

DIPLOMACY IN THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE THIRD WORLD

B. SEN

It has often been said that the institution of diplomacy is as old as history itself. Oppenheim in his treatise on International Law had stated "Legation as an institution for the purpose of negotiating between different States is as old as history whose records are full of examples of legations sent and received by the oldest nations". History records that in the earliest periods, special missions were being exchanged between Greek City States and by the Fifth Century B.C., such special missions had become so frequent that something approaching our own system of regular diplomatic inter-course seemed to have been achieved. The early Romans too maintained treaty relations with some of their neighbours which were concluded with the active participation of diplomatic envoys. The contemporary Asian princes are also known to have had diplomatic relations with their neighbours and envoys were sent and received from time to time. There is historical evidence to show that after the break-up of Alexander's empire, the new States which had emerged maintained relations among themselves. The Indian Kings also sent their envoys to the Greek Courts and under Emperor Ashoka exchange of envoys with other countries became more and more frequent. It is said that his Ambassadors were sent to distant lands like Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus and Cyrene and in the 7th Century A.D. diplomatic relations were opened with China. The kingdoms in South and South-East Asia also appeared to have maintained contacts with China through their envoys and the Emperors of Sumatra and Java (now Indonesia) as also the King of Ceylon, as early as in the 4th Century A.D. are reported to have sent emissaries to India to facilitate the visit of Buddhist pilgrims.

In West Asia from the time of prophet Mohammed, emissaries were sent abroad for religious or political purposes and according to Muslim chronicles the prophet is reported to have sent envoys to Byzantium, Egypt, Persia and Ethiopia. In the

beginning these emissaries were not concerned with promotion of international relations, their functions being related to certain specific missions such as negotiations or signing of peace treaties or exchange of prisoners of war. Later, however, during the period of Abbasid Caliphs, the policy of peaceful and friendly relations between Islamic countries and other nations began to develop and diplomacy naturally gained increasing significance, especially in matters of international trade. The Fatimid and Mamluk kings sent and received diplomatic missions to and from countries in Central and East Asia as well as Europe and treaties of friendship and commerce were negotiated through their envoys.

In Europe the origin of diplomacy may be said to be contemporaneous with the break-up of the Roman empire. Until that time there was neither room nor need for development of international law or diplomatic relations since the Roman Empire had practically swallowed up the entire civilized world known in Europe. However, after the split of the empire in A.D. 395 in Eastern and Western halves, the kings in the eastern part of the empire freely began the practice of sending envoys to foreign courts for observation and reporting on the political situations which became useful in manouvers against potential rivals. Gradually with the disintegration of the empire and the weight of various influences that were gaining ground in Europe, the feudal princes also found it useful to exchange envoys among themselves.

Though the practice of exchanging envoys and conduct of diplomatic relations through them had been in vogue for fairly long, the establishment of permanent missions of the type we are familiar with is of a comparatively recent origin. Before the 15th century the European princes normally sent temporary diplomatic missions which were to be terminated as soon as the particular purpose of the mission had been fulfilled. Similarly, the missions by and large in other regions were of a temporary character which were sent for specific purposes, whether it be political, economic or cultural. It was the Italian Republics and Venice in particular which were the first to recognize the advantages of maintaining permanent diplomatic missions at each others' capitals and introduced the practice of so doing. As the celebrated jurist Fauchille rightly points out, the history of diplomacy

falls into two clearly distinct periods. The first is the period of non-permanent *ad hoc* missions covering antiquity and the middle ages ending in the 15th century. The second period is that of permanent legations which originated in Italy and later gained ground throughout Europe. It was the ferment of Renaissance, the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution which changed the face of the contemporary European world and led to more and more contacts between the various nations in Europe; furthermore the need for finding markets for an expanding industry made permanent representation almost essential. At the close of the 15th century, England, France and Spain had established legations at each others' courts and in the 16th century the Republic of Venice established permanent legations at Vienna, Paris, Madrid and Rome. After the treaty of Westphalia (1648) which confirmed the principle of balance of power in Europe, European States felt the need to keep watch on each other and the establishment of permanent diplomatic missions gradually became the order of the day. Initially however, certain States such as France, in the reign of King Henri IV and England under King Henry VII vigorously opposed the establishment of embassies or legations. In 1651 the States General of Holland debated whether embassies were of any use and in 1660 Poland proposed that all accredited Ambassadors should be sent out of the country. The French Revolution, the wars that followed and the spectacular industrial revolution which was then beginning to make itself felt, however, put an end to the isolation of States and the practice of accrediting envoys became so common as to enable Grotius to assert "There are two maxims in the law of nations relating to Ambassadors which are generally accepted as established rules; the first is that Ambassadors must be received and the second that they must suffer no harm".

European nations in the course of trade and commerce throughout the 17th and 18th centuries were brought into contact with nations in other parts of the globe and the instances of their envoys being sent to the eastern princes for negotiating treaties are not infrequent. Gradually however in the process of expansion, the European powers of the day like England, France, Spain, Holland and Portugal conquered or colonized practically the whole of the known world in Asia and Africa as well as the discovered territories of the Americas with the result that the dip-

lomatic relations became practically confined to European States and Turkey. Countries like China or Persia, though not actually conquered or colonized, became subject to many restrictive treaties which greatly reduced their status and thus made it unnecessary to have diplomatic relations with them. The American independence and the gradual elimination of the colonial powers from the Americas gave rise to institution of diplomatic missions in that continent. Now with the emergence of new nations of Asia and Africa, diplomatic relations between States in various parts of the world have become of universal application.

