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INDO-U.S. RELATIONS

1947 - 1972

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Government

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

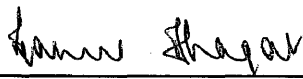
Rahul N. Bhagat

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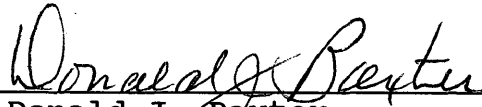
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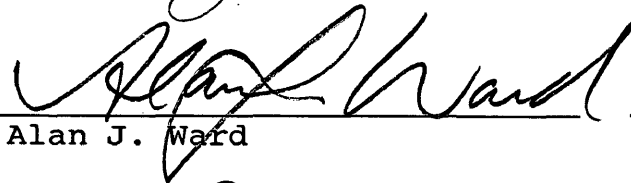


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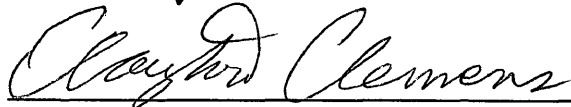
Approved, May 1988



Donald J. Baxter



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Clayton Clemens

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ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of Indo-American relations between 1947 and 1972. What this thesis seeks to achieve is an understanding of the principal factors that determined Indo-American bilateral relations.

In this thesis, it will be argued that the absence of common Indian and American strategic interests and global perceptions were a manifestation of their different historical experiences and geographic locations. Further, since the limited contact, prior to 1947, provided little foundation upon which to build bilateral ties, Indo-US relations were moulded by the international strategic environment, which is to say, bilateral relations depended upon whether any compatibility of interests and policies could be formally recognised.

This analysis of Indo-US relations suggests that, when nations have different objectives and interests, the intensity of bilateral relations is dependent upon strategic perceptions. Only when the strategic perceptions and immediate interests of India and the United States converged did Indo-American bilateral relations perceptibly improve.

AN ANALYSIS OF
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF
INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES
1947 - 1972

INTRODUCTION

Analysing Indo-American relations as they evolved after India's independence from the British in 1947 is, indeed, a daunting task. Separated by more than merely geography, the two countries stumbled into each other's presence in the 1940s, spent almost a decade attempting to understand the logic that propelled each other's ideas and perceptions of the world, settled down in the 1960s to build bridges and link their destinies, only to find that they were unable, in reality, to transform hopes and aspirations into concrete policies that could be characterized as a mutual identity of purpose. While nation states in the latter half of the twentieth century rarely admit that they are at "logger heads" with each other, I do not think it is presumptuous of me to characterize Indo-US relations in the period between 1947 and 1972 as a series of alternating currents; flowing at times harmoniously together and, at other times, at cross purposes.

That relations between the two largest and most dissimilar democratic republics did not mature into settled patterns earlier, despite some eagerness on both sides, can be attributed, in part, to the numerous factors and considerations that separate the two countries. Even a

casual glance at a map of the world reveals the distance that separates India from the United States. Geography, moreover, contributed to the divergent historical traditions experienced by the two countries. Although both countries had, at one time or another, been colonies of the British Empire, the similarity in their respective historical traditions ends there. America won her independence from the British in the eighteenth century, over eighty years before the first major revolt against the British by Indians in 1857, and over a century before the founding of the Indian National Congress, India's first nationalist political party, in 1885. Further, it was not until the United States entered the Second World War in 1941 that India and the United States came into official contact with each other.

Although Indian history, like its American counterpart, demonstrates the assimilation of varied cultures to form a heterogenous Indian character, the vast majority of foreign invaders that eventually represented an ethnic stream of Indian culture were primarily Asian in origin. The fact that the British were always regarded as foreigners and that political developments in Europe and the Western world never had a profound impact on events in India, even whilst a colony, says something about the divergence in historical experiences between India and the Western world.

Another factor that played a considerable role in accentuating the differences between India and the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century was the

difference in status between the two countries. The United States emerged from the Second World War as the world's premier economic, military and diplomatic power. India, on the other hand, only won her independence in 1947, was racked by civil strife, and was an economic basket case, unable to survive, it appeared, without substantial assistance from the United States, the only country in 1947 in a position to help alleviate India's economic plight.

Despite the tremendous dissimilarities between the United States and India, both countries initiated official relations with the other with considerable optimism for close bilateral relations. The United States initially looked upon India as a prospective ally, based primarily upon the fact that both countries were democracies and upon India's ties with Britain and the Commonwealth. India, concurrently, looked towards the United States as a potential ally in her crusade against colonialism, and as a government from whom India could expect economic assistance. However, this mutual optimism, as subsequent developments proved, was ill-founded and misdirected.

The different historical experiences and geographic locations of India and the United States manifested themselves in the garb of divergent strategic interests and global perceptions. Containing the twin threats of the Soviet Union and international communism had, by 1947, become the corner-stone of American foreign policy. India, on the other hand, regarded the Cold War as a derivative of Western historical experience, which it did not share. As

the first Asian nation to win its independence, India focussed upon anti-colonialism and the representation of Asian interests in a world still largely defined from a Western perspective.

In this thesis, it will be argued that the absence of common Indian and American strategic perceptions was a manifestation of their different historical experiences and geographical locations. Further, since the limited contact between the two countries, prior to 1947, provided little foundation upon which to build bilateral ties, Indo-American relations were moulded by the international security environment, which is to say, bilateral relations depended upon whether any compatibility of interests and policies could be formally recognised. However, each government defined its political and military objectives in a manner that encroached upon the other's interests, thus making collaboration extremely difficult. Even though both India and the United States shared common interests in their antipathy to colonialism and communism, for example, they differed in their methods of opposing these forces, and they perceived threats to peace differently.

Having determined that it was the international security environment that moulded Indo-US relations, rather than a common strategic perspective, it is important to describe the weave that patterned these relations.

India, in 1947, had little diplomatic power, negligible military strength, and no economic infrastructure that could be of any fundamental benefit to the United States.

Moreover, since divergent historical experiences and geographical locations precluded the possibility of India sharing the United States' strategic interests and global perceptions, there was little that India had to offer the United States in order for the latter to focus its attention on India. Although the United States did have a global vision of which the Indian sub-continent was a part, it would be unrealistic to expect the United States, a country which emerged from the Second World War as the most powerful global power, to develop a specific policy for India, an infant state sans military muscle or economic power and struggling for its existence. In other words, India could be of significance to the United States only if it identified with US interests and objectives. India, on the other hand, because of the divergence in status between the two countries, had continually to recognise the importance of the United States as a central figure in its foreign policy planning. Because the United States was the world's leading global power, almost all its actions--diplomatic, military or economic--had a repercussion in India, whether India was the intended beneficiary or not. India, in contrast, was of value to the United States only if it adjusted its global perceptions to identify with those held by the United States, the dominant partner in the relationship.

That, in essence, is the pattern that describes Indo-US relations in the period between 1947 and 1972. Because of the limited political contacts between the two countries

prior to 1947, and the different historical traditions and geographical locations of India and the United States, it was the international strategic environment that moulded Indo-American relations. Moreover, and more important, it was only when India adjusted her strategic perceptions to be in identity with those of the United States that relations between the two countries perceptibly improved.

While this thesis, through a narration and analysis of events, serves as an example to show how relations between a global power and Third World nation evolves, what it demonstrates quite conclusively is that bilateral relations between countries of divergent sizes and power do not hinge upon stated long term objectives, however much these objectives may be in congruence. Instead, this analysis of Indo-US relations suggests that, when nations have different objectives and interests, the intensity of bilateral relations is dependent upon strategic perceptions. Only when the strategic perceptions and immediate interests of India and the United States converged did Indo-US bilateral relations perceptibly improve.

I am not suggesting that the convergence and divergence of strategic interests and perceptions is the only factor that determined the nature of Indo-American relations. Individuals played a significant role in the maturing of these relations, as evidenced by the difference Ambassadors Chester Bowles and John Kenneth Galbraith made to Indian attitudes towards America, as determined by the importance President Kennedy placed upon India's economic success, and

as demonstrated by the common personal antipathy which President Nixon and Prime Minister Gandhi held for each other. Similarly, the liberal beliefs of Kennedy's Administration resulted in a major swing in Indo-US relations, as did Prime Minister Nehru's personality and commitment to an independent foreign policy for an independent India. While all these factors, among others, manifested themselves in ways that helped influence Indo-US relations, it would be inaccurate to suggest that Indo-American relations hinged primarily on these factors.

Indo-American relations between 1947 and 1972, as this thesis demonstrates, were unplanned, therefore unpredictable. Although both countries shared common long term objectives, immediate bilateral relations were shaped by the international strategic environment. Since there was a disparity in the status of the two countries and in terms of one's importance to the other, it was only when India adjusted her global perceptions to identify with those of the United States, or when their interests were in congruence, that bilateral relations perceptibly improved. In other words, what this thesis demonstrates is the fact that the intensity of Indo-US relations between 1947 and 1972 was determined by the convergence and divergence of strategic perceptions.

It is when their strategic perceptions and interests have been in tandem that the two countries have shared warmer bilateral relations. At other times, when there has been a divergence in interests and perceptions, the

relationship can be described as one of exasperatedly strained cordiality, like a couple that can neither get along nor separate, given the fact that the two countries shared declared long term interests and objectives, but divergent perceptions.

Since the differences and changes in perceptions by the United States and India, between 1947 and 1972, were most marked with respect to the Soviet Union, China and Pakistan, the three countries of greatest common strategic importance to India and the United States, we find that this study of Indo-US relations, while highlighting the changing international strategic environment in general, focusses most closely on these three countries in particular. It is when the views of India and the United States, with particular respect to China, Pakistan and the Soviet Union, have converged and been in harmony that Indo-American bilateral relations adopted a warmer tone.

I have focussed my attention on three periods, or case studies, really, to facilitate the conduct of my study. This study of Indo-US relations does not attempt to describe and analyse the period 1947 to 1972 in its entirety. The three periods upon which I have focussed are what I consider to be the most significant, and represent the clearest fluctuations in Indo-US relations, namely that of the periods between 1947 and 1954, 1961 and 1965, and 1969 and 1972.

The first case study, 1947-54, is important because it describes the early tentative appraisals undertaken by both

countries in attempting to understand and evaluate each other. This period highlights the differences in perceptions between the United States and India through a variety of interests. The United States was, in 1947, primarily interested in containing the expansion of the Soviet communist threat, a perception India did not share. Although India was clearly closer to the United States than the Soviet Union, it did not share the American perspective or agree with the method chosen by the United States to contain communist Russia. When China fell to the communists in 1949, America viewed this development with alarm while India welcomed the development and declared its Asian foreign policy objectives as being in tandem with those of China. Further, by choosing non-alignment as the principal vehicle for its foreign policy, India chose not to ally with the United States in containing the communist nations to its immediate north, China and the Soviet Union. Having consciously decided against allying with the United States, India found that America entered a military relationship with Pakistan, India's antagonistic neighbour, in 1954.

The years between 1947 and 1954 swing from a period where the two countries are optimistic about the future of Indo-US relations, to a period when divergent strategic perceptions with regard to the Soviet Union and China forces the United States to select Pakistan as its Asian ally, isolating India in the process. A detailed study of this period highlights how different historical experiences and geographical locations led to divergent strategic

perspectives, which in turn caused the two countries to view each other with suspicion and mistrust.

The second case study, 1961-65, is in direct contrast to the earlier period for a variety of reasons. The American Administration under John F. Kennedy was more benevolent towards India's policy of non-alignment and recognised the importance of India to the future of Asia. Moreover, China's attack on India in 1962 forced India to repudiate its earlier entente with China, making India view China in much the same way as the United States did. With China's attack of India in 1962, Indian and American strategic perceptions, for the first time, merged, leading to large scale assistance by the United States and the expectation of closer long-term bilateral relations. This was due entirely to the fact that India's perceptions were in tandem with US views on the threat of communist China, thus making closer bilateral ties possible. However, soon after the threat of a resumption of conflict passed, differences in perception between the two countries came to the surface again, causing relations to return to their earlier status quo.

The last case study, 1969-72, is an interesting example of the United States' geopolitical objectives clashing with India's regional security needs. The United States "tilts" towards Pakistan as the latter facilitates its opening to China, an important geopolitical objective of the Nixon Administration. India, on the other hand, helped achieve the liberation of Bangladesh, resulting in a war with

Pakistan. This war, moreover, threatened to disrupt the United States' geopolitical design, leading to severely strained relations between the United States and India.

As will become evident from the third study, India and the United States had entirely different strategic objectives born out of divergent interests, a factor that caused the foreign policies of the two countries to encroach upon the interests of each other. Moreover, in keeping with the hypothesis of this thesis, the divergence in strategic perceptions and interests led to a period of extremely strained Indo-US relations.

Thus, Indo-US relations between 1947 and 1972 can be characterized as a series of alternating currents, sometimes flowing harmoniously together and, at other times, clashing. The alternations caused by the divergent perceptions and strategic interests of the two countries, are: global aspirations vs. regional realities; security pacts vs. non-alignment; friendship and convergence of interests vs. alienation.

These are the themes of foreign policy which proved so very difficult to align. Only occasionally, and under certain circumstances, was it to happen, despite best intentions and high hopes on both sides.

We will return to these general observations in the concluding chapter, but the next step in the development of this argument is to review Indo-American relations as they evolved after India's independence from the British in 1947.

CHAPTER ONE

To one analysing Indo-American relations as they evolved after 1947, the maturing of these relations, in the early years, appears as a painfully slow process completely devoid of any constructive exchange of ideas and assessments of the respective positions adopted by the two governments. When viewed, however, in the light of the limited contacts that the two sides had had with each other prior to 1947, it is not surprising that the succeeding years were exhausted in attempting to evaluate and understand each other's positions, with little apparent movement. Thus, any attempt at explaining the attitudes adopted by India and the United States towards each other immediately after August 15, 1947, necessitates a re-capitulation of the limited political relations between the states in the pre-1947 period.

With the bombing of Pearl Harbour and America joining the Allied cause in World War II, Americans were forced to focus their attention on a country that had long been considered Great Britain's problem. Prior to 1942, although liberal American journals had been sympathetic to the position of the Indian National Congress and their opposition to being dragged into a European war without any guarantees of political benefits, the prevalent attitude

remained that India was not of immediate American concern.¹

Until the summer of 1941, American reports of developments in India were routed through London, an inconvenience that did not necessarily reflect an unbiased view of the state of the nationalist movement. That year, the Indian and American governments exchanged diplomatic missions, an exchange that established diplomatic relations although the Indian agent-general, Girja Shankar Bajpai, was attached to the British embassy in Washington. This proved to be a crucial factor in influencing official American opinion on India, an exchange that "served the American need for more extensive, reliable, and direct information from India and underscored to Indians, Americans, and the British the official interest in India."²

In August 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill issued the Atlantic Charter, a declaration of war aims that later became the focus of American ideological concern with Indian nationalism. The point most relevant to the Indian context was the second clause of Article 3, which read, "and they hope that sovereign rights and self-government may be restored to those from whom it has been forcibly removed."³ Whilst the Indian question was not on the official agenda for talks between the two allied leaders, the association of the Atlantic Charter with India came to light when Churchill told the House of Commons that Article 3 did not apply to the British Empire. He maintained that

the article was directed at people under Nazi hegemony; countries under allegiance to the British crown were not the focus of the Atlantic Charter. While liberal American reaction to Churchill's speech reflected disillusionment and demanded a response from Roosevelt, the President was not forthcoming with his views on the subject, despite repeated criticism of the British by Thomas Wilson, the American representative in India.⁴

Coinciding with the attack on Pearl Harbour and America's growing involvement with the war, and Indian leaders' requests to Roosevelt to intervene on their behalf, official American interest in British-Indian relations increased substantially, culminating in the April 1942 Louis Johnson mission to India as the President's "special representative."⁵ Johnson, reflecting America's new interest in the political developments of India's national movement, attempted to mediate between the British authorities and Indian nationalists in arriving at a political settlement.

