

**NEPAL'S PARTICIPATION IN NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCES :  
THE MAHENDRA ERA ✓**

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## P\_R\_E\_F\_A\_C\_E

Nepal is a small Asian country situated between India and China. Its rulers always felt the need to maintain good relations with both the neighbours. During the period of British rule in India Nepal was cut off from rest of the world on account of the various treaties the Government of Nepal signed with the British Government in India. It was King Tribhuvan who broke the policy of isolation by ending the century-old autocracy of the Ranas in 1951 and ushering in democracy.

King Mahendra ascended to the throne in 1955. He pursued an active foreign policy. The birth of the non-aligned movement in 1961 provided him an international platform for projecting the national identity and independent foreign policy of Nepal.

What are the compulsions and difficulties of a small country situated in the midst of strong neighbours? What constitute the determinants of its foreign policy? Why is a small country more worried about preserving its national identity? How does it participate in non-aligned conferences? These are some of the basic questions which I have sought to answer in this dissertation. King Mahendra's was a dynamic personality. He held independent

views. He was the architect of an independent foreign policy, shifting from a position of "special relationship with India" to one of "equal friendship" with all the countries. His sudden death in 1972 put an abrupt end to an era, the Mahendra era, in Nepal's history.

The first chapter of this dissertation seeks to present an introduction to Nepal, including its geopolitical set-up and socio-economic conditions. Chapter Two deals with the determinants of non-alignment and evolution of Nepal's policy of non-alignment. King Mahendra participated in all the three non-aligned conferences held in his life time -- in Belgrade, Cairo, and Lusaka. His role in these conferences forms the subject matter of the dissertation. We have dealt with his role in the third, fourth and fifth chapters. The sixth chapter contains our conclusions.

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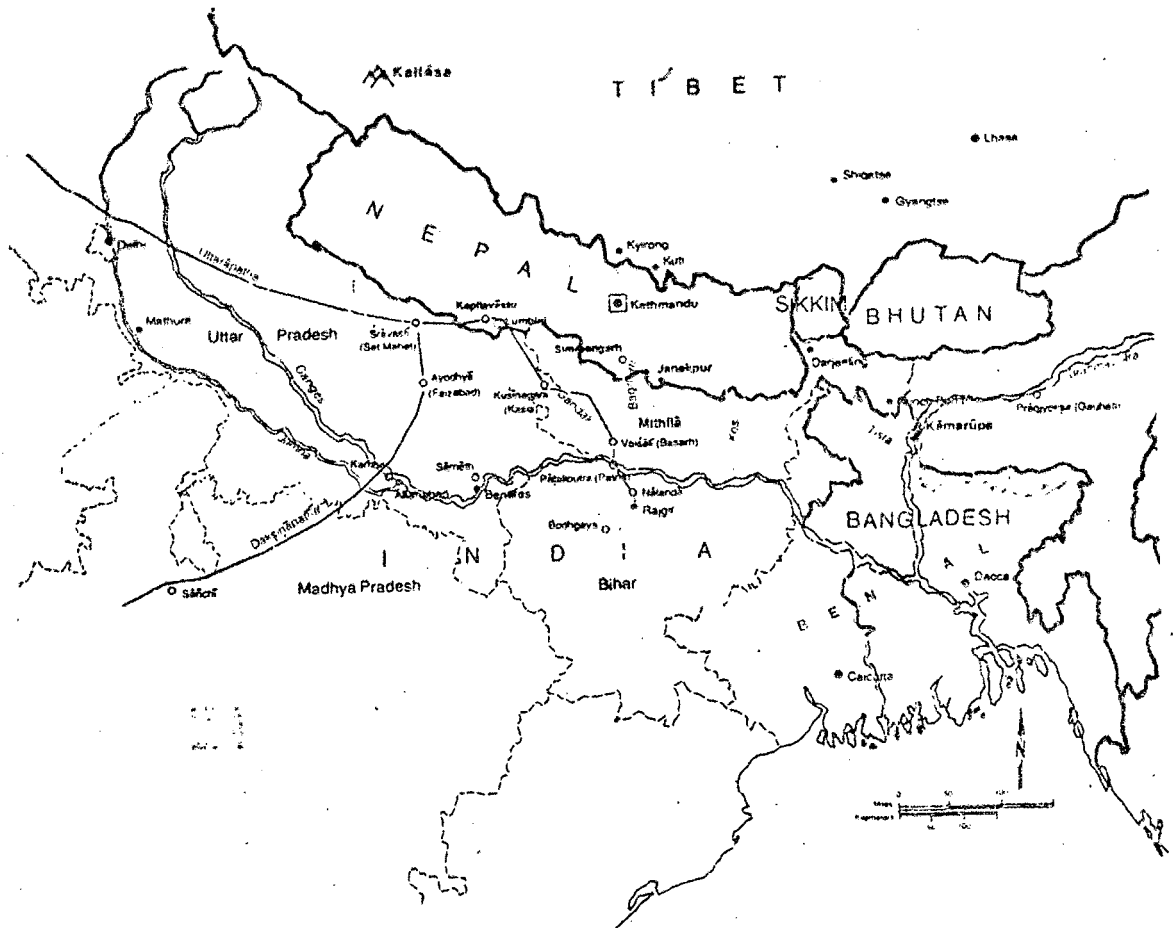
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New Delhi,

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Nepal and Her Neighbors

Source: Mary Shepherd Slusser, Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley (Princeton, N.J., 1983).



## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Nepal is an Asian country situated between China and India. In 1979 the population of Nepal was 13.71 million. Its area is approximately 141,059 square kilometres. Out of this 34.20 per cent is under forest; 14.97 per cent is under perpetual snow; 12.66 per cent is under pasture; 16.49 per cent is under cultivation; 2.33 per cent is under water; 18.64 per cent is waste land; and only 0.21 per cent is residential area and roads.<sup>1</sup> Its length from east to west is about 800 kilometres, and its breadth from north to south is, on an average, 160 kilometres.<sup>2</sup> Nepal is situated mainly along the southern slopes of the Himalayas, the highest range of mountains in the world. Approximately one-third of the Himalayan range (2,400 kilometres) lies in Nepal. It is sandwiched between

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1 His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Agricultural Statistics Division, Agricultural Statistics of Nepal (Kathmandu, 1977), p. 3.

2 K.K. Jha, Agricultural Finance in Nepal (Delhi, 1978), p. 7.

China in the north to an extent of 800 kilometres and by India in the south, east, and west. These two countries, as is well known, are comparatively big countries. Nepal has no sea-coast. It does not touch sea at any point; nor does it command a sea-route. It is thus a landlocked country. The nearest port, Calcutta in India, lies at a distance of about 800 kilometres.

India and China differ widely in their social, political, cultural, and religious outlook. Nepal, between these two giants, offers a meeting-ground for diverse peoples having varied social, political, cultural, and religious background. It serves as a bridge between the two civilizations.<sup>3</sup>

The Himalayas in the north constitute a natural boundary. In the south, however, there is no such natural boundary. Mount Everest (8,848 metres) the highest mountain peak in the world, which is called Sagarmatha in Nepal, lies in the Nepal Himalayas. Nepal can, besides Mount Everest, boast of many tall mountain peaks like Makalu (8,481 metres). The nature of the Himalayan range can be realized from the fact that some of its peaks are more than 8,000 metres from sea level in altitude. The

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<sup>3</sup> Rishikesh Shaha, An Introduction to Nepal (Kathmandu, 1976), p. 1.

Himalayas have a number of passes as, for example, the Nara Pass, the Kuti Pass, and the Kofari Pass. Nepal used to have trade with Tibet prior to Tibet's integration into China. The Tibetans carried on their trade through the passes mentioned above. They visited Nepal and India to obtain a number of necessities of life. Thus there were cultural, social, religious, and trade relations between these countries for ages.

#### Geographical Features

Although Nepal is regarded as a small country, it is almost as large as Bangladesh, twice the size of Sri Lanka, and three times the size of Switzerland. Geographically it can be broadly divided into three parts. To the southern side of the ice-capped Himalaya range, there is the Mahabharat range running from west to east and averaging 1,500 to 2,700 metres from sea level. The Churiya (Churo) range, which is called the Siwalik Hills in India, the south of the Himalayas averages 550 to 1,600 metres from sea level. These are separated by the valley. The terai in the south of Nepal is at an elevation of 200 metres above sea level<sup>4</sup> and adjoins Indian territory. Thus almost the whole of

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<sup>4</sup> Jha, n. 2, p. 7.

Nepal is situated on the Mahabharat range, the Himalayas, and the Churiya Hills. Besides the Kosi, the Karnali, and the Gandak, the important rivers of Nepal are the Bagmati, the Sonli, and the Dalan. Most of the rivers of North India, except the Brahmaputra, the Ganga, and the Yamuna, have their origin in the Nepal Himalayas. These rivers have vast potentiality for hydroelectricity, but owing to lack of resources this has not been tapped yet. The Churiya Hills and the terai as well as the inner terai, where the altitude is about 900 metres, have a humid, tropical climate. The region in the altitude range of 900 to 2,400 metres has a moist subtropical climate. The climate in the high Himalayan region between 2,400 metres and 4,000 metres is temperate. The region further above has the tundra type of climate. The mountains in the north are cold and desolate and without human habitation.

#### Socio-Political Make-up

Nature has provided a natural boundary to Nepal: it is separated from China and the west of Asia by the Himalayas in the north. This boundary also serves as the political boundary of Nepal. The people inhabiting the northern part of Nepal are Mongoloid and resemble the

Chinese and the Tibetans in the social and cultural aspects of their life. Of the Mongoloid group of people, the Magars and the Gurungs are the most numerous. They are concentrated in western Nepal and the mid-mountain region. The Limbus, the Rais, and the Tamangs inhabit the hill area situated to the east of the Kathmandu Valley. There are also certain communities of Tibetan origin like the Sherpas and the Thakalis.<sup>5</sup>

The southern part of Nepal, known as Sagaul, is inhabited by people of Indo-Aryan origin. Naturally, in their mode of living, food habits, and culture these people are very close to the people of India in border areas. The Sagaul people and the people of Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh - the Indian States bordering Nepal in the south - freely intermarry and acknowledge kinship.

Tribal people have been the inhabitants of Nepal for generations. Among these the Tharus are predominant. The population of Nepal consists mostly of people of the Indo-Aryan race and of people of Mongol origin. Their numbers vary as we move from north to south while people of Mongol extraction came from the north, the Indo-Aryans came from the south. The tribals came from

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<sup>5</sup> Leo E. Rose, Nepal: A Strategy for Survival (Bombay, 1971), pp. 7-8.

South east Asia.<sup>6</sup>

Religion and Culture

Hinduism and Buddhism are two prominent religions of Nepal. At places they are so intermixed that one cannot be viewed in isolation from the other. The very people who go to Pashupatinath and other Hindu temples also go to Swayambhu Nath and other Buddhist temples. Nepal is now the only Hindu Kingdom in the world. The influence of the Hindu religion is predominant in Nepal. The people worship Hindu gods and goddesses like Shiva, Rama, Krishna, Ganesha, Hanuman, Vishnu, Bhairav, Kali, and Durga in the temples.

Sizable numbers of people profess Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity also. They have freedom to follow their own religions and worship God in their own ways. Cow-slaughter is totally prohibited. Even imported beef is not allowed to be sold.

The Licchavi ruled Nepal when the Gupta kings were ruling in North India.<sup>7</sup> Gautama Buddha of the Shakyas dynasty was born at Kapilavastu in Lumbini in Nepal, but he carried on his mission mostly in India.

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6 Ibid., p. 7.

7 Lallanji Gopal and others, Studies in the History and Culture of Nepal (Varanasi, 1977), pp. 43 ff.



From India Buddhism spread far and wide in the world. The Aryans, who entered Nepal about six hundred years ago before the Buddha was born, spread the Vedic religion there. People believe that Nepal is protected by Lord Pushpabinath. According to them the King is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu Himself.

( Nepalese culture can also be divided into three broad divisions. The Hindu-Aryan culture, the Mongol culture, and the native-tribal culture. Hinduism is the ruling religion. Beyond Kathmandu in the north there is an admixture of Hinduism and Buddhism.

According to the Census of 1971, the Hindus numbered 10,330,009; the Buddhists, 866,411; the Muslims, 351,186; and the followers of other religions, 8,577.<sup>6</sup>

According to Hindu mythology, Rama, son of King Dasharatha of Ayodhya, was married to Sita, daughter of Raja Janaka of Janakpur in Nepal. Even now, in line with this tradition, a large number of families, including upper-class and aristocratic families, have marriage relationships with families of the corresponding class in India.

Thus we see that India and Nepal have had unbreakable ties with each other over the years. No

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<sup>6</sup> P. Sharma, Government and Politics of Nepal (Delhi, 1965), p. 4.

such close ties exist between Nepal and China or Tibet in the north, although the living and food habits, culture, religion, and languages of the people of the northern part of Nepal are very similar to those of the people of Tibet. This is probably due to the Himalayas and lack of conveyance and communication between Nepal and the countries in the north. The border between India and Nepal is separated only by a no-man's land which, at places, is just a few metres wide. People, especially in the tarai belt, cross the border as many times as they like and return as visas and passports are not required for travel between India and Nepal.

#### Linguistics.

The people of Nepal, especially in the tarai, have, through the ages, been sentimentally attached to Indian religions, scripts, languages, literatures and culture. The Nepali language is much nearer to Sanskrit and Maithili. The spoken language of the tarai is the same as that of the adjoining part of India.<sup>9</sup> Even two and half decades ago Nepal had no university of its own. The colleges in Kathmandu were affiliated to the University of Patna.<sup>10</sup> The medium of teaching in the tarai belt was

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9 Ibid., p. 5.

10 See King Mahendra, Proclamations, Speeches, and Messages, vol. 2 (1960-65), p. 109.

Hindi.<sup>11</sup> The Tribhuvan University was incorporated in 1959.

As many as thirty-six dialects are spoken in Nepal.

### Economic Conditions

Agriculture is the most important occupation in Nepal and occupies a key place in the country's economy. In 1971 almost 94.4 per cent of its working population was employed in agriculture,<sup>12</sup> the highest percentage in the countries of Asia. In 1974-75 agriculture contributed more than 65 per cent of the total national income.<sup>13</sup> It accounts for about two-thirds of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. The average annual rate of growth of GDP during 1964-65 was 2.65 per cent.<sup>14</sup> The GDP increased at the annual rate of 2.2 per cent during 1975-80.<sup>15</sup> Nepal's national income is believed to be no higher than (US) \$ 50 per capita.<sup>16</sup> It is thus an

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11 This is according to an eminent person interviewed by the author.

12 Agricultural Statistics of Nepal, n. 1, p. 3.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

14 *Ibid.*

15 His Majesty's Government Ministry of Finance, Economic Survey, 1980-81 (Kathmandu, 1981), p. 1.

16 Sharan, n. 8, p. 10.

economically less developed country. Rice and wheat are the important cereal crops; jute and sugar are the important cash crops. Besides, Nepal's forests are rich in medical herbs and valuable wood.

Nepal and Tibet had a flourishing trade for long years. However, in course of time, trade with India became more crucial to Nepal's economic welfare than entrepot trade. Direct trade between India and Nepal is approximately 90 per cent.<sup>17</sup> The main cause of this dependence on India is Nepal's land-locked situation. The major source of foreign exchange is export trade, besides tourism and Gurkha remittances.

Like most underdeveloped countries Nepal exports mainly agro-based products which account for more than 80 per cent of the total exports. Food and live animals accounted on an average for 57 per cent of the total value of trade in the period from 1961/62 to 1970/71. Nepal's second major export is crude materials and inodibles like timber, raw jute, mustard, oilseeds, and hides and skins. On the whole, Nepal's exports as a percentage of the total GDP of the country were 5.4 in

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17 See S.D. Hani, Foreign Policy of Nepal (Delhi, 1973), p. 201. Also see Hani, n. 5, p. 18.

1965/66; the percentage increased to 7.2 in 1967/68.<sup>18</sup> It did not reach the same high level of 7 per cent during the period 1968/69--1978/79.

Nepal's imports are consumer goods and machinery, transport equipment, petroleum products, iron, steel, cement, etc. They accounted for 11.5 per cent of the GNP in 1965/66. There was no appreciable change in the situation till 1971/72.<sup>19</sup> It registered a rising trend again from 1972/73 (10.3 per cent) to 1976/77 (11.6 per cent). Data show that the exports are almost constant with little fluctuations during the period between 1965/66 and 1976/77. The imports too are also almost constant with the exception of slight irregular fluctuations for the period from 1966/67 to 1971/72. Thereafter there was consistent increase up to 1976/77.<sup>20</sup> This indicates that the development efforts made so far have not helped improve the foreign trade of Nepal.

Nepal being a less developed country, foreign aid plays a vital part in its economy. It was 83 per cent

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18 Source (a) Quarterly Economic Bulletin (Kathmandu Nepal Rastra Bank), mid-January 1979.  
(b) Main Economic Indicators (Kathmandu Nepal Rastra Bank), April-May 1979.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

of the total expenditure in 1960/61, 65 per cent in 1970/71, and 63 per cent in 1979/80.<sup>21</sup>

### Historical Background and Political Development

In the first or second century A.D., some Lichchhavi princes from India entered Nepal and carved out a kingdom for themselves by defeating the original inhabitants of the Valley, the Kirats. Nepal has been a sovereign state since that period.<sup>22</sup> The Valley was colonized by the Hindus both consciously and by the natural process of expansion.<sup>23</sup> The ruling dynasties, mostly Hindu, from the plains of India--the Mauryas, the Lichchhavis, the Karnatakas, and the Gorkhas--tended to establish a system of divided sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> Dravya Shah, "a descendant of one of the conquered Gorkha and Khatriya kings from India", founded the Shah dynasty in 1559.<sup>25</sup> Later, in 1769, Prithvi Narayan Shah, a descendant of

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21 Govind R. Agrawal, "Mobilization of Resources for Basic Needs Oriented Public Sector Programme in Nepal", Planning for Basic Needs and Mobilization of Resources (Bangkok), June 1980, p. 251.