Although diplomacy, even in the modern sense, has been practised for over a period of four hundred years, the objectives and functions of the institution basically remain the same, namely, protection and advancement of the interests of States; and a diplomat's duties in the ever expanding sphere of international activity can still be described simply as "charge of official relations between his home State and the State to which he is accredited". The scope and content of what may be regarded as the interests of a nation which a diplomat has to promote has nevertheless undergone vast and fundamental changes.

During the pre-colonial era, the main purpose of diplomacy was the promotion of a country's influence in the framework of power politics in Europe and the entire institution of diplomacy was naturally geared to that end. The Ambassador or the Envoy who was regarded as the personal representative of the sovereign was chosen by the Monarch out of the clergy or the nobility and accredited to the Court of another, often as a mark of friendship or alliance. Accreditation of an Ambassador signified special relationship between the two sovereigns or the importance of the Court to which the Ambassador was accredited in the context of European politics, whilst representation at the level of Envoy was considered sufficient in normal circumstances. The task of an Ambassador or Envoy in those days ranged from promoting matrimonial alliances between royal families to reporting on the attitude or intrigues of the Court to which the diplomat was accredited. Occasionally, however, they could be concerned also in promoting their trading interests of their countries and affording protection to the nationals who may be sojourning abroad. In those days of absolute monarchy, when the Sovereign's

word was the law, the Ambassador or the Envoy could do no better than to be on constant attendance at the Royal Court and guard against being outmanouvered by his colleagues in the intrigues of the Court. The closer an Ambassador found himself to the Sovereign in the country of his accreditation, the better he could serve his own. His character as the personal representative of his sovereign assured him easy access to the Court, and his personal inviolability and extra-territoriality for the premises of his mission flowing from his representative character was readily granted. It was again on this principle that the despatches which an Ambassador sent to his own sovereign through his courier over the land routes of Europe came under the protection of International Law and were inviolable. The difficulties of communication and the long and arduous journeys one had to perform between one capital and another, even within Europe, made it necessary for the King or the Emperor to place exclusive reliance on the report of his Ambassador or Envoy in formulation of foreign policies and even for declaration of war. The responsibilities which consequently fell on the diplomatic envoy were naturally far more than one can imagine today and the success or failure of the foreign policy of a nation naturally depended on his skill and observation of the situation in the country of his accreditation. The Ambassador's suite or entourage were almost invariably chosen by him personally, there being nothing comparable to the foreign service of today, and they normally came from the same social class as the Ambassador himself. The younger sons of the nobility who preferred to spend a tour of duty abroad assisted the Ambassador in gathering information at the lesser levels at the Royal Court, and to prepare despatches for transmission to his own Sovereign. Many of the old archives show that one of the matters on which a junior diplomat had to acquire proficiency was to have a good handwriting and ability to use the cypher code. The diplomats naturally constituted an elite of the society in the countries of their accreditation and no royal function would be complete without their participation. The origin of diplomatic uniform goes back to those days which helped to identify the countries to which they belonged as some sovereigns still regarded them as honourable spies and were suspicious to a degree.

Beginning with the second half of the 18th century and until the end of the first world war which may broadly be regarded as one of the most significant periods of world history, the scope and purpose of diplomacy underwent a gradual change and as a consequence the functions of a diplomatic agent also needed to be reoriented to meet the requirements of the day.

During this span of nearly 150 years vast territories of Asia and Africa came under colonial flags but at the same time the process of emancipation from colonial rule set in in the Western hemisphere. The United States of America declared its independence in 1776 and gradually established itself as a powerful nation. By the year 1842 most of Latin America had freed itself from colonial rule and the new republics found their feet as independent nations after unsuccessful attempts by colonial powers to re-establish their rule. By the end of the Nineteenth Century Japan had shaken off the burden of unequal treaties and the powerful Ottoman empire began to show signs of disintegration.

It may be recalled that the colonial era was ushered in by the end of the sixteenth century with discovery of new lands in the Western hemisphere later followed by annexation of territories in Asia and Africa as a sequel to the need for finding markets for industrial output and an outlet for the saturated economy of Europe resulting from the industrial revolution. The discovery of the American continent offered an opening for over-populated Europe and several communities preferred to escape from poverty, squalor or religious persecution at home and to begin a new life in the discovered territories and establish settlements under the protection of the flags of their home States. The invention of new sources of power which revolutionized industrial growth and expansion soon resulted in overproduction and consequent flooding of local markets. This led to recession, unemployment and stoppage of mills and factories and new areas had to be found where such goods would be readily marketable. Attention was directed to the Middle East, the Levant and other parts of Asia and trading communities acting under Charters granted to them by their Sovereigns went to lands far and near, some travelling as far as China, Korea and Japan. The struggle for markets led to competing claims and rivalry for dispensations of favour by local rulers. This was followed by series of wars

between the colonial powers themselves and annexation of territories in Asia and Africa so that they could be assured of a market for their goods and sources of raw materials for their expanding economy. By the close of the 18th century, the process of annexation and conquests in Asia and Africa was nearly over and more than two-thirds of the entire region came to be divided up between the seven colonial powers, namely, Britain, France, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Portugal. Even those territories which were not formally annexed became subjected to unequal treaties and came under the domination of one or more of the colonial powers. By that time the colonial settlements which had come up in the Western hemisphere began to clamour for self-rule, free from interference by the Government at home and this was slowly achieved but not without struggle.

