COMRADES IN STRUGGLE – INDIA AND INDONESIAN REVOLUTION

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Mr. President, Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot find adequate words to express my deep sense of appreciation and profound thanks to the Executive Committee of the Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies for the honour they have conferred by requesting me to preside over the Southeast Asia Section of this Conference. I am engaged in teaching and research for more than four decades and I consider this gesture as a recognition of my academic contribution for the promotion of Southeast Asian Studies in our country.

A number of scholarly works have appeared in recent years dealing with the emergence of Indonesian nationalism and the Indonesian struggle for freedom against Dutch colonialism (1). While the Indonesian nationalist triumvirate- Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir- has repeatedly acknowledged India's seminal contributions to the cause of Indonesian independence, the Western writers have generally shown a marked tendency to downgrade India's role. Except for incidental references to Nehru's plan to visit the Indonesian Republic and the New Delhi Conference on Indonesia, even the oft-quoted and widely acclaimed book on Indonesian nationalist movement, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia,* by Professor GM Kahin does not give any credit to India's mobilization of world opinion on behalf of Indonesian nationalists. It is all the more saddening because Prof. Kahin was present in Jogjakarta during the most critical phase of Indonesian Revolution and was an eye witness to the tumultuous developments in that country. Prof. Anderson's otherwise excellent account of *Java in the Time of Revolution* also suffers from the same drawback.

It must be stated at the outset that the nationalist movement in Indonesia was essentially an Indonesian response to foreign domination; it developed its own nuances and methods of struggle depending on the ideological orientation of the leadership, the policies and programmes of the Dutch colonial authorities and the compulsion of events. At the same time, as the largest imperialist possession in Asia, which was waging a heroic struggle in a non-violent manner against the British imperialists, the Indian nationalist movement inspired the nationalists in other Asian countries. As Sukarno, the father of the Indonesian nation, put it:

> India and Gandhi have frequently inspired me and our struggle for freedom and in those lonely years when I had been exiled from my own people or confined to a death prison cell only because I sought freedom for my people, it was my strong belief in God and the inspiring spirit of India that raised my hopes and my own faith in our cause (2).

In the same vein, the Burmese nationalist leader, U Nu, acknowledged his indebtedness to the Indian nationalist leaders and called Mahatma Gandhi his political *Guru.* U Nu said, " Though I have met the Mahatma only once, I have always regarded him as my *Guru"* (3).

Spread of Indian Cultural Influences in Indonesia

Indian interest in Indonesia was a natural development, for the archipelago had always evoked fond and pleasant memories in Indian minds. Describing the spread of Indian cultural influences in Indonesia, Jawaharlal Nehru has written in *Discovery of India:* "Just as Hellenism spread from Greece to the countries of the Mediterranean and in Western Asia, India's cultural influences spread to many countries and left its powerful impress on them" (4). Indianised kingdoms like Sri Vijaya, Mataram, Sailendra, Singosari and Majapahit; the familiar Indian words in *Bahasa Indonesia*; architectural monuments like Borobudur and Lara Djonggrang; literary masterpieces like Amaramala, Arjuna Vivaha and Bharata Yudhha; the *Wajang Kulit,* based on Ramayana and Mahabharata themes; the living Indian traditions in the island of Bali – all these are a testimony to the courage and zeal of Indian princes, poets, priests, merchants and artisans and the ingratiating and assimilable qualities of the people of Indonesia (5). To provide one vivid illustration, in addition to variety of Ramayana tellings in different parts of the archipelago, the great Indian epic has influenced literature, performing arts and moral and political philosophy. As Malini Saran and Vinod Khanna have highlighted:

> These range from the millennium-old sculptural masterpieces in the temples of *Lara Jonggrang* (Prambanan) to the spectacular enactment today in an open air amphitheatre with the same temples illuminated in the background; from the poetic rendition of the late nineteenth century Old Javanese *Ramayana Kakawin* to the allegorical use of Ramayana themes in the overthrow of President Suharto (6).

The Indonesian nationalist leaders have frequently made appreciative references to the fruitful cultural interactions their country had with India in the past. As President Sukarno wrote in a special article in *The Hindu:*

> In the veins of every one of my people flows the blood of the Indian ancestors and the culture that we possess is steeped through and through with Indian influences. Two thousand years ago, people from your country came to *Jawadvipa* and *Suvarnadvipa* in the spirit of brotherly love. They gave the initiative to found powerful kingdoms such as those of Sri Vijaya, Mataram and Majapahit. We learnt then to worship the very Gods that you now worship still and we fashioned a culture that even today is largely identical with your own. Later, we turned towards Islam;

but that religion too was brought to us by people coming from both sides of the Indus (7).

The spread of Indian cultural influences, leading to the cultural enrichment of Southeast Asian countries, constitutes a glorious chapter in Indian and Southeast Asian history alike. The famous lines of Rabindranath Tagore, who visited Indonesia in 1927, comes to my mind:

In the dim distant unrecorded age
we had met, thou and I
when my speech became tangled in thine
and my life in thy life...

From the heavens spoke to me two mighty voices
the one that sung of Rama's glory of sorrow
and the other of Arjuna's triumphant arm
urging me to bear along with the waves
this epic lines to the eastern islands;
and the heart of my land murmured to me its hope
that it might build its nest of love
in a far away land of its dream (8).

As mentioned earlier, Sukarno used to make frequent references to Indonesia's cultural indebtedness to India. In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on August 19, 1946, following the second anniversary of the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic, Sukarno wrote as follows:

Your country and your people are linked to us by ties of blood and culture which date back to the very beginning of history. The word "India" must necessarily always be part of our life for it forms the first two syllables of the name we have chosen for our land and our race – it is the "Indo" in Indonesia. This Jogjakarta from which I write is – like Java, Sumatra and most other place names – an Indian word; my very name is eloquent testimony to the great extent to which we have fallen heir to the rich culture of your ancient land (9).

Jawaharlal Nehru undertook his first state visit to Indonesia in June 1950 and he came face to face with the abiding Indian influences in the archipelago. In a letter addressed to Chief Ministers after his return to India, Jawaharlal Nehru recalled his impressions as follows:

> In the distant past of India, there were innumerable contacts with the peoples of Southeast Asia, and among them probably the closest to us were the peoples of Indonesia. Even today there are numerous survivals of those old contacts. Indeed, if we have to see and admire some of the finest examples of Indian architecture, we have to go to Java (10).

Jawaharlal Nehru was enthralled with his visit to the island of Bali, which left behind "unforgettable impressions". I am tempted to quote Nehru's words, extracted from a letter written to the Chief Ministers, on July 2, 1950:

> The island of Bali is famous for many things and it lived up to its reputation. There is an enchantment about it, which affected me all the more because of its living culture, derived much from India in the distant past. I have never come across a more artistic people than the people of Bali. Artistry was at the tip of their fingers and in the toes of their feet. Every man and woman and child seems to be born with this sense of beauty and grace (11).

Not much work has been done by Indian scholars on the impact of culture in Indian foreign policy. In fact, as far as Southeast Asia is concerned, the fascinating encounter among Indian, Chinese and indigenous influences deserve deeper study and sharper focus. In this connection, I would like to submit the following thoughts for your consideration.

The spread of Chinese influences in Vietnam was an offshoot of political subjugation and consequent sinicisation of that country. On the contrary, Indian influences spread into the region in a peaceful way. Except for the solitary incident of Chola invasion in Southeast Asia, no other Indian ruler embarked on military expeditions. Secondly, Indian contacts with Southeast Asia did not snap in the thirteenth century. Recent researches in maritime history clearly prove that the Keralites, Tamils and Gujaratis had extensive contacts with Southeast Asia during the medieval period. In fact, in the Islamisation of Indonesia, the Muslims from Gujarat and Malabar, Tamil Nadu and Bengal played decisive roles (12). Thirdly, Indian historians must re-evaluate the concept of "Greater India". The concept was a product of Indian national movement and it gave Indians a sense of pride in their glorious history. At the same time, its leading protagonists, more often than not, adopted a patronizing tone and denied Southeast Asian cultures autonomy of their own. To cite one illustration, Prof. RC Majumdar has written:

> On the whole, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Indian cultural influence deeply penetrated the soul of diverse races in Asia over widely extended regions, and enabled them in many cases to emerge out of primitive barbarism (13).

Southeast Asian scholars are deeply sensitive and feel hurt because of this attitude of turning a "Nelson's eye" to the rich and virile indigenous cultural traits, which developed in different parts of Southeast Asia, even before contacts with India were established. Badr–ud-Din Tyabji, who was Indian Ambassador in Indonesia in the mid 1950's, has pointed out:

> Unfortunately many Indians ... would even go to the extent of teaching the Indonesians how to pronounce their own names and institutions in the correct classical Sanskrit manner. The Indonesians reacted badly to this crude form of cultural chauvinism (14).

Prof. Arun Das Gupta convincingly points out that the concept of Greater India in its older form

> is not very useful. This does not mean we have to reject the unquestionable evidence of tremendous Indian influence in Southeast Asia. I suggest that instead of looking at Southeast Asian culture as an extension of Indian culture, we should treat the Southeast Asian region as a confluence area (15).

This balanced historical approach alone will provide the basis for benign cultural interaction between India and Southeast Asian countries.

I am left with mixed feelings. When I think of the enormous efforts that have gone to the study of the cultural evolution of Southeast Asian societies, I am , at the same time, conscious of the fact that much more remains to be done. Is the glass half empty or half full! The Indian scholars, committed to Southeast Asian Studies, should ponder over what Prof. Van Leur wrote few years ago about Dutch historiography: "The writing of real history has yet to begin" (16).

Imperialist Phase

The fruitful and friendly relations were not only severed, but underwent a fundamental transformation during the period of European domination. Basing themselves in India, the British extended their control to Burma, the Straits Settlements and the Malay States. The British were keen to extend their sway to the East Indies also, but in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry for the control of the archipelago, the Dutch emerged victorious. For a short spell during the Napoleonic wars, the East Indies came under the control of the East India Company, but the territory was ceded back to the Dutch under the Paris Peace Settlement. Lord Curzon, the British Viceroy, has referred to India as the "determining influence of every considerable movement in British power to the east and south of the Mediterranean". In an address to the Guild Hall, London, Curzon explained India's contribution the expansion of the British Empire as follows:

> If you wanted to save your colony of Natal from being over run by a formidable enemy, you ask India for help and she gives it; if you want to rescue White Men's Legations from massacres at Peking, and the need is urgent, you request the Government of India to send an expedition and they dispatch it; if you are fighting the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, you can soon discover that Indian troops and Indian generals are best qualified for the task, and you ask the Government of India to send them; if you want to defend any of your extreme outposts or coaling stations of the empire, Aden, Mauritius, Singapore, Hong Kong, even Tien-Tsin, it is to the Indian Army your turn; if you want to build a railway to Uganda or in the Sudan, you apply for Indian labour... It is with Indian coolie labour that you exploit the plantations equally in Demerara and Natal; with Indian trained officers that you irrigate and dam the Nile; with Indian forest officers that you tap the resources of Central Africa and Siam; with Indian surveyors that you explore all the hidden places of the earth ... (17).

A few Indian immigrants went to Sumatra in the early 20th century to provide the much needed labour for the development of the rubber plantations. The Indian community in Indonesia today number about 50,000 and they live in perfect harmony with the Indonesians (18). They do not create misgivings and suspicions among the indigenous population as the numerically larger, economically powerful and culturally exclusive Chinese communities. The era of imperialism also led to new types of economic linkages between British India and Dutch East Indies. East Indies became an important source for the import of certain essential items like sugar, tea, petroleum and tin. India, in turn, exported large quantities of gunny bags, textiles and coal (19).

