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Article

Non-Alignment from New Delhi to Korea, 1949-53

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Abstract

Non-alignment was officially born at a conference in Brijuni, Croatia (then Yugoslavia) in 1956 and then formalized in Belgrade in 1961. Yet its origins go back to the independence struggle of Indonesia in 1945-49 and especially to diplomacy around the Korean War in 1950-53. During that conflict, United States unilateralism pushed India, Indonesia and Burma (now Myanmar) into forming an Asian bloc aligned for diplomatic purposes in the goal of peace. The search for peace in turn formalized a bloc of Asian states that would initiate the Bandung Asian-African conference of 1955 and finally the Non-Aligned Movement. This article explores the emergence of non-alignment in the alte 1940s and early 1950s as a conscious rejection of both Cold War alignment, and earlier European concepts of neutralism in favour of an "active and independent" non-aligned diplomacy that would lead to the emergence of a bloc of non-aligned states.

Keywords: non-alignment; neutralism; Korean War; Indonesia; India; Burma; Cold War

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1. Introduction

Historians of non-alignment tend to portray as the inevitable policy of independent Asia and Africa. Indian writers have been especially active in creating this picture, viewing peace and detachment from blocs as inherent in their national character since the Emperor Asoka turned from expansionist warfare to Buddhist non-violence. This picture, however, is essentially an invented tradition (Ranger and Hobsbawm 1984).

The Korean War (1950-53) locked Asia into a new bipolar order. The war also saw the formation of a new group of countries that reacted to bipolarity with an assertive refusal to be imprisoned in one bloc or the other. By the war's end, there was a new cleavage, between Washington and a third group of unaligned states. Importantly, the new non-aligned states rejected comparisons to "neutrality" as practices by Sweden, Switzerland and others. Insetad, they insisted their policy was "independent and active" and expressed it through active diplomacy aimed at affecting, not avoiding, international entanglements.

2. The UN Commission on Korea and South Asian Anti-Communism

The Indian National Congress was almost unique among nationalist movements in the degree of its involvement in foreign affairs. Even its concerns, however, sprang largely from domestic concerns. Its founding meeting in 1885 deplored British India's annexation of Burma (Jansen 1966: 24). Congress' main foreign policy concern was the use of Indian troops abroad. "On account of India," Jawaharlal Nehru declared at the 1927 founding meeting of the League Against Imperialism (Louro et al 2020) in Brussels, "other lands have suffered and suffer still" from British Indian troops: "China, Egypt, Abyssinia, the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria, Tibet, Afghanistan and Burma ... it is a horrifying list" (Jansen 1966: 30).

In 1945, Asian delegates to the founding conference of the United Nations planned an Asian Relations Conference, meant to be the expression of Asia's resurgence. The conference met in New Delhi in 1947. Ostensibly non-governmental, it was hosted by Nehru, soon to be India's prime minister. Nehru (1949: 248-53) stressed that there was no hostile intent towards Europe. That was

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borne out by the proceedings, as one exchange demonstrated. When John Thivy of Malaya "suggested the formation of a neutrality bloc," the idea was rejected by Nehru's sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, U Raschid of Burma and others (Jansen 1966: 57-61).

Perhaps the most widely cited statement of India's non-alignment is Nehru's 1946 broadcast on foreign policy (Nehru 1949: 2). "We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale," he said. This declaration was followed up with numerous references to the need to stay out of blocs, but the context for these speeches was almost always pressure to align with the Soviet Union, exerted by leftist opposition parties. The context matched precisely that faced by Mohammad Hatta, who declared in 1948 that Indonesia would not align with the USSR, but instead "navigate between two reefs" (Hatta 1972).

Without joining American-sponsored military blocs, India nevertheless served American interests. "When I say we should not align ourselves with any power blocs, obviously it does not mean that we should not be closer in our relations with some countries than with others," Nehru (1949: 47) declared. His stance on blocs, in fact, was the same as US Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who agreed with him that the "time was not ripe for a pact corresponding to the North Atlantic Treaty, owing to [internal Asian] conflicts." Both India and the U.S. thus rejected Philippine efforts to set up a Pacific Pact based on NATO.