In the early days of colonial expansion, the functions of a diplomatic envoy were basically the same as in the pre-colonial era because the foreign policies had to be oriented in the context of rivalries between the colonial powers themselves. But the field of operation was no longer confined to European politics but embraced much broader spheres. The maintenance of balance of power had now to be viewed in the context of colonial expansion. Europe was still being ruled by absolute monarchies and the diplomat's approach in the country of his accreditation and his listening post was still the Royal Court. Nevertheless, the field of diplomacy had to be somewhat extended and diplomats of standing began to be sent on special missions to some of the eastern courts for securing concessions in the matter of trade and establishment of trading posts and also to ensure that the colonial rival of his home State did not get a better foothold in the country to which his mission took him. There are several instances of this type of diplomatic activity, such as those of emissaries at the Mughal Court at Delhi, where both the English and the French were aspirants for royal favour, envoys at the Royal Courts of Persia, the Ottoman Empire and even in Peking.

By the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, diplomacy had to be reoriented to meet the needs of European politics in its changed context. The French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, the unification of Germany, the advent of personalities like Metternich and Bismarck on the

political scene changed the face of contemporary Europe and paved the way for a broader based diplomacy. A diplomat's task could no longer be confined to attendance at the Royal Court and reporting on the attitude of the Sovereign or intrigues at his Court. The French Revolution, which had shaken up the super-structure of absolute monarchies, made it necessary for the envoy to feel the pulse of the nation and the attitude of the common man. In reporting to his home State the Ambassador needed a larger perspective and his assessment had to include reporting on the stability of the regime, the aspirations of the people in regard to political rights and democratic forms of governments as also their general attitude towards his country and its nationals. Foreign policies had to be evolved no longer according to the wishes or whims of the Monarch but on a proper assessment of the international situation. The embassies and legations naturally grew in size and a certain degree of professionalism had to be introduced in the art of diplomacy. There was need for experts conversant with the local conditions, language and customs and by the middle of the 19th century professional cadres of regular diplomats belonging to foreign services began to emerge.

In Latin America where several independent republics had been established upon the cessation of colonial rule, a new type of diplomacy came to be practised. Here was a vast continent rich in minerals and other natural resources which had to be developed and lines of communication had to be built. The great powers of the day found it opportune to obtain advantages from that situation for themselves and their nationals. Contracts and Concessions were obtained from the new Republics which would enable their nationals and national companies to exploit the resources, build railroads and establish trading posts for marketing of their goods. Legations were established by the great powers ostensibly to protect their interests as also of their nationals. The burden of foreign exploitation of the country's resources gradually led to resentment and at times cancellation of concessions or nationalization of projects. Such actions often resulted in fierce diplomatic controversy, the great powers demanding for their nationals and national corporations treatment according to what they conceived to be minimum standards of international law including

huge sums as compensation. It was not uncommon for such demands to serve as pretexts for intervention and at times envoys of great powers worked openly for ouster of the government if the regime was found to be unfavourable to the particular colonial power. The diplomatic envoys thus assumed a new role of arbiters in the destinies of those nations in the knowledge that they would receive the support of their sovereigns in the imperious role they were to play. Notwithstanding this position Latin America was the first to establish its own regional organization in 1890 and begin an era of co-operation among the States of the region.

In so far as Asia and Africa were concerned, there was hardly any scope for diplomacy during the colonial era except perhaps to a limited extent in regard to the Ottoman empire and the territories which were left unconquered, some of whom were meant to serve as buffer States. In the colonial territories which were ruled directly by Metropolitan powers, consular posts at times were established by other European States to perform minor consular functions such as authentication of documents and watching over the interests of their nationals who were primarily traders or missionaries. Any major issue concerning the colonial territories was however the concern of the Envoy resident at the seat of the Metropolitan power.

China provided an interesting example where almost all the major colonial powers had acquired various kinds of trading and other rights including the right to establish consular courts for dealing with disputes involving their own nationals. Here the main purpose of diplomacy was to outmaneuver one's colonial rival in the matter of trade and obtaining of other advantages for their nationals. The resident Consuls were not envoys in the real sense but their functions were very much akin to those of diplomatic representatives in that they not only reported to their home Governments but they also had to take action on the spot in protecting the interests of their States and the nationals, a very large number of whom were engaged in missionary activities. On occasions when the situation so required, special envoys were sent out to negotiate settlements or to conclude treaties and agreements which would confer on their countries better or more extensive rights. In countries, like Afghanistan, or

Persia, the main purpose of colonial diplomacy was to keep an eye on the activities of other European powers like Russia or Germany, the main object being the preservation of the integrity of their colonial empires. There were certain States which were not brought directly under the colonial rule but the great powers of the day succeeded in acquiring for themselves the right of suzerainty or protection under treaties concluded with local rulers. Here the political agents representing the paramount power were ostensibly concerned in overseeing the performance of treaty obligations but in that pretext they often assumed the role of a superior and asserted the right to interfere in the affairs of the government itself. Again there were territories in respect of which the interested powers concluded treaties between themselves whereby each undertook to refrain from annexing or interfering in the affairs of the territory. One such example was Tibet where both Britain and Russia under a treaty with China agreed that the country should be kept in a primitive state and even railroads should not be built. The object was to ensure the integrity of British India against any possible attack by Russia from the north. When the Ottoman Empire began to show signs of disintegration it provided good grounds for intrigue and many a European State took advantage of that situation in extracting special consular rights which virtually brought them in control of trading activities in some of the important parts of the Empire. The resident Ambassador at Constantinople representing a colonial power could often exercise a degree of influence which would be almost beyond the imagination of the diplomatic envoy of today.

