

India and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence

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ABSTRACT

A few countries stood by Indonesia in her struggle for freedom from the Dutch. India was one them. It had made a valuable contribution to the cause of Indonesia's independence not only through diplomatic support both inside and outside the United Nations, but also through active material support. In the United Nations, India together with Australia condemned the brutal attempt of the Dutch to recover its colonial possession in Indonesia after the Japanese surrender, and played a decisive role in mobilising the support of UN members as well as international public opinion in favour of Indonesia's freedom. At the time when some Indonesian Republic leaders were under threat of their lives due to Dutch military action, India sent a plane under great risk to airlift them to safety in Singapore and India to enable them travel to other parts of the world to publicise their cause for freedom. India supported the Republican diplomatic representative and his mission in Delhi with financial and other help, including the facilities for broadcasting Indonesian viewpoint on the struggle for independence. As a protest to the Dutch military action against the Republican government, India stopped all KLM flights over its territory. It also sent a medical mission along with large supplies of medicine to help the victims of Dutch aggression. Parallel with the Government of India, its people expressed their solidarity with the Indonesian people through organisation of public demonstrations, refusal to deal with anything Dutch and through many other acts of moral support.

Key words: Indonesia, India, independence struggle, Dutch

ABSTRAK

Beberapa buah negara berdiri bersama Indonesia dalam perjuangannya untuk kemerdekaan daripada Belanda. India salah sebuah daripadanya. India telah membuat sumbangan berharga kepada perjuangan kemerdekaan Indonesia bukan sahaja melalui cara diplomatik di dalam dan di luar Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu (PBB), tetapi juga melalui sokongan material yang aktif. Di PBB, India bersama-sama Australia mengecam usaha kejam pihak Belanda untuk menguasai semula Indonesia setelah penyerahan diri Jepun, dan memainkan peranan yang menentukan dalam menggembeleng sokongan daripada

negara-negara anggota PBB dan pendapat awam antarabangsa supaya menyokong perjuangan pembebasan Indonesia. Pada masa yang sama, apabila nyawa beberapa orang pemimpin Indonesia terancam oleh tindakan ketenteraan pihak Belanda, India mengambil risiko besar mengirim sebuah kapal terbang untuk membawa mereka ke tempat yang selamat di Singapura dan India untuk membolehkan mereka menjelajah ke tempat-tempat lain di dunia untuk menghebahkan cita-cita perjuangan mereka. India memberi bantuan kewangan dan sokongan lain kepada wakil diplomat Republik Indonesia dan rombongannya di Delhi; ini termasuk kemudahan untuk menyiarkan pandangan Indonesia mengenai perjuangan kemerdekaan mereka. Sebagai bantahan kepada tindakan ketenteraan Belanda terhadap Republik Indonesia, India menghentikan semua penerbangan KLM di ruang udara wilayahnya. India juga mengirim satu rombongan perubatan bersama-sama bekalan perubatan yang banyak untuk membantu mangsa pencerobohan Belanda. Bersama-sama dengan kerajaan India, rakyat India juga menyatakan rasa setiakawan mereka kepada rakyat Indonesia dengan mengadakan tunjuk perasaan, enggan mempunyai sebarang hubungan dengan Belanda dan dengan memberi sokongan moral lainnya.

Kata kunci: Indonesia, India, perjuangan kemerdekaan, Belanda

For all ex-colonial countries the struggle for freedom and independence from foreign yoke is an important and memorable phase of history. For some, the process towards independence was fairly smooth and peaceful; for others the path had been quite tortuous and painful. Indonesia falls into the later category. She had to experience not only a traumatic phase of Japanese occupation and sufferings, but also a long four year period of revolutionary struggle against the Dutch for attaining her freedom and preserving her independence.

While Japanese occupation was a bitter experience for most Indonesians, it nevertheless created a situation from which it was possible to go on to the achievement of independence. At the same time it contributed to the necessity that this should be achieved by revolutionary means. On August 17, 1945 two days after the Japanese surrender, Sukarno and Hatta who became President and Vice President a few weeks later, proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia. But the Netherlands was in no way prepared to accept an Independent Indonesia and its soldiers began to return to Indonesia under the cover of the British, who were entrusted with the authority to restore law and order after the Japanese surrender. And in the course of 1945-49 the Dutch continued their effort to undermine the newly proclaimed Republic and restore their authority by destroying the latter. The Indonesian nationalists were also in no mood to allow the Dutch to impose their colonial rule on them and fought a valiant struggle against them during the same period. While the final independence was achieved essentially through negotiations with the Dutch, culminating in the Round Table

Conference and the eventual transfer of power in December 1949, the revolutionary struggle by the Indonesians accelerated the process. It not only strengthened the hands of the Republic in the negotiating process towards independence, but it also demonstrated the courage, determination and the willingness of its people to sacrifice for the cause of independence which eventually convinced the external world of their right cause and forced the Dutch to surrender power to the Indonesians.

In Indonesia's struggle for independence and in its travail a few countries stood by her in support of her cause. India was one of the most important of those countries which made a valuable contribution to Indonesia's struggle for independence not only through diplomatic support by mobilising world public opinion against the Dutch, but also through active material support.

For India, support to independent struggle in other parts of the world was an integral part of the Indian national movement. For Gandhi and Nehru no single country could attain true independence from European colonialism unless it was rid from the whole of Asia. In fact, opposition to colonialism and racial discrimination was built into India's approach to world politics during India's freedom struggle as well as in the post independence period. It was but natural that India would raise its voice when a 'sister' country was suffering from colonial occupation. India's policy of supporting Indonesia's struggle for independence was, therefore, part of her overall approach towards colonialism and racial discrimination. This was, however, not all. Indonesia provided India the first occasion not only to put that policy into practice but also an opportunity of making a spectacular entry on the world scene with a mission of enlarging human freedom and an expression of Asian solidarity. Second, India's zeal and enthusiasm for unreserved support to Indonesian freedom movement was also a function of similarity of character and outlook of the nature of freedom movement in the two countries. In fact the leadership in both the countries was under the control of nationalists who subscribed to an ideology of democracy and social transformation through peaceful means.

The first response to Indonesia's freedom struggle from India came in October 1945, when in response to Sukarno's invitation to Nehru to visit Java and inspect the conditions there, Nehru declared in an interview to a special correspondent of the Associated Press of India:

I should like to tell Dr. Sukarno that if I can be of any service to the cause of Indonesian freedom I shall gladly visit Java in spite of urgent and important work in India. *I believe that our freedom in India or Java or elsewhere hangs together and if I can serve the cause of freedom in Java now better than in India I shall certainly go there.* But that depends not so much on my wishes but on the facilities for within India and travelling to Batavia by air. If these facilities are available I shall set aside all the work and go there. Meanwhile I send my greetings to Dr. Sukarno and to my old comrades Dr. Hatta and Dr. Sukarno and wish them all success in achieving an independence of Indonesia (Bright 1958: 377).

On October 28, Nehru again declared "people of India will stand by the Indonesian demand for independence and will give all the help they can". He added that the people of India resented the use of Indian troops against the national freedom movement in Indonesia, and called for the withdrawal of British troops as well as immediate recognition of Sukarno's provisional government.

