CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
The term South East Asia which encompasses the territories, which lie to the east of India and south of China, came into vogue only during the second World War. It comprises Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Laos, Kampuchea, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Brunei. Geographically, the area is divided into peninsular or mainland South East Asia and insular or island South East Asia. Burma, Thailand, Kampuchea, Laos, Vietnam, West Malaysia and Singapore come under the former category and Indonesia, the Philippines, East Malaysia and Brunei come under the latter category.

It was mainly through the sea that South East Asia came into contact with external forces - India and China during the early period, Islam during the medieval period and colonialism and imperialism during the modern period. Due to racial and cultural diversity we find many religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism and Confucianism prevalent in South East Asia, so also different languages. Each minority group follows its own customs and traditions and hence the problem of integration is a burning issue in contemporary South East Asia. South East Asia enjoyed a high standard of living economically as it was rich in natural and mineral resources.
After the Second World War, the political developments in South East Asia was largely determined by competitive rivalry among external powers - United States, Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, Japan, the United Kingdom, France and Holland. It was in this context that India's policy towards South East Asia came into sharp significance. For geographical, historical, commercial and cultural reasons South East Asia was very close to India and it was these very reasons which largely determined India's policy towards South East Asia. The presence of large number of Indians in South East Asia particularly Burma, Malaya and Singapore was yet another added dimension for India's abiding interest in the region. Strategically and economically too India had vital stakes in the region.

India's South East Asia policy was an integral part of New Delhi's overall foreign policy. During the period 1947-1954, India's policy towards South East Asia had three major components. First was the strong support to anti-imperialist struggles which found expression in India's ardent support for Indonesia's freedom movement. Second was to strengthen the forces of non-communist nationalism, which were being challenged by communist
parties, with powerful ideological support from both Moscow and Peking. It was in furtherance of this objective India mobilised Commonwealth economic and military support to Burma. Third, India felt that South East Asia should not be a cockpit of Cold War which would be a hindrance to its political and economic development. Indian objective, therefore, was to convert South East Asia into an area of peace. India's diplomacy in the Geneva Conference in 1954 was a classic illustration of India's commitment to this goal.

As in other parts of Asia, South East Asia too, came under European domination during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which created a wide wall of separation and prevented cooperation between India and the countries of South East Asia. Even then, in the nineteenth century, some Indian Intellectuals like Kesab Chandra Sen were sensitive to the exploitation of imperialist powers and emphasised the necessity to develop Pan Asian consciousness among Indians.¹

¹ Birendra Prasad, Indian Nationalism and Asia (New Delhi, 1979), p. 27
The Indian National Congress evinced great interest in world affairs ever since its inception in 1885. With the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as the undisputed leader of the nationalist movement, this interest increased and the Congress began to formulate its views on various matters connected with foreign policy and international affairs. Mahatma Gandhi was fully conscious that the British conquest of India was the prelude to the subjugation of people in other parts of Asia. Mahatma Gandhi believed:

India's freedom would be the first death blow to the insolent exploitation of the nations of Asia and Africa.

The Indian nationalist horizon widened and its interest in world affairs intensified with Jawaharlal Nehru emerging as the 'acknowledged Congress spokesman' on foreign affairs in 1927. Pointing out the interrelationship between India's struggle for freedom and the freedom struggles in other Asian countries, Nehru declared in 1927:

2. For a lucid account of the origins of India's foreign policy during the nationalist movement refer Bimla Prasad, Origins of Indian Foreign Policy: The Indian National Congress and World Affairs, 1885-1947 (Calcutta, 1962)

3. Prasad, n. 1, p. 25

I want you to appreciate that the Indian problem is not a purely national problem, but that it affects a large number of other countries directly and the whole world indirectly ....

I do submit that the exploitation of India by the British is a barrier for other countries that are being oppressed and exploited. It is an urgent necessity for you that we gain our freedom.⁵

Attempts to bring about solidarity among Asiatic people were facilitated by international conferences of exploited people. In 1927 Nehru played a commendable role in the Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels. Among the leading participants, mention must be made of the Vietnamese revolutionary, Ho Chi Minh and the Indonesian nationalist leader, Mohammed Hatta, who in later years, became the Vice President of the Indonesian Republic. In his statement to Press on 9 February 1927, Nehru pointed out that there was 'much in common' in the struggle of the various 'subject and oppressed people'. Their opponents, Nehru said, 'are often the same, although they sometimes appear in different guises and the means employed for their subjection are often similar'. He appealed for 'greater contacts' and 'close cooperation'.

