

Asian Security: Soviet Perception and Proposals

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "ASIAN SECURITY :SOVIET PERCEPTION AND PROPOSALS" by Mr. Sanjay Kumar Pandey, is his own work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree to this or any other University. We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for consideration of award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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PREFACE

'Search for Security' has been the eternal preoccupation of Aristotle's social animal (man). And this search pervades all aspects of his existence -- individual, social, political, cultural and even spiritual. Since state is 'individual writ large', this concern for security has been as much of an obsession with the state as it has been with the individual. The states have generally depended upon military means to ensure their security. But just as one man's bread is another's poison, the security of one state is the cause for insecurity to the other. This leads to wars and conflicts. Here the concepts of regional and international security come, which are considered more reliable means of ensuring security interest of all states.

Soviet concern for security is even more understandable given its experiences of the past: the civil war (1917-1920); the international hostility and isolation during the inter war period; loss of 20 million lives during the Second World War; and fierce rivalry with the United States. In view of the various conflicts in Asia, the need for some arrangement to ensure security and peace in the region is also felt. So when the

Soviet Union talks about security of Asia it cannot be dismissed out of hand, though one may not agree with what it says. Here one is reminded of what Ian Clark said about the Brezhnev plan for collective Asian Security. He said "we should be interested in the Soviet proposal not as a thing, but rather as a way of looking at Soviet attitudes towards developments in Asia and flexible Soviet response to these developments. Collective security might never be realized, but that is no reason why we should not analyse what the Soviet Union has done in its name." This observation is still valid.

In the completion of this work, I recieved great help from my supervisor Dr. Shams-ud-din, who provided me with the basic understanding and a systematic framework. I express my gratitude to him.

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Sanjay Kumar Pandey

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CHAPTER - I

CONCEPT OF SECURITY

MEANING

National security (which will be the focus of this chapter) has been variously defined.

The Dictionary of Political Thought defines "National Security" as "the political arrangements which make war less likely, which provide for negotiations rather than belligerence and which aim to preserve peace as the normal condition among states". This is a positive interpretation of the term. Contrast it with the further elaboration of the term in the same dictionary "National security also denotes all purposes of defence: i.e. the preparation for belligerence in order to deter or deflect it; in certain conditions therefore policies of national security may precipitate insecurity" and here the dictionary refers to "the problem of arms race"¹. This is a narrow approach to

1. Roger Scruton, A Dictionary of Political Thought (London, 1982) p. 421.

security. It only alludes to the military aspect of the concept.

Stanley Hoffman talks about national security in "narrow" and "broader" senses. In the former sense it means "the protection of the nation.... from physical attack and safeguarding of its economic activities from devastating outside blows." Thus even in the narrow sense national security connotes both military economic safety.²

While discussing the "broader" aspect of national security Hoffman equates it with national interest. But this, he himself admits, could prove dangerous since increase in one states power (which the national interest demands) would threaten other states.³

The contradiction between the security interests of various states has been extensively debated by Robert Jervis. He is of the opinion that greater the range of interests that have to be protected, the higher is

2. Stanley Hoffman, "Security in the Age of Turbulence: Means of Response", Third World Conflict and International Security (Part II) Adelphi Papers, no. 167, (Summer, 1981) pp. 4-5.

3. Ibid.

the potential for conflict, and for the exacerbation of what he calls the "security dilemma" which he defines as follows "many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decreases the security of others "The expansive definition of national security also includes such vague and dangerous concepts like national power, prestige and grandeur. Jervis is apprehensive that the behaviour resulting from such a concept of national security which "almost automatically has a competitive connotation" will "almost surely clash with that of others, who define their security in the same way."⁴

In the end we can only say that the national security as defined by Hoffman and Jervis is neither attainable nor desirable since absolute security of one state would mean insecurity for the others.

✓ Yet another definition of national security could be "the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats" or as Walter Lippman says

4. Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under Security Dilemma", World Politics, vol 30, no 2, Jan. 1978, pp 169,185.

"a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values ..."⁵ Relating 'national security' to 'core values' of a nation however, complicates the concept since these values are determined by the ruling elites in a particular political system. Thus in case of western democracies individual liberty and freedom may constitute such core values, whereas in the context of communist states it may involve the defence of the socialist system. Yet another problem is the element of subjectivity involved in the assessment of threats and between 'reality' and 'perception'⁶.

In the above discussion over-emphasis has been given to the competitive and hence confrontationist aspect of security. 'Collaboration' and 'cooperation' are, perhaps, more reliable means of ensuring national security, eventually leading to international security⁷. This point will be discussed later in the same chapter.

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5. Morton Berkowitz and P.G. Bock, "National Security" International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (New York, 1968) p. 40.
 6. Nisha Sahai Achutan "Soviet Conceptions of Security and Western Interpretations" Strategic Analysis (New Delhi) vol. XI, no. 9, December 1987 pp. 1083-84.
 7. Ibid p. 1085.

SOVIET SECURITY CONCEPT

The Soviets take a much wider and comprehensive view of security. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia defines security as "state of political, economic and other relations between states, which remove the threat of aggression and ensure peaceful co-existence of states on the principle of equality, national interest and sovereignty of the people and also their free development on democratic basis."

As is proper any discussion of the Soviet views on security must begin with what Marx, and Lenin said about it. Marx did not write about security as such, though he dealt with the problem of war. The origin of war, according to Marx can be traced to the anatomic contradictions of social development. War, in modern times in his view was a logical consequence of the development of capitalism and further intensification of its contradictions. He talks about the socio-political and economic nature of war. The ruling classes use war as a means to protect their economic interest and perpetuate their political authority.⁸

8. Marxism Leninism on War and Army (Moscow, 1972) p.14.

Lenin adds yet another dimension to the problem of war and security. He feels that imperialism is the source of aggression and aggressive wars and the prime cause of insecurity. "war" according to him "is the continuation of politics by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political system that engender them."⁹

According to Marxism Leninism war can be prevented and security ensured by transformation of an imperialist war into a civil war, followed by seizure of power by the working class through a socialist revolution. The revolution would have to be sustained by promoting the solidarity of the working class at the international level, raising powerful armed forces, promoting internal contradictions in the capitalist system, encouraging class struggle in the capitalist countries to impede the precipitation of war by the imperialist powers and finally by identifying and seeking the support of other social forces favourably disposed towards it.¹⁰

9. V.L. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1967) vol. 24, p. 400.

10. V.I. Lenin, On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet State (Moscow, 1968) see passim.

In short, in a socialist system there will be no antagonistic class contradiction, no exploitation and hence no war. In the words of Lenin "our aim is to achieve a socialist system of society which by eliminating the ~~exploitation~~ of man by man and nation by nation, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war."¹¹

Following the ideals of "world revolution" and "proletarian internationalism" the Bolsheviks after capturing power in Russia tried to incite revolutions all over Europe, which however failed. On the other hand fourteen capitalist powers intervened in the Russian civil war on the side of the "White Guards". A pragmatic that Lenin was, he realized that till Revolution came about in all other states or most of them (which at that time was not possible) Soviet Russia would have to exist in a hostile atmosphere, surrounded by capitalist states. The survival and security of "the Revolution" was his prime concern. With this objective Lenin enunciated the concept of "Peaceful Coexistence" among all states with different social systems. He first referred to it in the famous Decree

11. V.I. Lenin Collected Works (Moscow, 1967), vol. 24, pp. 398-99.

on Peace (1918) and later elaborated it in his various speeches and writings between 1917 - 1922.¹²

The Stalin period witnessed the strengthening of the socialist system and commendable achievements (the shortcomings of the rule notwithstanding) in fields of economy, industry, education and social services. But the success at home front was matched by complete international isolation and even hostility. The experience coupled with the unprecedented loss of life (nearly 20 million) and property during the II World War left a deep impact on the Soviet mind which developed an aversion for war and longing for peace. Another related feeling was of deep distrust of the capitalist system, which was only accentuated by the American nuclear monopoly and its declared objective of 'containing' and if possible "rolling back" communism, in the post war period.

Stalin continued to follow the Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence and made every effort to strengthen "Socialism in one country". In later years he even talked about economic cooperation with the

12. Lenin on Peaceful Co-existence : Articles and Speeches (Moscow, 1975).

capitalist system.¹³

The 1950s witnessed the intensification of cold war and arms race which by now had acquired the nuclear angle. This led to a re-emphasis on the concept of peaceful coexistence by Khrushchev. At the 20th Party Congress he declared his "resolve to pursue the Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence between different states irrespective of their social systems".¹⁴ However this does not mean that Socialism has finally come to terms with capitalism. The latter was still considered the chief source of tension and war in the world until socialist transformation comes about and the basic contradictions are removed, lasting peace is not possible.

The intensive economic activity during the 50s in Soviet Union made Khrushchev confident to declare at the 21st Extraordinary Party Congress "with the implementation of the Economic Programme of the Soviet Union, there will be real possibility of eliminating

13. J.V. Stalin, Economic Problems of Socialism in USSR (Moscow, 1953, 1953) ed . 2, pp. 39-49.

14. N.S Khrushchev, Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU at the 20th Party Congress (New Delhi, 1956) p. 46

war as means of solving international issues"¹⁵

Another momentous development of the post war period was the end of Soviet isolation with the successful consummation of socialist revolutions in China, Korea, states of Indo-China and other parts of world. The 60s witnessed acceleration of the decolonisation process and emergence of new and independent political entities and the consequent spread of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Soviet Union which played a positive and valuable role in these developments, also gained in political, military, economic and technological fields to the extent that by early 70's it could boast of "strategic parity" with the US. Brezhnev talked about "reliable defence" and "security reliably guaranteed" He maintained, like his predecessors that imperialism "is the chief obstacle to mankind's historically inevitable advance, to the triumph of freedom, peace and democracy."¹⁶ He, however felt that the threat to peace

15. N.S. Khrushchev, Report to the 21st Extraordinary Congress of the CPSU (New Delhi, 1959), p.62

16. International Meeting of Communist and Worker's Parties Moscow, 1969 (Prague, 1969), p. 131.

can be contained through a favourable balance of world social forces and the success of socialism and the USSR. This was, in short the line adopted at the 23rd (1966) and the 24th (1971) Congress.

The Soviet foreign policy is thus a veritable mix of idealism and realism, of Marxist-Leninist ideology and Soviet national interest. "The Marxist-Leninist analytical system, Soviet scholars affirm, leaves enough room for the decision makers to select commitments, determine priorities keep alternatives in reserve and make adjustments in the light of success or failure."¹⁷

THE MODERN APPROACH: CONCEPT OF COMMON SECURITY

The last few decades witnessed fierce arms race and a phenomenal increase in nuclear stockpile which now has the capacity to destroy the world many hundred times over . The concept of the "balance of power" which had governed international relations in the past was replaced by the ominous "balance of terror". The nuclear weapons hang like the proverbial "Damocle's sword" over mankind. The dividing line between security and insecurity, between life and annihilation has blurred. what is left of security then?

17. Bhabani Sen Gupta, The USSR in Asia: An Interperceptional Study of Soviet Asian Relations (New-Delhi, 1980), p. 2.

It was this grim realization that set human mind on a thinking process. The urgent need to revise the old stereotypes was felt. The new concept of security in the world is asserted by the Palme Commission, in which the capitalist, the socialist as also the developing world was represented. The commission came out with the formulation that common security concept should replace the currently wide-spread concept of nuclear deterrence which provides for continuous build up of "nuclear might" proceeding on a premise that a "balance of terror" automatically entails peace and international stability. The report says that "the realities are such that military strength alone cannot provide real security. By every index of military strength it is evident that most nations have become more powerful over the years. Yet it is clear that greater national military might has not led to greater sense of national security."¹⁸

18. Common Security : A Programme for Disarmament
The Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues under the Chairmanship of Olof Palme (London, 1982), p. 4.

The report further declares that in the nuclear age security must of necessity be mutual: "Most important countries must recognise that in the nuclear age, nations cannot achieve security at each others expense. Only through cooperative efforts and policies of interlocking national restraint will all the world's citizens be able to live without the fear of war and devastation, and with the hope of a secure and prosperous future for their children and later generations."¹⁹

V. Petrovsky sums up the modern approach, he says that given goodwill and realistic assessment of the world situation, statesmen of different political convictions can draft a programme of specific measures along the line of cooperation and disarmament to ease international tensions and ensure security of all countries.²⁰

GORBACHEV'S 'NEW THINKING'

Perhaps, no other statesman of our age realized

19. Ibid p.

20. V. Petrovsky, Soviet Security Concept
International Peace and Disarmament Series,
(Moscow, 1986) p. 8.

the gravity of the present world situation to the extent Gorbachev has. And his genius lay in the fact that he re-formulated his country's policies according to that realization. This came to be known as the 'New Thinking'. The new approach was detailed by Gorbachev under the heading "Basic aims and Directions of the Party's Foreign Policy Strategy" in the Political Report of the Central Committee to the 27th Congress of the CPSU.²¹

Gorbachev declared "the time has come to have a through understanding of the harsh realities of our day : the nuclear weapons harbour a hurricane with the potential of sweeping the human race from the face of the earth" He stressed on the political rather than military means of resolving political problems.

Criticising the doctrines of 'containment' and 'deterrence' he called them absurd and amoral. They encourage arms race and make the whole world "a nuclear hostage" He maintained that security can only be "mutual" and "universal" It is vital that all states must feel equally secure. He gave a call for an "all embracing system of international economic security."

21. SOVIET REVIEW (New Delhi) vol. XXIII, no. 10, 3 March 1986, see passim.

In short modern world has become much too small and fragile for wars and for a policy of force. He then draws certain conclusions -

- that it is no longer possible to win an arms race or nuclear war for that matter
- the present level of the nuclear capabilities of the opposite sides is much too high In our age genuine equal security is guaranteed not by an excessively high but by the lowest possible level of strategic parity, from which nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction must be completely eliminated.
- in the present situation there is no alternative to cooperation and interaction between all countries.....

In reply to the concept of "balance of power" he gives a call for "mutually acceptable balance of interest".

He feels that the problem of disarmament must be approached in its totality since "in terms of security they are linked with each other." Regarding the Soviet stand he says "our country stands for removing weapons of mass destruction from use, for limiting military potential to reasonable adequacy."²²

22. Ibid.

But at the same time he is quite emphatic "The Soviet Union lays no claim to more security but it will not settle for less."

This in short is Gorbachev's concept of a comprehensive system of international security.

Conclusion: In the end we can say that national security has been an indefinable and elusive concept. For all practical purposes national security has been equated with national interest as defined by the ruling elites of a country. This makes the concept subjective and vague. Thus national security can be interpreted in two ways: defence of the state borders - the minimalist approach, and defence of interests beyond state borders - the maximalist approach.

