

**SOVIET PERSPECTIVES ON INDIA'S
INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES
1969 - 1971**

Handwritten notes and stamps, including a library stamp from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

SHANTA NEDUNGADI

Handwritten mark: "10-11-71"

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS OF THE
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE OF
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**

**CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110057**

1978

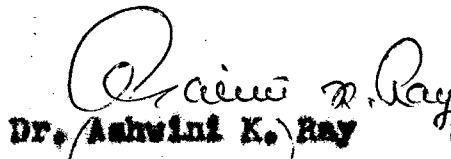
DECLARATION

Certified that the material presented
in this dissertation has not been
submitted for any other diploma or
degree of this or any other University.



Prof. C.P. Bhambhani

Chairman



Dr. Ashwini K. Ray

Supervisor



Candidate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my pleasant duty to express my profound sense of gratitude to all those from whom I received help and encouragement. I express with great pleasure my indebtedness to Dr. Ashwini K. Ray, Associate Professor in the Centre for Political Studies whose friendly encouragement and scholarly guidance have helped shape this work. I thank the Centre for Political Studies for allowing me to work on the topic of my choice and interest. I would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the assistance rendered by the staff of the Library of the Indian Council of World Affairs and the staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Library.

Finally, in the preparation of this dissertation, I have freely drawn upon the writings of eminent authors. I am indeed grateful to all of them.

New Delhi
May 1978

(Shanta Nedungadi)

C O N T E N T S

	<u>PAGES</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
 <u>CHAPTERS</u>	
I INTRODUCTION - I AND II	1 - 6
II GOA : CONVERGENCE OF DOCTRINES AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY	7 - 22
III THE SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT - DOCTRINAL POLEMICS AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY	23 - 60
IV THE INDO-PAK CLASHES AND SOVIET REASSESSMENT OF SOUTH ASIA	61 - 100
V EMERGENCE OF TRIANGULAR DIPLOMACY	101 - 140
VI CONCLUSIONS	141 - 154
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 155 - 160

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

(I)

The effects of De-Stalinization were manifest both in the Soviet Union's internal as well as external policies. With a reassessment in global perspectives, there was a consequent shift in foreign policy priorities. With the introduction of the Khrushchevian principles of peaceful transition and peaceful coexistence to the Communist doctrines, one encounters a revitalization of policy strategies so as to permit the Soviet Union maximum flexibility for manoeuvres in the international field. This was in direct contrast to the Soviet postures during the Stalinist phase.

Consequently, the outlook towards India also underwent considerable change. Indian foreign policy of non-alignment, which was hitherto looked upon with hostility, was now welcomed as conducive to peaceful coexistence. Soviet Union was more interested in promoting an independent, non-aligned India, which was not in the western imperialist camp. The Dullesian outlook of the United States, which was against the promotion of "grey" areas helped in underlining the significance of the new Soviet foreign policy.

Two main objectives could be traced for such a Soviet policy. First of all, the important geographical situation of India, the "rimland" of Asia contiguous with the USSR. Indian non-alignment was of vital importance both (a) in relation to

Pakistan's alignment with the Western bloc and the consequent military base in Gilgit, as well as (b) in checking the policies of China with whom Soviet differences were broadening. Secondly, for the Soviet Union to live down the image of past isolation, India represented a natural bridge to the Third World nations.

Therefore, a strong India was basic to Soviet interests and consequently there followed Soviet support for India on political, economic and diplomatic issues. The Soviet view of Kashmir in the late fifties, as contrasted with her views in 1947 was quite different. In fact it was the Soviet veto on Kashmir that saved India in the Security Council in 1957 and later in 1962.

The period 1957-59 also saw a worsening of Sino-Soviet relations partly ^{due to} ideological reasons and partly on grounds of power politics. The crisis in Iraq in 1958 exposed the differences in attitudes between China and the Soviet Union as also the Chinese resentment of Soviet partiality towards India. The years immediately preceding the beginning of the sixties also saw increasing border tensions along the Sino-Indian front. It is of utmost importance that as the Sino-Soviet conflict deepened, Indo-Soviet relations improved. This Soviet posture may have added to India's resolves on the question of her territorial disputes in the sixties.