The domination by different colonial masters created a wide wall of separation and prevented co-operation between Indians and the peoples of Asia. Even then, in the 19th century, a few Indian intellectuals were sensitive to the common colonial experiences and the necessity to instill a pan-Asian consciousness among the Indians. Kesbah Chandra Sen, the great leader from Bengal, tried to impress upon his followers that India must be viewed as an integral part of the Asian world (20). These pan-Asian sentiments were carried forward by Swami Vivekananda who visited Japan and other Asian countries in 1893. Vivekananda highlighted the common points of Asian cultural heritage and tried to revive the age-old contacts between India and the neighbouring countries of Asia. (21). Attempts to forge closer cultural links received an impetus as a result of Tagore's visit to China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaya and Thailand in 1924, 1927 and 1929. Tagore was accompanied by two great intellectuals, Nandalal Bose and Kalidas Nag. In the course of his visit to Indonesia in 1927, Tagore met Sukarno, then a "comparatively unknown revolutionary youth" (22). Tagore, according to his biographer Krishna Kripalani, was "moved deeply, as much because of the natural beauty of the country and the charm of the people as on account of the joy of recognizing an ancient kinship in culture" (23). Contacts were established on a firm footing and students and teachers from Asian countries, including Indonesia, associated themselves with the academic programmes of Visvabharati to promote mutual understanding. It may be pointed that the popularization of *Batik*, an Indonesian handicraft, in India was due to the Javanese artists who came from Indonesia to Shantiniketan.

Genesis of Indonesian Nationalism

The Indonesian archipelago is a sprawling chain of more than three thousand islands stretching from the southern tip of the Nicobar islands to the shores of Australia. It was the lure of the fabled riches of the Indies, especially its well known spices, which brought the European merchants to these islands way back in the sixteenth century. In the bitter struggle for the control of the spice trade, the Dutch East India Company, with the complete backing of the government and its armed forces, began to control the external trade. In 1798, the Dutch East India Company collapsed and the Netherlands government assumed direct control. With the Indonesian society politically fragmented, the Dutch found it easy to extend their control throughout the archipelago. By 1910, the process was virtually complete. The Dutch imperialism in the East Indies must be seen as an integral part of the expansion of western imperialism, when large parts of the countries of Asia and Africa came under the domination of Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Spain and the United States. The contribution of East Indies to the prosperity of Holland was immeasurable. The Dutch Governor General van den Bosch wrote," It is certain that without the generous contributions of the Indies, the State would have been ruined and we would have been forced to submit ourselves to the mercy of the opposition" (24). The well known historian of the colonial period JS Furnivall quotes a colonial Minister, "Java poured forth riches upon riches on the homeland as if by a magician's wand" (25).

There were opposition to the Dutch rule from the very beginning, for example, during 1825-30, Prince Diponegoro resisted the Dutch rule by unleashing the Java War. But the Indonesian nationalism, as we know it, was a product of new imperialism and should be seen as an integral part of the anti-imperialist struggles going on in different parts of the world. It was not only aimed at national liberation, what is more, a sense of national identity emerged in the course of the struggle. To a large extent, this national consciousness was shaped and moulded by Sukarno.

The founding of the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) in 1927 marks an important milestone in the development of Indonesian nationalism. Under the dynamic leadership of Sukarno, the PNI united all the anti-imperialist forces under its banner and took an uncompromising stand on independence and rejected any form of co-operation with the Dutch. Sukarno, like Gandhi, was a product of evolution; many influences moulded his life and political philosophy. Of these the Indian influences had been one of the greatest. Born of a Javanese father and Balinese mother in 1901, the young Kusno imbibed the Hinduised Javanese culture through the world of *Wajang*. He listened and watched with awe and admiration the stories and performances of the *Wajang* heroes – Arjuna, Gatotkacha, Indra, Hanuman, Bima and a host of others, each with his own noble characteristics. In his childhood, as Bernard Dahm points out, it was with Bima that he tried to identify himself (26). The stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata provided abundant opportunities for the D*alang* to express the innermost political aspirations of the people in a language and manner easily understood by the people. Night after night, as the young Kusno watched the W*ajang*, the desire for independence slowly filled in his mind. More often than not, he considered himself as the D*alng* "shaping the events of this universe and expounding their inner meaning" (27). As a student, Sukarno was also introduced to tneosophy by his father and became familiar with the writings of Annie Besant, who later became the President of the Indian National Congress. Like Gandhiji, who experienced racial segregation in South Africa, Sukarno was made aware of the colonial caste system existing in the European elementary school in Surabaya. After frequent humiliations, he decided to fight it; he felt the pride and self-confidence of a free man and tried to instill the same feeling among his contemporaries. Self-help, self-reliance and self-confidence – these concepts became the bywords of his political philosophy.

Sukarno had his political apprenticeship in Tjokroaminoto's house where he met Islamic intellectuals, secular nationalists and Marxist ideologues. He realized that if there was no unity among them, the Dutch rule would indefinitely continue in Indonesia (28). His political programme was directed to the unity of all nationalist forces and in pin-pointing those elements of the struggle where unity could be accomplished. Like Gandhi, he believed in converting the nationalist movement into a mass movement. He passionately subscribed to mass politics and mass organizations. Though he was influenced by Marxist ideas, like Gandhi again, he felt that the Marxist concept of the proletariat had no relevance to Asian agrarian societies and developed his own concept of *Marhaenism.*

In order to unify the scattered anti-imperialists forces, Sukarno propounded a new and dynamic concept of nationalism. In the development of this nationalist philosophy, Sukarno was influenced by the writings of Renan, Wells, Marx, Engels, Sun Yat Sen and Gandhi. Like Gandhi, Sukarno condemned the exclusiveness and chauvinism of European nationalism and asserted that his nationalism was based on the love of all humanity. Quoting Gandhi, Sukarno said:

> My love of the homeland is a part of my love of all mankind. I am a patriot because I am a man and human being. No one is excluded (from my love) (29).

This feeling, Sukarno said, was the secret that had given Gandhi the power to unite the Muslims, Hindus, Parsis, Jains and the Sikhs (30). He quoted Chittaranjan Das to explain the characteristics of Western nationalism:

> European nationalism has an aggressive character, is a nationalism which is concerned with its own needs, a commercial nationalism that can lead to profit or loss but that in the end must perish or be destroyed (31).

Sukarno successfully used the slogan of nationalism to weld together the forces of Islam, secular nationalism and Marxism, which were hitherto working at cross purposes in Indonesia. He frequently cited the example of Indian national movement, to the "indissoluble union" between nationalist Gandhi and the Pan-Islamists, Maulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali – to drive home his point (32). Sukarno again quoted Gandhi to substantiate his two cardinal points of nationalism and internationalism in the famous *Pantjasila* speech before the Investigating Committee for the Preparation of Independence on June 1, 1945 (33).

It must also be pointed out that the Indonesian nationalist triumvirate viewed their struggle as an integral part of a wider Asian struggle for freedom from imperialist domination and the establishment of an egalitarian society. They have repeatedly stated that they admired and also derived great inspiration from India's struggle for freedom. As Sukarno put it:

> Just as we are your debtors in culture, so too are we your debtors in political faith. Since 1908, we have given no little attention to your aspirations and political movements. Dadabhoy Naoroji, Surendranath Bannerjee, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Aurobindo, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Dr. Ansari and Abul Kalam Azad are honoured names. And Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru are names to conjure with in Indonesia (34).

Summing up the profound influence of Indian nationalist movement on Indonesia, Khoo Kay Hock has mentioned:

> The Indian nationalist struggle was followed closely by a section of the Indonesian nationalists. The *Budi Utono,* for instance looked to India to obtain teachers in their educational programme. Its members regarded Tagore and Gandhi as great national leaders. The non-cooperation policy and passive resistance tactics of Gandhi were copied by *Partai Nasional Indonesia* and Partindo in the later stages when early confidence in Dutch good intentions had given way to militance and anti-Dutch sentiment (35).

INDIAN SOLIDARITY WITH INDONESIA – NATIONALIST PHASE

India's championing the cause of Indonesian independence was a logical corollary of the manner in which Indian national movement developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Indian National Congress, the main institutional expression of Indian nationalist aspirations, evinced keen interest in matters relating to foreign policy from its very inception (36). Though in the initial stages, it was confined to resolutions in the annual sessions of the Congress, it became more pronounced with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru playing a dominant role in nationalist politics. Gandhiji took a global view of the Indian nationalist movement. To quote Gandhiji's words:

> India is the key to the exploitation of the Asiatic and other non-European races on earth. She is held under bondage not merely for the sake of her own exploitation, but that of her neighbours, near and distant (37).

Gandhiji, therefore, urged on Indians that they had a duty not only to free India, but the world from colonial oppression. To quote Gandhiji again:

> My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation in which England is the greatest partner (38)

The Indian nationalist horizon widened and interest in international affairs became more intense with Jawaharlal Nehru becoming the "acknowledged spokesman" on foreign affairs (39). Through his speeches and writings, Nehru influenced the Indian National Congress to pay greater attention to international affairs. Nehru underlined the need for a reorientation of the Indian outlook on world affairs and was mainly instrumental in making the Indian National Congress take a clear-cut stand on issues relating to freedom from colonial domination, and the necessity to fight against fascism and Nazism. As his well-known biographer, Sarvepalli Gopal has written:

> Jawaharlal Nehru played a decisive role in the history of the twentieth century – as a leader of the Indian people, as a representative of the new mood of Asia, and as a spokesman of the international conscience (40).

A study of Indian nationalist view of world affairs before independence gives a clue to the understanding of the main elements of Indian foreign policy, more especially its active role in furtherance of Indonesian independence. The main element, undoubtedly had been the consistent support to the demand for independence of the colonial peoples. Equally important and allied with it had been the desire to keep India out of great power rivalr (41). In fact, in the first session of the Indian National Congress in 1885, a resolution was passed condemning the annexation of Upper Burma to the Indian Empire (42). In later years, the Indian National Congress repeatedly condemned the use of Indian soldiers and resources in wars across the Indian frontiers to serve British imperialist interests. Although the Indian National Congress supported the British Government during the First World War, hoping that such a move would hasten India's progress towards independence, it opposed the British during the Second World War in view of British reluctance to assure independence. The freedom of dependant peoples and the aversion to power politics of imperialist powers were the two main elements of Indian nationalist perception of world affairs.

Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels, 1927

The international perspective further crystallized with Indian participation in international conferences on the exploited and suppressed peoples. In February 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru attended the Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels as the representative of the Indian National Congress. This Congress was the first of its kind and was attended by 174 delegates from 31 countries. The Chief organiser was Willie Muenzenberg. The distinguished delegates, among others, included Henri Barbusse, George Lansbury, Ellen Wilkinson, Fenner Brockway, Harry Pollitt, Reginald Bridgman, Ernst Toller, Mohammad Hatta and Ho Chih Minh (43).

The Brussels Conference, as Jawaharlal Nehru has pointed out , was an "event of first class importance" and is "likely to have far reaching results" (44). In Brussels, for the first time, Nehru came into contact with three political streams, the European Pacifist movement, the Asian, Latin American and nascent African nationalist movements and

the Marxist movements "in all its innocence and apocalyptic expectancy of the imminent collapse of capitalism and dawn of socialist millennium" (45). One significant fallout was the recognition of the Indian National Congress by the progressive forces in the world as the "authentic voice of the Indian people" (46).

In a statement to the press on 9 February 1927, Nehru pointed out that there was "much in common" in the struggles of various "subject and oppressed peoples". Their opponents, Nehru said, "are often the same, although they sometimes appear in different guises and the means employed for their subjection are often similar". He appealed for "greater contacts" and "closer co-operation" among the nationalists fighting for freedom (47). In a moving speech to the Congress on 10 February 1927, Nehru attacked British imperialism for its exploitation and underlined the necessity to forge close links among Asian nationalists. Nehru pointed out that India was the key to the exploitation of Asia and that the freedom of India was an essential pre-requisite for the emancipation of mankind. To quote Nehru:

> It is important for you if we win freedom. Not only internal freedom, but freedom also to make contacts with our neighbours and other lands as we wish (48).