22 Dibya Deo Bhatt, Nepal and Non-Alignment (Kathmandu, 1979), p. 3.

23 R.P. Jayaswal, Chronology and History of Nepal (Varanasi, 1976), p. 110.

24 Ibid.

25 Satish Kumar, Basic Polity in Nepal (Bombay, 1967), p. 7.

Dravya Shah, integrated the Kathmandu Valley.<sup>26</sup> He gave Nepal a political significance by bringing the whole of it under a single ruler.<sup>27</sup> Since then Nepal has been ruled by an unbroken line of kings of the Shah dynasty.<sup>28</sup> Prithvi Narayan Shah sought consciously to "safeguard the independence of Nepal, especially against the British, and to make Nepal economically strong.... Towards Tibet his policy was not to give any cause for complaint, but if the occasion arose [he] was prepared to fight.... With China, he did not have any special relations."<sup>29</sup> His description of Nepal as "a yam between two rocks" is famous.

Prithvi Narayan Shah's successors were not so strong. They came into direct collision with the British power in India, which did not look upon the consolidation of a unified regime in Nepal with equanimity and came headlong into clash with the new power in Nepal.<sup>30</sup> The British defeated Nepal and forced it to sign a treaty in March 1816 at Sugauli. Nepal lost its possessions in

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26 See Sharan, n. 8, p. 11.

27 King Mahendra, n. 10, p. 124.

28 Satish Kumar, n. 25, p. 16.

29 Ibid., pp. 17-18.

30 King Mahendra, n. 10, p. 124.

Sikkim, Kumaon, and Garhwal, as well as a portion of its territory in eastern and western Nepal.<sup>31</sup> The subsequent treaty of friendship concluding the war marked the end of the first phase of the history of the new nation. The leaders of Nepal fought bravely to prevent any external Power from interfering in its affairs.<sup>32</sup>

In 1846 Jung Bahadur Rana became the Prime Minister. He massacred a large number of the nobility on 14 September 1846. This massacre is known as the Kot Massacre. He then founded the Rana dynasty of Prime Ministers, which ruled Nepal for a hundred and five years by usurping the power of the King. Thus, the Kot Massacre marked the beginning of an era in Nepalese history in which the monarchy was kept "in abeyance".<sup>33</sup> The Prime Minister became the de facto ruler of Nepal and the King lost all de facto power as well as de jure power to a great extent.<sup>34</sup> Owing to their own compulsions and needs the British and the French became firm allies. "The Rana rulers of Nepal afforded assistance in men and materials in

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31 Rose, n. 5, p. 89.

32 King Mahendra, n. 10, p. 124.

33 Satish Kumar, n. 25, p. 33.

34 Ibid., p. 143.



their hours of distress to the British rulers in India in the hope of winning over their blessings... [perpetuating] their autocratic-cum-military family despotism in Nepal.<sup>35</sup>

When the British left India, the power vacuum created by their departure was filled up by Free India. As we have stated earlier, Nepal has geographical, religious, and cultural relations with India. It was, therefore, natural that the Indian freedom movement should make an impact on the Nepalese leaders, who were eager to establish democracy in the place of Rana rule. B.P. Koirala and other Nepalese leaders participated in the Indian freedom movement, and in their turn they received the support of such Indian leaders as Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia in the struggle launched by the Nepalese people against Rana rule.<sup>36</sup>

#### Struggle against Traditional Forces

Many political parties grew up meanwhile in Nepal -- as, for example, the Praja Parishad (1955),<sup>37</sup>

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35 King Mahendra, n. 10, p. 124.

36 Fernand, The Nepali Congress Since Its Inception (Delhi, 1932), pp. 10-17.

37 Ibid., p. 8.

the Nepali National Congress (1947),<sup>38</sup> the Nepal Praja-  
tantra Congress (1948),<sup>39</sup> and the Communist Party  
(1949).<sup>40</sup>

King Tribhuvan took asylum in the Indian embassy  
in Nepal on 10 November 1950 with his entire family except  
his second grandson, Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah. Next day  
he went to New Delhi.<sup>41</sup> During his self-exile in India  
the Ranas enthroned Gyanendra, then a 4-year-old infant,  
as the King of Nepal, but the Government of India firmly  
refused to recognize Gyanendra as King.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the  
Ranas did not get support from any country. In the meantime  
the revolution in Nepal against Rana rule forced the Ranas  
to agree to constitutional reform. Under the "Delhi  
compromise" King Tribhuvan returned to Kathmandu on  
15 February 1951. It was the first instance since 1847  
the King of Nepal employing his sovereign Royal power at  
his own discretion.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, with the help of India, the monarchy was  
restored in Nepal.

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38 Lok Raj Baral, Oppositional Politics in Nepal  
(Delhi, 1977), p. 25. Also see Rose, n. 5, p. 183.

39 Parnanand, n. 36, p. 27.

40 Baral, n. 50, p. 54.

41 Rose, n. 5, p. 190.

42 Ibid., p. 191.

43 Rose, n. 5, p. 194.

The period that followed was a period of "special relationship" between India and Nepal.<sup>44</sup> King Tribhuvan died on 13 March 1955, and his son Mahendra succeeded him as the King of Nepal.

B.P. Koirala and his Nepali Congress succeeded in getting a parliamentary form of government established in the country. Koirala became Prime Minister following the first ever nation-wide general elections held in 1959. However, King Mahendra, who felt dissatisfied with the experiment with the parliamentary form of government, dismissed Koirala from office on 15 December 1960 and assumed full powers as King.

Meanwhile Nepal's heavy dependence on India and the consequent Indian presence in its affairs engendered suspicion about New Delhi's intentions in some quarters in the kingdom.<sup>45</sup> Some Nepalese criticized India's diplomacy and politics. This was how there arose an anti-Indian feeling.<sup>46</sup>

In the changed circumstances King Mahendra was obliged to adopt a policy that would be suitable

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44 S.K. Jha, "Politics towards India", S.D. Muni, ed., Nepal: An Assertive Monarchy (Delhi, 1977), p. 206.

45 Ibid., p. 207.

46 Ibid.

for his country, with its divergent ethnic and cultural groups and economic and geopolitical limitations. He devised what was called the Panchayat system instead of the parliamentary system of government. He adopted non-alignment as the basis of the country's foreign policy. "King Mahendra... [now] the answer to Nepal's security and identity problems is non-alignment and 'Nepalization' - the adoption of a political system differing from both China's Communist regime and India's parliamentary democracy".<sup>47</sup> Indeed, non-alignment became both a symbol of Nepal's sovereignty and a means for guarding its integrity against external influences.<sup>48</sup>

The determinants and the evolution of the non-aligned movement and the participation of Nepal in the different non-aligned conferences will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

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<sup>47</sup> Leo E. Rose and Margret W. Fisher, The Politics of Nepal: Persistence and Change in an Asian Monarchy (London, 1970), p. 162.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Two

### DETERMINANTS AND EVOLUTION OF NEPAL'S NON-ALIGNMENT POLICY

#### DETERMINANTS

The "determinants" of a country's non-alignment policy may be defined as those factors which have motivated or induced that country to join the non-aligned movement. A country's joining the non-aligned movement is a part of its foreign policy. The "determinants" in fact influence and shape the country's foreign policy itself.

The following may be considered as determinants of the foreign policy of a country: (1) The Geographical Factor; (2) Size of the Country; (3) Population of the Country; (4) Level of Economic Development; (5) Level of Military Strength; (6) Level of Technological Development; and (7) Type of Socio-Cultural make-up.

#### The Geographical Factor

The geographical location of a country is an important determinant. If a country is situated near the borders of a Super Power, it is doomed to face constant trouble till it aligns itself with the Super Power concerned completely or partially. It would have to

mortgage its foreign policy and its freedom to choose its own form of government to that Super Power. Nepal's problems derive from its situation also. It lies between Asia's two major Powers, India and China. Its policy-makers are, therefore, constantly engaged in the feat of tightrope-walking as between those two Powers. Out of the two alternatives before Nepal—complete alignment with either of the two neighbouring Powers, India and China, or membership of the non-aligned movement—the latter is definitely the better alternative for it.

#### Size of the Country

The size of a country is also very important. If a country is small in size, its smallness would be a limitation on its development. Unfortunately Nepal is very small in size. Its area is only 141,059 square kilometres.<sup>1</sup>

#### Population of the Country

Not only the size but the population is also an important determinant. The size of Sahara desert is not small, but its population is small. If population is larger the man-power needed in the military and other

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<sup>1</sup> His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Agricultural Statistics Division, Agricultural Statistics of Nepal (Kathmandu, 1977), p. 3.

fields would easily be available. A strong country needs a large population to maintain the desired level of strength. The population of Nepal is small: in 1979 it was just 13.71 million.<sup>2</sup>

### Level of Economic Development

A country which is economically strong can preserve its independence and territorial integrity. Only a strong country is in a position to choose whether to join any Power bloc or not. It can afford to ignore any alignment of Powers. The weaker the country, the greater the chance of its joining some Power bloc or other or the non-aligned movement for the sake of preserving its national freedom and conscience. As described in the First Chapter, Nepal is economically very underdeveloped and its compulsion to join the non-aligned movement is obvious.

### Level of Military Strength

A nation is a strong if it is militarily strong, apart from its economic strength. Economic strength may or may not be associated with military strength. For

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2 The Non-Aligned Countries, Ivo Djerak, trans. (London, 1982), p. 514. Cited hereinafter as Non-Aligned Countries.

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example, Japan and Saudi Arabia are economically very strong, but they are not militarily as strong. Hence the determinant "level of military strength" is an independent factor influencing the foreign policy of a country. Like economic strength, a country which is too weak militarily to defend itself when attacked would not be able to preserve its national freedom. It has to join some bloc or other or the non-aligned movement. Since Nepal's military strength is very poor, it joined the non-aligned movement right at the start.

#### Level of Technological Development

A country may be economically very strong, its military may be composed of a large number of battalions and yet its security would be in danger if its army is not provided with the most modern and sophisticated weapons. To develop sophisticated weapons, its level of technological development must be very high. It is also necessary for a country to possess a high level of technology not only in the field of defence but also in fields other than defence but otherwise vital to security. The score of Nepal in this important determinant too is very low. The lower the score of a country, the greater the chance of its joining some Power bloc or other. The non-aligned movement is the only way open to it to preserve its independence.



### Type of Socio-Cultural Make-up

It is said that of all the weapons, the weapon of ideology is the most potent. In spite of the superiority of their military forces France and the United States of America could not match the national fervour of the Vietnamese people; so much so that they were ventually forced to withdraw from Vietnam in disgrace. The Soviet bid to control Afghanistan has not succeeded according to plan because of the religious fervour and love of independence of the Afghan people. The social and cultural background of the country is, therefore, an important determinant. Nepal is fortunate, at least, in respect of this determinant. History shows that the Nepalese have always manifested extreme sensitivity where national honour and prestige are concerned. They have fought with rare unity in defence of their freedom and their frontiers. The valour of the Gurkha soldiers is well known throughout the world.

These determinants are valid, in general, in respect of all the countries of the world, including Nepal. Now, we may consider the following two determinants which

are relevant to Nepal alone. We shall call them "specific determinants"; the other determinants, i.e. those mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, are only "general determinants".

### Personality of King Mahendra

The leadership of a country often plays an important role in shaping and guiding the destiny of its people. Jawaharlal Nehru, Marshal Josip Broz Tito, and Gamal Abdel Nasser were stalwarts whose leadership put their respective countries on top in the comity of nations. King Mahendra of Nepal was a shrewd politician, an excellent strategist, a man of independent thinking, ambitious, far-sighted and intelligent. He was the architect of Nepal's independent foreign policy. He achieved it by shifting from a position of "special relationship with India" to one of "equal friendship with all the countries". He evolved a policy of equidistance from the two neighbours of Nepal, viz China and India. The non-aligned movement provided him with a platform for expressing his views boldly.

### Emergence of China as a Dominant Power

China, considered a sleeping giant, rose to the stature of a dominant Power in Asia under the Communist

leader Mao Tse-tung. China's action in annexing Tibet sent a wave of fear through the neighbouring countries. The events in Tibet had their effect on Nepal's foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> The non-alignment platform provided an opportunity to Nepal to express its views as an independent country.

#### NEPAL AND NON-ALIGNMENT

In the field of international politics the term "non-alignment" has acquired much importance and significance. In the beginning the term was not quite clear. It was explained variously--as "non-commitment", "non-involvement", "neutrality", "neutrality", "positive neutrality", "independent and active policy", "peaceful active co-existence", etc. It was first officially used in the late 1950s<sup>4</sup> and acquired importance only in course of time. Its guiding principles as adopted from its very inception are<sup>5</sup>

- (1) anti imperialism, anti colonialism, and anti-neo-colonialism;
- (2) struggle for international detente;
- (3) opposition to apartheid, racism, and Zionism;
- (4) opposition to military bases of the imperialist Powers on the

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3 Leo E. Rose, "King Mahendra's China Policy", in S.D. Khari, ed., Nepal: An Assertive Monarchy (Delhi, 1977), p. 222.

4 Peter Lyon, "The Non-Aligned Movement: Performance and Prospects", in U.S. Dajpal, ed., Non-Alignment: Retrospective and Prospects (Delhi, 1983), p. 23.

5 Non-Aligned Countries, n. 2, p. 9.

territories of the non-aligned countries or in colonial countries; (6) economic and political co-operation between the countries of the Third World; and (7) struggle for a new international economic order.

There are several reasons for its popularity.<sup>6</sup> First, newly liberated nations feel that non-alignment is in their interest and that it is essential for the preservation of their independence. Secondly there is the psychological and cultural aspect. The up and coming non-aligned nations were once colonies. They suffered at the hands of the Big Powers for centuries. Their aversion to the Big Powers is, therefore, natural. The third reason for the popularity of non-alignment is its opposition to colonialism. The non-aligned countries have had enough of colonialism, and they do not want to fall a prey to it again. Fourthly, the underdeveloped countries are in need of help from both the Power blocs. Such help they have been able to secure from both the Power blocs without any string attached to it. Yet another reason for the extent and spread of "non-alignment" is the desire of the non-aligned countries for peace in the interest of their development.

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<sup>6</sup> Motlurelal Sharma, Antarasthitiya Sambandh (Jaipur, 1977), p. 260.

Besides, the non-aligned countries have certain common experiences, ideologies, and aspirations. The most significant of these experiences is the constant use of their resources in men and money in the wars waged by their imperial masters. This is naturally resented, for it is felt that these wars did not involve their interests but only the interests of their rulers. This has engendered a feeling of revulsion in them against the power politics of the Big Powers. They are convinced that it is in their interest to keep away from the Big Powers.<sup>7</sup>

#### Evolution of a Non-Aligned Policy in Nepal

We can see the evolution of Nepal's non-alignment in the perspective of its age-old history, its diplomatic relations, its admission as a Member state of the United Nations, its internal political developments, its relations with its two neighbours (India and China), the rise of King Mahendra, the change in political system and its participation in international conferences, including especially the non-aligned summit conferences. King Prithvi Narayan Shah (1742-69), who unified Nepal, showed his awareness of the need for a policy which was somewhat

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7 Bimal Prasad, "The General Experience of Non-Alignment and Its Prospects for the Future", in L. Acimovic, ed., Non-Alignment in the World of Today: International Symposium, 16-19 January 1969 (Belgrade, 1969), p. 79.

similar to non-alignment when he said: "This Kingdom [Nepal] is like trul [Foot of a certain vegetable] between two stones. Great friendship should be maintained with the Chinese emperors. Friendship should also be maintained with the southern sea [the British], but he is very clever. Do not engage in an offensive attack; fighting should be done on a defensive basis....If it is found difficult to resist in the fight then even means of persuasion, tact, and deceit should be employed."<sup>8</sup>

Ranas were aware of their predicament. Even then they tried to follow the policy as far as possible. Maharaja Jung Bahadur Rana told the British Resident in Nepal: "...we will make no change in that policy, by the strict observance of which we have preserved our independence as a nation to the present time, unless you compel us to do so."<sup>9</sup> In order to cultivate the friendship of the British, Jung Bahadur Rana, breaking the then prevalent customs, conventions, and taboos, went to England in 1850,

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8 Quoted from Nurbhari Nath Yogi and Babu Ram Acharya, Rastanaita Sri Ranajit Rada Maharaja Prithivi Narayan Shah Dev ko Divya Udash (Divine Council of Father of Nation His Majesty King Prithivi Narayan Shah Dev (Kathmandu, 1953), pp. 15-16.

9 Richikoth Shaha, "The Historical Roots of Non-Alignment", Journal of the Nepal Council of World Affairs (Kathmandu, 1975), p. 66.

and met Queen Victoria. He tried to influence Englishmen in every possible manner.<sup>10</sup>

In their own interest the Ranas wanted the continuance of British rule in India. If the British exploited India, the Ranas too did not lag far behind them in the matter of exploiting the people of Nepal. Thus they were birds of the same feather. The Ranas were afraid that the departure of the British from India in 1947 might endanger their position. They felt that democratic India would not be as friendly to them as the British had been.<sup>11</sup> They, therefore, sought to establish relations with other countries. An opportunity to do so came their way when they received an invitation to participate in the first Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947. They enthusiastically accepted the invitation to attend the Conference, hoping that Nepal's participation in the conference would demonstrate its sovereign status to the world,<sup>12</sup> and afford it an opportunity to interact<sup>13</sup> with other independent Asian Governments.

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10 S.D. Muni, Foreign Policy of Nepal (Delhi, 1975), p. 8.

11 Leo E. Rose, Nepal Strategy for Survival (Bombay, 1971), p. 179.

12 Ibid., pp. 178-9.

13 Ibid., pp. 179-80.

## NEPAL'S GROWING INTERNATIONAL STATUS

### Participation in the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi

The First Asian Relations Conference was held in New Delhi from 23 March to 2 April 1947. India was still not independent then. In the San Francisco Conference of the previous year some of the Asian delegates had formally proposed to Vijayalakshmi Pandit that her brother Jawaharlal Nehru should take the initiative in the matter of convening a full-scale Asian Conference as they feared that the United Nations might meet with the same fate as the League of Nations or turn into a White Men's Club.<sup>14</sup> A total of 243 delegates and observers from twenty-eight Asian countries<sup>15</sup> participated in the First Asian Relations Conference. Nepal sent five delegates and three observers under the leadership of Major-General Bijaya Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana,<sup>16</sup> who was a grandson of Padma Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana, the then Prime Minister of Nepal.