Nehru was not alone among the Indians to express sympathy for Indonesia's cause and in protesting against the British for the use of Indian troops in suppressing the Indonesian nationalists. The Indian National Congress, the largest nationalist organisation, as a whole was roused by Indonesia's sufferings and its struggle for survival. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a very prominent member of the Congress and its President for a few times, was so much touched by the Indonesian cause that he stated on October 19, 1945 that, "things have come now to the point when Congress will have to consider seriously what steps to adopt to prevent the use of Indian men and material against the Asiatic peoples fighting for their freedom" (*The Statesman*, Calcutta, October 20, 1945).

It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Congress at its annual meeting at Meerut in August 1946 passed a resolution on Indonesia congratulating the Republic and assuring the people of Indonesia of 'the goodwill of the Indian people and their desire to cooperate in the fullest measure' in the promotion of the freedom, independence and human dignity of the peoples of Asia (Prasad 1958). In the newly elected Central Legislative Assembly which met for the first time in January 1946 in Delhi, some prominent members had brought a motion of censure against the Government of India for permitting the use of Indian troops in Indonesia. They were so outraged by the callous acts of the British India Government that they made a scathing attack on it for being too eager to 'prop up Dutch materialism', and for wanting to reinstate the Dutch authority in Indonesia. Sarat Chandra Bose, the elder brother of Subhash Chandra Bose and a prominent member of the Legislative Assembly, expressed his anguish over the developments in Indonesia and said: "India today does not want to dip her hands in her neighbour's blood", and demanded that every sea-man and soldier be withdrawn from Indonesia (*Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly 1946*, 1: 75). One month after this the Assembly met again and passed a fresh motion of censure against the government for its failure to instruct its delegates to the United Nations to convey to the Security Council the strong feeling of the National Assembly regarding the Anglo-Dutch operations against Indonesia.

While such developments were taking place in Indonesia, India was still not independent, naturally restricting a wider initiative on her part in promoting the cause of Indonesia's independence. In September 1946 the interim government under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru took office, and was then in a position

to act more effectively in helping the 'Sister Republic'. The first major act the interim Indian government took to express her anger at the Dutch intransigence and her solidarity with the Indonesian cause, was a declaration made on March 9, 1947 when Kundan Thakurdas, an Indian-born local businessman from Jakarta and who was appointed as the Indian interim envoy at Batavia, that the Dutch KLM passenger planes would be forbidden to land at Indian airports and that the Indian government had decided to reject all offers to conclude commercial treaties with the government of the Netherlands East Indies but would like to establish trade relations with the government of the Indonesian Republic (*The Statesman*, Calcutta, March 10, 1947).

Despite the predicament Indonesia was facing for its survival at that time she was eager to reciprocate India's support to her and help the former in her need. In early 1946 India was facing severe shortages of foodstuffs, particularly rice, and Indonesia, in spite of her constraints, came forward to help India. In May 1946, Dr. Sjahrir, the Prime Minister of Indonesian Republic sent a cable to Nehru with the message:

Indonesians will keep ready for shipment to India a quantity of rice amounting to half a billion tonnes. Every section of Indonesian community gives enthusiastic adhesion (sic) to the plan ... For the sake of mutual assistance between the two nations, we should like to receive in exchange goods most urgently needed by the majority of population, e.g. textiles, agricultural implements, etc. In case you cannot dispense with goods mentioned above on account of Indian peoples' own needs, we should call ourselves fortunate if we can secure some other exchange ... We are quite prepared to consider any other kinds of goods that happen to be at your disposal. (Bright 1958: 378)

Nehru was quite overwhelmed by the Indonesian gesture and said on May 23, 1946: "I am sure everybody in India will appreciate and feel deeply grateful for the generous offer that Dr. Sjahrir has made on behalf of the Indonesian people. That offer came from him unsolicited and he persisted on it, in spite of all manner of discouragement. The terms of the offer and language that Dr. Sjahrir has used will go to the heart of the Indian people" (Bright 1958: 378). He further said that it was by such acts that nations and peoples were bound together, and the Indian people would not only feel grateful but would remember this in the days to come. Nehru declared that the government of India would send a delegation from India to Java at the beginning of June to settle the details of the transaction, and the delegation was to be led by Morarji Desai, then the Food Member of the Government of Bombay. On 20 August 1946, the first load of rice was delivered. The shipment, however, was not as smooth as India had expected, for the Dutch, angry at the success of the Republic, had shelled, among other things, the rice store in Banyuwangi in East Java, from where the shipment was to come to India, and destroyed a greater part of the rice stored there. In spite of the Dutch attempt to sabotage the Indonesian effort, the first load of Indonesian rice amounting to 6,000 tonnes, reached the Indian port of Cochin in South India.

The political developments in Indonesia in the course of 1946 was moving very rapidly (Kahin 1952). In a situation where two governments were functioning alongside one another each claiming sovereignty over the country as a whole, conflict of interests and clashes were inevitable. Thus the years 1946-49 were a time of intermittent negotiations and fighting. In the course of 1946 the Netherlands established control over a number of cities and surrounding areas in Java and Sumatra. But the great majority of the people of these two islands continued to be governed by the Republic. Outside them the Dutch were more successful being able to suppress nationalist military resistance and to exercise governmental functions. Limited negotiations between the Netherlands and the Republic produced only limited agreement. At the end of November 1946 due to British pressure on the two parties as well as difficult situation on the ground the Linggadjati Agreement (LDA) was signed by which the Netherlands agreed to recognise the Republic as the de facto authority in Java and Sumatra and agreed to cooperate with it towards the achievement of a sovereign federal Indonesia.

Immediately after the signing of this Agreement which took place on March 27, 1947, the Indian government extended de facto recognition to the Indonesia Republic, and also invited the Indonesian government to send representatives to the Asian Relations Conference which met in Delhi in March 1947. A special plane was sent by Nehru to fetch the Indonesian delegates to the conference. Republican leaders were elated particularly because for the first time they were sending delegates to an international conference. They were glad that they were not being guided or accompanied by foreign observers at the conference. The greatest significance of the Republic's participation, emphasised by Abu Hanifa, leader of the Indonesian delegation was "that the Indonesian people cannot easily be kept in an isolated position as before". Abu Hanifa declared that Indonesians loved peace and wanted peace also with the Dutch. But the Dutch must recognise their independence. The Asian Relations Conference symbolised the growth of common consciousness and solidarity among Asians and their bold determination to play a prominent role in world affairs. Indonesian delegates returned home with some good memory as the plenary conference unanimously adopted a *Report on National Movement for Freedom in Asia*, which contained a suggestion that the Republic of Indonesia should be immediately recognised by other states. It was in the Asian Relations Conference that the leaders of the Indonesian Republic were able to develop their rapport and friendship with the Indian leaders, which was soon transformed into a major bond between the two countries. Biju Patnaik who later was to play a significant role in the cause of Indonesia's independence came to know some of the leaders of the Republic quite intimately at this conference. While the conference as such was not able to offer anything concrete other than moral support to Indonesia, it positively helped the leaders of the two countries to forge closer ties and understanding of each other (Ray 1964: 112-113). In

November the same year, India appointed a Consul General in Jakarta and sent V. Raghavan to co-ordinate India's initiative on the Indonesian situation. While Raghavan was the official representative of India in Jakarta, for the Dutch were still the legal ruler of Indonesia, Mohammad Yunus was sent to Jogjakarta to establish links with the Republican leaders and to maintain liaison with New Delhi. To facilitate Indonesia's links with the outside world and her integration with the rest of Asia, Nehru suggested that she be admitted to the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) which met at Ootacamund in South India in early 1948; and in June 1948 in New Delhi, Nehru pleaded again for the admission of the Republic of Indonesia to that body and then representing it at the ECAFE session in Singapore in October 1948.