India was an active participant in US efforts to build up South Korea as an anti-Communist bastion, lending strong support when Washington referred the Korean problem to the 1947 United Nations General Assembly. Ukrainian ambassador Dmitry Manuilsky accused India of creating "a new hotbed of discord, which will be fraught with grave consequences. Remember that!" (Gupta 1988: 71). "What is your interest in Korea and Greece?" Manuilsky asked Indian delegation leader Pandit. "To us these are vital areas for our defence. Why should India interest herself against our interest in these matters?" (Panikkar 1955: 10). Clearly, Soviet delegates saw India as an adversary, not a non-aligned state.

India interested herself greatly, however. Its ambassador to China, K.P.S. Menon (not to be confused with Krishna Menon), was chosen to chair the UN Temporary Commission on Korea. He "referred to the need for preserving Korean unity and said, 'What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder'" (Menon 1965: 252-254). UNTCOK duly gave its seal of approval to hold elections in South Korea only. The General Assembly then resolved that the Republic of [South] Korea was a lawful government.

India was increasingly suspicious of Communism in 1947 and 1948, moving in parallel with Burma and Indonesia on this score. Moscow condemned Nehru, U Nu and Sukarno as imperialist lackeys. At the same time, and much more significantly, Communist parties moved to oppose all three governments. In 1949, several states banned the Communist Party of India (CPI) (Singh 1979: 160).

The CPI was probably not a great threat. Nor, as it turned out, was the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) able to pose a strong challenge to a Sukarno-Hatta government fighting for survival in the face of Dutch attacks, although its challenge to Hatta's foreign policy prompted Indonesia's first declaration of non-alignment. The Sukarno-Hatta government then smashed a Communist uprising in 1948. Similarly, Burma's normally mild prime minister U Nu, who later prayed over Stalin's corpse to instill merit and spent a happy day at Bandung releasing trapped insects from carnivorous plants at botanical garden, blamed Moscow for Communist Party of Burma (CPB) uprisings. "Mother-fornicating Russians! They give the order and our miserable Communists obey. Our Communists think Stalin loves them" (Nu 1974: 141). Nu's declaration of non-alignment came in response to CPB calls for an alliance with Russia (Nu 1949: 117). In short, all three countries issued statements of non-alignment in the context of communist-led calls to align with Moscow. Non-alignment in such a context meant in essence a policy of friendly relations with the West.

India joined with Britain, Australia, Pakistan and Ceylon to send financial aid to Burma, adding military aid that Nu (1975: 227) believed saved his government from disaster. The Commonwealth now presented itself as a possible means of collective security. At the October 1948 Commonwealth prime ministers' summit, the three Asian members supported NATO and asked for "close

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consultation in defence matters" (Reid 1981: 17). A year later, Nehru's speech to the Canadian parliament declared "we are all partners in the same great undertaking" (Nehru 1949: 583; Gopal 1980: 369-70). Close ties to the Commonwealth, especially in the defence realm, appeared to some as the negation of independence. Certainly they appeared this way to the Soviet Union. When Ceylon's independence was accompanied by a defence pact with Britain, for instance, Moscow vetoed its application for UN membership on the grounds that there was no proof that Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) was truly independent.

Closer Indian ties with the Commonwealth also meant closer ties to the United States. In April 1949 Nehru promised equal treatment of Indian and foreign businesses, with no restriction on repatriation of profits (Heimsath and Mansingh 1971: 369). This echoed Indonesian declarations of openness to foreign investment and a "right to export" to the West.

After the "loss of China" to communism in 1949, many Americans shifted their hopes to India. *Time* magazine called India "a new anchor in Asia" (Brands 1989: 28). Nehru (1949: 591) won applause when he told a joint session of Congress: "Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot and shall not be neutral." He even told the American ambassador to the UN that "India has lost all faith in Russia and in the dependability of Russia's words" (FRUS 1949, 6: 1752-1756).

