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To Hold a Hand Uplifted:
The Principles and Developments of Indian Foreign Policy under Nehru

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Abstract

This work is an examination of the developments of Indian foreign policy from the beginning of India's independence in 1947 to near the end of the Nehruvian era in the early 1960s. Nehru's initial vision of Indian diplomacy and foreign policymaking was one of humble peacekeeping, with an eye toward non-alignment policies as the ideological division between the West and the East rapidly expanded. Nehru's grand vision of how India would be perceived by the world translated into a movement towards non-alignment not only in India, but many other former colonies as well. But in a freshly dividing and changing world, how well could his ideals be followed? The five principles of the Pancha Sheela are also examined in regards to the basic concepts of Nehruvian foreign policy. With what seemed to the West as lofty, somewhat idealistic principles, Nehru intended India to shine as a beacon for peace, moral justice, self-determination among former colonies, and as a staunch opponent to the accumulation of arms and nuclear weapons. But non-alignment does not necessarily mean neutrality or inaction; India's high-placed principles would be tested many times while Nehru was in office, sometimes with mixed results.

After World War II, one of the greatest and most globally engulfing wars the world has ever seen, whole countries and regions were left in ruins. These ruins were not just made of brick and mortar homes, but can be seen in the political, economic, and sociological systems laid to waste by an all-out international brawl of physical might and strategy. As survivors and victors alike tried to pick up the pieces of their shattered nationalisms, two giants had risen whose ideological stare-down threatened to bring what has been left standing crashing down. The world had become a series of alliances like none other before, splitting the world into two with-us-or-against-us type teams like a game of ideological dodge ball. It had become a world in so much political flux that we still strain and focus to see it from every angle, to understand why the world seemed to both freeze and whirl into a cyclone of tension at the same time. New advances in weapons technology had brought ideological conflicts to a dangerous fever pitch which threatens to consume all in its path if nothing was done to stop it.

Amidst the new world order, former mighty imperial powers in Britain, Portugal, France, the Netherlands, and others had lost their old global strength. The vestiges of imperialism, which had been slowly dismantling under their own weight well before the war, were disintegrating faster than ever with a tide of anti-colonialism spreading across Asia and Africa. India, gaining its independence from the British Empire in August of 1947 after years of effort, put herself at the forefront of this growing movement towards anti-racism and anti-colonialism from the West. After over two-hundred years of colonialism, India saw itself as being ready to move closer to the table with the other world powers.

But this new independent state, under the careful eyes of men such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi did not seek to be seen immediately as one of the Great Powers; rather as a Great Power-to-be. Nehru understood that India had a long way to go before it could have a revered seat at the table regarding world powers, but that did not diminish the role he felt India should play on the world stage. At the stroke of midnight on 15 August, after the singing of India's national song Vande Mataram ("I Bow to Thee Mother"), Nehru stood before the Indian Congress and stated his aspirations for the resurrected nation in his famous *Tryst with Destiny* speech:

"A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance... Freedom and power bring responsibility. The responsibility rests upon this Assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India... Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now. That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we might fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the One we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity."¹

On the very moment of India's independence, Prime Minister Nehru set forth his idealistic and caring image of India that he and Mahatma Gandhi had striven to achieve in previous years.

Although this image soon became marred with the consequences and events surrounding Indian and Pakistani partition soon afterwards, Nehru set forth India's new set of goals pertaining to moral responsibility and integrity towards the world at large primarily inspired by

¹ Nehru, Jawaharlal. "Tryst With Destiny by Jawaharlal Nehru." Sri Venkateswara College. <http://www.svc.ac.in/files/TRYST%20WITH%20DESTINY.pdf>. Accessed April 1, 2014.

Gandhiji.

In a new world split asunder by ideological and political divisions between East and West, Nehru's vision of India was that of a country who stood independently and with its own principles, no matter how lofty those principles seemed to by the West. It was to become a beacon of self-determination, moral justice, and peace not only among the Great Powers but down to the very bottom of the political power chain. In what was quickly becoming a black and white world, Nehru sought to create a grey area with the potential to ease the tensions without the constraints of the ideological issues which came with aligning with either side of the conflict: the Non-Aligned Movement. India was intended to become the eye of the storm of ideological controversy, a hand held uplifted², and palm facing out in a gesture of peace and in favor of rational thought before political rhetoric.

As an ambassador and politician of India, Vijayalakshmi Pandit cited the Pancha Sheela or five principles upon which both Non-Alignment and Indian foreign policy as a whole strove towards: coexistence, respect for the territorial and integral sovereignty of others, non-aggression, non-interference with the internal affairs of others, and recognition of the equality of others.³ These terms were well in line with Nehru's vision of an Indian foreign policy built around global moral justice, and are according to Pandit, key to understanding Indian foreign policy-making. Nehru's sometimes difficult attempts at adhering to the Pancha Sheela are evident throughout his career as Prime Minister of India, and can be applied to many of his decisions regarding the nations, organizations, and institutions mentioned in this examination. For Nehru, the principles of the Pancha Sheela were ultimately a "message of tolerance" that

² Pandit, Vijaya Lakshmi. "India's Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* 34, no. 3 (April 1956): 440.

³ Pandit. 434.

was ‘inherent to the Indian culture and way of thinking’.⁴ Its basis of peaceful coexistence in a world now being fuelled by raging communalism and ideology was, for Nehru, was essential to conducting foreign policy.

