CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The relations of Vijayanagar with all her neighbours — the Bahamani kingdom and her legal successors Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Golconda, Bidar and Berar kingdoms, Kalinga or Orissa kingdom and the Portuguese in Goa have been described in detail, in an effort to find out the motives behind the activities of Vijayanagar rulers in their wars or peaceful contacts with their neighbours. Apart from the motives of the Vijayanagara sovereigns, an interesting subject of study is the machinery they employed in the execution of their policy. If such a machinery existed, did it correspond to modern systems at least in its rudimentary form? It is to throw light on the evidence we have with regard to these matters that the study is undertaken. Vijayanagara's relations with Kondavidu, Rajahmundry and Kundukuru were of great importance, but these fall outside the time limits we have set for the study.

In any study of the relations of men or society with regard to their neighbours, the primary interest
of the subject would be to preserve oneself. The instinctive activity for one's perpetuation is bound to result in violence. Violent activity on a large scale is what is called war. Wars in plenty had to be waged more in defence of their state than to aggrandize over others by the rulers of Vijayanagara. The only exception to this statement was the activity of Ramaraya but even he wished the welfare of all though he wanted exclusive credit for achieving it. So the first principle of life i.e., urge for survival forms the basic principle of foreign policy of any state. Consequently a large part of this study on external relations of Vijayanagara has become a study of the wars fought by Vijayanagar either in defence of herself or to gain mastery of others.

King: - Vijayanagar empire was a vast and well knit empire comprising all India South of river Krishna in its heyday of glory. It had monarchial form of Government which implies that the king was the head of the administration and occupied a supreme position. In Amuktamalyada it is said that king was the most
important of the seven members of the body politic. But this did not mean that he was an autocrat. In Amuktamalyada Krishnadeva Raya reveals the paternal conception of the duties of the king and his government towards the people.

Vijayanagar like the other monarchial kingdoms had to face the problem of usurpation and dynastic change more than once. But it goes to the credit of the rulers of Vijayanagar that all of them had the interest of the empire close to their heart and tried to enhance the power and prestige of the empire. "A patriotic programme and not selfish greed was the motive behind usurpation."  

Council:— Though the king was supreme he had many checks on his authority and one of them was the Imperial Council much akin to the Mantri Parishad of Kautilya. It was a permanent body which influenced the policy of the king. According to Achyutaraya-bhynayam the council met in a hall which was called Venkata Vilasa Mantapa. It is perhaps the same building which Pass describes "Thence he (the king) goes to a building made in the shape of a porch without walls which has many pillars hung with cloth to the top and with the walls handsomely painted..... In such a building, he despatches his work with those men who bear office in his kingdom and govern his
The meetings of the council were confidential and all the matters pertaining to the state - internal as well as external - were discussed frankly. There were two categories of members in the council (a) the Prime Minister, Ministers Deputy Ministers and Heads of the Departments and (b) a few blood relations of the king.

Usually the council was dominated by one strong minister, the Pradhani. According to Krishnaraya-vijayam, Krishnadeva Raya consulted Saluva Timma affectionately called Appaji, after defeating the Muslims on the advisability of proceeding further into the Muslim territories and when the Minister advised him not to undertake such a rash task, the king accepted the advice.

But not on all occasions, the monarchs took the advice of the council - If Nuniz is to be believed, Krishnadeva Raya ignored the councils advice regarding the campaign he led into the territory of Ydalcao. When "the lords of his council" told the king that the reason for which he invaded the Bijapur territory was rather petty and that "he should think of what would be said and talked throughout the world"
he did not listen to their advice. Hence the coun-
cillors seeing him "unmoved from his determination
to make war" let him have his way and contented them
selves with making a few suggestions about the route
he was to take for the campaign."

Espionage:— The Vijayanagar rulers had a well or-
ganised system of espionage employed in foreign states
too. These secret agents travelled everywhere and
gathered information about the condition of the enemy
states and conveyed news to the king. The city was
expected to reside in the capital was to be conversant with languages and acquainted with the spies
of other countries.

In Rayavacakam it is said "It is customary
according to politico-moral maxims of Canakya that
envoys should report to their masters not only what
they have heard and seen, but their considered opinion
on affairs forming the subject matter of their report."  