Earlier, although Churchill had reacted adversely to Roosevelt questioning him on India when the former visited Washington in December 1941, the American Government continued to press their British counterparts to define a positive approach towards solving the problems in India.⁶ Responding to Churchill's justification for continued British presence in India because of the diversity of religions and the inability of the Indian National Congress to represent all groups, Roosevelt wrote a long letter to

Churchill in which he drew parallels between the Indian position and that of the American colonies immediately after America's independence. Urging the British to arrive at a political settlement, he ended the letter by saying:

For the love of Heaven don't bring me into this, although I do want to be of help. It is, strictly speaking, none of my business, except insofar as it is a part and parcel of the successful fight you and I are making.⁷

Johnson, on arriving in India, immersed himself in the deliberations between the Indian leaders and the Cripps mission that had arrived in India to negotiate a political solution.⁸ By 1942, however, Indian affairs could not be viewed independently of Japanese advances in Southeast Asia and up to Burma, India's neighbour. Johnson, viewing his mission as an outcome of Roosevelt's obvious interest in finding a solution for Indian independence, did his best to prevent the negotiations from stalling, advising both Stafford Cripps and the Indian leaders, even suggesting alternatives to the original Cripps' proposal.⁹ Despite Johnson's attempts to find a compromise solution, the talks failed, however, and Churchill wrote to Roosevelt justifying his attempts at having "proved the British desire to reach a settlement." Roosevelt, acting on Johnson's view that Cripps' position in India had been undermined by both the British viceroy in India and Churchill, replied:

... I am sorry to say that I cannot agree with this point of view set forth in your message to me. ... The feeling is almost universally held that that the

deadlock has been caused by the unwillingness of the British Government to concede to the Indians the right of self government, notwithstanding the willingness of the Indians to entrust technical, military, and naval defense control to the competent British authorities.¹⁰

Even though the Louis Johnson mission to India failed, it is important to recognise it as the first public demonstration of the Roosevelt Administration's genuine interest in the Indian national movement. It is evident from the tone of Roosevelt's letter that the US Government disagreed entirely with the British position in India, but it is pertinent to observe that the Americans, whilst disagreeing on ideological grounds with their wartime ally, were unable to press the point further because of the greater importance of the threat that faced them, Japanese advances in Asia. The attempt, however, could not have been entirely lost in the minds of the Indian nationalists; Jawaharlal Nehru and Johnson were able to become friends, and this effort undoubtedly contributed substantially to the widespread belief "that the US government would be the most helpful foreign agency in backing Congress objectives."¹¹

During the rest of 1942, the Indian question, for the United States, became entangled with the military effort. As seen from the perspective of the Defense Department, the security of India was vital to the preservation of Allied control of the Middle East. In spite of repeated urgings by the press, US representatives in India, Chiang Kai-shek, and a personal appeal from Gandhi, the Roosevelt Administration

was reluctant to bring pressure to bear on Britain as long as military planning remained the priority.¹² Roosevelt would only go so far as admitting to Gandhi the need for Allied harmony, implicitly outlining the dilemma his administration had been caught in and their inability to focus their attention on the nationalist movement.

Thus, when the United States failed to support the Indian national movement publicly at a time when Indian leaders were being thrown into jail and their movement violently suppressed,¹³ the mutual distrust that was to characterize so many of their later contacts, surfaced. Congress leaders had come to view the United States as the only nation capable of pressuring the British to find an immediate solution, and when they found little public or official support for their position, their view of the United States soured.¹⁴

In December 1942, William Phillips was designated as the President's personal representative to India. Phillips' experience and seniority within the diplomatic community reflected Roosevelt's attempt to break the impasse that had developed in India. While Phillips conceived his role as one of gaining the confidence of the various groups and of becoming a center around which some of the problems might be resolved, the British blunted his efforts by refusing him permission to meet any of the jailed nationalist leaders. Cordell Hull, the US Secretary of State, succinctly stated the Administration's position when he said, "... on the question of India, while the President is missing no

opportunities, we cannot do much if the British are immovable."¹⁵

Concurrently, Phillips' silence and inability to intercede was being viewed by Indians, unaware of his petitions to the Viceroy, as a reflection of the US' superficial interest in India, further deepening the mistrust developing in the Indian attitude towards the United States.

Realising his inability to help alleviate the situation, Phillips urged Roosevelt to allow him to return to Washington, merely four months after his appointment. Although Phillips submitted his resignation on his return to Washington, it was not accepted until March 1945, even though he never returned to India.

Phillips' anomalous status reflected Roosevelt's uncertainty about Indian policy. To have accepted Phillips' resignation earlier would have increased Indian criticism, but to have dispatched Phillips to India would have rekindled Indian hopes and invited difficulties with the British.¹⁶

From the departure of Phillips until the end of the European war in May 1945, the US maintained a more distant role in Indian developments. Phillips was not followed by another high ranking diplomat, a fact which probably symbolized Roosevelt's acknowledgement that, owing to Churchill's intransigence, assisting India was beyond America's capability without risking Allied disharmony.

These, then, were the limited official contacts between India and the United States under British India. We move

now to the first of my case studies, the early tentative appraisals and evaluations by independent India and the United States between 1947 and 1954.

NOTES for CHAPTER ONE

¹Gary R. Hess, America Encounters India, 1941-1947 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 19-21.

²Ibid., pp. 23-24.

³Ibid., p. 26.

⁴Ibid., pp. 28-31.

⁵Charles H. Heimsath and Surjit Mansingh, A Diplomatic History of Modern India (Calcutta: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1971), p. 347.

⁷Hess, p. 40.

⁸With increasing Japanese successes in Southeast Asia, and the war approaching India's border, the British, under pressure from the Labour leaders of the War Cabinet, felt obliged to make some gestures to win over Indian public opinion. Stafford Cripps led a delegation to India with a draft resolution promising, among other concessions, post-war Dominion status for India. For more details, see Sumit Sarkar, Modern India: 1885-1947 (Delhi: Macmillan India Limited, 1983).

⁹Ibid., pp. 42-59.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 51-52.

¹¹Heimsath and Mansingh, p. 347.

¹²Hess, pp. 66-72.

¹³August 1942 saw the initiation of the "Quit India" movement by the Indian National Congress, led by Mahatma Gandhi.

¹⁴Heimsath and Mansingh, p. 348.

¹⁵Hess, p. 82.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 112.

CHAPTER TWO

The first of my case studies, the period between 1947 and 1954, is an analysis of the factors and issues that were at play in giving Indo-US relations their initial shape and form. This chapter includes an analysis of the early tentative appraisals, individual perceptions of common global issues, and the search for common ground upon which to build bilateral relations.

INDIA FASHIONS A POLICY

With the attainment of independence in August 1947, India had to structure a foreign policy that would serve its national interests as an independent country, rejecting, in large measure, the foreign policy of its erstwhile British rulers which had been fashioned around the interests of British imperialism in Asia. This was no easy task. The new Indian government had two distinct traditions in foreign policy thinking. The first was the policy they inherited from the British, and the second was the ideas of the leaders of the Congress party. Although the Congress government under Jawaharlal Nehru relied on their own opinions and views in defining a policy for India, their views were, indirectly, an outcome of their experiences

under the British.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Congress party identified India's political struggle with world movements against imperialism and all forms of oppression. It gave expression to this view by supporting nationalist movements in other countries, and with support for China which was under attack by Japan in the mid 1930s.¹ In addition, Britain had successfully guaranteed India's security for the better part of a century, making most Indians complacent and naive about international issues and the threat of foreign attack. Nehru, accepting Gandhi's philosophy that fear was the cause of most wars, believed that if India avoided military alignments and remained aloof from international conflicts, there would be no reason to fear an attack on its borders, and, more importantly, not much chance of getting involved in a war. This attitude, moreover, was essential, according to Nehru, if independent India was to concentrate on building the nation as, "without peace, all our dreams are vanished and reduced to ashes."²

Although India's policy of non-alignment was responsible for thrusting it forward into the international arena in the early 1950s, it is inaccurate to state that Nehru's government embraced this policy, as it later came to be defined, as early as 1947. India's desire to renounce the power politics that was dividing the world into ideological camps in the years of the Cold War was more the result of a reaction against its colonial past than an ideological commitment that recognised the benefits of

non-alignment as a policy. Proud of being the first Asians to shake off their colonial rulers, Indians guarded their independence with a zeal that obscured the realities of international affairs. Independence, to Nehru, meant more than the departure of the British and the birth of an independent nation ruled by an indigenous government. Independence meant more than the culmination of a nationalist movement to obtain freedom; it was the perception of Indians, being recognised by the rest of the world, as masters of their own destiny. As Nehru told the Constituent Assembly in 1948:

What does independence consist of? It consists fundamentally and basically of foreign relations. That is the test of independence. All else is local autonomy. Once foreign relations go out of your hand, into the charge of somebody else, to that extent and in that measure you are not independent.³

Independence, to Nehru, was the assertion of the principles that constituted the term.

Born at a time when the world was divided into antagonistic ideological camps, with states aligning themselves with the two groups that constituted the bipolar world, India's policy of keeping itself out of the Cold War was bound to attract global attention. Nehru had reasoned that non-alignment was the best means of asserting India's true independence, as well as achieving a stature of significance in international affairs.⁴ In the late 1940s, however, whilst India attracted global attention as a result of its unique status in the international community,

the rapidly changing configuration of world politics denied Nehru the niche he desired in global politics; the evolving alignment of states into a bipolar system preoccupied the time and attention of the major governments, and India seemed to have no place in the evolving scheme. The benefits of non-alignment and its contribution to global politics was not recognised until the 1950s.

In the interim, both the Soviet Union and Western governments viewed India's policy of non-alignment as merely a verbal exercise, and were skeptical of its supposedly true intentions. The Soviet Union saw India as essentially committed to the West, an outcome made plausible by the adoption of the constitutional system chosen by India, and necessitated by economic needs. The Soviets denounced the Indian position as a policy of collaboration with British imperialism, and, suspicious of everyone not completely on their side, pressed India to make up its mind and refrain from remaining aloof.⁵ The United States, on the other hand, was disappointed with India as it initially looked at India as a candidate for the "free world", based primarily upon the fact that both countries were democracies and upon India's ties with the United Kingdom.⁶ Thus, non-alignment in the 1940s remained a policy that won India few favours, and which, with the major governments of the world doubting India's intentions, was perceived as an academic posture that was bound to change to fit the evolving structure of world politics.

In the period immediately after the attainment of

independence, India's prestige was initially rather high in the eyes of the American administration; its grappling with monumental domestic problems and its active role in the United Nations enhanced this prestige, although there was official concern over India's policy towards Pakistan.⁷

In response to the growing antagonism between Pakistan and India over the status of Kashmir, the US government decided to adopt a neutral stance, rejecting the plea for military assistance by Pakistan and adopting a similar approach to the expected Indian demand.⁸

The Soviet Union was active in 1948 in directing the Communist Party of India to rebellion,⁹ and American officials were worried, as was the Indian government, about communist advances in India through the local communist party, a fear enhanced by the activities of the Soviet Ambassador in New Delhi.¹⁰ The Soviets made it clear to the Indian Ambassador in Moscow that they were not content with India's intended lack of hostility; "the world is divided into two great camps, the democratic and imperialistic and it is now up to India to decide which side she is going to take."¹¹

The Soviets may not have been entirely wrong in being skeptical of India's avowed policy of non-alignment. Sarvepalli Gopal, Nehru's biographer, contends that Indian non-alignment, in the early years, was clearly benevolent to the West.¹² Probably as a result of Soviet pressure on the Indian government, Nehru took it upon himself to clarify to the United States, through diplomatic channels, that it

was unthinkable for India to be on Russia's side in the event of a conflict between the two superpowers.¹³

In an interview with Michael Brecher, Krishna Menon, a close confidante of Nehru's, argued that the genesis of non-alignment was a desire to remain aloof from the ideological conflict that was dividing the world in 1947. He contends that the political benefits of this policy were not realised till much later, as was the contribution India could make in international disputes.¹⁴ In the light of this argument--India did not align itself with either bloc because it did not share the fundamental reasons that were responsible for their creation--it is easy to explain how India, despite its proclaimed policy of non-alignment, was closer to the West, thus understanding the wavering in India's commitment to non-alignment. The open hostility of the Soviet Union and the conflict with the Communist Party of India were only some of the more obvious factors. India's military weakness, its economic dependence on the West, and the spill-over of India's conflict with Pakistan over the status of Kashmir were all powerful factors that pressured India to seek closer relations with Britain and the United States.¹⁵

Despite its initial disappointment about the Indian position on non-alignment, the United States seems to have recognised Indian fears regarding the Soviet Union and its ties with the Indian communists. It is safe to presume that Americans were also aware that India leaned closer to the West than towards the Soviet Union, but, in the late 1940s,

Indo-US relations were stagnant in that no major policies were initiated by either government. India, as mentioned earlier, had told the American government that it was unlikely to be on the Soviet's side in the event of a conflict; the American position, on the other hand, was delivered to Girja Bajpai, Secretary General of India's foreign office:

It was the considered opinion of the United States Government that in the long term close and friendly relations between India and the United States was the anchor of stability of the whole area from Africa to South East Asia. Unfortunately, at the moment the United States found it necessary to concentrate its efforts and resources on resisting aggression in other parts of the world.¹⁶

As mentioned earlier, one of the important factors that led to the Indian government's clearly pro-Western stance in foreign affairs stemmed from its need for Western economic aid in developing the nation. Substantial economic aid, however, was not made available by the United States, the only country in a position to assist India, a development that seemed to irritate Nehru and strengthen his belief that America, despite public proclamations to the contrary, was evidently more interested in seeking closer relations with "imperialists" in Europe than in supporting the growing tide on nationalism in Asia.¹⁷ As the Cold War progressed, Indians were disappointed to observe that the United States laid utmost emphasis on maintaining strong ties with European colonial powers, ignoring, in the process, its commitment to anti-colonialism. Moreover, this seemed, to

Indians, to be in keeping with their earlier limited experiences with the US in the years of the nationalist movement; Roosevelt would demonstrate interest and concern for Indian nationalism, but refuse to press the issue with Churchill when the latter adopted a strong stand against Indian nationalism, effectively sacrificing his principles to the American interest of maintaining cordial relations with Britain.

THE UNITED STATES AS A SUPERPOWER

To a neutral observer, the Indian attitude, admittedly, refused to recognise the United States' position in global politics and the inherent forces at play. It is thus pertinent, at this point, to analyse the American position from a geo-strategic perspective in an attempt to understand where and why India stood in their global outlook.

With the end of the Second World War, Americans were forced to accept their position as a superpower, abandoning the advice of their first President, George Washington, to stay away from the politics that guided the destinies of European nations. Around the same time that India won its freedom from the British in 1947, George F. Kennan was appointed to the position of Director of the newly constituted Policy Planning Staff charged with "formulating and developing ... long-term programs for the achievement of US foreign policy objectives." Recognising that the United States only had limited resources with which to fight Soviet communist expansion, Kennan set about devising a strategy of

containment, and it is now certain that Kennan's recommendations paralleled the thinking of the administration he served from 1947 until well into 1949.¹⁸ Kennan believed that American security could be attained by ensuring that the four centers of industrial and military power, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and central Europe, and Japan, that were not under the Soviet Union's control did not fall under the domination of Moscow. It was the combination of industrial and military power, which were concentrated in only these four areas and the USSR, that could affect the global balance of power, thus primary emphasis had to be maintained on the defense of the four centers.¹⁹ The difference between the policy recommended by Kennan and the earlier thinking of the Truman Administration stemmed from the conviction that, irrespective of the nature of the external threat, the country only had limited resources with which to fight it. Thus, "strongpoint defense" became the watchword of the Truman Administration after 1947, concentrating on the defense of particular areas and the means of access to them, rather than fighting communist expansion wherever it appeared. As John Lewis Gaddis states,

The "strongpoint" concept permitted concentration on areas that were both defensible and vital, without worrying too much about the rest. The assumption was that not all interests were of equal importance; that the United States could tolerate the loss of peripheral areas provided this did not impair its ability to defend those that were vital.²⁰

Having decided upon a strategy of asymmetrical response, the United States categorized India as falling in the group of countries on the Asian mainland, from Afghanistan around to Korea, whose loss to the Soviet Union, though regrettable, would not fundamentally alter the balance of power and threaten American security. On a purely economic scale, the costs involved in defending the area far outweighed the possible contribution it could make to Soviet military capability, given the fact that the area lacked both industrial and military capabilities that could be of immediate use to the Soviets.²¹

The State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee, in a report in April 1949, said:

The basic strategic objectives of the US, with respect to South Asian countries are: ...
... (iii) to develop, without commitment to military action on our part, a cooperative attitude in these countries which would facilitate obtaining the use of areas or facilities which might be required by the Western democracies ... for military operations against the USSR in the event of war.²²

India, however, was not asking for military protection by the United States. Whilst Indians like to believe that non-alignment deprived the US of an important ally in the 1940s, this is not wholly in keeping with the facts. Americans may have been disappointed with the policy of non-alignment because that prevented India from publicly joining the chorus castigating the Soviet Union, but Kennan's policy of containment clearly recommended that the United States remain aloof from military commitments in the

region, a recommendation the Administration followed, as evidenced by the policy statement quoted above.

