Chapter III

MAJOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDO-BURMESE RELATIONS
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Century old cultural relations between India and Burma, the economic ties which these two countries of East Asia maintained for years and the influences of the colonial British rule provided India and Burma with some positive basis to maintain a pattern of close relations with each other. Common experience of Western education which helped the nationalists of India and Burma to learn the values of parliamentary democracy and a united struggle for independence from the colonial rule went a long way in strengthening the mutual ties between India and Burma in the post-independence years. In the post-independence years the changing global situation prompted both India and Burma to take a common stand on various international issues. However, they differed at times when the national interests of their respective countries were involved. While discussing the major developments in Indo-Burmese relations, we have to review their level of co-operation on bilateral, regional and global levels.

India and Burma on Bilateral Level

Indo-Burmese bilateral relations were already continuing particularly on the administrative level much before the independence of Burma. During the pre-Second World War days, the Government of India was represented in Burma by a British agent. His status was raised to that of a Representative in 1944. But the formal diplomatic relations were established only after India
gained its independence on 15 August 1947 when the status of the Representative was raised to that of a High Commissioner. Later when Burma formally left Commonwealth on gaining her independence on 4 January 1948, M.A. Rauf, then High Commissioner became the first Indian Ambassador to Burma and the Ambassadorial relations at the diplomatic level were established.

After making his own country free from the British rule, it was a great desire of the Indian Prime Minister Nehru to see that Burma too became independent. Ultimately when the Burmese independence was achieved in January 1948, Nehru's reaction was clear. In a message published in *Burma Souvenir*, an illustrated brochure brought out by the Government of India in commemoration of Burma's attainment of independence Nehru said, *inter alia*:

> The independence of Burma is an event of significance to the whole of Asia and to India particularly. I should like to express on behalf of the Government and people of India our deep satisfaction at the consummation of Burma's struggle for freedom. India and Burma have been closely associated in the past that anything that happens in either country affects the other. I have no doubt that our association will be even closer. Not only our common sentiments demand it but the whole of Asia point towards this close association. 2

Since the year 1948, many developments took place which spoke of Indo-Burmese co-operation at various levels. After framing a democratic constitution for itself, India went to the extent of placing at the disposal of the Burmese Government an eminent Indian jurist and constitutional adviser Sir Bencegal Rau

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1  *The Hindu* (Madras), 22 June 1950.
2  Ibid., 5 January 1948.
to assist the Burmese in drafting their constitution. It also returned to the people and Government of Burma the throne of King Thibaw, a decorated table and a silver mat woven by Queen Supalayat which were brought to India by the British in 1825. Thereafter, Nehru always laid emphasis on the maintenance of Indo-Burmese friendship despite minor differences that might crop up in future. In December 1949, in a message to the Friends of Burma Society, Nehru said "it is inevitable that India and Burma should co-operate together for mutual advantages and we must not forget this fact even though we might have occasional differences."

Since 1950, Indo-Burmese relations became so informal that the Burmese Prime Ministers or other members of the Burmese Government were welcome in Delhi whenever they felt the need to come there to discuss their problems with Nehru and the Indian Government. Whenever an occasion arose the Indian Prime Minister expressly exhibited India's concern and tilted in favour of its neighbouring friend. In June 1950, when Nehru visited a few South East Asian countries, he stopped over at the Burmese capital where he was accorded warm and lavish welcome by the Burmese people and the Government of Burma. He stayed in

3 Ibid., 14 March 1948. After years later in 1958 India also returned to Burma war mementoes like six historical guns dating back to 1751 and captured by the British troops during the Anglo-Burmese wars which were taken to India. See Asian Recorder (New Delhi), vol. 4, no. 34, 16-22 August 1958, p. 2199.

4 Quoted from Ton That Thien, India and South East Asia 1947-1960 (Geneva, 1963), p. 175.

5 Ibid.
Rangoon for three days and discussed various issues of mutual interest with the Burmese Prime Minister. Several receptions were held to honour Nehru’s visit to Burma. At a civic reception in the City Hall at Rangoon on 20 June 1950 U Thein Maung, the Mayor of Rangoon, welcomed Nehru by describing him as a symbol of renaissance Asia “awake, alert and striving to attain her place in the sun” and added:

Architects of our political freedom found in you a fund of friendship, good-will, wisdom and good counsel which were freely given and was freely and willingly drawn upon particularly by our late Aung San as well as by our present Prime Minister, Thakin Nu. 7

Nehru in his reply declared that “India and Burma have had their little quarrels, but they have also a kinship of spirit, of ideals and of objectives”. He hoped that in the future “kinship will lead to co-operative effort in the achievement of our ideal”. He also spoke about the age-old relevance of Buddhism in the promotion of cultural and religious ties between India and Burma and expressed that Buddhism although in name “had ceased to have any significance, it had affected the texture of India to a very great extent.”

6 The Hindu,
7 Ibid., 21 June 1950.
8 Ibid.
9 Nehru further explained that “there is a greater attraction today in India towards the teachings of Lord Buddha”. He himself had been powerfully attracted from his early years by the life and teachings of Prince Siddharta. See Ibid., 22 June 1950. Later in the year 1956 U Nu was presented at Rangoon with a set of six Buddhist relics by the Indian Ambassador R.R. Saxena.

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Welcoming Nehru to a State dinner on 21 June 1950,

U Nu the Prime Minister of Burma said:

The Indian Prime Minister had been a consistent friend of Burma and his help and guidance in the hour of her travail had been of inestimable value. World events today were such that they threatened the newly-won independence of South-East Asian countries, and it was more than ever necessary for these countries to come closer together. He believed that Pandit Nehru's visit to those countries at such a momentous period had a profound significance towards that end.

Wide publicity was given to Nehru's visit to Burma.

Rangoon's newspapers carried on front pages detailed accounts of his activities liberally illustrated by photographs. The New Times of Burma, an influential English daily in an editorial captioned "Burma's Nehru", said that his presence in the multitude of trouble-ridden peoples of Burma would be a source of pride, hope and jubilation. To the Burmese, Pandit Nehru represented the personification of their national hero. While describing Nehru as one who belonged not only to India but to Burma, the paper said:

Against dark and minous forebodings of the world torn asunder into dangerous power blocs the children of the infant Republican Burma cannot but look at Nehru with an infinite sense of relief and rejoicing.

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These relics comprised three plaster casts of the rock edicts of Emperor Asoka, one plaster cast of an elephant, original relics from the Sanchi Stupa in Bhopal, and a pillar from the palace of Emperor Asoka at Pataliputra in Bihar. See Asian Recorder, vol. 1, no. 60, 18-24 February 1956, p. 681.

