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**With an Eye to the East: The China Factor and The U.S.-India  
Relationship, 1949-1979**

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**With an Eye to the East: The China Factor and The U.S.-India  
Relationship, 1949-1979**

**by**

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## **Dedication**

To Mummy, Papa and Nidhi

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# **With an Eye to the East: The China Factor and The U.S.-India Relationship, 1949-1979**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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In recent years, as China has continued to rise as an economic, political and military power, there has been increasing interest in the U.S. in developing a strategic relationship with India in response. Most have seen this as a relatively recent framework for building U.S.-India relations after five decades of viewing the bilateral relationship either through a U.S.-India-Pakistan lens, or through a Cold War lens with India seen as a leader of the non-aligned movement and subsequently a *de facto* ally and security partner of the Soviet Union. A much-debated question among academics and policymakers has been whether India and the U.S. will ally or partner against China in the future. One set of answers asserts that a China threat-driven U.S.-India partnership is inevitable; a second contends that a China-driven U.S.-India alignment or partnership is highly unlikely, if not impossible.

This dissertation shows that China has played an important role in shaping U.S.-India relations since the People's Republic of China came into existence in 1949. It explores past US-Indian interactions vis-à-vis China between 1949-1979 and makes evident that a US-India partnership against China is neither inevitable nor impossible. India has partnered, one could argue even allied, with countries against China—with the US in 1962 and the USSR in 1971. On the other hand, at other times, even when Indian



and US policymakers have considered China to be threat number one, the countries' partnership has not been sustainable.

The two countries *have* come together against China, but *only when* certain conditions are in place. This dissertation shows that they have partnered against China when they have agreed on (a) the nature of the threat, (b) the urgency of the threat, and (c) how to deal with the threat. In laying out this argument, this dissertation offers insights related to the future of the China-India-U.S. strategic triangle. More broadly, it also emphasizes that in considering when countries ally or partner, it is insufficient just to focus on threat itself or even perceptions of threat; it is also necessary to consider means: how states best think a threat can be met.

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## Introduction

...if in 10 or 15 years—or sooner, but 10 or 15 years—China begins to act aggressively externally and in a hostile way, these two countries [India and the US] will come together naturally. So they do not have to plan for it; they'll come together...So they don't have to plan for it; it will happen, it seems to me, because they are natural allies...

– Robert Blackwill, former US Ambassador to India, 2006<sup>1</sup>

But engagement with the United States is essential in the world that we live in. This is not an alliance; this is not a military alliance. This is not an alliance against any other country...I wish to dispel this illusion and I do say so with respect because it is an illusion. We are not part of any military alliance and we are not ganging up against any other country, least of all against China...I wish to dispel this opinion which may exist that what we have done with the United States is at the cost of China or any other country.

– Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, 2005<sup>2</sup>

We have always prided ourselves on preserving our strategic autonomy, and this is an article of faith for us. India is too large a country to be boxed into any alliance or regional or sub-regional arrangements, whether trade, economic or political.

– Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, 2010<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, as China has continued to rise as an economic, political and military power, there has been increasing interest in the US in developing a strategic relationship with India in response. Most have seen this as a relatively recent framework for building US-India relations after five decades of viewing the bilateral relationship either through a US-India-Pakistan lens, or through a Cold War lens (with India seen as a

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<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Blackwill, "Journalist Roundtable on India," Council on Foreign Relations, February 23, 2006 ([http://www.cfr.org/publication/9954/journalist\\_roundtable\\_on\\_india\\_rush\\_transcript\\_federal\\_news\\_service\\_inc.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/9954/journalist_roundtable_on_india_rush_transcript_federal_news_service_inc.html)).

<sup>2</sup> Manmohan Singh, "Reply to the Lok Sabha debate on his US visit," New Delhi, August 3, 2005 (<http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content.asp?id=160>).

<sup>3</sup> Manmohan Singh, "Excerpts of address by the PM at the Combined Commanders' Conference," New Delhi, September 13, 2010 (<http://www.pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=926>).

leader of the non-aligned movement and subsequently a *de facto* ally and security partner of the Soviet Union).<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in India today there are discussions of potentially allying with the US against China or, at least, using Indian relations with the US as leverage with China. But, in fact, China has played an important role in shaping US-India relations since the People's Republic of China (PRC) came into existence in 1949.

The present discussion arises from enhanced interest in the future of the China-India-US triangle, and in questions similar to those Harry Harding posed in relation to the China-Japan-US triangle:

Will it be a concert of powers, in which the three great nations share enough common values and common interests to work together to promote peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region? Will it be a firm alliance of two against one—an alignment in which the United States and Japan work together to contain the expansion of Chinese power? Will it be a balance of power, in which Japan tries to mediate a 'new Cold War' between China and the United States? Conversely, will the United States attempt to mediate an emerging rivalry between China and Japan in Asia? Or will the triangle be highly fluid, with each pair of countries working together on some issues, but finding themselves in disagreements on others, without forming any firm or enduring alignment?<sup>5</sup>

With the growing power and influence of China and India, the changing context of the three countries' relations, and their increasing interactions in East and South Asia, across the globe and in multilateral forums, these questions have assumed greater importance—not just in academic departments, op-ed columns, or think tanks around the world, but also in the corridors of power in China, India and the US. Indeed, in India, a

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<sup>4</sup> For the views of administration officials and external experts, see Josh Rogin, "U.S. and India take their relationship beyond South Asia," *The Cable*, November 15, 2010 ([http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/11/15/the\\_us\\_and\\_india\\_take\\_their\\_relationship\\_beyond\\_south\\_asia](http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/11/15/the_us_and_india_take_their_relationship_beyond_south_asia); accessed November 16, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Francine Frankel and Harry Harding, ed. *The India-China Relationship: What the United States Needs to Know* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 322

recent government-sponsored assessment identified the management of the China-India-US triangle as the key challenge that policymakers will face.<sup>6</sup>

In relation to the triangle, one of the questions that receives the most attention is whether India and the US will ally or partner against China. While there has not been a great amount of theoretical work on the US-India relationship, theoretical frameworks have implicitly or explicitly formed the basis of certain assumptions and arguments about the relationship made in both academia and the policy world.<sup>7</sup> This is true in the case of analyses of the impact of the China factor on the US-India relationship as well, with assessments tending to emerge through a realist or a constructivist lens.

One set of answers asserts that a China-driven US-India partnership is inevitable. This sentiment is based on realist assessments such as those of Robert Blackwill, the former US ambassador to India, reflected in the quote above. For this group steeped in a realist perspective, the assumption of an inevitable, automatic alignment forms the basis for the argument that the US and India should form a deeper and broader strategic partnership. It leads to assertions such as these: “India and the United States are uniquely suited for strategic partnership. Both harbor growing anxieties about China’s increasing military power and regional assertiveness.”<sup>8</sup> Shared anxiety is seen as eventually leading to alignment. This belief is not restricted to some circles in India and the US. Half of

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<sup>6</sup> See Rajiv Kumar and Santosh Kumar, *In the National Interest: A Strategic Foreign Policy for India* (New Delhi: Business Standard Books, 2010). The Indian Ministry of External Affairs commissioned the study.

<sup>7</sup> See T.V. Paul, “Integrating International Relations Studies in India to Global Scholarship,” *International Studies*, Vol. 46, Issue 1&2, (India, 2009), pp. 129-145 for how these concepts can both explicitly and implicitly filter through to policy frameworks. Also see that article for some explanations of why there has been limited international relations theoretical work on (and in) India. For further explanation, as well as statistics on the relative paucity of such work, see Rajesh M. Basrur, “Scholarship on India’s International Relations: Some Disciplinary,” *International Studies*, Vol. 46, Issue 1&2, (India, 2009), pp. 89-108.

<sup>8</sup> Tim Sullivan and Michael Mazza, “Shaping the Future of U.S.-India Defense Cooperation,” *CDS Strategic Briefing* (Washington, DC: AEI, 2011), September 27, 2010.



those surveyed in a poll in China in 2005, too, felt that the US and India would come together in an anti-Chinese alliance.<sup>9</sup>

A second perspective holds that China-driven US-India alignment or partnership is highly unlikely, if not impossible. This sentiment has been evident in Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's stated views such as the one quoted above that indicate that because of its strategic culture, India does not "do" alliances. Others such as Matthew Rudolph offer a more "eclectic" explanation, arguing that "India will not bandwagon with the US against China because it will be difficult to do so for material reasons (geography), because it is unlikely to be in India's commercial interest to do so, and because to do so would not accord with India's identity."<sup>10</sup> Some analysts in China, indeed, take succor in the Indian emphasis on strategic autonomy, arguing that it will prevent a US-India tag-team containment strategy.<sup>11</sup>

An exploration of past US-Indian interactions vis-à-vis China, however, makes evident that a US-India partnership against China is neither inevitable nor impossible. India has partnered, one could argue even allied, with countries against China—with the US in 1962 and the USSR in 1971. On the other hand, at other times, even when Indian and US policymakers have considered China to be threat number one, the countries' alignment has not been sustainable. The two countries thus *have* come together against China, but *only when* certain conditions are in place.

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<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, 33 percent said they did not think such an alliance would be formed. Survey conducted in 2005. Quoted in J. Mohan Malik, "India's Response to China's Rise in Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato eds. *The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond* (Oxford, UK: Routledge), p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> See Matthew C.J. Rudolph, "Asia's New Strategic Triangle: US-China-India Relations in Eclectic Perspective," Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, September 1, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu and Jing Dong Yuan, *China and India: Cooperation or Conflict?* (Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner, 2003), p. 102.

What are these conditions? When does China successfully drive the US and India into each other's arms? Thus far, neither these conditions nor China's role in shaping US-India relations has been explored in any great detail. This subject is much speculated about, but it has been little studied. This dissertation seeks to correct that imbalance and address the questions: What role has the China factor played in the relationship between India and the United States? When does the China factor bring the US and India together? By doing so it intends to contribute to addressing a broader question: What confluence of conditions has shaped Indian and the US proclivities to pursue alignment with each other?

To explore and disentangle the impact of the China factor on US-India relations and the conditions when it succeeds or fails in bringing about an alignment—or even when it causes estrangement—between the US and India, it is necessary to consider many other sub-questions. How have Delhi and Washington perceived Beijing? What has affected these perceptions of China and whether it poses a threat? What has shaped Indian and US policy towards China? How have these two countries' perceptions and policies interacted? Under what conditions has China had an impact on the US-India relationship? What kind of impact has it had—an adverse or an ameliorative one?

This is not a narrative that easily fits into any single theoretical international relations paradigm. Pure balance of power and balance of threat explanations do not fully provide answers. Nor do constructivist approaches such as those emphasizing India's strategic culture. Perhaps the paradigm that comes closest to addressing the question is neoclassical realism, which suggests, “intervening unit-level variables can deflect foreign policy from what pure structural theories might predict.”<sup>12</sup> But even that lens does not

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<sup>12</sup> Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics*, Volume 51 Issue 1 (1998), p. 168.

inherently provide an explanation of what those variables might be or how they might interact, and it assumes that a state's behavior is first and foremost derivative of systemic conditions. Finally, while it might explain behavior on one side, it is not necessarily an accurate representation of the dynamics on both sides.

In order to understand how the China factor interacts with various factors operating in the US-India context—at the ideational, domestic political, and systemic level—to produce key shifts in that bilateral relationship an empirical explanation is required. This dissertation undertakes to provide that explanation, considering the role China played in shaping the US-India relationship—an aspect that has been neglected in the existing literature—during an illustrative period: 1949-1979.

This chapter lays out the empirical explanations offered in the existing literature on the US-India relationship, as well as assessments of the China factor. It then outlines the key arguments of the dissertation, as well as the purpose this study aims to serve. Finally, it presents an outline of each dissertation chapter.

## **THE STORY THUS FAR**

Theoretical frameworks have implicitly or explicitly formed the basis of certain assumptions and arguments made about the US-India relationship in both academia and the policy world. In his book on US-India relations, for example, Dennis Kux posed the question “Why was it that these democracies seemed to have so much trouble in getting along?”<sup>13</sup> The assumption implicit in the question is that, as democracies, the US and India *should* have got along during the Cold War. On the other end of the theoretical

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<sup>13</sup> Dennis Kux, *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies, 1941-1991* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1992), p. xi. Also, see Surjit Mansingh, *India's Search for Power: Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy, 1966-1982* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1984), p. 72, which emphasizes the “divergence in strategic perspectives which prevented the formation of an otherwise logical partnership.”

spectrum, realism also would suggest that the two countries would have cooperated with each other, if not formed an alliance, especially vis-à-vis China during the first half of the Cold War. These two theoretical paradigms, which predict a more consistently cooperative US-India relationship, continue to form the basis of the assertion that the two countries are “natural allies.”<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, application of an ideational paradigm has highlighted American and Indian ideological and cultural differences. One strand of this argument would suggest that while American decision makers were acting on the basis of “the Cold War [which] was a structure of shared knowledge that governed great power relations for forty years,”<sup>15</sup> decision makers in India were acting on the basis of a different structure of knowledge—one shared with other post-colonial or non-aligned countries. Another strand of this argument puts the emphasis on the two countries’ cultural differences, causing them to perceive (or misperceive) each other and the world from very different—possibly irreconcilable—lenses. This paradigm, which approximates to a constructivist one, would predict a more conflictual bilateral relationship. But reality has belied this prediction, as well as the concept of India and the US being natural allies either because the nature of the two states dictates it or the balance of power in the international system does.

On the empirical side, compared to the US-China relationship, for instance, there has been somewhat limited scholarship about the US-India relationship. The studies on

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<sup>14</sup> Some form of the term has been used in both countries. Former Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee used the term (Atal Behari Vajpayee, “Address at the U.S. - India Business Summit,” New York, N.Y., September 13, 2000, [http://www.indianembassy.org/indusrel/pm\\_us\\_2000/pm\\_us\\_india\\_bus\\_september\\_13\\_2000.htm](http://www.indianembassy.org/indusrel/pm_us_2000/pm_us_india_bus_september_13_2000.htm)). The 2008 Democratic Party Platform used the term “natural strategic allies” (Democratic National Convention Committee, “Renewing America’s Promise,” August 25, 2008, p. 39). The term “natural partners” has also been used (a few years ago, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, for example, stated, “As two great democracies, we are natural partners in many ways” (Manmohan Singh, “Address to the Joint Session of the U.S. Congress,” Washington, D.C., July 19, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Constructing International Politics,” *International Security*, Summer 1995, v20, n1, p. 74.

US-India relations that exist have tended to focus on the role of Pakistan or the former Soviet Union, the role of personalities, the role of economics, the role of culture, or the role of the two countries' foreign policy traditions or ideologies in shaping bilateral relations.<sup>16</sup>

Mirroring the general trend in scholarship on diplomatic history, one of the most recent works on the history of the bilateral relationship emphasizes the impact of culture. Andrew Rotter in his book *Comrades at Odds* considers the two countries' strategic cultures, beliefs about governance, and positions on and perceptions of race, religion, gender and class.<sup>17</sup> Rotter argues that the culturally determined views of Americans and Indians on these issues shaped the countries' diplomatic relations. While he shows effectively that Indians and Americans (or, rather, Westerners—he tends to conflate the two at times) held stereotypes of each other, he fails to present a convincing case that these stereotypes determined policymaking. For example, he asserts that the motive for the US looking toward Pakistan as a partner rather than India during the Eisenhower administration was that US policymakers “were impressed with the allegedly manly, martial qualities of the Islamic nation’s political leaders and soldiery.”<sup>18</sup> But Rotter neither shows that this was what spurred the decision to lean toward Pakistan, nor refutes alternate explanations. In this particular instance, his interpretation ignores evidence that indicates that a South Asian version of “empire by invitation” might have been playing out in the region in the 1950s—that while a number of US policymakers wanted to

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<sup>16</sup> There has been very limited work applying theories to US-India relations, especially compared to that on U.S.-China or East Asian relations. Examples of the latter include Thomas Christensen’s *Useful Adversaries* that considered U.S.-China relations, and Victor Cha’s *Alignment despite Antagonism*, which explored Japan-South Korea relations.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: Culture and Indo-US Relations, 1947-1964* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Rotter, p. xxiii.

partner with India to balance China, Delhi remained unwilling to sign up to such a partnership, while Karachi expressed a strong interest in developing a deeper political and military relationship with the US, lobbying hard for it.<sup>19</sup>

Sulochana R. Glazer and Nathan Glazer's edited volume *Conflicting Images: India and the United States* also emphasizes the effect of culturally-shaped perceptions as an influence on the foreign policy of the countries toward each other.<sup>20</sup> H.W. Brands, in his book *India and the United States: The Cold Peace*,<sup>21</sup> surveys the geopolitical, social, cultural and political factors involved in shaping the relationship but also places special emphasis on the differing perceptions the two countries held of each other and of themselves. He argues that both the US and India saw themselves as role models. This self-image caused friction when each country did not see its role acknowledged or understood by the other. Archival evidence from India and the US, however, suggests that policymakers in both countries more often than not did understand the other country's perspective and its role—sometimes, they just believed that that perspective was wrong; at other times, though, they did not just acknowledge the other's crucial role, but saw it as critical in their own strategic framework.

Focused largely on the US perspective, as most scholarship on the US-India relationship has been, a volume edited by Harold Gould and Sumit Ganguly considers each US administration's policy toward India, identifying ideological differences as the main cause of the ups and downs in the US-India relationship. Many of the authors in the

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<sup>19</sup> Taking on traditional arguments that emphasized the US role in shaping alliance dynamics in post-war Western Europe, Geir Lundestad made the case, for example, that the Europeans' played a greater role in the formation of NATO (and more broadly in keeping the US involved in Europe) than had previously been thought. Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 263-277 (1986).

<sup>20</sup> Sulochana R. Glazer and Nathan Glazer ed., *Conflicting Images: India and the United States* (Glenn Dale, MS: The Riverdale Co., 1990).

<sup>21</sup> H.W. Brands, *India and the United States: The Cold Peace* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990).

book stress that while US policymakers saw situations through the lens of anti-communism, Indian policymakers saw them through a post-colonial lens that emphasized nationalism and sovereignty, causing tension between the two countries.

M. Srinivas Chary also explores the bilateral relationship in *The Eagle and the Peacock* by looking at different US administrations' attitudes toward India, but he emphasizes the effect of personalities as well as the influence of economics, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. He argues that US interest in India was heavily influenced by policymakers trying to "open doors." When the Indian government would not open up its economy to large-scale foreign investment, he argues, American policymakers lost interest in the country.<sup>22</sup> In considering the relationship up to the Kennedy administration, Dennis Merrill in *Bread and the Ballot* also considers the economic angle but asserts that there was little American interest in trade or investment in India.<sup>23</sup> The main economic element involved was American aid to India, which was seen by key decision-makers in Washington as the means toward the end of keeping India away from communism, and thus China and the Soviet Union.

While there seems little doubt that economics, culture, ideology and personalities played a role in the US-India relationship, these factors suggest continuity but do not really explain change. Most of the books mentioned above consider the economic, ideological, and cultural trends as being consistent, or at least slow to change, but simultaneously recount how the bilateral relationship went through many ups and downs. Personalities, for their part, can explain some turns in the relationship, but not all: for example, it becomes difficult to explain how and why US President Richard Nixon and

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<sup>22</sup> M. Srinivas Chary, *The Eagle and the Peacock: U.S. Foreign Policy toward India since Independence* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995).

<sup>23</sup> Dennis Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990)

National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger damaged and subsequently started to rebuild the bilateral relationship in the space of a few years if one turns mainly to a personality-based explanation (in this case, that Nixon disliked India, and more specifically Indira Gandhi). A better explanation of their role might be that the personalities involved in the relationship facilitated cooperation or exacerbated conflict that was driven by other factors.

Strategic factors have provided a more compelling—yet still incomplete—explanation for the periods of continuity and change. In the scholarship on the strategic drivers of the US-India relationship, most scholars have traditionally focused on the linkage between the US bilateral relationships with India and Pakistan or between India’s bilateral relationships with the Soviet Union and the US. Robert McMahon, considering the relationship from 1947-1965 in *Cold War on the Periphery*, effectively highlights the Cold War as a major factor in the relationship, emphasizing the effect of the Pakistan and Soviet factors. McMahon’s approach is US-centric, however, and overstates the role of the US in shaping the situation in South Asia—even blaming persisting India-Pakistan problems on the US rather on the actions of the two South Asian countries. His account also underestimates the role of India and Pakistan in exploiting the geopolitical situation, crediting them with little agency.<sup>24</sup>

Dennis Kux, in his sweeping narrative diplomatic history *Estranged Democracies*, provides a more comprehensive look at the relationship, seeking to include some of the dynamics on the Indian side as well. Kux outlines three sources of estrangement in the relationship—US efforts to combat communism, Indian non-alignment, and mutual misunderstanding. Like McMahon, Kux stresses that the Cold War

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<sup>24</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994).



framework, specifically the US tilt towards Pakistan and India's tilt towards the Soviet Union, shaped the relationship.<sup>25</sup>

There have been multiple reasons for scholars emphasizing the link between the US relationships with India and Pakistan and identifying Pakistan as the country determining the state of US-India relationship. For one: the historical, mostly antagonistic, relationship between the two neighbors. In addition, policymakers in India and Pakistan have themselves made the connection and considered—in rhetoric if not in reality—their relationships with third countries to be a zero-sum game. Furthermore, in policymaking structures around the world both countries generally fall into a single foreign affairs bureau, while other sections cover China. Finally, the manner in which area studies departments have been structured wherein India and Pakistan are more likely to be studied together than China and India.

Overall, in these studies, consideration of the role of the other elephant—or, perhaps more appropriately, dragon or tiger—in the room has been thus far largely missing, even by those who highlight strategic factors. The connection between US relations with China and India, and the Indian relationships with China and the US has been not been explored in any great detail. Some scholars have indeed dismissed the China factor. Writing recently, for example, Kux, discussing US relations during the Cold War, stated, “Washington’s policy toward India and Pakistan had its own trajectory that

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<sup>25</sup> Dennis Kux, *India and the United States*. Kux boils his argument down as “Washington and New Delhi fell out because they disagreed on national security issues of fundamental importance to each. In the late 1940s, India decided to pursue a neutralist foreign policy, staying apart from the two power blocs then emerging; then, after 1954, the US decided to arm India's enemy Pakistan as part of a global policy of containing communism through a system of military alliances; finally, in the late 1960s and especially after the 1971 Treaty of Friendship, India decided to establish a close political-security relationship with the Soviet Union. India was thus lined up with America's principal foe while, at the same time, Washington was itself aligned with India's major enemy.” (p. xiii)

followed a different and separate path from that of US-China policy.”<sup>26</sup> A few scholars have considered how the China factor shaped the relationship, but those who have either tend to focus on a limited period or event—for example, in the case of the China-India war of 1962 or the Tibetan revolt in the 1950s.<sup>27</sup> Other observers have considered China’s role very briefly as part of a broader study.<sup>28</sup> Yet others have focused on projecting into the future and predicting how the China-US-India triangle might play out. Their projections have tended to be based on realist or constructivist assumption.<sup>29</sup> Some projections have emphasized the fluidity of the triangle, but not really examined in detail the conditions under which the nature of the relationships within the triangle changes.

#### **THE EASTERN SHADOW: THE CHINA FACTOR AND THE US-INDIA RELATIONSHIP**

In sum, the existing literature provides a fair amount of insight into the US-India relationship. But it does not provide an entirely satisfactory explanation of the quality of the relationship: why the countries did not get along when they did not get along, and why they did get along when they did. The literature tends to neglect certain key aspects

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<sup>26</sup> Kux, “Review of Robert McMahon’s ‘U.S. Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War,’ *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8:3 (Summer 2006): 131-144,” *H-Diplo Article Review*, October 15, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> The 1962 war, because of US intervention, gets coverage in each of the books mentioned above. McMahon’s ‘U.S. Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War,’ *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8:3 (Summer 2006): 131-144” covers the Tibetan issue in greater detail, as does S. Mahmud Ali, *Cold War in the High Himalayas: the USA, China, and South Asia in the 1950s* (Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 1999). Mansingh has also noted the impact of Sino-Indian relations on India’s other relationships as well. Mansingh, *India’s Search for Power*, p. 193.

<sup>28</sup> William J. Barnds, *India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1972).

<sup>29</sup> Amitabh Mattoo, “Shadow of the Dragon: Indo-U.S. Relations and China,” in Gary K. Bertsch ed., *Engaging India: U.S. Strategic Relations with the World’s Largest Democracy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), p. 213. In this chapter Mattoo takes a down-the-road look, perceiving China as posing a long-term threat to both the U.S. and India and arguing that the U.S. should woo India, which can be part of a U.S.-Japan-India partnership – a similar argument to the one that the Bush ’43 administration made on entering office and that some Japanese policymakers who argue for an arc of freedom and prosperity have more recently made. Matthew Rudolph explores “how India will behave in the China-India-U.S. triangle,” arguing that India will not “bandwagon with the U.S. against China” in Rudolph, “Asia’s New Strategic Triangle.”

including domestic imperatives, the Indian perspective, and the China factor. Furthermore, current scholarship offers more explanation for continuity than change, and for estrangement than engagement.<sup>30</sup> This study, while spotlighting the China factor, also highlights and contextualizes more of the Indian perspective, domestic drivers in both countries, as well as the causes of change and engagement. It does not argue that the China factor was the only one that mattered and, therefore, also seeks to put the China factor in the context of other factors at play—thus, for example, it re-conceptualizes the role of Pakistan.

This study builds on and uses the existing scholarship, as well as related secondary works. Moreover, it is based on a study of Indian and US archival material. One reason for the greater attention paid to the American perspective in the existing literature has been the greater accessibility to US official documents. This study indeed uses the reports, official correspondence, telephone conversations, and memoranda available in presidential libraries, the State Department files at the national archives, and document collections such as the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. These documents continue to be available in greater quantity than those from the Indian side. But access to documents in India has increased over the last decade, and this study makes use of those that have been made available.

This dissertation explores the still small number of papers of India's ministry of external affairs that are available at the National Archives of India. It also examines the significantly greater quantity of documents accessible through the personal papers of senior policymakers available at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in Delhi. There remain gaps in availability—the papers of India's prime ministers remain

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<sup>30</sup> The latter emphasis is evident in the titles of books about the bilateral relationship, eg. *Unfriendly Friends; Impossible Allies; Estranged Democracies; Democracies at Loggerheads; Comrades at Odds*.

unavailable—but those papers that are available allow a better reconstruction of the Indian perspective than has been possible in the past. The papers that are available include those of a number of Indian ambassadors to the US – Vijayalakshmi Pandit (1949-1952), GL Mehta (1952-1958), MC Chagla (1958-1961) and TN Kaul (1973-1976); senior bureaucratic aides to Indian prime ministers – especially Subimal Dutt (foreign secretary under Jawaharlal Nehru in the second half of the 1950s and early 1960s) and PN Haksar (senior aide to Indira Gandhi during her first half decade in office and described by former foreign minister Natwar Singh as the “[m]ost powerful civil servant of independent India);”<sup>31</sup> diplomats such as KPS Menon (Indian ambassador to the Soviet Union for most of the 1950s); and some cabinet ministers such as TT Krishnamachari (minister of economic and defense coordination). The Dutt and Haksar files are especially useful, containing as they do reports and correspondence from a number of diplomatic posts, and accounts of deliberations among senior Indian policymakers and between Indian policymakers and their foreign counterparts. The offerings are by no means complete, but they do provide insight into the Indian perspective. Another useful primary source is the document collection *The Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, which—in the context of little or no availability to the Nehru papers—provides access to some of Nehru’s speeches, official correspondence, and internal memos.

American and Indian views of China or of each other were not monolithic. For example, in the first phase that this study covers, just as there were disagreements about perception of and policy toward China between the two countries, there was dissonance within each country as well. Some Indian policymakers—politicians and bureaucrats—

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<sup>31</sup> See footnote in K. Natwar Singh, *Yours Sincerely* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2010), p. 39

agreed with the dominant US view of China as hostile and called for explicit containment. Similarly, some in the US agreed with elements of Nehru's China perception and policy. But, the dominant US and Indian perceptions of China and their China policies were in conflict during this period. And it is these dominant perceptions prevalent among the key decision-makers that the dissertation refers to as the perceptions of "India" or the "US."

The purpose of this research is five-fold. First, it aims to shed light on the conditions under which China has brought the US and India together. The dissertation argues that perception of external threat from China is a necessary but insufficient condition to cause US-Indian alignment. The US and India's proclivity to pursue such an alignment requires agreement on not just the actual or perceived existence of a threat but also agreement on the nature of the threat, the urgency of the threat and how to approach the threat. Thus, it is not just necessary for the two countries' diagnoses of the case to match but also their prescriptions.

The key elements in the debate about approach included whether engagement or containment was the best strategy towards China. Relatedly, whether the use of force or diplomacy—and in what proportion—was most appropriate. Also, whether Pakistan was perceived as part of the problem or the solution. Furthermore, how best to distribute resources between defense and development, based on assessments of whether internal or external balancing was the best approach. Finally, whether collective security—through alliances or strategic partnerships—was the preferred means or a diversified and wide-ranging set of partnerships.

The dissertation will also offer insight into how strategic frameworks, competing priorities, domestic politics, existing capabilities, history (interpretations of the past

successes and failures and the lessons learned), as well as Chinese behavior interacted to shape US and Indian perceptions of China and their approaches toward that country.

Second, this study intends to bring China back into the story of US-India relations—not just in a cameo appearance, but in the leading role that better reflects the part China actually played. This study argues that the ups and downs of the US-India relationship cannot fully be explained without systematically considering the role China played in shaping the US-India relationship. China was at times a source of tension in the relationship, but it also plays a large part in explaining why the two countries continued to engage with each other, despite what an Indian official called a “range of irritants” in the relationship and all the reasons for estrangement that scholars have outlined.

A study of the China factor thus serves as a tool to explore this particular bilateral relationship and to illustrate the countries’ attitudes and approaches towards each other, China and the world more broadly. It also serves as a vehicle to test the applicability to this particular case of theories that predict the nature of state interaction.

Third, this dissertation hopes to contribute to the emerging debate on Indian foreign policy. In the vein of more recent literature—and as part of the process of what K. Subrahmanyam has called “shedding shibboleths”—it questions the characterization of Nehru as an idealist, extraordinarily naïve about China. It offers another way of conceptualizing non-alignment: as a strategy Indian leaders, acting from weakness and operating under political and economic constraints, used to expand their options by diversifying their dependence. It also emphasizes the continuity of this element of diversification in India’s strategy across time. Furthermore, it reassesses when and how changes occurred in Indian foreign policy, for example, by questioning the neat break in the Indian foreign policy continuum in 1962. Moreover, it intends to break down the billiard ball called India—building on the contention that while there might have been

dominant views in Indian foreign policy, there has never been a consensus view.<sup>32</sup> Finally, it seeks to question the myth that India does not “do” alliances.

Fourth, when assessing the nature and scope of the US-India relationship—and the degree of alignment or partnership—it seeks to emphasize the importance of including not just military, but also economic ties. The stove piping of dimensions of the relationship—military, economic, technological—or the horizontal focusing either on the first, second, or third images provide an incomplete picture.

Finally, the dissertation hopes to offer insights for present and future policymakers. It uses a historical approach to engage with an important dimension of international relations with global implications, and with the statecraft that has affected policymaking in the past and will do so in the future. This dissertation offers historical context for many of the challenges and opportunities related to the bilateral and trilateral relationships facing Indian and US policymakers today. This study can also offer lessons—of caution, possibilities and limitations—from past experience that can inform current policies. Finally, the dissertation can help answer questions about the future of the China-India-US triangle.

A note on what this dissertation is not: it is not a study of China as an actor in the US-India relationship, but of when and how the China factor shaped the relationship. Whether and how Chinese policymakers actively sought to shape US-India relations are no doubt questions that merit further study. But, given the already large scope of this study, as well as the limited work that exists on this subject alone, this dissertation focuses on one crucial aspect of the triangular dynamics—with the hope that this will contribute to further explorations that focus on or include the Chinese perspective.

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<sup>32</sup> C. Raja Mohan, “The Re-Making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending the Marginalization of International Relations Community,” *International Studies* 46: 1&2 (2009), p. 149.

Furthermore, the study does cover the debates about China and India policy in Washington, and China and US policy in New Delhi, but it is not an in-depth study of the domestic roots of the bilateral relationships. Finally, while the study includes information on public opinion and its impact wherever available, the perceptions that it focuses on are those of the policy elite rather than those of the public.

### **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION**

This dissertation examines the impact of US and Indian perceptions of and policy toward China on US-India relations between 1949-1979. The onset of this period was when the PRC came into existence; 1979 marked the formal US recognition of China, as well as when India officially normalized relations with China. The time-span covers multiple American and Indian administrations. It also spans periods of US-Indian engagement and estrangement, as well as when (a) Sino-Indian relations were neutral to positive while Sino-US relations were negative; (b) both Sino-Indian and Sino-US relations were negative; (c) Sino-Indian relations were strained, while Sino-US relations improved; and (d) both Sino-Indian and Sino-US relations were warming. The dissertation is organized to reflect these different states of the Indian and the US relationships with China and explore their impact on the US-India relationship in each period.

Chapters One and Two, titled as all the chapters are using *Economist* article titles from the time, focus on Indian and US perceptions of and policies towards China and the impact on US-India relations in the period 1949-1956. India's relations with China during this time were neutral to positive; Sino-US relations were negative. During this period China cast a relatively dark shadow on the US-India relationship. Both the US – led by Truman and then Eisenhower – and India – led by Jawaharlal Nehru – came to see the



other's attitude and actions towards China as, at best, hindering or, at worst, harming their major strategic priorities. American and Indian policymakers' differences on the nature of the China threat, the urgency of the threat and how to deal with the threat posed a major challenge for US-India relations. The two countries' differences over perception and approach were evident on questions such as the recognition of China, in the discussions over what to do about Tibet, as well as the debate over China's role in the Korean War.

Chapters Three and Four examine Indian and US attitudes and actions towards China between 1956-1962 and the effect those had on how Delhi and Washington dealt with each other. During this period there was a convergence in the two countries' views on the nature and urgency of the China threat, as well as on the means to dealing with it. The second Eisenhower administration and Kennedy administration came to see China not just as a direct security threat, but also a symbolic and psychological threat to US interests. The Indian leadership, which had earlier believed that any potential threat from China would be symbolic/psychological, came to see China as a more traditional security threat just as US policymakers did. Moreover, the two countries agreed on what was required to meet such a threat: close partnerships with each other, and the strengthening of not just India's defense apparatus, but also its development effort.

Chapters Five and Six consider the period 1963-1968 when Delhi and Washington saw China as threat number one. It analyzes the impact of that threat perception on the US-India bilateral relationship. It shows that while threat perceptions matched to a great extent, the two countries' assessment of what means to use to tackle the threat once again diverged. Their common interest in containing China kept their disillusionment from resulting in complete disengagement. But while the countries' agreement on ends laid the basis for cooperation, US and Indian disagreement on

means—how to contain China—stalled the alignment. The two countries disagreed about the optimum balance of resources that should be devoted towards Indian development and defense to strengthen the country against China. In a role reversal, the US led by President Lyndon Johnson believed that the China threat called for more Indian investment in and US aid to India's development rather than its defense effort. On its part, the Indian leadership led by first Lal Bahadur Shastri and then Indira Gandhi had come to desire greater defense expenditure than before. Furthermore, the US believed that with China as the primary threat, India should seek a rapprochement with Pakistan. India, however, believed Pakistan to be part of its China problem, rather than a means to solving it. Finally, India's preferred strategy of diversifying its dependence proved to be an obstacle to deeper US-India relations.

Chapters Seven and Eight focus on the period 1969-1972 and examines the impact of the shift in US and Indian perceptions of and policy toward China on the US-India relationship. The changing US attitude towards China became a source of major tension in the US-India relationship. Initially, this was caused by a divergence in threat perception. On the US side China started sliding down the threat list, while it remained the major threat on India's horizon. With the reduced need to counter China, India's importance to the US decreased as well. Then, the US came to see India as hindering Sino-US rapprochement. On the Indian part, Sino-US rapprochement occurred in the midst of a crisis, Indian policymakers saw the US ranged against India on China's side. They turned another way to tackle the threat from China, seeking an alignment with the Soviet Union.

Chapter Eight covers the period between 1973-1979, a time of developing détente between each of the countries in the triangle. Post-Sino-US rapprochement, the new US framework for Asia reduced, if not eliminated, the US desire and need to seek an Indian

role as counterweight or contrasting model to China. This rapprochement and wariness of over-dependence on the Soviet Union caused India to seek to improve its relations with China, while the Indian leadership simultaneously pursued a nuclear weapons program. The US and India sought to re-establish and maintain a working relationship to limit the Soviet role in India, but, with China no longer looming as large, the US and India slid down the others' priority list for rest of the Cold War.

The conclusion offers a summary of the main arguments of the dissertation. It also concludes with policy implications, as well as avenues for related future research.

## Chapter 1: The Orientation in the Orient (1949-1952)

Divergencies [sic] between United States and Indian views toward China and Indochina are serious foreign policy conflicts blocking closer understanding with India.

– Department of State Policy Statement, December 1, 1950<sup>1</sup>

In October 1949, a US president and Indian prime minister met for the first time in Washington, DC. A few days before, chairman of the Chinese Communist Party Mao Zedong had announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). As historic events unfolded in China, that country intruded into the agenda of the meeting between Harry Truman and Jawaharlal Nehru. Over the next three decades, in direct and indirect ways, China would continue to affect the US-India relationship. Over the next few years, China cast a dark shadow on the relationship. From 1949-1956, American and Indian policymakers differed over the nature of the China threat, the urgency of the threat and how to deal with the threat—differences that posed a major challenge for US-India relations. US policymakers came to see China as hostile and sought to contain it. The dominant view in India, on the other hand, was that in the short-to-medium term China did not pose an external threat and Delhi thus sought to engage Beijing. This chapter explores those differences, which were evident during the Truman years—on the questions of whether India would or would not serve as a bulwark against China; the recognition of China; the Chinese role in the Korean War; the Chinese takeover of Tibet; and India's role as intermediary between China and the US—as well as the impact they had on the US-India relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of State [DoS] Policy Statement: India, December 1, 1950 in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950, Volume V: The Near East, South Asia and Africa* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1978) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1950 Vol. V*], p. 1480.

The US and India's different perceptions of and policy towards China need not have mattered, but for the fact that each country came to see the other's position on China as, at best, hindering or, at worst, harming, its own strategic priorities. Furthermore, as the US focused more on Asia and India played a larger role on the global—and especially Asian—stage, the two countries crossed paths frequently on the China plane. Simultaneously, however, each country's strategic framework—and China strategies—envisioned a role for the other; this prevented the strain resulting in a complete break in the US-India relationship.

From the US perspective, there were two key aspects of the impact China had on the US-India relationship. On the one hand, communist China's emergence made India a bigger blip on Washington's radar—one that stood out because of its size, potential and democratic government. On the other hand, Delhi's disagreement with US policy on and perception of China made India a troublesome blip. Disagreements over China contributed significantly to tensions in the US-India relationship and, especially, negative-to-indifferent views of India in the US Congress during the period this chapter covers. The strain their China policies caused spilled over into various facets of the relationship.

China also shaped the US-India relationship in two key ways from India's perspective. On the one hand, the differences in perception and approach negatively affected Indian views of the US. Key Indian policymakers came to see the US more as part of the problem in Asia than as part of the solution. Nehru thought US actions and attitude towards China were making Asia—and, consequently, India—more insecure. The resultant lack of peace and stability would potentially require higher Indian defense expenditures and disrupt India's development, which was a key priority for his fledgling government. But, on the other hand, in terms of that economic development—which

Nehru believed was also essential for India's long-term security against China—the Indian leadership saw the US as an indispensable part of the solution.

#### **CHINA AND INDIA: THE VIEW FROM WASHINGTON (1947-1949)**

In 1947, while the elements of what came to be called containment were falling into place in the US, the Truman administration was preoccupied with Europe. Asia was generally an afterthought. The idea of strongpoint defense—“concentration on the defense of particular regions and means of access to them, rather than on the defense of fixed lines”—had taken hold in the administration. It did not believe that the loss of the swath of Asian territory that included India to communism would make the US insecure. Besides, as Under-Secretary of State Lovett argued, the US did not have the means available to “underwrit[e] the security of the whole world.”<sup>2</sup>

In the context of limited means, US officials such as State Department Director of Policy Planning George Kennan stressed the need for the US to differentiate between vital and peripheral interests. In listing the centers of the world that were vital for American national security neither China nor India found mention. Administration officials such as Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Kennan judged a country's value in terms of possession of “skilled manpower and industrial potential capable of significantly altering the balance of world power.” If the Soviet Union directly or indirectly took over countries that were valuable according to these criteria, it would adversely affect US interests. Japan met these criteria in Asia; China and India did not.<sup>3</sup>

India was even less important than China. A Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report in September 1947 placed it in the group ranked fourth and last in a list of areas of

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<sup>2</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 22, pp. 57-59.

<sup>3</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 75.

importance to the US.<sup>4</sup> India had neither industrial-military capacity nor skilled manpower. The country's raw materials gave it some value, but the administration did not consider India's resources indispensable.<sup>5</sup>

With the Soviet Union considered the major threat in the early years of Indian independence, Pakistan was the country in South Asia that had more apparent value, especially according to some early military and intelligence assessments. It neighbored the Soviet Union and was also nearer to the oil-rich Middle East, the defense of which was considered critical. Thus, as far as South Asia was concerned, if there was a goal it was stability, and American and British diplomats believed that "a Kashmir settlement was the sine qua non" to achieve it—a belief that caused serious differences with India.<sup>6</sup>

At that stage, India did not even have the symbolic role in the US framework that it came to play in the future. The nature of a country's government was not on the list of characteristics that made a country important to the US. Thus India's fledgling democratic experiment only gave it minimal symbolic value. At that time, administration officials such as Kennan believed that the type of government within states was not

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<sup>4</sup> The report also reflected the similar views of the policy planning staff. See McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> The criteria that helped to differentiate between vital and peripheral interests: "presence of industrial-military capacity, together with necessary sources of raw materials and secure lines of communication" (Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 58). When considering the value of India, assessments focused on physical resources—raw materials, strategic goods, military manpower, potential military bases—rather than psychological ones (McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 16).

<sup>6</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 17-18; also see p. 68. In late 1948, acting secretary of state Robert Lovett stated that resolution of Kashmir was "essential to the peace of the Indian subcontinent... Particularly in view of recent events in China and Indonesia it is increasingly important to the United States to help preserve and assure the stability of the subcontinent" (Quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 30). Nehru thought the US attitude was "incline[d] towards Pakistan," and that, along with the UK, it was playing a "dirty role." Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru (prime minister of India) [hereafter JLN] to Vijayalakshmi Pandit (Indian ambassador in Moscow), January 23, 1948 and Letter from JLN to Pandit, February 16, 1948 both in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [NMML], Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit Papers (1<sup>st</sup> Installment) [VLP (I)], Subject File [SF] No. 54. Also see S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal: A Biography, Vol. II: 1947-1956* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 27-28.

necessarily relevant in determining the US response to or relationship with it. It was in US interests to have at least some nations remain democratic, but the US itself could serve to demonstrate the benefits of democracy. Economic recovery in the democratic countries of Western Europe could further serve to prove that democracy and economic progress could co-exist.<sup>7</sup>

The lack of interest in India came with a relative lack of concern about its foreign policy, even India's "avowed intention to pursue an independent but cooperative policy."<sup>8</sup> There was also little concern that communists would gain much ground within India in the summer of 1947. Thus most US policymakers, lacking the time, expertise and interest, were satisfied with Britain showing them the way on policy towards India.<sup>9</sup>

Developments in Asia, however, soon brought the continent, in general, and India, in particular, to Washington's attention. Two events in late 1949—the "loss" of China to communism and the Soviet nuclear test—shook the faith that strongpoint defense would be sufficient to ensure US security. Asia seemed more vulnerable because of China going communist, and Western Europe because of the weakening of the US nuclear deterrent. Kennan's view that China was not vital became less resonant. At a time when it was difficult to judge Soviet intentions or even actual capabilities, the perceived shift in the power balance caused by these two "shocks" counted.<sup>10</sup>

Initially in 1949, as the Guomindang (GMD) regime had been collapsing in China under the weight of the communist onslaught, Truman and Acheson had perceived no good options. They had continued to aid the GMD. But they had no desire to increase aid

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<sup>7</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, pp. 30-43; p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> Secretary of State [S/S] George Marshall to AmEmb India, January 22, 1947, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22, p. 25. Also see McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, pp. 82-83.



that they believed was unlikely to help the situation, which was partly of the GMD leader Jiang Jieshi's making. In the summary of a report on US-China relations released in July 1949, Acheson had concluded, "...it is abundantly clear that we must face the situation as it exists in fact. We will not help the Chinese or ourselves by basing our policy on wishful thinking."<sup>11</sup> So, the secretary of state had considered fostering a wedge between the Soviet Union and the Chinese communists, partly by continuing contacts with the latter.<sup>12</sup> While there was public opposition to recognizing the communists as China's leaders, there had been little or no strong opposition among the public to this cautious policy.<sup>13</sup>

Growing agitation in the US Congress in the summer and fall of 1949 on the administration's China policy had complicated this approach. Opposition had stemmed from personal, strategic or partisan motivations. It was loudest from members of the China bloc in Congress who formed part of the China lobby—a motley crew of academics, businessmen, diplomats, labor, media persons, military officials—that strongly advocated support for Jiang, increased aid and even direct US military intervention. But their views had not gained the traction they would after the onset of McCarthyism and the Korean War.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 303.

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950* (New York, NY, 1983), pp. 13-17.

<sup>13</sup> Leonard A. Kusnitz, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: America's China Policy, 1949-1979* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984) pp. 23-24.

<sup>14</sup> Acheson noted the political dimension, partly tracing the agitation to "bitter frustration" on the part of Republicans because they had not been able to win majorities in 1950 (Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 344-355). Tucker has noted that a number of Republicans also joined the chorus of opposition, sensing a potential way to attack the administration. Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust*, pp. 11-12; also see pp. 80-99.

But India did gain traction with the “loss” of China.<sup>15</sup> Even while China was in the process of “falling” to communism, there had been rhetoric linking China and India from both the liberal and conservative ends of the political spectrum. Supporters of the GMD like Senator William Knowland (R-CA) and Maj. Gen. Chennault had warned that if China fell—and the senator had argued that the Truman administration’s “do-nothing policy” had been hastening this eventuality—then all of Asia, even India, would fall to communism.<sup>16</sup> Among others, the idea of India as part of the solution to the Asia problem had also taken hold. Some in this subgroup had asserted that the US should not only increase aid to the GMD, but also offer military assistance to countries like Burma and India. Others had argued that instead of considering more aid to the GMD, the administration should consider other approaches in Asia that included India—a Pacific Pact, for example, or increased economic assistance to India, where communists were “pressing hard.”<sup>17</sup> Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) had noted that democratic India was “the logical choice” for a “new start” in Asia.<sup>18</sup> The media had hailed Nehru as “Asia’s greatest statesman and diplomat, a man with vast qualities of courage and leadership...If

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<sup>15</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 50. *The Economist* noted the increased American commentary on the role of “India as a bulwark against Asiatic Communism” (“Notes of the Week,” *The Economist*, September 24, 1949, p. 9).

<sup>16</sup> See Transcript of Conversation between Retd. Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault (chairman, China Civil Air Transport) and Dean Rusk (assistant secretary of state [AS/S] for Far East Asian affairs [FEA]), May 11, 1949, *FRUS 1949, Volume IX: The Far East: China* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1974) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*], p. 520. Also see “Bridges Condemns Acheson on China,” *The New York Times* [hereafter *NYT*], April 16, 1949. Others in the China bloc, including Rep. Walter Judd (R-MN) and in the China lobby, including former Amb. William Bullitt and Gen. Chennault, echoed this argument. See “Christianity held Sole Hope for Asia,” *NYT*, May 11, 1949, p. 24, Felix Belair, Jr., “Bullitt Asks US Direction of Chiang Forces in China,” *NYT*, January 7, 1949, p. 14 and Felix Belair, Jr., “Chennault Urges \$700,000 Fund for China at Once,” *NYT*, May 4, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Marquis Childs, “Washington Calling: Discredited China Formula,” *The Washington Post* [hereafter *WP*], August 11, 1949, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) to Blair Moody (Moderator, *Meet Your Congress*), April 26, 1949. Quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 35.

we can find the right formula for joining our strength with his, the future of Asia and the world will become much brighter.”<sup>19</sup>

At the end of summer 1949, with the “fall” of China imminent and the administration reluctant to prop up Jiang, within the administration, too, Truman noted that India had become “key to the whole Asian situation.” Two years after a CIA report had designated India among the group of least importance, a report from the agency and another one from the State Department highlighted India’s importance as the only potential competitor to China in Southeast Asia. India’s “political stability, its economic and military potential, and [its] relative security from overland aggression” made it an asset. A special consultative committee on Asia advocated US support for potentially stable, independent governments and noted that “India and particularly Nehru” were “the most solid element with which the United States can associate itself for the promotion of its general policy in the area.” From Moscow, the US ambassador added that instead of wasting resources and energies trying to take on the communists in China, the US should build up countries like India and Japan “where we still have good chance [to] stem [the] Communist tide.”<sup>20</sup>

India had now been assigned a role in the US strategic framework—a role that was highly derivative of that of China. This came with benefits. After China’s “fall” in October 1949, the media held Nehru up as the “hope of Asia;” the “strongest figure in a troubled continent.” India was “potentially a great counterweight to China.”<sup>21</sup> Along with

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<sup>19</sup> “If We Quit Crying Over Spilt Milk, We Still have a Chance,” *Life*, August 22, 1949, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> Truman, in a meeting with Walter White, August 25, 1949 and DoS, INR Report: “India: Problems and Prospects,” October 4, 1949, quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 50 (The CIA report was “Relative US Security Interests in the European-Mediterranean Area and the Far East,” September 12, 1949); Memo from Consultative Committee on Asia (Jessup, Fosdick, and Case) to Acheson, September 2, 1949, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 39-40. Telegram from the US ambassador in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to Acheson, August 26, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Dennis Kux, *India and the United State*, p. 70. Also, Robert Trumbull, “Spokesman of a Troubled Continent,” *NYT*, October 9, 1949, p. SM12. “Our Stake in India,” *NYT*, October 13, 1949, p. 26

public adulation, there were other consequences. Some scholars have argued that India's new value also "led to a growing number of administration strategists to accept India's intransigence [on issues like Kashmir] with equanimity."<sup>22</sup>

The "fall" of China also ensured that Indian aid requests got "a more thorough hearing" in Washington.<sup>23</sup> As Merrill has noted, in the early years of Indian independence most Indian requests for economic aid from the US "either went unanswered or were turned down." The overarching reason had been that policymakers did not see aid to India as "significantly advanc[ing]" US interests.<sup>24</sup> Assessing the economic picture in India in summer 1947, an interagency report had noted, "The situation in India is not now, nor likely to be within the next five years, so critical as to necessitate special appropriations of American public funds in order to safeguard United States security by extraordinary measures of financial aid to India."<sup>25</sup> But, by early October 1949, on the grounds that it would help develop India as "a stalwart and worthy champion in Asia in collaboration with the West," the US ambassador to India, Loy Henderson, proposed to Washington an economic assistance package for India totaling \$500-million over five years.<sup>26</sup>

Everyone within the administration did not share this enthusiasm. Some, including a key South Asia hand, were skeptical about India's ability to play the role envisioned.<sup>27</sup> But, juxtaposed against China, overall there was agreement that India had

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<sup>22</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 36.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> Loy Henderson (US ambassador in India) to James Webb (Under Secretary of State [US/S]), October 3, 1949, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> See the views of Raymond Hare (Deputy AS/S for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs [NESA]) in MemCon of Anglo-American Talks on Southeast Asia, September 12, 1949 in *FRUS 1949 Vol. VII Part 2: The Far East and Australasia* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1949 Vol. VII-2*], pp. 1197-1203.

the potential to be “a powerful and valuable Asiatic friend.” The bigger question was about India’s willingness: “Would Nehru join the free nations of the world in a concrete policy aimed at containing further Communist aggression?”<sup>28</sup> The US awaited a visit by Nehru in October 1949 to hear the answer.

### **CHINA AND THE US: THE VIEW FROM DELHI (1947-1949)**

For many US policymakers, one of the key lessons of the Second World War had been that aggressors should be confronted, not appeased. Nehru, who as prime minister and foreign minister had a dominant role in and influence on foreign policymaking in India,<sup>29</sup> highlighted other aspects of that war: the way India had become entangled in a war not of its choosing; the consequences for India’s development; and the adverse impact on many countries’ economies. Furthermore, Nehru did not think either of the world wars had “settled” the situation—rather they had created more problems.<sup>30</sup>

Newly independent India did not need more problems as its leaders focused on nation building. As tensions rose in the world in the late 1940s, Nehru feared that if war broke out, “all our schemes of progress would have to be pushed aside for many, many years.” India would not be able to stay aloof. It was likely to get “entangled” by virtue of

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<sup>28</sup> Winthrop Sargent, “Nehru in the U.S.,” *Life*, November 7, 1949, p. 70. W.W. Butterworth (Director of the Office of FEA) had questioned this willingness, especially if any such role was US-sponsored. See MemCon of Anglo-American Talks on Southeast Asia, September 12, 1949.

<sup>29</sup> Raja Mohan, “The Re-Making of Indian Foreign Policy: Ending the Marginalization of International Relations Community,” p. 149. Shashi Tharoor, *Reasons of State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy under Indira Gandhi, 1966-1977* (New Delhi: Vikas Pub. House, 1982), pp. 23-24. Also see Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 564.

<sup>30</sup> Nehru also asserted, “India has not yet recovered from the effects of the last war. India, therefore, does not want to get itself entangled in another war if it comes” (JLN, Speech, Sambalpur, April 12, 1948, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series* [hereafter *SWJN SS*] Vol. 6, p. 3. Also see JLN, Speech at a dinner hosted by the CCFR and the Chicago Chamber of Commerce, Chicago, October 27, 1949, *SWJN SS Vol. 13*, p. 364; JLN, Speech at the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Indian National Congress, Jaipur, December 18, 1948, *SWJN SS Vol. 8*, p. 5). Other Indian officials, too, shared Nehru’s bleak view of the world situation. Bajpai, for example, noted his “fear [was] that some stray spark may ignite the gunpowder that is lying about any time” (Letter from GS Bajpai (secretary general, Indian ministry of external affairs [MEA]) to Pandit, June 4, 1948, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56).

its independence, its integration with the world and its “potential power in world affairs.” Even if the country managed not to get “directly involved, it will still be powerfully affected.”<sup>31</sup>

The Indian leadership’s priorities were political, social and economic development, for which India needed peace.<sup>32</sup> This assessment connected India’s domestic imperatives and its ultimate external objective. It also shaped India’s perception of and policy towards China. The Indian leadership watched the developments in China carefully. Toward the end of 1948, officials expected China to split. Nehru did not believe a communist victory in China would lead to “any immediate results in the rest of Asia,” but he did think it would “encourage...communist elements elsewhere.”<sup>33</sup> As the communists consolidated their gains in China, the Indian prime minister reassessed the consequences for the region and India. A communist Chinese victory, he believed, would have

far-reaching results all over South East Asia and ultimately in the world. India will naturally be affected by it, though there is no reason to fear any direct conflict. The future of Tibet may become a subject for argument. Indo-China and

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<sup>31</sup> Letter from JLN to the Premiers of Provinces [PoPs], November 2, 1947, *SWJN SS Vol. 4*, p. 446; Letter from JLN to Pandit, January 23, 1948, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 54. Garver has also noted India’s—as well as China’s—internal focus in John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001), p. 4. Also see JLN’s Reply to the debate on foreign policy in the Constituent Assembly, December 4, 1947, *SWJN SS Vol. 4*, p. 596; JLN’s Interview with G. Ward Price (Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, London), April 10, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 10*, p. 161; JLN, Address at a Public Meeting, Kanpur, August 28, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 5; and Letter from JLN to the PoPs, August 16, 1948, *SWJN SS Vol. 7*, p. 349. Contrary to later assertions that Nehru sought to stay aloof, the prime minister was aware that a more realistic goal was to try to minimize the adverse impact of entanglement in the evolving cold war. For an example of this assertion, see Tharoor, *Nehru: The Invention of India* (New York, NY: Arcade Publishing, 2003), p. 184. Pandit also noted that if there was war, India would not be able to stay aloof and would have to pick a side at some point (Letter from Pandit to JLN, February 11, 1948, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 57).

<sup>32</sup> Nehru noted, “We want, above all, some time and some peace to build.” Letter from JLN to Pandit, January 23, 1948, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 54.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, November 16, 1948, *SWJN SS, Vol. 8*, p. 224.

Siam, both of which have large numbers of Chinese, will be powerfully affected.  
So also Burma.<sup>34</sup>

Whatever Jiang's view of Nehru, the Indian prime minister's relations with the GMD leader had been friendly.<sup>35</sup> But when the GMD's collapse became imminent, Nehru argued that India could not continue with the status quo "merely because of the past." Nehru's diagnosis of the GMD's failure and prospects echoed those of Acheson, and the overall prescription, at least, seemed to match as well: "We have to take facts as they are..."<sup>36</sup>

The Indian prime minister believed that Delhi had to deal with the government in Beijing that existed in fact, not the one it wished existed.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, "if we stood up for the bankrupt government in China now, we would be condemned in India and this would give a fillip to communism in India, strange as that sounds."<sup>38</sup> Beyond pragmatic and domestic reasons, the prime minister's view also stemmed from a liberal internationalist perspective that it was important to integrate and bind China into the international community. Furthermore, Nehru's view of China flowed to a degree from mirror imaging, which would continue to affect his perception of China over the next half-decade. Nehru and key officials thought nationalism, rather than communism was the key driving force in China.<sup>39</sup> Like the Indian government, Nehru asserted that a

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<sup>34</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, December 6, 1948, *Ibid*, pp. 231-232.

<sup>35</sup> Sheng has noted that Jiang "barely concealed his disdain for India...that smacked of xenophobia and national self-grandiosity." Michael M. Sheng, "Mao, Tibet, and the Korean War," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2006), p. 24. For Nehru's view, see Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 77 and Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1977), pp. 73-74.

<sup>36</sup> For Nehru's similar views to those of Acheson on reasons for Jiang's failure, see Letter from JLN to PoPs, July 1, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 12*, p. 292. For Nehru's perspective that Jiang's army could not succeed without American help, see Letter from JLN to Pandit, July 1, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 12*, p. 408.

<sup>37</sup> See Letter from JLN to Pandit, July 1, 1949, *Ibid*, p. 409 and Letter from JLN to PoPs, August 15, 1949, *Ibid*, p. 317.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from JLN to Pandit, July 1, 1949, *Ibid, Vol. 12*, p. 409.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, November 16, 1948, *SWJN SS, Vol. 8*, p. 224. Bajpai shared Nehru's assessment (See Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 31).

communist Chinese government would focus on internal issues, especially economic development—and it would do so in a pragmatic, rather than an ideological way.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, India's limited capabilities influenced the prime minister's view about India's China policy options. While he was uncertain about China's external intentions, he was certain that India could not afford to provoke its northern neighbor. Thus, he noted, "[O]ur general attitude to the new China should be a friendly expectation and waiting to see what happens."<sup>41</sup> Nehru's wariness about any provocation showed in his furious reaction to an article in an Indian tabloid newspaper suggesting Indian interest in Tibet, which the communist Chinese press criticized.<sup>42</sup> It was also evident in his negative reaction to discussions about a US-sponsored Pacific Pact—which would include India—to counter China's potential "loss."

Nehru often saw pacts as provocative; as in the world wars they entangled countries and exacerbated rather than prevented conflict. Furthermore, alliances restricted freedom of action.<sup>43</sup> Nehru had earlier noted India's interest in developing a "regional

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<sup>40</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, December 6, 1948, *SWJN SS, Vol. 8*, p. 231; Letter from JLN to PoPs, July 1, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 12*, p. 293. After his conversations with Zhou Enlai in 1954, he expressed the same views (Letter from JLN to the Chief Ministers [CMs], July 1, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 560). Raghavan has argued that Nehru consistently underestimated the influence of ideology on Beijing's—and Moscow's—decision-making (Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years* (Ranikhet, India: Permanent Black, 2010), p. 317).

<sup>41</sup> Note by JLN on India and Indonesia, June 28, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 12*, p. 371. For India's limited defense capability and Nehru's emphasis on development over defense, see Arthur Lall, *The Emergence of Modern India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 118-119 (Lall was an Indian diplomat). Kavic has noted that even before Indian independence, the desire not to divert resources to defense partly contributed to the Congress party's "marked tendency to envisage a free India relatively secure against attack." Lorne J. Kavic, *India's Quest for Security: Defence Policies, 1947-1965* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967) p. 22; 39.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, September 16, 1949 in *SWJN SS Vol. 13*, p. 201.

<sup>43</sup> Not everyone shared Nehru's perspective on alliances. His sister, then India's ambassador to Moscow had noted, "we have said that we shall not ally ourselves to any grounds and will consider each question on merit. This sounds well enough but means nothing. Inevitably one finds oneself aligned on one side or the other..." Letter from Pandit to Bajpai, New York, October 9, 1947, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 55.



understanding *on a broad basis*” with Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia.<sup>44</sup> But he had no desire to include India in any grouping that came together on *an anti-communist basis*. He had outlined why

As [a] realist, one has to recognize that Communists control greater part of China and may, before long, control the whole of that country. In [the] broader interest of international peace, it is not desirable that we should do anything that would make cultivation of normal friendly relations with the new China difficult, if not impossible.

Any suggestion of Indian participation in an anti-communist grouping “can only rouse suspicion and hostility of new China.”<sup>45</sup> He thus dismissed any notion that he was going to discuss a Pacific Pact on the visit he was scheduled to make to the US in October 1949.<sup>46</sup>

While Nehru had no interest in a Pacific Pact, he welcomed another of the ways that US policymakers were contemplating to support India to play a central role vis-à-vis China: economic assistance. When it came to aid, Nehru believed that the three most important countries for India were Britain, the Soviet Union, and the US. And Nehru noted to the Indian deputy prime minister that, at that stage, “The USA [was] of course, most important” and India needed to “take full advantage of our friendship” with the US.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Commonwealth PMs, London, October 12, 1948, *SWJN SS Vol. 8*, p. 277.

<sup>45</sup> Cable from JLN to Pandit, July 19, 1949 in *SWJN SS Vol. 12*, p. 389.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, September 16, 1949 in *SWJN SS Vol. 13*, p. 201. Nehru’s feeling about pacts in general was that “It would not be in the interest of India to engage herself in any pact which would automatically involve her in war” (JLN’s Interview with G. Ward Price (Correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, London), April 10, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 10*, p. 161). Nehru was not alone in his lack of desire to join such an anti-Communist bloc—Jessup noted on his visit to the Far East that there was opposition to such a bloc. (Telegram from Ambassador at Large (Jessup) to Rusk, Bangkok, February 17, 1950 in *FRUS 1950, Vol. VI: East Asia and Pacific* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*], pp. 19-20).

<sup>47</sup> Letter from JLN to Vallabhbhai Patel (Indian deputy prime minister), May 21, 1948, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 6*, p. 454. Nehru laid out why the US and UK were important: “In this world of wars and impending wars it is obviously important from the point of view of independence to be in a position to have proper arms and

Taking full advantage included Indian officials using the China factor to elicit support for aid to India.<sup>48</sup> Internally, an Indian official elaborated one way that India could capitalize on developments in China:

The China situation will alter the balance in Asia and it seems to me that this is a good time to take up seriously the question of opening trade talks with the USSR. One result will be to stir up the Anglo-Americans who have been treating our requests for capital goods rather cavalierly.<sup>49</sup>

As McMahon has noted, the use of this tactic could be quite blatant. In December 1948, an Indian diplomat appealed for US economic aid, implying that developments in China had increased Indian concerns about the potential spread of communism in India, which could only be prevented through economic development.<sup>50</sup> Officials such as Nehru's senior-most foreign policy aide Girja Shankar Bajpai indicated to American interlocutors that "following the collapse of China," American aid was indispensable to maintain India as the "chief stabilizing influence in Asia."<sup>51</sup> Using similar logic, Bajpai had earlier also broached the subject of military assistance from the US.<sup>52</sup> Nehru, too,

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equipment as well as industrial backing for them...Without some kind of cooperation with an industrialized country well up in this business India will remain weak and a prey to others including possibly even Pakistan. We cannot remain isolated completely. In the nature of things today the only countries which can possibly help us in this process are America and England" (Letter from JLN to Pandit, June 8, 1948, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 54).

<sup>48</sup> As Walter Crocker, who was the Australian high commissioner in Delhi, noted, while Indian officials attacked the Cold War, they were not above using it to get other countries to give India aid. Walter R. Crocker, *Nehru: A Contemporary's Estimate* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 75.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from Rajeshwar Dayal (Indian chargé in Moscow) to Pandit, December 21, 1948 in NMML, VLP (II) SF No. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ambassador Rama Rau at a meeting with Charley Sawyer (Commerce Secretary), December 17, 1948, quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 47.

<sup>51</sup> Telegram from Henderson to DoS on a meeting with Bajpai, December 31, 1948, quoted in Ibid, p. 47 and Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup> MemCon by Lovett (Acting S/S), April 2, 1948, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 28. At that time, Merrill notes, there was very little interest and, therefore, discussions at the senior levels of these feelers for military assistance (p. 29). For Bajpai's influence with Nehru (at least on the conduct of foreign policy), see Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 23.

noted in a pitch to George Marshall for economic assistance that, “in working for itself India was working for all of Asia, especially in view of the tragic course in China.”<sup>53</sup>

Indian policymakers did not just see the China factor as instrumental, useful in extracting aid. They had their own concerns about communism, believing that communists operating in India were “dead-set against [the] government and trying to create trouble in every direction.”<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, after March 1948, the Indian communists’ policy had been “completely allied with violence.”<sup>55</sup> Nehru considered the communists to be one of the two most disruptive elements in India. They were creating problems not just in India, but also in Burma and Malaya. He believed that any communist attempt to instigate trouble needed to be “nipped in the bud and not allowed to grow.” Thus, despite concern about India’s image and Soviet reaction, Nehru approved crackdowns against the communists.<sup>56</sup> Reacting to criticism about this crackdown, Nehru was blunt: “in moments of a crisis, for a State, security becomes the most basic thing after which only liberty can come.”<sup>57</sup>

But Nehru asserted that crackdowns only dealt with the symptoms of the problem; they did not address the underlying cause of it. He believed that communism thrived

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<sup>53</sup> Telegram from Marshall to Acting S/S, October 16, 1948 in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 31.

<sup>54</sup> Cable from JLN to Pandit, March 31, 1948, *SWJN SS Vol. 5*, p. 349. Also see Letter from JLN to the PoPs, April 1, 1948, *SWJN SS Vol. 5*, p. 339. For Nehru’s distinction between communist parties per se and their use of violence, which he objected to, see JLN, Remarks on Current Problems, Bombay, April 26, 1948, *SWJN, SS Vol. 6*, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> JLN, Press Conference, New Delhi, August 5, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 12*, p. 7. Indian policymakers believed that the shift to a more extremist policy had resulted from external—i.e. Soviet—instigation [Cable from JLN to VK Krishna Menon (Indian high commissioner to the UK), April 11, 1948, *SWJN, SS Vol. 6*, p. 387]. There was much Soviet criticism of Nehru’s government at the time (See Letter from JLN to Pandit, April 15, 1948, *SWJN, SS Vol. 6*, p. 451).

<sup>56</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, July 1, 1948, *SWJN, SS Vol. 7*, p. 326; Letter from JLN to the PoPs, October 4, 1948, *SWJN, SS Vol. 7*, p. 373; Letter from JLN to Gopichand Bhargava (chief minister of Punjab), November 23, 1948, *SWJN SS, Vol. 8*, p. 218.

<sup>57</sup> JLN, Press Conference, New Delhi, August 5, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 12*, p. 10.

where governments “could not deliver the goods.”<sup>58</sup> Nehru considered that, “in Asia at any rate, communism flourished only where the economic standards of the people were indefensibly low; and the positive answer to the Communist threat was to remedy those conditions.”<sup>59</sup> He believed that the GMD had failed in China because it had not delivered and lost the faith of the Chinese people.<sup>60</sup> If his government did not deliver, it, too, would be vulnerable to dismissal—and the country vulnerable to communism—especially once China demonstrated an alternate model.<sup>61</sup> The development race was not just a “wholly Western construction,” as some have argued, but also on the minds of Indian policymakers.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, New Delhi, November 16, 1948, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 8*, p. 225.

<sup>59</sup> See Nehru’s comments in Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Commonwealth PMs, London, October 13, 1948, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 8*, p. 280.

<sup>60</sup> Shalini Saksena, *India, China, and the Revolution* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1992), p. 176. Also see Letter from JLN to PoPs, July 1, 1949, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 12*, p. 292.

<sup>61</sup> Record of JLN’s Interview with William H. Attwood (Correspondent of *Look*), August 31, 1954 in *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 315. Nehru outlined his views of how the lack of democracy and development could be a breeding ground for communism in a letter responding to the Nepalese king: “The Communists have succeeded in countries where the masses of the people were poor and, more especially, where the agrarian system was feudal and backward. In Asia it is this backward agrarian system which has been the chief cause of trouble and which has encouraged communism. The Chinese National Government has collapsed because of its inability to deal with the agrarian problem. There was no democracy in China. It was a purely authoritarian State. Wherever there was an element of democracy, communism was checked.” (Letter from JLN to Mohan Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana (Nepalese prime minister), August 19, 1949, *SWJN SS Vol. 13*, p. 255) He also stressed that communism could be nipped in the bud if one “delivered the goods.” (JLN, Speech at a reception given by the UN Correspondents Association, Lake Success, NY, October 19, 1949, *SWJN SS Vol. 13*, p. 330). Krishna Menon echoed Nehru’s view that a regime or political system could not survive if it did not “yield results” or “deliver the goods.” See Michael Brecher, *India and the World: Krishna Menon’s View of the World* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 280.

<sup>62</sup> See Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War battle against poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 139. Indian policymakers constantly compared China and India. In his first report to Nehru, the Indian ambassador to China indeed devoted a section to a comparison of conditions, listing areas where China had advantages [Letter from KM Panikkar (Indian ambassador to China) to JLN, June 17, 1950, National Archives of India [NAI], File No. 770 (3)-CJK/50}. Pandit, too, noted that Indian development could demonstrate the contrast between democracy and communism [Letter from Pandit to Bajpai on a meeting with Floyd Blair, April 2, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56}.

The prime minister consistently perceived India's main vulnerability as internal; its primary problem as economic.<sup>63</sup> His government's aim was "achieving good results as rapidly as possible." The consequences of not delivering or delivering too slowly would not just be bad for India's stability, but for regime stability, since "[a] Government which goes about telling people that 'we are very sorry we cannot feed you' or 'we cannot clothe or house you' will not last very long in the modern age."<sup>64</sup>

Nehru realized that his government alone could not deliver—an assessment that his rhetoric about self-sufficiency has tended to obscure. He acknowledged that rapid and efficient development required assistance from abroad. A lack of foreign aid would result in delays in economic development, "and delay in promoting the economic development of India would encourage the spread of communism and create grave social and political problems."<sup>65</sup> Thus not only would his government not prevent foreign help, but it would "welcome it."<sup>66</sup>

Nehru especially welcomed aid from the US.<sup>67</sup> He outlined why: "The USA is among the best countries that have at their disposal the wherewithal needed to implement India's [industrial and agricultural development] plans."<sup>68</sup> The Indian finance minister

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<sup>63</sup> JLN, Inaugural Speech at the Asian Regional Labour Conference, New Delhi, October 27, 1947, *SWJN, SS Vol. 4*, p. 552.

<sup>64</sup> JLN, Address to ASSOCHAM, Calcutta, December 15, 1947, *Ibid*, pp. 561-562.

<sup>65</sup> JLN in Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Commonwealth PMs, London, October 13, 1948, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 8*, p. 280.

<sup>66</sup> JLN, Address to ASSOCHAM, Calcutta, December 15, 1947, *SWJN, SS Vol. 4*, p. 569. Also see JLN, Speech, Sambalpur, April 12, 1948, *SWJN, SS Vol. 6*, p. 3. Nehru and his cabinet stood by this view of foreign participation (that it would be welcomed if it brought with it technical know-how and speed) in certain sectors even in the face of opposition {Letter from JLN to NV Gadgil (cabinet minister), New Delhi, July 3, 1948 and Letter from JLN to CM Trivedi (Governor of Punjab), New Delhi, July 12, 1948, *SWJN, SS Vol. 7*, p. 465-470}.

<sup>67</sup> JLN, Speech at a banquet given by the National Foreign Trade Council and the Far East American Council of Commerce and Industry, New York, October 20, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 341.

<sup>68</sup> JLN, Address to a meeting organized by the East and West Association, the FPA, the India League of America and the Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, NY, October 19, 1949, *Ibid*, p. 336. Gopal has noted that despite the rhetoric about staying non-aligned, India was in reality closer to Britain and the US, partly because of the traditional connection with them. Gopal, *Nehru, Vol. II*, p. 57.

made efforts to gauge US interest in aiding India.<sup>69</sup> The importance of aid from the US even had Nehru contemplating a “tilt,” reportedly saying to close confidante and then Indian High Commissioner in London V.K. Krishna Menon, “Why not align with the United States *somewhat* and build up our economic and military strength?”<sup>70</sup>

Another reason to look primarily to the US was that the Soviet Union was not really an option.<sup>71</sup> In the initial years of Indian independence, Nehru reached out to Moscow, seeking to diversify India’s relationships—and thus any potential dependence—and maximize the country’s options in terms of sources of aid.<sup>72</sup> But there had been “progressive deterioration” in the Indo-Soviet relationship. Nehru resented Soviet accusations that his government was a “stooge of the Anglo-American bloc.” He believed that India’s Communist Party, which had become steadily more extremist and hostile, had been operating under Moscow’s guidance.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, Nehru was critical of “Russia’s active expansionism” and “her apparent lack of any sense of ethics in international affairs.”<sup>74</sup> Moreover, Indian policymakers had few avenues to talk with officials from the Soviet Union or its satellites, making it harder to deal with differences.<sup>75</sup> Finally, Soviet

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<sup>69</sup> Letter from John Mathai (Indian finance minister) to JLN, June 23, 1949, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>70</sup> Krishna Menon’s account of a conversation with Nehru. Quoted in Gopal, *Nehru, Vol. II*, p. 59. Nehru noted to others as well that he was not above making “some inclination towards this group or that” when necessary {Letter from JLN to Pandit, January 23, 1948, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 54}.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Pandit to KPS Menon (Indian foreign secretary), August 5, 1948, NMML, VLP (IInd installment) SF No. 9. Also see Letter from Pandit to JLN, January 19, 1948, NMML, VLP(II), SF No. 9 and Gopal, *Nehru II*, p. 44 and p. 57.

<sup>72</sup> Brecher has argued that maximizing options was a key motivation for nonalignment. Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 558.

<sup>73</sup> Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, June 26, 1948, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 6*, pp. 463-465. Nehru asserted, “I do not approve at all...of the internal politics of a country being judged from the point of view of the foreign policy of Russia” (Letter from JLN to Lady Mountbatten, November 7, 1948, *SWJN SS, Vol. 8*, p. 302).

<sup>74</sup> JLN in Minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Commonwealth PMs, London, October 19, 1948, *SWJN SS, Vol. 8*, p. 281.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from JLN to Jayaprakash Narayan (Socialist Party leader), April 14, 1949, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 10*, p. 165.

offers and terms of assistance fell short.<sup>76</sup> It was in this context that Delhi looked to Washington.

## **COLLIDING POSITIONS<sup>77</sup> (1949-1952)**

### **Red China or New China?: Comparing Notes (1949-1950)**

McMahon has noted that Nehru's visit to the US in October 1949 revealed "fundamental" differences between India and the US—on the Soviet Union, China and communism.<sup>78</sup> China was indeed one of the key subjects of discussion between American and Indian policymakers. Nehru laid out both his perception of and preferred policy toward China. He contended that even with a communist victory in China, nationalism rather than communism would be the "governing force" there. He asserted "India's proximity to China put India in a somewhat different position from that of other countries and indicated a leaning toward early recognition."<sup>79</sup> Nehru believed that Washington, on its part, could create a wedge between Beijing and Moscow, not by loud condemnations of communism, but by working with China. Acheson disagreed that the communists controlled all of China or that they had the backing of the Chinese people—both of which were required before the US would even consider recognition. Furthermore, he believed that any recognition would constitute a sign of US rejection to those still resisting the

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<sup>76</sup> For example, Indian officials believed that the Soviet offers of grain for sale were at "uneconomic prices." See Commerce Ministry's Note in footnote 4, referenced in Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, May 12, 1948, *SWJ, SS, Vol. 6*, p. 481.

<sup>77</sup> Memo from George McGhee (AS/S NESAs) to Acheson on Indian Request for Food Grains, January 30, 1951 in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1951, Volume VI: Asia and the Pacific, Part 2* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1977) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1951 Vol. VI-2*], p. 2096.

<sup>78</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 56. Gopal noted that the discussions "failed to develop any cordiality or understanding" (Gopal, *Nehru, Vol. II*, p. 60).

<sup>79</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Truman, Nehru, Acheson and Bajpai, October 13, 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949, Volume VI: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1949) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1949 Vol. VI*], p. 1752. Brecher has noted the influence of geography on India's foreign policy in Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 557.

communists. Finally, the Chinese government needed to make clear its “international obligations” before expecting recognition.<sup>80</sup>

US policymakers had been aware of Nehru’s attitude towards China. Even before the visit, some voices within the administration had noted, “there is little hope that Nehru will dramatically announce that he has seen the light.”<sup>81</sup> In a survey of elite Indian opinion on China, Henderson had noted that the majority of the leadership shared Nehru’s views.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, US diplomats’ reports of their conversations with Indian officials in Delhi and Nanking had made evident that American and Indian attitudes and approaches towards the Chinese communists did not fully overlap.<sup>83</sup> But Nehru’s visit and his public pronouncements—including hints that India was close to recognizing the communist regime in China<sup>84</sup>—made clear to the public what had been previously apparent to some observers within the administration:<sup>85</sup> the US might have assigned India a role in its strategic script, but India was not willing to play that role in the way the US wanted.<sup>86</sup> As the British ambassador in Washington noted, the visit “made abundantly clear to the American public that they could not look to India as a ready-made replacement for China [in] the cold war against Communism.”<sup>87</sup> Nehru had told the US Congress, “where freedom is menaced...or where aggression takes place, we cannot and

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<sup>80</sup> Record of JLN’s Talk with Acheson, Washington, DC, October 12, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 297.

<sup>81</sup> Memo from Matthews (DoS South Asia Office director) to McGhee, September 6, 1949, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 39.

<sup>82</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, September 6, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, pp. 72-74.

<sup>83</sup> See Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, June 17, 1949, *Ibid*, pp. 43-44 and Telegram from Counselor of US embassy in China (Jones) to Acheson reporting his conversation with Panikkar, Nanking, September 1, 1949, *Ibid*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>84</sup> JLN, Speech at the Overseas Press Club, New York, NY, October 18, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 326.

<sup>85</sup> The South Asiawallahs had been especially aware of India’s attitude. Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 39.

<sup>86</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 58

<sup>87</sup> Sir Oliver Franks (British ambassador to the US) to the UK Foreign Office, November 3, 1949, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 58



shall not be neutral.”<sup>88</sup> But as an article in the *New York Times* lamented, Nehru “significantly declined to encourage the slightest hope” that the US would have an “ally” in India.<sup>89</sup> The “fall” of China had created a constituency for India in Washington among the public and Congress; Nehru’s visit limited its hopes and membership.

Within the administration, the visit clarified the view that India was not necessarily the “logical choice,” certainly not one that would justify half a billion dollars of aid at a time when resources were limited, Congressional support was uncertain, and the Truman administration’s focus remained on Europe.<sup>90</sup> There was also a developing change in emphasis in US policy from economic to military assistance. In the week after the visit, Henderson’s proposal for a large aid package to India was set aside.<sup>91</sup>

There were some concerns about the desirability and feasibility of India as a counterweight to China beyond Washington as well. At a meeting of US chiefs of mission in the Far East, officials expressed doubts about the wisdom of building up Japan or India as dominant powers to counter China and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, officials questioned whether India and Japan could form effective counter-balances. India had not shown “constructive leadership,” after all, and it was preoccupied with internal matters. Finally, some officials believed that any such assigned leadership would stir up countries like Pakistan or Sri Lanka.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Gopal, *Nehru, Vol. II*, p. 61.

<sup>89</sup> Arthur Krock, “Mr. Acheson’s Troubles Now Cover the Globe,” *NYT*, December 4, 1949, p. E3.

<sup>90</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 47-49; p. 53. The public was somewhat Eurocentric as well. Of the 87 percent of the American public who thought that the US should do something to stop the spread of Communism in the world, in January 1950 51 percent thought that it was more important to do so in Europe rather than Asia (12 percent). 22 percent believed it was important to stop communism in both {Foreign Affairs Survey, Jan, 1950. Retrieved Oct-17-2010 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut}.

[http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html)

<sup>91</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 20-21, p. 43.

<sup>92</sup> Telegram from US ambassador in Thailand (Stanton) to Acheson, Bangkok, February 27, 1950, *FRUS 1950, Vol. VI*, p. 27.

As McMahon has noted, the visit—and Nehru’s attitude—served to limit the US view of India’s importance.<sup>93</sup> The shift in the administration’s attitude was evident in the National Security Council staff’s December 1949 position paper on Asia policy. The paper, NSC-48, reflected the sense that since communism was global, rather than regional or local, the solution to the communist problem was not necessarily regional or local. Thus, it would be “unwise” for the US to look towards India, as a “bulwark” against communism in Asia.<sup>94</sup>

Moreover, the evolving strategic framework conceived of not just India as worthy of consideration, but South Asia. This affected US policy in at least two ways that caused dissension with Delhi. First, as McMahon has noted, US policymakers put an even higher premium on stability in South Asia. While Nehru would not have argued with this objective, the American assessment that the Kashmir dispute was one of the key threats to that stability—and required greater US involvement—came to be a major source of tension between the US and India.<sup>95</sup> British officials had been warning that the “loss” of China would make a Kashmir solution even more “essential;” they now had more adherents to this view in Washington.<sup>96</sup> Second, even though India was the bigger domino in most US policymakers’ eyes, it had become important to prevent not just India

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<sup>93</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 56

<sup>94</sup> A Report to the NSC by the Executive Secretary on The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia, NSC 48/1 Draft, December 23, 1949, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 44.

<sup>95</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 33. Also, see Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 60-66. Earlier, there had been reluctance in the US to get involved on the grounds that it had other priorities and any interest the US showed would only attract Soviet interest. As the situation in China, Indochina and Indonesia had deteriorated, US interest and involvement in solving the dispute had increased. Initially, the US had got involved because of British urging, but as the need for stability became greater, the US thought a solution and US involvement more necessary—even after one of a series of mediators stated in fall 1950 that the issue was best left to India and Pakistan to solve and despite the ambassador in Delhi’s urgings against involvement. For Nehru’s reaction, see Gopal, *Nehru II*, pp. 62-63, 91.

<sup>96</sup> Telegram from the British Embassy in Washington to the DoS attaching Continuation of Paper on China attached to Sir Oliver Franks’ Letter of January 5, 1949 to Mr. Lovett, FRUS 1949 Vol. IX, p. 10.

from falling to communism, but also Pakistan.<sup>97</sup> And, in spring 1950, Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali made clear that, while India might resist playing a role in the US script for Asia, his country was ready to play its part.<sup>98</sup>

NSC 48/2 also, however, reflected an area of US-India agreement on China. One aspect of Nehru's prescription—pursuing a wedge strategy—had “impressed” some in the State Department.<sup>99</sup> And NSC 48/2 advocated exploiting “rifts” between the communist giants. This did not lead to US-India convergence, however, because of differences over means. Some US policymakers like Kennan believed that Titoism—communists governing without Soviet control—would emerge in China.<sup>100</sup> In the fall of 1949, China watchers at Foggy Bottom argued against assuming Soviet control of the Chinese communists and stressed that Mao could act independently. Much like Nehru, the American embassy in Moscow believed that US recognition of the communist government in Beijing could help create a wedge with the Moscow. Acheson, too, argued that attempting to detach Beijing from Moscow would not constitute appeasement. Truman endorsed this goal through NSC-48/2.

But, as Gaddis has noted, while this US objective had been defined, the means were not quite as clear.<sup>101</sup> Officials like Kennan believed that a US “hands off” policy was the best method. Acheson, on the other hand, considered cautiously trying to detach Beijing from Moscow, but not until “the Chinese Communists follow Tito in stopping active abuse of us.”<sup>102</sup> This would become a continuing point of difference with Nehru:

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<sup>97</sup> View reflected in NSC 48/1: The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia, presented in December 1949. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 16.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61

<sup>99</sup> James Reston, “China Question becomes a Central Issue for US,” *NYT*, January 1, 1950, p. 77.

<sup>100</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 42.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>102</sup> Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 344

who would take the first step, China or the US. Furthermore, publicly, the US administration continued to treat international communism as a monolith and condemn communism generally.<sup>103</sup> To Nehru, this was counterproductive to the objective of facilitating a Sino-Soviet split and was hardly a step that would reassure Beijing.

### **To Recognize or Not to Recognize**

Nehru was, on the other hand, willing to take the first step with China by offering to establish relations with the People's Republic in late December 1949. This grated in Washington. Other countries, including US allies like Britain, had made clear that they would soon recognize the communist Chinese government. But, US policymakers and legislators watched India's decision particularly carefully because, as McMahon has noted, Nehru was thought to have broader influence, especially among other developing countries.<sup>104</sup>

Nehru had long stressed the need to acknowledge developments in China. Nonetheless, through most of 1949 the Indian prime minister had been in "no hurry to recognize Communist China."<sup>105</sup> He had wanted to "wait and watch developments" in China before India took such a step.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, he had not wanted "too abrupt a break" with Jiang.<sup>107</sup> In addition, throughout that year, communist Chinese news outlets had continued to condemn his government as a "lackey" of the Western "imperialists."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 68.

<sup>104</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 43. Others have noted this influence—disproportionate to India's material capabilities (Tharoor, *Nehru*, p. 188).

<sup>105</sup> Letter from JLN to Pandit, July 1, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 12*, p. 409. Also see Nancy Jetly, *India China relations, 1947-1977: a study of Parliament's role in the making of foreign policy* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1979), pp. 10-11.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from JLN to the PoPs, September 16, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 200.

<sup>107</sup> Cable from JLN to BN Rau (Indian representative at the UN), September 25, 1949, *Ibid*, p. 269. In a conversation with Jiang's representative in Delhi, Nehru reportedly also identified gratitude for previous GMD help to India and the Congress party as one reason for the lack of rush to recognition {Telegram from Strong (US chargé in China) to Acheson, Chungking, October 27, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 147}.

<sup>108</sup> Sheng, p. 24.

Finally, there was no consensus in India about recognition. Before and after the declaration of the PRC, there was a lively debate about whether to recognize China in the press. Politicians of all stripes debated the issue as well. Some supported recognition on idealistic or pragmatic bases; some opposed it as disloyal to Jiang or on the grounds that it would divide the US and India. Yet others called for conditional recognition, seeking guarantees from China in return. Within the government, Indian representative in China KM Panikkar, former Indian agent general in China and then foreign secretary KPS Menon and Krishna Menon argued in favor of recognition. Others such as governor-general C. Rajagopalachari, deputy prime minister Sardar Patel and some junior diplomats advocated a “go slow” approach.<sup>109</sup>

Nehru had not decided on the how and when of recognition on the eve of his visit to the US.<sup>110</sup> In public, while avoiding a direct answer, he had made clear that recognition was in the offing.<sup>111</sup> The prime minister subscribed to his representative to China’s view that recognition would put India in a “better position to protect [its] interests vis-à-vis China than isolating it.<sup>112</sup> He believed that indefinite delay or conditional recognition would likely push China and the Soviet Union together, and strengthen the hands of those in Beijing pushing for such a communist tag-team.<sup>113</sup> Bajpai noted another reason when he stated that India was not “flirt[ing]” with communists, but could find her own role in

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<sup>109</sup> Saksena, pp. 179-192. Also see Telegram from Sebald (acting political adviser in Japan) to Acheson on conversation with Indian First Secretary, October 7, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 105.

<sup>110</sup> JLN, Remarks at a meeting with the staff members of the United Press Association, New Delhi, October 1, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 270. Also see Letter from JLN to the PoPs, October 2, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 207.

<sup>111</sup> JLN, Speech at the Overseas Press Club, New York, NY, October 18, 1949, *Ibid*, p. 326.

<sup>112</sup> Telegram from Donovan (US chargé in India) to Acheson on conversation with Panikkar, November 7, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 178.

<sup>113</sup> Cable from JLN to BN Rau, September 25, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 269.

Asia adversely affected if other Asian countries recognized China and India did not.<sup>114</sup> The Indian government had also watched carefully the American and British attitudes towards recognition. And Patel—who made clear his concerns about recognition to the US chargé—later noted that Nehru’s decision was hurried along by indications that Britain and the US were just waiting for a good time to recognize China. Nehru wanted to pre-empt them so that Beijing would see him as a leader rather than a follower on this front. Thus, on December 10, the Indian foreign secretary informed the US ambassador in Delhi that India had decided to recognize Mao’s government. On December 30, India made a public announcement that it would be willing to recognize the communist Chinese government.<sup>115</sup>

There was little immediate reaction from Beijing following Indian recognition. The response India did get was not as enthusiastic as Nehru might have expected. A foreign ministry official later noted that the reaction even seemed hostile.<sup>116</sup> In the US, on the other hand, the reaction to India’s move was evident and ranged from frustrated to fed up and angry. An American official in China had worried in summer 1949 that India was considering recognizing the communist government “fairly promptly after ‘decent interval.’”<sup>117</sup> In China and India, directly and through British officials, US officials had sought assurances from the Indian government that it would coordinate or at least consult

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<sup>114</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson on conversation with Bajpai, December 6, 1949 in *FRUS 1949*, Vol. IX, p. 215.

<sup>115</sup> Telegram from Donovan to Acheson, September 6, 1949, Ibid, pp. 100-101; Telegram from Donovan to Acheson, November 4, 1949, Ibid, pp. 165-167; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 11, 1949, Ibid, p. 221; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 30, 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, Vol. VI, p. 615.

<sup>116</sup> Dutt, *With Nehru*, p. 76. A few months later a US official noted that the Indian government felt there was “little progress in the development of relations” with China {MemCon of Oral Report by Jessup upon his Return from the East, April 3, 1950 in *FRUS, 1950*, Vol. VI, p. 74}.

<sup>117</sup> Telegram from Stuart (US ambassador in China) to Acheson, Nanking, May 17, 1949, *FRUS 1949* Vol. IX, p. 24.

with other western states on the matter of recognition.<sup>118</sup> But it had been fairly evident by that fall that it was just a matter of time before India recognized Mao's regime.<sup>119</sup> At a briefing on Nehru's upcoming visit, the first question asked of Acheson in the senate foreign relations committee (SFRC) was whether Nehru was indeed favoring recognition.<sup>120</sup> During the visit, the Indian prime minister's comments to Acheson had made it clear that he was, as had those of the Indian foreign secretary who had noted to the US chargé in Delhi that recognition was "inevitable" though there was "no reason for haste."<sup>121</sup> American officials based in Britain, China, India and the US had then focused their efforts on delaying recognition, emphasizing that indeed there was no reason for haste on the part of India.<sup>122</sup>

The Indian announcement about recognition and the failure of these efforts exacerbated the Truman administration's problems—especially politically. In early December 1949, a news article had commented, "China is only a pang, though a large one, in the global headache which afflicts Mr. Acheson's conduct of foreign policy."<sup>123</sup> Mao's visit at the time to the Soviet Union made that pang larger. Indian recognition of China later that month and impending British recognition—which Acheson later noted the Indian decision partly spurred<sup>124</sup>—made the pang more acute, especially with the China bloc in Congress breathing down the administration's neck.

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<sup>118</sup> Telegram from Stuart to Acheson, Nanking, May 26, 1949, *Ibid.*, p. 28 and Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, May 26, 1949, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>119</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, September 6, 1949, *Ibid.*, pp. 72-74.

<sup>120</sup> The question came from committee chairman Sen. Connally. Reviews of the World Situation, October 12, 1949, *Hearings held in Executive Session Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee – 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, First and Second Sessions 1949-1950* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1974) [hereafter *SFRC Hearings 81-I&II 1949-1950*], pp. 84-85.

<sup>121</sup> Telegram from Donovan to Acheson, October 10, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>122</sup> Memo by Butterworth (AS/S FEA) to Acheson on Reply to Note from Indian Embassy on Question of Recognition, December 5, 1949, *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>123</sup> Arthur Krock, "Mr. Acheson's Troubles Now Cover the Globe," *NYT*, December 4, 1949, p. E3.

<sup>124</sup> Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 335.

There had been little support in the administration for getting involved in the Chinese civil war on behalf of Jiang. Acheson indeed asserted to the senior military leadership in late December that instead of trying to prop up Jiang militarily, the US should consider focusing on strengthening China's neighbors by supporting the nationalist governments there and helping build their internal stability and prosperity—a strategy with which Nehru would have concurred. But, that's where the concurrence ended, since there was little support in the administration for recognition of the communists.<sup>125</sup> As Acheson had told his British and French counterparts, recognition would serve no purpose and would only worry US partners in Asia.<sup>126</sup> Despite many allies leaning towards recognition, the administration agreed with members of Congress that the US should not recognize Mao's regime at that stage. Chinese maltreatment of US nationals, including diplomats,<sup>127</sup> and responses to Acheson's request for the views of US missions in Asia about recognition only reinforced this view.<sup>128</sup> Even Henderson, while noting that the Indian leadership would vociferously criticize the US for not recognizing China, asserted that the US should not do so—it would adversely affect US credibility because countries in the region would see it as a sign of weakness.<sup>129</sup>

At home, the administration received little credit from China hawks for not extending recognition to the communists. Sen. Knowland criticized the administration for not doing enough to stop or at least delay Indian recognition.<sup>130</sup> China bloc criticism only

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<sup>125</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Acheson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 29, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 465. For more on the White House view, also see Kusnitz, pp. 30-32.

<sup>126</sup> Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 328.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p. 340.

<sup>128</sup> Telegram from Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, December 16, 1949 in *FRUS 1949, Vol. IX*, pp. 222-223.

<sup>129</sup> He argued that non-recognition would translate to long-term benefits with India. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 29, 1949, *Ibid*, pp. 253-255.

<sup>130</sup> Harold B. Hinton, "U.S. Joint Chiefs Will Visit Japan in February Tour," *NYT*, December 31, 1949, p. 1.



increased when Truman and Acheson made clear publicly in early January 1950 that the US would neither defend Taiwan militarily nor significantly increase aid to Jiang's regime. Some members of the SFRC were unhappy that not only was the administration declining to increase military aid to the GMD but that, despite the rhetoric, it was not willing to do more for countries like India to build them up.<sup>131</sup> If countries like Japan and India were the crucial ends of the "crescent of countries" around China—as Acheson was asserting to senators<sup>132</sup>—and if the administration's policy was containment of communism in Asia—as Acheson had argued to the joint chiefs—the administration was not laying out how it was going to achieve this.<sup>133</sup> Sen. Styles Bridges (R-NH) said the situation begged the question whether Americans were "men in Europe and mice in Asia."<sup>134</sup>

Criticism of India was not lacking as well. Through a senior foreign policy official, Nehru had expressed the hope that the US "would not take amiss" India's early recognition.<sup>135</sup> But this was wishful thinking. Recognition reinforced the growing sense in Washington that India might not be the hoped-for solution to the China conundrum. Before Indian recognition, a map of Asia in the *New York Times* outlining the spread and threat of communism had highlighted India as a "non-communist strong point" with a label that read "West counts on Nehru for support in long run."<sup>136</sup> A month later, post-recognition, in a similar map that statement had turned into a question: "Will India

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<sup>131</sup> William S. White, "Bars Military Aid," *Ibid*, January 11, 1950, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Reviews of the World Situation, January 10, 1950, *SFRC Hearings 81-I&II 1949-1950*, p. 135.

<sup>133</sup> Ferdinand Kuhn, "Jesup Talks on Hill Prior to Asia Trip," *WP*, December 15, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> "Growing Issue," *NYT*, January 15, 1950, p. E1.

<sup>135</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 19, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. IX*, p. 227.

<sup>136</sup> "Duel for Asia," *NYT*, December 18, 1949, p. E1.

Supply Effective Anti-Communist Leadership?”<sup>137</sup> Commentators lamented that India “h[eld] the key” to any defense of Asia and yet its attitude was “dangerous.”<sup>138</sup>

Other incidents in early 1950 only exacerbated the negative feeling towards India in the US. Nehru publicly criticized the American attitude towards China as unnecessarily confrontational.<sup>139</sup> India’s membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC) at the time further highlighted US-India differences, this time on the issue of Chinese representation.<sup>140</sup> Then, India declined to recognize Bao Dai’s regime in Vietnam. American commentators labeled this a “great pity” because Nehru could have led the way for other Asian countries. All this left observers commenting that Nehru was being “less than fair” and his views of China and Asia were “less than wise.”<sup>141</sup>

Indian policymakers were not unaware of the consequences of the shift in mood in the US towards India because of its China policy. Bajpai tried to assure US officials that India was not appeasing China.<sup>142</sup> Internally, diplomats discussed the need to take action “to correct the misrepresentation to which India is being subjected.”<sup>143</sup> It was important to do so because India needed the US—it wanted “a charge account” from America.<sup>144</sup> But Acheson was blunt; aid could only be “forthcoming when there is Indian receptivity and our own ability, and constructive purpose to be served.”<sup>145</sup> At a time when the first two elements were limited, and the latter was not evident—given India’s lack of

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<sup>137</sup> Foster Hailey, “West Turns Attention to Southeastern Asia,” *Ibid*, January 22, 1950, p. 131.

<sup>138</sup> C.L. Sulzberger, “Kremlin Opens Cold War Second Front in Asia,” *Ibid*, February 5, 1950, p. 131.

<sup>139</sup> At the Colombo conference in January 1950. Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 49.

<sup>140</sup> Memo by Bacon (UN Adviser of FEA Bureau) to Merchant (DAS/S FEA), December 30, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. IX*, pp. 258-260. Also see “Russia Boycotts the UN,” *NYT*, January 18, 1950, p. 30.

<sup>141</sup> “Recognizing Indo-China,” *NYT*, February 8, 1950, p. 26.

<sup>142</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 6, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 216.

<sup>143</sup> Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, March 22, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>144</sup> Letter from Pandit to JLN, May 2, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 59.

<sup>145</sup> Telegram from Acheson to AmEmb India, April 21, 1950, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 50.

willingness to play a role—there did not seem to be much appetite for aiding India. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the Indian ambassador in Washington, noted that this US attitude towards aid and its Asia policy, in turn, were the reason for growing criticism of the US in India.<sup>146</sup>

But the bigger China-related stumbling block in US-India relations was yet to come. After all, other US friends and even allies such as Britain had recognized communist China. It was US-India interactions over the Korean War that drove home the disconnect between US and Indian perceptions of China, as well as their preferred method of dealing with that country.

### **The Korean War: Seeing Each Other as Spoilers (1950)**

McMahon has noted that the Korean War set off a chain of events that “further aggravated” US-India tensions.<sup>147</sup> Initially, however, the war increased India’s importance. This was partly a result of a strategic reconsideration that found expression in NSC-68. The document represented a more all-encompassing view of US strategy, blurring lines between vital and peripheral interests. Drafted in the first half of 1950, the document asserted that, “in the context of the present polarization of power a defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere.” This turned Lovett’s assertion on its head: the US was now opening the door to underwriting the security of the whole world. Threats were not just physical, but psychological as well. A country’s importance was derivative not just of its military potential, economic capacity and geographical position, but also of how its loss could affect perceptions of US credibility and prestige, and thus the balance of power.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Letter from Pandit to Bajpai on Meeting with McGhee, May 27, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>147</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 81

<sup>148</sup> See NSC, NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, April 14, 1950 (<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>) Also, see Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 90. Gaddis has argued

Europe had remained “the main center of activity” for the Truman administration. US policymakers had accepted the possibility of the loss of certain areas outside Europe—indeed Acheson had said as much in a January 1950 speech. The Soviet Union remained the main threat; China was a secondary one. There had still been consideration of the possibility of creating a wedge between the Soviet Union and China. But NSC-68 envisioned international communism rather than the Soviet Union as the threat, with no possibility of “fragmentation” in the short-term. Furthermore, an ongoing reassessment of China policy in the State Department in spring 1950 replaced earlier reluctance to oppose the communists taking over Taiwan—on the grounds that this would push China closer to the Soviet Union—with an argument for the need to assess the impact of such a takeover on perceptions of the global balance of power.<sup>149</sup>

As Gaddis has noted, NSC-68 might have had little impact had it not been for the Korean War. But, the outbreak of the war “validate[d] several of NSC-68’s most important conclusions.”<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, with the focus on Korea, Asia—including China and India—came into the spotlight.

Initially, in the aftermath of the North Korean invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, the US and India seemed to be on the same page. India voted for the US-sponsored UNSC resolution demanding the withdrawal of North Korean troops from the south. Two days later, India abstained on a resolution that asked UN members to provide assistance to South Korea, causing consternation in Washington. But Nehru soon noted

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that NSC-68 was a document on strategy, but one of its key purposes was to achieve a tactical objective—support for an increased defense budget (p. 106).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, pp. 100-101.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 107-112.

publicly that India supported the second resolution; Delhi had just not had time to relay instructions to the Indian delegation at the UN.<sup>151</sup>

Differences between India and the US, however, soon emerged, and they often revolved around China. Washington insisted that China was hostile and it needed to be confronted. Nehru, however, insisted that China's actions during the initial phase of the war stemmed from insecurity and Washington needed to reassure, not isolate or provoke Beijing.<sup>152</sup> Motivated by fear of expanded war, Nehru argued that China and the Soviet Union could be part of the solution—indeed, no solution was possible without Beijing and Moscow. This led him to suggest to Acheson that the PRC be allowed to take the Chinese seat at the UN.<sup>153</sup> The US administration, however, thought Beijing was part of the problem and should not be rewarded for its part in the invasion with a UN seat.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, officials argued that there was little “practical benefit” in allowing China to take the UN seat and it was a distraction from the main issue.<sup>155</sup>

There were also differences on the Truman administration's linkage of the Taiwan and Indochina issues to the Korean situation. Following the onset of the war, the administration had announced an increase in aid to anti-communist forces in Indochina

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<sup>151</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 82. Also see Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, June 30, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>152</sup> The Indian ambassador to China's earlier contention that China wanted “ten or fifteen years undisturbed peace, so that they can re-organise the country” had perhaps influenced this view in Delhi (Letter from Panikkar to Menon, June 15, 1950, NAI, File No. 770-CJK/50). He also strongly expressed the view that American isolation of China and the “ill concealed designs of American strategists on the Asian coast of the Pacific” had “left the Peking regime with no option but to tie itself up definitely with Moscow” (Letter from Panikkar to JLN, July 11, 1950, NAI, File No. 771-CJK/50).

<sup>153</sup> Noting the real fear of war, the Indian ambassador in Beijing had asked Delhi to exert more effort to get China representation on the Security Council. Bajpai also noted the advantages of bringing China into the discussion—allowing simultaneous negotiations to take place to solve Korea (just as the heat over Berlin had been eased), and alleviating accusations that the UN was essential a Western body. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 5, 1950, *FRUS 1950, Vol. VI*, pp. 368-369.

<sup>154</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>155</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 5, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, p. 369. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 419.

and its intention to defend Taiwan in case of a communist attack.<sup>156</sup> India disagreed with this linkage, believing that it would only further destabilize the region and be counterproductive to India's objective—peace. Nehru had earlier asserted, "If there is war in any part of Asia it has some close effect on India."<sup>157</sup> And the Korean War had already disturbed the peace and stability in Asia that India needed.<sup>158</sup> American actions such as the dispatch of the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait in June—even if they were meant to be defensive—would unnecessarily provoke China.<sup>159</sup> Panikkar, the Indian ambassador in Beijing, had noted that the Chinese leadership was differentiating between Korea, where China did not want to get involved in the fighting, and Taiwan, where it would not back down.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, Indian officials thought the US policy toward Taiwan would only bring Beijing and Moscow closer—a view shared by some in the US

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<sup>156</sup> William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 43.

<sup>157</sup> JLN, Address to the National Press Club, Washington, DC, October 14, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 307. For US-India differences on linkage, also see Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, June 30, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56. James Reston later mentioned to Pandit that Acheson had internally disagreed with the linkage as well. Letter from Pandit to Bajpai, July 19, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>158</sup> Bajpai noted another potential adverse side-effect for India if there was expanded war: "One point to remember is that with its resources getting more and more committed to monetary and armed aid to 'threatened' countries, there would be little left over in the USA for us, whether in the way of military equipment, or, what we need even more, capital goods." Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, July 20, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>159</sup> Stueck, p. 51 and McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 83. Nehru's concerns had been heightened by Panikkar's "panicky" reports regarding the war fervor in Beijing (see Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 5, 1950 in *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 368, and Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 9, 1950 in *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 371). The Indian ambassador suggested that Beijing was planning to attack Taiwan, and was considering invoking the terms of the Sino-Soviet treaty to get the Soviet Union involved (Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 9, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 372).

<sup>160</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 5, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 368. Panikkar noted "American action in respect of Taiwan is greatly resented by them and their feeling is that the Korean situation has been used as a cloak by the USA to annex the important island" (Letter from Panikkar to JLN, July 1, 1950, NAI, File No. 771-CJK/50).

like Kennan.<sup>161</sup> Even those in India who did not subscribe to Nehru's perception of China, like Bajpai, believed that this policy was counterproductive.<sup>162</sup>

India took on what became a recurring role, urging China and the US to reassure the other. The Indian government asked the US to ratchet down its rhetoric and reassure China about US intentions, especially with regard to Taiwan.<sup>163</sup> Indian officials tried to convince their US interlocutors that China saw US actions as aggressive.<sup>164</sup> They passed on Panikkar's assessment that even though its fears might be "groundless," China saw the US defense relationship with Thailand, US policy in Indochina, General MacArthur's visit to Taiwan in July 1950, and the US stance at the UN as signs of hostile American intentions. Insecurity made Beijing lash out—which the US could prevent by alleviating Chinese fears.<sup>165</sup>

Acheson dismissed the Indian analysis. He asserted that if Indian and British officials pushed for a settlement of Taiwan, it would unnecessarily create "sharp differences" in US bilateral relations with these countries.<sup>166</sup> MacArthur argued that

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<sup>161</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 113.

<sup>162</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, September 4, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 482. Bajpai had doubts about Chinese intentions, noting "My own rather cynical view is that, in us, China sees the only potential rival to political and economic equality in Asia and, therefore, jealousy rather than love is likely to be the real sentiment of China towards us. While we should do our best to cultivate her friendship, we must not be led away by false sentiment or illusion." Pandit wondered "if it is quite a Garden of Eden as we are led to believe!" (Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, August 21, 1950 and Letter from Pandit to Bajpai, August 30, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56).

<sup>163</sup> Indian officials asked the US to clarify that it had no territorial ambitions when it came to Taiwan and that its ultimatum to China was a temporary expedient and not a promise to aid Taiwan. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 9, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 372.

<sup>164</sup> Panikkar had passed on China's views of an American conspiracy of which Korea and the treaty with Thailand were a part. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson on conversation with Menon, July 28, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 394.

<sup>165</sup> Steps that Panikkar suggested that could alleviate this fear included an American assurance that the protection for Taiwan was only for the time being; US acceptance of the regime in Beijing as the only representative of the Chinese people; or British/Indian/other assurances that they would strive to persuade the US not to attack China using Taiwan as an excuse (or to persuade the US that they will limit their protection of Taiwan). Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, August 24, 1950, *Ibid*, pp. 446-448.

<sup>166</sup> Telegram from Acheson to AmEmb India, August 3, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 415 and Telegram from Acheson to AmEmb UK, August 13, 1950, *Ibid*, pp. 432-433. On the other hand, Harriman argued that the US indeed

Nehru would achieve nothing with “appeasement.”<sup>167</sup> American officials reiterated that the US would give China no assurances till there was danger from China or Russia; Beijing should already know that the US would not attack the mainland as long as China did not attack Taiwan or another place in Asia.<sup>168</sup> There was also criticism of Indian linkage of the Korean and Chinese representation at the UN issues.<sup>169</sup> Acheson insisted that China’s hostile words and actions drove the US attitude towards China. It was this hostility—directed towards a number of countries—and not US objections that kept communist China out of the UN. Occasional statements that China wanted peace were not borne out by Chinese behavior. Furthermore, it did not seem that Beijing was acting independently of Moscow. Instead of Washington, Beijing was the one that needed to reassure others if it wanted to elicit a change in perceptions of China.<sup>170</sup>

Throughout that summer and fall, India indeed had tried simultaneously to get China to temper its actions in order to reassure the US. Nehru had instructed Panikkar to inform Chinese officials that India, even if it sympathized with China’s claims, would not support or ignore any Chinese attempt to take Taiwan by force. India would judge China’s intentions from the way it behaved vis-à-vis Taiwan. At other times, the Indian government urged China to decrease or cease its anti-US activities if it wanted to receive a fairer hearing at the UN. Delhi tried to convince Beijing to stop its threats to use force against Taiwan and Tibet in order to convince others that it was interested in peace.

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should be cautious on Jiang, since he had the potential to be a liability and could adversely impact the attitude of countries like Britain and India on anti-communism [Memo from Harriman (special assistant to the president) to Truman, August 1950, quoted in Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2: Years of Trial and Hope* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1956), p. 352].

<sup>167</sup> Memo from Harriman to Truman, August 1950, quoted in Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, p. 352.

<sup>168</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, August 24, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, pp. 446-448.

<sup>169</sup> Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, July 30, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>170</sup> Telegram from Acheson to AmEmb India, September 1, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, pp. 478-480.



Indian calls for restraint in Beijing, however, were met with the retort that the US was to blame.<sup>171</sup>

While it might not have seemed that way in Washington, the Indian leadership did not always give China the benefit of the doubt at the expense of the US. Indian officials occasionally acknowledged US steps that seemed conciliatory. They also realized that some Chinese actions were not helping Beijing's cause or the broader efforts towards peace.<sup>172</sup>

### **Tibet: Lost by Default? (1950-1951)**

Among the Chinese actions raising doubts in Delhi was the Chinese move into Tibet in October 1950. A year before, in September 1949, Nehru had predicted that China would invade Tibet, possibly within the year, bringing China to India's doorstep.<sup>173</sup> Over the next year, Indian officials had continued to expect matters to "come to a head" in Tibet.<sup>174</sup> Thus, while there had been debate about the timing and nature of a Chinese takeover, the invasion itself was not unexpected in India.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 9, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 372; Telegram from Douglas (US ambassador in the UK) to Acheson on British report re Nehru's instructions to Panikkar on August 19, August 29, 1950 *Ibid*, p. 469; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, September 1, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 476; and Memo handed by Sir Esler Denning (British Foreign Office) to Rusk, September 14, 1950 on Extract from Report of Indian Ambassador's Conversation with Zhou En Lai (Chinese premier) on September 9, *Ibid*, p. 499.

<sup>172</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson on conversation with Bajpai, September 4, 1950, *Ibid*, pp. 482-483.

<sup>173</sup> At that time, Nehru had foreseen this as having repercussions for not just India but Nepal as well. Letter from JLN to CPN Singh (Indian ambassador in Nepal), September 10, 1949 and Letter from JLN to Matthai, September 10, 1949, SWJN SS Vol. 13, pp. 258-260. Nehru's thoughts were expressed even before Mao wrote to Peng Dehuai in November 1949 indicating that the regime should try to take care of the Tibetan question by fall/winter 1950 (See Sheng, p. 18).

<sup>174</sup> Letter from Panikkar to JLN, June 17, 1950, NAI, File No. 770 (3)-CJK/50 and Letter from Menon to Pandit, July 26, 1950, NMML, VLP (II), SF No. 14.

<sup>175</sup> Some Indians believed that China would prefer infiltration or subversion rather than all-out invasion to take Tibet (because of the expense). On timing, by April 1950, some MEA officials believed that China would not invade Tibet that year—as Nehru had expected—because of the country's other problems. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, April 24, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, pp. 332-333.

Key Indian foreign policymakers had crystallized India's Tibet policy—and conveyed it to US officials—by January 1950. The policy basically involved “leav[ing] the matter alone.” Officials had made clear that India would not take the initiative on Tibet with China. If Beijing accepted Tibetan autonomy, Delhi would recognize Chinese authority over Tibet. In the meantime, India would continue and possibly expedite its sale of small arms to Tibet and even train Tibetan officers there, but it would not welcome the establishment of a Tibetan liaison office in India. Officials had also emphasized that India would not take any military action in the case of a Chinese attack on Tibet.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, India resisted Anglo-American pressure to increase aid to Tibet. Finally, officials discouraged US involvement on the grounds that it would convince Beijing of a US-India anti-China conspiracy and expedite the Chinese takeover of Tibet.<sup>177</sup>

Acheson had wanted to use the communist threat to Tibet to convince India to move away from its “unrealism [and] semi-detached attitude” towards the Chinese threat.”<sup>178</sup> But, without British and Indian help forthcoming, the US had had no desire to get embroiled by holding out the prospect of aid to Tibet—despite Truman's later inclusion of the Chinese invasion as part of Beijing's “challenge to the Western world.”<sup>179</sup> In Delhi, Henderson had made clear to Indian foreign secretary KPS Menon that the US neither wanted to make it harder for the Indian government to persuade Tibetan officials to accept autonomy, nor expedite a Chinese invasion. Washington,

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<sup>176</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson on Donovan's conversation with Menon, January 10, 1950, *Ibid*, pp. 272-273. Also, see Dutt, *With Nehru*, p. 80.

<sup>177</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 20, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, pp. 283-285. Sheng has identified another reason—that to allow the US to do so from India (which was the only way it was possible) would have negatively affected Chinese perceptions of India's role as intermediary on Korea. Mao, in turn, actively sought “to reduce Nehru's fear”—for example, showing a willingness to talk tentatively to Tibetan officials—out of concern that increased anxiety would lead India to work together with the UK and the US. See Sheng, pp. 26-27.

<sup>178</sup> Telegram from Acheson to Henderson, December 9, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 1090.

<sup>179</sup> Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, p. 380.

nonetheless, had continued to look for signs of change in India's attitude and to probe the Indian government for its potential reaction to a coordinated US-UK-Indian effort—with India “bear[ing] primary responsibility”—to meet Tibet's defense requirements.<sup>180</sup>

Delhi, on its part, had continued to eschew any covert or overt actions that Beijing might see as provocative or part of a joint US-India effort to counter China. India did not want to provoke China. Furthermore, Indian officials did not believe that the country had the ability to offer effective resistance because of Tibet's inaccessibility and India's limited resources. Finally, there were serious doubts about Tibetan willingness to resist. Thus, the Indian government had encouraged Tibetan officials to negotiate with China, in India if necessary.<sup>181</sup>

The outbreak of the war in Korea had increased US interest in supporting Tibet. While clarifying that US support would not extend to direct involvement if China invaded Tibet, US officials suggested that Tibetan officials ask the Indians to facilitate US aid. But the war had not made Indian policymakers any more likely to help. Delhi did not think it could deter a Chinese invasion of Tibet.<sup>182</sup> But India had tried to delay it.<sup>183</sup> Officials had pursued the issue on “on firm [but] friendly lines” in Beijing. Bajpai had given Henderson the gist of a message delivered to Chinese officials, which noted that India had gone out of its way to establish friendly relations with China, even though this had been to the detriment of its other bilateral relations; a Chinese invasion of Tibet

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<sup>180</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 20, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, pp. 284-285 and Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, March 1, 1950, *FRUS 1950, Vol. VI*, p. 314.

<sup>181</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, March 8, 1950, *Ibid*, pp. 317-318; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, April 24, 1950 *Ibid*, pp. 332-333. Also see Sheng, p. 21; and Telegram from Douglas to Acheson, London, June 20, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 365. Indian officials were skeptical that any effort to strengthen Tibet could remain covert.

<sup>182</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 15, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 376-377; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, August 7, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 426. Bajpai believed it inevitable that China would achieve its goal of integrating Tibet into the country, and there was very little if anything India could do to stop that (Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, August 25, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 449).

<sup>183</sup> Sheng, p. 25.

might make India reassess its view of Chinese intentions, as well as its support for Beijing's entry into the UN.<sup>184</sup>

After the invasion in October 1950, officials like Henderson blamed India, believing that Tibet had “lost heart” because of India's reticence. Nonetheless, while urging India to do more, and suggesting that the US wanted to be helpful, Acheson made clear that the US did not want to pressure India too much lest Delhi blame Washington for any consequent Sino-Indian complications.<sup>185</sup>

Henderson had hoped that an invasion would result in an Indian reevaluation of Chinese intentions. Acheson, too, believed that the invasion, Chinese aid to Ho Chi Minh and “duplicity in dealing with GOI re Korea” would make India “reassess its views re character” of the regime in Beijing. Nonetheless, the US ambassador warned Washington against giving the impression that it was trying to use the events to sell India on alignment with the US. He further asserted, “If rift should come [between Communist China and India]...it should clearly come through force of events and not with help of outside powers.” US officials, including Acheson, were subsequently careful not to appear to be trying to create a wedge between China and India.<sup>186</sup>

China's Tibet policy did not create a deep wedge between China and India, but it did have an impact within India. A diplomat noted the “deep anger” engendered by the invasion. In parliament, from sections of both the opposition and treasury benches,

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<sup>184</sup> Bajpai's instruction to Panikkar, who met with Chinese officials on August 12, as told to the Acting British High Commissioner. (Telegram from Douglas to Acheson, London, August 12, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, pp. 430-431). Henderson was skeptical that the actual message to the Chinese had been so blunt. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, August 14, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 441.

<sup>185</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, October 27, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 540; Telegram from Acheson to Henderson, October 27, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 545. {Sheng has noted that Mao thought of British, Indian and Pakistani recognition of his regime had also been “advantageous to our military march into Tibet.” Sheng, p. 25}

<sup>186</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, August 14, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 441; Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, October 27, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 545; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, October 31, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 547; and Telegram from Acheson to the USUN, November 16, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 577.

anxiety about Chinese intentions and Indian preparedness accompanied the anger. Even socialist politicians like Minoo Masani and Ram Manohar Lohia became disillusioned with China.<sup>187</sup> Within government, officials like Bajpai admitted that they had altered their assessment—the invasion of Tibet showed that China did not really care about what India said or did. With Nehru’s approval, Bajpai instructed Panikkar to tell Beijing that its use of force was harmful for Sino-Indian relations, as well as China’s international position. Suggesting that China had misled India, India sent an official note calling the Chinese action “deplorable.”<sup>188</sup> After India received an accusatory response from China, Delhi responded defensively, denying that it had any ambitions in Tibet, but asserting that it had certain rights there.<sup>189</sup>

The invasion made the debate about China in the Indian government more pronounced. The contours of the debate on China were perhaps most evident in the contrasting views of Nehru and Patel, perhaps the second most powerful person in the government. Their expressions at the time highlighted their different perceptions of China—including whether it posed a threat to India or not—as well as their proposed strategies towards that country.

Patel laid out in a letter to Nehru his view—closer to the dominant view in the US—that the invasion showed that China represented both an internal and external threat to India. He argued that China’s leaders were hoodwinking their Indian counterparts. Furthermore, he insisted that China did not see India as a friend despite India’s recognition of the communist regime, and its efforts to facilitate Beijing’s seating at the

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<sup>187</sup> Dutt, *With Nehru*, p. 81. Jetly, pp. 18-22. Saksena, p. 191.

<sup>188</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, October 13, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 531; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, October 31, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, pp. 545-548. {The note was sent on October 26, 1950}.

<sup>189</sup> Sheng, p. 28 and Dutt, *With Nehru*, pp. 81-82.

UN. Patel argued that it was unlikely that anything India did to convince China of its good intentions would change the minds of the Chinese leadership, which was hostile towards India. Finally, he asserted that China's behaviour—more important to focus on than its rhetoric—suggested that it was a “potential enemy,” which was no longer separated by a Tibetan buffer and which had territorial ambitions that included parts of India's northeast and Burma.

Patel was critical of the government's approach—arguing that it had been too placatory and weak in its response to the Chinese invasion—and concerned about India's capabilities. He thought that accommodation would be seen as a sign of weakness; that complacency and vacillation would increase the threat from China. Instead, Patel advocated “enlightened firmness, strength and a clear line of policy.” He called for a threat assessment, analysis of India's existing and needed defence capabilities, reconsideration of Delhi's support for Beijing at the UN, strengthening of India's northeast and of Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim, internal security measures in India's border states, improvement of transport and communication lines to the border, manning of key border posts, reassessment of India's Tibet presence and its position on the McMahon Line, and, finally, a re-examination of India's external relations—including with the US.<sup>190</sup>

Despite Patel's stature, Nehru was the ultimate decision-maker on foreign policy.<sup>191</sup> In the initial aftermath of the invasion Nehru, expressed disappointment, briefly questioning broader Chinese intentions. But, as Henderson had correctly predicted, Nehru decided to stay the course after receiving what he interpreted as a less antagonistic note

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<sup>190</sup> Letter from Patel to JLN, November 7, 1950 in Durga Das ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50, Vol. X* (Ahmedabad, India: Navajivan Publishing House, 1974) [hereafter *SPC 1945-1950 Vol. X*], pp. 335-341

<sup>191</sup> Tharoor, *Nehru*, p. 162.

from China that—coupled with a Chinese military pause at the Sinkiang-Tibet border—seemed to leave the door open for Sino-Tibetan negotiations.<sup>192</sup>

Detecting a change in tone in Chinese correspondence, Nehru commented in an internal note that he saw as significant the lack of a demand for complete withdrawal of Indian interests in Tibet. He believed that China desired India's friendship and that Delhi should respond. Nehru stressed the need to keep in mind the long-term perspective—the Chinese communist regime was going nowhere and Delhi needed to establish a working relationship with it. He reiterated that India lacked the military capacity to prevent the takeover of Tibet. Any attempt at stopping the Chinese advance would likely fail and would lead to Chinese hostility towards India and constant insecurity at India's borders. Nehru sought instead a more limited, what he considered feasible, goal—Tibetan autonomy—arguing that India could not help achieve even this if Sino-Indian relations were bad.

Nehru did not think there would be any “real” Chinese military invasion of India in the “foreseeable future.” For one, this would likely spark a world war. Also, China needed to defend its other borders and would hardly be able to divert the troops required for a major attack on India. Nehru did, however, potentially expect “gradual infiltration” across the border and Chinese occupation of disputed territory. This required improving connectivity to India's tribal areas in the north-east, which were not well integrated with the country.<sup>193</sup> The government also needed to prepare to prevent any Chinese

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<sup>192</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, November 3, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 551 and Sheng, p. 28 (Henderson had earlier contended that if China sent even a somewhat “mollifying reply,” the Indian government would continue to seek Chinese friendship, albeit with a little more caution. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, October 31, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 545).

<sup>193</sup> Letter from JLN to CPN Singh (Indian Ambassador in Nepal), September 10, 1949 and Letter from JLN to John Matthai (Indian finance minister, September 10, 1949, *SWJN SS Vol. 13*, pp. 258-260. Kavic has noted that Nehru also believed that geography—specifically the Himalayas—India's size and the balance of power helped insulate India from any attack from the north. Kavic, pp. 24-25.

infiltration. Furthermore, India needed to tackle the other real threat from China—the “infiltration of...ideas”—with ideas of its own.

Nehru believed that visible military strengthening was neither desirable nor feasible on the scale Patel envisioned. Any attempt to build up India’s military on the Sino-Indian border would likely reinforce Chinese insecurity and be counterproductive—instead of preparation acting as a deterrent, it would serve as provocation. Furthermore, Nehru asserted that India did not have the financial and military resources to prepare for an unlikely attack. The prime minister asserted that Pakistan was the major potential threat to India and diverting significant resources to the Sino-Indian border would undermine Indian defence vis-à-vis Pakistan. He believed, additionally, that Pakistan would take political or military advantage of tensions in Sino-Indian relations. Even if India enhanced its defence capabilities or looked abroad for military supplies it would then be left in a strategically “unsound” position with two major enemies.

Nehru did not rule out the possibility that the Chinese communists would be expansionist, but he did not believe this was inevitable. It depended on a number of factors, including the development of both countries and how communist China really became. Sino-Indian conflict would be destructive to both and allow external actors to take advantage. Given this assessment and the level of India’s capabilities, while India should prepare for contingencies, Nehru continued to believe that the best approach was reaching “some kind of understanding” with China, as long as Beijing desired the same.<sup>194</sup> This belief underlay India’s subsequent Tibet and China policy.

Post-invasion, Acheson had hoped that, at the very least, India would take part in proposed UN action on Tibet—seen as having a propaganda purpose. Participation might

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<sup>194</sup> Note by JLN on China and Tibet, November 18, 1950 in *SPC 1945-1950 Vol. X*.



lead Delhi to realize how difficult it was to deal with Beijing and Moscow. This could make India “less neutral and more realistic about Communism in general” and more supportive of the US on other issues, which, in turn, could lead to better US-India relations.<sup>195</sup> But, despite having earlier indicated that it would participate,<sup>196</sup> India demurred after receiving the more conciliatory note from Beijing.<sup>197</sup> Some officials such as Bajpai were “suspicious and cynical” about the note and doubted that it signified a change. But, he too, did not think a UN debate would be helpful at that time.<sup>198</sup> India did not want any such debate to jeopardize the efforts it was making towards a ceasefire in Korea.<sup>199</sup> Patel’s death in December 1950 only made Nehru’s voice more dominant on Tibet.<sup>200</sup> By January 1951, India seemed to wash its hands off the issue.<sup>201</sup>

Henderson, who had been urging joint US-UK-India action to stall China in Tibet or at least UN action that could bring attention to the issue to highlight China’s “aggressive attitude,” alleged that Indian interpretations were “wishfully warped” to fit their “inclination to do nothing which might offend China.”<sup>202</sup> While some US officials argued that such joint support would buoy Tibetan spirits, Indian officials made clear that

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<sup>195</sup> Telegram from Acheson to the USUN, November 16, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 578.

<sup>196</sup> There had been differences in Indian cabinet about what to do about Tibet at the UN. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, November 20, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 578.

<sup>197</sup> Rau interpreted other moves as conciliatory as well: China’s release of US POWs in North Korea and the Chinese representative’s statement on arrival in the US. Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, November 28, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 583.

<sup>198</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, November 30, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 584.

<sup>199</sup> Even Bajpai didn’t think much could be done to save Tibet at that point. Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 18, 1950, *Ibid*, p. 603.

<sup>200</sup> Telegram from Taylor (US chargé in India) to DoS on outgoing Ambassador Bowles’ conversation with Bajpai, May 26, 1952, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54, Volume XI: Africa and South Asia, Part 2* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1983) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*], p. 1644.

<sup>201</sup> Bajpai noted to Henderson that with other issues intervening, India “was giving little thought to Tibet.” Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 25, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1951, Volume VII: Korea and China, Part 2* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1983) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*], p. 1529.

<sup>202</sup> Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, December 14, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 602; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 12, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, pp. 1506-1508.

they believed that the Tibetans were merely trying to postpone—rather than resist—a Chinese takeover.

Despite appearances, however, Indian officials were hardly disinterested—but their interest in Tibet did not translate into support for US initiatives. Indian policymakers *were* chagrined about the idea of China taking over Tibetan border defense.<sup>203</sup> Bajpai acknowledged that the Sino-Tibetan agreement signed in May 1951 would have an impact on India’s position vis-à-vis Bhutan, Burma, Nepal and even Korea. India had already taken some steps to protect its position. Before Eisenhower and Dulles’ “pactomania,” Nehru and his officials had devised their own version. In 1949, Bhutan and India signed a treaty, allowing India to “guide” Bhutan in its external relations. The Treaty of 1950 between Nepal and India was also the result of Indian strategists’ “reconsider[ation]” of India’s northern frontier. Finally, another treaty in December 1950 made Sikkim a protectorate, giving Delhi control over Sikkimese foreign and security policy.<sup>204</sup>

There was also an effort to strengthen and integrate India’s northeast. Nehru had appointed a military committee to consider what the disappearance of a buffer state meant for the defense of India’s northeastern and eastern borders after the initial invasion. The committee had recommended strengthening border posts, transport and communications infrastructure, and alleviating the neglect of the area and its residents. But militarily, India had limitations—even Bajpai acknowledged this—and could do little

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<sup>203</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson on Kennedy (Deputy Director, Office of South Asian Affairs) and Steere (Counselor, AmEmb India)’s conversation with Menon, March 27, 1951 in *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1609.

<sup>204</sup> Valentine J. Belfiglio, “India’s Economic and Political Relations with Bhutan,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 12, No. 8 (August 1972), p. 680; John W. Garver, “China-India Rivalry in Nepal: The Clash over Chinese Arms Sales,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 10 (October, 1991), p. 956. Also see Garver, *Protracted Contest*, pp. 140-141 and p. 170.

to assist countries like Burma.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, to key decision-makers in Delhi, the disappearance of the buffer and the Sino-Tibetan agreement only made it more necessary to keep China in good humor.<sup>206</sup>

The US chargé in Delhi remained concerned that Tibet was being “lost by default.” He believed that the impact of the loss on India would be even more consequential than in Tibet itself because China could “constantly menace” India from there. He argued that the US should convince India that the Sino-Tibetan treaty was not in its interests and that Delhi should encourage the Dalai Lama to reject it and flee to India.<sup>207</sup>

But, on its part, while Washington was willing to give the Dalai Lama asylum and encourage the Tibetan regime and its autonomy in spirit, it was unwilling alone to provide military or financial assistance or appoint official representatives to Tibet. Acheson maintained that India had primary responsibility to help Tibet. In addition, the US had no desire to upset Jiang by announcing support for Tibetan sovereignty.<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, like Britain and India, the US was conscious of the affect on the Korean situation—though US officials denied to Tibetan interlocutors that one had anything to do with the other. Finally, any unilateral US action in Tibet would only serve to push India

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<sup>205</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, May 31, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1692. Also see Kavic, pp. 46-61.

<sup>206</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson on Anglo-Indian discussions in Delhi, June 3, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1696. As British officials had earlier noted to their US counterparts, the fact that India shared a border with China and was vulnerable to attack from that country motivated Nehru to seek and maintain friendly relations with China. (See Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 57) The loss of Tibet as a buffer state only increased this vulnerability and thus Nehru’s desire for good relations with China. Note by Nehru on Conversation with Henderson, September 15, 1951, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>207</sup> Telegram from Steere (US chargé in India) to the DoS, May 24, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, pp. 1684-1685; Telegram from Steere to Acheson, June 27, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1720.

<sup>208</sup> Telegram from Acheson to AmEmb India, June 2, 1951, *Ibid*, p. 1693 (The US believed it best that the Dalai Lama remain in the neighborhood. See Telegram from Steere to Acheson, May 29, 1951, *Ibid*, pp. 1687-1690); Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, June 3, 1951 *Ibid*, p. 1696.

towards China—it would “lessen Indian resentment toward CPG which may develop as Chi Commie control over Tibet consolidated.”<sup>209</sup>

By the fall of 1951, the Truman administration was reconciled to the fact that Tibetan officials were unlikely to reject the Sino-Tibetan agreement. The Far East Asia desk at the State Department continued to advocate US use of “Tibet as a weapon for alerting GOI to the danger of attempting to appease any Communist Govt and, specifically, for maneuvering GOI into a position where it will voluntarily adopt a policy of firmly resisting Chinese Communist pressure in south and east Asia.”<sup>210</sup> And there were still some attempts to get India to assure the Dalai Lama that he would be given asylum in India. But with India unwilling to take the initiative and a new US ambassador in Delhi—Chester Bowles—less enthusiastic about pressuring India on this issue, such efforts petered out. So did hope that India would change its China policy.

### **Chinese Intervention in the Korean War: The Blame Game (1950-1951)**

In the fall of 1950, there had been some hope in the US that the invasion of Tibet would make the Chinese communists’ aggressive intentions in Asia apparent to countries like India. These hopes had only escalated when the Chinese subsequently intervened in the Korean War.<sup>211</sup>

Even though its initial efforts in summer and early fall 1950 had met with little success, the Indian role as intermediary between China and the US had continued, as it

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<sup>209</sup> Memcon of DoS discussions with British Embassy officials on Tibet, July 2, 1951, Ibid, p. 1728 (This linkage was especially evident in Acheson’s assertion that the US could not promise a specific response to any Tibetan appeal to the UN. See Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, July 3, 1951, Ibid, p. 1729); Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, July 12, 1951, Ibid, p. 1749; and Telegram from the Acting S/S to the ConGen Calcutta, August 15, 1951, Ibid, p. 1790.

<sup>210</sup> Memo by Perkins (Deputy Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs) to Merchant (DAS/S FEA), September 6, 1951, Ibid, p. 1800.

<sup>211</sup> Review of the World Situation, November 28, 1950, *SFRC Hearings 81-I&II 1949-1950*, pp. 386-387 and Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 54.

would for a number of years. India's non-aligned policy and its relations with China, which the US usually considered a liability, were assets when the US needed a channel to China. Since its ambassador in Beijing had access to Chinese officials, India was a potential conduit.<sup>212</sup> Britain, a US ally, also had a presence in Beijing. But, India was an Asian country with credibility in Asia and in the rest of the non-aligned world. Nehru exerted "moral authority and political leadership" among these countries that no British leader could hope to emulate.<sup>213</sup> And India was willing to take on this role. Thus, from the start of the war, Indian officials had briefed US officials on the messages they received from Panikkar. In turn, India had passed on US messages to China, including warnings intended to deter China.<sup>214</sup> But, the fact that India was not an ally—and followed an independent China policy that seemed to US policymakers as primarily designed to avoid provoking China—resulted in US policymakers doubting India's role as an honest broker. This added to the strain in the US-India relationship.

