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Farewell Non-Alignment?

Constancy and change of foreign policy in post-colonial India

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Summary

In 1947 India, formerly a colony of the British Empire, became independent. In 1974 it detonated its first nuclear device. However, it is only in the last few years that the country with the world's second largest population has been recognised as a potential future world power. Since its economy opened up in 1990, India has been achieving fantastic growth and is experiencing a boom only exceeded by that of China. In view of these facts, the way this Asian giant with its increased weight directs its foreign policy is of exceptional importance.

One possible response to this would be to expect constancy of India's foreign policy. After all, the concept of non-alignment, developed by India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, continues to be featured in almost all keynote addresses by politicians of every hue and is still thought of (as it has been for the last 60 years) as a central tenet of India's foreign policy.

On the other hand, the transformation which shifting parameters almost inevitably had to involve could also be emphasized. After all, there are one or two things which have changed in the India of 2008 since the India of the middle of the last century or the India at the height of the Cold War.

In terms of domestic policy, the end of the domination of the once unchallenged Indian National Congress, or Congress Party, ought to be mentioned. Until 1990, almost without a break, this party was part of, or entirely constituted, the government. Since then this domination has come to an end: a second party with a similar level of influence at national level has arisen in the form of the BJP. Both are nonetheless considerably weaker than the Congress Party in its heyday, and are therefore dependent on numerous coalition partners. Furthermore, the Indian electorate has become more critical and since 1989, with one exception, has sent the current government into opposition at every national parliamentary election.

The reform of the economic system, which used to be closed and quasi-socialist, likewise falls in the realm of domestic policy. This successfully broke with old dogmas and, having since become a cross-party consensus, is no longer endangered by a change of government. In terms of foreign policy, more than anything else the end of the Cold War completely overturned the parameters of India's foreign policy: the Soviet Union, a good friend and since 1972 to all intents and purposes an alliance partner, suddenly no longer existed, and on the other side of the coin one or two impediments to cooperation, which had formerly substantially hindered relations with the USA, ceased to apply.

From this one or two observers derive the diagnosis, referred to in this report as the *Farewell Non-alignment Hypothesis*, that since the end of the Cold War India has – under the influence of an increasingly neo-liberal economy and under pressure from the superpower USA – distanced itself (too) far from the once cherished ideal of a non-aligned, moral foreign policy rooted in peaceful cooperation.

The conclusions of this report however suggest a different point of view. An analysis of India's foreign policy since 1947 in the subject areas of world and regional policy produces the following results:

1. It makes sense to differentiate three phases of India's foreign policy during this period (1947-1965, 1966-1989 and 1990-present). While these are far from being completely homogeneous in themselves, they do plainly differ from one another with regard to the relevant protagonists at work, the contexts of foreign and domestic policy, and the actual output in terms of foreign policy.

2. There is no evidence in any of these three phases of irreproachable adherence to the principles of non-alignment. Not only after the end of the Cold War, as the *Farewell Non-alignment Hypothesis* suggests, but already under Indira Gandhi and even as early as under Jawaharlal Nehru there are numerous examples to be found of divergences from this ideal.

3. The overridingly important goal in all three phases was (and is) to preserve India's independence and ability to act, to maximize Indian possibilities for influence and, put in quite general terms, to make India into a Global Player, with a voice which will command attention in the shaping of world order.

4. As long as India was extremely weak, non-alignment and involvement in the Non-aligned Movement were perceived in New Delhi as an ideal vehicle for drawing nearer to these goals. However, the stronger India becomes, the more any involvement in this movement loses its attraction.

5. A further change in India's orientation, for instance a closer cooperation with the People's Republic of China, cannot therefore be ruled out in the future, if India's leadership has the impression that by so doing it is able to draw nearer to the interests already outlined.

6. The way in which democracy has in the mean time become firmly anchored in the Indian system of values, and the way earlier impediments to cooperation have been put aside nonetheless give rise to the hope that India's turn towards the west may last for some considerable time.

In contrast to the USA, which used the end of the Cold War to put its relations with India onto a whole new level, Germany and the EU have so far largely slept through this development. This could prove to be a fatal mistake, when India overtakes China this century as the country with the world's largest population, and perhaps not long after this finally rises to join the ranks of the world powers in economic, political and military terms.

Contents

1. Outline of the issue[1]

Non-alignment for many years formed an unchanging basic principle of India's foreign policy. The great legacy of the founder of the Indian state Jawaharlal Nehru was (and is) repeatedly celebrated and praised by his successors in keynote speeches (cf. Press Trust of India 2007, Cherian 2006b). Since the end of the Cold War, however, there have increasingly been grounds to suspect that New Delhi was distancing itself ever further from its traditional foreign policy (cf. Mohan 2003: 31-38). Reasons for this are given on the one hand as being the inevitable irrelevancy of an organization of non-aligned parties in a world free of military blocs (cf. Thakur 1992: 180), and on the other also as a new orientation carried out for reasons of power politics, which brings India closer to the remaining superpower, the USA.

It cannot be disputed that the output of India's foreign policy in 2008 differs markedly from that of 1974 (at the highpoint of Indira Gandhi's term of office) or of 1947 (directly following independence). However, critics' complaints about India's "new" foreign policy clearly go way beyond these empirical observations.[2] According to these critics a *paradigm shift* (Bidwai 2006b) has taken place, characterized not only by different results, but also and primarily by a betrayal of the former standards and principles of Indian foreign policy, namely non-alignment.

The main focus of this report falls upon the issue of the extent to which this *Farewell Non-alignment Hypothesis* applies to contemporary Indian foreign policy, so as to clarify whether there has been a genuine transformation in Indian foreign policy. My counter-hypothesis is that what is instead at issue here is symptoms of a strategy of adaptation in order to achieve objectives which *remain constant* in a changing environment.[3]

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1   I am grateful to the following for their helpful commentaries and observations: Matthias Dembinski, Thorsten Gromes, Susanne Fischer, Giorgio Franceschini, Katja Freistein, Andreas Haidvogl, Philipp Langer, Harald Müller, Annette Schaper, Andreas Schmidt, Niklas Schörnig and Carmen Wunderlich.

2   Cf. Cherian (2004, 2006a, 2007), Bidwai (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c), Koshy (2006).

3   With respect to this, the fact that India is a parliamentary democracy with freedom of the press and freedom of speech, but does not in any way have a completely homogeneous intellectual tradition with regard to foreign policy, should not be overlooked. Even in autocratic regimes the distinction is frequently made between "doves" and "falcons", "moderates" and "radicals", "modernists" and "traditionalists", or "US-friendly" and "US-hostile" movements in the foreign policy establishment. In societies with a democratic constitution, such movements are furthermore still the object of public and controversial debate, not merely existing in the back offices of party headquarters or ministries. Just as for instance in the USA a distinction has to be made at least between an isolationist and interventionist foreign policy tradition (Rudolf 1999, Bierling 2004), and just as Hellmann (1996) identified a total of at least 4 relevant intellectual trends for the Federal Republic of Germany, it is likewise self-evident that India should not be (mis)understood as a monolithic bloc or "black box". Stephen Cohen (2001: 37-50) in this respect points to the existence of five clearly distinguishable schools of foreign policy within India. He labels these as classic and militant Nehruvians, Gandhians, center-right realists and Hindu-revitalists (cf. the similar, but not identical differentiation of "traditions of strategic thought" in India by Mitra 2002). However the sheer existence of different schools of thought should in no way be interpreted as an automatic substitute for the presence of a changeable foreign policy. For on the one hand in the society with a democratic con-

So as to conduct the necessary investigation, it is first of all important to establish one or two basic clarifications. These include: What were (are) central components of India's foreign policy? What is non-alignment? Is non-alignment as a concept identical with Indian foreign policy which defines itself as "non-aligned" or with the principles of the Nnon-aligned Movement? This "narrow" formulation of a question concerning the correspondence between actual Indian foreign policy and the principles of non-alignment is supplemented and completed by the "broader" question of transformation and continuity in Indian foreign policy.

The procedure will follow the steps below. Chapter 2 will elaborate what should be understood by non-alignment or non-aligned foreign policy. Chapter 3 will additionally give the reader one or two orientation points on the potential determining factors for Indian foreign policy. For three distinct phases since 1947 this report will briefly present central protagonists, and contexts for domestic and foreign policy, and current Indian strategies for dealing with foreign policy issues. In Chapter 4, the heart of the report, Indian foreign policy since 1947 will be discussed in two subject areas (regional policy and world policy) and examined with regard to the norms and principles of non-alignment. Finally in the conclusion a balance will be taken, and lesson and policy recommendations drawn from what has previously been discussed.

2.   Non-alignment

Traditionally and (rhetorically at least) officially Indian foreign policy has always understood itself to be under an obligation to the so-called Non-aligned Movement and the standards and principles of non-alignment.

However, what does non-alignment actually mean in theory and practice? An early formulation of the "idea" of non-alignment can be found with Jawaharlal Nehru even before the call for India's independence: "On his entry into the 'Provisional government' in September 1946 Nehru declared with conviction that India would put as much distance as pos-

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stitution it is up to the electorate whether it continues to support the same concepts over a period of several years (or decades), or helps new ideas to come into power. On the other hand – as indicated by the theory of realism in international relations – it is completely conceivable that politicians once elected into office ultimately have to sacrifice their own preferred foreign policy strategies under structural pressure from the international system. Nevertheless the existence of a debate about the objectives of its own foreign policy (especially in the case where there is no completely dominant point of view) illustrates that a simplistic consideration of changes in foreign policy strategy is not very helpful. Thus Mohan (2003: 34f) also draws attention to the fact that there has never been a total consensus within India over the policy of non-alignment, despite widespread acceptance. Both the political left wing and right wing often strongly criticized this foreign policy concept, to which the Congress Party most probably largely owed its lengthy prominence during its equally lengthy period in office. It makes sense to bear this in the back of one's mind if there is discussion below of "the" Indian foreign policy and questions raised concerning how "the" Indian foreign policy can be reconciled with the principles of non-alignment.

sible between itself and any political group of blocs, which were directed at one another in conflict and which in the past as in future led to world catastrophes, or which were directed towards continuing to do this" (Sinigoj 1998: 25/26, cf. also Mohan 2003: 30ff).

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM for short) is, after the UN, the international organization with the most members. It represents some 55% of the world population and its member states hold almost two-thirds of the seats on the UN General Assembly.

The first step on the path towards establishing this organization was the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955, at which 29 countries from Africa (6) and Asia (23) were represented. The discussion there primarily covered subjects such as colonialism, race discrimination, general disarmament and a ban on nuclear weapons (cf. Baumann 1982: 6-11). As part of this conference the Indian and Chinese prime ministers presented their concept of peaceful coexistence, which (at least officially) was intended to instruct about both Indian and also non-aligned foreign policy. Six years after this conference the Non-Aligned Movement was launched as an organization in Belgrade in 1961 (cf. ibid. 11-27). The leading and influential members were Jawaharlal Nehru of India, President Nasser of Egypt and Yugoslav State Premier Tito, who admittedly was head of a Communist system, but had fallen out with Stalin.[4] Over the following years and decades the non-aligned states' summit conference held regularly every three years was to be a preferred forum for Indian foreign policy.