Indian disillusionment resulted from the lack of financial assistance they had hoped for from the United States. The Indian tendency to equate the US with "imperialists" and "colonial" powers in Europe was based primarily on the resentment that America had a Marshall Plan for Europe, but nothing for the poor nations of Asia.²³ The reason, it appears, was a lack of understanding and appreciation of the American necessity for initiating the Marshall Plan, their obsession with the Soviet Union, and the fact that even the United States, the richest nation in the world, could be strapped for funds. I do not think it is presumptuous to argue that this lack of appreciation by India lay in the fact that the contacts between the two countries were new, thus limited in that a mutual mistrust existed, and that India had initially expected substantial economic assistance from America, the absence of which proved to be most disappointing.

NEHRU VISITS WASHINGTON, 1949

It was primarily the recognition of the importance of close relations with the United States that prompted Nehru to accept President Truman's long-standing invitation to visit the United States in 1949. That Nehru appreciated the importance of his visit in attempting to transform relations from a level of cordiality to the entente he desired is evident from his frame of mind in preparing for the visit.

"Why not," Nehru asked Krishna Menon somewhat rhetorically, "align with the United States somewhat and build up our economic and military strength?"²⁴

The official talks, unfortunately, were far from successful. Considerable time was spent in exploring a solution to the problem in Kashmir, an issue on which Nehru's views were intractable, and US actions, as part of the United Nations Commission to arrange a truce between India and Pakistan, piqued the Indian Prime Minister.²⁵ Truman had written to both Indian and Pakistani prime ministers urging them to accept the commission's recommendations, but Nehru viewed the American position as unfair to India.²⁶ The Americans, on the other hand, disagreed with Nehru on his assessment of events in China, and resented India's early recognition of the new communist government, which was clearly in the offing. Ambassador Jessup, of the US delegation to the UN, argued that there were many areas in China that were still under the control of the Kuomintang and that Indian recognition of the communists was premature.²⁷ Nehru felt the Americans were stalling at a time when it was evident that the Kuomintang had lost to the communist rebels, but admitted to Truman that India's proximity to China favoured early recognition.²⁸ As for economic assistance, Ambassador Loy W. Henderson, the US representative in India, had informed the Indian delegation that Truman was prepared to give India anything that Nehru asked for; Nehru, however, would do no more than state India's requirements of food and commodities

in general terms. The result was that at a time when there was a glut of wheat in American markets, India was not even offered special terms, let alone the gift of a million tons that was widely expected.²⁹

At about the same time as Nehru's visit to the United States, India's position on non-alignment began to shift from a pragmatic stand to a more ideological one. Previously, India's world views could be predicted according to the issue at hand; when it came to matters related to any form of oppression--colonial, economic imperialism, or racial--India could be expected to denounce it in all its manifestations. On issues related to the Cold War, however, India had preferred to remain neutral and distant. In America, Nehru explained to the public that non-alignment did not exclude commitment to principles, and that India's detachment in the Cold War did not imply isolation and indifference on basic issues. In Nehru's words,³⁰

... Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot and shall not be threatened. ... When Man's liberty or peace is in danger we cannot and shall not be neutral; neutrality would be a betrayal of what we have fought for and stand for.

In spite of Nehru's clarifications to the American public about the meaning of non-alignment and India's position on the ideological conflict of the time, Indian and American leaders parted in 1949 acknowledging that their policies and assessments diverged in fundamental ways. Nehru's visit reinforced the widespread view that, in spite of shared political traditions and commitments to democratic

principles, the two countries were committed to separate postures in the global political arena.

As a result, the US could not firmly reinforce India's primary international objective, the eradication of colonialism; and India was unwilling to support the paramount American goal, the containment of communism.³¹

As Dean Acheson, the US Secretary of State, summing up the despondency at the failure of the talks, said, "[Nehru] was so important to India and India's survival so important to all of us, that if he did not exist--as Voltaire said of God--he would have to be invented."³² But why was there general recognition in 1949 that the two countries' policies and assessments diverged in fundamental ways?

DIVERGENT STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

Nehru, in a report in early 1950, wrote, "If there is a world war, there is no possibility of India lining up with the Soviet Union whatever else she may do."³³ On the surface, this sentence reflects the kind of rhetoric the US would have liked to hear from the Indians. The two countries disagreed, nevertheless, not at the level of action, but over the perception of the threat, the expansionary nature of international communism, and, as a consequence, over the appropriate response to that threat.

Nehru was convinced that the American response in concentrating on rigid military blocs and relying on ideological dogma was the wrong way to ward off the communist threat. He reasoned that the approach ought to be

less direct, although he did recommend resorting to other means if faced with aggression.³⁴ The US, on the other hand, was apt to disregard Nehru's attitude, quoted above, as nothing more than benevolent neutralism. Analysing America's reaction to Indian attitudes, Heimsath and Mansingh wrote:

India's government betrayed its democratic political heritage, refused to face the challenges of the real world of power, and knowingly increased the prestige of "international communism" by refusing to align itself with Western policies and frequently criticizing the US. In the great struggle of ideologies India refused to commit itself; in the division of world opinion, the "battle for men's minds," in which every government, ultimately every person could be counted, India appeared to hold back. Such a wavering and indecisive posture could be called "immoral." At the very least it seemed unfriendly, at a time when the world's most powerful state "needed all the friends it could get" and unpopularity seemed the harbinger of defeat.³⁵

The fall of China to a communist government in 1949-50 is an important case in attempting to understand the divergence in policies and assessments between the US and India. It had been a fundamental objective of the Indian government's foreign policy to see the elimination of Western presence in Asia and to achieve the establishment of a grouping of states to promote distinctly Asian interests.³⁶ India, as the first Asian nation to win independence, had hoped to spearhead this movement. This policy, however, was destined to clash with traditional American objectives in Asia. The Americans, at the end of the Second World War, had hoped to continue their alliance

with China, strengthening the latter to promote US objectives in the region.³⁷ The success of the communist rebels and the formation of a People's government, however, was to lead to a re-evaluation of US strategy and the attempt to find an alternative to Chiang Kai-shek on the Asian mainland.

The shocks of 1949--principally the loss of China to communism and the Soviet atomic bomb--led the Truman Administration to repudiate Kennan's strategy of containment, replaced instead by NSC-68 in 1950. The industrial-military combination that determined the strongpoint defense strategy of Kennan gave way to the need to uphold the credibility of the American response, with "perceptions" of power beginning to be of vital importance. Thus, NSC-68 recommended perimeter defense, responding wherever the Russians chose to challenge American interests.³⁸

In December 1950, a Department of State Policy Statement suggested:

With China under Communist domination, Soviet power now encroaches along the perimeter of the Indian sub-continent. India has become the pivotal state in non-Communist Asia by virtue of its relative power, stability and influence.³⁹

Another policy statement proposed by the National Security Council stated even more specifically:

The loss of India to the Communist orbit would mean that for all practical purposes all of Asia will have been lost; this would constitute a serious threat to the security position of the United States.⁴⁰

Read in the light of the new American strategy of perimeter defense, it is apparent that the United States was beginning to look upon India as an alternative to China as its main Asian ally.

This, however, was in direct contrast to Indian interests. Whilst the United States desired to stem the spread of communist growth and inhibit the development of Chinese power, India was seeking closer ties with China in pursuit of its Asian objectives. China had, verbally at least, identified itself with a traditional Indian aim, the withdrawal of Western colonial presence from Asia. Moreover, whilst America was antagonistic towards China because it viewed communist expansion in China as Soviet sponsored, Nehru did not share this opinion. The new Chinese government had come to power in their own way, largely as a result of the ineptitude of the Kuomintang regime. Nehru believed that China did not share Russia's aggressive view on international communism, and, having won power independently, the new Chinese government would concentrate on national development rather than be a mere camp follower of the Soviets on international issues; China's size made Russian control over it impossible. Further, Nehru strongly argued for the early recognition of the new Chinese government, as all acts of hostility would only serve to encourage closer ties between China and the Soviet Union.⁴¹ Finally, the US policy of viewing India as a prospective alternative to China for its Asian strategy opposed the tenets of non-alignment, a policy India was

beginning to realise could play a positive role in international issues beyond the mere posturing it had allowed India to achieve immediately after independence.

Thus, by 1950, the US and India had come to recognise the fact that the interests of one did not necessarily reflect the interests of the other, however regrettable that may have been. Although they shared democratic traditions and thought on similar lines on issues like liberty, justice, the pursuit of happiness, and freedom from oppression, their divergent experiences and needs brought to the surface their differences on assessments and interests. And, in the final analysis, relations between the two countries hinged on their attitudes and views on international issues, a gap that was difficult to bridge, given the divergence in the priorities of interest that determined the nature of each country's foreign relations.

Containment of Soviet communist expansion was the corner-stone of American foreign policy, and if India was to find a niche for itself in the eyes of the US' strategic doctrine, it had to identify with American interests and priorities. But India was a new nation, a nation that did not share the ideological dilemma that was dividing Europe and the Western world. Even on the spread of communist influence in Asia, India's assessments differed from those of the United States. The rise to power of a People's government in China was, to Indians, a manifestation of nationalist pride and desires, not the long arm of international communism, spearheaded by its flag-bearer, the

USSR. The Cold War remained a derivative of Western historical experience, a power struggle with whose reasons India could not identify. Having been a colony of the British empire for almost two centuries, India's foreign policy strove to achieve the two fundamental features of Asian nationalism and Asian pride in a world that was still defined from a Western perspective. Perhaps, the Indian government reasoned, non-alignment would help keep Asian nations away from the divisions of the Western world, providing newly independent nations with a vehicle with which to be heard and noticed on the global stage. "India could not be a mere hanger-on of any country or group of nations; her freedom and growth would make a vital difference to Asia and therefore the world," Nehru had written in 1944.⁴² "Far too long have we been petitioners in western courts and chancelleries. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our own feet ... we do not intend to be playthings of others," the Indian Prime Minister said five months before independence.⁴³ Yes, India required American assistance in building the nation, and this was an important priority of the new government. But independence was a novelty, a dream that had kept the nationalist movement alive when all the odds were against its survival. Having won independence, the dreams of the nationalist movement were transformed into principles that were to determine policies, both at home and abroad. Under these circumstances, how was it possible for India to compromise on her dreams when victory seemed so

near, and ally with the United States, when the specific foreign policy objectives of the two countries stemmed from different roots? Thus, non-alignment was viewed as "immoral" by Americans, and Indians, unable to understand America's pre-occupation with fighting the Soviet "threat", remained disillusioned over the lack of understanding shown to them.

KOREA AS A CATALYST

After Nehru's return from the United States, relations with the Truman Administration got worse than ever, but Nehru was careful to ensure that the stand-offishness of the US did not compel India to draw closer to the Soviet Union and destroy all ties with the Western world, for he was still very wary of Soviet behaviour.⁴⁴ Ambassador Henderson, analysing the Indian government's attitude, wrote to Acheson:

... criticism expressed in the press or orally, of US government or people upon which Indians when irritated with the US are accustomed to dwell, including our treatment of American Negroes, our tendency to support colonialism and to strive for continued world supremacy of white peoples, our economic imperialism. ...⁴⁵

The Truman Administration was becoming increasingly annoyed over the lack of understanding by the Indians of the strain America's commitment to Europe placed on its economy. Moreover, Indian insistence on no strings being attached to any assistance, particularly at a time when the US required support in Asia, precluded the feasibility of American tax

money being provided without any tangible benefits. It was Acheson's opinion that friendly relations had to hinge on something more substantial and enduring than "millions of tons of wheat, dollar loans, or gifts."⁴⁶ Henderson, however, was convinced that the only possible way for the two countries to grow closer was if America provided substantial economic aid, or if international communism began fresh adventures in India, scaring the Indian leaders into turning to the United States.⁴⁷ Nothing else, it seemed, would prevent the current drift to change, with India continuing to denounce the United States, when irritated, publicising, in the process, its independent approach to foreign policy.

With the outbreak of war in Korea in June 1950, India and the United States were to find themselves locked in vigorous disagreement with each other, often representing ideological extremes. Much of this disagreement emanated from the chambers of the United Nations for the world to hear, but this contest of ideas and beliefs had its advantages too. It provided each country with an opportunity to size the other up, as well as understand the other's political beliefs, providing, in the long term, a more mature understanding of the other's foreign policy. India's diplomatic efforts at finding a solution to the crisis in Korea gained for itself greater understanding of non-alignment in the United States, but not before there had been considerable resentment expressed at the seemingly anti-American posture adopted by India with respect to the

former's position in Korea.

India's efforts to seat the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, and to convince the Soviet Union to return to the Security Council, provided it with a degree of credibility with the communist powers, thus making it possible for India to act as an arbiter on issues in Korea. Recognising this, the United States requested Nehru to warn China that it was against its interests to attack Formosa or get involved in the fighting in Korea, and not to react to American successes in the peninsula.⁴⁸ Nehru appealed to the Chinese Premier, Chou En-lai, to be patient and not react to events, but this appeal was thwarted by the Western powers who, believing that the Soviet Union and not China was the main opponent, crossed the 38th parallel, prompting Chinese "volunteers" to cross the Manchurian border.

It appeared, then, that the phase when Nehru could use his influence with China was over. The US was critical of India's repeated calls for restraint, and for mobilising support to gain admission for China into the United Nations at a time of crisis.⁴⁹ Nehru, speaking to Ambassador Henderson, explained that the Government of India did not believe that the Chinese were expansionist or had aggressive designs against other countries in Asia; China intervened in Korea because it believed the US wanted to use Korea as a base for subsequent invasions into China.⁵⁰ The Western attitude was summed up by the British at the Commonwealth meeting in London: they believed that China and Russia were acting together; the strategy was for China to tie down

large armies of the West in Korea while the Soviets would neutralize Germany and make advances in Europe.⁵¹

Whatever the true facts surrounding the conflict in Korea may be, the important factor to this thesis is the continuing Indian inability to appreciate American security concerns in Asia. As Chester Bowles, an American Ambassador to India who was able to develop close relations with the Indian Prime Minister, explained to Nehru, India was harping too much on fighting nineteenth century imperialism which was already dead, or dying, while underestimating the power of the new Russian imperialism, led by the world communist movement.⁵² India's ideological position was manifested further in an episode symbolic of the divergence in the countries' policies, the signing of the Japanese peace treaty in San Francisco in 1951. The treaty draft was circulated to some fifty-odd countries still technically at war with Japan, but India had two objections: the failure to recognise complete Japanese sovereignty (Ryuku and Bonin islands remained under American administration), and the failure to specify the return of Formosa to the People's Republic of China, thus making the treaty obviously unacceptable to the latter.⁵³ India made its objections public by boycotting the ceremony in San Francisco, but, in retrospect, it appears naive of Nehru, the architect of India's foreign policy, to have expected the United States to compromise on a vital issue regarding its Far Eastern strategy. That, in essence, was the stumbling block in Indo-US relations in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

In early 1952, Bowles and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt encouraged Nehru to resume active negotiations to break the impasse that had developed over issues in Korea. Responding to this, Nehru sent Krishna Menon to the UN to deal with the Korean question, eventually negotiating a settlement for the repatriation of prisoners by establishing a commission, led by an Indian, to act as a neutral arbiter. India's diplomatic role earned for itself a greater appreciation and understanding of non-alignment in the United States, but, unfortunately, there was no similar appreciation by India of the US' interests.⁵⁴

NAILING THE COFFIN

The Korean war served as a catalyst for the United States in defining a clear strategy to fight communist expansion in Asia. NSC-68 had recommended perimeter defense, and with the loss of China to communist domination, the Soviet "threat" now encroached along the perimeter of the Indian sub-continent. A policy statement by the National Security Council declared in 1951:

... the loss of China, the immediate threat to Indochina and the balance of Southeast Asia, the invasion of Tibet, and the reverses in Korea have greatly increased the significance to the US of the political strategic manpower and resource potential of the countries of South Asia and made it more important that this potential be marshalled on the side of the US. India, especially, and Pakistan as well, possess leaders having great prestige throughout the whole of Asia; the future support of these countries diplomatically and in the United Nations is of great importance; India in particular has certain strategic materials of importance to our national defense; ...⁵⁴

As mentioned earlier, the US was viewing India as an alternative to China as the main ally of the United States in Asia. However, concurrently, India stated its Asian objectives as mutual identity of purpose with China, vis-a-vis Asia, thus excluding India from the list of potential American allies in Asia. Ambassador Bowles, too, was of the opinion that nothing short of a dramatic change in the global political situation could force India to repudiate its "neutrality" on issues related to the Cold War and military alignments.⁵⁵ Thus, there was, for the United States, only one course of action left to pursue: it could exert influence through "smaller, peripheral states," many of whom feared the power of China and India.⁵⁶

Selig Harrison argues that the genesis of Pakistan's military alliance lay in the ideas of a retired civil servant of the British Raj, Sir Olaf Caroe.⁵⁷ Caroe, in his book, Wells of Power, argued that, with partition, India was no longer the logical base for Middle Eastern defense. Pakistan, on the other hand, lay well within the grouping of Southwestern Asia. It appears, however, somewhat naive to assume that the diplomatic and military policy makers in Washington were unable to judge for themselves Pakistan's potential as an American ally, and had to rely instead on the advice of Caroe. Caroe, moreover, had been arguing that Pakistan, not India, was the logical base for both Southwestern Asia and the Sino-Soviet land mass.

