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INDIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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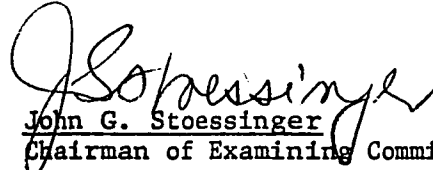
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1973

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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I dedicate this study to my parents -- whose prayers and blessings greatly contributed to my success -- and to my wife and children, whose cooperation, understanding and sacrifice played a vital role in keeping my foundering spirit in good shape.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is a searching inquiry into the content and style of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East.¹ India's historic, cultural, economic and political ties with the Middle Eastern countries, place this region fairly high on India's diplomatic agenda. The Suez Canal (now closed), has been the commercial life-line for many developing countries like India, in terms of exchange of goods and services with the western hemisphere.²

It is assumed in this study that the Arab-Israel conflict overshadows the political spectrum across the Middle East. It will attempt to examine India's responses to and her role in the three main phases of the Arab-Israel conflict: i) the Palestine dispute and the emergence of the State of Israel (1948), ii) the Suez Crisis of 1956, and iii) the Arab-Israel War of June 1967. It will focus on the questions such as: what was the range of options opened to India, what choices were finally made, and what were the underlying factors for certain preferences in specific situations? Given India's national-historical experience, geopolitical foundations, comparative weakness in military and economic power; how well did India's ruling elite understand the "paramount

1

The terms "Middle East," "Near East," and "West Asia," are used interchangeably for somewhat indeterminate geopolitical area. A survey of such definitions reveals the most common core to be Turkey, Iran, Israel, Egypt and the Arab States of Asia. For a detailed study, see Roderic H. Davison, "Where is the Middle East?" Foreign Affairs, Vol. 38 (July, 1960), pp. 665-675.

2

India's dependence on the Suez Canal for its import-export trade had increased from 60% in 1956 to 70% in 1967. See Suez Canal: A Documentary Study (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1956), p. 3, and Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. V, July 3, 1967.

importance of diplomacy as an element of national power," and its utility³ for "the promotion of national interests by peaceful means?" How did India's foreign policy makers perceive their foreign policy objectives in the region, what techniques did they use to achieve or defend them, and with what results or pay-offs -- in terms of inputs and outputs or expectations and satisfactions? In this process, what profile did India present as a new nation in the international landscape?

India's pro-Arab policy disposition is seemingly evident, but its underlying factors and basic premises have not been adequately identified, much less empirically analyzed. The most plausible hypothesis, that India extends uncritical support to the Arabs in order to win their favor at the United Nations -- particularly in her dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir -- though not without validity, suffers from unidimensional rationalization and stereotyped oversimplification. In fact, it places much heavier empirical burden on a single variable than it should.

The official view in Tel Aviv, as reported by an Indian journalist, rejects the aforementioned hypothesis, "...because India doesn't give a damn about what the United Nations says or does. Nor has Arab support been all that readily forthcoming in the world body." Instead, Israeli circles maintain that there is "a basic anti-Semitism in the Western-educated elite who shaped India's foreign policy in accordance with their own view."⁴ The above observations, though debatable, provide useful empirical propositions.

3

Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 519.

4

S.K. Datta-Ray, "A Test of Skill for Indian Diplomacy," The Statesman (New Delhi), April 7, 1970, p. 8.

For understandable reasons, the assumption about India's pro-Arab policy disposition is questioned by a semi-official publication in Pakistan. The publication maintains that:

- i) "India's policy towards Israel vis-a-vis Arab-Israel conflict deserves a more careful study than, it seems, has so far been undertaken. For, it is an example par excellence of an exercise in Machiavellian politics and duplicity.
- ii) "India and Israel are trusted friends and natural allies to each other. They are bound together by a common hatred of Muslims and the Arabs, their religion and their civilization.
- iii) "In the years to come Indo-Israel cooperation in various fields such as diplomatic, nuclear, economic, etc., though likely to grow will continue to be covert as far as possible.
- iv) "India has tried not only to get Israel admitted into international forums, but at times shielded her from international condemnation, as for instance, at the Bandung Conference of 1955 and Belgrade Conference of Non-aligned countries in 1961.
- v) "The Indian Sikh Community expressed its happiness over Israeli victory against the Arabs by presenting a ceremonial silver-handled sword to the Israeli Prime Minister.
- vi) "With the exception of Communists, all major opposition parties such as Jana Sangh, Swatantra, DMK, etc., supported Israel and urged the Government to take a neutral stand on the Arab-Israel conflict.
- vii) "A public opinion survey conducted in four major cities of India in August 1967 revealed that a majority of the people supported Israel against the Arabs."⁵

5

Indo-Israel Relations: A Study of India's Posture on Arab-Israel Conflict (Karachi: Ma'aref Limited, undated), pp. 3-5. The ceremonial sword was presented to the visiting Israeli Minister, Mr. Joseph Saphir, for the Israeli Prime Minister. The public opinion survey indicated opposition to unqualified support to the Arabs. It did not support Israel, but favored an objective view towards Arab-Israel conflict. See Monthly Public Opinion Survey (New Delhi: The Indian Institute of Public Opinion), July 1967, pp. 3-19.

The inferences and conclusions drawn in the aforementioned publication, by placing factual statements out of context, are certainly debatable, though not totally fabricated. For instance, India and Burma had favored inviting Israel at the Bandung Conference of 1955.⁶ During the Belgrade Conference of nonaligned countries in 1961, the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, while agreeing with the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser, about "Israel's imperialist role," did not favor condemnation of Israel, maintaining that the Conference should not deal with local quarrels, and that "Others are responsible too, but we are not condemning them."⁷ The observation that "India and Israel are trusted friends and natural allies -- bound together by a common hatred of Muslims and the Arabs, their religion and their civilization," is not supported by verifiable evidence. However, there is apparently no direct clash of national interests between Israel and India. Both are fairly functioning parliamentary democracies in a continent which has, more often than not, been found "too hot for democracy." Both are non-Muslim states with large Muslim minorities. Both are situated in a region in which the Islamic culture and the number of Muslim countries are

6

Richard J. Kozicki, "India and Israel: A Problem in Asian Politics," Middle East Affairs, Vol. 9 (May 1958), p. 167.

7

Yitzhak Oron, editor, Middle East Record, Vol. 2 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1961), p. 192.

8
significant factors in interaction of the states in the area. Both
have fought three major wars, and almost daily border clashes, with
their neighboring Muslim adversaries during the last quarter of a cen-
tury. Yet they do not seem to be collaborators in any meaningful
fashion, as semi-official publication in Pakistan would lead us to
9
believe.

There is sufficient evidence that the lines for India's pro-Arab
foreign policy were drawn as early as the 1930's, when India was still
a British colony, Pakistan was still in the realm of a wishful thought,
and the Kashmir problem was almost two decades in posterity. Historical
evidence indicates that India's elite leadership had perceived an organic
connection between India's independence movement, Arab nationalism and

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There are almost 30 countries in the Afro-Asian region in which
the Muslims are either in absolute majority, hold parity position, or
are a significant minority. Despite their divergent political affilia-
tions, economic interests, and voting behavior in international con-
ferences, the Muslim countries exhibit a varying degree of hostility
(overt or covert) towards an adversary of a Muslim country. Their
hostility towards Israel is more marked than their attitude towards
India -- with reference to the Arab-Israel conflict and Indo-Pakistan
disputes respectively. Their non-recognition of Bangladesh (another
Muslim country), is indicative of a complexity because the situation
involves, simultaneously, an intra-Muslim dispute and an "adversary"
issue. Their ambivalence, or indifference, towards Bangladesh is
partly because of their sympathy with Pakistan and partly because of
India's military intervention -- a crucial factor in the emergence of
Bangladesh -- which added an "adversary" variable in the situation.

9

In fact, despite India's de jure recognition of Israel in Sep-
tember 1950, India has not yet exchanged diplomatic mission with
Israel. An Israeli Consulate was established at Bombay in 1953.

a wider anti-colonial struggle. India's Muslim minority had provided a symbolic variable for the romantic kinship between the Indian and the Arab nationalisms. Mahatma Gandhi's and Jawaharlal Nehru's shrewd perception of the Muslim minority's crucial role in the future destiny of India -- its unity or dismemberment -- was probably the most critical variable which greatly influenced their initial attitude towards the Palestine problem. In this framework, the Jewish demand for a national home in Palestine was placed on the other side of the firing line, as "darling" of the West.¹⁰ In fact, the Jewish demand for a national home in Palestine and the Muslims' demand for a separate homeland in India, were suspected as British-inspired conspiracies to perpetuate their colonial rule.

The partition of India in 1947, the creation of Pakistan and the emergence of the Kashmir problem provided an added imperative to pursue a policy vaguely conceived in the 1930's. Pakistan aside, India's own Muslim minority of 62 million and the predominantly Muslim state of Kashmir constitute a societal pressure-group of no insignificant importance. There is neither a countervailing force, in the form of Jewish votes (whose total population in India is around 25,000 mostly in Bombay), nor a strong Jewish lobby. India's economic interests in

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No wonder, the then Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, complained that "the Israeli struggle for self-determination and independence against Britain was the only national liberation movement in Asia not recognized as a genuinely anti-colonialist effort." See Samuel Decalo, "Israeli Foreign Policy and the Third World," ORBIS, Vol. XI (Fall 1967), p. 727.

11

terms of foreign trade with the Arab countries, her increasing need for oil from the Middle East for her expanding industry, cotton from Egypt, Indian business establishments in the Persian Gulf area, a friendly Egypt because of the importance of the now closed Suez Canal, are some of the other factors which could not be lightly ignored by anyone in the ruling circles in New Delhi. Moreover, in the newly available international parliamentary forum, theoretical sovereign equality of the new nations, could be demonstrated only through a "trade union," of small states.¹² Thus, in the numbering game, the historical and cultural identification between the Indian and the Arab nationalisms could now be placed in a contemporary world perspective for maximum political returns in the arena of conference diplomacy.

 11

Approximately 15 per cent of Indian exports go to and 10 per cent imports come from the Middle Eastern countries. The UAR, Iran, Sudan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia are major trading partners of India in the Middle East. For details see United Nations Statistical Papers - Commodity Trade Statistics 1969, Series D, Vol. XIX, pp. 9758-10013

12

An analogy with regard to the small-state pressure-group can also be found in the Hague Conferences, particularly the second one. As pointed out by Inis L. Claude, Swords Into Plowshares (New York: Random House, 1964, p. 25), "At the Hague, the small states got a strong taste of independence and equality...The era of the Concert had been the period, par excellence, of great power hegemony; the Hague Conferences ushered in the heyday of the small states." The "trade-union diplomacy," differs from what Henry Kissinger defines as "coalition diplomacy." The latter concept has the overtones of military alliances to inhibit aggression, while the former relies on sheer weight of numbers, primarily in international conferences, to maximize influence or pressure despite economic and military weakness. See Henry A. Kissinger, "Coalition Diplomacy in a Nuclear Age," in Joseph S. Nye, Jr. International Regionalism (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1968), pp. 126-45.

Despite these seemingly substantive factors, underlying India's Middle East policy, a significant section of public opinion in India has expressed dissatisfaction with the uncritical support to the Arabs during the 1967 war. The lack of Arab support for India during the India-China border conflict in 1962, India-Pakistan war in 1965, the non-admission of the Indian Delegation to the Islamic Summit in 1969, and somewhat hostile Arab attitude during India-Pakistan war over Bangladesh in 1971, have magnified India's disillusionment with the Arabs. Indeed, the continued validity of some common-sense premises of India's policy in the sub-region is being seriously questioned. The Nehru era of relatively uncritical acceptance of India's Middle East policy obviously belongs to the past. A new phase of awareness, anxiety, inquiry and a kind of auditing of performance is evident. The content and style, or the modus operandi, of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East, has been the target of cross-fire from articulate sections of public opinion in India.

Many opposition groups in the Indian Parliament were critical of the official position on the Arab-Israel war of June 1967. In fact, one opposition member of the Parliament (Mr. M.L. Sondhi - Jana Sangh), referring to the external broadcast of All India Radio on this issue, expressed deep concern that "India functions as the fourteenth Arab State."¹³ The Jana Sangh (People's Party), which represents Hindu nationalist sentiments, maintains that "when the chips are down between India and Pakistan all Arabs will support the latter irrespective of the merits of the dispute because of religious considerations." They, therefore,

13

Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. IV, 3929-30, June 8, 1967.

argue why should India "continue to alienate Israel for the sake of un-
dependable Arabs.?"¹⁴

Leading editorials in many influential Indian newspapers took issue with the Government of India's Middle East policy and favored a more objective view towards the Arab-Israel conflict. The Statesman (New Delhi), criticized the official policy for having "made screaming non-sense of India's nonalignment,"¹⁵ and castigated the Congress Government for taking a one-sided view of the dispute. The Times of India (Bombay), defined the official policy as "an exhibition of amateurishness," and chided the Foreign Office for the "suspension of all its critical faculties,"¹⁶ in respect of its Middle East policy. Even the ruling Congress Party itself lacked the unity on this policy issue. Senior cabinet ministers were reported to have expressed reservations about the unqualified support to the Arabs. In fact, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi, clashed with her opponents within the Congress Parliamentary Party,¹⁷ over her "West Asia policy" -- the official label for India's Middle East policy.

14

Girilal Jain, "Disillusionment with the Arabs," The Round Table, Vol. 57 (October 1967), p. 434.

15

The Statesman (New Delhi), June 12, 1967, p. 6.

16

The Times of India (Bombay), June 8, 1967, p. 6.

17

Indian Recorder and Digest (August 1967), p. 7.

If interactions of the states, like interpersonal relationships, are two-way streets and not unidirectional, one would imagine that the lack of reciprocity from the Arab side, as expressed in a section of public opinion, would reduce India's historic friendship and identity with the Arabs to a mere diplomatic fiction. In what fashion would this adverse reaction in India's Parliament and Press (which partly reflects and partly shapes public opinion) influence official policy? What could be possible long-range implications of the emerging trends of inquiry into the performance of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East? What could be the relevance of seemingly sound advice for an "even-handed" approach to such conflicts, because a "skillful diplomacy never lays all its eggs in one basket?"¹⁸ These are some of the questions explored in the study that follows.

METHODOLOGY

The framework of inquiry is rather simple. I do not pretend expertise in any of the modern methodological designs. I have, however, listened to the experts among the students and scholars, with a mixture of admiration, envy, and bewilderment. Mine is a simple traditional approach; to analyze selected empirical material with a view to identifying the dynamics of interlocking societal and trans-societal factors, including personal dispositional variables, underlying India's Middle East policy. Empirical evidence has been quantified through relevant United Nations records, official pronouncements, parliamentary debates in India, cross-sectional observations and comments by the journalists, diplomats and academicians, in the newspapers, periodicals and professional journals with a view to gain some accurate historical perspective out of contemporary bon mot; and possibly to "provoke reflection

about how we know what we think we know," assuming that the "facts as well
 as values can be contested."¹⁹

CONTRIBUTION

The scope of inquiry is limited in time and space. It cannot possibly provide a guidance to India's diplomatic behavior in all its ramifications, but it should, hopefully, enable us to discern what James Rosenau defines as the "regularities in the behavior of actors, in the common goals which are sought, in the means and processes through which the goal-seeking behavior is sustained, and in the societal sources of the goals and means selected."²⁰

CONTENTS

The study starts with a chapter on the foundations and directions of India's foreign policy. It may not be easy to establish an empirical relationship between the legacy of national-historical experience and the fixed facts of geography, and a nation's contemporary perceptions, policy formulations, and actions or behavior. Yet, a resumé of historical perspective should provide a useful point of reference. Chapter II, covers the initial perceptions and attitude of Indian political elite towards the Palestine dispute, and underlying societal factors including the elite leadership's personal predispositions. Chapter III, deals with India's role during the Palestine drama at the United Nations and the proclamation of the State of Israel. Chapters IV and V, outline

19

Louis Kriesberg, ed., Social Processes in International Relations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968), p. v.

20

James N. Rosenau, International Politics and Foreign Policy (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 3.

the modus operandi of Indian diplomacy during the Suez Crisis of 1956 and the Arab-Israel War of 1967 respectively. Chapter VII, contains an analysis of the emerging trends, as discerned through the views expressed in the Indian Parliament and Press. Chapter VIII contains summary observations and a conceptual perspective.

CHAPTER IIFOUNDATIONS OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity...for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today... Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom; so is prosperity now..."

1

Jawaharlal Nehru

India, though one of the original signatories of the United Nations Charter, is comparatively a newcomer to the art of diplomacy in the arena of international politics. Having achieved independence from Great Britain in August 1947, India belongs to the younger generation of the United Nations family. However, the newness of India has an old national-historical past, which seemingly limits her options and profoundly affects the content and style of her diplomacy. As pointed out

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Speech delivered in the Constituent Assembly on the eve of India's independence (August 14, 1947). For full text see Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy - Selected Speeches: September 1946 - April 1961, (New Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1961), pp. 13-15.

2

India's de jure membership of the League of Nations, her active participation in the I.L.O., and at the San Francisco Conference on the U.N.O., are significant points of reference. However, India's de facto membership (not as an appendage of British Delegation), of international bodies dates back from 1947 only. It may be interesting to note that India's legal claim over Kashmir (besides the Instrument of Accession signed by its Ruler), is based on the ground that the partition of India and creation of Pakistan did not affect India's international legal status or her relationship with the states and areas which have not acceded to Pakistan. See M.M. Rehman, The Politics of Non-alignment (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1969), p. 83.

by a scholar on Indian affairs, "India entered the family of nations in 1947 with relatively little experience and with relatively few commitments. This proved to be both an advantage and a handicap."³

A brief resumé on geopolitical and historical perspective should be helpful for a better understanding of India's foreign policy objectives and diplomatic imperatives. Needless to emphasize that in a study of this nature, one must know, at least roughly, the type of frontiers one is trying to get across.

GEOPOLITICAL SETTING

In the present times, the dimensions of natural defense lines are undergoing rapid change. With the development of nuclear technology, explorations in outer space, and consequent territorial vulnerability, it is difficult to determine exactly the role which a country's geographical location plays in her foreign policy formulations. However, it is a commonplace belief that "the geographical position of any state in relation to other political areas is always a factor of considerable importance in determining her foreign relations and sometimes even a factor of paramount importance."⁴ India is bounded by the Himalayan mountain ranges in the north. Her frontiers touch Tibet and Nepal in the

3

Norman D. Palmer, India, in Major Governments of Asia, edited by George Mc T. Kahin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 390. It was partly because of this lack of commitment to either of the two ideological blocs that India enjoyed some flexibility in the conduct of her foreign policy vis-a-vis east-west power struggle. For the same reason, however, India was often suspected by both sides e.g., for her roles during the Korean War and as a chairman of International Control Commission in Indochina.

4

J..C. Kundra, Indian Foreign Policy 1947-1954 (Groningen, Netherland: J.B. Wolters, 1955), p. 4.

north, Burma in the east (with East Pakistan, now Bangladesh forming an enclave), China in the northeast, and Pakistan in the northwest -- with Kashmir in the northwestern mountains, sharing its frontiers with Pakistan, China, USSR,⁵ and Afghanistan. The Arabian Sea marks India's western coast and the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal carve her southern shores. With the total area of 1,262,275 square miles, India⁶ is the seventh largest country in the world. It has a land frontier of 9,425 miles, and a coastline of 3,535 miles long. Her dimensions extend about 2,000 miles from north to south and about 1,850 miles from east to west.⁷ Located in a commanding position over the Indian Ocean, major **trade routes** traverse through the waters which wash India's shores. As such,

"While to other countries the Indian Ocean is only one of the important Oceanic areas, to India it is the vital sea. Her life lines are concentrated in that area. Her future is dependent on the freedom of that vast water surface. No industrial development, no commercial growth, no stable political structure is possible for her, unless the Indian Ocean is free and her shores fully protected."⁸

5

A small strip of land in north Kashmir joins the frontier of Afghanistan, from where the Soviet border is just a few miles. See J.C. Kundra, op. cit., p. 4. (A geopolitical perspective is gained better from the globe rather than from a flat map.)

6

William Bridgwater, ed., The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), p. 505.

7

India: The World's Largest Democracy (Washington, D.C.: Embassy of India, Information Services, undated), p.7.

8

K.M. Pannikar, India and the Indian Ocean (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 83.

Placed in such a situation, India's "geography denies her the so-called privilege of an isolationist position."⁹ India's three conventional wars with Pakistan (1947-48, 1965 and 1971), and one border fiasco with China in 1962, seem to support the view that her size and geographical location, profoundly affect, if not determine, her destiny in the scheme of the things in the eastern hemisphere.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS

The legacy of centuries-old foreign domination and the struggle for maintaining the identity of native culture and spiritual heritage; lately: the impact of British rule, national movement for independence, partition of the subcontinent, the emergent problem of Kashmir, the conflict-relationship with Pakistan and consequent "strategic problems within the natural frontiers of the Indian subcontinent,"¹⁰ the rise of China as a great power in Asia and the changing dimensions of so-called frigid Himalayan frontiers, the gigantic poverty and backwardness and imperative need for a rapid economic development -- these are some of the important factors which provide necessary background to the study of India's foreign policy objectives and diplomatic strategies.

9

Shantilal Kothari, India's Emerging Foreign Policies (Bombay: Vohra & Company, 1951), p. 161.

10

Norman D. Palmer, op. cit., p. 389.

Through centuries India acted and reacted in the background of physical weakness,¹¹ but with a pride in her cultural and spiritual heritage, and with a confidence in her shrewdness and prudence. This perceived sense of pride and confidence stood by the side of 'Mother India' even during her most humiliating capitulations. This was partly because of the spiritual ideals handed down to the generations of the Indians by the Hindu saints and philosophers, and partly because of the mythical faith in the resilience of the Hindu culture. Even though utopian, the glorification of these ideals provided the necessary anecdote to the demoralized, frustrated and often alienated masses. It was probably because of this precarious blend of utopia and reality that the Hindus did maintain their cultural identity and spiritual heritage, through all these centuries. The "fact that Hinduism was able to resist the onslaught of Islam for 750 years, and...over 150 years of challenge by Christianity...must have some inherent values of high significance."¹² In fact, "the tradition of India has always been one of synthesis. Her geographical position perhaps helped her to develop a singular ability to absorb the culture of others and assimilate it without losing her own

11

This is despite the fact that the Indian history is punctuated by the strong Mauryan Empire (second century B.C.), the Gupta Empire (fourth century A.D. -- known as the "Golden Period," of Indian history), and occasionally strong kingdoms in parts of India, including the Rajput, Maratha and the Sikh confederacies. In this respect, both the Moghul Empire and British rule, are referred to as foreign dominations-- Akbar the Great's brief period of "trans-cultural socialization," notwithstanding!

12

K.M. Pannikar, Hinduism, in Asia: A Handbook, Guy Wint, ed., (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 56.

13
 identity." Barring the extremes, which is a common phenomenon of more or less every large society; the tradition of tolerance, compromise, prudence and shrewd withdrawal from conflict, appears to be the accepted elements of Hindu way of living. For the Hindus the "history is as much the record of harmonious adjustment as it is the story of conflict." This technique for adjusting and reconciling differences, "a method on which Mahatma Gandhi's fame must ultimately rest, assumes the moral potential of the wrongdoer, the possibility of reasonableness of the adversary,"¹⁴ provides an example par excellence of an interesting combination of utopia and reality.

Lest references to Hinduism and the Hindu culture are taken amiss, a word of explanation may be appropriate. The absolute numerical majority of the Hindus in India (approximately 450 million -- 83 per cent), makes the Hindu culture or the Hindu way of living and thinking, inevitably preponderant.¹⁵ One cannot possibly study India, past or present, without a reference to the Hindu culture, "because there is a functional connection between Hinduism that permeates the life of the vast bulk of

13

K.M. Pannikar, The Foundations of New India (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), p. 16.

14

David L. Sills, ed., International Encyclopedia of Social Science, Vol. 7 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 178.

15

See Census of India 1971 (Series 1 - Religion) New Delhi: Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 1972, p. iii.

the Indian population, and the thought and ideas of the Indian people."¹⁶
 This does not, however, mean that about 62 million Muslims, 15 million
 Christians, 11 million Sikhs, and other small communities like the Jains,
 Budhists, Parsees and the Jewish, do not have the freedom to maintain
 their own religious and cultural identity. For "Hinduism has a strong
 tradition of freedom of conscience and tolerance of religious diversity."¹⁷
 In fact, Hinduism "is a commonwealth of systems; not a particular faith
 but a fellowship of faiths."¹⁸ However, in view of the legacy of antago-
 nism between the Hindus and the Muslims, they have developed some stereo-
 typed perception or misperception of each other. As observed by William
 Brands, "Moslems generally regard Hindus as devious, untrustworthy, and
 hypocritical," while the "Hindus look upon the Moslems with a mixture of
 contempt and fear, regarding them as intolerant and brutal."¹⁹

UTOPIA AND REALITY

If one tries to compare the centuries-old ideals, beliefs and
 spiritual heritage of India, and the shape of the things in contemporary
 India, the divergence may be too bewildering to grasp or comprehend.
 Yet, through many centuries of foreign domination, India's dreams and
 cherished ideals were kept alive in the hope for a better, even if

16

J.C. Kundra, op. cit., p. 14.

17

Donald E. Smith, India as a Secular State (Princeton: Princeton
 University Press, 1963, p. 493.

18

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, The Evolution of India (London: Oxford
 University Press, 1958), p. 6.

19.

"India in Transition: Friends and Neighbors," Foreign Affairs,
 Vol. 46 (April, 1968), p. 557.

utopian, future. Here is an outstanding example of intellectual flight into the wonderful dreamland projecting such cherished ideals, by a great Indian (Bengali) poet, Rabindranath Tagore:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
 Where knowledge is free;
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
 narrow domestic walls;
 Where words come out from the depth of truth;
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards per-
 fection;
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
 into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
 Where the mind is led forward by thee into everwidening
 thought and action
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country
 awake."²⁰

Swami Vivekananda, a great Indian saint, speaking on "Pride in India's past and her mission in the modern world," said:

"The land where humanity has developed farthest towards gentleness, generosity, purity, and calm, the land above all of introspection and spirituality, it is India... taking country by country there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much as to that of the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu. "The mild Hindu" is a phrase sometimes used as an expression of reproach, but...the "mild Hindu" has been the blessed child of God always."²¹

This characteristic pride in the past glory amidst persistently haunting misery and poverty of the masses is probably a common phenomenon in many oriental societies. While the gospel of God was freely sold to the multitude of Indians, in terms of Karl Marx's "religion as opium

20

From Gitanjali, a collection of selected poems of Rabindranath Tagore, which won him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 (the first such prize awarded to an Indian). See Wm. Theodore de Bary, Sources of Indian Traditions, Vol. II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 235.

21

Swami Vivekananda, "Pride in India's past and her mission in the modern world," in Modern Indian Political Traditions, edited by K.P. Karunakaran (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1962), pp. 123-124.

for the masses," God's generosity was reserved for the privileged ones, "the blessed child(ren) of God always." Nevertheless, Indian saints and sages, kept alive the hope for a better life through past greatness and glory; even if the present was full of gloom and tragedy. They gave their countrymen a "sense of dignity and pride in their own culture."²²

The same blend of utopia and reality seems to reflect in India's independence movement and the hope for cultural coexistence and cooperation, under the vanguardship of Indian National Congress. The course of this movement was significantly reshaped under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He turned this essentially urban-elite movement into a mass movement of non-violent resistance against the foreign rule. In this process, he squeezed out the radicals like Subhash Bose, N.B. Khare, Nariman and others.²³ He also witnessed the breakaway of a strong segment of Muslim leadership, which refused to follow his lead. This

22

Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., Sources of Indian Traditions, Vol. II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 95.

23

In a discussion, under the caption: "The Architects of India and Pakistan," K.P. Karunakaran, observed: "Gandhi was as thorough in dealing with his opponents as these dictators (reference is made to Napoleon and Stalin) ...his opponents included Nariman of Bombay, Subhas Bose of Bengal and N.B. Khare of the Central Provinces. One of them once remarked that he was the victim of non-violent Nazism." See Afro-Asian and World Affairs, Vol. 3 (Autumn 1966), p. 277.

culminated in the partition of the country, which shattered Gandhi's
 24
 dream of the rebirth of the ancient Indian empire.

Jawaharlal Nehru's political darlings, secularism at home and non-alignment abroad, were partly the offsprings of Gandhian political theology (religion, morality, politics, economics, utopia and reality all combined in one), and partly the product of his own liberal upbringing and western education. Their legacy can also be traced back from the historic cultural conflict and consensus, and the national independence movement. In the independence movement, more or less all the communities, in this multi-religious, multi-lingual, and multi-racial

24

In the same discussion (cited above), K.P. Karunakaran, cites from the book by S.K. Majumdar (Jinnah and Gandhi: Their Role in India's Quest for Freedom, Calcutta, 1966): "Gandhi was indeed playing for the highest imaginable stakes, and he cherished a Caesarian ambition. His ambition was to find a Holy Gandhian Empire in India, and to be its Pope. The literal meaning of Pope is Papa or Bapu. It is to be noted that he began to call himself 'Bapu' and sign letters as Bapu. The appropriation of the use of this word to himself is pointed to the direction of his ambition, to be the Bapu of the New India and thereafter to be Bapu of the world. For the achievement of his ambitions, the fanatical obedience of Hindu-Muslim masses towards him was the first requirement, and if he could secure that, the mighty British government would be powerless before him and it would be compelled to quit India. Then his Khadi-clad battalion, duly brainwashed by continuous handspinning, would form his Swiss Guards to establish and protect the Gandhian papacy in India." Ibid., pp. 276-277.

25

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), was sent to England when he was only 15. He was admitted to the Public School Harrow. From Harrow he went to Cambridge where he took his tripos in natural sciences. After that he studied law and was called to the Bar from the Inner Temple. On his return to India in 1912, he enrolled himself as an advocate (like his father Motilal Nehru, who was a well-known barrister of his time), but soon plunged into active politics. While in England, Nehru "studied the western political traditions from Plato and Aristotle to Locke and Rousseau. He read the pamphleteers of the American and French Revolutions and the writings of Jefferson and Lincoln. He acquired an intellectual interest in the philosophy of Marx and Lenin..." See Lester P. Wohlers, "The Policy of India concerning Soviet-American Relations," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1951), p. 184.

society, participated together and invested their fortune in a shared future, full of dreams and aspirations. According to an official publication, "the entire country was awakened under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and people belonging to different communities -- Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians -- all followed the Mahatma in the struggle for independence." ²⁶ The subsequent developments marking breakaway of militant Muslims leading to the partition of the country, greatly clouded this historic fact of common participation by all the communities.

DIRECTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

It was suggested in the foregoing pages that one cannot study India, past or present, without a reference to the Hindu culture. By the same token, it may be suggested that one cannot study India's foreign policy without a reference to Jawaharlal Nehru. As observed by a notable scholar on India's foreign affairs:

"There is some justification for saying that India did not have a foreign policy, but Nehru did. No other democratic prime minister has ever had such a free hand in the formulation and the execution of his country's foreign policy."

He further writes:

"Long before independence was achieved, Nehru had decided that the fundamental task of the government of India was to raise the standard of living of the mass of people. This meant that as much as possible of the country's revenue had to be earmarked for bringing about economic and social change...With this in mind, Nehru evolved what might be called the doctrine of defense by friendship."²⁷

26

India: World's Largest Democracy, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

27

Michael Edwardes, "Illusion and Reality in India's Foreign Policy," International Affairs, Vol. 41 (January, 1965), p. 49.

Lest this emphasis on Nehruvian overtones in India's foreign policy is misunderstood, it may be pointed out that Nehru did not formulate the policy in a vacuum. His policy was based on his perception of historical perspective. He was after all "the instrument of circumstances, the child of the time, and the spokesman of the Indian people."²⁸ He was, by destiny, placed in a position from where he could view better, spell out and articulate India's foreign policy objectives and direct its diplomatic strategy. As soon as the interim government was installed in India, late in 1946, Nehru, as Vice-President of Viceroy's Council, declared that "India would keep away from power politics of groups aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale."²⁹ The Congress Party, in a foreign policy resolution (invariably Nehru's brainchild), stated in December 1948, that:

"The foreign policy of India must necessarily be based on principles that have guided the Congress in the past years. These principles are the promotion of world peace, the freedom of nations, racial equality, and the ending of imperialism and colonialism..."³⁰

The following year, in his address at Columbia University (October 17, 1949), Nehru said:

28

B.V. Govinda Raj, India and Disputes in the United Nations (Bombay: Vohra & Company, 1959), p. 24.

29

Jawaharlal Nehru, Independence and After (New Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1949), p. 340.

30

As cited in Karunakar Gupta, Indian Foreign Policy in Defense of National Interest (Calcutta: The World Press, 1956), p. 8.

"India came into the family of nations with no prejudices or enmities, ready to welcome and be welcomed. Inevitably she had to consider her foreign policy in terms of enlightened self-interest, but at the same time she brought to it a touch of her idealism. Thus she has tried to combine idealism with national interest."

He added that the main objectives of India's foreign policy are:

"The pursuit of peace, not through alignment with any major power or group of powers, but through an independent approach to each controversial dispute or issue, the liberation of subject peoples; the maintenance of freedom, both national and individual, the elimination of racial discrimination, and the elimination of want, disease, and ignorance, which inflict the greater part of the world's population."³¹

A veteran Indian diplomat, writing almost two decades after Nehru's vital foreign policy pronouncements observes:

"...although he had had no official experience in foreign affairs or government (not even in a parliamentary opposition party), Nehru could outline a policy which has continued to shape India's external posture for the last twenty years."³²

A content analysis of Nehru's foreign policy pronouncements would reveal that principal objectives of India's foreign policy were, and still are, the quest for national security (maintenance of political independence and territorial integrity), and economic development (through domestic resources as well as foreign assistance). Both seem to be complementary to each other. Both appear to be the projection of domestic necessity to external imperatives. Both can trace their ancestry from India's

31

S.L. Poplai, ed., Selected Documents on Asian Affairs - India 1947-50, Vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 51-52.

