

GOA IN THE INDIAN SUB - CONTINENT

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INDEPENDENT INDIA'S TRYST WITH THE LIBERATION OF GOA

Pratima Kamat

" We should make all attempts at a peaceful solution so as to give the world no cause to accuse us of not having done everything possible to avert war. We must omit nothing, no matter how slender our hopes of success."

- Lord Krishna in Mahabharat" ¹

India had freed itself from the shackles of British colonialism in 1947, but Goa continued to remain under foreign domination for yet another fourteen years. It was only on 19th December, 1961 that with the success of the Indian Army's 'Operation Vijay', this final colonial " pimple" was cleared from the surface of India.

The liberation of Portuguese India (consisting of Goa, Diu, Daman, Dadra and Nagar Haveli) completed the decolonisation of India and served as a beacon of hope to Portuguese Africa. However, the use of the Indian Army in solving the Goa Question excited a lot of national and international debate and also levelled accusations at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the staunch advocate of peaceful co-existence, of displaying political hypocrisy in ordering, what has been considered by one of these critics as an "outright invasion"² of Goa.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to analyse the factors that changed a non-violent foreign policy relying on the use of peaceful diplomatic means alone, to one which sanctioned the use of force to resolve the Goa Problem. It also proposes to review the role of Pandit Nehru, initially in the pre-1947 period as a leader of the Indian National Congress, and later as the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, in the liberation of the Portuguese enclaves on the west coast of India and their subsequent integration with the Indian Union.

Early Contacts

In the pre-1947 period, Jawaharlal Nehru's association with Portuguese Goa was rather restricted unlike that of other Indian nationalists like Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia whose contacts with this territory had grown considerably in the wake of the Quit India Movement.

In the 1920's, some Kunbi labourers from Goa had been duped by agents of British tea planters with promises of a better life and were taken to toil on the tea plantations of Assam under conditions bordering on slavery. It was in connection with the discontinuation of this practice and the release of those who had been recruited under false pretences that Pandit Nehru, came into one of his earlier contacts with the people of Portuguese Goa. Upon receiving appeals from the Goa Congress Committee and its leader, Tristão de Bragança Cunha, Pandit Nehru, as the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress to which the Goa Congress Committee was affiliated, intervened in this matter and secured the repatriation of the Kunbi labourers.³

Incidentally, Pandit Nehru's first and only visit to Portuguese Goa took place on 10th February 1937 when, enroute to Trivandrum from Bombay, his plane touched down at the aerodrome in the Portuguese Goan town of Vasco-da-Gama for refuelling. The crowd that had assembled at the airport to greet him was prevented by the Portuguese officials from approaching him.⁴

18 June 1946 Movement

The liberal air that had been breathed into the administration of the *Estado da Índia* after centuries of colonial oppression, in the wake of the establishment of the Republic in Portugal in 1910, was snuffed out by the imposition of curbs on the civil liberties of the people under the fascist regime of Antonio d' Oliveira Salazar. The resultant discontentment came to the fore when on 18 June 1946, a movement for the restoration of civil liberties was launched in Goa.

" *Trivaar mangalvaar
aazala trivaar mangalvaar
swatantrachi sinhagarzana
aatan ithen uthanar* ".⁵

This is the opening couplet of a revolutionary song composed by Goa's poet-laureate, B.B.Borkar, as a spontaneous reaction to the patriotic fervour generated by the historic events of 18 June 1946. It was on this day that the " opening salvo"⁶ of Goa's anti-imperialist struggle was fired by the veteran, firebrand socialist leader, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, who had been convalescing in Goa at this time. On this occasion he defied the Portuguese Government's ban on civil liberties by holding a public meeting in Margão.

At this time, the exercise of civil liberties was severely restricted in Goa. Public meetings were banned, newspaper heavily censored, and nationalist literature confiscated. However, by then, the Indian National Movement had reached a critical juncture and Goans were being informed about its progress through newspapers like *Kesari, Navakaal and Free Press Journal* that reached them from across the border and stirred nationalist sentiments in this Portuguese enclave. Patriotic feelings were further fanned by first-hand accounts of the Indian National Movement that were made available to Goans by visitors from across the Ghats.