Divergences on the interpretation of the Linggadjati Agreement (LDA) and the refusal by the Dutch government to recognise the new situation in Indonesia led to the renewal of hostilities in July 1947 by which time the Dutch had already strengthened itself with 150,000 soldiers in Indonesia. Then charging the Republic with failure to comply with the LDA they launched a full scale attack on parts of its territory. Within two weeks, Dutch tanks, armour and infantry were holding most of the major cities, and towns in West and East Java, had obtained some control over communication links between them and occupied all Javanese deep water ports. Republican forces withdrew to the hills and mountains, and the government established itself in the cultural centre of Java, the city of Jogjakarta.

The Republican leaders obviously were in a difficult spot since the Dutch had obtained most of their goals through military means. Abu Hanifa, an important leader of the revolutionary period, commented bitterly: "They (Dutch) were very happy indeed. They were also pleased because Great Britain and the United States, which had recognised the Sovereignty of the Republic de facto, while denouncing the Dutch aggression and attack, otherwise did nothing to hinder the Dutch. The British and the USA offered to mediate but the Dutch bluntly refused both offers. The Dutch felt sure that their allies in World War II would never take the side of the Republic. The Republican leaders were bitter about the attitude of the Western powers. However, Indonesia still had some friends left. India was indignant and angry and Pandit Nehru said as much: '*What has become of the United Nations Charter? The spirit of New Asia will not tolerate such things. No European country, whatever it may be, has any business to set its army in Asia against the peoples of Asia. When it does so Asia will not tolerate it*' (emphasis mine) (Abu Hanifa 1972: 259-260). No one else could have expressed so well and accurately as Abu Hanifa did about India's anguish over the Dutch 'police action' against the Republic and India's feelings for Indonesia's legitimate cause. The Dutch action provoked strong reaction in India where all the leading newspapers in their editorials took up the cause of Indonesia and condemned the Dutch for starting armed hostilities (*The Statesman* July 22, 1947; *The Hindu* July 22, 1947).

The Indian government's reaction came in the form of a press note released on July 22, 1947 expressing great concern at the resumption of hostilities and with the declaration that it had made urgent representations to the British and the American governments to spare no efforts to bring about an immediate cessation of the armed conflict and the resumption of negotiations between the parties for an amicable settlement of the dispute. In an address in Delhi on July 28, Nehru declared: "India has been and is especially interested in the freedom of the peoples of Asia Asia, having suffered greatly in the past from foreign domination and exploitation, is determined to end it. Any attack on the freedom of the people in any part of Asia affects the rest of the great continent. The mere presence of a colonial regime or of foreign troops in any Asian country is an insult and challenge to Asia". He also announced that India proposed "within a few hours" to make a formal approach to the United Nations regarding Dutch aggression in Indonesia "if nothing happened" (*The Statesman*, July 29, 1947; *The Hindu*, July 30, 1947).

On July 29, the Indian government announced its decision to terminate Dutch air services flying over India. On the next day instructions were sent to the permanent delegation of India in New York to draw immediately the attention of the UN Security Council on the situation in Indonesia. Simultaneously it sent V.K. Krishna Menon, a seasoned diplomat as well as a close friend of Nehru, to represent him before the Security Council. At the same time both Nehru and Indian diplomats abroad were trying to impress upon the Western powers the seriousness of the Indonesian situation and tried to persuade them to put pressure on the Dutch to cease hostilities. Indeed, this was the first occasion after India became independent when she took up the cause of Asian freedom and demonstrated before the world her policy of anti-colonialism and Asian solidarity. On July 30, 1947 India placed the Indonesian conflict before the UN Security Council through a letter by Nehru addressed to the UN Secretary General. India stated that the Dutch, without any warning, embarked on large scale military action against the Indonesian people at a time when a delegation of the Republican Government was actually at Batavia for negotiations with the Dutch authorities for implementation of the LDA. India resorted to Article 34 of the UN Charter and argued that the Dutch action had endangered the maintenance of international peace and urged for urgent UN action. On the same day Australia also requested the intervention of the United Nations. It happened that the Australian motion had precedence over India's because Australia based its motion on a breach of peace according to the Article 39 of the UN Charter. Australian resolution proposed an immediate cessation of hostilities and that the dispute between the Dutch and the Republic should be submitted at once for arbitration by a third party according to the LDA. The Security Council debate that followed gave the Republic an impression that the United States was not willing to support the Australian resolution against the colonial powers. Instead the United States put forward a compromise proposal which watered down the

Australian resolution a great deal. This attitude of the United States, to quote Abu Hanifa "for a long time afterwards influenced the opinion of Indonesia that the United States was not after all the champion of the suppressed, but the Soviet-Russia was. It could be said that the United States spoiled the hopes of many Indonesian leaders at that time" (Kahin 1952: 260). During the debate on the Indonesian question in the Security Council, B.R. Sen, India's representative, pointed out very strongly that it was not enough to ask the parties for an immediate cessation of hostilities but the Security Council must ask the governments concerned to revert to the original positions they held before the outbreak of the hostilities. Like the representative of Soviet Russia Gromyko, he argued that a negotiation conducted while the troops of one party were in the territory of another could not be conducive to creating equality for both parties. In the existing situation if at all negotiations took place, they would give the Dutch an advantage which may be unduly unfavourable to the Indonesian Republic.

As a result of Australia's and India's action, the Security Council adopted at its 173rd meeting on August 1, 1947 a resolution calling on the parties (1) to cease hostilities forthwith and (2) to settle their disputes by arbitration or by other peaceful means and keep the Security Council informed about the progress of the settlement. At the 192nd meeting when the Dutch representative raised the question of the competence of the Security Council to deal with the Indonesian question, N.R. Pillai, the Indian representative, countered it by saying that this was an attempt on the part of the Dutch to delay action and by-pass the Council and to ensure that questions bearing on policies of imperialism were not raised before the Security Council. He dubbed the Dutch attempt as a dilatory strategy to gain time for a renewed offensive in Indonesia on a much larger scale and warned that tension in Asia was already getting very difficult to control. He declared:

To us it is intolerable that after the world has fought two wars for democracy and national self-determination, a colonial war of this kind should be permitted to continue. India's position, generally, is that no European country whatever it may be has any business to use its army in Asia. The fact that foreign armies are functioning on Asian soil is itself an outrage against Asian sentiments. The fact that they are bombing defenceless people is scandalous. If other members of the United Nations tolerate this or remain inactive, then the United Nations cease to exist. This is the general feeling not only in India but throughout Asia. (United Nations 1947: 2154)

He also warned:

