

**When Birds of a Feather Do Not Flock Together:
The Failure of Democratic India and Democratic America to Ally
During the Cold War**

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Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of History of Vanderbilt University In partial
fulfillment of the requirements For Honors in History
April 2020

On the basis of this thesis defended by the candidate on _____
we, the undersigned, recommend that the candidate be awarded _____ in
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Acknowledgements

This project would not have been anywhere near as presentable as it is now without the help and support of many people. Thank you to Professor Tasha Rijke-Epstein for not only helping me figure out the basis of a project and helping me through the prospectus process, but for being so flexible during your other classes so that I could meet thesis deadlines. Thank you so much to my third reader, Professor Samira Sheikh for helping me find new sources last minute and putting up with my awful rough drafts. I also thank you for rekindling my interest in Indian history and having such thought provoking discussions about both antiquity and modern problems during your classes. To Professor Joel Harrington, thank you for all your feedback and your patience in dealing with some of my unexplainable, energy drink fueled lapses in spelling, grammar, and capitalization. Your relentless attitude towards progress and making sure I was on track to finish ensured that I wouldn't be ashamed of what I turned in. Finally, thank you so much to Professor Thomas Schwartz. You are the sole reason I even decided to undertake this endeavor and despite your honest feedback and bluntness when it came to this project's shortcomings, I wouldn't choose any one else to be my advisor if I had to do this all over again. I enjoyed the opportunity to take your classes and talk with you all four years of my stint here at Vanderbilt.

From the Senior Thesis Class, a special thanks to Ellie and Nissim who went out of their way to offer detailed feedback and talk to me outside of class about the project.

Finally, thanks to my parents for working so hard to provide me with a fantastic education from Vanderbilt and for the opportunities to travel and do the research required for this project. Thanks to Sam, Abhishek, Davis, Sachin, and Charles for keeping me sane, pushing me forward, and for helping me edit the final product during this journey.

Introduction

At midnight on August 15, 1947¹, the British government granted independence to the inhabitants of British India and created two new dominions: India and Pakistan. The birth of these nations was tainted by conflict and a feud that lasts till today. It was also largely shaped by a new war that dominated the second half of the twentieth century, a Cold War between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R, former wartime allies. During this period, the entire world was a battlefield in the struggle between Superpowers, but outside of Afghanistan, South Asia is largely absent from the political and scholarly discourse about the Cold War. Obviously, the conflict between India and its neighbors has always been especially dangerous, especially in terms of its foundational conflict with Pakistan. Yet this conflict has largely been understood as purely regional and religious, and the presence of the US and USSR is usually minimized in studies of the various Indo-Pak wars.

Even more obscure is the rationale behind how these superpowers chose their proxies in this region. By all known metrics, India's conflicts with Communist China, Islamic Pakistan, and Maoist Rebels alongside its status as an industrializing liberal-democracy should have made it the perfect host for US partnership, yet it was overlooked by the United States who chose to become a patron of Pakistan. This choice has become especially problematic in the wake of

¹ Pakistan celebrates its Independence Day on the 14th of August, even though the India Independence Act of 1947 specifies the 15th. Independence was granted at midnight between the 14th and 15th. Since the Last Viceroy Lord Mountbatten could not be in two places at once, he administered Jinnah's oath on the 14th and Nehru's on the 15th. Even Jinnah mentions the 15th as Pakistan's Independence Day in his inaugural speech as Governor-General, but later on the difference in time zones between the two states, Jinnah's earlier oath ceremony, and the Islamic Calendar were all given as reasons for Pakistan retroactively citing the 14th as their Independence Day.

Pakistan's role in supporting the Taliban and sheltering US enemies such as Osama Bin Laden. Why did the US turn away from India and towards Pakistan? How did the perceptions and attitudes of both US and Indian leaders undermine the strategic and diplomatic interests that may have resulted in a robust US-Indian relationship?

Given this contentious relationship it is very important to explore how this happened. Early US-Indian relations were rather uneventful, especially before the 1930s, because India was seen solely as an extension of the British Empire so it was merely another aspect of dealing with Downing Street. This changed over time as the Indian Independence movement gained steam leading up to World War II. As men like Mahatma Gandhi became household names after gaining attention from world, Franklin Roosevelt had a new way to look at India. Still as the Second World War started to turn towards an allied victory and Roosevelt pushed for decolonization and independence during his various conferences with Allied leaders like Winston Churchill, India was still not a shining light that captivated Americans. Some of this had to do with men like Subhas Chandra Bose and their perceived treachery and status as collaborators in pursuing independence by seeking aid and materiel from the Axis. The immediate start of the Cold War was another factor in taking the limelight away from newly independent colonies like India.

This is the time period where the presidents themselves played an outsized role in governing foreign policy due to the expanded status of the executive branch and the United States in the world, so the personal convictions of presidents and their influences may have had undue impact in how they pursued different foreign policy goals. Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower had a chance to cultivate a real relationship with India since they were the first presidents to deal with a newly independent India. Yet neither of these men considered India a

priority and they largely set a status quo where India and Pakistan were not the main focus of the Cold War, especially once John Foster Dulles and other ardent Cold Warriors rejected non-binary stances—like nonalignment—in the pursuit of fighting communism. Yet the flexible and laissez-faire status quo set by Truman and Eisenhower opened the door for presidents who were truly invested in the idea of India. John F Kennedy and Richard Nixon had the opportunity to pour their personal passions and views on India and Pakistan into their foreign policy and these men had an entirely different trajectory in their pursuit of allies in South Asia and they made use of unique geopolitical opportunities that were turning points in what could have happened in order to cultivate a strong Indo-American relationship.

Hindu Mystics and Muslim Warriors

Race may not have dominated every aspect of both Indian and American attitudes towards foreign policy, but it is a factor that cannot be overlooked when presidents like Nixon and Kennedy were certainly influenced by their frame reference for what India and Pakistan represented. According to historian Andrew Rotter, “Race played a subtle but important role in United States-India relations... [since] White American policy makers inherited the racial assumptions of their British predecessors.”² In other words, there was a pronounced disconnect with American discussions of liberalism, freedom, and democracy when it came to the “colored” populations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. India, despite its strategic importance, was hardly a blip on the US strategic map after winning its independence in 1947, with its most important legacy to the western world was the association with Britain and Britain’s crumbling status in Asia. Outside of some literature, the only images of India before the twentieth century

² Andrew Jon Rotter. *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 149-150.

were through the speculative interest of scholars interested in eastern religion and philosophy and more individual analyses of prominent Indian leaders as they emerged onto the world stage.

Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* (1894) was the first exposure many Americans had to India, and Kipling found Hindus despicable and saw Indians as nothing more than another black race.³ Perhaps the most popular depiction of Indians in early twentieth-century America was in Helen Bannerman's *Little Black Sambo* (1899), a caricatured cartoon whose parents "Black Mumbo and Black Jumbo" let him wander around the woods in nothing more than a *dhoti* (loincloth) and the companionship of four tigers.⁴ Rotter suggests that many American readers thought it was yet another racist minstrel caricature of African Americans with its use of characters like "Black Jumbo" and "Black Mumbo" who had exaggerated lips and pitch black skin, and they had the book banned from many public libraries and stores.⁵

Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* (1927), categorically solidified a negative view of India. After a mere six months in India, Mayo felt confident enough to characterize the Indians as monstrous, forcefully declaring that the "only decent people in India [were] British..."⁶ Mayo was a notorious muckraker who had targeted all aspects of American corruption, both social and government, from the New York state police to American governance of the Philippines, yet her scathing and racist critique of India was her most enduring legacy.⁷ According to Rotter,

Mayo was an anglophile convinced that Western liberal supporters of the nationalist leader Mohandas Gandhi had misplaced their sympathies, and she fabricated evidence in order to prove India's lack of fitness for self-rule...thousands...embraced her conclusions...'the most discussed book of the last ten years' in London and the 'topic of conversation at every dinner party' in Simla...⁸

³ Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, 157-158.

⁴ Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, 150.

⁵ *ibid* 150-151

⁶ *ibid* 268

⁷ *ibid* 1-2

⁸ *ibid* 2-3

Obviously, Mayo's extreme stance was certainly not the norm, but with few resources to gauge the public at that time it still has to be considered. Other than "Little Black Sambo" and Rudyard Kipling, her works were the only readily available public discourse on India, so much so that when Harold Isaacs began his "polling" of prominent Americans in 1953, *Mother India* was the most commonly referenced single text and she was the most commonly cited author after Kipling in how prominent political and academic Americans viewed India.⁹

However, Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* was not a book that captured the cultural zeitgeist outside of academics, politicians, and bureaucrats. More typically, during the late 1940s and 1950s, Indian people were generally viewed in terms of exotic Hollywood stereotypes rather than as citizens of a newly free and non-aligned rising power. A man like Gandhi was praised in most American circles, but he was seen as the exception and not the rule of what Indians could achieve, especially after another Indian Hindu killed him without remorse. In general, to the Average American India was a faraway land that did not affect their lives nor their outlook on the world.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this collective view of India is the implicit comparison to Pakistan and the road to independence. The British Martial Race theory—the classification of Indians by caste, region, and religions most likely to be superior physical specimens prone to fighting prowess and violence—elevated the status of Muslims as near peers to white Europeans,¹⁰ something that may have influenced educated and politically connected Americans who already had a negative view of Hindus from earlier literature. Kaushik Roy is an

⁹ *ibid* 1,2, 150

¹⁰ Kaushik Roy. "Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880– 1918." *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 1314.

Indian historian who has written extensively on British interactions with the Indians in terms of race, military, and economic issues. Roy summarizes the predominant utilitarian and evangelical philosophy that dominated how race was viewed in the UK from the mid-19th century through the end of the Second World War, “Different races of people represented differing levels in the ladder of progress.”¹¹ This British preference for Muslims rooted in the East India Company’s reliance on Muslim rulers as proxies prior to the 1857 mutiny, nonetheless found its way into Hollywood through Rudyard Kipling’s writing.¹² Despite the perceived territorial and military triumph of Hindus against Muslims in the period immediately before partition, Americans in office still largely favored Britain granting India total independence, but the bloodbath of partition and assassination of Gandhi led many American elites to regret this sympathetic view.¹³ There were religious figures and members of the political establishment who believed India to be “the most stupendous fortress and citadel of ancient error and idolatry now in the world.”¹⁴ To some, at least the Pakistanis could claim an Abrahamic faith. Indians to many Americans, including those in the foreign service and state department, were at worst “the lesser breed”¹⁵ and at best “benighted heathen Hindus...”¹⁶ The fundamental lack of religious understanding combined with the India that American followed the British idea of “racial inferior[ity]... distinctions between themselves and Indians...often conflated Indian with Africans.”¹⁷

¹¹ Roy, “Race and Recruitment,” 1316.

¹² Isaacs, Harold R. *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958), 275-278.

¹³ The newly created India gained the majority of the military forces and territory that had constituted British India.

¹⁴ Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 257.

¹⁵ Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 271.

¹⁶ Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 259.

¹⁷ Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, 156-157.

Indians on the other hand, particularly among the social elites, struggled to view America through any lens without seeing the prominence of racial inequality, as the most common question Chester Bowles faced during his stint as Ambassador in the early 1950s—and later the early 1960s— was “what about America’s treatment of the negro?”¹⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru , India’s first Prime Minister, was convinced that racism and racial inequality were the preeminent factors that “typified American Society” and American foreign policy.¹⁹ Educated Indians could not get past, as African-American scholar J. Saunders Redding noted on a trip to India, “the implication and/or the declaration that American Color prejudice is...official American International policy...[as] international relations reflect our domestic order.”²⁰ Indians saw themselves as Caucasian but had solidarity and identified with the struggles of “other people of color in Asia, America, and Africa.”²¹

The most important legacy of these early perceptions of India and Pakistan were how they would go on to influence future politicians after independence. The idea of pagan India’s exoticism and femininity as compared to Pakistan’s more Abrahamic bluntness, martial leanings, and masculinity were undoubtedly involved in the formulation of picking an ally.²² This becomes especially obvious when the more left leaning and academically inclined Kennedy, Galbraith, and Bowles fawned over India—whose liberal leaders flirted with economic and social reforms—while the more masculine obsessed and martially influenced Dulles Brothers, Nixon, and Kissinger found an ally in Pakistan—whose religiously conservative military dictatorship made it a staunch enemy of communism.

¹⁸ *ibid* 151-152

¹⁹ *ibid* 152-153

²⁰ *ibid* 153

²¹ *ibid* 155

²² Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 301, 401-403.

Historiography

Scholarly literature on India and Pakistan's conflict has been mostly limited to partition era conflicts, analysis purely based on Indian and Pakistani perceptions, or post-1980 wars when both rivals became or were becoming fledgling nuclear powers. Therefore, most discussions of the 1962 Sino-Indian War and India's role in the 1971 Bangladeshi War of Independence have limited usefulness for this thesis, but there are a few outstanding works that provide much of the background knowledge required to analyze the US role in South Asia. Robert McMahon's *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (1994) serves as the overarching framework that contextualizes the US role in these conflicts between 1948 and 1965. There are other articles and books used in this thesis like *The Hope and the Reality: U.S.-Indian relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (1992), but due to their niche uses within the project they are not present in this section.

Almost all of the books chosen as secondary sources—with the exceptions of some memoirs—are pre-1995 which may be troubling to some. Indo-Pak relations were of great concern in the 1980s and 1990s as both were fledgling nuclear powers and increasingly potent conventional militaries. Especially in terms of prominent western historians, 1995—with Engerman as an obvious exception—seems to be the cutoff for most of the important analysis of the US India relationship but these books are still great tools for contextualizing the archival sources. It is not an area of strategic importance now as the Indian and Pakistani economies keep expanding at an astonishing rate and the military situation seems to be less precarious, nor is it prudent for scholars to focus on Indo-Pak Wars when the new concern is a deteriorating US and Pakistan relationship in the wake of 9/11, the assassination of Bin Laden, and Pakistani support of extremist non-state actors.

The most important scholar on the US role in South Asia is Robert McMahon, and McMahon's *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* is not only the definitive work on the subject, but it also explores the cyclical and somewhat eclectic nature of the US's patronage of India and Pakistan, from the immediate aftermath of partition through the 1962 war and Johnson administration. It also provides key contextual and background information about the US, India, and Pakistan. The one main criticism of McMahon is that he defaults to a "great man" framework for his historical analysis, but that is also a criticism that could be applied to this thesis. Still, great man history is a useful tool to explore the direct impact of individual leaders and McMahon still highlights the subjective nature of Cold War diplomacy and hints at its long-lasting consequences in terms of geopolitical alliances and the growth of extremism in the region as a direct result of the US-Pakistan relationship cultivated in this era.

David Engerman's *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (2018) is groundbreaking in his use of different resources from many nations and it is the most recent scholarship on this issue; his US sources came from many of the same archives as this project. However, his scope and focus is entirely different, and therefore the selection of primary documents is also slightly different. His interest in aid and the minute details like currency exchanges as parts of arms deals allows for a different perspective, and so one focused on presidential interest and military alliances is still a valuable and unique contribution. He provides a very charismatic argument about how aid politics took options away from India in terms of negotiating with the great powers, and how the strings attached to US aid inadvertently sent India even further towards the Soviet Union. His book is very sympathetic to the idea that India stubbornly stood its ground on nonalignment and even courted Soviet aid due to the double-edged sword—in terms of corporate lobbying and demands—that came along with

American and British economic and military aid. Due to his focus on broad aid programs and food programs especially under Eisenhower and Johnson, Engerman's book does not fit into the mold of looking at outlying presidential figures like Nixon and Kennedy so he is cited sparingly.

British journalist Neville Maxwell's controversial work, *India's China War* (1970), on the 1962 war was long the leading account of the Sino Indian War and was reputedly a favorite of Henry Kissinger. It was the definitive authority on the 1962 for most government leaders and some western scholars despite its mix of conjecture and history, because it was the one of few well known studies of the conflict by known western figure for at least a decade, despite pushback from Indian scholars on its merits. As the main South Asia correspondent for *The Times* before and during the 1962 war, Maxwell spent time in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh (then East-Pakistan), and Nepal. He was well known for offering analysis and op-eds on issues like the inevitable failure of Indian Democracy, Pakistani Non-Proliferation, and an assured Pakistani triumph in the next Indo-Pak War, were in hindsight almost all completely incorrect. Its pro-China tilt and attribution of blame to Nehru is useful in analyzing how the Nixon Administration sought information that would portray India in a negative light during the 1962 conflict.

