Chapter - III

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA
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Besides the ancient days, Sino-Indian relations date back in modern times to the colonial period when two countries were struggling against imperialism. Jawaharlal Nehru met Gen. Chiang Kai-shek personally to express India's solidarity with Chinese national cause.

When in 1938 China became a victim of Japanese aggression, the Indian National Congress sympathised with her and advised the people of India to refrain from purchasing Japanese goods. The Congress decided to send a medical mission to China. At that time, the political conditions of Europe were very bad. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was aware of this did not want to leave India at a moment of crisis. But, in spite of this, he visited China on 22 August 1939 and met Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek in whom he found the determination to fight for the freedom of China. Nehru said:

"I found, to my joy, that my desire that China and India should draw closer to each other was fully reciprocated by China's leaders, and more especially by that great man who has become the symbol of China's

3. Nehru, op. cit., p.60
unity and her determination to be free."  

Often those two leaders had to sit in an air-raid shelter when the Japanese planes were bombing a city. They discussed the past and the present of their two countries and the prospects of their cooperation in the future. Thus the people of India gave whole-hearted support to the freedom struggle of China.

After India became free, one of the first countries with which she established diplomatic relations was the Nationalist government of China in 1948 and appointed K.M. Panikkar first Indian Ambassador to China. But when the Nationalist Government was overthrown by the Communists in 1949, India was among the first countries to recognise the new government. In this context on 30 December 1949, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

"Ever since the Chinese Revolution, we naturally had to think of what the new China was likely to be ... We knew that a strong China is normally an expansionist China .... Taken with the fact of China's somewhat inherent tendency to be expansive when she is strong, we realized the danger to India ... As the years have gone by, this fact has become more and more apparent.

5. Nehru, op.cit., p. 608
7. A.Appadora, I. S. Rajan, India's foreign policy and relations, New Delhi, 1985, p. 115.
and obvious. If any person imagines that we have followed our China policy without realizing the consequences, he is mistaken. If he thinks that we have followed it because of fear of China, he is doubly mistaken."  

But, in spite of this, the Indian leaders thought in the beginning that Indian cooperation with the new regime of China would be helpful in maintaining peace and freedom in the region. However, they were greatly shocked when the Chinese army entered Tihet in 1950. Still, India voted against a resolution in the U.N. General Assembly in February 1951 describing the People's Republic of China as an "aggressor" in Korea. Again, India refused to participate in the conference which was held at San Francisco in September 1951 to sign a peace agreement with Japan on the ground that China was not participating it. India realized that attending an important conference on the Far East, from which China was excluded, would not be proper. In 1953, India submitted a resolution in the U.N. General Assembly on the questions of the prisoners of War. Nehru made it clear that the resolution was intended to accommodate the viewpoint of China, as far as possible, on that question. India pleaded for the restitution of Formosa, the off-shore Chinese island, to the China. 

10. The Statesman, 8 September, 1958, p.1; and also Asian Recorder 1955, p.139.
India concluded an agreement with China on April 29, 1954 by which she recognised Chinese Suzerainty over Tibet speaking on the application of the principles of Panchsheel in this context Nehru said on May 15, 1954:

These principles indicate the policy that we pursue in regard to these matters not only with China but with any neighbouring country, or for that matter any other country. What is more, it is a statement of wholesome principles, and I imagine that if these principles were adopted in the relations of various countries with one another, a great deal of the trouble of the present day world would probably disappear.... It is a matter of importance to us, of course, as well as, I am sure, to China that these countries, which have now almost about, 1,800 miles of frontier, should live in terms of peace and friendliness and should respect each other’s sovereignty and integrity, should agree not to interfere with each other in any way and not commit aggression on each other. By this agreement, we ensure peace to a very large extent in a certain area of Asia. I would earnestly wish that this area of peace could be spread over the rest of Asia, and indeed over the rest of the World.  


India and China concluded the famous panchsheel agreement on May 29, 1954 by which they agreed on following principles:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Mutual non-aggression;
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
4. Equality and mutual benefit; and
5. Peaceful co-existence.

