HOME AND THE WORLD

Pandit Nehru is at his best when he is not pinned down to matters of detail.

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I

NOT LONG AFTER THE 1952 election the Indian writer Nirad C. Chaudhuri produced an essay on Jawaharlal Nehru for a popular magazine. The writer was by this time moderately well known, but his subject still towered over both him and everybody else. Nehru's leadership, remarked Chaudhuri, 'is the most important moral force behind the unity of India'. He was 'the leader not of a party, but of the people of India taken collectively, the legitimate successor to Gandhiji'. As he saw it,

> Nehru is keeping together the governmental machine and the people, and without this nexus India would probably have been deprived of stable government in these crucial times. He has not only ensured co-operation between the two, but most probably has also prevented actual conflicts, cultural, economic, and political. Not even Mahatmaji's leadership, had it continued, would have been quite equal to them.
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> If, within the country, Nehru is the indispensable link between the governing middle-classes and the sovereign people, he is no less the bond between India and the world. [He serves as]India's representative to the great Western democracies, and, I must add, their representative to India. The Western nations certainly look upon him as such and expect him to guarantee India's support for them, which is why they are so upset when Nehru takes an anti-Western or neutral line. They feel they are being let down by one of themselves.[1]

Through his long tenure as prime minister, Nehru served simultaneously as foreign minister of the government of India. This was natural, for among the Congress leadership he alone had a genuinely internationalist perspective. Gandhi had been universal is tin outlook but had hardly travelled abroad. The other Congress leaders, such as Vallabhbhai Patel, were determinedly inward-looking. Nehru, on the other hand, 'had always been fascinated by world trends and movements'.[2]

Through the inter-war period Nehru remained a close observer of and occasional participant in European debates. In 1927 he visited Soviet Russia, and in the next decade travelled widely over the Continent. In the 1930s he played an active part in mobilizing support for the Republican cause in Spain. He became a pillar of the progressive left, speaking often on public platforms in England and France. His name and fame in this regard were aided by the publication and commercial success of his autobiography, which appeared in London in 1936.[3]

Representative of Nehru's ideas is a speech he delivered on 'Peace and Empire' at Friends House, Euston, in July 1938. This began by speaking of 'fascist aggression but went on to see fascism as merely another variant of imperialism. In Britain the tendency was to distinguish between the two. But in Nehru's mind there was little doubt that those who 'sought complete freedom for all the subject peoples of the world' had to oppose both fascism and imperialism.

The crisis of the times, said Nehru, had promoted a 'growing solidarity of the various peoples' and a 'feeling of international fellowship and comradeship'. His own talk ranged widely around the hot spots of the world. He spoke of Spain, of Abyssinia, of China, of Palestine, and most sensitively, of Africa. The 'people of Africa deserve our special consideration', he pointed out, for 'probably no other people in the world have suffered so much, and have been exploited so much'.[4]

In the late summer of 1939 Nehru planned a trip to India's great Asian neighbour, China. He had been in friendly correspondence with Chiang Kai-shek, for, as he told a colleague, 'more and more I think of India and China pulling together in the future'. He hoped to go by air to Chungking, spend three weeks travelling in the hinterland and to return home via the Burma Road. Sadly, the war in Europe put paid to the tour.[5]

Nehru was jailed for his part in the Quit India movement of 1942. When he was released in July 1945 his energies were devoted to the endgames of empire. But after it became clear that India would soon be free, his thoughts turned once more to foreign affairs. In a radio broadcast of September 1946 he singled out the United States, the Soviet Union and China as the three countries most relevant to India's future. The next year he spoke in the Constituent Assembly on how India would be friends with both the US and the USSR, rather than become camp followers of one power 'in the hope that some crumbs might fall from their table'. As he put it, 'we lead ourself'.[6]

An early articulation of what came to be known as 'non-alignment' is contained in a letter written by Nehru to K. P. S. Menon in January 1947, as the latter prepared to take up his assignment as India's first ambassador to China:

> Our general policy is to avoid entanglement in power politics and not to join any group of powers as against any other group. The two leading groups today are the Russian bloc and the Anglo-American bloc. We must be friendly to both and yet not join either. Both America and Russia areextraordinarily suspicious of each other as well as of other countries. This makes our path difficult and we may well be suspected by each of leaning towards the other. This cannot be helped.[7]

Nehru saw Indian independence as part of a wider Asian resurgence. Past centuries might have belonged to Europe, or to the white racesin general, but it was now time for non-white and previously subordinated peoples to come into their own.

A remarkable initiative in this regard was the Asian Relations Conference, held in New Delhi in the last week of March 1947. Twenty-eight countries sent representatives – these included India's close neighbours (Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon and Nepal), the still colonized nations of Southeast Asia (such as Malaya, Indonesia and Vietnam), China and Tibet (the two sent separate delegations), seven Asian 'republics' of the Soviet Union and Korea. The Arab League was also represented and there was a Jewish delegation from Palestine. As a Western journalist covering the event recalled, for a week the city of Delhi 'was filled with the most intricate variety of people, strange in costume and countenance – brocades from South-East Asia, bell-bottoms from the Eastern Soviet Republics, braided hair and quilted robes from Tibet . . . dozens of curious languages and poly-syllabic titles. One way and another, as we kept reminding one another, this multitude represented nearly half the population of the world.'[8]

The conference was held in the Purana Qila, a large, somewhat rundown yet still majestic stone structure built by Sher Shah Suri in the sixteenth century. The opening and concluding sessions were open to the public, and attracted large crowds – 20,000, by one estimate. The official language was

English but interpreters were provided for the delegates. Speakers spoke on a podium; behind them was mounted a huge map of the continent, with ASIA written atop it in neon lights. The inaugural address was by Nehru. 'Rising to a great ovation, he talked of how, 'after along period of quiescence', Asia had 'suddenly become important in world affairs . Its countries could 'no longer be used as pawns by others'.[9] However, as the journalist G. H. Jansen recalled, Nehru's speech 'was not directly or strongly anti-colonial. "The old imperialisms are fading away", he said. With an almost contemptuous wave of the hand he did something worse than attack them; he pronounced a valediction.'[10]

After Nehru had his say, each participating country, in alphabetical order, sent a speaker to the podium. This took two whole days, after which the meeting broke up into thematic round-tables. There were separate sections on 'national movements for freedom'; 'racial problems and inter-Asian migration'; 'economic development and social services'; 'cultural problems'; and 'status of women and women's movements'.