The Soviets have followed both the approaches. The Soviet statesmen have skillfully blended their internationalist commitment with the exigencies of time to suit their national interest. During the first three decades of its existence, when the basic Soviet concern was survival and consolidation of the socialist system, Soviet Union followed the policy of peaceful co-existence and socialism in one country. After the victory in

the Second Great war they actively helped revolutions in Eastern Europe and to lesser extent in Indo-China. Thus emerged a community of socialist states ending Soviet isolation and making them more confident. In the face of escalating 'cold war' Khrushchev re-emphasised the concept of peaceful coexistence. But at the same time the Soviet Union never hesitated in safeguarding socialism wherever it was in danger: in Germany (late forties), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979), even if it amounted to military intervention.

Gorbachev has reformulated his domestic and foreign policy keeping in view the present day world situation and long term Soviet national interest (both strategic and economic) what are his calculations and objectives will be discussed in IVth Chapter.

CHAPTER - II

A BACKGROUND

GEO-STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The importance of Asia in present day world politics cannot be over emphasised. It is the largest continent both in terms of territory and population. It occupies one third of entire land area of our earth and is inhabited by more than half of its population. It has within it two of the most ancient and yet living civilizations. Asia is also the source of all the religions the human history has created. People professing various religions, speaking hundreds of languages and dialects, and belonging to different races, historical traditions, customs and practices, live here.

Asia has enormous labour, mineral and non-mineral resources including fuel and strategic minerals. About half of worlds oil reserves are concentrated in the Persian Gulf alone. The Gulf countries account for about a third of world oil production and about two thirds of capitalist world's exports. Besides that as much as 80 percent of world gold production, 50

percent of tin and about a third of manganese, are concentrated in the Indian Ocean area. Other resources include natural rubber, bauxite, lead, nickel, iron ore and zinc. The United States for example, imports 40 types of raw materials from here.¹

Apart from the Indian Ocean, Asia is also washed by the Pacific Ocean. The ocean floor of the Pacific is estimated to hold 30 to 40 percent of all the potential deposits of oil and gas in the world's oceans. The region's countries account for 56 percent of the world's known deposits of lead, 47 percent of zinc, 41 percent of nickel 37 percent of cobalt and 32 percent of copper. The Asia Pacific region now accounts for over 30 percent of world trade with a value estimated at 1,280,000 million dollars. Many Soviet specialists predict a growing role for the Asia Pacific region in the world economy.²

The expression 'Asia - Pacific', which is frequently used in the third chapter, is very expansive &

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1. Yevgeni Rumyanstev, Indian Ocean and Asian Security (New Delhi 1986), p.3.
 2. Yuri Bandura, Addressing Asia (Moscow 1987), p.5.

somewhat difficult to define. There are many Asian countries (like the states of West Asia and the Indian sub-continent) which are not situated in the Pacific, which in turn has states which are non-Asian (the countries of the American continent and the Oceania). The Asia-Pacific region countries are at different stages of socio-economic and political development. There are highly industrialised states like the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Then there are the newly industrialising countries - South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore - veritably named "the four little tigers", while the ASEAN states like Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and some other states of the region have registered quicker economic growth than other countries of the developing world. Also situated in the region are the small island states and territories of Oceania (Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, Kiribati etc) as well as Latin American countries with access to Pacific - Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, El-Salvador, Peru, Chile and Ecuador.

There is also a large group of socialist states in the region - the Soviet Union (large part of whose

territory lies in Asia) China, North Korea and the states of Indo-China (Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea). More about the Asia-Pacific region will be discussed in the relevant chapter, for the present we would confine ourselves to Asia proper - the continent.

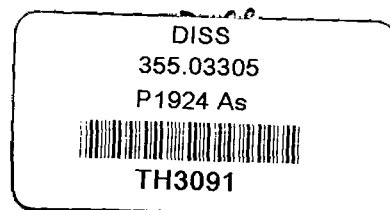
The present day conflict situation in Asia cannot be understood without a reference to its colonial past, whose legacy many of these conflicts are. The rich resources (human and natural) of Asia attracted the European nations which were seeking markets for their manufactured goods and raw materials for their industries. This led to occupation of territories and colonial domination of Asia began. The Portugese, the Dutch, the British, the Danish and other Western powers established their colonies. Asia became an arena of imperialist rivalries. For centuries these powers exploited the natural resources, markets and cheap labour of the region and enriched themselves.³

In the aftermath of the Second World War these colonial empires disintegrated rapidly. Thus India,

3. V.V. Swaminathan, *Problems of Peace and Security in Asia* (New Delhi 1986) p. 7.



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Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia and many other states became independent. Discussing the post-war situation Gunnar Myrdal marks out three changes

- rapid liquidation of colonial power structure
- emergence of a craving for development in the under-developed countries: themselves, or rather among those who think, speak and act on their behalf; and
- the international tensions, culminating in cold war, that have made the fate of the under developed countries a matter of foreign policy concern in the developed countries⁴.

Thus even after independence the countries of Asia were not allowed to chart an independent course of socio-economic development. In fact the process of decolonisation itself was not a smooth one. The former colonial masters were in no mood to accept the rapidly changing structure of international system, without a fight. Backed by their new leader, the United States, they made every effort to frustrate or crush the national liberation movements and to restore status quo ante ore at least extract some economic privileges and foothold in their former colonies.

4. Gunnar Myrdal, The Asian Drama (New York 1968), p.8.

The 'new leader', United States amply demonstrated its Super Power status by dropping nuclear bombs on Japanese (Asian) cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was the most catastrophic event of our times and an ill omen, a foreboding of the times to come.

Thus Holland aided by Britain tried to regain Indonesia, its former colony, in 1949. In 1950 war broke out in Korea. The United States, under the UN flag, intervened physically and Korea was divided⁵. People on both sides of the border want re-unification, but some outside powers and their local allies won't let that happen except on their conditions. But the most fierce and prolonged conflict occurred in Indo-China. France with US help tried to regain its lost Empire. After the French defeat and withdrawal the US stepped in causing untold misery to the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos. But that was not the end of their misfortune. After fighting the Imperialist-Capitalist powers for thirty years, Vietnam was attacked by a socialist brother. China tried "to teach a lesson"

5. D.D. Narula and R.R. Sharma (ed.) Asian Dimension of Soviet Policy (New Delhi 1986) p. XI

though got a bloody nose in return. Vietnam's apparent fault was that it had helped Heng Samarin to over-throw the genocidal Pol Pot regime (which had killed one million of its own people). The real reason was, however, China's excessive national pride (the famous Middle Kingdom Complex). The conflict in Indo-China goes on⁶. The Vietnam backed Heng Samarin government is opposed by the coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea (government in exile). The CGDK is recognised and supported by US, the Western Powers, China and ASEAN nations. Recently the prospects of a settlement have brightened. Vietnam has announced total withdrawal by September 1989. The negotiations at Paris and the Jakarta Informal Talks between Prime Minister Hun Sen of Kampuchea and Prince Norodom Sinbouk 'President of the CGDK, have narrowed down their differences. The role of the Khmer Rouge, the most powerful faction in CGDK, in any future set up is the major hurdle. The Hun Sen government is bitterly opposed to the idea.

The situation in West Asia is no better. After more than four decades of fight and wait the Palestinians

6. Ibid p. XII

are yet to achieve their legitimate demand for an independent and separate homeland. Four major wars (in 1948, 1967, 1973 and 1982) and continued hostility has been the feature of the Arab-Israel conflict. Israel gets moral and material support from the US and the West, the same who were instrumental in its creation. The US decision to begin talks with the PLO after the later moderated its stand and the proposal for an International Peace Conference are positive signs, but the end of tunnel is still far off. The eight year old Iran-Iraq war, in which a million perished and property worth billions was destroyed, has ended but the vital issues, like the question of Shat-ul-Arab water-ways is yet to be settled. So it is more of a temporary ^{truce} truce than permanent peace. And we must not forget that unfortunate country, Lebanon. It has been divided into six parts controlled by various factions (Maronites, Druze, Shias etc) and outside powers (Israel and Syria). A new term has been added to Political-Diplomatic vocabulary - LEBANONISATION.

Nearer home Afghanistan has become an open bleeding wound. The ~~New~~ Leadership in Moscow itself

considers the 1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, 'a blunder'. The Geneva Accords, apart from accomplishing the Soviet troops withdrawal, could not provide any solution. Acute civil war goes on. The Soviet supported PDPA regime of Dr Nejjibullah is being opposed by the Mujahideen rebels, who get moral and logistical support from the same outside powers - the US, the West and China. To this list we must add Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other conservative regimes of West Asia. We must also not forget that we too had to fight three major wars with Pakistan (in 1948, 1965 and 1971). In its rivalry with India, Pakistan again is supported by the Western Powers. The creation of Pakistan in 1947 after partitioning India, was partly a British legacy.

Apart from these major conflict areas, there are other bilateral tensions in various parts of Asia. After surveying the Asian scene, there cannot be much debate about the need for peace and security in the region. It is a different matter as to how one interprets and approaches the problem of peace and security. And here begins the grey area. Every nation or group of nations interprets security in accordance with its

national interest and the ideology it follows. And if this search for peace and security is mixed with "the struggle for power and influence" (an allied but equally important objective) the cocktail becomes insipid. The content of peace is diluted and security itself becomes security of the strong, achieved through force. This is what happened in Asia.

In the eyes of the United States and the Western Powers, the main threat to Asia was from the spread of communism. Thus their main objective in Asia, or anywhere for that matter, was to 'contain' and if possible 'roll back' communism. Ofcourse increasing their own influence was the other objective. This was the essence of TRUMAN Doctrine. The Eisenhower Doctrine coming in the late nineteen fifties and the REAGAN Doctrine had similar aims. In the years immediately after the Second World War the US and its Western Allies were quite confident about achieving the above objectives, backed as they were by US economic might and nuclear monopoly.

However with the explosion of the first nuclear device by the Soviet Union in 1949, the question of

unleashing a third World War to roll back communism was ruled out. The end of American nuclear monopoly compelled the Western camp to look for a new strategy to contain communism and maintain its world dominance. It set itself the task of construction a network of military bases all over the world and started an unprecedented arms race, by inventing new kinds of weapons, especially nuclear. Asia had a special place in the new military strategy of Washington, where the US policy makers hoped to get easily into the shoes of the outgoing colonial powers.⁷

It was this approach-security through military pacts-which led to the formation of NATO. The same thinking was behind the establishment of NATO type military pacts in Asia - SEATO in South East Asia, the Baghdad Pact later named CENTO (after the withdrawal of Iraq) in West Asia, and ANZUS in South Pacific.

But the US did not stop there. After establishing close economic and strategic relationship with various countries of Asia, it constructed nearly 300 military

7. Davendra Kaushik and Satyendra Peerthum, Towards Collective Security in Asia (New Delhi 1973), p.1.

bases, installations and facilities in these countries. The list of the countries is long one - Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Phillipines, Thailand, Pakistan, Oman, Qatar etc.⁸ Ofcourse there is the Diego Garcia in Indian Ocean, the mainstay of CEMTCOM and RDF. The US naval presence in Indian and Pacific Oceans is also alarming. Many of these vessels carry nuclear war heads (the details will be discussed in later chapters).

The pertinent question here is, whether these pacts, bases and naval presence has furthered the cause of peace and security in Asia or whether they have worsened the situation?

SOVIET INTEREST IN ASIA

With seventy - five percent of its 1,376 million square kilometer territory and one fifth of its 280 million population being Asiatic, the USSR is one of the largest Asian states, bound with close historical, political economic and cultural ties with several neighbouring Asian states.

8. Mikhail Yelin, Durable Peace and security for Asia (New Delhi 1986), p. 13.

However there is no un-animity about the Asian-ness of the Soviet Union. One school of opinion maintains "It is but natural for the Soviet Union to take interest in peace and security in Asia. There is nothing surprising in it; after all the USSR is an Asian power too, though its capital lies in Europe. Territorially it is the largest Asian state and population wise too (excluding its European population) it ranks among the biggest countries of ^AAsia. The Asian role of the Soviet Union was clearly envisaged by its founder V.I. Lenin, who wrote "Russia geographically, economically and historically belongs not only to Europe, but to asia as well. The Soviet Union's fate is indissolubly linked up with Asia, as the Australian scholar Geoffrey Jukes puts it "It cannot just pack up and go unlike other outside powers"⁹.

There are others who do not agree with this line of argument. The United States, West, China and some countries of Asia are more in accord with De Gaulle's characterisation of the personality of the Soviet Union

9. Davendra Kaushik and Satyendra Peerthum, Towards Collective Security in Asia (New Delhi 1973), p. 49.

(as quoted by A.G. Noorani) at a press conference on Nov. 10, 1959. "No doubt Soviet Russia, inspite of having aided communism to take roots in China, recognises that she is Russia, a white nation of Europe, which has conquered part of Asia....."¹⁰ A.G. Noorani further contends "Russia came to Asia as a European power and this historical fact has its political consequences which Russia cannot shake off - appeals to geographical realities not-withstanding - particularly since it is a super power as well. Asian states will never accept it as one of themselves"¹¹

The United States and West have consistantly warned against evil Soviet designs in Asia. There may be a grain of truth in the above arguments, but as Mr. Noorani himself later admits "The times have changed and similar warnings from like quarters donot impress Asians much"¹²

10 A.G.Noorani, Brezhnev Plan for Asian Security :Russia in Asia (Bombay 1975) p. IX

11. Ibid page X

12. Ibid.

In the end one may say that the whole debate about the Asianness of the Soviet Union is redundant. There is no gainsaying the fact that the Soviet Union has vital and genuine stakes in Asia. For the state which has its longest frontier in Asia, it is hardly unnatural to make efforts to ensure that the region does not become a flash point or an arena of military confrontation.

Highlighting the importance of the region General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Mikail Gorbachev said, in his famous July 28, 1986 Vladivostok speech:

"East of the urals, in Asia - Siberia, in the Far East - lies a greater part of our country's territory. It is here that many national tasks, put forward by the Party Congress, will be fulfilled. hence the situation in the Far East as a whole, in Asia and the Ocean expanses washing it, where we are permanent inhabitants and seafarers of long standing, is to us of a national state interest".¹³

13. Soviet Review (New Delhi), vol XXIII no. 31, 7 August 1986, p. 32.

SOME EARLY PROPOSALS

The genesis of Soviet Union's Asia policy can be traced back to Lenin's Decree of PEACE adopted by the Second All Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers and Soldiers Deputies on November 8, where Lenin made an impassioned appeal for an immediate halt to the First World War. He strongly opposed and condemned all forcible annexations and seizure of foreign land "whether this nation is in Europe or in distant overseas country."¹⁴

The appeal of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR to All Mohammedan Workers in Russia and the East (Dec. 7th, 1917) urged them to throw off foreign imperialist yoke, to organise their lives according to their wishes and to support the Revolution and the Republican Government. It condemned all the unequal and secret treaties concluded by the Czars and abandoned all territorial claims on Turkey and Persia¹⁵.

14. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow Progress Pub. 1967) vol. 26, p. 250.

15. The Soviet Union and Peace: The most Important Documents Issued by the Government of USSR Concerning Peace and Disarmament (London, Martin Lawrence Ltd.) From 1917 to 1929.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People (1918) proclaimed "a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilization, which has built the prosperity of exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people of Asia."¹⁶

In his address to The IInd All Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East (Nov. 22, 1919) Lenin talked about efforts to muster all the awakening people of the East, and together with them wage a struggle against 'International Imperialism'¹⁷

In reply to a question regarding Soviet plan in Asia put by Karl Wiegand, a Berlin Correspondant of Universal Service, Lenin said "They are the same as in Europe: peaceful co-existence with all peoples, with the workers and peasants of all nation's awakening to a new life, a life without exploiters..."¹⁸.

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16. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, Progress Pub; 1967) vol. 26, p. 424.
17. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, Progress Pub; 1967), vol. 30, p. 161.
18. Ibid, p. 365.

On yet another occasion, speaking at the Eighth All Russia Congress of Soviets (Dec, 1920) Lenin renounced all unequal treaties and territorial claims and hoped to establish and strengthen friendly relations with the oppressed nations of the East particularly Turkey, Afghanistan and Persia.¹⁹

Not only did the Soviet Government annul all the inequitable treaties and agreements which the Czars had with those countries but it also helped the Eastern peoples in their struggle for political and economic independence.

Thus based on the principles of friendship, equality and mutual respect, the young Soviet state concluded its first treaties in 1921 with Persia, Turkey and Afghanistan. A further step was signing of Non-Agression and Neutrality Treaties with Turkey (1925), Afghanistan (1926) and Persia (1927). Later USSR concluded trade treaties with these states. Similar treaties

19. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works: in 3 vols (Moscow Progress Pub. 1964), p. 444.

were also concluded with China and Mongolia.

During the 1930's, the Soviet Union came out with Comprehensive Peace Programmes based on the concept of 'indivisible peace' One proposal was for a detailed plan for European Collective Security. In November, 1933, in view of the commercial chaos in the Far East the USSR proposed a Pacific Ocean Pact between the USSR, USA, Japan and China.²⁰ The United States, to which the proposal was put, expressed its opinion to bring in European powers like Britain, France and the Netherlands in such a pact. But the rivalries among the European countries thwarted the realization of such proposals.²¹

In the same year (1933) at the Geneva Conference on Reduction and limitation of Armaments the Soviet delegation proposed that the sphere of action of the Draft of the European Declaration on the non-use of force should be extended beyond Europe. In July 1936,

20. A.A. Gromyko and B.N. Ponomarev, ed., Soviet Foreign Policy: 1917-1945 (Moscow, 1981), p. 301

21. O.N. Mehrotra, "Soviet Asia Pacific Policy", Strategic Analysis (New Delhi, IDSA), vol. XII no. 6., Sept. 1988 p. 577.

Soviet Foreign Minister M. Litvinov stated, at the 16th session of the League of Nations that his country favoured covering all continents, for a start at least the whole of Europe with a system of regional pact, not superseding but supplementing, the covenant. Speaking at the 17th session in September 1936, Litvinov said "We have in mind regions of various geographical sizes and shapes, including even continents, since the larger the region covered, the greater guarantee of security"²².

In the post IIInd World War period, the Soviet Union played constructive role as an initiator and an active participant in several major international conferences and agreements aimed at ensuring peace in various regions of the Asian continent, in particular 1954 Geneva meetings on settlements in Korea and Indo-China, the Geneva Conference of 1962 to Proclaim the Neutrality of Laos, the International Peace Conference on Vietnam in Paris in 1973, the Geneva Peace Conference²³

22. Devendra Kaushik, "Asian Security Concepts" World Focus (New Delhi), vol. 7 no. 6, June 1986, p. 3-4.

23. Mikhail Yelin, Durable Peace and Security for Asia (New Delhi, 1986), p. 4-5.

on the Middle East in 1973 etc²⁴.

In the various CPSU Congress help after Stalin's death (1953) proposals concerning peace and security in Asia were put forward and discussed. The report of the 20th CPSU Congress asked for peace through a proposed Collective Peace Pact in Asia Pacific region.²⁵ There were reports which landed the role of the Indian Republic, "to safeguard peace and security in Asia." Again at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in 1959, Nikita Khrushchev called for a 'zone of peace' above all an "atom free zone" in the Far East and the entire "Pacific Ocean Area".²⁶

24. Ibid.

25. N.S. Khrushchev, Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU at the 20th Party Congress (New Delhi, 1956), p. 57.

26. N.S. Khrushchev, Report to 21st Extraordinary Congress of CPSU (New Delhi, 1959), p. 70.

CHAPTER - III

BREZHNEV PLAN FOR ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Soviet interest and initiatives towards Asian security have a long history as the previous chapter sufficiently proves. Thus on June 7, 1969 in his address to the World Conference of Communist and Workers Parties held at Moscow, when General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Leonid Brezhnev proposed "a system of collective security in Asia" it should not have been wholly unexpected, a bolt from the blue. His stand was quite in conformity with Soviet approach to the question in earlier times. However, compared to the earlier proposals, the new plan was more concrete and was pursued with consistency, vigour and tact, in the following years. In that sense it indeed was the most important diplomatic initiative taken by the Soviet Union concerning Asian Security.

Brezhnev said

The burning problem of current relations do not conceal from our view, long term tasks, namely the

creation of a system of collective security in those parts of the globe where the dangers of another world war, of armed conflict are concentrated. Such a system is the best replacement for the existing military - political groupings We are of the opinion that the course of events is also putting on the agenda, the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia."¹

Before discussing the plan in detail it would be proper to discuss the context in which it was put forth. Brezhnev himself talks about "the course of events" necessitating collective security system for Asia. There are two interpretations of the context, as also regarding Soviet objectives behind the proposal.

Mikhail Kapista, of Moscow State University, while discussing the context of the Brezhnev initiative, calls Asia "the most turbulent continent after the Second World War." The wars in Middle East, Indo-China and Korea; the military clashes between various Asian states: Afghanistan - Pakistan, India - Pakistan, India -

1. International Meeting of Communist and Worker's Parties, Moscow, 1969 (Prague, 1969), p. 171.

China and Indonesia Malaysia; and the various US sponsored military alliances: SEATO, CENTO, ANZUS etc. have converted Asia into an arena of conflict and tension. He also talks about the inability of the UN system to effectively deal with these problems. It was in these circumstances that the Soviet Union came out with the collective security proposal²

The other school of thought, comprising mainly of US, Western and some Asian writers would not take such a charitable view. Consensus among them is that the Soviet plan has been put forward in the context of

- Sino-Soviet rivalry which climaxed with clashes along river Ussuri in March 1969.
- British decision in January 1968 to withdraw from East of Suez by 1971 and
- American intention of gradual disengagement in South East Asia.³

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3. Lawrence L. Whethen "Moscow's anti-China Pact" The World Today (London) vol. 25, no. 9, Sept. 1969, pp. 385-93. Alexander O. Ghehardt "The Soviet System of Collective Security in Asia" Asian Survey, vol. XIII no. 12, Dec. 1973 pp. 332-38. Marian P. Kirsch "Soviet Security Objectives in Asia" International Organisation (Boston) vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 451-78.
 2. Mikhail Kapista "Collective Security System for Asia", Soviet Land, , vol. XIII, no. 23-24, December 1970, p. 67.

Robert C. Horm, in his article Soviet Union and Asian Security maintains that China (emerging from the trauma of the cultural Revolution) emerged as a major threat to Soviet Union. He also refers to Nixons Guam speech, in which the United States unfolded a new Asian policy, as yet another reason behind the Soviet plan.⁴

He points out the following objectives behind the Soviet initiative on Asian security-

- to convince the Asian and non-Asian states that Soviet Union is not only a world power but also an Asian power.
- reducing and limiting Washington's influence which is not an integral part of Asia,
- ~~limiting Japanese influence~~
- containing China
- acquiring bases and port facilities for the expanding Soviet navy and
- economic interest - expansion of trade, new
- markets etc. - in various regions of Asia.

4. Sudershan Chawla and D.R.Saradesai (ed.) Changing Patterns of Security and Stability in Asia (New York, 1980), pp. 63-65.

These objectives according to Robert C. Horn are in conformity with the basic Soviet concern which is - to enhance Soviet security and to increase Soviet power.⁵

Alexander O. Ghebhardt maintains that "both China and US were the principal targets, of what appeared to be a Soviet plan of containing the former and taking the place of the latter in Pacific Basin" He also points to the British withdrawal decision, and contends that the Soviet leaders might have guessed about the new US Pacific Doctrine enunciated by Nixon only a month after the Brezhnev speech.⁶

Yet another related Soviet objective, according to Ghebhardt, was to erode the basis of regional alliance's in Asia like SEATO, ASPAC and ASEAN.⁷

5. Ibid.

6. Alexander O. Ghebhardt, "The Soviet System of Collective Security in Asia" Asian Survey, vol. XIII, no. 12, Dec, 1973, pp. 332-38.

7. Ibid.

Bhabani Sen Gupta re-iterates the same three factors behind the Brezhnev proposal

- British decision to withdraw from East of Suez
- American humiliation in Indo-China and
- Sino-Soviet rivalry and Chinese assertiveness in Asia

Sengupta however feels that the Soviet policy with regard to their two principal adversaries was - accommodation with the United states to precede side by side with firm containment of China - militarily as well as diplomatically. The result was - concentration of troops on China border and the Asian Collective Security proposal. The thrust of Soviet diplomacy in Asia thus was to caution Asian states about the Chinese threat and to win their friendship and goodwill.⁸

He enumerates three dimensions of Brezhnev's 1969 proposal

- replacement of US security system by a system or systems with Soviet participation.⁸

8. Bhabani Sen Gupta, USSR in Asia (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 99-101.

- Isolation of China and
- launching of a security praxis on a limited regional scale in the southern flank of the Soviet Union where a network of rewards linking the Soviet Union, Afghanistan and Iran were being built or were in planning state.⁹

The "vacuum theory" - that the Soviet Union was trying to fill the vacuum created by the British and the US withdrawal decisions - was strongly refuted by Soviet commentator Vikenty Matveyev. He contends "Hardly any political blank spots by which I mean places without Independent states, are left". He accuses the United States, her friends (Australia and Japan) and China of having definite designs on a number of countries in this part of the world. "The independent states that have arisen upon the ruins of the colonial empires need no patrons and guardians. They have the ways and means to protect their own interest including their security". He then calls for dismantling foreign military bases and establishment of Collective Security System for Asia and commits Soviet support for it.

9. Ibid.

Matveyev's article "Stuffed Vacuum" was published in Izvestia on May 28, 1969, ten days before Brezhnev came out with his plan.¹⁰

Regarding the criticism that the Brezhnev plan was directed against China, we have already discussed many view points. There are host of others. Marian P. Kirsch labels it as "the Dullesian call" directed against Peking.¹¹ A.G. Noorani agrees with Victor Zorza's characterisation of the plan as a "Cordon Sanitaire". Noorani quotes from Brezhnev's same speech, where he bitterly criticised China's "Great Power aspirations, with its claim to territory of other countries", to prove his point. He further says that "The Johnson-Rusk domino theory was receiving support from strange quarters who, as we shall see, were emulating Dulles example instead of profiting by his experience".^{12.}

10. Izvestia (Moscow), 28 May 1969.

11. Marian P. Kirsch, "Soviet Security objectives Asia" International Organisation (Boston, 1970), vol. 24 no.3, pp. 451-78.

12. A.G. Noorani, Brezhnev Plan for Asian Security: Russia in Asia (Bombay, 1975), pp. 1-4.

The charge, that the Brezhnev proposal was anti China, was vehemently and consistantly denied by various Soviet leadrs. We will come across these denials and clarifications in the course of our discussion.

The Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in his report to the Supreme Soviet (10 July 1969) called Asian security "the question of collective efforts of all Asian states safeguarding security in that part of the world in their commong interest". The Soviet Union, he declared, was ready "to express its concrete views" on the security system in the course of consultations with Asian states all of which were eligible to join". Replying to the charge that "collective security system in Asia would be spearheaded against a certain country or a group of countries." He said "such inventions are utterly groundless".¹³

At the UN General Assembly session on Sept. 19, 1969 Gromyko said "All states in that region irrespective of differences in their social systems must study and work for the creation of such a system which would be in the interest of each of them". Yet another important point made by Gromyko was that regional security systems

13. Pravda, 11 July 1969.

in different parts of the world will contribute to international security.¹⁴

THE DETAILS OF THE PLAN

There is a practical problem in discussing the details of the Soviet plan for Collective Security in Asia. Official Soviet pronouncements on Asian Collective Security have been miserly, mystical and mellow. "Brezhnev himself has not publicly spoken more than fifteen hundred words on the subject in six years; Andrie Gromyko has given it five small, cryptic paragraphs in five out of his probably hundred speeches and statements; Alexie Kosygin even less Soviet collective security system in Asia is not only still a club in reach of members but is also still in search of a comprehensive and comprehensible theory".¹⁵ One reason was given by Andrie Gromyko himself who said that the Soviet Union will "express its concrete views" on the security system in the course of consultations with Asian states."

14. Pravda, 20 September 1969

15. Sengupta, n. 8, p. 93.

This view that perhaps, the Soviets themselves were not clear about the Plan in their own mind and have merely aired general principles in order to initiate detailed deliberations, has been hotly contested by A.G. Noorani who contends that it is unthinkable that Brezhnev would have made the suggestion publicly at all except after the fullest deliberations Such a view does little credit to men known to think before acting and to strive ever to retain the diplomatic initiative."¹⁶ Noorani maintains that thus reticence on part of the Soviet Union is due to the hidden implications of the concept..... both in regard to its objective-the containment of China - and in regard to its established connotation, the use of the collective power of states to deter and resist aggression by military and other means".¹⁷ These two charges have since stuck to the Soviet Plan. And Soviet leaders and commentators have not been quite able to clarify their position to the satisfaction of their detractors.

