Chapter IV

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN INDO-BURMESE RELATIONS; REGIONAL CONFERENCES AND GLOBAL ISSUES
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In view of the political developments of the period, Indo-Burmese relations cannot be understood correctly unless sufficient light is thrown on their role in regional conferences and global issues. In such regional conferences, as the Second Asian Relations Conference, the Asian Socialist Conference and the Bandung Conference both India and Burma played a significant role. On the global front, issues like the Korean Crisis, Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Crisis drew the attention of many countries including India and Burma. Moreover, the role played by these two Asian countries at the non-aligned conference at Belgrade cannot be ignored.

India, Burma and Regional Conferences

To promote co-operation and solidarity among the Afro-Asian countries India and Burma actively participated in a number of regional conferences. It was at these various conferences that they could discuss the problems faced by the countries of the region. Both the countries being advocates of Afro-Asian solidarity, played very important roles in organizing many conferences before and after their independence especially during the period 1948-62. The Asian Relations Conference was the first of its kind in this respect which was convened at a time when India and Burma were on the threshold of freedom.

The First Asian Relations Conference

It was at the initiative of Jawaharlal Nehru, that the First Asian Relations Conference was convened
during March-April 1947 at New Delhi at an unofficial level by an unofficial body known as Indian Council of World Affairs.

The Conference marked the beginning of the coming together of various nations of Asia for the first time in history. Most of the countries represented in the conference had small delegations, but India participated with the largest delegation of fifty-one delegates and six government observers. Burma was the third largest representative with seventeen delegates and four government observers. The conference marked the resurgence of Asia on the world stage. Both India and Burma stressed the need for Asian unity. In his inaugural address of welcome at the Conference, indicating that the idea of such a conference had arisen in many countries of Asia, Nehru said that "there was a widespread urge and an awareness that the time had come for us, peoples of Asia, to meet together to hold together and to advance together." He further explained:

In this conference and in this work there are no leaders and no followers. All countries of Asia have to meet together on an equal basis in


2 For details about membership of representing countries in the Asian Relations Conference, see ibid., pp. 254-79. Also for India and Burma see ibid., pp. 255-6, 69-71.

a common task and endeavour... We have no designs against anybody; Ours is the great design of promoting peace and progress all over the world. 4

While asserting strongly his stand on nationhood and organising solidarity and co-operation between the free countries of Asia, Nehru in a powerful speech said:

For too long we of Asia have been petitioners in Western Courts and chancelleries. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our own feet and to co-operate with all others who are prepared to co-operate with us. We do not intend to be playthings of others. 5

Similarly, Justice Kyaw Myint, the head of the Burmese delegation supported the stand taken by the Indian leader. He also appreciated the nature of Burma's close relations with its immediate neighbour India and said: "I feel here I am a man in his own house.... We are contiguous to the centre of culture. We are near in thought; ... literally near geographically, socially and culturally." Regarding the importance of the conference, he read out a warm message on behalf of General Aung San which said:

The proposal to hold a conference of the countries of Asia has evoked a feeling of wide-spread satisfaction in Burma, and the people here are all the more gratified that the proposal has taken a concrete form.... I wish the Asian Relations Conference every success and pray that the cornerstone to the edifice of an all-Asian unity and solidarity has been well and truly laid at the conference. 7

4 Ibid., pp. 301-3.
6 Ibid., p. 37.
7 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
From the beginning of the Conference, the Indian and Burmese delegates participated actively in various group discussions on issues concerning the national liberation movements, racial relations and migration inside Asia, economic development, industrialisation and cultural ties etc. They voted in favour of a resolution relating to the establishment of a permanent institute to carry on the work of the Asian Relations Conference. This reflected serious concern of both the countries about the larger interest of whole of Asia.

In order to give final shape to the creation of an organisation, a provisional general council was formed which consisted of 30 members. Pandit Nehru was subsequently elected President of the Council and Burma was represented by its two delegates Kyaw Myint and U Rashid. When in the year 1947, the Central office for the Asian Relations Organisation was established in Delhi, Nehru became its honorary President and Burma became one of the six countries where its national units were established.

Despite the sincere efforts of Nehru, the Asian Relations Organisation could not maintain permanently its active existence due to lack of co-operation from China and other countries of

8 Besides India and Burma, other countries who voted in favour of the resolution, were Ceylon and Iran. The countries opposed to it were China, Philippines and Afghanistan. See G.H. Jansen, Afro-Asia and Non-Aligned (London, 1966), pp. 85-89.

9 Asian Relations Report, n. 1, p. 256.

10 Other countries where national units were established were Ceylon, India, Israel, Malaya and Nepal. See Jansen, n. 8, p. 71.
South and Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, the importance of the conference lay in the fact that this first all Asian forum was able to demonstrate before the world the idea of Asian unity in the Asian People’s struggle against colonial rule, the community of their aims and the need for Asian co-operation in political, economic and social fields. It marked the emergence of an independent Asia in the international arena, capable of influencing the course of world events.

The Second Asian Relations Conference

To vindicate its support to the liberation movements and against colonial oppression, the Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Nehru, organised at an official level a second meeting of the Asian countries. This meeting which was held in New Delhi during 20-23 January 1949 was facilitated by the achievement of independence by India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, between 1947 and 1948.

The meeting was specifically called to condemn the Dutch military aggression against the Indonesian Republic on 18 December 1948 and was represented by delegates from about nineteen states. It is generally believed that the main brain behind the conference was the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu and

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11 Many of the countries represented in the conference like Burma, Indonesia, India, Malaya and Vietnam had not even achieved their independence.


13 Countries like Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen were represented by their delegates at ministerial level, while China, Nepal, New Zealand and Thailand made their representation in the Conference at observer level. See ibid.
it was appreciated by the leader of the Burmese delegation U Win in the following terms:

It gives me no end of pleasure to see that the suggestion made by my Prime Minister, to call a conference of this kind has been accepted by the Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with enthusiasm and intuitive perception of Asia's needs. 14

As a matter of fact both India and Burma had been showing their deep concern to the national struggle in Indonesia against the Dutch imperialism since its onset three and half years ago. To deal with the situation, they had banned the entry of Dutch ships and planes from their harbours and airports.