The conference concluded with a talk by Mahatma Gandhi. He regretted that the conference had not met in the 'real India of the villages but in the cities that were 'influenced by the West'. The 'message of Asia', insisted Gandhi, was 'not to be learnt through the Western spectacles or by imitating the atom bomb . . . I want you to go away with the thought that Asia has to conquer the West through love and truth.' [11]

Gandhi made his appearance, but this was really Nehru's show. His admirers saw it as confirmation of his status as the authentic voice of resurgent Asia. His critics were less generous. In its account of the conference, the Muslim League newspaper, *Dawn*, complained of how 'skilfully he [Nehru] has worked himself into some sort of all-Asian leadership. That is just what this ambitious Hindu leader had intended – to thrust himself upon the Asian nations as their leader and through his attainment of that prestige and eminence to further the expansionist designs of Indian Hinduism.'[12]

II

Nehru had often been to Europe before Independence. His first trip to the United States, however, took place two years after he had assumed office as prime minister. The US had not loomed large in Nehru's political imagination. His *Glimpses of World History*, for example, devotes far less space to it than to China or Russia. And what he says is not always complimentary. The capitalism of the American kind had led to slavery, gangsterism, and massive extremes of wealth and poverty. The American financier J. Pierpont Morgan owned a yacht worth£6 million, yet New York was known as 'Hunger Town'. Nehru admired Roosevelt's attempts at regulating the economy, but he was not hopeful that FDR would succeed. For 'American Big Business is held to be the most powerful vested interest in the modern world, and it is not going to give up its power and privileges merely at the bidding of President Roosevelt'.[13]

Before Nehru's trip to America in late 1949, an enterprising reporter at *Time* magazine went through his writings.The exercise revealed that he had 'simply never given the subject [of America] much thought. As a British university man, he has perhaps looked down snobbishly at American deficiency in culture. As a sentimental socialist, he has ticked off the U.S. as unrivalled in technology but predatory in its capitalism.'[14]

Nehru's feelings were widely shared. Like British aristocrats, the Indian elite tended to think of America and Americans as uncouth and uncultured. Representative are the views of P. P.

Kumaramangalam, scion of an illustrious south Indian family. His father, Dr P. Subbaroyan, was a rich landlord and an influential politician – he later served in Nehru's Cabinet. The son studied at Sandhurst — his siblings in Oxford and Cambridge. These, a brother named Mohan and a sister named Parvathi, went on to become leading lights of the Communist Party of India. This predisposed them to a dislike of America. But in this respect the brother who was an army officer outdid them. After Indian independence he was sent for training to the artillery school at Fort Sill in Oklahoma. From here he wrote to a Madras mentor of how

> This country is not one that Iwill ever get fond of. I have not got a very high opinion of them. The people that I have to deal with are very kind, hospitable and have been very good to the two of us. But somehow I feel there is a trace of artificiality in that and also it is the result of trying to impress one. They I think are very jealous of the old world and its background and culture and this results in an aggressive inferiority complex. As for their state of morality, there is none. People seem to delight in trying to outwit each other by any means, mainly crooked. The politicians are racketeers and big business has a tight grip on everything in the country. The small country tradesman and the farmer I think have their hands pretty securely tied by the big men. I do hope our country proceeds with caution and doesn't get entirely under the influence of the [United] States.[15]

Americans, for their part, had their own prejudices about India. They admired Gandhi and his struggle for national independence, but their knowledge of the country itself was scant. As Harold Isaac once pointed out, for the postwar American there were really only four kinds of Indians. These were: (1) the *fabulous* Indians, the maharajas and magicians coupled with equally exotic animals such as tigers and elephants; (2) the *mystical* Indians, a people who were 'deep, contemplative, tranquil, profound . . .'; (3) the *benighted* Indians, who worshipped animals and many-headed gods, living in a country that was even more heathen than China; and (4) the *pathetic* Indians, plagued by poverty and crippled by disease – 'children with fly-encircled eyes, with swollen stomachs, children dying in the streets, rivers choked with bodies . . . Of these images perhaps the last two predominated. It was no accident that the book on the subcontinent best known in America was Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, a book that Gandhi had described as a 'drain inspector's report'.[16]

Nehru in part shared the prejudices of Indians, and he was sensible of the American ones. But for this first high-level encounter between the youngest and richest to put them on hold. In August 1949, as he prepared for his trip, Nehru was uncharacteristically nervous. 'In what mood shall I address America?' he asked his sister Vijayalakshmi. 'How shall I address people etc.? How shall Ideal with the Government there and businessmen and others? Which facet of myself should I put before the American public – the Indian or the European' . . . I want to be friendly with the Americans but always making it clear what we stand for.[17]

Nehru spent three weeks in America, delivering a speech a day to audiences as diverseas the UnitedStates Congress and a congregation in a Chicago chapel. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Columbia University and listened to by a crowd of 10,000 at the University of California at Berkeley. He displayed the common touch, being photographed with a taxi driver in Boston, but also made clear his membership of the aristocracy of the intellect, as in a much-publicized visit to Albert Einstein in Princeton.

Addressing Congress, Nehru spoke respectfully of the founders of America, but then counterposed to them a great man from his own country. This was Gandhi, whose message of peace

and truth had inspired independent India's foreign policy. The Mahatma, however, 'was too great for the circumscribed borders of any one country, and the message he gave may help us in considering the wider problems of the world'. For what the world most lacked, said Nehru, was 'under-standing and appreciation of each other among nations and peoples'.

This was diplomatically put, but elsewhere Nehru spoke more directly. At Columbia University Nehru deplored the desire to 'marshal the world into two hostile camps'. India, he said, would align with neither, but pursue 'an independent approach to each controversial or disputed issue'. In his view, the main cause of war was the persistence of racialism and colonialism. Peace and freedom could be secured only if the domination of one country or one race over another was finally brought toan end.[18]

The American press was impressed with the Indian prime minister. The *Chicago Sun Times* went so far as to say that 'in many ways Nehru is the nearest thing this generation has to a Thomas Jefferson in his way of giving voice to the universal aspirations for freedom of people everywhere'.[19] The Christian Science Monitor described himas a 'World Titan' . When he left, a columnist in the St. Louis Post Dispatch observed that 'Nehru has departed from us, leaving behind clouds of misty-eyed women'.[20] Even Time magazine admitted that, while Americans were still not sure what Nehru stood for, 'they sensed in him, if not rare truth, a rare heart'.[21]

There was, however, one set of people who did not warm to the visitor from India – the mandarins of the State Department. Nehru had several long discussions with the secretary of state, Dean Acheson, but these went nowhere. In his memoirs Acheson wrote dismissively and with some despair about Nehru's visit. In their talks he found him 'prickly', arrogant 'he talked to me . . . as though I was a public meeting),and too ready to pick on the faults of others (notably the French and Dutch colonialists) without recognizing any of his own. When Acheson broached the subject of Kashmir, he got 'a curious combination of a public speech and flashes of anger and deep dislike of his opponents'. Altogether, he found Nehru 'one of the most difficult men with whom I have ever had to deal'.[22]

Other American officials were more sympathetic to Nehru. One such was Chester Bowles, who was ambassador in New Delhi from 1951-3. Witnessing Nehru at work in his own environment, Bowles was visibly impressed by his commitment to democracy and democratic procedure, and to the rights of minorities. Dean Acheson, and many other Americans, divided the world into two categories: friends and foes.[23] That was not a reading that Bowles endorsed. He insisted that 'it is immature and ridiculous for us [Americans] to jump to the conclusion that because he [Nehru] is not 100 per cent for us, he must be against us'.[24]

During Bowles's tenure India and the United States drew closer. The US sent experts and equipment to help with Indian programmes of agricultural development. But the popular mistrust persisted. A writer from Delaware, touring the subcontinent in the early fifties, came across many educated Indians for whom the United States was a country 'isolated by gross faults, stewing alone in the unthinkable sins of materialism, imperialist ambitions, war mongering, political corruption, spiritual and cultural poverty, racial discrimination and injustice'.[25]

The mutual distrust deepened after 1953, when the Republicans found themselves back in power after twenty years out of it. Towards the end of that year William F. Knowland, the Republican leader in the Senate, undertook a six-week world tour. After he returned home he told the *US News and World Report* that Jawaharlal Nehru did not represent all the nations or peoples of Asia. Said Senator Knowland emphatically: 'Certainly Nehru does not speak for the Republic of Korea, for Japan, for Free China or Formosa, for Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos or Cambodia. He certainly does not

speak for Pakistan. The only countries he might be able to speak for with some authority, or at least represent their views, would be India itself, Indonesia which is also neutralist in outlook, and perhaps Burma . . .'.[26]

These views were shared by the new secretary of state, John Foster Dulles. Dulles was the coldest of cold warriors, whose foreign policy was dominated by his obsession with communism. In the battle against the Soviet Union, Dulles was prepared to disregard the internal political systems of other nations. Generally speaking, dictators who toed the American linewere to be preferred to democrats who didn't: 'If he is a bastard, at least he is our bastard, as he is famously supposed to have said.