US doubts about the messenger were partly responsible for skepticism about messages from Beijing via Delhi in September and October that China would intervene directly in the war if UN forces crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>215</sup> Some policymakers saw the accompanying Indian warning in light of their assessment that Nehru prized peace at any cost. Skepticism of Panikkar, who passed on the Chinese messages, affected others'

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<sup>212</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 74. Mao "welcomed" this role as well. See Sheng, p. 26.

<sup>213</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 85.

<sup>214</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 5, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 368; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, July 9, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 371. This included messages urging China not to intervene in the fighting in Korea after the Inchon landing; see Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, September 16, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 506.

<sup>215</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 55-56. Nehru even went public with his opposition to any move north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, asserting that other means should be explored for a settlement—India's representative pursued a compromise at the UN that would lead to a political settlement, but his proposal was defeated (Stueck, p. 93).

views.<sup>216</sup> Yet others, like Truman, believed that China was trying to influence a vote pending at the UN and the messages were either just Chinese propaganda or “a bald attempt to blackmail the UN.” MacArthur further assured the president that there was little likelihood that China would intervene.<sup>217</sup> There was concern among allies, as well as in American military and political circles about the Chinese reaction and potential escalation. But the concerns about credibility (global and domestic) and military demands that had led Truman to sanction operations across the parallel even before the Indian warnings had persisted. Thus, despite Indian—and other—warnings, Truman declined from rescinding his earlier approval.<sup>218</sup> On October 7, US forces crossed the parallel. Twelve days later, Chinese troops started moving into Korea.<sup>219</sup>

Expectations in the US that subsequent Chinese entry into the war would lead India to see the light assumed that India would interpret Chinese actions the same way the US did. Instead, the intervention increased Nehru’s frustration *with the US* rather than *with China*. He believed that the UN move across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel had provoked China into retaliation, heightening the prospect of a larger war, which Nehru—dreading that India would get dragged into such a war—had been trying to prevent.<sup>220</sup> To avert even

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<sup>216</sup> Truman later noted that Panikkar had “in the past played the game of the Chinese Communists fairly regularly, so his statement could not be taken as that of an impartial observer” (Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, p. 362; Also see Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 74). There was a belief that officers like Panikkar and Britain’s Hutchison had “gone native” {Telegram from Gifford (US ambassador in the UK) to Acheson, January 20, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1951*, Volume VII: Korea and China, Part 1 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1983) [hereafter cited as FRUS 1951, Vol. VII-1], p. 112}. There was skepticism of Panikkar on the Indian side as well. Bajpai, for example, noted, “our Ambassador in Peking is a little too responsive to the atmosphere, whether for our conviction or as a safe guide to our policy. His eulogy of the men who now rule China, their great reforms and their friendship for us, leave me somewhat skeptical, especially the last.” Pandit agreed with him {Letters from Bajpai to Pandit, August 21 and September 10, 1950, and Letters from Pandit to Bajpai, August 30 and October 16, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56}.

<sup>217</sup> Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, p. 362, 366, 373.

<sup>218</sup> Stueck, pp. 92-97; Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 109; and Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, p. 362.

<sup>219</sup> Mao had given the order to intervene on October 8. Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 90-91.

<sup>220</sup> Indian representative to the UN B.N. Rau asserted that China had intervened not because of “a desire for expansion of Chinese territory or influence,” as the US was contending, but because of “a fear for

further escalation, India sponsored a resolution, backed by Britain, in January 1951 that called for a ceasefire and then talks between the stakeholders. The US grudgingly supported the resolution, with Acheson hoping that China would reject the resolution.<sup>221</sup> Beijing complied. Its negative response led to criticism in Indian newspapers and disappointment in the Indian government. Writing from Moscow, an Indian official noted that Chinese “intransigence” seemed to be following “the Soviet line” and Delhi thus should curtail hopes of an “Asiatic Tito.” But, publicly, the Indian government asserted that the Chinese reply was not an “outright rejection.”<sup>222</sup>

Parallel US efforts toward a General Assembly resolution blaming China as the aggressor proved to be another source of tension between the US and India. Nehru vociferously criticized the resolution as another example of the US not facing facts. Taking on US assertions, he argued that rather than Chinese aggression being responsible, “All the troubles in the Far East arise from the failure of the rest of the world to adjust itself to the changes which have taken place in Asia.”<sup>223</sup> Moreover, Nehru believed he was better than US policymakers at assessing Chinese intentions. The US had

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China’s own territorial integrity” (“Text of Indian Delegate’s Speech in U.N.,” *NYT*, January 21, 1951, p. 4). Nehru later analogized China’s reasoning for reacting to the UN forces crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel as akin to the reaction the US might have if a “Communist army [was] approaching the Rio Grande” (Record of JLN’s Interview with Attwood, August 31, 1954 in *SWJN SS, Vol. 26*, p. 313). Also, see Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, January 30, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 148 and Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>221</sup> This was based on a proposal that a thirteen-nation group, led by India, had presented to China in early December (Jian, *Mao’s China*, pp. 91-92). The administration had earlier considered a ceasefire, but had decided against pursuing one because of Chinese conditions—with domestic political pressure and US credibility at stake, meeting them did not seem feasible (Stueck, p. 135). Also, see Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 74 and Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 110.

<sup>222</sup> Robert Trumbull, “Peiping Rejection Disappoints India,” *NYT*, January 19, 1951, p. 3; Letter from YD Gundevia (Minister Counsellor, IndEmb USSR) to Menon, February 2, 1951, NAI, File No. 770-CJK/50; “Text of Indian Delegate’s Speech in UN,” *NYT*, January 21, 1951, p. 4; and “Nehru Speaks in Bombay,” *NYT*, January 22, 1951, p. 4.

<sup>223</sup> “Nehru Is Not Informed,” *NYT*, January 17, 1951, p. 4 and “Nehru asks West to Keep Peace Aim,” *NYT*, January 18, 1951, p. 3. Arthur Lall noted that Nehru “did not believe in a diplomacy of condemnation” (Lall, *Emergence of Modern India*, p. 135).

made a “major error” in crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel despite Chinese warnings and “further complications ensued.” With the resolution, the US was only shutting the door to negotiations and compounding its mistakes.<sup>224</sup>

Washington disagreed. It was not as if there had not been similar concerns in the US about escalation and discussions about limiting US actions in the Korean theatre.<sup>225</sup> But Truman was blunt in his response to Indian criticism, noting, “I believe in calling an aggressor an aggressor.”<sup>226</sup> US commentators called Nehru’s views a “misappraisal” and dismissed his assertion that the isolation of China, rather than Chinese aggression, had led to the situation in Korea. Worse, he was playing into Chinese hands by “sowing confusion and mistrust.” Chinese behavior was not evidence of a move toward a settlement—as India and US allies such as Britain believed—but as actions designed to divide the non-communist countries.<sup>227</sup>

Once again, the different lessons learned from the last war played a role in shaping US and Indian views of the correct approach, with US officials arguing that collective failure to combat aggression would lead to more of it, eventually resulting in a larger war.<sup>228</sup> Acheson asserted that he could not understand “what means India would

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<sup>224</sup> “Indian gives View,” *NYT*, January 25, 1951, p. 1; “Text of Indian Delegate's Speech in UN,” *NYT*, January 21, 1951, p. 4.

<sup>225</sup> Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, pp. 373-378. With reservations in Washington about the expansion of the war, the administration had moved to try to assure China in October that it had no designs on the mainland. But, despite concerns, the White House did not stop MacArthur from moving forces towards the Yalu river for his November ‘end-of-war’ offensive. With a massive Chinese counter-attack later that month, there began what MacArthur called “an entirely new war” (Stueck, pp. 114-119).

<sup>226</sup> “The Presidency: A Time for Firmness,” *Time*, February 5, 1951 (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,888964,00.html>). Also, see Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, January 27, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 140.

<sup>227</sup> “Nehru and Red China,” *NYT*, January 26, 1951, p. 20; James Reston, “Split Between U.S. and West on Asia Held at Critical Point,” *NYT*, January 24, 1951, p. 6.

<sup>228</sup> Henderson, indeed, referred to the Munich analogy in a conversation with Bajpai, noting “aggression gave rise to war” (Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 27, 1951, *FRUS, 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 138). Nehru indeed acknowledged the Munich analogy, but noted that in the case of Hitler it was obvious he could not be stopped so Chamberlain was wrong. In the case of the Cold War, steps could be taken to stop war—and the stakes were higher because of nuclear weapons (Record of JLN’s Interview with



propose [to] use to check aggression.” Bajpai contended that the means would “depend upon form and character of aggression and upon effect which such means might have upon world peace.”<sup>229</sup>

The differences over means—including the question of balance between force and diplomacy—were broader. NSC-68 and subsequent policy seemed to reflect the US belief that the need to counter an existential threat did not just make “all interests vital;” it also made “all means affordable, all methods justifiable.” But for Nehru, as a contemporary put it, “the end rarely justified the means.” In the US, moreover, the Korean War had only strengthened the view expressed in NSC-68 that active military resistance was more appropriate than passively waiting for the emergence of nationalist resistance—as Nehru seemed to prefer.<sup>230</sup> These different views of the best means were perhaps partly influenced by the two countries’ capabilities. While there was a sense in the Truman administration that rather than divide the resource pie, one could expand it to justify larger defense spending, Indian policymakers like Nehru did not believe it was feasible to expand the small pie they had.<sup>231</sup>

These differences had an adverse impact on the relationship. Henderson hoped that differences over tactics would not overpower a common interest in peace and security. But Acheson emphasized that tactics mattered, noting “it was not [Nehru’s] objectives so much as way in which he said and did things which had caused us lots of

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Attwood, August 31, 1954 in *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 311). Furthermore, Nehru believed that even the Second World War had left the “so-called victors” with a number of problems (JLN, Speech at a public meeting, Lucknow, November 22, 1952, *SWJN SS Vol. 20*, p. 22).

<sup>229</sup> Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, January 30, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 148; Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, February 2, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 155.

<sup>230</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 93, 97. For Nehru’s view Crocker, *Nehru*, p. 71.

<sup>231</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 92 and Jetly, p. 23.

trouble.”<sup>232</sup> Nehru would later acknowledge that the main difference between the US and India was “in the method of approach.”<sup>233</sup> And he thought the US approach was harmful to peace and stability in Asia—a key Indian objective that would allow the country to consolidate and develop. As Gaddis has noted, for US policymakers “frustrating the Kremlin design,” rather than the means to an end, had become an objective itself.<sup>234</sup> Nehru believed this blurring of means and ends was making it harder to achieve the objective of peace. Fear motivated both American and Indian policymakers, but Nehru believed that the US approach—with an emphasis on military instruments—was self-defeating and only likely to increase fear.

The consequence—especially as the situation in Korea deteriorated after the Chinese intervention—was strain in the US-India relationship. As McMahon has noted, India’s China policy sparked condemnations in the US.<sup>235</sup> Indian officials like Bajpai and Pandit recognized that Indian statements on China interpreted in the US as defending Chinese intervention, India’s early recognition of the communist government in Beijing, US linking of the Korea and Taiwan issues, US rejection of Nehru’s proposal regarding overtures to China in July 1950, the crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and the resolution branding the Chinese as aggressors had widened the “rift” between India and the US. Pandit was concerned about the “considerable hostility” towards India in US government circles. Bajpai lamented that as a consequence, “for the time being, at any rate, we are

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<sup>232</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 27, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 142; Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, January 27, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 140.

<sup>233</sup> Robert Trumbull, “Nehru Answers Some Basic Questions,” *NYT*, November 11, 1951, p. SM5. Also see Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 583.

<sup>234</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 3 and pp. 97-99.

<sup>235</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 86-87.

isolated, and that over Kashmir and other issues, Pakistan and our enemies will exploit our isolation to the full.”<sup>236</sup>

The friction over China contributed and exacerbated the doubts and lack of trust in the US-India relationship. Beyond disillusionment, a more visible impact was evident in the reaction to India’s first major formal request for bilateral assistance from the US in December 1950. An Indian request for food aid had followed closely on the heels of Chinese entry into the Korean War. There was debate within the administration about aiding India economically—not so much on the desirability of it, but on the feasibility given the cost and Congressional attitude. While there was a series of issues on which India and the US disagreed, including India’s “muted criticism of the Soviet Union [and] uncooperative policies toward Indochina and Japan,”<sup>237</sup> Acheson told the Indian ambassador frankly that Congress would basically watch India’s approach on two matters: (1) Kashmir and (2) Korea, especially India’s response to greater Chinese involvement.<sup>238</sup>

Given direct US involvement, India’s attitude toward the Korean War evoked greater reaction in Congress than Kashmir, as assistant secretary of state George McGhee learned when he reached out to SFRC chairman Tom Connally (D-TX) to facilitate passage of an aid bill in January 1951. The senator bluntly noted that sentiments towards India—deeply affected by its China policy—would make the task difficult. He refused to

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<sup>236</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 27, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, pp. 141-142. Pandit noted the effort “to play down India and Nehru;” Bajpai noted “the venom and the universality of the change in tone” [Letters from Pandit to Bajpai, October 16 and December 11, 1950 and Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, October 29, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56].

<sup>237</sup> McMahon, “Food as a Diplomatic Weapon: The India Wheat Loan of 1951,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (August 1987), p. 353.

<sup>238</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Acheson, McGhee and Pandit, December 29, 1950, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 62-63.

move quickly on Indian food assistance, referring the question to a subcommittee.<sup>239</sup> In the subcommittee McGhee tried to argue that the grant would have a “strong conditioning effect on Nehru’s policies, and indeed the feelings of the people of India toward us,” but that if the US did nothing and large numbers died,

at that time the people of India will know the people are dying; they will know we had the grain; they will know they made the request; and they will know at that time that Mr. Nehru and we were on the outs over the question of Communist China, and an inference will be very strong to them that we denied this request because we did not like the political attitude Mr. Nehru expressed.

But Connally asserted, “You spoke about it being necessary to do this for our relations. Our relations with India now are not very good, are they? Nehru is out giving us hell at the time, working against us and voting against us. Is this a proposition to buy him? He won’t stay bought, if you buy him.” Sen. Gillette (D-IA) said he did not want to do anything to stabilize Nehru’s position. And Sen. Fulbright (D-AK) said that India should either pay for the foodgrains or the administration should turn down the request, adding that he did not like what seemed like blackmail with India arguing “Give it to us or we will go Communist.” McGhee argued that the US had already lost China and could not afford to lose India too, but when Fulbright asked if India, especially given its attitude, was “more important than the Ruhr and Japan” the assistant secretary had to admit “Strategically, no.”<sup>240</sup>

US officials noted to their Indian counterparts that Indian statements and actions—seen as defending the Chinese attack against UN forces—made the aid request harder to get through Congress.<sup>241</sup> The New York Times predicted further delays

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<sup>239</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 79-80; Anthony Leviero, “Truman Declares Nation Backs Him in View on Peiping,” *NYT*, January 26, 1951, p. 1.

<sup>240</sup> Proceedings of the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and African Affairs, January 26, 1951, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Vol. III Part 1 - 82<sup>nd</sup> Congress, First Session 1951* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976) [hereafter *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. III-1 82-1 1951*], pp. 33-45.

<sup>241</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 27, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 141.

“probably...due to irritation caused by Mr. Nehru’s refusal to go along with the United States and its policy toward Communist China.”<sup>242</sup> A former chairman of the Republican National Committee asserted that India’s “cooperation with aggressors” made the case for aid weak.<sup>243</sup>

President Truman nonetheless decided to proceed with a request to Congress that February. At first there seemed to be bipartisan support for food aid to India on humanitarian grounds; some even used a Cold War framework to argue for it. Many members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee agreed that it was important to aid India. The bill, however, stalled in Congress for months as representatives debated whether to give India aid and—since Delhi was not going to support or aid US foreign policy—whether to demand resources in return.<sup>244</sup> The debate also gave members a forum to criticize repeatedly and vociferously India’s China policy.

The India-bashing on Capitol Hill and in the columns of newspapers resulting from India’s China policy had repercussions in India. Congressional criticism and linkage between India’s foreign policy and US food assistance adversely affected Indian views of the US.<sup>245</sup> As Nehru had noted, “we are a sensitive people and we react strongly to being cursed at and run down...Our general reaction, whenever any pressure is sought to be applied upon us by any country, is to resent it and may be to go against it.”<sup>246</sup> Anti-Indian rhetoric in the US generated louder self-sufficiency rhetoric in India. Nehru insisted publicly that conditional aid would not be welcome. Nehru’s criticism, in turn, sparked

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<sup>242</sup> “Hunger is not Political,” *NYT*, January 27, 1951, p. 12. This sentiment that the differences over China led to the delay persisted, though, later, food production projections came to be added to the list of reasons there was delay (“On India’s Hunger,” *NYT*, April 22, 1951, p. 148).

<sup>243</sup> “India Opposes Reds, House Group is Told,” *NYT*, February 23, 1951, p. 9.

<sup>244</sup> “India Aid Defended as Check on Soviet,” *NYT*, March 5, 1951, p. 8 and Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 69-72.

<sup>245</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 27, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 141.

<sup>246</sup> Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, June 26, 1948, *SWJN, SS, Vol. 6*, pp. 463-465.

further criticism on the Hill, finally leading the prime minister to state that India would prefer a loan rather than a grant.<sup>247</sup> Six months after India had requested aid, Truman finally signed a food assistance bill. The US ended up helping fill Indian stomachs, but having done so after “extended haggling in the Congress and the outburst of anti-Indian sentiments,” it seemed to have lost the battle for Indian hearts and minds.<sup>248</sup> Meanwhile, others received credit—while the debate had raged in Congress, China and the Soviet Union had offered India grain on a barter basis. Later China also offered—and India accepted—foodgrains on a sale basis.<sup>249</sup>

### **India as a Channel to China: Only Hurting Itself? (1951-1952)**

Feeling burned by the US attitude, Delhi had taken a backseat on the Korean war in spring 1951, limiting its intermediary role.<sup>250</sup> But, in the summer of 1951, Indian officials undertook efforts in Beijing and Delhi—quietly coordinating action with British and Swiss representatives—to secure the release of American prisoners being held in China.<sup>251</sup> Different US and Indian perceptions were, however, evident again. In the early

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<sup>247</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 72.

<sup>248</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 80-82. For more about the irritation and frustration caused in India and among Indian officials in the US, see Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, April 25, 1951, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56 and B.K. Nehru, *Nice Guys Finish Second* (Delhi, India: Penguin, 1997), p. 231 (BK Nehru was finance adviser to the US embassy at the time).

<sup>249</sup> “China to Sell India Rice,” *NYT*, January 2, 1951, p. 6; “Peiping Stresses Rice Aid to India,” *NYT*, March 22, 1951, p. 6; “China Raises Rice Offer to India; Would ‘Sell’ Second 50,000 Tons,” *NYT*, March 31, 1951, p. 3; “Nehru Bars Food with any ‘Strings’,” *NYT*, May 2, 1951, p. 34. Trying to spur action, Acheson and Sen. Alexander Smith noted the Soviet and Chinese options in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting (See Proceedings on S. 872 India Emergency Food Aid Act of 1951, April 16, 1951, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. III-1 82-1 1951*, p. 362, 368).

<sup>250</sup> Gopal, *Nehru II*, p. 138-139. Bajpai asserted “I think both China and the USA are determined to fight it out, and any third party that tries to come between the two is likely only to hurt itself” (Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, April 25, 1951, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56).

<sup>251</sup> Telegram from Gifford to Acheson, August 2, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1768; Telegram from Holmes (US chargé in the UK) to Acheson, August 10, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1774. India had played such a role earlier when it had tried to secure the release of American Consul Angus Ward in 1949 (MemCon of Meeting between Pandit and Webb, November 22, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 196 and Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 2, 1949, *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 210).

stages of talks with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, Panikkar interpreted the premier's responses positively; British officials, on the other hand, did not share his optimism and their views seemed to be taken more seriously in Washington. There were also differences on tactics. American officials thought that public representations on behalf of the US would make evident to China how many countries disapproved of their attitude towards foreign nationals. Indian officials, on the other hand, believed that explicit association with the US—or Britain and Switzerland—would reduce Indian influence in Beijing.<sup>252</sup>

Indian officials had mixed feelings about the intermediary role—which continued on the Korean issue as well, even as China and the US undertook armistice talks after summer 1951 in Kaesong and then Panmunjom. That role had an adverse effect on the US-India relationship.<sup>253</sup> Furthermore, the experience itself was frustrating. China and the US mistrusted each other's intentions and, therefore, insisted that the other take the initiative in giving reassurance. Chinese officials told their Indian counterparts that Mao did not believe the US wanted a peaceful settlement in Korea. Western intermediaries, in turn, asked the Indian representative to the UN what could convince Mao that had not already been said or done by the US.<sup>254</sup> Acheson asserted that the US first wanted reassurances from China that it would not renew its aggression. Assistant Secretary of State for Far East Asian affairs Dean Rusk told Indian officials that the US did not

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<sup>252</sup> Telegram from Holmes to Acheson, London, August 8, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1770; Telegram from Bowles (US ambassador in India) to Acheson on Menon-Steere Meeting, December 15, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1872. Also see Panikkar's views in Telegram from Holmes to Acheson, London, September 21, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1808.

<sup>253</sup> For discussion of this in the Indian parliament, see Jetly, pp. 27-28. Years later, some criticized accused Nehru of advocating for China at the expense of India in Washington. For their criticism, see Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 29.

<sup>254</sup> Telegram from Austin (US Representative at the UN) to Acheson, April 5, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 302.

believe that China was thinking about a negotiated peace.<sup>255</sup> An exasperated Nehru commented that China and the US both “express their desire for settlement, but neither is prepared to give in...and wants the other to do so.”<sup>256</sup>

Nehru’s disapproval of the US approach led to more frustration with Washington than Beijing. After a Chinese u-turn on an in-principle agreement for a settlement in summer 1952, the prime minister noted that he did not like the Chinese action, but “generally speaking, the way the Americans have behaved in Korea has been outrageous.” Even after two years, the US seemed to continue to think that military actions would pressure China into negotiations, but it only made Chinese policymakers more intransigent. When Krishna Menon indicated his sense that Sino-Indian relations had “cooled off” while India-US relations had got closer because of the Chinese u-turn, Nehru asserted that he did not think China had been “straight” in its dealings with India on the matter, but “in the balance, I think that American policy in the Far East has been very much to blame and I have little doubt that it is basically that policy that has come in the way of a peace effort.”<sup>257</sup>

Nonetheless, Indian frustration was not just directed at the US. At times, Indian officials found themselves faced with Chinese officials in a “belligerent frame [of] mind.”<sup>258</sup> They were often dissatisfied with the lack of progress in negotiations because of

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<sup>255</sup> While earlier India had expressed consternation about the linking of Taiwan with Korea, now Acheson asserted that Taiwan and Chinese admission to the UN was not part of the Korean question and thus would not be bargaining chips. Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, June 20, 1951, *Ibid*, p. 538. Also, see MemCon of Indian Minister-Counselor Kirpalani’s Call on Dean Rusk, April 7, 1951, *Ibid*, p. 316.

<sup>256</sup> Cable from JLN to TN Kaul (Counsellor, IndEmb China), July 20, 1952, *SWJN SS Vol. 19*, pp. 579-580.

<sup>257</sup> Nehru believed that a settlement would bring up broader issues including the recognition of China and the US “does not want to face these questions.” Letter from JLN to BG Kher (Indian HiCom to London), August 15, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 588. Also, see Message from JLN to Krishna Menon, July 21, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 582 and Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, August 17, 1952, *Ibid*, pp. 589-590.

<sup>258</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, April 22, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-I*, p. 375.



Chinese intransigence, deeming officials in Beijing as unreasonable.<sup>259</sup> Like their US counterparts, there were some Indian officials like Bajpai who questioned whether China was feeding India wrong or exaggerated information to pressure the US into negotiations on Chinese terms.<sup>260</sup> There was additional irritation that China seemed to go back and forth about its preferred policy option.<sup>261</sup> In July 1952, China backtracked on its in-principle acceptance of a prisoner repatriation formula that Britain and India had helped generate.<sup>262</sup> Nehru lamented, “the situation at the China end is more difficult than we have imagined.”<sup>263</sup> He asserted that any future Chinese proposals should be conveyed in writing rather than verbally.<sup>264</sup> The prime minister was also disappointed when—despite the trouble India had gone through—in November 1952, China rejected an Indian proposal on Korean prisoners of war repatriation, criticizing India’s attempts to be the “voice of Asia” and dismissing India as a tool of the US. The prime minister wondered if this stemmed from Moscow’s influence. But he was also concerned that Chinese rejections stemmed from a belief that India had leaned too much towards the UN/US side.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Panikkar, for example, became so frustrated with the lack of Chinese action on the question of American prisoners in China that he believed that it might be necessary to go public contrary to his earlier assertions. Telegram from Gifford to the DoS on Lamb-Panikkar conversation, London, March 28, 1952, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54, Vol. XIV: China and Japan, Part 1* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1985) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*], p. 23. Also see Telegram from Bowles to the DoS, July 5, 1952, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54, Vol. XV: Korea, Part 1* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*], p. 207.

<sup>260</sup> Telegram from Bowles to DoS, April 11, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 43.

<sup>261</sup> Gopal, *Nehru II*, p. 140. Telegram from Gifford to DoS, London, July 14, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 407. Also Telegram from Bowles to DoS, July 14, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>262</sup> Letter from JLN to Agatha Harrison (Society of Friends, UK), July 18, 1952, *SWJN, SS Vol. 19*, p. 579. Also see Note by JLN to the foreign secretary, July 25, 1952, *SS Vol. 19*, pp. 584-585.

<sup>263</sup> Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, July 30, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 586.

<sup>264</sup> Cable from JLN to IndEmb China, August 4, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 587.

<sup>265</sup> Gopal, *Nehru II*, pp. 145-146. Also, see Letter from Pandit to RK Nehru (Indian foreign secretary), New York, December 2, 1952, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 55 (includes reaction to US criticism of India).

Despite concerns about mediating, there was also a sense in Delhi that India's role—and its neutrality—gave it value in the eyes of China. Bajpai noted that while China was involved in Korea, it would not trouble India. Rather, China had given India assurances regarding the Sino-Indian border, with Zhou indicating that China “had no intention [of] making claims to or raising questions about boundary between Chi[na] and Ind[ia]” and asserting that China wanted “cultivation [of] friendship [with] Ind[ia] and Burma.” Furthermore, China had not asked India to withdraw its trade missions or escort forces in Tibet.<sup>266</sup> Acheson, too, later noted that China was not taking military action against Burma since it would upset India at a time when it was important for Beijing to keep on Delhi's good side.<sup>267</sup> Beyond China, some Indian officials like Krishna Menon also believed that India's willingness and ability to play the role of negotiator increased its global influence and importance. Nehru, who did not like the term “mediator,” noted that India could help because it had a “special position”—the corollary was that India's intermediary role also gave India this position.<sup>268</sup>

US officials continued to have mixed feelings about the Indian role as well. On the one hand, some officials believed that India was in the best position to exercise an “ameliorating influence” on Beijing.”<sup>269</sup> In addition, occasionally they found Indian

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<sup>266</sup> Telegram from Steere to Acheson, Delhi, October 6, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, pp. 1828-1829. Also see Telegram from Bowles to Acheson on Conversation with PN Haksar, December 3, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1856.

<sup>267</sup> US Minutes of the First Meeting, ANZUS Council: Fifth Session, August 6, 1952, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54, Vol. XII: East Asia and the Pacific, Part 1* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*], p. 193. Despite Mao's wariness of Nehru's government, Sheng has noted that India's intermediary role did give it some value to Mao (Sheng, p. 26). Indeed, while India was playing a role, Mao also directed Zhou to seek Soviet advice on how to respond to informal Indian proposals for a “nonaggression pact” with China, and for high-level visits, noting that “it would be inconvenient for us to refuse” if India brought up these proposals formally [Hand-delivered note, Zhou to Stalin conveying telegram from Mao to Zhou, September 16, 1952 (Translation available at Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) website)].

<sup>268</sup> Brecher, *India and World Politics*, pp. 189-190 and JLN's Remarks at a Press Conference, New Delhi, July 24, 1952, *SWJN, SS Vol. 19*, p. 583.

<sup>269</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, January 31, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 149.

contacts with Chinese officials to be useful to pass on warnings of potential US retaliation if China escalated.<sup>270</sup> Furthermore, as long as the US could use multiple channels to China, India's good relations with China and its standing with other Asian countries made the continued use of this channel worthwhile.<sup>271</sup> Finally, officials like Bowles believed that even if US discussions with India did not get through to China (or were not heeded by Beijing), it would help convince Delhi that Washington was doing its part to seek peace while Beijing was not.<sup>272</sup>

On the other hand, some US officials increasingly doubted whether India should be used in such a capacity.<sup>273</sup> They continued to distrust certain Indian officials, especially Panikkar.<sup>274</sup> Furthermore, they believed that India was likely to play spoiler rather than supporter in any discussions. Some officials also questioned India's reliability and its officials' judgment about China's intentions. There was a sense that the Chinese leadership was manipulating India.<sup>275</sup> In addition, there was unease that Indian officials like Panikkar were proposing ideas to Chinese officials that the US did not know about or had not approved, while suggesting to Beijing that the proposals had resulted from close contact with Washington.<sup>276</sup> There were also doubts about whether roving Indian envoys

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<sup>270</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Rusk and Australian ambassador to the US, April 18, 1951, *Ibid*, p. 366.

<sup>271</sup> Telegram from Acheson to the AmEmb India, June 25, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-2*, p. 1717.

<sup>272</sup> Telegram from Bowles to Acheson, April 9, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 30.

<sup>273</sup> Telegram from Kirk (US ambassador in the Soviet Union) to Acheson, June 25, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 549. These doubts had existed since the beginning—Acheson labeled the early Indian efforts in the summer of 1950 to include China in the UNSC as moving forward in “multisplendored confusion,” with each Indian official putting forward “the scheme a little differently” (Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 419).

<sup>274</sup> US officials noted their “complete and thorough distrust of Panikkar.” Telegram from Austin to Acheson, New York, December 11, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 1305.

<sup>275</sup> See Hickerson (AS/S UNA) and Gen. Collins (COAS) exchange in Memorandum of the Substance of Discussion at a DoS-JCS Meeting, May 21, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 215.

<sup>276</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Deputy AS/S FEA (Johnson), Office of Northeast Asian Affairs [ONA] Director (Young) and British Embassy officials, June 6, 1952, *Ibid*, pp. 317-318. Charles Bohlen asserted, “It can be dangerous to have the Indians interpret the US Government views. See Memo of Substance of Discussion at a DoS-JCS Meeting, July 9, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 390.

like Krishna Menon were actually keeping Delhi in the loop on US views. Furthermore, there was concern that US officials did not know what Delhi was actually saying to the Panikkar and what he, in turn, was saying to Chinese officials.<sup>277</sup>

Other officials worried that India would compromise principles and ignore US red lines in order to achieve any settlement.<sup>278</sup> In Congress, Sen. H. Alexander Smith (R-NJ)—usually moderate on India—worried that India would try to force the US to make concessions to China in order to enhance Nehru’s image and influence in Asia.<sup>279</sup> US officials felt there was a lack of clarity about whether what they were hearing from Panikkar and Krishna Menon were their personal views or Chinese ones.<sup>280</sup> When China seemed to back down from proposals it had apparently made, US officials came to question whether the proposals had actually originated from Panikkar instead. Finally, Chinese actions on the ground did not seem to reflect the attitudes Panikkar asserted they were expressing in Beijing.<sup>281</sup>

The experience of dealing with Delhi as an intermediary to Beijing led Washington to try to limit India’s role during the rest of the war—which Indian officials resented. While Zhou indicated that China wanted India to be included in negotiations, the US showed little desire to include India in groups like the Good Offices Committee (India, on its part, showed little desire to serve on the latter). And despite British urging,

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<sup>277</sup> Memo by Allison (AS/S FEA) on Recent Developments in Korea, July 9, 1952, *Ibid*, pp. 397.

<sup>278</sup> Telegram from Clark (Commander in Chief, Far East) to the JCS, July 21, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 415.

<sup>279</sup> Proceedings of the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and African Affairs, September 22, 1951, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Vol. III Part 2 - 82<sup>nd</sup> Congress, First Session 1951* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976) [hereafter *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. III-2 82-2 1951*], p. 46.

<sup>280</sup> A similar view was that the messages the US received from Panikkar expressed Indian, rather than Chinese, preferences (Stueck, p. 280). Also see Telegram from Gifford to the DoS, London July 11, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 398.

<sup>281</sup> Telegram from Ringwalt (First Secretary in the UK) to Johnson (DAS/S FEA), July 31, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 448 and Telegram from Hickerson to Gross (Deputy Representative at the UN), July 7, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 383.

the US resisted consulting India on a 16-nation statement on Korea on the grounds that India was not a participant in the military action in Korea, and she had shown every desire to disassociate herself from the group that had provided forces for the UN effort. The US also made clear its opposition to Indian involvement in any Korean armistice conference, despite British and Canadian backing for Indian participation.<sup>282</sup> In the case of negotiating for the release of American prisoners being held in China, having ruled out other alternatives, the US was left with little choice but to turn to India to act as a channel.<sup>283</sup> But, even in this case, US officials continued to pursue other viable alternate channels.<sup>284</sup> They also tried to work around the Indian diplomats they neither liked nor trusted (Krishna Menon, Panikkar) and work with the ones they did (such as NR Pillai and Vijayalakshmi Pandit).<sup>285</sup> These efforts to restrict India's role and influence would continue after the Truman administration.

### **What Have They Done for US Lately? (1951-1952)**

Menon had expressed the hope that “the differences in our approach to Communist China would not lead to mutual embarrassment.”<sup>286</sup> But these differences continued to have an impact for the rest of the administration. India's China policy, for

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<sup>282</sup> Stueck, p. 155 and p. 170; Memcon of Meeting between Rusk, Johnson (ONA Director), and Tomlinson (Counsellor, British Embassy), March 30, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 279; Memcon of Meeting between Hickerson, Johnson (DAS/S FEA) and British embassy officials, December 26, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 1448; and Memcon of Meeting between Johnson and Tomlinson on Korean Armistice Negotiations, April 2, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 132.

<sup>283</sup> The US had ruled out using the British chargé and the Swedish representative in China, as well as the Chinese Ambassador to India to pass messages (Memcon by Hickerson on Panikkar's Report of Communist Proposal on POW Question, June 19, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 345). Truman later acknowledged the limitations and problems that came the lack of direct contacts with Beijing (Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, p. 380).

<sup>284</sup> Telegram from Hickerson to Gross, July 7, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 383. Bohlen suggested approaching the Russians {Memo of Substance of Discussion at a DoS-JCS Meeting, July 9, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 390}.

<sup>285</sup> Telegram from Gross to DoS, New York November 1, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 570.

<sup>286</sup> Telegram from Henderson to Acheson, December 11, 1949 in *FRUS 1949 Vol. IX*, p. 222.

example, continued to affect Congressional sentiments about aid to India. This sentiment, in combination with the Truman administration's emphasis on Europe and on military assistance and Congressional views on India's Kashmir stance, led to limited aid to India. Furthermore, the aid debates continued to give Congress a chance publicly to criticize India. While many Congressional members targeted foreign assistance in general, India offered a particularly ripe target for attack, especially for members of the China bloc. Focused on aiding allies (that too militarily), in its FY1952 aid request, Truman and Acheson thus halved the amount of aid an interagency assessment suggested for aid to South Asia. Congress further decreased aid to India from \$65 million to \$54 million in summer 1951.<sup>287</sup>

In 1952, Bowles pushed for an expanded aid package for India for FY1953. But this effort faltered, in large part because the White House did not think it could get a large aid package for India through Congress. The Indian attitude to the Japan Peace Treaty the previous year had not helped its case. In fall 1951, India had declined to sign the treaty—the US administration believed this was primarily on the grounds that China and the Soviet Union had not been part of the negotiations.<sup>288</sup> Rusk had noted to a House subcommittee in spring 1951 that Beijing and Moscow's decisions could be expected to impact Delhi's decision.<sup>289</sup> John Foster Dulles, the US negotiator for the treaty, indicated

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<sup>287</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>288</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 77, p. 82. While Nehru had long argued that China and the Soviet Union should be invited to join the negotiations, this was not the deal-breaker when it came to India's final refusal—American troops in Japan were. China's attitude, nonetheless, was a key consideration [Record of Conversation between Jessup (Ambassador at Large) and Representatives of the British Foreign Office re Meeting with Nehru, London, March 11, 1950, *FRUS 1950 Vol. VI*, p. 46; and "India's Approval Foreseen," *NYT*, July 14, 1951, p. 3; Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, September 22, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56].

<sup>289</sup> Proceedings of the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific Ocean Area, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 5, 1951, *Selected Executive Sessions of the House Foreign Affairs Committee 1951-1956 Vol. XVII: US Policy in the Far East Part I* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1980) [hereafter *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. XVII*], p. 132.

that Indian opposition stemmed from Nehru's belief in the communist propaganda line of "Asia for Asians." Even though Nehru publicly rejected the idea of "Asia for Asians," the impression stuck.<sup>290</sup>

Bowles unsuccessfully tried to convince administration officials and members of Congress that Nehru had lost any illusions about China and supported the US position on prisoners of war in Korea "100 percent."<sup>291</sup> He argued that losing India to communism would be worse than the loss of China and consequences would include domestic political ones.<sup>292</sup> He had some support for his advocacy from junior officials on the Near East and South Asia desks, as well as liberal legislators like Rep. John F. Kennedy (D-MA) and Sen. Humphrey on the grounds that aid could ensure that India remained non-communist and secure. But there continued to be congressional criticism on the grounds that India was not being helpful in Korea. Of the \$250 million for India that Bowles had argued for—\$125 in development assistance; \$125 in commodity grants—the administration only agreed to request \$115 million of assistance. Congress disproportionately slashed the aid request for India by 70 percent, only approving \$45 million.<sup>293</sup>

As McMahon has noted the apathy towards India was widespread in Congress—where India did not have a major constituency—and among the public, as well as within

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<sup>290</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 156 and Robert Trumbull, "Nehru Answers Some Basic Questions," *NYT*, November 11, 1951, p. SM5.

<sup>291</sup> See McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 114 and Memcon of Meeting between Acheson and Bowles, June 9, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1649.

<sup>292</sup> Bowles argued that "if the second biggest country in the world goes the way of the first biggest country in the world, I think we lose our position in Asia...If we fail, we have another China on our hands, only this time it could be even worse because many other countries might fall, too." Proceedings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, January 16, 1952, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Vol. IV - 82<sup>nd</sup> Congress, Second Session 1952* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976) [hereafter *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. IV 82-II 1952*], pp. 75-76. Also see p. 87.

<sup>293</sup> Compared to a 60 percent cut to the administration's overall foreign assistance request.

much of the administration.<sup>294</sup> In some sections, there was downright antipathy. Truman and Acheson understood the potential threat of the lack of economic development in India, but given the administration's other priorities (Korea, Europe), the lack of an imminent threat (of communists taking over in India) and of an opportunity (of winning India over), they had no stomach to take on the apathy or antipathy.

Thus, Acheson and mutual security program director Averell Harriman also turned down Bowles' request in summer 1952 for a special appropriation for India. Given congressional views on India, they were concerned that such a request could adversely affect foreign assistance more broadly. Deputy director of the mutual security program further asked "Is it in our best interests to spend large sums to build strength in a neutral India which is thereby able to assume the leadership of the Asian countries?"<sup>295</sup> Concerns about communism spreading in India, a NSC-68 reappraisal, and cooperation with India at the UN eventually led the outgoing administration to agree to suggest an increased aid package for India for FY1954 to the incoming Eisenhower administration. But with the proposal coming in the lame duck period of the presidency, the chances of it getting through unscathed seemed slim.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 119.

<sup>295</sup> John Ohly, quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 120.

<sup>296</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 91-94. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 114-117



## Chapter 2: Why So Wary? (1953-1956)

We did not come to an agreement about anything. I don't mean to say we disagreed about everything. We didn't try to come to an agreement...

– John Foster Dulles on his meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1953<sup>1</sup>

It was obvious that we did not feel in the same way as the American Government about communism and the way to combat it...we felt that [the] American reaction to the communist countries was not only exaggerated and dangerous but actually was likely to produce the very opposite results than those aimed at, more especially in Asia. In Asia, one must always remember that our primary urges were different...American policy has led the United States to side with colonial and reactionary elements in Asia, and as a result of that, had almost presented to the communist countries an ideal opportunity to pose as liberating agencies. Mere force and threats of war might frighten people for a while, but would never succeed in convincing people.

– Jawaharlal Nehru to George Allen, April 24, 1954<sup>2</sup>

In 1953, the administration changed in Washington, but US-India differences on perceptions of and policy towards China persisted over the next three and a half years. The two countries' dissimilar attitudes and ideas about the correct approach towards China came to the fore in the context of the final stages and the aftermath of the Korean war, the situation in Indochina, their evolving partnerships (for the US with Pakistan, and for India with China and the Soviet Union), the issue of American prisoners in China and the Taiwan Strait crisis. These differences continued to have adverse consequences for the relationship—at some times they deepened the rift between the US and India; at other times the differences prevented the countries from bridging the gap. This chapter

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<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 3, 1953, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Vol. V – 83<sup>rd</sup> Congress, First Session 1953* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1977) [hereafter *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. V 83-I 1953*], p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> Note from JLN to MEA secretary general [SecGen], foreign secretary [FonSec] and the commonwealth secretary [ComSec] on discussion with George Allen (US ambassador), April 24, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 496.

examines those differences, their impact on the relationship, as well as why they did not lead to the two countries totally turning away from each other.

In some ways, President Dwight Eisenhower's beliefs were more similar to those of Nehru than those of the Truman administration had been. Nehru and Eisenhower had similar views about the need to strike a balance between defense and development—the Indian prime minister agreed with Eisenhower's and secretary of state John Foster Dulles' view that military strength alone was not important; economic stability was essential as well. Furthermore, unlike the previous administration's idea that it could expand the means available, in thinking about how to secure the country's expanded interests Eisenhower—like Nehru—emphasized the need to consider that policymakers were operating in the context of limited, not expandable, resources.

But, there were other views that jarred with those of Nehru, especially Eisenhower and Dulles' assertion that the “free world” could afford no more losses to the communist world; that the battlefield was global and any loss would decrease US credibility and security. Focusing on ideology publicly, administration officials asserted that communism was monolithic—Beijing an affiliate of Moscow—and was incompatible with nationalism. The administration saw the process of decolonization, which Nehru welcomed, as creating vulnerabilities that the communists could exploit. Communists could also take advantage of any cleavages in the “free world”—thus it was essential that the “free world” stood tough together. Neutral countries muddied the water; furthermore, Dulles believed that they could encourage the formation of rifts in the “free world.”

How key US and Indian policymakers translated their concepts—even the shared ones—into practice also differed, at least in most of Eisenhower's first administration. Nehru's view of containment on the cheap envisioned engagement through negotiations.

Given limited means, Eisenhower on the other hand believed that the US alone could not pay any price or bear any burden. Thus there needed to be burden sharing through alliances, and the use of more cost-effective instruments such as nuclear weapons and covert action. Furthermore, while Eisenhower approved of the idea of negotiations, as Gaddis has noted, he deferred to his secretary of state on the conduct of them. And Dulles asserted that negotiations were desirable when the US was in a position of strength—otherwise allies and adversaries would see them as a sign of weakness.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Eisenhower and he saw sabre-rattling—even of the nuclear kind—and heated rhetoric as acceptable instruments to portray strength and deter adversaries.<sup>4</sup> Nehru thought they were provocative and counter-productive. And these different views of preferred means did nothing to alleviate tensions in the US-India relationship.

#### **INTERACTING IN THE EAST (1953-1954)**

##### **Korea: Mediating Once More (1953-1954)**

Eisenhower called the Korean War the most urgent problem facing him when he came to office.<sup>5</sup> The president and Dulles wanted to find a way to end the war that was consuming US resources and concerning American allies. To bring China to the negotiating table on US terms, at the start of the administration, they ratcheted up the pressure on China and North Korea. Policymakers even considered the use of nuclear weapons to end the war. Then, suddenly, in the aftermath of Stalin's death in March 1953, there was a Chinese offer to exchange sick and wounded prisoners—as Delhi had proposed in 1952 and Washington had suggested the month before—and to move

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<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), pp. 52-53, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, pp. 130-133, 144-145.

<sup>5</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), p. 171.

towards a settlement. This spurred debate between Eisenhower and Dulles about whether the offer was a genuine attempt towards peace or just a stalling tactic.<sup>6</sup>

Nehru, on the other hand, believed that the post-Stalin Soviet leadership did want to ease world tension. While he often demurred from answering the question of how much influence Moscow had on Chinese decision-making and sometimes even rejected that Moscow had any, Nehru believed that the Chinese offer had to have had Soviet approval. He did not know the precise reasons behind the change in Beijing and Moscow's attitudes, but he welcomed it. He also welcomed the approach suggested and represented by Eisenhower's chance for peace speech that April, believing it was "a great improvement" from the first few months of the administration when escalation seemed to be the chosen US approach in east Asia—an approach he had publicly criticized.<sup>7</sup> Nehru told Dulles when they met in Delhi in May that there were really only two options in Korea: a settlement or a war on a "much wider and more intensive scale"—as Dulles had himself indicated.<sup>8</sup> And Nehru feared that continuing US suspicion of the communist countries would prevent a settlement.<sup>9</sup>

Dulles, in turn, believed that Nehru was not suspicious enough of China and the Soviet Union; that he was "quite naïve" and not "fully grounded as to facts" on certain matters.<sup>10</sup> This sense contributed to the administration's attitude on aiding India. It cut the

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<sup>6</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 68-70. Also see Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, pp. 179-181.

<sup>7</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, April 19, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 541 and Letter from JLN to Chief Ministers [CMs], May 24, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 554. For Nehru's views on Sino-Soviet dynamics, see JLN Interview to Sylvain Mangeot, London, June 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 528 and Letter from JLN to CMs, April 8, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 539. In February 1953, Nehru had publicly criticized the US escalatory approach {See footnote 32 in Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 2, 1953, *Selected Executive Session Hearings of the House Foreign Affairs Committee 1951-1956, Vol. X: Mutual Security Program Part 2* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1980) [hereafter *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. X*], p. 110}.

<sup>8</sup> JLN's Minutes of Discussions with Dulles, New Delhi, May 22, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 512.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, April 19, 1953, *Ibid.*, p. 542.

<sup>10</sup> Proceedings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 3, 1953, p. 448.

previous administration's suggested \$200 million assistance package to India to \$110 million. Beyond the broader budgetary pressure the administration was facing, Dulles asserted that such a high amount could not be "either justified by the facts or...be justified to Congress."<sup>11</sup> The administration believed it was worth supporting India to ensure it did not lose the China-India race, but only on a "limited" basis.<sup>12</sup> Some members of Congress wanted further cuts, partly on the grounds that India was not on the US side and Nehru had not been "playing fair with us all along."<sup>13</sup> Subsequently the legislature, where India had few constituencies, cut the aid amount further to about \$90 million.

Nehru's attitude also contributed to the Eisenhower administration's doubts about India's involvement as an intermediary between China and the US. Washington had continued to use India as a channel to China—Dulles, for example, sought to warn Beijing through Delhi that, if necessary, the US would "extend the area of conflict."<sup>14</sup> But, more often than not, the administration, like its predecessor, tried to eliminate or limit Indian involvement as a mediator—during the Korean crisis and after. Most of these efforts were unsuccessful, however, and US attempts to exclude India only exacerbated the strain between the two countries.

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<sup>11</sup> Dulles to Bedell Smith (US/S), quoted in McMahon, *Cold War in the Periphery*, pp. 157-158. Also see Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 100. For budgetary pressure, see Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>12</sup> Statement of Dulles on the Mutual Security Act, June 2, 1953, *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. X*, p. 76. Also see at the same hearing, Statement of the Director, Mutual Security Agency, p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on the Mutual Security Act 1953, June 11, 1953, *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. X*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>14</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Nehru, May 21, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 1068. Later Dulles suggested in *Life* that China had known about and been deterred by the statement he made to Nehru that the US would use nuclear weapons if necessary if the war continued. Nehru later asserted that whatever the conversation had included—he could not recall a reference to nuclear weapons—India had passed on no message about what weapons the US intended to use to China [Message from JLN to Anthony Eden (British PM), January 25, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 31*, p. 393].

In the waning stages of the Korean War, as settlement proposals flew back and forth between the adversaries, the US unsuccessfully tried to prevent India from getting the role of the neutral state that would supervise post-war prisoner repatriation. The State Department's U. Alexis Johnson noted US unhappiness about the prospect of India playing the role because "India all too often seemed to consider it necessary to be 'more neutral' towards the Chinese Communists than towards the UN."<sup>15</sup> When it became clear that a group of neutrals—the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC)—would take on the supervisory role, General Clark, commander of the UN forces, added that India's neutrality was not "as well defined" as that of some other candidates and expressed concern about India having a swing vote in the group.<sup>16</sup> Dulles thought India would be acceptable, if necessary, as long as the operating procedures and principles were set out firmly.<sup>17</sup> Sen. Knowland weighed in with the view that Congress would oppose India as the neutral member of the commission—he said that till then in Korea India had "perhaps 80 percent of the time voted with the Chinese Communists." Officials like assistant secretary of state for far east Asian affairs Robertson suggested that if China insisted on India as a neutral, the US could insist that it play that role in conjunction with Switzerland and Sweden. He even laid out the excuse that could be put forth—India's lack of resources—to deny India the job alone. But General Collins, US army chief of staff, said this was impractical and insulting to India, and he favored India as a neutral state.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Johnson (DAS/S FEA) and Tomlinson (British Embassy official), April 1, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 832.

<sup>16</sup> Telegram from Gen. Clark to the JCS, Tokyo, April 1, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 858. Telegram from Clark to the JCS, Tokyo, May 8, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 991.

<sup>17</sup> Telegram from Dulles to DoS, April 18, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 917.

<sup>18</sup> Memo of the Substance of Discussion at a DoS-JCS Meeting, May 1, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 956-960.

The US soon found its hands tied. A communist proposal on May 7 envisioned a five-nation commission—on the lines India had proposed in November 1952—with Sweden, Switzerland, Poland and Czechoslovakia, as well as India as the chair. Despite pressure from South Korean leader Syngman Rhee to exclude India, the State Department’s far east bureau realized the US had been put in a spot by the communist move—the communists would use any US exclusion of India for propaganda purposes. Eventually, as a result of this—as well as pressure from NATO allies, especially Britain—the administration felt it had little choice but to accept Indian chairmanship of the commission.<sup>19</sup>

But the administration would not acquiesce to other communist demands, especially one that called for each commission member to have troops on the ground to supervise the prisoner repatriation process—only India, according to a May 13 UN command (UNC) proposal, could provide supervisory forces. Nehru believed that the new UNC proposal was “most unhelpful” since Beijing would find it unacceptable. It was too much of a departure from the May 7 Chinese proposal that Zhou—perhaps to flatter India<sup>20</sup>—had indicated to an Indian official had been based on the Indian one of November 1952. The May 13 UNC proposal gave India a crucial role, but Nehru did not want India to take on any responsibility that did not also come with Chinese agreement.<sup>21</sup> Beijing’s negative reaction and pressure on the US from allies such as Britain led to another revised UNC proposal, which British prime minister Winston Churchill noted to

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<sup>19</sup> Report by Dulles, April 29, 1953, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. V 83-1 1953*, p. 390. Memo by Robertson (AS/S FEA) to Dulles, May 8, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 994. Telegram from Gen. Collins to Gen. Clark, May 9, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-1*, p. 997.

<sup>20</sup> See Cable from JLN to N. Raghavan (Indian ambassador to China), May 14, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 438 and footnote 2 on same page re Cable from Raghavan to JLN, May 13, 1953 on his meeting with Zhou Enlai. Nehru appreciated the references Beijing made to the previous Indian proposals: Letter from JLN to CMs, April 8, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 539.

<sup>21</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, May 14, 1953, *Ibid.*, p. 436 and Cable from JLN to Rajeshwar Dayal (deputy permanent representative to the UN), May 14, 1953, *Ibid.*, p. 437.

Nehru was more in line with the November 1952 Indian resolution. The UNC made concessions to the communists but still insisted that India have sole military supervisory authority.<sup>22</sup> Nehru believed it would not be enough to secure Chinese acquiescence, but Beijing agreed to the US proposals in June. This led Nehru to praise the “very statesmanlike attitude” of the Chinese government. He noted publicly that Beijing could now return to nation-building, which had been disrupted by a war in which China had been reluctantly “brought...in” by the fear of US attack.<sup>23</sup>

Nehru’s tendency to give China credit and the benefit of the doubt created resentment among US officials. But he was not above giving the US the benefit of the doubt at times. When Rhee released prisoners—a move that threatened to torpedo the Korean settlement—Nehru did not think Washington had participated in the decision. Nehru asked N. Raghavan, his ambassador in Beijing, to tell Chinese officials that he believed it to be a unilateral move on the part of Rhee.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, given Zhou’s wavering on the settlement on the grounds that the prisoner release proved that the US was “undependable,” he asserted that the US had to take responsibility and assure Beijing that it could control the situation. Simultaneously, he urged Zhou not to back out of the armistice agreement.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, in order to strengthen Eisenhower’s hands and prevent China from backing out of negotiations, Nehru pushed for the reconvening of the UN general assembly as soon as possible. This interjection, however, annoyed Dulles

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<sup>22</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, May 25, 1953, Ibid, p. 441; Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, May 25, 1953, Ibid, p. 442.

<sup>23</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, June 5, 1953, Ibid, p. 447; JLN Interview to Mangeot, London, June 1953, Ibid, p. 527.

<sup>24</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, June 19, 1953, Ibid, p. 461.

<sup>25</sup> Cable from JLN to Dayal, June 21, 1953, Ibid, pp. 462-463; Cable from JLN to Raghavan, June 21, 1953, Ibid, p. 465. Nehru thought that the US government was not inciting Rhee, but did think some sections in the US and some military officers based in Korea might have been doing so [Message from JLN to U Nu (Burmese prime minister), June 29, 1953, Ibid, p. 474]. Eisenhower later acknowledged that the communists had a right to question whether the US could carry through with such an agreement (Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, p. 185).



who believed that broadening the number of parties in discussions would only complicate the matter.<sup>26</sup>

As chair of the NNRC, India had a more formal mediating role in the Korean situation than it had had in the past. The formality made India's task more formidable. Indian policymakers felt that India was in a "thankless position" with "both sides accusing India of partisanship."<sup>27</sup> In the US, observers charged that India accepted Chinese and North Korean allegations about Taiwanese instigation of some prisoners, while ignoring US allegations about the communists doing the same. Sen. Knowland accused India of giving into all Chinese demands; Dulles refused to repudiate these accusations, adding that the administration was not pleased with the way the NNRC was functioning.<sup>28</sup> China, on the other hand, criticized India for not giving into its demands that the custodial commission use force to coerce Chinese and North Korean prisoners. When the Indian chairman of the commission announced that the NNRC would return all unrepatriated prisoners to the captors by January 22, 1954, China vociferously criticized the decision. But even some in the US complained that instead of returning the prisoners should have said it would release them—a step that the US announced it would subsequently take.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Message from JLN to Lester Pearson (Canadian foreign secretary), June 30, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, pp. 474-475.

<sup>27</sup> Gopal, *Nehru II*, pp. 173-175. Also see Letter from JLN to CMs, February 1, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 541.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Trumbull, "Indians See a Plot in Riots by POWs," *NYT*, September 25, 1953, p. 3; "Dulles Cites Dissatisfaction," *NYT*, October 7, 1953, p. 9. Arthur Dean warned Washington that, left unchecked, the anti-India opinion generated because of its role in the NNRC would cause further damage to US-India relations, which were crucial to keep India "out of the communist orbit" {Memcon by O'Connor (Special Assistant to Dulles) on Meeting with Dean (Deputy to Dulles for the Korean Political Conference), October 6, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-54, Vol. XV: Korea, Part 2* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-2*], p. 1525}.

<sup>29</sup> "Reds Protest to Neutrals Asks Force to be Used on POWs," *NYT*, December 17, 1953, p. 1; Telegram from Allen to DoS re Conversation with Pillai (MEA SecGen), January 12, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-2*, p. 1718; Telegram from Young (Deputy Representative for the Korean Political Conference) to DoS on

The administration also took steps to restrict India's role in the political conference that was to follow the Korean truce—which did not win it any friends in India. Nehru had asserted that India would not seek to play a leading role in the conference, but he had seemed to expect that India would be asked to participate because “[w]e are in the rather special position of being friendly with all the parties involved in the dispute.”<sup>30</sup> But, despite Australian, British and Canadian support, the US refused to endorse Indian participation in the talks largely because of Rhee's objections that India was biased towards the Chinese and North Korean position. The South Korean foreign minister accusing India of “trafficking with the Communists,” said that Seoul would only accept India's presence at the conference if it participated on the communist side. In Congress, Sen. Knowland and others asserted that India's “dubious” record should take it out of contention for membership. The US representative to the UN publicly announced in the general assembly that the US would vote against extending India an invitation. China, on the other hand, supported Indian participation and even suggested New Delhi as a possible venue for the conference—thus, at the very least, scoring propaganda points.<sup>31</sup>

To save face and the conference, Nehru withdrew India from consideration. He asserted that the US attempt to exclude India was one more example of the west excluding Asians from decision-making that affected Asia. He asserted that Asian

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Conversation with Thimayya (Head, NNRC), Munsan-ni, January 15, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-2*, p. 1725; and Robert Trumbull, “Indians Shocked at Red Invective,” *NYT*, January 20, 1954, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> JLN Interview to Mangeot, London, June 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 527.

<sup>31</sup> Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: the politics of peacemaking at the Korean armistice talks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 200-201. Gopal, *Nehru II*, pp. 171-173. Also see Thomas J. Hamilton, “Lodge Sees India Losing Parley Bid,” *NYT*, August 22, 1953, p. 1 and Thomas J. Hamilton, “South Korea Bars India on UN Side at Talks on Peace,” *NYT*, August 25, 1953, p. 1. Report by the AS/S FEA, July 16, 1953, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. V 83-I 1953*, pp. 668-669. For a similar Soviet role in suggesting India as an intermediary to gain credit in India (knowing that the US would resist in many cases), see Mansingh, p. 133.

countries would no longer submit to being “ignored or bypassed, certainly not sat upon.”<sup>32</sup> Nehru later stated that despite lacking military or financial power, non-aligned India could make a difference.<sup>33</sup> It was around this time that Indian policymakers also started publicly indicating a desire to play a leadership role in Asia—moving away from previous denials that India sought such a role.<sup>34</sup>

On Washington’s part, in the aftermath of the Korean War, there was an effort to downplay any Asian leadership role for India and Nehru—a role many in the US had earlier advocated. Sen. Knowland, heavily critical of India for “yielding to the Chinese Communists,” dismissed Nehru as the spokesman for all of Asia. Dulles did not want to take actions that would “establish Nehru as the leader of all South and Southeast Asia.” US diplomats reported with satisfaction when differences between Nehru and other South Asian leaders on communism were apparent.<sup>35</sup>

India’s formal role in the NNRC and the debate on its participation in the political conference had made its role mediating between China and the US more public—and thus the impact on India’s image even beyond Washington greater. The Korean War took its toll on American public opinion of India. In January 1951, a quarter of those polled did not think India could be counted on to cooperate with the US; by April 1954 this

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Trumbull, “US-India Relations again at Ebb,” *NYT*, September 27, 1953, p. 171 and “Nehru Implies Immaturity Shows in US Foreign Policy,” *WP*, September 18, 1953, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from JLN to U Nu, May 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 481. Also see Nehru, *Brecher*, pp. 559-560, 593.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas J. Hamilton, “India Proclaims her Role as Spokesman for Asians,” *NYT*, October 4, 1953, p. E5. See reference to Nehru’s inaugural address at the Asian Relations Conference in March 1947 in Kavic, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Robert C. Albright, “Knowland for Bigger Defenses if Talks Fail,” *WP*, October 6, 1953, p. 3 and Letter from Senator Knowland to Dulles, November 16, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 355; Memcon of Meeting between Eisenhower, Dulles, Adm. Davis and Byroade (AS/S NESAs), January 14, 1954. Quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 233; and Telegram from Crowe (US ambassador in Ceylon) to DoS, May 6, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1134.

number had climbed to 42 percent.<sup>36</sup> In January 1952, 57 percent of those polled who had an opinion on the matter believed that India was neither on the Russian nor US side; in a poll taken in April 1954, only 28 percent thought India was neutral, with 7 percent believing the Indian government was communist and 26 percent considering it to be pro-communist.<sup>37</sup>

### **Indochina: Dueling Approaches (1953-1954)**

By the onset of the Geneva political conference on Korea and Indochina in spring 1954, India's stock as an honest broker had plummeted even further in Washington: a US policymaker expressed the belief that "the Chinese Communists in a sense hold a veto over India."<sup>38</sup> Dulles believed that Indian policymakers had been pushing for the conference to "elevat[e]" India's role as a leader in Asia.<sup>39</sup> The US succeeded in excluding India officially from the political conference in April, but as Raghavan noted, India "was more than present" in the form of Indian envoy Krishna Menon.<sup>40</sup>

Nehru sent Krishna Menon to Geneva because he believed that a settlement in Indochina was crucial. A year earlier he had asserted that communists were no doubt taking advantage of the situation in Indochina, but the root of the situation was nationalism. He had admitted that there was no "easy solution." He was critical of a

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<sup>36</sup> Foreign Affairs Survey, January 1951 and Foreign Affairs Survey, April 1954. Retrieved Oct-17-2010 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. [http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html).

<sup>37</sup> Roper Commercial Survey, January 1952 and Gallup Poll (AIPO) April 1954. Retrieved Oct-17-2010 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. [http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html)

<sup>38</sup> Quoted anonymously in James Shepley, "Strained Seams in the Great Alliance," *Life*, May 31, 1954, p. 21

<sup>39</sup> Telegram from Parkman (Director of the Berlin Element, Office of the US High Commissioner for Germany) to DoS re Meeting of Dulles with Anthony Eden (British foreign secretary), January 24, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-2*, p. 1734.

<sup>40</sup> Raghavan, Annual Political Report for 1954 from the IndEmb Beijing, February 5, 1955 in NAI, File No. 2(2)-FEA/55.

“purely military approach in aid of a colonial power”—that kind of approach, which countries like the US were pursuing, would only make things worse. He understood US motivations—anti-communism and the desire not to abandon ally France—but thought American support to its ally indeed created the opportunity for communists in Indochina.<sup>41</sup>

By the time of the Geneva conference, Nehru thought the options in Southeast Asia were clear: (a) a settlement that accepted and stabilized the status quo and essentially prevented Chinese expansion or (b) a lack of agreement, which meant continuation of military activity that would benefit China and the Vietminh. He was concerned that US policy was leading to the latter, which, in turn, would eventually lead to war. Seeking a settlement, Nehru proposed a peace plan in conjunction with other Asian leaders and sought British support for it. Furthermore, egged on by British foreign secretary Anthony Eden, Nehru urged Zhou to cease large-scale attacks in Indochina, even getting the Chinese premier’s public endorsement in principle of non-interference in Southeast Asia.<sup>42</sup>

In Geneva, Krishna Menon’s shuttle diplomacy between American and Chinese officials need not have exacerbated US-India tensions. After all US and Indian objectives in Southeast Asia were not entirely disparate—even with an upswing in Sino-Indian relations (see below), India had no interest in seeing greater Chinese influence in the region.<sup>43</sup> US officials indeed acknowledged that India desired neither a return to

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<sup>41</sup> Note from JLN to FonSec, May 10, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 501; JLN, Minutes of Discussions with Dulles, New Delhi, May 22, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 511; and Letter from JLN to CMs, May 24, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 556.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from JLN to GL Mehta (Indian ambassador in Washington), June 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 355; Message from JLN to Eden, June 12, 1954 in *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 354. Also see Ramesh Chandra Thakur, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam: Canada, India, Poland, and the International Commission* (Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1984), p. 50.

<sup>43</sup> Lawrence’s contention that “Indians wished to prevent Southeast Asia from becoming a cockpit of Cold War rivalries, but Nehru, a staunch anti-communist, was equally determined to prevent domination by any

colonialism nor a turn to communism in the region nor even “a further consolidation of external communist power.”<sup>44</sup> But, as a scholar has noted in this context too, “Indian and American approaches were mutually exclusive...and led to mutual irritations.”<sup>45</sup>

Just before the conference was underway, Nehru’s statement that India would not permit foreign forces en route to Indochina to go through or fly over India had led to criticism on Capitol Hill. Even before his statement, members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee had questioned India’s attitude during hearings on the foreign assistance program. Rep. Vorys (R-OH) had asserted that India was a “neutral that isn’t even neutral.” Rep. Smith (R-WI) had added, “it is very difficult to justify our assistance” given “that there are basic fundamental differences in policies between India and ourselves.” Reps. Church (R-IL) and Judd (R-MN) commented that continued support to India—which did not support the US—adversely affected the US position with friends in Asia who did offer that support. Rep. Jackson (R-CA) pointed out that India had actively put up “stumbling blocks” for the US.<sup>46</sup>

Some in Congress believed that, with his attitude on transit, Nehru was creating yet another obstacle. Rep. Bolton (R-OH) asked if Indian policymakers did not realize that their attitude on Indochina was going “to bring communism right to their own

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single power over the region, especially if that power was Mao’s China” held even after the April 1954 Sino-Indian agreement. Mark Atwood Lawrence, “The limits of peacemaking: India and the Vietnam War, 1962–67,” *India Review*, Vol. 1 Issue 3 (2002), p. 43.

<sup>44</sup> Memo by Morgan (Acting Executive Officer of the OCB) to Lay (NSC Executive Secretary) re Progress Report on NSC 5409, July 29, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, pp. 1137-1138. Also see National Intelligence Estimate: Probable Developments in South Asia, June 30, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1086.

<sup>45</sup> Thakur, *Peacekeeping in Vietnam*, p. 49.

<sup>46</sup> Judd—an Asia-firster—praised the increased emphasis on Asia, but noted that the dichotomy that India was fighting against communism domestically, but supporting it externally. Testimony of Byroade (AS/S NES-A), April 13, 1954, *Hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee 83<sup>rd</sup> Congress, Second Session on the Mutual Security Act of 1954* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1954) [hereafter *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*], p. 221-239.

doors.”<sup>47</sup> Sen. Bridges, appropriations committee chairman, and others said the US should keep in mind Nehru’s refusal when considering aid to India. Sen. Homer Ferguson (R-MI) added that India’s action “to say the least gave aid and comfort to the communist world.”<sup>48</sup> As the criticism continued, the Democrats in the Senate “sat silent.”<sup>49</sup>

US ambassador to India George Allen pointed out that India had followed the transit policy consistently since independence, but this did not stem the criticism.<sup>50</sup> Noting the criticism, Nehru said that while “it would be grossly unfair...to judge the United States by the speeches of some Senators...inevitably there are reactions in India to speeches and writings in the press.”<sup>51</sup> Reports indicated that even friends of the US and critics of Nehru in India were disappointed by the outburst against India in Congress.<sup>52</sup> The prime minister expressed doubts to his ambassador in Washington about accepting US aid since the two countries were at such loggerheads.<sup>53</sup> That might not even have been a choice had the House not defeated what the *New York Times* labeled “the no-aid-to-India-unless-she-gets-off-the-fence amendment” to the foreign assistance bill.<sup>54</sup>

The Geneva conference did not alleviate Nehru’s doubts about the US or its leaders’ approach. At the conference that began on April 26, unlike Dulles, the prime

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<sup>47</sup> Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 4, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 533.

<sup>48</sup> Note from JLN to MEA SecGen, FonSec and ComSec, April 24, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 494 (also see footnote 2 on the same page). Rep. Jackson said Nehru’s refusal was an “open affront” and should lead to a reconsideration of the amount of assistance given to India (Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 3, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 486).

<sup>49</sup> William S. White, “3 GOP Senators Criticize Nehru for his Ban on Airlift,” *NYT*, April 23, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 4, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 522.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from JLN to Dorothy Norman, May 26, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 497. In a separate letter, Nehru noted that, moreover, this was not a new policy—India had not allowed French or British forces these rights en route to Southeast Asia (Letter from JLN to CMs, April 26, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 558).

<sup>52</sup> Robert Trumbull, “India is Dismayed by US Aid Stand,” *NYT*, April 17, 1954, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from JLN to Mehta, June 7, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 512.

<sup>54</sup> James Reston, “Washington: Enter the ‘Silly Season’,” *NYT*, July 4, 1954, p. E6

minister thought Zhou was neither “uncompromising” nor merely following Moscow’s lead. He believed that any rigidity on the part of the premier stemmed from US behavior—a sense exacerbated by Zhou’s assertion to Nehru that the US attitude basically was “to obstruct any settlement in the Conference.”<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, Dulles had not just given what came to be called his “massive retaliation” speech earlier that year, but had also made clear the US reluctance to participate in the conference. Furthermore, in a speech beforehand he had dismissed criticism of the country’s China policy, asserting that the US policy of non-recognition was “soberly rational” given Beijing’s “consistently and viciously hostile” behavior towards the US. He argued that communist promises were unreliable and outlined the administration’s preferred alternative of “united action” against the Chinese threat.<sup>56</sup>

Nehru had found it “rather odd” and unhelpful that Dulles had given a speech emphasizing the communist threat in east Asia and the need for “united action” to meet it.<sup>57</sup> The move was indeed deliberate—Dulles thought it would serve as a warning to China and boost France. At the conference, it could also help the French negotiating position that he believed to be very weak, given the imminent fall of Dien Bien Phu. Eisenhower and Dulles believed that after the “loss” of China to the communist world, a loss in Vietnam—to the China-backed Vietminh—would be crippling. Eisenhower was skeptical of the British and French belief in the value of negotiations with the communists—and disapproved of the influence India seemed to have with British

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<sup>55</sup> Letter from JLN to Ali Sastroamidjojo (Indonesian prime minister), June 12, 1954 in *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 34; Record of JLN’s Conversation with Zhou, June 25, 1954, 3:30pm in *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 368. Nehru told U Nu that the US “appears to be almost anxious not to have a settlement in Indochina” (Letter from JLN to U Nu, May 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 481). For Dulles’ views, see Thakur, p. 46.

<sup>56</sup> “Text of Address by Secretary of States Dulles on United States Policy in the Far East,” *NYT*, March 30, 1954, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, April 14, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 552.



policymakers on this question. Nonetheless, so as not to break with allies who hoped to reach a settlement at Geneva, Eisenhower had agreed to send US representatives to the conference. But, as Immerman has noted, Dulles indeed hoped that the negotiations would “acrimoniously collapse.”<sup>58</sup>

Nehru did not expect much to come from the conference. He was unhappy with the US approach, asserting that the US only seemed to be able to “think in terms of war or threat of war and massive retaliation” and no solution was possible on that basis.<sup>59</sup> But by the end of the conference, he was relatively pleased with the result. Krishna Menon’s shuttle diplomacy facilitated the achievement of a settlement at Geneva. India subsequently agreed to chair the International Control Commission, created to supervise ceasefires in Indochina. But Eisenhower and Dulles had already turned to a different approach to the problem: collective security—an approach that Allen called the source of the “biggest difference” between the US and India.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, Eisenhower declared that the US was not bound by the Geneva settlement and the US refused to sign on to the agreement. The administration subsequently announced the consideration of a collective security organization in Asia—the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)—that only further exacerbated US-India tensions.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 88-95. Also see Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, pp. 333-349.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, April 14, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 553. Letter from JLN to U Nu, May 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 481.

<sup>60</sup> Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 4, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 531. Nehru had earlier noted that Dulles would likely play spoiler at Geneva so that a collective security organization would come into being as an alternative (Letter from JLN to CMs, April 14, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 553).

<sup>61</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 94-95; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, pp. 366-371; Lawrence, p. 44 and Thakur, p. 48.

## **PROBLEMATIC PARTNERSHIPS (1953-1955)**

Nehru had told Dulles that it was quite natural that the US and India's attitudes and approaches on certain issues were different "because our background, our geography, our history, etc., had been different. We had grown up in a certain set of circumstances and were naturally influenced by them."<sup>62</sup> The fact that the differences were natural did not make the negative impact they had on the relationship any less intense. Like Acheson before him, Dulles noted that the US and India did not necessarily have differences on ultimate interests. But the secretary of state laid out the real crux of the issue from the US perspective: while policymakers might understand that India had a different position, the methods India chose and advocated created problems for the US.<sup>63</sup> One of these methods was the Indian engagement of China. On India's part, Nehru saw Eisenhower's preferred means, especially collective security—which made Pakistan part of the solution, rather than part of the problem as Delhi saw it—as increasing India's difficulties.

## **The US-Pakistan Relationship: Collective Security or Creating Insecurity? (1953-1954)**

The last few years of the Truman administration had seen the US focused on the far eastern part of Asia—which had given India more of a role—but in the early years of the Eisenhower administration there was increasing concern about the situation in the Middle East. This brought with it attention to and eventually alliance with Pakistan, a country that was not just willing, but had been actively seeking to ally with the US. The idea of bringing Pakistan into the US-supported network of alliances preceded the Eisenhower administration. The Truman administration, however, had shelved plans to

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<sup>62</sup> JLN, Minutes of Discussions with Dulles, New Delhi, May 22, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 507.

<sup>63</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles, Byroade and Mehta, October 7, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, pp. 1725-1726.

include Pakistan in a Middle East Defense Organization.<sup>64</sup> US-Pakistan negotiations in the Eisenhower era had commenced in the spring of 1953 and reports of the prospective partnership had first become public in November that year. Subsequently, in February 1954, the US announced that it would militarily aid Pakistan.

A few months later, Pakistan offered to join SEATO and US policymakers reluctantly accepted.<sup>65</sup> While policymakers were conceptualizing the organization, some—including Dulles—advocated for Indian involvement. Dulles was even willing to consider including non-aggression principles—of the sort that China and India agreed to (see below) and some were arguing for—if it would bring India and Burma into SEATO.<sup>66</sup> But, the military wanted India excluded and the focus to be on the Pacific.<sup>67</sup> Defense Secretary Wilson thought the US should let Britain and India take the initiative

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<sup>64</sup> Only partly on account of India's expected adverse reaction. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 149-151, 159-163. Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>65</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery* p. 194. Dulles was not initially sold on the idea of including Pakistan. Later, he insisted that language be included so that SEATO and the US would not be committed to/caught up in any India-Pakistan conflict. Faced with resistance from other parties, including Pakistan, to explicitly stating SEATO was against Communist aggression, the US added an understanding to the treaty. Dulles came to have doubts about the desirability and utility of the treaty even as it was being negotiated—he thought it would limit US freedom of action by requiring too much consultation with countries that were not really committed to stopping the Communists. See Dulles-Australian ambassador meeting in Memcon of Meeting between Australian Foreign Minister and Dulles, June 29, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 588; Memcon of Meeting between Scott (Minister, British Embassy) and MacArthur (Counselor of the DoS), August 26, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 797; Memo by the MacArthur to the Acting S/S, August 28, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 806; and Memo of Telephone Conversation between Dulles and Merchant (AS/S Europe), August 30, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, pp. 821-822.

<sup>66</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Australian Foreign Minister and Dulles, June 29, , *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 587. There was a belief that they could be included if there was a dual-type grouping—with one set in the group focused on military matters, and the other set coming together for economic stability and development. The president approved of such an idea (See Editorial Note re NSC meeting on July 22, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 651).

<sup>67</sup> Memcon of State-Defense Discussions of Forthcoming US-UK Joint Study Group [JSG] Meetings, July 6, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 602. The joint study group eventually suggested that both India and Pakistan should be considered potential members (See Working Paper prepared for the US-UK JSG by Scott, July 7, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 605). Gen. Smith was concerned that invitations to any of the Colombo powers would create problems in terms of Taiwan, South Korea and Japan as potential members (US Minutes of the Second Meeting of the US-UK JSG, July 8, *Ibid*, p. 611). There was also concern about the delay in negotiations that further inclusion of members would entail (US Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the US-UK JSG, July 13, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 619).

for any Southeast Asian grouping. He and national security advisor Cutler were more in favor of an Asian economic grouping rather than a US-sponsored military one, but Dulles thought the US had come too far to jettison the latter.<sup>68</sup> The US also dropped an idea of a dual-track grouping because of the lack of participation of countries like Japan and India and the belief that non-aligned countries would not participate in an economic consortium associated with the military treaty.<sup>69</sup>

Indian reaction to the inclusion of Pakistan into the US strategic script was highly negative at both the official and public levels.<sup>70</sup> Nehru called it an “intrusion of a new and dangerous element in the politics of Asia.” He noted that one need not take “an alarmist view,” but nonetheless there needed to be an Indian policy rethink.<sup>71</sup> Privately Nehru acknowledged that the US was likely to play a restraining role on Pakistan, thus reducing the chances of an India-Pakistan war. But, he was extremely anxious about Pakistan’s increased access to military equipment and what that would mean for India’s defense expenditures.<sup>72</sup>

Nehru’s adverse reaction to SEATO stemmed from his overall attitude that pacts “brought insecurity.”<sup>73</sup> He felt that the motives for SEATO’s creation might have been

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<sup>68</sup> Letter from Wilson (Defense Secretary) to Dulles, August 17, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 739; Minutes of an Interagency Meeting on Southeast Asia Chaired by the Vice President, July 24, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 667-668.

<sup>69</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Baldwin (Acting DAS/S FEA) and Blakeney (Counselor, Australian Embassy) re the SEATO Treaty, September 1, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 827.

<sup>70</sup> See McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 213-215 and Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 113-115. Also Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, March 12, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 49 and Note from JLN to the MEA SecGen on Exchange Schemes between India and USA, April 14, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, pp. 492-493.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, February 1, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 536; Letter from JLN to CMs, March 15, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 544.

<sup>72</sup> He identified the reason why: “Oddly enough, I think that American policy is opposed to such a war and therefore they will discourage Pakistan. This is not for love of us, but because such a conflict would upset their larger plans in Asia.” Letter from JLN to K.N. Katju (Indian home minister), July 3, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 218. Also Record of JLN’s Interview with Attwood, August 31, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 315.

<sup>73</sup> JLN, Speech in the closed session of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, April 22, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 106.

good—to ease fear of countries in the region—but the approach was wrong. It could only be seen as anti-China.<sup>74</sup> While the US thought China posed a clear and present danger in Southeast Asia, Nehru disagreed that there was such a threat. In another instance of mirror-imaging, he asserted that China did not have aggression on its mind; rather, like India, it wanted peace to focus internally. Moreover, he disagreed with the Eisenhower administration’s military approach, arguing that it created more, rather than less, insecurity. He stated that the US should accept Chinese assurances that they would not indulge in aggression and, in turn, assure China that there would not be attempts to invade China or overthrow the communist regime in Beijing. In what had become a familiar retort, Allen, however, argued that China, given its apparent expansionist tendencies in Korea and Indochina, needed to reassure the US first.<sup>75</sup>

Had India’s China policy affected the US decision to ally with Pakistan? McMahon has argued that “American disillusionment with and devaluation of India formed a necessary precondition for the American military commitment” to Pakistan.<sup>76</sup> That devaluation had partly stemmed from India’s lack of willingness to play the role vis-à-vis China that Washington had hoped it would. The role it *had* played had not been helpful. The disillusionment, too, partly emerged from what US policymakers saw as India’s lack of understanding of the China threat and the US approach toward China. Beyond Delhi’s willingness, questions about India’s ability to stand up against China also contributed to the decision to go the collective security route. The idea of alliances and partnerships in the region itself partly stemmed from the belief that while India and Japan

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<sup>74</sup> JLN, Speech in the Lok Sabha, September 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 322; JLN, Statement at the Second Session of the Conference of PMs of the Colombo Countries, Bogor, December 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 116.

<sup>75</sup> Telegram from Allen to DoS, Delhi, August 9, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, pp. 713-714.

<sup>76</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 178-179.

were potentially considerably strong, at that point they lacked the ability to resist effectively. Thus, non-communist Asia needed “protection against Communist attack.”<sup>77</sup>

### **Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai: Peaceful Coexistence or Naïve Nurturing (1953-1955)**

Most Indian policymakers at the time disagreed that India needed protection against Chinese attack and even more vociferously disagreed with the way the Eisenhower administration was trying to establish that protection in Asia. In mid-1953, US intelligence analysts had noted that, of all US anti-communist efforts, the ones that seemed to make India most apprehensive were those directed against China.<sup>78</sup>

Since there had seemed to be few near-term options to get rid of the communist government in Beijing short of a large-scale US commitment, Eisenhower and Dulles’ strategy had focused on pressuring China so that the regime would become internally unstable. At the same time isolating China would strain Sino-Soviet relations, as Beijing would depend more on and demand more of Moscow. The administration could apply pressure through trade embargos, covert action and psychological warfare, as well as by refusing to recognize Mao’s regime or to support its bid to take the Chinese seat at the UN.<sup>79</sup>

But Indian policymakers believed that the ways the US sought to pressure China were dangerous. Nehru believed America’s China policy was “unrealistic and fallacious.”<sup>80</sup> He worried about the consequences of the continued American effort to keep Taipei in and Beijing out of the UNSC, noting, “an obviously wrong thing [is]

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<sup>77</sup> NSC 166/1: Statement of Policy by the NSC on US Policy towards Communist China, November 6, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 280.

<sup>78</sup> NIE: Probable Developments in South Asia, June 30, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1086.

<sup>79</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 119-120. Ronald W. Pruessen, “Over the Volcano: The United States and the Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-1955,” in Robert Ross and Jiang Changbin, eds., *Re-examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Relations, 1954-1973* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), p. 81.

<sup>80</sup> JLN’s comments in Report of Conference of Heads of Indian Missions (HoMs) in Europe and the USA, Burgenstock, June 17, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 520.

perpetuated and a whole castle is sought to be build on an artificial foundation; and then, if something goes wrong afterwards, complaint is made.”<sup>81</sup> He also remained frustrated about the US reluctance to recognize the regime in Beijing.<sup>82</sup> He believed that the foreign policy of those who would not recognize China had become “topsy-turvy”—since they were leaving a “major factor out of reckoning. It is bound to upset the cart.”<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Nehru had a different idea of how a wedge strategy could work—even though by this stage he questioned the desirability of attempting to split Beijing and Moscow. He thought persuasion and engagement would eventually lead Beijing to turn away from Moscow, as China would have other options.<sup>84</sup>

Dulles had replied in the negative when asked if there was any agreement between Nehru and him on China.<sup>85</sup> He had noted to Rhee that the key difference was on tactics—India believed “the methods of appeasement rather than strength would weaken the communist world.”<sup>86</sup> In the incoming Eisenhower administration, there had been little expectation that India would change its approach toward China. Nehru had told Dulles that India had to deal with China for reasons of geography and pragmatism—his country had a 2000-mile border with China and did not want “trouble for the indefinite future,” especially since the Indian leadership wanted to focus on nation-building and wanted

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<sup>81</sup> JLN, Statement in the Lok Sabha, September 17, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 398.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Paul G. Hoffman (president’s special emissary to India and Pakistan) to Dulles, April 28, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1321. Also see JLN, Speech at a meeting of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), July 6, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 21.

<sup>83</sup> JLN, Speech at a meeting of the AICC, July 6, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 22.

<sup>84</sup> JLN’s comments in Report of Conference of HoMs in Europe and the USA, Burgenstock, June 17, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 520. As a US intelligence assessment indicated, Indian leaders had continued to believe that China could be “weaned away” from the Soviet Union. (NIE: Probable Developments in South Asia, June 30, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1086).

<sup>85</sup> Statement of Dulles on the Mutual Security Act, June 2, 1953, *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. X*, p. 109.

<sup>86</sup> Memcon of First Meeting between Rhee (South Korean president) and Dulles, August 5, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XV-2*, pp. 1468-1470.

peace. The other reasons that some scholars have given as the motivation for Nehru's China policy—"past history and cultural associations with China"—the prime minister saw as secondary and only mattering "to some extent."<sup>87</sup>

In the post-Stalin era, US analysts had seen Beijing's willingness to come to the table for talks on Korea as only reinforcing Indian views that China did not intend to behave aggressively. US policymakers knew that India wanted to reach and maintain a *modus vivendi* with the regime in Beijing. For that reason, an NSC assessment had predicted in early 1954, "It can be expected that India will go to great lengths to win Red China's friendship."<sup>88</sup> Indeed, India was doing just that at the time with negotiations that culminated in the signing of the Sino-Indian agreement in April 1954.

Allen believed that US military aid to Pakistan caused this Indian deepening of its relations with China. Merrill has also linked the developing US-Pakistan relationship and the increased "militarization of Asia" with India's stepped up outreach to other countries, especially China.<sup>89</sup> But India's desire to deepen its relations with China had preceded the announcement of US aid to Pakistan. In March 1953, Burmese Prime Minister U Nu had first suggested that Burma, China and India sign a 50-year friendship and non-aggression agreement. Nehru had been unsure of the Chinese reaction given Beijing's adverse response to the Indian resolution on Korea at the UN in late 1952 and the resultant "coolness" towards India. Nonetheless, Nehru had "welcome[d]" the idea, but only if it

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<sup>87</sup> JLN, Minutes of Discussions with Dulles, New Delhi, May 22, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 510. Nehru also publicly noted how the shared frontier made a difference stating, "it makes all the difference in the world whether that is a friendly frontier or a hostile frontier. I want it to be a friendly one. I cannot help thinking that when that sort of problem is being looked at from Europe or America, it is sometimes discussed as something very remote and unreal" (JLN Interview to Mangeot, London, June 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 528).

<sup>88</sup> NIE: Probable Developments in South Asia, June 30, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1086 and Study Prepared by the NSC Staff, NSC 5409: US Policy Toward South Asia, undated 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1101.

<sup>89</sup> Telegram from Allen to DoS, July 28, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54, Vol. XII-1*, p. 679 and Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 113.



was not “anti” any country. He also thought the duration too long, recommending instead a decade-long agreement with the possibility of renewal. He had suggested that rather than a trilateral agreement, the countries aim for a series of bilateral ones. He urged U Nu to take the initiative, but not to commit India. Nehru wanted any steps to be taken with great care because he expected that any such agreements would have a “powerful” impact, especially on the US. He also did not want Beijing to think Delhi might be interested in such an agreement out of weakness—China “did not respect those who show weakness,” so India should be “both friendly and firm.”<sup>90</sup>

After Stalin’s death and end of Korean war, Nehru had hoped that fear and suspicion would abate. By fall 1953, given the lack of agreement on holding a political conference that could have helped alleviate global and regional tension, he had been “more doubtful of any permanent settlements in the near future.”<sup>91</sup> This made it even more important for India to seek peace with China.<sup>92</sup> Thus, Nehru sought to avoid steps that China would see as unfriendly.<sup>93</sup> And he had moved to settle issues that could cause tension between the two countries—especially Tibet—announcing in September 1953 that his government had reached out to Beijing seeking talks.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Letter from JLN to U Nu, March 6, 1953, *SWJN SS Vol. 21*, p. 534. Also see Cable from JLN to Raghavan, March 6, 1953, *SWJN SS Vol. 21*, p. 536.

<sup>91</sup> JLN, Speech at a meeting of the AICC, July 6, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 20 and JLN, Statement in the Lok Sabha, September 17, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 396.

<sup>92</sup> Nehru outlined why peace was crucial for India – “in avoiding war, one can maintain one’s independence or general position and objectives. In war, one cannot.” JLN Conversation with Norman Cousins, September 3, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> Nehru noted, for example, strong disapproval of indications that some Congress party members might be marking “Tibet Day.” Letter from JLN to Balvantray Mehta (AICC general secretary), August 24, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 483.

<sup>94</sup> Nehru realised that India would have to withdraw any military presence in Tibet and even some communications facilities, but he wanted to ensure that India’s trading privileges were maintained. Furthermore, while he did not want to raise the question of India’s border with China at that point, he knew it would “have to be brought in in a larger settlement. In that settlement I should like to make clear our special position in the border States...But, for the present, no mention need be made.” Note by JLN on Residual Problems Regarding Tibet, August 30, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 484. Also see “India Extends Red China Bid to Tibet Talks,” WP, September 24, 1953, p. 5.

Despite the slight easing of general tensions following Stalin's death and the truce in Korea, there had been continuing strain in the Sino-Indian relationship through 1953 because of India's role in the NNRC. But, even though Sino-Indian relations "were not quite happy"—and, indeed, because they were not—the two countries began discussing the status of Tibet at the end of December 1953—the beginning of January 1954.<sup>95</sup> In spring 1954, Indian officials told their US counterparts to expect "some kind of statement of mutual desire...to maintain peace between [the] two countries" if the Sino-Indian negotiations over Tibet were successful.<sup>96</sup> What emerged was the Sino-Indian agreement, signed in April 1954, through which India implicitly recognized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Explicitly, it laid out rights for trade and pilgrimages between India and Tibet, as well as Indian promises to withdraw its military missions in Tibet and reduce its overall footprint there. Finally, it contained the five principles of peaceful coexistence or Panchsheel, including clauses on mutual respect for territorial integrity and non-interference in other's internal affairs.<sup>97</sup>

Some US analysts (and others subsequently) saw the Indian desire for reaching an accommodation with China as stemming from "legendary bonds of friendship and culture" and "psychological ties arising from the fact that the Chinese as a colored race and as Asians have asserted themselves against the West."<sup>98</sup> But, from the Indian perspective, there were other motivations as well. Nehru believed that India's importance increased because of her "intimate relations" with China. This "enabled [Delhi] to make

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<sup>95</sup> Raghavan, Annual Political Report for 1954 from the IndEmb Beijing, February 5, 1955 in NAI, 2 (2)-FEA/55.

<sup>96</sup> Telegram from Allen to DoS, March 20, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1351.

<sup>97</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 51. Also see Agreement between the Republic of India and the PRC on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India, April 29, 1954.

<sup>98</sup> NSC Staff, NSC 5409: US Policy Toward South Asia, undated 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1101.

approaches to [Beijing] and to say things which many other nations could not.”<sup>99</sup> For Nehru, there was also a more important reason. While he did not think there was any “immediate likelihood,” it was not inconceivable that India’s relations with China would deteriorate. It was possible that there could be a new phase of Chinese expansionism, and the only feasible solution for India was to “fashion our policy to prevent [China] coming in the way of our interests or other interests that we consider important.” The agreement might not be “a permanent guarantee,” but it was a useful insurance policy at that stage.<sup>100</sup> This was especially desirable for a leadership that did not want to enter an alliance to ensure the country’s security.

In the US, the New York Times declared, “Peiping Gets Indian Gift.” On Capitol Hill, Rep. Bolton called the agreement the “first step toward the communization of India.” Allen tried to explain that the “favorable Indian attitude toward China is not because China is Communist, but in spite of the fact that it is Communist.” He acknowledged that the agreement might not be a good deal, but said Indian policymakers accepted it as “the best deal they could get.”<sup>101</sup>

The agreement was one of the major steps in Nehru’s attempt to “encircle and contain China in a ring of pledges.”<sup>102</sup> Nehru traced the criticism of the agreement that

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<sup>99</sup> Proceedings of conference of Indian HoMs in Europe, Salzburg, June 28-30, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 242.

<sup>100</sup> Note from JLN to the MEA SecGen, FonSec, Joint Secretary, June 18, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, pp. 477-478. Nehru later expressed the same view to U Nu, noting that while India cannot “rely upon [China] absolutely to keep [its assurances], but it will be a check on them and helpful to us as circumstances develop.” The assurances might be unreliable “both because governments may change their minds and because a communist government especially functions often in a particular way”—but that at that time it was to Beijing’s advantage to be friendly with India and India could take advantage of that to address the differences between the two countries (Letter from JLN to U Nu, May 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 481). Also see Kavic, p. 44.

<sup>101</sup> “Peiping Gets Indian Gift,” *NYT*, May 1, 1954, p. 6; Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 30, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 460; and Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 4, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 517-518.

<sup>102</sup> Thakur, p. 20.

emerged abroad and in some quarters in India to lack of awareness of this bigger picture. An alternate approach was neither feasible nor desirable. What India had lost—rights in Tibet—it could not have held on to, and, moreover, what India gained from China outweighed any loss: “a friendly frontier and an implicit acceptance of that frontier.”<sup>103</sup> India did not have the ability to act within Tibet; it could merely tolerate, without encouraging, the Tibetan movement in India—which he assumed the US was supporting—if it was “peaceful and unobtrusive.”<sup>104</sup> Finally, Nehru contended that “assum[ing] an aggressive role” would only lead to trouble.<sup>105</sup>

After the treaty was signed, in mid-June 1954, Zhou Enlai suddenly accepted a pending invitation to visit India, pleasantly surprising Nehru.<sup>106</sup> In the US, the *New York Times* reflected public disapproval of Zhou’s visit, noting with chagrin that it took place on the fourth anniversary of the Chinese-“aided and abetted” North Korean invasion of South Korea.<sup>107</sup> In India, Zhou was well received. Nehru and the premier did not discuss potentially contentious issues like the Sino-Indian border—Nehru indeed thought that the very act of bringing the subject up might suggest doubt about India’s frontiers, which he asserted were settled.<sup>108</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, the Indian vice president, later noted Zhou’s reasonableness about every subject, with one exception—the US.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Letter from JLN to Mehta, June 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 356. For criticism in parliament, see Jetly, pp. 37-38.

<sup>104</sup> He asserted that helping the Tibetans to resist China would be “wholly outside the range of practical politics and it would have been of very doubtful legality.” Letter from JLN to the CMs, July 1, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 557. Also, see Note from JLN to the MEA SecGen, FonSec and Joint Secretary, June 18, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, pp. 478-479.

<sup>105</sup> JLN, Reply to a Debate on the International Situation and GOI Policy in Lok Sabha, September 30, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 336.

<sup>106</sup> Message from JLN to U Nu, June 22, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 353.

<sup>107</sup> “Zhou and Nehru,” *NYT*, June 26, 1954, p. 12 and “Nehru and Zhou Open Secret Talk,” *NYT*, June 26, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>108</sup> Nehru noted that he had made clear in Parliament that the McMahon line was firm and did not need to be discussed. He further stated that he brought this up “deliberately” in public to send the Chinese a

US policy towards China was a key subject in the Sino-Indian discussions and—just as US and Indian policymakers differed about China—differences in the Chinese and Indian perceptions of and policy toward the US were evident. The Chinese premier wanted China and India to be on the offensive, asserting that if the Panchsheel principles were put in effect between more countries, this would help stop the spread of the US military bloc in Asia. But, while highly critical of the US in internal correspondence—Nehru asserted to the Indian ambassador in Washington that US policy with regard to China was “wrong” and “wholly lacking in realism”<sup>110</sup>—in conversations with Zhou, Nehru was more circumspect. He admitted that US-India relations were “not good,” but declined Zhou’s suggestion that China and India try to corner or isolate the US. Furthermore, Nehru tried to explain the motivation behind US policy towards China, stating that it partly stemmed from domestic politics. He noted, moreover, that the US was acting out of fear; resultantly, it was encircling and creating fear in China and the Soviet Union.<sup>111</sup>

In order not to exacerbate US fear or further harm US-India relations, Nehru ensured that the Sino-Indian joint statement emerging from the visit did not condemn the US or any other country. Furthermore, just as he had in the case of a US-sponsored Pacific Pact and would in the case of SEATO, he emphasized his lack of interest in what he interpreted as Zhou’s suggestion for a grouping or pact of Southeast Asian countries;

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message. Letter from JLN to the CMs, July 1, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 557. Also see Letter from JLN to U Nu, July 9, 1954 in *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, pp. 412-413.

<sup>109</sup> Telegram from Allen to DoS on Indian vice president S. Radhakrishnan’s talks with Justice Douglas, July 17, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 499.

<sup>110</sup> Letter from JLN to Mehta, June 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 355.

<sup>111</sup> JLN called this the “vicious circle of fear.” Record of JLN’s Conversation with Zhou, June 26, 1954, 3:00pm, *Ibid*, pp. 392-393. Also, see Record of JLN’s Conversation with Zhou, June 25, 1954, 10:00pm, *Ibid*, p. 380 and Record of JLN’s Conversation with Zhou, June 27, 1954, 3:00pm, *Ibid*, p. 402.

instead, he urged Zhou to pursue bilateral understandings with Southeast Asian countries to reassure them.<sup>112</sup>

US intelligence assessments viewed Zhou's visits to India and Burma as part of a Chinese reassurance tour to split the non-communist countries and to buy time while simultaneously continuing to subvert non-communist regimes and building up Chinese military capability. After the visit, some Western diplomats worried that Nehru had been sold on China's "peaceful intentions" line. They lamented that as long as Nehru had "blind faith" in China's good intentions he would not even help guarantee Burma's security—let alone do more. There was also concern about the impact on the Indian public's perceptions of China and the US. In India, Zhou had publicly offered reassurances about China's intentions. He had also expressed Chinese concern about American encirclement and regime change efforts, "thus endeavoring to avert picture of China as aggressor to picture of China as victim of United States aggressive designs."<sup>113</sup>

Indian officials believed that Zhou's trip had been designed to reassure as well, and also to show Beijing's independence from Moscow.<sup>114</sup> After the visit, Nehru admitted that Zhou's assurances could have been part of a "clever strategy looking to the distant future."<sup>115</sup> But, nonetheless, at that point, he was convinced that Chinese leaders did not want war because it would disrupt their efforts to improve conditions within China. The only thing, he believed, that would provoke them was fear of attack. He was

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<sup>112</sup> Letter from JLN to U Nu, June 27, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 407-409. Nehru later also resisted efforts to visit Beijing at the same time as U Nu, in case that was misconstrued as the beginnings of an anti-SEATO alliance (Letter from JLN to Zhou, September 21, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 484).

<sup>113</sup> NIE-10-7-54: Communist Courses of Action in Asia through 1957, November 23, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, pp. 930-931; Telegram from Allen to DoS on conversation with Reid (Canadian High Commissioner to India), August 9, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 715; and Telegram from Allen to DoS on conversation with Pillai, July 19, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 501.

<sup>114</sup> Telegram from Allen to DoS on conversation with Pillai, July 19, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 500.

<sup>115</sup> Letter from JLN to the CMs, July 1, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 559.

impressed by Zhou's questions about what might reassure Southeast Asian countries—enough that he seemed convinced that China wanted peaceful settlements with them. He saw the lack of an attack on Burma—even though GMD operations from there gave Beijing a pretext—as evidence of China's desire for peace. He also saw it as support for his belief that China was focused on settling its internal problems rather than invading Burma, Indochina or Thailand.<sup>116</sup> Asked by an American correspondent about Zhou's continued insistence that China had the right to take Taiwan by force, Nehru said he disagreed with that contention, but dismissed it as directed towards a domestic audience. Finally, he saw as a good sign the Chinese leadership's indication that it would make people of Chinese origin in other countries choose a nationality.<sup>117</sup>

Assured about China's near-term intentions, Nehru seemed even more convinced that Washington's China policy was obstructive. He noted that he was not alone in thinking that US non-recognition of the regime in Beijing was unhelpful, pointing to the Australian foreign minister's private and New Zealand foreign minister's public statements. He saw US behavior at Geneva at the time—and, later, the formation of SEATO—as exacerbating the situation.<sup>118</sup>

Some Indian policymakers believed that the state of Sino-Indian relations proved that the Indian approach was better than that of the US. The Indian ambassador to China noted that the Sino-Indian agreement showed that Beijing was willing to be a “reasonable negotiator.” Nehru asserted that India could not agree with the US attitude that

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<sup>116</sup> He had expressed this view before as well. See JLN, Minutes of Discussions with Dulles, New Delhi, May 22, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 511. Also, JLN's comments in Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Commonwealth PMs' Conference, London, June 4, 1953, *SWJN SS Vol. 22*, p. 445.

<sup>117</sup> See Letter from JLN to U Nu, June 27, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 408; Record of JLN's Interview with Attwood, August 31, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 313; JLN, Speech in the Lok Sabha, September 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 329.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from JLN to U Nu, July 9, 1954, *Ibid.*, p. 413; Message from JLN to U Nu, July 31, 1954, *Ibid.*, p. 418.

communists would never stick to their agreements so it was better to pulverize rather than parley with them. US policy represented a “record of repeated failure.” His understanding with Zhou suggested a better way than military alliances to “restrain and resolve conflicts.”<sup>119</sup>

The US watched closely when Nehru travelled to China in October 1954, coming as it did after the Manila Pact creating SEATO.<sup>120</sup> Just as US-India talks repeatedly featured China, the US was again an element in Sino-Indian discussions—especially since the visit took place as the first Taiwan Strait crisis was unfolding (see below). Once again, there were differences; once again, Nehru tried to inject moderation into Beijing’s attitude towards the US. He insisted that the US position was not as monolithic and hostile as China believed. But Zhou questioned US intentions, asserting that Washington—unlike Delhi or Beijing—did not want to ease global tensions. The US was not just out to protect its interests, as Nehru insisted, but wanted to enlarge them through hostilities. Trying to convince Nehru of this interpretation, Zhou argued that the US was encouraging Pakistan to be expansionist. He drew a contrast with China’s willingness to reassure countries in the neighborhood, noting that the US was doing the opposite. The discussion left Nehru commenting that Zhou’s preferred approach toward the US—insistence on preventing American expansion, on isolating Washington and on not appeasing the US—mirrored what he would hear in Washington about Beijing.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Raghavan, Annual Political Report for 1954 from IndEmb China, February 5, 1955 in NAI, 2(2)-FEA/55; Letter from JLN to the CMs, July 1, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, pp. 564-565; and Letter from JLN to Eden, August 1, 1954 in *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 421.

<sup>120</sup> Nehru denied that the timing of the visit was related to the formation of SEATO or the Pakistani Prime Minister’s visit at the time to the US. JLN, Press Conference, Calcutta, October 15, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> JLN, Minutes of Talks with Zhou, Beijing, October 20, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 11-15.



Mao reiterated to Nehru why the US was a threat. When Nehru tried to explain that fear influenced US policies, the chairman retorted that he could not understand what a country like the US had to fear. On Mao's prompting, Nehru contended that, while the growing influence of the Defense Department in policymaking was problematic, most Americans, including many in government, did not want war to attain US goals. He stated his belief that Eisenhower did not want war, but the president's opinion was not consistent since he was "so completely in the hands of third rate advisers." Nehru disagreed with Mao's contention that though war should be avoided, it should be welcomed if it came.<sup>122</sup>

Dulles had initially hoped that Nehru's visit to China might be "on balance, advantageous to the West." He believed that Nehru's China policy was "one based on considerations of admiration and fear in about equal proportions." He hoped that the visit would increase the latter—in that it would heighten Nehru's concerns about the "implications for India of Chinese Communist policies and strength."<sup>123</sup> But, after his trip, Nehru publicly dismissed Dulles' assertion that there was no proof that China had changed intentions, contending that Beijing had given many indications of its peaceful intentions. He asserted this view privately as well, stating that he had "no doubt at all that the Government and the people of China desire peace and want to concentrate on building up their country during the next decade or two."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Nehru thought the Democrats were less belligerent (Summary of JLN's Talks with Mao, Beijing, October 19, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 7-8; Minutes of JLN's Talks with Mao, Beijing, October 23, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 33-36). If Eisenhower's strategy was to let Dulles and others be the "lightning rods" for criticism of US policy, it thus seemed to be successful in convincing Nehru (Immerman, *Dulles*, p. 43).

<sup>123</sup> Memo by Dulles to Eisenhower, November 30, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1786. On the same lines, Allen had earlier that year told the SFRC that Nehru saw China with a "mixture of admiration and concern." See Report on India by Ambassador Allen, May 12, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on Developments in India*, p. 5.

<sup>124</sup> JLN's Interview with Norman Cliff (BBC), November 19, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 88 and JLN's Note on China Visit, November 14, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 84.

Publicly, Nehru denied reports that Zhou and he had “sharp differences,” noting that, while in some cases the two countries’ basic approaches were different, there were no disagreements during the talks.<sup>125</sup> Nehru hoped that the differences that they did have would not preclude cooperation.<sup>126</sup> He emphasized that just because the two countries were following different paths, it did not need to result in conflict.<sup>127</sup>

The US, on the other hand, tried to facilitate dissension. With interagency assessments outlining the long-term Chinese objective as eliminating “Western power and influence” in the region,<sup>128</sup> there was concern in Washington about the impact of improved Sino-Indian relations. The administration tried to create a wedge issue by suggesting that India replace China on the UNSC.<sup>129</sup> But, Nehru opposed this, primarily on the grounds that it was intended to disrupt the Sino-Indian relationship. He eventually acknowledged that it might also be a way for the US to alleviate its problem of how to include Beijing in the UN general assembly without excluding Taipei, but he remained opposed because he thought the result would be a break with China—which India could not afford.<sup>130</sup>

In the aftermath of Nehru’s visit to China, on Dulles’ urging, Eisenhower wrote to Nehru stressing that “differences in approach [did not] constitute any bar to growing friendship and cooperation” between the US and India, since there was a great amount of

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<sup>125</sup> JLN, Press Conference, Beijing, October 26, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>126</sup> Letter from JLN to Zhou, October 29, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 51.

<sup>127</sup> JLN, Speech at a public meeting, Calcutta, November 2, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 59.

<sup>128</sup> Pruessen, “Over the Volcano,” p. 83.

<sup>129</sup> The object was to create dissension, but also find a way to settle the two Chinas problem by seating both in the UNGA, but replacing China with India on the UNSC (NSC Planning Board, NSC 5429/3: Current US Policy in the Far East, November 19, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 978). The idea was not new—Dulles and Jessup had suggested it to Pandit when they were advisors to the Truman State Department [Letter from Pandit to Bajpai, August 21, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56].

<sup>130</sup> Minutes of JLN’s meeting with Soviet leaders, Moscow, June 22, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 231 and JLN’s Note on Impressions of Tour of USSR and Other Countries-II, August 1, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 303.

“common ground on which we can work out mutual problems and minimize differences.” Nehru agreed saying differences in approach were “natural,” but “should not be allowed to come in the way...”<sup>131</sup> Good intentions, however, were not enough to overcome the tensions engendered by differences over methods.

One source of that tension—Indian engagement with China—continued, with a year of *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai* (Indians and Chinese are brothers) culminating in China’s coming-out party at the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung in April 1955.<sup>132</sup> Publicly, Dulles said the conference was of no direct concern to the US. Privately, however, an American official noted to the Indian ambassador to the US that the inclusion of China at the conference was not “well received” in the US. But Nehru dismissed these objections and US pressure on other organizers, insisting that China needed to be invited.<sup>133</sup> Garver has argued that the prime minister saw the conference was another way to “creat[e] political constraints” that would hinder any Chinese violation of its agreements.<sup>134</sup> Thus, Nehru resented what he believed to be US encouragement to Pakistan and Turkey to toe the American line at the conference and be obstructive. In contrast, he saw Zhou as “accommodating.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Letter from Eisenhower to Nehru, November 30, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1787 and Letter from Nehru to Eisenhower, December 13, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1795.

<sup>132</sup> B.K. Nehru, who was part of the Indian delegation, noted that the conference’s “importance did not lie in what it did; what was important was that it was held at all and laid the foundation for possible cooperation among Asian countries.” B.K. Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 263.

<sup>133</sup> Note from JLN to MEA SecGen, December 18, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 106 and Note by JLN on Afro-Asian Conference, December 20, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 110. Also see Letters from Mehta to RK Nehru (Indian foreign secretary), January 6 (re Meeting with Allen) and January 10, 1955, NAI, File No. 70-2/55-AMS.

<sup>134</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 170.

<sup>135</sup> Note from JLN to CMs on the Asian-African Conference, April 28, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, pp. 131-133.

### ***The Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954-1955)***

Having spent the previous few months dealing with the first Taiwan Strait crisis, accommodating was not a word the Eisenhower administration would have associated with the Chinese leadership. In September 1954, while negotiations for SEATO were underway, China had started shelling Taiwan-held offshore islands, intensifying these actions over time. There was no love lost on the part of Eisenhower or Dulles for Jiang and they had concerns that he would try to force their hand as he tried to make a move onto the mainland. But for reasons of credibility, as well as domestic politics, the Eisenhower administration could not jettison the GMD leader.<sup>136</sup> Thus, following the shelling, it had expanded the presence of the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait. It had also sped up discussions between Taiwan and the US on a Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), which was eventually signed in December 1954.<sup>137</sup> The administration saw the MDT as “a way to simultaneously support and control [J]iang.”<sup>138</sup>

When the US had been considering the MDT, the State Department’s near east bureau had expressed concern that a MDT would drive India “closer” to China. It would “further antagonize” India, which would see it as provocative and indicative of the lack of desire on the part of the US to settle with China. An intelligence assessment had added that India would see it as “further evidence of US imperialistic interference in Asian affairs.”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, p. 118, pp. 121-124. Also, Pruessen, “Over the Volcano,” p. 88 and Steven M. Goldstein, “Dialogue of the Deaf?: Sino-American Ambassadorial-Level Talks, 1955-1970 in *Re-examining the Cold War*, p. 201. The JCS, as well as the Taiwan hands and the far east bureau at the State Department advocated more assertive support to Jiang.

<sup>137</sup> Jian, *Mao’s China*, pp. 167-170. Some like Dulles had been reluctant to sign such a treaty because of concerns about European allies’ reaction, as well as the hold this would give Jiang over US policy. See Immerman, *Dulles*, p. 125.

<sup>138</sup> Pruessen, “Over the Volcano,” p. 89.

<sup>139</sup> Quoted in Memo by Robertson to Dulles, March 31, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 399. Also, see Memo by Jernegan (DAS/S NESAs) to Robertson, August 27, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 551; and

But Nehru's reaction—expressed in the context of his concern about potential escalation of the crisis—was more nuanced. He believed that earlier in his administration, Eisenhower had altered Truman's stance of restraining Taiwan from attacking China. This had heightened Chinese insecurities and destabilized the situation. To Nehru, if a MDT indicated that the US would restrain Taiwan from attacking the mainland, it would be “commend[able]” and “useful” in the long term even if Beijing was not immediately convinced of US sincerity.<sup>140</sup> Unbeknownst to Nehru at the time, in a related exchange of letters, the US did get Taipei to commit not to unilaterally attack China.<sup>141</sup>

On his visit to Beijing, as the crisis continued, Nehru stressed the importance of diplomacy to Chinese officials, emphasizing to Zhou that negotiations were the best method to solve issues related to Taiwan and Southeast Asia, “instead of using armed force as [China did] now.” Nehru stressed that a diplomatic approach would pave the way toward easing China's isolation—Beijing's lack of engagement with the world only caused China to lack understanding of countries outside the communist bloc. Chinese officials, however, thought Nehru was “naïve” about US intentions. Internally, they dismissed his contentions that the US did not want war and that the American military presence around the world was for defensive purposes.<sup>142</sup>

As the situation escalated, towards the end of January 1955, Eisenhower sought and received congressional authorization to use force to protect Taiwan. Actions such as

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Memo from Cabell (Acting Director of Central Intelligence) to the NSC, November 2, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 842.

<sup>140</sup> He thought Beijing, on its part, would not do “anything big,” and was realistic about any immediate gain of Taiwan. Telegram from Clutterbuck (British High Commissioner in India) to the CRO on Conversation with JLN, November 10, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 893-895. Also, see JLN Note to Sastroamidjojo, September 24, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 430.

<sup>141</sup> Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, p. 466.

<sup>142</sup> Key Points of Conversation: Song Qingling and Nehru, undated, 1954 from PRC Foreign Ministry Archive File number: 204-00007-07. Translation available from CWIHP (These points were circulated to Chinese officials and sent to Zhou on October 23, 1954)

these that Eisenhower and Dulles saw as part of brinkmanship to deter China, Nehru saw as bullying, provocative and “indefensible.” Rather than stabilizing the region, as Eisenhower and Dulles claimed, they would exacerbate the situation further. Moreover, he thought they would prove ineffective.<sup>143</sup> Believing that China was “[l]ogically entitled” to take possession of the offshore islands, he came to see Dulles’ speech on providing a shield for the offshore islands as just making things worse.<sup>144</sup>

At the same time, Nehru did comprehend the danger and the delicacy of the issue “because two great countries with high ideas of their own prestige and ‘face’ and with a good deal of passion are at logger-heads.”<sup>145</sup> He instructed his ambassador in the Soviet Union to urge Moscow to find a way to reduce the tension.<sup>146</sup> Given how explosive the situation was, Nehru did not want to make any public statements that would add to the problem. Otherwise quick to participate in multilateral efforts, he declined the Burmese premier’s suggestion that the Colombo powers issue a declaration.<sup>147</sup> When U Nu suggested to Zhou that China, India, the Soviet Union and the UK meet to discuss Taiwan, Nehru agreed with British foreign secretary Anthony Eden that such a meeting was impractical since, of the stakeholders, only China would be present and there was no

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<sup>143</sup> Pruessen, “Over the Volcano,” p. 89 and Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 127-128. Also see footnote 2, Note from JLN to Indira Gandhi, February 1, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 159 and Cable from JLN to Pandit, January 26, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>144</sup> Letter from JLN to the CMs, January 26, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 572 and Letter from JLN to Sastroamidjojo, February 20, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 98.

<sup>145</sup> Note from JLN to Indira Gandhi, London, February 1, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, pp. 158-159. Also, see Note from JLN to CMs on the Asian-African Conference, April 28, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 136.

<sup>146</sup> Telegram from JLN to IndEmb USSR via FonSec, Cairo, February 16, 1955, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 61 (I).

<sup>147</sup> Note from JLN to U Nu, London, February 2, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 160; Message from JLN to U Nu, February 14, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 172.

“basis for agreement.”<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, as Krishna Menon noted, it was “unrealistic” to “ignore American sentiment.”<sup>149</sup>

Nehru understood Mao’s motives—fear of joint US-Taiwan action against the mainland.<sup>150</sup> But he did not approve of the Chinese leader’s means. Through his ambassador in Beijing, Nehru urged China to be constructive and accept an invitation to the UNSC or show some inclination to discuss the crisis. He was disappointed with the negative Chinese response. He thought it was “uncompromising” and not “adequate or proper.” India, in theory, recognized the mainland’s claims to Taiwan, but Nehru noted that “however justified it might be, it is not practical politics at present to ask US to withdraw completely. No great power can act in that way.” What China could aim for, and India could help with, was the offshore islands, beginning of direct or indirect negotiations on the issue, prevention of deepening US-Taiwan relations, and recognition of the Beijing regime.<sup>151</sup> Nehru later noted to Austrian and Soviet interlocutors that Taiwan “ultimately” had to go to China, but peacefully, not through war.<sup>152</sup>

Whether through direct negotiations or the good offices of others, Nehru thought it essential that China and the US find a way to lessen tensions.<sup>153</sup> He noted to the Commonwealth prime ministers that if the US sufficiently assured China that it would not use Taiwan as a base to attack China, Beijing would not resort to war to try to

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<sup>148</sup> Letter from Makins (British Ambassador) to Dulles, March 7, 1955 in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-57, Volume II: China* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*], p. 339.

<sup>149</sup> See footnote 5 re Letter from Krishna Menon to JLN, March 13, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 176.

<sup>150</sup> Telegram from Aldrich (US ambassador in the UK) to DoS on conversation with JLN and Pandit, February 3, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 200.

<sup>151</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, London, February 4, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, pp. 160-163 and Cable from JLN to Raghavan, February 10, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 169.

<sup>152</sup> Minutes of JLN’s talks with Austrian leaders, Vienna, June 27, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 240 and Record of JLN’s Talks with N.A. Bulganin (Soviet premier) and N.S. Khrushchev (Soviet first secretary), New Delhi, December 13, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 31*, p. 348.

<sup>153</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, London, February 5, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 164.

takeover the island.<sup>154</sup> After the discussions in London, he became aware that the US had not given Jiang assurances on the offshore islands. But Nehru worried that the US stance on the offshore islands was ambiguous.<sup>155</sup> Indeed, that was the US intention in order to keep China guessing.<sup>156</sup>

By March, Beijing's continued assertiveness worried the administration—as did concerns about the impact on US credibility with allies and adversaries.<sup>157</sup> Eisenhower, Nixon and Dulles publicly implied that the US would not rule out the use of nuclear weapons in the case of war in the Strait—not just as a message to Beijing, but also to Moscow and perhaps to prepare the ground domestically in case of war.<sup>158</sup> These public statements did not help their cause with Nehru. Indian policymakers were aware of US concerns about credibility.<sup>159</sup> And the prime minister was not entirely unsympathetic to Eisenhower's difficulties related to dealing with Jiang.<sup>160</sup> But he continued to believe that Washington's China policy was “basically wrong” and eventually would have to be jettisoned—the longer it took to change, the harder the change would be.<sup>161</sup>

By mid-April, Nehru felt that the US attitude on the offshore islands had “toned down a little.” Nehru disapproved of Dulles' indication that the issue should be brought

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<sup>154</sup> Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Commonwealth PMs' Conference, London, February 8, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 65.

<sup>155</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, London, February 10, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 169 and Letter from JLN to CMs, February 23, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 566.

<sup>156</sup> The administration had debated indicating the US commitment more precisely, but had decided against it. Pruessen, “Over the Volcano,” p. 90.

<sup>157</sup> The president was concerned that Beijing's actions stemmed from the perception that the US position was weak. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, pp. 473-477.

<sup>158</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>159</sup> Letter from Mehta to MEA SecGen enclosing Note on Dulles' address after his return from the far east, March 20, 1955, NAI, File No. 70-2/55-AMS. Nehru saw the letter on March 31.

<sup>160</sup> Nehru noted Eisenhower's Jiang problem noting, “The difficulty is how to get rid of him. Letter from JLN to S. Krishnaswami (Member of Lok Sabha), March 11, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 175.

<sup>161</sup> Note from JLN to MEA SecGen and ComSec on Implications of Military Alliances, April 4, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 321.



up at the UN, seeing it—as it turns out correctly<sup>162</sup>—as an American attempt to bring its allies on board and tie their hands. He did believe, however, that the US was restraining Jiang from attacking the mainland and had the sense that the US would not attack either.<sup>163</sup> Interestingly, this was when Eisenhower and Dulles, after considering and dismissing the idea of persuading Jiang to withdraw his forces to Taiwan and the Pescadores, were proposing a plan with Taipei that would result in Taiwanese withdrawal from the offshore islands—in exchange for a US blockade and mining of the Strait and placing of nuclear weapons in Taiwan.<sup>164</sup> Before those US-Taiwanese discussions bore any result, however, Zhou made a surprising move.

At Bandung in April, Zhou, while declining to renounce unilaterally the use of force to reclaim Taiwan, suggested that he was willing to talk to US officials directly about the issue.<sup>165</sup> Despite his belief in the correctness of the Chinese position, Nehru had been frustrated with the “good deal of stubbornness” on Beijing’s part.<sup>166</sup> This changed to approval after Zhou’s overture. Nehru believed the offer was the effect of Bandung—and validation of the Indian approach.<sup>167</sup> Dulles later claimed that it was the result of US sabre-rattling, especially of the nuclear kind.<sup>168</sup>

Dulles’ response to the Chinese initiative reiterated US support for Taiwan and expressed uncertainty about China’s intentions, but noted that the US was open to finding

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<sup>162</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 125-127.

<sup>163</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, April 14, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, pp. 577-578.

<sup>164</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>165</sup> Note from JLN to CMs on the Asian-African Conference, April 28, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 135.

<sup>166</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, April 14, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 578.

<sup>167</sup> Even before Bandung, Nehru had expected the conference to have a salutary influence on the crisis. See Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, March 20, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 176 and Letter from JLN to CMs, April 14, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 578. The Indian ambassador in Beijing noted that after the Geneva and Bandung conferences, China seemed to have realised that “she would gain more friends in Asia by moderation than by hard words and sabre-rattling.” Raghavan, Report for the month ending June 30, 1955, July 2, 1955, NAI, File No. 2 (4)-FEA/55.

<sup>168</sup> Immerman, *Dulles*, pp. 132.

out if the Chinese were sincere.<sup>169</sup> Nehru thought the initial US response was unhelpful but, nonetheless, a step forward. He later told Soviet leaders that he believed that Eisenhower, at least, wanted to respond positively to the Chinese overture.<sup>170</sup> He noted the president's lack of encouragement to Jiang and was impressed that the US did not reject the Chinese overture outright. Furthermore, Nehru appreciated that Eisenhower and Dulles agreed to see Krishna Menon who the prime minister dispatched to Washington with the "main task" of encouraging the US leadership to respond favorably to the Chinese invitation. He approvingly noted Krishna Menon's observation that Eisenhower was "very receptive" and even Dulles was "a little receptive."<sup>171</sup>

These meetings seemed to have a more beneficial effect on Nehru than on Eisenhower and Dulles, who did not think that Krishna Menon, at least, had understood or accepted the US viewpoint. Despite the US desire for clarity from China on the possibility of a ceasefire and a peaceful Taiwan solution, Dulles had never been keen on Krishna Menon visiting the US in June after a trip to Beijing. While he was interested in the Sino-Indian talks on the subject in May, Dulles certainly did not want Krishna Menon to be an "intermediary."<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, there were key differences between the administration and Krishna Menon on potential negotiations with China, including on potential subjects of discussion. Krishna Menon recommended that China and the US discuss the big issues (Taiwan, offshore islands) and then turn to smaller ones (including

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<sup>169</sup> See Editorial Note re Dulles' statement at a press conference on April 26, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 519.

<sup>170</sup> Note from JLN to CMs on the Asian-African Conference, April 28, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, pp. 135-136; Minutes of JLN's meeting with Soviet leaders, Moscow, June 22, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 229.

<sup>171</sup> Proceedings of the conference of the heads of Indian Missions in Europe, Salzburg, June 28-30, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 244; Minutes of JLN's meeting with Soviet leaders, Moscow, June 22, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 230; and Minutes of JLN's meeting with Soviet leaders, Moscow, June 21, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 222.

<sup>172</sup> Telegram from the Acting S/S to AmEmb India, May 7, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 558; Telegram from Dulles to AmEmb India, May 24, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 573; Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, July 6, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 637; and Goldstein, p. 203.

American airmen being held in China). Eisenhower disagreed, noting that the question of imprisoned American airmen was not a minor issue for the US and had to be addressed first.<sup>173</sup>

***The Problem of Prisoners: Major or Minor Issue? (1954-1956)***

India was no stranger to the prisoner question—it had acted as intermediary in late 1954. Like its predecessor, the Eisenhower administration had not welcomed the Indian role. The administration tried to side-step India, working through the UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold instead.<sup>174</sup> Dulles had not believed that Indian officials like Krishna Menon understood the US position.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, Canadian officials had seconded the US perspective that India was too sympathetic to China on the issue.<sup>176</sup> Zhou's indication that India was one of the two countries that China would accept as an intermediary—the other was the Soviet Union—did nothing to alleviate this impression.<sup>177</sup> The Indian attitude toward Hammarskjold's trip to Beijing to try to secure the release of the prisoners had only cemented this view. Worried that China would think India was taking the US/UN side, Nehru turned down Hammarskjold's suggestion that an Indian official accompany him. The Indian ambassador in Beijing then asserted that

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<sup>173</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Eisenhower, Dulles and Krishna Menon, Washington, June 14, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 594.

<sup>174</sup> Some US officials like Henry Cabot Lodge even resisted UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold's suggestion that he consult Nehru on his mediation trip to Beijing. Lodge assumed that Nehru would think the trip was a bad idea [Telegram from Lodge (US Representative at the UN) to the DoS, December 11, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-I*, p. 1016.

<sup>175</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, December 3, 1954, *Ibid*, pp. 985-986.

<sup>176</sup> Memcon of Meeting between the Canadian ambassador and Jenkins (Officer in Charge of Chinese Political Affairs), Washington, December 14, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 1029.

<sup>177</sup> Telegram from Wadsworth (Deputy Representative at the UN) to DoS on Hammarskjold-Zhou conversation, February 11, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 267.

China would make concessions only if it did not look like it was capitulating to pressure, so the US needed to cease its “bluster.”<sup>178</sup>

In early 1955, when the US led condemnation of China at the UN for holding the prisoners, Indian policymakers had told US officials the move was unhelpful.<sup>179</sup> But Nehru understood from his own officials, as well as other world leaders that the US was serious about the prisoner issue.<sup>180</sup> So the prime minister had urged Zhou to meet with Hammarskjold.<sup>181</sup> Krishna Menon, too, had come to understand the resonance of the issue in Washington after meeting Eisenhower and Dulles in March 1955. He had recommended that Delhi suggest to Beijing that it release some, if not all, the prisoners as a goodwill gesture.<sup>182</sup> Indeed, Nehru had directly brought up the issue in conversations with Zhou in Bandung.<sup>183</sup>

US officials had, nonetheless, remained unconvinced about India’s role as intermediary. When India had announced after the Bandung conference that Krishna Menon would visit Beijing to discuss the issue, US officials had tried to ensure that he did not get the impression that he had a “mandate” to speak for the US.<sup>184</sup> After Krishna

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<sup>178</sup> Telegram from Lodge to DoS, December 17, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 1037; and Telegram from Lodge to DoS on conversation with Arthur Lall (Indian representative to the UN), December 20, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 1042.

<sup>179</sup> Telegram from Aldrich to DoS on conversation with Nehru and Pandit, London, February 3, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 201.

<sup>180</sup> Telegram from Weil (Chargé in India) to DoS, December 13, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 1028.

<sup>181</sup> Telegram from Lodge to DoS, December 20, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 1042. The Indian ambassador in Beijing later noted that Chinese leadership had agreed to see Hammarskjold because of India’s “valued” advice [Raghavan, Report for the month ending January 31, 1955, February 1, 1955, NAI, File No. 2 (4) FEA/55].

<sup>182</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, March 27, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 177.

<sup>183</sup> Nehru also dismissed the Chinese contention that US agents were responsible for the explosion of the *Kashmir Princess*, and suggested that even if they were, he did not believe the White House had anything to do with it. JLN’s Note on Talks with Zhou, April 23, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 179.

<sup>184</sup> Telegram from the Acting S/S to AmEmb India, May 7, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 558. There was skepticism about Krishna Menon in the US Congress as well. The House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman later noted that he was biased {Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 15, 1955, *Hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, First Session on the Mutual Security Act of 1955* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1955) [hereafter *HFAC Hearings 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*], p. 479}.

Menon's visit to Beijing, China agreed to release four of the airmen, Nehru took credit.<sup>185</sup> Krishna Menon speculated that China did not release all the airmen because of public opinion and the desire to assess the response to that first step.<sup>186</sup>

It was in this context that Krishna Menon urged the US to take steps to reassure China when he met with Dulles and Eisenhower in June. Dulles noted that the US had already offered to take steps that should have reassured China. Dulles pointed out that even during the Korean War the US had ceased fire first, despite some domestic opposition. Furthermore, since then, the US had facilitated the Taiwanese withdrawal from one of the offshore islands, ensured that the MDT did not cover the offshore islands, and restrained Taiwan from attacking airbases on the mainland. Washington was also considering changing operating instructions for US aircraft so that their flights were less provocative, and trying to make repatriation for Chinese students easier. Dulles stressed that the US did not want war with China. A war was not desirable—it would not be limited, would involve the Soviet Union and the use of nuclear weapons, and even if the US did emerge victorious, it would then be left holding the bag in China.

Krishna Menon thought, however, that the US could take a few more steps to create conditions conducive to negotiations: allow US citizens to visit China; urge Taiwan not to follow a “scorched-earth” policy on the offshore islands; and not set preconditions for negotiations, asserting that there was little harm in such negotiations. But even though Dulles admitted that he had detected a change in Chinese attitude, the secretary insisted that the US did not want to negotiate prematurely. He noted that China

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<sup>185</sup> Message from JLN to Dulles, May 27, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 182.

<sup>186</sup> Telegram from Cooper (US Ambassador to India) to the DoS, May 27, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, pp. 576-577.

was using American prisoners as bargaining tools and expected to be rewarded for bad behavior. If Washington acceded, the image of China in the US would only deteriorate.<sup>187</sup>

Krishna Menon's mediation attempts seemed to follow a familiar path. He tried to convince Dulles that China wanted to improve relations with the US. Dulles insisted that the US had seen scant evidence of this desire. In the absence of talks, the Indian envoy urged at least discussions on the basis for talks. Dulles clarified that the US did not have a precondition regarding the release of the prisoners before talks; just that the talks would be more successful if prisoners were released.<sup>188</sup>

These Indian efforts had an unintended impact—it partly resulted in Eisenhower and Dulles coming to see a Sino-US exchange of “commissioners” as a good option. They wanted to find a way to establish communications between China and the US without using third party representatives. Krishna Menon had only “mix[ed] up the channels of communication” and “crossed wires” causing the situation to “slip...backwards.”<sup>189</sup> US concern only intensified when different messages seemed to emanate from Beijing from the multiple channels being used; Washington did not know who to believe.<sup>190</sup> And the urgency only increased with the possibility of tension flaring once again in the Taiwan Strait, and the Soviet Union insisting on including China in the four-power summit due to be held in July in Geneva. By July, Dulles declared that he was

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<sup>187</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, June 14, 1955, Ibid, pp. 595-601 and Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, New York, June 15, 1955, Ibid, p. 604.

<sup>188</sup> Dulles asserted, “[Beijing’s leaders] could not shoot their way into the UN. If anyone wished to join a club, he should not go about it by insulting the members of the Admissions’ Committee.” Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, July 1, 1955, Ibid, p. 623, 626.

<sup>189</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Eisenhower and Dulles, San Francisco, June 19, 1955, Ibid, p. 605. Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Macmillan (British FonSec), San Francisco, June 20, 1955, Ibid, p. 606.

<sup>190</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, July 1, 1955, Ibid, p. 625.

“fed up with all the intermediaries;” it was less dangerous to indulge in direct talks than to continue to use middlemen who were not effective, clear or trustworthy.<sup>191</sup>

When Dulles mentioned to Krishna Menon the possibility of direct Sino-US contact in Geneva with a change in the level and scope of discussions, the Indian envoy’s reaction was that success would depend on the subjects up for discussion. Krishna Menon did not think the absence of Taiwan as a subject would be a deal-breaker, but at some point he believed that China and the US would have to discuss the “general relations[hip].”<sup>192</sup> Concerned that Krishna Menon would “warp” in his interactions with Chinese officials what the US was proposing in Geneva, Dulles asked Eisenhower to send a clarifying message to Nehru.<sup>193</sup>

Nehru, too, was not optimistic about the Chinese reaction if the US did not widen the scope of the talks. He believed that the US had not gone far enough and worried that the US wanted the Taiwan “question to remain unsettled and the tension to continue.”<sup>194</sup> Acting on Nehru’s concerns and British foreign secretary Harold Macmillan’s urging, Dulles agreed to phrase the US proposal for talks less restrictively.<sup>195</sup> Despite his pessimism, Nehru suggested that China accept the US proposal to hold ambassadorial talks, noting that he believed that US opinion had changed and “a realistic approach” to the Strait crisis was possible. Nonetheless, he was somewhat taken aback when he heard that Zhou’s response was “quite friendly.” He declared, “I hope this does not lead UK or

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<sup>191</sup> Memo from Dulles to Hoover (US/S), July 3, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 631. Also, see Goldstein, p. 204.

<sup>192</sup> Dulles would not agree to a ceasefire beforehand, but pointed out that the US had elicited a promise from Jiang not to take hostile action without consultation. Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, July 6, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, pp. 632-634.

<sup>193</sup> See fn 2 re Telegram from S/S to the president, July 7, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 637.

<sup>194</sup> Record of Talks between JLN and Marshal Tito, Belgrade, July 2, 1955, NMML, Subimal Dutt Papers [SDP], SF No. 82.

<sup>195</sup> Message from Macmillan to Dulles on conversation with JLN, London, July 10(?), 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 642. Telegram from Dulles to AmEmb UK, July 11, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 643.

USA to think that we are stronger advocates of Chinese position than [the] Chinese themselves.<sup>196</sup>

Dulles believed that Nehru's pessimism had stemmed from his desire to keep Krishna Menon involved as an intermediary between China and the US.<sup>197</sup> But, by June 1955, Nehru had come to believe that direct—preferably informal—Sino-US negotiations were the only effective option. He disagreed with Soviet and Chinese policymakers, who had called for a six-power conference to discuss far eastern issues, because he had come to believe that large conferences involved too much back and forth on issues like participation.<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, big issues like Taiwan were best dealt with bilaterally and informally. There was little chance of a Taiwan solution in the offing, but, at the very least, direct talks could possibly alleviate tensions related to the offshore islands. Even if no issues were solved, “the barrier could be broken and a better atmosphere created.”<sup>199</sup> Finally, Nehru believed there was a limit to how much India could achieve; he was frustrated with the Chinese attitude on American prisoners, believing that their continued detention gave the Eisenhower administration an excuse to rile up anti-China opinion.<sup>200</sup>

There was another reason for Indian reticence to get involved again—the impact on US-India relations. In his talks with Dulles, Krishna Menon repeatedly asserted that Indian policy toward China was not anti-American; instead, India actually wanted to

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<sup>196</sup> Cable from JLN to Zhou, July 14, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 361 and Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, July 16, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 362.

<sup>197</sup> Telegram from Dulles to the Acting S/S, Paris, July 16, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 659.

<sup>198</sup> Minutes of JLN's meeting with Soviet leaders, Moscow, June 22, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 230; Proceedings of the conference of the Indian HoMs in Europe, Salzburg, June 28-30, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 246.

<sup>199</sup> Minutes of JLN's meeting with Soviet leaders, Moscow, June 22, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 229. Also, see Letter from JLN to Sastroamidjojo, July 17, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 366.