⁵. 'Speech at the Brussels Congress', S. Gopal, ed., Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (New Delhi, 1979), vol. 9, pp. 275-6
among the nationalists fighting for freedom.

Nehru was very impressed by the Indonesian delegation which consisted of Hatta, Semaun, Nazir Pamuntjak and Subardjo. The contacts established at the Brussels Congress were of great importance in putting Indian-Indonesian relations on a friendly note in later years. Though the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities itself came under communist domination and Nehru and Hatta were expelled as 'national reformers', the two leaders kept in touch with each other through correspondence. As Jawaharlal Nehru mentioned, few years later, in an address to the Indian Council of World Affairs:

I remember when I was in Europe just twenty years ago, I attended a Conference in Brussels, at which many Asian and European countries were represented.... I remained in touch with many of these people from Syria to Indo-China. We used to correspond sometimes and it might interest you to know that some of the friends I met twenty years ago at that Conference are running the Indonesian Republic today, and those old contacts have stood us well now, because, apart from knowing each other distantly, personal

6. 'Statement to the Press at Brussels', Ibid., pp. 270-2

7. 'Report on the Brussels Congress', Ibid., pp. 278-97
relationships made me personally more interested in Indonesia and to a small extent made them more interested in India.8

Throughout the 1930's and early 1940's the Indian National Congress expressed its solidarity and unflinchingly supported the anti-imperialist struggles in other Asian countries, especially in Indonesia. In the 'Quit India Resolution' passed on 8 August 1942, the Indian National Congress declared:

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power.9

As the war came to a close, the Indian interest further intensified on the question of decolonisation of other Asian countries. In a memorandum submitted to the San Francisco Conference on 4 May 1949, Vijayalakshmi Pandit demanded the immediate declaration of not only Indian freedom but also of South East Asian countries:

8. Jawaharlal Nehru, "Inter-Asian Relations", India Quarterly (New Delhi), vol. 2, pp. 323-7
I speak here for my country because my national voice has been stilled by British duty. But I speak also for those countries which like India are under the heel of alien militarists and cannot speak for themselves. I speak in particular for Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, all bound to my own country by the closest of ties of historical and cultural kinship and which cherish aspirations to national freedom like our own. Liberation from Japan should mean for them, liberation from all alien imperialism so far as this Conference is concerned.  

So long as India remained a British possession, New Delhi could not do much for the Indonesian Republic which came into existence on 17 August 1945. But with the assumption of power of the Interim Government in September 1946 India's ability to assist Indonesia increased to some extent. Nehru made it clear that India had no intention to keep in step with the policy-makers in White Hall and that many of the assumptions of imperial foreign policy were largely irrelevant to the new situation. In his first broadcast as the Vice President of the Interim Government, Nehru proclaimed the necessity to forge close friendship and association among Asian countries and made a special reference to Indonesia.

10. _The Hindu_, 6 May 1949

The first foreign policy decision of the Interim Government pertained to Indonesia. It decided to call back the Indian troops sent by the British to the archipelago to execute the surrender of Japan and who, to the great dismay of Indian nationalists, clashed with the Indonesian nationalists in Surabaya and other places. In his first Press Conference, as the Miniter-in-Charge of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, Nehru declared that the kernel of India's foreign policy would be the ending of colonialism all over Asia. Nehru said that, in practice, the Interim Government recognised the Indonesian Republic. "We have one hundred per cent sympathy with them. We want them to win through and establish their freedom and we want to help them and support them in every way."

Indian attempts to foster unity and cooperation among Asian countries advanced tremendously when India, still under foreign domination, took the initiative and convened the Asian Relations Conference in March-April 1947. The Conference was a great event in Asian history; because it was the first time that nationalists of Asian countries came together to discuss their common problems and forge cooperative links. As Nehru put it, it was symbolic of "Asia's resurgence" and reflected the vast changes taking

12. The Hindu, 8 September 1946
place in Asia after the Second World War. The Indonesian leaders were extremely happy because it was their first conference in which they were participating. The Indonesian delegates gave a masterly and lucid account of their problems and struggle and they were able to win the support and sympathy of all the assembled delegates. Addressing the Conference, Dr. Sjafrir said:

Our being here in such great numbers is in fact due not only to our immense interest in what is happening here, but also to the fact that we have been isolated for many years. We thought it would be a great thing if as many of our people as could be spared from our country could take advantage of such splendid opportunity to meet so many representatives of nearly all Asia. That is why Indonesia is so greatly represented in this Conference.