However, the present conference was not opposed to any country or people. It was not "anti-European or anti-American or anti-Western". While addressing the proceedings of the first plenary session on 20 January 1949, Nehru explained:

"We meet today, because the freedom of a sister country of ours has been imperilled and the dying colonialism of the past has raised its head again and challenged all the forces that are struggling to build up a new structure of the world." 17

Nehru condemned the Dutch military action of 18 December 1948 as the most "open and unabashed" and called upon the Security Council of the United Nations to take an immediate

14 Ibid., p. 666.
15 Besides India and Burma, other countries who had done the same were Ceylon, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. See V.P. Dutt, India's Foreign Policy with Special Reference to Asia and the Pacific (Delhi, 1950), p. 7.
17 Nehru's Speeches, n. 3, p. 326.
action. He explained that the main objective of the conference was to see "how best we can help the Security Council to bring about a rapid and peaceful solution of the Indonesian problem. We meet to supplement the efforts of the Security Council, not to supplant that body. In the same tone, U Win of Burma said that the conference has been convened to "reinforce the purposes of the United Nations and the Security Council and not to obstruct the fulfillment of the hopes of mankind which are centred in this great body."

In order to influence the proceedings of the UN Security Council against the Dutch aggression, the Indian, Burmese and Indonesian delegates participated actively in the deliberations of the conference and came out with three different sets of proposals. Although these proposals had only a few ideas common in spirit and nature yet there was general agreement in

18 Nehru further reiterated that "we meet in no spirit of hostility to any nation or group of nations, but in an endeavour to promote peace through the extension of freedom." See ibid., p. 328.

19 Poplai, n. 12, p. 667.

20 The Indian proposal recommended the following line of action like Dutch withdrawal; an inquiry into the aggression; cessation of all aid to Holland and the immediate restoration of conditions which could enable the Indonesian Republic to function freely. On the other hand the Burmese proposal consisted of the recommendations like the Dutch withdrawal; de jure recognition to the Republican Government of Indonesia by all Asian governments; immediate release of all the Indonesian traders; lifting of the Dutch blockade of Indonesia; widened range of sanctions against the Dutch; setting up of a machinery to watch the progress of the future decision of the conference and the Security Council; and lastly an appeal to the United States of America to withhold all aid to the Netherlands Government. See ibid., pp. 660-3, 667-8.
the conference. The conference finally came out with three resolutions. Of these three resolutions, one was mainly on Indonesia and contained recommendations to the Security Council incorporating most of the suggestions made by India, Burma and Indonesia except some changes in the latter’s proposal.

Besides the Indonesian issue, the conference also discussed the long-term issue of the formation of a permanent Asian organisation for the purpose of “effective mutual consultation and concerted effort in the pursuit of common aims.” In this connection Nehru made a suggestion for a Consultative Committee drawn from the permanent representatives at the United Nations or composed of the ambassadors of the Asian governments in New Delhi with his preference for the latter and it was supported by Burmese delegate U Win. However, due to lack of unanimity over the formation of a permanent Asian organisation, the Conference in a separate resolution expressed the opinion that “participating governments should consult among themselves in order to explore ways and means of establishing suitable

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21 Few of the recommendations made in one of the resolutions of the Conference forwarded to the United Nations Security Council were the release of all members of the Republican Government, other Republican leaders and all political prisoners in Indonesia; the withdrawal of the Dutch troops from occupied areas by 15th of March as against Indonesia’s demand of 1 March 1949; completion of elections to the Constituent Assembly of Indonesia by 1 October 1949 against Indonesia’s 1 June, and power transferred to Indonesia by 1 January 1950 against Indonesia’s demand of 1 September 1949. See Jansen, n. 8, pp. 91-92. For details about the three resolutions of the conference forwarded to the Security Council, see Poplail, n. 12, pp. 682-6.

22 Nehru’s Speeches, n. 3, p. 329.
machinery ... for promoting consultation and co-operation within the framework of the United Nations."

On 13 April 1949, ambassadors from ten Afro-Asian countries met in New Delhi to confer with Nehru the necessity of securing from the Security Council the implementation of the recommendations of the Asian Relations Conference. U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma who was also present in Delhi expressed his grave concern for inaction from the Security Council. The present deliberations in fact had greatly influenced the decision of the Dutch Government regarding granting of independence to Indonesia. The result was the granting of independence on 29 December 1949 against the deadline of 25 January 1950 as fixed by the Conference.

Although the Second Asian Relations Conference like the previous one could not succeed in its deliberations to produce a permanent institute, yet the main issue - the settlement of Indonesian crisis for which the Conference was convened, was favourably resolved. The deliberations of the conference marked by active participation of India and Burma, further strengthened the bonds between them to work for the Asian solidarity and goodwill, and also against colonialism, imperialism and racialism of all sorts.

23 Jansen, n. 8, p. 94.
24 Ibid., p. 96.
At the invitation of the Burma Socialist Party an epochal Asian Socialist Conference was held in Rangoon during 6-15 January 1953. The conference invited socialist delegates from different parts of the world. The socialist delegates from India and Burma took active part in the conference which had been the first of its kind non-governmental conference in the history of socialism.

The delegates who attended the conference impressed upon the Asian socialists to pursue a policy of non-alignment in the rivalries of the power blocs and try to keep themselves away from them with a view to work for peace in Asia and the world.

At the opening session of the conference, U Ba Swe of Burma was unanimously elected as the Chairman. Prem Bhasin of India was elected Secretary. In a speech, U Ba Swe, the chairman of the conference, said:

"I take it as a great honour to have to act as chairman of this conference of Asian Socialist Parties which is bound to be epoch making in world history in general and in Asian history in particular." 27
Referring to the problems like the threat to world peace, rivalries of the two power-blocs, the economic imbalance in the world, colonial struggle for freedom and the aggressive character of the International Communist Movement, U Ba Swe said that these were the "problems which concern not only the Socialist Parties of Asia. They are matters of life and death importance to people of the whole world."