China's Mao Zedong, as much as Stalin, viewed Nehru as an imperialist stooge. "I firmly believe that relying on the brave Communist Party of India and the unity and struggle of all Indian patriots India will certainly not remain long under the yoke of imperialism and its collaborators," he wrote to the CPI in October 1949 (Heimsath and Mansingh 1971: 186). The solution, in the minds of Nehru and U Nu, was to bring China into the international system, in the hopes of reducing its dependence on the Soviet Union. Thus Burma was the first non-Communist country to recognize the People's Republic; India and Pakistan followed soon afterwards. Still, Nehru was becoming more and more pro-West. One American account of his 1950 Southeast Asian tour reported that "the theme of his speeches was a strong attack against Communism instead of the continued existence of European colonialism in Asia which it might so well have been.... In speaking so frankly Nehru served our purposes admirably" (FRUS 1950, 5: 1446-1448).

3. The Indonesian Revolution

The new cleavage can also be seen as one between two world views, one bipolar vision and another, spelled out in 1955 at the famous Bandung Asian-African conference, of an "area of peace" standing apart from both blocs (Acharya and Tan 2019; Brands 1989; Indonesia 1955; Kahin 1955; Lee 2019; Romulo 1956; Wright 1956). The war in Korea created the pre-conditions for Bandung. This paper will concentrate on the Korean War diplomacy of India, Burma and Indonesia, three states that formed "the hard core of the 'area of peace,'" (Ton 1963: 88) and "the core of Asian neutralism" (Chang 1960: 57). Yet in 1949, all three appeared poised to follow policies broadly sympathetic to the Western powers in the cold war. It is the course of events in 1949-53 that set each of them on the path to non-alignment.

The Korean war provided the context for non-alignment to emerge. Non-alignment "came with Korea," according to controversial Indian diplomat and politician V.K. Krishna Menon (Brecher 1968: 9). Burma followed a similar trajectory. Indonesia saw the Asian middle powers' efforts to find a compromise peace in Korea as the realization of its "active and independent" foreign policy (Hatta 1953: 444-445).

After India's independence, Nehru considered that colonialism was essentially over. India had been the keystone in the imperial arch, and its freedom meant European empires all over Asia would collapse. "The old imperialisms are fading away," Nehru said at the Asian Relations Conference in 1948. He was more upset still when the Netherlands attempted to recolonize Indonesia after the Second World and the 1945 declaration of Indonesian independence. India had been interested in Indonesia ever since the use of Indian troops against Indonesian nationalists in the Battle of Surabaya in 1945, the defining event of the early Indonesian revolution. India's new legislature censured the colonial government of India over this use of troops (Thien 89). Ceylon, India and Pakistan all banned

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Dutch flights to Indonesia over their airspace. Ceylon's ban was its first foreign policy action as an independent government (Nissanka 1984: 117).

The biggest tragedy of the Dutch in Indonesia, according to Nehru (1949: 48), was its destructive effects on European-Asian relations. His response was to organize the New Delhi Conference on Indonesia in January 1949, where 20 governments gathered to form an action plan in support of Indonesian independence. Nehru in his opening speech cited two main problems. First, "the freedom of a sister country of ours has been imperiled and a dying colonialism of the past has raised its head again." Second, resolutions by the UN had "been flouted, and its expressed will set at naught" (Nehru 1949: 407-411). Most of the speeches breathed equal outrage at Dutch actions. "Those of us," said Ceylon delegate Solomon Bandaranaike, "who believe in the democratic way of life and who wish therefore to establish close and friendly relations with other democratic countries, particularly of the West, — I should like to say and quite frankly, — have suffered a grievous disappointment" (Poplai 1959: 660-681).

The question raised at the conference, apart from support for Indonesia, was whether to form an Asian bloc. General Carlos Romulo of the Philippines saw the gathering as meeting "to strengthen the forces of democracy, to prevent other ideologies from capturing the faith of Asia by default," and producing "an Asian front against Communism" (Jansen 95). Moscow worried along the same lines. According to *Pravda*, the conference's goal was "to create an anti-Communist bloc, which will serve as an instrument of an imperialist war against the USSR, against the new democracy of China and the freedom of Asiatic peoples" (Gupta 119).

