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OCCASIONAL PAPER**

HISTORY AND SOCIETY

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77

**Distant Countries, Closest Allies:
Josip Broz Tito and Jawaharlal Nehru and
the rise of global nonalignment**

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**Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
2015**

NMML Occasional Paper



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Published by

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
Teen Murti House
New Delhi-110011

e-mail : ddnehrumemorial@gmail.com

ISBN : 978-93-83650-82-8

Price Rs. 100/-; US \$ 10

Page setting & Printed by : A.D. Print Studio, 1749 B/6, Govind Puri
Extn. Kalkaji, New Delhi - 110019. E-mail : studio.adprint@gmail.com

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Distant Countries, Closest Allies: Josip Broz Tito and Jawaharlal Nehru and the rise of global nonalignment*

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Introduction

In November 1956, during the Hungarian and Suez Crises, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made the following statement in front of the parliament: "Yugoslavia is a country with which we exchange our appraisals of the world situation more frequently than with any other country. We attach great value to this in regard to Europe."¹ In these words, India's paramount leader for the first 17 years since independence depicted the essence of the rapidly evolving "strategic partnership" between India and Yugoslavia during the tumultuous Cold War years.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, India, a rising Asian great power, and Yugoslavia, a communist renegade with rapidly expanding Third World ties, constituted, together with Nasser's Egypt, the core of the emerging global nonalignment.

What first comes to our mind is the question: what kind of political or ideological bonds had brought together two totally unrelated regimes on two different sides of the globe? What had a big Asian nation and a small Balkan country found in common

* Lecture delivered at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 16 May 2013.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946–April 1961* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2004, p. 581).

to become a founding principle of this comprehensive relationship? Two distant countries, separated not only by geographical or historical, but also political and social differences, and both acting under particular conditions of the global Cold War confrontation, had managed to bridge the gap of many divisions and construct a stable political relationship that was one of the most dynamic ones in the post-1945 history.

Their nonaligned foreign policy was marked by the outright rejection of any bloc divisions and power politics in world affairs that encroached on the independence of small nations and equally threatened world peace and international stability. Any association with the two existing camps meant for these countries the obvious denial of their sovereign rights and direct threat to their independent internal and foreign policies by any of the Great Powers. Nevertheless, the issue of Indo–Yugoslav relations drew a lot of attention during the Cold War years, but until today we only have one international study that basically deals with this research topic and it was published more than 40 years ago.²

This article is primarily based on the newly declassified documents coming from the major Yugoslav/Serbian archives (Serbian Foreign Ministry Archives and Archives of Yugoslavia where Tito's personal archive and the archives of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia [LCY] are kept), and also on documents obtained at the National Archives of India (Ministry of External Affairs), Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Subimal Dutt, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, and other collections), Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives, as well as on some Soviet/Russian and U.S. archival materials.

Using all these newly available sources this study will try to reconstruct the evolution of the Indo–Yugoslav strategic partnership during the 1950s and early 1960s, thus putting this relationship in the context of the evolving personal relationship

² Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

between Josip Broz Tito and Jawaharlal Nehru. Yugoslavia and India, indeed, deeply shared the same principles of peaceful co-existence and nonalignment that made them fully recognizable in Cold War politics. This was one of the closest and most sincere friendship the leaders of both countries ever had, including the later political relationship between Tito and Nehru's daughter and heir Indira Gandhi.

Between Ideology and Real Politik

When the Cold War started, Yugoslavia and India found themselves on the opposite sides of the global confrontation between the major powers of the East and the West. After independence India undertook a completely different political course from the rest of the divided world, loudly proclaiming its neutrality and opposition to the dominant blocs, thus dubbing this foreign policy strategy as nonalignment.³ On the other hand, at first Yugoslavia was one of Stalin's closest allies in Europe, but after the eruption of the conflict with Moscow in 1948 Tito had become the very first heretic of the communist world. Nevertheless, during those early years Yugoslavia basically shared the concepts and the bias of the Soviet propaganda that often portrayed people like Nehru and Burmese prime minister U Nu as reactionary politicians and imperialist puppets, while the only forces in Asia that deserved the full backing of the socialist camp were local communist parties.⁴

A completely new international situation was needed for Yugoslavia to ultimately rediscover the importance of countries like India and Burma in international affairs. With time, couple of crucial factors would keep this relationship moving forward: Yugoslavia's close political and military relations with Burma would trigger India's invitation for Tito's first visit. Normalization of relations between Yugoslavia and India with the USSR

³ J. Bandyopadhyaya, "Nehru and Nonalignment", in B.R. Nanda, *Indian Foreign Policy: Nehru Years*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1990, pp. 170–183.

⁴ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, op. cit., pp. 26–27.

alongwith threat of China became new points of convergence of interests. Particularly Yugoslavia's growing influence and prestige among Third World nations finally brought the two countries closer together.

According to recently declassified documents, in those early years Yugoslavia played a very controversial role in India that was, most probably, very closely coordinated with Moscow. After the secret Yugoslav diplomatic recognition of Jiang Jieshi's Republic of China in June 1947 (with the full knowledge and support from Moscow) and the subsequent visit by Chinese and Indian communists to Yugoslavia in July that same year, leadership in Belgrade consciously decided to deeply involve itself with the intricacies of Asian politics.⁵ In order to get some people to China for a meeting with Mao Zedong, two high-profile Yugoslav officials, Vladimir Dedijer and Radovan Zogović, both in charge of the propaganda section of the Central Committee Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CC CPY), decided to undertake a round trip and enter China through India and Burma.

At the same time, the Communist Party of India (CPI) held its Second Party Congress in Calcutta and its General Secretary Manohar Joshi invited Yugoslav delegates to join them on this occasion.⁶ Both Dedijer and Zogović participated in the working sessions of the CPI Congress in late February 1948. However, any hope to finally get to China through Burma had been totally abandoned. Both Yugoslav officials were forced to return home immediately.⁷ Nevertheless, there were some authors in the West who pointed out that these two envoys, besides demonstrating a militant approach regarding the social problems in Asian

⁵ Jovan Čavoški, "Overstepping the Balkan Boundaries: The Lesser Known History of Yugoslavia's Early Relations with Asian Countries", *Cold War History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (2011).

⁶ Archives of Yugoslavia (AJ), CC LCY (CK SKJ), 507/IX, 42/I-7, "Letter from Joshi, the General Secretary of the CPI inviting Yugoslav representatives to attend the Second CPI Congress", February 22–28, 1948.

⁷ Vladimir Dedijer, *Izgubljena bitka Josifa Visarionoviča Staljina*, Rijeka: Liburnija, 1982, pp. 20–21, 39.

countries, left for Burma afterwards in order to foment revolution there.⁸ However, this was not the fact, as we now know from the *recently declassified documents*.

On the other hand, the above mentioned activity of Yugoslavia's party officials regarding China, India, and partially Burma was in accordance with the Soviet strategy towards these newly liberated nations during the early Cold War years. In India, for example, Stalinist foreign policy was criticizing the post-colonial regime as a reactionary one, pushing for the realization of a communist revolution (in March 1948, after the Congress in Calcutta, the CPI launched a wave of violent protests and strikes).⁹ Very soon, similar rebellions erupted in Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Many people were confident that the Soviet Union stood behind all these coordinated actions. However, what has eluded the attention of many scholars was Yugoslav's role in this strategy. Two U.S. scholars doing research on the CPI made a bold statement that "...it is at least possible that Yugoslav directives triggered Communist guerrilla-style revolution throughout Southeast Asia".¹⁰ Was it really possible that Yugoslavia was acting as a transmitter of Soviet strategic plans? Dedijer bitterly denounced any kind of personal involvement in the preparations for these uprisings in Asian countries.¹¹

Nevertheless, some newly available documents point to some discrepancies in Dedijer's testimony. In March 1956, two Yugoslav delegates visited Joshi and they discussed certain issues from the history of CPY-CPI relationship. During this conversation, Joshi mentioned Dedijer's and Zogović's visit.

⁸ Gene D. Overstreet, Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1959, pp. 271–272.

⁹ Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 45–46.

¹⁰ Gene D. Overstreet, and Marshall Windmiller, op. cit., p. 274.

¹¹ Vladimir Dedijer, op. cit., pp. 41–42.



He said that:

after the war they [CPI] had been greatly inspired by the CPY struggle for the liberation and that our party enjoyed utmost respect in India, being placed right after the Soviet party. This was the period in which they were expecting our leadership for action. However, Zogović and Dedijer, CPY delegates at the Congress in 1948, left a very bad impression on them. Personally, they disliked them because they [CPI members] refused to stay at home of some party members, specially arranged for them, and they stayed in a hotel; and politically, they considered them detrimental since they were cheering for the initiation of a guerrilla struggle against Nehru. He [Joshi] said that they had put all their credibility behind the guerrilla warfare [policy]. In this manner, he was offered financial assistance to acquire 10,000 rifles. He said that little could have been done if this kind of line had been followed and that only people could have been killed.¹²

On the other hand, this testimony should be taken with great caution, since the CPI had supported the expulsion of the CPY from the Cominform in 1948, while in 1956 relations between the CPI and the LCY were still rather tense, especially since Yugoslavia was very close to Nehru at that time. By the way, Joshi also held some personal grievances against Dedijer, which he also needed to vent off.

However, there is another document that could corroborate some of the facts expounded by Joshi. In 1948, during negotiations with Yugoslav representatives in London on the establishment of diplomatic relations, Krishna Menon, then India's High Commissioner in Great Britain, personally put forward the issue of the visit of Yugoslav delegates:

These delegates were fiercely attacking Nehru's Government and they considered them responsible for the change in the political line of the CPI, which now has taken the direction

¹² AJ, CK SKJ, 507/IX, 42/I-24, "Minutes of conversation with the former CPI General Secretary Joshi", March 25, 1956.

of the ‘revolution behind the lines’ that ... represents creating unrest and chaos ... Our delegates caused the removal of the former General Secretary Joshi from his post ... At that time, it was widely held that our delegates were not speaking for themselves, but that they were just following orders.¹³

As we can see, Dedijer’s visit to India could have been very embarrassing for Indo–Yugoslav relations. Most probably, it was only the Soviet–Yugoslav rift that enabled the final normalization of contacts between Belgrade and New Delhi. Nevertheless, both countries ultimately established diplomatic relations in December 1948, immediately after the meeting between Nehru and Yugoslav representative Aleš Bebler in Paris, when the first trade agreement was also signed.¹⁴ In 1950, Yugoslavia opened its embassy in India, while the Indian ambassador in Rome also became accredited as India’s first ambassador to Yugoslavia.

When the split with Stalin became open and unavoidable, Yugoslavia initiated a gradual realignment of its political and economic relations both with Western powers and with major countries of the developing world, including India. Since the end of 1949 Yugoslavia shifted its policies inside the UN in order to vote according to its own principles and ideas, emphasizing the growing importance of small nations, equality between states, independence of all nations, resisting interference of great powers, and pointing out to the existence of military blocs as direct causes of armed conflicts.¹⁵

At the same time, very close political coordination with India and Egypt in the UN during the Korean War had brought Belgrade

¹³ Diplomatic Archives of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs] (DAMSPS), Political Archives (PA), 1948, folder (f) 159, 430981, “Minutes of conversation with India’s High Commissioner in London”, November 13, 1948.

¹⁴ AJ, 837, Chancellery of the Marshal of Yugoslavia (KMJ), I-3-b/288, “Note on talks between Bebler and Nehru”, November 1, 1948.

¹⁵ Jadranka Jovanović, *Jugoslavija u Ujedinjenim nacijama*, str. 45–50.

closer to the official stance of these nations, thus opening the doors for Yugoslavia's future Third World engagements. Yugoslavia's ambassador Ales Bebler, India's ambassador B.R. Rau, and Egyptian ambassador Mahmoud Fawzi had precise instructions to work closely together inside the UN in order to reach the final resolution of the Korean conflict.¹⁶ It was during the years of the Korean War that the Afro-Asian political group was gradually established, largely around the agenda of the cease-fire, with a potential for these nations to exert more influence on the policies of both blocs. Questions of war and peace, life or death, became the driving force for the political unity of Afro-Asian nations, as well as for Yugoslavia, thus making the UN the most important political arena for the nonaligned during most of the Cold War period.¹⁷

In this manner, Yugoslav foreign policy was gradually abandoning old Soviet stereotypes against newly liberated countries, while those countries had ultimately realized that Yugoslavia was much more than just a Soviet peon. In fact, unlike the nonalignment of many developing countries, Yugoslavia's nonalignment was not the result of any anti-colonial struggle but the direct outcome of the inter-bloc policy dynamics of the Cold War.¹⁸ It was a country that generally shared with them some of the basic principles of independence and cooperation they themselves advocated. However, constant danger from the Soviet bloc countries and the prospects of a potential military invasion pushed Yugoslavia to establish a close working relationship with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, while many of the political contacts with India and other Third World nations

¹⁶ Dragan Bogetić, *Koreni jugoslovenskog opredeljenja za nesvrstanost* (Beograd: ISI, 1990), pp. 204–223.

¹⁷ G.H. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Nonalignment*, London: Faber and Faber, 1966, pp. 102–113.

¹⁸ Jovan Čavoški, "Between Great Powers and Third World Neutralists: Yugoslavia and the Belgrade Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement 1961", in Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tine, Nada Boškovića (eds), *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi-Bandung-Belgrade*, London: Routledge, 2014, p. 186.

were mainly left in the realm of astute Yugoslav diplomats in the field.¹⁹

Nevertheless, some people in the Yugoslav leadership, perhaps still nurturing ideological bias or disappointed with the fact that New Delhi had not yet made any concrete moves towards Yugoslavia, readily expressed their grievances that India was pushing for a compromise among the Great Powers that could have left Yugoslavia and some other small countries stranded between two global blocs. Commenting on Yugoslavia's ties with India in the UN, Foreign Minister Edvard Kardelj said, "We have often acted in coordination with India but setting off from completely different positions. India is constantly pushing for an agreement between the Great Powers and that is a kind of Munich. Therefore, concerning important questions we have not acted together ... In perspective, India's policy will be harmful to us."²⁰

However, seasoned diplomats in the field, like Josip Djerdja, Yugoslavia's first ambassador to India and Burma and "the architect of Yugoslavia's Asian policy", demonstrated much more understanding and finesse for India's position, often openly contradicting to what was generally held by his superiors. Once he reported, "Besides certain similarities between the present Indian policy and Chamberlain's, that kind of policy is now closest to reality here and, with some corrections, it could be applied both to the U.S. and the UN as the most suitable one to reach concrete results."²¹ Djerdja personally observed and felt the enormous potential countries like India, Burma, and Indonesia had for the Yugoslav foreign policy, while he continuously informed Belgrade about the similarity of aspirations and outlooks that he found in Nehru, U Nu, or Sukarno.²²

¹⁹ Thomas C. Fingar, *From "National Communism" to National Collapse: U.S. Intelligence Community Estimative Products on Yugoslavia, 1948–1990*, Washington, D.C.: National Intelligence Council, 2006, pp. 100–132.

²⁰ Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu: Odnosi sa velikim silama 1949–1955*, Zagreb: Globus, 1988, p. 194.

²¹ DAMSPS, PA, 1951, f-33, 42331, "Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in India", January 28, 1951.

²² Alvin Z. Rubinstein, op. cit., p. 34.

While things with India were moving at a frustratingly slow pace, generally due to a lack of interest at the very top in both countries (Yugoslavia was preoccupied with the USSR, India with China, and the Korean War), men like Djerdja were interested in pushing things forward in a radical way. According to some earlier published literature there was a lot of controversy about what kind of long-term impact Djerdja's activities had on the overall foreign policy course in Belgrade. While some authors suggested that Tito and others were not that interested in these calculations with distant countries, others claimed that Yugoslavia's first ambassador to India made a "radical change" in foreign affairs that substantially influenced Tito's ideas about nonalignment.²³

According to a newly declassified document, a political instruction from Kardelj to Jože Vilfan, newly appointed ambassador to India and Burma, India was, indeed, considered as one of the most important foreign policy partners with most prospects for fruitful cooperation: "1) push India for support over concrete issues; 2) work on the exchange of political, cultural or economic visits; 3) we have the interest to develop relations with India as far as possible; 4) open in Bombay news agency center; 5) maintain relations with all parties".²⁴ As we can see from this document, in early 1952 and not in 1954, as it was generally held in previous literature, Yugoslavia decided to pursue a cautious policy of political rapprochement with India and gradual opening to the nonaligned world. Nehru, indeed, was very pleased to receive Yugoslavia's new ambassador to India and the two discussed the international situation for quite some time. However, Nehru was more interested in talking about India's internal situation rather than wanting to find out anything more about Yugoslavia and its internal and foreign policies.²⁵

²³ Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu*, pp. 319–320.

²⁴ AJ, 837, Cabinet of the President of the Republic (KPR), I-5-b, India, 1952, pp. 4–5.

²⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1952, f-35, 43117, "Note on the visit to Jawaharlal Nehru", February 21, 1952.

