

**INDIA'S MILITARY HELP TO NEIGHBOURING STATES:
A CASE STUDY OF BURMA (1948-49),
NEPAL (1951-53) AND SRI LANKA (1971)**

P R E F A C E

PREFACE

India achieved her independence in 1947. Since then she has been an active participant in international affairs. She has played a very important role in Asia not because of any ambition but because of her geographical situation, large area, big population and historical background. She has always taken a keen interest in world affairs in general and in the neighbouring countries in particular.

From the very beginning India witnessed various types of disturbances in the States bordering her. There was an insurrection in Burma in 1948-49. Nepal faced a series of internal disturbances during the period 1951-53 and an insurgency took place in Sri Lanka in 1971. Though India had just become independent at the time of trouble in Burma and Nepal yet she could not remain an indifferent observer to these events. Because of her ideology and national interest India extended moral support and military help to these countries. This work is an attempt to discuss some of the important aspects of these disturbances in relation to India and analyse the military help given by India to neighbouring countries on these occasions as an instrument of her diplomacy.

This work consists of five chapters. In the first chapter an attempt has been made to underline the objectives of India's foreign policy in general and towards the neighbouring states in particular. The second, third and fourth chapters are devoted to the study of the particular cases of Burma, Nepal and

Sri Lanka respectively. The fifth chapter is conclusive in nature where we have tried to make a comparative assessment of all the three cases. In this chapter effort has also been made to co-relate India's role in the three cases with India's declared objectives and actual practices in relation with her immediate neighbours.

This study is based largely on secondary sources. However, since secondary sources are not adequate on the subject, newspaper clippings and some other primary sources are often referred to.

The work could not have taken the final shape without the co-operation of my teachers and friends. I must acknowledge the debt I owe to Dr. S.D. Muni, my supervisor, for his friendly co-operation, bitter criticism, frank advice and constant inspiration. I also take the opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr. Satish Kumar, Dr. Pushpesh Pant and Dr. Urmila Phadnis for valuable suggestions. I sincerely thank my friends Ramesh Dixit, Girijesh Pant, Pankaj Singh and O.N. Shukla who have helped me in various ways during the course of work. My thanks are also due to the staff members of the ICWA Library and the JNU Library who promptly supplied me the material for the preparation of the manuscript.

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Chapter I

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES

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INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES

India attained her independence in 1947. But even since long before that, she had actively participated in the international affairs. She was an original member of the League of Nations in 1919, she participated in the conference held at San Francisco in 1945 and later signed the Charter of the United Nations. The Indian National Congress which spear-headed the struggle for independence kept itself abreast with the developments in international politics and took stand on major world issues. Thus India did not feel any difficulty when she became independent, in deciding the objectives - major or minor - of her foreign policy and the means to achieve these objectives.

The frame of India's foreign policy has been determined by history, geography, culture, economic resources, political institutions and the international milieu. The determinants were translated in terms of goals and objectives of foreign policy by the towering personalities like that of Gandhi and Nehru. Nehru not only contributed to the evolution of India's foreign policy during the pre-independence period but also articulated and pursued its objectives as the first Prime Minister of India.

Major Objectives: To Serve the National Interest

The first and the foremost objective of the foreign policy of any country remains to serve the national interest and India's

foreign policy was never an exception to it. What comes under the national interest is a point to be given thought of. Basically, (i) security, (ii) economic prosperity, (iii) desire to maintain a respectful status in the world, and (iv) desire to provide good life for its people are enlisted as the basic national interest.¹ National interest should not be counterpoised to morality or values as "national interest itself has moral dignity."² Emphasizing the fact that pursuit of national interest is the supreme objective of foreign policy, Nehru, during the formative phase of independent India's foreign policy, said:

Whatever policy we may lay down, the art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. ... We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we may say. But in the ultimate analysis a government functions for the good of the country it governs and no government dare do anything which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of that country. Therefore, whether a country is imperialistic or socialist or communist its foreign minister thinks primarily of the interest of that country. ³

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1. Rashiduddin Khan, "The Crisis of National Interest in India" in The Inter-Relation Between India's Foreign Policy and Defense Policy, Seminar held at the University of Poona by the Department of Military Studies (Poona, n.d.), pp. 21-35.
 2. Hans Morgenthau, "In Defense of the National Interest", pp. 38-39, cited in Robert C. Goad, National Interest and Moral Theory: Foreign Policy in the Sixties (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 271-92.
 3. Jawaharlal Nehru, Independence and After: A Collection of the more important speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru from September 1946 to May 1949 (Delhi, 1949), pp. 199-200.

World Peace

World peace is one of the important objectives of India's foreign policy. It is necessary for stabilizing the world order and for achieving internal economic development and internal consolidation in a smooth way. The Indian leaders, while framing India's foreign policy, paid great attention towards world peace. For them peace was something positive. Speaking at Moscow, on 22 June 1955, Nehru said:

Peace in our view is not merely abstention from war but an active and positive approach to international problems and relations, leading, first to the lessening of the present tension through an attempt to solve our problems by methods of negotiations, and then to a growing co-operation between nations in various ways - cultural and scientific contacts, increase in trade and commerce and exchange of ideas, experience and information. 4

Categorically stressing the need of world peace, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, while touring abroad in September 1971, said: "... Ever since our independence we have put forward the idea of world peace and world cooperation as an enlightened self-interest of India." 5

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4. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches (1953-57) (New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, 1957), pp. 303-4.
 5. India Speaks [Special Speeches of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her tour abroad (September 1971)] (New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India), p. 40; Speech at Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 29 October 1971.

At the time of British withdrawal India was in a very bad shape economically. The partition of the country further aggravated the already deteriorating economic condition of the country because as a result of it there arose a great problem of refugees and their rehabilitation. To provide food, cloth and house to such a vast population was a big problem. Moreover, India had to fight a very costly war just after the partition and that also affected Indian economy very badly. Social situation was not better than economic one, as after the partition it had become very difficult to maintain law and order in the country. Internal consolidation was also not complete. And, thus, to have peace both at home and abroad was in India's national interest. Emphasizing the need of world peace in the Indian context Mrs. Vijay Laxmi Pandit had written:

We need peace not in order to become more powerful or more prosperous but in order to exist. We need it in order to eat, to be clothed and housed and made literate. We need it for these basic unadorned reasons and we will not jeopardize their realization by even a remote word or action that might add to the unhappy tensions that already exist. 6

Elimination of Imperialism, Colonialism
and Racialism

Unless the root causes of war are eliminated peace is not possible. Motivated by this idea India made it a point to work for eliminating the causes of war. It was a firm belief of

6. Vijay Laxmi Pandit, "India's Foreign Policy", Foreign Affairs, vol. XXXIV, April 1956, p. 435.

Indian leaders that there can not be peace until the people subjected to imperialism, colonialism and racial discrimination are liberated. Therefore, India always raised her voice at every available platform against these shameful tendencies. Addressing the third session of the UN General Assembly on 3 November 1948 Nehru said:

It is an astonishing thing that any country should still venture to hold and to set forth this doctrine of colonialism whether it is under direct rule or it is indirectly maintained in some form or the other. After all that happened there is going to be no mere objection to that but active objection, active struggle against any and every form of colonialism in any part of the world. 7

The urge to fight imperialism, colonialism and racialism emerges out of history, culture and ideology. India having been under the British subjugation, knew by her own experience the bitter torturous exploitation and oppression of the people by the imperialists. Moreover, she felt that imperialism, colonialism and racialism were shameful tendencies in human society. Every man is equal and every country has a right to be independent. That is why India always stood for the freedom and equality of the people. She believes that freedom like peace is indivisible⁸ and this is reflected in the outline of India's foreign policy.

7. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 3, p. 320.

8. See Report of All India Congress Committee, Jaipur Session 1948. "In particular, the Congress is interested in the freedom of the nations and the peoples of Asia and Africa who have suffered under various forms and colonialism for many generations." For details see Bimal Prasad, Origins of Indian Foreign Policy (Calcutta, 1960).

Want, disease and illiteracy are also some of the major causes which directly or indirectly lead to war and that is why to work for uprooting these causes is one of the primary objectives of India's foreign policy.

As a means to world peace, India's policy of disarmament and using nuclear power for peaceful purposes only is also a step towards having peace in the world. After exploding the nuclear device on 18 May 1974 India has emerged as a nuclear nation but she has made her stand clear that she will use nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes.

International Co-operation

Securing economic and technological aid has also been an important objective of India's foreign policy. At the time of independence India was in a very bad economic condition. Even now, though a large percentage of population is agrarian yet the country is not self-sufficient in foodgrains and raw materials for industries.⁹ It is so when since independence agricultural production has increased by about 80 per cent. Thus the condition of Indian economy at the time of independence can easily be imagined. The shortage of capital and technical know-how was felt very badly in India. Though she had vast natural

9. Out of the total population of 547.95 million (80 per cent rural and 19.9 per cent urban) in 1971, the total working force was 183.61 million of which 126 million or 68.6 per cent was engaged in agricultural pursuit. Progress of Agriculture in India (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, October 1972), p. 7.

10. Ibid., p. 3.

resources and man-power yet for exploiting these assets she needed help from developed countries. Foreign aid is basically a programme of greater effort on the part of India to mobilize her own resources. Once Lal Bahadur Shastri, clarifying India's stand on foreign aid, said: "We do need help but what we seek should be the minimum, and it should be directed towards making us independent of aid."¹¹

India very well realises the fact that no country in the world is self-sufficient in every commodity and without mutual international co-operation it is not possible for any country and more especially in the Third World to get the things it needs. So, in international sphere India always participates in every act of co-operation with other states where it is performed under the auspices of the United Nations or through bilateral or multilateral treaties and agreements.

Peaceful Co-existence

India has always been in favour of non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Peaceful co-existence in the relations amongst various nations has been India's main objective. The concept and practice of peaceful co-existence were outlined in Panchsheel which consists of five principles: 1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;

11. Speeches of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, June 1964 - May 1965 (New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India), p. 103.

2) non-aggression; 3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; 4) equality and mutual benefit; and 5) peaceful co-existence.

Democracy

India is also a great champion of progressive parliamentary type of democracy - democracy dedicated to planned economic development,¹² peaceful transformation of an old social order to a new one, the uplifting of people from social, economic and technological underdevelopment. The Indian leaders believe that democracy is the best form available for the governance of human beings.¹³ For India socialism and democracy are complementary, meaning thereby that real democracy cannot exist if there is a very great economic inequality.¹⁴ She is deeply concerned if democracy is threatened anywhere in the world and more especially in the neighbouring countries. India rejects the politico-economic systems like fascism, capitalism and communism. Nehru used to say repeatedly that in the world-wide conflict of ideas and politics, India stands for democracy and against

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12. "... We stand in the country for democracy, ... now obviously anything that is opposed to the democratic concept, the real, essentially democratic concept which includes not only political but economic democracy - we ought to be opposed to." Nehru in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates, vol. III, no. 2, 8 March 1948, p. 1768.
 13. Jawaharlal Nehru, The Unity of India: Collected Writings 1937-1942 (London, 1942), as cited in K.T. Narsimha Chari, The Quintessence of Nehru (London, 1961), p. 150.
 14. India Speaks, n. 5, p. 33.

Fascism and the totalitarian state. Talking about communism he once said that:

In India their tactics have been utterly disruptionist and if I may say so, injurious to the very idea they put forward, ... I am talking of the idealist part of it only. I wish to combat every kind of disruptionist tendency in India apart from the fact also that the general policy of communists is conditioned by factors which are extra-territorial. That I do not like either. 16

Obviously, while rejecting these systems like capitalism and communism, India does not want these systems taking roots in her neighbouring countries.

Independent Policy

To have an independent policy in dealing with international affairs have been India's strong desire and she sees to it that she is not deprived of her independent status. India never wants to be dominated by any of the world powers. "We should rather delay our development, industrial or otherwise, than to submit to any country. This is an axiom, which is accepted by everyone in India." ¹⁷ The policy of non-alignment was partially an instrument for carrying out this objective. Emphasizing the need of non-alignment for an independent policy

15. Jawaharlal Nehru, The Unity of India, n. 13, pp. 23-4.

16. Jawaharlal Nehru, Press Conference 1952 (New Delhi, Information Service of India, 1952), p. 28.

17. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 3, p. 308.

Nehru said:

We believe that each country has the right not only to freedom but also to decide its own policy and way of life. Only thus can true freedom flourish and a people grow according to their genius. 18

The idea of non-alignment was voiced by India at various international platforms. It suited the position of India and other members of Afro-Asian community. Nehru was the first and the greatest spokesman of the non-alignment policy and following him other leaders like Nasser, Tito, and Sukarno also, adopted it as one of the best means for obtaining the foreign policy objectives. Non-alignment is often mistaken by other states as a policy of neutralism. However, the truth is just contrary to it. Explaining what non-alignment is, Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India said:

In foreign policy we have adopted what is known as non-alignment.... Non-alignment to us did not mean being neutral or unconcerned with what was happening or even not having relationships with countries of the military blocs. It merely meant that we could not join a military bloc and we would not be guided by any other country. That is, we reserve the right to judge each international issue on its merits and keeping in view our national interests and interest of world peace. And we feel that in the context of our recent history it continues to be necessary and beneficial and that it will give us strength to meet the challenges that confront us internationally. 19

18. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 4, p. 49.