16. Noorani, n. 12, p. 5.

17. Ibid, p. 1.

In stark contrast to the reticence of the official leadership, Soviet intellectuals, commentators and propogandists have spoken and written profusely about the plan. Going through these writings, one gets a feeling, however, that at least some of them, wittingly or unwittingly have further complicated the matter by clearly coming out against China's "Great Han-Chauvinism and in favour of "use of collective power of states to deter aggression". We have already discussed Matveyev anti China stand.

Dr. Gueorgui Petrovich Zadorojhnyi, Professor of International Law at the Institute of International Relations, Moscow, speaking on "Recent Trends in Soviet Diplomatic Policy" discusses the Siviet collective security proposal in detail: its objectives, membership, structure principles etc.

OBJECTIVES: promotion of -

- 1 International peace and security in Asia and
- 2 International cooperation between the countries

MEMBERSHIP

- 1 All the Asian States

- 2 USA which has vital interest and possession in the region
- 3 Australia and NewZealand which are politically, though not geographically, nations of the region
- 4 Turkey, Iran and Iraq and
- 5 Both the parts of the divided nations of Korea Vietnam and China

STRUCTURE -

- 1 General Assembly - with each member having one vote
- 2 Security Council - with some permanent and some temporary elected members - to deal with the question of aggression. and
- 3 Bodies for political, economic and cultural cooperation

The Organisation will be based on the principles of the UN Charter. He even supported the Idea of an Asian Charter.¹⁸

18. Noorani, n. 12. See Appendix II for the text of Dr. Gueorgui Petrovich Zadorojhnyi's talk on "Recent Trends in Soviet Diplomatic Policy" pp. 370091.

In reply to a question Zadorjhnyi felt that sub regional arrangements like ASPAC SEATO, ANZUS and ASEAN "caused international tension between countries. They divided Asian nations into blocks".

When asked by an Indian journalist Sircar as to what is the source of threat to asia he gave vague answers. He said that the Asians "know themselves who are the enemies of peace and friendship between Asian countries." Pressed further he pointed to "the existence of sub-regional organisations directed against each other". And then he said something very important, that when and if countries like India are attacked they must receive help. (We all know that India was attacked by China in 1962)¹⁹.

In the preceeding pages we have discussed Mikhail Kapista's views on the context in which the Soviet Union came out with the Asian collective security plan. Talking about the details of the proposed system Kapista admits that there is no ready made plan but feels that "Collective Security will be the fruit of joint efforts,

19. Ibid.

of joint searchings of Asian countries"²⁰ Kapista gives a number of clarifications and details about the plan.

- it will not be a block of some states against others.
- there will be no secondary states. All states will take part on an equal footing.
- states included will build their relations on the basis of generally recognised international principles: equality, respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and non interference in internal affairs.
- disputed issues must be settled through negotiations. Use or threat of use of force is impermissible.
- the exchange of political information and consultation between states particularly in situations dangerous to peace, will be useful
- economic, scientific and technical cooperation and cultural exchange will be promoted.
- non-Asian powers can join if the-Asians so desire.

20. Mikhail Kapista "Collective Security System for Asia" Soviet Land vol. XIII, no. 23-24, Dec. 1970, p. 68.

- military blocks will be dissolved.
- the organisation, functions, powers etc will be finally decided by the member states themselves.²¹

✓The establishment of an Asian Collective Security system will be a difficult task, ✓Kapista feels. "Deep rooted suspicion exists between states, and it will take time to overcome them."²²

ASIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PLAN

The Brezhnev plan was not very well received in Asia. The reactions varied from total skepticism to guarded approval.

China's reaction was expressed in picturesque phraseology commonly found in its policy statements. Brezhnev plan was "something it (Russia) picked up from the garbage heap of the notorious war-monger John Foster Dulles" Hsinhua said on June 28. "It is stuly shameless that Brezhnev and his ilk have to seek help from the

21. Ibid. p. 69-70.

22. Ibid.

ghost of Dulles to get out of their predicament. The so called system of collective security in Asia "is actually an anti China military alliance."²³

India extended a token sympathetic support for the Brzhnev Plan but did not show any enthusiasm for getting actively involved in its implications. In Jakarta on June 30, 1969, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said that she was still awaiting the full details of the plan, but added "if he is talking of a military alliance we would disagree. If he is talking of economic cooperation it would be a different matter".²⁴ India thus, had two well known reservations about the plan- its anti-China, anti US implications and its strategic and military connotation (mutually considered defence "action to prevent war") India was not willing to be associated with any anti China grouping (and at least that was the way China looked at it) for that was the time when a basic shift in India's approach to China had been initiated, which opened the way for a process of normalisation to begin. On the other hand the

23. Peking Review, no. 29, 10 July 1969.

24. Hindustan Times, 1 July 1969.

plan was not in keeping with India's policy of non-alignment.²⁵

However, as Mrs. Gandhi herself admitted, India welcomed the Kosygin plan to forge a regional economic cooperation grouping of India Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran so as to facilitate trade and transport links, through land mainly, between these countries and the Soviet Union. The proposal was mooted by Kosygin on May 30, 1969 during his visit to Islamabad.²⁶ Pakistan did not show much enthusiasm for the Kosygin Plan much less for the Brezhnev plan which came just a week later. The main reason was strong opposition from China. The reaction in the countries of the South East Asia-Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand was also guarded and muted due to the same reason.

SLOWING DOWN. THE CAMPAIGN (1970-72)

It is said that due to the unenthusiastic reception of the Brezhnev Plan by majority of Asian countries, Soviet Union slowed down its

25. S.D. Muni, "Subcontinent: Mobilising Asian Opinion" World Focus, vol. 7, no. 6, June 1986, p. 19.

26. Pravda, 31 May 1969.

campaign. In this connection Brezhnev's election speech of June 12, 1970 is cited where he said, "We have supported and continue to support the setting up of reliable security system in different areas of the globe. Quite naturally, we devote greater attention to the problems of European Security."²⁷ Kiril Mazurov, Soviet First Deputy Prime Minister's speech on the Brezhnev Plan at Pyongyong on Aug 15, 1970 was the only major official pronouncement of any significance during this period. Brezhnev himself did not mention Asian collective security in the Six Point Peace Programme suggested in his Report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU on March 30, 1971, though the goal of collective security was specifically mentioned.²⁸ Soviet commentators claimed however that the campaign for collective security in Asia formed an integral part of the peace programme.

Dieter Braun and Glaubitz interpret Moscow's silence on Asian collective security, during this period in these words "Moscow realised that the anti-Chinese

27. Soviet Review, vol. VII, no. 46, 7 July, 1970, p.30

28. L.I. Brezhnev, Report of the Central Committee to the 24th Congress of the CPSU (Moscow, 1971). p.29-31.

sting of its proposal, a sting which though never officially formulated, was evident from Soviet press comment on the subject, had a counterproductive effect. The Asian countries, not least Japan, were not prepared to commit themselves against China. This attitude was to an increasing extent due to the flexible policy China adopted towards Asia since 1970"²⁹

SOVIET POLICY IN ASIA BETWEEN 1970-72

The almost two years of silence came to an end when three top Soviet leaders Prime Minister Kosygin, General Secretary Brezhnev and President Podgorniy, one after another, in quick succession, re-launched the campaign for collective security in Asia. Before discussing their views it would be profitable to study the changed circumstances under which the plan was re-formulated and re-launched. According to Glaubitz and Dr. Braun "By then the policy of detente in Europe had made further progress and bilateral treaties with Egypt India and Iraq had been concluded, and Brezhnev's

29. Noorani, n. 12, p. 15.

internal position had become strong enough to tackle the basic questions of orientation of Foreign Policy. Further more there are clear indications that the developments in South Asia - the hope for an early agreement between the three states of the Indian subcontinent, under auspices favourable to the Soviet Union, might have played an important part."³⁰

Thus, the Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the USSR signed on Aug 12, 1970 was a big impetus to detente in Europe.

Nixon-Kissinger combine pulled the "coup of the century" when Kissingers secret visit to China (in 1971) was followed by Nixon's state visit in 1972. The famous Shanghai Communique was issued. Hand in hand Mao and Nixon made, a somewhat sinister declaration - "Today our two peoples hold in their hands, the future of the whole world"

This great diplomatic achievement was, however, accompanied by American humiliation in Indo-China.

30. Ibid.

The Paris Peace talks between the US and Vietnam had started partly due to Soviet efforts. This finally led to the reunification and complete independence of Vietnam and US withdrawal. In Laos also, national accord was reached.

US sponsored regional pacts in Asia were also in bad shape. SEATO was gripped by grave crisis while ASPAC was paralysed. CENTO was forced to make serious amendments in its aims.

The situation in West and South Asia was also favourable to the Soviet Union. where it concluded treaties of Peace and Friendship with Egypt (1971) India (1971) and Iraq (1972) Egypt however denounced and abrogated the treaty in 1972. In South Asia India had liberated Bangladesh with Soviet backing and peace was restored with the signing of the Shimla Pact (1972) The Indo-Bangladesh Peace and Friendship Treaty was also welcomed by the Soviets.

Soviet Union also improved its relation and signed trade and technology agreements with Iraq, Turkey and Japan.

Soviet writers hailed these treaties as one of the "bricks" on which the edifice of collective security will be built in Asia.

Bhabani Sen Gupta maintains that "security related issues have become major plank of Soviet diplomacy with the Asian countries "and what ever may be the level or type of relationship" security is invariably a part of the ongoing dialogue." He further says "The experience of the past five years has shown that although a formal launching of an Asian collective security system under Soviet leadership or even with Soviet participation would still be extremely difficult it would not be no difficult to construct bilateral security oriented relations with individual Asian countries." "Professor sengupta further clarifies that "This does not mean that Soviet leaders will give up the goal of collective security, what it does mean is that emphasis will continue to be on seeking bilateral & multilateral security relations with flexibility of response to the given balance of forces"³¹

Some Western commentators like Avigdor Haselkom

31. Sen Gupta, no. 8, p. 95.

have argued that the Soviet Union has already assembled the rudiments of a security sub-system in the Middle East and South Asian region to be linked with the Warsaw Pact "Central Security System."³² Prof. Bhabani Sen Gupta disputes this argument on the ground that none of these states (with whom Soviet Union has treaty relations) will be willing to get involved in any "Russian War."³³

THE CAMPAIGN RE-LAUNCHED AND REFORMULATED

Coming back to the re-iteration of the proposal in 1972 - we have an avalanche of official pronouncements and write ups and commentaries which extolled the virtues of the plan for collective security in Asia. Prime Minister Kosygin speaking at a luncheon in Moscow on March 14, 1972 in honour of Prime Minister Abdul Zahir of Afghanistan said "Measures of Asian states for strengthening of collective security in that area would

32. Avigdor Haselkom "The Soviet Collective Security System" Orbis 19, no. 1 (Spring 1975), p. 67.

33. Sen Gupta, n. 8, p. 95.

in our opinion contribute to the consolidation of peace in Asia. Such principles as renunciation of use of force in the settlement of disputable issues between states, peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems, the development of mutually advantageous cooperation, that is, the principles which fully comply with United Nations Charter and are in no way directed against any state, could be used as basis for system of collective security in Asia.³⁴

Brezhnev's address to the 15th Congress of Trade Unions of the USSR on 20th March 1972 contained a detailed exposition and to a certain extent re-formulation of the collective security proposal. In view of its criticism he made some clarifications. Thus it is necessary to study this speech in some detail.

Brezhnev began by explaining Soviet Unions (whose two thirds territory lies in Asia) interest in Asia and the growing importance of the region in world politics in view of the success of the national liberation

34. Soviet Review, vol. IX, no. 24, March 18, 1972, p. 12.

movement and Asia's economic development. In both fields Soviet Union has played crucial role. It had fraternal relations with Mongolia, North Korea and North Vietnam. It had good relations with Afghanistan and Ceylon, while its relations with Burma and Turkey were improving steadily with India it had Treaty of Peace and Friendship. The newly liberated Republic of Bangladesh was the newest addition to Asian friends of the Soviet Union between Soviet Union and Pakistan there were "no conflicts and no contradiction of interest. Recently there had been a "noticeable turn for the better" in Soviet Japanese Relations.³⁵

After detailing Soviet Union's relations with the countries of Asia Brezhnev declared "The idea of ensuring Asian Security on collective basis has aroused growing interest in many Asian countries. It is becoming increasingly clear that the road to security in Asia is not one of military blocks and groupings, not one opposing the countries against each other, but one of

35. L.I. Brezhnev, Selected Speeches and Writings on Foreign Affairs (Oxford 1979) p. 258-60.

good neighbourly cooperation among all states interested in such cooperation".

"To our mind collective security in Asia should be based on such principles as renunciation of the use in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and inviolability of border, non-interference in domestic affairs and extensive development of economic and other cooperation on the basis of complete equality and mutual advantage."³⁶

After this Brezhnev while welcoming Nixon's China visit made certain objections about the real motive behind the Shanghai communique. He also called for normalisation of relations between the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China.³⁷

Now, in this very important speech Brezhnev has explained the peaceful character of his collective security plan which is to be based on internationally recognised principles like renunciation of use of forces, respect for sovereignty, etc. This was a rejoinder

36. ibid. p.259

37. ibid. p.259-60

to the allegation regarding the military undercurrents of the plan. He also tries to allay the fears about the alleged Soviet intension to dominate Asia by saying that the plan will be based on "complete equality and mutual advantage." He also denied that the plan was directed against any country and hoped to improve relations with China.³⁸ In his speech on the 50th anniversary of the USSR on Dec 22, 1922, Brezhnev repeated his proposal while refuting Chinese charge of encirclement.³⁹

President Podgorny spoke about the plan during his visit to Turkey on April 20, 1972 and more extensively at Kabul on May 21, 1973 where he repeated Brezhnev's elaborated version of his plan. He further clarified, "This system would fully conform with the requirements of the UN charter and would not be directed against any state."⁴⁰

The compatibility of the Soviet Asian collective security plan with the UN system was emphasised by various Soviet commentators. Svyatoslav Kozlov, APN Military Commentator defines and explains Soviet plan in these words. "Collective security is cooperation

38. ibid. p.260

39. Soviet Review, vol IX, no 60, 30 Dec. 1972. p.32-33

40. Soviet Review, vol X, no.28, 2 June 1973, p.12-15

between states aimed at maintaining peace. Such cooperation can be realised in various forms and different ways. The basic solution to the problem of maintenance of peace consists in establishment of a system of collective security through such a universal and global organisation as the UN. However according to the UN Charter it is not only advisable but also expedient to establish collective security systems outside the UN, too, through regional organisations and agreements."