The spies were employed even during the wars
and this is testified by Nuniz when he speaks of a
few spies who were like scouts and had to spy out
the country before the army and move at a distance
of three or four leagues in front."
Spies travelled incognito and in disguise. In Rayavacacam the spies report to the Raya that "We joined the pilgrims who were going to Ramasetu from the Bhagirathi and having crossed the water (river Krishna) in their company we assumed our normal habitments and reached the city."¹⁰

The spies were given gifts, betel leaves and nuts (Tambula) and sometimes even cash after their audience with the king. This was apart from the salary that they regularly received from the king.

Ambassadors: Vijayanagara kings also appointed permanent ambassadors to the courts of the neighbouring states. In Rayavacacam the activities of these ambassadors or sthanapathis are described in detail. For instance Rayavacacam describes in detail about the sthanapathis who were assembled in the court of Bijapur and who discussed amongst themselves the strength of their respective kingdoms and also the measures to be taken by each of their kings in view of the impendending attack on the Gajapathi kingdom by Krishnadeva Raya. The sthanapathis mentioned are Mudda Pandit of Golconda, Niladri Pandit of Ahmednagar, Subuddhi of Gajapathis.¹¹
At another place while describing the policy of Bheda (split) employed by Krishnadeva Raya before attacking Cuttack, the name of Kamalanabhayya is mentioned. He is said to be the ambassador of Vijayanagar stationed in the Gajapatis court. 12

From the above account it becomes clear that the practice of appointing permanent ambassadors to the neighbouring countries was in vogue.

The ambassadors were shown great respect wherever they went for they were the accredited representatives of their respective kings. Krishnadeva Raya says that "the frienship of an enemy king could be brought about by honouring and rewarding his ambassador"13 Krishnadeva Raya generally followed his precept. He gave many gifts even to the messengers who brought the letters from the Sultan of Berar, Bidar and Golconda in which they threatened to join the Adil Shah of Bijapur to help him in recovering his lost territories unless Krishnadeva Raya of his own accord restored them to him.14

According to Krishnadeva Raya a frank talk was necessary with an ambassador. "A king should freely converse in his court with the ambassadors of kings of neighbouring states and speak to them about admi-
Envoy - Apart from the Sthanapathis or ambassadors, diplomatic agents were sent to foreign courts whenever necessary. Their object was either to make acquaintance with them or to renew and strengthen old friendships. In 1511 Krishnadeva Raya sent his ambassador to the Portuguese court "in order to establish a perpetual friendship with the king of Portugal." This was answered by a counter embassy from the king of Portugal who was anxious to secure the friendship of Vijayanagar. In 1601 Venkata II sent his ambassadors to the court of Ayres De Saladana the new Portuguese viceroy.

These diplomatic agents were different from the permanent ambassadors in the sense that these agents had only a temporary work delegated to them. Sometimes even before the envoy returned to the capital another envoy was sent in order expedite the matter or to get specific assurance of help. These diplomatic agents took handsome gifts to the kings they visited as a token of friendship.

Krishnadeva Raya also received envoys from the other States with specific purpose of securing his
friendship. Mention can be made in this instance of the embassy of Friar Luis in 1510 AD. From his embassy we come to know that an envoy could get more than one audience with the king. But after this, he could leave the kingdom only with the permission of the host king. Since this was not granted to Friar Luis he had to stay in the capital from January to November 1510 AD.

Besides political missions, Vijayanagar Kings also received religious groups, travellers and traders. Mention can be made of the Jesuit missionaries who frequented the court of Venkata II and explained the basic tenets of Christianity to the emperor. They were received cordially and Venkata II had excellent rapport with them.

Right from its inception in 1336 AD Vijayanagar had belligerent neighbours to contend with. From that time onwards till the final eclipse of the empire in 1672 AD, Vijayanagar had to wage wars - sometimes for glory and territorial acquisition and sometimes for survival with its neighbours.

By 1500 AD Vijayanagar was a powerful kingdom extending from the river Krishna downwards till the seas. Only on the coastal areas of Western India was its hold slack. On the other hand Bahamani empire
had disintegrated to be replaced by five energetic Sultanates in its place. Thus there was no respite from them even now for Vijayanagar. Golconda and Bijapur being her immediate neighbours wars with them ar were common. These states tried to augment the states power in relation to their neighbours by territorial aggrandizement. This brought them into clash with Vijayanagar.

Another factor of study is the validity of the theory advanced by Prof. Sherwani regarding the urge for balance of power in the actions of the Sultans of Deccan which is said to have played an important role. No state wanted the ascendency of any one state to such an extent as to be a cause of threat to the other state. This factor was responsible for the alliances and counter alliances that were formed during the period between 1500-1565 AD. This was also one of the reasons for the Deccan Sultans to join a league against the rising power of Rama Raya in 1565 AD.

