Chapter XII
THE PROBLEM OF GOA

It might seem one of the paradoxes of Indian history that the first ever European Power to have established its colonial domination over Indian territory should be the last one to have stuck like a leech to its Indian possessions till as late as the greater part of 1961. After the mighty British had gracefully departed from the Indian soil, it lay in the logic of history that other foreign possessions must not continue to be so for the simple reason that the completion of the process of India's political unification could not be made to depend on the sweet will of this or that Power. While France took some years\(^1\) to follow the British lead, Portugal, taking advantage of her 'ancient Alliance'\(^2\) with Britain and her membership of the NATO, remained obdurate throughout the period of our study. Whatever might have been the views of the Portuguese obscurantists and their ideas of progress in this modern world, the Government and people of India expected that the British Government would adopt a rational attitude toward the problem of Goa's decolonisation. They were fortified in their expectation, in the main, for two reasons. First, there could be such a thing as Portuguese or French possessions in India 'chiefly because they were tolerated as such by the then British power'.\(^3\) After Britain herself had given up her Indian Empire, it was her moral obligation, as India saw it, to advise the Portuguese Government to follow suit: such advice Britain could certainly give in virtue of her 'ancient Alliance' with Portugal. Secondly, India had a definite claim on British friendship if that was sincere and should seem to be sincere. A friend ought to have understood that the process of India's liberation would remain incomplete if some pockets of Indian territory continued to remain
under the sway of foreign powers. This was more so in view of Nehru's declaration which seemed to suggest that India's touchstone of friendship toward her of other countries would be their attitude over Goa. But the British Government preferred to adopt 'an irritatingly equivocal attitude' to the question of Goa and landed herself in a posture of demonstrative bias in favour of Portuguese colonialism. Needless to say, the Government and people of India wholly disapproved of such an attitude. Goa then became an important issue in Indo-British relations leading to the rise of anti-British feelings in India. Britain was weighed in the balance and found wanting.

After the withdrawal of the British from India, Goa fell under a firmer grip of Portugal. The Portuguese mocked at the UN Charter and in 1951 converted the colonial territories into so-called 'provinces' of Portugal. This constitutional violence against the people of Portugal's Indian possessions was carried a stage further when in a broadcast on 12 April 1954 and on other occasions, Portugal's Prime Minister Salazar maintained that Portugal's claim to sovereignty over her colonial settlements was guaranteed by the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1642, and also by Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty which entitled her to consult her military allies, Britain included, in case the 'territorial integrity' of her possessions was threatened. Further, Portugal repeated ad nauseam that the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 23 June 1661 gave her British support in defence of all her overseas possessions.

As early as 8 March 1949 Jawaharlal Nehru defined India's attitude to the 'ugly pimples' disfiguring the fair face of India in freedom. He said: '... all along we have stated that we wanted a peaceful solution in regard to these foreign possessions. But it is quite clear that there is only one future for these possessions
and that is complete integration with India. We are prepared to wait a little for it, to avoid conflict. We want peaceful solutions of these and other problems. But it is an inconceivable thing that in this new, resurgent India, bits of territory should belong to powers far away ... Even under the gravest provocations coming from the Portuguese side and unwarranted interference emanating from Portugal's allies, in this case the United States and the United Kingdom, India maintained her stand on finding a peaceful solution of the problem while insisting on the inevitability of Goa's integration with the country.

In line with its policy, the Government of India presented an aide-memoire to the Portuguese Government on 27 February 1950 proposing negotiations on the future of that Government's possessions in India, i.e., their transfer of Goa, Daman, and Diu to India. But the obdurate Portuguese even refused to discuss, much less to accept, India's repeated proposals for negotiations. India established her Legation in Lisbon in 1949 precisely to facilitate a negotiated settlement of the future of the Portuguese possessions in India. Portugal's wholly uncompromising attitude rendered the maintenance of the Legation completely infructuous and, therefore, the Legation was closed on 11 June 1955. Meanwhile, Goan nationalist opinion was incensed at Portugal's failure to negotiate whereupon the Portuguese Government resorted to unheard-of repression against the Goans. This led to the birth of an underground movement of the Goan nationalists inside Goa which became very much open with the hoisting of the Indian flag on 18 June 1954 in the wake of nationalist demonstrations in Goa: this culminated in the Quit Goa Movement. This movement most naturally received the support of the Indians. Early in July 1954 the National Congress of Goa decided to launch a non-violent struggle for the liberation of the
Portuguese colonies in India. The Goan nationalist volunteers registered a signal triumph when they succeeded in liberating the enclaves of Dadra and Nagar-Aveli towards the end of July and the beginning of August 1954. The Portuguese Government blamed it upon the Government of India, and demanded transit facilities for its troops and police from Daman to the liberated enclaves. Replying on 28 July the Government of India firmly rejected Portugal's unfounded allegations about abetment and Indian troop concentrations on the borders of the Portuguese Settlements. Further, they refused to concede the Portuguese demand for transit facilities on the well-known ground that India did not permit foreign troops on Indian soil and told the Portuguese Government that they 'fully supported the aspirations of the Goans and that they could not be a party to the suppression of a genuine nationalist movement'.

