CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC AND INDIA'S CONFLICTS WITH CHINA AND PAKISTAN

The Chinese Aggression:

The border dispute between India and China which had been a source of tension between the two countries since 1969, suddenly acquired the dimensions of a large-scale armed conflict between them, when China launched a massive attack on India on October 20, 1962. The impact of this attack on India's Non-alignment has already been examined. It is proposed to examine here the role of the United Arab Republic, as a leading non-aligned country with very close relations with India.

Nasser offers Mediation:

The first response of the United Arab Republic was a cable from Nasser to Nehru and Chou En-lai, the Chinese Prime Minister, on October 21, suggesting conciliation and offering his good offices. This proposal of Nasser disappointed the Indians. Nehru himself was reported to have set aside this suggestion. More recently Theodore C.

Sorensen\textsuperscript{5} has advanced a similar view. This view does not, however, fit in with the view of G.H. Jansen\textsuperscript{6}, that Nehru did not only accept Nasser's offer but that "Indian Officials actually suggested to the United Arab Republic that it should not take a firm denunciatory line against China lest this jeopardise its role as a future mediator".

That such a suggestion might have been made by Nehru, appears true from what Nehru said in Parliament on January 26, 1963. "When Mr. Ali Sabri, their Prime Minister, comes here he is asked to say that China is an aggressor. Here is a man coming as a mediator. He has to behave with some decency towards the parties concerned. It is very unfortunate that he was treated that way".

It would thus appear that the United Arab Republic had told India, through diplomatic channels, that it considered that China was an aggressor. Otherwise, the question of India's suggestion for restraint on its part would not have perhaps arisen at all. Even if the United Arab Republic had not taken such a stance against China so early in the crisis, the fact

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Afro-Asia and Nonalignment op. cit., p. 331.
\item \textsuperscript{7} \textit{I.L.S.}, Third Series, Third Session, Part II, (Vol. 12, Nos. 27-31, January 23, 1963), col. 6547.
\end{itemize}
that Nehru and some others in the External Affairs Ministry thought that the United Arab Republic should not condemn China and play a mediatory role, suggests an identity of approach between India and the United Arab Republic or at least between Nehru and Nasser. Did they then think that however deplorable China’s action might have been their long-range interests would be better served in conciliation with China? If they had these calculations in mind they appear to have been correct at least to some extent, as the developments since the Chinese aggression indicate, especially the increasing rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union. Indeed if this were true it also vindicates Nehru’s whole approach to China as we shall point out in the concluding remarks.

However, it was this type of mediatory role that India, and especially Nehru, had attempted in many international crises including the Suez Crisis, notwithstanding Nehru’s condemnation of the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on the United Arab Republic. Nasser might have, therefore, thought that Nehru would welcome such a move from him in India’s dispute with China. So much so he might not have liked to condemn China thus spoiling the chances of mediation.

Nasser’s initial response would perhaps be compared to the response of India to the nationalisation of the Suez
Canal Company by Nasser. Further India does not appear to have at any stage taken either the United Arab Republic or any other country into confidence in its dispute with China. As A.G. Noorani has pointed out, Nehru did not raise the issue even at the Belgrade conference of the nonaligned States in September 1961. It has been mentioned earlier that a more intelligent and judicious use of nonalignment by India would have perhaps prevented the Chinese attack or at least would have prepared the world to grasp its significance much earlier and much better than when it came at an extremely delicate situation in international relations. It was the extreme stress of the Cuban Crisis that appears to have produced some of the distortions in the judgement of even eminent thinkers like Bertrand Russell on the merits of the Sino-Indian dispute.

It is not without significance that the United Arab Republic in a post-mortem analysis of the debacle bitterly lamented that so poor had been India's diplomatic and public relations work amongst Afro-Asians that few countries had any clear idea about the dispute, and few were prepared to believe that the Chinese had mounted a powerful and

8. Our crudity and negligence, op. cit., p. 57
9. See above pp. 100-103.
massive invasion of India's frontiers," This conforms to the alround failure displayed by India in various other spheres in this dispute.

**Nasser Accepts India's stand:**

However, it is to the credit of Nasser that he grasped the real nature of China's aggression, as soon as the facts were known to him, if not from the beginning itself, and took a firm stand favourable to India by proposing in letters addressed to the Prime Ministers of the two countries on October 25, 1962 inter alia that both sides cease fire and withdraw to the positions held by them prior to September 8, 1962, a proposal which Nehru himself had made just two days earlier, on October 24, while rejecting the Chinese proposal of the same day as completely unacceptable. Nasser's proposal was made public by the United Arab Republic through a statement of the Presidential council on October 31, 1962 thus ending public speculation as to where it stood in the conflict.

12. Supra, n.2 p.2 see also The Hindu, November 2, 1962.
13. Chinese Aggression in War and Peace. Letters of the Prime Minister of India, p. 12.
15. Supra, n.2 pp. 1-3.
This proposal of Nasser earned from Nehru a well deserved tribute which the latter paid on November 8, 1962 in Parliament. Nehru said, "I must pay my tribute to President Nasser in this matter because he did not make a vague proposal in the air. People advise us to be good and peaceful as if we are inclined to war ... people talking to us to be good boys and make it up has no particular meaning unless they come to grips with particular issues involved. Now President Nasser took the trouble to understand the facts and thereafter, issued a presidential decree or communiqué issued by the President in Council of the United Arab Republic in which he made certain proposals. These proposals were not exactly on the lines we had suggested but were largely in conformity with our proposals. They laid special stress on troops withdrawing to their lines where they stood prior to the 8th of September. That was a major thing that fitted in with our proposal. China has rejected this proposal made by President Nasser."

