CHAPTER IV

INDIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA DURING 1950-1954
India, which emerged as a free nation in 1947, became a Sovereign Democratic republic on 26 January 1950, with the coming into force of a constitution drawn up by the representatives of the people of India. The inauguration of republican government coincided with a period of comparative peace and political stability in India. By then the Government of India was able to cope up with some of the major problems — economic dislocation, refugee rehabilitation, integration of Indian states and the armed struggle led by the Communist Party of India (C.P.I.). The manner in which India was able to get over these difficulties raised India's image in the eyes of the world and enabled New Delhi to play its part in the international field.

The main elements of India's foreign policy—anti-colonialism, anti-racialism, non-alignment and the promotion of world peace — were formulated in these early years of independence. Despite severe opposition from both the United States (U.S.) and the Soviet Union India firmly held to these basic principles of foreign policy. The international situation after the second world war enabled India to play a more positive role.
The establishment of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) on 10 October 1949, to quote Professor Gopal, was "a world event of the first magnitude". India decided to follow a policy of "cautious friendliness" towards the new government and granted recognition to the P.R.C. on 30 December 1949. India's China policy was based on the assumption that friendship between India and the P.R.C. would be a powerful factor for peace in the world. Conflict between these two great countries of Asia would be harmful not only for themselves but also for entire Asia. Above all, it was a question of recognizing the realities of the situation in China. Speaking in Parliament on 17 March 1950, Nehru said:

It is not a question of approving or disapproving; it is a question of recognizing a major event in history, of appreciating it and dealing with it.3


2. Ibid., p.108

The emergence of two rival Chinese governments in Peking and Taipei, and the support to the P.R.C. by the Soviet Union and its camp followers, and to the government in Taiwan by the U.S. and its allies made the international situation more complicated and dangerous. The outbreak of the Korean war on 25 June 1950 and the direct intervention in the Korean war by the P.R.C. brought cold war nearer to India with imminent possibility of a global conflagration. The Korean war put to test India's statesmanship and diplomacy. Throughout the war India's policy was, as Nehru put it in the identical messages addressed to Marshal Stalin and Dean Acheson, "to localize the conflict and to facilitate an early peaceful settlement" in Korea. The signing of the cease-fire agreement on 27 November 1951 and the Prisoners of War agreement between the U.S. and the P.R.C. on 8 June 1953, marked the success of Indian diplomacy in Korea. The Korean war demonstrated the importance of India as an uncommitted

4. For a detailed account on India's peaceful efforts to solve the Korean problem see K.P. Karunakaran India in World Affairs (Calcutta, 1958), vol.2, pp.102-28. See also (1) Shiv Dayal, India's Role in the Korean Question (New Delhi, 1959) and (2) B. Shiva Rao and C. Kondapi, "India and the Korean Crisis", India Quarterly (New Delhi), vol.7, pp.298-9

5. Karunakaran, n.4, p.102
nation for the promotion of peace in the world. India’s policy of non-alignment was well rewarded when India was made the Chairman and Executive Agent of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee to implement the agreement reached on 8 June 1953.

With this general background it is proposed to analyze India’s relations with individual Southeast Asian countries from 1950 to 1954.

Indian interest in Southeast Asia continued with greater intensity during 1950-1954. Due to convergence of a variety of interests - identity of foreign policies, commitment to secularism and desire to establish non-communist egalitarian societies - India came closer to Burma and Indonesia than other countries of Southeast Asia. Due to their alignment with the U.S. and partisan role in international affairs, India could not come closer to the Philippines and Thailand. India was also sensitive to the complex problems faced by the Federation of Malaya, which remained a British colony, and established close rapport with the Malayan nationalist leaders.
Relations between India and Burma during this period were extremely cordial. Soon after the attainment of independence, it was natural for the Burmese government to concentrate on the rehabilitation and development of its economy. It was unfortunate that the implementation of this economic programme was hampered by the civil war which broke out in Burma within a few months after winning freedom. Before the government could put down the rebels completely, Burma was faced with the problem created by large number of Kuomintang troops who occupied Burmese territory. The danger reached such serious proportions that Rangoon was forced to seek foreign assistance, particularly from India. Reliance on Indian assistance was one of the facts of life of independent Burma. Friendship with India became the kernel of Burma's foreign policy. India, on its part, evinced keen interest in the stability and security of Burma. India extended all-out support to the Burmese government when it was threatened with extinction by a series of revolts engineered by the communists and Karesns. This friendship was further cemented by the pursuit of identical foreign policies.
As a country which suffered European colonial domination for more than a century, Burma, like India, adopted a policy of anti-colonialism. Clarifying Burma's attitude to colonialism Barrington, Burma's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (U.N.) said:

Colonialism, as we see it, is the domination of one people by another; and since it is a violation of fundamental human rights and a threat to the peace of the world, we condemn it without exception, wherever it may occur, and in whatever form. It has been Burma's consistent policy to support the cause of all colonial peoples in their struggle for national freedom.6

Realizing that peace was essential to attain economic freedom Burma followed a policy in furtherance of peace. U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma, declared "We must exert our utmost energies towards the preservation of peace throughout the world and the maintenance of good relations and understanding between all nations". 7

6. GAOR, session 9, plen. mtgs. 485, 10 October 1954, p.144
Burma did not take sides in the cold war and pursued a non-aligned policy. To quote U Nu: "Our circumstances demand that we follow an independent course and not ally ourselves with any power bloc. Any other course can only lead the Union to ruin ...." On several international issues Burma took identical stand like India. The Burmese approach to various international matters was so similar to that of India that Hugh Tinker considered Burma's policy "a carbon copy of India's policy". Following India's lead, Burma granted de facto recognition to the Indonesian Republic in November 1948; denied landing facilities to Dutch planes and finally granted de jure recognition to Indonesia on 27 December 1949. When the P.R.C. was established in October 1949, both New Delhi and Rangoon were keen to establish diplomatic links with Peking. According to a distinguished Indian diplomat, U Nu requested Nehru to delay India's recognition till such time as Rangoon accords recognition so that Burma


9. Hugh Tinker, "Nu, the Serene Statesman", *Pacific Affairs* (Richmond), vol.30, p.134

10. Tinker, n.8, p.343
would have the privilege of first non-communist state to recognize the P.R.C. In 1950, Burma joined India to vote in favour of the Security Council's resolution condemning North Korea as aggressor. Again in January 1951, like India, Burma voted against the U.N. General Assembly resolution branding the P.R.C. as aggressor for its intervention in Korea. When a conference was held in San Francisco in 1951 to sign a peace treaty with Japan, Burma, like India, refused to attend and finally signed a peace treaty with Japan separately on 5 November 1954.

On the question of membership to the P.R.C. in the U.N., Burma and India took identical stand. Speaking on this subject, Barrington, Burma's delegate, told the U.N. General Assembly: "In urging the seating of the Central People's Government of China in this organization we are merely taking cognizance of an existing fact".


12. Tinker, n. 8, p. 343

13. Ibid. See also Werner Levi, Free India in Asia (Minneapolis, 1952), p. 123

14. GAOR n. 6, p. 143
Burma along with India condemned hydrogen bomb tests. Pointing out the grave consequences of this dreadful weapon, Barrington told the U.N. General Assembly on 1 October 1954: "We meet once more in the shadow which grow in size with every month that passes. Man has at last mastered the secret of his own extinction. We have heard before of wars to end all wars. But the next one will end all war and with it the human race".

Burmese reaction to the proposal of the Philippines to form a Pacific Union was similar to that of India. When Jawaharlal Nehru indicated that India would not join a Pacific Union, but might be interested "in a general way" in close cooperation among the Southeast Asian nations, "the Burma government", as William C. Johnstone points out, "took the same position". Burma was also staunchly opposed to military alliances. Condenning

15. Ibid., p.142

16. William C. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy* (Massachusetts, 1963), p.55. Explaining Burma's stand on the creation of Pacific Pact U Nu said: "Burma is not interested in joining a Pacific Union that has been mentioned in some quarters if the Union is in the nature of a military alliance*. *The Hindu*, 7 March 1950
the American military moves in Southeast Asia, U Ba Swe, the Defence Minister of Burma, said in October 1954:

"The United States is reviving colonialism by impressing small nations to enter into its defence and economic systems. This endangers world peace and must be opposed as an evil contributing to the downfall of nations".

Burma not only refused to join Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (S.E.A.T.O.) sponsored by the U.S., but also took measures along with India to suggest an alternative solution for the promotion of peace and security in Southeast Asia. One such measure was the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement with the P.R.C. the very next day after India signed a similar agreement on 28 June 1954. In a joint statement issued by Chou En-lai and U Nu on 29 June 1954, they said:

In regard to the principles agreed upon between China and India to guide relations between the two countries, namely: (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (2) non-aggression; (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (4) equality and mutual benefit and (5) peaceful co-existence; the Prime Ministers agreed that these should be the guiding principles for relationship between China and Burma.

