Surrounded on the West, the North, and the East by countries which are stronger than herself, Burma is, in the words of UNO, "hemmed in like a tender ground among the cactus." It is impossible to regard foreign affairs as something remote or academic; blunders in foreign policy could have direct repercussions at home. In particular, Burma is vulnerable to the technique of subversion by an unfriendly power amongst those of her communities which have not yet completely reconciled to the union. The efforts which have been made since independence to maintain an independent foreign policy in this precarious situation have been partly based upon a traditional policy of withdrawal and isolation and partly upon a new concept towards all round international goodwill.

Hence Burma's geographic contiguity with Communist China has always involved special consideration for Burma's policy makers different from those which might apply to many new excolonial nations like Ghana. Burma shows an significant example of how a small nation can maintain its independence in a world which is governed by two rival 'power blocs.' (now big powers). The Revolutionary Council has balanced

Eastern and Western influences in Burma while keeping both to the minimum. The reason is that Burma is a Buddhist country and since Buddhism exhibits pacific tendencies, the question of its relationship with other countries is also influenced by it. Buddhist Burma may seek the way of compromise and peaceful solution of conflict, but never at the expense of its own survival. So the foreign policy of Burma is based upon neutralism, non-alignment and socialism.

UNU has been already formulating the principles which were to determine the course Burma would adopt during the following years. To a mass rally on 11th December 1949 he declared. "In regard to our foreign policy, we are convinced that the course, we have adopted is the best in the circumstances of our country and we are therefore pursuing it steadfastly no matter how strongly it is criticized. Our circumstances demand that we follow an independent course and not to ally ourselves with any power bloc. Any other course can only lead the union to ruin ....... The only political programme which we should pursue is the one which we genuinely believe to be the most suitable for our union, whatever course the British, the Americans, the Russians and the Chinese communists might follow ....... Be friendly with all foreign countries. Our

tiny nation can not have the effrontery to quarrel with any power. If any country comes with an offer of a mutually beneficial enterprise, welcome it by all means ...... but ...... in laying down political programmes, do not forget to ensure that it is fully suited to the requirements of the union."

Burma cannot be said to have played any independent part in international affairs from the 1880 to 1940. In the great political system of South Asia which the Foreign and Economic Department at Simla wished to create, Burma represented an outer bastion. In the absence of a 'forward policy' Burma's foreign relations were limited largely to the creation of a satisfactory frontier with Siam and China. During the years 1948 to 1962, the foreign policy of Burma was dependent upon UNU, inspite of the caretaker government formed in November 1958 to 1960. Since General Newin's second takeover of March 1962, some people are of the view that Burma has become advantageously neutralist from the Communist point of view. But this conception is partly wrong. General Newin is not pro-Peking nor has he sought in any known way to undercut American policies in Southeast Asia. Burma never favours with either the Communist or Western camps in inter-

national affairs, generally Newin visited Soviet Union in 1966 he also visited India, Pakistan and in 1960 he travelled to U.S.A. "Newin's neutralism is no more pro-Communist than was UNU's, but Newin has diminished Western influence in his country. In some respects it seems that Burmese neutrality favours the communists or more specially China than it does the West or the U.S.A. For example, the Burmization programme has been one sided and has adversely affected only Indian and Western interests. This has not been the case for communist countries like China.

Burmese leaders believed that the world is divided by the contest of the big powers in a cold war. They also saw at their problem of building a new nation, and desired as little to do with this international contest as possible. They knew that withdrawal from the world was not the answer. They determined to keep on friendly terms with all nations and to avoid involvement with the big power blocs if they could. By taking economic help from a variety of sources, foreign governments and international bodies, they realise that they have not prejudiced their neutralism on their independence of action. They might not have been able to


