

**BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON:
WHY THE 1949 VISIT OF PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER LIAQUAT ALI KHAN
TO THE USSR DID NOT TAKE PLACE?**

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The article is devoted to the problems of foreign policy orientation of the post-colonial world in the conditions of the bipolar system of international relations that had been created after the Second World War. The object of the study is the foreign policy of Pakistan, which arose with the transfer of British power colonial India and its division along religious lines into the Indian Union and Pakistan. As a subject, the author proposes a conflict in the history of the formation of Pakistani-Soviet relations — the planned but failed visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan to the Soviet Union in 1949. Against the background of the geopolitical interests of the USA and the USSR, an analysis of this diplomatic story and its consequences is given. The work is based on the materials from the archival collections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation, the National Archives of India, and published documents from Pakistan, the USA, and Great Britain. The author uses general and specialized literature, it is characterized by a virtual lack of comprehensive research on the topic of Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to Moscow, its consequences for bilateral relations.

Keywords: Pakistan, India, USSR, Liaquat Ali Khan, J. V. Stalin

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**МЕЖДУ МОСКВОЙ И ВАШИНГТОНОМ:
К ВОПРОСУ О ВИЗИТЕ ПАКИСТАНСКОГО ПРЕМЬЕР-МИНИСТРА
ЛИАКАТА АЛИ ХАНА В СССР В 1949 г.**

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Статья посвящена проблемам внешнеполитической ориентации постколониального мира в условиях биполярной системы международных отношений, сложившейся после Второй мировой войны. Объектом

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исследования является внешняя политика Пакистана, возникшего в результате передачи власти Великобританией политическим силам колониальной Индии и ее разделения по религиозному признаку на Индийский Союз и Пакистан. Предметом изучения автор предлагает коллизию истории становления пакистано-советских отношений — запланированный, но не состоявшийся визит премьер-министра Пакистана Liaquat Ali Khan в Советский Союз в 1949 году. На фоне геополитических интересов США и СССР дан анализ этого дипломатического сюжета и его последствий для пакистано-советских отношений. Работа основана на материалах архивных фондов министерств и ведомств иностранных дел: Архива внешней политики РФ, Национального архива Индии, а также опубликованных документах Пакистана, США и Великобритании. Автор использует общую и специальную литературу, для нее характерно фактическое отсутствие комплексного исследования темы визита Liaquat Ali Khan в Москву, его последствий для двусторонних отношений.

Ключевые слова: Пакистан, Индия, СССР, Liaquat Ali Khan, И. В. Сталин, Дж. Неру

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Pakistan was born on August 14, 1947 as a result of the partition of British India into two dominions — India and Pakistan. The All India Muslim League leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah became the Governor-General of it, the Secretary General of the League Liaquat Ali Khan held the post of the Prime Minister. Jinnah's death in of 1948 led to a change in the status of Liaquat Ali Khan. He retained the post of the Prime Minister [Belokrenitsky, Moskalenko, 2008, pp. 92–93]. Pakistan became a member of the British Commonwealth, which united the dominions and ex-colonies of the Empire. Independence was accompanied by a deterioration of relations between the new Hindustan and Pakistan, primarily due to territorial claims to each other. The dispute over which of them should join the State of Jammu and Kashmir led to the outbreak of hostilities in October 1947 [Shaumyan, 2002, pp. 61–76]. In May 1949, the State was occupied by the Indian Army (Jammu, Kashmir Valley, Ladakh) and Pakistani troops (Gilgit, Mirpur, Baltistan).

The leaders of the bipolar world — the USA and the USSR — entered into a competition for influence on the South Asia. For the USA Pakistan's strategic importance was no more significant than India's. But it was the Indian Prime Minister Nehru who was the first to receive an invitation to pay an official visit to the USA [Yurlov, Yurlova, 2010, pp. 616–617]. This visit was a diplomatic blow for Pakistan, which already had diplomatic relations with Washington. The USSR's attitude towards Pakistan was also built on a complex basis. Information about Anglo-American 'intrigues' in Pakistan regularly appeared in the Soviet press [Novoye Vremya, 1950, p. 22]. Moscow understood that the Central Asian part of the USSR was predominantly Muslim and could contact the co-religionists of Kashmir. The actions of the United States posed a threat to the security of the USSR from the territory of Northern Kashmir.