However, many people in India were reluctant to seek a partnership with a distant European country, even though India's Deputy Foreign Minister B.V. Keskar stated that there was an increased desire to get to know Yugoslavia better, especially since it was "the only socialist country that allows its measures to be observed" and had "most direct experience with the USSR which could be used in polemics with Soviet agents".²⁶ On the other hand, due to Yugoslavia's special political, military, and economic ties with NATO countries Tito was still not ready to launch a political project that could be characterized by others as the "third bloc". During the visit of the delegation of the Socialist Party of India in 1952, the Yugoslav President expressed his standing reservations:

I think that formal establishment of the third bloc would not be expedient for the time being and it would be better to continue to work on rapprochement and coordination in the UN on many issues that are of common interest. Otherwise, we could have both of them, i.e. both blocs, against us and that could hurt us. Reaction of both blocs would be harsh.²⁷

On the other hand, at the end of 1952 the Yugoslav goodwill mission visited India. In January 1953 two very high government and party officials, Bebler and Milovan Djilas, came to New Delhi after the Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon.²⁸ As the Indian side later admitted these high-profile visits were used later on to justify their own goodwill mission to China and to strengthen Congress' criticism of the CPI.²⁹ Nevertheless, Yugoslavia was still trying to maintain a number of stable bilateral relationships in the Third World as a political leeway, but without any

²⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1952, f-34, 43654, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", March 17, 1952.

²⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1952, f-35, 410760, "Transcripts of conversation between Marshal Tito and the delegation of the SPI", May 29, 1952, p. 7.

²⁸ National Archives of Myanmar (NAM), 15/3(3), 062, "Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon and its subsequent meetings", January–August 1953.

²⁹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, Report "India", November 1954, pp. 248–249. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–42, 47–48.

insinuations about possible establishment of a close political coordination with any group of countries.

Yugoslavia's military relations with NATO countries, especially after the signing of the Treaty of Ankara between Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey in February 1953, could not have helped improve relations with New Delhi in any way.³⁰ Not only that it seemed that Yugoslavia was slowly aligning with another bloc of states, but Turkey's close military ties to Pakistan in the U.S. global strategy to contain communism in Asia, a country with which Yugoslavia had just signed a military treaty, naturally raised a lot of concern in India.³¹

Indian ambassador B.R. Sen expressed his understanding for Yugoslavia's relationship with Turkey, dubbing it as unlike any other existing military alliance. Many Indian officials understood this fact well. However, the Indian public opinion was against these kind of pacts.³² Nevertheless, in July 1953 India's Vice-President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan went on an official visit to Yugoslavia, thus becoming the first high-level Indian dignitary that ever visited the distant Balkan country.³³ Furthermore, Indian Vice-President was so impressed with everything he saw in Yugoslavia that he decided to personally support Yugoslavia's bid to export some heavy machinery for India's factories. At least for the Yugoslav ambassador, doors of Radhakrishnan's office were always open.³⁴

³⁰ Dragan Bogetić, *Jugoslavija i Zapad 1952–1955: Jugoslovensko približavanje NATO-u* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 2000), pp. 141–154; Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu*, pp. 488–512, 643–649.

³¹ Robert J. McMahan, op. cit., pp. 154–188.

³² AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, "Transcripts of conversation between the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Koča Popović and the Indian ambassador B.R.Sen", April 3, 1953.

³³ DAMSPS, PA, 1953, f-37, 410445, "Visit of Radhakrishnan to Yugoslavia, July 22–26, 1953.

³⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1953, f-36, 411319, "Note on the visit of G. Nikoliš to Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of the Republic of India, to his residence", August 5, 1953.



In essence, Yugoslavia's links with NATO and the U.S. were gradually becoming a big burden for Yugoslav diplomats in India. As ambassador Nikoliš pointed out in his confidential report that the biggest obstacle in discussions with New Delhi was the unclear nature of Belgrade's relationship with Washington, although he did not spare the lack of interest demonstrated by India's foreign policy towards Yugoslavia:

If we want to gain stronger positions here we must undertake a line to adapt our tactics to India and Asia in general. We have to be as flexible as we can to broadly identify ourselves with the views that exist in this part of the world, but to stay as firm as we can to remain faithful to the basic principles of our foreign policy ... We have to condemn aggressive moves of the United States in Asia.³⁵

However, on the other hand, people like Vilfan considered that India basically observed its relationship with Yugoslavia through its relationship with the Soviet Union, not the United States, and that the main problem was the lack of willingness among the Indian ruling elite to accelerate rapprochement with Yugoslavia.³⁶

At that time, the main problem of Indo-Yugoslav relations were more associated with the issue of its further realization than with the essential characteristics of that same relationship. Yugoslavia's increasing political and military cooperation with Burma, Tito's forthcoming visit to Asia, and the new page in the history of Sino-Indian relations, revolving around the "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence", finally laid down the foundations of the Indo-Yugoslav strategic partnership.

From Partial Alignment to Nonalignment: Tito in India

The formulation of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence" and the full normalization of Sino-Indian relations after the signing of the historic treaty on Tibet in April 1954, as

³⁵ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, "Survey of materials from India: From the letter of comrade Nikoliš", August 14, 1953.

³⁶ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, "Evaluation of materials from India".

well as Chinese PM Zhou Enlai's official visits to India and Burma in June–July that same year, ultimately set up a general historical framework inside which the Indo-Yugoslav relations had taken a radical shift towards rapid rapprochement.³⁷ At that time, Yugoslavia openly considered India's China policy as a triumph of Nehru's realism that was directed at consolidating New Delhi's positions in South and Southeast Asia and creating diplomatic mechanisms to effectively counter Pakistani threat.³⁸

On the other hand, Yugoslavia found itself coming under increased U.S. pressure to finally become part of the Western Alliance and to undertake substantial political and economic reforms that would ultimately curb Tito's and LCY's powers. Yugoslav President was still not ready for that kind of compromise and concessions. The towering problem of the Balkan Pact was still evident in direct contacts with Indian officials, but from then on their understanding of Yugoslavia's troubles was unexpected and significant.

Therefore, Indian Deputy Foreign Minister Anil K. Chanda publicly stated that there was a substantial difference between the cases of Yugoslavia and Pakistan and added, "Yugoslavia has a stable government and ingenious leader Marshal Tito who knows what he wants and he enjoys the support of the people."³⁹ Yugoslav–Indian rapprochement and the normalization of Sino-Indian relations were two distinct processes that would ultimately become closely interwoven during 1954–55. After the Geneva Conference (1954) on Korea and Indo-China, India was still searching for reliable international partners that could help her in the defense of world peace and Yugoslavia was often viewed as one of "the morally and politically most consistent international partners".⁴⁰

³⁷ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Zhou Enlai zhuan*, vol. 3, Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998, pp. 1149–1154.

³⁸ DAMSPS, PA, 1954, f-32, 45767, "Nikoliš's ciphered letter on the agreement between India and China over Tibet", May 31, 1954.

³⁹ DAMSPS, PA, 1954, f-33, 48980, "Transcripts of conversation with A.K.Chanda", April 7, 1954.

⁴⁰ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat: ogledi o spoljnoj politici Josipa Broza Tita*, Beograd: Arhipelag, 2014, pp. 136–138.

While Zhou Enlai was on his first official visit to India, Nehru's sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was sent by her brother as an envoy to make her first official visit to Yugoslavia, personally meet with the Yugoslav President, and directly discuss with him the future of the bilateral relationship. Ever since late 1953, Yugoslavia was continuously trying to organize the visit of Mrs. Pandit, who was the President of the UN General Assembly at that time, but Nehru was very reluctant to allow it.⁴¹

During her meetings with Yugoslav leaders the shadow of the Balkan Pact was still hovering over the Indo-Yugoslav relationship, while esteemed guest from India sincerely expressed her opinion that "closer integration of Yugoslavia, a country with independent policies, with these two countries [Turkey and Greece] which do not pursue independent policies, causes great concern in India that the final result would be the weakening of Yugoslavia's independence".⁴² She was given strong assurances that this would not be the case and in a report on this visit to her brother, she indicated that an alignment between Yugoslavia and the West, beyond the defensive Balkan Pact was out of the question.⁴³

However, during her talks with Tito and after she heard a detailed explanation of Yugoslavia's specific reasons to join the Balkan Pact, which Tito directly compared to India's realist policies vis-à-vis China, Mrs. Pandit openly concluded that "India made a mistake by putting whole of Europe into one same (sic) basket and not making any distinction [between Yugoslavia and others], although Yugoslavia and India found the same ground on many number of issues", especially emphasizing that for India "Yugoslavia holds the key position in Europe". At the end of the visit, Mrs. Pandit privately invited President Tito on her brother's

⁴¹ DAMSPS, PA, 1954, f-33, 42453, "Notes of conversation with Mrs. V.L. Pandit", September 8, 1953.

⁴² DAMSPS, PA, 1954, f-33, 49314, "Transcripts of conversation between Edvard Kardelj and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit in Dubrovnik", June 25, 1954.

⁴³ NMML, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit Collection, Installment 2, Speeches/Writings by her, file 9, July 23, 1954.

behalf to visit India by the end of that year, since Tito informed her that he would be travelling to Burma soon, and a visit to India would be also interesting.⁴⁴ She suggested that he should visit as many Asian countries as he could, since “the global balance of power has been shifting and it is very important that responsible statesmen get to know this region from their own experience”. This open invitation was cordially and readily accepted by the Yugoslav President.⁴⁵

This was a moment of triumph for Tito. With possible pending normalization of relations with the Soviet Union (although this process would be finalized only in May–June 1955) and the reduction of demands for integration into NATO (even though in August 1954 a new agreement was signed with Greece and Turkey to put additional pressure on the Soviets), he was quite ready to initiate the search for a viable foreign-policy alternative.⁴⁶ Tito’s trip to India and Burma represented “...an intellectual catharsis of its own kind, through which Tito got rid of his Balkan selfishness and Eurocentric horizons, and over night he had become a citizen of the world and a world leader”.⁴⁷ As one Indian diplomat vividly pointed out Tito was “the first great European statesman who came to Asia not as a representative of colonizers, but as a great friend of Asian nations”.⁴⁸

For Nehru himself, this was a relationship of a special kind, unlike any other India had, since “...good relations between Yugoslavia and India will prove not only that countries with different set-ups can co-exist, but also that they can learn from each other, and cooperate and help each other in different ways...”.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-a/38-3, “Transcripts: comrade President received Mrs. Pandit in his villa on the Brioni Isles”, June 28, 1954.

⁴⁶ А.Б. Едемский, *От конфликта к нормализации: советско-югославские отношения в 1953–1956 годах*, Москва: Наука, 2008.

⁴⁷ Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavijau Hladnomratu*, p. 674.

⁴⁸ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-9, 41835, “Notes of conversations at the dinner given by the attache of the French Embassy Mr. Godfey”, November 23, 1954.

⁴⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, op. cit., p. 581.

Similarities between Yugoslavia's and India's new approach to international relations had also become evident in the reports of U.S. diplomats: "The Yugoslav objective might be described as a "third position through national strength, which, although different from India's third position through softness, nevertheless attracts Tito to visit India and talk with Nehru".⁵⁰At first, certain reservations about Tito's visit existed among the Indian leadership, particularly with Krishna Menon, but ambassador Dayal's assurances that Tito pursued similar policies finally made all these concerns go away.⁵¹

However, we have to ask ourselves what were the true reasons that compelled Nehru to change his attitude towards Yugoslavia and invite Tito himself to come for an official visit. Was it because of the gradual normalization of Soviet-Yugoslav relations, as some authors have claimed? It is not very likely. Tito's correspondence with Khrushchev was still a secret at that time, while nothing was yet totally clear about the final outcome of this process. So, what was it that was so important for India to compel Nehru to make a radical choice with regards to Yugoslavia? Without any doubt, it was the issue of Burma. During early 1950s, the political, economic, and military cooperation between Yugoslavia and Burma was so close and intensive that it substantially influenced the complete internal and foreign policies of the Burmese state.⁵²

Yugoslavia was not only a role model for Burma's constitution, socialist reforms, or nonaligned policies, but, above all, Belgrade was the largest supplier of weapons to Burma at that time, a fact which the Government in Rangoon effectively used to crush the rebellion of Guomindang (GMD), Communist, and separatist groups during the period 1954–55.⁵³ Under the

⁵⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1952–54, vol. 8, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1988, p. 1415.

⁵¹ Rajeshwar Dayal, *A Life of Our Times*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1998, pp. 219–220.

⁵² DAMSPS, PA, 1954, f-33, 42453, "Notes on conversation between G. Nikoliš and R.K. Nehru", January 11, 1954.

influence of this massive cooperation, Burmese PM U Nu had already extended his invitation to Tito on two occasions, in September 1953 and January 1954.⁵⁴ After making some preliminary arrangements, both India and Burma had publicly announced that in December 1954 President Tito would start his tour of these two countries.⁵⁵ Without the Burmese link it would have been very difficult to contemplate any significant changes in India's European politics.

Nevertheless, there is yet another dimension that would start to shape Indo-Yugoslav relations and that was the relationship both countries had with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Even though Yugoslavia was one of few countries that extended its recognition to the new regime in Beijing in October 1949, this diplomatic recognition was never officially accepted by the Chinese, especially due to their particular relationship with the USSR. Previous analyses of many authors that the gradual rapprochement between Belgrade and Moscow had triggered Beijing's rapid diplomatic action to establish diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia had to be readdressed. According to newly declassified documents from the Yugoslav/Serbian and Chinese archives it had become evident that Tito's arrival to India and Burma decisively pushed China to seek normalization with Yugoslavia, while the overall state of the Soviet initiative just constituted the general framework of this story.⁵⁶

Since the essence of China's new foreign policy strategy was continuously focusing on India and Burma and the promotion of

⁵³ Jovan Čavoški, "Arming Nonalignment: Yugoslavia's Relations with Burma and the Cold War in Asia, 1950–1955", *CWIHP Working Paper*, No. 61, Washington, D.C.: 2010.

⁵⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1954, f-14, 42494, "Minutes of conversation between the ambassador Bulajić and PM U Nu", January 2, 1954.

⁵⁵ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Minutes of conversation with Pillai the general secretary of the Indian MEA", August 27, 1954.

⁵⁶ Jovan Čavoški, "Počeci diplomatskih odnosa Jugoslavije i Kine i uspostavljanje jugoslovensko-kineskih diplomatskih odnosa 1954–1955", in Čedomir Popov, Dragoljub Živojinović, Slobodan Marković (eds), *Dva veka srpske diplomatije*, Beograd: Balkanološki institute SANU, Institut za evropske studije, 2013, pp. 285–301.

a “peaceful co-existence” doctrine, the arrival of the “communist heretic” Tito into China’s geopolitical backyard could not have remained unnoticed in Beijing. The true significance of this visit for the Burmese leadership was clearly demonstrated by PM U Nu himself when he inquired with the Yugoslav ambassador, “when President Tito plans to come here, so that, accordingly, he [U Nu] could fix his visit to China”.⁵⁷ Relations with Yugoslavia topped the Burmese foreign policy agenda, even bypassing some of Burma’s most important and crucial neighbours. Something similar also happened with India, although it brought a small shadow over the preparations for this visit.

While Tito was still getting ready to depart for Asia, PM Nehru paid his first official visit to China in October 1954.⁵⁸ Although there is no mention of Yugoslavia in the official transcripts brought by Chinese sources, things, however, tend to change when we read corresponding Indian documents. On October 26, during Nehru-Zhou talks in Beijing, Indian PM unilaterally raised the issue of Tito’s forthcoming visit to India:

Nehru: We are likely to have a visit within a few months from Marshal Tito. He is going to Burma, and on his way he desired to visit India. He wanted to come and we said yes, you are welcome. There are, however, no specific matters to be discussed.

Zhou: Recently Yugoslavia’s attitude has been fairly good and she supports peace. She shows willingness to work for peace and has taken a positive attitude in opposing splitting of Europe. She has also shown readiness to resume normal relations with us and we are in touch with them. We should not reject any country which desires peace, but we should help it. During his [Tito’s] visit to India, Prime Minister Nehru would be able to promote this work.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-2, “Minutes of conversation between the ambassador Bulajić and PM U Nu”, September 6, 1954.

⁵⁸ *Mao Zedong wenji*, Vol. 6, Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999, pp. 361–372.

⁵⁹ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 27 (Second Series)*, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2000, p. 43.

What is very obvious from these transcripts is the fact that Nehru consciously avoided saying that he personally dispatched his sister to Yugoslavia to report on the situation there and hand in his invitation to Tito if the issue of an official visit to India came at any time. Nehru also unilaterally elaborated this issue, although the Chinese did not pose any questions, which could indicate that he had worries about possible Chinese reactions to Tito's visit. This episode clearly demonstrates how Tito's visit to India could have had diverse impact on the overall state of Sino-Indian relations. However, we should also point to the part where Zhou Enlai, using his ambiguous diplomatic language, asked his Indian interlocutor to contribute to the general process of normalization of Sino-Yugoslav ties. Indian PM did not know that the Chinese had already initiated the process of diplomatic recognition with Yugoslavia through their embassies abroad.