These proceedings created understandable tension in Indo-Portuguese relations and it appeared that Britain had chosen the moment to abandon her Indian friend in favour of her Portuguese ally. On 6 August 1954 the British Foreign Office announced that Selwyn Lloyd (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs) had told the Portuguese Ambassador in London that Her Majesty's Government greatly regretted 'the state of tension now existing between a member of the Commonwealth and an ally of such long standing as Portugal'. The statement continued that recent events appeared likely 'to intensify this tension and to result in violence and bloodshed'. The British Government, therefore, expressed the 'earnest hope' that 'there will be no resort to force or to methods bound to lead to the use of force'. The expression 'recent events' occurring in the Foreign Office statement might have referred to events leading up to the success of the nationalists at Dadra and Nagar-Aveli and to the growing Satyagraha.
The (non-violent resistance) movement\(^\text{16}\) for the liberation of Goa. Be that as it might be, the point is that while the text of the statement was officially conveyed to the Government of India, an identically note was not sent to the Portuguese Government. In the circumstances of the case, this particular action on the part of the British Government could be regarded as no other than a warning administered to India. The British press had hit the nail on the head when they displayed the news-item regarding the Foreign Office statement under such headlines as: 'India warned — Do not use force'.\(^\text{17}\) Speaking later, a British MP had correctly observed:

... what gave the greatest offence to the Indian Government was the fact that they had regularly tried for some time to get the Portuguese Government to discuss Goa but had been met with refusal. Then, in 1954, the British Government warned India not to take any action, without giving a similar warning, as far as one can make out, to the Portuguese Government.\(^\text{18}\)

India was not only 'much hurt',\(^\text{19}\) but dismayed, and even enraged, with this piece of sharp practice indulged in by the British Government. The Government of India's reply\(^\text{20}\) noted the British Foreign Office statement 'with regret and surprise' and stated: 'The Government of India emphatically repudiate the unwarranted implication contained in the UK Government's statement and in the views that the UK Government have conveyed to them. They deeply regret that the UK Government should have made themselves responsible for an expression of opinion based on one-sided information'. It drew attention to the fact that the present situation in the Portuguese Settlements had arisen from the Portuguese Government's resistance to 'the desire of a subject people for freedom from foreign rule' and that India had 'persistently sought a peaceful solution of this problem by negotiation'. Concluding,
the Indian note said that the Government of India were determined 'to pursue their peaceful and conciliatory approach without either use or support of violence in any form' and expressed the hope that the Portuguese Government would respond and that all 'friends and allies of Portugal' would counsel her to respond to India's peaceful and conciliatory approach. It was an unusual exchange of notes between two Commonwealth Governments. The British attitude was unnatural from another standpoint also. The UK Government avoided taking, and rightly, any specific attitude toward the problem of the future of the French possessions in India. It did not stand to reason why Britain should adopt a specific attitude in regard to the Portuguese possessions, particularly when that attitude was demonstrably in favour of Portugal and carrying with it as it did the grave risk of offending the susceptibilities of an Important Commonwealth country like India. In India's view Britain's 'ancient Alliance' with Portugal could hardly be any match for sound Indo-British understanding.21