The diplomatic relations between the USSR and Pakistan were established on May 2, 1948 as a result of an exchange of letters in New York between the Soviet representative to the UN A. A. Gromyko and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Zafullah Khan. Due to the absence of the Pakistani Embassy in Moscow and the Soviet Embassy in Karachi, the parties' communication was carried out through their diplomatic representatives in Iran. On May 16, 1949, at a reception in Tehran with local authorities, Liaquat Ali Khan, in an interview with the Soviet Charge d'affaires in Iran Aliyev, said that he would have been very happy to visit the USSR if the Government had invited him' [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file 6, p. 1–2]. Later, in an interview with journalists, Liaquat stated: 'Pakistan's desire is to have friendly relations with all countries of the world. The decision to exchange ambassadors with Russia is in line with this policy' [Speeches and Statements of Quaid-i-Millat, 1967, p. 145]. The invitation

of I. V. Stalin to Liaquat Ali Khan took place on June 2, 1949. Stalin invited Liaquat to come to Moscow on an official visit on August 14. The invitation was conveyed by Aliyev through Pakistan's Ambassador Gazzanfar Ali Khan when Liaquat was in Tehran. This was followed by the announcement by the Pakistani side that 'the Prime Minister and Mrs. Liaquat Ali Khan had received an invitation to visit the USSR, and that it had been accepted' [NAI, 1949, p. 4].

On July 9, 1949, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Ya. Vyshinsky informed Stalin that Gazzanfar Ali Khan had handed Aliyev a written request regarding the visit about Liaquat Ali Khan's intention to leave Karachi on about August 20 for a stay in the USSR from 10 days to two weeks. He was very interested in studying economic planning, industrial development, agriculture, education and culture of the USSR. Liaquat would also like to visit one or two Muslim republics of the USSR [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, p. 19]. Gazzanfar made it clear to Aliyev: Liaquat hopes that 'the Soviet Government will send a plane to Karachi or Tehran for him' [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, p. 19]. The Soviet Government was ready to receive Liaquat Ali Khan in Moscow at the end of August-beginning of September, provide him with 2 aircraft to Tehran or Karachi, at his discretion, and fulfill all wishes' [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, p. 19, p. 19–20]. It was decided to accommodate Liaquat with his wife and part of the accompanying persons in the mansion on Ostrovsky Street, 8, and all the other members of the delegation in the hotel 'National' [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, p. 19, l. 22]. To meet the distinguished Pakistani guests, it was planned to send F. F. Molochkov to Baku, who there, accompanied by the leaders of the Azerbaijani SSR. In Moscow, he was waiting for a meeting personally with Stalin in the Kremlin. From the Muslim republics, the Uzbek SSR was chosen for his visit [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file 6, p. 13–15]. However, the author of this article has not yet found any documents indicating that Liaquat was given a satisfactory answer at that time regarding the dates of the visit indicated by him.

On July 21, 1949, Vyshinsky again reported to Stalin:

'According to our Charge d'affaires in Tehran, in connection with the Independence Day of Pakistan — August 14 and the ceremony associated with this date, at which the presence of the Prime Minister is mandatory, Liaquat Ali Khan can fly out of Karachi only on August 18 and arrive in Moscow by August 20' [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, p. 25]. On July 23, on the text of this memo to Stalin, Vyshinsky had already added the following: 'To Comrade Gromyko. Postpone until early October. Signed by A. Vyshinsky' [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, p. 25]. And on a separate blank sheet with a pencil he added: 'Pakistan. All this can be done, but better... To do, after the exchange of Ambassadors. Approved by Comrade Stalin' [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22-a, f. 16, file 249, p. 27]. Thus, on July 23, by Stalin's decision, Pakistan was, in fact, denied his first request for the timing of the visit.