32

Arthur Lall, "Change and Continuity in India's Foreign Policy," ORBIS, Vol. 10 (Spring, 1966), p. 92.

33

geopolitical and historical circumstances. For the achievement of both these objectives, India needed and still needs, stability at home and peace abroad, "because if war comes everyone suffers, so that in the long distance view, self-interest may itself demand a policy of cooperation with other nations..."³⁴ All other objectives -- the promotion of world peace, adherence to the United Nations Charter, elimination of colonialism and racial discrimination -- though very significant, have meaning only with reference to the principal objectives of national security and economic development. Given "the economic compulsions (even if we ignore our political traditions for the present), the only rational stance for our diplomacy can be one of avoidance of war to the best of our ability. Peace is a minimum precondition for our economic development."³⁵

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See Fred Greene, United States and the Security of Asia. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968): "In the pre-independence era, the strategic unity of the region had rested on Britain's dominant political position, its control of the seas, and a strong Indian Army that could protect Burma and Afghanistan as well as project its force into the Middle East and South East Asia. With independence all this changed. The new political divisions soon rivaled historic cockpits like the Balkans in their tangled complexity. At the core lay the deep Pakistan-India antagonism over Kashmir, over the concept of communal states, and over the dismemberment of the subcontinent." p. 124.

34

Jawaharlal Nehru. Speech in the Constituent Assembly of India (December 4, 1947). For full text see S.L. Poplai (ed.). op.cit., p. 19.

35

J. Bandopadhyaya, "The Economic Bases of Foreign Policy," India Quarterly, Vol. 25 (October-December, 1969), p. 368.

As observed by K.M. Pannikar, a trusted diplomat of Nehru, "the objective of all policy is territorial security and this is governed predominantly by geographical factors." ³⁶ The Economist, London, commenting on Nehru's mediatory role, wrote:

"Europeans tend to overlook the statesman is working all the time for what he believes to be the safety of and interest of India. He sees safety in being charitable to the Soviet Union and China and is interested in good relations with the rich and compliant west."³⁷

The liberation of subject people and elimination of racial discrimination seem to have become keynotes of India's foreign policy through the circumstances of her own history. Having herself suffered the evils of foreign rule, and having experienced the plight of Indians in South Africa, India became committed to these causes. It has been pointed out in this context that:

"This sweeping aim to wipe out imperialism and racism, everywhere is advanced in the belief that there can be no real freedom for any nation and no equality for Indians in particular as long as racial discrimination continues." There was, of course, "the expectation that great prestige will accrue to India for the championship of the freedom of all peoples."³⁸

36

K.M. Pannikar, India: Past and Present (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 47.

37

The Economist (London) January 27, 1951.

38

Werner Levi, Free India in Asia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952), p. 48.

DIPLOMATIC IMPERATIVES

If diplomacy is the art of conducting foreign policy in the most economical way, it was imperative for India to gain some proficiency in this art. In terms of military power, or even economic, industrial and technological development, India has not shown the promise of becoming a great power, such as the United States, Soviet Union or China. Norman Palmer has pertinently observed that "in power political terms India is a weak country, with few of the advantages which a nation must possess to be influential in world affairs."³⁹ At the same time, India is not insignificant enough to be left alone to determine her fate in relative isolation. India's position in Asia is somewhat analogous to France in Europe -- not so powerful yet strategically located and politically significant, in terms of size as well as population.

Mindful of the gigantic problem of poverty and under-development in the backyard; and power inferiority, or 'power imbalance' to borrow Arthur Lall's expression, in the outer dimensions; India's charismatic leadership tried to build up an external image with a view to provide a kind of compensatory psychological balance. Nehru's statements often reflected the characteristic faith of the Indians (at least notables among them) in a better future. Despite India's military weakness, Nehru was optimistic that India would "count more and more," because it was not some "odd little nation somewhere in Asia or Europe."⁴⁰ In this

39

Norman D. Palmer, op.cit., p. 388.

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Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. 3 (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1950), p. 1770.

venture, India's cultural and spiritual heritage, and the names of Gautama Buddha, Ashoka, Tagore, Gandhi and others were fully utilized. The "Indian statesmen made generous references to the grandeur of Indian tradition with a view to projecting the image of a country which could exercise a leadership role even without possessing the acceptable essentials of power."⁴¹ India's independence was hailed as a great landmark, ushering in a new era for the subject people -- not unreasonably perhaps! Speaking at the Asian Relations Conference, held at New Delhi (April, 1947), Nehru declared:

"For too long have we of Asia been petitioners in Western courts and chancelleries. That story must now belong to the past...We have no designs against anybody; ours is the great design of promoting peace and progress all over the world."⁴²

The reference to "promoting peace and progress all over the world," was essentially a message of hope and aspirations for the resurgent people of Asia. India's leadership and foreign policy makers -- while in conflict with the west, particularly in matters of colonialism and racial discrimination -- tried to understand, grasp, and manipulate western rules of the game. In this task, India's own traditional shrewdness,

41

Swadesh Rana, "The Changing Indian Diplomacy at the United Nations," International Organization, Vol. 34 (Winter, 1970), p. 53.

42

Jawaharlal Nehru, Independence and After (New York: John Day Company, 1950), p. 298.

43

from Kautilya (a contemporary of Aristotle) through Gandhi and Nehru, was put to optimum use. They sought to make up through diplomacy what they lacked in political and military power. Given the awareness of national-historical background, geographical location, cultural heritage and mundane realities of international politics, they tried to mobilize a kind of "trade-union" style of diplomacy to cushion military weakness and ensure independence and security. In the numbering game, it was an attempt to organize a kind of small-power pressure group as a counter-⁴⁴vailing force to the gunboat diplomacy pursued by the big powers. They had witnessed the rise of British trade-union movement and emergence of the British Labor Party. They had themselves used this strategy against the British rulers, during the national movement for independence, from a position of physical weakness. **As such**, they appealed to the Asian pride, Afro-Asian unity, and extended full diplomatic support to colonial revolutions. In supporting colonial revolutions, they relied on trade-union type of diplomacy, -- passing resolutions, sending goodwill missions, making statements at the United Nations and other international conferences. Since India's national movement does not belong to the typology

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According to Kautilya, power has three components: power of deliberation or decision-making, including the capacity to intrigue; the treasury; and the army. For a detailed study, see George Modelski, "Kautilya: Foreign Policy and International System in the Ancient Hindu World," The American Political Science Review, Vol. LVIII (September, 1964), pp. 549-59. Also see Arthashastra, translated by R. Shamasastri (Mysore, India: Mysore Printing and Publishing House, 1960).

44

See p. 6 Supra.

of "war of liberation," India lacked the temperament to provide material, aid to any such war of liberation. International gatherings, such as Asian Relations Conference at New Delhi (1947), Bandung Conference in Indonesia (1955), Nonaligned conferences, and annual sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and Specialized agencies, provided the required parliamentary framework and institutional workshop for experimenting trade-union style of diplomacy. As observed by Swadesh Rana:

"A combination of international and domestic factors made Indian diplomatic strategy a little more rewarding for its leadership...the Indian diplomats were at times overwhelmed by their own achievement."⁴⁵

Another scholar on Indian affairs observed:

"Nehru's domestic political strength was magnified by the success of his diplomacy on the world scene. As the prophet of neutralism, advocate of panch shila (five principles of peaceful coexistence) and principal partner in a neutralist axis with Nasser, and Tito, Nehru won respect for himself and his country. The Indian mission to the United Nations played a prominent role, and Indian lieutenants of Nehru were active in international diplomacy. India's importance and Nehru's influence in the "third world" were soon converted into a major political resource."⁴⁶

NONALIGNMENT AND SECULARISM

As mentioned in foregoing pages, Jawaharlal Nehru's political darlings; secularism at home and nonalignment abroad, were partly the offsprings of Gandhian political theology, and partly the product of Nehru's own liberal upbringing and western education. Lest this statement lay

45

Swadesh Rana, op.cit., p. 54.

46

Wayne A. Wilcox, India and Pakistan (New York: Foreign Policy Association Inc., 1967), p. 20.

much heavier empirical burden on personal predisposition of elite leadership than it should, it may be pointed out that these ideals were partly handed down by India's history; the legacy of cultural conflict and consensus; the bitter experience of colonial rule; independence movement; fixed facts of geography and changing international power configuration. It seems that a nation's perception of international environments in horizontal terms and its domestic needs and pressures in vertical terms, juxtapose each other in foreign policy projections. Furthermore, "the attitude of a nation to international problems is conditioned by the image of the world it carries in its collective consciousness." ⁴⁷ As pointed out by Karunakar Gupta:

"Indian foreign policy like all policy is a mirror of competing purposes and pressures generated in a semi-colonial economy with a class as well as a caste hierarchy, at the same time conditioned by the fixed facts of geography as well as the fluid facts of power relationship in the changing context of the world balance of power."⁴⁸

Both nonalignment and secularism have a tinge of idealism as well as of pragmatism, Both come under severe strain and pressure, at home as well as abroad. Yet the Indian polity does not appear to have discarded either

47

Devdutt, "India: National Interest," in Outside the Contest, edited by K.P. Karunakaran (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1963) p. 68. We often tend to use the word 'nation' in an abstract and synthetic fashion. In this context, we refer to the ruling elite or group of elites who actually control and exercise power in the name of the nation. A.F.K. Organski pointed out that "it is not to be expected that a nation's international goals need always be in accord with the best interests of the entire population," and "it seems safe to say that national goals are always the goals of those who hold the most power in the national government. Whether the goals of this group are shared by the entire population or even the majority varies from situation to situation." World Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 73.

48

Karunakar Gupta, op.cit., p. viii.

of them as a utopia. Despite the shock of the partition of the country, which shattered the Gandhian dream of Akhand Bharat (the united India), India's predicament over Kashmir and in the northern frontiers with China (in fact China's military thrust in 1962 and prompt US military aid to India had cast doubt on the validity of the concept of nonalignment), the ideals of secularism and nonalignment seem to have become cardinal principles of the state policy. The adoption of the policy of secularism at home, which is prima facie morally superior is rooted in Indian historical traditions. India's history shows ample evidence that suppression of minorities has not eliminated the conflict in the society. Moreover, externally, secularism has provided a political cushion to India's image abroad; because of the multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious character of its polity. In fact, the predominant numerical majority of the Hindus makes their position so secure that they do not seem to lose anything by tolerating the minorities or by treating them well. By the same token, they gain some leeway in dealing with the Arab world as well as with the West, by having a large Muslim minority (about 62 million) and the Christians (about 15 million). Thus the ideal of secularism was like the American model of "separation of Church and State." Its application to foreign affairs, across ideological spectrum, meant nonalignment with either of the "churches" -- eastern or western. Incidentally, the first new nation, the United States had initially followed more or less a similar policy in respect of power rivalry in Europe. Besides, India's ruling elite were well aware of the gap between rival ideological proclamations, pretensions and actions. The "Reds" were imposing unprecedented subjugation upon the people in the name of "liberation." On the other hand, the western democracies, with their

hands red with the blood of colonial people, were speaking in the name of liberty and fundamental freedoms all over the world. Thus the alternative of joining either of the two power blocs -- for national security or for economic development -- was considered not only undesirable but also irrelevant. This juxtaposition of domestic and foreign policies was influenced by the utopian ideals as well as by pragmatic responses to the environmental factors. It might appear paradoxical, but the paradox has its own rationale. As explained by Jawaharlal Nehru:

"A policy must be in keeping with the traditional background and temper of the country. It should be idealistic, aiming at certain objectives, and, at the same time, it should be realistic. If it is not idealistic, it becomes one of sheer opportunism; if it is not realistic, then it is likely to be adventurist and wholly ineffective."⁴⁹

Though determined by the ruling elite, the policy of nonalignment also mobilized mass support, because in most of the newly emerging nations, there was:

"A basic distrust of the western powers, arising largely from the imperialist character of most western powers...Proud and jealous of their freedom, and conscious of their material and military weakness, they regarded every move to bring them into bloc alignments with deep suspicion..."⁵⁰

49

Jawaharlal Nehru, Congress Bulletin, No. 5 (New Delhi: Indian National Congress, June-July, 1954), p. 246.

50

N. Parameshwaran Nair, "Nonalignment: History, Ideology, Prospects," in Outside the Contest, edited by K.P. Karunakaran (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1963), pp. 27-28.

Moreover, "certain forces inherent in the traditions and experiences of the social and political movements of these countries made it difficult for them to identify themselves with either of the blocs."⁵¹ As pointed out by a newspaper correspondent:

"Mr. Nehru is not an isolationist. The neutrality upon which his policy is based springs from a genuine inability, at this stage, to see world politics in terms of pure black and white."⁵²

India in particular, and many newly emerging nations in general, perceived their national security best protected through the policy of non-alignment. As pointed out by Arthur Lall, one of India's most brilliant diplomats, who has earned the title of being India's Averell Harriman:

"A variety of factors, mostly very practical ones, explain the rise of nonalignment. These include the need for peace, so that the less-developed world should be able to turn its attention to the urgent problems of development; the need for economic assistance, without strings...and perhaps to some extent, the enjoyment of the luxury of criticizing and offering advice to the very great powers of the world."⁵³

The content and style of nonalignment has undergone subtle transformation during the last quarter of a century, partly in response to practical experience near home and partly as a feedback reaction to the changing dynamics of "the great triangular struggle for influence... building up in this region in which the United States, the Soviet Union and Communist China are engaged."⁵⁴ Referring to Indo-Soviet treaty of

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Ibid., p. 27.

52

The Economist, (London) January 24, 1953.

53

Arthur Lall, "Advances Toward Understanding: The West and Asia," in Paths to World Order, edited by Andrew W. Cordier and Kenneth Maxwell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 158.

54

Max Frankel, "President's Task in Asia," The New York Times (July 28, 1969), p. 11.

friendship, amidst confused situation in the subcontinent over the crisis in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), a member of the Indian Parliament is reported to have hailed the new "realism" in India's policy, and praised Mrs. Gandhi for having "put some meat in our vegetarian nonalignment." Mrs. Gandhi and other official spokesmen seem to "insist that the treaty is not a departure from alignment, but merely an independent move in the national interest and that it, in fact, strengthens nonalignment." The official contention can be contested, yet characterizing the treaty as a "military alliance," which is "said to bury India's nonalignment," may be a premature conclusion. Similar conclusions were also drawn in the Fall of 1962, when the United States had rushed its military mission to aid India, after the border fiasco with China. C.L. Sulzberger's recent interview with Mrs. Gandhi with regard to Soviet support to India over Bangladesh issue brought the following response:

"One of our faults is that we are unable to display gratitude in any tangible sense for anything... Countries help one another because they need one another. Obviously countries are not disinterested when they help one another. But I don't think the record shows an inclination to display tangible gratitude here."

Sulzberger pointed out that:

"An inability to 'display gratitude' here is a phenomenon ruefully remarked upon by Americans in the past. United States statesmen were at times puzzled, after more American aid was distributed here than in the entire Marshall Plan program for Europe, that no more lavish thanks for political support was directed to the benefactor. Possibly the Kremlin may be in for similar disappointment...if the Kremlin expects to submit a bill for this..."⁵⁶

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Sydney H. Schanberg, "Pact Said to Bury India's Nonalignment," The New York Times (August 14, 1971), p. 6.

56

C.L. Sulzberger, "The Bounds of Ingratitude," The New York Times (February 18, 1972), p. 35.

INDIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

It has been mentioned earlier that India tried to make up through diplomacy what it lacked in political and military power. Given the awareness of national-historical background, geographical location and the dialectics of power politics, the Indian ruling elite tried to mobilize a kind of trade-union style of diplomacy to cushion military weakness and ensure national security. It was an attempt to organize a kind of small-power pressure-group as a countervailing force to neutralize and/or cool off the gunboat diplomacy pursued by the big powers. In this venture, the United Nations and its specialized agencies provided the necessary parliamentary framework and institutional laboratory for experimenting the trade-union style of diplomacy.

Constitutional blueprints often conceal more than what they reveal, yet they provide significant points of reference for any meaningful inquiry. It may be interesting to note that the Indian Constitution, which was drafted in the same decade as the United Nations Charter, incorporates some of the principles of the Charter as Directive Principles of State Policy. Article 51 of the Indian Constitution (effective January 26, 1950), enshrined the following principles: i) to promote international peace and security; ii) to maintain just and honorable relations between nations; and iii) to foster respect for international law and treaty obligations. The Indian National Congress, India's ruling party since 1947, in its foreign policy resolution (December, 1948), had stated that "with a view to advancing the cause of world peace and cooperation, India associated herself with the United Nations. This Congress declares its full adherence to the principles underlying

57

the Charter of the United Nations." Jawaharlal Nehru in his broadcast to the nation (April, 1948), had visualized a future wherein the United Nations' mechanism might develop into a world government on federal principles. Despite India's disenchantment with the United Nations in Kashmir and in the background of Hungarian and Suez crises, Nehru said in the General Assembly on December 20, 1956, that "Even if the United Nations did not do anything wonderful, the mere fact of the United Nations itself has been of great significance to the world."

58

Despite a general lack of experience in international diplomatic arenas and pressure of domestic problems, India took active part in matters affecting international peace and security. Indian delegates were actively involved in negotiations and accepted difficult international assignments during the Palestine dispute (1947-48), the Korean War (1950-53), and repatriation of prisoners of war after the armistice agreement in July 1953, the Geneva Agreement on Indo-China (1954), the Suez Crisis (1956), and the establishment of the UNEF, the Lebanese Crisis (1958), the Congo Crisis (1960), and the creation of ONUC, the Cyprus problem (1964), and the creation of UN force in Cyprus (UNFICYP),

57

As cited by Karunakar Gupta, Indian Foreign Policy in Defense of National Interest (Calcutta: The World Press, 1956), p. 8.

58

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, 1961, op.cit., p. 173.

59

so on and so forth. India also tried to help evolve some modus vivendi with regard to the questions such as the admission of new members to the United Nations, colonial issues, disarmament, and the controversy over Article 19 of the Charter -- regarding financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. While India paid her own share of expenses on United Nations peacekeeping operations, she did not support the principle of a binding legal obligation to pay. By the same token, she did not favor compulsory imposition of this expense or precipitation of a showdown against France and the Soviet Union. India favored a formula of voluntary payments, based on ability to pay, thereby asking the rich industrial nations to share the greater burden.

Despite its failings, the United Nations provided some hope for India, as for many newly emerging nations, against domination by the big powers. It was considered as an "excellent instrument of diplomacy permanently available even to those who did not have the resources to establish worldwide contacts." Both in their quest for national security as well as for the peace and stability necessary for rapid economic

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India was represented on the 11-member United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). India served as chairman of the United Nations Repatriation Commission with Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland as members. India served as chairman of International Control Commission in Indochina with Canada and Poland as members. India provided the largest single units for the UNEF as well as for the ONUC. Indian Ambassador Rajeshwar Dayal served on the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon with Galo Plaza of Ecuador (Chairman) and Major General Odd Bull of Norway. Indian Generals Gyani and Thimayya served as commanders of the UN Force in Cyprus. General Indarjit Rikhye of India commanded the UNEF until its withdrawal in May 1967.

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Swadesh Rana, op.cit., p. 49.

development, most developing countries like India entertained great hope in the United Nations. Their support to the United Nations is largely based on the assumption,

"that the world body is the only workable mechanism for peaceful settlement of international disputes in the present context, apart from finding in it a forum in which they are able to realize equality with other nations and a means of maximizing their influence in world affairs."⁶¹

Besides peace and security aspects, the United Nations is equally important for the developing countries as a multilateral channel for economic cooperation. India, like most other developing nations, prefers economic aid through the multilateral machinery of the United Nations and its specialized agencies rather than on a bilateral basis. The analogy of borrowing money or accepting charity from an individual and the element of personal gratitude involved in such a deal, and the alternative of making such a transaction with a bank or a philanthropic foundation, holds good even in interstate relations. This is despite the fact that, in view of their colonial experiences, the developing countries do not feel obligated to pay the bills of gratitude to the industrial nations.

India's active role at the United Nations was in line with her trade-union diplomatic style to maximize influence through active participation. By the same token India tried to utilize the world organization to promote and defend her national interests. India's anti-colonial role at the United Nations was not only in conformity with her national-historical legacy, but also served the purpose of applying continued diplomatic pressure on France and Portugal against their

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N. Parameshwaran Nair, op.cit., p. 30.

colonial pockets on India's south-western seashores -- Pondicherry and Goa respectively. Besides India earned the good will of many Afro-Asian countries; and hoped that with the support of Afro-Asian countries in general, and nonaligned countries in particular, her voice would carry greater weight in international assemblies. India's active involvement in the United Nations peacekeeping operations provided her with an opportunity to influence the modalities of the newly developing mechanism for keeping peace. By contributing large contingents to the UNEF and the ONUC, India insisted on certain preconditions and reservations. Prior consent of the host country for stationing the United Nations forces is an instance in this point. This way India could forestall any move for an international force in Kashmir. For the same reason India opposed a permanent United Nations force and favored an ad hoc arrangement as and when necessary. By supporting the Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold's vigorous initiatives during the Suez crisis, the UNEF and the ONUC ventures, by responding to the requests for men and material (without submitting any bill initially), and by defending him against the American interference with the personnel in the Secretariat and against the mounting Soviet criticism during the Congo crisis, Indian diplomats were able to establish a kind of tête-à-tête relationship with the Secretary-General. Needless to add that in this way India could also exert some influence in the Secretariat.

While enhancing her diplomatic profile and trying to evolve compromise solutions, India could safeguard her own national interests against any unwelcome move at the United Nations over Kashmir or Goa. Though India did not get enough support for her position over Kashmir,

she did not lose any ground either. Despite simple logic of Pakistan's case, based on absolute Muslim majority in Kashmir, Pakistan has so far not taken the case to the General Assembly, obviously because she is not confident of mustering a two-thirds majority against India. In the case of Goa, though, India's diplomatic investment at the United Nations, particularly as a champion of colonial people, did not pay off and eventually India had to use force; India could still draw some satisfaction inasmuch as she escaped a formal condemnation at the United Nations.

In the opinion of a reputed American scholar:

"...in a basic sense, India won the case. Although it obtained no formal endorsement of its position, it carried through its conquest of Goa without incurring formal condemnation, and its Western critics, conceded that they could not expect to win, in that organ, a political verdict unfavorable to India."⁶²

Perhaps no nation, big or small, weak or powerful, can always have its way or draw full satisfaction from its participation at the United Nations. Yet, practically every nation, like actors in a drama, is involved in a constant reciprocal interaction in using the United Nations for its best exposure. Each nation is competing in a continuous struggle for greater influence and recognition, indeed for greater support and power. Given a general lack of diplomatic experience and the newness in terms of western rules of the game, India's participation at the United Nations has been a mixed success. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (the then President of India), in a radio broadcast on October 23, 1966, said that "the United Nations has become a part of our international political life.

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Inis L. Claude, Jr., The Changing United Nations (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 97.

It is not a panacea for all our ailments, but a safety valve which softens the asperities of international anarchy which is still the lot of mankind." ⁶³ The above statement reflects, to an extent, India's continued faith in the world organization, despite her dissatisfaction over certain issues.

CHAPTER IIIINDIA, PALESTINE & EMERGENCE OF ISRAEL

Long before our story begins, the winds of nationalism had been blowing across the oceans right into the backyard of western colonial empires in Asia and Africa. The emergent national movements, drawing their inspiration from the past greatness and glories, even to the extent of "distorted patriotic idealization of the past,"¹ projected an ideal, indeed a utopian future. The elite leadership of these movements, for understandable and valid reasons, blamed the foreign rulers for the predicament of their people. It was their belief that once they achieved the right of self-determination and became masters of their own destiny, a new era of common sense of belonging, peace, happiness and prosperity would be ushered in. In retrospect it appears that these petit bourgeoisie nationalists were as much concerned with securing from the foreign rulers their own privileged rights to govern their people, as with any challenge to their privileged position from their own people. These similarities should not obscure distinct developments under peculiar sociocultural and historical circumstances. They are, nevertheless, significant for gaining some understanding of the dynamics of national movements.

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Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 200.

INTERACTION OF NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

For our purpose, three independent yet interrelated movements viz., India's independence movement, the Pan-Arab movement and the Jewish aspiration for a national home in Palestine, are of particular importance. A close analysis of historical material reveals an interesting simultaneity in the emergence of these movements at the turn of this century, and in the momentum they developed during and between the two world wars. Each of these movements, for national identity and self-determination, simultaneously developed the propensities of cooperation and conflict, involving common ideals to be achieved as well as conflicting perceptions of majority claims and minority rights. Each of these movements achieved its objectives only partially, at the cost of untold human misery, leaving behind the legacies of persistently recurring and haunting conflicts. At least some clue to the contemporary pattern of interaction of policies and practices of the actors involved in this drama, can be traced back from the initial perceptions, which the vanguard leadership of these movements developed toward one another and among themselves.

INDIA'S AWAKENING

After many centuries of foreign domination, India's awakening, or rather reawakening, took some rudimentary shape by the end of the last century. Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, at the initiative of an Englishman, Allan Octavian Hume, a retired civil servant, in cooperation with a few notable Indians. It was this embryo, initially

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For details see William Theodore de Bary (editor), Sources of Indian Traditions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), II, pp. 122-23.

designed to provide a "safety valve" for the British-Indian "transmission belts," which grew into a mass national movement culminating in the downfall of the British Indian Empire. In this context Louis Fischer observed:

"When the demand for broader participation in local government and for redress of grievances grew more insistent, Lord Dufferin, Viceroy from 1884-1888, intending to direct upper-class discontent into an artificial canal, sired the Indian National Congress; subsequent Viceroys blessed it. Even if they had foreseen that a callow Indian law student in London in 1880's would make Congress an instrument of the downfall of British rule, they could not have helped themselves."³

This "callow Indian law student," was Mahatma Gandhi, who had subsequently turned this essentially urban-elite movement of 1880's into a mass movement.

THE JEWISH NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Roughly at that time, the Jewish national movement known as Zionism was in the process of getting organized under the leadership of Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). The Zionist movement has been defined as "the story of a people so long exiled from its ancestral home, scattered and dismembered, and buffeted by unrelenting storms, yet zealously guarding its personality and its claim to nationhood..."⁴ Theodor Herzl a Viennese journalist, and the convener of the First Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897,

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Louis Fischer, The Life of Mahatma Gandhi (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), p. 169.

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Emanuel Neumann, in his foreward to the Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel, edited by Raphael Patai (New York: McGraw Hill, 1971), further defines the "Zionist Revolution," as the "linear progenitor of the Jewish State," and maintains that "both phenomena, Zionism and Israel, are but two aspects of the same process inextricably woven together." p. ix.

is considered as the spiritual father of "Der Judenstaat" or the Jewish State.⁵ According to John Davis, a keen student of Jewish affairs, Herzl was brought up in an affluent Viennese home, was not even a practising Jew, and took little active part in the Jewish affairs. However, his coverage of the Dreyfus trial in Paris in 1894, on behalf of the Neue Freie Presse, a Viennese newspaper, made a profound impression on him. The "treatment of Dreyfus at the trial and the attitude of the military, the courts and public," convinced Herzl that "anti-Jewish feelings," and "hostility towards Jews was an innate characteristic of Gentiles..."⁶ The same scholar further observed that "while the roots of Zionism run back through many centuries, the modern movement took vital form and life at the First Zionist Congress."⁷ at Basle in 1897. By 1917, Dr. Chaim Weizmann,⁸ had successfully prodded the British cabinet ranks for

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Fred J. Khouri, The Arab-Israel Dilemma (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1968), maintains that "the concept of a Jewish nationalism was first expounded by Leon Pinsker, A Russian Jew in 1882," p. 3.

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John H. Davis, The Evasive Peace (London: John Murray, 1968), p. 2.

7

Ibid., p. 1.

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Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel, was born in Russia in 1874. He received his early education at Pinsk and higher education at Darmstadt, Berlin, and at the University of Freiburg, where he received a doctorate in 1899. He taught at the University of Geneva and the University of Manchester. It was in Great Britain through his contacts that Weizmann was to render his historic service to the Jewish people. See Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel, op. cit., p. 1207.

a positive support. His efforts and influence with Arthur James Balfour (Foreign Secretary in Lloyd George's Cabinet), were responded in the form of Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917. It was declared that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the Jewish people..." Apparently, in an effort to assuage the rising Arab nationalism, the declaration added that "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." Parenthetically, it may be pointed out that the draft proposed by Dr. Chaim Weizmann containing the phrase: "recognition of Palestine as the country of the Jewish people," was changed to "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." The declaration, obviously vague and contradictory, was pregnant with explosive potentialities which unfolded themselves in the decades to follow. Under the blistering fires of the First World War, and imperative need for securing the cooperation and confidence of the Jewish as well as the Arab people, the British promised the same throne to the two contenders -- although the possibility of a "bi-national" Palestine could not be ruled out. It was an example par excellence of British diplomacy in operation. One would tend to agree with the view that while drafting the historic declaration, "the British were thinking less of the Jewish National Home and of the future relations between the Arabs and the Jews than they were of their

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For full text see The Middle East Conflict - Notes & Documents (1915-1967), (Brussels: International Association of Democratic Lawyers, undated), pp. 19-20.

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See Rustum Bastuni, "Palestine Alternative," The New York Times, February 11, 1972, p. 37.

own imperial position."¹¹ In fact, the British were playing a similar game in India, assuring the Hindu majority that its claims would be granted; while promising the Muslim and the Sikh minorities that their rights would be respected. In a way, the British were neither deceiving the people in their colonial empire nor betraying their own conscience. The British ruling elite, in terms of their self-indoctrination with the ideology of imperialism, could not possibly conceive that the subject people in these colonies would ever be worthy of self-determination. Nor could they possibly believe that the "whiteman's burden," could ever be lifted. They obviously believed that the hour for fulfilling the conflicting promises and granting divergent claims would never arrive. That different communities pitched against each other would always need the British masters for keeping peace between and among them.

THE ARAB NATIONAL MOVEMENT

More or less at the same time, the Pan-Arab national movement was sweeping all over the Middle East, though not yet well-organized nor well-defined. Despite their varying historical experiences and divergent economic interests, the bonds of a common language and Islamic traditions provided the Arabs with some semblance of horizontal unity of purpose against foreign domination. The Arabs, and particularly the politicized elite, assembling in coffee houses and meeting in social and cultural clubs, and academic institutions, took great pride in and drew inspiration from the ideal of Arab brotherhood. The Arabs'

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Earl Berger, The Covenant and the Sword (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 12-13.

pride of having been an imperial race was "based on traditions from a great Arab past of a millennium or so ago, when Arab order and unity prevailed from the Atlantic shores to the Persian Gulf and Arab power dominated the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean and extended to Bengal."¹² Besides, the rise of Japan in Asia, the Young Turks and Persian movements of 1908 and 1909, nationalist upsurge in China in 1911, followed by the cracking wall of European unity in 1914, the Irish Rebellion of 1916, the Russian Revolution of 1917, America's entry into the first world war, and last but not the least, President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, particularly concerning the freedom of nations and national self-determination, gave a new momentum to the national aspirations in the Middle East, India and other parts of Asia. The nationalist movement in Egypt received new momentum under the leadership of Saad Zaghlul. This "highly intense phase of Egyptian nationalism under Zaghlul coincided with the Gandhian phase of the Indian national movement, a fact which made a deep impression on Mr. Nehru, who was always anxious to relate the Indian struggle for freedom to a wider anti-colonial movement."¹³

WIDER ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENT

Indian leadership had anticipated a wider colonial struggle against imperialism. Dr. M.A. Ansari, in his presidential address to the Forty-second Session of the Indian National Congress (1927), declared:

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Charles B. Marshall, "Reflections on the Middle East," ORBIS, Vol. XI (Summer, 1967), p. 344.

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Girilal Jain, op. cit., p. 433.

"The history of this philanthropic burglary on the part of Europe is written in blood and suffering from Congo to Canton. Once India is free the whole edifice of Imperialism will collapse as this is the keystone of the arch Imperialism. The best guarantee for the freedom of Asia and the peace of the world, is a free and self-governing India."¹⁴

Subhash Chandra Bose, speaking in the Fifty-first Session of the Congress (1938), reiterated the same theme:

"Ours is a struggle not only against British Imperialism but against World Imperialism as well, of which the former is the keystone. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well."¹⁵

Jawaharlal Nehru in his autobiography traced an organic connection between world events, and emphasized that "the Arab struggle against British imperialism in Palestine is as much part of this great world conflict as India's struggle for freedom."¹⁶ In one of his letters from the prison (May 20, 1933), to his daughter (now Prime Minister of India), Nehru mentioned the importance of Egypt in the Arab world. He wrote that Egypt "has been the highway between East and West, the great trade route for steamships ever since the building of the Suez Canal." He further noted that "the daily newspapers of Cario go to all Arab countries and have great influence there. Among all these countries the nationalist movement first took shape in Egypt, and it was thus natural for the Egyptian nationalism to become a model for the other Arab

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Cited in Jawaharlal Nehru, Independence and After (New Delhi: Government of India, Publication Division, 1949), p. 231.

15

Ibid., p. 1158.