10 The Hindu, 22 June 1950.

The most important development in Indo-Burmese friendship took place on 7 July 1951 when the two countries signed a treaty of friendship. So far both countries had come to the help of each other. Now the signing of the treaty was a concrete step towards strengthening and developing the already existing friendly relations between them. The treaty which was to be effective for five years was signed in Rangoon on 7 July 1951 by San Akin Ngio, the Burmese Foreign Minister and M.A. Rauf, the first Indian Ambassador to Burma.

Two articles of the treaty - viz Article II and IV, put noteworthy emphasis on the friendship and co-operation between the two countries. Article II stipulated that "there shall be everlasting peace and unalterable friendship between the two States who shall ever strive to strengthen and develop further the cordial relations existing between the peoples of the two countries." Under Article IV, the two countries agreed that "their representatives shall meet from time to time and as often as occasion requires to enlarge views on matters of common interest and to consider ways and means for mutual co-operation in such matters". M.A. Rauf, speaking on the occasion of the signing of the treaty said that the treaty was

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12 For details of the provisions of the treaty see Burma (Rangoon, Director of Information), vol. 2, no. 1, October 1961, pp. 50-52. The treaty came into force later on 31 January 1952 by the exchange of the instruments of ratification in accordance with Article VII of the treaty. See Report 1952-53 (New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, n.d.), p. 5.

13 Burma, n. 12, p. 51.

14 Ibid.
merely a token and symbol of the great goodwill which already existed between India and Burma. "I say so", he said, "because the bond of friendship between us have been growing stronger even without a treaty".

The signing of the treaty was enthusiastically hailed by all well-wishers of India and Burma as it truly reflected the long cherished sentiments and ambitions of both Indian and Burmese peoples. The New Times of Burma while describing the treaty as "another brilliant chapter - to the annals of Burmese history" said that "now that India and Burma are free of imperialist fetters, such a treaty ... will mark the beginning of a new era in Indo-Burmese economic co-operation and cultural relations".

The signing of the treaty was followed up by U Nu's visit to India during 21-30 October 1951. This was one of his many forthcoming visits to India during which he laid stress upon strengthening the pattern of bilateral relations between the two countries. On his arrival at New Delhi on 21 October, U Nu told correspondents that "he had come here for consultation with Prime Minister Nehru". He referred to a clause in the Indo-Burmese Friendship Treaty stipulating the holding of periodical conferences between the representatives of both countries and said that the present talks "would be in pursuance of that provision and be held in implementation of that clause". At New Delhi, U Nu and Nehru discussed various issues of mutual

15 Ibid., p. 50.
16 New Times of Burma, 3 July 1951.
17 The Hindu, 22 October 1951.
interest. Issues like Japanese Peace Treaty, the situation created by the presence of Kuomintang troops on Burmese territory, and trade relations between the two countries figured prominently in their discussion. The talks took place in an atmosphere of cordiality and goodwill. Since Burma like India did not participate in the Conference on the Japanese Peace Treaty at San Francisco, the two Prime Ministers discussed in particular about the future relations of their countries with Japan. At a Press Conference at New Delhi on 23 October 1961, U Nu explained that "Burma's reasons for not signing the Japanese Peace Treaty were similar to those of India". He said that "the procedure that India may adopt for concluding a separate treaty with Japan may be followed by Burma also later on". While emphasizing the fact that his country's foreign policy was closely associated with that of India's, U Nu said that "he always believed in personal contacts and his visit had helped to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries".

Three months later the informal and intimate character of Indo-Burmese relations was stressed by Nehru. Attending a Press Conference in New Delhi on 28 February 1952, he said:

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18 The Nation (Rangoon), 22, 24 October 1961.

19 India was opposed to San Francisco Treaty on the ground that it contained a provision which allowed the presence of the US forces in Japan. Burma also shared the same opinion but unlike India, Burma was more concerned with war reparation due from Japan which were being neglected. See Modern Review (Calcutta), vol. 90, no. 3, September 1951, pp. 175-8.

20 The Hindu, 24 October 1951.
"We are in frequent touch with the Government of Burma on many matters. We are not only friendly in the normal sense of the word, but if I may say so somewhat more friendly." Later on 17 March 1953, while making a foreign policy statement in the course of his reply to the foreign policy debate in the House of the People in New Delhi, Nehru declared that "India's relations with Burma have never been so co-operative and friendly as now". He further said that "India's present relations with Burma were even better than its relations with Commonwealth nations".

Personal friendship between Nehru and U Nu was also an important factor in Indo-Burmese relations. The two leaders knew each other well. U Nu used to make periodic visits to India and exchange ideas with Nehru. U Nu was a personal friend of Nehru. This was perhaps the reason that when U Nu resigned his premiership on 5 June 1956, Nehru was greatly upset. In a letter to U Nu, he said that his resignation created "a little void" for him. In the same letter Nehru said "whether you are Prime Minister or not, you will be there as a tower of strength not only to your country but to others also".

The general pattern of friendly relations between India and Burma continued even under the premiership of U Ba Swe.

21 Ibid., 29 February 1952.
23 Ibid.  
24 Burma Weekly Bulletin (Rangoon, Ministry of Information), vol. 5, no. 12, 22 June 1956, p. 82.
(6 June 1956 - 27 February 1957). The new Premier reiterated his Government's faith in the continuation of U Nu's policy of friendly and cordial relations with all neighbouring countries including India.

On 28 February 1957 U Nu was again re-elected as the Prime Minister of Burma. Thereafter he visited India many times and spoke highly of India's friendly attitude towards Burma. During his visit to India in December 1957, U Nu told the students in Calcutta that Burma being a small neighbour of a big nation like India, harboured some fears about the latter immediately after its independence in 1948. But after his visit to India as Prime Minister of Burma and the reciprocal visits of Indian leaders to Burma to exchange mutual goodwill, the fear disappeared. U Nu acknowledged the contribution of Nehru in developing such a relation. He regarded Nehru as an "embodiment of courage, peace and progress" having a very "significant role to play in the shape of things to come". Even during the temporary phase of General Ne Win's caretaker Government (October 1958 - March 1960), Burma's relations with India were normal and continued in the same spirit as during the time of U Nu.

In 1960 once again U Nu came back in power and many instances could be traced which bear witness to cordial

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25 For U Ba Swe's statement on continuation of U Nu's foreign policy of non-alignment and friendly relations see The Nation, 6, 15 June 1956.