How did Karachi react to Moscow's proposal 'on the desirability of postponing Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to the Soviet Union until the end of October or early November of this year'? On August 4, 1949 Pakistan declared the Prime Minister's readiness to fly from Karachi on November 7 and arrive in Moscow on November 9–10 and asked the Soviet Government to give an answer to this. The USSR Foreign Ministry was also informed through Aliyev that 'the Government of Pakistan is not going to appoint its Ambassador to the USSR before November of this year'. The department of Vyshinsky decided that 'the answer can be given in the first half of September. Aliyev will tell the Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran that the USSR considers it desirable that the establishment of normal actual, and not nominal, diplomatic relations between the USSR and Pakistan should precede the arrival of the Prime Minister in Moscow' [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file 6, p. 27–28]. Thus, the issue of the appointment of the Pakistani

Ambassador to Moscow acquired a fundamental character in the preparation of Liaquat's visit to the USSR, and there was no final agreement on the date of his arrival in Moscow.

The aims of that visit were specific for each of the parties.

It was important for Pakistan to gain the support of the USSR in resolving the Kashmir issue at the level of the UN Commission. The invitation of Nehru to the USA, the admission of the Indian Republic to the Commonwealth of Nations decided the outcome of the case [Cheresheva, 2016, pp. 57–60]. Liaquat Ali Khan decided: 'Pakistan is obliged to make friends — wherever it finds them' [Pakistan News, 1949, November 6]. This point of view is shared by modern Pakistani researchers, for example, Shahid Amin [Amin, 2000, p. 41]. They also put forward the thesis that Liaquat used the Soviet invitation only to get an invitation from the USA [Dawn, 1994, January 1]. The Soviet official point of view under Stalin was that Pakistan was forced to establish its ties with the USSR in view of the changes in British policy towards it. The activation of the Anglo-American policy to create a bloc hostile to the USSR in the countries of the South and Southeast Asia, prompted the British to focus more on India and to make some concessions in the settlement of disputes between the dominions at the expense of Pakistan [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file 6, p. 5–6; USSR and Pakistan, 1984, pp. 21–22]. Modern Russian scholars emphasize that 'Liaquat zealously followed India's activity in the international arena. Having learned that Nehru was invited to the USA, he hurried to accept the invitation to come to the USSR that had come to him in a roundabout way' [Belokrenitsky, Moskalenko, 2008, p. 98]. In Britain and the USA, it was found that 'Liaquat was shocked by the fact that the Anglo-American bloc considered India to be the main base of the anti-communist movement in the South-East Asia and even canceled from investment in Pakistan' [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file 6, p. 30].

Official Delhi also analyzed the aims of Liaquat's visit to the USSR. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sounded: 'If the United Kingdom and the USA have shown their willingness to be friends with India, then Pakistan will become an ally of another great power. If the Indian Prime Minister goes to Washington, Liaquat will go to Moscow' [NAI, 1949, p. 4]. Or: 'What Liaquat really expects from this visit, no one can say. Pakistan should become a republic, withdraw from the Commonwealth, and all foreign personnel (primarily the British) should be removed from key posts in the state' [NAI, 1949, p. 4]. On July 14, 1949 the Charge d'affaires of the Indian Embassy in Moscow reported in Delhi that 'Liaquat intends to take military experts with him to Moscow to conclude a non-aggression treaty with Russia,' and that 'negotiations on Gilgit' are planned between him and Stalin [AFP RF, f. 07, inv. 22, f. 35, file 200, p. 5–6].

The Soviet leadership made contact with Pakistan based on its own vision of not at all rosy prospects for this rapprochement. In Karachi's failure to comply with the procedural points of principle for the Kremlin with the appointment of the Ambassador, it saw signs of certain ambivalence in its behavior. Moscow believed that 'if the Government of Pakistan were headed by the people who care about the national interests of their country, and not the Government of Liaquat Ali Khan, known for its pro-English orientation, then one would expect that the Government of Pakistan would take decisive steps towards the practical establishment and normalization of bilateral ties. It could be expected that having established diplomatic relations with us on May 2, 1948, the Government of Pakistan would not delay the issue of appointing its Ambassador to Moscow' [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file. 6, p. 30].

