CHAPTER FOUR

THE DIPLOMACY OF THE INDONESIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE
In this chapter we shall examine the diplomacy of the Indonesian freedom struggle against Dutch colonial rule. The Indonesian nationalist diplomacy exhibits interesting parallels with the Indian nationalist diplomacy. Like the Indian, the Indonesian nationalist diplomacy was moulded by a Western-educated elite, who borrowed many political strategies from the Indian nationalist diplomacy. The revolt against the Dutch colonial rule was led by the Indonesian National Party (PNI) which was modelled after the Indian National Congress.

Another crucial factor that influenced the Indonesian nationalist diplomacy was the Second World War. The Dutch flight from their prized colony and the Japanese occupation of Indonesia during the War and their support for nationalist cause, as in case of Indian National Army, encouraged a radical diplomacy that believed in an armed struggle to fight the colonial rule.

What distinguished the Indonesian nationalist diplomacy from the Indian, however, was its twin-track approach to anti-colonial struggle. The first track of this strategy was represented by the followers of the policy of Diplomasi (negotiations) and the second track advocated an armed insurrection against the Dutch rule. Freedom was achieved, as we shall see, through a combination of both
these strands of nationalist movement, though Diplomasi proved in the end the more effective.

In the later years of the anti-colonial struggle after the Japanese defeat in the War, the nationalist leadership proclaimed an independent Republic, and henceforth the nationalist diplomacy was used to gain international support and recognition for this Indonesian provisional government. This was done, as is discussed in the present chapter, through diplomatic and quasi-diplomatic activities in the metropolitan centre, propaganda diplomacy, participation in international conferences, exploiting Cold War rivalries to gain U. S. support and activating diplomatic support from newly independent countries like India.

Indonesia attained independence on 27 December 1949 as the outcome of an international conference at the Hague at which the government of the Netherlands agreed to transfer sovereignty. Independence had been proclaimed four years previously on August 17 1945, days after the surrender of Japan, the wartime occupying power of Indonesia. From the moment of the independence proclamation, the embryo Republic of Indonesia was confronted by a Dutch challenge to its very survival. The Indonesian diplomacy took the initial form of attempts to secure international recognition in order to deny the restoration of the Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia.
Underlying the conduct of the diplomacy of the Indonesian nationalist movement, was a distinctive approach to the attainment of independence. The nationalist leadership did not rule out the armed resistance but independence was sought and obtained primarily through diplomatic process involving third-party mediation. The diplomacy of the Indonesian nationalist movement was oriented towards strengthening the international identity of the Republic through the medium of the United Nations and the support from the newly independent Asian nations.1

The experience of attaining independence in this manner demonstrated the utility of a diplomatic technique which was employed subsequently in resolving other international disputes. In addition, the bitter encounter with the Dutch, and an evident ambivalence towards Indonesia's claim to independence on the part of the major powers, had a formative influence on the international outlook of political leaders after the transfer of sovereignty. The evolution of this international outlook, a common set of attitudes towards the outside world by those Indonesians involved in the making of foreign policy was an important factor in the diplomacy of the freedom struggle.

---

1 The most comprehensive account of Indonesia's freedom struggle is to be found in George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, 1952) Other general works supplementing Kahin's, which were consulted for this chapter, are: J. S. Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution 1940-1945* (Camberwell, 1974) and J. S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India* (London, 1967).
Two distinct modes of nationalist diplomacy were practiced during the Indonesian freedom movement. The first mode was represented by the advocates of the policy of Diplomasi (negotiations). This was the dominant mode and became the instrument used, in the main, to secure the eventual transfer of sovereignty. The second mode, that of Perjuangan (struggle), or the display of fighting spirit, believed that independence could be secured only through an armed confrontation with the colonial power. This view played an important part in sustaining the early momentum of the nationalist movement and, ultimately, in frustrating Dutch attempts to impose a military solution. Despite the divergent nature of these modes, their protagonists had a meeting point in shared experience of anti-colonial feeling which carried over into independence.

THE ORIGINS OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA:

The diplomacy of the Indonesian national movement was intimately linked to the genesis of the idea of nationalism in this "world's richest island empire" and the nature of the leadership of the freedom struggle against the Dutch colonialism.

The beginning of the twentieth century brought a turning of the tide against colonialism in Asia and a nationalist movement awakened the Indonesian nation and sparked the struggle against the colonial system. The rise of
nationalism as a potent force in Indonesia is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. While the beginnings of the Indonesian nationalism probably go back as far as the initial period of Dutch penetration of the islands, active and organised resistance to Dutch rule dates from the first two decades of this century.2

The first organised and articulate expression of Indonesian nationalism came from a student group. The Budi Utomo (High Endeavour), founded by two Indonesian medical students in 1908, was the cradle of the Indonesian nationalist movement. The Budi Utomo aspired both to help the Indonesian peasantry and to create a movement that would embrace the whole archipelago.

Another major nationalist organisation, Sarekat Islam, became the first to achieve a mass following. Initially formed as a merchants protective association, Sarekat Islam was reorganised in 1912 among more clear nationalist lines. Riding the crest of a popular Islamic modernist movement, the new organisation showed that Islam could be used as a rallying point for Indonesian solidarity against the Dutch rule.