26 The Hindu, 16 December 1957.

relations between India and Burma. In November 1960 U Nu paid again a ten days official visit to India. At New Delhi, Nehru spoke about the importance of U Nu's visit. At a banquet given in his honour, the Indian Premier lavishly praised the Burmese leader in the following words:

It has been our privilege to welcome him often in this country.... He comes as a friend, a dear friend. He comes casually and he goes also casually, without fuss or ceremony.... Any Prime Minister of Burma would have been warmly welcomed by the Government and people of India. But when you come here, you not only bring the perfume of your country but also an air of serenity, of calm, of friendliness.... So this world Janus like, is two faced.... When you come, the evil face recedes ... and only the good face is evident, and so our spirits rise within us and our hopes also rise and we feel the better for it. 28

U Nu from his side referred to the centuries old Indo-Burmese relations and their common approach to various world 29 problems. However, the growing trend of close and friendly relations between India and Burma was appreciated by U Nu further during his last official visit to India in January 30 1962. He suggested that the relations between them should become more broadbased instead of keeping it confined to exclusive relations between the two Governments. Once again


29 U Nu said: "Happily on the foundation of tradition of friendship and of a strong sense of solidarity our two countries have developed in recent years a fundamentally similar approach to the various problems with which the world is faced today." See Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs), vol. 6, no. 11, November 1960, p. 296.

30 On 2 March 1962, U Nu was dislodged from power by an army coup led by General Ne Win.
U Nu was hailed by Nehru as a "staunch pillar of peace in international affairs". As in previous years, U Nu also made a pilgrimage of various centres of Buddhist interest in India, including Sarnath and Bodhgaya.

Besides the periodic meetings between Nehru and U Nu which undoubtedly were indicative of the excellent relations existing between India and Burma, there were some other issues of importance in the bilateral relations between them.

Indo-Burmese Co-operation to Consolidate Internal Stability

Immediately after independence, Burma was faced with a lot of problems. Foremost among them was the problem of internal stability and security. From the beginning, the new Republic of Burma was confronted with challenges to its authority which rapidly developed into a civil war disrupting process of internal stability of Burma.

The Indian Government was seriously alarmed by the prevailing civil war situation in its neighbouring country during 1948-49. In reality, India had reasons to be worried about Burmese civil war. The presence of different racial-

31 Asian Recorder, vol. 8, no. 6, 5-11 February 1962, p. 4404.

32 Since the year 1948, the Burmese Government had to face problems from the Red Flag Communists and the Mujahid bands of Muslim adventurers who aimed at creating a separate Muslim State in the Arakan region. The real threat came from the White Flag Communists who considered the Burmese Government leaders of the AFPFL as tools of the British imperialism. For details about the origin of the civil war created by the Communists and other ethnic minorities see Hugh Tinker, The Union of Burma (London, 1967), pp. 36-48.
ethnic minorities across the Indo-Burmese border was a factor relating to the security of India as well. Keeping in view its own security, India did not want the domestic crisis in Burma to continue for a long time. Solution to the crisis was necessary lest it could serve as a source of inspiration and incitation for the minority groups like Nagas and Mizos who were living in the Indo-Burmese frontier areas. Besides, the safety of a large number of Indians in Burma coupled with India's interest in getting a favourable flow of rice from the former, were some of the other considerations in motivating latter's deep concern in restoration of peace and stability in the Union of Burma.

Without getting directly involved in the domestic problems of Burma, India took all possible steps to help the Burmese leaders run the administration and tackle internal problems. This included financial and military assistance to Burma by the Government of India. India also took a leading part in the Commonwealth Conferences concerned with the proposals for financial aid to Burma.

Nehru, the Prime Minister of India made it clear that his role in helping Burma was to see a friendly country getting out of her difficulties. On 17 March 1950 addressing the Indian Parliament, Nehru said:


34 For details regarding India's military assistance to Burma as well as the former's initiative in sponsoring Commonwealth assistance to Burma see Chapter 6th of the thesis.
There is Burma which has seen a great deal of trouble - internal trouble - in the course of the last two or three years and has faced these enormous difficulties. Naturally, our government and our people have been interested in the future of Burma, and in the present of Burma. It is not our purpose, and it is not right for us, to interfere in any way in other countries. But inevitably, we are greatly interested, and where possible we give such help as we can to our friends. And we have ventured to do so in regard to Burma too, without getting any element of interference.

As far as mutual security was concerned, India and Burma had no such border problem with each other as they had with Communist China. But there had been evidence of some restiveness in the year 1951 in the tribal area of Nagaland bordering India and Burma. The tribals of this area had started an agitation with the aim of forming a separate Naga State. It is difficult to say who engineered this agitation. But it was widely believed that some elements of the "White Flag Communists" from Burma had infiltrated into the tribal area. Whoever might be behind this agitation, they succeeded in one significant way. They saw to it that the Nagas boycott the General Elections of India held in 1952.

Pandit Nehru, during his visit to the frontier in October 1952, felt the gravity of the Naga problem. And therefore he stressed the need for Indo-Burmeso action for the solution of the Naga impasse. On Nehru’s initiative, the Prime Ministers

36 The Hindu, 18 March 1952.
37 Ibid.
of the two countries met at Imphal on 29 March 1953 and conducted a joint tour of the Naga tribal areas. There Nehru and U Nu assured the Nagas of the welfare activities started for the tribals by the two governments. They also supervised the various facilities provided by their respective governments for the uplift of the tribal people on the frontier. They emphasized upon the need for joint responsibility for the welfare of the Nagas living on Indo-Burmese border areas.

For the creation of a better understanding and harmonious relations between the Nagas of both the border areas, U Nu emphasized upon the need for joint visits by Naga party for friendship and goodwill and vice versa. Although this joint tour did not result in any settlement of the Naga problem, it did succeed in one significant aspect. For one full year thereafter, the Naga tribal areas of India and Burma did not pose any serious threat. Then, suddenly in December 1954, the so-called "People's Sovereign Republic of Free Nagaland" was declared in the unadministered areas of Indo-Burmese border by a Naga leader named Dang Khin. His existence however, was never recognized by the Government of India. His followers were reported to be indulging in hostile activities against the Government of India. Simultaneously the Naga National

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39 In this connection Nehru said: "We can learn a good deal from each other's experience". Similarly U Nu emphasized that "personal contact was the best instrument for better understanding". See ibid.

Council in the Naga hill district of Assam was preparing for the final showdown with the Indian Government.

At this stage certain areas on the Indo-Burmese border were notified as disturbed areas by the Government of India. Nehru informed Lok Sabha on 25 July 1955 that "the disturbed areas were a small part of territory on the Indo-Burma border and not the North-East Frontier". The Indian Government also requested assistance from Burma to quell the Naga uprising. However, it has been the common concern of both the countries to ensure economic progress and social welfare of these similar kind of tribes inhabiting the Indo-Burmese border. Moreover these tribal areas constituted part of north-east frontier which had also been a significant line of defence for both India and Burma. Therefore whatever measures were to be taken for the benefit of these tribal areas, had to be on the basis of joint co-ordination of India and Burma.