Steven A. Hoffman's *India and the China Crisis* (1990) is almost a direct refutation of Maxwell's book, but only of his misguided presumptions and policy assumptions. Hoffman's book well-argued and researched, but Maxwell, in a review, diminished Hoffman as a mere revisionist for not taking Chinese arguments and testimony at face value like Maxwell himself had.²³ Instead, Hoffman weighs Indian sources and uses the political science models to argue that blame in the Sino-Indian War was on both parties and due to the intentionally confusing borders

²³ Neville Maxwell, "Fresh Insights into India's Boundary Claims." *Economic and Political Weekly* 25, no. 44 (1990): 2425-427. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4396932>.

drawn by the British during Partition. It is definitely a more evenly researched and less pro-China angle, as it rides a fine line between Maxwell's position as a Chinese mouthpiece and Indian historians' biases towards India.²⁴ It has surpassed Maxwell's book as the definite record of the Sino-Indian War, and its use in this project is to refute and illustrate the type of information, or misinformation, that was used during the Nixon administration's quest against India.

The secondary literature surrounding the US involvement, or lack thereof, in the 1971 Bangladeshi War of Independence is sparser, yet deeply personal and based on the experiences of individuals. American Consul General Archer Blood's *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh* (2002) and Gary Bass's *The Blood Telegram* (2014) both deal with Blood's famous telegram from Dhaka to Washington DC in which almost the entire US diplomatic staff of the consulate mutinied and dissented over Nixon's willful ignorance of the Pakistani Army's genocide in East Bangladesh as a way of maintaining relations with China. Bass's book is a more explicit and politically tinged condemnation and investigation of Nixon and Kissinger's role in not only undermining the US foreign service in Dhaka, but their rejection of human rights and morality as corner stones of Cold War US foreign policy. The final piece in this puzzle is Srinath Raghavan's *1971 A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, which provides the perspective and rationale of an Indian diplomat directly involved in both the diplomatic lead up to the declaration of an Independent Bangladesh and the resulting war. The triumvirate of books essentially complements the available US diplomatic documents to create a personal account of how the US' prolonged ignorance of and delayed intervention in Pakistan's civil War in

²⁴ Arthur G. Rubinoff, *International Journal* 46, no. 2 (1991): 357-61. Accessed April 19, 2020. doi:10.2307/40202868.

Bangladesh fundamentally de-stabilized South Asia and pushed India into finally swing entirely towards the Soviet Union.

The closest scholars have come to the goals of this project are Bruce Riedel in *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War* (2013) and Dennis Kux in *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies* (1992). Despite Riedel's success in characterizing Kennedy's goals in South Asia and drive against China, he glosses over the personal ambitions of JFK to more closely explore Kennedy's advisors and his overall standing in the spectrum of different politicians and "cold warriors" during the 1950s and 1960s. Kux is very detailed and captivating, due specifically to his job as a member of state department stationed in South Asia during much of the Kennedy and Nixon Administrations. While he writes an extensive tome on the entire period of US and Indian relations from Roosevelt to H.W. Bush, his optimistic harping on future relations and extensive shifting of blame from the influence of important figures to overarching ideological disagreements leaves it lacking for this project. Kux is also one of the few writers so far to argue that Nixon's administration failed in trying to overwhelmingly push the US towards Pakistan.

The use of archival material from the John F Kennedy Presidential Library and the Richard Nixon Presidential Library also supplements available state department records from the Foreign Relations Series of the United States (FRUS). The rolling basis of US declassifications opened up many documents specific to the Sino-Indian War and Indo-Pak War of 1971 that were previously classified, especially in the 1990s when most of the current scholarship was written. At the presidential libraries, specifically, many of the boxes and folders relevant to exploring presidential input were marked as recently declassified or reclassified (anything from the last 15 years) and still had many items that were heavily redacted. These documents frame the thesis

because they contain exchanges and revelations not present in some of the secondary literature, and they contribute to the idea of looking at foreign policy with the chief executive in mind. A presidential analysis opens up the possibilities of human error and individual judgement and preference that disappear in institutional reviews and lofty overviews that focus on continuity, ideology, and providing answers to ages old questions with a modern omniscience. The presidential analysis locks this project into using sources and knowledge that decision makers in the time period were influenced by and actively using. The primary documents also allow a focus on specific moments, and how they may have been seen as turning points by people as they were happening.

There are definitely flaws with the primary documents, as most do not mention names or subsections within the State Department, unless there it was a major figure like Galbraith who wrote or received the document. The primary sources used by McMahon and Engermann are not cited heavily in this thesis, because they are either inaccessible or the primary research done specifically for this project focuses on different aspects of foreign policy. To make this distinction, the heavy the primary source analysis comes later in the Kennedy and Nixon chapters. This is to allow the development of major characters and a general contextualization of the time period to familiarize the reader, while also making use of the secondary sources.

Unique Contribution

India and Pakistan's existential conflict with each other is something most people know about and the US various schemes in the fight against communism are also well ingrained in popular history by now. Robert McMahon gave a vast overview while David Engerman really broke down the finest details of Aid politics and the use of money as a weapon, so how is a rather limited presidential analysis unique? By focusing specifically on the two presidential

outliers—Kennedy and Nixon- when it came to South Asia allows a new focus on their personal contributions, attitudes, and reasons for entering the South Asian Quagmire and picking a side.

Unlike scholarly research on a single president, this project is able to showcase the outliers in the greater context of their predecessors and successors while not becoming lost in the small details that tend to dominate presidential biographies or overviews that span too long a timeframe.

There is substantial exploration of US geopolitics in South Asia by scholars like McMahon, Engerman, and Riedel, but nothing really pins the blame on US leadership for allowing the relationship to flounder, in favor of more petty goals. What makes this project unique is the focus on both Nixon and Kennedy as presidents who departed from the status quo set by Eisenhower and Truman. This project intends to bridge the gap in the understanding of how two pivotal moments in the relationship between India and the United States led to today's status quo. This thesis will fully explore just how critical the personal values and perceptions of John F Kennedy and Richard Nixon were in determining the long-term trajectory of US foreign Policy in critical areas like South Asia, and how these same goals were undermined by the bureaucracy's role in promoting stability and consistency in US foreign policy.

Chp. 1 Indians: Friend or Foe?

...India and the United States of America are at opposite ends of the globe...one barely impinges on the consciousness of the other's population. [Therefore] Contacts between them are the result of human endeavor rather than natural circumstance— Surjit Mansingh ²⁵

India's tale of liberation from Britain, despite its parallels to the US' inception, never captured the American eye, especially not after the US rise to superpower status from World War II and the chaos of the post-war nation building campaign. Yet India and Pakistan's early explosive conflict over Kashmir made clear to Truman and Eisenhower that South Asia would be an important battleground for allies in the already obvious beginnings of the Cold War. Kashmir was already shaping up to be an issue of international importance, and India and Pakistan's bellicose attitudes threatened the stability of the entire region. If there could be no peace between them, one of these fledgling countries had to become a US ally and partner in shaping the trajectory of the region. With a choice between a Muslim, conservative Pakistan and a secular, somewhat socialist India, the first two American presidents to deal with the issue were rather indifferent towards who would become an American ally. Over time, perceptions about race, the issue of Kashmir in the UN, and ultimately which country was more willing to beg for support became the dominating aspects of America's aid and alliance policies in South Asia under Truman and Eisenhower. They both had their differences, namely Truman's more pro-India Secretary of State and Ambassador compared to Eisenhower's advisors and idea of dogmatic Foreign Policy. The battle between India and Pakistan in US hearts and minds was split along racial, ideological, and pragmatic lines as well as who was more willing to align with the US grand strategy without asking questions.

²⁵ Surjit Mansingh "India and the United States," in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years*. edited by B.R. Nanda (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), 150.

The Legacy of British Colonialism and the Emergence of Gandhi

In terms of Indian leaders themselves, Americans remained largely ignorant of the freedom movement before Gandhi rose to global prominence and despite his relative insignificance within the internal structures of the Indian liberation movement beyond the status of a figurehead, he brought the world's eyes to Indian leaders. Gandhi was lauded for his commitment to nonviolence and social justice in the wake of British violence. It was a cartoonish David and Goliath understanding of this puny old man standing up to the British behemoth, and it stirred patriotic sentiment of many Americans and the popular history of yeoman farmers and minute men defeating the British army to win America's freedom.²⁶

Gandhi's march to the sea was seen as a turning point in American perceptions of British rule in India. From that point on, the US State department through their consulates in British India focused their efforts on Gandhi and used him as the indicator of attitudes in the greater freedom movement.²⁷ As early as 1942, various state department officials in clearly higher ranking but unclear positions throughout consulates in British India kept tabs on Gandhi and debated on how to present him to Franklin Roosevelt.²⁸ The US State Department Officer in Charge in New Delhi, George Merrell, took personal interest in tracking Gandhi and his nonviolent Civil Disobedience. He saw Gandhi's effectiveness in rallying Indians and foreigners to the cause of independence and he started to raise alarm about the consequences if Britain

²⁶ Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 300.

²⁷ G. Bernard Noble, E.R. Perkins, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1942, General, Volume I, The British Commonwealth, the Far East* Editors: G. Bernard Noble, E.R. Perkins (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), Document 559 Merrell to President and Secretary of State.

²⁸ The men in these memos, aside from the Secretary of State, all seem to be high ranking members of the State Department. This is because they throw out ideas and solutions directly to the Sec. of State rather than an immediate superior. However, their exact job titles and descriptions have been rather elusive.

continued to ignore Gandhi or decided to crackdown.²⁹ In 1943, Acting Consul General of Bombay Howard Donovan urged his superiors at the State Department and the Secretary of Himself to see Gandhi as a de facto leader of many Indians and help pressure the British Government into giving into the demands of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress.³⁰ Yet despite Gandhi's somewhat successful record of bringing American Eyes to India, Nehru would come to determine the long term impressions of American leaders and would steadily undo all of Gandhi's progress in shifting political and bureaucratic perceptions of India within the halls of DC.

Nehru: India's English-Educated Anti-Americanist

Jawaharlal Nehru—the de facto leader of the Indian nationalists and chief architect of the independence movement and later the Prime Minister—dominated India's foreign policy from shortly before independence until his death. During this time, his peculiarities and perceptions of America came to define the Indo-American relationship. Nehru's tenure was also moment of comparison for outsiders who saw a change from the Gandhian India they had imagined during the freedom struggle and the more *Realpolitik* occurrences under Nehru. Nehru was either loved or bitterly despised, mostly along partisan lines. American liberals, especially the Chester Bowles' Wing of the Democratic Party loved the “aristocratic rebel” and nationalist who pushed a secular unification in the pursuit of independence.³¹ His strongest admirers commended both his leadership and commitment to nonalignment.³² Men like Bowles admired Nehru's vision for an independent India, comparing his goal for idealistic implementation of certain socialistic

²⁹ *FRUS* Document 559 Merrell to President and Secretary of State

³⁰ L. Evans, R.R. Goodwin, E.R. Perkins, F.C. Prescott ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1943, Volume IV, The Near East, and Africa, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964), Document 397 Donovan to Sec of State 1943.

³¹ Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 304.

³² Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 306-308.

practices as a version of America's own New Deal.³³ The fans of Nehru, despite their status in Congress lacked the will and political capital to steer foreign policy in favor of India until John F. Kennedy came into power.³⁴ But praise was not universal, even among Democrats. His friendliest critics admired the man but criticized his quickness in critiquing the US as well as his arrogance.³⁵ Given the backdrop of the Cold War, Nehru's socialistic tendencies pushed Republicans and other conservatives into an Anti-Indian viewpoint. The Republicans and Conservative Democrats in Isaacs' study— as well as John Foster Dulles—were much less complimentary, they saw him as someone who built a career by “[taking] a free ride on the prestige of Gandhi...keeping himself on top of a dung heap...he accepts communism...arrogant, anti-American...high-class, aristocratic, stiff-necked Hindu...”³⁶

Nehru and his ministers, at least initially, were deeply anti-American mostly due to their days as students in the United Kingdom and their struggles as freedom fighters against the West. Jawaharlal Nehru was sent to Britain by his father to be educated. His father initially secured his son a seat at Harrow —one of the most elite secondary schools in Britain with alumni including the likes of Prime Ministers Stanley Baldwin and Winston Churchill, Jordan's King Hussein, King Ghazi and King Faisal II of Iraq, and various other politicians, military officers, and members of global royalty.³⁷ During his time at Harrow, the British position in India grew increasingly aggressive and in 1905 there was a the “heavy-handed partitioning of the province

³³ Surjit Mansingh “India and the United States,” in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years*. edited by B.R. Nanda (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), 155

³⁴ *ibid.* 155

³⁵ Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 312-313.

³⁶ Isaacs, *Scratches on our Minds*, 312.

³⁷ Sarvepalli Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography Vol I-III*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 6-7

of Bengal.”³⁸ This was a catalyst that forced Nehru to reject the more moderate, constitutionalist practices of protest employed by his peers at Harrow and instead yearn for more extremist, and perhaps effective, challenges to British rule.³⁹

This train of thought continued and became broadly anti-imperial and anti-western by the time he enrolled in Trinity College at Cambridge University. While at Cambridge and in his pursuit of a barrister career, Nehru grew fascinated with William Morris—a 19th century British textile designer and socialist.⁴⁰ Despite fundamental problems with Britain and English High society, Nehru continued on the path to being a British gentleman by joining the Trinity Boat Club and attempting to join the University Mounted Infantry, and he culminated his education by joining the renowned and conservative Honourable Society of the Inner Temple—one of four inns a prospective British lawyer has to join to be called to the bar and practice.⁴¹ He returned to India with an odd duality: “he brought back with him attachments to Britain... values he considered British,” and at the same time fought against British rule, institutions and social structures in India.⁴² He considered himself an Englishman to the core, and being dismissive and resentful of America’s growing presence in the world was one of the pre-requisites. “Despite the cultural preferences of a westernized elite in India, its ties were with the British rather than America.”⁴³

During his days as a member of the Indian National Congress even before independence, Nehru traveled extensively throughout Asia and Europe in the 1920s. He was adept enough to

³⁸ Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 6.

³⁹ Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 7.

⁴⁰ Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 7-8.

⁴¹ Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 8.

⁴² Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 9.

⁴³ Surjit Mansingh “India and the United States,” in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years*. edited by B.R. Nanda (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), 154

foresee the fall of Britain as a global hegemon and predict the rise of the US as the lord of Europe and the world, but he also predicted the collapse of the Kuomintang in China and the rise of a Soviet-Chinese communist bloc.⁴⁴ But in these predictions, Nehru was careful to ascribe imperialist intentions to the United States' increasing presence in the world. Nehru was made an honorary President of the League Against Imperialism in 1927 and during this meeting in Brussels his love of the Soviet Union began in earnest.⁴⁵ In his later reflections on the Conference and his idealistic notions of Lenin, Nehru asserted that it convinced him to no longer be a slave of the Gandhian independence movement.⁴⁶

A free, democratic, socialist India must take the lead in designing a new world order that promotes these qualities for people everywhere. India must translate Gandhian ideals into practical procedures⁴⁷

Besides learned anti-Americanism, the defining attribute of Nehru—even before his rise to the premiership— was his idealistic vision of nationalism and what it meant for an independent India. While he rejected the western inability to deal with ambiguity in terms of concepts like socialism, Nehru himself was unable to deal with the hypocrisy of the West in terms of championing freedom while perpetrating colonialism and imperialism.⁴⁸ His major break with Gandhi illustrated this commitment to an idea beyond just independence.

At the age of thirty-eight, Jawaharlal had decided that nationalism per se—in other words, struggling for independence from Great Britain was not enough. Nationalism must have a "social content" and an economic agenda, and socialism in some form—adapted to Indian conditions—could supply that content... Violence was common in both places, but the violence of the

⁴⁴ Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 53-55

⁴⁵ Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 56-57.

⁴⁶ Gopal. *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 58.

⁴⁷ Sumit Ganguly and Harold Gould. *The Hope and the Reality: US-Indian Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (1992), 30.

⁴⁸ Sumit Ganguly and Harold Gould, *The Hope and the Reality*, 22.

capitalist order seemed inherent in it; whilst the violence of Russia, bad enough though it was, aimed at a new order based on peace and cooperation and real freedom for the masses...⁴⁹

It was this fundamental inability to understand the intellectual journey that formed the basis of Nehru's naïve idealism that made him such an enigma to the West.