19. India Speaks, n. 5, pp. 30-31.

Thus, India always has been against making any military alliance with any country. There have been talks in various circles from time to time and more especially after the shock of 1962 to form a federation or military organization keeping defence in view. While government took note of the need for emphasizing the Asian context and form in India's foreign policy it rejected the idea of forming any group. Indira Gandhi told the Lok Sabha on 2 March 1966;

The Government policy on this matter has been clear and it remains the same, which is that we believe that making such pacts does not only not lead to peace but may actually increase tensions; also in certain cases it may impinge on our independence. 20

It was in the pursuit of world peace that India adopted the policy of non-alignment and kept herself away from military pacts. It was because of the successful implementation of the policy of non-alignment that India could get economic and technical aid from both the American and the Soviet bloc at the time when both countries had very tense relationship.

Friendship with all, with special
interest in Asia

Another very important objective of India's foreign policy is to have friendly relations with every state in the world and more especially with the states in Asia. India has always championed the cause of Asia and has worked for its place in international sphere. Asia having suffered immensely in the

past from foreign domination and exploitation is determined to end it. In India's opinion any attack on the freedom of the people in any part of Asia affects the rest of the great continent and thus obviously India cannot remain indifferent towards the happenings in Asia.

Justifying India's greater interest in Asian affairs, Nehru said:

It is fitting that India should play her part in this new phase of Asian development. Apart from the fact that India herself is emerging into freedom and independence, she is the natural centre and focal point of the many forces at work in Asia. Geography is a compelling factor and geographically she is so situated as to be the meeting point of Western and Northern and Eastern and South-East Asia. 21

India's cultural influence on the Asian countries also played a vital role behind her interest in Asia. But India is interested only in seeing Asia prosperous, dignified and on its own. Clarifying India's position in Asian affairs, Nehru said:

We have no designs against anybody; ours is the great design of promoting peace and progress all over the world.... We propose to stand on our own legs and to co-operate with all others who are prepared to co-operate with us. 22

Even before independence, India's leaders often expressed their concern for the Asian countries because the problems before the countries of Asia were more or less of the similar nature,

21. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches September 1946 - April 1961 (New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting), p. 250.

22. Ibid., p. 251.

as the problems of defense, getting rid of feudal structure and establishment of democratic institutions, development of industry and agriculture and rapid raising of the standard of living of the masses.²³

In view of India's geographical location in Asia and her cultural bonds and common interests with Asian countries there were talks of some kind of Asian Federation.²⁴ Commenting on the idea of an Asian Federation Nehru said:

I am convinced that co-ordination of various countries in the Middle East, India and South-East Asia is not only possible but exceedingly likely in the future. The question of an Asiatic Federation is perhaps premature but some kind of closer association between these countries is necessary both for defence and trade purposes.²⁵

While emphasizing her deep concern for her neighbours India always made it clear that she has no designs on her part to gain leadership among the Asian countries. She was quite aware of the fact that because of her special, very important geo-political position based on the vastness of her area, manpower, natural resources and stable government her move for friendship in the area also can be misunderstood. So, from

23. Nehru's speech quoted in Dorothy Norman, Nehru: The First Sixty Years, Vol. II (New Delhi, 1965), p. 198.

24. H. Venkatasubbiah, "Prospects of an Asian Union", India Quarterly, vol. 5, No. 2, April-June 1948⁹, pp. 99-112.

25. Dorothy Norman, n. 23, p. 118.

Nehru to Indira Gandhi, India always have been clarifying her stand over Asia for not having any desire for leadership. Clarifying India's stand over the issue, Lal Bahadur Shastri said:

We seek no leadership of the Afro-Asian group, we are content to be humble collaborators with our sister nations in Africa and Asia in the common cause of world peace and freedom of people. 26

Prompted by the objective of forging closer relations with the Afro-Asian world India initiated steps to call an Asian Conference in 1947 in New Delhi. The conference was proposed to help in promoting good relations with neighbouring countries and in pooling ideas and experience with a view to raising living standards. It was thought that the conference will be instrumental in strengthening cultural, social and economic ties among the Asian people.²⁷ The resolutions adopted at this conference had following features:

- (a) to promote the study and understanding of Asian problems and world aspects;
- (b) to foster friendly relations and co-operation among the peoples of Asia and between them and the rest of the world; and
- (c) to further the progress and well-being of the people of Asia.

26. Speeches of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, n. 11, p. 6.

27. For the agenda see A.K. George, "Asian Regionalism and India's Early Initiatives: The Two Asian Conferences", India Quarterly, July-September 1971, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, p. 239.

In 1948, the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution on the independence of Indonesia. In a speech delivered at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, on 22 March 1949, Nehru expressed India's concern to Asia. He said:

The problem of Indonesia is more important to us than many European problems.... If some kind of colonial domination continues in Indonesia and is permitted to continue, it will be a danger to the whole of Asia, to us in India as well as to other countries. 28

Thus, India's objectives in Asia were in short to support the liberation movements, to try for elimination of disease, illiteracy and poverty, and to work for economic and technological development of Asia so that Asia could achieve the place equal to others in the international family and its people also could lead a dignified life which they were deprived of for nearly two centuries because of foreign domination. For this India always worked vigorously and participated in many aid programmes in the Asian and world forums.

Approach Towards the Neighbours

Though it has been a general objective of India's foreign policy to have friendly relations with every state yet, as has been said earlier also, it has been India's consistent objective to have friendly relations with neighbouring countries in particular.

Towards the neighbouring countries India's objectives and policy have been quite clear and her performance towards achieving these objectives have been guarded by practical wisdom.

With neighbouring countries, as with others also, India believes in peaceful co-existence and co-operation. She has special trade relations with these countries. India believes in non-interference in others internal affairs yet at certain occasions she could not remain an indifferent observer keeping in view her national interests.

While informing the Constituent Assembly about the instructions given to the Indian delegates about voting in the UN Nehru made clear India's approach towards international conflicts. He said:

... it is perfectly natural that in our desire to have friendship with other powers, we avoid doing anything which might irritate. As a matter of fact we go as far as possible to try and win over. It is not our purpose to enter into other people's quarrels. If I may say, I have more and more come to the conclusion that the less we interfere in international conflicts, the better unless our own interest is involved, for this reason that it is not in consonance with our dignity just to interfere without any effect being produced. Either we should be strong enough to produce some effect or we should not interfere at all. I am not anxious to put my fingers in every international pie. Unfortunately sometimes one cannot help it. One is dragged into it. 29

29. Indian Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates, vol. III, no. 2, 8 March 1948, p. 1767.

Democracy is another important objective India wants to see established in the countries neighbouring her. However, it has not been clarified by the Indian foreign policy-makers that what type of democracy India wants in the neighbouring countries.

India's special interest in neighbouring countries is particularly guided by her concern for security. The neighbouring states have a great importance from strategic point of view. If the neighbouring states are weak economically and politically, India's security is threatened. So friendly, stable, and strong government in neighbouring countries is India's national interest and obviously, national interest is the supreme objective of India's foreign policy.

With the view of India's security problem, the two regions - the Indian Ocean and the Himalayan Kingdoms - are of particular importance. The importance of Indian Ocean can hardly be overestimated for India's security and prosperity. The great part of her external trade passes through it. Her industrial development, commercial relations and communication with other countries depend largely upon it. So India needs to be friendly with all the countries on Indian Ocean. A threat to any one of them is a threat to India's security also.

The strategic importance of the Himalayan Kingdoms was clearly envisaged during the British period. Lord Curzon, while considering the problem of security of India, said:

India is like a fortress, with the vast most^a of the sea on two of her faces and with mountains for her walls which are sometimes, by no means of inseparable height and admit of being easily penetrated, extends a glacis of varying breadth and dimension. We do not want to occupy it, but we also can not afford to see it occupied by our foes. We are quite content to let it remain in the hands of our allies and friends, but if rival and unfriendly influences creep upto it and lodge themselves right under our walls, we are compelled to intervene because a danger would thereby grow up that could one day menace our security.... He would be a shortsighted commander who merely manned his rampart in India and did not look beyond. 30

This statement of Lord Curzon remained valid even after several decades. It shows the importance of the neighbours in terms of India's security.

Thus, India's major foreign policy objectives have been to achieve world peace, to work for eradication of imperialism, colonialism and racialism without which peace is not possible, to champion the cause of the liberation of subject people; to work for the elimination of want, disease and illiteracy, to try to curb cold war, to have an independent policy towards international affairs and international co-operation. India supports democracy and does not appreciate the systems like autocracy or dictatorship. Nevertheless, she believes in peaceful co-existence. All these objectives of India's foreign policy become more meaningful and significant in the context of Third World as the third world faces the problems of imperialism,

30. Cited by J.C. Kundra, India's Foreign Policy 1947-54 (Djakarta, 1955), pp. 32-33.

colonialism and racialism; and poverty, disease and want more acutely. But India's concern is more with her neighbouring countries as the question of security also is involved with it. In the context of the neighbouring countries India's foreign policy objective has been very clear and consistent and that is, to have a friendly, democratic, economically strong and politically stable government.

Chapter II

INDIA'S MILITARY HELP TO BURMA 1948-49

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Burma achieved independence from the British rule on 4 January 1948, Only three months after independence the nationalist government of Burma was called upon to deal with the problem created by internal insurrection. Besides mobilising internal sources the government also depended upon external assistance from friendly countries, including India. This provided the first opportunity to the Government of free India to help one of its next-door neighbours. Before going into the details of the nature of the help given by India it will be better to look back to the major dimensions of the Indo-Burmese relations.

Determinants of Indo-Burmese Relations

Often referred as Suvarnabhumi in early Indian literature Burma was a province of farther India from 1886 to 1937 under the British and thus shares with India common heritage of British rule. Apart from the fact that India and Burma both suffered the same way under the imperialistic yoke of Britain till achieving independence in 1947/48, both have had close relations since the ancient times when propagators of Buddhism travelled from India to Burma and preached the great religion there. Burma adopted¹ Buddhism which has its great impact on Burmese civilization.

1. See for instance, Maung Htin Aung, A History of Burma (Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 5.

Geographically, Burma is India's immediate neighbour in the east having a common border of 1,474 kms. The Indian States of Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, and the Union Territories of Arunachal and Mizoram touch the border line of Burma. Though politically Burma has been a part of India from 1886 to 1937 yet nature has separated the two states by a horseshoe of hills that are offshoots of the Tibetan Himalayas.

India and Burma have close trade relations. Burma is rich in natural resources. It is rich in minerals like silver, tin and tungsten. The amount of rice, timber and oil it produces is not only sufficient for itself but it exports them also and India is one of its customers of rice and oil. Till independence and for some time afterwards also, India practically depended on Burma for her oil and rice. Before the beginning of the second World War India used to import roughly 1½ million tonnes of rice from Burma. When during the War the Japanese occupied Burma India had to face a great food crisis.

The case of Indian immigrants is another example of the interdependence between India and Burma. The immigrants of the

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"The Jatakas clearly mentioned Indian merchants sailing to Suvarnabhumi, 'the land of gold' across the ocean. Although it is possible that the Jatakas were collected only after Buddha's passing away, they had been compiled at least by the time of Asoka.... He sent to distant lands a number of religious missions, one of which reached Suvarnabhumi, converting its people to Buddhism."

2. See B.S.N. Murti, Nehru's Foreign Policy (New Delhi, 1953), p. 147.

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earlier period were absorbed in the Burmese population. The beginning of Indian immigrants to Burma, on any appreciable scale, therefore, may be dated to 1852. The British annexation of the province of Pegu and of Upper Burma opened up a new chapter in the history of Indian immigrations into Burma. Man-power was largely needed in skilled and unskilled labour, clerks traders, engineers, etc. because Britishers wanted to develop Burma as an Indian province. A big number of workers was required for the railways, post-offices and such other services.

The greatest factor that attracted Indians to Burma was high salaries and wages. The field for employment was also quite wide in comparison with India as after British occupation Burma started developing big rice-fields and thus it needed more and more men to work. Normally, some 3 lakhs of Indians yearly entered the port of Rangoon alone.⁴ In 1941, the Indian population in Burma floating as well as permanent numbered over 11 lacks.⁵ Indian labour played an important role in the new economy of Burma. Burmese labour was not available in sufficiency. It was the definite policy of the British government to encourage Indian immigration in order to ensure the cultivation of land.