Nehru’s vision of India’s responsibility to the world corresponded directly to his vision not only of how India would be perceived by the world, but how it would go about setting its foreign policy and diplomatic strategies. Throughout this work, the ways in which India’s high-held principles of global moral responsibility have been tested and evolved since independence and into the early 1960s will be examined; its position between the United States and the growing U.S.S.R.; relations with China and other former and soon-to-be former colonies and the dominions in Asia; and the role it played as world mediator in the General Assembly of the United Nations. The surest way to test the content of one’s character is to see the way in which one treats others and expects to be treated, not only in the carefully chosen words they give.

Because of the multi-faceted nature of India’s foreign policy, this analysis has been organized thematically as opposed to chronologically in order to explain Nehru’s principles through example and context more succinctly. Each section follows the specific timeline of its subject, and has been done so with the intention of further exploring the complexity of India’s relations in that specific area of interest for the benefit of more detailed and focused historical dissection.

Historiography

⁴ Nehru, Jawaharlal, and Mushirul Hasan. *Nehru's India: Select Speeches*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.188-189

The arena of post-World War II history is held among many historians as a period of intense change in the global orders of power and overwhelming ideological divides. The containment of communism, and the United States obsession with it, are well documented both domestically and abroad. In part due to its strategic significance in the region and its humble yet outspoken approach in the new ideals of geopolitics, India's foreign policy and its leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement make it a vital part of many of these historical discussions. There is no shortage of documents from ambassadors and government officials during Nehru's time in office (1947-1964). The *Foreign Relations of the United States* papers for this time period comprised mainly of telegrams to the Secretary of State informing on the ins and outs of global affairs once considered so volatile for their time to be labeled 'secret' and 'top secret'.

Ambassador Vijayalakshmi Pandit⁵, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's sister and President of the United Nations General Assembly in 1953, also published articles in political journals like *Foreign Affairs* well into the 1950s highlighting and expanding upon the ideals of Indian foreign policy and its application during events such as those between India and Portugal in the case of Goa. Later into the 1960s ambassadors such as B.K. Nehru, India's ambassador to the United States from 1961-1968, spoke at length both in written works and speeches given at universities and the United Nations about the issues of India's economy, international relations (including the status of non-alignment), trade, and aid. As the chairman of the United Nations Investment committee, his works tended to center around the economic status of India and other Asian power in the region.

On the side of academia, there have been many historians from the 1950s forward who

⁵ UN. "UN General Assembly - President of the 62nd Session - Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (India)." UN News Center. <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/bios/bio08.shtml> (accessed May 1, 2014).

have studied both the impact of non-alignment globally and its effect on India's history and foreign policy in general. Sumit Ganguly, director of the Center on American and Global Security and professor of Political Science at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, is one of the preeminent authorities on the topic of Indian foreign policy. For his work in the discussion of Indian political history and studies he holds the Rabindranath Tagore Chair in Indian Cultures and Civilizations at the University of Indiana and has both authored and co-authored over twenty books on South Asian politics.⁶

When it comes to non-alignment, scholarly works tend to differ greatly in their interpretation of its effectiveness or ineffectiveness throughout history, some considering it an obsolete ideology by the end of the Cold War. Jacob Abadi's work expressing the failure of non-alignment in conjunction with the Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962 is one of those who considers non-alignment to be an ineffective and impractical implication of policy.⁷ Abadi cites Nehru's failed military focus, funding, and strategy in India's aggression towards China as being indicative of a system which hindered the nation's stability as little more than just another idealist geopolitical policy. The work of Ross Berkes and Mohinder Bodi discuss India's effectiveness at least within the setting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, giving India an avenue through which to define and push towards their goals of peace in a time of great division.⁸ As the director for USC's School of International Relations and the Institute of World Affairs, Berkes' has studied foreign policy since the early 1950's.⁹

⁶ "Sumit Ganguly Tagore Professor." Sumit Ganguly. <http://polisci.indiana.edu/faculty/profiles/sganguly.shtml> (Accessed April 26, 2014).

⁷ Abadi, Jacob. "The Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962—A Test Case For India's Policy of Non-Alignment." *Journal of Third World Studies* 15, no. 2 (1998): 11-29.

⁸ Berkes, Ross N., and Mohinder S. Bedi. *The Diplomacy of India: Indian Foreign Policy in the United Nations*. Stanford, CA:Stanford University Press, 1958.

⁹ Los Angeles Times. "Ross Berkes; Expert on International Relations." Los Angeles Times.

Indian Agenda in the United Nations

In a note concerning India and the United States' positions at the United Nations in 1946, Nehru admitted, "Actually, we are not a Power that counts; potentially we are very much so."¹⁰ India, as a country newly freed from colonial bonds, did not have the global weight needed in order to effect the differences Nehru spoke of in his *Tryst with Destiny* speech on its own. Instead it turned to the also newly formed United Nations organization which promised an equal voice for all in global politics and affairs in its General Assembly. Nehru and the government of India intended to use their role in the United Nations to effect the change they wished to see in the world and took full advantage of the opportunity. For India the United Nations would be a vehicle towards the ultimate goals of anti-colonialism and the elimination of racism, a step towards peace in a world so decisively divided.