Dulles and Nehru disliked each other from the start. The American claimed that 'the concept of neutrality is obsolete, immoral, and short sighted'. Those who professed it were, in effect, crypto-communists. Nehru, naturally, did not take kindly to this interpretation. As the Australian diplomat Walter Crocker wrote, the Indian prime minister did not miss the irony that,

> as regards the sanctity of the Free World and the Free Life proclaimed by Dulles, he, damned by Dulles, was carrying India through a argantuan effort towards Parliamentary Democracy, the rule of law, freedom and equality for all religions, and social and economic reforms, while among the countries which Dulles praised and subsidized because they were 'willing to stand up and be counted' as anti-Communist were effete or persecuting tyrannies, oligarchies and theocracies, sometimes corrupt as well as retrograde.[27]

Dulles further offended Indian sensibilities when he suggested that Portugal – a trusted US ally – could keep its colony of Goa as long as it chose to. However, the secretary's decisive contribution to wrecking Indo-US relations was the military pact he signed with Pakistan in February 1954. As one historian drily remarked, 'Mr Dulles wanted pacts . . . Pakistan wanted money and arms.'[28]

Almost from the time of Independence the United Kingdom had seen Pakistan as a potential ally in the Cold War; as, in fact, a 'strong bastion against Communism'. By contrast, India was seen as being soft on the Soviets. Winston Churchill himself was much impressed by the argument that Pakistan could be made to stand firm on Russia's eastern flank, much as that reliable Western client, Turkey, stood firm on the west. The brilliant young Harvard professor Henry Kissinger endorsed this idea – in his view, the 'defense of Afghanistan [from the Soviets] depends on the strength of Pakistan'.[29]

For Republicans like Dulles, the fight against communism was paramount. Hence the tilt towards Pakistan, which he saw as a key member of a defensive ring around the Soviet Union. From bases in Pakistan American planes could strike deep into Soviet central Asia. Dulles's view was seconded by Vice-President Richard Nixon and their combined efforts ultimately prevailed over President Eisenhower, who was worried about the fall-out in India following any formal alliance with Pakistan.[30]

American military aid to Pakistan ran to about $80 million a year. The US also encouraged the Pakistanis to join the anti-Soviet military alliances in central and Southeast Asia known as CENTO and SEATO. Two months before Dulles signed his pact with the Pakistan is an American missionary who had worked for years in the subcontinent warned that 'to weigh Pakistan militarily over and against India would alienate India'[31] That it certainly did, although there were others trains on Indo-American relations as well. In the ongoing conflicts of the Cold War – as in Korea and Indo-China – India was seen as being too neutral by far. Nehru's vigorous canvassing of the recognition of the

People's Republic of China, and his insistence that it be given the permanent seat in the UN Security Council then occupied by Taiwan, was also not taken to kindly by Washington. There were an increasing number of Americans who felt that Nehru had 'entered the arena of world politics as a champion challenging American wisdom'.[32]

As perhaps he had. For, as Nehru wrote to the industrialist G. D. Birla in May 1954, 'I do not think that there are many examples in history of a succession of wrong policies being followed by a country as by the United States in the Far East during the past five or six years. They have taken one wrong step after another . . . They think that they can solve any problem withmoney and arms. They forget the human element. They forget the nationalistic urges of people. They forget the strong resentment of people in Asia against impositions.'[33]

The industrialist himself was rather keen that the two countries forge better relations. In October 1954 Birla visited the UnitedStates and spoke to across-section of influential people. He even had half an hour withJohnFosterDulles, who complained about how India 'misrepresented them as war-mongers and so on andso forth'.[34] In February 1956 Birla visited the United States again on a bridge-building mission. He asked Nehru for advice, and got asermon. 'Dulles's statement about Goa has angered everybody here', said the prime minister. 'Indo-American relations are much more affected by this kind of thing than by the aid they may give. Then there is the American military aid to Pakistan, which is a constant and growing threat to us and, in effect, adds to our burdens much more than the actual aid they give to us.[35]

The next month John Foster Dulles made so bold as to visit New Delhi. The record of his talks with the Indian government is still classified, but we do have the proceedings of a press conference he addressed. Here, the secretary of state was subject to a series of hostile questions. He was asked why he had said that Goa was an integral part of Portugal. Dulles did not deny this, but clarified that he was for a 'peaceful solution' of the controversy. Then the talk turned to military aid to Pakistan, and the possibility that it might lead to an escalation of the conflict in Kashmir. Dulles defensively answered that 'the arms supply to Pakistanis not designed in anyway to be a threat to India'. When the questioner persisted, Dulles angrily remarked that 'we do not feel that because there is a dispute over Kashmir . . . Pakistan should be unarmed so that it could not resist Soviet Communist aggression'. The secretary of state thenthreatened to walk out if any more questions were asked on Goa or Kashmir.[36]

India and the United States did seem to have much in common -the democratic way of life, a commitment to cultural pluralism, and (not least) a nationalist origin myth that stressed struggle against the British oppressor. But on questions of international politics they resolutely differed. America thought India soft on communism; India thought America soft on colonialism. In the end, that which divided seemed to overwhelm that which united; in part because of the personal chemistry – or rather, lack thereof – between the key players on either side.[37]

III

Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Soviet Union two decades before he toured North America. Arriving by train from Berlin, he reached the Russian frontier on 7 November 1927, the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik seizure of power. 'Lenin worship' was abundantly on display. There were red flags and busts of the Bolshevik hero everywhere. Nehru went on to Moscow, a city which impressed him both with its physical grandeur and its apparent social levelling. 'The contrasts between extreme luxury

and poverty are not visible, nor does one notice the hierarchy of class or caste.

Nehru wrote a travelogue on his trip; its tone is unfailingly gushing, whether speaking of peasant collectives, the constitution of the USSR, the presumed tolerance of minorities, or economic progress. A visit to Lenin's tomb prompted a reverie on the man and his mission, ending with a ringing endorsement of Romain Rolland's claim that the Bolshevik leader was 'the greatest man of action in our century and at the same time the most selfless'. He was taken to a model prison, which he thought illustrative of the 'better social order and humane criminal law' of the socialist system.