Nehru also expressed his shame at the use of Indian troops by the British imperialists to oppress the peoples of China, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Tibet, Burma and other countries (49).

Nehru was very impressed by the Indonesian delegation, which consisted of Hatta, Semaun, Nasir Pamuntjak and Subardjo. In his report to the All India Congress Committee, Nehru said:

> The Indonesians, chiefly from Java, were even more interesting. They were Muslims, but even their names are partly derived from Sanskrit. Their customs, they told us, were still largely Hindu in origin, and many of them bore a striking resemblance to the higher caste Hindus (50)

The contacts, which were established in Brussels, became very useful in later years in forging closer links with Asian neighbours, especially with Indonesians. The Congress of Oppressed Nationalities itself came under communist domination in later years and Nehru and Hatta were expelled from the League against Imperialism and National Independence as "national reformers". (51). A few years later, in an address to the Indian Council of World Affairs, while reminiscing about the contacts established in the Brussels Conference, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

> I remember when I was in Europe just twenty years ago, I attended a Conference in Brussels at which many Asian and African countries were represented ... I remained in touch with many of these people from Syria to Indo-China. We used to correspond sometimes and it might interest you to know that some of the friends that I met twenty years ago at that Conference are running the Indonesian Republic today; and those contacts have stood us well now, because apart from knowing each other distantly, personal relationships made me personally more interested in Indonesia and, to a small extent, made them more interested in India (52).

Jawaharlal Nehru's relations with Dr. Mohammad Hatta became more intimate when the latter became the Prime Minister of Indonesia. In fact, on his return from a state visit to Indonesia in 1950, in a letter of thanks sent to Mohammad Hatta, Nehru referred to him as "my oldest friend in Indonesia" and how his interest in Indonesian freedom "dates back to the time" when they met in Brussels in 1927 (53). The Indian interest in foreign affairs was further heightened when the Indian National Congress established a separate Foreign Department in May 1936 under the direction of Jawaharlal Nehru. The Foreign Department was the training ground for many Indian nationalist leaders like Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and Acharya Kripalani and was also the crucible in which many new ideas were tested and perfected. The Foreign Department can be rightly characterized as the precursor of the Ministry of External Affairs of independent India.

Under the Shadow of the Second World War

With the dark clouds of the second world war gathering over the horizon, the Indian National Congress was naturally concerned with the momentous changes taking place in Southeast Asia. The rapid victory of Japan and the collapse of the old imperialist forces, the mobilization of the Indian communities in the region under the Indian National Army and the rapid march of the Japanese army, overrunning Andaman and Nicobar islands and knocking at the doors of northeast India sent shock waves throughout the country. In December 1941, the Congress Working Committee expressed its deep sympathy with the peoples of Burma, Malaya and the East Indies in the trials and hardships they were facing as a result of conflict among imperialist powers (54). In August 1942, when the Quit India resolution was adopted, the Congress did not forget the Asian comrades and expressed its conviction that the "freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination" (55). How close the people of Indonesia were to Nehru's heart becomes evident if one reads through his speeches and writings during this period. *The Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* contains the "stray notes" scribbled by Jawaharlal Nehru as reference material for his speech in the Congress Working Committee meeting on 5 August 1942. The first country to figure in the notes was Indonesia, followed by Korea,

Ceylon and Nepal under the broad heading "zero hour of the world" (56). In the International Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations in 1945, Mrs Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit pointed out that the days of colonialism were over and called for the independence of India, Burma, Indo-China and the East Indies. On 4 May 1945, Mrs Pandit submitted a memorandum in the San Francisco Conference demanding independence for India and other Asian countries. The Memorandum stated:

> I speak, in particular, for Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and Dutch East Indies, all bound to my own country by the closest ties of historical and cultural kinship and which cherish aspirations to national freedom like our own. Liberation from Japan should mean for them liberation from alien imperialism so far as this Conference is concerned (57).

In 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru visited Malaya and Singapore to extend his sympathy and support to the people of Indian origin who suffered humiliation and untold suffering during the second world war. He assured the people that when India became independent, it will be able to "contribute its share to unite Asia and preserve peace in the world" (58). In a speech in Singapore on 18 March 1946, Nehru highlighted:

> The independence India wants is not merely for herself. You cannot have the world half-free and half-slave. If India aspires for freedom, it is for a free world, and when India is free, every ounce of its energy shall be used for the freedom of all subject countries. This is true of Indonesia, Malaya or any other country in the world (59).

In a special article written for the *New York Times Magazine* dated 3 March 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru made a special mention of the Indonesian struggle for freedom. To quote from the article:

> In Indonesia we have been witnessing a clear case of shattered imperialism trying to hold on with the help of another imperialist power. Here is a country well capable of looking after herself, with a functioning Government which has obviously the support of the mass of the people, where there would certainly be peace and security if outsiders did not intervene (60).

Indonesia Proclaims Independence

The Japanese Occupation hastened the independence of Indonesia. The harsh military rule, rising inflation, black market, rampant corruption and introduction of forced labour brought in its train untold misery and suffering. The official policy of Japan to promote the slogan of Asia for the Asians was fully exploited by the Indonesian nationalists to promote their objectives. After considerable deliberations, the nationalists decided to adopt a dual policy, one section will ostensibly co-operate with Japan while the other would carry on a resistance movement. Sukarno and Hatta officially sided with the Japanese, while the under ground resistance movement was masterminded by Sutan Sjahrir, with the co-operation Amir Sjarifuddin and Djipto Mangunkusumo. In March 1943, Japan established the *Pusat Tenaga Rakyat* or Putera, which brought various groups of nationalists together. In order to train a local army corps for the "defence of the fatherland" the *Sukarela Tentera Pembela Yanah Air or* PETA came into existence. The Islamic groups – Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiah and *Partai Sarekat Islam* – came together and formed the *Masjumi.* The Indonesians rallied together under the banner of *Angkatan Muda* (youth organization). Contrary to Japanese expectations, the nationalist organizations which they sponsored turned out to be focal points of Indonesian nationalism.

When the military fortunes of Japan began to take a turn for the worse, they became desperate to further mobilize Indonesian support and made a promise for independence. A Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence was formed in January 1944. On 8 August 1945 Japan announced that independence would be granted on August 24, 1945. However, sections of radical Indonesian nationalists began to pressurize Sukarno to proclaim the independence of Indonesia without waiting for official Japanese proclamation. The news came that Japan might surrender at any time. And if the surrender took place before August 24, Indonesia would be cheated of her independence. On August 15 it was confirmed that Japan had surrendered. After some hesitation, Sukarno and Hatta agreed with the Indonesian radical nationalists and proclaimed the independence of Indonesia over radio on August 17, 1945. The Independence Preparatory Committee assembled on August 18 and elected Sukarno as the President and Muhammad Hatta as the Vice President of the Republic. Sutan Sjahrir became the Prime Minister and concurrently the Foreign Minister on 14 November 1945. Sukarno and Hatta retained their offices, but relinquished executive authority. The Indonesian Revolution had begun.

From its very inception, the infant Republic had to face the Dutch challenge. Holland was keen to restore its rule as early as possible over the archipelago. In order to defeat the Dutch plans, the Indonesian nationalists were keen to get international recognition for the Republic, which alone could prevent the restoration of Dutch colonial power. Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir were convinced that international intervention on the side of the Indonesian Republic was the need of the hour. As Michael Leifer has rightly pointed out securing "international recognition in order to deny the restoration of colonial power" (61) was the main objective of the foreign policy of Indonesian Republic. Armed

resistance was inevitable, but what was more important, was the mobilization of international solidarity. Here the Indian role became the most important factor in furtherance of Indonesian independence.

The complex and fascinating details of the final years of Indonesian revolution – negotiations leading to various agreements with Hague – the Linggadjati Agreement and the Renville Truce, the recalcitrant Dutch attitude and its military response, the role of the United Nations and the abortive communist revolt for power – need not detain us, for they have been analysed in great detail by several scholars. From an Indian point of view, what should be of interest and relevance is how New Delhi responded to the situation and played a catalytic role in furtherance of the Indonesian nationalist objective. And as stated earlier, this aspect of the Indonesian revolution has not received the attention that it deserves from the academic fraternity specializing in Southeast Asian Studies.

Indian Support to Indonesian Proclamation of Independence

The momentous developments in Indonesia, following the proclamation of the Republic, fired the imagination of the Indian leaders, who spontaneously expressed their solidarity with the Indonesian nationalists. President Sukarno got in touch with the Indian leaders and invited Jawaharlal Nehru to visit Indonesian Republic for an on the spot study of the situation (62). On 15 October 1945, Nehru not only welcomed the birth of the Indonesian Republic, but also urged Indians to express their solidarity with the Republic till the Indonesian struggle was brought to a successful end (63). On 23 October 1945, Nehru demanded that the British Government in India should recognize Sukarno's government immediately. Nehru also exhorted the dock workers not to load any war materials meant for the suppression of the Indonesian Republic. In this connection, he welcomed the initiative taken by the Chinese and Australian trade unions. In a letter addressed to Sardar Patel on 16 October 1945, Nehru gave expression to what sort of role India should play in this regard:

> The Indonesian struggle is becoming more intense and I feel that we ought to give it greater prominence. It would be a good thing if there were meetings etc. But the most dramatic thing would be for our dock workers and sea men to refuse to load war materials for Java, as the Australians did (64).

Fired by intense nationalism, even during the second world war the Indonesian workers employed in Dutch ships, while on duty in India, had boycotted their duties. They were not only retrenched by their employers, the Dutch management wanted to take penal action against them. The Indonesian Students Committee in India took up their cause. In a memorandum submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru, the Committee pointed out that these sea men "were bitter against the Dutch" because they were forcibly recruited into the Dutch merchant Navy "without their consent". What is more, they were feeling that they "were not fighting for their country". Hence they refused to man the ships. Some of them got in touch with the Muslim League and Mohammad Ali Jinnah, but did not receive any help from them (65). Nehru immediately took up their cause. In a letter to

Yusuf Meheralli, then Mayor of Bombay, Nehru pointed out that the Indonesians cannot "get any help either from the Dutch Consular authorities or from the local police". Nehru wanted Meheralli to immediately attend to their problems relating to food and accommodation (66). Meherally sorted out their problems relating to day to day living. After the formation of the Interim Government, the Provisional Government got in touch with the Republican authorities. The two sides were determined not to leave the stranded sea men to the mercy of Dutch authorities. They were keen to repatriate them back to Indonesia in a neutral ship. Finally the Indonesians left the shores of Madras in the middle of June 1946 in a British ship *Dunera* (67).

New Delhi condemns the Deployment of Indian Soldiers in Indonesia

The dominant thinking in the post-second world war period was that the days of colonialism were over and the freedom of the former colonies would usher in a new era in international politics. The British decision to grant independence to India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon and the upsurge of nationalist feelings in many African countries were indications that a new world of independent nations would soon dominate the international scene. But the developments in Indonesia cast a long shadow of despair over this general feeling of optimism. The determination of the Dutch to restore their colonial rule, with the connivance and abetment of the Western world, had its inevitable fallout on the domestic politics. In the early months of the revolution, a discerning student can identify two approaches to the question of decolonization. The first view subscribed to the necessity and efficacy of the diplomatic approach, a point of view advocated by the senior leaders, more especially the nationalist triumvirate. If the Republic could consolidate its power and project an image of reasonableness, it can smoothen the process of transfer of power. The opposite view, the *Pemuda* view, which subscribed to P*erdjuangan* (struggle), did not have any faith in the *bonafides* of the Dutch government. What is more, they felt that the Dutch should be forced to make concessions and these concessions could be extracted only through long and protracted struggles. The *Pemuda* view was forcibly articulated by Tan Malaka and his revolutionary followers. In the final analysis, it was the diplomatic approach which succeeded, but at the same time, it must be highlighted that the hands of the Indonesian leaders were strengthened by the many acts of heroism and bravery displayed by the revolutionaries in Surabaya, Bandung and other places.