With the passionate hatred of colonialism it is not surprising that one of the most important strands of India's foreign policy should have been the freedom of countries still under alien rule. Indonesia provided an opportunity and a challenge to India's foreign policy-makers. With their deep commitment to the

13. "Asia Finds Herself Again" (Inaugural Address at the Asian Relations Conference, 23 March 1947), n. 11, pp. 248-53
15. For good accounts of the subject refer: (a) N. Pichai, India and the struggle for Indonesian Independence (Dissertation, M. Phil., Centre for South and South East Asian Studies, University of Madras, 1980) and (b) A. Lakshmana Chetty, India's Foreign Policy in South East Asia, 1947-1954 (Thesis, Ph.D., Centre for South and South East Asian Studies, University of Madras, 1981)
principles enshrined in the U.N. Charter it was but natural for India to bring the Indonesian dispute to the attention of the United Nations. From July 1947 when the issue was first discussed in the Security Council on requests made by Australia and India, the Indian representatives energetically championed the cause of the Indonesian Republic. From the very beginning India advocated strong measures against Holland which was adopting a recalcitrant stand. The Indian delegates accused that the Dutch were not only adopting a delaying tactics but also were by-passing the United Nations and these were intended to gain time to crush further the Indonesian nationalist movement. India also pointed out that a moral issue was involved; no European country had the right to use its armed forces in Asia and there would be great disillusionment unless the United Nations took effective steps. Throughout the discussions, India was critical of the attitude of the western Powers and appealed to the United Nations to adopt stronger measures.

Outside the United Nations, India assisted the Indonesian Republic in many ways. All sections of public opinion rallied to the cause of the Indonesian Republic. The All India Radio started its first External Broadcast
in Bahasa Indonesia which exposed the machinations of Dutch imperialists and presented a correct picture of the developments in Indonesia. The Indian nationalists also sent a medical mission to Indonesia to provide medical aid to the sick and the needy. The Interim Government refused facilities for the Dutch Airlines to fly in or across India after the second Dutch police action. The crowning glory of India's diplomacy was the convening of the Conference on Indonesia in New Delhi from January 20-23, 1949. It was the first conference of Asian states to fulfil and strengthen the United Nations in its objective of finding a peaceful solution to the Indonesian dispute. The Conference championed and furthered the cause of Indonesian Republic without losing friends and antagonising anyone. The resolutions passed by the Conference provided the basis for the eventual transfer of power from Dutch to Indonesian hands in 1949.

The friendly and cordial relations which existed between the two countries during the early years after the second World War were still further strengthened in the years after Indonesian Independence. Two factors responsible

16. The Hindu, 15 October 1947
17. Ibid., 10 September 1947
18. Ibid., 25 December 1948
for it were the personal friendship between the leaders of the two countries and identity of foreign policy perceptions on major cold war issues.

If support for Indonesia's independence was in keeping with India's anti-colonial stance, New Delhi's policy towards Burma was in conformity with its principle of strengthening the forces of non-communist nationalism in South East Asia. India was aware of the threat posed to South East Asian governments by communist movements and hence vehemently condemned their activities both in Indonesia and Malaya.

Burma which emerged as a sovereign state on 4 January 1948 from British rule was faced with a series of rebellions on the domestic front and the government nearly lost control of the country. The Burmese Communist Party (B.C.P) led by Thakin Than Tun rose in revolt in March 1948. Their aim was to set up a communist government. The White Band People's Voluntary Organisation (P.V.O) joined the communists after three months of the outbreak of communist revolt. Burma continued to face further problem from a mutiny of two battalions of the Burma Army. The Karen revolt
in January 1949 posed the most formidable threat to Burma.\textsuperscript{20}

New Delhi was concerned with the deteriorating situation in Burma as peace and stability in Burma was essential for India's security, Burma being its immediate neighbour in South East Asia. India naturally wanted to help the Burmese Government to restore law and order. Burma needed foreign assistance to overcome the financial and security crises. In January 1949 the Burmese Government turned to the British Government for help. The British Government feared that unilateral assistance might be interpreted as an attempt to re-establish British imperialism. Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Ceylon were consulted. The informal Conference on Burma convened in New Delhi on 28 February 1949 suggested mediation proposals for possible solution to the Burma-Karen conflict. These proposals were dropped, for the Government of Rangoon looked upon them as interference in the internal affairs of the nation.\textsuperscript{21} Nehru himself had offered to mediate between the