Nehru surpassed Gandhi in influence and standing within the Indian National Congress and the larger freedom movement as early as the 1920s, but it was not until the 1940s that Americans caught on to Gandhi's diminished role. Nehru brought with him to the premiership a distrust of American not solely due to his education, but because of the history of the West in India and his idealistic yearning about socialism's more egalitarian and utopian values. In the post-WW2 boom, Nehru and his compatriots ruled without any real challenge and immediately targeted American aid and corporations as the same "nascent imperialism" as the British East India Company's beginnings.⁵⁰ Yet India continued with a sort of ambivalence where they threatened socialization of Indian labor and the nationalization of industries while also courting American companies and capital.⁵¹ Furthermore, India's aggressive stance against American bases in Asia and Pakistan's paranoia about its neighbor and willingness to accept America led to a fruit fruitful relations between the US and the Pakistan. During Gandhi's Quit India Movement and the failed Cripps Mission to India (attempts by the British to gain outright Indian support in World War II and the resulting Indian boycott of labor and British goods), Americans also turned their sympathy for Gandhi to outright opposition due to a perceived betrayal of the

⁴⁹ Sumit Ganguly and Harold Gould, *The Hope and the Reality*, 23

⁵⁰ Surjit Mansingh "India and the United States," in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years*. edited by B.R. Nanda (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), 153

⁵¹ Surjit Mansingh "India and the United States," in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years*. edited by B.R. Nanda (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), 153

allies.⁵² However, Nehru opposed the Quit India movement because he saw Roosevelt as a more persuasive figure to the British and therefore a better guarantor of Indian Independence than Gandhi.⁵³ Still while he respected President Roosevelt, Nehru was suspicious of America. His first visit to the United States was a disaster as Nehru was sensitive to the “militarism” of United States politics and, “with the wisdom of hindsight we can surmise that Nehru instinctively reacted against...America[n]...”⁵⁴ There were compounding levels of animosity and Nehru’s choice of advisors only added fuel to the fire. V.K. Krishna Menon, who held various ministry positions during Nehru’s tenure but most famously played a pivotal role in the disastrous jet deal of JFK’s era, took an even more radical stance against the US than even Nehru.⁵⁵ Perhaps the only senior government officials of note with even a somewhat positive view of America were the Indian Ambassadors to the US Vijayalakshmi Pandit and G.L. Mehta, but both colored their experiences were colored due to perceived American intolerance and racism.⁵⁶

Truman and the Sub-continent: Indifference Towards Sleeping Giants

The conclusion of World War II and the start of the Cold War forced President Truman to push the United States into adopting a binary foreign policy, based on dividing countries into US or Soviet camps. This dichotomy made it near impossible to deal with newly formed entities, mostly Post-Colonial or ethnic states like—Pakistan and India— with views that would not fit into the binary. India especially clung to the non-alignment of Nehru, making it a lucrative point of contention for both the Soviets and Americans. While Truman led the charge on foreign

⁵² Surjit Mansingh “India and the United States,” in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Nehru Years*. edited by B.R. Nanda (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976), 152-153

⁵³ Sumit Ganguly and Harold Gould, *The Hope and the Reality*, 27.

⁵⁴ Surjit Mansingh “India and the United States,”), 153.

⁵⁵ Surjit Mansingh “India and the United States,”), 154.

⁵⁶ Surjit Mansingh “India and the United States,”), 154.

policy, in terms of India and Pakistan he was rather indifferent about who would rise to level of US ally. There was an initial tilt towards India and its democratic nature, but things like Kashmir dispute with Pakistan and the Korean Conflict quickly muddied the waters.

The rollercoaster of US relations with India started in 1948 shortly after Indian independence the previous year. Truman's desire to force India away from staunch non-alignment can be credited for both the first bonds and rifts between the US and India. Many in the US thought they could be friendly with both India and Pakistan, as diplomats in South Asia acknowledged that US aid to both countries was a zero-sum game unless relations warmed the illusion soured. The Truman Administration was particularly calculating in how it approached foreign policy; strategic interests trumped everything especially with the escalating crises in Europe and the American commitments in Japan.⁵⁷ Truman did somewhat convince non-aligned India to be a valuable US partner in South Asia because he was an early adopter of the philosophy that Nehru was key to Asia, as it "could be won or lost in the mind of one man—Jawaharlal Nehru...to have him as an opponent or even a critic could jeopardize the position of Western Democracy throughout Asia."⁵⁸

Truman's remarkable ability to relate to Nehru, while using India as the US's trusted intermediary to China was unprecedented in terms of relations between a superpower and burgeoning post-colonial democracy. Even Secretary of State Acheson, the proponent of Containment, realized Nehru's singular importance, but he distrusted Nehru's strong commitment to non-alignment—therefore a rejection of the US patronage and leadership—and

⁵⁷ McMahan, Robert J. *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 19.

⁵⁸ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 84.

his socialist idealism.⁵⁹ Truman took a rather active role in foreign policy, and alongside Acheson, the recommendations of diplomats on the ground were taken seriously.⁶⁰ The earliest state department records suggest approaching India first before making any commitments to Pakistan, that would give the US more bargaining power in extracting a Treaty of Friendship or at least more favorable relations.⁶¹

Despite this somewhat solid starting point for a relationship, continued pressure on Nehru to stop criticizing US policy in Asia and US congressional opposition to Nehru's desired amount of economic and food aid led to mutual rift between the short-lived friends.⁶² Nehru was strongminded and could not be moved from non-alignment, a policy position that fundamentally threatened the US' binary view on foreign policy.⁶³ People close to Nehru knew he was deeply prejudiced against Americans stemming from his days at Cambridge and Inner Temple Law in the UK.⁶⁴ According to US Ambassador Loy Henderson after a private meeting with the Prime Minister he believed, "the US was an overgrown, blundering, uncultured, and somewhat crass nation."⁶⁵ He also "feared the spread of Americanism much more than he did the spread of communism."⁶⁶ This left Truman at a disadvantage, and he made no trips to India to fight this perception. He was also struggling to take a position on Kashmir, an issue that had heated up

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 89

⁶⁰ FRUS, 1950, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume V, - Office of the Historian," Doc 825

⁶¹ H.A. Fine, D.H. Stauffer ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Volume V, Part 1, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2010), Document 397.

⁶² *Ibid*, 100-107

⁶³ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 40.

⁶⁴ *ibid* 42

⁶⁵ *ibid* 41-42.

⁶⁶ *ibid* 42

between India and Pakistan. When war broke out in 1947, the next logical step was to stop the war to improve the perception of the US in India, but that was easier said than done.

Kashmir: A Short Aside on an Indefinite Struggle

Within months after Independence, India and Pakistan fought their first war over the Princely State of Kashmir. Pakistan claimed this majority Muslim territory using the rules established by the British during Partition, however India convinced the Hindu Prince and Ruler of Kashmir to sign Instrument of Accession to make Kashmir an autonomous Indian Territory in exchange for defending it from Pakistani Tribal militias. Though the war raged for over a year, it was officially ended by a UN ceasefire agreement which established the Line of Control and divided the territory between India and Pakistan—1/3 to Pakistan, 2/3 to India.

Kashmir came to dominate almost every foreign policy decision western nations tried to make with India or Pakistan. Under Truman, America had to give India warning before meeting with the Indian appointed head of Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.⁶⁷ Eisenhower's Secretary of State had to repeatedly assure India that there would be no discussion of Kashmir with Pakistan or the Kashmiri Independence movement before every official trip or visit, "You authorized us to give Nehru firmest assurances US Government made no suggestions officially or unofficially encourage Kashmir government seek satisfaction any given set demands".⁶⁸

As a result, Kashmir became a bargaining chip for America when it came to dealing with India and Pakistan. For Pakistan, it was reason to bend over backwards to please America. For

⁶⁷ FRUS, 1948, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume V, Part 1 - Office of the Historian," Doc 218

⁶⁸ FRUS, 1953 Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Africa and South Asia, Volume XI, Part 2 Doc 773

India, it was a way to play the US off of the Soviets for support. Even the US Ambassador to India recognized, that Indians saw the US as more pro-Pakistan due to the perception that the

...US favors Pakistan in Kashmir dispute is using its influence behind scenes to help Pakistan obtain Kashmir, and is even endeavoring exert economic pressure on India to follow course of action which would give Kashmir to Pakistan. Indians in ever larger numbers are becoming convinced that US preference for Pakistan is based on US belief that friendship of Pakistan is more valuable to US than that of India... US engrossed in world-wide struggle for maintenance of system of free enterprise is using its economic power through various channels in attempts to force India to abandon national economic planning which GOI supported by majority Indian nationalists considers essential for economic development of country in view of India's shortage in material and financial resources, of technical and administrative personnel in Government apparatus, and of public-spirited and able financiers, industrialists, and merchants in business circles...Explanations of reasons for failure US to give India substantial economic aid ...most Indians take attitude "action speaks louder than words."⁶⁹

It might seem unnecessary to have such large and dense block quote but it is a very unique situation. The lack of pleasantries and the honest appraisal is rare in the State Department dispatches of the era. It is the most explicit example of a foreign service officer bluntly explain the situation and possible paths forward, there is no hesitation in critiquing the current US approach. The foreign service officer goes beyond just the situation in Kashmir to link the US's possible actions towards India with wider global goals. This officer saw the writing on the wall and warned his superiors and Truman that the current US strategy was unsustainable if winning India's trust was important. The officer showed the Truman Administration that a decision had to be made, and it had to be made soon, in order to reverse Indians' negative perceptions of the US and feeling that an US-Pakistani alliance was inevitable. This was a realization that encouraged Truman to give his diplomats in India more leeway to change the tide of an uphill struggle.

⁶⁹ FRUS, 1950, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume V, - Office of the Historian," Doc 825

Truman's Loss of Patience

Though the first war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir was ongoing, Truman had long ago given up arguing with Nehru and it was only at the insistence of the State Department that the US injected itself into the peace process with the hope of winning India over completely. As the US tried to mediate the conflict, Pakistan was more responsive to US demands than India, but the US was more skeptical of Pakistani claims to Kashmir than it was of India's claim.⁷⁰ Though this mediation failed, the narrative of the State department Documents shows that the US was working diligently to get a ceasefire that would be to India's benefit.⁷¹ The US actively tried to coordinate its efforts with the UK, and showed India that even close cultural allies like Afghanistan had asked for an end to the conflict.⁷² India rejected any notion that the US played a role in the ceasefire for fears that the US would try to use this rapport as a way to propose an alliance or Treaty of Friendship.⁷³ India did not want a relationship with the US unless its terms were drawn up by Nehru, and even the US aiding them was seen as a ploy.⁷⁴ The State Department was at an impasse, and their political capital in keeping Truman engaged had also vaporized.

There was no real progress made until 1950, after India and Pakistan had gone to war and the US's attempts to mediate was seen as a pro-Pakistani move by Indians. The US ambassador to India, Loy Henderson, strongly urged the president to take definitive action towards India in terms of aid or diplomatic support in order to placate, since "Indians in ever larger numbers are

⁷⁰ FRUS, 1948, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Volume V, Part 1 - Office of the Historian," Doc 265.

⁷¹ FRUS 1165-1166

⁷² FRUS Doc 1170

⁷³ FRUS doc 1189

⁷⁴ FRUS doc 1189

becoming convinced that US preference for Pakistan is based on US belief that friendship of Pakistan is more valuable to US than that of India.”⁷⁵ It was not enough to pay lip service, money and arms had to be involved in the US response, “So long as India continues to measure our friendliness by what we do for her, rather than by what we say, it will continue to be difficult to advance our basic objectives with respect to India, namely, to develop India’s pro-Western orientation and promote her stability.”⁷⁶ However, this ambassador’s pleas are also quite interesting because he also returned to the attitudes discussed by Isaac in pinning the blame for Indian’s perceptions of the US on Nehru’s rhetoric which, “[did] not hesitate to exploit such anti-American feelings.”⁷⁷

The Truman Administration, however, remained divided in its measured bi-lateral action toward both India and Pakistan, working through international entities such as the UN or more substantive direct US actions with India that would ensure the longevity of a stable, pro-west India resistant to communism and committed to US interests.⁷⁸ Truman grew impatient with Nehru’s use of the soapbox to target US actions abroad,⁷⁹ especially since Pakistan’s founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah boldly dedicated Pakistan to the West’s march against communism as early as 1948 and directly called for the US to be the principal ally of the emerging nation by bankrolling the military and political framework of Pakistan. His direct appeal to be allies, broadcast to the world stage, was something that not even the most pro-India US officials could dream of squeezing from Nehru.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ FRUS doc 825

⁷⁶ FRUS doc 825

⁷⁷ FRUS doc 825

⁷⁸ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 37.

⁷⁹ *ibid* 64, 68-70

⁸⁰ *ibid* 69

At the same time, Truman was still susceptible to following Britain's lead and both countries grew beyond exasperated by foreign policy and "economics in India [tended] to be treated politically," with anti-imperialism being a bigger factor than economic viability or long term stability.⁸¹ Every mention of Nehru drew "disillusionment and dismay...As India's strategic stock declined, Pakistan's rose."⁸² However, Pakistan had its own problems and three different internal communications within the state department expressed worry that though Pakistan was eager to ally with US, it was not capable of demonstrating, "a high degree of Internal Stability and vitality..." nor was it truly a "viable state."⁸³ There was hope in the State Department that despite his Anti-American views, the British education of Nehru and his cabinet made ensured at least some sort of a deep-seated ideological solidarity with the west, but these hopes were receding as Pakistan made itself more open to the US and Nehru held the line on his ideological purity tests.⁸⁴

In the words of historian Robert McMahon, "more than any other single event, it was the Korean War that transformed American Attitudes and Policies towards Pakistan."⁸⁵ With the outbreak of the Korean War, the Truman administration lost all patience for neutrality, especially when the US gained the sanction of the United Nations to support the South Koreans and repel the Chinese offensive. In the American and Western view, the invasion of South Korea was a blatantly aggressive and internationally illegal act; they looked to India and Pakistan to support them with troops and join the UN consensus. Pakistan was eager to commit troops, but Nehru

⁸¹ David C. Engermann, *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018.) Pp. 22

⁸² McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 64.

⁸³ FRUS 838 for quotes, and 837-839 for general consensus of Treaty of Friendship with Pakistan -

⁸⁴ McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 45.

⁸⁵ *ibid* 123

condemned the US and Truman as imperialists rather than oppose the involvement of China and the Soviet Union in the invasion.⁸⁶ India outright refused to contribute to combat troops and only provided a nominal group of Ambulatory and medical troops.⁸⁷ When pressed on the matter, Nehru demanded the Chinese be added to the UN and asked Stalin to stop his boycott of the United Nations Security Council, arguing that only these steps were productive and acceptable. American officials could not decide whether the Prime Minister was arrogant or simply naïve.⁸⁸

Nehru, somewhat shortsightedly given ongoing border disputes with the Chinese and his later stance in 1962, was very pro-China at this point in his career and a champion of allowing the country membership in the UN. He purposefully talked of a Sino-Soviet split as early as 1949, long before there was any real evidence of animosities between the two red states. In essence, Nehru's non-alignment was a condemnation and rejection of the United States but not China or the USSR.⁸⁹ At any rate, this was seen as a fundamental betrayal by India of both the West and neutrality, a criticisms that further compounded by Prime Minister Nehru in sending his president Radhakrishnan to meet with Stalin in 1950 and 1951 to discuss the Korean Conflict and America.⁹⁰ Nehru went as far as to vote against the UN's eight power resolution calling for the reunification of Korea, winning him worldwide ridicule as a communist puppet and condemnation by even close allies of India like Afghanistan and the UK.⁹¹

India's commitment to non-alignment, criticism of Truman, and non-censure of Socialists led to Pakistan becoming the key player in US strategies towards both South Asia and

⁸⁶ *ibid* 81-82

⁸⁷ Mansingh, "India and the United States," 164.

⁸⁸ McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 83-84.

⁸⁹ Mansingh, "India and the United States," 164-165.

⁹⁰ Engermann, *The Price of Aid*, 43.

⁹¹ McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 86.

China. Pakistan actively courted the US, something drastically different than Nehru's nonchalant and sometimes openly hostile attitude towards Truman and Acheson. Pakistani eagerness to commit troops to Korea only helped their relationship with the US, and when time came for India and Pakistan to de-escalate in Kashmir, the Pakistani relationship led to US pressure on and frustrations with India.⁹² Their newfound Pakistani ally also gave the US a foothold in the Middle East separate from the Saudis. Many outside observers, including the British Foreign Service, saw this dangerous departure from bilateral relations in South Asia as dangerous and "that the present American interests...may lead her...towards a pro-Pakistani and anti-Indian viewpoint."⁹³ These British diplomats also noted this could permanently damage Anglo-American relations and stability in South Asia. The actions against the US by India in the Korean War and Pakistan's eagerness to please Truman had changed the status quo, Pakistan and India no longer had an equal footing in terms of US foreign policy. Pakistan had proved itself to be an ally, and India had turned its back on the West even in a conflict as clearcut as the Korean War. Non-Alignment came to be known as Nehru's policy, and despite his protests, this sort of word association had effectively made the US perceptions of India coming into the Eisenhower administration come full circle and erase the contributions of Gandhi.