Founding members of NAM were more than twenty states[5], and the movement now has 118 members, but has lost some of its former importance. A decisive reason for this has been the end of the Cold War and the resulting rapprochement between the former blocs, which deprived the movement of the most important justification for its existence.[6] Furthermore, the constant expansion of the number of members also deserves a mention, making it increasingly difficult to reach a consensus over results. It should also not be forgotten in this regard that NAM is far less coherent in terms of programme and ideology than for instance NATO or the former Warsaw Pact. Socialist states coexist within NAM with capitalist states, and democracies with autocracies (Pörtner 1997: 13-17).[7]

In the following, an investigation or presentation of the development - in terms of content and organization - of the Non-Aligned Movement or of other prominent member

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4 Yugoslavia's participation did not alter the fact that the Non-Aligned movement was and is predominantly a movement of countries from the southern hemisphere.

5 Afghanistan, Algeria (provisional government), Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab States (Egypt and Syria),Yemen, and Yugoslavia.

6 In which, as will be illustrated below, the rejection of bloc conflict ought perhaps to be the most prominent, but in no way the only important target-setting of non-aligned states, and so that not all principles of non-alignment were rendered obsolete by the end of the Cold War.

7 Sinigoj (1998: 3-4) at any rate makes it clear that this ideological heterogeniety was not only achieved by expanding member states, but the movement was already from the very beginning peopled by nations which "were subject to strongly ideological fluctuations".

states will be omitted.[8] Instead, the aim here is to use the (original) principles of the Non-Aligned Movement as a blueprint for being able to pronounce a judgement on the extent to which India is fulfilling its long-cherished claim of operating a non-aligned foreign policy.[9]

So what did count as *non-aligned*, in the eyes of the initiators themselves at least? In the run-up to the first summit conference five conditions were formulated, which had to be fulfilled by any country seeking to participate:[10]

1. The country should operate an independent policy based on co-existence of states and non-alignment, or demonstrate a tendency towards implementing such a policy.

2. The country should permanently support national liberation movements.

3. The country should not be member of a multilateral military alliance in the context of the conflict between the great powers.

4. In the event that the country has agreed a bilateral alliance with a great power, this alliance should not have been entered into in the context of the great power conflict.

5. In the event that the country has entrusted use of military bases to a foreign power, this concession should not have been made in the context of the great power conflict.

Likewise an important part was played by the so-called five principles of peaceful co-existence,[11] also known as Panchsheel, developed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Chou En-lai:[12]

1. Mutual respect for other nations' territorial integrity,

2. Non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries,

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8   With regard to this cf. Baumann (1982), Pörtner (1997) and Mohan (2003: 38-48). One clarification is important however: the issue which is focussed on India in this report, could with equal justification also be focussed on many other "non-aligned" states. Even the Non-Aligned Movement itself could be asked to what extent it still represented in later years what the founding generation understood to be "non-aligned".

9   Mohan (2003: 29) furthermore points to the fact that "[a]n important distinction must be made between India's foreign policy of non-alignment and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Although the two ideas are related, non-alignment was the defined foreign policy orientation of India from the first days of Independence. The NAM came much later, towards the end of the Nehru years, and developed a dynamic of its own. Although India was one of the founding members of the NAM and its presumed leader, the movement and its politics did not always merge completely with India's own articulation of its national interests. The NAM often complemented India's pursuit of its international objectives but never fully supplanted non-alignment".

10 cf. Baumann (1982: 3-4).

11 cf. Baumann (1982:9). See also Sinigoj (1998: 38f), who sets the relationship of the five principles against elements from the United Nations Charter.

12 These five principles were not drawn up specifically for the Non-Aligned Movement. Instead in 1953 they arose from bilateral negotiations between the People's Republic of China and India and were adopted in a contract between the two countries the following year. In 1955 they were further reinforced at the Bandung Conference (in which China also took part). The Non-Aligned Movement then identified itself later with the five principles, as did the People's Republic of China (not a member of NAM), which even awarded it constitutional status in 1982.

3.   Equality and mutual support,

4.   Peaceful co-existence,

5.   Non-aggression.

So as to outline a little more clearly the task of assessing Indian foreign policy against the basic concepts of non-alignment, this total of 10 conditions and principles will be summarised as three, more general, axioms:

I.   Non-alignment means NOT getting involved in the conflict of the great powers (Conditions: 1-5).

II.   Non-alignment means recognising all states as having the same rights and therefore rejecting any involvement in the internal affairs of other countries (Condition: 1; Principles: 1-3).[13]

III. Non-alignment means operating a fundamentally peaceful foreign policy (Condition: 1; Principles: 1, 4 und 5).

3.   Phases of Indian foreign policy since independence

As already established in the introduction (and as will be illustrated in Chapter 4), over the course of the sixty years of independence there have been one or two changes in the way Indian foreign policy has manifested itself. Without seeking to go into these in detail, the following chapter aims to show variations in those fields which are generally perceived as potential determining factors for state foreign policy. Since Kenneth Waltz (1954) introduced them, it has become accepted practice to distinguish between the analytical levels of decision makers, social system, in which these are embedded, and international surroundings.

In the case of India three phases can be identified, which with regard to these levels are relatively homogeneous in themselves. Between themselves these three phases[14] can be differentiated both in the key deciding protagonists at the switch point of Indian foreign policy as well as in the context of domestic and foreign policy in which they were embedded. Accordingly, Indian strategies for dealing with and ways of handling foreign policy issues also show/showed clear vacillations.

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13 Condition 2, which obliges non-aligned states to support the Non-Aligned Movement, certainly contradicts this. It is nonetheless possible to argue that this obligation only applies to colonized countries. As soon as a country is self-governing, any interference from outside is to be refused.

14 Cf. Wagner's division (2005c), which likewise identified three rough phases in Indian foreign policy very similar to those presented here. The Nehru period (characterized by a mixture of soft-power and hard-power components in Indian foreign policy), the period of the Indira Doctrine (predominance of hard-power components) and the period of the Gujral Doctrine (predominance of soft-power components). However, Wagner is only concerned with India's regional policy in his essay, whereas the phases presented here are intended to be true of foreign policy in general.

3.1   Phase I: India's foreign policy after independence (1947-1965)

The first phase of Indian foreign policy lasted from independence in 1947 to the end of the Second Indo-Pakistani (Kashmir) War in 1965. India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru was the key political figure of this period. Independence and the first years of self-determination can be seen as the context for domestic policy, and the beginnings of the Cold War and division of large parts of the world into two power blocs in hostile opposition to each other as the context for foreign policy.

In this phase India initially pursued a largely idealistic foreign policy. Peace, anti-racism, international cooperation and disarmament should, in Nehru's view, occupy cen-tre-stage. Of course, India should take on an important role in the newly forming world order, of that there was no doubt at all (cf. Sinigoj 1998: 24). However the aim was to send out a clear rejection of cynical power politics, as known from Europe, which had led to two world wars within one generation (cf. Nehru 1949: 232). Instead, there should be a combination of peaceful evening out of and dialogue between different interests.

However, the Pakistan-Kashmir Conflict ensured that India was forced to attend to military policy at an early stage, against the wishes of its state founder. This did not alter , however, Jawaharlal Nehru's fundamental views: his objective remained to establish India as a great or world power. This was not to be achieved through use of war or force, but by means of international cooperation and the "irresistible" Indian civilization and culture (cf. Sinigoj 1998: 26/27).[15]

Accordingly, Nehru dreamed of a multipolar, cooperative world order, in which various major powers (including India naturally) would work peacefully together for the good of all nations. The most important thing to him in all of this was that, as part of such a world order, the peoples of Africa and Asia, who had to that date been oppressed and barely lis-tened to, should be given a voice and be able to take part in the progress.

So as to achieve this objective, he thought up the policy of non-alignment, which would enable India to retain good relations with both blocs without itself becoming em-broiled in the Cold War. As it happened, even the father of this policy himself found it difficult to implement it in its pure form. Thus Nehru when in doubt tended to lean to-wards the Soviet Union, and even Nehru was prepared to apply other standards in his own, Indian, sphere of influence.

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15 See also Walker (1996: 65/66), who writes that "[i]n the years just before and after India achieved its inde-pendence, Jawaharlal Nehru and other political leaders enunciated a vision of an international society that would be just and egalitarian, and in which social progress and international harmony would be achieved through non-violent and democratic means", but a little later continues "[a]s many observers of India have noted, this political philosophy coexisted with an opposite trait. Wherever India's own status was in question, it refused to be content with equality and was keen to assert its superiority".

3.2   Phase II: Indira Gandhi's "non-alignment" (1966-1989)

In 1964 Jawaharlal Nehru died, and after a brief period of transition his daughter Indira Gandhi[16] took office as prime minister. She, and later her son and successor as head of government Rajiv Gandhi, were the key protagonists who left their mark on the second phase of Indian foreign policy, which lasted from 1966 to 1989. This period also includes the phase of the Janata government (1977-1980). This multi-party coalition, which ranged from Hindu-nationalists to Communists, was a reaction to Indira Gandhi's authoritarian style of government, which led to the proclamation of a state of emergency from 1975 to 1977. However, by 1979 the original coalition had already fallen apart and the rump government was from then on dependent on the support of the Congress Party which in 1980 (along with Indira Gandhi) also once again officially took over government. In this brief period, with the exception of one or two beginnings, no new features became apparent in foreign policy.[17] For this reason the author considers it justifiable to regard the phase from 1966-1989 as on the whole decisively marked by Indira Gandhi.

The context for domestic policy during this stage was the dominance of the Congress Party and an increasingly authoritarian style of government by Indira Gandhi. The most important context for foreign policy had to do with one or two changes in the Cold War. The USA was providing Pakistan with military and moral weapons and making India's arch-enemy into one of its main allies (against the Soviet Union). At the same time an ideological and power political rift opened up between Beijing and Moscow and this subsequently led to a rapprochement between the People's Republic of China and the USA.

In this phase there was the first turnaround in Indian foreign policy, which can be traced back to both personal and structural origins. Indira Gandhi leaned more obviously than the previous leadership towards the Soviet Union as key international partner (and in so doing distanced herself even further from the USA), and she represented more clearly than the previous leadership a policy of regional domination, which had as its objective the hegemony of India in South Asia (cf. Rothermund 2003).

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16 Nehru's daughter was not related in any way to her namesake Mahatma Gandhi. She owed her family name to her marriage with Indian politician and journalist Feroze Gandhi.

17 On the contrary, new prime minister Desai even defended Indira Gandhi's Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in an interview with Spiegel magazine (cf. Der SPIEGEL 1977). Mohan (2003: 35) also writes, that the Janata party while originally seeking to reverse the close bond with the Soviet Union, nonetheless "[o]nce in power, the Janata Party recognized that the strategic necessity of a close relationship with the Soviet Union, and the then-foreign minister, Vajpayee, did little to disrupt the ties with Moscow".