16

Jawaharlal Nehru, Toward Freedom: The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru (Boston: Beacon Press: 1967), p. 420.

countries." ¹⁷ Nehru's rambling account of history contains complimentary references to Saad Zaghlul, as "unquestioned leader, beloved of the peasantry from which he had sprung, and idolized by the middle classes to which he belonged." ¹⁸

However, behind the apparent common ideals, unity of purpose, mutual sympathy and cooperation, these movements, by the very dynamics of the momentum, gave rise to mutual hostile perceptions and conflict. In view of the limited scope of this study, our frame of reference will be confined to the dynamics of national movements in India and the Middle East, particularly Palestine, and their bearing on the trans-societal dimensions of these movements.

GANDHIAN PHASE OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND MUSLIM SEPARATISM

Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa early in 1915, marked a new phase in India's national movement. In a different context, what Theodor Herzl had witnessed during the Dreyfus trial in France, Gandhi experienced on a mass scale in South Africa, in the form of racial discrimination against the Africans and the people of Indian origin. Gandhi, who had studied law in England and practiced in South Africa, "seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing their attention to them and to their appalling condition." ¹⁹

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Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History, Vol. II (Letters to his daughter, written in prison and containing a rambling account of history for young people), (Allahabad (India): Kitabistan, 1938), pp. 1156-57.

18

Ibid., p. 1158.

19

Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1960), p. 274.

Along with the Gandhian inspired momentum, the movement had developed an inner conflict. The British promise in August 1917 (Edwin Montague's Declaration in the British Parliament), of "the gradual development of self-governing institutions," increased the apprehensions of the Muslim minority in India. Their "fear of Hindu domination grew steadily as the moment for self-determination progressed."²⁰ Wayne A. Wilcox, a scholar on Indian affairs pointed out that:

"It was Gandhi who turned Indian nationalism from an urban Hindu and Muslim elite movement...into a mass movement that reached into smaller towns and captured the popular imagination. But it was also Gandhi who unwittingly magnified the differences between Indian Hindus and Indian Muslims with his emphasis on mass participation, majority rule and Indian (Hindu) tradition. Muslims became apprehensive that majority rule and Hindu revivalism would undermine their faith and dim their political future."²¹

The opinions might differ on whether Gandhi magnified these differences or not. But long before Gandhi became a participant in the political drama, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), a well-known Muslim educationist had vaguely conceived the idea of a separate, if not sovereign, Muslim identity in India. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1939), a great Muslim poet and intellectual, was the first to conceive of a Muslim homeland in India. In fact, the contemporary phenomenon of Muslim aspiration for a separate homeland in India can also be traced back from the time of the fall of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century, and from the Muslim pride in having been a ruling race in India.

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Percival Spear, India: A Modern History (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 409.

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Wayne A. Wilcox, India and Pakistan (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1967), p. 5.

Thus, the Muslim League was established in 1906, partly as a Muslim countervailing force to the Hindu revivalism and partly as a British inspired move to fend off Indian nationalism. Despite the new organization, a large number of Muslims continued participating in the Indian National Congress -- from its primary ranks to its top leadership hierarchy. The Muslim League, encouraged by the British, demanded and achieved separate Muslim constituent-representation in 1909, 1919 and 1935. The Muslim League often worked in cooperation with the Congress, particularly during 1916-24, when Muslim feelings were aroused against the British on account of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire and the abolition of the temporal power of the Caliph, the Sultan of Turkey. Though not directly affecting the Indian Muslims, the dissolution of the Turkish Empire "had become a focus for Muslim discontent," who regarded it as the British "betrayal of Islam." This issue of the Caliphate which "Gandhi chose for a breach with the Government," did not directly involve "India's real interests." Gandhi, "selected it partly from a commendable desire to promote Hindu-Muslim unity, but partly from shrewd foresight that it was an issue on which mass Muslim feeling could be aroused." In fact, it was also in token of Gandhi's assurances to the Muslim community that the Congress will not betray their cause. Anyway, this gesture of goodwill and cooperation could not forge a long-term unity. Nehru's perception that "some kind of a dream of unity has

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P. Moon, Gandhi and Modern India (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1969), p. 110.

23

Ibid.

occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization." ²⁴ was more a quest than a reality.

As the movement for India's independence gathered greater momentum, the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims became more vocal and better organized, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948). The Muslim League's one-item manifesto, wrapped in political-theology of Muslim self-determination, was gaining increasing support from Muslim masses. The nationalist Muslims like Maulana Azad, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the Khan brothers and others, though very much respected, **were** politically isolated by the ideology of separatism, preached by Jinnah and revered by the Muslim masses. Thus Jinnah, a contemporary of Gandhi, riding on the wave of mass Muslim support and using the technique of "direct action" which very often resulted in mass violence, pressurized the Indian nationalists, and humbled them to capitulation. He accomplished the dream of establishing a Muslim homeland, much to his own surprise.

The long cherished independence came to the subcontinent with a mixed blessing. The joys of freedom were tempered by the scars of partition, communal riots, and bloodshed -- though we continue calling it a "bloodless revolution." The dream of "Akhand Bharat" (United India), was shattered and the nationalist elements among almost all the communities in India got a rude shock. Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the 'Lion of Kashmir,' who was in jail at the time of the partition lamented: "to me personally, the cutting up of the India of our dreams and the India of many

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Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, op. cit., p. 31.

associations, sweet or sorrowful, was a grievous shock." ²⁵ The caravans of refugees from across the yet imaginary and undemarcated frontiers continued pouring in on both sides, seriously disturbing the ethnic, cultural, and economic life of the communities.

ELITE LEADERSHIP'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

It was this inner conflict, and its shrewd perception by Gandhi and Nehru many years in advance, which seem to have marked the lines of India's attitude toward the Palestine problem. The demand for a Muslim homeland in India, was naturally, in sharp conflict with the Indian National Congress' demand for an independent and undivided India. This conflict between the majority's dream -- for the unity and independence of India -- and the minority's aspiration -- for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims -- had some similarity in Palestine, where the Jewish and Arab nationalisms met at hostile crossroads. As early as 1928, Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru, sent its "warmest greetings to the peoples of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq and its assurances of full sympathy with them in their struggle for emancipation from the grip of Western Imperialism." ²⁶

Again in July 1936, the Working Committee of the Congress sent "its greetings to the Arabs of Palestine in their struggle for independence against British Imperialism." ²⁷ In October 1937, the All India Congress Committee opposed a British Royal Commission's recommendation for the partition of Palestine, and passed the following resolution:

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Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, To America (Bombay: Associated Printers, February 1948 -- a booklet), p. 3.

26

N.V. Rajkumar (editor), The Background of India's Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Indian National Congress, 1952), p. 48.

27

As cited in India and Palestine, op. cit., p. 14.

"The Committee record their emphatic protest against the reign of terror that has been established in Palestine by British imperialism with a view to coerce the Arabs into accepting the proposed partition of Palestine and assure them of the solidarity of the Indian people with them in their struggle for national freedom."²⁸

The following year (February 1938), the Congress condemned Great Britain for its attempt "to bring about the partition of Palestine in the teeth of the opposition of the Arabs." The resolution conveyed the following message:

"The Congress records its emphatic protest against the continuation of the reign of terror which is still being maintained in Palestine to force this policy upon the unwilling Arabs. The Congress expresses its full sympathy with the Arabs in their struggle for national freedom and their fight against British imperialism.

"The Congress hold that the proper method of solving the problem is by amicable settlement between themselves (Arabs and Jews) and appeals to the Jews not to seek the shelter of the British Mandatory and to allow themselves to be exploited in the interest of British imperialism."²⁹

The Indian National Congress' support for the Arab nationalism and the Arab cause in Palestine, was not only in deference to the Muslim minority in India -- which has been, right now is, and is likely to remain, a strong pressure group in Indian politics -- but also, and which was of much greater importance, for the maintenance of the unity and territorial integrity of India itself. As a matter of fact, it was indirectly meant to be a political counter-offensive against the Muslim League's demand for the partition of India, and a rebuff to the British against any such "evil design."

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Ibid.

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Ibid., pp. 14-15.

By a complex web of historical and geopolitical circumstances, the Congress' resolutions on Palestine were simultaneously addressed to the two equally potential audiences -- the Muslim minority at home and the Jewish minority in Palestine. These resolutions clearly reflected the initial perceptions and attitude of the Congress leadership under Gandhi and Nehru, toward the problem of Palestine. At that stage of political development, the common people in India were neither very much aware of this problem, nor were they so much concerned with the things beyond the landscape of the Indian subcontinent. Nehru, in his Autobiography, mentioned that, "...inevitably, foreign affairs did not touch the life of the average person, who was absorbed in his own troubles. The peasant was full of his growing difficulties, his appalling poverty, and of the many burdens that crushed him." ³⁰ Tracing an "organic connection between world events," and the "interaction between one and the other," he emphasized that "The Arab struggle against British imperialism in Palestine is as much part of this great world conflict as India's struggle for freedom." ³¹ Thus, the Congress leadership under Gandhi and Nehru, clearly identified the Indian national movement with Arab nationalism. By the same token, they seemed to suspect the Jewish demand for a separate home in Palestine and similar demand by the Muslim minority in India; and identified them with the British imperialism. They perceived the partition plans as a British-inspired conspiracy to perpetuate the British control in these areas by the same old game of "divide and rule." Thus

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Jawaharlal Nehru, Toward Freedom: The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 359.

31

Ibid., p. 420

they saw a symbolic connection between the unity and independence of India and Palestine. Ironically, it was the Muslim minority, in fact the elite leadership of the Muslim League, which was considered an adversary to India's unity, and it was the Muslim majority in Palestine in whom India's unity found a friend.

In March 1939, the Congress, recalling its earlier resolutions on Palestine, adopted another resolution, in the following terms:

"The courage, determination and sacrifices made by the Arabs in the struggle have evoked the admiration of the people of India who desire to convey to them again their feelings and good wishes for the complete success in the attainment of their objective..."

"The Congress trusts that the Arabs and Jews will endeavor to find a basis for direct cooperation with a view to establishing an independent democratic state in Palestine with an adequate protection of Jewish rights."³²

The reference to "establishing an independent democratic state in Palestine with an adequate protection of Jewish rights," was indirectly an appeal for unity as well as an assurance to the Muslim minority at home for similar safeguards and protection.

Mahatma Gandhi's pronouncements on the Palestine problem, in early 1939, reflect more emphatically the same theme. The content and style of his pronouncements and Congress' resolutions seem to have laid down the foundations of India's policy in the area for decades to follow. They were clearly meant to be the warnings against the ideology of separatism and partition:

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As cited in India and Palestine, op. cit., p. 15.

"My sympathies are all with the Jews. I have known them intimately in South Africa. Some of them became life-long companions. Through these friends, I came to learn much of their age-long persecution. They have been the untouchables of Christianity. The parallel between their treatment by Christians and the treatment of untouchables by Hindus is very close. Religious sanction has been invoked in both cases for justification of the inhuman treatment meted out to them. Apart from the friendship, therefore, there is more common universal reason for my sympathy for the Jews.

"But my sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for a national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other people of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood?

"Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English, or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today, cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. Surely, it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to Jews, partly or wholly, as their national home.

"The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews, wherever they are born and bred. The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that the Christians born in France are French. If the Jews have no home but Palestine, will they relish the idea of being forced to leave the other parts of the world in which they are settled? Or do they want a double home where they can remain at will? This cry for the national home affords a colourable justification for the German expulsion of the Jews."³³

In response to Gandhi's pronouncements, Martin Buber, a great Jewish scholar, wrote an open letter to Gandhi in March 1939:

"The question of our Jewish destiny is indissolubly bound up with the possibility of ingathering, and that is bound up with Palestine...

"But you say that Palestine belongs to the Arabs and that it is therefore "wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs."...Two vital claims are opposed to each other, two claims of a different nature and a different origin...between which no objective decision can be made as to which is just, which is unjust. We...consider it our duty...to endeavour to reconcile both claims. We could not and cannot renounce the Jewish claim...

"By what means did the Arabs attain to the right of ownership in Palestine? Surely by conquest... The conquered land is, in my opinion, only lent even to the conqueror who has settled on it -- and God waits to see what he will make of it..."³⁴

Mahatma Gandhi reiterated his earlier views in July 1946:

"No wonder that my sympathy goes out to the Jews in their unenviably sad plight. But, one would have thought, adversity would teach them lessons of peace. Why should they depend on American money or British arms for forcing themselves on an unwelcome land? Why should they resort to terrorism to make good their forcible landing in Palestine?"³⁵

Jawaharlal Nehru, in his May 29, 1933 letter to his daughter, made the following comments with regard to the Palestine problem:

"Adjoining Syria is Palestine, for which the British Government holds a mandate from the League of Nations... The people inhabiting it are predominantly Muslim Arabs, and they demand freedom and unity with their fellow Arabs of Syria. But British policy has created a special minority problem here -- that of the Jews --

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See text in Kenneth Love, Suez: The Twice-Fought War (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1969), p. 26.

35

D.G. Tendulkar, op. cit., Vol. VII, 1953, p. 189.

and the Jews side with the British and oppose the freedom of Palestine as they fear that this would mean Arab rule. The two pull different ways and conflicts necessarily occur. On the Arab side are numbers, on the other side great financial resources and world-wide organization of Jewry. So England pits Jewish religious nationalism against Arab nationalism, and makes it appear that her presence is necessary to act as an arbitrator and to keep the peace between the two. It is the same old game which we have seen in other countries under imperialist domination; it is curious how often it is repeated."³⁶

The letter also includes references to the Jewish people, their history and aspirations, in the following terms:

"The Jews are a very remarkable people...They were humiliated, reviled, and massacred;...and yet these amazing people not only survived all this, but managed to keep their racial and cultural characteristics, and prospered and produced a host of great men. Today they hold leading positions as scientists, statesmen, literary men, financiers, businessmen, and even the greatest socialists have been Jews...These people without home or country, and especially the poor among them, had never ceased to dream of old Jerusalem, which appeared to their imaginations greater and more significant than it ever was in fact. Zion they called Jerusalem, a kind of promised land, and Zionism is this call of the past which pulls them to Jerusalem and Palestine."³⁷

Referring to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Nehru wrote in the aforementioned letter to his daughter:

"Perhaps this declaration was made to win the good will of international Jewry and this was important from the money point of view. It was welcomed by Jews. But there was one little drawback, one not unimportant fact seems to have been overlooked. Palestine was not a wilderness, or an empty uninhabited place. It was already somebody else's

36

Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 1195.

37

Ibid., p. 1196.

home. So that this generous gesture of the British Government was really at the expense of the people who already lived in Palestine..."

"The story of Palestine during the last dozen years has been one of conflict between Arabs and Jews... They (the Arabs) have declared that 'Zionism had been an accomplice of British imperialism; responsible Zionist leaders had constantly urged what an advantage a strong Jewish National Home would be to the English in guarding the road to India,... because it was a counteracting force to Arab national aspirations.' How India crops up in odd places."³⁸

While acknowledging that "the Jewish immigrants there have improved the country, introduced industries and raised standards of living," he added that "we must remember that Palestine is essentially an Arab country, and must remain so, and the Arabs must not be crushed and suppressed in their own homeland." Speaking at the Asian Relations Conference held at New Delhi (April, 1947), Nehru expressed deep sympathies with the sufferings of the Jewish people, but added:

"That the people of India, necessarily, and for reasons into which I shall not go, have always said that Palestine is essentially an Arab country and no decision can be made without the consent of the Arabs. We had hoped, and we still hope, that if the third party withdraws from Palestine it might be easier for the parties concerned to settle their own problems among themselves, however difficult that might be."³⁹

To cut the long story short, in the complex drama of competing nationalisms in India and Palestine, the common aspirations for political independence and national identity capitulated to the forces of conflict

38

Ibid., pp. 1197-98.

39

Asian Relations: Proceedings and Documents of the First Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March-April, 1947, (New Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1948), p. 70.

and violence. Colonialism took a bon voyage leaving these countries torn into pieces and bleeding. India got her long-cherished independence on August 15, 1947, cut into two pieces, rather three, while the 'Beauty of Kashmir' was still lying in slumber. The sons and daughters of India, the comrades of yesterday, who had fought against the British colonialism, split apart across the newly created hostile frontiers. Since then they confronted each other both near home as well as abroad.

The fate of Palestine was hanging on a similar precarious balance. On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution recommending partition of Palestine and establishment of a Jewish national home. This event was mentioned in the following words:

"In the small hours of Sunday, 30 November 1947, tumultuous rejoicing broke forth from every Jewish city, town, village, and hamlet in Palestine...one chapter of Jewish history was being brought to an end and another was opening."

"...Only those conscious of the Jews' timeless yearning for their national redemption could grasp the depths of the fervour with which they greeted that decision of the United Nations."⁴¹

The reaction among the Arabs of Palestine and in the neighboring Arab countries was bitter and hostile, instigating fresh violence. The following year, on May 14, 1948, the new State of Israel was proclaimed. Quincy Wright's juridical observations in this regard are noteworthy:

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This has a reference to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), situated about 1000 miles away from 'mainland' Pakistan.

41

Israel and the United Nations: A Report of a Study Group set up by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (New York: Manhattan Publishing Co., 1956), p. 17.

"The UN resolution of November 1947, partitioning Palestine and establishing the State of Israel as demanded by Zionists supported by hostilities of local guerillas, is difficult to reconcile... especially as the rights of the 'people' in the mandated territories was explicitly protected by the mandate and Article 80 of the Charter. This action, however, must be regarded as an act of international legislation which the General Assembly deemed necessary to meet the crisis situation which developed from the local hostilities and British resignation of its mandate. The resolution was eventually ratified by general recognition and admission of Israel to the United Nations."⁴²

In any case, a long cherished dream of the Jewish people was realized, under extremely hostile environments. As destiny would have it, the major victims of this political drama of self-determination were the native Arabs of Palestine. They lost their ancestral homes and became the shuttle cocks of the "Hobbesian jungle" in the Middle East. Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General of the United Nations, recorded his observations about the refugee problem in the following words:

"Of the 850,000 Arabs who had left Palestine since partition, 450,000 had sought haven in Jordan, 130,000 in Lebanon, 85,000 in Syria, and 130,000 in Egypt. In theory, there was every reason for their return; in practice, repatriation was impossible, and most of them would have to be settled where they were. But the Arab governments themselves hotly disputed this conclusion; at least they refused to move unless and until fantastic claims for compensation were met. Israel, on the other hand, felt unable to pay more than a fraction of what obviously would be a fair compensation, and still continued to freeze the bank accounts of absent Arabs."⁴³

42

"The Middle East Problem," Royalton Review, Vol. 4, (Summer, 1969), p. 25.

43

in the Cause of Peace (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1954), pp. 195-196.

Referring to the interaction of competing national movements in India and Palestine, a notable scholar on international affairs, has pertinently observed that while "the great chasm between Hinduism and Islam robbed the Indian national movement of much of its effectiveness,"⁴⁴ the two competing forces of nationalism in Palestine had "the element of a genuine tragedy, since each side's case, though containing points of merit, did not invalidate the case of the other."⁴⁵

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John G. Stoessinger, The Might of Nations (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 85.

⁴⁵

Ibid., p. 94.

CHAPTER IV

PALESTINE QUESTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

India was not yet independent when the Palestine question came before the United Nations in April, 1947. However, an interim national government was installed in New Delhi, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. The Indian delegation, headed by Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, was still new to the art of diplomacy, in terms of western rules of the game. Yet, instead of taking a back seat, the Indian delegation took an active part in the deliberations over the crucial question of Palestine. India's own bitter experience under colonial rule, and consequently her desire to play a positive role in similar situations, seem to have influenced India's active participation in the Palestine question. The Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru, had already outlined India's attitude towards the Palestine dispute. With the oncoming responsibilities as a free nation, India's leadership foresaw their vital interest in the Middle East. Apart from the intra-societal political considerations, with regard to a potential constituency of a Muslim minority; such trans-societal factors as the supply of oil from the Middle East, Egyptian cotton for the Indian textile industry, and peace in the Suez Canal area -- India's life-line with the West -- also seem to have influenced articulation of India's foreign policy objectives in the Middle East. According to an eminent scholar on the subject, "The Near East is far more important to India than India is to the Near East."¹

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Werner Levi, Free India in Asia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952), p. 60.

Early in 1947, the British Government announced that they were "not prepared to continue indefinitely to govern Palestine themselves merely because Arabs and Jews cannot agree upon the means of sharing its government between them." Confronted with increasing terrorist activities and violence, the British Government referred the case to the United Nations. On April 2, the British Delegate, Sir Alexander Godogan, requested the acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Victor Chi Tsai Hoo, that the question of Palestine be placed on the agenda of the next regular session of the General Assembly. He also requested for early convocation of a special session of the Assembly, "for the purpose of constituting and instructing a special committee," to make a preliminary study of the Palestine question.² Accordingly, the first special session of the Assembly was convened at Flushing Meadows, from April 28 to May 15, 1947. When the special session resumed its work, five Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria), requested for the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda: "the termination of the mandate over Palestine, and the declaration of its independence."³ Indian representative M. Asaf Ali (a nationalist Muslim), supported the Arabs, by

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Louis B. Sohn, The United Nations in Action (Brooklyn: The Foundation Press, 1968), p. 3.

3

The British forces had occupied Palestine in 1917. On April 25, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers had assigned the Mandate for Palestine to the British on the understanding that Balfour Declaration would be put into effect. The draft mandate was confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations on July 24, 1922, and became formally effective on September 29, 1923. For full text see the Report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (Document No. A/364, September 3, 1947), Vol. II, Annex 20, pp. 18-22.

pointing out that "the question of the independence of Palestine was implicit in the termination of the mandate and future government of Palestine." While supporting the Arabs, Asaf Ali took caution not to offend the Jewish community. He complimented the Jewish people for their struggle for survival and for their intellectual and humanitarian pursuits. While expressing sympathy for their sufferings through the centuries, Asaf Ali used the opportunity to point out that "in my country, the Jews have never suffered throughout their history...and have always been treated with the best of regards."⁴ Coming to the substantive issue, Asaf Ali raised the question of main actors in the Palestine drama, who were missing. He said that:

"While I congratulate the advocates of the Arab states on the ability with which they have put their case, I am bound to state that we have been playing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Where is Palestine here? Where are the people whose actual rights we must consider? Where are the great representatives of the Jewish people who are also interested in this problem."⁵

After a prolonged debate, the General Committee of the Assembly decided against the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda, which was proposed by the Arab states and supported by India. However, it was decided to invite the representatives of both the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee. The Arab Higher Committee refused to participate, stating in a telegram to the United Nations Secretary-General that the "Arab

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G.A.O.R., First Special Session, Vol. II, p. 42. There are about 25,000 Jews in India, a prosperous business committee, mostly in Bombay (about 17,000). See Simon Federbush, World Jewry Today (London: W.H. Allen, 1959), p. 335.

5

Ibid., p. 38.

Higher Committee is determined persist in rejecting partition and in refusal recognize UNO resolution this respect and anything deriving therefrom, for these reasons it is unable accept invitation."⁶

THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE (UNSCOP)

When the First Committee of the Assembly started considering the terms of reference of the proposed special committee, the Indian delegate supported the Arabs for an explicit reference to the "independence of Palestine." While the term "independence" was not explicitly mentioned in the resolution, the President assured the Assembly that the independence of Palestine would naturally be borne in mind by the members of the Special Committee. The resolution asked the Special Committee to "ascertain and record facts and to investigate all questions and views relevant to the problem of Palestine." The Indian delegate, in his intervention, objected to the inclusion of the "Big Five" on the Special Committee on the ground that almost all of them were directly or indirectly interested in the question. After some debate this objection was accepted. Finally, an 11-member Special Committee was constituted, which included Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. This Committee designated as the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), visited Jerusalem, Haifa, Hebron, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Negev, Gaza, Galilee and other areas (from June 18 to July 3), for obtaining representative views.

6

As cited in Trygve Lie, In the Cause of Peace (New York: Macmillan Co., 1954), p. 164.

UNSCOP: MAJORITY AND MINORITY REPORTS

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The UNSCOP submitted a report in August 1947, which contained a majority report and a minority report. The seven-member majority plan (supported by Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, and Uruguay), recommended partition of Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State, bound together by an "Economic Union." The minority plan (by India, Iran and Yugoslavia), recommended a federal state of Palestine, comprising an Arab State and a Jewish State with considerable local autonomy. Australia did not support either of the two plans and abstained.

A detailed examination of the verbatim records of UNSCOP's public hearings reveals early indications of Indian views or even predispositions. Sir Abdur Rahman, Indian representative at UNSCOP, in a kind of cross-examination of David Ben-Gurion and Dr. Weizmann, (at Jerusalem on July 7, 1947), tried to corner them by drawing a clear distinction between "National Home" and "National State." He reminded Dr. Weizmann of the latter's statement on March 1, 1918, that "We do not aspire to found a Zionist State. What we want is a country in which all nations and all creeds shall have equal rights and equal toleration." Dr. Weizmann responded that "in those twenty-five years a great deal has changed... we did not want to speak of a State then," but maintained that "the characteristic of the thing, whether it is a National Home or whether it is a State, remains the same." Sir Rahman in his repeated cross-questions on this theme, was trying to drive David Ben-Gurion and Dr.

7

G.A.O.R. (UN Doc. A/364, September 3, 1947), Second Session, Supplement No. 11, Vol. I.

8

Ibid., Vol. III, Annex A (Oral evidence presented at public meetings), p. 85.

Weizmann to this fine distinction, and indicating India's subsequent recommendation for a "binational" federal state. Sir Rahman, while questioning the Jewish statesmen and British authorities, again and again tried to draw their attention to the rights of Palestinians, to the pertinent provisions in the Covenant, Mandate, and the Charter.⁹

A brief account of the majority and minority recommendations should be useful for a proper understanding of opposing views. The majority recommendation for partition and economic union, emphasized, inter alia, the following salient points:

"The basic premise underlying the partition proposal is that the claims to Palestine of the Arabs and Jews, both possessing validity, are irreconcilable, and that among all of the solutions advanced, partition will provide the most realistic and practicable settlement...

"It is a fact that both of these peoples have their historic roots in Palestine, and that both make vital contributions to the economic and cultural life of the country. The partition solution takes these considerations fully into account.

"The basic conflict in Palestine is a clash of two intense nationalisms. Regardless of the origins of the conflict, the rights and wrongs of the promises and counter-promises, and the international intervention incident to the Mandate there are now in Palestine some 650,000 Jews and

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some 1,200,000 Arabs who are dissimilar in their ways of living and for the time being, separated by political interests which render difficult full and effective political cooperation among them...

"Only by means of partition can these conflicting national aspirations find substantial expression and qualify both peoples to take their places as independent nations in the international community and in the UN.

"Partition is based on a realistic appraisal of the actual Arab-Jewish relations in Palestine.

"Jewish immigration is the central issue in Palestine today and is the one factor above all others, that rules out the necessary cooperation between the Arab and Jewish communities in a single state. The creation of a Jewish State under a partition scheme is the only hope of removing this issue from the arena of conflict.

"In view of the limited area and resources of Palestine, it is essential that to the extent feasible, and consistent with the creation of the two independent States, the economic unity of the country should be preserved."¹¹

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The Jewish immigration, though uneven, increased rapidly "between 1933 and 1936 as a result of the Nazi persecution in Europe. Between the census year of 1931 and the year of 1936, the population of Jews to the total population rose from 18 per cent to nearly 30 per cent." The population of Palestine (area 10,000 sq. miles):

<u>Year</u>	<u>Moslems</u>	<u>Jews</u>	<u>Christians</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
1922	486,177	83,790	71,464	7,617	649,048
1931	693,147	174,606	88,907	10,101	966,761
1941	906,551	474,102	125,413	12,881	1,518,947
1946	1,076,783	608,225	145,063	15,488	1,845,559

Ibid., Vol. I. pp. 11-12.

11

UN Doc. A/364, 3 September 1947, Vol. I, p. 47.

The minority recommendations for a federal plan envisaged a single nationality and citizenship for all Palestinians -- the Arabs as well as the Jews. It proposed an elected constituent assembly, for the purpose of drafting a constitution, defining the powers of the federal government and the governments of the Arab and the Jewish states respectively. It suggested a bicameral legislative body, at the federal level -- one chamber based on proportional representation of the whole population, and the other based on equal representation of the Arab and Jewish citizens of Palestine. The "federalists" representing the minority of UNSCOP, including India, justified the proposed federal scheme in the following terms:

"It is recognized that Palestine is the common country of both indigenous Arabs and Jews...

"The basic assumption underlying the views herein expressed is that the proposal of other members of the Committee for a union under artificial arrangements designed to achieve essential economic and social unity after first creating political and geographical disunity by partition, is impracticable, unworkable, and could not possibly provide for two reasonably viable states.

"It would be a tragic mistake on the part of the international community to bend every effort in this direction. Support for the preservation of the unity of Palestine by the UN would in itself be an important factor in encouraging cooperation and collaboration between the two peoples, and would contribute significantly to the creation of that atmosphere in which the will to cooperate can be cultivated. In this regard, it is realized that the moral and political prestige of the UN is deeply involved.

"The objective of a federal-state solution would be to give the most feasible recognition to the nationalistic aspirations of both Arabs and Jews, and to merge them into a single loyalty and patriotism which would find expression in an independent Palestine.

"The federal-state is also in every respect the most democratic solution, both as regards the measures required for its implementation and in its operation, since it requires no undemocratic economic controls, avoids the creation of national minority groups, and affords an opportunity for full and effective participation in representative government to every citizen of the State. This solution would be most in harmony with the basic principles of the Charter of the UN."¹²

In a special note, Sir Abdur Rahman of India, gave a detailed analysis of historical documents involved in the Palestine dispute and outlined various factors influencing his recommendations. He drew special attention to President Woodrow Wilson's July 4, 1918 address in which he had mentioned inter alia "the settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangements or of political relations upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned..." He also referred to "the right of self-determination of peoples," as envisaged by President Wilson (and on which the first four paragraphs of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations were based), to Article I of the Charter propounding "respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples..." and reiterated that "independence should be granted to Palestine forthwith..." At the end of his note, he questioned the desirability of the Balfour Declaration, and the validity of the Mandate, which he thought "was in conflict with, and inconsistent with, the Covenant of the League of Nations." Finally, he warned that the partition plan was pregnant with serious consequences for peace in the area.

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Ibid., p. 59.

13

Ibid., Vol. II, p. 38.

In retrospect Sir Abdur Rahman's warning that "the partition plan was pregnant with serious consequences for peace in the area," proved prophetic. However, in the background of bitter hostilities between the Jewish and the Arab communities in Palestine, the justification for a federal state was as much a utopia as the recommendation for preserving the economic unity of Palestine after partitioning the country, as envisaged in the majority report. The hope entertained in the minority report and shared by Sir Rahman of India that a federal scheme would provide the "most feasible recognition to the nationalistic aspirations of both Arabs and Jews," and "merge them into a single loyalty and patriotism...",¹⁴ was more in the nature of a wishful thought than a feasible proposition -- in view of the violence and terror in Palestine. At any rate, it reflected India's unfulfilled quest for unity. Indeed, the federal scheme for Palestine represented India's consistent reaction against any partition plan.¹⁴ Behind this reaction was India's own bitter experience, "when British India was partitioned amid torrents of blood,"¹⁵ causing untold human tragedy and serious economic dislocation. It appears that while supporting the Arab cause in the United Nations, India was, on the one hand, pleading against the repetition of the same prescription of partition in Palestine; and on the other hand, was assuring the Muslim minority (and particularly nationalist Muslim elites who had decided to invest their future in India), that even a divided India would not betray their cause at home or abroad.

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Lately, though ironically, India seems willing to accept partition of Kashmir, on the basis of existing cease-fire line.

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C.L. Sulzberger, "A Job To Be Done," The New York Times February 23, 1972), p. 41.

Simultaneously, India was trying to outflank Pakistani propaganda in Muslim countries that India was the enemy of Islam. Unfortunately, in the mundane realities of politics, the pressure of violence and a near anarchic situation to which the Indian leadership had already succumbed in accepting the partition, was not less acute in Palestine. Despite a last minute desperate attempt to provide for adequate constitutional safeguards for the minorities, the federal scheme could not survive in India. Perhaps, despite as well as because of this failure the constitutional framework of federalism -- as a horizontal unifying balance over and between vertical ethnic and communal divisions -- became as sacrosanct with Indian leadership as "separation of church and state," was with the founding fathers of the American Republic.

When the UNSCOP report was being considered by a specially constituted Ad Hoc Committee of the whole Assembly (second regular session - Fall 1947), India once again pleaded for the maintenance of the unity of Palestine. Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the leader of the Indian delegation, emphasized that Palestine should be recognized as an independent country, "with wide autonomy for Jews in areas where they were in a majority." She warned that "any other solution would lead to conflict... The peace of the Middle East was at stake, and a false or ill-considered step might produce untold consequences..."¹⁶ The UNSCOP report was further considered by three subcommittees. The Ad Hoc Committee finally submitted its report to the General Assembly on November 26, 1947, recommending the partition plan with economic union. After some modifications -- mainly concerning the boundaries, transitional arrangements,

and implementation procedures -- the majority plan for partition with economic union was adopted by the General Assembly on November 29, 1947. ¹⁷

There were 33 votes in favor (including the United States, the Soviet Union and France but excluding Great Britain), 10 abstentions (including Great Britain, Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, and most of the Latin American countries), and 13 against. India (having already voted against the partition plan in the Ad Hoc Committee), joined the Arab states, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Cuba and Greece in voting against the resolution in the General Assembly.

The General Assembly resolution provided, inter alia, for the termination of mandate, and partition of Palestine "into two independent states, one Arab, the other Jewish," and envisaged that "the City of Jerusalem shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime." ¹⁸ It also outlined, in some detail, the arrangements preparatory to independence, boundaries, religious and minority rights, a Joint Economic Board, etc., and called upon the Security Council to take necessary measures for the implementation of the resolution.

The adoption of the resolution sparked fresh violence in Palestine. The Arab states, supported by other Asian countries including India, had questioned the competence of the United Nations to decide the issue against the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants, who happened to

17

Resolution No. 181(II)A. For full text see The Middle East Conflict - Notes and Documents (1915-1967), op. cit., pp. 48-49.