\textsuperscript{20} For a detailed account of the revolt and India's help refer: (a) Uma Shankar Singh, \textit{Burma and India, 1948-1962} (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 52-59; (b) \textit{John F. Cady, A History of Modern Burma} (Ithaca, 1958), pp. 578-625; and (c) D. R. Sardesai, \textit{South East Asia: Past and Present} (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 340-41

\textsuperscript{21} Russell H. Fifefield, \textit{The Diplomacy of South East Asia: 1945-1958} (United States, 1968), p. 212
two parties. Thakin Nu pointed out that the Burmese government was a "caretaker government" so it could not negotiate a compromise either with the communists or Karens or P.V.O.'s. U Nu visited New Delhi on 12 April 1949. He had asked Nehru for arms aid and for help in obtaining funds from the Commonwealth. India played an active role in the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in London held in April 1949. Burma Aid Committee comprising of representatives of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Great Britain was formed to decide upon the quantum of aid to be sanctioned. The final amount decided was £6,000,000 to which India contributed £1,000,000. These proposals came through only in June 1950.

In the meantime India gave all possible help to suppress the rebellion. India sent arms and ammunition to Burma and also aircraft to Air Burma Limited and made advances and loans to cover some of the losses suffered as a result of the insurrection. On 12 April 1950 the

22. The Hindu, 7 March 1949
23. Ibid., 13 April 1949
24. Ibid., 17 April 1949
Government of India sanctioned a special loan of Rs.5,000,000 against rice supplied to India by Burma. A large percentage of Burma's main export - rice - went to India. In the early difficult years of its independent existence when the rice production was disorganised Burma realised that only India could be relied upon to purchase large quantities of rice at reasonable prices. The practice continued through the mid-1950's although the total Indian rice imports from Burma declined during this period. In addition the Indian government reduced and finally wrote off in 1954 a substantial Burmese debt arising out of the 1937 separation agreement and wartime advances to the Burmese government in exile. From 1951 India provided training to Burmese military personnel. In 1957 India extended a substantial loan of Rs.2,000,000 to Burma for its development programme. Expressing the gratitude for the timely help rendered by India Thakin Nu wrote "without the prompt support in arms and ammunition from India, Burma might have suffered the worst fate imaginable". He described Nehru as "a friend and saviour".


27. Charles N. Heimsath and Surjit Mansingh, A Diplomatic History of Modern India (Bombay, 1971), p. 241

28. Th Nu, Saturday's Son (Bombay, 1976) p. 227
The importance of Burma to India was evident from V.K. Krishna Menon's statement in the General Assembly on 5 November that "what hurt Burma hurt India because of the links of friendship, geography and history between the two countries". An identical view was put forth by Nehru in a speech in Parliament. Commenting on the enormous difficulties faced by Burma Nehru said:

Naturally our Government and our people are interested in the present and future of Burma. It is not our purpose — and it is not right for us — to interfere in any way with other countries, but, wherever possible, we give such help as we can to our friends. We have ventured to do so in regard to Burma too, without any element of interference.

India's policy was also naturally influenced by the fate of the 800,000 Indians in Burma.

In Indo-China there was a bitter anti-colonial struggle against the French. Whereas in Vietnam the anti-colonialist feelings were very high, in Cambodia and Laos, they were not so intense. The nationalist movement in Vietnam came under communist control in 1930

30. Nehru, n. 11, pp. 292-3
31. The Hindu, 13 May 1949
with the formation of the Communist Party of Indo-China under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. With the defeat of Japan Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (D.R.V.N.) on 2 September 1945. The French, who returned after the war, were forced to come to terms with Ho Chi Minh's Government. The contest for control of Vietnam came to an end with the agreement reached between Ho Chi Minh's Government and the French on 6 March 1946. In opposition to the D.R.V.N. the French created a non-communist Government on 20 May 1948 and Bao Dai was made the Chief of the new French 'dominion'.

The D.R.V.N. as well as the Bao Dai Government tried to enlist Nehru's support for their respective Governments. Nehru decided to remain neutral and during the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in March-April 1947 New Delhi extended invitation to both the Governments. The D.R.V.N. representative, Mai The Chau, not only wanted India to give moral and material support but to accord recognition and take up the question in the United Nations. Ho Chi Minh wanted Nehru to raise the

32. John F. Cady, The History of Post-War South East Asia: Independence Problems (Ohio, 1974), pp. 30-31
34. Asian Relations Conference, n. 14, p. 77
Vietnamese matter in the Security Council but it was not possible as France was a Permanent Member and would definitely have exercised Veto. The D.R.V.N. was not invited to the Conference on Indonesia by India and all efforts by the Vietnamese leader to get the support of the members of the Conference were in vain. Bao Dai wanted India's recognition since India was one of the key nations in Asia and its recognition would enhance their prestige and give them "priceless encouragement". Through United States he tried to influence New Delhi but with no result.