<sup>200</sup> He instructed his ambassador in Beijing to suggest to the Chinese leadership that releasing the prisoners would be seen as a sign of strength, not weakness. Cable from JLN to Raghavan, July 17, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 364.



“help increase and promote the prestige of the United States throughout Asia.” He vehemently asserted that he did not want differences over China, and India’s mediation to affect negatively the US-India relationship or result in the US questioning India’s motives.<sup>201</sup>

Some members of Congress were, at the very least, questioning India’s wisdom. There was discussion and frustration about India’s naïveté regarding China, as well as invocation of Munich analogies and metaphors about lambs lying down with lions. Others asked if India did not realize that growing Chinese strength would decrease India’s “prestige” in Asia.<sup>202</sup> There was annoyance that India’s actions and attitude had increased China’s global respectability.<sup>203</sup> There were questions about Nehru’s attitude toward the world—Sen. Smith asserted that the prime minister’s neutrality seemed more pro-communist than pro-US.<sup>204</sup> Sen. Fulbright went further, noting Nehru’s “antipathy to the West.”<sup>205</sup>

India’s improving relations with China and later the Soviet Union also gave critics of aid to India more ammunition in 1955. As it is, on Capitol Hill, “India served as a lightning rod for...critics of Eisenhower’s mutual security program.”<sup>206</sup> That summer

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<sup>201</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, June 14, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 600; and Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, July 6, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II*, p. 635. There was a sense of an adverse impact on all facets of the relationship among other Indian officials as well. The Indian ambassador, for example, had expressed frustration that the US government was delaying projects like the supply of airlines to Air India because of India’s desire to start air service to Beijing [Letter from Mehta to FonSec on Meeting with Allen (AS/S NESAs), January 6, 1955, NAI, File No. 70-2/55-AMS].

<sup>202</sup> See comments made by Rep. Jackson and Bowles. Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 16, 1955, *HFAC Hearings 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*, pp. 524-525. Also see Rep. Selden’s comments on p. 530.

<sup>203</sup> Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 588.

<sup>204</sup> Proceedings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May 12, 1955, *Hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, First Session on the Mutual Security Act of 1955* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1955) [hereafter *SFRC Hearings, 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*], p. 223.

<sup>205</sup> Proceedings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May 23, 1955, *SFRC Hearings, 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*, p. 527.

<sup>206</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 222.

while advocating for aid to India, Allen acknowledged, “There are important differences in views between ourselves and India on the best means of preserving the peace of Asia and the free world.” He admitted that these differences resulted in India being “considered one of the most controversial countries insofar as [the administration’s FY1956] aid program is concerned.” Rep. Vorys (R-OH) bluntly asked administration officials “what do we get out of” aiding India? Rep. Adair (R-IN) asserted that the US should not be as generous with India as those countries that were “avowedly our friends.” Mutual security program director Stassen had to point out that the administration was only asking for a “modest amount.” But Congressional leaders like Sens. Knowland and Bridges argued that even that was too much, asserting that aid only be given to those who “cooperate[d] fully” with the US.<sup>207</sup> Rep. Judd noted, “every year to get the appropriation for India is the biggest fight of any of them.”<sup>208</sup> That year, at the end of the fight, Congress approved only \$60 million of the \$90 million requested for India.

Concern about such impact gave India another reason to step back from mediating. Thus, once Eisenhower privately indicated to Nehru in July 1955 that ambassadorial talks in Geneva could begin, the prime minister handled India’s role carefully. He approvingly noted that the US publicly gave India and Burma credit<sup>209</sup>—in contrast with the US playing down India’s role a month earlier when it had helped secure the release of the American airmen.<sup>210</sup> Then, he instructed Krishna Menon to keep his distance from the talks so that neither Chinese nor US officials thought that India was

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<sup>207</sup> Knowland was Senate majority leader at the time and Bridges was the ranking Republican in the Senate Appropriations Committee. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 222-223. Also see Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 115-117.

<sup>208</sup> Proceedings of the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 21, 1955, *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. XVII-1*, p. 324.

<sup>209</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, July 28, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 378.

<sup>210</sup> Proceedings of the conference of the Indian HoMs in Europe, Salzburg, June 28-30, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 246.

interfering. Furthermore, while he kept Krishna Menon informed, Nehru told him that Delhi would handle things from that point.<sup>211</sup> That fall, India did get involved once again, but only when China and the US requested India's help with the return of any Chinese citizens in the US who wanted to return to China.<sup>212</sup>

At the onset of the Sino-US ambassadorial talks, Nehru had been encouraged by reports that even Dulles was thinking flexibly about negotiations with China. He had felt that the talks and the four-power conference in Geneva lessened tension even if nothing substantive was achieved and the scope of talks was limited.<sup>213</sup> But, by October 1955, the Sino-American talks seemed to have stalled.<sup>214</sup> The Indian ambassador in Washington suggested to Dulles that to discuss larger issues China and the US should consider talks at a higher level. But Dulles questioned the reliability of Chinese promises since nineteen American prisoners remained in China. Furthermore, despite US acceptance to discuss other issues, the only one China proposed was foreign minister level talks.<sup>215</sup> A concerned Nehru also tried to clear roadblocks, suggesting to Chinese officials via his ambassador that the release of more American prisoners would result in progress with the

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<sup>211</sup> See fn 2 re Telegram from JLN to Krishna Menon, July 29, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 380. Also see Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, August 1, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 381.

<sup>212</sup> Letter from JLN to U Nu, September 6, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 30*, p. 402.

<sup>213</sup> Cable from JLN to Raghavan, July 31, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 380; JLN's Note on Impressions of Tour of USSR and Other Countries-II, August 1, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 301. Also see Letter from JLN to Eisenhower, Cairo, July 11, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 29*, p. 358. The Indian embassy in Beijing speculated that the easing of the Chinese attitude was due either to a change in policy, desire for negotiations leading to a settlement, the result of the conference, or "a slow recognition of the futility of bellicosity—a result of Indian influence [Raghavan, Report for the month ending July 31, 1955, August 1, 1955, NAI, File No. 2 (4)-FEA/55].

<sup>214</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, October 15, 1955, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-57, Volume III: China* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1986) [hereafter *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. III*], pp. 129-131. Also see Goldstein, pp. 209-214.

<sup>215</sup> Note from Mehta to Pillai on meeting with Dulles, Washington, October 3, 1955, NAI, File No. 70-2/55-AMS; and Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and Krishna Menon, October 15, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. III*, pp. 129-131.

US on various matters.<sup>216</sup> Nehru believed that neither side wanted to terminate the talks. Nonetheless, as a new year rolled around, he remained concerned that there had been little progress and the talks were in danger of failing.<sup>217</sup>

### **More Problematic Partnerships (1955)**

India's receding intermediary role reduced one source of tension between the US and India, other irritants emerged, especially related to their partnerships with others. Negotiations over the Baghdad Pact in 1955 exacerbated Indian concerns about US aid to Pakistan's military—even though the US was not a member.<sup>218</sup> Nehru believed that, like SEATO, the group might just end up having “more bark...than bite,” but the potential consequences made it problematic for India.<sup>219</sup> He reminded senior American and British officials that India had to “guard a very long frontier,” including a two thousand-mile border with China and Tibet where India needed to maintain check-posts.<sup>220</sup> At a time when his government was focused on development, neither getting into an arms race with Pakistan nor diverting resources to the India-Pakistan border was desirable.

That fall, the US relationship with another ally—NATO member Portugal—also “seriously strained” the US-India relationship.<sup>221</sup> Dulles, in a joint statement with the Portuguese foreign minister in December 1955, referred to Goa as a Portuguese province

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<sup>216</sup> Note from JLN to MEA SecGen and FonSec on Sino-American Talks, November 9, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 30*, p. 408. The Indian chargé had reported that criticism of the US attitude in Geneva in the Chinese press increased significantly in November [See IJ Bahadur Singh, Report for the month of November 1955, December 12, 1955, NAI, File No. 2 (4)-FEA/55].

<sup>217</sup> Cable from JLN to FonSec, December 15, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 31*, p. 395 and Message from JLN to Anthony Eden (British PM), January 25, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 31*, p. 392.

<sup>218</sup> Record of JLN's Talks with Bulganin and Khrushchev, New Delhi, November 21, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 306.

<sup>219</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, November 26, 1955, *Ibid*, p. 524.

<sup>220</sup> Cable from JLN to Eden, March 23, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 32*, p. 290. Also see Nehru's comments to Dulles in PM's Statement at the Conference of HoMs (March 24-April 3, 1956) on Talks with Eminent Foreign Visitors, *SWJN SS Vol. 32*, p. 443.

<sup>221</sup> Progress Report by the OCB on NSC 5409, March 30, 1956 in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-57, Volume VIII: South Asia* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1987) [hereafter *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*], p. 1.

instead of a Portuguese colony as India labeled the territory.<sup>222</sup> The statement had followed Chinese and Soviet declarations supporting India's stance on the issue. The US ambassador later clarified that Dulles' statement neither indicated a final US position on Goa nor that Goa fell within NATO's purview. But, as scholars have noted, the damage to the US image in India had already been done.<sup>223</sup>

The deteriorating US-India relationship stood in stark contrast to the developing Indo-Soviet one. Some have argued that improving US-Pakistan relations pushed India into Soviet arms.<sup>224</sup> Indeed, India's ties with the Soviet Union did increase in the aftermath of the US-Pakistan agreements. But, the improvement in Indo-Soviet relations would have likely taken place even in the absence of US military assistance to Pakistan. Delhi, for one, had been trying to improve relations with Moscow since independence. But the Soviet Union had given India short shrift. What had changed in the early Eisenhower years was the willingness of the Soviet Union to improve relations with India.

As the US had before it, post-Stalin Soviet Union had come to assign India a role in its drive to counter its adversaries' power and influence.<sup>225</sup> To encourage and enable India to play that role, it offered assistance and acceptance. The new bonhomie had been evident during Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in June 1955, and was on display when Khrushchev and Bulganin visited India in November-December 1955. Soviet leaders offered India not only improved diplomatic relations, but more economic assistance at

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<sup>222</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 119. Also, see H.W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism: the United States and the emergence of the Third World, 1947-1960* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 83.

<sup>223</sup> Gopal, *Nehru, Vol. II*, pp. 251-252.

<sup>224</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 173. Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 106.

<sup>225</sup> In 1953, Nehru had noted that in the aftermath of Stalin's death there had been "a definite change" in Soviet policy, which was "likely to endure for the next few years." JLN Conversation with Norman Cousins, September 3, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 11.

better terms, certain kinds of aid, especially scientific and technical aid that Moscow seemed less inhibited about giving than Washington, large infrastructure projects, including in the state-owned sector, as well as trade, offers of military equipment, and support for India's position on Kashmir and its claim to Goa.<sup>226</sup> Importantly, the availability of the Soviet option also allowed the Indian leadership to diversify the country's dependence. Finally, Nehru sensed that while there would be "angry reaction" in the US, it would also create "a feeling that India being even more important than they thought, far greater efforts should be made to win her on their side."<sup>227</sup>

US policymakers indeed kept a close eye on Indo-Soviet interactions, observing them with "unease." As McMahon has noted, they were realistic about how far this friendship could go, but saw this improvement in relations as "a set-back to our objectives with regard to India."<sup>228</sup> Within some sections of the government, there was skepticism about propping up through aid an "unfriendly" Indian government that tended to support Chinese and Soviet policies.<sup>229</sup> Returning from a study mission to India just after the Soviet leaders' trip, Rep. Byrd (D-WV) said the trip only highlighted that India was not a dependable country. He said that while he had previously supported aid to India, it was time to "let Mr. Nehru and his people know that those who like to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds just can't get American aid." Rep. Adair agreed, criticizing the China-India development race arguments that American and Indian officials were making to urge assistance for India. But by spring 1956, those arguments started to gain more adherents. China bloc members like Judd noted the importance of

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<sup>226</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 118-120. Also for the Soviets' relative lack of inhibition in giving certain types of aid, see Letter from JLN to K.N. Katju, August 28, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 518.

<sup>227</sup> Note by JLN on the Visit of the Soviet Leaders to India in November- December 1955, December 20, 1955, NMML, SDP, SF No. 17.

<sup>228</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 216.

<sup>229</sup> Robertson, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 222.

not jettisoning India, whose five-year plans were “succeeding due in no small degree to American assistance; it is really phenomenal.” In addition, another view started to gain traction—not necessarily that the US should try to win India over, as Nehru had anticipated, but that it should, at the very least, try to maintain the very Indian non-alignment that had previously created trouble in the relationship. Rep. Zablocki (D-WI), who had led the congressional study mission, vocalized this sentiment, noting “India is slowly but definitely falling further to the left...Discontinuing or stopping future assistance will only drive India further into the Soviet and Communist orbit.”<sup>230</sup>

There also seemed to be some indications of improvement in the interactions of policymakers on both sides. When Dulles and Nehru met in March 1956 in Delhi, it was evident that differences over issues like recognition of China remained. But, signs of change were evident in the conversations that Dulles described as “intimate and animated and informal” and Nehru called “long and frank.” While Nehru continued to believe that the offshore island problem needed to be sorted out as soon as possible, he admitted that the issue of Taiwan could be “deferred” for years. Furthermore, he acknowledged that though China was “inherently less aggressive than the Russians,” given that its experience with revolution was nearer, it might be “more aggressive.” The tone of the Dulles-Nehru conversation also seemed less trenchant than the one they had three years before. Both policymakers offered assurances and explanations on key subjects of concern to the other (Goa, Pakistan, the Soviet Union). Nehru noted, “Dulles did not repudiate all that I said, but brought in the time element and also the need for maintaining strength...I said that every country had to maintain its strength, but in view of the new situation when war was practically ruled out, it had become essential to try peaceful

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<sup>230</sup> Proceedings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, January 25, 1956, *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. XVII-1*, pp. 363-383.

approaches...” Dulles also passed on Eisenhower’s invitation for Nehru to visit the US, which the prime minister seemed inclined to accept.<sup>231</sup> By the time that visit would take place in December, a number of changes would occur, including in how the two countries perceived and sought to deal with China and each other.

**“MUST NOT LEAVE BACKDOOR UNLATCHED”<sup>232</sup>**

Why did the dissension that the two countries’ China policies create in the US-India relationship in the Truman and early Eisenhower administrations not lead to a complete rupture? For all their differences, the executive authorities in both countries faced a dilemma then that they would continue to face over the next decade and a half: each country might not like the other country’s policies, but it needed the other country. With China-India comparisons becoming commonplace and gaining strength in the early 1950s, US administrations could not see India fail and/or go communist like China. For India, the US was an essential component in its plans for development, which was seen as critical for India’s defense, as well as political stability.

From the Truman administration’s perspective, difficulties with India over China notwithstanding, the communists’ takeover of China and their successful military action against UN forces in Korea in winter 1950 made it crucial that India did not “go communist” just as China had—this, according to Kux, was “Washington’s main concern about India.” A State Department policy review in December 1950 noted that, “India has become the pivotal state in non-Communist Asia by virtue of its relative power, stability

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<sup>231</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Dulles and JLN, New Delhi, March 9, 1956 and March 10, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, pp. 307-308. JLN’s report of conversation with Dulles, March 10, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 32*, pp. 375-381.

<sup>232</sup> In 1952, Bowles had argued in a message directed to the president that while it was important to stop Communist at the “front door,” it was also crucial not to “leave backdoor unlatched.” Telegram from Bowles to DoS, Delhi, July 5, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1655.



and influence.”<sup>233</sup> A NSC reassessment of South Asia policy in January 1951 stated that if India was lost, “for all practical purposes all of Asia would have been lost; this would constitute a most serious and threatening blow to the security of the United States.”<sup>234</sup> The loss of India would also constitute a political blow to the Truman administration, still suffering from accusations that it had lost China. The loss could happen either through the lack of economic development, leading to political and socioeconomic instability, or through India turning elsewhere for aid because it had not been forthcoming from the US.<sup>235</sup> Thus, the US needed to aid India’s development.

Given Indian officials’ public statements, there seemed to be little point in the administration arguing to Congress that aid could win India over to the side of the “free world.” Instead, the objective as stated bluntly in the administration’s aid requests was to prevent India’s loss.<sup>236</sup> This formulation was evident in Truman’s message to Congress supporting food aid legislation for India in 1951. As presidents after him would, he appealed for aid to India for strategic, symbolic and humanitarian reasons. Administration officials making the case to Congress did the same. Acheson replied in the affirmative when asked by Rep. Javits (R-NY) if the aid was to help “keep India in the column of the free people.” Amb. William Pauley, in turn, noted that there were some areas in the world where bread and butter rather than guns and bullets worked better to contain communism. He further argued that granting India the grain would help strengthen the hand of those in the Indian government who were pro-US.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 87.

<sup>234</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>235</sup> British officials reinforced US concerns by expressing uncertainty about whether India and the rest of Asia could remain free in the short-term. Memcon of Meeting between Franks (British Ambassador), Nitze (DoS Policy Planning Director) and Rusk, June 4, 1951, *FRUS 1951 Vol. VII-1*, p. 501.

<sup>236</sup> For the line administration officials took, see Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>237</sup> Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on the Famine in India,” February 12, 1951 (<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=241&st=&st1=>). Also, see Testimony of

Administration officials worried about the adverse impact of Indian rhetoric and actions on congressional support for aid to India and foreign aid more broadly. Making the case for India despite what was seen as its intransigence, US officials like McGhee argued, “India is too important to us and Nehru too important to India for us to take the easy road of concluding that we cannot work with Nehru. We must work with him.”<sup>238</sup> Many in the US public agreed. In October 1951, two-thirds of respondents asserted that the US should continue to try to cooperate closely with India despite India’s disagreement with America’s China and Korea policy.<sup>239</sup>

Because of its need for aid, India had an interest in trying to maintain a working relationship with the US as well. With his country requiring US assistance, Nehru tried to minimize the impact of differences on his visit to the US in 1949.<sup>240</sup> Later, in December 1950, the Indian finance minister acknowledged that India’s request for food aid indicated formal recognition that India needed the US for its major objective: peace and stability.<sup>241</sup> The food minister bluntly noted to a US official, “we have got to have American help.”<sup>242</sup> At the time, while the Soviet Union had offered food aid, only the US could provide the quantity that India needed, at the speed India wanted, and on terms

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Acheson, February 20, 1951, *Hearings before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs - 82<sup>nd</sup> Congress, First Session 1951* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1951), p. 13; and Testimony of Special Assistant to the S/S (Pauley), April 16, 1951, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. III-1 82-1 1951*, p. 369, 377.

<sup>238</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 87-89.

<sup>239</sup> 18 percent said it was “not important”; the rest “did not know.” Foreign Affairs Survey, Oct, 1951. Retrieved Oct-17-2010 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. [http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html).

<sup>240</sup> JLN’s Address to a meeting jointly organized by the East and West Association, the FPA, the India League of America and the Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, NY, October 19, 1949, *SWJN SS, Vol. 13*, p. 339.

<sup>241</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 91. The finance minister was also interested in raising funds to aid India’s development from the west more broadly (B.K. Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 239).

<sup>242</sup> Quoted in Proceedings on S. 872 India Emergency Food Aid Act of 1951, April 16, 1951, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. III-1 82-1 1951*, p. 373.

India preferred.<sup>243</sup> Policymakers were also cautious about turning to Beijing for assistance since promises of grain repeatedly fell short, either because of China's terms or its domestic needs. Furthermore Beijing's offers of grain were a double-edged sword for the Indian government: it helped the situation to a limited degree, but simultaneously it constituted a propaganda coup for China's alternate system.<sup>244</sup> Finally, Indian policymakers realized that the acceptance of "red rice" might have an adverse impact on its position in the US—this contributed to India's relative silence on its grain negotiations with China.<sup>245</sup>

In spring 1951, as the food assistance bills worked their way through both houses of the US Congress, the need for the US also led to Indian government officials trying to limit criticism of the US in India. The food minister urged patience in parliament, stressing that, like India, the US was a democracy and the food bill was going through a democratic process.<sup>246</sup> Officials also chose to wait to inform the US about the Indian inability to provide troops in Korea till after the passage of the bill.<sup>247</sup> Eventually, Nehru also agreed to accept conditions attached to assistance.<sup>248</sup> Subsequently, so that US-India hostility would not get out of hand, India moderated its response to the negative American reaction to India's attitude toward the Japan Peace Treaty. It also helped moderate the Rangoon's reaction to American silence about the presence of GMD troops

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<sup>243</sup> "Indians Skeptical on Red Food Help," NYT, April 5, 1951, p. 4. In exchange for grain, the Soviet Union asked for goods in barter, which were foreign exchange earners for India ("Soviet Bloc's Terms Cut Trade with India," NYT, January 3, 1952, p. 71). Later Nehru noted that the US also had more advanced technology (Letter from JLN to CMs, August 26, 1952, SWJN, SS Vol. 19, p. 701).

<sup>244</sup> "India asks Peiping for Food Urgently," NYT, April 8, 1951, p. 8; "Indian Hints Soviet will Reduce its Aid," NYT, June 1, 1951, p. 10; "India Worried Over Food," NYT, February 23, 1952, p. 12; and "Indians Skeptical on Red Food Help," NYT, April 5, 1951, p. 4.

<sup>245</sup> "Silent on China Deal," NYT, May 16, 1951, p. 6.

<sup>246</sup> "India asks Peiping for Food Urgently," NYT, April 8, 1951, p. 8.

<sup>247</sup> Letter from Bajpai to Pandit, May 24, 1951, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>248</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 82.

on Burmese territory.<sup>249</sup> Aid from the US was important for not just economic reasons, but political ones as well—as an Indian official later noted, “Prime Minister made [a] great many promises and history may record it was Americans who made it possible for him to keep them.”<sup>250</sup>

In support of India’s case for US aid, some Indian commentators also tried to lay the groundwork for China-India comparisons—Barbara Ward and later Chester Bowles also elaborated on this idea of the two countries as “testing grounds,” “laboratories” or “experiments in democracy.”<sup>251</sup> Frank Moraes, editor of *The Times of India*, noted in *Life* magazine as early as 1951:

China and India are two testing grounds. If India, with her constitution drawing inspiration from countries such as the U.S., Canada, Britain and Switzerland, can assure her people of economic security and individual freedom, Asia will be won for democracy. But if India fails and China succeeds in proving that her present way of life offers food and employment for the millions, Asia will be lost to Communism.<sup>252</sup>

Indian officials even employed the “loss” argument in the military sphere. Officials negotiating for the purchase of tanks and jet aircraft from the US, for example, noted that it was not in US interest for India to become weak.<sup>253</sup>

There were no doubt some in the US who also came to use the China loss analogy instrumentally to garner support for India, but there were also true believers. Observers

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<sup>249</sup> Extract from the Record of Conversation between Bajpai and Henderson, September 12, 1951, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>250</sup> Telegram from Taylor to DoS, Delhi, May 26, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1646.

<sup>251</sup> Cullather, p. 138

<sup>252</sup> “What Asians think of U.S. Policy,” *Life*, December 31, 1951, p. 25

<sup>253</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Banerji (Indian military attaché) and DoS South Asia office personnel, August 1, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1659. Bowles used defense against “Commie expansion in Asia” and the need to prevent India from turning to another source as reasons for his support of the sale (Telegram from Bowles to the DoS, August 13, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1660). But approval of request in mid-1952 for sale of 200 Sherman tanks and, following US indications that 200 jet aircraft would not be forthcoming, 54 C-119s (Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 86).

noted that if the US did not support the stability of the Nehru government in India—“the last important stronghold of democracy in Asia”—it would be a mistake “almost as calamitous as the one we made in China.”<sup>254</sup> Spurred by the arguments of Paul Hoffman, director of the Ford Foundation, Bowles also took to making explicit China-India “economic competition” references to lobby for economic aid for India.<sup>255</sup> In early 1952, he went on a tour in the US to highlight the test the US faced, arguing that in countries like India “plows [were] more important than machine guns and should not be overlooked in the defense of Asia.” In an election year in the US, he further asked legislators to think about the repercussions for the country (and for them) if the US lost India as it had lost China. Bowles argued that the loss of India would be worse than China, because “Southeast Asia and the Middle East would be impossible to hold.” To bolster his case, Bowles tended to exaggerate the danger of communism, as well as the “growing disillusionment” with—and increasing fear of—China in India.<sup>256</sup>

But Indian concerns were not entirely non-existent. There was some apprehension in India about communists taking advantage of disillusionment with the government’s ability to deliver when a coalition of communist and socialist parties made electoral gains in a southern state at the expense of the ruling Congress party. In the US, too, there was concern that communists and communist-affiliates received a larger share of votes in the 1952 Indian elections than expected.<sup>257</sup> The near east bureau, while noting that it would

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<sup>254</sup> “Cowles Urges Support of Nehru To Avert ‘a Calamitous Blunder’,” NYT, September 25, 1951, p. 3.

<sup>255</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 82-86.

<sup>256</sup> He argued that his aid proposal was not just a good economic and strategic move, but a good political one, because it would save them from blame for “India going [the] way of China.” Telegram from Bowles to the DoS, February 21, 1952, FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2, pp. 1635-1638. Also, see “Bowles Sees India Test,” NYT, January 19, 1952, p. 2 and James Reston, “Dewey Talk Awaited for Key To Policy on Asia’s Defense,” NYT, January 24, 1952, p. 3.

<sup>257</sup> Robert Trumbull, “Discontent Sparks Gains by Reds In Voting on India’s Malabar Coast,” NYT, January 25, 1952, p. 3 and Hanson W. Baldwin, “Fate of Southeast Asia,” NYT, January 29, 1952, p. 2.

be difficult to get the amount of aid that Bowles was lobbying for through Congress, nonetheless argued that these communist gains showed how important it was for the US to tackle through aid the problems that led to communism thriving in India.<sup>258</sup> Merrill credits concern about these electoral gains as the reason for Bowles managing to convince Acheson to increase somewhat the aid request for India for FY1953 that the secretary had earlier cut substantially.<sup>259</sup>

A reappraisal of NSC-68 in summer/fall 1952 further highlighted the importance of the “free world” developing “greater stability in peripheral or other unstable areas.”<sup>260</sup> Attempting to elicit aid for India that fall, some liberals argued that, “China is gone, yes...But there are perhaps four years in which we can help save India.”<sup>261</sup> As Kux has noted, Bowles also continued to link Indian economic development to US security interests. The ambassador argued that India’s democracy was still vulnerable to communism and if it collapsed, the effect on US interests would be “catastrophic.”<sup>262</sup> His cause was buffeted by an intelligence estimate that fall that noted, “[C]oming on the heels of the Communist victory in China [the loss of South Asia] would create the impression throughout non-Communist Asia, Africa, and Europe that the advance of Communism was inevitable.”<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> They couched it in domino theory terms: “if South Asia is subverted it will only be a matter of time before all of the Asian land-mass and over a billion people will be under Communist domination and our national security will face an unprecedented threat.” Memo by Berry (Acting AS/S NESAs) to Matthews (DUS/S), February 8, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1634.

<sup>259</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 90.

<sup>260</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 122.

<sup>261</sup> Marquis Childs, “Ike’s Point of No Return,” *WP*, September 16, 1952, p. 12.

<sup>262</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 82. Also, see Telegram from Bowles to the DoS, October 28, 1952, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1669.

<sup>263</sup> Special Estimate: Consequences of Communist Control over South Asia, October 3, 1952 *Ibid*, pp. 1063-1064.

In India, Nehru tried to do his part by pointedly acknowledging American aid publicly, noting that the US had sent assistance with the “very best of motives and without strings of any kind.” While Nehru believed that the communists in India were weaker than six months before, like Bowles his government remained concerned that directly and indirectly Beijing had “done a disturbingly effective job of selling China as a new land of milk and honey”—all achieved through communism, rather than democracy.<sup>264</sup>

In the US, by the time Eisenhower took office in 1953, as Merrill notes, the debate was no longer on whether defense (of the US and the “free world”) and development (of India and other developing countries) were connected. Some continued to argue vociferously against aid for India. But the key point of discussion was on how much aid India should receive.<sup>265</sup> The lame-duck Truman administration had left office suggesting that the new administration allocate over four times the amount of aid India had received the previous year. Acheson had argued that it would help keep India on the side of the “democratic free world” and make India an example for others.<sup>266</sup> The Eisenhower administration considered the proposals excessive. But the president worried about the vulnerability of states that had recently gained independence.<sup>267</sup> Thus, while reducing the amount, Dulles still endorsed in Cold War language—outlining the China-India competition—and elicited from Congress more aid for India for FY1954 than had ever been authorized in the past.<sup>268</sup> Some members of Congress grudgingly admitted that

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<sup>264</sup> And Nehru wanted US officials to know he had acknowledged the aid. Telegram from Bowles to the DoS, October 2, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 1666 and Telegram from Bowles to the DoS, October 28, 1952, *Ibid*, p. 1672.

<sup>265</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 101.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>267</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 179.

<sup>268</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 100. Dulles argued to the senate foreign relations committee that “Whether you like India or not, as far as the foreign policy of India is concerned, there is a pretty important

while they did not like Nehru, it served US purposes to help India prevent communists from taking over. Others noted that if they cut aid to India even further, it might have negative repercussions on India's stance in the NNRC.<sup>269</sup>

There continued to be debate about the necessity and benefits of aiding India in 1953-1954. Ambassador Allen and under secretary of state Walter Bedell Smith asked whether the US had "gone past the point of diminishing returns in several areas" with India. Smith noted that the relationship with India would survive an aid stoppage—Burma seemed to have fared well even without US aid and Burma-US relations seemed to be doing fine as well.<sup>270</sup> Dulles disagreed, however, noting that the termination of aid would leave the US no way of ensuring stability in India. Furthermore, along with the general negative impact on the US-India relationship, such a cut-off would have "unfortunate results which would likely take place in connection with discussions of Asian problems, UN debates and resolutions, and India's work as chairman [of] NNRC."<sup>271</sup>

Like its predecessor, the Eisenhower administration did not see aid as a way to win India over. Administration officials had little-to-no expectation that India would

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sort of competition going on between India and Communist China...If the Indians fall and collapse it will be very difficult to prevent Communists from taking control in India and doing in India what they have demonstrated in China that they can do better, and on the other hand, if India proves they can do it better, then there might be a reverse effect. I think it would justify some help there" (Testimony of Dulles, June 3, 1953, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. V 83-I 1953*, p. 450). Some administration officials tried to assure members of Congress that the Chinese invasion of Tibet had made India much more aware of the communist threat (Report by the Director, Mutual Security Agency, June 4, 1953, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. V 83-I 1953*, p. 471).

<sup>269</sup> See statements of Rep. Vorys and Rep. Judd in Proceedings on the Mutual Security Act 1953, June 11, 1953, *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. X*, p. 210.

<sup>270</sup> Memo by Bedell Smith to Eisenhower, August 18, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1712 and Memo by Byroade to the Acting S/S and Matthews, August 20, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, pp. 1712-1713.

<sup>271</sup> Telegram from Dulles to AmEmb India, September 3, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 1717.



move closer to the US.<sup>272</sup> There was hope in some quarters that eventually India could be persuaded to participate in a “common front against communism”<sup>273</sup> But the purpose of aid to the South Asian countries at the time, as vice president Richard Nixon put it, was not primarily “a desire to gain credit or to buy friendship, but rather to build up these countries.”<sup>274</sup>

India, in turn, had a “desperate” need for foreign aid.<sup>275</sup> Nehru noted that it was “very important” for India to strive to have a working relationship with the US because “What we do or do not do is powerfully affected by our relations with America.”<sup>276</sup> The importance of American aid in satisfying Indian requirements was evident in India’s reaction to the uproar over an Indian shipment of thorium nitrate to China in 1953. Before that, when there had been some US concern about Indian exports of another strategic material—rubber goods—to China, India had suspended such exports. But, in July 1953 the US ambassador received reports that a state-owned Indian company was shipping thorium nitrate to China. The Battle Act of 1951 made states exporting such strategic items to countries like China and the Soviet Union ineligible to receive US aid. When broached about US officials’ concerns that the Indian shipments would result in a suspension of US aid to India, Nehru argued that he had always made clear that aid had to

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<sup>272</sup> Byroade to Bedell Smith, February 5, 1953. Quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 157. Also see NIE: Probable Developments in South Asia, June 30, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1074.

<sup>273</sup> Draft Statement of Policy Proposed by the NSC (NSC 5409: US Policy Toward South Asia), February 19, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1094.

<sup>274</sup> Memo of a Discussion at NSC Meeting, March 4, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 1129. This view had also been reflected in NIE: Probable Developments in South Asia, June 30, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 1087.

<sup>275</sup> Letter from Hoffman to Dulles, April 28, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 1320.

<sup>276</sup> JLN Conversation with Norman Cousins, September 3, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 23*, p. 16. Even on a broader basis, Nehru acknowledged that it was important for India to maintain “friendly relations” with the US (JLN, Minutes of Discussions with Dulles, New Delhi, May 22, 1953, *SWJN, SS Vol. 22*, p. 507).

come with no strings attached.<sup>277</sup> He further noted that even if he could recall the shipment, the “political consequences, both internally and in relations between India and China, would be so serious as to render [such action] impossible.”<sup>278</sup> Nonetheless, despite assertions that it was neither desirable nor feasible to stop the shipment, key Indian officials—aware of the stakes—tried to do just that, albeit unsuccessfully.<sup>279</sup> Furthermore, an anxious Indian government accepted Dulles’ proposed solution.<sup>280</sup> It declared that the thorium nitrate was for commercial purposes in China and that India did not expect any such future shipments to China or other countries in the Soviet orbit. Later, when China and the Soviet Union approached India for more thorium nitrate, Indian officials quickly turned to the US to make this purchase instead.<sup>281</sup>

In early 1954, NSC 5409—United States Policy toward South Asia—emphasized the stakes involved for the US following “the consolidation of communist control in China” and the setbacks in Indochina. It reinforced various themes: South Asia as “a major battleground in the cold war,” China-India competition, the threat posed by India’s internal economic and political vulnerability, the adverse impact if India—“potentially...the pivot of the whole area”—was lost. Furthermore, it laid out the key problem: “If India does not achieve substantial economic and social progress through

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<sup>277</sup> Though simultaneously, Indian officials acknowledged that they had erred in this case, by not informing Nehru of the implications of the Act when sending the proposal for shipment to him for approval. Nehru asserted that he had not realized the implications. Telegram from Allen to DoS, Delhi July 26, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1697.

<sup>278</sup> Telegram from Allen to the DoS, July 28, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 1700.

<sup>279</sup> Memo by Byroade and Waugh (AS/S Economic Affairs) to Bedell Smith, July 31, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 1704.

<sup>280</sup> Dulles and other American officials had also been concerned about not finding a solution. Dulles noted the “deteriorating trend [in] our relations [with] GOI...need to continue aid in support [of] economic progress and India’s role in Korea” (especially given India’s forthcoming role in the NNRC). Telegram from Dulles to AmEmb India, July 30, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 1702 and Memo by Byroade and Waugh to Bedell Smith, July 31, 1953, *Ibid*, p. 1705.

<sup>281</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 182; and Telegram from Allen to DoS, September 8, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1717.

democratic processes, and on the other hand, Communist China appears to be moving forward through totalitarian methods, the peoples of South Asia may turn to communist leadership and methods for solutions to their own problems.” And China seemed to be delivering faster.<sup>282</sup> Therefore, as Merrill has noted, even though Nehru irked Eisenhower and Dulles, they saw the need to help support India and Nehru’s government. Of the economic aid requested for underdeveloped countries for 1955—even though it paled in comparison to military assistance and aid to allies—the largest request was for India.

Dulles and other administration officials advocated for this aid using Cold War logic, and language that specifically highlighted the China-India economic competition.<sup>283</sup> Gen. Stewart, the director of the defense department’s office of military assistance, stressed that from a military perspective, the loss of India would be a disaster for US national security—“equally as great a disaster as the loss of China.” Appealing to the China bloc members on the House foreign affairs committee, Stassen noted that the US had already made the error of once basing China policy on adverse perceptions of Jiang; it should not repeat that mistake by basing India policy on views of Nehru. Assistant secretary of state Byroade argued that despite disagreements about perceptions and policy toward the communists, the US could not totally give up on India. He asserted, “We don’t have a program of helping our friends. We have a program of preserving our

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<sup>282</sup> Study Prepared by the NSC Staff, NSC 5409: US Policy Toward South Asia, undated 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, pp. 1098-1113. Also, see Draft Statement of Policy Proposed by the NSC (NSC 5409: US Policy Toward South Asia), February 19, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, pp. 1089-1091; and Report to the NSC by the Executive Secretary, “United States Policy toward South Asia,” January 1954, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 107.

<sup>283</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 109. Dulles told the House foreign affairs committee that even though “India’s foreign policy differs from our own,” the US should aid that country because India was “carrying on a notable experiment in free government. It provides a striking contrast with the neighboring experiment being conducted by China...” (Statement of Dulles, April 5, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 4). Stassen also used India’s “relative strategic position... vis-à-vis Communist China” to argue in favor of aid (Statement of the Director of Foreign Operations Administration, April 6, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 39).

way of life in this world.” Furthermore, termination of aid would weaken the hands of those in India who were friendly to the US. Allen stated that it was crucial to dispel the notion in Asia that the US had only “one string to our bow” i.e. military means to solve problems. The US needed to help the democratic Indian government “deliver the goods.”<sup>284</sup> The administration found support from senators like Smith and Humphrey. They managed to convince somewhat senators like Fulbright, who had been skeptical, but came to believe that one of the most important questions was “whether or not India, with our assistance, is making greater progress than China with the Russian assistance.”<sup>285</sup>

The Indian need for that assistance from the US, as intelligence assessments noted, meant that India would “seek to avoid a clear-cut break with the US and its allies” despite the US announcement of military aid to Pakistan.<sup>286</sup> Nehru indeed warned against any knee-jerk Indian rejection of US aid in retaliation or any statement about forsaking such aid.<sup>287</sup> Indian requirements also caused officials to express deep concern about the

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<sup>284</sup> Testimony of Gen. Stewart, April 13, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 232; Testimony of the Director of Foreign Operations Administration, April 27, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, pp. 355-356; Testimony of AS/S NESA, April 13, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 208, 221-222, 229; and Testimony of Ambassador Allen, May 4, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 509-512 (Allen even brought newspaper clippings to prove that Nehru was anti-communist domestically). A Foreign Operations Administration official argued that the urgency in India related to its development plan stemmed from the pressure from needing to keep up with the massive Chinese development plan being undertaken simultaneously. [Testimony of Paul (NESA Regional Director, FAO), May 5, 1954, *HFAC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 538].

<sup>285</sup> Proceedings, June 4, 1954, *Hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 83rd Congress, Second Session on the Mutual Security Act of 1954* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1954) [hereafter *SFRC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*], p. 14, 34; and Proceedings, June 8, 1954, *SFRC Hearings 83-2 Congress on MSA 1954*, p. 72.

<sup>286</sup> They noted, “there is virtually no major act of reprisal India could undertake against the US without jeopardizing its own interests.” See Special Estimate: The Probable Repercussions of a US Decision to Grant or Deny Military Aid to Pakistan, January 15, 1954, quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 178. Also see NIE: Probable Developments in South Asia, June 30, 1953, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1074.

<sup>287</sup> Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, March 12, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 491.

deterioration in US-India relations in March 1954.<sup>288</sup> Furthermore, it partly led to **Nehru and some officials advising against public ranting against SEATO later that year.**<sup>289</sup>

In summer and fall 1954 some within and outside the US government continued to argue that the US should only give aid to anti-communist states. Others contended that the US could not just write off countries like India—the US could not wait for India to come to its senses; it needed strengthening now so it could resist communism. Moreover, attaching any political or military strings to aid would only help communist propaganda.<sup>290</sup> A working group formed to consider a large-scale long-term economic assistance program for Asia advised that neutral countries be included in such a program. Economic aid could serve to counter communist subversion in these countries and was part of the “total anti-Communist defense in Asia.”<sup>291</sup> Intelligence assessments noted with concern China’s economic progress, especially on the industrial front.<sup>292</sup> The State Department and some other agencies believed that since there was little prospect of reducing absolute Chinese power—as some in the Defense Department and the JCS desired—the goal should be to reduce its relative power by building up countries like India.<sup>293</sup> An interagency document also recommended that the US “develop the basic

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<sup>288</sup> Telegram from Allen to DoS, March 20, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1350. Nehru said if India refused aid then it would just “add to the friction and lack of understanding between the two countries,” which he was eager to avoid (Note from JLN to MEA SecGen, FonSec and ComSec on his meeting with Allen, April 24, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 25*, p. 495).

<sup>289</sup> Note from JLN to the MEA SecGen and ComSec on the Manila Treaty, October 9, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 205.

<sup>290</sup> Robertson and US Ambassador the Philippines Admiral Spruance had expressed the former view. Baldwin disagreed. Memo by Baldwin (Economic Coordinator in FEA) to Robertson, August 13, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, pp. 733-734.

<sup>291</sup> Memo by Baldwin to Bowie (DoS Policy Planning Director) on Report of the Asian Economic Working Group, August 30, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 809; Memo by Murphy (DUS/S) to Dulles on Interim Report of the WG to the NSC Ad Hoc Committee on an Asian Economic Grouping, undated 1954, *Ibid*, p. 1020.

<sup>292</sup> NIE-10-7-54: Communist Courses of Action in Asia through 1957, November 23, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XIV-1*, p. 935.

<sup>293</sup> Memo of Discussion at the 226<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, December 1, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 1004.

stability and strength of non-Communist countries, especially Japan and India, and their capacity and will to resist Communist expansion.”<sup>294</sup>

There continued to be some concern within the administration about putting aside aid for India on the grounds that India had not been helpful to the US and that Congress would not concur. Treasury Secretary Humphrey, for example, argued that the US was better off focusing on building up Japan as a counterbalance to China.<sup>295</sup> Others asserted that, even though Congress made cuts to administration requests, it eventually always appropriated some funds for India because Congress, too, realized that “it is in our overall interest to see that the Indian Five-Year Plan succeeds, since the alternative to such success is judged to be disastrous to US security interests.”<sup>296</sup>

By early 1955, the initial stages of the Soviet economic offensive and increased Indo-Soviet interaction, combined with the military setback in Indochina, caused the re-emergence of concern in the US that the West was losing ground in India.<sup>297</sup> This led to discussions of an expanded foreign assistance program, which Eisenhower called “the cheapest insurance in the world.”<sup>298</sup> It also led to recognition of the need to deal with those with whom one differed. Difficult as it was to deal with Nehru, US policymakers accepted that “to deal with India one must deal with Nehru.”<sup>299</sup> For Eisenhower, India had “special status.”<sup>300</sup> Admitting that he did not trust Nehru, Eisenhower nonetheless

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<sup>294</sup> Note to the NSC by Lay (Executive Secretary) on Draft Statement of Policy by the NSC on Current US Policy in the Far East, November 19, 1954, *Ibid*, p. 977.

<sup>295</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 221.

<sup>296</sup> Memo by Nolting (Special Assistant to the S/S for Mutual Security Affairs) to Hoover, December 15, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XII-1*, p. 1043.

<sup>297</sup> Briefing Paper Prepared in OSAA on India – Some Current Economic Problems, January 19, 1955 in *FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume VIII*, p. 275.

<sup>298</sup> Memo of Discussion at NSC Meeting, November 21, 1955. Quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 219.

<sup>299</sup> Study Prepared by the NSC Staff, NSC 5409: US Policy Toward South Asia, undated 1954, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. XI-2*, p. 1100.

<sup>300</sup> July 1955. Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 118.

suggested to the head of media companies that they “not knock down the Indians too much,” even if they did not like Nehru: “After all...If they are ever added to the great populations that the Communists now control, the free world will be up against it, not only in the East but throughout the world...we have got to keep them at least on the neutral side if we can...don’t go slamming the Indians.”<sup>301</sup> This echoed Acheson’s assertion that even though Nehru was “one of the most difficult men with whom I have ever had to deal,” he “was so important to India and India’s survival to all of us” that the US had little choice.<sup>302</sup>

In Congressional testimony in support of aid to India that summer, Dulles identified Japan and India as the “keystones” of security in Asia, noting that in both countries the most urgent problem was economic rather than military. Stassen noted the beginning of Soviet “economic warfare.” Allen argued that the US could not cut and run because the Soviets had showed up—as some were arguing—but had to stay and “fight the issue out.” Bowles added that it was a time of “competitive co-existence.”<sup>303</sup> An administration official asserted, “With Russia intensifying its efforts to get a foothold in India...and with China developing the show window, I think that it makes the task of India and ourselves perhaps, as hard during the coming year as it has been so far.” He used the China contrast in Congress to counter other objections on aid to India. When Rep. Judd, for example, raised concerns about aiding India that was “socializ[ing],” an administration official pointed out that the US should focus on the contrast between

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<sup>301</sup> Diary Entry by Hagerty (President’s Press Secretary) on President’s meeting with Howard (Chairman of the Executive Committee of Scripps-Howard Newspapers), February 24, 1955, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. II-1*, pp. 306-307.

<sup>302</sup> Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 336.

<sup>303</sup> Testimony of Dulles, May 5, 1955, *SFRC Hearings, 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*, p. 18; Testimony of the FAO Director, May 6, 1955, *SFRC Hearings, 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*, p. 79; Testimony of the AS/S NESA, May 12, 1955, *SFRC Hearings, 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955* p. 220 and Testimony of the AS/S NESA, June 8, 1955, *HFAC Hearings 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*, p. 115; and Testimony of former ambassador to India (Bowles), May 23, 1955, *SFRC Hearings 84-1 Congress on MSA 1955*, p. 508.

China and India—just as other Asian countries were—rather than between the American and Indian systems where there were more similarities. Judd grudgingly acknowledged, “It is the philosophy of the lesser evil.”<sup>304</sup>

Escalating Indo-Soviet interaction in 1955 only heightened US anxiety. So did intelligence assessments that indicated that China’s power and prestige had grown in Asia and that, with Soviet assistance, Beijing’s military programs were charging ahead.<sup>305</sup> Soviet efforts changed what Dulles called “the scene of the battle” in a way that would eventually come to benefit India.<sup>306</sup> But till then, while the Truman and Eisenhower administrations had supported assistance to India, it was only in a “moderate degree”—with continuing skepticism about India limiting the amount of aid the executive would ask for and receive from the legislature.<sup>307</sup>

US assessments of the second half of 1955 indicated that there was a greater appreciation of American aid and its value in India.<sup>308</sup> This Indian understanding meant that the government in Delhi tried to limit public criticism of the US. Nehru tried to ensure that any official Indian criticism of the US related to the Baghdad Pact was through private channels.<sup>309</sup> His efforts at message control hit a bump in the road with the Dulles statement on Goa. Nehru was very concerned that, without damage control, the negative reaction in the country would escalate, adversely affecting India’s relations with

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<sup>304</sup> See testimony of assistant regional director, NESAs Operations, FAO in Proceedings of the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 21, 1955, *HFAC Executive Sessions 1951-56 Vol. XVII-1*, p. 302, 323.

<sup>305</sup> NIE-13-56: Chinese Communist Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action through 1960, January 5, 1956, *FRUS 1952-54 Vol. III*, p. 231.

<sup>306</sup> Memo of Discussion at NSC Meeting, November 21, 1955. Quoted in McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 219.

<sup>307</sup> Report of the Director, Mutual Security Agency, June 4, 1953, *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. V 83-I 1953*, p. 810.

<sup>308</sup> Instruction from DoS to the Diplomatic and Consular Offices in India re Semi-Annual Review of US-Indian Relations: May 15-November 15, 1955, January 20, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 304.

<sup>309</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, December 2, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 31*, p. 321.



the US and “indirectly...the question of our receiving any help from the US for our developmental programme.” He lamented, “Everything that the US might have done to India is likely to be forgotten in the anger caused by this.”<sup>310</sup>

Furthermore, better Indo-Soviet and Sino-Indian relationships only made it more important to maintain India’s relationship with the US. Nehru’s policy called for balance: between defense and development, but also between the Soviet Union and the United States. For one, this would allow India to play one off against the other. But, more than that, Nehru hoped this would allow India to maintain its freedom of action by diversifying its dependence. Diversification would allow India to reduce dependence on any one country or bloc, as well as to cope with the questionable reliability of benefactors. Finally, it was necessary to maintain the US option because of continuing Indian concerns about the Soviet Union. This stemmed from Soviet support for the communist party of India that was taking India’s government on, as well as the Soviet veto of UN membership for newly independent nations. Thus, to maintain balance, when the visits of Khrushchev and Bulganin were forthcoming, Nehru extended an invitation to Eisenhower.<sup>311</sup> During their visit, worried about American and British reaction, he also tried to eliminate or limit the Soviet leaders’ public criticism of the US.<sup>312</sup> Then, in March 1956, India rejected a Soviet offer of aircraft, partly because Dulles had made

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<sup>310</sup> Note from JLN to MEA SecGen, FonSec, ComSec on Fallout of the Joint Statement by Mr. Dulles and Foreign Minister of Portugal, December 4, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 31*, p. 425; and Letter from JLN to Pandit, December 5, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 31*, p. 329.

<sup>311</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>312</sup> Nehru believed Bulganin and Khrushchev had “overstepped the mark” in their speeches in India [Letter from JLN to Pandit, December 2, 1955, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 61 (I)]. While he thought the Soviet leaders’ trip increased India’s importance even in American eyes, he worried about the negative impact of the leaders’ speeches in London and Washington (Note by JLN on the Visit of the Soviet Leaders to India in November-December 1955, December 20, 1955, NMML, SDP, SF No. 17).

clear that India was unlikely to receive economic aid from the US if it was spending money on Soviet aircraft.<sup>313</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Mutual need—and the reality that neither could ignore the other—had kept the US-India relationship from deteriorating into hostility or total indifference. But between 1949-1956, that need had not been sufficient to overcome their major differences on attitudes and approaches towards key issues, including China. Moreover, the two countries had not developed the habits of cooperation that allowed the US, for example, to overcome policy differences—especially, but not solely, on China—with countries like Britain. American and Indian policymakers had little historical experience interacting with each other. They had never been in the foxhole together.<sup>314</sup> At times, the executive leaderships were willing (albeit grudgingly) to give the other the benefit of the doubt, but this was not common. Simultaneously, however, in each country expectations for the other were—perhaps unrealistically—high. Many in the US expected India to play a role in their cold war script. After all, it was a non-communist democracy faced with a communist threat at its doorstep. On the other hand, many in India expected the US to understand India’s perspective. After all, it was a fellow post-colonial democracy that had advocated for India’s independence and had itself experienced the desire not to get entangled in power politics.<sup>315</sup> But, when these expectations were unfulfilled, it had only increased the disillusionment.

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<sup>313</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 127.

<sup>314</sup> Dulles, when he was an advisor to Truman’s State Department, had told Pandit that “it is natural for us to be more closely allied to the UK and to consult her than Eastern countries. Trust is built up over a period of time...” Letter from Pandit to Bajpai, August 21, 1950, NMML, VLP (I), SF No. 56.

<sup>315</sup> The Indian ambassador to the US noted in a speech in Chicago that India’s foreign policy was “virtually indistinguishable from American foreign policy from 1789 to 1937.” The US of all countries should empathize with “the desire of a nation which is still in the early stages of development to avoid being

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dragged into rivalries and conflicts of powers.” ISI Washington, Extract from Report on Ambassador’s Tour to Chicago, April 19, 1955, May 5, 1955 NAI, File No. 70-23/55-AMS.

### **Chapter 3: The Pandit and The President (1956-1958)**

It was also dawning on America that in a war of ideas or ideologies, India was the strongest ‘ally’ in a strategic region of the world not because India had announced this alliance, nor that India had signed any treaty, but that India existed and continued to grow as a thriving Democratic State.

– Indian minister (political), Washington, DC on 1959<sup>1</sup>

It speaks much for the latent strength of Indo-US friendship that the stresses and strains of the international crises in 1958 and storms in UN did not cause any basic adverse effects on Indo-US friendly relations in spite of the known divergencies in outlook. The tendencies in the past which have cast considerable doubts and suspicions on the ability of the ‘two largest democracies in the world’ to co-operate were not only kept in check but were materially reduced in influence.

– Indian first secretary, Washington, DC on 1958<sup>2</sup>

By the time Nehru travelled to the US in December 1956, circumstances had changed from his previous visit in fall 1949. There was more convergence or at least parallelism in American and Indian views than there had ever been before. Between 1956-1962, Delhi’s perception of China and its policy toward that country would be closer to those of the US than previously. There were changes in Washington too—not over the question of whether China was a threat, but in the kind of threat that it posed and in the means considered best to tackle the China threat. This convergence on China not only implicitly eased the strains on the US-India relationship, but also explicitly brought the two countries together.

On the one hand, the US came to see China as much of a symbolic and psychological threat as a direct security threat to its interests. On the other hand, the Indian leadership, which had earlier thought that any threat from China was symbolic and

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<sup>1</sup> D.N. Chatterjee, Annual Political Report for 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(14)-AMS/60.

<sup>2</sup> K. Dalal, Annual Political Report for 1958 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(9)-AMS/59.

psychological, came to see China as a more traditional security threat. Moreover, the two countries agreed on what was required to contain and confront such a threat: close partnership with each other, and the strengthening of not just India's development effort, but eventually also its defense apparatus.

Between 1956-1958, Eisenhower partly came around to Nehru's view of the threat from communism and China. His administration worried that along with the infiltration of men, the infiltration of ideas and influence could be threatening. For Washington, as it watched the battlefield beyond Europe for hearts, minds and stomachs unfold through a cold war lens, if Soviet-backed China succeeded while India failed economically, this would be a victory for communism. If, on the other hand, the US could help India succeed and win the development race versus China, it could demonstrate to the uncommitted world that democracy and development could co-exist and thrive. Scholars have often said that the US emphasis on global rather than regional imperatives when it came to South Asia caused a lack of interest in India.<sup>3</sup> By the mid-to-late 1950s, however, it was those imperatives that caused interest in and brought attention to India in the US.

Nehru had already believed that if there was a short-to-medium term threat from China, it was that Beijing might show that its approach was more successful at delivering the goods than that of Delhi. This threat became real as his government dealt with charges of complacency and stagnation while China seemed to thrive next door and communism established an official foothold at home. Nehru's government had to kick-start the economy—partly to meet that threat—but this task was near impossible without external assistance, especially from the US.

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<sup>3</sup> Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, cited in Mansingh, p. 75.

Simultaneously, Nehru started to worry about the threat of the infiltration of men and influence from China. This change resulted from growing concern about China's attitude toward the Sino-Indian border, Chinese behavior in Tibet and Beijing's increasing interactions with India's neighbors. India also increasingly had doubts about China's commitment to peaceful co-existence and non-interference. Indian disappointments with China during this period meant that Delhi and Washington more often found themselves on the same page with regard to China. Even where there continued to be differences, India's changing attitude toward China made it more understanding of the US perspective—and vice versa—thus significantly reducing the adverse impact the China factor had on the US-India relationship. Overall, each country's need for the other to play a role in its China strategy was accompanied by a greater tolerance of the other's approach, as well as a reduced emphasis on differences and—where they continued to exist—a better way of handling disagreements. For India, this stood in sharp contrast to the way communist countries seemed to handle disagreements.

#### **CHANGING DIAGNOSIS, CHANGING PRESCRIPTION: THE INFILTRATION OF IDEAS AND INFLUENCE (1956-1958)**

In this period, the US administration still perceived a threat from communism in general and from China in particular, but the strategic context and resulting framework changed. By the mid-1950s, Eisenhower came to see the Cold War battleground as having moved from Europe to the uncommitted world, where “[a]ll of the new nations appeared to be more or less in danger of falling to the Communists.”<sup>4</sup> The post-Stalin Soviet leadership had taken the initiative in wooing these nations and a rival suitor piqued US interest and concern. As Merrill has noted, towards the end of 1955 and into 1956, the administration was anxious about the Sino-Soviet bloc economic offensive. The CIA

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 376

highlighted a particular reason for concern—most of the Soviet economic assistance was directed at four countries (Afghanistan, Egypt, India and Yugoslavia). Eisenhower worried that, unlike Soviet-supplied guns that elicited fear, butter would present a more benign and attractive Soviet face in those countries.<sup>5</sup>

This concern was not restricted to the White House. A public survey in the US asked whether the Soviet drive to win over uncommitted nations should be a cause for concern for the US government. Only 12 percent of respondents said it was not a subject of concern, while 49 percent thought it was very serious and 32 percent thought it was somewhat serious. While 52 percent thought the US was doing what it should to win the friendship of nonaligned countries like Burma, Egypt and India, a significant 40 percent thought the US should try harder.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, in the cold war, the battles for territory were giving way to battles for not just hearts and minds, but stomachs. The Eisenhower administration believed that if the “free world” could not prove that democracy and development could co-exist, it would “lose” large sections of the world. Conceptually, officials and observers were increasingly juxtaposing the democratic Indian development experiment against the communist Chinese one. In what was being described as a “keen competition,” Dulles noted in December 1956 that “[a] great deal depends” on India’s success.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, many officials argued that the US had a stake in facilitating an Indian win in the competition against China.

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<sup>5</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 122-124.

<sup>6</sup> Foreign Affairs Survey, January 1956. Retrieved Oct-17-2010 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.  
[http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html)

<sup>7</sup> “Differences with India Minimized,” *WP*, December 8, 1956, p. A5.

Documents such as NSC-68 had referred to the power of example. Many like Kennan, however, had believed that the US was a sufficient model to show that democracy could deliver security, stability and prosperity.<sup>8</sup> By the mid-1950s, however, it was becoming apparent that the US was not an adequate model. Countries just emerging from colonialism, far behind on the socioeconomic and political development ladder, could hardly relate to the superpower. India, on the other hand, was relatable. In this regard, an Indian loss to China in the development race would be a setback to the “free world” cause—and thus US security.

There was another related challenge—that of potential Indian failure. Rather than outright attacks or invasions, there was a sense that internal subversion in underdeveloped or developing countries was more of an imminent threat. Communism might win in these countries not through the use of military instruments, but by exploiting economic weakness. What made countries vulnerable was the lack of economic development. If individuals in non-communists countries felt that their system of government would not deliver, they would look to another way of life and thus be more susceptible to communism. Thus, the “free world” could lose India if Indians looked next door to China and saw it moving ahead under a communist government.

With the change in diagnosis of threat came a change in prescription—to one that matched that of India. The US could strengthen “free world” security and these uncommitted countries—especially India—by focusing on development. It could help not by giving them military assistance, which a number of them did not want anyway, but by providing economic assistance.

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<sup>8</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 35 and p. 51. Also, see “NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,” April 14, 1950 (<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>).



On these grounds, the US embassy in Delhi, led by Ambassador John Sherman Cooper, called for a re-evaluation of American aid policy towards India. He based this call largely on the grounds that India, which was in competition with China, could demonstrate “the superior capacity of democracy in Asia for economic achievement for the people.” Officials proposed a five-year \$500 million economic and \$300 million food assistance package for India to ensure its success and to show that the US did not just rely on a military approach.<sup>9</sup> India’s ambitious \$14.7 billion second five-year plan, which envisioned more than double the expenditure of the first five-year plan, left the country in need of food assistance and with a foreign exchange gap of \$1.7 billion. US officials considered this foreign exchange shortage the “most critical immediate problem” in implementing the plan.<sup>10</sup> The plan, which began in spring 1956, offered the US an opportunity to assist India. Subsequently, that spring Dulles directed a State Department task force to study the case of India. It eventually suggested a \$75 million annual aid package for India for five years, as well as \$300 million in PL480 food assistance.<sup>11</sup>

A key challenge remained: convincing Congress. While advocates within the administration such as Dulles wanted the US to move towards a different, more flexible and imaginative aid policy, skeptics like Treasury Secretary Humphrey cautioned that there was little appetite on Capitol Hill for long-term assistance, especially for India. There continued to be serious opposition to foreign assistance in general in Congress.<sup>12</sup> For India in particular, Rep. Byrd (D-WV) predicted a “sufficiently hard time” for appropriating even a one-year commitment through Congress.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> AmEmb India Paper, March 13, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, pp. 311-314.

<sup>10</sup> OCB Progress Report on NSC 5409, November 28, 1956, *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 126-128.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 124, p. 129.

<sup>13</sup> Testimony of Dorsey (Acting regional director, Office of NESAA Operations, ICA), April 24, 1956, *Hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session on the Mutual*

Administration officials directed their efforts towards convincing Congress members about how crucial it was to aid India. They highlighted the importance of the demonstrative effect of India's success vis-à-vis China.<sup>14</sup> One official stated,

The people of Asia are watching the show windows of Communist China and India, one displaying the fruits of totalitarianism and the other displaying the results of democracy. It is in the interests of the free world that India provide the more genuinely successful example. To achieve this goal, India must have outside aid.<sup>15</sup>

Without American aid, they argued that India would not succeed. If India failed, all of Asia would likely fall to communism as had China. Dulles and other officials asserted that the US had an interest in preventing India's fall to communism and even ensuring an Indian victory versus China. Given the loss of China, India's future was especially important to US security.<sup>16</sup>

Officials and advocates highlighted India's achievements, adding that US aid had already helped India make progress through its first five-year plan. India's progress was "modest," but, nonetheless, "remarkable." No other country in Asia, or perhaps even in the world, had made as much progress with as little. Dulles also assured members of

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*Security Act of 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956) [hereafter *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*], p. 598.

<sup>14</sup> Testimony of Allen (AS/S NESAA), April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 539. Also, see Testimony of Allen and Dorsey, May 8, 1956, *Hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session on the Mutual Security Act of 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956) [hereafter *SFRC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*], p. 200 and Testimony of Rountree (Acting AS/S NESAA), June 12, 1956, *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations Appropriations, House Appropriations Committee 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session on Mutual Security Appropriations for 1957* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956) [hereafter *HAC-FOA Hearings 84-2 Congress on MS Appropriations 1957*], p. 452.

<sup>15</sup> Testimony of Dorsey, April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 553.

<sup>16</sup> Testimony of Cooper (outgoing ambassador to India), May 8, 1956, *Ibid* pp. 866-868; Testimony of Paul Hoffman (Member, Board of Trustees, Committee for Economic Development), October 9, 1956, *Hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session on Foreign Policy and Mutual Security* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956) [hereafter *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on FP&MS 1956*], p. 24; Testimony of Dulles, May 24, 1956, *HAC-FOA Hearings 84-2 Congress on MS Appropriations 1957*, p. 34.

Congress that Nehru was “fighting the Communists very hard in India” and trying to “avoid being absorbed into the Communist bloc.” Eisenhower, in turn, publicly warned of the danger of the communist bloc presenting China as a successful model. Other administration officials played up Chinese and Soviet economic engagement with India, arguing that they were trying to win over and convert India.<sup>17</sup>

There were some congressional supporters for aid to India. Some like Sen. Humphrey (D-MN) argued that India needed to be given more aid because it was “trying to make its economy work in competition with that Red Chinese outfit.” Some like Sen. Thye (R-MN) were concerned that the US would lose India. Others such as Rep. Church (R-IL) did not want to cut aid to India, but said that Washington should demand that Delhi be more sensitive to US interests.<sup>18</sup> Yet others like Sen. Fulbright (D-AK), Sen. Green (D-RI) and Rep. Smith (R-WI) thought that, overall, the administration was not doing enough in the face of the communist economic offensive and, indeed, was still too focused on military rather than economic aid.<sup>19</sup>

Advocates for aid had their work cut out for them. Some key senators continued to have problems with India’s actions that irritated the US, and especially its neutrality.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Eisenhower, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 129. Testimony of Dorsey, April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 555, p. 558; Testimony of Cooper, May 8, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, pp. 867-869; Testimony of Allen and Dorsey, May 8, 1956, *SFRC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 181, p. 190; Testimony of John McCloy (Chairman of the Board, Chase Manhattan), October 9, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on FP&MS 1956*, p. 11; Testimony of Dulles, June 19, 1956, *Hearing before the Senate Appropriations Committee 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session on the Mutual Security Appropriations for 1957* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1956) [hereafter *SAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MS Appropriations 1957*], pp. 27-28.

<sup>18</sup> Testimony of Dulles, June 26, 1956, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Vol. VIII – 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1978) [hereafter *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. VIII 84-2 1956*], p. 531; Testimony of Dulles, June 19, 1956, *SAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MS Appropriations 1957*, p. 27; Testimony of Allen, April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 593.

<sup>19</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 130.

<sup>20</sup> Views of Senator Bridges and Senator Potter; Views of Senator Holland. Testimony of Cooper, June 26, 1956, *SAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MS Appropriations 1957*, p. 256, p. 259.

There also continued to be strong opposition from representatives like Byrd who considered Nehru a “menace” and others like Adair (R-IN) who complained about anti-American sentiments in the Indian press. They pointed to testimony from American business leaders who emphasized that foreign aid to India was wasted because India was actively siding with communists, especially China.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, with some congressional members still talking about cutting a single-year aid package to India, the administration put any thoughts of increasing that aid or putting it on a multi-year basis on the backburner. Instead, it was relieved that the single-year aid package for India emerged from Congress only \$5 million lighter at \$65 with an additional \$10 million in technical assistance. Furthermore, in August 1956, the two countries also agreed to a three-year \$360 million PL480 package.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, during the course of the year, the administration continued to re-examine US aid policy, with assessments linking the “reasonable” success of India’s second five year plan with the health of its democracy.<sup>23</sup> On the flip side, Cooper continued to express concern that if India’s government did not deliver the goods, it would adversely affect India’s democratic future, with even Nehru questioning whether India could stay abreast with China without resorting to authoritarian means. From the US perspective, it would result in India falling behind China. Furthermore, if India did

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<sup>21</sup> Testimony of Dorsey, April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 577; Testimony of Allen, April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 588; Testimony of George Burger (VP, National Federation of Independent Business), May 4, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 720 and on the same date that of Merwin Hart (President, National Economic Council, NY) – see p. 747.

<sup>22</sup> Summary Minutes of a Meeting at DoS of the Ad Hoc Committee on Cooper’s India Aid Proposals, May 3, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 318; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 129; footnote 2 re Memo from Philip H. Trezise (DoS Policy Planning) to Bowie, May 8, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 317.

<sup>23</sup> OCB Progress Report on NSC 5409: US Policy Toward South Asia, November 18, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, pp. 16-17.

not progress while Nehru was alive, a generation of “more Asia-for Asian minded” leaders would take over and follow an authoritarian path to keep up with China.

In December 1956 in the run up to a visit by Nehru to the US, Cooper argued that US and India were now standing at “an open gate [rather] than at crossroads.” He argued that India’s need for aid gave the US an opportunity. He believed that India, in turn, would see the US as a more attractive option to meet its internal needs for a few reasons: the Soviet option had lost some of its luster because of its actions in Hungary; India’s need to reduce its dependence on Britain and the Commonwealth; and India’s “uneasy political, social and economic rivalry with Red China.” While others were skeptical,<sup>24</sup> Cooper even expected India to alter its external policies to facilitate its internal development. He noted that, after all, “India’s foreign policy is to a large extent conditioned on India’s need and determination to progress economically as rapidly as possible.”<sup>25</sup>

As he awaited Nehru’s visit, Eisenhower expected the prime minister’s primary aim to be smoothing the way for US assistance. The president had been “inclined to think” that the US should give India a “substantial” loan package in the \$500 million range. The president, nonetheless, heeded Dulles’ warning about making any concrete commitments during the visit. Simultaneously, he was concerned about appearing to be “too cool.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, as advised by Cooper, he brought up India’s development program in discussions with Nehru. He stated that the US would give “every possible consideration” to an Indian request for assistance. This seemed to make an impression on Nehru who

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<sup>24</sup> OCB Report: Operations Plan for India and Nepal, July 3, 1957, *Ibid*, p. 355.

<sup>25</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, December 7, 1956, *Ibid*, pp. 320-322.

<sup>26</sup> Summary of Meeting with the President, December 14, 1956 *Ibid*, p. 328; Telcon between Eisenhower and Hoover, December 19, 1956, quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 134; Telegram from Dulles to DoS, Paris, December 12, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 326.

noted that the president “seemed to be greatly interested” in India’s development plans that he said he would help “boost.”<sup>27</sup>

That previous August, Nehru had detected a change for the better in the west’s attitude towards India. He traced it to the “feeling that with China having gone Communist, India offered some hope to stem the tide of Communism in Asia.”<sup>28</sup> Delhi welcomed American assistance, which had become even more crucial because the success of the second five-year plan depended on foreign assistance. In the years after the Second World War, India had received over half a billion dollars in food and economic assistance from the US.<sup>29</sup> Now India needed more.

This time around on his visit Nehru was not as bashful about making India’s needs known. There had been criticism in Congress that India did not deign to ask for aid.<sup>30</sup> Administration officials testifying in Congress had found that members deemed insufficient their assurances that India was privately making their need for assistance evident.<sup>31</sup> While officials did not think a formal Indian request for a long-term package was wise at that point, American officials had indicated that Congressional receptivity to aid for India would increase if Nehru at least acknowledged previous US assistance

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<sup>27</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Washington, December 19, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 339; JLN, Note on Talks with Eisenhower, January 8, 1957, *NMML, SDP, SF No. 91*. Cooper believed that such an approach would make Nehru more “tractable” on other issues. Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, December 7, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 321.

<sup>28</sup> Enclosure to Letter from JLN to CMs, August 16, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 34*, p. 445.

<sup>29</sup> Testimony of Cooper, May 8, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 866.

<sup>30</sup> Testimony of Hollister (Director, ICA) and Murphy (Controller, ICA), March 28, 1956, *Ibid*, pp. 162-163. Also, see views of Rep. Selden during Testimony of Hoover, March 20, 1956, *Ibid*, p. 20. For similar concerns from Rep. Adair, see Testimony of Allen, April 24, 1956, *Ibid*, pp. 587-588, and Rep. Lanham, see Testimony of Cooper, May 29, 1956, *HAC-FOA Hearings 84-2 Congress on MS Appropriations 1957*, p. 180. Sen. Ellender’s views in Testimony of Cooper, June 26, 1956, *SAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MS Appropriations 1957*, p. 251.

<sup>31</sup> Testimony of Hoover, March 20, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 20. Also, see Testimony of Dorsey, April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 598.

publicly.<sup>32</sup> Thus, even before his visit, Nehru expressed appreciation publicly for American aid, adding that foreign aid was “vital” for India.<sup>33</sup> In the US, when asked publicly what the US could do to assist India with its economic plans he suggested aid, especially loans. To address concerns about Indian socialism that were often expressed on the Hill, Nehru also publicly asserted that India’s economic policy was not based on dogma, but pragmatism.<sup>34</sup>

### **No More “You’re With Us or Against Us”**

Some have noted that the Nehru visit that December started a “new phase” in the relationship.<sup>35</sup> It might be more accurate to say that the visit helped and highlighted an aspect of the relationship that had been already been improving over the previous few months: the increased understanding of, if not convergence with, the other government’s approach. This improvement—which would continue over the rest of this period—would have a salutary effect on the relationship in general.

First, there was greater tolerance on the part of Eisenhower for what he called neutralism and Nehru called nonalignment. This generally helped the relationship because in the administration it led to less criticism and more acceptance of Delhi’s desire to diversify its portfolio of partnerships, pursuing relationships with both Moscow and Washington. There was a more sophisticated understanding of nonalignment, with American assessments seeing it as a strategy that countries perceived as best serving their

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<sup>32</sup> The views of Philander P. Claxton (Special Assistant to AS/S Congressional Relations). See footnote 2 re Memo from Trezise to Bowie, May 8, 1956, FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII, p. 317.

<sup>33</sup> JLN, Speech in Rajya Sabha on the Resolution on the Second Five Year Plan, September 7, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 83. Also see JLN at the National Press Building, Washington, December 19, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 499.

<sup>34</sup> Later recalled in Memcon of Dillon (DUS/S EA)-Mehta (Indian ambassador to the US)-Nair (Indian finance secretary) Meeting, Washington, May 13, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII, p. 341; JLN at the National Press Building, Washington, December 19, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 504.

<sup>35</sup> Gopal, *Nehru Vol. 3*, p. 41 and Schaffer, *Ellsworth Bunker*, p. 52.

interests rather than as a rigid ideology.<sup>36</sup> In language that Nehru could have used, Eisenhower expressed understanding of India's position and acknowledged that "neutrality" in most instances was basically an "aversion to military alliances."<sup>37</sup> While there continued to be criticism on the part of some including vice president Nixon, even Dulles, who had publicly labeled neutrality as "immoral" in June 1956, refused to make it personal against India. He noted that merely holding UN membership removed a country from the immoral list since it showed an acceptance of the idea of collective security. Dulles' conceptualization left columnist Walter Lippmann noting that for Dulles, "neutrality is immoral but...there are no neutrals who are immoral."<sup>38</sup>

The tolerance was aided by the fact that the administration no longer believed that it could bring India into an alliance.<sup>39</sup> There was a sense among some that the US should not even try. Budget-conscious Eisenhower repeatedly noted that it was actually better for the US that India remain nonaligned, because if she sought an alliance with the US, it would require the American taxpayer to take on a greater burden and the US military to help defend "2000 miles more of active frontier."<sup>40</sup> This attitude was indeed echoed by some on the Hill such as Rep. Morano (R-CT) who stated that too much cooperation with India might not be advisable because it could prove costly.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the goal was not necessarily to win India over—or require it to come over—to the US side any more, but

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<sup>36</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 131; Nehru detected a change of opinion, noting that Eisenhower had "put in a good word for what is called neutralism." JLN, Remarks at Press Conference, India House, London, July 6, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 34*, p. 423; NSC 5701: Statement on US Policy Toward South Asia, January 10, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 30.

<sup>37</sup> These views were expressed in a letter to his brother. Quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 131-312.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in *Ibid*, p. 132. For Nixon's comments, see Dana Adams Schmidt, "View on Neutrals Eased by Dulles," *NYT*, July 12, 1956, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> NSC 5701, January 10, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 34.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Bunker (US ambassador India) to Bartlett (Counselor, AmEmb India), June 27, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 348.

<sup>41</sup> Testimony of Allen, April 24, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on MSA 1956*, p. 586.



to ensure that it was not lost to the other side. This attitude continued through the rest of the administration, with little expectation that India would give up its nonalignment.<sup>42</sup>

Second, the age and attraction of alliances in the US had faded somewhat. Besides the fact that treaties had already been signed with most potential allies, a certain amount of alliance weariness had also set in at the White House. Dealing with allies sometimes seemed as, if not more, difficult as dealing with adversaries. Interactions with South Korean leader Syngman Rhee during the Korean War, and Britain, France and Israel during the Suez crisis had contributed to Eisenhower's exacerbation with allies. By fall 1956, Eisenhower had directed committees to assess US alliances and propose ways of reducing military aid packages to certain allies. More specifically, in India's neighborhood, the president and a number of US officials had come to see the alliance with Pakistan as a "burden and a blunder." Eisenhower would note frankly in early 1957, "our tendency to rush out and seek allies was not very sensible." Finally, there was recognition that some allies were not as important as some neutrals—as Dulles made evident when he contended that he "would rather see us lose Thailand, an ally, than to lose India, a neutral."<sup>43</sup>

Indian policymakers were neither unaware nor unappreciative of the changes in Washington. Nehru detected a "variety of opinion" on nonalignment, approvingly noting that Eisenhower had "put in a good word for what is called neutralism." He felt that there

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<sup>42</sup> NSC 5701, January 10, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 34; NIE 51-58: The Economic and Political Consequences of India's Financial Problems, September 2, 1958, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960 Volume XV: South and Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1992) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*], p. 453. Also, see Letter from Bunker to Bartlett (Director, OSAA), December 9, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 473-474.

<sup>43</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 154; McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery* p. 190; p. 207; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 140.

was less rigidity in the US and “more understanding” and even appreciation of India’s nonalignment than ever before.<sup>44</sup>

Overall, Nehru continued to believe that there was a better understanding of the Indian perspective in the Eisenhower administration.<sup>45</sup> Later in his second term, the president would indeed go as far as saying that India was “wise” to be nonaligned.<sup>46</sup> This fit in with Nehru’s assertion that nonalignment was not just a matter of principle for India, but, more importantly, one of practicality. For India, the benefits of staying outside an alliance outweighed the risks of not being in one. India had already seen advantages in terms of “enhanced” stature and a role in maintaining peace. There was another key advantage. Nehru stated that he did not want to “get into a position of bargaining for temporary benefits with one camp or the other.” What he left unsaid was that diversifying India’s portfolio of partners allowed India to be in a position of gaining benefits from both camps.

Nehru, on his part, showed more tolerance of other countries’ freedom to choose a camp. He acknowledged that in some cases, it might be less risky to be in an alliance than out of it. He even acknowledged that some countries, which did not have the capacity to defend themselves, might want foreign troops in their country.<sup>47</sup>

Nehru also showed less passion for a third way. While he rejected the alliance option for India, he also rejected calls for a commonwealth of Afro-Asian states, calling it “impracticable.” In the circumstances that existed even another Bandung-style conference

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<sup>44</sup> JLN, Press Conference, India House, London, July 6, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 34*, p. 423; JLN at the National Press Building, Washington, December 19, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 500, p. 504.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from JLN to Mehta, May 8, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 710.

<sup>46</sup> Memo of Discussion of 408<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, May 28, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> JLN’s Intervention during the debate on the address by the president, May 16, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 21-22; JLN’s Interview with Finnish Radio, June 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 537-538; JLN’s TV Interview, Tokyo, October 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, pp. 565-566. Also, see JLN’s Interview with UPI-AFP Correspondent, Nara, October 11, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 596.

would not be possible.<sup>48</sup> Publicly, he only said that it was not the right time for such a conference, but privately he asserted that the countries involved would not have the desired level of unity or common interests. Therefore, a political or economic conference would neither be desirable nor feasible.<sup>49</sup> As for a “third force,” it had “no relation to reality.”<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, Nehru seemed to appreciate Eisenhower’s attitude towards partners. Eisenhower’s statement “that you cannot make friends by dominating them” reassured Nehru. The prime minister disliked larger powers not treating their smaller partners as equal—as he noted, “We are an independent nation, we want to be friends, we are friends with every country but when somebody tells us, join up, line up, I am not a soldier to be recruited in a regiment.”<sup>51</sup> It was for this reason that Nehru believed that the situation in Hungary—and Soviet behavior—had “undermined” both national and international communism.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, when he returned from the US he especially remarked that the US government “went out of their way in showing me honour.” On his visit, Eisenhower

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<sup>48</sup> Note from JLN to MEA Joint Secretary (West), March 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 555; Letter from JLN to Krishna Menon, April 13, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 701; Note from Dutt (Indian foreign secretary) to ComSec, April 14, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; and Letter from JLN to SWRD Bandaranaike (Sri Lankan PM), April 20, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 705.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from JLN to SN Haji (Chairman, AIMO), November 14, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 690. Also, see Letter from JLN to John Thivy (Indian ambassador to Italy), May 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 455; JLN, Press conference, The Hague, July 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 671; JLN’s Interview with Chief Political Editor of *Asahi Shimbun*, Hakone, October 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 555; JLN, Extracts from Lok Sabha discussion, April 9, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 699.

<sup>50</sup> Mahendra Pratap’s suggestion. See footnote 4 re Lok Sabha debates, December 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 576; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, December 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 580. Also, see JLN’s Interview with a Brazilian journalist, March 29, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 801 and see footnote 4 re Cable from JLN to Jung (Indian ambassador to Yugoslavia), August 3, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 499.

<sup>51</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Washington, December 19, 1956, FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII, p. 333; JLN, Press conference, Stockholm, June 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 583; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, December 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 586.

<sup>52</sup> JLN, Note on Talks with Eisenhower, January 8, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 91. Also see Record of JLN’s Talks with Zhou, Bhakra-Nangal and on journey, December 31, 1956 and January 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 590.

and Dulles had not just listened to his viewpoint, but seemingly even acted on his advice in certain cases.<sup>53</sup>

Indian officials also realized that there was a growing awareness in Washington of the risks of alliances. After a visit from Dulles, Nehru noted that the US came across as “a weary titan trying to do good to the world but being let down by [its] allies and having to go to their rescue repeatedly.” The prime minister continued to mention the challenges the US was facing with its allies, including Britain, France and Taiwan.<sup>54</sup>

Eisenhower’s reaction to US allies’ actions during the Suez crisis had also made Indian policymakers aware that Washington could act on the merits of a case rather than just on the basis of alliance solidarity. When Egypt announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal, Nehru had believed that this was just going to add to India’s “headaches.” He did not want to take sides.<sup>55</sup> Delhi and Washington agreed that a peaceful settlement was the best option. Nehru was, however, concerned that Washington would eventually agree with London’s belligerent approach. After seeing the American reaction to the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt, he was convinced that Washington did not approve of the invasion and appreciated the US attitude.<sup>56</sup> Even Krishna Menon, who thought US anger at its allies was because of lack of consultation rather than on principle,

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<sup>53</sup> JLN, Note on Talks with Eisenhower, January 8, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 91.

<sup>54</sup> Note on JLN’s talks with Dulles, Delhi, March 10, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 32*, p. 376; Letter from JLN to CMs, November 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 727; Letter from JLN to CMs, November 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 727; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, December 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 560.

<sup>55</sup> Cable from JLN to Pandit (Indian high commissioner to the UK), July 27, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 34*, p. 318.

<sup>56</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, August 22, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 34*, p. 373; Message from JLN to Eisenhower, October 31, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 421. Also, see JLN, Note on Talks with Eisenhower, January 8, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 91 and Note from JLN to K Ram (principal private secretary) enclosing letter, March 6, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 732.

later acknowledged that the allies did not tell Washington because “they knew they would have been stopped.”<sup>57</sup>

Eisenhower’s portrayal of the US as a reluctant warrior on the military front serving on invitation—even though it would rather focus internally—also made an impression on Nehru.<sup>58</sup> The prime minister praised Eisenhower as a “great man” of peace. While lamenting the US emphasis on the military approach, Nehru stressed his belief that the US “could do a great deal of good in the world.”<sup>59</sup> The US president, on his part, continued throughout his term to emphasize to Indian officials this reluctance to resort to arms. He also stressed his concern that “we might lose our free institutions in defending them.” Finally, he made clear that he was aware of the negative impact of certain US military actions on the American image abroad.<sup>60</sup>

From the US perspective, Nehru, on his part, displayed more circumspect behavior on the international stage. Nehru was more restrained in offering up India for mediatory roles or participation in great power conferences. India did not need to get entangled at a time when it had its own “burdens.” He asserted that India did not want to go around the world telling others what to do with a “missionary zeal.” He also added that condemnation was not helpful. Nehru denied that the circumspection was in return for something. He himself, however, acknowledged that crusading and condemnation could have an adverse impact in terms of India’s influence and India needed to “win over the other side.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Brecher, *India and World Politics*, p. 71.

<sup>58</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Washington, December 19, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, pp. 334-335.

<sup>59</sup> Speech by JLN at a Public Meeting, Calcutta, January 16, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 42.

<sup>60</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-Radhakrishnan (Indian vice president) Meeting, March 19, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 427.

<sup>61</sup> JLN, Speech, Ernakulum, Kerala, February 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 43; JLN, Speech, Lok Sabha, March 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 461; JLN, Speech at All India Manufacturers’ Organization (AIMO)

The greater tolerance toward the other country's approach—and the acknowledgement that the other side meant well—was accompanied by a reduced emphasis on differences and a change in the way the two countries handled disagreements. The change was evident in the tone of the Dulles-Nehru talks in March 1956, which both sides noted had much improved from previous Dulles-Nehru interactions. On points of disagreement, Nehru noted that Dulles did not reject his contentions, but merely pointed out differences and explained the reasons for them. When Nehru visited Washington, Eisenhower also did not contradict his contentions on certain issues, merely noting that the US emphasis was somewhat different.<sup>62</sup>

Nehru acknowledged the differences, but noted that no two countries had “complete agreement.”<sup>63</sup> In many cases, he thought the disagreement was exaggerated and often the difference was one of emphasis.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, Nehru publicly pointed out that, beyond the differences between the US and India, “there are many basic similarities in approach,” which were being emphasized more.<sup>65</sup> Even on issues like Hungary and Suez, privately, at least, there were indeed more similarities than differences. As Merrill has noted, during this period “the frequency and intensity” of disagreement between the two countries decreased.<sup>66</sup>

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Annual Conference, Delhi, April 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 186; JLN, Press conference, London, July 4, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 642; JLN, Press conference, Helsinki, June 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 521; JLN, Speech during Lok Sabha debate on the demands for grants of the MEA, July 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 461-462; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, September 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 519; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, September 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 539; Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon (Indian defense minister; Indian UN delegation chair), October 16, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 740; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, December 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 540.

<sup>62</sup> Note on JLN's talks with Dulles, Delhi, March 10, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 32*, p. 379; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 132; JLN, Note on Talks with Eisenhower, January 8, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 542.

<sup>63</sup> JLN, Speech at AIMO Annual Conference, Delhi, April 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 185.

<sup>64</sup> JLN, Note on Talks with Eisenhower, January 8, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 91.

<sup>65</sup> JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, December 4, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 455.

<sup>66</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 132-133, p. 140.

Differences did not disappear, but the two countries seemed to handle them better. Differences over existing alliances, for example, remained. Nehru believed that SEATO and CENTO had exacerbated the problems they had been designed to solve. Even when he talked about them, however, he was careful to add that he was not “trying to run them down” or be “presumptuous enough to criticize,” but merely wanted to note that they were counterproductive. Nehru also made sure to include the Warsaw Pact when he discussed the downside of alliances.<sup>67</sup>

This change in approach towards differences was also evident in the Indian government’s reaction to the announcement of the Eisenhower doctrine in 1957. Nehru internally expressed regret about the US emphasis on a military approach,<sup>68</sup> also writing to Eisenhower to outline his concerns.<sup>69</sup> He refused, however, to make a special statement on the doctrine, heeding a senior official’s advice that it would serve no purpose.<sup>70</sup> Publicly, Nehru resisted a strong adverse reaction, declining to get drawn into criticism of the doctrine. He added that there were “so many excellent things in that proposal,” praising its economic elements, while regretting their linkage with military aid. Overall, even when directly asked to make critical assessments of US policy, he started refusing.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> JLN, Speech, Fateh Maidan, Hyderabad, February 22, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 10; JLN, Speech in the Lok Sabha, March 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 463; JLN, Speech in the Lok Sabha, March 25, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 467.

<sup>68</sup> Letter from JLN to Mehta, Indore, January 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 538 and JLN, Speech, Bangalore, February 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 34.

<sup>69</sup> Letter from JLN to Bandaranaike, January 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 621.

<sup>70</sup> Cable from Dutt to Banerjee (IndEmb Syria), May 13, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 49 and Note from Dutt to JLN, May 12, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27.

<sup>71</sup> JLN, Speech in the Lok Sabha, March 25, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, pp. 469-470; JLN, Speech, Ernakulum, Kerala, February 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 43; JLN’s Interview with CBS, July 3, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 622; JLN’s Interview with CBS, July 3, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 623.

Delhi also gave instructions that before reacting to American policies, its officials should seek clarification.<sup>72</sup>

In Washington, in turn, there was a realistic understanding that the US could not expect complete support from India. Some in Congress questioned whether the US should strengthen a country that did not agree with it. There was a strong sense in the administration, however, that it was in US interests to do so despite some differences between Delhi and Washington. Outgoing ambassador Cooper suggested that the need to aid India to develop into “a democratic counterpoise to China” was a “compelling reason for our accommodating certain of our objections to Nehru’s policies and views.”<sup>73</sup> New ambassador to India Ellsworth Bunker also asserted that differences should not obfuscate the “overriding objective” of helping build India into a successful model.<sup>74</sup> Despite some differences, assessments noted that India and the US also had common interests, including limiting communist expansion—especially Chinese expansion in South and Southeast Asia—and encouraging cooperation between Asian and African non-communist states. The administration overall agreed that the benefits of a “stable and influential” India outweighed the costs of a “weak and vulnerable” one. India could serve as an alternative to China and, once it had developed more, provide itself the means to protect itself and South and Southeast Asia against China.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Cables from Dutt to Mehta on April 8 and to IndEmbs Iran, Pakistan, UK and US on April 2, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 49.

<sup>73</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, December 7, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 322.

<sup>74</sup> To Dulles, quoted in Schaffer, *Ellsworth Bunker*, p. 59.

<sup>75</sup> OCB Report: Operations Plan for India and Nepal, July 3, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 354; NSC 5701, January 10, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, pp. 34-36.



## The Development Race

Nehru's visit had seemed to consolidate the view in the administration that India, along with China, was the "leading political contender" in Asia.<sup>76</sup> Concern about Chinese economic progress was evident in the administration's revised statement of its South Asia policy in early 1957. It emphasized that it was critical that India's momentum did not slow down. India's development had domestic and international implications. Regarding the latter, if India lost the economic competition to China, this would have an adverse impact on the cause of the "free world" across Asia and Africa. As Merrill has noted, while the concept of a Sino-Indian race or a competition was not new, this was the first time it was mentioned in an official document and linked with US security.<sup>77</sup>

Nehru sometimes criticized those who made comparisons between China and India, denying that there was a race between the two countries.<sup>78</sup> He himself, however, consistently made such comparisons, admitting that in many ways China was the only country that India could be compared with. He noted that China and India were at similar stages of development and had some similar characteristics, but he contrasted Beijing's use of autocratic means with Delhi's employment of democratic ones. Nehru acknowledged the "great test:" if his government did not "deliver the goods...democracy will then be in peril...Then people may think of totalitarian methods..." Thus, his goal was that "India should become a stable and united country during the next 10-15 years." He was "anxious" that it "become firm on its axis" or else it might not be sustainable.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> NSC 5701, January 10, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 30.

<sup>77</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 139-140; NSC 5701, January 10, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 31; Memo from Mathews (DoS PP) to Dillon re Results of Interagency Groups' Assessments, September 11, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 367.

<sup>78</sup> JLN, Press conference, The Hague, July 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 670, and JLN, Address to the CPP Meeting, December 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 105.

<sup>79</sup> JLN, Speech in Lok Sabha, August 21, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 133; JLN, Speech, Bangalore, February 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, pp. 27-28; JLN, Speech, Jabalpur, February 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 71.

In early 1957, there was concern in Delhi that the government was not delivering. Nehru was already concerned that the economy was “giving us a good deal of trouble.” This concern only increased with the announcement of the spring 1957 general and state election results. Despite the overall victory for Congress, Nehru and other party members thought the results and “reverses” were “bad for India and bad for the Congress.” He was surprised by the Congress party’s losses in certain parts of western India. What concerned him about the election setbacks were not the defeats per se, but what they indicated about the perception of whether the party was delivering. Nehru felt that “Congress is losing its hold.” Worryingly, it was also losing the confidence of the “intellectual classes” that influenced the “masses.” Complacency, he fretted, would spell the death knell for the party. The consequences of Congress failure would, moreover, be disastrous for the country because there would be a “vacuum” that other democratic parties were incapable of filling.<sup>80</sup>

In one state at least, the communist party filled the vacuum. In the southern state of Kerala, communists came to power. Nehru saw Congress party performance as responsible—the communists had not won, according to him, Congress had lost by not delivering.<sup>81</sup> Internally, he asserted that there was little getting away from the fact that it

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<sup>80</sup> JLN, Speech, Gurgaon, February 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 78; Letter from JLN to Pandit, March 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 102; Letter from JLN to Pandit, March 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 105; JLN, Address to the outgoing CPP, Delhi, March 18, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 109; JLN, Remarks at CWC Meeting, Delhi, March 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 114; JLN, Speech at a CPP Meeting, Delhi, March 29 and 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 120; JLN, Speech at a CPP Meeting, Delhi, May 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 373, p. 375; JLN, Speech at a conference of presidents and general secretaries of the Pradesh Congress Committees, Delhi, May 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 380; JLN, Speech at AICC Meeting, Delhi, June 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 381; See footnote 3 re Letter from Damodar Seth (former Congressman from UP) to JLN, November 8, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 467.

<sup>81</sup> JLN, Press conference, Helsinki, June 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 530. Also, see Letter from JLN to U Nu, March 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 112; JLN, Informal Talk with the Press, Delhi, March 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 118; JLN, Speech at a CPP Meeting, Delhi, March 29 and 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 121; and JLN’s Interview with Derek Holroyde (BBC), April 22, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 596.

was a “very positive defeat for the Congress.”<sup>82</sup> He acknowledged the “significant” aspect of the communist victory—it was the first time in the world that communists had come to power through democratic elections. Before the elections—when Nehru had expected the communists to get a majority in Kerala—and in their immediate aftermath, he resignedly noted that the country might as well experience such an “experiment.” However, soon, like some in the US, he came to worry that the communists would become a successful alternative model. He acknowledged that the communists seemed to have succeeded in connecting with voters in a way that his party had ceased to do.<sup>83</sup> He also admitted that the victory could have “some effect” on international communism.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, communist reaction abroad seemed to range from cautious approval to triumphal predictions that the communists could expand from that foothold.<sup>85</sup>

Confronted with continued criticism about the lack of government performance and how Indian development paled in comparison with that of China, Nehru took a few different steps. For one, he tried to create a sense of momentum in India. After the election setback, he directed officials to make a greater effort to publicize the government’s development plans.<sup>86</sup> Rebuilding the country, he stated, was both a “tremendous,” as well as “exciting task.”<sup>87</sup> He asserted that India had made progress and

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<sup>82</sup> JLN, Remarks at CWC Meeting, Delhi, March 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 116.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from JLN to Pandit, March 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 102; Letter from JLN to U Nu, March 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 112; Letter from JLN to Pandit, March 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 106; JLN, Remarks at CWC Meeting, Delhi, March 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 116; Letter from Dayal (Indian ambassador to Yugoslavia) to Dutt, July 17, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Letter from JLN to Sampurnanand (Uttar Pradesh CM), June 10, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 399.

<sup>84</sup> JLN, Informal Talk with the Press, Delhi, March 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 118.

<sup>85</sup> Letter from Dayal to Dutt, July 17, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29.

<sup>86</sup> JLN, Address to the outgoing CPP, Delhi, March 18, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 109. Also, see Letter from JLN to BV Keskar (Information and Broadcasting Minister), July 29, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 70.

<sup>87</sup> JLN, Speech, Akershus Castle, Oslo, June 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 545.

compared well with other recently decolonized countries.<sup>88</sup> From the “larger view,” India was not doing that badly. Moreover, India was respected globally because of its achievements.<sup>89</sup> Publicly and privately, he argued that India’s problems were *due* to the progress India was making.<sup>90</sup>

Simultaneously, Nehru highlighted China’s problems. When some asserted that next door in China, communism was delivering while his government was not, Nehru emphasized that all was not well in China, even if it seemed to be. He argued that “there are great complaints in China;” that Chinese leaders were having similar difficulties with their economic plans; and that sometimes these problems were even greater than those of India. Just like India, he asserted that China, too, was “pay[ing] the price” that came with industrialization and development even though it was an authoritarian country.<sup>91</sup> Eventually, he would also take point out reports that the statistics coming out of China were exaggerated.<sup>92</sup>

Nehru asserted that China’s failures were not as evident because of the lack of openness and the pervasiveness of censorship and fear, but that only made it more likely

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<sup>88</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, May 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 781; JLN, Address, Town Hall, Copenhagen, June 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 501; JLN, Independence Day Speech, Delhi, August 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> JLN, Speech in the Lok Sabha, March 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 453; JLN, Independence Day Speech, Delhi, August 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from JLN to EMS Namboodiripad (Kerala CM), July 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 72. Also, see Letter from JLN to Heads of Indian Missions, June 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 103; JLN, Speech, Town Hall Maidan, Mysore, September 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 13; JLN, Speech to UN Association of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, Delhi, October 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 43. Letter from JLN to CMs, August 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 787. JLN, Speech, Guwahati, December 29, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 61.

<sup>91</sup> JLN, Speech at CPP Meeting, Delhi, March 29 and 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 131; Letter from JLN to Mauli Chandra Sharma (Congress party leader, previously Jan Sangh), May 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 43; Letter from JLN to Namboodiripad, July 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 72; Letter from JLN to CMs, June 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 787; JLN, Speech at Bharat Sewak Samaj meeting, Kanpur, November 29, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, pp. 30-31; Letter from JLN to CMs, May 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 783; JLN’s Intervention during the debate on the address by the president, May 16, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 17, p. 20, p. 27; JLN, Speech to Indian students, London, July 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 656.

<sup>92</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, September 7, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33.

that “the lid” would come off and “terrible criticism” would emerge later.<sup>93</sup> He admitted that industrially China had moved past India.<sup>94</sup> He acknowledged that perhaps China paid less of a price for rapid development sometimes, but he said that was because Beijing could do things by “decree” in a way that Delhi could not. China, for example, could take strong measures to curb corruption that were not feasible for India because of “constitutional safeguards and civil liberties.”<sup>95</sup>

On a related note, Nehru suggested that India’s progress was better than that of China because even if it might seem slower, it was more sustainable. Unlike countries like China, he noted that India faced a dual problem: how to achieve a “peaceful socio-economic revolution” after having established a democracy. Democracy came with certain disadvantages. It, however, also came with dividends. Overall, development might take longer, but democracy was “the sounder way of doing things.” The democratic way was the “best and safest method...[it] has the best chance of solving the problems of the world today.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> JLN, Statement in Lok Sabha debate, May 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 88.

<sup>94</sup> JLN at Meeting of the Planning Commission, May 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 121.

<sup>95</sup> JLN’s Intervention during the debate on the address by the president, May 16, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 27; JLN, Press conference, The Hague, July 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 670; JLN, Speech at a conference of Presidents and Secretaries of Pradesh Congress Committees, Delhi, March 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 140.

<sup>96</sup> JLN, Speech at the 30<sup>th</sup> Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Annual Session, Delhi, March 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 167; JLN, Speech, Merchants’ Chamber of UP, Kanpur, November 29, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 85; JLN, Speech at the annual conference of the US Technical Cooperation Mission personnel in India, November 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 646-647; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, March 11, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 100; JLN, Speech, Allepey, Kerala, April 25, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 43; JLN, Speech, Allahabad University, July 16, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 40; JLN, Speech, Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen, June 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 478; JLN, Speech, Trichur, April 26, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 49; JLN, Press conference, The Hague, July 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 670; JLN, Speech to Sri Lankan MPs, Colombo, May 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 719.

Nehru and other officials tried to keep track of what China was doing. This was partly to see if Delhi could adapt some of Beijing's policies.<sup>97</sup> It was also to see how India compared with China.<sup>98</sup> He made it a point to discuss Chinese economic difficulties with American ambassador. He also took special note of the Yugoslav vice president's unfavorable impression of the Chinese economy after a visit there. Indian officials also reported signs of discontent.<sup>99</sup> There was a short period during 1957 when Nehru was impressed at the industrial progress the Chinese leadership was generating while simultaneously liberalizing society and weeding out corruption through a rectification drive.<sup>100</sup> Subsequently, however, Nehru received information about a reversal in Mao's liberalization drive, and he asserted that the signs coming from China were not "impressive" and indicated a return to "the old rigidity."<sup>101</sup>

Ultimately, however, Nehru knew that his government had to deliver. This was crucial for the nation-building project, to save democracy and for domestic political purposes. Moreover, he pointed out, "Even as far as foreign affairs are concerned we can

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<sup>97</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, November 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 729. Also, see Letter from JLN to TT Krishnamachari (finance minister), August 11, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 56 and Letter from JLN to CMs, August 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 803; Note from JLN to Dutt, September 7, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; Note from Dutt to JLN, October 27, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33.

<sup>98</sup> Letter from RK Nehru (Indian ambassador to China) to JLN, August 2, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Letter from KPS Menon (Indian ambassador to the USSR) to Dutt re Visit to Xinjiang, October 12, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; and JLN, Speech at Rajasthan sarpanch conference, February 2, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 25.

<sup>99</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt re Meeting with Bunker, August 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 679; Note from JLN to Dutt and MJ Desai (MEA secretary general) re Meeting with Yugoslav vice president, October 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 717; Note from RK Nehru on Tour of Central and Southwest China, December 5, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 30.

<sup>100</sup> JLN at the fifth meeting of the Commonwealth PMs' Conference, London, June 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 610; Also, see Letter from JLN to RK Nehru, June 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 691; Letter from JLN to CMs, June 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 787.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from RK Nehru to JLN, August 9, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Letter from JLN to RK Nehru, July 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 692; Letter from JLN to CMs, November 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 722; Letter from Dutt to RK Nehru, August 13, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 52.

be only as powerful as we are domestically strong.”<sup>102</sup> Finally, development was also necessary in order to defend India—after all, invasion was not the only way India could collapse; internal weakness could be exploited.<sup>103</sup> Nehru emphasized that “We must not allow ourselves to go under.” India was at a critical stage—“a difficult stage of crossing over from that kind of static economy to a dynamic, moving, progressive and self-motivated economy.” In a “dangerous and turbulent” world, India had limited time to strengthen itself. Thus, like many US policymakers, Nehru did not believe that India could afford to slow down. He asserted that “In Asia...one has to make good quickly, otherwise one is swallowed up by other forces.”<sup>104</sup>

For this reason, Nehru rejected calls in India that his government significantly “tone down” the second five-year plan. The plan had put an even larger burden on the government than it had expected. India was in a “very difficult phase” developmentally—a phase expected to last for at least another two years—and suffering from a serious resource crunch. Two critical problems the government was facing were food and foreign exchange shortages.<sup>105</sup> And there was only one country that could help in a substantial way: the US.

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<sup>102</sup> JLN, Speech at CPP Meeting, Delhi, March 29 and 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 121; JLN’s Intervention during the debate on the address by the president, May 16, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 20.

<sup>103</sup> Note by JLN sent to Shriman Narayan (AICC general secretary), May 4, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 435.

<sup>104</sup> JLN, Speech at 30th FICCI Annual Session, Delhi, March 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 171; JLN, Speech at Lignite Mines, Neyveli, May 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 126; JLN in Lok Sabha debate, May 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 90; JLN, Speech, Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen, June 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 478; JLN, Press conference, Helsinki, June 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 529.

<sup>105</sup> JLN, Statement in Lok Sabha debate, May 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 89, p. 97; JLN, Speech at AIMO Annual Conference, Delhi, April 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 187, pp. 190-191; JLN, Speech at CPP Meeting, Delhi, March 29 and 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 129; Letter from JLN to U Nu, May 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 81; Letter from JLN to Pandit, May 25, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 80; Resolution drafted by JLN for the AICC meeting, May 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 47; Letter from JLN to central ministers and CMs, June 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 100; Note from JLN to cabinet ministers, June 8, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 62; JLN, Speech to Indian students, London, July 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 655; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, September 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 516; JLN, Speech, Tiruchirapalli, Madras State, December 9, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 50.

By summer 1957, admitting that India's situation was "grave," Nehru decided to seek assistance from abroad. He did not, however, want the decision made public.<sup>106</sup> Nehru spoke privately with the US ambassador, who had earlier recommended long-term credits for India. Bunker suggested that the Indian embassy in Washington also make direct approaches.<sup>107</sup>

### **Who Delivers Wins**

The environment in the US seemed more conducive for aid to India. The discussions of the previous year had created a greater debate about foreign assistance. Senate and House groups, as well as an administration commission had been formed to study the US foreign assistance program. During the hearings on the Hill on the program, advocates of aid had emphasized that India was making progress with US help. They had highlighted, however, the greater rate of progress of the Soviet "showcase"—China—compared to India. They had asserted that this made it urgent that the US aid India even more.<sup>108</sup>

Despite their differences, each of the studies that emerged in early 1957 had highlighted the importance of meeting the communist offensive through long-term planning for aid and soft-loan packages. Within the administration, the State Department's policy planning staff suggested the creation of a \$2 billion soft-loan Development Loan Fund (DLF). An interagency group—created on Eisenhower's

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<sup>106</sup> Cable from JLN to Pandit, May 25, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 78-79; footnote 2 re Cable from Krishnamachari to Pandit, May 25, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 78; Letter from JLN to Pandit, June 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 809.

<sup>107</sup> Note from JLN to Pillai (MEA secretary general), Dutt and Desai (ComSec) re Meeting with Bunker, May 8, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 734.

<sup>108</sup> Testimony of Bowles, November 27, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on FP&MS 1956*, p. 271; Testimony of Abram Bergson (Harvard Russian Research Center), October 10, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on FP&MS 1956*, p. 98, p. 101; Testimony of Philip Mosely (Director of Studies, CFR), October 10, 1956, *HFAC Hearings 84-2 Congress on FP&MS 1956*, p. 89.



behest—recommended that the administration fund India through the DLF, as well as the Export-Import Bank. As Merrill has noted, India aid advocates' case was strengthened by the communist party victory in Kerala that caused concern in the US by highlighting the consequences of the Indian government's failure to deliver.<sup>109</sup>

Testifying before Congress in 1955, Bowles, then ambassador to India, had confidently said that people had “never voted to go Communist in the history of the world, and I don't think they are likely to if they have any chance or any alternative.” He had called the Indian structure “Communist proof.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, the communist victory in Kerala, as well as the increase in communist vote-share from five percent in the 1952 general election to ten percent in the 1957 one, caused concern. The administration saw it as not just an electoral victory, but also a psychological one for the communist bloc with repercussions beyond India. Moreover, it was anxious that the election had given the communists a respectable foothold in India from which they would try to expand. Like Nehru, officials continued to see the elections as a referendum on the Congress party's ability to deliver in one of the most “economically depressed” states.<sup>111</sup> Indian officials hardly played down the link. Finance ministry official BK Nehru, for example, noted how India's economic vulnerability could impact its democratic nature, emphasizing that India's “political requirements” called for a certain rate of development.<sup>112</sup>

That summer, Eisenhower publicly stressed that a small amount of aid could “fatefully decide the difference between success and failure” in countries like India where

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<sup>109</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 138-143; Memcon of Dillon-Mehta-Nair Meeting, Washington, May 13, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 343.

<sup>110</sup> Proceedings of the SFRC, May 23, 1955, *SFRC Hearing 84-1 MSA 1955*, p. 515, p. 519.

<sup>111</sup> OCB Report: Operations Plan for India and Nepal, July 3, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 356; Memo from Bartlett to Rountree (AS/S NESAA), September 30, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 379.

<sup>112</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, Washington, May 31, 1957, *Ibid.*, pp. 344-345.

it was crucial to maintain momentum.<sup>113</sup> Based on the policy planning staff's report, he requested funding for a three-year \$2 billion DLF as part of the administration's foreign assistance request. There were still doubts about the feasibility of getting a larger aid request through Congress. Dulles noted congressional and budgetary constraints in tight economic times. Officials from treasury and the international cooperation administration wanted to keep costs contained. The State department still did not think it was possible to get long-term assistance packages through Congress. Others in the administration, especially in the defense department, also worried about the wisdom of aiding neutrals at the expense of allies. Treasury was particularly concerned about approaching Congress for special legislation for aid for India.<sup>114</sup>

Bunker worried that since India was not at the point of collapse, there would be little appetite for aiding India substantially on the Hill. Nonetheless he was heartened at finding a "more sympathetic response" than expected in the administration with regard to India's needs, including from the president.<sup>115</sup> He assured Indian officials that the chances of most of the general aid package getting through Congress were "fairly good."<sup>116</sup>

As Douglas Dillon, deputy under secretary of state for economic affairs, had noted to Indian officials the question of aid to India was "one of amount and not of principle." He had explained that a specific aid program for India was not feasible, with a lot more work yet to be done to get Congress to accept the desirability of development

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<sup>113</sup> See footnote 2 re Eisenhower's speech, May 21, 1957, *Ibid*, p. 341.

<sup>114</sup> See footnote 3 re Memcon of Dulles-Bunker Meeting, Washington, June 4, 1957, *Ibid*, p. 349; Letter from Dillon to Randall (Chairman, Council on Foreign Economic Policy), July 15, 1957, *Ibid*, pp. 359-360; Letter from Bunker to Bartlett (in Delhi), June 27, 1957, *Ibid*, p. 349; Memo from Randall to Adams (assistant to the president), July 17, 1957, *Ibid*, p. 362; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 140, p. 143.

<sup>115</sup> Letter from Bunker to Bartlett, June 27, 1957, *Ibid*, pp. 348-350.

<sup>116</sup> Note by Dutt re Bunker's report on his talks in Washington, June 19, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 28.

assistance more broadly. American and Indian officials had subsequently discussed the possibility of assistance through other avenues—the DLF and Export-Import Bank funding.<sup>117</sup>

To avoid the public back and forth that had followed the Indian request for wheat in 1950-1951—and the adverse impact that had had on the US-India relationship — Bunker had recommended that the two countries have quiet informal discussions about the possibility of assistance before any formal request for aid. Senior US and Indian officials had concurred.<sup>118</sup> The countries continued to agree that India should not make a formal request lest the two countries “be left with a situation in which many harsh things would have been said about India...but with no offsetting constructive results to show for our efforts.”<sup>119</sup>

With the deteriorating situation already having forced India to scale the development plan back somewhat, however, Nehru made India’s need clear that fall. Even as Indian officials were holding discussions with Soviet officials in Delhi for \$125 million of credit, in what the *New York Times* called “his most pointed pronouncement,” Nehru stated that India would welcome \$500-600 million of loans from the US. Asserting that the Indian economy was “fundamentally sound,” he also announced that the Indian finance minister, T.T. Krishnamachari would travel to Britain, Canada, the US and West

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<sup>117</sup> Memcon of Dillon-Mehta-Nair Meeting, Washington, May 13, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII, p. 342; Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru (joint secretary, finance ministry) Meeting, Washington, May 31, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 346.

<sup>118</sup> Memcon of Dillon-Mehta-Nair Meeting, May 13, 1957, *Ibid.*, pp. 342-343; Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, Washington, May 31, 1957, *Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>119</sup> After conversations with Mehta and BK Nehru. Letter from Bunker to Bartlett, June 27, 1957, *Ibid.*, p. 351.

Germany in September and October 1957 to seek aid, credit and capital from these countries, as well as the World Bank.<sup>120</sup>

In an interview before his departure, Krishnamachari warned that without aid, India would have to cut its economic plans drastically. He acknowledged the reluctance of the US Congress to sanction development assistance programs, but emphasized, “the battle here in India is a battle against communism too.” He used the communist victory in Kerala to highlight the consequences of the shortage of resources for development. He implied that domestic communists might call upon Beijing and Moscow to aid them in attacking the Indian state. Furthermore, he asserted that India needed to strengthen itself because communist countries that India considered friendly at that time would not necessarily stay friendly. In private, he was more direct, indicating to the American ambassador—presciently as it turned out—that the Chinese threat would reach its climax in 4-5 years.<sup>121</sup>

Indian private sector leaders on a visit to Washington also warned of the possibility of a communist takeover if the development plan failed. GD Birla emphasized that India was “the citadel in Asia against the spread of communism” and it was crucial that it win the “silent race” with China. Nehru himself hardly played down the Sino-Indian race. While noting that “we do not look upon it as a competition,” he admitted, “inevitably comparisons are made.” Just as US administration officials did, Nehru also highlighted that India was employing a different method than that of China.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 141; JLN, Press conference, Helsinki, June 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 523-524; JLN’s Talk with Press Correspondents, Calcutta, October 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 742; Henry R. Lieberman, “India to Ask US for Loan in Crisis,” *NYT*, September 6, 1957, p. 1. Also, see Telegram from Bunker to DoS, September 20, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 369.

<sup>121</sup> A.M. Rosenthal, “Austerity Plans Prepared in India,” *NYT*, September 14, 1957, p. 7; Telegram from Bunker to DoS, September 20, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 370.

<sup>122</sup> John P. Callahan, “US Loan to India Held Vital Now,” *NYT*, September 17, 1957, p. 47; Henry R. Lieberman, “India to Ask US for Loan in Crisis,” *NYT*, September 6, 1957, p. 5.

Krishnamachari's implicitly and explicitly stated concerns about China and the Soviet Union created an uproar on the left in India, with accusations that the government was seeking to ally with the US. Publicly, Nehru did not defend Krishnamachari's remarks, but he also did not repudiate the minister's right to state his views. The prime minister merely noted that as far as he was concerned India had friendly relations with China and the Soviet Union. Asked about Krishnamachari's comment that India was in practice closer to the US, Nehru admitted that economically that was the case. Privately, Nehru told his minister that such *public* advocacy created problems since it gave the communist party ammunition and caused potential embarrassment with Beijing and Moscow.<sup>123</sup>

Privately and publicly, Nehru acknowledged that the US was the "only country" that could help India "substantially."<sup>124</sup> Bunker believed that many in India had come to see the US as the only real hope for assistance.<sup>125</sup> Nehru had not been optimistic about the immediate results of Krishnamachari's visit, expecting them to fall short of India's needs. They were a start, however, and he expected more help.<sup>126</sup> The minister's trip report, which leaked at the end of October, made evident that the core of the plan could be saved, but only with the aid that looked like it could be forthcoming from the US,

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<sup>123</sup> JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, November 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 518; JLN at press conference, Delhi, October 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 771; Cable from JLN to Krishnamachari, September 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 116; For reaction in parliament, see footnote 3, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 515.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from JLN to Pandit, September 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 110; Letter from JLN to KD Malaviya (mines and oil minister), October 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 123; JLN's TV Interview, Tokyo, October 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 562.

<sup>125</sup> Telegram from Bunker to DoS, September 20, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 369.

<sup>126</sup> Letter from JLN to CMs, October 25, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 821; Letter from JLN to CMs, November 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 724; JLN's Interview with a Norwegian journalist, November 3, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 710.

Japan and West Germany. Krishnamachari subsequently acknowledged in parliament that India hoped to get “sizeable” aid from the US, West Germany and the World Bank.<sup>127</sup>

The Indian government was aware of the importance of creating a positive atmosphere for aid to India in the US. Christian Herter, under secretary of state, had stressed to Krishnamachari the importance of the Congressional attitude and noted the negative impact of any public airing of differences.<sup>128</sup> Indian foreign secretary Subimal Dutt subsequently remarked to Nehru that there were “special reasons” not to rock the boat in the US.<sup>129</sup> The prime minister went on to censure those in India who were critical of the US for not helping immediately. He tried to create understanding of the US perspective, explaining the strained economic conditions in the US and UK. He asserted that it was not just the US that should understand India better, but vice versa. Nehru further noted that India would be grateful for whatever it received, but would not “quarrel” with those who could not or would not provide aid.<sup>130</sup> Publicly and privately, Indian officials also continued to express gratitude for American aid and understanding, and welcome further assistance.<sup>131</sup> Nehru, for example, publicly acknowledged that the

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<sup>127</sup> Discussion of the leak to *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting, October 29, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 301. Also, see footnote 4 re Krishnamachari’s statement, November 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 69.

<sup>128</sup> See footnote 2 re Memcon of Herter (US/S)-Krishnamachari Meeting, September 27, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 373.

<sup>129</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, October 31, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29.

<sup>130</sup> JLN, Speech at CPP meeting, Delhi, November 10, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, pp. 14-15; JLN, Speech to MPs in Parliament, November 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 642; JLN, Speech, Merchants’ Chamber of UP, Kanpur, November 29, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 88.

<sup>131</sup> Letter from JLN to Eisenhower, November 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 641; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, November 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 518; JLN, Speech at Prime Minister’s dinner, Helsinki, June 18, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 509; JLN, Press conference, London, July 4, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 633 and JLN, Speech to Indian students, London, July 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 653.

US was the largest supplier of aid. At a party meeting, he also highlighted how much Japan had achieved with American economic assistance.<sup>132</sup>

Nehru was and would continue to be sensitive about appearing to moderate or change India's foreign policy because of the US.<sup>133</sup> Privately, however, he and others were cautious because of the potential impact of Indian actions and words on US attitudes. Thus, Nehru stalled a minister advocating for further Soviet projects, noting that India needed to be cautious so as not to complicate Krishnamachari's efforts. He instructed the Indian representative in the ICC not issue to condemnations of American-British-French proposals lest it cause a "definite breach with these Governments." Dutt told other diplomats that Delhi generally wanted to stay out of most international issues.<sup>134</sup> Nehru asked Krishna Menon, defense minister and head of the Indian delegation to the UN, to limit involvement as well. When Krishna Menon expressed concern that India was turning away from nonalignment because of economic necessity, Nehru disagreed, but asserted that he did not "want to appear as a crusader on the world stage." India would not change its basic policy, but he did not want to engage in unhelpful criticism or global involvement.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Memcon of Dillon-Mehta-Nair Meeting, Washington, May 13, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII, p. 341; JLN, Press conference at Hotel d'Angleterre, Copenhagen, June 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 491; JLN, Speech, Kilpauk, Chennai, December 7, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 126; JLN, Speech at CPP Meeting, Delhi, November 10, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 5.

<sup>133</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishnamachari, September 29, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 734; Letter from JLN to CMs, September 25, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 812; JLN, Reply to the debate on economic situation at the Congress plenary session, Guwahati, January 19, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, pp. 611-612; JLN, Extracts from Lok Sabha discussion, April 9, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 698.

<sup>134</sup> Letter from JLN to Malaviya, October 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 123; Note from JLN to Desai (ComSec), May 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 733; Letter from Dutt to Tyabji (IndEmb Iran), September 21, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 52.

<sup>135</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, September 18, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, pp. 548-549; Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, September 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 549; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, December 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 540, p. 548.

Nehru pushed back on criticism from the left and right that his government was involving itself too much or too little in global affairs. He pointed out that sometimes India could not help but get involved—not just because it was a member of international organizations, but, since “we are all neighbours,” because of global interdependence.<sup>136</sup> Nonetheless, India now had to be more careful about this involvement:

Just taking up a brave attitude, the attitude of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, charging at windmills thinking that they were the brave knights in armour—that is past except that occasionally it appears on the Opposition Benches.

Thus, India would express its opinion—because international security issues and India’s parochial concerns were linked<sup>137</sup>—but it had to be realistic about its role: “we must put our own house in order first before we try to advise others.”<sup>138</sup>

Publicly, Nehru continued to acknowledge differences with the US on policy, but he stressed his appreciation for the improvement in “the basic approach” of the US towards India. Publicly and privately, he highlighted the positive change in the American approach. He asserted that it was important to stress similarities, rather than differences. Nehru acknowledged that the US was seeking to play a constructive role in Asia.<sup>139</sup> He approvingly quoted Eisenhower’s speech at a NATO conference in which the president stressed, “there is a noble strategy of victory—not victory over any peoples, but victory for all peoples.” The Indian prime minister even likened them to Buddha’s words.

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<sup>136</sup> JLN, Speech in the Rajya Sabha, March 27, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, pp. 483-484; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, September 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 524, p. 527; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, November 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 517; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, December 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 548; JLN, Speech, University of Guwahati, January 18, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 5.

<sup>137</sup> JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, December 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 568, p. 575.

<sup>138</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, December 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 676 and JLN, Speech, Delhi, January 30, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>139</sup> JLN, Speech at the annual conference of the US Technical Cooperation Mission personnel in India, November 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, pp. 657-658; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, December 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, pp. 551-553; JLN’s Interview with UPI-AFP Correspondent, Nara, Japan, October 11, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 595.



Privately, he favorably compared the rhetoric emanating from the NATO conference, which seemed more moderate, to that emerging from the communist parties' meeting in Moscow.<sup>140</sup>

### **The Glorious Gamble**

In the US, in fall 1957, two interdepartmental groups that had been created to assess Indian needs and US options to aid India's economic development, indicated that the steps the US had been contemplating were insufficient. From Delhi, Bunker had argued that India was a "good long-term investment" for the US, as well as its private sector. Others had argued that economic setbacks could help communists make gains in the next Indian general elections, especially in Bengal and Bombay.<sup>141</sup>

Dulles had publicly noted that the US would give—within budgetary constraints—"sympathetic consideration" to any Indian aid request.<sup>142</sup> Privately, when Krishnamachari had formally requested assistance, Eisenhower and Dulles had both promised to "explore the possibilities." Dulles had emphasized that there was no conceptual problem with giving India aid, but there was a practical one, with Congress and the treasury department noting public demands for tax cuts and highlighting objections to further aid.<sup>143</sup>

Within the administration, there was discussion about the risks and benefits of aiding India over the long term. The key question highlighted was "whether the free

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<sup>140</sup> JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, December 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 570, p. 582; Letter from JLN to CMs, December 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 734; For Eisenhower's speech, see Eisenhower: "Remarks at the Opening of the NATO Meetings in Paris," December 16, 1957. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10962>

<sup>141</sup> Telegram from Bunker to DoS, September 20, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 371; Memo from Mathews to Dillon, September 11, 1957, *Ibid*, p. 367.

<sup>142</sup> See footnote 3 re Dulles press conference, September 10, 1957, *Ibid*, pp. 373-374.

<sup>143</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-Krishnamachari Meeting, October 8, 1957, *Ibid* p. 387; Memcon of Dulles-Krishnamachari Meeting, September 25, 1957, *Ibid*, pp. 375-376; footnote 2 re Memcon of Herter-Krishnamachari Meeting, September 27, 1957, *Ibid*, p. 373.

world can take the risk of letting India sink or swim on its own.” The China analogy seemed at the forefront of the arguments in favor of aiding India in both a negative and positive sense. The negative “fundamental” argument in favor of aiding India was that aid would help prevent a communist takeover of the country. China posed political, socio-economic, psychological and military problems for India. Economic development could alleviate India’s problems on these fronts.<sup>144</sup> The time was now: “Once a country, like China, comes under Communist control it is lost to the free world; no amount of dollars can buy it back.” The consequences: “[I]f India went so would go almost all of Asia.”<sup>145</sup>

There was also a more positive argument: the administration could help India win or at least keep pace with Moscow-aided China in the development race.<sup>146</sup> This was important as these administration discussions took place in the aftermath of the Soviet launch of Sputnik, which was followed by public shock and Democratic accusations of the administration allowing “various ‘gaps’” to develop between the “free” and communist worlds.<sup>147</sup> Advocates for aid to India argued that it could “be a great force for stability in Asia.” They noted that internal development and sound leadership were key to India’s role as an alternative to China; aid would assist that development and also give the Indian government time to consolidate.<sup>148</sup>

Based on these arguments, Operations Coordination Board and State Department suggestions about increased aid to India, and discussions with vice president Nixon and treasury secretary Anderson, Dulles recommended an India aid package to Eisenhower.

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<sup>144</sup> AmEmb India Study: India, 1957-1962, November 8, 1957, Ibid, p. 397.

<sup>145</sup> Memo from Bartlett to Rountree, September 30, 1957, Ibid, p. 380. For Bunker’s use of the China loss argument, see Letter from Bunker to Eisenhower, November 15, 1957, Ibid, p. 403 and footnote 2 re Letter from Herter to Bunker, December 12, 1957, Ibid, p. 404.

<sup>146</sup> Memo from Bartlett to Rountree, September 30, 1957, Ibid, p. 380.

<sup>147</sup> Ambrose, pp. 423-426.

<sup>148</sup> AmEmb India Study: India, 1957-1962, November 8, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, pp. 396-397.

This recommendation was buffeted by an intelligence assessment of the grave consequences of economic failure in India—including the spread of communism from Kerala to “strategically situated” Bengal to the rest of the countries to Asia—as well as the previous NSC assessment that it was in US interests that India’s second five year plan succeed.<sup>149</sup> Anderson, Dulles and Nixon laid out the problems for Eisenhower as well: Congressional opposition and the impact on allies such as Pakistan. Nonetheless, even Nixon—not known to be a fan of nonaligned nations—argued that it was important to aid India: “if we do not, the cost will be disintegration of India and its orientation toward the Communists,” which would have a deleterious impact on all of Asia. Eisenhower agreed to go big, but “to break the problem down into parts.” Rather than seeking special legislation, which Anderson and Dulles thought would be problematic, the administration decided to put together a package of Ex-Im Bank loans, funding from DLF and contributions from allies, while urging Indian economic reforms and reductions in defense expenditures.<sup>150</sup>

In January 1958, the administration formally told the Indian government that it was willing to discuss extending India credit of \$225 million through the DLF and the Ex-Im Bank. Anticipating criticism from some allies, Washington laid out the argument for the offer: that India was of such “major political and psychological importance in Asia” that it was “obviously in interest free world that India remain independent and free of Communism which would flourish if [the] economic situation deteriorates.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Memo from Dulles to Eisenhower, November 4, 1957, *Ibid.*, pp. 394-395. Also, see Memo from Staats (OCB Executive Officer) to the OCB, October 3, 1957, *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386 and Memo from Murphy (DUS/SPA), Dillon and Rountree to Dulles, October 16, 1957, *Ibid.*, pp. 390-393.

<sup>150</sup> Memo of a Conference with the President, November 12, 1957, *Ibid.*, pp. 404-406. See comments about Nixon’s view of “neutrality” in IndEmb China, Report for July 1956, August 7, 1956, NAI, File No. 2 (4) FEA/56.

<sup>151</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, January 10, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 415-416; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 143-144; Memcon of Dulles-Mehta Meeting, January 17, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*

Nehru was “pleased and gratified” by the offer. He publicly expressed his appreciation.<sup>152</sup> Indian officials repeatedly conveyed the government’s gratitude not just for the decision, but also for the terms eventually agreed upon that March, as well as the lack of major conditions.<sup>153</sup> Taking on communist criticism about aid from the US, Nehru not only denied that India had “barter[ed] our soul,” but stressed that the US had not even asked it to do so.<sup>154</sup>

The aid helped significantly, but India would need more. There continued to be calls in India for “pruning” the plan, but Nehru resisted major cuts on the grounds that India could not afford to lose momentum.<sup>155</sup> There continued to be discussion of cuts, but the government decided against major pruning.<sup>156</sup> Nehru, nonetheless, realized that the situation continued to be grim and worried that “If we do not come to grips with our problems soon, the problems may well break our economy.”<sup>157</sup> India had miscalculated its balance of payments situation. The cabinet agreed that India needed more large-scale foreign assistance. Nehru did not like it, but India had no choice—it needed aid on a

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*Vol. XV*, p. 420; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK and Other SEATO capitals, January 11, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 418.

<sup>152</sup> See footnote 7 re Telegram from Bunker to DoS, January 14, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 417; JLN, Speech, Delhi, January 30, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 20; JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, February 28, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 78, p. 80.

<sup>153</sup> Memcon of Dulles-Mehta Meeting, January 17, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 419. Also, see Memcon of Herter-Mehta-BK Nehru Meeting, March 6, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 423; Memcon of Eisenhower-Radhakrishnan Meeting, March 19, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 427; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, March 11, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 104.

<sup>154</sup> JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, March 18, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 108.

<sup>155</sup> JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, November 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, pp. 73-75; JLN, Speech, Jamshedpur, March 1, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 63;

<sup>156</sup> Extracts of discussion at the Tenth Meeting of the National Development Council, May 3, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 87.

<sup>157</sup> See footnote 3 re Letter from JLN to Shastri (commerce minister), May 15, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 115.

“massive scale.”<sup>158</sup> He admitted publicly that India would have to continue to seek assistance, especially from the US, which was in the best position to aid India.<sup>159</sup>

That spring, US officials had avoided discussing specifics of additional aid.<sup>160</sup> Eisenhower had, however, emphasized the US commitment to India.<sup>161</sup> There was an awareness that more would have to be done. Although American policymakers no longer doubted that the Indian leadership shared their attitude toward the dangers of communism in India, they continued to be concerned about the Indian leadership’s capacity to combat it. Development, in their minds, was the best deterrent to communism in India.<sup>162</sup>

Officials repeatedly mentioned the China comparison not just to justify aid to India in Congress, but also in internal documents. As Merrill notes, India was special in a way—a place where, unlike the case of non-democratic allies, “strategic interests coincided with ideals.” By late 1957 and especially spring 1958, Merrill points out that aiding India in its competition with China had become a “cause célèbre” and “somewhat of an ideological crusade” in the US. The cause had gone mainstream. Newspapers and newsmagazines joined earlier advocates of aiding India to stress the importance of an Indian victory in “the race.” A resolution proposed by Sen. Kennedy (D-MA) and Sen. Cooper (R-KY)—and attached to the 1958 foreign assistance bill passed in the Senate—had identified India as deserving of special attention: “India, like the United States, is

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<sup>158</sup> Note from JLN to cabinet ministers, May 15, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 115; Letter from JLN to CMs, May 18, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 791; footnote 4 re BK Nehru’s statement to *Reuters*, Washington, July 20, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 97; Extracts from the minutes of the cabinet meetings, June 4 and 5, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 119; Letter from JLN to CMs, July 30, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 123.

<sup>159</sup> JLN at press conference, July 3, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, pp. 600-601.

<sup>160</sup> Memcon of Herter-Mehta-BK Nehru Meeting, March 6, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 423.

<sup>161</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-Radhakrishnan Meeting, March 19, 1958, *Ibid.*, p. 427.

<sup>162</sup> Memo from Smith (ICA Director) to Dillon, March 11, 1958, *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425; Telegram from Bunker to Dillon, May 29, 1958, *Ibid.*, p. 430; Despatch from AmEmb India to DoS, June 27, 1958, *Ibid.*, p. 434; NIE 51-58, September 2, 1958, *Ibid.*, p. 458.

engaged in a struggle of coexistence—in its case with China, which is also pursuing a planning effort being put under consideration all over the world.”<sup>163</sup>

The previous year, officials had decided to reconsider in 1958 whether to go to Congress with special legislation for India.<sup>164</sup> The administration, however, decided that while congressional reaction had seemed “fairly satisfactory up to now,” it did not want to push its luck. Rather than special legislation that B.K. Nehru had been pressing for, further assistance came through World Bank president Eugene Black’s suggestion of a “creditors’ meeting.”<sup>165</sup> The US took the lead in August to form what became the India aid consortium with Canada, Japan, West Germany and the UK. Working through the World Bank, it announced pledges of \$350 million for India immediately and envisioned commitments of \$600 million through the rest of the five-year plan. As Merrill has noted, this development took place within a broader change of approach in the US—one in which the administration unusually requested less money for military assistance than economic assistance for FY1959. As envisioned by the step-by-step approach decided upon in January, the administration also decided on more PL480 agreements for India that June and September and, working with the World Bank that July, it postponed the repayment of debts from the 1951 wheat loan to India.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 146-148. The resolution called on the US “to join with other nations in providing support of the type, magnitude, and duration adequate to assist India to complete successfully its current program for economic development.” See footnote 4 re the Congressional Record in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 424.

<sup>164</sup> Memo from Randall to Adams, July 17, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 362.

<sup>165</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, July 16, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 441; Memcon of Dillon-Black (World Bank president) Meeting, July 12, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 439.

<sup>166</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 144-145; reference to Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, August 28, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 443-444; NIE 51-58, September 2, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 452; See footnote 2 re Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, July 2, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 437. In January, the administration had already started pressing allies to act: see Telegram from DoS to AmEmb FRG, January 25, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 421 and footnote 5 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Japan, January 29, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 421.

By fall, Dillon noted to B.K. Nehru, “In general...the leaders of both political parties are in favor of continuing foreign aid and the trend in public opinion is in favor of expenditures for economic development rather than for military programs. There continued to be a mix of hope and fear associated with the cause. Intelligence assessments worried about a “recent trend toward a weakening of the Congress Party and toward an increase in Communist strength” and emphasized the importance of aid in stalling and reversing this trend. This was especially crucial because Washington needed to start considering what a post-Nehru India would look like. Indian finance minister Morarji Desai, taking on statements that India’s plan was too ambitious, also stressed that communists would take advantage of any loss of economic momentum. He linked a lack of aid, as Bunker and BK Nehru had earlier in the year, with political instability.<sup>167</sup>

At the same time, intelligence assessments linked Indian success to the availability of aid. American advocates of aid like Bunker stressed that India was using aid effectively and the investment would “pay off.”<sup>168</sup> Senior Indian policymakers like Desai emphasized that the Indian government was successfully combating domestic communists and economic development had limited the communists’ progress—Congress, for example, was making gains again in Kerala. They also continued to assure

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<sup>167</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, August 26, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 450-45; NIE 51-58, September 2, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 452-453, 457-458; Memo from Bartlett to Rountree, September 30, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 381; Memcon of Morarji Desai (Indian finance minister)-Dillon-Coughran (AS/Treasury) Meeting, September 8, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 462; Telegram from Bunker to Dillon, June 19, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 432 and Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, July 16, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 440.

<sup>168</sup> NIE 51-58, September 2, 1958, *Ibid*, pp. 452-453, pp. 456-457; Telegram from Bunker to Dillon, May 29, 1958, *Ibid*, p. 430; Telegram from Bunker to Dillon, June 19, 1958, *Ibid*, pp. 432-433; Telegram from Bunker to DoS, August 26, 1958, *Ibid*, p. 445.

their American interlocutors that, overall, India would succeed and its success would have a positive impact on Asia.<sup>169</sup>

### **CREEPING CONCERN ABOUT CHINA: THE INFILTRATION OF IDEAS, INFLUENCE AND INDIVIDUALS (1956-1958)**

Some developments in Asia meanwhile had had a negative impact on India's attitude toward China and had helped pave the way for the improvement in US-India relations. Towards the end of 1958, intelligence assessments indicated the factors that would most affect US-India political relations: American military aid to Pakistan, the American approach towards alliances, and the two countries' China policies.<sup>170</sup> On the latter front, during this period, India's attitude had already altered a bit.

#### **Changing Indian Perceptions**

The question of the Sino-Indian border, consisting of a western, middle and eastern sector, was a key element in the changing Indian attitude toward China. The "preservation of its frontiers" had been one of India's major goals with regard to China. Chinese and Indian officials had not discussed their border in any comprehensive fashion, despite debate on the Indian side about the wisdom of doing so and doubts about the Chinese position.<sup>171</sup> In May 1956, with new Chinese maps continuing to show swaths of what India considered its territory as part of China, "occasional petty raids," and a communications and transportation infrastructure build-up in Tibet, Nehru expressed "a sense of disquiet." According to him, his officials and he had repeatedly stated to their Chinese interlocutors that India considered the frontier as "firm," but it seemed "China

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<sup>169</sup> Memcon of Morarji Desai-Dillon-Coughran Meeting, September 8, 1958, Ibid, p. 462; Memcon of Eisenhower-Radhakrishnan Meeting, March 19, 1958, Ibid, p. 427. Also, see Letter from JLN to Emanuel Celler (Chairman, House Judiciary Committee), August 31, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 544.