(II)

This study would concentrate on the Soviet perspectives on the major international disputes like the "police action" and the consequent liberation of Goa, the Sino-Indian conflict, the Indo-Pak war in 1965 on Kashmir and the Indo-Pak war in 1971,

leading to the emergence of Bangladesh.

Strong Soviet support for Goa existed ever since 1954. Ideologically, Soviet Union always stood for anti-colonialism and national freedom. When the Indian forces liberated Goa, Daman and Diu from the Portuguese, Pravda flashed the news, "Portuguese colonialists are ousted from India"¹, and Khrushchev in his message to Nehru expressed his Government's complete support to the Indian action.² Accordingly in 1961 the Soviets used their veto to block a Security Council resolution sponsored among others by the US and UK, condemning India as an aggressor.³ Besides the ideological factor, the Soviet Union would also have regarded American support for Portuguese interests as a ploy to involve Portuguese Goa in SEATO and thus apply additional pressure on India. Here, in the Soviet attitude, there was thus a convergence of doctrines and operational strategies.

Soviet reaction to India's territorial dispute with China is of greater relevance, both from a pragmatic foreign policy approach as well as from the standpoint of ideology. Though the Soviet Union had taken a position of neutrality during the 1959 Sino-Indian border skirmishes, the situation was slightly different in 1962. The timing of the Chinese military action was perfect. Preoccupied with the Cuban missile crisis, the Soviet Union tended to placate China to rally Communist support for the Soviet position in Cuba. She thus, initially fully endorsed the

1 Pravda, 19 December 1961, C.D.S.P., vol. XIII, no. 51.

2 Pravda, 22 December 1961, C.D.S.P., vol. XIII, no. 51.

3 SCOR, yr 16, mtg. 988, pp. 25-26.

4

Chinese views, and Pravda issued an editorial highly critical of the Indian position and giving complete support to the Chinese views on the MacMchan Line.¹ But, however, once the Cuban crisis subsided, the Soviet Government returned to a position of neutrality and later, in the face of sharp Chinese criticism on the Soviet stand on Cuba, they vehemently criticised Peking's role in the border conflict.² The Soviet attitudes on the Sino-Indian conflict are indicative of the widening gulf between China and the Soviet Union. Further, Soviet support for the Chinese would have not only undone Indo-Soviet rapprochement, but would have also dealt a blow to the Khrushchevian global strategy of peaceful coexistence. It also indicated a precedence of national interest over ideology. (Doctrinal Polemics and operational strategy witnessed here.)

1965 saw two clashes on the Indo-Pakistan border : (1) The Rann of Kutch and (2) Kashmir. In both, the Soviet Union took a position of neutrality. Sino-Pakistan relations had been improving ever since 1966. At this time, the Soviet perspective towards the subcontinent as a whole, began to change perceptibly. With China already hostile towards her the Soviet Union looked for a more stable relationship with the strategically important subcontinent as a whole, i.e. with both India and Pakistan. There followed a swift improvement of Soviet-Pakistan relations. The growing detente with the West and the declining importance of

1 Pravda, 25 October 1962, C.D.S.P., vol. XIV, no. 43, 21 November 1962, p. 17.

2 Pravda, 13 December 1962, C.D.S.P., vol. XIV, no. 52, pp. 7-8.

the Third World countries, and of India in particular, led to a 'low profile' in Soviet attitudes to India including Indo-Pak relations, though considerable economic and military aid to India continued. Thus, on the Rann of Kutch issue in May 1965, the Soviet Union took a position of neutrality between India and Pakistan, despite China's vociferous support for Pakistan. This position later enabled the Soviet Union to act as a mediator after the outbreak of hostilities in Kashmir in September 1965. R.B. Remnek observes, that the Tashkent meeting was in itself a diplomatic victory for the Soviet Union, for it marked the first instance when two disputing non-Communist states had sought the good offices of a Communist power to help solve the dispute.

With the year 1970, came a major shift in global positions. Nixon's anxiety to exploit the Sino-Soviet rift to suit America's global strategy in which containment of Soviet power was still the main theme became evident. Kissinger's visit to Peking indicated that USA would value contacts with China even at the cost of risking further Soviet antagonism.