The New Delhi Conference on Indonesia did not set up a bloc. It acted only when great power efforts seemed insufficient, and only moderate action through UN channels was suggested. However, the framework was in place for joint Asian action under Indian leadership. When great power action seemed to be failing again in Korea, this framework began to be activated.

4. The UN's Korean War, June-August 1950

Asian states, by and large, were one with the West in their reaction to reports of a North Korean attack across the 38th parallel on 25 June, 1950. They saw it as a clear case of aggression that had to be halted by UN action. Burma, concerned over its own survival as a small nation on China's borders, saw itself in South Korea's place. U Nu told parliament "the United Nations was pledged to suppress aggression wherever it occurred and if Burma did not support it now, other member nations might take little interest in Burma, if she was ever faced with a similar situation" (Singh 1979: 165).

When the Security Council resolution for aid to the South Korean government, India and Egypt abstained, pleading lack of instructions from their governments. The Indian government consulted Burma and Indonesia and then accepted the Security Council call. India contributed a medical unit, the same support given by Scandinavian countries. It also gave in-kind donations valued at $169,000. Indonesia would later pledge $100,000 in cash and Burma $49,934 (YUN 1950: 227; YUN 1953: 216-217).

Few in India disagreed. A furious Krishna Menon was the main exception, offering his resignation as high commissioner in London (Gupta 1987: 107). He saw Korea as a civil war: "In my view neither North Korea nor South Korea committed 'aggression'; as Korea was one country they were 'aggressing' into each other" (Brecher 1968: 34). But India's parliament passed a unanimous resolution of support for UN resolutions in August 1950 (Stueck 1995: 80). American reaction was jubilant. "India's decision to accept the UN resolution calling for military support to South Korea will be received throughout the democratic world with profound satisfaction," the *New York Times* wrote in an editorial. "One can almost say it puts the finishing touch to the bulwark that the Free World is erecting against the North Korean aggression" (Appadorai and Rajan 1985: 225).

5. China and Nehru's First Mediation Effort, July 1950

Nehru's China policy and hopes for peace caused the first crack in the facade of Asian-Western unity. On 7 July 1950, Nehru wrote to Stalin and Acheson appealing for a peace deal based on letting Communist China take its seat in the UN in order to "localize the conflict." The letter came as result of consultations in Beijing between Indian Ambassador Sardar Panikkar and Chinese foreign minister

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Zhou Enlai, and was sent on Nehru's personal initiative without reference to the rest of the cabinet or to the foreign ministry (Panikkar 1968: 104; Gupta 1987: 107). It inspired some pro-Western dissent, with deputy prime minister Sardar Patel promising Henderson that India would be "on the side of the free countries" in event of Korea becoming general war (Brands 1989: 44).

Panikkar and Nehru were worried that war might spread to China, given American actions with regard to Taiwan (Foot 1985: 64). Panikkar (1968: 103) worried that :the United States had willy-nilly as a result of the Korean incident stepped directly into the Chinese civil war."

Stalin, unsurprisingly, embraced Nehru's peace initiative. Indeed, the Soviet-Indian exchange of letters was published on front pages of Pravda and Izvestia on 18 July 1950 (Gupta 1988: 176). But U.S. secretary of state Dean Acheson sent a harsh rebuff (Vasudevan 1996: 27-28). Nehru was consistent in seeing the admission of the People's Republic to UN as step towards peace. He compared the UN failure to seat China to the attitude that doomed the League of Nations (Nehru 1949: 169). "I am convinced in my mind," he told parliament in 1954, "that there would have been no Korean war if the People's Government of China had been in the United Nations — it is only guess work — because people could have dealt with each other across a table" (Reddy and Damadoran 1990: 68). Indian opinion saw Communist China as the expression of Chinese nationalism, rather than an existential challenge (Bhattacharya 1952: 233). Korea policy in New Delhi and Washington, as well as Commonwealth capitals, ran along parallel lines. All agreed that aggression had taken place, that it had to be stopped, and that the UN was the right arena. Fissures were beginning to appear, however, over policy towards China.