India's role in the United Nations corresponded directly to Nehru's foreign policy objectives. This "attempt to combine idealism with national interest" was best explained in a speech given by Nehru at Columbia University in 1949, outlining India's projected role in the United Nations: "The main objectives of that policy are... the liberation of subject peoples; the maintenance of freedom, both national and individual; and the elimination of want, disease and ignorance which affect the greater part of the world's population."¹¹ One of the first hurdles towards the maintenance of peace would be to bridge the growing divide and fostering peace between the Great Powers, and India made that her overarching goal. Indian delegates, in

<http://articles.latimes.com/2000/dec/25/local/me-4510> (accessed May 4, 2014).

¹⁰ Nehru, Jawaharlal, and Sarvepalli Gopal. *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru a project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund*. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Vol. 1. 1984. 471.

¹¹ Berkes, Ross N. *The Diplomacy of India*. 1.

keeping with the very basic principles of non-alignment, refrained from taking sides between the Great Powers on issues and instead focused on finding small points of consensus which would encourage compromise and harmony between them.¹²

Speaking often as a representative for all of Asia, India proposed many joint resolutions towards this end backed by the bulk of the dozen or so Afro-Asian delegates.¹³ In line with its overall principles, India's conviction that the U.N. was finally a chance for the "long- silent voices of the Afro-Asian world"¹⁴ to have sway in world affairs, rested on its hope to elevate all parties to an equal playing field. It favored the principles of universality with talks turned to United Nations membership, fearing that a move towards selective membership would "lead to the transformation on the United Nations into another bigoted "Holy Alliance"¹⁵. When discussions moved towards nuclear arms, which in a post-Hiroshima world was a central concern of many, India fervently disagreed with calls of the use of atomic weapons to "resist aggression". After the failure of the Baruch Plan of 1946 towards complete disarmament and the resulting acceleration of the international arms race, India's optimistic outlook against the use of fire-with-fire propositions seemed naïve. B.N. Rau of the Indian delegation suggested to the General Assembly in 1949 a declaration stating that "no state or individual shall use atomic energy except for peaceful purposes", and further prohibiting the sale, possession, manufacturing, or use of atomic weapons. This kind of proposal, while finding friends among the Asian powers, fell on deaf ears with much of the Western powers.¹⁶

The Non-Aligned Movement

¹² Ibid., 64.

¹³ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁵ Ibid., 33.

¹⁶ Ibid., 65.

At its heart, India's foreign policy focused on its commitment to the principles of Non-Alignment which echoed Gandhi's own policy of non-violent protest before independence. It emphasized the need for peaceful coexistence in a world of conflicting ideologies by keeping political freedom to choose not to align its policies with the restrictions of the interests of a separate ideological bloc.

Non-alignment however, as pointed out by Ambassador B.K. Nehru in the 1960s, is not a synonym for inaction or neutrality. For India and many other non-aligned countries, nonalignment "merely says that in arriving at decisions in world affairs, it will make up its own mind independently...and on the merits of the issues involved." It also did not mean that a country would not fight be willing to fight if need be, but that the decision whether to use any force would be "because it believed that in the circumstances of the times, there [was] no other alternative... but to take this extremely serious step."¹⁷ These concepts of non-alignment tended to elude many of the Western powers, who saw much Indian non-alignment movement as an attempt to simply have the best of both worlds. The idea that non-aligned countries were merely sitting on the great ideological fence of the times instead of picking a side, remarked Ambassador Nehru, would be to assume that issues only had two sides. But for India in particular, most issues seemed much more multi-faceted and complicated than the propagated black and white divide that had spread since the end of World War II. There was a much grayer area to the current issues of the world than either the West or the East would admit to.

At the Bandung Conference of April 1955, India stood with countries such as Egypt, Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon, to declare both their support for the principles set forth in non-alignment as well as their condemnation for the continuation of colonialism "in all of its

¹⁷ Nehru, B.K. *Speaking of India*. Washington D.C.: Information Service of India, 1963. 62.

manifestations”¹⁸. The conference attendees hailed mostly from former colonies in Africa and Asia, coming together to endorse Nehru’s five principles (the Pancha Sheela referred to by Mrs. Pandit) as part of the unanimously accepted 10-point “Declaration on the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation”. Earlier and very similar conferences like the New Delhi Conferences on 1947 and 1949 were presented as a show of solidarity against the vestiges of colonialism its inherent racism from Western powers.

Australia, one of the few remaining dominions in the region, was internally torn between accepting this new world order or whether to align itself only to the West, primarily along racial lines. With economics at the forefront of Australia’s foreign policy concerns, it looked to a radically changing Asia with hopes of engagement.¹⁹ While the Chifley government was very supportive of the looming independence of India and Indonesia with hopes of better access to further trade in the region, Opposition leader Robert Menzies and Opposition spokesman for foreign affairs Percy Spender imagined Australia as “a handful of white people in a coloured sea”. Nationalist movements pushing for independence across Asia, they were sure, must be dominated by “Communist ideology” and were therefore something that should not be condoned by the Australian government.²⁰ India had already formally severed diplomatic ties with South Africa due to its continued use of the oppression of native peoples, standing in cold contrast to the anti-colonialism and anti-racist stance at the core of Indian foreign policy. “We need not be too soft with people who treat us in the way the South Africans have done,” said Nehru when asked of the government official attitude to South

¹⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. “Bandung Conference.” accessed April 1, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/51624/Bandung-Conference>.

¹⁹ Beeson, Mark, and Kanishka Jayasuriya. “The Politics of Asian Engagement: Ideas, Institutions, and Academics.” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 55, no. 3 (2009): 360-374.

²⁰ Soares, Julie. 2011. *Engaging with Asia: The Chifley Government and the New Delhi Conferences of 1947 and 1949*. *Australian Journal of Politics and History*. 57, no.4: 497.