<sup>170</sup> NIE 51-58, September 2, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 460.

<sup>171</sup> Raghavan, pp. 234-240.



never clearly accepted our frontier as it is.”<sup>172</sup> Subsequently, he brought the subject up in a conversation with Zhou in early 1957. The premier said that in the eastern sector, though China had not recognized the McMahon Line that India claimed as the border, “now that it is an accomplished fact, we should accept it.”<sup>173</sup> This left Nehru assured that the Chinese government had accepted in principle, at least, the status quo at the Sino-Indian border.

Doubts about the Chinese attitude, however, emerged over this period due to four reasons: border skirmishes, Chinese maps, the Sino-Burmese border dispute and Chinese road construction. The Sino-Burmese border dispute had flared up in July 1956. During subsequent negotiations, China called into question the validity of Burmese claim that the McMahon Line represented the international border between the two countries. Since, as far as the Indian government was concerned, the same line demarcated the Sino-Indian border, this Chinese contention worried Indian officials. Nehru especially noted that Zhou had told his Burmese interlocutor that China did not want to accept the use of the term McMahon Line because that would complicate the question with India. Nehru was not sure what the question was about: “...so far as we are concerned, this frontier...is not a matter of dispute at all and Chou En-lai has accepted it. It is true that his acceptance was oral, but it was quite clear and precise.”<sup>174</sup>

Border skirmishes that had been taking place also concerned Indian officials. T.N. Kaul, one of the negotiators of the 1954 Sino-Indian agreement, had expected China to push forward on the frontier within five years. Differences over claims, albeit minor ones,

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<sup>172</sup> Note from JLN to Krishna Menon, May 6, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 33*, p. 475.

<sup>173</sup> Quoted in Raghavan, p. 245.

<sup>174</sup> Letter from JLN to U Nu, April 22, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, pp. 507-508; Note from Dutt to JLN, May 4, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; Letter from JLN to RK Nehru, July 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 693; Note from JLN to Dutt, August 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 654.

had been evident as soon as that year in Bara Hoti, but China and India had eventually agreed to discuss the issue.<sup>175</sup> In fall 1956 and spring 1957, however, there were a series of incidents on the Sino-Indian border that resulted in skirmishes.<sup>176</sup> What worried Nehru about the skirmishes were not the small bits of territory involved, but the “aggressive way on the part of the Chinese.” Furthermore, given that there had been no “formal acceptance” of the border by China, it raised the problem of the whole Sino-Indian border: “that this could not be treated as an agreed border...and the question might be raised at any time by China.” Adding to Indian officials’ concerns was the fear that tension with China would hinder India’s economic development.<sup>177</sup>

Until fall 1957, there was still talk of potential cooperation. The Indian vice president on a trip to China told Mao that if the two Asian countries worked together, “the world would take note.” Despite the “modest” turnout for and censoring of Radhakrishnan’s speeches, a diplomat observed that the visit “could not have gone better.” Subsequently, however, Nehru noted Mao’s unsatisfactory response to the vice president’s observation that it was better to change someone’s mind in a “friendly way” rather than with suppression.<sup>178</sup> That fall Delhi also received reports from its embassy in Beijing that China had announced the completion of a road connecting Tibet and Xinjiang that seemed to go through Indian territory. Lacking enough details, but

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<sup>175</sup> Raghavan, p. 241, p. 243.

<sup>176</sup> There had been border incidents in spring/summer of 1956 as well. But it was the series of three transgressions at Shipki La in September 1956 that raised serious concern. For T.N. Kaul’s reporting to an inter-agency meeting about this, see footnote 3 in Note by JLN to Foreign Secretary on The Fate of Shipki La, October 8, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 518.

<sup>177</sup> Letter from JLN to Sampurnanand, May 14, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 689; Note from JLN to Dutt, July 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 693; Note from Dutt to Defense Secretary, June 26, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27.

<sup>178</sup> K. Natwar Singh, *My China Diary, 1956-1980* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2009), pp. 73-74; Note from JLN to Dutt and MJ Desai, October 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 719.

convinced that the road went through Aksai Chin, in February 1958 the government decided to send a reconnaissance team to the area.<sup>179</sup>

In the meantime, more points of disputes appeared on the border, even as the government denied publicly that there was a dispute re the “international border” in November 1957.<sup>180</sup> There continued to be no sign of the Chinese team of negotiators that Beijing had agreed to send to discuss the dispute at Hoti, which had left Nehru with the sense that, “So far as procrastinating tactics are concerned, probably no government can beat the Chinese at this game.”<sup>181</sup> Then in January 1958 in a discussion with the Indian ambassador, Zhou mentioned “outstanding problems” between the two countries. Concerned about what those problems were, Nehru wanted the foreign secretary to stress to the Chinese ambassador that India was “anxious” to settle any problems. With continuing reports of Chinese activity on the border and some problems at the mountain passes that India thought had been settle by the 1954 treaty, India offered talks again without preconditions. The government wanted to figure out “how the Chinese mind is working in regard to the general question of Indo-Chinese border in this area.”<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Note, November 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 39. Also, see footnote 2 re Note from Dutt to JLN, February 3, 1958; Note from JLN to Dutt, February 4, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 674; Note from Dutt to JS(East), April 9, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Notes from Dutt to MEA Deputy Secretary (East), June 2, 1959 and to JS(E) on June 16, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36 and Note from Dutt to defense secretary, April 7, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36; Note from Dutt to SOFA, May 24, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36

<sup>180</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, November 4, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 30; Note, November 21, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 30;

<sup>181</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, August 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 654. For the waiting game India played, see Letter from JLN to Sampurnanand, May 14, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 690. Also, see Note from JLN to Dutt, July 30, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 690; JLN’s comments at a meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee on foreign affairs, November 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 489; Note from JLN to Dutt, January 21, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 673.

<sup>182</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN re Zhou-RK Nehru meeting on January 12, January 24, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from JLN to Dutt, January 21, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, pp. 672-673; Note from Dutt to JLN, February 24, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from Dutt to JLN, February 8, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31.

In April 1958 China finally agreed to talk about Hoti. Occurring in the midst of a general hardening of China's attitude abroad, the talks did not go very well. By June there was a stalemate and the talks were eventually suspended. To the Indian side, it seemed that Beijing accepted neither the northern border nor even the Indian position on the passes. Fearing that China would try to strengthen its claims, Dutt stated that India had to find a way to make clear to Beijing that its forces could not unilaterally occupy areas and treat them as settled.<sup>183</sup> That spring and summer there were also concerns about Chinese propaganda in India's northeast, indoctrination of Indian citizens in China, as well as allegations against Indian officials and the arrest of an Indian embassy official in China. Delhi subsequently decided to keep a closer eye on Chinese activities in China and India.<sup>184</sup> Commenting on China's "cooling off" towards India, an Indian official traced it to the "Economic rapprochement" between the US and India, speculations in the Indian press about a visit by Nehru to Tibet, and the Chinese sense that the Congress government was losing ground to the communists in India.<sup>185</sup>

By July 1958, Nehru admitted to the home minister that relations with China were on the downswing—he believed it was mostly because Beijing suspected India on Tibet.<sup>186</sup> That summer, the map problem flared up publicly when a Chinese magazine's

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<sup>183</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, April 17, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note from Dutt to JLN, June 3, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note from Dutt to JLN, June 12, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Cable from Dutt to Bahadur Singh (Indian chargé, China), June 11, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 54. For China's general attitude, see Christensen, pp. 199-200.

<sup>184</sup> Note from Dutt to JS(E), February 8, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from Dutt to JLN, February 3, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from Dutt to JLN, April 7, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32 and Cable from Dutt to Bahadur Singh, April 19, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 54; Note from Dutt to JS(E), March 13, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 3; Note from Dutt to DS(E) and Home Secretary, June 24, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note from Dutt to DS(E), April 28, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36.

<sup>185</sup> Report from Indian Consul General in Shanghai, May 8, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32. The foreign secretary passed the report to Nehru in June.

<sup>186</sup> Letter from JLN to Pant, July 11, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 534. Also, see Note from Dutt to Special Secretary, JS(E), June 20, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32 and Note from Dutt to JLN, June 19, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32.

publication of a map led to parliamentary questions about China's attitude. Chinese maps had remained the same, continuing to show "considerable" parts of what India considered its territory as part of China.<sup>187</sup> Nehru asserted internally that Zhou's explanation that the maps were old no longer held water and the matter should be taken up with China. That fall, one of the reconnaissance teams sent in the summer reported that the Chinese road did indeed go through Aksai Chin—what India considered its territory—while the other never returned. The government decided that it could no longer stay silent. The previous few months had "revealed a suspicious attitude on the part of the Chinese."<sup>188</sup>

The Chinese response unsettled Indian policymakers. When Indian officials took up the Aksai Chin and maps issue, Chinese officials indicated that the road was in Chinese territory. They also noted that they had detained the reconnaissance team sent there and suggested that the Sino-Indian border had neither been surveyed nor settled. In December, Nehru wrote to Zhou, observing that in 1954, the premier had not raised any border questions and then, in 1956, had said that China proposed to recognize the McMahon Line. Now the negotiations on the minor problems, which Nehru himself had brought up in 1956, had stalled and Chinese maps continued to show large parts of India's northeast as Chinese territory. He noted that it had left him "puzzled," because he did not think there was a major problem.<sup>189</sup>

A second reason for the changing Indian attitude toward China was concern about China's growing relationships with India's neighbors. Between March-November 1956,

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<sup>187</sup> Raghavan, pp. 244-246; Letter from JLN to Sampurnanand, May 14, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 689.

<sup>188</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, August 12, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 536; Note, November 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 39; Note from Dutt to JLN, October 8, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; Note by Dutt, October 23, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33.

<sup>189</sup> Note from Dutt to JS(E) re Meeting with Chinese ambassador, October 18, 1958 and Note by Dutt, October 23, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; Letter from JLN to Zhou, December 13, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 56; Note from Dutt to Parthasarathi (Indian ambassador to China), December 15, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 56. Also, see Raghavan, pp. 247-248.

China established diplomatic relations with Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, it seemed to be building relations with Pakistan.<sup>191</sup> Over this period, China's interactions also increased with a country of special significance to India: Nepal. Delhi wanted to limit foreign presence in Nepal because of that country's "strategic importance" to India.<sup>192</sup> Earlier in 1954, despite India's closeness to China, Nehru had tried to dissuade the Nepalese leadership from establishing diplomatic relations with China. Eventually, he had given his assent to Nepal establishing relations with China, but asserted that Sino-Nepalese discussions were best conducted in Delhi, rather than Kathmandu or Beijing.<sup>193</sup> In 1956, the Indian government learned from Zhou that China and Nepal were thinking of signing a Panchsheel-like agreement. The Chinese premier also indicated that Nepal wanted China to establish a consulate general in Kathmandu. Internally, Nehru objected to a Sino-Nepalese treaty, especially since it increased each country's presence in the other. Moreover, he was particularly concerned that Kathmandu had kept Delhi out of the loop, not just on its interactions with Chinese officials, but also with Soviet ones.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, in September 1956, China and Nepal signed a trade and travel agreement and agreed to set up consulates general in the other country. Nepal also decided to accept economic aid and industrial equipment from China. Learning from Moscow that Nepal was also establishing relations with the Soviet Union did nothing to alleviate the Indian concern that it was losing influence in this key buffer state—especially over its foreign

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<sup>190</sup> OCB Progress Report on NSC 5409, November 28, 1956 in *FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume VIII*, p. 12; Summary of JLN's Talks with Zhou, Delhi, January 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 633.

<sup>191</sup> IndEmb China, Reports for March, July and December 1956, NAI, File No. 2(4) FEA/56.

<sup>192</sup> Cable from Dutt to Bhagwan Sahay (Indian ambassador to Nepal), June 4, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 50.

<sup>193</sup> Letter from JLN to M.P. Koirala (Nepal PM), June 29, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 489; Letter from JLN to the King of Nepal, May 1, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 28*, p. 269.

<sup>194</sup> Note to FonSec on Attitude of Nepal, September 7, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 502; Cable from JLN to Sahay, September 2, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, pp. 501-502; footnote 2 re Dutt's message to Sahay

relations. This was a sensitive area for India. Thus, Delhi instructed its representative in Beijing to push back on any references that suggested that China did not recognize India's special relationships with Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan.<sup>195</sup>

The concern about growing Chinese influence in Nepal had an impact on US-India relations. Initially, India had strongly resisted and objected to any other country exercising influence in Nepal. India had also had concerns about US involvement in Nepal, partly because Delhi believed that would increase Chinese interest in the country. Nehru had even suggested to the Nepalese king that he restrict American activities.<sup>196</sup> This attitude, however, changed once it had become clear in mid-1955 that China and Nepal were going to establish relations just as it was becoming harder for India to aid Nepal because of its deteriorating fiscal situation. Despite dissension from India's ambassador in Nepal, India had subsequently accepted and even welcomed US involvement in certain crucial projects in Nepal. Officials like R.K. Nehru and T.N. Kaul had encouraged—and Nehru agreed to—coordination between Nepal, India and the US, but with care so that China would not become suspicious of India's motives.<sup>197</sup> Indian officials had also suggested that the US and India coordinate their economic aid programs to Nepal to keep Chinese influence to a minimum.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> OCB Progress Report on NSC 5409, November 28, 1956 in *FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume VIII*, pp. 17-18; Cable from JLN to K.P.S. Menon, July 27, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 34*, p. 389; Cable from Dutt to RK Nehru, April 25, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 49.

<sup>196</sup> Letter from JLN to B.K. Gokhale (Indian ambassador to Nepal), November 7, 1952, *SWJN SS Vol. 20*, p. 480. Also see Letter from JLN to the King of Nepal, November 7, 1952, *SWJN SS Vol. 20*, p. 481. Letter from JLN to B.K. Gokhale, July 6, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, pp. 490-491. Minutes of Talks with Zhou, Beijing, October 21, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 27*, p. 31. Letter from JLN to M.P. Koirala, August 30, 1954, *SWJN SS Vol. 26*, p. 497.

<sup>197</sup> Note from JLN to R.K. Nehru, September 7, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 30*, p. 414; Note by Sahay on Discussions in Delhi, October 14, 1955, *SWJN SS Vol. 30*, p. 416..

<sup>198</sup> Instruction from DoS to the Diplomatic and Consular Offices in India re Semi-Annual Review of US-Indian Relations: May 15-November 15, 1955, January 20, 1956 in *FRUS, 1955-1957, Volume VIII*, p. 304; Letter from JLN to Sahay, March 13, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 32*, p. 359.

Indian officials appreciated that Washington respected India's "special position" vis-à-vis Nepal.<sup>199</sup> Even before 1955, US officials had recognized the role India was playing in keeping Nepal out of the Chinese orbit and had reassured India that they had no desire to seek the removal of Indian influence in that country. India and the US continued to work together in Nepal. Delhi saw American help as assisting India's interests, especially because Washington committed to consulting and working together with India rather than sidestepping it. Occasionally, Indian officials would hear reports that, in order to reduce Indian influence and play one foreign benefactor against the other, Kathmandu was trying to reach out independently to Washington. US officials would subsequently assuage Delhi's concerns, making it a point to keep Indian officials informed of their activities.<sup>200</sup> Indian officials favorably compared this American approach with the Soviet one—they disliked the fact that Soviet officials were not coordinating their activities with India. Soviet officials either did not inform India about their activities or informed Indian officials after the fact, sometimes even violating assurances about limiting their presence in Nepal.<sup>201</sup>

A third subject of concern that re-emerged for India vis-à-vis China during this period was Beijing's behavior in the Chinese areas bordering India. Indian officials grew

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<sup>199</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt re Meeting with Bunker, August 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 679.

<sup>200</sup> Telegram from Allen (US ambassador to India) to DoS, March 20, 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol XI-2*, p. 1351; Note from Dutt to JS(E), January 21, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; JLN's Reply to Question in Rajya Sabha, February 25, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 697; Note from Dutt to JS(E), March 16, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from Dutt to JS(E), March 28, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from Dutt to JS(E) re Talk with Sahay, April 3, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note by Dutt re Meeting with Bunker, October 25, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; Letter from Dutt to Sahay, November 14, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 56; Note from Dutt to CS, JSE re Meeting with Bartlett and Bunker, January 29, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 40; Note from JS Mehta to JS(E) re Meeting with Heck (AmEmb India), June 3, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36.

<sup>201</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, April 15, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; Note by Dutt re JLN's Instructions, November 11, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 56 and Note from Dutt to JLN re Meeting with Soviet ambassador, January 12, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35; Note from Dutt to JS(E), PS, June 5, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36.



chagrined about the Chinese crackdown when uprisings broke out in Kham and frowned upon the way China was exercising control in Tibet, where the autonomy that had been promised never materialized. Furthermore, Zhou made clear to Nehru that China would “put down” any uprising in Tibet. He also criticized acts of omission or commission—perhaps even in collusion with the US—on the part of Indian officials as they dealt with Tibetan sympathizers’ “anti-Chinese activities” in India.<sup>202</sup>

To external audiences, Nehru stated that China might loosen its hold in Tibet, eventually granting it autonomy.<sup>203</sup> Internally, he acknowledged that Tibet was under “forcible occupation of Chinese armed forces and that a considerable majority of the Tibetans resent this.” However, he stressed to Tibetan officials that India did not have the capacity to do very much: China could not be defeated “by armed force.” There was also another reason for Nehru’s reticence. As he stated to a cabinet colleague, “We have to move rather cautiously in this matter of Tibet, as Indian intentions are suspect in China.”<sup>204</sup>

Thus, Nehru instructed his officials to keep Beijing in the loop on all matters Tibet, including contact with the Dalai Lama. He made clear that he did not want to get dragged into the actions of rebels in Tibet. Nehru also warned Tibetan sympathizers in India not to indulge in anti-China propaganda. Despite Chinese complaints, however, he refused to take any action against these sympathizers unless they broke the law.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Record of JLN’s Talks with Zhou, Bhakra-Nangal and on journey, December 31, 1956 and January 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, pp. 596-599.

<sup>203</sup> JLN at the fifth meeting of the Commonwealth PMs’ Conference, London, June 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 612.

<sup>204</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, December 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 617; Note from JLN to Dutt re Meeting with Tibetan ex-PM, January 13, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 671; Letter from JLN to Humayun Kabir (cultural affairs minister), June 28, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 662.

<sup>205</sup> Note from JLN to Pillai, February 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, pp. 504-505; Note from Dutt to JLN, May 6, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; Draft Letter from JLN to Dalai Lama, May 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 49; Note from Dutt to JS(E), July 27, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Letter from Dutt to Rameshwar Rao (MP), August 13, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 52; Note from Dutt to JS (E), July 18, 1957, NMML,

Over time, Nehru and his officials increasingly saw signs that disturbed them. They started receiving reports of the mistreatment of Indian traders in Yatung. Since this had implications for the 1954 treaty, India protested with Nehru having declared it a serious matter that needed to be taken up with Beijing in an “unequivocal” manner.<sup>206</sup> Indian policymakers also noticed that Beijing was trying to limit India’s links with Tibet. China was “evasive” about an air link that India was seeking to Tibet. This evasiveness belied Delhi’s expectation that China would welcome the improved connectivity.<sup>207</sup> Then, China asked India to remove its wireless station in Tibet.<sup>208</sup> There was also a growing sense that China was increasingly unhappy with Indian trade agencies in Tibet.<sup>209</sup> Finally, when Nehru repeatedly contacted Beijing about taking up the Dalai Lama’s invitation to visit Tibet, its response ranged from silence to waffling to letting Nehru eventually know that it did not think it was “advisable” that he go to Tibet at that stage.<sup>210</sup> At home, as the situation in Tibet deteriorated, meanwhile Nehru had to deal

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SDP, SF No. 29; Note from JLN to Dutt, December 26, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, pp. 619-620; Note from JLN to Dutt, January 21, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 673; Note from Dutt to JS(E), February 13, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from Dutt to JS(E), May 21, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note from JLN to Dutt, June 17, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 661.

<sup>206</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, August 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 697. Also, see Note from SK Roy (SOFA) to JS(E), July 14, 1956, NAI, File No. 1(51)-NEFI/56 and Note from JLN to Krishna Menon, August 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 698.

<sup>207</sup> Note from JLN to Krishna Menon, August 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 698. Also, see Note from Dutt to JS(E), May 28, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27, Note from Dutt to JLN, September 2, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29, Letter from JLN to CMs, December 31, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 732 and Note from JLN to Dutt, February 24, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 675; Cable from Dutt to RK Nehru, June 13, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 50.

<sup>208</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, January 21, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 673.

<sup>209</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, April 17, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32.

<sup>210</sup> For Dalai Lama’s invitation, see Letter from JLN to Dalai Lama, May 8, 1957 and footnote 5 re Letter from Dalai Lama to JLN sent through Apa Pant (political officer in Sikkim) in February 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 687-688. For the Chinese response, see Cable from JLN to RK Nehru, January 21, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 672; Notes from JLN to Dutt, May 13 and June 17, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, pp. 659-660; Cable from Dutt to Apa Pant, June 18, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 54; Note from Dutt to JS(E), June 27, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Letter from JLN to Padmaja Naidu (Governor of West Bengal), May 25, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 820; Letter from JLN to Apa Pant, July 11, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 534; Letter from JLN to Bhutanese king, July 25, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 553; and JLN at press conference, July 27, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 604.

with calls for India to be less timid on Tibet—both from within his government, as well as outside it from the right and left.<sup>211</sup>

### **Contrasting Approaches**

Chinese actions in Tibet raised serious questions about Beijing's overall approach. Even before the situation in Tibet had deteriorated, however, Chinese and Indian differences on perception and approach had been evident in their reactions to the uprising in Hungary in fall 1956. Zhou had asserted to Nehru that the Soviet crackdown had been the only appropriate response to "control the situation." The Indian prime minister had not believed that those who had undertaken the uprising were subversives, as Zhou contended, but nationalists who, like most Hungarians, did not want foreign control. For Nehru, it had been important for the people's wishes to be followed; for Zhou the major priority had been ensuring that the socialist system would continue and if that called for Soviet intervention—even if it went against the Panchsheel spirit of non-interference—so be it. And while Nehru had asserted, "Shooting down is not any solution," Zhou had insisted that persuasion was fine to an extent, but pressure was necessary. A few months later, Nehru had lamented publicly that "peaceful coexistence" was much "bandied about," but "not acted upon by even those people who use those words."<sup>212</sup>

Doubts about the Chinese approach only increased when it seemed that, after a short period of relaxation, there was a return to rigidity in both Beijing and Moscow.

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<sup>211</sup> Note from Dutt to JS(E), August 5, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Note from Dutt to JLN, September 15, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; and Note from Dutt to JLN, October 25, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33. On the right, Jaswant Singh noted that India had "surrendered our interests because we had no guts to stand up" in Tibet. See footnote 2 re Rajya Sabha debates, December 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 554. For criticism on the left, see JLN, Speech, Lok Sabha, August 20, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, pp. 440-443.

<sup>212</sup> Record of JLN's Talks with Zhou, Bhakra-Nangal and on journey, December 31, 1956 and January 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, pp. 588-592; JLN, Speech at AIMO Annual Conference, Delhi, April 13, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 185.

Domestically, Nehru said China seemed to have gone from “Let a hundred flowers bloom” to “the flowers [have] become weeds to be pulled out.”<sup>213</sup>

Externally, the Chinese reaction to two events in summer 1958 shocked Nehru and other officials. The Chinese and Soviet refusal to send delegations to the Yugoslav party congress and their subsequent propaganda offensive against Yugoslavia dismayed Nehru. Their condemnation suggested that various communist leaders’ earlier indications to him that there was tolerance for various paths to socialism were no long valid. Furthermore, he was concerned that this signaled a return to the “crusading attitude of the Communist Party which was one of interference.” Perplexed about Beijing’s reaction, the foreign secretary asked for a detailed study of it.<sup>214</sup> Nehru, in turn, was especially concerned about Beijing’s reaction and its “language of violence.” He asked, “Where do the Five Principles or the Panchsheel come into the picture?” And he answered his own question, stating that they “have gone by the board.” This was linked to a parochial concern: “If the Soviet Union or China can do this in regard to Yugoslavia, there is no particular reason to imagine that they cannot or will not do so in the case of India.” Nehru pointed out that, as it is, the Chinese attitude toward India had “stiffened.” He asserted that, therefore, India had to be “particularly careful” about words and actions related to China.<sup>215</sup> Things would only get worse. The subsequent execution of detained Hungarian leader Imre Nagy in June 1958 shocked not just the Indian public but also Indian officials who disapproved of the Soviet attitude and thought the Chinese celebratory reaction

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<sup>213</sup> JLN, Speech at AICC Meeting, May 12, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 526.

<sup>214</sup> JLN, Extracts of Speech to CPP, May 10, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, pp. 77-78; Letter from JLN to Kabir, June 28, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 662; Letter from JLN to CMs, May 18, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 789; Letter from Dayal to Dutt, May 13, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note from Dutt to MEA Historical Division Director (DHD), June 14, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32.

<sup>215</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, June 15, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 676; Letter from JLN to CMs, June 9, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 795; JLN at press conference, July 3, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 591 and footnote 15 re Home Minister GB Pant’s Speech at West Bengal Pradesh Congress Political Conference, Calcutta, June 29, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 592.

“amazingly foolish.” The prime minister was left stating that these developments were a “shock to peace.”<sup>216</sup>

These events also significantly affected views of the Soviet Union in India and consolidated Nehru’s discomfort with Moscow’s chosen methods. Soviet action in Hungary in 1956 had left Nehru with serious doubts. While he had hesitated from publicly criticizing the Soviet actions, privately, he had called them “deplorable.” Nehru had been sensitive to the domestic and foreign criticism that greeted the Indian government’s tepid public response.<sup>217</sup> On the defensive, he had denied that he was toeing Moscow’s line and, eventually, had publicly condemned the Soviet action.<sup>218</sup> Privately, he had indicated to the Soviet leadership his disapproval of militarily strong countries coercing weaker ones.<sup>219</sup> As time went on, his disapproval and concern had increased.<sup>220</sup> By December 1956, with the arrest of Nagy, Nehru had thought of the Soviet stance as “patently wrong,”<sup>221</sup> and was more willing—as was Krishna Menon, who had been hesitant earlier—to take a publicly critical attitude of the Soviet Union.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Cable from Dutt to IndDel Yugoslavia, June 20 and 21, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 54; footnote 2 re Note from Dutt to JLN and Note from JLN to Dutt, June 20, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 650; Letter from JLN to KPS Menon, June 28, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, pp. 653-654; Letter from JLN to CMs, June 30, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, pp. 804-805; Letter from JLN to Sundarlal (Congress leader from UP), June 27, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 732.

<sup>217</sup> Cable from JLN to Mehta, November 5, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 457; For the criticism, see JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, November 16, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 349; Address by JLN to CPP Members, November 15, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 338; Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 39. For Nehru’s concerns about it, see Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, November 11, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 459; Cable from JLN to Mehta and Pandit, November 15, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 462.

<sup>218</sup> JLN, Statement, Lok Sabha, November 19, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 368.

<sup>219</sup> Message from JLN to N.A. Bulganin (Soviet premier), November 6, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 436.

<sup>220</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon (Indian UN delegation chair), November 20, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 470; Message from JLN to Bulganin, November 22, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, pp. 475-476; JLN, Statement, Rajya Sabha, December 3, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 435.

<sup>221</sup> Letter from JLN to Tito, December 2, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 556.

<sup>222</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, December 3, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 560; footnote 4 re Cable from Krishna Menon to JLN, December 6, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 562; Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, December 9, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 566. For Krishna Menon’s earlier reaction, see See footnote 2 re Cable from Krishna Menon to JLN, November 22, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 35*, p. 482 and See footnote 2 re Cable from Krishna Menon to JLN, November 30, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 557.

Between 1956-1958, India's thinking about the Soviet Union went through many ups and downs. Every time officials saw signs of hope that the atmosphere in Moscow was more liberal—post-twentieth Congress in spring 1956, a few months after the Hungarian uprising in spring 1957, when Molotov was expelled in summer 1957—they seemed to be followed by disappointing reversals.<sup>223</sup> Hopes had risen again in spring 1958 as the Soviet Union seemed forthcoming on the question of disarmament.<sup>224</sup> In May, however, when Moscow suspended credits to Yugoslavia because of political differences, Nehru saw it as a “breach of an agreement.” He and other officials wondered about the implications for India.<sup>225</sup> Later, when reports emerged that Moscow was cutting off imports to Finland because of political differences, the Indian foreign secretary sarcastically noted, “Soviet Govt profess that they give aid and do trade without any political strings.”<sup>226</sup> These incidents leant credibility to Yugoslav leader Tito's remark to the Indian ambassador in Belgrade that Moscow wanted “camp-followers” rather than a “fraternity.”<sup>227</sup> The Nagy execution left Nehru even more shocked and “distressed” and he asserted his strong disapproval of Soviet methods.<sup>228</sup> This disapproval did not stay private. In August 1958, the Congress party journal published an article by Nehru that

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<sup>223</sup> Note on JLN-Mikoyan (Soviet first deputy premier) Talk, March 27, 1956, NMML, SDP, SF No. 19; Note from Dutt to JS(West), March 31, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 26; Letter from KPS Menon to Dutt, July 16, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Letter from Dutt to CA Ronning (Canadian High Commissioner in India), September 7, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 52; Note from Dutt to Krishna Menon, October 30, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 51

<sup>224</sup> JLN, Extracts from Lok Sabha discussion, April 9, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 687. Also see JLN at press conference, April 4, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 744 and Cable from Dutt to JLN and embassies enclosing KPS Menon's view of Khrushchev, April 1, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 54.

<sup>225</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, June 15, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, pp. 676-677 and Letter from JLN to CMs, June 9, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 795; Cable from Dutt to IndEmb Yugoslavia, June 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 54; Note from Jung re Meeting with Tito, June 9, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note from Dutt to JLN, June 11, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32.

<sup>226</sup> Note from Dutt to JS(W), January 9, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 40.

<sup>227</sup> Note from Jung re Meeting with Tito, June 11, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32.

<sup>228</sup> Letter from JLN to Pandit, July 1, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, pp. 562-563; Letter from KPS Menon to Dutt, September 8, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; Letter from JLN to Namboodiripad, June 30, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 399.

mentioned communism's "rigidity" and "suppression of human freedom" and that "its unfortunate association with violence encourages a certain evil tendency in human beings."<sup>229</sup>

Concern about Sino-Soviet intentions and approaches also led to continuing and even increasing Indian concerns about external communist influence in the domestic political arena.<sup>230</sup> Nehru asserted that India's communists' "thinking apparatus lives outside India." Their loyalties lay with the external communist parties.<sup>231</sup> He was thoroughly displeased about the bad behavior on the part of the communist party in Kerala. He continued to say that there was neither need nor justification for the center to intervene to dismiss the communist government, but he saw the situation as continuing to deteriorate.<sup>232</sup> It did not help when the Soviet ambassador to China wrote an article responding to Nehru's article from that summer, criticizing Nehru's contentions and the Indian government's economic policies vociferously. To make matters worse, the Soviet diplomat also included statistics to show that China was making greater progress than

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<sup>229</sup> JLN, "The Basic Approach," July 13, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, pp. 3-11. Reprinted in *AICC Economic Review* on August 15, 1958 and as JLN, "The Tragic Paradox of our Age," *NYT*, September 7, 1958, p. SM13.

<sup>230</sup> Note on JLN-Mikoyan Conversation, March 27, 1956, NMML, SDP, SF No. 19; Note from Dutt to JLN, April 10, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; Note from Dutt to JLN, May 1, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; Note from Dutt to JLN re Home Ministry's Advice, November 25, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 30; Note from Dutt to JLN, March 22, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Note from Dutt to JLN re IB Director (DIB) report, April 16, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note from JLN to Dutt, April 17, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Letter from Dayal to Dutt, May 13, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note by Dutt re Meeting with Pillai, BN Jha (home secretary), BN Mullik (DIB), May 21, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Note by Dutt re Meeting with DIB, October 30, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; footnote 3 re Note from GB Pant (home minister), BN Jha and Mullik to JLN, April 15, 1958 and Note from JLN to GB Pant, April 17, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 302.

<sup>231</sup> JLN, Speech at AICC Meeting, May 12, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 526; Letter from JLN to Namboodiripad, June 30, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, pp. 398-399.

<sup>232</sup> Letter from JLN to VR Krishna Iyer (Kerala Law Minister), January 17, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 490; JLN at press conference, July 27, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 604; Letters from JLN to Namboodiripad, July 29 and August 6, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 331, p. 334. Also, see JLN at press conference, July 27, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 604.

India. It left Nehru agreeing with Dutt that the communists only seemed to be getting more rigid.<sup>233</sup>

### **Mediating No More**

It was difficult for Indian policymakers not to compare the different ways the US and the Sino-Soviet bloc dealt with differences during this period. Differences between the US and India on China, for example, had not disappeared. Even in December 1956, however, then ambassador Cooper noted that the two countries had reached the stage where they could “agree to disagree.”<sup>234</sup> This acceptance of differences with the US on China, along with Indian disappointments with China, aided the Indian relationship with the US in two ways. First, it made Delhi less inclined to mediate between Beijing and Washington—reducing the instances where it could be accused of siding with Beijing. Second, it made India more understanding of US policy toward China. This removed a key thorn in the relationship, at least as far as the executive branches were concerned.

Despite contemplating another attempt in 1956 to get China and the US to settle the question of American prisoners being held in China, Nehru decided against getting involved again. Some Indian officials had suggested that the atmosphere in the US made success more likely on this front, and believed that a successful Indian attempt could give Nehru leverage in his upcoming talks with Eisenhower. The prime minister, however, did not think India could do anything more to convince the Chinese leadership to act. China had continued to resist India’s entreaties. Furthermore, Nehru did not want to make any promises about the US reaction to any potential Chinese steps or vice versa. He believed

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<sup>233</sup> Chalmers M. Roberts, “Red Envoy to Peking Hits ‘Distortions’ by Nehru,” *WP*, December 21, 1958, p. A12; Note from Dutt to JLN, January 2, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35 and JLN’s response on the same day. Also, see Letter from Dutt to Jung, February 11, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 57. Khrushchev downplayed its significance of the article, see Letter from KPS Menon to Pillai, February 10, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 57.

<sup>234</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, December 7, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 321.



that Washington, along with Moscow, had taken steps to lessen tensions and he sensed “a belief in the US of the failure of their Asian policy and a desire to change it.” He did not think, however, that Washington’s China policy would change till at least after the American election. Finally, mediation would let China and the US off the hook in terms of talking to each other directly.<sup>235</sup> So Nehru decided against becoming an intermediary. He authorized his ambassador in Beijing to give Zhou a sense of the trends detected, but not to give any formal advice.<sup>236</sup>

When Nehru travelled to the US that December, Dulles expected him to try to mediate between China and the US for the benefit of Sino-Indian relations. China indeed came up in conversations with both Eisenhower and Dulles. Overall, however, Nehru was less activist. Publicly, too, then and a year later he brushed aside the idea of India being “a bridge” between China and the US, stating that it was unnecessary and caused India too much embarrassment. He merely expressed “hope” that eventually the two countries would come to an understanding.<sup>237</sup>

Meetings with Eisenhower, Dulles and Zhou in quick succession that winter seemed to change Nehru’s attitude in a key way that would benefit US-India relations. Before Nehru’s visit to the US, he had passed on to Zhou Krishna Menon’s observations from the US that releasing the prisoners would be in China’s interest and not be a sign of weakness. He asserted that their continued captivity was not pressuring the US

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<sup>235</sup> Note from JLN to Pillai and FonSec, May 18, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 33*, p. 468; Note from JLN to Pillai and FonSec, May 20, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 33*, p. 468; footnote 3 re Telegram from R.K. Nehru to JLN on meeting with Zhou in December 1955, May 22, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 33*, p. 469; Cable from JLN to RK Nehru, May 22, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 33*, p. 470; Cable from JLN to RK Nehru, May 27, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 33*, p. 471; Letter from JLN to U Nu, April 6, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 32*, p. 344.

<sup>236</sup> JLN’s Note to FonSec, June 3, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 33*, p. 472.

<sup>237</sup> Telegram from Dulles to DoS, Paris, December 12, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 326; JLN at the National Press Building, Washington, December 19, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 505. Also, see JLN’s Interview with Chief Political Editor of *Asahi Shimbun*, Hakone, October 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 555; JLN Interview with Edgar McInnes (President, Canadian Institute of International Affairs), Ottawa, December 23, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 530.

government as Beijing intended and instead made it seem like China was holding hostages.<sup>238</sup> Zhou had dismissed his advice, noting that there was no point taking any such step since previous releases had borne no fruit and no progress was possible for a while anyway.<sup>239</sup>

In the US, Nehru noted that China—especially its imprisonment of Americans—was the only issue that really riled up Eisenhower.<sup>240</sup> The president highlighted US efforts to come to agreement with China, a country he called “a number one priority.” He told Nehru that the existing state of Sino-US relations, marred by the legacy of Korea, was neither normal nor sustainable, but the prisoner question continued to be a stumbling block. Dulles reiterated the latter point.<sup>241</sup>

Nehru had come to understand that this was a major subject of “controversy” in the US, even though China might consider it a small matter.<sup>242</sup> In subsequent conversations with Zhou, he noted that he believed Eisenhower’s contention that he did not subscribe to the views of the China lobby, but was bound by the atmosphere that the lobby and Chinese actions had helped create. Nehru told Zhou that continued imprisonment of the prisoners only helped the China lobby. He did not think that the issue was important enough to hold a relationship hostage over; that “major developments are held up for this rather small matter.”<sup>243</sup> Nehru seemed a bit fed up, noting that despite his pleading, Zhou did not “budge an inch.” He thought Zhou’s

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<sup>238</sup> Letter from JLN to Zhou, December 5, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 581.

<sup>239</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, December 7, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 582.

<sup>240</sup> Letter from JLN to Norman Cousins, February 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 469.

<sup>241</sup> JLN Note re Talks with Eisenhower, January 8, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 543; Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, December 19, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, pp. 337-338; Memcon of Dulles-JLN Meeting, December 16, 1956, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 329. Delhi had also received reports that this was the case: See Extracts from the Monthly Political Reports from Indian ConGen Geneva, September, November and December 1956, NAI, File No. 73(37)-AMS/55.

<sup>242</sup> JLN Interview with McInnes, Ottawa, December 23, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 530.

<sup>243</sup> Record of JLN’s Talks with Zhou, Delhi, January 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, pp. 606-609.

explanations of the continuing imprisonment were not “adequate.”<sup>244</sup> During another conversation with Zhou, after listening to the premier list American faults and China’s desire for peace, Nehru asserted that merely criticizing the other side would do little to achieve peace and only exacerbate tensions.<sup>245</sup>

While earlier Nehru had seen the US as the intransigent country in Sino-US interactions, by spring 1957 he came to question the Chinese leadership’s desire for a peaceful relationship with the US. He especially perceived Beijing’s continuing imprisonment of Americans as “extraordinarily foolish.” On the one hand, since the US had long made it clear that no progress in the Sino-US relationship was possible without the release of the prisoners, Nehru wondered if the Chinese leadership really wanted the relationship to progress. On the other hand, the Indian prime minister had detected—even from Dulles who he saw as a hawk—a desire, even “anxious[ness]” to improve Sino-US relations.<sup>246</sup> Later that year, when he expressed that “early reconciliation” between China and the US was not possible because of continuing difficulties, it was clear that he thought that on the American end at least there had been progress. He believed there was increasing acknowledgement of “the facts of the situation” in the US, which was more practical than before. Furthermore, he thought that people in the US were “realistic and businesslike” and would eventually come to acknowledge that they needed to recognize China.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Note by JLN to Pillai, R.K. Nehru and Apa Pant re Talks with Zhou-IV, January 1, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 618; Letter from JLN to Bandaranaike, January 21, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 620; Letter from JLN to Bowles (private citizen at the time), February 27, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 729.

<sup>245</sup> Summary of JLN’s Talks with Zhou, Delhi, January 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 636.

<sup>246</sup> Letter from JLN to Norman Cousins, February 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, p. 469; Note from JLN to Krishna Menon, Pillai and Mehta re Talks with Dulles, Washington, December 16, 1956, *SWJN SS Vol. 36*, pp. 480-481.

<sup>247</sup> JLN at the fifth meeting of the Commonwealth PMs’ Conference, London, June 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 613; JLN’s Interview with Chief Political Editor of *Asahi Shimbun*, Hakone, October 6, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 555.

Between fall 1957 and the end of 1958, as Sino-Indian relations were on a definite downswing, for Indian policymakers the contrast between the American attitude and approach and those of the communists in general and the Chinese in particular only seemed to increase. In the note written in summer 1958 that was published in India and abroad, Nehru's view of this contrast was evident. Communism, according to him, had become "too closely associated with the necessity for violence...Means distorted ends." It had been "tainted." As for the other bloc:

Communism charges the capitalist structure of society with being based on violence and class conflict. I think this is essentially correct, though that capitalist structure itself has undergone and is continually undergoing a change because of democratic and other forces...Democracy allied to capitalism has undoubtedly toned down many of its evils and, in fact, it is different now from what it was a generation or two ago...Capitalism itself has, therefore, developed some socialistic features...<sup>248</sup>

While Beijing's attitude seemed to be more rigid and intolerant of differences with other countries, Washington's approach continued to show improvement as far as Delhi was concerned. By early 1958, US officials were commenting on the "harmonious" nature of the relationship over the recent period. Later that year, analysts noted that—privately, at least—Nehru had seemed to be "somewhat more sympathetic" to the US.<sup>249</sup>

#### **DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES**

Differences had not disappeared between the two countries, even on China, but the two governments worked toward handling them better. This was evident in the two countries' reaction to the second Taiwan Strait crisis in 1958. In the second half of August, China began shelling the offshore islands and subsequently, even after the shelling decreased, tried to blockade Taiwan. The Eisenhower administration believed

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<sup>248</sup> Note by JLN, July 13, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 5.

<sup>249</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, March 12, 1958, quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 422; NIE 51-58, September 2, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 460.

that the loss of the offshore islands would adversely affect Jiang's government and, in turn, Taiwanese security and thus US credibility and interests. The American aim during the crisis was both to support and restrain Taipei. By backing Taipei with military assets and public declarations of support, Washington tried to pressure Beijing to back down. Subsequently, it also resumed talks with China at Warsaw. By mid-September the US was convinced that the crisis had de-escalated. By the end of the month, the Chinese blockade ended as a result of American efforts. American attempts to convince Jiang to withdraw from the offshore islands, however, were less successful. Eventually there was a ceasefire in early October.<sup>250</sup>

Delhi always thought of the Taiwan issue as creating sticky situations for India, which felt stuck between China and the US. Indian policymakers did not believe Chinese accusations that the US would use Taiwan to attack China.<sup>251</sup> The crisis, however, caused Nehru "grave concern" because of the potential for escalation. Internally, he contended that the root cause of the problem was the lack of American recognition of China. He did not, however, agree with the Chinese use of force.<sup>252</sup> There had been continued Indian frustration with the US lack of recognition of China and Beijing's lack of representation at the UN. Non-recognition only meant that China would not owe any "obligations" to the international community—this, Nehru had privately emphasized, was "dangerous." Furthermore, he thought it kept China in Soviet arms.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Christensen, pp. 195-198; Robert Accinelli, "'A Thorn in the Side of Peace:' The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis," in *Re-examining the Cold War*, p. 107.

<sup>251</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, October 18, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Note from Dutt to JLN, June 2, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; footnote 2 re Cables from RK Nehru to JLN re Talk with Zhou, May 21 and June 1, 1957; Cable from JLN to RK Nehru, June 5, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 746-747.

<sup>252</sup> Draft Message from JLN to Macmillan (British PM), September 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33.

<sup>253</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, June 2, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; Note from Dutt to Director-General (Post and Telegraph), July 10, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; JLN, Press conference, Stockholm, June 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 574; JLN at the fifth meeting of the Commonwealth PMs' Conference, London, June 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 610, p. 614.

Publicly, during the crisis, Nehru only reiterated India's position that Taiwan belonged to China, but China did not have the right to use force to take over Taiwan or the offshore islands. Krishna Menon's more activist stance at the UN, pushing for a vote on Chinese representation and assigning blame to Taipei, however, created consternation in Washington.<sup>254</sup> When the crisis had broken out, Dulles had actually liked the idea of potentially using Delhi to convey messages to Beijing. After Krishna Menon's statements, however, others like the UN secretary-general and Norwegian foreign minister thought India was "too partial" to be a mediator. By this point, Dulles agreed that the US could not use India in that role. Subsequently, rather than railing against the Indian role publicly, US officials quietly worked to exclude Krishna Menon. Senior State Department officials also did not seem to assign much blame to Nehru for the vocal Indian position at the UN, noting that he was probably getting erroneous reports.<sup>255</sup> On India's part, embassy officials in Washington subsequently gave Dulles "credit" for restraining Jiang.<sup>256</sup>

Another subject of difference between India and the US continued to be the US relationship with Pakistan. Indian concerns remained about the US military supply to Pakistan, the lack of awareness of the magnitude and type of aid Pakistan was receiving, the fact that US supply to Pakistan required India to divert resources from development to defense expenditure, as well as due to the sense that Pakistan was more intransigent

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<sup>254</sup> Chalmers M. Roberts, "Little Gain Expected in US-Peking Talks," *WP*, September 8, 1958, p. A1; Note from Dutt to JS(E) and JS(W), September 8, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33.

<sup>255</sup> Telcons Between Dulles and Parsons, Herter and Parsons, and Dulles and Herter, August 27, 1958, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960 Volume XIX: China* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1995) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*], p. 88; Memo from the Counselor of the US Mission to the UN (Barco) to Dulles, September 25, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 276; Memcon of Dulles-Hammarskjold Meeting, New York, September 27, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 287; Telegram from Herter to Lodge, October 3, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, pp. 326-327.

<sup>256</sup> K. Dalal, Annual Political Report for 1958 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(9)-AMS/59.

because of military aid.<sup>257</sup> Nehru's criticism of the US-Pakistan military supply relationship, however, was more measured in public. Furthermore, privately and publicly, he acknowledged that the US did not want these weapons used against India and that he did not mistrust American motives.<sup>258</sup> While highlighting India's concern about the implementation of US assurances regarding Pakistani use of US-supplied weapons, he also noted that he did not doubt the "genuineness" of the assurances."<sup>259</sup>

When news reports emerged of US military activity in Pakistan-held Kashmir, instead of reacting publicly, Nehru asked his officials to seek clarification from the US privately. The US ambassador, in turn, denied that there were US "installations" there. US policymakers also repeatedly reassured India about the guarantees they had elicited from Pakistan about not using US equipment against India. Furthermore, they noted that the US would not allow Pakistan to attack India. Finally, they assured their Indian counterparts that their estimates of US military supply to Pakistan were exaggerated.<sup>260</sup>

There also continued to be Indian concern about who exactly the pacts that Pakistan was part of were directed against, but on this, too, the US offered signs of

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<sup>257</sup> JLN, Speech, Fateh Maidan, Hyderabad, February 22, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 9; Note from Dutt to Defence Secretary, June 26, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27; Letter from Chagla (Indian ambassador to the US) to JLN re Meeting with Dulles, November 25, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 56; Letter from JLN to GD Birla (Industrialist), April 2, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, pp. 391-392; JLN, Speech during the Lok Sabha debate on the demands for grants of the MEA, July 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 465; footnote 8 re Cable from Krishna Menon to JLN, November 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 491; Letter from JLN to Eisenhower, June 7, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 625.

<sup>258</sup> JLN's Interview with CBS, July 3, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 622; Note on JLN-Mikoyan Conversation, March 28, 1956, NMML, SDP, SF No. 19.

<sup>259</sup> JLN, Speech, Fateh Maidan, Hyderabad, February 22, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 9. Also, see Note from JLN to Dutt, April 4, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 37*, p. 498; Note from Dutt to HC Sarin (defence ministry), July 1, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29.

<sup>260</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt and MJ Desai, September 23, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, p. 683; Note from Dutt to JLN re Meeting with Bunker, October 23, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29; Note on JLN's Conversations with Dulles, March 10, 1956, NMML, SDP, SF No. 87 and Letter from Chagla to JLN re Meeting with Dulles, November 25, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 56; Note from Dutt to Defense Minister re Bunker's report on his talks in Washington, June 19, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 28 and Note from Dutt to JLN re Meeting with Bunker, October 23, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 29.

reassurance. India approvingly noted reports that indicated that the US had specified its participation in SEATO as directed against communist aggression and had been cautious about Pakistan's attempts to discuss Kashmir at a council meeting. Nehru pointed out that the US and the UK opposed Pakistani attempts to discuss Kashmir at a subsequent Baghdad Pact meeting. Later, when the Pakistani prime minister publicly called for CENTO countries to be equipped with nuclear weapons, Nehru highlighted the US assertion that it would not give these weapons to other states. He publicly stated that he was "gratified" that the US had turned down the Pakistani demand and "deserves to be praised" for doing so.<sup>261</sup>

When the UN was scheduled to discuss Kashmir, American officials also discussed in advance with Indian officials the line that the US was going to take. Bunker told Nehru that the harsh public statements that Krishna Menon had nevertheless subsequently made were "gravely imperil[ing]" the goodwill that had developed in the US. Nehru assured the ambassador that "there was no question of our considering US as hostile to India," which was itself "anxious" for American friendship. He asserted that he wanted to separate the issue of Kashmir from the broader US-India relationship. India did not like the subsequent US-UK proposal on Kashmir and Nehru wanted to oppose it unequivocally. Nevertheless, he reiterated to Krishna Menon that any statements he made should be "short and dignified." Making clear of his disapproval of Krishna Menon's behavior, Nehru also stressed that he should avoid hostile references "and attacks on motives of sponsors." He noted that the US was indeed trying to moderate the US-UK proposal. He stated that there had been a negative reaction both in India and abroad to his

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<sup>261</sup> Note from Dutt to DHD, June 11, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27. Note from Dutt to RS Mani (Indian ambassador to Iraq), June 11, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 50; MEA, Special Report on SEATO, March 1956, NMML, SDP, SF No. 92; Letter from JLN to CMs, June 12, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 789; JLN, Speech, Delhi, January 30, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 19; JLN, Speech, Maharaja's College, Jaipur, February 2, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 43.



speeches and the government had to consider its interests outside the UN.<sup>262</sup> Nehru also publicly stressed that he “regretted very much” Krishna Menon’s remarks.<sup>263</sup>

There was American hope that India and Pakistan would reduce the strain in their relationship and even attempts to urge them to do so—both because it would allow them to focus on development and because it would make it easier to get aid for them through Congress.<sup>264</sup> The US, however, refused to withhold aid from India to push it towards a settlement despite Pakistani calls that it to do so. Dulles asserted to Pakistani officials that it was in Pakistan’s interest that the US aid neutral countries like India. After all, “what this country was doing in India was needed to prevent India from going the way of China.”<sup>265</sup>

Overall, it was clear that during this period both sides tried to deal with their differences in a better way. One was by handling them with care and, to the extent possible, privately. Nehru, for example, was careful to keep most criticism and concern private.<sup>266</sup> If the government was going to express concern about any international issues publicly, his instructions were to do so “without going too far.”<sup>267</sup> Nehru also tried to

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<sup>262</sup> Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, October 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 39*, pp. 508-509; Cables from JLN to Krishna Menon, November 16 and 18, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 490 and p. 492; JLN’s comments at a meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee on foreign affairs, November 15, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 48; Cables from JLN to Krishna Menon, November 19 and 20, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, pp. 493-494; Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, November 22, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 495; footnote 2 re Cable from Krishna Menon to JLN, November 22, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 496;; Cable from JLN to Krishna Menon, November 24, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 496.

<sup>263</sup> JLN, Statement in the Lok Sabha, November 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 523.

<sup>264</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 149. Also, see Memcon of Eisenhower-Radhakrishnan Meeting, March 19, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 426-427. Also, see Memcon of Morarji Desai-Dillon-Coughran Meeting, September 8, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 464.

<sup>265</sup> Memcon of Dulles-Amjad Ali Meeting, Washington, April 30, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 95 and Airgram from Langley (AmEmb Pakistan) to Rountree, September 2, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 137-139.

<sup>266</sup> Letter from JLN to Pandit, January 12, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 685; Letter from JLN to Mountbatten, January 28, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 689 and Message from JLN to Tito, January 13, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, pp. 741-742. Also, see Cable from Dutt to Mehta, June 21, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 50.

<sup>267</sup> Note from JLN to Dutt, April 2, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 728.

temper public criticism. When there was criticism about Dulles' reported lack of desire to invite India to a summit conference, for example, Nehru refused to criticize him and said that Indians should accept Dulles' reasonable explanation.<sup>268</sup> Overall, government policy as the foreign secretary laid out for Indian diplomats was to limit comment on developments in other countries and refrain from initiatives that did not concern India.<sup>269</sup> Nehru himself declined to participate in some joint declarations and nonaligned summits on the grounds that they were neither desirable nor feasible.<sup>270</sup>

The second way was by de-emphasizing differences. In both governments there seemed to be a belief that the agreement they had reached that they were crucial to each other's broader strategies trumped disagreements on most issues.<sup>271</sup> Dulles bluntly noted that India's success was so crucial that it "over[ode] any areas of difference." Bunker noted his pleasant surprise that "Washington has somehow come to believe that as a matter of cold fact it is not in the United States' interest to see India's economy collapse notwithstanding divergencies [sic] in foreign policy and other irritants which from time to time are apparently bound to develop."<sup>272</sup> Eisenhower and Radhakrishnan concurred, "we had our differences but that they were not vital."<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> JLN at press conference, August 7, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, pp. 610-611.

<sup>269</sup> See footnote 5 re Note by Dutt, April 2, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 42*, p. 728; Note from Dutt to JS(W) re Lall speech in NY, June 23, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Letter from Dutt to Tyabji (IndEmb FRG), January 24, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 57; Note from Dutt to Krishna Menon, March 18, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 31; Record of Talks between JLN and Grotewohl (GDR PM), January 12, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 40.

<sup>270</sup> Letter from JLN to Tito, July 17, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 468; Letter from JLN to U Nu, July 18, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 472 and Cable from JLN to Pandit, July 18, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 475. Also, JLN, Speech, Lok Sabha, August 14, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 510; Letter from JLN to Jung (Indian ambassador to Yugoslavia), July 24, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 492.

<sup>271</sup> Memcon of Dulles-Krishnamachari Meeting, September 25, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 376; Letter from Bunker to Eisenhower, November 15, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 403. Also see footnote 2 re Letter from Herter to Bunker, December 12, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 404.

<sup>272</sup> Memcon of Dulles-Mehta Meeting, January 17, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 420; Letter from Bunker to Bartlett, December 9, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 473.

<sup>273</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-Radhakrishnan Meeting, March 19, 1958, *Ibid* p. 427.

## Chapter 4: Semi-Detached Ally? (1959-1962)

To say that the American attitude today is noticeably friendly to India in contrast to the past is to state the obvious. Our country seems to be on the uppermost level of consciousness of the internationally-minded section of Americans...It is not enough to say that India has gained favour in American eyes because there has recently been an upsurge of military authoritarianism in West and South Asia. This no doubt has been a potent factor in shaping American attitude to India, but it is made obvious to us here that the main motivating factor in this context has been fear of China.

– MC Chagla, 1959<sup>1</sup>

What has moved India toward us in the last few years? Essentially it isn't our policy or our increasing generosity in supporting India's ambitious five-year plans. It is the Chinese pressures on the northeast frontier. Over time, the conflict of interest between Peiping and Delhi will almost certainly grow rather than decrease. And sooner or later the Indians will come to realize that the arena of conflict is not only along the Himalayas but in Southeast Asia as well.

– Robert Komer, 1962<sup>2</sup>

By 1959, there was already convergence in American and Indian views on the symbolic and psychological threat that China posed and the two countries had come to agree on how to meet the challenge. Two key developments in 1959—the intensifying Sino-Indian border dispute and an uprising in Tibet—would bring convergence in their views of China as a security threat as well. This convergence on China affected the US-India relationship in two ways. First, it removed an obstacle to further improvement in the relationship. Second, in and of itself, it led to a strategic partnership, with joint efforts to contain China.

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<sup>1</sup> Fortnightly Political Report for February 1-15, 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-I.

<sup>2</sup> Memo from Komer (Kennedy NSC staff) to Bundy (Kennedy National Security Advisor), January 6, 1962, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963: South Asia, Volume XIX* [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*] (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1996), p. 180.

During this period American extended sympathy and support for India in its dispute with China. India would eventually also request—and the US would provide—American military assistance and efforts to restrain Pakistan during the Sino-Indian war of 1962. Finally, the closer US-India ties involved increased US development assistance to India. When the question about whether India and the US have come together against China is asked, the answer is usually seen through a military lens and thus it is only with the 1962 war that the US and India are seen as coming together. Even before that point, however, China had brought the two countries together in a significant way on the economic plane. This engagement only increased between 1959-1961. In the few years before, there had been in the US both hope that India would succeed and fear that it might fail. By 1959, the former sense dominated, leading to discussions of whether the US should think beyond trying to help India become a successful democratic alternative to communist China to helping it become a counterbalance to that country.

### **INDIA LIKES IKE (1959-1960)**

#### **The Friendliest Feelings**

By 1959, US policymakers testifying in Congress noted that it was not even worth elaborating upon why India's success was so crucial for the non-communist world since that fact had been already so well established. That spring, Sens. Cooper and Kennedy once again introduced a resolution outlining the importance of sending a study team to India to consider its needs further. This time they couched it in terms of South Asia, trying to address the previous year's criticism in the House that they had focused too much on one country. At a May conference on India and the United States both Nixon and Kennedy spoke out vociferously in support of aid for India—each, as Merrill notes, vying “for recognition as India's best friend.” Nixon asserted that as far as he was

concerned, “what happens in India...could be as important or could be even more important in the long run, than what happens in the negotiations with regard to Berlin.” There was a competition between “two great peoples in Asia.” The result would have an effect across the globe.<sup>3</sup>

In the US, most of the talk of India was now in terms of its potential for achievement.<sup>4</sup> There was enough confidence that there were debates at the most senior level on whether the American objective should “be something more ambitious.” National Security Advisor Gordon Gray laid out the question: “Was India to serve as a counter-weight to Communist China or was India to be a successful example of an alternative to Communism in Asia?” Eisenhower emphasized that it was not a “black and white” question. He hoped that some day India would be a “greater counterweight” to China, but did not think that the US could use India as a counterweight since Delhi did not want to play that role. Moreover, in the near term, the US would “bankrupt” itself trying to achieve that goal. Nonetheless, it was “obviously important for the U.S. to help India to prove itself.” There seemed to be agreement with Dillon’s assertion that it was not sufficient just to “prevent India from going communist.” The US needed to help lay the basis for long-term Indian success. If India succeeded, it “might well prove to be a counter-attraction if not a counterweight to Communist China.”<sup>5</sup>

This was especially important in the context of what the NSC saw as increasing Chinese power that was changing the dynamics in South Asia and threatening “free

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<sup>3</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 147; Testimony of Rountree, April 14, 1959, *Selected Executive Sessions of the House Foreign Affairs Committee 1957-1960 Vol. XX: Mutual Security Act of 1959* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1983) [hereafter *HFAC Executive Sessions Vol. XX MSA 1959*], p. 165; and Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, May 5, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 482.

<sup>4</sup> NSC Planning Board Paper: Issues Affecting US Policy Toward South Asia, May 26, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Memo of Discussion of 408<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, May 28, 1959, *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

world” interests in Asia. Thus, it was essential to continue to invest in “developing in India a successful alternative to Communism in an Asiatic context.”<sup>6</sup> Administration officials argued on the Hill that increasing Chinese economic strength meant that the US had to help India compete.<sup>7</sup> In internal discussions, some like Gray wondered if the US could find a way to move to a multi-year basis for assistance exclusively in the case of India to achieve such a purpose.<sup>8</sup> Overall, for the administration it was crucial that India not lose the momentum it had gained because “Asia and Africa will be watching and comparing” Delhi and Beijing’s achievements.<sup>9</sup>

It was not just African and other Asian countries comparing India’s progress with that of China. As CIA Director Allen Dulles pointed out, there were fears in India about falling behind China as well.<sup>10</sup> In Delhi, having seen reports of Chinese development, the foreign secretary indeed asked

What lesson is one to draw from the phenomenal progress made by China? There is no easy answer. One might be prepared to sacrifice ‘the mechanism of free enterprise’ but are we prepared to write an obituary...on political liberties? At the same time, of what good are political liberties if they mean lack of the minimum necessities of life for millions?<sup>11</sup>

Indian officials wanted to examine what India could learn from its neighbor. Then, however, reports of food shortages started to emerge from China. A few months later Dillon noticed that in India the previous concern about Chinese economic progress had

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<sup>6</sup> NSC Planning Board Paper: Issues Affecting US Policy Toward South Asia, May 26, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 1.

Also, see NSC 5909/1: Statement of US Policy Toward South Asia, August 21, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Testimony of Leland Barrows (Regional Director, NESAC, ICA), April 14, 1959, *HFAC Executive Sessions Vol. XX MSA 1959*, p. 187.

<sup>8</sup> Memo of Discussion of 408<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, May 28, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> NSC 5909/1, August 21, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> See reference to Memo of Discussion of 408<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, May 28, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 493.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Dutt to NB Menon (IndHC Canada), February 2, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 57.

diminished quite a bit. The Indian finance minister told him that Chinese claims had been exaggerated.<sup>12</sup>

In the US, there continued to be some concern about India's comparative strength and some intelligence officials also worried about its political stability.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, there was a sense that the Indian government understood the internal threat and the need to contain or combat it.<sup>14</sup> That summer, Allen Dulles happily pointed out that the communists in Kerala were serving as a negative example. Earlier, US officials had believed that Nehru would not be inclined to act against the communists. They had predicted, however, that he might not be left with much choice. Sure enough, Nehru dismissed the communist government in Kerala that July. In the US, this boosted his non-communist credentials. There was a sense that the communists' actions in Kerala, along with the Chinese crackdown in Tibet that spring, had facilitated Indian understanding of the ugly side of communism in general and China in particular. When the communists were defeated in the subsequent elections in Kerala in early 1960, the administration sought subtle ways to use the defeat and the lack of effectiveness of the Kerala communists for propaganda. Allen Dulles pointed that it created hope since it was the first time communist rule had been overthrown. State Department official Livingston Merchant, however, saw it as a "reprieve" rather than a "victory." Allen Dulles agreed and emphasized that it was crucial not to let the guard down.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from Parthasarathi to Dutt, March 6, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 5; Note from Dutt to President, Vice President, Home Minister forwarding Parthasarathi's note of May 22 on JLN's Instructions, June 9, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36. Also, see Letter from Dasgupta (IndEmb China) to Ranganathan (Commerce Secretary), May 21, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36; Memcon of Dillon-Jiang Meeting, Taipei, October 21, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 618; Letter from Morarji Desai to JLN, October 10-12, 1959, NAI, File No. 52(46)-AMS/59.

<sup>13</sup> Allen Dulles' view. See reference to Memo of Discussion of 408<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, May 28, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 493.

<sup>14</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India (Brown) to DoS, May 28, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 495.

<sup>15</sup> Memo of Discussion of 411<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, June 25, 1959 and Memo of Discussion of 412<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, July 9, 1959, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 502; NSC 5909/1, August 21, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 31; footnote 3 re

This meant a continuing need to strengthen India, one of the crucial “islands of development” in the “free world.” Discussions about the country’s third five-year plan, scheduled to start in 1961, made clear that India envisioned over \$20 billion of expenditure.<sup>16</sup> In earlier discussions, American officials had stressed the need for the plan to be “realistic.”<sup>17</sup> Nehru, frustrated about questions at home about whether India’s next plan would be as ambitious as the second one, had also emphasized that he did not again want to have to ask for “big loans.” That hope, however, had not been realized. Earlier in 1959, BK Nehru had asked about potential American support for the next plan. The Indian finance minister would note that “in order to reach self-sustaining point,” India needed a large plan and more foreign exchange. India also continued to need food. While Nehru had not wanted to continue to import food, as a government committee had emphasized in 1957, the country would continue to need to import food grains for the foreseeable future.<sup>18</sup>

For Indian policymakers, a lot rode on American assistance. Beyond the aid itself, officials appreciated that the US was respecting the terms of previous agreements.<sup>19</sup> They publicly continued to welcome aid.<sup>20</sup> They appreciated the advocacy efforts of administration officials like Dulles and congress members like Cooper and Kennedy.

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Memo from Gordon Gray (NSA) to Maj. Gen. William Persons, February 8, 1960, *Ibid*, p. 530; Memo from O’Connor (Operations Coordinator) to Jones (AS/S NESAA) re OCB Meeting, February 10, 1960, *Ibid*, p. 530; Special Report Prepared by the OCB: Exploitation of Kerala Elections, February 17, 1960, *Ibid*, p. 532; Memo of Discussion of 434<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, February 4, 1960, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 528.

<sup>16</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 148, p. 165.

<sup>17</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, July 16, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 443 and Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, August 26, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 450-451. British officials had concurred in this assessment and recommendation. See Memcon of Meeting with the British to Exchange Information on the Sino-Soviet Bloc’s Economic Activities in India, July 10, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 506-507.

<sup>18</sup> JLN, Speech at 4<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Farmers, March 15, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 179; footnote 4 re Report of Foodgrains Enquiry Committee, November 19, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 160.

<sup>19</sup> Note from Dutt to Pillai and Finance Secretary, February 20, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 40.

<sup>20</sup> JLN’s Remarks in the Lok Sabha, March 17, 1959, NAI, File No. 54(2)-AMS/59.



Pleased Indian officials noticed that even those who had been previously reluctant to aid India appeared to have come around to seeing the necessity to do so. Even Nixon seemed to have become a convert to the cause of aiding India on a large and continuing basis. It left Indian officials wondering whether his “metamorphosis” had anything to do with his presidential ambitions. If that was the case, it seemed to them that “advocacy of increased economic aid to India is, in the current mental climate of the United States, a politically popular move.”<sup>21</sup> They realized that this support for India was because of the “race” with China. The military takeovers in Burma, Pakistan and Thailand had made the Indian democratic contrast even more important.<sup>22</sup> Officials hoped that this support would translate to long-term funding, but realistically expected few changes in the foreign aid program in the near future.<sup>23</sup>

Congressional sentiments and treasury’s concerns indeed continued to limit the administration’s ability to put aid on a long-term basis.<sup>24</sup> Congress also controlled the size of the DLF, which remained key to US efforts to aid India.<sup>25</sup> There had been, however, a change in the foreign aid debate on the Hill in a way that could potentially help India. Senators like Fulbright proposed thinking about a long-term DLF. He also emphasized that the administration should focus on aiding countries economically rather than militarily. It further helped that some representatives who had earlier been India skeptics, had come around to the view that it was important to aid India—even if it was neutral.

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<sup>21</sup> Fortnightly Political Report for April 16-30, 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-I; Fortnightly Political Report for May 1-15, 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-II.

<sup>22</sup> K. Dalal, Annual Political Report for 1958 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(9)-AMS/59.

<sup>23</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, May 5, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 482; Fortnightly Political Report for April 1-15, 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-I

<sup>24</sup> Memo of Discussion of 408<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, May 28, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru-LK Jha (Economic Affairs Secretary-designate) Meeting, May 23, 1960, *Ibid*, pp. 540-541. Also, see Memcon of Morarji Desai-Dillon Meeting, September 26, 1960, *Ibid*, p. 555.

For FY1960, Congress approved close to \$200 million.<sup>26</sup> An American official noted that there was general consensus on the need for Indian economic development and the need for US aid to ensure that development. The public and congressional climate was also likely to continue to be favorable as a result of Sino-Indian differences becoming evident.<sup>27</sup>

Some officials continued to be concerned about Moscow's competing efforts and its intentions in India. There was a sense that seeing Indian momentum, Moscow had decided to help India succeed after all, but through public sector expansion. There were continued discussions of US attractiveness to and advantages in India versus those of the Soviet Union. British officials pointed out that the Indian government was wary of increased Soviet political and economic influence and had taken steps to limit it. Overall, most policymakers expected Delhi not to look too much to Moscow and to continue to try to diversify its dependence.<sup>28</sup>

For the same reason, there continued to be little expectation that India would "align with" the US on all issues. Nonetheless, it was to strengthen India. The risks of a weak India were "far greater" than those of a strong, albeit neutral, India over the long run. At most, the administration could encourage "recognition of its community of interest with the Free World."<sup>29</sup> When Eisenhower travelled to India in late 1959—on a three-week multi-nation tour before which he admitted that he was "doing all this just to

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<sup>26</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru Meeting, May 5, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 482. Also, see views of Sen. Morse. Testimony of Allen Dulles (DCI) February 7, 1958, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Vol. X – 85<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session 1958* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1980) [hereafter *SFRC Executive Sessions Vol. X 85-2 1958*], pp. 113-114; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> Memo from Smith (AS/S PP) to Herter, November 24, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 519-520.

<sup>28</sup> AmEmb India Paper: Soviet Economic Offensive in India, May 12, 1959, *Ibid*, pp. 483-489; see Bunker's assessment in Memo from O'Connor to Jones re OCB Meeting, August 5, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 513; Memcon of Meeting with the British to Exchange Information on the Sino-Soviet Bloc's Economic Activities in India, July 10, 1959, *Ibid*, pp. 505-508.

<sup>29</sup> NSC 5909/1, August 21, 1959, *Ibid*, pp. 37-38.

get to India”<sup>30</sup>—he made clear to Nehru that the US did not want India to join any collective security arrangements. Washington just wanted Delhi not to “openly oppose us on this.”<sup>31</sup>

Indian policymakers, in turn, continued to be concerned about the political and economic climate in the US and its impact on aid for India. They worried about the budget bureau and treasury’s desire to cut foreign aid. They also worried that advocacy for aid for other countries would decrease the amounts that India would receive. On the other hand, they noted with relief that some members of congress such as Sens. Fulbright, Mansfield and Morse were increasingly highlighting the benefits of economic aid relative to military aid. To help make India’s case, on a visit to the US that fall, the Indian finance minister repeatedly assured his audiences that India would not just welcome aid but private capital. He emphasized that India was trying its best “to consolidate our political freedom by economic progress.” Indian officials were hopeful that growing concern about Moscow moving ahead in the missile and industrial growth race and continuing concerns about China would drive calls for more aid for India.<sup>32</sup>

Over the rest of the administration, there was indeed concern about increasing Chinese military superiority. Consequently, it continued to be important for India to beat or match China on the economic front—if India continued to progress economically, it would be the right kind of model for the rest of Asia.<sup>33</sup> In May 1960, the administration

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<sup>30</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-Lord Plowden (UK AEA Chairman) Meeting, November 13, 1959, Ibid, p. 521.

<sup>31</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Delhi, December 13, 1959, Ibid, p. 525.

<sup>32</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report for September 1-15, 1959 and Political Report (November 1959) in NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-III; Note from Dutt to JS(W), January 13, 1959 and Note from Dutt to US(AMS), January 22, 1959 in NMML, SDP, SF No. 40; IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report for April 16-30, 1959, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-I; Fortnightly Political Reports for May 1-15, May 16-31, June 1-16 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-II; Letter from Morarji Desai to JLN, October 20, 1959, NAI, File No. 52(46)-AMS/59; IndEmb US, Annual Political Report for 1959, NAI, File No. 50(14)-AMS/60.

<sup>33</sup> NIE 100-2-60: Sino-Indian Relations, May 17, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 664.

signed another PL480 agreement—the four-year \$1.276 billion program was the largest of its kind. There was reportedly even consideration within the outgoing administration of proposing an increased amount of \$300 million for India for FY1961.<sup>34</sup> Even in the last few months of the administration, as Dillon noted, US interest in India’s economic development had “not slackened.”<sup>35</sup> There was a sense of achievement. An intelligence assessment in October 1960 noted that “long-term” threats remained to India’s stability and unity, but highlighted the “considerable progress in constructing the foundations of a modern democratic state” that India had made. Furthermore, the assessment emphasized that India would continue to look to the “free world” rather than the communist world for further assistance.<sup>36</sup> One of the many reasons for that was that the communist world did not look as friendly to India as it had in the past.

### **From Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai to Chou En-lai Hai Hai**

In 1957, Nehru had commented, “All history shows us that friends and allies sometimes become enemies and enemies become friends, and even the history of the last ten years has shown us this.”<sup>37</sup> The next ten years would show how China and India went from being friends to enemies. Two developments in 1959 hastened that process: the Sino-Indian border dispute and the uprising in Tibet. The result was evident the next year in the fact that six years after Indians had greeted Zhou with chants of “Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai” (Indians and Chinese are brothers), they would protest his return in 1960 with shouts of “Chou Enlai hai hai” (down with Zhou).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 144, p. 148.

<sup>35</sup> Memcon of Dillon-BK Nehru-LK Jha Meeting, May 23, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 540-541.

<sup>36</sup> NIE 51-60: The Outlook for India, October 25, 1960, *Ibid*, pp. 569-570.

<sup>37</sup> JLN, Statement in Lok Sabha, December 17, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 40*, p. 573. Also, see JLN, Speech at Congress plenary session, Gauhati, January 18, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 41*, p. 599.

<sup>38</sup> Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Policy towards India: Ideology and Strategy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 159.

The first signs of trouble appeared on the frontier question. Replying to Nehru's letter the previous year, Zhou asserted that China neither accepted the McMahon Line nor gave up the Chinese claim to Aksai Chin. He stated that the border had never been delimited formally and, in turn, complained about Indian maps. Nehru's reply in March laid out the basis of India's border claims. Furthermore, it agreed with Zhou's suggestions that the two countries maintain the status quo at the border, but also called for the two countries to give up recently claimed spots—thus, in effect, suggesting a return to the status quo ante.<sup>39</sup>

Even as Indian officials had been drafting that reply, the next sign of trouble appeared on the horizon. For the previous few months, the government had been concerned about differentiating between refugees and rebels trying to escape to India from Tibet. It had wanted to restrict the latter from entering India for three key reasons: the desire not to upset Beijing since Delhi thought India could help to moderate Chinese actions in Tibet; fear of escalation due to Chinese hot pursuit across the border; and concern that Beijing would question India's claim to areas where the rebels were entering and sheltering.<sup>40</sup> Then, on March 10, a Tibetan uprising broke out in Lhasa after rumors that Beijing was going to put the Dalai Lama under house arrest or forcibly remove him from Lhasa. As the situation deteriorated, the Indian government continued to deter rebel fighters from entering India. On March 19 the Indian government, however, sent a message to the consul general in Lhasa that it would give the Dalai Lama asylum if he

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<sup>39</sup> Raghavan, pp. 248-249.

<sup>40</sup> Note from Dutt to JS(E), October 11, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 33; Minutes of interagency meeting on security in northeastern India, January 7, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 79; Note from Dutt to JLN, January 9, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35; Note from Dutt to JLN, February 5, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35.

asked for it. The Dalai Lama had already left Lhasa at that point and subsequently he crossed over into India. Soon, he would be joined by thousands of refugees.

Nehru wanted to help the Tibetans, maintain Chinese friendship and ensure Indian security—all while trying to avoid Tibet becoming a cold war issue and dealing with the fact that it had become a public issue in India, where parliamentary protests had pressured the government into admitting an increasing number of refugees. Very soon it would become clear that Nehru failed on at least one front: maintaining the friendship with China. Initially, Beijing called Kalimpong, an Indian town close to the Sikkim border, the “commanding center” of the rebellion. Then, there were reports that members of the National People’s Congress (NPC) were accusing India of everything from kidnapping the Dalai Lama to encouraging the rebellion to interfering in Chinese affairs.

Nehru tried to reassure China about India’s intentions and his government advised the Dalai Lama and his advisors to steer clear of political statements or actions that might provoke China further. The inflamed public atmosphere in India, however, did nothing to help his attempt to convince the Chinese government of India’s intentions. In May, an article in *People’s Daily* condemned the Indian criticism coming from the left and right and alleged that a “counter-revolutionary ‘holy alliance’ of the Metternich type has bound together the US State Department, British colonialists, Syngman Rhee of South Korea, Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam, Chiang Kai-shek of China and India's reactionary parties—the Praja Socialist Party and the Jan Sangh Party.” It alleged that the Indian prime minister had been “pushed by that alliance into an important role in their so-called sympathy with Tibet movement.” Noting that Nehru had been a friend of China, the article expressed surprise about the “different tune he was piping.” Furthermore, it criticized his “deplorable error” of blaming Beijing and sympathizing with “the little

Chiang Kai-shek.”<sup>41</sup> Subsequently, what Nehru called “a wall of silence with muffled whispers occasionally” descended on the subject of Tibet.<sup>42</sup>

The brief period of silence turned out to be the calm before the storm. In August in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian border, there were serious Sino-Indian clashes, which Nehru believed were “the culmination of progressive Chinese unfriendliness towards India.”<sup>43</sup> By this time there were an increasing number of questions in parliament about the frontier, especially the road in Aksai Chin and China’s attitude towards the McMahon Line. As Raghavan has noted, parliamentarians unsatisfied with Nehru’s replies and the government’s response to alleged Chinese actions and border claims put significant pressure on the government. Subsequently, Nehru agreed to make public a white paper on the subject.

Why did Nehru, who until then had emphasized the need to strengthen and state India’s position without provoking China, agree to lay the issue out so publicly?<sup>44</sup> In 1958, India had indeed agreed to a Chinese request to keep the discussions over Hoti out of the public eye. Later that year and in early 1959, the government had handled with great care and sometimes evasiveness questions that had been asked in parliament about the border and Chinese maps.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> “The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy,” *People's Daily*, May 6, 1959. Available at [http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded\\_pics/Nehru\\_Philosophy1.pdf](http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/Nehru_Philosophy1.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> Gopal, *Nehru Vol. 3*, pp. 88-93. Raghavan, pp. 249-252.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Raghavan, p. 252.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from JLN to Sampurnanand (Uttar Pradesh CM), May 14, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, p. 690; Note from Dutt to PM, January 2, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35; Minutes of interagency meeting on DIB report, January 8, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 79; JLN’s Remarks in the Lok Sabha, March 17, 1959, NAI, File No. 54(2)-AMS/59; and Note from Dutt to DS(E) re JLN’s Instructions, May 10, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 36.

<sup>45</sup> Notes from Dutt to JLN, April 17 and April 23, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 32; Draft response to question in Lok Sabha from Hem Barua, September 4, 1958 and Draft response to question in Lok Sabha from Ila Palchoudhuri, February 23, 1959 in NMML, SDP, SF No. 35.

Raghavan states that the reasons for the release of the white paper were a desire to “stem the tide of criticism, and to demonstrate that the government had not been complacent.”<sup>46</sup> Some officials perhaps also saw it as a potential source of leverage with China. Earlier that year, while acknowledging that publicizing the dispute would allow the “foreign press” to “make much of” Sino-Indian differences, the foreign secretary had indeed stated, “there may be an advantage in our negotiations with China to let the Chinese feel that there is anxiety in our country about the border incidents.” In October that year, he would note that India needed to demonstrate to China both the strength of the feeling in the country and the support for the Indian government to make clear to Beijing that any further intervention would “do more harm than good.”<sup>47</sup> Regardless, as others have noted,<sup>48</sup> the release on September 7 of the first white paper—and subsequently additional ones—had the opposite effect: rather than giving India more leverage, it constrained Nehru’s freedom of action. Agitated public opinion became not just a factor, but also a potential veto point in India’s decision-making on China.<sup>49</sup>

The release of the white paper also infuriated China. Zhou objected to the public pressure and publicly blamed India for the dispute. The document release might even have contributed to the heated atmosphere in the NPC standing committee whose members blamed “Western imperialist forces and their agents in India who wanted to create Sino-Indian conflict and “change India’s foreign policy of peace and neutrality.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Raghavan, p. 253.

<sup>47</sup> Note from Dutt to PM re Acharya and Mehta notes, February 6, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35; Letter from Dutt to Iengar (Reserve Bank of India governor), October 24, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 58.

<sup>48</sup> Raghavan, p. 253; Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 40; Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World’s Largest Democracy* (New Delhi, India: Picador, 2007), p. 355.

<sup>49</sup> It continued to remain so. See, for example, Note from Dutt to JLN, February 1, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 41; Note from Dutt to SS, February 9, 1961, NMML, SDP, SF No. 46.

<sup>50</sup> Extracts of Tsinhua reports, September 1959 and Press report from IndEmb China, September 12, 1959 in NMML, SDP, SF No. 37.



There continued to be criticism that the US was inciting India. Dutt, however, approvingly noted that the American part of the “foreign press” had actually been “very discreet,” perhaps so as not to complicate things for India.<sup>51</sup>

The situation only seemed to escalate. A September 8 letter from Zhou stated that Nehru had misunderstood his previous assurances about the McMahon Line. It also laid down a basis for delimitation for the whole border, which India would subsequently strongly dispute. The letter left Nehru flabbergasted and doubting previous Chinese assurances. Its claims on India’s northeast were especially troublesome. As Raghavan notes, Indian assessments of China’s motivations ranged from Chinese doubts about India’s Tibet policy to China’s expansionist ambitions. Overall, a sense developed that Beijing was not trustworthy.

After the next major Sino-Indian skirmish took place in the western sector in October, even though Nehru had maintained privately that this section of the border had not been delimited, the prime minister’s public stance became even firmer. A Chinese statement that Nehru read as indicating that Beijing would hold India’s northeast hostage if Delhi did not make concessions in the west made him “defiant.” Raghavan has suggested that this tone resulted both from the pressure of public opinion and the desire to build a strong negotiating position vis-à-vis China.

The situation only deteriorated throughout that fall and winter. India subsequently rejected China’s proposal of mutual withdrawals twenty kilometers from the McMahon Line in the east and from the line of actual control in the west, believing that it would strengthen China’s position and weaken that of India on the ground and at the negotiating table. Then, China rejected an Indian counter-offer. India considered various proposals to

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<sup>51</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, November 24, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 39.

put forth, including a “face saving” one accepting China’s de facto presence in Aksai Chin and a “barter” one that envisioned swapping India’s claims in the west with those of China in the east. These ideas went nowhere. Neither did discussions with Zhou in Delhi in April 1960 and three subsequent rounds of discussions between Chinese and Indian officials between June and December. During this time, the lack of trust in China only intensified within the government, as did anti-Chinese sentiment outside it.<sup>52</sup>

### *Watching from Washington*

In early 1957, the Eisenhower administration had envisioned American exploitation of differences between China and India whenever it was feasible.<sup>53</sup> Washington watched carefully the situation in Tibet and the border dispute, both of which created an opening for the US.<sup>54</sup> Administration officials did not just want to exploit the rift in terms of its relations with India. US officials also envisioned using the dispute for propaganda, for example, by pointing to it as a lesson for African nations thinking about recognizing Beijing hoping for benefits in return. The idea was to highlight the fact that India had not only recognized the regime in China but had also been friendly towards it, and it had been rewarded with territorial claims and incursions.<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, the administration hoped to use the Sino-Indian rift in favor of India at home. The policy planning director, for example, advocated “exploit[ing] the favorable public and Congressional attitude toward India which are likely to result in the next

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<sup>52</sup> Raghavan, pp. 253-266. Also, see Note from Dutt to JS(AD) and DS(O&M), December 30, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 45 and Note from Dutt to Director(China), October 28, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 45.

<sup>53</sup> NSC 5701: Statement on US Policy Toward South Asia, January 10, 1957, *FRUS 1955-57 Vol. VIII*, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 149-150 and Schaffer, *Ellsworth Bunker*, p. 63. Also, see NSC Planning Board Paper: Issues Affecting US Policy Toward South Asia, May 26, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 3 and NSC 5909/1, August 21, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 44.

<sup>55</sup> Circular Telegram from DoS to Certain Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices, September 2, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 587.

several months from the border situation and the President's visit to India," to garner more aid for India.<sup>56</sup> On the Hill, administration officials had indeed asserted that India had reacted "vigorously" to the Chinese crackdown in Tibet and stressed that Delhi now realized that China was an aggressive country that could not be trusted.<sup>57</sup> The developments did have an impact on members of Congress. Some noted that "the best thing that has happened in that part of the world" was the loss of Indian illusions about China after its crackdown in Tibet. Others like Poage believed that, while there was insufficient understanding in India that communism could "destroy" the country, the Chinese actions could convince India of the problem and of the need to resist it.<sup>58</sup> In public, too, there was much discussion of the impact on India's threat perception, some skepticism of whether Nehru's balancing act would work, continuing concern that Nehru would "appease" China, and the hope that India would lose its illusions about its northern neighbor.<sup>59</sup>

The administration, however, was careful about its public response. It was aware of Indian anxieties about the developments in Tibet, the border situation and the potential for escalation. Initial US intelligence estimates had suggested that Beijing would "avoid drastic action" to avoid offending India. Once it became clear that this was a mistaken assessment, the administration felt that Chinese actions were having enough of an impact in India and the whole of Asia. Inflamed Indian public opinion, for example, had already forced Nehru's government to take a more assertive stance on Tibet. An aggressive US response would only be counter-productive. The administration thus did not want US

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<sup>56</sup> Memo from Smith to Herter, November 24, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 520.

<sup>57</sup> Testimony of Rountree, April 14, 1959, *HFAC Executive Sessions Vol. XX MSA 1959*, p. 165.

<sup>58</sup> Views of Reps. Saund and Bentley expressed during Testimony of Rountree, April 14, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 218 and *Around the World With Rep. Bob Poage: A Report on a Recent Trip*, February 12, 1960, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Reports Covering March 16-April 15 and August 16-September 15, 1959, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-I.

officials or others like Jiang to make any moves that would suggest that the uprising in Tibet was a western or Taiwanese-instigated rebellion or take any action that would lessen the impact of Chinese behavior.<sup>60</sup>

American officials did not want Delhi to have a veto on Washington's Tibet policy. Nonetheless, India's role and influence and the US-India relationship made Indian opinion an "important factor."<sup>61</sup> Thus, the US was cautious about dealing with Indian officials on the subject. Washington emphasized that American officials in Delhi take no action vis-à-vis the Tibetans streaming into India that would decrease the adverse impact Chinese actions were having. The US expected India to need help with the refugees, but even on this front it instructed that officials wait for Indian requests for that aid.<sup>62</sup> Once the US was helping with aid, the administration also took care not to highlight a US government role.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, Washington was careful about how it used the situation. Defense Secretary McElroy wanted more efforts to publicize the Chinese crackdown, but Secretary of State Herter advised caution.<sup>64</sup> The US instead worked to get Taiwan to give up publicly its claim on Tibet and recognize Tibetan independence. Jiang had already pledged to recognize Tibetans' right to self-determination. Assistant Secretary of State

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<sup>60</sup> See Allen Dulles' report. Memo of Discussion of 400<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, March 26, 1959, quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 751; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Taiwan, April 2, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 754.

<sup>61</sup> Memo from Dillon (Acting S/S) to Eisenhower, April 30, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 764.

<sup>62</sup> Intelligence Briefing for the President, April 1, 1959, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 753.

<sup>63</sup> See views of Murphy (US/S PA). Memo on the Substance of Discussion at a DoS-Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, May 8, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 769. Also, see Letter from Dutt to Bunker, December 22, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 58 and Note from Dutt to JLN, April 20, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 42.

<sup>64</sup> Memo of Discussion of 403<sup>rd</sup> NSC Meeting, April 23, 1959, quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 756.

for Far East Asia Robertson, however, believed the statement fell short because it was too “ambiguous.”<sup>65</sup>

India’s actions also continued to fall short of what the US would have liked.<sup>66</sup> There were concerns about India’s position regarding the Dalai Lama. These were perhaps exacerbated by the views of the Taiwanese ambassador, who believed that Nehru would force the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet to appease China in exchange for a Sino-Indian border settlement.<sup>67</sup> The US was simultaneously receiving intelligence reports that Beijing was indeed seeking the Dalai Lama’s return. The Dalai Lama, in turn, wanted Washington to recognize a Tibetan government and persuade others to do so as well. Dillon worried that he would take hasty public action that would put Washington in a bind.<sup>68</sup>

The US was indeed contemplating the question of recognition and even trying to get a sense of how Taiwan would react if the US recognized Tibetan independence.<sup>69</sup> There were inter- and intra-agency differences on the subject. While the near east and international organization bureaus at the State Department were more cautious, some in the far east bureau argued that the US should recognize a Tibetan government if other countries did. The Far East bureau stressed that the views of India and other neutral countries should not be decisive. The military leadership also hoped that the US could be

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<sup>65</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Taiwan, April 2, 1959, Ibid, p. 754; Memcon of Robertson-George Yeh Meeting, April 23, 1959, Ibid, p. 757.

<sup>66</sup> Memo from Dillon to Eisenhower, April 30, 1959, Ibid, p. 764.

<sup>67</sup> Memcon of Robertson-Yeh Meeting, April 23, 1959, Ibid, p. 757.

<sup>68</sup> Memo of Discussion of 404<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, April 30, 1959, quoted in Ibid, p. 762; Memo from Dillon to Eisenhower, April 30, 1959, Ibid, pp. 763-764; Memo from Dillon to Eisenhower, June 16, 1959, Ibid, p. 771. Also, see Telegram from USUN to DoS re Lodge-Thondup (Dalai Lama’s representative) Meeting, October 8, 1959, Ibid, p. 791 and Memo from Parsons (AS/S FEA) to Herter, October 14, 1959, Ibid, p. 792.

<sup>69</sup> Memcon of Robertson-Yeh Meeting, April 23, 1959, Ibid, p. 757. Also, see Memcon of Robertson-Yeh Meeting, April 29, 1959, Ibid, pp. 760-761.

more proactive, arguing that India's security itself was at stake. Others like Deputy Under Secretary of State Murphy, however, argued that if the US was too proactive, the issue would be seen as a cold war one, possibly giving Nehru an excuse to "wash his hands off the matter."<sup>70</sup> Eisenhower, meanwhile, insisted that the State Department, which remained cautious overall, keep the lead.<sup>71</sup>

There was a sense that the US needed to do something. Allen Dulles explained Nehru's dual problem of needing to "conciliate China," as well as simultaneously factor in the great sympathy for the Tibetans in India.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, the US was concerned that, without any sign of American support to the Tibetans, India's continuing caution would lead the Dalai Lama to acquiesce to Indian demands and consequently lose his symbolic role and influence. Thus, Dillon recommended assuring the Dalai Lama of American financial support and finding an alternate asylum destination if necessary. He also suggested a UN appeal.<sup>73</sup> Eisenhower, however, did not want the Dalai Lama to break with Nehru or the US to suggest an appeal to the UN. Moreover, he wanted to suggest only limited American support. As for the asylum question, as Allen Dulles pointed out, there seemed little interest in other countries to accept the Dalai Lama.<sup>74</sup>

Overall, it was necessary to ensure that neither the Dalai Lama nor Washington take any action that would jeopardize the Tibetan leader's presence in India. Thus, the US decided to offer aid to the Tibetans to submit their appeal to the UN, but also to tell the

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<sup>70</sup> Draft Memo from Robertson to Herter, May 5, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 766; Memo on the Substance of Discussion at a DoS-Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, May 8, 1959, *Ibid* p. 769; See expression of views of the Collateral Activities Coordinating Group in Unsigned Memo to McElroy, June 1959, quoted in *Ibid* p. 770.

<sup>71</sup> Memo of Discussion of 409<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, June 4, 1959, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 770.

<sup>72</sup> Memo of Discussion of 415<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, July 30, 1959, quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 773-774.

<sup>73</sup> Memo from Dillon to Eisenhower, June 16, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 771.

<sup>74</sup> See footnote 2 re Memo by Goodpaster (Eisenhower's Staff Secretary) on President's Instructions on Reply to Dalai Lama, June 20, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 773; and Memo of Discussion of 415<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, July 30, 1959, quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 773-774.

Dalai Lama to defer the recognition question. The State Department also instructed the American ambassador in Delhi to continue to desist from establishing any formal connection with the Tibetans that might upset Indian officials. Furthermore, it instructed officials to keep their Indian counterparts informed of US interactions with Tibetan leaders in India, as well as general US plans vis-à-vis Tibet.<sup>75</sup>

The State Department did not think that India would cooperate with the US on the UN appeal. There was a sense that Delhi, even while acknowledging that the Dalai Lama had the right to make an appeal, thought it would be ineffective.<sup>76</sup> Indian officials had previously considered and dismissed the idea of taking the Tibet issue up at the UN.<sup>77</sup> That summer Nehru indeed declined to sponsor the appeal. Indian officials pointed out to their American interlocutors that one reason was to avoid making Tibet a cold war issue—if it became one, Moscow, which had remained neutral, would be forced to take Beijing’s side. Moreover, the Indian foreign secretary pointed out that an appeal would not result in any real action because “No one is going to war with China over Tibet.” Furthermore it would not really have any effect because Beijing was not even represented at the UN. Finally, it would only intensify the Chinese crackdown. Dutt acknowledged that the sentiment in India favoring a UN appeal meant that the Indian government would not oppose an appeal that was phrased right. Overall, India’s policy would be “firm” toward China, but careful since “we have to be friends with powerful country with whom we have border of 2680 miles.”<sup>78</sup> The US, careful about the Indian government’s

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<sup>75</sup> Memo from Parsons and Walmsley (Acting AS/S IO) to Herter, August 5, 1959, *Ibid*, pp. 775-776. Also, see Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Brown-Dalai Lama Meeting, September 4, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 780.

<sup>76</sup> Memo from Parsons and Walmsley to Herter, August 5, 1959, *Ibid*, pp. 775-776.

<sup>77</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, March 30, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35.

<sup>78</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Brown-Dalai Lama Meeting, September 4, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 779; Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Brown-Dutt Meeting, September 5, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, pp. 780-781.

sensitivities, subsequently urged Tibet to focus on the charge of human rights violations rather than aggression in any appeal.<sup>79</sup>

Even as officials were discussing the question of a Tibetan appeal at the UN, Nehru went public with the border dispute that fall. Eisenhower conveyed his “distress” and “concern” to the prime minister and to Pandit who was visiting the US at the time. The president highlighted that this was another instance—like Chinese behavior in Korea, Southeast Asia and the Taiwan Strait crisis—of Beijing “abandon[ing] negotiation and conciliation in favor of force and strife.”<sup>80</sup> Eisenhower told legislators that the situation had made Nehru more realistic, with “even [Krishna] Menon” accepting the possibility that Delhi had made a mistake regarding Beijing.<sup>81</sup> At a NSC meeting, Allen Dulles noted that despite Indian doubts about China’s sincerity, Delhi would nonetheless try to settle the dispute through negotiations, even as it sought to defend the border militarily.<sup>82</sup>

India was assured by the US response. Even among the US public initial “smug satisfaction” seemed to have given way first to fear that a weak India would give in to China and then to a determination to stand by India as it stood up to China.<sup>83</sup> The Indian government was not so pleased, however, about front-page headlines later that fall that read “Herter Avoids Firm U.S. Stand on India Border.” At a press conference in November the secretary of state noted that while the US presumed that India’s claims were “valid,” it had “no objective basis for such a presumption.” He added, “I don’t think we have taken any sides in [the dispute] at all.” Furthermore, he went on to say that he

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<sup>79</sup> Memcon of Murphy-Hood (Minister, British Embassy) Meeting, September 5, 1959, Ibid, p. 782; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, September 9, 1959, Ibid, p. 783. Also, see (for Dillon’s argument) Memo of Discussion of 418<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, September 10, 1959 Ibid, p. 785 and Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India enclosing Letter from Eisenhower to Dalai Lama, October 6, 1959, Ibid, p. 790.

<sup>80</sup> Letter from Eisenhower to JLN, Paris, September 2, 1959, Ibid, p. 514.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 150.

<sup>82</sup> Memo of Discussion of 418<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, September 10, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 784.

<sup>83</sup> IndEmb US, Annual Political Report for 1959, NAI, 1959, File No. 50(14)-AMS/60.



thought it was “probably correct” to say that the US “has no view whatsoever as to the rightness or wrongness of this issue.” American officials, reporters and Indians present seemed surprised and in the latter case “deeply disturbed.”

News reports from India indicated that Herter’s statement was greeted with “puzzled surprise,” but not the vitriol that might have been expected. This was perhaps because India needed all the friends it could get, as well as the fact that the US had rushed to clarify Herter’s statement. Soon after his initial comments, Herter’s office issued a statement noting that the secretary had been talking about the legal aspect of the border issue and unequivocally condemned the Chinese use of force to press its claims. The next day Herter again asserted that the US in no way condoned Chinese action; instead it found “wholly abhorrent” the “aggressive armed action” against India.<sup>84</sup> The US also rushed to reassure Indian officials in Washington and Delhi of its position. Furthermore, the embassy in Delhi ensured that a statement of US sympathy toward the Indian position was published in major newspapers in India.<sup>85</sup> The Indian foreign secretary told the US ambassador that India had appreciated the correction, but there should be no “ambiguity” about the border.<sup>86</sup> After conversations in Washington, Indian embassy officials laid out multiple possible reasons for the US position: not wanting to make the border issue a cold war one; not wanting to upset Taiwan; “genuine doubt;” general tradition of not commenting on the legality of claims; or the desire to give India maneuverability in case it had to give up some territory in the future. At the very least,

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<sup>84</sup> William S. Jorden, “Herter Avoids Firm U.S. Stand on India Border,” *NYT*, November 13, 1959, p. 1; E.W. Kenworthy, “Herter Strives to Assure India,” *NYT*, November 14, 1959, p. 1; Paul Grimes, “Red Chinese Free Indians Captured,” *NYT*, November 15, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, SecGen, MEA Director (External Publicity), November 14, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 39; Note by NB Menon re Talk with Bartlett (DoS), Washington, November 18, 1959, NAI, File No. F-52-AMS/59-II; Paul Grimes, “India Parliament Convening Today,” *NYT*, November 16, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from Dutt to Bunker, November 18, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 58.

they noted quick criticism in the press for Herter's "moral ambiguity about Peking's aggressive thrust against India."<sup>87</sup>

Subsequently at a news conference, Eisenhower asserted that the exact points of the border dispute were not the major issue, "What is important and what is the issue is this: are nations going to settle their differences by negotiation, honest meeting, honest negotiation with each other, or are they going to move in with force and take that course in the settlement of these disputes?" Repudiating Herter's comment, he asserted that there was little question which side the US was on.<sup>88</sup>

When he met with Nehru at the end of 1959, the president again expressed sympathy. He pointed out that the question came down to whether to let "the matter slide or to get more severe" with China.<sup>89</sup> The president asserted in parliament that US forces "serve not only ourselves but *friends* and allies who, like us, have perceived the danger" and to a million-strong audience that "we who are free must support each other." These statements left observers scrambling to interpret whether that meant that the US would defend India in the case of a Chinese attack. Eisenhower's staff subsequently had to issue a clarification that assistance had neither been requested nor promised. An American observer noted, however, that if China and India did go to war there was "no question that India would have to seek military assistance—and would get it from the United States at once." In the meantime, he asserted that even if India did not want military aid, it certainly wanted Eisenhower's "heavy moral support" on the question. Furthermore, it continued to want economic assistance for development, which Nehru continued to

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<sup>87</sup> IndEmb US, Political Report (November 1959), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-III; IndEmb US, Annual Political Report for 1959, NAI, File No. 50(14)-AMS/60; Note by Indian chargé to MEA re US views on Sino-Indian Dispute, Washington, November 30, 1959, NAI, File No. F-52-AMS/59-II.

<sup>88</sup> Eisenhower: "The President's News Conference," December 2, 1959. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11587>

<sup>89</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Delhi, December 10, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 521-522.

assert, was the best way to deal with the long-term threat from China. Nehru indeed appreciated the moral support and publicly noted that Eisenhower, coming as he had at “this special hour,” had struck a deep chord.<sup>90</sup>

India also appreciated the fact that the U.S. had also continued to take account of Indian sensitivities on the Tibet question, even as it realized that Washington would have to show Tibet some public support.<sup>91</sup> Allen Dulles had noted that as the border skirmishes had increased and Indian public sentiment became stronger, the Indian government seemed to become “friendlier” towards the Dalai Lama.<sup>92</sup> The Indian government was still, however, reluctant to be more active on the Tibet question at the UN. As the British foreign secretary explained, the border dispute—and Soviet neutrality on that issue—had only reinforced India’s desire not to give Moscow a reason to take China’s side. Soviet officials had indeed told their British interlocutors that a formal Tibetan appeal at the UN would only inflame the situation, especially between China and India. With British and French officials also calling for caution, to avoid playing a very public role the US instead got Ireland and Malaya to sponsor a resolution that kept the focus on human right violations.<sup>93</sup>

As for recognition, in October, the Far East bureau recommended against it. It was unlikely that other countries would recognize Tibetan independence and this would lead to the Dalai Lama being associated exclusively with the US, which would do his

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<sup>90</sup> “New Delhi Talks Stir Speculation,” *NYT*, December 12, 1959, p. 10; Paul Grimes, “Eisenhower Asks ‘World-Wide War Against Hunger,’” *NYT*, December 12, 1959, p. 1; Paul Grimes, “Nehru Alters His View of U.S.,” *NYT*, December 13, 1959, p. E5; Paul Grimes, “Eisenhower Hints U.S. is Duty-Bound to Defend India,” *NYT*, December 14, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (September 16-30, 1959), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-III.

<sup>92</sup> Memo of Discussion of 418<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, September 10, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 784.

<sup>93</sup> Telegram from USUN to DoS re Herter-Lloyd-Couve Meeting, September 18, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 786; Telegram from USUN to DoS re Dixon (British representative)-Kuznetsov (Soviet representative) Meeting, September 28, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 788; Telegram from USUN to DoS re Lodge-Thondup Meeting, October 8, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 791.

cause little good.<sup>94</sup> Privately, Washington informed Tibetan officials, as well as Indian and Taiwanese ones, that the US recognized the “principle of self-determination” for Tibetans. The US could not, however, recognize a Tibetan government-in-exile at that point. Furthermore, responding to Tibetan pleas that Washington push Delhi on this question, American officials asserted that India would not extend recognition.<sup>95</sup> Finally, given Indian concerns, the US turned down a request for the Dalai Lama to meet Eisenhower during the president’s visit to India. The Indian foreign secretary was relieved, since India felt a meeting would increase Chinese accusations of India-US collusion and consequently India’s security problem.<sup>96</sup>

American officials did, however, move forward on another front. Allen Dulles and Herter concurred on continuing covert actions to support Tibetan resistance operations to harass Beijing and help the Tibetan and “free world” cause.<sup>97</sup> While some have contended that India cooperated with the US on this front, available evidence suggests that, at the very least, India was aware of—and did not quite object to—some US activities. The Indian foreign secretary asked Bunker about US violations of India’s air space and US arms that had been found with Tibetan refugees. He accepted American excuses on the latter and expressed the hope that any future American airdrops would not cross Indian air space. Bunker interpreted this conversation as not disapproving of US

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<sup>94</sup> Memo from Parsons to Herter, October 14, 1959, *Ibid.*, p. 793.

<sup>95</sup> Memcon of Murphy-Thondup Meeting, Washington, October 29, 1959, *Ibid.*, p. 797, p. 800. Also, see Memcon of Parsons-Yeh Meeting, November 3, 1959, *Ibid.*, p. 801.

<sup>96</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India re Bunker-Dutt Meeting, November 2, 1959, *Ibid.*, p. 804; Note from Dutt to DS(E) re Meeting with Bunker, November 21, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 38.

<sup>97</sup> Memo for the Record by Gray on Discussion with the President on Tibet, February 4, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 808.

actions, but stemming from concern that this might negatively affect Indian public opinion of the US and also weaken Delhi's hand vis-à-vis Beijing.<sup>98</sup>

The US continued to be cautious about public action, especially as the Sino-Indian border dispute showed no sign of dissipating. By summer 1960, the intelligence community came to believe that there would be no early settlement and expected a stalemate with intermittent clashes. It worried, however, that the longer dispute lasted, the more dangerous it would be, especially if Nehru was no longer prime minister. It outlined a swap deal as the most likely solution, but even if that was achieved intelligence officials did not foresee any turning back the clock in terms of Sino-Indian relations.<sup>99</sup>

This seemed evident in conversations that Nehru had with Eisenhower and Herter in fall 1960. Nehru outlined Indian uncertainty about Beijing's intentions and worried about the Chinese "national trait" to be expansive whenever China felt confident. He stated that the Sino-Indian talks had stalled because of the very basic disagreement on facts. China was not being clear about its claims. India, on its part, could only accept "minor deviation[s]." He responded in the affirmative to Eisenhower's query about whether giving up Indian claims in the east would not almost bring China into India's plains. He expressed concern about China's logistical advantages in the east. He also highlighted the pressure on him in parliament to go to war with China "as though one could go to war over those mountains." Nehru expressed frustration that China was being unreasonable with India. On the other hand, China had reached border agreements with Burma and Nepal, which India had indeed encouraged them to seek. Nehru felt that Beijing had been "reasonable" with them in an attempt to create leverage with India.

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<sup>98</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India re Bunker-Dutt Meeting, November 26, 1960, Ibid, p. 814. Also, see Note from Dutt to DS(C) re Meeting with Bunker, November 26, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 45.

<sup>99</sup> NIE 100-2-60, May 17, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 664. The Dalai Lama continued to ask for support at the UN (Letter from Herter to Dalai Lama, October 11, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 811).

Herter said that, at the very least, it was good that China and India continued to discuss the issue. Eisenhower noted, however, that communists tended to be “uncompromising” in negotiations.<sup>100</sup> Earlier, in a conversation with US officials the president had also expressed concern that while China would not aggress against Taiwan or Korea, it could act against India or Nepal or Southeast Asia.<sup>101</sup>

US intelligence assessments indicated that Chinese actions had “tended to create in India a more sympathetic view of US policies.” The Chinese threat, along with need for US aid and better understanding of the American approach, would only buoy the trend toward even better US-India relations. Nehru had also mentioned that Chinese actions had created anti-Chinese sentiment in the country. The assessments noted that they had also weakened the communist party in India.<sup>102</sup> The previous year the dispute had indeed caused serious internal differences within the communist party, which would eventually split over the issue.<sup>103</sup>

### ***Possible Solutions***

Intelligence analysts, however, expected India to continue with its nonaligned path because of the need for Soviet aid and hope for Soviet restraint of China.<sup>104</sup> As India’s relations with China deteriorated, Moscow’s relations with Beijing had become more of a subject of interest in India. Officials watched Sino-Soviet relations, especially

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<sup>100</sup> Memo of JLN-Eisenhower Conference, New York, September 26, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 562; Memcon of JLN-Herter Meeting, New York, October 7, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 566-568. Also, see Telegram From Harriman (Kennedy Ambassador at Large) to Kennedy (President) and Rusk (Kennedy S/S) re Meeting with JLN, Delhi, March 24, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 31.

<sup>101</sup> Memo of Discussion of 456<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, August 18, 1960, quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 711.

<sup>102</sup> NIE 51-60, October 25, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 570-571. Also, see NIE 100-2-60, May 17, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 664. Also, see Memcon of JLN-Herter Meeting, New York, October 7, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 567-568.

<sup>103</sup> Paul Grimes, “Red Chinese Free Indians Captured,” *NYT*, November 15, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> NIE 100-2-60, May 17, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 664. Also, see NIE 51-60, October 25, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 570-571.

to detect whether there were disagreements between the two. After 1958, it seemed clear that there were differences because of Beijing's greater orthodoxy, but the Indian assessment had been that the Chinese need for aid and the Soviet need for bloc unity would prevent a breakup. This meant that India had to be careful not to overestimate the likelihood of a split.<sup>105</sup>

When the border dispute was first made public in September 1959, Moscow released a statement calling for China and India to solve the problem peacefully. Soviet neutrality surprised many and in India there was speculation about the cause and the extent of that stance.<sup>106</sup> (Subsequently, it has been traced to Khrushchev's desire not to jeopardize his forthcoming visit to the US and not to jettison the Soviet relationship with India, leaving the field to the US.<sup>107</sup>) Nehru came to believe that the Soviet Union, concerned about growing Chinese strength, saw India as "a balancing force in relation to China in Asia." For this reason—and in an effort to keep India out of Washington's arms—it would likely remain neutral.<sup>108</sup>

Allen Dulles also believed that Moscow was not pleased about the dispute and would want it settled as soon as possible. He did not, however, think that Beijing would heed pressure from Moscow to settle because Chinese policymakers were annoyed about Soviet criticism of their economic progress and concerned about what message backing

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<sup>105</sup> Cable from Dutt to IndEmb Poland, May 25, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 49; Letter from KPS Menon (Ambassador to the USSR) to Dutt, September 16, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 52; MEA Historical Division, "China and the Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute," June 4 and 23, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 99; Political Report for October from KPS Menon, November 4, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 38; Record of JLN-Erlander (Swedish PM) Talk, December 18, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 39.

<sup>106</sup> Political Report for October from KPS Menon, November 4, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 38. Also, Letter from Indian ambassador in West Germany, September 22, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 37; Record of JLN-Erlander Talk, December 18, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 39.

<sup>107</sup> Raghavan, p. 254.

<sup>108</sup> JLN to British ambassador, October 17, 1959, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 281.

down on an international issue would send regarding their domestic credibility.<sup>109</sup> The US had already been receiving reports of “critical strains” between Beijing and Moscow and by the end of 1959 there was unanimity in the intelligence community about this. Like Indian officials, however, there was little expectation of a “serious weakening of the alliance.”<sup>110</sup> Toward the end of 1959, an American analyst did note that the lack of easing of Sino-Indian tension indicated the onset of a period in which Beijing would resist Moscow on foreign policy.<sup>111</sup>

While Indian officials might not have believed that Moscow could restrain Beijing, at the very least they hoped it would stay neutral. This hope had indeed been the reason to avoid internationalizing the Tibet issue and to limit overt cooperation with the US on Sino-Indian questions. It was also the reason that the government was concerned about press criticism of the Soviet Union.<sup>112</sup> For a while, officials seemed to be succeeding. When Khrushchev visited India in early 1960 he told the prime minister that Moscow “took no definite stand” and would try to maintain this attitude. He noted the difficulty of the situation for him since Moscow did not want its relations with either Delhi or Beijing to “cool off.” The Indian ambassador in Moscow also reported that Khrushchev told him that even the border dispute had not darkened the prospects for India-Soviet relations. A subsequent statement from Nehru seemed to imply his belief that by staying neutral, Moscow was actually taking India’s side.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Memo of Discussion of 418<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, September 10, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, pp. 784-785.

<sup>110</sup> Memo from Cumming (INR Director) to Herter, September 24, 1959, *Ibid*, pp. 593-594. Also view of Bissell (Acting DCI), see Memo of Discussion of 428<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, December 10, 1959, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 640.

<sup>111</sup> Memo from Smith to Herter, November 17, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 630.

<sup>112</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, January 13, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 41.

<sup>113</sup> Record of JLN-Khrushchev Talk, Delhi, February 12, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 24; Raghavan, pp. 281-282.



American officials were not too worried about these Indian attempts to keep Moscow from giving up its neutrality. Allen Dulles happily noted the relative lack of public enthusiasm for Khrushchev's visit in 1960—compared to both his last visit and Eisenhower's visit. He also noted that attacks on the west by the Soviet leader had not gone down well in India and that Khrushchev had avoided mentioning the Sino-Indian dispute.<sup>114</sup>

Senior Indian officials on their part tried to ensure that government statements or actions did not “hurt the feelings of the US government.”<sup>115</sup> When the U-2 incident occurred in summer 1960, even as the Indian press criticized the US, the Indian government tried to avoid comment, so much so that China started playing up Indian “indifference” and lack of condemnation to try to create a wedge between Delhi and Moscow. Nehru merely expressed concern about the deteriorating situation and called on all sides to settle their problems peacefully. Dutt explained privately to Soviet officials the reasons for Indian silence, but, overall, India did not want to get involved.<sup>116</sup>

The US, in turn, saw signs that Moscow was trying not to get involved in the Sino-Indian dispute—for example, the Soviet news agency office in Delhi excused itself from working on Chinese business. Then, in a move that suggested a lack of neutrality, the Soviet Union offered India helicopters despite their potential use in the north against China. Meanwhile, assessments in Washington continued to indicate strain in the Sino-Soviet relationship.<sup>117</sup> From the Soviet Union, it was receiving assessments that Moscow

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<sup>114</sup> Memo of Discussion of 434<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, February 18, 1960, quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 531.

<sup>115</sup> Letter from Dutt to Vishnu Sahay (cabinet secretary), July 24, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 61.

<sup>116</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, May 27, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 42; Personal Message from JLN from Dutt to Macmillan, May 23, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 42; “Summit Rift Deplored,” *NYT*, May 21, 1960, p. 2; Note from Dutt re Meeting with Soviet chargé, June 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 43.

<sup>117</sup> Memo of Discussion of 456<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting of the NSC, August 18, 1960, quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, pp. 709-710; INR Memo: Recent Developments in Sino-Soviet Relations, August 26, 1960, *FRUS*

was irritated about Beijing's actions ruining its larger strategy in Asia, and that Beijing was upset about Moscow not taking its side on issues like the Sino-Indian dispute.<sup>118</sup>

From Beijing, the Indian ambassador also reported continued signs of a Sino-Soviet rift to Delhi. Nehru confirmed to Eisenhower the Indian belief that China and the Soviet Union were "not getting along." Nonetheless, he noted that India could not take a split for granted since the two countries were still talking. Moreover, Soviet concern about Chinese power, which Eisenhower envisioned, was only likely to materialize in the long term.<sup>119</sup>

Eisenhower was skeptical that Moscow would be an effective solution to India's China problem—despite Soviet disapproval, it was clear, after all, that China continued to undertake incursions into India.<sup>120</sup> There had been hope in Washington, however, that Pakistan could be part of India's China solution. It arose in spring 1959 with the Chinese crackdown in Tibet. It only increased as the Sino-Indian border dispute became evident and intensified. In May 1959 Eisenhower instructed that the US make "special efforts" to bring Delhi and Karachi together to understand that their "true enemies" were Beijing and Moscow.<sup>121</sup> Intelligence assessments indicated that a joint India-Pakistan effort could materialize if the two countries understood that China was directly threatening them.<sup>122</sup> There was skepticism among some US policymakers that anything but a step-by-step

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1958-60 Vol. XIX, p. 715. Also, see Telegram from Thompson (AmEmb USSR) to DoS, September 10, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 721 (also reflects views of American Consul General in Hong Kong).

<sup>118</sup> Telegram from Thompson (AmEmb USSR) to DoS, September 10, 1960, *Ibid*, p. 722.

<sup>119</sup> INR Memo: Recent Developments in Sino-Soviet Relations, August 26, 1960, *Ibid*, p. 713; Memo of JLN-Eisenhower Conference, New York, September 26, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 561.

<sup>120</sup> Memo of Discussion of 456<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, August 18, 1960, quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XIX*, p. 711.

<sup>121</sup> Memo of Discussion of 404<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, April 30, 1959, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 762; NSC Action No. 2073-b (Approved by the President on May 4, 1959), quoted in *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 166; Memo of Discussion of 416<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, August 6, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 21.

<sup>122</sup> NIE 52-59: The Outlook for Pakistan, May 5, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 718.

approach to solving India and Pakistan's problems would work.<sup>123</sup> There was also recognition of the limits of US influence in getting the two countries to settle.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, Eisenhower's hopes that the two countries could settle their problems increased when the two countries reached an Indus waters agreement in fall 1959.<sup>125</sup> As an Indian embassy official noted there was a general sense that this agreement was a result of the Chinese threat.<sup>126</sup>

When Eisenhower and Nehru met in Delhi in December 1959, Eisenhower stressed that the real threat came from the north. Nehru indicated that there had been recent progress in India-Pakistan relations. He, however, made clear—as his ambassador had before—that the American idea of joint India-Pakistan defense planning would violate nonalignment. He instead proposed a joint no-war declaration, which Eisenhower recommended to Pakistani leader Ayub Khan as a “great opportunity.”<sup>127</sup>

Indian officials accepted that the threat from China made a settlement with Pakistan more desirable. Nehru had indeed told Eisenhower of his concern about a Pakistani “stab in the back” if and when India was acting against the Chinese threat. As the American ambassador noted, however, for domestic and precedent reasons, the

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<sup>123</sup> Bunker's view. Memo from the Operations Coordinator (O'Connor) to Jones (AS/S NESAA) re OCB Meeting, August 5, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 512.

<sup>124</sup> NSC 5909/1, August 21, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 37.

<sup>125</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 150-151. For Dillon's views on the importance of this settlement in reducing tensions, see Memo of Discussion of 408<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, May 28, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (October 16-31, 1959), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-III.

<sup>127</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Delhi, December 10, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 522-523. Chagla had noted the same. See Memcon of US/S Murphy-Chagla (Indian ambassador to the US) Meeting, Delhi, December 2, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 193-194. Also see, Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 149-152. For the idea of joint defense planning, see NSC Planning Board Paper: Issues Affecting US Policy Toward South Asia, May 26, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 3.

tension with China made Nehru less likely to concede India's claim on Kashmir as Pakistan wanted.<sup>128</sup>

Despite Ayub's rejection of Nehru's suggestion, through 1960 there continued to be hope in Washington that the China threat would lead India and Pakistan toward a settlement. Intelligence analysts believed that the threat meant an "about even" chance that India and Pakistan would settle.<sup>129</sup> In the meantime, Eisenhower seemed pleased with the general improvement in India-Pakistan relations and Nehru's realism. Later that year, his approval only increased when Nehru travelled to Pakistan to sign the Indus waters agreement.<sup>130</sup>

India, on its part, continued to disapprove of US military aid to Pakistan, especially since the US and Pakistan signed another bilateral agreement in early 1959. From the Indian perspective, this aid resulted in increased Indian defense expenditure and a more intransigent Pakistan.<sup>131</sup> The US, however, saw it as necessary to reassure Pakistan of the commitment and the benefits that came with being an ally. This need had only increased—especially in the minds of defense and intelligence analysts—after Pakistan agreed to allow the US to establish a facility at Badaber.<sup>132</sup>

Both India and the US, however, tried to handle this situation with care. The US, for example, kept India informed of decisions to provide Pakistan with major equipment

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<sup>128</sup> Memcon of US/S Murphy-Chagla Meeting, Delhi, December 2, 1959, Ibid, p. 193; Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Delhi, December 10, 1959, Ibid, p. 523; Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, January 22, 1960, Ibid, pp. 203-204.

<sup>129</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 153; NIE 51-60, October 25, 1960, Ibid, pp. 570-571.

<sup>130</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-Bunker Meeting, April 25, 1960, Ibid, p. 536; Memo of JLN-Eisenhower Conference, New York, September 26, 1960, Ibid, p. 558.

<sup>131</sup> Memo from O'Connor to Jones re OCB Meeting, August 5, 1959, Ibid, p. 512. Also, see Letter from Chagla to JLN re Meeting with Dulles, November 25, 1958, NMML, SDP, SF No. 56 and Memcon of Eisenhower-Bunker Meeting, April 25, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 536.

<sup>132</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 180-181. Also, see Letter from Jones to Bunker, *July 13, 1960, FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 545.

(without revealing quantity). When the bilateral agreement was signed, US officials assured India that there was no secret coda and—even though Pakistan claimed and had wanted an expanded commitment that covered Indian aggression—that it applied only to communist aggression.<sup>133</sup> Indian officials, on their part, showed the US ambassador the statement that the prime minister would make in parliament on the subject in advance. In parliament, Nehru highlighted American assurances that this was not a new or expanded commitment. He denied that India was toning down its criticism because of American aid to India, but asserted that he was not going to indulge in “fiery speeches” or “send aggressive notes.” The US, after all, had “the friendliest feelings for us, by and large.”<sup>134</sup>

Thanks to China, these friendly feelings also became evident on the US-India military front, as the US slowly became part of India’s military solution to its Chinese problem. Before 1959, there had not been much focus in Washington on the defense sales and assistance potential of the US-India relationship. American officials trying to get development assistance for India had indeed wanted Delhi to reduce defense expenditures, arguing that it had more than enough military capability.<sup>135</sup>

This view changed with the Chinese threat. By mid-1959, the Eisenhower administration was referring to the Indian military establishment as “relatively modest.” Treasury and budget bureau officials continued to be interested in getting both India and Pakistan to reduce their forces. However, while Dillon—who had earlier believed that

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<sup>133</sup> Note from Dutt to ComSec, JSE re Meeting with Bartlett and Bunker, January 29, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 40; Note from Dutt to JLN re Meeting with Bunker and mentioning Letter from Chagla re Meeting with Henderson (US/S), March 7, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35; Memo by Fleck (Officer in Charge of India, Ceylon, and Nepal Affairs) re Indian Request to Purchase Sidewinder Missiles, June 7, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 541-542.

<sup>134</sup> Note JLN to Dutt, March 7, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 35; JLN’s Remarks in the Rajya Sabha, March 6, 1959, NAI, File No. 54(2)-AMS/59; JLN’s Remarks in the Lok Sabha, March 17, 1959, NAI, File No. 54(2)-AMS/59.

<sup>135</sup> Memcon of Dillon-Black Meeting, July 12, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 439; Memcon of Anderson-Waugh (ExIm Bank)-Morarji Desai-Nanda (Planning Commission) Meeting, Delhi, October 9, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 469.

India should reduce its forces—and defense department officials suggested trying to get India to redeploy forces to the China border, they did not think India could or should decrease its forces. Given the increased threat, despite the consequences for the development program, overall, the administration believed that a reduction in Indian defense expenditures was not going to be feasible.<sup>136</sup>

As the threat increased, India, on its part, worked to strengthen its military capabilities. Indian officials expected that the US would probably welcome an Indian request for military aid, despite the fact that the US was itself not reaching out to India on this front. Delhi was not ready to take that step, but it considered asking for payment concessions from the US for Indian defense purchases—this was a departure given that India had resisted this option previously on the grounds that it could be interpreted as a request for military assistance. Meanwhile, officials were relieved that the defense department had assured them that it would expedite delivery of Indian orders of arms and ammunition.<sup>137</sup>

Some American officials wanted to be more proactive. Bunker recommended offering to sell India certain military equipment, arguing that if the US did not do so, India would have to balance out Pakistani procurement with more expensive acquisitions from Britain. This would have a deleterious impact on its defense strengthening and infrastructure build up efforts on the Chinese border and on its internal strengthening versus China. Eisenhower indicated that he had no problem with such an offer.

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<sup>136</sup> Memo of Discussion of 416<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, August 6, 1959, *Ibid*, pp. 18-20; NSC 5909/1, August 21, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 32, p. 37.

<sup>137</sup> IndEmb US, Annual Political Report for 1959, NAI, File No. 50(14)-AMS/60; Fortnightly Political Report for August 16-31, 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-III; Letter from Dutt to RP Sarthy (additional secretary, defense ministry), February 5, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 59.

Eventually, the US agreed to sell India C-119s.<sup>138</sup> There remained concern on the part of some, however, about the perception that the US was treating neutral India on the same basis as ally Pakistan. Thus, when India informally inquired about buying certain missiles, the US sought to encourage India to purchase them from Britain instead.<sup>139</sup>

Officials, nevertheless, agreed that the US should sell India more equipment but preferred to do it discreetly on a case-by-case basis with a focus on equipment to meet the China threat. Bunker suggested offering India helicopters, aircraft and road building equipment for purchase.<sup>140</sup> Such an offer could also help achieve the US goal of encouraging India to continue to rely on the west for its arms acquisitions. Furthermore, it would strengthen the hands of the Indian military, which the administration believed to be strongly non-communist and opposed to military purchases from Moscow.<sup>141</sup>

The State Department believed that it was neither feasible nor desirable to get into a “sales competition” with the Soviet Union. The Pentagon’s concern increased, however, when it received reports that an Indian defense team had gone to Moscow. Senior military officials worried that the Soviet foot in the military sales door would lead to a lot more because Moscow could undercut Washington on price and prove itself a reliable supplier to India. They recommended making an offer to support India’s indigenous defense industry even if the US had to absorb some of the costs. In any case, they argued, these costs would be less than if the US was giving India military grants, which India did

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<sup>138</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-Bunker Meeting, April 25, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 536; Memo by Fleck re Indian Request to Purchase Sidewinder Missiles, June 7, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, pp. 541-542.

<sup>139</sup> Memo by Fleck re Indian Request to Purchase Sidewinder Missiles, June 7, 1960, *Ibid*, pp. 541-542. Also, see Letter from Jones to Bunker, *July 13, 1960*, *Ibid*, p. 546.

<sup>140</sup> Letter from Jones to Bunker, *July 13, 1960*, *Ibid*, p. 547; Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, *September 17, 1960*, *Ibid*, p. 553.

<sup>141</sup> NSC 5909/1, August 21, 1959, *Ibid*, p. 44. Also, see Memcon of State-Defense Meeting on Possibility of Preventing Indian Purchase of Soviet Helicopters, *August 17, 1960*, *Ibid*, pp. 549-550 and Memo from the JCS to Gates (SecDef), November 15, 1960, *Ibid*, p. 576.

not want anyway, or if Washington got into a sales competition with Moscow. India had already expressed some interest in such assistance in talks with American defense corporations. The proposal also had the benefit of decreasing India's external dependence, assisting its economic development and conserving its foreign exchange. Overall, it was more of a "permanent cure."<sup>142</sup>

This proposal—as well as the near-term sale of helicopters that military officials wanted to undertake—however, left unanswered the question of how to finance the sales.<sup>143</sup> The issue languished in the transition period between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations.

## **IN CAMELOT (1961-1962)**

### **The Present Excellent Trends**

Many of the trends that became evident in the latter half of the Eisenhower administration only intensified in the Kennedy administration—including the emphasis on the uncommitted world and the need to fight indirect aggression. As Merrill has noted, there was more of a change in tactics rather than strategy. This change, nevertheless, proved important for India, since the incoming administration placed relatively less emphasis on establishing formal alliances and military assistance. Moreover, as Schlesinger has noted, of all the uncommitted countries, the president was "most interested" in India. When it came to India, there was also a difference in degree from the last administration, with Kennedy believing even more strongly in India's role as a

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<sup>142</sup> See footnote 2 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, *October 5, 1960*, Ibid, p. 553; Memo from the JCS to Gates, November 15, 1960, Ibid, pp. 575-578.

<sup>143</sup> See footnote 2 re Letter from Douglas (DepSecDef) to Merchant (US/S PA), December 3, 1960, Ibid, p. 578. Also, see Letter from Douglas to Dillon, December 19, 1960, Ibid, p. 579.



counterbalance and contrast to China—a belief that he had made evident even before taking office.<sup>144</sup>

The year before, Kennedy had indeed called for the non-communist world to devote *more* time and attention to “the struggle between India and China for leadership of the East, for the respect of all Asia, for the opportunity to demonstrate whose way of life is the better.” He had further highlighted why he believed “the outcome of this competition will vitally affect the security and standing of this Nation:” if India faltered in this struggle “its role as a counter to the Red Chinese will be lost, and communism would have won its greatest bloodless victory.”<sup>145</sup>

India had not worried too much about the change of administrations. As Dillon had noted to the Indian finance minister before the 1960 polls, “whichever party won the forthcoming election would be sympathetic to continuing aid to India.”<sup>146</sup> Indian officials, however, particularly welcomed Kennedy’s victory since they believed he and his advisers were “very sympathetic to India and will do their best.”<sup>147</sup> Indian officials continued to make the case for aiding India to incoming administration officials. B.K. Nehru argued, “India, on a population basis and for compelling political reasons, had a good case for receiving ‘substantially more than one-third’ of total American aid.” He also noted the Soviet commitment of \$500 million credit for the plan and consideration in Moscow of another \$300 million. Nehru, in turn, highlighted his government’s challenge:

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<sup>144</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 170; McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 272; Schlesinger, p. 522.

<sup>145</sup> Kennedy, “Remarks of the Senator at University of New Hampshire,” Durham, New Hampshire, March 7, 1960

([http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/JFK+Pre-Pres/1960/002PREPRES12SPEECHES\\_60MAR07.htm](http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/JFK+Pre-Pres/1960/002PREPRES12SPEECHES_60MAR07.htm))

<sup>146</sup> Memcon of Morarji Desai-Dillon Meeting, September 26, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 555.

<sup>147</sup> IndEmb US, Annual Political Report 1960, NAI, File No. 50(8)-AMS/61; IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (February 1-15, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

“We have a politically-conscious mass of people who think that they deserve everything—and they do—but India is unable to supply it.” The prime minister simultaneously also emphasized the progress India was making and stressed that the trends were moving in the right direction.<sup>148</sup>

Indian officials were preaching to the choir. Eisenhower’s last policy planning director had feared that a new administration would be “reluctant” to put together a large foreign assistance plan.<sup>149</sup> The fact that a Kennedy transition task force had suggested annual aid of \$500 million for India indicated that this concern was misplaced. The new administration formed a task force led by under secretary of state George Ball to review foreign assistance. It criticized the previous administration’s emphasis on military assistance, but it also recommended ideas that the Eisenhower administration had tried to implement, including long-term assistance packages and burden sharing with allies. In addition, it suggested a one-stop aid agency. Moreover, Kennedy argued publicly that his administration’s aid policy was not designed just to contain communism, but to assist positively in “an historical demonstration that...economic growth and political democracy go hand in hand.”<sup>150</sup>

The case for aiding India in particular was facilitated by optimism about that country within the context of the administration’s general sense of optimism.<sup>151</sup> Kennedy was impressed with India’s progress. He told Nehru that he was committed to aiding

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<sup>148</sup> Memcon of Ball (US/S EA)-BK Nehru Meeting, February 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 4-5 (This tactic had made an impact in the past on American officials like Bunker who had reported with concern that India was expecting aid between \$650 million and \$1 billion from Moscow. AmEmb India Paper: Soviet Economic Offensive in India, May 12, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 484). Memcon of Lyndon Johnson (vice president)-JLN Meeting, Delhi, May 18, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>149</sup> Memo from Smith to Herter, November 24, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 520.

<sup>150</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 170-173.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171. Also, see Letter from BK Nehru to LK Jha (economic secretary) re Meeting with Harriman, Washington, February 22, 1961, NAI, File No. 73(37)-AMS/61; reference to Kennedy speech in IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (June 1-15, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

India and trying to make the foreign assistance program more flexible and long-term.<sup>152</sup> There was also optimism about the bilateral relationship, with officials noting the “present excellent trend in Indo-American relations.” Taking on congressional contentions that the US was losing ground internationally, secretary of defense Robert McNamara cited India as one of the “bright spots” that proved that criticism wrong. The administration’s adoption of ideas (and personnel) that advocated that economic progress could support political stability only boosted the case for aiding India.<sup>153</sup>

Thus, Indian officials were reassured by the administration’s attitude toward India. They were, however, concerned about the impact of the economic strain in the US on foreign assistance. They kept a close watch on government statements, as well as expert recommendations to detect the prevailing mood on assistance. They were heartened that, despite the economic problems, Kennedy, Johnson and other policymakers seemed committed to aiding India. Their statements and advocacy indicated “good intentions.” Officials knew, however, that implementation would depend on Congress, which might continue to pose a problem.<sup>154</sup>

India had continued to struggle with not knowing in advance how much aid would be forthcoming over the next few years. The previous year Nehru had noted that even if liberals took the White House, aid would likely only come in “dribbles” because of congressional difficulties.<sup>155</sup> B.K. Nehru, nevertheless, hoped that the new

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<sup>152</sup> See footnote 1 re Letter from Kennedy to JLN, May 8, 1961 delivered by Johnson on May 18, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 41.

<sup>153</sup> Letter from Rountree (US ambassador to Pakistan) to Weil (Director, OSAA), February 8, 1961, *Ibid.*, p. 8; Testimony of McNamara (SecDef), June 14, 1961, *Hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, First Session on S-1983 Part 2 1961* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961) [hereafter *SFRC Hearings, 87-I Congress on S1983-2 1961*], p. 675; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 171.

<sup>154</sup> IndEmb US, Annual Political Report 1960, NAI, File No. 50(8)-AMS/61; IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Reports (February 1-15, March 16-31, June 1-15 and July 1-15, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61; Letter from BK Nehru to LK Jha re Meeting with Harriman, Washington, February 22, 1961, NAI, File No. 73(37)-AMS/61.

