

## Electronic Journal of International History - Article 7

ISSN 1471-1443

[Introduction](#) | [Contents](#)

### The Politics Of Anglo-American Aid To Nonaligned India, 1962

Dr. Tracy Lee Steele

Associate Professor of History Sam Houston State University

In late 1958, Sino-Indian relations were at the breaking point when the Indian government belatedly discovered that the Chinese had built a road across the Aksai Chin Plateau in Ladakh in the north of India. Although it is one of the most remote regions of India, it was strategically important to both nations. The area is nestled amongst the peaks of the western Himalayas where India, Pakistan and China have disputed border claims. The Aksai Chin Plateau was important to the Chinese due to the all-weather road they had built to link the regions of Tibet and Xinjiang to greater China. There was no armed conflict at the time because the Indian government had been reluctant to challenge directly the Chinese claims. As Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru informed President Dwight Eisenhower, India 'had to rely on the weapons of peace' because of its poverty.[1] In November 1961, Nehru announced a forward policy whereby Indian forces were instructed to 'proceed as far forward as possible behind Chinese-held posts toward the international border;' a misguided policy which angered Beijing.[2] When the Chinese troops attacked Indian border troops in Ladakh on 20 October 1962, officials in Delhi, Washington and London were shocked. Western intelligence agencies had estimated that the bitterly cold Himalayan winter would deter hostilities from breaking out before the spring thaw.[3] Hence, the United States and Britain had no contingency plans to respond to a potential Sino-Indian border war. Lacking any plans, they were forced to improvise their response. As reports that the Indian Army was losing ground to the Chinese People's Army arrived in Washington and London, President John Kennedy and his British counterpart, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, agreed that India's problems presented a unique opportunity for the two allies to change the political dynamics of the sub-continent by using aid to gain leverage over India and help it to shift its nonalignment to veer towards the West.

The policy of nonalignment was closely associated with Nehru who was essentially foreign minister as well as prime minister. In Nehru's view, nonalignment best served India's national self-interest. Anita Inder Singh defines nonalignment as:

India's determination to stay out of military alliances with any country of the Western or communist bloc and to avoid being tied down to a particular line of action because of membership of a cold war bloc or of the Commonwealth. It also signifies Indian attempts to maintain friendly relations with all countries whether belonging to military blocs or not.[4]

In the first instance, nonalignment was a move away from Britain that marked a sharp delineation between the colonial era and independent India. On a broader horizon, nonalignment was a cost-effective way to keep all external powers out of Asia.[5] As such, nonalignment reflected principles that were integral to India's history, particularly anti-colonialism.[6] Part of India's colonial past included its passive role in the Great Game of the 1850s when Russia and Britain challenged each other to gain control of strategic locations in South Asia, grabbing land and setting borders with at their whim. The Cold War of the twentieth century seemed to many Indians to be a new version of the same preoccupations of the great powers, albeit now the Soviet Union and the United States. This time, however, independent India intended that nonalignment and neutrality would inhibit the ability of the great powers to ensnarl the subcontinent in 'a contest of economic and military aid, of alliance building, and of rhetoric and propaganda' even if it was not a shooting war between the United States and the Soviet Union.[7] But in the Indian view, the Soviet Union, the successor state of Russia, was at least an Asian power with legitimate security interests in the region. Whereas to the Indians, 'the only foreign military they saw in Asia was American.'[8]

Nehru, a victor in the Indian struggle for independence from Britain, seemed the natural leader for a third force of nonaligned and newly-independent Afro-Asian countries. Nehru's personal appeal to the nonaligned countries reached its zenith in the mid-1950s. Among his triumphs in that time were the Sino-Indian treaty of 1955, based on the principles of panch shila or peaceful co-existence, and the meeting of the twenty-nine countries at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955.[9] However, a rival to Nehru's leadership emerged at Bandung in the person Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai of the Chinese People's Republic. Soon disquieting trends in Chinese behaviour came to light. Chinese actions included border crossings into Uttar Pradesh and the Chinese colonisation of Tibet that resulted in the decision of the Dalai Lama to seek refuge in India.[10] Although divergent interests threatened the unity of the countries that met at Bandung, nonalignment remained the cornerstone of Indian foreign policy. Whereas the sheer size of India both in terms of its geography and its population, the second largest in the world, placed India in a strong position to forsake bloc politics, the same could not be said for many other newly independent countries. This is especially true in the case of Pakistan, a nation that saw itself as vulnerable to India on every level including size, population, and wealth. In a total rejection of nonalignment and neutrality, due in part to Pakistani fears that some Indian officials were unreconciled to partition, Pakistan cemented its military relationship with the United States and Great Britain with a series of agreements, starting in 1954. In addition to a 1954 United States-Pakistani Mutual Security Agreement, Pakistan joined the South East Asian Treaty Organization in 1954, the Baghdad Pact (which became the Central Treaty Organization, CENTO, in 1958), and in 1959 a bilateral executive security agreement was signed between Pakistan and the United States. Hence, the Indian prime minister blamed his Pakistani nemesis for bringing the Cold War to South Asia.

Although considered as a dynamic defender of neutralism by third world leaders, many Western leaders tended to regard Nehru as arrogant, smug and sanctimonious, particularly regarding nonalignment. What troubled the Western leaders was that the nonaligned countries rejected the bi-polarity of the post-World War II world, steering a middle path between the military blocs in pursuit of their own individual interests. The United States, in particular, was reluctant to accept India's proclaimed determination to defend itself without becoming involved in bloc politics.[11] American leaders had not been previously opposed to nonalignment when it was in their interest. When the Yugoslavs defected from the Soviet bloc in 1948, the United States was obviously pleased by the rift, even though no one in the American government expected the Yugoslav leader Tito to fully align his country with the West. According to John Gaddis, however, in India's case, 'Nehru's insistence on keeping India neutral caused the Americans greater concern, but they could attribute much of this to the Indian leader's formidably prickly personality.'[12] One of the catalysts for American disillusionment with the nonaligned movement was the Bandung Conference. At that meeting, the People's Republic of China played an integral role even though it was within the orbit of the Soviet Union via the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty of 1950. This added to American suspicion of the entire movement. Although nonalignment implied neutrality and even-handed

treatment of the two *blocs*, Britain and the United States clearly felt that India tilted toward the Soviet Union.<sup>[13]</sup> This view was reinforced when the Soviet Union began a rigorous campaign to woo the third world and nonaligned/neutral countries. The Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, jettisoned 'the old Stalinist notion that nationalism was a bourgeois phenomenon likely to work against Moscow's interests.'<sup>[14]</sup> Moscow evidently believed that if it could bolster the neutralist inclination of the newly emerging areas, it could negate the value of Western third world alliances.<sup>[15]</sup> It was the fact that Moscow was less inclined than the Americans to insist that a nation take a stand with one bloc or another that appealed to Nehru rather than any misguided belief that communist bloc nations could not be a potential threat to India's security. In fact, Soviet-Indian relations were not that great and Nehru tended to keep the Soviets at arms length.<sup>[16]</sup> But, as Nehru had explained to Eisenhower in 1958, India was too poor to be able to arm itself sufficiently to sustain a military attack from a country such as the Soviet Union.<sup>[17]</sup> Since Nehru believed that India's borders were free from potential attack (except from Pakistan), the prime minister felt India could afford nonalignment.<sup>[18]</sup>