obtain all the economic help from outside that they wanted but they did not have to go about begging. UNU described Burma's foreign policy as one of "dynamic neutrality". In his National Day speech the Prime Minister UNU referred to Burma's foreign policy as follows: "Due to our neutral policy, we do not align ourselves with any, power bloc. For this non-alignment, both blocs would of course view us as favourable as they would their own close colleagues. But, one fact is certain, both these power blocs know fully well we are not playing second fiddle to any bloc. Because of our neutral stand, we are in a position to be on friendly terms with all countries of both blocs. It may perhaps be difficult to understand that our friendly dealings with all countries are important for the stability of our independence. But, a perusal of the world map and the geographical position occupied by our country and close-study of various countries will convince us, beyond a shadow of a doubt, how far our friendly relations with all countries based on our neutral foreign policy have contributed towards the stability of our independence ...... we have been able to be on the friend­liest terms with both power blocs because of our correct foreign policy. I have not the slightest doubt about it."


8. Ibid., p. 100.
On January 4, 1956, Ba U, the President of Burma, in his Independence Day speech, said, "Burma gained world-wide recognition mainly due to her steadfast pursuance of the policy of maintaining strict neutrality between the two Power Blocs." In this month UNU resigned and U Ba Swe, (who had been Defence Minister), succeeded him, stating that Burma's Foreign Policy was, "active neutrality aimed at bringing about understanding and better relations between the two opposing blocs." Again on July 3, 1956, U Ba Swe affirmed the policy of "active neutrality" and later in the same month he asserted," we will accept aid from any country provided it does not conflict with our policy of independent neutrality."

On July 19, 1956, UNU as a President of the AFPFL said in his speech, that Burma's "neutral foreign policy" had three features: "1. Non-alignment with any power bloc, 2. Friendship with all countries, and 3. Positive endeavours to bridge the gulf between opposing blocs and to promote peace." He also said that, "striking at the opposition political groups in Burma as stooges (a favourite level) stooge-breeding will end up with the loss of independence." To protect his country to this danger UNU said

9. Ibid., p. 103.
10. Ibid., p. 103.
that the AFPFL Government must "use the following weapons:
1. Support for the U.N. Organisation, 2. A clear and straightforward policy of neutrality and 3. Activities directed towards conversion of the foreign stooges without our country."

When the foreign affairs section started, the Prime Minister quoted from the international relations section of the constitution and stated, "our foreign policy is directed towards, securing a world peace based on international justice and morality, establishing and maintaining friendly relations with all other nations and cooperating with them for our mutual benefit, but at the same time avoiding entanglement which might entail the loss of our freedom of action in foreign affairs."

It is said that Burma's foreign policy of neutrality is the synthesis of the fear of foreign aggression or interference in her internal affairs and the ideal of contributing her bit to world peace and harmony. The policy is neither blind nor negative. It is to say that Burma's neutrality is not neutrality as between right and wrong, it is neither a negative one nor an isolationist policy. On one side India's;

Britain, U.A.R., U.S.A., France greeted the cordial policy of Burma and on the other side, China, Yugoslavia, Pakistan, 13 Russia recognise and appreciate the policy.

That is why most of the Burmans in politics are firm supporters of their government's neutral policy. It has given permission to them to travel to Israel to the United Arab Republic, to the U.S. and to Communist China, to the Soviet Union and to Japan and Western Europe. Since 1954, being a member of U.N.O., Burma has naturally been requested to send representatives to all U.N. conferences, atomic energy and the international law of the Sea, and to host privately sponsored conferences. In these meetings, the Burman representatives are treated with respect, they have an equal voice with those of the big powers, and their feelings are listened by all this means that the politically educated Burmans really have a determining voice in the politics of their country and have begun to exhibit characteristics of egocentrism. We can take the example of U Thant, the former General Secretary of Burma, played a important role in so many international issues. Burmese have been convinced by experience that the policy of their government has been workable, and has paid dividends both to their government and to themselves as Burmans.

"As a result, more and more Burmans have come to believe that neutralism permits their country to be friends with all nations and beholden to more. This has permitted growth of the sentiment that Burmans should run their own affairs as they please with as little advice from outside as possible."