The population is sullen, restive and discontented, and Southeast Asia in particular, has become one of the danger spots of the world. Events in Indonesia which is the heart of Southeast Asia, are being scrutinised with anxious eyes by the rest of Asia and one of the surest ways of defeating the objectives of the United Nations and of lowering its prestige

and authority would be refusal of justice to Indonesia. (United Nations 1947: 2154)

Besides condemning Dutch action and trying to arouse world conscience in favour of Indonesia in the Security Council, India supported Indonesia in practically whatever course of action that the latter wanted. For example, at the 193rd meeting of the Council on August 22, the Indonesian delegate requested the Council to set up two commissions one for supervising the mission of the cease-fire and another for settling of points of dispute between the parties by mediation or arbitration. India supported Indonesia on both these counts and was instrumental in the setting up by the Security Council of a Counsellor Commission on August 25 and of a Committee of Good Offices on November 1, 1948 (United Nations 1947-48: 369-70). She also supported the Republic of Indonesia's point of view that the Dutch forces must revert to the positions they occupied before the outbreak of the hostilities, as well as its attempt to block the formation of a Dutch-sponsored Federal Government of Indonesia which would be detrimental to the interests of the Republic, for it would only be one among many other federal states having a much weaker position vis-à-vis other states who might be willing to collaborate with the Dutch leaving the Republic isolated. When the Dutch eventually made a unilateral attempt to set up a federal government in Indonesia at the beginning of 1949, India's representative in the United Nations took up the Indonesian brief and said that such a step "will contribute to further strengthen the opinion of the Republic that the Netherlands government has been proceeding unilaterally to establish ultimately a United States of Indonesia on its own terms and without the Republic. The formation of an interim government now without the Republic will greatly complicate a negotiated settlement of the Indonesian dispute and could create serious unrest in Indonesia" (United Nations 1947-48: 213).

Parallel with the action of the Indian government, Indian public was also actively expressing its support and solidarity with the Indonesian people in several ways. As far back as November 14, 1945 Indian seamen recruited to man Dutch ships in Bombay Harbour in place of Indonesian seamen refused to work. When the Dutch took its first police action against the Republic, important leaders like Sukarno and Sjahrir were caught in a situation where they had no way of escape as they were encircled by Dutch soldiers. The major target of the Dutch attack was the top echelon leadership of the Republic. Nehru was concerned about the safety of the leaders of the Indonesian Republic and immediately sent on July 22, 1947 Biju Patnaik with a Dakota plane to air lift Prime Minister Sjahrir and flew him to Singapore from where he was brought back to India. Patnaik was praised by Nehru at a Press Conference on July 28 for being a "very gallant Indian airman who brought Dr. Sjahrir from Indonesia to Delhi", and for his great efficiency in flying and for his "adventurous and daring spirit" (*The Hindu*, July 30, 1947). Patnaik maintained very close links with the leadership of the Indonesian airforce at the time, and helped them to

train younger pilots to improve their flying capability. The strong bond between him and Air Commodore Suryadarma, the then Chief of the Indonesian airforce, could be gauged from a letter that the latter wrote to the former on August 27, 1947 giving an account of the Indonesian situation prevailing at that time. In the same letter he also expressed his deepest gratitude to Patnaik for the help he rendered to the cause of Indonesia's independence (*File No.114-FEA/47, Indonesian Affairs: 32*). Patnaik had not only rescued Sjahrir and brought him to safety, but also ran a couple of sorties to Indonesia which helped the Republic not only to run the blockade the Dutch had imposed on them, but also to receive essential supplies like medicine and even occasionally arms. In the historical account on the Indonesian revolution, Patnaik's contribution to the Indonesian revolution is well documented. To quote from it: "The arrival of Patnaik with his plane meant that the air blockade had been run. Tonnes of medical supplies urgently needed by the people were carried directly to Jakarta. Not only that our leaders and other Indonesian people who had to go abroad in the interests of the struggle could also make use of this plane" (Indonesia 1975).

On an earlier occasion, Patnaik had flown Sjahrir out secretly in his Dakota plane from Java to India via Singapore to propagate Indonesia's case before the outside world. Then on August 24, 1947 in response to an appeal from the Indonesian Red Cross, an Indian Medical Mission led by Dr. P.L. Nurula along with two other doctors and three nurses and 7,000 pounds of medical supplies were sent to Indonesia by an Indian plane which landed in Maguwo on August 26. Successively on August 28 and 29, two Indian planes arrived in Jogjakarta carrying medicine and three doctors who had volunteered to help the struggle of the Indonesian people. On their arrival in Jogjakarta, Nurula announced that the Indian Red Cross had offered to send to Indonesia a fully equipped and staffed hospital of 1,000 beds. "It was not only sympathy that the people of Indonesia received from India ..." In addition to the gifts of medicines, India also helped the Indonesian diplomatic struggle in the international forum and even trained Indonesia's air cadets'. One such help India extended to Indonesia when on July 24, 1948, Dr. Soedarsono, the head of the Indonesian Mission in New Delhi, made an urgent request to the Government of India to grant the Indonesian delegation in Delhi facilities for broadcasting and transmission of news to provide the link between the Republic and the Indonesians abroad (*File No. 126-FEA/47: 1*). This request was immediately granted and the facilities were offered by the external services of All India Radio in October.

While inaugurating the service, Sardar Patel, Indian Minister of Information and Broadcasting, said "This service creates no new bonds, but merely revives and rejuvenates old ones. I am confident that this ethereal link will draw us closer together in the common and arduous tasks that await us" After years of heroic struggles, he continued, "India has attained her independence. Indonesia is still in the grip of foreign rule and we, who have known the agony and anguish of slavery naturally turn with a sympathetic heart

to Indonesia in the valiant struggle which she is waging to shake of the foreign yoke. India knows that there can be no real freedom for her as long as there are manacles round Indonesia's wrists" (*The Statesman*, October 13, 1947). In response to Sardar Patel's sympathetic note, Dr. Soedarsono, Indonesia's representative in New Delhi, in a message said "The external services division of All India Radio is to be congratulated on starting this new service. We, the Indonesian people, consider the opening of this new transmission as having a great significance in strengthening the relations between the nations of Asia; the service is a bridge for a strong spiritual link between the peoples of India and Indonesia The Indonesian people truly appreciate the gesture" (*The Statesman*, October 13, 1947).

Indian nationals living in Indonesia also contributed their little might in this struggle. They were aroused by sufferings of the ordinary Indonesians and united themselves in a voluntary brigade to take part in the struggle side by side with the Indonesians. Among these were also a few Indian soldiers who deserted from the British army and joined the Indonesians not only in their struggle for independence but also to train them to fight against the Dutch. The Indians along with the Chinese and Filipinos formed on August 30, 1947 an international brigade under the leadership of Abdul Mazid Khan (Indian), Dr. Estrada (Filipino), Tony Wen (Chinese) and Adnan (Malay), for the purpose of helping the Indonesians in their fight for independence (Indonesia 1975). The sympathy of the government of India was so strong for Indonesia's struggle that Mohd. Yunus, India's representative in Jogjakarta addressed the Indian soldiers associated to the international brigade, thanked them for helping the Indonesians and declared that the "Indonesian struggle is really the Indian struggle" (Indonesia 1975).