The emergence of the triangular diplomacy among Moscow, Washington and Peking could not but have recurring effects in the South Asian subcontinent. One consequence of this was that the relations between India and Pakistan and the relations of each with the Soviet Union were powerfully influenced by the Sino-Soviet antagonism. When America as well as China stepped up their investments in Pakistan, India had no choice but to sign the Indo-Soviet Treaty in 1971. Podgorney's letter of 2 April 1971 to President Yahya Khan on the latter's decision

1 Pravda, 4 April 1971, p. 1, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 41, pp. 35-36.

to use armed forces in East Pakistan indicated that for the Soviet side, her policy of maintaining good relations with both India and Pakistan was at an end from the Soviet angle. The Indo-Soviet Treaty institutionalized Indo-Soviet relations and thus reduced certain Soviet anxieties. At the very least, it ensured that India would not be used in any manner as a base of operations by Western powers against the Soviet Union's southern borders. The Treaty has also been widely interpreted as a combined warning against China. Thus, the significance of the Treaty went far beyond the Bangladesh crisis. But however it certainly served its immediate purpose, much to India's advantage during the Bangladesh war.

Throughout the December 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, Soviet Union stood firmly behind India and used its veto in the Security Council, time and again, in India's favour.

The assumption here is that the changing perspectives of the Soviet Union on India's international territorial disputes have been the result of factors, ideological as well as pragmatic. The ideological rift with China, resulting in poly-centricism in the Communist ideology, the growing power of the United States, the fluctuating importance of Indian non-alignment and the changing shades of power politics with India, were some of the factors responsible for the shifts in the attitudes of the Soviet Union regarding India's boundaries.

An attempt would be made to analyse these changing Soviet postures towards India, between the period 1960 and 1971 starting with the Goa issue of 1961 and ending with the Bangladesh war of 1971.

Chapter II

GOA : CONVERGENCE OF DOCTRINES AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Nature of the Dispute :

Goa, Daman and Diu were parts of Indian territory which were under Portuguese colonial rule. With Indian independence Goa, Daman and Diu remained the only territories in the whole subcontinent that were subject to foreign domination.

Portugal's first contact with India was in 1498 when Vasco da Gama on a mission to discover a new route to the fabulous riches and spices of the East, landed on the Calicut coast. Albuquerque came and established himself in Goa in 1509, seizing it from the Bijapur Sultans. This conquest of Goa was followed by those of Daman and Diu.¹

Nestling in a narrow strip between the Western ghats and the Arabian Sea, the tiny enclave of Goa is surrounded on three sides by the Indian Union. Goa, Daman Diu and its enclaves Dadra and Nagar Haveli encompass a total area of 1,537 sq. miles with a population of 637,591 (according to the 1950 Portuguese census). The people of Goa speak Konkani, while those of Daman and Diu speak Gujrati. The custom and manners of the people in all the Portuguese settlements, whether Hindus or Christians are similar to those prevailing in the adjoining parts of India. Thus, they shared a common cultural heritage with the Indian mainland.

Besides her common cultural heritage Goa also occupied a position of strategic importance geographically. Goa, being on the coastal strip, gave Portugal access to the Persian Gulf

1 Asian Recorder, 15-21 January 1962, pp. 4370-1.

besides containing excellent potential for a natural harbour. This was an added disadvantage to India. During World War II, the strategic importance of Mormeagao and Panjim came to be fully realized when German merchant ships took shelter in Goa and were found transmitting meteorological reports and other valuable information regularly to the German Navy.¹

Other developments further complicated matters. Portugal became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Mr. Paulo Cunha, Portuguese Foreign Minister, declared in a statement that Goa was no longer just a colony of Portugal but in fact an overseas Province of Portugal. Further Mr. John Foster Dulles, U.S. Secretary of State supported such a stand.³ The statement angered the people of India who vehemently condemned it as a clear case of interference of NATO in India's internal affairs.⁴ It was feared that NATO's colonial members would use the organization to cling to their colonies. Further, this pact presented a new danger to India regarding defence, particularly keeping in view the hostile relations between the two power blocs on the one hand and between India and Pakistan on the other. A fear existed that in any future war between the two blocs Goa might become a base for operation and consequently India would also be dragged into that war.