The events following upon the First World War had considerable impact on foreign policies and diplomatic relations. The break-up of the Ottoman Empire, liquidation of German colonies upon the defeat of Germany and the establishment of the League of Nations were important developments of consequence. The Russian Revolution had already taken place and under the Peace Treaty several new independent States had been established in the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. The uneasy peace that followed called for close observation resulting in phenomenal increase in the activities of foreign offices and multiplication of diplomatic posts which by that time came to be manned principally by career diplomats.

In Europe the main concern of the major powers was to contain the spread of Bolshevism within the frontiers of the Soviet Republics and to prevent Germany from rearming itself which could threaten the peace and security of the European Continent. Close watch had to be kept on the sensitive situation all around, but the western diplomacy with its traditional and hidebound approach could not make much headway on that direction as evident from the events that followed. Germany rearmed itself almost overnight, her main purpose being to outlive the humiliation and defeat which she had suffered during the war. The rise into power of Hitler in 1934 and the contemporaneous growth of fascism in Italy and Spain led to threats to security and order all over Europe. Events followed in quick succession—the Spanish Civil War, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, German annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia—and by the year 1938 the situation had come to a stage which could no longer be brought under control. The League of Nations which was the first attempt at collective diplomacy for preservation of security and prevention of threats to world order remained an idle spectator and was doomed to failure when it failed to take effective action against Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia. The failure of diplomacy in this regard is often attributed to the lack of earnestness on the part of great powers in checking a European power from overrunning a small country in the underdeveloped world and also their reluctance to get involved in an armed conflict for which they were not prepared. This lack of preparedness coupled with the lack of adequate knowledge of the German armed might had led the colonial powers to making concession after concession to Hitler until the situation was beyond redemption. Soviet Russia practically isolated from the rest of the world became involved in its internal problems of revisionism, revolts and purges and could play little part in the European affairs of the day. Her first entry in European politics was witnessed by her attack on Finland in 1939 and conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Hitler. This however was short lived and Russia herself fell a victim to German aggression in the summer of 1941.

The period between the two world wars may well be characterised as one of failure of diplomacy and a degree of blame had to be shared by the diplomats of great powers of the day who failed to keep their governments informed about the bre-

wing situation which could perhaps have been checked by timely action.

Diplomatic activity in the Middle East and Africa took another shape. In the territories which had formed part of the Ottoman Empire feuds were fomented among local rulers or tribal chiefs which enabled one or more of the colonial powers to keep their foothold in the area and obtain concessions for their nationals or national companies in regard to mineral resources. Show of force through what is known as Gunboat diplomacy was at times resorted to in order to assert their influence. Some areas freed from the Ottoman rule such as Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Transjordan were virtually brought under colonial rule of Britain or France in the garb of Protectorates, League of Nations mandates, or spheres of influence. The former German colonies also met with the same fate. Even in Egypt, Britain established itself as a paramount power. In the Far East the colonial influence over China contributed to the weakening of the government. Japan which had fought with the allies in the First World War emerged as a strong naval power and became no less important than the colonial powers of the day. In the rest of Asia under colonial domination freedom movements continued to gain strength which could no longer be ignored. In Latin America the influence of colonial and other big powers also began to decline as more and more countries began to assert their position and reject outside interference.

Events in Europe slowly led to the Second World War and diplomatic activity became geared almost solely to war efforts and representing the country's interests in the few capitals which had remained neutral. Here too the diplomat's main function was to preserve the neutrality of the country of his residence and to strive towards the goal that the neutrality should be with a bias in favour of his own State.

The Second World War amidst its misery and destruction of the magnitude unprecedented in world history gave birth to new norms and ideals which led to the adoption of the United Nations Charter but it also on its wake brought problems of its own. When the war ended, Europe became practically divided into two parts. Western Europe liberated from German occupation looked forward to shaking off the scars of war and began

an era of reconstruction. With their economies practically shattered both in terms of manpower and material resources, they needed all their energies wholly geared to that task and even outside help was welcome. The United States of America which had emerged as a super power with her means of production practically intact was ready to respond to the call. Countries in Eastern Europe had however to face a more formidable task. Even though freed from the tyrannies of war, they became subjected to another kind of domination no less onerous. Governments were taken over by regimes who looked elsewhere for formulation of their policies both in external relations and in the domestic field. Peoples in countries like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia who had been traditionally freedom-loving found their hopes and aspirations for re-establishment of a free society almost shattered. This was the beginning of the cold war which threatened to envelope the entire globe, the United Nations became the principal arena of fierce controversies and verbal duels between the erstwhile war-time allies and there was fear of break-out out of fresh hostilities. The Western allies and the United States conceived of mutual defence pacts practically encircling the entire area from Norway to Japan within the framework of three treaty alliances, namely, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