Speaking on India's foreign policy Nehru said on 30 September 1954:

"Leaving these three big countries, the United states of America, the Soviet Union and China, aside for the movement, look at the World. There are many advanced, highly cultured countries. But if you peep into the future and if nothing goes wrong—wars and the like— the obvious fourth country in the world is India." 14

Chinese Prime Minister, Chou-En-lai visited India in June 1954. He spoke in favour of cooperation between the two

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countries. Later in the same year the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru again went to China for promoting closer cooperation between the two countries, from 19 to 28 October 1954.

India and China came closer to each other. In the Communist Bandung Conference China was also invited and which was held from 18 to 24 April 1955 in Indonesia. On Sept. 17, 1955, addressing the Lok Sabha Nehru said:

"These ideas of peaceful co-existence there is nothing new about these ideas, but nevertheless it was a new application of an old idea, an application to a particular context were initially mentioned and promulgated, not only have they spread in the world and influenced more and more countries, but they have progressively acquired a greater depth and meaning.... I think we take some credit for spreading this conception of a peaceful settlement, and above all, of non-interference of each country should carve out its own destiny without interfering with others is an important conception, though there is nothing new about it."

16. (Nasenko, Yuri), Jawaharlal Nehru and India's foreign policy, New Delhi, 1977, p. 184; and see C. F. Fitzgerald, China and South East Asia, since 1945, Delhi, 1975, p. 81.

17. Lok Sabha, September 17, 1955, p. 14198.
China continued to follow a policy of friendship with India. Chinese Prime Minister Chao-En-lai visited India on 2 December 1956 and emphasised close cooperation between the two countries which he said, would be helpful in maintaining world peace and security. China also supported Goa's merger with India and strongly condemned the US-sponsored resolution on Kashmir in the Security Council in January 1957. People of either of two countries were allowed to visit each other's religious places in China and India. They were permitted to travel through the Shipki La Pass, the Mana pass, the Niti Pass, the Kungri Bingri Pass, the Dharma Pass and the Lipu Lekh Pass. Nehru sent a letter to Prime Minister Chou En-lai on 14 December 1958 in an effort to solve the Boundary issue. After that, various letters were exchanged between them in connection with the dispute between the two countries. From 1955, the Chinese started rebelling Tibet. Tibetan leaders became rebellion against the Chinese government. Nehru said that he had little doubt that the great majority of Tibetans sympathized with it. In March 1959 Tibetan suspects that the Chinese government had a secret plan to remove Dalai Lama from Tibet because the Chinese government felt that there was a danger to China's security.

20. A.Appodurai & M.S.Rajan, op.cit., p.118
21. Ibid, p.126
22. Nehru speeches, op.cit, p.343
from his presence. Lai Lai Lama fled from Tibet and came to India on 31 March 1959. Nehru was very keen to give help to Tibetans and their Dalai Lama. He said on April 27, 1959.

Dalai Lama and his party reached Mussorie, where the Government had made arrangements for their stay... They sought asylum, and we agreed .... We could not leave these refugees to their own resources. Apart from the humanitarian considerations involved, there was also the law and order problem to be considered.

India's foreign policy towards China came under greater strain to some extent when China occupied Longju and some other Indian territory in Ladakh in 1959. In this situation, Nehru expressed his views on 28 August 1959 in Lok Sabha thus:

The House will appreciate that these areas are extraordinarily remote, almost inaccessible, and even if they can be approached, it takes weeks to march and get there... A reconnaissance Party was sent there. I cannot exactly say when, but I think it was a little over a year ago, sometime last year. In fact two parties were sent: one of them did not return and the other returned.... We waited for two or three weeks, and when it did not return, we suspected that it might have been apprehended or captured by Chinese authorities on the border. So we addressed the Chinese authorities. This was more

24. Nehru speeches, Vol.IV, op.cit., p. 185,
than a year ago; we addressed them about a month after the incident and they said some of our people had violated their border and gone into their territory, and they had been apprehended, but because of their relations with us, etc., they were going to release them, and they did release them afterwards, that is, after they had been with them for about a month or so.\textsuperscript{25}

Frequent border violations were made by China and on October 21, 1959, nine Indian soldiers were killed.\textsuperscript{26} At the same time, an uprising took place in Tibet which was promptly suppressed by China. There was deep indignation in India at the harsh measures of China. In these circumstances Nehru said on September 10, 1959.