The year 1957, however saw a new development on the Indo-Burmese border. Towards the end of that year there were some incidents of violations of Burmese territory by the Indian army. It occurred at Langua Tingha village on India-Burma border. The Government of Burma did not make any official representation to India in this connection. But India's


43 Nag, n. 41, p. 24.
attention was drawn to criticisms in Burmese press reports. As a result, the Government of India assured the Burmese Government that "there can be no border dispute between the two countries and that any lack of clarity can be settled in a friendly way by joint local inspection". Referring to the incident at Langua Tingha, Nehru said:

This is a small boundary dispute which involves perhaps half a mile or so in mountain territory, I informed the Prime Minister of Burma Mr U Nu that I am perfectly prepared to accept his own arbitration in the matter even without a team. Let him go there and tell us what he thinks right or after consultations, and I will accept his decision in the matter.

Nehru further reiterated that "our relations with Burma are not such that we should get excited over such matters, but we should decide them in a friendly way."

Some more border trouble between India and Burma took place again in 1961. It started due to subversive activities by the Nagas who operated from the Burmese territory. "When the Indian Government made a representation to the Government of Burma regarding the Naga hostilities, the latter responded favourably. The Foreign Office in Rangoon immediately issued a communique on 16 May 1961. It said that the Burmese Government

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44. India, Parliamentary Debates (Lok Sabha), second series, vol. 8, no. 10, 22 November 1957, col. 1209.

45 In reply to a question about the location of the village, Nehru said in Lok Sabha on 22 November 1957 that "the village is supposed to be and almost appears to be, on the Indian side of the border. But the village has spread and probably, a bit of it may have gone to the other side of the border." He explained that "there is no clear demarcating line, there is a ridge and certain plateau." See ibid., col. 1311.

46 Ibid., col. 1310.
would take “every measure open to them” to deal with the hostile Nagas reported to be operating from Burmese territory. To implement this assurance the government officials in Burma were reported to have given immediate orders to take strict action against Naga trouble makers. Thus U Nu’s Government’s co-operation in dealing with Naga problem won wide appreciation from the Indian Government.

In spite of these spheres of co-operation there was one aspect that became an irritant in bilateral relations between India and Burma. That was the problem of Indians in Burma. After independence the Government of Burma took certain legislative measures to boost the economy of the country. These measures affected the Indians, particularly the Chettiyars who had been playing quite dominant a role in Burmese economy. But both the Indian and the Burmese governments took all precautions to handle this problem wisely. India and Burma were fortunate to have Rauf as the first Ambassador to Burma who was quick to see that Indians in Burma, many of whom had known no other home-land, should adjust to the changing circumstances and make the best of the new situation.

Friendly atmosphere maintained at the higher levels between Nehru and U Nu ensured that no gross injustice was inflicted on Indians in Burma. Both the Prime Ministers handled

48 I have discussed in detail the problems of Indians in Burma in chapter V of this thesis.
the problem of Indian citizenship, immigration and compensation etc., with mutual understanding and co-operation. They did not allow these problems to create any ill feeling in relations between their countries at the official level. Making his stand clear on this issue Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister said "It is very difficult for us in an internal matter to protest when there is no discrimination, when it applies to all aliens or foreigners". Similarly U Nu, while addressing the AAPPFL members of Parliament on 24 September 1955, spoke about the position of the Government of Burma. He said:

Nobody will dare deny that the Union of Burma is for the people of the Union... But it is impossible to deny the foreigners in any country, big or small, their legitimate rights. While we should try never to lose sight of the fact that the Union of Burma is for the citizens of the Union, the foreigners should also be given their legitimate rights. Excessive selfishness and shortsightedness will not pay in the long run.

India and Burma on Regional Level

India and Burma co-operated and maintained friendly attitude not only on bilateral level but also on regional level. Both the countries were geographically situated on the Asian peninsula. So after independence they had to take into consideration the developments taking place in the countries close to their borders or the countries who were factors for maintaining peace and security in the region.

50 Ibid.
51 India, Parliamentary Debates (Lok Sabha), second series, vol. 45, no. 19, 26 August 1960, col. 4752.
Almost all the countries of this region had a colonial past despite their differences in race, religion and cultural background. India along with Burma had always championed the cause of independence of the countries of the region particularly those situated in the South-East Asian region. During the post-independence period they made sincere efforts to ensure the peace and security of the region. In this connection three important developments can be mentioned that throw light on Indo-Burmese co-operation on regional issues; first, the emergence of People's Republic of China as a strong neighbour of both India and Burma; second the Indonesian independence and third the Indo-Chinese crisis.

**India, Burma and China**

The strategic location of China on South and South East Asian frontier proved to be an important factor in influencing the relationship of many Asian countries — particularly India and Burma. After the establishment of the communist regime in October 1949, the regional role of China became more important. In 1949, both India and Burma realized the importance of the new regime in China and acted accordingly. Burma became the first non-communist country to recognize the People's Republic of China on 17 December 1949.

On 30 December 1949, India became the second biggest Asian

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country to recognize the People's Republic of China.

The recognition of the Communist Government in China by India and Burma was a clear indication of their interest in cultivating friendly relations with their colossus neighbour, China. But the response from China was different. After emerging fresh as a Communist country, China began to term India and Burma as stooges of Western imperialism. It also gave its verbal support to the underground Communist movements in Burma and other South-East Asian countries. Besides this, publication of maps showing large areas of India and Burma as Chinese territory became another feature of its policy towards the neighbouring non-Communist Governments. In spite of all these, India and Burma persisted in their efforts to share friendly gestures towards the former. There was reason for such a policy. In this regard the Times of India, a leading daily newspaper of India rightly commented:

To India, China is only one of the big factors in world affairs. To Burma, China is palpable, it stems from the powerful enemies entrenched beyond the 900-mile long Sino-Burmese frontier, it is accentuated by sizable underground insurgent inside the country.

55 K.M. Panditkar, Indian Ambassador to the Chinese Nationalist Government at that time states that the Burmese Government had specifically requested the Indian Government to delay its recognition of the new regime in China so that Burma could be the first Asian nation outside the Soviet bloc to do so. See K.M. Panditkar, In Two China: Memoirs of a Diplomat (London, 1955), p. 65.


58 Times of India (New Delhi), 29 June 1953.
India's attempt to bolster close relations with China was motivated not only by a necessity of maintaining external security but also because of the fact that its northern neighbour was the most populous Communist country assuming significant status at regional and global levels.

