

India's Non Aligned Nehruvian Legacy.

Written by Arnav ANJARIA

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India's foreign policy has been hugely influenced by Nehruvian ideals, he being one of the tallest Indian leaders, recognized as statesmen of great repute. Some of the preliminary traits of India's foreign policy were visible from 1946 when Nehru, as the leader of the Interim Government decided to organize the Asian Relations Conference in 1947 in New Delhi. The decision to organize the conference also reflected the messianic role that India was willing to play at the global level.

Another significant importance of this conference was an invitation extended to Tibet was invite as an Independent nation.[i] There were 4 Tibetan delegates who attended this conference. Thus Tibet's presence and the invitation to attend the conference remains a valid proof of evidence of Tibet's lost sovereignty for those who continue to struggle and advocate the idea of Tibetan independence.

Apparently India attained its Independence at a critical juncture in World History when the world was divided into two major, ideologically contrasting, power blocks- United States of America (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia (USSR) after the culmination of the Second World War in 1945. At this critical juncture when the world was divided into "two worlds" [ii]

India could not have either sided with West which comprised of the erstwhile colonial forces and also not with the Communist USSR. Thus this was the most striking aspect of Nehruvian foreign policy- Non Alignment. Non Alignment meant remaining independent in the conduct of external affairs. In fact it was considered as a logical extension of India's nationalism and also of its struggle against Racism, Colonialism and Imperialist forces. But before India could actually establish its foreign policy, there were two major conflicts that required the government to act upon and these conflicts in a way have also influenced the successive foreign policy issues. In 1948 the Kashmir crisis emerged. Kashmir was invaded by tribal fighters from Pakistan. This

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made the Maharaja to sign the accord of accession with India in exchange for the Military help that India extended to drive out the Pakistani Tribes. When India was on the verge of liberating the whole of Kashmir, Nehru approached the United Nations and internationalized the issue. Thus an immediate ceasefire was called for. Since then stalemate has prevailed over the issue of Kashmir.

Another significant issue was India's Recognition of the new Peoples Republic of China in 1950 and successively recognizing China's suzerainty over Tibet.[iii] Even though it is worth mentioning that in the initial days of Chinese aggression, Nehru had strongly condemned it and had called it as an "invasion". Thus this was the beginning of a seesaw Sino-Indian relationship that has undergone various changes. A significant aspect of India's foreign policy was also manifested in the Sino-Indian relationship in the form of 'Panchsheel' in 1954 when Prime Minister Nehru visited Peking. Panchsheel were 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence': [iv]

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
2. Mutual non-aggression,
3. Mutual non-interference in each others internal affairs,
4. Equality and mutual benefit, and
5. Peaceful co-existence

Nehru's optimism regarding "Panchsheel" was reflected in his famous speech that he delivered from Colombo in which he asserted that "If these principles were recognized in the mutual relations of all countries, then indeed there would hardly be any conflict and certainly no war." [v] But India's foreign policy always began at its borders. India was surrounded by Pakistan on the East and the West. Pakistan was a result of partition of India and ever since its emergence, it has always had an Anti-India stance in its conduct.

[vi]

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The peculiarity of Pakistan's emergence as a nation has been the basis of its foundation. Religion has been the foundation on which Pakistan has staked its claim for nationhood. In 1951 Pakistan organized the "Motamar"-Islamic conference which was attended by various Islamic countries.

[vii]

The conference was an effort on the part of Pakistan to advocate a greater Islamic solidarity and its say in the Islamic world. While India remained Non Aligned, Pakistan began to expand its ties with the United States. In 1954 Pakistan signed a Mutual Defense Agreement with the United States and subsequently became a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and CENTO.