Very probably the Tibetan developments have angered and soured the mind of the Government of China. Perhaps they have reacted strongly to what we have done, for example to the asylum we have given to the Dalai Lama. We have tried to steer a middle way. We respect the Dalai Lama.\textsuperscript{28}

To reduced tension between India and China, the Prime Ministers of both the countries met in New Delhi from 20 to 25 April 1960.\textsuperscript{29} The Prime Minister Nehru in a speech after

\textsuperscript{25} Nehru speeches, Vol.IV, op.cit., pp.194-195,  
\textsuperscript{26} Notes, memorandum & letters ex-changed and Agreement between India & China, (NMLIC), 1959, p.22.  
\textsuperscript{27} V.P.Dutt, op.cit., p.105.  
\textsuperscript{28} Nehru, Vol.IV, op.cit., p.211,  
\textsuperscript{29} Girija Kumar; V.K.Arora: Documents on Indian Affairs, 1960, Bombay, 1965, pp.524-25.
holding the meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister said:

Our whole argument was based on the Chinese forces having come into our territory ... The Chinese position was basically different, historically, actually, practically... I do not imagine that this process will clarify the situation and make it easy of solution.30

Nehru made it clear that India could not rule out further conflict or some kind of peaceful talks in future.

Official teams of the two countries also visited each other. But no agreement could be reached and the border incursions continued. After this Nehru said, in Lok Sabha on April 1, 1961:

The House knows well enough how recent developments have created a wide gulf in the relations between India and China. We have felt strongly about it, and the House has also felt strongly about it. Nevertheless, we have tried to avoid, in so far as we can, taking any steps which may create unbridgeable chasms between the two countries, we have to look, at this moment of history, not only to the present but to the future; and the future of India and China who are neighbours to each other and have vast populations, is of the highest importance to themselves and to the world. So we have tried to steer a middle course between our strong resentment and the steps we actually take in this context. We

30. Jawaharlal Nehru speeches, Vol.IV, New Delhi, 1964, pp.218-220,
try not to allow ourselves merely in anger to do something which may create further problems and difficulties. Broadly, our attitude has been to strengthen ourselves to prepare for any contingency and not in the slightest to give in on any matter which we consider important.  

The Indian government wrote a letter to the Chinese government dated 14 May 1962 urging it to reconsider the offer made by Nehru to Premier Chou En-lai on 16 November 1959 which inter alia proposed as an interim measure, that in the Ladakh region, India should withdraw its personnel to the west of the line shown in the 1956 Chinese map and the government of China should withdraw its to the east of the international boundary shown in Indian official maps. Thus Indian government tried its best to solve the dispute by peaceful means.

India submitted a proposal to the Chinese government to the effect that the status quo on the border, as on 8 September 1962, should be returned, and thereafter, the two countries should start discussions.

Ultimately, on October 20, 1962 China mounted a full fledged attack on India across the N.E.F.A. and Ladakh border with India, which, on its part, ordered its forces to free the N.E.F.A. of Chinese intruders.

32. A.Appadorai & M.S.Rajan, op.cit., p.137, NMLC,VI-p.43 and see also Hind Gyan Mala Chinese Betrayal of India,N.Delhi, 1962.
In his broadcast from All India Radio, Delhi, on October 22, 1962 Nehru said:

We have followed a policy of non-alignment and sought friendship of all nations. I believe in that policy fully and we shall continue to follow it. We are not going to give up our basic principles because of the present difficulty. Even this difficulty will be more effectively met by our continuing that policy.  

At this critical moment, Government of India requested the USA and Great Britain on 26 October 1962 for immediate help to meet the Chinese aggression. The first consignment of US arms reached India on 3rd November, although, the formal pact between the two countries was signed on 14th November 1962. On November 19, again India requested the United States for providing air support to her. Thus a war between India and China took place, which ended in a military debacle for India. However, China made a unilateral declaration of withdrawal on November 21, 1962. During the war India received considerable military aid from the Western powers. Soviet Union also supported India and helped her with MIG planes.  