As most Asian countries were not independent then, the main preoccupation of the conference was the question

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14 G.H. Jansen, Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment (London, 1966), p. 41.

15 See Indian Council of World Affairs Asian Relations I. Report of the Proceedings and Documentation of the First Asian Relations Conference (New Delhi, 1949).

16 Ibid.



of achieving freedom from foreign rule.<sup>17</sup> The Conference also sought to enable all Asian countries to meet together from time to time, to hold together, and to advance together.

According to Jawaharlal Nehru, it "was not a vague desire but a compulsion of events that forces all of us to think along these lines".<sup>18</sup>

The conference discussed many important topics like (i) "Defence and Security"; (ii) "Racial Problems"; (iii) "Intra-Asian Emigration and the Status and Treatment of Immigrants"; (iv) "Transition from a Colonial to a National Economy"; (v) "Agricultural and Industrial Development"; (vi) "Public Health, Nutrition, and Labour Welfare"; (vii) "Cultural Co-operation".<sup>19</sup>

This conference was one of the biggest conferences of its kind. In his speech on behalf of Nepal, Bijay Shamsher remarked: "It is a unique occasion when, for the first time in history,....more than half of the entire population of the world should have gathered together on a common platform to exchange information and views."<sup>20</sup> He

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17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

hoped that the conference would help in extending the region of mutual understanding and goodwill in the world. He admitted that the Asian countries had various problems. Some of these problems were due to historical reasons; others were a direct consequence of the Second World War. He said:

If, as a result of this conference, these problems and difficulties, or at least a major part of them, could be resolved, then the example and influence of the conference might extend beyond the boundaries of Asia and might become a powerful force for the establishment and spread of enduring peace and goodwill throughout the world. 21

Under the Vice-Presidency of Nepal there was discussion at the conference on agricultural reconstruction and industrial development in the countries of Asia.<sup>22</sup>

As a result of its participation in the conference a fundamental change came about in the foreign policy of Nepal: it shed its traditional policy of isolation and adopted a policy of establishing close diplomatic relations with other countries, of participating in international deliberations, and of playing an increasingly active role in world politics.

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21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

Expansion in Diplomatic Relations

Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher declared in May

1948:

In modern times it is neither possible nor desirable for any state to keep itself in isolation from world affairs. It shall be our policy, therefore, to enter into diplomatic relations with all such countries that seek our friendship. It is evident that we shall require much help and co-operation from abroad in our nation-building project. We hope we shall obtain such needful assistance and co-operation from our neighbouring and friendly countries. 23

Nepal took the initiative to establish diplomatic relations with Belgium, China, France, the Netherlands, Tibet, and many other countries as well.<sup>24</sup> It raised the status of the legation of Nepal in the United Kingdom to that of an embassy. It signed a treaty of friendship and commerce with the United States of America in Kathmandu in April 1947. Ten months thereafter the two countries established diplomatic relations with each other.<sup>25</sup>

The emergence of the People's Republic of China in 1949 posed a danger to the security, identity, and

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23 Resc, n. 11, p. 180.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 179.

independence of Nepal. Nepal lost interest in having diplomatic relations with Beijing and kept the idea in abeyance for the time being.<sup>26</sup>

Nepal formally applied for admission to the United Nations in February 1949. It was frustrated on that occasion by the Soviets, who questioned "Nepal's sovereign status". And yet its application for membership of the world body constituted the conclusive step in the "opening" of Nepal to the world.<sup>27</sup>

#### Wave of Changes in Nepal

In the meantime people were fed up with Rana rule in Nepal. There was an urge for a change towards a democratic set-up. D.R. Regmi warned that if the Government of India adopted a policy of helpful co-operation with the Ranas on the plea of counteracting Communist infiltration from the north, the Nepalese people would in frustration, be compelled to seek support from their northern neighbour in the struggle against the Ranas.

In this state of affairs Jawaharlal Nehru adopted a policy that constituted a via media in so far as Nepal was concerned. He stated:

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26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., p. 190.

We have tried, for what it is worth, to advise Nepal to act in a manner so as to prevent any major upheaval. We have tried to find a way, a middle way, if you like, which will ensure the progress of Nepal and the introduction of some advance in the way of democracy in Nepal. We have searched for a way which would, at the same time, avoid the total uprooting of the ancient order. 28

Nehru respected Nepal's independence and sovereignty. At the same time he sympathized with the aspirations of the people of Nepal, who were striving hard to overthrow the Ranas. He was also anxious to ensure that Nepal did not get out of the hold of India. He declared in India's Parliament on 6 December 1950:

Three years ago we assured Nepal of our desire that she should be a strong independent and progressive country. We pointed out in a friendly way as possible that the world was changing rapidly, if Nepal did not make an effort to keep pace with it, circumstances were bound to force her to do so. 29

Being devoted to democracy, Nehru wanted democracy to be established in all the countries in India's neighbourhood. The leaders of both India and Nepal wanted a democratic set-up in Nepal and the ouster of Rana rule.

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28 Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, 1949-53 (Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1954), pp. 176-7. Hereinafter cited as Nehru's Speeches.

29 Ibid., p. 175.

Nehru said in the Indian Parliament on 7 March 1950:

We have advised in earnestness the Government of Nepal, to the extent a friendly Power can advise an independent nation, that in the inner context of Nepal, it is desirable to pay attention to the forces which are moving in the world, the democratic forces and forces of freedom and put themselves in line with them. 30

### Treaties with India

During this period India and Nepal signed two treaties in Kathmandu on 31 July 1950--the Treaty for Peace and Friendship and the Treaty of Trade and Commerce. They also exchanged a letter along with it, which was kept confidential till 1959. The first article of the Treaty for Peace and Friendship ran "The two governments agree mutually to acknowledge and respect the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of each other."<sup>31</sup> The reference to the principle of complete sovereignty and territorial integrity was only a reiteration of the Anglo-Nepalese Treaty of 1923 and the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1947. A close scrutiny of the contents of the letter exchanged would, however show that most of the items mentioned in it, albeit with modifications, are borrowed from the Peace Treaty

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30 Nehru's Speeches, n. 23, p. 147.

31 Hunt, n. 10, p. 233.

of Sugauli of 1815 and the Treaty between Nepal and Great Britain signed in 1923.<sup>32</sup> It said: "Neither government shall tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat the two governments shall consult with each other and devise effective counter measures."<sup>33</sup> Although it is usual to have such a clause in a Treaty of Peace and Friendship and does not necessarily amount to a formal military alliance, Nehru said in the context of a reference to it in the Indian Parliament much later: "... even though there is no military alliance between the two countries, any possible invasion of Nepal ... would inevitably involve the safety of India."<sup>34</sup>

The letter exchanged said that the Government of Nepal might, for its security, import arms and ammunition through the territory of India, which should be so imported with the assistance and agreement of the Government of India.<sup>35</sup> It also said that if the Government of Nepal should decide to seek foreign assistance with regard to

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32 Rishikesh Shaha, Nepal Politics: Retrospect and Prospect (Delhi, 1973), p. 253.

33 Muni, n. 10, pp. 236-7.

34 Nehru's Speeches, n. 23, p. 147.

35 Muni, n. 10, pp. 136-7.

the development of the national resources of, or of any industrial project in Nepal, the Government of Nepal should give first preference to the Government or the nationals of India as the case might be, provided that the terms offered by the Government of India or Indian nationals as the case might be, were not less favourable to Nepal than the terms offered by any other foreign Government or by other foreign national.<sup>36</sup> Further, the two Governments agreed not to employ any foreigner whose activity might be prejudicial to the security of the other.

This is reminiscent of Article 7 of the Treaty of Sugauli, which restrained the Government of Nepal from employing any foreigner or European or American subject without the consent of the British Government in India.<sup>37</sup>

Really it was a treaty between two unequals. The Ranas, who were a party to it, had no locus standi. Even their existence was in danger. They depended on India for support. The treaty also reflected Nepal's alignment with India.

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36 Ibid.

37 See Shaha, n. 32, pp. 255-6.



### REVOLUTION IN NEPAL

On 6 November 1950 King Tribhuvan asked for political asylum in India. He arrived in India on 10 November 1950. Members of the Nepali Congress, who were striving hard to overthrow the Ranas, launched an attack on the Ranas. The Ranas deposed King Tribhuvan and placed his 4-year old grandson Gyanendra on the throne. They then requested other countries to recognize the new Government. Neither India nor countries like the United Kingdom and the United States recognized Gyanendra. This destroyed the prestige and the credibility of the Ranas, and they collapsed like a house of cards. They lost their hold on Birganj, Biratnagar, the eastern Terai and the hilly regions in the west to the Nepali Congress. Although the revolutionaries did not have enough arms and ammunition, they had the full support and sympathy of the Indian leaders and the Press.<sup>38</sup> However, the Government of India neither opposed them nor supported them. Rather Nehru criticized the Nepali Congress for not adhering to non-violence.<sup>39</sup> The Ranas received no moral support.

This created panic among the Nepalese administrators. There was complete anarchy. Realizing the

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<sup>38</sup> Rose, n. 11, p. 189.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

gravity of the situation, Jawaharlal Nehru, who felt concerned about the disorder across the border, declared in the Indian Parliament on 6 December 1950:

From time immemorial the Himalayas have provided us with magnificent frontiers, we cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated because it is also the principal barrier to India. Therefore, much as we appreciate the independence of Nepal, we can not allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened because that would be a risk to our own security. 40

The Government of India tried to reach an understanding with the King of Nepal and the leaders of the Nepali Congress on the following basic points: (i) an elected Constituent Assembly should be set up to draft a new constitution; (ii) an interim government should be formed with popular (Nepali Congress) representatives but with a Rana Prime Minister; and (iii) King Tribhuvan should be recognized. Seeing that the Ranas were not willing to accept this arrangement, Nehru warned them on 21 December 1950, and said that if the "popular political reforms and a satisfactory settlement are delayed in Nepal, the greater the danger to Nepal's security and internal stability". 41

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40 Nehru's Speeches, n. 23, p. 176.

41 Rose, n. 11, p. 195. Also see The Hindu (Madras), 23 December 1950.

The Ranas had no way out. In January 1951. Mohan Shamsar, the then Prime Minister, issued a public proclamation, that as no friendly country having diplomatic relations with Nepal had recognized the new King Gyandhra, King Tribhuvan would be restored to the throne and that a cabinet with popular representatives would be formed.<sup>42</sup>

The Ranas did not get recognition from foreign countries. On the other hand the Nepali Congress received much sympathy and support from the Indian leaders.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, King Tribhuvan himself was in New Delhi. Nepal was surrounded by India, and it being a land-locked country, the Ranas eventually had no option but to accept the above-mentioned arrangement. On 15 February 1951 King Tribhuvan, along with the leaders of the Nepali Congress, returned to Kathmandu. He regained his throne on 18 February 1951.<sup>44</sup> After a lapse of about a century the King became the sovereign head of Nepal. According to the terms of the Delhi compromise a 10-man cabinet equally divided between the Nepali Congress and the Ranas was set up under the Prime Ministership of Mohan Shamsar. This

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42 Rose, n. 11, p. 193. Also see The Hindu, 9 January 1951.

43 Rose, n. 11, p. 189.

44 Ibid., p. 194.

underlined India's influence in Nepalese politics.

India found it a rather difficult matter to evolve a sound policy towards its three border states—viz Bhutan, Nepal, and Sikkim. At one stage several high-level Indian officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel, reportedly urged the accession of the border states to the Indian Union in the same way as the "native" Indian States. The decision on this issue, however, lay with the External Affairs Ministry, which was headed by Prime Minister Nehru.<sup>45</sup>

Rose says that for some time after 1947 there was a certain amount of ambivalence about the attitude of Indian officials towards the above-mentioned border states. They were not quite clear whether these states had been independent prior to 1947 or whether they had been a de facto part of the British Indian Empire. As late as 6 December 1950 Nehru was still describing Nepal's independence in rather vague terms, thus: "Geographically, Nepal is almost a part of India, although she is an independent country."<sup>46</sup> On another occasion he said:

Nepal was an independent country when India was under British rule; but, strictly speaking,

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45 Rose, n. 11, p. 195.

46 Nehru's Speeches, n. 23, p. 147.

her independence was only formal....Nepal's foreign relations were strictly limited to her relations with the Government functioning in India at the time. That was an indication that Nepal's approach to international relations was a very limited one. <sup>47</sup>

Rene says that this was incorrect factually and questionable under international law. <sup>48</sup>

India sent its constitutional experts to Kathmandu in 1947 to advise the Darbar on political reforms. <sup>49</sup>

India also sent its military personnel to impart military training to Nepalese soldiers. Indian officials were placed in charge of reorganization of Nepal's Secretariat. The first Attorney-General of Nepal was an Indian attorney. <sup>50</sup>

The King and the leaders of Nepal frequently visited India for consultations with the Government and leaders of India. The Indian currency was legal tender in Nepal. Indian text-books were used in Nepalese schools and colleges. Indian police and military personnel were often invited to Nepal to help control the law-breaking elements. All these caused much dissatisfaction in Nepal.

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47 Ibid., p. 175.

48 Rene, n. 11, p. 195.

49 Ibid., p. 181.

50 Ibid., p. 192.

There was much criticism of even the economic aid given by India; by and large it was regarded as an interference on the part of India in the affairs of Nepal.

Nehru said in February 1952:

We have taken particular care not to interfere. We have given advice on some occasions. On two occasions the Prime Minister was here. And the King was also here, once or twice. We naturally discussed various matters and gave advice. In two matters more particularly we are closely associated, in matters of foreign policy and defence, not by formal agreement but simply because both matters are common to us. 51

The close relationship between India and Nepal made foreign countries regard Nepal as a protectorate of India. This was one of the reasons why the Soviet Union doubted that Nepal was an independent sovereign country.

Nepal adopted the fundamentals of Indian foreign policy as its own, as also the terms "non-alignment" and "peaceful co-existence". King Tribhuvan saw no threat to Nepal's independence from India. Indeed he acquiesced in the "special relationship" between the countries. 52

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51 Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 16 February 1952.

52 Lee E. Rose and Margaret W. Fisher, The Politics of Nepal (London, 1970), p. 153.

## BANDUNG CONFERENCE, 1955

The Prime Ministers of Burma, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) met at Bogor on 28 and 29 December 1954 to arrange for the Bandung Conference. They decided to extend invitations to twenty-nine Asian, African countries. They also worked out details of the ensuing Bandung Conference. They agreed that Indonesia would sponsor and host the conference. They also agreed that such countries of Asia and Africa as had independent governments should be invited country by country. Nepal was also invited to attend the Bandung Conference met from 18 to 24 1955.

This was a unique conference. It was neither accidental nor unexpected. It was an important event of the twentieth century, an outcome of constant consultations among the participating states. It was unusual in that it was comprised exclusively of the poorer and less developed countries of Asia and Africa which had suffered at the hands of imperialism directly or indirectly.

The various countries were invariably represented by their respective Prime Ministers.

Nepal was represented by a 5-member team led by Major-General Sovag Jung Thapa, Foreign Secretary. Ram Prasad Manandhar (Education Secretary), Yadu Nath Khanal, Narashman Singh, and Colonel Padma Bahadur Khatri were

the other members.<sup>53</sup>

The Bandung Conference succeeded beyond all expectations. All the countries which had been invited attended the conference.

Major-General Sovag Jung Thapa, head of the Delegation from Nepal, demanded that Membership of the United Nations should be thrown open to all countries. He expressed the hope that unity and collaboration among the Asian and African countries would not be interpreted as an attempt for creation of a new world bloc. He also described Nehru's five principles of peaceful co-existence (Panchasheel) as implying goodwill and a sincere desire for co-operation.<sup>54</sup>

Thapa read out a message from the King of Nepal, which said:

I have great pleasure in sending delegates from Nepal to participate in this Conference at this hour of international unrest. The unique gathering, the first of its kind, of the representatives of so many countries of Asia and Africa should afford excellent opportunities for greater mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among nations. I wish the conference every success.

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53 Government of the Republic of Indonesia, Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung (Djakarta, 1955), pp. 40-41. Cited hereinafter as Asia-Africa Speaks.

54 *Ibid.*, pp. 105-7.



He expressed thanks to the countries for convening the Asian-African Conference and for making excellent arrangements.

Thapa traced the history of Asia and Nepal. He referred to the birth of Gautama Buddha in Lumbini, a place in Nepal. He explained that the popularity and wide acceptance found by the concept of Panchasheel, based on the teaching of the Buddha, was a matter of pride and privilege for Nepal. He said that Nepal did not want a third bloc or region. He then added:

The growing unity and solidarity among the countries of Asia and Africa is leading towards the consummation of a historical process. This in no way should be taken as signifying ill-will or hostility to other countries of the world; nor should it be understood as directed towards the development of narrow outlook based on the idea of forming a regional bloc. 55

He reiterated Nepal's belief that the five principles embodied in the agreement between India and China constituted a realistic basis for the construction of the superstructure of Asian-African goodwill and co-operation. "In a world torn asunder by mutual fear and suspicion and heading desperately towards disaster, the five

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55 Ibid.

principles in our opinion provide a real basis of international co-operation".

With reference to his own country, Thapa said that it was a very small country but that "there was ample scope for the harnessing of water resources, for the exploitation of minerals, and for the development of agriculture. Thapa said that one of its aspirations was to become a Member of the United Nations. He pleaded that the Asian-African Conference should endorse the claim of Nepal and other similar independent countries to the Membership of the world body. He added: "Nepal suggests that the Membership of the United Nations should be opened to all the peace-loving sovereign and independent countries able and willing to fulfil the obligation of the [UN] Charter."<sup>56</sup>

In the final communique, the Bandung Conference took note of the fact that several states had still not been admitted to the United Nations, and declared that for effective co-operation for world peace, the Membership of the United Nations should be universal. It called on the Security Council to support the admission of all the states which were qualified for Membership. It expressed the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

view that Nepal was one such qualified country.<sup>57</sup>

This was a great achievement for Nepal. Nepal was recognized as sovereign, independent state, which it was, and received the co-operation of the Asian-African Conference.