As compared to bourgeois countries, concluded Nehru, the Soviet Union treated its workers and peasants better, its women and children better,even its prisoners better. The credulousness of the narrative is made complete by the epigraph to the book of his travels – Wordsworth on the French Revolution: 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive / But to be young was very heaven.'[38]

Nehru's biographer points out that he visited 'the Soviet Union in the last days of its first, halcyon period. If his reaction was idealistic, it was partly because there was still some idealism in the air. [39] This is true, after a fashion; for there was still aglow about Lenin (whose own intolerance was not yet widely known outside Russia); while the extermination of kulaks and the Siberian death camps lay in the future. And of course there were other such endorsements provided by Western fellow-travellers of the 1920s. Like them, Nehru had come intending to be impressed; and he was.[40]

It was, above all, the Soviet economic system which most appealed to Nehru. As a progressive intellectual of his time, he thought state ownership more just than private property, state planning more efficient than the market. His *Glimpses of World History* contains an admiring account of the Sovietfive-year plans. Yet at no time was he attracted by the Bolshevik model of armed revolution or by the one-party state. His training under Gandhi predisposed him towards non-violence, and his exposure to Western liberalism made him an enthusiast for electoral democracy and a free press.

After Independence, relations with the Soviet Union were at first frosty. This was because the Communist Party of India, with Moscow's blessing, had attempted to overthrow the state. But the insurrection failed, and the Soviets also thawed. Now they sought to woo India away from the Western camp. In 1951, while the American Congress debated are quest for food aid from India, the Soviets – unencumbered by democratic procedure – offered to send 50,000 tons of wheat at once. Indian efforts in mediating in the Korean conflict were also appreciated by Moscow. Previously, Asian states had been judged by their suitability for communism; but(as with Dulles's America) the Cold War made ideology more flexible. It no longer mattered if acountry was socialist; what was crucial was whether it was on one's side.[41]

The consummation of this change was the reception given to Jawaharlal Nehru when he visited the Soviet Union in 1955. 'Wherever Nehru went in the Soviet Union', wrote one observer, 'there were large crowds to greet him. In all the factories workmen gathered in thousands to have a glimpse of him.' At Moscow University 'the students left their classes and gave him a great ovation'. (One of the students was Mikhail Gorbachev; years later, he was to recall in his memoirs the impact made on him by Nehru and his idea of amoral politics.[42])On the last day of his stay the Indian prime minister was due to speak at a public meeting in Gorky Park. But the crowd turned out to be far larger than anticipated, so the venue was shifted to the stadium of the Dynamo Moscow football team.[43]

Six months later the Soviet leaders Bulganin and Khrushchev came for a return visit. The Indians in turn pulled out all the stops. Before the visitors arrived in Delhi, loudspeakers exhorted the people to turn out in numbers, in grateful response to the reception the Russians had given Nehru. In the event there were spectacular turnouts in all the cities the duo visited. There were several reasons for this enthusiasm: the curiosity for the exotic and foreign, the Indian love of a good show and, not least, the

deep vein of anti-Western feeling which took vicarious pride in Russia's challenge to the USA. The crowds were biggest in radical, anti-imperialist Calcutta, where students and factory workers made up a good proportion of the half a million who came out to cheer the Soviet leaders. But even New Delhi was ablaze with illumination. 'The brightly lit Delhi Stock Exchange vied with the Communist Party office in a challenge of festive lights.'[44]

In their three weeks in India Bulganin and Khrushchev visited steel mills and hydroelectric plants, and spoke at public meetings in no fewer than seven state capitals. The most significant of these, without question, was Srinagar, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir state. Here they made clear that they accepted the Valley as being part of the Indian Union, and the Kashmir is as being one of the 'talented and industrious peoples of India'.[45] Nothing could have sounded sweeter to Indian ears.

IV

On the eve of Nehru's departure for Moscow in 1955 an Indian critic had worried that he would be taken in by his hosts. For 'like many another sensitive nature, accustomed in its late twenties and early thirties to regard the Soviet Union as truly Progressive, the Prime Minister seems never to have quite got over the vision of those days. Despite all that has happened since then, the Soviet [Union] still retains for him some of that enchantment. To its virtues he continues to be very kind, to its vices and cruelties, he is almost blind.'[46]

The writer was A. D.Gorwala, a Western-oriented liberal. There were others like him, Indians who believed that India should ally more strongly with the democracies in the Cold War.[47] But these were most likely outnumbered, and certainly outshouted, by those Indians who suspected the United States and favoured the Soviet Union. One reason for this was that while the Americans were loath to ask their European allies to disband their empires in Asia and Africa, the Russians spoke frequently about the evils of racialism and colonialism.[48]

Nehru at first tried hard to avoid taking sides in the Cold War. But, as he often said, this non-alignment was not mere evasion; it had a positive charge to it. Athird bloc might come to act as a salutary moderating effect on the hubris of the superpowers. We have spoken already of the Asian Relations Conference in 1947. Another such effort, in which Nehru played an important part, was the Afro-Asian conference, held in the Indonesian city of Bandung in 1955.

Only countries that had independent governments were invited to Bandung. Twenty-nine sent delegations, including India and China. Four African nations were represented (the others still lay under the colonial yoke); but delegates from Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria all came. The meeting discussed methods of cultural and economic co-operation, and committed itself firmly to the end of colonial rule. For, as President Sukarno of Indonesia observed, 'how can we say that colonialism is dead so long as vast areas of Asia and Africa are unfree?'[49]

Nehru considered the Bandung Conference 'a great achievement'; it 'proclaimed the political emergence in world affairs of over half the world's population. [But] it presented no unfriendly challenge or hostility to anyone . . .' Ashe told the Indian Parliament on his return, the historic links between Asian and African countries had been sundered by colonialism; now, as freedom dawned, they could be revived and reaffirmed.[50]

This last protestation was in answer to the charge that Bandung and the like were, in essence, anti-Western. How 'non-aligned', in fact, was non-alignment? In India, its ideals were put sternly to the test in the second half of 1956. In July of that year Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the company

that managed the Suez Canal. Britain (whose strategic interests were most threatened by the action) reacted by asking for international control over the Canal. Nehru, who knew both parties well, tried hard to mediate. But he failed, and ultimately, in late October, the British, in collusion with the French and the Israelis, undertook a military invasion of Egypt. This act of neocolonial aggression drew worldwide condemnation. Finally, under American pressure, the Anglo-French alliance was forced to withdraw.[51]

Close on the heels of the invasion of Egypt, Soviet tanks rolled into Budapest. This followed a popular revolt which had overthrown the Soviet client regime in favour of a more representative government. Moscow reacted in brutal fashion to restore the *status quo ante*. Their action, like that of the British and the French in the Middle East, was viewed as an unacceptable infringement of national sovereignty.

