INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy is an inseparable component of a country’s foreign relations. Defined as a process of negotiation to promote national interest, it is only too often identified with a sovereign state. A careful study of the anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa would, however, show that the colonised countries have tried to use the tools of diplomacy to free their land from the colonial yoke.

From the time of Har Dayal in the early decades of this century, to the present day Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the colonised peoples, seeking justice and independence, have pursued diplomatic and quasi-diplomatic activities to achieve freedom from an alien rule. The nationalist diplomacy has relied on the time-tested strategy of highlighting through propaganda the plight of one’s country in other countries or at an international forum and amassing support—moral, economic and political, for its liberation.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines diplomacy as “the management of international relations by negotiations; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys”. Harold Nicolson in his study of the subject accepts this definition. This definition
however, reflects a narrow concept of diplomacy. Seen in an interdisciplinary perspective diplomacy must be perceived as the whole process of managing relations with other states and international institutions.

In the case of the anti-colonial freedom struggles the ultimate national interest was the accomplishment of independence. The diplomatic and quasi-diplomatic activities of sections of the nationalist elites abroad exemplify a symbolic representation of the national interests of the colonised nations. These non-state transnational actors, who evolved their own diplomacy, carried out the role of unofficial envoys of their respective countries.

For the purposes of this study we understand diplomacy in its multilateral form, as the conduct of international relations and their adjustment between and among several international actors, mainly within the framework of intergovernmental organisations. These relations cover those between governments, relations between international organisations, and groups themselves. Their management and adjustment takes place within the framework of conferences and meetings and also through functional cooperation and joint diplomatic ventures.

Keeping this significant aspect of diplomacy in view, the present thesis primarily focuses on the diplomatic and
quasi-diplomatic activities of the nationalist elites of Afro-Asian countries in their struggles against colonialism. The three case studies, that of India, Indonesia and Algeria, taken from three different regions of the world, with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and colonised by three different European powers, the British, the Dutch and the French respectively, offer considerable variety and are chosen to make the study wider in its observation and broader in perspectives.

The diplomatic methods adopted for the liberation of their lands differed from country to country. The Indian nationalist elite under the Congress party made constitutional agitation the basis of the anti-British struggle. The party leadership had a firm belief that only under a framework of liberal-constitutionalism could India gain her independence from the British. Significant deviations from the posture of the diplomacy of the Congress party were tried with some success, by men like Har Dayal, M. N. Roy and Subhas Chandra Bose. These strands of the Indian nationalist elite, who were disgruntled with the Congress moderation, left a definite imprint on the formulation of India's diplomacy during her freedom struggle.

In the case of Indonesia, the national liberation movement took shape under the banner of Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) founded by Sukarno in 1927. The Indonesian
leadership was dominated by an array of leaders like Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir who had to grapple with the diplomatic challenges with which they were confronted in their struggle against the Dutch. The proclamation of the Indonesian Republic by the nationalists after the Japanese withdrawal from Indonesia was an astute diplomatic move of the nationalists and much of their diplomacy was geared to resist the Dutch efforts to reclaim their colonial territory and to seek support for independence from the friendly Asian nations.

The Algerian national struggle adopted a more militant line of action. The National Liberation Front (FLN) led by Ben Bella was the mainstay of Algerian freedom movement. The diplomatic attitude adopted by this north African country was characterised by its overt belligerent tone. The Algerian leadership believed in the guerilla warfare and its diplomacy was exercised in taking recourse to attaining arms and ammunition from friendly neighbouring countries along with securing sanctuaries there.

In all the three cases the nationalist elites, although not identical in their ideological orientation, showed a certain attitudinal similarity as far as advocating the case for their country's freedom at the various international forums is concerned. Thus conference diplomacy became an important component of the
anti-colonial struggle. From the earliest stirring of anti-colonialism in the colonies, the nationalist elites realised the importance of conference diplomacy. International conferences provided the platform to coordinate at an international scale the anti-colonial struggle.

Most notable among these were the Brussels Congress of 1927, the Asian Relations Conference of 1947, the Bandung Conference of the Afro-Asian nations of 1955 and the Belgrade summit of the Non-aligned of 1961. The nationalist elites of the countries of Asia and Africa tried to highlight their aims and aspirations at all these international conferences. This trend of conference diplomacy gained additional impetus with the emergence of the United Nations Organisation. At this international diplomatic gathering the case for the independence of India, Indonesia and Algeria was put forward from time to time by some articulate sections from these countries and from friendly foreign nations.