Moscow did not rule out the most seemingly implausible scenario — that 'Liaquat Ali Khan, declaring his intention to come to the USSR, does not really have this intention'. And it was ready for that. The USSR Foreign Ministry believed that 'even in this case our consent to Liaquat's arrival in Moscow could only contribute to exposing the real intentions of the Pakistani leadership towards the USSR in the future' [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file 6, p. 6]. Among the many aims of the Soviet Union, according to which this visit would contribute to 'strengthening our ties with Pakistan, identifying the

real needs of Pakistan, speeding up the exchange of ambassadors between our countries, 'I would like to highlight one more. The Kremlin hoped that 'after this arrival of Liaquat Ali Khan in Moscow, Jawaharlal Nehru, of course, would also have to come to the USSR' [AFP RF, f. 0117, inv. 3, f. 2, file 6, p. 6].

London was monitoring all the nuances of Liaquat's upcoming visit. In the diplomatic circles of the Commonwealth countries, information was spread that it would take place in November, and, finally, the candidacy of the Ambassador of Pakistan to the USSR was selected, and that 'someone has already talked about this with His Majesty'. London did not hide the fact that Pakistan nevertheless took care that the Ambassador arrived in Moscow 'earlier or at the same time as the Prime Minister' [NAI, 1949, p. 40]. As a bolt from the blue for the British Government, information received by the Intelligence Services appeared that 'Russia has already supplied heavy weapons to Pakistan with a promise to give even more' [NAI, 1949, p. 41].

In London, there was no doubt that an offer of military supplies would be made to Liaquat during the visit, but the news that they were already being implemented caused a shock. Having repeatedly rechecked that data, the British 'completely excluded any agreements already reached between the USSR and Pakistan, as well as found no evidence of at least one case of the supply of military materials' [NAI, 1949, p. 41]. Nevertheless, it was clear to everyone that if the Liaquat mission in Moscow was successful, it was only a matter of time before Soviet military supplies began. In reports to the Prime Minister K. Attlee, Secretary of Commonwealth Affairs P. Noel Baker, assured him that the acceptance of Stalin's invitation by Liaquat did not mean that Pakistan was going to move to the communist camp. However, Attlee was not convinced by these arguments. As a result, Noel Baker's Office began to actively contact the US Embassy in London and put pressure on the Americans, openly making it clear that Britain wanted the US to officially invite Liaquat to visit Washington [Kazimi, 2003, p. 300; Riaz, 1985, p. 1].

November of 1949 came — the month of the Pakistani Prime Minister's visit to Moscow, which had been preparing for so long. However, day after day passed, but nothing significant happened in this regard. On November 15, the Indian Foreign Ministry and Bajpai personally made an urgent secret request to their representative in Karachi: 'Liaquat Ali Khan probably postponed his visit to Moscow. We would be grateful for any reliable information about the reasons for the postponement and the date of his possible visit' [NAI, 1949, p. 44]. Kripalani replied: 'The latest information received from the British Ambassador and confirmed by American sources is that the Pakistani Press Department issued a release marked 'For internal use only' that this visit would not take place until next spring, but a day later this release was removed without any clear explanation' [NAI, 1949, p. 47]. Analyzing the reason for the postponement of the visit, Kripalani stressed upon 'the slowness with which the Soviets corresponded with Pakistan about the program and even on the issue of visas'. Kripalani pointedly concluded: 'The winter months are not the best time to travel to this country... Everything will be postponed until spring... Until then, a lot of water will flow down the Moscow River' [NAI, 1949, p. 47].