The recently appointed Indian ambassador to Yugoslavia, Rajeshwar Dayal, made an official visit to the Cabinet of the President of the Republic on November 8, 1954 to convey Nehru's personal message to Tito on his recent visit to China. He particularly stressed that he had received a dispatch from Nehru himself in which

...he [Dayal] was informed that during talks with Zhou Enlai he [Nehru] had raised the issue of Tito's visit to India; Zhou Enlai expressed his approval of this news, indicating in further conversation that the Chinese would not only agree with the normalization of relations with Yugoslavia, but this normalization would be also greeted by them.

General Secretary of the President, Jože Vilfan, asked the ambassador if this was true and Dayal "emphasized that it is true and that normalization of relations with other countries represents a program of the Chinese Government, while normalization of relations with Yugoslavia would be also greeted".⁶⁰

⁶⁰ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, "Information on the visit of the Indian ambassador Mr. Dayal to the Cabinet of the President of the Republic", November 8, 1954.

Two days later the Indian ambassador paid a visit to the office of the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Koča Popović. He again reiterated that Nehru informed Zhou Enlai of Tito's arrival and that the Indian PM was under the impression that the Chinese wanted full normalization and diplomatic recognition with Yugoslavia.⁶¹ That very same day, Yugoslav ambassador to India Crnobrnja had a meeting with Chanda, one of Nehru's closest aides. Chanda told him in utmost confidence that "... Nehru is under the impression that the Chinese are willing to alter their attitude towards us. He offered their [Indian] good offices".⁶² Although the Chinese side was well aware that President Tito had just arrived in India, nevertheless they decided to extend their recognition at that same time, thus also expressing their goodwill towards India.⁶³ These documents concretely prove that China selected Asian channels of communication, India above all, to send its message to Yugoslavia. With time, the adverse impact of the China factor would have an enormous influence on the stabilization of the Indo-Yugoslav strategic partnership.

On December 16, 1954, Tito disembarked at the Bombay port, heading straight for New Delhi to hold talks with Nehru and President Rajendra Prasad. Although Tito and Nehru had met thrice on December 17, these transcripts cannot be found in Tito's personal archive. Nevertheless, during their two meetings on the next day, Nehru first raised the issue of Sino-Yugoslav recognition, again reminding his guests that Zhou Enlai had stressed his desire for direct talks during Nehru's visit to Beijing. Tito did not want to elaborate this problem into details and he just expressed "... our readiness to accept the Chinese initiative, if they undertake it".⁶⁴ Nehru had some information (probably

⁶¹ DAMSPS, str. pov., 1954, f-3, 729, "Minutes of conversation between the State Secretary Koča Popović and the Indian ambassador Rajeshwar Dayal", November 10, 1954.

⁶² DAMSPS, PA, 1954, f-33, 414696, "Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in India", November 10, 1954.

⁶³ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-50, 4221, "Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in Japan", December 30, 1954.

⁶⁴ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Minutes of conversation between the comrade President and the Indian PM Nehru at his residency in New Delhi", December 18, 1954.

from the Chinese side) that “the Chinese ambassador to Moscow would present a note to the Yugoslav ambassador there within a day or two suggesting an exchange of diplomatic missions”.⁶⁵

Even though Tito must have been well informed on the Chinese note handed over to the Yugoslav embassy in Moscow just the day before (telegraphic connection between Belgrade and the delegation in India was working rapidly), nevertheless Yugoslav President was not very comfortable to present these facts to Nehru during their preliminary negotiations. Tito told Nehru that he thought that many of the Chinese initiatives towards India were done in close coordination with the Soviet Union and he questioned Chinese sincerity in all these actions. However, Nehru rejected this as unsubstantiated.⁶⁶ What was the main reason for this kind of hesitance?

Tito was conscious enough that his trip to Asia was not well received from either the West or the East. A whole cannonade of criticism was launched inside many Western newspapers on Yugoslavia’s neutrality or gradual rapprochement with the Soviet Union, while the Yugoslav political system was often being denounced by many Western observers as totally undemocratic.⁶⁷ When Tito finally decided to acquaint Nehru with the Chinese initiative for diplomatic recognition, he also stressed that, although Yugoslavia greeted this as a useful step, nevertheless the form and the moment for this kind of proposal had not been chosen wisely.

First of all, he said, “...it would seem as if we [Yugoslavia] have taken this initiative to establish relations, while, on the other hand, we were among the first ones to recognize China in 1949”.

⁶⁵ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 27 (Second Series)*, op. cit., 2000, p. 204.

⁶⁶ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, “Minutes of conversation between the comrade President and the Indian PM Nehru at the Rashtrapati Bhavan residency in New Delhi”, December 18, 1954.

⁶⁷ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4, “Kardelj’s letter to Tito on international reactions to his trip to India and Burma”, January 11, 1955.



However, when it came to the timing, Tito was even more sincere about his reservations:

... It would not be proper enough to establish relations during his visit to India, since this could be interpreted as the direct outcome of this visit (Nehru's intervention), which could not be suitable and it would overshadow the main purpose of this trip to India. Besides this, this would cause the reaction in the West and there is no reason for us to hurry, since the Chinese had left us to wait for such a long time.

Nevertheless, Nehru was convinced that these were just procedural matters and that this issue should not be prolonged indefinitely.⁶⁸ After a while, Tito promised that he would seriously take into consideration his (Nehru's) opinion.

However, contrary to his statements, Nehru was also well aware that the West would be embittered with the Sino-Yugoslav recognition. In a personal letter to his sister, Nehru wrote that that the U.S. and the U.K. would be shocked to know that Yugoslavia and China had agreed to the exchange of diplomatic missions.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Nehru concluded in a letter to one of his ministers that :

...in this matter [Sino-Yugoslav recognition] we have been of some help, though I think this would have happened anyhow because of new developments; this is also a move in stabilizing relations between countries and will thus help the cause of peace; possibly, the change in China's attitude in this respect has been influenced by the Soviet attitude.⁷⁰

Nehru felt that this was the matter that was developing itself under its inherent logic and that both India and the Soviet Union constituted two parallel channels between Belgrade and Beijing.

⁶⁸ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Minutes of conversation between the comrade President and the Indian PM Nehru at the Rashtrapati Bhavan residency in New Delhi", December 21, 1954.

⁶⁹ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 27 (Second Series)*, op. cit., 2000, p. 204.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 558–559.

However, Tito's arrival to South Asia, as we have seen, represented the dominant factor of the rapid Sino-Yugoslav normalization.

The first meeting between Tito and Nehru in India was truly an encounter of European and Asian politics. During official talks between the two statesmen, as we can see from the available transcripts, Tito had the obvious initiative, continuously insisting that only through comprehensive and integral analysis of corresponding European and Asian issues a secure path of cooperation and co-existence could be found. Nehru was the very first foreign statesman that Tito informed about his confidential correspondence with Khrushchev, as well as about the true nature of the Balkan Pact and that it did not pose any threat to India or to Yugoslavia's independence.⁷¹

This kind of concept, quite different from the one that Nehru advocated with the Chinese, was a direct way to diffuse the perils to world peace, as Tito said in his speech in Indian Parliament: "What I have in mind is not a sort of passive co-existence, but an active cooperation and a peaceful and agreed settlement of different problems, as well as the removal of all elements liable to impede a broad cooperation between States, large and small."⁷² Tito was not sure how these problematic Asian issues would influence the general tendencies of the Cold War, particularly emphasizing that he was "afraid of provocations, especially provocations in Asia, where the role of India could be great—to avert and foil all these provocations". He also explained the essence of Yugoslavia's troubles with the socialist camp during previous years, subtly warning his host that similar things could happen to any country, India included.⁷³ Tito was, basically, skeptical towards the true intentions of Soviet and Chinese foreign policies, as well as towards the Great Powers in general.

⁷¹ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, pp. 148–150.

⁷² AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Tito's speech in the Indian Parliament", December 21, 1954.

⁷³ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Minutes of conversation between the comrade President and the Indian PM Nehru at the Rashtrapati Bhavan residency in New Delhi", December 20, 1954.



With time Nehru became more and more receptive to Tito's formulation of nonalignment that proved more viable and valuable than the all-encompassing racial-political format of the forthcoming Bandung conference.⁷⁴ This was also more than evident in the joint communiqué Tito and Nehru issued at the end of the visit to set forth the areas of accord. They both proclaimed their sincere adherence to the policy of active nonalignment that meant both non-involvement in any of the great power blocs and the desire for an independent position in foreign affairs, putting forward "the necessity of peaceful co-existence not merely as an alternative, but as an imperative". They also made a clear distinction between the principles of "nonalignment" and "neutralism", i.e., passivity, claiming that nonalignment is a "positive, active, and constructive policy seeking to lead to collective peace, on which alone collective security can really rest". Both leaders readily rejected any kind of notion of a "third bloc" as directly contradicting the idea of nonalignment.⁷⁵

Nehru became even more receptive to Tito's suggestions to broaden the activities of the nonaligned, although his horizons were still firmly locked inside the Asian context. On the other hand, Tito was also impressed with Nehru, with his imposing historical figure, so he openly denounced any media criticism of the Indian PM: "Why should not we endorse the opinion of this man who stands higher than anybody else and who is the only one who can see what needs to be done? Even his opponents consider him as the strongest one ... He is the man who realistically observes international events."⁷⁶

On his way back from India and Burma Tito also had his first meeting with the Egyptian President Nasser, thus encompassing

⁷⁴ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Minutes of conversation between the comrade President and the Indian PM Nehru at the tea-party hosted by the West Bengal chief minister BC Roy", January 1, 1955.

⁷⁵ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Joint Communiqué of the President of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and the Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of India", December 22, 1954.

⁷⁶ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Transcripts of conversation between comrade President and journalists inside the special train", January 2, 1955.

the third most important world leader in the history of the formation of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM). Tito, very enthusiastic about it, explained in detail the course and the results of his visits to India and Burma. Nasser was interested to find out more about Tito's hosts whom he was about to meet on the eve of the Bandung Conference, as much as he wanted to personally forge closer ties to the experienced and agile statesman like Tito. The Yugoslav President had to admit to his Egyptian counterpart that "...after what we have seen in India, we had to change our opinion, because we did not know what kind of enormous opportunities exist in these countries".⁷⁷ Sometime later, while talking to Yugoslav diplomats in Egypt, Tito also pointed out to the future political potential of his newly found allies, "India and Burma are countries of the future. If they are left in peace for the period of next ten years then the danger of becoming colonies again would be gone. Yugoslavia, as a small country that has remained independent despite all pressures, renders them moral support."⁷⁸

In general, Tito was truly impressed with his visits to both India and Burma, while his world perspectives suffered radical changes. While still in India he made a public statement openly criticizing those who doubted India's importance and possibilities for political and economic cooperation with Yugoslavia:

...I have heard a lot about India, read about it too, but only now ... I got the real picture about it, i.e. the picture what [India] is and what it will be ... Many people have seen only exotics in India, just sought what made it backward, what remained from the past ... They have not seen what really India is today, what enormous latent force exists inside it, [a force] that is more and more coming out to the surface and pushes it towards development.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4, "Minutes of conversation between the President of the FPRY Josip Broz Tito and the Prime Minister of Egypt Nasser and their associates", February 5, 1955.

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Transcripts of conversation between President Tito and journalists in a special train", January 2, 1955.



The Yugoslav President was convinced that both in India and Burma he found nations that shared the same aspirations and similar difficulties as Yugoslavia, but he also saw in them, especially in India, a potent force that could, through intensive high-level political coordination, readjust the whole system of international relations. While still in India he openly emphasized these similarities, “Here [India and Burma] we were greeted by people that are going through same sufferings and hardships as we do, who, and I do not want to be immodest here, are inspired by our struggle and efforts.”⁸⁰

From Bandung to Brioni: Nehru in Europe

Without any doubt, winning over India for the global agenda of nonalignment became an imperative for the Yugoslav foreign policy throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. Overcoming the political, geographical, and ideological limitations of the Afro-Asian movement had ultimately become the true goal sought both by Yugoslavia and India. Even though Nehru was still very firm in his rejections of founding any concrete organization on the global level, the rising challenge from China would ultimately force him to readdress these issues.

Tito himself purported to see Yugoslavia as “the bridge between East and West”, thus implying Belgrade’s strong alignment with the Third World. At the same time, the nonaligned policies of Yugoslavia were also used as a leverage to elevate Belgrade’s stature among the superpowers, particularly in Moscow.⁸¹ In these factors some U.S. analysts saw “Tito’s attraction to the line taken by such countries as India, Burma, and Egypt, and his desire to play a role on the world stage (evidenced by the furnishing of arms to Burma and recently to Egypt)”.⁸² Tito, in essence, sought a role for his country transcending the logic of its geographical location, size, and wealth.

⁸⁰ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4, “Transcripts of conversation between President Tito and the members of our diplomatic colony in Egypt”, February 6, 1955.

⁸¹ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–78.

⁸² FRUS, 1955-57, vol. 26, p. 710.

After Tito's visit to India many influential people in New Delhi had started to observe Yugoslavia and its leader in a completely different light, pointing out to many similarities that could be used as a basis for an even stronger alliance. Right after Tito's return to Yugoslavia, ambassador Dayal wrote a comprehensive report to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in which he pointed out the influence India had and could have in Yugoslavia:

...The significance of the fact that a European country, whose influence in international affairs is disproportionate to its size or importance, has subscribed to our Panch Shila, is already evident, and will increase with the passage of time ... Already, in Tito's public statements, there is a marked similarity to Indian pronouncements on international questions ... Further, in regard to internal developments in India, Tito has declared that the direction is the same as in Yugoslavia...This has given a somewhat similar alignment to the policies of the two countries in both the external and internal spheres. What Tito has observed in India is already beginning to influence his domestic policies."⁸³

Dayal also noticed that many Western diplomats in Belgrade were very nervous about the possibilities that India and Yugoslavia could form in the future another bloc of neutral countries that could stand confidently between the two existing ones.⁸⁴ At the same time, Indian ambassador to Yugoslavia enjoyed some of the privileges during his encounters with the Yugoslav leadership which were unfathomable for other foreign diplomats, while the general public opinion was gradually becoming more and more pro-Indian.⁸⁵ Tito even publicly stated that "Yugoslavia has found more than a friend and ally in India, notwithstanding the lack of formal ties."⁸⁶

⁸³ NAI, MEA, F 62 – R&I/55(s), "Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade, for the Period ending 28 February 1955", pp. 4–5.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

⁸⁵ NAI, MEA, F 62 – R&I/55(s), "Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade, for the Period ending 31 March 1955", pp. 8–9.

⁸⁶ NAI, MEA, F 62 – R&I/55(s), "Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade, for the Period ending 28 February 1955", p. 4.

However, as ambassador Dayal emphasized during his conversations with Yugoslav officials, the major contribution of President Tito's visit to India was that New Delhi's policies were now far better understood both in the West and in the East:

Yugoslavia is considered in the world as a realist country, while for Indians they say we are idealists, that we pursue a policy of imagination, mystery. Now, after the visit of President [Tito], who is regarded in the world as a major realist in politics, and after his comments on India, even the West will not be able to continue with its previous criticism of India. However, this visit influenced not only the Western assessment of India, but also the one in the East, as well as among leftist circles in India that used to talk about India as a capitalist country, almost a colony. Therefore, President [Tito's] statements given in Simla and other places that India and Yugoslavia march together towards the same goal are very important for India. It was also very important that President [Tito] attended the Congress meeting in Avadi when a historical decision has been made that India will develop itself in a Socialist manner.⁸⁷

At the same time, this visit also created major possibilities for extensive economic and cultural cooperation between two countries, especially in the field of engineering, heavy machinery (cranes, turbines, generators, and railway carts), chemical industry, agricultural sector etc.⁸⁸

The sole idea of a gathering like the Bandung Conference and India's active participation in it were warmly greeted by Belgrade, although Yugoslavia, its ties with Asian and African nations notwithstanding, could not have participated in it as a European country. Nevertheless, the interest for the Afro-Asian Conference in the general public and especially among the officials was very

⁸⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-24, 42523, "Notes on conversation between Laza Latinović, head of the Foreign Secretariat's fifth section, and the Indian ambassador Dayal", February 24, 1955.

⁸⁸ Dragan Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije*, pp. 162–164.

widespread, while support for India's position and Nehru's initiatives were more than obvious.⁸⁹

State Secretary Popović instructed the Yugoslav ambassador in India to visit Nehru and convey to him the Yugoslav's stand on this issue and what kind of prospects Bandung Conference had stimulated:

...You can express to him our opinion that there is a condition and a need to initiate wide, constructive actions, not only in Asia, but also in the world in general, that could practically curb the pretensions of leading powers to impose the solutions of general problems along the rigid lines of bloc divisions ... Therefore, the role of the countries outside the blocs that pursue active policy of lessening tensions has increased ... Bandung Conference will certainly act in this manner and it should be possible to undertake a similar action that would encompass countries of Europe, America etc.⁹⁰

This was a subtle way to put it that the concept of nonalignment generally surpassed the narrow geographical divisions of Asia and Africa.