34. The Hindustan Times, Oct. 23, 1962, p.6  
After the Chinese aggression Nehru said on December 10, 1962,

On the 21st November the Chinese Government issued a statement making a unilateral announcement of ceasefire as from the midnight of the 21st-22nd November and a withdrawal of their forces from the 1st December. On the 23rd we asked for some clarifications and received a reply on the 26th November. On the 30th we sought further clarifications.

On the 22nd November, the Government of Sri Lanka announced that they had called a conference of six non-aligned countries at Colombo. The date for this was subsequently changed and it is due to begin or rather has begun in Colombo today.  

The Sino-Indian war of 1962 prompted Afro-Asian countries to mediate and to try and bring about a peaceful solution of the Sino-Indian border dispute. A conference from 10th to 12 December, 1962 was held at Colombo, which was attended by six nations - Indonesia, Cambodia, Burma, UAR, Ghana and Sri Lanka. The conference virtually accepting India's viewpoint submitted proposals urging both India and China to resume talks for solving the border dispute. India accepted the proposals, but China did not respond favourably. Making a speech on the eve of this conference Nehru said:

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38. V.P.Dutt, China's foreign policy, op.cit., p.224.
Anxious for peace, we suggested this minimum condition which might lead to a peaceful approach. They have rejected our proposal...

The Colombo conference which is meeting today is considering what recommendations honourable to both sides— they might make in order to resolve the differences between India and China. We recognize their friendly feelings and their well-meant attempts to solve or at any rate to lessen this crisis. I trust, however, that they will appreciate that there can be no compromise with aggression and an expanding imperialism and that the gains of aggression must be given up before both the parties try to resolve their disputes.  

The withdrawal of Chinese forces proposed by the Colombo conference was to be 20 kilometers as suggested by Prime Minister Chou-En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru. Prime Minister Chou-En-lai in his letter of 28th November 1962 proposed the withdrawal from the line of real control between the two sides as of 7 November 1959, as defined in Maps III and IV circulated by the government of China, while the military posts under the forces of the government of India was to remain up to the line mentioned above, there was to be a demilitarized zone of 20 kilometers which was to be administered by civilian posts of either side. These were the proposals of the Colombo Conference. The position, the number of posts and their composition were to be mutually agreed upon between India and China.

40. Chinese Aggression in war and peace, Letters of the Prime Minister of India, Delhi, 1962, p.42.
The conflict of 1962 was of great significance for China because she got a large chunk of Ladakh territory which provided her the much needed link between Sinkiang and southern China, which in India, resulted in doubts being expressed about the efficacy of India's policy of non-alignment.

On 2 March 1963, the Chinese government wrote a letter to India announcing the completion of their withdrawal from the area seized before their ceasefire declaration of 21 November 1962 and asserted that the Chinese forces had withdrawn 20 kilometers behind the Chinese version of the 'line of actual control', as of 7 November 1959. At the same time China announced the setting up of 26 'civil posts' on her side of the so-called line of actual control. Actually six of them were set up in Indian territory of Ladakh.41

On 3 March 1963, Premier Chou En-lai sent a letter to the Prime Minister of India informing him of the Chinese government's action. On 5 March 1963 Nehru expressed his views to Chinese government urging it to act according to the Colombo proposals. In this letter he said:

I am prepared, when the time comes, provided there is approval of Parliament, even to refer the basic dispute of the claims on the frontier to the International Court of Justice at the Hague. 42

41. A. Appadarai & M.S. Rajan, op. cit., p. 146.
42. NMLIC IX, pp. 5-7.
On April 3, 1963, Indian government wrote a letter to its Chinese counterpart indicating five steps which could solve the problem between the two countries. The main points of the letter were as follows:

(i) The government of China should accept, without reservations, the Colombo proposals, just as the government of India had done;

(ii) The acceptance by both sides of the Colombo proposals should be followed by a meeting of their officials to arrive at a settlement of various matters left by the Colombo Powers for direct agreement between the parties and to decide the details regarding the implementation of the Colombo proposals on the ground;