Gradually, the idea of launching a similar struggle took shape in the minds of the local people, resulting in the establishment of nationalist organisations such as the *Goa Seva Sangh* that was founded in 1943 by Purushottam Kakodkar, Vinayak Mayenkar, Nilkanth Karapurkar and others. Aimed at propagating Gandhian nationalism, the *Sangh* organised spinning classes, prayer meetings and flag-hoisting sessions. The *Sangh* would depute its workers to move from village to village, propagating nationalist ideas. These house-to-house contacts later proved to be invaluable in harnessing mass support for the *satyagraha* movement.

There were other organisations like the **Vidyarthi Congress** which recruited young boys to spread political awareness in the countryside, and the **Rashtra Seva Dal**, organised by Vishwanath Lawande, which aimed at instilling a sense of discipline in the youth through regular drills and parades.

Dr. Lohia's arrival served as a catalyst, gearing up the politically conscious groups to take action against the governmental ban on civil liberties. Dr. Lohia's clarion call soon echoed all over Goa:

*"Dhanya Lohia,
dhanya bhumu hi,
dhanya tiche putr,
dhanya tyancha tyaag
dekhte janatache netr"*

"He has lighted a torch which the inhabitants of Goa cannot, except at their peril, allow to be extinguished," wrote Mahatma Gandhi in the wake of 18 June 1946. This flame burnt brightly throughout 1946 with Gandhiji's blessings to spur it on, the establishment of the Interim Government in British India to inspire it, and the formation of the National Congress (Goa) to give it direction.

The National Congress (Goa) resolved to offer **satyagraha** on the 8th, 18th, and 28th of every month. Besides this, **prabhat feris** were taken out, public meetings were held, pamphlets circulated clandestinely and even the Indian tricolour was hoisted on several occasions inspite of strict police surveillance.

The police came down heavily on the **satyagrahis**. Thousands of people courted arrest and had to suffer floggings. Some were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, while others were deported. However, this tempo did not last for long. The movement tapered off after the initial enthusiasm had been dampened following police brutalities and the imprisonment of its leaders like Purushottam Kakodkar, Vinayak Mayenkar, Tristão

de Bragança Cunha and others. Another reason for this was the imminent independence of India.

Although not an active participant in this movement as Dr. Lohia had been, Pandit Nehru, in his capacity as the President of the Indian National Congress, had on occasion assured the Goans of the support of British Indians to their cause by declaring that "For us Goa is as much a part of India as any other part and that the freedom of India inevitably includes the freedom of the people of Goa - freedom there becomes part of our own struggle."⁷

Yet, in 1934, the Indian National Congress had disaffiliated the Goa Congress Committee on grounds of being "foreign."⁸ The Goa Congress Committee had been founded in 1928 by a group of Indian nationalists from Goa who sought to make common cause with their counterparts in British India in order to liberate their motherland. In the very year of its establishment, this organisation had secured affiliation to the Indian National Congress.

Nehru's 'non-active' role in Portuguese Goa's struggle for civil liberties has come under heavy fire from a group of writers with socialist leanings. They opine that it was on account of Lohia's assumption of the leadership of this movement that Nehru preferred to maintain a low profile with regard to it.⁹ Lohia's criticism was levelled against the Indian leadership in general whom he had on one occasion referred to as "false and small men... whose words made a lot of noise but whose acts rarely kept step with them."¹⁰

Nehru believed that with the imminent withdrawal of the British from India, the Portuguese would follow suit since their "authority had existed in Goa not because of Portuguese power but because of the British power in India."¹¹ He regarded Goa as a tiny pimple on the face of India that would fade away consequent to the British exit from the country. Lohia, however, cautioned him of the great potential that the tiny pimple had to

scar India permanently.¹² This political analysis of Nehru's failed to stand the test of time for it was fourteen years after the British had left the Indian shores that Portugal was pushed out of Goa with the deployment of force that left a blot on the international image of India in some quarters.