Although Bill Brands' assertion is correct that Eisenhower's genius as president lay 'in making fewer than his share of mistakes', in that the United States did not become involved in a prolonged military conflict during his presidency, it could be argued that his decision to build ties to the military government in Pakistan rather than building bridges to democratic India was not in keeping with the rhetoric of the Cold War that democratic principles were to be defended no matter the cost.<sup>[19]</sup> No doubt the 1954 alliance with Pakistan reinforced Indian suspicions that 'the Western countries themselves had combined with or opposed communism out of political expediency and not moral principle.'<sup>[20]</sup> Key American allies such as the British were dismayed by the turn of events. Reluctantly Britain came to view its own membership in the Baghdad Pact as the only way to maintain its influence in the Middle East and South Asia.<sup>[21]</sup> Overall, however, it can be argued rightfully that the benefits of the alliances were 'a good deal less than the signatories had hoped; the fallout was far more toxic than they had feared.'<sup>[22]</sup> India viewed the American defence relationship with Pakistan as a direct threat to its own security, which in turn had a detrimental effect on Indo-American relations. India was not a priority for the majority of American officials, particularly congressmen, who were suspicious of India's democratic credentials and the apparent sympathy many members of the Indian National Congress had for the Soviet Union since, under Nehru and his successors, India followed a socialist form of democracy. Doubts about India's sympathies were again raised in 1956 during the Suez crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Whereas the United States and India both condemned Britain, France and Israel for their invasion of the Suez Canal, Nehru was hesitant to criticise Khrushchev's decision to use military force in Hungary. Most Americans interpreted this as the height of hypocrisy on the part of Indians.<sup>[23]</sup> Hence it was an uphill battle to persuade Congress that it was in American interests to increase humanitarian aid to India in order to counter Soviet influence in the region as well as to prevent India from falling behind China in economic development which might lead to the loss of hundreds of millions of Indians to communism.<sup>[24]</sup> But despite the aid and a successful presidential visit, Indo-American relations failed to improve.

The new Kennedy administration in 1961 shifted American policy toward the subcontinent. Kennedy felt that Eisenhower's policies had been mistakenly focused on containing communism rather than promoting democracy. He believed that, rather than simply defending democracy, 'America would actively promote it' in countries such as India despite its adherence to socialist ideals. Kennedy did not interpret neutralism/nonalignment as inherently hostile to American interests in the contest between the democratic and socialist *blocs*.<sup>[25]</sup> Therefore, he hoped to make up for the lack of American influence among the nonaligned countries by cultivating a tolerant attitude towards neutralism coupled with offers of financial commitments to the economic development plans of those nations.<sup>[26]</sup> According to Robert McMahon, 'With tact, patience, and dollars, Kennedy thought that India and other nonaligned states could be won for the West; at a minimum, communist influence could be arrested and increased support for US policies gained.'<sup>[27]</sup> But Kennedy would face the same criticisms of aid to India from people within his own party. Democratic Senator Stuart Symington derided aiding India 'whose military plans and programs build up the Soviet economy at the expense of our allies and ourselves, and whose chief leaders constantly threaten with military aggression some of the steadfast and loyal friends the United States has in the free world.' The senator was referring to America's firm friend, Pakistan.<sup>[28]</sup>

Like Eisenhower, Kennedy, was willing to risk American-Pakistani relations to get closer to India. This was important considering the strategic nature of the American-Pakistani relationship: it provided the US with territory within striking distance of the Sino-Soviet bloc; American listening posts were located in the country; and the Central Intelligence Agency was allowed use of airfields in Peshawar and Lahore for U-2 intelligence-gathering flights.<sup>[29]</sup> Both the United States and Britain hoped to halt the arms build-up between India and Pakistan. But 'India's importance to Kennedy administration strategists derived also from their fixation with China's presumed threat to the Asian equilibrium.'<sup>[30]</sup> The Kennedy administration's perception of China as a threat cannot be underestimated. When it was reported that Beijing would soon be capable of a nuclear detonation, the idea was raised in Washington to encourage India to produce its own nuclear detonation to blunt the impact.<sup>[31]</sup> Thus, 'Kennedy and his senior aides viewed India as a Cold War prize of such magnitude that they were willing to run substantial risk with Pakistan in order to secure India's alignment with the West.'<sup>[32]</sup> Despite the pro-Indian tilt of the Kennedy administration, Kennedy disliked Nehru personally. He found his arrogance and sense of superiority offensive.<sup>[33]</sup> The administration was, however, ready and willing to use the Sino-Indian border conflict for its own ends. This attitude is best reflected in the words of Chester Bowles, appointed by President Truman as the American ambassador to India from 1951 to 1953 and chosen by President Kennedy to replace John Galbraith in 1963 for his second tour of duty in New Delhi:

In October 1962 we were suddenly confronted with the opportunity that many of us had been hoping for - an overt Chinese Communist action which would bring home to the Indian Government and people some primary facts of life of Asian politics, i.e., the inevitable political-economic rivalry of China and India and the danger that an expansionist China holds for India not only along the 2,200-mile Himalayan frontier but also in Southeast Asia which flanks India's eastern approaches.<sup>[34]</sup>

This passage indicates that, despite differences in approach, a common thread in American policy since the Truman years was the forlorn hope that India could be convinced that China was the greater threat to its security than Pakistan. The Sino-Indian border conflict not only provided an opportunity to bring this fact home to the Indians, but also appeared to be the right time to put Nehru's nonalignment/neutralism policy to a test.

Neither Macmillan nor Kennedy criticised Nehru for his failure to negotiate the border with China or Nehru's failed forward policy which invited Beijing's attack. Instead, the border conflict was seen through the lens of communist aggression rather than Indian intransigence. From the outset of the Chinese invasion, British and American officials agreed that China was pursuing short term goals in India rather than attempting to establish hegemony over the subcontinent. This explains why, in the midst of dealing with the border war between October and November of 1962, the British and American governments began to put into place policies which would result in possible advantages to the West.<sup>[35]</sup> It was not inevitable that the United States and Great Britain should join their not inconsiderable clout to deal with the border conflict. The United States acknowledged that Britain's knowledge of South Asia was superior to their own. As one British official noted in the 1940s, 'The British would educate the Americans about the finer points of Asian gamesmanship: London would supply the brains, Washington the money and the muscle needed to hold South Asia.'<sup>[36]</sup> American interest in South Asia ebbed and waned depending on other world conditions, but Britain's attention was more constant. Britain had never written off India as anti-West: India was a valued member of the British Commonwealth and Britain continued to be India's largest trading partner and main arms supplier until 1962.<sup>[37]</sup> Britain's decline as a world power and its loss of economic clout is underscored by the fact that, by 1959, American private investment surpassed that of Britain.<sup>[38]</sup> By the 1960s, Britain was not in a position to intervene in the subcontinent in a meaningful way without the United States as its partner. American interest in the region was peaked as a result of the Korean War which signified the spread of the Cold War from Europe to Asia. From this time on, when events caused Washington to focus on the region, the Americans were willing to pursue their own policy with or without the approval of the British. This is evidenced by the signing of bilateral military agreements with Pakistan. Generally, however, the Americans preferred to have the British on board. For most of 1962 the United States

and Britain were deeply involved in negotiations with India to prevent the purchase by the Indian Air Force of military aircraft from the Soviet Union. Hence, the Anglo-American partnership was in place when the conflict began. No doubt the fact that the United States was simultaneously involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis contributed to the need for a bilateral approach to the hostilities, especially since both Macmillan and Kennedy viewed the conflict in the same manner. American officials believed that Nehru was disillusioned with his policy of nonalignment now that the Chinese had destroyed the illusion of '*Hindi-Chini bhai-bhaism*' or Hindu-Chinese goodwill. The British and Americans believed that, by playing their cards skilfully, they could bring about a realignment of India more closely to the West, level out the pro-Soviet tilt in Indian policy and also improve Indo-Pakistan relations. Resolving the Kashmir problem would allow India and Pakistan to 'join together in the task of defending the whole sub-continent,' theoretically against communist aggression.<sup>[39]</sup> Both the Americans and British agreed that the Kashmir issue needed to be resolved or 'the Soviet Union would exploit their [India and Pakistani] differences for its own purposes, and Kashmir itself might become a target of communist expansionism.'<sup>[40]</sup> Hence, the American Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, agreed with the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Home, that 'the situation in the subcontinent may hold opportunities for us both.'<sup>[41]</sup> The Americans and British hoped to gain leverage by manipulating aid to India.