That China had rejected the proposal made by Nasser was announced on November 2, by Ali Sabry in Cairo. Why did China reject this? The answer was given by Nehru on December 10, 1962 in Parliament: "We decided long ago, two or three months ago, to suggest this 8th September line because, if accepted by the Chinese Government it shows that all that has happened since then has been their aggression. It is a very big thing for them to accept and they have not accepted it."

This proposal of Nasser proved that his offer of mediation was not based on a refusal as some had thought then to see the rights and wrong of the dispute. It might have been a reflection of uncertainty about India's own stand in the dispute.

19. Supra, n.3 & n. 4.
It might have been a reflection of uncertainty about India's own stand in the dispute. Once Nehru spelled out his terms, Nasser accepted them and tried his best to secure the approval of as many Afro-Asian and nonaligned countries as possible as the statement issued by the Presidential council made clear.20

Nasser Appeals for Afro-Asian Support:

Finally, Nasser was also concerned with the damage that the conflict between India and China would cause to the Afro-Asian solidarity. As the statement of October 31 put it:

"Motivated...by the spirit of Bandung and the principles of Afro-Asian solidarity, the United Arab Republic hastened to assume its incumbent role of positive action and to take such steps as are required to stop these armed clashes, clear away the growing shadow of danger and contribute to a peaceful solution of the problem and eliminate the cause of dispute between India and China, both of whom occupy positions of prominence and great influence among the community of African and Asian countries."

It also said: "while the United Republic believes in the principles of Bandung which call the countries of the world to solve their international problems through means other than the use of force, it still holds unshakeable faith in the need for the application of this call in particular to the problem between two countries which are signatories of the Bandung Charter—China and India—both of whom contributed to the establishment and to widespread adoption of the principles of the Charter.

"The United Arab Republic asserts that it will spare no effort in its endeavours to preserve the wonderful image of Afro-Asian solidarity unblemished by drops of blood and battles between countries working for peace."

Nasser appears to have been been more interested in Bandung Principles than India had ever been and this not/For India:

20. Supra, n.2, p.3.
21. Supra, n.2.
22. Id., p.3.
the Panch Sheel was more attractive than the Bandung principles. Nasser never openly subscribed to the Panch Sheel. Afro-Asian solidarity was less attractive for India because of its rivalry with China which was becoming more and more open. The uses of Afro-Asian solidarity were better illustrated in problems of colonialism than elsewhere to the extent that India was not so immediately concerned and/or confronted with this problem it had less use of it. One important occasion on which India had depended upon this Afro-Asian solidarity in the United Nations was when a large number of Afro-Asian states and the Soviet bloc supported India's seizure of Goa.

Thus Nasser appears to have appealed to Afro-Asian nations especially nonaligned nations to make common cause in the matter. According to the statement of the Presidential Council in pursuance of the policy of consultation and exchange of views current among the friendly states on all events, President Gamal Abdul Nasser communicated with the heads of state and heads of Governments of Afghanistan, Indonesia, Algeria, the Sudan, Morocco, Ceylon, Ghana, Guinea, Cambodia and Mali, inviting them to join in the common effort of the Casablanca Charter countries and the nonaligned countries in Africa and Asia to ward off the danger on the frontiers between India and China . . ." A PTI correspondent reported from Colombo that

24. Supra, n.2.
Ali Sabry said that "As soon as the conflict occurred, the UAR Government got in touch not only with Peking but a number of nonaligned Governments as well. It would have been very useful had there been a combined approach to the problem then. However ... some Governments made individual approaches and this to some extent vitiated the position."

The Eastern Economist wrote on 26 October that the Chinese note of October 24 "was the outcome of the mediatory efforts performed by President Nasser." The Soviet Union was also believed to have exerted influence on China. It was possible that Nasser had also approached the Soviet Union as he was reported to have done after India's appeal for arms to the United States.

However, Indians were not satisfied with the response of Nasser. A member of Parliament, U.M. Trivedi observed that "we wanted stronger words from President Nasser in our help." It would thus appear that Nasser had missed a golden opportunity of earning the gratitude of the Indian masses by his failure to condemn China before anything else. Had he done so, he would have become as much a hero for Indians as he is for his own people, even if he had done nothing else afterwards. It was surely a tactical mistake on his part, since his

29. Supra, n.16 col. 186.
friendship for India was genuine and sincere. If the Government of India had not restrained him, as reported, he might have as well done it, sooner than he actually did, and thus established a reputation for himself among the people.

But, for good or bad, he chose a less attractive and more difficult role of supporting India's cause in the Afro-Asian circles. And he seems to have succeeded in his role to a large extent especially in the role his country played in the Colombo Conference of the Six nonaligned states as shall be seen in a moment.