M.S. Venkataramani, a scholar of Indo-US relations,

provides substantial evidence to illustrate America's early preference for India as a more favoured nation, including the fact that it was Nehru, not the Pakistani Prime Minister, who was first invited to Washington.⁵⁸ I tend to agree with Heimsath and Mansingh's view that it was India's commitment to non-alignment, re-inforced in the 1950-53 period, that prompted the Americans to turn to "smaller, peripheral states" to act as a bulwark against communism. Further, numerous policy statements drawn up by the National Security Council and Armed Force's committees, quoted earlier, all explicitly stated preference for India as the "pivotal state" in resisting communism.

Thus, India's decision to reject the military alignments that characterized the bipolar world led to a US military alliance with Pakistan in 1954, the ground work for which began in the twilight years of the Truman Administration. Pakistan and India, however, shared an uneasy, antagonistic relationship, and the Government of India was apt to view any change in the regional balance of power as an act of hostility against it. This alliance brought forth two principal complaints from the Indian government. First, Pakistan's alliance with the United States fractured the geographic solidity of the non-aligned grouping of states, bringing the Cold War into what Nehru had hoped would be the "no war" area of Asia. By allying itself with Pakistan, the United States was bringing the Cold War to India's borders. Second, the US-Pakistani alliance resembled nineteenth century imperialism, where a

relatively weak power accepted foreign military assistance to increase its own strength, gradually losing independence and providing a launching pad to spread alien influence into neighbouring countries.⁵⁹ Nehru's second objection was, admittedly, an outdated analogy, but one that mirrored the fears of a nation still only seven years old. Apart from increasing the strategic vulnerability of India vis-a-vis Pakistan, the US Administration's decision to spawn military alliances on the Asian mainland was, in essence, the end of Nehru's vision of a "no war" Asia that could, through a loose grouping of Asian federations, voice distinctly Asian interests in the global arena. For the US, however, it was a question of filling the vacuum on the Asian mainland. The land mass from Turkey to the Philippines, while on the southern flank of the communist area of influence, was unprotected by any Western-oriented forces. Apart from troops in Korea, there were no American troops on the entire Asian mainland.

President Dwight Eisenhower, attempting to explain American security needs, wrote to Nehru in February 1954:

Our two Governments have agreed that our desires for peace are in accord. It has also been understood that if our interpretation of existing circumstances and our belief in how to achieve goals differ, it is the right and duty of sovereign nations to make their own decisions ... What we are proposing to do, and what Pakistan is agreeing to do, is not directed in any way against India. And I am confirming publicly that if our aid to any country, including Pakistan, is misused and directed against another in aggression I will undertake immediately, in accordance with my constitutional authority, appropriate action both within and without the UN to thwart such aggression.⁶⁰

Despite Eisenhower's assurances, the Indian government's position towards the United States hardened. Recognising that there had always been substantial differences of opinion, this growing apart was essentially due to the strengthening of Pakistan militarily, and America's policy of collective defense through military alignments within India's sphere of strategic interest, South and Southeast Asia.⁶¹ Later that year, US government officials were concerned that relations had deteriorated sufficiently for Eisenhower to intervene personally and invite the Indian Prime Minister to Washington. Eventually, the President wrote once again to Nehru:

What really counts is that there be common ground on which we can work out mutual problems and minimize differences. I believe the United States and India have such common ground in abundance. I do not consider that our differences in approach constitute any bar to growing friendship and cooperation between our two countries.⁶²

The damage, however, had been done. American security needs had clashed with Indian interests and objectives. While the United States and India had never shared common strategic perceptions and needs, America's decision to build allies on the Asian mainland fractured India's Asian objectives. Of even greater damage, moreover, was the United States' decision to build Pakistan's military strength, an act that was considered positively unfriendly to India, given the antagonistic relationship between the two countries of the subcontinent.

As is clearly evident from this analysis, the divergent global perspectives adopted by India and the United States were the result of different historical experiences and geographical locations, as well as the result of the difference in size between the two countries. Moulded as it was by the international strategic environment, since India could not share America's global perspective or interests, there was little substance upon which to build close bilateral relations, despite common declared long term interests and objectives. Thus, the United States entered a military alliance with Pakistan, a development that was looked upon by India as encroaching upon her security interests.

NOTES for CHAPTER TWO

¹Charles H. Heimsath and Surjit Mansingh, A Diplomatic History of Modern India (Calcutta: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1971), p. 56.

²William J. Barnds, India, Pakistan, and the Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 49.

³Heimsath and Mansingh, p. 49.

⁴Ibid., p. 61.

⁵Sarvepalli Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 43-44.

⁶Heimsath and Mansingh, pp. 59-60.

⁷Barnds, p. 90.

⁸United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, vol. 5, pp. 496-497. Hereafter referred to as FRUS.

⁹Gopal, p. 44.

¹⁰FRUS, 1948, pp. 497-498.

¹¹Ibid., p. 497.

¹²Gopal, p.45.

¹³FRUS, 1948, p. 498.

¹⁴Michael Brecher, India and World Politics: Krishna Menon's View of the World (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), pp. 3-14.

¹⁵Gopal, p. 46.

¹⁶FRUS, 1948, p. 504.

¹⁷Barnds, p. 64.

¹⁸John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 55.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 29-31.

²⁰Ibid., p. 59.

²¹Ibid., pp. 60-61.

²²United States, Department of State, Foreign

Relations of the United States, 1949, vol. 6, p. 10.

²³United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, vol. 5, p. 1461.

²⁴Gopal, p. 59.

²⁵Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969), p. 336. The debate over Kashmir focussed upon the accession of the state with India. The ruler of the state, a Hindu, opted for India, but Pakistan disputed this as the population was predominantly Muslim. Pakistani tribals entered the state in an effort to take it over, but were faced in combat with Indian troops. The UN Commission was established to arrange a truce in the hostilities between the two countries, and, previous attempts having failed, the commission suggested the arbitration of controversial issues by Admiral Nimitz, designated plebiscite administrator.

²⁶Gopal, pp. 57-58.

²⁷FRUS, 1949, pp. 1755-1756.

²⁸Ibid., p. 1752.

²⁹Gopal, p. 60.

³⁰Ibid., p. 61.

³¹Heimsath and Mansingh, p. 350.

³²Acheson, p. 336.

³³Gopal, p. 64.

³⁴FRUS, 1949, pp. 1753-1754.

³⁵Heimsath and Mansingh, p. 351.

³⁶Ibid., p. 352.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 353-353.

³⁸Gaddis, pp. 90-101.

³⁹United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, vol. 5, p. 1478.

⁴⁰United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, vol. 6, p. 1651.

⁴¹Gopal, pp. 64-65.

⁴²Heimsath and Mansingh, p. 56.

⁴³Ibid., p. 59.

⁴⁴Gopal, pp. 62-64.

⁴⁵FRUS, 1950, p. 1461.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 1464.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 1469-1470.

⁴⁸Gopal, p. 103.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 104-105.

⁵⁰FRUS, 1951, p. 2120-2127.

⁵¹Gopal, p. 134.

⁵²FRUS, 1951, p. 1651.

⁵³Heimsath and Mansingh, p. 354.

⁵⁴FRUS, 1951, p. 1651.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 2191-2202.

⁵⁶Heimsath and Mansingh, pp. 352-353.

⁵⁷Selig S. Harrison, "India, Pakistan and the US - I," The New Republic, August 1959, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁸M.S. Venkataramani, "America's Military Alliance with Pakistan," International Studies 8 (July-October 1966) : 77-79.

⁵⁹Heimsath and Mansingh, pp. 55-56.

⁶⁰United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1954, p. 1736.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 1772.

⁶²Ibid., p. 1787.

CHAPTER THREE

This second period, the years between 1961 and 1965, provides an interesting contrast to the first study. This chapter begins with an appreciation of John Kennedy's views on the Third World, in general, and India, in particular, highlighting the difference from the perspective of the Eisenhower Administration. This chapter also includes the effect China's attack on India in 1962 had on the latter's foreign policy, India's subsequent appeal to the United States, and the immediate years after the 1962 war.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

Senator John F. Kennedy's announcement, in early 1960, that he had chosen Chester Bowles as his chief advisor on foreign policy ought, in retrospect, to have served as warning that, if elected President, a Kennedy Administration would herald a shift in foreign policy for Asia, in general, and India, in particular. Bowles had served as President Truman's Ambassador to New Delhi between 1951 and 1953, and was a vocal critic of the Eisenhower Administration's decision to include Pakistan in the newly created military alliances of SEATO and CENTO. Bowles had, for almost a decade, strongly and consistently

opposed American policy in Asia which was based primarily, as he saw it, on military alliances with several rightist Asian governments.¹ He had, as Ambassador to New Delhi, urged that India be recognised, along with Japan, as the United States' "bridge" to the East. This could be accomplished, he argued, by strong American support for India's five-year plan, winning India's friendship and understanding. "A dynamic, stable India and friendly Japan," he recommended, "can provide two crucial anchors for the whole vast territory from South Africa to the Aleutians. ... The balance of power and influence would be tipped sharply in our direction."²

Even though Kennedy was deeply concerned with the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, he did not attribute all mankind's troubles to this conflict. As Arthur Schlesinger noted, "in 1961 this was still rather a novel viewpoint for an American President."³ Holding the view that the battle for Europe, except for Berlin, had essentially been won by the end of the 1940s, Kennedy was of the opinion that the battleground between democracy and communism had shifted to the Third World countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.⁴ This, however, was contrary to the policy he inherited as President, a policy deeply entrenched in the world of government and bureaucracy.

There had been a tendency in the years after the Second World War, including the 1950s, to view the world as neatly divided in the ideological conflict between America and the Soviet Union. Countries that did not fit into the

two categories of "communist" and "free world" were regarded as anomalies in a highly ideological planet. John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's Secretary of State, had aspired to encircle the Soviet Union and China with a ring of states aligned with the United States, with the hope that this would discourage Soviet and Chinese attacks and further communist advances.⁵ To achieve this Dulles had attempted to recruit the Third World nations of Asia to align themselves with the United States through treaties and unilateral declarations--SEATO, CENTO, bilateral security pacts with South Korea and Taiwan, and Congressional resolutions on Taiwan and the Middle East. Countries like India, however, which chose to be neutral and removed from the ideological crusade of the times, were viewed as "immoral." In an ideological struggle as intense as the Cold War, there was, for Dulles, no room for middle ground. Neutrality, to Dulles, was "an immoral and short-sighted conception."⁶ As Schlesinger, summing up Dulles' creed, wrote:

If they declined to ally themselves to the United States or went their own way in the United Nations or indulged in tirades against the west or engaged in social revolution, it was due to inherent moral weakness compounded by the unsleeping activities of the minions of a Communist Satan.

There was, in other words, an inherent belief in the American government that those countries who were not with us were necessarily against us.

Kennedy, on the other hand, was of the view that neutral nations were as naturally indifferent to the

"moral" issues of the Cold War as the United States had been to political developments in Europe at a comparable stage of growth. As he said in 1959:

The desire to be independent and free carries with it the desire not to become engaged as a satellite of the Soviet Union or too closely allied to the United States. We have to live with that, and if neutrality is the result of concentrating on internal problems, raising the standard of living of the people and so on, particularly in the under-developed countries, I would accept that. It's part of our own history for over a hundred years.⁸

Thus, while Dulles opposed neutrality and regarded neutral nations as essentially committed to the "other" side, Kennedy, by making national independence the crucial issue in his foreign policy for the Third World, encouraged neutral Third World countries to be benevolent towards the United States because of their common stake in resisting the threat of communist totalitarianism.

India, more specifically, was regarded by Kennedy as "the key area" in Asia, a country that, of all neutral nations, he was most interested in. Kennedy had visited India with his brother Robert in 1951, and believed that the struggle between India and China for the economic and political leadership of the East would determine the future of Asia. It is interesting to note, at this point, how Kennedy's views on India coincided with those of another Democratic politician, Bowles. Whilst still a Senator, Kennedy, with Bowles in the House of Representatives, had introduced a resolution in Congress calling for a joint European-American financial effort to support India's

five-year economic plan. Introducing the resolution, he said, "If China succeeds and India fails, the economic-development balance will shift against us." Regarding India's commitment to its policy of non-alignment, he went on to say, "Let us remember that our nation also during the period of its formative growth adopted a policy of noninvolvement in the great international controversies of the nineteenth century."⁹

Thus, because of Kennedy's long standing interest in and support for India, his election as President was met with considerable optimism in India.¹⁰ Moreover, Kennedy's choices of Bowles as his Undersecretary of State and John Kenneth Galbraith as Ambassador to India undoubtedly served as an indication of the importance President Kennedy placed on relations with India. Schlesinger wrote that "in sending Galbraith as his ambassador to New Delhi, Kennedy deliberately chose a man who could be depended upon to bring to Indian problems his own mixture of sympathy and irony."¹¹

KENNEDY'S WORST VISIT, 1961

On assuming his duties as Ambassador to New Delhi, Galbraith felt the best way of erasing memories of Dulles' isolation of India was to expose the Indian Prime Minister to the new President.¹² Although unhappy at the Bay of Pigs adventure, the two governments had worked in tandem in the Congo,¹³ and Nehru, at Kennedy's request, had intervened with Hanoi and Moscow to arrange a cease-fire in

Laos.¹⁴ Kennedy was extremely grateful for India's assistance in Laos, and even committed himself to assist India's economic development. Nehru appreciated Kennedy's goodwill and stated in Parliament that the new American Administration was more friendly to India than its predecessor had been.¹⁵

However, despite general acceptance by the two leaders that relations between the two countries were on the threshold of a major breakthrough, Nehru's visit to the United States in November 1961 was not a success. Arthur Schlesinger quotes the President describing the visit as "a disaster ... the worst head-of-state visit I have had."¹⁶ The American assessment was that Nehru was a tired old man who had stayed around too long.¹⁷ The Indian delegation, on the other hand, was in something of a dilemma. Kennedy had won the election by an extremely narrow margin and appeared insecure in his handling of power. The Indian guests, moreover, were aware of differences between the White House and State Department vis-a-vis India, and were troubled by the Bay of Pigs fiasco.¹⁸

The two leaders talked about Laos, Vietnam, Kashmir, the growing Sino-Indian border problem, and Pakistan, and Galbraith records the meetings as a monologue by the President as the Prime Minister simply did not respond on most issues.¹⁹ While Nehru had already done what he had been asked to do to secure Laotian neutrality and independence, he did not want to join the American effort

in finding a solution in Vietnam. Kennedy had earlier indicated to M.C. Chagla, the retiring Indian Ambassador to Washington, that he would have liked India to assume a position of leadership in Southeast Asia against China, and that he was willing to accept non-alignment of the area if that was the outcome of Indian leadership.²⁰ In the United States, Kennedy once again pressed Nehru to help in finding a solution for Vietnam, with methods ranging from an approach by Nehru to Ho Chi Minh, a UN observer corps, a stronger International Control Commission, and acceptance of Indian leadership in establishing a neutral belt across Southeast Asia.²¹ Apart from recommending that President Diem of South Vietnam be urged to reform his administration, the Indian delegation refused to even consider any of the other proposals. Nehru refused to consider the sponsorship of a neutral Southeast Asia, for it amounted to a virtual alliance, and the Indian team did not think that any initiative was possible apart from the proper working of the International Control Commission under the Geneva Accords of 1954.²² While there is confusion as to the reasons for Nehru's unusual reticence, his reluctance to be drawn into any effort in Vietnam is justified by what we now know. During the course of these discussions in the United States, plans to send a modest 8,000-man American military force were being drawn up at the State Department.²³

It is interesting to analyse, at this stage, why Nehru's visit to the United States in 1961 is acknowledged

by all to have been a complete failure, particularly in light of the expectations that a meeting between the two leaders had begun to evoke in the minds of others. Kennedy's views on India's role in Asia have already been discussed. Nehru, it has also been noted, had been impressed by Kennedy's commitment to India's economic development as a Senator, and had publicly acknowledged the thawing of Indo-US relations in the early months of the new Democratic Administration. It is evident from the narrative of the talks between the two, described above, that the stalemate appeared to arise over Southeast Asia. Galbraith recorded that Nehru only seemed interested when the talks focussed upon India's immediate geographic vicinity.²⁴ This is particularly intriguing when viewed in the context of Nehru's views of Southeast Asia in the early 1950s, which included his vision of an Asian federation and no-war area devoid of Western colonial and military presence.