Africa.²¹ South Africa's increasingly terrible treatment of "coloureds", including many Indians and other South Asians (such as Mohandas Gandhi before he was referred to as the Mahatma), and acquired the absolute contempt of the anti-colonialism focused countries in Asia. The specter of Australia's "White Australia" policies, which centered around severely stemming the flow of non-European immigration in favor of white Europeans, loomed heavily over the Australian delegates at the conferences, but were brought up only once to the relief of many in the Australian camp.²²

Putting aside Nehru's idealistic policy visions, India's acceptance and use of non-alignment as a basis for foreign policy can be seen as a kind of survival strategy in the early years of the Cold War. With its proximity to China and the Soviet Union, it would have been very difficult to have joined the Western side of the debate; with India's ties to the United States and Great Britain for much needed economic aid and Nehru's kind outlook on socialism, it would not have done well to join the Soviet camp either. Staying independent of the growing political divide kept options open for a country slowly rebuilding itself after a near century of colonization. Especially for a country as fragmented domestically as India was at the time of independence along linguistic, ethnic, religious lines, pushing for external peace would give India more time to focus on pulling itself together under a more unified nationalist banner. It was very much in India's self-interest to promote and maintain world peace in order for it to focus on economic development. At this point in India's history, the country was still very dependent on outside sources for oil, food, and war materials; economic development and the building up of the Indian military to be "equal to the task of providing reasonable

²¹ Nehru, Jawaharlal, and Sarvepalli Gopal. *Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru a project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund*. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Vol. 1. 1984. 489.

²² Ibid., 501.

security”.²³ It would not have been possible if India were to be forced into any military conflicts.

Pakistan, Kashmir, and the Diplomatic Aftermath of Partition

The relationship between India and Pakistan has improved little since the years following partition. In the years preceding India's independence, tensions between the Indian Congress and the Muslim League headed by Muhammad Ali Jinnah had reached a head. Communalism, which had risen in India at the end of the 19th century, had begun to form deep divisions between Hindus and Muslims all over the subcontinent with underlying British support.²⁴ Jinnah and others in the Muslim League put forward that Hindus and Muslims were not just of two religions, but of two nations., using this line of thinking in order to justify his party's calls for an independent Muslim state which incorporated the territories that held a muslim majority and thereby creating a 'people's government' in Pakistan.²⁵ The two-nation theory, along with continued tensions between the sides fostered an environment ripe for civil war and communal violence.²⁶ Lord Mountbatten's hasty decree of Partition only spurred such tensions, bring the fears of many Indian leaders to fruition. With their “markedly different organizational strategies” and “competing visions of nationalism and state building”, the Indian Congress and the Muslim League, along with growing communalism, set the basic tone Indo-

²³ Appadorai, A. "India's Foreign Policy." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944--)* 25, no. 1 (January 1949): 37-46.

²⁴ India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. *The Paradox of India Pakistan Relations*. Revised ed. New Delhi: Government of India Publications Division, 1971. 5.

²⁵ Hay, Stephen. *Sources of Indian Tradition*. 2. ed. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.

²⁶ Singh, Anita Inder. *The Origins of the Partition of India, 1936-1947*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987. 237.

Pakistani relations for decades to come.²⁷

Partition left a bitter taste for many in India, creating “anger and resentment in the mind of the Hindu” majority.²⁸ Within 48 hours of independence, fear and violence had begun to set in all over parts of northern India, especially along the line that now dissected the Punjab region. Split in two with Pakistan, communal violence sprang forward on both sides: in Pakistan, Muslims attacked Hindus and Sikhs who had not yet fled to India; in India, Hindus and Sikhs attacked Muslim villages, killing and burning all in their path.²⁹ With communalism starting to affect members of the military and their willingness to stop the carnage, soldiers were brought from South India, which had not been affected by partition.³⁰ This mirrored effect of violence greatly disturbed Prime Minister Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, the latter of whom undertook a fast in hopes of quelling some of the communal violence that had burst forth at the dawn of partition in Delhi.³¹ With increasing violence came the largest mass migration of people ever as populations on both sides fled communal violence across the borders. By 1951, 7.3 million people had crossed into India, while 7.2 million had fled to Pakistan according to its 1953 census.³²

One of the principal issues which furthered tensions between India and Pakistan in the years after partition are the events surrounding the year-long First Kashmir War which began only two months after partition. The princely states of Jammu and Kashmir, located directly between the two feuding states, became the focus of military strategy and politicization in late

²⁷ Ganguly, Sumit. *Conflict unending: India-Pakistan tensions since 1947*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. 10.

²⁸ Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam. *India Wins Freedom: The Complete Version*. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 1988. Print. 227.

²⁹ Ibid., 228.

³⁰ Ibid., 229.

³¹ Ibid., 232.

³² Khilnani, Sunil. *The Idea of India*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1998. 129.