(iii) The officials of both sides concerned should then take action to implement these proposals on the ground so that agreed ceasefire arrangements are established on the ground;

(iv) Thereafter, in the improved atmosphere, India and China should take up the question of their differences on the boundary question and try to reach a mutually acceptable settlement in one or more than one stage. If a settlement was reached, this could be implemented in detail on the ground,

(v) If a settlement was not reached in these direct talks and discussions between the two parties, both
sides could consider measures to settle the differences peacefully in accordance with international practices followed in such cases. Both India and China could agree to make a reference, on the differences regarding the boundary, to the International Court of Justice at the Hague and agree to abide by the Court's decision. If this method of peaceful settlement was for any reason not acceptable to the government of China, both parties could agree to some sort of international arbitration by a person or a group of persons, nominated in the manner agreed to by both governments, who could go into the question objectively and impartially and give their award which would be binding to both governments.43

On 9 October 1963, Chinese government in its response to the above-mentioned letter stated that she was not ready for further discussion on Colombo proposals. She rejected the Indian proposal that the disputes of the two countries should be placed before the International Court of Justice. On 16 October 1963, India sent another letter to the Chinese government, expecting that lastly wiser counsel would prevail and the Chinese government would take to the ways of peace.44

43. NMLIC, IX, pp. 34-35.
On April 13, 1964, addressing the Lok Sabha Nehru said:

In regard to China, we have made it clear that if the Colombo proposals are accepted by China, we shall be prepared to discuss with them our disputes.... In this matter, I should like to make clear one development which took place these some time ago. This was referred to by Mrs. Bandaranaike in one of her recent letters to US. We were asked whether if the Chinese vacated all their posts in the demilitarized area in Ladakh. We would consider this as fulfilment of the Colombo proposals. In the Colombo proposals, it was stated that in the demilitarized area of Ladakh, both parties should have, by agreement, an equal number of posts.45

In 1964, the External Affairs Minister of India, Mr. Swaran Singh made it clear that his country was anxious to take up negotiations if China would only agree to making a token gesture and withdrawing from the seven posts which she had built in Ladakh in violation of the Colombo proposals.46

Giving his reaction to the Indian proposals Chou En-lai said as follows while addressing the third National People's Congress held at q%an from 21 December 1964 to 4 January 1965:

We will not withdraw from a single one of these posts, and at the same time, the Indian government has to be reminded that 90,000 kilometers of territory, over which China has never relinquished its sovereignty... We can wait.47

India had great doubts about Chinese motives and designs. She came to the conclusion that China was eager to extend its dominations in Asia. The Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri said in Parliament:

To justify its aggressive attitude, China is pretending to be a guardian of Asian countries, who, according to China, are being bullied by India. The basic objective of China is to claim for itself a position of dominance in Asia, which no self-respecting nation in Asia is prepared to recognise.... We reject the Chinese claim to tell us anything about what we should do or should not do about Kashmir, which is an integral part of India.48

In spite of the policy of non-alignment, India started getting economic and military aid from USA and USSR to strengthen its position in the face of the Chinese postures of domination in Asia.

Lal Bahadur Shastri could not succeed in improving Indian relations with China. However, the foreign policy of India

48. V.P. Dutt, op.cit., pp.211-212.
remained fundamentally the same, with slight modifications. However, Shastri continued to reiterate the ideas of Nehru, like non-alignment, world peace and co-existence in 1964-65.

During the tenure of Indira Gandhi India's relations with China continued to be strained and deteriorated in 1967 when two secretaries of the Indian Embassy at Peking were subjected to mob violence and one of them was denounced by the Chinese as a spy. This naturally led to repercussions in India. The government of India retaliated by expelling a Chinese diplomat. Demonstrators in Delhi broke through a police cordon and attacked the Chinese staff.

In spite of the sharp differences between the two countries, India continued her traditional policy of supporting China's case for admission to the United Nations.

She also tried to keep the door open for negotiations to settle the outstanding border dispute.

49. V.P. Dutt, op.cit., pp.312-315.
50. V.P. Dutt, op.cit., p.310