As the conflict deepened with no sign of China stopping short of completely humiliating India, Nehru overcame his reluctance to seek military aid from the West and appealed initially, it is said, for 'sympathy' and 'support' of the United States. Soon however, he had asked for large scale military aid from the United States, which Kennedy did not think wise to supply without first ascertaining India's needs and capabilities. There was, however, an immediate supply of small arms in large quantities, which however were considered insufficient for any offensive to be taken by India. In the wake of this supply of American arms came the news of the resignation of Krishna Menon as

30. See Sorensen, op.cit., p.748.
31. Ibid.
32. Supra, n.8, p.135.
Defence Minister. This meant an obvious increase of United States influence in the Government of India. Such a development was of direct concern to Nasser. At this stage he appears to have decided to intensify his efforts to bring greater pressure on China to desist from further aggression. To this end he was said to have approached the Soviet Union also to bring sense to China as indicated above.

It is from this point of view that one has to view his decision to make public his proposal of October 26, and to support India publicly and influence others to do the same. And once China rejected these proposals the press in the United Arab Republic called China aggressor in its war with India. On the same day i.e., November 6, the official Yugoslav Newspaper Borba came out with criticism of China on the crossing of the McMahon Line.

**China Announces Cease-fire**

Then, on November 21, China having overrun more than 14,000 square miles of India's territory, announced a unilateral cease-fire beginning from the next day and a

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33. Sorensen writes that Kennedy was greatly satisfied with this development. (Supra n.29). Perhaps the acceptance of the American aid was not approved by Menon and might have been a factor in his resignation.

34. Ibid.

35. See The Hindu, November 6, 1962

36. Ibid. This would suggest close contacts between Nasser and Tito.

37. See The Hindu, November 22, 1962.
withdrawal from December 1, 1962 to what it called the line of actual control, stipulating that Indian troops should not attack after the cease-fire, nor again advance to the line of actual control in the eastern sector, that is the 'illegal' MacMahon Line, and/or refuse to withdraw but remain on the actual line of control in the middle and western sectors. It also stipulated that Indian troops should not cross the line of actual control and regain their positions prior to September 8.

As A.G. Noorani\(^\text{38}\) aptly observes "these were clearly surrender terms which a victor would impose on the vanquished, like the earlier three point plan, except for one more condition, namely that India should not move her troops to the MacMahon Line.\(^\text{3}\)" India clearly had only two alternatives either to reject the cease-fire and fight to regain its territory or to accept the humiliating terms offered by China. It is difficult to say what China would have done if India had decided to fight. But the question is was India in a position to fight to regain the lost territory? It was not, as the Harriman report to Kennedy made clear. Kennedy was, therefore, not willing to support India to win back the lost territory.\(^\text{40}\) Similarly, Khrushchev also appeared unwilling to go further to make China withdraw.

\(^{38}\) Supra, n.8, p.101.
\(^{39}\) Sorensen, op.cit.,p.750.
even if he could, having perhaps already exerted pressure on China to cease-fire, without endangering his position in the Kremlin. The fact that he did not support China against India was proof of his rejection of China's claim that it had acted in 'self-defence', ruling out thereby Soviet support for China under the mutual-security treaty, even after American arms supply to India. Khrushchev might have also known that Kennedy was prepared to provide air-defence to India in case of further attack against India.

India, therefore, needed a better alternative than the acceptance of the Chinese cease-fire. The Colombo Proposals of the Six nonaligned nations provided India with the alternative which India so desperately needed to make its acceptance of the cease-fire look less humiliating than it might otherwise have been, as shall be seen below.

The Colombo Conference

The course of India's response to the proposed Colombo conference itself suggests that this is not an unjustifiable conclusion. The initial response of India and the United Arab Republic to the idea of the Colombo Conference was not enthusiastic. As G.H. Jansen reported from Colombo on

42. Supra, n.1, p.144
43. Sorensen, op.cit., p.760.
December 10, 1962 "the suggestion of Ceylon happened to fructify mainly because one of those invited, Burma, responded promptly and gave it a certain momentum. Ghana tried to shift its venue to Accra and till a few days ago there was a strong feeling here that if the United Arab Republic temporised further then it should be left cut." More recently Jansen has revealed that "From the start India was not at all enthusiastic about the Colombo Conference......India...at first tried to scuttle, and then to delay, the holding of the conference. In this she was aided by the United Arab Republic - also most reluctant to attend. Egypt managed, by requests for clarification to delay the opening from the 1st December until the 10th but on or about the 6th, an indignant Ceylon issued a scarcely veiled threat to the United Arab Republic that the conference would be held with or without her". And that "The United Arab Republic seems finally to have agreed to attend mainly in order to be of assistance to India".

This reluctance on the part of the United Arab Republic to attend the conference appears to have been due to the fact that Nasser was conducting mediation between China and India in Cairo. As Jansen reported from Cairo

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45. See Afro-Asia And Nonalignment, op. cit., p.334.
"while the nonaligned begin to foregather in Colombo, the real dialogue between India and China is taking place in Cairo with President Nasser acting as intermediary.

"Having heard the Indian point of view twice over, from the special Indian mission, President Nasser, with some Indian prompting, is in a position to ask the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Hwang Chen who arrived here yesterday, what his country's final negotiating position is.

"The bargaining will probably involve some struggling between military and civilian control over territory between the line of September 8, and the line of October 20."

But once it was evident that the Colombo Conference would be held even without the United Arab Republic, it would have been a grave mistake for the United Arab Republic, to refuse to attend, and India to persuade it to do so for India would have achieved nothing and perhaps the outcome of the conference would have been different from what it actually was mainly due to the presence of the United Arab Republic at the Conference. When China, which was in a strong position, was making efforts to influence the outcome of the Conference, it would have been folly if India had tried to keep aloof from it, by persuading the one friend it had.