The Asian-African Conference considered a number of problems of common interest and concern to Asian-African countries and discussed ways and means by which they could achieve fuller economic, cultural, and political co-operation. It laid more emphasis on economic and cultural problems than on political problems. It recognized the urgency of promoting economic development in the Asian-African region. It recommended the early establishment of a Special United Nations Fund and an International Finance Corporation for the economic development of the Asian-African countries. It also underlined the need to establish commodity trade in the region.<sup>58</sup>

The conference also recognized the development of cultural co-operation as one of the most powerful means of promoting understanding among nations. It expressed its

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57 Indian Society of International Law, Non-Aligned and Developing Countries: Basic Documents (Delhi, 1970), p. 67.

58 Ibid., pp. 61-69.

belief that Asian and African cultural co-operation should be developed in the larger context of world co-operation. It referred to the dangerous situation of global tensions and the possibility of a world war breaking out and invited the attention of all nations to the terrible consequences of such a war. It then declared that universal disarmament was an absolute necessity for the preservation of peace.<sup>59</sup>

The conference correlated the problem of peace with the problem of international security. It said that for the promotion of international peace, social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom were needed, that all peoples should have the right of self-determination, and that they should have the right freely to choose their own political and economic systems and their own ways of life.<sup>60</sup>

The conference developed ten principles and recommended that these principles would enable the various nations of the world to practise tolerance, live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and develop friendly co-operation.

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59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., p. 68.

These were very encouraging resolutions for the situation of Nepal and were in the interest of Nepal.

#### RISE OF KING MAHENDRA

The accession of King Mahendra to the throne on 15 March 1955 is a significant landmark in the history of Nepal. The admission of Nepal to the United Nations in 1956 and the establishment of relations with Communist China heralded a shift in Nepal's foreign policy. Nepal moved away from its position of a "special relations" with India to one of "equal friendship" with all countries. To achieve this shift King Mahendra pardoned K.I. Singh, who had been exiled. Also he appointed Tanka Prasad, who was a leader of a party called the Praja Socialist Party and who was actually a Leftist in outlook with an image of being anti-Indian,<sup>61</sup> as Prime Minister on 27 January 1956.<sup>62</sup> Tanka Prasad said that he was prepared to take "aid without strings" from any country, whether it was India, Britain, China, France, India, the Soviet Union, or the United States. He also declared that he would seek an amendment of the Indo-Nepalese Trade Treaty of 1950 to establish direct

61 Rose, n. 11, p. 209.

62 S.K. Jha, "Policy towards India", in S.D. Muni, ed., Nepal: An Assertive Monarchy (Delhi, 1977), p. 207.

trade relations with third countries.<sup>63</sup> Nepal and China signed a treaty on 20 September 1956. This treaty was based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence (Panchashila). King Mahendra demonstrated the sovereign status of Nepal by voting with the Western bloc on the Hungarian question in the UN General Assembly<sup>64</sup> while India voted in favour of the Eastern bloc. This was the first major issue in the United Nations on which Nepal had not voted with India, thus establishing Nepal's credentials as a sovereign and independent state in the international field. Also King Mahendra hosted the Fourth Congress of the world Buddhist Fellowship held in Kathmandu on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of Gautama Buddha. Buddhist monks from thirty-two countries participated in this conference.<sup>65</sup> This was a demonstration of the fact that Nepal could establish cultural relations with other countries directly, i.e. without reference to India. King Mahendra, however, realized that the steps he had taken to expand Nepal's relations with China were rather hasty. He then dismissed the coalition led by Tanka Prasad on

63 See Gorkha Patria (Kathmandu), 30 January 1958. Also see Rose, n. 11, p. 209.

64 Sita Shrestha, "Nepal in the United Nations", in Muni, n. 62, p. 167.

65 Rose, n. 11, p. 214.

14 July 1957, He then appointed a new Government headed by K.I. Singh, now a pro-Indian politician. Once again the existence of a "special relationship with India" became the dominant theme, and the goal of "diversification" of Nepal's foreign relations was postponed if not abandoned.<sup>66</sup> The King dissolved this Ministry too on 19 November 1957.

The year 1959 is important in Nepalese history on account of the General Election held in that year. The Nepali National Congress Party emerged as the largest party in the election. Consequently B.P. Koirala, President of the party, formed the Government. The election manifesto of the Nepali Congress had stated that the party would, if elected to power, establish relations with all countries on the basis of mutual friendship and equality, that Nepal would not enter into any military pact, that it would raise its voice for peace in the United Nations, and that it would have friendly relations with both of its great neighbours.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile there occurred a full-scale rebellion against Chinese rule in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama escaped to India and found refuge there.<sup>68</sup> This served as a warning

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66 Ibid., pp. 216-17.

67 See Rose, n. 11, p. 219. See, also, Parmanand, Nepali Congress since its Inception (Delhi, 1932), pp. 248-9.

68 Rose, n. 11, p. 219.

to all nations in general and to Nepal and the Nepali Congress Party in particular. In a resolution the Nepali Congress criticized the Chinese action in Tibet as one reminiscent of the "19th-century imperialist tradition".<sup>69</sup> It stated that the cause of dissatisfaction among the Tibetans was the action of China in deviating from its commitment to the autonomy of the Tibetans.<sup>70</sup> It urged China to allow Tibet full autonomy within the framework of the Sino-Tibetan agreement.<sup>71</sup> This was a setback for Sino-Nepalese relations. B.P. Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal, tried his best to improve relations with China. He was able to achieve an honourable settlement of the Everest dispute and a resolution of the Mustang incident in 1960.<sup>72</sup>

King Mahendra dissolved the Parliament on 15 December 1960 in exercise of the right bestowed on him by Article 55 of the Constitution of Nepal.<sup>73</sup> In a proclamation he said:

We have this day, in exercise of the powers conferred on us by Article 55 of the

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69 Ibid.

70 Parmanand, n. 57, p. 249.

71 Rose, n. 11, p. 221. See also The Motherland (Kathmandu), 2 May 1959.

72 See Muni, n. 10, pp. 103 and 109.

73 His Majesty's Government of Nepal, King Mahendra's Proclamation, Speeches and Messages (Kathmandu), vol. 2 (1960-65), p. 2.



constitution, dissolved by this proclamation the cabinet have assumed unto ourselves the entire administration of the country, till as may be required for the installation of an alternative arrangement. <sup>74</sup>

Through this proclamation he also suspended parts 2, 3, and 10 and some provisions of parts 4 and 5 of the Constitution, <sup>75</sup> and appointed and constituted a Council of Ministers under his own Chairmanship. <sup>76</sup>

In the field of foreign affairs King Mahendra said that he would "hold firm to the principle of neutrality and continue the policy of friendship with all the friendly countries". He reaffirmed his "desire for peace and friendship through the country and the world". <sup>77</sup> He charged the Nepali Congress with maladministration, misrule, and corruption. <sup>78</sup> He launched an attack on parliamentary institutions, and said that they were unsuitable to the infrastructural conditions in Nepal and the genius of the Nepalese people. He regarded "Parliamentary democracy as a form of government is completely unknown

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74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., p. 2.

77 Ibid., pp. 2-3.

78 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

to the people, and whatever its merits elsewhere has no possibility of taking immediate roots in Nepal".<sup>79</sup>

India vehemently criticized the King's action. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, called it a "setback" for democracy and a complete reversal of the democratic process in Nepal.<sup>80</sup> He praised the dissolved Koirala Government, and said: "For the first time Nepal had some order of government which was trying to improve things."

This was the period in which Indo-Nepalese relations were possibly at their lowest ebb. The King exuded great confidence, and said: "We have still to make known to the world the glories of Nepal and the Nepalese.... We shall take our stand before the world and prove our mettle as the true Nepalese."<sup>81</sup>

#### EMERGENCE OF CHINA

The emergence of Communist China as a major Power changed the political outlook of some of the South Asian countries. Some looked upon Chinese power as an alternative to Indian "paramountcy". The two rising Powers, India and

79 Rose, n. 11, p. 254.

80 Ibid.

81 King's Proclamation, n. 73, p. 4.

China, justified the fear of Nepal in the words of King Prithvi Narain Shah as a "root between two stones". Chinese action in Tibet added to Nepal's apprehension because "after all, Mao Tse-tung had once listed Nepal as one of the dependent states [that] the British had seized from China".<sup>82</sup>

When Nehru accepted the suzerainty of China over Tibet in the Sino-Indian Treaty of September 1952, Nepal was further disturbed. Indeed it caused King Tribhuvan to seek yet closer ties with India. The accession of King Mahendra in March 1955, however, changed the entire scene. Nepal established diplomatic relations with China during this period. It felt concerned about the border dispute between China and India and activities of the Khomphas in eastern Tibet. Instead of a "special relationship" with India King Mahendra devised the policy of "equal friendship" with all countries. The appointment of Tantra Prasad Acharya, a pro-Chinese politician, as Prime Minister of Nepal was a step towards equal friendship with all countries. China's Vice-Premier, Ulanfu, who came to attend the coronation ceremony of King Mahendra in May 1956, expressed China's

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82 Coral Bell, "The Foreign Policy of China", in F.S. Northedge, ed., The Foreign Policies of Powers (London, 1969), p. 131. See also "King Mahendra's China Policy", in *Muni*, n. 62, p. 222.

sympathy for Nepal's efforts towards economic development, thereby strongly implying China's interest in giving aid to Nepal.<sup>83</sup> China and Nepal signed a treaty on 20 September 1956.<sup>84</sup> This was followed by Tanka Prasad Acharya's visit to China (which was the first visit by a Prime Minister of Nepal to a foreign country other than India). Zhou En-lai, Prime Minister of China, paid a visit to Nepal between 25 February to 28 February 1956. These visits highlighted the cultural and racial affinity between China and Nepal. During Zhou En-lai's stay in Kathmandu the Nepalese authorities discussed with him a proposal to build a Tibet-Kathmandu road,<sup>85</sup> but he expressed his country's helplessness at the moment.

In a real sense it was King Mahendra who was the designer of the foreign policy of Nepal. The Prime Ministers were just pawns on his chess-board of foreign policy. When he noticed that the expansion of Sino-Nepalese relations had been too hasty, he dismissed Tanka Prasad and appointed in his place K.I. Singh, a well-known pro-Indian politician,<sup>86</sup> to keep the balance between the two neighbours. Meanwhile China tried to cultivate relations with Nepal with a good deal of tact and circumspection. It avoided doing anything

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<sup>83</sup> Ross, n. 11, p. 210.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

that might hurt the feeling of the Nepalese masses. For instance, there was misunderstanding over the Mustang incident, but it was removed to the complete satisfaction of Nepal. The two sides also reached agreement on Nepal's claim to Mount Everest during this period.

When B.P. Koirala's elected parliamentary Government, which was well known for its pro-Indian stand and for its preference for just a formal relationship with China was dismissed,<sup>87</sup> India raised a hue and cry. In contrast China maintained a discreet silence. Its media just reported the matter without editorial comment. The principal threat to the Royal regime came from Nepalese political leaders and organizations that had managed to gain refuge in India, but which still commanded substantial support in Nepal, particularly in the tarai region bordering India. These could only be contained internally if they were not backed officially or unofficially, by New Delhi.<sup>88</sup>

India was unwilling to provide the kind of guarantee that the Royal regime considered vital to its survival.<sup>89</sup> King Mahendra's primary objective thus was to neutralize

<sup>87</sup> Rose, "King Mahendra's China Policy", n. 62, p. 230.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

### India's influence in Nepal:

Since the motive force behind this policy is to secure a good opportunity for national prosperity, befitting the aspirations of the country and the necessities imposed by the nuclear age of to-day, we have placed full faith in the principle of neutralism in conjunction with the promotion of friendly goodwill with all countries and the maintenance of world peace. 90

### King Mahendra further declared:

Nepal wants to keep clear of every bloc and cannot bear any interference in her domestic affairs, in her progress and development, from any quarter. Nepal wants friendship with all and will never fail to make her best contribution to the cause of world peace. Similarly, Nepal is ready to accept any useful help or co-operation from any friendly country without any string and infringement of her own rights. 91

Defining what he meant by "neutralism", he said:

"We are not in favour of remaining totally aloof like Switzerland in the pursuit of a neutralist policy. Nor are we for entering any power bloc or for making capital out of the difficulties of any other nations."<sup>92</sup> On another occasion he said: "Not to be the camp follower of any bloc should not mean that we sit on the fence". What Nehru said about India

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90 King Mahendra's Proclamation, n. 75, p. 172.

91 Ibid., pp. 230-1.

92 Ibid., p. 230.

seemed to be relevant to King Mahendra's foreign policy: "Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened we cannot and shall not be neutral."<sup>95</sup> Nepal's foreign policy under King Mahendra was thus dynamic.

### CONCLUSION

The "determinants" of a country's opting for a policy of non-alignment are seven in number: (i) the geographical factor; (ii) size of the country; (iii) population of the country; (iv) level of economic development; (v) level of military strength; (vi) level of technological development; and (vii) type of socio-cultural make-up. A country with poor scores on most of these determinants is more likely to join the non-aligned movement. The "specific determinants" in the case of Nepal were: (i) the personality of King Mahendra, and (ii) the emergence of China as a dominant Power.

Nepal has pursued a policy of non-alignment towards its neighbours for centuries. This is evident from King Prithvi Narayan Shah's description of Nepal as a tarul (a vegetable root) caught between two stones (India and China) and his advice to his successors that they should pursue a policy akin to our modern policy of non-alignment

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95 Ibid., p. 126.

in respect of its neighbours. In the present world also, Nepal has continued to follow the same policy. Moreover, many Nepalese leaders feel that Panchasheel, or the five principles of peaceful co-existence which form the basis of non-alignment, have emerged from the teachings of Buddha, whom they look upon as a Nepalese prince. This has enhanced the appeal of non-alignment in the eyes of the Nepalese elite. The most important reason behind Nepal's attachment to non-alignment, however, lies in its determination to maintain its independent identity and status. Non-alignment provides the best means for this.

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## Chapter Three

### BELGRADE, 1961

The first conference of the non-aligned countries was held in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, between 1 and 6 September 1961. Twenty-five countries participated in the conference as full-fledged members of the non-aligned movement; three countries attended as observers.<sup>1</sup> Nepal attended as a full-fledged member. King Mahendra himself headed the Nepalese delegation.

#### NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

The Cold War between the two Super Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, was at its intensest. The summit meeting of the two Super Powers in Paris had failed. War between them over Berlin seemed imminent. They had both acquired deadly nuclear weapons, and the whole of the world appeared to be on the brink of disaster.

The non-aligned countries believed that their social and economic development was possible only in a

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<sup>1</sup> The Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, Belgrade, September 1-6, 1961 (Belgrade, 1961), p. 259. Cited hereinafter as Belgrade Conference.

climate of peace in the world. Their basic problem was to prevent the outbreak of a third world war. They did not wish to be dragged into a world war. They wanted to play a positive and dynamic role by preventing a war. They had the support of millions of people. The non-aligned movement received strength from the fact that there were millions of people who were not aligned and who did not want war at any cost.<sup>2</sup>

In the last chapter we saw how the King assumed all power in Nepal by doing away with the parliamentary form of government. India had sharply reacted: Nehru had described it as a "set back to democracy".<sup>3</sup> The leaders of the Nepali Congress organized widespread acts of terrorism from their bases in India in 1961. Such acts became more frequent after King Mahendra's visit <sup>to China.</sup> It was evident that it was due to the tacit support of the Indian authorities that the Nepali rebels resorted to violent acts.<sup>4</sup>

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2 Shashi Bhushan, Non-Alignment: Legacy of Nehru (New Delhi, 1976), p. 65.

3 India, Lok Sabha, Debates, 16 December 1960, cols 5973-7. Also see Leo E. Rose, Nepal: Strategy for Survival (Bombay, 1971), p. 235.

4 See Rose, *ibid.*, pp. 242-3.

with the rise of the Communist power in China, Nepal had to be more cautious in its foreign policy; for it was necessary for Nepal to be friendly with China also.<sup>5</sup> There was no direct danger to it from either of the Super Powers; for it seemed as though Nepal had gradually become an area of agreement between the two Super Powers in the interest of neutralizing the Chinese influence in the Kingdom.<sup>6</sup> There was, however, the danger that even the slightest sign of an inclination on its part towards any one of its neighbours would cause trouble from the other side. It was essential for it to exhibit its independent foreign policy. Nepal joined the non-aligned movement in order to project a certain image in the international world and exhibit its utter independence in the field of foreign policy.<sup>7</sup>

India's non-alignment also played a significant part in the decision of Nepal to remain a non-aligned country.<sup>8</sup> Nepal felt that it was in its best interest to join the non-aligned movement. It regarded non-alignment

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5 See Corkhapatra (Kathmandu), 29 October 1962.

6 S.D. Muni, Foreign Policy of Nepal (Delhi, 1973), p. 177.

7 Dulai Giri, in an interview to the author.

8 Kirti Nidhi Bista, in an interview to the author.

as an effective means of the preservation of its sovereignty. King Mahendra put it as follows: "In the present situation of the world, a great responsibility has devolved upon nations like ours, adhering to the policy of neutrality, in connection with maintenance of world peace, even in their own interests." He added: "Ever bearing in mind that the disappearance of Nepal's sovereign entity will mean an end to the existence of every Nepali and that we rise or fall with our country, we are this day leaving for Belgrade." He also held that Nepal's participation in the non-aligned movement would further strengthen its friendly relations with many of the other participating countries.<sup>9</sup>

Long before the Belgrade Conference, President Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India met in Brioni (in Yugoslavia) on 20 July 1956.<sup>10</sup> In spite of differences in their backgrounds and cultural heritages, those leaders had a common international outlook, and they were determined to create a common platform in the interest of preserving peace and amity in the world.

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9 King Mahendra, Proclamation, Speeches, and Messages: vol. 2 (1960-69) (Kathmandu, 1967), pp. 33-34. Cited hereinafter as King Mahendra's Speeches.

