

Revisiting Nehru in the Era of Conflicts: Models and Impacts

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Abstract: *Remembering Nehru and his ideals for international peace becomes even more eminent at present time. Being more and more concerned about the international peace, Nehru on several occasion has expressed that without peace there cannot be prosperity and quality of life. He emphasized on several occasions that peace is a precondition for development. In this article his ideals, practices by putting those ideals in to actions, its impacts and implications have been analyzed to find out the relevance of his model for the present era of conflict. There is no doubt that world is in a dire need of a leader at present who can talk about the peace and prosperity of the people across the national borders. Though Nehru is not around us but his model for peace can still be a beacon to guide the misled world of today. His efforts to defuse the towering conflicts around the world can be seen as the model for a world suffering from new challenges and conflicts. Major mediatory roles which Nehru played at international levels have been highlighted in this research.*

Keywords: Nehru, Non Alignment, Peace and Conflict, Palestine, Congo

1. Introduction

Jawaharlal Nehru was a firm believer in peaceful settlement of disputes. Freedom of opinion and action 'the core principles to the policy of non-alignment' enabled Nehru to mediate in many international conflicts. For him any dispute could be resolved through negotiations. He believed that conflicts among nations arise because of differences of perceptions and approaches. In all the conflicts whether they are small or big, therefore, the solutions is only negotiation and. Thus we see that Nehru struggled for peace with all his strength, not only for India but for the whole of the world. He always spoke for love and peace. While replying to the debate on the objective Resolution in the Constituent Assembly in January 1947, he said: "we wish for peace, we do not want to fight any nation if we can help it" (Nehru, 1964).

Nehru's Methodology

Nehru was not only the Prime Minister but he was also the Foreign Minister of India, he always talked about peace, whenever he got the opportunity, while talking about peace Nehru said: "we must develop temper of peace and try to win even those who may be suspicious of us or who think they are against us. We have to try to understand others, just as we expect them to understand us" (Nehru, 1964). He believed that mediation by a third party may bring the warring groups together and which can resolve the disputes between them. However, Nehru believed that third party which seeks to mediate must enjoy the trust of the rival nations. It (trust of the rival nations) is possible only when it (third party seeking to mediate) remains non-entangled in power politics, like this the mediator should have no interest to gain any benefit for itself from the dispute and should be genuinely concerned to defuse tensions and promote peace. In this context, Nehru's idea of arbitration was novel in the post world war II international state of affairs. When Nehru conceived a policy of non-alignment he was well aware of the scope and role of mediation that India going to play in global crises. He felt that India with her non-aligned posture was markedly qualified to serve as a mediator in the peaceful settlement of international disputes. He also

believed that India could serve as an effective ideological bridge between the competing powers in the cold war. Nehru made his all efforts to lessen the tension of the world. In the followings, we have tried to give a very short description of the Jawaharlal Nehru's standpoints and positive efforts which he made to lessen the international disputes of that time. The novel role which Nehru played at the international stage in defusing the heat of hatred and differences among the nations undoubtedly sheds the lights and provides clear example for present day's crises management world is suffering from.

2. Important Conflicts Nehru Mediated

Nehru took separate and impartial stands and intervened vigorously in Korea, Indo-China, Hungry, in Suez Canal crisis, Congo crisis and in Palestinian conflict etc.

Korean Crisis

Korean Crisis came to an end due to Nehru's efforts. It was the first mediatory role by Nehru played at international level. He was praised by world leaders. This great work of Nehru branded India as a neutral and peace lover nation and policy of non-alignment was ultimately accepted as a factor for peaceful co-existence. India was made the chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission for Korea. India had also to supply forces and operating personnel for the custody of the prisoners of war and eventually the cease-fire agreement was arrived at. It was a great contribution of Nehru for the peace at the early stage of India's independence. Nehru's proposal that China should be admitted into the UN and North Korea be given a hearing was accepted by Stalin. Stalin in his reply to Nehru said, I welcome your peaceful regulation of the Korean question through the Security Council with the obligatory participation of the representatives of five great powers, including the Peoples Government of China" (Cross Road Bombay, 1950).

Palestine Crisis

Indian delegation on the instance of Nehru proposed an independent solution on the Palestine issue although it was

not acceptable to the west, but later the world community realized its utility. Partition of Palestine, thus brought permanent trouble in the Middle East, which at present is extremely explosive with the possibility of a great deal of trouble in the future. Had Nehru's plan been accepted the problem perhaps might have been managed better.

Nehru's speech in the Lok Sabha on August 14, 1958 described Nehru's stand over the issue. He said: "we are convinced that any effective solution of the problem of West Asia must be based on the recognition of the dominant urge and force of Arab Nationalism. Any settlement must have the goodwill and co-operation of the Arab nations. The need of the European countries for oil is patent, but there should be no difficulty in arriving at a friendly arrangement which ensures the supply of oil" (Nehru, 1964). He further adds "Every one of the Arab countries has tremendous problems of development to face. If the threat of war is removed from them they will apply themselves to these problems and become a source of strength to the forces of peace" (Nehru, 1964).