6. Taking the War North: Parallel Paths Diverge, August-October 1950

If the goal of the UN was to repel a North Korean attack, then American armies should presumably have stopped on reaching the 38th parallel, task accomplished. They did not, preferring to press their advantage and win a total victory. Indian policy did not reject the reunification of Korea, but it did reject the use of force to accomplish the goal. Days after the Incheon landing, India was warning the United States not to cross the parallel for fear of provoking China (FRUS 1950. 5: 763, 791). Indian UN delegate Benegal Rau argued that crossing the parallel would hurt UN prestige and allow UN forces to stay in the North for long period. His proposal was for a committee of the temporary members of the Security Council to come together and examine all resolutions on Korea in the hopes of bringing them together, with private assurances given to the West that this would be on the basis of existing UN resolutions (FRUS 1950, 5: 590-592). Rau's proposal was rejected in favour of a U.S. resolution creating the UN Commission for the Unification and Reconstruction of Korea. Indonesia joined India and five others in abstention. This was by no means defection (the abstainers joined the majority in a 55-5 vote to renew the UNCOK mandate) but did show signs of divergence (YUN 1950: 264, 266).

The next American step was the Uniting for Peace resolution, designed to over-ride the Soviet Security Council veto by devolving some security powers to the General Assembly. Here, again, India was concerned over the implications. Nehru said it "seemed like converting the UN into a larger edition of the Atlantic Pact and making it a war organization more than one devoted to international peace" (Heimsath and Mansingh 1971: 69). But Burma was an enthusiastic supporter. "A small weak nation like ours ... can never successfully defend ourselves, alone," U Nu told parliament, adding that UN action in Koea provided "great hope, the only hope for small nations like us" (Johnstone 1963: 213). Burma was included in the Collective Measures Committee established by Uniting for Peace, and always voted to renew the committee's mandate.

In their own different ways, both India and Burma were worried about China. Their policy outcomes diverged. A warlike China was India's greatest nightmare. Never was this truer than October 1950, when the People's Liberation Army crossed the frontier into Tibet, British India's vital buffer state. "At the present time when the international situation is so delicate, any move that is likely to be interpreted as a disturbance of peace may prejudice the position of China in the eyes of the world," India warned in a diplomatic note (Gupta 1987: 131). When Chinese troops moved regardless, India sent another note with a strong protest, but China rejected this as unwarranted interference inspired by its enemies (Gupta 1987: 133-134). In November, Bajpai noted his alarm over

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Chinese saber-rattling against Nepal, which like Tibet had owed suzerainty to the Qing empire (FRUS 130, 7: 1094).

The solution to Chinese advances, in Nehru's mind, was an "area of peace," achieved by agreement with China in 1954. The search for a "peace area" became the basis of India's foreign policy and the expression of its heretofore hit-and-miss peacemaking, Krishna Menon called the peace area "materially speaking, a weak man's policy" (Brecher 1984: 8). The peace area was not just a buffer zone to replace India's lost Himalayan buffer, but reached out to try to reconcile opposing great powers, like the United States and China. The problem with the peace area, from the American perspective, was that it could also be viewed as a defection of a bloc of Asian powers from the "free world." India's search for security was leading it further from the American world order.

7. Formation of the Asian Bloc and the Aggressor Resolution, December 1950-January 1951

With Chinese troops pushing south in Korea, the United States moved to have China branded as an aggressor at the UN. This was the antithesis of Indian hopes for peace. India consequently sought to gather the Asian powers, pooling their efforts for the first time. The result was a tentative plan for a cease-fire to be followed by a political conference on Far Eastern issues. Benegal Rau argued that China did not want a war, and "would welcome a spell of peace" (YUN 1950: 248). The cease-fire motion was very attractive to Commonwealth and European states, so the United States agreed to support it, as Acheson said, "in the fervent hope and belief that the Chinese would reject it (as they did) and that our allies would then return (as they did) to comparative sanity and join us in censuring the Chinese as aggressors" (Gupta 1988: 196).