Communists In Nationalist Movement:
On the Left, the establishment of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1920 by Tan Malaka, a Western-educated

2 Kahin, n. 1, p. 64.
school teacher, provided a new ideological element to the anti-Dutch movement in Indonesia. The party demanded total independence from the Dutch rule and to achieve this aim started a massive propaganda war. Through the pages of its Dutch-language newspaper, *het vrije woord* (The Free Word), the PKI tended to galvanise the radical elements in the Indonesian nationalist elite. It was this elite with a socialist worldview that was to pursue the more militant diplomacy in the anti-colonial movement.

The PKI became affiliated to the Communist International, drawing considerable moral and intellectual support from the alliance with Moscow. Through its vitality, the dedication and discipline of its leaders and cadres, and most important, the radical tone of its powerful propaganda the PKI became an important force in the Indonesian nationalist movement.3

Within a few years PKI had attracted nearly 3000 members. Seriously miscalculating the depth of its popular support, however, the PKI launched a premature rebellion against the Dutch in 1926-27. The poorly planned and executed revolt ended in a crushing defeat for the communists and a destruction of their organisation in Indonesia.

---

Rise of Sukarno and Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI):

To fill in the void in the nationalist movement a new much-better equipped party modelled after the Indian National Congress came to the forefront of Indonesian struggle against the Dutch. The Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), founded in 1927 under the chairmanship of a dynamic young engineer named Sukarno, posed a formidable threat to the Dutch colonial regime. Largely as a result of Sukarno’s exceptional oratorical skills and charismatic leadership, the PNI soon became the foremost nationalist party in Indonesia. Sukarno envisaged the party’s role thus:

The PNI takes up the inner essence of the colonial question, tackles the colonial question directly in its fundamentals, takes up the basic philosophy of the colonial question, that is to say- in every colonial system there is a conflict of interest between the imperialist and the native people.4

In 1927 the PPPKI (Permufakatan Perhimpunan Perhimpunan Kebangasaan Indonesia) or Federation of Indonesian Peoples’ Associations was founded. It tried to popularise the idea of an all-Indonesian nationalism as a common denominator for the struggle against the Dutch colonialism.

Alarmed by the growing strength of the PNI, and especially by the anti-colonialist overtones of the movement, the

Dutch authorities resorted to large-scale repression. Sukarno was arrested in 1929 and PNI was outlawed. Mohammed Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir, two Western-educated and extremely talented Indonesian leaders came forward to fill in the political vacuum in the nationalist movement. Unlike the mass-based PNI, they advocated the creation of small, well-educated cadres that would slowly grow into bigger associations. These highly trained cadres would then serve as the vanguard of the freedom movement.5

The Dutch authorities were quick to grasp the threat of this so-called 'new' PNI. In February 1934 the Dutch officials arrested both Hatta and Sjahrir and exiled them to the island of Banda, where they remained until 1942. Meanwhile, Sukarno, who was released from jail in 1931 joined a new political party in 1932, Partindo. The party followed the policy of the old PNI and soon became a mass-based party. The Dutch arrested Sukarno again in 1933 and exiled him to one of the outer islands where he would remain until 1942.

Between the early thirties and the destruction of the Dutch colonial state by the Japanese in 1942, the Indonesian nationalist movement showed signs of weakness.  

5 For the intellectual testament of these two talented Indonesian leaders see: Sutan Sjahrir, Out of Exile (New York, 1949) and Mohammed Hatta, Past and Future (Ithaca, 1960).
in the face of Dutch oppression. In political terms, the anti-colonial movement went through a series of false starts without much success. The Dutch regime entered the most repressive phase of its history.6

NATIONALIST DIPLOMACY IN METROPOLITAN CENTRE:

As the nationalist movement was gaining new ground in Indonesia a group of Indonesian students studying in the Netherlands organised themselves into political groupings to solicit support for the independence of their country. Indonesian students in Holland established an Indonesian Society the *Indische Vereeniging* (Indies Association), established in 1908, which was shortly to produce the main alternative to Sukarno's style of secular nationalism. Originally founded for the benefits of all who were connected with Netherlands India, the Society later became more and more politicised, producing some of the most prominent leaders of the nationalist movement.7

In 1922 this organisation for Indonesian students in Netherlands was renamed *Perhimpunan Indonesia* (Indonesian Association) (PI) and became more involved in political questions. The exiled PKI leader Tan Malaka, among

---


others spoke at the meetings of the Indonesian Association and the organisation moved towards more radical direction. Two of the main leaders of this organisation were Mohammed Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir. Hatta was to become both Vice-President and Prime Minister of Indonesia and Sjahrir was to become Prime Minister. Two other future prime ministers, Ali Sastromidjojo and Sukiman Wirjosandjojo were also prominent members of the group active in the Netherlands.8

In ideological terms the members of the Perhimpunan Indonesia were mostly socialists who accepted much of the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of colonialism. Indonesian communists residing in the metropolitan country set up a group in Amsterdam in 1923 which later became the Foreign Bureau of the Communist Party of Indonesia.