The Indian socialist delegates like Jaya Prakash Narayan, Ashok Mehta, Ram Manchar Lohia and others fully agreed with the stand taken by the Burmese delegate. In the words of Jaya Prakash Narayan "India and Burma have many bonds of friendship and have shared in common many and varied experiences of history.... India and Burma are typical of the whole of Asia." While appreciating the determination of the conference to destroy vestiges of imperialism and colonialism from the face of Asia, Jaya Prakash Narayan said:

The people of Asia are awake with a new consciousness and they are shaking off not only the yoke of foreign rule but also their accustomed inertia and passivity.... A strong irresistible breeze of freedom blows through the corridors of the Asian nations. The remaining vestiges of imperialism and foreign oppression will soon become mere memories of the past.  

At the conference, when a controversy arose over the question of the relationship between the Asian Socialist Conference and the other parts of the socialist world, primarily the Socialist

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28 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
International, M.S. Gokhale, a socialist delegate from India, came out with a middle-of-the-road draft resolution. His proposal aimed at the establishment of a permanent organisation of Asian Socialist Parties "to strengthen relations between the Asian Socialist Parties; co-ordinate the political attitude by consent, establish closer relations with Socialist Parties in all the world, and establish a liaison with the Socialist International". Unlike other countries, who suggested some minor amendments to the Indian proposal, chairman U Ba Swe of Burma fully supported the Indian proposal. As a result amendments were withdrawn and the Indian proposal was accepted unanimously. An Organisation of Asian Socialist Parties was set up as an independent body. It was to function through three bodies -- the Conference, the permanent Bureau and the Secretariat responsible to the permanent Bureau and executing the decisions of the Conference and the Bureau. Burma, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaya and Pakistan were represented in the permanent Bureau. An Indonesian was made Secretary-General with Joint Secretaries from India and Burma. Accordingly the

31 Ibid., p. 2.
32 Ibid.
33 U Ba Swe tried to assure the delegates that a proper interpretation of the phrase "establish a liaison with the Socialist International" would be that liaison would be maintained at all levels, i.e. that the Secretariat, Bureau and the Conference of the Asian Organisation would maintain contacts with corresponding organs of the Socialist International. See ibid., vol. 1, no. 43, 23 January 1953, p. 3.
permanent Bureau of the Asian Socialist Conference held its subsequent meetings in Hyderabad (India), in Kalaw (Burma) and in Japan.

The Second Congress of the Asian Socialist Conference was held in Bombay during 1-10 October 1956. It coincided with world shocking developments in Egypt and Hungary. The Burmese Prime Minister U Ba Swe, Ashok Mehta of India, Moshe Sharett of Israel and Sjahjir of Indonesia actively participated in the Conference.

In the plenary session of the Conference, the Indians and Burmese delegates carried their weight, passed two resolutions condemning Anglo-British-Israeli military aggression in West Asia, and Russian armed intervention in Hungary. By doing so, they succeeded in not only setting up a pace for the building of a strong opinion on the then current development in West Asia and Hungary but also went a long way in influencing the general attitude of the Afro-Asian powers in the Councils of the United Nations. Besides this they also discussed the important issues like the fast changing international situation, nuclear weapons, disarmament, declaration of Asian peace, military bases in Asia, revision of the United Nations Charter, programme for colonial freedom and developments in the Communist world.

36 The two resolutions were drafted by Prem Bhasin of India, U Kyaw Eway of Burma, Manoo of Indonesia and Moroshima of Japan. See Burma Weekly Bulletin, vol. 5, no. 32, 15 November 1956, p. 254.
37 Ibid., p. 256.
Despite the significant success of the conference it failed to save the socialist unity in Asia. Absence of any official support to the furtherance of Asian socialist movement was one of the reasons. Moreover as a result of the treaties like NATO, SEATO and Warsaw which marked a division of the world into aligned and non-aligned group of nations, the idea of Asian socialist unity faded into insignificance. Instead it was replaced by Afro-Asian unity manifested in the Bandung Conference.

The Bandung Conference

The decision to convene the Asian-African Conference was taken at a meeting of the Prime Ministers of five Colombo Powers, viz Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia and India, at Bogor in Indonesia on 28 and 29 December 1954. It was decided to convene such a conference at ministerial level under their joint sponsorship. At Bogor it had been made clear that the proposed conference would strive for promoting goodwill and co-operation between Asia and Africa and aim at establishing world peace and co-operation.

The conference began at Bandung from 18 April 1955 and continued up to 24 April in which 29 countries of Asia and Africa participated. The whole Asian and African world got the


immense satisfaction of seeing its first great representative conference held in an atmosphere of dignity and sanity. The conference had been held at a time when the world was in the grip of civil war tensions marked by the formation of several defensive pacts like NATO, SEATO etc.

India and Burma worked earnestly in the conference to speed up the formation and development of active non-alignment. They tried to highlight the ideals of non-alignment based on combating colonialism and neo-colonialism. Both the countries were unanimous in demanding prohibition of nuclear weapons, and in condemning the racial segregation and discrimination in large parts of the world especially in Africa. Both Nehru and U Nu along with other members of the conference supported the rights of the colonized people in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to self determination, also owed their full support to Indonesia's claim to West Irian. Even in the case of controversial issues, like "Soviet colonialism" and "Peaceful Co-existence", Nehru and U Nu extended full co-operation to each other.