This principle of Balance of Power led the Rulers of South India to form alliances and counter alliances in such a way that they considered their contiguous neighbours as their enemies and neighbours of their enemies as their friends.
If this concept of balance of power was understood and adhered to by the kings of that age, certainly Rama Raya would not have thought of taking up the challenge of the powers of the league without roping in friends on his side. Many of the arguments advanced by the scholars making the Balance of Power, as the ideal after which the Sultans had striven hard are not supported by hard evidence. If the ruler of Golconda succeeded in roping in others on his side, it was the fundamentalist attitude of the Sultans that helped him to achieve his desire.

Geography too played an important role in the formation of foreign policy of Vijayanagar. The wars with Bijapur were generally for the purpose of conquering Raichur Doab a tract of land which was not only fertile but was also strategically located. This desire of both Vijayanagar and Bijapur to possess this land led to frequent wars between them.

The policy of Rays was also to acquire natural frontiers for their empire and hence their wars with Bijapur and the Gajapatis for having river Krishna as the natural boundary between them.

Economic considerations and interests was another factor which influenced the foreign policy of Vijayanagar. The dealings with Portuguese fall under
this category. The continuous supply of horses was the constant source of worry for the Rayas. So, the arrival of the Portuguese was viewed with interest by them. But while establishing friendly relations with them, Vijayanagar rulers were in no mood to supplicate themselves before them. No doubt they overlooked certain indiscretions by the Portuguese but did not enter into such a treaty with them in order to increase Portuguese hold over Vijayanagar. In Amuktamalyada Krishinadeva Raya says -

"Acquire the friendship of merchants of distant islands who import elephants and horses, by granting them villages, spacious houses in the capital, frequent audience presents and (facilities to secure) good profits so that the (elephants and horses) may not reach your enemies"\textsuperscript{16}

This Rajaniti seems to have been followed to the letter by the Rayas towards the Portuguese.

The Vijayanagar Kingdom stood as the symbol for Hindu Culture and religion for more than two centuries. But this did not mean that the Rayas were religious bigots or that they persecuted devotees of other religions. On the contrary we have evidence to show that the people of different faiths including
the Mussalmans, being given full freedom to practice their religious customs - The urge to preserve and protect Hindu religion inspired the Rayas to strive for a strong and well knit empire, so that it could withstand the onslaught of the Muhammadans - But it does not mean that it was at the cost of other religions, that Vijayanagar sought to preserve its Hindu identity. Rama Raya is the target of many a historian and they allege that he insulted the Mussalmans, showed disrespect to Quran and burnt and plundered the Masjids. This charge is not true. All the wars that Rama Raya fought were in the company of Ali Adil Shah or Ibrahim Qutb Shah. What stopped them from preventing Rama Raya there and then? The most important piece of evidence which disproves the charge is that Syed Ali Taba Taba, the court Historian of the Nizamshahis in whose territories these outrages were said to have been committed, does not allude to them at all. It is only Ferishta, writing about 70 years after the incidents had occurred. Refers to them and paints Rama Raya in black colours - This lead of Ferishta is taken by the Modern Scholars too which is unfortunate - The actual reason for the sultans to join in a league against Rama Raya was the common hatred they nurtured against him because of his over-
whelming pride and ascending strength. Religious sentiments were roused in order to bring under one flag the warning and strifing Deccan Sultans with the sole purpose of crushing the rising power of Rama Raya - Thus, it becomes clear religious ideology was never used by the kings of Vijayanagar in order to rouse the masses against the Mussalmans nor was it the main factor to shape the foreign policy of the Rayas.

It was mainly the economic and geographical factors which shaped the foreign policy of Vijayanagar. In the ultimate analysis the exingencies of the time compulsions of the situation and above all the personality and character of the person at the helm of affairs determined the formulation of foreign policy of the empire.
NOTES

1. Canto 4 : Verse 206

2. P. Sree Rama Sarma, Saluva Dynasty p 192

3. Sources p 162

4. F E pp 241-42

5. T V Mahalingam - Administration and social life under Vijayanagar - p 29

6. Sources p 131

7. F E pp 309-10

8. Rayavacakam p p 61-64

9. F E p - 313

10. Rayavacakam p p 95 - 109

11. Ibid p p 46 - 51

12. Ibid p p 95 - 109

13. Amuktamalyada - Canto 4, verse 225

14. F E p - 331

15. Amuktamalyada Canto 4, verse 259

16. Amuktamalyada - Canto 1, Verse 204