The bureau ensured contacts between the party and the Comintern executive committee. What is more, it launched vigorous propaganda activity through the Indonesian Seamen's Union which illegally brought communist literature into Indonesia. The Union published a monthly magazine called Pandu Merah (Red Pilot). Reflecting the

8 ibid, p. 47. Also see for a good discussion on the Indonesian nationalist activities in the Netherlands Robert Van Niel, The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite (The Hague, 1970), pp. 222-227.
viewpoint of the Foreign Bureau, the magazine wrote on 15 July 1924:

The oppressed peoples must maintain contact with the Comintern because they and the Comintern have one and the same enemy—international capitalism and international imperialism.9

Soon the organisation became a powerful weapon in the struggle for Indonesian liberation movement. In September 1927 Hatta and other Indonesian students were arrested on a charge of encouraging armed resistance to Dutch rule in Indonesia. After five months in prison they were tried in the Hague and acquitted, much to the embarrassment of the Dutch authorities.

Hatta had used his defence speech to make a sweeping denunciation of Dutch rule and justification of Indonesian nationalism. The trial was a triumph for Hatta and his supporters and their national and international reputation was established. Besides, the issues raised at the hearing helped make the Indonesian case a domestic debating point in the Netherlands.

Its freedom increased, the Perhimpunan became in many ways the mouthpiece for the Indonesian nationalist movement which had been bound and gagged in Indonesia by the

colonial authorities. The Society became a training ground for the nationalist elite. Returning to their native country after graduating, its members had no difficulty in obtaining leading posts in the nationalist movement.

At a time when the mainstream national movement in Indonesia had suffered set-backs, the leading role for struggle against Dutch colonialism was increasingly shifting to the Communist Party of Holland. Under the influence of news from Indonesia, the Perhimpunan Indonesia became radicalised. In November 1925, it sent a "resolution of support" to the Comintern executive, which said that the PI supported the Comintern tactics in relation to the national liberation movement.10

Aware of its position, the PI became affiliated to the League Against Colonialism, thus putting the Indonesian independence issue in the context of the world struggle against imperialism. Later in 1931, the PI was to split when Moscow-oriented communists gained control of the organisation expelling both Hatta and Sjahrrir.11

With Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrrir in exile, the Dutch had effectively seized the initiative from the nationalists by


11 Brackman, n. 3, p. 63.
the mid-thirties. On the eve of the Second World War Dutch repression had successfully subdued and controlled the Indonesian nationalist movement. Indonesian leaders felt that their willingness to cooperate against fascism and the drain on Dutch strength which the war would bring should inspire the Netherlands to grant Indonesia some form of autonomy.

On May 10, 1940, Hitler invaded the Netherlands and the Dutch government fled to exile in London. Thereafter it would make no change in Indonesia's status while the war was in progress. On the same day, martial law was declared in Indonesia and all public political meetings were banned.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION AND THE NATIONALIST DIPLOMACY:

The outbreak of the war in the Pacific in 1941 profoundly affected developments in Indonesia. Intent on seizing the rich raw materials of the Dutch colony, especially its oil, the Japanese invaded and overran Indonesia in February and March 1942, beginning an occupation that lasted until the Japanese surrender to the Allies in August 1945. This relatively brief period of Japanese rule initiated momentous changes in Indonesian society, most significantly, it proved to be a watershed in the history of the Indonesian fight against the Dutch colonial rule.

The three and half years of Japanese occupation constitute
one of the most crucial phases of modern Indonesian history. Before the Japanese invasion no serious challenge to the Dutch rule in Indonesia existed but by the time the Japanese surrendered there had been so many extraordinary changes that the Indonesian revolution was possible. The Japanese contributed directly to these developments. The political and military compulsions of the war, the need for manning administrative operations made the Japanese involve Indonesians in the running of their country. They indoctrinated, trained and armed many of the younger Indonesians and gave older leaders opportunities to forge links with the masses. Throughout the archipelago they politicised Indonesians down to the village level both by intention and by subjecting them to suppression.

Welcoming the Dutch humiliation, Indonesian nationalists generally greeted their new overlords as liberators. Expediency led the new Japanese administration to effect a rise in socio-economic status. They interned the entire Dutch population of Indonesia, opening up thousands of administrative and technical jobs to be filled by Indonesians. This new mobility became a significant factor after the war. Now there was a large class in Indonesia whose rapid elevation in status would be threatened by a return to Dutch rule and pre-war colonial conditions.12

12 Sjahrir, n. 5, p. 237.
A primary Japanese aim was the restructuring and redirecting of the Indonesian economy in order to support Japan's war effort and its plans for long term economic domination of East and Southeast Asia. The immediate aims were quite explicit:

- to plan for the prompt development and utilization of military resources in the occupied areas and to look to strengthening an augmenting the Empire's war potential. 

Japanese policies were developed to whip up anti-colonial sentiments in Indonesia. Western influences were destroyed with the banning of Dutch and English languages. Since Japanese language was little known this led to the growth of the **Bhasa Indonesia** which became the vehicle for nationalist propaganda. An intense propaganda campaign was started to make Japanese look as brothers in arms. This anti-Dutch propaganda campaign did stiffen anti-colonial sentiments throughout Indonesian society and did contribute to the spread of the idea of an Indonesian nation among the masses.