Due to the complicated situation in Vietnam Nehru remained neutral on the question of recognition of either Ho Chi Minh's or Bao Dai's Government. New Delhi urged the British Government to bring about a peaceful settlement of Indo-China dispute. Nehru felt that interference by other nations would worsen the situation and hence non-alignment was the best policy as far as Vietnam was concerned. The same view was put forth by the Indian representative in the Conference of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in Colombo. With the recognition of the D.R.V.N. by the People's Republic of China (P.R.C) and the Soviet Union on 19 January 1950 and the Bao Dai Government by the United Kingdom and the United States on

35. The Hindu, 25 April 195
36. Ibid., 10 February 1950
6 February 1950, the Indo-China issue became deeply embroiled in Cold War. Nehru's worst fears came true. Till 1954 India strictly adhered to the policy of non-interference in its relations with Indo-China.

With the recognition of the D.R.V.N. Government and the Bao Dai Government by the two rival power blocs and the situation in Indo-China threatening to break out into a World War India decided to take some positive steps. At this juncture France, Britain, Soviet Union and P.R.C. too desired an early settlement of the Indo-China issue. France wanted to end the Indo-China war due to political pressure at home, loss of men in the war and the military success of the Viet Minh and Ho Chi Minh's repeated requests for a peaceful settlement. Britain was not happy about United States' aid to France. Other factors that influenced Britain's attitude for an amicable settlement was Soviet Union's offer for trade, problems faced by U.S. in the Federation of Malaya due to communist insurgency movement and the interest of the Commonwealth partners in Asia. With the death of Stalin in early 1953 Soviet Union's policy of confrontation was replaced by a policy of conciliation and they too wanted peace in Indo-China. P.R.C. too desired peace to be restored in Indo-China in order to settle the internal problems. It was only United States which remained
indifferent for Washington feared that Indo-China would be lost to the Communists. It was this general desire for peace that led to the convening of the Berlin Conference from 25 January to 18 February 1954 which was attended by the Foreign Ministers of U.S., U.K., Soviet Union and France. It was decided at the Big Four meeting that a Conference on Far East should be convened at Geneva in April in which the possible peaceful settlement of the Indo-China question (and the Korean question) should be discussed. To this Conference "representatives of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic and other interested States" would be invited. 37

Nehru welcomed the Berlin Conference not for its results which were "disappointing", but because of the fact that the Conference was held and as Nehru put it the fact that people met and talked was by itself "a good thing". 38 Three days after the Berlin Conference, speaking in the Lok Sabha, Nehru said :


38. The Hindu, 23 February 1954
I venture to suggest to all the parties and the
powers concerned that in view of the fact that
this matter of Indo-China is going to be discussed
at the Geneva Conference two months later, it
might be desirable to have some kind of cease-fire.
The parties need not give up their positions,
whatever they might consider their rights.\textsuperscript{39}

Though the West were not in favour of Nehru's cease-fire
call at least it set the ball rolling. As Nehru stated:

Although nothing very much has come out of it,
I believe it has done some good in the sense
that there has been a good deal of consideration
given to these problems and the possibility of
"cease-fire" by the countries concerned.\textsuperscript{40}

The period between the end of the Berlin Conference and
the beginning of Geneva Conference, witnessed intensification
of conflict in Indo-China. Nehru was much concerned with
the increase of aid to Viet Minh and France by P.R.C. and
U.S. respectively. He said in the Parliament :

To us in India, these developments are of grave
concern and of grievous significance. Their
implications impinge on the newly won and
cherished independence of Asian countries....
Indo-China is an Asian country and a proximate
area.... The crisis in respect of Indo-China
therefore, moves us deeply and calls from us
our best efforts to avert an extension and
intensification of the conflict and to promote
trends that might lead to a settlement.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39} India, \textit{Lok Sabha Debates}, pt. 2, vol. 1, no. 6,
22 February 1954, col. 415

\textsuperscript{40} India, \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, pt. 2, vol. 2,
23 March 1954, col. 797