The Independence of India and Portuguese Goa

When Nehru took over as Prime Minister and also External Affairs Minister of the nascent Provisional Government of India in September 1946, Goan political workers looked up to him for speedy freedom from Portuguese rule. Instead, when India kept her tryst with independence on 15 August 1947 amidst the bloody communal "battle with our own selves", Nehru decided to tackle the question of the integration of the Portuguese and French Indian settlements at a later date because his Government was beset with a host of teething problems. In spite of all these difficulties, Sardar Vallabhai Patel had wanted to settle this issue immediately. Nehru, however, believed that the remaining European colonial pockets in India would "automatically, inevitably" and "naturally revert to the motherland."¹³ Such a peaceful and friendly transfer of power did not take place. Instead, this issue evaded a pacific solution, assumed international implications and cast a menacing shadow upon the credibility of India's foreign policy.

The Goa Problem

The Goa Problem was thus born on 15th August, 1947 with the independence of India which now wished to completely cure itself of the malaise of colonialism. While France was inclined to settle the issue of her enclaves amicably, Portugal preferred to cling on to its **Estado da India**, thus giving rise to the 'Goa Problem.'

Geographically, racially, historically and economically Goa was an indistinguishable part of India. However, on account of the Portuguese efforts to not only Christianise the Goans but also Lusitanise them, there was a cultural presence of the west

in Goa which was blown out of proportion by Salazar to justify his claim that Goa was an integral part of Portugal.

Salazar tried to mislead the international community into thinking that Goans had Portuguese blood coursing through their veins, that the Portuguese language was their mother tongue, Roman Catholicism their religion and westernisation, their cultural hallmark; that Goa was "the statement of Portugal in India";¹⁴ for "if geographically Goa is India, socially and in religion and culture Goa is Europe"¹⁵ and hence, must be preserved as "a memorial of the West in the East."¹⁶ He frequently declared on more than one occasion that although Goa was an economically unviable proposition for Portugal it was an integral part - "an overseas province" - of Portugal.

Another argument propounded by Salazar was that of Portugal's "four - centuries old sovereignty" over Goa by which he claimed a legal right to rule this territory. However, the fact that the territories of the so-called 'New Conquests,' constituting about four-fifths of Portuguese India, were annexed by the Portuguese only at the end of the 18th century renders the claim of a four and half centuries old rule false. It must also be remembered that the colonised people could not be granted independence at a time when Portugal itself was denied civil liberties by the Salazarist dictatorship. Yet another reason responsible for the Portuguese Government's adamant refusal to grant freedom to Goa was its fear that the liberation of the **Estado da India** would serve as an 'open sesame' for its more profitable colonies in Africa to shrug off colonial rule.¹⁷

The Options

There were three ways out of the problem posed by Salazar's adamant refusal to transfer Goa to India - firstly the later could send its troops to liberate Goa; secondly, it could ignore the issue altogether, leaving the Goans to their own devices; or finally, it could try to secure the peaceful and friendly withdrawal of Portugal from Goa through diplomatic means.

Principles of India's Foreign Policy

Before the course of action adopted by the Government of India to solve this problem is discussed, it would be quite pertinent to identify the main principles that guided India's foreign policy immediately after Independence.

In his speech delivered at the Columbia University on 17th October, 1949 Nehru defined the main objectives his Government's foreign policy to include "the pursuit of peace, not through alignment with any major power or group of powers, but through an independent approach to deal with each controversial or disputed issue; the liberation of subject peoples; maintenance of freedom both national and individual: the elimination of racial discrimination: the elimination of want, disease and ignorance which affect the great part of the world's population."¹⁸ Therefore, Nehru advocated peace, an ethical approach to international affairs, non-alignment, anti-colonialism, democracy, liberalism, anti-racism and socialism in international relations, but the "most compelling experience"¹⁹ in Nehru's life was the attainment of freedom of people through pacific means. He believed that "a worthy end should have worthy means leading upto it."²⁰ This, however, did not imply that India was pledged to non-violence as Nehru himself had admitted to Acharya Kripalani on the floor of the Lok Sabha in 1955.²¹