<sup>155</sup> Record of JLN-Khrushchev Talk, Calcutta, March 1, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 24.

administration's attempt to put aid on a long-term basis would be successful. Ball warned him that, while the administration was re-evaluating aid policy, congressional and fiscal constraints would continue to hinder major changes.<sup>156</sup>

On the Hill, advocates of aid for India highlighted the positive. They argued that even if India was lagging behind China somewhat in terms of rate of growth, it was fighting the good fight of freedom. State Department officials pushed back against criticisms that US aid to India had not produced results and only strengthened government control of the economy. Advocates reiterating the "bases for optimism," argued that India continued to be "critically important." It was one of the "points of strength" in the underdeveloped world and in an "intense competition with the Communist system in China for recognized achievement." Moreover, India's agreement with Pakistan on the Indus waters treaty showed that it was willing to do whatever it took to keep its focus on development and China.<sup>157</sup>

Indian officials tracked the continuing debate about various aspects of foreign aid in Congress: whether it should be given at all and, if it should, to whom, what kind and how much. They believed there was a "swing of opinion" in favor of the foreign assistance bill, thanks to indications of a renewed Soviet economic offensive, Ayub's speech in Congress that advocated foreign assistance, and vocal support for foreign aid

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<sup>156</sup> Memcon of Ball-BK Nehru Meeting, February 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 4-5. Kennedy had expected difficulties with Congress as well. See Memcon of Kennedy-Md. Shoaib (Pakistani finance minister) Meeting, March 7, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>157</sup> Testimony of Jerry Voorhis (Exec. Director, Cooperative League of the US), June 20, 1961, *SFRC Hearings, 87-1 Congress on S1983-2 1961*, p. 915; Exhibit B: Letter from William Macomber (DoS), June 1961, *SFRC Hearings, 87-1 Congress on S1983-2 1961*, pp. 967-969; Testimony of Frank Coffin (Managing Director, Development Loan Fund), June 27, 1961, *Hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, First Session on HR7372 Part 3 1961* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961) [hereafter *HFAC Hearings, 87-1 Congress on HR7372-3 1961*], p. 1074-1130; Testimony of Bunker (former ambassador to India), June 27, 1961, *HFAC Hearings, 87-1 Congress on HR7372-3 1961*, p. 1157.

from Eisenhower and Nixon. Nevertheless, they realized that the long-term provisions in the bill were not popular and unlikely to make it through.<sup>158</sup>

As expected, Congress rejected the administration's multi-year funding request. Despite cuts, however, the administration still got authorization for \$4.1 billion. The administration had proposed \$500 million of the total \$900 million development assistance amount for FY1962 for India. After cuts in Congress, the amount came to \$465.5 million—more than double the previous year. India had estimated that it needed \$5.5 billion of foreign aid to meet its \$24 billion third plan goals. When the India consortium met that spring and summer, there were pledges of \$2 billion of aid for the first two years, including \$1.045 billion from the US. In addition, the administration committed \$1.3 billion in food assistance for India.<sup>159</sup>

Nehru and his officials continued to express gratitude for US aid. He also acknowledged Kennedy's efforts to work towards aid programs on a long-term basis.<sup>160</sup> Overall, he was pleased with the new administration's approach. Johnson's assertion in Delhi that "military force alone can never be a permanent bulwark against Communist activities" in Asia was music to Nehru's ears.<sup>161</sup> Kennedy's public statements that he was going to make a special effort to reach out to nonaligned countries further pleased the prime minister.<sup>162</sup> The president even seemed willing to sort out disagreements with the Soviet Union. Nehru also thought the administration's attitude on the issues of Angola,

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<sup>158</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Reports (July 1-15 and August 1-15, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

<sup>159</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 173-176. Also, see Memo from Ball to Kennedy, April 19, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 33 and Memo from Ball to Kennedy, May 1, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 38-39 and *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>160</sup> Letter from JLN to Kennedy, May 13, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 39-40. Also, see Memcon of Ball-BK Nehru Meeting, February 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 6.

<sup>161</sup> Memcon of Johnson-JLN Meeting, Delhi, May 18, 1961, *Ibid*, p. 41.

<sup>162</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 170 and IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (May 16-31, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

Congo and Laos showed a “marked change” in the foreign policy realm.<sup>163</sup> India indeed worked with the US on Congo and Laos and, despite the fact that the experience was not without problems, it left a positive impression of the administration.<sup>164</sup>

On their part, Indian officials tried to be careful about differences. Kux has noted, for example, the “relative[ly] calm” Indian reaction to the Bay of Pigs invasion.<sup>165</sup> Even before the administration had come to office, Dutt had noted that India had to be careful not to get “drawn into” Cuba-US controversies. When it had seemed that India would have to pick a side at the UN in late 1960, Indian officials had informed their American counterparts in advance.<sup>166</sup> In spring 1961, when reports of the invasion emerged, initially Nehru called the situation “distressing,” but refused further comment till he had more details. His government ensured that the issue was not discussed in parliament, despite communist party pressure. As pressure built on Nehru, in parliament he acknowledged that there had been an invasion of Cuba and he could not see how it could have occurred without American help or encouragement. He suggested that private concerns might be more responsible and welcomed Kennedy’s statement about not permitting American military intervention in Cuba. Nevertheless, his disapproval of US government actions was clear, with his major concern apparently the impact on the negotiations in Southeast Asia. Just a few days later, however, he seemed to have

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<sup>163</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN re Meeting with US chargé, April 23, 1961, NMML, SDP, SF No. 43; Paul Grimes, “Nehru?” *NYT*, May 6, 1961, p. E5.

<sup>164</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 179. Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 183-186.

<sup>165</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 185.

<sup>166</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, March 23, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 41; Note from Dutt to JS(W) re Meeting with Bunker, November 26, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 45.

“second thoughts” and expressed faith in Kennedy’s assurances and played down his previous criticism.<sup>167</sup>

Administration officials hoped that Nehru would stay on that path, but developments that fall would take a bit of the sheen off the Indian bright spot for them. That summer, Ayub asserted to Kennedy that in return for aid, “at the back of its mind the U.S. surely thought India would support the U.S.” Kennedy asserted that he did not expect Indian support, even on some issues that were vital to the US. The US gave India aid not to gain support but “to help it stay free.”<sup>168</sup>

Nevertheless, with a greater degree of interest and aid there seemed to be greater hope (and expectation) than in the previous administration that India would support the US—or, the very least, not oppose it on key issues. When India did not meet those expectations, there was disappointment. The administration accepted the principle that India would have an independent foreign policy, but sometimes its practice posed real problems. The problems started with Nehru’s public comment during the Berlin crisis in August that the west’s access to Berlin was a “concession” rather than a right. Then, there was disapproval of the Belgrade nonaligned conference and the related Indian reaction to the Soviet resumption of nuclear tests. This was followed by public questions about India’s continued insistence on supporting communist Chinese seating at the UN.

Nehru’s comments on the crisis Berlin had varied. Initially, he had criticized the closing of the border. Then, there was his statement about access not being a right. Even Indian embassy officials in the US admitted that the “hysteric excitement” that followed

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<sup>167</sup> “Nehru Decries Situation,” *NYT*, April 18, 1961, p. 17; “Nehru Accuses the US of Encouraging ‘Invasion’ of Cuba,” *NYT*, April 21, 1961, p. 5; “Nehru Eases Stand Toward US on Cuba,” *NYT*, April 26, 1961, p. 6.

<sup>168</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-Ayub Khan (Pakistani president) Meeting, Washington, July 11, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 68-70.

Nehru's remarks were "understandable." They explained to Delhi that Indian comments especially hit a nerve because the Kennedy administration had been actively trying to gain the understanding of nonaligned countries. In what one newspaper called a "switch," Nehru subsequently clarified that he believed the communist bloc should not deny the west access to Berlin. US ambassador to India Galbraith, nevertheless, told the Indian foreign secretary that India needed to be careful, since its words or actions weakened Kennedy's hand.<sup>169</sup>

Nehru's words had made the administration "nervous" about his attitude at the forthcoming nonaligned conference in Belgrade, since it had expected the Indian prime minister to be a "moderating influence" there.<sup>170</sup> Nehru had shown little enthusiasm for convening a conference, which Egypt, Indonesia and Yugoslavia had been pushing.<sup>171</sup> He had eventually, however, accepted it. It is not exactly clear why, but Indian concern about losing ground in the Afro-Asian world to China and the sense that Beijing was actively trying to isolate Delhi might have played a role in his acquiescence.<sup>172</sup>

The conference took place just after the Soviet Union announced that it was resuming nuclear tests, blaming the west's intentions for its decision. There was much public criticism in the US about the nonaligned reaction to the Soviet move. Indian officials noted that even supporters of India believed that the nonaligned countries were "soft" on the Soviet Union and "hard" on the west at the conference. Critics did not think

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<sup>169</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (August 16-31, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61; Note from MJ Desai (FonSec) to JLN re Meeting with Galbraith, September 8, 1961, NAI, File No. 73(92)-AMS/61.

<sup>170</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (August 16-31, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

<sup>171</sup> Paul Underwood, "Neutrals Revise Plans for Talks," *NYT*, May 14, 1961, p. 7. Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 192.

<sup>172</sup> Note from Dutt to JLN, January 28, 1961, NMML, SDP, SF No. 47; Cable from Dutt to Parthasarathy, November 24, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 44; Letter from Indian ambassador in Burma to MJ Desai (commonwealth secretary), October 21, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 58.



Egyptian leader Gamal Nasser and Nehru's denunciations were targeted enough. The administration clarified that it was satisfied with Nehru's behavior at the conference.<sup>173</sup> The prime minister had expressed deep regret about the Soviet decision, stating that it made the world a more dangerous place, and had resisted other nonaligned countries' call to propose solutions for a host of global issues, including Berlin.<sup>174</sup> American officials assured India that Kennedy's statement when signing the foreign aid legislation that it was his "belief that in the administration of these funds we should give great attention and consideration to those nations who have our view of world affairs" was not directed at India. Then, however, Krishna Menon's statements blaming the west for the Soviet decision and equating Soviet atmospheric tests with American underground ones really upset the administration. Indian officials worried about the review of foreign policy the administration announced and the media's "cooling off" toward India. When administration officials publicly attacked Krishna Menon's statement, observers in the US wondered if this signified a U-turn in the administration's attitude toward India.<sup>175</sup> They awaited a visit by Nehru to find out.

Schlesinger and others have identified Nehru's visit in November as resulting in Kennedy giving up "hope...that India would be in the next years a great affirmative force in the world or even in South Asia."<sup>176</sup> Given the events leading up to it, Nehru's visit probably confirmed that view rather than caused it. The Indian military takeover of Goa after the visit would only reinforce the view. The American reaction, which condemned the Indian use of force but not the continuation of the Portuguese empire, in

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<sup>173</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Reports (August 16-31, September 1-15 and September 16-30, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

<sup>174</sup> MS Handler, "Nehru Says Soviet Tests Increase Danger of War," *NYT*, September 3, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Reports Covering August 16-October 31, 1961, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

<sup>176</sup> Schlesinger, p. 526.

turn, upset India.<sup>177</sup> Indian officials had expected a negative reaction to the action, though one wryly commented that if India instead had “launched an offensive against the Chinese to regain our territory we would of course be applauded as heroes.”<sup>178</sup>

The two countries, however, needed each other too much. On his visit, Nehru did some damage control. In the joint communiqué issued, India agreed that the west had a “legitimate and necessary right” to access Berlin. Speaking publicly, Nehru also called the Soviet nuclear tests “a very harmful, disastrous thing.” Seeming to repudiate Krishna Menon, he said that it was “obvious” that Soviet actions were the ones responsible for the new “phase” of tension. He stressed that their resumption of testing was “completely wrong” and acknowledged that there should have been stronger criticism from the nonaligned countries. Furthermore, he denied that there was a nonaligned bloc and seemed to distance India from other nonaligned countries’ statements. Privately, he said to Kennedy, “Non-aligned countries are so non-aligned that they do not agree even among themselves.” Finally, on the question of Indian support for a place for China at the UN, which had also been criticized, he explained that Delhi believed it would be “easier” to deal with Beijing if it was in the UN. The Indian embassy noted that after Nehru’s visit, at least, the “attacks on our motives are reduced.”<sup>179</sup>

Despite frustrations with Nehru and Krishna Menon, for the US as well “India remained the key area in Asia” and, moreover, the “most reasonable” of the Asian developing countries. As Schlesinger has pointed out, while the vision of India and its

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, pp. 527-529.

<sup>178</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (December 1-15, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

<sup>179</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-JLN Meeting, Washington, November 7, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 135; Richard Lyons, “Nehru Arrives in U.S., Says Reds Obviously’ Broke Ban On Testing,” *WP*, November 6, 1961, p. A1; Tom Wicker, “Nehru Says Entry to Berlin is Vital,” *NYT*, November 10, 1961, p. 1; Gerald Stone, “Nehru Slaps Neutralists for Soviet-Test Apathy,” *WP*, November 13, 1961, p. A1; IndEmb US, Political Report (November 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

role might have shrunk, Kennedy still thought it was crucial to help India succeed.<sup>180</sup> As far as he was concerned, “The independence of countries sometimes cause problems...We should simply have to live with those difficulties”—this tolerance was what made Washington different from Moscow.<sup>181</sup> The reality was that India had enough influence that it could play serious spoiler or major facilitator when it came to US interests on various issues and the administration thought, overall, that India would play the latter.<sup>182</sup>

Administration officials highlighted Nehru’s statements in support of the west and critical of the Soviet Union. The administration shifted the blame for the major differences that fall to Krishna Menon, portraying him as loose cannon.<sup>183</sup> Outside the administration even Nixon came to Nehru’s defense, welcoming the prime minister’s “inspiring leadership.” In a tirade about neutral countries, he noted that “to his credit” Nehru was not one of the nonaligned leaders who tried to blackmail the US into providing aid by threatening to go communist. He pointed out that the Indian prime minister had been the only leader at Belgrade who had given the Soviet Union more than a “gentle slap on the wrist” for resuming atomic tests.<sup>184</sup>

More importantly from India’s perspective, the administration moved forward on supporting India on both the defense and development fronts. Secretary of State Dean Rusk went beyond the traditional US position on the Sino-US border, stating at a press conference in December, “we support the Indian view with respect to their own borders.

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<sup>180</sup> Schlesinger, p. 523, p. 526, p. 532.

<sup>181</sup> At a meeting in January 1962. Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 185.

<sup>182</sup> NESAA, “US Relations with South Asia,” undated (January 1962), *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 182.

<sup>183</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (October 16-31, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61; IndEmb US, Political Report (November 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

<sup>184</sup> Richard M. Nixon, “People of America are Fed Up with So-Called Neutralism,” *WP*, November 15, 1961, p. A4.

Those borders have been well established in law if not in every locality demarcated exactly on the ground. But the McMahon Line generally is something that the rest of the world has accepted.”<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, just a month after Kennedy had ordered a hold on aid to India because of the Goa takeover, he approved its release in early 1962. Even as Kennedy worried about the amount of aid going to South Asia relative to Latin America and emphasized the need to “tighten up” overall aid terms to make them more acceptable to Congress, he continued to support a large aid program for India.<sup>186</sup> That aid program seemed under threat that summer in the senate. Sen. Symington (D-MO) led an effort to cut the proposed aid package for India by 25 percent. The lack of an India-Pakistan settlement, Krishna Menon’s statements the previous fall and India’s ties with the Soviet Union motivated him. Reports of a potential Indian defense deal with the Soviet Union only increased the size of the target on India’s back in Congress. Kennedy personally intervened to save the Indian aid program. The administration managed to limit the cut and received \$400 million of the \$450 million it requested for India for FY1963.<sup>187</sup>

The signs, however, did not bode well for the future. Congress cut 20 percent from the administration’s overall request. Even though the cut to the India package was relatively less (at around 10 percent), it was the first time in years that the amount of aid appropriated for India was less than the previous year. From then on, this feature would be the rule rather than the exception. Moreover, even supporters like Galbraith had started worrying that India was taking western aid for granted. The “considerable help” he had envisioned getting from India did not seem to be materializing. He wondered if the US had been too “eager to help and...anxious to explain ourselves” and if, instead, it

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<sup>185</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (December 1-15, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61.

<sup>186</sup> Memo from Komer to Bundy, January 12, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>187</sup> Schlesinger, p. 531; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 187.

should play “cooler” in terms of offering aid, which would have “a good effect here and a good ultimate effect in Washington.”<sup>188</sup>

At that stage, however, from the Indian perspective the prospects of US-India relations seemed good. Nehru conveyed his country’s gratitude for America’s “friendly and sympathetic attitude, even more than the aid” and emphasized that this would persist no matter what differences emerged.<sup>189</sup> American officials in Delhi detected a definite “Movement of India toward west during past five years.”<sup>190</sup> As NSC staffer Robert Komer would later note, China had made—and would continue to make—a significant contribution to that movement.

### **“Growls from Peking”**

The Sino-Indian border dispute had not dissipated. By 1961, Nehru was convinced that Beijing was the real danger to peace and to any US-Soviet détente. He told US officials that the situation with China was “dangerous,” with negotiations going nowhere. He feared that China’s internal problems were only going to increase Beijing’s assertiveness and lead it to “press forward wherever possible.” Nonetheless, he and other officials noted that they did not think that China would resort to major aggression in the next few years.

Under Secretary of State Bowles told Nehru that the possibility of major Chinese aggression could not be ruled out for the next decade. He urged that India and the US discuss such a contingency, even if they could not jointly plan for it. He noted that in the long-term an Asian power balance—with India, Japan and Pakistan—could help contain China, with the US military “more unobtrusively in the background.” In the meantime, he

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<sup>188</sup> Letter from Galbraith (ambassador to India) to Kennedy, August 6, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 320.

<sup>189</sup> Letter from JLN to Kennedy, August 5, 1962, quoted in Gopal, *Nehru*, Vol. 3, pp. 217-218.

<sup>190</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS and DoD, May 18, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 249.

“assured [Nehru] that if China sought to expand into South or Southeast Asia by military power we would oppose this effort with whatever allies we could persuade to cooperate with us.”<sup>191</sup>

Kennedy was uncertain about China’s overall intentions and actions and worried that the Sino-Indian border dispute would be a potential problem over the next year.<sup>192</sup> Like Eisenhower, he hoped that India would help alleviate this problem by settling its Pakistan one. Soon after he had taken office, Ayub and other Pakistani officials had started urging the US to use economic assistance to push India towards a Kashmir solution. Both Kennedy and Johnson told Ayub that the US did not have that kind of leverage with India. Furthermore, administration officials, including the president, continued to assert that the US would not stop assisting neutrals in general and India in particular. With Chinese pressure on India increasing, Ayub started arguing that Washington should use the Indian need for US backing as leverage, since Delhi was now “very relian[t]” on the US. Realizing that there was little appetite for this in Washington, the Pakistani president also tried another line of argument: that South Asia would not be truly secure without an India-Pakistan settlement.<sup>193</sup>

This argument already held traction in the administration. In addition, officials believed that India-Pakistan reconciliation would make aid for India easier to get through

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<sup>191</sup> Memcon of Bowles (US/S)-Nehru Meeting, Delhi, August 8-9, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 82-84. Also, see Memcon of McConaughy (AS/S FEA)-Chatterjee (Indian chargé) Meeting, June 30, 1961, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume I: Vietnam, 1961* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1988) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. I*], pp. 191-195.

<sup>192</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-Ch’en (Taiwanese Vice President) Meeting, August 1, 1961, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963 Volume XXII: Northeast Asia* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1996) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XXII*], p. 104.

<sup>193</sup> Letter from Rountree to Weil, February 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 7; Memcon of Kennedy-Shoaib Meeting, March 7, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 18-19; Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re Ayub-Harriman Meeting, Karachi, March 22, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 29; Memcon of Johnson-Ayub Meeting, Karachi, May 20, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 47-48; Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re Rountree-Ayub Meeting, June 2, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 53; Memcon of Kennedy-Ayub Meeting, Washington, July 11, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 68-70.

Congress, prevent the bilateral quarrel and arms race from cancelling out the benefits of US assistance and remove a thorn in US-India relations.<sup>194</sup> Thus, as per Kennedy's promise to Ayub, administration officials including the president discussed the possibility of an India-Pakistan settlement with Indian officials.

Nehru eventually expressed a willingness to accept the status quo in Kashmir with some minor changes if necessary.<sup>195</sup> As Galbraith had explained, there were limits to how far Nehru could go, however, given the Sino-Indian border situation and upcoming elections in India in February 1962.<sup>196</sup> Nevertheless, in order to stop Pakistan from bringing Kashmir up at the UN and making things more difficult for everyone, Washington urged Nehru to take some visible action. In January 1962, the prime minister agreed to try to sit down with Ayub after the elections, but made clear that he neither would nor could accept mediation.<sup>197</sup>

Some officials like Komer resented the constant Pakistani pressure, which was creating problems for broader American strategic interests such as with India. Komer asserted, "if we must choose among these countries, there is little question that India (because of its sheer size and resources) is where we must put our chief reliance..."<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-BK Nehru (Indian ambassador to the US) Meeting, February 28, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 214. Also, see Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re JLN-Bowles-Galbraith Meeting, February 23, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 213; NESAA, "US Relations with South Asia," undated (January 1962), *Ibid*, p. 183. Also, see Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 186.

<sup>195</sup> Letter from Galbraith to Talbot (AS/S NESAA) re Meeting with JLN, September 21, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 107-108. Also, see Memcon of Kennedy-JLN Meeting, Washington, November 7, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 132. Nehru had suggested as much earlier as well: Telegram from Harriman to Kennedy and Rusk re Meeting with JLN, Delhi, March 24, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 32.

<sup>196</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, June 28, 1961, *Ibid*, p. 59. For the sensitivities related to the elections, also see Memcon of Kennedy-JLN Meeting, Washington, November 7, 1961, *Ibid*, p. 132 and Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Galbraith-JLN Meeting, December 28, 1961, *Ibid*, p. 165.

<sup>197</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Kennedy-BK Nehru Meeting, January 31, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 211-212. For the US suggestion, see Memo from Komer to Bundy, January 12, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 190. Also, see Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India enclosing Letter from Kennedy to JLN, January 15, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 194.

<sup>198</sup> Memo from Komer to Bundy, January 6, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 179-180.

American officials did not appreciate Pakistan's formal request that the US use aid as leverage, terminate military sales to India unless India forsook "aggressive intentions" and agreed to limit use against China, and announce publicly the 1959 assurance that the US would aid Pakistan in the event of an Indian attack. Even the South Asia bureau at the State Department, which was urging that the US try to get India and Pakistan to talk to each other, did not believe that aid should be used to push India, even if that created problems with Pakistan.<sup>199</sup>

The American frustration with Pakistan only increased over 1962 when it pursued the Kashmir issue at the UN despite persistent American advice and efforts with India that had resulted in Nehru inviting Ayub to India. The US refused to sponsor a UN resolution as Pakistan wanted, but found itself having to support one that summer because of previous commitments.<sup>200</sup> In parliament Nehru expressed his disappointment with the US and UK, noting that on Kashmir and Goa the two countries would "almost invariably be against us." Washington made clear to Delhi that this speech had an adverse impact on Congress and the president, especially given that the US had worked to moderate the resolution.<sup>201</sup> Administration officials were, however, none too pleased with Pakistan either, resenting the fact that it pushed the US to take a public stand at the UN.

Pakistan's developing relationship with China had also upset the administration. In 1959, intelligence analysts had dismissed the idea that Sino-Pakistani ties would

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<sup>199</sup> NESAA, "US Relations with South Asia," undated (January 1962), *Ibid*, p. 186.

<sup>200</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, December 29, 1961, *Ibid*, pp. 166-167. Also, see Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re JLN-Bowles-Galbraith Meeting, February 23, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 213; Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re Bowles Meetings with Ayub and MEA officials, March 4, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 221; Memcon of Rusk-Zafullah Khan (Pakistani PR to UN) Meeting, April 12, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 233; Memo from Cleveland (AS/S IO) and Talbot to Ball (Acting S/S), June 22, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 290.

<sup>201</sup> Reference to Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, June 24, 1962 in *Ibid*, p. 291; Telegram from Bundy to Galbraith, June 24, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 291; Telegram from Rusk to Galbraith, July 2, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 296.



expand.<sup>202</sup> In the Kennedy administration, however, the Pakistani government seemed to move toward a more neutral position, pursuing economic engagement with Moscow and border talks with Beijing.<sup>203</sup> Earlier Ayub had publicly stated that Pakistan would not accept any Sino-Indian agreement that covered the border in the western sector because that area was in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>204</sup> By spring 1961, however, he had indicated to American officials that he perceived a greater Chinese threat and thought Pakistan should itself reach a border agreement with Beijing. Subsequently, Pakistani officials had told Kennedy that China had approached Pakistan for a settlement, probably because it would give them an advantage in negotiations with India.<sup>205</sup> Then, Pakistan had indicated that it was normalizing relations with China and the Soviet Union and would settle with Beijing to protect its own interests. Ayub had denied that this was an effort to “embarrass India.” Ambassador-at-large Harriman, however, had questioned how any such agreement—*de jure* or *de facto*—could not trouble India.<sup>206</sup>

Both India and the US saw Pakistan’s relationship with China as a problem. US officials doubted that Pakistan would jettison the US tie because Beijing and Moscow could not help Islamabad that much. Intelligence analysts basically expected Pakistan “to seek greater independence within the framework of its pro-Western orientation.”<sup>207</sup> There

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<sup>202</sup> NIE 52-59: The Outlook for Pakistan, May 5, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 718.

<sup>203</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 181.

<sup>204</sup> Memcon of Eisenhower-JLN Meeting, Delhi, December 10, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 523.

<sup>205</sup> See footnote 4 re Telegram From AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re Ayub-Rountree Meeting, Karachi, March 3, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 28; Memcon of Kennedy-Shoaib Meeting, March 7, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 19.

<sup>206</sup> Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re Ayub-Harriman Meeting, Karachi, March 22, 1961, *Ibid.*, p. 29. It did. Indian officials constantly worried about the Sino-Pakistan rapprochement. See Note from Dutt to Director(C) and CommSec, January 22, 1961, NMML, SDP, SF No. 46 and Note from Dutt to JLN, January 21, 1961, NMML, SDP, SF No. 46; Note from Dutt to Director(C) re Cabinet Foreign Affairs Committee Meeting, January 18, 1961, NMML, SDP, SF No. 46.

<sup>207</sup> Memo from Komer to Bundy, January 6, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 180; NIE 32-61: Prospects for Pakistan, July 5, 1961. *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 65.

was concern, however, that Pakistan's relationship with China could create trouble for American and Indian interests. Kennedy noted that Pakistan was no longer supporting the US on issues like Chinese representation at the UN, which were of vital interest to the US.<sup>208</sup> In addition, as Nehru had told Kennedy, Pakistan's "flirt[ation]" with China made Kashmir harder to solve because of public opinion.<sup>209</sup> India and the US only became more upset when China and Pakistan made public their border negotiations in summer 1962. Pakistan's insistence that the initiative had come from China did not help; as Islamabad admitted the agreement only put more pressure on India.<sup>210</sup> Kennedy seemed fed up. He nixed the Pakistani suggestion of US-Pakistan joint defense planning vis-à-vis India. When there was consideration of whether to restate guarantees to Pakistan to reassure it about US action in case of an Indian attack, he remained hesitant, noting that he was "extremely reluctant to give any new commitments." He also questioned why the previous commitments were ever made.<sup>211</sup>

By summer 1962 intelligence assessments noted that US-Pakistan relations had "deteriorated."<sup>212</sup> Contributing to this was the US refusal to rule out supplying India militarily. A year earlier Kennedy had denied that the US was thinking about giving India military aid at that point, but told Ayub that if India asked for aid if the border situation deteriorated, the US would reconsider. He had assured Ayub that, in the event that happened, the US would talk to Pakistan about the reconsideration.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-Ayub Meeting, Washington, July 11, 1961, Ibid, p. 70. Also, see Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan re Kennedy-Aziz Ahmed (Pakistani ambassador to the US) Meeting, January 26, 1962, Ibid, pp. 207-208.

<sup>209</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-JLN Meeting, Washington, November 7, 1961, Ibid, p. 133.

<sup>210</sup> Memcon of Rusk-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, May 28, 1962, Ibid, pp. 256-257. Memo sent by Brubeck (DoS Executive Secretary) to Bundy on US-Pakistan Relations, June 15, 1962, Ibid, p. 276.

<sup>211</sup> Memo for the Record on Meeting with the President on India-Pakistan Problems, June 14, 1962, Ibid, p. 279.

<sup>212</sup> NIE 31-62: Prospects for India, May 31, 1962, Ibid, p. 258.

<sup>213</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-Ayub Meeting, Washington, July 11, 1961, Ibid, p. 74.

In late 1959 and spring 1960, Ayub had acknowledged that India faced a “real danger” from China and thought it “natural” for India to increase its defense expenditures. At that time, however, he had been trying to lobby for more US military aid and had been generally playing up the communist Chinese threat.<sup>214</sup> Ayub had continued to acknowledge a Chinese threat India through 1961 and early 1962, but he had argued that India was a lost cause because of its vulnerabilities—Pakistan would be the true firewall in the subcontinent. Ayub had also told Kennedy that India did not see China as its main enemy and it perceived the Sino-Indian disagreement as an “aberration.” Pakistani officials had told American officials that Pakistan would not object to aid to India if it was going to fight China, but that was unlikely since India would likely appease China. In a contradictory argument, however, Ayub had also said that the US should not aid Indians because they were “very trigger-happy people.”<sup>215</sup>

As the situation with China deteriorated in summer 1962, the State Department expected that India might ask for military aid at some point and realized the US would need “flexibility” with Pakistan to be able to help India. This did not mean that Pakistan would get a veto, since “India is of such importance that little or no consideration can be given to a major retrogressive change in U.S. policy toward it.”<sup>216</sup> Instead, American officials prepared the ground with Pakistan, arguing (to little effect) that Pakistan should

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<sup>214</sup> Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re Rountree-Ayub Meeting, March 5, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 802 and Memcon of Eisenhower-Ayub Meeting, Karachi, December 8, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 783. For skepticism about the Chinese threat to Pakistan, see Letter from Poullada (Officer in Charge of Pakistan-Afghanistan Affairs) to Linebaugh (Special Assistant for Mutual Security Affairs, AmEmb Pakistan), March 14, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 806.

<sup>215</sup> Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re Ayub-Harriman Meeting, Karachi, March 22, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 28; Memcon of Johnson-Ayub Meeting, Karachi, May 20, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 48-49; Memcon of Kennedy-Ayub Meeting, Washington, July 11, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 68-69, p. 73. Also, see Memcon of Rusk-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, Washington, January 3, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 172 and Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan re Kennedy-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, January 26, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 205..

<sup>216</sup> DoS, Memo of Discussion on Pakistan-US Relations, May 13, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 244.

prefer the west to be India's source of military supply because if India attacked Pakistan—which most US policymakers did not believe was likely<sup>217</sup>—the west could cut off that supply. With the prospect of western supply becoming real, Pakistani officials began asserting that India was exaggerating the Chinese threat. They told their American interlocutors that they had received Soviet reports that India was playing up the threat to elicit American aid.<sup>218</sup>

American officials, however, had a different perspective on the China threat and consequently the military supply question. Initially, when Kennedy had taken office, policymakers had decided to delay any action on the Eisenhower defense department proposals to supply India till the administration's larger assistance policy had been determined.<sup>219</sup> Galbraith and deputy secretary of defense Gilpatric had reiterated the need to maintain the orientation of India's military leadership toward the west. There had been concern that this would change with Krishna Menon's continuing leadership of the Indian defense ministry, with the US potentially even being excluded as a military supplier. At the very least, the US needed to prevent more purchases from Moscow. Two major obstacles to selling major equipment to India had remained: Indian concerns about in-country surveys that the supply of some military equipment would require, and the likelihood that if the US sold equipment on a competitive basis (for example, by allowing

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<sup>217</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-Ayub Meeting, Washington, July 11, 1961, *Ibid*, p. 68.; Letter from Poullada to Linebaugh, March 14, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 806.

<sup>218</sup> Memcon of McGhee (US/S PA)-Grant (DAS/S NESAA)-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, June 21, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 285-286; Memcon of Rusk-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, July 19, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 309.

<sup>219</sup> See footnote 3 re Letter from Bowles to Gilpatric (DepSecDef), March 23, 1961, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 579.

payment in rupees) India would be classified as recipient of military aid (or an ally)—which would raise serious concerns in Delhi.<sup>220</sup>

Action had been deferred, but it had come up again because supply to Pakistan had renewed interest in American equipment in India. In August 1961, the US had delivered twelve F-104s to Pakistan. Pakistan had turned down an American request to inform India of the details of the purchase. With wild speculation in India about the magnitude of the delivery creating problems for the US (and Nehru), Washington had given Galbraith permission to reassure Indian officials that the quantity was limited.<sup>221</sup> The supply—along with the Chinese threat—seemed to spur some interest in India in acquisitions from the US. The Indian foreign secretary had asked the army chief who had been visiting the US if defense department officials had mentioned their willingness to give or sell military equipment to India; he had said no, but had also pointed out that in the past India had not viewed kindly suggestions of this kind.<sup>222</sup> They had also, however, spurred Krishna Menon to look to Moscow for aircraft, as well as an engine for an indigenously developed supersonic. Indian military officers who preferred to look to Washington had approached defense department officials about how to get around the defense minister.<sup>223</sup>

The question of military supply to India had not been discussed during Nehru's subsequent visit to the US. Before he had arrived, however, the US had decided that it

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<sup>220</sup> Letter from Gilpatric to Bowles, June 12, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 57-58. Also, see Letter from Gilpatric to Bowles, September 13, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 97-98 and Telegram from DoS to Rountree and Galbraith, December 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 151.

<sup>221</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 181-182. Telegram from Ball (Acting S/S) to Galbraith, August 4, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 79.

<sup>222</sup> Note from MJ Desai to JLN re Talk with Gen. Thapar (COAS), August 11, 1961, NAI, File No. 73(83)-AMS/61.

<sup>223</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 182; Letter from Gilpatric to Bowles, September 13, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 97.

would be prepared to consider requests for dual-purpose equipment against China. After his visit, when it became clear that a Soviet military sales mission was expected in India, there had been a push to make clear to Indian officials that the US was open for business. This effort had stalled, however, because of the Indian takeover of Goa.<sup>224</sup>

In summer 1962 when it seemed that India was close to reaching an agreement to acquire MiGs from the Soviet Union, US officials tried to dissuade India from the purchase. Galbraith emphasized the adverse impact on US opinion and legislation and stressed that the rupee payment terms of the MiG deal made it military aid.<sup>225</sup> (India had indeed previously turned down such terms on the grounds that it would be considered aid.<sup>226</sup>) In Washington, Komer argued that the US should protest “for effect,” but not try to match the Soviet offer at that time. Purchases from Moscow might actually give India some confidence of Soviet neutrality in the Sino-Indian dispute and make Delhi more resolute. Moreover, given that the UN was about to take up the Kashmir issue and the US needed to keep Pakistan from extreme action, it was not the right time to give Pakistan proof that the US was “shifting to a pro-Indian stance.” Finally, India was not going to turn to Moscow as its sole supplier, and would more than likely try to find a way to balance the purchase with a western one.<sup>227</sup>

Galbraith, however, argued that the Chinese threat meant that India was going to buy modern equipment, even if it was just for prestige and morale. The US needed to try to find a way to check greater Soviet influence, especially as Nehru’s future was

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<sup>224</sup> Telegram from DoS to Rountree and Galbraith, December 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 150-151; Memo from Komer to Bundy, January 12, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 190.

<sup>225</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS and DoD re Galbraith-MJ Desai Meeting, May 8, 1962, *Ibid.*, p. 241. Also, see Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Galbraith Meetings with Krishna Menon (Indian defense minister) and MJ Desai, May 13, 1962, *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247.

<sup>226</sup> Telegram from Bunker to Dillon and Jones re Bunker-Krishna Menon Meeting, May 5, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 539.

<sup>227</sup> Memo from Komer to Bundy, May 9, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 242-243.

uncertain and a new leader might move leftwards. India agreed to hold the purchase, but only on the assumption that the US would make alternatives available to it. The ambassador argued that the “pivotal position” of India justified offering it either American or British options.<sup>228</sup>

The administration tried to get Britain to offer an alternative package with US financing in order to stall the deal (Congress was debating the aid bill at the time), even if the administration could not prevent it. There continued to be debate about whether an alternate offer would be effective, as well as discussion about Pakistani and Congressional reaction. Nevertheless, many wanted a “spoiling offer,” even if it was just for the record.<sup>229</sup>

British officials said that the potential adverse US reaction was causing president Radhakrishnan and finance minister Desai to encourage Nehru to delay a decision on the MiGs. The US, nevertheless, encouraged London to help put together a package of Lightnings, an engine for the Indian supersonic and C-130s. It hoped India would end up choosing neither the western nor Soviet option, or delaying “indefinitely.”<sup>230</sup> Even as the

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<sup>228</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS and DoD, May 18, 1962, Ibid, pp. 248-250.

<sup>229</sup> Memo from Komer to Bundy, May 25, 1962, Ibid, pp. 254-255; SNIE 31/32-62: Probable Reaction of Pakistan to the Provision of Supersonic Aircraft to India by the US or Other Western Countries, June 6, 1962, Ibid, p. 263; Memo from Rusk to Kennedy, June 1, 1962, Ibid, p. 260; Memo for the Record on Meeting with the President on India-Pakistan Problems, June 14, 1962, Ibid, p. 278. Also, see Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, June 1, 1962, Ibid, p. 261; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, June 4, 1962, Ibid, p. 262; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, June 9, 1962, Ibid, pp. 264-266; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, June 14, 1962, Ibid, p. 270; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, June 19, 1962, Ibid, p. 280; Telegram from Galbraith to Kennedy and Ball re Message to JLN (subsequently delivered verbally), June 21, 1962, Ibid, p. 284; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, July 6, 1962, Ibid, p. 300.

<sup>230</sup> Footnote 2 re Message from Macmillan to Kennedy, June 19, 1962, Ibid, p. 278; Telegram from Galbraith to Kennedy re Meeting with JLN, June 20, 1962, Ibid, p. 282; Memo on Decisions Taken at President’s Meeting on Countering MiG Sale to India, June 14, 1962, Ibid, p. 269; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, June 19, 1962, Ibid, p. 280; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, July 6, 1962, Ibid, p. 300.

Anglo-American discussions continued, by the last week of July it seemed clear that India was going to take up the Soviet option. Kennedy decided to back off. The State Department on its part hoped that India bought a few MiGs, but would not manufacture them.<sup>231</sup>

Krishnamachari told Galbraith that demand for the planes in the cabinet had increased because of the linking of the China and Pakistan threats. Krishna Menon had earlier also suggested that India was purchasing the MiGs because of its China problem. Nehru had, however, told a British policymaker that Pakistan's acquisition of F-104s was what had created the public demand for such aircraft in India.<sup>232</sup> Rusk seemed to conclude that India's decision was brought about—or at least sped along—by the sense that it needed protection on two fronts.<sup>233</sup>

### **“Indians to Arms”**

The situation on the China front had indeed deteriorated by that summer. In early 1961, the Indian defense minister had suggested a more assertive policy of “zigzagging” i.e. establishing competing posts wherever the Chinese seemed to be moving into areas India claimed. The Indian government had not initially acted on this, however, and later that year it had seemed that China was establishing more posts. That fall, an intelligence assessment had indicated that Chinese troops, however, seemed to stay away from areas where India had posts even if Beijing claimed them. Raghavan notes that this report also seemed to assume that the establishment of Indian posts in the eastern and western

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<sup>231</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to Ball, White House re Meeting with Krishnamachari, July 25, 1962, Ibid, pp. 312-313; Telegram from Rusk to Galbraith, July 27, 1962, Ibid, pp. 314-316.

<sup>232</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to Ball, White House re Meeting with Krishnamachari, July 25, 1962, Ibid, p. 313; Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Galbraith Meetings with Krishna Menon and MJ Desai, May 13, 1962, Ibid, pp. 246-247; footnote 1 re Message from Macmillan to Kennedy, June 18, 1962, Ibid, p. 278.

<sup>233</sup> Memcon of Rusk-Ahmed Meeting, July 19, 1962, Ibid, p. 309.



sectors would not provoke an aggressive Chinese response. This assumption and the increasing pressure in parliament on the government had led to the decision at a meeting led by Nehru in November to implement a “forward policy,” which was “aimed at deterring further Chinese incursions by installing posts and ensuring patrolling.”

In spring 1962, India had started implementing the policy. Contrary to Indian expectations, China had responded, resuming its forward patrols that spring in the western sector. What followed through that summer between China and India was a series of border clashes, settlement offers, rejections and counter-offers that only heightened the tension. The lack of trust in China and public opinion prevented any public concessions on the part of India that Beijing insisted upon.<sup>234</sup>

American intelligence assessments that summer believed that the Indian forward policy would lead to some border clashes, but “odds are against any major military escalation.” In early August, a State Department assessment indicated that the stalemate would continue, but there were “no indications that either side wishes to start up full-scale fighting at present.” Galbraith noted Nehru’s concern about “the number of men up in the mountains ‘who wonder who is going to shoot first.’” The prime minister, nevertheless, expected that further talks in September, while unlikely to bear fruit, might “calm” the situation.<sup>235</sup>

As Raghavan notes, a key reason why Nehru continued to believe that China would not attack India was that this would lead to others getting involved and potentially a “world war”—an argument he repeated to the press, the party and parliament. In February 1962, the Australian envoy had noted that the prime minister saw the Soviet

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<sup>234</sup> Raghavan, pp. 273-277, pp. 285-292.

<sup>235</sup> NIE 31-62: Prospects for India, May 31, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 258; ; Memo from Brubeck to Bundy re Galbraith-JLN conversation, August 10, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 321-322.

Union as “the best insurance” against Chinese over-reaction.<sup>236</sup> The American intelligence community believed that the most important Indian interest vis-à-vis Moscow had indeed become its ability to help (or hurt) India on the China question.<sup>237</sup>

India also hoped and believed that the thought of potential American involvement would deter Beijing. Just as Indian officials had kept an eye on Sino-Soviet relations,<sup>238</sup> they had also continued to watch Sino-US interactions. In the later years of the Eisenhower administration Indian policymakers had detected a growing sense that isolating China was counterproductive.<sup>239</sup> They realized that the Kennedy administration might contemplate a change because of the president’s belief that Sino-US relations were “irrational.”<sup>240</sup> There had been some concern in India about a potential change and especially worry about reports that, given increasing Sino-Soviet differences, Washington might reach out to China. Overall, however, officials believed that a change would benefit India since a Sino-US rapprochement would probably lead to more restrained Chinese behavior. Regardless, the prevailing sense in India continued to be that any major change was unlikely because of Chinese actions, domestic opposition and Jiang’s sentiments.<sup>241</sup> This meant that India would likely continue to have US support vis-à-vis China.

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<sup>236</sup> Raghavan, p. 279, p. 282.

<sup>237</sup> NIE 31-62: Prospects for India, May 31, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 258.

<sup>238</sup> Note from Dutt to MEA Historical Division Director, January 25, 1961, NMML, SDP, SF No. 46.

<sup>239</sup> Record of JLN-Khrushchev Talk, Delhi, February 12, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 24; Fortnightly Political Report for May 16-31, 1959 from IndEmb US, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-II; Letter from Indian chargé to Coelho (JS-MEA), Washington, November 30, 1959, NAI, File No. F-52-AMS/59-II.

<sup>240</sup> Schlesinger, pp. 479-480.

<sup>241</sup> IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Reports (February 16-28 and October 1-15, 1961), NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/61. Also, see IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report for June 1-15, 1959, NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-II; IndEmb US, Fortnightly Political Report (October 16-31, 1959) and Political Report (November 1959) in NAI, File No. 50(1)-AMS/59-III.

In some cases, the discussion about American support could be quite explicit. In summer 1962, General Kaul, chief of the general staff of the Indian army, asked Bowles “whether we would come to India's aid in event open ChiCom armed invasion.” The general went on to suggest secret joint contingency planning, even without the approval of Nehru or the defense minister. Bowles told Kaul to take the matter up with Galbraith, but said that he personally believed the US would come to India’s assistance if China invaded.<sup>242</sup>

China had continued to allege not just US support but incitement. Thus, as the situation deteriorated, with a series of increasingly more serious border clashes after September 8, the US was careful about what it said publicly “so as to give the Chinese no pretext for alleging any American involvement.” Privately, the US conveyed its “natural sympathy for the Indians and the problems posed by the Chinese intervention.” Responding to Indian requests, it also helped India buy some military transport and communications-related equipment and supplied spare parts. The State and Defense departments also looked into “the availability on short notice and on terms acceptable to India of transport, communications and other military equipment in order to be prepared should the Government of India request such U.S. equipment to cope with the Chinese threat.” Rather than offer specific aid, the US waited for further Indian requests. It, nevertheless, made clear that it would be sympathetic to requests.<sup>243</sup>

Mid-October US assessments indicated that neither “side desires the conflict to become more extensive than the present skirmishing on the border.” Analysts worried,

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<sup>242</sup> Telegram from Bowles to DoS re Meetings with Nehru, Krishna Menon et al, Karachi, March 3, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 220.

<sup>243</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to DoS, October 15, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 343-344; Memo from Brubeck to Bundy, October 15, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 342-343; Telegram from Galbraith to DoS re Meeting with JLN, October 18, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 347 [the latter also refers to a conversation on the subject between Indira Gandhi and Rusk].

however, that public opinion or questions of credibility on both sides could exacerbate the situation.<sup>244</sup> Even as Nehru was worrying about full-scale war breaking out<sup>245</sup> and Kennedy was dealing with the Cuban missile crisis, on October 18 the Chinese central military committee formally approved a “self defence counterattack war.” Two days later on October 20, there was a Chinese offensive in “full strength” in both the eastern and western sectors.<sup>246</sup>

### ***The War***

Scholars have generally traced the outbreak of the war to some combination of two key elements: Chinese suspicions and insecurity about Indian actions, especially after the uprising in Tibet; and the border dispute and India’s forward policy.<sup>247</sup> Within a week the Chinese offensive had given China control over large parts of what India considered its territory, which Indian troops had been unable to defend. During a brief pause in fighting, China put forth and India rejected a proposal that would have accepted Chinese gains in the western sector. In mid-November, the lull ended with a Chinese offensive in the eastern sector, where Chinese troops overran Indian positions. The Indian military position was dire in both the east and west. As Raghavan puts it, the troops in the east “collapsed,” leaving eastern India vulnerable, even as the position in the west remained ominous. Nehru sought expanded US military assistance. Before most of this assistance could be delivered, however, the war ended when China unilaterally declared a ceasefire,

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<sup>244</sup> Memo from Brubeck to Bundy, October 15, 1962, Ibid, p. 341.

<sup>245</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to DoS re Meeting with Nehru, October 18, 1962, Ibid, p. 347.

<sup>246</sup> Raghavan, p. 304.

<sup>247</sup> Scholars differ on whether Chinese policymakers viewed Indian actions and the resulting insecurities

<sup>247</sup> Scholars differ on whether Chinese policymakers viewed Indian actions and the resulting insecurities through the prism of domestic politics, ideology or realism. See Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," in Robert S. Ross and Alastair Iain Johnston eds. *New Approaches to the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy* (Stanford University Press, 2006); Raghavan; and Taylor Fravel, “Power Shifts and Escalation: Explaining China’s Use of Force in Territorial Disputes,” *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter 2007/2008).

keeping its territorial gains in the western sector, while restoring the status quo in the eastern sector.<sup>248</sup>

### ***The Last Best Option: The United States***

In the midst of the crisis, it became clear that India could not count on the Soviet Union. While earlier the Soviet had professed neutrality, once the crisis was underway, the Soviet Union “tilted” towards China. Khrushchev was “not happy with the situation in the Himalayas,” but by October 13, he was declaring to Chinese officials his support for his Chinese “brothers” rather than his Indian “friends.” He asserted that “[I]n relations between us there is no place for neutrality.” India might not have known about Khrushchev’s subsequent assurance to the Chinese ambassador in Moscow that he would delay the delivery of fighter jets to India in early October or about the Soviet Union giving China intelligence about India, but Nehru became aware of the change in the Soviet position early in the war. Letters from Khrushchev to Nehru on October 20 and October 31, and editorials in *Pravda* starting on October 25 made clear that the Soviet Union was backing the Chinese position.<sup>249</sup>

India learned that it could count on the US. Before the war, when General Kaul had reportedly suggested that India look to the US for significant military assistance at a meeting in October 11, Nehru had rejected his advice. At that time, however, neither the scale of the war nor the lack of support from the Soviet Union was known. Even while they were told of military “difficulties,”<sup>250</sup> there is little evidence that at the time Indian

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<sup>248</sup> Details of the war can be found in Garver, Raghavan, and Neville Maxwell, *India’s China War* (London, Cape, 1970).

<sup>249</sup> Vojtech Mastny, “The Soviet Union’s Partnership with India,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 2010, pp. 59-63; Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2009), pp. 28-29; Raghavan, pp. 306-307.

<sup>250</sup> Rudra Chaudhuri, “Why Culture Matters? Revisiting the Sino-Indian Border Conflict of 1962,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 32 No. 6 (December 2009), pp. 855-856.

policymakers thought there was an existential threat to India, as they did later. As of October 18, Nehru even “discounted” the significance of some key clashes.<sup>251</sup>

Till October 25, the US embassy in India also believed that China had “limited objectives” in the east. It was only on that day with the reported fall of Tawang in India’s northeast that Galbraith said that the US must consider if Beijing had “graver ambitions.” He interpreted the continued lack of a formal request for US aid as driven by a hope that Moscow would restrain Beijing, as well as Krishna Menon’s reluctance. When he met with the foreign secretary and the finance minister on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, however, both indicated a request was “inevitable and imminent.” Galbraith wanted to be prepared to respond promptly to such a request in order to assure India, deter China and create goodwill towards the US. He suggested contingency planning to supply India.<sup>252</sup>

On October 26, Nehru sent Kennedy what the State Department considered a “circular communication” asking for US “sympathy and support.”<sup>253</sup> That day, Indian officials also expressed the hope that the US would restrain Pakistan—which was making “pro-Chinese noises”—from taking any action to open a second front.<sup>254</sup> By this point, Nehru was aware not just of the looming threat, but also of the possibility that the Soviet Union was wavering from neutrality and likely to back China. The prime minister knew no active support of India or restraint on China would be forthcoming from the Soviet Union—his foreign secretary acknowledged as much to Galbraith.<sup>255</sup> An October 25

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<sup>251</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to DoS re Meeting with JLN, October 18, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 347.

<sup>252</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to Bundy, Rusk and McNamara, October 25, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 350-351.

<sup>253</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Galbraith, October 27, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 352.

<sup>254</sup> John K. Galbraith, *Ambassador's Journal: A Personal Account of the Kennedy Years* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1969), pp. 437-438.

<sup>255</sup> Galbraith, p. 431.

*Pravda* article calling for India to accept Chinese terms on the border dimmed any remaining Indian hopes of Soviet support.<sup>256</sup>

Indian policymakers knew that the US option, on the other hand, was available. At the onset of the war, the US had announced that it would consider “sympathetic[ally]” any Indian request for aid. Without appearing overly eager to help, Galbraith had also continued to offer “quiet sympathy and encouragement to the Indians, let[ting] them know who are their true friends, be[ing] receptive to requests for aid.”<sup>257</sup> Now, the US declared that it “recognized the McMahon Line as the traditional and generally accepted international border and fully supported India's position in that regard.” Furthermore, Kennedy responded to Nehru’s letter, making a “generalized offer of practical support.”<sup>258</sup>

Nehru was soon ready to take up Kennedy’s offer. He had tried to diversify India’s dependence, but, as a former diplomat recently noted, turning to the US “was the only available option for him.”<sup>259</sup> On October 29, he made clear to the US ambassador that India needed American aid.<sup>260</sup> When he initially requested US assistance, Nehru was operating in the context of overall favorable political and public support for such a request. The decision to ask for American aid was approved with “broad consensus” in the cabinet.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Memo from Kaysen (Deputy NSA) to Kennedy, October 26, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963 Vol. XIX*, p. 351.

<sup>257</sup> Steven A. Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 196; Galbraith, pp. 430-431.

<sup>258</sup> Footnote 2 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, October 26, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963 Vol. XIX*, p. 351; Galbraith, p. 440; Telegram from Kaysen to Galbraith, October 27, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963 Vol. XIX*, p. 357.

<sup>259</sup> Kanwal Sibal, quoted in “Jawaharlal Nehru pleaded for US help against China in 1962,” *The Economic Times*, November 16, 2010. India also received aid from others in the West, including Britain, Belgium, Canada and France.

<sup>260</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, October 29, 1962, 1 p.m., *FRUS 1961-1963 Vol. XIX*, p. 351.

<sup>261</sup> Hoffmann, p. 199.

There was hesitation among some in his cabinet. Once it became evident, however, that a balancing Soviet option was not feasible, Nehru worked to overcome this hesitation, especially on the part of Krishna Menon (who would soon be removed from his position anyway), by using parliamentary and military opinion. There was some political opposition to US assistance, primarily in the communist party. Even the Indian communists were split on the war, however, with a pro-China group within the party taking a more hard-line stance. Furthermore, to restrict communist propaganda supporting the Sino-Soviet line and opposing the Indian government's stance, the government invoked emergency measures.<sup>262</sup>

The US commenced delivery of military aid in early November. It also moved to help India on another front—restraining Pakistan. Eisenhower had earlier assured Nehru that he would not allow Pakistan to “stab India in the back” if India was engaging China on the battlefield as long as he was president.<sup>263</sup> Now Kennedy worked to ensure the same. Even before major hostilities commenced, he had met with the Pakistani foreign minister and discussed the issue. Responding to the minister's statement that “my enemy's enemy is my friend,” the president said that the communists would threaten not just India, but Pakistan as well and it was important for “free world” countries to work together. As the Sino-Indian crisis mounted, the State Department had wanted to warn Ayub against taking any political or military action that would require India to divert focus and/or forces from meeting the China threat. Moreover, Washington had wanted Ayub to offer Nehru an agreement to keep the India-Pakistan border quiet while India was engaged in battle with China. When the US ambassador to Pakistan balked at being so blunt (he was especially concerned about making any statement implying that Pakistan

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<sup>262</sup> Hoffmann, p. 197; Raghavan, p. 307; Galbraith, p. 438.

<sup>263</sup> Record of JLN-Eisenhower Talks, December 10, 1959, NMML, SDP, SF No. 41.



was seeking to take advantage of the Sino-India conflict), Washington had asserted that he could frame the issue as one involving a Chinese threat to the entire subcontinent. Nonetheless, the ambassador had to make clear that Pakistan do nothing to add to India's problems. The State Department had instructed him to explore with the Pakistani leadership the steps that Pakistan could take that would ease those problems.<sup>264</sup>

In Delhi, Galbraith continued to be concerned that Pakistan was not taking the Chinese attack "very seriously" and basically saw the attack as "great opportunity to get concessions from the Indians."<sup>265</sup> In Washington, the administration realized that the assistance the US was providing to India would create problems with Pakistan. Deputy National Security Adviser Carl Kaysen, however, noted that the US "must push through." The US was not going to make concessions to Pakistan by backing its demand for a plebiscite in Kashmir, but it could minimize the damage to the US-Pakistan relationship by reminding Pakistan how valuable the relationship was to it.<sup>266</sup> There was also public support in the US for aid to India. Of the people who had heard or read about the fighting between China and India, about two-thirds thought that the US should help India.<sup>267</sup>

Rusk asserted to Pakistani officials that the US would not be forced by the vitriolic Pakistani reaction to US aid to India into giving Pakistan balancing aid or pressuring India. Responding to implied Pakistani threats that it might withdraw from SEATO and CENTO, he warned that all US military aid to Pakistan was linked to those

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<sup>264</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan re Kennedy-Mohammed Ali (Pakistan foreign minister) Meeting, October 16, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 345; footnote 1 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, October 21, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 349; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, October 22, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 349.

<sup>265</sup> Letter from Galbraith to Kennedy, November 13, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 383.

<sup>266</sup> Memo from Kaysen to Kennedy enclosing Sino-Indian war situation report, November 3, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 363.

<sup>267</sup> Gallup Poll (AIPO), November 1962. Retrieved Oct-17-2010 from the iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. [http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html). 14 percent said the US should not help; 21 percent said they did not know.

alliances. He was also annoyed by suggestions that US aid to India would lead to closer Sino-Pakistan relations. Rusk made it clear that the US saw the Sino-Pakistan border agreement in May 1962 as part of Chinese preparation to attack India and not as proof that Beijing was reasonable, as Pakistan stated. Furthermore,

U.S. would not understand entente between two and such action would be viewed most seriously here. At time when Chicoms attacking subcontinent we do not expect nation which allied with us against communist expansionism give aid and comfort to Chinese. This would be a way of beginning to establish the dimensions of our tolerance of Pakistan flirtations with the Chinese Communists.<sup>268</sup>

US ambassador to Pakistan McConaughy cautioned the Pakistani foreign minister about these flirtations.<sup>269</sup> Even after the war Kennedy would instruct Harriman to warn Ayub about the negative consequences “[w]ere Pakistan to move closer to the Chinese at a time when we were assisting India to confront Communist China.”<sup>270</sup>

That assistance had increased significantly as the war had gone on. The initial request from India was only the tip of the iceberg. When fighting resumed after a lull in mid-November and the Indian military situation became desperate, Nehru, in two letters to Kennedy on November 19 that had very limited distribution, made further requests. The first made clear that India would need “air transport and jet fighters.” Later that same evening, Nehru wrote to the president asking for “more comprehensive assistance.” He requested American-manned fighter squadrons and radar equipment to defend Indian cities, as well as bombers that would be flown by Indians trained in crash courses in the US. Furthermore, he requested the US air force to “assist the Indian Air Force in air battles with the Chinese air force” over Indian territory in certain instances. He

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<sup>268</sup> Telegram from Rusk to AmEmb Pakistan, November 18, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 393-394. Also, see Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 191.

<sup>269</sup> Telegram from McConaughy (ambassador to Pakistan) to DoS re Meeting with Mohammed Ali, November 20, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 403.

<sup>270</sup> Telegram from Kennedy to Harriman, November 25, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 407.

voluntarily attached a “string,” assuring Kennedy that India would only use any US-supplied equipment against China.<sup>271</sup> Galbraith interpreted this as a request “amounting to joint air defense.”<sup>272</sup> This was a significant step—just five years earlier, India was sensitive about even agreeing to storing anything for the US navy or allowing the Indian navy to refit US ships in their facilities.<sup>273</sup>

Kennedy moved to send a high-level mission to assess India’s needs, speed up delivery of essential spare parts to the Indian Air Force (IAF), expand the group of US military advisors working with their Indian counterparts, and send an aircraft carrier to the Bay of Bengal to deter China. Despite Galbraith’s concerns that the IAF taking to the air and US intervention would escalate the conflict, Washington was also “in the process of drafting a favorable reply to Nehru’s air cover proposal.”<sup>274</sup> Before a reply could be sent, however, the Chinese declared a ceasefire on November 21.

## **THE TILT**

As a former foreign secretary recently noted there continues to be debate between Nehru-baiters and Nehru-supporters on the question of whether nonalignment died in November 1962 or not.<sup>275</sup> The answer depends on how one defines nonalignment. If one considers the refusal to seek military assistance as part and parcel of nonalignment—as many have—then policymakers did indeed violate nonalignment. If one strictly considers that some say that nonalignment meant not aligning against anyone, then, too, policymakers violated it. As even Nehru admitted at the time, “There is no nonalignment

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<sup>271</sup> Letters from JLN to Kennedy, November 19, 1962 in Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers [JFKL], NSC Box 111: India: Nehru Correspondence November 11, 1962-November 19, 1962.

<sup>272</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to Kennedy, Rusk and McNamara, November 19, 1962, in JFKL, President's Office Files, India: Security, 1962.

<sup>273</sup> Note from Dutt to JS (Americas), June 11, 1957, NMML, SDP, SF No. 27.

<sup>274</sup> Hoffmann, p. 209.

<sup>275</sup> K. Shankar Bajpai, “The Amateurs in Charge,” *Indian Express*, November 20, 2010. For some of the debate, see Rudra Chaudhuri, p. 842.

vis-à-vis China.”<sup>276</sup> BK Nehru’s later comment that “we had become in fact the allies of the United States in their confrontation *at least against China*” would indeed ring true.<sup>277</sup> On the other hand, if one takes nonalignment to mean the lack of participation in a formal alliance, then India did not give up nonalignment. Nor did it stop seeking to diversify its partnerships and its dependence. In November 1962, it just learned the hard way that diversification requires the availability of willing partners—and at that time, with the Soviet option unavailable, India had little choice but to tilt toward the US.

One could perhaps argue that the fact that India had an option to turn toward was a benefit of its policy of diversification. One then has to admit that that still left the risk that the US might not have been willing to aid India. Even given American willingness, Komer later highlighted another risk of the lack of a formal commitment or at least “prior preparations” that allies regularly undertook: the danger that the US would have been unable to help in time.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, one can ask the question of what Nehru would have done had the US made its assistance contingent on an alliance. Finally, one can wonder if an alliance would have prevented a Chinese attack. Nehru believed that alliances dragged countries into war. Some have suggested, however, that the Chinese decision to go to war was facilitated by Beijing’s belief that the US would not intervene on behalf of India.

Some have given Nehru credit for successfully “avoid[ing] entering into an alliance.”<sup>279</sup> There were indeed calls in India to ally with the US.<sup>280</sup> However, there were few, if any, such calls from Washington. Even before the war there had been little

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<sup>276</sup> Nehru in December 1962, quoted in A.G. Noorani, “India’s Quest for a Nuclear Guarantee,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 7 No. 7 (July 1967), p. 490.

<sup>277</sup> BK Nehru, p. 407.

<sup>278</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, December 16, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 437.

<sup>279</sup> Rudra Chaudhuri, p. 842.

<sup>280</sup> Raghavan, p. 309.

expectation in the Kennedy administration that India would join an alliance and little desire that it should do so. Kennedy accepted that India would remain nonaligned, noting, like Eisenhower, that the US, too, had taken a neutral position in the early years of its independence. Bowles also noted to Nehru that the US did not believe that Delhi would ever agree to a “formal alliance” with the US. Intelligence assessments further noted that there was little likelihood that India would give up nonalignment. A South Asia bureau report’s assessment was that India would continue to stand “sometimes on the side of the Bloc, sometimes on our side and always on its own side.”<sup>281</sup>

Once the war was underway, Kaysen expected a rethinking in India, but “Our military assistance is designed to help a friend, not win an ally...We can expect the Indians to redefine their nonalignment policy, but we do not expect India to abandon this policy.” As Roger Hilsman noted, the US understood the reasons India would maintain “good relations” with the Soviet Union; Kaysen indeed outlined at least three of them: aid, MiGs, a UN veto.<sup>282</sup>

As for the US, Rusk had stated bluntly before the war, “we are not reaching out for additional allies.” During the war as the US sent aid to India some like Galbraith were concerned: “The Indians are busy worrying about the end of non-alignment. It is we that should be doing the worrying on this.”<sup>283</sup> Rusk indeed was shocked at Nehru’s request of November 19 and wanted to ensure that Nehru realized the implications of his letters which

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<sup>281</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-JLN Meeting, Washington, November 7, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 129; Schlesinger, p. 522; Memcon of US/S Bowles-JLN Meeting, Delhi, August 8-9, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 83; NIE 31-62: Prospects for India, May 31, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 258; DoS NESAA, “US Relations with South Asia,” undated (January 1962), *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 182.

<sup>282</sup> Roger Hilsman (INR Director), quoted in Donaldson, pp. 163-164. Memo from Kaysen to Kennedy enclosing Sino-Indian war situation report, November 3, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 366.

<sup>283</sup> Letter from Rusk to Galbraith, July 31, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 78-79; Letter from Galbraith to Kennedy, November 13, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 383.

in effect proposes not only a military alliance between India and the United States but complete commitment by us to a fighting war...it is a proposal which cannot be reconciled with any further pretense of non-alignment. If this is what Nehru has in mind, he should be entirely clear about it before we even consider our own decision.<sup>284</sup>

After the war, American officials indeed prepared to “head off” any British attempts to pull India into an alliance. When Soviet ambassador Dobrynin asked Harriman if the US had attached any conditions to aid, Harriman speedily clarified that the US had not asked India to give up nonalignment.<sup>285</sup> Even when the US and India were discussing an air defense agreement months later Rusk noted that for very practical reasons India would not join an alliance. Furthermore, also for very practical reasons, “It was not in our interests to ‘compromise’ Indian non-alignment, lest we promote a Soviet-Chinese rapprochement which would greatly up our bill.”<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Galbraith, November 20, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 401.

<sup>285</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, December 16, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 435; Memcon of Dobrynin-Harriman, December 28, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. V*, p. 599.

<sup>286</sup> Notes by Rusk on Karachi-Delhi Visit, May 5, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 577; Memo for the Record of President’s Meeting on India, May 17, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 593.

## Chapter 5: Bread or Bombs (1963-1965)

For what it's worth, my feeling (and Bob Komer's, too) is that we're the victims of an inevitable falling off in US/Indian relations from the high point of Winter 1962. There's no use blaming ourselves unduly that neither Washington nor Delhi can sustain the high pitch of collaboration which emerged from the Chicom attack. We've had trouble on our side sustaining the momentum of our relationship, but the Indian slate is by no means clean either...These are facts with which we must live.<sup>1</sup>

– McGeorge Bundy, 1964

A common threat perception of China motivated the US and India's continuing *efforts* to nurture a strategic partnership between 1963-1968. The two countries had a major shared interest—containing China, which both considered threat to India and thus to broader US interests in Asia and the world. While the countries' agreement on ends might have laid the basis for cooperation, the US and Indian disagreement on means—how to contain China—prevented the deepening of the partnership and eventually led to it unraveling. The two countries differed on whether China was a short-term or a long-term threat to India, as well as whether it posed more of an external or internal threat. They also disagreed about the optimum balance of resources that should be devoted towards Indian development and defense to strengthen the country against China. Furthermore, while the US saw Pakistan as part of the solution when it came to meeting the China threat, India saw it as part of the problem. Finally, India's strategy of diversifying its dependence—which the US had earlier accepted—proved to be an obstacle to deeper relations. The US saw the Indian political and military relationship

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Bundy to Bowles (US ambassador to India), March 9, 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Volume XXV: South Asia* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2000) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*], p. 51.

with the Soviet Union that was part of Delhi's China strategy as counterproductive to Washington's China strategy in Vietnam and even in India.

Between 1963-1965, Delhi and Washington saw China as a major threat. For India, China was enemy number one. Even in Washington, by 1963, policymakers like Kennedy believed that while one could talk to Moscow, Beijing was the "long-term danger to peace."<sup>2</sup> This sense did not dissipate when Lyndon Johnson became president and as US involvement in Vietnam increased. Differences, however, appeared between American and Indian threat perceptions. The US saw China as a medium-to-long-term threat to India. Furthermore, while it did not rule out the external security threat to India, Washington, sounding like Nehru had in the early 1950s, worried more about the internal threat to India that China posed. There was now little hope for India's potential and much fear of its vulnerabilities. Since policymakers worried that an internal collapse was more likely to bring this domino down, their prescription was development-heavy and defense-light spending for India. On the defense front, they believed the US could provide implicit assurances and some explicit assistance. Furthermore, India could ease its defense problem—and thus the defense burden on its budget—by making Pakistan part of its China solution. It was important that India focused its resources on economic development and showed the US—especially Congress—that it was making a serious effort to meet the China challenge not just at its border, but within them.

Indian policymakers, on the other hand, did not think they could again afford to underestimate the immediacy or the extent of the China threat. Development continued to be a key objective, but defense spending could no longer be ignored at its expense. This meant seeking military assistance from wherever it was available, including from

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<sup>2</sup> Schlesinger, pp. 903-904.



Moscow. Furthermore, policymakers' experience with external benefactors reinforced their sense that it was best to reduce or diversify dependence to the extent possible. Soviet behavior during the war had made evident that external benefactors were not always reliable. After the war, American efforts to get India to settle with Pakistan—which India saw as part of its China problem—while discussions about further military assistance were underway, reinforced the idea that dependence brought with it unwelcome demands. To ensure that India built up an independent capability and to deal with the opposition and public criticism—which was playing a larger role—that the government had not done enough to protect Indian security, the government wanted to spend much more on defense than it had before.

During the rest of Nehru's term and that of his successor, India continued to need the US for both its defense and development objectives. Delhi, however, saw Washington's slow response, as well as its pressure to limit all defense acquisitions and make peace with Pakistan as counterproductive to its China strategy and general security objectives. During the rest of Kennedy's term and that of his successor, the US, in turn, continued to need India not to fail. Washington, however, saw India's defense spending at the expense of its development efforts, continuing conflict with Pakistan, different approach to Vietnam and growing defense relationship with Moscow as counterproductive to America's China strategy and general security objectives. Over this period, while the defense relationship briefly deepened before plateauing, the development relationship found itself on a downward trajectory. The fall 1965 India-Pakistan war during which China threatened to intervene reminded the US and India not just why they remained tethered to each other, but also that the other had not lived up to its billing.

## THE LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF ALIGNMENT (NOVEMBER 1962-NOVEMBER 1963)

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Chinese threat loomed large in India. Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Harriman found there a sense that “Red China was determined to destroy India's independence and way of life.” He noted that everyone he met “unanimously spoke of the emergency in long-range terms.<sup>3</sup> Galbraith indeed observed that if there was a “principal gain” of the war for the US, it was that India wholeheartedly acknowledged the Chinese threat. In addition, Indian policymakers feared another attack.<sup>4</sup> Nehru believed that China had wanted to humiliate India. He was concerned that the ceasefire might just be a temporary Chinese tactic, while it prepared to attack India again or to press forward on its claims. To make matters worse, China seemed to have won the propaganda battle in the Afro-Asian countries with regard to these claims.<sup>5</sup>

Externally and internally, India seemed vulnerable having suffered setbacks in the security and economic sphere. Along with the defeat—which Guha has called Nehru’s “most consequential failure”—there were food and foreign exchange shortages and the third five-year plan seemed to be faltering.<sup>6</sup> Delhi was concerned that this economic strain would affect the government’s ability to strengthen India’s defense capacity. Furthermore, it might also make the government politically vulnerable to the charge of not delivering the goods and India internally vulnerable to subversion and communism. This atmosphere was in sharp contrast to that less than a year before, when Bowles

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<sup>3</sup> Memcon of Ayub-Harriman (AS/S FEA)-Sandys (British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and Colonies) Meeting, November 28, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 410-411.

<sup>4</sup> T.V. Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan and The Troubled Decade* (Bombay: Somaiya, 1971), p. 91. Also, see Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 448, p. 453.

<sup>5</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-JLN Talks (Nov. 22-28), November 30, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 417.

<sup>6</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 338; Michael Brecher, *Succession in India: A Study in Decision-Making* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 7.

commented on an “overriding impression...of tremendously increased Indian self-confidence, both in economic field and vis-à-vis China.”<sup>7</sup>

The concerns about Indian vulnerability were not restricted to Indian shores. China was still considered a threat by the US—if anything a bigger one. At a time when India showed a willingness to contain China, however, the shock of the speed and scale of Indian defeat brought questions of Indian capacity to contain China to the fore in the US. Such doubts had preceded the war.<sup>8</sup> But they reached a new level. Furthermore, from the mid-1950s till before the war, any doubts had been more than balanced by hopes for India’s potential. After the war, there was more fear about the country’s vulnerability and what its potential failure would mean for US security.

Merrill has noted the loss in enthusiasm in the US for India. This was not just the case in Congress, where opposition to assisting India remained amidst broader skepticism about foreign aid. In the administration as well, there was disillusionment.<sup>9</sup> Komer and Galbraith noted their shock at how quickly India had folded.<sup>10</sup> External observers also compared India’s “indescribable poverty” and “will-less Government” unfavorably with “the intensity and unfathomable ambition of wild young China.”<sup>11</sup> Some such as Galbraith and Bowles still believed that India was “the only Asian country which really stands in [China’s] way.”<sup>12</sup> Overall, however, the hope that India could be built up as a contrast or counterbalance to China gave way to fear that India would collapse, causing

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<sup>7</sup> Telegram from Bowles (DoS Special Adviser) to DoS re Meetings with JLN, Krishna Menon et al, Karachi, March 3, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 220.

<sup>8</sup> See reports of Talbot’s view in Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 108.

<sup>9</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 193.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 202.

<sup>11</sup> *Sunday Times*’ reporter, quoted in Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 344.

<sup>12</sup> Galbraith to Kennedy, January 29, 1963, quoted in *Ibid*, p. 340. Also, see Testimony of Bowles, April 30, 1963, *Hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Nomination of Chester Bowles to be Ambassador to India Vol. 1 1963* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1963) [hereafter *SFRC Hearings Vol. 1 1963: Nom.*], p. 6.

the non-communist world to suffer a major ideological defeat. Along with that came the replacement of the idea that the US should help cure India's ailments with the focus on just stemming the bleeding. This meant helping India enough on the defense front that it was protected, but not so much that India focused only on military cures.

### **Debating Defense**

Just after the war, defense department official Paul Nitze, who was part of an assessment team sent to India, assessed that it would take India at least a year, if not more, to get into a "good military position."<sup>13</sup> The State Department believed that China was unlikely to back down, especially in terms of its claims in Ladakh and its position in Tibet. For at least the next year there was going to be uncertainty about whether it would resume fighting.<sup>14</sup>

There was desire in India for the US to help the country get into a good position. In a poll of a Indian legislators conducted between December 1962 and February 1963, surveyors found 96 percent of the legislators polled wanted India to accept military supplies from the US. Furthermore, 58 percent wanted India to cooperate very closely with the US—a significant increase from the 21 percent who had wanted to do so in 1958.<sup>15</sup> Pollsters also found a substantial increase in support for cooperation with the US in a poll of the public. From the summer of 1962 to the period just after the war, there was a 19 percent increase in support for India to cooperate "very closely" with the US and UK, with 94 percent of respondents endorsing such support. Comparatively, there was a 27 percent drop in support for very close cooperation with the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-JLN Talks (Nov. 22-28), November 30, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 416.

<sup>14</sup> Telegram from DoS to McConaughy, February 6, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 489.

<sup>15</sup> IIPO, "The Impact of the Sino-Indian Border Clash," *MPOS*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (October 1963), pp. 16-20.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9.

There was support in the US for aiding India against the China threat. Kennedy let Nehru know that the US, along with the UK, remained prepared to assist India with its defense needs.<sup>17</sup> Outside the administration, Eisenhower called for “all-out American military assistance to India,” but only if the US was “determined to go as far as we must.” He was concerned that some would take a narrow “I told you so” view and argue against aid to India.<sup>18</sup> There were indeed skeptics, with some like Sen. Richard Russell (D-GA), then chairman of the armed forces committee opposing military assistance for India because of doubts about its capacity and reliability.<sup>19</sup>

Having been taken by surprise by the war itself, American officials remained concerned about China suddenly resuming hostilities.<sup>20</sup> They believed, however, that there were limits to the responsibilities that the US could or should undertake—partly because of limited resources. Thus while Kennedy asserted that the US would continue to cooperate with India and give it advice and support, he made clear that the primary responsibility in terms of what course of action to take was Indian.<sup>21</sup> In terms of military assistance, initially Washington was keen that the Commonwealth take the lead on questions like coordinated air assistance.<sup>22</sup>

Kennedy and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, along with other American and British policymakers, discussed the Chinese threat to India at Nassau in December 1962.<sup>23</sup> The two countries agreed on what Kennedy called “a reasonable and

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<sup>17</sup> Telegram from DoS to Galbraith enclosing Message from Kennedy to JLN, November 20, 1962, 22.31pm, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 403-404.

<sup>18</sup> Robert T. Hartmann, “Ike Asks All-Out India Military Aid,” *WP*, November 25, 1962, p. A2.

<sup>19</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 340.

<sup>20</sup> Circular Telegram from DoS to Certain Diplomatic Posts, December 8, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 427.

<sup>21</sup> Telegram from Kennedy to Galbraith and Harriman, November 23, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 405.

<sup>22</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-JLN Talks (Nov. 22-28), November 30, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 417.

<sup>23</sup> Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *Ibid* p. 448-454.

frugal program of military assistance designed solely to enable India to defend itself better should the Chinese Communists renew their attacks at an early date.”<sup>24</sup> Each side agreed to provide up to \$60 million of military assistance and, furthermore, explore a plan for air defense.<sup>25</sup> The US also focused more intelligence assets on the Chinese threat to India. In addition, US special forces initiated a training program to help Indian forces combat potential guerilla operations in its border areas.<sup>26</sup>

There had been concern in the administration that either India might take politically or militarily rash decisions, or give in to Chinese pressure due to lack of confidence.<sup>27</sup> The latter seemed less likely as Nehru showed little initial inclination to accept a Chinese settlement offer extended during the war. US officials had advised him, at the very least, to make a counter-offer to sell India’s case and put China on the backfoot.<sup>28</sup> As tempers cooled, the US worried less about rash action as well—officials believed that India would be careful not to provoke China in the near term.<sup>29</sup> Soon, India indeed responded to the proposals put forward by six nonaligned countries, in a move the US saw as designed to “put ball neatly back in Peiping’s court.”<sup>30</sup>

That left a debate in the administration about what action China would take—specifically what was the urgency of the threat from China? The answer to this question would differ from that of India, where the threat felt more acute, and would affect both the US view of the correct approach for India to take in dealing with the China threat, and

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<sup>24</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan enclosing Message from Kennedy to Ayub, December 22, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 458.

<sup>25</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 192.

<sup>26</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, January 12, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 470; Memo from Komer to Kennedy, February 16, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 494.

<sup>27</sup> Telegram from Kennedy to Galbraith and Harriman, November 23, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 405.

<sup>28</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-JLN Talks (Nov. 22-28), November 30, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 415.

<sup>29</sup> Circular Telegram from DoS to Certain Diplomatic Posts, December 8, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 427.

<sup>30</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, January 26, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 485.

Indian views of the US. Different diagnoses led to either different prescriptions or, at the very least, similar prescriptions, but different ideas of the correct dose.

Some US officials did not believe that there would be another Chinese attack in spring 1963—and did not think Indian policymakers expected one either.<sup>31</sup> Kennedy, however, wanted a fresh intelligence assessment of the possibility, as well as “If there is a prospect of the Chinese resuming the offensive, are we doing enough to help India? If we are doing enough, are we doing it soon enough?”<sup>32</sup>

The US assessment was that, while there might be minor skirmishes, there would not be another major Chinese attack that spring. Beijing would not want to “risk triggering US/UK intervention,” especially when China had little to gain politically that it had not already. Beijing would also realize that the US would gain even more from another Chinese attack. Komer thought that the Indian government was “playing [the] threat up partly as a pitch for US aid, partly to keep Indian people alive to threat.” The US had already met Indian emergency requirements. With the additional change in the Indian defensive posture, he thought India was likely to be more militarily effective than before, and able to contain any Chinese advance into the Indian plains in the northeast. Thus, unlike Galbraith, Komer saw little need to speed up the rate of flow of aid to India, especially given limited Indian capacity to absorb the aid and the continued need to use the aid as “leverage on Kashmir.”<sup>33</sup> McNamara, too, noted that for the next few years, the Chinese threat was “small.” CIA Director John McCone doubted even more that China would open two fronts on the east, as some feared, because of the logistical and political problems that fighting through Burma would entail.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, February 16, 1963, *Ibid.*, p. 494.

<sup>32</sup> NSAM No. 223: Appraisal of Sino-Indian Situation, February 26, 1963, *Ibid.*, p. 515.

<sup>33</sup> Memos from Komer to Kennedy, March 14 and 23, 1963, *Ibid.*, pp. 524-526.

<sup>34</sup> Memo for the Record of President’s Meeting on India, April 25, 1963, *Ibid.*, pp. 561-562.

## **Parley with Pakistan**

The lack of a sense of urgency in Washington partly contributed to a US prescription that India had trouble digesting. Many in the administration believed that India could ease its threat environment vis-à-vis China by making peace with Pakistan and thus eliminating part of its overall defense problem. From a domestic political perspective, India-Pakistan reconciliation would also greatly facilitate the administration's effort to get economic and military aid for India through Congress, which was increasingly frustrated about India's capacity, as well as Indian and Pakistani diversion of resources towards fighting each other.

Kennedy believed that the war had given Washington "a one-time opportunity to bring about a Pak-Indian reconciliation." Accepting that the US could only persuade, not order India to do anything, he noted that he did "see the current situation as moving both parties toward the point where we can assist in a reasonable compromise involving some give by both parties."<sup>35</sup> After a debate about how much the US should get involved, and whether it should offer to mediate as Ayub was suggesting, Kennedy eventually ruled out playing a direct role.<sup>36</sup> He did not want to "be left holding the bag if negotiations were to fail."<sup>37</sup> Komer laid out another risk—if the US got involved and failed, India would face repercussions on the Hill.<sup>38</sup> The US did, however, "exercis[e]...influence from [the] sidelines."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Telegram from Kennedy to Harriman, November 25, 1962, Ibid, p. 407.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from McConaughy to Ayub enclosing Letter from Kennedy, February 7, 1963, Ibid, p. 493. For Ayub's call for mediation, see Memcon of Kennedy-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, February 4, 1963, Ibid, p. 488. For the debate, see Telegram from DoS to Rusk, in Paris, enclosing Letter from Macmillan to Kennedy, December 13, 1962, Ibid, p. 431. Also, see Telegram from DoS to Bruce (ambassador to the UK) enclosing Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, December 5, 1962, Ibid, p. 419; Memo from Komer to Kennedy, January 12, 1963, Ibid, p. 468; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, January 15, 1963, Ibid, pp. 471-472; Memo from Komer to Kennedy, February 20, 1963, Ibid, p. 504.

<sup>37</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, February 4, 1963, Ibid, p. 488.

<sup>38</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, February 20, 1963, Ibid, p. 504.

<sup>39</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, January 4, 1963, Ibid, p. 464.



On Harriman's urging, despite reservations about public opinion and Pakistani reciprocity, Nehru agreed to hold talks with Pakistan on Kashmir without preconditions.<sup>40</sup> Ayub and Nehru then released a joint communiqué facilitated by the US and UK on November 30 that stated that the two countries agreed to try "to resolve the outstanding differences between their two countries on Kashmir and other matters."<sup>41</sup> Subsequently, between December 1962 and May 1963, the two countries conducted six rounds of talks.

Kennedy acknowledged how hard it was for Nehru to move on this front at a time of continuing Chinese threat, but insisted that dealing with the question of Kashmir was a means to containing that threat. Reconciliation with Pakistan would allow India to concentrate its economic and military resources to defend itself against China. Eventually, it might also make India-Pakistan joint defense—or some sort of unified effort—possible. Furthermore, it would eliminate a complication from the US-India relationship.<sup>42</sup> Finally, as Rusk noted, Indian efforts towards a settlement would better allow the US to plan for long-term military aid to India and improve Congressional sentiments towards India.<sup>43</sup>

Was US military aid conditional on a solution? It was clear there was a link between *long-term* aid and *efforts* toward a solution. As Rusk put it, "While there should be no question of linking between emergency phase military aid to India and progress on Kashmir, it should be made clear to Indians there [is a] definite relationship with longer

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<sup>40</sup> See reference to this agreement in Memcon of Ayub-Harriman-Sandys Meeting, November 28, 1962, Ibid, p. 409.

<sup>41</sup> See footnote 1 re Telegrams from AmEmbs India and Pakistan, November 29, 1962, Ibid, p. 410.

<sup>42</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India enclosing Message from Kennedy to JLN, December 6, 1962, Ibid, p. 422 and Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India enclosing Letter from Kennedy to Nehru, February 6, 1963, Ibid, pp. 490-491.

<sup>43</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, February 16, 1963, Ibid, p. 501. Also, see Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, January 4, 1963, Ibid, pp. 464-465.

run aid.”<sup>44</sup> Kennedy also noted that the Indian “attitude toward Pakistan must inevitably be a factor in our long-term military aid plans.”<sup>45</sup>

The US made the link clear to Indian policymakers. Harriman indicated to Nehru that “unless tensions [are] relieved [the] US position [is] untenable if it was asked [to] give aid [to] both Pakistan and India with part of aid being used for defense against the other.”<sup>46</sup> While indicating to Pakistan that it would only get a “solution which likely fall[s] considerably short of achieving Pak objectives,” in India Rusk wanted to “ensure that [the] relationship between US capacity to aid India and resolution [of] Kashmir dispute is widely understood among key political leaders both at center...and in states” as well as among senior military.<sup>47</sup>

Rusk realized that there was risk to such linkage, but felt India-Pakistan reconciliation was essential to strengthening the subcontinent against China and making aid possible.<sup>48</sup> Macmillan noted that the US and UK needed to be careful about using the “important card” of Indian dependence on western military assistance: “if we overplay the hand we could easily destroy the favourable atmosphere which recent events have created. It will obviously be unwise for us...to threaten the Indians with the withdrawal of military aid if they fail to reach agreement with Pakistan.”<sup>49</sup> Kennedy, too, admitted that it “complicates” US-India relations.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, January 4, 1963, Ibid, p. 464.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from McConaughy to Ayub enclosing Letter from Kennedy, February 7, 1963, Ibid, p. 492.

<sup>46</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Nehru Talks (Nov. 22-28), November 30, 1962, Ibid, p. 416.

<sup>47</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, December 8, 1962, Ibid, pp. 424-425.

<sup>48</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, December 8, 1962, Ibid, p. 425.

<sup>49</sup> Telegram from DoS to Rusk, in Paris, enclosing Letter from Macmillan to Kennedy, December 13, 1962, Ibid, p. 432.

<sup>50</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India enclosing Letter from Kennedy to JLN, February 6, 1963, Ibid, p. 491.

There was another potential risk. In order to stop the US aiding India, Pakistani policymakers had been suggesting that the best solution was for India to reach a negotiated settlement with China instead.<sup>51</sup> This suggestion seemed to have the opposite effect. Kennedy was already concerned about the possibility that “India would make a deal with the Chinese if we press India on Kashmir.”<sup>52</sup> Galbraith worried that if the US made it seem like Kashmir was a bigger concern for it than China, the US would lose Indian willingness to confront China.<sup>53</sup> Rusk, too, noted the risk that India would decide to negotiate with China if it felt it was being asked to concede too much on Kashmir.<sup>54</sup>

The president also realized that the link might be counterproductive. He acknowledged, “no Indian politician could involve his country in negotiations with Pakistan if Indian opinion came to believe that the West was forcing India to give up Kashmir as a price for helping it to save Ladakh or even NEFA.” He worried that in a few months India would blame the US and UK for pushing India into a corner. There needed to be some movement, however, since “Whether we like it or not, the question of Kashmir is inescapably linked to what we can do to assist India militarily.”<sup>55</sup>

There was a genuine sense of concern in the administration that it would not be able to get military aid or further economic assistance for India through Congress if there was no progress between the two countries or if India did not at least make a serious effort. Kennedy, Rusk, Harriman and Galbraith all shared this concern.<sup>56</sup> Sen. Fulbright,

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<sup>51</sup> Letter from Ayub to Kennedy, December 17, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 442; Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS enclosing Letter from Ayub to Kennedy, January 11, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 466. Also, see Memcon of Kennedy-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, February 4, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 488.

<sup>52</sup> Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 452.

<sup>53</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to White House, DoD, March 5, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 517.

<sup>54</sup> Memo from Rusk to Kennedy, February 20, 1963, *Ibid*, pp. 505-506.

<sup>55</sup> Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 448; Memcon of Kennedy-BK Nehru Meeting, December 17, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 440.

<sup>56</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India enclosing Message from Kennedy to JLN, December 6, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 422; Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 448-449; Telegram from

chairman of the SFRC, indeed noted his concern about increasing military supply to India in the absence of a Kashmir settlement.<sup>57</sup> After it became evident that there was a poor chance of a settlement, Komer even argued that at the very least the US could try to get India to make a move so that the US could blame the failure on Pakistan—thus making it easier for the administration to move on an aid package for India.<sup>58</sup>

There were limits to how far the US would take the linkage. Pakistani policymakers had wanted any further military supply to India to be conditioned on a Kashmir settlement. Moreover, they argued that further aid was neither necessary (because the threat was limited) nor desirable (because it would only encourage India to start a war with China or Pakistan.<sup>59</sup> A British official noted the “disastrous” consequences for US-Pakistan relations if the US aided India without a settlement. Kennedy, however, demanded, “In return for the protection of our alliance and our assistance what do [Pakistan] do for us?”<sup>60</sup> He told Ayub that the US would not make arms supply to India for defense against China contingent on a Kashmir settlement. A weak India would only invite further Chinese aggression, which would be dangerous for the entire “free world.”<sup>61</sup> Kennedy and McConaughy told Ayub that if India was unilaterally intransigent on Kashmir, it might revisit the issue.<sup>62</sup> The US, however,

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DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, January 15, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 471; Telegram from Kennedy to Galbraith, March 22, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 524.

<sup>57</sup> See footnote 1 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, February 5, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 491.

<sup>58</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, March 2, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 516. Rusk later opposed this tactic. See Memcon of President’s Meeting with Advisors, April 1, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 536-537.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Ayub to Kennedy, December 17, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 442; Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS enclosing Letter from Pakistani foreign minister to Rusk, January 22, 1963, *Ibid*, pp. 481-482.

<sup>60</sup> Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 455-456.

<sup>61</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan enclosing Message from Kennedy to Ayub, December 22, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 458.

<sup>62</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan enclosing Message from Kennedy to Ayub, December 22, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 458. Also, see Telegram from EmbOff Pakistan to DoS re Ayub-McConaughy Meeting, Murree, December 27, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 461-462.

disapproved of Pakistan's attitude during the talks, labeling it "inadequate" at times,<sup>63</sup> and resenting Pakistani pressure on the US as "abominable" and "blackmail."<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, there was displeasure about developments in the Sino-Pakistan relationship. The US was concerned about Pakistani "philandering" with China not just because of the impact in Washington, but also because it presented a "clear danger" to the India-Pakistan negotiations. It was entirely counterproductive to US goals.<sup>65</sup> On December 26, the day India-Pakistan talks had begun, Pakistan had announced that it had reached a border demarcation agreement in principle with China. Indian negotiator Swaran Singh had called these developments unhelpful.<sup>66</sup> Then, before another next round of talks, Pakistani foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto visited Beijing to finalize the agreement, adding to the India-Pakistan tension. Rusk felt that Pakistan was playing into the hands of China, which seemed to time these developments to torpedo the talks. He asserted to Pakistani officials that if China attacked again, which Pakistan intransigence made more likely, the US "would feel compelled to provide India with further military assistance."<sup>67</sup> Kennedy also told Ayub that Bhutto's visit made it very hard for any Indian leader to get his public to accept concessions on Kashmir. He made clear that if the Chinese threat increased or if there was renewed fighting, the US would have to consider helping India substantially.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, February 16, 1963, Ibid, p. 498.

<sup>64</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, January 12, 1963, Ibid, p. 468. Kennedy used the term "blackmail." See Informal Notes on Discussion with President on Kashmir Negotiations, February 21, 1963, Ibid, p. 509.

<sup>65</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, January 4, 1963, Ibid, p. 463. Also, see Memo from Talbot to NSC Executive Committee, January 7, 1963, Ibid, p. 470 and Telegram from DoS to AmEmb UK enclosing Letter from Kennedy to Macmillan, January 21, 1963, Ibid, p. 479.

<sup>66</sup> See reference in footnote 1 to Swaran Singh's statement, December 28, 1962, Ibid, p. 463.

<sup>67</sup> Memcon of Rusk-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, February 23, 1963, Ibid, p. 513.

<sup>68</sup> Telegram from DoS to ConGen Dacca enclosing Letter from Kennedy to Ayub, March 9, 1963, Ibid, p. 518 and Letter from McConaughy to Ayub enclosing Letter from Kennedy, February 7, 1963, Ibid, p. 492.

While the US had not committed any further aid to India, within the US government it was clear that the US would give India more aid. Kennedy noted that the US would have to move on air defense and other military aid fairly soon.<sup>69</sup> Rusk admitted that regardless of whether the India-Pakistan talks failed or succeeded, the US “would still need to be in a position to give India some assistance against Chinese Communist pressure, tailoring this as best we possibly can to maintain our security interests in Pakistan.”<sup>70</sup>

There was a debate about whether making this reality evident to India would help or not. Galbraith suggested that since the US was going to give aid anyway, it should try to get the most from it. He suggested that the US tell India that it would provide assistance in developing India’s indigenous defense industry, backup air support and a substantial long-term aid program (including high-performance aircraft) if India made a substantial concession on the valley.<sup>71</sup> Rusk, however, thought this would go too far in giving India an “open-ended military commitment” for not even a settlement, but only concessions; it would increase rather than decrease India-Pakistan tension.<sup>72</sup> Kennedy, who had earlier worried that India was not making concessions because it knew it was going to get aid, asked what was wrong with being more forthcoming on aid which the US would give India anyway in exchange for some concessions. Rusk and Talbot, however, noted that it would lead to a rejection by Pakistan.<sup>73</sup>

By mid-April, it was clear that the talks had stalemated. Pakistan was unwilling to make concessions and Komer believed that the US—following Galbraith’s presentation

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<sup>69</sup> Telegram from Kennedy to Galbraith, March 22, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 524.

<sup>70</sup> Memo from Rusk to Kennedy, April 19, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 551.

<sup>71</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to White House, DoD, March 25, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 527.

<sup>72</sup> Memo from Rusk to Kennedy, March 31, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 530.

<sup>73</sup> Memcon of President’s Meeting with Advisors, April 1, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 536. Also, see Telegram from Kennedy to Galbraith, March 22, 1963, *Ibid*, pp. 523-524.

of a proposal—had pushed Nehru too far.<sup>74</sup> In the aftermath of the failure of the talks, relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated with the countries expelling each other's diplomats.<sup>75</sup>

The idea that Pakistan could be part of the solution to India's China problem—or at least help alleviate its defense problem—had not been absent in India. Nehru himself was not unaware that a Kashmir settlement could allow India to focus on the China front.<sup>76</sup> Harriman believed that the acknowledgement of the long-term threat of China had brought with it serious discussion in India of settling with Pakistan.<sup>77</sup> A senior British official had also thought that even beyond Nehru there was a realization among others, especially in the defense establishment, of the need to make some progress with Pakistan.<sup>78</sup> The Indian defence minister indeed did not believe that India had the ability to meet a Sino-Pakistan threat and so had backed Nehru's decision to talk to the Pakistani leadership.<sup>79</sup>

Two factors, however, made the government unable and unwilling to make any major concessions. As Nehru noted, one was strategic: developing Sino-Pakistan relations, which made Indian officials and the public doubt Pakistani sincerity or reliability. The other was political.<sup>80</sup> A weakened government in Delhi meant that there was little backing for any major concessions on Kashmir.<sup>81</sup> Nehru's reputation had

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<sup>74</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, April 24, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 553.

<sup>75</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>76</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 346. Galbraith, p. 499.

<sup>77</sup> Memcon of Ayub-Harriman-Sandys Meeting, November 28, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 410.

<sup>78</sup> Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 450.

<sup>79</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 118.

<sup>80</sup> See footnote 1 re Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re JLN-Galbraith Meeting, December 10, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 423. Also, see Letter from Dar (IndEmb US) to Rusk, enclosing letter from JLN to Kennedy, April 21, 1963, JFKL, Komer Papers, India 1961-63.

<sup>81</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 118.

suffered in India. He was personally weakened—both politically and physically.<sup>82</sup> There was “severe” criticism in parliament.<sup>83</sup> US officials noted that “aroused Indian nationalism has made Nehru far less of a free agent in foreign affairs.”<sup>84</sup> His need to deal with political pressure indeed led to statements on Pakistan that were not helpful in terms of the negotiations.<sup>85</sup>

Even before the talks, Nehru had noted that public opinion constrained how far he could go: “India had been humiliated by ChiCom attack and public opinion would not stand for further humiliation in making concessions to Pakistan”—especially, he had added, since nothing but hostility had flowed from Pakistan since the war.<sup>86</sup> This was perhaps also an attempt to use public opinion to limit US pressure. However, even foreign officials like Harriman and British official Duncan Sandys had noted that certain concessions would be “impossible” for Nehru, including a plebiscite and the transfer of the Kashmir valley “as such” to Pakistan.<sup>87</sup> Komer, too, had observed that Nehru’s range of options was bounded by heated public opinion that was reluctant even to support limited proposals to resume Sino-Indian talks.<sup>88</sup> The US had even discussed how to use the political and public pressure on Nehru for the benefit of their cause by trying to change the minds of others around him about a Pakistan settlement, since “events have indicated [that] Nehru is responsive to political groundswells beneath him.”<sup>89</sup> Nehru did not appreciate this tactic and would later note that the pressure to settle with Pakistan had

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<sup>82</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, pp. 342-346.

<sup>83</sup> Brecher, *Succession*, p. 101.

<sup>84</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, January 26, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 485.

<sup>85</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-BK Nehru Meeting, December 17, 1962, *Ibid.*, pp. 439-440.

<sup>86</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-JLN Talks (Nov. 22-28), November 30, 1962, *Ibid.*, p. 416 and Memcon of Kennedy-BK Nehru Meeting, December 17, 1962, *Ibid.*, p. 439.

<sup>87</sup> Memcon of Ayub-Harriman-Sandys Meeting, November 28, 1962, *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>88</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, January 26, 1963, *Ibid.*, p. 485.

<sup>89</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, February 16, 1963, *Ibid.*, p. 500.



not alleviated, but rather accentuated India's China problem. A settlement was not feasible and more pressure would only inflame Indian public opinion and "dampen...their ardour and keenness to face the Chinese threat."<sup>90</sup>

Nehru thought that another US tactic—linking military aid and the India-Pakistan talks—worsened the situation by increasing public pressure on him not to make concessions on Kashmir for aid.<sup>91</sup> Earlier BK Nehru had predicted that linkage would make a settlement harder by also making Pakistan more intransigent.<sup>92</sup> The linkage also led to resentment of the US. Though Galbraith had publicly denied that the US was pressing India on Kashmir, many on the Indian side had seen the Harriman-Sandys mission that arrived just after the war as, at best, persuading or, at worst, pressuring Nehru to accept talks.<sup>93</sup> To those inclined toward the latter view, the US attempt and the dialogue with Pakistan was seen as the "political price" India had to pay for the aid it had received and hoped to continue to receive from the US and UK.<sup>94</sup> The resentment only deepened when that aid did not seem as forthcoming.

### **The Substance of Alignment?**

Noting the China threat, Nehru had complained that the US response on the military assistance front seemed too "studious and deliberate."<sup>95</sup> He did not just have to worry about the threat, but also criticism that his government was not doing enough to meet it. A correspondent had observed Nehru's defensiveness at his first post-war press

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<sup>90</sup> Letter from JLN to Kennedy, August 11, 1963, *Ibid*, pp. 632-635.

<sup>91</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to DoS, April 15, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 547 and Letter from JLN to Kennedy, April 21, 1963, quoted in Gopal, *Nehru*, Vol. 3, p. 259.

<sup>92</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-BK Nehru Meeting, December 17, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 439.

<sup>93</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 118. Galbraith, p. 501

<sup>94</sup> BK Nehru believed it was Britain—more than the US—trying to extract that price. He later noted that Kennedy—because of his frustration with Ayub over Pakistan's China policy—was not responsible, but was swayed by "pro-Pakistan" officials in the State Department. See BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, pp. 407-408. Also, see Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 119.

<sup>95</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to White House, DoD, March 5, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 517.

conference, which was “marked by hostile questions concerning the state of Indian defenses.”<sup>96</sup> There had also been criticism from Nehru’s left flank about the value or effectiveness of the move toward the US. There were questions about the reliability of the US, given the lack of speed of decisions on aid.<sup>97</sup>

Galbraith had warned that the US would lose momentum in India as the sense grew that the US was reluctant to aid India because of domestic political considerations at home and Pakistani reaction abroad. He had noted that some in India were making the argument that there was no point making concessions on Pakistan because the US was unlikely to aid India anyway.<sup>98</sup> The ambassador argued that the US needed to move on the long-term aid question. In the US there was agreement that the long-term threat from China was serious and Komer also urged consideration in the near future of steps to provide further military aid to India, defense production assistance, and support to rebuild the Indian air force.<sup>99</sup> McNamara noted that cost-wise the US would not find it difficult to develop a package for air defense and short-term defense production assistance. He pointed out, however, a key problem: the US did not even have a clear sense from India of its long-term needs.<sup>100</sup>

To meet the external and internal challenge from China—and to stay afloat—the Kennedy administration had wanted the Indian government to optimize the balance between defense and development expenditure. There was little doubt that India needed to improve its defense capabilities, but there were differences on how and to what extent. Delhi envisioned a total military assistance program of \$1.6 billion over five years—

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<sup>96</sup> Selig Harrison, “Nehru Belittles China as Future Nuclear Threat,” *WP*, January 1, 1963, p. A10.

<sup>97</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to White House, DoD, March 5, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 517.

<sup>98</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to White House, DoD, March 5, 1963, *Ibid.*, p. 517.

<sup>99</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, March 14, 1963, *Ibid.*, p. 526.

<sup>100</sup> Memcon of President’s Meeting with Advisors, April 1, 1963, *Ibid.*, p. 536.

which later even an Indian diplomat admitted was “totally unrealistic.”<sup>101</sup> In the US at the time, there was consensus that this was too much. Even Komer and Galbraith only recommended a \$500 million program over five years.<sup>102</sup> McNamara thought that Indian defense projections and requirements—different from American and British estimates of Indian needs—were “quite unrealistic” and the country needed a better plan.

At a meeting in late April, McNamara observed that the US and UK could provide anywhere from \$150-300 million of military assistance over three years and thought India could be persuaded to see this as sufficient. The British did not want to contribute as much as the US would have liked. McNamara and Rusk thought the lack of British contribution would have negative repercussions in Congress, where there was a lack of enthusiasm for and even opposition to aiding India. McNamara believed that for the administration to get congressional support for military aid, “one of three conditions would have to be met: (1) a Kashmir settlement; or (2) a realistic program; or (3) the UK going along.”

There were concerns in the administration about the Indian reaction to the delays and the quantity. Bowles emphasized the political rather than the military imperative to aid India, noting that India now recognized the Chinese threat, which had been the US hope for a decade. If the US did not help India, Delhi might look to make amends with Beijing or turn to Moscow. At the very least, “We should give the Indians an “emotional assurance” as soon as possible that we are with them; this would buy us a little time.” Kennedy also wondered if \$300 million was sufficient to “get the Indians to take the same view of the [broader] Chinese threat,” especially since the Indians were thinking of military assistance of over a billion dollars. He asked: “How could we avoid a real clash

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<sup>101</sup> BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 408.

<sup>102</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 193.

and disillusionment?” The president thought the US should move on further aid soon and not be held back by British reticence. Kennedy believed that “India is the important thing; not the UK.” It was indispensable to the effort to “stop Communist China.” He asserted, “Let's not be penny wise about India; let's not let them get into a position where they feel that they can't cope with the Chicoms and Paks on top of their other problems.”<sup>103</sup>

The discussion turned to a subject on which there had been more agreement: air defense. After the war, Harriman had let Nehru know that American, British and Indian officials would continue to discuss the air assistance option.<sup>104</sup> The UK and US had subsequently sent a team to India to explore this option. Both Galbraith and Komer had suggested an Anglo-American “air umbrella.”<sup>105</sup> Responding to American and British concerns about the risks of being dragged into a Sino-Indian conflict, Galbraith had noted that the US “was not running an appreciable risk” since Chinese air operations seemed very unlikely.<sup>106</sup>

At the April meeting, McNamara expressed the view that an air umbrella had “great political value” and was more cost-effective. Bowles and Komer thought the US should move on this as well. Kennedy stated that “if the Chicoms bombed India [the US] would of course become involved, so he didn't see too much risk in giving a prior commitment.” Deputy Assistant Secretary of State James Grant suggested that it would also buy time with India, in terms of showing US willingness to help India, while

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<sup>103</sup> Memo for the Record of President's Meeting on India, April 25, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 561-563. For British reluctance, see Memo from Rusk to Kennedy, April 19, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 550-551.

<sup>104</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-JLN Talks (Nov. 22-28), November 30, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 417.

<sup>105</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to White House, DoD, March 5, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 517; Memo from Komer to Kennedy, March 14, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 526.

<sup>106</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to White House, DoD, March 5, 1963, *Ibid*, p. 517.

American and Indian officials worked out a more realistic military assistance plan. Rusk expressed the concern that “shooting at Chicom planes in India would lead almost certainly to the Chicoms shooting at us elsewhere. It would immediately broaden the war.” He wanted to hold on a commitment till Sandys and he returned from a trip to India. In the meantime, to indicate US willingness to assist India, there could be military talks about the possibility of “sending the US/UK air defense squadrons” to aid India.

Kennedy agreed, but did not want to wait too long. He emphasized, “We want the Chicoms to know what we are going to do so they won’t attack.” Furthermore, he wanted military assistance talks to continue and the State Department to stay away from them so that “we didn’t appear to tie the talks too much to political conditions such as Kashmir.” He noted that the administration should also prepare Congress for an air defense commitment. After all, “Congress would be much madder if India went Communist.” Air defense was cheaper and less likely to cause problems with Pakistan. If India did not want it to be too overt, “We could put the program under the guise of training.” Finally, he believed that the US should go ahead regardless of the British decision. If the US held off any longer, it might “jeopardize the developing relationship between the US and India.” His bottom line was “It is hard to see how we can stop the Chinese Communists without India.”<sup>107</sup>

On a visit to India, Rusk tried to reassure Nehru, noting that “there was not the slightest reason to doubt US sympathy and support to India in its conflict with China...If India is again attacked by the Chinese, the US is and will remain India's friend.” The US knew it had responsibilities since such an attack would have repercussions for it as well. Nehru acknowledged that it was possible that China would not attack India over the next

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<sup>107</sup> Memo for the Record of President’s Meeting on India, April 25, 1963, Ibid, p. 565; Memo for the Record of President’s Views on India, April 26, 1963, Ibid, p. 566.

few months, but he could not be sanguine about the threat over time. He noted to Rusk that he “continue[d] to feel the heavy pressure of further prospective Chinese aggression.” In the US, T.T. Krishnamachari, Indian minister of economic and defense coordination, observed to Kennedy that Beijing’s hostility toward India was unlikely to dissipate. India had concerns about potential Chinese subversion in Nagaland and encirclement of India through subversion or cooptation of the states on India’s periphery. He believed that China would use its air force if it attacked again. Indian retaliation would then lead to a Chinese attack on Indian cities, which he was not sure India could cope with at that stage.<sup>108</sup>

Lobbying Kennedy for American aid, Indian policymakers highlighted the stakes for the US. Krishnamachari outlined the consequences for Indian security and political stability—and thus, by implication, the US—of the government’s inability to protect India’s cities. Radhakrishnan asserted that China was trying to send a geopolitical message to Southeast Asia, as well as an ideological message about the superiority of the Chinese “way of life” rather than the Indian “democratic way of life.” He emphasized, “The stabilizing factor in Asia is the success of India’s democracy, as it was India’s weakness that tempted the Chinese to come in.” Thus, India needed to be strengthened and, in the meantime, supported—only that would strengthen India and its neighbors’ resolve, as well as deter China from another attack.

Kennedy affirmed the US desire to aid India economically and militarily. An air defense program, along with the other assistance the US was providing, would signal China—the only thing that would deter China was the thought that the war would turn into a major conflict involving other countries. He believed that “The greater the

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<sup>108</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re JLN-Rusk Meeting, May 4, 1963, *Ibid*, pp. 573-574; Memcon of Kennedy-Krishnamachari (Indian Minister of Economic and Defense Coordination) Meeting, May 20, 1963, *Ibid*, pp. 600-604.

evidence of U.S. interest, it would seem the more restrained the Chinese Communists will be.” An air defense agreement would also minimize the negative reaction from Pakistan. Furthermore, the US was interested in ensuring that India had the ability to defend itself and air defense gave the US time to help India get to that point. Finally, It would “give the substance of alignment without the fact of it.”<sup>109</sup>

On July 9, 1963 the Galbraith delivered to the foreign secretary a proposal for air defense that subsequently resulted in the Air Defense Agreement of 1963. The US agreed to provide India with two mobile radar installations, eventually to be manned by US-trained Indian technical personnel, and subsequently six permanent radar installations. The proposal also envisioned joint air force training exercises and finally, that “The United States Government will consult with the Government of India, in the event of a Chinese Communist attack on India, regarding possible United States assistance in strengthening India's air defenses.”<sup>110</sup> In internal administration discussions, Rusk had explained that the proposal “does not involve a firm mutual defense commitment” since India would not accept it because of the implication for its foreign policy. However, in response to a question from Kennedy, he confirmed, “‘consult’ actually means a commitment to defend.”<sup>111</sup> The Indian government subsequently agreed to the proposal.<sup>112</sup> Later that year, in November, the American, Australian, British and Indian air forces conducted a joint exercise.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Memcon of Kennedy-Radhakrishnan (Indian president) Meeting, June 3, 1963, Ibid, pp. 609-611. Memcon of Kennedy-Krishnamachari Meeting, May 20, 1963, Ibid, pp. 600-604.

<sup>110</sup> Telegram from Galbraith to DoS, July 10, 1963, Ibid, pp. 615-617.

<sup>111</sup> Memo from Rusk to Kennedy, May 8, 1963, Ibid, p. 581; Summary Record of the 514<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, May 9, 1963, Ibid, p. 584.

<sup>112</sup> See footnote 1 re Telegram from Timmons (AmEmb India) to DoS re Letter from MJ Desai, July 16, 1963, Ibid, p. 622.

<sup>113</sup> Ian C. C. Graham, “The Indo-Soviet MiG Deal and its International Repercussions,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (May 1964), pp. 830-831.

Nehru made evident in a letter to Kennedy in August 1963 that India would require more. He outlined not just India's continuing view of China—alone and in combination with Pakistan—as a geopolitical and ideological threat, but also that Beijing would not stop till it either forced upon India a political settlement or caused its internal disintegration. This challenge required an Indian effort on both the defense and development fronts. The US had helped “handsomely and generously,” but India had much left to do. If the government did not take adequate measures, it would have to submit to China and would lose citizens' confidence. Thus, the government could not meet the unhelpful and unfeasible US demands to limit or reduce its defense expenditures.<sup>114</sup>

The US had continued to help India on the economic front, but this help would not be as “handsome” as before given decreasing support for foreign aid in general and aid to India in particular in Congress. In hearings while Bowles insisted that American aid had “allowed India to stand on her feet, succeed and stand up to Communist China,” there were questions about the effectiveness of aid. Even those like Sen. Carlson (R-KS), who thought India was “one country we have got to have in that area,” worried about whether India could take care of herself against China even with the help of the US and the UK. Sen. Sparkman (D-AL) noted that India and Pakistan's continued spending and focus on fighting each other made it difficult to aid either of them. Others like Sens. Smathers (D-FL) and Lausche (D-OH) continued to find it hard to justify aid toward building a nation that they considered too friendly with the Soviet Union.<sup>115</sup>

The head of a committee reviewing foreign assistance that Kennedy had appointed to assuage congressional concerns suggested that the proposed administration

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<sup>114</sup> Letter from JLN to Kennedy, August 11, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 632-635.

<sup>115</sup> Testimony of Bowles, April 30, 1963, *SFRC Hearings Vol. 1 1963: Nom.*, pp. 4-41.



request of nearly \$5 billion was excessive. This led to a reduced request of \$4.5 billion, but, later that year, Congress appropriated only \$3 billion. In this context, aid allocated for India fell for a second year in a row. It went from \$400 million the previous year to \$337 million for FY1964. India did get another PL-480 commitment, but it was clear that there was decreasing support for aid to India.<sup>116</sup>

### **A Lost Opportunity?**

In a chapter in his memoirs titled “A Lost Opportunity,” Bowles implied that if Kennedy had lived, India and the US would have had a much closer relationship because the military assistance would have gone even further.<sup>117</sup> Having replaced Galbraith as ambassador to India, Bowles indeed discussed with the president a proposal for a five-year military assistance program for India, preferably with \$65-75 million of annual aid. Komer was skeptical of the administration’s ability to put aid on a long-term basis or commit to more than the \$50 million of annual aid that the defense department had been envisioning. Nevertheless, he said that if the president decided to agree to propose a long-term agreement to India, “why not see how much we can use this leverage to get some things from Delhi that we really want?”<sup>118</sup> Before Kennedy could make a decision, however, he was assassinated in Dallas.

Was there a lost opportunity? The kind of agreement that Bowles argued Kennedy would have signed cannot be taken as a given. As the ambassador himself admitted, before Kennedy’s death there was only “tentative” agreement on a five-year military package, that too in Delhi.<sup>119</sup> Bowles contended that, despite State Department concerns,

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<sup>116</sup> Merrill, pp. 196-199.

<sup>117</sup> Chester Bowles, *Promises to Keep: My Years in Public Life, 1941-1969* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 472-486.

<sup>118</sup> Memo from Komer to Kennedy, November 12, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 689-690; Memo from Komer to William Bundy (DASD/ISA), November 14, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 690-691.

<sup>119</sup> Bowles, *Promises to Keep*, p. 475.

at their meeting in November Kennedy “left no doubt in my mind but that he would go through with the agreement in any event.”<sup>120</sup> Komer’s record of the meeting, however, only notes that the President

was favorably impressed *in principle* with Chet's pitch that it might be possible to trade off a 5-year US military commitment...for at least a tacit understanding that the Indians would not exceed certain reasonable force goals, would limit their buys from the Soviets, and would take a more active role in our grand strategy against China. (emphasis added)

While the record notes that Kennedy thought Bowles had an “interesting proposition,” Komer—hardly considered anti-India—at no point suggested that Kennedy had approved such a proposal. Instead the president had “asked that he be given a preliminary Washington view” before he met Bowles again.<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, it is not clear that India would have agreed to meet the US conditions. While the two countries might have reached an implicit understanding on force goals, the years ahead would show that India was unwilling to take on a more active role in US grand strategy against China in places like Southeast Asia. In the near term, India had also not agreed—then or later—to limit its purchases from the Soviet Union.

For domestic political reasons—the potential reaction from Congress—as well as the concern that India would end up overspending on defense if both the American and Soviet stores were open to it, the Kennedy administration was not thrilled about India turning to the Soviet Union. As Bowles himself noted, Kennedy had asked him to look at the “possibility of a long range military understanding *which would prevent India from developing military relationships with communist states* and strengthen our political-military ties with the Government of India against Chinese Communists.”<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p. 481.

<sup>121</sup> Memo from Komer to William Bundy, November 14, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, pp. 690-691.

<sup>122</sup> Emphasis added. Quoted in Mansingh, p. 77.

For India, however, continuing to exercise the Soviet option allowed the government to return to its preferred method of diversifying dependence. The Soviet attitude during the war had only increased questions about the reliability of external benefactors. The Indian defense minister noted that other countries' willingness to give India aid depended on their political attitudes, which were apt to change.<sup>123</sup> US pressure on India to settle with Pakistan and limit its defense expenditures, in turn, highlighted the downside of overdependence on a single source.<sup>124</sup> Both these instances reinforced the Indian inclination to diversify dependence as long as Delhi lacked the ability to eliminate it entirely.

India's "reluctant tilt" during the war had been the result of a certain set of circumstances, including the lack of availability of the Soviet option.<sup>125</sup> In the aftermath of the war, the Soviet option became available once again. A few days after the war ended, Khrushchev expressed the hope that India would stay nonaligned and promised "strong friendship" and the commitment to "fulfil all our obligations."<sup>126</sup> He even called the Chinese attack "unnecessary."<sup>127</sup>

While some in India had blamed the diversified strategy for leaving India without friends during the war, most—in government and seemingly among the public—were not ready to jettison the strategy. Some argued that it had indeed worked. After the war, for example, Nehru stated his belief that because of the India-Soviet relationship, Moscow had exerted "some pressure" on Beijing for a ceasefire.<sup>128</sup> And

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<sup>123</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 99.

<sup>124</sup> As Surjit Mansingh has noted, India did not want to be too dependent on any one source. Mansingh, p. 56.

<sup>125</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 339.

<sup>126</sup> Khrushchev to TN Kaul (Indian ambassador to the USSR), November 24, 1962, quoted in Raghavan, pp. 308-309.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>128</sup> Selig Harrison, "Nehru Belittles China as Future Nuclear Threat," *WP*, January 1, 1963, p. A10.

It is, we think, of the utmost importance that the Soviet Union maintains this attitude [of support to India] in the Sino-Indian conflict...Even if there were no other valid reasons, our maintaining our policy of non-alignment is essential for this purpose.<sup>129</sup>

Policymakers would feel vindicated when, in September 1963, Moscow made clear that it would not be obliged to stand by the Sino-Soviet treaty if China again attacked India.<sup>130</sup>

India was more than happy to diversify with the Soviet option once again. Contrary to later contentions, India did not just turn to the Soviet Union *after* it became clear that a more comprehensive defense agreement with the US would fall through in 1963.<sup>131</sup> Its military relationship with the Soviet Union commenced *before* and *continued through* discussions with the US and UK.<sup>132</sup> Moscow did “postpone...delivery” of the MiGs during the war.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, British and Indian officials expected it to resume supply.<sup>134</sup> Nehru even publicly asserted that Moscow would soon send India the MiGs.<sup>135</sup>

The Soviet Union delivered a few MiGs that spring with more to come later. Meanwhile, India moved ahead with plans to manufacture the planes domestically and that fall also announced that the two countries had agreed to build India’s domestic capacity to manufacture missiles and radar equipment, among other defense deals. Moscow committed \$130 million in military assistance between October 1962 and May 1964 according to some reports.<sup>136</sup> It helped to have multiple benefactors—a lesson brought home even on the economic front after it became evident that, despite the

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<sup>129</sup> JLN to BK Nehru, January 5, 1963, quoted in Raghavan, p. 309.

<sup>130</sup> Highlights From Secretary of State Rusk's Policy Planning Meeting, October 15, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XXII*, p. 400.

<sup>131</sup> Bowles, *Promises to Keep*, p. 483; Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 230. Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, pp. 114-115 (he has suggested that India turned to the Soviet Union in November 1964 after its requests to US and UK were not satisfied).

<sup>132</sup> See Graham, pp. 823-832. Also, see Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 99.

<sup>133</sup> Memcon of Ayub-Harriman-Sandys Meeting, November 28, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 412.

<sup>134</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Nehru Talks (Nov. 22-28), December 3, 1962, *Ibid*, p. 417; Memcon of Anglo-American Talks, Nassau, December 20, 1962, *Ibid*, pp. 455-456.

<sup>135</sup> Selig Harrison, “Nehru Belittles China as Future Nuclear Threat,” *WP*, January 1, 1963, p. A10.

<sup>136</sup> Graham, p. 829; Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 99; Donaldson, p. 202.

Kennedy administration's support, the US would not fund the construction of a public sector steel mill at Bokaro because of Congressional opposition. Subsequently, Moscow financed the mill instead.<sup>137</sup>

There was also a domestic reason for exercising the Soviet option. Nonalignment had staying power in the country. In the poll of Indian legislators taken after the war, surveyors found that neutrality continued to be "a very real concept for the legislators"—83 percent did not want India to side with either the US and its allies or the Soviet Union and its allies.<sup>138</sup> Tharoor has observed that over the years Nehru had conveyed his government's foreign policy not as his foreign policy or that of the Congress party, but as the countries' foreign policy. Moreover, he had "transform[ed] opposition to its fundamentals into opposition to India's very independence."<sup>139</sup>

This transformation ended up tying Nehru's own hands in some ways as well—ironic for an approach that was designed to expand Indian policymakers' options. It gave critics ammunition against him. Even those who had earlier criticized nonalignment exploited any move away from it to criticize the government. This was perhaps most visible in the reaction to the possibility that the US would set up a Voice of America transmitter in eastern India. Delhi had agreed to such a proposal in early 1963, partly because the plan helped India, designed as it was to transmit anti-China propaganda into China. When the news broke that summer, however, there was so much criticism that it was a violation of nonalignment that the government repudiated the agreement.<sup>140</sup> Thus,

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<sup>137</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 215-217.

<sup>138</sup> IIPPO, "The Impact of the Sino-Indian Border Clash," *MPOS*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (October 1963), p. 16.

<sup>139</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 44.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40; BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 461; Gopal, *Nehru Vol. 3*, p. 254; Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 215.

it is not clear that Nehru could or would have agreed to limit India's relationship with the Soviet Union in exchange for a somewhat larger American defense deal.

### **TETHERED, BUT NOT TIED (DECEMBER 1963-APRIL 1965)**

Narratives of US-India relations during the Johnson administration have tended to focus on the countries' "divergent interests" and "asymmetric concerns."<sup>141</sup> But during the Johnson period, there was one major subject of agreement between Indian and US policymakers: that China was the main threat in Asia. As McMahon has noted, by this point in the eyes of US policymakers China "had become a near-demonic force in world affairs."<sup>142</sup> Johnson saw Beijing as "bellicose and boastful."<sup>143</sup> As Vietnam became the administration's major foreign policy preoccupation,<sup>144</sup> Johnson became increasingly concerned about the Chinese bellicosity and support behind Ho Chi Minh.<sup>145</sup> He perceived the North Vietnamese leader's efforts as a nationalist struggle, but as part of a "much more ambitious strategy" on the part of the communist bloc.<sup>146</sup> To protect US security and credibility in the face of that offensive in Vietnam, it was crucial to prevent losses to that bloc.<sup>147</sup>

Viewing Asia even beyond Vietnam through that prism, the administration could not afford to see India falling or failing in the face of Chinese aggression. The danger persisted. Many of the Kennedy administration officials who continued to serve under

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<sup>141</sup> Sumit Gnguly, "US-Indian Relations during the Lyndon Johnson Era," in Gould and Ganguly eds. *The Hope and the Reality*, p. 81. Also see H.W. Brands, *India and the United States*.

<sup>142</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on The Periphery*, p. 308. Also, see Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS re McConaughy-Ayub meeting, August 11, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 143.

<sup>143</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 134.

<sup>144</sup> Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), p. 210.

<sup>145</sup> Johnson, *Vantage Point*, p. 53.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>147</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 240. Leffler, pp. 210-211.

Johnson had continued to believe through 1963 that China might still want to seek “political, psychological, or territorial gains through limited military operations” against India.<sup>148</sup> Some had even refused to rule out the possibility of another attack.<sup>149</sup> In early 1964, Rusk disagreed with Pakistani officials trying to downplay the China threat in order to stop further US military aid to India. He noted that Chinese actions globally—on nuclear and boundary issues—and especially in Southeast Asia made clear that China did not have peaceful intentions.<sup>150</sup> According to the State Department, potentially India was still “the only non-Communist country on the Asian mainland which by its size and resources may eventually add a substantial independent weight to the Asian power balance.” In the near term there was a bigger concern: India’s “loss to Communism would tilt the strategic balance of Asia sharply, if not decisively against us.”<sup>151</sup>

US policymakers saw the Chinese threat to India as both internal and external. By 1964, for policymakers and economists—in the latter case even in India—hopes that India would “take off” had given way to fears that it would collapse.<sup>152</sup> The administration believed that the challenge from China called for not just India’s military defenses to be strengthened, but also India as a whole. To maintain, at the very least, the “strategic balance of Asia,” this required that India expend resources in—and the US

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<sup>148</sup> Telegram from Ball (in Portugal) to Kennedy, Rusk and McNamara, September 6, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 672.

<sup>149</sup> See views of General Quinn. Memo for the Record of President’s Meeting on Ball Mission to Pakistan, September 9, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 678.

<sup>150</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Rusk and G. Ahmed (Pakistani ambassador to the US), January 8, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 3. Ayub continued to try to downplay the Chinese threat to India. Telegram from EmbOff Pakistan to DoS on Talbot-McConaughy-Ayub meeting, March 11, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 56-62.

<sup>151</sup> National Policy Paper on India, November 3, 1964, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA), Record Group (RG) 59, Subject Files 1963-1973, Policy Planning Council (1961-1969), Box 46, S/P National Policy Paper – India. The paper was drafted by Howard Wriggins of the Policy Planning Staff and signed by the Secretary.

<sup>152</sup> Mansingh, p. 12.

provide support for—both its defense and development sectors. While the protection of India’s territorial integrity required continued US military assistance, internal stability could be achieved with “a workable democracy and at least a politically effective non-Communist government...[and] the development of a sound and expanding economy.” This required a US strategy to “strengthen Indian will and ability to defeat Communist military aggression and to resist the expansion of Communist influence in the subcontinent.” Additionally, the US could help by “encourag[ing] foreign policies which will improve India’s relations with its major neighbors,” as well as by “minimiz[ing] the likelihood that India will develop a nuclear device.”<sup>153</sup>

The Indian defense minister noted that the US and India “were in substantial agreement on Chicom threat.”<sup>154</sup> Indian policymakers continued to see China as a major threat, alone and in collusion with Pakistan.<sup>155</sup> Beyond the more traditional geopolitical threat China posed, Indian officials were also worried about losing the ideological battle to China—at home and abroad. They watched with concern Zhou’s travels to many Afro-Asian countries, anxious that he would convince others of the Chinese case.<sup>156</sup> Domestic developments added to India’s sense of vulnerability. In January 1964, Nehru suffered a stroke. Over the next five months, as some of his cabinet colleagues took on more

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<sup>153</sup> National Policy Paper on India, pp. 2-3.

<sup>154</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Rusk-Chavan (Indian defense minister) Meeting, May 22, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 104.

<sup>155</sup> See Congress Party resolution referred to in Memcon of Meeting between Rusk and G. Ahmed (Pakistani ambassador to the US), January 8, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 2. For concern about Sino-Pakistan relations, also see Telegram from AmEmb India to Rusk re MEA China Director’s Views, December 2, 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson Library [LBJL], National Security Files [NSF], Country File [CF], Box 128, India, Vol. 1: Cables [1 of 2].

<sup>156</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to Rusk re MEA China Director’s Views, December 2, 1963, LBJL, NSF, CF, Box 128, India, Vol. 1: Cables [1 of 2]. Also, see Memorandum from DoS Executive Secretary (Read) to Bundy on Pakistan’s Referral of Kashmir to Security Council, January 27, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 18-22.



prominent decision-making roles,<sup>157</sup> India remained concerned about the Chinese threat,<sup>158</sup> as well as the possibility of a joint Sino-Pakistan attack as Nehru remained in a weakened state.<sup>159</sup> Overall, observers described a period of “crippling malaise of inaction and inertia” and “rudderlessness of the government” in India.<sup>160</sup>

Nehru’s death did not change India’s perception of China. If anything, the new government was more hawkish on China. A contemporary biographer noted that on China policy, the government of new prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was “disposed to show no quarter.”<sup>161</sup> Addressing the nation when he took office after Nehru’s death in May 1964, Shastri asserted, “China had wronged us...by her premeditated aggression against us.” He noted that India had accepted a settlement on the lines of the Colombo proposals. If China had peaceful intentions, it could demonstrate them by moving on this front and ceasing its anti-India propaganda across Africa and Asia.<sup>162</sup>

India seemed vulnerable both at and within her borders. Contemporary observers expressed concern that India’s democracy would not survive if there was “a massive external threat, which the civil government is incapable of meeting; and prolonged economic stagnation.” At the time, both seemed plausible fears. When Shastri came to power, some noted that the Indian economy was at its “lowest ebb” with food price and foreign exchange crises raging.<sup>163</sup> The Indian economy continued to suffer with the

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<sup>157</sup> Brecher, *Succession*, p. 22, p. 102.

<sup>158</sup> Letter from JLN to Johnson (president) on April 14 referenced, in Memcon of Meeting between Johnson and Indira Gandhi, April 27, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 92.

<sup>159</sup> Krishnamachari-Bowles (ambassador to India) conversation on April 23, referenced in Letter From Komer to Bowles, April 24, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 90. Also, see Gandhi’s remarks in Robert Trumbull, “US Losing India’s Goodwill,” *NYT*, April 22, 1964, p. 2 and Chavan’s comments in Telegram From DoS to AmEmb India re Rusk-Chavan Meeting, May 22, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 105.

<sup>160</sup> Indian journalist Inder Malhotra, quoted in Brecher, *Succession*, p. 26.

<sup>161</sup> D.R. Mankekar, *Lal Bahadur: A Political Biography* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1964), p. 156.

<sup>162</sup> First Broadcast to the Nation by the Prime Minister, June 11, 1964, quoted in Mankekar, p. 166.

<sup>163</sup> Brecher, *Succession*, p. 187, p. 143.

government admitting that the situation was “extremely grim.” India’s foreign exchange reserves were running low; inflation was rampant; there were food shortages; cuts in imports to conserve foreign exchange were affecting industrial production; and debt repayment obligations lay on the horizon.<sup>164</sup> By spring 1965 domestic observers were comparing the situation that the Congress party found itself in with that the GMD had faced in China before the communists had taken over. External observers, too, echoed the view that India at the time resembled GMD China.<sup>165</sup>

The Congress party was under pressure to deliver the goods. Joining the opposition chorus, there was criticism from some within the party such as Vijayalakshmi Pandit that Shastri was not doing enough.<sup>166</sup> A party leader warned that people would not have as much patience with Shastri’s government as they had with that of Nehru if the government did not deliver.<sup>167</sup>

The security realm did not seem any more promising between June 1964 and April 1965. The China threat showed no sign of dissipating.<sup>168</sup> China conducted its first nuclear test, leading to calls at home for India to pursue a nuclear weapons program.<sup>169</sup> An Indian attempt to turn the test against China in the developing world went nowhere. A proposal by Shastri for the nonaligned states to act together to stop Chinese nuclear program got little traction.<sup>170</sup> Nonaligned states did not seem as concerned about the

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<sup>164</sup> “Mr. Shastri’s Dilemma,” *The Economist*, January 9, 1965, p. 56 and “Test for the Aid Club,” *The Economist*, February 27, 1965, p. 81.

<sup>165</sup> Indian journalist BG Verghese’s views, quoted in Brecher, *Succession*, pp. 184-185 and Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 414.

<sup>166</sup> Brecher, *Succession*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>167</sup> Senior Congress party leader K. Kamaraj, quoted in Mankekar, p. 149; and Pran Chopra, quoted in Brecher, *Succession*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>168</sup> In September 1964, the defence minister declared that China had a number of divisions—more than during the 1962 war—at the Sino-Indian border. Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 121.

<sup>169</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, pp. 390-391.

<sup>170</sup> L.K. Jha drafted it. Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 48.

adverse consequences of the test and indeed seemed to admire the Chinese achievement. Overall there was a sense that China with its “revolutionary and self-reliant path” was getting more traction in the developing world than India with its “middle way of nonalignment and mixed economy.”<sup>171</sup> Chinese propaganda continued to play up India’s military defeat and the foreign assistance it was receiving to keep it afloat. Furthermore, China took the lead in organizing a second Afro-Asian conference and successfully blocked Indian attempts to invite the Soviet Union to the conference. Some considered this period one of India’s “dwarfing by China.”<sup>172</sup>

Furthermore, China and Pakistan seemed to be growing even closer.<sup>173</sup> China offered Pakistan loans, as well as support on the Kashmir issue.<sup>174</sup> A number of senior Chinese and Pakistani political and military leaders exchanged visits, capped off by visits by Ayub to China and Zhou to Pakistan in spring 1965. US officials noted that Ayub’s visit “represent[ed] significant consolidation of Pak-ChiCom relationship.”<sup>175</sup> High-level Chinese leaders also visited Afghanistan and Nepal, offering aid and support to these countries in India’s neighborhood.<sup>176</sup> Breaking protocol, China also communicated directly with the Sikkimese king rather than through India.

Shastri did not expect a direct Chinese attack, but Indian policymakers feared Chinese intervention in what India considered internal issues. This concern was only exacerbated by indications from the US that China—in competition with the Soviet

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<sup>171</sup> Mansingh, p. 17, p. 196.

<sup>172</sup> Brecher, *Succession*, p. 180.

<sup>173</sup> For Shastri and Chavan’s views, see Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 121.

<sup>174</sup> Memo for the Record re Bundy-Pakistani finance minister meeting, September 24, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 160. Also, see Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS, March 16, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 199.

<sup>175</sup> Telegram From EmbOff Pakistan to DoS, September 19, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 155; Telegram From AmEmb Pakistan to DoS, March 16, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 199.

<sup>176</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 122.

Union—was taking more aggressive stances and was likely to focus on subversion.<sup>177</sup> Thus India was angry when, in the midst of an unfurling India-Pakistan crisis, Zhou met with Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah who had been talking about independence for Kashmir from India. Furthermore, Zhou invited Abdullah to visit Beijing.<sup>178</sup>

Thus, few Indian policymakers would have disagreed with Bowles description of India's defense problem vis-à-vis China as “two dimensional: (1) an adequate military defense shield and (2) the building of vigorous, dynamic society which is impervious to covert Chinese Communist infiltration.”<sup>179</sup> There was also little argument about the ends that the US strategy was designed to achieve—a contained China and a strengthened India with a sound democracy and economy—and a continued desire for US military and economic support, especially as Moscow seemed to be flirting with Islamabad.<sup>180</sup> Disagreements, however, emerged with the US over means. These differences on how to meet the China threat set limits to the US-India relationship, even as that very China threat kept the relationship from unraveling.

### **Guns or Butter**

The elements of the US strategy for India were connected to each other and to other US interests. At best, US policymakers expected that a sound and well-prioritized Indian development strategy—aided by the US—would strengthen Indian democracy; at the very least, it would keep the communists in India at bay. Better economic development would also allow India to contribute a much larger share of the effort to build Indian defense capacity against China, thus reducing the burden on the US.

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<sup>177</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Shastri (Indian PM) meeting, March 5, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 195.

<sup>178</sup> “Salt for India’s Wounds,” *Ibid.*, April 10, 1965, p. 42. Also, see Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 396.

<sup>179</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, April 20, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 86.

<sup>180</sup> Ayaz Naseem, *Pak-Soviet Relations, 1947-1965* (Lahore, Pakistan: Progressive Publishers, 1989), pp. 143-147; Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 123.

Furthermore, a politically, militarily and economically strengthened India would offer a less tempting target to China.

A major emphasis in the US strategy was to encourage India to balance its defense and development efforts in a way that the latter did not suffer. US officials from the top down saw these efforts as linked. The US emphasis on India striking a defense-development balance led in large part to the length of time it took to negotiate further military assistance to strengthen India against China. In negotiating a package, Johnson had instructed US officials in December 1963 to encourage India to try to do the following: limit its force levels, limit procurement from the Soviet bloc, limit diversion of foreign exchange from development to defense needs, and “exercise restraint” vis-à-vis Pakistan.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, the US linked any military assistance agreement to the formulation of a five-year Indian defense plan that could lay the basis for more balanced expenditure on development and defense.