3. B.R. Pearn, Racial Relations (England, 1946), p. 6.

4. W.S. Desai, India and Burma, A Study (The Indian Council of World Affairs, 1954), p. 27.

5. Ibid.

Apart from the higher scale of pay, working conditions in Burma were also better. There were such acts like Factory Act and Mines Act which gave a sigh of relief to the Indian labour there. But at the close of the first World War relations between Indians in Burma and Burmese started straining as Burmese started realising Indians' dominating positions in every walk of life of Burma. The Britishers were fanning this anti-Indian policy and were acquiring a pro-Burmese posture as having an anti-Indian attitude. They did not want Indians and Burmese united lest Burmese also demand national independence. Because the illwill towards Indians was getting deeper and deeper in Burmese heart and Britishers also wished it, the ultimate result was the Indo-Burmese separation in 1937.⁶

But by becoming a separate political entity the relations between India and Burma were not broken. There was a large number of Indian immigrants still there who had their investments, jobs, and trade. The two peoples continued as trade partners and even today beside cultural, social, political and religious bonds, India and Burma have several trade agreements in between themselves.

Political condition also played a vital role in Indo-Burmese relations. Since 1886 when after third Anglo-Burmese war Burma was made an Indian province and was administered by Britishers, India and Burma shared the suffering and humiliation

6. For details on the immigrant problem, see Pearn, n. 3.

of an imperialistic foreign rule which was flourishing by exploiting them. The link with India was the most important factor that contributed in the awakening of nationalism in Burma. The Indian National Congress was formed in Burma also as Burma was an Indian province. After the Japanese occupation, Burma was proclaimed independent and Dr. Ba Maw was made the Head of the State. A section of Indians thought of liberating India by attacking the Britishers from outside by the help of Japan. Subhash Chandra Bose was the most prominent among them. They decided to make Burma a base for the military operations. In the struggle for independence also India and Burma decided to struggle shoulder to shoulder. When Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan called an assembly of the greater East-Asian Nations in Tokyo on 5th and 6th November 1943, Ba Maw, the Adipadi (derived from Sanskrit Adhipati, meaning thereby the Head) of Burma, publicly and with pride acknowledged the popular Burmese feelings towards India. While speaking on the importance of freeing India he said:

I am proud to admit that much of the political philosophy that the Burmese learned, was learned from India. Burma in the past derived her religion, philosophy from India. In the present, I, as a leader of my people, cheerfully acknowledge that we learned much of our political philosophy also from India. 7

7. AS quoted in Desai, n. 2, p. 83.

With this background of religious, cultural, commercial, economic and political relationship between the two States we now come to the nature of the insurrection in Burma.

Burma Faces Insurrection

Burma achieved independence on 4 January 1948, and soon after independence it had to witness a period of bloodshed and chaotic conditions. Different forces which were till then struggling for national independence now found themselves on different roads.

Conservatives and Liberals, Capitalists and Labour, Socialists and Communists, the landed gentry and the landless peasants had made common cause against the British rule and foreign vested interests. But soon the ambitions of individuals, the rivalries of the groups, the clash of ideologies and differences to the mode and the pace of achieving national objectives - all these created stresses and strains in the AFPFL (Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League) and they found expression in open dissensions. 8

These social dissensions took the form of a crisis when on 28 March 1948 the Communists revolted against the government in power and just after four months of the beginning of the Communist insurrection the 'White Band' of PVOs (People's Volunteers Organization) led by Po Kun and Lu Ya Yuang took arms in open rebellion against the government. Taking advantage of the government's preoccupation with these two sets of insurgents, members of the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) and

8. "Burma Since Separation" by Research Staff of the Indian Council of World Affairs, published in India Quarterly, vol. 5, 1949, p. 357.

Mon National Defense Organization (MNDO) became more subversive in their activities. It was late December 1948 and early January 1949 that KNDO launched an armed campaign against the government. When the joint menace of Communists and White Band PVOs was about to be curbed KNDO and MNDO insurrection assumed formidable proportions. Among all the insurgents KNDO were the most formidable, and their rebellion put the government into "unprecedented straits".⁹

The main forces party to the insurrection were as follows:

(1) The Burma Communist Party, or "White Flag" Communists, led by Thakin Than Tun; (2) the Communist Party of Burma or "Red Flag" communists, a small "Trotskyites" group of dissident communists, led by Thakin Soe; (3) the Karen National Defence Organization led by Saw Ba U Gui until his death in 1950; (4) the "White Band" or the anti-government section of the People's Volunteer Organization; (5) the Mon National Defense Organization operating chiefly from the Mon area of the Tenasserim; and (6) the Muslim Mujahids in the Arakan area, border of Burma and the then East Pakistan.

Broadly speaking, there were two major groups heading the insurrection; one the Communists and the other - the Karens, because PVO more often ideologically and practically joined the Communists and MNDO and other groups were very minor groups.

9. Thakin Nu, Towards Peace and Democracy (Ministry of Information, Rangoon, 1949), p. 201.

White Band PVO like Communists had rejected the Nu-Attlee¹⁰ Treaty which formally recognized Burma's Independence, and accepted the Communists contention that the independence obtained was not real since Burma was still inside the British sphere of influence, still within the sterling bloc, and still dependent on the British for arms and aid.¹¹

Here it is better to probe into the reasons which led these groups to indulge in the insurrection. The Burma Communist Party (BCP) started showing hostile attitude to AFPFL after the Nu-Attlee Treaty was concluded. They did not like it and so gave a call for an armed revolution to change the system. According to them, this was the way to secure freedom from "capitalists, expansionists, and imperialists". They denounced Thakin Nu and his Government as "an imperialist tool" in the suppression of "freedom and democracy", the result of whose policy is the bands of colonial slavery and of unleashing the civil war against the people. To counteract all this the BCP called for "a fighting united front from below" as the basis of a "national rising" in order to bring people's government through the democratic revolution.¹²

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10. For details of Nu-Attlee Treaty and Burmese reaction to it see, John F. Cady, A History of Modern Burma (New York, 1958), pp. 568-77.
 11. See Maung Htin Aung, n. 1, pp. 312-3.
 12. Frank N. Trager, Burma from Kingdom to Republic (London, 1966), p. 97.

Karens were also threatening for the insurrection. The majority group of the Karens under the leadership of Saw Ba U Gyi formed the Karen National Union (KNU) and came out of the Government over the issue of the right to secede. They wanted an autonomous Karen state. The constitutional provision for a Karen state was rejected by the KNU leaders as an inadequate recognition of their territorial and political demands. In the summer of 1947 the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) was established. By that time they made it clear that the KNDO, the military wing of the KNU stands for a Karen state, separate from Burma and to get this demand fulfilled they too joined the insurrection in late December 1948.

It is interesting to note here that these insurgent groups who were co-operating with each other against the government had nothing in common among themselves except one point programme - overthrowing the government. The exact strength of the insurgents was not certain. In October 1951 Burmese Prime Minister Thakin Nu estimated it as between 3,000 and 4,000 whereas a correspondent of the New York Times gave it three months earlier at 15,000 to 20,000 consisting of 5,000 to 10,000 "White Flag" Communists, 5,000 Karens, 2,000 "White Band" forces, and a few hundred others including a large number of dacoits who took advantage of the political disorders to carry out criminal activities in many rural areas. ¹³ The chaotic conditions

13. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1950-52 (London), p. 12062.

encouraged the tendency of crime. Some Indians as well as Burmese were even kidnapped and were released only after the ransom money was paid.¹⁴

During the first six months of 1949 Burma was in a state of civil war. The Communists, the "White Band" of PVO and the Karens operating jointly were able to occupy many areas especially in North and Central Burma.

The insurrection very badly affected Burma's internal condition. Its whole economy was disrupted. Speaking on the eve of the elections Prime Minister Thakin Nu said that the 'cult of the gun' in Burma had caused the death of more than 30,000 Burmese, made over 500,000 people homeless and destitute, and brought fear and insecurity to millions who were not directly affected. In financial terms, the insurrection had caused a loss of more than 3,000,000,000 rupees to the public exchequer.¹⁵

Thakin Nu, while speaking to the nation on 27 February 1950 appealed to the insurgents for a cessation of the "terrorist activities". He said that the lawlessness and terrorism in Burma had reduced the country in the eyes of the world.¹⁶

14. See Desai, n. 4, p. 101.

15. According to Burmese Government Information Department as quoted in Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1950-52 (London), p. 12064.

16. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1948-50 (London), p. 10041.

India Helps Burma

The crisis created for the Burmese government by the insurrection was naturally a matter of great concern for the Indian government owing to intimate and extensive ties between the two countries.

In order to help Burma, Nehru initiated a conference of India, Great Britain, Pakistan, Australia and Ceylon on 25 February 1949. On the same date it was officially announced in New Delhi that the Governments of India, Pakistan and Britain had "followed with anxious interest" the developments in Burma. They had been in close touch with the Burmese Government and that advantage was to be taken of the presence in India of Dr. Evatt (Australian Minister for External Affairs) and Gordon Bottomley, MP (UK Secretary for Overseas Trade) to hold informal¹⁷ discussion on the Burmese situation.

On 26 February 1949, this conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers issued a joint communique which called for an early settlement in Burma through conciliation and that a joint¹⁸ communique be sent to U Nu to make certain suggestions. Burmese, however, did not like this particular proposal. The conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers held in London in May 1949 had agreed on the point that law and order could not be restored in Burma unless the Burmese government were sustained and in the

17. For details see ibid., p. 10041.

18. Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 29 February 1949.

process the Indian, UK, Pakistani and Ceylonese ambassadors in Rangoon were appointed to a committee to advice on the help to be given to Burma in the form of money, consumer goods and also the arms.¹⁹ To consider the reports submitted by these countries the next Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference was held at Colombo in January 1950 which granted a loan of £6 million to Burma.

India contributed generously to this loan. Besides this financial and diplomatic support India also rendered some military help to the Burmese government. The nature of the military help given to Burma is, however, not known. It included some arms as there are scattered references to it. Hugh Tinker has mentioned the Indian arms aid to Burma. He writes:

Somehow, the desparate months from February to April 1949 were endured and the Government was able to rally its scattered forces. Reinforcement of arms and equipments were provided by Britain and India. 20

Ton that Thien has written that India sent arms and ammunition to Burma and aircraft to Air Burma Limited and gave loans to cover some of the losses caused by the insurrection.²¹

19. See, Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1948-50 (London), p. 10625.

20. Hugh Tinker, The Union of Burma - A Study of the First Years of Independence (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 323.

21. Ton That Thien, India and South East Asia, April 1947-1960 A Study of India's Policy towards the South East Asian Countries (Geneva, 1963), pp. 169-170.

Werner Levi also has referred to the Indian arms aid to Burma. ²²

However, the exact figure of the arms given is not available. ²³

Explaining India's help to Burma, Nehru said:

... our government and our people are interested in the present and the future of Burma. It is not our purpose - and it is not right for us - to interfere in any way with other countries but wherever possible we give such help as we can to our friends. We have ventured to do so in regard to Burma too, without any element of interference. ²⁴

India's arms assistance to Burma was confirmed subsequently by Nehru. In a press conference in Delhi on 6 March 1949 Nehru ²⁵ said that India had supplied arms to the Burmese government.

Later, on 13 May 1953 a question was asked in Parliament whether a B.S.I.N. ship S.S. Pandua, loaded with boxes of cartridges at Calcutta was bound for Malaya or the Far East, Nehru replied ²⁶ that the shipment was for Burma.

This timely concern shown by India which resulted in a Commonwealth loan to Burma at the time when Burma was not a member of the Commonwealth helped Burma at the crucial time when it was at the edge of going to pieces.

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22. Werner Levi, Free India in Asia (University of Minnesota Press, 1952), p. 111.
 23. See Snamani S. Yamben, Indo-Burmese Relations From Independence to Revolution (1948-1962) (Dissertation submitted for the degree in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi), chapter 2, p. 3.
 24. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches September 1946 - April 1961 (New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India), p. 292.
 25. Ton That Thien, India and South East Asia, n. 21, p. 170.
 26. Parliamentary Debates, vol. 2, part I, 13 May 1953, col.3082.

Here, one must analyse the reasons why India took an initiative for calling a conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers to consider the situation in Burma and why she rendered military help to Burma. It is to be noted that India herself was weak and had just become independent and was a British dominion. Even then her decision of helping Burma to suppress the insurrection had various factors behind it.

The Reasons why India Helped Burma

Looking on the map we find that Burma is bordering India in the South-east. Therefore, Burma occupies a strategic position. Burma is the weakest link in the defense system of the Southeast Asia. The control of Bay of Bengal by an enemy power imperils the security of India.²⁷ Describing Burma's strategic importance Sardar K.M. Panikkar wrote:

The defence of Burma is in fact the defence of India, and it is India's primary concern no less than Burma's to see that its frontiers remain inviolate. In fact no responsibility can be considered too heavy for India when it comes to the question of defending Burma. 28

During the year of the second World War, when Japan had occupied Burma, there was a plan to make Burma a base to attack and liberate India militarily.²⁹ This also shows the strategic importance of Burma to India. That is why India had

27. See Murti, n. 2, p. 147.

28. K.M. Panikkar, The Future of South-East Asia: An Indian View (New York, 1943), pp. 40-41.

29. Desai, n. 4, p. 81.

to be concerned about the happenings in Burma and obviously it was in India's interest not to permit Burma going into pieces.