The KMT Crisis and the Reaction of India

During the first few years after Burmese independence, the KMT (Kuomintang) crisis emerged as a significant event in Burma which drew the attention of the Indian Government. In the beginning Burma was not able to give due consideration to this situation due to civil war in the country. In 1950, the issue of large scale intrusion of KMT troops became a problem for the Burmese government. The intrusion created for Burma a potentially dangerous security threat from the north. By 1952 the crisis aggravated as the strength of KMT troops had increased to 12,000. By March 1953, it was reported that an alarming number of 30,000 KMT troops under the command of

59 The KMT crisis was an outgrowth of the defeat of the Nationalist troops in the hands of the Communist forces resulting finally in the Communist victory in China in the year 1949. Like the Burmese government, the new Communist Government of China did not effectively control the area along the Burma - China border which was largely mountainous, sparsely populated and undermilitarized. This provided the defeated KMT armies in Yunnan Province an excellent place to retreat, which subsequently posed serious problems of internal and external security for Burma. See Robert H. Taylor, *Foreign and Domestic Consequences of the KMT Intervention in Burma* (New York, 1973), p. 10.
General Li Mi were on the border. It was feared that the Chinese Government might take advantage of KMT troops on Burmese territory to invade Burma. So the Burmese Government started condemning the presence of these troops. The Government of Burma made attempts to solve the problem. But Burmese attempts to find a solution through diplomatic channels proved unsuccessful due to KMT's refusal to submit to disarmament and internment.

From the very beginning, India showed its concern at the presence of KMT troops on the Burmese soil. It could not afford to remain indifferent to the growing threat to Burma's security. At a Press Conference in New Delhi on 23 February 1952, Nehru said:

The presence of these troops ... is a matter of grave concern to the Government of Burma. The presence of any foreign troops is a matter of concern; more especially, the presence of Kuomintang troops, because there is always a danger of other types of conflicts on the border so long as those troops are there.... Foreign

The first signs of difficulties appeared in the spring of 1950. Considerable number of Chinese Nationalist troops entered Kengtung, the easternmost Shan State of Burma, adjacent to the Indo-Chinese and Siamese borders. There they established their training camps. They started recruiting troops from Chinese and Shans on the border. Most of the Shans were bribed and threatened to join the KMT's. Their number went on growing gradually. The KMT's monopolised the "han opium" trade. It also went to the extent of assuming the functions of de facto government in the Shan State and subversion against the Union Government of Burma. See ibid., p. 13. Also see John E. Cady, "The Situation in Burma", Far Eastern Survey (New York), vol. 22, no. 5, 22 April 1953, p. 49.

Thein, n. 4, p. 178.
troops in a country are never tolerated and they
should be pushed out into the sea or mountains or
anywhere else. 63

India's vital interest in anything pertaining to the security
and stability of Burma was aptly described by The Hindu in its
editorial on 18 March 1953. "To the extent that the regime in
Burma is strong, our north-eastern frontier is secure", it
commented.

When Burma raised the issue at the United Nations in
1953, the Indian Government strongly supported the Burmese
case. During the course of a joint tour of the Indo-Burmese
border with U Nu, Nehru stated in a Press Conference at Khamti
on 31 March 1953 that India's attitude regarding Burma's complaint
in the United Nations would be to support that complaint.

In the debates of the Political Committee of General
Assembly on the issue, Krishna Menon, the representative of India
highly deplored the situation growing out of the presence of the
KMT troops in Burma and their hostile activities. On 17 April
1953, while expressing his deep concern over the situation, he
said that "any violation of the honour of Burma or any wrong
done to that country was as significant to it as a wrong done
to India". On 22 April, Menon further reiterated his
Government's concern and said that "the aggression was quite

62 Jawaharlal Nehru, Press Conferences 1952 (New Delhi,
Information Service of India, n.d.), pp. 4-5.

63 The Hindu, 18 March 1953.


65 United Nations, General Assembly Official Records
(GAOR), 7th Session, First Committee, 605th meeting,
17 April 1953, p. 659.
obvious" and that the occupation of 50,000 square miles of
Burma's territory was an "absolutely illegal situation" and a
"flagrant act of aggression, which must be brought to an end
with all urgency". On 28 September 1953, while expressing
his apprehension, Menon said "There is no indication that the
invasion of the territory will be ended.... What hurts Burma
hurts us.... That it should be harassed by foreign invaders of
this country was as significant to it as a wrong done to India."

In the year 1953, India also became a party to nine-power
resolution which stressed upon disarmament and internment of
the KMT forces in Burma and assured the Government of the Union
of Burma of its "continuing sympathy with and support of the
efforts of that Government to bring about a complete solution
of this serious problem".

Period of Co-operation between India, Burma and China: 1954-55

The year 1954 marked the beginning of good neighbourly
relations between India, Burma and China. This became possible
as a result of the changing situations in South-East Asia and
the emergence of India and Burma in the non-aligned bloc.
During this period, the United States started increasing its
influence in the region by creating SEATO (South East Asian

65 Ibid., 611th meeting, 22 April 1953, pp. 635-6.
67 GAOR, 8th Session, 449th plenary meeting, 28 September
1953, p. 206. For details about the Indian support to Burma
on KMT crisis in the debates of the UN General Assembly
see Yearbook of the United Nations, 1953 (New York,
United Nations, Department of Public Information, 1954),
pp. 162-72.
Treaty Organisation). Through SEATO, the United States tried to check the Communist influence in the region and as such wanted to draw as many countries as possible under the umbrella of SEATO. But China did not want that any big and small Asian nations should join the Western bloc headed by the United States.

Nehru and U Nu too did not want that the countries of the region should join SEATO. These two Asian leaders had formulated their foreign policy based on non-alignment so as to keep themselves away from the conflict-power blocs. In other words they were the leading members of the non-aligned group and propagated the concept of non-alignment. As non-aligned nations they advocated friendship with both the Communist and the Western bloc and condemned treaties like NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and SEATO.

Regarding SEATO Nehru had said: "... after reading the treaty carefully, I feel that its whole approach is wrong and dangerous from the point of view of any Asian country." Similarly Burma was equally unhappy with SEATO. U Nu's opposition to it was based on the fear that it was not only incompatible with the foreign policy of positive neutrality

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69 About the aims and objectives of SEATO see Chatham House Study Group, Collective Defence in South East Asia (London, 1956), pp. 2-6.


71 Nehru, n. 23, p. 39.
but also dangerous to the cause of world peace.

By 1954 India and Burma had become utterly disillusioned with the Western bloc led by the United States. In case of India, it was more due to military support to Pakistan by the United States and also Pakistan's association with the military pacts. On the other hand, KMT issue was one of the important factors behind Burma's disenchantment with the Western bloc led by the United States.

These developments created a favourable ground for Nehru and U Nu to advocate Communist China's entry into the United Nations; support China's claims over Formosa; their refusal to brand Communist China an aggressor in the Korean crisis; and condemn the American involvement in Indo-China. All this helped to convince the People's Republic of China about the validity of the independent foreign policy of non-alignment as pursued by Nehru and U Nu. Moreover in view of the role played by India and Burma in settling the then prevailing crisis in Korea and Indo-China, the Communist China felt the need of regulating the mutual relations with both the countries.

