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**Reverberations Across Asia: The Partition of Palestine  
& U.S. Investments in Indian Higher Education**

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**Abstract**

While the global order was being reorganized in the post-colonial period, the United States was faced with the decision of which new states to back, especially in fragile regions that could fall prey to communism. Following the Partition of Palestine in 1947, the US chose to publicly support Pakistan over India, a decision that was largely driven by the need to preserve relations with Arab states after choosing to support the creation of Israel. Pakistan would serve as a symbolic Muslim ally for the US, allowing them to preserve goodwill with Arab nations that they relied on for oil reserves. As a result, investments in India looked substantially different from investments in other new states like Pakistan or Israel, focusing on subtler forms of human development in the country. This paper will follow the trajectory from the fallout of the Partition of Palestine to educational investments in India, seen most clearly through the Kanpur Indo-American Program. Tracing this trajectory reveals that such technical assistance, especially in Indian higher education, allowed the US to advance long-term development in India while reinforcing its soft power in Asia, and now, globally, as the Indian diaspora continues to influence the global order.

**Initial Alignment with India**

During the post-colonial period, India's democratic and secular identity resonated with the United States. Given their shared values, the US was strongly inclined to support the development of the Republic of India, economically and politically. Within the first year of Indian independence, the United States made great strides to create an ally in South Asia through India. Nehru, during discussions with the Secretary of the Embassy in India, James Parsons, outlined general Indian expectations and attitudes towards the newly developing world order,

especially concerning the growing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nehru, given his policy of non-alignment, took a middle-road approach in his dealings with the United States. Parsons wrote in his report to the Regional Director of the Near East, South Asia, and Africa bureau that it was “evident” that Nehru wished to use the interview to “obtain Secretary’s views on the world situation and Soviet motives and objectives.”<sup>1</sup>

Given India’s position as a country of significance in South Asia and in the non-aligned movement generally, it was clear that the United States was concerned about India’s interactions with communism. Parsons writes in his report that “Nehru recognizes [the] interaction of Soviet policy and world Communism,” signaling US concern for the spread of communism in India.<sup>2</sup> During this initial meeting, Parsons even mentioned the “dangerous situation [in] Latin America with wealthy crust on top and little else but mass of poor,” suggesting a similar parallel relationship in India. Nehru, while seemingly understanding this parallel, “preferred [to] dwell on [the] social and economic objectives of his Government,” further underlining his focus on post-colonial development and state-building initiatives over the anti-communist approach that the United States expected from India.<sup>3</sup>

Despite Nehru’s ambivalence towards the US’s foreign policy, the US had a large stake in the development of India, especially considering the context of the Cold War and the potential for the spread of communism in a new nation like India. A State Department policy paper written in 1955 explained the general approach of the US government towards India immediately following independence. The “Communist Economic Offensive” was a topic of concern within the State Department, as they wrote that “there seems no doubt but that the Soviet Union and its

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of State, “The Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State, October 16, 1948,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, vol. V, pt. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954), doc. 678, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v05p2/d678>.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State, “The Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State,” doc. 678.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of State, “The Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State,” doc. 678.

European satellites and Communist China have recently greatly increased the tempo and scope of their efforts to supplement political penetration of South Asia with economy penetration.”<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, given India’s relatively similar values and beliefs, the United States had a strong interest in protecting and supporting the country. Other recently independent countries in South Asia, like Pakistan and Afghanistan, did not have the same secular and democratic vision as India. The United States was uniquely poised to support India during this new period of growth. Aid for India specifically was widely advocated for by the State Department, a strong priority in the aid packages created for South Asia. Aid recommendations to Congress in 1951 allocated \$65 million for India, \$12.5 million for Pakistan, and \$700,000 for Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> Despite the vastly different population sizes of India and Pakistan, an apparent interest in India is clear when considering the aid per capita. Given India’s population of 361 million in 1951 and Pakistan’s population of 75.7 million, aid per capita is \$0.18 and \$0.165, respectively, illustrating the special focus and attention given to the Indian state, for what can generally be assumed to be its special status as a democratic and secular state. A “top secret” appraisal of US National Interests in South Asia in 1949 captures the US interest precisely, writing that “India is the natural political and economic center of South Asia and aid given to the peripheral countries would have to be adapted to conditions in India,” emphasizing a clear internal prioritization and recognition of the US relationship with India.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of State, “Briefing Paper Prepared in the Office of South Asian Affairs, Washington, January 19, 1955,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957, South Asia*, vol. VIII (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), doc. 143, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v08/d143>.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Department of State, “The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India, Washington, May 22, 1951,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, Asia and the Pacific*, vol. VI, part 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977), doc. 474, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p2/d474>.