It is quite clear that Burma and other nations adopted a non-alignment policy, had the labels neutralist or neutralism thrust upon them, with the implication in Western capitals, mainly in U.S.A. that such a posture was not only 'immoral' but also needed that they follow a strict course of impartiality. It was realised in 1950 that Burma and some other neutral nations were leaning toward the Communist side rather than toward the West.

UNU realised the difficulty to accept the 'label neutralist' as best describing their foreign policy, the result of this might be to limit severely their freedom of action and to make them so subject to pressures from each bloc in the cold war as virtually to paralyze action in the interests of strict impartiality. For example, the post Korean war usage of "the terms neutral, neutrality, neutralist and neutralism, had so deviantured the older and more precise

meanings of this terminology as to make it useless for their purposes. Yet UNU and leaders of the non-alignment nations have been so trapped by widespread usage of the terms neutrality and neutralist and their own usage of this terminology that it is difficult to see how they can escape from this 'Semantic Trap.'

But Nehru, UNU and other leaders have tried their best to escape from the 'Semantic Trap' of neutralism by use of other terms to describe their foreign policy - such as "non-alignment", "un-committed" and by use of qualifying adjectives such as "positive" and "dynamic". They believe that they have made impartial to their actions, saying that their neutralism combines the ideas that each nation will take the "right" stand on any problem as it may judge it at a given time. UNU and other neutral leaders now feels, today that almost their every action in relations with important nations can be judged as partisan. But Burma's foreign relations shows that Burmese government can neither afford to be strictly partial in its foreign relations or in its status on all international problems, nor has it wished to be in the past.

The 'neutralist label' has so strongly been attached upon every nation following a policy of non-alignment in

15. Ibid., p. 284.
the cold-war that such nations can not ignore it.

"The Semantic trap, from which the non-aligned nations have been unable to escape so far, is more than a matter of words. The implications that any action which openly espouses a policy of non-alignment, and is therefore, immediately dubbed neutralist, must strive to follow a course of impartiality is very clear. If unwilling to force a change in policy in a given case, such as that of Burma, both the Communist bloc states and the Western allies will put pressure on the Burma government, not to show favoritism to the other-side. Whenever Burma or any neutral seem to act partially, it is criticized only by the opponents of the side it has seemed to favour. Such a situation has induced in the leaders of Burma and similar neutral nations as constant attitude of wariness in their foreign relations. They hesitate to take a needed action or to adopt a logical position they believe to be "right" on some international issues or the cold war. UNU insists that Burma was following an 'independent' foreign policy?"

But General Newin's policy has paid political dividends for Burma in terms of Communist and Western friendship and economic aid, and more important because it has enabled Burma

to avoid the agony of Vietnam type war of 'National liberations.'

Since UNU, General Newin and even other Burman leaders have tried their best to give stress on 'label neutralist' for their foreign policy and have attempted to present it as an 'independent' policy, their lack of gain may well have diminished their ability to make hard or courageous decisions on the basis of "right" action. So Burmans and other leaders of neutral nations are far from happy about the terminology of neutralism and have sought to escape from 'semantic difficulties with little success so far. Burma has developed friendly relations with all the countries, adhere refusal of any kind of foreign aid which reduce Burma's political, economic and strategic independence and has no desire to be entangled in any alignment of world powers.

There are two reasons for this success. The first is the fact that as a small nation, Burma is not only under-populated, but also has a large rice surplus which is the mainstay of its foreign exchange earnings. It is fortunate

for Burma that the government has not been under the pressure of population growth such as India. The second reason is that Burma's limited resources have not been attracted to foreign predators through out its history. In the 19th century, other European powers had neither the will nor the strength to contest gradual conquest of Burma by the British. In this century, Japan has created keen interest in Southeast Asia, more interested at Indonesia for its resources than at Burma and other territories. Neither Russia nor communist China regarded Burma as a high-priority target for either economic or strategic reasons. That is why, Burma has been in a position to trade and get aid from a large number of nations. "Members of both power blocs as well as neutrals, without seeming to prejudice to its non-alignment policy or prevent its maintenance of friendly relations with all."