10 Indian Society of International Law, Non-Aligned and Developing Countries: Basic Documents (Delhi, 1970), p. 2. Cited hereinafter as Non-Aligned and Developing Countries.

## NEPAL'S ROLE AT BELGRADE

First there was the Cairo Preparatory Conference of the non-aligned countries, which met from 5 to 12 June 1961 under the chairmanship of Mahmoud Fawzi, Foreign Minister of the United Arab Republic.<sup>11</sup> In all, nineteen countries participated; seventeen of them, including Nepal, were Asian-African. Cuba and Yugoslavia were the only participating countries which were not Asian or African. Brazil attended as an observer.

The convenors of the Cairo Conference recognized that the foreign policy of Nepal was based upon non-alignment and extended an invitation to Nepal to attend the Belgrade conference.

The subjects discussed in the Belgrade Conference included the establishment and strengthening of international peace and security, respect for the rights of peoples and nations to self-determination, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, racial discrimination and apartheid, disarmament, peaceful co-existence, and the problems of unequal economic development.<sup>12</sup>

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11 Official Communiqué issued in Cairo on the preparations for the Belgrade Conference. Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 15.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

In the drafting of the conference agenda, the Nepalese representative emphasized the importance of non-intervention and non-interference by one nation in the internal affairs of other nations.<sup>13</sup>

Accorded  
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The subjects and the trend of discussions with the foreign policy of Nepal. Nepal expressed its views on the various problems.

#### Peace and Disarmament

Nepal condemned the Cold War between the Super Powers and the military alliances formed by them. It also condemned the arms race, colonialism, imperialism, racialism, and neo-colonialism.<sup>14</sup> It condemned the stupendous amounts being spent by the Super Powers on the production, maintenance, and manufacture of armaments. It felt that instead of spending on armaments, if the Super Powers had used so much money on the economic development of the poor countries, the standards of living of the people would have risen remarkably, the economic disparity between the various countries would have narrowed down appreciably, and the establishment of a durable peace would have

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13 Yedu Nath Khanel, "What Nepal Expects from the Neutral Summit" (text of the statement made by the Nepali Foreign Secretary at the bureau meeting of the Belgrade Conference). See Gorkha Patria, 8 August 1961. Also see Rose, n. 3, p. 231.

14 Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 140.

been made a certainty.

In his speech the King of Nepal said: "The basic source of tension among nations, in my opinion, is not ideology but economic disparity between individuals and nations, and the basic cure is not armaments but economic development."<sup>15</sup> The piling up of armaments, therefore, created a kind of vicious circle in so far as it diverted a large part of the world's resources from their proper use for economic development. This had the effect of retarding economic development and perpetuated the basic source of tension. On the one hand millions of people were being allowed to sink below the poverty line, and on the other scarce resources were being frittered away on armaments. The King, therefore, pleaded for disarmament. He criticized nuclear tests and demanded a complete ban on nuclear tests and weapons. He said: "We believe the conference must make it clear that the non-aligned countries are united in favour of a complete ban on nuclear tests."<sup>16</sup> He added that the Western and Soviet positions were not fundamentally opposed on the question whether disarmament should come before

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15 Belgrade Conference, n. 1, pp. 140-1.

16 Speech of King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva in the Belgrade Conference. See Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 140.

control or whether control should come before disarmament. Given the will and determination, he declared, it should still be possible to come to an agreement. He observed:

It is very disturbing to find that the Vienna meeting between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev should have actually resulted in increased tension when our hopes and expectations were so different. As matters stand to-day, we seem to be heading towards a world of more threats, more incrimination, and more tension and, therefore, we are urged to do something concrete in the direction of lessening the tension. 17

On 30 August 1961, just one day before the Belgrade Conference was to begin on 1 September 1961, the Soviet Union started a new series of experiments with nuclear weapons. This was a direct challenge to the non-aligned countries. The non-aligned countries too perceived it to be a challenge, and there was sharp criticism of the tests. Contrary to expectations, however, King Mahendra did not speak a word about the tests in his speech.<sup>18</sup>

The non-aligned countries were under no illusion that the two Super Powers would do something for the preservation of international peace and global unity. They felt that it was the collective responsibility of the smaller countries to do something for the preservation of the international peace. To that end they sent emissaries

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17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., pp. 137-42.



to the Soviet Union and the United States with an appeal for peace. They pleaded with the Super Powers to make direct approaches to each other and avert the imminent conflict and establish peace:

This Conference of Heads of State and Government of the non-aligned countries is deeply concerned that even apart from the already-existing tension, the grave and critical situation which, as never before, threatens the world with the imminent and ominous prospect of conflict would almost certainly later develop into a world war. In this age of nuclear weapons and the accumulation of the Power of mass destruction, such conflict and war would inevitably lead to devastation on a scale hitherto unknown, if not to world annihilation. 19

The conference expressed the earnest hope that nations not represented in the conference would also make a similar appeal to the leaders of the Super Powers, thereby proclaiming and promoting the desire, determination, and achievement of lasting peace and security of all nations.<sup>20</sup>

King Mahendra pleaded for all possible efforts on the part of the non-aligned countries in the cause of maintenance of peace. Nepal, he declared, would not enter into any bloc: "We want to keep away from all sorts of

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19 Ibid., p. 257.

20 Ibid.

military alliance; and so far as bloc formation is concerned, we are not in favour of forming even a neutral bloc."<sup>21</sup> He added that not being an expert on disarmament, he would suggest that the problems should be left to the two parties concerned: "We are no experts on the question of disarmament and believe that it is a matter which should essentially be settled between the two parties directly involved."<sup>22</sup>

He urged the Super Powers that to save mankind and to establish peace they take steps to consider the problem of disarmament between themselves.

The King suggested that disarmament should be planned and supervised by an apex body of the United Nations in which the non-aligned countries should also be represented. He wanted this suggestion to be considered in the next meeting of the United Nations.

The suggestion received full consideration in the conference.

#### Political Problems

The Belgrade Conference also dealt with several political problems. One of the most important among them

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21 Ibid., p. 144.

22 Ibid., p. 140.

was the problem of Berlin. During this period Berlin was a burning problem. It was much feared that the two Super Powers might resort to the use of force to solve the problem and thereby touch off a world war.<sup>23</sup> Nepal, therefore, suggested that all parties interested in the question of Berlin and Germany should restrain themselves in their speeches and actions and seek to come together rather than to drift apart.<sup>24</sup> This suggestion was incorporated in the final resolution of the conference, which stated that the problem of Berlin should be treated not as a regional problem, but as an international issue, and that it should be solved through mutual co-operation and understanding.

Colonialism was another major issue which was discussed at Belgrade. The conference expressed the view that it was important to strengthen the consciousness against colonialism. Nepal described the anti-colonial struggle as a significant phenomenon. It said: "The success of the anti-colonial movement in Asia and the powerful support given by the newly independent Asian countries have combined to give a great impetus to the African fight for independence."<sup>25</sup> It condemned the Portuguese for holding on to their colony in Goa and whole-heartedly supported the

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23 Ibid., p. 261.

24 Ibid., p. 139.

25 Ibid., pp. 139 and 260-1.

Goanese struggle for freedom. By taking up the cause of Goa Nepal proved its credentials as a non-aligned country. It is important to note that Indo-Nepalese relations at this time were none too good.<sup>26</sup> Relations between Nehru and King Mahendra were also very tense. And yet King Mahendra declared that his country would always support the determined efforts of the peace-loving countries of the world in their fight against colonialism.<sup>27</sup> He gave emphatic expression to his opposition to colonialism in every form and shape and said: "Nepal is firmly on the side of the forces of revolution. We believe that colonialism is an unmitigated evil, a social and political order involving such relationships between man and man as are not acceptable."<sup>28</sup> The countries participating in the conference were all united on the question relating to the struggle against colonialism. King Mahendra was only expressing the view of the entire conference when he said that "the anti-colonial revolution, wherever it takes place and in whatever form must be supported".<sup>29</sup> He further said: "If the Colonial powers

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26 Shree Krishna Jha, Uneasy Partners: India and Nepal in the Post-Colonial Era (New Delhi, 1975), p. 186.

27 King Mahendra's Speeches, n. 9, p. 125.

28 Bolton Conference, n. 1, p. 39.

29 Ibid.

say that we do not appreciate their intentions and understand their problems, we reply to them that they do not understand our feelings."<sup>30</sup>

King Mahendra expressed his country's sympathy with the people of Algeria, Mozambique, and Kenya, who were fighting against colonial Powers like France and Portugal. He said: "...Belgium had definite neo-colonial ambitions in the uranium-rich Congo. Nepal is opposed to all forms of domination over any country by any other".<sup>31</sup>

Nepal, however, avoided bringing up any bilateral issue in the conference.<sup>32</sup>

#### Support for the United Nations

King Mahendra reposed full faith in the United Nations. According to him, that organization assured international peace and security especially for the smaller and underdeveloped countries. He looked upon it as a bulwark against the encroachment of the bigger Powers.<sup>33</sup> He was aware of the serious limitations of the world body but felt that everything should be done to strengthen and perfect it. He held that it was the only real hope for

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30 Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 139.

31 Ibid., p. 140.

32 S.D. Muni, Foreign Policy of Nepal (Delhi, 1973), p. 176.

33 Hishikesh Shaha, Nepali Politician: Retrospect and Prospect (Delhi, 1978), p. 148.

peace in the world. Small non-aligned countries like Nepal needed the protective umbrella of the United Nations more than members of military alliances or the more powerful members of the world community.

At this time the Soviet Union had put up a proposal for what it called a troika, or a committee of three, instead of the office of Secretary-General at the apex of the UN Secretariat - one from the Western Powers, the second from the Communist bloc, and the last from the non-aligned countries. The King of Nepal opposed the proposal firmly with courage, conviction, and determination. He pointed out that it would be clearly unworkable and that it was against the Charter of the United Nations. In his view the structure as provided for in the Charter did not reflect the then political reality in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe.<sup>34</sup> He felt that a solution of the problem lay in according fairer representation to all countries.<sup>35</sup> He was in favour of minor changes in the UN Secretariat, but did not feel that the UN Charter was ripe for an amendment.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 142.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> King Mahendra's Speeches, n. 9, p. 31.

Nepal wanted the United Nations, as the guardian of the freedom of the smaller nations, to grow in such a manner as to inspire the confidence of such nations.<sup>37</sup> King Mahendra expressed his hope that the conference would give due consideration to his views and take the right decision.

King Mahendra said that China was a world Power. According to him, owing to the absence of China in the United Nations, the world body would not be able to function as effectively as it should.<sup>38</sup> He also supported One China. He said that he did not believe in the theory of Two Chinas.<sup>39</sup> Nepal gave consistent support to China's admission into the world body and did not miss any opportunity to advocate the cause of China.<sup>40</sup>

This can be viewed from two different angles, regional and global. Nepal supported Chinese representation in the United Nations to counterbalance its relationship with India at the regional level and to express its non-aligned behaviour at the global level. This shows the correlation between the regional balance of power and global non-alignment.<sup>41</sup>

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37 Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 142.

38 Ibid.

39 King Mahendra's Speeches, n. 9, p. 50.

40 Sita Shrestha, Nepal and the United Nations (Delhi, 1974), p. 179.

41 See Muni, n. 32, pp. 250-1.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Nepal, China had presented an image of reasonableness. China had never opposed the non-aligned policy of Nepal.<sup>42</sup>

Nepal's participation in the conference enhanced its international image as an independent country. By supporting the cause of admission of China into the United Nations it established better and more cordial relations with China.

While returning from Belgrade King Mahendra visited Pakistan. He went to China on a State visit for seventeen days beginning 25 September 1961. He also visited Outer Mongolia. During this period Tula Giri signed an agreement on behalf of his country with China on the construction of a road linking Lhasa with Kathmandu. Nepal obtained a public assurance of support from China against aggression by any country. The King returned from China with assurance of support for his regime.<sup>43</sup> This may be taken as the precautionary measures against India but it never means that the King was against India or was quite

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42 As told by Tula Giri in an interview to the author.

43 Tami, n. 32, p. 122.



in favour of China. When the King was in Beijing, the Chinese made several subtle attempts to manoeuvre the King into making public anti-Indian declarations, but with no success.<sup>44</sup> Obviously he did not like to buy the friendship of one neighbour at the cost of the other. Thus he successfully maintained the independent position of his country as between India and China. On another occasion, the King quoted Liu Shaoqi as having stated in a private conversation that China "might have a tendency to ignore just and rightful claims, and the rights and susceptibilities of her small neighbours".<sup>45</sup> Of course Nepal was eager to have China's friendship, but strictly on terms compatible with the country's independence. Mao Zedong gave the King full assurance that China would be careful to respect Nepal's sentiments. Thus China won over Nepal whereas Indian economic and political policies continued to seem to the Nepalese inimical to their independence and sovereignty.<sup>46</sup>

#### Economic Problems

King Mahendra attached great importance to the economic development of Nepal. In his speech at the

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44 Rose, n. 3, p. 238.

45 Ibid.

46 Shaha, n. 33, p. 124.

Belgrade Conference, he referred to a revolution taking place in his country. He said that the purpose of this revolution was to raise the living standards of the people through economic development. He observed that the people of Nepal were deeply rooted in spiritual and religious tradition and that they could not work up any enthusiasm for a purely materialistic view of life.<sup>47</sup> And yet he was realistic enough to add that the basic source of tension among nations was not ideology but economic disparity between individuals and nations. He emphasized that the basic remedy for the ills of the world lay, not in armament but in economic development. He suggested that if the amount that was being spent on armaments were to be spent on the economic development and emancipation of the people, life in the world would be happier and more worth living. At the same time "it might root out the cause of strife and conflict in the world as poverty anywhere is a danger to prosperity everywhere". He thus gave expression to an eternal truth. It was true in 1961 as it is true today and will remain true in the years to come. The North-South dialogue today is based on this connexion between growth of civilization on the one hand and economic development on the other. King Mahendra also noted that Europe developed a dynamic economic and political system on account of science and

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47 See Speech of King Mahendra, in Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 141.

technology. Nepal, an underdeveloped country, could prosper much faster with economic co-operation and economic aid from the developed countries. He said:

We must strive to achieve unity amongst ourselves by developing positive points of contact, cultural and economic, entirely different in quality from those that are usually fostered between big and small Powers....the best form of co-operation is of course economic co-operation and a substantial measure of economic co-operation is possible even among the non-aligned countries. 48

The conference heard Nepal and its proposals in Items 21, 22, and 23 of the Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries.<sup>49</sup> The Agenda was very long and rather complicated, and Nepal could only outline, very briefly, its attitude to some of the more important international problems.

The conference gave an opportunity to Nepal to come across leaders and heads of State or Government of divergent opinions and discuss as an equal partner with them their common problems on a common platform. Nepal was able to place its views before them on international problems firmly and with determination and also understand their problems.

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48 Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 142.

49 See Belgrade Conference, n. 1, pp. 259-60.

King Mahendra expressed his profound sense of gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Yugoslavia for the generous hospitality and for giving Nepal an opportunity to meet, as well as to develop personal contacts with the leading personalities of the world.<sup>50</sup> Indeed his own personal participation was due to the clear possibility of such an opportunity becoming available to him.<sup>51</sup> He concluded his speech with a message of peace from Lord Buddha.

Much of the success of the Nepalese delegation was due to the towering personality of King Mahendra himself. He had a full grasp of international problems, especially the problems of the non-aligned countries of Asia and Africa. He kept aloof from Power blocs and did not touch on problems that were too complicated. He also managed to steer clear of controversial subjects. He avoided becoming an eye sore to any of the Big Powers. He manifested his independence as regards international problems and supported the non-aligned movement. On his return to Kathmandu, King Mahendra expressed his happiness that Nepal had been able to offer all possible co-operation for the success of the conference. He said that there was need to hold more such conferences to solve common problems.<sup>52</sup>

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50 Ibid., p. 137.

51 See King Mahendra's Speeches, n. 9, p. 33.

52 Gorkha Patria, 16 September 1961.

The performance of Nepal in the conference was appreciated in the Press and in other intellectual circles of Nepal. It was felt that King Mahendra's speech was symbolic of the feelings not only of the Nepalese people but also of other peace-loving peoples in the world.<sup>53</sup> It symbolized especially the feelings of small and underdeveloped nations.<sup>54</sup> It is forceful and historic speech had further enhanced the glory and prestige of Nepal and helped the conference in analyzing the world problems of the time.<sup>55</sup> It had also conveyed Nepal's message of peace to the world.<sup>56</sup> It had proved that Nepal was a dependable friend of the Asian-African countries.<sup>57</sup> It was indicative of the fact that Nepal was possessed of a balanced judgement on international issues,<sup>58</sup> especially the issue of nuclear tests.<sup>59</sup>

The Nepalese Press utilized the opportunity to praise the King as "fearless", "far-sighted", and "self confident".<sup>60</sup> It said that he was a skilful and shrewd

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53 Nava Samaj, 4 September 1961.

54 Philings (Kathmandu), 4 September 1961.

55 Dainik Nepal (Kathmandu), 7 September 1961.

56 Halkhabar (Kathmandu), 16 September 1961.

57 Nepal Samachar (Kathmandu), 16 September 1961.

58 Gorkha Patria (Kathmandu), 18 September 1961.

59 Swatantra Samachar (Kathmandu), 5 September 1961.

60 Gorkha Patria, 8 September 1961.

politician.<sup>61</sup> The Nepal Council of Asian Relations and World Affairs passed a resolution thanking the King for enhancing Nepal's prestige in the international sphere.<sup>62</sup>

NEPAL'S SUCCESS IN THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE :  
AN ESTIMATE

What success did Nepal achieve, and what benefit did it derive by its participation in the conference? To answer this question is no easy task as there is no way of making a quantitative measurement of the success achieved or of the benefit gained. However, if we look upon the speech of King Mahendra in the conference as a parameter of his views and the aspirations of Nepal and examine it with close reference to the Text of Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, we may have some idea of the success.

As mentioned earlier (Chapter Two) Nepal was more or less cut off from the rest of the world till 1951, i.e. till King Tribhuvan overthrew the century-old autocracy of the Ranas. Belgrade was the first big conference in which Nepal participated after it threw overboard its policy of isolation. Nepal, being a small country, suffer rightly

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61 Naya Sandesh (Kathmandu), 5 September 1961.