1947, when tribesmen supported by Pakistani military invaded Kashmir. Beforehand, even with the large amount of muslims in the state, there had been a marked lack of enthusiasm amongst many Kashmiris to join Pakistan, eyeing a much brighter economic future with India instead³³. But the mountains of Kashmir seemed too valuable to Pakistan for them to given up so lightly to what leader had come to refer to as their greatest enemy, India. Pakistani leaders had already cut off services such as Q to Kashmir, hoping to pressure them into accepting accession. In desperation the maharaja and other leaders of Kashmir turned to India for help, signing the Instrument for Accession with India. Once Nehru saw the accession as legitimate, the Indian military was airlifted into Kashmir to rid it of the insurgency.³⁴

India's military intervention can be understood through its policy of encouraging self-determination when it came to sovereign states. Nehru attempted to justify his actions as being within the Panch Sheela, by noting the Indian government's reluctance to intervene as a show of honoring Kashmir's sovereignty as a state. The government of the princely state of Kashmir had chosen to become part of India under their own free will, and Indian troops, under Nehru's explanation, only attacked in defense of what had just become a new Indian state. Pakistan, however, continually questioned the legitimacy of the accession in the United Nations General Assembly after the war ended.

By the mid-1950s Pakistan had begun to side with anyone who was not immediately with India, even siding with South Africa at one point and briefly courting the U.S.S.R. before turning instead to a pro-West side of the conflict.³⁵ An article in the London Times said of Pakistan: "The loadstone of every aspect of Pakistan's foreign policy is bad relations with

³³ Ganguly, Sumit. *Conflict unending*. 16.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁵ India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. *The Paradox of India Pakistan Relations*. 41.

India.”³⁶ Pakistan claimed that it could only survive at the destruction of India. In late 1954, President Eisenhower announced that the United States would be giving military assistance to Pakistan, including weapons and military training³⁷. This U.S.-Pakistani military pact made Nehru exceptionally unhappy, with the looming fear the Pakistan would use their new weapons and training in further conflicts with India, especially over Jammu and Kashmir. U.S. assurances that the weapons were not to be used against India did nothing to assuage growing fearful tensions between the two countries, further dividing the neighbors. Pakistan had also formed a military pact with China by the early 1960s, developing relations with one of the largest countries in Asia for a more strategic advantage over India. Nehru had, however, made offerings of ‘no-war’ pacts with Pakistan several times in his time in office but each one had been declined citing the lack of an agreement on Kashmir.³⁸ In the wake of the riots all over the region caused by partition, Nehru’s offering of no-war pacts and Pakistan’s share of the national economy under British rule³⁹ were attempts to bridge the growing bitter divide in favor of a coexistence between two regions that had until recently been one.

India and America: A Marriage of Convenience

While India and the United States have generally maintained friendly relations, there have been many points of tension between the two that have caused strain in diplomatic relations. In a telegram from 1951 outlining the number of issues people in India had with the U.S., American Ambassador Henderson cited the many expressed criticisms of America

³⁶Ibid., 25.

³⁷Ganguly. 17..

³⁸ Ibid., 25.

³⁹ Ibid., 34.

existing in India:

“... including our treatment of American negroes, our tendency to support colonialism and to strive for continued world supremacy of white peoples, our economic imperialism, superficiality of our culture, our lack of emotional balance as evidenced by our present hysteria in combatting Communism and our cynical use of “witch-hunting method” in promoting domestic political ends... our assumption of superiority merely because we have higher standards of living, our hypocrisy, etc.”⁴⁰

America’s support of colonialism and racial equality issues were especially troubling for Indian diplomatic sensibilities. During World War II, American propaganda in India had been much more sensitive, taking out the representations of Japanese as mice, primitives, or monkeys that were so prevalent in the same propaganda back at home.⁴¹ From India’s perspective one could see an element of Rudyard Kipling in America’s racial attitudes towards the west. Americans tended to see many of the Asian countries as being especially immature or childlike when it came to the business of being a viable world power. As referenced by historian Andrew J. Rotter, even “Mahatma Gandhi’s simple *dhoti* became a diaper in Western representations”, and the leaders of India’s princely states were referred to as acting like spoiled children for their adamant refusal to give up much of their sovereignty to a new more centralized government in a united post-independence India.⁴² American ambassador Loy

⁴⁰ “Relations of the United States with India” pp. 1462. In *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, Vol. V: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1982.

⁴¹ Pullin, Eric D. "Noise and Flutter: American Propaganda Strategy and Operation in India during World War II." *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 2 (2010): 277.

⁴² Rotter, Andrew J. *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1948-1964*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University

Henderson made remarks in 1949 intimating that entertaining Prime Minister Nehru would be a simple matter, much like a little boy. “If some Indian tribe could make him ‘Big Chief’ with [a] feather bonnet... and if in some western town a group of cowboys... could present him with a ten-gallon hat and set him up on a calico pony, he might be really pleased... with all his complexity.”⁴³

On the side of Indian leaders and diplomats many, including Nehru, saw American leaders as crass, immature, arrogant, materialistic, diplomatically clumsy and boorish.⁴⁴ Interestingly, Indian leaders also saw American leaders and people in general as children, citing their lust for new technological ‘toys’ and gadgets, their ingrained cultural informality demonstrated through “first-name calling and backslapping”, and the very impatient, impetuous nature that presented itself through much of their foreign diplomacy.⁴⁵ In response America dismissed Nehru’s high aspirations and moral principles in his foreign policy as indicative of India’s self-righteous tone.⁴⁶ This large cultural miscommunication between the two powers, coupled with America’s rather ironic support of colonialism whose most ardent opposing force was headed by India itself, made for what seemed odd bedfellows.

With the containment of the spread of Communism as America’s chief concern after World War II and China’s post-1949 ideological alliance with the Soviet Union, American policy makers were terrified of losing anymore of Asia to the influence of the U.S.S.R. With its strategic placement in Asia, desperate need for economic aid, and its newly independent

Press, 2000.