Secondly, at the time of the insurrection the Government of Burma under the Prime Ministership of Thakin Nu had very friendly relations with India. It was a popularly elected government and was of the same nature as was the government of India. Both governments were democratic and had socialism as their ultimate goal as the internal policy of the government. Moreover, in dealing with foreign affairs also both of them believed in non-alignment and followed more or less the same foreign policy. And this is one of the reasons why Nehru, a great champion of democracy, socialism and non-alignment wanted the Government of Thakin Nu to become stable and stronger.

Thirdly, the insurrection in Burma was of a mixed nature. There were Communists: "White Flag" and "Red Flag", "White Band" PVO, KNDO, MNDO and others which differed among themselves on various points. In fact, Karens were anti-communists, and looking at the nature of the insurrection it was very much clear that they could not have formed a stable government because if any of these forces had got power the other would have tried to overthrow it. In that case AFPFL, the ruling party, only was in the position to provide a stable government in Burma. There is no doubt that in the case of neighbouring states it has always been India's consistent

policy to have a friendly stable government there.

There were some other very important factors behind India's active interest in the Burmese situation. The one very important factor was that India at that time was the largest consumer of the Burmese rice. From the period 1948 to 1953 the flow of rice from Burma to India was 90 per cent of India's rice imports.³⁰ While rice was the most prominent item of India's import from Burma the other important thing which India was importing from Burma was petrol which was largely consumed in India. Because of the insurrection in Burma India was not getting her normal quota of these imports.

Another important factor was that the Burmese insurrection could also encourage the Indian ethnic minorities, particularly those living along with the Indo-Burmese border, particularly because at that time the Nagas in the eastern states of India were very much dissatisfied and wanted to have a separate state for themselves. The Karens' insurrection with a demand for a Karen state separate from Burma could have inspired Nagas also to revolt in India.

The Communist victory over China was also of an alarm to India. Nehru felt that communism was not a suitable system in the given conditions of the developing world. When he visited Burma between 20-23 June 1950, at a press conference in Rangoon on 22 June, he re-emphasized his belief that communism

30. Hugh Tinker, The Union of Burma (New York, 1961), p. 252.

would not succeed in India. It would be unable to overthrow the strong urge of nationalism and he denounced the terrorists in India and in other Asian countries³¹ which in the given context also included Burma. Not wanting communism in Asia he had reasons to help the present government in Burma to suppress the insurrection to which Communists were the largest party and which was initiated by the communists only. Sardar Patel's letter dated 3 November 1949 written to Nehru when the latter was abroad, throws enough light on the Indian view of the Burmese insurrection. He wrote:

The situation in Burma continues to be unsatisfactory. There is no sign yet that the civil war is nearing its end or the Government forces are definitely on the top of the insurgents.... There is no evidence yet that the communist victories in China are influencing the situation in the north of Burma. But such victories will undoubtedly encourage the forces of disorder in neighbouring countries and will encourage subversive elements in fomenting trouble which they can exploit to their political advantage.... Our eyes must, therefore, inevitably rest on our eastern and north eastern frontiers. We can not afford to relax in our efforts to seal off those frontiers against suspect and indisposed foreigners. 32

Thus, another possible reason why India was so eager and enthusiastic in helping the Burmese government might be the fear of the intervention from another quarter. Bands of Chinese communists were reported to have been active in the Yunnan province just across the border. The Chinese communist

31. Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 23 June 1950.

32. Durgadas, ed., Sardar Patel's Correspondence (Ahmedabad, 1973), p. 388.

infiltration could become an important factor in the Burmese
civil war.³³

Another very important reason behind the aid was the factor that the welfare of 700,000 Indians in Burma at that time³⁴ was involved with the problem. It is very obvious that when a country faces internal chaotic conditions it cannot guarantee the welfare of the citizens of another country. It may be repeated here that some of the Indians living in Burma had been kidnapped by the insurgents for ransom money. For India the question of the welfare of the Indian nationals was of a great concern.

When the insurrection in Burma had not taken a very serious turn and was in its initial stages, Nehru had shown his concern to the problem and had given the reasons for the same. His letter from London to Sardar Patel dated 13 October 1948 showed India's national interest involved in the security of Burma. He wrote:

... Of course, when there is chaos on the border, adventurous elements are likely to cross over and all precautions should be taken.

If Burma goes to pieces, this will undoubtedly have a serious effect on India. Not so much because it will be made the base for operation in India but because our trade and people there will suffer. 35

33. The Economist (London), 29 May 1949.

34. New York Times, 13 April 1949.

35. Durgadas, n. 32, p. 665.

These were the reasons for which India, when requested by the Burmese Prime Minister Thakin Nu for the arms aid ³⁶ came forward promptly to render help.

The keen interest that India took in the Burmese problem and the timely help she gave to Burma in the form of money and arms at the time of crisis for the newly founded independence and democracy there, not only contributed in saving a friendly neighbouring government sharing the common ideals in home and foreign affairs going into pieces but was instrumental in strengthening the bonds of an age-old friendship between the two states and in serving the national interest. India's this act of help was adequately acknowledged by the ³⁷ Burmese Prime Minister.

36. New York Times, 13 April 1949.

37. Thakin Nu, n. 9, p. 201.

Chapter III

INDIA'S MILITARY AID TO NEPAL 1951-53

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Being her immediate neighbour, bound by the silken bonds of geography, history and culture, Nepal acquires a very significant position in India's foreign policy. Nepal is situated on the southern slopes of the Himalayan range. She separates the two biggest and most important nations of Asia - India and China. After the Communist victory over China and by China's clear intentions over Tibet, Nepal became more and more important to India. Describing India's special relations with Nepal Nehru once said:

Ever since I have been associated with the Government, I have taken a great deal of interest in Nepal. We have desired not only to continue our old friendship with that country but to put it on a still firmer footing. ... We recognise Nepal as an independent country and wish her well. But even a child knows that one cannot go to Nepal without passing through India. Therefore, no other country can have as intimate relationship with Nepal as ours is. We would like every other country to appreciate the intimate geographical and cultural relationship that exists between India and Nepal. 1

India's objectives in Nepal

India viewed her relations with Nepal in the light of this special relationship. When India became independent, other powers like USA, Britain and China were trying to have their

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1. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches September 1946 - April 1961 (New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961), pp. 435-36.

foothold in Nepal as these countries had their own interests involved there. To Britain Nepal provided a recruiting ground for her army even after 1947. The United States of America also had a keen interest in the developments in Nepal as a major objective of her foreign policy was to contain communism all over the world.² China, Nepal's neighbour in the north had turned communist. She had long standing cultural and historical interests in Nepal. These interests had become intense and acquired political and strategic significance following the developments in China and Tibet during 1949-50. China was naturally interested in making Nepal her stronghold with the objective of propagating communism. All these factors made Nepal a potential ground for the cold war tensions and power rivalries within the region.

In these circumstances it had become India's foremost objective towards Nepal to keep the Kingdom close to herself and away from the conflict of cold war. Stressing India's stand on this point Nehru declared in the Parliament on 6 December 1950:

Nepal was an independent country when India was under British rule, but her foreign relations were largely limited to her relations with the Government functioning in India. When we came into the picture, we assured Nepal that we would not only respect her independence but see, as far as we could, that she developed into a strong and progressive country. We went further in this respect; Nepal began to develop her foreign relations and we welcomed this and did not hinder the process. Frankly, we do not like and shall not brook any foreign interference in Nepal. 3

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2. S.D. Muni, Foreign Policy of Nepal (Delhi, 1973), p. 46.
 3. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 1, p. 435.

This objective becomes further clear by India's Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel's reply dated 9 May 1949 to a communication from S.S. Majithia who was then India's Ambassador to Nepal. Patel wrote, "I agree that we have to wean Nepal away from the western influences which dominated it so long."⁴

Another objective which guided India's policy towards Nepal was to ensure Nepal's security which is deeply linked with India's own security. The occupation of Tibet by China in 1950 aroused the anxiety of India about her own security as there is no natural barriers between India and Nepal. This anxiety was increased more because in some Chinese maps Nepal was shown as Chinese territory and as early as 1939 Mao Tse-tung had said that Nepal was a dependent state of China.⁵ In fact, the Chinese had regarded Tibet as palm and Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh and NEFA as the five fingers of Tibet.⁶

And for this reason India was deeply concerned with the security of Nepal because as has been said earlier, it was closely related with her own security. On 17 March 1950 Nehru declared in the Indian Parliament:

4. Durga Das, ed., Sardar Patel's Correspondence, Vol. 5 (Ahmedabad, 1973), p. 33.

5. Economist (London), 27 August 1960, p. 841.

6. As quoted in B.K. Jha, Indo-Nepalese Relations (1951-1972) (Bombay, 1973), p. 4.

Geographically, Nepal is almost a part of India, although she is an independent country. ... It was clear that in so far as certain developments in Asia were concerned, the interests of India and Nepal were identical. For instance, to mention one point, it is not possible for the Indian Government to tolerate an invasion of Nepal from anywhere, even though there is no military alliance between the two countries. Any possible invasion of Nepal, ... would inevitably involve the safety of India. 7

On 6 December 1950 Nehru again proclaimed India's policy towards Nepal as far as security was concerned. He said:

Our interest in the internal conditions of Nepal has become still more acute and personal in view of the developments across our borders, in China and Tibet. Apart from our sympathetic interest in Nepal, we were also interested in the security of our own country. From time immemorial the Himalayas have provided us with a magnificent frontier. Of course, they are no longer as impassable as they used to be but they are still fairly effective. We cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened, because that would be a risk to our own security. 8

In pursuance of this objective, India took various steps in her relations with Nepal. A Treaty of peace and friendship was signed on 31 July 1950 between the two countries. The two governments also exchanged letters along with the Treaty. In these letters it was made clear that neither government would tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor and to deal with any such threat, the two governments

7. Jawaharlal Nehru, Speeches 1949-1953 (New Delhi, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, 1954), p. 147.

8. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 1, p. 436.

will make arrangements for counter measures after consulting each other.⁹

Closely related to the concern for security was India's support for democratic movement in Nepal. But before we talk of democracy in Nepal, a peep into its background is essential.

From 1876 to 1950, for nearly a century, Nepal was under the Rana autocracy established by Jung Bahadur and consolidated by his brother successors. Under the Ranas the condition of Nepal was deteriorating day by day. They did not care for the King or for the people. The King was merely titular head and the people of Nepal were suffering from poverty in order to make Ranas' lives more luxurious. There was dissatisfaction among people but they did not know how to revolt against the Ranas or how to express the dissatisfaction. The political system in Nepal needed a thorough change. India since her independence had been taking keen interest in the democratization of Nepal and as an instrument to it, she sent two experts for drawing up a constitution for Nepal.¹⁰ Its recommendations were not agreed upon by the Ranas. The circumstances were favourable enough for the Nepali people to rise into a revolt. The actual action was initiated by King Tribhuvan's dramatic flight to the Indian embassy on 6 November 1950. From the embassy the King was flown to New Delhi on 11 November. This coincided with

9. S.D. Muni, n. 2, pp. 286-87.

10. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives (London), Vol. 8, 1950-52, p. 11210.

with the revolt of Nepali Congress, a political organization which launched a series of attacks across the border in India. From inside also people rose in revolt. The revolt of 1950 in Nepal was meant to overthrow the Ranacracy and to establish a¹¹ democratic system in Nepal.

And at this point of political crisis India was forced to play a very important role. She could not remain a silent spectator because affairs in Nepal were directly related with her own security. Even then India was very conscious about the non-interference in others internal affairs. Earlier also in a letter dated 3 February 1949 written to India's Deputy Prime Minister Patel, the Prime Minister wrote:

Some ministers both of the Central government and provincial government, recently sent a message of goodwill to a meeting of the Nepal Democratic Congress at Calcutta. There was nothing wrong about the messages or about our sympathising with the democratic movement in Nepal, nevertheless, it is not customary for ministers of the government officially to address in this way an organization which is engaged in an agitation against the government of a friendly country. Difficulties arise and the government of the friendly country protests. It is therefore, desirable ... to refrain from sending such messages. 12

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11. For details of the anti-Rana revolt, see Aniruddha Gupta, Politics in Nepal. A Study of Post-Rana Political Development and Party Politics (Allied Publishers, 1964), Chapters 2 and 3; and Bhuwan Lal Joshi and Leo E. Rose, Democratic Innovations in Nepal: A Case Study of Political Acculturation (University of California Press, 1966).
 12. Durga Das, n. 4, p. 37.

But the situation had become quite different in 1950. People had come in an open revolt against the government. The King had taken refuge in India, and moreover India's own national interests like security were at stake. And thus India was dragged to play a very important role in the Nepalese affair which later became the ground in offering military help to Nepal.