Indian commentators saw the invasions of Egypt and Hungary as wholly comparable. Both were 'acts of international brigandage by powers that commanded permanent seats in the UN Security Council – both had 'spread a wave of cynicism throughout the world'. As a Madras journal pointed out, while the independence of Egypt threatened the oil resources of Britain and France, 'the independence of Hungary would not only threaten the supply of uranium so essential for the maintenance of the Red Army in top form, but would cause a dangerous rift in the Soviet empire. London could not countenance the first and Moscow could not tolerate the second. Hence their acts of naked aggression which amount to a savage exhibition of the predatory animal instinct.'[52]

Nehru had criticized the Anglo-French intervention as soon as it happened.[53] But now, when the United Nations met to discuss a resolution calling upon the Soviet Union 'to withdraw all of its forces without delay from Hungarian territory', India, represented by V. K. Krishna Menon, abstained. This caused great resentment in the Western world, and exposed the Indian government to the charge of keeping double standards.[54]

There was also much domestic criticism of India's stand. There was an angry debate in Parliament, and sections of the press deplored 'our shameful sycophancy to the Soviet rulers . . .' 'By kowtowing to Russia we have abdicated our moral pretensions', wrote one journalist. It was speculated that the government may have been influenced by its uncertain hold over Kashmir, since one of the UN resolutions it had abstained from asked for an internationally supervised plebiscite in Hungary.[55]

Later research has revealed that Nehru was actually deeply unhappy about the Soviet invasion. He had sent several private messages to Moscow urging it to withdraw its troops. Afterwards, India spoke out in public too, but the damage had been done. It was compounded when Nehru stood by Krishna Menon's original abstention, on the grounds that insufficient information was available at the time.[56]

The fiasco over Hungary undermined Nehru's international credibility. Non-alignment was seen by some as meaning 'fierce condemnation of the Western bloc when its actions are wrong', but 'equivocal language when the Soviet bloc goes off the rails'.[57] The episode also exposed the prime minister to the charge of putting personal loyalty above national purpose. For while he privately deplored what Krishna Menon had done, he stood by him in public.

Krishna Menon was an oldfriend of Nehru, and in his own way a remarkable man. Educated at the London School of Economics, he was also the first editor of Penguin's prestigious non-fiction imprint, Pelican Books. In the 1930s he had worked tirelessly in canvassing British support for Indian independence. But he also found time to act as an unofficial spokesman and literary agent for Nehru. He was rewarded with the High Commissioner's job in London after Independence. Here he worked

very hard, but also made enemies, through his arrogance and by frequently advertising his friendship with the prime minister.[58]

After returning from London, Krishna Menon was made a Cabinet minister without portfolio. He became a sort of roving ambassador, representing India at the UN and at disarmament meetings in Geneva. A man of forceful opinions, he was controversial both in his homeland and out of it. The 'lucidity of his intellect', wrote one journalist who knew him well, 'is sometimes clouded by passions and resentments'. Since his 'likes and dislikes are stronger than would seem quite safe for a man in his position', it did seem 'strange that a man who carries such a storm around with him should have been used for delicate diplomatic missions'.[59]

Even before Hungary there had been adverse comment about the prime minister's reliance on Krishna Menon. Within the Congress, there were many who were uncomfortable with his pro-communist leanings.[60] And the Western press cordially hated him, a New York paper speaking of the 'lack of loveableness' in this 'least tactful of diplomats'.[61]

But Nehru would stand by Menon. As early as 1953 it was being noticed in Delhi that the prime minister 'turns blue when anyone criticises his diplomatic pet, Mr Krishna Menon'. This blindness was to cost Nehru dearly over Hungary in 1956. But he still would not discard him. Why? A helpful answer is provided by Alva Myrdal, who was Sweden's ambassador in India at the time, and knew Nehru well. The prime minister, concluded Myrdal, 'knew Menon's shortcomings but kept listening to him because of his brilliance. Menon was the only genuine intellectual foil Nehru had in the government', the only man with whom he could discuss Marx and Mill, Dickens and Dostoevsky.[62]

V

Let us now turn to India's relationship with its larger and even more populous neighbour, China. The two civilizations had long been linked by ties of trade and culture. More recently, each had keenly watched the other's struggle against European domination. The Congress, and Nehru, had a particular regard for the Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek, who had urged the Americans to in turn urge the British to grant the Indians independence.

In 1949, however, the Kuomintang were overthrown by the communists. What would relations now be like? To indicate continuity, India retained their serving ambassador to Beijing, who was the historian K. M. Pannikar. In May 1950 Pannikar was granted an interview with Mao Zedong, and came away greatly impressed. Mao's face, he recalled later, was 'pleasant and benevolent and the look in his eyes is kindly'. There 'is no cruelty or hardness either in his eyes or in the expression of his mouth. In fact he gave me the impression of a philosophical mind, a little dreamy but absolutely sure of itself. The Chinese leader had 'experienced many hardships and endured tremendous sufferings', yet 'his face showed no signs of bitterness, cruelty or sorrow . Mao reminded Pannikar of his own boss, Nehru, for 'both are men of action with dreamy, idealistic temperaments', and both 'may be considered humanists in the broadest sense ofthe term'.[63]

This would be laughable if it were not so serious. Intellectuals have always had a curious fascination for the man of power; George Bernard Shaw wrote about Lenin in much the same terms. Yet Shaw was an unaffiliated writer, responsible only to himself. Pannikar was the official representative of his government. What he said and believed would carry considerable weight. And here he was representing one of history's most ruthless dictators as a dreamy, soft, poetic kind of chap.

In October 1950, not long after Mao met Pannikar, China invaded and annexed Tibet. They had long claimed suzerainty over that country, and in the past had often exercised control over it. But there had also been periods when Tibet was genuinely independent, as in the four decades before the communist invasion. Tibet and China, after all, had sent separate, independent delegations to the Asian Relations Conference in 1947.

Nehru was now placed in an unenviable position. India had close relations with Tibet, economic as well as cultural. But a newly free and still vulnerable India could scarcely go to war on Tibet's behalf. Speaking in Parliament a few weeks after the Chinese action, Nehru hoped that the matter would be resolved peacefully. He clarified that he believed that while China had historically exercised some kind of 'suzerainty' over Tibet, this did not amount to 'sovereignty'. He also added that he did not see how Tibet could at all be a 'threat' to China.[64]

Privately, Nehru thought 'the Chinese acted rather foolishly in annexing Tibet. There was 'a strong feeling here [in India] of being let down by them'. Still, thought the prime minister, 'we have to be careful not to overdo' criticisms of a neighbouring country that was also emerging from the shadows of European domination.[65]

Other members of the government urged a stronger line. Vallabhbhai Patel, for instance, was convinced that the Chinese had made a dupe out of Pannikar. They had lulled him into a 'false sense of confidence' which led the ambassador to overlook completely the plans for the invasion. But now that the deed was done, it behoved India to be vigilant. Writing to Nehru on 7 November, Patel warned that 'China is no longer divided. It is united and strong.' 'Recent and bitter history', said the home minister,

> also tells us that communism is no shield against imperialism and that the Communists areas good or as bad imperialists as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam . . . Chinese irredentism and Communist imperialism are different from the expansionism or imperialism of the Western Powers. The former has a cloak of ideology which makes it ten times more dangerous. In the guise of ideological expansion lies concealed racial, national or historical claims.