⁴³ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 89.

state, India became the lynchpin of America's containment policies in the region. Chester Bowles, American ambassador to India in the early 1950s, posed that if communism were to spread to India and take hold of government positions of power the result would be the loss of not only the Indian subcontinent, but the rest of Southeast Asia and the Middle East as well.⁴⁷ To this end, fostering relations with India became quite important to America. Under the auspices of giving assistance to a fresh democracy, the U.S. sent a large amount of economic aid to India in order to steer the internal political climate of India in favor towards democracy and, by extension, the U.S. In a 'top secret' telegram from Ambassador Bowles to President Truman in 1952, Bowles expressed his concern in the proposed plan for sending \$150 million in aid to India during the 1953 fiscal year, saying that it would not be nearly enough to stem the tide of communism from gaining favor within Indian borders. To give a better idea of the weight of such an economic expenditure in foreign aid, this would be equivalent to around \$6.8 billion in the year 2013.⁴⁸ Bowles contested that communist successes in south India earlier that year "indicate[d] how rapidly [the] political and economic situation here could deteriorate,"⁴⁹ and in order to keep India from "going the way of China", the U.S. was going to need a much larger amount in aid.

Bowles' claims and fears were well-founded. With a food crisis in India in the early 1950s and the election of communist party leaders in parts of India such as E.M.S. Namboodiripad of Kerala state in the south⁵⁰, both countries would need to strengthen their diplomatic ties to each other in order to reach their own goals on any scale. India needed

⁴⁷ "Principle Policies and Problems with Relations in India," In *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-54, Vol. XI, Part 2: Africa and South Asia*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1982. 1636.

⁴⁸ Williamson, Samuel H. "Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1774 to present," MeasuringWorth, 2014. Amount found by applying the 'Economy Cost' under 'Project' calculation. www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/. Accessed April 29, 2009.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1637.

⁵⁰ Hay. *Sources of Indian Tradition*. 354.

America just as much as the other: India needed American for its global political, military, economic power and aid, and America needed India in order to stave off the dreaded spread of communism and to support as a stronghold of democracy.

India and the Communist Powers

India's non-alignment policies, as explained before, were designed to give it the freedom to not be caught up in the ideological divide that threatened to consume much of political attention. Especially for a weak state fresh from colonialism, the ability to referee the fight between two great powers instead of participate in it left India in a much better political position when it came to initiating peace talks. Although India did not directly choose sides, she did have commonalities in interests on both sides. India relied on the U.S. for aid, both economically and, in the case of Chinese tensions in the early 1960s, militarily. But Nehru also had a certain affection for the efficiency of socialism, and this was reflected in India's attitude towards relations with the Soviet Union⁵¹. For the United States, India's refusing to go one way or another seemed more like a moral issue than solely a political one. With Indian foreign policy tilting ever so slightly towards the Soviets, many U.S. officials were at once frustrated and terrified, as evidenced by Bowles' fear of Communist encroachment in democratic India.

At times in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Russia attempted to strong arm India formally towards the U.S.S.R., pushing Mrs. Pandit on several occasions while in Moscow to install more diplomats in Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe such as Yugoslavia and

⁵¹ Ollapally, Deepa M. "The Evolution of India's Relations with Russia: Tried, Tested, and Searching for Balance." In *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Sumit Ganguly, 226-250. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Poland.⁵² Russian Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov was the driving force behind such talks with the Indian ambassador, and similar to the U.S. had become “disappointed by the indecision of the Indian attitude” to pick one side or the other.⁵³ With attacks waged against India in the Soviet media for its indecision, Nehru’s reiterated India’s stance of non-alignment by giving a speech to the Constituent Assembly in New Delhi entitled “India Keeps Out of Power Blocs.” Nehru went a step further by saying that it would be “unthinkable” of India joining Russia’s side against the U.S. India after all did depend on the U.S., and while India refused to align itself with either political power bloc, Nehru was very displeased with Russia’s tactics of subterfuge.

While Molotov put more pressure on Indian diplomats in Moscow, Russia was asserting itself directly into the Indian political arena. In early 1948 the Soviet ambassador arrived in Delhi; but instead of contacting or otherwise informing any Indian officials of his presence, the ambassador had arrived with the intention to direct the more secretive movements of Indian Communists into positions of power within India.⁵⁴ With the revelation of the Soviet ambassador’s subterfuge tactics in their own backyard, Nehru and the Indian Congress were furious, some calling for Mrs. Pandit to be recalled from Moscow altogether. Mrs. Pandit herself, as related to U.S. Ambassador Smith, had been just as deeply affronted by Soviet actions as her brother (Prime Minister Nehru), adding “she herself now restricts her attendance at Soviet official functions to about fifteen minutes.”⁵⁵

⁵²“The Ambassador in India (Grady) to the Secretary of State,” In *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Vol. V, Pt.1: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1979. 497-498.

⁵³ Ibid., 497.

⁵⁴ “The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Smith) to the Secretary of State,” In *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Vol. V, Pt.1: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1979. 499-500

⁵⁵ Ibid., 501.