After watching carefully the situation in Nepal Nehru in a speech delivered in the Parliament on 17 March said:

Freedom interests us in the abstract as well as in the guise of a practical and, in the context of Asia, a necessary step. If it does not come, forces that will ultimately disrupt freedom itself will be created and encouraged. We have accordingly advised the Government of Nepal, in all earnestness, to bring themselves into line with democratic forces in the line that are stirring in the world today. Not to do is not only wrong, but also unwise from the point of view of what is happening in the world today. 13

On 6 December, again, he declared:

We have stood for progressive democracy not only in our own country but in other countries also. This is specially, when one of our neighbouring countries is concerned. We pointed out to Nepal in as friendly a way as possible that the world was changing rapidly and if she did not make an effort to keep pace with it, circumstances were bound to force her to do so. We did not wish to interfere with Nepal in any way, but at the same time realized that, unless some steps were taken in her internal sphere, difficulties might arise. 14

13. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 7, p. 147.

14. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 1, p. 436.

He further informed the Parliament:

We have tried to advise Nepal to act in a manner so as to prevent any major upheaval. We have tried to find a way, if you like, which will ensure the progress of Nepal and the introduction of or some advance towards democracy in Nepal. We have searched for a way which would, at the same time, avoid the total uprooting of the ancient order. 15

Thus, Nehru advocated a "middle way" in the anti-Rana revolution. By King Tribhuvan's stay at New Delhi and Nepali Congress and Rana Government's confidence in the Government of India, India started negotiations with the parties concerned. On 8 December 1950 the Indian Government submitted a memorandum to the Nepalese Government on constitutional changes in Nepal. Again in January 1951 the Rajaⁿ Government asked New Delhi to mediate between the Ranas and the Nepali Congress to solve the crisis caused by the resignation of 40 Ranas from the high offices. By the mediation of the Government of India a "Delhi Settlement" was concluded which beside other things, initiated¹⁶ the process of democratization in Nepal. And since then it became one of the major concerns for the Government of India to stabilize the new democratic arrangement and to help the Nepalese Government towards that end.

15. ^{Ibid} India, p. 436.

16. K.P. Karunakaran, India in World Affairs 1950-53 (London, 1958), p. 195.

For details of India's role in anti-Rana revolution see S.D. Muni, Foreign Policy of Nepal.

Accordingly, India helped Nepal in several ways to reorganize her administration and to develop the economy of the country. She gave financial assistance. The Indian Ambassador in Nepal stated at a press conference that the total financial aid to Nepal to which the Government of India had already committed herself amounted to Rs. seven crores in 1954. Besides, India supplied trained personnel not only for military training but also for survey and execution of a number of projects, directly or indirectly. Such indirect help from India has largely come through Nepal's membership of various UN organizations like UNESCO, WHO and FAO.

✓ To ensure stability of the new political arrangement in Nepal India rendered military help to Nepal during the period between 1951 to 1953. The role India played in solving Nepal's internal crisis made her position quite dominant in Nepal and it was owing to this dominant position of India that from time to time she had to help Nepal.

Disturbances in Nepal and India's help

During the period 1951 to 1953, four times India rendered military help to Nepal. The first occasion when India was asked for help, Nepal was facing a difficult time because of the terrorist activities by K.I. Singh, a leader of one wing of the Nepali Congress.

17. Y.P. Pant, "Anti-Indian Demonstrations in Nepal - The Post Mortem Analysis", Economic Weekly, 10 July 1954, p. 773.

As has been said earlier, after the revolt in 1950, a settlement was made in New Delhi. According to it a coalition ministry of Ranas and Nepali Congress was formed on 18 February 1951. This ministry itself could not work smoothly and to add fuel to the fire there were internal disturbances also dealing with which was not an easy task for this newly formed government.

The formation of the Rana-Congress coalition under the Delhi settlement was not approved in Nepal's certain political circles. According to them Nepal had surrendered to the wishes of India and in their view the cause of the revolt was marred by the settlement. K.I. Singh along with some of his followers were quite unhappy with the new political arrangement and he refused to accept the settlement which was made by the Government of India's mediation.¹⁸ Unlike the other Nepali Congress forces, he did not surrender arms. As against this, he launched terrorist activities and created panic in some districts of south-west Nepal.

The Government of India received informations from both the Nepalese government and the U.P. government that a gang of over 200 persons under K.I. Singh had committed a large number of dacoities and some murders on the Nepal-Gorakhpur border. A number of individuals who were Indian nationals living near the border also complained directly to the government about the murder of their relatives by this gang and the looting of their

18. See Grishma Bahadur Devkota, Nepal Ko Rajnitik Darpan (Kathmandu, 1960), pp. 44-46.

property. The Government of India received not only general and vague charges but also specific informations about several murders committed in cold blood and numerous dacoities. Cases of rape were also reported. The murders were apart from people killed in actual fighting. The gang of K.I. Singh was reported to be well armed with rifles and automatic weapons. ¹⁹

The U.P. government was also affected by these activities of lawlessness as they had created havoc on Indian side of the border also. Under the circumstances the Government of Nepal found itself incapable of dealing with the reign of terror let loose by K.I. Singh. It, therefore, sought the help of the Government of India, and accordingly a joint action by the Indian and Nepalese forces was proposed. ²⁰

The Government of India readily complied with the request of the Nepalese Government as these disturbances were against India's interests. Moreover, the two governments had agreed in the past to take joint action when criminal activities took place in a considerable number. ²¹ It was agreed upon by both governments that the joint operation should be a speedy one. ²² The Area-Commander came to Nepal with his troops at 9 o'clock in the evening of 19 February 1951. By the joint

19. ^{India,} Parliamentary Debates, Part I, Vol. VI, 12 March 1951, cols. 2163-64.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., col. 2164.

22. Ibid.

action taken by the forces of India and Nepal, leader of the gang K.I. Singh was arrested along with his 357 associates.²³ Large quantities of arms and ammunition and looted property were also captured.²⁴ The joint operation lasted for less than a week. Among many who were captured along with K.I. Singh some were notorious dacoits wanted by U.P. police for serious crimes.²⁵

Replying to a question in the Parliament about India's help to Nepal Nehru gave the details of situation in Nepal and the nature of the help given by India. He explained the cause that prompted in sending the help. He said:

It is the policy of the Government of India not to interfere with the internal affairs of Nepal. When, however, criminal activities take place on considerable scale on the border, the two governments have agreed in the past to take joint action. Indian forces have strict orders not to enter Nepal territory except in such cases of joint action by agreement. It was at the request of and with the permission of the Nepal authorities that a certain number of police and soldiery entered Nepal territory from India for the purpose of this joint action. This was entirely confined to the suppression of a criminal gang and had no political significance.²⁶

K.I. Singh's rebellion in February 1951 was closely followed by the revolt of Kirantis in April 1951 in eastern Nepal. Kirantis and Limbus were against the Central Government

23. Grishma Bahadur Devkota, n. 18, p. 53.

24. See Parliamentary Debates, Part I, Vol. 9, 20 August 1951, col. 465.

25. Parliamentary Debates, n. 19, col. 2164.

26. Ibid.

and that is why they rose in revolt. At the same time Western Nepal also became victim of disturbances where Congress itself was split and different groups were indulging in violent clashes.²⁷ In Taulihawa, Thanda Nagar, Bahadurganj and Kailabas there was reign of terror. Fifteen groups of nearly one thousand strength,²⁸ were terrorising these places. It was difficult to maintain law and order there. The situation was worst in the countryside. In the villages armed bands of dacoits roamed freely while the Bada Hakims (District Governors) found themselves helpless.²⁹ The entire Tarai region was terrorised by people who earlier were in Congress Mukti Sena. They were given arms for revolting against the Ranas but now they had refused to lay down their arms and by the help of these arms they were indulging in anti-national activities. It proved beyond the capability of the Nepal Government which had come into power just a few months back to deal with the situation. Therefore, Nepal government again requested India to help.

Viewing the delicate internal situation of Nepal and having the same consideration as on the previous occasion, India decided to help. On 11 April 1951 the Government of India sent five companies of U.P. Provincial Armed Constabulary and one

27. Gorakhpatra, 10 Chaitra, 2007 V.S. as cited in B.K. Jha, n. 6, p. 64.

28. Ibid.

29. Aniruddha Gupta, n. 11, p. 53.

battalion of Indian troops. ³⁰ The joint operation was successful in restoring peace and order in the disturbed areas and it ³¹ lasted for seven days.

The third time when the Government of India rendered military help to Nepal was in July 1951. As has been told earlier K.I. Singh was arrested in the rebellion of February 1951. He was kept in Bhasrahawa jail. Even while in jail, K.I. Singh was in touch with his followers and the plans to escape from the prison were going on. In the night of 10 July 1951 K.I. Singh escaped from jail and the other day, on 11 July, in the gardens of Piprahia he was proclaimed by his followers the governor of ³² the area. He also occupied the government treasury. At this point of crisis Nepal Government again had to rely on India for the military help to which she readily agreed.

When on 13 July K.I. Singh came to know that Indian forces have come to Nepal to trap him, he fled away leaving his people to guard the government treasury. On 14 July Indian forces freed the government treasury and arrested the watch-keepers. Even after the arrival of Indian forces, K.I. Singh occupied Parasi. The Indian forces attacked Parasi also. K.I. Singh took shelter in hills and forests. Indian forces followed him but

20. See Parliamentary Debates, Part I, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 17 May 1951, col. 4240; p. 4358.

31. Parliamentary Debates, n. 24.

32. K.P. Srivastava, Nepal ki Kahani (Delhi, 1955), p. 176.

he could not be arrested. This time the joint operation³³ lasted for two weeks.

AS soon as the situation came under control the Indian forces returned to India.³⁴ At the successful completion of the operation the All India Radio announced that by the joint operations of the Indian and Nepalese forces situation in Bhairahawa district (in western Nepal's Terai region) has come to an end.³⁵ At that time there was no news of K.I. Singh. Later K.I. Singh and another leader Colonel Khadga Bahadur Singh Gurang were arrested along with 30 persons in Western Dhorpatan, sixty miles from Palpa by the Indian forces on 10 August 1951.³⁶

The Embassy of Nepal in India published a bulletin which expressed its government's gratitude towards the Indian government's military help in suppressing the disturbances and helping in the maintenance of law and order in the Kingdom.³⁷

During the following two years, internal condition in Nepal was relatively calm and quiet. The trouble arose again in July 1953 in south-west Nepal where about 700 insurgents led by Bhimdutt Pant (alternatively described as a communist and as a follower of the left-wing Congress leader K.I. Singh) who had

33. See Parliamentary Debates, n. 24.

34. Grishma Bahadur Devkota, n. 18, p. 53.

35. Ibid.

36. K.P. Srivastava, n. 32, p. 177.

37. Grishma Bahadur Devkota, n. 18, p. 53.

then escaped from the prison,³⁸ and had raised a considerable band of lawless people - armed with guns, rifles, khukries and spears. He suddenly attacked the police station at Brahmdev Mandi in south-west Nepal on 1 July 1953, seized fire-arms and private property. The trouble was mainly inspired by the motives of loot and brigandism. Thereafter, Bhimdutt and his men moved towards Billary, Kanchanpur, pillaging villages on the way. Billary was attacked and looted on 8 July and atrocities were committed on the local people. The rugged mountaineous Terai which separated this area from Kathmandu made it difficult for the Nepalese government to reinforce its troops in the area. When the Nepalese government learnt that he planned to attack Dhangarhi where there was a large amount of cash in the government treasury - and in view of the difficulties in communication and "the serious menace that was developing in the district the Nepalese government requested India for police help in restoring order until reinforcement could be moved in by the Nepalese Government" as there was no other way left except help from India.³⁹

On the request of the Government of Nepal, the Government of India decided to help Nepal at this moment of crisis. A joint operation of Indo-Nepalese troops was decided upon at a

38. See Keesing's Contemporary Archives (London), Vol. 9, 1952-54, p. 13136A.

39. See the statement of General Bijaya, the Nepalese Ambassador in India, published in The Times of India (New Delhi), 20 July 1953.

high level conference between the representatives of the Nepalese Government and the U.P. Government.⁴⁰ Accordingly on 15 July units of the United Provincial Armed Constabulary were sent to Nepal.⁴¹ The gangsters were located somewhere in the north of Dhangarhi. They offered resistance and fired on the Indian and Nepali police. As a result of the joint action which took place insurgents including 28 leaders who had arms and other military equipments were captured. Two gangsters were killed.⁴² Fifty injured.⁴³ Leader of the gang escaped and took shelter in a forest. Later, on 23 August 1953 he was killed in an accidental gunfight near Dundeldhura district.⁴⁴

There were the four occasions - February, April and July 1951 and July 1953 - when India was asked to give military help to Nepal which she gave readily for quelling the lawlessness and restoring peace.

The Reasons Behind the help

The reasons behind giving military help to Nepal were more than one. First of all, Nepal's internal stability was a matter of close concern to India. Any chaos in Nepal with her

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40. The Statesman (Calcutta), 20 July 1953.