Bandung Conference was beginning of a new era in Asia by the summer of 1956 and also opened a new chapter in Burma's foreign affairs. It might not be wrong to suggest that upto 1954, Burma had established relations with foreign countries more or less on empirical lines.

The Burmese foreign policy has been tested in three specific situations in the fall of 1956. The first one was a serious border dispute broke-out with communist China. The other one was the Israeli invasion of Egypt and the Anglo-French occupation of the Suez Canal again the threat of a general war. The third one was the Soviet armed intervention of Hungary created the problem of communist imperialism. The first problem was bilateral, but the other two problems, although not directly affecting Burma's security, were brought before the U.N., where Burma like all other members had to formulate a status and take a position.

The great trouble came before Burmese government, and her foreign policy to the Sino-Burman border dispute was arised. They tried to escape real danger with Communist China by all possible means but not at the price of significant loss of territory or any real compromise of their independence.

The war between Arab and Israel and the intervention of Anglo-French created no problems in Burma's relations.


23. See, the detail of this dispute Chapter was part a case study of Sino-Burmese relations, pp. 124-134.
with Communist China or the Soviet Union. While the Burman leaders felt the danger of this situation, but it did not come between Burman's vital interests and hence the Burmese government could easily take the stand which they considered "right" on this issue. On this problem Burman took the position which was quite different from India, Indonesia and other "neutrals." On September 23, 1956, Prime Minister U Ba Swe stated that he believed "President Nasser had done right in nationalizing the Suez Canal Company, but that he believed that as an international waterway, it should be kept open to all nations." The Prime Minister also said that the Colombo powers should be consulted about the matter and realised that they could bring about a peaceful settlement. He said "Burma did not want to see any party suffer as a result of the settlement on Suez, and she did not want to see the dispute flare-up into war."

When Anglo-French intervened, at that time U Ba Swe was in Bombay attending a meeting of the Asian Socialist Conference. He issued an official statement on this situation on October 2, 1956 ......."I feel rather strongly that in the present crisis, more condemnation of certain countries

will not help to solve the problems confronting the world today. Rather than condemn, I would place all possible emphasis on constructive and effective action for the immediate restoration of peace. Steps must be taken for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Egyptian territory, and the countries concerned must, without reservation, refer the cases of dispute to the U.N., which it must be remembered, is the only hope of mankind. In any collective action under the auspices of the U.N., Burma is prepared to put in her share of contribution towards for the solution of the problem...."

Burma has the hope that the powers in the U.N., which were involved in the Middle East affairs were capable to check the erupting conflict. The basis for a peaceful settlement has been established in the resolution adopted unanimously by the Security Council on 22nd November 1967.

The Hungarian conflict and its brutal suppression by the intervention of the Soviet Union's armed forces created a different type of a question for neutralist nations like Burma. The credit should go to U Ba Swe and his


government which had given positive support to U.N. action in the crisis. On this issue, Russian forces had been invited into Hungary to "suppress a revolt against a legitimate government. Naturally this was an internal affair.

Burmese position was explained in a series of statements. Firstly U Pe Khin, Burma’s representative at the U.N. General Assembly, announced that Burma’s abstention in the General Assembly resolution condemning Soviet action in Hungary was due to the fact the Burma delegation lacked instructions. He said, "My delegation will support any effort of the U.N. which is consistent with the charter and which in the opinion of my Government does not amount to interference by some other power." In a Press Conference in Rangoon, U Tun Shein, permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office explained, "we worked desperately out we received notice of two resolution on Saturday and the vote was taken on Sunday night. Instructions just failed to reach our delegate in time." UNU also added, "we should have voted. You can quote me as saying the abstention was wrong."