Closer to home, India found a different but no less tenuous relationship to the new People's Republic of China. Nehru had been one of the first to accept the nation under Mao Tse Tung, even including the communist country in the talks of the Bandung Conference. As the largest power in Asia, Nehru had hoped to garner Chinese support to further "India's efforts to shape post-colonial Asia".⁵⁶ In 1954 India and China signed a peace agreement outlining India's relinquishing of any special inherited rights in Tibet while recognizing China's claim over it at the same time, making it the first agreement to state so. This agreement was also the first to outline Nehru's *Pancha Sheela*, or five-principles, referred to in the document as "The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence."⁵⁷

As China's policies became increasingly anti-western, so did the tension increase in its relations with close neighbor India. Tibet was a clear issue between the two after Tibet and India had signed a treaty creating the McMahon Line, which put the border of Tibet and India near the Indian state of Assam much too far north for Chinese tastes.⁵⁸ Although that agreement had been reached during the Shimla Conference in 1914, it was still a thorn in the side of Sino-Indian relations. These tensions, coupled with escalating tensions with China over the Aksai Chin territory (part of Kashmir) finally resulted in the Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962, leading scholars to very different conclusions of the event's effects on India's foreign policy and non-alignment. With India's weak military due to what many scholars refer to as Nehru's shortsightedness when it came to weak military spending and failure to recognize China's aggressive intentions on the frontier, it was in no shape to defend itself against China's armies

⁵⁶ Garver, John W. "Evolution of India's China Policy." In *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Sumit Ganguly, 83-105. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010. 85.

⁵⁷ Garver. "Evolution of India's China Policy". 87.

⁵⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "McMahon Line," Accessed April 1, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/355136/McMahon-Line>

along the Tibetan borders. India was forced to run to the United States for aid and to provide military support on the Indian side of the conflict. With the United States behind it, China became much more receptive to the propositions of peace⁵⁹ given by the Colombo powers (India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, and Indonesia).⁶⁰ Some scholars referred to this action by India as the failure of non-alignment policies in India.⁶¹ Others reasoned that although it was an embarrassment for India, “China’s withdrawal, paradoxically, contributed towards a continued legitimization of non-alignment.”⁶² While India did have to call in a superpower like the United States in order to defend its own boundaries, it was done so without violating the core of non-alignment.

“A Monument of the West in the East”

Although the bulk of the colonial powers inhabiting Asia had left by the mid-1950s, Portugal had remained either unaware of or ambivalent to the changed political tide of the times. Their dominion, spanning from Brazil to East Timor, was not something that the Portuguese were willing to liberate themselves from lightly. In response to calls from India and other anti-colonial Asian countries for Portugal to vacate Goa and other Indian territories, Portugal claimed that it must keep their Goan colony as a “monument to... and a small hearth of the Western spirit in the East”⁶³. This kind of stalwart attitude from Portugal garnered no favor in a region charged with anti-colonialism and even less so with India, whose land made up the bulk of Portugal’s remaining Asian territories. Goa was the Portuguese empire’s main

⁵⁹ Harshe, Rajen. "India's Non-Alignment: An Attempt at Conceptual Reconstruction." *Economic and Political Weekly* 25, no. 7/8 (February 17, 1990): 402.

⁶⁰ *The Deseret News (Salt Lake City)*, “All Eyes Turn on Manila as Eight Nations Gather to Discuss Formation of Southeast Asia Security Pact.” September 4, 1954.

⁶¹ Abadi, Jacob. "The Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962—A Test Case For India's Policy of Non-Alignment." 13.

⁶² Harshe. "India's Non-Alignment: An Attempt at Conceptual Reconstruction." 402

⁶³ Pandit. "India's Foreign Policy." 437.

landholding in India, along with Diu and Daman in what is now the state of Gujarat.

After independence from Britain and the subsequent partition from Pakistan, India's first monumental task had been one similar to the 'risorgimento' of 19th century Italy: to unite the sovereign princely states under a unified banner of India.⁶⁴ Legation had been filed in Lisbon by the Government of India soon after independence in 1949, but was met with Portugal's outright refusal to discuss the matter of leaving Goa. The 1950s saw two rebellions among native Goans against the semi-dictatorship: one in July of 1954 entailing the disarmament of Portuguese police by a small band of protesters; another in August of 1955 involving the unarmed satyagraha (non-violent, civil resistance) of an assembled crowd composed of Indians and Goans. The first was met with arrest of nearly 2,500 Goans, some of whom were tried by Portuguese military tribunals and many more went to prisons throughout the Portuguese empire. The second had a much deadlier outcome as the Portuguese shot down 225 protesters, counting an Indian minister among the twenty-four dead. Still Nehru and the Government in India did not intervene directly, holding fast to the principles of non-interference in the affairs of others, while sympathizing with the Goan's struggle. In an address to the Parliament, among strong public outcry for swift action against Portuguese authority in Goa, Nehru asserted his intention to handle the matter through the auspices of India's peace policy "without resorting to military measures."⁶⁵ Nehru hoped to stave off military action with the hope that Portugal may yet still "see the error of their ways"⁶⁶ and abandon its Indian colonies. By the beginning of the 1960s, it had become very clear that they had no intention of leaving.

⁶⁴ Wright, Quincy. "The Goa Incident." *The American Journal of International Law* 56, no. 3 (July 1962): 619.

⁶⁵ Pandit. "India's Foreign Policy." 438.

⁶⁶ Nehru. *Speaking of India*. 77.