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73 During 1953-54 Burmese relations with the United States had deteriorated as a result of popular and official identification of the United States with the Chinese nationalists' activities in Burma. As a result Burma took a decision to refuse further US aid which was a "mark of protest against the alleged complicity of the Americans with the KMT". See for details, Oliver E. Clubb, The Effect of Chinese Nationalist Military Activities in Burma on Burmese Foreign Policy (California, Calif., 1959), pp. 19-21.
on the basis of Panchsheel. The "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence" were first formulated in the Preamble to the agreement between India and China in regard to Tibet which was signed on 29 April 1954 at Peking.

In order to make Panchsheel the basis of permanent relations with India and Burma, and reaffirm adherence to the five principles of peaceful co-existence, Chou En-lai visited India and Burma subsequently in late June 1954. China was further able to get an endorsement of Panchsheel and strengthen its image of a peaceful neighbour and supporter of the non-aligned countries in the Bandung Conference of April 1955 where China was invited mainly at the instance of Nehru and U Nu.

India, Burma and China After 1955

After the Bandung Conference, it appeared that India, Burma and China would live in an era of peaceful co-existence.

74 The five principles of peaceful co-existence which later came to be known as Panchsheel were (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (2) mutual non-aggression; (3) mutual non-interference in each other's affairs; (4) equality and mutual benefit; and (5) peaceful co-existence. See Nehru, p. 28, p. 99.

75 Ibid., pp. 303-4.

76 For a Joint statement on Panchsheel issued by Nehru and Chou En-lai in India, see Foreign Policy of India: Texts of Documents 1947-64 (New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1965), pp. 294-6. For a joint statement of the Prime Ministers of Burma and China incorporating the five principles of co-existence, see Burma Weekly Bulletin, vol. 3, no. 14, 7 July 1954, p. 97.

77 As regards the role of Communist China in the Bandung Conference, see George McTurnan Kahin, The Asian African Conference (New York, 1956), pp. 52-54.
But this did not happen primarily because of the Chinese attitude towards India and Burma on one common issue — the border.

The very year of Bandung witnessed border violation between India and China. Chinese troops had violated Indian territory in two places, Saba Hoti and Damzan. In the following year of 1956 Chinese patrols crossed three times into India over the Shipki La Pass. This culminated in Chinese forces establishing a camp on Indian territory near Milang.

Most ominous of all in 1956, was the Chinese construction of a permanent road deep into Indian territory crossing the Aksai-Chin bulge of Ladakh. Probably India was aware of this but made an official acknowledgement of it only in October 1958. From all these incidents, Chinese claims to Indian territory became quite implicit. It was not until the year 1959 that Chou En-lai made an official repudiation of the so-called McMahon Line as the boundary line between India and China and laid claim to thousand acres of land falling within Indian territory. In the meantime, situations in Tibet caused further complications for Sino-Indian relations. The Lhasa...

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79 Ibid., p. 18.
80 Ibid., p. 28.
revolution and the flight of Dalai Lama into India led to further aggravation of Sino-Indian border tension finally resulting in the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962.

The year 1955 was marked by some incidents of border violations and armed clashes on the Sino-Burmese frontier also. When Burma protested officially, Peking attributed the causes to "misunderstanding between the outpost units of the two countries in the border region". But one year later, China was found intensifying its military moves along the Sino-Burmese border. It was brought to public notice by the Nation, a Burmese daily. On 31 July 1956 this newspaper reported that Chinese Communist troops had occupied over 1,000 square miles of indisputable Burmese territory in the Wa State. Subsequently, the Nation started a full-fledged campaign against infiltration of Chinese Communist troops charging them with building up an invasion of Burma.

Initially, these reports were denied both by the Burmese and the Chinese Governments. But the public and the Press in Burma remained quite indignant and deeply concerned over the whole episode. As a result, the Burmese Government admitted the entrance of Chinese troops but denied the alleged Chinese

82 See V. D. Karnik, ed., China Invades India (Bombay, 1963), p. 284; also see Neville Maxwell, India's China War (Bombay, 1970), p. 357.

83 Chou En-lai, "Report on the Question of the Boundary Line Between China and Burma", supplement to People's China (Peking), no. 15, 1 August 1957, p. 1.

84 The Nation, 31 July 1956.

85 Ibid., 1, 7, 14 August 1956.
occupation of some areas in Burma. On the other hand the Burmese Government urged the Press to refrain itself from issuing news which might hinder progress of negotiations between Burma and China. Whereas the Peking regime denied the Press reports about an alleged "invasion of Burma", it admitted the presence of Chinese Communist troops on the southern part of the Sino-Burmese frontier on the plea that the said area had never been defined and demarcated.

Instead of accusing China as aggressor, Burma started a process of negotiations with China which finally resulted in the signing of a treaty of Peace and Friendship and border agreement in the year 1960. Although this border agreement was signed by China mainly to alienate India, it precipitated a period of close and friendly relations between Burma and China not only during U Nu's period but even after Ne Win's takeover in March 1962.

Although India and Burma had the same border problem with China, they could never raise their voice on a single platform. They could not even make it a common issue nor did


they make a joint effort to tackle this common problem of border violations by the Chinese. Rather both the countries keeping in view their national interests, followed a policy of urging each other to settle its border problem with China separately through direct negotiations and without any interference from outside.

Even during Ne Win's regime, Burma remained quite cautious in not making any policy statement on the rights and wrongs of the parties involved in the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. In the Colombo conference of six non-aligned nations during 10-12 December 1962, which was specially convened to consider the Sino-Indian conflict, General Ne Win made a call to both the countries for cessation of hostilities. He also emphasized upon the need for settlement of the border dispute through bilateral negotiations and ruled out any outside arbitration which might jeopardize chances of settlement.

Although the Sino-Indian border has remained unsettled so far, the Chinese aggression of 1962 gave a great setback to the credibility of India's policy of non-alignment in the Afro-Asian world. India, however, never lost faith in the policy of non-alignment. In this connection Uma Shankar Singh writes:

90 In the conference, he said: "We, as a conference, must refrain from making any attempt to determine or pass judgement in any way on the rights and wrongs, merits and demerits, of the positions being adhered to by the two parties to the dispute, because if we tried to do that we should only be compromising our position as friendly and impartial neutrals and should therefore be doing a grievous disservice not only to ourselves and the cause of our endeavours, but, in a larger sense, to our two friends, China and India, as well." See "The Six-Non-Aligned Nations Conference", Forward (Rangoon, Director of Information), vol. 1, no. 10, 22 December 1962, p. 2.
However, although Burma's neutralism or non-alignment and Panchsheel did succeed in the case of Burma's own relations with China and India's non-alignment and Panchsheel did not succeed in her relation with China, yet India did not consider seriously even at this time to abandon her policy of non-alignment. 91

India continued to follow a policy of non-alignment but failed to justify the strength of its non-alignment due to lack of pragmatic approach and too much emphasis on idealistic principles like Panchsheel or peaceful co-existence.