41. The Times of India (New Delhi), 20 July 1953.

42. Ibid.

43. The Statesman, 23 July 1953.

44. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 24 August 1953.

long common frontier with India would have disturbed and did disturb peace of India's border districts. The other important reason behind the help was that if India would not have helped some other country with vested interest could interfere in Nepal and obviously India never wanted it.

By the prompt help rendered by India, the newly established popular government could be saved and strengthened. On all the four occasions the joint operations conducted by the Indian and the Nepalese troops were successful in curbing the disturbances, restoring the peace and order in the affected areas. By the timely help given by India, Nepal's dependence on India became all the more greater which further consolidated the special relations existing between the two countries.

It is true that in the case of Nepal military help was given too often. Only in the year 1951 India helped Nepal militarily thrice in six months. This dependence of the Nepalese Government on the Government of India and India's readiness for giving help planted seeds of suspicion in some quarters of Nepal about India's ultimate objectives towards the Kingdom.

But, despite the feeling of suspicion in the common man's mind which was exploited by the political parties having vested interests, the two governments had come nearer to each other during this period. The Government of Nepal remained thankful to the Government of India which helped it in the periods of crisis and trouble. M.P. Koirala, the then Prime Minister of Nepal while visiting India in January 1952 denied

all allegations of Indian interference and acknowledged with pleasure India's help in initiating Nepal on the path of democratic progress. King Tribhuvan also did the same on several occasions. The attitude of the Government of Nepal towards India's role is well reflected in the statement given below when Nepalese Foreign Minister told the press representatives in June 1954:

Placed as we are, so closed together, facing common problems and running common risks sometimes, we will have to pursue a common policy in several matters; Nepal has taken her march forward with India's help and good wishes. 45

45. Y.P. Pant, n. 17, p.

Chapter IV

SRI LANKA ASKS INDIA FOR MILITARY HELP 1971

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Separated from India by a narrow strip of water in the Palk Strait, Sri Lanka is India's close neighbour not only geographically but historically, culturally and religiously also.

Determinants of Indo-Sri Lanka Relations

Indo-Sri Lanka relations are as old as recorded history. It is believed that the Sinhalese inhabitants of Sri Lanka are descendants of the Indians who went there and settled in the sixth century B.C. In 247 B.C. Buddhist missionaries under the headship of the Apostle Mahinda went to Sri Lanka. They went there with the spiritual message of Buddhism and along with religion also spread their cultural influence. As early as 302 A.D. an embassy was also sent from Sri Lanka to the court of great Emperor Samudra Gupta. The purpose was to seek the Emperor's permission to establish a hostel at Buddha-Gaya for Buddhist pilgrims from Sri Lanka.

Thus, since the ancient times India and Sri Lanka have various factors in common which strengthen their neighbourly relations. India and Sri Lanka both were under British domination and achieved their independence nearly at the same time. The dawn of independence ushered a new era in Indo-Sri Lanka.

1. L.H. Horace Perera and M. Ratnasatapathi, Ceylon and Indian History (Colombo, 1954), p. 216.

relationship. Before going to the nature and reasons of the military help given by India to Sri Lanka in April 1971, it will be better to have a glance over the Indo-Sri Lanka relations.

One factor which dominates Indo-Sri Lanka relations is that of culture and religion. India is the land where Lord Buddha, the propagator of Buddhism - the state religion of Sri Lanka - got enlightenment and preached Buddhism. This peculiar phenomenon plays an important role in Indo-Sri Lanka relationship as this factor cannot be overlooked in Sri Lanka. All the places associated with the life of Lord Buddha in India are centres of pilgrims for the people of Sri Lanka.

Geographically, India is a big giant. As against this Sri Lanka is a tiny island in the Indian Ocean at the southern tip of Indian peninsula. India's population is 547,367,926² which is more than forty times that of Sri Lanka's 12,747,755³ millions. India is rich in natural resources. Her industrial potential also is definitely greater than Sri Lanka's. However, Sri Lanka's per capita income and rate of literacy is higher than India's. Sri Lanka has always been a bit suspicious of India's domination because of her size. From a geographical view Sri Lanka a small island lies within the periphery of a country which in relation to her, is a huge power.⁴

2. As on 1 June 1971. See United Nations Statistical Year Book 1971 (New York, 1972), p. 66.

3. As on 9 October 1971. Ibid.

4. S.U. Kodikara, Indo-Ceylonese Relations Since Independence (Colombo, 1965), p. 1.

Since independence it has been India's sincere desire to have good friendly relations with Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is India's next-door neighbour and co-operation and friendship with all and more especially with neighbouring countries is vital objective of India's foreign policy.

Strategy plays an important role in Indo-Sri Lanka relations. Strategically Sri Lanka's importance to India is just the same as Madagascar is important to the mainland of Africa. The strategic importance of Sri Lanka lies in its location in Indian Ocean. Indian Ocean is very important to India's defence as from three sides India is surrounded by it. Sri Lanka not only is situated in Indian Ocean but has got two excellent harbours - Colombo and Trinacomalee. Describing Sri Lanka's strategic importance to India, Rao writes:

India has no island for cover. Her extensive sea-coast is entirely open and defenceless, easily bombed by carrier based aircraft.... Ceylon (Sri Lanka) is the natural focus of the Indian Ocean and therefore of its defences. It possesses unrivalled geographical advantages. Colombo is also the focus of air routes in the Indian Ocean and is linked up through India with transcontinental air services. Thus Ceylon is the fulcrum of the Indian Ocean, in the geography of an air age. Ceylon's oceanic and serial nodality is of decisive importance. 6

As early as in 1940s the strategic importance of Sri Lanka was felt and writings were coming out on Indo-Sri Lanka

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5. The importance of Indian Ocean to India is dealt with in detail in K.M. Panikkar, India and the Indian Ocean (London, 1945), pp. 82-95.
 6. P.R. Ramchandran Rao, India and Ceylon, A Study (Indian Council of World Affairs, 1954), p. 8.

joint defence programme. In an interview, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the President of the Indian National Congress, stated:

India and Ceylon must have a common strategy and common defence strength and common resources. It can not be that Ceylon is in friendship with a group with which India is not in friendship not that Ceylon has no right to make its own alignment and declare its own affiliations - but if there are two hostile groups in the world, and Ceylon and India are with one or the other of them and not with the same group, it will be a bad day for both. 7

Owing to all these factors, India has always been interested in seeing that Sri Lanka remains an independent, democratic and friendly state. Nehru once underlined the intimate links between the two countries, saying:

Ceylon and a

√ We want an independent and friendly Ceylon. ... In every sense Ceylon is nearer to us than any other country - culturally, historically, linguistically, and even in the matter of religion. 8

Four Phases of Indo-Sri Lanka Relationship

Since independence like India, Sri Lanka has had parliamentary system of government. The basic objectives of the foreign policy of Sri Lanka also had been quite similar to those of India's. Despite these common factors the relations between the two countries have not always been very cordial.

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7. Stated in an interview with representatives of Ceylon Daily News (Colombo), 23 April 1949.
 8. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches September 1946 to April 1961, p. 298. From speech during debate on foreign affairs in Lok Sabha, 30 September 1954.

With regard to the relations with India the entire period since independence can be seen in four phases. The first phase starts from 1948 to 1958. Second phase goes from 1956 to April 1965, the third phase from 1965 to 1970 and the fourth phase from 1970 to the present day. This division is based upon the changes in ruling parties in Sri Lanka.

From 1948 to 1956 was the period when Sri Lanka was under the United National Party (UNP) government. During this period, in spite of India's warm approach towards Sri Lanka political aloofness was the chief characteristic of Sri Lanka's attitude towards India. There were reasons behind Sri Lanka's this attitude. In the early period of independence talks were going on in India of having a joint federation between India and Sri Lanka.⁹ Being a small country, naturally, Sri Lanka had doubts about India's "designs" and, therefore, it preferred the policy of keeping a bit away from India¹⁰ instead of maximum co-operation. India's Prime Minister Nehru took a serious note of Sri Lanka's fear and made it a point to clarify India's intentions of non-interference in other's internal affairs and of respect for other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. So when the idea of Indo-Sri Lanka federation was received with

9. See Pattabhi Sitaramayya, n. 7.

10. This feeling can be very well seen in a sum-up of Sri Lanka's attitude to India by Sir Ivor Jennings, "India thus appears as a friendly but potentially dangerous neighbour to whom one must be polite but a little distant." See Ivor Jennings, The Commonwealth in Asia (London, 1951), p. 113.

reservations in Sri Lanka, Nehru sent special message to assure that India did not have any designs against Sri Lanka and will not interfere in her sovereignty.¹¹ When he visited Colombo in January 1950 at the occasion of "Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference" he repeated: "Some people fear that the great country India might want to develop or sort of absorb Ceylon. I assure you that if any people have any such idea it is completely wrong."¹² Nehru's propagation of Panchsheel which was based on India's ancient Buddhist tradition was also a clear hint ^{to} of Sri Lanka's that she had nothing to fear from India.

Though, during this period Sri Lanka had her inhibitions vis-a-vis India, yet she always treated India as the country with which she had the closest historical-cultural links. UNP leaders like D.S. Senanayake were no doubt fully aware of Sri Lanka's immense cultural debt from India, and always regarded India as the mother country.

The policy of keeping aloof politically was ended during the period between 1956 to 1962. The greater part of the period was of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) rule.¹³ In 1956 the SLFP government was headed by SWRD Bandaranaike. And it was under his Prime Ministership that Sri Lanka started improving her relations with India. Nehru and Bandaranaike, fortunately, had

11. The Hindu (Madras), 7 May 1949.

12. As cited in S.U. Kodikara, n. 4, p. 36.

13. For details see ibid., p. 44.

more or less similar views on national and international problems. Bandaranaike considered India a friendly state and according to him there was no reason for Sri Lanka to be fearful of India. On the eve of his taking office as Prime Minister in April 1956, he declared:

I visualise much more friendly relations and closer co-operation between myself as the Prime Minister of this country and Pundit Nehru as Prime Minister of India in dealing with not only problems affecting our two countries and Asia but general world problems. 14

Not only the general approach of the Indian and Sri Lanka's Prime Ministers was same to the issues like capitalism, imperialism and colonialism but also in respect with the problems of people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. Bandaranaike had a different approach to the question of the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka than the earlier government. Bandaranaike viewed this question as a domestic concern of Sri Lanka. He said that the so-called Indo-Ceylon problem was Ceylon's own problem and neither Mr. Nehru's nor the India Government's. 15

Thus the period from 1956 to October 1962 had its own significance for glossing over mutual differences and cementing the friendship and good neighbourly relations.

Second half of the 1956-65 phase shows a remarkable change in Sri Lanka's policy towards India from October 1962, to be more precise from the date of Chinese aggression on India.

14. The Hindu (Madras), 8 April 1956.

15. Ibid., 15 December 1953.

The opposition parties including UNP and MEP (Mahajana Eksath Perumana) strongly condemned the Chinese aggression and expressed their support to India¹⁶ but the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) condemned India as aggressor. The question of Sino-Indian dispute was very crucial for Sri Lanka government. In a reply to India's Prime Minister Nehru's letter in which he asked for sympathy and support, the Sri Lanka Prime Minister did not formally support India and did not blame China as aggressor. This neutral attitude of Sri Lanka at the time of the greatest crisis in post-independence history of India gave a shock to India as she had never expected such neutral attitude from Sri Lanka. She always viewed her relations with Sri Lanka in the light of long standing historical and cultural bonds. But Sri Lanka also had reasons for adopting such attitude because at that time more than 60 per cent of her total rubber export went to China and from China she received more than 40 per cent of rice imports.¹⁷

Though Sri Lanka had acquired a neutral attitude towards Sino-Indian border dispute nevertheless, she took keen interest in the normalization of relations between these two states and played an important role in the evolution and execution of "Colombo Plan". Anyhow, the period after October 1962 to 1965

16. See Urmila Phadnis, "Ceylon and the Sino-Indian Border Conflict", Asian Survey, 3, April 1963, pp. 189-96.

17. See S.U. Kodikara, n. 4, pp. 53-54. For details see Anuradha Muni, "Sri Lanka's China Policy: Major Trends", South Asian Studies (Jaipur), Vol. VIII, No. 1, January 1973, pp. 75-79.

remained of good friendly relations with a bit of tension caused by the unpleasant memories of Sino-Indian border dispute. The October 1964 Agreement about the people of Indian origin was signed in this period only.¹⁸

The period after 1965 when the government of Dudley Senanayake came into power the policy of Sri Lanka government remained more or less the same because the results of the election by which it came to power were indecisive. The United National Party led by Dudley Senanayake in coalition with MEP, FP and SLFP and one independent member formed the Government. But after the general elections in March 1970 the situation became much favourable towards Indo-Sri Lanka relations. Both Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, and Mrs. Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, could strike a good understanding between themselves, and it is this period when India gave military aid to Sri Lanka in its difficult time and the long-debated problem of Kachchathivu was solved.