In order to achieve a rapprochement with the Indonesians, the Japanese turned to those nationalist leaders who

---

commanded wide-spread support—Sukarno and Hatta. Having freed them from their Dutch-imposed exiles, the Japanese authorities pushed these nationalists forward as sponsors of Japanese-Indonesian cooperation. One can hardly believe that the two nationalists were under any illusions regarding the role in which they were cast, the language, and actions of the Japanese were too obvious to be ignored. But Sukarno and Hatta had to consider what was best from the point of view of the struggle for independence.14

On the Left of the nationalist spectrum was Sjahrir, who took a broader view of world events and was distrustful of the radical slogans used by the Japanese and refused to cooperate with them. Since it was not possible for these Leftists to express their views in public, they were forced to meet clandestinely and work underground. Sjahrir build up a cadre of nationalists working under a network that would ensure to make contact with the Allies.

The diplomacy of the Indonesian nationalists was geared to take maximum political advantage from the war and the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. Japanese promised concessions to Indonesian nationalists in return for an

Indonesian commitment to Tokyo's war effort. Sukarno and Hatta, accepted this quid pro quo when Japan assured them that Indonesia would be granted independence in the near future.

This political arrangement between the Japanese and the prominent Indonesian nationalists later led both Indonesians and Dutch adversaries of Sukarno and Hatta to accuse them of collaboration with the fascist forces. But in reality, Sukarno and Hatta were not dupes of Japanese propaganda, as some of their political rivals charged, but sincere nationalists who seized a unique opportunity to further accelerate the Indonesian freedom movement.

Even their bitterest critic at that time, Sjahrir, who was leading the anti-Japanese underground movement, recognised that Sukarno and Hatta agreed to do "everything legally possible to give the nationalist struggle a broader legal scope, and at the same time secretly support the revolutionary resistance."15

The real value in terms of the nationalist diplomacy of Sukarno's and Hatta's wartime activity was that, while ostensibly rallying Indonesian behind the Japanese effort, they were actually spreading and intensifying nationalist ideas among the populace and simultaneously forcing the Japanese to make concessions that eventually led to

15 Sjahrir, n. 5, p. 246.
self-government. Using all means of modern communication including radio broadcasting facilities, printing press, wire services etc., that the Japanese had placed at their disposal, the Indonesian nationalists carried the message of freedom throughout the country, heightening the consciousness of the masses and preparing the way for the independence struggle that was becoming more and more politicised.16

In March 1945 as the Japanese war effort began to experience signs of weakness, the Japanese formed an Indonesian Independence Preparatory Committee (PPKI) under the chairmanship of Sukarno for the transfer of power from Japanese military authorities. August 24 was set as the day when the Japanese would officially confer independence on the Indonesian nation. The underground Indonesian leaders however, fearing that Indonesia would appear to be a Japanese-created puppet state, prevailed on Sukarno and Hatta to make their own declaration of independence without waiting for Japanese approval.17

PROCLAMATION OF NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT: SYMBOLIC DIPLOMACY

As was done by sections of Indian nationalists, the Indonesians also gave importance to the symbolic diplomacy


by proclaiming a provisional nationalist government in their fight against the Dutch. This was done with a view to institutionalise the nationalist diplomacy and to enhance the international presence of the Indonesian nationalists.

Domestically, the proclamation of a nationalist government was meant to boost the morale of the nationalist ranks. On August 17, 1945, years of the Indonesian national struggle culminated in Sukarno and Hatta’s proclamation of independence. The declaration read simply:

We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare Indonesia’s independence. Matters concerning the transfer of power and other matters will be executed in an orderly manner and in the shortest possible time. It was signed: In the name of the Indonesian People, Sukarno-Hatta. 18

The next few years were to show to the nationalist leaders that even with Japanese military government removed, the nation was determined to defend independence for which it had striven so long. And the diplomacy of the nationalists was geared to achieve this. Sukarno and Hatta nominated the first 135 members of the Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (KNIP) (National Central Committee of Indonesia) which in its first session adopted a

resolution declaring that the Indonesian people were
determined to defend its independence by every means.
Sukarno also announced the formation of a single party
which would be the mainspring of the struggle in every
aspect and defend the Republic.19

With the Japanese surrender to the Allies, a clash between
the newly proclaimed Republic of Indonesia and the
recently freed kingdom of the Netherlands followed.
Within the nationalist groups there were differences among
forces of armed struggle (Perjuangan) and those of
Diplomasi; between the communists, represented by the
return to Indonesia of the veteran communist Tan Malaka,
and the Rightist forces, and between Islam and secular
forces, constraining a clear-cut policy to face the Dutch.

Diplomacy of 'Symbolic' Government:
The diplomacy of the nationalists was now pursuing the
following three objectives:

1. To seek international recognition of Indonesia's
   independence as proclaimed by Sukarno and Hatta on August
   17, 1945.

2. To defend Indonesia's freedom against the encroachment
   of the Dutch government, which was trying by use of the
   military force to impose a new style of colonial rule in
   Indonesia.