Pakistan: Eisenhower's Indifference and Nixon's Insistence

Upon assuming office in January of 1953, Eisenhower sought to distinguish himself from his predecessor, especially in the realm of foreign policy and this meant trying to rekindle the failed relationship with India. By aligning himself with hardline anticommunists like John Foster Dulles and Richard Nixon even before taking the White House, Eisenhower was committed to a

⁹² McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 125-127.

⁹³ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 141.

stringent binary in terms of foreign policy. This moral crusade, dubbed the black and white, cast doubt on how exactly he was going to make new strides in US foreign policy. Initially, Eisenhower sought to follow Britain's advice without making enemies of Karachi.⁹⁴ Both US and Indian leaders seemed eager to put the blunders of the Korea behind them and tried to forge a better working relationship, but that was easier said than done. India was in constant contact with liberal democrats in the US congress and were convinced they had found a champion in Chester Bowles.⁹⁵

With the appointment of the Dulles brothers to Eisenhower's inner circle, India's hopes of pursuing a relationship with the US had appeared immediately dashed. John Foster Dulles, now remembered as an ardent Cold Warrior and supporter of Containment, was not a fan of India, to say the least. As early as 1947, he called Britain's decision to grant India Independence a mistake, arguing that "Soviet communism exercises a strong influence through the...Hindu government."⁹⁶ The Secretary of State in 1947, Bowles pleaded with Truman to control Dulles and allow them to educate and give him a "more complete picture [of the] Indian Situation," and this concern arose again when Dulles' anti-India speeches resurfaced during the Eisenhower Administration.⁹⁷ The comments were so strong that Eisenhower's Ambassador to India made clear the concerns of Dulles becoming Secretary of State⁹⁸ Both Dulles and the president-elect Eisenhower tried to address the problem by preemptively writing Nehru and guaranteeing their commitment to fair and objective view towards India and Nehru. However, Nehru saw the very

⁹⁴ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 167.

⁹⁵ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 155.

⁹⁶ M McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 156.

⁹⁷ FRUS, 1947, The British Commonwealth; Europe, Volume III - Office of the Historian," Doc 86.

⁹⁸ FRUS, 1947, The British Commonwealth; Europe, Volume III - Office of the Historian," Doc 86.

election of Eisenhower as a militaristic march towards a world comprised of two-spheres where India had no place. Bowles presence in the Eisenhower Administration assuaged some of Nehru's fears but Dulles' increasing role threatened even this fragile peace.

Bowles remained a fervent advocate for India and lobbied to remain in place as Ambassador, arguing that he could uniquely facilitate "American Interests [which] would be served by the development of India." This was backed by the Assistant Secretary of State Henry Byroade, who was adamant that "India was prepared to abandon...its non-alignment policy in order to give greater support to the free world."⁹⁹ But in 1954, Congress, led by Republicans who were hostile to India and trusted Eisenhower's slide to Pakistan, rejected Bowles and cut the suggested aid to India from \$200 million to less than \$100 million. Bowles' outburst against Eisenhower in response to this turn of events led to him being summarily forced out of any role connected to the State Department. The loss of Bowles' advocacy left a vacuum for Dulles, Nixon, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reassert Pakistan's importance towards the US national security agenda.

Eisenhower gave up some control by allowing his generals to pursue a military alliance with Pakistan, against the advice of his State Department and the British. Henry Smith, deputy director of the State Department's office of South Asian Affairs lamented the, "change [in] the course of the United States-India relationship for a longtime to come...we had...decided that the smaller and much weaker country of Pakistan was more useful to us."¹⁰⁰ The sole detractors from the view that India was more Important than Pakistan in the President's cabinet were Secretary

⁹⁹ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 157.

¹⁰⁰ McMahan, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 169.

of State Dulles and then Vice-President Richard Nixon—a duo which ultimately won out against the entire State Department and the National Security Council.

Nehru saw this as a fundamental betrayal of India's efforts towards the US. He felt that despite India's commitment to non-alignment and therefore refusal of support from the USSR, the US had turned around and, "outflanked India's...neutralism and will thus bring India to her knees...[there] will be an extreme dislike of the United States in India."¹⁰¹ Both sides of the aisle in Congress saw this as a monumental blunder, but Dulles could not be swayed. It was not until 1957 that Eisenhower tried to balance the scales— despite pushback from Nixon and Dulles— due to heavy lobbying by more liberal US politicians and US allies abroad, but many feared it was too little too late.¹⁰² Eisenhower increased both economic aid and military assistance to India before leaving office, but only the Pakistani retreat from US aid after a U-2 crashed in the Soviet Union really cemented this new wave of good tidings with India.¹⁰³ "Eisenhower's visit to India in 1959 doubtless did much to foster that improved atmosphere," that left US-Indian relations better than he had found them and a relatively neutral/positive point that JFK sought to build upon before the disastrous events of both the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Sino Indian War.¹⁰⁴

These early actions gave a clear precedent as to why Pakistan won support from the US. Pakistan's instability and paranoia towards India left it desperate for allies. This desperation and the societal dominance by military figures left military security as the country's primary goal and there it was open and willing to become an American proxy. Its contributions to the Korean War alongside the Pakistani military's openness to and eagerness to buy from America reinforced

¹⁰¹ McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 172.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 260-261

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 269

¹⁰⁴ McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 269.

many of the positive racial and religious predispositions that Americans may have had. To refer back to Isaacs, many Americans, especially conservatives were still particularly taken with the British Martial Race Theory. Pakistanis, comprised of India's Muslims as well as Sindhis and Punjabis were amongst the most well-regarded martial races. As we will see, Nixon had his own fascination with the "masculinity of Pakistan" that would be central during his presidency. After visiting Pakistan, Vice President Nixon pushed through a comprehensive military aid package to Pakistan by having the US Ambassador there convince Dulles that "Pakistan has already contributed significantly to the realization of United States Policy Objectives in Middle East and South Asia."¹⁰⁵ The US was committed to modernizing Pakistan's military as thanks for the government of Pakistan's eagerness to join the "free world."¹⁰⁶ Ultimately Eisenhower's ambivalence allowed Dulles and Nixon to push through a more strongly worded Military assistance program—one step short of an alliance—with Pakistan.¹⁰⁷ Still Truman and Eisenhower largely determined their policies towards South Asia based on actions that were happening, and it's difficult to effectively argue that they had picked sides before coming office. Rather, they played the situation by ear and found themselves drawn to Pakistan due to the Pakistani willingness and eagerness to be a US ally as compared to India and Nehru's apprehensions and fears of being dominated by yet another western power. However, the exact opposite is true for Kennedy and Nixon, who knew exactly which South Asian country they wanted to court and used the situations presented to try and only further achieve their goals.

¹⁰⁵ "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Africa and South Asia, Volume XI, Part 2 - Office of the Historian." Doc 1166.

¹⁰⁶ FRUS 1165

¹⁰⁷ McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 169-171.

Chapter 2: The Era of Kennedy

When it came to South Asia, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was a monumental outlier from all of his predecessors and most of his successors. Before him, the region was mostly an afterthought in the strategic framework of US foreign policy, with leaders like Eisenhower dealing with India and Pakistan only when absolutely necessary. More specifically, Kennedy fundamentally altered the US stance towards India and tried to pursue a real relationship, even an alliance like the one Eisenhower had granted to Pakistan. Had he succeeded in his efforts, the South Asia of today would look fundamentally different, with a robust US-India relationship rather than the relationship with Pakistan that Kennedy's predecessors and successors preferred.

Departing from Eisenhower's ambivalence and Dulles' insistence on cultivating Pakistan as an ally to punish India's neutrality and perceived treachery, Kennedy wanted to re-define the United States' strategy in the Cold War, especially in Asia. But he and his team also challenged how they dealt with the neutrality and status of countries struggling with balancing nationalism and international cosmopolitanism in newfound post-colonial independence. Even before assuming the presidency, Kennedy declared the US must oversee a western effort to "enable India to overtake the challenge of Communist China," and he also proclaimed, "we had put too much emphasis on Pakistan at the expense of India."¹⁰⁸ Kennedy very early on gained the support of powerful men in the Democratic Party, especially the formerly marginalized Chester Bowles, who agreed that "the existence of communist China" was the only thing that the US

¹⁰⁸ Robert J. McMahon *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 273, 276.

should fight in Asia.¹⁰⁹ The US even reneged on its former promise to Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir, not only supporting some of Nehru's claims but also helping India push back against border disputes with both Pakistan and China—all while trying help all parties negotiate a settlement without bloodshed.¹¹⁰ For Kennedy and his advisors, moving closer to India was not only matter of common sense, but one steeped in upholding the values of the United States in foreign policy while trying to actively uplift the Third World rather than see everything through the black and white morality of his predecessors. To understand Kennedy's role in fundamentally creating new way to approach India it is necessary to look at his interest in different stages: during the election, during peace where domestic issues ruled supreme, and during India's war with China, where Cuba played an important role. Within that wider framework aside from Kennedy, figures like John Kenneth Galbraith, Ayub Khan, Chester Bowles, Jawaharlal Nehru, Krishna Menon, and even Henry Kissinger all played different roles in the evolution of US dealings with India and Pakistan.

John Kenneth Galbraith: Kennedy's India Guru and member of the Brain trust

Kennedy was busy redefining what it meant to think about foreign policy as soon as he conjured an idea to run for president, opting for a "brain trust" of Harvard academics and other intellectuals over generals, bureaucrats, and career politicians. Many of Kennedy's key influences on the issue of South Asia came from Harvard's faculty. More broadly they came from Democratic academics and activists, students, and acquaintances the Kennedy brothers made during their time at Harvard and in the halls of the Capitol. Their father, Joseph P Kennedy was already a well-known name in America, famous not only for his immense wealth but also

¹⁰⁹ McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, 274 and Bowles to Kennedy, July 1, 1961, Kennedy Folder, Box 297, *Bowles Papers*, Yale

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 282-283

the isolationism and anti-Semitism he championed while ambassador to the UK before World War II. Despite this notoriety, John Kennedy had a clean slate when he entered the halls of Harvard following his older brother, and the men he met and befriended came to shape the Free World after meeting his brother Robert and solidifying their allegiance to the charismatic Kennedys. Professors who grew enamored enough with the Kennedy family to join the brain trust included Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Schlesinger, and last but certainly not least John Kenneth Galbraith. While they were all academics, the individual members of the brain trust had a complex mix of intellectual curiosity, patriotism, partisan loyalty, and personal ambition. Of these men, none was more key to crafting the campaign's intellectual attitude towards India policy than Ken Galbraith.¹¹¹

After years of teaching at Harvard while mixing with DC's political elite, Galbraith embarked on a tour of Europe to gain inspiration and conduct research for his next book. By 1955 he looked towards Asia as a place to satisfy his intellectual curiosity and a destination for his Guggenheim Fellowship.¹¹² He dined with Rani's and Maharajas, orientalist from Cambridge and King's college, while also probing close friends of Bengali Poet Rabindranath Tagore to better understand the late poet.¹¹³ He spent a summer at the Indian Statistical Institute, overcome by the beauty of Calcutta.¹¹⁴ It was at the Institute where he had his first encounter with John Foster Dulles, a man he was initially rather taken with. By writing papers about the Soviet Five-Year plans in Comparison to Nehru's own policies, Galbraith got to meet with

¹¹¹ Bruce Riedel. *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War*. (Washington, D. C., UNITED STATES: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 47-48

¹¹² John Kenneth Galbraith. *A Life in Our Times*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1983), 322-323.

¹¹³ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 323.

¹¹⁴ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 324-325.

Indian ministers and politicians.¹¹⁵ By his own admission, India was Galbraith's passion and he was troubled as Eisenhower's suggestion to have Milton Friedman help in its economic development, comparing it to "asking the Holy Father to counsel on the operations of a birth control clinic."¹¹⁶ He had a fascination with India's pining for western liberal democracy, considering India a country ripe to be groomed into the perfect ally, but as Keynesian he was also impressed with Nehru's willingness to experiment with socialism.¹¹⁷ He saw in India's five-year plans towards modernization and institutional fight against poverty a measure of humanity and valuation of man that was missing from America, where even "At the gates of heaven... St. Peter [only] asked American applicants what they had done to increase the Gross National product."¹¹⁸ After meeting Dulles again, he was disgusted by John Foster Dulles' characterization of US foreign policy as holy crusade sanctioned by Jesus himself to crush communism and the immoral fools who believed neutrality to be an option.¹¹⁹ Yet he bit his tongue and bided his time, knowing that he was representative of America and criticizing his government while abroad would only weaken his future as a diplomat. This first trip to India became the basis for *The Affluent Society* (1958), a book which became very influential in some Democratic economic circles and provided Kennedy's first real exposure to Galbraith's views on India.¹²⁰

In 1956, Galbraith returned to Harvard to resume teaching while rubbing elbows with Adlai Stevenson's probes into a presidential campaign. He had big dreams for himself and for

¹¹⁵ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 232-233.

¹¹⁶ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 324.

¹¹⁷ *ibid* 324-325

¹¹⁸ *ibid* 336

¹¹⁹ *ibid* 328

¹²⁰ *ibid* 339

India even before coming into Kennedy's fold, as he confidently declared to his wife "When the Democrats get back in, I think I will get myself made ambassador to India."¹²¹ Even before Kennedy sought a presidential run, the US embassy in Delhi convinced the newly proclaimed war hero to tour India with his brother Bobby and meet with Nehru.¹²² Although this trip during the Korean War was a mere congressional trip and vacation, it solidified the idea of a presidential run and after meeting Galbraith their mutual experience in India convinced him to create a new sort of foreign policy under the tutelage of his brain trust. It was also the trip that ensured Bobby Kennedy would become an integral consigliere to John Kennedy and that the brothers would essentially form a trio with Galbraith that became the driving force of the future administration's Indian policy.

Congressional Career and Presidential Run of 1960

Already as a senator, Kennedy made it clear that he was not a lockstep participant in Eisenhower's world view. In fact, in a famous speech he made clear that the solely anti-communist sense of morality in American leadership for the Cold War had failed to adapt to the changing dynamics of the third world in respect to the legacies of the west. On July 3rd 1957 he declared,

Mr. President, the most powerful single force in the world today is neither communism nor capitalism, neither the H-bomb nor the guided missile. It is man's eternal desire to be free and independent. The great enemy of that tremendous force of freedom is called, for want of a more precise term, imperialism...Soviet imperialism and...Western imperialism... If we are to secure the friendship of the Arab, the African, and the Asian - and we must, despite what Mr. Dulles says about our not being in a popularity contest...the strength of our appeal to these key populations - and it is rightfully our appeal, and not that of the Communists - lies in our traditional and deeply felt philosophy of freedom and independence for all peoples everywhere.¹²³

¹²¹ *ibid* 334

¹²² Riedel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis*, 46-47.

¹²³ Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Senate Files. Series 09. Legislation. Box 784, Folder: "Algeria Speech". July 3, 1957

Algeria was a microcosm of a larger American failure to uphold the founding values of the nation, and this lapse in judgment allowed the Chinese and Soviets to co-opt nationalist movements throughout the cold war as the US stuck to Dulles and Eisenhower's stringent dichotomy.¹²⁴ On July 2, 1957, during the middle of the Algerian War of Independence, Kennedy gave a speech in the Senate addressed directly to President Eisenhower.¹²⁵ Though only a junior senator, he condemned the delicate US-French relationship by rejecting France's colonial claims on Algeria, and he directly accused US complacency on the issue, saying, "French conception of settlement has stubbornly adhered to the concept of Algerian incorporation within France itself... Africa cannot be evaluated purely in terms of the historical and legal niceties argued by the French, and thus far accepted by the State Department..."¹²⁶ "The time has come," he concluded, "for the United States to face the harsh realities of the situation and to fulfill its responsibilities as leader of the free world."

With this sentence Kennedy unilaterally undermined the moral angle of Eisenhower's foreign policy while accusing the administration of neglecting its role as hegemon to preserve French sentiments.¹²⁷ The Algeria speech put a young John Kennedy on the map as a rising star, and it was among the first publicly presented arguments against Eisenhower's foreign policy that received traction.¹²⁸ The French were quick to condemn it and John Foster Dulles had a new

¹²⁴ Riedel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis*, 47-48 .