18

Ibid., p. 45.

be the Arabs. Their demand in the Ad Hoc Committee that the question of United Nations' competence be referred to the International Court of Justice, was supported by most Asian states including India, but was lost by one vote.¹⁹ Thus the Arab world was bitter with the West and particularly with the United States for having driven a wedge "into its very heart and an obstacle to its complete unity."²⁰ The situation in Palestine was getting worse. The hostilities between the Arab and the Jewish communities had assumed dangerous magnitude.

A second special session of the General Assembly was convened on April 16, 1948. The debate in the First Committee was primarily centered on three main aspects of the Palestine question: i) the termination of hostilities, ii) interim administration in Palestine when the British withdraw on May 15, 1948, and iii) the means to achieve a lasting solution. The United States delegate submitted a "working-paper" embodying a temporary trusteeship plan for Palestine, specifically explaining that the temporary trusteeship "would be without prejudice to the character of the eventual political settlement."²¹ The Indian delegate, Mr. G.S. Bajpai, supporting the U.S. proposal requested acceptance of a temporary trusteeship, and suggested that "during this transition period, both Jews and Arabs should participate in the government." He further said that "the U.S. paper envisaged a single government with a single cabinet and it would be most gratifying if the Jews and the Arabs could

19

The Yearbook of the United Nations 1947-48, p. 244.

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Prince Hassan Ben Talal. The Palestine Question (London: Harrow School, 1964), p. 21.

21

Trygve Lie, op. cit., p. 170.

be persuaded along these lines at once."²² On the initiative of the Cuban delegation, (which had voted against the partition plan of November 29, 1947), a subcommittee of 12 members, including India, was constituted for the formulation of a proposal for a provisional regime for Palestine. The recommendations of this subcommittee eventually developed into the proposal for a United Nations Mediator for Palestine.²³

While the Palestine question was being considered at the United Nations, the new State of Israel was proclaimed in Palestine on May 14, 1948. The same day President Truman extended de facto recognition to the new State, "while his representative at the UN, Dr. Philip C. Jessup, was, under instructions, speaking in the General Assembly in favor of a temporary trusteeship."²⁴ With this proclamation, the partition of Palestine had become a fait accompli and the whole complex of the Palestine problem had assumed an entirely different dimension.

INDIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISRAEL

One might have expected that in terms of her professed nonaligned policy, India would take a neutral or even-handed attitude after the establishment of the new State of Israel, and with regard to the continued Arab-Israel conflict. For example, back home, despite their bitter opposition and a sense of grief and loss over the partition of

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G.A.O.R., Second Special Session (1948), Vol. II, Summary Records of Meetings, pp. 64-65.

23

Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, was appointed as the UN Mediator on May 20, 1948. Count Bernadotte and Colonel Andre Serot (Chief of French observers), were shot and killed in the Israel-held sector of Jerusalem, on September 17, 1948. Ralph J. Bunche of U.S., succeeded Count Bernadotte.

24

Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 258.

India, once Pakistan was established, the Congress leadership accepted it as an international person. Apart from extending de facto recognition, full diplomatic relations were established with Pakistan. It can, perhaps, be argued that such analogies are not necessarily similarities; and even if they are so, diplomacy knows the art of drawing fine distinctions. It can be argued that Pakistan, though accepted under the pressure of mass-scale violence and bloodshed, was nevertheless constitutionally established by an Act of British Parliament, whereas the State of Israel was declared under different circumstances. The partition of Palestine, though recommended by the General Assembly resolution of November 29, 1947, was not established formally. Israel had shot its way through the international landscape at the cost of native Palestinians. As such, even though by force of circumstances, Israel became associated with western imperialism, pitched in the Middle East against rising Arab nationalism -- with which the Indian national movement was closely identified. These considerations, though significant, could not by themselves constitute a formidable barrier to India's de facto recognition of Israel. For, once a new state is well-established, most of the legal and technical considerations for non-recognition become apologies for political considerations in terms of national interest. Evidently, Indian policy makers did not consider the new State of Israel as politically vital in India's diplomatic priorities. Just two years later, the Communist regime on mainland China was extended immediate recognition, despite the fact that the new regime had not established itself by any constitutional means, and had also shot its way by means of force. Full diplomatic relations were immediately established. Besides the close geographical proximity of China and India, the former

was considered very vital in India's foreign relations. Moreover, the force used by the Communist regime in China, was not "Made in USA," "Great Britain," or "Western Europe." In addition to the important factors already mentioned, a new and most critical factor had developed, which seriously affected India's flexibility in the changing dynamics of the Middle East situation. That critical factor was the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, which was brought to the United Nations in January, 1948. As observed by Richard Kozicki:

"The painful consequences of the Partition of 1947 and the prospect that Muslim Pakistan might enjoy the active support of her co-religionists in the Middle East in any major dispute with India have lingered with New Delhi. Arab friendship, New Delhi has reasoned for some years, must be maintained. The difficult Kashmir issue has served to reinforce this thinking..."²⁵

Thus, a pre-independence policy, formulated by the Congress leadership on the problem of Palestine in deference to the Muslim minority in India (and to ward off Muslim separatism), was now projected to external dimensions in order to outflank Pakistani diplomacy in the Middle East. Far from remaining neutral or adopting an even-handed policy toward the Arab-Israel conflict, India voted against the admission of Israel to the United Nations in the Fall of 1949. India supported the Arabs' position that the Arab refugees' claims for settlement, compensation, etc., must be considered first before any meaningful negotiations on boundary question could start. By the same token, India opposed Israel's contention that the settlement of the question of Arab refugees was linked with the overall settlement of political questions, particularly boundaries. Besides diplomatic imperatives in India's support for the cause of Arab

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Richard J. Kozicki, "Indian Policy Toward the Middle East," ORBIS, Vol. II, (Fall, 1967), p. 788.

refugees, purely humanitarian considerations, made more sensitive by India's own experience with the plight of refugees in its own backyard, seem to have influenced India's attitude -- particularly her emphasis on the clear distinction between the refugee problem per se and the overall political settlement in the area. In the fifth session of the General Assembly, Indian delegate Mr. Chari, stressing the same theme, observed that he could not understand the assertion "that the rehabilitation of these refugees...should depend on a general settlement of the problem."²⁶

Despite all the political considerations and diplomatic imperatives, the de facto existence of Israel and India's non-recognition of that fact, seem to have bothered Nehru's sensitive mind, until he finally decided to extend recognition to Israel in September 1950. A press communique issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, according diplomatic recognition to Israel stated, inter alia, that:

"As in the case of Communist China, India's decision was the recognition of an established fact. The recognition was delayed...because all aspects of the question had to be carefully considered, including the sentiments of the Arab countries...the recognition of Israel did not affect our feelings of amity towards the Arab countries and...would always value the friendship of Egypt and other Arab countries."²⁷

However, India did not exchange diplomatic missions with Israel, and it does not until today.²⁸ A day after this recognition, the notable Israeli scholar, Dr. Immanuel Olsvanger, wrote a letter to Nehru (September 18, 1950), which reads:

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G.A.O.R., 5th Session, Summary Records of meetings of the Ad Hoc Political Committee, p. 416.

27

The Statesman (New Delhi), September 19, 1950.

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An Israeli Consul was permitted to function at Bombay in 1953 (not at New Delhi indeed).

"Dear Panditji,

The great act of India's recognition of Israel came as a long awaited holiday gift, practically on the eve of the most solemn day of the Jewish year, the Day of Atonement. And a solemn event, indeed, it is."

To me it is the realization of a long cherished dream to see a bridge uniting the holy waters of the Jordan and the sacred waves of the Ganges. These names are symbolic of sublime revelations that came in pre-ancient times to mankind from beyond the skyline...We have a lot to learn from Bharat (India) but perhaps, we will be granted the privilege of making a small contribution to her in return.

There is a great kinship between the souls of our two nations. It is not given to definition. It must be felt. I vividly felt it when listening to the chanting of the Ramayana, so reminiscent to the similar chanting of some passage of the Talmud...

From now onward let there be a permanent interchange of ideas between India and Israel, both resurrected to new life.

I hope, that the day is near when Israel will become as dear to every thinking Indian, as India and her leaders have always been, and will ever remain, dear to me.

Please accept the most respectful regard and affectionate greeting from Yours sincerely, Sd/-I. Olsvanger."²⁹

This nicely worded complimentary letter must have been embarrassing Nehru. In fact, Nehru had taken great pains to reassure the Arabs that the recognition of Israel would not affect India's pro-Arab policy. In token of that assurance, Nehru did not go all the way to exchange Ambassadors with Israel. In fact, "Nehru was keenly mindful of the potential influence of Egypt after the 1952 revolution, and the ensuing Nehru-Nasser personal friendship cannot be discounted as a factor in India's

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As quoted in Indo-Israel Relations: A Study of India's Posture on Arab-Israel Conflict. Karachi: MA'AREF Limited (undated booklet), pp. 7-8.

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Middle East policy." While Nehru's response to this letter is not available, a later letter of Nehru to Dr. Olsvanger, (March 23, 1958), makes interesting reading:

"Dear Dr. Olsvanger,

I have today received your letter...You know well our attitude to Israel and our difficulties. We have never been unfriendly to Israel...We earnestly hope that these problems will be solved peacefully and cooperatively. How can we help in this? I have felt and I still feel that we cannot be helpful just by sending an Ambassador to Israel.

I do not remember saying anywhere that Israel was a foreign body in the family of Asian nations. I may have said that Israel has looked to Europe and America more than to Asia, and it has, therefore, not fitted in with Asia. But what is Asia? I suppose there is something about the Asian concept but is vague and incapable of definition. There is vast variety in this great continent. All good wishes on the anniversary of your birth.

Yours sincerely, 31
Sd/ Jawaharlal Nehru."

Linguistic sophistry aside, Nehru's letter means much more than it reads. It reflects Nehru's dilemma, rather a conflict within, between Nehru the intellectual and Nehru the statesman. The letter is a shrewdly worded apology for the limitations imposed by the statesmanship upon Nehru. The intellectual Nehru offers this apology to the intellectual Dr. Olsvanger pleading with him that the choices open to the statesmen are much more limited than those available to the intellectuals.

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Richard J. Kozicki, "Indian Policy Toward The Middle East," ORBIS, Vol. XI (Fall 1967), p. 790.

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As quoted in Indo-Israel Relations, op. cit., p. 8.

In summary, Nehru's pragmatism in terms of India's economic and political interests in the Middle East, and his deference to the Arab friendship -- which has sometimes been defined as a "diplomatic fiction," in terms of its actual existence, but a reality because India constantly sought it -- greatly influenced India's diplomatic behavior. The Muslim minority in India (some 62 million), a potential pro-Congress constituency, is another factor influencing India's policy toward the Arab-Israel conflict. There is no countervailing pressure-group of the Jewish people whose total population in India is only 25,000. Kashmir, besides its international dimensions, is a predominantly Muslim state which is considered as an arch-stone of India's secularism. The Muslim majority in Kashmir (and its elite leadership), is a vital factor in itself. Though this factor does not determine India's foreign policy, it reinforces the pro-Arab stance of Indian diplomacy.

The question of moral considerations with regard to the recognition of Israel, in the first instance, the desirability of establishing diplomatic relations, and the option of an even-handed approach to the Arab-Israel conflict, were not irrelevant to Nehru's sensitive mind. However, despite this inner conflict, Nehru clearly distinguished between a statesman's personal considerations and his responsibilities as the navigator of a nation's destiny. He would not dispute Hans Morgenthau's thesis that "the universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of the states in their abstract universal formulation, but that they must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of the time and place."³² Speaking in the Constituent Assembly of India on December 4, 1947, Nehru had said:

³²
Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 10.

"Whatever policy you may lay down, the art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. We may talk about international goodwill and mean what we say. 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."³³

A great deal depends upon the way a nation's foreign policy makers perceive their national interest best served through a certain policy disposition. There is apparently no direct clash of interest between India and Israel. In fact, there are possibilities, though yet unexplored, of mutual benefit through bilateral trade and cooperation in the scientific, industrial and cultural fields. However, India's Muslim minority-politics at home and the trans-Islamic overtones of her diplomacy across the Middle East seem to reinforce each other. Besides her trade with the Arab countries and other Muslim states, India attaches great importance to their cooperation and good will in international conferences. As such, the desirability of friendly relations with a non-hostile state has been subordinated to the probability of the Arabs' hostility.

CHAPTER VTHE SUEZ CRISIS OF 1956

Early in 1956, the situation in the Middle East was assuming explosive dimensions. The armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab countries were being respected in daily violations rather than in observance, and were thus being reduced to a mere fig leaf. As usual, the two belligerent sides were making complaints and counter complaints against each other. Besides, there was an increasing competition between the two super-powers viz., the Soviet Union and the United States. Both were trying to extend the area of their influence, since the British and the French were losing their hold in the Middle East. The situation has been very cogently summed up in the following words:

..."three different yet interrelated struggles were approaching a climax: the hostility between Israel and the Arab states was escalating toward open combat; the new nationalism of Egypt was becoming increasingly belligerent toward Anglo-French colonialism; and the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States overarched the entire Middle East."¹

Following several meetings of the Security Council, and behind the scene dialogues, a resolution sponsored by the United States was adopted on April 4, 1956, requesting the Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, "to undertake a survey of the various aspects," and "to report back not later than one month."² Consequently, Dag Hammarskjöld, in a whirlwind trip visited Cairo, Tel Aviv, Beirut, Damascus, Amman -- back and forth --

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John G. Stoessinger, The United Nations and the Superpowers (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 62.

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S.C.O.R., Document No. S/3575, April 4, 1956.

in the search for a reasonable compromise. The situation seemed to pose a challenge as well as to provide an opportunity to Dag Hammarskjöld, the architect of preventive diplomacy for suspension and limitation of conflict. In all his public statements and press releases, he avoided any pronouncement that could be interpreted as a qualitative judgment on the position of any one country. He conceived his role, what Inis Claude defined in a different context, "as a candle snuffer so as to minimize the necessity for relying upon an unreliable fire department."³ He did not envision his position as a judge "called upon to pass legal or moral judgments on the propriety of state conduct; and regarded himself essentially as a diplomat, a political technician."⁴ In his progress report⁵ to the Security Council, Hammarskjöld expressed his deep concern that a "chain of action and reaction had been engendered in the area," which unless broken, would lead to war. As a result of his efforts, at least temporary cooling off of tempers was achieved. While Dag Hammarskjöld continued his efforts to effect some lasting settlement in this area, the events were taking a different turn towards a violent encounter.

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Inis L. Claude, Jr., Swords Into Plowshares (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 216.

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Oscar Schachter, "Dag Hammarskjöld and the relation of Law to Politics," American Journal of International Law, Vol. 56 (January, 1962), p. 3.

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S.C.O.R., Document No. S/3596, May 2, 1956.

NATIONALIZATION OF THE SUEZ CANAL

After their talks with Marshal Tito at Brioni, when Nehru and Nasser returned to Cairo on July 20, 1956, the Voice of America was transmitting the disturbing news. Only a day before, the United States Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, had announced withdrawal of United States aid for the construction of the Aswan Dam in the Upper Nile. ⁶ Soon after, Britain withdrew an accompanying offer of \$14 million, which was followed by the withdrawal of the World Bank's offer of \$200 million. This dramatic development naturally came as a shock to President Nasser, because the Aswan Dam had been projected in the minds of millions of Egyptians as an economic panacea for their poverty and backwardness. No wonder, President Nasser perceived this rebuff as "a blackmail and bully," and "a blow to the neutral bloc, to Mr. Nehru, Marshal Tito and myself, for daring to meet and exchange views at Brioni the previous week." ⁷ The following week, on July 26, President Nasser, "in retaliation for the United States' refusal...nationalized the Suez Canal Company and placed the Canal under Egyptian management." ⁸ In a public statement at Alexandria, he declared:

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A Western journalist later observed: "In retrospect, specialists in Middle Eastern affairs believe that...Dulles committed a diplomatic blunder...when he curtly withdrew a United States offer to help Egypt begin the Aswan High Dam. Academic and government sources tend to concur that the manner of the rebuff to the sensibilities of the Egyptians--and particularly President Gamal Abdel Nasser--hurt United States interests more than the act of canceling the proposed aid offer." See Benjamin Welles, "Experts Feel Dulles Blundered in Dropping Offer to Aid Cairo," The New York Times (January 16, 1971), p. 8.

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As cited in R.K. Karanjia, Arab Dawn (New York: International Publishers Inc., 1959), p. 79

8

Louis B. Sohn, The United Nations in Action (Brooklyn: The Foundation Press, 1968), p. 112.

"We shall not allow those who traffic in war and in humanity to impose their will upon us. We shall henceforth depend entirely upon ourselves...With the \$500 million revenue from the Suez Canal in the next five years, we will not look to Britain and the United States for their \$70 million grant... As King Farouk left Egypt definitely on 26th July, 1952, so today, on the fourth anniversary of that memorable date, it is the International Suez Canal Company which ceases to exist."⁹

He justified the action on the ground that the Canal was well within the Egyptian territory and that the act of nationalization had been taken by Egypt in the full exercise of its sovereign rights. He claimed that Egyptian sovereignty over the Canal and freedom of navigation were not incompatible. The official decree for nationalization included the assurance that "Stockholders and holders of founders shares shall be compensated...in accordance with the value of the shares shown in the closing quotations of the Paris Stock Exchange on the day preceding the effective date of the present law."¹⁰ Britain and France contested the Egyptian claim and protested against the "seizure" of an international waterway in "violation" of Constantinople Convention of 1888.¹¹ The Afro-Asian countries identifying themselves with the Egyptian nationalism (their Bandung partner), against western imperialism, generally supported Nasser. Prime Minister Nehru said: "The Canal itself is in

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As cited in R.K. Karanjia, op. cit., p. 85.

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Documents on the Middle East, edited by Ralph H. Magnus (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1969), p. 168. (Full text, pp. 167-69.)

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The Convention Respecting the Free Navigation of the Suez Maritime Canal, Constantinople, October 29, 1888, provides that "the Suez Maritime Canal shall always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war without distinction of flag." (Article I). For full text see Documents on the Middle East, ed edited by Ralph H. Magnus (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1969), pp. 8-11.

Egypt and an integral part of Egypt. The sovereignty of Egypt is thus beyond question.¹² The events were moving rapidly, Britain and France refused to pay tolls to the new Egyptian authority. The United States joined them in blocking all Egyptian accounts, including those of the Canal Company.

THE LONDON CONFERENCE

The following month, a conference was called at London (August 16-24, 1956), at the initiative of Britain, France and the United States. Egypt refused to attend the London Conference in which 22 countries, including India, participated. The Indian Delegation, headed by Nehru's brilliant trouble-shooter, V.K. Krishna Menon, was sent in consultation with Nasser. Krishna Menon was in constant touch with Nasser's unofficial envoy Wing Commander, Ali Sabri, who was at London working behind the scenes. Krishna Menon did not go along with the majority plan for some kind of international control over the Canal. He echoed the Egyptian contention that freedom of navigation was compatible with the Egyptian control. He presented a detailed plan proposing, inter alia i) recognition of Egyptian authority for control, management, operation and development of the Canal, and ii) a consultative body which would advise Egypt in accordance with the interests of the users of the Canal, and maintain contacts with the United Nations. The Indian proposal was supported by Ceylon, Indonesia and the Soviet Union. However, the other 18 participants in the Conference (including some Afro-Asian countries like Iran, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Turkey and Japan), favored an international

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Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 528.

authority. Egypt rejected the 18-Power plan, and proposed the establishment of a negotiating body. The second London Conference (September 19-21), did not find any meaningful basis in the Egyptian proposal for further dialogue. Thus the dispute drifted to the Security Council.

THE DIALOGUE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The Security Council was overly occupied with procedural wranglings. Instead of grappling with the substantive problem, its energies were consumed in procedural elementaries. The real dialogue was carried on in a series of "behind the scenes," meetings, which were held at the initiative of Dag Hammarskjöld. Though India was not a member of the Security Council, chief Indian delegate, Arthur Lall, actively participated in the informal meetings. After many informal meetings the parties agreed to six principles which should form the basis of any settlement of the Suez dispute. On October 13, 1956, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution based on the following principles:

- "(1) There should be free and open transit through the Canal without discrimination, overt or covert -- this covers both political and technical aspects;
- "(2) The sovereignty of Egypt should be respected;
- "(3) The operation of the Canal should be insulated from the politics of any country;
- "(4) The manner of fixing tolls and charges should be decided by agreement between Egypt and the users;
- "(5) A fair proportion of the dues should be allotted to development;

"(6) In case of disputes, unresolved affairs between the Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian Government should be settled by arbitration with suitable terms of reference and suitable provisions for the payment of sums found to be due."¹⁴

High tributes were paid to Dag Hammarskjold for his "tact and goodwill," by the French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau, "able and tactful assistance," by the British Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, and "the active and fruitful collaboration," by Shepilov of the Soviet Union.¹⁵ While the Secretary-General was discussing with the parties concerned the modalities to implement the proposals contained in the resolution, his efforts were interrupted by the commencement of hostilities in the Middle East.

THE TRIPARTITE ATTACK

The diplomacy drifted from conference tables to the battlefield. On October 29, 1956, the uneasy peace in the Middle East was engulfed by the clouds of war, when "Israel invaded Egyptian territory...and rapidly advanced toward the Suez Canal." Using this as "the cutting edge of the Anglo-French punitive expedition against Egypt,"¹⁶ Britain and France issued an ultimatum to Israel and Egypt, demanding cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of their forces ten miles from the Suez Canal area. Egypt rejected the ultimatum, on the valid ground that no self-respecting nation could accept the call for withdrawal of forces from its own territory. On October 31, Cairo was under attack by the French and the

¹⁴ S.C.O.R. No. S/INF/11/Rev. 1, Resolutions and Decisions, 1956, p. 7.

¹⁵ UN Document, S/PV, 742, October 31, 1956.

¹⁶ John G. Stoessinger, The Might of Nations, op. cit., p. 64.

British bombers. Thus "what had begun as an armed conflict between two Middle Eastern nations now assumed the proportions of a direct Western attack against the new nationalism."¹⁷

This tripartite invasion over Egypt came as a rude shock to the Third World. Whether the evidence pointing up to the tripartite "collusion," was "circumstantial," or otherwise, did not make much difference for them.

In the background of the Bandung Conference of 1955, the Nehru-Nasser-Tito meeting at Brioni in July 1956, India's role at the London Conference and her stand during the informal meetings at the United Nations; her reaction was understandably emphatic and forthright. Having loudly criticized western imperialism as "philanthropic burglary on the part of Europe...written in blood and sufferings from Congo to Canton," India could not, in good conscience, exhibit ambivalence -- as indeed she did during the Hungarian crisis.¹⁸ In fact the Suez crisis provided both a challenge as well as an opportunity for demonstrating the strength of "trade-union," diplomacy. Nehru branded the Israeli action as "clear, naked aggression." Referring to the Anglo-French invasion, he said: "In the middle of the 20th century, we are going back to the predatory method of 18th and 19th centuries." He added that "there was a difference now;

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Ibid.

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Soviet Union gave India her first major supporter in her dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir. By the same token, it placed certain limits on India's foreign policy options. Dependence on Soviet support "to protect this vital Indian interest made it incumbent upon India not to take a stand on any issue which could be openly anti-Soviet." S. Chawla, The UN and the Indian National Interest (unpublished Monograph, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, 1958), p. 44.

there were self-respecting, independent nations in Asia and Africa which were not going to tolerate this kind of incursion by the colonial powers." He condemned the revival of colonialism, and "unabashed aggression and deception."¹⁹

In the meantime, the Security Council met on October 30, in an emergency session at the initiative of the United States Ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge. Ambassador Lodge asked the Council "to consider the critical development which has occurred...as the result of Israel's invasion of that area yesterday," and gave notice of his intention to introduce, at the afternoon meeting, a draft resolution calling upon Israel to withdraw, behind the Armistice Line. Ambassador Loutifi of Egypt in his statement said that "We are faced by an armed unprovoked attack committed by Israel forces on Egyptian territory in violation of the general Armistice Agreement, the Security Council resolutions and the United Nations Charter." Ambassador Abba Eban of Israel defended the action as "security measures which the Israel defense forces have felt bound to take...in the exercise of our...inherent right of self-defense. The object of those operations is to eliminate the Egyptian fedayeen bases from which armed Egyptian units...invade Israel's territory for purposes of murder, sabotage and the creation of permanent insecurity to peaceful life."²⁰ Britain and France justified their position as "peacemakers," merely trying to ensure the safety and freedom of the vital

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Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, op. cit., pp. 535-536.

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S.C.O.R., XI, 748th-751st Meetings, October 30-31, 1956.

"international waterway." Except for these verbal exchanges, the Security Council did not accomplish anything at four meetings. Two draft resolutions before the Council, one by the United States and the other by the Soviet Union, calling upon Israel to withdraw behind the Armistice Line, were foiled by the British and French veto.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY - EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION

The Yugoslav Ambassador, Joza Brilej, took the initiative to pull the dispute out of the veto-bound Security Council. Sir Anthony Eden later described this initiative as "fateful in its consequences." He further observed that "Prompted from the sidelines by the Indian representative, Yugoslavia sought to transfer the dispute from the Security Council to a special session of the General Assembly, under the procedure known as "Uniting for Peace," originally devised at the time of the Korean conflict." ²¹ The Yugoslav draft resolution was adopted on October 31, by 7 votes to 2 (Britain and France opposing), with 2 abstentions (Australia and Belgium). The Secretary-General, accordingly summoned the first emergency session of the General Assembly, which held its first meeting on November 1, 1956. British Delegate, Sir Pierson Dixon, conveyed his Government's objections to the effect that, "the procedure under resolution 377(V) of the General Assembly, "Uniting for peace," has...been improperly invoked on this occasion," but did not press the point. Ironically, Soviet Union, which had all along challenged the validity of the above mentioned resolution, had voted for it in the Security Council.

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Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), pp. 586-87.

India supported the United States draft resolution (adopted on November 2, 1956), which, inter alia, i) urged that all parties now involved in hostilities in the area agree to an immediate cease-fire; ii) urged that the parties to the armistice agreements promptly withdraw all forces behind the armistice line; iii) recommended that all member states refrain from any acts which would delay or prevent the implementation of the resolution; iv) urged that, upon the cease-fire being effective, steps be taken to reopen the Suez Canal; v) requested the Secretary-General to observe and report promptly on compliance to the Security Council and to the General Assembly; and vi) urged the Assembly to remain in emergency session pending compliance with the present resolution.²²

In the meantime, Israel had occupied the Gaza strip and Sinai Peninsula on November 2, and Anglo-French forces had landed in the Port Said area. By November 5, Israeli forces controlled the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba.

On November 3, Ambassador Arthur Lall of India introduced a draft resolution on behalf of 19 Afro-Asian delegations, expressing concern over the non-compliance with the November 2 resolution. The resolution was adopted on the following day (59 votes to 5, with 12 abstentions). It authorized the Secretary-General "Immediately to arrange with the parties concerned for the implementation of the cease-fire and the halting of the movement of military forces..." and requested him "to report

compliance, not later than twelve hours from the time of adoption of
the resolution;..."²³

India also supported the Canadian resolution, adopted on the same day (57 votes to 0, with 19 abstentions), requesting the Secretary-General "to submit within 48 hours a plan for the setting up, with the consent of the nations concerned, of an emergency international United Nations force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of that resolution."²⁴

THE UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY FORCE

In pursuance of the Canadian resolution, Dag Hammarskjold immediately initiated consultations with Lester Pearson of Canada, Arthur Lall of India, Engen of Sweden and Francisco Urrutia of Colombia, and produced²⁵ a concrete plan for putting the UNEF in the field. Lester Pearson had originally envisaged an Anglo-French force. This proposal was, however, modified apparently under the pressure applied by the Afro-Asian countries on behalf of Egypt. The Secretary-General's final report, approved by the Assembly on November 6, laid down the following guiding principles for the organization and functioning of the UNEF: i) the consent of the countries concerned for stationing the Force, ii) non-intervention in the internal political conflicts, iii) exclusion of the major military powers from the UNEF, iv) international character and status of

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Yearbook of the United Nations, 1956, p. 29.

²⁴

Ibid. (Resolution 998(ES-I), November 4, 1956)

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Andrew Boyd, United Nations: Piety, Myth and Truth (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 164.

the Force, v) the independence of the United Nations in selection of such troops, and vi) good faith in the interpretation of the purposes of the Force. ²⁶ It may be mentioned here that in the selection of the force, the Secretary-General had to accommodate the Egyptian objections. For instance, Egypt refused to accept the Pakistani contingent, because Pakistan was a member of the Baghdad Pact -- which in the Egyptian perceptions was a western imperialistic military pact. Even the Canadian contingent, which resembled the British in uniform, and thus irksome to the Egyptian sensitivities, was used only for logistic purposes.

Some 24 countries had offered to contribute their forces. Eventually contingents from ten countries (Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, India, Indonesia, Norway, Sweden, and Yugoslavia), were accepted. Other offers were not formally refused and were, instead, treated as "available reserves." India provided one of the largest contingents for the UNEF. By virtue of that, India was also appointed to the Advisory Committee established by the United Nations to advise the Secretary-General on the establishment and operation of the UNEF.

While effective measures were being taken to move the UNEF to take the position from occupying forces in the Middle East, Indian delegation was actively coordinating efforts to ensure speedy withdrawal of Anglo-French and Israeli forces. India sponsored and actively sought support for a 19-Power draft resolution, adopted by the Assembly on November 7, again calling upon Israel, Britain and France to withdraw their forces from the Egyptian territory. Another resolution, on similar lines, was

passed on November 24, which was co-sponsored by India. By the middle of December almost 4000 men of UNEF were in Egypt. The Anglo-French forces completed their withdrawal on December 22.²⁷

India co-sponsored two further draft resolutions, which were adopted by the Assembly on January 19 and February 2, 1957, deploring the non-compliance of earlier resolutions by Israel. On March 1, 1957, Mrs. Golda Meir, the then Foreign Minister of Israel, declared in the Assembly that Israel was prepared to withdraw its forces from the Egyptian territory, on the assumption that freedom of navigation would continue and that the UNEF would be stationed in the Gaza strip as well. By the first week of March, Israel had withdrawn her forces and the full complement of some 6000-men UNEF was patrolling the cease-fire line.

The foregoing resume of India's role clearly indicates that India made a substantial diplomatic investment during the Suez crisis. It goes without saying that it was not done just for fun. The Indian diplomats made full use of both the challenge and opportunity provided by the crisis. India emerged as the main spokesman of Afro-Asian countries at the United Nations. Ambassador Arthur Lall of India developed an intimate rapport with Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld²⁸ during difficult negotiations and behind the scenes meetings. He earned Dag Hammarskjöld's confidence in the difficult task of giving shape to the UNEF -- the

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This was followed by speedy arrangements for the clearance of the Suez Canal. Normal navigation was restored by April 1957. For the details see this author's unpublished M.A. Thesis: "Dag Hammarskjöld: The Pilgrim of Peace," New York: The City College, 1966, pp. 31-32.

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No wonder Arthur Lall's Modern International Negotiation: Principles and Practices (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), was dedicated "To the Memory of Dag Hammarskjöld."

extended arm of Hammarskjold's preventive diplomacy. In this, the Indian Delegation and the Secretary-General's Office found a mutual friend in each other. By active participation in the UNEF and UN Advisory Committee, India utilized the opportunity to help its "trade-union," partner Abdel Nasser, to gain what he had lost in the battlefield. Ambassador Lall, in a later date study, as a professor at Columbia University, on the techniques of modern international negotiations, observed:

"It is not germane to this study to go into the conflict, but it is of relevance that after the conflict those very powers which had insisted on an international regime as recently as a few months previously accepted full Egyptian control and operation of the Canal, without the international advisory board which India had proposed at the London Suez Canal Conference, and which had been rejected as falling short of their irreducible minimum objectives."²⁹

In any case, besides earning the goodwill of the Arabs, which India always sought through "secular" techniques to outflank Pakistan for the latter's "parochial" appeal to the Muslim sentiments, India could also influence formulation of the guiding principles for the establishment, organization and operation of the UNEF -- the first major peacekeeping venture of that magnitude. These ground rules were modified to meet the Egyptian susceptibilities, and simultaneously to safeguard India's own national interest. While negotiating compromises in support of Egypt, the Indian Ambassador was not unmindful of India's own predicament over Kashmir. Even though India had accepted the United Nations observers to patrol the cease-fire line in Kashmir, she consistently opposed any proposal for "supervised elections," for a settlement in the Kashmir.

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Ibid., p. 53.

In fact, India had bitterly reacted against an Anglo-American move which "threw in the suggestion of the United Nations force to hold the ring,"³⁰ and "left partition aside as a solution."³⁰ Thus, India made it perfectly clear that "consent of the host country," was the article of faith for any kind of United Nations force, otherwise it could be like any occupation army, and would be so treated.³¹

Speaking in the General Assembly on March 1, 1957, Chief Indian Delegate, Krishna Menon, declared that:

"It has been basic to whole functioning of UNEF that it could not set foot anywhere on Egyptian soil except in full accordance with international law and practice and with recognition of the sovereignty of Egyptian territory."³²

In a subsequent statement on March 4, Ambassador Arthur Lall stated:

"India, as a participant in the UNEF, has always held and has entered into the Force on this agreed basis, that there can be no question at all of the Force replacing the invaders...There can be no question at all of the Force becoming an occupying army in Egypt. We maintain this position and re-iterate that the Force cannot be kept anywhere on Egyptian territory without the freely given consent of Egypt."³³

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Lord Birdwood, Two Nations and Kashmir (London: Robert Hale, 1956), p. 104.