The situation around Liaquat's visit has become unclear. Pakistani Ambassador S. Qureshi, appointed on October 30, 1949, arrived in the USSR in December (The Soviet Government appointed A. G. Stetsenko as the Ambassador to Pakistan on February 13, 1950. He arrived in Karachi on March 18 and presented his credentials to the Governor-General of Pakistan on March 22. — L. Ch.) [AFP RF, f. 0117, op. 3, item 2, d. 2, p. 1]. The protocol was maintained. The Pakistani Ambassador arrived in Moscow ahead of the Prime Minister. However, the question of the arrival time of the Liaquat itself remained open.

In December 1949, it became known that Liaquat Ali Khan was invited to pay an official visit to the United States on May, 1950. Liaquat postponed his visit to the USSR and went on a two-month tour of the USA and Canada. His visit to the USA took place in May 2–31, 1950. During his visit to

Washington, Liaquat Ali Khan met with President H. Truman, delivered a speech before the House of Representatives and the Senate [Dawn, 1950, May 3]. The result was the President Truman's program for Pakistan, approved on June 5, 1950, and envisioned the allocation of \$34.5 million to Karachi [Kazimi, 2003, p. 299]. However, during all these months Liaquat thought about the Soviet Union [Liaquat Ali Khan, 1976, p. 24]. In the USA, when asked about his visit to the USSR, Liaquat replied: 'An exact date was not set for this. As soon as this happens, I will inform the press' [Speeches and Statements of Quaid-i-Millat, 1967, p. 374]. The Prime Minister of Pakistan himself did not make any attempts to resume the story with a visit to the USSR.

Why did not Liaquat's visit to the USSR take place? In modern Russian research, the reason is defined as follows: 'Under the pressure of the British and Americans, Liaquat soon changed his mind, and his visit to Moscow did not take place' [Belokrenitsky, Moskalenko, 2008, pp. 98–99].

Pakistani authors put forward a number of their explanations. One of them: the invitation of the USSR, allegedly, was canceled due to the intervention of India. When Liaquat Ali Khan was in the United States, Nehru requested information from the American authorities about his actions. The American officials replied that the State Department had not received any complaints or comments from the Pakistani Government during Nehru's visit to the United States [Kazimi, 2003, p. 297]. The Pakistanis consider it quite possible that Nehru expressed his dissatisfaction with the Soviet Union, but, unlike the United States, the USSR could listen to his words. Another Pakistani version boils down to the fact that Moscow rejected the idea of accepting Liaquat because they learned about the plans of the Communist Party of Pakistan to carry out a coup against him [Kazimi, 2003, p. 297].

Walid Iqbal, grandson of Pakistani poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, calls Liaquat's failed visit 'a public insult to the Soviet Union' [Iqbal, 2004, p. 89]. He sees the reason in the fact that the situation was used by Pakistan 'as a lever of pressure on the American administration of President Truman' and allowed Liaquat by December 1949 to 'literally snatch an invitation from that to pay an official visit to the United States' [Iqbal, 2004, p. 89].

Shahid Amin, without identifying Liaquat's goals with the reasons for his failed tour to the USSR, calls the version that the root of evil lies in the Pakistani prime minister's agreement to accept the US invitation and 'betrayal of agreements with Stalin' a 'myth'. He is sure that 'Liaquat Ali Khan is not personally responsible for the disruption of the visit to Moscow,' and blames the USSR exclusively for that. Amin writes: 'For reasons that still remain shrouded in secrecy, the Soviets could not agree on a mutually acceptable date for the visit. Liaquat has repeatedly stressed that he has not given up the idea of going to Moscow. Even while on a visit to the United States, he stated that he would visit the USSR as soon as the issue of timing was resolved. However, no progress was made, and in 1951 he tragically died' [Amin, 2000, p. 41–42].

The Indian researchers are looking for reasons, trying to take a comprehensive look at the problem. In their opinion, the mission did not take place because of Pakistan's desire to become the leader of pan-Islamist forces, this was a stumbling block for the development of relations with the USSR [Kau-shik, 1971, p. 38]. The growing pro-Western orientation of Pakistan increased the suspicion of the Russian side. The visits of the Americans to Pakistan, including to its northern regions adjacent to the border with the Soviet Union, could not but irritate the Kremlin.