47. Jansen feels that India should have done this. See Afro-Asia And Nonalignment, op. cit., pp. 334-335.
not to attend it and try to influence its deliberations. As such it is difficult to agree with the opinion that "At this stage those conducting Indian foreign policy were thoroughly flustered......India's Foreign Ministry was off balance" that the United Arab Republic itself was motivated by such calculations was evident from the statement of Ali Sabry made to a P.T.I. correspondent who had travelled with the latter from Bombay to Colombo, that "Since so many Governments were participating in the Colombo Conference it was considered desirable for the United Arab Republic as well to do so."

The Colombo Proposals Censure China

At the very beginning of the conference Ali Sabry made it clear that one of the principles which should govern the conference deliberations was that "there must be no gain on account of military operations." K. Nadarajah of Express News Service wrote on December 11 from Colombo that "the United Arab Republic would like to call a spade a spade and pronounce a forthright view on aggression. However it is not expected that any such stand will be taken because that would bring about an abrupt end of the Conference." Though the United Arab Republic failed to get its view adopted, it was at least able to get its principle of 'no gains on account of military operation', incorporated

48. Ibid.
49. Supra, n.26.
50. See The Statesman, & The Hind, December 11, 1962
51. See The Indian Express December 12, 1962.
as one of the principles underlying the Colombo proposals, as one of the Documents of the Colombo Conference presented to China along with the proposals makes it clear. It said, inter alia:

"In the formulation of these proposals, the six paid particular attention to the following principles:

(A) Neither side should be in a position to derive benefit from military operation;

(B) A stable cease-fire must precede any attempt at negotiations between China and India;

(C) Any cease-fire arrangements must be without prejudice to the boundary claims of either party;

(D) In the establishment of a stable cease-fire neither side should be requested to withdraw from territory which is admittedly theirs, or from territory over which they exercised exclusive civilian administration;

(E) The establishment of a stable cease-fire may or may not according to circumstances require the establishment of demilitarized zone."

It was reported in The Hindu on May 14, 1963, that "One of the documents of the Colombo Conference of the 'Six nonaligned countries' which has just become available, has in effect, accused China of having committed aggression on India. It is believed Peking rejected the Colombo proposals because of the clear indictment of China."

This document of the Colombo Conference also states that:

"I. The Sino-Indian boundary dispute must be settled by peaceful negotiations between China and India. The object of the Six is to create an atmosphere which would enable China and India to enter negotiations with dignity and self-respect.

"2. The proposals of the Six are intended to create such an atmosphere.

"3. In considering the proposals made by them, the six welcomed the announcement of unilateral cease-fire and withdrawal made by China on November 21, 1962."

Put together, the 'principles' of the Six and the statement of objectives indicate that they had devised a subtle diplomatic device of telling China that it had committed aggression and that they did not accept its gains, instead of an open and forthright condemnation as Ali Sabry advocated initially, since their purpose was to mediate and no to arbitrate the dispute. As the Times of India commented on December 13, 1963: "It is to their very real credit that they have rejected the easy way out of adopting an innocuous resolution vaguely commending the virtues of peaceful negotiation..... It is unreasonable to expect any member of a mediating group to commit itself to an assessment of the merits of the dispute itself. Any tendency, indeed, to 'take sides' even by powers which are basically sympathetic to New Delhi would be inconsistent with the larger interests of promoting a rational settlement..... the preference for 'quiet diplomacy' is
undoubtedly an extremely wise one ..."

It was in defence to this consideration that the United Arab Republic appears to have accepted the quiet diplomacy of the Colombo proposals. It is difficult to agree with the view\textsuperscript{54} that the United Arab Republic had compromised on its principle of 'no gains on account of aggression', in agreeing to the Colombo proposals. For the proposals were neither a solution of the dispute nor did they judge the merits of the dispute but were only an attempt to make India and China start negotiations, with dignity and self respect. So much so their acceptance by either India or China did not mean their rejection of their conception of the dispute as Nehru himself said.\textsuperscript{55}

The same could be applied to the Colombo Powers. The United Arab Republic might have also calculated that if the nonaligned nations failed to reach an agreement at Colombo it would deal a blow to Nonalignment when it was supposed to be "at a discount" as a commentator put it, in the wake of India's failure to meet the Chinese aggression.

\textbf{India Accepts The Proposals}

It is perhaps a measure of the strict neutrality of the Colombo proposals that while many in India have criticised them as unsatisfactory\textsuperscript{56} China rejected them.

\textsuperscript{54} See M.G. Agwani, 'The Reaction of West Asia And The United Arab Republic', International studies (Vol.5, Nos.1-2, July-October, 1963) p.77.

\textsuperscript{55} See below n.59

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Supra}, n.41.

\textsuperscript{57} See below n.61 & 62.
as supporting the Indian claims. That the Chinese interpretation was not entirely unfounded was borne out by the fact that the Government of India and Parliament accepted the proposals. Explaining the proposals in Parliament on January 23, 1963, Nehru said:

"...The proposals as originally framed were not clear with regard to one or two matters and were liable to different interpretations. Therefore the first thing which we did when the representative came here was to ask them to clarify their proposals and to make us understand what they were in order to avoid any misinterpretations or different interpretations.