<sup>6</sup>U.S. Department of State, “Report by the SANACC Subcommittee for the Near and Middle East,” [Washington,] April 19, 1949, SANACC 360/14, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, vol. VI (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977), doc. 3, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v06/d3>.

## The Palestine Question

As much as India and Pakistan were divided during this period, another similar situation was playing out in the Middle East, as several Western powers attempted to carve out a Palestinian and Israeli state. Despite growing concerns over its support of a Jewish state, the United States voted for the creation of Israel in 1947 through its support for the UN Partition Plan for Palestine, dividing Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state. US support for Israel, however, alienated Arab nations, a sentiment that was well understood within the State Department itself. George Kennan, the Director of the Policy Planning Staff, outlined several reasons against US support for the Partition of Palestine in a memorandum to the Secretary of State in January 1948.

One of Kennan's primary reasons against US support for the creation of Israel was the declining standing of the United States among Arab countries. According to Kennan, the "U.S. support of partition has already brought about loss of U.S. prestige and disillusionment among the Arabs and other neighboring peoples as to U.S. objectives and ideals."<sup>7</sup> The United States' advocacy against the Palestinian cause, one that was largely viewed as a self-determination and independence movement against British rule, occurred much to the chagrin of these Muslim-majority Arab countries. Kennan even recognized that any sort of assistance that the United States would give, including to the state of Israel itself and the enforcement of partition, "would result in deep-seated antagonism for the U.S. in many sections of the Moslem world over a period of many years."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>George F. Kennan (Director, Policy Planning Staff), "Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Secretary and Under Secretary of State," Washington, May 21, 1948, FRUS 1948, Western Europe, vol. III, doc. 100, U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v03/d100>.

<sup>8</sup>George F. Kennan (Director, Policy Planning Staff), "Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Secretary of State," Washington, January 20, 1948, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, General; the United Nations*, vol. I, part 2, doc. 4, U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v01p2/d4>.

Relations with Arab states were particularly valuable for the United States following the conclusion of World War 2. Arab countries, which had large stores of oil, were necessary for the success of the Marshall Plan. In order to meet the oil requirements of the Marshall Plan, production of oil would have to have been raised to about 2,000,000 barrels a day, and given that “no oil for Europe for this purpose could be provided from the U.S., from Venezuela, or from the Far East,” the United States heavily invested in the development of oil production in the Middle East. According to Kennan, however, it would “be impossible to proceed if the present situation continues,” referring to the growing tensions between the US and Arab nations over the partition.<sup>9</sup>

Ultimately, Kennan recommended that the United States pull back all support for the partition efforts, underlining that sponsorship of the UN policy recommending the partition of Palestine led to a “severe blow” to US prestige in the Moselm world and US strategic interests in the Mediterranean and Near East.<sup>10</sup> Protecting the United States’ interests in the Middle East would have required the US to stop its support of partition. Against Kennan’s wishes, the US continued to support the newly formed Israeli state.

### **The Pakistan Solution**

Given the United States’ decision to move forward with its support for the partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel, its relationship with the Arab world was in jeopardy. Trying to balance its support for Israel while preserving the support of the Arab community, the United States sought to align itself with another Muslim-majority country through Pakistan. Pakistan was an essential state for offering a symbolic counterbalance to the US’s support for Israel.

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<sup>9</sup>Kennan, “Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff,” doc. 4.

<sup>10</sup>Kennan, “Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff,” doc. 4.