While there was a sense that the Indian defense plan generated in the spring of 1964 had not really “relate[d] the defense effort in much detail to India’s total economic and fiscal situation,” the US did succeed in eliciting a commitment to a ceiling on foreign exchange expenditure for defense procurement.<sup>182</sup> In June 1964, India and the US eventually signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The US agreed to provide India military assistance worth \$50 million over the next fiscal year for mountain warfare equipment, communications, and defense production. In addition, the US offered credit for purchase of military equipment worth \$10 million in that fiscal year and \$50 million

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<sup>181</sup> Telegram from Ball to AmEmb India, December 14, 1963, LBJL, NSF, CF, Box 128, India, Vol. I, Cables [1 of 2]

<sup>182</sup> Telegram from Greene (AmEmb India) to DoS, April 5, 1964, LBJL, NSF, CF, Box 128, India, Vol. II, Cables. Also see Memo from Komer to Bundy, May 21, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 102-103.

in the next one.<sup>183</sup> The US conditioned the annual extension of military assistance for another four years on refinement of the Indian defense plan to reflect a more appropriate balance between defense and development.

To help prop India up internally, the US continued to support India's development strategy with economic assistance and food aid. In fall 1964, the US and India signed two loan agreements and a one-year PL480 sales agreement, providing India 4.5 million tons of wheat. For FY1965, Congress also authorized \$265 million of economic assistance for India for FY1965 and the next year it would put aside \$309 million.<sup>184</sup>

At the time—and since—the MoU received more attention for what it did not contain than what it did. The deal left Indian officials disappointed—they had wanted (and expected) a five-year commitment, as well as high-end items like supersonics. But they were neither willing nor perhaps able to meet US conditions that might have made the US more forthcoming on these fronts. Indian officials recognized that they needed to balance expenditure in the defense and development realms, but they had a different idea of what constituted the right balance. There were divisions within the government on this question. The US saw the finance minister, for example, as an ally in its effort to get India to strike a more appropriate budgetary balance. The defense minister, on the other hand, saw the US insistence on a defense-development balance as just an excuse not to give India aid. Overall, the Indian leadership was acutely sensitive to the criticism directed its way during and after the 1962 Sino-Indian war for neglecting the defense realm and did not want to repeat its mistake. Through the spring of 1964, there was domestic press criticism of the continued lack of defense preparedness to meet the China

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<sup>183</sup> Memo from Komer and Bundy to Johnson, Washington, June 4, 1964, as *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>184</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 240; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 4.

and Pakistan threats, with accusations that the government was not doing enough. Praise from Indian commentators that the five-year defense plan adequately reflected India's needs made it hard to make further cuts as some in the US desired.<sup>185</sup>

The sensitivity to criticism on this front only increased after Shastri took over as prime minister. Shastri had nowhere near the political standing that might have allowed Nehru to absorb and survive the political blows that would likely have been directed at the government had India made further concessions on this front. In his inaugural speech Shastri stressed that while economic development was his priority, the threat from China “left us with no choice” but to continue the defense expenditures that were putting a heavy burden on the economy.<sup>186</sup> During negotiations for the military assistance package, defense minister Chavan asserted that Shastri neither would nor could agree to any provisions limiting force goals or further limiting foreign exchange expenditure on defense—partly because he would not be able to sell such restrictions to the Indian cabinet.<sup>187</sup> He was also not in a position to give up the Soviet option.

### **Diversification**

Beyond ability, there is little evidence that the government was willing to give up or even limit the Soviet option to the extent that would have been required for a major five-year military assistance deal with the US to go through. Military assistance agreements with the Soviet Union were indeed a major reason that the MoU with the US did not go farther than it did, especially on the question of supersonics. During negotiations on the MoU, senior Indian officials made it clear that India would not stand down from negotiations to acquire more MiGs from the Soviet Union. Shastri told the US

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<sup>185</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, pp. 100-120.

<sup>186</sup> First Broadcast to the Nation by the Prime Minister, June 11, 1964, quoted in Mankekar, p. 165.

<sup>187</sup> See Memo from Solbert (DASD/ISA) to McNamara on June 3, 1964 referenced in footnote 2 of Letter from McNamara to Chavan, June 3, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 115.

ambassador that, while there had been some internal differences over the MiG deal, Nehru had already decided to move forward with the deal in April—before final talks on the US-India MoU. Chavan clarified that India did not want American F-104s instead of MiGs; it wanted them in addition to the Soviet aircraft.<sup>188</sup>

Across the board in the administration, however, it was clear that as long as India had a deal in play with the Soviet Union to acquire more MiGs no supersonic deal was possible with the US. To begin with, US officials did not see supersonics as necessary for defense against China. Moreover, given India's more pressing needs (both defense and development) they thought that the money would be better spent elsewhere. Finally, officials believed that if both the US and the Soviet Union supplied India with supersonics, Pakistan would demand even more such aircraft from the US.<sup>189</sup>

After Nehru's death, in Washington there was again some consideration of offering India supersonic aircraft on the small chance that Delhi might have a change of heart. Although there was a sense that India was too far along with the purchase of MiGs, the idea was to get credit for the offer. National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy and Komer advocated making the offer, even on the off chance that India decided to forsake the MiGs and buy American. McNamara approved of the offer, if it was made to both India and Pakistan, but Rusk thought it would kill the glimmer of hope of an India-Pakistan rapprochement generated by Ayub's conciliatory statement after Nehru's death.<sup>190</sup> Nonetheless, Rusk outlined a package involving F-6As, engine development assistance for India's domestic supersonic and the prospect that F-104s could be offered

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<sup>188</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 107. Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, August 27, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 150.

<sup>189</sup> Memos from Komer to Bundy, May 21, May 23 and May 27, 1964, LBJL, NSF, CF, India, Box 128, Vol. II, Memos & Misc.

<sup>190</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, June 16, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 114.



in the future—conditioned on India not purchasing MiGs.<sup>191</sup> Even while this was being considered, reports came in that the MiG deal had already been finalized.<sup>192</sup> The Indian cabinet secretary said India was not likely to renege on the deal that was a follow-on to the one made in 1962. Assistant Secretary of State Philips Talbot confirmed that in that case the US would not consider an air package for India since that would mean even more diversion of development resources towards defense.<sup>193</sup>

The Indian side was aware that the purchase from the Soviet Union was a stumbling block, but the government was not going to give up that option. Beyond the fact that the MiG deal was a bird in hand, Indian policymakers did not want to be overly dependent on the US as a military supplier.<sup>194</sup> Senior Indian policymakers told the US ambassador that they already felt pressured by the US on a number of fronts.<sup>195</sup> The Indian government believed that diversifying its dependence at least gave India the ability to resist that pressure somewhat. Furthermore, even if Shastri had wanted to put all India's eggs in one basket, domestic political circumstances would have made it hard for him to renege on the deal. Politically, he was vulnerable on his left flank—leftists in the Congress party had even opposed him coming to power. He was also sensitive to criticism that he was deviating from Nehru's foreign policy and pushed back against such accusations.<sup>196</sup>

On the US side, domestic politics made it unlikely that an India that agreed to a Soviet deal would also be able to get greater American military assistance. As it is, Johnson had been concerned that any large military aid package to India would affect

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<sup>191</sup> Letter from Rusk to McNamara, June 17, 1964, *Ibid*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>192</sup> Memo from Komer to Bundy, June 23, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 128.

<sup>193</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Khera-Talbott Meeting, July 2, 1964, *Ibid*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>194</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 109.

<sup>195</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, August 27, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 149.

<sup>196</sup> Mankekar, pp. 33-38, pp. 158-159.

congressional sentiments about the large economic assistance package India was receiving.<sup>197</sup> Once it became evident that India was going to go the MiG route, administration officials expected a negative reaction in Congress.<sup>198</sup> Aware of the potential reaction to an Indian military deal with the Soviet Union announced a few months before the presidential and congressional elections, Bowles sought to persuade Indian officials to limit the extent of the deal and keep it as “low key” as possible.<sup>199</sup> An announcement in the Indian parliament in September put paid to that hope.<sup>200</sup>

Bowles feared that with this, Indian policymakers shut the door to further negotiations in the defense realm with the US. As the India desk officer at the State Department predicted, however, India had no desire to put all its eggs in the Soviet basket either.<sup>201</sup> Indian policymakers were not convinced that China and the Soviet Union would remain at odds. Bowles indeed tried to encourage such doubts about Soviet reliability versus China in the minds of the Indian prime minister and defense minister, indicating that Sino-Soviet rapprochement remained a key Soviet goal.<sup>202</sup> There were also doubts about Soviet reliability on another front—the ability of Moscow to deliver. These doubts led to the Indian defense minister coming back to ask the US if it would be willing to supply India with F-5s. Bowles wondered whether this request was the result of delays with the Indian supersonic, the fact that the MiG domestic production line would not bear fruit for a decade, the developing Soviet-Pakistan relationship, or a desire to diversify

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<sup>197</sup> Letter from Johnson to Bowles, January 21, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 14.

<sup>198</sup> Letter from Rusk to McNamara, June 17, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 127.

<sup>199</sup> Letter from Bowles to Bundy, July 18, 1964, *Ibid*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>200</sup> See footnote 4 re Airgram From AmEmb India to DoS, September 23, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 159.

<sup>201</sup> See Letter from Bowles to Bundy, July 18, 1964, *Ibid*, pp. 139-142 and footnote 3 re Memcon of Meeting between Chavan-Lakeland (DoS India desk officer), July 7, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 139.

<sup>202</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, August 27, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 150. Also, see Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Chavan-Bowles meeting, January 29, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 185.

using the American option.<sup>203</sup> The State Department received intelligence that Chavan was motivated by delays in MiG deliveries and a sense that the Soviet Union was shortchanging India on the commitment it had made vis-à-vis domestic production of MiGs.<sup>204</sup> Shastri admitted that the “Soviets had not been fully coming through.” He hoped to discuss the acquisition of aircraft with Johnson on a trip to the US scheduled for spring 1965.<sup>205</sup>

Bowles, the military attaché in India, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Solbert believed that giving India the F-5s could help limit how much India turned to Moscow.<sup>206</sup> In the State Department, Talbot argued for either giving both India and Pakistan aircraft or giving none.<sup>207</sup> Harriman, too, was supportive of the Indian request.<sup>208</sup> Trouble on the India-Pakistan front, however, put paid to any prospect of the deal.<sup>209</sup>

### **Pakistan: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?**

Like its predecessor, the Johnson administration believed that continuing tension with Pakistan consumed Indian resources that were required to meet the external and internal threat from China. An improved Indian relationship with Pakistan could result in less diversion of Indian attention and resources from not just the China front, but also from development priorities that were critical to insulating India from Chinese subversion. US policymakers also believed that better India-Pakistan relations would stymie the developing Sino-Pakistan partnership—a relationship that continued to be a

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<sup>203</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Chavan-Bowles meeting, January 29, 1965, Ibid, p. 184.

<sup>204</sup> Information Memo from Talbot to Rusk, February 23, 1965, Ibid, pp. 190-191.

<sup>205</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Shastri meeting, March 5, 1965, Ibid, p. 195.

<sup>206</sup> See footnote 5 re Memo from Solbert to JCS, February 2, 1965, Ibid, p. 186.

<sup>207</sup> Information Memo from Talbot to Rusk, February 23, 1965, Ibid, p. 191.

<sup>208</sup> Telegram From Harriman to Johnson and Rusk, Manila, March 7, 1965, Ibid, p. 198.

<sup>209</sup> Telegram from Bundy to Bowles, April 15, 1965, Ibid, p. 241.

major source of tension in the US-Pakistan relationship.<sup>210</sup> Even though key officials thought India was “the major prize in Asia,” Pakistan, too, was considered a part of the Cold War framework that made India important.<sup>211</sup> As Andersen has noted, this made keeping Pakistan on the “free world” side crucial.<sup>212</sup>

In some ways, the US and India were not that far apart on Pakistan. For one, the Johnson administration, too, saw Pakistan as adding to its China problem. Rusk laid out the US perspective, noting

We are determined to face squarely our responsibility for helping to maintain the security of free Asia against the Chinese Communists until the nations concerned are strong enough to preserve it themselves. Pak policy cuts across this grain. When we are trying to stop Chinese Communist infiltration in Southeast Asia, Paks in effect seem to be encouraging them to make hay in South Asia.<sup>213</sup>

Furthermore, despite Pakistani calls for US pressure on India, most in the administration were disinclined to put too much pressure on India. On Kashmir, the Kennedy administration’s failed effort to get the two countries to reach a settlement seemed to have taken its toll. Some like Harriman still believed that the UK and US should continue to focus attention on a Kashmir settlement.<sup>214</sup> Overall, however, policymakers thought Pakistan’s “pressure tactics” were “unwise” since the US could not offer the kind of

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<sup>210</sup> See Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001)

<sup>211</sup> Memo from Komer and Bundy to Johnson, February 26, 1964, LBJL, NSF, CF, Box 128, India, Vol. I, Memos & Misc. Other than size differential, one reason Pakistan might have been considered less important at the time was that US policymakers sought Pakistani cooperation more against the Soviet Union, while they wanted Indian cooperation against China. With China rising to the top of the list of adversaries, India’s importance increased accordingly. See Telegram from Talbot to Rusk, London, March 25, 1964, LBJL, NSF, CF, India, Box 128, Vol. II, Memos & Misc.

<sup>212</sup> Walter K. Andersen, “US-Indian Relations, 1961-1963,” in Gould and Ganguly eds. *The Hope and the Reality*, p. 78.

<sup>213</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan (Talbot and Ambassador) for conversation with Ayub, March 9, 1964, FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV, p. 53. Also, see Memo from Bundy and Komer to Johnson, FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV, pp. 49-50 and Telegram from EmbOff Pakistan to DoS on Talbot-McConaughy-Ayub meeting, March 11, 1964, FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV, pp. 56-62.

<sup>214</sup> Telegram From Harriman to Johnson and Rusk, Manila, March 7, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 198.

support Pakistan was seeking on the issue at the UN. They believed that India and Pakistan should sort out the issue on a bilateral basis.<sup>215</sup> Rusk indeed told Bhutto it would be “mistake of lifetime” to believe that “India can be coerced.”<sup>216</sup> Bundy and Komer thought that pressing a weak Indian government to negotiate on Kashmir would lead to instability that China could exploit.<sup>217</sup> Talbot told the Pakistani ambassador that the US did “not see how outside powers can be helpful until disputants decide themselves to make such concessions.”<sup>218</sup> As for Johnson, he did not think the two countries were ready for a settlement.<sup>219</sup>

The Pakistani attitude towards China and India’s importance vis-à-vis China indeed prevented further US pressure on India. Administration officials rejected Pakistani calls for conditioning aid to India on a Kashmir settlement. Bundy sent a clear message to Pakistan that

neither Ayub nor any other Pakistani should be under any illusion that leaning on the US or making noises toward China would change our determination to help India against China. This was a major aspect of our foreign policy. The Paks might disagree with our judgment as to the reliability of India and whether the Indians would ever fight China. But this was not the issue. We regarded India as a very important place and were determined to avoid the critical vacuum which would be created by India's collapse. This was also in Pakistan's interest.<sup>220</sup>

Given Ayub’s reticence over supporting the US in Vietnam, Johnson had little patience for Pakistani suggestions that American aid to India would cause India’s neighbors to look to China, and perhaps lead to Pakistan reconsidering its alliance commitments. Johnson noted that that was Pakistan’s decision to make; given the Pakistani attitude, the

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<sup>215</sup> Telegram From DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, January 21, 1964, Ibid, pp. 16-17.

<sup>216</sup> Quoted in Telegram From DoS to USUN, February 12, 1964, Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>217</sup> Memo from Bundy and Komer to Johnson, March 8, 1964, Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>218</sup> Telegram From DoS to AmEmb Pakistan re Talbot-G. Ahmed meeting, December 24, 1964, Ibid, p. 174.

<sup>219</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Johnson and McConaughy, July 15, 1964, Ibid, p. 138.

<sup>220</sup> Memo for the Record re Bundy-Pakistani finance minister meeting, September 24, 1964, Ibid, p. 161.

US would also “re-evaluate the condition of our relationship.” Johnson instructed McConaughy to make clear to Ayub how upset he was about the deepening Sino-Pakistan relationship, especially in the context of the trouble China was creating for the US in Southeast Asia.<sup>221</sup> Johnson also told McConaughy to tell Ayub that the US was the best judge of how it should go about helping India deal with China.<sup>222</sup>

When Pakistan again called for pressure on India following India’s decision to integrate Kashmir constitutionally in December 1964, in a conversation with Pakistani officials, Harriman highlighted Shastri’s internal difficulties and also the US inability and unwillingness to pressure India on Kashmir. He noted that the “US ability to bring pressure to bear upon India is limited by our confrontation with Chicom threat and activities in area and elsewhere around the world.”<sup>223</sup>

Even as the administration saw Pakistan as part of its own China problem, however, it still believed that India should make Pakistan part of its China solution by making “common cause” with Pakistan against China.<sup>224</sup> Indian officials, however, increasingly believed that Pakistan was directly part of their China problem. The fact that the threat from Pakistan and China had become linked in Indian minds did nothing to make an India-Pakistan rapprochement easier. Indian officials saw China and Pakistan “united in a strange marriage of convenience” and thought this collaboration made it harder to deal with Pakistan on other issues.<sup>225</sup> Indian policymakers also saw the US

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<sup>221</sup> Letter From Ayub to Johnson, July 1, 1964, Ibid, pp. 129-130; Memcon of Johnson-G. Ahmed Meeting, July 7, 1964, Ibid, pp. 132-134 and Memcon of Johnson-McConaughy Meeting , July 15, 1964, Ibid, p. 137.

<sup>222</sup> Telegram From AmEmb Pakistan to DoS, August 11, 1964, Ibid, p. 143.

<sup>223</sup> Telegram From DoS to AmEmb Pakistan re Harriman- G. Ahmedmeeting, December 14, 1964, Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>224</sup> Telegram From DoS to AmEmb Pakistan (Talbot and Ambassador) for conversation with Ayub, March 9, 1964, Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>225</sup> S. S. Khera, *India's Defence Problem* (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1968), p. 46. Khera was the Indian Cabinet Secretary from 1962-1964.

“unfair” stance at the UN as increasing Pakistani intransigence.<sup>226</sup> Indira Gandhi, Indian minister of information and broadcasting, even publicly admonished the US for its “favoritism” towards Pakistan when it came to Kashmir.<sup>227</sup> As Gandhi wrote in a letter, the war with China and Pakistan’s continued hostility had “completely changed” the stakes as far as Kashmir were concerned.<sup>228</sup> There were few takers for suggestions of concessions to Pakistan and China.<sup>229</sup> By spring 1965, after a local crisis in Kashmir in December 1963, a refugee influx from East Pakistan through most of 1964, and India’s December 1964 announcement that it was taking steps to formally integrate Kashmir,<sup>230</sup> there seemed little hope that India would come around to the US view of Pakistan as part of the solution to India’s China problem.

Moreover, the Indian government was unable to do what the US insisted could make Pakistan part of the solution. Shastri was not considered a hawk. While still a minister Shastri had stated in parliament that, even in the case of Pakistan, the door to negotiations should never be shut.<sup>231</sup> When, despite internal government dissension and opposition objections, Nehru had released Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah in April 1964—as part of his effort to ease India’s Pakistan problem so that it could focus on China—Shastri had supported this release as well as Nehru’s efforts to talk with Abdullah.<sup>232</sup> In his inaugural speech, Shastri left the door open to negotiations with Pakistan.<sup>233</sup> In summer 1964 his government invited Ayub to visit India with a

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<sup>226</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, April 20, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 88.

<sup>227</sup> Gandhi’s remarks in Robert Trumbull, “US Losing India’s Goodwill,” *NYT*, April 22, 1964, p. 2. LBJ referred to the interview in his conversation with Gandhi. See Memcon of Meeting between Johnson and Gandhi, April 27, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 91.

<sup>228</sup> Quoted in Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 397.

<sup>229</sup> Brecher, *Succession*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>230</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>231</sup> Mankekar, pp. 134-135.

<sup>232</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, pp. 346-361.

<sup>233</sup> First Broadcast to the Nation by the Prime Minister, June 11, 1964, quoted in Mankekar, p. 166.

preliminary ministerial beforehand.<sup>234</sup> Shastri also heard out socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan who went to Pakistan on a goodwill trip that fall. He also briefly stopped over to meet with Ayub in October 1964.<sup>235</sup>

Shastri, however, had limited room for maneuver on Pakistan. There were doubts that even Nehru could reach a settlement on Kashmir.<sup>236</sup> For a new prime minister who was sensitive to criticism that he was weak and indecisive, any settlement requiring concessions would only open him up to further charges of weakness. Even when he had stated as a minister that the door to negotiations should never be shut, he had followed it up by tempering and even backtracking on this view when criticized by the opposition and some other members of the government.<sup>237</sup> As Narayan noted to Ayub in fall 1964, Shastri was unlikely to consider himself in a strong enough position politically to make the concessions that might be needed.<sup>238</sup> Thus, while both the Indian and Pakistani leaders made conciliatory noises after Nehru's death, border skirmishes continued and a Kashmir solution remained elusive.

Why did all these disagreements on means not lead to a breakdown of the US-India relationship? While it helped prevent an Indian tilt toward the US, Soviet assistance to India was not a deal-breaker in US-India relations. Most in the Johnson administration were quite realistic about India's relations with the Soviet Union. A policy planning paper noted,

Because of the special utility of the Soviet Union to India's foreign and domestic policies, we cannot hope at present to achieve a major curtailment of the Soviet-

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<sup>234</sup> Telegram From AmEmb Pakistan to DoS, August 11, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 146.

<sup>235</sup> Brecher, *Succession*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>236</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, pp. 360-361.

<sup>237</sup> Mankekar, pp. 134-135, 138-139.

<sup>238</sup> Telegram From EmbOff Pakistan to DoS, September 19, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 157.



Indian relationship. However, there are steps which we can take to reduce to some extent the degree of intimacy and the risk of Communist political success.<sup>239</sup>

In other words, the US goal when it came to Soviet involvement in India was not rollback, but containment.

Similarly, the US-Pakistan relationship, while a sensitive subject in India was not enough to break Delhi and Washington up. On Kashmir, the Johnson administration was less activist than the Kennedy administration. By the early Johnson years, even the State Department, usually the US agency keenest to mediate the dispute between India and Pakistan, expressed doubts about the likelihood of a Kashmir settlement. Foggy Bottom also acknowledged the limitations of what the US could do and advocated “back[ing] off” in fora like the United Nations.<sup>240</sup> Furthermore, India believed that there was one key benefit of the US-Pakistan relationship: Washington’s ability to restrain Islamabad.

Finally, the US-Pakistan relationship was hardly at its peak at this point thanks to Pakistan’s dalliance with China—and, soon, with the Soviet Union. For all the talk of Johnson’s admiration of Ayub Khan, he found Pakistan and its leader exasperating. He later suggested the reason, stating: “I liked [Ayub] and thought he was the finest fellow in the world and the last man in the world I thought the Communists would take. But by god they just had him running all year long; when he’s not in Peking, he’s in Moscow and in both places he’s denounced us.”<sup>241</sup>

Most of all, the China factor kept the two countries tethered. Developments on each of the fronts mentioned above in the spring and summer of 1965, however, would lead to disillusionment and disappointment and a fraying of that tether. Vietnam, the subject that Bundy noted was “in the forefront of all minds” in Washington would bring

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<sup>239</sup> National Policy Paper on India, p. v.

<sup>240</sup> Memorandum from Read to Bundy, January 27, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 18-22.

<sup>241</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Sen. Richard Russell (D-GA), July 19, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6507.04, Program No. 13, Citation 8352.

to the fore differences in the two countries' approaches to China, and highlight the different levels of importance the two countries placed on India's relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>242</sup> Increasing India-Pakistan tension led to Indian questioning of the reliability of US assurances. It also resulted in frustration in Washington about the lack of focus in India on the main threat—China—and made it harder to justify assistance to India when its defense-development priorities seemed to be skewed. Finally, Johnson's decision to hold back—and then eventually suspend—both guns and butter from India made Delhi question the American commitment to helping it meet the external and internal China challenge.

#### **DUAL DISAPPOINTMENT (APRIL-JULY 1965)**

##### **Vietnam: Dueling Approaches**

After a visit to India in spring 1965, Harriman wrote to the president with much optimism about the US and India's "full agreement on such matters as aggressive intents of Red China, need to prevent Reds' take-over in South Vietnam and SEA." But he added, "They are, of course, still suspicious and fearful of some of our policies and methods." This was especially the case in Vietnam, where India worried that the Chinese threat was being exacerbated by the US military approach and Washington's perception of the Soviet Union as part of the problem rather than part of the solution.<sup>243</sup> The Johnson administration, on the other hand, thought that India was not pulling its weight on an issue on which the two sides should have agreed, given that it saw its own actions as designed to contain the Chinese threat.

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<sup>242</sup> Telegram from Bundy to Bowles, April 15, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 240.

<sup>243</sup> Telegram From Harriman to Johnson and Rusk, Manila, March 7, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 197-198.

Indian and US interests in Southeast Asia had not necessarily been divergent. Lawrence has noted that as early as the late 1940s India had exercised caution with regard to Southeast Asia because of its “conflicting priorities.”<sup>244</sup> The desire to play an important role abroad, bolster political legitimacy at home and limit superpower intervention in India’s near abroad had competed with Indian interest in maintaining its relationships with Britain and France and preventing the expansion of Chinese influence in Southeast Asia.

Over the 1950s, the “competing demands” had persisted, though India had prioritized them differently and accordingly “tailor[ed] its position on Vietnam.”<sup>245</sup> In the second half of the 1950s Delhi had started worrying more about Beijing’s role in Southeast Asia. There had been concern that US policies would lead to an expanded Chinese role. For Nehru, the question of whether there was peace or war in Southeast Asia largely depended on China. He had believed that US isolation of Beijing would make conflict more likely and US pressure on local leaderships in countries like Laos would force them “to look to China for assistance.”<sup>246</sup>

By the early 1960s, one demand became more pressing for India: keeping China out of Southeast Asia or, at the very least, limiting its influence there. With China seen as a looming threat, the other priorities had dropped down the list. India was more circumspect about seeking “a position of major importance in international affairs.” The Congress party’s claims to legitimacy were being judged not so much on the basis of its role in the Indian struggle against European colonialism anymore as on performance on

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<sup>244</sup> Lawrence, p. 42

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, pp. 46-47

<sup>246</sup> JLN at the fifth meeting of the Commonwealth PMs’ Conference, London, June 28, 1957, *SWJN SS Vol. 38*, pp. 611-612. Also, see Note from Dutt to JS(AD) and DS(O&M), December 30, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 45.

defense and development. Furthermore, more than American or Soviet intervention, Indian policymakers feared a vacuum or instability in Vietnam that China could exploit. For these reasons, India had an “interest in avoiding over-hasty removal of Western influence from Southeast Asia.”<sup>247</sup>

Key officials in the Indian government had come around to the view that North Vietnam was supporting the Vietcong and that this was having a destabilizing effect on the situation.<sup>248</sup> India had still been neither as forthcoming nor as public in its support for the US position as Washington would have liked. In 1961, Nehru, for example, had remained reticent about publicly speaking out against the communist methods in South Vietnam as then vice president Johnson had urged.<sup>249</sup> American and British officials, however, had been pleasantly surprised about Nehru’s non-hostile reaction to an increased US presence in South Vietnam in late 1961 and his government’s cautious and balanced approach in the ICC after the build-up—despite objections by some within the Indian government. Despite not going as far as Canada, the UK and the US wanted, in the ICC in 1962 India had taken a stance on North Vietnamese involvement in South Vietnam that the Canadian representative had interpreted as “a turning point in Indian foreign policy in direction of greatly increased firmness in dealing with the communist bloc.” Some have argued that this stance indeed led to the North Vietnamese jettisoning its neutral position on the Sino-Indian dispute towards a pro-Chinese one. Despite western fears that India would soon tilt the other way to display its neutrality, India had subsequently supported a policy of “masterly inactivity” for the ICC—an approach that

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<sup>247</sup> Lawrence, p. 47

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>249</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 180. Also, see Memcon of Johnson-Nehru Meeting, New Delhi, May 18, 1961, *FRUS 1961-63 Vol. XIX*, p. 42.

British officials had noted favored the west.<sup>250</sup> Following that, Indian officials repeatedly told their US counterparts that they did not want the US to withdraw from Vietnam, not just in the Kennedy administration but also in the early Johnson years. Indian officials acknowledged American “efforts to keep communists out of Southeast Asia, and...hoped that this effort would be successful.”<sup>251</sup>

Indian concern about the kind of US efforts, however, increased with US escalation in Vietnam in February 1965, and especially with the bombing campaign. The concern did not stem primarily from a desire to protect its “claims to non-alignment” and thus its international image and national identity (even though that was how it was seen in the US)—although Indian officials were concerned that China was winning the propaganda war in the Afro-Asian world because of this escalation. It was partly due to the need to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union, one of India’s largest aid providers. In addition, India feared that escalation would get in the way of détente between its two benefactors: the US and Soviet Union. Moreover, the Indian government believed that Moscow could be part of the solution. American officials tried to convince Indian officials of the differences between US-Indian and Soviet interests in Vietnam.<sup>252</sup> Shastri, however, believed that the Soviet Union was a “moderating influence” in Southeast Asia and was trying to “offset” Chinese influence.<sup>253</sup> Furthermore, Indian policymakers believed that escalated US involvement in Vietnam would push the Soviet Union to come down on the side of China.<sup>254</sup> This worried Indian officials who were

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<sup>250</sup> Peter Busch, *All the Way with JFK? Britain, the US, and the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 51-63.

<sup>251</sup> Lawrence, p. 52, p. 58.

<sup>252</sup> Letter from Bowles to Bundy, July 18, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 141.

<sup>253</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Shastri meeting, March 5, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 195.

<sup>254</sup> Lawrence, pp. 50-54. Also, see Telegram From Harriman to Johnson and Rusk, Manila, March 7, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 198.

constantly concerned about the prospect of a Sino-Soviet rapprochement. Such a rapprochement would significantly change the balance in Asia and would undercut the very basis of India's strategic approach by making the country more heavily dependent on the US. Finally, Indian policymakers believed that the US approach was counterproductive.

This concern translated into criticism of the US in fora like the ICC.<sup>255</sup> What grated more in Washington was public criticism. In June 1965 Gandhi, then a minister, spoke out against US intervention—more forcefully than Shastri. She was mainly trying to burnish her credentials and strengthen her position vis-à-vis Shastri, but many in the Indian government shared her assessment that escalated American involvement invited more Chinese intervention in Southeast Asia. Most Indian concern and criticism, however, was expressed privately. Shastri's public appeals for negotiations, as Lawrence has noted, were "relatively balanced." Furthermore, a number of "Indian officials continued to give Washington quiet support" through 1965. Most of the "sniping" from Indian leaders came after that time.<sup>256</sup>

Rusk observed that "the Indian attitude regarding South Viet Nam has been generally helpful."<sup>257</sup> Bowles, however, outlined the problem as far as the administration was concerned: while India was trying to be helpful on Southeast Asia behind the scenes, its "failure publicly to recognize that we are in fact fighting their battles" was problematic.<sup>258</sup> The criticism and lack of support for and understanding of the US approach especially grated on Johnson. He was upset about Shastri's spring 1965 call for

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<sup>255</sup> Lawrence, p. 52

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, p. 41, p. 55, p. 57. Lawrence notes that in early 1966 even Shastri's successor, Indira Gandhi, was "remarkably moderate in her attitude toward US policy in Vietnam" (p. 58).

<sup>257</sup> Telegram from DoS (Rusk) to AmEmb India, April 14, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 214.

<sup>258</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha (Secretary to the Indian PM) meeting, April 16, 1965, Ibid, p. 222.

a ceasefire in Vietnam.<sup>259</sup> He asserted to the Indian prime minister, “To us, the Chinese Communist-supported aggression in Vietnam poses the same kind of threat to Free World interests as Communist China's attack on India in 1962.”<sup>260</sup> The president was irked that while Washington was holding the line for the “free world,” countries like India threatened by communists did not appreciate US efforts. Indian officials needed “to recognize that we're fighting their war in Vietnam.”<sup>261</sup>

### **Assets and Liabilities**

Johnson's irritation about the lack of support on Vietnam from Pakistan also ended up affecting India adversely. Annoyed with Pakistan's deepening relations with China and the Soviet Union, and its lack of support on Vietnam, Johnson indefinitely postponed the visit of Ayub scheduled for that spring. Rusk identified US-Pakistan differences on China as the main reason for postponement.<sup>262</sup> A similarly scheduled Shastri visit became collateral damage, when Johnson simultaneously postponed it as well.<sup>263</sup>

The manner of the cancellation of his visit left Shastri humiliated. Indian officials dismissed the explanation that Shastri would have been forced to speak out in Vietnam if he had travelled to Washington. They were not unaware of Johnson's sensitivities on Vietnam. In the lead up to the trip, Harriman had indeed briefed Shastri on them.<sup>264</sup> BK Nehru called the indefinite postponement a “colossal bloomer” connected to “the

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<sup>259</sup> Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 337-338.

<sup>260</sup> Letter from Johnson to Shastri, June 5, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 270.

<sup>261</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, June 8, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 273.

<sup>262</sup> Telegram from Rusk to AmEmb Pakistan, April 14, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 215.

<sup>263</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 322

<sup>264</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Shastri meeting, March 5, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 195.

annoying policy of equating Pakistan with India.”<sup>265</sup> It also came at an inopportune time for Shastri.<sup>266</sup> The prime minister was still fending off challengers domestically, including some who continued to accuse him of weakness. Earlier in the spring he also had to deal with major language riots in southern India and the related resignation of two ministers. In addition, Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah, on tour abroad, had been making statements unfriendly to India.<sup>267</sup> Moreover, the cancellation came just as the Pakistani army—“armed with American weapons” from India’s perspective<sup>268</sup>—seemed to be challenging India in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965.

Since the clash in the Rann followed Sino-Pakistan talks, Indian officials were concerned that the clash was a result of Sino-Pakistani collusion.<sup>269</sup> What made matters worse from the Indian perspective was that Pakistan was using US-supplied equipment. Officials complained that the US was not living up to its promise that it would not allow this equipment to be used against India unless India inarguably attacked Pakistan.<sup>270</sup> To many in India, the American inability to control usage called into question the reliability of US assurances about the use of such weapons, as well as whether the US could really be depended upon to restrain Pakistan in the case of a larger war between India and China or India and China-Pakistan.

To Johnson, the skirmishes were a manifestation of what he thought was India’s misplaced sense of priorities in the face of the China threat. As US involvement in Vietnam escalated, so did Johnson’s frustration that instead of focusing on the main

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<sup>265</sup> BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 418.

<sup>266</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, April 21, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 226.

<sup>267</sup> Guha, *India After Gandhi*, pp. 393-398.

<sup>268</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha meeting, April 16, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 222.

<sup>269</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, April 14, 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>270</sup> Guha, *India After Gandhi*, pp. 393-398.



threat in Asia (China), India and Pakistan, both of which the US was supporting, were fighting each other. Johnson was tired of India-Pakistan “bickering.”<sup>271</sup>

US analysts acknowledged that given deepening Sino-Pakistan relations and the previous Chinese defeat of India, the Shastri government could not afford to back down against Pakistan.<sup>272</sup> But Johnson’s patience seemed to have reached a breaking point as he questioned not just India’s performance, but also its priorities.<sup>273</sup> These clashes were additional evidence that India was not quite living up to its billing. The president had never been as much of a true believer in India’s potential as others in his administration—Bowles, Komer, Bundy, Deputy National Security Advisor Walt Rostow—nor even a convert to the cause like McNamara or Rusk.<sup>274</sup> He was, however, a true believer in the cold war framework, the China-India race and the fact that Indian success or failure could have not just a strategic, but possibly even a political impact.

Komer dated Johnson’s “pulling back” from South Asia to that spring.<sup>275</sup> Johnson said he was “terribly disillusioned by both” India and Pakistan. He began questioning the roles that they had been assigned in the US script for Asia, telling Bundy that he wanted someone to “really evaluate that part of the world for me.”<sup>276</sup> He asked McNamara to assess for him the “military and allied value” of India and Pakistan before he made a decision about any more aid “allocations.”<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Telegram from Bundy to Bowles, April 15, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 217.

<sup>272</sup> Memo from Read to Bundy re Fighting in the Rann of Kutch, April 24, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 229.

<sup>273</sup> For details on the Rann of Kutch clash, see Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>274</sup> Memcon of Johnson-McConaughy Meeting, July 15, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 138.

<sup>275</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, January 12, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 531.

<sup>276</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Bundy, May 31, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6505.33, Program No. 2, Citation 7848.

<sup>277</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Rusk, May 27, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6505.31, Program No. 11, Citation 7840.

Adding to Johnson's sense that India was more a liability than an asset had been India's disappointing economic performance despite American aid. Bundy reported Johnson's feeling that "we're spending biggest single chunk of our aid money on an enterprise which isn't going anywhere fast."<sup>278</sup> At a meeting called to discuss aid for India and Pakistan in June 1965, Johnson instructed his officials that all aid decisions and announcements had to be approved by him till Congress passed the foreign aid bill. As Kux has noted the reasons for this decision with regard to India were its economic performance and congressional attitude towards foreign aid.<sup>279</sup> Johnson cancelled advance program loans for both countries and asked for a review of aid allocations to assess "(a) whether the US should be spending such large sums in either country; and (b) how to achieve more leverage for our money, in terms both of more effective self-help and of our political purposes."<sup>280</sup> He made clear to his advisors, as well as officials in the subcontinent, that the policy review might result in a "substantial change" in those policies—or even "very likely a complete revision and a new policy that'll require some negotiations."<sup>281</sup>

NSC and State Department officials recognized that these delays were causing concern in India about US reliability.<sup>282</sup> With the foreign exchange situation as bad as it was, Indian officials were desperate for information on economic assistance and could not understand why Johnson was delaying. At that point, even Bundy was not quite sure

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<sup>278</sup> Telegram from Bundy to Bowles, April 15, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 217.

<sup>279</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 240-241. Rusk, too, noted that India's economic performance had been a disappointment and there was a feeling that Indian officials took US aid for granted. Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview I, 7/28/69, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJL.

<sup>280</sup> Memo from Bundy to Rusk, McNamara, AID Administrator re Presidential Decisions on Aid to India/Pakistan, June 9, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 274.

<sup>281</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Thomas Mann, June 30, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6506.08, Program No. 15, Citation 8210.

<sup>282</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, June 3, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 267.

what condition the president wanted to attach to food aid. Komer also highlighted for Johnson the risks of stalling on the military supply front, noting that delaying a response on Indian requests for aircraft would lead Delhi to look even more to Moscow.<sup>283</sup> Johnson, however, wanted to continue to “hold up” military assistance.<sup>284</sup>

As the summer progressed, a resigned Johnson declared to Sen. Russell (D-GA), “I got to give them something.”<sup>285</sup> It was, however, not going to be business as usual. Eventually he agreed to let FY1965 military supplies continue, but deferred any commitment for FY1966.<sup>286</sup> Toward the end of July, Johnson also approved a two-month extension of food assistance to India instead of a two-year or year-long one that his advisors had recommended—the beginning of what came to be known as the short-tether policy<sup>287</sup>—but before any bilateral negotiations about long-term aid could take place, war broke out in the subcontinent between India and Pakistan in August 1965.

#### **THE STAKES MADE EVIDENT (AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1965)**

Some scholars have referred to the India-Pakistan war as a “watershed” or “turning point” in US relations with India and Pakistan.<sup>288</sup> McMahon, for example, has argued that the 1965 war “radically” shook US assumptions about the subcontinent. It is perhaps more accurate to describe the crisis as a catalyst, crystallizing the sentiments that were already percolating. The war did not “induce,” but consolidated the US “shift” in thinking that had been festering for months.<sup>289</sup> Nor did it bring US disillusionment and

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<sup>283</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, June 5, 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 268; Memo from Bundy to Johnson, June 28, 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 285; Memo from Komer to Johnson, June 21, 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>284</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, July 9, 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 296. See Johnson’s handwritten note as well.

<sup>285</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Sen. Richard Russell (D-GA), July 19, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6507.04, Program No. 13, Citation 8352.

<sup>286</sup> Telegram from OSD to Adams (Commander in Chief, Middle East, South Asia, and Africa South of the Sahara), July 15, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 307.

<sup>287</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 240.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239. Also see McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 334

<sup>289</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, pp. 334-335.

disengagement with India, as scholars have argued. The disillusionment had set in earlier. The disengagement would take longer—despite the frustration on both sides, the US and India remained tethered, in no small part because of China. The 1965 war would make this evident.

The previous winter and earlier that spring, US intelligence estimates had noted that it was unlikely that there would be “major hostilities” between India and Pakistan over the next 3-4 years.<sup>290</sup> The Rann of Kutch clashes caused doubts about those estimates. The war that broke out in late summer proved them inaccurate. The first hint of trouble between India and Pakistan reached Washington on August 8.<sup>291</sup> NSC officials confirmed to the president that the US had evidence of Pakistani infiltration across the ceasefire line (CFL) in Kashmir.<sup>292</sup> By mid–August, Indian troops crossed the CFL but there was no sign of Pakistan backing down.<sup>293</sup> On September 1, in a “thrust at the Indian jugular,” Pakistani regulars crossed the CFL to cut off access from Delhi to the Kashmiri capital.<sup>294</sup> Despite urging from some of his officials, Johnson’s preferred course of action was to “get behind a log and sleep a bit.” The stakes did not seem high enough and he did not think that the US had enough leverage with the countries. He wanted to let the UN, which had called for a ceasefire, take the lead. Johnson instructed his officials to let each side know that the US was supporting the UN Secretary-General’s actions and was

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<sup>290</sup> NIE 31-64: The Prospects for India, December 10, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 168 and NIE 32-65: The Prospects for Pakistan, March 24, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 201.

<sup>291</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, August 8, 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 328. As Kux points out the infiltration had begun on August 5. He also outlines possible reasons for the Pakistani actions, and the timing. Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 235.

<sup>292</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, August 9, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 329.

<sup>293</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, August 19, 1965, *Ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>294</sup> DoS Departmental Paper on Presidential decision-making: The India-Pakistan War and its Aftermath, October 29, 1968, p. 6, LBJL, NSF, NSC Histories, South Asia 1962-1966, Box 24, Vol. 3, Indo-Pak War, State Department History [I]

“speaking equally strongly” to both of them.<sup>295</sup> On September 6, with Shastri still smarting from charges that he had surrendered in the Rann of Kutch,<sup>296</sup> India attacked across the international border, taking Pakistan by surprise.<sup>297</sup> On his officials’ advice, Johnson suspended military and economic assistance to both countries. The suspension stemmed from his concern that inaction on this front would threaten the whole aid bill pending in Congress at the time.<sup>298</sup>

The China factor changed the calculus. The White House had received intelligence reports that the Rann of Kutch skirmishes and the latest infiltration into Kashmir were part of a plan that Pakistani officials had discussed with their Chinese counterparts.<sup>299</sup> Then, on September 4, the Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi had held talks with his Pakistani counterpart in Karachi and publicly expressed support for Pakistan’s actions—causing concern in India.<sup>300</sup> Intelligence assessment indicated that there might be a “secret Sino-Pakistani mutual defense agreement of some kind” that had been rumored to be in existence since early 1964. Analysts believed that it probably left Beijing enough flexibility to decide whether or not to use force to aid Pakistan and noted that until then China had been somewhat cautious about its material support to Pakistan. They did, however, feel that such an agreement would lead Pakistan to throw caution to

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<sup>295</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, September 2, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 347

<sup>296</sup> See BK Nehru’s account of his conversation with Shastri in June 1965. BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 426. Also, see Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 125, p. 128 and Memcon of Rusk-BK Nehru Meeting, May 8, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 251.

<sup>297</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, September 4, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 354

<sup>298</sup> Memo from Komer to Bundy, September 7, 1965, LBJL, NSF, NSC Histories, South Asia 1962-1966, Box 24, South Asia, 1962-1966, Vol. 2, Tab B: 14-21 [2 of 2] and Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, p. 225. As the Indian ambassador noted later, it wasn’t lost on the administration that this had more of an impact on Pakistan than India, which did not receive that much military assistance from the US anyway. BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 425.

<sup>299</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, August 28, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 341.

<sup>300</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, pp. 141-142.

the wind.<sup>301</sup> When asked about such an agreement, Ayub responded vaguely.<sup>302</sup> Around this time, in an effort to take the pressure off Pakistan, China rhetorically entered the fray, demanding that India remove its posts and withdraw its troops near some sections of the Sino-Indian border.<sup>303</sup>

While before the war some US officials had questioned India's importance, the potential Chinese threat made evident the consensus about India's place in the US framework for Asia. The US kept a close eye on Chinese actions, uncertain about what Beijing's declared support for Pakistan entailed.<sup>304</sup> Johnson and McNamara discussed their concern that China would do more than threaten India. McNamara noted that the Defense Department was preparing for contingencies so the US would not be in "a terrible jam" if China intervened militarily.<sup>305</sup> Rusk shared this concern about Chinese involvement, worrying that any escalation of the crisis would result in a setback to the American "effort to build [in the subcontinent] a viable counterweight to Communist China."<sup>306</sup> He believed that a Chinese victory against India would affect the balance in Vietnam, and Japan and the Southeast Asian countries would see it as a Communist victory over the US. The NSC concurred, with Komer asserting that if China did get

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<sup>301</sup> Memo Prepared in the Office of Current Intelligence, CIA re Possible Sino-Pakistani Military Agreement, September 6, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 359-360.

<sup>302</sup> Telegram from EmbOff Pakistan to DoS re McConaughy-Ayub-Bhutto (Pakistani foreign minister) meeting, September 6, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 362-363.

<sup>303</sup> "Chinese Government Statement, 7 September 1965" in K. Arif ed. *China Pakistan Relations, 1947-1980: Documents* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1984), pp. 73-75. The statement also ominously warned, "India's aggression against any one of its neighbours concerns all of its neighbours." Also, see Intelligence Memo from CIA to the White House Situation Room: India-Pakistan Situation Report, NR. 23, September 9, 1965, LBJL, NSF, CF, India, Box 129 [2 of 2]. Summary of the note in "Chinese Note to India, 8 September 1965" in Arif, pp. 75-76.

<sup>304</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, September 7, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 368.

<sup>305</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Robert McNamara, September 8, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6509.02, Program No. 23, Citation 8843.

<sup>306</sup> Memo from Rusk to Johnson, September 9, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 376-377.

involved militarily, the US too would have to intervene since “the whole Western power position in Asia may be at stake.”<sup>307</sup>

With Chinese condemnations continuing, along with Chinese accusations that India could not have taken action without US “consent and support,”<sup>308</sup> Johnson took a more active interest, concerned that “the stakes were far bigger than Kashmir.” He stressed that the US “must find a solution” but maintained that he still saw this being achieved through the UN.<sup>309</sup> China’s threats persisted, as did Johnson’s concern.<sup>310</sup> With Vietnam on his mind, his major preoccupation vis-à-vis the crisis seemed to be expressed in his question to McNamara: “What about the Chinese?”<sup>311</sup> US intelligence did not think that China would do more than provide political and token military support to Pakistan or instigate smaller skirmishes unless Pakistan’s defeat became imminent.<sup>312</sup> As Pakistan’s situation deteriorated, however, on September 16 another Chinese ultimatum to India—this time with a deadline—ratcheted up the fear of Chinese military intervention.<sup>313</sup>

The Chinese ultimatum did not catch the Johnson administration “off-guard.”<sup>314</sup> The Defense Department had been well on its way to evaluating its operational plans that included strengthening Indian air defenses and possible US air force intervention in case

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<sup>307</sup> Memo by Komer on U.S. Policy at the Crossroads in the Subcontinent, September 8, 1965, LBJL, NSF, NSC Histories, South Asia 1962-1966, Box 24, South Asia, 1962-1966, Vol. 2, Tab B: 14-21 [2 of 2]

<sup>308</sup> Anwar Hussain Syed, *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), p. 113. “Premier Chou En-Lai’s Speech at a Public Event Marking the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Founding of the Korean Democratic People’s Republic, 9 Sept. 1965” in Arif, pp. 76-77. Brines, p. 376

<sup>309</sup> Memo for the Record re Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, September 9, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 374-375.

<sup>310</sup> Syed, p. 111. In Lhasa, the Chinese Vice Premier echoed Zhou’s statement. *People’s Daily* kept up the stream of condemnations over the next week. See documents 66, 68 and 70 in Arif, p. 76-83.

<sup>311</sup> Conversation between Johnson and McNamara, September 12, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6509.03, Program No. 7, Citation 8851

<sup>312</sup> SNIE: Prospects of Chinese Communist Involvement in the Indo-Pakistan War, September 16, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 395.

<sup>313</sup> “Chinese Note to India, 16 September 1965” in Arif, pp. 83-85.

<sup>314</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p. 331.

China intervened; it was also planning to resume military aid to India for use against China.<sup>315</sup> The US also privately indicated to China that any intervention would be ill advised.<sup>316</sup> To pressure Pakistan to head to the negotiating table, despite objections from the embassy in Islamabad, Washington decided against making a new pledge of economic assistance for Pakistan and supported the postponement of a scheduled aid consortium meeting.<sup>317</sup>

Washington took a tough line with Pakistan, which seemed to be trying to use the Chinese threats to its advantage. After initially asking for US intervention as a Pakistani ally,<sup>318</sup> Ayub had started asking either for a US statement of support for Pakistan or that the US condition any support to India vis-à-vis China on a Kashmir settlement. He had suggested that if the US did not do so, he would have to move towards Beijing.<sup>319</sup> The State Department conveyed Johnson's message that such an American indication would not be forthcoming, especially as long as Pakistan seemed tethered to the Chinese position. Rusk also warned Pakistani officials, "President Johnson is not the sort of man who will ever give his approval to one thin dime for a country which supports or encourages the aggressive pressures of Red China."<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Memo by Komer on Agenda Points, September 17, 1965, LBJL, NSF, NSC Histories, South Asia 1962-1966, Box 24, South Asia, 1962-1966, Vol. 2, Tab B: 14-21 [2 of 2]. By September 21, the JCS was indicating "the U.S. may find it expedient to provide India, under certain contingencies, material and/or air transport to move material and/or personnel within India to support Indian capabilities." Cable from JCS to CINCSTRIKE/USCINCMEAFSA: Possible Support of India in Event ChiCom Intervention in Current Conflict, September 21, 1965. For details of operational plan also see Cable from JCS to CINCSTRIKE/USCINCMEAFSA, September 21, 1965, LBJL, NSF, CF, India, Box 129 [2 of 2].

<sup>316</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 202.

<sup>317</sup> Circular Telegram from DoS to Certain Posts, September 17, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 404-405.

<sup>318</sup> Telegram from EmbOff Pakistan to DoS re McConaughy-Ayub-Bhutto meeting, September 6, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 362.

<sup>319</sup> Telegram from EmbOff Pakistan to DoS re McConaughy-Ayub meeting, September 18, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 406-407.

<sup>320</sup> Telegram from DoS to EmbOff Pakistan, September 18, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 410-411.



While preparing in the background to support India against China, the Johnson administration was careful about promising India anything, lest its support delayed India's path to the negotiating table.<sup>321</sup> Another reason for the lack of public support was that intelligence assessments noted that if the US appeared to be getting involved on India's behalf, it would make Chinese intervention on Pakistan's side more likely.<sup>322</sup>

Thus, in the early stages of the crisis, the State Department had demurred from restating US assurances in the event of a communist attack on India as Bowles urged.<sup>323</sup> When the Indian ambassador asked Johnson what the US would do if China intervened. Johnson agreed that this was a source of concern for the US, but gave no indication of the potential US response. He added that any public indication of US support would only be provocative.<sup>324</sup> In Delhi Radhakrishnan asked Bowles the same question, but the US ambassador gave no commitment.<sup>325</sup>

The Indian side continued to ask for assurances and pressure on China and Pakistan. Shastri requested that Johnson make clear to Pakistan that if third parties intervened on its behalf, the US would have to reconsider its neutrality.<sup>326</sup> Subsequently, after another Chinese ultimatum, the Indian foreign minister instructed BK Nehru to ask the US to warn Beijing off formally as a deterrent. While he did not specifically invoke the Air Defense Agreement, he requested US assistance in the event of a Chinese attack. Rusk said he would refer the request to the president, but that it was more important for

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<sup>321</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, September 17, 1965, LBJL, NSF, CF, India, Box 129 [2 of 2].

<sup>322</sup> Memo Prepared in the Office of Current Intelligence, CIA, September 6, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 359.

<sup>323</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India and AmEmb Pakistan, September 2, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 347-348.

<sup>324</sup> Memo for the Record re Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, September 9, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 374.

<sup>325</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Radhakrishnan meeting, September 11, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 390.

<sup>326</sup> Letter from Shastri to Johnson, September 16, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 398.

the conflict to cease to render the question moot.<sup>327</sup> The concern about Chinese intervention was real. It is one of the reasons India did not take action on its eastern border with Pakistan in case that gave China a pretext to attack.<sup>328</sup> The next day, the prime minister's senior aide LK Jha tried again, indicating that India had detected signs of Chinese troop movements. He asked that the US authorize military consultations with India for contingency planning.<sup>329</sup> While Bowles recommended that the US agree to such consultations, Washington told him that Johnson had not authorized consultations.<sup>330</sup> Subsequently, Ball reiterated to BK Nehru that the US would not undertake pre-emptive joint contingency planning with India, noting that Washington would review the situation if China attacked. He also stated that the US believed that any public warning would be provocative, and thus would not be forthcoming at that stage.<sup>331</sup>

With China extending the deadline for its ultimatum to India, lack of support from other countries, a deteriorating military position and the possibility of US military involvement because of China's threats, Pakistan seemed ready to compromise.<sup>332</sup> Meanwhile, the concern about Chinese intervention, US ambiguity about its response and situation on the ground seemed to have brought India to the same point. On September 22, India and then Pakistan announced that they would accept the UN ceasefire proposal.<sup>333</sup> Jha outlined concern about China as a crucial reason for India agreeing to a

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<sup>327</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Rusk-BK Nehru Meeting, September 17, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 401-402.

<sup>328</sup> Russell Brines, *The Indo-Pakistani Conflict* (London, UK: Pall Mall Press, 1968), p. 362.

<sup>329</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha meeting, September 18, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 405-406.

<sup>330</sup> See footnote 2 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, September 18, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 406.

<sup>331</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Ball-BK Nehru Meeting, September 19, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 413-415.

<sup>332</sup> "Chinese Note to India, 19 September 1965" in Arif, p. 89.

<sup>333</sup> Telegram from the White House Situation Room to Johnson, September 22, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 424.

ceasefire.<sup>334</sup> Subsequently, intelligence reports indicated that China also reduced its state of alert on the Sino-Indian border, thus defusing the immediate crisis.<sup>335</sup>

The war made two things evident: first, that India still looked to the US for protection against China, especially since the Soviet Union showed no inclination to get involved. Secondly, the war made apparent that as long as US administrations remained caught up in the cold war web they had spun for Asia, for geopolitical, ideological and domestic political reasons they could not see India fall to China. During the war, the US had stayed neutral and fairly indifferent while India and Pakistan were dueling. The moment China had entered the fray, however, the stakes for the US had changed.

On the other hand, the war also reinforced Johnson's sense that India was not an asset that could be built up against China, but rather a liability whose weakness threatened US interests and his agenda. It also made Indian policymakers question the reliability of US assurances. Furthermore, given that the Soviet Union had, at least, refrained from suspending military assistance, it reminded India why it was good to continue to diversify its partnerships.

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<sup>334</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha meeting, September 21, 1965, Ibid, p. 422.

<sup>335</sup> Telegram from the White House Situation Room to Johnson, September 23, 1965, Ibid, p. 426.

## Chapter 6: Playing It A Bit Cooler (1965-1968)

There is no difference in the object of containing China. The difference is only how we can achieve it. We feel America is going in the wrong way.

– Indian foreign minister, 1967<sup>1</sup>

The 1965 war added to the growing disappointment on both sides. The mutual need kept the two countries tethered to each other for a while, but the bond frayed more and more over the next few years. Over the next three years the disappointment would turn to disillusionment and eventually disinterest and disengagement. As the US became increasingly involved in Vietnam, Johnson increasingly questioned India's capacity—and eventually its willingness—to play the role that US policymakers needed it to play in Asia vis-à-vis China. Eventually, he seemed to lose interest in India. This lack of interest in India was reinforced by the fact that, while policymakers initially worried that it was too big to fail, by 1967 or so India seemed able to survive the stress tests.

After the war Indian policymakers, on their part, increasingly questioned how much they could rely on Moscow and Washington in their effort to meet their external and internal China challenge. It strengthened their desire to continue to diversify India's dependence, as well as their efforts to try and reduce it. Domestic political developments only reinforced this tendency. As this period went on, they found the demands of dependence increasingly heavy, but they still needed US assistance. It was not lost on them, however, that India was losing traction in Washington. This led policymakers to try to strengthen their domestic options, maintain their Soviet one, and also explore the nuclear, look east and even China options.

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<sup>1</sup> Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Jonathan Aitken of the *London Evening Standard*, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MC Chagla Papers [MCC], SF No. 92.

## DEPENDENCE (FALL 1965-SPRING 1966)

From the Indian perspective, the 1965 war had made evident that China continued to be a threat, whether alone or in collaboration with Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> Indian policymakers did not expect the threat to abate. Since early in the Johnson administration, Indian officials had worried that 1966-1967 would be a “critical period” when it came to the China threat because of timelines related to road construction in certain strategic areas.<sup>3</sup> Better military performance in the 1965 war than in the 1962 one had created a sense of confidence, but there was also recognition that India continued to need external assistance.<sup>4</sup> The 1965 war, however, had raised serious questions about the reliability of India’s external benefactors.

The British reaction during the war elicited the most public Indian criticism.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet middle-of-the-road stance disappointed many who were used to Moscow tilting towards Delhi in India-Pakistan situations. There was also significant concern about the reaction and reliability of the US on four fronts. First, there was concern about the US response—or the seeming lack of it—to China’s threats. Years later, Indian policymakers like Gandhi would still reference the lack of US assurances or assistance during the crisis. Second, there were questions about the reliability of US assurances vis-à-vis Pakistan.<sup>6</sup> The use of American military equipment by the Pakistani military during the war had raised serious doubts about the US ability and willingness to restrain Pakistan. This was even more worrisome because India depended on the US restraining Pakistan in the case of another Sino-Indian conflict. Rusk’s comment to the Indian ambassador that “we

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<sup>2</sup> S. Nihal Singh, *The Yogi and the Bear: Story of Indo-Soviet Relations* (Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1986), p. 62. Also, see Chavan’s speech in Parliament, referenced in Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Telegram from the DoS to AmEmb India, May 22, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 105. For details of the road construction, see Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 147 and pp. 205-207.

<sup>4</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 403.

<sup>5</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 144. BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 428.

<sup>6</sup> BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 425.

cannot control tanks from ten thousand miles away” did nothing to allay these concerns.<sup>7</sup> To make matters worse, there was a sense that military aid to Pakistan had led to “the desire to attack India” replacing “the fear of attack from India” there.<sup>8</sup> This especially hurt in the context of India having agreed to limit its own arms acquisitions based on assurances from Washington that would not permit Pakistan to use US-supplied weapons against India.<sup>9</sup>

Third, the US suspension of the military package that had been agreed to in June 1964 left a sense in Delhi that India did not have much to show for all the negotiations and concessions it had made.<sup>10</sup> BK Nehru later noted that the US had violated the 1964 agreement when it suspended aid to India.<sup>11</sup> The Indian defense minister felt that the US had left India in the lurch. He noted in parliament that between October 1962 and September 1965 the US had only delivered 45 percent of what it had pledged.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, by suspending the delivery of spare parts, it had delayed defense production in India by requiring her to start from scratch with other countries.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, on the economic front, the cut-off in economic assistance—required, among other things, for the nation building that would strengthen India against China—reinforced doubts about US reliability that Johnson’s short-tether policy had created. In the aftermath of the war, the Johnson administration indeed made it clear that it was in no hurry to resume previous levels of assistance to India. A fed up Johnson asserted,

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<sup>7</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, September 3, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 349.

<sup>8</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 117.

<sup>9</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb Pakistan, September 3, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 348. Memo for the Record re Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, September 9, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 373.

<sup>10</sup> BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 408.

<sup>11</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Hare (AS/S NESAA)-BK Nehru Meeting, June 7, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 669.

<sup>12</sup> Brines, p. 265.

<sup>13</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 110.

I don't know if we got an obligation the rest of our lives just to ship them 10% of what they eat. And not without even having agreement or discussions, or tying in any alliance, or to be sure of serving our national interests. They say if you don't, they'll go to Russia. Well, I think it might be a good thing if Russia did a little of it for a while. . .<sup>14</sup>

Washington indicated to Delhi that it had no intention of resuming economic aid “until we are assured conditions exist on [the] subcontinent which make development feasible” and until it had a sense of the “effect of GOI’s proposed military expenditure on prospects for economic development.”<sup>15</sup>

As a US assessment indicated, unlike Pakistan, India was more concerned about the resumption and continuation of economic rather than military aid from the US.<sup>16</sup> While officials in Delhi were peeved about the cut-off of military supplies during the war and its implications, they recognized that the cut-off had adversely affected Pakistan even more. While India would have welcomed military aid and, possibly, the opportunity to buy American equipment, it had other sources to turn to, including the Soviet Union, as well as an indigenous defense industry. Furthermore, Indian officials realized that Pakistan would take advantage of any broader resumption to a greater degree than India. The cut-off of economic assistance had a greater impact on India. S. Bhoothalingam, the Indian finance secretary, noted that the continued suspension of aid was a “shock” to India and was contributing to feeling in India of being “let down by friends on whom they had counted.”<sup>17</sup>

Responding to American criticism that the war had shown that India was too focused on defense rather than development, Bhoothalingam indicated that China was

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<sup>14</sup> See editorial note re Telephone Conversation Between Johnson and Goldberg (ambassador to the UN), September 18, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 408.

<sup>15</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, October 2, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 442.

<sup>16</sup> SNIE: Indo-Pakistani Reactions, December 7, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 489.

<sup>17</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Mann (US/S EA)-Bhoothalingam (Indian Finance Secretary) Meeting, October 1, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 439.

still India's main problem and the US needed to see Indian defense expenditure in that context.<sup>18</sup> Within the government, if anything, US and Soviet behavior during the war had reinforced the Indian desire to ensure that it built an independent capacity to defend itself. The US, in turn, stressed that as long as it seemed likely that India was focusing expenditure on defense rather than development, economic aid would not be forthcoming.<sup>19</sup> Instead of military spending, India could help solve its China conundrum—especially the Sino-Pakistan dimension of it—by settling its Pakistan problem.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, if India and Pakistan did not solve their problems, China could exploit the situation, thus defeating the purpose of US assistance to India.<sup>21</sup>

Bowles reported that public sentiment in India focused not on Washington trying to get Delhi to fix its priorities through an aid short leash, but on allegations that the US was using aid to force India to make concessions to Pakistan or to take a pro-US stance on Vietnam.<sup>22</sup> The State Department worried that the public statements of policymakers like Shastri, Gandhi and Planning Minister Asoka Mehta implying that the US was linking food aid to Kashmir concessions was encouraging this sentiment.<sup>23</sup> In the White House, even those like Bundy who had no desire to return to long-term food aid agreements became concerned that if India believed that the US was using food as a “blunt instrument,” it would push policymakers away from the west.<sup>24</sup> The Indian food minister C. Subramaniam pointed out another consequence of the aid suspension. He

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<sup>18</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Mann-Bhoothalingam Meeting, October 1, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 439.

<sup>19</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, November 10, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 462.

<sup>20</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, October 2, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 441. Memo from Bundy to Johnson, October 5, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 447.

<sup>21</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, November 10, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 462.

<sup>22</sup> Telegram from Bowles to Komer, September 21, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 420. Also, see Mansingh, p. 79.

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 2 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, October 6, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 444.

<sup>24</sup> Memo from Bundy to Johnson, October 5, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 445-446.



observed that while he was taking on internal critics to push through agricultural reforms that the US wanted, external i.e. American criticism about India not doing enough was counterproductive and was only weakening his hand.<sup>25</sup>

### **Too Big to Fail**

In Washington, there was little interest in resuming military aid to India, but there was concern in the NSC about turning the economic tap off. Bundy believed that the first principle when considering future US policy toward South Asia should be that “India is more important than Pakistan and there is enough hope in India to justify continued support by food and economic aid if the Indians in turn are reasonable with us.”<sup>26</sup> It was not “hope in India,” however, that drove Johnson to turn the tap back on again, but fear that the country would fail. While Johnson’s advisors had been selling India’s potential strength, he had become even more concerned about the country’s internal and external vulnerabilities, worrying “I don’t see how this country is going to survive.”<sup>27</sup>

The logic of US involvement in Asia at the time did not leave room for disengagement. In 1949, Kennan had noted in that “no policy and no concept...will...stick in our government unless it can be drummed into the minds of a very large number of persons.”<sup>28</sup> And the idea that there would be serious repercussions for American and administration interests if India collapsed in the face of China had been drummed into the minds of policymakers by this point.

India continued to have a key place in the administration’s framework for Asia, an arena of increasing importance for the US as the war in Vietnam escalated and with it

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<sup>25</sup> Telegram from Bowles to Freeman (Agriculture Secretary), November 15, 1965, Ibid, p. 467.

<sup>26</sup> Memorandum from Bundy and Komer to Johnson, October 5, 1965, Ibid, p. 445.

<sup>27</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Goldberg, November 18, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6511.07, Program No. 6, Citation 9184.

<sup>28</sup> Kennan quoted in Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 51

concern about China.<sup>29</sup> Laying out the case for continued and possibly greater US involvement in Vietnam in late 1965, McNamara argued that there were “three fronts to a long-run effort to contain China (realizing that the USSR ‘contains’ China on the north and northwest); (a) the Japan-Korea front; (b) the India-Pakistan front; and (c) the Southeast Asia front.” Furthermore, he asserted that “[d]ecisions to make great investments today in men, money and national honor in South Vietnam make sense only in conjunction with continuing efforts of equivalent effectiveness in the rest of Southeast Asia and on the other two principal fronts.”<sup>30</sup>

Disillusioned though US officials might have been with India, because of the way India fit into the US framework for Asia, the war in Vietnam heightened the importance of ensuring that India did not fail. Deputy national security advisor Komer noted that one of the basic propositions that the US just could not get around was that “India is (with Japan) one of the two really key countries in Free Asia--so merits a comparable investment *almost despite the Indians*.”<sup>31</sup> As Gaddis has noted, “fear of retreat” had become a great concern for Johnson as he considered his options in Vietnam.<sup>32</sup> Concerned about US credibility abroad and his political credibility at home, a broader fear of retreat meant that Johnson could not just let India go, no matter how annoyed he was about it getting distracted from its development and defense efforts against China. In the middle of a presidential rant about India’s performance, when US ambassador to the UN Arthur Goldberg suggested that the US should leave India alone and let it become communist, Johnson stopped him, noting “Well, I don’t know, that’s what they said

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<sup>29</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Ayub and Ball, December 14, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 506.

<sup>30</sup> Robert S McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 1st ed. (New York: Times Books, 1995), p. 218.

<sup>31</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, November 16, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 469.

<sup>32</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 239.

Acheson did with China.”<sup>33</sup> As Logevall has noted in reference to the president’s reasons for not wanting to lose South Vietnam, Johnson believed that “Harry Truman and Dean Acheson had lost their effectiveness from the day that the communists took over in China.”<sup>34</sup> India was the largest domino still standing in Asia; in Johnson’s view, its fall, too, would have repercussions beyond its borders.

To prevent such a fall, US efforts in India now focused heavily on development. China remained a threat to India—the war had made that evident. While not ruling out the possibility that China would nibble at India’s borders, however, the assessment of the US intelligence community was that China’s preoccupation with the war in Vietnam made it unlikely that it would undertake any large-scale military action against India.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it soon became evident that it was not in the security realm that India was most vulnerable, but in the economic one, leading to greater US attention to the latter.

In late September, Johnson picked up the short-tether policy where it had been left off during the war, approving the resumption of food aid to India, but this time sending enough only for a month. He did so again in October. As the fall and winter of 1965 progressed, however, a larger problem loomed that threatened India’s political and economic stability. The monsoons had failed in 1965, resulting in a poor crop yield; this, combined with the way food grains were stored and distributed in India at the time, made food shortages and famine likely. To some of Johnson’s advisors, the situation called for a loosening of the tether.<sup>36</sup> The president, however, saw an opportunity to link aid to

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<sup>33</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Goldberg, November 18, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6511.07, Program No. 6, Citation 9184.

<sup>34</sup> Johnson to a biographer, quoted in Logevall, pp. 76-77.

<sup>35</sup> SNIE: Indo-Pakistani Reactions, December 7, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 487.

<sup>36</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 243.

performance and pressure India to do more to help itself and, by extension, to help the “free world.”

At the time (and since then) there has been debate about the motivations for Johnson’s short-tether policy.<sup>37</sup> Rusk later strenuously denied that the US had pressured India for political concessions, arguing, “We weren't asking any political quid pro quo in terms of Viet Nam, or a vote on Red China in the United Nations, or anything of that sort. The only quid pro quo we were asking for was things that the Indians ought to be doing for themselves, quite apart from the United States.”<sup>38</sup> The Johnson administration was not the first one to consider the idea—the Eisenhower administration had thought about conditioning aid to Indian reforms as well.<sup>39</sup> Johnson later noted that his policy was motivated by humanitarian reasons, as well as a desire to get India to improve agricultural performance.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the documentary evidence, as Ahlberg has noted, indicates that Johnson “elected to keep the tether taut in order to pursue America’s cold war policy objectives in tandem with his humanitarian goals.”<sup>41</sup> Those cold war policy objectives had more to do with India doing its part in the development realm, than with India changing its policy on Vietnam—a change that most US policymakers did not really expect.

Once again, Delhi would not have disagreed with the goal of strengthening India, but Washington’s preferred means would prove problematic. At the time Rusk acknowledged “[the] intrinsic importance of India to us,” but added that India needed to demonstrate “a. Actions to turn swords into plowshares... b. Actions to translate

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 240-241.

<sup>38</sup> Transcript, Dean Rusk Oral History Interview III, 1/2/70, by Paige E. Mulhollan, Internet Copy, LBJL.

<sup>39</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, November 20, 1959, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 517.

<sup>40</sup> Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, p. 224.

<sup>41</sup> Kristin L. Ahlberg, “Machiavelli with a Heart”: The Johnson Administration's Food for Peace Program in India, 1965–1966,” *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 4 (2007), p. 666.

economic promises to Indian people and to US into economic performance.”<sup>42</sup> The first element called for India to make peace with Pakistan, so that China could not continue to take advantage of South Asian discord and so that India could keep its focus on strengthening itself. It did not, however, constitute US pressure on Kashmir per se. While some officials wanted the White House to compel India to negotiate on Kashmir, most US policymakers—including Johnson—continued to believe that there was little the US could or should do about Kashmir, other than encourage India and Pakistan to settle their differences.<sup>43</sup>

The second element would become harder for India to achieve over the next year and a half when the monsoon would fail again in 1966, causing further food shortages and a major famine in parts of India’s most populated region. Throughout, however, Johnson kept up the pressure on India to make reforms in the agricultural and broader economic development realms. Bowles told Shastri that the “only reason” for the short-tether policy was “concern that India was not doing enough to increase its own agricultural output.”<sup>44</sup> Johnson held the reins himself and held them tight—loosening them every time just before his grip might cause fatal damage.<sup>45</sup> Whether on food or economic assistance—the US would eventually also resume the latter—Johnson’s policy

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<sup>42</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, November 10, 1965, *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, pp. 461-462.

<sup>43</sup> Memo from Bundy and Komer to Johnson, October 5, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 445. Johnson later expressed frustration about the issue in a conversation with one of his predecessors, noting that he was trying to improve relations with Pakistan, but every time US policymakers tried to talk to Ayub Khan or other Pakistani policymakers, they mentioned Kashmir, but the US could not settle Kashmir. See Conversation between Johnson and Dwight Eisenhower, November 4, 1967, LBJL, Tape WH6711.01, Program No. 2, Citation 12402. There was even less desire to mediate. See footnote 3 re Memo from Bundy to Johnson, October 22, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 454.

<sup>44</sup> See footnote 2 re Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Shastri meeting (Oct 16), October 19, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 449. Also, for Bundy and Clark Clifford’s views see Memo from Bundy to Johnson, October 19, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 450.

<sup>45</sup> For details of US assistance to India in 1965-1966, see Ahlberg.

was primarily designed to get India to move toward self-sufficiency.<sup>46</sup> The US made clear that it was linking aid to performance and not changes in India's Kashmir policy or its "basic outlook."<sup>47</sup>

There was a sense in Washington that the short-tether policy and the famine, along with the struggling economy, succeeded in leading India towards reforms. Indeed, Subramaniam had signed an agreement with US Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman, committing India to agricultural reforms and to prioritizing agriculture in the upcoming five-year plan. The Indian planning minister had also reached an agreement with the World Bank to institute broader economic reforms. Furthermore, the Indian government did implement a number of the agreed-to reforms, though it probably did not move as far or as fast as some in the US would have liked. Even Komer, who had been skeptical of Johnson's conditional aid policy, thought it was successful—in combination with India's "desperate straits" and the fact that the US was its only real option in this realm—in getting Indian policymakers to listen. Thus, he felt that it should continue, noting, "If India is important, and it is, we must skillfully maintain this momentum by continued use of carrot and stick."<sup>48</sup> Freeman, in turn, was convinced that with US help, "India can make the grade... It will be slow and tough, but it can be done."<sup>49</sup>

Johnson sought buy-in from the US Congress and other countries for his policy. He ensured that Congress signed off on any assistance so that he would not be criticized for acting unilaterally at a time when foreign aid was under attack on the Hill. There had

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<sup>46</sup> Memo from Bundy to Johnson, November 17, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 470. Also, see Memo from Komer to Johnson, November 16, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 469.

<sup>47</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, November 16, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 469; Memo from Freeman to Johnson, December 1, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 482.

<sup>48</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, January 12, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 531-533. Also, see Memo from Komer to Johnson, December 1, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 483 and Memo from Komer to Johnson, December 6, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 486.

<sup>49</sup> Memo from Freeman to Johnson, December 1, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 482.

been a “strong Congressional urge that we get out of South Asia” thanks to the India-Pakistan fighting making clear that they did not have their eyes on the prize.<sup>50</sup> Administration officials bluntly told their Indian interlocutors about congressional difficulties over the foreign aid program in general and the South Asian program in particular as a result of the war.<sup>51</sup> Rusk told Jha, Shastri’s senior aide, that further aid to India and Pakistan had indeed created a political “crisis” with Congress. He asserted that Indians had “a political constituency in [the] U.S. they have to nourish.”<sup>52</sup>

Congressional difficulties were one of the key reasons to get other countries to contribute to the effort to aid India. Johnson was also fed up with the lack of support from US allies on Vietnam. He wanted them to step up to the plate on assistance to India—if India was so important for the “free world,” he believed that these countries should help prop India up, especially since they were not doing much to help in Vietnam.<sup>53</sup> Administration officials involved Indian officials in the effort to get others to contribute, emphasizing that this contribution would make it easier to get aid through Congress.<sup>54</sup> Later, Johnson would link US aid commitments to aid pledges by its allies.

The president and other officials also recognized Soviet contribution to the effort to feed Indians and to Indian development more broadly. Washington and Moscow, after

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<sup>50</sup> Memo from Rusk to Johnson, September 9, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 377.

<sup>51</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Mann-Bhoothalingam Meeting, October 1, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 440 and footnote 3 re Memo for the Record re Komer-Bhoothalingam Meeting, October 6, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 440. Also, see Memo for the Record re Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, September 9, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 374.

<sup>52</sup> Telegram from Rusk to DoS, New Delhi, January 13, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 537.

<sup>53</sup> See Conversation between Johnson and Goldberg, December 1, 1965, LBJL, Tape WH6512.01, Program No. 3, Citation 9303, and Conversation between Johnson and Orville Freeman, February 2, 1966, LBJL, Tape WH6602.01, Program No. 7, Citation 9607.

<sup>54</sup> Memo for the Record re Johnson-Subramaniam (Indian food and agriculture minister) Meeting, December 20, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 518; Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Rusk-BK Nehru Conversation, April 6, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 610.

all, shared an interest in containing China by strengthening India.<sup>55</sup> While some like Bowles wanted to do more to keep the Soviet Union out of the subcontinent, most in the Johnson administration continued to accept that the Soviets would play a role in India. This acceptance was also evident in Washington's reaction to Moscow taking the lead in post-war peacemaking between India and Pakistan in Tashkent in January 1966. The Soviet Union hoped to get India and Pakistan to resolve their differences and come together against China—an objective the US itself had tried and failed to achieve in the past. Thus, when Soviet premier Alexei Kosygin had pushed to act as mediator during and after the crisis, the US reaction was reflected in Komer's sentiment: "let the Soviets have a try if they want."<sup>56</sup> Analysts expected India to continue to maintain relations with both the US and Soviet Union.<sup>57</sup> They also realized that, in any case, improving Soviet-Pakistan relations put a limit to India-Soviet relations. Overall, the administration's attitude toward Indo-Soviet relations was to "keep...the Indians from unbalanced surrender to the Soviets," but "Soviet help in itself [was] not intolerable."<sup>58</sup>

### **Too Important to Jettison**

India, on its part, had no intention of surrendering to the Soviet Union. Maintaining the Soviet option continued to be important since it was a source of economic and military assistance. Furthermore, unlike the US, Moscow had not suspended aid to India.<sup>59</sup> Finally, India thought that the Soviet Union, as a country bordering China, could potentially serve as an "antidote to Peking" in a unique way.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Conversation between Johnson and Freeman, February 2, 1966. Also, see Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Humphrey-Rusk-Subramaniam meeting, January 14, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 540.

<sup>56</sup> Memo from Komer for Johnson, September 24, 1965.

<sup>57</sup> SNIE 31-32-65: Indo-Pakistani Reactions to Certain US Course of Action, December 7, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 490.

<sup>58</sup> Memo from Bundy and Komer to Johnson, October 5, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 446.

<sup>59</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, pp. 144-145. Brines, p. 365.

<sup>60</sup> Brines, p. 362.



Nevertheless, Indian officials had been concerned by Soviet behavior during the war. Even observers sympathetic to Moscow had noted its initial “vague” reaction and then pressure on India to accept a ceasefire.<sup>61</sup> Thus, while the war had highlighted the downsides of dependence, it also reinforced the Indian inclination to reduce and diversify dependence—and that meant maintaining the US option.

As mentioned above, China remained a threat and India still hoped that—when the rubber hit the road—the US would directly or indirectly help India. India’s internal situation also reinforced the need for the US. While the war had strengthened Shastri politically, it had only weakened the Indian economy.<sup>62</sup> The finance and food ministers were indeed reported to have supported Shastri’s acceptance of a ceasefire because of the adverse impact of the war on the economy.<sup>63</sup> Even the defense minister admitted that the war gave India “a good bit of headache in the economic field.”<sup>64</sup> The drought that year had also made assistance critical.<sup>65</sup> So did a political imperative—acting Prime Minister Gulzarilal Nanda worried about the viability of democracy in the absence of socio-economic development.<sup>66</sup> The need for the US indeed led India to agree even to strings attached with the commitment to undertake reforms in return for economic and food assistance.<sup>67</sup>

The need to keep the US option available led to Indian efforts to reassure the US about Delhi’s continued desire for a good relationship with Washington. Even before accepting the Soviet offer of post-war mediation, Indian officials had solicited the US

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<sup>61</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 156.

<sup>62</sup> SNIE 31-32-65: Indo-Pakistani Reactions to Certain US Course of Action, December 7, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 488.

<sup>63</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 157.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 161.

<sup>65</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 409.

<sup>66</sup> Telegram from Rusk to DoS, New Delhi, January 13, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 534.

<sup>67</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 402.

reaction, explaining that India wanted to accept in order to get Moscow on India's side if China attacked again.<sup>68</sup> Indian policymakers also moved to temper the anti-American rhetoric that had followed the war. They realized that public criticism of the US did not just upset American officials, but could also tie their hands at a time when they knew that the US continued to be essential to their objectives. Thus, as Bowles noted, "there is evidence on every side of a desire to bring the situation back into balance."<sup>69</sup> Even before the US had expressed concern about Indian leaders' public statements, an official government statement clarified that the US was not using food assistance to apply "political pressure."<sup>70</sup> When the US expressed concern about a Shastri speech that sounded belligerent, Jha explained that it was the result of needing to balance policy and political imperatives. He added that the US should not to pay too much attention to the public statements since they were for domestic consumption.<sup>71</sup> After that protest, however, the statements did subside.<sup>72</sup>

Indian policymakers were concerned that their harsh words had done a lot of damage. An anxious Shastri asked Bowles if there was a change in America's India policy.<sup>73</sup> Indian officials indicated that Shastri was keen to visit the US to clear the air.<sup>74</sup> Jha noted the Indian government's concern about the state of the relationship. He pointed out the countries' mutual dependence noting, "India badly needed the US and if there is

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<sup>68</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha meeting, September 21, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 422-423.

<sup>69</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha meeting, November 12, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 466.

<sup>70</sup> Information Memo from Hare to Rusk, October 5, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 443-444.

<sup>71</sup> See footnote 3 re Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, November 7, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 458.

<sup>72</sup> See footnote 3 for Document 242, *Ibid*, p. 458.

<sup>73</sup> See footnote 2 re Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Shastri meeting (Oct 16), October 19, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 449.

<sup>74</sup> Memo from Bundy to Johnson, October 19, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 450.

to be an independent non-Communist Asia with an effective block on Chinese expansionism the US also needed India.”<sup>75</sup>

## **DISILLUSIONMENT (SPRING 1966-SPRING 1967)**

### **The Demands of Dependence**

Bowles more or less agreed, noting

India's basic objectives and ours are very similar, i.e., India and America are equally anxious to block Chinese expansionism, and help maintain stability in Asia and Africa, to strengthen the UN, etc. The US also recognizes that a stable, economically viable, and democratic India with one-seventh of the world's population is absolutely basic to a stable and peaceful Asia.<sup>76</sup>

Johnson, however, was increasingly unsure about whether India deserved a key role in his China strategy. Some of the president's aides encouraged him to do much more on military and economic assistance in order to strengthen India, as well the fledgling government of Indira Gandhi who became prime minister following Shastri's sudden death just after he signed the Tashkent agreement in January 1966. The president did not agree.<sup>77</sup> India had not been living up to its billing for years, but now its performance was not even living up to the reduced expectations he had. He increasingly thought this was a “one-way deal.” He wanted to know, “What can they do to help us?”<sup>78</sup>

Johnson eventually approved negotiations for the restart of economic assistance and case-by-case limited credit sales on the defense side. He instructed officials to try to ensure that India did not overspend on defense, which made India-Pakistan reconciliation

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<sup>75</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha meeting, November 12, 1965, Ibid, p. 464.

<sup>76</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Jha meeting, November 12, 1965, Ibid, p. 465.

<sup>77</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, February 1, 1966, Ibid, pp. 551-553. Also, see Johnson's note on the same.

<sup>78</sup> Telcon between Johnson and Freeman, February 2, 1966 referred to in editorial note in Ibid, pp. 553-554.

less likely and led to diversion from development.<sup>79</sup> He clarified that in return he did not expect an alliance or total support for US foreign policies. What he hoped for, at the very least, is that “when the US is under attack in the UN or other forums it would be immensely helpful if the Indians could occasionally at least stand up and say ‘stop, look and listen--let's try to understand what the US is doing before we criticize it.’” Furthermore, “I don't say just rubber-stamp anything we do, but I don't think they need to denounce us every day on what we're doing in Vietnam.” He hoped that India would make efforts with Hanoi.<sup>80</sup> Vice president Humphrey reiterated to Gandhi in India that the US did not want Indian “endorsement” on Vietnam, but publicly throwing “dead cats at the US” was highly unhelpful.<sup>81</sup> He also went a bit further. He stressed that the US was committed to India's security, but it expected “the same commitment on India's part to the US.” Humphrey noted that he also “pounded away at the interrelationship of Communist activities in the subcontinent and Southeast Asia” and pointed out that India needed to think about what India could or would do if China attacked the US in Vietnam.<sup>82</sup>

On Vietnam, Shastri had told Johnson that India did not have enough influence or ties with North Vietnam to involve itself directly, but he had talked with Kosygin about the matter without much success.<sup>83</sup> Like Shastri before her, Gandhi also expressed “appreciation” for Johnson's efforts towards peace in Vietnam.<sup>84</sup> Through BK Nehru, she

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<sup>79</sup> Telegram from DoS to Humphrey (vice president), February 10, 1966, Ibid, pp. 564-565. Also, see footnote 4 re Telegram from Rusk to AmEmb India, February 12, 1966, Ibid, p. 566.

<sup>80</sup> Telcon between Johnson and Freeman, February 2, 1966 referred to in editorial note in Ibid, p. 555; Telegram from Rusk to Humphrey, February 10, 1966, Ibid, p. 565.

<sup>81</sup> See footnote 2 re Memcon of Humphrey-Gandhi Meeting, February 17, 1966, Ibid, p. 575.

<sup>82</sup> Telegram from Humphrey to Johnson re Feb. 17 Humphrey-Gandhi meeting, February 20, 1966, Ibid, pp. 575-578.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Shastri to Johnson, Tashkent, January 6, 1966, Ibid, p. 525.

<sup>84</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Gandhi meeting, January 20, 1966, Ibid, p. 548.

also conveyed her disappointment at Moscow and Hanoi's lack of response.<sup>85</sup> Indian officials further indicated that they would approach Soviet officials privately, but made no promises on public declarations of support, asserting that those would decrease Indian influence with Hanoi and Moscow.<sup>86</sup>

In terms of what else India could do, Rusk had suggested that Johnson could get India to move toward further liberal economic policies and greater focus on agriculture.<sup>87</sup> Komer, too, expected India to agree to economic reforms. Overall, he did not expect Indian movement on Vietnam or Pakistan because of Gandhi's domestic political situation. Nevertheless, even on these issues, he believed that the Indian need for the US could lead to a shift. He stated that, "we have a strong ally moving India toward us on these matters--Mao Tse-tung. Just as he forced the Soviets in our direction, he's done the same with India. So the Indians are increasingly serious about China, and all we need do is nudge this trend along." As Komer asserted, however, the US needed to calibrate pressure carefully.<sup>88</sup>

Johnson recognized the domestic pressure on the new Indian prime minister. He assured the Indian ambassador that to help strengthen Gandhi's position, the US would not pressure her when she visited Washington in March 1966, as her opposition would expect.<sup>89</sup> During her visit, Gandhi on her part showed a willingness to act on various issues. She suggested a joint India-Pakistan economic project to improve relations.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Memo for the Record re Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, February 2, 1966, Ibid, p. 557.

<sup>86</sup> Telegram from Humphrey to Johnson, New Delhi, February 17, 1966, Ibid, p. 574. Also, see Telegram from Humphrey to Johnson re Feb. 17 Humphrey-Gandhi meeting, February 20, 1966, Ibid, p. 577.

<sup>87</sup> Memo from Rusk to Johnson, March 26, 1966, Ibid, p. 588.

<sup>88</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, March 27, 1966, Ibid, pp. 594-595.

<sup>89</sup> Memo for the Record re Johnson-BK Nehru meeting, March 22, 1966, Ibid, p. 586.

<sup>90</sup> Summary Record of Johnson-Gandhi Conversation, March 28, 1966, Ibid, p. 598.

Furthermore, following her visit, Ayub and she exchanged messages.<sup>91</sup> The Indian government also agreed to economic reforms worked out with the World Bank.<sup>92</sup>

The administration was pleased since it wanted to get out of the business of pouring money into India to prevent an internal collapse (and in the case of the India optimists to build it up as a bulwark against China). Along with economic reforms, it continued to want to see progress on the Pakistan front. Johnson saw the two aspects as linked. He believed that as long as India's attention and resources remained diverted toward Pakistan, it could not become "an indigenous Asian counterweight to China." India-Pakistan tension did not just result in Indian defense resources being spread thin, but led to the diversion of funds from development activity towards defense. Since it was difficult politically for Indian policymakers to cut defense expenditures, if India at least moved to alleviate its Pakistan problem, this could limit that expenditure.<sup>93</sup> He, in turn, made clear to Ayub that Pakistan's deepening relations with China made an improvement in India-Pakistan relations harder.<sup>94</sup> He also asserted to Pakistani officials that Pakistani friendship with China at a time that Americans were dying at the hands of Chinese supported-insurgents in Vietnam created serious problems for the US-Pakistan relationship.<sup>95</sup>

After Gandhi had returned to India, reports came in of a sense of "euphoria" there about the visit. Rusk felt this needed to be tempered by maintaining some pressure.<sup>96</sup> Otherwise, India might regress in terms of reforms and reconciliation. Thus, the US

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<sup>91</sup> Letter from Johnson to Ayub, April 17, 1966, Ibid, p. 614.

<sup>92</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, May 8, 1966, Ibid, p. 645.

<sup>93</sup> Letter from Johnson to Bowles, May 20, 1966, Ibid, p. 652. Also, see Memo from Rostow (National Security Advisor) to Johnson, April 25, 1966, Ibid, p. 621.

<sup>94</sup> Referred to in Letter from Ayub to Johnson, May 1, 1966, Ibid, p. 635.

<sup>95</sup> Memo from Handley (DAS/S NESAs) to Rusk re Johnson-Shoaib (Pakistani finance minister) conversation, April 28, 1966, Ibid, pp. 632-633.

<sup>96</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Johnson-Rostow Conversation, April 6, 1966, Ibid, p. 612.

continued to make clear that it wanted India to decrease defense expenditure, including from the Soviet Union.<sup>97</sup> To ensure that Indian policymakers translated their promises into performance, Rusk also wanted aid to continue to be doled out in phases.<sup>98</sup>

However, doling out aid in phases—the preferred means for the US—caused problems for Gandhi. Indian officials felt the means were counterproductive to the ends Johnson was seeking to achieve since they weakened Gandhi’s hand. Rusk himself had earlier warned about the adverse impact the lack of food aid would have on Gandhi’s political position in an election year, rendering her unable to make the kind of economic reforms that the US wanted.<sup>99</sup> Bowles reported that support for the US and the Indian government had initially increased after Gandhi’s visit. Since then, however, there had been Soviet-sponsored and indigenous left attacks on Gandhi’s government that highlighted US conditions and ambitions in India. The ambassador noted that Gandhi was defending the US-India relationship, but to sustain her position and policy, the US had to be subtler about pressure and deliver on promises.<sup>100</sup>

### **The Downside of Dependence**

If India had not continued to need the US for internal strengthening and external protection, Gandhi might have sought to disengage from the US to relieve the domestic pressure and acquire some international maneuverability. She was realistic, however, about the need for the relationship. Even when she first came to office, she was aware of the country’s weaknesses. She realized that weakness meant dependence, which meant constraints on Indian action. Publicly, Gandhi might have insisted that India could “do without” aid, but she recognized the necessity of that dependence. As Mansingh has

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<sup>97</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Hare-BK Nehru Meeting, June 7, 1966, Ibid, p. 669.

<sup>98</sup> Memo for the Record re Johnson-Rostow-Rusk meeting, April 27, 1966, Ibid, pp. 631-632.

<sup>99</sup> Memo from Rusk to Johnson, March 30, 1966, Ibid, p. 607.

<sup>100</sup> Memo from Bowles to Johnson, May 5, 1966, Ibid, pp. 640-641.

noted, the view in the prime minister's secretariat was that "India's national interest demanded as much support as possible from both superpowers." In that context, "the West could not be ignored." The US was the only option for the kind of food aid that India needed. Furthermore, the Soviet Union had not shown the willingness or ability to aid India economically to the same extent.<sup>101</sup> Finally, as the Indian foreign secretary noted, India was concerned about whether domestic developments in the Soviet Union might lead to a Sino-Soviet rapprochement.<sup>102</sup>

Since she was aware of India's dependence, Gandhi tried to be careful not to pick fights, verbal or otherwise, with either of India's major benefactors.<sup>103</sup> The day after she was elected Gandhi had told Bowles that she wanted to clear up the "gross misunderstanding" that she "leaned towards the USSR." She had said she had "deep respect" for the US and "understood the importance of US assistance, and was profoundly grateful for what [the US] had done."<sup>104</sup> Directly and through her ambassador, Gandhi had asked for economic assistance to be restarted.<sup>105</sup> In the lead-up to Gandhi's visit to the US in spring 1966, her close aide P.N. Haksar had told her that the two countries needed to get back to "a stable footing."<sup>106</sup> Before her trip, Komer had approvingly credited government management with the lack of Indian press allegations about US pressure tactics.<sup>107</sup> Before and after her trip to Washington, Gandhi had herself

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<sup>101</sup> Mansingh, p. 2, p. 22, p. 33, p. 42, p. 135; Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 66, p. 88, p. 95; Lall, *Emergence*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>102</sup> Memcon of Gandhi-Rusk Meeting, March 29, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 602.

<sup>103</sup> Mansingh, p. 32.

<sup>104</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Gandhi meeting, January 20, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 546-547.

<sup>105</sup> Letter from Gandhi to Johnson, February 8, 1966, *Ibid.*, p. 562 and Memo for the Record re Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, February 2, 1966, *Ibid.*, p. 560.

<sup>106</sup> Conversation referred to in Note from Haksar (Principal Secretary to PM) to Gandhi, July 30, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 42. Also, see Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 409.

<sup>107</sup> Memo from Komer to Johnson, March 27, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 593.



been careful not to make critical statements about Vietnam.<sup>108</sup> During that trip, she had told Johnson that India wanted a “good working partnership” with the US.<sup>109</sup> After she had returned to India, Gandhi and the food minister had publicly defended US assistance.<sup>110</sup>

As noted above, Gandhi made commitments when she was in the US, but there were limits to the concessions she could make. Like her predecessor, Gandhi knew that a certain level of defense expenditure was necessary, even while she recognized that development was an important component of national security. Some within and outside government argued that defense expenditure could contribute to growth and development.<sup>111</sup> There were also political costs to appearing weak on this front. The critical reason to maintain that level, however, was that India had to meet a dual-front threat. While the US administration was more concerned about India’s internal vulnerabilities, the Indian government felt the need to ensure a certain level of external protection—especially given that there were questions about the reliability of the superpowers.

Thus Gandhi’s planning minister—and subsequently the Indian ambassador—made clear that there were limits to the concessions India could make on defense expenditures: “As long as [the] need to defend against China remains, India will not be able to reduce [the] level of its defense expenditures very much...if there should be some reduction in Pak defense outlay, India would be willing to match it. Such Indian reduction could not however be ‘mixed up’ with need for defense against [the]

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<sup>108</sup> Lall, *Emergence*, p. 174.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Mansingh, p. 68.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 60-61.

Chinese.”<sup>112</sup> For Indian policymakers, the China threat persisted—alone and in conjunction with Pakistan. Furthermore, Beijing’s support for liberation struggles had become a major source of concern for India.<sup>113</sup> In February 1966, the prime minister had spoken of China’s propensity “to stir up trouble wherever it can.”<sup>114</sup> India worried about this propensity in its northeast, which seemed more vulnerable than before. In spring, a Mizo insurgency had broken out. Talks with the Nagas had also stalled and soon there were indications that they were seeking Chinese assistance.<sup>115</sup>

Even as India’s domestic socioeconomic vulnerabilities created a crucial imperative for the US-India partnership, Gandhi’s domestic political vulnerabilities set limits to that partnership.<sup>116</sup> The precedent of prime ministerial responsibility in foreign policy and the lack of interest in the subject among other party leaders had given Gandhi’s foreign policymaking space and authority.<sup>117</sup> It also allowed the further concentration of foreign policy decision-making in the prime minister’s secretariat.<sup>118</sup> That did not, however, mean that in this period others did not have an impact on her foreign policy options.<sup>119</sup> Gandhi was aware of her own political constraints. As Mansingh has noted, she had come to power not because party leaders saw her as a strong leader, but because they had hoped and expected her to be a weak and pliable one.<sup>120</sup> Gandhi’s domestic political weakness made her sensitive to accusations that she was

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<sup>112</sup> Memcon of Rusk-Mehta (Indian planning minister) Meeting, April 25, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 623. Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Hare-BK Nehru Meeting, June 7, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 669-670.

<sup>113</sup> Mansingh, p. 11.

<sup>114</sup> Quoted in Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 86.

<sup>115</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 405, pp. 407-408.

<sup>116</sup> Mansingh, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 53.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55; Mansingh, pp. 25-26, p. 35.

<sup>119</sup> For Kamaraj’s role, see Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 128.

<sup>120</sup> Mansingh, p. 8; Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 51. [She got qualified support from her party. Mansingh, p. 10.]

yielding to external pressure.<sup>121</sup> Even before Gandhi's visit to the US, Subramanian had already been under attack from within the party for the reforms he had agreed to in late 1965.<sup>122</sup> Gandhi had told Rusk that the main question in India about her visit would be "have I sold the country?"<sup>123</sup> After her visit, she acknowledged Johnson's understanding of her political problem. She also noted that the attacks had already started on her government and she only expected them to increase.<sup>124</sup>

Gandhi's sensitivity to accusations of succumbing to pressure grew that summer after the devaluation of the rupee, which Tharoor has called a "turning point."<sup>125</sup> It made the political downside of dependence very apparent to Gandhi. Years earlier Nehru had dismissed as "fantastic nonsense" any suggestion that the rupee would be devalued.<sup>126</sup> However, a number of Indian policymakers had come to believe that it was overvalued. As part of the reform process, the US had been pushing for devaluation of the rupee. Even toward the end of the Shastri administration, Indian officials had believed that further financial assistance from the US and the World Bank consortium was contingent on devaluation. After Gandhi had taken office, a cabinet committee had recommended devaluation, but it had been put on the backburner because the prime minister had wanted to take another look.<sup>127</sup> During her visit, India had agreed to devaluation as part of a package of reforms that the World Bank had wanted. After her visit, she indeed devalued the rupee.

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<sup>121</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 65.

<sup>122</sup> Memo from Freeman to Johnson, March 4, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 579-580.

<sup>123</sup> Memcon of Gandhi-Rusk Meeting March 29, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 599.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from Gandhi to Johnson, May 12, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 646-647.

<sup>125</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 123.

<sup>126</sup> JLN at press conference, July 3, 1958, *SWJN SS Vol. 43*, p. 601.

<sup>127</sup> BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, pp. 446-447, pp. 452-453.

Critics—especially but not solely—on the left blamed American pressure.<sup>128</sup> Within Congress, moderate-left nationalist party leaders used it to attack her.<sup>129</sup> BK Nehru laid out for Johnson the “ugly mood” in India that prevailed because of allegations that the government had succumbed to American pressure. Critics targeted not just the prime minister but also Subramaniam, BK Nehru, Mehta and finance minister Chaudhuri.<sup>130</sup> Gandhi later highlighted to Johnson how the “slightest suspicion of external pressure, whether from foreign countries or international institutions” resulted in domestic political upheaval.<sup>131</sup>

BK Nehru was surprised that Gandhi had announced devaluation so far before the next World Bank consortium pledge meeting. He noted that it would “be good move only if India can “get a lot of money” to make it work prior to elections.”<sup>132</sup> Noting the opposition to the move in India, National Security Advisor Rostow, too, urged action on the US end to help stabilize Gandhi’s position and allow her to undertake further reform. Most agencies agreed and Johnson subsequently approved the US commitment to the consortium to give Gandhi something to show for her efforts.<sup>133</sup> The domestic political damage, however, had already been done.

In India, Gandhi tried to explain that devaluation was necessary for the country and that she had no choice.<sup>134</sup> She denied that US aid came with strings attached and said that there was no harm in getting aid and advice from friends.<sup>135</sup> The whole situation, however, forced her to be much more aware of the necessity to appear not to give into

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<sup>128</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 410.

<sup>129</sup> Mansingh, p. 20. Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, pp. 128-129, p. 138.

<sup>130</sup> Memcon of Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, August 17, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 714.

<sup>131</sup> Quoted in Memo from Wriggins (NSC Staff) to Johnson, August 19, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 717.

<sup>132</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Hare-BK Nehru Meeting, June 7, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 668.

<sup>133</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, June 11, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 677-679.

<sup>134</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 410.

<sup>135</sup> In a statement in May 1966, quoted in Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 94.

external pressure. She came to see a political imperative in limiting the dependence that India's strategic imperatives required. She also saw the need to demonstrate that her portfolio of partners remained diversified. American assistance was useful, but appearing to tilt too far toward it (and away from Moscow) held danger for her political survival and her freedom of action at home.<sup>136</sup>

### **Vietnam: Force or Diplomacy?**

The need to correct the appearance of imbalance and alleviate that danger led to a move that would exacerbate difficulties in the US-India relationship. In early July there were calls on her to do something about Vietnam after the aerial bombings of oil installations in Hanoi and Haiphong. Her critics, who had been accusing her of moving away from socialism and nonalignment for aid from the US, pointed to her general silence on Vietnam as further evidence of this shift.<sup>137</sup> Initially Gandhi said, "what can we do?" Subsequently, she proposed the immediate convening of a second Geneva conference. She did not, however, suggest the cessation of bombing as a pre-condition for talks. As a news report commented, she was also "careful to spread the blame for the war as evenly as possible." Her call for the withdrawal of "all foreign forces" was indeed seen as an improvement on a previous call for the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam.<sup>138</sup> Beijing saw it as biased and rejected the call.<sup>139</sup> At home, it gave her critics further ammunition.

Just a few days later, on a visit to the Soviet Union, her contention that an American bombing cessation was a precondition for the convening of a conference indicated a *volte-face* on her part. The resulting India-Soviet communiqué also called for

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid, p. 66, p. 79.

<sup>137</sup> J. Anthony Lukas, "Mrs. Gandhi Mends Her Fences," *NYT*, July 17, 1966, p. 144.

<sup>138</sup> Lukas, "Mrs. Gandhi Urges British-Soviet Bid on Vietnam Talks," *NYT*, July 8, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>139</sup> "Peking Rules Out Talks Unless US Leaves Vietnam," *NYT*, July 10, 1966, p. 1.

the immediate cessation of bombing.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, at a joint event at which she was present, Soviet premier Kosygin attacked US “vandalism and barbarism on an international scale.”<sup>141</sup> When she returned home, following communist pressure, she recalled the Indian consul general in Saigon who had publicly explained the US rationale for the bombing.<sup>142</sup> To some observers the announcement of Moscow’s promise of \$1 billion in credit for India’s fourth five-year plan seemed a lot like a reward for her U-turn.<sup>143</sup> The argument and assessments that on her trip Gandhi did not criticize the US to the extent that the Soviet Union wanted did nothing to temper the Johnson administration’s adverse reaction.<sup>144</sup>

Indian officials had been aware of Johnson’s focus and sensitivities on Vietnam.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, that was partly why Shastri had been “relatively inactive” on the question and why till July 1966 Gandhi was relatively silent as well.<sup>146</sup> Just earlier in 1966, she had tempered her criticism of the US on the issue. The problem she faced was that just as Johnson said her statements on Vietnam gave his critics ammunition, her critics got ammunition when she seemed to hold back from criticism of the US.<sup>147</sup> That summer, she had been on the defensive, denying that the quid pro quo for aid from the US was a Vietnam policy that was more amenable to Washington.<sup>148</sup> By that fall,

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<sup>140</sup> Lukas, “Mrs. Gandhi Confirms Shift in Vietnam Stand,” *NYT*, July 20, 1966, p. 4. Also, see Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 109.

<sup>141</sup> Raymond H. Anderson, “Kosygin Rebuffs Peace Overtures,” *NYT*, July 15, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Lukas, “India is Recalling Consul in Saigon,” *NYT*, July 21, 1966, p. 12.

<sup>143</sup> Lukas, “Mrs. Gandhi Mends Her Fences,” *NYT*, July 17, 1966, p. 144.

<sup>144</sup> Mansingh, p. 137.

<sup>145</sup> BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 435.

<sup>146</sup> Lukas, “Mrs. Gandhi Bids US Ends Bombing,” *NYT*, August 13, 1966, p. 3 and also Lukas, “Mrs. Gandhi Mends Her Fences,” *NYT*, July 17, 1966, p. 144.

<sup>147</sup> Johnson, *Vantage Point*, pp. 583-584.

<sup>148</sup> Mansingh, p. 79.

however, calling for the cessation of American bombing gave her a way to assert her independence from the US and take on her critics.<sup>149</sup>

The perils of multiple audiences were not lost on Indian policymakers. In Washington, in an attempt at damage control, BK Nehru indicated that the communiqué was the result of a “staff snafu.” Gandhi, too, realized that the reaction in Washington would not be good. She wrote to Johnson, regretting any misunderstanding. She also noted that she had subsequently made statements to clarify the Indian position. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of visible nonalignment since that gave her the domestic political credibility to carry on the economic reforms that the US wanted. Finally, she reiterated that India believed that the best way to deal with the situation in Vietnam—and limit Chinese influence there, which was a goal India shared with the US—was for the stakeholders to find a solution peacefully.<sup>150</sup>

Publicly, an unhappy Johnson indicated, “we can’t talk about just half the war. We should talk about all the war, and we have not the slightest indication that the other side is willing to make any concession, to take any action that would lead to the peace table.”<sup>151</sup> Privately, he responded to Gandhi’s assessment that Kosygin shared the US and Indian view that the Vietnam solution should be found at the conference table rather than the battlefield. He asserted, “The crucial question, of course, remains how this objective can be brought about.” If Delhi had the answer, it should work with Hanoi and Moscow to get them to yes.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 108.

<sup>150</sup> Memo from Wriggins to Johnson re Gandhi Letter, August 19, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 716-717.

<sup>151</sup> Johnson, “The President’s News Conference,” July 20, 1966. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27724>).

<sup>152</sup> Letter from Johnson to Gandhi, August 31, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 727.

More than other officials, Rusk had hoped for more support for Vietnam policy from India because he saw it as serving an Indian interest as well: “thwart[ing] China’s ambitions.” He had been frustrated that India would not make any public statements of support or common interests with the US—he had believed they were not forthcoming because of India’s relationship with the Soviet Union.<sup>153</sup> Now he saw downright opposition. He was furious and called Gandhi’s shift an “outrageous departure from non-alignment.” Rusk doubted not just India’s ability but its willingness to stand against China, noting “Do you really think that there is one chance in a thousand that India would take any action to be a counter-weight to Communist China in Asia unless India itself were attacked?”<sup>154</sup>

Indian officials did worry about “great Chinese pressure and influence in Vietnam” and the consequences of a hasty American withdrawal, albeit privately. Even senior officials like TN Kaul, who were not supporters of an American presence in Southeast Asia, outlined the Indian concern noting, “Even if the Americans leave, will the Chinese leave?”<sup>155</sup> Two key differences remained on approach: Delhi believed that Washington should make Moscow part of its Vietnam solution and focus on diplomacy rather than force. Foreign minister MC Chagla told Rusk “that so far as China was concerned there was a coincidence of interests of the Soviet Union, United States and India.” When Rusk asked why then India did not support the US position in Vietnam, Chagla noted that India was

against bombing and against the continuation of war in Vietnam because it had precisely the opposite effect to that intended. The Vietnam war merely helped China and gave her a footing in North Vietnam which, left to themselves, the

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<sup>153</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Bowles, November 10, 1965, Ibid, p. 462.

<sup>154</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Bowles, July 26, 1966, Ibid, p. 706.

<sup>155</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Kaul (Secy, MEA) with Zimyanin (Chief Editor, *Pravda*), September 20, 1966, NMML, TN Kaul Papers [TNK], SF No. 13.



North Vietnamese would, in the context of their historical relations with the Chinese, not permit.<sup>156</sup>

Moreover, Indian officials thought the US had exaggerated concerns of a united Vietnam, which India thought would most likely help counterbalance China.<sup>157</sup>

As fall 1966 progressed, the US felt that public Indian pinpricks continued on this front. In October after Gandhi, Nasser and Tito met in Delhi, they issued a communiqué repeating the call for bombing to cease without preconditions. They called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Vietnam, but also identified the Viet Cong as a necessary participant in any negotiations.<sup>158</sup> Harriman subsequently reported that Gandhi privately also reiterated that the US should agree to a bombing cessation in North Vietnam unconditionally.<sup>159</sup>

By late spring 1967, Rusk, who had wanted India to play supporter, just wanted India to keep out so that it would not play spoiler. His frustration and sensitivity about the issue was evident in an “edgy” tirade about a birthday greeting from Gandhi to Ho Chi Minh. He asserted,

those who pretend to be non-aligned should in fact be non-aligned and stay away from questions on which they are not prepared to take any serious responsibility. Mrs. Gandhi has no constituency in North Viet-Nam and Ho Chi Minh has no constituency in India but Mrs. Gandhi surely does have a major constituency among the American people and she had better give some thought on how to nurse it from time to time.

He emphasized, “No one is carrying a greater burden in serving one of India's vital interests, namely, in organizing a durable peace in Southeast Asia” and warned, “If she feels that she must slant her “non-alignment” in favor of the Communist world in order to

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<sup>156</sup> Note by CS Jha (FonSec) on Chagla (Indian foreign minister)-Rusk Conversation, December 12, 1966, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>157</sup> Mansingh, p. 79.

<sup>158</sup> Lukas, “3 Neutral Nations Ask Bombing Halt,” *NYT*, October 24, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>159</sup> See footnote 2 re Telegram from Harriman to Johnson and Rusk, Teheran, October 31, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 746.

keep her credentials clear with Moscow, she cannot maintain her credentials with the US.”<sup>160</sup>

### **Pakistan: Pressure or Persuasion?**

By the time he would make that statement, India’s credentials with the US would already be damaged. In late summer and fall 1966, unhappiness with India on its approach to Vietnam affected the US view of the approach to take towards Pakistan—specifically on the question of whether or not to resume the supply of lethal military equipment to that country. Rusk’s frustration with India on Vietnam seemed to translate to an inclination towards favoring resumption. Responding to concerns about the potential adverse impact on US relations with India. He stated, “I doubt that we should move toward reliance upon India as our sole partner in the subcontinent because I do not believe that India would accept or play that role.”<sup>161</sup>

Initially, there had been little support for a resumption of supply of lethal military equipment to either country.<sup>162</sup> The senior military leadership was an exception—it wanted to resume sales and possibly grants to both India and Pakistan.<sup>163</sup> Following Gandhi’s statement on Vietnam in July, however, there seemed to be a change in the mood in Washington.<sup>164</sup> The State Department’s argument became that if the US did not resume supply, especially given the level of Indian defense expenditure, Pakistan would turn increasingly to China.<sup>165</sup> While the administration was still debating the matter, the

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<sup>160</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Bowles, May 18, 1967, Ibid, pp. 859-860.

<sup>161</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Bowles, July 26, 1966, Ibid, p. 706.

<sup>162</sup> See Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, June 15, 1966, Ibid, pp. 682-685; footnote 4 re Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS, May 26, 1966, Ibid, p. 684; and footnote 2 re Memo from McNaughton (ASD/ISA) to McNamara re DOD/ISA Study on "The Problem of US Military Assistance to India and Pakistan," June 8, 1966, Ibid, p. 685.

<sup>163</sup> Memo from the JCS to McNamara, June 15, 1966, Ibid, pp. 685-687.

<sup>164</sup> See footnote 2 re Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, July 24, 1966, Ibid, p. 703.

<sup>165</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Bowles, July 26, 1966, Ibid, p. 706.

*Washington Post* reported in late July that the administration had taken a “guarded first step” towards resumption of the supply of spare parts for lethal equipment to Pakistan.<sup>166</sup>

This was met with howls of protest in the Indian parliament.<sup>167</sup> It also left Indian policymakers concerned that the US would make not just their Pakistan problem harder, but also their China conundrum. When the subject of possible resumption of military supply to Pakistan had come up earlier that summer, senior Indian policymakers had asserted that this would only make India-Pakistan rapprochement—a US objective—harder. They had also highlighted close Sino-Pakistan ties, noting that just as China was using North Vietnam as an instrument of its policy, it continued to do the same with Pakistan.<sup>168</sup> While India, like the US, did not want China and Pakistan to move even closer to each other, its policymakers did not think the US resuming the supply of parts would prevent this.<sup>169</sup> 1966 seemed to be the year of Sino-Pakistan friendship. India had watched with anxiety as senior Chinese policymakers, including Zhou, as well as advisors had visited Pakistan. China seemed to be helping Pakistan re-equip her military, with the supply of aircraft and tanks and assistance for new Pakistani divisions.<sup>170</sup> India also received “hints of nuclear cooperation” following a Pakistani leader’s visit to China.<sup>171</sup>

Johnson continued to argue that Delhi could help stem further Sino-Pakistan ties by improving relations with Islamabad.<sup>172</sup> He told BK Nehru that India needed to “do

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<sup>166</sup> Selig Harrison, “Spare Parts Deal Sought In Pakistan,” *WP*, July 29, 1966, p. A1.

<sup>167</sup> Referred to in Memo from Rostow to Johnson, September 28, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 737.

<sup>168</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles/Laise-Gandhi/Swaran Singh/LK Ja/CS Jha Meetings, May 27, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 656-657.

<sup>169</sup> Memcon of Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, August 17, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 715.

<sup>170</sup> Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, p. 163. Mansingh, p. 201. Memo from Rusk to Johnson, April 27, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 629.

<sup>171</sup> Memcon of Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, August 17, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 715.

<sup>172</sup> Letter from Johnson to Gandhi, August 31, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 710-711.

better” on this front.<sup>173</sup> Their bilateral talks had stalled, however, with Pakistan insisting on a Kashmir solution first.<sup>174</sup> The US realized that a Kashmir settlement was unlikely. So Rostow and Rusk wanted instead to urge India to negotiate an arms limitation agreement with Pakistan and “be prepared to listen to the Paks on Kashmir.” Himself upset with Pakistan about its parleying with China, Johnson decided to postpone the spare parts supply question and instead approved Rostow and Rusk’s proposal.<sup>175</sup>

### **Food: With Strings or Chains?**

The postponement of the question of military supply should have pleased India. At that time, however, India was concerned about the US approach to food supply—this approach would make India seriously question US reliability and thus India’s dependence on it. With the monsoon failing for a second year in a row in 1966, there was another serious food shortage in India.<sup>176</sup> In the US, the kind of agricultural surpluses that had facilitated (and indeed led to) the PL480 program were no longer available; the wheat supply was “very tight.” Nonetheless, Freeman had noted that summer that India had “lived up to her commitments” made the previous year and recommended that the US should start negotiations on another PL480 agreement to meet the shortfall expected later that year.<sup>177</sup>

At the end of August the NSC staff had again recommended that Johnson approve an agreement.<sup>178</sup> However, the president, who seemed to have lost any enthusiasm for India because of its performance, priorities and policies, declined to make a decision at

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<sup>173</sup> Memcon of Johnson-BK Nehru Meeting, August 17, 1966, Ibid, p. 715.

<sup>174</sup> Memo from Wriggins to Johnson re Gandhi Letter, August 19, 1966, Ibid, p. 717.

<sup>175</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, September 28, 1966, Ibid, pp. 736-738.

<sup>176</sup> Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 415.

<sup>177</sup> Memo from Freeman to Johnson, July 19, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 699.

<sup>178</sup> Memo from Wriggins to Johnson, August 24, 1966, Ibid, p. 723. Also, see Memo from Freeman to Johnson re his meeting with Subramaniam in Delhi, July 19, 1966, Ibid, p. 699.

that point. In early September, in the context of the upcoming Indian election in early spring and a potential gap in food supplies, Rostow urged approval of the agreement, after having established that it would not adversely affect domestic US prices.<sup>179</sup> Weeks later, having received no reply, he warned of the impact on “the high-level Indian’s view of our dependability.” He also said an indefinite delay would give Gandhi’s opposition ammunition against her.<sup>180</sup> Johnson said he wanted to wait, pointing to Freeman’s recommendation that the US should do so till the domestic price scene became clearer.<sup>181</sup> A couple of weeks later, Rostow again brought up the reliability issue and noted that the “question is whether Mrs. Gandhi can show that US aid pays off or whether her opposition makes stick its charge that she’s sold India’s dignity for a mess of pottage.”<sup>182</sup> Johnson, however, still wanted to hold.

Rusk explained to Bowles that India had been losing supporters even beyond Johnson as a result of its approach on Vietnam. The Gandhi-Nasser-Tito that fall had not helped:

While we must avoid the overt impression of political conditions, the truth is that India has a political constituency in the US which it must nourish if it expects substantial concessional help. This is simply a political fact of life since the President has no resources except those made available by Congress and this in turn is affected by the general political atmosphere. I am sure you realize that the gratuitous departure of India from a position of non-alignment in Viet-Nam does not help at all.<sup>183</sup>

By November, however, with the situation in India deteriorating Freeman and he joined Rostow in recommending at least the approval of a stopgap amount, while waiting to

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<sup>179</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, September 2, 1966, Ibid, pp. 728-729.

<sup>180</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, September 26, 1966, Ibid, p. 734.

<sup>181</sup> See Johnson’s note on Memo from Rostow to Johnson, September 2, 1966, Ibid, p. 735.

<sup>182</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, October 15, 1966, Ibid, p. 739.

<sup>183</sup> Telegram from Rusk to Bowles, November 7, 1966, Ibid, p. 752.

make a larger commitment till the US had a better sense of the status of Indian reforms.<sup>184</sup>

Bowles argued that independent observers, including from USAID, had already reported that India was performing better than ever and had especially made real progress on the agricultural front.<sup>185</sup> The even tighter short tether had opened the Indian government to attack domestically; it was also counterproductive because it made it harder to plan economically for the long term. Bowles pointed out another problem: further delays would likely be evident in India through food shortages just before the Indian elections.<sup>186</sup>

Upset about the Gandhi-Nasser-Tito statement, Johnson, however, pointed out that India did not seem to be concerned about “kicking us” before the US election.” He said he was going to take his time till Congress came on board. He instructed that a study group be sent to India to gauge its performance.<sup>187</sup> Even after Freeman reported the study group’s positive assessment, however, Johnson stated that—because of budget pressure, domestic needs and costs of Vietnam—he did not want to go further than one-quarter of what Freeman was recommending without Congressional buy-in.<sup>188</sup>

In India, aware of the socioeconomic and political implications of the intensifying food crisis, the prime minister instructed her officials to “avoid confrontation or debate” with the US on minor matters.<sup>189</sup> Her government also cautioned the North Vietnamese representative in India against issuing a press release criticizing the US.<sup>190</sup> There had

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<sup>184</sup> Memo from Freeman to Johnson, November 7, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 749-751.

<sup>185</sup> Telegram from Bowles to Rusk, November 8, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 755.

<sup>186</sup> Telegram from Bowles to Rusk, November 8, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 756-757. Also see, Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Subramaniam Meeting, November 12, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 763.

<sup>187</sup> See note re Telcon between Johnson and Freeman, November 11, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 758-759.

<sup>188</sup> See note re Telcon between Johnson and Freeman, November 27, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 763-766.

<sup>189</sup> Note from Gandhi to Chagla, December 1, 1966, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>190</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, November 28, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 768.

already been reports that Gandhi had tempered the nonaligned communiqué's language, eliminating Nasser's condemnation of the US.<sup>191</sup>

Indian policymakers became increasingly upset with the US, however, as Johnson seemed to keep moving the goal posts. The situation was deteriorating so much that in desperation officials proposed purchasing grain from the US despite their constrained resources.<sup>192</sup> The Indian government was under attack at home with even an establishment newspaper stating that "The Grimmiest Situation in 19 Years" was the Congress party's fault.<sup>193</sup> Perhaps to divert criticism from the government, Gandhi publicly noted that November that there was a delay in US shipments. Denying that India was undertaking insufficient reforms, she said the delay meant that the country had to look elsewhere and might have to tighten food rations.<sup>194</sup> While she did not identify India's Vietnam policy as a reason for the delay, leaks from Washington were suggesting that issue as Johnson's motivation.<sup>195</sup> Internally, Subramaniam was losing patience. He asserted that he had contingency plans, but the US needed to make up its mind."<sup>196</sup> The Indian foreign minister also told Rusk that the US food policy was causing resentment in India.<sup>197</sup>

Johnson told Rostow to tell the Indian ambassador that he could "make no commitment now but the Indians should keep quiet and have some faith."<sup>198</sup> A congressional delegation travelled to India and on its return noted that it had been

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<sup>191</sup>Lukas, "3 Neutral Nations Ask Bombing Halt," *NYT*, October 24, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>192</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Bowles-Subramaniam Meeting, November 12, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 763.

<sup>193</sup> Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 415.

<sup>194</sup> See footnote 2 re *AP* article, November 26, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 767.

<sup>195</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, November 28, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 768.

<sup>196</sup> Memo from Freeman to Johnson, November 28, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 771.

<sup>197</sup> See footnote 4 re Memcon of Chagla-Rusk Meeting, December 12, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 777.

<sup>198</sup> Memo for the Record, December 9, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 776.

“impressed by the magnitude of economic progress, especially in agriculture, by the severity of the drought in northern India, and by the awesome prospect of human suffering which is certain to follow if no help is forthcoming.” It recommended that the US send India 1.8 million tons of food for its expected demand in February, March and April. Eventually, two and a half months after the Rostow memo, in late December Johnson approved a proposal but only for half that amount, which he thought could meet India’s requirements through February. Eventually, he decided that in a speech just before the Indian elections he would announce a commitment of 1 million tons of grain.<sup>199</sup> Keeping in mind the US political calendar, he stated that then in February Congress could discuss and approve further aid.<sup>200</sup> Sen. Jack Miller (R-IA), who had been part of the delegation that visited India, kept in mind the Indian elections and suggested that all hearings be delayed till after the Indian election.<sup>201</sup>

Thinking about the Indian political calendar—especially the elections—Indian policymakers lamented that the approved amount was “politically dangerous.”<sup>202</sup> US policy toward India did indeed open Gandhi up to criticism during the election campaign and put her on the defensive. In January, when the government agreed to further restrictions on trade with Cuba and North Vietnam because US legislation required it, critics alleged that Gandhi had accepted “humiliating conditions.” Krishna Menon accused her of continuously giving in to pressure and asserted, “This rot must stop.”

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<sup>199</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, January 12, 1967, *Ibid*, p. 800 and Memo from Rostow to Freeman, January 14, 1967, *Ibid*, p. 802.

<sup>200</sup> Letter From Representatives Poage (D-TX) and Dole (R-KS) and Senator Miller (R-IA) to Freeman, December 20, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 783. Also, see footnote 2 re Johnson-Freeman Telcon, December 22, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 784. Johnson, *Vantage Point*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>201</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Freeman and Sens. Miller and Poage, January 9, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 793.

<sup>202</sup> Telegram from AmEmb Italy to DoS re Eugene Rostow (US/S PA)-Subramaniam/LK Jha Meeting, January 20, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 811.



After initially trying to explain her policy on the basis of pragmatism—noting that India’s choice was to accept the conditions or refuse the food—she subsequently turned to denying that she was succumbing to pressure, asserting, “We would rather starve than sell our national honour.”<sup>203</sup>

## **DISENGAGEMENT (SPRING 1967-WINTER 1968)**

### **Losing Traction**

On the basis of the Indian reaction, the possible adverse impact on the Indian election and economic reforms, support from other countries, Johnson eventually approved 2 million tons for an interim allocation as recommended by various officials. He also recommended in a message to Congress further aid to India and urged the multilateralizing food aid.<sup>204</sup>

In early 1967, Rostow noted that Johnson’s approach on food aid had been “popular at home” and “educational abroad.”<sup>205</sup> It certainly was educational to India, but not in a good way. The experience shook up Gandhi, as did the Indian election results that March. An American intelligence estimate in late 1964 had expected Congress to retain its dominant position.<sup>206</sup> The party indeed remained in power following the elections, but it suffered a serious setback, with Gandhi acknowledging the results as “very bad.”<sup>207</sup> The party went from having 73 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha to 55 percent—the first time its tally had gone below 70 percent. In the state assemblies,

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<sup>203</sup> Lukas, “Indians to Limit Trade with Reds,” *NYT*, January 23, 1967, p. 1.

<sup>204</sup> Memo from Eugene Rostow to Katzenbach (Acting S/S), January 27, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 812-815. Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Posts, February 2, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 817.

<sup>205</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, January 2, 1967, *Ibid*, p. 790.

<sup>206</sup> NIE 31-64: The Prospects for India, December 10, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 168.

<sup>207</sup> “Setback in India,” *NYT*, February 27, 1967, p. 34.

Congress went from holding 61 percent of the seats to 49 percent.<sup>208</sup> Food shortages and economic stagnation were seen as key factors leading to the setbacks.<sup>209</sup>

Adding to the government's challenges was the fact that the China threat remained. Publicly, the foreign minister stressed that it was "a great menace to India and to all Southeast Asian countries."<sup>210</sup> Privately, the policy planning chief concurred, noting that, whatever the internal changes in China, "As far as India is concerned, the attitude remains the same – of hostility and promotion of dislocation and chaos."<sup>211</sup> Most policymakers did not think China would engage in a full-scale war with India, but did expect Chinese pressure on the border, occasional intrusions and border skirmishes, as well as—most significantly—subversion.<sup>212</sup>

Concern about subversion increased with the growing sense of the government's political vulnerability. The elections had made this vulnerability evident. Through those elections, the communist party of India (Marxist), the more ideological offshoot of the communist party, had also come to power in coalitions in Kerala and West Bengal.<sup>213</sup> Overall, the results were seen as a reflection of the electorate's disillusionment with the Congress party and especially its ability to deliver the goods.<sup>214</sup> The outbreak of a Maoist insurgency in Andhra Pradesh and the Naxalite movement in West Bengal that spring only increased the sense of vulnerability to any Chinese efforts at subversion. Radio

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<sup>208</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 419.

<sup>209</sup> Lall, *Emergence*, p. 175.

<sup>210</sup> Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Jonathan Aitken of the *London Evening Standard*, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

<sup>211</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, February 4, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>212</sup> Note by LK Jha on Nuclear Policy, May 3, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 111. Also, see Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Robertson Stephen, Foreign Editor of Observer, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

<sup>213</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, pp. 421-422.

<sup>214</sup> Mansingh, p. 8.

Peking's declaration in support of the Naxalites and description of them as inspired by Mao in June 1967 did nothing to ease concerns.<sup>215</sup>

Policymakers' belief that the "stagnant" economic climate and the "critical" food situation made India more susceptible to Chinese subversion made maintaining the relationship with the US crucial.<sup>216</sup> The Indian government tried to find out if and to what extent the US was willing and able to support India.<sup>217</sup> Policymakers were aware that American agricultural surpluses were drying up.<sup>218</sup> Indian officials worried that this, along with Johnson's insistence on matching food aid commitments from other countries, suggested the beginning of the end of food aid from the US.<sup>219</sup> Gandhi acknowledged, "the whole concept of food aid has changed." Rusk had already indicated to Chagla that the American "tradition" of giving food assistance was "coming to an end;" the US would now expect payment. Gandhi, however, noted to political leaders that India did not have the foreign exchange to purchase enough grain from abroad; as it is, India had to divert resources from crucial sectors like defense towards purchasing food. Thus India needed to focus even more on developing "self-help measures and to mobilizing our internal resources so as to be less dependent on foreign aid."<sup>220</sup>

That would take time, however, so Gandhi defended the continuing resort to food aid from the US, noting that India had no other choice. The Soviet Union, after all, had

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<sup>215</sup> Quoted in Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 423.

<sup>216</sup> Draft Letter from Gandhi to BK Nehru enclosed with Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 30, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 110.

<sup>217</sup> Telegram from Bowles to Johnson and Rusk, March 28, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 827.

<sup>218</sup> BK Nehru, *Nice Guys*, p. 432.

<sup>219</sup> Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Robertson Stephen, Foreign Editor of Observer, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

<sup>220</sup> Letter from Gandhi to CMs, March 7, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91. Also, see Note by CS Jha on Chagla-Rusk Conversation, December 12, 1966, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91. Draft Letter from Gandhi to AK Gopalan (Member of Parliament) enclosed with Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 31, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 110.

not been forthcoming about food aid.<sup>221</sup> Furthermore, overall, the Soviet option had hardly been unproblematic—and definitely not an option that India could rely upon alone. There were concerns about whether a leadership change in Beijing might lead to a Sino-Soviet rapprochement. Indian officials also watched with concern Soviet efforts “to become increasingly friendly towards Pakistan, to reduce that country’s dependence on both the USA and China.” The best the foreign minister could seem to say about India-Soviet relations was that they “had not deteriorated.”<sup>222</sup>

Gandhi and Chagla believed that it was a critical time for the US-India relationship.<sup>223</sup> The government recognized that India continued to need the US to alleviate these problems, but this recognition was now combined with the realization that the circumstances were changing in the US. So Indian officials tried to ensure that India retained some importance to the US. Indian policymakers were aware of changes in the way the US perceived India. They knew that US policymakers were questioning India’s value and capacity. Aware of the repercussions for India if the US lost interest, they continued to try to “sell” India vis-à-vis China. When Rusk, pointing out that the US had invested heavily in India’s success asked what India had done for the US lately, the foreign minister responded that “by standing firm against China [India was] contributing towards countering [the] Chinese menace and thus helping in the containment of China which was also the United States aim.”<sup>224</sup> Publicly, too, the foreign minister reiterated, “It

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<sup>221</sup> Draft Letter from Gandhi to Gopalan enclosed with Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 31, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 110.

<sup>222</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, February 4 and May 20, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>223</sup> Draft Letter from Gandhi to BK Nehru enclosed with Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 30, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 110. Also, see Letter from Chagla to G. Parathasarathi (Indian PR to UN), January 31, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>224</sup> After the meeting the foreign secretary commented on Rusk’s “testiness.” Note by CS Jha on Chagla-Rusk Conversation, December 12, 1966, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

was in the interest of the United States to keep India strong, for if India goes under then the lights of democracy will go out in the whole of Asia.”<sup>225</sup>

The recognition of the China-India connection in the US also made Indian officials aware that a change in America’s policy toward China could also have an impact on India’s role in the US framework. At a foreign ministry meeting, the foreign minister noted the increasing sentiment in American business circles to do business with China. He said that China, on its part, might be motivated toward “getting closer” to the US because of its deteriorating relationship with the Soviet Union. The foreign secretary conveyed Japanese reports that Chinese officials had indicated that they wanted to seek a rapprochement with the US. He thought that once the Vietnam war was over, a rapprochement would be much more likely. The policy planning chief was skeptical, noting that China might hesitate because any rapprochement with the US would “completely destroy the ideological claim and pretensions of China.” Even if there was a rapprochement, he did not think that it would necessarily mean a Sino-US gang-up against the Soviet Union or India. The foreign minister, however, agreed with another senior official who said that any rapprochement would have “serious repercussions” in Asia and that India had “to carefully watch trends in this regard.”<sup>226</sup>

### **Losing Interest**

The US, on the other hand, was watching India less and less. For Johnson, whose focus remained on Vietnam, India was not being helpful and thus was becoming less critical for the US. Furthermore, the country looked like it would at least not fail. Thus,

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<sup>225</sup> Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Robertson Stephen, Foreign Editor of Observer, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92. Also, see Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Jonathan Aitken of the *London Evening Standard*, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCG, SF No. 92.

<sup>226</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, February 4, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

over the last two years of his administration, India slipped down the priority list. Disillusionment started leading to disinterest and disengagement.

In the case of food and economic aid, on the basis of congressional approval and a World Bank assessment that India was keeping up its end of the bargain on reforms,<sup>227</sup> the administration had agreed to multilateral economic and food assistance plans that spring.<sup>228</sup> Later that year, Rostow laid out the case for further food assistance and thus the relationship with the Indian government. As he considered the request, Johnson's desire for disengagement was evident in his response that his advisors get him "someone to argue the other side please."<sup>229</sup> He subsequently asserted, "it would appeal to him if some other nation would recognize their responsibilities in this nation, even the Russians."<sup>230</sup> By the next summer, Congress was appropriating less funds for India than it had for about a decade.<sup>231</sup>

By summer 1967, US officials believed that Indian defense preparations also seemed good enough. An intelligence assessment noted that India was not just likely to be able to win any war with Pakistan, but

could also probably repel a Chinese attack before it could reach the Indian plains. We believe that India's armed forces would be able to prevent a major breakthrough by combined Chinese-Pakistani forces equipped with conventional weapons, though they might have to yield ground in Ladakh and northeastern India.

This assessment contributed to the sense that the level of India's defense expenditure could be curtailed if not cut.<sup>232</sup> It had also contributed to the finding of a review earlier

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<sup>227</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, March 30, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 829-830.

<sup>228</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, April 8, 1967, *Ibid.*, pp. 839-840.

<sup>229</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, August 2, 1967, *Ibid.*, p. 869.

<sup>230</sup> Notes of President's Meeting (Tuesday Luncheon), August 8, 1967, *Ibid.*, p. 874.

<sup>231</sup> Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, p. 4.

<sup>232</sup> SNIE: Indo-Pakistani Arms Race and its Economic Implications, August 3, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 873. Also, see Telegram from Rusk to Bowles, May 13, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 857.

that year of military supply to South Asia that the US did not need to resume military supply in any major way to India. In April 1967, the administration had outlined a new policy designed to “restrain military expenditures...and to encourage highest priority allocation of resources to agricultural and economic development.” The policy restarted a program to train some Indian and Pakistani officers, and opened up on a case-by-case basis the sales of spare parts for US-supplied equipment, but, overall, it signaled the US desire to disengage more generally. It withdrew the US military advisory groups in India and Pakistan, banned the sale of lethal equipment, limited credit sales, and required approval of third-country sales of equipment covered by US controls. The US would finish funding the ground radar system on the Sino-Indian border, because it directly “contribute[d] to US security interests.” Overall, however, Rusk said, “We are in fact reverting to a military relationship with both countries similar to the one we had in the fifties with India (when it was on friendly terms with Communist China and the Soviet Union).”<sup>233</sup>

By 1968, when there was reconsideration of military supply policy, India no longer seemed likely to fall on Johnson’s watch. Thus, while US officials acknowledged that there was “a case for loosening up our military supply policy, especially within the context of the China-India relationship,” there was a sense that “in terms of Indian defense, the need does not now seem compelling.”<sup>234</sup>

The administration had also continued to believe that India could alleviate the “more immediate threat of military pressure from China” by improving relations with

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<sup>233</sup> Telegram From Rusk to Bowles, March 31, 1967, *Ibid.*, pp. 831-832; Telegram From Rusk to Bowles and Locke (ambassador to Pakistan), March 31, 1967, *Ibid.*, pp. 833-834; and Memo from Rostow to Johnson, March 16, 1967, *Ibid.*, pp. 823-824.

