

India with Solution of some International and Regional Problems in the 1950s–1960s (Part 1)

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This article examines the role and influence of India in solving international and regional issues taking place in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, India, through a policy of conducting progressive and neutral diplomacy, emerged as an important mediator of the conflicting interests among the world's great powers. For example, India played an important role in ending the Indochina War, and the Korean War, as well as acting as a mediator in the civil war in the Congo and helping to solve diplomatic issues related to the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal. In order to examine these issues in more detail, the authors of this paper make use of original sources and relevant academic works published by scholars from academic institutions around the world. At the same time, the authors use two primary methods of historical science, including the historical method and the logical method, along with other methods such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, statistics, and comparison. This study is intended to provide additional perspectives and understanding regarding India's diplomatic policies during this period of the Cold War. The analyzed policies demonstrated India's creativity and flexibility in its diversity of approaches in solving regional and international issues. Despite the effects and pressures of the bipolar order, India remained steadfast in its goals and basic principles of its diplomacy.

Keywords: Indian diplomacy, Korean War, Suez Canal, Congolese Civil War, Indochina War, Soviet Union, Egypt, Cold War.

Introduction

After gaining independence from the British government and establishing self-governance during the Republic (1947–1950), India chose their own path of national development to strengthen and protect the independence of its people. Along with the whirlpool of complexities brought about by the Cold War, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, India was aware of the dangers threatening its independence which stemmed from the division of international political power and conflicting interests among the world's great powers. In the beginning, to meet the challenges of this environment, India's political elites chose a moderate and flexible approach for conducting international relations and remained determined not to get involved in the ongoing geostrategic competition between great pow-

ers under the umbrella of the Yalta bipolar order. The new Constitution of the Republic of India, approved by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, solemnly enshrined the basic principles of their foreign policy as: “(a) to promote international peace and security; (b) maintain just and honourable relations between nations; (c) foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another; and (d) encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration” [1, p. 21]. It clearly identified the close association between national independence, neutrality, and non-alignment with peace and friendship among nations in the region and around the world. This did not mean, however, that India was isolated. On the contrary, the Indian government identified itself as an inseparable part of the region and the world.

From peaceful solutions to the Korean and Indochina wars to ensuring the right of Egyptian self-determination and independence regarding the Suez Canal, to opposing British, French, and Israeli intervention in Egypt or encouraging conflict resolution in order to help stabilize the Congo, for which India was recognized by the international community for its’ tireless efforts promoting regional and world peace. Through their active pursuit of “shuttle diplomacy”, along with promoting their perspectives and solutions regarding anti-colonialism, war, and the defense of India’s right to national self-determination, India was able to emerge as an important mediator in the “Third World”. As a result, the role of India was not only recognized by the Western Bloc and The Eastern Bloc; many countries around the world were influenced by their position of non-alignment. India’s foreign policy, formed during the 1950s and 1960s, remains today as the foundation for its’ modern foreign policy doctrine.

During the process of collecting data for this article, we realized that India’s policy towards key international conflicts in the 1950s and 1960s has historically been one of the topics in this area of study that has received the most attention from scholars. Thus, this topic is discussed directly or indirectly in a large number of academic works in a way which generally follows two trends.

The first trend focuses on India’s foreign policy in the early years of the Republic as part of the country’s early developmental history. Typical works on this topic include: “Indian Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches September 1946 — April 1961” by J. Nehru (1961); “Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, 1947–1964” by D. R. Sardesai (1968); “India and World Politics: Krishna Menon’s View of the World” by M. Brecher (1968); “Indo-West Asian relations: The Nehru era” by Heptulla (1991); “India’s representation-patterns and diplomatic interactions at the United Nations: A comparative study of the 1950s and the 1960s” by P. K. Mishra (1995); “India after independence (1947–2000)” by B. Chandra (2000); “India’s Role In The UN During The Nehru Era (1950–1960)” by S. Rizvi (2005); “Foreign Policy of India” by K. Gupta, V. Shukla (2009); “Nehru’s Foreign Policy of India — A Historical Study” by V. N. Naik (2015).