Despite alignment on shared democratic values with India, supporting another non-Muslim state would not have been a viable option for preserving US relations in the Middle East. Pakistan's identity as a majority Muslim country was a significant reason for US investment and involvement in Pakistan. A Department of State Policy Statement on Pakistan in 1951 argues that "while India may refuse to give open support should aggression against Near East countries occur, Pakistan will seriously consider its capabilities to assist its co-religionists."<sup>11</sup> Given Pakistan's natural tendency to support its neighbors in the Middle East, the United States had a strong motivation to develop a relationship with the country. Beyond just its relationship with Arab countries, the United States also viewed Pakistan as having taken "a leading role among Muslim states," an important motivation for securing its relationship with the country.<sup>12</sup> After losing the support of nations in the Middle East, the US was eager to preserve its relations with the Arab world, through which Pakistan offered an important avenue.

While the United States had several humanitarian motivations in Pakistan, including the strengthening of a country "with democratic principles, a healthy political and economic state capable of satisfying the growing needs of its people," the political advantages of having Pakistan as an ally, particularly in the context of the Cold War, were widely recognized. One of the goals of the United States was to "encourage Pakistan to improve its relations with its neighbors, including the Muslim nations to the West," an objective that strongly served US interests as well.

Preserving its relationship with Arab countries was a primary goal of the United States, given its reliance on the region for oil reserves. An ally in Pakistan would create a path for the

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<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Department of State Policy Statement (Pakistan)", [Washington,] July 1, 1951, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, Asia and the Pacific*, vol. VI, part 2, doc. 493, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p2/d493>.

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Department of State, "Department of State Policy Statement (Pakistan)", doc. 493.

US to continue having access to Arab oil. An important goal of the United States in Pakistan, as outlined in the Policy Statement, was “to develop in Pakistan an attitude which would afford the United States and its allies access to those facilities, resources, and markets desired in time of peace and required in the event of war.”<sup>13</sup> Access to markets, specifically markets of Arab and other Muslim countries, and resources, like oil, was necessary for the United States, given the lack of easy-to-access oil in the United States and other Western allies.

### **Indian Indignation**

Nehru recognized the relationship between the Partition of Palestine and the US’s support for Pakistan in the post-colonial period. Writing to his chief ministers in a series of letters, Nehru outlines his views on the situation in the Middle East, explaining that “the Americans who voted for the partition of Palestine and thereby alienated the sympathies of the Arabs seem anxious to win back Arab support which is essential for them in view of the oil situation.”<sup>14</sup> Nehru believed that the United States’ reliance on Arab oil forced it to maintain a good relationship with Arab countries. As a result, the United States was “openly, and with very little finesse, supporting Pakistan” over India in South Asia.<sup>15</sup>

The United States’ growing relationship with Pakistan was viewed very negatively in India, especially as Pakistan and the United States entered into a military pact in 1953. Nehru wrote to his Chief Ministers in 1953 that while India “cannot come in the way of such a pact between independent countries,” it was still “affected by it very greatly.”<sup>16</sup> Nehru grew

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<sup>13</sup>U.S. Department of State, \*Department of State Policy Statement (Pakistan)\*, doc. 493.

<sup>14</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, letter to his Chief Ministers, February 20, 1948, in *Letters for a Nation: From Jawaharlal Nehru to His Chief Ministers, 1947–1963*, ed. Madhav Khosla (New Delhi: Penguin Random House India, 2018), 179.

<sup>15</sup> Nehru, letter to his Chief Ministers, 179.

<sup>16</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, letter to his Chief Ministers, November 15, 1953, in *Letters for a Nation: From Jawaharlal Nehru to His Chief Ministers, 1947–1963*, ed. Madhav Khosla (New Delhi: Penguin Random House India, 2018), 208.

increasingly frustrated with the military relationship between the United States and Pakistan, especially given the growing divergence between India and the US on issues related to the Cold War.