The foreign policies of nations and their diplomatic activity in the immediate post-war period had naturally to be oriented in the context of the prevailing situation. The Governments of several countries under war time occupation who had established themselves in exile as the *de jure* governments, returned home to take up the reigns of administration. Diplomatic missions which had either been closed down or accredited to governments in exile were re-established in their posts. In Western Europe this was a natural outcome of the cessation of hostilities and notwithstanding their internal problems, both economic and political, resulting from the upheaval of the war, the group of nations moved forward towards a closer knit community necessitated by considerations of their very survival and preservation of their way of life. Diplomatic activity among countries of Western Europe *inter se* was primarily directed to strengthening their ties and a large number of agreements and treaties emerged

providing for mutual defence, customs unions, economic co-operation, abolition of visas, etc., finally leading to the establishment of the Council of Europe itself. The co-operation between this Group of countries was also reflected in the deliberations of the United Nations where they began to vote as a bloc on every issue of major international importance. The United States of America breaking away from her traditional policy of isolation took a positive role in European affairs and became an active participant in the defence alliances and provided massive aids for economic recovery of Western Europe. Frequent meetings at ministerial level carefully prepared by their diplomatic representatives opened up avenues for closer co-operation on various spheres of activity and formulation of common policies on international issues. The Western diplomacy towards Eastern Europe was primarily directed to those countries where people by their background and attitude were wedded to democratic institutions in a attempt to halt the process of their isolation and complete submersion within the Soviet orbit. The diplomatic activity in these countries resorted to popular appeals in explaining the cultural ties, the affinity and the friendliness of Western Europe towards them and also to offers of generous economic aid to help them in their re-construction. For a time such approaches had considerable impact in countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, but very soon the governments came down with heavy hands on popular movements, no doubt under outside inspiration, and diplomatic activity had to be brought down to a minimum. The Soviet policy towards the Western world during this period was one of rigidity and confrontation. Tension was largely generated over possession of nuclear armament, German unification and other issues and Eastern Europe came under complete isolation. The cold war enveloped the entire diplomatic activity and declaration of diplomats as *persona non grata* by one country followed by similar retaliatory measures by another became a part of the cold war politics.

The end of the war at the same time provided new impetus to the freedom movements in the colonial territories of Asia and Africa. Some of these countries had played active and glorious roles in the defeat of the fascist forces and they looked forward to the fulfilment of the promises of self-rule made to

them by their colonial masters in return for active support in war effort. Some of the territories in South East Asia which had come under Japanese occupation during the war and had enjoyed a degree of autonomy resented the prospect of re-establishment of colonial rule. The events in China also cast their shadow over neighbouring territories and guerilla activities against colonial rule were intensified. All this coupled with the fact that the Metropolitan powers awakened by the ravages of war were no longer in a position to keep their military hold, gradually led to the process of decolonization and emancipation of the entire Asian-African region. Whilst in some cases the transfer of power was accomplished in a peaceful manner as in the case of the British Indian Empire (now comprising India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma), there were other areas where the colonial power agreed to withdraw only after unsuccessful attempts to re-establish its rule as in the case of Indonesia. Again there were areas where long and bitter struggle persisted before the colonial power could be made to relinquish control as in Indo-China or Algeria. Gradually the world public opinion against colonialism assumed such proportions so as to compel the Metropolitan powers to part with their remaining possessions. This is particularly true of Africa and indeed some of the colonial rulers in the late fifties and sixties began to realise the advantages to be derived from granting self-government to their colonial territories before extreme bitterness was aroused among the local population.

No sooner had the countries in Asia and Africa achieved their independence, their attention was focused on world affairs, at times even at the expense of their internal development. Most of the newly independent States in Asia almost immediately after gaining their freedom opened up regular diplomatic missions in the major capitals of the world and prepared themselves for playing their rightful roles in the international sphere. The glamour of foreign service attracted senior politicians and civil servants who had distinguished themselves even during the pre-independence period to accept Ambassadorial assignments or to proceed on special missions to the United Nations and other world forums. The post of Ambassador like the days of old in Europe became interchangeable with that of a Cabinet Minister. Regular foreign service cadres were established and more and

more diplomatic missions were opened in various capitals all over the world depending on the need and their involvement in world affairs. The countries in Africa soon followed suit and by now the Asian-African nations are second to none in the field of diplomacy and the Third World has become a powerful force in the international community of today.

Initially the prime concern of the newly independent countries of our region was to continue their struggle against colonialism so that its vestiges were totally removed from the territories of the Asian and African continents. Along with it they renewed their fight against apartheid and racial policies of minority regimes in Africa. Even during the colonial period the national movements in various countries had placed emphasis on elimination of foreign domination in all its forms and as independent nations they found themselves in a much stronger position to work towards that goal. Public opinion had to be created against colonialism and racism, which are in negation of the very principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, not only in the world forums but also in cities and villages in every part of the world, so that the voice of the people might be reflected in the actions of their governments. Diplomats of the Third World took it upon themselves the task of bringing home to the governments and the people in the countries of their accreditation what colonialism and racism meant to those who were subjected to it. Even with the colonial powers themselves such efforts were not without success because in the democratic process the governments were forced to bow to the popular will. Resolution after resolution was moved and adopted in the United Nations primarily at the initiative of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa and it is significant to note the success that has been achieved in freeing practically the whole of Asia and Africa from foreign domination within a short span of twenty five years. Unfortunately however, racism and racist regimes still continue in parts of Africa which have not only flouted the resolutions passed by the World Body but have continued to act in violation of all civilized canons of law and justice.