The United States and Britain had long provided humanitarian aid to India but this had not been without strings. The United States first addressed the issue of food aid in response to a famine in India in 1951. At that time, there was a crude attempt to tie this aid to a promise by India to sell to the Americans critical strategic materials such as manganese, monazite, and beryl. Indians were offended that rich, well-fed Americans would haggle in this manner. But the American Congress was psychologically and philosophically predisposed to question the correctness of aiding socialist India. Ultimately, wheat was sold to India for blocked rupees rather than in a grant. Actually, the Indians preferred to pay for the food, but the episode was followed by similar mistakes and harmed Indo-American relations.<sup>[42]</sup> Military aid was certain to be even more difficult to negotiate since India had refused military aid because of its policy of nonalignment and Nehru's sensitivities to what may be interpreted as economic imperialism. Nehru and his Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, insisted upon purchasing military hardware from sources of their own choosing. But India's foreign exchange reserves were not sufficient to make this policy practicable once the border war began. Because of the delicacy of the situation, however, Macmillan hesitated to make a public offer of aid to India lest the Indian Prime Minister infer that the British were trying to exploit the situation for Cold War purposes.<sup>[43]</sup> Similarly, the Americans waited for Nehru to make a definite request for US military assistance so as not to 'be in the position of running after Nehru to offer aid.'<sup>[44]</sup> It was important for the Americans and British, therefore, to wait until India made the first request for military aid in order to avoid the appearance of exploiting India's plight. Nehru was initially reluctant to seek aid from the United States so as to protect itself from charges that it was abandoning nonalignment.<sup>[45]</sup> When Nehru formally requested aid on 29 November 1962, the Americans were pleased but surprised by the scale of the Indian aid request. It included a dozen squadrons of all-weather fighters, two squadrons of B-47 bombers manned by American crews to attack positions in China, and, finally, American help in constructing a radar shield for India's cities.<sup>[46]</sup> Before the US could respond, however, the Chinese ended the conflict while retaining control of Indian territory.

Despite the abrupt ending of the conflict, Washington and London were not deterred from their previous decision to use Nehru's aid request to exact a price from India.<sup>[47]</sup> Within days of Nehru's request British and American officials met in Washington to discuss their objectives. In regard to India's policy of nonalignment, they wanted 'less a public change of policy than a change in emotional attitude.'<sup>[48]</sup> Their goal was not to destroy Indian nonalignment completely. Kennedy was willing to use neutral language to describe the changed circumstances of Indo-American relations. 'The terms alliance and military assistance were conspicuously avoided.'<sup>[49]</sup> The Americans and British believed that one of the Chinese objectives in the conflict had been to expose the fallacy of Indian nonalignment, to prove that India did indeed tilt towards the West.<sup>[50]</sup> The Americans and the British were never able to define exactly how they wanted the Indian policy of nonalignment to be altered, but they certainly wanted to tilt India away from the Soviet orbit and believed that, by promising aid, they would gain enough leverage over India to bring this about.

The first test of the Anglo-American plan to realign India more closely to the West was India's purchase of MIG 21s from the Soviet Union.<sup>[51]</sup> In May of 1962 this became a major issue when rumours that the Indian Government was planning to purchase, and eventually produce, the MIG 21s proved to be true. The United States and Britain opposed this deal, not only because they feared that it would lead to an arms race between India and Pakistan, which had purchased American Lockheed F104s, the most advanced American technology available, but also because of the clout and access the Soviet Union would obtain in India to Western-made military hardware. British officials did not feel that either London or Washington would be very successful in their attempts to prevent the purchase of the MIG 21s for the following reasons. First, Nehru was under the influence of Menon, who was strongly disliked by most Western leaders and was perceived as being pro-Soviet. Second, Russia was offering payment and delivery terms, as well as conditions concerning future supply and local manufacture, that were quite attractive to India. Third, the MIG 21 deal, and Anglo-American attempts to prevent it, had been widely reported and a sudden switch to a Western supplier would be perceived as an Indian cave-in that might well jeopardise India's freedom to obtain arms from any source. The British shared American concerns that Soviet technicians going to India would gain access to secret Western technology and that the purchase in question might result in a realignment of India that would bring it even closer to the Soviet Union.<sup>[52]</sup> Despite Nehru's assurances that satisfactory arrangements could be put in place to prevent Soviet technicians from stealing Western technology, it was feared that the MIG 21 purchase would anger or offend American Congressmen who were then debating how much humanitarian aid should be granted to India.<sup>[53]</sup> For this reason, Britain continued to offer alternatives to the MIG 21s. Indeed, Kennedy disapproved of the MIG deal so strongly that, at one point in the summer of 1962, he had entertained a possible linkage between the MIG deal and American wheat that was provided to India.<sup>[54]</sup> This would surely have backfired. As it was, Nehru resented American pressure regarding the MIG fighters.<sup>[55]</sup>

All attempts to prevent the MIG sale were hindered by India's nonalignment, Britain's bleak financial outlook and the position of Pakistan. The British Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Duncan Sandys, preferred that the Indians purchase the MIG 21s from Russia because there would be no footprints back to the Western allies that would damage Western-Pakistan relations and worsen Indian-Pakistan relations. The Minister of Defence [Peter Thorneycroft] maintained that Britain's own defence requirements and need for planes meant that there were no spare planes to be sold under any terms to India.<sup>[56]</sup> Furthermore, the Western alternatives to the MIG 21s were the Lockheed F104, the French Mirage and the British Lightning II. A sale of American F104s was thought improbable, not only because the Pakistanis would object, but also because they were considered too expensive and not technologically suited for India's needs. The French were unwilling to sell the Mirage for Indian rupees, which were blocked from being converted into hard currency such as francs, dollars or pounds and could only be used for purchases originating in India.<sup>[57]</sup> This left the British Lightning II, which the British were virtually forced by Kennedy to offer to India for blocked rupees in order to avoid appearing to the Americans as unwilling to help.<sup>[58]</sup> Due to the political factors, Macmillan informed the president that he was willing to sacrifice and to let the Indians have every other Lightning II off the production line as they became available in 1964.<sup>[59]</sup> The cost of the Lightning II was 600,000 per plane. Even if the Americans paid one-half, this was still too steep a price for both the Indian and British treasuries because the remaining 300,000 would be paid in blocked rupees, with the entire purchase totalling around 12 million. The Indians could not accept the aid without jeopardising their nonaligned status and the British could not afford it unless the Americans paid for the full cost of the planes. Another option was to upgrade the planes that the Indians already owned, the British HF 24s, by installing a more powerful engine, the Orpheus. The Orpheus engine was a costly project which earlier had been moth-balled by the British government; but Kennedy offered to pay 75 per cent of the additional 3 million required to develop the engine. Nehru, however, informed Sandys that this would not be acceptable. Even the Lightnings were rejected, primarily because the sale of Lightnings at half their proper price would eventually become known and it would be evident that India was receiving military aid.<sup>[60]</sup> Of course, no one knew the true cost of the Soviet MIG 21 which meant that the Soviets could give the Indians a bargain without compromising India's nonalignment. Ultimately, the Anglo-American effort resulted in only a deferred decision by the Indians to purchase the MIG 21s. As Kennedy noted, however, this put 'our friends in India in a position to say, in the event of an aid cut or other adverse consequences, that Krishna Menon and his supporters brought down disaster

on India by pushing through the MIG deal despite the fact of a reasonable alternative.[61]