It must be remembered that as Prime Minister holding the External Affairs portfolio and serving as the leader of the ruling party in Parliament, Pandit Nehru dominated Indian foreign policy completely - "his is the guiding hand that shapes the policy."²²

While on the one hand, as a colony deprived of civil liberties and subjected to racial discrimination, Portuguese Goa called for intervention by India, on the other hand, Portugal's stubborn and unresponsive stand rendered the use of pacific means to which Nehru was committed, an exercise in futility. For fourteen years Nehru was in the throes of this dilemma"... the Portuguese

presence, while rendering proof of his Western admired commitment to non-violence, eroded his revolutionary image in most of the world. Yet any attempt to remove the reluctant colonial power would render him open to the charge of hypocrisy. It was a situation the Portuguese could not help but exploit."²³ Thus Nehru was fighting for a pyrrhic victory - if his principle of non-violence won, the decolonisation of India would remain incomplete, on the other hand, if he succeeded in freeing India from colonialism it would be at the cost of his international prestige. The "problem of Goa has become a problem of the prestige ridden Prime Minister; and so long as it remains on this foot, it will not have a solution."²⁴

As has been discussed earlier on, in the pre-1947 period Nehru's association with Portuguese Goa was rather restricted. However, upon assuming the mantle of the Prime Minister of India, Nehru frequently voiced his concern about the protracted colonial status of Goa.

At the time of India's independence the question of the French and Portuguese Indian enclaves was deferred by Nehru whose Government was beset with a number of teething problems like those of communal riots, partition and the integration of the Princely states. It must be noted over here that in spite of these hurdles the 'Bismarck of India,' Sardar Vallabhai Patel had wanted to settle this issue immediately, Joachim Alva, a member of the Indian Parliament at this time, regarded India's failure to integrate Goa in 1947 as a major "blunder".²⁵ After this initial postponement, for fourteen years, the Goa problem evaded solution of the three that were then available to the Government of India. The third one was tried out first with sterling patience, but to no avail. Next, India tried to assume the role of a spectator rather than that of a participant, ordering its citizens to refrain from entering Goa as **satyagrahis**, and finally for reasons which will be discussed below, the use of force was sanctioned.

Policy of Negotiations

Nehru's biographer, Prof. S. Gopal, would have us believe that Nehru did not insist on holding a plebiscite in Portuguese Goa because he was doubtful about the result going in favour of India. Hence he preferred to rely on negotiations in order to remove the indignity of continued colonialism in Independent India. For these parleys to commence, the formality of establishing direct diplomatic relations between the two countries had to be fulfilled.

Hence till the end of 1947, "no practical steps were taken to solve the problem of Portuguese enclaves from India, apart from talks with a view to establish diplomatic relations."²⁶ With this goal in mind, the Indian Legation in Lisbon was opened in 1949 and the first *aide-memoire* regarding Goa was sent to the Portuguese Foreign Ministry on 27th February 1950. By stressing the observance of such diplomatic niceties, Nehru has been accused of failing to assert India's sovereignty over Goa. These negotiations patiently pursued by Nehru's Government proved to be a dismal failure in the face of Salazar's obdurate refusal to withdraw from the ***Estado da India***.

On 28 March 1951, Nehru explained his Government's policy towards Portuguese India in the following words:

"India cannot tolerate any footholds of foreign powers in this country. We are anxious to give the people in these areas the opportunity to live their own lives and the right to change their future. We do not wish to interfere with their ways of life. There are only two ways of bringing this about, either through war or through diplomatic means. In pursuance of our ideals, we have ruled out war as a means of redress unless we are forced into one. The only alternative we are left with is the diplomatic method and we are pursuing it."²⁷

The Portuguese Government had reacted to the moves of the Indian Government to achieve a negotiated settlement by declaring that "It is possible that for reasons of internal or electoral politics, the Indian Government felt the need to be able to say that the Goa question has been submitted to the Portuguese Government... It is possible that after this attempt and our firmness in this matter, the Government of India, may for some time, abandon this question with the excuse of the principle of non-violence."²⁸ After having "reasoned, argued and used peaceful methods all without results" for six years, the Government of India closed its Legation in Lisbon in June, 1953.