62 Ibid., 16 September 1961.

or wrongly, from the fear that its national independent identity might be endangered if it developed too close relations with either of its giant neighbours. The Belgrade Conference provided it with an international platform for projecting its independent national identity. Indeed, as we have already seen, he had said on the eve of his departure for Belgrade: "We cannot exist unless the country exists.... We shall take our stand before the world and prove our mettle as the true Nepalese...."<sup>63</sup>

Nepal's views on subject of general interest such as anti-colonialism, neo-colonialism, disarmament, banning of nuclear tests, etc. were in harmony with the views expressed in the various declarations adopted by the conference.

King Mahendra had made it clear in his speech to the conference that the institutions and organizations that might be set up for the economic upliftment of Nepal should be in keeping with the genius of the people of Nepal and that there should be no outside interference in this respect. This view was confirmed by Declaration No. 13,<sup>64</sup> which recognized the right of all peoples to self-determination,

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63 King Mahendra's Speeches, n. 9, p. 4.

64 Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, n. 10, p. 12.

as also their right to adopt any political system of their choice and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development without intimidation or hindrance. Declaration No. 13 also recognized the right of all the people freely to dispose of their natural wealth and mineral resources upon the principle of mutual benefit, and in line with international law, without interference from other countries.<sup>65</sup> The King had also pointed to the gap between the advanced countries and the other countries in the economic field. The conference also decided to make efforts to remove economic imbalances through accelerated implementation of economic, industrial, and agricultural programmes.<sup>66</sup> It demanded just terms of trade for the economically less developed countries.<sup>67</sup> This was an encouraging factor for Nepal in the context of Indo-Nepalese trade relations. The Conference was successful in promoting a new depth of understanding among members of the developing countries as regards the problems of trade and development, including those of the land-locked states.

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65 Ibid.

66 See Belgrade Conference, n. 1, p. 260.

67 Ibid.



## Chapter Four

CAIRO, 1964

The Second Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries met in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, from 5 to 10 October 1964. In this conference forty-seven countries participated as full-fledged members; ten countries attended as observers. There were, besides, representatives of two organizations.<sup>1</sup> Nepal attended as a full-fledged member. The number of delegates was twice as large as the number of delegates who attended the Belgrade Conference. The criteria for invitation were the same as those formulated for participation in the Belgrade Conference.<sup>2</sup>

There had been many changes in the international situation since the First Conference. At the time of the First Conference the smaller countries were full of misgiving as to their security and independence. Now there was some ray of hope in them. There were many reasons for this change.

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1 Conference of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Countries, Cairo, 5-10 October 1964 (Cairo: Government of the United Arab Republic, 1964), p. 334. Cited hereinafter as Cairo Documents.

2 Felix R.D. Bendoricuk, "History of Non-Alignment as a Force for Peace and Stability in a Divided World", in U.S. Bajjal, ed., Non-Alignment: Perspectives and Prospects (Delhi, 1963), p. 20.

## INTERNATIONAL SCENE

The beginning of detente between the Super Powers had, especially after the Cuban missile crisis, helped mitigate their rivalry in the South Asian region as elsewhere.<sup>5</sup>

Another important event was the Treaty on the Partial Ban on Nuclear Tests (1963) signed by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Under this treaty the signatory countries agreed not to test atomic weapons on land or in open air or water. However, there was no ban on underground atomic tests. The non-aligned countries had demanded a complete ban on all kinds of atomic tests.

Yet another event was the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held in 1963. Seventy-seven developing countries, including Nepal, participated in this conference. The conference gave an opportunity to Nepal to understand and appreciate the problems and difficulties confronting the developing countries. This was the beginning of the so-called North-South dialogue.

The non-aligned movement was, however, bedevilled at this time by conflicts among the non-aligned nations

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<sup>5</sup> Wayne Wilson, "South Asia and World Powers", in S.P. Verma and K.P. Misra, eds, Foreign Policies in South Asia (Bombay, 1969), pp. 297-30. Also see Vinod Kumar, "Great Powers and Nepal", in S.D. Sani, ed., Nepal: An Aspective Monarchy (Delhi, 1977), p. 153.

themselves. The Indo-China War (1962) gave a jolt to the member countries of the non-aligned movement of Asia and Africa. They felt shocked that an attack on a non-aligned country should be mounted, not by any colonial Power, but by a friendly country. Besides, there was friction between many other non-aligned countries on account of differences over boundary alignments. The non-aligned countries involved in such friction were, to cite a few examples: Algeria, Afghanistan, Kenya, Morocco, Somalia and the Sudan. There were also certain irritating problems such as Suez, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), etc. The non-aligned movement seemed to be on the verge of cracking up.

#### NEPAL AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

✓ During the period from 1961 to 1964, i.e. during the period between the first two non-aligned summit conferences, Nepal was subjected to much political pressures by virtue of its geographical situation between India and China. In the preceding chapters we have already touched upon the circumstances in which King Mahendra felt called upon to dismiss the Nepali Congress Government and assume absolute power. India vehemently criticized the action. This inevitably resulted in a sharp deterioration in Indo-Nepalese relations. A bomb was thrown on the car of King Mahendra, in Janakpur, Nepal, in January 1962. Nepalese newspapers and Nepalese leaders

blamed Nepalese rebels and their supporters in India for all the trouble. Tuli Giri charged that the unsuccessful assassin had come from India and that "no local person had a hand in the attempt".<sup>4</sup> At a meeting with Nehru in April 1962 in New Delhi, King Mahendra insisted that the Nepalese rebels living in India were solely responsible for the internal troubles in Nepal<sup>5</sup> and demanded the extradition of those rebels, but Nehru refused. King Mahendra emphasized the need for states to abide by the principles of Panchasheel "not only in words but also in deeds".<sup>6</sup> Nehru sought to explain to King Mahendra that India was not hostile either to the King personally or to his regime, but in vain. He also failed to change the views of King Mahendra on China and the inadvisability of building the Lhasa-Kathmandu Road.<sup>7</sup>

To pressurize King Mahendra, India kept up its undeclared economic blockade of Nepal.<sup>8</sup> In October 1962 there was a sudden border conflict between China and India. Nepal did not side with any of the two countries, on the

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4 Nepal Samachar (Kathmandu), 24 January 1962; and Nava Samaj (Kathmandu), 30 January 1962.

5 Leo E. Rose, Nepal Strategy for Survival (Bombay, 1971), p. 244.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 215.

7 National News Agency (Kathmandu), 19 April 1962. See also Rose, n. 5, p. 245.

8 Rose, n. 5, p. 247.

ground that it saw "no reason" why it should allow itself to "become a victim of the struggle" between its two neighbours.<sup>9</sup> It said that it was "very difficult for a small country to sit in judgement on issues when big and powerful nations were involved".<sup>10</sup> After capturing some disputed territories China declared a unilateral cease-fire. In view of the dangerous border situation India lifted its economic blockade of Nepal and disallowed the use of Indian soil by Nepalese rebels.<sup>11</sup> India thus fully realized Nepal's strategic value. This enhanced Nepal's capability to play a balancing game between India and China. India and Nepal cannot afford to have hostile relations with each other for long. Such is the logic of the geographical, economic, and social circumstances of the two countries. Also it is not possible for Nepal to go for too close a relationship with China.

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's unofficial visit to Nepal in 1963 was the beginning of a distinct improvement in Indo-Nepalese relations.

By highlighting its identity in this manner Nepal tried to have good relations with many Western countries as well.

9 King Mahendra's Proclamations, Speeches and Messages, vol. 2 (1960-1965) (Kathmandu, 1967), pp. 147-8.

10 Surendra Pal Sharma, "Nepal and Non-Alignment", in Rising Nepal (Kathmandu), 14 September 1970.

11 Rose, n. 5, p. 248.

Nepal and China signed a boundary treaty on 20 January 1963 and a trade treaty on 19 May 1964.<sup>12</sup> Nepal and Pakistan concluded a trade agreement in October 1962. A direct air service between Dacca (now Dhaka) and Kathmandu started in 1963.<sup>13</sup> Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan, visited Nepal from 9 to 12 May 1963.<sup>14</sup> While maintaining good relations with its neighbours thus, Nepal established diplomatic relations with Belgium and the Lebanon also. It already had diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Burma, China, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, Greece, Holland, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the United States, West Germany and Yugoslavia.<sup>15</sup> Nepal was thus successful in projecting its identity as an independent nation in the international field.

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12 Nepal Press Digest (Kathmandu), vol. 2, no. 19, 16 May- to 22 May 1964. Also see S.D. Muni, Foreign Policy of Nepal (Delhi, 1973), p. 151.

13 National News Agency Report (Kathmandu), 12 and 13 May 1963. Also see Muni, n. 12, p. 152.

14 Muni, *ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*, Appendix I.

**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE AND OBJECTIVES OF  
THE SECOND NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT**

The need to convene a Second Conference of Non-Aligned Countries was underlined in October 1962 by Nasser, the President of Egypt, and Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), in a joint communique signed by them. The aim was "to create a better understanding between states and help towards easing world tensions".<sup>16</sup> A preparatory conference at the Ambassadorial level was then held in Colombo in March 1964 which proposed Cairo as the venue of the conference. It was also decided to welcome new members to increase the number of participating countries and to make the conference far more impressive.<sup>17</sup> The Second Bandung-type conference was scheduled to be held that year.<sup>18</sup> In the event of the Second Bandung never came off because of the downfall of Ben Bella in Algeria just five days before the date set for it.

The aims and objectives of the Second Summit Conference were stated to be "to analyse the international

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16 G.H. Jansen, Afro Asia and Non-Alignment (London, 1966), p. 378.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Jyoti Sen Gupta, Non-Alignment & Search for Destination (Calcutta, 1979), p. 126.

situation with a view to making an effective contribution to the solution of the major problems which are of concern to mankind in view of their effects on peace and security in the world".<sup>20</sup> According to the participants of the conference, though there was a general improvement in international relations, "the situation shows that the forces of imperialism are still powerful and that they do not hesitate to resort to the use of force to defend their interests and maintain their privileges".<sup>21</sup> Active, though somewhat contradictory, were the parts played by Indonesia and Yugoslavia. However, more weightage was given to the theme presented by Yugoslavia, viz "peaceful co-existence and the codification of its principle by the United Nations".<sup>22</sup> The argument was that the policy of peaceful co-existence was an indivisible whole incapable of being applied in parts in accordance with special interests and criteria.<sup>23</sup>

#### NEPAL'S PARTICIPATION

Most items on the agenda were the same as those which had figured on the agenda of the Belgrade Conference.

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20 Cairo Documents, n. 1, p. 254.

21 Ibid., p. 235.

22 Jansen, n. 16, p. 377.

23 Cairo Documents, n. 1, p. 335.



The new items included the question of liberation of the countries which were still under colonial rule, settlement of disputes without use of force in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, peaceful uses of atomic energy, banning of all nuclear weapon tests, foreign troops, and bases, the implementation of the resolutions passed in UNCTAD I, etc.<sup>24</sup>

King Mahendra delivered his speech at the sixth meeting of the conference on 8 October 1964.<sup>25</sup> In this he expressed his views on many topics such as colonialism, disarmament, the role of the United Nations in the settlement of disputes, the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and UNCTAD. He expressed his shock at the sad demise of Nehru, one of the pillars of non-alignment, and President John F. Kennedy of the United States, a champion of peace. He expressed his happiness over the fact that a large number of the newly independent countries of Africa had declared themselves non-aligned.<sup>26</sup> According to him, the Belgrade Conference was a landmark in the history of the world-wide movement for peace. He further said: "The resolution on

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24 See Dewan C. Vohra, Economic Relevance of Non-Alignment (Delhi, 1985), p. 215.

25 See Cairo Documents, n. 1,

26 Ibid., p. 201.

'war and peace' passed by that conference was not only a commentary on the frightening international situation prevailing then but was also the collective moral expression of the universal human urge for peace."<sup>27</sup> He hoped that the spirit of the Belgrade Conference would prevail and help in maintaining the dynamism of the movement.

King Mahendra condemned colonial rule in Angola, British Guinea, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, South Rhodesia, South-East Africa etc. He announced his country's full support for the fight against colonialism. He held that colonialism should be fought basically by non-violent means: "It would be a real disaster for humanity if the anti-colonial forces of the world, in the face of the Portuguese defiance, were compelled to decide that there was no alternative to violence to end colonialism."<sup>28</sup> The battle for peace and peaceful co-existence, he went on, would go on till all forms of colonialism--territorial, economic, or political--were ended. He referred to the UN resolution on colonialism, and remarked: "It is our considered opinion that the United Nations resolution on colonialism should be

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27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., p. 203.

respected in the spirit in which it was passed by all Powers who still continue to possess colonies.<sup>29</sup>

Nepal had always pleaded in favour of disarmament. The King, therefore, welcomed the treaty on a partial ban on nuclear tests. He lamented the failure of the 17-nation Disarmament conference at Geneva. "The reasons for failure", according to him, included "the attitude of defiance of world opinion, monopolistic tendency, and suicidal race for armament for world domination by the participating countries."<sup>30</sup> The so-called civilized advanced countries ignored poverty, disease, and suffering in the underdeveloped countries and incurred wasteful expenditure on weapons of mass destruction. The massive stockpiling of lethal weapons gave birth to such dangerous military theories as the "theory of limited war", the "theory of military vacuum in the ocean", the "theory of military intervention in other countries for peace", etc. Appealing for complete disarmament, King Mahendra remarked: "Owing to the urgency of the problem of disarmament we have supported, and shall continue to support, any move, whether within the United Nations or outside, leading towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control."<sup>31</sup>

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29 Ibid., p. 204.

30 Ibid., p. 205.

31 Ibid.

As regards Nepal's own military budget, the King disclosed that it was a nominal sum of Rs26,495,000 in Nepali currency in 1963-64.<sup>32</sup> Nepal had already signed the partial nuclear test ban treaty. Expressing his firm opposition to any pact with the Super Powers, King Mahendra said: "There is no military solution to the ideological conflict between the two Power groups".

The speech by King Mahendra gave his country's position on economic matters in great detail. This had a salutary impact on the economic views of other member countries. According to the King, "progress and peace are inseparable" and "political independence and economic independence are both equally important". He also pointed out how there had emerged a new form of colonialism, i.e. neocolonialism, and said that this "economic colonialism or neo-colonialism needs to be fought with even greater determination".<sup>33</sup> About Nepal's efforts to achieve its own economic emancipation, he said: "Nepal is actively engaged in diversifying its products and trade by setting up industries so that its economy, which is essentially based on agriculture, may become more balanced."<sup>34</sup> He appealed to the conference "to formulate new principles of trade in the light of the intimate

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32 Muni, n. 12, Pg 271.

33 Ibid., p. 140.

34 Ibid.

connexion between trade and development to evolve an institutional framework capable of translating these principles into practices "either among ourselves or through the United Nations".<sup>35</sup> He added that Nepal, which was a landlocked country, had great faith in the non-aligned conferences and UNCTAD for the solution of its problems. We may recall here the criticisms made by Nepalese officials at UNCTAD-I as regards India's failure to accommodate Nepal in the matter of trade and transit facilities.<sup>36</sup>

✓ Nepal concluded a trade agreement with Pakistan on 19 October 1962 in order to diversify its trade. It was, however, more convenient for Nepal to use the trade transit routes passing through India. India was ready to allow transit facilities through Radhikapur in the east and Wagha in the west provided Nepal would pay it rent for them, but the rent or cost was so exorbitant as to be uneconomical for Nepal. Naturally, Nepal criticized India for its unfriendly and non-co-operative attitude.<sup>37</sup> Tulsī Giri, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, remarked: "Though an independent nation, we are being pressurized from outside. We want to exercise the freedom of trade with other countries, but obstacles are put in our way. We are not being allowed to trade freely

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35 Cairo Documents, n. 1, p. 203.

36 Rose, n. 5, p. 252.

37 For details see Muni, n. 12, p. 205.

with Pakistan."<sup>38</sup> Although India did not grant the trade transit facilities demanded by Nepal, it allowed Nepal trade transit facilities through Radhikapur on nominal rail service charges.<sup>39</sup>

From the very beginning Nepal had reposed full faith in the United Nations as an agency for removing conflict between nations. In its view, the world body was the supreme form of international community: "The United Nations is a source of strength and a sentinel of peace. It is becoming a supreme form of the international community and a guarantee of equal rights of all the people and the countries."<sup>40</sup> It took every opportunity to reiterate its faith in the ideals and principles of the United Nations: "We firmly believe in the ideals and the principles of the United Nations, which, in our opinion, represents mankind's best hope for the future, especially for smaller and weaker nations."<sup>41</sup>

The United Nations was set up in 1945. At that time fifty countries were its Members. At the time of the Cairo Conference its Membership had increased to 113. Because

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38 Nava Samaj, 4 December 1964.

39 See Muni, n. 12, p. 206.

40 Cairo Documents, n. 1, p. 206.

41 Ibid.

of this increase in its Membership, Nepal wanted a revision of the UN Charter, so that the world body might be better equipped to solve the various problems faced by the world in the changed circumstances.<sup>42</sup>

✓ King Mahendra pleaded that China be admitted to the Membership of the world body because of its very large size and population. He felt that without China as one of its Members, the United Nations would not be quite right in claiming to be the representative body of the entire world. He insisted that rivalry between the Big Powers should not affect world peace and that, therefore, "the People's Republic of China must be ensured its rightful place in the Organization".<sup>43</sup>

Nepal had always opposed the policy of apartheid that was being pursued by the racial regime of South Africa. It regarded the policy of apartheid as immoral and violative of human dignity and self-respect. It also wanted a total boycott of South Africa as desired in the African Summit Conference held in Cairo.<sup>44</sup>

The liberation struggle in Vietnam put an end to French colonial rule. The two Super Powers then tried to

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42 Ibid., p. 205.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

fill the vacuum created by French withdrawal. The result was that Vietnam was divided into North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Vietnam was not divided as a result of the desire of Vietnamese people, but as a result of the fearful division of the world into two powerful blocs.<sup>45</sup> North Vietnam, backed by China and the Soviet Union, waged wars for the unifications of the two Vietnams. The Americans by their presence in South Vietnam stood in the way of the unification of the two Vietnams.