Therefore, when the Sino-Indian border war broke out in October 1962, there were renewed efforts by the British and Americans to halt the MIG deal. By the end of the border conflict Krishna Menon had resigned in disgrace. Menon was deeply unpopular in India for his failure to ensure India's preparedness. It is generally accepted that Defence Minister Menon had failed to pass on to Nehru the warnings from the military, stationed along the Chinese border, that the army did not have the supplies needed to enact Nehru's forward policy, nor was it in a position to defend India against a Chinese attack.[62] With Menon gone from the scene, the United States and Britain hoped that questions of Soviet loyalty to China versus Soviet loyalty to India raised during the fighting would finally kill the MIG 21 deal. The Soviets initially hesitated to support India, but Khrushchev assured the Indians in November 1962, while the fighting was still taking place between India and China, that the MIG contract would be honoured. The Indian government, therefore, informed the British that they had full confidence that they could rely on the Soviet Union to fulfil its obligations.[63] Despite this, the British High Commission in Delhi reported on 10 December 1962, that there was no serious intention to incorporate the Soviet aeroplanes into the Indian Air Force - i.e. the MIG deal was considered dead.[64] On 21 December, however, the British High Commission was informed that India would be receiving 6 MIGs in January. This was a great blow to the British, who were assured by the Indian Secretary-General of the Ministry of External Affairs, R.K. Nehru, that, while they would have little military value, the MIG 21 purchase would be useful for symbolic and political purposes.[65] The British Foreign Office felt the Indians had ridden roughshod over their very valid security concerns. Ultimately, however, the Indians were not penalised for this, to the ire of the Pakistanis. India was able to maintain its insistence that it had the right to buy arms from both blocs, maintaining its nonalignment. The United States and Britain failed in their joint goal to realign India closer to the West but this setback did not prevent them from attempting to accomplish their other major goal: improving Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly the problem of Kashmir.

Just before the announcement of the decision to purchase the MIG 21s, Kennedy met with Macmillan at Nassau in December 1962. There it was agreed that the United States and Britain would provide long-term military aid to India valued at over \$120 million. In order to expedite the Anglo-American plan, however, this aid was to be linked to progress on the talks which had begun between Pakistan and India that same month to settle the problem of Kashmir. Kennedy was particularly enamoured with this plan. As was explained to the British, 'whatever the United States or other countries might be able to do to help India, if asked, it would be insignificant compared to the immediate military potential that would accrue from India's being able to withdraw one or two divisions from their present positions in Kashmir.'[66] Troops could then be redeployed to the border with China.

It is interesting that a decision was taken to tackle the thorny question of Kashmir at that particular time. Back in 1961, when the American Vice President, Lyndon Baines Johnson, was briefed for his visit to the subcontinent, it had been 'suggested that the Vice President say as little as possible because of the long-standing nature of the dispute.... There is no possibility of solution in the near future.'[67] The American Ambassador, John Kenneth Galbraith, was one of many who questioned the feasibility of tackling the Kashmir issue so soon after India had lost face to the Chinese. Galbraith had the ear of the president but Kennedy insisted that resolving the Kashmir issue was the key to progress in the subcontinent.[68] Kashmir was of particular strategic and geopolitical importance to the British and Americans who feared that the dispute could be exploited by the Soviet Union.[69] Early in the Kennedy administration, there had been a failed attempt to open an Indo-Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir. The rejection of the US initiative to mediate was seen by National Security Council advisor Robert Komer as 'merely a cover for India's basic satisfaction with the present status quo.'[70] Nothing had changed.

There can be no doubt that the talks between Pakistan and India on Kashmir were linked to aid by the US.[71] Unfortunately, the Kashmir talks never produced the desired result of improving Indo-Pakistan relations, which left the US and Britain in a quandary: would they provide the aid India requested even without progress on Kashmir? Ultimately, it was not an either/or proposition of no settlement/no aid. But if a settlement was reached on Kashmir, American largesse would be freely available to the Indian Government.[72] British Foreign Secretary Lord Home speculated that the only way India could be induced to move on Kashmir was by withholding military aid,[73] but this plan was simply not feasible given India's option to turn to the Soviet Union for whatever military aid the US and Britain refused to provide. Subsequently, the United States and Britain felt they had no option but to offer military aid whether there was progress in the Kashmir talks or not. They could only hold out the hope to the Indians that, if agreement were reached, India might receive even more Western military aid than had been offered. The US and Britain still hoped to gain leverage over India by providing something the Soviet Union had not yet offered India: air defence of India's key cities.

Air defence for India became a key issue for the US and Britain because it was believed that Nehru had refrained from using the Indian Air Force in tactical support of its armies during the conflict with China for fear of reprisal bombing raids on Indian cities.[74] The British hesitated to offer India air defence before Kashmir had been settled because, unlike the Americans, they believed that India would become intransigent on Kashmir if assured of Western air defence, and may become more aggressive towards China and Pakistan.[75] Kennedy, however, was 'persuaded that adding to Indian confidence *vis-a-vis* the Chinese is more likely to help promote a Kashmir settlement than to make the Indians more intransigent.'[76] In short, Kennedy believed that Nehru was more likely to settle Kashmir if a gun was not pointed at his back.[77]

As each round of the Kashmir talks ended without progress or improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations, the British and Americans still had to agree on just what safeguards they would be able to provide for India's air defence. The British could not afford to guarantee to come to India's assistance in case of attack for both political and financial reasons. The British Cabinet concluded, on 25 April 1963, that British military aid to India should not extend to active participation by British forces in the defence of Indian cities against air attack.[78] Unlike Britain, however, the United States was willing to make a commitment to come to India's aid in case of a Chinese Communist attack and sought to persuade the British to make a contribution of their own.[79] It is important to note that this guarantee did not cover an attack by Pakistan. Kennedy proposed to Macmillan that:

it would be a mistake to let the Indians conclude that there is little prospect of any further military help in the absence of a Kashmir settlement... So our problem is how to forestall jeopardizing our new relationship with India, without putting too much strain on our relations with Pakistan and still retaining some leverage on Kashmir. It seems to me that to signify willingness to go ahead on air defence would best meet this dilemma. This would: (1) lend credibility to our intent to help India if attacked again; (2) be the least expensive gesture we could make, since it involves mostly earmarking our own forces; (3) be the gesture least offensive to the Paks [*sic*], since it entails no build-up of Indian air; (4) last but not least, buy us time to stall a bit longer on what the Indians really want, i.e. substantial hardware to build up their own forces.[80]

The British Cabinet was not persuaded and ultimately decided to caution Kennedy against giving any commitment to participate actively in the air defence of Indian cities.[81] Although Macmillan agreed with much of Kennedy's argument, he informed Kennedy that the air umbrella plan, which involved an open-ended commitment to India, reminded him of the origins of World War I. He feared that Kennedy's plan:

might involve both of us in very far-reaching commitments. I cannot get out of my mind the situation which confronted this country in 1914 when, as a result of what were intended to be only precautionary arrangements, the bulk of the French Fleet was moved to the Mediterranean and Britain thus became morally committed to the defence of the North Sea and so to war with Germany.[82]

Furthermore, Macmillan suggested that Nehru would not agree to an air umbrella now that his initial panic after the invasion had subsided and India had reverted to nonalignment.

But the history lesson was not yet over. Winston Churchill was cited by Kennedy who countered that the lesson to be learned from 1914 was that, 'if the United Kingdom had made demonstrably clear in advance its commitment to come to the aid of France, World War I might not have taken place.'<sup>[83]</sup> There is no evidence that Macmillan was persuaded by the arguments of either Churchill or Kennedy, but he was concerned by Kennedy's threat to offer fighter squadrons to India whether Britain agreed or not. Macmillan feared that this would cause a rift in British-Indian relations. Macmillan hoped to use his influence with the young American president by encouraging Kennedy to reformulate the plan so as to avoid making an American commitment to India's defence. In order to do this, it was obvious that Britain had to participate in Kennedy's scheme.<sup>[84]</sup> Ultimately, a compromise was reached whereby the Indians agreed that British and American squadrons should visit India periodically for training missions. Neither Britain nor the US were committed to defend India, but the US did unilaterally promise additional assistance to India in case of another Chinese attack.<sup>[85]</sup> As it happened, the next war India would fight would be in 1965 - with Pakistan rather than China.