Burma’s concept on Cambodia and Laos was for some years doubtful; But in 1954, these suspicions had removed

and in August Burma gave formal recognition to both states.
During November 1954, the then king of Cambodia, Norodom
Sihanouk, paid a state visit to Burma - sharing the same
religion and similar cultural traditions, the relations
between the two countries which were entirely closed during
the colonial period, may developed at this time. Both
countries still follow neutralist foreign policy. Burma
has established diplomatic relations with Cambodia and
Laos. When "Mr. Pathet Lao's military, victory in Laos
resulted in the U.S. sending troops near the Burma-Thailand
border, but the Burmese government refused to allow protest
demonstrations lest these be interpreted as an 'unneutral'
act which based on Burma's policy of non-alignment." Burma's
main relations with Laos have concerned the KMT problem;
the two countries have a common frontier for some 160 miles
along the Mekong, as a result of operations in January and
March 1955 KMT troops sought refuge in the Laotian border
land. There were so many meetings held in Kengtung and in
Vientiane in May 1955 between representatives of the two
countries to coordinate action against the K.M.T. Burma has

31. Werner, Levi, The Challenge of World Politics in
South and Southeast Asia, Prentice Hall INC, 1968, p.78.
32. Hugh, Tinker, op. cit., p. 360.
developed cordial relations with Cambodia when Major General Lon Nol former Minister of Finance and Chief of the Royal Khmer Armed forces of Cambodia, who led a four men goodwill mission paid a visit to Burma and welcomed by the people and armed forces of the Union of Burma. He said, "when we accepted his invitation to visit the Union of Burma, we certainly anticipated joys of friendship and of close relations renewed after a break of almost a century due to extraneous circumstances. The actual facts experienced by us are far beyond our dreams."

As regards Vietnam, Burma has not developed and established diplomatic relations with it. Burma's attitude has remained non-committal. Burma has not established any relation with the Bao Dai regime, but none gave formal recognition to either government, although a semi-official representation was established at Rangoon from 1947 onwards. In 1964, UNU spent a day at Honai when he was going to China, there he talked to Hocchi Minh. Afterwards, a joint communique stated, "the two countries would conduct their relations on the basis of the Five Principles of co-existence, and expressed the hope that relations between the two countries would be strengthened." Pham Von Dong, the Deputy Prime

34. Hugh, Tinker, op.cit., p. 361.
Minister of North Vietnam, paid a return visit to Burma in April 1966, but the two countries have not developed their talks because UNU was waiting the national elections in Vietnam.

When Newin's Revolutionary Council seized power in Burma, they proclaimed a statement on Vietnam war and appealed "to U.S.A. to refrain from escalating the war in Vietnam and search out ways and means of bringing about a political solution in conformity with the Geneva Agreement of 1954 on Vietnam." The Council also lamented at the recent stepping up of "air operations in the outskirts of Hanoi and Haiphong in North Vietnam." U Thant, former General Secretary of the U.N., addressed in London Conference in Atlantic City on May 24, 1966, on the situation of Vietnam, he said, "......As the war worsens, its justification in terms of confrontation of ideologies is becoming more and more misleading. For democratic principles which both sides consider to be at stake in Vietnam, are already falling a victim to the war itself. Although the U.N.O. can not act in a conflict which is beyond its scope, military method can not restore peace in Vietnam. Peace can only be restored by a return to the Geneva Agreement."

35. Ibid., p. 361.
So, Burma greeted the current peace talks over Vietnam, and it is quite hopeful that they will lead the way to a future of their own choosing for the Vietnamese people, free from all external hinderence or interference. Colonel Maung Lwin, Burma's Minister for foreign Affairs said, "It is immoral to cling to adamant positions while innocent citizens are being subjected to indiscriminate bombing and brutal shelling. A good part of the responsibility lies with the great powers involved in the affairs of these countries."