Diagram: The three phases of Indian foreign policy

Phase I: 1947-1965	
Key protagonist:	Jawaharlal Nehru
Domestic political context:	Newly won independence; establishment of democracy; socialist development model
Foreign political context:	Beginnings of bipolarity and Cold War
Important events:	1st Indo-Pakistani War (1947); founding of the Non-Aligned Movement (1961); war with China (1962); 2nd Indo-Pakistani War (1965)
Indian strategy:	Regional consolidation of power; transcending of Cold War through non-alignment

Phase II: 1966-1989	
Key protagonist:	Indira Gandhi (+Rajiv Gandhi)
Domestic political context:	Dominance of the Congress Party
Foreign political context:	Cold War and China's change of side
Important events:	3rd Indo-Pakistani War (1971); "peaceful nuclear explosion" (1974), interventions in the Maldives and Sri Lanka
Indian strategy:	Regional domination policy; rapprochement with the Soviet Union

Phase III: Since 1990	
Key protagonist:	Various
Domestic political context:	Compelled to form coalition governments; liberalization of the economy
Foreign political context:	End of Cold War; US unipolarity; rise of China
Important events:	Nuclear weapons testing (1998); Kargil War with Pakistan (1999); terrorist attacks on the Indian Parliament (2001)
Indian strategy:	New policy towards neighbours; strategic partnership with the USA; increasing integration into the regional and international systems

Source: Author's representation

3.3 Phase III: After the Cold War: Triumph of pragmatism (since 1990)

The second phase of Indian foreign policy ended towards the late 1980s, when two events took place which proved to be highly significant for the future of Indian foreign policy. On the one hand there was a radical change in Indian foreign policy. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union changed the environment of India's foreign policy drastically. On the other hand, there was a radical change in domestic policy at almost the same time. This took the form of the (provisional) end of the 37-year rulership of the *Nehru-Gandhi-dynasty,* and linked with this the downfall of the Congress Party which had until that time ruled continuously until 1989, with only 5 years not at the pin-

nacle of government, and also the reform of the economic system.[18] Individual personalities who – like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi – were able to put their stamp on the phase as a whole[19], are no longer to be found here. This is partly because of the fact that since 1989 no government has been able to remain in power for longer than one parliamentary term (5 years). A correspondingly high number of politicians were permitted to have a go at the most important control centres of foreign policy. The phase is still ongoing and is primarily associated with important adjustments of India's global and regional position.

On a global scale New Delhi edged very much closer to Washington's side. This was made easier by the fact that many formerly divisive factors were no longer present (Cold War, India's quasi-socialist economic system) or had become more relative (US alliance with Pakistan). At a regional level the Indian governments (of various political hues) recognised during this phase that with their frequently brusque policy of domination they were achieving only the opposite of what had actually been their goal and they therefore assumed (very successfully) the role of a benevolent hegemon.

4. India and non-alignment in the field of regional and world policy

India's behaviour in the field of regional and world policy is of particular importance for understanding Indian foreign policy. The section below will investigate the extent to which respectively compliance with or divergence from the principles of non-alignment can be ascertained.

This does not imply in any way that all aspects of Indian foreign policy are going to be exhaustively identified and discussed here however.[20] In any event the scope and structure of this report prohibit tackling all these subjects with the same attention to detail. For this reason the author has decided to concentrate on two subject areas.

Still more important are the material reasons which make India's policy towards its neighbours (Chapter 4.1) on the one hand, and India's position in world policy (Chapter 4.2) on the other particularly central to the issues raised in this report. So as to explain

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18 Cf. on economic reforms Müller/Rauch (2008), Das (2006), Thakur (2006) and Wagner (2001), and on radical political changes Betz (2006), Wagner (2001, 2006a and 2007) and Müller (2006: 156-165).

19 The strong personalization of Indian foreign policy carried out here may come as something of a surprise, especially in a democracy, but as Wagner (2005d: 90/91) ascertains, the decision-making process for foreign policy in India remained for a long time essentially "the boss's business".

20 There might well remain more to be said about India's policy towards its so-called second circle, i.e. the neighbouring regions of Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa (cf. Müller 2006: Chapter 8). Likewise it might be possible to talk about Indo-European relations (or the lack of them) (cf. Ihlau 2006, Wagner 2005a). It might also be possible to discuss India's efforts to gain a place on the UN Security Council (cf. Bourantonis 2005: 9 and 58).

how India's foreign policy complies with the principles of non-alignment it is essential to examine India's position vis-à-vis the great powers, with its intention not to get involved in the great power conflict. And so as to analyze fulfilment of the non-interference rule and the fundamental principle of operating a peaceful foreign policy, India's policy towards those states which lie in its immediate sphere of influence and which might accordingly be on the receiving end of Indian ambitions must be looked at.

Furthermore, with regard to the broader issue of change and/or continuity in Indian foreign policy the relations with the great powers (closer relations with the USA are perceived by some observers to be the great break here) and with the smaller neighbouring states again appear to be of greatest interest.

Since the objective of this report is to take a critical look at the *Farewell Non-alignment Hypothesis*, the main focus of attention analytically speaking will be directed at any possible divergences from non-alignment guidelines, as summarised in Chapter 2. This is because, let us not forget, an essential component of this hypothesis is that there has been a disastrous movement away from the principles of non-alignment which has manifested itself **after** the end of the Cold War. **Before** this point, in contrast, there should exist no, or at least very few, cases in which Indian policy diverged. If on the other hand non-alignment was always more a strategy for achieving a specific objective rather than an absolute value in itself, it would come as no surprise to find divergences from the principles even prior to 1990, and especially at the time when non-alignment and the objectives which are supposed to be achieved through it contradict each other.[21]

4.1   India's regional policy

India's regional policy in this context is intended to be understood as its policy concerning its neighbours, that is, the way in which India deals with its smaller, weaker neighbours in South Asia.[22] These include in particular Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma.[23] Within this group a distinction should be made between Pakistan, which always considered itself to be on a level with India, was never prepared to recognise Indian rule on the sub-continent and was also not afraid of picking a fight with

21 This method of procedure furthermore results in there being no attempt below systematically to look for actions which illustrate compliance between Indian foreign policy and the principles of non-alignment. On the one hand it is by definition partly a question of "non-events" (non-interference, non-belligerent foreign policy, non-involvement in conflict between blocs etc.), which by their nature are difficult to prove. On the other hand the questions posed by this report do not constitute a value by which for instance five instances of divergence from non-alignment might be offset against five compliances with it.

22 Accordingly, Indo-Chinese relations are not discussed until the following section on "India in international politics".

23 India's superior strength in comparison with these countries is obvious and can be represented as statistics. India itself clearly represents more than two thirds of the total population and economic power of South Asia and almost two thirds of export trade (cf. Wagner 2005c: 1).

New Delhi in military terms, on the one hand, and between India's other much smaller and weaker neighbours, which had absolutely no chance of being able to compete with it.

4.1.1 India and Pakistan

During British colonial rule the Indian National Congress (INC)[24] was not the only political movement to speak out against foreign rule. Another important group was the Muslim League led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah.[25] The INC wanted the entire British colony to be granted independence as a new state of India. On the other side, the Muslim League, fearing that if this happened the Muslims would be permanently made subject to the Hindu majority, demanded the partition of the sub-continent and the creation of the state of Pakistan[26], which would serve as a homeland for Indian Muslims.

After lengthy negotiations and in the face of protests from the INC the British finally got involved and on 14-15 August 1947 the states of India and Pakistan were granted their independence. Since these newly created regions were in no way completely homogeneous, however, this resulted in bloody mass expulsions (most Hindus were expelled or fled from Pakistan, and many Muslims in India fell victim to actions to expel them) with more than 10 million victims expelled and up to 1 million dead (cf. Mann 2007, Müller 2006: 37). This laid the foundations for an enmity which has still not been overcome today and which until 1999 paved the way for a total of four wars between both states.

Although Great Britain occupied the majority of India and governed it quasi directly, there were still numerous small principalities, which although recognising London's sovereignty nonetheless remained formally independent. After the Partition of the sub-continent these small states were supposed to decide whether they wanted to remain independent or accede to India or Pakistan. Most cases were resolved more or less peacefully.

Two problematic cases were the principalities of Junagadh and Hyderabad. These were inhabited by Hindus in the majority, but ended up under Muslim rulership. Junagadh's prince wanted to accede to Pakistan, whereupon there was a rebellion by the Hindu population, which prompted India to undertake a military intervention in December 1947. After the military operation was over, there was a referendum which legitimized accession

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24 The Indian National Congress (INC), also known as the Congress Party, was founded in 1885 as a secular Indian independence movement. Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi were important leading figures in the INC in the fight for independence from Great Britain. After independence in 1945 the INC was for the next five decades – despite several splits – the dominant political party in India and led every government until 1989. Even today retaining very strong links with the Nehru-Gandhi family, the INC officially represents the interests of the lower classes in particular, although the party leadership continues to be dominated by those from the privileged classes (cf. Wagner 2006a: 116-125).

25 As the name already suggests, this group was primarily concerned with the interests of Indian Muslims. Accordingly, it developed the so-called two-nation theory which implied that two nations existed on Indian soil, the Hindus and the Muslims. The INC in contrast was – at least judging by its claim – non-denominational, even though it was in reality dominated by Hindus.

26 In Persian and Urdu the name Pakistan means "Land of the Pure".

to India. The Nizam of Hyderabad, after a preliminary flirtation with Pakistan, chose independence for his state. His rulership was supported by militant Muslim militias, which took brutal action against Hindus (and other opponents of the regime). In September 1948 the Indian army put an end to these goings-on (Operation Polo) and forced accession to India. This subsequently led to pogrom-like rioting against Muslims (cf. Müller 2006: 37/38).

The greatest problems were experienced by Kashmir however.[27] In Kashmir, which importantly for strategic reasons lies not only between India and Pakistan but also on the border with China, a Hindu prince – Maharaja Hari Singh – ruled over a predominantly Muslim population. The prince was aware of the difficult position his country was in and initially wanted to avoid any commitment. However, Pakistan then decided to exploit a tribal revolt in the west of the country to take military action against Kashmir and annex it for itself. The Kashmiri ruler consequently asked India for help. New Delhi was prepared to give this, but at a price.

This price was the accession of the province to India. In his hour of need Hari Singh was prepared to pay this price and signed the Instrument of Accession. India sent in its troops straightaway and the first Indo-Pakistani War broke out. Sure enough neither side was able to make a decisive breakthrough so Kashmir became to all practical purposes partitioned (there is still no regulation in place which is binding under international law), and it remains so to this day.[28] In the following period there were three more wars (in 1965, 1971 and 1999). These will be dealt with in the section on world policy below, as they – more than the first war – occupy the context of international events and therefore should not be considered in isolation.

The basic conflict is still not resolved today, however. On the contrary: "The Kashmir conflict has for many years left its mark on relations between India and Pakistan and has contributed in part to the nuclearization of the sub-continent" (Ganguly 2008:33). And even below the threshold of war New Delhi and Pakistan have repeatedly arrived at the brink of war over the last 20 years (1987, 1990 and 2001-2002): in 1987 it was over a military manoeuvre by India, which was interpreted by Pakistan as the preliminary to an Indian attack (prior to this Pakistan had supported the insurgent Sikhs in India on a massive scale). In 1990 it was once more about Kashmir and a revolt in the Indian sector in which Pakistan was involved. Finally, on 13 December 2001 there was a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament. The terrorists responsible belonged to the Jaish-e-Mohammed group, which while not being officially supported by Pakistan, did operate from Pakistani territory. In all three cases it was the intervention of the USA (in the first crisis also the

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27 On the following cf. Ganguly (2004: 116-119), Cohen (2001: 211-217), Ganguly (2008).

28 Two UN resolutions which were passed during the first Kashmir War on the one hand called for Pakistan to end its aggression, and demanded as a countermove that India hold a referendum in Kashmir to establish to which state it would ultimately accede itself. India demanded in return that Pakistan withdraw all its troops before the referendum. Pakistan in contrast insisted that the referendum must take place before any withdrawal of troops (cf. Ganguly 2004: 116/117).