By the end of 1962, American transport planes began arriving in India bearing arms and equipment for ten divisions of mountain troops. The attendant complement of American instructors, advisers and technicians followed.<sup>[86]</sup> Soon India had a larger American military mission than Pakistan; but India had not become an American client-state.<sup>[87]</sup> Nehru remained a harsh critic of American foreign policy, particularly in regard to Vietnam. Nehru biographer, B.N. Pandey, placed an upbeat spin on international crises such as the civil war in the Congo, the East-West tension over Berlin, the Cuban missile crisis, and, closer to home, the Sino-Indian border war. Each 'had a brighter side for Nehru, and none destroyed his vision for the world and for India.'<sup>[88]</sup> Clearly Pandey's account glosses over the fact that the conflict with China was a tremendous blow to Nehru. Ross Marlay and Clark Neher claim the border conflict caused Nehru to go into physical and emotional decline, withdrawing from contact with most people.<sup>[89]</sup> After surviving strokes in 1963 and 1964, independent India's first prime minister died from a burst aorta on 27 May 1964.<sup>[90]</sup> With Nehru's death, the Americans and British lost someone they might have disliked but knew well. Nehru's death coupled with Kennedy's assassination brought new actors on the scene, who were either distracted by other critical problems such as Vietnam, lacked clout, or were relatively uninterested in dealing effectively with the unresolved issues.

In the Anglo-American effort to use leverage gained over India due to the border conflict, who gained and who lost? Nehru had pursued a shrewd line of Indian self-interest on matters close to home: Pakistan, China and Southeast Asia. The British and Americans could rely on Nehru 'to seek to manipulate the rivalry between the superpowers, to play West against East to India's advantage and his own.'<sup>[91]</sup> In the case of India, the point could be made that, in its relations with the Soviet Union, Nehru was as effective at manipulating the Russians as the Russians were at manipulating him.<sup>[92]</sup> Also, the border conflict did not hinder Nehru's ability to manipulate the West. India received increased aid from both the West and the Soviet Union in exchange for very little. Some commentators argue that nonalignment was 'scrapped in favor [sic] of American air and missile support.'<sup>[93]</sup> It is true that the British and Americans agreed to provide India military aid, but nonalignment remained official Indian policy even though, according to Kapur, India came out of the 1962 conflict with China 'badly battered and severely humiliated,' a country which had become 'weak, incoherent, unable to defend her own interests, and which had to turn to the outside world for help and protection.'<sup>[94]</sup> Humiliation was particularly pertinent because China believed it had punctured India's pretence of nonalignment and had completely disproved Nehru's belief in peaceful resolution of conflict - a notion that had given Nehru a certain amount of standing in the Afro-Asian world.<sup>[95]</sup> But Nehru was not willing to jettison nonalignment, even though he was 'deeply disappointed by the lack of support from other nonaligned countries, feeling that they had abandoned India in its time of need.'<sup>[96]</sup>

Nonalignment underscored the Indian preference that the superpowers should have only a minimum presence in South Asia, but this changed after the conflict when India gained the promise that its cities would be defended against a communist attack and American bilateral assistance became India's 'most important source of direct external assistance' until the late 1960s.<sup>[97]</sup> Satu Limoye argues that 'no Indian government could or was willing to give up nonalignment, and the US appeared to view this as a minimum requirement for substantive defense [sic] relations.'<sup>[98]</sup> This is not a completely accurate conclusion. It was not required by either the United States or Britain that the Indians should publicly renounce nonalignment, since this would add to India's humiliating defeat and negatively affect Indian public opinion. General Maxwell Taylor who, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was sent to evaluate the need for and scope of American military aid to India in late 1963 reported that, 'The Indians are prepared to view themselves, implicitly at least, as part of a regional security community with the common objective of containing China.'<sup>[99]</sup> In regard to the plans for joint air training exercises, Macmillan suggested to Kennedy that they 'indicate a significant and desirable shift' in India's traditional policy of nonalignment.<sup>[100]</sup> So long as the Westerners believed that a shift had occurred within the hearts and minds of the Indian elite, they did not require that it be made glaringly obvious to the public.

Failure to successfully play the China card to change the political dynamics of the subcontinent was perhaps inevitable, but what was the damage? In regard to Kashmir, Galbraith acknowledged in his salutary letter from New Delhi that there was no chance of a Kashmir settlement, but the attempt had helped the administration politically at home and had not caused a setback to the effort in the subcontinent. 'We were probably too optimistic. No settlement between Catholics and Huguenots was possible for fifteen years after the St. Bartholomew massacre and similarly here.'<sup>[101]</sup> It was clear, however, that Galbraith had not enjoyed working with the British, but Kennedy had refused to go forward without them. The British resented American leadership in what had once been a British colony, but lacked the resources and prestige to manoeuvre the situation independently.

Undoubtedly, there was a price for the failure. Cracks in the relationships among the Americans, British, Pakistanis and Indians deepened. Pakistan increased its official contacts with the People's Republic of China,<sup>[102]</sup> which inflamed emotions in India where it was alleged that Pakistan was linked with the Chinese Communists in committing aggression against India. Despite this, the new American Ambassador in New Delhi, Chester Bowles, urged President Johnson in December 1963 to continue to aid Pakistan by suggesting 'that in their hearts the Pakistanis, in spite of all this talk, are good friends of America, and the China gesture is more a gimmick than a commitment.' Bowles predicated this aid on Pakistan adopting a policy of neutrality on the Sino-Indian conflict and working with the Americans to create a better atmosphere on the subcontinent, i.e., not going to war with India. In the ambassador's view, conditions on the subcontinent would have improved if Pakistan had issued a strong statement of support of India when the Sino-Indian conflict began, but Bowles understood that Pakistan geared its defences against India not communists.<sup>[103]</sup> Although Americans tended to discount the strategic value of Chinese aid to Pakistan, even after 1964 when the People's Republic detonated a nuclear weapon, it was a major irritant in American-Pakistan relations and was bitterly criticised by President Johnson in meetings with Pakistani officials. Nevertheless, American military aid to Pakistan continued until conditions changed due to the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 when Johnson stopped deliveries of goods, including wheat, to both India and Pakistan in an effort to claim a position of neutrality.<sup>[104]</sup>

The Sino-Indian border conflict verified Western intent to defend India if attacked by either the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China, despite New Delhi's continued refusal to join a regional alliance and its vocal criticism of Western policy.<sup>[105]</sup> India was in a relatively weak position, but remained impervious to Western attempts to put conditions on aid. In the end, the leverage that the United States and Britain hoped to gain over India as a result of providing aid never fully materialised, for several reasons. First, neither the United States nor Britain could convince either Pakistan or India that their primary focus for defence should be against potential communist aggression rather than against one another. Second, Western military aid to both India and Pakistan came with strings attached. Western military hardware sold to Pakistan was not to be used against India and *vice versa*. Inevitably this was hard to enforce. When the Indian Prime Minister complained vehemently to President Johnson in 1965 that American-made weaponry was being used by Pakistan against India, the Americans had no reason to suspect that the claim was not in fact true.<sup>[106]</sup> Alternatively, Pakistan resented India acquiring American military equipment after the 1962 attack and feared that the United States would abandon Pakistan in favour of India, despite its pledge to defend Pakistan if American-made arms were used against Pakistan.<sup>[107]</sup> As the border conflict became a distant memory, the planning for expanded American military

shipments were delayed to death and ultimately stalled. The cause for the failure to finalise the terms for a military package is a point of controversy. To begin with, the American military had difficulty dealing with Indian bureaucracy and even had trouble getting through customs when they arrived for the joint exercises in 1963.[108] Jyotika Saksena and Suzette Grillot argue that it was the American refusal to assist India's defence modernisation effort that led to substantive Indo-Soviet military ties.[109] This is not quite accurate; military supplies were offered but the Indians were 'dissatisfied with the type, quantity and conditions of the weapons,' particularly when the United States refused to sell India the Lockheed F104 which had already been sold to Pakistan.[110] Third, the assassination of Kennedy and the death of Nehru took two key players out of the equation at a critical point, leaving many issues unresolved and susceptible to ambiguity and delay. American documents reflect growing impatience with India in Washington. This is evidenced in the failure of Congress to approve funds to build the Bokaro steel plant in India (designed to prevent the purchase of a Soviet plant) despite an appeal from President Kennedy in 1963. The congressional committee that reviewed the plan concluded that the United States 'should not aid a foreign government in projects establishing government-owned industrial and commercial enterprises which compete with existing private endeavors.' [111] Finally, the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War was a distraction from what Johnson perceived as the real problem: communist aggression in Asia. American interest had once again shifted away from the subcontinent and Johnson was happy to leave it to the new Labour Government of Prime Minister Harold Wilson, the United Nations General Secretary, or even the Soviet Union to negotiate a cease fire of the Indo-Pakistan War.