Britain showed much understanding for the Portuguese position. When asked at a New Delhi press conference as to whether Britain should not advise Portugal to follow the British example and quit India, Foreign Secretary Eden had this to say: 'If you want friends, you should not be continually giving advice'.22 And Eden's successor in office, Selwyn Lloyd, who as Minister of State was responsible for the deplorable note of the British Government in August 1954, said at a New Delhi meeting in March 1956 that as the Goa question was a 'controversial and delicate question', it was his hope that the question would be settled by direct negotiations.23 By the time this latter remark was made, Britain was not certainly unaware of the respective positions of India and Portugal concerning the so-called 'controversial and delicate question'. For, in his
speech to Lok Sabha on 25 August 1954, Nehru had reiterated once
again that Goa and the Indian Union formed one country and that the
process of India's liberation would not be complete till the remain-
ing foreign possessions were also freed from colonial control. At
the same time, Nehru declared that India would 'continue to pursue,
with patience and firmness, the path of conciliation and negotia-
tion', and, therefore, the Government of India invited the Portu-
guese Government 'to co-operate in the peaceful consummation of
these endeavours'. On the other hand, the Portuguese Government
declared that if the Goa question was understood as a transfer to
the Indian Union of sovereignty over Portuguese territories, 'it
is certain that the question will not be solved by peaceful means'.
Portugal was only prepared to discuss problems arising out of the
contiguity of the territories as neighbours. There could hardly be
any controversy about the glaring reality of Goa being a colonial
problem unless, of course, one subscribed to the Portuguese
sophistry claiming Goa as a part of Portugal. With respect to a
country like Britain taking legitimate pride in her own record of
decolonisation in India and other territories, it was difficult to
understand why she should have found it 'delicate' to advise Portu-
gal to quit Goa and thereby earn the goodwill of India as Britain
herself had done in similar circumstances. Granting that Britain's
policy of decolonisation was confined by and large to her own colo-
nial territories, she could have at least taken up a 'negative
posture' on the Goa question and thereby could have reciprocated
'goodwill and friendship' to the Indian people. But, Britain
chose to intervene on the Goa question on the side of Portugal in
1954 and, in the subsequent period as well, there is no evidence
to show that she appreciated the Indian stand. At this point, it is
necessary to examine how far, if at all, the British attitude was inhibited or influenced by the bilateral treaties existing between Britain and Portugal, and their membership of the NATO.

It was mainly in the context of the Portuguese colonies that questions about British commitments under the Anglo-Portuguese Treaties and incidentally under the North Atlantic Treaty were raised in the House of Commons. To a question as to how far the assurances given to the Portuguese Government in 1943 regarding the maintenance of Portuguese sovereignty over all Portuguese colonies after the War were still valid or in force, the official reply on 12 May 1958 was that the assurances 'which were in keeping with the tradition of the Alliance, were by their terms concerned with a particular period and particular circumstances and have not been the subject of discussions between our two Governments since the War'. To a direct question a week later as to what extent Britain was committed to the maintenance of Portuguese sovereignty over Goa and other colonies in view of Salazar's claims to protection under the Anglo-Portuguese treaties and also through the NATO, the official reply was plainly evasive as far as that part relating to Goa was concerned. While it was stated that it would be for the party invoking the treaties to establish a case for the application of particular treaties to particular circumstances, Selwyn Lloyd said: 'I am not aware that any armed attack is contemplated against Goa'. Speaking later and referring to Selwyn Lloyd's replies on the question, D. Ormsby-Gore remarked: 'I do not know that it is very profitable for me to discuss in any detail the possibility of our having to defend the Portuguese position in Goa. As he suggested, there is no question of our expecting an armed attack on Goa, and the Indian Government have given repeated assurances that they do not intend to resort to force, and they are dealing with the
matter in .... an extremely statesmanlike way'. It was good of the British Ministers to have done the courtesy to the Government of India by praising their statesmanship for seeking a peaceful solution of the Goa problem. But then this was hardly a reply to the specific question about Britain's attitude to Goa's decolonisation. It is fair to add that the British Government maintained a certain consistency in her approach to the question. In 1954 the Government of India sought clarifications from some NATO countries including Britain as to their attitude to Portuguese claims that the NATO offered some protection to the Portuguese interests in Goa. The British Government was reported to have taken the position that, because the question of Britain coming to the defence of Portuguese colonies would only arise in case of aggression against them, and since India had declared her desire of not using force against them, the Indian query was entirely hypothetical. M.S. Rajan rightly remarks that 'this was clever logic, but not a friendly assurance to India'.