King Mahendra appealed to the delegates present in the Cairo Conference to help in the establishment of peace in the area.<sup>46</sup> He intensely wished to make the non-aligned movement play a more active and dynamic role in the resolution of conflicts everywhere.

Nepal considered the non-aligned movement most vital for world peace and security. The non-aligned movement was the only alternative left for all those countries which did not like to be involved in the politics of the Power blocs. He was of the view that "there is no military solution to the ideological conflicts between the two Power groups".<sup>47</sup> The non-aligned movement was, therefore, essentially "a movement for peace, a moral movement dedicated

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45 Ibid., p. 204.

46 Ibid., p. 207.

47 Ibid.



to the creation of world public opinion in favour of peace.... It provides for the most thorough exchange of views on international issues among representative of countries following basic similar policies."<sup>48</sup> This was why Nepal attached great importance "to this conference of non-aligned countries".<sup>49</sup>

The King pointed out that interference by Big Powers in various "subtle ways" in the internal affairs of the smaller countries was a constant danger to world peace. Emphasizing the need and importance of peaceful co-existence for world peace, he exhorted the countries of the non-aligned movement to stick to the policy of non-alignment for their own benefit and survival: "Non-alignment is essentially a product of a country's desire to preserve its freedom and independence from powerful external forces and contains within it the principle of non-interference in the affairs of others."<sup>50</sup> The principle of non-interference by a country in the internal affairs of others, he declared, should be strictly followed by all Powers, big and small. That was the only way to ensure world peace. He further remarked: "If the present conference could exert itself to evolve a useful code of conduct to govern not only the relations between the member countries on the one hand and

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48 Ibid., p. 207.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

the Big Powers on the other but also the relations among [the member countries of the movement] themselves,... then it would do [sic] a really useful and practical work in the direction of peace and peaceful co-existence."

#### AN APPRAISAL

The speech delivered by King Mahendra was a masterly exposition of Nepal's foreign policy. The King expressed himself against colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, the arms race, and racial discrimination; he also extended full support to the world body in the interest of world peace, security, and peaceful co-existence. Further he backed China's claim to the membership of the United Nations. The problem of codification of the principles of non-alignment in the relations between countries, big and small, was then a burning problem. King Mahendra's emphasis on the codification problem was based upon his experience of, and case as a reaction to, the interference in his country's internal affairs by the countries in its neighbours. Such codification was essential, according to him, for upholding the principles of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence and for maintaining world peace.

King Mahendra laid emphasis on world peace without involving himself in the controversial international issues

of the period. He was fully aware of the compulsions of the smaller countries. Hence he did not touch upon the controversial issues. He felt that any verdict that the less powerful countries might pronounce might land them in difficulties and jeopardize their economic and trade interests. He remained silent, for instance, on the controversial issue of sending a mission to China to persuade that country to desist from acquiring nuclear weapon capability.

King Mahendra's comments on the issue of Vietnam were in quite general terms. He did not condemn either of the two Super Powers; all that he said was that "we do not want [sic] that there should be outside interference in Vietnam". Both China and the United States were friends to Nepal, and Nepal should avoid giving the impression of carrying on one-sided propaganda on the part of one country against the other. King Mahendra did not also condemn US interference in Cambodia and Vietnam.<sup>51</sup> In the final Resolution Nepal refused to be associated with any criticism of Israel. It expressed its reservations on the Palestine resolution in spite of the pressure of the entire Arab bloc; for it felt that such a resolution completely would bypass the UN resolution on the subject.

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<sup>51</sup> Muni, n. 12, p. 172.

Nine other nations joined it in the closed session of the heads of State in opposing the paragraph concerning Palestine. However, at the time of the final draft, Burma alone stood by it. Nepal showed with what consistency and determination it was prepared to follow its decision not to be diverted by parochial considerations from its principled postures on world problems.<sup>52</sup> On the resolution regarding the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace it reserved its views. It was only after another decade that it came out in support of the idea of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. It gave comparatively little attention to the cultural issues. On a whole it maintained an independent stance.

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52 Nepalase Perspective, 24 October 1964 (7 Kartik 2021).

## Chapter Five

LUSAKA, 1970

The Third Conference of Non-Aligned Countries was held from 8 to 10 September 1970 in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. In this conference fifty-three countries participated as full-fledged members; and eleven countries as observers. Representatives of six liberation movements came as guests.<sup>1</sup> The conference should have met in 1967, but there was a gap of six years between the second and the third conference. There were many reasons for this gap.

### NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Hostilities between the East and the West had ceased at this time, and the process of detente had started. The two Super Powers--the United States and the Soviet Union--had both moved towards detente. Colonialism had practically ended except for a few colonies under Portugal and other Colonial Powers. Consequently many of the international issues that had caused the non-aligned countries to avoid membership of the Power blocs and build up the non-aligned movement had become non-issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Indian Society of International Law, Non-Aligned and Developing Countries: Basic Documents (New Delhi, 1970), p. 315. cited hereinafter as Non-Aligned and Developing Countries.

To check nuclear proliferation, the UN General Assembly passed on 12 June 1968 a resolution calling upon its Member countries to sign the nuclear non-proliferation pact. Britain, Nepal, the Soviet Union, and the United States were among the countries which signed the pact; some other countries declined to sign. Some of the countries which signed did so with certain reservations. Nepal signed without reservations. The Super Powers held Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) between themselves first on 17 November 1969 and later on 10 July 1970.

The old bloc politics had given way to a new kind of competition between the Super Powers. They had started giving aid to countries having altogether different ideologies and not necessarily to countries having ideological systems similar to their own. The aid given by the Super Powers to India, Egypt, and Pakistan is to be seen in this context.

The two Super Powers, which had been at loggerheads with each other for the past twenty years, were coming closer. At the same time China and the Soviet Union were drifting away from each other in spite of their allegiance to the same ideology, viz Communism. In the face of strong opposition from a number of Asian and African countries Britain was supplying arms to the South African Government. This proved to be prejudicial to the freedom

movements in Rhodesia, Mozambique and Namibia.<sup>2</sup>

In many countries guerrilla wars were being fought, aeroplanes were being hijacked, international borders and territorial seas were being violated.

The most important reason for the delay in holding the Third Non-Aligned Conference was the preoccupation of the member countries of the non-aligned movement with their own internal problems. The Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1965 and the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 affected not only the countries directly involved but also the countries situated in the vicinity of the theatres of war. The Indo-China War, the problems of Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam, the Sino-Soviet border conflict of 1969, the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, etc. were problems which were totally new to the countries concerned. They engaged the attention, energies, and resources of most non-aligned countries. These countries were not accustomed to such problems.

Nepal was thoroughly involved in its own internal problems. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Indian Prime Minister, had died in 1966, and Indira Gandhi had become the Prime Minister of India. It was an opportune time for Nepal to

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2 Mahadev Prasad Chaturvedi, "Out Nirapeksh Raashtron ke Shikhar Sammelan mein Bharat ke Bhoomika : Balgoid se Lusadka Tak" (D.Phil Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, School of International Studies, New Delhi, 1932), pp. 83-89.

got the Indo-Nepalese relationship changed to a much more satisfactory pattern.

In September 1970 India issued an identity certificate to B.P. Koirala for going abroad. This strained Indo-Nepalese relations further. Nepal considered it an interference in the internal affairs of one non-aligned country by another non-aligned country. There was some dispute regarding the boundary-line between India and Nepal in the Jasta region. Both sides claimed to be of a small patch of land in this region.<sup>3</sup>

The Government of India regarded the mutual security arrangements between India and Nepal as a legacy and a responsibility it had inherited from its predecessor, the British Government. It wanted to stick to those arrangements which were in its favour. Nepal, however, wanted modifications. India warned Nepal: "If Nepal insisted on bringing about any substantial change in those arrangements [1950], it would seal the border and thus deny trade, economic, and other benefits to Nepal resulting from the open border between the two countries."<sup>4</sup> Finally, after prolonged talks, it agreed to call back its technicians

3 S.D. Nuni, Foreign Policy of Nepal (Delhi, 1973), p. 242.

4 Dinesh Singh at a Press conference in Kathmandu. See Gorkha Patrika (Kathmandu), 16 June 1969. Also see India, Lok Sabha, Debates, 21 July 1969, cols 230-44; and Nuni, n. 3, p. 245.



posted along Nepal's northern borders and also remove the Indian Military Liaison Group (IMLG) from the northern checkpoints of Nepal by the end of August 1970.

The trade treaty concluded between India and Nepal in 1960 for a period of ten years expired in 1970. India delayed its renewal with a view to bringing pressure to bear on Nepal. However, it was renewed on 13 August 1971.<sup>5</sup> India agreed to the Nepalese proposal for separate agreements on trade and transit. Nepal, however, had to forgo its right over the Rodhikopur overland routes.

Meanwhile in China, the Cultural Revolution triggered by Mao Zedong was at its peak. Since 1956 there had been intense propaganda of Mao's literature, exhibition of Mao's photographs, and other Communist literature.<sup>6</sup> On 1 July 1967 the Chinese stall set up at the Ramello Bazaar was disturbed by students and youth in protest against the disrespect shown to Nepal's national flag and to King Mahendra's portrait at the stall. A Chinese jeep was burnt, and a Chinese literature shop was ransacked.<sup>7</sup> China protested; Nepal rejected the protest. Regretting the Chinese propaganda on the incident through different media, H.N. Bista, then Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal, said in

<sup>5</sup> Gorkha Patria, 13 August 1971.

<sup>6</sup> Muni, n. 3, pp. 234-5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

the Rashtriya Panchayat. "No Nepali has ever lagged behind to shed his blood for his independence when the occasion arose, nor will he do so in future. The entire Nepali race is ready to stake their lives for their King, their system and their dignity."<sup>8</sup> This, however, did not prevent an improvement in Sino-Nepalese relations. In 1968 K.N. Bista went to China for a period of ten days (22 May to 31 May). China readily agreed to make more concessions and to grant more aid to increase trade between the two countries.<sup>9</sup> China's help in the construction of the Kathmandu-Kodari Road further improved Sino-Nepalese relations. Thus Nepal's strategic importance was enhanced.

Indo-Nepalese relations, however, deteriorated.

India was suspicious of Nepal's intentions. The Kathmandu-Kodari Road was not of much use to Nepal as trade and commerce through this route was more expensive. Moreover, Nepal carried on most of its trade by sea via India. China's growing interest in Nepal seemed to disturb the balance of power in the region. India made it clear: "While being ready to extend economic co-operation to Nepal and display unreserved respect for its political, emotional, and other sensitivities, India expected complete reciprocity from the

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Also see Nepal Times (Kathmandu), 14 September 1970.

<sup>9</sup> Gorkha Patria, 1 June 1965.

Kingdom in matters of mutual interest."<sup>10</sup>

#### PREPARATIONS FOR THE SUMMIT

The non-aligned countries found themselves in a situation totally different from the one in which they were in the year of the Belgrade Conference. There were signs of fragmentation and loss of dynamism within the movement.<sup>11</sup> How to make the non-aligned movement more dynamic in the current world situation was the main problem before the Lusaka Conference. Not that the non-aligned countries were inactive during the period. Tito, Nasser, and Indira Gandhi had met in New Delhi between 21 and 24 October 1966 and issued a joint communique. They met again from 8 to 12 July 1969 in Belgrade.<sup>12</sup> Special Government representatives of forty-five countries attended this meeting as members, and the representatives of seven countries participated as observers. Nepal went as a full member country. The most important problems considered at this conference were: (1) the role of the policy of non-alignment

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10 See Humi, n. 3, p. 240.

11 Soedjatnoko, "Non-Alignment and Beyond" (Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial Lecture, 1962), in U.S. Bajpai, ed., Non-Alignment: Perspectives and Prospects (New Delhi, 1963), p. 62.

12 See Communique of the Consultative Meeting of Special Government Representatives of Non-Aligned Countries, Belgrade, from 8 to 12 July 1969, in Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, n. 1, p. 45.

in the present-day context; and (ii) the possibilities of making the movement more dynamic.<sup>13</sup> The meeting expressed its satisfaction that "the principle of non-alignment continues to be valid in the present day world".<sup>14</sup> It was decided to call a meeting of the heads of state and government of non-aligned countries. Yadu Nath Khanal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal, demanded at the preparatory meeting that Malaysia and Pakistan be admitted as members of the non-aligned movement. India opposed the demand, and said that so long as Pakistan was a member of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) it could not be accepted as non-aligned. The Nepalese dropped their demand at the preparatory committee meeting held subsequently at Dar-es-Salam.<sup>15</sup>

A meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries took place in the General Assembly hall of the United Nations on 27 September 1969. Another meeting took place in Dar-es-Salam, the capital of Tanzania, from 13 to 17 April 1970. The consensus was that even in the

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13 Communique on the Consultative Meeting of Special Government Representatives of the Non-Aligned Countries, Belgrade, 8-12 July 1969, in *Non-Aligned and Developing Countries*, n. 1, p. 45.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Tribhuvan Nath, *The Nepalese Dilemma, 1960-64* (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 311-12.

changed circumstances of the world, the importance of the non-aligned movement was undiminished.<sup>16</sup> Finally it was decided to call the Third Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, before the 25th meeting of the UN General Assembly.

It was not an easy task for Zambia to shoulder the responsibility of organizing such a big conference. Besides the economic constraint, there was the Zinababwean struggle for independence. The atmosphere was not thus quite congenial for the holding of the conference.

The President of Zambia, however, took up the challenge. Marshal Tito, who was sentimentally attached to the non-aligned movement, came to the aid of Zambia. He financed, and gave technical co-operation for the construction of a beautiful conference hall and a conference village in Mulungushi.<sup>17</sup>

The Third Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries met in Lusaka from 5 to 10 December 1970. Fifty-four

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16 Final Communiqué of the Preparatory Meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, 13-17 April 1970, in Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, n. 1, pp. 50-60.

17 Felix R.D. Bandarenko, "History of Non-Alignment as a Force for Peace and Stability in a Divided World", in U.S. Bajpai, ed., Non-Alignment: Perspectives and Prospects (New Delhi, 1983), p. 18.

countries took part as full members; eleven countries participated as observers. Representatives of six national liberation movements also addressed the conference. The seat of Cambodia was kept vacant because of the confusion as to which Government represented Cambodia truly - the Government of Lon Nol or that of Prince Sihanouk. Some of the important items discussed in Lusaka were the role of non-alignment and the ways and means of strengthening co-operation among the non-aligned countries, neo-colonialism, economic development, and self-reliance, bilateral co-operation, regional co-operation and inter-regional co-operation.<sup>18</sup>

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the conference were "to exchange views on the significance and the role of non-aligned countries in the present-day world with reference to safeguarding and strengthening world peace and security, ensuring national independence and full sovereignty of all nations as a basis of equality; on the need to realize the fundamental right of all peoples to self-determination as well as democratization of international relations, on the promotion of rapid economic growth in the developing countries and possibilities of greater consultation and

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<sup>18</sup> See, Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, n. 1, p. 315.

co-operation among the non-aligned countries; and on the strengthening of the United Nations".<sup>19</sup>

The aims of the Lusaka Conference were thus close to those of Nepal's foreign policy. It is universally accepted that two and a half decades earlier, the United Nations had taken shape to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Similarly the non-aligned movement was formed to reflect "the determination of independent countries to safeguard their national independence and the legitimate right of their peoples; the aspirations of nations for freedom, independence, and equality; and their determination to resist all forms of oppression and exploitation".<sup>20</sup>

#### NEPAL'S ROLE

King Mahendra was one of those heads of State who had participated in all the earlier conferences of the non-aligned countries.

Like Nepal, Zambia is also a land-locked country. Nepal's happiness about the choice of Zambia as the venue of the conference was, therefore, natural. King Mahendra in his address, remarked:

It is an irony of fate that Zambia, which is trying so hard to create a decent life for all its citizens and residents irrespective of colour and race, should itself

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19 Ibid., pp. 316-21.

20 Ibid., pp. 316-17.

be surrounded right up to this moment on three sides by neighbours where the tragedy of what man has made of man is being ruthlessly enacted.... Angola to the west and Mozambique to the east continue to smart under the oppressive wheels of Portuguese colonialism which defies with impunity, the collective conscience of the civilized world expressed in the United Nations resolution. 21

He further remarked: "It is clear that our struggle against colonialism is not yet over".<sup>22</sup> He appealed to the delegates to ponder over the question why, even after two decades of anti-colonialism and liberation movements, Angola and Mozambique are still under bondage in spite of the co-operation and efforts of the non-aligned member countries.<sup>23</sup>

As a matter of fact, it was one of the important objectives of the non-aligned movement to end colonialism. Indeed it was a challenge to the capability of the non-aligned movement itself. Expressing the will of Nepal to help remove colonialism in spite of its limited resources, King Mahendra remarked:

My Government, in the United Nations and elsewhere in international conferences, has given its full support to the African

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21 "His Majesty at Lusaka Summit", Nepalose Perspective (Kathmandu), 19 September 1970. Cited hereinafter as "His Majesty at Lusaka Summit".

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.



countries and to the anti-colonial liberation movements of Angola and Mozambique in their efforts to eliminate the last vestiges of colonialism from their continent. 24

He hoped that the conference would give urgent thought to the question of evolving practical measures for the realization of this objective.<sup>25</sup>

The final declaration by the conference, as King Mahendra had hoped, included references to the problems of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau.<sup>26</sup>

Opposition to apartheid and racialism is an important principle of the foreign policy of Nepal. Speaking on the Rhodesian problem, King Mahendra said that Nepal had been always opposed to the policy of apartheid and racialism within the terms of its resources and capabilities in the United Nations.<sup>27</sup>

The white minority in Rhodesia had, following the policy of apartheid, usurped power illegally and denied justice and dignity to the majority, who were the children of the soil. He appealed to the delegates in the conference to take up the problem of Rhodesia in a more serious way.<sup>28</sup>

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24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, n. 1, p. 330.

27 "His Majesty at Lusaka Summit", n. 21.