3. To conceive a course of diplomacy for settlement of
   the Dutch-Indonesian dispute by negotiation and
   accommodation, by applying to a third power to render her
   good offices as mediator, or by submitting the dispute to
   the jurisdiction of the United Nations for its assistance
   in reaching a negotiated solution.

19 ibid, p. 95.
To realise these objectives, the Indonesian leadership had also to take into account the prevailing political situation in Southeast Asia, the defeat of the Japanese and the ever-present shadow of the Dutch claim to their prized colony on which they had become more dependent than any other European imperial power. The nationalist leadership, enunciating the policy of Diplomasi, made efforts to negotiate their case with the victorious allied forces, who also realised that it was exceedingly difficult for the Dutch to regain Indonesia. Indeed, Admiral Lord Mountbatten, the supreme Allied Commander in Southeast Asia had advised that negotiations be opened with the Indonesians as soon as possible "as a matter of military expediency".20

The Indonesian leadership derived assurance from the unwillingness of the Allied forces to suppress the independence movement on behalf of the Dutch. Nevertheless, Dutch troops were landed and the Netherlands Indies civil administration headed by Lt. Governor, H. J. Van Mook returned from Australia. These developments were viewed by the younger sections of the nationalist leadership with increasing alarm and they started to resort to arms action against the Dutch. The challenge to

---

public law and order posed by these young elements was utilised by the Republic's leaders in a diplomatic attempt to persuade the British-led Allied forces to exclude Dutch troops in return for cooperation in the civil administration. It was argued that until the issue of Indonesian independence had been reviewed by a competent world body, the incumbent administration should be recognised as a *de facto* government.

The initial negotiating position of the nationalist diplomacy was therefore based on two primary concerns - the demand for *de facto* recognition and exclusion of Dutch forces from Indonesia. But soon the nationalist diplomacy was engaged in negotiations with the former colonial rulers. A willingness was indicated to deliberate on the Indonesian situation with the Dutch government, provided the negotiations were based on the right of self-determination and held in the presence of a 'third intermediate party'. A readiness to seek a diplomatic solution was encouraged by the violent course of events, sparked off by the younger elements, the armed *Permuda*.

Preliminary diplomatic interactions between Van Mook and Sukarno, Hatta and Foreign Minister Achmad Subarjo, had been repudiated publicly by The Hague. To overcome this display of Dutch diplomatic rigidity the Indonesian leadership, which was tainted as pro-Japanese in the eyes of the Allies, thought in terms of an alternative leadership, more acceptable for the conduct of negotiation
with the Dutch. The Indonesian leadership had already rejected a policy of armed struggle in favour of negotiations within the framework of good offices offered by the Allies. For their diplomacy to succeed, the Republic was obliged to present a more acceptable international face. A change of leadership was imminent in order that the representatives of Indonesia would be seen to be free from Japanese associations.

Such a leadership was available in the person of Sutan Sjahrir, an outstanding intellectual of democratic socialist convictions who had been imprisoned by the Dutch and who had refused to cooperate with the Japanese. His record made him acceptable not only to the Dutch but also to the militant Permuda. However, in diplomatic terms Sjahrir's administration was committed to the policy determined by Sukarno and Hatta of seeking international recognition by projecting 'an external stance of peaceful moderation'.

Only after the ascendancy of Sjahrir as Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs on November 14, 1945, were efforts made by the new administration to establish its political representatives in the neighbouring countries in order to arouse interest in those countries concerning political developments in Indonesia and the birth of free and independent Indonesian Republic.

21 On Sjahrir's political views see Herbert Feith (eds) Indonesian Political Thinking (Ithaca, 1970).
CONFERENCE DIPLOMACY: INTERNATIONALISING THE INDEPENDENCE ISSUE:

The winds of political change were prevailing in Asia during those post-war years. With the Indian independence the tide against colonialism had received its greatest impetus. In these political circumstances the Indonesian struggle to safeguard her proclaimed independence against the Dutch attempt to reinstate the colonial rule received a wide response of sympathy and goodwill from emerging Asian countries. The Indonesian nationalist diplomacy was henceforth pushed to capitalise on the anti-colonial aspect of these historical events. Sjahrir, encashing on this sentiment of Asian solidarity, sent some bright young people of the Indonesian foreign ministry to the neighbouring countries to represent Indonesia's diplomatic position to those allies. For instance, Sudarsono was sent to New Delhi, Usman Sastroamidjojo to Canberra, and Hadji Rashidi to Egypt to gain Arab support. It must be realised that in the first year of Indonesian independence it was not possible to require de iure recognition but most of those countries had extended a de facto recognition to the Republic, allowing its representatives to carry out their respective assignments as diplomats abroad.

Meanwhile, the Anglo-Dutch talks elicited an official Dutch commitment to negotiate with the Indonesian nationalists and thus discussions were held between Sjahrir and Van Mook in February 1946, but they failed.
Nationalists sent their representative to The Hague to negotiate but talks again failed. After the failure of the talks in Holland, the Republic had to renew appeals for international support for its cause.