An important aspect of the military agreement between Pakistan and the United States concerned the creation of several military bases across Pakistan. Nehru strongly criticized this move, writing that “if a number of bases are given by Pakistan to the US, Pakistan becomes in a sense an American colony and certainly a satellite country to the US.”<sup>17</sup> According to Nehru, American foreign policy was driven primarily by the military approach, with the primary goal of opposing communism. Pakistan’s identity as a Muslim country, in contrast to India as a secular nation, motivated the US relationship with Pakistan, as “the viewpoint has been well publicized that Islam is against communism and that is enough for the US.”<sup>18</sup> Nehru’s indignation towards the United States continues to grow, as he criticizes the general foreign policy of the United States, writing that there is “an almost total unawareness that human beings count.”<sup>19</sup> The United States’ military alignment with Pakistan continued to be a source of frustration for India, as India had expected significant support from the United States. Alignment with Pakistan, which, according to Nehru, shared comparatively fewer values with the United States, was seen as a public betrayal of India in his eyes.

### **Quiet Investment in India**

While the United States did not invest militarily in India, the United States still recognized the importance of supporting the nation. Following its realignment toward Pakistan, the United States moved away from overt military or political support for India. Instead, the

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<sup>17</sup> Nehru, letter to his Chief Ministers, 208.

<sup>18</sup> Nehru, letter to his Chief Ministers, 208.

<sup>19</sup> Nehru, letter to his Chief Ministers, 208.

United States chose to prioritize developmental aid through the primary avenues of education and agriculture, investing in the long-term human development of India.

An Indo-American Technical Cooperation Fund was established in 1951, in which the US agreed to “ deposit up to the 30th June 1952, the sum of 5 million dollars for agreed projects.”<sup>20</sup> The technical assistance provided by the United States laid the groundwork for a partnership focused on development, rather than a purely military or political alliance. Before the creation of the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Fund, the United States and India signed the Point Four General Agreement for Technical Cooperation in 1950. The purpose of the agreement was to promote cooperation between the countries, through “the interchange of technical knowledge and skills and in related activities designed to contribute to the balanced and integrated development of the economic resources and productive capacities of India.”<sup>21</sup> Providing technical assistance to India allowed the United States to support the economic development of India through this back-alley approach, without sacrificing its strategic geopolitical objectives concerning the Middle East and Arab countries.

Similarly, in 1971, the United States continued giving technical assistance, as opposed to military or political aid, through a technical assistance program of \$10.8 million, focusing “on increasing agricultural productivity, improving India’s agricultural universities, and assisting the improvement and expansion of India’s considerable efforts in family planning and nutrition.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America relating to Technical Cooperation Programme, signed January 5, 1952, in *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 157, No. 2045 (New York: United Nations, 1953), <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20157/volume-157-i-2045-english.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup>Point Four General Agreement for Technical Cooperation between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America, signed December 28, 1950, in *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 1369, No. 2045 (New York: United Nations, 1951), <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20136/volume-136-i-2045-english.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup>William P. Rogers (Secretary of State), “Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon,” Washington, February 2, 1971, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XVII, China, 1969–1972*, doc. 104, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v17/d104>.

US investments in India, focusing primarily on agriculture and education, continued, despite souring relations between both countries in the wake of the Bangladesh Liberation War.

### **The Kanpur Indo-American Program and the IITs**

Given its poor literacy rate at the time of independence, a key goal of the newly installed Indian government was the development of educational institutions in India, especially institutions of higher education. The Sarker committee was established to investigate the development of higher technical institutions in India, eventually recommending “the establishment of four Higher Technical Institutions in the Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern regions, possibly on the lines of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, with a number of secondary institutions affiliated to it.”<sup>23</sup> A decade later, the Institutes of Technology Act of 1961 designated the first four IITs, IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur, IIT Bombay, and IIT Madras, as institutions of national importance. An important duty of these institutions was “to co-operate with educational or other institutions in any part of the world having objects wholly or partly similar to those of the Institute.”<sup>24</sup>

The Kanpur Indo-American Program (KIAP) was a significant example of US involvement with the IITs. Launched in 1962, following the Institutes of Technology Act, the KIAP was a 10-year technical assistance program run by a consortium of 9 US universities and USAID to support the development of IIT Kanpur. Considered “President Kennedy’s gift to Prime Minister Nehru,” the development of this major technical assistance project was a national

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<sup>23</sup> Development of Higher Technical Institutions in India: Report of the Sarkar Committee, March 1948, Government of India Press, Simla, 1946, <https://indianculture.gov.in/reports-proceedings/development-higher-technical-institutions-india-report-sarkar-committee>.