It is obvious that Kennedy was agitated to find a solution short of sending American military personnel to Vietnam, and while Nehru responded negatively to all the American suggestions on Vietnam, he continually re-iterated that the US should not send troops to the area.²⁵ But the Americans required a realistic alternative, and this Nehru refrained from providing. The practicality and effectiveness of a stronger International Control Commission or a neutral belt across Southeast Asia is not the subject of this thesis. The intriguing question is why

Nehru rejected the offer to sponsor such a solution, knowing that an effort, even if a failure, would win greater American goodwill and assistance for India, as evidenced by the results of his diplomatic role in Laos.

Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia and Gamal Nasser of Egypt had, earlier in 1961, been keen to convene a conference of all non-aligned states. Nehru felt that the conference, whose purpose was to create a bloc or at least a platform of like minded nations, would damage the concept of non-alignment. The essence of non-alignment was the retention of freedom from pre-commitment; the creation of a third bloc, a non-aligned one, contradicted this purpose. Non-alignment, to Nehru, meant more than merely standing aloof from the Soviet Union and the Western powers; it included non-alignment with other countries as well.²⁶ Nehru realised, however, that he could not stay away from the meeting at Belgrade, but made his hesitation known and guided the conference to be as broad based in its policies and priorities as possible.

Visiting the United States a month after Belgrade, Nehru possibly had the same hesitation in mind when he opposed Indian leadership of a neutral Southeast Asia because it virtually amounted to another military alliance. While the specific reason that prompted Nehru's reluctance is unclear, I can only presume his hesitation stemmed from the same ideological reasoning that characterized his response to Nasser and Tito.

Be that as it may, Nehru, undoubtedly aware of the

strategic value of Southeast Asia to the United States, described in the previous chapter, allowed an opportunity for the two countries to work in tandem in an area of geo-strategic value, to pass. Although relations between the United States and India were not harmed by Nehru's reluctance to be drawn into closer global contact between the two countries, Kennedy's perceptions of India's potential greatness were altered.

Though Kennedy retained his belief in the necessity of helping India achieve its economic goals, he rather gave up hope, after seeing Nehru, that India would be in the next years a great affirmative force in the world or even in South Asia.²⁷

SINO-INDIAN BORDER WAR, 1962

While India and China had been locked in dispute over their common Himalayan border since the early 1950s,²⁸ the Chinese attack on the 20 October, 1962, caught the world unprepared for any major fighting. Coinciding with the crisis over Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, any anticipation that a bilateral matter would develop into a world crisis was soon shattered. However, the day after the Chinese attacked, the State Department declared that the United States "was shocked at the violent and aggressive action of the Chinese communists against India," and that any Indian request for aid "would be considered sympathetically."²⁹

The Soviet Union, preoccupied with events in Cuba, was reluctant to get involved, but assumed a pro-Chinese stance. Similarly, leaders of other non-aligned nations,

with the exception of Tito and Nasser, were guarded in their responses. The general reaction of other nations shocked Nehru out of the complacency he had assumed with the attainment of independence, even making him skeptical about the faith he had placed in the inherent goodwill of nations and the superiority of the ways of peace.³⁰

These developments, coupled with a succession of quick reverses suffered by Indian troops and the lack of equipment, forced India to turn to any quarter to obtain arms.³¹

President Kennedy's offer of aid was communicated by Galbraith to Nehru on 29 October, an offer that was promptly accepted. That Nehru was sensitive to the political implications of this act is evident from two episodes. Speaking to Galbraith, Nehru mentioned that while India did indeed require military aid, he hoped this did not mean a military alliance between the United States and India.³² Similarly, in delivering Nehru's first letter to Kennedy, Ambassador B.K. Nehru expressed the hope that Kennedy would offer "support" instead of "military assistance" on the basis of "sympathy" instead of an "alliance."³³ While it is evident that Nehru was clinging to his ideological position of non-alignment at a time of crisis, it was also a prudent political move. He did not want to irritate the Soviets, who realised that military assistance from the United States was inevitable, as he expected them to revert to their earlier attitude of partiality to India once the Cuban crisis was

resolved.³⁴ To America's eternal credit in Indian eyes, though short lived as subsequent events proved, Kennedy offered "support out of sympathy."

That America responded promptly to the Indian plea is evident from the fact that the first load of military equipment arrived in India merely four days after the request was made.³⁵ The initial airlift, worth several million dollars, was extended to India under the terms of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act (section 503), which empowered the President to draw upon existing stocks of US weapons, in special situations, without prior Congressional approval. This airlift--essentially of mobile weapons--was completed on the 12 November.

Although the Prime Minister had warned the nation to be prepared for further reverses, and the army instructed to fight on terrain that was favourable to them and not advantageous to the Chinese--as in the higher slopes of the Himalayas--even Nehru was not ready for the rout that was to follow. On 17 November, the Indian commander of the eastern sector sent a desperate message that the superiority of the Chinese was so great that foreign troops should be asked to come to India's aid.³⁶ Within two days, an advance to Leh in the west and the loss of the entire northeast appeared inevitable, with the likelihood that the Chinese would advance into the Indian plains.

The magnitude of the Chinese break-through resulted in a state of panic and shock at all levels of Indian decision-making. Without apparently consulting any of his

cabinet colleagues, apart from the bureaucratic chief of the Foreign Office, M.J. Desai,³⁷ Nehru sent Kennedy two letters on 19 November.³⁸ Describing the situation as "really desperate," the Indian Prime Minister

requested the immediate despatch of a minimum of twelve squadrons of supersonic all-weather fighters and the setting up of radar communications. American personnel would have to man these fighters and installations and protect Indian cities from air attacks by the Chinese till Indian personnel had been trained. If possible, the United States should also send planes flown by American personnel to assist the Indian Air Force in any battles with the Chinese in Indian air space; but aerial action by India elsewhere would be the responsibility of the Indian Air Force. Nehru also asked for two B-47 bomber squadrons to enable India to strike at Chinese bases and air fields; but to learn to fly these planes Indian pilots and technicians would be sent immediately for training in the United States. All such assistance and equipment would be utilised solely against the Chinese.³⁹

However, the United States lifted the naval blockade of Cuba on 20 November, and the Chinese announced a unilateral cease-fire on the 21st, with a withdrawal north of the McMahon Line in the east and the "line of actual control" in other sectors to follow in ten days.

The effect of Nehru's atypical response in requesting direct American participation to resist the Chinese attack was blunted by the Chinese decision to announce a unilateral cease-fire two days after the request was made. Ironically, it was, therefore, the Chinese who made it possible for India to retain, technically at least, its hallowed policy of non-alignment. While critics can argue that the request did, in essence, end any claims to

non-alignment, the fact remains that Nehru's potentially momentous decision was never implemented, allowing India to defend the legitimacy of its non-alignment.

Galbraith records that the United States did take the Indian plea for "military association" very seriously. Before the Chinese announcement of a cease-fire came through later that night, Kennedy sent Galbraith a message on 21 November indicating that he was prepared to help and was sending a high-level mission to "assess the needs of the Indians." The message also contained the promise of further equipment for the Indian defense effort, and the proposal of three American teams to help run the war.⁴⁰ The day after the war ended, a large mission arrived in New Delhi from Washington, headed by Averell Harriman. It is thus perfectly apparent that, although Nehru's request for military association was never implemented or completely tested, the Kennedy Administration was actively considering the Indian plea. Even Michael Brecher notes that the US Government was in the process of drafting a favourable reply to Nehru's request when the cease-fire was announced.⁴¹

The question of greatest relevance to this thesis is why the United States reacted so favourably to India's defense needs, particularly when it was concurrently occupied by a more critical issue, the Cuban missile crisis. Nations do not offer foreign aid or conduct their international relations for purely altruistic reasons, and the United States was no exception.

The India-China border war of 1962 provided the United States with a rare opportunity to further its political aims in a region of strategic importance. American relations with China had not improved since 1949, and India's need for assistance provided the Kennedy Administration with an opportunity to consolidate America's position in the area. Coming to India's aid would provide greater influence over India, as well as a more pro-Western version of non-alignment. Moreover, it provided the United States with a lever to pressure India to negotiate a settlement over Kashmir, leading to greater Indo-Pakistani cooperation with Western forces in facing the northern communist bastion.

Galbraith noted in his diary that, on the evening of 20 November, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, sent him a long message in response to Nehru's letter of the 19th. It asked several questions on pointedly political issues: India's attitude to Pakistan, problems of communism in South Asia, and the potential roles of the Commonwealth and United Nations in brokering a solution for Kashmir.⁴² Even the Harriman Mission, the most visible expression of American commitment to India in 1962, recorded:

Part of our mission was merely to demonstrate United States support for India and so to send the Chinese Communists a signal of deterrence.... But beyond this emergency, further Chinese behavior would depend on whether or not an effective deterrent could be created in the sub-continent ... how India and Pakistan each assessed the nature of the threat from Communist China ... and whether they were willing to modify their hostility toward each other.... The only effective

defense of the sub-continent against such a threat would be a joint defense by both India and Pakistan standing together.⁴³

Thus, while America's decision to assist India in 1962 can be viewed in the general context of President Kennedy's policy of reversing Dulles' isolation of India by building closer bilateral relations, the 1962 border war also provided the Kennedy Administration with the means whereby a larger American political objective could be accomplished, that of opposing the communist countries to India's immediate north. Moreover, this could be achieved in a variety of ways. By reacting promptly to India's needs, the United States could win the confidence of India's political elite and the necessary influence to result in changes that would make Indian foreign policy more sympathetic to the American view of the world.⁴⁴ Or, as Galbraith noted, the political benefits of military aid and an air defense pact had the ingredients of major implications for long-term Indo-American relations.⁴⁵

However, the "joint defense of the sub-continent," envisaged by the Harriman Mission, hinged on the issue of settling the dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan. It is easy to understand why the United States required this political development before committing itself to an effective defense of the subcontinent against Chinese attacks: military assistance would have to be directed against the Communist threat, not frittered away in settling old scores. But when the Chinese attacked India

in October 1962, Pakistan made no secret of its bias against India and support for China.⁴⁶ Dependent on the United States and Britain for military assistance, India could not refuse to negotiate with Pakistan; Harriman told Nehru that public opinion in his country would only favour generous support to India if it were linked with a settlement on Kashmir.⁴⁷ Nehru, welcoming Bowles on his return to India in 1963, noted that he had been puzzled by the United States' decision to pressure India to compromise on Kashmir at a time when Pakistan's support of China made such a situation politically impossible, the only action by the United States in 1962 that piqued an otherwise grateful Indian Government.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

Following India's debacle in the war with China, and given prospects of a long phase of Chinese hostility, India's military requirements had to be given a more realistic dimension. Its military unpreparedness, and the consequent dependence on military assistance from the United States, made Nehru more willing than at any previous stage to fit India into the pattern of American policy, an adjustment that was necessary if India hoped to capitalise on American assistance.

Expecting the resumption of a Chinese attack somewhere in the foreseeable future, Nehru's government suggested an agreement whereby India would commit its tactical aircraft to engage the invading Chinese while the United States

would undertake the defense of Indian cities.⁴⁸ Although Ambassador Galbraith was eager to take the opportunity "by the ears," as it provided an "economical basis for a continuing relationship," Washington wanted the Commonwealth to take the lead in any such scheme.⁴⁹ At the Nassau meeting in December 1962 between Prime Minister Macmillian of the United Kingdom and President Kennedy, the British proved reluctant to undertake the lead, allowing "a great opportunity to bring India into much closer working association with the western community, an opportunity sensed only by the President, [Philip] Talbot and myself [Galbraith]," to pass.⁵⁰

Thus, an opportunity where the Indian Government was prepared to barter its non-alignment for a military relationship with the United States came to nought. Within a few months, possibly as the result of a decrease in the level of anti-Chinese hysteria in India, Nehru began to dismiss suggestions of an American 'air umbrella.'⁵¹ He wanted, instead, United States help in building India's military forces to be able to defend the nation, and he requested military assistance worth \$500 million over a period of five years. Although the State and Defense Departments were reluctant to upset their Pakistani allies, Kennedy privately conceded to Bowles, by now appointed Ambassador to New Delhi, that he supported the request, and instructed Bowles to explore Indian attitudes and needs.⁵²

On arriving in India in the summer of 1963, Bowles met

with Nehru to follow up on the Prime Minister's request. Directing Bowles to defense officials, Nehru indicated that India now required forces strong enough to deter two aggressive neighbours, Pakistan and China. By the autumn of that year, a tentative agreement had been worked out at the cost of \$75 million a year for five years. Having negotiated a tentative agreement with the Indians, Bowles suggested that the United States would welcome India's political cooperation in Vietnam and other Southeast Asian nations, an offer Nehru had rejected in 1961 in Washington, but which he now promptly accepted.⁵³

Knowing that he had the President's support, and armed with both a tentative agreement and Nehru's surprising willingness to help the American position in Southeast Asia, Bowles arrived in the United States in mid-November. On reporting to the President, Kennedy informed Bowles that he would support the proposal regardless of the bureaucrats at the State and Defense Departments who were anxious not to annoy Pakistan, and scheduled a meeting of the National Security Council for 26 November, 1963.⁵⁴ Four days before the scheduled meeting was to have taken place, President Kennedy was assassinated.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, quite naturally, was anxious to view the agreement from his own perspective, and asked for the meeting to be postponed. By May 1964, another tentative agreement had been reached, and Bowles was followed to Washington by Indian Defense Minister Chavan and a team of officials to tie up the loose ends.

After two weeks of negotiations, an agreement satisfactory to India, and agreed to by the Secretaries of State and Defense, had been reached, and a meeting at the White House set for 28 May. On 27 May, Prime Minister Nehru passed away in India.

Although Ambassador Bowles recommended that this was an important time to demonstrate American support for India, and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy, agreed, officials at the State and Defense Departments wanted to watch political developments in India till "the dust ha[d] a chance to settle." Knowing that Indian officials were anxious to sign an agreement with the United States but were prepared to take advantage of a Soviet offer to provide similar military hardware, Bowles urged Washington to act soon, but to no avail.⁵⁵ In mid-August 1964, the same Indian defense team that had visited Washington under Chavan, left for Moscow. They returned two weeks later with everything they had asked for, and more.

Even though Galbraith's and Bowles' recommendations were never adopted by Washington, the period of aborted negotiations between the two countries serves as an interesting back-drop for a commentary on Indo-US relations during the Kennedy years.

John Kennedy entered the White House with views on the the Third World and India that fundamentally differed from those of his immediate two predecessors. Indo-US relations had been given form and shape in the Truman and Eisenhower

administrations under the influence of Cold War rhetoric. The Kennedy Administration promised to break new ground and change the direction of these relations, in keeping with the time. His tenure, more importantly, witnessed an important milestone in Indian foreign policy, the Chinese attack on India, a period when the Indian Government was prepared to adjust its perceptions of global events to fit in with American strategic evaluations. However, when viewed with the benefit of over twenty years of hindsight, the promise and intentions of the Kennedy years, with respect to Indo-US relations, remained just that; they failed to significantly alter Indo-US relations in a manner that would serve as a legacy upon which future generations could build. The key question is why?