At the time of the independence of British India, Nehru had been confident that the transformation of Goa from a Portuguese colony into an integral part of India would be achieved through the friendly co-operation of the concerned Governments. However, unlike the French, the Portuguese Government refused "to recognise the signs of the times and come to honourable terms with its inhabitants...."²⁹ who looked upto the Indian Government for their political salvation. In the 1950s India's international status had increased considerably, which according to some Goan freedom fighters developed a false sense of prestige in Nehru's Government making it "highly sensitive to any criticism particularly from the Western countries, and therefore the Goa problem was left without the guidance of any decisive policy".³⁰...

The Liberation of Dadra and Nagar Haveli

In April 1954, Nehru reaffirmed his Government's stand that the Portuguese settlements in India were anachronisms whose "existence is inconsistent with the historic development that resulted in the termination of imperial rule in India itself."³¹ The year 1954 gave a serious jolt to the diplomatic impasse on Goa when, in the month of July, a group of Goan political workers succeeded in liberating the tiny Portuguese enclave of Dadra and within a fortnight repeated this success in Nagar Haveli. The Portuguese Government accused India of complicity in this matter. The latter denied the charge and instead held the mis-

guided policy of the Portuguese responsible for this turn of events. ³² At the same time, it declared that "Indians, in Portuguese possessions are as much entitled to their freedom as those in the Indian Union...."³³

In order to re-establish their rule in these areas, the Portuguese troops had to march across Indian territory, and for this purpose, their Government requested its Indian counterpart for transit authorisation. This request was promptly turned down on the ground that India "cannot be a party to the suppression of a genuine nationalist movement for freedom from foreign rule."³⁴ Portugal then took this dispute, which has been termed as the Right of Passage over Indian Territory Case, before the International Court of Justice where it was ultimately decided in India's favour.

From 1954 to 1961, Prime Minister Nehru allowed these territories to remain more or less independent because although they had requested for a merger with India, Nehru did not accept them since they had not come through what he called the "normal processes." "I did not wish to isolate Nagar Haveli from the problem of the other Portuguese territories in India. When that problem is settled, we shall take the normal steps about Nagar Haveli."³⁵

The Satyagraha Phase

In 1954, "the question of Goa" continued to remain a source of "much trouble and many headaches"³⁶ and resulted in snapping of diplomatic ties between the two countries. When the Government of India's policy of "conference and negotiation" failed to yield the desired results, Goan freedom fighters decided to resort to mass **satyagraha** which evoked an encouraging response from Indian Citizens who defiantly crossed into Goa only to be subjected to arrests, "brutal and uncivilised treatment" and "shoot or kill" orders.

Nehru had declared that "the future of Goa, that is, the union of Goa with India, is a matter of special, intense, equal concern to every Indian including every Goan"³⁷ and that "Indians have every right to work for the freedom of Goa."³⁸ However, this right had been accepted in theory and not in practice, for in the face of the violence which was the outcome of these peaceful, unarmed demonstrations, Nehru decided to bring the curtain down on the "Indian" participation in the "Goan" issue.³⁹ Indian nationals were prohibited from crossing the border into Goa as **satyagrahis**, not because mass **satyagraha** was considered to be wrong, but because of the contemporary Portuguese policy, which was likely to lead to "unforeseeable results and large-scale violence."⁴⁰

The decision was greeted with loud protests from the floors of the Indian Parliament and in the writings of Goan leaders. While Acharya Kripalani favoured the continuance of **satyagraha** as a means to "eschew war,"⁴¹ the Goan leader, Tristão de Bragança Cunha, denounced the distinction made between Indian nationals and Goans as a partial recognition of Portuguese sovereignty over Goa. He believed that if this ban was lifted, the Goa problem would be soon resolved in India's favour.⁴² Nehru, however, regarded the **satyagraha** opposition to Portuguese colonialism as "an entirely Goan movement, popular and indigenous," and invited the Portuguese Government "to co-operate in the peaceful consummation of these endeavours."⁴³