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L.C. Green, "The Double Standard of the United Nations," The Year Book of World Affairs, 1957, Vol. II (London: The London Institute of World Affairs, 1957), pp. 128-29. Also see Nehru's statement in the Lok Sabha on November 19, 1956 (Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 357.

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G.A.O.R., A/PV. 665, p. 1272.

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G.A.O.R., A/PV. 667, p. 1302.

A student of Indian affairs observed that "while the desire for recognition of India's international status led her to participate actively in the United Nations, her active participation enabled her to utilize the Organization to implement her foreign policy objectives." Besides "enhancing her influence," India was able to influence the ground rules³⁴ "more in line with India's views."

In summary, India fully supported Egypt's sovereign rights over the Suez Canal, as well as the Egyptian contention that nationalization of the Canal was not incompatible with freedom of passage. India did not make her position clear on the issue of the "state of belligerency," on the basis of which Egypt prevented Israeli flag ships from enjoying the freedom of passage. Perhaps, this ambivalence was deliberate. In a situation of conflict between India and Pakistan -- and peace in Kashmir has always been uneasy -- a future hostile Egyptian Government could declare itself at war with India in support of Pakistan, even without actual participation, and bar Indian ships from the Canal. At any rate, India opposed the plans for internationalization of the Canal, criticized formation of the Suez Canal Users Association, condemned the tripartite aggression, demanded unconditional withdrawal of Anglo-French and Israeli forces, actively worked in the international forum to build pressure towards that end instrumentality of "peacekeeping," provided one of the largest contingents to the UNEF, and indirectly influenced the guiding principles of its organization and functioning; thereby not

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Ramakrishna Reddy, India's Policy in the United Nations. (Madison: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1968), p. 144.

only manouvering the big powers out but their allies in the Third World like Pakistan, as well.

India's "trade-union" diplomacy had gathered many points at the score board of international forum. What Nasser had lost in the battle-field, Nehru's skillful diplomacy (operated through his trouble-shooters, Krishna Menon and Arthur Lall), tried to get him back through parliamentary procedures and pressure at the United Nations. Not only the two western powers were humiliated, the solid wall of the western military bloc was cracked -- because the United States did not support them. This was a big dent in the western wall of unity. The Third World had every reason to be happy over the outcome. India could rightfully claim to be the champion of freedom from colonial rule. That nonalignment was no mere sham or utopia, it pays off. That any nation in Asia or Africa which aligns itself with imperialism, be it Israel or Pakistan, may have to pay the price.

While much of the success of this diplomacy was partly circumstantial, because two super powers, the United States and Soviet Union, took the positions which favored the outcome, the credit could naturally be taken by the Third World.

Success is always intoxicating, and people as well as nations lose many opportunities for lasting peace. Perhaps, Nehru and Nasser could use the period after the reopening of the Suez Canal in harmonizing the situation. Egypt had achieved its objective of asserting sovereignty over the Suez Canal. Perhaps, Nehru could use his moderating influence to bring about some kind of modus vivendi between Egypt and Israel. Once Israel had withdrawn from the Egyptian territory and normal traffic was restored in the Suez Canal, Nehru could reasonably seek Nasser's indulgence and quietly establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

India had always assigned highest diplomatic priority to Cairo. As such, India has invariably sent top ranking diplomats to Cairo, e.g., K.M. Pannikar, Apa B. Pant, Ali Yavar Jung, R.K. Nehru, Azim Hussain, and others. An equally strong representation at Tel Aviv might not have performed miracles but could have made some difference. But Nehru had his own problem. He was always shy of discussing Kashmir. Any approach to Nasser for a compromise with Israel. could bring a response for equal accommodation in Kashmir. Any "even-handed" gesture could have brought an equally wise counsel for settlement in Kashmir. If Nehru and Nasser had marshalled their nonaligned diplomatic forces in peace with the same sense of urgency as they did during the time of crisis, the second India-Pakistan war of 1965, and the third Arab-Israel war of 1967 could have been avoided. The image of the Third World, as an ongoing counter-vailing pressure-group at the United Nations, suffered from missed opportunities and lost gains because the urgency which forged unity during the crisis did not endure during the time of peace.

CHAPTER VITHE ARAB-ISRAEL WAR OF JUNE 1967

The third major round of the Arab-Israel conflict broke out approximately a decade after the Suez Crisis of 1956, and almost two decades after the partition of Palestine, and the proclamation of the State of Israel in May 1948. During the intervening periods between the first, second and third rounds of armed conflicts, intermittent border clashes remained a regular feature of Arab-Israel interaction, rather than an exception.

Early in 1967, the situation on the Israel-Syrian border started deteriorating. Israel complained to the Security Council against Syria's "acts of aggression" on Israeli villages, farms and fishing boats on Lake Tiberias in the Demilitarized Zone.¹ Syria responded by rejecting Israel charges and accusing the latter of "aggression against Syria," and "illegal occupation of the Demilitarized Zone by liquidating what remained of the rights of Arab cultivators."²

Secretary-General, U Thant, informed the Security Council of "a threatening military build-up on both sides," and of the measures he had taken for holding an emergency meeting of the Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission (ISMAC), to restore the conditions in the Demilitarized Zone.³

¹
S.C.O.R. Document No. S/7668, S/7671 and S/7675. Letters of January 8, 9 and 11, 1967, from Israel.

²
S.C.O.R. Document No. S/7673 and S/7680. Letters of January 10 and 13, 1967, from Syria.

³
S.C.O.R. Document No. S/7683. Note of January 15, 1967, from Secretary-General.

While communications from Syria and Israel continued pouring into the Secretary-General's office (some 18 of them), serious fighting broke out between Syria and Israel on April 7, over the question of land cultivation in the Demilitarized Zone. Though the cease-fire was restored on intervention by the Secretary-General, the situation remained highly volatile. The activities of the Palestine guerrillas, operating from Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and quick reprisals by the Israeli forces on the sanctuaries across the borders were causing a serious threat to the precarious peace in the area. There were reports of mobilization and troop concentration in the border areas of these states. The situation was further aggravated by highly provocative statements and counter-statements by the parties to the conflict.

The diplomatic paper-war continued through May 1967. Some fifty communications were exchanged between the capitals of these states and the United Nations Secretariat containing charges and counter-charges of violations, provocations and breaches of the peace. In the meantime, Egypt demanded withdrawal of UNEF on May 18. The Egyptian demand was complied with by the Secretary-General, though with serious misgivings. The following week, Egypt announced a blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, claiming it as her territorial waters which could be closed to the states with which she was at war. In an emotional speech, on May 22, to the Armed Forces, President Nasser, declared:

"What is the meaning of the armed forces' occupation of Sharm el-Sheikh? It is an affirmation of our rights and our sovereignty over the Aqaba Gulf. The Aqaba Gulf constitutes our Egyptian territorial

waters. Under no circumstances will we allow the Israeli flag to pass through the Aqaba Gulf."⁴

Israel, whose only southern port at Elath depended on free passage through these waters (particularly for regular supply of oil from Iran), contested the Egyptian position and declared that it would consider the blockade as an act of war. Initially, Israel "sought international action...but failing to secure satisfactory assurance, it decided that the Arab challenge had to be answered," sooner rather than later. Needless to add that the "logic of Israel's geography is obviously a compelling factor,"⁵ underlying such a crucial decision. Once the tempers reached the boiling point, the parties reached a point of no return. It appears that "each side was pushed toward the brink of war as much by the action of the other as by the logic of its own policies and interests,"⁶ as perceived by each party to the conflict. The chain reaction of threats and counter-threats culminated in a full-scale war on June 5. In a brief

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Documents on the Middle East, edited by Ralph H. Magnus (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1969), p. 198. (Full text, pp. 195-199). Regarding President Nasser's affirmation of "sovereignty over the Aqaba Gulf," it has been pointed out that "perhaps he meant that the entrance to the Gulf, the Strait of Tiran, came within this definition. The Gulf itself is bounded by four states, of which Egypt is one, and even if it is to be considered a mare clausum, its waters cannot be subjected to the rule of only one of the four states." See Arthur Lall, The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 26.

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Yashpal Tandon, "UNEF, the Secretary-General, and International Diplomacy in the Third Arab-Israel War," International Organization, Vol. XXII (Spring, 1968), p. 546.

6

Ibid., p. 547.

six-day war, Israel, in a clear victory, occupied the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula reaching the east bank of Suez Canal and Sharm-El-Sheikh overlooking the Gulf of Aqaba, the Jordanian half of Jerusalem, the west bank of the Jordan River and the Syrian Heights north and west of the Sea of Galilee.

INDIA'S ROLE

The 1967 crisis, though a continuation of the conflict-relationship between Israel and her Arab neighbors, seemed to provide a new test case for nonaligned countries and particularly for India. As observed by Arthur Lall:

"The 1956 Suez crisis had been significantly different. On that occasion the participation of France and the UK in the attack on Egypt had given the situation a close relationship with old-time colonialism."⁷

Besides "the specific alignment of forces was quite different. This time the two super-powers took opposing sides, while Britain tended to favor Israel and France leaned toward the Arabs."⁸

Despite the seeming newness of the situation, somewhat different from the colonial connotations of the 1956 Suez crisis, as well as India's disillusionment with the Arabs' indifferent attitude during the India-China border conflict in the Fall of 1962 and the India-Pakistan conflict of 1965; India supported the Arabs, particularly Egypt, on all substantive issues involved in the 1967 conflict.

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Arthur Lall, The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 171.

8

John G. Stoessinger, The Might of Nations, op. cit., p. 124.

A week before the June 1967 War, Foreign Minister M.C. Chagla, speaking in the Indian Parliament mentioned, inter alia, about a personal message which President Nasser had sent to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. "The message," he said, "referred to the various statements recently made by the Israeli Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Chief of the Army Staff indicating that preparations were being made for an attack on Syria," and that "the UAR had consequently taken necessary measures to deter the Israelis from any aggressive designs against Syria." The Foreign Minister added that a reply was sent on May 19, on the following lines:

"The reply expressed deep concern of the Government of India at the dangerous situation which had developed and our anxiety at the nature of the statements recently made by the Israeli leaders...We said that we fully appreciated the reasons why the UAR has had to institute precautionary measures. We expressed the hope that peace would be maintained and we noted with gratification that it was not the intention of the UAR to increase tension in the area but that the measures taken were in the interest of preparedness and precaution against a possible attack on an Arab country. This message reiterated the respect and regard which we have for President Nasser personally and for our friendship for the UAR."⁹

Furthermore, India fully supported the UAR on the three main issues involved in the conflict: 1) withdrawal of the UNEF, ii) UAR's claim over the Gulf of Aqaba and the Strait of Tiran, and iii) demand for unconditional withdrawal of Israel forces from all Arab territories.

9

India News, (Washington, D.C.), June 9, 1967, p. 5.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNEF

India supported the UAR's demand for withdrawal of the UNEF on the grounds that just as Israel exercised its sovereignty in withholding its consent to station UNEF in her territory, so did the UAR in asking for its withdrawal.¹⁰ In fact, "consent of the host country," was India's precondition for participation in the UNEF, as indeed in any other United Nations peacekeeping force. India had sent her contingent on receiving an understanding from the late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld¹¹ that the force was being sent with the Egyptian consent. Speaking in the Indian Parliament on November 19, 1956, Nehru had explained that before sending an Indian contingent to the UNEF, "we made it clear that it was only if the Government of Egypt agreed that we would send them...We are not prepared to agree to our force or any force remaining there indefinitely."¹² This precondition was in accord with India's own national interest. While India had agreed to the stationing of the United Nations Observers Group to patrol the cease-fire line in Kashmir, she persistently resisted the proposals for the presence of "United Nations," "Commonwealth," or other "Neutral," forces, preliminary to a "plebiscite" in Kashmir.

India's Foreign Minister M.C. Chagla, in a statement before the Parliament on May 25, 1967, said:

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India and Palestine, op. cit., p. 55.

11

UN Document No. A/3302/Add. 4/Rev. 1.

12

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 357.

"The Government of India have always supported UNEF's activities and believe that its presence on the Israel-UAR border has helped in maintaining peace in the area. We would, however, like to state clearly that we appreciate the reasons which have impelled the UAR to ask for the withdrawal of UNEF. When UNEF was stationed in the UAR, it was with the consent of the UAR Government and UNEF could not continue to remain in the UAR territory without that government's continuing consent. India could not be a party to any procedure which would make UNEF into an occupation force, nor could the Government of India agree to UNEF's continued presence in the UAR in the absence of latter's consent and, in any case, Indian troops could not remain part of UNEF without UAR's approval."¹³

He further emphasized that India's position was "in keeping with customary international law, the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the subject and the understanding reached between the late Dag Hammarskjold, the then United Nations Secretary-General, and the UAR Government."¹⁴ By supporting the UAR's position, the Foreign Minister, had simultaneously echoed India's own position with regard to the basic principles governing the presence of the United Nations peacekeeping force.

The following month, speaking in the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Chandra Shekhar, stated:

"...I must dwell at some length on Israel's attitude to the UNEF, which is relevant to the present crisis. Having refused to allow the stationing of the United Nations force on its soil, and having later enjoyed the full benefits of its presence on Egyptian territory for more than ten years, Israel has now proceeded to defame the United Nations and to criticize Secretary-General Thant's correct decision to withdraw the Force, on the ground that he did not first consult Israel...

13

India News, (Washington, D.C.), June 9, 1967, p. 5.

14

Ibid.

"I am proud to represent a country which has contributed the largest single national contingent to the Force for all the ten years from its inception to its withdrawal. I am, therefore, speaking in the name also of those gallant Indian sentinels of peace who served in the Middle East and died at their posts as martyrs. We supported the Secretary-General that the Force, by staying on in the region once the consent of the UAR to its presence had been withdrawn, might have become an army of occupation."¹⁵

In fact, the statements made by the Indian representatives in the General Assembly (Eleventh Session), reflected the same theme. India's Defence Minister, Krishna Memon, speaking in the General Assembly on March 1, 1957, had stated:

"It has been basic to whole functioning of UNEF that it could not set foot anywhere on Egyptian soil except in full accordance with international law and practice and with recognition of the sovereignty of Egyptian territory."¹⁶

In a subsequent statement on March 4, Ambassador Arthur Lall of India, further clarified India's stand in the following words:

"India, as a participant in the UNEF, has always held and has entered into the Force on this agreed basis, that there can be no question at all of the Force replacing the invaders...There can be no question at all of the Force becoming an occupying army in Egypt. We maintain this position and reiterate that the Force cannot be kept anywhere on Egyptian territory without the freely given consent of Egypt."¹⁷

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G.A.O.R., A/PV. 1530, June 21, 1967, pp. 15-16.

16

G.A.O.R., Document No. A/PV. 665, p. 1272.

17

G.A.O.R., Document No. A/PV. 667, p. 1302.

The Indian Ambassador was trying to kill two birds with one stone. He was supporting the views of India's nonaligned partner, pleasing the Egyptians in particular and the Arab world in general -- thus earning the good will for India. At the same time, he was reiterating India's long-standing position on this issue, with particular reference to Kashmir. Thus, through active participation in the UNEF, the first major peacekeeping operation of this nature, India could influence the formulation of some basic principles and general guidelines, which were in accord with her national interest. By the same token, India safeguarded her position in Kashmir, and served a thinly disguised rebuff to any proposal for "outside" presence in Kashmir. This was another example of "trade union" style of diplomacy -- influencing things through active participation.

India's stand on the withdrawal of UNEF was also in accord with Secretary-General U Thant's rationale for quick compliance with UAR's demand. In response to the criticism concerning the withdrawal of UNEF -- without consulting the General Assembly which had created it a decade ago -- U Thant in a report to the Security Council on May 26, 1967, inter alia, stated that "The consent of the host country, in this as in other peacekeeping operations, was the basis for its presence on the territory of the UAR. When that consent was withdrawn, the essential part of the basis of UNEF's presence ceased to exist." He further pointed out that "if the request were not promptly complied with, the Force would quickly disintegrate due to the withdrawal of individual
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contingents." Though the report did not mention any country by name,

it was well-known that both India and Yugoslavia had made it clear that their contingents would not remain in the UAR without its continued consent.

Speaking in the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, criticized the decision for withdrawal of UNEF, in the following terms:

"It is often said that UN procedures are painfully slow. This one, in our view, was disastrously swift...What is the use of a fire brigade which vanishes from the scene as soon as the first smoke and flames appear."¹⁹

U Thant, in his statement on June 20, 1967, said that:

"During the last five and a half years I have never had reason to comment upon a statement made to this Assembly by a representative of a Government. But I feel it necessary to reply very briefly to...Mr. Eban's strictures on this matter...

"...despite the intent of the General Assembly resolution that UN troops should be stationed on both sides of the line, Israel always and firmly refused to accept them on Israel territory on the valid grounds of national sovereignty. There was, of course, national sovereignty on the other side of the line as well."²⁰

The Secretary-General's stand perfectly fitted into India's position and reservations about peacekeeping forces. Thus, the trade union diplomacy found another ally in the United Nations Secretariat. For understandable reasons, the Secretary-General's action was both supported as well as criticized by many notable scholars. Louis B. Sohn, a reputable scholar, made the following observations on the subject:

19

G.A.O.R., UN Document No. A/PV. 1526, June 19, 1967, para. 118.

20

G.A.O.R., UN Document No. A/PV. 1527, June 20, 1967, p. 1.

"...the presence of UNEF did not touch the basic problem of the Arab-Israel conflict -- it merely isolated, immobilized and covered up certain aspects of that conflict. At any time in the last ten years either of the parties could have re-activated the conflict and if they had been determined to do so UNEF's effectiveness would automatically have disappeared. When...the direct confrontation between Israel and the UAF was revived after a decade by the decision of the UAR to move its forces up to the line, UNEF at once lost all usefulness. In fact, its effectiveness as a buffer and as a presence had already vanished...even before the request for its withdrawal had been received...It is entirely unrealistic to maintain that the conflict could have been solved, or its consequences prevented, if a greater effort had been made to maintain UNEF's presence in the area against the will of the Government of the UAR."²¹

The same scholar, referring to the "good faith" aide-memoire written by Dag Hammarskjold on August 5, 1957, for his ex-aide Ernest A. Gross (a prominent American attorney), which seems to have limited UAR's authority to demand withdrawal of UNEF, further observes:

"This memorandum is not in any official record of the UN nor is it in any of the official files. The General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on UNEF and the Government of Egypt were not informed of its contents or existence. It is not an official paper and has no standing beyond being a purely private memorandum of unknown purpose or value, in which Secretary-General Hammarskjold seems to record his own impressions and interpretations (some eight and a half months after) of his discussions with President Nasser. This paper, therefore, cannot affect in any way the basis for the presence of UNEF on the soil of the UAR as set out in the official documents, much less supersede those documents."²²

21

Louis B. Sohn, The United Nations in Action (Brooklyn: The Foundation Press, 1968), p. 177.

22

Ibid., p. 186. For the text of the "good-faith" aide-memoire, see International Legal Materials, 1967 Vol. 6, (Washington, D.C.: The American Society of International Law, 1967), pp. 593-603.

Charles B. Marshall, writing on the subject, made the following comments:

"A memorandum by his predecessor was cited in reproach of U Thant's complaint withdrawal of UN force. The memorandum had no official status. Citing it as authoritative was like giving force of law to a diary entry...By its premises the sovereignty of both Egypt and of governments contributing force components had been impinged -- Egypt's by yielding autonomy respecting force on its territory, and the contributors by yielding control of their own forces. These were large assumptions to rest on a base so fragile as unofficial recollections."²³

The publication of this memorandum for the first time in The New York Times on June 19, 1967, almost ten years after the late Dag Hammarskjold had written it and at a time when the incumbent Secretary-General was under crossfire from various quarters, naturally raised many eyebrows. U Thant, in a brief remark said, "To say the least, the release of such a paper at this time would seem to raise some questions of ethics and good faith."²⁴

Legal considerations aside, Arthur Lall argues that in a situation characterized as "extremely menacing" by U Thant, the "UAR's demand for withdrawal of the Force was, on the face of it, inconsistent with the terms and conditions of its own acceptance of the Force."²⁵ He further pointed out that:

23

Charles B. Marshall, "Reflections on the Middle East," ORBIS, Vol. XI (Summer, 1967), pp. 354-55.

24

The New York Times, June 20, 1967, p. 19.

25

Arthur Lall, The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967, op. cit., p. 18.

"If the full range of procedure implied and assumed at the time of the creation of the Force had been put into operation...an opportunity would have been given to exert significant diplomatic pressures on the UAR to reconsider its request for withdrawal."²⁶

Another scholar observed that though the "Secretary-General was justifiably concerned about the security of an international force that was caught in the midst of a crisis," but

"What made him (U Thant) vulnerable to his critics was seeming too easily to acquiesce in Egypt's request for UNEF's withdrawal...The precedent of the Secretary-General's compliance with Egypt's request in acquiescence rather than in protest is likely to weaken the UN's authority in similar situations in the future."²⁷

On balance, it would seem that U Thant's action, though technically correct, was politically vulnerable to criticism. Even the UNEF Advisory Committee, which was consulted by U Thant in this matter, did not recommend reference to the General Assembly -- as it could do under the terms of paragraph 9 of the General Assembly resolution 1001(ES-I).²⁸

The position taken by India on the question of the withdrawal of UNEF was apparently based on sound legal and technical grounds. Besides, her support to the UAR was in accord with India's own interest -- to bolt any direct or indirect attempt to impose international force in Kashmir without her prior consent. India's stand earned her the goodwill of the UAR and other Arab countries, and provided much needed support to the United Nations Secretary-General in vindication of his fateful decision.

26

Ibid., p. 21.

27

Yashpal Tandon, op. cit., pp. 537-38.

28

UN Document No. S/7906, May 26, 1967, pp. 2-3.

THE GULF OF AQABA AND STRAIT OF TIRAN

On May 22, 1967, the UAR announced the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, threatening that ships flying the Israeli flag or carrying strategic goods to Israel would not be permitted to enter the Strait of Tiran. The UAR claimed that the Strait was her territorial waters in which she had a right to control shipping as a littoral state -- basing her position on the assumption that a state of belligerency continued to exist between the UAR and Israel.

Israel contested the UAR's position and asserted her right of innocent passage through the Strait. Israel had declared that it would regard the closing of the Strait to Israeli flagships and any restrictions on cargoes of other ships proceeding to Israel as a casus belli.²⁹ Israel immediately initiated a diplomatic counter-offensive. On May 25, Foreign Minister Abba Eban was sent to London and Washington to mobilize support for Israel's position, and to "ascertain what the Western powers would do to end the blockade."³⁰ On May 28, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol stated that his Government had decided to rely on "the continuance of political action in the world arena," in order to stimulate "international factors

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Yearbook of the United Nations, 1967, p. 168.

30

John G. Stoessinger, The Might of Nations, op. cit., p. 125. Incidentally, the controversy over freedom of passage through the Gulf, had become an emotional prestige issue. Iranian and probably Saudi Arabian tankers have been passing freely and delivering oil at Elath, any way. During the ten-year period in which the Gulf had been opened to Israeli ships, only five such ships had used the Strait of Tiran. The last Israeli ship to do so entered the Strait about 18 months before the announcement of blockade on May 22, 1967. See Arthur Lall, The UN and the Middle East Crisis, 1967, op. cit., p. 37.

to take effective measures to ensure free international passage "
 31
 through the Strait of Tiran.

In the meantime, Secretary-General U Thant, had returned from Cairo, where he had gone on a mission of 'quiet diplomacy.' On May 26, he submitted a report to the Security Council, mentioning inter alia that:

"...I called to the attention of the Government of the UAR the dangerous consequences which could ensue from restricting innocent passage of ships in the Strait of Tiran. I expressed my deep concern in this regard and my hope that no precipitate action would be taken."³²

The report also mentioned that "President Nasser and Foreign Minister Riad assured me that the UAR would not initiate offensive action against
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 Israel." It further pointed out that:

"A legal controversy had existed prior to 1956 as to the extent of the right of innocent passage by commercial vessels through the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba...It is not my purpose to go into the legal aspects of the controversy or to enter into the merits of the case. At this critical juncture I feel that my major concern must be to try to gain time in order to lay the basis for a detente. The important immediate fact is that, in view of the conflicting stands taken by the UAR and Israel, the situation in the Strait of Tiran represented a serious potential threat to peace. I greatly fear that a clash between the UAR and Israel over this issue, in the present circumstances, will inevitably set off a general conflict in the Near East."

31

Quoted in U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg's statement in the Security Council on May 29, 1967. See S.C.O.R. Document No. S/PV. 1343, p. 12.

32

S.C.O.R. Document No. S/7906, May 26, 1967, p. 4.

33

Ibid., p. 3.

"The freedom of navigation through the Strait of Tiran is not, however, the only immediate issue which was endangering peace in the Near East. Other problems, such as sabotage and terrorist activities and rights of cultivation in disputed areas in the Demilitarized Zone between Israel and Syria, will, unless controlled, almost surely lead to further serious fighting..."

"I therefore urge all the parties concerned to exercise special restraint, to forego belligerence and to avoid all other actions which could increase tension, to allow the Council to deal with the underlying causes of the crisis and to seek solutions."³⁴

The United States' Ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur Goldberg, speaking in the Security Council on May 29, in support of the Secretary-General's report, emphasized that "forgoing belligerence must mean forgoing any blockade of Aqaba during the breathing spell requested by the Secretary-General."³⁵ Ambassador Goldberg cited President Johnson's statement of May 23 saying that "The United States considers the Gulf to be an international waterway," and that "the right of free, innocent passage of the international waterway is a vital interest of the international community."³⁶ Ambassador Goldberg also quoted Article 16, paragraph 4, of the Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone (1958), as follows:

34

Ibid., pp. 4-5.

35

S.C.O.R. Document No. S/PV. 1343, May 29, 1967, p. 12.

36

Ibid.

"There shall be no suspension of the innocent passage of foreign ships through straits which are used for international navigation between one part of the high seas and another part of the high seas or the territorial sea of a foreign state."³⁷

Ambassador Mohammed El-Kony of the UAR justified his Government's position by claiming "absolute Arab sovereignty " over the Gulf and asserted that "Israel was at Elath in violation of the Armistice Agree-
ment and therefore had no standing as a littoral state."³⁸ The UAR Ambassador emphasized "continued existence of the state of war " between the Israelis and the Arabs, and claimed that "my Government has the legitimate right, in accordance with international law, to impose re-
strictions on navigation in the Strait of Tiran with respect to shipping
to an enemy."³⁹

India, while supporting the Secretary-General's appeal for special restraint by the parties concerned, endorsed the UAR's position. India's Foreign Minister M.C. Chagla, speaking in the Lok Sabha (lower chamber of the Indian Parliament) on May 25, 1967, reiterated that "we have taken the position as far back as 1957 that the Gulf of Aqaba is an inland sea

37

United Nations, Treaty Series, Vol. 516, p. 216. It may be mentioned that neither the Arab countries nor India signed this Convention. (See p. 124 infra)

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S.C.O.R. Document No. 1343, May 29, 1967, p. 31.

39

S.C.O.R. Document No. S/PV. 1343, pp. 36-37 The UAR Ambassador quoted the authority of L. Oppenheim, International Law, edited by H. Lauterpacht, 7th edition: "In spite of such cessation (of hostilities), the rights of visit and search over neutral merchantmen therefore remains intact, as do likewise the right to capture neutral vessels attempting to break a blockade, and the right to seize contraband of war." (Vol. II), p. 547.

that the entry to the Gulf lies within the territorial waters of the UAR and Saudi Arabia. We adhere to this view." A semi-official publication justified India's position in the following words:

"It had been pointed out by some that according to para. 4 of Article 16 of the General Convention on the Territorial Seas (1958), Israeli ships had a right of innocent passage through the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba. The point to remember, however, is that no Arab State was a party to this Convention nor was India. Moreover, even according to this Convention, the right of passage is not an absolute right but remains subject to the security requirements of the concerned State."⁴¹

In a lengthy statement in the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Chagla, again dwelt upon this subject:

"...Once the Force was withdrawn, the task of ensuring the security of Sharm El Sheikh and wherever else the Force had been located became once again the sovereign responsibility of the Government of the UAR. From this arose the so-called question of free passage through the Strait of Tiran. The UAR has always maintained that the Strait of Tiran is part of its territorial waters. India, along with a number of other countries, has supported this position for a decade and more...

"The point to examine now, therefore, is whether the control of the Strait of Tiran by the UAR in itself could justify the use of force against several Arab States by Israel. In considering this, we, in this Assembly, must keep the following points in view.

"First, the UAR is not a party to any agreement recognizing the Gulf of Aqaba as an international waterway or guaranteeing the freedom of passage to Israeli ships.

"Second, there is no universally recognized rule of international law on freedom of navigation applicable to such bodies of water as Aqaba.

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The Statesman, (New Delhi), May 26, 1967, p. 1.

41

India and Palestine, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

"Third, the status of this body of water is still a matter of controversy. I should like to refer to a recent publication of the US State Department, (Department of State Publication 7825, April 1965, Digest of International Law, Vol. 4, p. 233), containing a Memorandum by the office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State, on historic bays. On Aqaba, the Memorandum states as follows: ' The Gulf of Aqaba -- the exact status of this body of water is still a matter open to controversy.' I am sure there are many international lawyers in this august gathering and I make them a present of this quotation, from an authoritative American textbook.

"Fourth, even under the Geneva Convention, which is being quoted often, innocent passage of foreign ships through the territorial water of another state, is not an absolute right, but remains subject to the security requirement of that State.

"Fifth, the General Assembly did not recognize, much less accept, the conditions which Israel attempted to attach in 1957 to its withdrawal from Sharm El Sheikh.

"From what I have stated very briefly above, it is not established that under international law there is a right of free passage through the Strait of Tiran. And, therefore, there is no warrant for asserting that this is a right which could be enforced by the arbitrament of arms."⁴²

For a better perspective of India's position on this issue it would be appropriate to trace India's stand back in 1957. Speaking in the United Nations General Assembly (continued debate on Resolution 1124(XI), February 2, 1957, on March 1, 1957, the Defense Minister Krishna Menon, had raised the following points:

- 1) that the entrance to the Gulf was 9 nautical miles and both Egypt and Saudi Arabia claimed a 12 mile limit for territorial waters. The Strait of Tiran was, therefore, within the territorial waters of Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

- ii) that according to Article XVII of the Law of the Sea "The Coastal State may take necessary steps in its territorial sea to protect itself against any act prejudicial to its security," and that "The coastal State may suspend temporarily in definite areas of its territorial sea the exercise of the right of passage..."
- iii) that France holds the Bay of Cancale to be territorial, although its entrance is 17 miles wide. UK held that Conception Bay, Chaleur Bay and Miramichi Bay in Canada were territorial, although the width between their headlands is twenty, sixteen and fourteen miles respectively.
- iv) that Hudson Bay in Canada, which embraces about 580,000 square miles with an entrance of fifty miles wide, is claimed to be a territorial bay of Canada.⁴³

He, however, added that:

"This does not mean that in the interest of international peace, there is no obligation upon any party concerned, including my own country, to assist in such ways as are possible to maintain good behavior. My good friend, the representative of the United States referred to the fact that the Japanese ships -- and I suppose Russian ships -- sail up to Hudson and, therefore, there is freedom. But that is a freedom subject to consent. Mr. Lodge invites me to his apartment and I go there but that does not mean that I have the right to occupy it."⁴⁴

He further added that:

"My country -- and the Arab nations do not like us to say this -- hopes and trusts and looks forward to the time when whatever the rights and wrongs of the Israeli-Arab disputes, these problems will be resolved in some form so that the Arab countries can turn their attention to economic development and when the vast quantity of money that comes from the international world for the arming of the State of Israel will also

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G.A.O.R., UN Document No- A/PV. 665, March 1, 1957, p. 1271.

44

Ibid., p. 1270.

be diverted to the development of under-developed areas. This is our hope; but to express a hope and to work for it is not to deny the sovereign rights of someone else, and that is our position with regard to the Gulf of Aqaba. If it were true that passage could be forced in one place, passage could also be forced in another place."⁴⁵

Ambassador Arthur Lall of India, speaking in the General Assembly on March 4, 1957, further supported the UAR's position in the following legal terms:

"...over and above the question of the Gulf there is the separate issue of the Strait of Tiran, which is the only entrance to the Gulf. There can be no doubt that on the basis of existing law and practice this sole entrance to the Gulf through the Strait of Tiran is territorial water, for it is bounded on the one side of its width of a mere three nautical miles by the Egyptian coast and on the other by the Egyptian controlled island of Tiran. This being so, it becomes quite clear that access to the Gulf -- and that is the only way effective use can be made of the Gulf -- cannot be arranged except with Egyptian consent.

"The International Law Commission itself has reserved consideration of the legal position of such waters because of the complicated position involved..., the Secretary-General has himself drawn attention in paragraph 24 of his report of 24 January 1957 (A/3512), to this part of the report of the International Law Commission, and...observed that: 'A legal controversy exists as to the extent of the right of innocent passage through these waters.'⁴⁶

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He drew particular attention to the Montreaux Convention governing the use of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles (the two territorial Straits connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean), and referred to the

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Ibid.

46

G.A.O.R., UN Document No. A/PV. 667, March 4, 1957, pp. 1301-2.

47

Convention regarding the regime of the Straits, signed at Montreaux (Switzerland), on July 20, 1936. League of Nations, Treaty Series, Vol. 173, p. 213.

rights of Turkey to refuse passage to merchant vessels belonging to countries in a state of war with her. He supported the UAR's contention that "technically the Armistice Agreement of 1949 did not put an end to the state of war between Egypt and Israel." He also mentioned that

i) from 1948 onwards, the UAR exercised its right over the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba, ii) in July 1951, a British ship S.S. Empire Roach, carrying weapons tried to circumvent the restrictions but was forced to comply with the formalities, and so also the American ship Albion bound for Aqaba, and iii) in January 1954, an Italian ship Maria Antonia, which did not comply with the regulations, was sent back.