While Portugal was free to make any number of claims about the NATO 'shield' for her colonies in India, India had reasons to be concerned about the attitude as such of the NATO powers to the question of Goa. India's opposition to the colonialist aspects of NATO was well-known. In his speech to Lok Sabha on 29 September 1954, Nehru said he was not quite sure if the NATO powers, or most of them, were themselves quite happy about the Portuguese assertion that Goa was also the NATO countries' concern. Anyway, it appears that certain NATO powers did try to intercede with India in defence of the Portuguese position in Goa. This led Nehru to declare 'directly and explicitly' at a closed session of the Bandung Conference that 'the NATO today is one of the most powerful protectors of colonialism'. Continuing he said: "We get letters
from the NATO powers — mind you, Portugal is a member of NATO — and Portugal has approached its fellow members in the NATO on this point — telling us 'You should not do anything in regard to Goa, you should not do this and that'. I will not mention these powers; they are some of the so-called Big Powers. It does not matter what powers they are, but it is gross impertinence. The new Republic of India told them that it is gross impertinence on their part. Let there be no doubt about it, we shall deal with this little matter in the way we like'. Later, however, Nehru said that 'it has been made fairly clear by responsible people that the NATO alliance has little relevance' to the question of Goa. In any case, India was certainly not bound by the express colonial attitude of the NATO powers. Therefore, India did react sharply to the Dulles-Cunha joint statement of 2 December 1955 wherein the Portuguese colonies in India were referred to as 'provinces' of Portugal. In the context of the Dulles-Cunha joint statement it was remarked with justice that when Indians found the United Kingdom unable to mediate and the United States in a position of issuing a joint communique with the Portuguese Foreign Minister, 'they feel the explanation must be either a lingering affection for colonialism or straight unfriendliness' and neither explanation endeared the West to them.

Regarding the relevance or otherwise of bilateral and multilateral treaties vis-a-vis Goa, Nehru made the Indian stand quite clear. He said that as far as India was concerned, 'we are in no way bound by any old or modern treaty between other countries to which we have not subscribed, so that in no event are we concerned with the treaty between Portugal and England or other countries'. He also made the point that nobody else could be said to be bound by such ancient treaties as were proved to be absurd because of
later developments. An ancient Anglo-Portuguese treaty gave Portugal the right 'to raise an army directly in England, Scotland or Ireland', but, said Nehru, he had little doubt that the United Kingdom 'would refuse to acknowledge that fact, although it is there in the treaty'. Goa's decolonisation was an emergent necessity to bring about the consummation of Indian independence. To the extent that Britain chose to ignore this glaring reality and clung to the 'ancient Alliance' with whatever modern embellishments, she lost a valuable opportunity of earning further Indian goodwill. In the context of Goa, old-style Anglo-Portuguese friendship and the new friendship between India and Britain went ill together.

Portugal's brutal action against the unarmed and non-violent satyagrahis on 15 August 1955 led to the break-up in diplomatic relations between India and Portugal. Thereafter, the Portuguese indulged in recurring violations of Indian territory, territorial waters and air space. Even under these grave provocations, India did not take to armed action against the Portuguese nuisance. Throughout the period of our survey, the Government of India had continued to adhere to the policy of a peaceful way out of the Goa impasse even in the face of criticism that it was following a 'timid and compromising policy'. What could have been the reasons for such strict adherence to the peaceful path in relation to the Goa question?

Nehru explained that the Government of India was not pledged to non-violence, and indeed no government could be. But then to think in terms of 'some kind of police action or limited war' to liberate Goa would mean 'injuring all the larger causes that we stand for'. In regard to Goa, India ruled out 'non-peaceful
method completely' because, i
policy of solving all problems
against her declared principle. If India ven-
tured to say in the UN as she dis-
peacefully, 'it will not be appro-
military measures in regard to a partic-
problems should be solved
for us to talk in terms of
volved in a particular issue because it may be
in our interest to do so'.
It might be argued that insofar as
Goa was regarded as a part of India, it was but an internal question
of India; and, if, India could launch a police action in Hyderabad
more feasible, it would not be prop-
to humble the intransigence of a local ruler, why should she feel
called upon to desist from taking similar action to deal with the
intransigence of a colonial power determined to hold on to bits of
Indian territory? The truth was that though Goa was regarded as a
part and parcel of India, Portugal's presence therein was a reality,
however disagreeable, and that any forcible attempt at decolonisa-
tion might have generated international complications in view of
Portugal's membership of the NATO and the Anglo-Portuguese alliance.
Therefore, while standing firm on the issue of Goa's integration, the
Government of India undoubtedly revealed a spirit of accommodation
toward the West and the UK. It is possible that India's membership
of the Commonwealth had much to do with such an accommodating atti-
dude. And yet Britain did precious little to impress upon her Por-
tuguese ally the extreme inadvisability of hanging on to Goa, Daman
and Diu with ridiculous stubbornness.