Soviet Union), which finally led to peaceful settlement. In 2001-2002 the mutual nuclear deterrent may also have had the effect of subduing the conflicting parties (cf. Ganguly 2008: 34-37).

It is true that in 2003 a peace process – called a *composite dialogue* – started, as part of which several confidence-building measures were agreed upon, but distrust is still deeply rooted on both sides (cf. Huntington 2006, Wagner 2004, Wagner 2005b).

4.1.2 India and its smaller neighbours

Towards its obviously smaller and weaker neighbours India, in complete contrast to its omnipresent criticism of classic power politics, has for many years operated a policy increasingly in line with the principles of hard realpolitik.

The roots of such a policy go back to Jawaharlal Nehru himself. On a global level he spoke of equality between the powers and in so doing was trying to give the relatively weaker India a loud voice. However, India behaved quite differently with its (weaker) neighbours. Thus Cohen (2001: 87/88) writes, not without justification: "For Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan, India is a superpower, and Indian officials expect these states to be suitably deferential."

Contracts were arranged with them quite early on, but these were not contracts among equals, but unbalanced agreements which forced India's small neighbours to rely heavily upon their big brother.[29]

In this way for example Nepal was forced "to trade only via India and only procure weapons with India's permission. Nepal was not permitted to employ any foreigners who might pose a threat to Indian interests, and New Delhi was given the first access to any development projects put forward by Katmandu. Furthermore, following the model of the British colonial masters India was allowed to recruit the battlehardy Gurkhas as elite troops for the Indian army" (Müller 2006: 221). In addition, most of the small neighbours had to agree to allow themselves to be represented by India in foreign policy (cf. Cohen 2001: 130).

In the case of the last remaining relic of the colonial era on Indian soil – the Portuguese colony of Goa – Nehru, again, was none too soft or friendly. After the Portuguese government had turned down a number of requests by the Indian government that Goa be returned to it, Indian troops invaded in December 1961, laid siege to the Portuguese following a brief battle and brought an end to the 450 years of unbroken colonial rule. This was an action, which was difficult to reconcile with the mantra-like oaths of a peaceful foreign policy.[30] Although Nehru may well have been exposed (at least in the eyes of

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29 Wagner (2005c: 9) accurately describes these contracts as "diplomatic hard power strategy".

30 The then US President John F. Kennedy neatly summed up disillusionment with Indian policy, when he commented to the Indian ambassador with regard to Goa: "[Y]ou spent the last 15 years preaching morality to us, and then you go ahead and act the way any normal country would behave [...] the preacher has

his critics) as a proponent of power politics in a cloak of morality, India's hegemonial conduct increased even more steeply during the term of office of his daughter, Indira Gandhi, who after his death and a brief interlude became the new prime minister. Whereas in the case of Goa her father annexed an area which, although under European rule, was indisputably an historical part of India, in 1975 Indira Gandhi annexed the Himalayan state of Sikkim. This had previously been an independent kingdom for 300 years and had decided against accession to India in a referendum in 1947.

Pressure against Nepal and Bhutan was also clearly increased during the second phase. For instance Nepal (1988), when it dared to demand a change in the unequal treaties with India, was punished by these very treaties being cancelled without any substitution and furthermore by the imposition of a trade embargo. However the country – precisely because of these treaties – was completely dependent on trade with India. Indian-style imperialism thus reinforced the differences in domestic policy in the neighbouring country and fanned the flames of the already raging civil war (cf. Müller 2006: 221).

Following its independence Bangladesh was similarly closely bound to India, after annexation of the former East Pakistan was rejected for various reasons (cf. Sisson/Rose 1990). Only a few months after India's military intervention, which led to Bangladesh's independence, various treaties and agreements were signed, which were strongly reminiscent of the submission treaties with Nepal and Bhutan. Dhaka also leant heavily on New Delhi in its economic (*mixed economy*) and foreign policy (consolidation of relations with the Soviet Union) (cf. Wagner 2005c: 6).

This regional policy of domination reached its pinnacle in the *Indira Doctrine* (1983). This implied that neighbours were allowed to seek assistance only from India, not from powers outside the region, when resolving internal conflicts (cf. Cohen 2001: 137ff, Wagner 2005c: 3). With this the intention was to keep all other powers out of the region.

As part of this doctrine two interventions were carried out in the 1980s under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, actions which represented a divergence from non-alignment's absolute ban on interference.

These enjoyed very different levels of success. On the Maldives, India managed to suppress a coup d'état in 1988 without any major problems (cf. Müller 2006: 226). On Sri Lanka on the other hand, where Indian troops had been attempting to pacify the civil war since 1987, India experienced its "Vietnam" and finally had to withdraw in haste in 1990, without having achieved one of its objectives (cf. Wagner 2005c: 8). Worse was to follow: The result of all this was that Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by Tamil extremists.

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been caught coming out of the brothel" (Kux 1993: 198). However it is possible to bring Indian action completely into compliance with the non-aligned obligation of always supporting national freedom movements, as it was clearly directed towards an area which was not under self-administration.

In any event as far as Sri Lanka was concerned India's intervention to end the civil war was not the first time it had infringed the non-alignment ban on interference.[31] A few years before Indian troops would split up the conflicting parties, India was involved in no small measure in equipping one of the parties in the conflict, the Tamil separatists, with weapons (cf. Cohen 2001: 145, Wagner 2005c: 7).[32]

It can also be emphasized that India, against all claims that it wanted nothing more than to establish a world order with equal rights, in which the old form of power politics no longer had any part to play, based its regional policy precisely on these power politics. This was as true for the "founder" of non-alignment himself as for his daughter and her son.[33]

Towards the end of the 1980s it had become more than obvious that this did not increase Indian influence. The large-scale intervention in Sri Lanka did not manage to bring the civil war there to an end, but on the contrary caused it to spill over onto the Indian sub-continent. India's small neighbours, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh[34], felt themselves increasingly oppressed by India and took the obvious course of action – they sought out China's proximity as a counter-weight (cf. Müller 2006: 220f.). This was precisely the course of action which India originally wanted to avoid, however. In short: Indian policy towards its neighbours was a fiasco.[35]

31 As Indian intervention was at last requested by the government in Colombo, there could be a fundamental question over whether the 1987 intervention did actually contravene the ban on interference. Mind you, Müller (2006: 225) points out that this "invitation" by Sri Lanka was only forthcoming after obvious Indian pressure.

32 The background to this support was the Congress Party's dependence on the political support of Tamil parties in the south Indian federal state of Tamil Nadu (cf. Cohen 2001: 148f.).

33 Wagner (2005c: 8) claims especially for the later section and with regard to Sri Lanka: "The interval between 1983 and 1990/91 can clearly be identified as a period when India used hard power strategies to enforce a political solution in the neighbouring country. Nearly the whole spectrum of regional hegemony could be identified from diplomatic threats to military intervention." The author would support this, while adding that this was a tendency which affected (almost) all Indian neighbours and played a major role (with increasing intensity) after the declaration of Indian independence and into the 1990s.

34 In Bangladesh this estrangement began as early as in 1975 after the military coup which took place there and the stripping of power from the Awami League, an ally of India. The new military dictators sought better relations with the West and China, and at the same time tried to reduce Indian influence on Bangladesh. This prompted Indira Gandhi to support armed rebels in Bangladesh, who were fighting against the military rulership. These attempts remained largely without success, however (cf. Hossain 1981, Müller 2006: 219). Besides this there were four subject complexes which repeatedly led to disputes between India and Bangladesh: 1. Use of water from the Ganges; 2. mass migration of refugees from poverty into India; 3. Islamic-fundamentalist terrorism; 4. tensions in economic relations (cf. Müller 2006: 217-219).

35 Also for the apparent highpoint of Indian dominance/hegemony in the region – after the decisive victory against Pakistan in 1971, which led to the partition of the Pakistani state and foundation of Bangladesh – there is quite a different interpretation. What kind of hegemony, asks Wagner (2005c: 4), does not succeed in transforming a tremendous military victory into a permanent political solution for the most important border conflict (Kashmir) with the opponent against whom victory has just been won?

In this situation India decided after 1989 to alter course decisively and (similarly to its economic policy) undertake a total readjustment. This is linked with the name of the then foreign minister Inder Kumar Gujral, whose *Gujral Doctrine* represented almost the complete opposite of what had previously been known as the *Indira Doctrine.*

India should, as planned by this doctrine, no longer appear as a sinister dominator, but as a benevolent hegemon.[36] Of course it was also the goal of this strategy to limit external influences and increase the power and influence of India (cf. Mohan 2006). However, it contrasted markedly from the strict methods of the last forty years. Furthermore India acknowledged that a hegemon must bear over-proportional costs in the provision of public goods. The reciprocity requirement that neighbours must always produce goods to the same value in return for Indian prior concessions was accordingly dispensed with (cf. Wagner 2005c: 3, Gujral 1998).

Only a few concrete examples of this new neighbourhood policy will be cited here: India permitted the mediation services of three states (Norway, Great Britain and the USA) in its immediate neighbourhood (Nepal and Sri Lanka).[37] Furthermore the neighbouring states in the mean time were given the right to have their own foreign policy (even arms purchases by Sri Lanka from Pakistan were accepted). India refrained from making interventions of its own into the neighbouring states.[38] The unequal treaties were converted step-by-step into free-trade agreements.

An additional significant (new) development is India's commitment to multilateral organizations in South Asia. In the first four decades of its independence India (in contrast to its interest in activities in organizations at a global level such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations) concentrated steadily in its region on bilateral negotiations with its neighbours, so as to be able to display its own superiority as effective as possible (cf. Mitra 2002: 23).[39] In 1985 on the initiative of Bangladesh the *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation* (SAARC) was launched, and while it succeeded in winning over both India and Pakistan to take part, the SAARC remained largely unsuccessful until the end of the Cold War. After 1990 economic reforms (introduced not only in India but also in its neighbouring states) and also the new adjustment in regional policy

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36 Wagner (2005c: 2) also arrives at the assessment that "India's regional policy is characterised since the 1990s by a shift from hard to soft power strategies. The malign hegemon of the 1980s is trying to become a benign hegemon in the 1990s".

37 cf. Wagner 2005c: 8 and 10. Sri Lanka is, according to Wagner (2005c: 9), a good example of India's new policy towards its neighbours in the 1990s, which avoided political and military interventions and replaced them, in the spirit of the *Gujral Doctrine*, with political and economic cooperation at a bi- and multilateral level.

38 This applied even if India's own security situation might have justified an intervention. Thus for example in summer 2002 maoist rebels from India and Nepal began to join forces in the "Co-ordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia" (CCOMPOSA). Despite the associated threat to Indian security New Delhi refrained from any interference beyond a cooperation between security forces and arms deliveries (cf. Wagner 2005c: 10).

39 Furthermore the permanent conflict between the two major states India and Pakistan paralyzed any regional efforts towards cooperation and integration.

as part of the *Gujral Doctrine* ensured that the SAARC was able to celebrate one or two successes.[40] India also participated from the very beginning in the *Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation* (BIMSTEC[41]). At the same time India has recently been making efforts in multilateral organizations as well, which extend beyond the narrow context of South Asia. Thus efforts were made to gain membership of the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (SCO) and to participate in one or two projects of the *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (ASEAN) such as the *ASEAN Regional Forum* (in which security issues are discussed). India has also regularly been taking part in the pan-Asian *East Asia Summit* (EAS) since its first session in December 2005.