**Linggaadiati Agreement:**

Newed negotiations began in Jakarta in October 1946, under the auspices of the British government. The outcome of these discussions was a concession on the part of the Dutch, who agreed to recognise the government of the Republic, "as exercising de facto authority over Java, Madura and Sumatra". In addition, the parts of those islands occupied by Allied or Dutch forces were to be "included gradually through mutual cooperation in the Republican territory". The Linggadjati Agreement signed on March 25, 1947, at a mountain resort, Linggadjati in West Java, was considered to be the first success of the policy of Diplomasi.

**Asian Relations Conference:**

Concurrent with the signing of the Linggadjati Agreement, Sjahrir as the representative of the Republic of Indonesia, attended the New Delhi Asian Relations Conference and emphasised the community of diplomatic interests of the newly independent countries who had gathered to discuss the ways and means of nation-building.

In another shrewed diplomatic move, the Indonesian leaders sent their deputy foreign minister, Haji Agus Salim, who
had also attended the Asian Relation Conference in New Delhi, to Cairo where he set up an office to promote relations with Arab states. He concluded treaties of friendship with Egypt and Syria. The Dutch government disapproved of such diplomatic activity but they were unable to prevent de facto recognition being accorded to the Indonesian Republic in the wake of Linggadjati Agreement by the United States, Britain, Australia and China.

Diplomatic Reaction To The Dutch "Police Action":

In an desperate attempt to enforce their own will in a unilateral solution of the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, the government of the Netherlands authorised the launching of a military action against the Republic of Indonesia. This military action took place on July 17, 1947. A direct diplomatic consequence of the Dutch resort to force was a heated international response which involved the United Nations in the problem of Indonesian independence and, therefore, transformed the political context within which the struggle was taking place.22

22 India was one of the first countries to lend diplomatic support to the beleaguered nationalists of Indonesia following the Dutch "Police Action". In the United Nations India played a significant role in this regard. See: United Nations, Security Council Official Records (SCOR), 2 Years, MTGS 192, (New York, August 22, 1947), p. 2157.
To amass global diplomatic support in the wake of the Dutch aggression, Sjahrir flew to New Delhi and counselled with Nehru, who came out with a strong condemnation of the Dutch military action in Indonesia. The indignant Indian premier said:

What has become of the United Nations Charter? The spirit of New Asia will not tolerate such things. No European country, whatever it may be, has any business to set its army in Asia against the people of Asia. When it does so, Asia will not tolerate it.23

Diplomacy at the United Nations:

At the end of July, the government of India, followed by that of Australia, brought the matter of the Dutch military action before the United Nations Security Council. Australia's submission took precedence because its delegation cited Chapter VII of the U. N. Charter which dealt inter-alia with breaches of the peace. Dutch arguments about domestic jurisdiction were set aside and an additional measure of international status was conferred on the Republic when Sjahrir was invited to participate on its behalf in the Security Council deliberation. A Dutch attempt to secure corresponding invitations for representatives of the other states in the projected Indonesian federation was denied. Accordingly, the conflict assumed the character of one between two parties, each with international status.

23 Quoted in Kahin, n. 1, p. 215.
This was a major diplomatic victory for the Republic. The resolution of the United Nations changed the whole character of the Dutch-Indonesian dispute. From now on it was no longer a conflict that concerned the Dutch and the Indonesian governments alone, it had become the concern of the highest international body, the United Nations, and thus had become internationalized.24

In the Security Council, Sjahrir advocated the despatch of a U. N. supervisory commission to enforce the cease-fire and also to arbitrate in the dispute. He was obliged to settle for much less and was unable to attract sufficient support for an Australian proposal for the restoration of the status quo ante. The United States proposed a consular commission to supervise the cease-fire and sending of a Good Offices Committee of three to engage in conciliation.25

The Committee of Good Offices (GOC) consisted of representatives of the governments of Australia, Belgium and the USA, and was later transformed into the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI). The UNCI played the dominant role in the further settlement of the Indonesian-Dutch dispute right up to the transfer of power to the Indonesian nationalist leadership. It was the

24 For aspects of Indonesian diplomacy in UN see Alistair Taylor, Indonesian Independence and the United Nations (Ithaca, 1960).

25 ibid, p. 449.
first attempt by the United Nations to solve a problem involving the matter of colonialism and the struggle of an emerging country trying to get rid of her colonial bondage.

The Renville Agreements—The Success of Diplomasi:

After long deliberation with both the parties, the GOC succeeded in persuading them to sign the Renville Agreements on 19th January 1948 under which sovereignty throughout the Netherlands East Indies was to reside with Holland until the establishment of a United States of Indonesia, which would be a sovereign and independent state in equal partnership with the Netherlands in a union headed by the Dutch crown.26

The acceptance of a truce agreement which included the "Van Mook Line" (the line of the position held by the Dutch as a result of their military action in July, 1947) meant that the Indonesian forces and guerilla units would be removed from the pockets of resistance. This part of the agreement was strongly resisted by the Republic's military commanders. A crisis ensued leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin. Vice-President Hatta was made the Prime Minister who persisted with the Renville commitment despite some

26 ibid, p. 450.
Republican opposition to his style of diplomacy. Hatta expounded the following programme of his cabinet:

1. Implementation of the Renville agreements and political principles and continuation of negotiations with the Dutch through the Security Council's GOC.