The second trend analyzes relevant international conflicts in the 1950s and 1960s with the “presence” of the United Nations, the Soviet Union, the United States, China and even India. For example: “United Nations Peacekeeping in the Congo 1960–1964” by E. W. Lefever, W. Joshna (1960); “Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957, Suez Crisis, July 26 — December 31, 1956” by J. P. Glennon, N. J. Noring (1990); “China’s Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation” by C. Jian (1994); “The Role of India in the Korean War” by K. C. Wahn (2010); “Imbalance of Power: The Soviet Union and the Congo Crisis, 1960–1961” by A. Iandolo (2014); “Cold War in Asia: China’s

Involvement in the Korean and Vietnam War” by S. Becker (2015). In addition, important areas of international conflict, as well as the Indian government’s own views in the 1950s and 1960s have generally been only mentioned sporadically or indirectly in a number of research works by Vietnamese scholars such as: “America’s new colonialism and the anti-American movement in Africa” by Huu Thuy N. (1968); “Africa for national independence and social progress” by Phuong Ba N., Kim Cuong V., Trung Dung L. (1986); “Vietnam — India Relations (1945–1975)” by Trung Kien D. (1993); “Jawaharlal Nehru, Biography and career” by Cong Khanh N. (2001); “History of modern international relations (1945–2000)” by Nam Tien T., Tuan Khanh N., Tuan P. (2008); “Relations between India and the US from 1947 to 1991” by Hang Nga L. T. (2015).

Thus, it can be said that research on the Indian government’s views and methods for solving international and regional problems in the 1950s and 1960s still has many notable “gaps”. Therefore, by using historical and logical methods, in this paper we have done a deep analysis of India’s role in mediating and solving international and regional crisis and other problems during the 1950s and 1960s using four significant historical crises as examples, the Korean War, the Indochina War, the Nationalization of the Suez Canal and the Congo Civil War. Simultaneously, we use the structural system approach where we place India in the international and regional context of the 1950s–1960s in order that we may gain a more comprehensive view of India’s foreign policy from which we can draw objective, systematic assessments of these issues and events.

India with the Korean War (1950–1953)

At the end of World War II, Korea was liberated from Japanese domination. Prior to this, according to the Resolution of the Ianta Conference (February 1945), Korea had been divided into two regions, consisting of North Korea and South Korea. The 38th parallel was to be considered a temporary boundary between the two regions. In order to occupy the South and to unify the country by force, troops of the Korean People’s Army crossed the border on June 25, 1950, and triggered the Korean War [2, p. 9]. In response, the US immediately demanded that the United Nations Security Council convene to pass their first resolution on June 25, 1950, which called for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of North Korean troops to the 38th parallel. At this time, the Soviet Union was absent from the UN because it was boycotting the Security Council to protest the ROC’s (Republic of China’s) presence in the United Nations and to demand the return of the People’s Republic of China’s legal status in this international organization. On June 27, 1950, the Security Council met and approved the US proposal for sanctions against North Korea. Yugoslavia voted against it, India and Egypt abstained [3, p. 88].

After receiving promises of military aid from 16 countries, on July 7, 1950, the Security Council issued a resolution asking the US to appoint General MacArthur as commander of the United Nations military forces in Korea [4]. Thus, taking advantage of the Soviet Union’s absence in the Security Council, by passing a series of resolutions, the US created an important legal basis for military intervention in the Korean War. With the support of a United Nations coalition military force, South Korea staged an all-out counterattack, crossing the 38th parallel and approaching the Sino-Korean border, despite warnings from Beijing. Through K. M. Panikkar — Indian Ambassador to Beijing, on October 2, 1950, China announced that: “If the Americans crossed the 38th Parallel, China would be forced to

intervene in Korea... movement into South Korea would not trigger Chinese intervention, but an American intrusion into North Korea would encounter strong Chinese resistance” [5, p. 110]. From October 14 to 16, 1950, Chinese volunteer troops began crossing the Yalu River to support the North Korean army [6, p. 211]. Thus, the Korean War went from being an internal conflict to very quickly becoming a major international conflict.