The first formidable challenge which faced the Indian nationalists arose out of the British decision to deploy Indian soldiers in Indonesia to effectively bring about the surrender of Japan and restore law and order. In that process unfortunately the Indian forces also clashed with the Indonesian nationalists in Surabaya, Bandung, Semerang, Ambarawa and other places. These tragic incidents were brought to the notice of Jawaharlal Nehru by Mohammad Hatta in a letter written on December 1, 1945. According to Hatta:

> I do not know what will be the end of all this British provocative action. One thing is certain, it will not bring peace and order in Indonesia for which the British is supposed to be in Indonesia. Certainly, the British will finally break down the Indonesian armed resistance, but they cannot suppress the spirit of independence (68).

The Indian nationalists were convinced that the use of Indian troops was intended to restore Dutch rule in Indonesia. Naturally, the British decision aroused Indian indignation. Even before the dispatch of the Indian troops to Indonesia, the Indian National Congress made its stand very clear. In a resolution passed in September 1945, the Congress declared:

> In particular, the AICC would take strong objection to the use of Indian troops in maintaining imperialist domination over any part of these countries of Southeast Asia or Western Asia (69).

The British Government did not pay any heed to Indian feelings and decided to collaborate with Dutch imperialists. Nehru became indignant at British action and said, "it was a matter of shame that the British empire should be using all its might to establish a Dutch empire in Indonesia". He warned the imperialist powers:

> The movement of the people of Indonesia for freedom cannot be suppressed by force. The fire of freedom which has been lit in Asia will not extinguish till it has consumed the whole imperialist machinery (70).

All sections of Indian society joined in condemning the use of Indian troops in Indonesia. In Lucknow, Bombay, Nagpur, Poona, New Delhi, Kanpur and Karachi "Southeast Asia day" was observed on 28 October 1945, demanding the immediate withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia and protesting against the re-imposition of colonial rule (71). The sustained campaign undertaken by the Indian National Congress, ably supported by trade unions, students unions and women's organizations had its impact on the Indian soldiers in Indonesia. These brave men did not want to be utilised for suppressing the freedom movement in another country. The consequence was nearly 700 Indian soldiers refused to clash with the Indonesian nationalists and deserted the British Indian army (72). Some of them were captured by the allied forces and kept in detention in Sumatra under the most unhygienic conditions. Few others joined hands with the gallant Indonesian soldiers and made their contribution to the Indonesian struggle for freedom.

In order to awaken the conscience of the world, the Republican leaders, as mentioned earlier, invited Jawaharlal Nehru to visit Indonesia to form an "unbiased opinion of how matters stand there" (73). Unfortunately Nehru was not permitted by the British to go to Indonesia. In a resolution passed in December 1945, the All India Congress Committee noted

> with resentment that the Government of India has not granted necessary facilities to enable Jawaharlal Nehru to proceed to Java in response to Dr. Sukarno's invitation (74).

The use of Indian troops in Indonesia figured in the first meeting of the Indian Legislative Assembly on 21 January 1946. Prof. Ranga criticised the British Government for "its attempt to reinstate the hated and unwanted imperialists" in Indonesia and Indo-China. He said it was an unholy thing to use the Indian troops to keep these peoples in "continued enslavement" (75). Diwan Chamanlal described the use of Indian troops to suppress Southeast Asian nationalist movements as a "shameful thing" (76). Sarat Cahndra Bose asked the British Government to withdraw the British troops from Indonesia and Indo-China immediately, because India did not want "to dip her hands" in "neighbour's blood" (77).

Indian journalists in Indonesia like TG Narayanan of *The Hindu* and PRS Mani of the *Free Press of India News Agency* played a notable role in educating public opinion by their excellent dispatches. It may also be mentioned that Jawaharlal Nehru utilised these two outstanding journalists as sounding boards for Indian foreign policy towards Indonesia. Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir were aware of the importance of international media and used these channels effectively to strengthen the legitimacy of the Indonesian Republic and expose the machinations and evil designs of Dutch imperialism.

In a special article contributed to *The Hindu,* Sukarno wrote:

> In the wide world around us, there are countless friends and well wishers who are aiding us with their moral support and active help. Among you, our brothers and comrades in India, there are hosts of sympathizers and helpers. Your workers have struck work as a gesture of solidarity. Your press is supporting our cause. Your great leader Nehru's passionate utterances on behalf of our freedom have been a source of immense strength to us in our hour of trial and tribulation. How shall I ever be able to convey to you the deep stirring of emotion that wells up in every one of us when we think of the wonderful manner in which you have rallied to our cause. Deep down his heart every Indonesian

> utters a silent prayer "God bless you, our brothers and friends in India" (78).

Policy of the Interim Government

So long as India remained under British colonial domination, the Indian nationalists could not do much beyond expressing solidarity with nationalists of other Asian countries. However, with the assumption of power of the Interim National Government on 2 September 1946, the capacity of the Indian leaders to extend assistance to the freedom fighters of other Asian countries increased. In his first broadcast to the nation, as Vice President of the Interim Government, Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized the need to develop closer relations among Asian countries:

> We are of Asia and the peoples of Asia are nearer and closer to us than others. India is so situated that she is the pivot of Western, Southern and Southeast Asia. In the past her culture flowed to all these countries and they came to her in many ways. These contacts are being renewed and the future is bound to see a closer union between India and Southeast Asia on one side and Afghanistan, Iran and the Arab world on the other. To the furtherance of that close association of free countries, we must devote ourselves (79).

Nehru also reiterated that India would not spare any efforts to rid Asia of colonialism. In his first press conference, after assuming power in the Interim Government, Nehru said:

> India will watch with close interest the development of events in Palestine, Iran, Indonesia, China, Siam and Indo-China as well as foreign possessions in India itself. with every sympathy with the aspirations of the people of other lands for the attainment of internal peace, freedom where they lack it, and their place in the community of nations (80).

The first foreign policy decision of the Interim Government pertained to Indonesia. It decided to call back the Indian troops sent there to ensure the surrender of Japan. As mentioned earlier, these troops unfortunately clashed with the Republican army in few places. In the first press conference as Minister-in-Charge of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, Nehru declared the kernel of Indian foreign policy would be the end of colonialism all over Asia. Nehru said that, in practice, the Interim Government recognized the Indonesian Republic. "We have one hundred per cent sympathy for them. We want them to win through and establish their freedom and we want to help them and support them in every way, (81).

In his broadcast as the Vice President of the Interim Government on 7 September 1946, Nehru underlined the necessity to forge close friendship and association among Asian countries. He made a special mention of the Indonesian struggle for independence and said, "India has followed with anxious interest the struggle of the Indonesians for freedom and to them we send our good wishes" (82).

The Indonesians were very happy with the gestures of the Interim Government. On 19 August 1946, two days after the first anniversary celebrations of the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic, Sukarno addressed a personal letter to Jawaharlal Nehru. After describing the "ties of blood and culture" between the two countries "since the very beginning of history", Sukarno wrote:

> Your personal help...the kind word of encouragement you have repeatedly sent us and the way in which you have made the world conscious of the Indonesian question are matters for which we can never sufficiently thank you. Indonesians can never forget what you yourself or what India has done for us. Ingratitude is not one of our sins. We shall always cherish the help and goodwill we have received from you and when all the present difficulties have passed we look forward to fruitful and friendly co-operation with you (83).

A matter which required the immediate attention of the Government was the safe return of the Indian soldiers, who left the British Indian Army and joined the Republican forces. The allied forces wanted to treat them as deserters and punish them accordingly. On the other hand, Jawaharlal Nehru was determined to ensure that "no action should be taken against them" and they should safely return to India. Prime Minister Sjahrir concurred with Nehru's point of view; he felt that their case was "exceptional" as they were motivated by "political considerations". N. Raghavan, Consul General of India in Indonesia, took personal interest in the matter, visited the detention centres, spoke to the Indian soldiers and made arrangements with a British ship for their return to India through Singapore. Finally, at the end of May 1949, the former Indian soldiers returned to India. The Republican Government made a noble gesture by issuing a certificate to each one of the Indian soldiers. The certificate was signed by Mohammad Hatta, Vice-President of the Indonesian Republic. The certificate made a special mention of those soldiers, who sacrificed their lives for Indonesian freedom. Their graves will be a "symbol of friendship and unity between the Indian and the Indonesian people" (84).

Indonesia-India Rice Agreement

A number of Indians and Indonesians have played significant roles in building bridges of understanding between India and Indonesia during the formative years of Indonesian independence. Special mention in this connection should be made of PRS Mani, who first went to Southeast Asia as the War Correspondent during 1944-46. Nehru became friendly with Mani during his visit to Malaya in 1946. On crucial occasions, Mani was an emissary of Nehru and carried important messages from Nehru to Indonesian nationalist leaders. He later became the correspondent of the *Free Press Journal*, published from Bombay, and came back to Indonesia. He returned to New Delhi and worked as the correspondent of the Indonesian News Agency *Antara* for few months.. On the personal invitation of Jawaharlal Nehru, Mani joined the Indian Foreign Service and his first posting was in Jakarta as the *press attaché* in 1949-50. Acknowledging the significant role of PRS Mani in promoting India-Indonesia relations, the Government of Indonesia conferred on him the *Order of Merit* in December 1995.

Mani became extremely friendly with the nationalist triumvirate in Indonesia, especially with Sjahrir, whom he considered as an "intellectual giant" (85). In the course of his conversations with Sjahrir, who was then Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic, in April 1946, Mani mentioned that India was suffering from acute shortage of food grains. Mani felt that Java, with its abundance of rice, with three crops a year, "could come to the assistance of India". Expressing his sympathy with the Indian people, Sjahrir generously offered half a million tons of rice. However, he wanted India to arrange ships for the export of rice. And in return India could send textiles and medicines, which were in short supply in Indonesia. Apart from consolidating the good will, Sjahrir realized that the arrival of ships from India would mean a death blow to the Dutch economic blockade which had hindered the inter-island transport and also the traditional barter trade between Sumatra and Singapore. The trade pact would also enhance the international legitimacy of the Indonesian Republic (86).

Indian nationalists were extremely happy with the Indonesian offer of rice. In a cable sent to Prime Minister Sjahrir on April 20, 1946, Nehru remarked:

> I have learnt through the press that you have been good enough to offer to send half a million tons of rice from Indonesia to India to relieve famine conditions here, provided the necessary shipping is arranged for. I also understand that you are in great need of textiles from India. .. Half a million tons of rice or other food grains would make a great difference to India in the months to come (87).

The task of galvanizing the nation behind the Republican Government's rice offer was entrusted to Vice President Hatta. In a nation wide broadcast on June 22, 1946, Hatta pointed out that the offer was based on humanitarianism, one of the underlying principles of Indonesian nationalism (88). Despite the obstructions put by the Dutch authorities at every stage, the deal was carried through. The Indian Government assembled its ships in Singapore; on July 27, 1946 the Food Secretary to the Government of India signed and exchanged the Agreement with Prime Minister Sjahrir. The Agreement was signed even before the formation of the Interim Government. Nehru used his personal influence with the British government to see that the rice deal went through without a hitch. In a cable to the Colonial Secretary, he requested the British government to overrule the military objections. According to PRS Mani, Indonesia was able to fulfill in most part the stipulated supply of rice to India and received in return agricultural implements, textiles, medicines and miscellaneous goods required by them (89).