During the conflict of the Republic of Indonesia against Dutch authority, Burma along with other Asian nations and following the leadership of India, gave moral support to Indonesia. Burma gave de facto recognition to Indonesia in November 1948, and a representative, Thakin Tha Kin, was sent to establish relations with the Indonesian Government. Following the Hague Agreement of December 1949, Burma recognized the Republic of Indonesia as de jure the sovereign power of the archipelago on 27, December. The first treaty of friendship was concluded between

Burma and Indonesia in March 1951. Trade has also expended between the two countries, somewhat one sidedly, as Indonesia can not offer Burma any much-needed products in return for rice.

Foreign policies of Burma and Indonesia were decided by their governments as those of neutrality. The present Indonesian government likes the term, "active independent foreign policy," as more accurately defining the fundamental principle on which its relations with other countries are based. The Indonesian Parliament was especially offended by the requirement to contribute to "defensive strength of the free world."

Burma's relations with Japan are in a class apart. The occupation of Japan on Burma was a great shock upon Burmans of every degree. The general reaction has been voiced by UNU: "I have been a puppet during the Japanese regime as a puppet minister and I know what it means to be a puppet.......when one has to bow to the command of the Japanese masters and shout 'Tenno Heika Banzai' (long live the Japanese emperor) at the bidding .......How we detested those days when every second person you met was a

Japanese agent and when arrests and subsequent disappearances were the order of the day."

After this bitter experience, Burma refused to attend the general conference convened at San Francisco in 1951 for the signing of a peace treaty with Japan. At first, there was a great difference of views between the two countries. Japan offered compensation of $100 million which Burma put in a claim for $400 million. Kyaw Neyin, as Acting Foreign Minister went to Tokyo for negotiations on August 1954. A draft agreement was reached on a compromise basis, giving Burma $200 million and Japanese loan of $50 million spread over ten years. This agreement was formally signed at Rangoon on 5th November 1954, together with a treaty of peace.

After this agreement normal diplomatic relations were established, and the leaders of both countries convinced their desire for future friendship and co-operation. Burma would have developed her political and economic relations vis-a-vis Japan.

Burma was facing a threat from the Republic of China. A large number of refugees belonging to the Republic of China,

41. Hugh, Tinker, op. cit., p. 264.
42. Ibid., pp. 264-265.
of certain member states should be pursued in order to put an end to this situation.

Although Burma unwillingly accepted, "the compromise resolution, and entered into weary months of negotiation at Bangkok with the elusive representatives of Formosa, this feeble response to a situation of intense urgency was taken as final evidence that the U.N. could not be relied upon as a defence against aggression." The American envoy promised to Burma government that his government would reduce influence with the Chinese Nationalist Government on Formosa to have the Guerrillas with drawn.

The Burmese leaders have said so many times that, "reliance on the U.N. for protection of their sovereignty and security is a dubious foundation and that Burma does not want to become another Korea or a Congo."

Thailand is the next door neighbour of Burma, Thai influence in Burma is particularly seen in the 'Shan State'

45. (See detail in the Chapter V Burma and UNO, pp.238-251.)
46. Hugh, Tinker, op.cit., p. 347.
47. (The Guerrillas fled into the rugged frontier region of Burma to escape the Chinese Communist armies during the civil war in China).
in disguise of Kuomintang troops, infiltrated into Northeast Burma. Burmans knew very well that there must be American backing for the KMT troops. So many efforts were made to the American Embassy in Burma with a view to moving the state Department to put pressure upon Formosa to withdraw these forces from Burma, but there was no positive result. On 17th March 1953, the Burman Government suddenly announced to terminate the American aid.