THE DEMAND FOR UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF
ISRAELI FORCES FROM ALL ARAB TERRITORIES

India also supported the Arabs on the third substantive issue, demanding unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories. Speaking in the Lok Sabha on June 6, 1967, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, placed the responsibility for escalating the hostilities into an open armed conflict upon Israel.

She said:

"I do not wish to utter harsh words or use strong language. But on the basis of information available there can be no doubt that Israel has escalated the situation into an armed conflict which has now acquired the proportions of a full-scale war."⁴⁹

She warned that "world peace is in grave peril," and that "our own national interests are bound up with peace and stability in West Asia."⁵⁰

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G.A.O.R., UN Document No. PV. 667, op. cit., pp. 1301-2.

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Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. IV, 3296-97.

50

Ibid.

The cautious sentence which preceded the Prime Minister's strictures on Israel has an interesting background. As reported in an influential Indian periodical, the Prime Minister and leaders of opposition parties in the Parliament had met on June 6, to evolve a policy consensus with regard to the Arab-Israel conflict. The opposition leaders were not prepared to go along with Mrs. Gandhi's emphatic stand that "the Government held Israel blameworthy for escalating the armed conflict." This sharp policy difference between the official position and the non-Communist opposition parties, "erupted into an acrimonious debate in the Lok Sabha on June 6, after Mrs. Gandhi made a statement blaming Israel."

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The opposition spokesmen, except for the Communists, asked the Government "to concentrate on the peace bid at the United Nations Council, holding its judgment on the question of 'who started the war'." Some opposition members led by Prof. N.G. Ranga of Swatantra Party wrote a letter to the Prime Minister demanding that the Government should "adopt an objective attitude in this dispute and to abstain from taking sides or apportioning blame at this stage..." An articulate political commentator, in a special article, while defining India's policy of friendship

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The Communist Parties (of all shades) and the Muslim League have been placed in the same opposition group in the Parliament, not because they share a common ideology, but because of their election alliances and identical policy towards the Arab-Israel conflict.

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Indian Recorder and Digest (August 1967), p. 7.

53

As quoted in Prof. Ranga's statement in the Lok Sabha on June 6, 1967, Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. IV, 3297.

with the Arabs as "basically sound," observed that "dissatisfaction with the West Asia policy is as widespread as it is strong." He also mentioned that "even within the Cabinet's Foreign Affairs Committee, serious doubts were expressed by some of the most senior ministers before they agreed to the policy statement eventually made by Mrs. Gandhi in the Parliament."⁵⁴

At the United Nations, Indian Ambassador G. Parthasarathy, speaking in the Security Council meeting on June 5, proposed a draft resolution calling for a cease-fire and withdrawal of forces to the positions held by the parties before the commencement of hostilities on June 4. His resolution, though supported by Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, was opposed by the United States and other western countries, who favored a simple cease-fire resolution. On the following day, the Security Council unanimously adopted a simple cease-fire resolution, calling upon the parties concerned "to take forthwith as a first step all measures for an immediate cease-fire and for a cessation of all military activities."⁵⁵ Since hostilities continued, another resolution⁵⁶ was unanimously adopted on June 7, demanding "immediate cease-fire."

Ambassador G. Parthasarathy of India stated that while his delegation welcomed the unanimous decision of the Council, it would have preferred a resolution that linked the cease-fire with a withdrawal of

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Inder Malhotra, The Statesman (New Delhi), June 9, 1967, p. 8.

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S.C.O.R., Resolution 233, UN Document No. S/7935, June 6, 1967.

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S.C.O.R., Resolution 234, UN Document No. S/7940, June 7, 1967.

armed forces to positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. He emphasized that "such a decision would have been in accordance with past practice of the Council based on the principle that the aggressor should not enjoy the fruits of aggression." He strongly protested the Israeli attacks on the withdrawing Indian contingent of UNEF and asked for guarantees for the safety and security of those elements of UNEF that remained in the area.⁵⁷

On June 9, India joined the Soviet Union and Bulgaria in condemning Israel for continuing aggression in the following strong terms:

"The aggressor having occupied all its military vantage positions, all its objectives -- Sharm-el-Sheikh, Gaza, Jerusalem, the western bank of the Jordan River, and now the heights of Galilee -- will, after a show of reasonableness in negotiations, offer to split these gains half and half, perhaps."⁵⁸

He presented a four-point plan urging the Security Council to i) reinforce its call for a cease-fire, ii) immediately order the withdrawal of all armed forces, iii) reactivate and strengthen the United Nations machinery to reinforce the cease-fire, secure withdrawal and ensure strict compliance with various provisions of the General Armistice Agreements, and iv) appoint a personal representative of the Secretary-General to the area to help restore peaceful conditions and to ensure the safety of the civilian Arab population in the occupied areas.⁵⁹

During fifteen meetings of the Security Council (June 5 through 14), the Indian Ambassador made nine substantive interventions reiterating,

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Yearbook of the United Nations, 1967, p. 176.

58

S.C.O.R., S/PV. 1332, June 9, 1967, pp. 51-52.

59

Ibid.

inter-alia, India's position with regard to unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied during the war. 60

When the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly was convened on June 17, India was represented by her Foreign Minister, M.C. Chagla. Speaking in the General Assembly on June 21, Foreign Minister Chagla, while pointing out that "we have no quarrel with the people of Israel, and our record shows the objective attitude that we have adopted towards the State of Israel," called for "total, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the areas now under its occupation." In a long statement, the Foreign Minister stressed the following points:

"The fact that Israel struck the first blow is incontrovertible. The concept of a pre-emptive strike or a preventive war, is contrary to the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter...

"What Israel has done is to confront the world with a fait accompli, to attempt to impose a new status quo and to achieve a new balance of power in that region. In these circumstances Israel now demands a new Middle East settlement on its own terms...If its demands are not accepted, it threatens to consolidate its ill-gotten territorial gains...

"Leaders of Government, the armed forces and public opinion of Israel have recently made public statements to the effect that some of the territories...which they occupied now will not be vacated by them under any circumstances whatsoever...The latest and the most defiant in this series of statements is that by Mr. Eban, Foreign Minister of Israel...He told the Jerusalem Post:

'If the General Assembly were to vote by 121 to 1 in favour of Israel returning to the Armistice Lines tomorrow, Israel would refuse to comply with that decision. This has been made clear to major powers.'

"It is a universally recognized and honoured principle of law that the rewards of aggression must not be permitted to remain with the aggressor. The United Nations was based on this principle. The founding fathers of its Charter did not write the Charter so that the scourge of war should be considered as an investment by anyone who was strong enough to overcome his neighbors...

"There are some problems which have to be settled, but they must await their turn. The first thing to be insisted upon, and to be implemented, has to be withdrawal, total and unqualified, immediate and unconditional, of all Israeli forces from all Arab territories...

"If we acquiesce today in the proposition that a victor in an armed conflict can defy the United Nations mandate, can violate the basic principles of the Charter, then we might as well tear up the Charter and admit to ourselves that the idea of a world community living in peace was only a dream and the reality is that might is right...

"I make no apology in emphasizing again that the duty of this Assembly is to recommend immediate withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Arab territories."⁶¹

The Indian delegation actively worked in cooperation with the Arab and other Afro-Asian delegations. India co-sponsored a 17-Power draft resolution calling upon Israel to withdraw immediately all its forces to the positions they held prior to June 5, 1967. This resolution (A/L. 522), which was voted upon in the General Assembly on July 4, 1967, failed to

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G.A.O.R., UN Document No. A/PV. 1530, June 21, 1967, pp. 14-18.

obtain the required two-thirds majority -- roll call vote was 53 to 46,
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 with 20 abstentions.

India voted against the 20-Power "Latin American" (excluding Cuba), draft resolution (A/L. 523), which linked withdrawal of Israeli forces with ending the state of belligerency, freedom of transit through international waterways, etc. This resolution, also voted upon on July 4, failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority -- roll call vote was
 63
 57 to 43, with 20 abstentions. Indian Ambassador G. Parthasarathy, giving an explanation for his country's negative vote, defined the 20-Power draft resolution as "a formula for bargaining from a position of strength by Israel." He added that if the Arab States "have refused to change their attitude (on belligerency, Suez and Aqaba) for the last twenty years, is it fair to ask them to do so now, when enemy armies occupy vast chunks of their territory? Is it right for this Assembly to tell the Arab States that Israel could not withdraw its armed forces as long as the Arab States do not side by side recognize Israel, do not end the state of belligerency, do not agree to maritime passage, in
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 fact a host of conditions...?"

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Yearbook of the United Nations, 1967, p. 220. This resolution included, inter alia, the four-point proposal, earlier put forward by the Indian Ambassador in the Security Council. See S.C.O.R., S/PV. 1352, June 9, 1967, pp. 51-52 (supra p. 124).

63

Yearbook of the United Nations, 1967, p. 221.

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India and Palestine, op. cit., p. 68.

India voted in favor of a draft resolution (A/L. 527, which was adopted by 99 to 0, with 20 abstentions), embodying such formulations as "Deeply concerned at the situation prevailing in Jerusalem as a result of the measures taken by Israel to change the status of the City," and "Considers that these measures are invalid..."⁶⁵ India also voted for another draft resolution (A/L. 526, adopted by 116 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions), which, inter alia, "Called upon the Government of Israel to ensure the safety, welfare, and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations had taken place and to facilitate the return of those inhabitants who had fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities;" and "Recommended to the Governments concerned the scrupulous respect of the humanitarian principles governing the treatment of prisoners of war and the protection of civilian persons in time of war, contained in the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949."⁶⁶

During second part of the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly (July 12 - September 18, 1967), the Indian Delegation continued working in close cooperation with the Arab delegations. India voted in favor of a resolution (A/L. 528), adopted by the Assembly on July 14 (by 99 to 0, with 18 abstentions), deploring "the failure of Israel to implement General Assembly resolution 2253(ES-V);" and calling Israel "to rescind all measures already taken and to desist forthwith from taking any action which would alter the status of Jerusalem..."⁶⁷

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Full text in Yearbook of the United Nations, 1967, p. 221.

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Ibid., pp. 221-22.

⁶⁷

Ibid., p. 223.

After several fruitless attempts to devise an acceptable formulation capable of commanding a large majority in the General Assembly, the issue was once again taken up by the Security Council. After several meetings of the Security Council, and behind the scene attempts to a compromise, the United States, the Soviet Union, and India-Nigeria-Mali, agreed not to press their separate resolutions. Finally, the United Kingdom's draft resolution was unanimously adopted on November 22, 1967. This resolution, which now forms the basis of any future settlement of Arab-Israel conflict, inter alia, called for i) withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict," ii) "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for...the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force," and iii) "for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area."⁶⁸

Ambassador Parthasarathy of India, in a brief intervention in the Security Council before voting for the above resolution declared that:

"It is our understanding that the draft resolution, if approved by the Council, will commit it to the application of the principle of total withdrawal of Israel forces from all the territories -- I repeat, all the territories -- occupied by Israel as a result of the conflict which began on 5 June 1967."⁶⁹

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For full text of the resolution see The Middle East Conflict: Notes and Documents, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

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S.C.O.R., S/PV. 1382, p. 28.

Referring to Ambassador Parthasarathy's interpretation, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban later said, "For us, the resolution says what it says. It does not say that which it has specifically and consciously avoided saying."
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CHAPTER VIITHE EMERGING TRENDS: THE PRESS AND PARLIAMENT

It was mentioned in the introduction to this study that the Nehru era, of relatively uncritical acceptance of India's Middle East policy, belongs to the past. The critical point of departure appears to have been marked by the Arab-Israel war of June 1967. Prior to the 1967 war, the editorial comments pointing to the reality of Israel's existence and the absence of India's diplomatic representation at Tel-Aviv were rare but not altogether absent. As early as November 1956, an editorial in the Eastern Economist deplored the absence of India's diplomatic relations with Israel. It observed that "whether we or the Arabs like it or not, Israel is a fact...If India is interested in the pursuit of Middle-East peace, her steady neglect of Israel indicates that her intelligent interest is conspicuous by its absence. The omission is hard to explain."¹ Occasionally subdued voices were raised in the Parliament suggesting the same theme. During a foreign policy debate in the Rajya Sabha (upper house of the Parliament), in Spring 1956, Prof. A.R. Wadia from Bombay, suggested that India could best serve the cause of peace in the region by acting as an "honest broker," and by putting "a certain amount of pressure," on Egypt to "recognize the right of Israel to exist."² These subdued voices were like drops in the bucket. Nehru's charismatic personality, the solid majority of his Congress Party in both the houses of

¹
Eastern Economist (Bombay) XXVII, November 2, 1956, p. 647.

²
Rajya Sabha Debates, XVI, March 27, 1957, 775-779.

the Parliament, public confidence in his leadership, his emotional presentation of the themes of Indo-Arab historic friendship and particularly Indo-Egyptian kinship in the nonaligned camp, general approval of his emphatic statements in support of Egypt against the western colonial powers and gratification of the Muslim minority with regard to India's pro-Arab policy were some of the dominating features of India's foreign policy processes in those days. Nehru's death in May 1964 was preceded by his political demise in Fall 1962 -- India-China border fiasco. More than the physical injury caused to India, the psychological humiliation and demoralization had lowered India's international stocks. Friendship with China and peaceful northern frontiers "had been the keystone of the foreign policy Jawaharlal Nehru had set for India." The declining years of the Nehru era were soon followed by the Arab-Israel war of June 1967. There was a significant change in the political landscape at home on account of the lowering profile of leadership. The latest phase of the Arab-Israel conflict lacked the colonial connections of the Suez crisis of 1956. The emotional public outburst in India against the Anglo-American and Israeli attack on Egypt in 1956 was less apparent in 1967.

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Nehru, in his statement on August 8, 1956, extended full support to Egypt's claim of the sovereign right to nationalize the Suez Canal Company. In another statement on September 13, he deplored Prime Minister Anthony Eden's statement in the House of Commons (September 12), in terms of "surprise and regret," and "full of dangerous potentialities and far reaching consequences." For full texts see Lok Sabha Debates, VII, August 8, 1956, 2536, and VIII, September 13, 1956, 6963-6967.

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Neville Maxwell, India's China War (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1972), preface.

At best, the reaction in the Press and Parliament in 1967 was indicative of a wide cleavage rather than a consensus on this policy issue. Needless to add, the memories of an indifferent, rather unsympathetic, Arab attitude during the India-China border conflict of Fall 1962 and the India-Pakistan war of Fall 1965, were still fresh in India. The subdued voices and milder tones, already critical of India's attitude towards Israel and uncritical support to Egypt and Syria in particular, and the Arabs in general, emerged through their own shyness. A new phase of increasing public awareness and inquiry into the style and performance of Indian diplomacy became evident. This does not necessarily imply any marked shift in India's postures in the region. More often than not, there is a long time-lag before the increasing public dissatisfaction with a certain policy orientation becomes a major input in the decision-making process -- thus allowing the fixed patterns to operate until there is a mounting pressure for a change. Yet, one cannot ignore the fact that the content and style of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East became increasingly the target of crossfire from articulate sections of public opinion in India.

It may be of some empirical interest to note that India does not have an extensive TV network. The radio network is controlled by the Government. The public opinion polls are still in their infancy. Therefore, any reference to public opinion is generally confined to the views expressed in the newspapers and magazines and through the statements in the Parliament, by a microscopic active minority. For the multitude of a silent majority, the Arab-Israel conflict remains a peripheral issue. The support to and justification for the official policy is amply transmitted through the radio network, the dominant Congress Party organization

and widely circulated Party press. In view of this, the following analysis mainly reflects the critical public reaction as gleaned through the Press and parliamentary debates. The support to the official policy has been a regular feature. The widespread criticism is a relatively new phenomenon, and, therefore, the subject of our analysis is this chapter.

A two-part editorial, in a leading Indian newspaper known for its independent viewpoint, criticized the official policy for having "made screaming nonsense of India's nonalignment," and castigated the Congress Government for "pressing a resolution at the United Nations which takes no account of Israel's need for security against a ring of encircling neighbours who still declare that the war is not over." The editorial further added: "Israel would be justified in demanding that its security and withdrawals must be debated together. It would be a serious mistake for Indian diplomacy so far to commit itself to one side in this dispute as to overlook the essential interests of the other." Even a newspaper, which generally reflects a pro-Government viewpoint, while deprecating Israel, observed:

"Mrs. Gandhi's condemnation of Israel for escalating the war without taking other factors into account is one-sided. The mixed reception her statement received in Parliament shows how Indian opinion remains divided on the issue. It is open to argument whether Israeli aggression was not provoked by the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba and rendered inevitable by removal of the UN Emergency Force...Even if legal arguments favour the UAR stand on Aqaba, political realism should have counselled Cairo against upsetting the status quo at this juncture."⁶

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The Statesman (New Delhi), June 12 & 13, 1967, p. 6.

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The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), June 8, 1967, p. 6.

Another widely circulated daily newspaper rebuked the Government for its "strange caperings and postures" in the Middle East and described the official policy as "an exhibition of amateurishness." It added that "it is unlikely that in any such crisis a Power, not directly involved, has identified itself so completely -- by a suspension of all its faculties -- with the point of view of one party to the dispute." An articulate political commentator, in a special article, while defining India's policy of friendship with the Arabs as "basically sound," observed that "dissatisfaction with the West Asia policy is as widespread as it is strong." He also mentioned that "even within the Cabinet's Foreign Affairs Committee, serious doubts were expressed by some of the most senior ministers before they agreed to the policy statement eventually made by Mrs. Gandhi in Parliament."

A public opinion survey conducted in July 1967 by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion on the Arab-Israel conflict, revealed that two-thirds of the respondents in the four largest cities -- Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras -- were against unqualified support to the Arabs and favored a more objective view of the Arab-Israel conflict.

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The Times of India (New Delhi & Bombay), June 8, 1967, p. 6.

8

Inder Malhotra, The Statesman (New Delhi), June 9, 1967, p. 8.

9

Monthly Public Opinion Surveys (New Delhi: The Indian Institute of Public Opinion, July 1967), pp. 3-19.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Speaking in the Lok Sabha (lower house of the Parliament), on June 6, 1967, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, placed the responsibility for escalating the hostilities into an open armed conflict upon Israel. She said:

"I do not wish to utter harsh words or use strong language. But on the basis of information available there can be no doubt that Israel has escalated the situation into an armed conflict which has now acquired the proportions of a full-scale war."¹⁰

She warned that "world peace is in grave peril," and that "our own national interests are bound up with peace and stability in West Asia." She expressed India's deep "resentment of the wanton Israel artillery attack and subsequent strafings by Israel aircraft resulting in the death and injury of a number of personnel of the Indian UNEF contingent in Gaza." She added that "these attacks were deliberate and without provocation inspite of clear and unmistakable United Nations markings and identifications of our contingent." She informed the Members that she had addressed a message to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, "expressing our grief and indignation at these incidents," and urged them to "condemn this cowardly attack on our men, who have been¹¹ sentinels of peace in West Asia."

The cautious sentence which preceded the Prime Minister's strictures on Israel has an interesting background. As reported in an influential Indian periodical, the Prime Minister and leaders of opposition

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Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. IV, June 6, 1967, 3293-94.

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Ibid.

parties in the Parliament had met on June 6 to evolve a kind of policy consensus with regard to the Arab-Israel conflict. During this meeting it became evident that the opposition leaders (representing Jana Sangh, Swatantra, DMK and the Socialists), with the exception of the Communists and the Muslim League, were not prepared to go along with Mrs. Gandhi's emphatic stand that "the Government held Israel blameworthy for escalating the armed conflict."¹² This sharp policy difference between the official position and the non-Communist opposition parties, erupted into an

acrimonious debate in the Lok Sabha after Mrs. Gandhi made a statement¹³ blaming Israel. Mrs. Gandhi skillfully tried to play upon the sentiments of the Indian people in general and members of the Parliament in particular by profusely mentioning the death and injury caused to the Indian UNEF contingent in Gaza. She was, however, not successful in disarming her critics by expressing grief and indignation at the Israeli attack on "Our men, who have been sentinels of peace in West Asia." In fact, many members of the Parliament blamed the Government of India for its failure to take appropriate steps in time to evacuate the Indian contingent. They held the Government partly responsible for "the murder

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Indian Recorder and Digest (August 1967), p. 7.

13

As mentioned earlier (p. 129 supra), the small group of Muslim League is identified with the Communists because of their election alliances and similar attitude toward the Arab-Israel conflict. Some 50 members submitted call-attention notices. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha asked the party leaders to pick up one or two main speakers from their own ranks, because "everybody cannot get a chance," to speak. Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3295.

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of our soldiers." The opposition spokesmen, except for the Communists, asked the Government "to concentrate on the peace bid at the United Nations Council, holding its judgment on the question of 'who started the war'."¹⁵ Some opposition members led by Prof. N.G. Ranga of Swatantra Party (an old Congress Party stalwart), wrote a letter to the Prime Minister demanding that the Government should "adopt an objective attitude in this dispute and to abstain from taking sides or apportioning blame at this stage." The letter further emphasized that "if this attitude is adopted by the Government it will have the support of the country as a whole," and "could be conducive to Indians playing an honourable part in restoring peace in West Asia."¹⁶ Prof. Ranga who virtually assumed the leadership of the entire non-Communist opposition in the Parliament on this issue, expressed dissatisfaction with the official policy. In his statement in the Parliament, he said:

"In this crisis we expected the Government to play a role that would fully and satisfactorily reflect the national opinion and attitude of our people. Unfortunately...we have found that they were pursuing a line which was not satisfactory, nor in keeping with the experience we have had during the two tragic wars which were forced upon us. It is not as if the Government did not get any warnings about the feelings of a large number of us in this House as well as outside...We gave them definite warnings."¹⁷

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Ibid., See in particular, Mr. A.B. Bajpai (Jana Sangh), June 6, 1967, 3302 and Mr. Balraj Madhok (Jana Sangh), June 8, 1967, 3931.

15

Indian Recorder and Digest (August 1967), p. 7.

16

As quoted in Prof. Ranga's statement in the Lok Sabha on June 6, 1967. See Lok Sabha Debates, IV, 3297.

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Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3297.

Prof. Ranga complimented the Prime Minister for her anxiety that there should be a cease-fire, and noted with some satisfaction that India's representative at the United Nations was actively working to achieve that end. However, he asked whether it was "proper, while attempting to do so, for us to apportion blame as to who is primarily responsible for the escalation of these fightings which resulted in the actual outbreak of war?"¹⁸

Mr. A.B. Bajpai (Jana Sangh), stated that his party was not against the friendship with the Arabs. He added, however, that if friendship with the Arabs implies our commitment to the policy of destruction of Israel, his party could not support such a policy.¹⁹ Mr. Anbazhagan (DMK), in his statement suggested that "in such a great crisis as this, the Prime Minister should be able to take the consensus of opinion as far as possible, and her statement should be more cautious...In this, India's stand should be more on a nonaligned basis."²⁰ Mr. Surendranath Dwivedy (PSP) supported India's stand at the United Nations with reference to the resolution asking for cease-fire and withdrawal of forces to the positions held by the parties before the commencement of hostilities. However, referring to the death of Indian soldiers he said, "let us not be swayed away with emotions and apportion blame to this country or that country...we are not going to be a party to any conflict which directly

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Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. IV, June 6, 1967, 3297.

19

English interpretation (by this author) of the statement in Hindi. For original Hindi version see Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. IV, June 6, 1967, 3300.

20

Ibid., p. 3303.

or indirectly aims at extermination and liquidation of any nation." Mr. Dwivedy further remarked that "it is not good at this moment of crisis to reach hasty conclusions."²¹

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (SSP), in a lengthy speech criticized the Government and said that it was not the time for passing judgments as to who fired the first bullet. Instead, he suggested that India should concentrate on efforts to bring peace. However, it could not be expected of a Government, he said, whose body belongs to the Soviet Union and whose mind to the United States to make intelligent decisions in a crisis of this magnitude.²² Mr. Prakash Vir Shastri (Independent) observed that when the Middle East is engulfed in a bloody war -- with explosive potentialities -- we expected that our Prime Minister would adopt a cautious attitude with a view to promote the propensities of peace rather than of conflict. He further remarked that our nation will pay the price for the mistaken policy pursued by the Congress Government. He castigated the Government for taking a partisan position on this issue and asked²³ for immediate establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.

For understandable reasons, the Communists supported the Government's stand. Mr. S.A. Dange (leader of the CPI), in a brief intervention,

21

Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3310.

22

English interpretation (by this author). For original Hindi version of the statement, see Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3307-3308.

23

English interpretation (by this author). For original Hindi version of this statement, see Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3312.

drew a distinction between the people of Israel and the leadership of Israel, and observed that "it is the leadership of the modern State of Israel that we are condemning and not the Israeli people, as such." He strongly recommended that "India must stand on the side of the anti-Imperialist struggle of the Arab peoples, as against the aggression in the present case of the Israeli leadership." Mr. P. Rama Murti (Communist),²⁴ complimented the Government for a clear "anti-Imperialist" stand. He observed that "a tiny country had the courage to go and attack the UAR. Therefore, some other hand is there behind it."²⁵

Mr. A.N. Mulla (Independent from Lucknow -- a predominantly Muslim constituency), speaking in support of the Government's policy, asked the critics whether "an objective view means that we should not decide any thing so far as the justice of any claim is concerned?" He added that "In this world, we live like neighbours, and we cannot shut our eyes to the rights and wrongs of all the disputes around us." Secondly the opposition's attitude, he said, was "a projection of the anti-Pakistani bias, which has clouded the issues." He warned that if such a line of argument were pursued, "I am afraid tomorrow this particular ideology will lead us to support Taiwan against China."²⁶ Mr. Mohammed Ismail (Muslim League - Kerala), emphasized a positive view of nonalignment by saying that "nonalignment does not mean sitting on the fence...it means that we are free...to judge the things on their merits..." He supported

24

Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3904.

25

Ibid.

26

Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3311.

the official position and warned that "if we sit quiet and do nothing... nobody will respect us in the world and we shall not thereby serve our own national interest."²⁷

Acharya J.B. Kripalani (Independent-Socialist), in a brief intervention, emphasized that we "do not have sufficient evidence at this time to apportion blame."²⁸

When Mrs. Gandhi rose to answer the critics, there were repeated interruptions. The Speaker of the House remarked that the Congress Benches have heard the opposition "without even a murmur." He pleaded with them for "the same courtesy to the other side." The Prime Minister stated that "the foreign policy which we have formulated, or the foreign policy which we are pursuing, is part of the foreign policy which this nation had adhered to in the past years."²⁹ Mr. N.G. Ranga (Swatantra Party), interrupted by saying "your party," implying that the Prime Minister was identifying the nation with the ruling Congress Party. There was another interruption by Mr. Balraj Madhok (Jana Sangh) who said that "Nation and Party are not the same thing." Mrs. Gandhi responded that the opposition "have not spoken with one voice. Therefore, they cannot say that this divided opinion is the voice of the nation." She added that "no matter what the members of the opposition may say, these are facts of history which they cannot now change." Referring to the point raised by many members with regard to the Government's attitude

27

Ibid., 3314.

28

Ibid.

29

Ibid., 3316.

towards the "destruction," of Israel, Mrs. Gandhi said that "I have said so before and I have no hesitation in saying so again that we do not stand for the destruction of any nation." Answering the questions regarding the attitude of the Arab countries during India's predicament with China, she said "during the Chinese aggression, the UAR Presidential Council made a public statement in which the UAR proposed cease-fire and withdrawal of the Chinese forces to the 8th September position." She did not answer the questions about the attitude of other Arab countries. The Prime Minister's remarks that "we have at all times spoken out whatever we felt strongly about any situation," brought another interruption by Prof. Ranga, asking "what about Hungary?" The Prime Minister responded that "there is plenty to be said about Hungary. But I do not intend to say about it now...it is not connected with this particular statement." Mrs. Gandhi concluded her statement with the following remarks:

"I think that we have made a genuine effort to be objective, and I think that an objective presentation of the facts of the situation can help in the restoration of peace especially in a perilous situation. It does not help peace to sit on the fence and not to take a definite viewpoint, and that is why we have taken it. As I said simultaneously we have taken a step at the United Nations. I sincerely hope that we will be successful in our resolution..."³¹

In response to a "call attention notice" in the Lok Sabha on June 8, 1967, Foreign Minister M.C. Chagla informed the House that on June 6, the Security Council unanimously adopted a simple cease-fire resolution as a first step. He also mentioned that India "would have preferred a

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Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 6, 1967, 3318.

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Ibid., 3321-22.

resolution which, along with the cease-fire, called upon the governments concerned for a withdrawal of all armed forces to the positions prior to the outbreak of hostilities." He added that "such a linking of the cease-fire with the withdrawal of forces would have been in accord with the practice which the Security Council had evolved in the past based on the sound principle that the aggressor should not be permitted by the international community to enjoy the fruits of aggression." ³² The Foreign Minister also informed the House that according to the latest reports available regarding the Indian contingent of the UNEF, "nine were killed, 20 wounded, and 19 are said to be missing." He mentioned that "India has lodged a strong protest with the Government of Israel regarding attacks on Indian Personnel," and that "we have condemned the utter disregard by the Israeli authorities of the immunity which the United Nations Personnel engaged in peacekeeping operations enjoy." ³³

This time the opposition's attack on the Government's policy was led by Mr. Balraj Madhok, leader of the Jana Sangh Party. While expressing sorrow for the death of Indian soldiers of the UNEF, he held the Government partly responsible for the tragedy. He criticized the Government for having "failed to take steps in time to evacuate our soldiers from there, and, therefore, they cannot be exonerated of this blame of the murder of our soldiers there." He drew the attention of the members to India's stand at the United Nations, and said: "I want to make it very clear that hostilities did not start on June 4. The hostilities started on the day that UAR decided to blockade the Gulf of

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Ibid., 3924-25.

³³Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 8, 1967, 3924-26.

Aqaba, and, therefore, when we want the forces to go back, they must go back to places where they existed before the hostilities broke out."³⁴

Therefore, he argued that "the Gulf of Aqaba must be opened and Sharmel-Sheikh...should not be given back to the UAR lest UAR should be able to blockade that international waterway once again."³⁵ Mr. Madhok's description of the Gulf of Aqaba as an "international waterway" was in sharp variance with the official Indian position. The Government of India has consistently supported the UAR's claim that the Gulf (in fact the entry to the Gulf -- the Strait of Tiran) was its territorial waters in which it had a right to control shipping as a littoral state.

Mr. Madhu Limaya (SSP) criticized the Government's one-sided policy which was not helping the cause of peace. Mr. Limaya warned the Israelis that in their celebration for victory, they should not ignore the long-standing refugees' problem.³⁶ Mr. Prakash Vir Shastri (Independent), once again, suggested a cautious and prudent policy, instead of passing judgments.³⁷

Mr. M.L. Sondhi (Jana Sangh), participating in the Lok Sabha debate deplored the official policy and pointed out the wisdom of a "cautious and careful" attitude taken by some countries like Nepal, Rumania, Japan, Iran and others. He castigated the Government for its failure "to obtain the first hand information particularly in the case of Israel," and

³⁴

Ibid., 3930.

³⁵

Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 8, 1967, 3930-31.

³⁶

English interpretation (by this author). For the original Hindi version, see Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 8, 1967, 3932.

³⁷

English interpretation (by this author). Ibid., 3935.

suggested immediate "dispatch of an Ambassador to Israel," so that the official assessment should "be based upon a realistic understanding of the rights of this country." Referring to the external broadcast of All India Radio, Mr. Sondhi caustically remarked that "India functions as the fourteenth Arab State."

Mr. H.N. Mukerjee (CPI), in a forceful intervention, took the opposition to task. He said that "I am happy, if as pointed out by my friend from the other side, we behave as the fourteenth Arab State...if the Arab World thinks of us as their own brethren in their time of need." He further remarked that "we are not going to be intimidated and bamboozled by the fact of the temporary Israeli triumph..." Referring to the death of Indian soldiers, Mr. Mukerjee said "I have been ashamed to hear that even where our own people have died, some of our Members have hesitated to condemn those who openly and aggressively took steps in order to bring about the massacre of so many of our people, and they are trying to put the Government on the carpet..." Furthermore, he said "the temporary military triumph as it appears to be of Israel is leading some of the Members of Parliament to suggest that we change our basic foreign policy...That is something of a trap into which I hope and trust the Government will not fail."

Mr. Nath Pai (PSP), in one of the severest attacks on the Government, defined the official policy as "the colossal bungling by the

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Ibid., 3936.

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Ibid., 3937.

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Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 8, 1967, 3937-3939.

Government of this delicate (and) explosive situation." which "will go down in the annals of free India...as a piece of monumental ineptitude of incredible abdication of its sovereign self-respect." ⁴¹ Mr. Sushila Nayar, Mrs. Tarkeshwari Sinha, Mr. Piloo Mody, Mr. D.C. Sharma and Mr. Yashpal, belonging to different political groups, criticized the Government for pursuing a policy of uncritical support to the Arabs and for ⁴² the absence of diplomatic relations with Israel.

In view of the closure of the Suez Canal, many members of Parliament, particularly those coming from food deficit states, expressed serious concern about the delay in arrival of food supplies from the United States. The Food Minister (Mr. Jagjivan Ram) assured them that the Government was equally concerned with the problem and that appropriate ⁴³ steps were being taken to meet the situation on an emergency basis.