17. Tinker, n.8, p.368

18. For the text of the joint statement see G.V.Ambekar and V.D.Divekar, eds. Documents on China's Relations with South and Southeast Asia, 1949-1962 (Bombay, 1964), p.9
The close relations which developed between Burma and India found expression in mutual appreciation of each other’s problems. When the P.R.C. invaded Tibet in 1950, Burma did not hesitate to condemn the P.R.C. for its aggressive action, even though it was endeavouring to establish friendly relations with Peking at that time. U Thant, the Secretary to the Information Ministry in Burma, said in a radio broadcast on 5 November 1950:

Our country with its policy of abhorrence of aggression of any type is certainly not happy at the news of the People’s Republic of China ordering the units of the Chinese army into Tibet. Burma believes in the settlement of differences by peaceful means, and therefore, the Union Government cannot but regret that the Central People's Government of China should have seen fit to take this drastic action on Tibet.19

Burma also made efforts to mediate in the Kashmir dispute and bring India and Pakistan closer together. On 5 December 1950, U Nu offered to mediate on Kashmir. Rejecting U Nu’s offer Nehru observed that no other country could help in the matter. To quote

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19. Johnstone, n.16, p.162
Nehru: "The only way to solve it is for India and Pakistan to know that the burden is upon them and no one else". Again in August 1953, U Nu expressed the hope of peaceful and early settlement of Kashmir dispute. He also pointed out the serious implications for Southeast Asia if Kashmir remained unresolved between India and Pakistan. He even offered his good offices to solve Kashmir issue. His efforts did not bear fruits as an encouraging reply for his offer was not coming from India as well as Pakistan. Burma expressed great concern over the dangerous situation created in the Indian sub-continent as a result of the American offer of military aid to Pakistan in early 1954 despite specific warnings from India. The People, a Burmese newspaper, condemned Pakistan for accepting U.S. military aid: "Pakistan's action has created a new danger for peace loving peoples everywhere".

20. Gopal, n.1, p.113


22. The Hindu, 24 February 1954. Boh Sein Tun and Boh Tun Sein, who represented the Peoples Unity Party in Burmese Parliament, denounced the "American interference in Asian affairs". They said that U.S. arms aid to Pakistan was an indirect threat to the neutral policy of the Burmese government. Ibid., 6 March 1954. New Times of Burma, which generally voiced government's opinion, said that in accepting U.S. arms aid Pakistan was acting perfectly within its rights, but the issues involved extended far beyond Pakistan's borders. Quoted in Ibid.
India too, on its part, helped Burma in all possible ways. Of the various problems that troubled Burma during this period, the presence of Nationalist Chinese (K.M.T.) troops was the most important. Defeated by the Chinese communist forces in the civil war in China, the K.M.T. forces numbering around 12,000, moved across the border and settled themselves in northeastern Burma under the banner of "Yunnan Anti-Communist and National Salvation Army". Commanded by General Li Mi, they made abortive invasions regularly ever since 1950 against the P.R.C. These military activities annoyed the Government of Burma which was anxious to be friendly with the P.R.C. Burma feared that the hostile activities of the K.M.T. troops might provide a convenient excuse to the P.R.C. to enter Burmese territory under the guise of "mopping up" operations. The K.M.T. troops posed a serious threat to the peace of Burma. They caused much distress and resentment among the local people by looting and killing the innocent rural population. They defied the

23. For a detailed discussion on the problem of Nationalist Chinese troops in Burma, refer (1) Thompson and Adloff, n.21, (2) Johnstone, n.16, and (3) Oliver E. Clubb, Jr.; The Effect of Chinese Nationalist Military Activities on Burmese Foreign Policy (Santa Monica, California, 1959)


25. Johnstone, n.16, p.189
authority of the local government by smuggling opium and arms from across the Thai border and selling them to the local insurgents. Being militarily weak, handicapped by the absence of diplomatic relations with the Taiwan government and having failed to bring pressure on the Government of Formosa to withdraw its forces from Burma, Rangoon brought the problem before the U.N. by lodging a complaint on 25 March 1953 against the unlawful presence and harmful activities of the K.M.T. troops in Burma. The U.N. General Assembly acted swiftly and adopted a resolution on 23 April 1953 declaring that "these foreign troops must be disarmed and either agree to internment or leave the territory of the Union of Burma forthwith".

India which was "interested in the present and future of Burma", could not but view the problem seriously. Speaking on the K.M.T. problem, Nehru told Parliament:

There is disorder in parts of Burma. In the Northeast of Burma, a tremendous problem has existed for sometime because of the so-called Kuomintang troops having come in, unwelcome as they were, and squatting and creating mischief there.

27. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy : Selected Speeches, September 1946 - April 1961 (New Delhi, 1971), Reprint, p.293
28. Ibid,
Expressing his concern Nehru added: "Foreign troops in a country are never tolerated and they should be pushed out into the sea or mountains or somewhere else." Nehru shared Burma's fears regarding the possibility of Chinese intervention. K.M. Panikkar, Indian Ambassador in Peking, took up the question of the presence in Burma of the Kuomintang guerrillas more than once with the Chinese authorities on the advice of Nehru. On all occasions he was assured by Chou En-lai that so long as the Burmese government continued to take adequate steps against the Kuomintang intruders, Peking would make no move which might create trouble for Burma. India also took active part in the U.N. deliberations on the issue. When the U.S. sought the good offices of India in April 1953 to get the complaint of aggression made by Burma against Formosa settled outside the U.N. India took the stand that it was too late to think in terms of any such move.

29. India Record (London), 6 March 1952

30. Panikkar, n.11, p.169. According to two distinguished western observers, the Government of India told the P.A.C. in 1953 that since "India regarded Burma's defence as part of her own... India would deem any intervention in Burma on the plea of the need to suppress Kuomintang troops as quite unacceptable". Taya and Maurice Zinkin, Letters from India (London, 1956), p.21

31. The Hindu, 10 April 1953
Expressing India's deep concern, V.K. Krishna Menon, Indian delegate, told the U.N. General Assembly in April 1953, that India felt that "any violation of the honour of Burma or any wrong done to that country was significant to it as a wrong done to India". India extended unqualified support to Burma as New Delhi considered the K.M.T. army in Burma not only as an invading army but also an inciting army. Krishna Menon declared that "the danger was the more serious in that the troops had not only invaded Burma but were supporting rebellions stirred up against the legal authorities".

Since India did not have diplomatic links with Formosa, New Delhi asked the friends of the K.M.T. to use their influence to see that the "flagrant act of aggression" was brought to an end with all urgency. The Joint Military Committee formed on 15 May 1953, with the U.S., Thailand, Burma and Formosa as members, succeeded in evacuating large number of K.M.T. troops from Burma. By October 1954 nearly 7,000 persons were evacuated.

32. GAOHR, session 8, Cttee.1, mtg. 605, 17 April 1953, p.659
33. Ibid., session 8, Cttee.1, mtg. 611, 22 April 1953, p.685
34. Ibid., p.686
D.K. Barooah, Indian delegate in the U.N., commended the U.S. and Thailand for their "tireless efforts" to evacuate some of the rebels.

When the matter came up again before the U.N. General Assembly in October 1954, India supported Burma vigorously. Krishna Menon declared that the real object of the Chinese Nationalist irregulars was "to create a separate state in the territory of the Union of Burma". He further pointed out that nearly 6,000 "heavily armed" and "fighting men" of the K.M.T. army continued to remain in Burma and were carrying on illegal traffic in opium. Krishna Menon pointed out that this illicit traffic challenged the decisions of the U.N.O. and the efforts of the World Health Organization and urged the U.N. to take urgent measures to end the opium trade by driving out the foreign troops from Burma. Maha Thray Sithu U Kyin, the Burmese Ambassador to India and a member of the Burmese delegation to the U.N., thanked India for

36. GAOR, session 9, Ad Hoc pol. ctte, mtg.6, 14 October 1954, p.16

37. Ibid., session 9, Ad Hoc pol. ctte, mtg.7, 15 October 1954, p.22
its active support:

How helpful the Government of India has been in all matters concerning my people and my country! The latest instance of the friendship and harmony between our two countries has been very clearly demonstrated on the occasion of the submission of my Government's complaint on the KMT aggression. Mr. Krishna Menon declared in the Assembly 'Whatever hurts Burma hurts India'.

India also extended a helping hand to Burma in solving various other domestic problems. When Burma was faced with an acute shortage of professionals like doctors and engineers in 1952 New Delhi allowed Indian doctors and engineers to go to Burma. In March 1954 New Delhi also entered into a new agreement with Rangoon over the 1937 pre-separation debts Burma owed to India. As a result of the new agreement, the estimated capital sum of Rs.400,000,000 due to India was reduced to Rs.200,000,000. India also wrote off the entire interest accumulated on the outstanding dues.