\textsuperscript{41} India, \textit{Lok Sabha Debates}, pt. 2, vol. IV,
24 April 1954, col. 5581
India's interest in Indo-China increased further as its policy came in conflict with that of U.S. While New Delhi was interested in extending the area of peace, Washington was keen on forcing a military solution for the Indo-China issue. New Delhi was determined to put forth its views on the matter which would at least be considered by the other powers participating in the Geneva Conference. Therefore, in its earnest desire to resolve some of the difficulties and the deadlocks and to bring about a peaceful settlement, Nehru proclaimed a six-point peace plan in the Lok Sabha. Nehru called for promotion of a "climate of peace and negotiation" and appealed to all concerned "to desist from threats, and to the combatants to refrain from stepping up the tempo of the war". Secondly, "cease-fire" should be given "priority" and a cease-fire group be constituted consisting of the actual belligerents, namely France and its three associated states and Viet Minh. Thirdly, to proclaim complete independence of Indo-China and "the termination of French sovereignty, should be placed beyond all doubt by an unequivocal commitment by the government of France". Fourthly, limiting the Indo-Chinese question to "direct negotiations between the parties immediately and principally concerned". Fifthly, " a solemn agreement on non-intervention denying aid, direct or indirect... to which the United States, the U.S.S.R.,
the United Kingdom and China should be primary parties. United Nations to be requested to formulate a convention of non-intervention in Indo-China and include the provisions for its enforcement under the United Nations' auspices to which other states should be invited by the United Nations to adhere. Finally, the good offices of the United Nations should be sought "for purposes of conciliations under the appropriate Articles of the Charter, and not for invoking sanctions."\(^{42}\)

The Colombo Conference of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan met at Colombo from 28 April to 2 May 1954. Late in 1953 the Ceylonese Premier John Kotelawala proposed another meeting of the Colombo Powers towards the end of April or early May to discuss problems of common concern. The Conference met at an opportune moment, when the Geneva Conference on Far East had just opened (on 26 April), with two vital and urgent problems, of Asia—Korean unification and Indo-China conflict on its Agenda.\(^{43}\) With the exception of P.R.C., no major Asian country was represented in the Geneva Conference and hence it was hoped that decisions taken in Colombo would have some effect on the powers gathered at Geneva.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., cols. 5581-2

Nehru's resentment was evident from his speech in Parliament wherein he stated:

The Geneva Conference was a Conference, it is said, on Asia and a Conference on Asian problems in Europe chiefly dominated by Europeans and Americans and the like .... We must have a say in our destiny and in Asia's destiny.44

The Colombo Powers shared Nehru's resentment over Asian exclusion from the Geneva Conference and, in Kotelawala's words, wanted to demonstrate to the Geneva powers and the world that the only plan that would ensure peace in Asia would be the one formulated or approved by the leaders of free Asian countries who knew what was good for Asia.45

In his opening speech at Colombo, Nehru said that the Indo-China question should be discussed in a constructive spirit so that we can be helpful to them (Geneva Powers) and such weight as we possess might be thrown on the side of peace.46 The Colombo Conference of the five Prime Ministers endorsed Nehru's approach with

46. The Hindu, 29 April 1954
the difference that the concerned Great Powers - P.R.C., U.K., U.S., and U.S.S.R. - should work for ending the hostilities in Indo-China and prevent their resumption. Nehru explained that the stand of the Conference made an improvement on his suggestion in that it added positive contents of prevention and non-resumption of hostilities to his own stand of non-intervention. The Colombo Conference had the desired effect. As Nehru said in the Parliament the Colombo Conference attracted a great deal of attention at Geneva:

That was because it was supposed and rightly supposed, to represent the viewpoint of a very large part of Asia, in fact the part of Asia very intimately connected geographically and otherwise, by virtue of proximity, with the Indo-China problem.

On 8 May 1954 began the Indo-China phase of the Geneva Conference. The participants were the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom, U.S., P.R.C., Laos, Cambodia and governments of North and South Vietnam. Molotov, the Russian delegate, suggested that India should be invited to the Geneva Conference. France and the U.S., opposed the idea. British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden,

47. D.N. Mallik, The Development of Non-Alignment in India's Foreign Policy (Allahabad, 1967), p. 155
believed that the success of the Geneva Conference would depend to a large extent upon the position taken by India and other eastern nations and that it was essential not "to alienate India... in a part of the world which concerned her closely". 50 United States' Secretary of State, Dulles, was equally insistent that "any indication that India might be invited to join should be avoided". 51 Chou En-lai and Molotov pointed out to the absence of India in their opening speech in Geneva. Chou En-lai said:

Unfortunately some Asian states which express concern about peace in Asia such as India.... are unable to participate in our Conference; this certainly cannot be considered good. 52

Molotov proclaimed that "we are bound to find a disadvantage in the fact that a whole number of Asian Powers such as India.... are not taking part in our Conference although their presence would be very valuable for our work". 53

It was because of U.S., that India was kept out of the Conference. This attitude of U.S. irritated the Indian Government. On many occasions Nehru expressed his displeasure. On 25 August 1954 Nehru stated in Lok Sabha:

51. Ibid., p. 97
53. Ibid., p. 24
Both these Conferences were concerned with the countries and peoples of Asia. Yet the principal participants in the Conference, with the significant exception of China, were non-Asian states. This corresponds in some measure to the reality which reflects the territorial, racial and political imbalance in the modern world.  