The Swatantra Party leader, Mr. M.R. Masani, in a statement at Bombay on June 8, 1967, charged that the "ostrich-like refusal of the Congress Government all these years to establish diplomatic relations with Israel has now boomeranged against us by leaving us so ill-informed about developments in West Asia." He maintained that Indian public opinion, "whether reflected in the press or expressed in the streets and bazaars," was in "sharp conflict with the Congress Government's...deplorable attitude." ⁴⁴ Speaking at the meeting of the Indo-Israel Friendship League, Bombay, on "Peace and West Asia," Mr. Masani again expressed his

⁴¹

Ibid., 3941.

⁴²

Ibid., 3943-47 (English interpretation by this author).

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Lok Sabha Debates, IV, June 9, 1967, 4157-67.

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Times of India (Bombay), June 9, 1967.

dissatisfaction over India's foreign policy, and said: "The Arab demand that India should not have friendship with Israelis is preposterous. Such a suggestion can only be made by a husband or wife. Thank God we are not married to the Arab League yet."⁴⁵

The support of the official policy by the Communists and the Muslim League members needs hardly any explanation or justification. Among the other parties of the right and left, while the Swatantra Party, Praja Socialist Party and Samyukta Socialist Party leaders do not share Jana Sangh's anti-Muslim bias and distrust of the Arabs, they share a pro-Western and anti-Communist ideology. As observed by an Indian scholar, "the causes and motives of the opposition to the Government of India's policy are as diverse as the sources from which it has come." The same scholar, indicating some insight into the official policy-decision process, further mentioned that "even senior Cabinet ministers have been known to entertain serious reservations regarding the unqualified support extended by the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister..."⁴⁶ It was reported in an influential Indian periodical that at a "stormy" meeting of the Executive Committee of the Congress Parliamentary Party on July 19, Mrs. Gandhi "clashed with Tarkeshwari Sinha and some other senior members over the Government's West Asia policy." Consequently, the Prime Minister is reported to have "indignantly remarked that she was prepared to go to the country to seek its mandate on the question."⁴⁷ It is evident that the

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The Times of India (New Delhi), August 25, 1967.

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Girilal Jain, op. cit., p. 434.

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Indian Recorder and Digest, August 1967, p. 7.

criticism of the Government's policy regarding the Arab-Israel conflict was not confined to the non-Communist opposition in the Parliament. Though there was no open split in the ruling Congress Party on this issue, cross-sectional public opinion across the country was also reflected in the divergent views and internal clashes within the ruling Congress Party. From an empirical standpoint, this phenomenon is indicative of a healthy development in the decision-making process.

As pointed out earlier in this Chapter, except for the occasional demand for the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel, there is not much evidence of strong opposition to the Government's Middle East policy during earlier phases of the Arab-Israel dispute. The absence of the charismatic leadership of Nehru, the declining profile of Indian leadership, and increasing tendency to have a critical look at the content and style of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East, provide a partial explanation for the new national mood, but not an adequate answer to the complex question. For when it backfired, Nehru's China policy was not spared from bitter criticism. Therefore, one must look elsewhere to find reasons for this new phase of critical public inquiry into the performance of Indian diplomacy. The perception that the 1967 Arab-Israel war was somewhat different from the 1956 Suez crisis -- because of the latter's colonial connotations on account of tripartite aggression -- could be a significant contributory factor in stimulating a critical public inquiry. A series of disillusionments with the Arab attitude towards India (during the India-China border conflict, 1962, and India-Pakistan war of Fall 1965), were also instrumental in stimulating critical inquiry into India's Middle East policy. Besides, one needs hardly emphasize that after so many years of Independence, India as a

nation as well as its people, have grown adults, and are not inclined to leave such crucial policy decisions to the personal disposition of the ruling elite. Moreover, Indian diplomacy has been around long enough to be mature, and people do not seem to give it the benefit of doubt, as they did during the earlier phase of the Nehru era -- when everything was prima facie safe in the hands of Jawaharlal Nehru. Such, at any rate, is the impression conveyed by the recent public criticism of India's Middle East policy. The volume of public debate appears to be more than merely symbolic. The magnitude of public debate surpasses any within recent memory, and the division of public opinion seems to cut across party lines.

In the background of public criticism of India's Middle East policy, as well as expression of disillusionment with the Arabs' attitude towards India, one would imagine some shift in India's postures in the region. However, any such guess would be an overdrawn and premature conclusion. A question jointly submitted by half a dozen opposition members of the Parliament asking whether the Government intended to establish some liaison with Israel "at some diplomatic level for a better understanding of Arab and Israeli viewpoint?" received an emphatic negative response from the Foreign Minister. In any event, the pro-Arab content of Indian diplomacy has not changed but the sharp edges of its style, though not blunted, have been repeatedly hammered upon at home as well as abroad. Both the societal as well as trans-societal sources and processes for sustaining the existing "goal seeking behavior" of Indian diplomacy, to borrow James Rosenau's terminology, are under some pressure.

INDIA'S RABAT FIASCO

Non-admission of the Indian Delegation to the Islamic Summit Conference at Rabat in Fall 1969, once again brought the Foreign Office under public cross-fire. The Indian Delegation was reported to have returned home "muttering about reassessing New Delhi's policy toward some Arab nations." ⁴⁹ Though the UAR Delegation favored India's admission, it was apparently outmanouvered by President Yahya Khan of Pakistan. President Khan cited the 1969 riots in Ahmedabad (India), during which many Muslims were reported killed, and threatened to withdraw from the Summit if the Indian Delegation was admitted. Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia were reported to have taken a hostile attitude towards India's admission. The Indian Foreign Office, under bitter public criticism, immediately recalled her Ambassadors from these three countries leaving the Indian embassies there under junior diplomats. This episode, described as India's "Rabat fiasco," was widely reported and roundly criticized in the Indian Parliament and press. An Indian journalist of high repute cautioned the Foreign Office "from rushing in where angels might fear to tread and thus save the country from such misadventures as Rabat." He further suggested that Indian diplomacy must lower its profile in the Middle East and adjust its size to the exigencies of national security and economic development, which should assume top priority. He also counselled that India should scrupulously avoid "fancy frills" and "waste of time, resources and energy on the pursuit of non-essentials." ⁵⁰

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The New York Times, October 19, 1969, p. 7.

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Inder Malhotra, "Foreign Policy Cannot But Take a Back Seat," The Statesman (New Delhi), January 26, 1970, p: iii (Supplement).

The ruling circles in India, on the other hand, are invariably sensitive to any dialogue among the Muslim countries of the region, and claim participation by virtue of having the third largest Muslim population after Indonesia and Pakistan. They do not consider any such investment as "non-essential" because India has to counter Pakistan's bid for "parochial" affinity with the Muslim neighbors by outbidding Pakistan in emphasizing "secular" affinities. This can be done only through active participation based on "trade-union" experiences. The societal modernization processes for elimination of parochial affiliations (of caste, language, and religion), through economic differentiation and professional affiliations, are being applied to trans-societal dimensions in the Middle East. India tries to outflank Pakistan's bid for affinity on the parochial theme of Islamic unity by the secular theme of wider horizontal unity despite vertical variations. For this purpose India uses such instrumentalities as the "third world," "Afro-Asian," "nonaligned," "anti-colonial," "developing countries," so on and so forth, as countervailing forces to emphasize unity of purpose -- transcending parochial affinity. Despite many other minority groups which constitute India's multi-cultural society, India's secular balance often hangs precariously on Muslim politics, both at home as well as abroad -- particularly in the Middle East. Sensitivity to the Muslim sentiments at home and pro-Arab policy abroad seem to be inseparably intertwined

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After the dismemberment of Pakistan in the Fall of 1971, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India have more or less equal Muslim population. Bangladesh's total population is approximately 75 million, out of which roughly 10 million are non-Muslims. Pakistan's population is roughly 65 million (almost all Muslims). India's Muslim population, according to 1971 census figures, is about 62 million.

in the Indian political arena seemingly imposing a certain amount of inflexibility on the decision-making process.

The "Rabat fiasco," apparently signifies declining stocks of India's diplomatic enterprise in the Middle East. Besides the ingratitude of the Arab countries for India's emphatic support during the entire history of the Arab-Israel conflict, the Indian Foreign Office committed a tactical mistake. Instead of sending a notable Muslim leader (e.g., ex-Foreign Minister M.C. Chagla), as head of the Indian Delegation, the Foreign Office designated its Ambassador in Rabat -- who happened to be a Sikh -- to lead the delegation. This caused an avoidable offense to the Muslim sensitivities. Pakistan successfully exploited this situation. India learned a lesson the hard way that secularism cannot be pushed that far. An influential Indian newspaper, in a critical editorial, complained against "our feverish protestations of friendship for the Arabs and undying opposition to the Israelis " which have "evoked no proportionate reciprocity from our Arab friends who demonstrated at Rabat where their hearts and minds understandably lay..."⁵²

An Indian journalist reported, in a dispatch from Israel, that despite India's disillusionment with the Arabs, Israelis do not predict any major change in India's policy in the region. He mentioned, however, that Indian Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh's "meeting at the United Nations with the Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Abba Eban, was noted with interest." He further observed that "...many Israelis see in it a by-product of the fiasco at Rabat. But they argue that many more humiliations will be necessary before such straws in the wind can materialize

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 into concrete action." According to the same journalist, the Israelis argue as follows:

"Self-interest and a sense of political balance should ensure that friendship with one Power does not prejudice a country's relations with another... that skillful diplomacy never lays all its eggs in one basket."⁵⁴

The Arabs, on their part, did demonstrate an acute sense of political balance during the India-China border fiasco in 1962. They did the same during the India-Pakistan war of Fall 1965. Again in Fall 1971, some of them went to the aid of Pakistan, while others limited their support to an expression of sympathy.

Regarding the continued absence of a diplomatic establishment at Tel Aviv -- despite de facto recognition of Israel by India in September 1950, and occasional assurances of an early decision on an exchange of Ambassadors -- the Israelis reaction is quite bitter. Conveying the feelings of the Deputy Director-General, Yaakov Shimoni of the Israeli Foreign Office, the same Indian journalist reports:

"Snubbed and rebuffed time and again, the Israeli Foreign Office instructed all its diplomats about 10 years ago never again to broach the subject to colleagues from India. Until then our policy was to ask for an exchange of ambassadors on every possible occasion...but we have some pride left... we were tired of being told 'Please don't worry us' and being put off repeatedly."⁵⁵

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S.K. Datta-Ray, "A Test of Skill for Indian Diplomacy," The Statesman (New Delhi), April 7, 1970, p. 8.

54

Ibid.

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S.K. Datta-Ray, op. cit., p. 8.

Prime Minister Mrs. Golda Meir conveyed similar feelings: "I have met your Prime Minister. We are too small for a huge country like India to bother with."⁵⁶

BANGLADESH PHASE

It is noteworthy that none of the Arab countries raised a voice against the massacre which the Pakistani armed forces committed in Bengal in 1971 sending millions of Bengalis (The Hindus as well as the Muslims) across the border to India. When the actual war erupted between India and Pakistan in Fall 1971, none of them gave any thought to the underlying provocations. All of them (with the exception of Oman, which abstained) voted for a General Assembly resolution calling upon India and Pakistan to take forthwith all measures for "an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of their armed forces on the territory of the other to their own side of the India-Pakistan borders"⁵⁷ -- which actually meant withdrawal of Indian forces from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Both legally and technically (in terms of a dubious 'Domestic Jurisdiction' concept) Pakistani forces at that particular time were in their own territory even though they were perpetrating a massacre of the people of Bengal. Perhaps the Arab countries had every reason to vote for a resolution which reflected their own position vis-a-vis Israeli occupation, even though different issues were involved in the two situations. Indeed, even Israel voted for the same resolution along with the Arab countries. Besides, the Arab countries' support for the said resolution

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Ibid.

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G.A.O.R. Resolution No. 2793 (XXVI), December 7, 1971, (Supplement No. 29 - A/8429), p. 3.

indicated that they had not lost their freedom or flexibility vis-a-vis India-Pakistan relations. In fact, Saudi-Arabia, Jordan and Libya were reported to have sent American-built aircraft to Pakistan. Iran was reported to have provided a sanctuary for the Pakistani air force as a precaution against an all-out Indian attack over West Pakistan. While both the Soviet Union and the United States -- besides more than 90 other countries -- have recognized Bangladesh, the Arab countries are still awaiting a green signal from Pakistan. All this indicates that the Arabs have not bartered away their flexibility and independence in being sympathetic to Pakistan or even to China, despite India's belligerently vocal support to their cause.

It is significant to note again that India's Middle East policy is being constantly subjected to public scrutiny. In a seminar held under the aegis of the Society of Parliamentary Studies, held at New Delhi, Mr. M.R.A. Baig, a former Indian diplomat, referring to the Bangladesh issue, observed that "while India had shown its friendship to the Arab countries at every turn, this had not been reciprocated." Speaking on the same theme, former Foreign Minister M.C. Chagla also complained about the lack of Arab reciprocity, despite India's steadfast support to them. He, therefore, suggested that "in moulding India's foreign policy, the Government should take into account the attitude of the Arab States."

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Patwant Singh, "India and West Asia," The Indian Express (New Delhi), October 21, 1972, p. 3.

59

The Indian Express (New Delhi), August 14, 1972.

60

Ibid.

A widely circulated Calcutta newspaper, in an editorial, deplored the Arab attitude on Bangladesh and pointed out "the urgency of having a second look at her (India's foreign policy, particularly in respect of the Arab countries." The editorial further observed that India had refused "to accord diplomatic recognition to Israel obviously for no other reason than to avoid Arab displeasure." For the same reason Israel's "eagerness for closer relations...through cooperation in economic and other fields continues to be ignored by New Delhi." The editorial further pointed out that "The Arab countries...have never stood by India on India-Pakistan issues," and warned that "the possibility of their active opposition on such questions in future cannot be ruled out in the light of their performance on the Bangladesh issue."⁶¹

Indian newspapers carried conflicting reports about President Anwar el-Sadat's personal and public views on Bangladesh. Some of them tended to give him the benefit of doubt mentioning "the pressure reportedly coming from Colonel Gadaffy (Chief of Libya's ruling military junta),⁶² who had made no secret of his support to Pakistan." It is well known that Libya is one of the major creditors of Egypt, besides Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Others, while appreciating President Sadat's "belated declaration," that Bangladesh was "a reality," expressed resentment for the "dubious lead by Sadat to Arabs," for his non-recognition of Bangladesh.⁶³

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Amrit Bazaar Patrika (Calcutta), January 16, 1972.

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The Statesman (New Delhi), January 17, 1972.

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The Patriot (Lucknow), February 24, 1972.

Indian newspapers prominently reported Mohd. Hassanein Heikal's editorial in "The Al Ahram," (datelined Cairo, February 25, 1972), advising Egypt "to recognize Bangladesh," and pointing out that i) there should not be any confusion between the reality of Bangladesh and the reality of Israel, and ii) that Bengali people were living where they had always lived and nobody robbed anyone else of his land by force or
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terror.

Mr. D.P. Dhar, Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee of the Indian Foreign Office, visited many countries in the Middle East to counter Pakistani propaganda over Bangladesh. In a statement at Cairo on March 1, 1972, he expressed "anguish and sorrow," at the "stand taken by Egypt and other Arab countries on Bangladesh." He added, however, that "that was no reason for her (India) to change her policy towards Arabs. India was not an opportunist to change her basic policies merely because of
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temporary strains." The statement is significant for what it asserts as well as for what it denies. At the minimum it is indicative of a dilemma and points to an agonizing reappraisal of the present policy. To understand full importance of such statements, one has to read between the lines.

Two articulate scholars exchanged letters through a widely circulated daily newspaper. Their views reflect a cross-section of a divided public opinion in India over the Arab-Israel conflict. The exchange of divergent views was stimulated by Mr. Patwant Singh's special article on the subject, emphasizing the following points:

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Sunday Standard (New Delhi), February 27, 1972.

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Indian and Foreign Review, Vol. 9, (March 15, 1972), p. 4.

- i) that India should make "a searching reappraisal of our posture towards that region."
- ii) that India's policy-makers were "ignoring the fact that those who could respond in some measure to our overtures have long since left the Arab stage." The reference was obviously to the late President Nasser.
- iii) that "India has an entrenched and enthusiastic pro-Arab lobby which has long since closed its mind to all options."
- iv) that India's belated and "feeble statement," while deploring the Munich massacre, simultaneously emphasized India's support to "the Arab cause," and "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians."
- v) that "to talk of justice and mass murders in the same breath is bad enough, but to talk of justice for those who sat through the genocide of Bangladesh without a murmur...is rank hypocrisy."
- vi) that he was not making "a case for an unfriendly Indian policy towards the Arabs," but merely asking that we should "change our attitude to Israel."
- vii) that India must establish diplomatic relations with Israel in order to have "a new and badly needed point of view with which to balance the entirely one-sided picture we get at present from our proliferating embassies in the Arab countries."⁶⁶

Mr. Bhabani Sen Gupta, a journalist and academician at Jawaharlal Nehru University, in a rejoinder to Mr. Singh's article, defended India's policy and made the following observations:

- i) that "India has adopted a stance on this issue that corresponds with its historical experience, the ethos of its own freedom struggle, as well as its national interests."

- ii) that "Mr. Singh's sense of outrage at the Munich incident would have sounded more genuine if he had (not) totally ignored the systematic violence with which Israel has been trying, without success, to wipe out the resistance movement in the occupied territories since June 1967."
- iii) that "it cannot be denied that Israel was planted by imperialist powers on Arab Palestine..."
- iv) that "Israel happens to be the only country in contemporary history that has been permitted to expand territorially at the cost of its neighbours-- even the Chinese 'expansion' into Tibet was within the juridical limits of the Chinese state."
- v) that "when we deplore the failure of the Arabs to stand by us during the conflict of 1971, we tend to forget that it has been generally the norm for the Afro-Asian nations to strike a neutral posture on inter-Afro-Asian disputes."
- vi) that "Israel must come to terms with the Arabs before she can expect equal treatment by the majority of the Afro-Asian and all of the socialist countries."⁶⁷

Mr. Patwant Singh responded to some of the points raised by Mr. Gupta in his aforementioned letter, and observed:

- i) that "I am not impressed by the tiresome argument that Israel was planted by imperialist powers... So was Pakistan...and a whole lot of new nations were planted on the map of the world by the victors of World War II."
- ii) that whatever the rights and wrongs of the Arab-Israel conflict, it was hardly understandable that "India still remain unrepresented in Israel after nearly twenty-five years of that nation's existence."
- iii) that "in a changing world situation new developments impose new obligations on those who frame policies, and so new strategies have to be devised to exploit new possibilities."

- iv) that "sending of military equipment to Pakistan -- which is what Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan and Iran did when Pakistan was at war with India -- is by no stretch of imagination a 'neutral posture'."⁶⁸

The arguments and counter-arguments in the foregoing letters are self-explanatory and need no further elaboration.

On balance, the general tone of public debate, though critical of India's policy in the Middle East, has not advocated an about-turn implying a pro-Israeli stance. The editorials, newsletters, commentators, and critics in the Parliament, often took pains to pause and punctuate their observations by saying that they were not advocating an unfriendly policy towards the Arab countries. The whole controversy boils down to the advice that: i) India should maintain a political balance in terms of her nonalignment ideology; ii) she should use caution in taking partisan positions and in passing judgments; iii) Indian diplomacy should not lay all its eggs in one basket, iv) India should establish normal diplomatic relations with Israel; v) she should extend correct diplomatic courtesies to the visiting or transient Israeli dignitaries, and vi) she should enjoy the same flexibility and freedom in her Arab-Israel policy which the Arabs reserve for themselves -- in terms of India-Pakistan, as well as India-China relations. The advice sounds reasonable and good. However, the options of the policy-makers are often more limited than those

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Patwant Singh, "India and West Asia," The Indian Express (New Delhi), October 21, 1972, p. 6.

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It was noted with disapproval that the Israeli President Zalman Shazar was not shown appropriate diplomatic courtesies due a Head of State during his brief stopover at Bombay, en route Nepal. See Samuel Decalo, "Israeli Foreign Policy and the Third World," ORBIS, Vol. XI (Fall 1967), p. 727.

of the scholars and critics. Nevertheless, the scholars and critics provide an alternative viewpoint as an input in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS AND A CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

The foregoing inquiry into the content and style of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East tries to identify the dynamics of interlocking societal and trans-societal factors underlying India's pro-Arab policy disposition. It maintains that the most plausible hypothesis -- that India extends uncritical support to the Arabs in order to win their favor at the United Nations in her dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir -- though not without validity, suffers from unidimensional rationalization and stereotyped oversimplification. In fact, it places much heavier empirical burden on a single variable than it should. An attempt has, therefore, been made to analyze selected source material with a view to quantify empirical evidence for gaining some accurate historical and conceptual perspective of India's diplomatic behavior in the Middle East.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Elite Leadership's Role

The theme of the discussion starts with the proposition that the lines of India's pro-Arab policy were drawn as early as the 1930's, when India was still a British colony, Pakistan was yet in the realm of a wishful thought, and the Kashmir problem was almost two decades in posterity. The historical evidence analyzed in this study indicates that contemporary India's diplomatic behavior can be traced back in part to the initial perceptions which the vanguard leadership of the national movement developed towards the two competing nationalisms in the Middle East. India's elite leadership had perceived an organic connection between India's independence movement, the Arab nationalism (particularly

Egyptian), and a wider anti-colonial struggle. The shrewd foresight of Gandhi and Nehru of the Muslim minority's crucial role in the unity or dismemberment of India was probably the most critical variable, which greatly influenced their initial attitude towards the Palestine problem. Though personal predisposition of the elite leadership towards such a policy orientation at the initial stages is prima facie evident, there is hardly any indication of anti-Semitic sentiments in India. It was a common phenomenon in most western colonies, at that stage of national movements, that personal orientations and perceptions of the elite leadership played a dominant role in policy formulations. Nehru, in his autobiography, observed that "foreign affairs did not touch the life of the average person, who was absorbed in his own troubles."¹ This does not mean, however, that Gandhi's and Nehru's dominant personal predispositions were not influenced by the Indian conditions and regional considerations. They were very much the children of their time and products of their national-historical culture.

Competing Nationalisms

The demand for a separate Muslim homeland in India was naturally in sharp conflict with the Indian National Congress' demand for political independence and maintenance of the territorial unity of India. This conflict between the majority's dream for the unity and independence of India, and the minority's aspiration for a separate national identity, had some similarity in Palestine, where the Jewish and Arab nationalisms met at hostile cross-roads. The Indian National Congress' support for Arab nationalism and the Arab cause in Palestine was not only in deference

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See p. 51, *Supra*.

to the Muslim minority in India -- particularly its elite leadership -- but also for the maintenance of unity and the territorial integrity of India itself.

By a complex web of historical and geopolitical circumstances, the Congress' resolutions on Palestine were simultaneously addressed to the two equally potential audiences -- the Muslim minority at home and the Jewish minority in Palestine. Any support for the Jewish demand for a separate homeland in Palestine, would have been automatically construed as an acceptance of the Muslims' demand for a separate national identity in India. In fact, the Jewish demand for a national home in Palestine, and the Muslims' demand for a separate homeland in India, were suspected as conspiracies inspired by the British and designed to perpetuate their colonial rule. Ironically, it was the Muslim minority in India which was considered as an adversary to India's unity, and it was the Muslim majority in Palestine, in whom India's unity found a friend.

Interlocking Societal and Trans-societal Factors

This interaction between the internal minority politics and trans-societal Muslim politics continues to play a crucial role in India's diplomatic behavior in the area. Partition of India did not materially change the role of this interlocking variable. The creation of Pakistan and the emergence of the Kashmir problem provided an added imperative to pursue a policy vaguely conceived in the 1930's. Pakistan aside, India's own Muslim minority (45 million in 1947 and 62 million in 1971) and the predominantly Muslim state of Kashmir constitute a societal pressure-group of no insignificant importance. India is located in a region in which the Islamic culture and the number of Muslim countries are significant factors in interaction of the states in the area. There is clear

evidence of a convergent relationship between India's minority politics, with its distinct Muslim overtones, and her foreign policy in the Middle East.²

When the Palestine problem came to the United Nations in the Spring of 1947, the Indian Delegation took a pro-Arab position. This was in conformity with the policy laid down by the Indian National Congress since the 1930's. However, India and Iran often tried to "moderate Arab intransigence regarding hearings for the Jewish Agency..." Though Egypt "leaned toward the Indian view on more than one occasion, but was pulled sharply back by her more stiff-necked colleagues."³ Sir Abdur Rahman, Indian Representative at the UNSCOP, while questioning the Jewish statesmen and the British authorities, tried to draw their attention to the rights of native Palestinians, pertinent provisions in the Covenant, the Mandate, and the Charter of the United Nations. Eventually, Sir Rahman submitted a minority report (together with Iran and Yugoslavia), warning against the partition of Palestine. The report recommended the preservation of the unity of Palestine and offered a kind of "binational" federal state, which should provide "most feasible recognition to the nationalistic aspirations of both Arabs and Jews," and "merge them into a single loyalty and patriotism..."⁴

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The Jewish minority in the United States, though much smaller in numbers -- concentrated mostly in the larger metropolitan areas, with superior financial resources and organization -- plays a somewhat similar role in the increasingly pro-Israeli foreign policy of the United States.

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Mary K. Hugessen, The Arab-Asian States in the United Nations (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of London, 1954), pp. 88-89.

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See p. 75, *Supra*.

In retrospect, Sir Abdur Rahman's warning that "the partition plan was pregnant with serious consequences for peace in the area," proved prophetic. However, in the background of bitter hostilities between the Jewish and the Arab communities in Palestine, the justification for a federal state was as much a utopia as the recommendation for preserving the economic unity of Palestine after partitioning the country, as envisaged in the UNSCOP majority report. The hope entertained in the minority report and shared by Sir Rahman of India that a federal scheme would provide "most feasible recognition to the nationalistic aspirations of both Arabs and Jews," and "merge them into a single loyalty and patriotism,"⁵ was more in the nature of a wish than a feasibility. Indeed, such a wish reflected India's unfulfilled quest for unity at home. India was, therefore, pleading against the partition prescription in Palestine. It is

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It is interesting to note that the origin of the concept of "Mideast Commonwealth," put forward by Prof. Gideon Gottlieb (New York Post, February 22, 1971, p. 36), can be traced back to the UNSCOP minority report for a federal state of Palestine. The Gottlieb concept encompasses the whole of Palestine -- the existing sovereign State of Israel and the newly carved sovereign Arab State on both sides of the Jordan River -- and recognizes the nationalistic aspirations of both the Jewish as well as the Arab people. Another scholar views the Arab-Israel conflict in terms of "two major dimensions, one territorial and one social," and observes that "solutions along the territorial axis alone will fail...will in all probabilities lead to a succession of wars in the area." He maintains that any solution should combine "the territorial and social perspective," and suggests "a canton solution...containing cis-and trans-Jordania into a new state with a constitution similar to that of Switzerland," (Johan Galtung, "Middle East and the Theory of Conflict," Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 8 (1971), p. 205.

These concepts, though prima facie utopian, are thought provoking. A similar concept on a "South Asian Commonwealth," which would encompass India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and some other neighboring countries has been mentioned in scholastic circles. See B. N. Varma, "Towards South-Asian Commonwealth," The New York Times, February 16, 1972, p. 38.

evident that while supporting the Arab cause in Palestine, India was assuring the Muslim minority that even a partitioned India would not betray their cause at home or abroad. India was also trying to outflank Pakistani propaganda in Muslim countries which was projecting India as the enemy of Islam. Perhaps despite as well as because of this failure, the constitutional framework of federalism became as sacrosanct with Indian leadership as "separation of church and state" was with the founding fathers of the American Republic.

DIPLOMATIC PERSPECTIVE

While the Palestine problem was being discussed at the United Nations, the new state of Israel was proclaimed in Palestine in May 1948. With this proclamation, the partition of Palestine had become a fait accompli. India, which had voted against the partition plan, did not extend recognition to the new state, though India has generally maintained the policy of universal recognition. If the case of Pakistan was an analogy -- and analogies are not similarities -- one might have expected that once a new state was established, at least a de facto recognition would be extended. Proximity of geographical location and pressure of outstanding issues were, no doubt, the overriding factors in quick recognition and establishment of diplomatic contacts with Pakistan. True, Israel had shot its way through violence and force, and, though recommended, was not formally established by the United Nations General Assembly. This technical or

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The American federal system and the European Common Market provide useful models for common horizontal framework despite vertical variations and divisions. Although, both the models share certain common cultural, racial and historical experiences. These social and cultural ingredients can provide the necessary ground for experiments in larger functional organizations for mutual benefit.

legal distinction might not have materially affected India's decision regarding recognition of Israel, but other considerations apparently stood in the way. Just two years later, the Communist regime on mainland China was extended immediate recognition, despite the fact that the new regime had not established itself by any constitutional means, and had also shot its way by means of force. Full diplomatic relations were immediately established. As in the case of Pakistan, close geographical proximity of China, its size and population, as well as its Asiatic credentials were some of the factors which obviously made India rush into recognition -- even while the new regime was still in the process of consolidating its position. Moreover, the force and violence used by the Communists in China, were not of Western origin. Besides, Israel was considered peripheral to India's vital national interests.

Deference to the Arab sensitivities abroad, and to the sentiments of the Muslim minority at home, was further reinforced by disturbing developments in the Muslim majority state of Kashmir. Thus, a pre-independence policy, formulated by the Congress leadership, on the problem of Palestine, in deference to the Muslim minority in India and to ward off Muslim separatism, was now projected to external dimensions to outflank Pakistani diplomacy in the Middle East. The societal factor to sustain such a policy was not only the Muslim minority in India, but also the Muslim majority in Kashmir. Moreover, India's economic interests in terms of foreign trade with the Arab countries, her increasing need for oil from the Middle East for her expanding industry and military establishment, cotton from Egypt, Indian businesses in the Persian Gulf area, a friendly Egypt because of the importance of the now closed Suez Canal, are some of the other factors which could not be lightly ignored

by anyone in the ruling circles in New Delhi. Moreover, in the newly available international parliamentary forum, theoretical sovereign equality of the new nations, could be demonstrated only through a trade-union of small states. Thus, in the numbering game, the historical and cultural identification between the Indian and the Arab nationalisms could now be placed in a contemporary world perspective for maximum political returns in the arena of conference diplomacy.

Thus, far from remaining neutral or adopting an even-handed policy toward the Arab-Israel conflict, India voted against the admission of Israel to the United Nations in the Fall of 1949. India extended continuous support to the Arabs' position that the Palestine refugees' claims for settlement and compensation must be considered first before any meaningful negotiations on the boundary question could start. By the same token, India opposed Israel's contention that the settlement of the question of Palestine refugees was linked with the overall settlement of political questions, particularly boundaries. Besides diplomatic imperatives, purely humanitarian considerations for the Palestine refugees, made more sensitive by India's own agonizing experience with the plight of refugees in its own backyard, seems to have influenced India's attitude-- particularly her emphasis on the clear distinction between the refugee problem per se and the overall political settlement in the area.

Despite political considerations, the de facto existence of Israel, and India's non-recognition of that fact, seem to have bothered Nehru's sensitive mind, until he finally decided to extend recognition to Israel in September 1950. More than two decades have passed since, but India has not yet established diplomatic relations with Israel. Nehru had reportedly given a serious thought to establishing diplomatic relations in

1952. But Nasser's rise to power in Egypt, and Egypt's crucial role in the Arab world as a counter force to Pakistan's bid for an Islamic Alliance with Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and other Muslim monarchies influenced Nehru to shy away from such a course of action. An Israeli Consulate was allowed in 1953 to operate at Bombay but not at New Delhi. The subsequent Nehru-Nasser partnership in the diplomatic trade-union of non-alignment further restricted Nehru's flexibility vis-a-vis Israel.

Although India and Burma had favored an invitation to Israel at the Bandung Conference in 1955, they did not press the issue in deference to the Egyptian opposition. The Suez crisis of 1956, and India's bitter reaction against tripartite attack on Egypt, marked a setback to any possible move toward Indo-Israeli diplomatic relations.

The Suez Crisis

In the background of trade-union diplomacy of nonalignment, Bandung Conference of 1955, and Nehru-Nasser-Tito tripartite meeting at Brioni in July 1956, the Suez crisis, from the very beginning, assumed anti-colonial connotations. Nehru supported the Egyptian claim of sovereignty over the Suez Canal by saying that "the Canal itself is in Egypt and an integral part of Egypt." The Indian Delegation to the London Conference, was in constant touch with Nasser's unofficial envoy, Wing Commander Ali Sabri (since Egypt refused to participate in the Conference). Krishna Menon, the Chief Indian Delegate, did not go along with the majority plan for some kind of international control over the Canal. He echoed the Egyptian contention that freedom of navigation was compatible with Egyptian control. When the dispute moved to the United Nations, India fully supported the Egyptian position.

Finally, when the diplomacy drifted from conference tables to the battlefield, India's reaction was emphatic and forthright. Nehru branded the Israeli action as a clear and "naked aggression." He also condemned the revival of colonialism and "unabashed aggression and deception," by Britain and France. At the United Nations, the Security Council was paralyzed because of an Anglo-French veto against the resolutions calling for cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign forces from the Egyptian territory. Eventually, the first emergency special session of the General Assembly was convened on November 1, 1956, under the "Uniting for Peace" formula. Throughout the Assembly session, India supported the Arab position, and worked actively to seek cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign forces from the Egyptian territory.

India's role during the Suez crisis clearly indicates that she staked a substantial diplomatic investment in the gamble. She took a strong position against the two permanent members of the Security Council viz., Britain and France. Both happened to be her foreign aid benefactors. In fact, Britain is her major trading partner. It goes without saying that it was not done just for fun. The Indian diplomats made full use of both the challenge as well as of the opportunity provided by the crisis. India emerged as the main spokesman of Afro-Asian nations at the United Nations. Through her active participation in the UNEF and the United Nations Advisory Committee, India could help her trade-union partner, Abdel Nasser, to gain what he had lost in the battlefield. Besides earning the goodwill of the Arabs, India could influence formulation of guiding principles for the establishment, organization and functioning of the UNEF. While negotiating compromises in favor of Egypt, the Indian Ambassador was not unmindful of the Kashmir problem. Even

though India had accepted the United Nations Observers to patrol the cease-fire line in Kashmir, she consistently opposed any proposal for "supervised elections," in the presence of any kind of international "expeditionary force," in Kashmir. Thus, India made it clear that consent of the host country was sine qua non for the presence of a United Nations force.