The first controversy of the conference surfaced, when John Kotelawala (Prime Minister of Ceylon) in the course of discussion on problems of dependent peoples condemned all forms of colonialism including the Western and the Soviet. He especially referred to the East European states and said:

Are not these colonies as much as any of the colonial territories in Africa or Asia? And if we are united in our opposition to colonialism, should it not be our duty to openly declare our

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opposition to Soviet colonialism as much as to Western Imperialism? 41

This statement generated a heated debate in the conference. At this time U Nu tried to save the disruptive trend in the conference and called upon the members to refrain from making violent statements based on ideological differences. On the other hand Nehru made a strong defence for the independent existence of the East European states on the ground that they were diplomatically recognized and owe their membership to the United Nations. This was supported by U Nu also. Hence both successfully averted disruptive course of the conference by preventing John Kotelawala from introducing a resolution on colonialism. Finally, the controversy came to an end with a declaration that "Colonialism in all its manifestations" was an evil and should be brought to an end.

The second controversy developed in the course of discussion on the issue of "Promotion of World Peace and Co-operation". This controversy was precipitated by Mohammad Ali, Prime Minister of Pakistan, over a proposal submitted by U Nu based on "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence" with the addition of clauses on human rights and the Principles of


the United Nations Charter. To counter this, Mohammad Ali came out with "Seven Pillars of Peace" proposal which was based on emphasis on the need for collective self defence. The proposal of the Pakistani delegate was supported by Turkey.

Nehru challenged this proposal and said "every step that takes place in reducing that area in the world which may be called the un-aligned area is a dangerous step and leads to war." He advised the Afro-Asian nations to accept U Nu's proposal incorporating "Five Principles of Panchsheel" as a healthy basis for lessening the tension in the world overridden with power politics of the super blocs engaged in arms race.

Peace and security in South and South-East Asian region depended to a very great extent on the future attitude of the People's Republic of China. That is why, Nehru and U Nu encouraged keen participation of the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai in the Bandung Conference. "Both Indian and Burmese leaders -- and to a lesser but significant extent those of Indonesia, Pakistan and Ceylon attached great importance to

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45 U Nu in his proposal asserted that the nations of the world should regulate their relations with each other on the basis of Panchsheel as expounded by Nehru and Chou En-lai in 1954. At the same time U Nu called upon "the uncommitted nations to bridge the widening gulf between the world's two power blocs. He urged that in their effort to do this they strive to strengthen the United Nations and make it more effective and that in addition they should compensate for its deficiencies by adopting and supporting the Five Principles of Co-Existence." See Kahin, n. 41, p. 21.

46 Hassouna, n. 42, p. 106.

47 Kahin, n. 41, p. 66.

48 Ibid., p. 67.
maintaining Cambodia and Laos free from Chinese or Vietminh intervention or influence." Nehru and U Nu were specifically concerned to restrain Communist subversion in the whole of non-communist Asia particularly in their own countries.

In this connection, the biggest achievement of Nehru and U Nu in the Bandung Conference was that they were able to get an assurance from Chou En-lai for China's adherence to five principles of Panchsheel in conducting relations with Afro-Asia, particularly the neighbouring countries. Both India and Burma being interested in restoring peace in Indo-China, also successfully got an assurance of non-interference from Chou En-lai, in the internal affairs of the independent countries like Cambodia and Laos. Chou En-lai tried to convince Nehru and U Nu about his country's conciliatory attitude and said that "China has no intention whatsoever to subvert the governments of its neighbouring countries". He specifically made a mention of the border issue and assured Nehru and U Nu that his country shall take immediate steps to settle the border issues with those countries who had a common undemarcated border with China.

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India and Burma on Global Level

Indo-Burmese relations are not confined to the walls of bilateral and regional matters. They jointly played an

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49 Ibid., pp. 7-8.


51 Ibid., p. 170.
important role in world politics. Very often they spoke in one voice and maintained a common stand in matters relating to many international issues. At a time when the world had been divided into two power-blocs, both India and Burma followed the policy of non-alignment. Their aim was to bring more and more countries to the non-aligned bloc and in the process lessen world tension and maintain world peace. In this regard, India played the leading role and Burma always supported the Indian stand. During the period 1948-62, India and Burma not only followed a policy of non-alignment but also maintained anti-colonial and anti-racial stand in their foreign policy. Furthermore, both the countries owed their deep faith in the institution of the United Nations as a mechanism for ensuring global peace. So in order to understand their position at the global level, it is necessary to comprehend important international issues of the period and their role in these issues.

During this period (1948-62), three important world crises had taken place in which India and Burma played a significant role - the Korean crisis, Suez crisis and the Hungarian crisis. In these three crises the Super Powers had been involved and world peace was threatened. So India and Burma, as members of the non-aligned bloc, and as active members of the United Nations, tried their best for a peaceful solution to end those crises.
The Korean Crisis

The Korean crisis actually broke out on 25 June 1950 when the North Korean forces crossed the Thirty-Eighth Parallel that separated their country from the South. This gave rise to a grave international crisis. The situation undoubtedly assumed threatening proportion at the global level leading to vivid possibility of drawing the two Super-Powers and their allies into direct conflict with each other.

India and Burma, the two important Asian nations took keen interest in solving the Korean crisis. Being the members of the United Nations, their interest in promotion of peace and prevention of war in the Korean peninsula was very strong from the very beginning. As a result they participated actively in the debates of the Political and Security Committee of the General Assembly for the final settlement of the issues concerning the Korean crisis.

On 8 December 1948, India and Burma voted for the US sponsored resolution to recognise the Republic of Korea (South Korea) as the only legal and representative government in the country and opposed Soviet Union's efforts to challenge the Government of South Korea. Although India and Burma had voted for the resolution, they were not in favour of according diplomatic recognition to the Government of South Korea. They felt that recognising the government of one part of Korea and

52 For details of the Korean crisis, see Soon Chung Cho, Korea and World Politics (Berkeley, 1965), pp. 121-38.

53 Isabelle Crocker, Burma’s Foreign Policy and the Korean War: A Case Study (California, Calif., 1963), p. 60.
not of the other, or even to recognise both Korean regimes would be to perpetuate the partition which might prejudice all chances of unification of the country. India and Burma as critics of Cold War politics of the two Super Powers always stood committed in favour of strengthening the UN Commission on Korea. They voted in favour of a joint draft resolution of USA, Australia and China issued on 12 December 1948, that called upon the General Assembly to approve the conclusions of the Temporary Commission and establish a new commission on Korea to continue United Nations efforts to bring about the peaceful unification of Korea. Both India and Burma voted against USSR draft resolution demanding the termination of the United Nations Commission on Korea on the ground that the latter had not helped to liquidate the baneful effects of the Japanese rule in Korea and achieve the aim of re-establishing Korea as an independent democratic state.