There was no doubt whatever that on the Goa question British
official attitude was frankly pro-Portuguese. This attitude was
naturally resented in India. Thus, during the course of a Lok Sabha
debate in the early part of 1960 on the subject of India withdrawing
from the Commonwealth, an Opposition MP had observed that while a
slight gesture from Britain 'could easily stop Portugal and make
Portugal truckle down, Britain would not do that; and he alleged that Britain 'enjoys India being in trouble. Wherever India is likely to be in trouble, she tries to muddy the waters'. This was certainly an extreme position to take: the remarks were made undoubtedly in the anger of the moment. In a way, however, this was an expression of Indian frustration over Britain's role on a vital issue of India's national life. This was also an evidence of expecting too much from a friend: when expectations are above normal and they are belied, bitter indeed are the reactions. The point is that Britain could have adopted at least an attitude of friendly neutrality on the Goa question.

At the non-official level there was commendable British support to India's cause in Goa. In November 1955, a section of British MPs formed a Goa Committee headed by Anthony Wedgwood Benn and they urged upon the British Government to initiate negotiations between India and Portugal in order to arrive at a peaceful negotiated settlement of the problem. Kenneth Younger held the view that Portugal ought to be told that by their Goa policy, 'they are doing more damage to the Western cause in Asia than could be made by their contribution they are making to the North Atlantic Treaty'. A former Cabinet Minister and MP, John Strachey, expressed the view during a visit to India that Indo-British relationship was 'hundred times more important' to Britain than relationship of Britain to Portugal. During the course of a debate in the House of Commons on Portuguese colonies, Wedgwood Benn made several interesting points. He wanted the House to consider whether it was desirable that the Anglo-Portuguese agreements "which give us an interest in Portugal’s control over her colonies should be allowed to continue in their present form". In the background of lack of democracy in Portugal, Britain might find herself placed in the
position of having to defend the Portuguese colonial interests in Goa against a country which is a member of the Commonwealth, and, which, in statistical terms, is the largest democratic country in the world. He regarded it as 'very unattractive and undesirable' that Britain should put herself in the position of 'having to defend, or being bound to defend' the Portuguese interests in Goa. He said that nobody, least of all the Indian or British leaders' imagined that after the British withdrawal there would be any question of retention of the French or Portuguese possessions. Goa was certainly a matter of legitimate concern to the Government of India. He pleaded that as an 'old ally of Portugal and a comrade of India within the Commonwealth', Britain should use her good offices in trying to bring about a peaceful settlement. Finally, he made a very remarkable statement: 'Nobody wants to see this settled by force, but if we are not willing to see it settled by force we should use our influence to try to persuade the Portuguese Government to do something they have never agreed to do: that is, to negotiate the matter with India'. Such statements made in the spirit of abiding goodwill for India mitigated to a considerable extent, as an Indian would say, the evil effects of Britain's official attitude to the Goa question.

Disturbing indeed was the Portuguese behaviour in the post-1955 period. Violations of Indian territory were coupled with preparations, as certain reports gave forth, for the rapid conversion of Goa and Daman into military bases of the NATO and SEATO blocs. India had reasons to be concerned about her national security. Then, in Africa's Year of Freedom, 1960, the UN had already adopted the Declaration of independence to colonial territories. Inside Goa the nationalist movement was again beginning
Speaking in such a background, Nehru told the Rajya Sabha on 20 December 1960: "Both because of internal developments and the developments in Africa, the question of Goa or rather of Portuguese colonial possessions has become one of the urgent issues". Nehru said that though India had 'preferred waiting and exercising some patience', Portuguese domination over Goa could not continue for long. Continuing, he said that although he could not fix a date, it was clear that 'the freedom of India cannot be complete till Goa becomes part and parcel of India'. Adverting to the policy of the Government of India of not using force and the non-violent struggle for liberation then continuing in Goa, an Indian official publication said: 'The Government have also reviewed their policy towards the Portuguese possessions in India in order to ensure the early achievement of this objective'. This review of policy led to action resulting in the armed liberation of Goa in December 1961. Its assessment, however, lies outside the scope of our study.