It must be pointed out that the rice agreement was the first international agreement concluded by the Indonesian Republic with any foreign country (90). In reality, as Sukarno put it, "The Indonesian people consider this rice offer as a national pledge" (91). In a speech on the eve of the first anniversary of the proclamation of Indonesian Republic, Sukarno declared:

> The most satisfactory aspect of our foreign policy is the agreement arrived at between ourselves and the Government of India. We have thereby won the friendship and awakened the fraternal feelings of Indians and forged links of understanding which will stand us in good stead when India takes her rightful place as one of the big nations of the world (92).

Jawaharlal Nehru expressed the gratitude of the Indian people and characterized the rice deal as a precursor of close friendship between the two countries and hoped that the people of Indonesia would soon emerge from their struggle as a free and independent people (93). The Congress Working Committee was extremely elated at the Indonesian gesture and conveyed its gratitude to the Government and people of Indonesia (94).

India becomes Indonesia's Window to the Outside World

The Republic of Indonesia was very keen to get international recognition and support not only to its existence, but also to further the cause of Indonesian independence. Since India was the closest ally and friend of the Indonesian Republic, New Delhi naturally became its window to the outside world. An Indonesian Embassy started functioning in New Delhi and Dr. Soedarsono was appointed as the Indonesian representative in India. But the Republic did not have sufficient finance to manage an Embassy. New Delhi, therefore, stepped into the scene and provided the necessary finances. Another source of finance for the Indonesian Embassy was the sale proceeds of Indonesian rice in India which amounted to Rs. 1,800,000/-. Gradually the Indonesian

Embassy in New Delhi began to expand its activities to America, Australia, Singapore, Burma, Pakistan, England and Ceylon. On one occasion, running short of finance, Dr. Soedarsono wrote a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru requesting for a loan of Rs. 300,000/-(95). A perusal of the relevant papers indicate that there was objection from senior officials of the Finance Ministry. The Finance Ministry was not in favour of a loan to a foreign mission, what is more, the senior officials felt that it will turn out to be a "bad debt" (96). Finally, Jawaharlal Nehru intervened and the grant was made available from the secret funds of the Government of India.

Asian Relations Conference

Indian attempts to foster unity and co-operation among Asian countries reached its zenith in March-April 1947, when India, still under foreign domination, took the initiative and convened the Asian Relations Conference. As Dr. Gopal has put it, "for ten days from 23 March to 2 April, Delhi saw itself as the natural centre of a resurgent continent, conscious of its glorious past and forging links for the future" (97). The Conference heralded a new age of Asian resurgence. As Michael Brecher has pointed out, the Conference reflected "one of the most significant phenomenon of the century, the re-entry of Asia into world politics" (98).

The Conference was not official in character in that it was sponsored, not by the Interim Government, but by the Indian Council of World Affairs, a non-political organization. However, the brain behind the Conference was Jawaharlal Nehru, who, to quote Dr. Appadorai, Secretary of the Asian Relations Conference "provided every assistance that the Indian Council of World Affairs asked for in connection with the Conference" (99). The Conference was attended by representatives of twenty-eight countries, including Soviet Central Asia.

The Indonesian leaders were very happy because it was the first international conference in which they were participating. Jawaharlal Nehru was very keen that Dr. Sharir should lead the Indonesian delegation (100), but Dr. Sjahrir was busy with the negotiations leading to the Linggadjati Agreement and could come to New Delhi only in the final stages of the Conference. The Indonesian all party delegation, therefore, was led by Abu Hanifah, the leader of the Masjumi Party and the list of members read like a *Whos Who* in Indonesia (101). The Indonesian delegation was the largest delegation in the Conference, it consisted of twenty five delegates and six observers.

The Indonesian question was one of the problems discussed under "national movements for freedom". Indonesian delegates gave a masterly and lucid account of their struggle; though in political, economic and cultural matters, the Republic was sovereign and free they had consented to collaborate with the Dutch in foreign affairs. This did not mean that they would take orders from the Dutch, but it was only a co-ordination of policy (102). The Indonesian representatives were able to get the support and sympathy of all the assembled delegates. Intervening in the debate, Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that it was a fact that Indian troops were used in Indonesia after the end of the second world war, but the first step taken by his government was to order the withdrawal of these

forces immediately. Though it took some three months to give full effect to this order, by November 1946 all Indian troops had been complete withdrawn (103).

On his arrival in New Delhi, Sjahrir was given a rousing reception. Extending him a special welcome, Nehru said, "Indonesia has been playing such an important role in Asian and world events in recent years and the coming of Dr. Sjahrir is of considerable significance for our Conference and for us in India" (104). In the course of his reply Sjahrir responded:

> Our being here in such large numbers is in fact due not only to our immense interest in what is happening here, but also due to the fact that we have been isolated for many years. We thought it should be a great thing if as many people as could be spared from our country could take advantage of such a splendid opportunity to meet so many representatives of nearly all Asia. This is why Indonesia is so greatly represented in this Conference (105)

The Indian delegates repeatedly stressed that India based its freedom movement on a much wider concept of nationalism. The freedom of India was meaningless without the freedom of the oppressed peoples all over the world. India's heart was not only with Indonesia in their struggle, but behind all those who desired freedom (106). The Indonesian delegation was happy with the proceedings of the Conference. In a broadcast over All India Radio, Dr Sjahrir expressed confidence:

> We in Asia have now got together for the first time. Let us then set to work together in real earnest for the benefit of all mankind and we shall certainly succeed in founding a new world in which there will be peace, security and prosperity (107).

During the Asian Relations Conference, the representatives of the Muslim League were very active carrying on a pernicious campaign that the Asian Relations Conference was a Hindu conspiracy to win international support. The members of the Muslim League naturally got in touch with the Indonesian delegation, for Indonesia, in terms of population, was the largest Muslim country in the world. But the Indonesian delegation was not influenced by this false propaganda; according to Abu Hanifah, the Conference was "concerned with the brotherhood of the Asian people and we did not take the so-called Hindu influence in the Conference seriously" (108).

It was unfortunate that the objective of the Asian Relations Conference, viz, of forging friendly relations and promoting co-operation among the people of Asia through a permanent institutional arrangement was not carried forward. Asian unity turned out to be a mirage than a reality. In retrospect, however, one should not under-estimate the significance of the Asian Relations Conference. The origins of the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955 could be traced back to the Asian Relations Conference in 1947.

India Mobilises International Support

Within a few weeks of the signing of the Linggadjati Agreement, the Interim Government extended *de facto* recognition to the Indonesian Republic. The Indian initiative was followed by United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, China and number of Arab States. The Indian Government also requested the United Nations to admit the Republic of Indonesia in the regional meeting of the Economic Commission of Asia and Far East (ECAFE), which wad due to be held in India in 1948.

The Dutch authorities adopted a dogmatic stand on the implementation of the Linggadjati Agreement. Their plan was to set up a "puppet State" in the areas outside Republican control and then use it as a spring board to carry on military operations against the Republic. Their refusal to move with the times and recognize new realities led to a divergence in the interpretation of the Agreement. The Dutch Government resorted to the use of force and unleashed "police action" on the Republican territory on 21 July 1947.

After his return from the Asian Relations Conference, Sjahrir ceased to be the Prime Minister of the Republic. He was succeeded by Amir Sharifoeddin. However, Sjahrir continued to be close to President Sukarno and became one of his principal advisers. President Sukarno instructed Dr. Sjahrir to escape from Indonesia, proceed to New Delhi and mobilize international support for the cause of the Republic. In an act of heroism and daring, Biju Patnaik rose to the occasion, braved all hazards, avoided the Dutch blockade, flew to Jogjakarta in his Dakota plane, and brought Sjahrir to India via Singapore. Jawaharlal Nehru paid a rich and deserving tribute to Biju Patnaik in the press conference held on 28 July 1947:

> I pay a tribute to the very gallant Indian airman who brought Dr. Shjahrir from Indonesia to Delhi. He had been known to us for a number of years not only for his great efficiency in flying but also for his adventurous and daring spirit ... and it is good for India that we should have such young men (109).

Soon after his arrival in India, Sjahrir declared that he visited India "first" because Nehru was his personal friend and India was the best place to study the international situation and plan the future course of action (110). Nehru described the sudden attack on the Indonesian Republic as an "astounding thing" which the "new spirit of Asia" will not tolerate. Apart from the merits of the case, Nehru pointed out

> No European country, whatever it might be, has any business to use its army in Indonesia. Foreign armies functioning in Indian soil are themselves an outrage to Asian sentiment. The fact that they are bombing a defenceless people is a scandalous thing. If other members of the United Nations tolerate this or remain inactive, then the United Nations Organisation ceases to be (111).

Nehru pledged "every possible help" to the Indonesian Republic (112). On 28 July 1947, Nehru announced that Dutch Airlines would no longer be allowed to land in India (113). The Indian Federation of Labour issued a directive to Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta dock workers' unions not to handle Dutch ships or do anything prejudicial to the interests of the Indonesian Republic (114). The Indian public opinion was enraged when the Dutch shot down an Indian Dakota plane carrying Red Cross supplies from Singapore to Jogjakarta, killing nine people on board (115). The Interim Government lodged a strong protest with the Dutch *Charge d Affaires* and demanded compensation to the owner, injured and the kith and kin of those killed (116). The All India Youth Congress resolved to send a volunteer force of one thousand youth to Indonesia including doctors, nurses and demobilised soldiers to assist the Indonesian Republic in its moment of need (117).

In a letter to Prime Minister Sharifoeddin in early July 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that India "had been following with keen interest and anxiety the development of events in Indonesia" and, in particular, the Dutch policy of interfering with the freedom of the Republic. At the same time, Nehru also pointed out the enormous difficulties faced by the government and people of India in times of "instability and tension" (118). Disturbed by the dangerous drift of events, New Delhi approached the Governments of United Kingdom and United States to use their good offices to bring the hostilities to an end and to secure the resumption of negotiations. New Delhi warned that the conflict would assume serious proportions threatening the peace and tranquility not only of Asia, but the whole world (119). The British Government suggested to the Government of Netherlands the possible constitution of a Neutral Peace Commission. While New Delhi was in favour of the suggestion, Hague was opposed to it. The offer was renewed by the British Government, but there was no change in the Dutch attitude (120). The United States also made an effort offering its "good offices" to both parties (121). Even though there was no Dutch diplomatic representation at the highest level in New Delhi at that time, through indirect channels New Delhi continued to be in touch with the Dutch Government (122). But all these efforts were in vain. Disappointed with the Dutch intransigence and deeply concerned with the deteriorating situation in

Indonesia, the Government of India decided to take the Indonesian issue to the United Nations.

In a cable to VK Krisna Menon dated 25 July 1947, Nehru underlined the fact that the "so-called police action" by the Dutch is an "extirpation and long prepared military campaign", whose real purpose was "to inflict complete military defeat on the Republic and thus prepare the way for a political settlement entirely favourable to the Dutch" (123). In an interview to the press, three days later, Nehru exposed the true nature of the police action. To quote Nehru, what is called "police action" is nothing but "well organized war, with bombings of towns on a large scale" The unfortunate situation was the Indonesian side "has no means of meeting those air attacks either from the air of from the land" (124).

It may be pointed out that immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, the representatives of the Indonesian Republic appealed to India to take the Indonesian issue to the UN Security Council. Dr. Soedarsono and Dr. Soerinpino, the two representatives of the Indonesian Republic, in a joint appeal issued from New Delhi, urged the democratic forces of the world, especially India, "to bring the case of Indonesia before the United Nations Organisation" (125). Expressing shock over Dutch aggression in Indonesia, the UN Secretariat hoped that India would take the initiative and represent to the UN about the colonial war unleashed by the Dutch Government (126). In view of the close interest shown by India and Australia, diplomatic sources in London anticipated that either India or Australia might ask the UN to resolve the Dutch-Indonesian dispute (127). Azzam Pasha, Secretary General of the Arab League, urged Nehru "to stand by the Indonesian Republic and bring their complaint before the United Nations" (128).