Whether all of this was a question of a real and long-term transformation and not only of a short-term flash in the pan in reaction to Indira Gandhi's approach which had been strongly influenced by realpolitik, and of a new round in the struggle for spheres of influence, remains to be seen over the coming years. There are already one or two indicators of the first premise, such as for example the fact that after the end of Gujral's term in office and the fall of his United Front[42] government the BJP[43] and later the Congress Party conducted and still conduct a regional policy which very much more closely corresponded to the core components of the Gujral Doctrine than to those of the Indira Doctrine (cf. Wagner 2005c: 3).

4.1.3 Interim conclusion on regional policy

Of the three axioms of non-aligned foreign policy, elaborated in Chapter 2, Number II (Recognition of all states as having equal rights, interference rule) and Number III (Principle of peaceful foreign policy) are of particular importance with regard to regional policy.

One or two significant divergences from both principles can be ascertained. These divergences do **not** however only occur, as the *Farewell Non-alignment Hypothesis* would have us believe, in the recent past since the end of the Cold War, but are already in evidence under Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. On the contrary, the tendency towards

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40 Such as for instance the introduction of the SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA) in 1995 and the SAFTA free-trade agreement, signed in Islamabad in January 2004 (cf. Müller 2006: 229-231).

41 The first five letters of BIMSTEC are taken from the names of the five founding states **B**angladesh, **I**ndia, **M**yanmar, **S**ri Lanka and **T**hailand. Bhutan and Nepal joined later.

42 The United Front was one of a coalition of five center-left and left-wing parties, which governed India between 1996 and 1998. It relied for its majority on the toleration of the INC (cf. Wagner 2006a: 141-142).

43 The *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) is a party of the right-wing centre in India's political spectrum. It is closely linked with the Hindutva movement and also cultivates relations with more radical groups such as the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) and the *Visva Hindu Parisad* (VHP). Founded in 1980 it is now, alongside the INC, the second largest political party in India of nationwide importance. For a few weeks in 1996 and from 1998-2004 it led the Indian government (cf. Wagner 2006a: 126-131).

a neighbourhood policy geared towards interference and (military) force even appears instead in recent years to be in decline.[44]

Cases of not acknowledging the equal rights of all states and/or a contravention of the interference rule (Axiom II) are to be found in the unequal treaties with the small neighbouring states, in the intervention in the Pakistani civil war, and in the interventions in the Maldives and Sri Lanka as part of the *Indira Doctrine*.

Violations of the principle of peaceful foreign policy (Axiom III) are to be found in the military actions in the wake of the partition of the sub-continent, in the invasion of Goa (1961), in the annexation of Sikkim (1975) and in the basic refusal to rule out war as a political means in general.[45]

Walker (1996: 65/66) sums up the contradiction between the pretension and reality of Indian foreign policy very well:[46]

> "In the years just before and after India achieved its independence, Jawaharlal Nehru and other political leaders enunciated a vision of an international society that would be just and egalitarian, and in which social progress and international harmony would be achieved through non-violent and democratic means. [...] As many observers of India have noted, this political philosophy coexisted with an opposite trait. Wherever India's own status was in question, it refused to be content with equality and was keen to assert its superiority" (Walker 1996: 65/66).

Since the replacement of the *Indira Doctrine* by the *Gujral Doctrine* Indian regional policy once again stands more clearly in harmony with the requirements of Axioms II and III. While war did break out once again between India and Pakistan in 1999, India was clearly the party under attack in this case and reacted in a very restrained way in military terms. Interference in the domestic policy of other states is declining and by joining various multilateral organizations, which mainly operate according to the principle of unanimity, modern India is demonstrating that in principle at least it is ready to renounce the advantages enjoyed by the stronger partner in each case in a purely bilateral relationship.

4.2   India and the World Powers – India in the context of world policy

This second subject area is concerned with India's policy towards world powers or put in more general terms: India's action in world politics.

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[44]   It is not the aim of this report to explain this development. One possible supposition might be that there has been a hardening of the standards of non-alignment over time.

[45]   The wars with Pakistan cannot be regarded as evidence of India's lack of peacefulness, as India was not the aggressor in any of these cases, but saw itself as obliged to react to Pakistani aggression. In any event it is possible at least for 1947 and 1971 to put forward the question of whether deployment of the Indian military was necessary for *Indian* security (in one case the state being attacked was Kashmir, which did not yet belong to India, and in the other East Pakistan).

[46]   While he is concerned with Indian nuclear policy, in the author's opinion his comment also applies very well to Indian behaviour towards its neighbours.

India's state founder Jawaharlal Nehru hoped for cooperative relations between the great powers. However it is known that after the Second World War this was not how things transpired. Relatively quickly after victory over Germany and Japan the western Allies and the Soviet Union became estranged and suddenly found themselves confronting each other as enemies. This conflict was both one of power politics, in which the two states with by far the most power battled it out for global supremacy, and also an ideological one in which the political systems of Communism and Democracy competed with one another. Around the USA and the Soviet Union, countries from all over the world built themselves up into allied blocs. Any peaceful cooperation between various major powers, as Nehru had envisaged, was no longer thinkable. Instead the world was once again split into zones of influence and the great power game was played out without the countries of Asia (cf. Nye 2003: 118-135).

Indian hopes for a breakthrough for the Third World were just as disappointed. While India had retained its independence, not all states under colonial rule had by any means enjoyed this good fortune. Many European countries continued to have colonies in Africa and Asia and made no move at all to give these up (cf. Sinigoj 1998: 28).[47]

For India this gave rise to the paradoxical situation that it had to perceive the Western countries to which it was actually close in terms of political system as aggressors, instead viewing the Soviet Union as a peaceful neighbour, while Europe feared its expansionism.

4.2.1 India, the non-aligned states and China

This did not in any way mean that India under Nehru would have been prepared to accede to the Soviet bloc. In the final analysis it was precisely this way of thinking in terms of confrontational blocs which New Delhi identified as posing the biggest obstacle to world peace. India therefore attempted to overcome the emerging bipolarity by gathering around itself other countries finding themselves in a similar situation. In so doing the aim was explicitly **not** to create a third bloc between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but a movement **against** any kind of bloc-mindset (cf. Sinigoj 1998: 30, Mohan 2003: 39). At the same time a forum was to be created for the young independent states of Africa and Asia, with which these could denounce colonialism, racism and economic exploitation and draw attention to their legitimate interests. This gave rise to the Non-Aligned Movement already mentioned in Chapter 2.

Within this framework, in the eyes of India, the People's Republic of China ought to play an important role. In Nehru's opinion India and China were predestined for a fruitful cooperation, especially since both countries had suffered under colonial rule and after the end of the Second World War were getting ready (once more) to make their entrance on the global stage (cf. Wagner 2005d: 162-164). At the same time China (in contrast to Pakistan) was in the position of being able to pose a serious threat to India, should a conflict break out. For

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47 France even threw itself into a bloody war to win back its former colonies in Indo-China (which it had lost to Japan in the Second World War). The Vietnam War waged by the USA in the 1960s and 1970s also had its roots in this French colonial war.

this reason Nehru chose a policy of "conciliation and appeasement" towards Beijing (Ganguly 2004: 108). In this way India was one of the first countries to acknowledge the People's Republic of China as a sovereign state. The catch-phrase of those days was "Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai", which roughly means "Indians and Chinese are brothers". Nehru the democrat was not troubled by Mao's dictatorial style of government. India even refused to criticise China for expanding the Korean War (cf. Ganguly 2004: 108).

However, hopes for a peaceful cooperation or even simply co-existence were dashed on 20 October 1962, after the People's Republic attacked India in a border war, won victory after a brief period of fighting of a month or so, and in a very pointed gesture humiliated India.[48] Nehru in his euphoria over Chinese-Indian friendship failed to perceive that Beijing was determined to pursue its claims using force if necessary. He also failed to recognise that China felt provoked by the fact that India was offering asylum to the Dalai Lama and his associates (cf. Ganguly 2004: 111). The Chinese attack therefore caught India relatively off-guard, even though there had already been clashes from time to time before. China occupied the territory to which it was laying claim, penetrated a little further into Indian territory, then retreated pointedly once more to behind the newly established borderline and abstained from taking over any further territory other than that to which it had been laying claim from the outset.

This war therefore came as a shock to India in several respects:

1. China was transformed from being a potential partner to a potential enemy. This manifested itself among other ways in the alliance struck between China and Pakistan shortly after the war and in Chinese assistance to insurgents in East India (cf. Amin 2000: 158, Ganguly 2004: 117/118, 120).

2. In the face of their defeat, proud India was forced to ask the western powers for military aid.[49]

3. The obvious defeat was the catalyst for a new orientation in Indian policy, in which the military in future was to play a much more major role (Ganguly 2004: 116).

4. With this war lost, Jawaharlal Nehru himself stood before the shattered remains of his foreign policy and never recovered from this shock. He died a broken man two years later from a heart attack (cf. Ganguly 2004: 115).

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48 The issue under dispute was the overlapping territorial claims in the Himalaya region, over which both states had been negotiating for some time.

49 India approached the West for help, and not the Soviet Union, because Moscow at that time was still a loyal ally of Beijing. The USA was even on the point of intervening in grand style in India's favour shortly beforehand (and in so doing de facto reducing Nehru's declarations on non-alignment to the level of absurdity) and was only prevented from doing this by the Chinese decision to proclaim a unilateral ceasefire (cf. Brecher 1979 618/619). This prevented the emergence of any stronger military cooperation between India and the USA. Ganguly (2004: 115/116) commented with regard to this: "Limited military cooperation with the United States did emerge after the 1962 war [...] The ambit of military cooperation, however failed to significantly expand because of profound Pakistani misgivings, the inability of the two sides to reach a settlement of the Kashmir dispute, and India's own ambivalence about the relationship."

In the wake of this war Pakistan tried to exploit India's putative weaknesses and in 1965 provoked the Second Indo-Pakistani War. This however ended in a stalemate with a peace treaty which the Soviet Union was able to broker in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (cf. Rothermund 2002: 36-38, Ganguly 1994: 47-80, Ganguly 2001: 31-50).

In the mean time relations with China have improved slightly, with the result that in 2003 a deal was struck: India recognised China's sovereignty over Tibet, and China accepted Indian sovereignty over Sikkim in return. Nonetheless, current relations between the two countries can only really be described as a mixture of cooperation and confrontation.[50]

4.2.2 The USA and the Soviet Union

This sub-section considers India's behaviour towards the USA and the Soviet Union. For in spite of the official policy of non-alignment the great question remained for India too as to how it should position itself vis-à-vis both superpowers. While this question could be answered relatively quickly for most countries, because either they were located in the zone of influence of one of the superpowers and so did not really have a choice (such as Eastern Europe), or they could clearly be assigned ideologically to one or the other side, it was a more difficult matter for India.

India had taken over its democratic political system from Great Britain. As a result it might have been expected that the democratic USA and democratic India – similar to the democratic states of Europe, Canada, Japan or Australia – ought to be something like natural allies. At the same time it might have been anticipated that New Delhi would feel itself repelled by the autocratic Soviet Union.

On the other hand, India had decided upon a quasi-socialist and planned economy style of economic system and in this matter was positioned much closer to the Eastern bloc than to the capitalist USA. Furthermore there were feelings of resentment towards the Europeans because of their colonial past and at that time still current colonial policy.