On 18 December, 1961, India launched a three-pronged military invasion of Goa in order to liberate it from Portuguese authority and finally push the last remnant of colonialism out of the Indian subcontinent. A mere twenty-four hours later, the Portuguese authorities in Goa, as well as in Dui and Daman, had surrendered after what Indian Foreign Minister Menon described as a “swift and bloodless action”.⁶⁷ India’s action was met with shock and condemnation from many in the West, sparking a great debate within the United Nations Security Council, with many now calling Prime Minister Nehru a hypocrite. Portugal entered a complaint to the International Court of Justice, claiming that India was guilty of an act of aggression. United States delegate Adlai Stevenson, aghast at the actions of India proclaimed that “India’s armed attack on Goa mocks the good faith of its frequent declarations of lofty principles.”⁶⁸ The French delegation stood as well with Portugal, as did the majority of western powers including South Africa. The Soviets, the United Arab Republic, Ceylon and Liberia and many others in former colonies, however, stood by India’s actions by citing India’s own argument towards self-determination.

In its complaint to the United Nations Portugal claimed Goa was an integral part of Portugal. Ambassador Nehru countered that assumption by saying that of the 650,000 inhabitants of Goa, only 1,384 were Portuguese, and all of those were temporary residents with their primary homes back in Portugal. Indian representative to the United Nations C.S. Jha further argued that these colonies were integral parts of India, not Portugal. In keeping with India’s defense, Ambassador Nehru responded:

“The language of the people in Goa is Konkani and not Portuguese. The religion

⁶⁷ Singhal, D.P.. "Goa--- End of an Epoch." *The Australian Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (1962): 77-89.

⁶⁸ Wright. “The Goa Incident.” 618.

of the people is 61% Hindu, 37% Christian, and 2% Mohameddan. The color of the people is not white but the same as my own. They dress, eat, live, work, marry, are buried or cremated as other Indians... There is absolutely nothing to distinguish them in any way from the inhabitants of the rest of India.”⁶⁹

India’s position then was to overthrow the colonialism of Portugal in the auspices of liberation and self-determination, allowing Goans to rejoin the rest of the country they ethnically, religiously, and culturally identified with. Ultimately, the United Nations agreed that Goa, Diu, and Daman were not part of Portugal, only colonies, and argued for their independence. After years of well-defined tension along the borders of Goa, many saw the events as “a natural finale to the movement of Indian freedom from foreign rule.”⁷⁰ While most of the western powers sided on the side of the Portuguese, the British in stark contrast stood behind Nehru’s military decision. Many, including British Labour M.P. Woodrow Wyatt, applauded Nehru’s patience up until this point, saying “The wonder is... that Nehru has been patient for so long, not that he has acted now.” The Italian foreign press agreed, but Pakistan and the United States’ bitter condemnation of Nehru’s actions as a hypocritical showing of “naked militarism” only served to further hamper relations between the three.⁷¹

To better understand India’s actions in relation to Goa, it is important to remember to view the situation through the same lens of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism through which its decisions were made. Nehru’s actions towards Portugal before and after his actions in Goa were within the bounds of the five principles (regarding self-determination) that he and other

⁶⁹ Nehru. “Speaking of India.” 76.

⁷⁰ Singhal. “Goa--- End of an Epoch.” 78.

⁷¹ Ibid., 79.

Indian ministers declared to uphold as an agent of non-alignment. While Goa and her compatriots were always considered part of India to many Indians, the government respected their integral sovereignty and the territorial rights Portugal held over the areas in question. As explained earlier, India did not intervene after the bloodshed of the protests in 1954 and 1955 even after massive public outcry, considering the proposed action to equate to interference with the internal affairs of others. But non-alignment does not mean inaction; and in this case, Nehru found sufficient reason to finally resort to military measures in order to extricate the Portuguese after the failure of many peaceful attempts at resolution and conciliation. As a test of Indian foreign policy, the ‘Goa Incident’ seemed to strengthen the perception of India’s commitment to the “lofty principles” that the Indian government espoused through the lens of anti-colonialism.

* * *

With the tricky nature of geopolitics, Nehru’s foreign policies and their struggle to adhere to his own principles of Pancha Sheela had been many times over before his death in 1964. Nehru’s sometimes lofty principles of foreign policy served as a means through which India could slowly grow into its new and ever-expanding role as a world power, they were also a call for peace in one the tensest periods in world political history. A world dividing quickly into two camps, both filled with a virulent “with us or against us” mentality, needed a third party to act as a referee, and Prime Minister Nehru headed the movement which aimed to be just that. His main objectives, while not entirely achievable within the measure of his term in office, went a long way in changing the dynamic of global politics and bringing the interests and objectives of the emerging Asian powers of the 20th century to the forefront of political thought.

As a foreign policy it may not have always been the most practical solution, but as an independent ideology it carried much more weight and gave a home to the many gray areas in

the multi-faceted political issues of the day. It's stance encouraging peaceful coexistence and negotiations, and an end to the oppression of so many by so few, brought forth the idealization of "holding a hand uplifted above hate"⁷²; an ideal that is echoed throughout the halls of the United Nations so many decades later. In India itself, some pose that these ideals of Pancha Sheela died with Nehru in 1964, with the rise of his daughter Indira Gandhi and an entirely different political atmosphere; perhaps the essential heart of Pancha Sheela, that of peaceful coexistence, could be seen as instilled more in the people Nehru sought to unite and lead in the first place. Nehru himself claimed that these principles came from the Indian mindset⁷³, and whose role in Indian culture was to aid in garnering the respect among the international community that he had hoped for in order to grow India from a Great Power-to-be into the Great Power it is fast becoming today.

⁷² Pandit. 440.

⁷³ Nehru, Jawaharlal, and Mushirul Hasan. *Nehru's India*. 188.

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