In this context, India played an important role in resolving the crisis in North Korea as a neutral state. As soon as the war broke out, at a press conference on July 7, 1950, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru expressed India's position on this war: “It was clear without even great inquiry that this was a well-planned and large-scale invasion” [7, p. 108]. At the same time, India also did not support a United Nations resolution on military assistance to South Korea. Instead, India decided to send a medical unit to South Korea as a humanitarian action [8, p. 26]. Next, on July 13 and 15, 1950, Prime Minister J. Nehru sent personal messages to Stalin and US Secretary of State Dean Acheson proposing to resolve the Korean issue through peaceful negotiation. The messages stated: “India's purpose is to localize the conflict and to facilitate an early peaceful settlement by breaking the present deadlock in the Security Council so that representatives of the People's Government of China can take a seat in the Council, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics can return to it, and whether within or through informal contacts outside the council, the USA, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic and China with the help and cooperation of other peace-loving nations, can find a basis for terminating the conflict and for a permanent solution of the Korean problem” [7, p. 111]. With this declaration from Nehru, the Soviet Union affirmed its support for the Indian efforts toward a diplomatic resolution of the conflict. In his reply, J. Stalin affirmed that he agreed with India's position on a practical solution to the Korean problem [9, p. 24]. However, the US side objected. On July 20, 1950, India released telegrams exchanged with the Soviet Union and the United States which showed that it was trying to resolve the Korean issue peacefully [10, p. 133].

After a long series of attempts at reaching a negotiated settlement between the parties during the Korean War, by May 1952, the only obstacle that prevented the parties from reaching an armistice was the issue of prisoners of war. In this regard, the Chinese and North Korean sides demanded that their prisoners be released, while the US said that some prisoners did not want to return home, and the US would not force them [11]. When the US side suggested that India should be more active in its initiatives to reach an armistice in the Korean War [12, p. 242], on November 17, 1952, India joined representatives of Asian nations and Africa in the United Nations to draft a compromise resolution which was submitted to the General Assembly. Whereby:

“1. All prisoners of war should be released and repatriated in accordance with the Geneva Convention in respect of the treatment of prisoners of war dated 12 August 1949, in accordance with well-established international practice, with the principles of international law, and with the relevant provisions of the draft Armistice Agreement.

2. No force should be used against the prisoners of war to prevent or affect their return to their homes. They should be treated in accordance with the specific provision of the Geneva Convention and with the general spirit thereof” [8, p. 29].

On December 3, 1952, the resolution was adopted in the plenary session of the General Assembly by 55 votes to 5 [7, p. 122]. This was considered a great success for India's diplomacy in the complex context of the early Cold War. The resolution was welcomed by Britain and the United States in the Security Council. US Secretary of State

Dean Acheson “had warmly commended the Indian initiative and expressed agreement with the Intention of the Resolution” [13, p. 24]. However, it was criticized by the Soviet Union and China, who suspected that India was acting under American pressure [8, p. 30]. The Soviets deemed the Indian Resolution as a “rotten solution” leading to a bitter attack on the resolution by the Russian representative [7, p. 122]. Prime Minister J. Nehru was himself condemned as having larger ambitions of taking a leadership role in Asia even though India was just a minor power at that time [14, p. 170].

After more than two years of war, the situation did not improve. Faced with a stalemate of the negotiations, on February 2, 1953, US President Eisenhower sent a message that the United States would not hesitate to use atomic weapons in the Korean War. Soon after, India expressed deep concern that the United States could carry out this threat and that the war might expand. India appealed to the United Nations in its efforts to keep the negotiations going. On June 1, 1953, an agreement on the repatriation of prisoners of war was signed. This agreement was similar to previous Indian proposals. On July 27, 1953, the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed [15, p. 276].