28 Ibid.

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Expressing his grief over the tragedy of the people of the Middle East, the King recalled/a single moment of real peace for the past twenty years. He gave some suggestions for the re-establishment of peace in the area. First, war must be rejected as a solution. Second, all the countries in the region should will strongly to live in peace. Third, no solution was possible without solving the question of over a million Arab refugees. Fourth, the United Nations should appoint a representative to supervise any progress towards peace.<sup>29</sup>

Another thorny problem that had caused much suffering to people was Vietnam. The King appealed that the people of Laos and Cambodia should be allowed to decide their own future without any interference from outside. He said: "The situation in Indo-China cannot normalize except on the basis of self-determination. Injection of external forces further complicates the already complicated situation."<sup>30</sup> His forceful exaltation of the principle of self-determination indicated Nepal's firm adherence to non-alignment.<sup>31</sup>

Nepal appealed to the Non-Aligned Conference to take strong steps to protect the independence and dignity of small nations. It also requested the conference to devise

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29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Rising Nepal (Kathmandu), 21 September 1970.

effective ways and means to check any outside interference in the internal matters of small nations. It appealed to the conference to make the United Nations strong, purposeful, and universal for solving many of the complex problems facing different countries in the world.

Nepal expressed its full faith in the aims and objectives of the United Nations. It said that it regarded the world body as a support for the weak nations. It wished success to the efforts of the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the four Big Powers, in their efforts to further the cause of peace outside the United Nations too.<sup>32</sup>

King Mahendra expressed his satisfaction over the fact that as a result of the efforts of the United Nations, a cease-fire had come about between Israel, Jordan, and United Arab Republic. He said he had confidence that a durable solution of the problem would be found in the Security Council: "The basic elements of the solution are embodied in the Security Council resolution."<sup>33</sup>

As in the previous conferences, so in this conference, King Mahendra pleaded for China's admission to the Membership of the United Nations.<sup>34</sup> According to

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32 "His Majesty at the Lusaka Summit", n. 21.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

him, no major military or political problem of the world could be solved without the help of China. Moreover, "China wishes to participate positively through economic and technical co-operation in the creation and building up of a progressive world order".<sup>35</sup> In the meantime US views about China also changed in favour of China's admission. The United States was no more against the entry of China in the United Nations. China was, therefore, granted Membership of the world body on 26 October 1971.

Realizing his own limitations fully well, the King of Nepal declared that small nations did not stand in competition with the nuclear Powers. He appealed to the Big Powers to cut their military expenditure and give more aid to the underdeveloped world.<sup>36</sup> He said that Nepal welcomed SALT and detente. He also expressed his satisfaction over the dialogue between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic and wished it success.<sup>37</sup>

The shift in the alliances of the Big Powers also influenced the inter-relationship of small nations. King Mahendra hoped that the non-aligned movement would address itself to the task of exploring the meaning of the current

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35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

shift in global relationships.<sup>39</sup> He noted with satisfaction that the conference had succeeded in achieving its aims. He also said that discussions on the various items on the agenda had been carried out, and the proceedings recorded, more efficiently and smoothly than in all the previous conferences. That the spirit of non-alignment is valid even in the current global politics is evident from the way all the seven non-aligned conferences up to 1992 have been held without any controversy.

About ten years had elapsed since the First Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade. The non-aligned countries had realized that they had to depend upon their own resources, as far as possible, for their development. They had also seen how it would be a waste of resources, time, and energy to make efforts to evolve independently the methods and technologies that had already been developed in the developed countries and that it would be more profitable for them to import technologies from the developed world. It was the moral duty of the developed countries, according to King Mahendra, to help in the development of the underdeveloped countries.

King Mahendra expressed his disappointment that very little aid was forthcoming from the developed countries

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

for the development of the least developed countries and of land-locked countries like Nepal. He criticized the tenor of the deliberations held in conferences like UNCTAD, and said: "The experience of the two UNCTAD conferences shows that the majority of the developed countries are far from willing to readjust their tariff and trade policies to meet the just needs of the developing countries."<sup>39</sup> He also expressed his anxiety for the security and independence of small and land-locked countries. A resolution passed, in this context said:

In spite of the great progressive achievements and the aspiration of our generation, neither peace nor prosperity nor the right to independence and equality have yet become the integral, indivisible attribute of all mankind. Our age, however, raises the greatest hopes and also presents the greatest challenge. <sup>40</sup>

King Bheendra made an indirect reference to the strains in Indo-Nepalese relations. The period of Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Trade and Transit had already expired. India had not cared to renew the treaty. It had, further, stopped supplies of kerosene oil, salt, gas, and other commodities of daily use to Nepal. It had even refused to grant monthly extensions of the treaty of 1960 since October 1970 and had

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, n. 1, p. 317.

taken recourse to a partial blockade on the Indo-Nepalese borders. It, however, unilaterally decided to continue the flow of certain essential commodities like milk, salt, medicines, and kerosene oil to and from Nepal from January 1971, while restricting the flow of other goods.<sup>41</sup> As an aggrieved country Nepal put its views very strongly and boldly in this conference. Said King Mahendra: "The practice of interfering in the internal affairs of other states and of taking recourse to political and economic pressures and threats of force and subversion are acquiring alarming proportions and dangerous frequency."<sup>42</sup> He, further, observed that classical colonialism was trying to perpetuate itself in the garb of neo-colonialism "a less obvious but in no way a less dangerous means of economic and political domination over the developing countries".<sup>43</sup> He also pointed out how the developing world itself was not an equal and homogeneous community. Even among the developing countries there were some which were developed and which stood in need of more liberal and preferential trade policies from their more developed neighbours. He emphasized the need for more

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41 Murlidhar Dharwadwasi, Indian Diplomacy in Nepal (Jaipur, 1975), p. 167. Also see Habin Kheher (Kathmandu), 30 December 1970.

42 Non-Aligned and Developing Countries, n. 1, p. 318.

43 Ibid., p. 317.

liberal trade and aid policies, "not because we want them [i.e. the developed countries] to be charitable", but "because we want to be just".<sup>44</sup>

Another important matter on which the King placed great emphasis was the need to do something to mitigate the plight of land-locked countries. The land-locked countries were handicapped as regards their development, and even the developing countries could do a good deal to ensure that the effects of the handicap were minimized and that full and unrestricted transit rights were granted.<sup>45</sup>

King Mahendra said that inasmuch as the resources of the sea-bed and ocean floor were the common heritage of all mankind, they should be used to benefit the entire human race. He also demanded that land-locked countries should have access to sea as a matter of right.<sup>46</sup> Expressing his disappointment over the attitude of the developed countries, he remarked: "The majority of the developed countries are far from willing to readjust their tariff and trade policies to meet the just needs of the developing countries."<sup>47</sup> He noted that the commitment of the developed countries to increase their financial assistance to the developing countries at

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44 "His Majesty at the Lusaka Summit", n. 21.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.



least to one per cent of their gross national product was still unfulfilled. He suggested a joint front by the developing countries to demand more liberal trade and aid policies from the developed countries in the Second Development Decade. He remarked: "While the developed world has already succeeded in reaching the moon, the developing countries have to make efforts to reach one another."<sup>48</sup> Expressing his anxiety to develop his country, he said: "This momentous conference will give a firm guideline to reach to the hearts of the peoples that confronts us in our march to progress."<sup>49</sup>

#### AN ASSESSMENT

At the Lusaka Conference Nepal expressed its views emphatically on the various problems which affected it directly or indirectly. The speech delivered by King Mahendra threw light on the importance and objectives of the non-aligned movement in the present context of the world. He said he looked upon the conference as a means for weak nations to safeguard their freedom and ensure economic development.

Nepal's relations with China were not too cordial at this time. And yet it pleaded with fellow non-aligned

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

countries to support China's application for the Membership of the United Nations. This reflected its non-aligned character and its adherence to certain basic principles.

At the time of the Lusaka Conference, Indo-Nepalese relations were quite strained. During the conference King Mahendra held discussions with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India. The two agreed to exchange military information on developments harmful to each other. King Mahendra conveyed his willingness to permit India to post senior military personnel at its embassy in Kathmandu for an agreed period.<sup>50</sup>

In spite of its best efforts in the conference Nepal did not succeed in establishing its right to facilities of trade and transit and to access to sea. This reflected differences among the non-aligned countries themselves. The conference looked quite impressive and attractive outwardly, but many of its members countries did not behave according to the principles of non-alignment. None of the countries was ready to sacrifice its interest. They competed with one another in the matter of building their military strength. They still believed that might was right in this civilized world also.

As in the previous conferences Nepal did not raise any issue at Lusaka which was controversial. It raised only

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<sup>50</sup> This was disclosed by King Mahendra in a specially arranged interview to an Indian representative. Times of India (New Delhi), 21 October 1970.

those issues on which most member countries were unanimous. Thus it preferred to remain silent in the conference on the issue of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. It was happy that the issue of West Germany and Berlin had been resolved peacefully. This issue had once been regarded as an explosive one.

In the circumstances that obtained in the world at that time even the non-aligned countries were not quite clear as to the basic objectives of non-alignment. However, King Mahendra placed his balanced views before the conference, and said that the non-aligned movement could play a useful role not only in a period of tension between the Super Powers but at other times also.

Geographically, most of the advanced countries were situated in the Northern Hemisphere and the poor, developing, and underdeveloped countries were situated in the Southern Hemisphere. Most of the member countries of the non-aligned movement belonged to the latter region. In this conference it was resolved that the small, developing, and underdeveloped countries should help one another in their development. This is now known as South-South dialogic. It is rightly held that the Lusaka Conference gave a "major new thrust" to South-South collaboration.<sup>51</sup> All local newspapers wrote editorials

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51 Soedjatmoko, n. 11, p. 62.

praising the speech delivered by the King at the summit "as a true reflection of the feelings of the Nepalese people".<sup>52</sup> They expressed their satisfaction that "Nepal's order of priorities" had been reflected in the "resolutions, decisions, and appeals of this summit conference of non-aligned nations".<sup>53</sup>

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52 Nepal Press Digest (Kathmandu), vol. 14, no. 38, 21 September 1970.

53 Samachar (Kathmandu), 18 September 1970.

## Chapter Six

### CONCLUSION

The basic objectives of the non-aligned movement are the strengthening of international peace and security, opposition to and liquidation of colonialism, complete disarmament, economic as well as political freedom, equality, cultural unity, strengthening of the United Nations as an instrument for promotion of peace and the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives, opposition to Power blocs and opposition to apartheid.

During the Mahendra Era, Nepal fully subscribed to these objectives and added its voice in support of them at the three summit conferences of non-aligned movement. King Mahendra represented Nepal in all the three conferences held in Belgrade, Cairo, and Lusaka respectively. As discussed in Chapter Three of this dissertation, at the time of the Belgrade Conference the Cold War between the two Super Powers was at its intensest. The world seemed to be on the brink of disaster and destruction. The subject discussed at Belgrade included apartheid and racial discrimination, general and complete disarmament, the question of a ban on nuclear tests, peaceful co-existence among states with different political and social systems, the role and

structure of the United Nations and the implementation of its resolutions, the problem of unequal economic development, etc. These subjects came up for discussion again at the Cairo Conference. The Cairo Conference also discussed peaceful co-existence and the question of codification of its principles, the question of establishment of nuclear-free zones, military posts, foreign troops and bases, settlement of disputes without the threat or use of force, extension of trade and transit facilities to land-locked countries, etc. At the Luocha Conference, Nepal gave especial emphasis to the right of land-locked countries to trade and transit facilities. The participants also agreed to "intensify and unite efforts among the developing countries and between them and the developed countries for carrying out urgent structural changes in the world economy and achieve such international co-operation as will reduce the gap between developed and developing countries".

If we examine the statements and speeches made by King Mahendra during the period, we can see that Nepal joined the non-aligned movement for the sake of (i) preserving and projecting its national identity; (ii) ensuring its political independence; and (iii) making economic gain.

In the course of its history Nepal had had to sign a number of treaties with India--such as the Peace

Treaty of Sugauli in 1815; the Anglo-Nepalese Treaty of 1923; the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950. All these treaties, barring the last one, were in favour of the British power and were humiliating to Nepal. Of course the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 was liberal. The non-aligned movement provided a God-sent international forum for Nepal to demonstrate to the international community that Nepal was an independent country with a distinct identity of its own and with a foreign policy of its own. And King Mahendra made good use of the non-aligned forum to project Nepal's independent identity.

Nepal succeeded only partly in making political gain out of its non-aligned status. It abandoned its old policy of isolation and established diplomatic relations with a number of countries. It kept clear of the two Power blocs. It also avoided getting too closely identified with either of its neighbours. It secured economic aid from both the Power blocs and from both China and India. King Mahendra dissolved the Nepali Congress Government, assumed absolute power, and initiated a new system of party-less Government or what he called the Panchayat system. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru bitterly criticized this action of King Mahendra's and described it as a setback for democracy. Nevertheless, by his active involvement in the non-aligned movement, King Mahendra secured legitimacy

for his system in the international field.

To say that all member countries of the non-aligned movement are non-aligned in the true sense of the term would be an oversimplification. Nepal, however, made conscious efforts to maintain its non-aligned character. King Mahendra played an active role in the various non-aligned conferences and helped establish country's genuine non-aligned status. This is evidenced by the voting behaviour of Nepal on the various controversial issues of the period. On issues like Cambodia, Israel, and Palestine, Nepal expressed views which were quite different from those of China, India, the Soviet Union and the United States. Along with other non-aligned countries Nepal tried to make "disarmament" effective. However, to its sorrow, it found that not only the Super Powers but even the non-aligned countries were engaged in bitter competition with each other as regards weapons and armaments.

King Mahendra demanded trade and transit facilities for land-locked countries. Nepal itself was a land-locked country unable to establish trade links with the world outside on account of the non-cooperation of its neighbours.

Nepal wanted a codification of relationships not only between non-aligned countries on the one hand



and the Super Powers on the other but also between the member countries of the non-aligned movement inter se. This codification of the principles of peaceful co-existence was made at the Cairo Conference on the basis of the UN Charter.

One cannot tell whether and how far Nepal received any economic gain by joining the non-aligned movement. As mentioned earlier, its attempt to secure trade and transit facilities failed in spite of UNCTAD resolutions. This reflected the ineffectiveness of the non-aligned movement itself.

Almost thirty years have passed since the birth of the movement, and yet most member countries are still not self-reliant in economic and other fields. The non-aligned countries pass resolutions appealing to the Super Powers to agree to disarmament, but they are themselves engaged in an arms race with one another. Internal friction and border conflicts among member countries have made the non-aligned movement weak and ineffective. Why has the non-aligned movement failed to be effective? Several reasons may be advanced. First, the criteria of membership are too flexible. All countries barring those which have accepted membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) or the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) or the Warsaw Pact are free to join the non-aligned movement. This makes for

too much of variability and diversity of interests among its members with differing political systems such as monarchy, democracy, autocracy, dictatorship, etc. Secondly none of the member countries is willing to sacrifice its national interest, just or unjust, and make concessions to follow members. Their representatives deliver hypocritical speeches advising the Super Powers to pursue a policy of disarmament while they are themselves engaged in an armament race to suppress their neighbours/rivals.

There are, however, some plus points also. Non-alignment provides an international forum where even a very small and insignificant country can place its views boldly. A small country cannot do so if it joins either of the Power blocs. The non-aligned movement checked the division of the entire world into two clear-cut Power blocs. The members of the movement can, by maintaining equidistance from the two Power blocs, get economic aid from both. Thanks to the movement "bloc politics" has become outdated.

The South-South dialogue, which has helped a number of countries in their development, is a result of the deliberations held at the Non-Aligned Summit Conference held in Lusaka.

A critical perusal of the agendas and the texts of the declarations adopted by the three non-aligned

conferences held in Belgrade, Cairo, and Lusaka, would reveal that there is no basic difference between one text and another except perhaps a shift in emphasis from political to economic problems. This is largely due to the fact that from 1961 to 1970 there was no basic change in the conditions of most non-aligned countries. This is true especially in the case of Nepal. The speeches of King Mahendra from Belgrade to Lusaka were more or less of the same type. Also, during the period, there was no significant political or economic change in Nepal. However, as one of the active members of the non-aligned movement, Nepal represented, and echoed the sentiments and problems of, land-locked countries. King Mahendra's death on 31 January 1972 put an abrupt end to a notable era, the Mahendra era, in Nepal's history.

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**APPENDIX**

**Members of the Nepalese Delegations  
which participated in the Summit  
Conferences of the Non-Aligned Countries**

**BELGRADE, 1961**

**His Majesty King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev,  
Head of the Delegation**

**Members of the Delegation:**

**Dr. Tulsi Giri, Foreign Minister**

**Col. Subarna Samsher Jung Bahadur Rana  
Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary  
to Yugoslavia**

**Mr. Hir Dabba Ichwari Man, Secretary  
of the King**

**Professor Yadunath Khanal, Secretary  
for Foreign Affairs**

**CAIRO, 1964**

**His Majesty King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev,  
Head of the Delegation**

**Members of the Delegation:**

**Mr. Kirti Nidhi Bista, Foreign Minister**

**Mr. Yadu Nath Khanal, Royal Nepalese  
Ambassador to Cairo**

**Major General Padma Bahadur Khatri,  
Foreign Secretary**

Major General Sher Bahadur Malli  
Principal Military Secretary

Badakaji Purna Raj Raj Bhandari  
Principal Personal Secretary  
to His Majesty

Mr Subba Iswari Man Shrestha  
Secretary to His Majesty

Brigadier General Suchil Chandra Halder  
Royal Physician

Mr Sunder Nath Bhattarai, of the Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs

Mr Govardhan Bikram Shah, of the Royal  
Nepalese Embassy in India.

LUSAKA, 1970

His Majesty King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev,  
Head of the Delegation

Members of the Delegation:

Mr. Gchendra Bahadur Raj Bhandari,  
The Royal Palace and Foreign Affairs Minister

Mr. Ishwari Man Shrestha, Principal Private  
Secretary of the King

Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa,  
Finance Secretary

Mr. Jharendra Narayan Singh,  
Royal Nepalese Ambassador in Cairo

Mr. Bharat Raj Bhandari,  
Foreign Secretary

Mr. Jagdish Ghunsher Rana, Joint Secretary  
in the Foreign Ministry.

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