The next step which Burma was taken to complain the U.N. General Assembly accusing the Chinese Nationalist Government of having committed aggression by denying 12,000 Nationalist troops on Burmese territory, "to submit to disarmament and enterment in accordance with international law." When Burmese resolution came before the Assembly, Mexico, as spokesman for the American bloc, put forward a counter resolution in much more vague and general terms. This did not even confirm the forces in Kengtung with the KMT. It is well known the presence of hostile activities and depredation of foreign forces in the territory of the Union of Burma. The Mexican resolution went on to recommend that the negotiations now in progress through the good offices

43. Ibid., p. 246.
Thailand also declared a small boundary settlement with Burma by which both of the nations recognised the Thalweg of the 'Mae Sai River' as the frontier. Early in 1941 the Governor of Burma issued a statement which prohibited aliens from entering Burmese provinces adjacent to Thailand and Indo-China, because Burma suddenly guessed the danger of aggression from the Thai side.

When Burma became liberated, the relations between the two countries became friendly. There is a great similarity between them in comparison to other countries. No special developments took place until the KMT troops in Kengtung created trouble, Burmese started to believe that these KMT forces were receiving assistance through Siam. Thai Government closed the frontier with Burma in early 1963. When KMT troops were ready to evacuate their troops in October 1953, Thai and U.S. supervised the operation. Some tension created when Thai Government refused to permit a Burmese observation team to leave Bangkok to witness the working of the airlift to Formosa for themselves. In the course of air attacks on KMT positions the B.A.F. (Burma Air Force) bombed Thai villages in November and December 1953. In his public speech on 9 February 1954, the

Thai Premier, Pibul Songgram, blamed Burma of 'general unfriendliness'. Fortunately, this tense situation did not continue for long. Burma apologized for the unfortunate mistakes of her planes and announced compensation in return of this, which was settled at K.1,20,000. At this time both governments tried to improve relations, there was an exchange of mission at different levels. Atlast, at the end of 1954, Thai Government re-opened the road into Kengtung. UNU stayed at Bangkok on his way to 'Songor Conference' in the last days of 1954. There he apologized to the people of Thailand for the past misdeed of Burma."

When King Bhumibol of Thailand and queen Sirikit reached Burma, they were greeted with warmth of feeling and friendship by thousands of Burmese people. The main aim of their visit is to cement friendship and peace. Welcoming the Royal couple U Win Maung said, "the union of Burma and the Kingdom of Thailand are close neighbours and our two peoples have not only a common culture and religion, but also a similar way of life. The spirit of friendship and cooperation has animated our two people." The Thai King said, "The Burmese and Thai peoples are bound together in

friendship, through shaping the same Buddhist faith, as well as the same aspirations of peace and cooperation."

General Newin, the Chairman of Revolutionary Council, paid a visit to Thailand at the invitation of the King of Thailand to strengthening friendly relations between the two neighbouring countries. It is fact that, "Siam this growing friendship towards Burma has coincided with a full-blooded acceptance of SEATO and committal to American military plans in East Asia, this apparently non-complementary policy might indicate that Siam wishes to have a friend at court if it were ever decided that SEATO should be discarded for peaceful co-existence, or it may simply mean that Siam wishes to be certain that one flank is secure in case the other is attacked. In either event, Burma's friendship is not unimportant to Siam."

Burma developed a less closely relations to Pakistan. In June 1962, a treaty of friendship was signed between two countries. According to this treaty, Burma and Pakistan have agreed to work towards consolidation and further strength of

the good neighbourly relations between the two nations by increasing the intimate cooperation in economic, cultural and other fields.

Pakistan Government was sympathized with the Government of the union of Burma in regard from the presence of foreign troops, means KMT troops, in its territory, and they also hoped that these troops will soon be evacuated or give-up their arms.

A great change has come recently in 1971. When Bangladesh, which was a part of Pakistan and was known before as East Pakistan became independent in December 1971, has been recognised by Burma. In opposition, Pakistan government has withdrawn its ambassador from Rangoon. Burma also greeted the recent Simla Agreement and U Lwin, Chairman of Burma's delegation in U.N.O. said, "The recent Simla Agreement has contributed considerably to peace in Asia as a whole."