Thus, India's tireless efforts as a mediator were gradually recognized by both East and West. Thereafter, India became the Chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Council (NNRC) with full legal authority to control the exchange of POWs [16, p. 538]. It would be fair to say at this point that a resolution of the conflict which would bring about peace on the Korean peninsula was still incomplete for many reasons, but what had been established was really the initial basis that created conditions in which India would participate deeply and more effectively in helping resolve a number of international and regional issues negotiated during the Cold War.

The Korean War was also a powerful test of India's consistency in the path of “non-alignment” and a peace-loving ideology. At first, India suffered from estrangement from China and the Soviet Union because, in its statement, India claimed that North Korea was the initial aggressor. Later, India was again angered by the United States when it refused to align with the Western powers to intervene in the war. Even so, India did not let such a response influence its position in the Korean War. India continued to urge the United Nations to recognize and grant the People's Republic of China's legitimate rights in the UN Security Council [17, p. 153]. On the other hand, India desperately needed food aid from the US to help solve its inability to provide sufficient nutritional assistance for its people, but the Indian government was, nevertheless, unwilling to support the US's position regarding the political and military crisis on the Korean peninsula. India persisted in its position despite the influence exerted over it by different powers. In the end, all of India's efforts paid off. Both the Soviet Union and the West recognized India's neutral stance causing many around the world to acknowledge the positive influence of their non-alignment stance. The Soviet Union began to look upon India with friendly eyes as relations continued to warm. Around this time, Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin spoke publicly about the Soviets' gratitude for India's diplomatic efforts to the Indian ambassador — R. P. S. Menon: “the USSR fully appreciated India's position in the Commonwealth and hoped that India would continue to remain in it” [17, p. 154].

In summary, under the influence of the Cold War, while the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, were actively racing to find allies to increase the strength of their international position, India emerged as a mediator in this conflict, attracting the attention of all parties, especially the Soviet Union. Initially, India's support

for the US-sponsored Resolution at the United Nations General Assembly considering North Korea as the country that attacked first caused some concern for the Soviet government. However, later, due to the consistency of its neutral foreign policy positions, India gradually gained the trust of the Soviet government. And the policies India followed in other key conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s eventually brought the country closer to the Soviet Union as a regional ally.

India with the Indochina War (1945–1954)

It is evident that during the early days of building and consolidating the Republic, India's international position was recognized for its mediation efforts in the Korean War and that was India's great success. The sincerity of their stance for a neutral, non-aligned policy was initially acknowledged by the major powers. Furthermore, Indochina, being a region close to India, meant that a conflict occurring there might attract other countries to participate and India's freedom and non-aligned policy could potentially be threatened. Additionally, India could not just stand by passively because the conflict also involved many basic principles of its foreign policy, such as opposing colonial aggression and neo-colonialism by foreign countries. Therefore, after its successes as a mediator in North Korea, India continued to make efforts to reduce tensions and prevent the expansion of the conflict as well as promote negotiations that could lead to a resolution.

The global political environment in the early 1950s saw many important changes. After Stalin's death, the Soviet Union under Khrushchev (1953–1964) made adjustments in its foreign policy with the aim of easing the tension of the Cold War. The process of reconciliation between the two East-West blocs was gradually being promoted. The armistice agreement in Korea signed on July 27, 1953, confirmed this trend. In that context, the Government of India began to take active actions to contribute to ending the Indochina war. At the end of December 1953, Nehru, referring to the proposed US military aid to Pakistan, said that India would not allow foreign troops on her soil under any circumstances and any pretext. And in March 1954, replying to a question in Parliament about the American planes carrying French troops to Indochina across Indian airspace, Nehru explicitly stated that the Indian Government would not allow it [18, pp. 125–126]. On February 22, 1954, Nehru made an appeal for a ceasefire in Indochina. It can be said that the above statement marked a significant transformation of India in its efforts to end the Indochina War.