38. The Hindu, 26 April 1953

from Burma. This generous act of India was hailed by the Burmese press. Commenting on the debt settlement New Times of Burma wrote:

Nothing is more factual and demonstrable to prove Indo-Burmese friendship than the way India and Burma have settled the long outstanding debts to the mutual benefit of both countries.41

India also signed a rice agreement with Burma in a similar spirit. India was a traditional buyer of Burma rice. India imported 4,800,000 tons of Burma rice in 1951; 3,800,000 tons in 1952 and 2,100,000 tons in 1953. There was no necessity to import rice during 1954 as enough rice was available in India itself. Yet India agreed to buy 900,000 tons of rice from Burma at the rate of £48 per ton, in spite of severe opposition from some of the members of Parliament.43

40. For the texts of letters exchanged between C.D. Deshmukh, the Finance Minister of India, and Ma Ha Thray Sithu U Kyin, the Ambassador of the Union of Burma, regarding the final settlement of outstanding liabilities of the Government of the Union of Burma to the Government of India, see Ibid., Appendix 8, Annexure 44, session 6, 1954, pp.699–700

41. For similar comments by various Burmese newspapers see World Press on India (New Delhi), 24 April 1954

42. India, Parliamentary Debates pt.1, vol.3 and 4, 7 September 1953, col.1617

By agreeing to purchase 900,000 tons out of 1,500,000 tons of exportable surplus, and that too at a rate higher than that prevailing in the world market, India saved Burma's export-oriented economy from collapse. Thanking New Delhi for the rice deal Tribuna, a Rangoon daily, observed: "£ 48 rate is certainly a gesture of generosity on the part of our neighbour and old customer, since she had offers at prices ranging from £ 35 to £ 40 per ton and had turned these down in favour of our rice".

The policy of the Government of India on the question of compensation to Indian landlords mainly Chettiaris in Burma was yet another example of India's appreciation of Burma's economic problems. In 1938 Indian landlords owned 25 per cent of total land in Lower Burma. In 1948, when the Burmese government passed Land Nationalization Act, these landlords did not oppose the Act with the hope that they would get equitable compensation. They sought the Government of India's assistance in realizing their objective. Responding to the requests of the landlords the Government of India

44. "Rice in India and Burma", Eastern Economist (New Delhi), 10 July 1953, p. 48. See also "Indo-Burma Rice Deal", Modern Review (Calcutta), vol. 95, pp. 270-1

45. World Press on India, 13 July 1954
sent a delegation in June 1950 and another in December 1953 to request the Burmese government to pay fair compensation to the Indian landlords. The Government of Burma amended the Land Nationalization Act of 1948 on 15 March 1954, according to which the rates of compensation were fixed on a sliding scale varying between 12 times the land revenue to just a year's land revenue. Indian landlords demanded Rs.90,000,000 for the land which they owned and whose value, according to their estimate, was Rs.900,000,000. The Burmese government finally agreed to pay only Rs.15,000,000. The landlords were so much disappointed that they regarded the compensation rates as "token rates".

Nehru’s desire not to drag the matter any further became clear when he told Rajya Sabha that, the compensation Burma proposed to pay for nationalized land might not perhaps have done "full justice" and might have caused "considerable distress", but it was entirely the concern of the Burmese government. India,

46. The Hindu, 18 March 1954. See also “Land Nationalization in Burma”, Eastern Economist, 19 March 1954, pp.480-1

47. The Hindu, 18 March 1954

which also introduced the abolition of zamindari at that time, could very well appreciate the principle of equitable justice underlying the land reforms in Burma.

The approach to solve Indo-Burma border problem revealed the identity of outlook between the two countries. Numerous tribes belonging to the same stock lived on both sides of Indo-Burma boundary and moved about freely between the two countries. At times, this free movement took the form of inter-tribal raids involving villages on both sides. One such incident took place in 1952 when a group of Naga tribesmen from Burma crossed over into India, indulged in head-hunting and carried away ninety human heads. U Nu feared that the "headhunting forays into India were bound to strain relations between the two countries". To find a solution to this problem U Nu and Nehru undertook a tour of the eastern borders of India towards the end of March 1953. Commenting on this joint tour the Report of the Ministry of External Affairs observed:

"An event of special significance to both countries was the joint tour of the Prime Ministers of India and Burma for about a week in March-April 1953 in the tribal areas on either side of the Indo-Burma frontier in order to convince the tribal people of the great interest both the Governments were taking in their welfare".

49. U Nu, Saturday\'s Son (Bombay, 1976), p.228

In the course of the tour, addressing a large gathering of tribal people, Nehru described the Burma border as a friendly border. He added: "Burma is our neighbour but it is marked only in the map. Let there not be any border in the hearts of the people of these two countries". In order to solve the tribal problem both the Prime Ministers agreed to demarcate the national boundaries on scientific lines. Since the bulk of the Naga population lived on the Indian side, it was contemplated to bring the entire Naga area under Indian control, while Lahkar region was to be placed within Burmese territory as majority of the Lahkars lived on Burmese side. By doing so it was thought that the unlawful entries could be prevented. Though nothing concrete emerged out of these discussions the spirit in which both the Prime Ministers wanted to tackle the issue demonstrated their anxiety to maintain and further cordial relations between the two countries.

51. The Hindu, 30 March 1953. Speaking on the unsettled border between India and Burma, Nehru told Parliament on 24 December 1953: "There is certain undefined area between Burma and India and there were various proposals too, for not merely defining it but also slight exchange of territory to adjust things. But they have remained where they were". India, Parliamentary Debates pt.7, vol.10, 24 December 1953, col.3094.

52. The Hindu, 11 April 1953
Despite the broad area of agreement between the two countries, it must be pointed out that there were occasions when they differed from each other on certain issues. Mention must be made of Burma's attitudes towards the Commonwealth and Israel in this connection. Unlike India, Burma chose to remain outside the Commonwealth after independence. Burma also developed friendly relations with Israel calling it a sister socialist state while India maintained close relations with Arabs and supported their cause against Israel.

Of greater significance was the differing perceptions on the foreign policy goals of Peking in Southeast Asia in general and towards Burma in particular. Sino-Burmese relations were rendered complex by the undemarcated boundary between the two countries. Despite "the propitiatory gestures" of U Nu's government, Peking adopted a somewhat hostile policy and supported the activities of the Burmese Communist Party (B.C.P.). As a result, Rangoon entertained serious misgivings about China's foreign policy goals in Southeast Asia. Burma's vulnerable position, both

53. U Nu, n.49, pp.275-6
54. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.21
in matters of external defence and internal security, further worsened the situation. It was Burma's fear of Peking that led to differences on the nature of communist threat in the Colombo Conference in April-May 1954. In this Conference, Mohammed Ali Bagra, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, declared that international communism was "the biggest potential danger to democracy in the region". Opposing Pakistan's view Nehru argued that colonialism represented an active threat while communism was merely an ideology. U Nu supported Mohammed Ali Bagra's view. U Nu said that communism had gone "too far" and "it is time the Asians told them to stop interfering in our affairs". Though a compromise was effected between the opponents of international communism on the one hand and the assailants of colonialism on the other by declaring their "unmistakable determination to resist influence in the affairs of their countries by external communist, anti-communist, or other agencies", the controversy underlined the differences between India and Burma on certain important matters.

55. S.M. Burke, Pakistan's Foreign Policy (London, 1973), p. 174

56. Ibid.


58. For the text of the Joint Communiqué issued by the Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia
Personal friendship and trust also played a great role in promoting India - Burma friendship. When Nehru paid his first visit to independent Burma in June 1950, Burmese papers described him as "Nehru: the hope of Asia", and "Nehru represents best in Indian traditions". U Thein Maung, Mayor of Rangoon, in his welcome address, hailed Nehru "as a great and genuine friend of Burma" and that he was a symbol of reascent Asia "awake, alert and striving to attaining her place in the sun". Nehru responded warmly and said that "India and Burma have their little quarrels, but they have also a kinship of spirit, of ideals and of objectives. I do earnestly hope that in the future that kinship will lead to co-operative effort in the achievement of our ideals". At a state dinner Thakin Nu paid rich tributes to Nehru when he said that the Indian Prime Minister had been a consistent friend of Burma and his help and guidance in the hour of travail had been of inestimable value. In his reply Nehru said that he was always greatly pleased to visit Burma, because the people of Burma were extra-ordinarily friendly and helpful. He considered it a privilege to have friends like Aung San and Thakin Nu.

59. The Hindu, 21 June 1950
60. Ibid., 22 June 1950
61. Ibid., 23 June 1950
In the course of his tour, Nehru inaugurated the physio-therapeutic department of the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital. He paid glowing tribute to the silent and unostentatious work of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Government of India made an offer of a capital grant of Rs.120,000 and a recurring annual grant of Rs.25,000 for the rehabilitation of the hospital which was damaged during the second world war. In addition, Nehru made a friendly gesture by giving a personal donation of Rs.2,500. Thakin Nu paid a return visit to India in October 1951 during which he discussed with Nehru the problems of common interest. The personal relations between Nehru and U Nu were such that "U Nu stayed with Nehru whenever he went to India".

The friendly relations reached a climax on 7 July 1951 when a Treaty of Friendship was signed between the two countries in Rangoon. Speaking on the occasion M.A.Rauf, the Indian Ambassador to Burma, said:

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62. India Record, 6 July 1950
63. Ibid., 1 November 1950
64. U Nu, n.49, p.226
The treaty is merely a token and symbol that the bonds of friendship between our two countries have been growing stronger, even without a treaty. The last few years have demonstrated that India and Burma have much in common and there are always matters of which we take a similar view.