Patel urged Nehru to be 'alive to the new danger' from China, and to makeIndia 'defensively strong'. He then outlined a series of steps to enhance security. He thought that in view of the 'rebuff over Tibet, India should no longer advocate China's case for entry into the UN. Finally, he argued that the latest developments should prompt afresh reconsideration of 'our relationship with China, Russia, America, Britain and Burma'. Patel seemed here to be hinting that India should reconsider its policy of non-alignment in favour of an alliance with the West.[66]

This latter shift was advocated more vigorously by the journalist D. F. Karaka. Like Patel, Karaka was appalled by Pannikar's carelessness. (Apparently, the ambassador did not hear about the Chinese invasion until it was announced on All-India Radio.) The annexation of Tibet had shown that the Himalaya was no longer impregnable. And the Indian army lacked the equipment or training to take on a determined and focused enemy. Thus, concluded Karaka, 'whatever may be our past unhappy relations with Britain, however much may be our fear of American imperialism spreading in Asia, we have to decide now whether we will continue with this policy of neutrality and endanger our frontiers, or whether we will take the lesser risk and make a military pact with the United States and with Great Britain.'[67]

Nehru would not deign to take notice of journalists such as Karaka. But he did answer Patel, in a

note on the subject circulated to the Cabinet. He thought it a pity that Tibet could not be 'saved'. Yet he considered it 'exceedingly unlikely' that India would now face an attack from China; it was 'inconceivable' that they would 'undertake a wild adventure across the Himalayas'. He thought that 'the idea that communism inevitably means expansion and war, or to put it more precisely, that Chinese communism means inevitably an expansion towards India, is rather naive'. Regardless of the happenings in Tibet, India should still seek 'some kind of understanding' with Beijing, for 'India and China at peace with each other would make a vast difference to the whole set-up and balance of the world'.[68]

A month later Patel died. Now there existed no real opposition to a policy of 'understanding' with China. The two countries shared vast borders – thousand of miles of mostly unmarked and unsurveyed territory. On India's west, the border ran along the Buddhist-dominated district of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir state, which touched the Chinese provinces of Tibet and Sinkiang. On the east, the border was defined by the McMahon Line, drawn on the crest of the Himalaya, as a result of a treaty signed by the British and Tibet in 1914. In the middle, the two countries touched each other near the water shed of the river Ganga, which divided Tibet from the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

The border in the centre was relatively uncontentious, whereas in the two extremes the situation was more problematic. The Chinese regarded the McMahon Line in particular as an imperialist imposition. For the moment they let the matter pass, and focused on getting India's goodwill, necessary at this time as a bridge to the Western world. In the summer of 1952 a government delegation led by Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit visited Beijing. Mrs Pandit had served as India's ambassador to Moscow; more to the point, she was Nehru's adored younger sister. She met Mao once and Chou En-lai twice, and was profoundly impressed by both. Mao, wrote Mrs Pandit to her brother, was 'quiet [and] precise', with a 'great sense of humour . His appearance in public called Gandhi to mind. As with the Mahatma, 'the public doesn't just applaud him, they worship him. There is both love and adoration in the glances of those who look at him. It is moving to see.' As for Chou En-lai, he 'is a great statesman and possesses abundant vitality and charm. He is polished and has a sense of humour which is terribly infectious. One has to join in his laughter – and he laughs often. He makes one feel at home in a moment and his conversation loses nothing in translation.

The letter did strike the odd ambivalent note. 'We have been wined and dined', wrote Mrs Pandit, 'and have spoken of friendship and culture and peace until I am getting alittle tired.' And she wasn't sure whether the Great Helmsman reminded her more of Gandhi or of Stalin. For while 'Mao gives the impression of being kind and tolerant and wise', the 'tolerant part struck me almost as if it might be apose as it is reminiscent of the Russian leaders particularly Stalin. He uses the same gesture in greeting and has the same technique with the public. Still, what stood out was 'the great vitality of the people and the dedicated manner in which they are working. The oppression one feels in Moscow is absent here. Everybody seems happy and determined to make the country prosperous'.[69]

Mrs Pandit seems to have reacted to China in 1952 much as her brother had reacted to Russia in 1927. Perhaps this dawn might not turn out to be a false one after all. So Nehru was inclined to think, too. Soon, romanticism was to be reinforced by realpolitik. The United States began to tilt markedly towards Pakistan, giving New Delhi one more reason to befriend Beijing. In a wide-ranging agreement signed in April 1954, India officially recognized Tibet as being part of China. The joint declaration outlined five principles of peaceful co-existence (*panch sheel*), which included mutual non-aggression and mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity.[70]

One person who did not welcome this agreement was the former secretary general of the Foreign Ministry, Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai. Writing to acolleague, Bajpai warned that communist China was

no ‘different from Russian Communism in its expansionist aims . . .’ The current thinking in New Delhi was of ‘the naturalness of indefinite continuance of indefinite peace and friendship between China and us’. Bajpai feared that ‘those on whom the P[rime] M[inister] now relies most for advice completely and vehemently reject any possibility of a change in what appears to be China’s present policy of peace with its Asian neighbours’.[71]

It is unlikely that this warning reached Nehru, and even if it had he would most likely have disregarded it. Towards the end of 1954 he visited China for the first time. As in Russia six months later, huge crowds were mobilized to greet the visitor, who appreciated this ‘tremendous emotional response from the Chinese people . Nehru had discussions with Chou En-lai about border questions, and with Mao about the world situation. He also pressed the case for Tibetan autonomy, the Chinese assuring him in the Dalai Lama’s presence that the Buddhist state would enjoy a status which ‘no other province enjoyed in the People’s Republic of China’.[72]

On his return from China Nehru addressed a mammoth public meeting on the Calcutta Maidan. A million people heard him affirm that ‘the people of China do not want war’; they were too busy uniting their country and getting rid of poverty. He spoke admiringly of the spirit of unity in China, the absence of the provincial and sectarian interests that bedevilled India. As for the ‘mighty welcome’ he had received in the People’s Republic, this was ‘not because Iam Jawaharlal with any special ability, but because I am the Prime Minister of India for which the Chinese people cherish in their hearts the greatest of love and with which they want to maintain the friendliest of relations’.[73]

Two years later the compliment was returned when Chou En-lai visited India. With him were the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, who had been invited as part of the celebrations of the 2500th birth anniversary of the Buddha. On a drive through the countryside the Dalai Lama escaped his Chinese minders and travelled with Nehru. A revolt was brewing in Tibet against the occupiers, he said; he himself was strongly tempted to seek asylum in India. If that was not possible, at least India could send a consul to Lhasa who was not pro-Chinese or pro-communist. When Nehru asked Chou about the situation in Tibet, the Chinese leader conceded that there had been ‘unfortunate incidents’ there, and promised to look into them.[74]

So there the matter rested. The Dalai Lama went back to Lhasa, and India and China continued to be brothers-in-arms; as the slogan of the time went, *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai*. Themanmost responsible for this was the charming Chou. He impressed Nehru, of course, but also a man more cynical by far, the veteran politician C. Rajagopalachari. ‘Rajaji’ had lunch with the Chinese prime minister and later wrote to a friend that, ‘frankly my impression was very favourable. Apart from the general thawing of all communists the Chinese Premier is I believe agood type of man and trustworthy.[75]

In public India and China expressed undying friendship, buton the ground each was working to protect its strategic interests. India was more concerned with the eastern sector; China with the western one. The British had drawn the McMahon Line to protect the prosperous tea estates of the province of Assam from a putative raid down the Himalaya. There was an ‘Inner Line at the foot of the hills, beyond which no one could venture without a permit. Between this and the border lay some 50,000 square miles of densely forested territory, inhabited by many self-contained and self-administered tribes, each too small to form a separate state, each too remote to be subservient to any existing one. Some of the tribes were Buddhist, and there was also an old Buddhist monastery at Tawang. This paid tribute to Tibetan authorities and was ‘ecclesiastically subject’ to Lhasa.