<sup>24</sup> The Institutes of Technology Act, 1961, Act No. 59 of 1961, Government of India, <https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A1961-59.pdf>.

priority of the US, given the President's large stake in ensuring its success.<sup>25</sup> Despite the US's public alignment with Pakistan, strong support for India was still an important foreign policy objective.

KIAP was funded primarily by USAID through the PL-480 "Food for Peace" wheat loans, providing nearly \$13.5 million and ₹23 million for the development of the institution.<sup>26</sup> By 1972, approximately \$7 million was put towards the development of teaching and research equipment at Kanpur.<sup>27</sup> Another essential aspect of the program was the focus on Indian self-sufficiency. Under the KIAP, IIT Kanpur developed its own teaching staff and faculty, serving "as a damper to latent desires that any US Staff might have had to deliver themselves of the 'we-make-it, you-take-it' kind of intellectual imperialism."<sup>28</sup> The US valued the long-term development of India as a central aim, prioritizing development without dependency. Despite their public alignment with Pakistan, largely as a result of their desires to maintain good relationships with other Arab states, the US continued to prioritize and support its relationship with India, recognizing the importance of supporting this new democracy in Asia, one that was much more aligned with US values than most other newly independent states in South Asia.

Supporting India through this more discreet approach allowed the US to expand its soft power in Asia, advancing its own political and strategic goals in the region without sacrificing its foreign policy objectives in the Middle East through the risks that could have come with outright support of India. Moreover, given the context of the Cold War, expanding its influence in a newly independent state, especially one that the US thought was prone to communism, was an important goal for the US. US investment in IIT Kanpur occurred in 1959, following investments

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<sup>25</sup> Education Development Center, *Kanpur Indo-American Program Report*, iv. Kanpur, India: Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, 1973, <https://www.cse.iitk.ac.in/users/amit/books/dahl-1973-kanpur-indoamerican-program.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Education Development Center, *Kanpur Indo-American Program Report*, v.

<sup>27</sup> Education Development Center, *Kanpur Indo-American Program Report*, 118.

<sup>28</sup> Education Development Center, *Kanpur Indo-American Program Report*, v.

by the USSR and West Germany in 1958 and 1959, respectively. Recognizing the need for expanding its own influence in India, the US invested approximately \$176.7 million (in current US\$) in IIT Kanpur, significantly greater than the \$12.8 million and \$41.7 million (in current US\$) invested by the USSR and West Germany, respectively (See Figure 1).

### **Backdoor Aid Despite Conflict**

In 1971, relations between India and the US deteriorated considerably, as both countries took opposing sides in the Bangladesh Liberation War. Additionally, in August of 1971, a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation was signed between India and the Soviet Union, further contributing to the decline in Indo-American relations.<sup>29</sup> Despite an increase in political tensions, investments to India continued to flow, especially technical and agricultural aid, revealing a more long-term strategy for the US in India, deeply valuing the long-term development of the country, despite these acute periods of tension.

The IITs, in particular, serve as a key example of the value that was placed on investing in India. Even after the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty in August 1971, the US continued to invest in the IITs. In October of 1971, the “Governments of India and the United States agreed to set up a special endowment... ₹30 million annually for the development of the IITs,” revealing that despite deteriorating tensions, educational and technical investment in India was intentionally preserved.<sup>30</sup> IIT Kanpur, especially, was seen as an exemplary investment in India, an achievement that would even “seem likely to survive the current sad state of official Indo-American relations.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, signed August 9, 1971, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/RU71B1557.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Education Development Center, Kanpur Indo-American Program Report, 102.