KOREAN WAR

India's policy of Non Alignment was again brought to the test during the Korean War in 1950. India played a crucial role in the Korean crisis and grossly condemned the North Korean aggression in the United Nations and supporting the resolutions passed by the United Nations on the Korean War on the 25th and the 27th June. As India was also committed towards amicable resolution of the issue it did not support the United Nations resolution that was advocating military assistance for South Korea. This stand by India was also a reflection of its foreign policy commitment to restrain from attacking any other Asian nation. Moreover, India's Non Alignment was clearly reflected in this issue because rejecting this issue also meant rejecting a resolution that was supported by the United States. There were various reasons behind India's refusal to support the resolution. They were:-

1. India felt that military assistance was beyond her capacity.[viii]
2. India wanted to cultivate friendship with China. India thought that its acceptance of the resolution would make it a party to the war because the Korean crisis was becoming a part of rivalry between the two super powers. India argued that instead of the Nationalist China, Taiwan, the People's Republic of China should represent China in the UN for an early peaceful settlement of the Korean War.[ix]
3. India was too busy with its own socio-economic problems to participate in the war. For her socio-economic development, India needed peace, especially in Asia.[x]

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India's apprehension in supporting a resolution extending Military support to South Korea also emerged from the fact that any aggression across the 38th parallel would result in China entering the War. And ultimately China did enter the war. Thus Mainer times, India has been accused of ignoring the Korean war after China was declared as an aggressor. But after the war India played a major role in the armistice negotiations.[xi][xii] Even though India remained Non-Aligned on the Korean issue, after the passage of this resolution, India was criticized by China and USSR for acting on to United State's directions. But Still India was later made a part of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC). The NNRC was composed of Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and India. India's stand in the NNRC was applauded by both the contending sides.

Bandung

India under Nehru had always maintained a consistent policy in opposing the colonialist and the imperialist forces. India's rise amongst the International fraternity was also seen as it being the

protector of the several third world nations. Bandung conference help spread the idea of Non Alignment across various nations which had also recently gained independence. These nations mostly included those from Africa and Asia. Again it was the charismatic statesman Jawaharlal Nehru who played a prominent role in the Bandung conference. Other major statesmen who were a leading part of the Bandung conference were Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt, Chou En Lai, premier of China, Ho Chi Minh, prime minister of Vietnam, Kwame Nkrumah, prime minister of the Gold Coast (later Ghana) among many others. Thus Bandung actually helped, as Matthew Quest puts it, "forge the modern identity politics of race, religion and nationality." [xiii] Thus in total around twenty nine countries participated in the conference. Thus finally the outcome of the conference was a ten point declaration on promotion of world peace and cooperation.

Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations

- *Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations*

- *Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small*

- *Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country*

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- *Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself, singly or collectively, in conformity with the charter of the United Nations*

- *(a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve any particular*

interests of the big powers

- *(b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries*

- *Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country*

- *Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties own choice, in conformity with the charter of the United Nations*

- *Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation*

- *Respect for justice and international obligations.*

Just when Bandung emerged as a success for Nehru and the Non-Alignment, the Hungarian crisis of 1956 emerged as an eye opener as far as the future of Non Alignment was concerned. There was a revolt against the Soviet supported government in Hungary and thus that provoked the Soviets to militarily intervene in Hungary and suppress the revolt. India even opposed the General Assembly resolution in the United Nations which was asking for a UN supervised elections in Hungary. Because agreeing to such a demand would also compel India to adopt the same resolution on Kashmir or it may be compelled to adopt a resolution similar to that. Another reason for India's opposition to the UN intervention was its desire to not isolate the Soviet

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Union.

Therefore the years between 1950 to 1957 have marked the success of India's foreign policy in establishing itself as a nation having a say in the international system. Thanks to Nehru's charisma, India was looked upon by many a nations as a role model which could usher in the new era of change.