Soon after attainment of independence there were two major problems which confronted the newly independent States in Asia which necessarily had an impact on their foreign policies;

one was in regard to speedy economic development of the country and the second related to defence and security from external aggression. Even though most of these countries were rich in mineral wealth and the availability of manpower together with the resources afforded enough scope for industrialization, the colonial powers had done little towards that end. The wealth of these territories had been exploited primarily for their benefit to provide raw material for their industries at home. Exploitation of mineral wealth and even management of transport services were exclusively under the control of foreign companies who had been given contracts or concession by the colonial power. With the attainment of independence, attention needed to be focused to harness the natural resources towards speedy development, so that the people of the land could be rescued from abject poverty and begin to live as human beings consistent with their dignity as free people in a modern world. Development projects on a vast scale needed to be undertaken for which both money and technology was lacking. Outside help was needed and very often the newly independent territories looked toward their former colonial masters for assistance. Themselves impoverished as a result of the war and loss of colonies, assistance from this source to begin with was meagre and other avenues had to be found. The United Nations agencies at that time had not sufficiently grown to be in a position to provide the required help. The super powers and particularly the United States of America were however ready to invest in the development of the newly independent countries but the problem was how to obtain aid without strings being attached. In the cold war situation of the day it was understandable that the country providing the aid would wish to secure a position of influence, perhaps indirectly and unostensibly. The dilemma posed itself before many governments, whether to accept such aid to speed up their internal development and become a pawn in the big power politics or to depend mainly on their own resources and slow down the pace of expansion and growth. The choice was not an easy one to make and the governments opted for the one or the other depending on the philosophies and the needs of each nation. The attitude of the newly independent countries in Asia on this matter necessarily had considerable impact on their foreign policies, both in bilateral relations as also in multilateral diplomacy. In Africa however

the problem was somewhat different because by the sixties when most of the countries achieved their independence, some of the colonial powers themselves were in a position to help their former colonies in the process of development and modernization and they recognized the advantage of so doing. This is particularly true of French Africa and it is therefore not surprising that the foreign policies of those countries reveal a close attachment to France to which they are culturally and economically so well linked.

In the field of defence which had hitherto been the responsibility of the metropolitan power, many of the newly independent countries of the Asian -African region found themselves wholly unprepared as they neither had the manpower nor adequate resources at their disposal. Even though several of the colonies had provided men who fought gallantly during the Second World War under colonial commanders, the organization of defence on their own proved to be a formidable task. In the early fifties the offer to join mutual defence pacts or alliances under the sponsorship of the United States of America and its western allies therefore proved attractive and several States proved themselves unable to resist such invitations, particularly those who feared the threat of aggression or internal subversive activities by guerrilla forces. But at the same time there were countries which genuinely felt that the formation of alliances or defence pacts would aggravate the cold war situation and may lead up armed conflicts between two power blocs and their involvement therein. The idea soon gained ground that by pursuing independent policies without alignment to any of the super powers, the countries in Asia and Africa could play a significant role in arresting the deteriorating world situation. This was the beginning of the non-aligned movement and at its forefront were India, Egypt and Yugoslavia. Other Asian Countries like Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia soon gave their support to the principles and ideals of non-alignment and gradually this caught the imagination of more and more countries of the region and later spread to the other parts of the world. The non-aligned countries began meeting at various levels in order to bring about a common approach in international affairs and formulate their policies on that basis. The essence of non-alignment was that the Group of countries adhering to that prin-

ciple felt themselves free to examine every international issue objectively without being influenced by any power bloc and they were ready to criticise the action of any State or government, however powerful, if the same was contrary to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. Thus every act of intervention whether by the Soviet Union or the United States came under the same degree of criticism at the hands of the non-aligned nations. Very soon non-alignment acquired a moral force in world affairs and its voice became a powerful factor to be reckoned with in the deliberations of the United Nations. Countries all over the world felt compelled to strengthen their diplomatic ties with the Group of countries pursuing the policy of non-alignment as they found it important to explain their viewpoints and attitudes on international issues of importance and to secure the support of the nonaligned nations with the moral force behind them. Today the non-aligned movement has spread itself to various parts of the globe with a view to co-operate and formulate common policies on a variety of issues including trade and economic development, whilst remaining outside the sphere of influence of the super powers but the most important and significant role played by this movement was during the fifties and the early sixties when it was largely instrumental in introducing the test of objectivity in world affairs and thus helping to lessen the tension generated by the cold war. Over these years the Diplomats of the third world had played a significant and constructive role not only in bringing about closer collaboration between this group of states but also in establishing their image in world affairs generally.