China's attack on India in 1962 and the growing Sino-Soviet rift opened avenues for a fundamental and sweeping shift in global politics in Asia. When Dulles had sought to build American allies against China and the Soviet Union on the Asian mainland, India chose to identify its Asian objectives as being in congruence with those of China. Now that China had humiliated India and proved that it was "one head taller than India imagined herself to be," India had to take into account China's threat that it "had taught India a lesson and, if necessary, would teach her a lesson again and again."⁵⁶ Moreover, the Chinese attack and humiliation of India firmly proved Nehru's premise of non-alignment allowing the nation to focus primarily on her economic growth as being misguided, a factor that demanded

immediate changes in India's foreign policy thinking. Given the urgency of India's dilemma, Nehru was prepared to do anything to alleviate the potential disasters of another Chinese attack, even if it meant compromising on his fiercely independent view of the world.

Although Nehru's request for military association with the United States was negated by the Chinese announcement of a cease-fire, any significant development of the Indian armed forces required considerable support by the United States. India, moreover, had the advantage, it seemed, of two successive American ambassadors who believed it was India, not Pakistan, that the US ought to cultivate as its main Asian ally,⁵⁷ and an American President who regarded the future of Asia as being determined by the competition between India and China.⁵⁸ With old relations coming unstuck (Sino-Soviet, Sino-Indian) in a fashion that fitted in with American interests, the prospects of stronger American influence in Asia looked promising. Thus, all the ingredients for a resulting shift in relations were satisfied, with only a formal ratification necessary to begin the institutionalization of these changes.

While the death of two key actors at a time when the curtain was ready to rise can be attributed to fate, there is, to my mind, another equally important factor that prevented an agreement from being signed.

As mentioned earlier, Indo-US relations took both form and shape in the years of the Cold War, a period that was dominated by ideological rhetoric and dogma that

momentarily blinded principal actors from both countries from allowing a more mature appreciation of the other's attitudes, beliefs and concerns. Having ignored these factors in the 1950s, bureaucrats in the 1960s had to take into account the United States' principal ally in South Asia, Pakistan, an ally that the United States was bound to by treaty commitments and obligations. Thus, any dramatic change in American policy in South Asia had to consider the likely effects on US-Pakistani relations, a potentially necessary casualty given the uneasy antagonistic relationship India and Pakistan shared.

Thus, when I argue that a perceptible change in Indo-US relations had to be "institutionalized" by a formal ratification in the form of a treaty that legitimized the warming of relations, it is the shadow of the Cold War that I have in mind. It is the legacy of this rhetoric, this dogma, that proved to be the spoke in the wheels when an opportunity for change surfaced in 1962-63, a legacy to which bureaucrats of the State and Defense Departments referred frequently when arguing that a treaty with India would hurt relations with Pakistan, the United States' main ally in South Asia.

INDO-PAKISTAN WAR, 1965

1965 was a particularly bad year for Indo-American relations. Having lost the initiative for increased assistance to India to the Soviets in 1964, President Johnson invited Prime Minister Shastri to visit Washington

in the spring of 1965. Soon after the date had been finalised by the two governments, Johnson, because of his hectic schedule, withdrew the invitation, an action that was taken as an "insult" in New Delhi. Piqued by the American decision, Shastri's subsequent comment that the bombing of North Vietnam was unlikely to bring peace was played up by the press in both India and the United States. Responding to this minor, though irritating, development, Washington reacted by dragging its feet over the proposed shipment of American wheat to meet Indian shortages caused by the failure of the monsoons.⁵⁹

Just when it appeared that relations between the two countries could sink no lower in one year, Pakistan attacked the Indian positions in the Kashmir valley in August 1965. Although the United States was not directly involved in the war or responsible for Pakistan's decision, Pakistan, as a member of both SEATO and CENTO, was armed with American equipment, a fear that India had lived with since 1954. As Bowles wrote, "Over and over again it was pointed out to me that every Indian casualty had been caused by an American bullet, an American shell or an American hand grenade."⁶⁰

Eleven years had elapsed since President Eisenhower's assurance that he would take "appropriate action" if US arms were ever used against India, and Nehru, in reply, had doubted the practicality of Eisenhower's assurances. To make matters even worse, when UN observers at the cease-fire line in Kashmir reported to the Secretary

General that it was Pakistan which had committed the aggression, high officials at the UN were convinced that publicizing the report would push Pakistan into a corner and make negotiations impossible.⁶¹ Disappointed with the UN's failure to publish this report, Indian troops launched a counter-attack aimed towards Lahore, West Pakistan's second largest city, to take the pressure off the Kashmir front, thus spreading the war along the India-West Pakistan border.

Although India had continually opposed the transfer of American arms to Pakistan because it breached the "no war" area of South Asia and brought the Cold War to India's borders, private Indian fears focussed upon the immediate threat a militarily supported Pakistan posed to India's position in the sub-continent. While the United States had justified arms transfers as being directed against communist China--ignoring the development that, by the mid-1960s, Pakistan had turned to China as its principal ally--Indian officials hoped Pakistan's use of US equipment to attack India would remove the wool from American eyes and make them realise the folly of pursuing their global policies in the face of regional realities.

The possibility of losing its intelligence base in Peshawar, Pakistan, still dominated American policy for South Asia, however.⁶² The United States had, for almost a decade, used Peshawar as the launching base for its U-2 intelligence flights over the Soviet Union and China, the principal reason why officials at the State and Defense

Departments were hesitant to sanction an arms agreement with India in 1963-64. They suspected Pakistan would deny America access to the Peshawar base in the event of an Indo-US agreement. Thus, although the US Ambassador in Pakistan had privately "protested" against the Pakistani aggression with American equipment, when Pakistan publicly denied that any such protest had been made, Washington remained silent,⁶³ reinforcing the Indian attitude that New Delhi had been "double-crossed" by the United States.

As is evident, even though the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 was a regional bilateral issue, its ramifications transcended the sub-continent and made the United States a favourite whipping boy for India. Thus, when the Johnson Administration, exasperated with the dynamics of regional politics, suspended all military aid to both Pakistan and India in 1965, its effects had already been negated, in Indian eyes, by the fact that Pakistan had attacked with American weapons, the United Nations, of which the Western powers had considerable control, refused to declare Pakistan the "aggressor," and that there was no official outrage over Pakistan's misuse of American equipment. Military aid to Pakistan had been suspended, but this policy applied to India too. And, in the ultimate analysis, Nehru's skepticism of Eisenhower's assurances had been proven correct, showing up the folly of US strategic policy in South Asia.

NOTES for CHAPTER THREE

¹Chester Bowles, Promises to Keep (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 437.

²United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-54, vol. xi, pp. 1668-1681.

³Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 506.

⁴Ibid., p. 507.

⁵John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 153.

⁶Ibid., p. 154.

⁷Schlesinger, p. 506.

⁸Ibid., p. 507.

⁹Ibid., p. 522.

¹⁰Sarvepalli Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 187.

¹¹Schlesinger, p. 523.

¹²Ibid., p. 523.

¹³With the attainment of independence by the Belgian Congo in 1960, a crisis developed immediately by the determination of the Belgians to retain their authority. To counter this, the Prime Minister of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, appealed for military assistance to both the United States and the Soviet Union, and sought the help of the United Nations. The UN's Secretary-General was authorized by the Security Council to provide military and technical assistance till the Congolese security forces were able to function adequately on their own. Under conflicting pressure from the US and USSR, the Secretary-General appointed a senior Indian diplomat, Rajeshwar Dayal, as his special representative in the Congo. For details of the conflict as it developed further, see Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru, vol. 3.

¹⁴The Geneva Accords of 1954, ending the French colonial war and seeking to limit foreign influence in the area, had established the International Control Commission (ICC) with India as chairman. Under the Accords, a

neutralist government under Prince Souvanna Phouma assumed office in an uneasy coalition with the communist forces of the Pathet Lao. In 1958, Phouma's government was replaced, through CIA backing, by a right wing government under Phoumi Sananikone. His government was, in turn, overthrown by a general named Phoumi Nosavan who was later succeeded in 1960, once again by Phouma. Later that year, Phouma was overthrown, with American connivance, by Nosavan, yet again, but almost immediately came under pressure from the communist forces of the Pathet Lao. By the spring of 1961, the only alternative to sending American troops to Laos was to return Prince Souvanna Phouma and his neutralists to power, and to re-establish the ICC to help keep the peace. The American Administration felt Nehru was the answer to get the ICC back to Laos and to persuade the communist countries to go along with the neutralizing effort. For more details, see Schlesinger's A Thousand Days and John Kenneth Galbraith, A Life in our Times (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981).

¹⁵Gopal, pp. 187-188.

¹⁶Schlesinger, p. 526.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 523-524.

¹⁸Gopal, p. 188.

¹⁹John Kenneth Galbraith, Ambassador's Journal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 248.

²⁰M.C. Chagla, Roses in December (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1974), pp. 270-271.

²¹John Kenneth Galbraith, A Life in our Times (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981), p. 470.

²²Gopal, pp. 188-189.

²³Galbraith, A Life in our Times, pp. 470-471.

²⁴Galbraith, Ambassador's Journal, p. 248. All future references to Galbraith are with regard to this book.

²⁵Ibid, p. 246.

²⁶Gopal, p. 185.

²⁷Schlesinger, p. 526.

²⁸In 1841, Gulab Singh, the ruler of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, invaded Ladakh and defeated its Tibetan defenders. A few years later, when Kashmir fell to the British, the mountain plateau of Ladakh was included by

the British as part of their Empire. In 1897, Sir John Ardagh included the Aksai Chin as part of the state of Kashmir. The India-Tibet border was then demarcated by what came to be known as the Johnson/Ardagh Line, with Ladakh and the Aksai Chin encompassed in the Indian side. Sovereign India inherited this somewhat tenuous demarcation, but the issue was never settled with the Tibetans. Similarly, elsewhere along the Indo-Tibetan border, there were inherent disagreements between the Indians and Chinese. A far more serious dispute, however, was over the border to the east of the kingdom of Bhutan, separating Tibet from the Indian state of NEFA. In 1914, the British met with the Chinese and Tibetans to demarcate the border by what we know as the McMahon Line, and, as with the Aksai Chin, China disputed the exact demarcation.

²⁹Michael Brecher, "Non-Alignment Under Stress: The West and the India-China Border War," Pacific Affairs (Winter 1979-80), p. 613.

³⁰Gopal, pp. 221-223.

³¹Nehru is quoted as writing to Krishna Menon, his Defense Minister, on the 28 October, 1962: "I do not know how I shall explain to Parliament why we have been found lacking in equipment. It is not much good shifting about blame. The fact remains that we have been found lacking and there is an impression that we may have approached things in a somewhat amateurish way." *Ibid.*, p. 224.

³²Galbraith, p. 445.

³³Brecher, p. 614.

³⁴Gopal, p. 225.

³⁵Galbraith, p. 455.

³⁶Gopal, p. 228.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 228.

³⁸Galbraith, p. 486.

³⁹Gopal, pp. 228-229.

⁴⁰Galbraith, pp. 488-489.

⁴¹Brecher, p. 619.

⁴²Galbratih, p. 489.

⁴³Quoted in Brecher, p. 623.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 622.

⁴⁵Galbraith, p. 504.

⁴⁶Gopal, p. 255.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 256.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 251-252.

⁴⁹Galbraith, pp. 505-509.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 522.

⁵¹Gopal, p. 252.

⁵²Bowles, p. 440.

⁵³Ibid., p. 476.

⁵⁴Ibid, p. 481.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 483-484.

⁵⁶Quoted in Gopal, p. 230. Chinese leaders, particularly Liu Xiaogi, boasted that one of the chief purposes of China's military campaign had been to demolish India's "arrogance" and "illusions of grandeur"; they had "taught India a lesson, and if necessary would teach her a lesson again and again."

⁵⁷Bowles, pp. 436-437.

⁵⁸Sclesinger, p. 522.

⁵⁹Bowles, pp. 499-500.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 503.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 502.

⁶²Ibid., p. 504.

⁶³Ibid., p. 504.

CHAPTER FOUR

In this examination of the final period, 1969-72, I will focus upon the attitudes that characterized Mrs. Gandhi's and Richard Nixon's views of each other, and then move on to study the effects of the East Pakistan crisis of 1971.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

When the Nixon Administration entered office in January 1969, American foreign policy for the Indian sub-continent sought to build relations with both India and Pakistan. President Johnson had, in 1967, announced a new arms policy for the sub-continent. Exasperated with the dynamics of Indo-Pakistani antagonism, the Johnson Administration came to the conclusion that the United States had few direct interests in South Asia and should not have to make a choice between India and Pakistan; both countries were to be treated identically.¹ American grants of military equipment to both countries were terminated and US military missions were withdrawn. Further, the Johnson Administration decided that all subsequent requests for military equipment were to be treated on a case-by-case basis, with the intention of

improving relations with both India and Pakistan.

By the time President Nixon announced the approval of a "one-time exception" sale of military equipment to Pakistan in the summer of 1970, a number of unseen, though important, forces had begun to change the dynamics of Indo-US relations, the effects of which were not recognised till much later.

In India, Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, succeeded Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime Minister in 1966. Unlike her father, Mrs. Gandhi was a pragmatist, an individual uncommitted to the idealistic principles that had determined the focus of India's foreign policy in the years after independence. In the words of Surjit Mansingh, "it was enough for her to accept facts, adjust to them, and seek to use them to advantage; she did not project preconceived theories on the phenomenal world."² Mrs. Gandhi's main contribution to India's foreign policy was, to my mind, her recognition of the use of power as a crucial determinant in international relations. Unlike her predecessors, Mrs. Gandhi was more concerned with the tangible rather than moral face of foreign relations, a fact that was revealed in her handling of the Indo-Pakistan crisis of 1971.

Richard Nixon entered the White House with many preconceived notions about India. Unlike his Democratic predecessors, he was less susceptible to Indian claims of moral leadership, and regarded his predecessors' obsequiousness towards India as a prime example of "liberal

softheadedness."³ Nixon and Mrs. Gandhi, moreover, shared an extremely fractious personal relationship. Henry Kissinger, Nixon's Assistant for National Security Affairs, records that Nixon's comments after meetings with Mrs. Gandhi "were not always printable," and Christopher Van Hollen, Nixon's Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near and South Asian Affairs, notes that, "when Mrs. Gandhi's actions ran counter to White House desires, Nixon's customary sobriquet of 'that bitch' was replaced by more unprintable epithets."⁴

Pakistan, concurrently, was a country for which Nixon had special regard. It was one of the few countries where Nixon had been received with respect when he was out of office.

... the bluff, direct military chiefs of Pakistan were more congenial to him [Nixon] than the complex and apparently haughty Brahmin leaders of India.⁵

When President Yahya Khan visited Washington in October 1970, Nixon assured him that "nobody has occupied the White House who is friendlier to Pakistan."⁶

It is important to clarify these attitudes because they were among the guiding lights that determined American policies for the sub-continent during the India-Pakistan crisis of 1971, the subject of this chapter.

THE GENESIS OF THE CRISIS

It was virtually impossible to anticipate the explosive events of March 1971. On succeeding Ayub Khan as

President of Pakistan in 1969, General Yahya Khan publicly pledged the transfer of power to a civilian government elected on the basis of direct adult franchise. Since this chapter focusses upon the fall-out from the Pakistani general elections of 1970, I will sketch an outline of the crisis as it evolved.⁷

In the intense political campaign of 1969-70, the Awami League under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Mujib), campaigning on a six-point platform of regional autonomy for East Pakistan, won 167 out of the 169 seats it contested in the East, but made no impact on the West. Similarly, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, emerged in a dominant position in the West, winning 81 of the 138 seats allotted to West Pakistan. The PPP did not field any candidates in East Pakistan. Thus, according to the election results, the Awami League won a majority of the 313 seats in the National Assembly, giving Mujib the right to form a new government as Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Mujib refused to soften the Awami League's demand of greater regional autonomy for East Pakistan which would leave the central government with responsibility only in the fields of foreign policy and defense. Bhutto, on the other hand, was the advocate of a strong central government, and, viewing the Awami demand as tantamount to a threat of secession, he threatened to boycott any session of the National Assembly called before he reached a political understanding with Mujib. Yahya, caught in the

stalemate, did not know what to do. Although he did not hold Bhutto in very high esteem, he opposed the quasi-independence of the East demanded by Mujib.