<sup>234</sup> Memorandum from Linebaugh (Policy Planning) to Battle (AS/S NESAA), May 27, 1968, NARA, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1967-1969, Political and Defense, Box 2191, POL 1-India

Pakistan. After having made some effort earlier that year to get India and Pakistan to reach an arms limitation agreement, however, the US seemed to disengage even on this front. While “Indo-Pak reconciliation remain[ed] an important U.S. goal,” the administration concluded that

Experience has shown, however, that our resources and influence operate at maximum disadvantage when directed toward goal of reconciliation; in fact good historical case can be made that under present circumstances we cannot bring about reconciliation no matter how hard we try. It follows that our efforts should usually be directed more toward strengthening our bilateral relations with each country than toward bringing them together...

This, of course, meant maintaining a relationship with Pakistan as well, which might irritate India. While India might think the US-Pakistan relationship exacerbated its China problem, the US believed it helped limit India’s China problem. Thus, Rusk asserted that Delhi should realize that it was in neither American nor Indian interests for the US to cede the ground in Pakistan entirely to China.<sup>235</sup>

### **Reducing Dependence**

India needed less external help than before. In the arena of food grains, after 1967 “the new agricultural strategy had begun paying dividends,” assisted by the weather.<sup>236</sup> The government was also better able to purchasing food grains commercially. On the security front, a creditable performance by the Indian military in skirmishes with Chinese troops in 1967 buoyed the government’s confidence. Domestically, after mid-1967 Gandhi started moving towards the left—for her own pragmatic reasons, as well as inspired by her advisors’ principled ones—and continued to do so over the next few years

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<sup>235</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, September 7, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 885-886.

<sup>236</sup> Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 442. Mansingh, p. 111.



to strengthen her weak position.<sup>237</sup> Despite these changes, however, India continued to need—and therefore seek—some international assistance and support.

But, given the changing US attitude, Gandhi's government realized that it could not afford to rely in the medium-to-long term, or perhaps even in the short-term, on the US to help India with its China problem. This led to Indian efforts on a number of different fronts. First, India continued to develop its domestic capacity in both the defense and development realms.<sup>238</sup> Second, in order to continue to diversify its dependence, the Indian government maintained its relationship with the Soviet Union. Third, India tried to develop a Look East policy. Fourth, it kept its nuclear option open. Finally, it contemplated a rapprochement with China. Not all these efforts met with success and some led to friction with the US, but India would persisted on all these fronts—as well as the US one—for the next few years.

### ***The Soviet Option***

India was grateful for the Soviet option. The Soviet Union continued to give India economic assistance; between 1955 and 1968, it provided \$1.4 billion worth of credit to India. Furthermore, it was India's second largest trading partner. On the military side, Indian defense officials considered the Soviet Union to be more liberal with assistance to building India's indigenous defense production capacity and its navy. In May 1968, Moscow would also complete an agreement with Delhi to sell India a hundred Sukhoi aircraft.<sup>239</sup>

Nevertheless, this relationship had its problems too. The Indian government resented Soviet criticism. In 1966-1967, the Soviet Union criticized India's ties to the US

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<sup>237</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, pp. 435-436.

<sup>238</sup> Note from Haksar to HC Sarin (Defense Secretary), March 21, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 40.

<sup>239</sup> Donaldson, pp. 211-214. Mansingh, p. 134, p. 161.

and the composition of the Indian government.<sup>240</sup> It also critiqued India's economic performance.<sup>241</sup> From the Indian perspective, there were problems related to bilateral trade, as well as a number of Soviet industrial projects.<sup>242</sup> There were also complaints in the defense ministry that the Soviet Union seemed to be delaying the supply military spare parts.<sup>243</sup>

What really stung, however, were Soviet-Pakistan relations. While Sino-Soviet relations remained strained, Moscow's relationship with Islamabad kept getting closer. The Soviet Union signed economic assistance agreements with Pakistan in 1966, 1967 and 1968.<sup>244</sup> In fall 1967, Indian officials reacted negatively to the Soviet suggestion that India, as the larger country and given the domestic situation in Pakistan, should be more accommodating to Pakistan—Haksar said this was Soviet “pandering” to Pakistan.<sup>245</sup> Then, Moscow welcomed Ayub Khan and the Pakistani leader subsequently indicated that Soviet leaders had promised him economic aid till 1975.<sup>246</sup> It was his rumored discussions about arms supply, however, that caused concern in India.<sup>247</sup>

In spring 1968, Kosygin, on the first visit by a Soviet premier to Pakistan, pledged economic assistance, as well as the construction of a nuclear power plant.<sup>248</sup> He also agreed to sell military equipment to that country. In India, there were rumors about the latter agreement. There were also reports of potential Soviet aid for the construction of a naval base in Pakistan—the quid pro quo for the Pakistani announcement a few days

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<sup>240</sup> Singh, pp. 57-66

<sup>241</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 69. Donaldson, pp. 213-214.

<sup>242</sup> Mansingh, pp. 172-173.

<sup>243</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 184.

<sup>244</sup> Singh, pp. 57-66; “Soviet Extends a Credit of \$66 Million to Pakistan,” *NYT*, July 25, 1968, p. 14.

<sup>245</sup> Note from Haksar to Kewal Singh (Indian ambassador to the USSR), September 19, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 118.

<sup>246</sup> “Ayub Khan Ends Soviet Visit,” *NYT*, September 29, 1967, p. 30.

<sup>247</sup> Mansingh, p. 199.

<sup>248</sup> Joseph Lelyveld, “Kosygin Pledges More Economic Aid to Pakistan,” *NYT*, April 19, 1968, p. 16.

before that it was not going to renew the US lease for the Badabar base near Peshawar. A few weeks after Kosygin's visit, Soviet navy vessels visited Pakistan.<sup>249</sup> Then a few months later, in early July, a senior Pakistani military delegation travelled to Moscow.<sup>250</sup> Delhi soon received news from Moscow that the delegation was there to negotiate a defense deal, which was subsequently completed. Gandhi expressed to Kosygin her concern that the Soviet tie was making Pakistan more intransigent. She linked recent hostile statements made by the Pakistani president and foreign minister to Islamabad's developing relationship with Moscow. Furthermore, she worried about Kosygin trusting Pakistan's assessments of India-Pakistan dynamics over those of India. Implying that Moscow should not try to play third party, she suggested that it use its "growing influence" with Pakistan to encourage them to talk directly to India.<sup>251</sup>

Internally, Haksar expressed a more serious Indian concern stemming from the Soviet "erroneous and misguided" decision. He worried that the Soviet decision raised questions about Soviet reliability and thus it had implications for India-Soviet relations more generally. Furthermore, it also strengthened domestic critics of the India-Soviet relationship and of nonalignment.<sup>252</sup> Moscow's explanation—which sounded a lot like Washington's previous ones—that improving relations with Islamabad allowed it to undercut Sino-Pakistan ties was not very reassuring.<sup>253</sup> Gandhi was unhappy enough that she considered asking Moscow to cease military supply to both India and Pakistan. Defense ministry officials would scotch this idea.<sup>254</sup> Continuing Soviet pressure to talk to

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<sup>249</sup> Mansingh, p. 139. "Pakistan Bids US Close Base in '69," *NYT*, May 21, 1968, p. 11; "Soviet Naval Visit Begins in Pakistan," *NYT*, May 26, 1968, p. 8.

<sup>250</sup> Mansingh, p. 200.

<sup>251</sup> Gandhi's Draft Letter to Kosygin (Soviet premier), July 6, 1968, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 135.

<sup>252</sup> Notes from Haksar to Gandhi, July 13, 1968, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 135.

<sup>253</sup> Mansingh p. 200.

<sup>254</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 95.

Pakistan about Kashmir, however, only increased the Indian unhappiness about “diluted” support from Moscow.<sup>255</sup>

Gandhi stated publicly that the Soviet plan was “fraught with danger.” Given the American experience with Pakistan, she doubted that any Soviet assurances about restrictions on the use of the supplied weapons would help.<sup>256</sup> In parliament, Gandhi acknowledged that she shared the country’s “unease and anxiety,” which had people protesting against the Soviet Union in the streets. She saw Pakistan’s overtures to Moscow as designed to limit Soviet arms supply to India. She said that Soviet supply to Pakistan would add to regional instability and increase India’s defense burden.<sup>257</sup> An observer commented that the development had clearly shaken up the leadership and “Indians were probably doing more rethinking last week of their place in the world than at any time” since the 1962 war.<sup>258</sup>

Nonetheless, India had little choice but to maintain the Soviet option. So Gandhi and other government officials tried to calm sentiments. When some cabinet members wanted to cancel the Indian president’s scheduled state visit to Moscow in protest, others like defense minister Swaran Singh and finance minister Moraji Desai calmed them down.<sup>259</sup> Gandhi also tempered her public criticism of the Soviet-Pakistan relationship.<sup>260</sup>

When Soviet troops undertook a crackdown in Czechoslovakia that summer, the anti-Soviet sentiment in India only deepened, but, overall, the government avoided any harsh criticism of the invasion. Public opposition in India was vocal. There was also

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid, p. 69. Mansingh, *India’s Search for Power*, p. 138.

<sup>256</sup> “Soviet Agreement to Sell Arms to Pakistan Reported,” *NYT*, July 10, 1968, p. 12.

<sup>257</sup> Gandhi’s Draft Speech in Parliament, July 20, 1968, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 135. Also, see Lelyveld, “Mrs. Gandhi Sees Rise in Tension,” *NYT*, July 23, 1968, p. 3.

<sup>258</sup> Lelyveld, “India and Pakistan: the Soviet Arms Deal,” *NYT*, July 28, 1968, p. 134.

<sup>259</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>260</sup> Mansingh, p. 139.

opposition to the government attitude in the cabinet and party. A non-official resolution in the Lok Sabha expressed the country's "support and sympathy" for the Czech people. A cabinet minister even resigned over the issue. However, as Tharoor has noted, Gandhi controlled her pronouncements on the subject so as not to upset Moscow. Her foreign minister supported this approach and, at the UN, India abstained from voting on a resolution condemning the invasion because the wording could not be changed from "condemn" to "deplore."<sup>261</sup>

### ***The Look East Option***

Overall, however, with one benefactor losing interest in India, and the other showing a bit too much interest in Pakistan, Indian policymakers saw the writing on the wall. They continued to seek to decrease their dependence on the superpowers to the extent possible. This meant looking at other potential partners more closely. There had been criticism that India had not been doing enough in Southeast Asia, especially given that it shared the Chinese challenge with many countries in the region. Observers then and later criticized Gandhi's "abdication of responsibility in Asia." In 1966, Lee Kwan Yew complained that he had tried to get Gandhi interested in an "Asian regional arrangement to contain China." Her lack of interest, however, caused him to comment that she and her advisers resided in a "dream world." India had indeed been skeptical of regional organizations or coordination. It had previously demurred from joining ASEA in 1961, the Maphilindo confederation in 1963 and 17-nation conference on regional economic cooperation in April 1965. Subsequently, it did not join the nine-nation Asian and Pacific ministers' conference in June 1966 or the October 1966 conference on

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid, pp. 138-139. Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, pp. 81-82, p. 122, pp. 129-130, p. 140.

Vietnam in Manila and then it went back on a decision to participate in the 1968 Jakarta conference.<sup>262</sup>

After 1967, however, the Indian government did attempt to look east to a greater degree. Indian policymakers exchanged visits with Southeast Asian leaders and even gave aid to countries like Indonesia.<sup>263</sup> This policy was based on the feeling that almost all the countries on China's periphery shared India's assessment of the Chinese threat. Chagla told foreign ministry officials that India could "play a big role in South East Asia towards the containment of China."<sup>264</sup> Unlike some others in the foreign ministry,<sup>265</sup> he preferred enhancing bilateral economic and cultural ties between India and the various countries of South East Asia. He believed that if India proposed regional cooperation, the small countries might see this as an Indian attempt to seek dominance in the region.<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, he ruled out the idea of forming an anti-China political or military regional group since "military pacts...create more problems and complications."<sup>267</sup> Instead, he believed that the countries should focus on building their own and each other's economic

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<sup>262</sup> The Singaporean leader's comments were made to an Indian journalist in 1966. Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 99, pp. 199-201.

<sup>263</sup> Chagla visits to Indonesia (post-Sokarno?), Thailand, Burma (Review of Indian Press Opinion on the Foreign Minister's Recent Visit to Indonesia, Thailand and Burma by Deputy Director, ISI, MEA (Bose), January 27, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.) The Indonesian foreign minister visited India (Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Robertson Stephen, Foreign Editor of Observer, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92). Chagla also visited Malaysia and Singapore (Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, May 20, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.) India also had an annual dialogue with Australia (Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Jonathan Aitken of the *London Evening Standard*, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.). For discussion on aid, see Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, February 4, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>264</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, February 4, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>265</sup> See JS (PP)'s view in Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, February 4, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>266</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, February 4, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>267</sup> Points Made by the Foreign Minister in his Interview to Mr. Robertson Stephen, Foreign Editor of Observer, London, February 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

strength because “only an economically strong and viable South East Asia...will be able to contain China and ward off its expansionist threat.” He believed such strengthening should be done in coordination with—or at least with the knowledge of—Japan, the Soviet Union and the US.<sup>268</sup>

Finance Minister Desai also acknowledged that India needed to improve relations with countries in the Asia-Pacific more broadly.<sup>269</sup> Gandhi herself travelled to Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia in 1968 in an effort to improve contacts with those countries.<sup>270</sup> This effort would continue, as would complaints that India was not doing enough. Internal differences about whether to pursue a bilateral or a multilateral approach, as well as limited resources and capacity, however, seemed to play a role in limiting India’s efforts and success on this front.

### ***The Nuclear Option***

Thus far, limited resources had also played a role in limiting the Indian government’s desire to exercise its nuclear option. Many in the US had also not wanted India to acquire an independent nuclear weapons capability for this reason. When a Chinese nuclear test had seemed imminent in fall 1964, in order to deter India from going nuclear and investing heavily in conventional arms Bowles had proposed to Indian officials that they consider seeking an American nuclear umbrella. Bowles had also suggested to US officials that Washington play up the Chinese nuclear threat to gain leverage with India. Others such as McCone, however, had not wanted to highlight it lest it push India towards a nuclear weapons program.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Note from Chagla to the Minister of State, January 9, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>269</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, September 15, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 888.

<sup>270</sup> Mansingh, p. 29.

<sup>271</sup> Letter from Bowles to Bundy, September 16, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 152-153.

After China had tested on October 16 that year, the Indian ambassador had noted the immense pressure on the Indian government to nuclearize because of the relative fall in India's power, as well as the "psychological advantage" China had attained. He had added, however, that the government had decided not to pursue a program. He warned that eventually it might not be able to resist the pressure.<sup>272</sup>

The US had wanted to discourage an Indian program on economic and security grounds.<sup>273</sup> There was a debate on what it might take to keep India from nuclearizing. An intelligence estimate had laid out three key factors that would likely play into any Indian decision to go for the bomb: cost, developments in the Chinese program and its impact on Chinese behavior, and "the importance the Indians attach to assurances from the US and other nuclear powers."<sup>274</sup>

One immediate impact of the Chinese program had been Indian concern about the rise in Chinese status with the nuclear test.<sup>275</sup> On this, the US had been willing to consider taking steps to alleviate India's "prestige problem."<sup>276</sup> Indian officials like Homi Bhabha, head of the Indian department of atomic energy, had indeed stressed that the US needed to take action to help highlight India's other achievements in science and technology.<sup>277</sup> Furthermore, to give India a realistic estimate of the Chinese nuclear threat, the US had shared information with India on the Chinese program.<sup>278</sup> Finally, the US ambassador had made clear to the Indian atomic energy chief that he had

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<sup>272</sup> Memcon of Meeting between BK Nehru and Foster (ACDA Director), November 3, 1964, Ibid, p. 164.

<sup>273</sup> Memcon of Meeting between BK Nehru and Foster, November 3, 1964, Ibid, p. 164.

<sup>274</sup> NIE 31-64: The Prospects for India, December 10, 1964, Ibid, p. 169. Also, see Memo to Holders of NIE 4-2-64 and NIE 31-64, February 25, 1965, Ibid, pp. 192-193.

<sup>275</sup> Memcon of Meeting between BK Nehru and Foster, November 3, 1964, Ibid, p. 165. Also see Bhabha's view in Memcon of Meeting between Bhabha (Indian DAE Secretary) and Ball, February 22, 1965, Ibid, pp. 187-190.

<sup>276</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, December 12, 1964, Ibid, p. 170.

<sup>277</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Bhabha and Ball, February 22, 1965, Ibid, pp. 188-189.

<sup>278</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Shastri meeting, March 5, 1965, Ibid, p. 194.



underestimated the costs—and perhaps even the time—of producing an Indian bomb by at least two-thirds.<sup>279</sup> Bowles had hoped that this would contribute to the Indian leadership's own concerns about costs that had been a deterrent in the past.<sup>280</sup>

At that stage, however, the US had not wanted to provide more than a general non-specific assurance.<sup>281</sup> In the aftermath of the test, Johnson had given a speech indicating American support for countries subjected to nuclear coercion or attack. The joint chiefs and the secretary of defense had agreed that the US should give “general assurances” to those threatened by the Chinese but, worried about their facilities in Pakistan, they had asserted that any specific talks with India should keep in mind the goal of not alienating Pakistan.<sup>282</sup> A more overarching concern had been that any specific assurance would tie US hands.

India had a dilemma on this front. On the one hand, the assurance contained in Johnson's speech was too implicit to be considered reliable. The Indian ambassador had noted his skepticism of the reliability of such an informal assurance, especially in the absence of a formal US-India tie. He had noted his belief that “the United States would not come to our aid by attacking China if at the same time the Soviet Union said that it would assist China under such an attack.”<sup>283</sup> On the other hand, however, India had little desire to pursue an explicit assurance that would require it to make a binding commitment to the US. Shastri had made clear that India could not join a military alliance.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, January 21, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 182. Also, see footnote 5 on the same page.

<sup>280</sup> Guha, *India after Gandhi*, p. 391.

<sup>281</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, December 12, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>282</sup> See footnote 2 re JCS paper on Thompson Committee report on the Indian Nuclear Problem, October 23, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>283</sup> Memcon of Meeting between BK Nehru and Foster, November 3, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 165.

<sup>284</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Shastri meeting, March 5, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 194.

That did not, however, mean that India had not wanted any assurance. Shastri had told British Prime Minister Harold Wilson to let the Johnson administration know that the only alternative to an Indian nuclear program that he perceived was a nuclear umbrella supplied by the nuclear powers, including the Soviet Union.<sup>285</sup> Publicly, as well, he had urged that the nuclear powers find a way to assure nonnuclear nations about their security against a nuclear attack.<sup>286</sup> He had reiterated in spring 1965 that the superpowers, at least, should guarantee the safety of nonnuclear states. He did not ask for an assurance just for India, asserting that it would be “unwise.”<sup>287</sup> A general guarantee would not burden India with the appearance of having joined an alliance. Furthermore, a joint guarantee would not require India to tilt, would not provoke the Soviet Union or drive it back toward China, and, furthermore, would be a hedge against the uncertain reliability of one guarantor.

Meanwhile, the US had received reports that the Indian cabinet had given Bhabha the go-ahead for the first stage of producing a nuclear weapon and would review the situation after a year. US officials had worried that India had been leaking such information in order to elicit a guarantee from the US. Swaran Singh, however, had told Bowles that the prime minister’s position remained the same—India was not developing nuclear weapons—and India would let the US know if anything changed.<sup>288</sup>

By spring 1965, however, US intelligence analysts had asserted that if India did not have an international security guarantee in this realm, it was more than likely that India would go nuclear.<sup>289</sup> However, in Washington, concerns about giving India such a

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<sup>285</sup> See footnote 2 re Shastri’s visit to the UK in December 1964, *Ibid*, p. 170.

<sup>286</sup> “Nuclear Guarantee is Urged by Shastri,” *NYT*, December 5, 1964, p. 9.

<sup>287</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS re Harriman-Shastri meeting, March 5, 1965, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 194.

<sup>288</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to DoS, December 31, 1964, *Ibid*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>289</sup> Memo to Holders of NIE 4-2-64 and NIE 31-64, February 25, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 193.

guarantee, alone or with others remained. Ambassador-at-large Llewellyn Thompson had been concerned that Bowles had been indicating to Indian officials that the US was willing to offer India a specific guarantee. He and others had reservations about such a guarantee, especially a joint one with the Soviet Union.<sup>290</sup> Bowles had wanted Washington to think, at least, about “parallel action” with Moscow.<sup>291</sup> Thompson had suggested offering some other kind of assurance, but something that kept “freedom of action” in US hands.<sup>292</sup>

That attitude and the implication about US reliability, however, was another reason that India had little desire to pursue a guarantee solely from the US. The 1965 war did little to alleviate concerns about the reliability of external benefactors. At the onset of the war Rusk had indeed predicted, “if the Chicom get involved or this conflict runs its present course...India, feeling let down by the West and its national prestige at stake, would almost certainly go for the nuclear bomb.”<sup>293</sup> US intelligence assessment indicated that the war had indeed strengthened the hands of the advocates of a nuclear weapons program. However, it had also strengthened Shastri, who did not want to nuclearize and his greater domestic political strength had allowed him to hold off these calls. Nonetheless, the assessment expected the policy to change and predicted, “within the next few years India probably will detonate a nuclear device and proceed to develop

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<sup>290</sup> See footnote 3 re Ambassador at Large Llewellyn Thompson’s memo to Rusk, December 31, 1964, *Ibid*, p. 177.

<sup>291</sup> Telegram From Bowles to Komer, January 8, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 178.

<sup>292</sup> See footnote 7 re Memo from Thompson to Rusk, Talbott, Ball and Rostow, January 30, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 183.

<sup>293</sup> Memo from Rusk to Johnson, September 9, 1965, *Ibid*, pp. 377.

nuclear weapons.”<sup>294</sup> There was little expectation that India would give up its nuclear option.<sup>295</sup>

“Keeping the Indians away from nuclear weapons,” however, remained a basic US interest.<sup>296</sup> Rusk noted to Johnson that to be able to “head off” an Indian nuclear weapons program, the US would have to

be more responsive to Indian security needs, preferably in some way that will minimize our own commitment. However, we must recognize that this response would almost certainly involve an increased and more specific US commitment in the subcontinent and would entail important costs in terms of probable reactions of other states.

Rusk recommended against giving India a bilateral nuclear assurance at that time. He noted, however, that Johnson could tell Gandhi that

if a growing Chinese Communist nuclear capability should ever pose a serious threat to India, you hope she would frankly discuss the question with us so that we could examine together possible means to meet that threat without nuclear proliferation and without Indian assumption of the heavy economic and other burdens of a nuclear weapons program.

He could also offer to continue to share intelligence with her government on Chinese capabilities and remind her that the US was talking with the Soviet Union about how to ensure the security of non-nuclear weapons states.<sup>297</sup>

On her trip to the US, Gandhi asserted that India did not want to produce nuclear weapons. Her close aide, LK Jha, however, added that without another option ensuring non-nuclear states’ security, this decision—already under attack in India—would not be politically sustainable. Rusk noted that some sort of joint US-Soviet action vis-à-vis the security of non-nuclear states was not “inconceivable,” but there was little interest in

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<sup>294</sup> SNIE 31-1-65: India’s Nuclear Weapons Policy, October 21, 1965, Ibid, p. 451.

<sup>295</sup> SNIE 31-32-65: Indo-Pakistani Reactions to Certain US Course of Action, December 7, 1965, Ibid, p. 490.

<sup>296</sup> Memo from Bundy to Johnson, October 5, 1965, Ibid, p. 446.

<sup>297</sup> Memo from Rusk to Johnson, March 16, 1966, Ibid, pp. 582-583.

Moscow even to talk about the subject. He suggested that the other option that could be considered was joint US-UK action, but that would probably require an alliance. The Indian foreign secretary confirmed that India did not want an alliance and that, as Shastri had previously mentioned, India did not want just a US-UK guarantee.<sup>298</sup>

Indian officials were concerned that while China loomed large for Delhi, differences among the superpowers on obligations that a non-proliferation treaty would require of them in terms of cuts and verification were sidetracking the question of security of non-nuclear states.<sup>299</sup> This concern only increased after another Chinese nuclear test in summer 1966. Gandhi laid out for Johnson the domestic calls in India for a nuclear weapons program and that “each fresh report of China's activity in this regard strengthens this demand and attracts new adherents to it.”<sup>300</sup>

At a NSC meeting after the test, Johnson expressed concern about the political pressure on the Indian government to nuclearize. He believed it would negatively affect India's economy and Asian stability. Participants considered various options to prevent an Indian nuclear weapons program, including economic pressure, a US-Soviet arms control agreement that could decrease the Indian need to get a bomb, or bilateral or multilateral security guarantees to India. Vice president Humphrey suggested UN assurances combined with private US assurances—that would mean the Soviet Union could join if it wanted to; India would not feel pressured publicly to attach itself to the US; and the Soviet Union would not have to object. There was little consensus on what route to take. Rostow noted that the US needed to “to buy time until the Indians came to

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<sup>298</sup> Memcon of Gandhi-Rusk Meeting March 29, 1966, *Ibid*, pp. 600-602.

<sup>299</sup> Memcon of Gandhi-Rusk Meeting March 29, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 601.

<sup>300</sup> Letter from Gandhi to Johnson, May 12, 1966, *Ibid*, p. 648.

accept the necessity for Western assistance.”<sup>301</sup> Johnson subsequently approved the further exploration of alternative courses of action.<sup>302</sup>

That examination, however, came up with no answer, noting “we have been unable to devise anything dramatic which would not cost us more than any anticipated gain.” It recommended only further study while the US generated broader non-proliferation steps.<sup>303</sup> In the meantime, a State Department paper recommended sharing intelligence on the Chinese nuclear program with India, especially highlighting its deficiencies. Furthermore, it suggested emphasizing to Indian officials the costs of a nuclear weapons program, while simultaneously working with them to find ways to increase Indian prestige. It also recommended consideration of ways to link economic assistance to an Indian pledge not to go nuclear. In addition, the paper suggested working with Moscow to generate UN assurances to non-nuclear weapons states and come up with an arms control agreements. Simultaneously, however, the paper called for further studies on how to credibly assure India, what action to take in case of a Chinese nuclear threat to India, and what to do if India went nuclear.<sup>304</sup>

India, on its part, continued to look for an assurance. One option considered by officials in spring 1967 was to get a declaration in association with a potential nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). On a multi-country visit to explore the question Jha noted to Rostow that he had elicited Soviet agreement to such a declaration, which could be made in parallel with an American announcement when the NPT was signed. It would state that if non-nuclear signatories were at the receiving end of a nuclear threat or attack, the nuclear states would have a responsibility to act through the UNSC; furthermore, that

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<sup>301</sup> Summary Notes of the 558<sup>th</sup> NSC Meeting, June 9, 1966, Ibid, pp. 671-672.

<sup>302</sup> NSAM No. 351: Indian Nuclear Weapons Problem, June 10, 1966, Ibid, p. 673.

<sup>303</sup> Memo from Rusk to Johnson, July 25, 1966, Ibid, p. 702.

<sup>304</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, August 1, 1966, Ibid, p. 708.

nuclear states would be allowed to act on this assurance without a prior UNSC vote. Jha wanted to gauge US interest in exploring with the Soviet Union the question of making such a parallel declaration.<sup>305</sup>

Rostow called the option a “real breakthrough.” Johnson, however, merely told Jha that the draft of the potential Soviet declaration was “very interesting” and the US would study it. Subsequently, Rusk discussed it with Soviet foreign minister Gromyko in late June. He mentioned his concern that India seemed to be moving away from linking an assurance with the NPT. Gromyko assured him that for Moscow the two remained linked; something it had made clear to India. Rusk also laid out the problem from the US perspective: needing Senate ratification for any unilateral nuclear assurance. He believed it would be easiest to make an assurance through a UNSC resolution. Gromyko, however, noted, that India wanted a more “definite” assurance than a UN Charter-based assurance.<sup>306</sup>

The government of India wanted an assurance from both superpowers not just to limit criticism at home that it was renouncing non-alignment, but as insurance against a change in either superpower’s relations with China. Concern about the impact of potential changes in attitude towards China, along with Johnson’s short-tether policy, the US response during the 1965 war, and deepening Soviet-Pakistan relations had reinforced the Indian sense that the country needed to have multiple friends rather than to rely on only one bloc.

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<sup>305</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, April 15, 1967, Ibid, p. 845.

<sup>306</sup> Memo from Rostow to Johnson, April 15, 1967, Ibid, p. 845; Memcon of Johnson-LK Jha Meeting, April 19, 1967, Ibid, p. 845; Memcon of Rusk-Gromyko Meeting, June 23, 1967, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968 Volume XV: Arms Control and Disarmament* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1997) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XI*], pp. 482-483, p. 486.

Indian policymakers were realistic about the chances of getting a legal—as opposed to political—commitment from both countries, especially because the government was pushing for an assurance that covered non-nuclear states. It wanted such a guarantee for deterrence, to ensure that Washington knew where Moscow stood and vice versa, as well as to reassure its own public. In an internal memo, Jha also laid out why he thought such a legal commitment was unnecessary: “guarantee or no guarantee,” if there was a “Chinese attack on India in the near future, both the USA and the USSR would undoubtedly take the strongest possible action.” He said that this was also a reason India did not have to go nuclear. Furthermore, if India produced nuclear weapons, it would “greatly reduce the restraint on China using nuclear weapons against us and also weaken the political compulsions on the USA and the USSR to come to our help in such an eventuality.” In any case, India could not catch up with China.

Jha, himself, however also noted that an assumption that Moscow and Washington would come to India’s assistance versus China meant “living dangerously.” India needed to “recognise that conditions may change.” Even if there was a guarantee, it would hardly be “fool-proof, because if the political factors are unfavourable, some excuse can always be found to delay action, to act half-heartedly and ineffectively, or not to act at all.”<sup>307</sup> Doubts about reliability of external benefactors meant that even a guarantee “could be no substitute for its own defence. The implementation of such a guarantee, when the time arose, would necessarily depend on prevailing political circumstances.”<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Note by LK Jha on Nuclear Security, May 2, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 111. Also, see Note by LK Jha on Nuclear Policy, May 3, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 111 and Summary of LK Jha’s Discussions in London with the PM, FonSec (Chalfont), CommSec, May 5, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 110.

<sup>308</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, May 20, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.



Thus, for others such as the foreign minister questions about reliability meant that India needed to keep its nuclear option open. As Chagla said “We do not know what the alignments of power might be after four or five years.”<sup>309</sup> To Indian officials this was also a reason not to sign the NPT, even if Moscow linked any guarantee to Indian participation in the NPT.<sup>310</sup> The mood in India subsequently seemed to sour on both the NPT and an assurance. Critics stated that the government had not thought through the guarantee and what it would entail, including, potentially, military bases. Others questioned the reliability, criticizing the government for seeking “a nuclear umbrella without a handle.”<sup>311</sup> By the time the Indian deputy prime minister visited the US that fall, India’s lack of interest in a guarantee was publicly evident.<sup>312</sup> In Washington, Desai “discounted [the] efficacy of security assurances.” He also repeated Indian objections to the NPT.<sup>313</sup> Along with home minister YB Chavan, Desai repeated those objections in internal discussions that November as well.<sup>314</sup>

India’s continuing refusal to sign the NPT would lead to friction with the US. Haksar, however, caustically described the treaty as “born out of...a facile assumption that if you put a lid on a boiling cauldron, it magically stops boiling.”<sup>315</sup> As far as Indian policymakers were concerned, not only were the superpowers not moving toward disarmament, but, in the meantime, China was “merrily exploding nuclear weapons.”<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Foreign Minister’s Budget Speech in Lok Sabha, July 18, 1967, NMML, MCG, SF No. 92.

<sup>310</sup> Note by LK Jha on Nuclear Security, May 2, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 111. Also, see Summary of LK Jha’s Discussions in London with the PM, FonSec (Chalfont), CommSec, May 5, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 110.

<sup>311</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 180. Questions about the credibility and desirability of any guarantee also came up at a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party. See Note from MCC to PM, May 4, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91.

<sup>312</sup> John W. Finney, “Indian Indicates Shift on A-Pact,” *NYT*, September 13, 1967, p. 28.

<sup>313</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, September 15, 1967, *FRUS 1964-68 Vol. XXV*, p. 888.

<sup>314</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 121.

<sup>315</sup> Letter from Haksar to AR Gopal-Ayenger (BARC), April 6, 1968, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 36.

<sup>316</sup> Lall, *Emergence*, p. 181.

The NPT had emerged from a “coincidence of interest between USSR and USA,” but it was not in Indian interest. Lacking steps towards disarmament, the treaty would not “add to the sense of security in the world.” Two of the five nuclear powers were not even signing it:

This might not have mattered but for the fact that one of the non-signatories is our neighbour, namely, China, who is full of hostile intentions towards our country. It is not subject to the discipline which arises from membership of the United Nations; it accepts no generally accepted norms of international behaviour and accepts no restraint. It is imbued with an ideology which seeks to interfere in the affairs of the other countries.<sup>317</sup>

Years earlier Nehru had asserted that no disarmament attempt would be effective if it did include China.<sup>318</sup> Even before the Sino-Soviet split had become evident, India had been concerned that a China left out of the international system that developed “sophisticated weapons” would not even be subject to restraint from Moscow.<sup>319</sup> Now with strained relations with both superpowers, China was still outside the international system and thus potentially dangerous. Thus while India’s representatives in the NPT discussions in spring 1968 had instructions not to underplay or overplay the Chinese nuclear threat, that threat—and the need to keep India’s nuclear option open—led to India’s decision not to sign the document.<sup>320</sup> India could not close any option that could help it deal with the threats it faced.

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<sup>317</sup> Instructions to India’s Representative to UN on NPT, April 20, 1968, NMML PNH (I-II), SF No. 35. Also, see Summary of LK Jha’s Discussions in London with the PM, FonSec (Chalfont), CommSec, May 5, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 110 and Mansingh, pp. 58-59.

<sup>318</sup> Memo of JLN-Eisenhower Conference, New York, September 26, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 563; Record of JLN-Khrushchev Talk, Delhi, February 12, 1960, NMML, SDP, SF No. 24.

<sup>319</sup> Memcon of JLN-Herter Meeting, New York, October 7, 1960, *FRUS 1958-60 Vol. XV*, p. 566.

<sup>320</sup> Instructions to India’s Representative to UN on NPT, April 20, 1968, NMML PNH (I-II), SF No. 35.

### *The China Option?*

That even meant considering mitigating the China threat by reaching out to Beijing. The desire to reduce dependence—and prepare for a change in the superpowers’ relations with China—indeed led to discussions about a potential rapprochement with Beijing. The Chinese threat had not disappeared. The Chinese test of a hydrogen bomb in June 1967 served to increase Indian concerns further. The foreign minister noted that it added a “new dimension to our defence problem.”<sup>321</sup> The internal situation in China might seem to be in flux with the cultural revolution, but he asserted privately that “if anything, the Chinese were becoming more bellicose in their relations with India.”<sup>322</sup> The mistreatment of Indian diplomats by Red Guards in China that summer did not help. A sense of internal vulnerability remained as well.<sup>323</sup> Policymakers believed that China and Pakistan were helping Naga and Mizo insurgents in India.<sup>324</sup> Senior Indian officials worried about the “malaise” in India’s northeast. Indian domestic intelligence worried about the increasing communications between China and Naga insurgents. Army officials downplayed the significance of these contacts, but Haksar asserted that India had to be worried about the pattern of Naga insurgents coming to and from China.<sup>325</sup>

The foreign minister asserted that there was “no doubt” that Sino-Pakistan collusion continued.<sup>326</sup> The October 1967 Sino-Pakistan agreement for the construction of an all-weather road between Xinjiang and Pakistan-held Kashmir proved to be an

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<sup>321</sup> Foreign Minister’s Budget Speech in Lok Sabha, July 18, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

<sup>322</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of MEA Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Directors, May 20, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 91. Also, see Foreign Minister’s Budget Speech in Lok Sabha, July 18, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

<sup>323</sup> Mansingh, p. 202.

<sup>324</sup> Foreign Minister’s Budget Speech in Lok Sabha, July 18, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

<sup>325</sup> Cabinet Secretary and Home Secretary shared Haksar’s concerns. Note from Haksar to Gandhi, March 12, 1968, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 129. Also, see Guha, *India after Gandhi*, pp. 430-431.

<sup>326</sup> Foreign Minister’s Budget Speech in Lok Sabha, July 18, 1967, NMML, MCC, SF No. 92.

additional source of concern.<sup>327</sup> When what have been called the “bloodiest Sino-Indian clashes since the 1962 war” broke out at the Sikkim border in September 1967, it just seemed to confirm India’s fears. As Garver has noted, by the end of the clash, Indian policymakers were “quite pleased” with the troops’ performance.<sup>328</sup> As reports at the time indicated, India was better prepared to engage Chinese troops.<sup>329</sup> This improved performance created confidence in the effort to depend on internal resources. It also perhaps gave Indian policymakers more confidence to signal China that the door was open to negotiations.

India made some informal overtures to China in 1967, but they had not been reciprocated or welcomed.<sup>330</sup> In spring 1968, Gandhi made a statement calling on China to establish better relations with states like India even if their governments had different political compositions.<sup>331</sup> In September 1968, India again called for talks with China. Such efforts, if nothing else, served to show the Afro-Asian world that India was not the intransigent country.<sup>332</sup> The prime minister’s office also briefed Gandhi to state later that year, “we do not believe that one can proceed on the assumption of eternal animosity and conflict.”<sup>333</sup>

Given the lack of response, the foreign ministry continued to be careful about any steps that might provoke China. While the 1967 skirmishes had been going on, Desai on a visit to the US said he favored a two China policy. After the skirmishes ended, the

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<sup>327</sup> Mansingh, p. 201.

<sup>328</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 171.

<sup>329</sup> “China’s Own Worst Enemy,” *NYT*, September 14, 1967, p. 46.

<sup>330</sup> Singh, p. 62

<sup>331</sup> Mansingh, p. 204

<sup>332</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 87.

<sup>333</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi enclosing Points which PM may wish to make in regard to the current situation in the international field, November 5, 1968, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 45

foreign ministry had denied that this was official policy.<sup>334</sup> Gandhi privately explained that, “In the present strained relations between India and China, any pointed departure from the present practice might be treated by Peking as an affront to their sovereignty and provide them with an excuse for causing additional strain along our borders.”<sup>335</sup> Then, when the Dalai Lama visited Delhi in November 1968 and requested meetings with the senior leadership, Haksar asked Gandhi to consider turning down his request to see her and the deputy prime minister. He also asserted that the defense minister should definitely not see the Dalai Lama.<sup>336</sup> This careful approach also aided the effort to keep the door open. The Indian foreign secretary pointed out that India had to keep trying: “We have at present very little leverage with China...Ultimately however we have to convince China that confrontation with us can harm its interests while, on the other hand, cooperation with us can be of much greater advantage than cooperation with any other power.”<sup>337</sup>

The US response to these Indian efforts made evident how much changed. The prospect of Sino-India rapprochement no longer struck fear in the hearts of officials; instead they almost sounded relieved. Noting that “India, like us, has twin problems of defense and accommodation with China,” an official reflected the dominant US view that “[r]egarding the latter, the removal of a source of conflict between China and India—conflict which could involve the US—[was] far more important than the effect a border settlement would have on the exact degree of Indian nonalignment.”<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 122.

<sup>335</sup> Note from Gandhi to Acharya Kriplani, September 27, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 118.

<sup>336</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi on Visit of the Dalai Lama, November 20, 1968, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 45. Also, see Note from Haksar to FonSec, November 21, 1968, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 45.

<sup>337</sup> Points for FonSec’s Lecture on Pakistan, China and USSR, undated, NMML, TNK, SF No. 13.

<sup>338</sup> Memorandum from Linebaugh to Battle, May 27, 1968.

## Chapter 7: Fluid New World (1969-1972)

Over the next phase of the relationship, the shared US and Indian view of China unraveled. At the start of this phase the state of Sino-US and Sino-Indian relations was in flux. By 1971, the situation changed to the extent that the US went from an administration having contemplated sending an aircraft carrier to the Bay of Bengal to defend and support India against China in 1962 to another US administration sending the same aircraft carrier to the bay to deter Delhi and demonstrate to Beijing that it was willing to oppose India.<sup>1</sup>

At the onset of the period that this chapter covers, there were simultaneous but separate US and Indian efforts to seek a rapprochement with China. But the US initiative bore more fruit than that of India. This development had an adverse impact on US-India relations as US President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger came to perceive the Indian government's attitude and actions—especially those related to the 1971 Bangladesh crisis—as a threat to their efforts to engage China. Once again, American and Indian perceptions of and policy toward China diverged, with a detrimental impact on the US-India relationship. Kissinger later noted that in Nixon's world, there were arenas for cooperation and areas where interests clashed. During this phase India moved from the former to the latter.<sup>2</sup>

The White House's altered attitude and approach to China affected the US-India relationship in three ways. First, in the path to secure a rapprochement, Pakistan was a key facilitator—a crucial mean to a critical end. Second, Nixon and Kissinger came to see

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<sup>1</sup> Perkovich has noted the irony of this fact in George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 705.

India as a spoiler to their achieving a rapprochement. Third, a rapprochement with China considerably diminished India's importance in the US strategic framework.

The Indian government led by Indira Gandhi, on the other hand, continued to see China as a threat—alone and in collusion with Pakistan—especially as India's efforts to improve relations with China did not yield significant results. This threat loomed larger in 1971 when there was a real prospect of an India-Pakistan war, with China lining up on Pakistan's side. During the crisis, Indian policymakers found that US protection against China, which they had implicitly counted on, was no longer available. To make matters worse, the White House did not stay neutral. Instead, Indian officials believed that post-Sino-American rapprochement, the US lined up with China and Pakistan against India. This led to India signing a treaty with the Soviet Union as an insurance policy. During and after the crisis, the idea of a Beijing-Washington plan to use Islamabad to contain India and prevent its strengthening took hold in India. This feeling bled into every aspect of the relationship as the two countries seemed to disentangle from each other. Towards the end of the period this chapter covers, the state of affairs between Delhi and Washington left the Indian ambassador in Washington commenting to the US deputy national security advisor, "the present state of Indo-American relations could well have provided the plot for a farce by Moliere."<sup>3</sup>

## **REACHING FOR RAPPROCHEMENTS (1969-1970)**

### **US Views of China and India**

Candidate Richard Nixon had mentioned his interest in exploring engagement with China as early as 1967. A year after that, outgoing National Security Advisor Walt

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<sup>3</sup> Indian ambassador to the US LK Jha's Record of his Conversation with Al Haig (Deputy NSA), August 23, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

Rostow noted to his successor that one of the “objectives...within [the new administration’s] grasp” was the “beginnings of normalizing our relations with Communist China.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, early in the administration, Nixon demanded of Kissinger: “How do we establish relations with China?”<sup>5</sup>

China, as then Kissinger aide Winston Lord later noted, was important not only “for its own sake,” but also because of the Nixon administration’s other two priorities: the Soviet Union and Vietnam.<sup>6</sup> At a time when US dominance and its strategic and economic superiority were under threat, Nixon and Kissinger directed their foreign policy efforts toward maintaining “America’s standing in the world.” Based on a “a realistic assessment” of national interest, Vietnam-era geopolitical and domestic realities, and the belief that a balance of power would produce global stability, Nixon’s foreign policy came to revolve around what was called triangular diplomacy—the “calculated management of policy on mutual relations between and among the United States, the Soviet Union, and China.”<sup>7</sup>

Chinese hostility had not disappeared; nor had the threat. Nixon and Kissinger—who would dominate foreign policymaking in the administration—perceived Beijing’s involvement in the Vietnam War as contributing to their Vietnam conundrum, but they

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<sup>4</sup> Nixon, “Asia after Viet Nam”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (October 1967), pp. 111-125; Personal Memo from Walt Rostow to Kissinger, December 23 1968, NARA, Nixon Presidential Materials (hereafter cited as NPM), Henry A. Kissinger (HAK) Office Files, HAK Administrative and Staff Files, Transition, Box 4. Rostow believed that the (beginning of) normalization of Sino-US relations was possible within 12-18 months.

<sup>5</sup> Winston Lord (NSC Staff), quoted in “The Nixon Administration National Security Council,” *Oral History Roundtable, The NSC Project*, December 8, 1998 (<http://www.brookings.edu/projects/archive/nsc/19981208.aspx>), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 703; Nixon, “First Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s,” February 18, 1970, in *Public Papers of the President of the United States, Richard Nixon, Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President: 1970* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 119; Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, Revised ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994), p. 276.



also saw China as part of the solution to that conundrum. Furthermore, they also believed that bringing China in from the cold made a potential China threat “more manageable and predictable.”<sup>8</sup> Finally, they could use Beijing to out-maneuver Moscow.

Early in his administration, Nixon expressed a desire to reevaluate US policy towards China. There were skeptics, including Kissinger initially, but the president persisted. Within the US, Nixon moved on two fronts. Inside the administration, in February 1969, Nixon directed the NSC to examine existing US policy towards China and Taiwan, as well as the costs and benefits of alternate approaches. That summer, senior policymakers discussed in an interagency forum the potential risks and rewards of changing China China policy. The NSC document presented to Nixon subsequently in August suggested three options: continuing the existing strategy of isolation, increasing it or reducing it.

Externally, Nixon instructed senior officials to begin to create the right atmosphere among the public and policymaking community for a potential change in policy. The White House expected support from liberals, academics, and some in the business sector and in the State Department. Among the public, most of the vehement hostility toward “Red China” and communism had petered out by the time Nixon had come to office. The China lobby had lost traction by the late 1960s. The White House, nonetheless, expected opposition from allies abroad, from conservatives, including in Congress, as well as from some in the State Department concerned about the impact on relations with the Soviet Union. So Nixon directed Kissinger to discuss a potential change in approach toward Beijing with key legislators.

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<sup>8</sup> Margaret Macmillan, “Nixon, Kissinger, and the Opening to China” in Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston eds., *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 112; HAK Talking Points re US China Policy for August 14, 1969 NSC Meeting, NPM, NSC Institutional Files, NSC Meetings, Box H-023, NSC Meeting (San Clemente) 8/14/69 Briefings.

The strategy to make Beijing aware that Washington was interested in improving relations involved a two-pronged effort on the part of Nixon and Kissinger and a close circle of advisors. One prong involved public signaling through public proclamations. This included Kissinger's speech in December that the US had no "permanent enemies" and would judge countries on the basis of actions and not ideology, as well the president's foreign policy report. It also involved actions like suspending high-speed American naval patrols and eventually regular patrols in the Taiwan Strait. Following an NSC recommendation in summer 1969 that Washington move to improve relations with Beijing, the administration also eased trade and travel restrictions.

The other prong involved secret diplomacy and linked the rapprochement effort with South Asia—not through India, which two decades before had played mediator, but via Pakistan. Nixon had worried about publicly showing too much eagerness for a rapprochement or offering negotiations only to be snubbed by Beijing—which might negatively affect US prestige abroad and his political prospects at home. There was also a lack of trust in most of the foreign policy bureaucracy. Thus, Kissinger and he preferred to move discreetly.<sup>9</sup>

This meant finding a third-country intermediary. The White House tried to indicate its willingness to reach out to Beijing through a number of countries, including Cambodia, France and Romania. It was Pakistan, however, that developed into the crucial element in what Kissinger aide Helmut Sonnenfeldt called the administration's "subterranean activity."<sup>10</sup> What had earlier been Pakistan's greatest liability in US eyes—

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<sup>9</sup> Macmillan, "Nixon, Kissinger, and the Opening to China," p. 107-121. Also, see Winston Lord and Helmut Sonnenfeldt's comments in "The Nixon Administration NSC," p. 16, pp. 18-19, p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> "The Nixon Administration NSC," p. 17. Pakistani leader Ayub Khan had indeed suggested such an intermediary role during the Johnson administration. See note 2 re Telegram from AmEmb Pakistan to DoS, February 25, 1964 in *FRUS 1964-1968 Vol. XXV*, p. 49.

its “natural all[iance]” with China—had become its greatest asset. From late 1969 through summer 1971, Islamabad played a critical role in passing Washington’s messages to Beijing. Due to Pakistan’s role in the rapprochement effort, Nixon became adamant about the need “to do something” for that country. Subsequently, there was an increasing sense of urgency in the White House to “move” on a broader resumption of military supply, which Pakistan had been seeking.<sup>11</sup> This would have consequences for the US-India relationship.

As Kux has noted, South Asia had not been a major priority for the incoming Nixon administration in 1969. It had by no means, however, been written out of the script entirely. Nixon intended to develop and maintain good working relationships with India and Pakistan, both of which he perceived as holding some significance—Pakistan in the short term as a channel to China and India over the long run.<sup>12</sup> For Nixon, even looking beyond Vietnam, Asia was “where the action is.”<sup>13</sup> In his view “[a]ny discussion of Asia’s future must ultimately focus on the respective roles of four giants:” China, India, Japan and the US.<sup>14</sup> Most of the president’s predecessors would not have argued with that statement. Nixon, however, envisioned different roles for each of the giants, especially

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<sup>11</sup> Report on Major Problems and US Objectives: Near East and South Asia, December 1968, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Administrative and Staff Files-Transition, Major Problems and US Objectives: Near East and South Asia, Box 4; Minutes of Meeting of the NSC Review Group, Washington, November 25, 1969, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1969-1976, Volume E-7: Documents on South Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC, 2005) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7*] (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d43>); see footnote 1 re Letter from Schneider (DoS India Country Director) to Keating (US ambassador to India), December 23, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d45>); footnote 1 re Kissinger’s note on Telegram from Keating to DoS, February 22, 1970, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d48>).

<sup>12</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 280

<sup>13</sup> MemCon of Nixon-Dinesh Singh (Indian foreign minister) Meeting, Washington, July 10, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d26>)

<sup>14</sup> Nixon, “Asia after Viet Nam,” p. 119.

China. And this altered view of China would come to have a significant impact on US-India relations.

By the end of the Johnson administration, doubts about India's capacity had considerably eroded its utility as a contrasting model to or bulwark against China. Like Johnson, Nixon found India "both challenging and frustrating: challenging because of its promise, frustrating because of its performance." In 1969, this assessment of India's internal efforts and US officials' belief that India was most vulnerable to internal "fragility" kept the focus of the bilateral relationship on bolstering India economic development and political stability rather than its defense resources. An interagency group acknowledged that the US still had an "interest in India's ability to defend its borders against Asia's one big Communist power," but there was a sense that India seemed to be militarily capable enough to "defend itself simultaneously" against China and Pakistan.<sup>15</sup>

The focus on development was not altogether unwelcome in Delhi. As the US and other aid donors noted, by the time Nixon came to office, the Indian economy had improved considerably. India still had a long way to go, however, and continued to need foreign assistance. Nixon assured Indian officials that development assistance would continue.<sup>16</sup> And these Indian officials preferred the new president's method of providing that aid. Gandhi's closest aide P.N. Haksar noted approvingly that the new administration was not questioning India's defense expenditures.<sup>17</sup> In addition, unlike Johnson, Nixon

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 119; Analytical Summary Prepared For the NSC Review Group, November 22, 1969. Also, see Military Supply Policy toward South Asia in the Context of Our General Posture There, July 8, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President's Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India

<sup>16</sup> Telegram From the Mission to the OECD to Rogers (S/S) in New Delhi, May 23, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d22>); MemCon of Nixon-Dinesh Singh Meeting, Washington, July 10, 1969.

<sup>17</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Rogers, May 24, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 139. For Haksar's influence on Gandhi, see Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 434-435.

asked to review major economic assistance packages annually so that he could simultaneously consider food and economic assistance. On Kissinger's recommendation, the president did not make a small piecemeal commitment—partly to make evident that his approach was going to be a “marked contrast” to that of Johnson's short tether policy. In July 1969, Nixon approved a \$300 million PL480 package and a \$35 million loan for India even though USAID was not ready with a proposal for economic assistance. This was in addition to the \$55 million worth of food aid he had initially sanctioned as part of a continuing program for India. The next year, he approved \$193 million in economic assistance for India.<sup>18</sup> All this aid was in keeping with the goal that the administration had outlined as being in the US interest—supporting the political and socio-economic development of India.

Nixon's changing assessment of China reinforced the emphasis on economic relations with India. While Johnson administration officials had doubted the feasibility of India playing a role vis-à-vis China, the Nixon White House also questioned the desirability of even seeking such a role. Anticipating Indian concern about any sudden normalization with China, US officials thus sought to prepare the ground.<sup>19</sup> In May 1969, Secretary of State William Rogers—who himself was not aware of all the details of Nixon's China plans—admitted to the Indian prime minister that the US was “seeking” to talk to China. Gandhi recalled her own overtures to China, noting, however, “[t]here had been no reaction.” Kissinger, in turn, told the Indian ambassador that “the US may have

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<sup>18</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, July 18, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d28>); Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, March 20, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d12>); Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, Washington, undated, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d59>). Nixon approved the memo on May 19, 1970.

<sup>19</sup> Memo from Saunders (NSC Staff) to Kissinger re Your Appointment with Jung (Indian ambassador) on June 18, June 17, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595.

an easier chance than the USSR to normalize relations with China.” Nixon subsequently indicated to the Indian foreign minister that he did not buy the conventional wisdom “that the way to solve the China problem is to ‘gang up’ on China.” He asserted that he neither had illusions about Beijing, nor was he apologizing for its actions, but “all Asia must eventually move forward together.” In words that echoed those of Nehru two decades before, Nixon highlighted the danger of “trying to isolate China.” The president indeed noted his belief that Gandhi shared this view, which they had discussed when he had visited Delhi in 1967. Later in summer 1969, during Nixon’s visit to India, Kissinger, too, noted to Indian officials that the US was “open to contacts” and had made some “symbolic moves” toward China.<sup>20</sup>

Hints of a potential change in the US attitude towards China were not restricted to the corridors of power in India. On tour in Asia, Rogers also publicly suggested a more conciliatory US approach towards China. US officials noted that opinion leaders in India publicly speculated about American attempts to improve relations with China. Indeed, pro-Soviet “propagandists occasionally raised the bogey of a Washington-Peking axis.” Pakistan’s potential role as a channel to China was not entirely a secret in South Asia as well, with Pakistani newspapers stating in the lead up to Nixon’s visit to the subcontinent that “news reports in America and India have clearly indicated that Nixon will ask Pakistan to play the role of conciliator between China and the US.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Telegram From Rogers to DoS, May 29, 1969; MemCon of Meeting between Kissinger and Jung on June 18, June 25, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595; MemCon of Nixon-Dinesh Singh Meeting, Washington, July 10, 1969; Record of Foreign Minister’s Talk with President Nixon, July 10, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 42; MemCons of Nixon-Gandhi Meetings, New Delhi, July 31, 1969 and August 1, 1969. At the time, a BBC commentator also noted that Nixon sounded like Nehru re Asia (and peace). FBIS, Foreign Radio and Press Reaction to President’s Trip to Asia and Romania, August 6, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 464, East Asia Trip 1969 [Part 3].

<sup>21</sup> Robert Trumbull, “Rogers is Ending his Pacific Tour,” *NYT*, August 11, 1969, p. 7; Current Climate of Opinion in India, July 22, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 463, July-August 1969 Trip – Memoranda [2][1]; USIA, Worldwide Treatment of Current Issues (Special: Nixon Trip), July 23, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 461, July-August 1969 Trip - Miscellaneous Planning

A US interagency assessment indicated that non-communist Asia would likely have two “competing” reactions to any Sino-US rapprochement. Some in those countries, who thought Washington’s existing China policy was “totally unrealistic” and only increased the likelihood of war, would “welcome” a rapprochement. Others would “fear” it, assuming that this meant “the United States was withdrawing from Asia.”<sup>22</sup> Both sentiments were evident in India. They were even apparent in Gandhi’s public contention that US “recognition of China as a world power might be helpful in creating a new environment in Asia. But that would still leave the question of what to do with their power.”<sup>23</sup> With China still considered a threat, there was concern in India about potential US withdrawal and subsequent Chinese dominance in Asia. But, with parallel attempts by Gandhi to engage China underway as well, this concern was balanced with understanding.

### **India’s Views of China and the US**

The Indian government’s efforts to reach out to Beijing preceded those of Washington. Some have argued that India designed these overtures to warn Moscow off its growing friendship with Islamabad.<sup>24</sup> But they were not necessarily just designed to spur the Soviet Union. Indian officials had discussed their desire to seek a *modus vivendi* with Beijing privately with their US interlocutors as well. In a summer 1969 meeting with Nixon, India’s foreign minister acknowledged that Gandhi, too, believed that China

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<sup>22</sup> Response to NSSM 14: US China Policy, August 8, 1969, NPM, NSC Institutional Files, NSC Meetings, Box H-023, NSC Meeting (San Clemente) 8/14/69 Briefings.

<sup>23</sup> Selig S. Harrison, “Mrs. Gandhi: Moderate Signs in China,” *WP*, February 14, 1969, p. A21.

<sup>24</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 286. Also see Harrison, “Mrs. Gandhi: Moderate Signs in China,” p. A21.

should be brought into “the world community.”<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, Indian officials even sought to discuss “cooperation with China” with Kissinger.<sup>26</sup>

The Indian government’s efforts to mitigate the China threat were partly motivated by the desire to reduce India’s overall dependence on external actors to the extent possible. India had more confidence than before, but it was still dependent on external assurance on the security front, especially since it had not yet exercised its nuclear option and indigenous defense production could not meet demand. The reliability of assurances from both Moscow and Washington, however, was questionable, given increasing Soviet-Pakistani interaction and the memory of American neutrality in 1965. A rapprochement with China could reduce India’s need for these external assurances.

There was another internal reason motivating the government to seek improved relations with China. As Haksar noted, continued hostility from China “distorte[ed] the country’s economy by obliging [India] to maintain a high level of defence spending. This led to shrinkage both of the external and internal resources.”<sup>27</sup> Rapprochement could thus also free up funds for India’s development needs at a “time of travail,” when India was economically vulnerable and Gandhi politically so.<sup>28</sup>

Thus—despite little or no response from Beijing to earlier trial balloons—in January 1969, Gandhi publicly signaled that India was ready to dialogue with China

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<sup>25</sup> Memo from Linebaugh to Battle, May 27, 1968; MemCon of Nixon-Dinesh Singh Meeting, Washington, July 10, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d26>).

<sup>26</sup> Memo from Saunders to Kissinger re Your Meeting with Jung, September 17, 1969 in NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595.

<sup>27</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Kosygin, May 6, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 139 (drafted after discussion with FS Kaul? and DPD).

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Gandhi to General Ne Win (Burmese leader), August 29, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43. A sign of her government’s desire to concentrate on domestic political and economic matters was evident in the motivation to refuse to host the Commonwealth PM’s Conference and the Conference of Non-Aligned States in 1970—an opportunity that Nehru would have welcomed. Draft letter from Gandhi to GS Dhillon (Lok Sabha speaker), May 2, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153. Also, see Mansingh, p. 196.



without preconditions in the hope that this would eventually lead to a settlement of the border dispute. A month later, she again indicated that India was open to talking to China.<sup>29</sup> She maintained this stance even when China rejected her offer as “hypocritical.” The Indian foreign minister reiterated that India was open to negotiating with China, as long as Beijing showed India some respect. The government also publicly played down reports of Chinese border ultimatums to India in April 1969. Privately, Delhi instructed Indian troops at the border to be prepared, but also careful not to take any action that could be misconstrued as provocative. Even as Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated over the spring and India received reports of China moving some of its nuclear installations from Xinjiang to Tibet, the foreign ministry reiterated publicly that India was keeping the door open to talks with China. Later in the year, Gandhi made it a point to send greetings to Beijing on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic.<sup>30</sup>

There were some signs of reciprocity—what Haksar called “slight changes.”<sup>31</sup> In spring 1969, the Chinese deputy premier unusually did not mention India—or the US—in a speech at a Pakistani reception in Beijing. Indian policymakers observed that the Chinese chargé had started attending official functions in Delhi.<sup>32</sup> With China still in the throes of the cultural revolution, however, the Chinese response was limited. Haksar expressed frustration that Indian overtures only seemed to be met with “rebuff and

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<sup>29</sup> “Mrs. Gandhi’s Stand on Neighbors Eased,” *NYT*, January 2, 1969, p. 6; Mansingh, p. 244; Singh, p. 67; Harrison, “Mrs. Gandhi: Moderate Signs in China.”

<sup>30</sup> Memo from Chester Bowles to Rogers on India: Prospects and Implications of a Breakthrough, April 18, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595; Mansingh, p. 204; Telegram from Weathersby (AmEmb India) to DoS re Nathula, April 27, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595; Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 140; Sydney H. Schanberg, “China Said to Be Moving Nuclear Plant to Tibet,” *NYT*, September 13, 1969, p. 5; Note from Haksar to JS (MEA/Protocol), September 24, 1969 re Draft message from Gandhi to PM of PRC in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

<sup>31</sup> Note by Haksar, September 17 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

<sup>32</sup> “High Peking Aide Gives a Mild Tali,” *NYT*, March 24, 1969, p. 9; Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 140.

discourtesy.” In this context, it was difficult to determine whether even the small signs of a change in Beijing’s attitude toward India “mean[t] anything.”<sup>33</sup>

Uncertainty meant that Indian policymakers remained concerned about the external threat from China. Given the state of Indian defenses, even a “limited engagement” with China, would be “quite serious.”<sup>34</sup> Policymakers watched closely Beijing’s attitude towards Delhi, as well as towards Moscow and Washington. China hands in India saw as a bad sign the Chinese cancellation in February 1969 of talks with the US in Warsaw and the clashes with the Soviet Union in March.<sup>35</sup> In the aftermath of additional Sino-Soviet skirmishes in August, Gandhi was additionally anxious about Chinese troop movements in Tibet and Xinjiang, concerned that “having failed to make any impression on the Soviet Union, the Chinese might turn their thoughts towards our country and may find in Pakistan a ready response.”<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, while Nixon was plotting a potential path to Beijing through Islamabad, in Delhi there was persistent anxiety about China plotting with Pakistan against India. The continued Sino-Pakistan construction and operation of a road linking Pakistan-held Kashmir and Xinjiang exacerbated these concerns. As Garver has noted, Indian officials saw this as part of “China’s effort to encircle India via cooperation with Pakistan.” The establishment of a Sino-Pakistan coordination bureau to coordinate training, financing

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<sup>33</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Kosygin, May 6, 1969; Note by Haksar, September 17 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

<sup>34</sup> In a draft letter, Gandhi said “the path chosen by China remains a complete enigma to us.” Draft Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, April 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203; Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969.

<sup>35</sup> Memo from Bowles to Rogers on India: Prospects and Implications of a Breakthrough, April 18, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595. Also, see the Indian foreign minister’s statement in parliament quoted in Mansingh, p. 141.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, August 30, 1969 and Haksar Draft of Letter from Gandhi to Tito, September 8, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

and arms supply to various insurgent groups operating in India's northeast would have done nothing to alleviate Delhi's concerns.<sup>37</sup>

For Delhi remained worried about the internal threat from China, especially during a time of turmoil in India's northeast. Senior Indian policymakers conveyed their anxiety about Chinese support for "hostile tribes" within the country to both senior American and Soviet officials.<sup>38</sup> The arrest in India of Naga guerillas trained in China seemed to highlight Beijing's role in this area. China also started to supply arms to Mizo insurgents that year. Chinese military leader Lin Biao's reiteration of Chinese sympathy and support for revolutionaries in India at the ninth party congress in April only heightened Indian concerns. The formation in April 1969 of the extremist communist party of India (Marxist-Leninist) that looked to Beijing for guidance did not help, even though, at least initially, they did not receive the amount of assistance they sought.<sup>39</sup>

Uncertainties in India's relations with its eastern and northeastern neighbors only increased worries about India's vulnerability vis-à-vis China. In 1969, Sikkim's leader broached the subject of revising the 1950 treaty, which had established Sikkim as a protectorate of India.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the Nepalese prime minister cancelled an arms assistance agreement with India and demanded that India reduce its presence in Nepal. He denied that Beijing was urging these steps, but Chinese reports, nonetheless, praised Kathmandu's stance as one against the "aggressive designs of Indian imperialism."

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<sup>37</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, January 27, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 39; Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 94, pp. 206-207; Schanberg, "New Chinese Road to Kashmir Arouses Deep Concern in India," *NYT*, June 30, 1969, p. 6; Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, August 30, 1969 and Haksar, Draft Letter from Gandhi to Tito, September 8, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

<sup>38</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Kosygin, May 6, 1969; Note from Haksar to Gandhi, September 20, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43; Telegram From Rogers to DoS, May 29, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d24>); Record of Foreign Minister's Talk with President Nixon, July 10, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 42.

<sup>39</sup> "Naga Leader Seized on Return to India," *NYT*, March 17, 1969, p. 10; "Chinese Affirm Hard-Line Stand in Party Report," *NYT*, April 28, 1969, p. 1; Kunhi Krishnan, *Chavan*, pp. 251-255.

<sup>40</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, February 26, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 44.

Gandhi believed that the Nepalese leadership, in turn, was “encouraging” Beijing.<sup>41</sup> Finally, Indian officials remained concerned about increasing Chinese influence and presence in northern Burma.<sup>42</sup>

Indian concerns about China also persisted because of hostile rhetoric from Beijing. China issued protests about the intrusion by all things Indian—from aircraft to linoleum. Beijing also continued to accuse Delhi of colluding with Washington to exploit China’s vulnerability in Tibet. Furthermore, “try[ing] to take advantage of India’s dependence on western aid,” China seemed to be undermining India in other parts of the developing world.<sup>43</sup>

With its efforts to engage China going nowhere, the Gandhi government engaged with other countries to contain and mitigate the China threat. It looked east where there were “serious apprehensions” about China, with Gandhi visiting Japan and Southeast Asia, and the deputy prime minister Morarji Desai also travelling to the region. Concerned about Southeast Asia’s vulnerability to China, a potential vacuum if and when the US withdrew, and its own relative neglect of the area, India made efforts to reach out to these countries with “high-level bilateral consultations.”<sup>44</sup> Closer home, to assuage Nepalese concerns, India downgraded its military presence in Nepal. Nonetheless, to

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<sup>41</sup> “Nepal Bids Indians Withdraw Military,” *NYT*, June 26, 1969, p. 3; Tillman Durdin, “Nepal’s Dispute with India Grave,” *NYT*, July 18, 1969, p. 5; Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969.

<sup>42</sup> “Burma Hill Tribes Face New Trouble,” *NYT*, November 23, 1969, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> “Linoleum Blown into China from India Causes Protest,” *NYT*, May 12, 1969, p. 44; “Peking Charges India Arms and Finances Tibet Exiles,” *NYT*, January 4, 1969, p. 21; Note from Haksar to KK Dass (Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry), May 6, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 139.

<sup>44</sup> Haksar, Draft Letter from Gandhi to Tito, September 8, 1969, NMML, SF No. 43; Memo from Chester Bowles to Rogers on India: Prospects and Implications of a Breakthrough, April 18, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595. A former Japanese diplomat told a senior official that India needed to act quickly to deal with the “aloofness and coldness which had developed in Japan towards India.” (Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 28, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 139.) Overall, these efforts did not meet with much success whether due to lack of effort on India’s part or lack of interest in Southeast Asia. See Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, pp. 201-203.

maintain its influence—and not create a vacuum that China might fill—India rejected Nepalese calls for substantial changes in the broader Indo-Nepalese security framework.<sup>45</sup> To reassure the Sikkimese, Haksar also suggested a critical reappraisal of India-Sikkim relations.<sup>46</sup>

The Gandhi government even made an attempt toward rapprochement with Pakistan. Indian officials said Delhi was willing to offer “an unconditional commitment that [it] shall not transgress Pakistan’s territory.”<sup>47</sup> In June 1969, Gandhi expressed the hope to Soviet officials—who had been urging an India-Pakistan rapprochement so they could “jointly tackle China”<sup>48</sup>—that Pakistan would attend a regional conference on transit, but Pakistan demurred. She then wrote to Yahya Khan urging a re-start of commercial, economic and cultural relations, and proposing the establishment of India-Pakistan cooperative mechanisms. Subsequently, in July, an Indian minister travelled to Pakistan hoping for a resumption of trade and transportation links. Gandhi even sent a no-war proposal in 1969.<sup>49</sup> But Gandhi found the response “disappointing.”<sup>50</sup>

India also continued to look to Moscow for implicit and explicit security assistance against China. Despite hiccups in supply, the Soviet Union remained India’s main military supplier.<sup>51</sup> Gandhi told Soviet premier Kosygin that China’s “unabated”

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<sup>45</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 143, p. 149.

<sup>46</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, February 26, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 44.

<sup>47</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Air Marshal Nur Khan (Governor, West Pakistan), May 6, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 139. Also see Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Kosygin, May 6, 1969; and Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969.

<sup>48</sup> Extracts from Letter from R. Bhandari (Indian chargé in Moscow) to DP Dhar (ambassador to the USSR) regarding Meeting with Pegov (Soviet ambassador to India), March 27, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

<sup>49</sup> Referred to in Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Kaul (FonSec), May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>50</sup> Tillman Durdin, “Pakistan Spurns a Plea by India to Reopen Trade and Transport,” *NYT*, July 13, 1969, p. 4. Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, August 30, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

<sup>51</sup> Memo from Bowles to Rogers on India: Prospects and Implications of a Breakthrough, April 18, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595.

“malevolence” towards India and its “attack” on the Soviet Union in 1969 had only created a “new bond” between India and the Soviet Union. Kosygin, in turn, declared to Gandhi that the other nuclear powers would not “allow” the use of nuclear weapons against India.<sup>52</sup> In addition to offering more military aid, Soviet defense minister Marshal Grechko assured Indian officials that if China attacked India, the Soviet Union would provide assistance. Moscow also suggested to Delhi that the two countries sign a treaty, with Soviet official Nikolai Pegov selling the treaty as “very good insurance against any possible aggression by China or Pakistan.”<sup>53</sup>

The Indian ambassador in Moscow saw the Soviet offer of a treaty—put forward in March and April—as motivated by deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations. Kosygin brought the offer up again with Gandhi and tried to sweeten the deal by offering economic incentives. While some Indian officials were keen to act on the offer,<sup>54</sup> Gandhi was hesitant because of the domestic and Chinese reaction. She worried that the treaty would be seen as a move away from nonalignment or “directed against a third party.” Nonetheless, she agreed to “exploratory talks.” At this stage the provisions discussed seemed more akin to those in the Panchsheel treaty. When Kosygin brought up the idea of including political cooperation in the treaty, Gandhi stopped him. She reacted even more strongly against Kosygin’s mention of the possibility of incorporating mutual

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<sup>52</sup> Draft Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, April 1969; Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969.

<sup>53</sup> “Grechko Ends Visit to India,” *NYT*, March 10, 1969, p. 11. Also, see Extracts from Letter from Bhandari to DP Dhar regarding Meeting with Pegov, March 27, 1969, Draft Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, April 1969 and Note from Kaul to Haksar on DP Dhar’s Meeting with Foreign Minister, April 7, 1969 in NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

<sup>54</sup> See Haksar’s view below. Dhar argued for the treaty saying it would come with defence equipment. See Note from Kaul to Haksar on DP Dhar’s Meeting with Foreign Minister, April 7, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

assistance provisions in the treaty, noting that that would make it “a military agreement.”<sup>55</sup>

Some officials like Haksar urged Gandhi to strike while the iron was hot. He asserted that India needed to take advantage of “Soviet anxiety” vis-à-vis China at the time. The situation could change “overnight” and India could not “proceed upon the assumption...that India is of such vital importance to the Soviet Union that we can just sit back and relax and do stone walling.” India needed to consider the treaty “in the light of cold reason and self-interest.” The US was too distant and “can give us little comfort in such a situation.” Furthermore, India needed to consider the possibility of Indian “dilly-dally[ing]” resulting in the Soviet Union signing “a Pact of perpetual peace and non-aggression with Pakistan.”<sup>56</sup>

Concerns about the Soviet-Pakistan relationship—and the resultant doubts about Soviet reliability—on the other hand also played into Indian hesitation about the treaty. Moscow’s attempt at a “new look” relationship with Pakistan had enhanced concerns about its dependability.<sup>57</sup> Indian officials repeatedly warned Soviet counterparts about equating India and Pakistan, as well as about the consequences of militarily aiding Pakistan. Kosygin tried to play down the level and kind of assistance. He used the same justification that Indian policymakers had heard from Washington—that it was in India’s interests that the Soviet Union supply Pakistan lest the latter became too dependent on

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<sup>55</sup> Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969. This documentary evidence contradicts the assertion of some such as Tharoor, who have suggested that Gandhi was not involved in the treaty discussions and the assessment that “she had a “poor grasp of the details of policy and her inability to think of foreign affairs in any but the most generalized terms.” See Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 106.

<sup>56</sup> “Ideological considerations are meant for neophytes. Situated as we are in South Asia, with our entire Northern borders covered by China and USSR, we have to live with this geographical configuration.” Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 31, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 139. He had earlier noted to Gandhi that he had an “entirely favourable” reaction to the treaty. See Handwritten comment by Haksar to Gandhi on Letter from DP Dhar to Kewal Singh (Secretary, MEA), March 31, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203. For a discussion of the impact of Soviet proximity to India, see Mansingh, p. 131.

<sup>57</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, January 27, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 39.

other sources.<sup>58</sup> Questions about Soviet reliability persisted in India, however, further fueled by concerns about whether the Soviet attitude towards China would change—officials noted that, after all, Soviet attitudes towards various countries had changed rapidly during the Second World War.<sup>59</sup>

Contrary to later assertions by her subordinates about her “enthusiasm,”<sup>60</sup> for this reason and others Gandhi remained reluctant about the treaty. Along with concern about Soviet reliability and China’s reaction, Gandhi’s political position was vulnerable.<sup>61</sup> A treaty would be visible written evidence of India’s move away from nonalignment, which remained popular. In spring 1968, 91% of Indian parliamentarians surveyed had expressed a strong preference for India staying as neutral as possible.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, with the Indian public at least the US still had a higher favorability rating than the Soviet Union.<sup>63</sup> Gandhi and the India foreign minister were indeed concerned about the impact of such a treaty on US-India relations. Haksar had earlier himself pointed out to Gandhi that India needed to factor in the global impact of the

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<sup>58</sup> Draft Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, April 1969; Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 71; Record of Conversation between Gandhi and Kosygin, May 6, 1969.

<sup>59</sup> Telegram from Mishra (IndEmb China) to Kaul, April 4, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29. Telegram from DP Mishra (IndEmb Moscow) to Kaul and IndEmb China, April 2, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29. Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, July 1, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29. Indians, inside and outside government, also continued to notice that Moscow had not shown any recognition of India’s maps and border claims vis-à-vis China. See, Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>60</sup> Record of Discussions between Gromyko (Soviet foreign minister) and DP Dhar, Moscow, August 4, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 280.

<sup>61</sup> Leo Rose and Richard Sisson. *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 135. Also, see Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Kosygin, May 6, 1969. Despite his enthusiasm, Haksar himself noted that Beijing would “no doubt find [the treaty’s] direction to be against her. We have, therefore, to be cautious and have to be prepared to contain her unpredictable reactions.” He also noted that the Indian government would need to be able to “carry the Parliament and the country.”

<sup>62</sup> 100 Members of the Lok Sabha were surveyed in March-April 1968. IIPO, “The Outlook of Parliamentarians in Eight Countries,” *MPOS*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 3 (November, December 1968), p. 52.

<sup>63</sup> During 1966-1967, the Soviet Union’s favorability ratings were higher than those of the US among India’s urban population. But by 1969, 73 percent of respondents had a favorable opinion of the US, while only 61 percent had a favorable opinion of the Soviet Union. See IIPO, *MPOS* (Delhi, India: IIPO), Volumes XIV, No. 9 and 10 (June, July 1969).



treaty. He subsequently noted that India “can offer the same to the rest of the world, including the USA.”<sup>64</sup>

Finally, despite Gandhi’s leftward turn in the domestic political arena, key members of her government had remained wary of the possibility of too much dependence on the Soviet Union and believed that some of the provisions of the draft curtailed India’s freedom of action. Thus, in early 1970, the government shelved even a later version of the draft that left “the commitment relatively vague.”<sup>65</sup>

Some of these considerations also lay behind India’s demurrals from joining or supporting Brezhnev’s proposals for a collective security system proposed in June 1969.<sup>66</sup> There were some opinion leaders who argued that the China threat meant that India should take special note of the proposals and should debate the continuing viability of nonalignment.<sup>67</sup> But Gandhi wanted neither to foreclose her options by leaning to one side too much, nor to provoke China by joining what was seen as an anti-China grouping. Thus the foreign minister publicly refused to endorse the Brezhnev security system and privately told Nixon that India would not join a military pact.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Kosygin, May 6, 1969; Note from Haksar to Gandhi, September 10, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

<sup>65</sup> Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 433-441; Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, pp. 186-187. Mrs. Gandhi’s Visit: Biographical Note on Mrs. Gandhi, Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, October 15, 1971, The National Archives, Kew Gardens, Surrey, UK (hereafter cited as NA), Document 25, FCO 37/814: Political Situation in India, 1971.

<sup>66</sup> In Japan, Gandhi noted that India did not support or favor “collective security arrangements in Asia.” (DoS, India-Talking Points, July 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India) Kissinger highlighted India’s reticence to the president. Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Meeting with Indian foreign minister, July 10, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595. The Indian foreign minister later told Kissinger that any such grouping would only discourage Asians from taking the initiative to come together themselves. MemCon of Kissinger-Dinesh Singh Meeting on July 10, July 14, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595.

<sup>67</sup> Current Climate of Opinion in India, July 22, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 463, July-August 1969 Trip – Memoranda [2][1]

<sup>68</sup> Tillman Durdin, “Soviet Plan Arouses Interest of Asian Diplomats,” *NYT*, June 18, 1969, p. 2; Record of Foreign Minister’s Talk with Nixon, July 10, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 42.

Doubts about Soviet reliability and the desire to maintain flexibility by diversifying dependence meant that India continued to see the US as essential to its China containment strategy. As Kissinger put it to Nixon, “India sees Communist China as the main threat, and the US and USSR as major counters.”<sup>69</sup> Delhi still believed it had a “less formal sense of commitment” from Washington.<sup>70</sup> With persisting uncertainty about Chinese intentions, Indian officials continued to seek assurances from their US counterparts that if China attacked, they could count on US help.<sup>71</sup> Haksar urged Gandhi to bring up the subject in talks scheduled with Rogers in May 1969, highlighting the “one area of the United States foreign policy which needs to be probed, namely, Sino-American relations and the American view of Chinese aims, aspirations and postures.”<sup>72</sup>

The Indian government was not just concerned about US policy vis-à-vis China, but also with regard to the whole of Asia. Delhi remained torn about the US role in Asia, especially Southeast Asia. On the one hand, India wanted an end to the Vietnam War, which it thought American involvement perpetuated. Gandhi publicly disagreed with Walt Rostow’s contention that the American intervention in Vietnam had strengthened India’s security versus China.<sup>73</sup> Policymakers believed the continuing conflict prevented the establishment of peace, stability and regional cooperation in South and Southeast Asia, which could serve to limit Chinese influence and intervention.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand,

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<sup>69</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Upcoming Talk with Gandhi in New Delhi, July 17, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India

<sup>70</sup> Max Frankel, “Nixon’s Trip,” *NYT*, August 3, 1969, p. E1.

<sup>71</sup> MemCons of Nixon-Gandhi Meetings, New Delhi, July 31, 1969 and August 1, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d29>)

<sup>72</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Meeting with Rogers, May 24, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 139.

<sup>73</sup> She repeated the contention that absent a war, the two Vietnams would have been better able to “resist China.” Selig S. Harrison, “Mrs. Gandhi: Moderate Signs in China,” *WP*, February 14, 1969, p. A21.

<sup>74</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, July 30, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 42.

Indian officials worried that “a precipitate [US] pull-out would hurt them.”<sup>75</sup> The concern arose for two reasons—first, China could exploit the resultant vacuum; and second, the possibility that the US would further demote India in its strategic framework, leaving India without a key source of protection and assistance.<sup>76</sup>

For India, US assistance remained crucial and thus the Gandhi government had little desire to upset the US by emphasizing differences. When it came to the Vietnam War, Gandhi noted that US and Indian differences had “narrowed.”<sup>77</sup> The State Department indeed commented, “India no longer lectures us on the US role in Vietnam and has even indicated a desire to be helpful.”<sup>78</sup> Even over reports that the US was exploring the establishment of facilities on Diego Garcia, the State Department noted that the India reaction “has been muted to date, despite their public stance against great power military activity in the Indian Ocean.”<sup>79</sup>

On a visit to Washington, Dinesh Singh, the Indian foreign minister who was perceived to be pro-Soviet,<sup>80</sup> hailed Nixon’s comments that the US was looking to play a role in Asia “far beyond Vietnam.” Singh welcomed US facilitation of socio-economic development, emphasizing the significant demonstration effect of democratic countries like India closing the expectations-reality gap. Nixon agreed, noting, “If India did not

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<sup>75</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Upcoming Talk with Gandhi in New Delhi, July 17, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India

<sup>76</sup> Kissinger laid out this Indian dilemma out for the president: “Indians are ambivalent on our future role in Asia: they believe Asians should solve Asian problems, yet they face an aggressive China and want assurance of great power support in an emergency as well as substantial economic help.” Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Upcoming Talk with Gandhi in New Delhi, July 17, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India

<sup>77</sup> Selig S. Harrison, “Mrs. Gandhi: Moderate Signs in China,” *WP*, February 14, 1969, p. A21.

<sup>78</sup> DoS, India-Background-SEA and the ICC, July 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India

<sup>79</sup> DoS, India-Background-Indian Ocean, July 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India

<sup>80</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 159.

make the grade, the lesson for the rest of the world would be disastrous.” He indicated that it was “vital” to support development programs and not underfund such programs.<sup>81</sup>

There was also concern in Delhi of decreasing interest in India in the US. While recognizing that there was a sense in the US that India was “too big to tackle,” Gandhi publicly called for continued US help to India saying India was making “steady progress.”<sup>82</sup> In the lead up to Nixon’s subsequent visit to India in summer 1969—part of what was labeled his reassurance tour to Asia<sup>83</sup>—senior Indian officials prepped Gandhi to make the case for the importance of India. Haksar stressed to Gandhi the need to convince the US that communist influence in Asia could be limited “only by strengthening or stabilising forces in Asia, which, they must see, inevitably depends on the stabilising influence of India.” This, and not military alliances, should be the means used to counter China—alliances would only lead to additional conflict with the Soviet Union and allow China to portray itself as the “champion of Asian nationalism.” Haksar acknowledged that this might prove a hard sell to the US because Washington now doubted “India’s stabilising capacity” and the country’s “viability.”<sup>84</sup>

When Nixon travelled to India, Gandhi was preoccupied with domestic political struggles that would eventually lead to the Congress party splitting. The visit, however, went relatively well. Nixon left Gandhi worried about the outcome in Vietnam, but impressed with the president’s genuine interest in finding an honorable settlement.<sup>85</sup> In

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<sup>81</sup> Record of Foreign Minister’s Talk with Nixon, July 10, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 42.

<sup>82</sup> Selig S. Harrison, “Mrs. Gandhi: Moderate Signs in China,” *WP*, February 14, 1969, p. A21.

<sup>83</sup> Max Frankel, “Nixon Aides Term Meetings in Asia Key Part of Trip,” *NYT*, June 30, 1969, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, July 30, 1969 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 42.

<sup>85</sup> Gandhi noted that Nixon’s interest in getting out of Vietnam was genuine “provided he did not lose face or prestige in the process.” Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, August 30, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43. Her advisor reflected a similar sentiment in Haksar, Draft Letter from Gandhi to Tito, September 8, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

some other countries that Nixon visited there was concern.<sup>86</sup> He left the Indian leadership, however, reassured that the US wanted to find a way to “register their presence in the Pacific and in South and South-East Asia,” but not through military alliances.<sup>87</sup>

#### **TRYING TO STAY ON AN EVEN KEEL**

China, on the other hand, did not reassure India. By fall 1969, Indian officials indicated to their American counterparts that they did not perceive many indications that China was “softening” its attitude—though they did believe that “Chinese respect for power” could lead Beijing to seek increased communication with Washington and Moscow.<sup>88</sup> In spring 1970, an Indian request to the Chinese foreign office to meet in Beijing to discuss Cambodia “met with a rebuff” even though it was a subject of Chinese interest.<sup>89</sup> The Indian foreign minister believed that, overall, Beijing was also indulging in “extremely hostile, false and tendentious propaganda against our country.”<sup>90</sup>

Through the first few months of 1970, accusations continued to flow from China especially about India’s relationship with the US. Chinese statements continued to term India a “lackey of US imperialism and Soviet revisionism in international affairs.” They accused India of “coordinat[ing] with US in carrying out the so called US ‘new Asian policy’ of using Asians to fight Asians” in return for “more rewards.”<sup>91</sup> There were also charges that India was displaying its “reactionary nature and expansionist ambitions” in

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<sup>86</sup> Takashi Oka, “His Message Raises Some Troubled Questions Among His Hosts,” *NYT*, August 3, 1969, p. E1.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Gandhi to Kosygin, August 30, 1969, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 43.

<sup>88</sup> Memo from Rogers to Nixon re US-India Bilateral Talks, October 27, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. II-III, Box 596.

<sup>89</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 6, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.

<sup>90</sup> He was commenting on April 25 *Xinhua* reports of the Chinese foreign ministry’s annual report. Draft Telegram from Foreign Minister to Mishra, attached to Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 6, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.

<sup>91</sup> Telegram from IndEmb China to MEA, April 27, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

Tibet. This left Indian officials concerned about the “implied threat” that China would retaliate by interfering in local Indian affairs.<sup>92</sup>

Then, in May 1970, Mao’s greeting to the Indian chargé Brajesh Mishra at the May Day celebrations sparked hope that Chinese policymakers might be rethinking their India policy.<sup>93</sup> Mishra reported that Mao told him, “We cannot keep on quarrelling like this. We should try and be friends again...We will be friends again some day.” The chargé reported that he responded, “We are ready to do it today.” He did not know whether Mao’s comments were premeditated, but, given the source, recommended that they be given “weighty consideration.”<sup>94</sup> Subsequently, the head of China’s Asia department indicated that Mao had taken “the greatest concrete action on our side” and now India should take some steps since China was not responsible for the state of Sino-Indian relations.<sup>95</sup> Beijing, he said, had noticed the talk from India, but not seen “concrete action.”<sup>96</sup>

Haksar believed the Mao smile to have “some significance,” but suggested to the prime minister that they “must not rush to any conclusions” and handle the matter “very delicate[ly] and tentative[ly].” He was reluctant to recommend—as the foreign minister did—that Mishra seek to meet with high-level officials in Beijing.<sup>97</sup> Haksar was also hesitant about the foreign minister’s suggestion of a letter from Gandhi to Zhou

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<sup>92</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Secretary (East), MEA, March 25, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29. Also see Telegram from IndEmb China to MEA, April 11, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>93</sup> Singh, p. 80

<sup>94</sup> Interestingly, Mishra identified the “surprise of the evening” not Mao’s comments to him but the chairman’s “longish” conversation with the Soviet representative. Telegram from Mishra to Gandhi and Dinesh Singh, May 1, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29. The charge speculated that Chinese domestic politics might have something to do with the move. See Telegram from Mishra to Secretary (East), MEA, May 4, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>95</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Dinesh Singh, May 6, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>96</sup> Verbatim Record of Conversation between Mishra and Yang Kung Su (Chinese First Asia Department), May 6, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.

<sup>97</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 6, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.

suggesting an exchange of ambassadors. He thought India needed to be more cautious.<sup>98</sup> Gandhi seemed to concur. After she discussed the issue with her advisors, Haksar told Mishra to follow a “cautious and step by step approach.” Delhi instructed the chargé to meet China’s Asia department chief to convey India’s “sincere and positive” response and willingness to “initiate a dialogue with the object of removing the state of tension and hostility” on the basis of “mutuality and reciprocity.”<sup>99</sup>

The Indian chargé pressed for more, arguing that there were further positive signals from Beijing.<sup>100</sup> He noted that Beijing had “displayed what for them is moderation” in rhetoric during a visit by the Pakistan Air Force chief, and furthermore seemed to have got the chief to tone down his vitriol.<sup>101</sup> In July, Zhou conveyed his regards to Gandhi. Chinese officials also indicated to Asian diplomats that China was trying to normalize relations with a number of countries and intended to do the same with India. The North Vietnamese ambassador in Beijing told the Indian chargé that China was impressed with some Indian actions that seemed to indicate Indian independence from the US—parleying with deposed Cambodian leader Sihanouk’s representatives, inviting the East German foreign minister and boycotting the Jakarta conference on Indonesia.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, the Indian chargé noted that the Chinese reaction to India-Japanese foreign ministerial discussions—reported at the time to have mainly focused on

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<sup>98</sup> And assess whether Zhou would even agree to see the chargé and then decide what to propose and who to propose it to Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 19, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.

<sup>99</sup> Draft Instructions to the Charge in Beijing attached to Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153 and Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, June 1, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>100</sup> Chinese military official noted Chinese support for Kashmiri “self-determination” when the PAF chief visited. Telegram from Indemb China to MEA, June 1, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>101</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, June 1, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29. [They only referred to Kashmir and seemed to have got Pakistani official to tone down his vitriol—felt Chinese reticence might have been because Chinese officials not pleased with Pakistani position in Indochina. Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, June 5, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.]

<sup>102</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, July 14, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

“China’s growing power in Asia”—directed wrath towards Japan, rather than India. Mishra contrasted this with the vitriol that had been directed against India when Gandhi had visited Japan a year before. Even in reports in the Chinese news agency that were “clearly anti-Indian,” the chargé detected a “new trend.” He felt that there was “a quantitative as well as qualitative change” in China’s anti-India rhetoric—“more in line with China’s expressed desire to improve relations with India.”<sup>103</sup> Mishra also pointed out that despite anti-American vitriol, China was also keeping the door “slightly ajar” to the US.<sup>104</sup> This seemed to fit with Kosygin’s statement to the Indian foreign secretary that Chinese officials “are shouting against American imperialism yet they have their contacts with them.”<sup>105</sup>

Delhi, however, was frustrated about the lack of action. It had made clear it was interested in “a concrete discussion” with China, but there was no direct response from Beijing.<sup>106</sup> Skeptics like defence minister Swaran Singh publicly stated that there was little hope or evidence of response from China.<sup>107</sup> On the one hand Chinese officials were indicating to third parties that they were merely waiting for an Indian initiative, but on the other hand, they were not responding to Indian indications that they were ready to have discussions.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, China was indicating to other countries such as Yugoslavia that India was the country that was not ready for talks.<sup>109</sup> Finally, China had continued to complain about what they considered anti-Chinese activities in India.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Paranjpe (MEA), August 24, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>104</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, July 11, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>105</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Kaul, May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>106</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, August 30, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29. He was reacting to discussions between the Yugoslav ambassador and the Chinese vice foreign minister.

<sup>107</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, June 16, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>108</sup> Telegram from Jaipal (IndEmb Yugoslavia) to Paranjpe (MEA), August 26, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>109</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, August 13, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>110</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Paranjpe (MEA), May 4, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.



China's regional behavior also continued to worry India. China continued arms supply to Pakistan,<sup>111</sup> and promised \$200 million in economic aid in November 1970.<sup>112</sup> Beijing continued Sino-Pakistan road construction and also set up an ordnance factory in East Pakistan.<sup>113</sup> At the same time, Indian officials saw the Pakistani response to Indian overtures as "negative and extremely disappointing."<sup>114</sup> In Nepal, Indian officials believed that the king was "playing a dangerous game in playing India against China."<sup>115</sup> Indian worries about Chinese "intrusions" into Bhutan had decreased but Delhi remained concerned about Beijing's intentions there.<sup>116</sup> In addition, stepped-up activity within India by the Naxalites—labeled "Indian revolutionaries with a Chinese accent"<sup>117</sup>—in summer 1970 did nothing to allay Indian anxiety about the internal threat from China.<sup>118</sup> There was increasing concern about Chinese efforts to supply the Naxalites with arms through Burma, East Pakistan and Nepal as well as via the Indian state of Assam.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Telegram from Military Attaché, IndEmb China to DMI, April 6, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

<sup>112</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 210.

<sup>113</sup> R&AW Note on Threat of a Military Attack or Infiltration Campaign by Pakistan, Sent to PN Haksar by RN Kao (Director, R&AW) on January 16, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>114</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Kaul, May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>115</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Draft Minute from Gandhi to Dinesh Singh on Bhutan, May 2, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153. Also see Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Kaul, May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>116</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Kaul, May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276. [These concerns were playing out in the context of Indian anxiety about the impact of imminent Bhutanese entry into the UN on India-Bhutan relations. Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 4, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.]

<sup>117</sup> Dom Moraes, "The Naxalites, whose extremism knows no extremes," *NYT*, November 8, 1970, p. 232.

<sup>118</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Kaul, May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276. Kaul alleged that the Chinese were "encouraging and helping" the Naxalites.

<sup>119</sup> Dilip Mukherjee, "Violent Marxist Ultras, Working for a Maoist Dawn, Worry India," *WP*, July 16, 1970, p. A20.

India left the door open to China.<sup>120</sup> Despite even indications of growing Sino-Pakistan closeness—including a visit by Pakistani leader Yahya Khan to China—Gandhi emphasized that Indian policymakers “should not colour our attitude to attempt to bring about a change.”<sup>121</sup> Overall, however, as a contemporary report noted, while “one or two icicles have melted,” there was no “thaw.” An Indian official stated, “I don’t think anything is going to go very far very fast.”<sup>122</sup>

Thus, India continued its efforts with its neighbors. India moved to demarcate its border with Burma despite potential domestic political objections, because of concern about the “Chinese fishing in troubled waters.”<sup>123</sup> Vis-à-vis Nepal, Haksar noted that India should handle the situation with “firmness but...courtesy, selectively pressuring the King,” while clandestinely linking up with India-friendly Nepalese and probing the extent to which American, British and Soviet policymakers “share our concern at the way the King is opening the country to Chinese penetration and influence.”<sup>124</sup> India also hoped to deepen its bilateral relations with various countries in South and Southeast Asia, as well as develop regional economic cooperation.<sup>125</sup>

By fall 1970, fears of an imminent direct attack from China had receded in key Indian quarters, but for India the China threat—and the need to be prepared to defend

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<sup>120</sup> In 1970 the national day greeting from India to China, for example, was drafted to be “slightly more warm and less formal” than previously. Note from Haksar to Gandhi, September 21, 1970 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 47.

<sup>121</sup> Natwar Singh (PM’s secretariat) and Gandhi’s Handwritten Notations on Report of Joint Communique of November 14, November 19 and 20, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>122</sup> Schanberg, “Chinese-Indian 'Thaw' Is Still Only a Slight Melting,” *NYT*, October 24, 1970, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, September 17, 1970 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 46.

<sup>124</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi re Draft Minute from Gandhi to Dinesh Singh on Bhutan, May 2, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.

<sup>125</sup> Letter from Swaran Singh (Indian foreign minister) to LK Jha (Indian ambassador to the US), July 31, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217.

itself in case China did act against India—had not disappeared.<sup>126</sup> To Gandhi, the major concern was that “if Pakistan attacks us, China may join them.”<sup>127</sup> Indian intelligence also highlighted the negative consequences of Sino-Pakistan collusion” for India.<sup>128</sup>

Given this assessment, India needed to maintain healthy relationships with not just the Soviet Union but—given deepening Soviet-Pakistan relations<sup>129</sup>—also the US. This was despite the consequences for the Sino-Indian relationship. Mishra asserted that Beijing saw India’s relationship with the US as a key stumbling block to Sino-Indian rapprochement. The Indian ambassador had the impression that what China was asking in return “is not so much coolness towards Soviet Union as opposition to United States policies in South East Asia and Far East and to Japanese militarism and expansionism.” He noted that Zhou blamed the US for China’s bilateral border conflicts, and Chinese officials had indicated that China had more of an issue with US “imperialists” rather than Indian “reactionaries.”<sup>130</sup>

India was not willing to give up the relationship with the US. Even though India’s need for the US had decreased, that country remained important for India—and not just from the security perspective. Swaran Singh noted that the US was also India’s “most

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<sup>126</sup> Gandhi stated that, “We do not think China is going to attack us.” Telegram from Rogers to DoS, New York, October 24, 1970, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d88>). There were differences among Indian officials about the nature of the military threat, with those considered to be in the pro-Soviet camp suggesting that China was a bigger military threat.

<sup>127</sup> Record of Conversation PM Heath, Gandhi, Haksar and Kaul, New York, October 24, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>128</sup> R&AW Note on Threat of a Military Attack or Infiltration Campaign by Pakistan, Sent to Haksar by Kao on January 16, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>129</sup> Singh, p. 85. Also, see Mansingh, p. 200.

<sup>130</sup> Telegram from Mishra to Kaul, July 14, 1970 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 29.

important partner in the economic field.”<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, neither the economic nor the military relationship with the Soviet Union was without trouble.<sup>132</sup>

Thus, Gandhi had sent LK Jha to Washington as ambassador asserting, “India’s relations with the United States should be as good as they are with the Soviet Union.” Jha, however, worried about American “indifference” and whether and where India still fit in the US strategic framework. He felt that there was a “shift in emphasis from India to Indonesia”<sup>133</sup>—a shift that US officials did not deny. Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco indeed admitted that US-India relations were at a “delicate point.”<sup>134</sup> Harking back to an earlier age, the Indian foreign minister urged Jha to highlight the China-India contrast as “a common basis for India and America to work together.”<sup>135</sup>

#### **MAINTAINING BALANCE**

Those days, however, were gone. Washington continued to seek to establish relations with Beijing. With the various other channels stalling, toward the end of 1969 on White House instructions the American ambassador to Warsaw Walter Stoessel conveyed to a Chinese diplomat the US desire to re-establish contact there. The two heads of mission soon exchanged a few visits and subsequently in January 1970 the two countries announced a resumption of the Warsaw talks. Nixon stated in his foreign policy report that spring that it was in American interest to “take what steps we can toward improved practical relations with Peking.” Even as administration officials debated the

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<sup>131</sup> Letter from Swaran Singh to Jha, July 31, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217. Also, see Background Note on Indo-Soviet Economic Relations, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>132</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Kaul, May 25, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276. [Couldn’t get everything India wanted to import from the Soviet Union. Debt repayment burden heavy. In 1969 asked for rescheduling/relief; then changed mind. Letter from DP Dhar to Haksar, March 30, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.]

<sup>133</sup> Letter from Jha to Swaran Singh, June 29, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

<sup>134</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul re Meeting with Sisco (AS/S NESAs) on July 7, July 8, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Swaran Singh to Jha, July 31, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217.

wisdom of offering to send a representative to China, the American invasion of Cambodia led to a chill. After the US withdrawal from Cambodia later that summer, both sides took further steps that signaled the process was back on track. The Pakistan channel, which the White House had earlier used to send messages indirectly, was now used to send direct messages to Beijing that Nixon wanted to hold talks and normalize relations.<sup>136</sup>

Nixon did not intend for US relations with China and India to be a zero-sum game. He wanted to improve relations with China without upending relations with India. His administration was indeed quite careful about handling potential irritants in the relationship. One such irritant, in spring 1970, had been the Indian closure of foreign cultural centers, which adversely affected US facilities more than those of the Soviet Union.<sup>137</sup> Nixon's initial reaction had been to take a "stronger line" on the closings and do something in return to "irritate" India.<sup>138</sup> He eventually, however, decided to act in a manner that conveyed US displeasure but "avoid[ed] blowing up a major storm in US-Indian relations."<sup>139</sup> Eventually, despite India offering what it thought was a compromise, the US shut down the centers. At the time, however, heeding Kissinger and Rogers' warning, Nixon delayed any public, overt retaliation.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Margaret Macmillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2007), pp. 169-175.

<sup>137</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, pp. 284-285. A word both Jha and Keating used. Telegram from Keating to DoS, March 3, 1970, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. II-III, Box 596. Also see MemCon of Jha-Kissinger Meeting, July 22, 1970, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. II-III, Box 596.

<sup>138</sup> Memo From Haig (Senior Military Adviser to Kissinger) and Saunders to Kissinger, March 7, 1970, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d52>).

<sup>139</sup> Memo From Haig and Saunders to Kissinger, March 7, 1970.

<sup>140</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, March 27, 1970, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d55>). Also, see Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 285.

The desire to limit damage to the US-India relationship also showed in the option the president chose to “do something” for Pakistan in the military supply realm in the short-term to help his China policy, but without upsetting India too much. Kissinger had presented the president with essentially three options: (a) one-time sale of tanks or aircrafts, (b) approval of a Turkish proposal to sell tanks to Pakistan, or (c) liberalizing policy to allow continuing sales of replacement equipment for Pakistan. While Pakistan would have preferred the latter, Kissinger recommended a combination of (a) and (b), along with some economic assistance since “on balance it seems more consistent with U.S. interests to minimize our military relationship.” In spring 1970, Nixon indicated that he wanted a policy that was “less provocative politically in the U.S. & for that matter in India.”<sup>141</sup> Nixon further clarified that he wanted to “retain...the general embargo on the regular sale of lethal equipment” and only “mak[e] a one-time exception to sell Pakistan a few items.”<sup>142</sup>

Nonetheless, the US announcement of the one-time exception in fall 1970 elicited strong protests from India. When Haksar had noted in early 1969, “The Sino-American dialogue will have its impact on Pakistan,” this was not quite what he had had in mind.<sup>143</sup> Indian officials had tried to prevent a resumption of aid to no avail.<sup>144</sup> The Indian ambassador in Washington assessed the decision as brought on by pressure from the Pakistani lobby, as well as the White House’s “feeling that Pakistan could, perhaps, in certain circumstances serve as a middle-man to bring about rapprochement between

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<sup>141</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, March 16, 1970, Ibid  
(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d54>)

<sup>142</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, April 13, 1970, Ibid  
(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d57>)

<sup>143</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, January 27, 1969 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 39.

<sup>144</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul re Meeting with Joe Sisco on July 7, July 8, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277. Also see Letter from Swaran Singh to Rogers, July 20, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

America and China.”<sup>145</sup> The Indian foreign secretary dismissed the American hope that India should show “appreciation” for the restrained supply. India could not take US “assurances [about usage restrictions] at their face value.”<sup>146</sup>

A US official, however, noted that the Indian government’s public reaction was not as angry or sustained as expected. Indeed, while Indian officials privately criticized the move, they had taken Jha’s advice about not trying “to stir up public controversy beyond that generated in the Parliamentary debate early in November.”<sup>147</sup> The State Department noted that even that debate had been “relatively muted, and considerable attention was also given to Soviet arms sales to Pakistan.”<sup>148</sup>

The reason for the relatively muted reaction was that India could not afford to lose all traction in Washington. Jha had pointed out to Delhi that a larger package for Pakistan had been considered. He stressed that the US motive was not “anti-Indian.” He argued that while expressing criticism, “we should not allow it to become generally anti-American in tone or content.” If the Indian reaction was “generally unfriendly,” it would only further weaken the hand of those advocating for India in the State Department, Congress and the media—these advocates were already playing a weak hand because of India’s attitude on the Vietnam War.<sup>149</sup>

This was also the reason that the Indian government tried to show some restraint over US actions in Southeast Asia. Officials had continued to make statements related to the Vietnam War that irked US policymakers. Jha asked the US for understanding, noting that when a government depended on left-wing parties and support from the left within

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<sup>145</sup> Letter from Jha to Swaran Singh, October 11, 1970 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 48.

<sup>146</sup> Note from Kaul to Swaran Singh, November 24, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>147</sup> Letter from Jha to Swaran Singh, October 11, 1970 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 48.

<sup>148</sup> Information Memo From Sisco to Irwin (Acting S/S), December 3, 1970, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d103>)

<sup>149</sup> Letter from Jha to Swaran Singh, October 11, 1970 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 48.

the party for survival—as Gandhi’s did—some of its “statements on issues of international concern have to have a tinge that sometimes seems in the U.S. not friendly enough.”<sup>150</sup> Nonetheless, the Gandhi government tempered its criticism. India’s restraint was most evident on the question of the recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). US officials had already warned India about the adverse US response to any potential Indian recognition.<sup>151</sup> In fall 1969 India had considered establishing an embassy in Hanoi—a prospect that upset the Nixon administration.<sup>152</sup> Realizing the potential impact in Washington, Haksar had been upset that not only had then foreign minister Dinesh Singh prematurely discussed the issue with Rogers, but there had also been public speculation about internal Indian discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of recognizing Hanoi.<sup>153</sup> In large part because of the potential US reaction, at a time when India had been questioning Soviet reliability and the US Congress had again been questioning aid to India, Delhi had desisted from extending recognition to the DRV.<sup>154</sup> In 1970, the caution persisted. India upgraded relations with East Germany, but while considering doing the same in the case of DRV, refrained from doing so.<sup>155</sup>

In 1970, the US ambassador to India also noted that Indian criticism of US military operations in Cambodia was less harsh than expected, with Indian officials

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<sup>150</sup> Indian officials further argued that India’s policy towards Vietnam was “not because India has a pro-Chinese or a pro-Soviet view but because India’s honest view is that the use of force may strengthen Chinese influence in the area.” MemCon of Jha-Kissinger Meeting, Washington, July 22, 1970.

<sup>151</sup> Telegram from Keating to Rogers re Meeting with Dinesh Singh on September 6, September 8, 1969, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. 1, Box 595.

<sup>152</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, October 16, 1969, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d40>)

<sup>153</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, October 2, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 253.

<sup>154</sup> Garver, “Chinese-Indian Rivalry in Indochina,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 11 (November 1987), pp. 1205-1206.

<sup>155</sup> Dilip Mukherjee, “India Hesitates on Upgrading Hanoi Relations,” *WP*, August 4, 1970, p. A11.



refusing to “condemn” the move, only expressing “regret.”<sup>156</sup> Indeed, that year, Haksar even suggested that Gandhi avoid a meeting with Nixon to steer clear of discussing the “uncomfortable” questions of Southeast Asia and the Middle East that might raise US ire. He explained, “we would not wish to be unfriendly” to the US.<sup>157</sup> Delhi acted in a relatively restrained manner despite calls from some officials who wanted it to repudiate American policy even if it caused a “partial rupture” with the US. The Indian representative in Hanoi, for example, had asserted that India’s “timid[ity]” on this front left the field to Beijing.<sup>158</sup>

Indian policymakers realized they could not stay totally silent on developments in Southeast Asia. Thus, foreign minister Swaran Singh suggested to Jha that he should note Indian differences with the US on the subject but “without causing any annoyance.”<sup>159</sup> Publicly, Jha explained that on Southeast Asia, the key difference between Washington and Delhi was that the latter believed US policy was “driving countries who would have preferred to remain independent and non-aligned into the Chinese camp.”<sup>160</sup> Privately, the ambassador continued to suggest to Delhi that it not overreact in its criticism of Nixon’s Southeast Asia policy.<sup>161</sup> Such criticism only made it harder for those lobbying for aid for India in Washington.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> MemCon of Laird-Keating Meeting, Washington, May 27, 1970, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d62>). Sisco also told Jha that the US had noted the “low key” Indian criticism to US operations in Cambodia. See Letter from Jha to Kaul re Meeting with Sisco on July 7, July 8, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

<sup>157</sup> He advised that Gandhi turn down the foreign minister’s suggestion that she go to New York for the opening of the UNGA debate because that would potentially mean a trip to Washington since there was a pending invitation from Nixon. She could not turn him down because Nixon would see this as “an exercise in unfriendliness.” Note from Haksar to Gandhi, May 4, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 153.

<sup>158</sup> Letter from KS Shelvankar (IndCongen Hanoi) to Kaul, May 28, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>159</sup> Letter from Swaran Singh to Jha, July 31, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217.

<sup>160</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul re Meeting with Sisco on July 7, July 8, 1970, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

<sup>161</sup> He emphasized that Nixon’s Indochina proposals should be dealt with “on merits.” Letter from Jha to Swaran Singh, October 11, 1970 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 48.

<sup>162</sup> Letter from Jha to Swaran Singh, October 11, 1970 in NMML, PML (I-II), SF No. 48.

Swaran Singh, perhaps inadvertently, acknowledged that India tempered its criticism of its benefactors, noting in parliament, “we must make a distinction between countries are friendly and those that are not.”<sup>163</sup> Some in Delhi even tried to calm the storm that had risen due to allegations of US interference in Indian domestic politics. Gandhi pointed out to John Sherman Cooper who was visiting India that her government, for example, was “playing down” Home Ministry reports about the allegations.<sup>164</sup> Overall, the Soviet-Pakistan relationship, along with India’s continued need for US aid and protection, seemed to lead Indian policymakers to temper their criticism and try to keep US-India relations on an even keel.<sup>165</sup> Soon, however, these attempts floundered when a crisis broke out in East Pakistan in early 1971.

#### **TRIANGULATION AND THE TILTS (1971)**

In March 1971, the Pakistani military launched a crackdown in East Pakistan on Bengali demonstrators demanding implementation of national election results and greater autonomy. The situation deteriorated over the next few months: the Pakistani leadership refused to yield; the ethnic Bengali Awami League (AL) party called for independence; refugees escaping the crackdown flowed into India; East Pakistani separatist guerillas backed by India commenced operations from India against the Pakistani military; China declared its support for Pakistan; and both India and Pakistan moved troops on high alert to their borders, where they started skirmishing in November, eventually going to war in

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<sup>163</sup> Quoted in Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 186.

<sup>164</sup> Note by Natwar Singh on Gandhi’s Meeting with Sen. John Sherman Cooper on January 11, January 13, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 200.

<sup>165</sup> Public sentiment toward the Soviet Union in the country had deteriorated. Only 51% of those surveyed in a poll in India in August 1970 had a good or very good opinion of the Soviet Union—a 10-point drop from the year before was traceable to Soviet efforts to reach out to Pakistan. In comparison 66% had a good or very good opinion of the US. IIPPO, “The Changing International Images in Metropolitan Cities,” *MPOS*, Vol. XV, No. 11 (August 1970), p. 14.

December.<sup>166</sup> This crisis became the dominant issue in US-India relations in 1971. Nixon and Kissinger saw their evolving rapprochement with China threatened by Indian actions during the crisis. This led them to respond in a way that set off a chain reaction that culminated in US-India relations reaching a “nadir.”<sup>167</sup> India, in turn, found that it could no longer count on US assistance against China. This led Delhi to respond by tilting towards Moscow.

In a background briefing to Congress in the midst of the crisis, Kissinger refuted the notion that “US policy is motivated primarily by (a) considerations of China policy, or (b) a gut-loathing for the Indians.”<sup>168</sup> The Nixon administration’s evolving triangular diplomacy, of which rapprochement with China was a part, however, was indeed a major determinant of the US approach toward the crisis, with personal inclinations playing a role as well.<sup>169</sup> The US response to the crisis was a classic illustration of what Gaddis has noted as being the Nixon administration’s “insistence on dealing with [events] in global rather than regional terms.”<sup>170</sup> Gandhi, on the other hand, saw the situation as a regional one that became a little too local for comfort as millions of refugees streamed across India’s borders from East Pakistan. Her government’s actions were determined by

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<sup>166</sup> For details about the war, see Rose and Sisson.

<sup>167</sup> Gary R. Hess, “Book Review: Grand Strategy and Regional Conflict: Nixon, Kissinger, and Crisis in South Asia,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 31, No. 5 (November 2007), p. 959.

<sup>168</sup> India/Pakistan: Kissinger - Note from J.D.I. Boyd of the British Embassy, Washington, DC to J.A. Birch of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, December 14, 1971, NA, FCO 37/755: U.S. Policy Towards India and Pakistan, 1971, Document 9.

<sup>169</sup> As Hess points out, John Lewis Gaddis has noted this facet of both interests and personalities playing roles in the Nixon administration’s approach. See Hess, p. 960. For discussion of these factors, see Geoffrey Warner, Review article: “Nixon, Kissinger and the breakup of Pakistan, 1971,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, Issue 5 (2005), pp. 1097-1118 and Christopher Van Hollen, “The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger geopolitics and South Asia,” *Asian Survey* Volume 20, Issue 4 (April 1980), pp. 339-361.

<sup>170</sup> Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 333.

calculations of India's (and Gandhi's) interests,<sup>171</sup> with it perceiving the situation developing on India's eastern flank first as a threat and later also as an opportunity.<sup>172</sup>

### Early Reactions

Gandhi—newly empowered, as a result of a significant election victory in March 1971—had initially been reluctant to support East Pakistani calls for independence.<sup>173</sup> While there was popular sympathy in India for the Bengalis in East Pakistan and even support in the circle close to Gandhi for the guerillas,<sup>174</sup> the prime minister tried to dampen calls for greater Indian involvement.<sup>175</sup> There were a few reasons for this – the military leadership had informed her that any successful action would not be feasible at that time.<sup>176</sup> The monsoon season was imminent, there was a possibility of Chinese

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<sup>171</sup> A British assessment noted, “India support is given on a rational calculation of their interest vis-à-vis a future “Bangla Desh” and domestic pressures.” Briefing for Mrs. Gandhi's Visit - Cable from Sir Terence Garvey, British High Commissioner to India, to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, September 28, 1971, NA, FCO 37/825: Visits of Prime Minister of India from India to United Kingdom, 1971, Document 90.

<sup>172</sup> As has been noted, “the origins of the problem were internal to Pakistan...Still, once the dispute presented itself, India was not above stoking it for its own ends.” Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 452

<sup>173</sup> While the government had allowed a government in exile to be set up in India, Mueyedul Hasan, a close associate of the Prime Minister sent to Delhi in late May to get a sense of the prevailing sentiment, noted how there was still a debate within the Indian government about how much support to give to the rebels. Mueyedul Hasan, “1971: PNH in Bridging the Security Gap,” in Subrata Banerjee ed. *Contributions in Remembrance: Homage to P.N. Haksar* (Delhi, India: Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, 2004), pp. 21-23. For details on the Indian elections, see Katherine Frank, *Indira: The Life of Indira Nehru Gandhi* (London, UK: Harper Perennial, 2005), p. 324. Tharoor called it a “personal triumph” for Gandhi. Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 132.

<sup>174</sup> In a memo D.P. Dhar (Chairman, MEA Policy Planning ) noted to Haksar in April 1971, “we have to create the whole of East Bengal into a bottomless ditch which will suck the strength and resources of West Pakistan.” Quoted in Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 453

<sup>175</sup> This was evident from speeches given by Swaran Singh (criticized for being dispassionate) and Gandhi, as well as the resolution introduced in parliament by Gandhi. Swaran Singh's Statement, March 27, 1971, Document 29; Statements on Recent Developments in Pakistan: P.M. Intervenes in Discussion, March 27, 1971, Document 30; Text of the Resolution moved by Prime Minister Gandhi, March 31, 1971, NA, DO 133/201: India/Pakistan, 1971, Document 34.

<sup>176</sup> Depinder Singh, *Soldiering with Dignity* (Dehradun, India: Natraj Publishers, 2002), p. 129 (Singh was Chief of Army Staff Manekshaw's Military Assistant at the time of the war). Manekshaw's version of a Cabinet meeting in April when some ministers were pressing for intervention is also quoted in Shubhi Sood, *Leadership: Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw* (Noida, India: SDS Publishers, 2006), pp. 147-149 (Sood was Manekshaw's Aide de Camp).

involvement since the northern mountain passes were open,<sup>177</sup> and the troops deployed in eastern India were only equipped for election duty.<sup>178</sup> In addition, with different states in India such as Tamil Nadu, which had demonstrated separatist tendencies in the past, still calling for autonomy,<sup>179</sup> the precedent of a province breaking off from a country was not one Gandhi wanted to encourage.<sup>180</sup> While it was doing nothing to stop East Bengali guerillas operating from its territory, the Indian government also did not see the point in getting more involved since it expected Pakistani military authorities to take back control relatively quickly and then return to the negotiating table with the AL.<sup>181</sup>

The inability of the Pakistani military to re-establish control and a refugee influx into India soon brought increased pressure on the Indian government and a change in Indian calculations.<sup>182</sup> The refugees were entering parts of the country where the political situation had already been tense.<sup>183</sup> In West Bengal, Naxalites had been threatening

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<sup>177</sup> K. Subrahmanyam had noted that in deciding to do anything that would risk an India-Pak war, India had to think about whether China would intervene. Letter from K. Subrahmanyam (IDSA) to Defence Minister, Swaran Singh, Haksar, Kaul, Lall etc, April 4, 1971, enclosing paper on Bangla Desh: Policy Options for India, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>178</sup> Singh, p. 131. The Prime Minister and the COAS agreed at the time that, because of these reasons, if a political solution hadn't been reached nothing could be done before October/November at the earliest.

<sup>179</sup> "Pakistan says India Attacked Border Post," *WP*, 20 Apr. 1971, p. A15.

<sup>180</sup> Writing about the leader of the DMK, which in its early days had advocated Tamil separatism, a British diplomat noted: "In several recent speeches [Karunanidhi] has talked boldly about the importance of the centre granting the states much more control over their own affairs and has even raked in the alleged parallel of the tragic situation in East Pakistan." He noted that the leader was demanding autonomy, stating that if Gandhi did not take a more flexible attitude it would "create Mujibs in many of the Indian states." "The DMK and Autonomy for the States," Note from V.C. Martin, British Deputy High Commissioner to India, to J.D. Hennings, British High Commission, New Delhi, India, April 7, 1971, NA, FCO 37/814: Political Situation in India, 1971, Document 4.

<sup>181</sup> Rose and Sisson, pp. 141-142.

<sup>182</sup> By May, the State Department was indicating signs of change in India's inclination to favor Pakistani unity. It did not believe, however, that India would intervene militarily unless significant Pakistani units crossed over into India, there was increased public and parliamentary pressure in India due to "something approaching genocide of Hindus," or the burden of refugees became too great. Discussion of Indo-Pakistan Relations, Contingency Study, May 4, 1971, in Roedad Khan, ed., *American Papers: Secret and Confidential, India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 554-559.

<sup>183</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Swaran Singh, Moscow, June 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

stability enough in the past few years that Indian paramilitary forces had been deployed to combat them.<sup>184</sup> In the other states that the refugees were moving into, especially the tribal areas unused to outsiders, the ethnically-different refugees were creating a demographic imbalance, in some districts even outnumbering the locals.<sup>185</sup> The additional economic burden in these areas was also a subject of concern, especially for a Congress party in power that had been elected on the slogan of *garibi hatao* (remove poverty) and would be facing elections in key states in a year's time.<sup>186</sup> Furthermore, as it became clear that Hindus were especially being targeted in East Pakistan – a fact that the Indian government tried to keep under wraps<sup>187</sup> – the fear of communal riots breaking out in these recipient states was ever-present, especially in areas where a significant percent of the local population was Muslim.<sup>188</sup>

Finally, influential assessments' and the government's calculations were that the longer the instability continued, the more likely that China-backed left-wing extremists would come to dominate the AL, which had temporarily set up a government-in-exile in India.<sup>189</sup> Thus, India would be better off supporting the moderate AL and trying to ensure a solution as soon as possible. A related fear was that if extremists took over and led an

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<sup>184</sup> Naxalite-related incidents in West Bengal and Assam, two of the states where refugees were flowing into, had skyrocketed over three years. See Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 243: Riots in the States, July 29, 1971, NA, DO 133/194: General Political Situation in India, 1971, Document 28.

<sup>185</sup> Singh, p. 144

<sup>186</sup> The British High Commissioner noted that the burden of the refugees “postponed any early hope that Mrs. Gandhi will be able to fulfil the promises of economic and social reform with which she won a landslide victory.” “Instant India” - Diplomatic Report No. 368/71 from the British High Commissioner at New Delhi to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, July 14, 1971, NA, DO 133/194: General Political Situation in India, 1971, Document 32.

<sup>187</sup> Rose and Sisson, pp. 147-148

<sup>188</sup> Also, see Mansingh, *Indira's Search for Power*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>189</sup> Letter from Subrahmanyam to Defence Minister, Swaran Singh, Haksar, Kaul, Lall etc, April 4, 1971, enclosing paper on Bangla Desh: Policy Options for India, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276. The concern about Chinese influence in East Pakistan had been mentioned in earlier discussions as well. See Note from Kaul to Haksar on DP Dhar's Meeting with Foreign Minister, April 7, 1969, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203. Also see Record of Conversation between Gromyko and Swaran Singh, Moscow, June 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

independent Bangladesh, they would collaborate with the Naxalites in West Bengal for a “Greater Bengal.”<sup>190</sup> Thus, in late April,<sup>191</sup> Gandhi instructed the Indian military to organize and train the guerillas, who had been operating from India, and prepare for possible military action as well.<sup>192</sup> At this stage, this support was not for the creation of an independent state and India actively refused to recognize Bangladesh.<sup>193</sup> India hoped to pressure Pakistan into political accommodation that would ensure an AL government in East Pakistan.<sup>194</sup> To seek international pressure, India also went on a diplomatic offensive, with ministers fanning out across the world.<sup>195</sup>

At the onset of the crisis, the White House’s major objective had been to “maintain Pakistan’s goodwill” in order “to preserve the channel to Peking.”<sup>196</sup> In early April Beijing’s invitation to an American table tennis team to visit China had pleasantly surprised Nixon and Kissinger. They were even more delighted when at the end of month the Pakistani ambassador conveyed Zhou’s invitation to Nixon or an emissary to visit China.<sup>197</sup> With discussions and preparations underway for Kissinger to visit to China through Pakistan, Nixon instructed that nothing be done to “squeeze” West Pakistan.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> A Congress MP reflected on this fear of the Indian government to a British diplomat. Note for the File by R.L.B. Cormack, April 23, 1971, NA, DO 133/194: General Political Situation in India, 1971, Document 17. Also see DP Dhar’s comments in Record of Discussions between Kosygin and DP Dhar (Gandhi’s Special Representative to Moscow), Moscow, August 5, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 280.

<sup>191</sup> Lt. Gen. Jacob quoted as saying that on April 29 Eastern Command was “given the responsibility of assisting the Bangladesh force.” Sood, p. 158.

<sup>192</sup> Preparations detailed in Lt. Gen. J. S. Aurora, “The Liberation of Bangladesh-I,” in Mala Singh ed. *Khushwant Singh on War and Peace in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* (Delhi, India: Hind Pocket Books, 1976), pp. 46-51. (Aurora was in charge of Eastern Command of the Indian Army during the war).

<sup>193</sup> Rose and Sisson, p. 143. There were differences within the government. The defence and finance ministers wanted a more proactive policy in support of Bangladesh. The foreign minister, policy planning chief and the chief of army staff wanted a more cautious policy. Mansingh, pp. 216-217.

<sup>194</sup> Rose and Sisson, p. 186

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p. 188

<sup>196</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1st edn. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), pp. 853-854.

<sup>197</sup> Macmillan, *Nixon and Mao*, pp. 177-181

<sup>198</sup> See Memo from Haig to Nixon, April 28, 1971, in F.S. Aijazuddin, ed., *The White House and Pakistan: Secret Declassified Documents, 1969-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 241 and Memo

Despite congressional and media calls, Nixon and Kissinger thus initially refused to cut off aid to pressure Pakistan to accommodate East Pakistani demands for autonomy.<sup>199</sup> However, when State Department officials did not get a response to their queries about suspending military shipments to Pakistan, they went ahead and embargoed military exports.<sup>200</sup> Congressional and Indian criticism of Nixon's attitude increased in the summer when reports emerged that Pakistan was still receiving arms shipments from the US—these shipments in the pipeline had slipped through the State-engineered embargo.<sup>201</sup> While Indian officials acknowledged the financial assistance the US and other countries were providing to help it cope with the growing influx of refugees, they questioned whether the US was an honest broker, doubting US promises that it was making efforts toward a solution. The Indian foreign minister was especially taken aback having returned from Washington believing that he had received assurances about such US efforts.<sup>202</sup>

The reason for the limited White House effort was that while Gandhi's concern was the implications of the crisis in Bengal, Nixon was concerned about the effect on Beijing.<sup>203</sup> He resisted congressional calls for pressure on Pakistani leader Yahya Khan while Kissinger was in the midst of the July trip that would take him to Delhi, Islamabad

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from Kissinger to Nixon, April 28, 1971, Foreign Relations of the United States 1969-1976, Vol. XI, South Asia Crisis [hereafter cited as FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI] (Washington, DC: GPO, 2005), p. 98.

<sup>199</sup> Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, May 23, 1971, 2:30 p.m., NARA, NPM, HAK Telephone Conversation Transcripts (Telcons), Home File, July 1970-April 1972, Box 29.

<sup>200</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 293.

<sup>201</sup> Tad Szulc, "U.S. Military Goods Sent to Pakistan despite Ban," NYT, June 22, 1971, p. 1.

<sup>202</sup> MemCon, New Delhi, July 7, 1971, FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI, p. 228. Also, see Record of Discussions between Gromyko and DP Dhar, Moscow, August 4, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 280.

<sup>203</sup> He alluded to this in a conversation with the US ambassador to India, stating, "maybe there is going to be a Pakistan collapse...It may never be in our interest. But it certainly is not now for reasons we can't go into...we've got to take up here for reasons that go far beyond India-Pakistan relations another position" (emphasis added). Conversation Among Nixon, Kissinger, and Keating, June 15, 1971, 5:13-5:40 p.m., in FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7 (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/nixon/e7/48522.htm>)



and Beijing. When the House of Representatives voted against sending economic aid to Pakistan, the White House found work-arounds to continue such assistance, asserting that terminating assistance would remove the only source of its leverage with Pakistan (though at other points it argued that it had no leverage with Pakistan).<sup>204</sup> Furthermore, it took a liberal attitude toward Pakistani debt rescheduling, which allowed the country to conserve its depleting foreign exchange reserves.<sup>205</sup> Finally, the administration also admitted that additional military equipment that had been sanctioned earlier would be sent to Pakistan.<sup>206</sup>

This reluctance to push Yahya toward compromise continued after the White House had established direct channels to China. One reason for this was gratitude toward Pakistan for its role in establishing the channel.<sup>207</sup> There was also concern that US pressure on Pakistan “might be misunderstood in Peking” and seen as a joint Soviet-American action. Kissinger, therefore, in subsequent meetings with the Chinese leadership constantly reiterated American support for Pakistan.<sup>208</sup>

It remains debatable whether the Sino-US rapprochement could have survived increased American pressure on Pakistan. China had its own motivations for the rapprochement. Furthermore, it was not clear that Beijing’s commitment to Islamabad

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<sup>204</sup> See Tad Szulc, “U.S. Says It Will Continue Aid to Pakistan Despite Cutoff Urged by Other Nations,” *NYT*, June 29, 1971, p. 2 and *WP*, June 26, 1971.

<sup>205</sup> “House Foreign Affairs Comes Alive,” *WP*, July 20, 1971, p. A18.

<sup>206</sup> “More U.S. Weapons Will Go to Pakistan,” *WP*, June 30, 1971, p. A17.

<sup>207</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 849. Pakistani officials at the time Summary of Discussions of Pakistan Ambassadors’ Conference (Geneva), August 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220. also thought Nixon was “well disposed” to Pakistan in the crisis because of its role in the rapprochement.

<sup>208</sup> See MemCon between Kissinger and Huang Zhen (Chinese ambassador to France), August 16, 1971, Memo from Kissinger to Nixon on Conversation with Huang Zhen, September 13, 1971, Talking Points for Kissinger’s Meeting with Huang Zhen, September 13, 1971, Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, November 11, 1971, MemCon Between Zhou and Kissinger, October 22, 1971, in Aijazuddin, ed., *The White House and Pakistan*, pp. 267-301. Also Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, November 26, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1969-1976*, Vol. XVII: China, 1969-1972 [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVII*] (Washington, DC: GPO, 2006), pp. 595-598.

involved more than some military supplies, and rhetorical and political backing.<sup>209</sup> As early as March, a US interagency group had assessed that Chinese military intervention to aid Pakistan was highly unlikely since they would consider it “high risk, low benefit.”<sup>210</sup> Explaining his perspective, Kissinger later noted that he believed that China was more seriously committed to Pakistan because of his interpretation of a statement that Zhou made to the effect that “China would not be indifferent if India attacked Pakistan.”<sup>211</sup> With this assumption, Nixon and he believed that China would see a “victory of India over Pakistan [as being] the same as a victory of the Soviet Union over China.”<sup>212</sup> At a meeting in July, Zhou was indeed ambiguous about China’s position, stating “if India commits aggression, we will support Pakistan.”<sup>213</sup>

#### **The Indo-Soviet Treaty: “Calling in One Devil to Counteract the Other Two”<sup>214</sup>**

To ensure that India would be prepared if China went beyond supporting Pakistan diplomatically and politically, Delhi had been seeking assurances from the superpowers. In early June, Swaran Singh had discussed the potential role of China with Soviet foreign minister Gromyko saying it was a crucial issue for India, especially given Zhou’s “strong and belligerent statements” in support of Pakistan. He said there was a “good deal of circumstantial evidence which indicates a positive collusion between China and Pakistan.” Singh suggested to his Soviet counterpart that China’s opposition towards

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<sup>209</sup> In April, Zhou Enlai sent a letter to Yahya (letter published in Pakistani press) reiterating that if India attacked Pakistan “the Chinese government and people will, as always, support the Pakistan Government and people.” [Quoted in Guha, p. 454] But Pakistan ambassador to Beijing noted that he was uncertain about the nature of Chinese help if there was a war and that China was urging a political settlement. Summary of Discussions of Pakistan Ambassadors’ Conference (Geneva), August 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>210</sup> Consideration of Contingency Study on Pakistan by Senior Review Group: Briefing Memo, March 5, 1971, in *American Papers*, pp. 502-517.

<sup>211</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 862.

<sup>212</sup> Quoted in Kux, *The United States and Pakistan*, p. 203.

<sup>213</sup> MemCon, Beijing, July 11, 1971, FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVII, p. 452.

<sup>214</sup> Mohammed Yunus, cited in Mansingh, p. 89.

India was due to her disapproval of India's closer relationship with the Soviet Union. He noted, "A situation may arise, which may demand the entry of the Soviet Union into it in order to encounter the difficulties which may be created by the Chinese support to Pakistan." Gromyko, however, was not willing to give something in return for nothing. He brought the previously proposed bilateral treaty out of mothballs. Singh thought that might take too long. In the midst of the crisis, India was looking for deterrents and needed some kind of "understanding" soon.<sup>215</sup> He subsequently asked Kosygin for a statement in support of India's territorial integrity and against any military attack, wanting Moscow to "neutralize" the possibility of Chinese intervention.<sup>216</sup> Perhaps to urge India to reconsider the treaty, Soviet officials, on their part, played up such a the Chinese threat,<sup>217</sup> as well as "Sino-Pak collusion and supply of arms by USA to Pakistan."<sup>218</sup>

Seeking to diversify its deterrence options, India had sought assurance from the US as well. On his trip to India in July just before he went to Beijing, Kissinger assured the Indian defence minister—who wondered about the US stance "in view of the present

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<sup>215</sup> Record of Conversation between Gromyko and Swaran Singh, Moscow, June 7, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203. Singh later added, "such an agreement will act as a great lever for peace and also as a deterrent to China and Pakistan against embarking on any military adventures." Record of Conversation between Gromyko and Swaran Singh, Moscow, June 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

<sup>216</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and Swaran Singh, Moscow, June 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203.

<sup>217</sup> Grechko told Dhar that India should not worry about Pakistan; it was "the unpredictable enemy from the North" that India should factor in. Said Soviet Union thought China would stay hostile for years to come. Could not pick on Soviet Union, but given that India was "relatively militarily weak" Beijing could take a more aggressive attitude toward India. On this basis, Grechko tried to push India further, urging India to sign a "military cooperation" agreement with the Soviet Union." MemCon of Meeting between DP Dhar and Marshal AA Grechko (Soviet Defence Minister), June 5, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 229.

<sup>218</sup> "They had hinted that this was necessary in view of Chinese designs on their territory as well as on ours." Kaul, "Points for consideration by FM and PM," August 3, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 49.

situation between you and China, you and Pakistan and you, and Pakistan and China”— that the US would take a very “grave view” of a Chinese move against India.”<sup>219</sup>

The defence minister’s query reflected the continued Indian awareness of the changing US assessment of China even before Nixon’s announcement of Kissinger’s trip. The Soviet chief of mission in London had earlier told his Indian counterpart that the US was seeking an agreement with China.<sup>220</sup> Contrary to later assertions by an Indian diplomat,<sup>221</sup> when Kissinger met with Gandhi in Delhi that July, he had also indicated that it was Nixon’s policy to “gradually...establish a relationship with Communist China.” He added that there could be significant developments in the months ahead...that...derived...from [the administration’s] global policy.”<sup>222</sup> Thus, while the timing and speed might have come as a surprise, at the most senior levels of the Indian government there was little “Nixon shock” about the direction of Nixon’s policy toward China.

The announcement of Sino-US rapprochement did not make an India-Soviet treaty inevitable. As a US intelligence assessment subsequently noted, in general the senior Indian leadership believed that “cautious steps” to improve US-China relations per se were to the “net advantage” of India.<sup>223</sup> Gandhi indeed “welcomed” the start of

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<sup>219</sup> Note from K. Rukmini Menon (JS, AMS) to Swaran Singh, DefMin, DefSecy, Haksar, MEA Secy (W) and Secy (E), LK Jha re record of Kissinger’s meeting with Defence Minister on 7<sup>th</sup> July, July 13, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 229.