The principle of non-alignment led to the necessary corollary of peaceful co-existence and good neighbourly relations. It was recognized that in the context of the United Nations every State irrespective of the form of its government or internal policies had to co-exist if the succeeding generations were to be spared from the scourge of war. The five principles of co-existence known as *Panchshila* which were originally evolved between India and China in their relations *inter se* found expression in the Bandung Declaration of 1955 adopted at the end of the first Asian-African Conference. This was followed by the United Nations in establishing a Committee for drawing up the principles of peaceful co-existence. Here again the initiative was taken

by the Third World which contributed to the opening up of the detente between the United States and the Soviet Union as also in the beginning of a dialogue between China and the United States.

During the past three decades the Asian-African States have emerged as a powerful force in world affairs, but they have not been without problems of their own. The establishment of Israel in 1948 to provide a homeland for the Jewish people had created thorny problems for the neighbouring States of the region which have continued even until today. The uprooting of the Palestinian people from their hearth and home consequent upon the establishment of Israel made them seek refuge in other countries of the region causing considerable burden on the economies of these countries. The aggressive posture adopted by Israel populated by the communities alien to the land with the support or connivance of States in other regions has proved to be a threat to the security and integrity of its neighbours. Resolution after resolution in the United Nations had failed to bring an adequate solution of the problems. Naturally the foreign policies and diplomatic activity of the Third World generally and the Arab States in particular had to be oriented towards finding a solution to the humanitarian problem of the Palestinian people and adequate safeguards for the security and integrity of the Arab States of the region.

Asia and Africa has also not been free from the age-old problem of confrontation between neighbours. The pages of European history of the past centuries are full of episodes of jealousy, rivalry and even armed conflicts between neighbouring States and the newly independent States of the Third World proved no exception. The hangover from the colonial days, the seeds of dissention sown among the peoples to perpetuate their influence on the basis of divide and rule, the absence of proper delimitation of common frontiers in many areas, coupled with economic, religious and ideological conflicts proved to be the root causes of such frictions between the neighbouring States and this has been particularly so in regard to divided countries. Bigger powers were not slow in taking advantage of such situations which afforded them an easy foothold in the region. The situations were at times aggravated by reason of interference by

powers outside the region in the shape of military or economic aid to one or more parties to such conflicts.

Ever since independence the relations between India and Pakistan had not all been easy and frictions had led to break-up of hostilities on as many as three occasions followed by attempts at ironing out their differences to ensure a lasting peace in the sub - continent. India has also been subjected to external aggression from its northern neighbour China in 1962. Korea which fell victim to the super power struggle in the process of the cold war became divided into two and has continued in a position of confrontation ever since. The same situation followed in Vietnam where the presence of foreign forces resulted in long drawn out battles and conflicts until the country was overrun by communist forces. Border frictions in the shape of guerilla activity had been prevalent in many other parts of the region in East Asia, West Asia and in Africa. Even among the Arab States who are united by a common bond of language and solidarity in their struggle against Israeli forces, neighbourly disputes and frictions have not been unknown.

The neighbourly frictions had necessarily caused heavy drain on the resources of these countries and very often the foreign policies of a country had to be primarily directed to secure support for itself from other members of the international community in its confrontation with its neighbour. This has meant opening up of diplomatic missions in a larger number of countries as also in sending missions to explaining its point of view to other governments.

Notwithstanding these differences and the neighbourly disputes which are concomitant with the birth of new nations, the Third World has found its rightful place in the international community of today and it has been able to evolve common policies in many major areas of international relations. The most important in this field has been their unity in their struggle against colonialism and racism as also in their fight against outside intervention in the affairs of the region. In recent years, the solidarity of the Third World has perhaps been more pronounced in economic matters. With the establishment of the Group of 77 which now has a membership of one hundred and twenty-three States, the Third World has played a united and active role in working

towards the goal of harnessing the economic resources of the world for the benefit of the developing countries and more equitable sharing of the wealth of the nations. To this end the Third World has been playing an effective part in the deliberations of various United Nations bodies and principally the UNCTAD. Another area where the Third World has made tremendous contribution is in regard to the formulation of the new law of the sea to bring about a new order of the oceans so that the economic wealth of the oceans could be equitably shared and no longer remain the preserve of a few. The Asian -African States have also played a major role in strengthening the United Nations in their endeavour to free the world body from cold war politics. Thus year after year this group of countries had raised its voice for the seating of the People's Republic of China and bring about the inclusion of the largest populated country within the framework of the international community. The active participation by the countries of the Third World in peacekeeping operations of the United Nations is another illustration of their resolve to make the United Nations an effective forum for international co-operation.

The need for regional co-operation has also been recognized and the African States very soon after their independence established the Organization of African Unity whose main purpose had been to work towards elimination of colonial and racist regimes from that continent. It has also proved useful in settling disputes between the States of the region and to evolve common policies on several international issues. Another important regional organization which was established as early as in 1948 is the League of Arab States now composed of 22 Arab member states from West Asia and North Africa. A new and powerful regional organization in South East Asia known as the ASEAN has also recently emerged to facilitate collective action to preserve the integrity of its member nations and also to bring about close economic co-operation between them. Although the membership of the ASEAN embraces five states, namely, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, it has opened its door for co-operation with other nations as well and this is bound to result in significant developments in formulation of foreign policies and diplomatic activity in the countries in East and South East Asia.