Expecting the two leaders to iron out their differences, Yahya postponed the convening of the National Assembly, a move that antagonised the East. Hoping that a deadline would force the two political rivals to compromise, Yahya re-scheduled the National Assembly for 25 March, 1971.

In a final attempt to resolve the constitutional crisis, Yahya and Bhutto flew to Dacca to meet with Mujib. Bhutto, however, feared that a compromise would bring upon him the wrath of his supporters in West Pakistan. Mujib, similarly, could not control the momentum of the Bengali demand for an autonomous East Pakistan as the answer to their neglect by the more powerful West.

Unable to break the stalemate, and undoubtedly viewing Mujib's version of autonomy as tantamount to independence, Yahya arrested Mujib on 25 March and established military rule over East Pakistan to suppress the Awami sponsored political agitation. The army, drawn almost exclusively from the West, unleashed a reign of terror on East Pakistan, cracking down on the faculty and students of Dacca University, Bengalis in the police and armed services, and on all opponents of their regime. Faced with the genocidal oppression of the military regime, refugees began streaming across the border into India, forcing the crisis in Pakistan to assume an international nature.

INDIAN AND AMERICAN CONCERNS

With the military suppression of East Pakistan in March 1971, the United States was caught in a dilemma. While there was no doubt that the repression in East Pakistan was reaching genocidal proportions, the United States had few means by which to influence events in Pakistan. Even though there was widespread outrage in the American bureaucracy, press and Congress over the atrocities being committed in East Pakistan, the Nixon Administration was silent about these developments. As the carnage continued and the White House failed to issue a statement of condemnation, Consul General Archer Blood, from the American mission in Dacca, sent a strong telegram to Washington, signed by nineteen members of the Consulate-General, registering "strong dissent" with a policy that "serves neither our moral interests, broadly defined, nor our national interests, narrowly defined."⁸ Similarly, the US Ambassador to New Delhi, Kenneth Keating, reported to Washington that he was "deeply shocked at the massacre" and was "greatly concerned at the United States' vulnerability to damaging association with a reign of military terror." He urged the Administration to promptly and publicly condemn Yahya's move and to abrogate the 1970 "one-time exception" sale to Pakistan.⁹

Kissinger, in his spirited defense of White House policies during 1971 in his memoir, White House Years, explains the dilemma:

The United States could not condone a brutal military repression in which thousands of civilians were killed and from which millions fled to India for safety. There was no doubt about the strong-arm tactics of the Pakistani military. But Pakistan was our sole channel to China; once it was closed it would take months to make alternative arrangements.¹⁰

Van Hollen, in a devastating reply, challenges many of Kissinger's assumptions and conclusions as being factually inaccurate. Further, Van Hollen recognises that "in addition to the China initiative, Nixon's reaction to South Asia was influenced by his long-standing dislike for India and the Indians, and his warm feelings toward Pakistan."¹¹

Since there is no dispute over the fact that the White House's initial reaction to developments in East Pakistan was the result of the China initiative, it is pertinent to understand the Sino-US axis that was developing with Islamabad as the intermediary.

The opening to China was the major US diplomatic initiative in 1971. Since America did not officially recognise the People's Republic of China, Pakistan, because of its close ties with Beijing, served as the "go-between." By April 1971, Islamabad was not only Kissinger's point of contact but also the likely point of departure for his secret visit to China.¹² Given the fundamental importance of a diplomatic breakthrough to China, the White House was of the opinion that it could not afford to antagonise Yahya Khan of Pakistan, the United States' channel to China, and the latter's ally. The State

Department, totally ignorant of the secret China initiative--Secretary of State, William Rogers, only learned of the initiative in late June¹³-- moved on its own to impose a new arms embargo on Pakistan, including holding the equipment from the "one-time exception" in abeyance, thereby bringing it into bureaucratic conflict with the White House, represented by Kissinger.¹⁴

Kissinger contends that, in May 1971, the White House learned of an Indian decision to launch a lightning attack to take over East Pakistan, the first evidence they had that Indian plans could upset American geopolitical objectives. He writes:

We began increasingly to suspect that Mrs. Gandhi perceived a larger opportunity. As Pakistan grew more and more isolated internationally, she appeared to seek above all Pakistan's humiliation, perhaps trying to spread the centrifugal tendencies from East to West Pakistan.¹⁵

This, however, is not in keeping with the facts.

Grant Mouser, Political Officer in the United States Embassy in New Delhi during those tumultuous months of 1971, suggests that Kissinger, in White House Years, glosses over many of the facts in a retrospective attempt to justify his actions at a point when they were being increasingly criticized. He maintains that although everyone at the Embassy in New Delhi, like Kissinger in the White House, recognised the inevitability of East Pakistan's independence, officials at the Embassy knew of no such corroborating information indicating an Indian attack.¹⁶ Even Van Hollen, acknowledging that Indians

were engaged in military contingency planning, asserts that although Mrs. Gandhi was under strong political pressure to act more decisively, there was no evidence that she wanted to go to war in the summer of 1971.¹⁷ It is thus appropriate to turn our attention to India's interest in the East Pakistani crisis.

The Indian Government had, until March 1971, viewed developments in Pakistan as the internal affairs of a neighbouring country. Preoccupied with general elections in India, Mrs. Gandhi adopted a hands-off policy, and, in mid-March, Indian officials informed the United States that India favoured a united Pakistan.¹⁸

However, with a major influx of East Pakistani refugees into India at the end of March, and with the establishment of a Bangladesh government-in-exile on Indian soil, Mrs. Gandhi was forced to take cognizance of events in Pakistan and formulate a corresponding policy.¹⁹ Indistinguishable from the local Indian populace, the refugees had to be isolated to prevent them from disrupting Indian economic life and giving vent to existing dissidence in the Indian states bordering East Pakistan. Since tensions between Indian Bengalis and the local populations of Assam and other northeastern states already existed, there was constant fear that the addition of East Pakistani Bengali refugees would aggravate further the delicate political balance.²⁰ The financial crisis caused by almost ten million refugees, the danger of a deeper economic crisis through inflation and the cessation of

development, the fear of political disruption in states bordering East Pakistan where dissidence already existed, and the omnipresent fear of the effects a fusion of the radical left in West Bengal with the revolutionary youth of East Pakistan would cause, combined to awaken the Indian Government to the multi-layered threat the influx of refugees posed to broadly defined national security.²¹ India's principal concern became the return of refugees to East Pakistan.

While the Indian Government could have recognised the independence of Bangladesh and the legitimacy of the government-in-exile, this action would not have alleviated India's principal concern, the return of refugees. The answer, to India, lay in the formulation of a political solution in East Pakistan, the only method that would convince the refugees to return. Although there were officials who argued that India should recognise an independent Bangladesh, others reasoned that Pakistan could retaliate by 'recognising' Nagaland, an Indian state that had a secessionist movement. Moreover, an Indian military attack, if undertaken, had to guarantee success, and with the Chinese making threatening noises in the north, this option was bound to produce more problems rather than facilitate a solution.²²

Although Mrs. Gandhi's Congress party had won a decisive victory in the 1971 polls, the threat and urgency the existence of East Pakistani refugees posed to Indian stability made Mrs. Gandhi's position contingent upon her

ability to send them home.

Yahya Khan announced a plan on 28 June to transfer political power to a civilian government. This, however, did not provide a solution to the Indian problem. Since the Awami League had been outlawed in East Pakistan, no civilian government without the Awami League would induce a return of the refugees. The options open to India were obvious. While an independent Bangladesh under the Awami League was the only lasting political solution to the crisis in East Pakistan, India would not officially recognise an independent Bangladesh until Awami leaders demonstrated their ability to retain mass support and win control of East Pakistan, thus facilitating the return of the refugees.²³

Finally, there was the strategic factor as well. Although India and Pakistan had been antagonistic neighbours for over 23 years, an independent Bangladesh would not secure India's eastern border. While Kissinger claims that India sought Pakistan's humiliation, an uncertain future for East Pakistan under anyone other than Pakistan would not have consolidated India's strategic position. While there is no doubt in my mind that India welcomed an independent Bangladesh under the Awami League as it secured India's eastern front, the success of the Awami League, rather than a radical government, was essential if India was to favour a change to what could become a hostile East Pakistan.

As the analysis of the problem shows, both India and

the United States had vested interests in the political crisis in East Pakistan. However, while both governments recognised that an independent Bangladesh was inevitable, they did not share common interests.²⁴ The White House was primarily motivated by its desire to preserve Pakistan as its link with China, and was thus reluctant to force the pace of developments. India, on the other hand, sought to force the pace of developments in East Pakistan to facilitate the transfer of refugees. As is clearly evident, the United States and India had divergent interests in East Pakistan, as well as divergent methods to resolve the crisis.

GEOPOLITICAL CALCULATIONS

During the course of Kissinger's visit to the sub-continent in July 1971, two important developments took place. First, at his secret meeting with the Chinese, Chou En-lai informed Kissinger that China would not remain indifferent if India attacked Pakistan.²⁵ Second, after the announcement on 15 July of Nixon's forthcoming visit to China, Kissinger made it clear to India that Washington would not support it in the event of Chinese intervention.²⁶

A treaty between India and the Soviet Union had been under consideration for over a year. It was widely recognised that the main deterrent to an Indian attack of Pakistan was its fear of Chinese reprisal. Now, with what looked like an emerging Washington-Islamabad-Beijing axis,

a sense of insecurity overswept the Indian Government.²⁷

While the signing of an Indo-Soviet treaty was a plausible development in the near future, the fact that the treaty was signed in August was the culmination of the geostrategic developments that were taking place around India. More specifically, it was an insurance policy to deter China from attacking India.²⁸ As Van Hollen recognises:

The treaty gave Mrs. Gandhi, who was being attacked at home for a weak-kneed policy toward Pakistan, a diplomatic triumph by providing India with an offset to what many Indians perceived to be an emerging Washington-Islamabad-Beijing axis.²⁹

By signing a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviets, India strengthened its hand in promoting its national interests in the evolving politics of the sub-continent; if China raised the stakes, it risked Soviet reprisal. Moreover, it ensured an uninterrupted supply of military equipment to facilitate an invasion of East Pakistan, an option that was being regarded increasingly as the only solution to the crisis.

Although the White House saw the ultimate evolution of East Pakistan's independence as inevitable, it viewed the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty as having objectively increased the danger of war.³⁰ Kissinger argues:

The Soviet Union had seized a strategic opportunity. To demonstrate Chinese impotence and to humiliate a friend of both China and the United States proved too tempting. If China did nothing, it stood revealed as impotent; if China raised the ante, it risked Soviet reprisal. With the treaty,

Moscow threw a lighted match into a powdered keg.³¹

However, in this regard Kissinger was wrong. According to Grant Mouser, Kissinger was imposing a superpower rivalry on an essentially regional issue, the forces of which he did not quite comprehend.³² Although the treaty implied help in the event of Chinese involvement, the treaty implied neither unequivocal Soviet support for India nor a cessation of Moscow's efforts to encourage a political settlement. The Soviets favoured a settlement agreeable to the "entire people of Pakistan," and continued to provide economic assistance to them.³³

There is no doubt that the Nixon Administration had succeeded in persuading Yahya to soften his stand on a number of issues. However, Kissinger failed to recognise that the concessions the Pakistanis were willing to make were no longer relevant to the crisis in East Pakistan. By mid-October, the US had secured a timetable for political change from Yahya, a plan that allowed for the leading position in government to be held by an East Pakistani.³⁴ There was, however, no assurance that the civilian government Yahya planned for December would have included any Awami Leaguers who reflected the the views of Mujib, then under secret trial for treason. Moreover, since the Awami League had been banned, the most likely representation from the East would have been a puppet government, unreflective of the political aspirations of

the Bengalis.³⁵ Finally, since Mujib and the Bengalis were, by late 1971, demanding nothing less than complete independence, a demand neither Yahya nor Bhutto could have met, there was no solution available that would have satisfied both sides.

It was within this context that Mrs. Gandhi visited Washington in early November, a visit described by Kissinger as "the two most unfortunate meetings Nixon had with any foreign leader."³⁶ Nixon was unable to convince Mrs. Gandhi that the civilian government Yahya promised would represent Bengali self-determination.³⁷ Moreover, he believed that she purposely deceived him about Indian intentions because her generals were preparing military plans for West Pakistan while she was still in Washington.³⁸

By the middle of November, the inevitability of war was apparent. Van Hollen reasons that a number of factors combined to make the military option more attractive to India: unrelieved pressure of the refugees, a perceived lack of progress towards political accommodation in East Pakistan, assurances derived from the Indo-Soviet treaty, and the probability that the Chinese would not intervene.³⁹ Finally, Mrs. Gandhi had used her visit to Western capitals in early November to garner support for India's contention that the continuing threat to India's security, posed by the crisis in East Pakistan, gave New Delhi the "right to resolve the situation by any means" to ensure that the refugees returned.⁴⁰

Between 22 November and 3 December, Indian troops crossed the East Pakistani border on a number of occasions, ostensibly to quell the shelling of Indian territory from East Pakistan, but undoubtedly also to tighten the screws on the Pakistan army.⁴¹ On 3 December, the war formally began when Pakistan launched a major attack on eight Indian airfields in northern and western India, and limited strikes across the West Pakistan-India border. Yahya's desperate gamble in the west gave India the excuse she needed to launch a concerted offensive against East Pakistan, while committing herself to a "holding action" in the West.⁴²

Kissinger contends that once hostilities started, "we [Nixon and Kissinger] strove to preserve West Pakistan as an independent state, since we judged India's real aim was to encompass its disintegration."⁴³ The White House believed that India's design was to dismember West Pakistan and convert it into a "vassal state" by rendering it "impotent."⁴⁴ He credits this assumption to a "reliable" source, a report that Nixon and Kissinger were virtually alone in the United States in interpreting as they did.⁴⁵

Since the State Department did not share White House assumptions about India's intentions, American policy for the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 was centered in the White House, a development that led to a decision to order a naval task force to move towards the Bay of Bengal to scare off an Indian attack of West Pakistan.⁴⁶ Convinced that Indian intransigence had been fuelled by Moscow's highly "inflammatory role," a role that was seen to accomplish

the humiliation of both China and the United States, Kissinger viewed the war in a broad geopolitical context.

Our paramount concern transcended the sub-continent. The Soviet Union could have restrained India; it chose not to. It had, in fact, actively encouraged war by signing the Friendship Treaty, giving diplomatic support to India's maximum demands, airlifting military supplies, and pledging to veto inconvenient resolutions in the UN Security Council. The Soviets encouraged India to exploit Pakistan's travail in part to deliver a blow to our system of alliances, in even greater measure to demonstrate Chinese impotence. Since it was a common concern about Soviet power that had driven Peking and Washington together, a demonstration of American irrelevance would severely strain our precious new relationship with China.⁴⁷

Worried that a "client" Indian success would demonstrate the futility of reliance on either China or the United States as an ally, Kissinger perceived the Indo-Pakistan war as a "dress rehearsal for the Middle East in the spring of 1972," an area where US interests were considerably greater.⁴⁸

Finally, it was of paramount concern to the White House to ensure that the Chinese understood that the US was not in collusion with the Soviet Union.⁴⁹ When Kissinger met with Huang Hua in New York, the latter adopted a hard line that Kissinger interpreted as an indication that the Chinese might intervene militarily. Since Moscow had not replied positively to American demands to counsel restraint to the Indians, the White House, expecting Chinese intervention, now considered whether to assist China if the Soviet Union retaliated.⁵⁰ In Kissinger's words:

Nixon understood immediately that if the Soviet Union succeeded in humiliating China, all prospects for world equilibrium would disappear. He decided--and I fully agreed--that if the Soviet Union threatened China we would not stand idly by.... To provide some military means to give effect to our strategy and to reinforce the message to Moscow, Nixon now ordered the carrier task force to proceed through the Strait of Malacca and into the Bay of Bengal.⁵¹

As matters turned out, the Chinese reply from Beijing was not what the White House expected. On 14 December, Soviet representatives reported firm assurances that the Indian leadership had no plans of seizing West Pakistani territory. On 15 December, the Pakistani commander of East Pakistan surrendered to Indian forces, and, on 16 December, Mrs. Gandhi ordered an unconditional cease-fire in the West.