Common in the approaches of the authors of various national schools is the mention of Pakistan's attitude to the Korean War, which prevented the warming of relations with the USSR. For closer cooperation with the United States on this issue, the White House was ready to provide not only economic and military assistance to Pakistan, but also actively support it in the Kashmir issue. Liaquat Ali Khan publicly declared his full support for the UN position on this war and called North Korea's actions

a clear act of aggression [Kaushik, 1971, p. 38–39]. He offered 5,000 tons of wheat to the UN for needs in South Korea. By the way, *Novoye Vremya* described this as the ‘slavish zeal’ of Liaquat [Novoye Vremya, 1950, № 28, pp. 19–20].

As for the consequences of Liaquat’s failed visit to the USSR, in our opinion, they cannot be assessed unambiguously. On the one hand, their vision by Shahid Amin (a former diplomat of the Pakistani Foreign Ministry, ambassador to the USSR, Libya, Saudi Arabia, France, Nigeria) seems convincing. He claims that after, in 1949–1953, there were no sudden aggravations in the bilateral relations between Moscow and Karachi. The USSR, which was especially important for Pakistan, did not veto UN Security Council resolutions on the Kashmir issue. The states exchanged ambassadors. Until 1951–52 and later, Pakistan had a consistently favorable trade balance with Russia. Amin is right when he puts such an emphasis: ‘The relationship deteriorated not because of a failed visit in 1949, but somewhere in 1954 after Pakistan joined the pro-American military blocs’ [Amin, 2000, p. 42]. In international diplomacy invitations are often promising, but they are not always justified. A visit that did not take place in response to an invitation hardly ever became and will become the cause of a long-term cooling of interstate relations. On the other hand, it is impossible not to notice that Liaquat, willingly or unwittingly, with the help of a Soviet invitation, fueled the West’s interest in Pakistan and his person, and then, assessing the more tempting prospects for American assistance to Pakistan, decided to visit Washington instead of Moscow. The American position on the communist threat, on the Kashmir issue, turned out to be much more attractive than the Soviet one. The main consequence of the failed visit to the USSR was the impetus for the development of American–Pakistani economic, political and military cooperation, which in turn marked a turn in the development of the political history of Hindustan. Pakistan began to turn into a zone of influence of the United States.

There is no point in ‘putting a good face on a bad game’ and hush up that the choice to which the USSR itself pushed Liaquat, partly by its, somewhere justified, diplomatic bureaucracy, absolutely destroyed Stalin’s hopes for control in the Muslim world, in particular in Jammu and Kashmir. The Americans more successfully attracted Pakistan to their side and, despite all the efforts of Moscow, gained military bases in Northern Kashmir aimed against the USSR.

But that’s not all. In the changed circumstances, Stalin decided to abandon his passive position on the Kashmir issue. The change in the behavior of the USSR at the UN was so obvious and occurred solely in the interests of the Soviet Union, however, it entailed a new round of events. Politically, the most important of them was the correspondence between Nehru and Stalin on the Korean War. The Indian prime minister, who initially stood on the side of the United States, changed his mind and advocated the unification of Korea. Stalin truly ‘honored’ Nehru by sharing his ‘point of view and peaceful intentions’. Another manifestation of the Soviet interest in India was Stalin’s conversations with Indian diplomats, with the Ambassador Radhakrishnan. He spoke with respect about India’s efforts to maintain peace, despite the difference in the approaches of Moscow and Delhi to many international problems. From 1950 until his death, Stalin held only 5 meetings with foreign diplomats, three of which were with Indian ones [Chereshneva, 2021, pp. 150–151]. This could not but mean a gesture of friendship towards India. The first Indian Ambassador Lakshmi Pandit did not see Stalin even once. However, after her departure, the ice broke in Indo-Soviet bilateral relations. Ahead was the fruitful visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to the Soviet Union in 1955 and the beginning of the great partnership. The struggle for South Asia continued.

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