Foreign policy of a State or a Group of States is naturally oriented to suit the interests of the State or the Group of States and this is true of today as it had always been. Nevertheless the concept of an international community which today embraces the the entire world has brought home the fact that no nation however powerful can remain in isolation and that the interests of every nation are to be viewed in the context of the overall well being of the world community. The various notions and ideals embodied in the United Nations Charter such as collective security, Pacific settlement of disputes, Human Rights and human dignity, as also the emergence of a world order based on principles of justice and international law have had a major impact on the foreign policies of all nations. The United Nations has become the keystone in this new edifice and there has been a greater emphasis laid on multilateral diplomacy in the post war years. Nevertheless the traditional diplomatic functions still remain equally important as evident from the enormous growth in bilateral diplomatic relations among nations in recent years.

Every nation, big and small, is today represented at Ambassadorial level at almost every important capital and this has been possible in several cases through concurrent accreditation of the diplomatic agent to a number of neighbouring countries. The Envoy's traditional function of representing his own country in the State of his residence has in the modern context a variety of facets extending over a wide field which could include matters not only of bilateral interest but also matters of general concern to the international community. Bilateral relations between two governments naturally depend upon a variety of factors and in recent years these have included matters concerning aid programmes, air services, trade and cultural relations, voting in the United Nations and other international organizations in addition to various matters concerning the protection of the country's interest and its nationals. As between neighbouring States, questions concerning sharing of natural resources, delimitation of boundaries including the various sea zones like the territorial sea and the continental shelf as also the question of regional co-operation would naturally assume more importance.

Frequent consultations between governments on questions of international concern have resulted in considerable increase in the work of diplomatic missions and the need for representation

on a wide scale. Such consultations are generally held on various issues before the United Nations and particularly those relating to situations constituting a threat to peace and international security arising out of aggressive acts, intervention, racist policies or violation of human rights. The governments also find it useful to explain their viewpoints and policies to other governments through their diplomatic agents on matters of common interest such as the problems and issues discussed in international conferences and more particularly the various economic issues involving the developed and developing countries. A good deal of preparatory work and diplomatic moves have usually to precede the convening of any major international conference. Moreover the promotion of goodwill visits by Heads of States and governments, which has become a major feature of the post war era, also calls for a good deal of activity on the part of the Diplomatic agent.

In addition to conducting official relations between his home State and the State of his residence in formal and informal meetings with the foreign office and other government departments of the receiving State, an important function of an envoy which has emerged in recent years, is to project his country to the people of the State where he resides. This is of particular significance in the context of promotion of friendly relations between States as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. The mass media of the press, radio and television as also the enormous growth in travel and means of communication has helped to focus the attention of the people at large outside his homeland and to arouse his interest in the affairs and well-being of the peoples of other lands. He can no longer remain unconcerned with the policies and practices of other governments and their attitude towards his own. This has a direct impact on the formulation of foreign policies as the voice of the people expressed through their elected representatives in Parliament in a democratic set-up is bound to influence the policies of the government. A diplomatic envoy has therefore to avail of every opportunity to bring home to the people of the country of his accreditation, all aspects of the national life of his home state including the form of government, the friendliness of the people and their cultural and economic ties. This is often achieved through periodic bulletins or news letters, film shows, cultural programmes and talks as also

by exchange of visits of parliamentary delegations and social groups.

Equally important is the need for an envoy to report back to his government and the people about the country of his accreditation because an Ambassador's foremost function is to understand the country to which he is sent, its conditions, its mentality, its actions and its underlying motives and to explain those things clearly to his own government. It is true that under modern conditions a government is no longer dependent solely on the reports of its Ambassador and very often reports about events abroad reach a government much quicker through the press or the wireless than the diplomatic despatches of its envoy. Nevertheless the keen and watchful eyes of an envoy and his assessment of the local conditions remain as important as ever before in the formulation of the policies of a nation.

Foreign policies of a country whether in the political, cultural or economic field have no doubt to be formulated by the Government as a whole but in that formulation the reporting and advice by the country's diplomatic agents has a significant role to play. This is perhaps more so with older nations with established career diplomatic services where the initial step towards formulation of the governmental policy on a particular issue would normally originate in the appropriate section in the foreign office which after being examined and processed at various levels would finally reach the Minister for his decision. In the countries of the Third World, during the early stages, policy decisions used to emanate from the highest level in the government which a diplomat had to carry out, but in the course of years this has gradually given way to the system of regular examination of problems at professional level in the foreign office and the Minister being guided by the advice of experts. There are of course exceptions: for example, in regard to major policy questions concerning the overall foreign policy of a government, its relations with super powers and the role which a country is to play generally in international affairs, the decision can be taken only at the cabinet level but even here the advice of the Foreign Office would normally be sought. Again there are matters where a country may be called upon to play a major diplomatic role to bring about settlement in conflicts in areas which may prove

detrimental to the peace and security of the world. In such situations necessarily it is the government which would take a decision on its own guided by consideration of its overall policies but in such cases also the foreign office will almost invariably be kept in the picture.

The institution of diplomacy has travelled a long way ever since its inception—its purposes and spheres of operation have undergone vast changes. It has become the cornerstone in the structure of the new international legal order. If the ideals of the United Nations are to be translated into practice, if the succeeding generations are to be saved the scourge of war, it is the policies and practices of nations, their diplomacy and tact which can contribute towards it. It is in fulfilment of this task that the countries of the third world have an ever increasing role to play.