Under the treaty of 1914, the British persuaded the Tibetans to relinquish control over Tawang. For, as one colonial official argued, it was necessary to get this ‘undoubtedly Tibetan territory’ into British India, ‘as otherwise Tibet and Assam will adjoin each other and, if Tibet should again come

under Chinese control, it will be a dangerous position for us'.[76]

Other tribes living between the Inner and Outer Lines were beyond Tibetan influence. These, like the Buddhists, became Indian citizens by default in August 1947, when the new government inherited the borders bequeathed it by the British. Slowly, New Delhi moved to fill in the administrative vacuum that the British had left behind. In February 1951 a small force accompanied by apolitical officer visited Tawang, and instructed the lamas that they need no longer pay tribute to Lhasa. Officials also began to fan out into what was now called the North-East Frontier Agency, or NEFA. An Indian Frontier Administrative Service (IFAS) was formed, whose recruits were coached on how best to deal with the sometimes truculent tribes by the British-born anthropologist Verrier Elwin, who was now an Indian citizen and a confidant of Nehru.[77]

The Chinese, for their part, focused on expanding their footprint in the western sector. Here, too, the adjoining Indian territory, known as Ladakh, was Buddhist in its religious colouring. However, it had been an independent state as early as the tenth century. And for the past 150 years it had been part of the principality of Kashmir, whose own allegiances were all to the Indian side of the border.

Between north-east Ladakh and Sinkiang, on the Chinese side, lay an elevated table-land named Aksai Chin, 'absolutely bare' for the most part, with occasional patches of 'scant herbage'.[78] In the past, Ladakhi pastoralists had used Aksai Chin for grazing and salt collection. By an agreement of 1842 this area was identified as being part of Kashmir. This was confirmed by the British, who were worried that the Russians, their adversary in the 'Great Game',might use the plateau to advance heavy artillery into British India.

That didn't happen, but after 1950 the Chinese saw in the same flat terrain a route to their troublesome province of Tibet from the Sinkiang town of Yarkand. Peking sent surveyors to scout the land, and in 1956 began buildingaroad across Aksai Chin. By October 1957 the road was ready, equipped to carry 10-ton military trucks with arms and personnel from Yarkand to Lhasa.

We owe this information to accounts published much later. At the time, however, the Chinese activities in the west, and the Indian activities in the east, were carried on out of each other's gaze. To the world at large, and to their own citizens, the two Asian neighbours were bound by an exemplary relationship of friendship and co-operation.

VI

'If there were ever two countries where every prospect promised brotherly understanding and friendship', wrote a Bombay newspaper in January 1952, 'these two are India and Pakistan. Every possible kind of tie exists between them; the tie of race, the ties of language, of geography, economy and culture.[79]

Yet India's relations with Pakistan were poisoned from the start. The country had been divided against a backdrop of violence; and the mutual suspicion and hostility persisted. In the winter of 1949/50 there was a wave of communal riots in East Pakistan. Several hundred thousand Hindus crossed over the border into India. Nehru now suggested to his Pakistani counterpart, Liaqat Ali Khan, that they together visit the affected areas to bring about peace. His offer was declined; but Khan agreed to come to Delhi and sign an agreement binding both countries to the humane treatment of their respective minorities. However, the 'Nehru-Liaqat' pact failed to stem the tide of refugees. There was much anger among Hindus in West Bengal, some of whom even wanted the government to go to war with Pakistan on their behalf.[80]

The two main conflicts, however, were about those elemental human needs, land and water. The first, which this book has already alluded to and to which it will return, related to the unresolved status of Kashmir. The second pertained to the fair use of the Indus and its five main tributaries. These rivers ran from east to west, that is, from India towards Pakistan. The Indus and the Jhelum entered Pakistan before any major extraction was possible, but the other four rivers ran for many miles in Indian territory. This made it possible for India to regulate their flow and impound water before the rivers reached the other country.

After Partition, the governments of East and West Punjab signed a 'Standstill Agreement' whereby water continued to flow uninterrupted. When this lapsed, in April 1948, India stopped the waters of the Ravi and the Sutlej from flowing west. They claimed that no fresh agreement had been signed, but it was widely believed that the action was revenge for the Pakistan-backed invasion of Kashmir. Anyhow, the drying up of their canals created panic among the farmers of West Punjab. Within a month a newagreement was signed, and water supply restored. However, the building of the Bhakra-Nangal dam, on the Indian side of the Sutlej river, prompted fresh protests by Pakistan.

Both sides now sought amore permanent solution to the problem. Pakistan asked for the matter to be referred to international arbitration, which India at first refused. The World Bank stepped in to play the role of peacemaker. Knowing the recalcitrance of both sides, the Bank offered a surgical solution – the waters of three rivers would go to Pakistan, the waters of the other three rivers to India. This proposal was tabled in February 1954; it took another six years for the two sides to finally sign it.[81]

With the Indus, as with Kashmir or any other topic under the subcontinental sun, agreement was made more difficult by domestic politics. An Indian or Pakistani head of government who promoted dialogue was inevitably accused of selling out to the other side. An early example of this was the trade war of 1949–51, prompted by the devaluation of the Indian rupee. Pakistan stopped the shipment of jute in protest; India retaliated by refusing to supplycoal.[82] The conflict was resolved only when, in February 1951, Nehru agreed to recognize the par value of the Pakistani rupee. His decision was welcomed by chambers of commerce, but bitterly opposed by politicians of all stripes. The general consensus in New Delhi was that 'India has been completely defeated'. One Congress member reported that the feeling in the party office was that 'such a humiliation could not have been possible if Sardar Patel were alive'. A refugee leader remarked, 'The real question to be considered now is to find out the next issue on which Jawaharlal will surrender to Pakistan – Kashmir, or more probably Evacuee Property'. A spokesman of the Hindu Mahasabha said, 'In order to become a world leader, Nehru can go to the extent of surrendering the whole of India to Pakistan.' And an RSS organizer claimed, 'This shows what is to come next. More appeasement and surrenders if the masses do not check Nehru.[83]

On the Pakistani side, any concession to India was likewise seen by opposition politicians as appeasement of the enemy. At the popular level, however, the feelings about the other side were distinctly mixed. Nationalist ideology drove them apart; but mass culture brought them back together again. It was not just that they ate the same food and lived in the same kinds of homes. They also had the same sense of fun. Indian filmstars were widely admired in Pakistan; and Pakistani cricketers given arousing reception when they played in India.