1 From Information Service of India, India House, London, The Story of Goa, p. 1.

2 R.F. Rao, Portuguese Rule in Goa, p. 41.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

The Goan people themselves had tried to drive out the foreigners ever since the 16th century. There were altogether 40 revolts from within the colonial territories which were brutally put down by the Portuguese.¹

Three main factors were responsible for the discontent and dissatisfaction against the Portuguese administration in these enclaves; these were economic, political and religious. The intense economic exploitation impoverished the people; politically the Goans had no say in the administration and this led to great frustration and lastly, the demolition of mosques and temples and the violent proselytizing zeal of Jesuits stirred religious animosities.²

Goans themselves organized satyagraha units for independence but these were ruthlessly dealt with, some of the peaceful satyagrahis even shot at and killed.³

With the departure of the British from the Indian subcontinent in 1947 it was expected that the French and Portuguese would also follow suit. The French were realistic and bowed to the wishes of the people through negotiated settlements. Unfortunately the Portuguese were not. Portugal rudely rejected all appeals by the Government of India for peacefully ending colonial rule in Goa through negotiation. Moreover, time and again, there were several provocations from the Portuguese including shooting indiscriminately at the Indian citizens in

1 Ibid., p. 60.

2 Ibid.

3 Asian Recorder, 15-21 January 1962, p. 4371.

bordering Indian villages as well as at Indian vessels.¹

After waiting for fourteen years for some kind of a settlement through peaceful means, Jawaharlal Nehru indicated in Parliament on 7 December 1961, that the use of force could not be ruled out. He said:

We have always been reluctant, as the House knows to solve problems by application of force.... But I must say that the Portuguese attitude on Goa has been exasperating in the extreme. It has been difficult for us to restrain our feelings or the consequent actions....

Therefore we felt that we should be prepared for any developments and consequences and we have taken some steps to that end. What exactly will happen, I cannot say at the present moment, because it depends on the circumstances and developments.... But the present position is not to be tolerated. 2

Duration and Outcome of the Dispute :

Indian armed forces moved into the Portuguese enclaves of Goa, Daman and Diu at midnight on 17-18 December 1961. This action followed a period of increasing tension in which the Portuguese authorities in Goa had deliberately provoked the Indian Government by repeated violations across the Indian border and continuous arms build up.³ Opposition within Goa itself had led to mass arrests by the Portuguese authorities. The climax was reached when Portuguese soldiers invaded an Indian village across the border and looted it.⁴

1 R.P. Rao, op. cit., p. 154.

2 Ibid., p. 152.

3 Asian Recorder, 15-21 January 1962, p. 4368.

4 Ibid.

The Goa operations ended on 19 December 1961 less than 36 hours after the troops of the 17th Indian Division began moving across the Goan borders. Major General K.P. Kandeth assumed charge as Military Governor of the former Portuguese possessions in India.

Soviet Attitude :

Soviet support to India on the Goa issue was complete and absolute. When the Indian forces liberated Goa, Daman and Diu, Pravda flashed the news - "Portuguese colonialists are ousted from India. Indian forces liberate Goa, Daman and Diu."¹

In fact ever since the early fifties, the Soviet Union had been advocating for liberating Goa from Portugal colonial rule and bringing it back within the Indian fold.

As early as 1954, O. Orestov, O. Skalkin and A. Afonin had hinted that the American "military clique" viewed the Portuguese possessions as potential bases for use against New Delhi.² In contrast to Dulles' support of Portugal, Bulganin described the Portuguese rule in Goa as a "shame to the civilized world."³ Khrushchev in 1955 August also attacked Portugal for refusing to give up her colony of Goa and said that Portugal reminded him of a leech sucking the blood of a human body.⁴

In December 1955 in his Report on the visit to India, Burma and Afghanistan delivered at the IV session of the Supreme

1 Pravda, 19 December 1961.

2 Pravda, 4 and 17 August 1954.

3 Pravda, 28 November 1955.

4 Pravda, 17 August 1955.

Soviet of the USSR, N.A. Bulganin noted:

As you know, there is still a small Portuguese colony on an integral part of Indian territory - Goa. The Indians are rightly demanding that this intolerable state of affairs should be ended and Goa liberated. We have only to glance at the map of India and at these possessions of the Portuguese intruders to see how justified and lawful is the claim of the Indian Government that this Indian territory should be reunited with the motherland. The Soviet Government supports this just demand and considers that maintaining a Portuguese colony on Indian territory - as maintaining a colonial system in our day generally - is a disgrace to civilized nations. 1

Soviet support to India on the Goa question has been continuous and without exception. This support was reinstated vehemently in the late fifties, when a US-Portuguese deal for using Goa as a military base was suspected.