Obstacles between Indo-Sri Lanka Relations

The main question which constituted the greatest obstacle in the way of smoother, friendlier Indo-Sri Lanka relations is of the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. The problem of these so-called "stateless" people is the result of British

18. For the text of the Agreement see Foreign Policy of India: Texts of Documents 1947-1964 (Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, 1966), pp. 196-97.

colonial legacies. In the 19th century a big number of Indians emigrated to Sri Lanka as it lacked man-power to work in the coffee, tea and rubber plantations. The Britishers thus got a source of large and cheap man-power. Because of excess of unskilled labour in South India they continued migrating to Sri Lanka.¹⁹ The number of Indian Tamil estate workers and their dependants in Sri Lanka estates in 1946 was over 665,000.²⁰ The leaders of Sri Lanka always have been of firm opinion that these people were Indians and so they must go back to India. In December 1947 the Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka met in New Delhi to discuss the problem.²¹ Nehru-Senayake talk was followed by a subsequent correspondence between the two.²² Anyhow the problem could not be solved. Since then the issue was taken time to time almost by every government in Sri Lanka²³ but the problem could not be resolved

19. Growth of the Indian Tamil Estate Population in Sri Lanka:

1827	...	10,000	1921	...	493,944
1847	...	50,000	1931	...	692,540
1877	...	146,000	1946	...	665,853
1911	...	457,000	1961	...	943,689

See S.U. Kodikara, n. 4, p. 6.

20. Ibid.

21. For details of the talks see Sadhan Mukherjee, Ceylon Island that Changed (People's Publishing House, 1971), pp. 69-70.

22. See correspondence Relating to the Citizenship Status of Indian Residents in Ceylon, Sessional Papers, 22 of 1948, cited in S.U. Kodikara, n. 4, p. 102.

23. For details see, Sadhan Mukherjee, n. 21, pp. 63-84.

until the summit talks between India's Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike²⁴ in New Delhi in October 1964 when they arrived at a new agreement and thus the most thorny problem between India and Sri Lanka²⁵ was solved.

Besides this major problem there have been some other minor issues which have had their effect on Indo-Sri Lanka relations. The problem of Kachhativu island was one of them. Kachhativu is a tiny island having an area of 280 acre lying almost in the middle between Panben on the southern coast of India and Delft, an island off the northern coast of Sri Lanka. It is barren. It is uninhabited also. The erstwhile Raja of Ramnathpuram had laid a claim to it as this island came under his zamindari. Kachhativu island had political value more than productive or strategic value. The Government of India regarded this issue as a minor one and refused to make it a serious issue. As early as 1956 when the issue was discussed in the Parliament, official circles pointed out that there was no question of any major dispute arising between India and Sri Lanka on this²⁶ trivial subject.

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24. For the text of the Agreement see Foreign Policy of India: Texts of Documents 1947-1964, n. 18, pp. 196-97.
25. For a detailed study on the problem of people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka see S.U. Kodikara, n. 4, Chapter IV, pp. 107-43 and Sadhan Mukherjee, n. 21, pp. 63-64.⁸⁴
26. The Hindu (Madras), 28 March 1956.

However, with all tenderness in India's approach the problem could not be solved till 1974. The Indo-Sri Lanka agreement on Kachhativu was formally signed on 28 June 1974 according to which the island was finally given to Sri Lanka. ²⁷

Despite these problems the bonds of neighbourhood have always been very strong between India and Sri Lanka. Besides the facts discussed earlier since independence the socio-political system of India and Sri Lanka has been more or less the same. It is more especially so during the period under study as both the Governments were popularly elected and had a proclaimed bias in favour of socialism. Both the governments in their respective domestic contexts were also determined to contain extremist activities.

The Insurgency in Sri Lanka

After the general elections in March 1970 in which the United Front swept the polls and Mrs. Bandaranaike became the Prime Minister, Sri Lanka had to see an insurgency for the first time in its history in April 1971. Armed insurgency was an unprecedented event in a country like Sri Lanka where Buddhism is the State Religion, Buddhism that preaches Ahimsa (non-violence).

The insurgency, in fact, started in the form of an attack on the embassy of United States on 6 March 1971. The Government became alert and by the middle of March about 500 youth were

27. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 29 June 1974.

arrested. This mass arrest provoked the youth and they broke out in an overall revolt against the government. In the first four or five days about 90 police stations were attacked throughout the island.²⁸ The insurgency was of a very serious nature. Government tried to suppress it with all its might even then the insurgents disrupted law and order in several places. For few days Sri Lanka was in chaos. It was very difficult for the Government of Sri Lanka to suppress the insurgency as the total strength of the police and defence force put together was about 23,000²⁹ which was much less than the estimated figure of the insurgents and moreover it was ill equipped and inadequately trained for this type of fighting. Obviously, for such a small force it was quite tough task to suppress the insurgency. Sri Lanka is one of the countries which always have believed in spending the least on defence budget so it found itself in a helpless position and this was the reason that the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka had to ask for military help from the friendly countries and India was amongst the first to respond.

28. S. Arasaratnam, "The Ceylon Insurrection of April 1971: Some Causes and Consequences", Pacific Affairs, Vol. 45, No. 3, Fall 1972, p. 358.

29. The strength of the security forces was: Police 12,500; army 7,000; navy 1,900 and air force 1,500. Statistics supplied by Ceylon High Commission in New Delhi, as cited by Urmila Phadnis, "Insurgency in Ceylonese Politics: Problems and Prospects", Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, Vol. 3, No. 4, April 1971, p. 610.

The Nature and the Causes of the Insurgency

The bulk of the insurgents consisted of unemployed or ³⁰ underemployed but educated youth, between the age of 17 and 25. The insurgency that took place in April was perhaps Asia's first organised revolt of "educated unemployed" as one of Sri Lanka's ³¹ press analysis put it. The masses of the educated unemployed were led by young Marxist radicals. They belonged to different groups with the common objective of overthrowing UF government. These insurgents led by JVP (Janata Vimukti Peramuna - People's ³² Liberation Front) were popularly known as Che-Guevarists. The insurgency adversely affected every aspect of Sri Lanka's ragging economy.

The JVP was formally organized in 1964 when the formal split between Moscow and Peking oriented factions of the Ceylon Communist Party took place. It was founded by nearly a dozen young radicals who, according to one spokesman, had come to the

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30. Gue De Fontgalland in De Volkstraet, 22 July 1972, quoted in M. Van Der Kroeff, "The Sri Lanka Insurgency of April 1971: Its Development and Making", Asia Quarterly, 1973/2.
31. Ceylon Daily News (Colombo), 19 December 1972.
32. In a press interview one of the JVP leaders Mahinda Wijesekera maintained that his organisation was christened as 'Che Guevarists' by the police and press. The members underground during the UNP regime "did not have facilities to shave their beards while gaining training and it was this which provoked the government, police and press to call them Che Guevarists." See Latif Farook, "Exclusive Interview with an Insurgent", Ceylon Observer, Magazine Section (Colombo), 23 August 1970.

conclusion that "there was not a pure Marxist party or
revolutionary party or a party of pure masses in the island.³³
Rohan Wijeweera, one of the JVPs principal leaders was expelled
from the CCP (Ceylon Communist Party (pro-Peking). With his
efforts he began to transform JVP into a true revolutionary
force. The leaders of the JVP alleged that the "established"
Left of "Trotskyite" and Communist parties had done nothing for
the country and that the solution of Sri Lanka's problems could
come only from a virtually immediate resort to force.³⁴ All
political parties were condemned by the JVP leaders for having
failed in fulfilling the aspirations of the masses.³⁵

As regards their ideology, firstly, they were against
the parliamentary democracy. They believed that the lures of
it needed to be firmly resisted by all the true revolutionaries.³⁶
Even, just after nine months of the election one JVP leader said
in a public rally; "We helped to form the UF Government to make
the masses realise how futile it was to hope to usher in
socialism through the parliamentary system."³⁷ Thus, one very

33. Cited in B.H. Jaywardene, "Ceylon: Prescience", Far Eastern Economic Review, 22 May 1971, p. 14.

34. "Ceylon's Guevarists", Nation (Sydney), 24 July 1971, pp. 9-10.

35. Urmila Phadnis, "Insurgency in Ceylon: Hard Challenge and Grim Warning", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. VI, No. 19, 8 May 1971, p. 967.

36. M. Van Der Kroeff, n. 30.

37. Ceylon Daily News, 28 February 1971.

important aspect of these insurgents was that they were against the parliamentary democracy.

Secondly, these insurgents had a very clear 'anti-Indian' attitude. According to Wijeweera the threat of 'Indian expansionism' to Sri Lanka was as dangerous as that coming from "American or British imperialism". Smaller nations like Sikkim and Bhutan had been reduced to mere colonies of India while with bigger states like China or Pakistan which have been able to withstand India's pressure India's relations were strained. According to Wijeweera Sri Lanka's status too was likely to be reduced to the status of Sikkim or Bhutan, unless she removed the Indian business community and limited the Indian workers in the country's plantation economy.³⁸ There was a theory found in the JVP literature that with a concentration of capital in the hands of 76 families in India, Indian capitalism was bound to look for more markets and this would lead to 'the colonisation'³⁹ of the neighbouring countries.

The JVP was not only against India but its attitude towards the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka - both Indian entrepreneurs and Indian estate workers - was also very harsh. The JVP never considered them as rural proletariat. Instead they were considered "positively counter revolutionaries" and a

38. The Times of India (New Delhi), 2 May 1971.

39. Referred to by G.S. Bhargava, "Ten Days that shook Ceylon", Hindustan Times Weekend Review, 16 May 1971.

"fifth column" of India in Sri Lanka.⁴⁰ This anti-Indian attitude of the JVP was also one of the major reasons why India extended her hand of help to Sri Lanka in order to crush the insurgents.

From as early as 1967, the JVP was planning for an armed revolt as Mrs. Bandaranaike informed the Parliament of Sri Lanka that the Government had received a confidential report from CID about the revolutionary activities of the JVP. The leaders of the JVP were making an atmosphere for the armed revolt in Sri Lanka by giving "five lectures" which were: 1) "the left movement in Ceylon", 2) "Is Ceylon really independent", 3) "Need for revolution", 4) "Economic situation in Ceylon", and 5) "Indian expansionism"; that is the threat coming from India and Indians.⁴¹ The JVP ideology thus emerges as anti-established left also.

The reason why the youth of Sri Lanka broke out in an armed revolt lies in the fact that the UF Government had been unable to fulfil the conditions on which JVP and the youth of Sri Lanka had voted for it enthusiastically. In 1970 the JVP had given full support to the UF Government on the condition that it would solve the problems of unemployment, landlessness⁴² of peasants, malnutrition, and general economic decay. When

40. See Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1971, p. 92, cited in M. Van Der Kroeft, n. 30.

41. Urmila Phadnis, "Insurgency in Ceylonese Politics: Problems and Prospects", Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis Journal, Vol. 3, No. 4, April 1971, p. 569.

42. Ceylon Daily News (Colombo), 11 August 1970.

the UF Government could not fulfil its promises within a year the JVP decided to launch an armed revolt against the power with a definite goal of overthrowing the government.

And thus, dissatisfied with the government policies, motivated by romantic ultra-leftism the youth of Sri Lanka, mainly educated unemployed, launched an attack on police stations on the night of 5 April 1971, and thus a country which in 25 years had seen five changes in government by the peaceful way of ballot had to witness a period of bloodshed and anarchy sounded by the awful sounds of bullets. Foreign press estimated the strength of the insurgents in April 1971 at 70,000 and their sympathisers at over 100,000.⁴³ The Government of Sri Lanka had come into power only a year ago lacked sufficient forces, mobilization and the weapons to curb it or to take an offensive position. It was, therefore, inevitable to call for external help.

India's help

Smt. Bandaranaike sought help from India and several other countries on 6 April 1971. The communication lines were cut and the message is reported to have reached India only on 11 April. All the assistance from India reached Colombo by 13 April which included equipment for 5,000 combat troops, five frigates which sealed off the coastline of Sri Lanka to prevent

43. As estimated by the New York Times (New York), 25 April 1971.

any outside aid from reaching the rebels; six helicopters along with pilots solely for reconnoitering and 150 Indian troops to guard Bandaranaike airport.⁴⁴ With this timely help given by India and many other countries like USA, USSR, Yugoslavia and Pakistan the insurgency in Sri Lanka could be suppressed.

If one goes to look back for the reasons behind India's prompt help it can be traced in the broader objectives of India's foreign policy. As has been said earlier in the first chapter that it has been India's one of the foremost objectives to have international peace. To work for international peace is the hard core of India's foreign policy. It is quite clear that if peace in neighbourhood is disturbed there remains a threat to one's own peace also. The reign of terror in Sri Lanka was one of the reasons that India could not remain an indifferent observer to the events going on in her neighbouring State.

44. See Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. 2, No. 1, 25 May 1971, p. 30. Speech by Sardar Swaran Singh, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, while replying to a question about India's military help to Sri Lanka.