The Security Council resolution of 25 June 1950, condemning North Korea for its attack on the Republic of Korea and demanding their immediate withdrawal behind the 38th parallel was supported


55 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1948-49 (New York: United Nations, Department of Public Information, 1949), pp. 287-8. The Temporary Commission on Korea was established by the First Committee of the General Assembly by a resolution of 14 November 1947 to facilitate the establishment of a national government in that country by means of a nationwide elections and arrange the withdrawal of the occupying forces. In fact India became one of the nine members of the Temporary Commission. See for details of the Temporary Commission, ibid., 1947-48 (New York, United Nations; Department of Public Information, 1948), pp. 302-4.

56 Ibid., 1948-49, p. 287.
by India and Burma. On 27 June, the Security Council requested the UN member nations to provide the Republic of Korea with some possible assistance to repel the North Korean attacks. India responded by contributing an ambulance unit "presumably because she wanted to save herself from future embarrassments and to keep her options open". Burma too accepted the Security Council's resolution of 27 June but announced her inability to render any material assistance due to internal problems. Later, however, Burma sent 400 tons of rice valued at $49,943 to the Republic of Korea.

For the restoration of peace in Korea, both India and Burma opposed the crossing of the 38th parallel by the United Nations troops. They feared that it might lead to the possibility of the Chinese intervention and could create complications in the negotiated settlement. Ultimately, when the Communist


61 K.M. Pannikar, Indian Ambassador to China had been called to the Chinese Foreign Office by Chou En-lai where he was told that China will intervene in case of the UN troops crossing the 38th parallel leading to further extension of the conflict in the area. See K.M. Pannikar, In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat (London, 1955), p. 77.
Chinese troops entered into South Korea by crossing the 38th parallel, India and Burma made persistent efforts to bring a ceasefire. Finally when the US draft resolution condemning Communist China as an aggressor was adopted by the General Assembly on 1 February 1951, India and Burma became the only two non-communist countries to join together in voting against it.

During the next two years India and Burma continued their efforts to bring peace to the war-torn country. Various proposals were introduced by the USSR, the United States and by the Afro-Asian group to solve deadlock caused in the armistice talks over the issue of the repatriation of prisoners of war. India's proposal to solve the issue was supported strongly by Burma and other nations of the Afro-Asian group. After some modifications the Indian proposal was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 3 December 1952. On 3 June 1953

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62 India, Burma along with other eleven Arab-Asian countries submitted a 13-nation joint draft resolution on 12 December 1950 to the First Committee of the General Assembly for the formation of a Cease-Fire group. This resolution was later adopted by the General Assembly and India became one of the three members of the Cease-Fire Group. See United Nations, GACR5th Session, First Committee, 415th meeting, 12 December 1950, pp. 432-4. For detailed functioning of the Cease-Fire Group, see Yearbook of the United Nations 1951 (New York: United Nations, Department of Public Information, 1952), pp. 207-12.


64 The two main points of the Indian resolution which aimed at reconciling the two conflicting views of the Soviet and American bloc were as follows: (i) POWs would be released into the temporary jurisdiction of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission; (ii) After release of the POWs, both parties would have the opportunities to explain to their prisoners the rights and conditions
an agreement on the repatriation of prisoners of war was concluded between the belligerent groups. The terms of this agreement were found to be in almost perfect conformity with the provisions of the Indian proposal. The armistice agreement which was signed on 27 July 1953 led to the creation of a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission with India as a leading member.

In the post-armistice period, both India and Burma participated in debates on the question of composition of a peace conference as envisaged in the Indian resolution of December 1952 and as recommended by the United Nations. Both the countries demanded representation of Korea as well as the Communist China in the peace conference at Geneva.

As India and Burma aspired for peaceful settlement of the Korean crisis, the final decision of the four powers (the US, Britain, France and the USSR) to hold a conference at Geneva were appreciated by them. However, U Nu's proposal demanding representation of any Colombo Power in the peace conference did not gain any support.

prevailing in their homelands. The resolution was however, rejected by China and North Korea. For the entire text of the Indian resolution, see Yearbook of the United Nations, 1952 (New York: United Nations; Department of Public Information, 1953), pp. 201-2.


67 Crockor, n. 53, p. 45.

68 Ibid., p. 46.
About the unification of North and South Korea, both India and Burma took a joint stand. At the plenary sessions of the General Assembly in the fall of 1954, Burma mostly voted down the line with India and other members of the Arab-Asian bloc on a series of the US and the USSR sponsored resolutions.

Burma, however, did not always follow the Indian line blindly. On several occasions Burma voted differently from India. On USSR sponsored resolution "demanding a cessation of hostilities and recommending a Joint Commission to oversee elections", Burma voted against it while India abstained. On another resolution sponsored by the USSR "calling on the United States to cease the barbarous bombing of civilians in Korea", Burma abstained but India voted against it. Similarly on "Uniting for Peace" resolution sponsored by the United States, Burma voted in favour while India abstained.

These variations in the voting pattern were guided by the respective national interests of these two countries. The Burmese delegates on the whole consistently declared themselves in favour of any proposal which gave promise of keeping open the possibility of further negotiations no matter how impossible the situation looked at any given moment. However, India and Burma did not follow the policy of siding permanently with one or the other group of nations. Sometimes they voted with the Soviet Union, and on other occasions, they favoured the position of the United States. While doing so their attitude was guided

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69 Ibid., p. 59.
70 Ibid., p. 55.
by their own independent judgement of the situation rather than a policy of satisfying one or the other power blocs.