In addition, Prime Minister J. Nehru and the Government of India conducted a series of activities to restore peace in Indochina. On April 24, 1954, before the Indian National Assembly, Prime Minister J. Nehru made a statement on the current situation in Indochina and on the French reoccupation of their former colony. With a desire to assist in resolving the stalemate as well as finding a peaceful solution, in the final part of the statement, Prime Minister J. Nehru made a 6-point peace proposal on the Indochina war:

1. A climate of peace and negotiation has to be promoted, and the suspicion and the atmosphere of threats that prevail sought to be dissipated. To this end, the Government of India appeals to all concerned to desist from threats, and to the combatants to refrain from stepping up the tempo of the war.

2. A cease-fire. To bring this about, the Government of India propose: (a) that the resolution of a "cease-fire" be given priority on the agenda of the Indo-China Conference; and (b) a cease-fire group be constituted consisting of the actual belligerents, namely France and her three Associated States and Viet-Minh.

3. Independence. The conference should decide and proclaim that it is essential to the solution of the conflict that the complete independence of Indo-China, that is, the termination of French sovereignty, should be placed beyond all doubt by an unequivocal commitment by the Government of France.

4. Direct negotiations between the parties immediately and principally concerned should be initiated by the conference. Instead of seeking to hammer out settlements itself, the conference should give the parties all assistance to this end. Such direct negotiations would help in keeping the Indo-China question limited to the issues which concern and involve Indo-China directly. These parties would be the same as would constitute the cease-fire group.

5. Non-intervention. A solemn agreement on non-intervention denying aid, direct or indirect, with troops or war material to the combatants or for the purposes of war, to which the United States, the USSR., the United Kingdom and China shall be primary parties, should be brought about by the conference. The United Nations, to which the decision of the conference shall be reported, shall be requested to formulate a convention of non-intervention in Indo-China embodying the aforesaid agreement and including the provisions for its enforcement under the United Nations auspices. Other states should be invited by the United Nations to adhere to this convention of non-intervention.

6. The United Nations should be informed of the progress of the conference. Its good offices for purposes of conciliation under the appropriate Articles of the Charter, and not for invoking sanctions, should be sought [19, pp. 399–400].

These proposals formed the basis of the communique of the conference sent to the Prime Ministers of five countries, which convened on April 29 — May 2, 1954, in Colombo. The Conference, which was called on the initiative of the Prime Minister of Ceylon, John Kotelawala, was attended by Ceylon, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Burma [20, p. 145]. One of the six points that was made at the Colombo Conference was that the great powers should not interfere in the internal affairs of Indochina. The conference issued a final statement, proposing an immediate ceasefire in Indochina and direct negotiations between the warring parties, in the presence of China, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain. The Colombo Conference was of great significance. The Colombo Declaration was promptly given to the members of the Geneva Conference on Indochina “the voice of Asia” for the settlement of war issues in this region. Because “our dominant passion and urgent necessity is for the maintenance of peace” [19, p. 400].

When the Geneva Conference on Indochina was held (April 24 — July 21, 1954), the leaders of India expressed their wish that the treaty would be signed and peace would be restored. Speaking at the Indian National Assembly on May 15, 1954, Prime Minister J. Nehru affirmed that the Korean and Vietnamese issues currently being considered in Geneva were significant problems of Asia. In particular, the Indochinese issue was of interest to India due to the close geo-political ties between India and this region [21, p. 26].

Recognizing China’s role and influence as the world’s second largest and most populous socialist country, India held meetings with the Chinese government to seek to find common ground between the two sides in solving a number of regional and international problems¹. At the end of June 1954, during the pause of the Geneva Conference, Prime

¹ On December 30, 1949, India was the first non-communist country to establish relations with China actively. On January 19, 1950, India and the Soviet Union asked the United Nations to grant China a legal position in this organization. That meant denying Taiwan’s position on behalf of China in the Security Council [25, p. 77].

Minister J. Nehru had a meeting with Premier Zhou Enlai on June 26, 1954 in Delhi, in order to reach a consensus on preventing internationalization of the Indochina war. The talks between Nehru and Zhou Enlai terminated on June 28 in the signing of a joint statement on the principles on which relations between India and China were to be based. They were: (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (2) non-aggression; (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (4) equality and mutual benefit; and (5) peaceful co-existence [22, pp. 97–98]. Subsequently, the Five Principles of peaceful co-existence of states or Panch Sheel gained the widest recognition and support of all peace-loving peoples and many governments [23 p. 151].