While describing the government's stand in the international issues, Nehru mentioned the issue of Israel-Palestine as an instance, in a speech in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on December 4, 1947. In the speech Nehru also talked about the plan which he gave for the solution of Israel-Palestine issue, beside the United Nations committee's minority and majority's Plan. He said "When during the last few days somehow partition suddenly became inevitable and votes veered round to it, owing to the pressure of some of the great powers, it was realized that the Indian solution was probably the best and an attempt was made in the last 48 hours to bring forward the Indian solution, not by us but by those who had wanted a unitary state. It was then too late. There were procedural difficulties and many of the persons who might have accepted this solution had already pledged themselves to partition. And so ultimately, partition was decided upon by a two thirds majority, with a large number abstaining from voting, with the result that there is trouble in the Middle East now and the possibility of a great deal of trouble in the future" (Nehru, 1964).

Vietnam Crisis

The solution of problem in Vietnam by Nehru had also been praise worthy. The Vietnam War was between French Colonialism and Ho-Chi Minh's forces for freedom; which became a conflict between the parties to the Cold War and by the time Nehru intervened in it (Nehru, 1964) . He made certain suggestions for a ceasefire and they were accepted by the parties concerned. A neutral supervisory commission was constituted and India became its chairman. Nehru also inaugurated a conference of the representatives of the three governments- Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia – to establish the commission by which independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of these three states was realized (Schuman, 1958).

Congo Crisis

Nehru also played an active role in the Congo crisis- perhaps the most complicated one- to resolve the problem (National Herald, 1960). At the request of United Nations, Nehru sent two hundred fifty persons, mostly civilians to Congo, they

were to help the UN efforts not to fight. But India stuck on to prevent intervention by outside cold war powers. A resolution sponsored by others and India asked the UN to implement its mandate to aid the central government, and urged the release of all political prisoners, the immediate convening of parliament and prevention of armed units from any interference in the Congo. Ultimately, this crisis too came to an end with the support of Nehru and leaders of other Asian and African countries (Gopal, 1984).

An Assessment

An assessment of his efforts for conflict resolutions and peace establishment around the world has been put forward for clear understanding of his accomplishments. there is no doubt Nehru initiated the new era of conflict resolution and defused several crises of his time. Infact he is the leader and practitioner both at the same time. He not only originated Non Alignment but he practiced it as well with core of his heart. Several time his sincere efforts have been severely criticized and he had been blamed for his legacies.

His greatness is the greatness of a man who is neither exclusively oriental nor-occidental, politician nor ascetic, highbrow nor dire poor. Pandit Nehru is in part all these things, and he speaks as a man who has straddled two worlds, two philosophies and two standards of living. The key to Nehru's greatness as a statesman is his ability to leave past conflicts behind him as he enters new situations (Bhambhari, 1987).

It is needless to add, Nehru's policies were not unopposed. As is well known his policies were subjected to scathing criticism especially on two issues namely, on India's approach to the Hungarian Crisis of 1956 and the Chinese attack on India in 1962. After India's defeat in the Sino-Indian war of 1962, it was Nehru personally rather than the govt. of India, who was targeted for attack "for the first time in his life" wrote Kuldeep Nayer "Nehru heard his countrymen say that he had betrayed them" (Nayar, 1971).

3. Conclusions

Nehru was a world statesman who believed in the idealism of truth and non-violence as instruments for conducting foreign relations. That is why he could be betrayed. But that did not make him small although disillusioned at the way the world powers behaved.

Nehru was only being modest when he disowned any personal responsibility for chalking out India's foreign policy. He claimed it to be coincidental that he was the first Prime Minister-cum-Foreign Minister of the country. But that was an over-simplification. Nehru's personality is implicit in every aspect of India's foreign policy. Brecher was therefore not wrong when he said that Nehru was "the philosopher, the architect, the engineer and the voice of his country's policy towards the outside world... It was he who provided a rationale for India's approach to international politics since 1947. It was he who carried the philosophy of non-alignment to the world at large. And throughout this period he has dominated the policy-making process.

The *Baltimore Sun* portrayed Nehru contributions precisely, when it commented, "His greatness is the greatness of man who is neither exclusively oriental nor-occidental, politician nor ascetic, highbrow nor dire poor. Pandit Nehru is in part all these things, and he speaks as a man who has straddled two worlds, two philosophies and two standards of living. The key to Nehru's greatness as a statesman is his ability to leave past conflicts behind him as he enters new situations" (Bhambhari, 1987).

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