Emphasizing on this, N. Pastukhov while writing in Pravda said:

Portugal is attempting to strengthen its position in Goa. From time to time it provokes conflicts with the important Asian power of India and is conducting a loud anti-Indian prepeganda campaign. What is the reason for this? It is clear. At a crucial point for Portugal - when the population of Goa and the entire Indian people rose to struggle for their freedom - a hand bearing aid for the Portuguese colonizers was extended from beyond the seas.

Pravda no doubt also voiced Soviet worries when it said:

... The Indian Press carried reports of American-Portuguese talks on turning Goa into a SEATO base. The results of these talks soon appeared. On the eve and on the day of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of Indian independence Indian army patrols were fired on from Goan territory....

... As far as the Soviet people are concerned their sympathy is fully and entirely on the side of the Indian population of Goa, which is trying to return to the posom of the mother country. 2

1 Bimal Prasad, Indo-Soviet Relations 1947-72, p. 122.

2 Pravda, 18 September 1957, under title "Goa is an integral part of India's territory".

The article by Perevoshchikov in Izvestia (11 December 1957) also stressed on American interference while giving wholehearted backing to Goan freedom. He writes:

Striving to preserve its domination in Goa, Portugal is counting on support from the U.S. The Portuguese foreign minister's talks in Washington were devoted to the subject. It appears from the communique published after these talks that the U.S. is resolutely supporting Portugal. Trying to create the impression that Goa is a "Portuguese Province", the colonizers would like to ignore universally known historical facts and to defend their colonial policy by hook or by crook. However such manouvers are doomed to failure. It is widely known that Goa as well as Daman & Diu are integral parts of India. Goa is inhabited by the Marathas of India, who, despite prolonged colonial domination, have preserved their language and customs. 1

Soviet support to India on the Indian action was made obvious through three main sources - first of all, the messages and speeches of their leaders; secondly, through their Press releases; and thirdly, and most important of all by their support in the United Nations.

Khrushchev's message to Nehru expressed his Government's solidarity with India on the issue. The message stated:

On behalf of the Soviet people, the Soviet Government and myself, I send you respected Mr. Prime Minister, your Government and the people the warmest and most sincere congratulations on the occasion of liberation of the age-old Indian land - Goa, Daman & Diu from the alien people and its adjoining with the motherland.

This step of the Government of India is a great contribution to the noble task of the people's struggle for complete and urgent liquidation of the shameful colonial system.

1 Izvestia, 11 December 1957.

2 Pravda, 22 December 1961.

Stressing on the anti-colonial nature of the struggle,
he said:

The Soviet Union always stood and stands by the side of all peoples who are fighting against colonialism.... The determined action of the Government of India in liquidating the colonial pockets in its territory is a completely lawful and rightful act. Soviet people unanimously support friendly India in this action and wish her every success in strengthening her independence. ¹

When the Indian forces marched into Goa, Daman and Diu, President of the Supreme Soviet Mr. Leonard Brezhnev was in India on an official tour. In his speech in India on 17 December 1961 i.e. just before the Goan liberation, he stated that the Soviet Union regarded with full understanding and sympathy the desire of the Indian people to achieve the liberation of Goa, Daman and Diu. ² Speaking after the Indian action, Brezhnev noted, "There is nothing wrong in India's action. It is something inevitable, something historic. Soviet people rejoice at the fact that the entire Indian land has now been cleared of the foreign colonialists." ³

Interestingly, the Western powers without any exception criticized the Indian action on the grounds of her having abandoned peaceful means and of having resorted to the use of force. The British Government declared in a statement that she deplored the use of military force by India to liberate Goa and also declared that she supported the Portuguese appeal to the

-
- 1 Pravda, 22 December 1961, C.D.S.P., vol. XIII, no. 51.
 - 2 Asian Recorder, 1962, p. 4368.
 - 3 Izvestia, 22 December 1961.