The Asian bloc gained credibility in the West by issuing a united appeal to China not to cross the 38th parallel. Rau noted that the appeal, "which was direct and sincere, had a powerful effect on public opinion here and elsewhere, and it gave the first indication to a distracted world that the countries of Asia had taken the initiative — as they would be immediately concerned — to prevent the outbreak of hostilities in the East, which might ultimately envelop the entire world" (Jansen 1966: 106). But China was no more willing to halt its advance than the United States had been. "So far as the 38th parallel is concerned," Zhou told Panikkar (1966: 118), "it is we, China and India, who wanted to uphold it. But [UN comamnder General Douglas] MacArthur has demolished it and it exists no longer."

The cease-fire resolution passed 54-5 (the Soviet bloc) with one abstention (Taiwan). It set up a three-man group of General Assembly president Entezam of Iran, Rau himself, and Canadian foreign minister Lester Pearson. These last two and their governments engaged in a flurry of lobbying: the Indians in Beijing and the Canadians in Washington. The cease-fire group failed to make any inroads with a Chinese delegation, so it presented a unilateral proposal for a cease-fire, the staged withdrawal of foreign troops and a political conference of the five great powers. China countered with a suggestion to negotiate troop withdrawals from Korea and Taiwan, seat the People's Republic at the UN and add India and Egypt to the conference roster. "I do not consider this reply to be outright rejection," Nehru wrote to Canadian prime minister Louis St. Laurent. "It is partly acceptance, partly request for elucidation, partly counter-proposal, and it leaves room for further negotiations" (DCER 1951: 60). The final result of the back-and-forth was an Asian group resolution for a 7-power conference to make arrangements for a political settlement, with a cease-fire as the first item (YUN 1951: 216). However, this resolution was passed over in favour of the American draft to brand China an aggressor, causing a major breach in US-India relations (FRUS 1951, 7: 140-142). Indonesia's UN ambassador L.N. Palar also declined to condemn China, argiung "we sh[ou]ld not get into a second failure" (FRUS 1951, 7: 43-44).

Nehru believed he had an implicit deal with the Canadians to restrain the United States while India restrained China (DCER 1951: 60-61). This was broken when Canada announced it would abstain on the Asian draft which it had helped to write, and support the Aggressor resolution. The Aggressor resolution passed 44-7 with nine abstentions. India and Burma joined the Soviet bloc in opposition, while most of the other Asians abstained. An upset Rau went on record that "when the world was marching, in our view, toward disaster we — most of the Asian powers — did all we

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could to halt that march." Rau blamed the Commonwealth and European delegations for the debacle, saynig "United States pressure was too great for them, and they were unable to act independently and according to their own better judgment. (Jensen 1966: 107).

An unidentified Indian cabinet minister complained that Commonwealth leaders had "flattered [Nehru] into believing he was only living statesman who could carry banner for those seeking world peace," but then surendered to US pressure (FRUS 1951, 7: 2091-2092). An Indian diplomat admitted to "a feeling in this part of the world that the growing issue is one of Asia against the rest, or the East versus the West" (Stuceck 1995: 163). Clearly, peacemaking had led to bitterness.

The failure of the peacemaking effort of December 1950 and January 1951 marked the first unified Asian action at the UN, and the end of India's tendency to rely first and foremost on the Commonwealth bond. India's closest intimacy would now be with its neutralist neighbours. Nehru proclaimed that "the two countries closest to India in policy were Burma and Indonesia. They are far closer than our Commonwealth link" (Singh 1979: 180). Despite denials of a bloc, India also began training Indonesian army officers in 1951 and pilots in 1953 (when over 3,000 pilots trained in India), with joint naval exercises following in 1958 (Heimsath and Mansingh 1971: 233).

8. Additional Measures: Asian Economic Dependence and the Embargo on China, May 1951

Ironically, Asian neutrals saw their power enhanced by the Korean War export boom, which sent raw material prices soaring. World trade rose 12% in 1950, while raw material prices rose 84.8%. The price spiral slowed in 1951 as the U.S. decided to ease off on strategic stockpiling, and prices started falling in 1953. India became the world's top textile exporter (Karunakaran 204-209). Burma's rice sales sent its trade balance soaring (Johnstone 1963: 61). The boom, however, came within a U.S.-centred world trading system, in which Asian states were highly dependent on American and European markets. Aid to India in 1951-54 came almost exclusively from the U.S. and Commonwealth. The U.S. supplied 70% and Canada 23% of grants, while investments remained dominated by Britain (Karunakaran 231).