[Introduction](#) | [Contents](#) | [back to the top](#)

## Notes for Article 7

- [1]. H.W. Brands, *India and the United States: The Cold Peace* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), p.92.
- [2]. Jane S. Wilson, 'The Kennedy Administration and India' in Harold A. Gould and Sumit Ganguly, eds, *The Hope and the Reality: US-Indian Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992) pp.52-3. The forward policy had a three-fold purpose: to establish an Indian presence in Aksai Chin in order to challenge Chinese control, to prevent further Chinese forward movement, and to give India leverage for future bargaining over the disputed territory. Nehru spurned attempts by the Chinese to open negotiations to settle the border dispute. In the early 1960s, China initiated a number of similar talks with India's neighbours, including Pakistan, to resolve similar disputed colonial borders.
- [3]. Public Record Office [henceforward PRO]: FO371/164871/ F1015/11, Expert Working Group in the Far East, October 1962, UK Draft Part III, (received in file) 18 Oct. 1962.
- [4]. Anita Inder Singh, *The Limits of British Influence: South Asia and the Anglo-American Relationship, 1947-56* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993), pp.xi-xii.
- [5]. Miland Thakar, 'Coping with Insecurity: The Pakistani Variable in Indo-US Relations' in Gary K. Bertsch, Seema Gahlaut, and Anupam Srivastava, eds, *Engaging India: US Strategic Relations with the World's Largest Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p.226. According to Thakar, nonalignment was based on Nehru's world view and was an 'eschewal of bloc politics during the Cold War.' Thakar notes that Pakistani analysts also viewed Nehru's policy in this light, but with a different spin: in the Pakistani view, nonalignment was designed to keep external powers out of South Asia so India could maintain its regional dominance.
- [6]. Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India* 2nd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.363.
- [7]. Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), p.38.
- [8]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., p.70.
- [9]. *Panch shila* includes: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; nonaggression; noninterference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence. The Bandung Conference was touted as a meeting of neutral or nonaligned nations. However, just less than half the attendees were members of Western alliance systems. Less than a handful of nations, were neutral or nonaligned.
- [10]. Wolpert, *India*, pp.364-5.
- [11]. Harish Kapur, *India's Foreign Policy: Shadows and Substance, 1947-92* (New Delhi, India: Sage Publications India, 1994), p.21.
- [12]. John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.170.
- [13]. For example, in 1956, when Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt in order to re-establish control over the Suez Canal, India vociferously condemned Britain's actions and there was even talk of withdrawing from the Commonwealth, but India remained mute on the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary which took place at the same time.
- [14]. Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p.171.
- [15]. Robert McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan* (New York:: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.232.
- [16]. Singh, *The Limits of British Influence*, op. cit, p.201. The Soviet Union had to renounce the Cominform to fit in with Indian ideas of nonalignment, but India still relied mostly on the West for trade.
- [17]. Brands, *India and the United States*, p.92.
- [18]. *Ibid.*, pp.34-5.
- [19]. *Ibid.*, p.99.
- [20]. Singh, *The Limits of British Influence*, op. cit, p.161. Accordingly, Singh notes, the Indians were little concerned about Western taunts that India was soft on communism. The United States and Britain had allied themselves with the Soviet Union during World War II when it was in their interest. The British had also worked with Indian communists against the Indian National Congress and allowed communists to gain influence in Indian labour unions.
- [21]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., p.63. The British viewed membership in the Baghdad Pact (later CENTO) as 'the only way to maintain influence in the Middle East in light of Egypt's intensifying nationalism, the only way to maintain access to Iranian oil, the only way to protect their military bases in Iraq. The addition of Pakistan to the pact three months after the British joined it was not altogether a surprise, but the British did not welcome it. Nor were they pleased as American arms shipments gradually weaned the Pakistanis away from British equipment.'
- [22]. *Ibid.*, p.63.

- [23]. Ibid., p.70. According to Rotter, in Nehru's world view, 'maintenance of a sphere of influence more or less contiguous to a country was an acceptable means of self-defence.' India resented criticism of its absorption of colonial enclaves within its borders such as Hyderabad, French Pondicherry, and Portuguese Goa or its attempts to dominate its neighbours such as Nepal, Burma or Sri Lanka. According to Rotter, Nehru thus saw Khrushchev's action as regrettable but understandable. The United States benefitted from this world view during the Bay of Pigs incident in 1961 when Nehru suggested that the Americans had 'good reason to be concerned with events in Cuba,' Singh, *The Limits of British Influence*, op. cit., p.161. Singh provides another reason for Indian reticence: the Soviet Union never claimed to represent the free world.
- [24]. Miland Thakar, 'Coping with Insecurity: The Pakistani Variable in Indo-US Relations' in Bertsch, et al, *Engaging India*, op. cit., p.230. According to Thakar, there was an increase in US economic aid to India between 1957 and 1964 which sometimes even surpassed aid to Pakistan to the immeasurable irritation of the latter. Pakistan believed that it should receive more favourable treatment, given that it was an American ally with membership in regional military alliances. Military aid to India largely occurred during the 1962 Sino-Indian Border Conflict.
- [25]. Michael R. Beschloss, *Kennedy v. Khrushchev: The Crisis Years 1960-63* (New York: Edward Burlingame Books, 1991), p.299.
- [26]. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p.273.
- [27]. Ibid., p.273.
- [28]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., p.109.
- [29]. According to McMahon, Gary Powers used the Peshawar base for his failed flight.
- [30]. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p.273.
- [31]. Amitabh Mattoo, 'Shadow of the Dragon: Indo-US Relations and China' in Bertsch, et al, *Engaging India*, op. cit., pp.215-6. When it became clear in 1961 that the People's Republic would likely provide the world with proof of its nuclear capability, there was talk within the Kennedy administration that India should be encouraged to produce a nuclear detonation first so as to lessen the impact of China's detonation. Nehru, however, was on record using strong speech against nuclear proliferation and the idea was shelved.
- [32]. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p.274.
- [33]. Ibid. p.281. For a fascinating discussion of the failure of Nehru and Kennedy to form a personal relationship see Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., pp.215-7. Kennedy described Nehru's visit to Washington in 1961 as 'the worst head of state visit I have had.'
- [34]. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, South Asia (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996) p.728. Chester Bowles, New Delhi, 'eyes only' letter to President Johnson, 27 Dec. 1963. Chester Bowles served tours as American ambassador to India during the Truman and Kennedy/Johnson administrations.
- [35]. See Anita Inder Singh, *The Limits of British Influence: South Asia and the Anglo-American Relationship, 1947-56* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993) for an excellent discussion of Anglo-American relations towards India. It does not encompass the Sino-Indian border conflict as does Andrew J. Rotter in *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000). Rotter's book looks at factors such as race, economics, gender and religion to interpret Indo-American relations. Although Britain does not factor in the title, he has substantial evidence supporting the British role in the relationship. Unfortunately, Rotter does not apply fully all these factors to interpret the Sino-Soviet border conflict and the failure of the United States and Britain to build upon the relationship forged with India in the heat of the war into meaningful relationship in peacetime.
- [36]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., p.53.
- [37]. Singh, *The Limits of British Influence*, op. cit., p.97, p.198 and p.201.
- [38]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., p.111. By 1959 American private investment had risen to \$225 million. Indian and American economists were disappointed by these figures and felt that a country of India's size should have attracted greater investment.
- [39]. PRO: FO371/170634/F1015/3, Expert Working Group on the Far East, April 1963, U.K. Draft: Part II. To be used for talks at NATO.
- [40]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., p.142-3. Rotter notes that the real issue of Kashmir was the 'family romance and tragedy of partition.' Nehru was born in Kashmir and was quite unlikely to relinquish Indian claims.
- [41]. PRO: FO371/164929/FC1063/1, E.H. Peck minute, 2 Nov. 1962, assessing the present situation and estimating possible future policy. This was seen and approved by Lord Home. FC1063/1a, Ormsby-Gore tel. 2788 from Washington to the FO, 5 Nov. 1962, relating discussions between Ambassador Ormsby-Gore and Dean Rusk. FC1063/1b, Ormsby-Gore tel. 2793 from Washington to the FO, Nov. 5, 1962, discusses the American team preparing to leave for London. The files for these joint committees are in PRO, FO371/164929 and FO371/164930 for 1962.
- [42]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit., pp.93-108.
- [43]. PRO: FO371/164914/FC1061/82D, tel. 1623 from Delhi to the Commonwealth Relations Office, 20 Oct. 1962, discusses whether the High Commission should say something to the Indian Government about the British Government's attitude.
- [44]. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston [henceforward JFK Library]: NSF: CO: India, Nehru Correspondence, 10/1/62-11/10/62, Rusk Deptel 1686 to New Delhi, 28 Oct. 1962 and Galbraith New Delhi tel. 1443, 29 Oct. 1963.
- [45]. Jane S. Wilson, 'The Kennedy Administration and India' in Gould and Ganguly, eds, *The Hope and the Reality*, p.54.
- [46]. Brands, *India and the United States*, p.104.
- [47]. PRO: FO371/164916/FC1061/129, Delhi tel. 1720 to CRO, 29 Oct. 1962.
- [48]. PRO: FO371/164929/FC1063, Record of Anglo-American meeting on the Sino-Indian Conflict, 12 Nov. 1962.
- [49]. Jane S. Wilson, 'The Kennedy Administration and India' in Gould and Ganguly, eds, *The Hope and the Reality*, p.54.
- [50]. PRO: FO371/164918/FC1061/179, Garvey tel. 540 from Beijing to FO, 12 Nov. 1962, and minute to tel. dated 13 Nov. 1962, reporting *People's Daily* report titled 'Indian Sheds the Cloak of Non-Alignment.'