Several questions emerge in the context of diplomatic postures adopted and strategies devised by the nationalist elites during the freedom struggle. How does a liberal elite negotiate with the colonial powers? What is the attitude of a militant radical elite in this regard? How does a country under foreign subjugation muster enough favourable international public opinion and exploit it for
achieving her diplomatic ends? What is the diplomacy of acquiring arms and ammunition from friendly neighbouring countries and securing sanctuaries there? What is the role of propaganda diplomacy in the liberation struggle? How significant is the diplomacy through conference? What is the role of symbolic diplomacy in freedom struggles? Is there a discernible diplomatic trend which can be traced from the study of the freedom struggles of the countries in question? In the following pages an effort is made to find answer to these and other related questions.

It is hoped that by delving deep into the matrix of diplomatic interactions among the Afro-Asian nations and with their colonial rulers, valuable insights can be gained in comprehending different facets of the evolution of Afro-Asian diplomatic style. This in turn would provide an understanding of the nature and dimensions of the Third World diplomacy in the contemporary world politics.

Although several academic and non-academic attempts have been made to recapitulate and analyse the freedom struggle of the countries in question, some of which are within a comparative framework, the diplomatic aspects of the freedom struggles have remained largely unexplored. By devoting itself exclusively to the diplomatic aspects of the above mentioned three freedom movements, the present
The study has endeavoured to fill the existing gap. The methodology adopted in the study has two aspects i.e. the politico-historical analysis and comparative case studies. Adequate care has been taken to identify the specific features of the negotiating techniques of the country in question. For drawing conclusions, the study has adopted the empirical method of interpreting from the available historical data.

The study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides a historical background and perspective to comprehend the emergence of nationalist diplomacy in the colonies. The impact of Westernisation and the emergence of nationalist elites who shaped the diplomacy of the freedom struggles in the colonies, and the various international factors that accelerated anti-colonial sentiment, are discussed in this chapter.

In the second chapter an effort has been made to define nationalist diplomacy. This chapter discusses the strategies and methods of nationalist diplomacy namely, propaganda diplomacy, diplomacy at the colonial metropolitan centre, and symbolic diplomacy. The impact of the various anti-colonial international conferences, which had a bearing on the nationalist diplomacy, is also considered in the chapter.
The third chapter examines the various dimensions of the diplomacy of the Indian freedom struggle. By its sheer size, the time span of anti-colonial struggle, and by its variety, the diplomacy of Indian national movement created precedents for the anti-colonial movements in other parts of Asia and Africa. Although the Indian freedom movement largely adhered to constitutional agitation, many sections of the nationalist elite advocated armed struggle against the British colonialism. The contribution of these strands of the freedom movement to the nationalist diplomacy is also examined in the chapter.

The diplomacy of the freedom struggle of Indonesia against the Dutch colonialism is discussed in the fourth chapter. The diplomatic methods adopted by the Indonesian nationalist elite were in many respects similar to the ones tested in the Indian nationalist diplomacy. The juxtaposition of military and diplomatic dimensions of the Indonesian nationalist movement was finally successful in ending the Dutch colonial rule in that country.

In the fifth chapter the militant aspects of the anti-colonial diplomacy, as reflected in the Algerian nationalist diplomacy, are discussed. The Algerian war of liberation against the French rule signified the growing militancy of anti-colonial movement. By resorting to armed struggle the FLN led Algeria to independence and created the precedence for a militant radical nationalist
diplomacy which found echo in several subsequent anti-colonial movements in the Third World.

The sixth chapter analyses, in a comparative framework, the diplomacy of Indian, Indonesian and Algerian freedom struggles. It draws parallels in the diplomatic methods and behaviour of the three nationalist movements. An effort is also made in the chapter to establish possible linkages of diplomatic methods and strategies, evident in the diplomacy of the three case studies, with the nationalist diplomacy of the contemporary freedom movements such as the Palestinian demand for a homeland, Tibetan struggle for independence and liberation movements in southern Africa. The appendix summarises the results of this comparative study and attempts to set out a typology of nationalist diplomacy.

The study of the diplomacy of Indian, Indonesian and Algerian freedom struggles provides us valuable insights into the evolution of Third World diplomacy with its underlining theme of anti-colonialism. This sentiment of anti-colonialism has evolved in Third World diplomacy. Combating colonialism in all its manifestations has been the central concern of Third World diplomacy. In political terms this has reflected in the Third World championing, mainly through the United Nations, the cause of decolonisation and development.
In economic terms the Third World diplomatic efforts, articulated in the form of demands for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), have been to restructure the international economic system to check the economic colonialism. In socio-cultural terms the Third World diplomacy has strived to check cultural colonialism with demands for a reformed New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). The contemporary Third World diplomacy thus reflects, in policy and sentiment, the profound experiences of anti-colonialism which coalesced during the diplomacy of the freedom struggles.