Nehru was anxiously watching the proceedings at Geneva. India's absence in Geneva did not prevent her from contributing its share to the Indo-China settlement. This was made possible by the presence of Krishna Menon who arrived in Geneva on 21 May 1954. More than formal meetings, innumerable private talks held in hotel rooms and villas in and out of Geneva acquired special significance since Krishna Menon's arrival. Indian diplomacy was playing an active and influential part behind the scenes at this conference. India's initiative was genuinely welcomed by the representatives of the Great Powers.  

Krishna Menon was in constant touch with Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary; Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister; and Chou En-lai, the Chinese Premier. Britain clearly demonstrated that "it valued Indian advice".  

54. Nehru, n. 11, p. 401  
55. The Hindu, 27 May 1954  
Krishna Menon found Russia very helpful. In fact he found Molotov "easier to handle than even the British".  

Krishna Menon's discussion with Chou En-lai "probably went on for two, three or four hours each time". It was with Chou En-lai's help that the North Vietnamese were brought around. Krishna Menon felt that the North Vietnamese were the "real parties to negotiate with" and developed "good friendship with Pham Van Dong". With Mendes-France becoming the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of France on 18 June 1954 Krishna Menon received more help. He became Prime Minister on the promise "peace in one month or I quit". Krishna Menon made it clear that there must be a time limit and Mendes France announced that the matter must be settled by the 20th of May. Bedell Smith, then Under-Secretary of State and head of the American delegation to the Geneva Conference in Dulles's absence was also helpful to Krishna Menon.

India served as a link between the East and the West; it played a benign role to remove the "cold war"

58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. *The Hindu*, 19 June 1954
61. Brecher, n. 57, p. 45
62. Ibid., p. 46
mentality and promote a degree of mutual understanding that would have been difficult to attain without an intermediary trusted by both sides. It was acknowledged by both sides that it was Menon who brought them face to face in private conversations in the first phase of the conference and in the final phase cleared up misunderstandings and impressed on each side the difficulties of the other. Most of the delegates were unanimous in their view that India had contributed to the peace settlement. The French Prime Minister, Mendes-France expressed his appreciation of India's good offices while speaking in the French National Assembly. China Prime Minister Chou En-lai told Nehru that the latter's efforts "were undoubtedly one of the important factors which made possible the success of the Geneva Conference". The British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, speaking in British Parliament observed: "Although our Asian partners in the Commonwealth were not represented at the conference, we were able to keep in constant contact with them at every stage of our work. This,... was quite invaluable to us". Nehru welcomed the Geneva settlement as "one of the outstanding achievements of the post-war era". He further

63. The Hindu, 21 July 1954
stated, Indo-China has been a truly negotiated settlement where, not any one of the belligerents but peace, has been the victor.\textsuperscript{65} Nehru observed that,

Asian countries have reason particularly to be gratified at this return of peace to Asia. The meeting of South East Asian Prime Ministers at Colombo undoubtedly exerted a powerful influence on the deliberations at Geneva, and, although Asia was not well represented at the Geneva conference, it was recognised that Asian opinion counted. A new responsibility is thus cast on Asian countries.\textsuperscript{66}

While the Colombo Powers were still meeting, Anthony Eden probed them regarding participation in maintaining cease-fire in Indo-China should such a possibility materialise. Nehru's initial response was non-committal; but with Eden's persistence on 15 May — the day after Molotov had proposed a neutral-nation supervising commission — Nehru declared that India would assist in "promoting and maintaining" a settlement. New Delhi's participation, however, would be subject to its own policy of non-alignment, its limited resources and the acceptance by all concerned of the agreements reached at Geneva, which must not favour the interests of one side over the other.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} India, \textit{Lok Sabha Debates}, pt. 2, vol. VI, no. 3, 25 August 1954, cols. 228-9