There were therefore good reasons for and against cooperation with both power blocs. However, in spite of this India opted increasingly over time for the Soviet Union, while officially retaining non-aligned status, and in so doing gave up its original idea of maintaining equidistance to the blocs.[51]

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50 cf. Astarita (2007), Basu (2007), Jing-dong Yuan (2007) and Mohan (2007). In particular the issue of the border line, which led to the war of 1962, is still unresolved despite numerous negotiations (cf. Ganguly 1989, Jing-dong Yuan 2001, Ganguly 2004: 122-124). At the same time, India is concerned about the growing influence of China in Myanmar (cf. Ganguly 2004: 123/124) and in Nepal and Bhutan (see Chapter 4.1.4).

51 Wagner (2005d: 197) also comments on this, sounding slightly surprised: "Relations between India and the Soviet Union were able, in the face of the completely different conditions in both states, to be accepted as unique throughout. If one considers how seldom India and the USA, the two great democracies, found a common political denominator, the on the whole good relation between the Indian Union and the UdSSR as two countries whose social structure could not have been more different, even more surprising."

This was in no way a radical turnaround though; Nehru had already always been much sharper in his criticism of the actions of the western powers than those of the Eastern bloc.[52] The most important example, which can at the same time be counted as India's first "fall from grace"[53] with regard to non-alignment, is the double crisis year 1956.[54]

This was the year in which Great Britain and France attacked Egypt in the Suez Crisis, while the Soviet Union defeated a popular uprising in Hungary. In both cases a foreign power interfered in the affairs of a sovereign state. From the point of view of non-alignment (Axioms II and III) this would have earned strong criticism. However, while India condemned the attack on Egypt in the strongest terms, criticism of Moscow, in so far as it was uttered at all, turned out to be extremely mild (cf. Sagar 2004).

This pattern was also to repeat itself in the future. The defeat of the 1968 Prague Spring barely raised a murmur from India. During the Vietnam War the USA was repeatedly rebuked and exhorted to withdraw from the region.[55] When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, however, India's reaction was no more than a dutiful criticism of interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries, without naming any names. Eight years previously – in 1971 – a treaty of friendship had even been agreed between India and the Soviet Union, which while not making any provision for any automatic mutual assistance obligation (such as the NATO treaty for instance) was nonetheless interpreted as a quasi-alliance.[56]

How could things have come to such a pass? Several causes played their part: the Pakistan conflict has already been discussed in Chapter 4.1. Within the framework of the Cold War this took on even more far-reaching consequences. Pakistan was viewed as an important frontier state by the USA because of its proximity to the Soviet Union.[57] Out of

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52 The explanation for this does not lie solely in the context of the Cold War. Already before independence Nehru was expressing a "fundamental sympathy for the Soviet Union", although steadfastly rejecting its authoritarian government system (cf. Sinigoj 1998: 14ff).

53 In reality one could go even further back to the Korean War, where India refused most of the UN resolutions aimed at the acts of aggression of North Korea and China (cf. Sinigoj 1998: 69ff.) "A [...] resolution by the United States of America, to condemn China's intervention, was not supported by the Indian delegate B.N. Rau, whereupon the USA countered Indian action with the reproach of "hypocrisy". Among Asian countries India and Burma were the only two which voted in favour of the members of the Communist bloc." (ebd.).

54 The objection could be raised here that the Non-Aligned Movement was not founded until 1961 (see Chapter 2), and that it is not therefore possible to accuse Indian of not having adhered to the principles of this movement before the movement was founded. This would however overlook the fact that non-alignment existed chronologically as a concept well before the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement.

55 Kux (1993: 255) points out that the USA was particularly annoyed by the bitter criticism from India since New Delhi was at the same time asking for development aid. "Ambassador Bowlers wrote, that when he commented Mrs. Gandhi was not saying anything more than the Pope or the UN Secretary-General, the curt response he got from Washington officials was, 'The Pope and U Thant don't need our wheat.'"

56 Kux (1993: 295) comments on this: "Even though short of a formal alliance, the treaty forged a relationship sufficiently close that it was hard to assert – as India did – that New Delhi remained true to the cardinal principle of nonalignment, independence from either major power bloc".

57 A narrow strip of land in Afghanistan (the so-called *Wakhan Corridor*), which in some places is no wider than 10 kilometres, stands in the way of any direct frontier between Pakistan and the Soviet Union.

fear that Moscow might expand in the direction of Pakistan, the USA has been more or less obviously supporting the Islamic state since its independence. Asian alliance systems (CENTO, SEATO), in which Pakistan participated[58], were set up in parallel to NATO. This support on the part of the USA was not in any way directed against India, but this is how it was interpreted by New Delhi. This was not entirely unfounded since Pakistan viewed its chief competitor as being not the Soviet Union but India, and cared relatively little for the USA's requests that it not use their military aid against India (cf. Adhikari 2004: 158, Cohen 2001: 274).

This gave rise to a fundamental mistrust by India of the USA.[59] This was even further reinforced by their behaviour in the Kashmir conflict. Once again Washington did not deliberately direct itself against India, but created precisely this impression.[60] For the USA supported the demand to hold a people's referendum in Kashmir, monitored by the UN, to decide to which country the area should accede. This was also the way that Pakistan saw things. India on the other hand insisted (as the stronger party in the conflict) on bilateral negotiations.

During the first two Indo-Pakistani wars Washington once again decided to adopt a neutral position and imposed arms embargos against both sides. This renewed India's annoyance, as it viewed itself as the victim of an attack and interpreted the USA's neutral behaviour as concealed partisanship for Pakistan.

In the third Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 the latent estrangement between India and the USA finally came to the fore as never before (cf. Rothermund 2002 38-44, Ganguly 1994: 81-118). This war had begun as a Pakistani civil war. Pakistan had comprised since independence a western and an eastern part which were not geographically connected. These two areas were bracketed together by their Islamic faith, but were otherwise very different even with regard to culture and language. West Pakistan remained politically dominant. However in 1970 the East Pakistan party *Awami League* won a majority in the parliamentary elections. The elite in West Pakistan did not want to recognise this and sent in the military so as to strengthen their rulership. A civil war flared up, which led to some

58 SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty Organization) was founded in 1954 as the south Asian counterpart to NATO. Its members were Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and the USA. The Baghdad Pact was founded in 1955 by Turkey and Iraq and was purely a defence alliance. After 1959 its official name was CENTO (Central Treaty Organization). Additional members were: Great Britain, Pakistan and Iran. The USA was allied to individual members through bilateral treaties and was later given observer status at CENTO.

59 This might possibly have had its origins longer ago. In the turbulence of the Second World War the USA saw itself as forced to manoeuvre between its actual defence of the right to self-determination of the people (and therefore also of the Indians) and the interests of its British allied partner (cf. Cohen 2001: 269). This was a source of lasting upset to the Indian independence fighters, who had counted on stronger support from the USA. Thus in 1945 Jawaharlal Nehru made the critical comment: "There has been some disillusionment in India in regard to American championing independence for freedom" (Nehru 1982: 457).

60 Kux (1993: 114) however represents the opinion that at least one or two pro-Pakistan decisions by the US government could be regarded as a "subconscious way of hitting back at India", in view of Washington's annoyance at the steady stream of criticism issuing from New Delhi.

one million people being killed in East Pakistan between March and December 1971, and a total of nearly 10 million refugees fleeing over the border to India.[61]

This in turn provoked India to intervene in the civil war on the side of East Pakistan (of course it cannot be ruled out that other strategic calculations, such as for example the weakening of the arch-enemy, lay behind this), whereby Pakistan even beat India to it with its own (preventive) attack. Indian and East Pakistani forces won the upper hand relatively quickly and East Pakistan declared its independence as Bangladesh.

The USA had continued to support West Pakistan during the civil war and now feared that India would use the favourable opportunity to overrun West Pakistan also. President Richard Nixon and his national security adviser Henry Kissinger therefore decided to send the aircraft carrier *USS Enterprise* into the Bay of Bengal (cf. Gandhi 2002). With this action three objectives were being pursued: 1. to prevent an attack on West Pakistan by the Soviet Union, which shortly before had agreed a friendship treaty with India; 2. to deter India from invading West Pakistan; 3. to demonstrate to China, with which Nixon was at that time conducting a détente, the usefulness of an alliance with the USA.

This episode put severe strain on Indo-American relations for more than two decades: "What Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger intended as a political gesture to an already defeated Pakistan and a new partner, China, lives on in Indian history as a symbolic demonstration of U.S. hostility to India" (Cohen 2001: 136).[62] Furthermore India interpreted this intervention as being threatened with nuclear weapons, since the USS Enterprise was supposed to have some of these on board. However, as India agreed a ceasefire relatively quickly with Pakistan, this threat did not materialise.

At about the same time the USA carried out a re-evaluation of its China policy. After Beijing and Moscow had become ideologically estranged and in 1969 had even engaged in a brief border war, the opportunity seemed ripe to establish an anti-Soviet community of interests with the People's Republic (cf. Kindermann 2001: 533-546). For India this was of course a strategic nightmare: both neighbours, with whom it had engaged in wars since independence, appeared now to be allying themselves against it with the superpower USA. India played only a subordinate role in these affairs in the mind of the USA however. In actual fact, the strategies there were still fixed on the East-West conflict, and accepted the strain on relations with India as unavoidable collateral damage.

Incidentally Indira Gandhi was also never on warm personal terms with any of the respective presidents of the USA, an aversion which was definitely mutual.[63]

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61 For this reason Wheeler (2000: 55), despite all other possible selfish motives which might be present, views it as justifiable to evaluate the Indian intervention as a humanitarian intervention.

62 It is one of history's ironies that it was likewise the USS Enterprise which had been sent by the USA in 1962 to support India in the war against China in the Bay of Bengal.

63 It is true that she attempted during her second term in office to make relations a little less tense, but the fundamental conflicts of interests continued to exist unchanged, as illustrated by the very different voting behaviour of both states at the UN (cf. Kux 1993: 396/397).

In summary it is possible to agree fully with Subrahmanyam (2005: 557) who writes:

> "The problem for the Americans during the Cold War was, India refused to share a common threat perception with them. In their view, the Soviet Union was the threat. Pakistan accepted it and therefore it was an ally. China, defected from the Soviet alliance and regarded it as an enemy after 1971 and provided bases in Xinjiang for the United States to monitor Soviet missile tests. Therefore, China became a partner. India, which was not with the US in its threat perception, was, in US logic, against them."[64]

The Soviet Union behaved more adroitly towards India.[65] Things were however easier for Moscow. On the one hand it had no colonial past (there was admittedly the Tsarist Russian Empire, but the Soviet Union managed successfully to distance itself from this) and was therefore able – at least in Indian eyes – to dissociate itself credibly from the imperialism of Western powers.[66] It was also easier for it to cooperate with India in the area of economy, as both states were pursuing similar development models. Lastly, the Soviet Union did not have ties of any kind with Pakistan and was therefore better able to play the role of an honest (if occasionally pro-Indian) broker than the USA. Thus the second Indo-Pakistani War for instance was ended by the Tashkent Peace Treaty, for which Moscow acted as mediator (cf. Rothermund 2003 and 2002: 38). When the Soviet Union then broke off relations with China, it finally became India's dream partner and remained such until the end of the Cold War.

Accordingly it comes as no surprise that Indira Gandhi on the one hand classified the American airbase *Diego Garcia*[67] as a threat to peace in the region and with her attempt to make the Indian Ocean into a "peace zone" pursued the goal of limiting or even banning American naval presence in the region, while on the other hand having no problem at all with granting the Soviet Union harbour rights in Madras, among other places, and in so doing tolerating the establishment of Soviet military bases on Indian soil (cf. Der Spiegel 1980).