While continuously stressing the inevitability of Goa's integration with India, Nehru identified three basic elements of his Government policy towards Goa — first, the use of peaceful methods, secondly, the ban on mass entry of Indian **satyagrahis** into Goa and thirdly, that "satyagraha should be predominantly the business of Goans."⁴⁴

The Government of India protested against the arrest of the **satyagrahis** and against the poor conditions in which they were detained and warned Portugal of serious repercussions if nationalists were ill-treated in Goa. Nehru also promised asylum to political activists who had sought refuge in India.⁴⁵

The next step taken by Nehru to achieve the liberation of Goa was the imposition of an economic blockade upon this territory. However, instead of starving the Portuguese into submission, this pressure tactic only served to portray India as the villain of the piece who had subjected the Goans to hardships of all kinds.

Throughout this period, Prime Minister Nehru refused to budge from his stand that he would not order any police or military action to liberate these "leftovers of European colonialism" in India⁴⁶ Goa had become the acid test to judge the strength of India's moralistic foreign policy. Nehru believed that "The high reputation that we enjoy in the world today and the weight that our words carry are due to the fact we adhere to and honour our principles." Hence, it was unthinkable for him to reverse this policy and be branded as a "deceitful hypocrite" in the international community.⁴⁷ Therefore, he insisted that the Goa Question could not be considered "from a purely narrow, local or even national point of view."⁴⁸ He was also very careful to clarify the fact that it was Goa's liberation with India that concerned his Government the most.⁴⁹

As the situation in Goa deteriorated, Nehru's policy of "passivity" irked the patience of some of the Goan freedom fighters who urged the Government of India to adopt a more energetic, action oriented policy. Tristão de Bragança Cunha, for example, bitterly criticised the Indian Prime Minister and his Government for possessing a "perplexed state of mind," of being ignorant of the real situation in Goa, of indecisiveness, of lack of determination to liberate Goa and of "an undue fear of international complications in a question of exclusive national interest of India." He condemned the use of "friendly and suave methods" with a fascist country and called for "determination and promptitude" instead⁵⁰

The Indian Government's policy towards Goa was hotly debated in both Houses of Parliament. Both Ashok Mehta⁵¹ and Lanka Sundaram⁵² had questioned the wisdom of practising an

unilateral peace policy in the face of military build-up in Goa. While some Members of Parliament favoured *satyagraha*, others talked of imposing an economic blockade upon Goa, as has already been mentioned above. Few others demanded the issuance of an ultimatum on Portugal and yet another group advocated a limited war to bring the country out of this impasse. Some MPs even accused Nehru of displaying "weakness and cowardice" in this matter.⁵³

To all this criticism, Nehru's reply was that he did not wield a magic wand to immediately set things right in Goa instead, by exercising restraint "even though it has been rather painful to do so," Nehru was of the opinion that India had displayed great mental courage. He was always careful to emphasise the fact that Goa was not being coerced to join the Indian Union.

Resort to Force

This policy of forbearance, of waiting with patience for non-violent means to deliver the goods, was reversed in 1961. At a press conference held after the completion of Operation Vijay on 28 December 1961, Nehru justified the change in policy in the following words: "I did not want to take this action. I was compelled by circumstances to take it. Every step became inevitable and refusal to take step seemed to me to lead to graver consequences, even in time of peace and war. If we had not taken this action, there would have been absolute chaos in Goa. There would have been terrible repression of the people."⁵⁵

The interplay of pressures from the international and national scene, especially those from within the Congress party, was responsible for effecting this significant change in the policy of the Indian Government towards Goa.