Outside Indonesia in the capital cities of Europe, America as well as in international forums, India made every effort to champion the cause of Indonesia in her fight against the Dutch. She took great pains to convince the world of the gravity of the Indonesian situation and its potential of a conflagration if the Dutch were not prevented from carrying on with their military solution, and persuading them to opt for a political settlement which would recognise the sovereignty of the Republic and the eventual transfer of power to it. Despite Indian and Australian efforts to make the UN Security Council act decisively, it only called for a cessation of hostilities and established a three-man Good Offices Committee (GOC) to help toward a conflict resolution. The Dutch were permitted to retain areas they had taken from the Republic, which included most of the important estate and mining areas in Java and Sumatra. When in January 1948, the pressure of the United States Chairman of the GOC resulted in the signing of a second negotiated agreement the Renville Agreement the terms merely reflected weaker military position of the Republic. Even then the Republic was eager to continue negotiations with the Dutch to resolve their differences. In the face of the Dutch uncompromising

attitude, the negotiations between the Netherlands government and the Republic of Indonesia broke down on July 23, 1948. The sequence of events in Indonesia was moving rapidly since then. In September Soviet Russia's minister had protested against inclusion by the Netherlands Government of the Indonesian Republic territories in statistics and other information submitted to the UN and proposed their exclusion. Britain, France, Belgium and Denmark decided to move amendments to this proposal. Shiva Rao, India's special representative appealed for time to study the Russian proposal on the ground that it was difficult to take decision at this stage because of Indonesia's fluid situation (India 1958: 647). Nehru was so much committed to the cause of Indonesia's freedom that he was somewhat surprised by Shiva Rao's neutral attitude and commented in a note on September 11, "Nothing should be done on our behalf which might weaken Indonesia's case" (India 1958: 647). A few days after this, in response to a telegram from Mohammad Hatta seeking Nehru's advice on the desirability of the Republic extending its foreign relations in view of its agreeing to restrict its foreign service under the Renville Agreement, the latter replied that these problems would cause confusion until a final settlement was reached and suggested that it would be wise to wait for a month or two. Nehru added, "Whatever action you may take you can count on the full sympathy and the support of the Government of India" (India 1958: 648). In the same month, the Communists who were partners in the Indonesian coalition government, broke away and made an unsuccessful armed revolt against the Hatta government. Meanwhile the Dutch were conducting a blockade to strangle the Republic. Indonesia approached India to use her good offices on her behalf with the United States government and point out to them the dangers of any Dutch police action and also that any delay by the Dutch to come to terms with the Republic would also strengthen the Communist factions. In a note to the secretary-general, Ministry of External Affairs on September 21, Nehru suggested that India should draw the attention of the US and the UK governments to the dangers mentioned above and to suggest to them the desirability of impressing upon the Dutch that they should refrain from any aggressive action and come to a settlement with the Republic (India 1958: 649). A few days later, he wrote to Mohammad Yunus, India's unofficial representative in Jogjakarta, asking him to tell President Sukarno that India was watching the developments in Indonesia with great concern and that "We are doing everything we can to bring pressure upon the great powers in favour of Indonesia" (India 1958: 656). Again in early November, Nehru sent a cable from Cairo to Mohammad Hatta informing him of his discussions in London and Paris with representatives of various governments of the imminence of Dutch military action and the grave consequences that would follow, and also assured him "of our solidarity with you in this grave crisis" (India 1958: 373).

Throughout the month of November 1948, India held discussions with the US and UK governments impressing upon them to pressurise on the Dutch not

to precipitate the crisis by resorting to military action. In the meantime, India was seriously concerned about the Dutch intentions of carrying out a second military attack on the Republican positions in order to pursue its objective of weakening the Republic and creating a Federal Indonesia in which the Republic would only be one among several states. In a cable to Girija Shankar Bajpai, the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs, on November 7, 1948, Nehru said that he had reports indicating deteriorating political situation and feverish preparations on the part of the Dutch for military action which it was rumoured might come on November 20, and also asked him to prepare for meeting the request from Mohammad Hatta for aircraft to carry away, if necessary, members of the Indonesian government. On the next day, the Government of India sent a cable to the Republican government expressing his readiness to provide all help within limits of its capacity and also to send an aircraft to Jogjakarta from India in case there was a need for it. India was willing to offer very gladly hospitality as well as facilities to any members of the Republican government if at all anyone chose to come to India and operate from its soil. But it was not very clear about its international implications and how the United Nations would view such a development. India's preferred course and suggestion was that in spite of difficulties and lack of safety, the Republican government must make every effort to function formally from some part of Indonesian soil, probably in Sumatra, for that would give the Republic sure foothold for international purpose. Some members of the government could however stay in India. As a contingency measure and if need be to airlift Republican leaders, a Dakota of Kalinga airline was sent to Singapore on December 16 but the Dutch refused to give it clearance for onward journey to Jakarta and transit facility to Jogjakarta until the night of December 18. On December 19, the aircraft took off but was turned back from Jakarta by the Dutch authorities. India was also keen to have either Sukarno or Hatta visit India. In fact, the Reuters news agency reported on November 29 that Sukarno had been invited by Nehru to visit India "to strengthen the bonds of friendship between India and the Indonesian Republic". The news was flashed by *Antara*, the Indonesia's leading news agency.

It also informed the Republic that Indian representatives in London, Paris and Washington were having continuous dialogue trying to impress upon those governments of the dangerous consequences of possible Dutch military action and India's very close interests in Indonesia's freedom. Apart from such moral support the government of India had also kept provisions for financial help to the Republican government in case of any contingency. In its attempt to mobilise international public opinion in favour of Indonesia's independence Nehru tried to highlight the danger that might follow if the Dutch succeeded in destroying the Republic. In a letter to C.R. Attlee, Prime Minister of Britain, Nehru wrote: "... any such action would not only destroy the last chance of reaching a settlement by agreement but would let loose such a volume of

bitterness and hatred in Southeast Asia against not only Netherlands but also other Western powers that I shudder to contemplate ... Undoubtedly the situation could give a chance to the Communists there to play a more important role as defenders of Indonesian freedom" (India 1958: 378). A few days after his note to the British Prime Minister, Nehru, in reply to a November 27 telegram by Noel-Baker, the British Secretary of Commonwealth Relations, cabled three days later noting that the Indonesian Republic "has gone too far to accommodate itself to many Dutch proposals. Dutch insistence now on complete break-up of the Republican Army and in regard to supreme command of Federal Armed Forces simply means abject surrender on the part of the Republic without any real trace of the Republican government left ... All this indicates an attitude on the part of the Dutch government to crush the Republic and impose military and colonial rule. We cannot advise the Indonesian government to accept this demand for this would mean ending of all that Indonesian nationalism has stood for and would inevitably lead to strengthening of communist elements. We realise that present Dutch attitude may lead to military action. If that happens the Republic may cease to exist but the ideal of the Republic will remain and will be fought for to a bitter end".