Mrs. Bandaranaike had stated that in all about 150 Indian security force men were in Ceylon at the invitation of the Government and they were either on static guard duty to protect their planes and equipment in the international Bandaranaike Airport of Colombo or manning and serving the six Indian helicopters which were on non-combat supply mission to island's armed forces fighting the rebels. See Indian Express (New Delhi), 18 May 1971. See also Urmila Phadnis, n. 41, p. 610.

Secondly, as has been made clear in the foregoing chapters, India stands for democracy, more especially in the neighbouring countries. India came forward whether it is a case of defending democracy as was with Burma or for establishing it as was the case in Nepal. Here also in the case of Sri Lanka democracy was in danger. As has been said earlier, the JVP had no faith in the parliamentary system of democracy and the leaders of the JVP had been openly denouncing it.

The third very clear and the most important reason behind India's help to Sri Lanka remains in the fact that the JVP was very much anti-Indian. Obviously, it was against the national interest of India if Sri Lanka came under the rule of such party. For mutual understanding, co-operation, co-existence it is necessary that neighbouring government is friendly.

The JVP was considered not only anti-India but pro-Peking also. According to a government report before the 1970 elections three major groups consisted JVP. These groups were: (i) the so-called guevarists group led by Rohan Wijeweera, (ii) the pro-Chinese faction led by Mrs. Theja Gunawardane, and (iii) a section of the Communist Party (pro-Peking).⁴⁵ The theory of "colonisation by India"⁴⁶ discussed earlier also was not "a pigment of Mr. Wijeweera's fertile imagination" but was a reproduction in a crude form of the writing on India by Peking

45. Urmila Phadnis, n. 41, p. 599.

46. G.S. Bhargava, n. 39.

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elements. At the time of Sino-Indian war also the JVP had supported China and had condemned India as aggressor. And that is why there were apprehensions in India that the insurgency in Sri Lanka might be inspired by China. This being the case, it was in India's interest to help the government of Sri Lanka in suppressing the insurgency, lest the insurgents come to power and the influence of China increases in the strategically located Sri Lanka. These apprehensions were strengthened by the mysterious silence of the Chinese government during the period of trouble and its support to the government of Sri Lanka only after the insurgency was suppressed.⁴⁸ However, the subsequent⁴⁹ developments made these apprehensions appear untenable.

There are other factors also linked with the national interest of India motivated by which the Government of India decided to help the Government of Sri Lanka. The insurgents of Sri Lanka were led by the Marxist radicals. In India also the Naxalite movement was going on under the leadership of Marxist-Leninist radicals. The success of the JVP in Sri Lanka would

47. Ibid.

48. The Soviets have openly accused the Chinese to encourage the insurgents in Sri Lanka. An article published in a Moscow weekly Za Rubston in the third week of August 1971 accused China of inspiring and aiding the recent anti-government movement in Sri Lanka as part of its grand design of lording over Asia. See Asian Recorder (Delhi), Vol. XVII, No. 39, p. 10372.

49. The Chinese Premier Chou En-lai wrote a letter, dated 26 April 1971 to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka appreciating the United Front Government's success in suppressing the insurgency. See Asian Recorder, Vol. XVII, No. 27, p. 10233.

have certainly encouraged the Naxalites in India which was, obviously, against the interest of the Government of India. Both the Governments of India and Sri Lanka were more or less of the same nature. Both Smt. Indira Gandhi and Smt. Bandaranaike had swept the general elections promising better living conditions to the people of the country. Both of them failed to fulfil the aspirations of the people. Like the JVP movement the Naxalite movement also was professing the dissatisfaction of the radical youth with the policies of the government of India. So the decision to help the Government of Sri Lanka was in the interest of the Government of India lest the insurgency in Sri Lanka could encourage Naxalite movement.

Under a news item in the Indian Express, dated 15 April 1971 it was viewed that Indian decision to help was influenced "by the fact that Ceylon is a close and friendly neighbour with a democratically elected government, enjoying majority support. Like India, it is also non-aligned country." In the editorial under the caption "Helping a Neighbour", the Hindustan Times wrote, supporting India's decision to help:

The absence of a defense treaty between Ceylon and India, however, can be no bar to going to the aid of a friendly neighbour threatened by insurgents.... Ceylon is a democracy which offers its people the opportunity to chose its government by peaceful and constitutional means. ... Any extreme left coup in the face of so fresh a popular mandate is therefore both unnecessary and impermissible. 50

50. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 15 April 1971.

While this action of the Government of India received wide approval from most of the quarters of press and public opinion it was bitterly criticised by the Communist Party of India (M). People's Democracy, the CPI(M) party paper, wrote:

^The Indira Gandhi government has committed the same crime of which the imperialists have been guilty all along giving arms aid to a government to suppress its own people.

and also that

her government unhesitatingly provides all the facilities to destroy the movement in Ceylon to safeguard her class counterpart in that country. 51

However, the Government of India had every reason - from ideological point of view to the very practical purpose of its own interest and the national interest - to give military help to Sri Lanka as in relation with the neighbouring countries it remains the policy of every government to have a friendly and stable government. In order to safeguard her own national interest and in order to defend democracy the Government of India rendered military help to Sri Lanka for suppressing the insurgency and no doubt that became successful in both - suppressing the insurgency thus saving the democratic government and winning the friendship of Sri Lanka.

51. People's Democracy (New Delhi), 9 May 1971.

Chapter V

C O N C L U S I O N

Chapter V

C O N C L U S I O N

India, since her independence, has been an active participant in her external affairs. She has been watchful enough to the international events and more particularly to the events happening in the countries surrounding her. Keeping national interest in sight and pursuing the policy of non-alignment and Panchsheel, India has always upheld the noble ideals of democracy, world peace, elimination of imperialism, colonialism, racialism and illiteracy, want and diseases, international co-operation etc. The main instrument of achieving these objectives has been diplomacy based upon economic co-operation and political understanding. A much less known, though very important, aspect of India's diplomacy was her military help in support of her foreign policy objectives. This aspect is clearly evident in India's relations with her immediate neighbours particularly Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

In Burma an insurrection was started by the communists at the end of the March 1948, just after three months of independence. Gradually other groups like White Band Peoples' Organization, Karen National Defence Organization, Mon National Defence Organisation also joined it. The Burmese government was about to collapse when military help from India and some other countries saved it.

Nepal was the second country to which India rendered military help and not only once but four times during the period

between 1951-53. India had special relations with Nepal because of her role in Nepal's democratization. Therefore, at every point of crisis in Nepal, the Government of India was asked to help. Because of Nepal's strategic importance to India and her social relations based on culture, religion and recent political developments, India helped Nepal in dealing with the disturbed situation.

The case of Sri Lanka is comparatively recent. In April 1971 Sri Lanka had to face an insurgency led by the Janata Vimukti Peramuna, basically a Marxist-Leninist organization. Unable in handling the situation the Government of Sri Lanka asked for help from various countries including India. India was one of the first countries to send the help within 48 hours. The main considerations behind the aid were based on its strategic importance to the Indian Ocean, to save the friendly, popularly elected Government and to help the suppression of the insurgents who were very much anti-Indian.

While comparing the above mentioned three cases, one finds certain common aspects in these disturbances. One thing which is common in all the three cases is that the crises had been of a very serious nature which threatened the stability of the government in power and the government found itself totally incapable of handling the situation and so asked India to help.

Except in the case of Sri Lanka where the insurgency took place in 1971, in other two cases of Burma and Nepal the disturbances took place at the very initial stages of the

establishment of popular and post colonial political systems. In Burma it was just after three months of independence and in Nepal the group of K.I. Singh revolted against the democratic government within a month of its establishment. Thus in these two countries before the governments could stabilize and strengthen themselves the disturbances broke out. It was only in Sri Lanka that the insurgency took place after the successful functioning of the democratic system for more than two decades.

The insurgency in Sri Lanka is different from the insurrection in Burma and disturbances in Nepal in another way as it had external dimensions also. The insurgents in Burma had certain grievances against the government and wanted to overthrow it. Their insurrection was completely an inland movement. The disturbances in Nepal also were the expression of the dissatisfaction of a particular group against the government and it was not inspired by any other country, whereas in the case of Sri Lanka, as has been briefly discussed in Chapter Four, there were doubts in certain circles that the insurgency was inspired by some other country which had her vested interests there.

India had rendered military help in all the three cases. In the case of Burma India limited its help to the arms and ammunition only. In addition to this India through its diplomatic initiatives and efforts arranged for the conference of the Commonwealth countries. India's help given to Nepal was of military-cum-police in nature. In every case of disturbance

in Nepal when India was asked for help along with military troops she sent battalions of the United Provincial Armed Constabulary also. The military help given to Sri Lanka was not in the form of arms and ammunitions only but it included six helicopters, five frigates and 150 troops also.

The help given to Burma and Sri Lanka was on an ad-hoc basis. There was no agreement or treaty signed earlier for such contingencies whereas in the case of Nepal the help was given under an agreement and the help was followed by further military assistance to Nepal by India when India was asked to send military personnel to train Nepalese militia.¹

India's action of rendering military help has been motivated by certain objectiges which have been common in every case. The foremost reason behind the help rendered seems to be security. Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka all the three countries are important to India's security in their own way. Nepal separates India from China - and thus acquires a very significant strategic position for the security of India. Burma is the gate-way of India on the south-eastern border and its vital importance to India's security was proved at the time of the second World War when there was a plan to liberate India by invading her from Burmese side. Sri Lanka has its own importance because of its strategic position in the Indian Ocean which surrounds the Indian peninsula. Not to have a friendly government

1. See Grishma Bahadur Devkota, Nepal Ko Rajnitik Darpan (Kathmandu, 1960), p. 137.

in the neighbouring countries is a direct threat to one's security. Here Lord Curzon's theory though propounded in a different context remains important that it is not desirable to occupy the neighbouring countries but its occupation by the foes also can not be tolerated.

Another reason which is very apparent behind the military help is that in all the three cases because the government in power was friendly to India, the Government of India wanted to support these governments. The fact that the insurgents in Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka were either anti-India or indifferent to her and were determined to overthrow the government friendly to India was not liked by the Indian government. The importance of a friendly government in the neighbouring countries is obvious and may not need any emphasis in respect of security, political and economic interest.

To strengthen democratic institutions and forces has been another very important reason which inspired India to render military help to these governments. In all the three cases under study the internal trouble had caused a threat to the popularly elected government. India has made it clear on several occasions that she is not merely a verbal spokesman for democracy but she can go to the extent of action also if needed to save democracy. As already noted, Nehru once declared that India stands for democracy not only in India but in other countries also especially if some neighbouring country was involved. And that is why to save the popular governments in Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka India gave them military help.

By helping these countries another objective of India's foreign policy towards the neighbouring countries was achieved and that is to check communism. In every case the trouble makers had apparently or avowedly left leanings, or so it was feared. This was particularly true in the cases of Burma and Sri Lanka. In Burma the insurrection was started by the communists. In Sri Lanka JVP the organisation responsible for the insurgency was ultra-left. Thus another reason behind the help given seems to be to check communism.

There have been doubts in certain circles that was not the military help given to these governments against the principle of non-interference in other's internal affairs. In this context one thing is worth-mentioning. Whenever the government of India rendered help she did so only when she was asked for it. In fact, India's behaviour whether she would help or not or when to help has been guided by the idea which has been very clearly explained by Nehru when he said:

It is not our purpose to enter into other peoples' quarrels ... the less we interfere in international conflicts, the better unless our own interest is involved.... Either we should be strong enough to produce some effect or we should not interfere at all. 2

By saying this Nehru explained India's stand over international conflicts. It clarifies two points - first that if national interests were involved, India could not remain an

2. See Indian Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates, Vol. III, No. 2, 8 March 1948, p. 1757.

indifferent spectator, and second, that India interferes only when she makes sure that her action will make a difference in the situation. And this has been proved true in these cases. Firstly in all the three cases India's national interests were involved and secondly by India's help the disturbances or the insurgency were suppressed.

By the timely help given by India the already existing bonds between the governments were strengthened and thus the help cemented the friendship between the two countries. The result was seen soon after the suppression of the insurgency in Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka. In Burma the suppression of the insurrection was followed by the signing of a trade agreement on 18 August 1950. Because of the help given by India during the troublesome period in Nepal, its government always expressed its gratitude towards India and thus the period between 1950-55 was known in Indo-Nepalese relations as the "era of special relationship". With Sri Lanka also by giving the help India was successful in strengthening the bonds of friendship and a long-standing obstacle between Indo-Sri Lanka relationship - the problem of Kachhativu was solved after the friendly gesture of India towards Sri Lanka.

By rendering military help to these countries India achieved reputation not only in the countries concerned but in the international sphere also. During the initial stage when India was emerging as an Asian power the military help given to Burma and Nepal reflected India's strength and her dominating

position in Asia. After the Sino-Indian war in 1962 India, somehow, lost her self-confidence of the earlier period. With this loss of confidence, her reputation as a dependable friend and neighbour also declined.

But again, being the first to render help to Sri Lanka within 48 hours India proved that she had started regaining her self-confidence and by her role at the moment of crisis in Sri Lanka India again proved herself a major and effective power in South Asia.

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