- [51]. For an excellent discussion of earlier successful attempts to halt the sale of military aircraft to India by Pakistan see Singh, *The Limits of British Influence*, op. cit pp.193-206.
- [52]. PRO: FO371/164881/F1223/15, Far Eastern Department Brief for the Secretary of State's meeting with the Prime Minister on 4 June, dated 3 June 1962.
- [53]. PRO: FO371/164881/F1223/15, Far Eastern Department Brief for the Secretary of State's meeting with the Prime Minister on 4 June, dated 3 June 1962.
- [54]. JFK Library, Boston: NSF:M&M: Index of Weekend Papers, 7/62-12/63, Box 318, Weekend Reading, 27 July 1962 written for JFK by McG. Bundy.
- [55]. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p.286.
- [56]. *Ibid.*, p.286.
- [57]. PRO: FO371/164881/F1223/49B, David Ormsby-Gore tel. 1659 from Washington to the FO, dated 22 June 1962 reporting on failed American attempts to persuade the French to sell the Mirage jets for rupees. The French were unable to offer anything other than commercial terms but they hoped the US would be satisfied because India had another offer on record.
- [58]. PRO: FO371/164881/F1223/49B, David Ormsby-Gore tel. 1659 from Washington to the FO, dated 22 June 1962 and FO371/164881/F1223/15, Far Eastern Department note on Possible Indian Purchase of Russian Fighter Aircraft, dated 3 June 1962.
- [59]. PRO: FO371/164881/F1223/29, FO tel. 4280 to Washington transmitting a message from Macmillan to Kennedy, dated 13 June 1962.
- [60]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, p.270 and PRO: FO371/164881/F1223/40, FO tel. 3300 to Washington, dated 19 June 1962 transmitting a copy of Kennedy's letter to Macmillan of 14 June 1962; FO371/164881/F1223/40, FO tel. 4402 to Washington dated 18 June 1962 transmitting letter from Macmillan to Kennedy.
- [61]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, pp.280-1 and PRO: FO371/164881/F1223/40, FO tel. 3345 S to Washington, dated 20 June 1962 transmitting Kennedy's letter to Macmillan dated 19 June 1962 regarding MIG deal.
- [62]. Jane S. Wilson, 'The Kennedy Administration and India' in Gould and Ganguly, eds, *The Hope and the Reality*, p.53 and p.55. According to Wilson, Nehru had 'misperceived criticism of Krishna Menon to be disagreement with Congress policy in general and sharply defended his old friend.' By late October of 1962, Nehru was forced to assume the defence portfolio himself and Menon was put in charge of ordnance factories, defence research and development.
- [63]. PRO: FO371/164918/F1061/163, Sir Frank Roberts tel. from Moscow to the FO, dated 10 Nov. 1962. The British Ambassador was reporting on his meeting with the Indian Ambassador to Moscow, Mr. Kaul. In minutes on the cover of this file it is revealed that the officials believed that Moscow's decision on the MIG deal would be the 'decisive indicator' that the Soviets would support the Indians over the Chinese, 'There seems little doubt the Russians are painfully climbing back on the fence. In public they are being careful; in private friendly to the Indians.'
- [64]. PRO: PREM11/4307, Delhi tel. 2270 to CRO, 10 Dec. 1962. This was seen by the Prime Minister.
- [65]. PRO: PREM11/4307, Delhi tel. 247 Saving to the CRO, 28 Dec. 1962. Seen by the prime minister.
- [66]. PRO: FO371/164915/FC1061/116, Ormsby-Gore tel. 2717, 29 Oct. 1962, reporting his discussions with Kaysen who was responsible for watching all world events not directly connected with the Cuban crisis.
- [67]. JFK Library, Boston: NSF: Trips and Conferences: VP trip to Far East & South Asia, 5/61, Background Material, India, Box 242, Briefing paper for Vice President's Trip to the Far East, May 1961, India.
- [68]. JFK Library, Boston: NSF:CO:India: Amb.Galbraith, Special File, Miscellaneous Messages, 1/63-7/63, letter from JFK to Galbraith, 9 Jan.1963.
- [69]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit, p.142.
- [70]. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery*, p.284.
- [71]. PRO: FO371/164929/FC1063/10C, Record of Anglo-American meeting on the Sino-Indian Conflict, 12 Nov. 1962.
- [72]. PRO: FO371/170638/F1042/42, Washington tel. 983 to FO, 4 Apr., 1962, and sent to CRO.
- [73]. PRO: FO371/170638/F1042/53, Home to Macmillan, 4 May 1963.
- [74]. PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/8, Air Defence of India - Background Note, Far Eastern Department, 11 Jan.1963.
- [75]. PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/20, Macmillan to Kennedy, 18 Jan. 1963.
- [76]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, op. cit, p.479 and PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/20, Kennedy to Macmillan, 22 Jan. 1963, date on original letter 22 Jan. 1963.
- [77]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, op. cit, p.479 and PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/20, Kennedy to Macmillan, 22 Jan.1963, date on original letter 22 Jan. 1963.
- [78]. PRO: CAB 128/37/CC26(63) minute 4, 25 Apr. 1963. The American Ambassador Galbraith was closer to British thinking on this. Galbraith opposed encouraging Nehru to use air power against China and as well any plan that the United States should supply air cover. The Ambassador was concerned that these actions would escalate the conflict without any hope of the Indian Air Force defeating the Chinese. Jane S. Wilson, 'The Kennedy Administration and India' in Gould and Ganguly, eds, *The Hope and the Reality*, p.56.
- [79]. JFK Library, Boston: NSF: M&M: NSC Meetings, 1963, No. 514, Box 314, Komer Memorandum for the President, 8 May 1963.
- [80]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, op. cit, pp.590-1 and PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/98, Kennedy to Macmillan, 14 May 1963, date on original letter 13 May 1963.
- [81]. PRO: CAB 128/37/CC31(63), 15 May 1963.
- [82]. PRO: FO371/170644/ F1192/98, FO tel. 4729 to Washington, Macmillan to Kennedy, 15 May 1963.