"The issue before us was how far these proposals were in conformity with what we had said repeatedly, namely that the position prior to the 8th September be restored.

It must also be remembered that it was stated all along that any response that we or the Government of China may give to the Colombo conference proposals would not prejudice in the slightest the position of either of the two Governments as regards their conception of the final-alignment of the frontier.

"The merits of the dispute were not considered by the Colombo countries. The conference was designed only to pave the way for discussion between the representatives of both the parties.

"These proposals as explained and amplified by the representatives of the Colombo Conference in answer to our questions related to three sectors, the western, middle and eastern of our border.

"In regard to the eastern sector, the position prior to the 8th September was that the Chinese forces were to the north of the international boundary called the McMahon Line and the Indian forces were to the south of this boundary. Before the 8th September no Chinese forces had come across that boundary except in Longju.

58. Supra, n. 62 pp. 10-11
59. Supra, n. 7, cols 6989-6992.
in Longju. In regard to this, the position that was taken was that for the present neither party should occupy it. The Chinese forcibly occupied it previously and later it was suggested that neither party should occupy it. The Colombo conference proposals as clarified by the visiting delegations, confirm this position except as regards the Thag La ridge area, which the Chinese call Chedong and where we have a border post known as the Dhola post. The Colombo proposals and the clarifications refer to these areas, Thag La ridge and Longju, as remaining areas arrangements in regard to which are to be settled between the Governments of India and China by direct discussion. That is to say, in regard to the eastern sector, the 8th September position was according to the Colombo conference proposals, entirely restored except in regard to Thag La ridge area and the Dhola post. These are withing three miles of the McMahon Line. The Colombo proposals stated that this matter might be left undecided. They left it to the parties to decide by direct discussion.

"With regard to the middle sector, the Colombo Conference proposals required the status quo to be maintained with neither side doing anything to disturb the status quo. This conforms to the Government of India's position that the status quo prior to the 8th September, 1962 should be restored as there had been no conflict in this area and the existing situation has not been disturbed.

"Coming to the western sector of Ladakh, the restoration of the status quo as it obtained prior to the 8th September would result in reestablishment of all the Indian posts shown in blue in the map circulated to Members. This would also mean that the Chinese will maintain the old Chinese posts at the locations shown in red in the same map. The Colombo Conference proposes that a 20 kilometer area will be cleared by the withdrawal of Chinese forces, and this area is to be administered by civilian posts of both sides, covers the entire area in which Indian posts existed prior to the 8th September except for two or three posts to the west of Sumdo. On the other hand the 20 kilometer withdrawal by the Chinese forces entails the Chinese forces going several kilometers beyond the international boundary in the region of Spanggur and further south. The Colombo Conference proposals and the clarifications thus satisfy the demand made for the restoration of the status quo prior to the 8th September. The slight variation is about two or three Indian posts west of Sumdo. This is however entirely envisaged by Chinese withdrawals in the region of Spanggur and further south, and also by the fact that many Chinese military posts have to be removed from the withdrawal areas. If hon. Members consider this matter with the help of maps they will observe that this position, as indicated by the Colombo Conference proposals, has certain advantage over the one which we had previously indicated, that is the restoration of the 8th Sept. position. In the 8th Sept. position the Chinese were there in very large strength and we had also some posts in that area. If the Colombo Conference proposal in regard to the western sector, is accepted, it removes the Chinese strength from that
sector and makes that sector a demilitarized area, with our posts as well as Chinese posts by agreement being civilian posts, in equal number of people and similarity of arms. It would be civil arms, police arms or small arms. I think this is definitely better than the restoration of Chinese posts in that area in a big way with large arms.

"On full consideration of these matters as contained in the Colombo Conference resolutions and their clarifications we came to the conclusion that these proposals fulfilled the essence of the demand made for a restoration of the status quo prior to the 8th September...."

This statement has been reproduced here at such length because it explains clearly the Colombo Conference proposal and the reasons why the Government of India accepted them as fulfilling their demand of restoration of the status quo prior to September 8, 1962. Nehru had repeated the same arguments on January 29 and said:

"The question is how to bring about the Chinese withdrawal to a certain extent in order to be able to deal with this matter in a manner which may lead to results. I think from both the political and the diplomatic points of view this is desirable. Our rejecting the Colombo proposals would be harmful to us, diplomatically and from every point of view. Not only the countries which have made these proposals, but other countries big and small will think that we are acting wrongly and will not continue the support they have given us...."

Colombo Proposals: An Evaluation:

The proposals were criticised by some, especially by A.G. Noorani. "Indeed," he said: "the most damaging effect of the proposals was that it completely restricted India's freedom of action." How, this was alone so, is not easy to comprehend

61. Supra, n. 8, p. 116.
unless it could be assumed that but for the proposals, India could have sent its troops into areas occupied by China or thrown the Chinese out from our territories. This was hardly possible. Similarly, even if the proposals sought to give China what she wanted in the western sector—that she considered important—and to satisfy India in the east, which was the vital area for her, the alternative would have been surrender to Chinese terms.

