

INDIA'S USE OF FORCE
IN GOA

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the principles of the United Nations with a country that ignored that body's declarations on colonialism. He pointed out that "negotiation" meant different things to both countries, for Portugal had steadfastly refused for fourteen years to discuss yielding sovereignty over Goa.

Other attempts at moving India toward talks with Portugal were made by the United Kingdom's High Commissioner in Delhi, Sir Paul Gore-Booth and Ambassador John K. Galbraith of the United States, but both fell short of formal mediation. Ambassador Galbraith could only offer vague guarantees of American pressure on Portugal in exchange for a six month standstill by India. He could not offer specific assurances that sooner or later the United States would get the Portuguese out of Goa.⁶¹ Despite these shortcomings, President Kennedy, acting through Ambassador Galbraith, managed to postpone the invasion twice.

By this time it was obvious the Nehru Government was now committed to the use of force to bring Goa into the Indian Union. The cabinet had met to consider the crisis on December 6, and eight days later a top level conference of military leaders was held at the border town of Belgaum by the Chiefs of Staff of the army and the airforce. Sensing the inevitable, both the United States and Great Britain made it clear they would not become involved in any hostilities.

Finally at midnight on December 17-18, the agony of several weeks' anticipation was ended, and operation Vijay commenced. Thirty-thousand Indian soldiers under the overall command of Lieutenant-General J. N. Chaudhuri, who had led the occupation of Hyderabad in 1948, and the field direction of Major General Kenneth Candeth, poured into Goa, Daman, and Diu. As the Indians had contended the evacuation of Portuguese officials had led to the collapse of the existing regime. General Thaper, Chief of Army Staff, told his troops, "You are not going into Goa as conquerors but as protectors".⁶²

61. Schlesinger, p. 526. See also John Kenneth Galbraith, *Ambassador's Journal* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company), Chapter XIV.

62. *Hindu*, December 18, 1961, p. 1 and p. 8.

Despite previous utterances pledging to fight to the last man, the Portuguese offered virtually no resistance in most areas, and within thirty-six hours all opposition was overcome. The only hope of the defenders was to hold out long enough for a possible United Nations instigated cease fire.

Instead of the 12,500 troops they asserted opposed them, Indians took only 3,500 prisoners.⁶³ This discovery led to the claim of the Defence Minister that the United Arab Republic had prevented Portuguese troop reinforcements from passing through the Suez Canal⁶⁴—a fact which the Nasser Government would not confirm.⁶⁵ As a result Menon was forced to

admit the report "turned out not to be quite correct".⁶⁶

After the invasion Prime Minister Nehru claimed India derived no satisfaction from taking armed action, but he declared, "The Portuguese ultimately left no choice open to us".⁶⁷ According to him Indian troops had been instructed to employ a minimum amount of force and "the very swiftness of the end and the very few casualties on either side (between thirty-nine and seventy-five were killed depending on various reports) showed the correctness of the Indian assessment".⁶⁸ Nehru emphasized the personal struggle of conscience he underwent before consenting to the invasion, for he believed military action to be "contrary to my grain".⁶⁹ Hence, at its subsequent Patna Meeting, the Congress wanted to reassure the world that "developments in regard to Goa. .. cannot be regarded as a departure from this basic (Indian) policy" of the pacific settlement of international disputes.⁷⁰ While in New York, Defence Minister Menon explained how this could be, when he said, "We have not violated the spirit of the United Nations

63. *New York Times*, December 21, 1961, p. 3.

64. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1961, p. 1.

65. *Ibid.*, December 21, 1961, p. 17.

66. *Ibid.*, December 22, 1961, p. 3.

67. *Ibid.*, December 19, 1961, p. 1.

68. *Ibid.*, December 20, 1961, p. 1.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

70. *Congress Bulletin* 1962, Nos. 1-3 (January-March), p. 24.