Speaking on the same occasion, Burma's Foreign Minister expressed similar sentiments and said that "the treaty is a manifestation of the ever increasing goodwill and understanding between our two countries."

Another indication of the intimate relations was revealed in the close co-operation between the two countries in the U.N. Paying tributes to Mrs. Vijayarajakshmi Pandit on the eve of her retirement as President of the U.N. General Assembly the Burmese delegate said: "We of Asia are proud of the gracious, skilful and impartial manner in which Mrs. Pandit conducted and guided the deliberations of the eighth session of the General Assembly. U Nu had so much regard for Nehru's

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65. India Record, 12 July 1951

66. GAOK, session 9, mtg. plen 485, 1 October 1954, p. 142
integrity and knowledge of world affairs that he considered him to be "the most remarkable man of our times". Nehru on his part valued Indo-Burmese friendship so much that he declared in Parliament that "We are much more intimately connected with Burma - not formally I mean informally than with the Commonwealth countries".

INDIA AND INDONESIA:

Mention has already been made to the invaluable Indian assistance during Indonesian struggle for freedom. After the attainment of freedom Indonesia, like Burma, followed a foreign policy whose basic principles were similar to those of India. A clear proof of the identity of views between the two countries was furnished by Sukarno himself. Replying to questions regarding Indonesia's attitude towards Vietnam, colonialism and communists, Sukarno said: "It is the

67. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.93

same as India's policy. As a country which was yet to be liberated completely from the Dutch colonial domination, it was but natural for Jakarta to adopt anti-colonialism as one of the basic principles of its foreign policy. The anti-colonialist feeling ran so high among the Indonesians that the very first sentence of the preamble to the Constitution states that "freedom is the right of all peoples and, therefore, colonialism should be wiped from the face of this earth because it is opposed to humanity and justice". Believing that peace was essential for the establishment of a prosperous Indonesian state, Indonesians made the policy of peace, as a cardinal principle of their foreign policy. Arnold Munonutu, Indonesian Minister of Information, said: "Our policy of peace is not based on pacific considerations. But only in conditions of peace can we improve the people's

69. The Hindu, 16 June 1950. Writing on the similarity between Indian and Indonesian foreign policies, Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Indonesia, observed: "If we compare Indonesia's foreign policy principles... with the conduct of India's foreign policy under Nehr and his consecutive statements in this field, we can see a similar and parallel point of view". Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, Twenty Years of Indonesian Foreign Policy, 1945-1965 (Mouton, 1973), p.27. See also "India and Indonesia", Eastern Economist, 24 September 1954, pp.497-8

70. Mohammed Hatta, "Indonesia between the Power Blocs", Foreign Affairs (New York, N.Y.), vol. 32, p.483
welfare and improve our international position". He also expressed the hope that in pursuing this policy Indonesia would have an ally in India. Being a friend of all, an enemy of none", needing "material and intellectual help from the outside world", and desiring to work energetically for the preservation of peace and relaxation of tension generated by two blocs", Indonesia decided to follow an "independent" and "active" foreign policy. Jakarta also decided neither to set up nor to "participate in any third bloc designed to act as a counterpoise to the two great blocs" for fear of creating "new suspicions and new enemies".

There was such striking resemblance in the foreign policies of India and Indonesia that the Far Eastern Survey commented: "The one country to which Indonesia seem to look for leadership in foreign affairs is India, which also has tried to steer a middle course between the conflicting policies of Russia and the United States". Further it said that

71. The Hindu, 8 June 1950
72. Hatta, n.70, p.491
73. Agung, n.69, p.26
74. Ibid.
Nehru's emphasis on socio-economic reconstruction of the countries of Southeast Asia and his blunt refusal to commit India to either bloc "have won particular favour in the Indies."

The identity of foreign policies found expression in the common stand they took on various international issues. Believing, like India, that every nation had the right to live "according to its own conscience, and to act, work and trade in conformity with its convictions, so long as such actions do not harm other people or nations", Indonesia accorded recognition to the P.R.C. in March 1950. "Indonesia lined up with India" in pursuing an "independent" policy in regard to the Korean and Tunisian issues. Indonesia's stand on the granting of recognition to the rival governments in Vietnam also was very similar to that of India. Explaining Indonesia's policy, Mohammed

75. "Indonesia and the West", Far Eastern Survey (New York, N.Y.), vol.20, 21 February 1951, p.41. See also L.P. Singh, "Dynamics of Indian-Indonesian Relations", Asian Survey (Berkeley), vol.7, pp.655-66

76. GAOR, session 9, mtg. plan 484, 30 September 1954, p.122

77. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.124
Natsir, the then Prime Minister of Indonesia, said that "recognition should be given to the whole people - should it be united by democratic procedure - rather than to a part of the people". In the Asian Prime Ministers' Conference in Colombo in April-May 1954 the area of agreement between the views of the two countries became more explicit. In the Conference Sir John Kotelawala, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, supported by U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma, and Mohammed Ali Bonga, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, moved a resolution condemning international communism as "anti-democratic" and "aggressive". Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo, the Prime Minister of Indonesia, supported Nehru and withheld his support to the resolution. Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo, like Nehru, did not wish to condemn countries on the score of ideologies. It was not in conformity with Indonesia's policy of non-alignement. Above all there was one factor that decisively influenced Indonesia not to denounce international

78. Mohammed Natsir, "A Review of Indonesia's Reconstruction Indonesian Review (Jakarta), vol. 1, p. 53
79. Jansen, n. 57, p. 156
80. Ibid.
communism. It must be pointed that Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo's government was functioning "with heavy backing from the Indonesian Communist Party." 81

In the Colombo Conference, Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo proposed the convening of a bigger conference of Afro-Asian states. Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo considered the holding of such a conference "a matter of prestige". It "would enhance the position of his cabinet" and "rally public opinion" in favour of his government. The response to Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo's proposal was mixed. Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma were "lukewarm to the idea". Nehru too was not enthusiastic about holding such a big conference, for he felt that such a conference would not come off in view of conflicting interests among the Afro-Asian states. Nehru, however, did not want to displease the Indonesian Prime Minister and ultimately gave his consent to the proposal of Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo to convene a conference of Afro-Asian states.


82. Agung, n.69, p.210

83. Ibid., p.207

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.
Indonesia also refused to join the S.E.A.T.O., a U.S. sponsored military alliance. Explaining his country's stand, Dr. Ali Sastroemirojo said that Indonesia kept itself out of the S.E.A.T.O. as it did not bring them anywhere near to the establishment of peace in Southeast Asia. He added:

The foreign policy of Indonesia is independent and active aiming at world peace. It was Indonesia's firm conviction that entering into the SEATO would mean the abandonment of the policy of non-alignment being followed by Indonesia. That would spell disaster to her.86

Though there was a larger measure of agreement in their approach to world problems, there were two issues on which the two governments differed. The first one related to the signing of the Japanese peace treaty. India refused to participate in the conference in San Francisco for signing peace treaty with Japan on 8 September 1951. India disagreed with many provisions

of the draft peace treaty prepared by the U.S. Finally, India concluded a separate peace treaty with Japan on 9 June 1952 waiving all reparation claims and agreeing to enter into commercial and other treaties at a later date. Indonesia, which was under Japanese occupation during the second world war, took altogether a different stand and decided to attend the San Francisco Conference, with the "desire to obtain fair and just reparations from Japan". Jakarta believed that a separate treaty with Japan would only differ in 'form' but not in 'substance' from the multilateral treaty of San Francisco. Above all Indonesian leaders felt that if their government concluded a separate peace treaty following India's lead, "the sphere of goodwill would certainly be absent and Indonesia would certainly not be able to count on any support from the United States".

There were, however, many people in Indonesia who appreciated India's point of view. They believed that

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87. India demanded restoration of complete sovereignty to Japan, the right of Japan to enter into any defence agreement after becoming a full-fledged sovereign state and Formosa to be returned to the P.R.C.

88. For a good account of Japanese peace treaty refer Karunakaran, n.4, pp.83-94

89. Indonesian Review, vol.1, p.291

90. Ibid., p.395

91. India Record, 18 October 1951
by signing the peace treaty, the government compromised the independent foreign policy and its solidarity with India. Sensing the intensity of opposition to the peace treaty, Indonesian government did not submit the treaty for Parliament's ratification.

There was yet another area of divergence between India and Indonesia. In January 1952 Prime Minister Sukiman signed a Mutual Security Assistance Agreement with the U.S. According to the Agreement the U.S. promised to give financial assistance to the tune of $8,000,000 annually in return for Indonesia's obligation to contribute to the "defensive strength of the free world". Public opinion was so much incensed with the Agreement that the Indonesian government was finally compelled to annul the Agreement. But for these two stray cases there was perfect understanding between the two countries in the execution of their foreign policies.

92. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.125

93. B.S.N.Murti, Nehru's Foreign Policy (New Delhi, 1953), p.154

94. Ibid. See also Evelyn Colbert, Southeast Asia in International Politics, 1941-1956 (Ithaca, N.Y. 1977), p.176. The signing of Mutual Security Assistance Agreement with the U.S. was so much criticized in Indonesia that finally it led to the resignation of Suberdo, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, S.Krishnamurthy, "Militant anti-imperialism", in K.P.Karunakaran, ed. Outside the Contest (New Delhi, 1969), p.119. See also (1) Kmary vandenbosch and Richard A.Butwell, Southeast Asia Among World Powers (Lexington, 1957), p.39 and (2) Lalita Prasad Singh, Power Politics and Southeast Asia (New Delhi, 1979), p.53
Indonesia adopted a neutral stand on issues affecting India-Pakistan relations and tried to be friendly with both the countries. Indonesia desired an early settlement of the Kashmir problem for it formed a barrier to the promotion of peace and friendship among South and Southeast Asian countries. Jakarta wanted India and Pakistan to remain friendly so that the "tightrope walking" in Indonesia's relations with them could be avoided. For instance, to avoid any misunderstanding President Sukarno visited Karachi immediately after his visit to India in January 1950. Indonesia signed treaties of friendship with both India and Pakistan simultaneously in 1951. In October 1951 when Burma invited Indonesia and India for a tripartite conference; Indonesia, for fear of incurring the displeasure of Pakistan which was not invited, expressed its reluctance in an indirect way, by asking for the postponement of the conference under the pretext of "pressing problems at home". Mention may also be made of Indonesia's policy towards Indo-Pakistan disputes. Despite the common bond of Islam, Indonesia's relations with Pakistan were not as close as that with India.

95. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.65
96. Ibid.
There were no personal contacts between the leaders of
the two countries. Pakistan also did not take any
interest comparable to that of India in Indonesia's
struggle for freedom. Yet as a true neighbour of
both, Indonesia made sincere efforts for an amicable
settlement of the Kashmir dispute. On 6 March 1951,
Mohamad Roem, Indonesia's Foreign Minister, offered
Indonesia's good offices for settling Kashmir problem.
This gesture was received with cold reception by both
India and Pakistan. In July, 1952, another attempt
was made when Hatta and Sukarno, in a message to the
Prime Minister of India and Pakistan, expressed the
hope of a satisfactory solution to the Kashmir problem
through the mediation of U.N. appointed Dr. Graham,
"whom the Indonesians have good cause to remember".
In his reply, while welcoming the suggestion, Nehru
said that "Pakistan's attitude of continuous threats
of war and denunciation is not helpful towards a
solution". On the eve of the Colombo Conference, which

97. Ibid.

98. India Record, 2 July 1952. Dr. Frank P. Graham
was the U.S. representative in the Good Offices
Committee appointed by the Security Council in
August 1947 to assist Holland and the Indonesian
Republic to arrive at an amicable settlement. He
played a crucial role in the signing of the
Kenville Agreements in January 1948.

99. India Record, 2 July 1952
was held in April-May 1954, Sunario, the Foreign
Minister of Indonesia, expressed his readiness again
100
to mediate in the Kashmir dispute. Indonesian press
hoped that the Colombo Conference would help solve the
outstanding issues between India and Pakistan. Commenting
on the proposed conference of Asian Prime Ministers
Minbar Indonesia, an Indonesian daily, wrote:

This conference will be of great value if
the participating countries can settle
the present Indo-Pakistan controversy —
immaterial who is right and who is wrong.101

Indonesia's friendly disposition towards India in the
India-Pakistan dispute can be understood from the fact
that while Sukarno visited Pakistan in 1950, the
Pakistani Head of State could not pay a return visit
to Indonesia until 1960.

100. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.65 In March 1954,
foreign office experts in Jakarta believed
that Indonesia, a Muslim country with strong
cultural ties with India was in an admirable
position to bring India and Pakistan together.
The Hindu, 18 March 1954

101. World Press on India, 13 January 1954
India showed great interest in getting Soviet recognition to the Indonesian government. When the Soviet Union refused to recognize Indonesia, condemning Sukarno and Hatta as the agents of western imperialism, S. Radhakrishnan, the Indian Ambassador, met Stalin twice and tried to persuade him to recognize Sukarno's regime.

India also supported vigorously Indonesia's claim to West New Guinea. India's support to Indonesia over this issue was based not only on its principled opposition to the continuation of colonialism, but also because of the recognition of close historical, geographical and political associations between Indonesians and West Irians. The Hague Agreement, according to which power was transferred to the Indonesians, provided for the retention of West New Guinea by the Dutch for one more year after which its future status was to be decided through negotiations. As the negotiations failed to produce concrete results, Indonesian Government finally brought the matter before the U.N. in August 1954. The issue

102. The Hindu, 27 August 1950
became complicated, when Australia staked its claims on New Guinea for strategic considerations. Indonesians held that "West Irian is a national claim". They feared that further delay in transferring West Irian to the Indonesians would only provide a powerful weapon to the Indonesian communists to gain influence. From the beginning, Indonesians counted on India's support for an early settlement of the issue. Sukarno, when he visited New Delhi in January 1950, sought India's help. Addressing a meeting of the members of Indian Parliament Sukarno said:

India and Indonesia now stand side by side as two independent nations but for Indonesia the struggle for independence is not yet over. There is still one area of our country - New Guinea - which is not yet incorporated in the territory of the United States of Indonesia but it is hoped that our negotiations with the Dutch Government on this issue will be successful in the course of 1950. New Guinea is also a part of Indonesia and it is my ardent hope that the people of India will give every moral support to the Indonesians in their negotiations to include New Guinea in the territory of Indonesia.


104. Hatta, n.70, p.486

105. Ibid., p.482

106. The Hindu, 26 January 1950
During his visit to Indonesia in June 1950, Nehru expressed in clear terms India's stand on the issue. Addressing a press conference Nehru said: "Generally it seems to me that historical and geographical approaches give weight to Indonesia's claim to include West New Guinea in Indonesia". However he asked the parties concerned to settle the question in a peaceful and co-operative way. India also vigorously supported Indonesia's claim in the U.N. When Casey, Australia's delegate in the U.N., mentioned that "there has never been an independence movement among the Papuans, the only voices heard in favour of union with Indonesia are echoes from Djakarta", V.K. Krishna Menon raised strong objection to the statement. He felt sad for "this statement came from Australia which is a part of that area usually called Australasia". When the West Irian issue came up for discussion in the U.S. General Assembly in November 1954, D. K. Barcooh, who replaced Krishna Menon in the U.N., disagreed with the

107. India Record, 22 June 1950

108. CAOR, session 9, mtg. plen. 492, 6 October 1954, p.227
Australian contention that the transfer of West New Guinea would only delay rapid progress of the island. Pointing out that it was hundred years of Dutch rule that was responsible for the sorry state of affairs in West New Guinea, he demanded its immediate transfer to Indonesia. Speaking again on the problem in the U.N. in December 1954 D.K.Barooah said:

To my delegation, as well as to the delegates of those countries having experience of colonial rule, the question of West Irian is the elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism in Asia so that all old animosities and bitterness between the East and the West could be removed from that part of the world... It is the earnest desire of my delegation that the Dutch Government as well as the people of the Netherlands will learn from their mistakes and endeavour to come to a peaceful settlement with their former colony and present day friends, the Indonesians.


110. Ibid., session 9, mtg. plen. 509, 10 December 1954, p.450
Despite India's strong support and assistance from some other Afro-Asian and Latin American 111 countries the draft resolution which called for resumption of negotiations could not be pushed through in the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly as it failed to get the required two-thirds 112 majority.

Cordial relations between India and Indonesia were greatly promoted by the exchange of visits by the leaders of both countries and by the visits of high level delegations from Indonesia to India. Within a month after the attainment of Indonesian independence Sukarno visited New Delhi. This was his first official visit as Head of the State. He was the chief guest at the celebrations to mark the inauguration of the Republic of India. The purpose of his visit was to convey to the Indian leaders, particularly Nehru, and the Indian people, the gratitude of the Indonesian people for their unswerving support during Indonesian struggle for freedom. 'Conveying Indonesia's greetings to the Indian Republic Sukarno said:

111. Besides India, Afro-Asian and Latin American countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Lebanon, Poland and Saudi Arabia vigorously supported Indonesian claim.

The whole world realises the deep significance of the independence of India, but I think that there is no country which realises its significance more than Indonesia does. The spiritual ties that bind Indonesia and India date back to hundreds, even thousands of years. I pray that free independent India will achieve peace and prosperity and become one of the greatest nations in the world and that India and Indonesia will march together in close co-operation.  

Speaking on Sukarno's visit to India Nehru told Parliament on 17 March 1950:

We had the honour and privilege, a short while ago, of welcoming here the President of the United States of Indonesia, Dr. Sukarno. He came here, not only as the head of that great new independent state but as a gallant fighter for freedom and a fighter who had achieved his objective in spite of very great difficulties. It was a pleasure to meet him here, to confer with him and to find, how much in common we had in our national and individual outlooks. So, we become more and more intimately connected, not by formal treaties and alliances and pacts but by bonds which are much more secure, much more binding - the bonds of mutual understanding and interest and ... even of mutual affection.