Yugoslav diplomats and journalists in Bandung were closely following the developments there, thus enabling the officials in Belgrade to make a general assessment of the prospects arising for Yugoslavia from this kind of event. The unstable geographical framework of the conference, open and hidden rivalries between the aligned and nonaligned countries, lack of any coherent political principles that could bring these countries together over common issues, all these factors influenced the course and the future of the Afro-Asian movement. Independent, active, and a constructive approach of the nonaligned countries and general non-adherence to military blocs was the only way these countries

⁸⁹ NAI, MEA, F 62 – R&I/55(s), "Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade, for the Period ending 31 March 1955", pp. 6–7.

⁹⁰ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-54, 44673, "Telegram from the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav Embassy in India", April 9, 1955.

could have a say in international relations, as Yugoslav officials thought.⁹¹ Yugoslavia was well aware of this, and so was India.

When China, Egypt, and some other countries wanted to convene the Second Bandung the following year, India stood up against the proposal. Yugoslavia stood firmly behind New Delhi's decision.⁹² Alvin Z. Rubinstein made a right conclusion on the impact Bandung Conference had on Yugoslavia's ties with Third World countries: "More than any other country, Yugoslavia helped to make of Bandung a prologue to political action rather than a footnote to futility."⁹³ Naturally enough, India was a major ally in this endeavor.

Tito always wanted to balance his relations with the superpowers, especially with the Soviet Union, against his emerging ties with different Asian, African, and later Latin American countries. Since Khrushchev was interested in full normalization of relations with Yugoslavia, Tito decided to squeeze in the visit of the Soviet leadership to Yugoslavia between Tito's meetings with U Nu and Nehru in June–July 1955, just to demonstrate his full independence in international relations and to indicate to the Soviet leadership what kind of opportunities existed among newly emerging nations. Indeed, Tito's trip to India and Burma made such a serious impact on the USSR, that Malenkov extended his own invitation to Nehru to visit Moscow right in the midst of Tito's visit to New Delhi. Nehru told Tito that the Soviets insisted that he should come to Moscow as soon as possible, but he had to postpone the visit for four to five months.⁹⁴

Khrushchev himself talked very favourably about the Tito–Nehru joint communiqué, once even ironically commenting that

⁹¹ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-54, 18024, "Afro-Asian conference".

⁹² DAMSPS, PA, 1956, f-72, 43014, "Attempt to organize a new Afro-Asian conference".

⁹³ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁹⁴ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/4-1, "Minutes of conversation between the comrade President and the Indian PM Nehru at his residence in New Delhi", December 18, 1954.

“...you could not get more out of Nehru”.⁹⁵ Besides this, the Soviet ambassador to Yugoslavia, during his meeting with Tito, first raised the issue of this visit and greeted the words of the Yugoslav President that Nehru pursued correct policies. Nevertheless, when Tito started elaborating Nehru’s internal successes and his grand authority, the Soviet ambassador attempted to demonstrate little interest into this matter.⁹⁶ However, the Soviet media, in general, remained silent about the results of Tito’s successful visit to India and Burma.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, sometimes silence speaks louder than words.

The Soviet Union essentially had very vague perceptions about what was going on in countries like India and Burma and Khrushchev personally admitted this to Tito during their talks in Yugoslavia in May–June 1955. He pointed out that he would like to find out more about India and Burma from the Yugoslav President. Tito was very eager to show off his newly forged friendships, especially emphasizing the enormous political and economic progress he witnessed in India:

...We have acquainted ourselves with the vitality of the Indian nation, its prospects and the beginnings of the establishment of a modern state. We consider that it is worthwhile to forge good relations with this people ... We have seen that this man [Nehru] pursues incredibly realist policies and I consider that it would be the best that he came to the Soviet Union to see your country, to talk to you too.

Tito particularly criticized Soviet’s continuous efforts to support local communist parties, without any basic understanding for progressive national leaders like Nehru, Nasser, and U Nu,

⁹⁵ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, USSR, “Telegram on the talks between Mijalko Todorović and Khrushchev in Moscow”, December 1954.

⁹⁶ DAMSPS, str. pov., 1955, 222, “Notes on the reception of the Soviet ambassador Val’kov by comrade President at the Brioni Isles”, March 28, 1955, 5 p.m..

⁹⁷ DASMIP, PA, 1955, f-64, 42135, “Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in the USSR”, February 16, 1955.

saying that these parties would be ultimately run over by the progress of time, since they just knew how to criticize and do nothing else. Khrushchev just had to concur with this assessment, denying any firm Soviet ties with local communists, particularly in the case of India and Burma.⁹⁸

Influence by Tito's visits to India and Burma and subsequent Soviet contacts with Nehru and the Burmese officials, in November–December 1955, Khrushchev and Bulganin undertook their own trip to India, Burma, and Afghanistan and that heralded the initiation of a serious Soviet Third World policy.⁹⁹ According to Burmese diplomats, this visit of Soviet leaders was planned exactly along the lines of Tito's previous visit.¹⁰⁰ Nehru, as he later wrote to Tito, correctly observed the enormous influence this trip had on the worldview of Soviet leaders: "...This opening out of a big window towards two non-Communist countries, which were friendly to the Soviet Union and yet followed their own policy, must necessarily have some effect in imperceptibly molding the Soviet Union both at the top and among the people".¹⁰¹ As we can see from the official transcripts, it is evident that Soviet leaders were, indeed, ignorant of conditions in India and this visit had opened their eyes to the actual state of affairs.¹⁰²

Nevertheless, even if the Soviets had not informed Tito about the results of this visit, Nehru already sent a detailed report to

⁹⁸ AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-a, USSR, "Visit of the state-party delegation of the USSR with comrade Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev—the course of the conferences between Yugoslav and Soviet delegations", pp. 23–26, 28–29.

⁹⁹ Aleksandr Fursenko, Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary*, New York-London: W.W. Norton, 2006, pp. 80–82.

¹⁰⁰ Russian State Archive for Contemporary History (RGANI), fond (f) 5, opis (op) 30, delo (d) 116, listy (l) 178, "Reception of the Burmese ambassador Maung Ohn", November 10, 1955.

¹⁰¹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/361, "Nehru's personal letter to Tito: Note on Khrushchev's and Bulganin's visit to India", December 23, 1955.

¹⁰² NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 17, "Summary of record of a talk between Nehru, Bulganin, and Khrushchev", December 12, 1955.

his Yugoslav friend in which he presented the essence of his negotiations with Soviet leaders. In this report, the Indian PM emphasized that Khrushchev confirmed to him what he had already said to Tito that “they [Soviets] had been ignorant of conditions in India and that their visit had opened their eyes to the actual state of affairs in this country; therefore, they had to completely revise their opinion about India”. Besides this, Khrushchev had to publicly denounce any formal ties or encouragements that came from the Soviet side to the Communist parties of India and Burma, reiterating that they do not know these organizations very well.¹⁰³

Only to confirm this, at a closed session of the Presidium of the CC CPSU (Politburo), Khrushchev, while making a report on his visit to South Asian countries, pointed out that Soviets knew very little about India and that the USSR had done badly there, so urgent changes were necessary. However, he still expressed his hope that the CPI’s strength would only grow.¹⁰⁴

This episode clearly demonstrated that Yugoslavia had already gained such an independent position in international affairs that it could get information on sensitive issues from multiple sources. At the same time, Yugoslav officials were closely monitoring all the developments concerning this visit.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the importance of the Yugoslav factor for the Soviet policy in India was also evident when during Nehru’s visit to the USSR when Bulganin really wanted to make a good impression on his guest emphasizing the importance of the Soviet–Yugoslav reconciliation. Tito was well aware of this.¹⁰⁶ As one high-level

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ А.А. Фурсенко, *Президиум ЦК КПСС 1954–1964, том 1: Черновые протокольные записи заседаний—Стенограммы* (Москва: РОССПЭН, 2004), pp. 72–75.

¹⁰⁵ NAI, MEA, F 62 – R&I/55(s), “Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade for the month of December 1955”, pp. 5–6.

¹⁰⁶ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 15, “The Prime Minister’s visit to the Soviet Union”.



Burmese official said that, Tito's visit to South Asia taught the Soviet Union how they should treat these countries and accordingly develop political and economic relations based on equality.¹⁰⁷ Whether Tito's visit to India and Burma was perceived by the Soviet leadership as an ideological challenge or a strategic opportunity, this event gave that ultimate impetus that pushed Moscow in finally making a bold choice in favour of India and the Third World.

Nehru finally came to Yugoslavia after his tour of the USSR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, visits that had already raised many concerns in the U.S. that India was getting too close to the socialist camp.¹⁰⁸ Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi went to a number of places and historical sites in Yugoslavia and had intensive encounters with the Yugoslav leadership during their eight-day visit.¹⁰⁹

During their detailed discussions, Tito and Nehru once again reached a consensus that principles of active peaceful co-existence represent a leading factor in bilateral and international relations, leading to a greater confidence and cooperation in international affairs. This time, unlike Tito's previous visit to India, European issues, above all the German issue, dominated the talks, although tensions around Taiwan were also mentioned.¹¹⁰ Both leaders also emphasized that "in the spirit of existing friendship, there should be an exchange of views from time to time between the two countries on current international questions".¹¹¹

Perhaps, the best evaluation of the results of his talks with

¹⁰⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1956, f-10, 4227, "Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in Burma", December 25, 1955.

¹⁰⁸ FRUS, 1955-57, vol. 8, pp. 305-306.

¹⁰⁹ NAI, MEA, F 62 - R&I/55(s), "Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade, for the month of July 1955".

¹¹⁰ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 82, "Tito-Nehru talks held in Belgrade", July 1, 1955.

¹¹¹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-a, India, "Joint communiqué of the Prime Minister of India and the President of the FPRY".



Tito was given by Nehru himself in a confidential letter to one of his ministers:

...I had long talks with Marshal Tito and his Ministers. These talks were even more frank and intimate than elsewhere. There was so much in common between our outlook and Marshal Tito's in regard to world affairs that we could discuss matters without any inhibition ... He knows all the prominent leaders in the Soviet Union intimately and knows their language too ... He is, therefore, in a peculiarly advantageous position to judge Soviet or Central European problems. I found these talks very helpful in understanding these problems and we have promised to keep in close touch with each other.

Nehru also pointed out that India should try to draw useful lessons from the Yugoslav socialist experience of self-management.¹¹²

This kind of statement directly proves that in those days Yugoslavia and India had reached such a close and intimate consensus on so many international issues that the foundations of the Indo-Yugoslav strategic partnership had been already laid. As Yugoslav Foreign Secretary indicated, this visit "...not only emphasized the decision of both countries to cooperate closely, but also demonstrated that both countries were achieving ... identical concepts and principles in their international activity".¹¹³

Tito's views and assessments enjoyed full confidence on the side of his Indian and Burmese counterparts. Right after his trip to Britain Nehru sent another letter to Tito in which he informed him about the results of his visit and expressed his gratitude to the Yugoslav President for his advice:

...Our conversations during my visit to Yugoslavia were very helpful to me in having clearer ideas about the

¹¹² *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 29 (Second Series)*, op. cit., 2001, p. 281.

¹¹³ NAI, MEA, F 62 – R&I/55(s), "Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade for the month of November 1955", p. 4.

international situation. Your intimate knowledge of European situation was particularly helpful, more especially after my visit to the Soviet Union. When I went to England afterwards I had long talks with Sir Anthony Eden and Macmillan and gave them my assessment of the situation...In doing so, your views proved very helpful.

Nehru also wrote that his assessment of the European situation, given according to Tito's advice, proved amazingly correct, as he was later told by Macmillan.¹¹⁴

The level on which Nehru was now assessing the importance of his personal and political ties to Yugoslavia was clearly depicted in a confidential instruction sent to the Indian embassy in Beijing (Yugoslav embassy in China got hold of this document):

Nehru talked about Yugoslavia in an open and positive manner. According to his assessment, in today's world only India and Yugoslavia are truly independent countries ... Therefore, he considers it is very important that relations between our two countries should continue to develop. Besides this, Nehru was really impressed by our economic and political development; therefore he emphasizes that in this or similar way the future of other countries lies, especially of the underdeveloped ones.¹¹⁵

The decisive influence Tito had on policies of Asian leaders like U Nu and Nehru was very obvious from the private statement made by U Thant, one of U Nu's closest aides and the future UN Secretary General: "Marshal Tito is strong and shrewd. Nehru and U Nu above all appreciate his ability to accurately assess relations and situation in the world and based on this calibrate actions. They [Nehru and U Nu] have full confidence in Marshal [Tito's] assessments and judgments".¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/360, "Nehru's personal letter to Tito", July 28, 1955.

¹¹⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-24, 416514, "Ciphred telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in China", October 18, 1955.

¹¹⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-9, 416756, "Ciphred telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in Burma", November 28, 1955.

Shaping of the Brioni Discourse

Tangible results of Nehru's visit to different European countries was more than evident when the Indian Government, after his return to New Delhi, energetically raised the issue of the last Portuguese colonies in the Indian subcontinent—Goa, Diu, and Daman.¹¹⁷ On this issue India enjoyed full and unreserved backing from Yugoslavia, not only on bilateral level but also in the UN, while one Indian parliamentary delegate publicly stated that “India has a faithful ally in Yugoslavia”.¹¹⁸ Nehru also personally expressed his gratitude to Tito for Yugoslavia's unselfish support, issuing instructions to Indian representatives in the UN to closely cooperate and coordinate their actions with the Yugoslav delegation.

For instance, India actively lobbied for Yugoslavia to become a non-permanent member of the Security Council in December 1955, while Yugoslavia resolutely pushed for India's election into the UN Disarmament Commission.¹¹⁹ At the same time, Yugoslav embassy in India maintained close contact with the head of the Indian resistance in Goa, Pedro Alvares, who personally thanked “Marshal Tito and the people of Yugoslavia for their moral support for the liberation of Goa”.¹²⁰ In addition, Alvares only visited Yugoslav, Burmese, and Indonesian embassies in New Delhi which clearly indicated what kind of influence and prestige Yugoslavia enjoyed in India.

However, Yugoslavia's support to India was not only political or moral. Ambassador Dayal addressed the Yugoslav Government with an urgent appeal that “due to situation in Goa” Yugoslavia should sell to India fast patrol boats as soon as possible, especially

¹¹⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–126.

¹¹⁸ NAI, MEA, F 62–R&I/55(s), “Monthly Report of the Embassy of India in Belgrade for the month of August 1955”, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ DAMSPS, PA, 1955, f-24, 412205, “Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in India”, August 27, 1955.

¹²⁰ DASMIP, PA, 1955, f-24, 412849, “Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in India”, September 21, 1955.

since “the English are creating them (sic) difficulties, so they cannot acquire these boats in other countries”. The Indian Navy needed these speed boats to conduct an effective sea blockade of Goa.

Although some people in the Yugoslav military were skeptical about the speed of deliveries of these systems, Tito made a personal remark on this document that “Indian request should not be rejected and possibilities for rapid production and sale of these boats to India should be examined”.¹²¹ However, due to the limited success of the Goan rebellion in 1955–57, Nehru decided to postpone the liberation of Goa for some time.¹²² Nevertheless, Yugoslavia finally reached an agreement with India to sell them a certain number of patrol boats.¹²³ Besides Yugoslavia, strong diplomatic backing to India was also given by the USSR, while the U.S. openly supported their Portuguese allies.¹²⁴

Tito personally considered that summit diplomacy was the best way to forge strong bonds among leaders of different countries and gradually set up a core of something that would ultimately become the third force in international affairs. Already in April 1956, Nehru expressed his desire to visit Yugoslavia again after his forthcoming trip to some European countries. Later on it was decided that this would be a shorter visit than planned, but Nehru would still go.¹²⁵ In order to further promote his international profile, in late July 1956 Nasser undertook a week-long visit to Yugoslavia during which he wanted to exchange

¹²¹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, “India’s request that our Navy give them certain number of patrol boats”.

¹²² DAMSPS, PA, 1957, f-36, 412578, “Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in India”, May 29, 1957.

¹²³ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, “Transcripts of conversation between the head of the Sixth Section J. Petrić and the Indian charge d’affaires Lukoze”, March 13, 1957.

¹²⁴ Shanta Nedungadi Varma, *Foreign Policy Dynamics: Moscow and India’s International Conflicts*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1999, pp. 38–44.

¹²⁵ AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-c, “Visit of the Indian PM”, May 18, 1956.



views with Tito and get himself familiar with Yugoslavia's socialist system.¹²⁶

While arranging this visit, Tito also wanted to bring Nehru and Nasser closer together through a tripartite summit in Yugoslavia. Since Nehru was anyway scheduled to travel to Cairo after his visit to Yugoslavia, this proved to be a fine opportunity for the three statesmen to meet each other and exchange their opinions on a number of world problems.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, due to his ongoing reservations over the negative reactions in Britain and the U.S., Nehru tried to downplay the anti-Western agenda of the meeting earlier proposed by Nasser and, to a certain extent, Tito too.¹²⁸ Creating the "active core" of the nonaligned world, together with Nehru and Nasser, and later with Sukarno, became the centerpiece of Tito's strategy.