Conclusion

Even though Nehruvian Non Alignment was envisioned or was seen to be an idealist forum, it was in reality an amalgamation of realism and idealism. India's foreign policy stand on various events that took place across the globe in a way reflect that Non Alignment was an opportunistic policy wherein India acted according to the situation and in turn took the stand that satisfied its own vital interest. Neither as Alan Cassel's asserts in his book Ideology and International Relations "Nor did the non-alignment movement as a whole live up to the moralistic precepts with which Nehru had tried to invest it. From the start, some of its subscribers were unmistakably aligned with either the communist or eastern bloc. Furthermore, the non-aligned movement always contained a faction less interested in reducing international tension than in mobilizing the Third World against neocolonialism." Even though Alan Cassel's seems critical of the Non Alignment policy, one finds admiration for Nehru's earnest efforts in trying to set a new stream of thinking in International Politics. Non-Alignment and the Non Alignment that started to gain ground after the Bandung conference was actually centered around the personality cult of Jawaharlal Nehru. He envisioned a stature and to a certain extent also enjoyed a status of an enlightened statesman who was concerned with the idea of global unity. And thus it was more of the personality cults of Nehru or Nasser of Sukarno that popularized Non Alignment more than any substantial political breakthroughs as such.

At the end, one can say that Nehru's Non Alignment in some ways reflected his yearning to act as the mediator for all seasons. He sought to be the bridge between the Capitalist and the Communist world and to some extent he was successful like in Korea but at various points of time one also finds his own limitations in living up to his cherished dreams on the international stage. The Hungarian crisis and India's handling of that crisis is a reflection of the constraints that stood in line for a Non Aligned nation. SO Jawaharlal Nehru remains an omnipresent entity for any discourse on India's Foreign policy and the architect of India's unique foreign policy which stood on its own ground.

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[i] "FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE"- SHANKAR SHARAN, published by Tibetan Parliamentary & Policy Research Centre, 1997.

[ii] "two worlds"-India and World Politics-Michael Brecher,-1968,Oxford University Press, pg. 2,

[iii] Press Conference at Delhi, 6 January, 1950. File No. 43(102)50-PMS.

[iv] **INDIA** and **PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA** Agreement (with exchange of notes) on trade and intercourse between Tibet Region of China and

India. Signed at Peking, on **29** April 1954

<http://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20299/v299.pdf> page 57-81

[v] Nehru, "The Colombo Powers' Peace Efforts", broadcast from Colombo 2 May 1954, *Jawaha*

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3, *March 1953–August 1957* (New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1958), p. 253.

[vi] “**Pakistan: The Anti-India Identity**” By RSN Singh ,**Indian Defence Review, Issue: Vol. 23.4** , Oct-Dec 2008

[vii] http://www.dialogueonline.org/world_muslim_congress.htm

[viii]http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=9&ved=0CFYQFjAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.liberationwarmuseum.org%2Fpapers%2Fflwm_icgtj_2009_kim.pdf&rct=j&q=india%27s%20stand%20on%20korean%20war&ei=uvBvTp-HHYPZrQeHr5mSBw&usg=AFQjCNEvEewUsi3GNtbeWk6_5Yp_557y2Q&sig2=deK81v8OWYZcPf1aD0TBaA&cad=rja

[ix]http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=9&ved=0CFYQFjAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.liberationwarmuseum.org%2Fpapers%2Fflwm_icgtj_2009_kim.pdf&rct=j&q=india%27s%20stand%20on%20korean%20war&ei=uvBvTp-HHYPZrQeHr5mSBw&usg=AFQjCNEvEewUsi3GNtbeWk6_5Yp_557y2Q&sig2=deK81v8OWYZcPf1aD0TBaA&cad=rja

[x]http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=9&ved=0CFYQFjAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.liberationwarmuseum.org%2Fpapers%2Fflwm_icgtj_2009_kim.pdf&rct=j&q=india%27s%20stand%20on%20korean%20war&ei=uvBvTp-HHYPZrQeHr5mSBw&usg=AFQjCNEvEewUsi3GNtbeWk6_5Yp_557y2Q&sig2=deK81v8OWYZcPf1aD0TBaA&cad=rja

[xi] **Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Canada, the United Nations, and the Search for a Korean Armistice, 1952-53-Dr Greg Donaghy**

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CBkQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww>

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[xii] **“Peacekeeping without the Secretary-General: The Korean Armistice Arrangements”**
A Thesis by Squadron Leader Raymond C.Smith, Royal Australian Air Force

[xiii] **“The Lessons of the Bandung Conference”** Reviewing Richard Wright's *The Color Curtain* 40
Years Later by Matthew Quest