The United Arab Republic has conceded that the proposals did not give India all she wanted. But they gave India sufficient to start negotiations with China with self-respect and dignity. Thus they were definitely what Nehru once called 'the lesser of the two evils'. And the United Arab Republic was not satisfied with them. Commenting on the refusal of some of India's neighbours to demand the vacation of aggression by China it says that "The Asian neighbours of China were apprehensive of China's wrath." This might have been true and the United Arab Republic might be justified in being angry with them. But India and the Indians, smarting under the blows

63. Supra, n. 11.
64. Nehru, op.cit., p.35
65. Supra, n.11.
inflicted by China neither had, nor have, any justification in accusing them of moral failure as G.H. Jansen does.

The role of the Six nonaligned nations appears to have been quite in conformity with the role which the nonaligned nations have generally played of not allowing either side to gain much over the other, consistent with their interests. Moreover they had also to keep in mind the fact that the major powers should not be allowed to step in on either side in order not to turn it into a world wide conflict. And as seen above the Big Powers themselves were not prepared to give all out support to India. It is just possible that they might have felt that the Colombo Conference serves their purpose and interests better than anything that they might do. It is difficult to say whether the Big Powers could not have made China accept the Colombo proposals by concerted pressure. It is also difficult to say whether an offer of the Security Council seal to China for voluntary renunciation of its aggression against India would not have made China more responsive and given Kennedy the much wanted break-through in United States relations with China.

66. Afro-Asia And Nonalignment, op.cit., p. 330 and pp. 326-329. He admits, however, that they cannot be wholly blamed.

U.A.R.'s Support to India:

However, in all this, there was at least one country, besides India which was not satisfied with the outcome of the Colombo Proposals and it was the United Arab Republic. Inspite of the initial offer of mediation, the United Arab Republic had consistently supported the Indian Government in all phases of the crisis. G.H. Jansen reported from Cairo that "Inspired 'leaks' to Indian correspondents speak of President Nasser's full moral and material support to India." He also later on wrote that "Indian newspaper correspondents in Cairo, and through them the world were informed that President Nasser had bluntly told the Chinese Chargé d'affaires in Cairo that China had committed aggression and should withdraw, but not one word of this appeared in the United Arab Republic's press. The question is not so much whether the United Arab Republic's stand was given publicity in the United Arab Republic as whether or not the information given to the Indian correspondents was accurate.

It was also reported that Nasser was believed to have categorically rejected Peking's contention that India was

68. Supra, n. 46
69. Afro-Asia And Nonalignment, op.cit., p. 332.
70. See Africa-Diary, 1962-63, p.888. In all this, there was one single jarring note. It was reported that there were fitting articles on Indians in the UAR's press. (See}
violating the Bandung spirit by taking arms from the United States and other western countries. At a press conference with members of the third floating world conference of journalists at Cairo on October 1, 1963. Nasser said, in reply to a question on the rejection of the Colombo Conference proposals by China, that "our opinion was that all troops should return to the lines they were on the 8th of September, 1962, the day on which incidents started between India and China..." About the rejection of the proposals by China he said "China had some reservations, then Mr. Ali Sabry, President of the UAR's Executive Council, visited Peking, he demanded that China should have no reservations on what Colombo Conference countries had decided. And they said that they will withdraw their reservations." China had not. On the other hand it had begun to accuse the Colombo powers of favouring India and being unfair to it, as the Political correspondent of Statesman reported.

(Continued from previous page)

It is not difficult to understand what or who prompted such writings, was it, by any chance in response to similar stuff in Indian papers or journals? Even if this were not so, was it government sponsored? It is not known whether the Government of India took note of it and protested against it. The effect of this has been naturally damaging. It is remembered even today in India. See K.Rangaswami's article in The Hindu, June 5, 1967.


He wrote further that "To prove this allegation it has cited the fact that India finds the proposal better than even the September 8 line" and that "Mr. Chou En-lai's letter to the Ceylon Premier is stated to be quite offensive in tone. It criticises the nonaligned nations for going beyond their mediatory role and trying to judge the merits of the India-China dispute. Apparently, China wanted to use the nonaligned countries to compel India to negotiate on Peking's terms but when they refused to oblige it has started condemning them."

Indian Grievances Against Arabs:

Despite all this, the feeling somehow persists even in some well informed and influential quarters that not only the nonaligned neighbours of India but also the United Arab Republic and the Arabs have not reciprocated India's friendship fully. Thus The Hindu, wrote on April 11, 1966, in its review of the External Affairs Ministry's annual report for 1965-66:

"The main objectives of any country's foreign policy are to promote its national interests to win the friendship and support of other countries necessary for the advancement of its cause .... What is India's record in this respect? When Pakistan attacked us last year, not a single country with the exception of Malaysia, was prepared to come openly to our support and condemn Pakistan's aggression even though the U.N. observers had squarely found it guilty. Much the same thing happened at the time of the Chinese attack in 1962, when apart from the Western Bloc member's, the other countries all chose to turn the Nelson's eye on China's aggression. This was a sad reflection on our
foreign policy. It meant that all we had achieved since Independence was to maintain fairly easy relations superficially with most of the world but had not been able to establish such terms of firm friendship with any country as would make it stand by us through thick and thin. This was largely the result of the ambiguity in our own attitude to other countries, the double standards we have sometimes adopted in judging others, a pusillanimous reluctance to call a spade a spade, the absence of give-and-take in our foreign relations, and a general lack of clear cut objectives and direction in our policy. The injustice done to Israel in not establishing diplomatic relations with it is an example of our Government's pusillanimity. Nor does it seem to have been worth the candle, judging by what the Ministry's report has said about Arab attitude towards India. Among our immediate neighbours, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon have all normal relations with Israel and they do not seem to be any the worse for it.