And while India had to wrestle with itself for a long time in 1964 before it decided – in an emergency – to ask the USA for military aid, requesting the then US president to declare this military aid to be harmless "support", which was being offered expressly not on the basis of any kind of alliance but purely out of sympathy[68] (cf. Brecher 1979: 614), the

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64 And of course this applied vice versa for Indian perceptions of the USA (cf. Kux 1993: XII).

65 Although it did need to go through a certain learning process first. Straight after Indian independence there was great antipathy on the Soviet side and the Indian strategy of non-alignment was criticised as a "highly imperialist undertaking" (Sinigoj 1998: 34).

66 Thus Nehru (cited after Sinigoj 1998: 17) commented as follows on Moscow's objectives in 1949: "Russian interest surely lay in ending [...] imperialism [...] the opposition of Britain, her attitude towards her mighty neighbours in Asia did not appear imperialistic at all."

67 The island of Diego Garcia lies in the middle of the Indian Ocean, some 2000 kilometres south of the Indian coast. It is part of the Chagos Archipelago, the last remaining British territory in the Indian Ocean. The USA has leased the island until 2016 as a military base.

68 When Nehru, due to the rapidly deteriorating war situation, made a renewed request in a letter to Kennedy for large-scale US support, he kept the only copy of the letter himself rather than sending it on to the Foreign Ministry. "It was most unusual behavior on Nehru's part, indicating an awareness that his deci-

India of Indira Gandhi had far fewer qualms in this regard.[69] Arms deals were struck with the Soviet Union during this period without so much as batting an eyelid. This reached such an extent that one or two Indian military experts feared that the efficacy of Indian forces might long since be dependent on Moscow.[70]

The end of the Cold War with the triumph of Washington came initially as something of a shock to India. This was on two counts: on the one hand India was no longer able to rely on the support of Moscow (previously India could count on the fact that - for instance in the Kashmir issue – the Soviet veto in the UN Security Council would prevent any decision by the world organization which was overly critical of India).[71] On the other hand, with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and of the *Council for Mutual Economic Assistance* (COMECON), India also lost its most important trade partners.

On the other side, India was not initially prepared to relinquish its inherited mistrust of the USA (cf. Cohen 2001: 231). Even in the USA doubts prevailed initially. The reasons for this continued to include Kashmir, where India wrongly believed the USA to be on the side of Pakistan, and the nuclear issue, in which with its nuclear testing in 1998 India appeared to be trying to provoke Washington.[72] American reactions to this were unequivocal criticism and the imposition of economic sanctions.

Indo-American relations therefore did not improve in any way suddenly after 1989. The situation altered only more gradually. The behaviour of the USA in the so-called *Kargil War* played an important role in this (cf. on this Rothermund 2002: 98-109, Ganguly 2001: 114-133). This was the fourth Indo-Pakistani War, which was once more waged over Kashmir in 1999. Kashmir guerrillas, supported by regular Pakistani troops, crossed the ceasefire line and penetrated into Indian territory. India took up arms for a counterattack, and a new and greater (possibly even nuclear) exchange of hostilities seemed imminent. But then something happened which no-one in New Delhi could have predicted. The USA intervened on behalf of India, condemned Pakistan's attack and called upon it to cease hostilities. It took hardly any time at all to be able to negotiate a new ceasefire.

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sion [...] undermined, or could be interpreted as a grave violation of, the hallowed principle of non-alignment" (Brecher 1979: 617/618).

69   Sinigoj (1998: 37) however puts forward the view that it was Nehru's "determined, publicly expressed opinion", to seek support from whichever superpower was in the best position to serve Indian interests at any given time.

70   The former director of a think-tank close to the government was asking himself in 1980 in SPIEGEL, "whether in accepting any further dependence on Soviet arms deliveries our freedom of action with regard to foreign policy can be any longer preserved." On the other side Cohen (2001: 141) writes that "[t]he general belief among Indian strategists was that the Soviet Union was [because of their war against Afghan guerillas/note added by CR] thus dependent upon India, and that India could extract even more and better equipment from the Russians".

71   This also led to the fact that India for a lengthy period did not really warm to the "new Russia" (cf. Mohan 2003: Chapter 5).

72   The USA's annoyance over India's nuclear tests went so far as Washington jointly sponsoring a Security Council decision with Beijing which condemned the tests in no uncertain terms (cf. Jing-dong Yuan 2001).

When President Clinton visited India a short time later as the first US President in 20 years to do so, he was given a rapturous reception (cf. Cohen 2001: 268).

In the fight against terrorism both countries discovered that they shared yet more in common.[73] After 11 September 2001 especially, India promised unlimited military support. In 2004 the cooperation was formalized as part of the "Next Steps in Strategic Partnership" initiative. This consists of a series of treaties and agreements in the most diverse areas ranging from economic to military cooperation (cf. Schreer/Wagner 2005).

Neither Pakistan's renewed increase in status (as part of the anti-terrorism coalition) nor Indian opposition to the Iraq War of 2003 have so far been able seriously to threaten this new healthy relation. This does not at all mean that what the two countries have in common meets only with approval in Europe; they also share common ground which provokes displeasure there. For example, Washington and New Delhi are united in rejecting the International Criminal Court, and both seek to drive forward ballistic missile defence.

4.2.3 India as a nuclear power

The clearest indication of the extent to which relations between India and the USA have transformed is provided by the area of nuclear policy, however. India, shortly followed by Pakistan, is known to have conducted several nuclear tests in 1998 and to have declared itself a nuclear power shortly thereafter.[74] India's path towards nuclear weapons started much earlier on however.

Just shortly after independence Prime Minister Nehru granted his scientists permission to carry out research into both the civilian and military possibilities offered by nuclear technology. Nehru himself was a firm opponent of nuclear weapons, but as long as efforts to ban them worldwide were unsuccessful, India ought at least not relinquish the opportunity of acquiring this most powerful of weapons for itself, should this be necessary. For this reason India has never been prepared (regardless of which government was in charge) to sign the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which divided the world and continues to do so into nuclear states and non-nuclear states.[75] Besides India, only Pakistan and Israel have also refused to sign it to date. India saw this attitude as justified, when not only its rival China procured nuclear weapons for itself in 1964 (so only a short time after the war with India), but the USA was also still widely perceived to pose a nuclear threat (see 3.2.2).

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73 An important role in the more positive perception of India by the USA was also played by the growing (political) influence of the Indian ex-pat community in the USA (cf. Wagner 2006b: 15, Cohen 2001: 287-292). Of course, having turned away from its quasi-socialist economic system India also became more interesting as a market and economic partner. Finally, the rise of China, increasingly perceived as a threat, and against which India had the potential to become a welcome counterweight for Washington, certainly also played a part (cf. Ganguly 2005, Kaplan 2005, Wirsing 2005).

74 cf. on the following Müller/Rauch 2007, Perkovich 1999, Tellis 2001 and Walker 1996.

75 This practice is criticised by India from time to time as "nuclear apartheid" (cf. Singh 1998).

Indira Gandhi then took, as in many matters, a step further than her father and allowed the first Indian nuclear test to be conducted in 1974. This was euphemistically explained (away) as a *peaceful nuclear explosion*, as a test with non-military aims. Indira Gandhi was content to send out a signal and demonstrate India's capability, without actually ultimately crossing the threshold to nuclear weapons. Barely 15 years later, Rajiv Gandhi permitted assembly of untested weapons to be carried out. The reason for this was the advance in the Pakistani nuclear programme, which was strongly supported by China.

Once again, barely a decade later (after a new test had been envisaged several times over previous years, and then cancelled at the last minute), came the tests of 1998 and the official commissioning of Indian nuclear weapons.

The superficial catalyst was the testing of a new Pakistani mid-range missile shortly prior to this. Behind it there was however the accumulation of several factors, which taken individually do not, but taken together do, suffice as explanation:

1. Indian efforts to obtain security guarantees from the nuclear powers had been as unsuccessful over the last 30 years as Indian disarmament initiatives (cf. Müller/Rauch 2007: 30-33).

2. The Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was extended for an indefinite period in 1995, and in addition the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was negotiated (which has however still not come into force). In India there was a sense of a window of opportunity which was closing: if they did not create history immediately, it might be too late and they would for ever be consigned to the rank of second-class power.[76]

3. Finally there was the additional fact that the Indian government in 1998 was led by the Hindu-nationalist BJP. This party had always proclaimed itself in favour of acquiring nuclear weapons and had also promised this in its election manifesto.[77]

The combination of these three reasons made the tests of 1998 all the more understandable. The international community reacted with outrage and imposed sanctions against India and Pakistan. Even the USA and China were united on this (cf. Jing-dong 2001).

However, the general improvement in relations between India and the USA led to a change of heart in Washington. Negotiations, that have been going on for more than three years, have recently been finalized on an agreement with India which will allow the latter at least to have a share once more in the civilian nuclear world market, to purchase uranium for its nuclear power stations (cf. for more detail on this Müller/Rauch 2007). India has been excluded from this since the nuclear explosion of 1974. Critics fear that in doing this not only will Indian nuclear weapons be legitimized, so-to-speak through the back-door, but that this agreement will also represent a bad model for the global fight against the spread of nuclear weapons.

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76 This point of view is represented among others by Paul (1998), and Rothermund (2003) also tends to support it.

77 Müller (1998: 4f) particularly emphasizes this point and views it as the most crucial factor.

What is important in connection with the question formulated in this report is primarily the fact that the USA, in the most sensitive of sensitive areas, the issue of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, has in the mean time come to see India as part of the solution and no longer part of the problem. What could more clearly indicate the transformation in relations between these two countries?[78]

4.2.4 Interim conclusion on world policy

In the area of world policy all three axioms for non-aligned foreign policy elaborated in Chapter 2 are relevant. However, Axiom I is especially significant here (non-involvement in conflict between great powers).

According to the *Farewell Non-alignment Hypothesis,* a clearly noticeable and equal distance to both great powers might be expected to have been maintained before the end of the Cold War, and any distancing from this principle would not have happened until the noticeable rapprochement with the USA. In actual fact, however, the above investigation illustrates that Indian foreign policy was plainly removed from any equidistance worthy of this name, even before the end of the Cold War. Jawaharlal Nehru may have stood for this ideal in all honesty, but even he frequently diverged from it. The request for military assistance in the war against China (1962) might still be dismissed as an emergency situation. The manoeuvring in the Korean War, the very different reaction to the actions of the West and East blocs during the year of double crisis in 1956 (Suez Crisis and Hungarian uprising) on the other hand could no longer be. No more could India's silence in the face of the suppression of the Prague Spring (1968) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) be interpreted as consistent application of the principles of non-alignment.[79] For in so doing India was contravening not only Axiom I, but also accepting without any criticism the Soviet Union's infringement of Axioms II and III. The conclusion of the treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union (1971) and the increasing dependence on Soviet arms exports under Indira and Rajiv Gandhi make this deviation even more obvious.

Of course, using this measurement criterion, the *strategic partnership* begun in the mean time with the USA also represents a certain divergence from the principles of non-alignment. However, India has so far understood that it should not allow itself to be used as

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78 Sagar (2004) remains sceptical nonetheless and questions there being any greater common ground between the interests of India and the USA. In his opinion, conflicts of interests continue to predominate. For this reason any talk of a "natural alliance" between both countries should definitely be dispensed with, as it would only raise hopes, which would inevitably be bound to be disappointed later.