The Suez Crisis

The Suez crisis was the result of Egypt’s unilateral declaration of the nationalization of the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956. This declaration caused the Israeli invasion of Egypt, and the Anglo-French occupation of the Suez Canal in October of the same year. Although the crisis did not affect the security of India and Burma directly, they as members of the World organization, had to formulate a policy and take a proper stand. Their approach towards the crisis was based on their efforts to lessen the tension in that area by maintaining a stand that went well with the idea of non-alignment. However, they had to keep in mind the national interests of their respective countries.

On the act of nationalization of Suez which brought strong reaction from Western Powers principally Britain and France, the major shareholders in the Universal Suez Canal Company, India and Burma gave their support to it and in fact took a position in favour of Egypt. Prime Minister Nehru in a public meeting on 1 August 1956 said that the nationalization of the Suez Canal was “symptomatic” of the weakening of the


72 For Indian reaction to the nationalization subsequently, see India, Parliamentary Debates (Lok Sabha), pt. 2, vol. 7, no. 18, 3 August 1956, col. 2540. For Burmese reaction see Burma Weekly Bulletin, vol. 5, no. 27, 11 October 1956, p. 201.
domination of European powers over West Asia which had lasted for over a hundred years.

Both the countries believed in the peaceful settlement of the Suez crisis. India was even invited to attend the proposed 24-nation International Conference at London. The objective of the Conference was to work out effective guarantees for freedom of passage through the Suez Canal. India decided to participate in that conference and sent Krishna Menon as its representative. Menon on behalf of India, put forth a proposal (opposed to American-British-French approach) that emphasised upon taking into consideration the Egyptian sovereignty as a basis for deciding the quality and quantity of international association to ensure the proper working of the Canal and the legitimate interests of the user nations.

On the occasion of Israeli-Anglo-French military venture in Egypt in October 1956, both India and Burma strongly opposed foreign intervention and asked for immediate withdrawal of foreign forces. On 31 October 1956 the Government of India issued an official statement which said that the Israeli aggression on Egypt on 29 October and the subsequent Anglo-French ultimatum (to attack) were "flagrant violation of the

73 The Hindu, 2 August 1956.
74 Barraclough, n. 71, p. 19.
75 For the text of India's proposal to the Suez Conference which was held in London during 16-23 August 1956, with 22 (instead of the 24 invited) states participating, see Foreign Policy of India: Texts of Documents: 1947-1959 (New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1959), p. 249.
United Nations Charter and opposed to all principles laid down by the Bandung Conference. Nehru while addressing a public meeting at Hyderabad on 1 November 1956 vociferously condemned the British-French action in Egypt "as clear and naked aggression". He declared that self-respecting and independent nations of Asia and Africa were not going to tolerate it. He further emphasized that "in all my experience of foreign affairs I have come across no greater case of naked aggression than what England and France are trying to do."

U Ba Swe, the Burmese Prime Minister also condemned the "incredible developments taking place in West Asia". In a statement to the press on 2 November he said that "war as an instrument of national policy, is being employed once again with renewed vigour by certain nations" which is the violation of the Charter of the United Nations. He further added that "mere condemnation of certain countries will not help to solve the problems confronting the world today". He called for immediate cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Egyptian territory and wanted that all the countries concerned should refer the cases of dispute to the

76 The official statement further reiterated that "this aggression is bound to have far-reaching consequences in Asia and Africa, and they may even lead to war on an extended scale". See The Hindu, 1 November 1956.

77 Ibid., 2 November 1956.

78 Ibid. For further details about India's reaction to the Suez crisis see Asha Hans, "Indian Diplomacy during the Suez Crisis of 1956", Ph. D. Thesis (New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1978), pp. 100-2.

79 The Hindu, 3 November 1956.
In the debates in General Assembly, both India and Burma demanded vigorous action of the United Nations to get withdrawal of the Anglo-French and Israeli forces behind the armistice lines and the cessation of hostilities in the area. Both India and Burma joined together in voting for a US draft resolution of 2 November 1956 which demanded immediate ceasefire by all the parties and halting of movement of military forces behind the armistice lines. They further supported a resolution of 4 November 1956 sponsored by Canada for setting up the UN Emergency Force in the area to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities. India and Burma were among those 24 nations which volunteered to offer a contingent of their forces for the UN Emergency Force in Egypt. Eventually India became one of the ten countries from which the offer was accepted. India's offer to contribute to the UN Emergency Force in Egypt however, was based on its own conditions -- that the UN Force in no sense shall be a successor to the Anglo-French forces and that the duty of the forces shall just be to defend Egypt-Israeli armistice lines. India also became one

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80 Ibid.
82 Ibid., p. 36.
83 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
84 United Nations, General Assembly Official Records (GAOR), 1st Emergency Special Session, 567th plenary meeting, 7 November 1956, p. 117. For Nehru's official statement regarding India's offer to the UN Emergency Force, see India, Parliamentary Debates (Lok Sabha), pt. 2, vol. 9, no. 4, 19 November 1956, col. 376.
of the 7-nation Advisory Committee established by a resolution of 7 November 1956 to advise the UN Secretary General regarding the establishment and operation of the proposed emergency force.

Thus, both India and Burma through their constructive and conciliatory role in negotiations made efforts for the settlement of the Suez crisis. Burma supported along with all those resolutions which demanded immediate withdrawal of the forces involved in aggression and the establishment of the UN Emergency Force in Egypt.

The Hungarian Crisis

In 1949, four years after the Second World War, Hungary officially became a People’s Democracy. Real power was in the hands of Matyas Rakosi, a Communist trained in Moscow. Under his regime, Hungary was modelled more and more closely on the Soviet pattern. Early in 1956, the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of USSR encouraged a movement within the Hungarian Workers (Communist) Party which aimed at a measure of democratisation and national independence and a relaxation of police rule. As a chain reaction to such a development there started a mass demonstration of the Hungarian people on 22-23 October 1956 which ultimately led to the formation of an all-party government by M. Imre Nagy. In response to over-

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85 Other members of the Advisory Committee constituted by resolution of 7 November 1956 were Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Colombo, Norway and Pakistan. Yearbook of the United Nations, 1956, n. 81, pp. 37-38.


whelming popular demands, M. Nagy subsequently announced that free elections would be held; that talks would be opened with the USSR to secure the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary; and that Hungary intended to adopt a policy of permanent neutrality to be guaranteed by the United Nations.