India believed that Dutch aggression was an attempt to undermine not only the Indonesian Republic, but also the United Nations. Nehru declared that the Dutch military action "foreshadow the ending of the world structure which the United Nations have sought to build". Pointing out the past errors and mistakes of the League of Nations, he cautioned all members to "be vigilant and to nip trouble in the bed, before it becomes too widespread to be controlled". He warned that if "each power was allowed to take aggressive action then the United Nations will have no prestige or authority and is bound to fade away" (129). In a cable to VK Krishna Menon dated 28 July 1947, Nehru drew attention to the fact that "even though appeal to the United Nations may bring no immediate relief to the hard-pressed Indonesians, it will rouse the moral conscience of the world" (130). Few hours before the United Nations took the Indonesian case for consideration, Nehru declared that "Indonesia has become a symbol and a test for all powers and more especially for the United Nations" (131).

The Interim Government sent a note to the UN Secretary General and the Security Council on 30 July 1947, drawing their attention to the situation in Indonesia and asking them to take prompt action for the restoration of peace. In this note to the Security Council, Nehru pointed out:

> During the last few days, Dutch forces have embarked without warning on a large scale military action against the Indonesian people... In the opinion of the Government of India, the situation endangers the maintenance of international security, which is covered by Article 30 of the Charter (132).

Australia, which was a member of the Security Council, requested the Council to consider the Indonesian crisis, which threatened world peace. Dr. Oscar Lange of Poland, Chairman of the Security Council, ordered the immediate hearing of the Indonesian question. Since India and Netherlands were not members of the Security Council, they were invited to attend the meeting.

Taking part in the deliberations of the Security Council, BR Sen, Indian representative, said that India had approached the UN "as a last resort, after all our efforts by other methods have apparently failed" (133). Supporting the Australian move to call for a cease fire and suggesting that it would be more desirable if the governments concerned were "asked to revert to the original positions which they held when the hostilities broke out", Sen urged that "the matter should be disposed off by the Security Council with the greatest possible expedition" (134). When the Netherlands representative objected to Indonesia being invited to take part in the proceedings, Sen pointed out that *de facto* recognition had been accorded to the Republic of Indonesia by UK, USA, India, Australia, members of the Arab League, besides Netherlands Government itself. Sen added:

> It will not be an infringement of international law if the Security Council extended an invitation to the Republic of Indonesia to attend the meetings of the Security Council (135).

After two days debate, the Security Council called upon the parties to cease hostilities forthwith and to "settle their dispute by arbitration or by other peaceful means" (136). Complying with the Security Council's instructions, the Dutch and the Republican Governments ordered cease fire effective from mid-night 4-5 August 1947. The Security Council's resolution spoke of truce and peaceful settlement, but not the withdrawal of Dutch forces from the occupied territories as demanded by the Indian representative. Even then, the steps taken by the Security Council marked the first victory for India in the Security Council on the Indonesian question.

Independent India and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence

The Indian independence on 15 August 1947 synchronized with the second anniversary of the proclamation of Indonesian Republic. The Indonesian leaders were convinced that independent India would spearhead Indonesia's cause in the comity of nations. As early as January 1946, Hatta had written:

> We, in Indonesia, sincerely hope that India will soon be free, all the more so, in view of the fact that the question of freedom of our two countries is really one common question. When India declares her independence and becomes free from British rule, the Indonesian independence will no longer be a problem (137).

In his independence day message, Dr Sjahrir said that in moments of great need "Indonesia has found in India a real friend. We have never been so close to each other at heart before in history" (138). In his greetings to India, President Sukarno pointed out that much would depend in the near future on India as to whether the Indonesian people could survive their present crisis and emerge as a really free country (139).

The significance of Indian independence for Indonesia was clearly brought out by *Merdeka*, the news bulletin issued by the Information Service of the Indonesian Republic in New Delhi:

> We Indonesians, having proclaimed our independence two years ago on August 17, but who are still fighting, struggling and toiling for the defence of the newly acquired freedom, are certainly not less happy by this big occasion. The freedom of a country is bound to influence the fate of millions of subject peoples. Particularly in this special case being a question of population second to that of China (140).

All India Radio's External Services

New Delhi took a number of significant steps to further the cause of Indonesian independence. On 12 October 1947, the External Services of the All India Radio started news broadcasts in *Bahasa Indonesia* to disseminate information that would be "without bias and without selfish motive". The *Bahasa Indonesia* programme was the first programme of the External Services of the All India Radio. Inaugurating the news service, Sardar Patel said:

> Indonesia is still in the grip of foreign rule and we, who have known the agony and anguish of slavery, naturally turn with a feeling and sympathetic heart to Indonesia in the valiant struggle. India knows that there can be no real freedom for her so long as there are manacles around Indonesia's wrists (141).

Medical Assistance to Indonesia

New Delhi also stepped up medical assistance to the Indonesian Republic. On 24 August 1947, on an urgent request from the Indonesian Red Cross, the Government of India despatched a medical mission comprising three doctors, three nurses and three hundred pounds of medical supplies. The medical assistance was heartily received because the Republic had only one doctor for every 100,000 of the population (142). The Republican leaders wanted to continue to export rice to India, but their hopes could not be fulfilled due to Dutch obstruction (143).

De Facto or De Jure Recognition?

The Indonesian nationalist leaders were very keen that independent India should accord *de jure* recognition to the Indonesian Republic. They argued that in addition to the unique significance of such a momentous step, the Indian example would be followed by Burma, Pakistan and the members of the Arab League. Dr. Soedarsono, the Indonesian representative in New Delhi, felt that this step would also strengthen the bargaining position of Indonesia in its negotiations with Hague (144). The Ministry of External Affairs, after carefully weighing the pros and cons, finally decided to continue with the existing arrangement of *de facto* recognition. The Indonesian Republic was already receiving "all the facilities that it needs" and that *de jure* recognition would not confer any additional advantage; on the contrary, it would merely "show us up as partisans". (144) GS Bajpai, the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs, added that India's effectiveness to assist Indonesia depended upon the "preservation of a semblance of neutrality" (145).

Following the rationale explained above, New Delhi started a Consulate General in Batavia and a Consulate in JogJakarta. The Consulate in Jogjakarta would work under the Consul General in Batavia. According to Jawaharlal Nehru, any other course of action would have meant Dutch opposition and the "denial of facilities for our representatives to go to Indonesia or to function there in any other way" (146). N. Raghavan was appointed as the first Consul General in Batavia and Muhammad Yunus was appointed as the Consul in Jogjakarta. In order to avoid possible misunderstanding, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote personal letters to President Sukarno, Vice President Hatta and Prime Minister Amir Sharifoeddin (147). In his letter to Sharifoeddin, Nehru pointed out that India had to uphold "diplomatic etiquette" and follow the usual "diplomatic practice". However, Nehru emphasized that primary objective of establishing diplomatic relations was to be in

touch with the Republican leaders and promote the cause of Indonesian independence (148).

The choice of Mohammad Yunus as the first Consul in Jogjakarta was an illustration of astute diplomacy. Yunus was the son Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known in India as the *Frontier Gandhi*; he also shared with Sukarno qualities of intense nationalism, secularism, sense of humour and a zest for life. President Sukarno and Mohammad Yunus became close friends. Having played a valiant role in India's struggle for freedom, Yunus was anxious to assist the Indonesian nationalists in their quest for freedom. He was hailed as *Bung Yunus dari India* (Brother Yunus from India) (149). So great was Sukarno's confidence in Yunus that he was asked by the President to be present even in Cabinet meetings (150). The Indian Consulate was the main window through which the Indonesian leaders saw the outside world. Yunus made the telegraphic facilities available for the Indonesian government for external contacts. This was intended to prevent Dutch interception of important messages (151). Thanks to Yunus again, Sukarno agreed to visit India in December 1948, but the visit could not materialize due to Dutch police action and consequent detention of President Sukarno. The Indonesian esteem for Yunus can be gauged from the fact that on 17 August 1972, President Suharto gave a *Letter of Appreciation* to Mohammad Yunus "for the assistance and co-operation rendered to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia" (152).

Role of Biju Patnaik in Indonesian Freedom Movement

Mention has already been made of how Biju Patnaik brought Sjahrir from Jog Jakarta to New Delhi during the difficult days of Dutch police action in the middle of 1947. Patnaik was regularly flying to Jogjakarta in his air craft carrying essential items like medicines. He came in contact with Sukarno, who developed great affection and admiration for the young man. In the course of her official visit to India as the President of Indonesia, Meghawati recalled that when the news of her birth was conveyed to her father, Patnaik was keeping company with Sukarno; the name Meghawati (daughter of the clouds) was suggested by Patnaik. When the Dutch were planning a military attack on Indonesia, Sukarno was very keen that Hatta should get out of the country at the earliest to carry on a sustained anti-Dutch campaign from New Delhi. Sukarno asked Patnaik for assistance. Hatta traveled with Patnaik as his co-pilot called Abdullah in a pilot's uniform. The plane flew to New Delhi via Kuala Lumpur and Rangoon. After arriving in New Delhi, Patnaik and Abdullah proceeded to Constitution House to call on Jawaharlal Nehru. Patnaik informed Nehru that a friend from Indonesia, with an important message, was waiting to call on him. When Nehru met the visitor, he was angry with Patnaik and told him, "This is Mohammad Hatta, why did you not tell his real name?" (153).

Patnaik continued with his many acts of heroism and provided the much needed help to the Indonesian Republic. Being a daredevil he never sought the permission either of the Government of India or the government of Netherlands. The Republican leaders were very keen to overcome the Dutch blockade; one way to accomplish this objective was to start their own airways and fly out of Indonesia through an air route outside the Dutch control. Dr. Soedarsono, the Indonesian representative in India suggested an air route linking Calcutta – Rangoon- Mergui - Kutaraja -Jogjakarta (154). With the

assistance of Biju Patnaik a detailed plan was worked out and was submitted to New Delhi for assistance. Unfortunately due to bureaucratic red tape in India, the plan could not be implemented. In December 1948, Biju Patnaik, with the full knowledge of Jawaharlal Nehru, planned a rescue operation to bring the Indonesian nationalist leaders to India. In fact, on December 19, 1948 an Indian Dakota had actually taken off, but it was turned back by the Dutch authorities before it could enter the Indonesian air space. A grateful Indonesian nation conferred the title of *Bumiputra* (son of the soil) on Biju Patnaik and offered him a "Royal Salute" in a special investiture ceremony in July 1980 in recognition of his distinguished role in the struggle for Indonesian independence (155).

Indian Diplomacy in the United Nations

The main focus of Indian foreign policy in 1948 continued to be Indonesia. Nehru was very happy with the "excellent work" being done by Raghavan and Mohmmad Yunus. In a letter to Mohammad Yunus dated 18 April 1948 Nehru expressed his desire to have a holiday in Indonesia, meet President Sukarno, whom he had not met so far, and discuss issues of common interest. Nehru underlined that "India and Indonesia have to pull together in the future" and the two countries should, therefore, start "clearing the ground" and discuss what steps could be taken to promote mutual interest (156). He was angry with the obstinacy of the Dutch, who continued to be out of touch with political realities. In a letter to the Chief Ministers dated September 1, 1948, referring to Indonesia, Nehru said that "the Dutch government continues to function and to think in the old colonial way" Nehru added that such a policy can "only lead to strife and can never offer a solution" (157).

India had raised the Indonesian issue in the United Nations in July 1947 and the future of Indonesia continued to be a subject matter of debate in the world body. P.P. Pillai, the Indian delegate, drew the attention of the UN to Dutch violations of cease fire and the need to halt the deteriorating situation:

> To us it is intolerable that after the world has fought two wars for democracy and national self-determination a colonial war of this kind should be permitted to continue (158).