In a cable on December 15, 1948 to Indian envoys in the United States and Britain, Nehru wrote:

The issue is no longer one of coming to a compromise about some relatively minor matter but the more basic one of colonial powers agreeing to the grant of national freedom without any reservation whatever. Once this is done, it will not be difficult to determine the nature of the association which would exist between these territories and countries with whom they have had long connections ... The government of India view this prospect with considerable concern and we, therefore, earnestly urge that action as indicated be taken before the situation gets all together out of control. (India 1958: 381)

On December 18, 1948 the Dutch launched a second major attack on the Republic. The Dutch did not let the Republican government know their fateful decision till they bombed Jogjakarta airfield on December 19. With blitz tactics, heavy arms, and air support they quickly captured the Republic's capital Jogjakarta and seized most of its top leaders including Sukarno and Hatta to exile them on the island of Bangka, off Sumatra. Further they succeeded in establishing control over all the cities and larger towns in Java and most of those in Sumatra, though certainly not all the surrounding areas or the road system (Kahin 1952). Dr. Sumitro, Indonesian Minister of Trade and Finance protested to the Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett in Washington, calling the Dutch action a second Pearl Harbour. He told newspapermen, "Money received in the United States, for the purpose of reconstruction in Holland, has been diverted at the rate of one million dollars a day to maintain an army of 130,000 in Indonesia ... I predict that the Dutch will find no peace in Indonesia no matter how many so

called victories they win ... The fact that the Dutch were able to capture Republican leaders was due to the fact that our government believed that negotiations were still going on. With unheard of treachery, the Dutch launched a sneak attack" (Fischer 1959). This time, however, the reactions of the Security Council was very much strongly anti Dutch. World opinion had been aroused and the United States Congress was exerting pressure for America to take a stand against the Netherlands. In the meantime certain objective conditions in Asia were changing fast. The communists were scoring victory upon victory in China and the United States was naturally forced to have fresh look on the importance of Asia as compared with Europe. Moreover, there was a change in America's attitude towards the Indonesian Republic after it had shown itself ready and able to suppress a communist revolt. India, whose leader Jawaharlal Nehru charged the Dutch with "naked and unabashed aggression" moved in to the breach. On December 20, the American government requested the holding of an emergency session of the Security Council which took place on December 22. On the following day, M.J. Desai, India's delegate voiced his government's concern at the deteriorating situation in Indonesia and blamed the Netherlands government for having decided to settle the question by force and said that the attack launched by them was "entirely unprovoked and uncalled for" and was "a flagrant breach of the truce agreements". He also warned that if the Indonesian question was not effectively and speedily resolved it would have wide repercussions in Asia. He also urged the Council to act "immediately, decisively and effectively" and called for an immediate cease-fire, the withdrawal of Dutch troops to the lines demarcated by the truce agreement and the release of Indonesian leaders and other persons taken prisoner since the outbreak of the hostilities (United Nations 1948: 24-29).

It was essentially because of the initiative of India and a few other countries that the Security Council was compelled to pass a resolution on December 24 calling on the parties to cease hostilities forthwith, to release immediately President Sukarno and other political prisoners arrested since the military action and instructed the GOC to report to the Security Council fully and urgently by telegraph on the events that took place in Indonesia since the military action. This resolution was supplemented by another one on December 28 calling on the Dutch to set free the political prisoners forth with and to report within 24 hours. It also called for negotiations between the two parties for the setting up of a federal, independent and sovereign United States of Indonesia, the formation of an interim federal government, elections to a Constituent Assembly by October 1, 1949, and transfer of sovereignty by July 1950. The GOC was transformed into a UN Commission for Indonesia (United Nations 1948: 212-237).

On December 19, in an address at the plenary session of the Indian National Congress in Jaipur, Nehru said: "Due to our efforts in the UN, the fight in Indonesia was stopped and suspended for 11 months. I may emphasise that no

one can prevent the tide of independence in Asian countries. The police action of the Dutch will have serious repercussions in India, in Asia and perhaps in some other countries too. Though we cannot give the Indonesian Republic effective aid now, we cannot remain idle spectators. We cannot approve of the Dutch action. Their action is contrary to all principles of the United Nations charter. Whatever happens, we will keep our ideal before us". At the end of the meeting the Congress Party passed a resolution and sent its greetings to the Indonesian Republic which said: "The Congress sends its greetings to the leaders and people of the Indonesian Republic who have struggled for their freedom against great difficulties during the past three years. It assures them of its complete sympathy for their cause" (*The Hindustan Times & National Herald*, December 20, 1948).

Apart from condemning the Dutch action in stronger terms, the government of India took some concrete measures to supplement its verbal support to Indonesia. An official invitation was extended to President Sukarno by Nehru to visit India to "strengthen the bond of friendship" between the peoples of India and Indonesia. An invitation was also extended to the leaders of the Republic to form a government in exile in India. The Indian government announced on December 23 suspension of the operation of KLM Dutch flights in or in transit across India, and sent instructions to airports not to clear Dutch aircraft proceeding to Indian airports or flying across India and not to supply any fuel or provide services to Dutch aircraft (*The Hindu*, December 1 & 24, 1948; *The Statesman*, December 10, 1948). When the Dutch government criticised India for allegedly violating Article 89 of the Chicago Agreement on Civil Aviation, the Indian government countered it by issuing a press statement, that "the so-called police action of the Dutch in Indonesia constitutes an act of war against the government of the Indonesian Republic, which the government of India has recognised de facto, and fully justify the denial of facilities of Dutch planes to land or fly across India under the article quoted" (*The Statesman*, December 30, 1948). India also postponed the departure of the first Indian Ambassador to the Hague, Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta, to show her displeasure with the Dutch action in Indonesia.

While the government of India was expressing its official condemnation of the Dutch police action, the people in India were outraged by the brutal action of a desperate colonial power making its last attempt to suppress Indonesian peoples' aspiration for freedom and independence. They expressed their anger and disapproval of the Dutch action by demonstrating against whatever symbol of Dutch authority present in India. For example, students in Bombay marched to the docks where a Dutch cargo ship was unloading and shouted slogans. They also staged a huge demonstration before the Dutch consulate and pulled down its official insignia from the top of the building. Emotions among the people ran so high that there were several violent incidents against Dutch property and manhandling of an official of the Netherlands Bank. Police

reinforcements had to be called to help break the demonstration and bring the situation under control (*The Statesmen*, December 25 & 27, 1948).

The high-noon of Indian diplomatic activity and moral support to the Indonesian cause was the convening of the Conference on Indonesia in Delhi on January 20-23, 1949 to deliberate and evolve ways and means to support the Republic. A few days before the Conference began, in an address to the Indian Journalists Association in Calcutta on January 13, 1949, Nehru defined the scope and necessity of having such a conference. "The question of Indonesia has been an important question for us in Asia and in India for the last two years or more", declared Nehru, "because we are intimately connected with the people of Indonesia and even more because of the consequences of what would happen to India and in a wider context to Asia and the world" (India 1958: 161). India felt the necessity of having such a conference because the efforts made by the Security Council which passed numerous resolutions but remained unimplemented were not at all satisfactory for the Indonesian people, drifting the country into a dangerous direction. It considered, therefore, to be desirable for countries which were intimately connected by geography and otherwise to move together and take counsel not in any way intending to bypass the Security Council but in order to strengthen it — a point particularly emphasised by Nehru. The latter informed his cabinet on January 19 of the main lines of Indian approach to the Indonesian problem at the conference: (1) That the conference should recommend to the Security Council the immediate steps which the Dutch should be called upon to take; (2) That the conference should also recommend to the Security Council such further action by way of sanctions or otherwise, which should be taken in case the Dutch did not comply with the directions of the Security Council; (3) That the conference should make proposals and initiate action for the setting up of an administrative machinery to ensure co-ordination of action by Asian countries to implement the conference decisions.