2. Acceleration of the formation of a sovereign, democratic United States of Indonesia.27

Hatta, pursuing the policy of Diplomasi, resumed negotiations with the Dutch. He indicated the Republic's willingness to participate in an interim government. Underlying this step was an abiding apprehension that the Dutch would seek to eliminate the Republic before the transfer of sovereignty and the establishment of a Federal state. The Dutch continued to set up new federal units carved out of territory seized by them and also to keep up an economic blockade of the Republican zone. Meanwhile the Dutch announced in March 1946 the formation of a provisional federal government to function until the establishment of the United States of Indonesia, in which the Republic would be permitted to participate only after it had come to terms with the Netherlands.

As this renewed drift in relations with Netherlands continued, the polarization of domestic forces led to a physical confrontation whose ultimate outcome served the

27 Kahin, n. 1, p. 234.
interests of the champions of Diplomasi. Challenge to Hatta's government was posed by the forces of radical Left, who sought to exploit the pressing economic difficulties in the Republican zone and the limited success of Diplomasi.

MADIUM UPRISING: THE FAILURE OF PERJUANGAN:

Hatta's refusal to revise either the practice or the emphasis of Diplomasi, as well as an unwillingness to accept the radical Left in his government, served to intensify conflict within the nationalist movement. Armed clashes took place between dissident military units and forces loyal to the government in Yogyakarta, the capital of the nationalist Republic. These clashes marked the beginning of a communist party-inspired uprising in the east Javanese town of Madium. The uprising was crushed by the Hatta government and consequently the radical Left within the nationalist movement was discredited.

The Hatta administration used the rebellion for gaining diplomatic mileage. It secured a sympathetic response from the United States where the enveloping climate of the Cold War ensured that the crushing of a communist rebellion was viewed with considerable approval. Accordingly, the U.S. government urged the Dutch to show restraint in dealing with the crisis-ridden Republic. Had this diplomatic pressure by the US not been exerted, the Dutch would have used the opportunity provided by the
Madium affair to apply the coup de grace to the stricken Republic.

Persisting with the time-tested strategy of Diplomasi, Hatta tried to put the Indonesian question in the context of the Cold War political considerations. His diplomacy was aimed at making the West understand the perils faced by an embryonic democratic Republic in the face of strong Left-wing opposition. Hatta made renewed efforts to convince the United States that its diplomatic interests were congruent with those of the Republic. He argued that a weak and undemocratic Indonesia would form a serious threat to peace in Southeast Asia and the only side to gain would be communists.28

This considered policy of Hatta was soon to pay diplomatic dividends. Washington began to view the problem of Indonesia increasingly in terms of the exigencies of the Cold War. The changed American perception was evident when the Dutch Foreign Minister, D. V. Stikker, visited Washington with the expectation of attracting support from the U.S administration. Stikker was left in no doubt by the Secretary of State George Marshall that the United States not only favoured a negotiated settlement between

28 The diplomacy of the United States with regard to the Indonesian independence struggle is best discussed in Robert J. McMahon, Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence (1945-1949) (Ithaca, 1981) Especially relevant for our discussion are pp. 53-70.
the Netherlands and the Republic but also disapproved of any further attempt at a military solution.

The communist rebellion, suppressed so successfully in such a short time by the Republican government even while it was engaged in a mortal struggle for independence against the Dutch, enhanced the prestige of the Republic in the international diplomatic arena and, in particular, among the Western powers. That the government of the Republic could succeed in putting down a full-scale communist rebellion in such difficult circumstances was considered proof enough that the Republic could exercise its power effectively and that its leaders could remain Non-aligned in the power-bloc struggle that had emerged as the Cold War.

Second Dutch "Police Action":

Despite changing diplomatic circumstances the Dutch pressed ahead with the demands on the Republic which foreshadowed a second military confrontation. On December 18, 1948, the Dutch officials received a note from the Netherlands government informing them that the Dutch government was terminating the truce agreement as conceived in the Renville accords. The second military action was launched on 19th December. Dutch airborne forces launched an attack on Yogyakarta which was captured and the principal leaders of the Republic were arrested. The Netherlands government transported the detained
leaders to internal exile where they were informed that the Republic was no longer recognised as a political entity with a territory of its own, consequently that they were no longer recognised as holding governmental positions.

The second military action initially seemed to indicate the complete failure of the Republic's political aspirations. Despite concern at the prospect of communist advantage, the US government did not appear inclined to undertake a decisive initiative which would deny the Dutch their political prize, while the Soviet bloc seemed more concerned to embarrass a Cold War rival than to assist Republican Indonesia. The military action however generated a wave of shock and disgust among the circles of the United Nations and in the Asian countries. In international relations this action dealt a devastating blow to the Netherlands' prestige.

Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities many Asian and Arab countries closed their ports and airfields to Dutch ships and planes. Egypt, India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma all followed this line while Australian dock workers repeated the anti-Dutch action undertaken during the first Dutch military action—boycotting every Dutch ship which called at Australian ports.