In this context, the limits of Asian independence were demonstrated by the next U.S. move against China, a resolution calling for a trade embargo. The resolution that branded China as an aggressor also authorized the Collective Measures Committee to meet as a re-named Additional Measures Committee, which went on to recommend an embargo against China and North Korea on "arms, ammunition and implements of war, atomic energy materials, petroleum, transportation materials of strategic value, and items useful in the production of arms, ammunition and implements of war" (YUN 1951: 227). Burma declined to take its seat on the Additional Measures Committee, and eight countries including India, Burma, Indonesia and Pakistan abstained, but none were willing to oppose the motion.

The country that stood to be hurt the most was probably Indonesia, which depended heavily on exports of rubber, a material seen as strategic by American planners. The Indonesian chargé d'affaires in Beijing noted that China could find its own rubber, but an embargo would send prices down and hurt Indonesia's economy (Panikkar 1955: 140). Indonesian ambassador Palar argued that "the implementation of a General Assembly resolution for recourse to collective measures might create a situation liable to develop into world war and to precipitate the very thing that the United Nations was intended to avoid" (Appadorai and Rajan 1985: 475). None of this cut any ice with the State department, which told Indonesian ambassador Ali Sastroamidjojo on 9 May 1951: "If Indonesia does in fact sell these materials to the People's Republic of China, it will mean that Indonesia has moved away from its independent policy and will be considered by the United States to have chosen the Soviet bloc" (Ali 1979: 231). A more tempered U.S. diplomat simply noted that there had been an "abrupt reversal in the Indonesian position" for trade reasons (FRUS 1951, 6: 650).

The U.S. was equally tough on Ceylon, still barred from the UN by the Soviet veto. Ceylon had been selling rubber to China at above market price, and the U.S. refused to take China's place in the arrangement. In September 1952 Ceylon sent a trade mission to China, agreeing on a rubber for rice swap. "The deal was one of sheer economic necessity," wrote John Kotelawala, then a cabinet minister in the conservative United National Party government, "and the alternative to it would have

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been just plain starvation for Ceylon" (Kotelawala 1956: 138). The American response was to suspend aid (Mendis 1983: 395).

All of this may have achieved adherence to the embargo, and showed Asian states their economic dependence. However, it also spurred resentment of the heavy-handed Americans, who were not only spoiling the strategy of controlling China through engagement and peace area notions, but also wreaking havoc on Asian economies that were becoming more and more vulnerable as the export boom faded.

9. The Japanese Peace Treaty & Rejection of the New Asian Security Order, 1951

American policy for eastern Asia had come more and more to rely on rebuilding Japan, both economically and as a military bastion. Washington was not bothered that its proposed Japan peace treaty was denounced by Moscow and Beijing, but the criticism leveled by India provoked fury. Washington signed mutual security treaties with Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines to obtain their agreement, and added reparations to increase Asian support. India's objections were more basic. It disagreed with the exclusion of the USSR and China, and to the way the treaty was being imposed. India declined to attend the treaty signing conference. Burma joined the boycott.

What rankled the most was that Indian rejection came just after approval of $200 million loan to buy wheat approved by Congress. The *New York Times* editorialized that "Nehru is fast becoming one of the great disappointments of the postwar era" (Brands 1989: 69-70). Secretary of State John Foster Dulles said India "seemed to align itself with the Chinese Communist line, which is that there cannot be 'Asia for the Asiatics' unless all Westerners are rooted out of Asia" (Gupta 1988: 219).

Indonesia, on the other hand, proved helpful. The Indonesian cabinet, split between two main parties with opposing views on the treaty question, decided to attend the conference and seek amendments, using hesitancy in cabinet as a bargaining chip to extract futher reparations from Japan. The Indonesian cabinet collapsed soon afterwards, however. The treaty was never ratified by parliament, and future Indonesian governments would no longer be viewed as U.S. clients. The new Japan-centred regional order, then, indirectly sent Indonesia into the camp of Asian dissenters led by India.