- [83]. PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/108, Kennedy to Macmillan, 23 May 1963. Kennedy noted Churchill's point in Volume I of *World Crisis* (p.205).
- [84]. PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/108, FO tel. Codel NATO 84 to Ottawa, Macmillan to Foreign Secretary and Minister of Defence, 24 May 1963.
- [85]. PRO: CAB 128/37/CC35(63) minute 4, 28 May 1963; FO371/170644/F1192/114, Macmillan to Kennedy, originally dated 29 May 1963; FO371/170644/F1192/117, Kennedy to Macmillan, 1 June 1963; FO371/170644/F1192/117, Macmillan to Kennedy, 3 June 1963; and FO371/170644/F1192/138, MacLehose to Garvey, 8 July 1963.
- [86]. India did not receive the US aircraft and air umbrella that it had requested, but it was agreed that the United States and Britain would supply radar, train technicians, and hold periodic joint air exercises in India. The first US-Commonwealth air team arrived in India in January 1963.
- [87]. Brands, *India and the United States*, p.104.
- [88]. B.N. Pandey, *Nehru* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1976), p.407.
- [89]. Ross Marlay and Clark Neher, *Patriots & Tyrants: Ten Asian Leaders* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p.310.
- [90]. Wolpert, *India*, p.365.
- [91]. Brands, *India and the United States*, p.107.
- [92]. Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p.164.
- [93]. Wolpert, *India*, p.365. Other security measures included 'A new elite arm was added to India's military establishment, the specially trained Border Security Force, kept directly under the prime minister's personal command.'
- [94]. Kapur, *India's Foreign Policy*, p.11.
- [95]. Jane S. Wilson, 'The Kennedy Administration and India' in Gould and Ganguly, eds, *The Hope and the Reality*, p.56.
- [96]. *Ibid.*, p.57. The response of the nonaligned group was to call for an end of the conflict.
- [97]. Jyotika Saksena and Suzette Grillot, 'The Emergence of Indo-US Defence Cooperation: From Specific to Diffuse Reciprocity' in Bertschk, et al, *Engaging India*, op. cit, p.146. As argued by Singh in *The Limits of British Influence* and others including Saksena and Grillot, the United States built a defence relationship with Pakistan only after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean Conflict in 1950. Pakistan was the only eager ally available to the US in South Asia in 1953-4 when the terms of the alliance were under discussion. Satu P. Limaye, *US-India Relations: The Pursuit of Accommodation* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), p.142.
- [98]. Limaye, *US-India Relations*, op. cit, p.184.
- [99]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, op. cit, p.722, From Taylor in New Delhi to Ball in State Department, 19 Dec. 1963.
- [100]. PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/114, Macmillan to Kennedy, originally dated 29 May 1963
- [101]. JFK Library, Boston: NSF: CO: India, Ambassador Galbraith, Special File, Miscellaneous Messages, 1/63-7/63, Box 111, Galbraith to Kennedy, 9 July 1963.
- [102]. Following the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict the United States and Britain released the Birchgrove statement of 30 June 1963 in which the two countries pledged to continue long-term military aid to India. To secure its own position by reaching out to its greatest enemy's enemy, China, Pakistan reached a border accord with Beijing in 1963. There followed increased signs of improving Sino-Pakistani relations, including agreements on use of air space for commercial airliners, trade agreements and a state visit by the Chinese premier Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) in 1964.
- [103]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, op. cit, p.729, Chester Bowles 'eyes only' letter to President Johnson, 27 Dec. 1963. The intent of the letter was not so much to argue for aid for Pakistan as intended to urge Johnson to seize the opportunity with India while they 'are thoroughly aroused against China and are deeply committed to the creation of an adequate defence force.' Bowles wanted the defence force to be built under the auspices of the United States rather than the Soviet Union.
- [104]. According to the Limaye, India viewed the embargo with equanimity because it had other military suppliers including Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union. The Pakistanis were almost completely dependent on American weapons. The Indians felt that the United States had reneged on a promise to build arms production facilities in India which caused it to view Washington as an undependable military supplier. Furthermore, Pakistan's 'military value had depreciated with the advent of satellites which made American radar installations there somewhat superfluous. Politically, Pakistan was suspect due to its growing ties to Peking [Beijing] just when the US was feeling the latter's pressures in Southeast Asia.' Limaye, *US-India Relations*, op. cit, pp.181-4.
- [105]. PRO: FO371/170644/F1192/96, Brief for Secretary of State's discussion at lunch at Karachi with Mr. Dean Rusk, 30 Apr. 1963; FO371/170637/F1041/15, Emery, CRO, letter to O'Brien, New Delhi, 28 Nov. 1963; FO371/170638/F1042, Home to Macmillan, 4 May 1963; FO371/164880/F1195/45, Ormsby-Gore tel. 2902 from Washington, 20 Nov. 1962.
- [106]. *Foreign Relations, 1964-1968* Volume XXV, p.265. Prime Minister Shastri to President Johnson, 23 May 1965. *Foreign Relations, 1964-1968* Volume XXV, p.270. President Johnson to Prime Minister Shastri, 5 June 1965; *Foreign Relations, 1964-1968* Volume XXV, p.275. Information Memorandum from Talbot to Secretary of State Rusk, 10 June 1965. There were also reports that India was using American-supplied munitions against Pakistan. In his response to PM Shastri, Johnson did not directly confront the issue. Rather he expressed his deep concern 'over the unhappy events in the Rann of Kutch and the use of US military equipment in this dispute.'
- [107]. *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963* Volume XIX, op. cit., p.693, Memorandum for the Record of conversation between President Johnson and Bundy, 30 Nov. 1963. President Johnson held President Ayub in high esteem and insisted that the US had not done enough to evoke Ayub's confidence in the United States to stand by its commitments. Johnson wanted this corrected.
- [108]. Jane S. Wilson, 'The Kennedy Administration and India' in Gould and Ganguly, eds, *The Hope and the Reality*, p.60.
- [109]. Jyotika Saksena and Suzette Grillot, 'The Emergence of Indo-US Defence Cooperation: From Specific to Diffuse Reciprocity' in Bertschk, et al, *Engaging India*, op. cit, p.146-7.
- [110]. Limaye, *US-India Relations*, op. cit, pp.182-4. According to Limaye, 'the US refused to sell India any weaponry, offensive or otherwise, that was not

directly applicable to mountain warfare.' This undoubtedly led India to suspect that the US was trying to nudge its defence capabilities in the direction of a particular American strategic objective (the containment of the PRC) while at the same time protecting Pakistani sensitivities.

[111]. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, op. cit, p.147-9. The failure to approve the Bokaro steel mill severely affected Indo-American relations. At the suggestion of the American Embassy, Nehru withdrew the request for aid.

[Introduction](#) | [Contents](#) | [back to the top](#)

The Institute of Historical Research (IHR), Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU  
The IHR is a member of the School of Advanced Study which is part of the University of London