On July 18–19, Tito, Nehru, and Nasser finally met on the Brioni islands to discuss many outstanding international issues. This was the very first tripartite summit they had, which was also a harbinger of future winds of the NAM. The three statesmen ascertained again similarities of their approaches on different international issues which led to the new convergence of their corresponding views. Although this summit suffered from small misunderstandings marked by Nehru's reluctance, Nasser's excessive eagerness, and Tito's desire to strike a balance between his guests, this meeting brought the official stance of Yugoslavia, India, and Egypt closer and they took an identical position on a number of international issues (disarmament, China, Algeria, and Palestine).

It was ascertained that peace could not be achieved through bloc divisions, but it should be backed by active peaceful co-existence and collective security efforts which would result in

¹²⁶ AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-c, "Note on talks between Tito and Nasser", July 1956.

¹²⁷ AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-c, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", May 30, 1956.

¹²⁸ Zvonko Štaubinger, *Titovo istorijsko ne staljinizmu*, Beograd, 1976, pp. 112–120.

the expansion of the area of peace and cooperation. In this way, a new model for exchange of views on crucial international problems between the three countries was ultimately set up.¹²⁹ Soon afterwards other Third World leaders like Sihanouk and Sukarno readily joined the Brioni statement. In a certain manner, this small summit paved the way for the Belgrade Conference five years later, setting up the agenda that would dominate the nonaligned discourse. The Brioni summit, thus became “Third World’s Yalta”.¹³⁰

From now on, Yugoslavia, India, and Egypt, by creating stable and diverse bilateral relations, would jointly insist that developing countries could and should exert their influence on the delicate balance of power during the Cold War. For Nehru himself, this meeting, his open reservations notwithstanding, confirmed his towering role among the Third World leaders. On the other hand, for Tito this was tangible recognition of his growing influence among nonaligned countries and on the world stage, while for Nasser this meant an entry into the inner circles of nonalignment and an enhanced prestige in the Arab world.¹³¹

Crucial importance of the Brioni meeting also lay in the fact that a European country chose to guide its foreign policy in a similar way like many other Asian or African countries. This proved to be the decisive factor in Tito’s wide acceptance, among “darker nations”, as an authentic nonaligned leader and a close friend.

However, while Tito, Nehru, and Nasser were still at Brioni in the midst of their negotiations, the Soviet ambassador to Yugoslavia, without any open invitation, tried to barge into this meeting and convey some messages to Tito and Nasser. Nevertheless, his reception was quickly rejected by Tito himself

¹²⁹ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 29 (Second Series)*, op. cit., 2005, pp. 297–304.

¹³⁰ Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World*, New York: The New Press, 2007, pp. 95–96.

¹³¹ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, op. cit., p. 75.

and the Soviet diplomat was forced to return to Belgrade without fulfilling his “mystery” mission.¹³²

Nevertheless, as soon as Nasser reached Cairo, the Soviet ambassador asked for an audience in order to know about the Brioni meeting. Nasser conveyed his very positive remarks about Yugoslavia and expressed his deep satisfaction with the results of the meeting he had had with both Tito and Nehru.¹³³ Nehru, who was also at that time in Cairo also faced a similar situation. Chinese ambassador Chen Jiakang wanted to meet Nehru and discuss the wider implications of the recent summit.¹³⁴ Brioni summit and the tripartite Yugoslav–Indian–Egyptian cooperation proved to be a matter of the highest importance for the Soviet bloc.

On July 26 immediately after his return from Yugoslavia following his meeting with Tito and Nehru, Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal as a reaction to the U.S. decision not to finance the Aswan Dam.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, in the view of the west, Tito and Nehru were considered as the chief culprits who were believed to have instigated Nasser to undertake such a daring action.

Both Tito and Nehru were utterly dissatisfied that Nasser had not found it necessary to inform them in advance, although both of them basically understood his frustration. Nehru was trying to convince his colleagues back home that he did not know anything about Nasser’s plans, even though he was in Cairo at that time.¹³⁶

¹³² AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, USSR, “Note of conversation between the State Under-Secretary Prica and the Soviet ambassador Firubin”, July 18, 1956.

¹³³ В.В.Наумкин (ed.), *Ближневосточный конфликт 1947–1956: Из документов АВПРФ*, Москва: МФД, 2003, pp. 453–455.

¹³⁴ CFMA, 107-00048-02(1), “Talks between ambassador to Egypt Chen Jiakang and Nehru”, July 20, 1956.

¹³⁵ Mohamed Heikal, *Cutting the Lion’s Tail: Suez through Egyptian Eyes*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1986, pp. 119–129.

¹³⁶ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 89, “Note on PM’s tour abroad, June-July 1956”, August 15, 1956.

He even had attempted to dissuade Nasser from the Dam project altogether as it would be an enormous strain on Egypt's resources.¹³⁷ Preliminary reactions in both New Delhi and Belgrade worried Nasser since he feared his main allies might take a step back from his struggle.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, Nasser was advised both by Tito and Nehru to show restraint and flexibility in order to gain wider international support and attempt to drive a wedge between the U.S. and Great Britain.¹³⁹

When the three Western powers decided to convene an international conference on the Suez Canal issue in August in London, India, Indonesia, and Ceylon were the only ones invited to this meeting from the Afro-Asian group and Nehru was preparing his mediation plan that would be also supported by Nasser.¹⁴⁰ Yugoslavia was deliberately left out of the loop by the British. Nevertheless, during the London Conference, Egypt, Yugoslavia, and India closely coordinated their actions in the international arena, actively lobbying Afro-Asian nations. However, Belgrade occasionally had to iron out policy disagreements between Cairo and New Delhi, since Egypt considered Indian proposals as sometimes being too soft.¹⁴¹

While the decision of the conference to establish the international supervision over the Suez Canal found support of 18 countries, but not the USSR, India, Indonesia, and Ceylon, it was flatly rejected by the Egyptians.¹⁴² In addition, both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia considered that the organized backing should be given to Egypt in the UN, while the Afro-Asian group

¹³⁷ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 34* (second Series), op. cit., 2005, pp. 319–320.

¹³⁸ Mohamed Heikal, *Cutting the Lion's Tail*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1986, pp. 134–136.

¹³⁹ Aleksandar Životić, *Jugoslavija i Suecka kriza 1956–1957*, Beograd: INIS, 2008, pp. 101–103, 118–120.

¹⁴⁰ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, vol. 2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 280–283.

¹⁴¹ Aleksandar Životić, op. cit., pp. 131–137, 142–144, 154–157.

¹⁴² FRUS, 1955–57, Vol. 16, Suez Crisis (1990), pp. 495–498, 512–515, 552–558.

should put forward the initiative and dictate the dynamics of the debate.¹⁴³ At one instance Nehru was also seriously considering providing arms to Egypt, but then he had to back down in order not to undermine the negotiating process.¹⁴⁴

The Suez issue had polarized the world community and acted as a catalyst for the first major joint action of nonaligned countries in the UN after the Korean War. During the debate in the UN, Egyptian Foreign Minister Fawzi maintained the closest possible contact with the Yugoslav, Soviet, and Indian delegations. Yugoslav Foreign Secretary Popović received instructions to act hand-in-hand with Indian and Soviet representatives, thus reaching an acceptable solution.¹⁴⁵ Conversely, the Indian special representative Krishna Menon went on a mission to Cairo and New York to reach a compromise along the lines of India's previous proposal to establish an international consultative body. This solution was partially acceptable to Nasser.¹⁴⁶ In the end, through Yugoslav, Indian, and Soviet mediation, a mutually acceptable resolution was adopted in the UN Security Council that guaranteed the sovereign rights of Egypt and freedom of passage through the Suez Canal.¹⁴⁷

However, when the Israelis attacked Egypt on October 29 and British–French intervention began two days later, both Tito and Nehru quickly assisted Egypt in every way possible.¹⁴⁸ Nasser was very grateful to both his friends for rapidly addressing the UN and alerting the world opinion, the Soviet Union, and the

¹⁴³ DAMSPS, str. pov., 1956, f-1, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in the USSR", November 17, 1956.

¹⁴⁴ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 35 (Second Series)*, op. cit., 2005, pp. 416–417.

¹⁴⁵ Mohamed Heikal, op. cit., pp. 161–175.

¹⁴⁶ Srinath Raghavan (ed.), *Sarvepalli Gopal: The Collected Essays*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2013, pp. 233–237.

¹⁴⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1956, f-16, 416853, "Telegram from the State Secretary Popović", October 10, 1956.

¹⁴⁸ DAMSPS, strogo pov., 1956, f-1, 1005, "Telegram jugoslovenske ambasade u Indiji", October 31, 1956.

United States to strongly condemn this aggression.¹⁴⁹ Soviet leadership also put forward the idea to convene a new Afro-Asian conference over the Suez issue, but this idea was rejected by a number of Afro-Asian leaders as not feasible, Nehru above all of them.¹⁵⁰

While the Soviet Union threatened Britain and France with military intervention, the U.S. strongly criticized this aggression, Washington withdrew any support for its allies, and led efforts in the UN to end the crisis, often in concordance with the Afro-Asian group and Yugoslavia. This ultimately led to the swift ending of the tripartite aggression against Egypt.¹⁵¹ With Yugoslavia and India acting as the backbone of the future UN peacekeeping force in the Sinai and as the strongest proponents of nonalignment in the world arena, Tito, Nehru, and Nasser were ready to expand this struggle into its new phase.

Nehru often observed Yugoslavia through its capacity to influence Moscow's policies in the world and he still considered Tito's role in this matter as a significant one, Hungarian events notwithstanding.¹⁵² For example, in the annual reports of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs relationship with Yugoslavia was always graded as "extremely cordial", which was never used for any other country.¹⁵³ In late 1957, under the impression of the possible coup d'état in Indonesia against Sukarno and France's clumsy handling of the Algerian issue, Tito suggested to Nehru that "the countries of the Bandung Conference should be re-

¹⁴⁹ Aleksandar Životić, op. cit., pp. 223–231, 242–243; Srinath Raghavan, op. cit., pp. 243–246.

¹⁵⁰ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 35* (Second Series), op. cit., 2012, pp. 430–437.

¹⁵¹ David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: Suez and the Brink of War*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011, pp. 216–257.

¹⁵² DAMSPS, PA, 1957, f-36, 422822, "Telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in India", October 22, 1957.

¹⁵³ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/11-3, Report "India", 1958, pp. 72–78.



activated again ... at least, to stop further disintegration of countries that share so many common interests".¹⁵⁴

Nehru promptly agreed that "...it is more necessary than ever countries like Yugoslavia and India should continue being unaligned and remain outside these military blocs... Only in this way we can serve the cause of peace and help in preventing some terrible conflicts", concluded Pandit Nehru.¹⁵⁵ For him, nonalignment was a definitive choice for India's foreign affairs strategy: "When we say our policy is one of nonalignment, obviously we mean nonalignment with military blocs. It is not a negative policy. It is a positive one, definite one, and, I hope, a dynamic one. But, in so far as the military blocs today and the Cold War are concerned, we do not align ourselves with either bloc."¹⁵⁶

Tito thought Nehru had reservations regarding the idea of any "third bloc". Once he made a private comment:

Nehru advocates Bandung principles, he is against colonialism, for co-existence, and for all principles that we also advocate. However, when it comes to concrete actions ... then he is unusually cautious. Nehru would hundred times check one thing out, observe it from all sides, whether this could harm Indian interests under present situation, and, if some step could hurt India, he would remain passive and sacrifice nothing.

Therefore, he had to admit that, Nehru's reluctance notwithstanding, "...I have an impression that this is our great friend, he appreciates our position and trusts us ... Nehru wants that we cooperate even more in the political sphere."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/366, "Tito's personal letter to Nehru", December 16, 1957.

¹⁵⁵ AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/366, "Nehru's reply to Tito's letter of December 16, 1957".

¹⁵⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹⁵⁷ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/11/1, "Report submitted at the session of the Federal Executive Council on the trip of the President of the Republic and the Yugoslav delegation to friendly countries of Asia and Africa, Belgrade", March 17, 1959, p. 36.



Although Tito readily acknowledged the fact that his plans for the NAM often faced India's complaints, at the same time he was fully conscious that without New Delhi's sincere support any idea of bringing together nonaligned countries did not have such bright prospects. Indeed, when Yugoslavia found itself under a new serious threat from the socialist camp in 1958–59, India decided to stand firmly by its European friend and ally.

In the Shadow of the Sino–Soviet Alliance

In spring-summer 1958, Yugoslavia came under fierce political and ideological attack from China and the Soviet Union after the publication of the LCY's new party program at its Seventh Congress. Propaganda against the "Yugoslav revisionism" became the factor of convergence and integration of the socialist bloc, while all these countries cancelled many economic deals previously concluded with Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁸ Besides this ideological dimension, Yugoslavia's rising relations with the Third World and Tito's forthcoming visit to a number of Asian and African countries in 1958–59 were also regarded as a major threat to Chinese and Soviet positions among Afro-Asian nations.

Serious and intensive measures were undertaken to suppress the Yugoslav presence in the Third World and stabilize the pre-eminence of the socialist camp. On this path stood not only Tito's astute and agile diplomatic performance, but also the lack of interest of many Afro-Asian nations, India and Egypt particularly, to cut their ties with Belgrade just to please Moscow and Beijing. During his talks with the newly appointed Indian ambassador to Yugoslavia, Tito pointed out that "the Soviets will try to persuade India that their conflict with us does not concern India at all, but the moral support from countries like India or the United Arab Republic is very important to us." Tito warned the Indian diplomat that this kind of scenario might repeat itself with any country and

¹⁵⁸ Dragan Bogetić, "Drugi jugoslovensko-sovjetski sukob 1958. i koncept aktivne miroljubive koegzistencije", *Istorija 20.veka* 2/2004, pp. 123–150.

he called for major nonaligned nations to maintain close and intensive contact.¹⁵⁹

The stance that Tito's general policies were primarily directed at undermining Chinese and Soviet positions among newly liberated countries was clearly emphasized in a set of guidelines sent by the Chinese Foreign Ministry to all its embassies abroad on December 16 1958: "The current activity of the 'Tito clique' in the Afro-Asian region, boastfully dubbed as active peaceful coexistence, represents an attempt to sever relations between Afro-Asian and socialist countries, especially fomenting discord between us and Afro-Asian countries".¹⁶⁰

That same day, another circular telegram was dispatched to all representations abroad: "Tito's intentions to undertake this Asian journey are to evaluate the goal of organizing the conference of neutral countries ... and simultaneously fighting the Soviet and Chinese influence among these countries ... At the same time, a big propaganda campaign is being launched to promote Nehru's and Nasser's socialism".¹⁶¹ In the internal discussions between the Chinese and Soviet officials a great amount of discontent was demonstrated with regards to Yugoslavia's increased activity among leading Asian countries, particularly in India.¹⁶²

Fortunately enough, the first results of the anti-Yugoslav campaign had not yielded satisfactory results. Especially India, Burma, and Egypt remained steadfast in their support for Tito.

¹⁵⁹ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 32, "Note on interview with President Tito on Brioni", June 9, 1958.

¹⁶⁰ CFMA, 109-01431-01(1), "Foreign Ministry's instructions to all embassies connected with the visit of the Yugoslav leader Tito to Afro-Asian countries", December 16, 1958.

¹⁶¹ CFMA, 109-00860-01(1), "Foreign Ministry's circular telegram to all embassies and consulates on the policy of relations with Yugoslavia and the tendencies of Yugoslavia's inner and foreign policies", December 16, 1958.

¹⁶² RGANI, f. 5, op. 49, d. 131, l. 167, "Talks with the Head of the Asian Department, Li Chen", June 15, 1958.

Therefore, Nehru, avoiding any ideological dispute, decided to lend his support to Yugoslavia in one of his public speeches in May, although he was still not ready to push things too far with Moscow.¹⁶³

Nevertheless, Yugoslav charge d'affairs in India was very open in his remarks to the Indian PM and he portrayed the present relationship with the socialist camp as deliberate bullying of a small country, threatening its nonaligned foreign policy, and interfering with its internal policies. What was even more important, he pointed out, was the cancellation of Soviet-Yugoslav bilateral economic agreements that was considered as an ominous sign that economic assistance could be withdrawn anytime if certain attitudes were not being appreciated by Moscow or Beijing.¹⁶⁴

This was what worried Nehru the most—a clear breach of the Five Principles by interfering into one country's internal affairs, no matter whether this country was capitalist or socialist, and withdrawal of economic assistance even after contracts had been signed.¹⁶⁵ After this, Nehru sent instructions to all his embassies abroad to give full support to Yugoslavia, according to the two above mentioned principles.¹⁶⁶ As it was reported by the Yugoslav ambassador Dušan Kveder, India wanted to present itself as a Great Power among the nonaligned countries, aiming at exercising the role of a special mediator between the two blocs that other nonaligned countries could not do.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ DAMSPS, PA, 1958, f-37, 413258, "Telegram jugoslovenske ambasade u Indiji", May 29, 1958.

¹⁶⁴ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 99, "MEA report on talks with the Yugoslav charge d'affairs", June 14, 1958.

¹⁶⁵ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 99, "Prime Minister's secretariat", June 15, 1958.

¹⁶⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1958, f-37, 415444, "Telegram jugoslovenske ambasade u UAR", 26.VI 1958.