"The scope of activity of the regional organisations as defined in the UN Charter, is wide enough for them to help maintain world peace and security. At the same time the setting of regional organisations against each other and the UN i.e. of turning them into military blocks, is expressly banned in the Charter"⁴²

Thus while proving the compatibility of the Soviet plan with the UN system, Lozlov castigates US sponsored regional organisations like SEATO, CENTO and ANZUK as opposed to the spirit of the UN. Later in his article

41. Soviet Review, vol. IX, no. 27, June 1972, p. 30.

42. Ibid.

he severely criticises these organisations which "created the illusion of security" and praises the Brezhnev plan which rests "on peaceful cooperation and renunciation of the use of force." It will lead to disarmament including nuclear disarmament, liquidation of military bases situated in Asia and turning the continent into a non-nuclear zone. The resources thus saved can be put to better use "for their speedily, all round development."

He acknowledges the role Soviet Union's Peace and Friendship treaties with India and Iraq in establishment of a collective security system in Asia which he feels "will become an important stabilizing factor of world politics."⁴³

At a reception in Moscow in honour of the Prime Minister of Iran, on August 6, 1973, Kosygin repeated the new version of the Brezhnev Plan and further said "To these could be also be added the recognition and observance by all, of the inalienable right of every

43. Ibid, pp. 31-33.

people of sovereign ownership of its national resources and to carry out socio-economic transformation."⁴⁴

This new addition of the principle of "sovereign ownership of national resources" was indifference to the thinking of the non-aligned states.

Speaking at Alma-Ata on Aug 15, 1973 Brezhnev took notice of the improved world scenario: settlements in Vietnam and Laos; normalisation in South Asia (Shimla Pact); and better prospects in Korea. He, then, added "Soviet Union is firmly convinced that Asia can and must live according to laws of peace and collective security" extolling the virtues of collective security he said, "we seek to exclude wars and armed conflicts, and imperialist aggression on the Asian continent; we especially want every country and people to be guaranteed conditions for free development and national revival and the spirit of trust and mutual understanding to reign in relations among Asian countries."⁴⁵

44. Soviet Review vol. IX, no. 14, 18 March 1972, p. 12.

45. L.I. Brezhnev, Selected Speeches and Writings on Foreign Affairs (Oxford 1979) pp. 261-62.

Once again replying to the oft repeated charges he said "We have said many times and we repeat: the Soviet Union stands for equal participation of all Asian states without exclusion in the collective security system". He also declared that his plan will be based on the principles "proclaimed in the historic Bandung Conference".⁴⁶

He expressed hope for better relations with China, but criticised its anti-Soviet attitude.

Shortly afterwards speaking at Taskent on 24 Sept, 1973 Brezhnev repeated the same theme. Regarding the slow progress in achieving peace and security in Asia Brezhnev likened Asia to "a huge flywheel which as it gains momentum rotates faster and faster, untill there is no stopping it."⁴⁷

A month later at the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow on 26th Oct, 1973, Brezhnev said, "The peoples of Asia most certainly need lasting peace and constructive cooperation no less, than say the people

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid, p. 263-64.

of Europe." He refuted the charge that the plan was anti China. "No body has ever raised the question of China's non-participation or much less isolation (not to say of the fact that it would be ludicrous to think of isolating such a big country). As for the Soviet Union it would welcome the participation of PRC in measures at strengthening Asian security."⁴⁸

Andrie Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, addressing the UN General Assembly on Sept 25, 1973 once again clarified Soviet position "The Soviet Union supports the equal participation of all Asian countries without any exception, in a collective security system. A desire to spearhead the collective security system in Asia against any state is alien to us, no matter how much it is attributed to us."⁴⁹

Brezhnev's visit to India in November, 1973 was an important landmark in Soviet campaign for security in Asia. India's support was crucial for the success of the plan. The importance of the visit can be ascer-

48. ibid. p.265-66

49. Soviet Review, vol X, no. 49, 11 Oct. 1973, p.11

tained from the large number of write ups and articles by Soviet and some Indian commentators, in the months preceeding the visit. They extensively discussed the collective security proposal - its necessity, objectives, and principals⁵⁰

These commentators, in short, made the following points - They -

- talked about the favourable conditions in Asia: the settlements in Indo-China (Vietnam and Laos) and South Asia (Shimla Pact); detente in Europe; Soviet Friendship Treaties with India and Iraq and her improved relations with other Asian countries.
- discussed the various principles on which the Asian collective security system will be based: peaceful-coexistence etc (which we have discussed many times)

50. Here some articles published in various issues of the Soviet Review are mentioned - "For Collective Security in Asia" (editors page) vol. X no. 17, 1973; Yuri Frolov "For an Asia without Conflicts" vol. X, no. 18, April 18, 1973; Mohit Sen "Collective security in Asia" vol. X, no. 29, June 6, 1973; Y Lugovskoi "In the Interest of of the Peoples of Asia" vol. X, no. 48, Oct. 4, 1973; Veniamin Shurygin "Road to Peace and Security" vol. X, no. 49, Oct 11, 1973; I. Ivokov "Asia New Hope in an Ancient Continent" vol. X, no. 50, Oct 18, 1973; Tribhuwan Nath "Collective Security in Asian" vol. X, no. 54-55, Nov. 19, 1973

- detailed the benefits of the collective security system; resources thus saved can be put to better uses of development; the countries concerned can pool their resources and efforts for implementation of important economic projects in fields like irrigation, power generation, flood control and to raise farm output and industrial production. These are areas of common interest.
- condemned the US sponsored regional pacts like SEATO, CENTO, ANZUS, ASPAC etc. for creating tension and rivalry in Asia and called for their immediate dissolution.
- criticised China for its opposition to peace and security in Asia and its designs and claims in the region. They also condemned its for anti-Sovietism and collaboration with the imperialists (the US and the West)

Addressing the joint session of the Indian Parliament on Nov 29, 1973, Brezhnev talked about new initiatives concerning "Asia's peaceful future", "neutralisation of South East Asia", "good neighbourly cooperation" in South Asia and turning " Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and plans for regional cooperation".

"There is also a growing interest in the idea

of safeguarding security in Asia through collective efforts. The Soviet Union is known to be a determined advocate of this idea. This is not only because greater part of our territory lies in Asia. We believe that establishment of relations of peace, security and cooperation in Asia, a continent populated by over half of the mankind, would be a step of would historic importance in ensuring the peace and security of nations on a world-wide scale. In this connection we take into account not only political but also the economic aspect of the matter. Given lasting peace Asian countries will be able, for the first time, to concentrate on solving the economic and social problems they face and developing their culture. In these circumstance it will be easier for them to consolidate their economic independence."⁵¹ As early as in the 1950s the Asian countries formulated the principles which envisaged the development of their relations in the direction of peaceful coexistenc and cooperation....These were the principles of Bandung as well as policy of Panchila

51. Soviet Review, vol. X, no. 58, 6 Dec. 1974, p. 90

which is especially dear to India".

After this he called for "a common approach" and "a broad and constructive discussion" to solve "the problems of peace and security in the continent" and then declared "Asia can and must become a continent of peace, friendship and cooperation. This great goal is worth the efforts and the 'struggle'. Indeed a struggle for the cause of peace and detente still has numerous and quite influential opponents".⁵²

In the above speech Brezhnev tried to Asianise his plan by linking it to the principles of Bandung and Panchsheel. At a meeting in Ullan Bator, the capital of Mongolia, a year later on 26 Nov, 1974, he went a step further and declared "The idea of peace and security in Asia based on joint efforts is far from new. In the light of their own historical experience Asian states have time and again suggested such principles and norms of relations which would serve as a basis for establishing peaceful and healthy relations among peoples."⁵³

52. Ibid, p. 91.

53. Brezhnev, no. 45, p. 268.

He once again declared his faith in the principles of Panchsheel and the Bandung Conference. He also supported the initiatives for strengthening peace in Asia taken by the 4th non-Aligned Conference held at Algiers in 1973.⁵⁴

The Report of the Central Committee to the 25th Congress of CPSU, presented on 24th Feb, 1976, reiterated Soviet Union's resolve to work "for lasting peace and security in Asia and for assuring them by collective efforts."⁵⁵

Speaking at a dinner given in the Kremlin in honour of the Prime Minister of India Morarji Desai, on Oct 21, 1977 Brezhnev said "Developments on the continent of Asia are of immediate interest for both our countries. Our Indian friends, we believe, are well acquainted with the Soviet Union's point of view. We are convinced that one of the most reliable means of achieving detente and security in Asia consists in joint

54. Ibid, p. 269.

55. Ibid, p. 270.

efforts by the Asian states in a form which they consider acceptable to themselves. "Thus Brezhnev leaves the details of the plan to be decided through "joint efforts".

On the question of "curtailing military activities in the Indian Ocean" he pledges to cooperate with India."⁵⁶

Then he re-emphasises "We have always considered peace to be indivisible. And today this is perhaps truer than ever before. A military conflagration in one area can spread in matter of hours to other countries eventually engulfing the whole planet. On the other hand real progress in strengthening peace and good-neighbourliness in one part of the world can improve the entire international climate."⁵⁷

SUMMARY

Before concluding up the discussion on the objectives and principles of the Soviet Plan for Asian Collective Security, it would be desirable to summarise these. Thus according to Soviet leaders and commentators the plan consists of

- Renunciation of the use of force in relation among states
- respect for sovereignty and inviolability of

56. Ibid, p. 287.

57. Ibid, p. 287.

borders,

- broad development of economic and other types of cooperation on the basis of full equality & mutual benefit,
- recognition and observance of the right of every nation to determine its future.
- inadmissibility of annexation of territory by aggression,
- settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means and
- Assertion of the inalienable right of every nation to sovereign possession of its natural resources and to choose its own way of economic and social development.⁵⁸

The Soviet plan for Asian Collective Security in its second 'avatar' (reincarnation) tries to answer the charges that were levelled against the 1969 Brezhnev plan, and infact contains some new aspects and formulations. Thus the new plan will

- not be a military grouping,
- not be directed against any state - US or China and the latter was infact invited to join.
- not be incompatible with the UN system but rather

58. Ivan Kovalenko, ed. Problems of Security in the Asian Pacific Region (New Delhi, 1987), p. 110.

complement it.

- not be opposed to international security but instead contribute to world peace,
- not be an instrument of domination but based on full equality and mutual benefit,
- not be imposed on the Asian states but evolved through discussion and joint efforts of all of them.
- not be based on any alien concepts but on the principles of panchsheel and Bandung, universally accepted by the Asian states.
- not be achieved in near future but is a "long term task" requiring "struggle".

Despite all clarifications, the Soviet Union was not quite able to convince the world even the Asian states about her good intentions or the usefulness of the plan. Hence the plan never really took off.

CHAPTER - IV

GORBACHEV'S ASIA-PACIFIC PLAN

Gorbachev was not the first Soviet leader to talk about Asia-Pacific. Elsewhere we have already discussed some early Soviet proposals about the region¹. When Gorbachev came to the helm of affairs in Soviet Union, there was a new urgency and compulsion due to which he was obliged to revise and amend some of the postulates and priorities of the Soviet foreign policy and to focus his attention on Asia-Pacific. In short these compulsions were -

-Strategic - fierce and costly arms race with the US; continued US hegemony and Soviet isolation in the Asia - Pacific and naval arms build up

Economic - Asia - Pacific economy was witnessing a boom and the region had become the hub of world economic activity. Japan has emerged as an economic and technological super power.

Domestic - Soviet economy was showing signs of stagnation and technology was becoming outdated. The country needed a respite from arms race and US, Western and Japanese financial and technological assistance for economic reforms

¹ See Chapter II

The above points along with other objectives behind the plan, like the desire for Sino-Soviet rapproachment will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

STRATEGIC SCENARIO

Infact Asia - Pacific has traditionally been an area of US interest and involvement: its colony in the Philippines; the inter-war rivalry with Japan; post war alliances in the region (SEATO, ANZUS, ANZUK, military pact with Japan etc) with a view to 'contain and "roll back" communism; and the dabbling and humiliation in Indo - China.

The defeat in Indo-China did not deter the United States. Instead President Ford after his December 1975 visit to China declared his 'Pacific Doctrine' in Honolulu. Its main points were

- maintainance of an equilibrium in the Pacific and ensuring the stability and security of the states of the region,
- no withdrawal from Asia to a "Fortress America",
- US, China, Japan and the Soviet Union were all

Pacific powers with security concerns that intersect Asia. But he talked about cooperation between the first three only.²

However the Vietnamese experience made United States wiser. Thus the Pacific doctrines propounded by various US Presidents - Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan - insisted upon two things

- no direct military intervention in the affairs of the countries of the region
- asking Japan and other allies in the region to share some of the military burden.³

The basic objective behind Washington's concept of 'Pacific Community' has been the formation of a politico-military and economic grouping in the Pacific to counter-balance the Soviet Union. Thus Zbigniew Brezinski proposed a Pacific Naval Triangle consisting of Japan, Indonesia and Australia and a system of

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2. Sudershan Chawla and D.R. Sardesai, ed. Changing Patterns of Security + Stability in Asia (New York, 1980) p. 72.
 3. Ivan Kovalenko (ed), Problems of Security in Asia Pacific Region : A Study (New Delhi, 1987), p. 9.

interrelationship among groupings in Asia Pacific region. in particular between the ASEAN and the ANZUS. He also opined that Japan must come forward to assume the main burden of responsibility for the preservation of the Free Enterprize system.⁴

Ronald Reagan pursued the goal of a Pacific Community with renewed zeal and even appointed an Ambassador for Asia and Pacific (Richard Fairbanks was the first appointee) .US Committee for Economic Cooperation with Pacific Countries was established in Sept. 1984.⁵

The American strategy of isolating Soviet Union in Asia Pacific was fairly successful. It was able to establish close strategic and economic ties with most of the countries of East and South East Asia - Japan,

4. Z. Brezenski; "The Fragile Blossom: Crisis and Change in Japan," (New York, 1972), see passim

5. Kovalenko, n. 3, p. 12.

South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand and the ASEAN nations. We have already mentioned the various anti Soviet alliances like ANZUS, SEATO, ANZUK etc. The Sino-American relations acquired new dimension with the growing strategic parallelism between Washington and Beijing. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan signed in 1978 had a prominent "anti hegemony clause" aimed at Soviet Union. The "Seoul-Tokyo Washington" axis was already there and an 'Eastern NATO' was established for all practical purposes, but in name.

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and its support for the Vietnamese involvement in Kampuchea did not exactly make it popular with most of the Asian countries. In fact it was forced into a defensive corner.