It will not perhaps be wrong to assume that much of this criticism is in relation to India's relations with the Arabs and in so far as the United Arab Republic is not excepted, with it also. Indeed, since it has been the most friendly Arab country, this may as well be mainly against the United Arab Republic. To the extent it is meant for India's relations with the Arabs in general and the United Arab Republic in particular, these views are, it is submitted, not in accordance with facts.

It has been indicated above that the United Arab Republic has consistently supported India in its conflict with China. Even among the other Arab states none supported China.
As Professor M.S. Agwani has written "In sum governments as well as the Press (barring a small section which was favourably disposed towards Peking), and the general public in the region, grasped the true nature and meaning of the Chinese threat to India ..... No government in the area approved of the Chinese action or rendered her any support."

India-Pakistan War : Nasser Supports India:

During the India-Pakistan war in 1965 also the United Arab Republic and a majority of the Arab states were not merely neutral, but were positively friendly to India. As it is not possible here to make an exhaustive analysis, a few press reports and comments are quoted below to illustrate the point. The Indian Express wrote on 16 September 1966:

"In the Arab world the commentating force is language and culture, not religion. Saudi Arabia is no doubt a theocratic state, but the United Arab Republic, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Sudan as well as the countries of the Maghreb are essentially secular states. It may be that India is somewhat disappointed in the stand adopted by the United Arab Republic and some other countries but it will not make the mistake of thinking that their attitudes have been determined by considerations of religion. ......."

74. The Indian Express (Vijayawada), September 16, 1966.
Here are a few reports from A.N. Dar of the Express News Service:

"Cairo, September 14: "Opening the third Arab summit in Casablanca yesterday President Nasser gave no hope to Pakistan that he would allow its India-Pakistan game to be played here. He spoke of India-Pakistan fighting with "regret" and refused to go beyond this one-line statement.... The UAR continues to be opposed to allowing the summit to be used for anti-Indian manoeuvres. Pakistan has been banking on countries like Syria and the four kingdoms of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya and Morocco to help it in rousing Muslim sentiment on the Arab stage. Arabs have been looking with distaste at the way Indonesia, Iran and Turkey have let Muslim sentiment have better of their reason in the context of India-Pakistan fighting. The Chinese prestige too has slumped by its open fanning of flames."

"Cairo, September 15: Saudi Arabia and Syria were today reported to betraying pro-Pakistan reference included in an appeal which the third Arab summit now meeting in Casablanca is likely to issue for peace in the Indian sub-continent. Several other countries taking a bold lead from President Nasser were still holding out against Pakistani pressures..... Earlier yesterday, the summit was reported to have rejected a proposal from Pakistan's friends to name India as the aggressor. That this suggestion was summarily rejected shows the lack of support Pakistan's friends could muster. This was a rebuff to Pakistan..... one thing is clear inside the summit India's battle is being heroically fought by President Nasser despite this forcing on him the additional burden of his having to fight off appeals for Muslim sentiment in a predominantly Muslim gathering....."

76. Id., September 15, 1966.
76. Id., September, 16, 1966.
"Cairo, September 18: The Arab summit which ended at Casablanca yesterday issued a communiqué which does not favour Pakistan but which it will be able to exploit in its campaign against India.

"A vaguely worded paragraph in the final communiqué urged India and Pakistan to put an end to fighting through peaceful means in accordance with the principles and preclusions of the UN. Though a not-so-clever an attempt, this statement is linked with another para which in a general statement calls for ending international problems by peaceful means and respecting the right of self determination.

"Despite Pakistan's pleadings it refused to believe the Pakistani lie that India was the aggressor. It gave no support to Pakistan's claim on Kashmir.

"But reading the two paragraphs together one can discern the hand of a draftsman who is not able to find support for any kind of stand against India. He managed to give Pakistan a crumb which it could exploit to bolster its morale at home than to find support abroad."

Cairo, September 26: "Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon ended his three-day visit here yesterday with a marathon two-and-half-hour meeting with President Nasser and the impression that Pakistan and Chinese propaganda against India has cut no ice here.

"He discussed with Mr. Nasser the situation created by Pakistani aggression and the latest Chinese posture. He said after the meeting that so far as UAR was concerned it wished for peace in the Indian sub-continent. The resolution passed by the Arab 'summit' in Casablanca, Mr. Menon was told, was a general statement of UN principles and nothing more."
"So far as self-determination was concerned, Mr. Menon has been categorically told here that UAR does not subscribe to it except in general terms of the UN Charter to which India also subscribes." (Author's Italics).

Only one conclusion is possible from the above facts. 79

A.N. Dar has drawn it. He writes:

"Much has been said of the Arabs' lack of support to India during the recent trouble with Pakistan. Despite the religious link, they did not actively support Pakistan either. So far as the United Arab Republic is concerned, there is a limit to which this sullenness can be taken. The Indian Government spokesmen have several times acknowledged that it was President Nasser who stood against the passage of an anti-Indian and pro-Pakistani resolution at the Arab summit at Casablanca while the fighting was on."