In summary, India fully supported Egypt's sovereign rights over the Suez Canal. She condemned the tripartite aggression, demanded unconditional withdrawal of Anglo-French and Israeli forces, actively worked in the international forum to build pressure towards that end, worked behind the scenes to give shape to the new instrumentality of "peacekeeping," provided one of the largest contingents to the UNEF, and indirectly influenced the guiding principles for its organization and functioning; thereby not only manouvering the big powers out but also their allies in the Third World like Pakistan. India could rightfully claim to be the champion of freedom from colonial rule. That nonalignment was no mere sham or utopia, it pays off. That any nation in Asia or Africa which aligns itself with the western imperialism, be it Israel or Pakistan, may have to pay the price. While much of this success was partly circumstantial -- because the two super powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, had taken the positions which favored the outcome -- the credit could be taken by the Third World.

Success is always intoxicating, and people as well as nations lose many opportunities for lasting peace. Perhaps, Nehru and Nasser could use the post-Suez period in harmonizing the situation. Egypt had achieved her objective of asserting her sovereignty over the Suez Canal. Perhaps, Nehru could use his moderating influence to bring about some kind of

modus vivendi between Egypt and Israel. Once Israel had withdrawn from the Egyptian territory, and normal traffic was restored in the Suez Canal, Nehru could reasonably seek Nasser's indulgence and quietly establish diplomatic relations with Israel. That was probably the most appropriate time to remove this irritating and embarrassing anomaly in the brief history of Indian diplomacy. Non-establishment of diplomatic relations with a nation admitted to the United Nations in Fall 1949, recognized by India in Fall 1950, and with which India has no direct conflict of interest, neither fits in India's overall diplomatic behavior nor suits her cultural traditions.

India has always assigned highest diplomatic priority to Cairo by invariably sending top-ranking diplomats on that assignment. An equally appropriate diplomatic presence at Tel Aviv might not have worked miracles, but could make some difference. But Nehru had his own problem in Kashmir, which greatly limited his flexibility as a peacemaker and moderator. India's own position over Kashmir had reached a point of no return. Any approach to Nasser for a modus vivendi with Israel, might have received an equally demanding compromise over Kashmir. This Nehru-Nasser shyness to discuss their problems in peace, with the same urgency with which they discussed them during the time of crisis and supported each other, was a greatly missed opportunity. One can say through the wisdom of hindsight, that if durable compromises could have been worked out during post-Suez period, taking advantage of favorable circumstances, the second India-Pakistan war of 1965 and the third Arab-Israel war of 1967, could have possibly been avoided. The image of the Third World as an ongoing countervailing force suffered from these missed opportunities and lost gains, because the urgency which forged unity during the time of crisis did not endure during the time of peace.

The Six-day War

The June 1967 war, though a continuation of the relationship of conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbours, was somewhat different in terms of the colonial connotations of the Suez crisis. This apparent newness of the situation, and India's disillusionment with the Arabs, did not materially affect the content and style of India's diplomacy in the Middle East. India fully supported the UAR and other Arab countries on the three main issues involved in the conflict: i) withdrawal of the UNEF, ii) UAR's claim over the Gulf of Aqaba and the Strait of Tiran, and iii) the demand for the unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories.

India supported the UAR's demand for withdrawal of the UNEF on the ground that consent of the host country, was sine qua non of the presence of UNEF on UAR territory. By supporting the UAR's position and Secretary-General U Thant's stand the Indian Foreign Minister was simultaneously echoing India's own position on the basic condition governing the presence of United Nations peacekeeping forces anywhere. Such a precondition was in accord with India's own national interests. India was safeguarding her own position, and serving a thinly disguised rebuff to any proposal for any outside force in Kashmir. Foreign Minister Chagla emphasized the same point while speaking in the United Nations General Assembly on June 21, 1967.

While supporting the Secretary-General's appeal for special restraint by the parties concerned, India fully endorsed the UAR's claim over the Gulf of Aqaba. India also supported the Arabs on the third substantive issue demanding unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories. Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi, in her statement before the

Indian Parliament on June 6, 1967, placed the responsibility upon Israel for escalating the hostilities into an open armed conflict. At the United Nations, Ambassador Parthasarathy of India joined the Soviet Union and Bulgaria in condemning Israel for continuing aggression. When the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly was convened on June 17, India was represented by her Foreign Minister, M.C. Chagla. Speaking in the General Assembly on June 21, he declared that "We have no quarrel with the people of Israel," but demanded "total, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the areas now under its occupation."

DECISION-MAKING AND PUBLIC OPINION

The Press and Parliament

India's strong support for the Arab position during the June 1967 crisis received considerable adverse public reaction at home. For the first time in India's brief diplomatic history, her Middle East policy became the target of cross-fire from articulate sections of public opinion. Many opposition parties in the Parliament, with the notable exception of the Communists (and their Muslim League allies), as well as many newspaper editorials, were critical of the official position on the Arab-Israel conflict of June 1967. There was apparently a lack of unity even among the leadership of the ruling Congress Party, which had angered Mrs. Gandhi. The voices were heard that India should not unnecessarily continue to alienate Israel for the sake of "undependable Arabs." High ranking members of opposition groups asked for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel and demanded that India should adopt an objective attitude in this dispute and should abstain from taking sides or apportioning blame at this stage.

Recalling the Arab countries' lukewarm attitude during the India-China border conflict (1962), and India-Pakistan conflict (Fall, 1965), it was argued that reciprocal feedbacks were lacking in India's pro-Arab policy, and that Indian diplomacy in the Middle East was outmoded and had reached a point of diminishing returns. Most Indians were, naturally, disillusioned when the Arab countries stayed neutral during the India-China border conflict in 1962. This was despite the fact that India had loudly championed the Arab cause in international assemblies. It may, however, be argued as to why the Arab countries were singled out when practically all Afro-Asian countries -- with the exception of the UAR and Malaysia -- had assumed the same attitude. Looking from another angle, none of them blamed India for escalating the fighting as the Chinese would have liked them to do. It may be recalled in this context that during the Belgrade Conference of nonaligned countries in 1961, Nehru did not favor condemnation of Israel on the grounds that the Conference should not deal with local quarrels. The Arab countries may have some justification for treating the India-China border conflict as a local affair. At any rate, during the Colombo Conference of five non-aligned countries -- Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia, Ghana and the UAR -- which was convened to prepare the grounds for bringing India and China to the conference table, at least Ali Sabri, the UAR Foreign Minister, made an emphatic statement insisting on unconditional withdrawal by China from the territory occupied by force -- thus echoing the official Indian position.

Coming back to the public criticism of India's Middle East policy, as reflected through the Indian press and parliamentary debates, there is no evidence of strong advocacy for an about-turn in India's policy

implying a pro-Israeli stance. The leftist press and Communist members of the Parliament (both Moscow as well as Peking-oriented), were among the strongest supporters of the official policy. They drew a fine distinction between the people of Israel and the "imperialist leadership," of Israel and made a strong plea for total support to the Arab people against the "aggressive leadership," of Israel. However, the temper of the general public debate on this issue suggested a caution to the foreign policy makers. The message was clear: that India, in terms of her policy of nonalignment, should maintain a political balance and flexibility in her Middle East policy; that a skillful diplomacy never lays all its eggs in one basket; that India's pro-Arab policy should not preclude the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with Israel; that deference to the Arab sentiments should not stop India from extending correct diplomatic courtesies to the visiting and/or transient Israeli dignitaries.

The "Rabat Fiasco"

The new national mood in India received further impetus when the Indian Delegation was not admitted to the Islamic Summit Conference at Rabat in September 1969. Pakistan's objection against India's admission and her threat to withdraw from the Summit, if India was admitted, was strongly supported by Morocco, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The UAR Delegation was reported to have favored India's admission, but was apparently outvoted by the other delegations. Even the Syrian Delegation assumed a lukewarm attitude toward India's admission, probably because India had successfully contested the Security Council's vacancy for 1967-68 against

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Syria. In any case, the failure of the Indian Delegation to gain admittance to the Islamic Summit caused considerable resentment in India. This episode was cited by the critics as another example of the Arabs' ingratitude despite India's unflinching support of the Arab cause, even to the extent of completely alienating Israel, with which India had no dispute whatsoever. In fact, India's behavior caused dismay and annoyance in the influential Jewish circles in the United States and Europe. The Foreign Office tried to play down the misadventure at Rabat, but was virtually forced to recall the Indian Ambassadors from Rabat, Amman and Jeddah. In a wider spectrum of the diplomatic game, the "Rabat fiasco," could possibly be a straw in the wind and an isolated, though unfortunate, incident. However, in the background of India's total support of the Arabs, despite the input of public criticism, the issue assumed greater importance. It was prima facie an indication of declining stocks of India's diplomatic profile in the Middle East.

Bangladesh

While India's Middle East policy had virtually weathered the storm caused by the "Rabat fiasco," the already fragile Indo-Arab friendship was put to a further test. Early in 1971, the Pakistan Government, headed by President (General) Yahya Khan used brutal military means to suppress the demand for political autonomy in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The Arab countries watched that human genocide in East Pakistan from

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That was probably the first major contest between India and an Arab country. There was a prolonged controversy over the informal understanding regarding temporary vacancies in the Security Council. Syria claimed one of the two Asian seats for the Arabs, because Japan was already occupying an Asian seat in the Security Council. India did not accept this distinction nor withdrew its candidacy despite Syrian pressure.

March 'til November 1971, with virtual silence. Not a single Arab country expressed a word of sympathy for their own Muslim brethren who were being butchered in East Pakistan by the West Pakistan armed forces -- thus granting Pakistan full benefit of doubt under the international legal concept of "domestic jurisdiction." Nor did the Arab countries compliment the Indian leadership for having exhibited prolonged moderation despite serious provocation from the inside as well as from the outside. They completely ignored the fact that not a single Muslim was killed in India in retaliation for millions of Hindus who were coming from across the Bengal border with horrible stories of mass murder, rape, atrocities and bloodshed. Finally, when India sent her armed forces into East Pakistan, most Arab countries sympathized with Pakistan, others expressed disappointment with India's action, and yet others accused India of aggression and supplied American-built aircraft and military equipment to Pakistan. Indian sensitivities were further hurt when all the Arab countries voted for a General Assembly resolution calling for a cease-fire and immediate withdrawal of Indian forces from East Pakistan. All these countries had assumed a crooked silence when Pakistani forces were carrying out mass murder and rape. From the Indian point of view, the Arab countries could, at least, abstain from voting. From the Arabs' point of view, that was an unreasonable expectation. When they had been pressing similar demands against Israel for unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, they could not possibly refrain from supporting a similar resolution, even though the situation was not similar. Moreover, India itself had championed many resolutions calling for unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab territories. From the Israeli point of view (since she also voted for the same

resolution along with the Arabs, at least on this occasion), India got from the Arabs what it deserved. For the Arabs have paid India in the same Indian currency, which the latter had advanced to them in plenty.

The emergence of Bangladesh and the consequent weakening of Pakistan should provide greater self-confidence to India. There is now a lesser challenge which Pakistan could pose to India, militarily near home and diplomatically abroad. This development has reduced, somewhat, the outside pressure on Kashmir, which has often been cited as a major underlying factor in India's Middle East policy -- although the Arabs never supported India over Kashmir. More than that, Pakistan's action in Bangladesh has weakened her claim over Kashmir and has lowered her international profile. Having perpetrated a virtual genocide of Muslim brethren in Bangladesh, Pakistan's claim over Muslim Kashmir is foundering on the same parochial rocks, upon which she was trying to build her Islamic bridges across the Valley of Kashmir. The principle of self-determination, which Pakistan has been invoking in support of her claim over Kashmir, was mercilessly crucified by her in the case of Bangladesh. This does not, however, mean that Bangladesh has strengthened India's claim over Kashmir. Indeed, Bangladesh could be a dangerous precedent for India. On the same basis, the Kashmiris could reassert their claim for self-determination and make an "Eastern Switzerland," of Kashmir -- thus realizing the dream of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the "Lion of Kashmir." In fact, but for the Soviet Union's support, Pakistan and China would like to make a Bangladesh of Kashmir, in order to settle their accounts with India. Despite the uniqueness of the Bangladesh problem -- the physical distance of some 1000 miles from West Pakistan, the wide-ranging racial, linguistic, cultural, social and economic divergence -- it can be a dangerous precedent for the unity of India.

NATIONAL IDENTITIES AND TERRITORIAL PARTITIONS

There are interesting similarities and contrasts between national movements: the Indian, the Pakistani, the Jewish and the Arab. The conflicts between the majority's claims and minority's rights; between the majority's quest for the maintenance of territorial unity and the minority's urge for vertical dismemberment on ethno-cultural lines; and the evolution of the Arab-Israel conflict on the one hand, and India-Pakistan confrontation on the other; are some of the common features under otherwise different landscapes.

Whether territorial partitions per se (imposed by outside forces or dictated by local conditions), have solved the problems or aggravated them, remains an open question? From the short-range perspective it appears that territorial partitions have caused untold human misery and economic dislocation. The partitions which have been effected to grant national identity to the minorities have at least a theoretical possibility of eventual unity, though on a different level. Once the aspirations for national identity are satisfied, political entities would tend to forge horizontal cooperation on functional basis. Such a functional organization is possible between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh -- with a satisfactory compromise on Kashmir. The American federal system and the European Common Market provide useful pedagogical models. Such a possibility is yet remote in the Middle East, where the Palestinian national identity stands territorially extinguished. Some Arab states are also responsible for this situation. Whatever rights and wrongs of

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Germany, Korea, India, Palestine, and Indochina are some of the recent examples.

the Arab-Israel conflict, peace in the Middle East will be in jeopardy, until a compromise solution is found to satisfy Palestinians' quest for national identity -- cultural as well as territorial.

Johan Galtung sees the conflict in "two major dimensions, one territorial and one social," and maintains that "solutions along the territorial axis alone will fail...will in all probabilities lead to a succession of wars in the area." He, therefore, suggests that "solutions might be found by combining the territorial and social perspective." The Galtung and the Gottlieb concepts though prima facie utopian are also thought provoking. A similar concept on "South Asian Commonwealth," which would encompass India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and some other neighboring countries, has been mentioned in scholastic circles. One wonders, whether we human beings are doomed to the fate of Sisyphus, or can we ever transcend man-made frontiers and barriers to exchange the "kiss of peace"?

IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The dialectics of East-West struggle have somewhat changed with the Sino-Soviet rift and Sino-American détente. Similarly anti-colonial movement has lost some of its momentum because of the very success of the colonial revolution. By the same token the dynamics of trade-union diplomacy have also undergone transformation. However, political alignments in the Middle East continue to reflect the same old pattern -- more or less in classical terms. Both China and Soviet Union and practically all the Socialist countries (with notable exception of Rumania, which has recently been taking an independent position), are supporting the

Arabs against Israel. Afro-Asian countries generally sympathize with the Arabs with varying degree of support. In such a political spectrum across the Middle East, India is clearly aligned, politically and ideologically -- though not militarily -- with the Socialist bloc. As such, India's pro-Arab foreign policy with specific emphasis on full support to the UAR, Syria and Iraq against Israel fits in her "leftist" diplomatic profile.

A study on the voting patterns in the regular plenary sessions of the United Nations General Assembly from 1946 to 1963, indicates "a partial merger of the Afro-Asian and the Soviet bloc," during 1956-63. In a "left" to "right" voting scale, with the West in the center, India, UAR, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan have been clearly placed on the "left," getting closer to the Soviet bloc. The study further shows that the distances between the UAR, India, and the Soviet Union, on the one hand; and Canada, France, Sweden, and Brazil, on the other, increase over years, while the distances between the Soviet Union and the UAR, the Soviet Union and India, and Canada and Brazil decrease. The study also indicates that "substituting India for the UAR as a representative of the Afro-Asians diminished the trend away from the West and toward the Soviets, but the trend still existed."¹⁰

India is deeply involved in a multiple contest in the Middle East and has been a constant bidder for the Arabs' friendship. Such a policy serves the purpose of countervailing Pan-Islamic postures of Pakistan

10

The voting figures, based on total tallies without any reference to the issues involved, can be misleading because on almost all colonial issues Afro-Asian countries and the Soviet bloc voted on the same side against the West. Yet, the conclusions in the study can be theoretically correct. See Hanna Newcombe, *et al.*, "United Nations Voting Patterns," International Organization, XXIV, Winter 1970, pp. 100-121.

and some Muslim monarchies like Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Secondly, India has been trying to frustrate the Western attempts toward a network of military alliances in the area. As it were, the regimes interested in the Western military pacts and entertaining Pan-Islamic ideas have been the same. This confluence between the Pan-Islamic postures and Western military alliances was in direct conflict with India's policy of nonalignment -- not only in the regional context but also in the arena of international conference diplomacy. Thirdly, since the 1960's, India has also been competing with China on account of the latter's increasing influence in the area. In this contest, the Soviet and the Indian interests evidently converge. Thus, India's diplomatic romance with the Arab countries, particularly of the "left," assumes a much wider regional and international importance than purely trans-Islamic political ramifications. It is interesting to note that in the Arab-Israel conflict, trans-Islamic politics and trans-Socialist politics tend to converge, despite intra-Arab and intra-Socialist cleavages.

THE DYNAMICS OF PERCEPTIONS AND STRATEGIES

The development of nuclear technology, ventures in outer space and explorations into the sea-beds, have apparently changed the dimensions of natural defence lines. Yet, the geopolitical variable remains a factor of considerable importance -- influencing a nation's perceptions, policy formulations, and actions. Indeed, it limits their foreign policy options and profoundly affects the content and style of their diplomacy. Here we may have to make a distinction between the geographic location per se and the totality of geopolitics. A country's dimensions, the size and ethno-cultural character of its population, and the magnitude of its economic and political stakes in the area, constitute the elements

of its geopolitics. India's location, in a region in which the Islamic culture and the number of Muslim countries are important factors, is further complicated by its territorial dimensions, the size and ethno-cultural character of its population, and the magnitude of its economic and strategic stakes in Asia. Other small countries like Burma, Ceylon, and Nepal, though located in the same region seem to enjoy greater flexibility vis-a-vis the Arab-Israel conflict, than does India. None of these small nations have a significant Muslim population. None of them except Burma, share their frontiers with any Muslim nation. The magnitude of their economic and political stakes in Asia is comparatively smaller. It appears that the lesser the stakes and commitment, the greater may be the flexibility in certain situations. Thus, the Soviet Union enjoys lesser flexibility vis-a-vis the Arab-Israel relations than say Rumania.

12

Despite "the newness of the new age," to borrow John Herz's phrase, and the consequent territorial permeability or nuclear vulnerability, most nations' policies still tend to be guided by traditional diplomatic and military strategies. This is more true of yet non-nuclear nations like India which has fought three conventional wars with Pakistan during the last quarter of a century and one frontier battle with China. The situation in the Middle East provides another example of concurrent confrontations. In fact, the decades following the Second World War are punctuated

11

Rise of China as a great power in Asia and Sino-Soviet rift adds yet another dimension to the existing geopolitics. For both "Russia and China alike, southern Asia is a rich field for making converts; it is also a place where neither can afford to let the other get the advantage in winning friends and influencing people...This is the place where they both have to be afraid of being politically outflanked." Editorial, The Economist (London), April 17, 1971, p. 18.

¹²John H. Herz, International Politics in the Atomic Age (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 5.

by local wars, which belong to the general typology of conventional wars. 13
 Indeed, the "Third World is increasingly becoming the scene of local wars,"
 though outside intervention, overt or covert, is invariably part of the
 game -- whether in Korea, Indochina, Middle East, or India-Pakistan. In
 a study on the relevance of traditional strategy, Michael Howard observed
 that "these concepts have shown themselves to be still valid in conflicts
 between non-nuclear powers." He further noted that "In the wars between
 India and Pakistan and between Israel and her Arab neighbors the tech-
 niques and even sometimes the weapons of the Second World War still
 showed themselves highly effective." 14

India's sensitivity to the Arab sentiments is based on traditional
 diplomatic and military strategy. In the numbering game, the dimensions
 of the Arab world, the size of the Arab population, and the number of
 Arab countries carry some weight in terms of traditional thinking. In
 positive terms, India seeks the Arabs' friendship by supporting them in
 international forums, and in turn expects their support and cooperation.
 Even if the nations do not "give a damn about what the United Nations
 says or does," they do, including the super powers, seek support for their
 point of view. This is not only for the sake of voting tallies at the
 United Nations score board, but also in psychological terms. Hans
 Morgenthau defines this phenomenon as "the struggle for the minds of men

13

Istàn Kende, "Twenty-Five Years of Local Wars," Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 8 (1971), p. 22.

14

Michael Howard, "The Relevance of Traditional Strategy," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 51 (January, 1973), p. 259.

as a new dimension of international politics to be added to the traditional dimensions of diplomacy and war."¹⁵

Nations conceive of the United Nations as a political instrumentality, used competitively, for the promotion of their foreign policy objectives -- somewhat similar to the way pressure-groups operate in national arenas to influence governmental policy. International conference diplomacy has become an integral part of the life-style of the nations. They seem to use their national-historical experiences in international forums, with a view to achieving or defending their objectives. India's ruling elite were greatly influenced by the trade-union movement and the rise of the Labor Party in England. They themselves used the trade-union pressure tactics against the British during the independence movement. These tactics, though modified by India's own culture and traditions, clearly belong to a different typology than the "war of liberation," -- used in other colonial areas like Algeria, Indochina, etc. India's active participation at the United Nations was influenced by a pressure-group strategy, with a view to seek recognition and influence the shape of the things -- despite military and economic weakness, or perhaps because of that. Theoretical sovereign equality of the new nations, lacking military and economic power, could acquire some meaningful recognition at the United Nations only through an active countervailing force of the Third World. India's high intensity pro-Arab policy at the United Nations, could conveniently fit in this pressure-group pattern. The pay-offs or satisfactions in return for

her diplomatic investment in the Middle East, were quite tangible during the 1950's. India's active role during the Suez Crisis, and the eventual settlement of the crucial issues -- at least for the time being -- in favor of her trade-union partner, enhanced the image of the Third World. India was virtually pushed into a position of becoming the main spokesman for the Third World. This was, obviously, an ample recognition of her international status, despite her economic and military weakness.

While enhancing her diplomatic profile and trying to evolve compromise solutions, India could safeguard her own national interests against any unwelcome move at the United Nations over Kashmir or Goa. Though India did not get enough support for her position over Kashmir, she did not lose any ground either. Pakistan has so far not taken the case to the General Assembly, obviously because she is not confident of mustering a two-thirds majority against India. Again, it was because of India's active participation in anti-colonial movement in international forums that her western adversaries, while "yelling aggression," declined to take the Goa issue to the General Assembly, because they knew that India's trade-union partners would not favor a verdict against India.

SUMMING UP

It is significant to note that the Arab-Israel War of June 1967, marks the starting point of a critical public inquiry into the content and style of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East. For the first time in India, questions have been raised regarding inputs and outputs and diminishing returns from India's diplomatic investment in the Middle East. Needless to add, independent India has grown adult and so have its people. Indian diplomacy has been around long enough to be mature,

and people do not seem to give it the benefit of doubt, as they did during the earlier phase of the Nehru era. On the basis of the foregoing analysis, two different and almost equally valid viewpoints emerge regarding the style and performance of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East. The first view takes the following line of argument:

1. Despite India's disillusionment with the Arabs' attitude during the crises involving India's vital national interests, and adverse public reaction, the basic factors sustaining India's pro-Arab policy have not become inoperative for the following reasons:

- a) India has historic, cultural and geopolitical ties with the Middle Eastern countries.
- b) The sentiments of India's Muslim minority (62 million) representing more than 11 per cent of total population (which generally supports the ruling Congress Party in the elections) cannot be ignored.
- c) The ethnic character of Kashmir with over 60 per cent Muslim population provides continued imperative of competition with Pakistan.
- d) India needs the Arabs' cooperation in international forums.
- e) The trans-Islamic and trans-Socialist politics tend to converge despite intra-Muslim and intra-Socialist cleavages. Hence India's pro-Arab policy fits in her "leftist" diplomatic profile.
- f) It serves the purpose of fending off Pan-Islamic postures and Western military alliances in the region. This confluence of the two is considered inimical to India's national interests.
- g) The importance of India's economic interests in terms of foreign trade with the Arab countries cannot be overemphasized.
- h) Regular supply of oil from the Middle East for India's growing industry and expanding military establishment, has economic as well as strategic importance.

- i) The Indian business establishments in the Persian Gulf Area and safety of the Indians' life and property in the sub-region will be in jeopardy in the absence of Indo-Arab friendship.
- j) Unlike many other Asian and African countries Indians have not been driven out en masse, from the Arab countries.
- k) Indians are often cheered rather than booed by the Palestinians and their sympathizers throughout the Arab world.
- l) The Indian diplomats have not been harrassed nor have the Indian embassies been burned in the area despite Pakistani propaganda projecting India as the enemy of Islam.
- m) The Arabs' support in any Indo-Pakistan dispute could not be realistically expected. In fact, a certain policy objective is achieved by keeping the Arabs' support to Pakistan at a minimum or by neutralizing it, so that they do not line up against India.
- n) Since the Arabs' dependence on India's support is minimal reciprocal feedbacks are not likely to be tangible.
- o) Continued Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, particularly the closure of the Suez Canal (Egypt's pride and symbol of Asia's assertion of independence from western imperialism), causes both a political offense and an economic loss to many nations like India.
- p) India's sympathies with the Palestinian national movement go far back in the history of India's own struggle for freedom.
- q) And finally, if India has consistently maintained a pro-Arab policy so far, this is hardly the time for a change, even in terms of semantics, when the Arabs' pride is in grief and the Palestinian identity territorially extinguished.

2. The second viewpoint which has emerged more clearly since late 1967 takes the following line of argument:

- a) There is neither any evidence of a direct clash of interests between India and Israel, nor has Israel ever acted in a way which might be considered prejudicial to India's vital national interests -- whether it was over Kashmir, Pakistan, Goa, China or Bangladesh. (In fact, Israel was one of the few countries which had accorded immediate de facto recognition to Bangladesh.)
- b) Ironically, this very absence of conflict between India and Israel places the latter in the periphery of India's foreign policy priorities. The desirability of cordial relations with a non-hostile state, is subordinated to the possibility of the Arab hostility.
- c) Israel is a member of the United Nations since 1949, was recognized by India in 1950, her Consulate has been functioning at Bombay since 1953. While the Arab League Mission has been operating at New Delhi with full diplomatic status since 1965, the Israeli diplomatic representation is conspicuous by its absence.
- d) Whatever rights and wrongs of the Arab-Israel conflict the absence of India's diplomatic relations with Israel does not fit in the pattern of India's diplomatic behavior.
- e) The lack of correct diplomatic courtesies to the visiting or transient Israeli dignitaries is repugnant to the Indian traditions. If it is done in deference to the Arab sentiments it offends India's native sensibilities.
- f) India has maintained diplomatic relations with Pakistan and China and consistently supported Peking's admission into the United Nations, despite hostile confrontations.
- g) One of the arguments in India's advocacy for the acceptance of the Peking regime in international forums was that isolation of a country increases her sense of insecurity and accounts for her belligerent behavior. It can be argued that Israel's isolation in the sub-region aggravates her sense of insecurity. Probably Israeli belligerency can be explained in similar psychological terms.

- h) Western affiliations of the Jewish nationalism and Israel's increasing dependence on the West is as much a circumstantial factor as India's own intra-societal and trans-societal Muslim politics. There is probably not much that Israel can do about this. In fact, Israel has been isolated and squeezed to such a situation.
- i) India's public opinion is not so much aroused against a pro-Arab policy disposition as it is over a high intensity pro-Arab policy, which ignores the existence of Israel and her security requirements, and causes avoidable offense to the influential Jewish circles in the United States and Europe.
- j) The critics of the official policy have not made a case for an unfriendly policy towards the Arabs, but merely asking for change of attitude towards Israel.
- k) And finally, in the Indo-Arab interaction, if the Arab nations have not lost their flexibility in maintaining equally cordial relations with Peking and Islamabad, there is absolutely no reason for India to deny the same privilege to itself -- in terms of correct diplomatic relations with Israel.

The dynamics of interlocking societal and trans-societal factors which tend to sustain a nation's policy in specific areas, by their very nature, do not belong to static categories. Changing dialectics of international politics and shifting perceptions of needs and objectives, can swing a certain policy disposition, or at least its operational intensity, from high through medium-range to a low-profile. Countries support each other in the hope of reciprocal cooperation. International relations like interpersonal relations are two-way streets. While there is no scientific scale to measure reciprocal feedbacks or the degree of satisfaction, continued lack of satisfaction -- as reflected through public opinion and mass-media -- from a given policy, over a period of time, would demand critical reappraisal.

George Kennan's observations that "what purports to be public opinion in most countries...is often not really the consensus of the feelings of the mass of people," but rather of "highly vocal minorities...politicians, commentators, and publicity seekers..."¹⁵ could be true of the political scene in India. However, increasing sensitivity even of a small vocal minority over the performance of Indian diplomacy in the Middle East has added a new dimension to the policy making process, which was so far the prerogative of the ruling elite. It is indicative of a wide cleavage rather than a consensus on this policy issue, even among the ruling elite in India. There is no doubt that the options of the policy makers are often more limited than those of the critics and scholars. Nevertheless, the critics and scholars articulate the issues and provide policy alternatives and fresh food for thought. Public controversy over India's policy in the Middle has also served the purpose of bringing an element of "empathy" for the Israeli point of view which was apparently lacking in India before the June 1967 War.

One tends to agree with the view that the basic factors sustaining India's pro-Arab policy have not become inoperative, despite public criticism. However, the style and operational intensity of such a policy remains an open question. The question assumes greater importance in view of the increasing public concern regarding the inputs and outputs of the policy processes. It appears that the caution which marked India's pro-Arab policy during the Nehru era is

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George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900 - 1950 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp.55-56.

missing from India's major policy statements on this issue in recent times. A skillful diplomacy would counsel restoration of that caution and prudence. The critics of the official policy have not asked for an unfriendly policy towards the Arabs. The whole public controversy boils down to a simple proposition that friendship with one country -- or a group of countries -- should not preclude maintenance of correct diplomatic relations, including economic and cultural exchange, with another. Such a stance, by the third parties -- not directly involved in a conflict -- falls in the familiar and acceptable pattern of international behavior.

This study has not adequately answered all the questions raised in the introduction, and some of them not at all. However, if this study, with all its limitations -- qualitative as well as quantitative -- can provide fresh food for thought and provoke empirical reflections, "love's labor," would not be altogether lost, I hope.

A PERSONAL FOOTNOTE

I believe that this study will not be complete without a personal footnote. I also believe that not only we human beings are culture-bound, our very quest for objectivity is structured in that framework.

I was born and brought up in a small town in Panjab (now in Pakistan), in a family of modest means but rich in affection and spiritual heritage. The life in this small town, away from modern means of communications and transportation, was simple, intimate and animate. Situated a few miles away from the Kashmir border its hilly landscape is still fresh in my memory like an unforgettable dream. I received my first education, at home, from my mother -- a saintly person, always in cheerful spirit, understanding, admiring and inspiring. I inherited from her the belief that dedication to one's own cultural and spiritual faith is fully compatible with respect and deference for others' faith and traditions. That infinite dimensions of moral human conscience and spiritual horizons recognize no frontiers.

For centuries, Panjab (the land of five rivers -- twice partitioned during the last quarter of a century), has been the meeting ground for many cultures, civilizations, languages, and races. They came as pilgrims, explorers, preachers, crusaders and invaders. Born and brought up in these environments and belonging to a socio-cultural and religious minority, the

phenomenon of social cleavage and conflict and the forces making for consensus, peace and order, often occupied my mind even when I was a school kid. I have been looking forward to exploring the twilight zones between conflict and tranquility, love and hatred, peace and war; and between the ideals and dreams of human existence and mundane realities of human subsistence.

Being myself a refugee from that part of Panjab which is now in Pakistan -- and having virtually walked over the dead bodies of those near and dear ones with whom I had played in my childhood and those with whom my ideals, dreams and life's yearnings were intertwined -- my personal views about territorial partitions of the countries are associated with great human tragedies. I belong to the Sikh community, and proudly so, which considers Panjab as its homeland. My personal concept of a homeland is not mere geographic. It is also associated with my social, ethno-cultural and historical cognitions. I have often wept for the refugees: whether they were the innocent Jewish people from Hitler's Germany travelling by leaking boats -- through darkness and storms -- towards the Promised Land; the native Palestinians herded around the Arab lands as if they do not belong anywhere; as well as for those Germans, Indochinese, Koreans, Indians and many others who were bled to death while crossing the artificial frontiers of the land which once belonged to them. I hear the silent cries of the refugees all over the world who were forced to leave their native home, never to return. This author's poignant

voice echoes through the following poem originally written in
Panjabi -- my native language -- many years ago:-

A Farewell

My love, oh my dream
you must go it seems,
and good-by I must say
and good luck to you.
May God be with you,
always.

Parting is always difficult,
it's painful too,
for me as well for you.
Sentiments and tears are no barriers,
b'cause you have to go,
and good-by I must say to you.

I'll pray for you
and search you in my dreams.
Don't forget me 'chan'
I'll miss you.
Come back soon,
I'll wait for you!

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