<sup>220</sup> Letter from Apa Pant (IndHicom London) to Kaul, March 23, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>221</sup> Singh, pp. 87-88. Kaul asserted that Kissinger had not mentioned an improvement in U.S. relations with China, and it had come as a surprise to the Indian government.

<sup>222</sup> MemCon, New Delhi, July 7, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI*, p. 222. The Indian ambassador also mentioned to Kissinger that his Indian interlocutors had noted that he had discussed China much more than expected during his meetings with Delhi, which they later assessed as hints regarding the upcoming trip. See Telegram From DoS to AmEmb India, July 24, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI*, pp. 283-284

<sup>223</sup> Memo from Helms (DCI) to Kissinger, July 29, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI*, p. 291.

normalization of Sino-American relations.<sup>224</sup> Rather, the treaty was the result of a confluence of conditions: the crisis, Gandhi's expanded domestic political capacity, the Indian need for deterrence and the Soviet desire for a treaty in return for providing that deterrence, as well as the lack of availability of the US as an option as a result of the Sino-US rapprochement.

Coming in the midst of the crisis, the announcement of Kissinger's trip caused anxiety at the lower levels of the Indian government and the military, and among the public. At the senior levels, the impact of the rapprochement on the role of the US in the crisis caused concern. At the onset of the crisis, an influential defense analyst had assessed the "probability of Chinese intervention" as "low." Even if China intervened, he asserted "the chances of Super Power support to India appear to be fairly high in the current circumstances."<sup>225</sup> The altered Sino-US dynamic, however, made evident that—at least as far as the US was concerned—the circumstances had changed. Just as awareness of altered Sino-US dynamics had preceded Nixon's announcement, so had doubts about the US role. In Delhi in early July, Haksar had been "puzzled" by Kissinger's implication that if China intervened in an India-Pakistan conflict, India would "have to rely on" the Soviet Union.<sup>226</sup> Kissinger's indication to Jha that India would be on its own if it took action in East Pakistan and China intervened caused further concern.<sup>227</sup> Soviet officials indeed played on Indian anxieties about the US, noting that Sino-US rapprochement

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<sup>224</sup> Letter from Gandhi to Nixon attached to Telegram from Haksar to Jha, August 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 170.

<sup>225</sup> Letter from Subrahmanyam to Defence Minister, Foreign Minister, Haksar, Kaul, Lall etc, April 4, 1971, enclosing paper on Bangla Desh: Policy Options for India, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>226</sup> Haksar's Note on Conversation between him and Kissinger, July 6, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 229.

<sup>227</sup> Memo from Helms to Kissinger, July 29, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI*, p. 291. Also, see Lall, *Emergence*, p. 184.

“must be a matter of concern” to India.<sup>228</sup> The suggested absence of US support against China at a time when there was a real chance that India and Pakistan would go to war, with China possibly intervening to aid Pakistan made an India-Soviet treaty more desirable to India than before—as a morale booster, deterrent to China, and source of fuel, military supply and support at the UN.<sup>229</sup>

The treaty had also become more feasible, since the American attitude had strengthened the hands of those in the Indian government who supported signing the treaty and tilting toward Moscow.<sup>230</sup> The Indian ambassador in Moscow, DP Dhar, had been pressing Delhi to return to discussions on the treaty earlier in the summer, arguing, “In these difficult days, it is only the Soviet Union whose help and support you can count on with an assured degree of confidence.”<sup>231</sup> Criticizing Delhi’s “lukewarm response” to Moscow, he had highlighted the possibility of Chinese intervention to argue in favor of closer Indo-Soviet relations.<sup>232</sup> Now, Dhar found “a sense of urgency” in India for the treaty.<sup>233</sup>

Indian foreign secretary TN Kaul—also an advocate of the treaty—emphasized the changed circumstances: “the possibility of Sino-American détente and the change in

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<sup>228</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul re his conversation with Dobrynin (Soviet ambassador to the US) in early August, August 5 and August 9, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 171.

<sup>229</sup> Mansingh, p. 147.

<sup>230</sup> Kaul, “Points for consideration by FM and PM,” August 3, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 49. There is also discussion of this last point in Tharoor, *Reasons of State*.

<sup>231</sup> Handwritten Note from DP Dhar to Haksar attached to Letter of May 30, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 229. Dhar had broached the subject – without instructions – even earlier in March 1971 about whether the Soviet Union was still interested in the treaty. But the Soviet foreign minister had demurred, adding that he would be happy to discuss it after the Indian elections. Letter from DP Dhar to Kaul on Conversation with Soviet foreign minister, March 3, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 203. He was a long-time supporter of the treaty; when it was eventually signed, he called it the “fulfillment of a dream.” Record of Conversation between Kosygin and DP Dhar, August 5 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 51.

<sup>232</sup> Letter from DP Dhar to Kaul, Haksar, June 5, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 229.

<sup>233</sup> Record of Discussions between Gromyko and DP Dhar, Moscow, August 3, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 280.

attitude of US Government to the Bangla Desh problem...” He referenced Kissinger’s conversation with Jha, noting, “America would not intervene in any conflict between India and Pakistan even if China did so.” He added, “[t]his has changed the whole perspective in which the Soviet proposal has to be considered...[since] there is no other alternative left to us but to have a reliable friend in case of necessity.”<sup>234</sup>

Along with the strategic circumstances, advocates of the treaty were also aware that the domestic political conditions were more favorable. In Moscow to discuss the treaty in August, Dhar noted that with the 1971 elections “the progressive policies of Mrs. Gandhi and her party were given an overwhelming support by the people of our country.” With the crisis additionally looming, “the climate was [now] suitable.”<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, by August, the Indian public attitude towards the US had deteriorated, with those having a favorable opinion of it in India dropping from 49 percent from the year before to 17 percent. Negative opinions of the US rose from 9 percent to 28 percent. Favorable opinion of the Soviet Union, meanwhile, had risen somewhat to 59 percent. Of those surveyed, 60 percent identified the Soviet Union as friendly towards India, compared to 40 percent who thought the US was friendly towards India.<sup>236</sup>

Kaul argued internally that “[a]t the present psychological moment” with war imminent and US unwillingness to cease actions that could be harmful to India, most, but not all political parties, would support the treaty. There would be some political opposition, but Kaul asserted that the treaty would have popular support because it would give India a “reliable and powerful friend” in a time of crisis.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, when the treaty

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<sup>234</sup> Kaul, “Points for consideration by FM and PM,” August 3, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 49.

<sup>235</sup> Record of Conversation between Kosygin and DP Dhar, August 5, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II). SF No. 51.

<sup>236</sup> IIPO, “A Study of International Images in Metropolitan Cities and a Trend Analysis: 1966-1971,” *MPOS*, Vol. XVI, No. 11, 12 (August, September 1971), pp. 4-9.

<sup>237</sup> Kaul, “Points for consideration by FM and PM,” August 3, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 49.

was announced, even Jan Sangh leader Atal Behari Vajpayee—usually a critic of Mrs. Gandhi’s government—acknowledged that India now had a much-needed “friend at a critical juncture.”<sup>238</sup>

British officials saw the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed in August as India “taking out [an] insurance policy with [the] USSR.”<sup>239</sup> Some on the Soviet side later identified it as “primarily a geopolitical move to offset Nixon’s rapprochement with China.”<sup>240</sup> Kissinger described the treaty in his memoirs as a “bombshell.”<sup>241</sup> At the time privately to Nixon, however, Kissinger, too, assessed it as a response to the Sino-US rapprochement and also the Soviet Union’s way of deterring India from making any rash moves related to the crisis.<sup>242</sup>

Indeed, even in the final stages of the treaty discussions, senior Soviet policymakers urged Indian restraint.<sup>243</sup> Indian policymakers agreed that the first step would be to consider what steps India and the Soviet Union could take together “to prevent a conflict.” Nonetheless, if a conflict broke out, India wanted to assess what the two countries could do “so that India is enabled to emerge out of it successfully.”<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> “Praise of Soviet Voiced in India,” *NYT*, August 11, 1971, p. 7.

<sup>239</sup> Briefing for Mrs. Gandhi’s Visit - Cable from Sir Terence Garvey, British High Commissioner to India, to FCO, September 28, 1971, NA, Document 90, FCO 37/825: Visits of Prime Minister of India from India to United Kingdom, 1971. A British assessment noted, “the signing of the Indo/Soviet Treaty was forced upon [Indira Gandhi] by the East Pakistan crisis; in more normal times she might well have refused to entertain it. She does not wish to see India become a Soviet satellite and her forthcoming round of visits is no doubt partly aimed at demonstrating India’s continued independence.” “Mrs. Gandhi’s Visit: Biographical Note on Mrs. Gandhi, Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs,” October 15, 1971, NA, FCO 37/814: Political Situation in India, 1971, Document 25.

<sup>240</sup> Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: the Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 217

<sup>241</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 866.

<sup>242</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, August 24, 1971, FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI, p. 363.

<sup>243</sup> Record of Discussions between Kosygin and DP Dhar, Moscow, August 5, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 280.

<sup>244</sup> Haksar, Points for PM’s Conversations with Gromyko, August 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 170.



Indian policymakers continued to be concerned about Soviet reliability—especially now that the US option was no longer available. There were persisting questions about the status of the Sino-Soviet relationship. Indian officials also disapproved of Gromyko’s mention of a potential visit to Pakistan. Thus, after the treaty was signed, Haksar suggested to the Indian foreign minister that he make clear to his Soviet counterpart that the Indian people would expect help in the crisis.<sup>245</sup> From Indian policymakers’ perspective, Moscow’s public underplaying the security provisions of the treaty continued to rankle.<sup>246</sup>

At that stage, there was little expectation that the US would join up on the other side. There was more of a sense that US policymakers “might act in the same manner as they did in 1965”—sitting back.<sup>247</sup> But there was a feeling that “Pakistan’s intransigence has been further strengthened by the help rendered by them in facilitating Kissinger’s visit to China.”<sup>248</sup> Furthermore, there was concern that Yahya would go to war “egged on by China, and general support of the United States.” Haksar saw China’s motive as “the economic and political disruption of India without firing a shot.” Thus, Indian officials received with concern reports that there had been Chinese troop movements in Gilgit.<sup>249</sup>

There were questions in India about whether China would indeed intervene in any potential conflict—the Indian government was aware of Pakistani doubts on the matter.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Haksar, Some further points for Foreign Minister’s Conversation with Gromyko, August 10, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 170.

<sup>246</sup> Mansingh, p. 144.

<sup>247</sup> Haksar, Points for PM’s Conversations with Gromyko, August 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 170.

<sup>248</sup> Record of Discussions between Gromyko and DP Dhar, Moscow, August 4, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 280. Also see Record of Discussions between Kosygin and DP Dhar, Moscow, August 5, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 280.

<sup>249</sup> Haksar, Points for PM’s Conversations with Gromyko, August 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 170.

<sup>250</sup> Summary of Discussions of Pakistan Ambassadors’ Conference (Geneva), August 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

Thus, India aimed “to probe [Beijing’s] intentions” and “refrained from making any statement which might even remotely irritate them.”<sup>251</sup> There were some attempts to reach out to Beijing. Even in 1971, Gandhi had continued to be open to an improvement in Sino-Indian relations. In spring, Dhar had noted that with her new electoral mandate, Gandhi was in an even better position to normalize relations with China, but “we cannot argue before a stone wall.”<sup>252</sup> Nonetheless, in July, Gandhi had written directly to Zhou, urging China to use its “undoubted influence” with Pakistan.<sup>253</sup> A letter from Gandhi to a member of parliament drafted by Haksar noted that India was “not insensitive” to the need for re-establishing relations with China and was trying to develop contacts with China through its embassies.<sup>254</sup> As a confidence-building measure, Gandhi also approved approaching Beijing to establish a bilateral “wireless communication” link.<sup>255</sup> Gandhi’s general attitude towards China—as well as the exclusivity of the Indo-Soviet treaty—was evident in her suggestion that India approach China for a treaty as well.<sup>256</sup>

### **The Crisis and US-India Relations Deteriorate**

There seemed little progress on that front or any other. As the monsoon season wound down over September and October, opportunities for a peaceful resolution of the crisis seemed to dissipate as each of the actors involved became increasingly inflexible. The Nixon administration continued to resist calls for pressure on Pakistan, and instead pressured India, asserting that India needed to take the first steps to de-escalate the

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<sup>251</sup> Haksar, Points for PM’s Conversations with Gromyko, August 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 170.

<sup>252</sup> Record of Discussion between DP Dhar and Kosygin, March 23, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 276.

<sup>253</sup> Text of Letter from Gandhi to Zhou sent through Cable from Haksar to Mishra, December 11, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 174.

<sup>254</sup> Draft Letter from Gandhi to Shankar Dev (MP), August 19, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 171.

<sup>255</sup> Note from Haksar to Kaul, August 30, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 170.

<sup>256</sup> Haksar pointed out that this was not feasible at the time, and would only anger the Soviet Union. Note from Gandhi to Haksar, August 12, 1971 and Note from Haksar to Gandhi, August 19, 1971, NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 170.

situation. Prodded by Nixon, Yahya eventually became willing to make concessions on the military front to get India to back down, agreeing to withdraw troops from the West Pakistan-India border if India would do the same.<sup>257</sup> By the fall, however, India seemed to have decided the situation represented not just a threat, but an opportunity as well. As part of the government's second diplomatic offensive that year, Gandhi set out for what many later saw as a preemptive justification tour.<sup>258</sup>

In November even as Gandhi was visiting Washington, Kissinger insisted "We are willing to do anything if the Indians will give us 6 months to turn around in."<sup>259</sup> The president's upcoming trips to Moscow and Beijing drove Kissinger's timetable. Nixon and Kissinger remained concerned about China's reaction to the US approach to the crisis, even though a surprised Kissinger had noticed that by the fall Zhou had ceased to be interested in discussing the South Asian situation despite China's public pledges of support for Pakistan.<sup>260</sup> State Department and allies' assessments had also been noting Chinese reticence, which they expected would persist.<sup>261</sup> Gandhi, too, commented on the fact that till that point Chinese support to Pakistan had fallen short of the level extended during the 1965 India-Pakistan war.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Nixon noted that he had urged Yahya "to take a moderate, more conciliatory line." Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), p. 525. Also see, Telegram From the Consulate General in Karachi to DoS, October 11, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI*, pp. 458-461.

<sup>258</sup> Mansingh, pp. 219-220.

<sup>259</sup> Conversation between Kissinger and Gov. Rockefeller, November 3, 1971, 7:00 p.m., NARA NPM, HAK Telcons, Chronological File, November 1, 1971-January 24, 1972, Box 12.

<sup>260</sup> John Burns, "China Vows Support for Pakistan," WP, November 8, 1971, p. A18. Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, November 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVII*, p. 550 and Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, November 26, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVII*, p. 597

<sup>261</sup> Pakistan: In Search of Assurance, September 27, 1971, in American Papers, pp. 679-680. Also see, French Actions in Regard to Indo-Pak Situation, November 24, 1971, in American Papers, pp. 724-725.

<sup>262</sup> Record of a Conversation between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, November 1, 1971, 10:30 a.m., Claridges Hotel, London, UK, NA, Document 201, FCO 37/826: Visits of Prime Minister of India from India to United Kingdom, 1971.

India kept a close eye on Sino-Pakistan interactions. The Indian chargé in Beijing reported some signals indicating that China did not want war and its support might not go as far as Pakistan wanted. When Pakistani foreign minister Bhutto visited China in early November, Mishra noted that, unlike Pakistan, China omitted reference to Chinese support for Pakistan in 1965 in speeches. He reported the official Chinese news agencies as deleting or moderating Bhutto's remarks on India and on the extent of Chinese support to Pakistan. Mishra assessed the Chinese motivation as wanting to "keep its options open." Mishra said his "overall assessment is that China has adopted an attitude of restraint and is advising Pakistan to do the same."<sup>263</sup> He noted that other information suggested that China had promised Pakistan support at the UN and military equipment, but declined to intervene because of a "desire to avoid clash with Soviet Union."<sup>264</sup>

Gandhi's timetable was driven by factors different from those motivating that of Kissinger. The military window of opportunity loomed for India. Serious skirmishes broke out in late November and Gandhi gave General Manekshaw, the Chief of Army Staff, the go ahead for major action on December 4. The Nixon administration spokesperson announced that "the U.S. plans to remain neutral,"<sup>265</sup> but as Nixon said privately to Kissinger, "[o]f course, we're not neutral."<sup>266</sup> The US held India responsible for the outbreak of the war, cancelled loans and sales of military spares and delayed

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<sup>263</sup> Cables from Mishra to Secretary (East), MEA, October 29, 1971 and November 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220 (latter passed on to Kaul in Bonn). High Commission in London passed on information from sources close to the Chinese embassy there that Bhutto got a "frosty" reception in Beijing, which was caught between wanting to help Pakistan and wanting to ensure that it didn't close the door to a relationship with BD. Cable from Prakash Kaul (IndHicom London) to Kaul, November 12, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>264</sup> Cable from Mishra to Secretary (East), MEA, November 9, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220. Passed on to Kaul in Bonn.

<sup>265</sup> U.S. Attitudes on India-Pakistan Crisis (U.S. Information Service), December 7, 1971, NA, Document 3, FCO 37/755: U.S. Policy Towards India and Pakistan, 1971.

<sup>266</sup> Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, December 4, 1971, NARA NPM HAK Telcons, Home File, July 1970-April 1972, Box 29.

approving food aid to India. Simultaneously, the White House suggested to America's Middle Eastern allies that while the US could not sell, or permit them to sell, American equipment to Pakistan, it would be "obliged to protest, but...will understand" if they supplied Pakistan with American arms.<sup>267</sup>

As the war progressed, Kissinger remained concerned about the impact of the US response on China's thinking:

if it turns out that we end up with the complete dismemberment of Pakistan, then they will conclude, 'All right. We played it decently but [the US is] just too weak.' And that they have to break their encirclement, not by dealing with us, but by moving either [unclear] or drop the whole idea.<sup>268</sup>

With the Pakistan Army's defeat in the east imminent, Nixon and Kissinger became convinced that India would try to destroy West Pakistan next, despite substantial contrary analysis within the US government.<sup>269</sup> Kissinger claimed to skeptical allies that he had received reports that the Indian cabinet had made such a decision.<sup>270</sup> Indian assurances, directly and through the Soviet Union, as well as doubts about military feasibility failed to dislodge this belief.<sup>271</sup>

Did India intend to take parts of West Pakistan? At the time, Haksar wrote to Jha that India had "no claims against the territory of West Pakistan." Moreover, he asserted

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<sup>267</sup> MemCon, New York, December 10, 1971, FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVII, p. 611.

<sup>268</sup> Conversation Among Nixon, Kissinger, and Attorney General Mitchell, December 8, 1971, 4:20-5:01 p.m., FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7, (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/nixon/e7/48537.htm>)

<sup>269</sup> Nixon, *RN*, p. 526. Also, Minutes of NSC Meeting, December 6, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI*, p. 672 and CIA Information Cable, December 7, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XI*, p. 687. Also, Cable from Lord Cromer, British Ambassador to the U.S., to FCO, December 15, 1971, NA Document 19, FCO 37/755: U.S. Policy Towards India and Pakistan, 1971.

<sup>270</sup> Describing Kissinger as attempting to be a "latter day Metternich," the British Ambassador in Washington had noted earlier, however, that, "From our own contacts with the CIA we have reason to believe that the CIA assessments do not confirm these reports." Letter from Lord Cromer, British Ambassador to the U.S. to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, British Foreign Minister, December 17, 1971, NA, Document 21, FCO 37/754: Anglo-U.S. Consultation on South Asian Affairs, 1971.

<sup>271</sup> Conversation between Kissinger and Vorontsov (Minister, Soviet embassy), December 12, 1971, 10:05 a.m., NARA NPM HAK Telcons, Anatoli Dobrynin File, February 1970-April 1973, Box 27.

that even though Pakistan-held Kashmir “legally belonged” to India, Delhi had said repeatedly that it would not “alter the status quo by force.”<sup>272</sup> After the war, Haksar commented to Jha on the CIA report about the cabinet meeting:

at no time PM ever made a statement even remotely resembling what the CIA agents have reported. You should also know that there was no occasion for the Cabinet to discuss the question. The only time when this matter was discussed was on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> December, first in the PAC of the Cabinet and later on in the Cabinet as well as with the leaders of the Opposition. At these discussions no one suggested that we might continue the war.<sup>273</sup>

India might not have had time for expanded operations on the western front. Even in 1967, when considering India-Pakistan war scenarios, Haksar had noted that whatever India’s objective, it would have a “short space of time allotted to us between the commencement of hostilities and the activation of international pressure, including the UN, for the cessation of hostilities and cease-fire.”<sup>274</sup> As the war was underway in 1971, Soviet and Indian officials agreed that India had around a fortnight to complete operations. After that, Soviet patience and support would run out, even as pressure at the UN from China and the US would grow.<sup>275</sup> After that, some Indian officials also believed that the pressure on China to intervene would increase.<sup>276</sup>

Despite the risks involved, after discussions with Nixon, Kissinger suggested to the Chinese permanent representative to the UN that in order to prevent West Pakistan going the way of East Pakistan, India needed to be “intimidated.” He urged a concerted,

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<sup>272</sup> Cable from Haksar to Jha, December 11, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 174.

<sup>273</sup> Letter from Haksar to Jha, March 3, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 243. Also see Gandhi’s handwritten comment on Letter from Jha to Haksar, February 17, 1972.

<sup>274</sup> Note from Haksar to Gandhi, September 14, 1967, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 119.

<sup>275</sup> Note from DP Dhar to Gandhi, Haksar, Kaul, Defence Secretary re Meeting with Pegov, December 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 243. Also see Note by Haksar for the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, December 13, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 174.

<sup>276</sup> Note from DP Dhar to Gandhi, Haksar, Kaul, Defence Secretary re Meeting with Pegov, December 8, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 243.

coordinated China-Pakistan-US effort to confront the India-Soviet action. Encouraging China to increase its military commitment, Kissinger passed along Nixon's message that if China "were to consider the situation on the Indian subcontinent a threat to its security, and if it took measures to protect its security, the U.S. would oppose efforts of others to interfere with the People's Republic." The permanent representative reiterated that China was prepared to defend itself *if* attacked. But, concerned that taking any action against India would give the Soviet Union an excuse to attack China, he repeatedly emphasized that China wanted to persist with efforts underway at the UN to resolve the situation.<sup>277</sup> Hoping to convince China of US willingness to provide back up if China made any military moves, Nixon had authorized the dispatch of a naval task force into the Bay of Bengal. Nixon claimed later that this deployment resulted in India announcing a ceasefire on all fronts when Pakistan surrendered in the east in mid-December. Contemporary and later assessments question this claim.<sup>278</sup> The result that was unquestionable was that US-India relations reached their lowest point. China, in confluence with a crisis, had once again cast a dark shadow on the US-India relationship. This time around, however, this was a result of Washington's—rather than New Delhi's—efforts to engage Beijing.

Did Washington's pressure on Moscow result in the ceasefire? Soviet calls for restraint had preceded US pressure. Since the beginning of the crisis, Moscow had urged Delhi and Islamabad to find a peaceful solution. It had been concerned for a few years about Beijing taking advantage of any instability in the subcontinent.<sup>279</sup> The signing of

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<sup>277</sup> MemCon, New York, December 10, 1971, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVII*, p. 612. For the subsequent meeting: MemCon, New York, December 12, 1971, *Ibid.*, pp. 621-624.

<sup>278</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 305. The British noted that they believed that "U.S. actions had no effect." Letter from T.A.K. Elliot, British Embassy in Washington, D.C., to K.M. Wilford, Assistant Under Secretary of State, FCO, on India/Pakistan: U.S. Policy, December 23, 1971, NA Document 26A, FCO 37/755: U.S. Policy Towards India and Pakistan, 1971.

<sup>279</sup> Also, see Mansingh, pp. 142-143.

the treaty did not result in Soviet officials changing their approach on this front—if anything, they were more concerned since they would inevitably be involved in any conflict. When Gandhi had visited Moscow in fall 1971, Kosygin had continued to encourage her to find a peaceful solution for this reason.<sup>280</sup> Nevertheless, it would be hard to argue that Moscow’s concerns about the crisis were insulated from its desire for détente with Washington.

### **A VICIOUS CIRCLE (1972)**

In the aftermath of the crisis, Kissinger predicted that India would want to re-establish a working relationship with the US, because Gandhi would not want to become overly dependent on the Soviet Union and India was still in no position to do without external assistance.<sup>281</sup> In January 1972, Kissinger felt vindicated when Keating reported that Kaul had suggested that India wanted to improve relations with the US.<sup>282</sup> Kissinger’s prediction that US-India relations would soon be better than before the Bangladesh crisis, however, proved wrong.<sup>283</sup> The crisis left a “critical strain” in the US-India relationship.<sup>284</sup>

Observers saw India’s first major foreign policy step in 1972—upgrading its relations with North Vietnam, which had earlier been “deferred out of deference to US sensitivities”<sup>285</sup>—as retaliation for Washington’s actions during the war.<sup>286</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>281</sup> Editorial Note re TelCon between Nixon and Kissinger, January 1, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7*, (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d198>)

<sup>282</sup> Telegram From the AmEmb India to the DoS, January 16, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d205>)

<sup>283</sup> Transcript of TelCon Between Nixon and Kissinger, January 16, 1972, 1 p.m., Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d204>)

<sup>284</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, January 9, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d201>)

<sup>285</sup> Telegram From the DoS to the AmEmb India re Jha-Irwin Meeting, January 21, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d212>). Also see Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 307.



the Indian ambassador asserted that while he thought the relationship needed to “get back on more even keel,” it would be “more difficult for GOI to take any initiatives.”<sup>287</sup> Gandhi herself “welcome[d] efforts to make a new start” but made clear that “the ball was in the US court.”<sup>288</sup>

What followed were months characterized by what Keating called a “vicious circle of actions and counteractions,” leaving US-India relations in a “state of limbo and drift.”<sup>289</sup> The ambassador to India noted that the US and India had a “tendency to place [the] worst possible construction on other’s acts of commission or omission.”<sup>290</sup> This tendency was only reinforced by Delhi’s post-crisis conviction that the overall American objective—in collusion with China and Pakistan—was to contain India. Post-crisis, the Soviet Union’s position was enhanced in India since it was seen as having stood by an India faced with a potential two-front war. On the other hand, the US—traditionally the country India had looked to for aid against China—had left India without support.<sup>291</sup>

Gandhi traced the change in America’s India policy to “when your policy toward China changed.”<sup>292</sup> In the aftermath of the war, India remained concerned about the influence of the China and Pakistan factors on US policy. Some US diplomats reinforced these concerns by their suggestions to Indian counterparts that China and Pakistan had been the reason for Nixon’s “anti-Indian attitude” during the war.<sup>293</sup> Indian policymakers

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<sup>286</sup> Schanberg, “New Delhi Raises Hanoi Ties’ Level,” *NYT*, January 8, 1972, p. 1.

<sup>287</sup> Telegram From the DoS to the AmEmb India re Jha-Irwin Meeting, January 21, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d212>)

<sup>288</sup> Sulzberger, “Mrs. Gandhi Asserts India is Still a Nonaligned Nation,” February 17, 1972, *NYT*, p. 1.

<sup>289</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, April 27, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598.

<sup>290</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, January 9, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d201>)

<sup>291</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, January 9, 1972, *Ibid*

(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d201>). Also, see Mansingh, p. 33.

<sup>292</sup> Sulzberger, “Mrs. Gandhi Asserts India is Still a Nonaligned Nation,” February 17, 1972, *NYT*, p. 1.

<sup>293</sup> Letter from KL Mehta (Indian Ambassador, Kabul) to Haksar re Meeting with Robert G Neumann (US Ambassador, Kabul), December 23, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217.

asked their British counterparts about the US attitude. The foreign minister asked whether there was “any parallelism” between American thinking about the subcontinent and China. The Indian foreign secretary asked if China or the US were “egging [Bhutto] on in adopting his present posture?”<sup>294</sup>

Contrary to British assurances to Indian officials otherwise,<sup>295</sup> China continued to cast a shadow on the relationship from the US perspective. Though Kaul had opened the door to an improvement in relations, Kissinger was adamant that, given the president’s upcoming trip to China in February, it was not the time for the US to respond positively. The US could “not do much now before we go to China because the Chinese are psychopathic.” Nixon agreed, but noted that the US should move towards improvement before the elections “for American consumption.” Kissinger assured the president that “by July we will have them improved.” For domestic consumption, Nixon and Kissinger decided to leak the information that India was seeking an improvement so that they would not get blamed for “driv[ing] them toward the Soviets.”<sup>296</sup>

On the US side, there was agreement that India would be open to an improvement even later in the year. Keating believed there would be limits to Soviet influence in India—partly because neither the Soviet Union nor India would meet the other’s expectations.<sup>297</sup> Rogers, too, predicted that to offset its “increased indebtedness to the Soviet Union”—the “price” of its victory—India would “try to restore more balanced

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<sup>294</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Swaran Singh and Alec Douglas-Home, December 23, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217. Also see MemCon of Meeting between Kaul and Denis Greenhill (PUS, FCO), December 23, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217.

<sup>295</sup> Douglas-Home tried to assure him by answering in the negative, asserting that there was especially no coordination between Beijing and Washington. MemCon of Meeting between Swaran Singh and Douglas-Home, December 23, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217.

<sup>296</sup> Transcript of TelCon Between Nixon and Kissinger, January 16, 1972, 1 p.m., *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d204>)

<sup>297</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, January 9, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d201>)

relations with Moscow, Peking and Washington over time.”<sup>298</sup> The NSC staff noted that, while exploiting the Soviet need for India in its effort to contain China, “India will also presumably continue to have some interest in a reasonable relationship with the US as a balance and even in lessening the strain in its relations with China.”<sup>299</sup>

Soviet influence in India, nonetheless, was a matter of concern to some US officials. Keating argued that the US should remain involved in and with India—not just to limit the Soviet role in India by providing an alternative, but also to limit the “spoiler” role that India could play vis-à-vis US interests in Asia.<sup>300</sup> The NSC staff also laid down this reason to improve relations with India: it was in US interests to see the Soviet thrust in India “blunted.” Since Moscow’s relationship with India was “motivated by the containment of China as much as anything,” the NSC felt that China, too, would share such an interest. Moreover, the US had to keep in mind that in the long term two competing factors would be at play:

the US on the one hand shares with Pakistan and China an interest in curbing India's power insofar as it is seen as enhancing the global position of the USSR. On the other hand, the US also has an interest in maintaining influence of its own in India. India is an emerging middle level power bent on and capable of playing a pre-dominant regional role and establishing a strongly competitive position throughout Asia.

At that point, however, Nixon and Kissinger’s sensitivities regarding China took precedence. NSC staffers asserted “the new US relationship with China requires that the US not appear to forsake Pakistan or reward India for its recent aggression.”<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Memo From Rogers to Nixon re Suggested NSC Meeting re Suggested NSC Meeting on Indo-Pak Situation, January 17, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d206>)

<sup>299</sup> Analytical Summary Prepared by Members of the NSC Staff for Kissinger, January 17, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d207>)

<sup>300</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, January 9, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d201>)

<sup>301</sup> Analytical Summary Prepared by Members of the NSC Staff for Kissinger, January 17, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d207>)

The China imperative called for delaying a response to Kaul's overture and any further steps till after Nixon's scheduled visit to China in February. Kissinger noted that the choice was whether to normalize relations with India rapidly or "let India work its way back slowly." The State Department and the White House agreed on a "go slow" approach until the end of February, letting India take the initiative and keeping the pressure up on it to see "what benefits we can get out of it."<sup>302</sup> The White House also dissuaded McNamara, then head of the World Bank, "from raising any new commitment to India on February 21. That would be the worst possible time for us to have to face the issue."<sup>303</sup> Any improvement in relations with India had to wait, according to Kissinger, because "we must go to China first in order to determine how we will play the triangular relationship in South Asia."<sup>304</sup>

The president went even further, asking McNamara "Is it worth normalizing our relations?"<sup>305</sup> This question partly reflected the fact that India was no longer considered useful to American plans in Asia. At a time when shared bilateral interests seemed to be lacking, the US ambassador was left emphasizing "shared values" as the "bedrock." The US went from having a specific interest in India to what Keating called a "general interest" in the country.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Minutes of SRG Meeting, January 19, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d210>). Also see Analytical Summary Prepared by Saunders and Richard Kennedy (NSC Staff) for Kissinger, January 28, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d219>)

<sup>303</sup> Minutes of SRG Meeting, January 19, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d210>)

<sup>304</sup> Minutes of SRG Meeting, February 1, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d220>)

<sup>305</sup> Memo for the President's File re Meeting with McNamara (World Bank president), February 8, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d223>)

<sup>306</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, January 9, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d201>)

However, India could still play spoiler—something the US needed to guard against. In early February, Kissinger met with the Indian ambassador, primarily “to keep India quiet while we were in China.” He suggested to Jha that India and the US had an opportunity for a new start and develop a relationship whereby “India would take the United States less for granted; the United States could give up its sentimentalization of India.”<sup>307</sup> Jha, however, noted to Sisco that the Nixon administration came closer to vilifying than sentimentalizing India. He pointed to Nixon’s foreign policy report that year as an example, noting that it represented the first instance of “consistent, sustained and sharp criticism of India” by an American president.<sup>308</sup>

Nixon’s China policy also affected US policy related to India’s neighbors in a manner that rubbed India the wrong way. The White House delayed any recognition of Bangladesh, a key priority for India. In the long term, Rogers pointed out that US and Indian interests vis-à-vis Bangladesh would converge; those of China and the US would diverge since China would seek to encourage a radical Bangladesh that could be used as a base to destabilize India, which Beijing looked upon “as a long range strategic and political opponent.”<sup>309</sup> In the short term, however, Sisco stated, “we need a better feel as to how the Chinese will play it.” Kissinger agreed, noting, “I want to be sure that a move toward recognition doesn't jeopardize a larger objective with China.”<sup>310</sup> The

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<sup>307</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Jha and Kissinger, February 11, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d225>)

<sup>308</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Jha-Sisco meeting, February 12, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598.

<sup>309</sup> Memo From Rogers to Nixon re Suggested NSC Meeting on Indo-Pak Situation, January 17, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d206>). Sisco and Kissinger concurred. Also see Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Briefing Papers for the China Trip: South Asia, February 8, 1972, NPM, NSCF, For the President’s File – China Trip, Book V, Box 846.

<sup>310</sup> Minutes of SRG Meeting, January 19, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d210>)

administration even deferred decisions regarding participation in reconstruction efforts in Bangladesh till after the president's China trip.<sup>311</sup>

The White House also continued to support Pakistan in order to show China that the US was a credible partner. In the lead up to the China trip, Kissinger told Nixon that it was critical that Washington showed Beijing that it was “reliable enough to deliver on the commitments we make,” or else their initiative would be “stillborn.”<sup>312</sup> These commitments included support to Pakistan—a country with which China was “exceptionally close.”<sup>313</sup> Thus, while the administration wanted to defer any decision on economic assistance or debt relief to India till after the China trip, the president wanted to be “forthcoming” when it came to Pakistan. Kissinger had noted that the US also needed to find a way to restore “some degree of military assistance” to Pakistan.<sup>314</sup>

During the visit to China, Nixon claimed credit for Soviet restraint of India and for saving Pakistan. He told Mao and Zhou that he had held steadfast despite the domestic political costs and bureaucratic opposition in the US.<sup>315</sup> Nixon also assured Zhou that, while it might be difficult for domestic political reasons for the US to aid Pakistan militarily, it would provide substantial economic assistance—freeing up Pakistani resources to acquire military supplies from others.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Minutes of SRG Meeting, February 1, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d220>)

<sup>312</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Mao, China and the Chinese Litmus Test, February 19, 1972, NPM, NSCF, For the President's File – China Trip, Book IV, Box 846.

<sup>313</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Briefing Papers for the China Trip: South Asia, February 8, 1972, NPM, NSCF, For the President's File – China Trip, Book V, Box 846.

<sup>314</sup> Minutes of SRG Meeting, January 19, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d210>)

<sup>315</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Nixon, Kissinger, Mao and Zhou, Beijing, February 21, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. XVII*, p. 680; and Memcon of Meeting between Nixon, Kissinger and Zhou, Beijing, February 22, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. XVII*, p. 680. Also see Memcon of Meeting between Nixon, Kissinger and Zhou, Beijing, February 23, 1972, Ibid p. 749.

<sup>316</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Nixon, Kissinger and Zhou, Beijing, February 23, 1972, Ibid p. 726.

Before the trip, administration officials had reaffirmed to their Chinese counterparts that the US would not make any policy changes regarding South Asia without consultation with Beijing. In South Asia, it intended to follow “an approach which parallels that of the People’s Republic of China.”<sup>317</sup> During his meetings with Zhou, Nixon repeated this assurance, indicating that he would keep Beijing informed of US policy in the subcontinent because “your interest here is greater than ours.” Furthermore, he indicated “it is essential to carry out the Prime Minister’s philosophy which is also ours, that no nation should establish dominance in that part of the subcontinent”—a statement that Indian policymakers, had they known about it, would likely have interpreted as evidence of Sino-US collusion to prevent India’s rise.

Just as Soviet leaders had played up Sino-US collaboration in order to encourage closer India-Soviet ties, Nixon sought to play up India-Soviet collusion to encourage greater Sino-US collaboration. The president told Zhou that India alone was hardly a threat to China, but an India backed by the Soviet Union was a “present threat”—one which China had limited options against. Nixon assured the premier that the US would use its “influence to prevent Japanese or Indian attacks against China.” Furthermore, Washington would say nothing with regard to those two countries that could embarrass China.<sup>318</sup>

The Shanghai communiqué that emerged from Nixon’s visit to China did more than embarrass India. Gandhi criticized its reference to India-Pakistan issues and

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<sup>317</sup> Telegram from the White House to the Defense Attaché in France (Walters), Paris, February 15, 1972. See footnote 2, *Ibid* p. 658.

<sup>318</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Nixon, Kissinger and Zhou, Beijing, February 22, 1972, *Ibid* pp. 702-703; Memcon of Meeting between Nixon, Kissinger and Zhou, Beijing, February 23, 1972, *Ibid* p. 726, p. 736. Kissinger Notes on Outstanding Commitments, August 10, 1972, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Country Files-Far East, Commitments to the PRC, Box 87.

specifically Kashmir.<sup>319</sup> Kissinger pointed out to Jha that “the U.S. formulation was much milder than the Chinese formulation.”<sup>320</sup> The national security advisor did not mention that he had not objected to—or tried to change Chinese policymakers’ minds about—the Chinese formulation, while being open to Chinese views regarding changes to the US formulation.<sup>321</sup> Indeed, Kaul later asserted that the US should not have allowed China to include its starker formulation.<sup>322</sup>

The Indian ambassador noted that Delhi acknowledged that the US formulation on the India-Pakistan question was milder. However, he expressed other concerns—specifically that the wording of the communiqué left open the door for US acceptance of Chinese hegemony in South Asia.<sup>323</sup> This was a far cry from Kissinger’s assurance a year before that “if the Chinese seek to dominate areas outside their country, or, for instance, dominate India, we cannot connive at this.”<sup>324</sup> The Indian ambassador did not express another concern that Indian officials worried about internally—the possibility that Nixon and Mao had reached a secret understanding.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Telegram From the AmEmb India to the DoS, March 8, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d232>). Jha had expressed similar concerns to the State Department. Telegram from DoS to the Embassy in India re Jha-Irwin meeting, March 4, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598

<sup>320</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Jha and Kissinger, March 10, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d233>)

<sup>321</sup> Memcon of Meeting between Ch’iao Kuan-hua (Chinese vice foreign minister) and Kissinger, Beijing, February 24, 1972, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Country Files-Far East, Box 92, Dr. Kissinger’s Meetings in the PRC during the Presidential Visit.

<sup>322</sup> Letter from Keating to Kissinger, May 1, 1972, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Country Files-Middle East, India-Pakistan [1971-1974], Box 134.

<sup>323</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Jha and Kissinger, March 10, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d233>). Jha had passed on other diplomats’ views to Delhi that the US communiqué section had actually not gone against India’s views. Letter from Jha to Kaul, February 28, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

<sup>324</sup> Haksar’s Note on Conversation between him and Kissinger, July 6, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 229.

<sup>325</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul, February 28, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.



Essentially, the Indian concern was that that China and the US would work together to contain India.<sup>326</sup> As the US was triangulating, an Indian observer noted to Gandhi, “India was calculatedly left out of calculations about the Asian scene. We were supposed to be at best naughty, clever boys, who could spoil a scene, but could never play a role in the drama.”<sup>327</sup> Even some US observers commented on the sidelining of India. Walt Rostow wrote to Kissinger to express his concern about Nixon’s vision of a multipolar world that included China, but left out India.” He asserted that India needed to be brought “back into the equation of power in Asia.”<sup>328</sup>

While Nixon was in China, Gandhi had asserted, “we will not allow China and the USA to decide what should happen in Asia.”<sup>329</sup> During the election campaign in India in March, Gandhi implied that China and the US wanted to “create trouble” for India. She used the US as a “whipping boy,” criticizing it—alone and in conjunction with China—for its support of Pakistan. She said the US was “sitting on China’s lap,” while China was getting whatever it wanted.<sup>330</sup> She repeated publicly what Jha had indicated to US officials privately: that India did not oppose improved Sino-US relations per se.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Memo From Saunders and Hoskinson (NSC Staff) to Kissinger re CIA Office of National Estimates Report on India’s Foreign Policy, April 24, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d257>)

<sup>327</sup> Letter from Dharam Bir Sinha (Deputy Minister, I&B) to Gandhi, February 26, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 217. Gandhi wrote that Haksar might be interested in the letter.

<sup>328</sup> Letter from Walt Rostow to Kissinger, March 13, 1972, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Administrative and Staff Files, Chron File July 1971-July 1972, Box 14.

<sup>329</sup> Quoted in Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 200.

<sup>330</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to the DoS, March 8, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d232>)

<sup>331</sup> Telegram From the DoS to the AmEmb India re Jha-Irwin Meeting, January 21, 1972, Ibid (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d212>). Haksar later reemphasized this in internal correspondence, noting to Gandhi that Nixon’s evolving relations with China and the Soviet Union (“we...rejoice at this”) were in fact validation of India’s views re peaceful coexistence. Note from Haksar to Gandhi on Some Stray Thoughts on India’s Foreign Policy in Contemporary International Situation, May 31, 1972 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 52.

Rapprochement between China and the US had been and was welcome, but not at India's expense.<sup>332</sup>

Indian officials were concerned that the way China and the US would choose to contain India was by rearming Pakistan.<sup>333</sup> They indeed expressed this concern during discussions with Soviet defense officials that had been held while Nixon was in China. Discussing India assessments of the threat from China and Pakistan, Manekshaw had asserted that American and then Chinese military supply to Pakistan had resulted in Islamabad's hostile posture.<sup>334</sup> The Soviet defense minister had contended that India "overrat[ed]" the Pakistan threat; the "real threat" was from China.<sup>335</sup>

Worried about the China threat and what might be transpiring in Beijing between Chinese and US policymakers, Indian officials had wanted to make sure they had Soviet support. As Keating had predicted, however, there was a limit to how far India would go. Just before the military delegation's trip, Gandhi had publicly asserted that India remained nonaligned.<sup>336</sup> During their visit, the Soviet defense minister had wanted to upgrade and operationalize the treaty. He had suggested that

the two countries should arrive at a firm understanding which will involve a programme of cooperation, coordination and even structural inter-relation of strategy, tactics between the Soviet and Indian defence forces against a possible Chinese involvement in a conflict with us or the Soviet Union.

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<sup>332</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to the DoS, March 8, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d232>)

<sup>333</sup> MemCon of Jha-Kissinger Meeting, March 10, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d233>)

<sup>334</sup> Record of Discussion between Indian and Soviet Delegations held at the Ministry of Defence, Moscow, February 24 and 27, 1972 (dated March 3, 1972), NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

<sup>335</sup> Note by DP Dhar on Discussion of Manekshaw and Dhar with Marshal Grechko, Moscow, February 26, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 242.

<sup>336</sup> Sulzberger, "Mrs. Gandhi Asserts India is Still a Nonaligned Nation," February 17, 1972, *NYT*, p. 1.

Dhar, however, had demurred saying that the two countries did not need to be “thinking in terms of any military alliance” since the treaty already provided for consultations.<sup>337</sup> Grechko had persisted, noting the potential benefits to India of “some form of a military alliance” with the Soviet Union. When Manekshaw said that India needed equipment to be prepared against China, Grechko replied that if they had an alliance “I shall earmark 50 IBMs for your defence against China.”<sup>338</sup> India, however, had remained reticent.

The US-India relationship meanwhile remained strained. Even the response to American attempts to brief Indian officials on the president’s trip to China reflected the tension. On March 28, Keating tried to meet Gandhi to brief her on Nixon’s trip to China, but was told to try to meet the foreign minister instead—this was the first time she had refused to see the ambassador. The foreign minister, in turn, commented that everything Keating told him had already been made public. Other than asking if further trips were planned, he did not say much on the subject.<sup>339</sup> He did, however, say more than enough—from the US perspective at least—on another subject: Vietnam. Swaran Singh publicly condemned the US resumption of bombing of North Vietnam in statements that the US thought were “unbalanced” and stemming from “pique.” Gandhi herself called the US action “deplorable.”<sup>340</sup> These statements came despite the fact that Indian officials knew

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<sup>337</sup> Letter from DP Dhar to Haksar, Moscow, February 26, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 242.

<sup>338</sup> Note by DP Dhar on Discussion of Manekshaw and Dhar with Marshal Grechko, Moscow, February 26, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 242.

<sup>339</sup> Telegrams from Keating to DoS, March 30, 1972 and April 1, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598.

<sup>340</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS re Keating-Swaran Singh meeting, April 21, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598. Singh statements on April 6 and April 17. For former, see Telegram from DoS to the Embassy in India, April 7, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598. Gandhi made the statement to *Blitz* magazine; she doubled down on it when speaking to a communist trade union forum. See Telegram from Keating to DoS, April 27, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598.

that such Indian statements on Vietnam had in the past negatively affected relations and aid.<sup>341</sup>

As a sign of good will, at the beginning of the year, Keating had recommended that the administration restore the aid to India it had suspended the previous year.<sup>342</sup> Even after the president's China trip, however, the White House was in no hurry to resume aid and was not too concerned about the potential negative Indian reaction.<sup>343</sup> Along with annoyance at Indian statements on Vietnam, policymakers also continued to be concerned about China's reaction. One of the programs that had been affected by the aid suspension was the Peace Indigo program, a communication system designed to connect the early-warning radar system that the US had provided India for use on the Sino-Indian border after the 1962 war. When the question arose of what to do about the program—because the suspension was driving particular US companies to the brink of bankruptcy—Kissinger's most pressing question was how the program “related to China.”<sup>344</sup>

Senior State and Defense department officials agreed that the US should continue to “play it cool” with India. The administration did not need to do anything for India. The “best way” to get India to come calling was for Washington “to have a success in Moscow, to continue the normalization of our relations with China and to have a stable government in Pakistan.”<sup>345</sup>

CIA analysts indicated, however, that the Indian government seemed disinclined to take the initiative and, regardless, was unlikely to respond to any US initiative. NSC

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<sup>341</sup> Letter from Jha to IG Patel (Secretary, Finance), April 27, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

<sup>342</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, January 9, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d201>)

<sup>343</sup> Memo from Saunders to Kissinger, April 18, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598.

<sup>344</sup> Memos from Saunders and Hoskinson to Kissinger, April 19 and April 12, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598.

<sup>345</sup> Minutes of SRG Meeting, April 17, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d249>)

staffers suggested that given this assessment, “Perhaps what is needed first is a more gradual repair job with softer words on both sides and measured actions until we reach the point where the past can really be put behind us.”<sup>346</sup>

Softer words and measured action, however, were not on the cards. After the US informed India that no aid would be forthcoming for the current year and there was only a provisional request for FY1973, India told the US to reduce USAID personnel in India.<sup>347</sup> Then, more Indian criticism of US actions in Vietnam followed. There was “formal condemnation” from the foreign minister.<sup>348</sup> On a visit to Europe, Gandhi, too, criticized US policy in Vietnam—later she acknowledged that she had taken the unusual step of going as far as “condemn[ing]” US policy.<sup>349</sup> India was also more critical of any American presence in the Indian Ocean than it had been before—while even a couple of years earlier Delhi might have seen this as a stabilizing development, it now insisted that it would bring more conflict to the neighborhood. Gandhi was also more vocal about her concerns about external political interference in Indian domestic politics. These concerns had dated back to 1967, but she was much more assertive on this front, convinced that the US was trying to weaken India and her government, and that such an approach also brought her political benefits.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Memo From Saunders and Hoskinson to Kissinger re CIA Office of National Estimates Report on India’s Foreign Policy, April 24, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d257>)

<sup>347</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS, May 8, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598. Also see Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re AID staff, May 16, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598

<sup>348</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India re Gonsalves-Irwin meeting, May 11, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598

<sup>349</sup> Telegram From AmEmb Iran to the DoS re Connally-Gandhi Meeting, July 7, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d279>)

<sup>350</sup> Mansingh, p. 37, p. 57.

Indian policymakers saw the refusal to re-start the aid program as more evidence of a plan to keep India down. Jha said India needed to think about its development plans assuming no US aid.<sup>351</sup> Soviet policymakers encouraged these Indian feelings. The Soviet ambassador in India played on Gandhi's concerns about joint Sino-US action contrary to India's interests, urging Delhi to work with Moscow to "frustrat[e] the plots."<sup>352</sup> Soviet officials reported that China had sent Pakistan tanks and fighter aircraft, as well as other military equipment that year, and that Nixon had agreed to supply Pakistan militarily through intermediaries.<sup>353</sup> Despite the fact that India and Pakistan reached an agreement in Simla that summer, there was also a persisting sense in India that China and the US support of Pakistan increased Pakistani president Bhutto's "intransigence."<sup>354</sup>

As Keating noted, however, while "India's relations with the United States are bad, with few prospects for early improvement; yet India does not wish to close off indefinitely this relationship and option." The reason for this was wariness of the demands that came with overdependence. These concerns came to the fore as India watched warily as Soviet leaders met with their American counterparts in Moscow that summer. Concerned about any partnership being at India's expense, Gandhi and her foreign minister warned both superpowers off from trying to carve out spheres of influence in South Asia.<sup>355</sup> Her government also continued to show little enthusiasm for

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<sup>351</sup> Letter from Jha to IG Patel, April 27, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277.

<sup>352</sup> Letter from Pegov to Gandhi, June 27, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 92 (a-d). Haksar noted that Gandhi had seen the letter.

<sup>353</sup> Note from GC Saxena (Deputy Director, R&AW) to DP Dhar, Haksar and Kaul, June 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 92 (a-d). Earlier, Soviet defence officials had told Manekshaw that China was planning to supply Pakistan militarily further. See Record of Discussion between Indian and Soviet Delegations held at the Ministry of Defence, Moscow, February 24 and 27, 1972 (dated March 3, 1972), NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

<sup>354</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS re Gandhi-Bhutto Summit, June 21, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598.

<sup>355</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS re Indian Reaction to Moscow Summit, June 2, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598. Interestingly, China had similar worries. Zhou commented on India's

Brezhnev's collective security system. Soviet officials had brought it up once again in March, and, then in June, claimed that the India-Soviet treaty was among the first steps toward such a system. Some in the Congress party had suggested signing on to the Brezhnev plan.<sup>356</sup> The government, however, did not support this idea. It asserted that it had not received any such proposal from Moscow and that the superpowers should leave Asians to sort out their own affairs.<sup>357</sup>

The desire to reduce dependence altogether caused Gandhi to seek improved Sino-Indian relations. Two months after the crisis—and just before Nixon's China visit—Gandhi had said that India “would like normal relations with China,” pointing out that Sino-Indian relations were no worse than before.<sup>358</sup> An American intelligence assessment had predicted that India would continue to “welcome some improvement in their relations with China.”<sup>359</sup> A Congress party resolution on international affairs especially mentioned China as one of the countries India wanted to improve relations with.<sup>360</sup> Foreign officials had told their Indian counterparts that China was insecure and uncertain about the India-Soviet partnership.<sup>361</sup> Thus, preparing Gandhi for an interview with *ABC*, Haksar's talking points included reassurance

It will be very short-sighted for any country to build its hopes and aspirations on setting China against the Soviet Union and vice versa. So far as India is

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displeasure—and implied Chinese concern—with the declaration of principles stemming from the US-Soviet summit that suggested the two superpowers would dominate global affairs. Memcon of Meeting between Kissinger and Zhou, Beijing, June 20, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. XVII*, pp. 932-933.

<sup>356</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>357</sup> Mansingh, p. 149.

<sup>358</sup> Sulzberger, “Mrs. Gandhi Asserts India is Still a Nonaligned Nation,” February 17, 1972, *NYT*, p. 1.

<sup>359</sup> Memo From Saunders and Hoskinson to Kissinger re CIA Office of National Estimates Report on India's Foreign Policy, April 24, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d257>)

<sup>360</sup> Draft of AICC resolution from Haksar to Gandhi, May 30, 1972 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 52.

<sup>361</sup> Schumann told Indian officials “China's anger against India was because of India's friendship with the Soviet Union.” Ambassador DN Chatterjee's Record of Discussion between Schumann and DP Dhar on February 21, 1972, Paris, February 22, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 242.

concerned, we have good and cordial relations with the Soviet Union and we hope that China too will realize that in the present day world there is no particular profit in assuming permanent postures of conflict and hostility.<sup>362</sup>

In July, Gandhi publicly mentioned that the “slow improvement” in Sino-Indian relations before the Bangladesh crisis had stalled, and expressed hope that they would improve.<sup>363</sup> In her September *Foreign Affairs* article, Gandhi explicitly stated “we want better relations with China.”<sup>364</sup>

It also likely reinforced Gandhi’s decision for India to take a key step on the path to exercising its nuclear weapons program option, which it had left open. Rostow had predicted that one of the results of the Sino-US rapprochement would be deeper Indian exploration of the nuclear option.<sup>365</sup> Just after the 1971 war had ended, the American embassy in Delhi had suggested that it was possible that the Indian government while not moving forward with a nuclear weapons program, might decide to conduct an underground test to demonstrate to China, as well as its domestic critics that India had such a capacity. It, however, had noted that this was most likely a long-term possibility. After all Gandhi had publicly said it was unnecessary for India to go nuclear to deter adversaries.<sup>366</sup> Some in the Defense Department had fretted that India might find it advantageous to “go...nuclear before the President's trip to Peking” and to reinforce its dominance vis-à-vis Pakistan in South Asia.<sup>367</sup> INR had asserted that the risks

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<sup>362</sup> Q&A prepared by Haksar for Gandhi Interview with *ABC*, May 3, 1972 in NMML, PNH (I-II), SF No. 52.

<sup>363</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS re Gandhi’s July 12 Press Conference, July 12, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598

<sup>364</sup> Memo from Hoskinson to Kissinger re Article by Gandhi in *Foreign Affairs*, September 15, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. VI, Box 598.

<sup>365</sup> Letter from Walt Rostow to Kissinger, March 13, 1972, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Administrative and Staff Files, Chron File July 1971-July 1972, Box 14.

<sup>366</sup> Airgram from AmEmb India to the DoS, January 21, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d211>)

<sup>367</sup> Memo From Nutter (AS/D ISA) to Laird, February 4, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d222>). Interestingly, this was a rumor doing the rounds as early as fall 1971. See Cable from Natwar Singh (Indemb Warsaw) to Kaul, October 12, 1971



outweighed the benefits for India and it was likely to defer any decision to go nuclear for “several years.”<sup>368</sup> In July, the president asked the NSC staff to explore the issue.<sup>369</sup>

During the course of that examination, the embassy in Delhi would note, “there is no evidence GOI has decided to stage peaceful test blast.”<sup>370</sup> State Department officials concluded that they “didn’t know” whether India would conduct a test.<sup>371</sup> Intelligence analysis would suggest, “The chances are roughly even that India will conduct a test in the next several years and label it a peaceful explosion.”<sup>372</sup> The NSC study would recommend that Washington discuss the question with Moscow and keep Beijing informed. It would conclude, however, that there was “no firm intelligence that Mrs. Gandhi has given a political go-ahead for detonating an underground nuclear device (which the Indians would undoubtedly label a peaceful nuclear explosion) or for developing nuclear weapons and a delivery system.”<sup>373</sup>

Evidence suggests, however, that this was the period Gandhi that gave the formal approval for the final stage of work towards a PNE. Earlier that year, there had been many calls across most of the political spectrum for India to develop its nuclear program further.<sup>374</sup> That summer Gandhi stressed that India’s policy was “to investigate the

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enclosing Telegram from Naseem Mirza (Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to All Heads of Pakistan Missions, October 1, 1971, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 220.

<sup>368</sup> Memo from Cline (INR Director) to Helms, February 23, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d228>)

<sup>369</sup> NSSM 156, July 5, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d275>)

<sup>370</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, July 26, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d295>).

<sup>371</sup> Meeting with the Acting S/S on NSSM 156, August 1, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d296>).

<sup>372</sup> SNIE 31-72:Indian Nuclear Developments, August 3, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d298>).

<sup>373</sup> Response to NSSM 156, September 1, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d275>)

<sup>374</sup> Mansingh, p. 35. Perkovich, pp. 169-172.

possibility of peaceful nuclear explosions, but not to develop nuclear weapons.”<sup>375</sup> There is some debate about when exactly the decision for a PNE in principle was made. There are arguments that the decision followed the death of India’s atomic energy commission chairman and the 1971 war and therefore was spurred by personnel or prestige factors.<sup>376</sup> Others suggest it preceded both those events.<sup>377</sup> Whatever the exact date, most of the available evidence suggests that a decision in principle was made in late summer or fall 1971. This indicates a time after it had become clear that India could no longer hope for US protection and might have to look entirely to Moscow for security assurance. Given that this was exactly the kind of over-dependence on one benefactor that Indian policymakers since the late 1960s had been trying to avoid, it is hard to make the argument that this did not play some role in affecting the decision to go ahead on this front. As an American intelligence assessment at the time noted the need to “hedge” against the questionable reliability and “durability” of the Soviet guarantee, as well as avoid over-dependence on Moscow were key factors favoring such a decision.<sup>378</sup>

Concern about overdependence on Moscow also resulted in India welcoming the visit of former US treasury secretary John Connally in summer 1972. Nixon had decided to send Connally to India as a “modest gesture”<sup>379</sup>—the kind envisioned by the NSC to start the repair job. Nixon wanted his envoy to make sure, however, that Connally spoke and acted in a way that did not give the impression that he was on an apology tour to

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<sup>375</sup> Response to NSSM 156, September 1, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d275>)

<sup>376</sup> Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State* (New York, NY: Zed Books, 1998), pp. 141-150.

<sup>377</sup> Perkovich, pp. 171-172.

<sup>378</sup> SNIE 31-72:Indian Nuclear Developments, August 3, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d298>).

<sup>379</sup> Kux, *India and the United States*, p. 309.

India.<sup>380</sup> Indian statements on Vietnam in the run up to Connally's visit had tempered any hope that the visit would be a turning point. The White House instructed Connally to assert to his Indian interlocutors that their "gratuitous slaps at US policy" were detrimental to US-India relations.<sup>381</sup>

During the discussions with Connally, Swaran Singh again welcomed Sino-US rapprochement, but indicated Indian anxiety that it "upset stabilizing forces in [the] Indian context." He implied that Pakistan was more intransigent because of Chinese and US support.<sup>382</sup> Gandhi, on her part, noted that the US needed to take the initiative to improve relations.<sup>383</sup> Nonetheless, at a press conference she herself took a step, calling for better US-Indian relations.<sup>384</sup>

The two countries still had a long way to go. The best the US ambassador to India could report was that Connally's meetings had "helped to clear the atmosphere at least to some degree."<sup>385</sup> Less than a month later, after a "profoundly disturbing" farewell call on Gandhi, Keating himself questioned whether the atmosphere had cleared at all. He emerged stunned following Gandhi's assertion that "everything the US does is against India."<sup>386</sup> Delhi saw delays over debt rescheduling as part of this containment effort—in

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<sup>380</sup> Backchannel Message From Nixon to John Connally in New Zealand, June 24, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d271>)

<sup>381</sup> Telegram From the White House to AmEmb New Zealand for John Connally, June 22, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d270>)

<sup>382</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to the DoS re Connally-Swaran Singh Meeting, July 4, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d273>)

<sup>383</sup> Telegram From AmEmb Iran to the DoS re Connally-Gandhi Meeting, July 7, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d279>)

<sup>384</sup> Telegram from Keating to DoS re Gandhi's July 12 Press Conference, July 12, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. V, Box 598

<sup>385</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to the DoS re Connally-Swaran Singh Meeting, July 4, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d273>)

<sup>386</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to the DoS re Keating's Farewell Calls, July 25, 1972, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d294>)

contrast to the US effort to help build India up against China. Jha, in fact, believed it was one of the reasons for Gandhi's outburst.<sup>387</sup>

The public and private Indian antipathy was heightened by the continued sense that China and the US were colluding, with Pakistan as an instrument, to contain India. In an article written in July for *Foreign Affairs*—published in September—Gandhi highlighted the dispatch of the USS Enterprise and the “extraordinary similarity of attitudes adopted by the United States and China” during the Bangladesh crisis. She noted that the US approach toward the Soviet Union and China was wise, but expressed concern that it could adversely affect India's interests. She provided as an example Sino-US cooperation in the UNSC.<sup>388</sup> Jha also noted to Kissinger India's concerns about the extent to which US “cultivat[ion]” of China would “encourage China to conduct a certain policy detrimental to our interests.” Kissinger explained that Beijing was concerned about India's attitudes and actions because of its fear of the Soviet Union. He admitted that the US “would not do something deliberately to affront China when China feels its security directly threatened.” Beyond that, he asserted, “in the normal conduct of diplomacy, we see no reason to coordinate our policy with China.” Kissinger insisted that the question of improvement of US-India relations was “totally independent of China.”<sup>389</sup>

India's anxiety and antipathy would have only increased had its policymakers known that during Kissinger's June trip to China, he had made a commitment to give Beijing “more detailed information on Indian armed forces, tank production, etc. through

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<sup>387</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Jha and Kissinger, September 22, 1972, Ibid  
(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d303>)

<sup>388</sup> Memo from Hoskinson to Kissinger re Article by Gandhi in *Foreign Affairs*, September 15, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. VI, Box 598.

<sup>389</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Jha and Kissinger, September 22, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7*  
(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d303>)

private channel.”<sup>390</sup> Furthermore, among the outstanding commitments to China, Kissinger noted that the US would consider supplying Pakistan with arms that China could not, and would consult with China regarding any “major change” in America’s South Asia policy.<sup>391</sup>

At the same time, however, some Indian officials grew increasingly concerned about the intensifying public antipathy to the US in India. Jha worried that the longer the two countries delayed a dialogue, the harder it would be to improve relations. He had urged the US to take the initiative, even if it was just with minor steps. Deputy Secretary of State Irwin, however, pointed out that “regretfully whenever one side or the other seemed ready an event occurred which seemed calculated to create new problems.”<sup>392</sup> Indeed, in retaliation for Gandhi’s accusations against Keating, there was a US-inspired postponement of the debt-rescheduling meeting of the India aid consortium.<sup>393</sup> Then in India, there seemed to be a coordinated effort to stoke anti-Americanism through allegations about CIA activities in India.<sup>394</sup> Later in October, Gandhi tried to temper her CIA allegations. After a point, public antipathy became less useful to the leadership and more problematic. The genie, however, was out of the bottle and the Congress party president continued to make accusations against the US.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Memo from Winston Lord to Kissinger on Immediate Undertakings after June Trip, June 26, 1972, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Country Files-Far East, Commitments to the PRC, Box 87.

<sup>391</sup> Kissinger Notes on Outstanding Commitments, August 10, 1972, NPM, NSCF, HAK Office Files, Country Files-Far East, Commitments to the PRC, Box 87.

<sup>392</sup> MemCon of Irwin (Acting S/S)-Jha Meeting, Washington, August 2, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d297>)

<sup>393</sup> Draft Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, September 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. VI, Box 598.

<sup>394</sup> Memo from Saunders and Hoskinson to Kissinger re LK Jha Speaks, October 2, 1972, NPM, NSCF, CF-ME, India, Vol. VI, Box 598.

<sup>395</sup> Telegram From AmEmb India to the DoS re CIA Charges Continue, November 3, 1972, *FRUS 1969-76 Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d309>)

Soon both governments seemed to conclude that the descent needed to be halted; it ceased to serve any purpose. Kissinger often said that the US and India had had a love affair. If 1971 was the year of the break-up—the year first the US and then India switched significant others—then 1972 was the year of the bitterness that followed the breakup. Throughout the year both sides were aware that they needed to get back to talking terms and deal with each other on a more “realistic basis,” but it took a year of vitriol and distance for them to get to that point. They seemed to reach that point by November 1972.

## Chapter 8: Looking Both Ways (1973-1979)

The main ideological and political justification for aid was to build up democratic India on a counter-balance against China. With Sino-US rapprochement, this justification is no longer there.

– Indian intelligence assessment, December 1972<sup>1</sup>

Kissinger: We are in a curious position. We have no major conflicts of interest, no major problems or issues, do we?...

Kaul: What amazes me is that we have no conflict of goals, or interests. Perhaps the methods of (ensuring our) security are different. But our mutual interests, our mutual goals should be more important. Perhaps a dialogue on the highest levels is lacking. This perhaps is responsible for the lack of progress.

– Meeting between the US secretary of state and the Indian ambassador to the US, 1976<sup>2</sup>

During this period, the lack of dialogue or understanding was not what prevented closer US-India ties. It was not enough that the two countries had no major conflicts of interest. The problem was that they lacked a major common interest. Earlier, China had been that common interest. After Sino-US rapprochement, however, the US had little to no desire to build or hold India up in contrast to China. No longer useful to the US, India found itself overdependent on the Soviet Union. Delhi tried to correct the imbalance over this period. In 1970, Gandhi had said that India's objective was to "strengthen our friendships, to change indifference into friendship, and to lessen the hostility where it exists."<sup>3</sup> Between 1973-1979, this describes the Indian government's objective with regard to the Soviet Union, the US and China respectively. As this period went on, the

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<sup>1</sup> Note from Kao to Haksar, December 3, 1972, enclosing a note on 'Four More Years of President Nixon – the Prospect' prepared by R&AW officer in Washington, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul (ambassador to US) Meeting, August 25, 1976, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976 Volume E-8: South Asia, 1973-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2007) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8*] (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d233>)

<sup>3</sup> Mansingh, p. 63.

US and India indeed sought to re-establish and maintain a working relationship to limit the Soviet role in India, but, with China no longer looming as large for either, the US and India slid down the others' priority list for rest of the Cold War.

## **MAKING UP**

In summer 1969 as Nixon had prepared for a trip to the subcontinent, Kissinger had asked the president to emphasize to Gandhi that his administration sought good relations not just with Pakistan, but also with India, “recognizing India’s importance and position vis-à-vis Communist China.”<sup>4</sup> After the Sino-US rapprochement, such a role was no longer as—if at all—necessary. For over two decades, the US had seen India through a China prism in a way that sometimes worked in India’s favor and at other times to its detriment. By 1973, as Washington continued to build its relationship with Beijing, it did not see India through the same lens. It did not expect that India could or would play too much of a spoiler in Sino-US relations. Nor did it need India to play a major role vis-à-vis China. This need had once made India important and useful. The lack of this need now resulted in relative indifference toward India.

Nevertheless, the White House did not think there was much benefit in continuing to bicker with the Indian government. There was some benefit, indeed, in trying to get bilateral relations back on an even keel. With the Soviet Union seeming to spread its tentacles around the world in this period, the US had an interest in limiting Soviet influence in the subcontinent—a goal that American policymakers believed that their Chinese counterparts shared. Isolating Delhi would only leave the field to Moscow.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, even as India did not have “that kind of influence” that it had previously, it

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<sup>4</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon re Upcoming Talk with Gandhi in New Delhi, July 17, 1969, NPM, NSCF, President’s Trip Files, Box 453, Trip July-August 1969 Country Briefing Book - India

<sup>5</sup> Thomas P. Thornton, “U.S.-Indian Relations in the Nixon and Ford Years” in Ganguly and Gould eds. *The Hope and the Reality*, p. 105.



was just too big to ignore entirely. Thus, over the next few years, Washington worked to develop relations with India on a “more realistic” level.<sup>6</sup>

The Indian government wanted to re-establish a working relationship with the US as well. By the end of 1972, India found itself relatively isolated. It was true that India had a close relationship with the Soviet Union, but it had hostile, estranged or indifferent relations with China, Pakistan and the US. This was not the kind of diversified portfolio of partnerships that India preferred. This period highlighted the downside of India’s diversification strategy. This strategy required options—others had to be willing to participate in India’s diversification for Delhi to achieve the benefits of balance. After the Sino-US rapprochement, however, the US option seemed to dissipate, with India becoming a “very low priority” for the Nixon administration that had won a second term.<sup>7</sup>

Declining American interest in India constrained Indian policymakers’ choices. It meant overdependence on Moscow. It also meant the need to continue to invest in preparations for a two-front war at a time when the government had a lot of internal issues that needed resources and attention. It further meant that the US was not available as much of a potential source of food and economic assistance, as well as investment and technology that the Indian economy needed.<sup>8</sup> Finally, despite Delhi’s denials, it meant that others no longer saw India as nonaligned.<sup>9</sup> India’s diversified set of relationships had

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<sup>6</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Kissinger-Chavan (Foreign Minister) Meeting, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d182>); NIE 31-1-75: Near-Term Prospects for India, May 22, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d201>)

<sup>7</sup> Note from Rukmini Menon to Swaran Singh, Kaul (foreign secretary), Haksar, Jha on US Presidential Elections, November 8, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 240. Also, see Note from Kao to Haksar, December 3, 1972, enclosing a note on ‘Four More Years of President Nixon – the Prospect’ prepared by R&AW officer in Washington, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 265.

<sup>8</sup> Mansingh, p. 71. Thornton, p. 114.

<sup>9</sup> Schanberg, “Pact said to Bury India’s Nonalignment,” *The New York Times*, August 14, 1971, p. 6.

given it not just more independence, but more status and influence—being just another partner of Moscow did not give India the same role or importance.

India tried other ways of dealing with overdependence on Moscow. It broadened its relations with a number of middle powers.<sup>10</sup> This, for example, allowed it to diversify its sources of military supply so that India's import dependence on the Soviet Union in this realm fell from 70 percent in the early 1970s to 50 percent by 1977. India also continued to develop its nuclear program. Furthermore, it worked toward developing indigenous capability across the board. As an Indian diplomat had noted as he had watched the Sino-US and US-Soviet *détentes*: "The lesson to be learnt is that we must really be self-reliant." Finally, during this period, India would also seek to reach out to China and Pakistan. However, the US option was still necessary. By 1973 the sheen wore off the Gandhi government. The economic and internal security situations were in bad shape, with the oil crisis and a bad monsoon having made the former worse. By 1974, from Delhi, the American embassy in Delhi would report, "This country is in trouble."<sup>11</sup> India still needed American aid and approval, and the US to help it balance its dependence on the Soviet Union. So, India worked to correct the imbalance on that front.

L.K. Jha, the Indian ambassador in Washington, had emphasized at the end of 1972, "The question we have to ask ourselves is, first whether there is any need, and second if there is any desire in either country to improve these relations."<sup>12</sup> As far as India was concerned, the answer was yes. Indian officials did not think that the US would

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<sup>10</sup> Mansingh, p. 13. Also, see Letter from Jha to Kaul with Note by Jha and Gonsalves on US-India Relations, November 16, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

<sup>11</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, March 4, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d158>). Also, see Letter from DN Chatterjee (ambassador to France) to Haksar, November 8, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 240; Thornton, p. 109; and Mansingh, p. 50, p. 52, p. 61, 164.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul with Note by Jha and Gonsalves on US-India Relations, November 16, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

go “out of its way” to improve relations with India, but they did believe that the Nixon administration’s pragmatism gave them an opportunity. After all there were some dynamics that might lead the US to seek an improvement of relations as well:

Bad relations with India are not really necessary for its rapprochement with China or for any other of its foreign policy purposes. In fact, bad Indo-American relations might give China an eventual advantage over the United States...It would not do to leave the Soviet Union a large field of uncontested influence... No injection of strength from outside can make Pakistan an equal of India...In the context of a future US-USSR-China-Japan power quadrangle, it would be wise to jettison friendship with the next largest power in Asia...The Americans know through their own sources that India has not compromised its independence or non-alignment in its friendship with the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup>

Intelligence analysts believed that the prospects for improvement were “not bright” because the need for an improvement was a bit lopsided. They pointed out that “[t]he fact is that USA is much more important to India than vice-versa.” Thus, they noted, “the best that one can suggest is an assiduous effort to cool down the political tempers on both sides and to seek and develop cooperation in areas where we share common interests.”<sup>14</sup>

Jha had pointed out that the most India could aim or hope for was the pre-1971 relationship of “superficial cordiality and normalcy.”<sup>15</sup> US officials noted that Indian policymakers in pursuit of that goal toned down their criticisms of the US and increasingly let Washington know that Delhi wanted better relations. The State Department noted that the Indian foreign secretary-designate on a visit to Washington in mid-November had “seemed intent on underscoring [the] positive and stressing hope for improvement in Indo-US relations.” *The New York Times* labeled the Indian foreign

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<sup>13</sup> Note from Rukmini Menon to Swaran Singh, Kaul, Haksar, Jha on US Presidential Elections, November 8, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 240.

<sup>14</sup> Note from Kao to Haksar, December 3, 1972, enclosing a note on ‘Four More Years of President Nixon – the Prospect’ prepared by R&AW officer in Washington, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 265.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul with Note by Jha and Gonsalves on US-India Relations, November 16, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

minister's subsequent public overture for better relations as the "Indian love call" and urged the administration toward a "warm response." Privately, too, Gandhi indicated that she wanted to improve relations.<sup>16</sup>

Nixon had been hesitant to do very much for India just before the 1972 election, thinking that any major move on his administration's part would be seen as an admission that he had erred during the 1971 crisis. Once the elections were over, Kissinger told Jha, "The president is ready and anxious to normalize and improve relations with India..." Jha interpreted this as a genuine overture because the president wanted to "go down in history as the man who gave a generation of peace." External observers pointed out that, with working relationships in Asia with China, Japan and the Soviet Union, one of the few countries that Nixon needed to make up with was India. Kissinger agreed with Indian officials that improved relations were important for "peace and stability in Asia."<sup>17</sup> The administration came to believe that, with increasing instability in other parts of the world, with a rapprochement with India, the US could reduce the likelihood that that the subcontinent would prove bothersome. This would allow the US to limit the resources and attention it would need to dedicate to the area. Thus over the rest of the Nixon administration and then the Gerald Ford administration, the two countries worked to improve relations. They sorted out some problems that continued to be irritants, such as the US holding of a significant quantity of rupees. They also established an annual

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<sup>16</sup> Telegram from AmEmb Iran to DoS re Rush (DS/S)-Gandhi Meeting, April 22, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d124>). Also see Memo from Rogers to Nixon, January 31, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d105>); Telegram From the DoS to AmEmb India, November 15, 1972, *FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d313>); "Indian Love Call," *NYT*, December 6, 1972, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> MemCon of Meeting between Jha and Kissinger, September 22, 1972, *FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d303>); Letter from Jha to Haksar, November 21, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277; Note from Jha to Kewal Singh (FS), December 19, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

bilateral dialogue and agreed to focus especially on scientific, cultural and education cooperation.<sup>18</sup>

The US and India also tried to react to other irritants in a measured manner. American officials appreciated that at a time when there seemed to be an increasing north-south divide, Indian official behaved in a relatively moderate manner in multilateral settings. The US government, in turn, reacted to the Indian nuclear test of 1974 in a relatively “low key” manner. The administration publicly expressed its regret and went along with congressional calls to vote against some multilateral loans to India. Privately, Kissinger told Gandhi that the US did not accept Indian explanations that India had only conducted a peaceful nuclear explosion. Nevertheless, he assured her that the administration was “not interested in recriminations but in how to prevent further proliferation.” Despite calls within and outside the administration to punish India heavily, Kissinger had indeed instructed officials not to make heated statements or take too many punitive actions. He believed that India was signaling China rather than using the bomb to threaten Pakistan and did not think vitriol would change the situation or Indian imperatives.<sup>19</sup> India, on its part, joined the US in underplaying the significance of the test.<sup>20</sup> The US government also took a “hands-off” policy when India took over Sikkim, even though American officials realized that greater comment or involvement on their

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<sup>18</sup> Thornton, pp. 104-110. As a result of payments related to the PL-480 program, the US held about \$3 billion in rupees or about 10 percent of the Indian money supply. The two countries reached an agreement by which two-thirds of that debt was basically written off. Also, see Conversation between Nixon and Moynihan (ambassador to India), February 8, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d106>)

<sup>19</sup> Memo from Scowcroft (deputy NSA) to Ford (president) re Report from Kissinger, October 28, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d179>). Also, see Memcon of Kissinger-Aziz Ahmed (Pakistani foreign and defense minister) Meeting, Washington, June 3, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d166>).

<sup>20</sup> Mansingh, p. 99.

part would please China and Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> Then, when Gandhi declared emergency rule in 1975, overall the administration's response was tempered.<sup>22</sup>

For both sides, the task of cooling tempers was made easier by the fact that over the period this chapter covers some of the key irritants in the relationship were less of a problem. Once the US signed the Paris peace accords and withdrew from Vietnam, a key source of difference faded.<sup>23</sup> US government involvement in the Indian economy kept declining. The US still indirectly helped assist India through its contributions to multilateral agencies, but bilateral economic assistance had significantly decreased. This meant that Washington was no longer strongly expressing its views on the balance of India's defense-development priorities. India, on the other hand, had less expectations of US assistance. Indeed the two countries overall had fewer expectations of each other and American officials tried to keep them low. Indian policymakers realized that India no longer had much traction in Washington since US policymakers no longer felt the need to build India up as a contrast to China. Furthermore, they believed that, even if relations improved, economic assistance would remain limited because of legislative and budgetary limits in the US.<sup>24</sup> This acknowledgement and the decrease in aid had the added benefit of Indian policymakers feeling less of a need to balance aid acceptance with anti-American rhetoric to emphasize their independence. There was also some easing of Indian concerns about the US "refusal to endorse...or to enhance" the country's

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<sup>21</sup> Telegram from DoS to AmEmb India, April 16, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d259>)

<sup>22</sup> Thornton, p. 113.

<sup>23</sup> Note from Kao to Haksar, December 3, 1972, enclosing a note on 'Four More Years of President Nixon – the Prospect' prepared by R&AW officer in Washington, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 265. Also, see Thornton, p. 109.

<sup>24</sup> Thornton, pp. 101-102, pp. 106-108, p. 116; Info Memo from Scowcroft to Ford re Report from Kissinger, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d181>); Note from Kao to Haksar, December 3, 1972, enclosing a note on 'Four More Years of President Nixon – the Prospect' prepared by R&AW officer in Washington, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 265.

status as a regional power or global player.<sup>25</sup> US officials publicly and privately increasingly acknowledged India as at least the “strongest power on the subcontinent.”<sup>26</sup>

Indian analysts also believed that Delhi’s relations with Moscow would worry Washington less. India had no desire to jettison its relationship with the Soviet Union—after all it was the bird in hand and officials believed that the India-Soviet relationship helped restrain China.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, the Indian government moved to correct the overdependence that seemed to have developed. Moreover, to ensure that US policymakers did not think India had totally tilted toward Moscow, Indian officials went out of their way to assert that this was not the case. American officials, in turn, noted that, with the developing US-Soviet détente and their belief that India would remain nonaligned, they were less concerned about India-Soviet relations. Kissinger even went on to acknowledge publicly that the US accepted Indian nonalignment.<sup>28</sup> As for Pakistan—another irritant in the relationship—India was trying to work through its problems with that country and policymakers came to believe that the US was indeed urging Pakistan to settle its problems with Bangladesh and India.<sup>29</sup> While the US

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<sup>25</sup> Mansingh, p. 64.

<sup>26</sup> Note from Jha to Kewal Singh (Foreign Secretary) re Moynihan’s comments, December 19, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235. Also, see Thornton, p. 104.

<sup>27</sup> Mansingh, p. 135; Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, March 4, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d158>)

<sup>28</sup> Note from Kao to Haksar, December 3, 1972, enclosing a note on ‘Four More Years of President Nixon – the Prospect’ prepared by R&AW officer in Washington, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 265. Letter from Jha to Haksar, September 25, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277; Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul (ambassador to US) Meeting, December 7, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d152>); Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d182>); Info Memo from Scowcroft to Ford re Report from Kissinger, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d181>)

<sup>29</sup> Thornton, p. 103. Memcon of Kissinger-Swaran Singh (foreign minister) Meeting, Washington, April 15, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d160>); Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul Meeting, August 25, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d233>); Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan

reassured Pakistani officials that the US would not allow India to swallow up Pakistan, it indeed encouraged Pakistan to persist with the Simla peace process and made clear that Chinese intervention in the subcontinent on Pakistan's behalf would be counterproductive.<sup>30</sup> When it came to Bangladesh, Kissinger continued to emphasize the potential for greater US-India common interests than Sino-US ones. US aid to that country was indeed aiding stability there, which India supported.<sup>31</sup> As for China, while it was no longer the glue keeping the two countries together, it was also no longer the reason for conflict or even as much of a reason for the US and India to keep their distance.

#### **SINO-US RELATIONS**

The US rapprochement with China continued to develop over the rest of the Nixon and Ford administrations, albeit at a slower pace than some had expected. In early 1973, Kissinger told Chinese policymakers that the administration would move to normalize relations fully after the mid-term elections the next year. He expected that the process would be complete by the middle of 1976. However, the Watergate scandal delayed substantial progress. When Gerald Ford replaced Nixon as president in 1974, Kissinger and he assured Chinese officials that the US would honor the commitments made under Nixon. The US did take some further steps such as completing the

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Meeting, October 8, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8*  
(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d237>)

<sup>30</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Bhutto (Pakistani PM) Meeting, Washington, October 31, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d183>); Telegram from Kissinger to Bhutto, August 30, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d209>)

<sup>31</sup> Letter from Jha to Haksar, September 25, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277; Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul Meeting, December 7, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8*  
(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d152>); Memcon of Kissinger-YB Chavan Meeting, Washington, October 6, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8*  
(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d212>)



withdrawal of all fighter aircraft from Taiwan. It also moved forward on offering China economic, defense, intelligence and technology cooperation. However, with setbacks abroad in Cambodia and Vietnam and domestic displeasure with détente growing especially on the right, the process stalled under the Ford administration. The Nixon and Ford administrations were aware of resultant Chinese frustration, as well as Beijing's questions about whether the developing American détente with the Soviet Union was causing the delays.<sup>32</sup> Chinese officials also continued to express concerns about growing Soviet influence in the subcontinent, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, holding the US lack of effort as responsible.<sup>33</sup>

Given Chinese sensitivities, American officials were concerned about how Beijing might view their efforts to improve relations with India. Kissinger told Nixon that the US had to be careful about Chinese sentiments as its policy toward Delhi or Moscow evolved. Kissinger described for Nixon the “scolding” he received from Chinese policymakers for not doing enough about Soviet power. Zhou had asserted to him that Delhi and Moscow were “allied to each other.” Kissinger told the president that Beijing saw Delhi as Moscow's “principal agent” and one of “two enemies in its pantheon.”<sup>34</sup>

Nixon told David Bruce, who was designated as the head of the new American liaison office in China, that the “Chinese must be reassured,” including on the India front. The Sino-American relationship was “the key to peace in the world” and gave the US

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<sup>32</sup> James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), pp. 61-76; Leffler, pp. 252-253

<sup>33</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 15, 1973, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976 Volume XVIII: China, 1973-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2007) [hereafter cited as *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*], pp. 38-40; Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 17, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 98; Memcon of Kissinger-Mao Meeting, November 12, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, pp. 389-390, pp.393-394; Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, October 20, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 769.

<sup>34</sup> Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, February 27, 1973, *Ibid*, pp. 205-207 and Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, March 2, 1973, *Ibid*, p. 214. Also, see Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 18, 1973, *Ibid*, p. 165.

leverage with the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the administration continued to discuss India-Pakistan issues with Beijing. Kissinger assured Chinese policymakers that the US would make no overall changes to its South Asia policy without discussion with China, and would continue to find a way to assist Pakistan economically and help Islamabad acquire arms. He also kept Chinese officials informed of developments in US-India relations, as well as US-Soviet discussions regarding the extent of Moscow's commitment to Delhi.<sup>36</sup>

American policymakers used India to highlight to Chinese policymakers why it was important for them to have the US as a friend. Despite what he said to Indian officials, Kissinger did not really play down India-Soviet cooperation. Instead, for example, he highlighted it as a reason that China should not want too hasty an American withdrawal from Southeast Asia. Nor did he assuage Chinese concerns about India's objectives vis-à-vis Pakistan, concurring that India would "encourage" breakaway movements in that country. American officials also noted that India was trying to create a "great imbalance" in terms of strength in the broader region.<sup>37</sup> Kissinger asserted that the US would not accept this, but was left on the defensive when the Chinese foreign minister pointed out that Kissinger had been giving speeches acknowledging Indian leadership and strength in the subcontinent.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Conversation between Nixon and Bruce (chief-designate of the liaison office in China), May 3, 1973, Ibid, p. 248.

<sup>36</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Huang Hua (Chinese PR to UN) Meeting, January 3, 1973, Ibid, p. 2; Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 15, 1973, Ibid, p. 38, pp. 43-44; Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 16, 1973, Ibid, pp. 54-55; Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, November 11, 1973, Ibid, p. 354; Memcon of Nixon-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, May 23, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d164>)

<sup>37</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 17, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, pp. 93-94, p. 99; Memcon of Kissinger-Qiao Guanhua (Chinese foreign minister) Meeting, New York, April 14, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, pp. 528-529; Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Xiaoping (Chinese vice premier) Meeting, Beijing, November 27, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 617; Memcon of Ford-Deng Meeting, December 3, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 889.

<sup>38</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, November 26, 1974, Ibid, p. 574.

The administration was aware that Chinese officials were watching the US interactions with India. Thus, while noting internally that the US was “anxious for steady improvement” with India, Kissinger emphasized, “We don’t want too high a visibility which might upset the Chinese who loathe the Indians...”<sup>39</sup> Kissinger assured Chinese policymakers like Zhou that personally he had “never been an admirer of Indian policy.” However, he indicated that the US would try to improve relations with India slowly in order to prevent Delhi from getting even closer to Moscow. With Nixon and then Ford’s acquiescence, Kissinger continued to highlight that American efforts to improve relations with India were part of a strategy to “wean them away from the Soviet Union.” Given that Beijing had been pressing Washington to do more on both the economic and military fronts for Pakistan, US officials also emphasized that improved US-India relations would have the added benefit of giving the administration domestic flexibility to do more for Pakistan. Ford and Kissinger also noted that it would allow the US to restrain India vis-à-vis Pakistan and Bangladesh and generally influence India on a variety of subjects of interest to China.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Saxbe (ambassador-designate to India) Meeting, January 27, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d187>)

<sup>40</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 18, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 166; Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, November 11, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, pp. 349-350; Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, November 14, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 429; Memo from Kissinger to Nixon, November 19, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 436; Memcon of Kissinger-Han Hsu (Acting chief, Chinese liaison office) Meeting, March 20, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 471; Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, New York, April 14, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, pp. 493-494; Memcon of Kissinger-Qiao Meeting, New York, October 2, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, pp. 528-529; Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, November 26, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 574; Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, November 27, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 615; Memcon of Ford-Mao Meeting, December 2, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 864; Memcon of Ford-Deng Meeting, December 3, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 886.

Intelligence analysts expected Sino-US relations to be a potential problem in US-India relations.<sup>41</sup> In discussions with Indian officials, however, American officials made no secret of the fact that they were continuing to try to improve relations with Beijing. They did try to assure Indian officials that Sino-US rapprochement was not “directed against India.” Kissinger also told senior Indian policymakers that the US had “absolutely no interest to let China weaken India. Our relations with China were a marriage of convenience.” He noted that the US also had no interest in China acting in a way that would increase instability in the subcontinent. He further assured Indian policymakers that the US “discouraged any Chinese adventures” and any Chinese attack on India would be “look upon this with extreme disfavor.”<sup>42</sup> What he did not say to them, but admitted internally, was that as things stood during the Ford administration, “It is almost certainly true that if the Chinese attacked we would support India, but we don't want the Chinese to think we are dumping them for the Indians.”<sup>43</sup>

## **SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS**

Indian officials realized that the US would take no steps on US-India relations that would “displease” China, but they did not expect that China would be a subject of

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<sup>41</sup> National Intelligence Analytical Memorandum: India’s Likely International Role and its Implications for the US, October 4, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d150>)

<sup>42</sup> Telegram From the DoS to AmEmb India, November 15, 1972, *FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d313>); Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d182>); Info Memo from Scowcroft to Ford re Report from Kissinger, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d181>); Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, Washington, October 6, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d212>); Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, Washington, October 7, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d214>)

<sup>43</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Saxbe Meeting, January 27, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d187>)

conflict between the US and India as it had been in 1971. They reiterated to their American counterparts that they “welcomed” Sino-US rapprochement, but hoped it would not be at India’s expense and that Washington might indeed be able to influence positively Chinese views of the subcontinent.<sup>44</sup>

There was another reason that Indian officials no longer saw the Sino-US relationship as highly problematic: India’s efforts towards its own rapprochement with China, which the US could potentially facilitate. For Indian policymakers, a better relationship with China could somewhat reduce their need for dependence on the superpowers, which was especially important because of Indian overdependence on Moscow (this is why they persisted in trying to improve relations with Beijing despite knowing that Moscow would not be thrilled<sup>45</sup>). Furthermore, a Sino-Indian rapprochement could help ease what had been a source of strain between India and the US. Finally, it might limit Sino-Pakistan relations and neutralize Sino-Bangladesh ties.<sup>46</sup>

Thus India once again made clear its interest in talking to China. Gandhi encouraged, or at least did not discourage, meetings between Chinese and Indian low-level officials.<sup>47</sup> Publicly, too, she asserted, “We obviously want friendship...We have always been ready to do anything on the basis of equality for reestablishing normalcy.

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<sup>44</sup> Letter from Jha to Haksar, November 21, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 277; Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d182>); Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul Meeting, Washington, July 16, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d207>)

<sup>45</sup> Mansingh, p. 58.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul with Note by Jha and Gonsalves on US-India Relations, November 16, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235; Interagency Intelligence Memorandum: India – Present Scene, Future Prospects, May 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d229>)

<sup>47</sup> Handwritten Comment by Gandhi on Note from A. Mitra (Planning Commission) to Gandhi, December 14, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

We welcome friendship with China. But it has to be a two way affair.”<sup>48</sup> Indian officials used the US as a source of information about China, constantly asking American officials for their assessments of the Chinese attitude. They also repeatedly asserted to American officials their desire for improved Sino-Indian relations, hoping that the US would pass this message on to China. They also urged their US counterparts to indicate to Chinese officials that a Sino-Indian rapprochement was a good idea.

Kissinger, in turn, told the Indian foreign minister that the US would welcome—and not create problems for—a potential Sino-Indian rapprochement. He noted to Indian officials that the US had told Chinese policymakers that India was not a Soviet stooge and ready to normalize relations with China. He even agreed to encourage China toward better Sino-Indian relations, but warned that the US might have limited leverage on this front.<sup>49</sup>

The secretary of state had two perspectives on how a potential Sino-Indian rapprochement would affect US interests. On the one hand, US policymakers believed that Sino-Indian rapprochement could limit Soviet influence in the subcontinent and Asia on the whole. Moreover, if Sino-Indian relations did not improve while Sino-US relations progressed, this would likely only push Delhi closer to Moscow. For this reason, Kissinger did indeed tell Chinese officials that India was “loosen[ing]” its relations with the Soviet Union and Delhi was not coordinating its policies with Moscow as closely as before.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, the US had been using the India-Soviet threat to highlight the

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Mansingh, p. 245.

<sup>49</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Swaran Singh Meeting, Washington, October 3, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d149>); Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul Meeting, December 7, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d152>); Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d182>); Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, Washington, October 6, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d212>)

<sup>50</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, New York, April 14, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 494.

importance of Sino-US ties. Moreover, Kissinger was concerned about how Beijing, which remained suspicious of Washington's intentions, would view American officials urging them to reconcile with India. He noted, "I don't want to promote better Sino-Indian relations in a way that makes the Chinese nervous. This is not particularly in our interest." Thus, he instructed the designated US ambassador to India, "If you are asked by the Indians about their relations with China, say that we have absolutely no objection to an improvement. But I would avoid getting into this in public."<sup>51</sup> He also did not directly urge Chinese officials to patch up with India. He did, however, mention to them that Delhi had asked Washington to let Beijing know about their intentions, adding that he was sure that China and India could use their direct channels to communicate.<sup>52</sup>

American officials also constantly advised Indian officials of the impact of their relations with Moscow on the likelihood of a positive Chinese response. They realized that "China is the most important determinant of Indian-Soviet relations. The worse the relations are between India and China the more need India feels for close Soviet backing."<sup>53</sup> They told Indian officials, however, that India-Soviet relations, in turn, increased Beijing's distrust of Delhi. Indian officials asked why then Beijing did not give Delhi an incentive to reduce dependence on Moscow. US officials believed that Beijing, however, at that time saw "aloofness" rather than rapprochement as a way to keep the India-Soviet tie from becoming even closer.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Saxbe Meeting, January 27, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d187>)

<sup>52</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, October 22, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 807.

<sup>53</sup> National Intelligence Analytical Memo: India's Likely International Role and its Implications for the US, October 4, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d150>)

<sup>54</sup> Note from DP Dhar (Minister, Planning) to Gandhi re Ceausescu's view, November 14, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 240; Letter from Savitri Nigam (President, IFUNA/Permanent Mission of India to UN) to Haksar re conversation with Chinese ambassador, November 23, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 240; Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul Meeting, December 7, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d152>); Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS,

The Chinese attitude seemed to serve that purpose to an extent. Indian concern about the Chinese reaction was one reason that the Indian government continued to stay aloof from any Soviet collective security plans. Indian officials demurred when Brezhnev suggested in August 1973 that the India-Soviet treaty was part of the initial stage toward a collective security system. The government then refused to endorse related Soviet proposals when Brezhnev visited India in November 1973. During Brezhnev's visit Gandhi furthermore publicly reiterated that India-Soviet "friendship is not aimed at any other country. There is no reason for our friendship with the USSR to exclude friendship with other countries...We too wish to expand the area of our friendship." Subsequently, India equivocated on the subject or remained silent on whether it would commit to such plans. This approach, as well as denials that India had promised Moscow any base rights, had the dual benefit of signaling not just China but also the US that India was not just a camp follower of the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup> (Eventually, when India started to see signs of Chinese willingness to improve relations, policymakers indeed saw this as stemming from the Chinese desire to limit India-Soviet relations.<sup>56</sup>)

Till the mid-1970s, there seemed to be mixed signals from China, with Beijing "blowing hot and cold." Indian policymakers watched and waited for positive signs. They speculated about what might induce Beijing to react positively to Indian overtures: changes in Chinese domestic politics, Sino-Soviet rapprochement or even a China desire to show the international community that it was being magnanimous. After 1975, there seemed to be a few more signals from China. In another installment of ping-pong

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March 4, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d158>); Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, Washington, October 6, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d212>)

<sup>55</sup> Mansingh, pp. 149-151. Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 193.

<sup>56</sup> Mansingh, pp. 135-136.



diplomacy, Beijing sent a table tennis team to India in January 1975. In February at a stopover in Calcutta, the Chinese vice premier announced Chinese openness to a dialogue. That winter, officials noticed that China did not denounce India at the UN as it did routinely.<sup>57</sup>

India still had concerns about China. Indian policymakers told US officials that they did not think that China would attack India. As US assessments indicated, however, Indian officials remained “wary and sensitive” about the possibility. As the Indian foreign minister explained, “Because of 1962 we have to be careful.”<sup>58</sup> There continued to be incidents that caused concern at the border. Within the country, China continued to support Indian insurgents. Indian officials were also anxious that Beijing would move from exploiting difficulties between India and her neighbors to creating them. China continued to help Pakistan, including with its nuclear program after India’s 1974 nuclear test. India also worried about growing Chinese and Pakistani influence in Bangladesh, especially after their positive reaction to a military coup there that involved the assassination of president Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in summer 1975. India was further concerned about China’s influence in Bhutan and its non-recognition of the Indian takeover of Sikkim. China also continued to aid and support Nepal and conduct anti-India propaganda there. Even beyond the neighborhood, India watched with concern China’s efforts to woo other nonaligned countries.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Tharoor, *Reasons of State*, p. 199; Mansingh, pp. 245-246.

<sup>58</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Swaran Singh Meeting, Washington, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d180>). Also, see Memcon of Kissinger-Swaran Singh Meeting, Washington, October 3, 1973, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d149>); Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, March 4, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d158>)

<sup>59</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 94, p. 132, p. 150, pp. 180-181, p. 296, pp. 325-327; Mansingh, pp. 244-246; Memcon of Kissinger-Swaran Singh Meeting, Washington, April 15, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d160>); Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8*

As Mansingh notes, there was no consensus on the importance of improving relations with China in the Indian government. There were also disagreements about how far to go. Some argued that China was expansionist; that India should not harm its relations with the Soviet Union by reaching out to China; that India could live with the border dispute; and that any rapprochement would require concessions to India on the border and recognition of Indian positions on Sikkim and Kashmir. Others argued that a rapprochement with China would allow India to reduce dependence on the Soviet Union; to settle eventually the border problem, which was an obstacle to growth and international flexibility and not something India had the capacity to settle by force; to help create a wedge between China and Pakistan; and to exploit the potential for economic interaction. Eventually, as Mansingh notes, the position that the Indian government took was “more or less a median one: cordiality without excess, talks without negotiation, normalisation without dramatics.”<sup>60</sup>

## **DUAL DÉTENTES**

Indian policymakers had not seen a Sino-Indian rapprochement as an easy sell domestically. There had been opposition on the grounds that India would have nothing to show for it or would end up making unilateral concessions because of its weaker position.<sup>61</sup> With the victory in the 1971 war and the 1974 nuclear test, however, there was more confidence in India. Among the public, at least, there seemed to be a desire to

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(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d182>); Memcon of Kissinger-Swaran Singh Meeting, Washington, October 29, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8*

(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d180>); Memcon of Meeting between Tomlinson (AmEmb India) and Bhutanese Embassy official, Delhi, November 8, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d255>); Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, Washington, October 7, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8*

(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d214>)

<sup>60</sup> Mansingh, pp. 246-248.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 193.

normalize relations with China even though people continued to have negative opinions of that country. In a poll taken in 1973, 84 percent of respondents said India's relations with China were not so satisfactory or not satisfactory at all. 42 percent thought that India should continue to try to normalize relations despite China's "unhelpful attitude." Another 27 percent thought India should do so if China reciprocated. Only 20 percent said India should not pursue normalization.<sup>62</sup> Gandhi's political dominance allowed her some flexibility, as well, which only increased after the emergency. This allowed her to blunt opposition attacks that her government was weakening India by reaching out to China and Pakistan. It also allowed her to take on criticism from the left that she was hurting India-Soviet relations. Gandhi's electoral and battlefield victory in 1971 had decreased the imperative for her to continue to move left.<sup>63</sup> Some indeed detected a rightward shift in 1974-1975 because of economic necessity, the need to correct the imbalance in India's partnerships, as well as the proclivities of Gandhi's inner circle.<sup>64</sup>

By late 1975-early 1976, there seemed to be more positive signals from the Chinese side, which also seemed apparent to American policymakers. Chinese vice premier Deng Xiaoping had earlier stated that the US improvement of relations with India was a "good move." He had noted that India was not a major threat, since it did not have the capacity to attack or even encircle China, but he had agreed with Kissinger that Moscow might use India against China.<sup>65</sup> By late 1975, he seemed convinced that India

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<sup>62</sup> 57 percent of respondents still had a negative opinion of China; another 17 percent were ambivalent; only 10 percent had a positive impression. IIPO, "International Images: February 1973," *MPOS*, Vol. XVIII, No. 5, pp. 8-11.

<sup>63</sup> Thornton, p. 100; Interagency Intelligence Memo: India – Present Scene, Future Prospects, May 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d229>); Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, May 19, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d230>)

<sup>64</sup> Mansingh, p. 94; Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, May 19, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d230>)

<sup>65</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, November 27, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 603, pp. 615-616.

was seeking good relations with China and believed that even the Indian public did not want too much dependence on Moscow.<sup>66</sup> For a while, Chinese policymakers had been hesitant about a rapprochement with India because of their concern about the Pakistani reaction and Deng continued to worry about Indian pressure on Pakistan.<sup>67</sup> However, even on this front, there had been positive developments from the Chinese perspective.

India had worked to stabilize relations with Pakistan. The two countries had resumed talks in 1973 and, along with Bangladesh, had signed a tripartite agreement in April 1974. The subsequent nuclear test had stalled the improvement in India-Pakistan relations, as had India's integration of Sikkim, its domestic preoccupations related to Gandhi's declaration of an emergency, and the Sino-Pakistani reaction to the military coup in Bangladesh. However, by late 1975-early 1976, there again seemed to be progress with India and Pakistan moving to implement further steps envisioned by the Simla Accord of 1972 and sending ambassadors to the other country.<sup>68</sup>

By late 1975, combined with this, Deng saw as a positive sign the developments in India-Soviet relations. Just as years earlier Nehru had been convinced that Sino-Soviet differences would grow over time, Beijing's own experience with Moscow left Deng convinced that Delhi's problems with Moscow would naturally increase.<sup>69</sup> By 1976, both China and the US indeed saw a "cooling" between India and the Soviet Union.<sup>70</sup>

Ironically, this was the period that Sino-US rapprochement seemed to stall a bit. Kissinger had noted to Ford that Sino-Indian rapprochement had a downside for the US:

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<sup>66</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, October 22, 1975, *Ibid*, p. 807.

<sup>67</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Zhou Meeting, February 15, 1973, *Ibid*, p. 43 and Memcon of Ford-Deng Meeting, December 3, 1975, *Ibid*, p. 888.

<sup>68</sup> Mansingh, pp. 231-233.

<sup>69</sup> Memcon of Ford-Deng Meeting, December 3, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 889.

<sup>70</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS, May 19, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d230>)

Beijing would feel less threatened. It was not Chinese desire for friendship with the US, however, that had decreased. Rather, Beijing was upset with the lack of movement on normalization on the US side. As their frustration grew, Chinese officials expressed it directly and through countries like Pakistan. When Kissinger informed the Chinese foreign minister that normalization would not be completed by the time Ford was scheduled to visit at the end of 1975, Chinese leaders were upset about being let down, especially since they were dealing with left-wing criticism of the Sino-US rapprochement. They rejected the language of a communiqué, leaving the US to consider cancelling Ford's scheduled visit.<sup>71</sup>

Kissinger was concerned about the slow down but the administration was unable to overcome domestic political constraints. He continued to seek Pakistani assessments about developments in China and Beijing's attitude toward the US.<sup>72</sup> Kissinger did not like what he heard. Pakistani policymakers noted that China was losing patience with the US.<sup>73</sup> Even the Indian ambassador told the secretary of state that Chinese officials in Washington were indicating their disappointment with the administration.<sup>74</sup> A frustrated Kissinger told Pakistani officials to convey to China that its criticism and anti-American propaganda was making it harder for the administration to sell China policy.<sup>75</sup> With Ford

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<sup>71</sup> Mann, pp. 65-76; Leffler, pp. 252-253; Memo from Kissinger to Ford, November 20, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 845.

<sup>72</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, Washington, June 3, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d166>); Memcon of Kissinger-Bhutto Meeting, Washington, October 31, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d183>)

<sup>73</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Bhutto Meeting, Washington, February 5, 1975, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d189>); Memcon of Kissinger-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, Washington, September 30, 1975, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d210>)

<sup>74</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Kaul Meeting, August 25, 1976, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d233>)

<sup>75</sup> Telegram from Kissinger to Bhutto, August 30, 1975, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d209>)

preparing for a visit to Beijing and China playing hardball, Kissinger felt that the president needed to show firmness. He thought Ford's visits to the Philippines and Indonesia could be appropriate "jabs" at Beijing. When the president asked about adding India to make a point, however, Kissinger said no, that would be "too big a shock."<sup>76</sup>

In Beijing, to keep Chinese officials interested, the secretary of state tried to highlight India as a potential problem again, noting US disapproval of Indian actions in Tibet. Deng, however dismissed them as insignificant. What might have been more galling for Kissinger, however, was Deng's insistence that the US seemed to be part of the problem in the subcontinent. Kissinger had asserted that the US expected India to attack Bangladesh and Pakistan within the next five years—even though few, if any in the US government, thought this was likely and Kissinger himself had told Pakistani prime minister Bhutto that India was not expansionist. Deng, however, argued that the problem was the US, which was not doing enough for Pakistan at that time, just as it had not done enough in 1971.<sup>77</sup>

By spring 1976, China and India moved towards normalizing relations and exchanged ambassadors. That year Gandhi made it a point to sign the condolence book at the Chinese mission after Mao and Zhou's deaths. The government also offered assistance to victims of the Tangshan earthquake.<sup>78</sup> As for Sino-US rapprochement, there was little progress in an election year in the US. The administration's frustration with Beijing's behavior was evident. Kissinger told the Pakistani foreign minister that Chinese criticism was giving both conservatives and liberals ammunition. Frustrated, he said that

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<sup>76</sup> Memcon of Ford-Kissinger Meeting, October 25, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. XVIII*, p. 833.

<sup>77</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Deng Meeting, Beijing, October 22, 1975, *Ibid*, p. 806; Memcon of Ford-Deng Meeting, December 4, 1975, *Ibid*, p. 887, p. 900. Also, see Memcon of Kissinger-Bhutto Meeting, Washington, October 31, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d183>)

<sup>78</sup> Mansingh, p. 7, p. 192, p. 248.

China was “tak[ing] a free ride” and “They can’t just take from it and put nothing into it.”<sup>79</sup>

Leadership changes in Beijing and Washington in 1976 did not initially bring progress, but eventually they would. Initially, some in the new administration, including President Carter himself, believed that the Nixon White House had been too conciliatory to Beijing. Nevertheless, the president made clear early on that he hoped to normalize relations with China. The Soviet Union was the administration’s major priority. However, Washington’s desire to have a China card to play in its interactions with Moscow meant that Nixon’s China policy ended up having staying power. While some like secretary of state Cyrus Vance had concerns about Sino-US normalization jeopardizing détente with Moscow, others like national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and military and intelligence officials wanted to make full use of the China card, especially since Moscow seemed to be acting difficult around the world. By spring 1978, Carter concurred and in May Brzezinski travelled to Beijing where he indicated that the administration would be moving forward with normalizing relations. The two governments reached an agreement in December on establishing diplomatic relations in January 1979 and a visit by Deng to the US that same month.<sup>80</sup>

Less than a month later, the Indian foreign minister (and future prime minister) Atal Behari Vajpayee visited Beijing—the first visit by an Indian foreign minister to China. A new leadership had taken over in Delhi as well, with a Janata Party coalition led by Morarji Desai taking office in 1977. The border problem and China’s support to insurgents had continued to rankle in India and there had continued to be a debate about

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<sup>79</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Aziz Ahmed Meeting, Washington, October 6, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d236>)

<sup>80</sup> Mann, pp. 78-92; Leffler, pp. 288-295.

how far India should go to reach out to China. Indian officials had also continued to have concerns about Chinese actions in Tibet, Bangladesh and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, they had worried about whether a new Chinese leadership would lead to a Sino-Soviet rapprochement. Nevertheless, partly as a result of these concerns but also because of Chinese reciprocity, India had moved forward with rapprochement. The two countries had exchanged trade delegations, facilitated banking, credit and shipping interactions and had encouraged exchanges of language students. In 1978, Chinese assurances that it would not support liberation struggles had removed another source of discontent. Beijing had also seemed to ease up on anti-India efforts in Nepal. The new Chinese leadership's efforts to ease the situation in Tibet had further helped, as had the establishment of contact between Beijing and the Dalai Lama in 1978.<sup>81</sup> These developments eventually culminated in Vajpayee's subsequent visit to Beijing. The trip was cut short because of the Sino-Vietnamese war, but, as a former Indian ambassador to China noted, this visit "marked a turning point in the new opening."<sup>82</sup>

The previous year American and Indian leaders had also exchanged visits, but they seemed to be heavy on style and light on substance. The US and India had continued to try to improve relations. Even in the last couple of years of Gandhi's tenure, while she had criticized "general external forces" for political purposes, privately her government continued to seek to improve US-India relations.<sup>83</sup> The Desai government with its emphasis on "genuine" neutrality also sought better relations. The Carter administration's emphasis on democracy and the restoration of democracy in India in March 1977 bode

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<sup>81</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 67, p. 151; Mansingh, p. 11, pp. 248-252, p. 296.

<sup>82</sup> Nalin Surie, "Speech on 60 years of India China relations," UGC Conference, Thrissur, Kerala, December 12, 2011 (<http://www.indiadiplomacy.in/htmllecture.aspx?skrc=282#.Tux1zSz-qt4>)

<sup>83</sup> Telegram from AmEmb India to DoS re Saxbe-Chavan Meeting, January 15, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d219>)



well for the relationship. The White House desire to encourage regional powers to take on responsibilities that the US wanted to shed also helped. The Indian foreign minister welcomed the “sense of equality” in the relationship, which he called “an equal partnership based on friendship and a common will to cooperate both in bilateral matters and on international issues.” 1978 marked the first time that American and Indian leaders had exchanged visits within a year. By the end of the year, Brzezinski commented, “we have never had such a good relationship with India as now.”<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, as Goheen noted, below the “levels of broad principles and personal hardware of diplomacy,” relations were “thin.”<sup>85</sup> This seemed to match intelligence assessments in 1975 that had predicted, “Although Indo-US relations are likely to be more stable than in the past, they will probably remain shallow and subject to uncertainties.”<sup>86</sup>

While American and Indian officials had reiterated throughout this period that there was no basic conflict of interest between the US and India, it had been more difficult to find areas of common interest.<sup>87</sup> China was no longer played that role. On some fronts the countries had continued to disengage from each other. The US gave India less aid. India asked the US to end the Peace Corps program in India. As Thornton has noted, India also seemed to have lost the support of American liberals after the Indian nuclear test, Gandhi’s declaration of an emergency, and restrictions that her government imposed on American scholars. There had also continued to be differences. Gandhi had resented American criticism of her declaration of the emergency even as the US

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<sup>84</sup> Foreign Minister Vajpayee’s speech in Delhi in May 1978 and National Security Advisor Brzezinski’s comments in December 1978, quoted in Mansingh, p. 95.

<sup>85</sup> Robert F. Goheen, “U.S. Policy Toward India During the Carter Presidency” in Ganguly and Gould eds. *The Hope and the Reality*, pp. 122-126; Mansingh, p. 94.

<sup>86</sup> NIE 31-1-75: Near-Term Prospects for India, May 22, 1975, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d201>)

<sup>87</sup> Telegram From the DoS to the AmEmb India, November 15, 1972, *FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. E-7* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d313>)

continued to try to build a relationship with China and other non-democratic countries. The US lifting of the embargo on arms sales to the subcontinent had not helped relations.<sup>88</sup> The two countries also continued to have differences over fuel supply for India's nuclear reactors.<sup>89</sup> They further disagreed about policy in Southeast Asia. The US had said it was interested in Southeast Asian neutrality, but Delhi increasingly saw Washington as lined up with China there.<sup>90</sup> Over the last year that this period covers, the impact of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan would only exacerbate differences.<sup>91</sup>

By the end of this phase, the two countries' feelings about each other seemed much as they had throughout the period. A common interest in containing China had disappeared. The US essentially believed that "our basic direct interests in the subcontinent are not major."<sup>92</sup> As for India, it did not like it, but it learned to live with US indifference and did not expect much change in the near future. As Jha had presciently noted early on, any change would have to wait:

any basic change in relations would depend upon our own strength, military and economic, as well as our role in world affairs and relations with our neighbours. The US would not particularly relish our emerging as a major power factor on the world scene, but to the extent that we do so its respect for us and willingness to deal with us on a basis of equality will go up.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Thornton, pp. 101-102, p. 103, p. 107, p. 113; Mansingh, p. 73.

<sup>89</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, October 8, 1976, *FRUS 1969-1976 Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d237>)

<sup>90</sup> Memcon of Kissinger-Chavan Meeting, Washington, October 6, 1975, *Ibid* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d212>); Mansingh, p. 80.

<sup>91</sup> Goheen, pp. 128-131.

<sup>92</sup> Minutes of the Secretary of State's Staff Regional Staff Meeting, Washington, April 10, 1974, *FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. E-8* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d35>)

<sup>93</sup> Letter from Jha to Kaul with Note by Jha and Gonsalves on US-India Relations, November 16, 1972, NMML, PNH (III), SF No. 235.

## Conclusion

In scripts of US-India relations, China only appears in a major role in the later acts—the ones set after 1998. China, however, was a major part of the US-India story much before that. It played more than just a bit part and made more than just brief appearances in 1962 and perhaps 1971. Between 1949 and 1979 it was always there, if not an actual presence then lurking in the two lead characters' minds. It affected how they interacted with each other, at some times pulling them apart, at other times bringing them closer. This dissertation has sought to restore China's role, because doing so helps better explain not just the two countries' estrangement that a number of scholars have written about but also their engagement.-

Today, when the effect of the China factor on US-India relations is discussed, the focus often tends to be on the question of whether China can bring the two countries together. This dissertation shows that it can; it also demonstrates that that does not mean that it automatically will—even when both the US and India see China as a threat. Indeed, China might do the opposite and keep them apart. In the period that this dissertation covers, India and the US did partner when China appeared to pose a threat. However, the two countries only partnered against a Chinese threat when they agreed on (a) the nature of the threat, (b) the urgency of the threat, and (c) how to deal with the threat. When they disagreed on threat perception, as well as on what approach to take toward China, the differences had an adverse impact on the US-India relationship, often driving the two countries apart. Differences on approach involved differing ideas of (1) how other actors such as Pakistan and the Soviet Union fit in to their China strategies, (2) what the best policy instruments were to deal with the China conundrum (eg. force, diplomacy, development aid, military assistance), (3) whether engagement could work or

whether hard containment was necessary, and (4) whether one should go it alone or turn to collective security or a diversified set of partnerships.

Between 1949-1956, India believed that whatever short-term ideological and long-term geopolitical threat China posed could best be dealt with by engaging China, with an emphasis on use of diplomacy rather than force. Years later, the US government would come to that conclusion between 1969-1972. During both those periods, the US and India took opposite approaches with China to the detriment of their bilateral relationship. In the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s China brought the US and India together on both the defense and development fronts. At this time, their perceptions of China as a geopolitical and ideological threat were similar. They also agreed on what to do about China. Finally, each saw the other as playing a key role in its China strategy. This agreement unraveled between 1963-1968. Even as the two countries agreed on the fact that China was a threat, they differed on the extent and urgency of the threat and what needed to be done to deal with the challenge. These disagreements led to doubts about the other country's utility and thus the partnership and led to its eventual unraveling. Between 1969-1972, differences on perception of and policy towards China would lead the US and India to the nadir of their relationship, just about a decade after China had taken them to the zenith. Finally, between 1973-1979 China disappeared as a key *raison d'être* of the relationship. The fact that India decided to engage with China, as the US was already doing, helped alleviate a source of strain; so did the fact that the US no longer saw India as a major spoiler in its engagement of China. Simultaneously, however, the two countries slipped down each other's priority list as they struggle to find major common interests.

This dissertation also set out to contribute to the emerging debate on Indian foreign policy. In this respect, it sought to highlight a few key aspects:

*India and the Cold War.* Traditionally, India has been seen as a non-Cold War actor—a perception perhaps encouraged by Nehru and other policymakers’ rhetoric about the US-Pakistan agreement in 1954 having brought the Cold War to South Asia and dragged India into the superpower conflict. However, this dissertation has shown that Indian policymakers before that knew that they could not remain aloof from the Cold War even if they wanted to. As Nehru said the world was too interdependent and India could not be isolated. The Cold War created the geopolitical, economic and ideological climate in which India operated. The external dynamics did bind India’s options, but it also created opportunities for Indian policymakers, who did indeed use the Cold War for India’s benefit as well.

Some have argued that India would have benefited more from a non-Cold War world, but as this dissertation shows India’s importance to both Moscow and Washington derived from Cold War dynamics. One cannot answer the counterfactual about whether India would have been as important to them had there been no Cold War, but this dissertation at very least shows that one cannot take for a given that these countries would have seen it to be in their interest to invest heavily in India absent a Cold War. Others have said that the US gave short shrift to India. Critics have asserted, “the Americans seldom regarded India as special. Their prior perceptions did not place India on the same plane as China. Few appreciated the value to American interests of a strong, independent and nonaligned India.”<sup>1</sup> It might be true that India went up and down the US priority list, but this dissertation also shows that there was significant phase of time when the US did see India as special and helped build and support a strong and independent India.

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<sup>1</sup> Mansingh, p. 85.

*Rethinking nonalignment.* Nonalignment is a term that is much used to mean a number of different things and to encompass various elements of Indian foreign policy. It has also been interpreted in numerous ways. It has been seen as either a defensive response or rejection of the Cold War bipolar framework, or an offensive reaction to gain leverage in the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> Some see nonalignment as having been a strategy of isolation, noting “Nonalignment as a foreign policy was designed to keep India out of the way of the storms and stresses of the Cold War, allowing India to concentrate on its economic development.”<sup>3</sup> Others see it as a postcolonial declaration of independence—“the ultimate expression of a newly independent nation’s reluctance to be bound by any other actor’s strategic needs and preferences.”<sup>4</sup>

This strategy that has come to be called nonalignment had elements of both defense and offense. Early in independent India’s history, the ruling Indian National Congress party “agreed that India was to enjoy complete and uncompromising autonomy in its strategic decision-making process.”<sup>5</sup> But, as this dissertation shows, Indian policymakers soon acknowledged reality i.e. that even if India wanted to, it could not isolate itself, and, moreover, it was likely to be dependent on others for a while; that much as India wanted to be self-sufficient and unaffected by others’ decisions, the reality was different. What emerged and evolved over time was a strategy that Indian leaders—acting from weakness and operating under political, economic and geopolitical

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<sup>2</sup> Itty Abraham, “From Bandung to NAM: Non-Alignment and Indian Foreign Policy, 1947-1965,” *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (April 2008), pp. 195-196.

<sup>3</sup> Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, “The Day India and the US Didn’t Ally,” *Foreign Hand*, November 25, 2010 (<http://blogs.hindustantimes.com/foreign-hand/2010/11/25/the-day-india-and-the-us-didnt-ally/>)

<sup>4</sup> Rudra Chaudhuri, “Why Culture Matters? Revisiting the Sino-Indian Border Conflict of 1962,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 32 No. 6 (December 2009), p. 847.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 847.

constraints—employed to expand their options. Essentially, what they developed was a strategy of diversifying their portfolio of partners.

As K. Subrahmanyam has asserted nonalignment should be seen as a “strategy to safeguard India’s security.”<sup>6</sup> The dominant Indian concept of external security did not just envision protection of the country’s territorial integrity, but also protection of its autonomy to the extent possible. While this could partly be considered a post-colonial reaction,<sup>7</sup> this dissertation shows that it has also in large part been the result of two other, more pragmatic, elements: (a) the desire to maintain the Indian leadership’s freedom of maneuver so that it would not just have to go along with others’ interests because it had no choice, and (b) questions about the reliability of other countries and the realization that their assistance came with strings attached. Thus, most Indian policymakers tried to reduce dependence on external sources as much as possible; at the very least, they strove to diversify it. They thought about nonalignment—or, more accurately, diversification—as a means to an end, not the end in itself.

*Tilting.* This dissertation also shows that India’s decision-makers have had to move away from their instinct to diversify and increase dependence significantly on one partner. One can call it alignment, one call it leaning as Nehru did or one can call it tilting. It has described two instances when they did so, tilting towards the US in 1962 and the Soviet Union in 1971. In both instances, Indian policymakers tried to resist tilting till absolutely essential, till they had exhausted all other options. Tilting was the Indian leadership’s last best option, but it was not a taboo. India tilted when four conditions were in place. First, there was a clear and present danger. In the case of 1962, the threat was the result of Indian reversals in the Sino-Indian war, with the fear of a larger Chinese

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<sup>6</sup> K. Subrahmanyam, “That Night of November 19,” *Indian Express*, November 18, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> See Rudra Chaudhuri, p. 843.

invasion of India looming. During 1971, the tilt occurred in the midst of the Bangladesh crisis, with India and Pakistan facing off and the possibility of Chinese intervention on Pakistan's behalf. Second, tilting occurred when the Indian inclination to diversify its dependence on multiple partners is thwarted and it could not deal with the threat on its own. In 1962, the Soviet Union refused to back India (or even stay neutral) against China at a critical stage in the crisis. In 1971, the tilt occurred in the context of Indian doubts about the US coming to its aid if China intervened on behalf of Pakistan in the event of an India-Pakistan war. Third, tilting occurred when there was a willing partner to tilt toward—just as it takes two to tango, it takes two to tilt. In 1962, the US was waiting with open arms. In 1971, the Soviet Union stood ready. Fourth, the India leadership had to have sufficient political capacity to undertake a tilt. In 1962, Nehru had the political mandate and, indeed, there was sufficient support for asking the US for aid. In 1971, Indira Gandhi, who had been re-elected with a clear and large political mandate, led the Indian government. She used this mandate to quell concerns about the treaty India signed with the Soviet Union in August that year.

*Diversification: Possibilities and Pitfalls.* This dissertation also helps expose both the strengths and weaknesses of India's diversification strategy. On the one hand, diversification allowed Indian policymakers to seek benefits from multiple sources. Having invested in multiple partnerships also gave Indian policymakers the ability to tilt when necessary. On the other hand, for a strategy that was designed to increase India's flexibility, diversification depended a great deal on the willingness of others to participate in it. Their willingness depended on others' strategic priorities and their perception of India's importance relative to others in their own strategies. Thus, for example, India could use a diversified Soviet-US balance against China only as long as both the Soviet Union and the US sought to balance China with India. When Washington's China policy



changed and it sought to engage rather than contain China, this option was no longer available to India. In crisis, India then *had* to tilt. There is always the danger that like the Soviet Union did in 1962 and the US did in 1971, a strategic partner will choose an ally, for example China, over a friend such as India. At other times of crisis, as this dissertation shows external actors chose not to participate in India's diversification strategy because they did not want to take sides, or because they disapproved of an Indian course of action. This was the case during the 1965 India-Pakistan war, when India found itself needing external assistance and reassurance vis-à-vis China, but not getting them from either the Soviet Union or the US.

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Cutty: Game done changed.

Slim Charles: Game's the same, just got more fierce.

—*The Wire*

Is an examination of the impact of China on US-India relations during the Cold War at all relevant to the contemporary or future world? Some might argue that it is not—that too much has changed: the Soviet Union no longer exists, China is far more powerful than it was, and the world is far more integrated. There are, however, elements that are not so different: for example, the importance of considering the US strategic framework—whether it is dominated by a Cold War prism or a counter-terrorism one or an international economic one—and the consequent strategic priorities and policies; the necessity then to consider where countries like China and India fit in to that framework, their relative importance to the US and how that affects US policies towards each of them. The same is true for the Indian side. Moreover, while the degree of interaction between the three countries has changed, an examination of the past shows that the contours of interaction between them that we try to assess today have existed before.

Even in the context of increasing interaction and growing interdependence between the three countries, there continue to be questions in India and the US about whether they should see China as a competitor or partner; whether it is best to contain it or engage it; whether the other can provide support for their strategy or play spoiler in it. Just as in the past, one country's perceptions and decisions about China can affect the other's options. Whether the US sees China as a strategic competitor or strategic partner has affected and continues to affect India and US-India relations. Similarly, whether India seeks to engage or contain China has and can play a role in supporting or spoiling US strategy. This dissertation has shown how the countries dealt with these dynamics in the past and can offer a glimpse of how they might do so in the future, taking into account the changes that the subsequent decades have brought.

Analyzing the countries' past interactions can contribute to understanding current and future interactions, if one can detect and factor in what dynamics have changed and assess how, if at all, those new dynamics might alter the triangular interaction. The past is not an exact guide, but it can provide a glimpse of how prisms, priorities, politics and policies can affect partnerships. The past can and does also shape current attitudes. Furthermore, at the very least, a study of the past shows that theory succeeds at explaining the triangular dynamics only under certain conditions, but not at all times. Scholars and policymakers have based and continue to base arguments and assessments about the future of the China-India-US triangle on realist or constructivist theories. This study shows that those assumptions based on theory, and the assessments based on those assumptions should be made with care.

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to conduct a detailed analysis of what past dynamics can suggest about the present or future of the US-India relationship

or indeed the China-India-US triangle, this section lays out some aspects that the dissertation has highlighted that can be explored further.

*On interests.* Lack of dialogue and the lack of understanding are often identified as reasons for US-India differences. However, understanding and dialogue have not necessarily led to US-India engagement. Common interests have been necessary for that—though they might not be enough. When discussing US-India relations, along with common values, policymakers in both countries continue to highlight the two countries’ range of common interests in areas ranging from Afghanistan and Pakistan to counter-terrorism to non-proliferation to climate change.<sup>8</sup> Managing and shaping the rise of China has also found its way high on this list of common interests.<sup>9</sup> These common interests are indeed laid out as the basis for and driver of closer US-India ties. As this dissertation shows, however, while interests might be a necessary basis for building and maintaining close bilateral ties, they are an insufficient one—the means they choose or prefer to achieve those interests matters as well. For the two countries to come together, it is not just necessary for their diagnoses to match, but also their prescriptions.

*On China.* Both the US and India envision the other as part of their China strategies, implicitly or explicitly—as they did in the past. There are risks and rewards for both India and the US in envisioning a key role for the other in their China policies in particular and in their grand strategy in general. One risk is related to expectations. Great

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<sup>8</sup> See Interview with Kanwal Sibal, *New Europe*, December 5, 2010 (<http://www.neurope.eu/articles/India-has-a-common-interest-in-combating-extremism/103826.php>). Also see Commander of the US Pacific Command Admiral Robert F Willard’s testimony to the US House Armed Services Committee referenced in “‘AfPak is one of extensive common interests of U.S., India ties’,” *Press Trust of India*, March 26, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> For a comprehensive list, see Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), “Address to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,” Washington, DC, November 5, 2010 ([http://mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.Speeches&ContentRecord\\_id=1c2b231f-d404-53ff-40c9-61e8e9ccb178&Region\\_id=&Issue\\_id](http://mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.Speeches&ContentRecord_id=1c2b231f-d404-53ff-40c9-61e8e9ccb178&Region_id=&Issue_id))

expectations about the other can lead to great reward for it. It can also lead to great disappointment if those expectations are unmet.

There is also a risk if the relationship becomes largely derivative. When India policy was derivative of China policy in Washington that sometimes translated to major benefits for India. However, if India's China policy did not match with that of the US—and vice versa—it could be a serious subject of disagreement between the two countries. Similarly, India's role vis-à-vis China can and has made it important in US eyes. However, if India's importance primarily derives from Washington's view of China, this importance can change and perhaps even dissipate. Thus, it is crucial for both India and the US to nurture cooperation across a broad range of issues and not assume that China will naturally bring them together. Each country has to make itself important to the other side, but there is a risk to do so in just one realm.

On the flip side, as this dissertation shows, the two countries cannot stovepipe their relations with other and their relations with China. Each is also likely to be affected by dynamics in the other's relationship with China. The Sino-US relationship has affected India in the past. How China and the US perceive each other will continue to affect India's options and the questions Indian policymakers will have to consider. If China and the US see each other as *strategic competitors*, should India play along with the US as willing foil or bulwark or subcontractor in Asia, deriving whatever benefits come with that role? Or should India continue to keep its options open vis-à-vis China? On the other hand, should Delhi see Washington's attitude as destabilizing to India's relations with China—as making India more insecure—and should it then tilt towards its neighbor to offer reassurance?

If China and the US see each other as *strategic partners*, will they collaborate in a way that narrows India's options? Should India jump on the bandwagon and seek to

participate in Sino-US collaboration, making the most of its relations with both? Or should it stay off the bandwagon, at the risk of getting left behind? As China and the US try to work together on a range of issues that are transnational in character, will India, which often is a key stakeholder, play spoiler or collaborator? Or can it be the swing vote, courted by both?

If *strategic reassurance* is the dominant approach in Sino-US relations, will Indian policymakers see US efforts to reassure China as being at India's expense? Can Delhi piggyback on Washington's efforts to gain reassurance from Beijing to elicit its own assurances from China? Should India and the US act in concert to reassure China, and, in return, seek reassurances from China? Should the US and India coordinate when there is a lack of reassurance to pressure China? Or should India seek assurances from China, even at the expense of its relations with the US?

Sino-Indian relations, similarly, can affect US options. This aspect gets less attention, but needs to be thought through as well. China in the past has not just been a subject and source of cooperation between India and the US, but also of contentiousness. Today, US-India relations are considered to be on more solid ground, and Sino-Indian relations can seem contentious. But, if there comes a point when Sino-Indian relations seem to be improving and the US relationship with China is deteriorating, the impact on US-India relations could be negative. Washington could come to see Delhi as unhelpful, and Delhi could come to see Washington as playing a destabilizing role that is not in India's interests. This is not a far-fetched scenario, given Sino-Indian interaction, especially in the economic realm, and India's desire not to provoke China.

*On diversification.* Since the world is no longer divided into two blocs (or three), some have argued that nonalignment is an irrelevant concept. What this dissertation has tried to show is that in considering Indian foreign policy it is important to look at the

strategy of diversification underlying nonalignment rather than the concept of nonalignment itself. That strategy has been remarkably consistent across time. Despite shocks in 1962 and 1991, which observers highlight as key turning points in Indian foreign policy, diversification has persisted. Indian policymakers try to diversify when it is possible. They apply this approach not just in terms of developing and maintaining foreign policy relationships with multiple partners, but also, for example, in arms acquisition policy or international energy sourcing. Diversification requires options, however, and as this dissertation has shown India's available options will be determined not just by how India sees countries like China and the US, but by how these two countries conceive of India's role and relative importance in their broader strategies.

Indian diversification, as this dissertation shows, has not been of the hub-and-spoke variety—i.e. all countries have not been kept equidistant and bilateral relationships have not been treated equally. At different times, India has had closer relationships with some countries—the degree of closeness has been determined, among other things, by level of importance of the other country, India's priorities and needs at the time, the willingness of the other country to engage with India, and India's other options in terms of partners.

There will be times when India has to make a choice between China and the US and tilt—tactically or strategically. India, indeed, tilted in the past to take out an insurance policy against China. Diversification has not precluded tilting towards certain countries when the circumstances call for it—in fact, it makes tilting possible.

Tilts can either be tactical or strategic. Tactical tilts can take place in certain fora or to achieve sub-objectives—for example, China and India working together in climate change negotiations, or Chinese and Indian companies joining together to out-bid an American company for an energy asset. Discussion about strategic tilting has focused on

India moving towards the US to contain China. As this dissertation shows, however, one should not dismiss the potential of India tilting towards China, if that seems essential to achieve Indian objectives.

*On domestic politics and public opinion.* US-India relations have been affected by policymakers' political capacity—their domestic political ability to undertake a certain course of action either in the context of favorable political support and public opinion; or in the absence of clear political acceptability, the ability to shape and use public opinion and external circumstances to overcome domestic resistance. Domestic politics and public opinion can affect policymakers' choices. In the past, for example, it limited the concessions the Indian government could make to China or the US. In the US, congressional views of India—in the absence of public support—restricted the amount of assistance the executive branch could give to India. Their impact is not, however, restricted to constraining options. It can help lead policymakers in a certain direction as well. For example, growing public support for India in the US at one stage both helped lead an administration to aid India, as well as allowed the administration to use that public support to overcome some political opposition. In India, domestic political opposition to India's tilt toward the US contribute to Indian policymakers trying to correct the imbalance and finding ways to assert independence publicly.

Domestic politics and public opinion can also affect the relationship in another way: it has affected and can affect rhetoric. The Indian government, for example, felt the need to make certain statements or take (or not take) certain actions publicly for public consumption domestically to give it more flexibility to make concessions in private. The multiple audience problem, however, led to these statements or actions having an adverse impact in the US.

Each government has the capacity to weaken—and perhaps even strengthen—the other government’s political capacity. US policy has weakened the Indian government’s hand in the past by giving ammunition to its opposition. However, in some cases the American approach strengthened the Indian government’s hand on the relationship by creating constituencies in India. This can work in other ways as well. If the US, for example, does not like the approach an Indian government is taking, it can give its opposition ammunition or try to create a groundswell to facilitate a change. Similarly, if India, for example, does not like the approach an administration is taking on India, it can try to create constituencies for a change or use existing constituencies for India in the policymaking community to call or press for a change.

*On style.* Style matters. The manner in which the two countries’ policymakers dealt with each other, as well as each other’s policymaking communities did have an impact on the relationship. As this dissertation, shows agreement on substance can lead to a better style of behavior; so can the habit of cooperation. US-India relations worked better when policymakers undertook advance consultation and warning, when necessary. They benefited from policymakers’ dealing with differences privately, without assuming the worst of the other side. When differences became public, it helped if the two sides worked to temper the public discussion. It also benefited the relationship if each side tried to support—rather than undermine—the other in dealing with various domestic constituencies. The Indian government, for example, found it easier to accept US conditions attached to assistance when the US government helped make them look like strings attached rather than chains attached.



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