¹⁶⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1958, f-37, 421043, "Cyphered telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", August 30, 1958.

Nevertheless, Soviet diplomats were displeased with India's performance regarding this matter, even calling this "a meddling into their own affairs, since they have never done this with regards to India's relations with other countries, namely Pakistan". Ambassador Dayal concluded that "Soviet policy towards Yugoslavia will do harm to the Soviet Union among Asian countries that pursue policy of peaceful co-existence". He added that this kind of attitude would arouse suspicion among these nations regarding the "sincerity of Soviet policy that claims it does not link economic cooperation with any kind of political conditions".¹⁶⁸

As some U.S. analysts correctly observed, "Indian suspicions of the [Soviet] Bloc have been reinforced by the execution of the leaders of the Hungarian revolution and by harassment of Tito".¹⁶⁹ The CPI was one of the strongest political cards of the Soviet and Chinese to put additional pressure on Nehru to influence his delicate relationship with Yugoslavia. Some Chinese officials even considered that "...by protecting Tito Nehru attempts to strike at the Communist Party of India", while "between Tito and Nehru ... a joint front is being formed against communism".¹⁷⁰

In a November top-secret report from the Chinese embassy in New Delhi, the general-secretary of the CPI, A. Ghosh, personally sent an envoy to the embassy to see

...what kind of position our party [CCP] has taken with regards to the Yugoslav national holiday [November 29] and based on this they will decide on their own position; he also hopes that our CC [CCP] might suggest what kind of attitude should the CPI assume during Tito's visit to India; he hopes that he will get the answer very soon, since they should discuss it over.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, "Notes of conversation between the State Under-Secretary Srdja Prica and the Indian ambassador Dayal", May 15, 1958.

¹⁶⁹ FRUS, 1958-60, Vol. 15, *South and Southeast Asia* (1992), p. 460.

¹⁷⁰ RGANI, f. 5, op. 49, d. 131, l. 161, "Talks with the Head of the Asian Department", June 7, 1958.

¹⁷¹ CFMA, 109-01302-02(1), "On the attitude of the CPI towards Yugoslavia and reactions to the *Renmin ribao* editorial", June 19, 1958.

However, when Ghosh met the Chinese ambassador in December, he stressed that the CPI, earlier dissenting tones notwithstanding, had finally taken the same position as other “brotherly” parties and they would demonstrate the obvious lack of interest during Tito’s visit.¹⁷² Although many authors previously considered that China started its joint propaganda campaign against Tito and Nehru only after the Tibetan events in 1959, these documents undoubtedly indicate that considerations of such kind were already largely present throughout 1958.

In December 1958, right on the eve of Tito’s trip to Asian and African countries, Soviet ambassador to China, Pavel Yudin, published an article in the journal *International Review of Marxism–Leninism* in which he openly criticized Nehru for his policies, often portraying political principles of the Indian PM as “blurry, subjective, and full of contradictions”. Especially Nehru’s attitude towards the Hungarian events of 1956 was fiercely criticized, although Yudin also wrote that Nehru was a respected leader who contributed a lot to the cause of national liberation and world peace. According to Yudin, ideological differences notwithstanding, socialist countries represented a “sincere, reliable, and unselfish friend” of the Indian people.¹⁷³

This was a strong reprimand to Nehru for his open backing of Tito and the forthcoming visit of the Yugoslav President. During this visit Tito made an honest assessment:

Perhaps this pressure is due to my visit. Perhaps they just wanted to indirectly tell you that it would be wrong if you wanted to take Yugoslavia as a role model on certain issues. Most certainly, Yudin did not write this article without permission. However, I do not think that Khrushchev ordered him to do this.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² CFMA, 109-01431-06(1), “Situation surrounding the visit of the Yugoslav leader Tito to India”, December 6, 1958.

¹⁷³ Sudarshan Bhutani, *A Clash of Political Cultures: Sino-Indian Relations 1957–1962*, New Delhi: Roli Books, 2004, pp. 13–15.

¹⁷⁴ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/11-4, “Transcripts of talks between comrade President and the Indian PM Jawaharlal Nehru”, January 15, 1959, pp. 11–12.

Anyway, the timing of the publication of this article, especially because there was no other reason for such an attack, undoubtedly suggests that this kind of warning to Nehru was, indeed, triggered by Tito's arrival to India.

During his visit to India in January 1959, Tito unmistakably indicated to his hosts that Beijing's and Moscow's attention was gradually shifting from the ideological criticism of Yugoslavia towards scrutinizing Yugoslavia's relations with numerous African and Asian nations: "...They think we exert influence over these countries, so that they do not have friendly relations with them ... In this way, they consider that we interfere with Chinese policies in Asia, which aims to transform these countries into their potential allies".¹⁷⁵

Tito and Nehru touched many international issues (Berlin, Middle East, Tito's visits to Indonesia and Burma, issue of Pakistan) in their negotiations, while the question of China, naturally enough, was not avoided. Nehru wanted to know more about Tito's attitude regarding the internal changes occurring at that time in China, especially regarding the phenomenon of "people's communes". Tito bluntly replied that "communes" did not have anything in common with Marxism, that was true revisionism, but he balanced his final assessment with an explanation that one could not pursue radical economic reform acting as the Chinese were. Tito concluded:

They make great efforts, but this is not the main thing, this is only temporarily...all these steel mills, communes, egalitarianism cannot become a stimulus for rapid economic development, they are just temporary solution for unemployment and there will not be any great benefit from all of this.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁶ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/11-4, "Transcripts of talks between comrade President and the Indian PM Jawaharlal Nehru", January 15, 1959, pp. 9–10.

Socialist countries, especially China, were already well aware that Tito was successfully competing with them for influence among certain countries in Asia and Africa, at least by keeping them away from any military alignments.¹⁷⁷ As one Indian historian accurately concluded,

Tito ... was slowly blunting the edge of the classical concept of Marxism by embracing the principle of nonalignment. The enthusiasm showed by Yugoslavia in taking a giant stride towards nonalignment was certainly eroding Communist China's prestige and position in the world in general and among Afro-Asian community in particular".¹⁷⁸

Chinese embassy in New Delhi was closely following all the events surrounding Tito's visit to India—from his official talks with Nehru and meetings with local politicians around India, all the way until his departure for Ceylon.¹⁷⁹

In one of their reports Chinese diplomats expressed their moderate satisfaction that Yugoslavia's efforts to convene a conference of the nonaligned nations again stumbled upon Nehru's hesitation to take active part in such an endeavour. At the same time, they were very glad that India would maintain its cautious neutrality in the Sino-Yugoslav dispute (obviously they were uninformed about Nehru's last instructions to support Yugoslavia), while it was optimistically emphasized that there were many unbridgeable differences between Yugoslavia's and India's position.¹⁸⁰

Nevertheless, most of these "optimistic" assessments were based on news reports and some lower level contacts, although

¹⁷⁷ FRUS, 1958–60, Vol. 10, part 2, *Eastern Europe*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993, p. 400.

¹⁷⁸ Gopal Chaudhuri, *China and Nonalignment*, New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1986, p. 25.

¹⁷⁹ CFMA, 109-01431-06(1), "Situation surrounding the visit of the Yugoslav leader Tito to India", January 9, 1959.

¹⁸⁰ CFMA, 109-01431-06(1), "Situation surrounding the visit of the Yugoslav leader Tito to India", January 17, 1959.

there is a telegram that conveys some of the sensitive details from the Tito-Nehru talks on China and it must have been obtained through some kind of intelligence activity.¹⁸¹ However, quite soon Soviet officials would be trying to back down from the harsh rhetoric against Yugoslavia and distance themselves from Chinese actions, since all this could have influenced their sensitive relationships with countries like India, Egypt, Burma, and Indonesia.¹⁸² The concept of nonalignment had gained its strength and tenacity in the realm of international relations and Tito and Nehru were well aware of it.

Nehru, Tito, and the Chinese Challenge

Yugoslavia's ideological conflict with the socialist camp was only a harbinger of the deeper political clash that leading nonaligned nations had with both Moscow and Beijing during 1959. Right at the time when Tito was slowly wrapping up his visits to Asian and African countries, facing growing hostility from China, a conflict was already brewing between India and China that slowly evolved into a serious clash between socialist and nonaligned countries. However, if China's deteriorating relations with Yugoslavia, UAR, and Indonesia caused certain worries about Beijing's future position among Afro-Asian nations, the eruption of the border conflict with India represented the greatest challenge and obstacle.¹⁸³ After the last Nehru-Zhou meeting, a border crisis was already simmering in this bilateral relationship, but when a rebellion broke out in Tibet in March 1959 the whole contentious issue started to unravel, escalating into skirmishes along the Sino-Indian border.

When the unresolved border issue was brought to the surface, not only it was directly influencing the regional peace and stability, but the earlier perceptions that India and China had about

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-a, USSR, "Reception of the Soviet ambassador Zamchevski by President Tito", March 14, 1959.

¹⁸³ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru 45 (Second Series)*, op. cit., 2012, pp. 697–706.

each other had also fundamentally changed. Mutual suspicions and accusations were on the rise, particularly among the Indian public opinion and inside the Chinese leadership.¹⁸⁴ On the other hand, with the rise of political and economic power of India and China in Asia, a sudden change in the correlation of forces occurred, thus affecting the overall Sino-Indian relationship.

China and India were gradually becoming competitors for the influence in Asia, while the initial economic successes in China were also raising stakes for India to accelerate its own development. Nevertheless, the biggest issue was the contentious border problem that was largely ignored by both sides, with the Indians totally denying it and the Chinese waiting for the right moment to raise it.¹⁸⁵ However, what worried some foreign representatives was a possibility that further escalation of the Sino-Indian conflict along the border might endanger India's nonalignment and push New Delhi into the arms of the West.¹⁸⁶

Some Indian officials, like Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, were convinced that China's goal was to discredit India's nonaligned foreign policy, force Nehru to make rapprochement with the West, thus discrediting him in the eyes of the Soviets, Yugoslavs, and other Afro-Asian countries.¹⁸⁷ However, when new border clashes erupted, when the Soviet Union took a neutral stance, it seemed as Moscow decided to give priority to peaceful co-existence and maintaining a constructive relationship with the U.S. and India and not throwing its weight alongside China. This urged Mao

¹⁸⁴ Jovan Čavoški, *Jugoslavija i kinesko-indijski konflikt 1959–1962*, Beograd: INIS, 2009, pp. 169–190.

¹⁸⁵ Archives of the Foreign Ministry of Russian Federation (AVPRF), f. 0100, op. 52, p. 451, d. 77, l. 60-78, "On Sino-Indian Relations", December 22, 1959.

¹⁸⁶ CFMA, 105-00946-04, "Telegram from the Chinese embassy in the USSR on Soviet policy towards India", September 29, 1959.

¹⁸⁷ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 59, 691.933/10-2959, "Telegram from the U.S. Embassy in UK", October 29, 1959.

Zedong to conclude that Khrushchev was afraid of China's influence inside the socialist camp and around the world.¹⁸⁸

Chinese officials were convinced that the goal of Nehru or some elements inside his party were to undermine the Sino-Soviet relationship, gain corresponding success in receiving Western aid, and re-establish India's influence all along the Himalayas. They also argued that Nehru was advocating nonalignment towards everybody, except towards China.¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, Soviet officials were criticizing China's inflexible approach that gave India a leverage to weaken the CPI, isolate China in Asia, and take over the initiative on the diplomatic front.¹⁹⁰

As was the case with the Soviets, Yugoslavia and some other nonaligned countries were also concerned how the deterioration in Sino-Indian relations would influence India's nonalignment. Earlier Chinese propaganda campaign against Yugoslavia and India left a strong impression on Nehru, indicating the path along which Sino-Indian relations might develop. The Yugoslav ambassador to India suggested that Nehru be kept informed regularly about the anti-Yugoslav propaganda by the Chinese for the Indian side to accordingly plan its own actions in defense of nonalignment. However, to Yugoslavia and the UAR's surprise, the conflict with China did not increase India's interactions with the nonaligned countries, rather, it contributed to a further inactivity in that field.¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, as one of Nehru's close aides said to the Yugoslav ambassador, that the campaign against Yugoslavia made them "study Chinese policy without any illusions".¹⁹² Nehru

¹⁸⁸ Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, pp. 146–150.

¹⁸⁹ CFMA, 105-00944-07, "India launches second tide of anti-Chinese propaganda", September 29, 1959.

¹⁹⁰ AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 53, p. 463, d. 78, l. 31–53, "Sino-Indian relations", January 21, 1960.

¹⁹¹ AJ, 507, CK SKJ, IX, 42/VI-28, "Passiveness of India's Foreign Policy", 1960.

¹⁹² DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-104, 49320, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", April 4, 1959.

himself was drawing many lessons from the Yugoslav example, as he said to Tito, even though some Indian officials were pointing out the differences with Yugoslavia rather than the similarities.¹⁹³ Yugoslavia stood by India's side, although it did not want to interfere with historical problems—only emphasizing the principle that contentious bilateral issues should always be solved in a peaceful manner. Preserving India's nonaligned position was imperative for the Yugoslav and Egyptian foreign policies, since without India the whole concept by Tito and Nasser of organizing the nonaligned world would have been quite unfeasible.¹⁹⁴

When the border issue further escalated, Yugoslavia became a country whose support and advice in India were sought more than ever before. Yugoslavia's support was important as a sign of India's continuous nonaligned foreign policy orientation, since some Asian nonaligned countries were still reluctant to take sides.¹⁹⁵ Those days "Yugoslavia was present in all discussions held inside the Foreign Ministry ... thus contributing to the steadiness of its position in India."¹⁹⁶ In another letter to Nehru, Tito emphasized that the problems that Yugoslavia and India were facing vis-à-vis China were a direct result of Beijing's intentions to demonstrate to the Soviets the feebleness of their policy of peaceful co-existence.¹⁹⁷

Yugoslav officials were well aware that Soviet support was most sought by their Indian counterparts in their conflict with China, since Moscow was the only one that could influence Beijing. Yugoslavia and some other leading nonaligned countries came only second. Nevertheless, taking into account that many

¹⁹³ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-37, 413838, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", May 5, 1959.

¹⁹⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-69, 426394, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in China", October 4, 1959.

¹⁹⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-37, 427574, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", October 19, 1959.

¹⁹⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-37, 428043, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", October 26, 1959.

¹⁹⁷ AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/369, "Tito's letter to Nehru", October 25, 1959.

Afro-Asian nations were still largely reserved towards the Sino-Indian border issue, stressing Yugoslavia's open support also was very important to Nehru to "keep a minimal balance between the superpowers". Yugoslav experience was used by the proponents of nonalignment in New Delhi as a justification of such policies, its "best example and argument".¹⁹⁸

Further escalation of the anti-Yugoslav propaganda in Beijing only contributed to the "spontaneous solidarity of India with Yugoslavia", which increased the possibilities of Yugoslavia's direct influence on India's foreign policy.¹⁹⁹ In November 1959, a high-level Yugoslav delegation made a successful visit to India as a sign of intensive cooperation between the two countries, while the Indians wanted to use this opportunity to find out more about Yugoslavia's experiences with the socialist camp.²⁰⁰

Nevertheless, in an internal analysis, Yugoslav diplomats considered that India's previous reservations towards other nonaligned countries brought them into such a problematic situation that from then on they would be compelled to value more connections with friendly countries.²⁰¹ Therefore, Yugoslav foreign policy made new tactics to intensify its ties with Afro-Asian nations, particularly with Burma, Ghana, and the UAR, thus forcing India to come out of its "splendid isolation".²⁰²

As for the Indian side, Yugoslavia's potential to influence the moderates inside the Soviet leadership also contributed to Belgrade's rising influence in New Delhi. Yugoslav presence

¹⁹⁸ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-37, 427574, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", October 19, 1959.

¹⁹⁹ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-38, 431696, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", December 7, 1959.

²⁰⁰ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 38, "Visit of the Yugoslav delegation", October 16, 1959

²⁰¹ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-37, 426952, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", October 14, 1959.

²⁰² DAMSPS, PA, 1960, f-37, 49575, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", April 6, 1960.

among the highest echelons of the Congress party was already significant, which created new possibilities for its diplomats to further influence India's foreign and internal policies.²⁰³ Therefore, the Yugoslav embassy in New Delhi suggested that more work should be done with regards to the Indian bureaucracy, thus creating an additional leverage to further promote Yugoslavia's cooperation with India.

Maintaining direct and close contact with Nehru was considered as "the safest way to influence India's foreign policy". Even when Indian officials were not always ready to publicly sound their undivided backing for Yugoslavia's international position, though privately they were strongly behind it, from then on this was considered not as a lack of willingness for closer cooperation with Yugoslavia but as a sign that India did not want to cause a diverse reaction from either of the superpowers.²⁰⁴ As it was noted by the Yugoslav ambassador to India, this new Sino-Indian rivalry became "a contradiction unknown in the recent history of Asia, which demands from us new assessments of the overall situation in Asia and assuming a new stance".²⁰⁵

The ongoing political conflict between the leading nonaligned countries and the socialist camp initiated a new round of discussions on the issue of closer political cooperation between them. During May–June 1959, UAR diplomats were carefully sounding out whether there could be a new tripartite meeting between Tito, Nehru, and Nasser, also calling for tighter foreign policy coordination.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Nehru was firmly against any Bandung-type meetings, envisioned by some countries, but also against Tito's and Nasser's proposal for a nonaligned conference that would discuss key world issues on the eve of a

²⁰³ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-38, 431698, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", December 7, 1959.