The American military presence in the region also grew. The Western and pro-US sources observe that the US Pacific fleet now shadows a Soviet fleet that has grown by nearly a third since the mid-1970's to include 51 surface combatants, 115 submarines and about 100 supersonic backfire bombers, and carry anti-ship

missiles. The US navy is composed of 51 submarines and 101 surface ships including 6 aircraft carriers. Its capability has been further enhanced at the Aleutian islands which are situated between Alaska and the Soviet Union. The United States, additionally, has 24 military bases and 35, 1000 troops stationed in Japan, South Korea and Philippines.⁶

The United States and the Soviet Union maintain, as we know, huge strategic nuclear potentials (totalling over 4,500 delivery vehicles and upto 25,000 warheads; according to official Soviet sources the US has about 15,000 warheads and the Soviet Union about 10,000). A part of these weapons (according to Soviet sources. about 20 percent of the delivery vehicles and 25 percent of the nuclear warheads) are deployed in the Asia Pacific region.⁸

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6. O.N. Mehrotra, "Soviet Asia-Pacific Policy" Strategic Analysis (IDSA, New Delhi), vol. XII, no. 6, Sept, 1988, p. 579.
 7. Vyacheslav Bunin, "Disarmament: Asia Pacific Region, (Moscow, 1988), p. 11.
 8. Ibid.

Situation in the South and West Asia and the Indian Ocean is no less grim. In 1980 the USA signed a number of agreements on leasing bases in Turkey, Kenya, Oman, Somalia and Pakistan.

The United States maintains a formidable presence in the Indian Ocean. The base at Diego Garcia has been further strengthened. A task force of nearly 20 ships is now in Indian Ocean on a permanent basis. It includes two aircraft carriers, several missile cruisers more than a dozen destroyers, several nuclear powered sub-marines, a number of support vessels and various landing ships and crafts.⁹

On January 1, 1983 the Reagan administration announced the formation of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) to keep the entire situation in the Western part of the Asia Pacific region under control. It consists of 300,000 officers and men and 700 aircraft. It has been created to ensure effective use of the Rapid Deployment force (RDF) over an area covering 19 countries of Asia and East Africa.¹⁰

10. Ibid.

9. For the Security of Asia (Moscow 1988), p. 16.

It was the realization of this grim scenario, particularly the ever present threat of nuclear war, that set Gorbachev on a thinking process. And delivering the Political Report of the Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress, he could declare "The time has come to have a thorough understanding of the harsh realities of our day: the nuclear weapon harbour a hurricane with the potential of sweeping the human race from the face of the earth."

He further said "the modern world has become much too small and fragil for wars and a policy of force

He draws certain conclusions

- that it is no longer possible to win an arms race or nuclear war for that matter
- that the present level of the balance of the nuclear capabilities of the opposite sides is much too high
- that in the present situation there is no alternative to cooperation and interaction between all countries.

Then he talks about the unilateral steps taken by the Soviet Union "we put a moratorium on the deploy-

ment of medium range missiles in Europe, reduced the number of these missiles and stopped all nuclear tests."¹¹

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

However strategic aspect is only one of the factors behind Gorbachev's new proposal. His genius lay in realizing the economic significance of the region.

Thus the 1970s witnessed a dramatic increase in the importance of the Pacific region in the economy of the capitalist world. The region became a zone of intense economic activity overtaking the countries of Atlantic in many areas. Already over 55 percent of the capitalist world's industrial production takes place in the area. The region's contribution to the annual growth of the capitalist industrial production is even more remarkable-about 60 percent. The GNP of the five developed capitalist countries of the region-US, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand-is 1.7 times as high

11. Soviet Review, vol. XXIII, no. 10, March 3, 1986.

as that of the Common Market. In some important indices of industrial production the Pacific basin countries have reached leading positions. In the early 80s the region produced 67 percent of all automobiles, over 70 percent of all ships and synthetic fibre, about 60 percent of all plastics and synthetic resins, over 50 percent of all aluminium, 43 percent of all steel and 77 percent of all TV sets produced in the capitalist world.¹²

If the capitalist countries of the region were witnessing a boom, the Soviet economy was stagnating. According to official statistics the national income during the Ninth Five Year Plan (1971-1975) was increasing at a relatively satisfactory rate of 5.1 percent. But by the time of the Eleventh Five Year Plan the growth of national income came down to 3.2 percent. The production of consumer goods was also not improving quantitatively as also qualitatively.¹³ Except in the fields

12. Ivan Kovalenko. Problems of Security in the Asia Pacific Region: A Study, New Delhi 1987, p. 2.

13. V.D. Chopra, Mikhail Gorbachev's New Thinking, Asia Pacific : A Critical Assessment, (New Delhi, 1988), pp. 162-63.

of military and space technology Soviet Union was lagging behind the US, the west, Japan and even some of the 'newly industrialised' countries like South Korea, and this gap was increasing.

The policy of Perestroika was thus initiated with the primary objective of economic rejuvenation. Apart from the internal reforms, Gorbachev realised that a relaxed international environment, easing of East West relations and reducing Soviet commitments in various parts of the world (Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Angola, Nicaragua etc) were the necessary steps to create the conditions and spare the resources for the economic restructuring.¹⁴ Thus he formulated a three pronged foreign policy.

- detente with the United States.
- the idea of "Common European Home"
- Asia-Pacific Security.

In fact these three goals are to be pursued

14. Ibid.

together as integral to an "all embracing international security system."

SOME EARLY REFERENCES ABOUT ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY

Gorbachev made first reference to this new concept at a Moscow banquet in honour of visiting Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 1985, where he felt that "In Asia, the problems of peace and security are today no less and in some areas even more painful and acute than in Europe." He referred to a number of initiatives by socialist and non-aligned states in respect of Asian Security as also to Europe's experience and then posed the question whether it was not advisable to think of a comprehensive common approach to the problem of security in Asia and a possible pooling of efforts by Asian States in that direction. He hinted at the possibility of a Helsinki-type conference, the path to which according to him was not "smooth and even"¹⁵ Bilateral and multilateral consultations could in his view lead to the convocation of an "all Asian forum for an exchange of opinions and joint search for constructive solutions."¹⁶ The cynics pointed out that the new Soviet

15. Pravda, 22 May 1985.

16. Ibid.

leader was reviving the defunct Brezhnev proposals of 1969. How wrong they were was proved later on.

The Soviet Government statement on "Safeguarding Peace, Security, Good Neighbourliness and trust in the Asia Pacific Region" (April 23, 1986) proposed to start a wide exchange of opinion among all the countries concerned in that part of the world, on ways of establishing, equitable, mutually beneficial and stable all round cooperation. It had detailed proposals on curbing the arms race and facilitating the search for ways to improve international climate. It criticised the US and its local allies for worsening situation in the region and then appealed for equitable cooperation open to all, rather than confrontation among states. It also called for bilateral and multilateral consultation to solve problems and for convening an all Asia forum for constructive solutions.¹⁷

In the Political Report to the 27th CPSU Congress Gorbachev acknowledged that "The significance of Asian and Pacific direction is growing". He appealed for

17. Mikhail Shmelyov, Soviet Peace Initiatives: 1946-1987 (New Delhi, 1987), pp. 111-13.

coordination and "pooling of efforts" for "political settlements of painful problems." He also talked about "collective quests for ways of defusing conflict situations."¹⁸

CONTEXT OF THE VLADIVOSTOK PROPOSAL

Before we begin a detailed discussion on the Vladivostok proposals it is only proper to take into account the setting and the context in which these proposals were made.

We have already discussed the grim military-strategic scenario in the world in general and the Asia-Pacific region in particular. But these were positive signs as well. Since the beginning of the eighties there were some encouraging developments, which could have prompted Gorbachev to come out with the new proposals.

After the 1975 Helsinki Accord, the situation in Europe was slowly improving. Soviet Union has already put a moratorium on deployment of medium range missiles in Europe and stopped all nuclear tests. With these measures the prospects for arms limitation and

18. Soviet Review, vol.XXIII, no.10, 3 March 1986, p.75.

disarmament were becoming bright and there was talk of a US-Soviet summit meeting. In South East Asia too, there were some encouraging signs. Indonesia was increasingly adopting an independent foreign policy stance and was championing the cause of ZOPFAN in the region.

In Philippines after the fall of Marcos and the rise of anti American, nationalist sentiments, the future of American military bases at Subic Bay and Clark has become uncertain.

Similarly in the south Pacific too anti-nuclear sentiments were on rise. At the 14th Meeting of South Pacific Forum held at Canberra in 1983, the Australian Labour Government of Prime Minister Hawke proposed a treaty declaring South Pacific as a nuclear-free-zone. Finally the treaty of Rarotonga was agreed upon on August 6, 1985. In New Zealand the Government of Prime Minister Dawid Lange went a step further and closed all its ports to US warships carrying nuclear weapons or equipped with nuclear launchers. The US responded by refusing access to military information and suspending joint military exercises. The fate of ANZUS alliance was

thus jeopardised. The Soviet Union was also able to sign a fishing agreement with Kiribati in 1985.¹⁹

The first hint about the possibility of improvement in Sino-Soviet relations came in 1982. It was in 1982 that China gave up its "united front against Soviet hegemonism" thesis and adopted the concept of "independent foreign policy" at the 12th Congress of the CPC. It was also the year 1982 when Brezhnev spoke about the desire for improving relations with China at Tashkent. And thus began direct talks to resolve disputes and normalise relations between the two countries. Economic, technological and cultural exchanges also increased. In 1985 Moscow agreed to refurbish 17 factories built with Soviet aid in the 1950s; construct seven new major projects; and increase Sino-Soviet trade tenfold by 1990 to \$ 3.2 billion a year.²⁰

19. K.P. Mishra, "South Pacific : Emerging Trends" World Focus (New Delhi) vol. 10, no. 2, Feb. 1989, pp. 7-9.

20. Sujit Dutta, "Sino-Soviet Relations: Recent Trends" Strategic Analysis, vol. XII, no. 9, December 1988.

Deng cited "three obstacles to complete normalisation of relations

- Soviet military build-up along the Sino-Soviet border, including Mongolia,
- The Soviet military presence in Afghanistan,
- Soviet support for Vietnamese military presence in Kampuchea.

Gorbachev could also have taken note of the Sino-American differences over Taiwan and other world issues. China was also not happy with the amount of financial and technological help the US and the West were providing.

One more thing which we must understand before discussing the proposals is the economic importance of the Far East region in Soviet economy, Soviet territory east of the Urals contains some 60 percent of the Soviet Union's oil and gas and 80 percent of its fuel reserves and hydro electric potential' and furthermore is the main (and still largely unexploited) source of gold diamond and other hard currency earning minerals.²¹ Developing these resources is essential to Gorbachev's overall economic strategy of forging regional economic links

21. - The Economist (London) vol. 295, no. 7395, 25-31 May 1985.

and modernising Soviet industry.

THE VLADIVOSTOK PROPOSALS

It was with these considerations in mind that Gorbachev, speaking at the Far Eastern city of Vladivostok, came out with a set of comprehensive and well thought proposals.²² One thing must be understood very clearly, at the outset that unlike Brezhnev, Gorbachev does not think of Asia Pacific region in isolation or in opposition to any other region or countries. On the contrary the idea is of integrating the Asia Pacific region into the general process of setting up of comprehensive system of international security covering military, political and other aspects. Thus before discussing the Asia Pacific security Gorbachev issues a call "to end the arms race, stop nuclear madness and eliminate nuclear weapons and to search persistently for a political settlement to regional conflicts".

Gorbachev talks about Soviet interest and stakes in Asia. He is emphatic that developments in this part of the world "will largely determine the destinies of

22. Pravda, 30 July 1986, The English version reproduced "in Soviet Review, vol. XXIII, no. 31, 7 Aug. 1986 see passim.

the whole world". He also mentions the success of socialism and the spread of the concept of non-alignment in the region.

The countries of the region are faced with multifarious and complex problems "inherited from the colonial past and emerging out of contradictions of the present day development". Poverty, illeteracy and backwardness are some of these problems. The capitalist countries indulge in economic blackmail, intrigues and interference in internal affairs of these. These under-developed countries are forced to divert their scarce resources away from development to arms race and mulitarisisation.

Gorbachev then clarifies "our interest is not a claim to priviledges and a special position Our interest is in the pooling of efforts and cooperation We are in favour of building together new, fair relations in Asia and Pacific." "The integration of the world economy" Gorbachev maintains" makes us seek accord and open links between states in the region."

He expresses his apprehension about the growing militarisation of the Pacific Ocean; the regional

— conflicts in the area; the militarised triangle of Washington, Tokyo and Seoul; deployment of nuclear weapons delivery vehicles and nuclear warheads in the Korean peninsula and the nuclear weapon delivery vehicles on Japanese territory.

Regarding measures for establishing international security and peaceful cooperation in Asia-Pacific Gorbachev lays special emphasis on bilateralism. Apart from the socialist states, he talks about improving relations with almost every country of the region. However he lays special emphasis on relations with China, Japan and United States.

About China, he says "we share the world's longest land border and for this reason alone we, our children and grand-children are destined to live near each other "for ever and ever History has entrusted the Soviet and the Chinese peoples with extremely responsible mission. Much in international development depends upon these two major socialist states."

He praises China's modernisation programme and

says that since the Soviet Union too had similar goals, the two states can cooperate and share their experiences particularly in the economic field. Some specific projects of bilateral cooperation, according to him could be:

- use of Amur river's rich resources for mutual benefit and in building water management projects,
- building of a railway connecting the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China with Soviet Kazakhstan (as proposed by China)
- exchanges in the sphere of culture and education.
- exchanges in space exploration.

However the most bold announcement made by Gorbachev was that "the official border could pass along the main ship channel" The acceptance of Thalweg principle was a major departure from the earlier Soviet position and hence a big concession.

Taking note of improvement in Sino-Soviet relations in the recent years Gorbachev declares that "the Soviet Union is prepared - at any time and at any level - to enter into discussion with China on additional measures for establishing an atmosphere of good-neighbourliness."

Gorbachev makes no effort to conceal his admiration for Japan "a power of foremost importance" which has "achieved outstanding success in industry, trade, education, science and technology". He commends the "self-discipline and energy of the Japanese people" and the "three non-nuclear principles" followed by the country, as factors behind the success. He further stresses the need for "profound cooperation" with Japan "on a sound and realistic basis and in a calm atmosphere free from problems of the past." He then appeals for

- joint ventures in regions not far from each other
- long term cooperation in investigation and comprehensive use of ocean resources, and
- programme for peaceful study and utilisation of outer space.

He urged Japan to employ its remarkable "economic diplomacy" to serve Soviet Japanese cooperation.