¹²⁵ Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Senate Files. Series 09. Legislation. Box 784, Folder: "Algeria Speech". July 3, 1957

¹²⁶ Algeria Speech

¹²⁷ Algeria Speech

¹²⁸ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954– 1962*. New York, United States: Viking, 1977, 247.

enemy in the Capitol.¹²⁹ Still, Kennedy had laid the groundwork for admiration by African and Asian nationalists, and the speech's references to American failures in the "challeng[ing] of imperialism" as well as the call to recognize America's blind eye towards European atrocities in places like "Indochina and Africa" and failures to learn from mistakes while delaying implementation of "aid programs and...the exercise of our diplomacy." With these actions, Kennedy set into motion the very sorts of relationships and foreign policy strategies he would eventually champion as president.¹³⁰ The Algeria speech already toed the line of sympathy for leftist and post-colonial nationalists, something critics argued only helped increase "anti-Americanism" in Europe while betraying communist sympathies.¹³¹ However, these principles of morality and anti-colonialism—that even Eisenhower and Dulles subscribed to on paper—showed up in Kennedy's presidential run and broadened the implications of what dealing with the post-colonial and non-aligned world could look like under the fluid and progressive attitudes of a Kennedy administration.¹³²

When the time came to gear up for the presidential election of 1960, as early as 1957, Galbraith had gathered Kennedy's "Brain Trust" for the campaign, including Chester Bowles as an integral member.¹³³ Much to the chagrin of his advisors, Bowles's style was very reactive and off the cuff, quite unlike the lofty academic style of Galbraith, but he did have the talent of candor and a dedication to cutting past the red tape in search of the honest truth.¹³⁴ Kennedy started a campaign that questioned the very roots of American foreign policy. By trying to

¹²⁹ Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, "Kennedy's Algerian Dilemma: Containment, Alliance Politics and the 'Rebel Dialogue'." *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 2 (1999): 61-62.

¹³⁰ Algeria Speech

¹³¹ Lefebvre, "Kennedy's Algerian Dilemma", 61-62.

¹³² Lefebvre, "Kennedy's Algerian Dilemma", 62-64.

¹³³ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 372-273.

¹³⁴ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 373-374.

complement his Harvard brain trust with rivals like Johnson and even an archenemy like Stevenson, Kennedy was trying to give an image of broad unity in the Democratic party. He also needed to show a continuity of his earlier vigor during the Algeria Speech and make sure he had not lost any momentum.

Kennedy's articulation of foreign policy as a candidate continued to follow trend of his remarks about Algeria. He rejected black and white morality of John Foster Dulles—a duality readily accepted by his opponent Richard Nixon—and offered a new flexible framework where America could adapt to the changing world rather than simply cling to old familiar structures or imperialism.¹³⁵ On the topic of South Asia, Kennedy and Nixon could not be more opposed to each other. Galbraith, by this time a dominant figure of Kennedy's inner circle, helped Kennedy write his next ground-breaking speech, but this time about the Chinese specter that threatened Asia's brightest rising star, India. In 1959, Kennedy forcefully declared that China could not be allowed to dominate Asia as the USSR's proxy, and much to the chagrin of Eisenhower, he picked India as the nation with the best moral, economic, and military potential to oppose the red spread in Asia: "...no struggle in the world today deserves more of our time and attention than that which now grips the attention of all Asia. That is the struggle between India and China for leadership of the East, for the respect of all Asia, for the opportunity to demonstrate which way of life is the better."¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Riedel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis*, 47-48. and Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Senate Files. Series 12. Speeches and the Press. Box 903, Folder: "Conference on India and the United States, Washington, D.C., 4 May 1959".

¹³⁶ Papers of John F. Kennedy. Pre-Presidential Papers. Senate Files. Series 12. Speeches and the Press. Box 903, Folder: "Conference on India and the United States, Washington, D.C., 4 May 1959".

With this harsh rebuke of China and exclusion of Pakistan as a US ally in the region, Kennedy firmly committed to India much in the same way Galbraith had. It was no longer just a choice whether to aid India, but a matter of global consequence. Galbraith was ecstatic that Kennedy had decided to listen to his advice on China. The historian Bruce Riedel underscores the grave departure this stance represented from the status quo, “Kennedy’s rhetoric was extraordinary. He was placing India at the center of the cold war at a time when many Americans had long regarded it as, if not an enemy, an unwitting accomplice of communism.”¹³⁷

But despite his forceful assertion of the US-India relationship, Kennedy was not without his faults in the realm of foreign policy. The very rhetoric that made Kennedy a champion of India almost sank his campaign.¹³⁸ Prominent supporters and advisors such as Arthur Schlesinger, Galbraith, and Bowles might as well have been Lenin, Stalin, and Mao to most cold warriors and Republicans.¹³⁹ Kennedy won the election despite his rhetoric, not because of it. As a member of his core group of advisors later lamented, “it was not the excellence of the Kennedy effort [that won] but the weakness of Nixon’s that served. Many of us thought Kennedy was better than his campaign, and on this we were right.”¹⁴⁰ Kennedy won the election by a margin of only about 110,000 votes out of 70,000,000 total.¹⁴¹ He did not have enough of a sweeping victory to unilaterally change the foundations of the United States’ approach to foreign policy. Nixon’s popularity among the republicans and meant Kennedy’s idealism and Harvard brain trust were not going to be as forceful in steering the reins of American foreign policy as he had hoped. He even had to keep on Allen Dulles— one of the Cold War architects of the US

¹³⁷ Riedel, *JFK’s Forgotten Crisis*, 49-50.

¹³⁸ Riedel, *JFK’s Forgotten Crisis*, 50.

¹³⁹ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 385.

¹⁴⁰ Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times*, 385.

¹⁴¹ Riedel, *JFK’s Forgotten Crisis*, 51.

relationship with Pakistan—as CIA chief to have any hopes of forming an acceptable cabinet. He simply had no mandate to start anew and reject the framework setup up by Eisenhower, the Dulles Brothers, and Nixon. It seemed Americans had largely accepted the unambiguous framework of the Cold War.

Grand Vision, Limited Capacity: Dealing with Nehru

Allen Dulles and the CIA were far more receptive to Kennedy’s reframing of foreign policy than initially expected, whereas the State Department and Defense Department with their permanent establishment of career bureaucrats provided far less malleable and far more resistant to change despite new leadership.¹⁴² The CIA may have appeared more amicable despite being led by Republicans in all major divisions, because they so desperately needed Kennedy to approve the Bay of Pigs operation.¹⁴³ Despite the warnings of Schlesinger and keeping Stevenson out of the loop, Kennedy and most of his advisors—Bundy and Galbraith included—bought into the invasion plan presented by Richard Bissell—CIA head of operations—hook, line, and sinker.¹⁴⁴ This elevation of the CIA as THE foreign policy apparatus only further constrained the relationship with State. However, the failure of the Bay of Pigs also made Kennedy more self-reliant in directing the foreign policy of the United States, and while Dulles stuck around for a while Kennedy kept him distant.¹⁴⁵

Galbraith and Kennedy become the primary proponents of interactions with India, and Kennedy relied heavily on Galbraith even in the direst circumstances to keep things with India calm. He wanted Pakistan to remain a US ally, but not at the expense of India and having an ally

¹⁴² Riedel, *JFK’s Forgotten Crisis*, 51.

¹⁴³ Riedel, *JFK’s Forgotten Crisis*, 51-52.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid* 51-55

¹⁴⁵ *ibid* 55

against China. Kennedy would have easily traded the places of India and Pakistan in the US' hierarchy of allies if he could have acted unilaterally. He wanted both countries, but was willing to accept a slight deterioration of the US' standing with Pakistan to counter China and have a democratic ally in South Asia. The State Department documents and Kennedy's papers paint a tale of an intricate dance between India, Pakistan, the State Department, and the president. There were multiple points of near disaster, averted only by Kennedy and Galbraith's desperate attempts to keep India talking and luck.

Galbraith was quick to begin his work on India. As soon as he assumed his place as Ambassador, Kennedy started smoothing things over with the India officials who were eager to see if he could live up to his lofty rhetoric. India's Ambassador Chagla took the initiative to congratulate Kennedy on his election and immediately tried to start the process of allying the two countries or at the very least increasing US aid to India.¹⁴⁶ Chagla minced no words, describing Kennedy as a "beacon to a darkening and despairing world which needs a message of hope and true leadership..."¹⁴⁷ But he and Nehru were just as impatient as Kennedy, and they pushed for immediate US aid, threatening to play the US and USSR off of each other. They wanted a concrete US agreement to provide money and economic aid for India's next five-year plan and threatened to seek closer ties with the USSR if they could not get a reasonable settlement.¹⁴⁸

Despite this prodding, Kennedy remained committed to Nehru and wanted to move forward, regardless of State's reservations over non-alignment and Nehru's neutralist tendencies expressed in a profile prepared for the president and ambassador Galbraith.¹⁴⁹ In these advisors'

¹⁴⁶ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 1/1/61-2/15/61 Doc 2-2C.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.* Doc 2C

¹⁴⁸ *ibid* Doc 5-6a

¹⁴⁹ *ibid* Doc 8A

view, Nehru's nationalism and commitment to non-alignment were incompatible and treasonous to the American framework of Good vs. Evil. As a nationalist with lofty expectations for the West, he often condemned American and European incursions into Asia and Africa without prior negotiations. At the same time, he remained a hardliner on Indian nationalist issues like Kashmir, where any talk of compromise was forbidden.¹⁵⁰ The State Department's profile, however, represented the first time its officials showed some signs of moving closer to Kennedy, in that they no longer had to treat Nehru as a communist sympathizer in the new framework. By February the state department declared, "our political relationship [with India] has undergone a radical transformation...we have successfully convinced the Indian people and their elected leaders that we are primarily interested in their nation's welfare for its own sake."¹⁵¹

Despite this initial leap forward, the successes in the US-India relationship soon slowed, as inter- and intra-departmental conflicts and assessments of India prevented timely aid payments and opened the door further for a Soviet entrance into the talks. In the same document that of the radical transformation, the State department also expressed its distrust of Indian motives and the feeling that

We have given the Indian government too much leeway...we have been too quick to agree with policies dictated by the Government of India...and we [in the state department] have not displayed the willingness... to make our own evaluative judgement of India's development plans...though the current era of good feeling between our two counties has made Indians more receptive...many members of the American Mission and State department are still inclined to act within the narrow area of Diplomatic caution...¹⁵²

In other words, the State Department still did not see India as a viable long-term beneficiary of US aid on par with Pakistan, even as Kennedy and Galbraith had been pressuring them. While

¹⁵⁰ *ibid* Doc 8A

¹⁵¹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 2/16/61-3/15/61 Doc 8A pp 1

¹⁵² *ibid.* Doc 8A pp 1-2

the State department acknowledged that India had asked for aid from the United States government and that was rejected by the domestic private Steel industry in training Indian engineers and aiding in building plants in India, they did not see this as an appropriate justification for India turning to Soviet aid in building plants and training engineers.¹⁵³

This fundamental disconnect between the Kennedy's vision toward India and the State Department's reluctance to acquiesce to India's demands led to a dangerous interdepartmental standoff, one that almost destroyed the budding US-India relationship. By March the US was due to deliver a double dose of bad news to India: only \$700 million at most of India's requested \$2.5 billion aid would be approved, which greatly dismayed Henry Owen—a member of planning staff in the State Department—and the US was set to continue its modernization of the Pakistani military with the delivery of F-104 jets and training advisors—a decision that Indian Commonwealth Secretary Desai found utterly unacceptable to both himself and the country.¹⁵⁴ Kennedy tried to defuse the situation by delaying the jet delivery and reiterating his belief that Nehru was an ideal ally for the United States going forward, especially due to his experience fighting communists and Maoist insurgents within India.¹⁵⁵ He was committed to rehabilitating Nehru's image in the State Department, which preferred Nehru's opposition "a new, non-communalist right-wing party...the Swatantra (Freedom) Party."¹⁵⁶ The president voiced his opposition to the characterization that "there is little substantial disagreement between Nehru and

¹⁵³ *ibid* 8A pp 6

¹⁵⁴ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 3/16/61-4/15/61 docs 1-9

¹⁵⁵ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Nehru Visit 1961 Box 118a pp 16

¹⁵⁶ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Nehru Visit 1961 Box 118a pp 17 and anecdotal Notes of my Great Grandfather Bezawada Ramachandra Reddy, a founder of the Swatantra Party in South India, who states that they had contact from Americans.

the various socialist parties in India,” not only through his insistence on military aid to India but in his dealings with Pakistan as well. While it took time, Kennedy sent letters to Ayub Khan directly and bypassing the majority of the State Department except the consulate at Karachi, and he warned that Pakistan “did not provide a viable basis for compromise...[and] India’s desire for US/UK military aid is also an incentive [for the US] ...”¹⁵⁷

However the State Department and Defense Department were unwilling to put all their hope in India without hedging their bets, and instead proposed military and economic aid to both countries: jets to Pakistan and tanks to India.¹⁵⁸ Despite seeing this as a mistake and provocation to both countries, Kennedy could do nothing about it, as Pakistan was a member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), and though India was a bigger military and economic powerhouse in South Asia, only Pakistan had the US military’s trust and backing.¹⁵⁹ He could offer somewhat equivalent aid to each of the rivals and displease both Nehru and Ayub Khan, or lose Ayub Khan fully if he continued to court India.¹⁶⁰ State pressured Kennedy to stop his obsession with Nehru and India, especially after Nehru refused to comment on the USSR’s presence in Hungary and Cuba but then immediately condemned not only the Bay of Pigs but US aid to dissidents like the Cuban exiles in general; the State department saw this as a fundamental betrayal.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. India Security 1963 Box 118a pp 16-17

¹⁵⁸ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 4/16/61-4/30/61 doc 2a. The bit about the tanks comes from Riedel pp 62

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.* 2A

¹⁶⁰ Riedel 62

¹⁶¹ ¹⁶¹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 4/16/61-4/30/61 doc 5a-5c

However, the situation reversed entirely when Ayub Khan continued to press his displeasure with Kennedy's fondness for India, thereby damaging US-Pakistan relations, despite all the institutional cards being stacked in his favor. Ayub took to voicing his displeasure by publicly denouncing India as a leach of US aid while on tour in the United States, something that naturally outraged Nehru, who warned that Ayyub's attacks may prompt an Indian response, especially as India faced physical territorial and existential threats from both Pakistan and Communist China.¹⁶² In the end, Ayyub's comments failed to change Indian or US opinions on closer relations, Indians saw it as Pakistan trying to deteriorate the South Asian situation rather than the US providing support to a national enemy.¹⁶³ The situation ultimately ended with India alarmed by the US decision to sell Fighter jets to Pakistan, seeing it as a fundamental contradiction to pursue better relations while supplying fire superiority to India's existential enemy.¹⁶⁴ Khan struck another nerve when Pakistan declared delivery of the jets while the US was still trying to deny the existence of such a deal to India.¹⁶⁵ Progress with India was seemingly lost as the nonaligned nation moved closer to the USSR due to the US' inability to make a permanent decision on Pakistan.

From this point Kennedy and Galbraith were fighting an uphill battle, not only to retake lost ground but to further the relationship with India. Galbraith took a hardline against the jet deal, arguing that massive outrage in India alone should have been enough of a catalyst to stop

¹⁶² ¹⁶² Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 6/16/61-7/31/61 doc 10

¹⁶³ *ibid.* doc 15

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.* doc 17-18

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Doc 20 and Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 8/61 doc 2

the sale.¹⁶⁶ However he was told to argue that jets were not an existential threat to India instead they provided a strategic barrier against Chicom¹⁶⁷ incursions in disputed Kashmir region and North Pakistan—a defense which obviously failed.¹⁶⁸ Galbraith made his objections clear to Dean Rusk, threatening to quit, and he tried to inform Kennedy of the gravity of the situation: India would turn to the Soviets if it saw the US continuing to arm Pakistani, no matter how friendly a Kennedy Administration pretended to be. This troubled Kennedy but he did not have the strength to stop future arms deals with Pakistan.¹⁶⁹ India started its slide towards the USSR, making clear that for any progress in its relationship with the US would require massive concessions and aid.

Things continued to deteriorate as the US tried to explain away the arms sales and shifted the conversation to de-escalating the Indo-Pak Arms Race. Secretary Desai bluntly stated that an arms race was inevitable given the US' inability to keep from arming Pakistan, and India must continue to advance if it is to face continued pressure from both of its neighbors—China and Pakistan.¹⁷⁰ Nehru also continued India's move towards the Soviets with positive comments about Soviet nuclear test bans in an effort to take advantage of the Sino-Soviet split; Nehru tried to gain an ally against China in Khrushchev while also ordering Indian diplomats to start negotiating with the US about both Kashmir and arms to Pakistan.¹⁷¹ As a result, Kennedy and Galbraith tried to pressure the State Department into talks with India deescalate the military

¹⁶⁶ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 8/61 doc 3

¹⁶⁷ Chicom was a common military and state department abbreviation for Communist China, as Taiwan was officially recognized as China during this period.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid* doc 4b

¹⁶⁹ *ibid* doc 4g

¹⁷⁰ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 9/61 docs 16 and 20a

¹⁷¹ *ibid.* doc 10

alertness in Kashmir in exchange for a restoration of standing between the US and India as well as implicit US support against China.¹⁷² As result of these efforts, Nehru restored the neutral standing of India by denouncing Soviet missile tests and putting India back inline as a non-aligned power.¹⁷³ Galbraith and Kennedy had effectively talked India down from the ledge.