<sup>31</sup> Education Development Center, Kanpur Indo-American Program Report, v.

Simultaneously, the US was also divesting from India in other areas, especially economic and military aid. A memorandum to Kissinger in January of 1972 outlined the plans for suspending aid to India by holding “in abeyance for the time being any decision with regard to the suspension of the \$87 million of the FY 71 pipeline.”<sup>32</sup> While aid decreased in other sectors, educational aid and technical assistance to India continued to be a priority, seen most clearly through these investments in IIT Kanpur (see Figure 2).

During this tumultuous period, Secretary of State Rogers outlined in a memorandum to President Nixon the importance of supporting India, writing that “India has an importance to us in terms of the Nixon Doctrine as a country which can contribute to a stable order in Asia.”<sup>33</sup> Rogers also distinctly believed that US “aid to India has supported an independent India which has been able to resist communist subversion and the threat of Chinese expansion,” underscoring the importance of US aid to India in protecting the liberal world order.<sup>34</sup> Given the geopolitical context of the Cold War, preserving the US’s relationship with a liberal democracy in this vital region was a priority. IIT Kanpur serves as an example of the importance that the US placed on supporting India, both as a new democracy but also as a strategic ally in Asia. Despite the suspension of aid during periods of tension, programs of technical assistance and education were exempted from these cuts, emphasizing the prioritization of the long-term development of this new nation. While US support for Pakistan was driven primarily by political considerations, especially the desire to maintain good relations with Arab nations after supporting the Palestine Partition, support for India was driven largely by shared values and mutual understanding, encouraging the US to continue its support even through more underground channels.

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<sup>32</sup> Theodore L. Eliot Jr. (Executive Secretary, Department of State), “Memorandum from the Executive Secretary of the Department of State to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs,” January 25, 1972, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXXIX, European Security*, Document 116, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v39/d116>.

<sup>33</sup> Rogers, “Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon,” doc. 104.

<sup>34</sup> Rogers, “Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon,” doc. 104.

## Looking Ahead

US foreign policy after the Partition of Palestine balanced several goals, choosing to both publicly align with Pakistan to garner support from crucial Arab partners, while simultaneously investing in India's technical and educational development. American aid to India took on a distinctive form, unlike the economic or military aid that was given to countries like Pakistan and Israel, focusing on human capital and infrastructure through projects like the Kanpur Indo-American Program, developing a highly skilled elite within India. Over time, this group became a fundamental component of American soft power, as this carefully curated group of Indian elites continues to influence both global and Indian politics.

Devesh Kapur writes that the development of these higher technical education institutions fostered the rise of a socioeconomic Indian elite in the United States. These institutions created a supply of "excellent talent" to the US that maintained very close ties to India, creating "strong bridges between the two countries."<sup>35</sup> Kapur explains that even if "just 1% of their communication with family touched on economic or policy issues, the sheer scale of interaction amplified the flow of new ideas."<sup>36</sup> Diaspora Indians contributed not only to America's human capital but also continued to influence policy issues within their home country. As a result, the United States was able to extend its soft power in India well beyond the Cold War, continuing to shape India's development through the institutions it helped cultivate.

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<sup>35</sup> Devesh Kapur, "Indian Higher Education," in *American Universities in a Global Market*, ed. Charles T. Clotfelter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 305–334, <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226110455.003.0010>.

<sup>36</sup> Devesh Kapur, "Ideas and Economic Reforms in India: The Role of International Migration and the Indian Diaspora," *India Review* 3, no. 4 (2004): 364–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/147364804908852>.

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## Figures

**Figure 1.**

University	Establishment Year	Primary Funder	Funding Info.	Funding Equalized (in current US\$)
IIT Kharagpur	1951	Indian Gov/UNESCO	Unknown	N/A
IIT Bombay	1958	USSR	₹55.5 lakh	\$12.8 million
IIT Madras	1959	West Germany/UNESCO	₹1.8 crore	\$41.7 million
IIT Kanpur	1959	US	\$16.8 million	\$176.7 million
IIT Delhi	1961	UK	Unknown	N/A

**Figure 2.**