Kissinger contends that the Indian decision to order a cease-fire was a reluctant one resulting from Soviet pressure, which in turn grew out of American insistence, and the movement of the American fleet into the Bay of Bengal.⁵²

However, a 1978 Brookings Institution study of the US armed forces as a political instrument concluded its examination of the Enterprise deployment in 1971 by emphasizing that "Soviet and Indian support for a cease-fire was not the result of US military pressure generated by Task Force 74."⁵³ Moreover, Van Hollen asserts that, once the military issue in East Pakistan was resolved, the Soviet Union had been counselling India in

the direction of a cease-fire in the West all along, motivated by Soviet interests in South Asia and not American pressures.⁵⁴

Finally, there is no evidence to support Kissinger's claim that India sought the dismemberment of West Pakistan. Having shifted from a position of support for a united Pakistan, before April, to an independent Bangladesh under the Awami League, so as to guarantee both the return of refugees and India's eastern borders, India had already attained unquestionable regional dominance in the sub-continent.⁵⁵ Moreover, the dismemberment of West Pakistan into four separate states would have created enormous political instability along India's western flank and encouraged fissiparous tendencies within India. The argument that India did, indeed, have territorial designs on West Pakistan, is made even more implausible by the fact, which Kissinger fails to mention, that at the time the war ended, Indian forces were in control of approximately 2,500 square miles of West Pakistan, territory from which the Indian army voluntarily withdrew. It is, thus, not surprising that officials from the State Department and the Embassy in New Delhi did not pay much heed to Kissinger's "reliable" intelligence source.

RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

As this analysis of events shows, Nixon and Kissinger initially reacted to events in East Pakistan with China in mind, and to the Indo-Pakistan conflict on the basis of

calculations about a global strategic triangle between the United States, China and the Soviet Union. This was particularly unfortunate as it denied an appreciation of the more complex and deep rooted issues at stake in the sub-continent, a veritable world in itself.

By reacting to developments in South Asia from a geopolitical perspective, the United States clashed with the regional objectives India sought to achieve. The crisis, moreover, surfaced at a time when America was pursuing its China initiative, a policy being directed from the White House. While there is no denying that the opening to China was an issue of far greater strategic relevance to the United States than events in the sub-continent, because the China initiative was being formulated in the White House, events in South Asia came to be seen from the White House's geopolitical perspective. This perspective, however, clouded the White House's judgement and shielded it from from the regional realities of the sub-continent, thus obscuring its assessments. As Mouser points out, Kissinger viewed the countries of South Asia in much the same way as the major European powers had historically reacted to the Balkan states, a quarrelsome area that upset major power calculations and even caused wars in the nineteenth century.⁵⁶ The regional conflict, for the White House, was an event that diverted attention from America's opening to China and deliberations over Nixon's 1972 summit in Moscow. What the Rudolphs call "global parochialism" blinded Nixon and Kissinger, and

shaped their perceptions of events in South Asia in a way that was sure to make them clash with Indian perceptions.⁵⁷

While many of the White House's miscalculations stemmed from a misapplication of global philosophy to regional disputes, the fact that the State Department was being ignored in 1971 compounded the problem. Thus, although Nixon and Kissinger may have been correct in reasoning that China would react adversely to any hard stand the US adopted towards Pakistan, the White House-centered system was ill equipped to handle a multi-faceted regional crisis that had never been on the regular White House agenda.

The White House, as a result, looked upon India's interest in the crisis as an excuse to settle old scores by "dismembering" West Pakistan, and the relatively balanced nature of the Indo-Soviet relationship as an analogy for a Soviet "client" acting in concert with Moscow to "humiliate" American alliances. This geopolitical perspective denied an appreciation of regional realities that permitted solely Indian interests: the existence of refugees posed a threat to India, a balance it sought to redress; the dismemberment of Pakistan, however intense the Indo-Pakistani antagonism may have been, probably would have threatened Indian security rather than consolidated it.

Leaving aside the more complex issue of assessments and true intentions during 1971, there is an almost

unanimous verdict from both Indian and American scholars that American foreign policy for South Asia during the India-Pakistan crisis of 1971 was the result of three factors: America's China initiative; Nixon's personal dislike for India, in general, and Mrs. Gandhi, in particular; and the perception of a continued superpower rivalry in South Asia.⁵⁸ Thus, as a result of perceptions and a combination of these three factors, the United States terminated all economic assistance for India, "tilted" towards Pakistan, accused India of being the "aggressor" in the 1971 war, and, finally, Nixon ordered a Task Force headed by the USS Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal to intimidate India.⁵⁹

Passions, as a result of these developments, ran high in India. On 3 December, reacting to Nixon's threat that an Indian attack of Pakistan would result in the termination of American aid to India, Mrs. Gandhi told a gathering of Congress workers in New Delhi:

Times have changed in the last five years. If any country thinks that by calling us aggressor it can pressurize us to forget our national interests then that country is living in its own fool's paradise and it is welcome to that.... Today we will do what is best in our national interests and not what these so-called big nations would like us to do. We value their friendship, help and aid but we cannot forsake the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.⁶⁰

Similarly, an Indian newspaper, commenting on Indo-US relations, said:

One of the casualties of the Indo-Pakistani war is surely whatever little was left of Indo-American goodwill. The anti-India bias of President Nixon in the last eight months has already caused

serious damage. The unnecessary display of strength inherent in the despatch of the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal made things even worse. Little that the USA may now attempt by way of amends will ever restore it fully since Indian public opinion, even if public opinion is proverbially short, will not soon forget that President Nixon was apparently prepared to create a second Bay of Pigs in the sub-continent at a time when the freedom of 75 million people was at stake.⁶¹

As can be seen, Indo-American relations appeared to have reached their nadir by the end of 1971. The issue of greatest relevance to this thesis, as this analysis of events shows, is that relations in 1971 were determined by the international strategic environment. Indian and American strategic perceptions and interests diverged, and with the divergence of interests and perceptions over issues as wide as they were in 1971, relations plummeted.

However, as mentioned in Chapter One, irrespective of what the US position with regard to India was, the difference in status between the two countries forced India to regard the United States as a central figure in her foreign policy planning. In 1972, Mrs. Gandhi despatched her most senior foreign service bureaucrat, T.N. Kaul, to Washington as Ambassador in an effort to mend fences.

NOTES for CHAPTER FOUR

¹Surjit Mansingh, India's Search for Power (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1984), pp. 81-82.

²Ibid., p. 27. For an excellent analysis of Mrs. Gandhi's conduct of Indian foreign policy, see Shashi Tharoor, Reasons of State (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982).

³Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 848.

⁴Christopher Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited," Asian Survey, April 1980, p. 341.

⁵Kissinger, p. 849.

⁶Quoted in G.W. Choudhury, "Reflections on Sino-Pakistan Relations," Pacific Community, 7:2, January 1976, p. 266.

⁷For a more detailed account of the emergence of Bangladesh, see Rounaq Jahan, Pakistan: Failure in National Integration (Dacca: Oxford University Press, 1973), and Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath (Dacca: Bangladesh Books International, 1980).

⁸The text is in Lawrence Lifschultz, Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution (London: Zed Press, 1979), p. 158.

⁹Kissinger, p. 853.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 854.

¹¹Van Hollen, p. 341.

¹²Kissinger, pp. 854-855.

¹³Van Hollen, p. 343.

¹⁴Kissinger, p. 854.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 856.

¹⁶Grant E. Mouser III, Williamsburg, Virginia. Interview, April 1987.

¹⁷Van Hollen, p. 346.

¹⁸Kissinger, p. 852.

¹⁹After Mujib was arrested, the East Bengal Rifles, the East Bengal Regiment, and East Bengal police units mutinied. Major Ziaur Rahman (later President of Bangladesh) declared independence over Chittagong Radio on 27 March. Senior Awami League leaders escaped to India, and, in the absence of Mujib, set up a government-in-exile under Tajuddin Ahmad.

²⁰Mansingh, p. 852.

²¹Ibid., pp. 215-216.

²²Ibid., pp. 216-217.

²³Ibid., p. 217.

²⁴Kissinger, p. 860.

²⁵Ibid., p. 862.

²⁶Van Hollen, p. 348.

²⁷Mansingh, p. 143.

²⁸Ibid., p. 222.

²⁹Van Hollen, p. 347.

³⁰Kissinger, p. 866.

³¹Ibid., p. 867.

³²Personal interview.

³³Van Hollen, p. 348.

³⁴Kissinger, p. 876.

³⁵Van Hollen, p. 349.

³⁶Kissinger, p. 878.

³⁷Mansingh, p.882.

³⁸Richard Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), pp. 525-526.

³⁹Van Hollen, p. 350.

⁴⁰Mansingh, p. 223.

⁴¹Lachhman Singh, Indian Sword Strikes in East Pakistan (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), pp. 66-81.

⁴²Van Hollen, p. 351.

⁴³Kissinger, p. 886.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 889-902.

⁴⁵Van Hollen, p. 351.

⁴⁶Kissinger, p. 905.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 885-886.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 886.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 889.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 909-910.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 910.

⁵²Ibid., p. 913.

⁵³Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, Force Without War (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1978), p. 200.

⁵⁴Van Hollen, p. 356.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 352.

⁵⁶personal interview.

⁵⁷Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Holber Rudolph, The Regional Imperative (New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1980), p. 23.

⁵⁸Mansingh, pp. 85-91; Van Hollen, p. 341, 353, 355; Rudolph and Rudolph, pp. 22-25.

⁵⁹Kissinger, pp. 902-913. Henry Kissinger's infamous "tilt" statement came to public attention when the noted columnist, Jack Anderson, published it. On 3 December, Kissinger told a WSAG meeting: "I've been catching unshirted hell every half-hour from the President who says we're not tough enough. He really doesn't believe we're carrying out his wishes. He wants to tilt toward Pakistan and he believes that every briefing or statement is going the other way." He later added, "It's hard to tilt toward Pakistan, as the President wishes, if every time we take some action in relation to India we have to do the same for Pakistan." His sarcasm was directed at bureaucrats from the State Department who questioned the assessments on the Indo-Pakistan crisis. Ibid., p. 897.

⁶⁰Quoted in Statesman (Calcutta), 3 December 1971, p. 1.

⁶¹Ibid., 17 December 1971, p. 8.

CONCLUSION

Having reviewed the status of Indo-US relations between 1947 and 1972, we now turn our attention to an analysis of the principal factors that determined the course of these relations. What this thesis argues is that, because relations were never planned, they have been unpredictable. Because of the extremely limited contact between the two countries prior to 1947, and the different historical experiences and geographical locations of the two countries, Indo-US relations seldom were formed directly, as the product of a bilateral recognition of shared interests, but were left aside, ultimately to be moulded by the international strategic environment. Moreover, the uncharted and shifting pattern of Indo-US bilateral relations between 1947 and 1972 is the result of continuously changing perceptions by both countries during this period. Thus, bilateral relations between 1947 and 1972 were marked by a 'zig-zag' pattern.

By the time India emerged from colonial rule as a sovereign state in 1947, the United States was the world's leading diplomatic, economic and military power. Containing the twin threats of the Soviet Union and international communism had, by 1947, become the

corner-stone of American foreign policy. India, however, did not share this objective. As the first Asian nation to win its independence from her colonial rulers, fighting colonialism and representing Asian interests were the chief objectives of the new Indian government. Moreover, although India was clearly benevolent to the United States' global position, the perception of being regarded as truly independent precluded the possibility of a close association with the United States.

India and the United States, therefore, had separate interests and objectives, the result of different historical experiences, geographic locations, and the difference in status between the two countries. India, as a result, chose a policy of non-alignment from the military blocs to represent its interests, a deliberate choice to distance itself from the evolving nature of global politics. Having made this decision, a weak, newly independent India had little to offer the United States, a global power fully engaged in the Cold War.

The fall of China to communism in 1949 represented a watershed in American strategic thinking. The United States adopted NSC-68 as its strategic doctrine, and initially looked upon India as a potential Asian ally. India, however, was concurrently improving relations with its northern neighbour, and declared its Asian interests and objectives to be in congruence with those of communist China, interests of the latter that the US sought to deter.

The fall of China to communism, the explosion of a Soviet atomic bomb, and the evolving crisis in Korea dictated American foreign policy. Having decided upon a strategy of perimeter defense, the United States sought to recruit allies on the Asian mainland. India, however, by committing itself to a policy of non-alignment and friendship with China, disqualified itself from consideration, a development that led to its rival neighbour, Pakistan, entering a military pact with the United States in 1954.

Dulles regarded a policy of non-alignment as "immoral," a view that led to the isolation of India by the United States between 1954 and 1960. The summary of events supports the view that this isolation of India was the result of divergent strategic perceptions leading to divergent interests and objectives between the two countries, a situation that, in the 1950s, necessitated American indifference towards Indian interests.

John Kennedy entered the White House in 1961 with views on non-alignment and the Third World that differed fundamentally from those of the preceding administration. Convinced that the economic competition between India and China would determine the future of Asia, he committed himself to improving Indo-American bilateral relations. With China's attack of India in 1962, Nehru's Government came to share the American interest in opposing India's northern communist neighbour, a convergence of interests that facilitated United States' support of India in 1962.

The Harriman Mission, the most visible expression of American support of India in 1962, indicated to Nehru that long term US support had to be preceded by India resolving its long-standing dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir. Although this opposed declared Indian interests, India recognised that it was a necessary development in order to secure American assistance, thus leading to a shift in the Indian position on Kashmir.

After the 1962 conflict, Indian military preparedness had to be given a more realistic dimension, a development that required substantial American assistance. The Kennedy Administration was prepared to meet Indian requirements, and Nehru agreed to support the United States' position in Southeast Asia, a commitment he had refused to make in 1961. This shift in Indian perceptions was the result of the recognition that any potential treaty with the United States, as was being negotiated at the time, meant a more benevolent Indian view of American interests, a compromise Nehru was willing to make.

Even though deliberations between the United States and India in 1963-64 did not result in the signing of a treaty, the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 fits in well with my argument. When President Johnson, exasperated with Indian and Pakistani intransigence, imposed an arms embargo on the sub-continent in 1965, inherent in the decision was a belated American recognition that divergent American and sub-continental historical experiences and locations led to divergent strategic interests. Although the United States

provided military assistance to Pakistan to bolster the latter's defenses to contain a perceived northern communist threat, the 1965 war served as a realisation that while communism was the ostensible reason for the US-Pakistan treaty of 1954, Pakistan looked upon India, not communism, as its primary threat.

The third and final study, the 1971 East Pakistan crisis and the subsequent Indo-Pakistan war, is perhaps the best example of the divergence in interests and objectives between the United States and India.

The United States had a geopolitical interest in the crisis, while India's involvement stemmed from a more immediate regional perspective. Although the two countries were not pitted against each other, they defined their interests and objectives in a manner that encroached upon the other's interest. Thus, 1971 witnessed a period when the clash of interests and objectives, born out of divergent strategic perspectives, led to a period of extremely strained Indo-American bilateral relations. Even more interesting, from the perspective of this thesis, is the fact that this clash of interests was the result of perspectives made from divergent planes: a geopolitical perspective, one that takes the global equilibrium into consideration, versus a regional view. The difference in perspectives, moreover, was a manifestation of the divergence in strategic importance between the two countries: the United States was a superpower; India had regional aims and ambitions.

On 11 August, 1971, Kissinger notes, "Nixon admitted to the Senior Review Group that in Mrs. Gandhi's position he might pursue a similar course."¹ But he was not. Whilst Nixon may have understood Mrs. Gandhi's concerns and reasons for behaving as she did, India's actions, nevertheless, jeopardised American interests. Thus, the effect of the events of 1971 was a period of extremely strained bilateral relations.

In the final analysis, the contention that Indo-American relations were moulded by the international strategic environment holds true. Moreover, the period between 1947 and 1972 demonstrates that close bilateral relations hinged upon the convergence of strategic perceptions and interests. Thus, the characterization of Indo-US relations as a series of alternating currents is perhaps an apt one. The alternations, moreover, can be described as follows: security pacts vs. non-alignment (1947-54); friendship and convergence of interests (1961-64) vs. alienation (1954-60); global aspirations vs. regional realities (1971).

NOTES for CONCLUSION

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