Fifteen countries accepted to attend the conference, comprising Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. Thailand and New Zealand sent observers. Only Turkey declined the invitation. When opening the conference Nehru made clear India's attitude both towards Indonesia and the problem of Asian freedom in general and declared: "We meet today because the freedom of a sister country of ours has been imperilled and dying. Colonialism of the past has raised its head again and challenged all the forces that are struggling to build up a new structure of the world. That challenge has a deeper significance than that might appear on the surface, for it is a challenge to the newly awakened Asia which has so long suffered under various forms of colonialism". He particularly emphasised the flouting of the United Nations resolutions by the Dutch who not only refused to abide by the directions of the Security Council but also concentrated all their efforts to form

a so-called interim government subservient to their will. "Any person who is acquainted with the spirit of the Indonesian people or of Asia today", warned Nehru, "knows that this attempt to suppress Indonesian nationalism and the deep urge for freedom must fail One thing is certain there can be and will be no surrender to aggression and no acceptance or re-imposition of colonial control" (India 1958: 163). The most important aspect of the conference was that the participating countries unanimously condemned the Dutch action to destabilise the Republic. The conference itself aroused great enthusiasm in all parts of Asia and much interest throughout the world. In Indonesia it greatly raised the morale of the nationalist guerrillas opposing the Dutch armed forces as well as the hopes of the Indonesian leaders. Three resolutions were passed by the conference and forwarded to the President of the Security Council. These included:

1. The Republican leaders should be released immediately and unconditionally;

2. The Netherlands should withdraw troops from the Residency of Jogjakarta immediately and from other territories of the Republic by March 15, 1949.

3. Old territories under the authority of the Republican government prior to the second Dutch military action should be restored to it, the immediate removal of restrictions imposed by the Netherlands government on the trade of the Republic and pending the formation of an interim government, the Republic be afforded all facilities for communication with the outside world (India 1958: 170). The resolution also recommended formation of an interim government by March 15, 1949 with republican representatives on it and with full powers of government including control over the armed forces; arrangement for the completion of elections for a Constituent Assembly by October 1, 1949 and the completed transfer for sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia by January 1, 1950. The resolution further recommended that the Security Council take effective action under the wide powers conferred upon it by the Charter if either party to the dispute failed to comply with the recommendations of the Security Council and that the Security Council be pleased to report to the UN General Assembly meeting in April 1949 all the measures taken or recommended by the Council in the solution of the Indonesian problem.

It was also agreed in the conference that the participating governments would keep in close touch on the Indonesian question both through normal diplomatic channels and through representatives at the headquarters of the United Nations. There was also considerable discussion on the proposal for establishing a permanent consultative machinery but due to the lack of support among the majority members the proposal was dropped. It was, however, recommended to the participating governments that they consult among themselves to find ways and means of achieving co-operation in matters of common interest. After the conclusion of the conference on Indonesia, Nehru sent a cable to Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Head of the Indonesian Republican Emergency Government and

said that the delegates who attended the conference earnestly hoped that efforts made by all friendly nations in the East would bring to the people of Indonesia peace and the fulfilment of their political aspirations (India 1958: 181). Two days before the cable was sent Sjafruddin declared that while the resolution of the conference did not fully meet their expectations, the Indonesians were convinced that "Asian countries will fully aid in the creation of an independent and sovereign Indonesia at the latest on January 1, 1950". Nehru also sent a cable to Dr. Sjahrir on February 5, 1949 and said; "We have been following events in Indonesia with the closest interest and not only with friendly sympathy but also with the conviction that the freedom of Indonesia is a matter of vital importance to India and Asia. We shall continue this policy with vigour". He also offered invitations to Republican leaders to visit India for consultations.

Five days after the conclusion of the New Delhi conference, the UN Security Council passed a resolution on January 28, 1949 calling upon both the Netherlands government and the Republican authorities to accept a cease-fire. The Netherlands government was asked to release immediately and unconditionally all political prisoners arrested since December 17, 1948 in the Republic and facilitate immediate return of the republican government with its officials to Jogjakarta. The council recommended that negotiations be undertaken at the earliest by both parties with the assistance of the UN commission for Indonesia towards establishing a federal, independent and sovereign United States of Indonesia at the earliest possible dates, not later than March 15, 1949 and that elections for an constituent assembly be completed by October 1, 1949 and the transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia should take place at the earliest, not later than July 1, 1950. The United Nations Committee of Good Offices was redesigned as the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI) and fresh directives were issued to it. The Security Council's resolution fell short of the New Delhi recommendations in that the resolution did not make any provision for the withdrawal of Dutch forces and extended the date for the transfer of sovereignty by another six months. Although international reaction to the resolution was not unfavourable, the emergency republican administration rejected it.

The Security Council was once again seized of the Indonesian question on March 23, 1949 when it passed a Canadian formula directing preliminary talks in Indonesia to consult under the auspices of UNCI on (1) the restoration of the Republican authority in Jogjakarta; (2) the organisation of a Round Table Conference (RTC) at the Hague aimed at creating an independent Indonesian federation. Even though the Canadian-sponsored directive was considered a setback for the Dutch, their government at the Hague were quick to accept the decision of the council and announced that they would send a delegation to Batavia for talks. The Republican delegation committed itself to discuss initially only the practical details of the restoration of the Republican government in Jogjakarta. In the meantime, after consulting the representative of the

governments which took part in the New Delhi conference on Indonesia in January, India and Australia asked for the inclusion of the Indonesian question in the agenda of the second part of the third session of the General Assembly scheduled in April. India's delegate, Setalvad said on April 8, 1949 at the 60th meeting of the Assembly's General Committee that the question was "of particular importance" for all Southeast Asia and that "the future of millions of people in Indonesia" was involved in its solution. While admitting that the Assembly could not take decisions or make recommendations while the Security Council was seized of the matter, he made a strong plea for the discussion of the Indonesian question in the Assembly regarding it as extremely helpful. Again on May 11 at the 208th meeting of the Assembly, India's delegate H. Malik reiterated that India was disappointed at the way in which the Security Council was handling the Indonesian question and wanted that "all possible steps should be taken to strengthen the action of the Security Council" (United Nations 1949: 8). The Assembly admitted the question on the agenda but in view of the reported agreement between the Dutch and the Republican delegations in Batavia, it was decided not to proceed with the discussion of the subject in the Assembly but postpone it to the Assembly's fourth session scheduled in September 1949.