Besides their policy towards China, both India and Burma had a significant role to play as regards two important regional issues of the period. One was the question of the freedom of the Indonesian people and the other was the peaceful solution to the Indo-Chinese crisis. These two issues in fact were the burning issues of the period.

Indonesian Independence

In the Indonesian archipelago, the Dutch colonialism grew out of their efforts to monopolise spice trade from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards. In order to secure their trading privileges, it became essential for the Dutch to eliminate competition from other traders particularly the Arabs, Chinese and the non-Dutch Europeans. This resulted in political intervention of the Dutch finally resulting in the expansion of their colonialism in the face of many armed uprisings and other

91 Uma Shanker Singh, n, 33, p. 194.
92 Ibid.
93 For details see George McTugnan Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (New York, 1952), pp. 1-10.
evidences of resistance on the part of the local population. Since the beginning of twentieth century, started the modern national movement by the Indonesians against the Dutch imperialism. Though the independence of the Republic of Indonesia had already been proclaimed on 17 August 1945 (two days after the Japanese surrender to the Allies) by A. Sukarno and M. Hatta, the two nationalist leaders of the country, the Dutch colonialism did not end there. Two military actions in 1947 and 1948, by the Dutch Government against the Indonesians further complicated the issue of Indonesian independence. It was during this period that both India and Burma started raising their voice against the Dutch policy in Indonesia. In the First Asian Relations Conference which was an important landmark in the history of the Asian nations fighting for freedom from European colonialism, India and Burma gave their full support to growing nationalist struggle for independence in Indonesia. They also condemned the Dutch imperialism in the Indonesian archipelago.

On 21 July 1947 when the Dutch aggression took place against the Republic, it aroused strong emotions in India. On 24 July 1947, Nehru, then Vice-President of the Interim Government reacted sharply to the Dutch attack and described the Dutch action as an "astounding thing". Further he said:

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95 Thein, n. d., p. 88.
What has become of the United Nations Charter? The spirit of New Asia will not tolerate such things. No European country whatever it might be, has any business to set its army in Asia against the peoples of Asia. When it does so, Asia will not tolerate it.

Subsequently India brought the matter to the United Nations and sent V.K. Krishna Menon to represent India before the Security Council. This was in fact for the first time since India became independent that she made an important effort to internationalise the issue of Indonesian independence and demonstrate her policy of anti-colonialism and Asian solidarity.

Although India was not a member of the Security Council, she participated throughout the deliberations of the Council by special invitation. At this time Burma was not a member of the United Nations. In the 171st meeting of the Council, it was Sen, India's representative, who earnestly raised the Indonesian issue and called upon the Security Council to ask both the Dutch and the Republic of Indonesia "to revert to the original positions which they held when hostilities broke out". He warned that "the dispute with which we are dealing today threatens the peace and security of the whole of South-east Asia".

At another meeting of the Council on 28 August 1947, Pillai, the Indian representative rebutted the Dutch attempt to

97 The Hindu, 26 July 1947.
98 Thein, n. 4, p. 92.
100 Ibid., p. 1628.
challenge the competence of the Council to deal with the
Indonesian question. He described the Dutch tactics "as a
prelude for a renewed offensive" against the Republic. At the
Security Council, India offered Indonesia maximum support in all
that this country desired. India supported the Indonesian
request to the Council to set up two commissions, one for
supervising the implementation of the ceasefire and another to
settle all points of dispute between the concerned parties
through mediation or arbitration.

Unfortunately the Second Police action of the Dutch on
18 December 1948 rendered futile the Indian government's efforts
for negotiated settlement of the Indonesian crisis through the
forum of the United Nations. This led to a lot of resentment
and shock in India. The next day on 19 December 1948, the
Indian Prime Minister Nehru warned the Dutch "that they will
not be able to achieve their object". He said "the day of
imperialism is over..." and the "police action of the Dutch will
have serious repercussions in India, in Asia and perhaps in some
other countries too."

By now Burma had also intensified her campaign for
Indonesian independence. U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma,
approached Nehru for convening a conference at New Delhi for

101 Ibid., 2nd Year, 192nd meeting, 22 August 1947, p. 2153.
102 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947-48 (New York:
United Nations, Department of Public Information, 1948),
p. 366.
103 S.D. Arora, "Indian Indonesian Relations: 1961-1967"
Ph.D. Thesis (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University,
1973), p. 35.
104 The Hindu, 21 December 1948.
the purpose of strengthening the position of the Republic and also to urge the Security Council to take remedial actions against the Dutch. The consultations between the two resulted in convening the Second Asian Relations Conference to be held at New Delhi in January 1949. At the conference, both India and Burma successfully sought to turn the Indonesian issue into an all-Asian issue. In the inaugural speech of the conference, Nehru took the Dutch action as a "challenge to a newly awakened Asia". He pointed out the urgency of the matter and stressed "the situation in Indonesia is full of dangerous possibilities and requires urgent action". This stand of Nehru on Indonesia was supported by the Burmese delegation at the conference.

Finally India and Burma became party to a resolution passed by the conference condemning the Dutch aggression and requesting the Security Council to take speedy and effective action for restoring independence to the Republic of Indonesia. Indo-Burmese participation at this conference must be considered a great success as far as the issue of Indonesian freedom struggle was concerned. The resolution adopted by the delegates of the conference did not go unnoticed among the members of the Security Council and world public opinion. Moreover Nehru had officially transferred the resolution of the Conference to the Security Council with a strong recommendation that the Security Council act forthwith. Throughout the

107 Nehru's Speeches, n. 105, p. 328.
conference India and Burma spoke with one voice. They had one aim -- to see an independent Indonesia.

Such a moral and diplomatic pressure created at New Delhi conference and some other factors ultimately led to the cessation of military action by the Dutch against the Indonesians. In April 1949, the Dutch resumed negotiations with the Indonesian leaders. In August 1947 the Round Table Conference at Hague resulted in the conclusion of the Dutch-Indonesian Agreement on 1 November 1949. Subsequently transfer of sovereignty to Government of Indonesia took place on 29 December 1949.

Indo-Burmese support to the cause of Indonesian independence laid the foundations for future cordial relations between India, Burma and Indonesia. After its independence on 29 December 1949 Indonesia joined the non-aligned bloc in which India and Burma played the vital role. Now India, and Burma along with Indonesia jointly started a campaign for world peace through the non-aligned movement.

In the latter period, India and Burma fully supported Indonesia's legitimate claims to West Irian (West New Guinea) against the Netherlands, both outside and inside the forums of the United Nations. By advising Indonesia to decide the issue of West Irian peacefully without resorting to force, India and Burma strengthened their policy of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism.