\textsuperscript{66} The Hindu, 22 July 1954

\textsuperscript{67} Colbert, n. 56, p. 278
With the conclusion of the Geneva Conference on 21 July 1954 and the decision to set up an International Supervisory Commission (I.S.C.) to implement the proposals, the composition of the Commission was discussed. During the early stages, Communist members wanted the Control Commission to consist of representatives of only the belligerents, that is, France and North Vietnam. The Soviets pressed for the inclusion of both Poland and Czechoslovakia. Later they agreed to consider the addition of India and various other neutral Asian countries. The Western representatives would not accept the two Communist states. The British proposed that the Commission be made up of five neutral Asian states. The United States maintained that no Communist state should be included because no Communist state could be neutral. Finally it was agreed that there should be one representative from the West, one from the neutral and one from the Communist with the neutral as Chairman. The states selected were India, Poland and Canada. 68

India was invited to accept the Chairmanship of the International Supervisory Commission and Nehru accepted the responsibility. As Nehru had put it:

India had not been a participant in the Conference. She had not sought a place on the Commissions. Indeed, we did not even disclose whether we would or would not accept the responsibility. But when this responsibility was offered to us, we could not refuse, for our refusal would have meant imperilling the whole agreement. We have thus to shoulder this heavy and onerous responsibility.69

The Government of India expressed "their deep appreciation of the trust and confidence placed in them by the Geneva Conference as a whole and by each of the participants thereof, severally, in naming India to the membership of the International Supervisory Commissions at various stages of the Conference and finally in inviting her to be the Chairman of the Commission".70

The Geneva Agreements thus brought to an end a long drawn-out war in Indo-China. The Geneva settlement comprised the three cease-fire agreements in respect of the three states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the Final Declaration of the Conference and unilateral declaration of certain states. The cease-fire agreements provided that

69. Nehru, n. 11, p. 403
70. The Hindu, 14 August 1954
three International Commissions, one for each of the three Indo-China states composed of representatives of Canada, India and Poland, with India as the Chairman, be set up to control and supervise the armistice agreements. The decision of the Commissions would be by majority vote. The Final Declaration signed on 21 July 1954 recognised the cease-fire agreements and hoped that their implementation would lead to independence and sovereignty of the three states. It took note of the declarations of Cambodia and Laos about holding general elections in 1955 and their decision not to request foreign military aid of any kind and also not to join any military alliance, to grant any foreign bases or permit location of foreign forces in their territories. The Declaration noted the terms of the cease-fire agreements on Vietnam, which was divided into two zones, North and South, at the 17th parallel, under which no foreign bases were to be allowed, or were they to join any military alliances. Free general elections were to be held in Vietnam in July 1956 under the supervision of an International Commission. The representatives of the two zones were to consult on the elections from July 1955 onwards. And finally, the Declaration took note of the French declaration to withdraw its forces from the three States and the French recognition of the independence,
sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the states, and members of the Geneva Conference also assured non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states.\textsuperscript{71}

In India, the Geneva settlement was hailed as a signal success of Indian Foreign policy. In their essence the Geneva Agreements closely resembled the recommendations of the Colombo powers, which in turn were a minor modification of Nehru's six-point proposal. Indians had cause to feel elated that their country was chosen to head a Commission entrusted with the task of keeping out those very influence that might threaten the area of peace.\textsuperscript{72} The outstanding feature of the settlement, if it worked out as envisaged, would result in extending the "peace area" of which Nehru had spoken so often. It would create a "South East Asia pattern" of peaceful and independent countries as distinct from a South East Asia military grouping tied to one or the other of the big power blocs. In this sense it would help powerfully to implement the policy of "peaceful co-existence".\textsuperscript{73} Geneva was the first success of the Panchsheel policy, which Nehru declared in

71. Rajan, n. 43, pp. 130-1

72. Sardesai, n. 45, p. 50

73. The Hindu, 21 July 1954
India strove to keep both U.S. and P.R.C. out of Indo-China. During Chou En-lai's visit to India in June 1954 India was successful in securing P.R.C.'s approval to his non-intervention policy. They had earlier signed the Panchsheel agreement on 29 April 1954. The P.R.C. had also agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Indo-China states. U.S. wanted to curb the spread of communism and establish peace in South East Asia through strengthening the common security, while India was of the opinion that "one does not seek peace through security, but security through peace". The clash of these rival ideologies was inevitable, the result being deterioration in Indo-American relations.

74. *Foreign Affairs Record*, vol. 1, no. 3, March 1955, p. 55

75. For text of the document see *Foreign Policy of India: Texts of Document, 1947-1958* (New Delhi, 1958), pp. 87-93