Although the Soviet Government ostensibly entered into negotiations with M. Nagy's Government on the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary on 4 November 1956, it suddenly launched a concentrated attack on Budapest and other provincial centres held by the Hungarian patriots. About this time, a rival government under the prime ministership of the local Communist Party Secretary Janos Kadar had replaced the Nagi regime and it was on the request of the new regime that the Soviet troops violently crushed the popular movement opposed to the government. On 11 November 1956 Kadar regime announced certain liberalization measures and reforms and promised early negotiations for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in Hungary. Thus the development in the year 1956 clearly indicated that Hungary was already in the grip of a crisis.

The most important issue relating to the Hungarian crisis was the intervention of the Soviet armed forces. Unlike the Suez crisis where India strongly condemned the invasion of Anglo-French-Israeli forces, in case of the Hungarian crisis that strong condemnation of Soviet military intervention was missing. Burma on the contrary, held a much stronger position in condemning the Soviet intervention in the internal affairs

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33 Ibid., p. 169.
of Hungary at different platforms both inside and outside the United Nations.

Both India and Burma firmly upheld the principle of non-intervention of foreign forces in the internal affairs of a country and as such were against the principle of suppression of nationalist upsurge in a country. In this respect the Prime Ministers of both the countries expressed their regrets for Soviet intervention. Simultaneously they expressed sympathy for the misfortunes of the Hungarian people. The Burmese Prime Minister U Ba Swe who was then attending the Second Asian Socialist Conference in Bombay condemned the Soviet military action in Hungary as the "most despicable form of colonialism". Similarly the Burmese Deputy Prime Minister U Kyaw Nyein denounced the Soviet interference in Hungary and declared that the "naked interference in Hungarian affairs has completed our disillusionment about Soviet Russia." India on the other hand was not so prompt and sharp in her reaction at the Soviet action. Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, described the Soviet action in Hungary as an outrage to freedom and human dignity.

Unlike Nehru the Burmese Prime Minister U Ba Swe did not find any difference between Anglo-French-Israeli aggression and the Soviet intervention. In a Press Conference at Rangoon on 19 November 1956, U Ba Swe said: "What is the difference between aggression and intervention? To my mind, they are both

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89 The Nation (Rangoon), 5 November 1956.
90 Ibid., 6 November 1956.
91 Parliamentary Debates, n. 84, col. 374.
basically the same." Thus he officially dubbed Russia's intervention in Hungary as nothing short of an aggression.

In the debates of the UN General Assembly both India and Burma, although adopted a common stand on few occasions, voted differently from each other on several occasions. India abstained from voting on most of the UN resolutions called for, condemning the Soviet Union for its repression in Hungary, deploiring the Soviet Union for depriving the Hungarian people of their fundamental right to liberty and independence under the shadow of continued presence of the Soviet armed forces; calling upon the Soviet Union and the Hungarian authorities for allowing the United Nations observers to enter the territory of Hungary for making on the spot study of the situation, while Burma voted in favour.

Although Burma did not abstain with India on some of the UN resolutions, the former's abstention on resolutions on Hungary, particularly on the resolution of 4 November 1956 condemning the Soviet Union as aggressor, was regretted by the Burmese Government. Burma's abstention, however, was clarified by U Pe Khin, Burma's representative at the United Nations. In his statement at the Second Emergency Special Session of the General

92 The Nation, 20 November 1956.

Assembly on 8 November 1956, U Pe Khin said:

It is hoped that the Assembly will appreciate the fact that my government is located in a capital far distant from New York and communication is not easy. If only the original vote on the said resolution of November 4, 1956 had been postponed perhaps a day, my delegation would have been in a position to take a definite stand. 94

U Pe Khin advocated his delegation's support to "any effort of the United Nations consistent with the Charter and which ... does not amount to interference by any outside Power, whoever that might be, to enable the Hungarian people to settle down and pursue a path of their own free will." 95

On the contrary the voting pattern followed by Krishna Menon at the United Nations was being always supported by the Indian Government. At one time when the Indian delegation voted against the 5-Power resolution of 9 November 1956 "demanding the holding of free elections under the auspices of the United Nations", the former was misunderstood and criticised for acting independent of the Indian Government. But the Indian Prime Minister Nehru came in strong defence of the voting on this particular resolution. Nehru made it clear that there was no difference of opinion between the Government of India and the Indian delegation at the United Nations but "complete unison

94 He further reiterated that "the Government of Burma views with great concern the act of Soviet Union's intervention ... armed intervention ... in the internal affairs of Hungary." For U Pe Khin's statement, see Burma Weekly Bulletin, vol. 5, no. 35, 6 December 1956, p. 281.
95 Ibid.
96 Rajan, n. 37, p. 174.
of thinking and action" between the two.

The general stand taken by India and Burma on Hungarian crisis in the United Nations, however, was visible from a joint draft resolution submitted by India, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia on 10 December 1956. While expressing deep concern over the tragic situation in Hungary, the resolution asked for the "withdrawal of Soviet troops and the cessation of foreign intervention". It also expressed its firm conviction that the "interest of the Hungarian people, of the United Nations, and of world co-operation would be best furthered by the cessation of the existing foreign intervention and by the assurance that there would be no external intervention or pressures armed or otherwise from any quarter".