108 Among the other factors the most important was the strong economic pressure exerted by the United Kingdom and the United States. For details see Thein, n. 4, pp. 101, 106.
India, Burma and the Indo-Chinese Crisis

Having tasted the bitter fruits of colonial rule, both India and Burma strongly opposed colonialism even after they gained independence. So far as the Indo-Chinese states were concerned, French colonialism was a major factor till the year 1954. But in post-1954 period, it was super power intervention in Indo-China that gave rise to turmoil in the region. India and Burma, the two countries of the 'non-aligned bloc' did not want Indo-China (which had centuries old contacts with India and Burma) to get trapped into the grip of Super-Power rivalry.

Unlike their support to the Indonesian struggle for independence at the official level, India and Burma surprisingly enough followed an attitude of reservation in their official reactions towards the national struggle for independence fought by the Vietminhs in Indo-China against the French colonialists. Being the supporters of the liberation struggle against the colonial rule elsewhere in the world, both India and Burma looked upon the French colonial imperialism as even worse than the Dutch. But their hesitation in giving open support to the liberation movement of the Vietminhs in Indo-China particularly during 1945-50 at official level could only be attributed to the fact that unlike the situation in Indonesia, the situation in Indo-China was more complicated. The nationalist upsurge in Indo-China was led by the Communists not only at the leadership level but also at the mass level. Hence they could not help

109 Ibid., p. 102.
110 Ibid.
doing anything else than give moral support to the Vietminh struggle for freedom and verbal condemnation of French colonialism.

In 1950, Communist states recognized the Ho-Chi Minh regime and Western countries including the United States of America gave recognition to Bao-Dai regime of South Vietnam. India and Burma however maintained a stand of neutrality. They did not want to take any hasty decision. The Indian Prime Minister expressed commitment to non-intervention and non-involvement frequently during his visits to Burma, and Jakarta in June 1950.

Since the year 1950, when the Indo-Chinese crisis took a serious turn due to Super Power involvement, India and Burma became deeply concerned with the nature of the Indo-China conflict. It also signalled direct participation of the Communist and non-communist countries in the conflict. The intensive military assistance to France as well as Vietminh fighting in Indo-China made the situation more grave in early 1954. It was in the light of such a situation that Prime

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111 For Prime Minister Nehru's declaration of his country's policy of non-interference in Indo-China, see Parliamentary Debates, n. 35, col. 1690; for Burma's stand on Indo-China see Frank N. Trager, Burma: From Kingdom to Republic (London, 1968), p. 282.

112 On his visit to Jakarta on 16 June, Prime Minister Nehru while commenting on India's non-recognition said, "This is not a negative attitude but slightly a positive one, because we do not want to make it more difficult for Indo-China's fight for independence." Again on 22 June in Rangoon, he said that 'India wanted to keep out of the internal conflicts of Indo-China and throw whatever weight she had on the side of peace.' For these statements see The Hindu, 17, 23 June 1950.
Minister Nehru on 22 February 1954, made an earnest appeal for a ceasefire in Indo-China. As India was in favour of an immediate settlement of the prevailing Indo-China crisis, Prime Minister Nehru came out with a six-point proposal for peace settlement in Indo-China.

Although India and Burma were not members of the Geneva Conference, they influenced the proceedings of the conference through the Colombo Conference of April-May 1954, where Nehru and U Nu along with other Colombo powers worked hard to find a peaceful solution of the Indo-China crisis. Ultimately they came out with a communiqué which was reiteration of the Six-Point Nehru Plan in content and subject. India and Burma were particularly pleased at the representation of Communist China in the Geneva Conference. Moreover, the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai during the recess of the Geneva Conference visited India and Burma. In Delhi, on 23 June 1954, Nehru and Chou En-lai in a joint statement emphasized upon the application of the principles of Panchsheel to the solution of the Indo-China problems, "where the political settlement should aim at the creation of free, democratic, unified and independent states, which should not be used for aggressive purposes or...


114 The six point proposal contained these points: (1) a climate of peace and conciliation; (2) a ceasefire; (3) independence for the three states; (4) direct negotiations between the parties immediately and principally concerned, i.e. France, the three associated states of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and the Vietminh; (5) a solemn agreement on non-intervention; and (6) informing the United Nations and using its good offices. See Nehru, n. 23, p. 399.

115 The Hindu, 3 May 1954.
be subjected to foreign intervention." Similarly at Rangoon in a joint statement on 29 June 1954, Chou En-lai and U Nu expressed "their hope that the question of restoration of peace in Indo-China which is being discussed in Geneva will be settled satisfactorily".

Finally, the Governments of India and Burma firmly supported the Geneva settlement of 1954 which provided for the establishment of independence of three Indo-Chinese States -- Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam on the principles of unity, territorial integrity and non-interference from outside. They welcomed it as a great contribution to the maintenance of peace in South-East Asia. In the post-Geneva period India even undertook a heavy responsibility by accepting the chairmanship of the proposed International Commissions of Supervision and Control constituted under the provisions of the Geneva agreements to control and supervise the armistice agreements in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

The implementation of the Geneva agreements in respect of Cambodia and Laos was smoothly carried out. In respect of Vietnam, however, while the terms of the ceasefire agreement were implemented, no general elections were held as scheduled and consequently, there was no political settlement, as

116 For text of the joint statement see Foreign Policy of India: Texts of Documents, n. 76, p. 295.
118 For details about Nehru's comments on undertaking the responsibility of chairmanship, see India: Parliamentary Debates (Lok Sabha), pt. 2, vol. 7, no. 30, 29 September 1954, cols. 3676-7. Also see Report, 1954-55, p. 16.
envisioned by the Geneva agreements of 1954 because of the non-co-operation of the South Vietnamese Government. But India did not try to escape responsibility or take steps that would hamper a peaceful settlement at any time in the future. India as chairman of International Commission with a view to re-unify the two zones, continued to have friendly relations on a de facto basis with the Governments of South and North Vietnam and also stressed the need to promote mutual understanding between them. The year 1957 was marked by opening up of India's consular relations with both the governments of Vietnam followed on by mutual exchange of visits and trade agreements with them.

On the other hand Burma too continued to exchange goodwill missions with each of the Vietnamese Governments. However it did not imply that Burma had recognized them. It was only in the year 1961 that the Burmese Government announced that it had entered into trade relations with the Communist regime of North Vietnam involving exchange of consular relations. Like India Burma too did not give de jure recognition to the 17th parallel demarcation line between North and South Vietnam and continued to favour their re-unification as contemplated in the Geneva settlement of 1954.

121 Ibid., *1956-57*, p. 20.
122 Johnstone, n. 56, p. 251.
123 Trager, n. 111, p. 267.