The Security Council's directive of January 23 was most disappointing to the countries which participated in the New Delhi conference, who felt that further steps should be taken and an informal meeting amongst them should take place. India took the initiative in calling such a meeting which took place on April 13, 1949 under the chairmanship of Nehru. The informal conference recommended to their respective governments that in the event of the failure of the Batavia meeting to reach an agreement, each member government should instruct its delegation to the current session of the UN Assembly to condemn the deliberate failure of the Dutch to comply with the Security Council resolution on January 23. It also suggested that each of the participating governments to actively examine the possibility of recommending economic sanctions against the Dutch and the denial of all transit facilities by land, sea, or air to the Dutch in and over its territory. Financial assistance by the participating countries to rehabilitate the Republic when its authority was restored in Jogjakarta was also considered in the meeting (United Nations 1949: 336). The recommendations of the New Delhi conference on Indonesia and the informal meeting in April and the resultant Asian and world opinion that they were able to arouse had undoubtedly influenced the Security Council to take necessary steps in resolving the Indonesian question, and played an important role in forcing the Dutch eventually to transfer power to the Indonesians.

India's position on the Indonesian question was, therefore, to work to its utmost capacity in influencing foreign opinion in the UN, in the USA and the UK, as well as in Asian and other countries that were interested in the matter. It tried to induce these countries to support the cause of the Indonesian Republic. It

was concerned with the future of the Indonesian Republic not only because of the historical bond between the two countries, but also due to the conviction that the existence of the Dutch power in Indonesia was dangerous from many points of view and would be a source of perpetual trouble and conflict in Southeast Asia. India believed that the only way to have stability in Indonesia, and thereby help stability in Southeast Asia, to quote Nehru, "is for the Indonesian Republic to be firmly established and to function in a completely independent manner" (India 1949). Nehru and other Indian leaders believed that while the Western imperialist powers must be eliminated from any position of control in Southeast Asia, the spread of communism appeared also to come in the way of freedom. India's approach to the Indonesian question was to a large extent conditioned by its fear of communist danger resulting from the continuation of conflicts in Indonesia. It believed that if the war in Indonesia continued due to the Dutch intransigence and their refusal to acknowledge Indonesian aspirations, it would strengthen the communist forces in Indonesia as well as Southeast Asia with its disastrous effects on the stability of the area, including India.

If one examines the statement of Nehru and India's delegates in the Security Council on Indonesia, one finds veiled references to such a communist danger. While speaking at a meeting in Allahabad on January 1, 1949, Nehru said that India's concern about Dutch aggression in Indonesia was not due merely to "love of national freedom and stout opposition to every kind of imperialism, but it is essentially a matter of self-interest for them" (India 1958: 369-374). In announcing the convening of the New Delhi conference on Indonesia, Sir Benegal Rau declared in the meeting of the Security Council on January 1, 1949: "Our Prime Minister was in no way exaggerating the situation when he said that if no effective measures are taken the consequences will be disastrous for the whole of Asia and for the whole world" (*The Hindu*, January 2, 1949). Nehru was convinced that the Dutch "cannot possibly continue to hold any kind of authority in Indonesia. They will have to go. But in the process of going, they may well do a great deal of injury to the country and encourage disruption and other factors. The sooner, therefore, they go, the better" (United Nations 1949c: 30). On August 8, 1949, Nehru argued that the Indonesian struggle was much more than the struggle of any particular nation trying to achieve its own freedom alone. It was symbolic in many ways of the struggle of whole of Asia to get rid of European or foreign control, imperialism and colonialism, and India was particularly interested in that struggle because "the fate of the future of Southeast Asia depends on that struggle. There are all kinds of forces at play in Southeast Asia. By any misfortune, if the forces of progressive nationalism which are represented by the present government of Republic of Indonesia, do not triumph then it is a bad day not only for Indonesia but for the rest of Southeast Asia and may be even for India. Our fates are intimately connected" (India 1958: 181).

Indian diplomacy both at the United Nations and in the capitals of Western countries was a contributing factor in the change of attitudes of the western countries towards the Indonesia question. India took a strong line and pointed out to them that it was not a mere question of Indonesia, but a matter which affected the whole of Asia. If the Dutch again took aggressive action in Indonesia, everyone would think that they had done so with the passive, if not active, consent of the United States and the UK. This would mean that the countries of Asia would become more and more unfriendly and critical of the USA and the UK. It took up this argument not only because it was true but it thought this would have a far greater effect than any pious appeal about help to Indonesia. This kind of argument did have a great effect and both the US and the UK soon after that brought a great deal of pressure to bear upon the Dutch government. They felt suddenly that while the Dutch government was useful to them in Europe for the Western Union or the Atlantic Pact, that government's activities were endangering their whole position in Asia. It was a difficult choice for the US and the UK, but progressively (not completely) they came to realise that the friendship of Southeast Asia was probably more important in the long run and in case of any great crisis, than the support of the Netherlands in Europe or elsewhere. Nehru took some satisfaction from the fact that during all the months that passed since October 1948, India had brought the greatest possible pressure on the Western countries in regard to Indonesia, and that "India has been of some service to the Indonesian Republic during these past critical months. That service, of course, it will continue to render not only because of our close relationship with Indonesia but also because it is in consonance with our basic policy" (India 1958: 380). Nehru assured the Indonesian leaders that even in her most difficult times, India will not refrain from espousing the cause of Indonesia. In a note on Indonesian situation on June 28, 1949, Nehru said: "We in India are facing difficult economic problems and we are not likely to be out of the wood for sometime to come. But whatever difficulties we may have at home, the cause of Indonesian freedom is both dear to us and important for us and we shall continue to strive our utmost in its behalf" (India 1958: 369-374).

From August 23, to November 2, 1949, at the Hague, the delegation of the Netherlands, the Republic of Indonesia, and the Federal Consultative Assembly met together and, with assistance from the United Nations Commission for Indonesia, came to an agreement which provided for the unconditional and complete transfer of sovereignty by the Netherlands to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, on December 29, 1949. For India, the successful conclusion of the Dutch-Indonesian negotiations was, to quote Sir Benegal Rau, India's representative in the Security Council and a leading constitutional expert, "an event at which we may well permit ourselves to rejoice", and "a matter for special gratification for India" (India 1958: 374). Sir Benegal was reported to have played a special role in the constitutional arrangement worked out between the Dutch and the Indonesians, as Hatta while passing through

Delhi on his way to the Hague had consulted the former and Indonesia's decision to remain in the Netherlands-Indonesia Union seemed to have been influenced by him. On December 8, immediately after the conclusion of Round Table Agreements, Rajagopalachari, the Governor-General of India, cabled his congratulations to Sukarno for the achievement of independence. On December 18, the Indian government raised the status of its office of the Consulate-General in Jakarta to that of an Embassy, and on December 30, Dr. P. Subbarayan, India's first ambassador to Indonesia, presented his credentials to President Sukarno, who acknowledged his country's debt and gratitude to India and to Nehru personally for the unflinching support that India provided during the most difficult days in an important chapter of Indonesia's history. On the eve of the proclamation of the United States of Indonesia, Sukarno declared: "On the eve of the rebirth of our nation, I am trying vainly to measure the gratitude the Indonesian people owe to India and to her Prime Minister personally for the unflinching and brotherly support in our struggle in the past" (United Nations 1949c). On the 50th anniversary of Indonesia's independence, the country had paid back the debt by honouring the four individuals, Jawaharlal Nehru, Biju Patnaik, Mohammad Yunus and Mani, who were deeply involved in Indonesia's struggle for independence, with the highest awards of the country. The bond of friendship and understanding that the two countries had developed during the period of 1945-49, besides the historical and cultural links, provided the basis for future relations between the two countries.

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