This ambivalence is captured in an exchange printed by the Karachi newspaper *Dawn* in 1955. A lady who had recently visited her relatives in India wrote of her experiences while travelling by train from Amritsar to Ambala. When they heard she was from Pakistan, she was set upon by passengers who were refugees from Sindh and West Punjab. Apparently, 'some of the non-refugee

Hindu passengers remonstrated, but the refugee Hindus and Sikhs brushed aside their remonstrance, saying that the non-refugees could not realise the suffering of the refugees from Pakistan'. This account of Indian animosity provoked several letters recounting the warmt hand hospitality on offer on the other side of the border. A man advised any future traveller to India to 'indulge in Amroods and Pans [guavas and betel-leaf] which are at their best these days instead of indulging in such talks as tend to injure the growing Indo-Pak accord'. A woman correspondent complained that such 'mis-statements created bitterness and precluded 'amity between India and Pakistan'. This last ideal was then endorsed by the original letter-writer, with this telling caveat: 'I wish, however, that as a Pakistani, which I suppose she is, she had the delicacy of stating "Pakistan and India" instead of "India and Pakistan".'[84]

VII

Indian foreign policy was opposed to the continuance of colonial rule anywhere. This, naturally, meant reclaiming the pieces of the motherland that were still under the control of foreigners. When the British left in 1947, the Portuguese stayed on in Goa and their other possessions in India while the French remained in control of three slivers of land in the south – most importantly the port of Pondicherry – as well as the eastern enclave of Chandernagore.

In June 1949 the population of Chandernagore voted by an over-whelming majority to merge withIndia. The electionhad witnessed a resounding display of patriotism, with posters representing a mother in Indian dress reaching out to reclaim a child clad in Western apparel. A year later the territory was transferred. But the French hung on to their slices of south India. In the spring of 1954 the situation became 'increasingly tense'; there was a vigorous pro-merger movement afoot in Pondicherry, and daily demonstrations in front of the French consulate in Madras. On 1 November the French finally handed over their territories, which the Indians celebrated with a spectacular display of fireworks. The following January's annual Republic Day parade for the first time featured a float from Pondicherry, with young girls singing French songs.[85]

In welcoming back these fragments, Jawaharlal Nehru praised the governments of both countries for their 'tolerance, good sense and wisdom', thus solving the problem of French India 'with grace and goodwill'.[86] These remarks were intended above all for the Portuguese, who, however, were not listening. They were determined to hang on to Goa for as long as they could. As the transfer of Pondicherry was being finalized, the Portuguese dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar spoke on national radio of their Indian colonies as belonging to 'the Portuguese Nation by injunction of History and force of Law'. 'Goa constitutes a Portuguese community in India', he insisted: 'Goa represents alight of the West in lands of the Orient. It had to be retained, so that it might 'continue to be the memorial of Portuguese discoveries and a small hearth of the spirit of the West in the East'.[87]

A Goa Congress Committee had been in operation since well before Independence; its activists included resident Goans as well as exiles in Bombay. They argued that the conditions in Goa were far worse than in British India; racial prejudice was rife and human rights wholly absent. In 1946 the left-wing Congress politician Rammanohar Lohia visited the territory and exhorted the people to rise against the rulers. A wave of strikes and protests followed; these were crushed by the authorities. On 15 August 1947 the Indian tricolour was hoisted here and there, but the protesters were quickly taken away by the police.[88]

Apart from Goa, the Portuguese also held several smaller territories up the Konkan coast. One

was Daman, which had a garrison of 1,500 African soldiers from Portuguese East Africa. This abutted the Indian province of Bombay, which after Independence had imposed prohibition. There was now a flourishing trade in the smuggling of liquor. On Sunday evenings the frontier between Daman and Bombay was 'strewn with pilgrims to Bacchus, wending their way back to the land where they belong, back to Bharat, land of scarcity and austerity.[89]

Alcoholics apart, most politically conscious Indians were outraged by the Portuguese attitude over their colonies. Nehru at first moved slowly, hoping that the matter would be resolved by dialogue. But his hand was being forced by radicals of the Socialist Party, who began a series of *satyagrahas* to compel Goa to join the union. In July 1954 a group of activists from Bombay seized the tiny enclave of Dadra. The next month the somewhat bigger enclave of Nagar-Haveli also fell without a fight. Then 1,000 volunteers attempted to cross over to Daman on Independence Day. They were stopped by the Indian police, whereupon they wired the prime minister for support. Nehru wired back saying that such a showdown would not 'help our cause'.[90]

The socialists were only temporarily deterred. A year later a group led by N. G. Goray entered Goa shouting slogans. They walked several miles into the territory before being attacked by the police. Several protesters were badly injured. The *satyagrahis* were put in Fort Aguada prison, where they spent twenty months before being released. During these protests in 1954 and 1955, the Portuguese arrested more than 2,000 people.[91]

VIII

For Jawaharlal Nehru, foreign policy was a means of making India's presence felt in the world. After Independence he personally supervised the creation of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), transferring to its cadre able officers of the ICS and making fresh selections from the young. A job in the IFS had a nearly unique combination ofidealism and glamour; it also offered the chance of personal contact with the prime minister. One IFS officer recalled how, early in 1948, Nehru called him to his room and showed him a map of the world. The prime minister's eyes ranged over the globe, and his fingers pointed to places north, south, east and west. 'We will have forty embassies!' he exclaimed. 'We will have forty missions!'[92]

Five years later, when India did have forty missions, Nehru wrote them all a letter of self-congratulation. The 'prestige of India has greatly increased since Independence, he said, for 'we have always avoided playing a flashy role in international affairs . . . Gradually, an appreciation has grown in other countries of our own sincerity of purpose even though there has been disagreement. He asked all those representing India abroad – 'from the Head of the Mission to the humblest employee' – to 'feel and work as ahappy family,cooperating with each other . . .
We are all partners in a great adventure, and are all partners and comrades in the same undertaking.'[93]

Although presented and carried out as a collective enterprise, this particular adventure had 'made by the prime minister' stamped all over it. In 1950, one of his most intelligent and least sycophantic cabinet ministers spoke of how Nehru was becoming 'the biggest man in the world, overtopping the USA men, the UK men and every otherman'. Through its leader, a country 'without material, men or money –the three means of power – was 'now fast coming to be recognized as the biggest moral power in the civilized world . . . her word listened to with respect in the councils of the great'.[94] Even opposition politicians appreciated what Nehru had done for India's international standing. Non-alignment seemed to them to be acreative application of Gandhian principles in world

affairs. Confidence in its viability was strengthened when India was called upon to play an important mediatory role in the conflicts and civil wars of the time.

Intelligent foreigners also praised Nehru's non-alignment. When that now great publishing firm, Feltrinelli of Milan, began operationsin 1955, one of the first two books it published was Nehru's autobiography, which it celebrated both for its 'consistent and coherent anti-fascism' and as an authentic voice of 'the countries that were emerging from colonial domination . . . to take their place forcefully in the global political system'.[95] And from her post in the Swedish embassy in New Delhi, Alva Myrdal wrote to her husband Gunnar of how Nehru was 'naturally playing an authoritative, not to say world-historical role without the slightest tendency to Caesarism. Isn't it true that he is perhaps the only person we have seen reach a high and powerful position without taking on new self-importance?'[96]

Such was Nehru's standing among the people of the front-line states in the Cold War, those who stood between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1955 non-alignment still had a glow and moral halo about it. The next year was the Hungary fiasco, and the beginning of the Western disillusionment with Nehru. It took longer for him to lose the enchanted support of his countrymen.