The Portuguese Government's use of violence to suppress the *satyagrahas* and other forms of local protests against the continuance of its rule in Goa, caused much heartburn to the Government of India. This distress slowly turned into anger

when Portuguese soldiers intruded into the Indian territory in search of **satyagrahis** and burnt down houses in the border villages. New Delhi was further provoked by the strengthening of Portuguese troops in Goa and the attacks launched on Indian ships and fishing boats. To make matters worse, Goa was being caught up in the Cold War. It had been a "potential bridgehead" for foreign interference. That Goa had the potential to serve as the Achilles' heel of India had been indicated in 1947 when Hyderabad had made a bid to acquire its Mormugão Port.

In the wake of the Dulles-Cunha Joint Statement of 1955 the possibility of Goa being used as a SEATO base loomed large. In the late 1950s, Pakistan had been taking a very keen interest in the happenings in this territory and had propped itself up as a friend of Portugal.

On the one hand, Goans from within the Portuguese enclave and from without, especially from Bombay, were building up immense pressure on Nehru to liberate Goa immediately. On the other hand, similar pressure was being exerted from the international community of colonised people, especially from Africa, whose leadership India had sought to acquire. Hence, by 1961 there were strong signs of all-round frustration with the 'extraordinary patience' displayed by Nehru over the Goa issue.

On 24th November 1961, another member of the Indian Parliament, S.M. Banerjee, asked for an ultimatum to be issued to Portugal in the first private member's resolution on Goa that had been tabled by him in the Lok Sabha.⁵⁶ The Opposition had already voiced its apprehension that as long as Nehru continued to be at the helm of affairs in India, "Goa was safe for Portugal."⁵⁷ Nehru was labelled as being weak for refusing to remove this affront to the nation. Such criticism, coming as it did, on the eve of elections, surely influenced Nehru in putting his Goa policy into a more forceful gear, although he had declared that he was ready to lose a hundred elections but not the good name of India.⁵⁸ Incidentally, it must also be recalled that Krishna Menon was contesting the elections from Bombay where Goan **émigrés** and their local supporters were clamouring for a more active policy.

When in March 1961, the Indian Prime Minister decided to lend military support to the United Nations peace-keeping force stationed in Congo, his policy of inaction in Goa stood out as a sore thumb. On 17 August 1961, in reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, Nehru had declared that his Government did not "rule out the question of using armed forces in regard to Goa."⁵⁹ In taking this radical decision, Nehru was in no small measure influenced by the news of the outbreak of a revolt in Portuguese Angola.

The New Delhi Seminar on Portuguese Colonialism held in October 1961, presented a "take-Goa-by-force-or-forfeit-the-leadership-of-the-bourgeoning-Afro-Asian-peoples" ultimatum to Nehru. Kenneth Kaunda's advice that 'you' got to shoot the bull, otherwise it will finish the Conference. Ultimately, Nehru confessed to a need to give up the allegiance to the principle of non-aggression in favour of more practical considerations — "we have been forced into thinking afresh by the Portuguese to adopt other methods to solve this problem."⁶⁰ He later also clarified that the Indian Army would not be sent in on a furtive sabotage mission but as an "open effort" very much "contrary to my grain."⁶¹

Even after this decision was taken there was much delay in making an "open effort" to liberate Goa. This was in spite of provocation from the Portuguese in the form of continued atrocities towards political workers and attacks upon passing ships and boats. The ongoing CENTO naval exercises in the Indian Ocean were also looked upon with considerable apprehension. In addition to this, the Communists and the Praja Socialists chided Nehru not to "remain a hero of empty words."⁶²

Thus propelled by circumstances that denied Nehru "any other alternative short of war" the Indian Army marched into Goa in December 1961, to keep Independent India's fourteen-year old tryst with the liberation of Goa, Daman and Diu.

Notes and References

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3. See "The Concealed Slavery of Assam" and "Liberated" in T.B. Cunha, *Goa's Freedom Struggle (=GFS)* (Bombay: Dr. T.B. Cunha Memorial Committee, 1961) pp. 261-266, 272-274.
4. *Portuguese India : A Survey of Conditions of 400 years of Foreign Colonial Rule* (Bombay: Goa Congress Committee, 1939) p.50
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Today is an eternally auspicious day
For the roar of freedom
Now resounds in this land."
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