However it is Gorbachev's heart-warming references of United States "our next door neighbour" which is "a great pacific power" having "important and legitimate economic and political interest in the region" which

prove him to a pragmatic and enlightened statesman of the first rate. He realises that "without United States participation it is not possible to resolve the problem of security and cooperation in the Pacific Ocean". Then he calls for "peaceful good neighbourly, equitable relations and mutually beneficial cooperation" with the United States. He also appeals for "effective joint solutions" to reduce and eliminate arms according to the "principle of equal security" and to prevent their spread into outer space. He regrets that the United States does not show the same eagerness.

Regarding Soviet position on arms race he says "we are not doing anything and shall not do anything over and above the level that corresponds to the minimal requirements of our own defence, and the defence of our friends and allies" He prefers elimination of the medium range missiles from Europe. They should not be moved from Europe to Asia. He comes out in favour of

- disbanding the military groupings
- removing the military bases from Asia and Pacific
- withdrawing troops from territories of other countries

Gorbachev is quite clear that Soviet views about security in the region did not come out of "thin air", and "take account of the past and the modern times". In this connection he refers to the principles of Panchsheel and of Bandung, the 1954 Geneva meet on Indochina and the Tashkent agreement between India and Pakistan.

He shows willingness to improve relations with ASEAN and participate in "a Pacific economic cooperation" and issues a call for establishing "a new world economic order".

Gorbachev also proposes a Helsinki type of conference to be held at Hiroshima, and attended by all countries gravitating towards the ocean, to deal with the problems of security and cooperation in the region.

Gorbachev gives out a five point programme to enhance Asia-Pacific security --

- (a) setting regional conflicts notably in Afganistan and Kampuchea. For the latter he calls for improvement in relations between China and Vietnam as also between Indochina and ASEAN.
- (b) blocking proliferation and build up of nuclear

weapons in the region. He also comes out in favour of nuclear free zones in South Pacific, Korean peninsula and South East Asia.

- (c) initiating talks on reduction of activity of naval forces in the Pacific with special reference to nuclear ships and resuming talks on turning the Indian Ocean into a peace zone. He also proposes that if the US gave up its military bases in Philippines, Soviet Union would reciprocate.
- (d) radically reducing the armed and conventional armaments in Asia to limits of reasonable sufficiency and in this connection the Soviet Union is willing to negotiate with China.
- (e) starting practical discussion on confidence building measures as well as non use of force. In this connection he talks about the security of the sea lanes and prevention of international terrorism.

Gorbachev also announces that the Soviet Union would withdraw six regiments from Afganistan and as soon as a political settlement is reached the rest of the forces would also be withdrawn.

Thus we see how Gorbachev addressed all the "three obstacles" put forward by Deng Xio Peng.

During his visit to India in Nov. 1986, Gorbachev

gave out some more details of Asian security, with special emphasis on Indian Ocean.²³

GORBACHEV'S INTERVIEW TO MERDEKA

In an interview to the Indonesian newspaper 'Merdeka' on July 21, 1987, Gorbachev reiterated the Vladivostok proposals and came out with some new ones.²⁴

Thus responding to American criticism and demands of many Asian countries Gorbachev agreed to eliminate all medium and short range missiles from Europe as well as from Asia.

Gorbachev once more deliberates on measures to reduce the danger of war especially nuclear war in the region and suggests following measures.

- no increase in the nuclear capable aircrafts in the region
- reducing the activity of naval fleets in the Pacific and restricting the area where naval vessels carrying nuclear weapons could move.
- turning Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and ensuring the safety of air traffic and sea lanes.
- moratorium on all nuclear tests and prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

23. Times of India, 27 November, 1986.

24. Soviet Review, vol XXIV, no.30, 30 July, 1987

Gorbachev presents the Indo-Soviet relations as a model to the world.

Gorbachev also refers to the encouraging signs in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. He commends the policy of national reconciliation adopted by the governments of these countries and appeals for political instead of military solution.²⁵

EVALUATION

The Vladivostok proposals, were interpreted differently in various countries and by various analysts and commentators.

Most Western and Japanese commentators point out ulterior motives behind it. They interpret the Soviet moves as following

- a tactical stance to guarantee peace in the region and in the meantime modernise Soviet economy,
- a "drive for a favourable balance of power" to reverse the "decline of Soviet influence in Asia" and

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25. Ibid.

- a move to recover from the Sino-Soviet rift and "relieve the pressure on Moscow's eastern flank"²⁶

Robert A. Manning, a former diplomatic correspondent for US News and World Report, also maintains that the proposals aim at "creating a peaceful international environment that will enable Gorbachev to carry out his 'perestroika' (restructuring), to maximise the resource available for domestic economic modernisation and to link the Soviet economy to that of the Pacific Basin." Manning feels that Western trade, financial assistance and technological know how is essential for the modernisation of Soviet economy. In this connection he refers to "Moscow's efforts to join GATT; its hints of interest in joining the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and its recent attainment of observer status in the Asian Development Bank and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference."²⁷

Manning also talks of "a perception that three

26. Richard Nation, "Moscow's New Track" Far Eastern Economic Review 14 August 1986.

27. Robert A. Manning, "Mosocow's Pacific Future: Gorbachev Rediscovered Asia", World Policy Journal, vol. 5, no. 1 Winter 1987-88. pp 56-57

decades of Soviet behaviour in Asia, Africa and Latin America have yielded more costs than benefits and a realization that Soviet adventurism undermined detente in the 1970s..... Moscow discovered at a great cost-- particularly in Asia --that military prowess does not necessarily translated into political influence, and can infact be expensive, counterproductive and polarizing".

He terms the Vladivostok proposals "Gorbachev charm offensive" and contends they aim to "exacerbate different threat perception among regional US allies and to loosen their ties to washington -- and particularly, to weaken the US-China-Japan defacto entente"²⁸

Manning also highlights the reasons why Gorbachev close Vladivostok to launch his plan.

He says "The Siberian venue was itself a telling symbol of three major points : the burgeoning economic importance of Soviet Far East; Moscow's quest for legitimacy as a political and economic participant in

28. Ibid.

the Pacific Basin; and elevation of Asia Pacific region to prime strategic importance right behind -- and strategically linked to -- Europe." Manning also talks about the Soviet desire to harness Siberian wealth with Japanese help. Soviet Union is also trying to exploit the anti-nuclear sentiments in the South-Pacific.²⁹

Some of the charges against the Vladivostok plan do not sound very convincing since Gorbachev has himself admitted of such motives. Thus at Vladivostok he makes reference of the rich mineral and other resources of the region and then complains that the "Far East economy has begun to show slower growth rate than the national economy as a whole, though it would seem that it should be the other way round."

Gorbachev also admits "Yes we stand to gain from disarmament.... just as all peoples whose governments spend billions on arms race stand to gain from disarmament" But the main concern according to him is the "future of mankind."

29. Ibid.

There is a body of opinion, sympathetic to Gorbachev, which sees in his plan an effort

- to accelerate the Social and economic development of Siberia
- to lessen confrontation and ensure international security and peaceful cooperation
- to promote practical bilateral relations between the USSR and the countries of the region.³⁰

Zafar Imam takes a similar stand and points out "four major objectives" behind the Soviet proposals.

- stop nuclear arms race and confrontation
- settle regional conflicts in Kampuchea and Korea.
- promote harmonious bilateral relations with all states
- promote such a conducive international environment in the region to draw Japan and even China into plans of industrialisation of the Soviet Far East.

"The central goal", according to him "is the institutionalisation of peace and security in Asia as a whole on the pattern of Helsinki accord in Europe" He emphasises the Soviet intention to settle the various conflicts through political (rather than military) means and to struck a "balance of interest" (of all states

30. Genrikh Apalin "The Peace Programme for Asia and the Pacific", International Affairs, no. 2, Feb. 1987. p. 68

of the region) as the framework of Soviet policy in Asia Pacific.³¹

It is interesting to quote here from Gorbachev's famous book *Perestroika*. Regarding criticism of his proposals he says "what a clamour was raised over my speech at Vladivostok. How many insinuations were made regarding the Soviet Union's decision to "tackle" the Pacific and to establish Soviet hegemony there and of course, to infringe upon US interests. But we are already used to such "caveman-like" response to our initiative" He repeats the points made at Vladivostok and in his Merdeka interview.³²

in Indonesian to quote from Gorbachev's
GORBACHEV'S KRASNOYARSK PROPOSALS

In the two years since the Vladvostok speech important changes took place at the world stage -

31. V.D. Chopra, ed. Mikhail Gorbachev's New Thinking: Asia Pacific: A Critical Assessment (New Delhi 1988) pp. 174-175.

1988) pp. 174-175.
32. Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking For Our Country And the World (London, 1987) pp. 180-83.

- The INF agreement was signed (1987) and ratified at the Moscow Summit (1988). According to it all short and medium range missiles stationed in Europe and Asia by the superpowers will be removed.
- Accords in Afghanistan were signed (April 1988) facilitating the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.
- In Kampuchea talks continued between the two parties and Vietnam pledged to withdraw 50,000 soldiers by the end of 1988.
- Iran-Iraq war ended and there was movement in solution of Palestinian question also.

The time was ripe and Gorbachev once again chose a Siberian city, Krasnoyarsk, to assess the developments in the Asia-Pacific since the Vladivostok proposals and make some fresh proposals.³³ Gorbachev refers to the colossal potential of "Asia and the basin of two great oceans" and reiterates that "the Soviet Union

33. "Mikhail Gorbachev's Speech in Krasnoyarsk," Strategic Digest, vol. XVIII, no. 12, December 1988, pp. 1561-76, Reproduced from Moscow News, Supplement to issue no. 39 (3339) 25 September 1988.

does not look for privileges and benefits to the detriment of others" and that security must be secured not military but "political and economic means"

He takes note of the positive developments in the region : the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, positive developments on Kampuchea particularly the Jakarta informal talks, and the end of Iran-Iraq war. He expresses satisfaction that "the US is gaining in strength.

He calls for full normalisation of relations with China and for a Soviet-Chinese summit. He also talks about the Soviet-Australia summit and improvement in Soviet relations with ASEAN states.

Gorbachev also takes note of the improvement in Soviet Japanese relations : his meeting with Japanese businessman and the former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, and the revival of Japanese business community's interest in Soviet Union.

At Krasnoyarsk Gorbachev came out with a seven point programme

1. The Soviet Union will not increase its nuclear weapons in the Asia Pacific region and calls on the United States and other nuclear powers to freeze their deployments there.

Unlike in the past, this time, apart from US Gorbachev also appeals to the other nuclear powers in the region, which means France and above all China, not to increase their nuclear weapons in the region. We must remember that India at the UNSSOD III in June 1988 also demanded that other nuclear powers must also be brought in for disarmament negotiations. Indian sensitivity to Chinese nuclear arsenal is well known.³⁴

Two of the proposals made at Krasnoyarsk relate to naval arms limitations.

- 2) Major naval powers in the region are invited to hold talks on the non increase of naval forces.
- 3) The Soviet Union proposes multilateral talks on lowering confrontation at points where the coasts of China, Japan, North and South Korea

34. C. Raja Mohan, "Gorbachev and Asian Security Strategic Analysis vol. XII, no. 9, December 1988, pp. 941-42.

and the Soviet Union converge. The talks would focus on reducing the strength and activity of those countries air and naval forces.

Gorbachev's extra emphasis on naval arms limitation is understandable since the Pacific has become a major arena of naval confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The situation is complicated by the expanding naval forces of China and Japan. Unlike in Europe where the East-West confrontation is structured around land and air forces, the confrontation in Asia Pacific has powerful naval element in it.³⁵

But given the traditional American emphasis on naval power, it is unlikely that progress can be achieved in the short term on limiting the naval arms race. Moreover the wide asymmetries in the naval capabilities of different powers in the region would make a naval freeze unacceptable to the emerging naval powers in the region.

- 4) The Soviet navy will stop using the Cam Ranh Bay for its fleet if the United States scraps

35.

Ibid.

its bases in the Philippines.

Gorbachev had made this offer at Vladivostok also, without naming its Cam Ranh Bay bases about which Robert A. Manning said that Gorbachev seeks to establish the perception of moral equivalence between the super powers. The tactics has boosted Moscow's standing in key states such as Philippines and Indonesia and in the South Pacific."³⁶ According to most Western analysts the Soviet offer is not reasonable since the Soviet bases in Vietnam have never been comparable in strength to the American military presence in Philippines.

- 5) Measures should be taken to prevent incidents in Asia-Pacific seas and airspace. These could be based on accords already worked out between the Soviet Union and Britain, and United States and Japan.

This one of the proposal about which an accord may come about in a few years.

36, Robert A. Manning "Moscow's Pacific Future : Gorbachev Rediscovered Asia" World Policy Journal vol. 5, no. 1 Winter 1987-1988. p 69

- 6) The Soviet Union proposes that an international Conference on making the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace be held by 1990.

We know that this proposal has been consistently championed by India and the NAM. The UN also passed a resolution to that effect in 1971. Gorbachev might have taken note of these facts.

- 7) A negotiating mechanism should be created for talks on Asia Pacific security. The discussion could be started between the USSR, China and the United States as permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The reference to the Security Council members only was naturally resented by important regional powers like Indonesia, Vietnam and India, who see themselves as independent players in the region. Later Moscow sought to allay New Delhi's apprehensions on this score.³⁷

Gorbachev proposed to convert the radar complex at Krasnoyarsk into an international centre for cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space. This in reply to the American allegation

37. Sumit Chakravarty, "Strengthening Asia Pacific Security Dynamics of Sino-Soviet Japanese Interaction", Mainstream vol. XXVII, no. 25, 18 March 1989, p. 24.

that the radar complex violated the 1972 ABM treaty.

Gorbachev also touched upon such diverse subjects as ecological pollution, economic cooperation, developing foreign tourism and regional centre in Asia-Pacific for cultural contacts among states. He announced a number of financial concessions and economic measures to boost the Far East economy and candidly expressed a desire for the modern development of Siberia and the Far East. He made a fervent appeal for "beautiful fabric of economic, scientific, technological cultural, ecological and other relations in that part of Asia.