10. The Indian Resolution on POWs and Third Area Assertion, 1952

In 1952, the General Assembly met amidst armistice negotiations in Korea which had bogged down over a single question: the repatriation of Chinese and North Korean prisoners of war. The session marked increasing assertion by Asian governments, who seemed to reason that if the superpowers were unable to find common ground, it was up to small powers. Outgoing General Assembly president Luis Padilla Nervo of Mexico called for "small and medium sized powers" to work for US-USSR rapprochement, adding that the General Assembly had "an inescapable obligation to make one more attempt" to end Korean War (Stueck 1995: 292).

By this point, India and others had made the break with the United States. On a Soviet motion to invite North as well as South Korea, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Burma voted on the Soviet side for the first time (YUN 1952: 180). When 21 powers (more than a third of the UN membership) backed the U.S. negotiating position, India's Krishna Menon countered with a draft of his own, backed by the now-solid Asian bloc, which sought to compromise by releasing prisoners to a neutral body. "I think the Americans found I had broken the unity of the Western group," Krishna Menon recalled. "They said so. They thought I was a vicious Machiavellian person" (Brecher 1968: 38). The unity of the West was preserved when the USSR denounced the Indian resolution. The United States now accepted it, and it passed with the support of all UN members except the 5-member Soviet bloc.

Krishna Menon preferred to work through the Commonwealth rather than the Asian group. The fact that Asian votes could be taken very much for granted by Krishna Menon was perhaps the clearest evidence that an Asian voting bloc had emerged. The Commonwealth, for its part, seemed more interested in winning India for the West than anything else. British foreign minister Anthony Eden argued for support for the Indian plan since it "represented the beginning of an alignment of Asian opinion ... on the side of the free world" (Bailey 122). Canadian prime minister St. Laurent saw

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the lopsided vote of support as "an encouraging demonstration of the strength and solidarity of democratic feeling throughout the world" (Lee 1995: 169).

Commonwealth leaders were practicing wishful thinking, however. India had managed, for the first time, to head off a resolution wanted by the United States. The Korean War signaled India's arrival as a different type of power. India was the only country trusted enough by both sides to chair the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission. In the words of one authority: "As a result of Korean War diplomacy, the essentially negative and passive character of non-alignment was altered. India proved its ability to assume the role of mediator and impartial arbitrator, and no further demonstrations of its unique posture were needed to establish in fact what Nehru had been proclaiming in theory" (Heimsath and and Mansingh 1971: 60).

11. Worlds Apart: Colombo and Geneva, 1954

After much jockeying and despite the support of a majority of the UN, India was not invited to the Geneva conference of 1954. Nor were any of the other neutrals suggested by the Chinese (Indonesia, Burma and Pakistan). India's exclusion, however, aroused much bitterness. Krishna Menon told Canadian high commissioner Escott Reid (1981: 52) that the Americans were as bad as the Russians, with Canada not much better.

The Asian non-aligned states' fears that Indochina would go the way of Korea led to the Colombo conference of Ceylon, India, Pakistan, Burma and Indonesia, held in 1954 at the same time as Geneva. Part of the motivation was resentment over Asia's exclusion from Geneva conferences on Asia. "The Colombo Conference was going to demonstrate to the world that the people of Asia know what was good for them," said the staunch anti-Communist prime minister Kotelawala (1956: 119) of Ceylon. India and its neighbours wanted to extend the peace area just defined by the Panchsheel doctrine of co-existence with China, and keep both China and the US out. While "free Asia" set itself on the road to Bandung, the West was constructing a enw Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), the negation of the peace area concept.

This divergence had always been a possibility, but was never inevitable. It happened gradually, against the background of Korean War diplomacy and the battle between India and the United States over how to treat China. Without the war in Korea, India and the United States would most likely have continued to follow parallel paths, and the origins of non-alignment might have been very different.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

FRUS	*Foreign Relations of the United States*
YUN	*Yearbook of the United Nations*
TLA	Three letter acronym
LD	Linear dichroism

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