Kennedy proposed a drastically new plan with the backing of Galbraith: The US would consider selling jets to India while ramping up operations against China in Tibet. But before long, Indian fears about a war with China started to come true, the Cold War about India's glacial boundaries with Pakistan and China was about to go hot.

Crisis and Failure

The start of the Sino-Indian War in October of 1962, was a blessing for Kennedy, as he was convinced that US support for India during the war and victory against China would all but ensure "India's alignment with the west" for posterity.¹⁷⁴ Despite the ongoing Cuban Missile crisis, the president personally wrote to Nehru "to give support and sympathy."¹⁷⁵ Rising tensions with the Soviets and Cubans prevented swift American military aid, but Kennedy tried to convince Pakistani President Ayub Khan to pledge his support to India or at the very least promise not to open a second front against India, but his optimism was poorly placed as the Pakistanis intended to use their US supplied military to attack India from the West as it was reeling from a Chinese attack in the East.¹⁷⁶ Nehru, in a grand departure from Indian non-alignment and self-determination, asked for direct US military Aid against China through Air

¹⁷² *ibid.* doc 20a

¹⁷³ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106, Folder: India General 11/6/61-11/20/61 doc 6

¹⁷⁴ McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*, 287.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 288

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 289-290

Support in the disputed border region of Aksai Chin.¹⁷⁷ Before Kennedy could respond, the Chinese inflicted a humiliating military defeat on India and then promptly withdrew their troops, in essence flaunting both a military and diplomatic win to the world.¹⁷⁸ At this point, Kennedy became a figure of singular importance, especially in McMahon's depiction, because he unilaterally steered the US so close to India than an alliance seemed probable, but then stood helpless while it faltered.

Many major issues threatened to derail this wartime effort to win over India, including Kashmir, Pakistan's military aid and support of China, Goa, and Sino-Indian War's success in courting Russian support of India. Throughout 1962, Kennedy also continued to tangle with the State Department and Defense Department over the issue of the jets, but once again the issue of Kashmir derailed all of South Asia, this time with an added Chinese threat. To distract Kennedy from the issue of the jets, the some members of the State Department gave a presentation on Kashmir to hopefully sway the president to make "peace" his new pet project for the region, rather than jeopardizing the US relationship with Pakistan. To be perfectly clear, the State Department was not necessarily against India but they did not feel that throwing away the US's existing and prospering relationship with Pakistan on the off chance that India would transform into a consistent and solid ally was an intelligent gamble at the time. They were sympathetic to courting India but saw Nehru as an inherent obstacle to building a relationship with India in the way the US had cultivated relations with Pakistan. This primer argued that the Pakistanis were eager to take Kashmir so any US involvement in the issue should prioritize, "assurances to Pakistan regarding future development [in the Indian Occupied Kashmir Valley] and...water,"

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 292

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 292-293

while getting India to give up on expanding past the current ceasefire line by offering, “[to] relieve India of a substantial financial burden which Kashmir represent[ed]...[through] economic benefits...aid.”¹⁷⁹ The State Department was primarily concerned with retaining Ayyub’s support rather than supporting Kennedy’s outreach to Nehru, as a result the presentation rejected Indian control of the Valley and Kashmiri Independence as “dangerous for peace,” and since the status quo was “unsustainable,” the only true solution would be to give “Pakistan a voice.”¹⁸⁰ The US seemingly “possess[ed] leverage...towards settlement of the Kashmir issue, had to dangle the fear of “Chicom aggression,” the US’ domination of the “economic development and security of the region,” over both parties.¹⁸¹

Begrudgingly forced to work with the State Department’s vision for the region, at least in theory, Kennedy warm relation with India without upsetting Ayub Khan. The very same report that laid out the US options in Kashmir pointed out that China was looking to take the Aksai Chin region and eventually the entire Kashmir Valley.¹⁸² Before Kennedy could present an offer of aid to India against the Chinese threat, Pakistan rejected US attempts and warnings for bilateral talks and instead went to the UN Security Council to demand India’s expulsion from Kashmir, or at the very least a more Pakistani centric drawing of the ceasefire line.¹⁸³ Chester Bowles—now a Special Representative and Advisor to the President after being removed from

¹⁷⁹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 23 pp.1-2

¹⁸⁰ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 23 pp.5, 1

¹⁸¹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 23 pp.7, 6

¹⁸² Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 23 pp.7

¹⁸³ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 1 pp.1

the State Department—immediately alerted the president and warned of the dire consequences should the state department support Pakistan in the UN, as senior diplomats felt they had to honor “a commitment made to President Ayub Khan last July.”¹⁸⁴ Kennedy threw out State’s playbook and bypassed all proper diplomatic channels to personally chastise Khan and warned him not to press the issue further:¹⁸⁵

I express my concern...I [will] be frank with you...any development which serves to worsen the relationship between your society and India inevitably works to the benefits of our communist adversaries in China and the Soviet Union...I must tell of my deep concern over ...your intention to bring the Kashmir dispute to the United Nations Security Council...I can foresee no good result for your country... [you will only] open up new trouble making opportunities for the communists.¹⁸⁶

Kennedy failed to bring Pakistan back to the table and India made no comments to the United States. Any hopes that this meant US-Indian relations were stable, however, were dashed when news broke about Goa.

By militarily annexing the remaining enclaves of Portuguese India in December of 1961, after Portugal refused to consider any decolonization efforts, India effectively sabotaged any chance of maintaining US support. The Kennedy administration reacted poorly to this action, as did most of Europe, but the Soviets applauded Nehru’s move against colonialism. Kennedy exclaimed “You spend the last fifteen years preaching morality to us, and then you go ahead and act the way any normal country would behave... People are saying, the preacher has been caught coming out of the brothel.”¹⁸⁷ This coincided with the Senate demanding an end to any talks of

¹⁸⁴ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 1pp.1-2

¹⁸⁵ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 1a pp.1

¹⁸⁶ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 1a pp.1-4

¹⁸⁷ Dennis Kux. *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies, 1941–1991* DIANE Publishing, 1993, pp198

weapons deals while also cutting US aid to India. Meanwhile, American businesses and Catholics were outraged and petitioned the president to reject “Indian sovereignty over Goa.”¹⁸⁸. To make matters worse, India’s most vocal US supporter, Galbraith, fell gravely ill and had to be evacuated to Hawaii.¹⁸⁹ Indian Defense Minister Krishna Menon, by this time a vocal opponent of an arms deal with the United States, used the negative reception in the US to attack Kennedy and use race as the easy way out, “The Americans are scoundrels. Their entire anger over Goa is only because a black nation has thrown out a white nation.”¹⁹⁰

Henry Kissinger, at this time a Harvard professor and part-time State Department advisor, was drafted and sent to India to play hardball with Prime Minister Nehru and Defense Minister Menon, while secretly holding a trump card. Kissinger’s role was to back Menon away from his hardline anti-western stances while winning over Indian support for a compromise of a weapons deal along with a tacit US endorsement against China. He dodged Menon’s allegations of bias and racism by arguing that “the president had been committed to a strong and developing India long before he became chief executive.”¹⁹¹ Menon simply transferred his diatribe toward Galbraith, who was seen as suspiciously “too pro-Indian” fascination of India, almost akin to a paternalistic fascination.¹⁹² Kissinger ignored this remark but he made progress negotiating Menon’s calls against Pakistan and in terms of nuclear testing. Still, this meeting allowed

¹⁸⁸ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 3/62 doc 7 pp.1-2

¹⁸⁹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 21

¹⁹⁰ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 1/62 doc 4 pp. 1

¹⁹¹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 2/62 doc 5 pp. 2

¹⁹² Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 2/62 doc 5 pp. 6

Kennedy, Galbraith, and McGeorge Bundy to finally try to appease India with a deal to sell and license C130 transport and attack aircraft, in order to prevent “India [from]... turn[ing] to Soviets for MIG 21s-23s...”¹⁹³ For India, this was seemingly too little too late, as they had assurances and had secretly obtained transcripts about the widening Sino-Soviet split where Khrushchev had backed India over China, saying, “China is not correct in antagonizing India... This is stupid.”¹⁹⁴ The US’ only hope was for Kennedy and Galbraith to go to India and make a real effort to show they cared about the relationship.

Kennedy then met with Ambassador BK Nehru, Nehru’s nephew and advisor, asking him to speak to his uncle personally about trying to salvage the relationship. Kennedy did not capitulate on the question of Kashmir, but instead offered a promise of aid.¹⁹⁵ Shortly thereafter, Chester Bowles met with Indian General Kaul. When Kaul bluntly asked if the US would intervene in the event of a CHICOM attack or Invasion, Bowles boldly claimed, “I assured him... we would do so.”¹⁹⁶ With that one statement, Bowles had reclaimed the US relationship with India as Nehru; the Indian defense staff demanded to speak to both Kennedy and Galbraith about how to move forward. By the time Galbraith recovered from his illness and returned to India, the promise was the only thing keeping the relationship alive. Galbraith strengthened India’s expectation of aid in the event of an attack: “Indian military... [concerned about] ...quality of their materiel... Indian Army expects trouble on northern border... grievously

¹⁹³ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 2/62 doc 17 pp. 1

¹⁹⁴ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 2/62 doc7 pp. 3

¹⁹⁵ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 3/62 doc 2a pp. 1-2

¹⁹⁶ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 3/62 doc 3 pp. 2

unprepared...army's view of situation is more pessimistic...should there be trouble there will certainly be a request to US Government for assistance...I again stress importance of safeguarding our position in handling this matter.¹⁹⁷

Less than a month later this resolve was put to the test, as Menon demanded the US back India against "Paks and Chicoms" or stressed US to bring Pakistan to bilateral talks.¹⁹⁸ Ayub Khan threatened to use "American arms against India" and Galbraith futilely argued for the State Department to censure Pakistan, especially since there had been Indian and Chinese skirmishes at this point.¹⁹⁹ The US failure to reign in Pakistan set into progress India's escalation of talks with the USSR over MIGs.

While Kennedy was busy calming the Senate, Galbraith became a man whose world was on fire, he continued to beg the State Department and Defense Department to sell jets and arms to India to prevent this burgeoning non-aligned power of South Asia from becoming a Soviet ally. Galbraith made it clear, "The Soviets have made a concrete offer. We have not."²⁰⁰ The Senate heard of India's willingness to deal with the Soviets and while unaware of Galbraith's efforts to broker a deal, they cut aid to India by over 75%, while reapproving a condemnation of Indian Actions in "Goa and Kashmir."²⁰¹ Rusk gave Galbraith a deadline to make India choose a side. Responding to Galbraith's efforts to argue US aid was of a "higher quality" than the "quantity of

¹⁹⁷ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 3/62 doc 16 pp. 1-2

¹⁹⁸ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 4/62 doc 10

¹⁹⁹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 5/62 doc 13 pp. 1-4

²⁰⁰ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 5/62 doc 4 pp. 2

²⁰¹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 5/62 doc 9 pp. 2

Soviet [aid], Menon once again presented an ultimatum, “[my] task is to be sure Indian pilots flew planes equal to those of the Chinese” what could the US provide to India if even the insulting offer to tour a c130 had to be postponed until one could be borrowed?²⁰² The US did finally offer India F104 jets, but Russian undercut the price by “more than half.”²⁰³ Kennedy floated the idea of joint US-western European arms deal with India where used and French manufactured f104 jets could be sold to India for cheap and faster than the soviet MIGs.²⁰⁴ The UK would offer Lightning Jets alongside a French offer of Mirage and F104 jets, but neither country was comfortable setting an example of giving a post-colonial nation air superiority. Kennedy therefore had to wrestle with them to even pretend to make an offer of testing delivery within 3 years. In a stroke of genius, the Soviets made an offer too good to refuse: India would get “24 MIG 21s with...armament...training for flight and ground personnel...assist India in establishing a [production] facility...” and this would all happen in “18 months.”²⁰⁵ The door was also open for upgrades alongside the Soviet Airforce, making India a peer-power which would have given them air superiority over both Pakistan and China.²⁰⁶ With Menon and the Indian Air Force all but ready to rubber stamp the Soviet deal, Galbraith and Kennedy make one last attempt to show their seriousness by questioning US aid to Pakistan, they agreed with Indian feelings that it was tantamount to “putting a loaded

²⁰² Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 106a, Folder: India General 5/62 doc 15 pp. 2

²⁰³ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 5/62 doc 4 pp. 1

²⁰⁴ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 5/62 doc 14 pp. 2

²⁰⁵ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 6/62 doc 17c pp. 1-3

²⁰⁶ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 6/62 doc 25-26

pistol in the hands of an irresponsible man.”²⁰⁷ Galbraith lamented the series of US failures: “We supported Portugal on Goa...We succeeded in antagonizing India...We supported Pakistan on Kashmir...we got nothing practical [from] Pakistan...we got bad press in India...we left the Pakistanis still complaining about Americans... [while they] negotiate with the Chinese”²⁰⁸

Even Republican Senators like John Cooper (1901-1991) from Kentucky, who had been Eisenhower’s Ambassador to India, asked Kennedy to find a way to stop the MIG deal and use” democratic values... {to preserve] good relations.”²⁰⁹ Cooper pointed out the obvious, “India [was] purchasing Soviet planes...[because] the United States has sold jets to Pakistan...congress...will aid...President Kennedy.”²¹⁰ At this point, India has not yet turned against the US. Yes, they accepted Soviet Planes but were still reasonably “non-aligned,” two actions changed India’s neutrality towards the US: US air force exercises with Pakistan and the Outbreak of the Sino-Indian War.

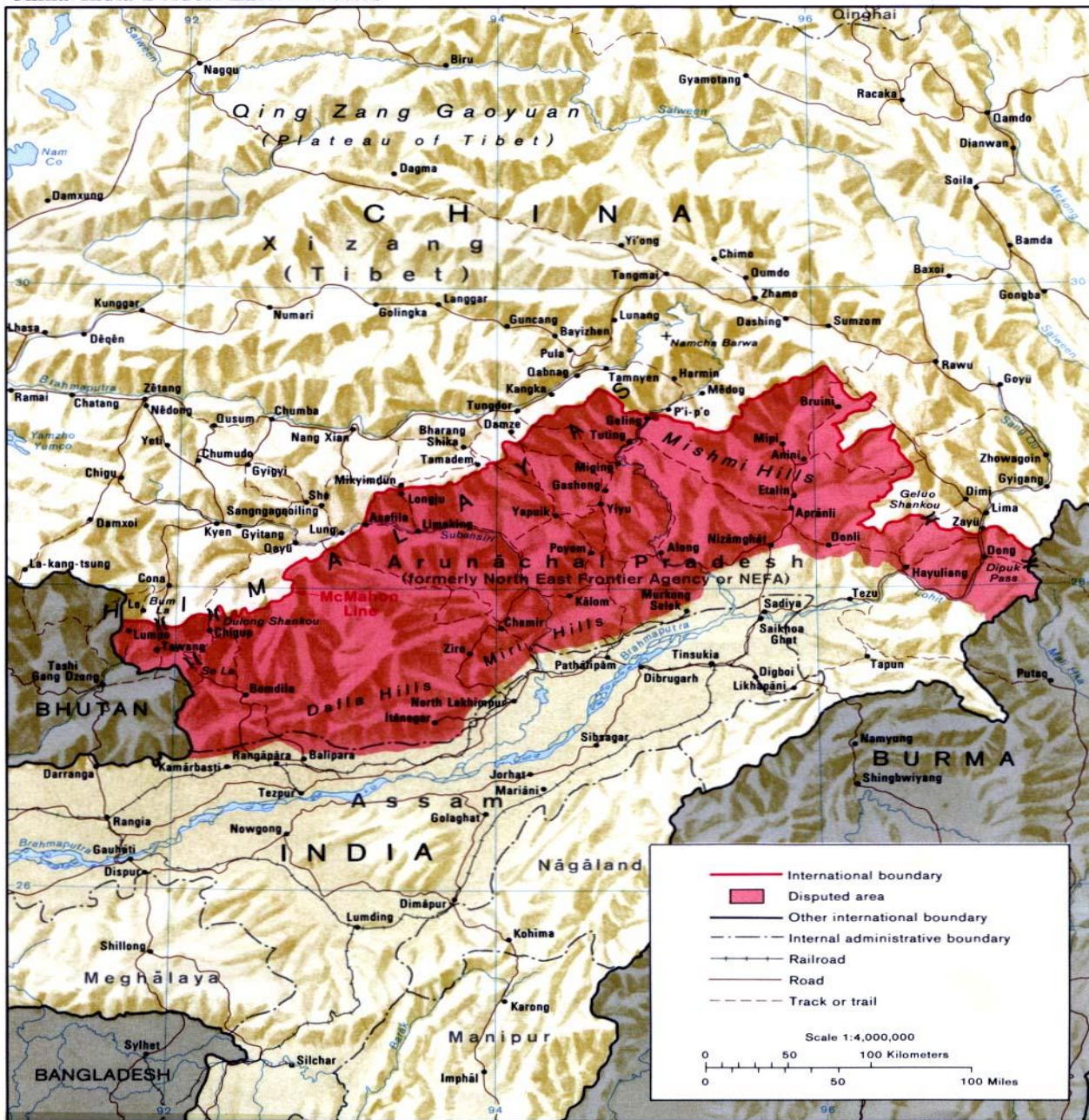
²⁰⁷ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 5/62 doc 13