India sent ambassador V. K. Krishna Menon to the Geneva Conference held by the United Nations to present an Asian view of the current situation on the Indochinese peninsula (India was not invited to participate in this Conference). At this time, K. Menon had many meetings with the leaders of the delegations and made positive suggestions. As a result, India made a notable contribution to the success of the Geneva Conference on Indochina, even though it was not an official member of the Conference².

On the night of July 20, 1954, the Geneva Agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Indochina was signed. While formally, India did not participate, they nevertheless contributed greatly to the success of the conference. In fact, India's role in the negotiations was so important that French Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France referred to the Geneva Conference as: "this ten power conference the nine at the table and India" [24, p. 40]. Also because of its neutral stance, India was appointed Chairman of the International Commission (including Poland and Canada) to control and supervise the implementation of the Geneva Agreement in Indochina [23, p. 152]. This not only confirms the high international prestige of Indian diplomacy more generally but also recognizes India's contribution to the success of the Geneva Conference in 1954.

On August 25, 1954, in a statement before the House of Representatives of India on the results of this international conference, Prime Minister J. Nehru said that India sent sincere and warm congratulations to the people of Indochina. Thanks to the liberation of Indochina, Asia increased its peace and stability. The attitude of the Government of India to the Indochinese issue was confirmed by Prime Minister J. Nehru in a statement dated September 27, 1954. India's views and the solutions they offered in the process of advocating for an end to the war in Indochina were in line with the will of the Indian people. In particular, India's official position was to strive for peace in Indochina. India would use all of its brains, patience, and determination to carry out that responsibility [21, pp. 26–27]. Thus, at this time, India's diplomatic efforts made an important contribution to safeguarding peace in Indochina, Asia, and the world.

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² When India sent its representative — Krishna Menon, to the Conference, his cooperation with the Soviet delegation and unofficial meetings with heads of other delegations contributed a great deal to the success of the talks. It was Menon who suggested the idea of Soviet and British co-chairmanship at the conference [23, p. 151].

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Индия в решении некоторых международных и региональных проблем в 1950–1960-х годах (часть 1)

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В данной статье рассматриваются роль и влияние Индии в решении международных и региональных проблем, имевших место в 1950-х и 1960-х гг. В этот период Индия, проводя политику прогрессивной и нейтральной дипломатии, стала важным посредником между конфликтующими интересами великих держав мира. Например, Индия сыграла важную роль в прекращении войны в Индокитае и Корейской войны, а также выступила посредником в гражданской войне в Конго и помогала решать дипломатические вопросы, связанные с национализацией Египтом Суэцкого канала. Чтобы рассмотреть эти вопросы более подробно, авторы данной статьи используют оригинальные источники и соответствующие научные работы, опубликованные учеными из академических институтов по всему миру. В то же время авторы используют два основных метода исторической науки, включая исторический и логический, наряду с другими методами, такими как анализ, синтез, оценка, статистика и сравнение. Это исследование призвано представить дополнительные перспективы и дать понимание дипломатической политики Индии в этот период холодной войны. В процессе сбора данных для этой статьи авторы не могли не отметить, что политика Индии в отношении ключевых международных конфликтов в 1950-х и 1960-х гг. исторически была одной из тем, привлекавших наибольшее внимание ученых. В результате анализа политических действий Индии в рассматриваемый период авторы исследования пришли к выводу, что страна продемонстрировала творческий подход и гибкость в разнообразии подходов к решению региональных и международных проблем. Несмотря на последствия и давление биполярного порядка, Индия оставалась непоколебимой в своих целях и основных принципах своей дипломатии.

Ключевые слова: индийская дипломатия, Корейская война, Суэцкий канал, гражданская война в Конго, война в Индокитае, Советский Союз, Египет, холодная война.

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