Unhappy with the Indian stand, the Dutch delegate tried unsuccessfully to draw a parallel between the colonial war in Indonesia and the communal riots which took place in India in 1946-47. P.P. Pillai condemned the comparison as "quite gratuitous and irrelevant" (159). After long deliberations, the Security Council appointed a Committee of Good Offices on 25 August 1947 with representatives of Australia, Belgium and the US to assist the parties to arrive at a settlement. The Security Council also set up a Consular Commission to supervise the cease fire order and report on the implementation of the truce. Strangely enough, the Commission consisted of Belgium, France, UK and US – all Western powers, who could naturally be expected to come to the defence of Holland. The Indian delegate expressed his "profound disappointment" over the strange manner, in which the Commission was constituted and pointed out that the Security

Council had accepted the "opinion of the accused as to how the trial should be conducted" (160).

The mounting Indian opposition to the continuance of imperialism in Indonesia, both within and outside the UN, infuriated the Dutch who started a smear campaign against India. Van Kleffens, the Dutch delegate in the United Nations, pointed out that in India there "was more military action" than in the whole "of Java and Sumatra put together" (161). A semi-official Dutch document, entitled *Indonesia, The Great Powers of Asia and Australia,* was brought out. It was widely circulated in Indonesia. Its objective was to project India as a country interested in dominating Asia. To quote from the document:

> India which has for a long time been on the verge of independence and was involved to its advantage in the late war by supplying materials and troops, and then released by England, toys with the idea of Asiatic leadership which it hopes to assume in succession to Japan. India's history has known expansionism in various directions in Asia and Asia Minor. The present ruling class under the leadership of Pandit Nehru is playing a more modern imperialistic game (162).

Nobody took all these wild and outrageous allegations seriously. D.B. Desai, the Indian delegate, declared in the Security Council that India has no "ulterior motives". He added that no power in Asia "can afford to sit back and look on with equanimity or indifference at the happenings in Indonesia" (163). Throughout 1947, the Dutch government continued with its acts of aggression in violation of Security Council resolutions. Consequently, Republican authority was reduced to Java and Sumatra. The Indonesian nationalists, however, did not lose hope and carried on a guerrilla struggle. The US, which watched the situation with dismay, did not want an escalation of the conflict and made efforts to bring the two warring parties together. At the initiative of the United States, peace talks began in the US Naval ship *Renville* on 8 December 1947. Nehru was naturally happy with the American initiative and welcomed the talks. In a message, Nehru appealed to the two delegations "to work for a similar consummation in a similar spirit as the peaceful transfer in India from British to Indian hands" (164).

The *Renville Agreements* were signed on 17 and 19 January 1948. Sovereignty throughout the Netherlands East Indies was to reside with Holland until the establishment of the United States of Indonesia. The United States of Indonesia would be a sovereign and independent state and it will co-exist with the Netherlands in a Union headed by the Dutch Crown. The status of the Republic was to be that of a constituent state in the United States of Indonesia. Provision was made for internationally supervised plebiscites in Java, Madura and Sumatra to find out whether the people in these states wanted to be a part of the Republic or want to be another state in the federal structure. Finally, all the federal states were to be offered "fair representation" in any provisional government (165). The *Renville Agreements* confirmed the *de facto* truncation of the bounds of the Republic. Even then the Indonesian nationalists accepted the Agreements because of

implicit assurances from Dr. Frank Graham, the US representative in the Good Offices Committee. If Indonesian Republic acquiesced in the Renville package, the United States was morally bound to come to the assistance of the Republic if the Dutch reneged on the Agreements.

The Government of India's reaction to the *Renville* Agreements was mixed. It welcomed the Agreement as a step forward towards final settlement. At the same time, it shared the feelings of the Indonesian nationalists that the Agreement "was arrived at mainly through the concessions which one of the parties had been compelled to make at all stages" (166). The *Renville* Agreements did not last long. The Dutch resumed their hostile attitude by attempting to establish puppet regimes in Madura and West Java and to block the progress of the Indonesian republic. The Indian representative drew the attention of the United Nations to the aggressive designs of the Dutch imperialists in total disregard of the provisions of the Agreements. Describing the Dutch plans as a pre-meditated and carefully worked out programme, P.P. Pillai warned the Security Council that if such developments were allowed to continue they "might lead to the fragmentation and dismemberment of the territories of the Indonesian Republic" (167).

The Communist Revolt that Failed

In 1948, the Indonesian Republic had to face not only the Dutch aggressive designs, but also a violent revolt led by *Partai Kommunis Indonesia* (PKI) or the Indonesian Communist Party. The PKI strategy was partly shaped by the increasing disenchantment with the path of negotiations followed by the Indonesian nationalist leaders and partly by the changing policies of the international communist movement. The revolt in Madium in Java in September 1948, however, turned out to be a "storm in the tea cup". It was easily put down by the Republican Government under the admirable leadership of General Nasution. The end of the revolt contributed to the immense prestiege of Sukarno and the legitimacy of the Republic in the eyes of the world.

Though Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian nationalist leaders did not make any specific reference to the communist revolt in Indonesia, their sympathies were obviously with the Republican leaders. Faced with a similar threat from the Communist Party of India, there was nothing surprising about the Indian stance. Nehru was conscious of the threats, which were posed by the communist movements, with powerful ideological support from Soviet Russia and the Chinese Communist Party, to the stability and security of Southeast Asian countries. He was convinced that if the imperialists adopted an intransigent attitude, the nationalist movements would pass on to more revolutionary hands and possibly even to the communists as it happened in Vietnam and China. But if freedom was swiftly transferred to non-communist nationalist leaders, the communists could no longer claim themselves to be the spokesmen of nationalist aspirations. The greatest guarantee against communists in Asia, according to Nehru, was the emergence of free states and establishment of egalitarian societies.

The above analysis is borne out by the indirect references contained in the speeches of Indian spokesmen during this period. In a speech in the Constituent Assembly, Nehru said:

> There are all kinds of forces at play in Southeast Asia and, if by misfortune, the forces of progressive nationalism which are represented by the present government of the Republic of Indonesia do not triumph then it is a sad day not only for Indonesia but for the rest of Southeast Asia and, may be, even for India (168).

Benegal Rao was more explicit in his speech in the United Nations on January 7, 1949:

> Our Prime Minister was in no way exaggerating the situation when he said that if no effective measures are taken the consequences will be disastrous for the whole of Asia and the whole world (169).

The leaders of the Indonesian Republic were apprehensive that under the pretext of putting down the communist revolt, the Dutch imperialists would intervene in the affairs of the Republic. But the United States, during this period, "wisely put strong pressure on the Dutch not to intervene and they were restrained from doing so" (170). The US also pressured the Netherlands to re-open negotiations with the Republic. During the talks, the Dutch proposed that in the Interim Government the Dutch representative should be vested with the sole authority to employ Netherlands' troops in case of internal disturbances. Hatta rejected it outright. He described the proposal as "indigestible" (171). Compliance with the proposal would have meant signing the death warrant so far as the Republic was concerned. It would not only have infringed on their sovereign rights, but also would have given convenient pretext for Dutch military intervention.

Second Police Action

The Dutch government was aware that they were running against time. They wanted to resolve the issue as a *fait accompli* and planned a quick military action. New Delhi was keenly following the developments in Indonesia and apprehended renewed Dutch attack on the Republic. On 4 November 1948, in a meeting in Cairo, Nehru declared that if any further "aggressive action" was taken in Indonesia, it might have "great repercussions in India and the world" (172). Nehru also invited Sukarno to visit India so that the latter could explain the situation and plan the future course of action. Sukarno readily accepted the invitation. On 19 December 1948, as mentioned earlier, Sukarno was awaiting the arrival of the plane piloted by Biju Patnaik, which was to fly him to India. The Dutch suspected the Indian move, for they feared that Sukarno might escape and set up a provisional government in India (173). The Dutch, therefore, refused landing facilities in Batavia and also transit facilities in Jogjakarta for the Indian plane. It was obvious that the Dutch wanted to thwart Sukarno's plan for visiting India and timed the police action accordingly. As Prof. Kahin remarks, "the timing of the Dutch attack was in part a result of their desire to keep Sukarno from reaching India" (174).

The question naturally arises, what was the Indian response to the suggestion of the leaders of the Indonesian Republic for the formation of a provisional Republican government in New Delhi, in case of need. According to Iqbal Singh, the idea of getting an aircraft from India was first mooted by Mohammad Hatta. He asked India for aircraft "to carry away, if necessary, members of Indonesian government". Hatta further asked Nehru if India "could allow provisional Republican Government to function from India in case of need". According to Iqbal Singh, Nehru mildly demurred to the suggestion and told GS Bajpai, the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs, that it might "lead to serious consequences in regard to our relations with the Dutch". But Nehru was willing "to give shelter to any members of the Indonesian Government who desire it" and "as to what other facilities we might be able to give, will have to be considered later" (175).

On 17 December 1948, the Dutch Government served an ultimatum demanding that the Republic should "surrender to the position" of the Hague. As the Republic refused to comply, the Dutch imperialists launched the second police action against the Republic on the morning of 19 December 1948. Within few hours, Jogjakarta, the Republican capital and "all important Republican leaders including the President, Vice President, members of the Cabinet and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army" were imprisoned (176).

The Dutch military action roused the indignation of all sections of Indian population. The Government of India expressed its complete disapproval of the Dutch action and suspended the rights of the Dutch airlines to operate in or across India (177). The departure of Mohan Singh Mehta, Ambassador designate to Holland, was also indefinitely postponed (178). In a resolution adopted in the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in Jaipur, the Indian National Congress assured the Indonesian Republic of its wholehearted sympathy. The Congress declared, "It was a matter of utmost concern to India that Indonesia should attain her full freedom and take her rightful part in the Asian and international affairs" (179). Addressing the plenary session of the Congress, Nehru declared:

> I emphasise that no one can prevent the tide of independence in Asiatic countries. The police action of the Dutch will have serious repercussions in India, in Asia and perhaps in some other countries also (180).

Indian diplomacy, once again, asserted itself in the UN. The Security Council held an emergency meeting on 22 December 1948 on the request made by the US and Australia. Taking part in the debate, DB Desai, Indian representative, said that the Indonesian question had become a test for the UN Security Council's dignity and self respect. Pointing out the grave consequences of Dutch military action, Desai declared:

> The struggle of the Indonesian people for freedom epitomizes the spirit that is stirring the whole Asia. In that continent, there is a tremendous upsurge. Every day, events of great consequence are taking place. If this question is not

> speedily and effectively solved, it will have wide repercussions in that continent (181).

D.B. Desai, therefore, requested the Security Council to act "immediately, decisively and effectively" and order an "immediate cease fire" and the release of Indonesian leaders "who have been taken prisoners since the opening of hostilities" (182). The Security Council passed a resolution on 24 December 1948, in which it called upon the parties "to cease hostilities forthwith" and asked the Dutch to release Sukarno and other political prisoners immediately (183). When the Hague failed to implement the resolution, the Security Council passed another resolution on 28 December 1948, calling upon Netherlands to set free the Indonesian political prisoners "forthwith" and to report to the Security Council within the next twenty four hours that it would comply with the UN wishes (184). The Netherlands flouted this resolution also.

The Dutch refusal to implement the Security Council's resolutions (which, to quote Nehru's words were "very weak and inadequate" (185)) and the Security Council's inability to deal effectively with the Dutch disillusioned India, which entertained great hopes on the usefulness of the UN. The pro-Dutch stand taken by the Western powers also caused great resentment. Nehru declared:

> We have to confess with sorrow that the attitude of some powers to this attempt to destroy the Indonesian Republic has been one of tacit approval or acceptance of aggression (186).