²⁰⁸ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 6/62 doc 3

²⁰⁹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 6/62 doc 2a

²¹⁰ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107, Folder: India General 6/62 doc 2a

China-India Border: Eastern Sector



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²¹¹ CIA Map depicting the disputed area, the top red-line is the McMahon Line.
https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_india_e_border_88.jpg

When the Sino-Indian conflict heated up in October of 1962, before becoming an all-out war in December, the US broke whatever bonds it had left with India by betraying its promise to help. The State Department pushed through a report to Galbraith in New Delhi, “We will be restrained...we will not offer assistance...”²¹² While entirely clear in the State’ Department’s correspondence with the Department of Defense, it seems a combination of the bitterness from the MIG deal and the Cuban Missile Crisis meant that no direct Military aid from the US in the form of weapons, troops, or fighting aircraft could be spared. Still, Galbraith asked Kennedy to direct the State Department to continue to provide spare parts and even transport planes to India, and Kennedy agreed to do so, while also trying to convince India that the US could help only if “Chinese [did not] terminate their latest incursion across the McMahon-Line First.”²¹³

Bolstered by lackluster support from the US, the Soviets seized the opportunity to not only deliver MIGs but also helicopters and ground crews to the IAF.²¹⁴ Disappointed by the nation’s bureaucratic and congressional institutions, Kennedy directed Galbraith to reach out to the UK for real military assistance to India. With the failure of the earlier jet deal with France, however, Galbraith was told that the UK “thinks the whole question of military aid to India has such delicate and complex ramifications...[have] reservation.”²¹⁵ Rusk and Kennedy then worked to diffuse

²¹² Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107a, Folder: India General 10/62 doc 1

²¹³ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107a, Folder: India General 10/62 doc 2 pp.3

²¹⁴ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107a, Folder: India General 10/62 doc 20 pp. 1-2

²¹⁵ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107a, Folder: India General 10/62 doc 14

rumors that Pakistan was planning to open a second front against India due to the thinning of Indian troops by the Line of Control in Kashmir.²¹⁶ Ayub Kahn reacted violently to UK proposals to supply “automatic weapons and ammunition...if [India] requested.”²¹⁷ The Joint Anglo-American strategy was to keep Pakistan out of the war while using military aid and China’s escalation of war to further estrange India from communists and non-alignment.²¹⁸ The US and the UK failed. China won so handily and Premier Zhou rejected all attempts by Nehru to negotiate a settle. China expanded its territory beyond the original contested area to occupy all of the Aksai Chin and opened a road to Pakistan for their help.²¹⁹

Kennedy, in his attempt to draw India closer to the United States, ended his presidency with a more Soviet Aligned India, a more anti-US Pakistan, and stronger China in the region. Yet Kennedy’s willingness to mostly respect the function, autonomy, and integrity of the State Department led to a gradual change where by the time of Nixon the State Department was much more sympathetic to India and suspicious of Pakistan. In essence, bureaucracy did its job to prevent the president from rocking the boat, but Kennedy left a lasting impression and solidified his legacy. After Kennedy’s assassination, India was something Johnson cared about, but it lost precedence. In fact, with most of Johnson’s foreign policy considerations going to the escalating conflict in Vietnam, India was given importance but less than it had in the past.

²¹⁶ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107a, Folder: India General 10/62 doc 2

²¹⁷ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107a, Folder: India General 10/62 doc 3

²¹⁸ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 107a, Folder: India General 10/62 doc 5 pp. 1-4

²¹⁹ Papers of JFK, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files. Box 108, Folder: India General 11/62-12/62 doc 2

Chapter Three: Nixon's Folly

Lyndon B Johnson had a rather uneventful tenure with India and was largely a stepping stone between Kennedy's pro-Indian attempts and Nixon's pro-Pakistan tilt, despite having to deal with the fallout of the 1965 Indo-Pak War. India's quick inclusion of the UN prevented the US from intervening or more explicitly aiding SEATO ally Pakistan. Within the Johnson Admin, the continued presence of Bowles made sure India was not maligned and there was general disapproval of Pakistan's unprovoked infiltration and sabotage in Kashmir.²²⁰ Johnson's compliance with the UN meant stopping arms sales to both countries, which disproportionately affected Pakistan.²²¹ This once again leveled the playing field, as Pakistan felt betrayed by the US' deference to the UN plan rather than providing unyielding support. The inconclusive UN negotiated stalemate that ended the war combined with escalating tensions in Vietnam relegated India to backburner for the rest of Johnson's term. Johnson also tried to continue the legacy of his predecessor through food aid and other green programs, but the escalating tensions in Vietnam largely took his focus away from South Asia by the late 1960s.

If John F Kennedy and John Kenneth Galbraith were, despite their shortcomings, India's loudest and proudest supporters in Washington D.C., then Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger were the Pakistani equivalent, but with even fewer limitations on what lines could be crossed. Nixon had various reasons for his incredulous support of Pakistan well into the genocide of the 1971 War, from the opening of China to his utter disgust of Indians and femininity."

²²⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1964-1968, General, Volume XXV, South Asia*, Editors: Gabrielle S. Mallon, Louis J. Smith, David S. Patterson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2000), Document 170 1965 briefing to president

²²¹ Gary Jonathan Bass. *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*. (London: Hurst & Company, 2014), 5.

Nixon, Kissinger, and The Gates of China

Despite the popular focus on Nixon's domestic battles and subsequent downfall, Richard Nixon's own primary concern upon assuming office was leaving behind a legacy of formidable foreign policy achievements. Of course, the Vietnam War was also in part a domestic issue, as well as a major drain of foreign policy resources, but China still remained central in determining the US's relations with East Asia, South Asia, and even Eastern Europe. Given his experiences as vice president for Eisenhower and the difficulties Nixon and the Dulles brothers had confronted in circumventing the State Department, from the onset Nixon looked for other channels to implement his foreign policy. Henry Kissinger (b. 1923) became Nixon's right hand and Pakistani President Yahya Khan (1917-1980), who often seemed more concerned with what the US thought of him than what his people did.

Nixon and Kissinger were not always a seemingly perfect match; in fact, they really did not care for each other even as late as 1968.²²² Kissinger's invitations to his Harvard lectures and conferences in the 1950s were snubbed by then Vice President Nixon and while they rubbed elbows in DC at a cocktail party in 1967, when asked about Nixon's run for the presidency Kissinger simply said, "I detest Nixon."²²³ Yet they had a begrudging respect for each other, Kissinger respected Nixon's grit and stubborn commitment to his ideology while Nixon devoured Kissinger's articles and books. Early on in Nixon's bid for the presidency, he was encouraged if not ordered by his advisors to pick up Kissinger as a key member of the

²²² Suri, Jeremi. *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*. (Harvard University Press, 2007), 202.

²²³ Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, 202.

administration's foreign policy apparatus. "They always had scheme, both domestic and foreign, to out maneuver their enemies."²²⁴

Nixon was open about his animosity towards India and within his opening months in office he made this clear. "Pakistan is country I would like to do everything for...the people have less complexes than the Indians...I don't like Indians!"²²⁵ Nixon saw himself as fighting against a groupthink that had taken hold of Americans during the Kennedy Administration in which there was a binary where India was good and Pakistan was bad; he shunned those who thought India's democracy was a virtue simply because it was a democracy when other factors like socialism and proximity to the USSR were ignored.²²⁶ This was juxtaposed with State Department regulars like Archer Blood who saw Nixon's obsession with Yahya Kahn as distasteful and "brusque."²²⁷ While Kennedy made his preference for India known, he still worked through proper channels like the DOD and State Department resulting in disasters like the Jet Deal that led to vast disparities between Kennedy's goals and the actual outcomes. Nixon rejected this framework. If the State Department was supposed to be bulwark of long term stability and consistency in American Foreign Policy, he would simply bypass them. On the president's order, Kissinger concentrated power in the White House, and the president ordered all critical state department personnel and policy decisions to go through Kissinger. This consolidation of power did not go unnoticed by the Indian Ambassador who warned Indira Gandhi that the level playing field of Johnson was gone.²²⁸ He was soon proven right, as one of

²²⁴ Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, 203.

²²⁵ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 3, 5.

²²⁶ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 5-6.

²²⁷ *ibid* 7

²²⁸ *ibid* 10

Nixon's first acts towards South Asia was lifting the Arms Embargo to Pakistan and resuming the sale of Jets, missiles, and small arms.²²⁹

Nixon never hid his hope to use Pakistan as a pathway to China, and by August of 1969 the Pakistanis were bending over backwards to reframe their foreign policy to cultivate Nixon's trust, "The Pakistanis are working in the belief that President Nixon told President Yahya that the US wished to seek an accommodation with Communist China and would appreciate the Pakistani's passing this word to [1st premier of China] Chou En-lai and using their influence to promote this."²³⁰ Pakistan made extensive use of their ties to China to keep the US updated on progress, checking in nearly every month as an intermediary between Kissinger and Premier Chou En-lai, even getting Chou En-Lai to agree to visit Lahore with a possible US meeting.²³¹

Pakistan's efforts started to show promise in 1971, as they became more advocate than simple intermediary as Mao and Chou En-Lai became more open to really pursuing a diplomatic relationship with the United States.

Premier Chou En-lai has seriously studied President Nixon's messages of April 29, May 17th and May 22nd, 1971, and has reported with much pleasure to Chairman Mao Tse-tung that President Nixon is prepared to accept his suggestion to visit Peking for direct conversations with the leaders of the People's Republic of China. Chairman Mao Tse-tung has indicated that he welcomes President Nixon's visit and looks forward to that occasion when he may have direct conversations with His Excellency the President, in which each side would be free to raise the principal issue of concern to it...²³²

Yahya Khan and Kissinger planned every detail of secret mission to Beijing where,

"Premier Chou En-lai warmly looks forward to the meeting with Dr. Kissinger" and where China

²²⁹ *ibid* 11-12

²³⁰ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 26

²³¹ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 54

²³² Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 130

was pushed for the visit to be a grand diplomatic event rather than a secret reprieve.²³³ Nixon was open about his desire to court China and gave both Pakistan and China Quid Pro-Quos in that the US would no longer make any public condemnations of China nor publicize its relationship with Taiwan and the US would support Pakistan in any way that contributed to internal Pakistani stability and efforts against India.²³⁴

China in return heightened Pakistan's importance to the US by portraying the fiery Islamic Republic—at least its name— as proof that US-relations with China would be beneficial for South Asia, as US backing and “combination of Third World leadership aspirations with pragmatism” would show the world the successes of multilateral diplomacy.²³⁵ Many in the state department saw this grandiose rhetoric as an attempt by the Chinese to have US-Pakistani relations improve to offset the collateral damage for when China demanded an end to US recognition and support of the ROC. China was making a power play,

Given its desire to become the leader of the “Third World” and its antagonistic posture vis-à-vis the US, USSR and Japan, the PRC will be especially radical on colonial and economic development issues, placing ideology and propaganda ahead of practicability. Similarly, it will press for radical disarmament measures, both to embarrass the US and USSR and, when necessary, to protect itself against lesser measures which would interfere with its own nuclear aspirations²³⁶

China was even factored in as an Anti-Indian ally when war broke out in 1971.

Kissinger, though only an Assistant for National Security Affairs, usurped the Secretary of State's job by directly communicating with US allies and foreign leaders and informing them

²³³ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 130

²³⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 94 and 90

²³⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 175

²³⁶ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 175

of the plan to court and “improve ties with the People’s Republic of China.”²³⁷ Nixon himself approached stumbling blocks to a thawed relationship with China like Charles De Gaulle of France by arguing that long-term stability for the world depended on the branding of the Soviets and Chinese as “great powers” and building “parallel relationships with them.”²³⁸ Despite warnings from the UN that any moves toward the PRC would endanger the Republic of China’s (Taiwan) diplomatic standing and misgivings from European allies like Spain about trusting the communists, Nixon moved forward. Everything was going his way, until India came into the picture.

Nixon’s Anathema: Indira Gandhi and those “Damn Indians”

Nixon’s relationship with India was already sour due to his preference for Pakistan and his opinion of Nehru as Eisenhower’s Vice President, but the election of Nehru’s daughter—Indira Gandhi—as Prime Minister was unacceptable and ended any chance of the US taking an impartial or pro-India stance in South Asia. Chester Bowles—who briefly retained his role as Ambassador to India from the reign of Kennedy—initially served as a moderating influence between Nixon’s decrees and the State Department’s actions in India before he was fired. With his departure, Nixon and Kissinger were free to form a narrative where Indians and Indira Gandhi were the root cause of all of America’s ailments in Asia.

In more than a few of the private conversations between Nixon and Kissinger, Indira Gandhi is referred to by one of her two preferred nicknames in the oval office, “the bitch” or the “old Witch” and the Indians are usually the “devious bastards,” and State Department officials

²³⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 20

²³⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 20

with pro-India leanings like Ambassador Keating are also “weak-willed” or “bastards”²³⁹ This deeply personal and antagonistic aspect of Nixon’s foreign policy is not a new observation, in fact Robert McMahon led the charge in publishing these shocking moments when the documents were first released, still in the greater context of the 1971 War Nixon’s personal convictions leave much to wonder in terms of his racial and gender biases in the evaluation of an international crisis.²⁴⁰

The letters between Indira Gandhi and Nixon Administration largely showed a deteriorating relationship and her official visits to the United States seemed more disastrous than harmonious, as result the Nixon Administration’s attempts to undermine the State Department’s connections to India in favor of Yahya Khan and Chou En-lai grew more blatant.

Genocide for Trade, Cold War boils over? 1971 and Nixon’s Neglect

East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was systematically disenfranchised in Pakistan’s parliamentary system, so despite having more people it was subject by minority rule by ethnic and linguistic groups based in West Pakistan, this boiled over in 1970. Pakistan’s Military dictator Ayub Khan handed over the reins of power to a hand-picked successor, career military man Yahya Khan, in 1968 hoping to quell widespread unrest. Yahya Khan’s luck was not much better and so he agreed to hold the country’s first elections in 1970.²⁴¹ The Awami League, a Bengali Nationalist and Social Party, triumphed in the elections of 1970 due to many factors but primarily the vast population difference in favor of East Pakistan and the political fragmentation

²³⁹ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 150, 177

²⁴⁰ Gary R Hess. "Grand Strategy and Regional Conflict: Nixon, Kissinger, and Crisis in South Asia." *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 5 (2007): 959-61

²⁴¹ Raghavan, Srinath. *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*. Harvard University Press, 2013, pp. 21-28

of the west. Khan's refusal to allow an Awami government plunged the country into chaos and a what was initially a civil war turned into the Bangladeshi War of Independence or the Indo-Pak War of 1971.

Even in 1969 Nixon was in tune with the troubles of East Pakistan, and he was more than willing to involve the US to preserve Pakistani stability. During the run-up to Pakistan's election of 1970, Nixon was antagonistic towards Archer Blood and Henry Kissinger for suggesting that Yahya Kahn was in a precarious situation and that his loss would mean a military crackdown and a possible separation between East and West Pakistan.²⁴² Kissinger while wholly unsympathetic to Archer Blood and the State Department took the concerns seriously once they were echoed by his handpicked "shadow" State Department within the annals of the White House. Reluctantly Kissinger decided to advise inaction: the US would not work in the aftermath of the election to prevent Bangladeshi secession nor would it try to prevent Yahya from forcible consolidating power in hopes of securing future relationships with Pakistan. He hoped a cooling period where the US did not try to interfere would prevent Yahya Khan from spilling blood and doing something irreversible.²⁴³ Nixon agreed and the joint force of Kissinger and Nixon were even able to convince the Stateside officials within the state department that the best policy was non-involvement. Those on the ground in Dhaka already knew it was too late

American Diplomats in Dhaka and Delhi—namely Consul General Archer Blood and his entire staff at the East Pakistani Consulate— started reporting the atrocities of the Pakistani army against Bangladeshis and Hindus almost as soon as the civil war broke out in March of 1971. Yet across the ocean, there was no discussion of war crimes or stopping the Pakistani crack down,

²⁴² Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 29.