UN Security Council for an immediate ceasefire.¹ The US spokesman in the United Nations, Mr. Adlai Stevenson gave vociferous support to the Portuguese move.²

In contrast, the Soviet Union besides giving India full support, vehemently denounced the Western stand. Condemning such Western reaction Mr. S. Vishnevsky writing in Pravda said:

Western politicians looked on with immovable indifference as this vestige of the Inquisition maintained itself in this day and age. India tried with great patience over a long period to awaken the conscience of the leaders of NATO STATES. Washington and London chancelleries received packages of irrefutable documents about Portuguese atrocities on Indian soil. These were stored away in dark corners where they collected dust. The NATO rulers never even thought of calling to order this blood stained Lisbon ally or of making him leave foreign soil.... 3

The paper continued:

On December 18th the cup of patience of the Indian people overflowed. Indian troops struck the lock from the Portuguese jails and flung the sealed doors wide open. It was then that the humanitarian speeches about Goa were heard for the first time in the West. The Br. Govt. immediately declared that it "condemns the use of force". "Everyone knows that we are against the use of force". A spokesman of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs echoed the British. The events in Goa, the Washington correspondent of the New York Times reported, "have caused concern and surprise in the Government circles. The whole Atlantic Press started whining in chorus about morality and humaneness. 4

Pravda continued in the same sarcastic vein:

1 Asian Recorder, 1962, pp. 4368-71.

2 Ibid.

3 Pravda, 20 December 1961, p. 6, C.D.S.P., vol. XIII, no. 51, December 1961.

4 Ibid.

Does this mean that the NATO leaders consciences had become alive at long last? Had their eyes opened to the atrocities of the Portuguese aggressors in India, to the centuries old use of force and violence in India? Not at all. The Western mourners were whining believe it or not about 'India's aggression' against Portugal.... Peace for the aggressors humaneness only for the bloodsuckers of all kinds from Hesinger to Salazaar.... that is their love of mankind. The disgraceful attacks on the Republic of India leave the unparalleled bigotry and disgusting hypocrisy of the imperialist conciliators completely exposed. 1

It was however, in the UN Security Council that India benefitted most from Soviet support. With the commencement of military operations, the US, UK, France and Turkey, all NATO powers sponsored a resolution in the UN Security Council supporting Portugal's demand for an end to hostilities and further charged India with all kinds of crimes against humanity and peace. When the Western Powers sought to use the UN Security Council to censure India and halt her advances in Goa, it was the Soviet delegate who resolutely stood by India. Soviet Union opposed at first the Security Council's consideration of India's action and finally vetoed the Western resolution against India. The Soviet delegate noted:

... The situation in territories which are part of a sovereign State cannot under the Charter be a consideration by any U.N. body including the Security Council. The present matter in our view is one which falls exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of India because Goa and the other Portuguese colonies in Indian territory cannot be regarded as other than temporarily under the colonial domination of Portugal. These territories are linked with the Indian Union by reason of their geographical position and by their

1 Ibid.

2 From speeches of the Soviet delegate in the Security Council on Goa, 18 December 1961. SCOR, yr 16, mtg. 988, pp. 25-26.

history, culture, language and traditions. They were wrested from the Indian State at the time when the European countries were establishing their colonial empire and we can but marvel at the patience shown by the people of India with regard to those hot-beds of colonialism in their territory. Therefore, the question submitted by the representative of Portugal, cannot be the basis for a discussion of the whole problem in Security Council. 1

The Soviet delegate went on to say that if any thing was to be considered by the Security Council it was primarily the question of the violation by the Government of Portugal of the provisions of the Declaration on granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, adopted by the General Assembly (Resolution 1514 (XV)) which states unequivocally that measures must be taken for liquidation of colonial empires. The Soviet delegate pointed out that the Government of Portugal was not carrying out these provisions of the Declaration and it was thereby carrying a threat to peace and security. He also drew attention to the fact that when Portugal exterminated hundreds of thousands of Angolan citizens, the UK and USA did not condemn it, did not say that it infringed on the UN Charter, and did not call its acts 'aggression'. But when it was a question of helping a people and a territory of India to free themselves from colonial domination, there were "immediate loud protestations about violation of the U.N. Charter"².