Phillipinns have not so far appeared over Burma's horizon, and the two states have not developed close relations.

The most important aspect of Burma's foreign policy has been the modes in which the world giants have been approached. The Government of Union of Burma enjoys the full support and help of the Soviet Union. In the high times of 1954 and 1955 UNU said, the Government of the Soviet Union helped Burma and offered technical aid.

In 1950, when the Korean War broke out and communist won over China, at that time U.S. policy took new shape. In 1949 Burma took keen interest in some kind of Pacific area Security Pact. Burma praised the U.S. sympathy, during the height of the 'Communist insurrection' in Burma and they also supplied military and police to Burma. But Burmese could not hope that U.S.A. took a risk to a big war for their sake.

But the relations between U.S.A. and Burma became worse on KMT problem. A Government source in Rangoon said that, "Burma's decision to refuse further U.S. aid was a mark of protest against the alleged complicity of the Americans with the KMT." When U.S.A. proposed a four power conference to discuss means of solving the Guerrilla problem.


At first, Burmese Government discarded the proposal, but realising the U.S. sincerity, afterwards Burma agreed. The four nation U.N. Commission started in Bangkok on May 22, 1953. Burmese were impressed by the sincerity of American efforts to evacuate Li Mi's forces. The Evacuation Committee announced from Bangkok on October 29, 1953 that Burma had agreed to cease fire. But Burma was tired by U.S. policy because lack of U.S. action.

In regard to the Asian conflicts such as Vietnam, Kashmir and Malaysia, Indonesia gave Burma's leaders a major challenge in attempting to control foreign influences. According to the Burmese Press a peaceful settlement can be made on the basis of the 1954 Geneva accords as a new type of conference ought to be called to settle the immediate problems of the conflicts. The Burmese Press and General Newin revived on Kashmir a strict neutrality for the peaceful settlement and to support the efforts of the U.N.O. General Newin said, "a peaceful settlement could be found if the dispute was moved from the battlefield to the conference table."

The most important period of our age is the emergence of Asia between 1940 and 1950. At the same time two great powers emerged, one was the rise of U.S.A. as the world's strongest and wealthiest nation which supports the democratic countries and Soviet Russia as the leader of communist countries. Asian nationalism gradually became a mighty force to reckon with in international affairs. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said, "Asia is waking up and stretching its limbs."

When the treaty for the 'defence' of Southeast Asia was concluded in 1954, Burmese opinion formed about this Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) that it was an anti-Asian conspiracy of some 'Western Powers'. According to Burmese opinion, "SEATO is a sword fashioned to be plunged into the flesh of free and democratic Asia, and the garnishings of collective Security and economic aid are organised on the principle that it is good to hide the sword in flowers."

So Burma remained aloof from SEATO. Among Southeast Asian countries only Thailand, Malaya and the Philippines


64. Ibid., p. 93.
joined the Organisation. UNU said that, "it was a political fact of life today that any government of Burma which aligned itself with a big power bloc would at once lose the confidence and support of the people."

Burma had spoilt its relationship with U.S.A. since General Ne Win in 1962, Washington was hoping for better relationship with Burma as a result of diplomatic efforts. But its hope was not fulfilled. Burma believes that war will not solve any of its problems and that Organisation like SEATO will never be successful.

Burma follows the 'neutralist policy' and does not believe in military alliance, so has gained the world wide confidence. But the drawback of neutralist policy is this that Burma is not receiving the lion's share from the two major powers U.S.A. and Russia Instead they are getting assistance from Japan and West Germany. The assistance, from Tokyo and Bonn is not very great. It is however going on in a phased manner. It is quite probable that there will be no great power to help Burma if at any time it undergoes some hardship. Much will however depend upon the balance of forces and considerations in Southeast Asia in the wake of new developments.

65. The Indonesia Observer, (Indonesia: March 6, 1961).