Nehru returned the visit in June 1950. It was a happy coincidence that the Prime Minister of a country, which championed vigorously and consistently Indonesia's

113. The Hindu, 26 January 1950
114. Nehru, n.27, pp.411-12
cause for freedom, should have become the first Chief of Government to visit free Indonesia. Indonesians attached great importance to Nehru's visit; Arnold Mononutu, Indonesia's Information Minister, declared in a nation wide broadcast that Nehru's visit would have deeper significance psychologically and geographically than "merely a routine visit by one head of state to another". In the course of his ten day visit Nehru advised the Indonesians to work for the achievement of economic freedom and for the promotion of world peace. Addressing Indonesian Parliament Nehru said that political freedom would have little meaning unless it was followed by economic freedom. He also exhorted them to strive for the promotion of world peace. Addressing a public meeting in Jakarta, Nehru advised Indonesians to discard hatred and live in co-operation with other peoples and countries including those who exploited them earlier. Since peace and unity were the pre-requisites for the successful implementation of the programme of economic re-construction of any country Nehru appealed to the people of Indonesia to extend all co-operation.

115. The Hindu, 8 June 1950
116. Ibid., 9 June 1950
to the government. Sukarno was much impressed by Nehru's visit to Indonesia. A few days thereafter, Sukarno said on 1 July 1950:

This friendship and co-operation are of ancient origin and date back to the beginning of the Christian era. The more than 1000 years old relations of commerce and common culture were disrupted when other peoples made it impossible for our two countries to continue their relations. But now that both peoples have regained their freedom and independence, our peoples are free again to intensify the cordial relations of the past for the benefit of both India and Indonesia. 118

In September 1950, soon after Nehru's visit, an Indian Trade Delegation went to Indonesia for exploring possibilities of promoting trade between the two countries. A Trade Agreement was signed on 20 January 1951 which envisaged a three-fold rise in the total volume of trade 119 between the two countries. Demonstrating the cordiality between the two countries, a Treaty of Friendship was signed on 3 March 1951. The Government of India sanctioned ten scholarships under a four year scheme.

117. Ibid., 10 June 1950

118. Foreign Policy of India : Texts of Documents 1947-58 (New Delhi, 1958), p.43

119. India Record, 6 September 1951

120. For the text of Indo-Indonesian Friendship Treaty see Foreign policy of India, n.118, pp.43-46
involving an expenditure of Rs.100,000 to enable Indonesian students to study in India. Under a programme of military assistance, an Indonesian Air Force goodwill mission visited India in July 1951. India undertook to give military training to a number of Indonesian military officers. An Indonesian delegation led by Dr. Subagja Hocksodipura, Secretary of the Central General Elections Bureau, visited India in January 1952 to study the system and conduct of India's general elections. In order to make a study of India's first five-year plan, Dr. Djunda, Director of the Indonesian National Planning Bureau, and Utojo Subato of the Indonesian Ministry of Economic Affairs visited India in June 1954. In February 1954 an India-Indonesian Friendship Society was formed in New Delhi "to bring the two countries more closely together".

Indonesia, on its part, made friendly gestures towards India. When India was faced with famine conditions Indonesian Cabinet decided in September 1952 to send food

121. India, Parliamentary Debates, pt.1, vol.6, 2 April 1951, cols.776-9
122. India Record, 29 September 1951
123. Ibid., 10 January 1952
125. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.124
articles worth $ 6000 to India. In September 1953 the Indonesian Red Cross Society also sent 567 bags of maize, 200 bags of green peas and 110 bags of peeled groundnuts to India.

INDIA AND MALAYA:

As Malaya had not yet attained its independence from the British, relations between India and Malaya were altogether different from those that existed between India and Burma or between India and Indonesia. India's interest in Malaya was mainly related to the protection and promotion of the interests of Malayan Indians who numbered 748,829 in 1947 and who formed the single largest group of the overseas Indians. Of the various problems that the Malayan Indians faced in the post-war period, the communist armed struggle and the question of Malayan citizenship were the two issues that affected Malayan Indians most.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Government of India expressed deep concern over communist violence in

126. Ibid.


128. Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) Debates vol.1, no.1, 21 November 1947, p.416
Malaya and condemned the terrorist methods adopted by the communists to seize power. Barring a few, Indians in general kept themselves away from the communist movement in Malaya. The Government of India took all possible steps to safeguard the interests of Indian community. Upto 31 October 1949, the Government of Malaya arrested 40 Chettiers on the specific charge of paying protection money to the terrorists or their agents. As a result of the representations made by the Indian Representative, 23 of them were released unconditionally and 15 were repatriated to India. Since the declaration of the Emergency in June 1948 upto 31 January 1953 about 1,390 Indian labourers were arrested in the Federation of Malaya and about 109 in the Colony of Singapore for alleged communist activities. Thanks to the efforts of the Indian Representative, large number of these Indian detainees were released. The Indian Representative also gave legal assistance to these Indians, who were awarded capital punishment, to file appeals and mercy petitions.

125. Ibid., pt.1, vol.4, 14 December 1949, p.454
The Government of India also showed much interest in the issue of citizenship of Indians in Malaya. According to the Federation of Malaya Agreement of June 1948, while the Malays, as the subjects of the sultans, became "automatically" the citizens of the new Federation, most of the non-Malays could become citizens only through "application", the qualifications for which were very stringent and difficult to fulfil. The Indian community in Malaya expressed its disapproval of the stringent and discriminatory citizenship laws and did not show enthusiasm to acquire citizenship.

B.V. Kestak, Deputy Minister for External Affairs, announced in the Parliament that by the end of November 1950, only 5,482 Indians became Federal citizens. The Malayan Indian Congress, which represented the Indian Community in Malaya, demanded that citizenship should be granted to all those who had good character, ability to speak colloquial English or Malay, and stayed in Malaya for five years. With a view to enabling more non-Malays to take up citizenship the British government decided to amend the Federation Agreement and liberalize the


132. India, Parliamentary Debates pt.1, vol.7, 6 April 1951, cols.2919-20
citizenship qualifications. The Federation Citizenship Act, which came into force on 15 September 1952, liberalized provisions regarding birth and residence. The Act enabled large number of Chinese and Indians to acquire citizenship.

As far as citizenship of overseas Indians was concerned, the Government of India had always maintained that either they should become the citizens of the country of their settlement or remain as nationals of India. Reiterating the Government of India's policy, Nehru said during his talks with Dato Onn bin Jaefar, Member for Home Affairs in the Malayan Federation, that Indians in Malaya should completely identify themselves with the local peoples or agree to stay overseas as Indian nationals. In a farewell message to Indians in Malaya, John Thivy, the Government of India's representative in Malaya, advised them not to plant their "two feet on two different soils".


135 *The Hindu*, 10 April 1952

136 Ibid., 22 August 1950
India also took some positive steps for promoting the educational standards of Indian population of Malaya. The standard of Indian education in Malaya remained poor. The number of schools meant for Indian students was small. Even these schools were either ill-equipped or inadequately staffed. As the students were mostly children of the Indian labourers, who formed the bulk of Malayan Indian population, they could not pursue higher education. In 1952, when the Government of the Federation of Malaya approached its Indian counterpart for the recruitment of Indian teachers to work in Indian schools in Malaya, the Government of India readily gave its consent and provided all facilities. In order to enable the students of Indian origin to receive university education the Government of India also instituted a scholarship fund in Malaya with the Representative of the Government of India in Malaya as the Trustee of the fund. The scholarship fund was raised from the contributions made by the Indian Relief Committee and the British India Steam Navigation Company and India's share of the assets of the Indian National Army and Indian Independence League funds seized in Malaya at the end of

the second world war. According to the scheme prepared
to administer the fund, 5 university scholarships of
M$ 1,500 each per annum and 25 pre-university scholarships
of M$ 90 each per annum were to be awarded to the Indian
138
students in Malaya.

The Government of India also took measures to
encourage Indian immigrant labourers to accept Malaya
as their permanent home. The Indian Representative who
held talks with the Malayan government succeeded in
convincing the latter to spend Malaya's share of Indian
Immigration Fund (13/14) for settling Indian labourers on
land in the peninsula. The settlers, who were allotted
land under two pilot schemes, were entitled to enjoy full
rights over the land except the right to sell.