"As regards our position", Mr. V. Zorin said, "We openly declare that we side with the people of Goa who are fighting to free themselves from Portugal's colonial domination...." "Lastly

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

we must immediately cease all aid to Portugal and apply sanctions to it as provided for in the U.N. Charter in order to compel it to carry out immediately the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.¹

Reacting dramatically to the Soviet veto, the US delegate Adlai Stevenson said that an act had been written of the drama which might be the beginning of the end of the United Nations - to which V. Zorin replied that "this day saw not the beginning of the end of the U.N. but the expression of the will to defend colonial countries and peoples and their right to life, freedom and independence."²

Convergence :

The Soviet attitude to the Goa issue, then, reveals a convergence of doctrines and operational strategies.

Doctrinally the Communist ideology has always been basically and vehemently anti-colonial and anti-imperialist. Anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism therefore formed one of the basic tenets of Soviet ideology. Thus, by supporting the Goan liberation, Soviet Union was bringing into operation one of its basic ideological tenets.

While backing the Indian stand, the Soviet stress has always been on the anti-colonial nature of the issue. Way back in 1955, while supporting India's appeal for a Portuguese withdrawal Bulganin noted, "The Soviet Government ... considers that maintaining a Portuguese colony on Indian territory as

1 Ibid.

2 As cited in Bimal Prasad, op. cit., p. 235.

maintaining the colonial system in our day generally - is a disgrace to civilized nations."¹

Again, right after the liberation of Goa, Pravda's² headlines read "Portuguese colonialists are ousted from India". Stressing on the anti-colonial nature of the struggle, Khrushchev's letter to Nehru emphasized,

The Soviet Union always stood and stands by the side of all peoples who are fighting against colonialism. The Soviet people supported the Indian people in their fight for national freedom. They therefore well appreciate the strength which was directed against the liquidation of the last colonial yoke. 3

In the UN Security Council, Mr. Zorin, while replying to Adlai Stevenson and vetoing the US Resolution branding India as aggressor said:

Thus in our discussion of the question of Goa, the Liberator's representative was entirely right when he said that the question is primarily a colonial one, it is a colonial problem, it is a legacy of colonialism by which we are still troubled. Speaking of the attitude of the Powers on this question, you have to take a clear stand: do you support the colonial Powers which are doing their utmost to retain their colonial domination and are fighting against the people struggling for their freedom, or, are you on the side of the colonial peoples which, in implementation of the Declaration which you now approve seek to achieve their liberation as soon as possible? 4

The Kommunist, the theoretical organ of the C.P.S.U., held the view that the Soviet veto was a "mighty blow to the colonialists"⁵.

1 Ibid., p. 134.

2 Pravda, 19 December 1961.

3 Pravda, 22 December 1961.

4 Bimal Prasad, op. cit., p. 232.

5 Kommunist, no. 2, 1961, pp. 15-20.

The change in global perspectives was closely interconnected with a rethinking in the doctrines; with changes within the Communist ideology itself. Such rethinking led to the advocacy for the principles of peaceful transition and peaceful coexistence.

On the one hand, the principle of peaceful transition obliterated the necessity of a violent revolution in India, with the natural consequence that the Soviet Union no longer condemned Nehru as an underdog of imperialism. On the other hand, the principle of peaceful coexistence tried to rule out the inevitability of conflict (at least for the immediate future) between capitalist and socialist forces. But such a peaceful coexistence necessitated the promotion and expansion of an area of neutrality. Indian non-alignment thus assumed great significance. With Cold War still going strong, Soviet Union was now interested in promoting an independent non-aligned India, out of the Western imperialist camp. The Goa issue presented a fortitious opportunity to the Soviet Union, for ensuring and endorsing Indian non-alignment. Therefore, support to India on the Goan liberation was also a natural consequence of the Soviet foreign policy strategy.

There was yet another important aspect to this operational strategy. With American support for Portugal, there existed an anxiety that Portuguese Goa might be converted into a base for US operations. This was obviously against Soviet national interest.

Both the United States and Portugal were members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The meeting between the American Secretary of State Dulles, and the Portuguese Foreign

Minister, Cunha, brought sinister tidings - both for India as well as the Soviet Union. It was said that Dulles had publicly referred to Goa as a Portuguese Province and that the United States might even consider the defence of Goa, as part of its NATO obligations.¹ There was also talk of a Portugal-Pakistan deal which involved the Portuguese transfer of the sovereignty of Daman and Diu to Pakistan, in return for Pak support to Portugal on Goa - thus linking NATO and SEATO with the defence of the colonial regime.²

This anxiety of the Soviet Union was reflected at several points. Perevoschikov, while writing on 11 December 1961 notes, "Striving to preserve its domination in Goa, Portugal is counting on support from the U.S. The Portuguese foreign minister's talks in Washington were devoted to this subject."