POST-KRASNOYARSK SCENE

Sino-Soviet Relations-

The Sino-Soviet relations have considerably improved over the years. The INF Treaty which includes dismantling all medium and short range missiles from Asian part of Soviet Union has improved Gorbachev's credibility in China. The two sides have agreed to pull back as many as a million troops from both side of the border, in the biggest arms limitation exercise ever. Of the "three obstacles : Soviet Union has agreed to withdraw three quarters of its troops from

Mongolia; after the Geneva Accords, Soviet troops have withdrawn from Afghanistan and there is greater understanding on the two sides of each other's position on Kampuchea, though that remains the only problem area.³⁸

But China has not blocked Hun-Sen--Sinhok talks (the Jakarta Informal Talks) and has also initiated Foreign minister level talks with Vietnam. On the disputed Sino-Soviet border, most of the territory has already been demarcated. In this setting Gorbachev visited China in mid May. Gorbachev termed his visit as watershed event while Deng declared that thirty years of estrangement and hostility had come to an end and the relations between the two countries were normalised.³⁹

The Sino-Soviet rapprochement has been generally hailed as conducive to peace and stability in Asia. Its impact can be felt in each part of Asia-in Korea,

38. Sumit Chakravarty "Strengthening Asia Pacific Security: Dynamics of Sino-Soviet-Japanese Interaction" Mainstream, vol. XXVII, no. 25, 18 March 1989, p. 25.

39. Times of India, 18 May 1989.

Indo-China (Kampuchea), Afghanistan and ofcourse on Indo-Pak and above all Sino Indian relations. About the latter, Soviet commentator Alexander Bovin says "The stabilisation of relations in the Delhi-Beijing-Moscow triangle will largely influence Asian and world politics."⁴⁰

SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATION

The Soviet-Japanese relations since the Second World War have been mostly cold and some times hostile mainly due to the US-Japanese close strategic-economic collaboration. After coming to power of Nakasone in Japan and Gorbachev in Soviet Union the matters are changing . In past three years Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Sheverdnadze has twice visited Japan. The Soviet Union has in return hosted many Japanese business delegations and politicians like Takako Doi, Chairman of Japanese Socialist Party, Eitaro Itoyama, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of

40. Izvestia, 8 Feb 1989.

Representative and former Prime Minister Nakasone.

Zhang Yaohua writing in Beijing review feels that improved Soviet-Japanese relations would be in the interest of both. While Soviet Union would get Japanese aid, trade and technology to modernise her economy (particularly the Far East) and increase her influence in the region, Japan's international position as "a major power" would get a boost. Yaohua maintains that both the sides are using the issue of Northern Territories (or the Kurile Islands) as bargaining chip. Soviet Union wants Japanese economic help and Japan wants the Kuriles back. Soviets have already expressed their desire to negotiate the matter.⁴¹



The Soviet-Japanese trade reached US \$ 6 billion mark in 1988 while there is a proposal for joint research in 21 most advanced scientific branches⁴² Gorbachev's Tokyo visit can materialise in near future leading to full normalisation. However both the countries are

41. Zhang Yaohua, "Moscow's New Japan Policy" "Main-stream", vol. XXVII, no. 34, 20 May 1989, pp. 31-32.

42. Ibid.

still apprehensive of each other's motives. At Krasnoyarsk Gorbachev expressed his concern over growing Japanese military expenditure. He said "One percent of the Gross National Product spent for military purposes looks somewhat modest," but pointed out that given Japan's "real weight with the country's growing economic weight "this one percent provokes serious thoughts, already now". But despite all this the relations are improving.

Soviet Union in South East Asia and South Pacific

Since Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, Moscow has made sustained effort to improve relations with ASEAN nations. It has revised its earlier thesis that ASEAN anti-Soviet. Countries like Indonesia are no more called "lackey's of imperialism. In March 1987, Sheverdnadze visited Thailand, Indonesia and Australia, apart from the Indo-China states. Senior officials from Thailand and Indonesia and the Malaysian and Australian prime ministers have visited Moscow. The Soviet withdrawal from Afganistan, the INF Treaty and its sincere efforts in Kampuchea have boosted its image in the region⁴³. The Soviet ASEAN trade is still limited. It amounted to a meagre \$ 487 millions in 1986 compared

43. O.N. Mehrotra, Soviet Asia-Pacific Policy Strategic Analysis, vol. XII, no. 6, September 1988, pp. 583-84.

to 24 billion between ASEAN and the United States⁴⁴.

As we already discussed elsewhere, the Soviets have praised the anti nuclear stand of the South Pacific countries (New Zealand Australia etc.) and backed South Pacific Forum's demand for a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treat in the region. On December 15, 1987 it signed protocols 2 and 3 of the Treaty of Rarotonga. Moscow also established diplomatic relations with Vanuati and signed fishing agreements with Kiribati and Tonga.⁴⁵

44, The Economist, vol. 304, no. 7534, 5 December 1987.

45. K.P. Misra "South Pacific: Emerging Trends" World Focus, vol. 10, no. 2, February 1989, pp. 7-9.

CONCLUSION

National Security has been a much debated and contested concept. In actual international practice the ruling elites decide the national security policies in the light of national interest as they perceive it. Thus national security policies depend upon the subjective assessment of a group of persons who by no means can be called infallible. This makes national security a somewhat vague and dangerous concept. Even a cursory look at history will prove that rulers have justified outrightly expansionist policies as essential to the security of the state. Relating national security to core values of a state does not decrease the vagueness of the concept, since the core values are again determined to a large extent by the rulers.

The above framework of national security has given it a competitive and confrontationist connotation since states are pitted against each other in terms of their security interest. Security of one state means insecurity of the other. Apart from this negative, military interpretation of the term, it can also be defined in positive manner. Thus 'cooperation' and

'collaboration' have been recognised as more reliable means of ensuring national security. This realization is particularly relevant in present day world, imperilled by the threat of nuclear annihilation.

Marxism-Leninism takes an expansive view of national security interpreting it in terms of socio-political and particularly economic context. Real security can only be possible in a socialist world, where there are no antagonistic class contradictions, no exploitation of man by man or nation by nation and hence no threat of war. Complete peace and harmony will prevail. Thus the ultimate goal is establishment of socialist system in the whole world. It was with this ideological framework that Bolsheviks came to power. But the compulsions of the time (the civil war and hostile international environment) compelled them to adopt the policy of "peaceful co-existence" and "socialism in one country".

After the Second World War the Soviet Union emerged as one of the two super powers. It has helped socialist revolutions in various parts of the world. But in view of the cold war and heightened international tension, the Soviets have time and again re-emphasised

the concept of 'peaceful co-existence'.

Like any other state the Soviet Union has also been in 'quest of security'. That has been the primary focus of its foreign policy whether in Asia or any other part of the world.

Asia is the largest continent in the world both in terms of territory and population. If we add the countries of Pacific, then the expression becomes somewhat indefinable and very expansive. The states in Asia and the Pacific are rich in natural and labour resources. They are at different stages of socio-economic and political development. On the one end are such rich and advanced nations like United States, Japan and Canada and on the other are the poor and backward countries like Nepal and Bangladesh. If United States, Canada, Japan, Australia New Zealand, and we can even add India, are throbbing democracies, Saudi Arabia and Nepal are still ruled according to medieval norms. There is a large group of socialist states also in the region.

The variety and complexity of the region coupled with its recent colonial past gave rise to a number of conflicts in the region: in West Asia (Arab-Israel);

in South Asia (Indo-Pakistan and Sino-Indian), in South East Asia (Kampuchea); and in the East Asia (Korea). In view of these conflicts the need for peace and security in the region cannot be denied. But as we know security is perceived differently by different states (or their rulers). Thus America, the west and their Asian friends maintain that the main threat to peace is from Soviet Union and her socialist allies, while the Soviets take the opposite view. This conflicting perception of security led to the formation of a large number of alliances and pacts, mainly under US patronage, and a fierce arms race in the region. Ironically this made the region even more insecure.

The Asianness of the Soviet Union has been hotly debated issue. The Soviet Union is accused of coming to Asia as conqueror and during the Czarist period, and that she still has sinister designs in the region. But even if the Czarist Russia came to Asia as an imperialist, the Soviet Union is now here to stay, and hence the discussion is useless. Seventy five percent of its territory lies in Asia and one fifth of its population is of Asian origin.

After coming to power the Bolsheviks under

the leadership of Lenin adopted the policy of peaceful co-existence, taking into account the needs of the time. Their policy towards Asia was spelt out in various policy statements and speeches and delcarations by Lenin himself: The Decree on Peace (1917); appeal to All Muslims Workers in Russia and the East (1917); Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People (1918); speech at the 2nd All Russia Congress of the Peoples of the East (1919); and the Speech at the Eight All Russia Congress of the Soviets (1920). In short the Boslheviks urged the Asians to unite and fight the imperialists and on their part they declared their intention to abrogate all unequal treaties concluded by the Czarist regime with Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and China. In the early twenties they concluded friendship treaties with these countries.

During the 1930s in view of the growing US-Japanese confrontation in the Pacific the Soviet Union proposed a Pacific Pact which however did not materialise. After the Second World War the Soviet Union emerged as the second most powerful nation. It played important and constructive role in the settlements in Korea and Indo-China. They adopted a generally

sympathetic and helping role towards the National liberation movements and gained the gratitude and friendship of many Asian countries. During the 1950s Khrushchev re-emphasised the concept of peaceful co-existence. At the 20th and the 21st congress of the CPSU, he came out with a number of proposals concerning peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. However none of these proposals were in the shape of concrete plans. At best they were airing of views.

The most important Soviet initiative concerning Asian security came in 1969, when Brezhnev, speaking at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties, talked about a "system of collective security in Asia". Compared to the earlier plans this one was pursued by the Soviets with more tact and consistency. However from the very beginning the plan was doomed. The Soviet Union was accused of taking advantage of

- The British decision to withdraw from the east of Suez by 1971, and
- The American humiliation in Indo-China and its desire to disengage itself from the region.

Apart from this, two very serious charges were levelled against the plan due to which it was unacceptable to most of the Asian states-

- that it was proposed in the context of the Sino-Soviet rift and clashes along the Ussuri river and hence was directed against China and
- that it intended to be some sort of a military block with provisions of common regional defence.

The Soviets were accused of having "hegemonistic designs" in Asia. It is said that due to the bitter criticism of the plan and cool response by most of the countries, the Soviet Union slowed down its collective Asian Security for two years from 1970 to 1972. In 1972 it re-launched its campaign with a new vigour. The reasons are not hard to find. The Kissinger-Nixon visit to Peking leading to a Sino-American rapprochement was the negative factor, while the Soviet success in concluding Peace and Friendship Treaties with Egypt, India and Iraq was the positive development from the Soviet view point.

This time the Soviets took care to answer the charges levelled against the 1969 plan. The new plan was thus re-formulated to a certain extent. In their various speeches top leaders Brezhnev, Podgorny, Kosygin and Gromyko were very emphatic that the plan was

- not a military grouping
- not directed against any state including China

which was invited to join it, and
- not an instrument of domination but based on full equality and mutual benefit.

They clarified that the plan was fully in accordance with the United Nations Charter and will be based on the principles of peaceful co-existence.

Brezhnev Asianised the plan by linking it to the principles of Panchsheel and Bandung. The Soviets also took care to include such concepts like "sovereign ownership of natural resources", "neutralisation of the South East Asia", "Indian Ocean to be converted into a Zone of Peace" & development of economic cooperation" -- which were popular among the Asian states.

However, the Soviets were not quite able to convince the world, particularly the Asian states. In those very speeches in which Brezhnev invited China to join the collective security system, he also bitterly criticised it for its 'anti Sovietism' and "collaboration with imperialists". Moreover the Soviet commentators and writers were also aiming their guns at China. All this left no one in any doubt about the possible objectives behind the plan. And here one is not trying to take China's side, which was even more fierce in its opposition to Soviet Union. Infact the basic Soviet

calculation was that states like India and those of South East Asia, who were apprehensive of the "Great Han Chauvinism" of China would readily join any anti China alliance. But none of them were willing to go to that extent. Moreover in the 70s China was moderating its stand and was trying to improve its relations with other Asian states. Thus the Soviet plan for a collective security system in Asia never really took off.

When Gorbachev assumed leadership in the Soviet Union, the country was faced with acute problems, both internal and external. Internally the Soviet economy was stagnating and the technology was become outdated. Externally the Soviet Union was faced with

- fierce arms race (including nuclear arms race) with the US and the West
- rivalry with China and
- commitments in various parts of the world (Afganistan, Indo-China, Nicaragua etc.)

Apart from creating international tension and bringing the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation, the above factors also harmed other Soviet interests.

- They were a heavy drain on Soviet economy
- they made it difficult for Soivet Union to improve

relations with US, West, Japan, China and other countries of Asia, whose help and cooperation was necessary to modernise the Soviet economy.

Thus Gorbachev adopted a comprehensive approach, restructuring at the same time both internal as well as external policies.

Asia Pacific has become the centre of world economic activity replacing Atlantic. Japan has emerged as the new economic Super Power and other countries of the region like South Korea, Taiwan and the ASEAN nations are also witnessing economic boom.

Strategically, the region is dominated by the US, which has close economic and military ties with most of the states of the region. Soviet Union is almost isolated.

Under these circumstances Gorbachev turned his attention to the Asia-Pacific. He came out with a number of proposals, particularly while speaking at the Far Eastern cities of Vladivostok (July 28, 1986) and Krasnoyarsk (September 16, 1988), to

- halt the nuclear arms race
- create nuclear free zones in South East Asia, Korean peninsula and the South Pacific
- convert Indian Ocean into a 'zone of peace'
- reduce the activity and strength of naval forces in the region

- limit the conventional armaments to the level of 'reasonable sufficiency'
- start discussion on confidence building measures and convening a Helsinki type conference.

Gorbachev also emphasises use of political rather than military means to settle regional conflicts like Afganistan and Kampuchea. He talks in appreciative terms about China, Japan, United States and ASEAN nations and expresses his desire to build with them relations of friendship and cooperation on the basis of mutual trust and benefit.

Various motives have been attributed to the Gorbachev initiatives -

- stance to guarantee peace in the region and modernise the Soviet economy.
- a drive for a favourable power balance in the Pacific,
- a move to recover from the Sino-Soviet rift.
- need of Western and Japanese technology to harness Siberian wealth and
- exploitation of anti-nuclear sentiments in the South Pacific.

The economic motives have been admitted by Gorbachev himself who has launched a massive programme to restructure Soviet economy and is keen to utilise the rich natural resources of Siberia. The other charge

regarding the exploitation of antinuclear sentiments may have some truth in it. But then, otherwise also Gorbachev is in favour of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. After the INF agreement his credibility as a champion of nuclear disarmament has been enhanced.

Thus compared to the previous Soviet leaders Gorbachev and his proposals are taken more seriously. His Asia-Pacific policy, indeed has some successes. After his Beijing visit Sino-Soviet relations have fully normalised. Soviet Union's relations with other countries in the region like Japan, Korea and the ASEAN states are also showing signs of improvement.

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