79 One line of argument might be built up in which India's non-criticism of the Soviet Union's behaviour might be described as an act of *non-interference* (in the affairs of Moscow). However, it can be argued against such a line of argument that this would mean that (a) the concept of non-interference would become plainly diluted and – more importantly for the case being studied here – that by this argument (b) the contradiction would not have been resolved which arises from the simultaneity of Indian criticism (of actions by the USA and the West) and Indian non-criticism (of comparable actions by the Soviet Union). The author would like to thank Katja Freistein, for bringing this problem to his attention.

the bridgehead for American interests in (South) Asia. New Delhi does not view itself as part of an explicitly anti-Chinese or even anti-Russian bloc, otherwise it would also be impossible to explain why India is taking part in the Russo-Chinese prestige project the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), with observer status at least, and as part of the *BRIC* group (Brazil, Russia, India, China) is also enjoying cooperative relations with these competitors of Washington (cf. Radyuhin 2008). At the same time, India is not in any way remaining silent in the face of questionable foreign policy actions by the USA and its allies. Thus, the Kosovo War of 1999 (cf. Thakur/Banerjee 2003: 183) was vehemently criticised. The Iraq War (2003) on the other hand, was rejected by India, it is true, but New Delhi avoided expressing overly harsh criticism of the USA (similar to 1979) (cf. Sinha 2003).

By and large, this means that in the "world politics" subject area there is nothing to suggest any clear decline in divergence from the principles of non-alignment, as there is in regional policy in the change from the *Indira Doctrine* to the *Gujral Doctrine*. At the same time there is no significant increase at all in this divergence or even any paradigm shift to be seen, as asserted by the *Farewell Non-Alignment Hypothesis*.

5.   Conclusion – The only way is up

From the subject areas studied an initial conclusion can be drawn: since independence, Indian foreign policy has gone through several phases and undergone a complete transformation judging by its manifest appearance.[80]

Reasons for these transformations can be found on all three levels, on which international policy is generally analyzed: at the level of the individual to whom it definitely makes a difference whether the rather idealistic Jawaharlal Nehru or his daughter, the hard-baked power politician Indira Gandhi, holds the reins in their hands.[81] At the level of society, where the end of the many years of rule by the Congress Party created new freedoms off the beaten track. And at the level of the international system and the interac-

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80 The present study should not however lead to the mistaken conclusion of viewing the phases identified here as monolithic blocks. There is no doubt that in the mean time – as illustrated in the report – cooperative aspects have pushed themselves to the fore and the once predominant policy of domination pressed itself into the background. Nevertheless there were repeatedly isolated episodes in every phase which do not allow themselves to be squeezed so easily into the pattern presented here. Thus for example in spring 2005, when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh allowed the scheduled SAARC summit in Dhaka to fall through, a decision criticised by some as "a return to the imperial style" (Müller 2006: 220). At the same time there was even under Indira Gandhi definitely a genuine friendship with the newly established state of Bangladesh, whose leadership was truly grateful to India for support in the Pakistani civil war. It was only as a result of a military putsch, which overthrew Bangladesh's civilian government, that India felt compelled to impose its hegemony over Dhaka (cf. Wagner 2005c: 6).

81 Mohan (2003) again finds himself in an outsider position, inasmuch as he – in contrast to the great majority in the bibliography – describes Nehru as a sensible, realistic proponent of power politics (with one or two odd moments of idealism), but instead categorises his daughter Indira as the follower of a strict moral idealism.

tion of the Great Powers, where despite all its efforts India initially was not able to escape the vortex of the Cold War, and the end of this Cold War itself created the structural precondition for a new definition of relations vis-à-vis the USA.

If it had been possible to show that these transformations appeared for the first time (or most importantly) after the end of the Cold War and that they are characterized above all by a very much stronger divergence from the principles of non-alignment, then the representatives of the *Farewell Non-Alignment Hypothesis* mentioned in the introduction could feel vindicated.

Nevertheless there are good reasons not to attach too much importance to these transformations, at whichever level they may have taken place, and to point out that at the same time a remarkable constancy with regard to the *grand strategy* can be identified. This is certainly an unexpected constancy, in as much as it is precisely not a question of a constant *agreement* of Indian foreign policy with the principles of non-alignment. Regardless of whether it be Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Vajpayee or the present prime minister Singh: the most important goal was always regarded as being to lead India to the table of the Greats, to gain attention for India to be heard, ultimately: to make India into a Great Power.[82] Differing contexts (which include structural conditions as well as, for instance, moral convictions of the politicians taking action) and learning-by-doing effects led to various different methods being adopted to achieve this goal.[83] The goal itself meanwhile was never in question. India as a regional middle-sized power, on a level with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Vietnam – utterly inconceivable![84]

Accordingly, non-alignment was often little more than a means of achieving this goal than a goal in itself, despite all protestations to the contrary.[85] This was not at all only since the pro-American turn at the beginning of this millennium. Already under Nehru[86], and even more obviously under Indira Gandhi, the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement were only adhered to very selectively, always only as far as they were in harmony with Indian interests (or with what were considered to be Indian interests). Mohan (2003: 37) is

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82 Nayar and Paul (2003: 127 and 135) also represent the view that this line of policy is already in evidence under Jawaharlal Nehru.

83 Gabriele Sinigoj (1998: 33) therefore suggests that Indian policy towards both superpowers should not be described as "equidistance" but as (from an Indian point of view each time) "adequate distance".

84 In this point the author's conclusion differs from Wagner (2005c), who otherwise comes to very similar conclusions, but views the transformation in India's foreign policy as an "attempt to change India's image from a regional bully to a benign hegemon", whereas this report aims to highlight the continuity of objectives even when differing means are chosen.

85 Cf. also Sinigoj's (1998:31/32) evaluation of Nehru's foreign policy: "The [...] strategy was agreed upon to achieve conformity with significant changes at an international level as a means to the end of promoting national interests and characteristic Indian calculations. This capacity to conform, versatility even, is characteristic of the trend towards non-aligned behaviour insofar as it on the one hand tended to pull to the left, and on the other tended to pull to the right."

86 Brecher (1979: 630) sees already in autumn 1962 after the war with China, that „[t]he term [Non-Alignment / note added by CR] was retained but it became an empty shell: the dynamic, activist spirit of the Nehru era was irrevocably shattered under the stress of the border war with China".

quite unequivocal when he writes: "For a country with hardly any real power to exercise in the international system, non-alignment seemed to offer India the best route to promote its diplomatic presence on the world stage."

It is therefore quite probable that New Delhi in the future too, nominally at least, will remain part of the Non-Aligned Movement and will uphold the principles of non-alignment on high days and holidays (cf. Mohan 2003: 46). But to view this symbolic bond as the actual *raison d'être* of Indian foreign policy would be tantamount to a massive political error of judgment.

It would be just as misguided however to tip the baby out with the bathwater and deny the standards and principles of non-alignment any independent effect. The results of this report simply suggest that at the point where these standards and principles meet (perceived) national interests head-on the latter triumph.[87] In spite of this, Indian foreign policy remains ambivalent to a limited extent. India criticized both the Kosovo War in 1999 and also the Iraq War of 2003. In 2006 the Indian prime minister attended the summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana, at which he allowed himself to be photographed in a cosy tête-à-tête with Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Venezuelan President Chávez, and on this occasion called Fidel Castro one of the greatest statesmen of our time, while he at the same time tried to prevent the final statement of the summit meeting from turning out to be overly anti-American (cf. Cherian 2006b, 2006c). The possibilities of exporting democracy (whether by force or peaceably) are still judged extremely critically by India, at this point the non-aligned ban on interference is clearly still effective (cf. Mohan 2007).

What lessons can be learned from this for the future? On the one hand certainly the fact that the present turning towards the USA does not inevitably have to last. Just like the alliance with the countries of the Third World in the 1960s and the quasi-alliance with the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, cooperation with the USA is primarily serving as a vehicle for fulfilling India's dream of finally becoming a recognised *Global Player*.[88] If an alliance with China should promise more success in the future, a renewed change in direction can definitely not be ruled out.[89]

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87 Such a head-on collision does not of course by any means inevitably happen. Thus in Kashmir India is still the target country of a UN mission (United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, UNMOGIP). Fear of interference from abroad is therefore not at all purely academic in India, but very real. New Delhi's own interests and the normative determination using the principles of non-alignment therefore go hand in hand in the case of the ban on interference or the upholding of national sovereignty. The author thanks Andreas Schmidt, for drawing his attention to this point.

88 With regard to this point Paul (1998: 3) asks us to consider that New Delhi's foreign policy is in no way a special path characteristic of India. Instead, "India's conduct [represents] the classic behavior of an emerging power that finds the existing powers seeking to block the entry of any new states to their status in the international hierarchy."

89 Ganguly (2004: 104) considers such a reorientation of Indian foreign policy to be unlikely, however, since the Indian side is still struggling with the trauma of having lost the border war in 1962.

However there are signs which suggest that current Indian foreign policy could prove to be more stable than its predecessors. For while earlier convictions in economic policy and ideological convictions acted like centrifugal forces, pulling India in different directions, so that it is almost astonishing that New Delhi did not collapse from the pressure, this situation has nowadays completely turned itself around.

As an increasingly free market economy and as a democracy India is virtually pinned to the USA's side. At last what one or two augurs were predicting as early as the beginning of the 1990s appears to be coming true: the USA and India are natural allies.[90] If they succeed in overcoming their former images of each other as the enemy and mutually recognise themselves as pluralistic democracies, then the first step will have been taken – as illustrated by research into so-called democratic peace (cf. Russett 1993, Rauch 2005, Geis/Müller/ Wagner 2007); away from an alliance with a purpose which can be annulled at any time and towards a cooperation based on shared values and beliefs and accordingly extremely stable. The anti-Americanism which persists in sections of Indian society appears against this background to be an atavistic relic of a long-gone age and is already in the process of decline.[91] Not by chance is George W. Bush, whose popularity ratings are very low almost everywhere in the world, popular in India of all places.[92] One should not however make the mistake of believing in inevitability. Internal Indian discussions about the nuclear deal illustrate that the old reflexes still exist and can be mobilised (cf. Müller/Rauch 2007: 19/20).

The prospects of cooperative relations between India and the West are good, very good even, and probably better than ever before in their common history – but they are not predetermined! Both sides should continue to work on them, for there is much at stake: in 2050 India will probably be the country with the world's largest population – and, possibly not much later, also that with the most power! For this very reason even the more distant Europe and Germany should keep an eye on this development.[93]

90 The then Indian prime minister Vajpayee brought in the USA and India as "natural allies" only a short while after the Indian nuclear tests of 1998. Cf. Vajpayee (2000). John Mearsheimer (2000) also uses this term.

91 Thus according to a study by Pew Global Attitudes Projects (2008: 3) 66% of Indians have in the mean time formed a positive opinion of the USA. In Germany this is true of only 31%, in France 42% and even in Great Britain – Washington's closest European ally – only 53%.

92 In the 24-country study by Pew Global Attitudes Project (2008: 33) India – besides Tanzania and Nigeria – is the only country, in which a majority of those asked expressed confidence in the policy of George W. Bush.

93 Schreer/Wagner (2005) and Wagner (2005b) draw attention to the fact that the EU in general and Germany in particular, in comparison to the USA which has plainly been intensifying its relations with India, have already lost an enormous amount of ground.

6.   **Bibliography**

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