And K.P.S. Menon has written "The United Arab Republic is firmly wedded to the policy of nonalignment. No country barring India is so sincerely and unflinchingly devoted to this policy as the United Arab Republic; nor has any other state been more friendly to India. Between President Nasser and Jawaharlal Nehru, there was complete understanding, respect and affection." Even if Shastri failed to establish such cordial relations with Nasser, according to Hassanein Heikal of Al-Ahyam, who's views could be questioned, the

80. India And The Cold War, op.cit., p. 55.
81. Supra, n.78.
82. I doubt if Heikal's views always authentically reflect Nasser's views.
United Arab Republic's friendship for India did not lessen. Why, otherwise, did it declare a "seven day mourning—the longest period declared in any country", as A.N. Dar has put it, on Shastri's death? Commenting on Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's decision not to visit Cairo on her first tour Abroad, breaking a tradition set by her father and her predecessor in office, A.N. Dar said: "If Mrs. Gandhi knew (as doubtless she does) of the enthusiasm here which greeted her election precisely because she was Mrs. Indira, she would have known how much store people here lay by the continuance of the tradition of friendship."

One would have, therefore, expected The Hindu to correct the impression created by the report of the External Affairs Ministry—that there was something seriously wrong with Indo-Arab relations if not also with Indo-UAR relations or that Pakistan's religious propaganda has been more successful than India's own propaganda. If things are against India in two or three Arab countries, it does not seem proper to conclude that it is so with all the Arabs and then to proceed to antagonise, perhaps permanently, all of them by establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. As a report of a seminar held

83. Supra, n.78.
84. Ibid.
at the Indian school of International Studies puts it, such a "move on our part at the present moment is bound to unsettle our well-established and cordial relations with Arab nations in the economic and political fields, and this might result in incalculable harm to our economy and facilitate the success of Pakistan's campaign against us in that region."

In more significant words, it adds: "It was also stressed that by not establishing diplomatic relations with Israel we were neither adopting an unfriendly gesture towards that state nor violating any basic principle of our foreign policy. After all, we do not have diplomatic relations with every country in the world. On the other hand, we have never followed the Arab line on Israel in its entirety...." Still The Hindu claims that India's Government has been pusillanimous in not having diplomatic relations with Israel. And when the Arab League supported the candidature of Syria for the Security Council seat against India, it came out with the comment that: "It is a pity that the Arab League should have chosen to oppose India's candidature for the latter has always been a staunch supporter, sometimes going out of its way, of Arab causes. There may perhaps be a lesson in this for our Government which has more

86. See The Hindu, November 14, 1966. (Italicized mine)
than once taken international stances, even if they went against the grain, in the hope of pleasing some other country or countries. Appeasement never pays in the long run...."

"I do not excuse the Arab League for its sponsorship of Syria's candidature against India. But I do think that it was not an anti-Indian step. If it was, perhaps it was a reflection of the growing disenchantment between India and the Arabs towards which the supporters of Israel in India appear to be contributing freely. But the claim that India has ever appeased the Arabs or even the United Arab Republic is not in accord with facts where the entire Arab world was overjoyed over the nationalisation of the Suez Canal company. Nehru and India expressed reservations on the manner in which it was done, unjustifiably, as been said earlier. If Nehru had not condemned Israel and then England and France when they committed aggression on the United Arab Republic, he would, perhaps, have condemned India in the eyes of the world, though he might have gained the goodwill of a few people here and there. He would certainly have incurred the wrath of the Arabs and Pakistan would have benefited greatly.

In the other Arab causes like Algerian independence, Yemen, etc., India's attitude has been equivocal. But in this

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talk of Arab appeasement, it is not at all remembered that the
United Arab Republic and the Arabs had given full support to
India when it occupied Goa by force which some said was a vi-o-
lation of the Charter. If the liberation of Goa was an article
of faith with India, the fight against Israel is no less an
article of faith with the Arabs.

That the Government of India does not share these views
became evident when Chagla and Indira Gandhi promptly rath ed
to the support of the Arabs in the West Asian crisis of 1967.
Chagla, certainly, cannot be accused of being an appeaser of
Muslims either in India or inside India unless every act of
friendship with the Arabs is dubbed as such.

If India had supported the Arabs against Israel in
1956, it was to gain their goodwill. If it had supported them
in 1967 it was not merely to retain it, but also to advance
its own claims against its enemies. Perhaps the supporters
of Israel in India do not realise that the talk of injustice
to Israel, gives a lie to India's claims against Pakistan and
its stand on Kashmir.

88. Supra, n.23.

89. According to Acharya Kriplani India's West Asia policy is
based on fear of Arabs, Pakistan and Muslims in the
country. This last is a fantastic claim. See The Hindu
It has already been pointed out that India's support to the Arabs goes much deeper than merely the need to contain Pakistan, in which, however India has not succeeded in so far as the latter's relations with the Big Powers and China are concerned. If India loses the goodwill of the Arabs also it is not very difficult to imagine the consequences to India's position in the world. All this could be brought about by a simple act of extending diplomatic relations to Israel. In other words India would be reduced to the position of Nepal, Burma, and Ceylon, in its relations with the Arabs and possibly with the outside world also.

On the other hand, if we can make proper use of our relations with the Arabs, it is possible to mend our fences with Pakistan and much else. Whether or not this is desirable will be examined in the next few pages.