Relations between the leaders of India and Malaya
did not reach the level of intimacy as between India and
Burma or India and Indonesia. Yet efforts were made by
the leaders of both the countries to promote better
understanding. Dato Onn bin Jaafar, Member for Home

138. See (1) Report of the Ministry of External Affairs,
1952-1953 (New Delhi, n.d.), p.15 and (2) India,
Lok Sabha Debates pt.1, vols 3 & 4, 14 August 1953,
col.571

(New Delhi, n.d.) p.15. See also Report of the
Ministry of External Affairs, 1953-1954 (New Delhi,
n.d.), p.13
Affairs in the Malayan government, visited India in April 1952. Though his eight-day stay in India was chiefly meant to explain the situation in Malaya, it helped him greatly to understand and appreciate India's policies. Addressing a public meeting on 29 April 1952, he said that as a result of Pakistan's misinterpretation of Kashmir problem, he had different impressions with regard to Kashmir. But after his talks with Sheikh Abdullah and after making an on-the-spot study of the situation in Kashmir, he was convinced that the stand taken by India was "absolutely right". He also expressed great admiration for the work Abdullah and his government were doing in Kashmir. His talks with Nehru enabled him to understand and appreciate the policy of the Government of India on the question of citizenship of overseas Indians. As a gesture of goodwill, India presented to the Federal Government of Malaya, a collection of fifteen antiques of considerable artistic value, for exhibition in the proposed museum of Kuala Lumpur. Speaking on the occasion of presentation of relics, R.K. Tandon, Commissioner of India in Malaya, said:

140. India Record, 8 May 1952
141. The Hindu, 10 April 1952
The ancient pieces which are being presented today bear testimony not only to our ancient cultural connections, but also to our relationship of today and tomorrow. The bonds of friendship and understanding have remained stretched between India and Malaya for over two thousand years and with the presentation of these exhibits fresh warmth and vigour flow through them. 142

INDIA AND THE PHILIPPINES:

Though the Philippines attained independence in 1946, India-Philippines relations did not make much headway during the period under review. Geographically, the Philippines is so located that for many Indians it appeared more a Pacific country than an Asian country. Economic privileges and military base rights enjoyed by the U.S. even after the Philippines attained independence gave the impression that the Filipino independence was nominal than real. Of the countries of Southeast Asia, the Philippines was the only country which was least affected by Indian cultural influences. Even with regard to the Indians that settled in the Philippines, the number i.e. 1,300 was far less when compared with the number of Indians in other Southeast Asian countries. 143

142. Ibid., 21 December 1954
143. C.Kondapi, Indians Overseas, 1839-1949 (Bombay, 1951), p.348
Since the Filipino economy was linked closely with that of the U.S., economic ties between the Philippines and India also could not make much progress.

Soon after attaining independence, the Philippines expressed its desire to identify itself as an Asian state through the development of co-operation among Asian countries in economic, political and military spheres. Above all it was the communist threat that shaped Filipino foreign policy. Though the communist Huk movement had its origins in the 1920's, it gained momentum only during the second world war and reached the height of power by 1949. The Huks created terror in the urban as well as rural areas. Describing the dangerous situation created by the Huk movement in the Philippines, Carlos P. Romulo, the Foreign Minister of the Philippines, observed: "Democracy in the Philippines was on its deathbed" and "there was no peace in the Philippines". This internal communist problem

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144. For a detailed account of communist movement in the Philippines see (1) Carlos P. Romulo, Crusade in Asia (Westport, Connecticut, 1973) and (2) Mahini Kaul, The Philippines and Southeast Asia (New Delhi, 1978)

145. Romulo, n.144, p.93

146. Ibid., p.103
compelled the Philippines to think of collective Asian action to save the newly established democracies of Asia. The emergence of the P.R.C. towards the end of 1949 further intensified the problem. Under these circumstances, the Filipino leaders hoped for Indian co-operation in dealing with the communist threat. India was the largest democratic state in Asia, economically more advanced than other Asian countries and was the most influential country in entire Asia. Above all, India was also facing communist problem like other Southeast Asian countries.

In 1947, when the Asian Relations Conference was held in New Delhi, the Philippines took active part in the proceedings and exhibited its keen interest in the development of friendship and co-operation. Addressing the Conference, the Filipino delegate said that the Asian Relations Conference was a historic one and having such gatherings was essential "to foster goodwill and more understanding between all countries". When India convened the Conference on Indonesia in 1949 the Philippines attended it expressing its solidarity with

the Indonesians struggling for their freedom. Taking active part in the discussions, Romulo, condemned the Dutch aggression in Indonesia. The Philippines had another purpose in attending the Conference and that was to work for some sort of an Asian organization for the furtherance of mutual interests. Addressing the Conference, Romulo said:

The Conference might consider further certain measures for the establishment of continuing machinery for the implementation of proposals that may be adopted, including a small permanent secretariat in New Delhi, or Delhi, or Manila, to serve as a clearing house of information essential to concerted action by our various Governments and a method of consultation on matters of common interest between the permanent representatives of our states to the United Nations. It is to be hoped that out of such methods of co-operation in nuclear form, we shall be able to evolve a potent permanent organization of Asian States, functioning as a regional body along side other associations of its kind, as contemplated by Article 52 of the Charter.148

The organization which Romulo was contemplating was to be anti-communist and pro-democratic. He made this point clear when he addressed the Conference:

We are met here in order that, by methods of self help, we may strengthen the forces of democracy and prevent other ideologies from capturing the faith of Asia by default.149

149. Ibid.
At the end of its proceedings, the Conference adopted three resolutions. The first two resolutions pertained to the Indonesian problem. The third resolution dealt with the suggestion made by the Philippines. The resolution stated:

The Conference expresses the opinion that participating Governments should consult among themselves in order to explore ways and means of establishing suitable machinery, having regard to the areas concerned, for promoting consultation and co-operation within the framework of the United Nations. 150

The outcome was naturally disappointing to the Philippines. Instead of establishing an anti-communist Asian organization the Conference diluted Romulo's suggestion and asked the participating countries to explore ways and means of establishing machinery for the promotion of consultation and co-operation. The Philippines was extremely disillusioned and its delegate said that their government "would have hesitated to come to this Conference if they had thought it was not going to lead to future co-operation on all matters." 151

150. For the text of resolutions adopted by the Conference on Indonesia see Jansen, n. 57, pp. 409-11
151. Ibid., p. 93
The Philippines, however, continued its efforts for the establishment of a permanent organization of Asian states. The convening of the Baquio Conference on 26 May 1950 by Quirino, the President of the Philippines, was a major step in that direction. Manila was very keen to establish a collective security organization in Southeast Asia on the model of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (N.A.T.O.). Manila was disappointed with the lukewarm response from the U.S. The growing communist strength in several Asian countries, however, convinced Manila that a security organization should be immediately set up. The Baquio Conference was convened to pursue this goal primarily. The Conference was a follow-up action to the Conference on Indonesia which envisaged the establishment of a suitable machinery "for promoting consultation and co-operation within the framework of the United Nations". Romulo, who was entrusted by President Quirino with the task of organizing a Union of Asian nations, while giving a detailed account of the proposed Conference said that the

152. Commenting on the attitude of the U.S. to the proposal of the Philippines for a Pacific Union Romulo stated: "I went from door to door in Washington in the attempt to find help in the movement to unite Asia, I was cold shouldered. No one in Washington seemed to see any importance then in such a meeting of minds in Asia. Several American leaders said, 'It's impractical. It can't be done'." Romulo, n.144, p.103. See also Kaul, n.144, pp.50-51

153. Jansen, n.57, p.411
principal objective of the Conference was to create a Pacific Union for promoting co-operation among the countries of Southeast Asia in economic, political and cultural fields. By promoting higher standards among Asians, Romulo observed, that co-operation would form a strong defence against totalitarian subversion.

Realizing that the proposed Union would carry little weight without India’s participation, the Filipino leaders made extra efforts to secure India’s support. Romulo said: “I want India to realize that the proposed Pacific Union is only a continuation of the East Asia Conference and nothing more.” Explaining the non-military character of the Union, he declared that there was no question of a military pact or of siding with one bloc against another, since the Union would be formed within the framework of the U.N. for the common interest of Southeast Asian countries. He ruled out the possibility of any “military commitments” by the representatives of the Pacific Powers in Baguio.

M.M. Farol, the Consul-General of the Philippines in India,

154. The Hindu, 4 September 1949
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid.
clarifying this point, further stated that the Conference would not involve any military entanglement as its aim was not to form a military alliance. In a bid to secure India's approval the Philippines even offered the leadership of the proposed Union to India. Romulo declared that the Pacific Union would undoubtedly function under India's leadership for India was the strongest and the most enlightened nation in Asia.

The Filipino effort to secure India's support was in vain; from the very beginning India took a negative attitude. Nehru told the San Francisco Press Club on 2 November 1949, that India did not intend joining the preliminary Conference proposed by the Philippines to form a non-communist Southeast Asia pact. Relying to a question on India's attitude to the formation of Pacific Union proposed by the Philippines, Nehru told the Constituent Assembly: "Government have (sic) seen the report referred to. They are not aware of any Conference for a proposed Southeast Asian Union, nor do they consider the formation of any such Union feasible in present circumstances". He disapproved the very idea.

158. Ibid., 25 May 1950
159. Ibid., 4 September 1949
160. Ibid., 4 November 1949
161. Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) Debates pt.1, vol.4, 5 December 1949, p.24a
of the Conference and said that there was no necessity for any kind of Asian conference "because the governments normally consulted with each other through their 162 Ambassadors". Actual reasons for India's indifference were the differing perceptions between New Delhi and Manila on major issues. India believed that joining any bloc would entail discarding the policy of non-alignment. According to New Delhi development programmes relating to economic and cultural spheres were being executed by the U.N. agencies like E.C.A.F.E., U.N.E.S.C.O. and Colombo Plan and it was not desirable to duplicate their efforts. India was joined by Indonesia which also opposed the Filipino move on the ground that its "independent foreign policy" was against the establishment of any third force in the cold war between the two power blocs. Indonesia went a step further to consider the Baguio as Philippines' "bid for Asian leadership". Ultimately the Philippines had to make the Baguio meeting a cultural conference in order to secure Indian and Indonesian participation.