²⁰⁴ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, "Who is creating foreign policy of India?", April 17, 1961.

²⁰⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1960, f-36, 412367, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", May 4, 1960.

²⁰⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1959, f-130, 430837, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in the UAR", November 24, 1959.

great powers' summit.²⁰⁷ Even Nasser's idea of an Afro-Asian conference which could be used to invite China to moderate its policies with regards to India and Indonesia was also rejected by Nehru.²⁰⁸ Therefore, both Tito and Nasser were ready to re-adjust their policies, unilaterally moving towards a nonaligned conference to which Nehru eventually would be forced to join in.

Tito, Nehru, and the Belgrade Conference of the Nonaligned

During the year 1960, all leading nonaligned countries were rapidly facing deteriorating relations with the major world powers, while the crisis in relations between the two blocs already created serious obstacles before reaching a meaningful compromise for the preservation of international stability. The necessity for joint action within the nonaligned camp was more visible than ever before. The 15th Session of the UN General Assembly (GA) in September 1960 presented a valuable opportunity for Tito, Nasser, Nehru, Sukarno, and Nkrumah to demonstrate to the world public opinion their joint proposals for the solution of pressing international issues. This was also the time to renew the appeal of nonaligned countries to the Soviet and American leaders to reinitiate their direct dialogue inside the UN. The international press already dubbed this joint initiative as the onset of the "neutralist or third bloc" in the UN, which heralded new developments in the year to come.²⁰⁹

Tito and Nasser decided to closely coordinate their activities inside the UN, especially during the debate on colonialism and disarmament. Besides, they were also waiting for Nehru to determine what would be the shape of the future action of nonaligned nations.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, Nehru was against any

²⁰⁷ NMML, Subimal Dutt Collection, Subject File 39, "S. Dutt instruction", December 14, 1959.

²⁰⁸ NAI, 21-A(2)-WANA, "S. Dutt letter to R.K. Nehru", December 16, 1959.

²⁰⁹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/12, "Survey of American press, September 24–28, 1960".

²¹⁰ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/12, "Transcripts of talks between Tito and Nasser, September 25, 1960".

collective action of these states. He only wanted to act individually, with India representing the whole Afro-Asian group in front of both the power blocs.²¹¹ The situation notwithstanding, Tito and Nasser decided to act together with Sukarno and Nkrumah as the driving force behind this initiative, with Nehru still lagging behind due to his well known reservations.²¹²

Although this initiative only became a moral–political victory of the nonaligned nations, this endeavour clearly demonstrated that the major nonaligned nations were ready to assume the role of global mediator in matters of peace and security. Some leaders even considered that international conditions were ripe enough for convening a new neutralist conference.

As was the case in 1958–59, in mid-February 1961 Tito undertook a two-month cruise around Africa during which he paid official visits to a number of countries (Ghana, Togo, Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Tunisia, and the UAR), among which some were pioneers of nonalignment in this region, while others were still reluctant to join this unofficial group.²¹³ However, one of Tito's driving motives for this long voyage was the idea to organize a summit conference of nonaligned leaders, right on the eve of the 16th UN General Assembly, where all these nations would reach a consensus on a number of crucial issues like preservation of peace, end of colonialism, disarmament, nuclear test ban, new role for the UN etc. and present this united resolution to both the superpowers as a clear voice of one third of humanity. At first, it was only Tito and Nasser who knew about this new initiative—Sukarno was still contemplating a second Bandung and Nehru was concentrating on strengthening India's influence among the Arab and African countries vis-à-vis China.²¹⁴

²¹¹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/12, "Transcripts of talks between Tito and Nehru", September 28, 1960.

²¹² AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/12, "Tito's report on his trip to the UN", October 13, 1960.

²¹³ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/13, "Tito's report on his trip to countries of West and North Africa", April 29, 1961.

²¹⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1961, f-116, 45196, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", February 17, 1961.

While Tito was presenting his new idea to his African counterparts, Nehru and Nasser briefly met in Cairo to exchange views on a number of issues, including this new summit conference proposal of nonaligned leaders. However, Nehru remained reserved over such initiatives, labeling them as premature and unnecessary, but he did not reject them altogether, even suggesting that Yugoslavia must be included. He was more for the promotion of a direct dialogue between the superpowers, as he felt any nonaligned conference might only bring to the surface inherent differences between these countries, thus making the dialogue much more difficult.²¹⁵

However, it was the Indonesian initiative for the second Bandung Conference, backed up by China's active diplomacy, which proved most worrisome for officials both in Belgrade and New Delhi. These were two countries which could suffer the most if Beijing took under its auspices any future Third World conferences. Therefore, Ambassador Kveder directly suggested close coordination with the Indian leadership, despite the differences between the two sides, in order to promote closer bilateral cooperation and understanding over certain key issues, particularly with regard to China's policies.²¹⁶ On the other hand, Nasser was openly lobbying for the nonaligned conference to take place as soon as possible, even if India would not participate.²¹⁷ Confronted with Nehru's well-known implacability and Sukarno's active push for an Afro-Asian meeting that would exclude Yugoslavia as a European country, Tito decided to enlist active support of as many nonaligned leaders as possible.

Essentially, what galvanized Tito's and Nasser's initiative was Nkrumah's sudden decision to endorse any future nonaligned summit which had far more prospects for joint action than the potential Afro-Asian conference. The two leaders also arrived at

²¹⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1961, f-116, 49399, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in the UAR", March 27, 1961.

²¹⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1961, f-35, 46939, "Report on Indian foreign policy", 1961.

²¹⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1961, f-116, 410170, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in the UAR", April 3, 1961.

a consensus that a comprehensive preparatory meeting should be held, with a preliminary list of participants already prepared, while the bulk of future efforts should be devoted to enlisting Nehru's support for such a meeting. Both Tito and Nasser concluded that Nehru's initiative to jointly condemn the Bay of Pigs invasion should be used to put additional pressure on him to stand behind their proposal for a nonaligned conference that would address all crisis issues, not just the individual ones.²¹⁸

Yugoslav and Egyptian leaders agreed to dispatch a separate letter to the heads of state of 21 nonaligned countries, inviting them to the preparatory meeting in Cairo and explaining the character and criteria of the future conference. Taking into account this turn of events, it was decided in Beijing to directly attack Yugoslavia, unmask Indian duplicity, and fight Tito's and Nehru's intentions to control this new nonaligned conference. From then on, Chinese propaganda activities were largely concentrated on the more radical participating countries.²¹⁹

Nehru's reservations notwithstanding, an open invitation to the forthcoming meeting and the strong willingness of many countries to participate forced India's hand to join this call and become one of the co-sponsors. However, the Indian side also demanded strict criteria for participation—the future conference agenda must be hitherto established, while insisting on extending the invitee list of participating countries.²²⁰ Officials in Belgrade and Cairo were well aware that India would assume such a policy that would not allow for the forthcoming conference to be directed against any of the blocs, but it was very important that Nehru finally decided to participate and that the regional framework of Bandung was also substituted by the more universalist agenda of nonalignment.²²¹

²¹⁸ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/13, "Transcripts of Tito-Nasser talks", April 20, 1961.

²¹⁹ CFMA, 109-02356-01, "Instructions from the Foreign Ministry on the conference of nonaligned countries", May 26, 1961.

²²⁰ DAMSPS, PA, f-116, 413744, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", April 30, 1961.

²²¹ DAMSPS, PA, f-116, 416838, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", May 28, 1961.

In many ways, India's decision to participate was dictated by its desire not to allow this conference to become a staging ground for pro-Chinese propaganda, since by then New Delhi observed most of its policies through the lenses of its deteriorating relationship with Beijing.²²² On the other hand, some Soviet diplomats stationed in India suggested that Yugoslavia should play an important role in inducing India to take part in this forthcoming conference, "moving India out of passive neutralism and forcing it to join any constructive actions".²²³

The preparatory meeting in Cairo in early June was not only dedicated to organizational matters. Since it was convened at the level of foreign ministers, it was also used to establish a minimal consensus between different participating countries on key international issues. Before his departure to Cairo, R.K. Nehru pointed out to the Yugoslav ambassador that India and Yugoslavia were the only two countries interested in resolving world problems, while "...others are using this conference to strengthen their own local positions".²²⁴

In fact, this preparatory meeting was marked by an acute disagreement between India on one side and Cuba, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali on the other over the issue of extending the invitation to as many Third World countries as possible, with Congo's participation as the stumbling block.²²⁵ India was confronted with an unpleasant fact that its influence among Afro-Asian countries was not as strong as it was previously believed to be.²²⁶ As the Yugoslav Foreign Secretariat pointed out, China's

²²² DAMSPS, PA, f-116, 417314, "Note on conversation between the State Under-Secretary Djerdja and the Indian charge d'affairs C. Dasgupta", June 1, 1961.

²²³ DAMSPS, PA, f-116, 416236, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", May 22, 1961.

²²⁴ DAMSPS, PA, f-116, 417533, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", June 2, 1961.

²²⁵ NAI, CON/27/61-AFR I, "Some aspects of the preparatory meeting of the conference of heads of states or governments of nonaligned countries", June 1961.

²²⁶ NARA, RG 59, 396.1-BE/6-1561, "Telegram from the U.S. embassy in Egypt", June 15, 1961.

presence was already tangible, while New Delhi “...demonstrated total unfamiliarity with Afro-Asian problems and surprising inability to adjust”, thus losing a lot of credibility in the eyes of these nations while pursuing a policy of “nonalignment towards the nonaligned”.²²⁷

Although Yugoslavia could not abide by the Indian proposal for broad participation of different countries, nevertheless Yugoslav officials were well aware that “...India’s and Nehru’s presence at the Belgrade Conference has positive meaning ... contributing to the prestige and significance of this whole action”. Therefore, Tito himself took the initiative to talk Nehru into coming to Belgrade, thus promoting close bilateral cooperation.²²⁸

Enlisting India’s full participation at the Belgrade Conference became one of the most difficult tasks for Tito and Yugoslav diplomacy, since till the very last moment it was not clear whether Nehru would personally attend this event, how India would accept the proposed conference agenda and its conclusions, and would he attempt to organize his own group at the conference (India, Burma, Cambodia, Nepal, Lebanon and others).²²⁹ Nevertheless, Nehru’s participation proved to be quite constructive during the sessions of the Belgrade Conference in early September 1961, which was a pleasant surprise for everybody. On the other hand, Tito, with his overt support to Soviet nuclear testing, proved to be a maverick of this gathering, causing great consternation among the Western powers.²³⁰

As soon as the Belgrade Conference ended it was decided in mid-November to hold another tripartite meeting between Tito, Nehru, and Nasser in Cairo. During the meeting between Tito and

²²⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1961, f-117, 420359, “Analysis of India’s position at the preparatory meeting in Cairo”, June 24, 1961,

²²⁸ DAMSPS, PA, f-117, 422060, “Telegram from the Under-Secretary Đerda to the embassy in India”, July 17, 1961.

²²⁹ DAMSPS, PA, f-117, 424796, “Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India”, August 12, 1961.

²³⁰ NARA, RG 59, 396.1-BE/9-2161, “Telegram from the U.S. embassy in Yugoslavia”, September 21, 1961.

Nasser, both leaders stressed that nonaligned countries were under serious pressure from both blocs, especially the West, which intended to finally break their unity. On the other hand, Nasser was dissatisfied with India's attempts to separate itself from the rest of the nonaligned group, thus subverting any intentions about joint action. He remembered Nehru's similar reservations during the Brioni summit five years earlier.²³¹

When Nehru reached Cairo after his visit to the U.S., he brought discomfoting news that the Kennedy administration was disappointed with the results of the Belgrade Conference. Tito noted that Moscow was equally disenchanted, but this opposition coming from both the superpowers only proved that nonaligned states were pursuing an independent course. He also suggested that this should be further promoted by stronger political coordination and closer economic cooperation between the leading nonaligned countries. Nasser immediately concurred, but Nehru was still reluctant to clearly define the scope of any future action. Nevertheless, the three leaders agreed to continue with their intensive exchanges and try to further the results of the Belgrade Conference.²³² The big three of the nonaligned world were still a force to reckon with.

The Belgrade Conference was not the true birthplace of the NAM, since it took a few more years to formally set up such an organization, but the "spirit of Belgrade" and the decisions taken at this gathering undoubtedly represented the emergence of a global alternative to the bloc divisions in world politics.

What was even more important, this gathering helped shape the political consciousness of the developing nations that through joint action they could strengthen their international position and influence the delicate balance of forces of the Cold War. Similar events only stressed the growing awareness of the Third World

²³¹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/14, "Transcripts of Tito–Nasser talks", November 18, 1961.

²³² AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/14, "Transcripts of Tito–Nehru–Nasser talks", November 19, 1961.



that could ultimately get it out of the colonial quagmire and reinvent its role in international affairs.²³³

Tito, Nehru, and the Sino-Indian Border War

After the eruption of the Sino-Indian border dispute in 1959, not only was nonalignment growingly under threat of going into a political or even military clash with China and the socialist camp, but also the ties between leading neutralist nations were being put under the test of facing different great powers. The abrupt change in the nature of the Sino-Indian relationship largely affected the nature of Third World politics at that time. At the same time, India was not willing or ready to undertake any programme of full military re-armament, since that would only undermine the realization of the country's economic modernization.²³⁴

During this period China also undertook certain steps to regulate some of the border issues, particularly with India, Burma, and Nepal. As one Yugoslav diplomat concluded, China needed to demonstrate goodwill to the small neighbours of the Bandung group, particularly when it seemed that other Great Powers were already going for the reduction of tensions.²³⁵ In fact, growing U.S. and Soviet economic assistance to India compelled Beijing to seek for a negotiated solution, since otherwise this could have only strengthened Indian resistance to a compromise along Chinese lines.²³⁶

Privately said, officials from both countries, indeed, were seriously contemplating a compromise that would preserve for both sides what they already controlled, while tacitly giving up on the territories they were only claiming. This would then largely

²³³ G.H. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Nonalignment*, pp. 305–307.

²³⁴ AJ, 507, CK SKJ, IX, 42/VI-11, "Nehru and China", April 6, 1959.

²³⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1960, f-67, 410307, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in China", April 4, 1960.

²³⁶ CFMA, 105-01001-04, "Methods, influence and roles of the U.S. and Soviet assistance to India", February 26, 1960.

settle the border issue with no gains, but also no losses for any side. However, under the pressure of India's public opinion and his party colleagues, Nehru was forced to give up on these thoughts altogether, while the Chinese were reluctant to make the first move.²³⁷ Nevertheless, Zhou Enlai's visit to New Delhi in April 1960 was intended to settle the issue along the above mentioned lines, thus sponsoring a compromise territorial swap, but this kind of solution was quickly rejected due to the fact that the level of mutual trust was already very low.²³⁸

Throughout 1961 and 1962 the situation along the Sino-Indian border was steadily deteriorating, with troops from both countries preparing to assume better positions along the borderline they respectively considered as legitimate. Chinese officials were already concerned with possible prospects that, after the failure of the Nehru–Zhou talks, the Indian side might try to foment discord between Beijing and Moscow.²³⁹ These new developments only meant that India would continue with its “forward policy” along the Western and Eastern sectors of the border.²⁴⁰

This kind of action could have only triggered proportionate Chinese response on the ground that it could have dissuaded Indian troops from further encroachments, as it was stipulated by Mao Zedong in his “armed peaceful co-existence” directives.²⁴¹ Both China and India were largely convinced that their competition went much further than the concrete border issue and

²³⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1960, f-36, 410207, “Notes of conversation between Filipa Čurčić and R. Jaipalom”, March 11, 1960.

²³⁸ NMML, P.N. Haksar Collection, Subject File 24-25, “Records of talks Nehru–Zhou Enlai, 20-25.IV 1960”.

²³⁹ CFMA, 105-01001-07, “Indian newspapers’ report on Indo-Soviet rapprochement and fomenting discord in Sino-Soviet relations”, June 28, 1960.

²⁴⁰ Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2011, pp. 284–287, 292–297.

²⁴¹ Shi Bo, *Zhong Yin dazhan jishi*, Beijing: Zhongguo dadi chubanshe, 1993, pp. 182–186.

it had serious implications not only for the respective superpower policies, but also for the Third World in general.²⁴² This was more than obvious when the border war finally broke out in October 1962.

Due to its dispute with China, India was engrossed into intensive diplomacy with the two superpowers, largely ignoring its ties with key nonaligned countries as part of the geopolitical puzzle. India was generally acting along the lines of its earlier policies, popularly dubbed by Yugoslav officials as “nonalignment towards the nonaligned”.