²⁴³ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 28-29.

instead Nixon and Kissinger conspired about how India and Russia could be implicated in stirring up hostilities, well after the genocide was known.²⁴⁴ The Administration's stunning neglect of an ongoing genocide and support of the Pakistani regime led to the infamous Blood Telegram and resignation or recall of all nearly State department employees in Dhaka and any in Delhi and Lahore that had vocally criticized the administration. This purge finally shored Nixon's complete domination of the US relationship with Pakistan and reaffirmed Kissinger's status as de-facto Secretary of State. The Blood Telegram was officially known as "Dissent from U.S. Policy Toward East Pakistan" and it was a scathing critique and rebuke of the Nixon's talking points about Yahya Khan's capabilities as a leader and the situation in East Pakistan as a whole.²⁴⁵ It is a powerful statement of dissent, where dozens of career bureaucrats put their careers on the line to make a point.

... East Pakistan serves neither our moral interests broadly defined nor our national interests narrowly defined, numerous officers of AmConGen Dacca, USAID Dacca and USIS Dacca consider it their duty to register strong dissent with fundamental aspects of this policy. Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak dominated government and to lessen likely and deservedly negative international public relations impact against them. Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy, ... We, as professional public servants express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected in order to salvage our nations position as a moral leader of the free world.²⁴⁶

The reaction to the Blood Telegram by Nixon and Kissinger was not the sort of about face the accusations of supporting a genocide should invoke, instead it was a feeling of betrayal and anger. Secretary of State William Rogers made every effort to flagellate his men in Dhaka and

²⁴⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 162, 163

²⁴⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971 Doc. 19

²⁴⁶ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971 Doc. 19

schemed with Kissinger to cover up the telegram before it got to the Democrats in Congress, namely Ted Kennedy.²⁴⁷ At the end of the Opening China was more important than diplomats who, “bitched about our policy.”²⁴⁸ In meeting with Indian Ambassador Jha and letters to Gandhi, Both Kissinger and Nixon accused India of stirring up troubles in East Pakistan. Nixon was convinced that the conflict in East Pakistan was some sort of elaborate Indian ploy meant to weaken Pakistan and allow Indira Gandhi to open a front towards Kashmir.²⁴⁹

Unlike Kennedy who tried to work within the bounds of the State department’s recommendations, Nixon’s ham handedness was threatening another mutiny a lá Blood Telegram. The US ambassador to India Kenneth Keating was described as a raving madman and “fanatical” for agreeing with Blood about the US’ moral bankruptcy in not immediately “cut[ting] off all military aid, all economic aid, and in effect help the Indians to push the Pakistanis out of [East Pak/ Bangladesh] ...”²⁵⁰ However, the Damage was done as India was winning over Congress.²⁵¹

Nixon largely dictated the US approach towards the 1971 conflict near singlehandedly, though behind the scenes Kissinger was in control of planning and executing Nixon’s will, but overall the Conflict became less about Pakistan and more about saving face. US strategy in the Bangladesh War of Independence depended on three pillars: blame India for the outbreak of

²⁴⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971 Doc. 20

²⁴⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971 Doc. 20

²⁴⁹ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 162

²⁵⁰ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–7, Documents on South Asia, 1969–1972, doc 136.

²⁵¹ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–7, Documents on South Asia, 1969–1972, doc 162

hostilities, give Pakistan top cover both militarily and diplomatically to maintain the relationship, and reign in the US bureaucracy by any means necessary to preserve Pakistan as a route to opening China. The Nixon saw India's involvement in the 1971 war as thinly veiled Russian plot, and he became even more convinced of this after Kissinger's meeting with Chinese Ambassador Huang in December of 1971.²⁵² The meeting was a reassertion of Beijing's want to break off from the USSR and establish new axis where "Peking's link with Pakistan will balance Moscow's with India and might conceivably establish a basis for a UN effort in which the five Permanent Members could help restrain Indian military moves while permitting a political solution in East Pakistan."²⁵³ Essentially in exchange for a seat on the UN security council, China would do whatever Nixon asked to harm the positions of India and Russia, especially in East Pakistan. Kissinger reassured China that despite "being barred by law from giving equipment to Pakistan... we are moving a number of naval ships in the West Pacific toward the Indian Ocean: an aircraft carrier accompanied by four destroyers and a tanker, and a helicopter carrier and two destroyers..."²⁵⁴ The point of no return in terms of the possibility of the US troops clashing with Indians and Russians was approaching.

Despite Nixon's insistence on moving a carrier fleet into Indian waters to cut off any further assistance from the Indian army to the Bangladeshis, the speed at which the Indians defeated Pakistan and Russia's steadfast willingness to back Gandhi left the US flatfooted and embarrassed. Nixon was devastated by the Indian army's progress in Bangladesh and he angrily

²⁵² Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 176.

²⁵³ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 175

²⁵⁴ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972 Document 176.

asked Kissinger how this had happened, “The partition of Pakistan is a fact... You see those people welcoming the Indian troops when they come in...”²⁵⁵ The same conversation between Nixon and Kissinger highlights Nixon’s paranoia at the fact that India was not threatening the annex Bangladesh, he thought the Russian offers to negotiate peace were a cover for future India aggression and the “Rape of Pakistan.” Indira Gandhi reached out to Nixon with a letter through Ambassador Jha trying to show that India was not the aggressor—against the allegations put forward by the US and UN— and that they were acting to defend democracy and human rights in Bangladesh, and the Ambassador pleads with Nixon not to further the divide between the US and India. But, Gandhi also puts the blame for the war squarely on the shoulders of World Leaders like Nixon,

The tragic war, which is continuing, could have been averted if during the nine months prior to Pakistan’s attack on us on December 3, the great leaders of the world had paid some attention to the fact of revolt, tried to see the reality of the situation and searched for a genuine basis for reconciliation. I wrote letters along these lines. I undertook a tour in quest of peace at a time when it was extremely difficult to leave, in the hope of presenting to some of the leaders of the world the situation as I saw it. It was heartbreaking to find that while there was sympathy for the poor refugees, the disease itself was ignored. War could also have been avoided if the power, influence and authority of all the States and above all the United States, had got Sheikh Mujibur Rahman released. Instead, we were told that a civilian administration was being installed. Everyone knows that this civilian administration was a farce; today the farce has turned into a tragedy.²⁵⁶

The letter, which Gandhi planned on releasing publicly, coupled with Pakistan’s humiliating surrender in Dhaka was too much embarrassment to go unchecked. China made its displeasure with the turn of events known, and warned that it would deploy troops to relieve the Pakistani army.²⁵⁷ West Pakistan, not yet accepting of the surrender, pleaded with the United States to deploy

²⁵⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–7, Documents on South Asia, 1969–1972, doc 168

²⁵⁶ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971 Doc. 314

²⁵⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971 Doc. 319

the Seventh Fleet against India. Fearing the Soviets would push India to end Pakistan's threat to Kashmir by marching their victorious army west, Nixon actually ordered the carrier fleet on standby into the Indian Ocean. While it ended before the US entered the War due to India's swift victory against Pakistan, the Russians and Indians felt like they had beaten the United States. The Russians gloated, "Pegov asserted the Soviet fleet was also in the Indian Ocean and would not allow the Seventh fleet to intervene. If the Chinese moved in Ladakh, Pegov said, "the Soviets would open a diversionary action in Sinkiang."²⁵⁸ The War was over and Nixon had failed.

²⁵⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971 Doc. 319

Conclusion

Theory and reality are vastly different propositions and what is dreamed of in theory rarely works out in reality, especially in the realm of politics. In theory, choosing an ally between a stable democratic state and an unstable theocratic republic prone to military coups is an easy choice. However, the realities of the Cold War and the binary system used to determine friend and foe for much of the latter half of the 20th century created a real dilemma for the United States when it came to India and Pakistan.

Truman and Eisenhower were the first presidents to deal with a newly independent India and Pakistan, and while neither had strong preference coming into office they ended up creating a status quo where the United States became a primary backer of Pakistan both economically and militarily. Whether it was ingrained prejudice against Indians from popular culture or difficulty in understanding India's stance on non-alignment, both Truman and Eisenhower had trouble dealing with Nehru and his very idealistic notions about the world. Pakistan's eagerness to be a US ally combined with Nehru's incessant courting of the Soviet Union and Condemnation of US actions in Korea led to a situation where the United States drew closer to Pakistan despite its best efforts to deal with both South Asian countries fairly. By the end of the Eisenhower Administration, Pakistan was an integral part of the US's dealing in Asia and a willing participant in the Black White mentality of the Cold War and Containment.

John F. Kennedy's rise to power was truly revolutionary for the US-India relationship, because he represented hope. From his advisors to his grand strategy of using India as an ally against China, Kennedy was willing to throw out the old paradigm and start his own framework. For Kennedy, the Crisis of the Sino-Indian War was not the driving force behind his will to

better relations with India nor was the result of the war the defining moment of his relationship with Nehru. There were years of back-and-forth in terms of economic aid military aid or even just technical support. Kennedy weathered high points and low points with India from the annexation of Goa to the Jet Deal, but there was always the underlying goal of improving relations with India without necessarily alienating Pakistan. The failed jet deal, the Indian government's continued arrogance when dealing with a more sympathetic American administration, and a lack of cooperation from US executive agencies all hampered John Kennedy's ability to pursue a meaningful relationship with India. The failure, however, was indicative of a larger problem with US foreign policy during the Cold War, something that not even the idealistic Kennedy and his brain trust could fight. Despite Eisenhower's Anti-Communist mantra and Kennedy's idea of a more progressive outlook towards the war and issues like neutrality, the US was always hampered by the inherent trend towards long term stability and consistency within the bureaucratic offices of the Executive Branch and Congress, as well as Europe's inability or unwillingness to be a partner in militarily aiding the post-colonial world. Kennedy's unwillingness or inability to completely sidestep his secretaries and act completely unilaterally meant that his goals eventually fell subservient to the longer-term plans that would last beyond a single president's whims preferred by career members of the DOD and State department. Kennedy's unwillingness to completely override the diplomatic fail safes and recommendations of the State Department led to a scenario where he tried to please both India and Pakistan and failed to win support from either one. This would not be the case with Nixon.

Richard Nixon came into office with two goals in Asia: reestablish a strong US-Pakistani relationship and use this relationship to open China. These goals were to be achieved by any

means necessary and creating a rift between America and “those damn Indians” was merely another benefit. He used crisis as the defining factor in terms of his relationship with India. There was no elaborate negotiation process for aid or alliance, instead there was only hostility and antagonism that reached a tipping point with the 1971 war. It is rare that a leader’s entire relationship with a country is based on destroying an existing relationship. In certain ways, despite his failure to keep Pakistan intact, Nixon was better than Kennedy at making his will become reality since bureaucrats in the State Department and recommended courses of action were of no bother with Kissinger at his side. Kennedy—despite wanting to overstep the naysayers in State and Defense—largely remained committed to the chain of command and normal procedures through which policy was conducted, and this prevented unilateral actions towards India during events like the Jet Deal.

If Kennedy’s failure to aid India during the Sino-Indian War wiped away any progress he had made towards an alliance, Nixon’s decision to support Pakistan was the final nail in the coffin in terms of a fruitful relationship with India for decades. Both the Sino-Indian War and the Indo-Pak War of 1971 highlight just how instrumental presidential leadership and goals were in governing the pursuit of American Foreign policy. Kennedy remained largely fixated on trying to better relations with India, just Nixon’s priority of opening China led him to remain close to Pakistan and posture against India. Moral quandaries aside, both men had varying amounts of success and failure in redefining the US’ relationship with India. They were perhaps the first and last Presidents who came into office with clearly defined prejudices and goals regarding South Asia and they by far had the most opportunities to change the status quo, as their predecessors and successors more or less used current economic, military, and ideological trends to pick a South Asian ally.

After Nixon, the next notable president to deal with India was Ronald Reagan who started his time in office as a vehement critic of India's support of the Soviet Union and its lack of support in aiding the Afghans during the Soviet Invasion. The US involvement in Afghanistan inevitably pushed the country closer to Pakistan and further away from India. However, the relationship thawed as he left office and granted some trade and scientific agreements that benefitted India. This transition away from military conflict redefined the Indo-US relationship to more economic centered partnership was the new norm and the new barometer for measuring the state of affairs between the two countries. George HW Bush largely remained silent on India, but was not a popular US president for Indians due to his perceived trade war with the subcontinent over copyright protections.

Bill Clinton signaled a new era where the two US political parties seemingly flipped their stances on South Asia. It now seemed Democrats were starting to become anti-India due to his outspoken trade actions against India and his condemnation of India's nuclear program. Meanwhile Republicans used the growing threat of Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism to erode the US relationship with Pakistan. Despite Clinton's condemnation of both South Asian powers developing nuclear weapons, Pakistan grew bolder in the 1990s in the lead up to the Kargil War, leading to rumors of US complacency and aid in allowing the Pakistani development of nuclear weapons. Similarly, George W Bush was seemingly the first Republican to be overwhelmingly pro-India during his time in office. He improved trade relations, removed some import tariffs, and even removed the sanctions placed on India by Clinton after the nuclear tests in the mid-1990s. Bush even started limited intelligence sharing with the Indian secret services over terrorism and war in Afghanistan, an unprecedented move given the US closeness to the Pakistani ISI. US Indian relations under Barrack Obama were a rollercoaster. In his first term,

India was snubbed and ignored during Secretary Clinton's tour of Asia which explicitly featured China and featured the strengthening Asia's great economies and incorporating them more readily into the global framework.²⁵⁹ But Obama did make substantial progress in terms of arms deals and military relations with India. There were joint military exercises and talks of an arms deal, but India still favored Russian small arms and fighter jets. At the same time, Obama's assassination of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan and the exponential increase in drone strikes within Pakistan's borders led to a deteriorating relationship with America's oldest ally in South Asia. The BJP's rise to power in 2014 coupled with Obama's dislike of Narendra Modi's far-right nationalism and past accusations of violence against Muslims and increasing economic warfare against Asia led to relationship ending on a sour note. The election of Donald Trump and his various attempts to win over India-Americans while cultivating a friendship with nationalist Narendra Modi has seemingly made everything come full circle. The Republicans now represent the Pro-India and Pakistan-skeptic party while the Democrats represented the Anti-far right and India-skeptic party.

No matter how eager presidents are about forging ahead and achieving personal policy goals, bureaucratic and institutionalized failsafes to protect the continuity of US policy often frustrate the ability of individual leaders to alter a foreign policy. Alliances cannot be unilateral, there needs to be a reciprocity in terms of desire and need. Pakistan's effort to court the US in the early Cold War as compared with the Indian political elite's disdain for the US played a substantial role in cementing the relationship, and did much to win over US politicians who did not have a dog in the fight. Race, religion, and political capital definitely had an impact but

²⁵⁹ Twining, Dan. "A U.S. Asia Strategy for Hillary Clinton's Trip." *Foreign Policy*, February 15, 2009. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/02/15/a-u-s-asia-strategy-for-hillary-clintons-trip/>

Presidential desire, Presidential capability, and India's commitment to nonalignment all prevented an Indo-US alliance from coming to fruition. Nixon and Kennedy both failed in their own ways to fundamentally alter the trajectory of the US' relationship with South Asia, but times have changed. America and India are on track to become the most important economic and military allies in South Asia as America backs away from Pakistan's support of terrorism and Russia becomes closer to China and Pakistan at the expense of India. If Donald Trump's rapturous reception in New Delhi in February is any indication, an Indo-US alliance meant to happen in the 1940s may come true in the 2020s.

Glossary of Important Figures

Dean Acheson: 1893-1971

Chester Bowles: 1901-1986.

McGeorge Bundy: 1919-1996.

M.C. Chagla: 1900-1981

John Foster Dulles: 1888-1959.

Allen Welsh Dulles: 1893-1969.

Dwight D Eisenhower: 1890—1969.

John Kenneth Galbraith: 1908-2006.

Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi: 1869-1948.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy: 1917-1963.

Henry Alfred Kissinger: 1923-Present

Ayub Khan: 1907-1974.

Liaquat Ali Khan: 1895-1951.

Yahya Khan: 1917-1980.

George Marshall: 1880-1959.

Robert McNamara: 1916-2009.

V.K Krishna Menon: 1896-1974.

Jawaharlal Nehru: 1889-1964.

Richard Milhous Nixon: 1913-1994

Henry Owen: 1920-2011.

Dean Rusk: 1909-1994.

Arthur Schlesinger: 1917-2007.

Harry S Truman: 1884-1972

Swami Vivekananda: 1863-1902.

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