162. India Record, 2 June 1950
163. Agung, n.69, p.195
164. Ibid., p.196
The Baguio Conference attended by India, Thailand, Ceylon, Australia, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines began its proceedings on 26 May 1950. In a resolution, unanimously adopted at the end of the five-day session, the Conference agreed to promote closer co-operation among the participants for the improvement of the living conditions of their people through diplomatic channels and to seek "joint action" in the U.N.

The Baguio Conference did not achieve anything new, as the machinery it provided for future co-operation, was already envisaged by the Conference on Indonesia in New Delhi in January 1949. For the Philippines, the outcome of the Conference was disappointing as its plan for Pacific Union did not materialise. From the Indian point of view the outcome of the Conference was a great success. India did not believe in military methods to solve world problems. Kamalnath Munshi, the Indian delegate, made India's stand clear in the Conference when he bluntly said: "Any alliance, political or military, was utterly foreign to our conception of how we can bring about peace in the world". India, on the

165. The Hindu, 31 May 1950

other hand, held the view that since communism was the outcome of poverty, the major emphasis should be raising the standards of living, and providing the basic necessities of life to the people. The discussions and the resolutions passed at the end of the Conference, clearly proved that India's point of view was generally appreciated by the delegates.

The divergent approach to the problem of Asian security had its effect on the general relations between the two countries. The two countries remained contented with the maintenance of formal relations. They established diplomatic relations at legation level from 1 December 1951. The Treaty of Friendship which was signed on 11 July 1952, came into operation only on 29 April 1954 when the instruments of ratification were exchanged in Manila. When the Government of the Philippines passed the Retail Trade Nationalization Bill, as a result of which 400 Indians were affected, New Delhi took up the matter with the Government of the Philippines through its Minister in Manila. While agreeing to revise the Bill, the Philippines asked the Indian Minister in Manila to


suggest amendments concerning the interests of Indian nationals."

The relations between the two countries suffered a setback with the establishment of S.E.A.T.O. on 8 September 1954. In the creation of S.E.A.T.O. India saw an American attempt to extend cold war right up to the borders of India. Hence India took great pains to thwart it at the time of its very inception itself. After its formation Nehru condemned the Asian countries who aligned themselves with the U.S. To quote Nehru: It is an intolerable thought ... that the great countries of Asia and Africa should come out of bondage into freedom only to degrade themselves or humiliate themselves in this way". India assailed S.E.A.T.O. because it diminished "the climate of peace" and it was a plan for perpetuating colonialism and suppressing the national liberation movements in Southeast Asia. The Philippines, on the contrary, welcomed S.E.A.T.O. The Philippines not only became a member but also hosted the Conference in Manila where S.E.A.T.O. was born. Justifying the Philippines' stand in the face of severe criticism of non-aligned countries Romulo said that the


171. Ibid., pp. 69-69
Manila Pact was intended to promote the security of Southeast Asia: "It was intended to halt the building up of tension in Southeast Asia resulting from the communist moves in Indo-Chinese states". Romulo further said:

Far from destroying the so-called climate of peace following the Indo-China settlement, the Manila Pact makes it doubly certain that the signatories shall not countenance any fresh outbreaks or renewal of communist aggression in the region.173

with such differing perceptions on peace and security of Southeast Asia the India – Philippines relations could never develop to any great extent.

INDIA AND THAILAND:

India also maintained formal relations with Thailand during this period. One facet of Indo-Thai relations pertained to the Indian minority in Thailand who numbered 30,000 during 1949-50. B.V. Keskar,


173. Romulo, n. 172, p. 90

Deputy Minister of External Affairs told Parliament in February 1950 that only about 25 Indians in Thailand had elected in favour of citizenship of Thailand. The living conditions of Indian settlers in Thailand were fairly good and the Thai government also was very considerate to them. The Government of Thailand passed Alien Registration Act in 1950, as a result of which Indians residing in Thailand became wary of their future. The Government of India took up the matter with the Thai authorities through the Indian Minister in Bangkok. The Thai government assured India that the Act would be leniently applied to those Indians, who were brought forcibly to Thailand by the Japanese during the war. Bangkok also agreed to issue free entry visas to Indians in Thailand visiting India for short durations.

Economic relations between India and Thailand were satisfactory. Being a rice deficit country, India imported large quantities of rice from Thailand. India

175. India, Parliamentary Debates pt.1, vol.1; 27 February 1950, p.500


177. Ibid., p.16
imported rice from Thailand to the value of Rs.24,343,777 during April-October 1948, of Rs.58,488,949 during April-October 1949, of Rs.74,000,000 during 1950-51 and of Rs.111,800,000 during 1951-1952. In addition to rice purchases, India also received Thai rice in the form of donation. In 1953, the U.N.I.C.E.F. donated 953 tons of Thai rice valued at $114,360 to be distributed amongst displaced persons.

At the governmental level, India and Thailand maintained correct relations. Thailand was one of the countries with which India established diplomatic relations immediately after the attainment of independence. The Indian legation in Bangkok was raised to an Embassy in 1951. Pending a new treaty of friendship both governments agreed in 1950 to continue the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of Friendship of 1937 which governed Indo-Thai relations till then. In the absence of a bilateral agreement, a temporary authorization was given to an Indian company, to operate an air-service to Bangkok and

179. India, Parliamentary Debates, vol.3 & 4, 12 August 1953, col. 513
180. The Hindu, 17 August 1949
Thailand amicably settled the war damage claims of certain Indians by paying £101,326 to India. Invited by the Government of Thailand, an Indian Air Goodwill Mission visited Thailand in June 1951. A Thai Air Goodwill Mission, headed by the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Air Force, returned the visit in November 1951. With a view to promoting commercial contacts, an Indian Trade Delegation visited Thailand in October 1950. In a bid to augmenting the quality of lac production in India, Nommun, Director of Indian Lac Research Institute, visited Thailand in June 1950. One of the officers of the Department of Science, Ministry of Industry, Thailand, visited India in August 1950 to study the lac market.

Gestures of friendship and goodwill were made by both the governments. Bhagwat Dayal Indian Minister to

185. Ibid.
Thailand, presented a life-size portrait of Mahatma Gandhi on 17 September 1951. Demonstrating the veneration with which the Mahatma was held in Thailand, the Thai government accepted the present and placed the portrait in the National Library of Thailand. The Government of India also decided to utilise the money which is inherited from the Indian Independence League for sending an Indian scholar to Thailand to deliver lectures on cultural subjects relating to Indo-Thai relations. Under this scheme Dr. Ramachandra visited Thailand in 1953.

India and Thailand, however, differed sharply in their approach to various international issues. If India advocated and practised the policy of non-alignment, Thailand aligned itself with the western bloc of powers, by concluding Mutual Defence Treaty with the U.S. in 1950. When Nehru called the Asian Conference to discuss the grave situation created by the Dutch police action against the Republic of Indonesia, Thailand initially was reluctant to attend the Conference for fear of offending...

189. *India Record*, 18 October 1952

the Western Powers. Encouraged by Australian participation, it changed its decision and sent an observer to the Conference. Commenting on the response of Thailand to India's invitation to the Conference on Indonesia, and its effect on Indo-Thai relations, Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff observed:

"This belated and half-hearted response could not but have had the effect of offending India ...."

Thailand felt that the military and political development in Indo-China, directly threatened its peace and security and, therefore, took the matter to the U.N. Security Council on 29 May 1954. Bangkok urged the Council to send a peace observation Commission to Thailand to make an on-the-spot study. By taking the Indo-China issue to the U.N., Thailand was only preparing the ground for the U.S. intervention in Indo-China. This was the time when India was vigorously working for the elimination of big power involvement in Indo-China. Criticizing Thailand, India said that Bangkok's move had been deliberately timed to "undo the good work done at Geneva". A situation, thus,


193. Thompson and Adloff, n.21, p.120
developed, which demonstrated clearly the divergence in the pursuit of their foreign policies between the two countries. The gulf widened further, when they took opposite stands on yet another thorny problem - the formation of S.E.A.T.O. India opposed the Treaty before and after its conclusion. Nehru declared in Parliament that S.E.A.T.O. "has little contribution to make" and "it has definitely added to the tensions and fears of the situation". On the contrary, Thailand which was exposed to the "danger of communist expansion" and "has long been interested in a peace or security arrangement for Southeast Asia", extended unstinted and enthusiastic support to the U.S. in forming the defensive alliance and also became an active participant after its formation. Thailand hailed the Treaty "as an instrument of peace". The Indo-Thai relations, therefore, like the India-Philippines, relations could not blossom further.

194. Nehru, n.271, p.88

195. GAOR, session 9, plen.mtg. 481, 28 September 1954, p.101

196. Ibid.