Conference on Indonesia

India's crowning glory in support of Indonesian independence was the convening of an international conference on Indonesia from January 20 to 23, 1949. Nehru was seriously thinking of the steps to be taken in support of the Indonesian Republic in the new situation created by the resumption of hostilities. He declared on the very day the Dutch launched aggression: "We will have to reconsider what we may have to do under the circumstances" (187). Nehru was also keeping in touch with other Asian leaders like U Nu, who suggested a meeting of all Asian countries (188). Nehru concurred and decided to convene an Asian Conference in New Delhi.

The Indian initiative evoked mixed reactions. The Republican Government was naturally elated and described the proposed Conference on Indonesia as the "most encouraging manifestation of international concern" over the situation in Indonesia (189). As was to be expected, the Dutch authorities were very angry and expressed concern over Nehru's action in calling a conference "to discuss the internal affairs of another country" (190). The United States had also its reservations and asked New Delhi not to adopt extreme postures which would lead to a "breach of relations with Holland" (191).

From the very beginning, Nehru took care to allay the fears of Western countries regarding the objectives of the Conference. Addressing the Indian Journalists Association in Calcutta, he stated categorically that it was not India's intention to "form an Asian bloc

against European countries or America. The Conference is not opposed to any country or people. It is not anti-European or anti-American or anti-Western" (192). The External Affairs Ministry explained that the purpose of the Conference was "to reinforce the United Nations, not to replace it". It further said that the Conference wanted to make the Security Council realize the strong feelings in Asia on the subject of imperialist aggression (193). Nehru himself made this point clear in the invitation issued to various countries: "The Conference is not designed to supersede in any way the activities of the Security Council, but only to lend the Council support on the basis of united understanding among ourselves" (194).

The Asian Conference on Indonesia assembled in New Delhi on 20 January 1949. Since the Conference was intended to assist the Indonesians, only those countries which sympathized and supported the cause of the Indonesian Republic, were invited. They included Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. China, Nepal, Thailand and New Zealand were represented as observers. Leading members of either bloc were excluded and the membership of the Conference was limited only to those countries which were "either neighbouring or directly concerned" (195). India naturally did not want the Indonesian question to be embroiled in cold war rivalry.

Inaugurating the eighteen nation Conference, Jawaharlal Nehru declared:

> We meet today because the freedom of a sister country of ours has been imperiled and the dying colonialism of a past age has raised its head again and challenged all the forces that are struggling to build a new structure of the world. That challenge has a deeper significance than might appear on the surface, for it is a challenge to a newly awakened Asia which has so long suffered under various forms of colonialism, .

Nehru reiterated that the Conference was meeting "in no spirit of hostility to any nation or group of nations". He also emphasized that the Conference was not intended to sidetrack or bypass the UN but to help the Security Council to bring about a rapid and peaceful solution to the Indonesian problem. To quote Nehru: "We meet to supplement the efforts of the Security Council, not to supplant that body". Nehru cautioned that if the Dutch challenge was not met effectively "it would affect not merely Indonesia, but also Asia and the entire world". He, therefore, urged the Conference: 1) To frame and submit proposals to the Security Council for the immediate restoration of peace and early realization of the freedom of the Indonesian people; 2) To suggest to the Security Council what action it should take in case its recommendations were not carried out and 3) to devise machinery and procedure to meet threat to freedom of Asian countries in future (196).

In a Memorandum submitted to the Conference, the Indonesian nationalists urged the inclusion of their proposals in the final Memorandum to be submitted to the United Nations. Their proposals included the formation of an Interim Government by 1 March 1949; holding of general elections for a Constituent Assembly by 1 July 1949; transfer of complete sovereignty by 1 September 1949; applying the provisions of Articles 41 and 42 of the UN Charter if the Dutch failed to carry out its recommendations; and extending *de jure* recognition to the Republican Government before the establishment of an interim government (197).

The Conference, after three days of frank and free discussions, unanimously adopted three resolutions. The first resolution declared that the Dutch military action against the Indonesian Republic constituted a "flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and defiance of the efforts of the Security Council and its Good Offices Committee to bring about a peaceful solution". The Conference recommended to the Security Council that all Republican leaders be freed immediately and the freedom of the Republican Government be restored; an Interim Government to be formed before 15 March 1949; and "power over the whole of Indonesia be completely transferred by 1 January 1950 to the United States of Indonesia" It also suggested that the Security Council take effective action under the wide powers conferred upon by the Charter "in case its recommendations were not complied with". Finally the Conference requested the Security Council to report to the UN General Assembly the progress made in solving the Indonesian issue.

Resolutions 2 and 3 of the Conference dealt with measures which should be taken for promoting close co-operation and consultation among the participants (198). The Chairman of the Conference telegraphed the resolutions to the President of the Security Council on 23 January and followed it up with a letter expressing the hope that the Council's effective action would not be further delayed. He also assured the Council "of the full co-operation of the member states represented at the Conference in any measure that it may decide to take" (199).

The Conference activated the Security Council and the international community took greater interest in Indonesia. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution on 28 January 1949, which incorporated the spirit and words of the resolutions passed by the Conference on Indonesia. However, in the time-table for the transfer of power, the Security Council made one important change by fixing 1 July 1950 as the deadline for the termination of sovereignty, instead of 1 January 1950. India and the Indonesian Republic were not entirely happy with the UN Resolutions. At the same time, they were also not completely dissatisfied, because for the first time, the Security Council had laid down terms for a definitive political settlement of the Indonesian problem. The resolutions also, as Prof. Alastair Taylor has argued, put the Indonesian Republic "in a stronger position" because it asked the Government of Netherlands to recommence negotiations with the Republican Government. For according to Hague, the Republican Government "had ceased to exist" (200).

The negotiations started in April and ended successfully in November 1949. Netherlands agreed to the complete and unconditional transfer of sovereignty before 30 December 1949 of the entire territory of the former East Indies, except for Western New Guinea, to the Republic of United States of Indonesia, a federal government comprising of the Republic of Indonesia and the fifteen political units established by the Dutch. The only problem that remained unresolved was the status of Western New Guinea. However, a compromise formula was evolved according to which the control and administration of Netherlands was to continue in Western New Guinea till its political status was "determined through negotiations" between the Netherlands and RUSI within a year from the date of transfer of power to the RUSI (201).

Thus came to an end another colonial empire in the most populous country in Southeast Asia. Jawaharlal Nehru proudly declared that the birth of the United States of Indonesia "marked the turning of a new leaf in the history of Asia" (202).

Request for Military Aid

Since the declaration of Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, the nationalist leaders, on several occasions, requested Jawaharlal Nehru that India should provide military assistance to the Indonesian Republic. The hope that New Delhi could provide military assistance to the struggling Republic got strengthened when the world came to know how India responded to the necessity to buttress and consolidate the U Nu government in Burma, which was struggling for its survival against heavy odds. The most serious problem confronting Burma soon after independence in 1948 was widespread insurgency in practically every part of the country. The Communists, Karens and Mons rose in revolt and within a year, the U Nu Government was in control of only the capital. Had it not been for massive support from India, the U Nu Government might have fallen. At the height of the Civil War, both India and Britain provided Burma with 10,000 small weapons each and arranged with other Commonwealth countries, including Australia, Ceylon and Pakistan to provide a loan of six million pounds sterling to tide over the economic crisis (203).

It must, however, be pointed out that there were basic differences between the Indonesian and Burmese situations. In Burma, it was an independent country which was struggling against domestic rebels, whereas in Indonesia it was the classic case of conflict between nationalist forces and imperialist power. International assistance was provided to Burma on the specific request made by the legitimate government of the country. Nehru was deeply sensitive of these basic differences in the two situations. In a note on "India and Indonesia" (prepared by Jawaharlal Nehru on June 28, 1949), Nehru explained the underlying principles governing the relations between the two countries.

Nehru pointed out that, over the years, a "close bond between India and Indonesia" and a "sense of intimacy" had developed between the two countries. The continuation of Dutch rule in Indonesia was dangerous from many points of view and would be a "source of perpetual trouble and conflict in Southeast Asia". The only way to provide stability and security to the region was for Indonesia to become free and function in an independent manner. During the critical phase of Indonesian struggle for independence "India had been of some service ... that service we will continue to render ... because it is in consonance with our basic policy".

According to Jawaharlal Nehru, "occasionally demands have reached us for some kind of military assistance", either in the "shape of arms and ammunition or even more active help". Nehru wanted to make the "position clear" and explained that India had practically exhausted the surplus military stores it had in the military operations in Kashmir and was sending missions to Europe and America to get military equipments. Apart from this practical problem, Nehru explained another significant dimension of the issue. Even if India wanted to extend military help to Indonesia, "it cannot do so without running the Dutch blockade' An attempt to militarily help Indonesia would lead to a war with Netherlands, which would not be of any help to Indonesia. Moreover, it would be a "defiance" of the United Nations (204). Therefore, Nehru ruled out any military assistance to the Indonesian Republic at the official level.

Differences among the Indonesian Nationalists

Jawaharlal Nehru was deeply pained and distressed that instead of presenting a united front against the Dutch colonialists, the Indonesian nationalists were fighting among themselves. As a matter of principle, Jawaharlal Nehru never interfered in the domestic politics of other countries, but since his relations with Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir were on "intimate terms", he wrote and appealed to them to sink their differences in a spirit of amity and good will for all round development of Indonesia. In a letter to President Sukarno dated June 30, 1949 Jawaharlal Nehru wrote as follows:

> If I may venture to offer one piece of advice of a rather general kind it is that nothing is more important for a national movement than to keep closely knit together and to present a common and united front against the enemy. Whether in India or Indonesia or elsewhere, our opponents have always tried to split the unity of the national movement and then to take advantage of the ensuing weakness and confusion of mind (205).

In a letter to Mohammad Hatta, Nehru pointed out:

> I have faith that the cause of the Indonesian Republic will triumph. My only apprehension is that in these prolonged negotiations and maneuvers of the Dutch, doubt and confusion may arise in the minds of the leaders of the Republic, leading to a loosening of the close bonds that hold them together. That would be more unfortunate than any other development can be (206).

The letter to Sjahrir echoed the same sentiments:

> You will forgive me if I write about a matter which has troubled me somewhat. I am greatly concerned about the differences of opinion among the leaders of the Republic are growing. Differences there must be, but it seems to me of the first importance that the leaders of the Republic should hold together and jointly face the enemy. A wrong step may be righted and an error corrected, but if there are internal dissensions that means an inner weakness which is bound to do injury to the cause (207).

The greatest tragedy of Indonesia after independence was the lack of unity among those who built up the national movement, brick by brick, against heavy odds. And the country had to pay a heavy price for this default.

Conclusion

The independence of Indonesia was not only a great event in Indonesian history, but it was also a great landmark in India-Indonesia relations. The Government of India was represented by Dr. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur in the transfer of power ceremony. In a press conference in Jakarta, she said that perhaps no other country in the world "rejoiced more sincerely than India" at the advent of Indonesian independence, because "right from the beginning", India had stood for Indonesian independence (208).

Throughout India, there was great joy and fervour on the day of Indonesian independence. Speaking on the occasion of the flag hoisting ceremony at the official residence of the Indonesian representative, Jawaharlal Nehru declared:

> Today the brave and loveable people of Indonesia, after a great turmoil, are emerging as an independent sovereign people ... It is really a historic moment for Asia, for today, it is not merely Indonesia, but the great continent of Asia which is gradually coming into its own (209).

The mutual affection and love, which bound the two comrades in struggle, was eloquently echoed by Dr. Soedarsono, the Indonesian representative in India:

> We want the Prime Minister of India to accept the heartfelt gratitude and thanks of millions of Indonesians, unknown to him, but whose cause he has championed so consistently, for the numerous acts of help, for the kind, friendly, and wise advice and hospitality he has given to all our leaders and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia (210).

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* This essay is partly based on Author's earlier writings on the subject

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