**New Delhi Conference On Indonesia:**

The Indonesian nationalists, like their counterparts in India, gave importance to the conference diplomacy to
publicise their struggle. The task of the Indonesian diplomacy was to capitalise on the Asian solidarity and to seek international support to resist the Dutch repression in Indonesia. With this in view they focused their attention on New Delhi where the Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, in consultation with the Burmese premier U Nu, had convened a special conference of independent Asian and African states to discuss the Indonesian question.29

In his presidential address Nehru outlined the objectives of the Conference:

To frame and submit to the Security Council proposals which would, if accepted by both parties concerned, restore peace immediately to Indonesia and promote the early realisation of freedom by Indonesian people; To devise machinery and procedure by which the governments represented here today can keep in touch which one another for purposes of mutual consultation and concerted action for the achievement of the purpose for which this Conference has met.30

Seen purely in diplomatic terms, the New Delhi Conference must be considered a major success for internationalising

29 The 18-nation Conference was held on January 20, 1949. The participants were: The governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, the Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen were represented by delegates at ministerial level, while China, Nepal, New Zealand and Siam sent observers. See: G. H. Jansen, Afro-Asia and Non-alignment (London, 1966), p. 89.

the Indonesian freedom struggle. The head of the Indonesian delegation, Mr Maramis had elaborated in all possible detail the political situation in his country to the participants to the conference. The other Afro-Asian nations now had a better understanding of the havoc wrought by the Dutch military action in the fragile Republic of Indonesia.31

After deliberating on the political situation in Indonesia for two days, the New Delhi Conference urged a cease-fire and the withdrawal of the Dutch troops to their position before the commencement of hostilities and the immediate release of the Republican leaders. The Conference set up a timetable for the creation of an interim government and the further resumption of negotiations which would lead at a fixed date to the transfer of sovereign power from the Dutch government to an independent government of the United States of Indonesia. The resolution adopted by the New Delhi Conference did not go unnoticed among the members of the Security Council and influenced the world public opinion.

In the United States the public opinion was strongly stirred by the Dutch military action. Many liberal Senators urged on the Truman administration not to extend economic assistance through the Marshal Plan to a country

which had been using that money to carry on a colonial war and to suppress a national movement.32

The inability of the Dutch to impose a political solution by military means, and the attendant fear that radical Left-wing forces might fill the political vacuum within Indonesia, encouraged the Americans to apply diplomatic pressure on the Dutch to restore the moderate leadership of the Republic identified with the policy of Diplo

The combination of an inability to impose a solution within Indonesia and growing international diplomatic and economic pressure for the restoration of the government of the Republic, obliged the Dutch, in February 1949, to propose an early conference at The Hague at which all parties to the conflict would make provision for an accelerated transfer of sovereignty. This initiative set in motion a resumption of protracted negotiations which culminated on 7 May in Republican compromise, under US diplomatic pressure.33

Meanwhile, the Dutch had put forward a new plan for a Round-Table conference, to be held in The Hague to discuss the early transfer of sovereignty. After much diplomatic wrangling, the Round-Table Conference opened at The Hague on 23 August, and continued till 2 November. During this

32 McMohan, n. 28, p. 57.
33 G. D. Legge, Indonesia, n. 6, pp. 192-193.
time a final agreement was reached between the Dutch and the Indonesian leadership, represented by Hatta, for the eventual transfer of sovereignty.34

The Hague agreements were ratified by the governments concerned within a few weeks, and on 27 December 1949, the ex-colonial power formally transformed sovereignty to the new United States of Indonesia. A hundred years since the name of "Indonesia" had first been mooted, what had been a loose conglomeration of islands now took its place in the international community as an independent state and shortly afterwards became the sixtieth member of the United Nations. This long and trying political journey was accomplished by the policy of Diplomasi, which in the final analysis proved to be successful and led the Indonesians to freedom.

Thus through a skillful combination of propaganda and conference diplomacy the Indonesian nationalists succeeded in their struggle against the Dutch. This nationalist diplomacy was strengthened by the political activities of Indonesian students working for their country's independence in the colonial metropolitan centre. The Second World War and the Japanese occupation of Indonesia was skillfully exploited by the Indonesian elite to revitalise nationalist diplomacy and proclaim a nationalist Republic. For four years the various

34 Taylor, n. 24, p. 217.
diplomatic methods were employed, supplemented with armed struggle represented by a section of the nationalist elite, to resist the Dutch efforts to recapture their colony.

The Indonesian freedom fighters considered the United Nations as a prime actor in the process of decolonisation and repeatedly sought its help for realisation of their cause. Additionally, by making use of the Cold War rivalries to gain U.S. support and by identifying with other newly-independent Asian nations, the Indonesian nationalist diplomacy achieved its ultimate goal, freedom from Dutch colonialism.

It is interesting to note how the style of the nationalist diplomacy changes due to circumstantial variations in terms of nature of colonial rule, strategies of liberation among the nationalist elites and the impact of world events on the anti-colonial movements. This also has, as we shall discuss in a later chapter, a definite bearing on the formulation of a country's foreign policy.

The Indian nationalist diplomacy, in the main, subscribed to a peaceful struggle. In case of Indonesia, the nationalist diplomacy exhibited both peaceful and armed dimensions of the struggle against the Dutch colonialism. It is to the more radical form of nationalist diplomacy, as reflected in the Algerian nationalist movement, that we shall now turn in the next chapter to get a complete perspective on the anti-colonial diplomacy.