In fact both India and Burma wanted to secure to the Hungarian people the right to a government of their own choice and help them play their part as an independent member of international society. In its efforts to achieve it, India followed a stand of forebearance and restraint by making amendments and suggestions in negotiating a settlement through the offices of the United Nations. Burma too followed a stand of settlement through negotiations but it never lagged behind in condemning the Soviet Union as "aggressor" for its military

97 Replying to criticism in Indian Parliament on India's vote against the resolution of 9 November 1956, Nehru said that the voting on this resolution was "entirely in consonance with our general policy and instructions," for his statement, see India, Parliamentary Debates (Lok Sabha), pt. 2, vol. 9, no. 3, 16 November 1956, col. 265. Also see ibid., pt. 2, vol. 9, no. 5, 20 November 1956, col. 539.

98 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1956, n. 81, p. 79.
invasion of Hungary.

Comparatively Burma was found more consistent in the pursuance of its foreign policy of non-alignment on both the issues of the Suez and the Hungarian crisis at the United Nations. On both these issues the Burmese Government acted regardless of relations with either of the power blocs by judging each issue on the basis of its merits. Although Burma is a small country, the smallness in size did not prevent its delegation at the United Nations from exercising independent judgement in both the cases.

The Hungarian crisis was one of the important issues where India and Burma were found to be at disagreement on several occasions in the debates in the General Assembly. According to Nehru, unlike the case of the Suez crisis where the Indian Government was fully apprised with the facts, in case of the Hungarian crisis facts about developments were not clear. Thus, whatever information was communicated to the Indian Government, it was fraught with contradictions. Besides, unlike the triple aggression on Egypt, which was an immediate and sudden provocation by outside forces, the Hungarian crisis was thought to be a case of "continuing intervention" which had been persisting as a result of the presence of Soviet forces in Hungary under the Warsaw Pact. In view of all this, India stood against outright condemnation of the Soviet Union's action in Hungary. However, both India and Burma through their voting pattern tried their best to avert Cold War tension and

99 *Parliamentary Debates*, n. 34, cols. 373, 375.
100 Ibid., col. 324.
henceforth worked for the settlement of the crisis in a 
peaceful manner.

India, Burma and the Non-aligned 
Conference at Belgrade

On the global level, India and Burma were basically 
interested in the maintenance of world peace and lessening of 
world tensions. To achieve this, they made all possible 
efforts not only in the United Nations but also in other 
international forums. In this connection the role of India 
and Burma at the first non-aligned conference at Belgrade in 
1961 needs some discussion.

A preparatory meeting for the conference of the 
uncommitted countries took place in Cairo during 5-13 June 
1961. Delegates of both India and Burma attended the meeting. 
Unanimous agreement was reached on the necessity of holding a 
conference of Heads of State or Governments of uncommitted 
countries at the meeting. The participants expressed the 
conviction that with the holding of such a conference, 
positive results could be achieved in the interest of world 
peace, effective international co-operation and the realization 
of the aspirations of millions of people for independence and 
a better and happier future. It was also agreed that the 
conference should be held in Yugoslavia early in September 
1961.

101. The Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-

102. Ibid.
Accordingly the conference of the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries was held from 1 September to 6 September 1961. Twenty-five countries including India and Burma participated in this conference "for the purpose of exchanging views on international problems with a view to contributing more effectively to world peace and security and peaceful co-operation among peoples". The delegates at Belgrade, which included the Indian Prime Minister and the Burmese Premier discussed many problems like the atomic bomb, disarmament, danger of power-bloc rivalry, benefit of peaceful co-existence and many other issues of common concern.

The most important issue discussed at Belgrade Conference was that of world peace and colonialism. For both Nehru and U Nu, the key to the problem of world peace lay essentially in the hands of the two great powers -- the United States of America and the Soviet Union. In this connection, U Nu said, "If I select these two powers in particular it is because the ultimate decision as to peace and war rests with them". The Indian Prime Minister stressed over and over again that it was the Conference's "duty and function" to tell the great powers "that they must negotiate" so as to create peaceful


104 For details of the problems discussed at Belgrade see ibid., pp. 15-19.

world atmosphere. U Nu on the other hand said that "negotiations cannot be successful if they are conducted with one hand on the holster and if considerations of prestige loom large." He felt that the political atmosphere being highly charged by power-bloc rivalry could not be conducive to an ideal atmosphere for peaceful and effective negotiations. He suggested that "the first pre-requisite for a sane and sober conduct of negotiations is the restoration of a calm atmosphere, free from frenzy or hysteria" and hence "our deliberations be directed towards ways and means of bringing about this cooling-off process". Although their approach was different, the leaders of India and Burma were concerned with one common problem -- the problem of world peace.

Both India and Burma had undergone a phase of colonial rule. So it was natural that both Nehru and U Nu strongly condemned colonialism, and racial discrimination at the Belgrade conference: "we should strive relentlessly to rid the world of these twin evils", said the Burmese Premier. Jawaharlal Nehru also stood for "anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-racialism and all that". India and Burma along with other non-aligned countries supported the freedom

106 Jansen, n. 3, p. 296.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid., p. 70.
fighters in Algeria, Tunisia and Angola. They also condemned the policy of apartheid practised by the Union of South Africa and demanded the immediate abandonment of that policy.

A striking fact about Belgrade Conference is that throughout his speech Nehru never referred to the word "co-existence." In contrast U Nu gave much emphasis on co-existence. He said:

We are all believers in peaceful co-existence. We believe that man must learn to co-exist, regardless of his differences, and that he must not be deterred or discouraged because of differences, because differences will exist as long as man lasts. 112

In the final declaration of the Conference the Indian and the Burmese Prime Ministers along with other delegates, not only condemned colonialism, racial discrimination, foreign intervention, Super Power rivalry but also agreed to co-operate on economic, cultural and other fields for the betterment of the newly independent countries. 113

111 It was mainly due to Chinese border forays on India in 1959 that the Indian Prime Minister Nehru did not feel the necessity of emphasising upon the utility of Panchsheel or peaceful co-existence in the Belgrade Conference of 1961. See Jansen, n. 8, p. 238.


113 For details of the final declaration see The Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, n. 101, pp. 253-61.