Even though interested in close relationship with Yugoslavia, the only way to overcome standing Indian reservations for closer cooperation with the nonaligned group was to intensively work with Nehru personally and try to win him over.²⁴³ As a new sign of bilateral cooperation, Indian officials requested that some Indian officers undergo training in Yugoslav military schools in mountainous and guerilla warfare, since Yugoslavia had ample experience in both from the Second World War.²⁴⁴ The key to India’s participation in any new nonaligned initiative was to have New Delhi finally overcome its standing reservations and see itself as part of a larger community that wanted to find its own political path between the superpower blocs.

The diverse impact of the Sino-Indian border conflict (October–November 1962) on the future of India’s nonalignment was one of the main factors which seriously disturbed this group of nations. In many ways, China’s decision to engage itself in an armed conflict with India also had its aim of not only forcing the Soviet hand into finally aligning with Beijing, but also readjusting

²⁴² NARA, RG 59, 691.93/4-1662, “MEA view on Sino-Indian relations”, April 16, 1962.

²⁴³ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, “Who creates Indian foreign policy?”, April 17, 1961.

²⁴⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1961, f-35, 416091, “Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India”, July 26, 1961.

Beijing's policies among the revolutionary Third World movements and giving additional proof that India's nonalignment was false, since Nehru "really" stood by the side of the U.S.²⁴⁵ In fact, India saw its conflict with China not as an expression of contradictions along the border, but as an attempt to decisively compromise India's policy of nonalignment.²⁴⁶

Nehru considered this conflict with China a direct assault the basic principles of peaceful co-existence, thus undermining not only India's security, but also world peace.²⁴⁷ This was the most serious crisis to date that could have shaken the very foundations of global nonalignment, leaving most of the nonaligned group without India's towering presence and its strong moral authority.²⁴⁸ This conflict was directly undermining the notions of Afro-Asian solidarity and nonalignment, strengthening imperialism, deepening divisions between these nations irrespective of what the different countries thought of India or China.²⁴⁹ Therefore, Tito's example of getting aid from both sides of the Cold War, which in return did not subvert Yugoslavia's nonalignment, became a precious example for Nehru to follow in this crisis.

The Sino-Indian border war became a true testing ground for Yugoslavia's nonaligned foreign policy, thus compelling Tito to act carefully in order to swing the Soviets and some other nonaligned countries his way and give concrete backing to India. Even though Nehru urgently dispatched his letter to Tito just a

²⁴⁵ Dai Chaowu, "Yindu waijiao zhengce, daguo guanxi yu 1962 nian Zhong Yin bianjie chongtu" in Niu Dayong, Shen Zhihua (eds), *Leng zhan yu Zhongguo de zhoubian guanxi*, Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2004, pp. 548–551.

²⁴⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-37, 438257, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", November 19, 1962.

²⁴⁷ AVPRF, f. 90, op. 24, p. 45, d. 11, l. 68-70, "Nehru's letter to Khrushchev", November 5, 1962.

²⁴⁸ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 3, pp. 229–230.

²⁴⁹ NARA, RG 59, 691.93/11-1062, "UAR attitude on Sino-Indian conflict", November 10, 1962.

few days after the hostilities broke out, asking Yugoslavia to render its military aid, there had been no reply from Belgrade for two weeks. Publicly, Yugoslavia was most reluctant to offer its support to India, which seemed puzzling to many. When the message was finally delivered to Nehru on November 13, the Indian side was quite satisfied with its contents, but Tito requested that it be not published.²⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Indian officials expressed their resentment due to the fact that Yugoslavia's support to India and nonalignment was of the utmost importance for India's future. It might have happened that New Delhi, under pressure from China, was soon compelled to alter the basic principles of its foreign policy, which would have been detrimental to Belgrade too.²⁵¹ On the other hand, some of the reasons for Yugoslavia initially dragging its feet could be also found in its inability to influence China, but also in its dissatisfaction with previous Indian policies that largely neglected any intensive contacts along the nonaligned political lines. This was also a way to demonstrate to Indian officials that Yugoslavia's and non-aligned countries' assistance, which was sometimes reluctantly sought by India during previous years, might prove to be rather necessary at a time of serious crisis. Tito knew well that his opinion and actions would influence the posture of other nonaligned nations, as well as of the Soviet bloc, and he needed time to carefully calibrate his international position.²⁵²

Since Yugoslavia was then engaged in the process of normalization of relations with the Soviet Union, siding openly with India against China at the time when even Moscow was still reluctant to take a clear stance would have had a diverse impact on this process. Being both communist and nonaligned at the same

²⁵⁰ NARA, RG 59, 691.93/11-1762, "Tito's message to Nehru of November 13", November 17, 1962.

²⁵¹ DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-37, 438260, "Telegram from the Yugoslav mission in the UN", November 16, 1962.

²⁵² DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-37, 436450, "Circular telegram from the Foreign Secretariat", November 9, 1962.

time only put additional strain on Yugoslav foreign policy.²⁵³ Inside the Yugoslav government an opinion was formed that India was very much to be blamed for its own isolation, since it neglected developing and nurturing friendly relationships with key nonaligned countries, particularly with those in Asia. Now India's future depended on the will of the two superpowers, which could have had a negative impact on the nonaligned global strategy as a whole.²⁵⁴

Some nonaligned countries such as like Indonesia and Cambodia, were banking on Tito's action to mediate in the border conflict but they were also well aware that Foreign Minister Chen Yi had already conveyed to the Ceylonese and Indonesian ambassadors that Yugoslavia must not participate in any of the mediating efforts of Afro-Asian nations and if they did so China would refuse to cooperate with any of them. Yugoslavia was labeled by the Chinese Foreign Minister as "a tool of U.S. imperialism".²⁵⁵ Therefore, Yugoslavia decided to act behind the scenes and render its support to India in other ways.

Three strategies were chosen to re-affirm Yugoslavia's position among countries: 1) close political coordination with the UAR in preparation for the Colombo Conference that would mediate the border conflict; 2) Tito's previously unplanned visit to the USSR, which was hastily organized at the time of the Sino-Indian border war, as means to influence Soviet views; 3) Vice-President Kardelj's visit to Indonesia and India where he could directly discuss pressing issues with these two key nonaligned countries.

Before the UAR delegation left for Colombo, Nasser wanted to visit Yugoslavia and exchange his views on the Sino-Indian

²⁵³ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 294–297.

²⁵⁴ DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-37, 441423, "Circular telegram from the Foreign Secretariat", December 21, 1962.

²⁵⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-64, 440389, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in China", December 8, 1962.

border conflict with Tito.²⁵⁶ Instead of Nasser's visit to Yugoslavia, State Secretary Popović was immediately dispatched to see Nasser and confer with him on this issue. What both sides agreed upon was a joint platform for negotiations at the future Colombo Conference, which meant that the UAR delegates would take a joint position of Cairo and Belgrade at the forthcoming event.²⁵⁷ In essence, it came to Yugoslavia and the UAR to become saviours of India's nonalignment in the diplomatic arena.

Soon after the end of the hostilities along the Sino-Indian border and since some nonaligned countries were slowly coming to the aid of India, while Moscow had finally altered its stance, as was indicated by Khrushchev himself in a talk with ambassador T.N. Kaul, Nehru considered it politically imperative to stay out of the Western bloc and maintain a policy of nonalignment as a guarantee of further Soviet support.²⁵⁸ At the same time, it was advised that India concentrated her efforts on nonaligned countries "because of the common ideology" than on Afro-Asian countries "on the basis of race or region". Nonalignment must be developed "irrespective of regional and racial ties it cuts across".²⁵⁹ Indian officials now saw nonalignment as based on respective military and economic strength, encompassing all defensive measures, including foreign military aid—but without any strings attached.²⁶⁰ Since Moscow altered its policies and decided to render serious support to India, Tito considered this as conducive to his own goals of rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

²⁵⁶ DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-138, 458746, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in the UAR", November 24, 1962.

²⁵⁷ DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-138, 439208, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in the UAR", November 30, 1962.

²⁵⁸ NMML, T.T. Krishnamachari Collection, Correspondence with Nehru, 1963, "Nehru to B.K. Nehru, 8.III 1963".

²⁵⁹ NMML, T.N. Kaul Collection (I-III Instalments), Subject File 15, "Letter from T.N. Kaul to M.J. Desai, 18.XII 1962".

²⁶⁰ NMML, T.N. Kaul Collection (I-III Instalments), Correspondence with R.K. Nehru, "Letter from R.K. Nehru to T.N. Kaul, 20.XII 1962".

In early December, Tito went to Moscow where he would meet Khrushchev and even make a public speech in front of the Supreme Soviet for the first time after more than six years. Even though in the official transcripts of talks between Soviet and Yugoslav delegations the Sino-Indian border conflict was not directly mentioned, it was more than obvious that this was the main goal of Tito's visit. In a letter he later sent to Nehru after his return from Moscow he said that Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union assumed an identical position towards this conflict, but Moscow could not publicly take a position due to its specific relationship with China and its commitment to the policy of peaceful co-existence. Tito gave assurances to Nehru that the Soviets would firmly support a negotiated solution of this issue.²⁶¹ This was the main goal of Tito's visit—to facilitate mending fences between Moscow and New Delhi—and it proved to be largely successful.

While Tito was in Moscow, Vice-President Kardelj paid official visits to Indonesia, India, and Iraq. While in Indonesia, Kardelj especially insisted on the assistance nonaligned countries ought to render to India in order to keep it on the right path. It was evident that Indonesia was already very close to China. Kardelj urged his hosts to influence Beijing, but Sukarno, his criticism of Nehru notwithstanding, was still interested in maintaining the nonaligned group intact.²⁶²

During his visit to India, Kardelj received a very solemn reception and he held long talks with Nehru. These talks were mainly about the nature of Chinese politics, China's relations with nonaligned countries, the Soviet Union, as well as about the importance for India to remain nonaligned, while Yugoslavia would render its full support in winning over other nonaligned countries to back India's position.²⁶³ In a letter to one of his Chief

²⁶¹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/378, "Tito's letter to Nehru", January 13, 1963.

²⁶² DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-37, 441436, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in Indonesia", December 19, 1962.

²⁶³ DAMSPS, PA, 1962, f-37, 441735, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", December 22, 1962.

Ministers, Nehru expressed his gratitude to Kardelj for pointing out to him this wider, global dimension of China's involvement in South Asia.²⁶⁴

Both sides agreed that the Colombo proposals for a compromise solution of the border conflict must be accepted by both India and China in order to reach the final settlement. Besides government officials, Kardelj also met the representatives of the CPI.²⁶⁵ Nevertheless, some Indian circles expected even more open Yugoslav support for India, but Nehru was quite satisfied with this visit since it helped him strengthen and reaffirm his nonaligned foreign policy course. This visit was officially portrayed as a clear signal that Yugoslavia was firmly at India's side, which was already obvious to both superpowers.²⁶⁶

Preserving India's nonalignment intact was the ultimate goal of the Yugoslav and UAR diplomatic actions. Nehru desperately sought international backing in order to maintain his previous foreign policy strategy intact, remain independent on the international scene, and avoid any internal or external pressures to join either side of the Cold War. Both Tito and Nasser were there to lend a hand and render as much support to their Indian friend as possible. In this way Nehru was able to openly avoid aligning with the West, while strengthening ties with both the Soviet Union and some of the nonaligned countries which proved to be conducive to balancing China's influence inside the socialist camp and also the Third World.

Therefore, India finally became one of the vociferous proponents of a new nonaligned conference that could diminish the influence of the pro-Chinese Afro-Asian group. As long as the very foundations of Nehru's nonalignment were left intact and

²⁶⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers 1947–1964*, Vol. 5, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1989, pp. 553–554.

²⁶⁵ DAMSPS, PA, 1963, f-37, 4646, "Telegram from the Yugoslav embassy in India", January 5, 1963.

²⁶⁶ NARA, RG 59, 033.6891/12-2962, "Telegram from the U.S. embassy in India", December 29, 1962.

there were no formal commitments and alignments between India and the West or India and the Soviet bloc, both Tito and Nasser were quite comfortable with India's short-term arrangements and balancing acts with any of the two blocs.²⁶⁷ This was the essence of Tito's views on global nonalignment.

Conclusion: Tito, Nehru, and the Destiny of Nonalignment

Sources of global nonalignment should be found in the immediate results of the process of decolonization and in the attempts of these nations to overcome economic backwardness. Their nonaligned policy was marked by the outright rejection of any bloc divisions and power politics in world affairs that jeopardized the independence of small nations and equally threatened world peace. Any association with the two existing camps meant for these countries the obvious denial of their sovereign rights and direct encroachment on their independent internal and foreign policies by any of the Great Powers.

In fact, two major factors directly contributed to such a change: the first one was the general nature of the whole Cold War system, divided between two major power blocs that made it possible for these newly rising nations to skillfully manipulate the nuances of the delicate balance of power between Washington and Moscow that had not become static in the Third World; the second one was the growing national consciousness of these nations, driven either by their resentment toward colonial humiliation or by resurgent nationalism based on old perceptions of past historical grandeur.

Under these particular conditions, three leaders of crucial countries standing between the two blocs—Tito, Nehru, and Nasser, contrary to their obvious differences in political and historical experiences, managed to set in motion a process that would ultimately encompass the whole developing world and

²⁶⁷ AJ, 837, KPR, I-5-b, India, "Discussion on India inside the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs", May 14, 1964.



influence the foreign policy strategy of many countries. Tito was convinced that in India and Egypt he found nations that shared same aspirations and similar difficulties with Yugoslavia, but he also saw in them a potent force that could, through intensive high-level political coordination, readjust and rebalance the whole system of international relations.

Tito, Nehru, and Nasser proclaimed their sincere adherence to the policy of active nonalignment that meant both non-involvement in any of the great power blocs and the desire for an independent position in foreign affairs. They were also putting forward the necessity of peaceful co-existence not merely as an alternative, but as an imperative of world politics. While for Nehru the sole idea of peaceful co-existence was a manner in which India would adjust relations with all its neighbours and calibrate its position in Asian affairs, for Tito the concept of nonalignment had become the main point of redefinition of Yugoslavia's role in the international arena.

Both Tito and Nehru, joined by Nasser, were conscious enough to know that developing countries had neither economic nor military power that could be effectively used to undermine the bipolar global system. Nevertheless, they were well aware that the nuances of the superpower confrontation and the intricacies of the world order they represented offered major opportunities for the Third World to establish itself as an area where the views of the superpowers could be moderated and the suspicions of the nonaligned allayed.

Eventually, as Tito persuasively embraced the idea of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence, he consciously transformed them into a new doctrine for the developing world that he personally labeled as the "active peaceful co-existence". He actually thought that the cause of peace, security, cooperation, and economic progress had to be achieved, not by just sitting idly between the blocks and avoiding all confrontations, but by engaging the superpowers through creation of mechanisms of international cooperation that could compel both the blocs to cope

more seriously with the problems of the developing world. In Tito's view, the policy of nonalignment was based on the assumption of a changing world in which peace was not a static thing to be bought by freezing the status-quo.²⁶⁸ It was an unceasing struggle against the conditions that bred war.

However, while Tito was using the strategy of nonalignment to stay as far away from any of the superpower contests and gain corresponding economic advantage from this, Nehru tried to stay above all this, assuming the moral high-ground from which he could influence the views of friend and foe. Whenever facing major crisis in international relations or being under pressure from different great powers, Tito always opted for a comprehensive exchange of views and consultations with leading Third World nations as a means of diffusing international tensions. Although Nehru was a reluctant conference-goer, he would always agree to Tito's initiatives, since any joint action might prove valuable for strengthening international peace and security.

Nehru's pragmatic regional approach and tactician's appeal to nonalignment were successfully balanced with Tito's sweeping nonaligned strategies and his true "internationalism" that sought the reduction of Cold War rivalries and broadening of the political base of the nonaligned. While Nehru's nonalignment was directed at elevating his prestige as a global mediator among the great powers, a true tour-de-force of international cooperation, Tito's nonalignment was more inclusive, therefore global, with flexible criteria that encompassed a growing number of countries, thus enhancing international solidarity against the general setting of the Cold War. This dilemma of strategy of nonalignment with regards to India was also strongly pointed out by Nasser: "Nehru with his 360 million inhabitants can afford to stand alone. I with my people of 20 million must get connected with my neighbors".²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, , p. 113.

²⁶⁹ AJ, 837, KPR, I-2-5, "Minutes of conversation between President Tito and President Nasser", January 5, 1956.

Without strong personal and political relationship between Tito and Nehru, and the one they both shared with Nasser, image of the third major force in international relations during the Cold War would have been quite different. It is quite normal to point out that Tito's and Nehru's independent policies had their different origins, different starting points, but the specific conditions of the Cold War system endowed them with grand opportunities to pursue together nonaligned policies between the superpower blocs, directly promoting the interests of the world standing between the two blocs.

In essence, both Tito's and Nehru's actions clearly demonstrated that major nonaligned nations were ready to assume the responsible role of the global mediator in the matters of peace and security. As one author correctly said, "Tito's ideas fell on receptive ears; he struck the right note with the right audience at the right moment in time."²⁷⁰ The same goes for Jawaharlal Nehru and his close political and private relationship with his Yugoslav friend, Tito.

²⁷⁰ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 117.