"It appears from the communique published after these talks that the U.S. is resolutely supporting Portugal.... Portuguese colonial claims have long enjoyed the protection of the U.S., especially since Portugal readily placed Goa at the U.S. disposal for the construction of an airforce base."³

Earlier in September 1957 Pastukhov had written in

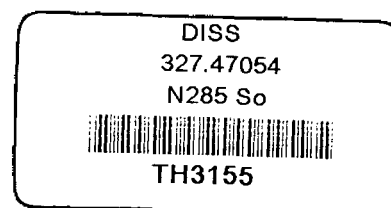
Pravda:

TH-3155

The pages of the Newspapers in the Asian countries are full of reports about plans to convert part of Kashmir into an American military base, about attempts to strain relations between India and Pakistan, about efforts to include Goa and Western New Guinea in the SEATO zone.⁴



- 1 Arthur Stein, India and the Soviet Union : The Nehru Era, p. 72.
- 2 Asian Recorder, 1962, pp. 4368-71.
- 3 C.D.S.P., vol. II, no. 50.
- 4 Pravda, 18 September 1957.



Investia concludes, "Thus, contrary to the will of the Indian people, and their Government, an American military base has appeared in Indian territory."

Thus, Soviet perspectives on the Goa issue, viewed as a whole, reveal a certain convergence of Soviet doctrines with her operational strategies. Soviet views on anti-colonialism were well-known, and ideologically, Soviet support for Goa was a reiteration of one of the basic tenets of the Communist doctrine. Doctrines however, also shared a happy meeting ground with operational strategies. Goan liberation would once and for all ended! Soviet anxieties of an American military base in Goa. Besides this, Soviet support to Goa also presented an opportunity to the Soviet Union to endorse as well as ensure Indian non-alignment. Thus, Soviet support to India on the Goan liberation accommodated both foreign policy strategies as well as adherence to doctrinal principles.

Chapter III

THE SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT - DOCTRINAL POLEMICS AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The history of Sino-Indian relations goes way back to almost two thousand years and until the last decade, these relations had been remarkably cordial. Especially after the 3rd century A.D. several contacts were established between the two Asian giants, primarily as a consequence of the spread of Buddhism.

India was one of the first countries to extend official recognition to the People's Republic of China. That India wanted to develop friendly relations with Communist China is apparent from her various gestures:

(a) The sponsoring of repeated resolutions by the Indian delegation in the UN General Assembly urging for the representation of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations.

(2) The exchange of State visits by the Prime Ministers of India and China.

(c) The Trade Agreement between India and China; and

(d) Exchange of visits of various cultural delegations.¹

Further evidence of a desire for Sino-Indian friendship are: (a) India voting against a resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations which branded the People's Republic of China as an aggressor in Korea, (b) India refused to attend the conference

¹ A. Appadorai, Introductory Essay "Chinese Aggression and India", International Studies, Special Double Issue, vol. 6, no. 1-2.

at San Francisco in 1951, convened to sign a Peace Treaty with Japan because among other reasons, China was not a party to it, (c) India's introduction of a resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1953, on the issue of prisoners of war in which the Chinese viewpoint could as far as possible be accommodated.¹

The peak in what is commonly known as "the honeymoon period" of relationship between the two countries was reached in 1954 when India signed an agreement with China on Trade and Intercourse between India and Tibet. With this, India surrendered all extra-territorial rights and privileges she enjoyed in Tibet that were inherited by her from the British Indian Government. The two countries reaffirmed that they would abide by the five principles of Panchasheel.²

However, that seeds of discontent were already sown during the period under reference is evident from two incidents. First on 21 October 1950, the Government of India drew the attention of the Chinese Government to the harmful effects of resorting to military action to liberate Tibet as such action might lead to further delay in the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations. The Government of India then received a rude reply criticising the latter as having been affected by outside influences hostile to China in Tibet.³

1 Ibid.

2 Mutual respect of each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence.

3 A. Appadorai, op. cit.

The second instance of discord was when during his visit to China, Nehru drew the attention of Chinese leaders to some maps published in China, which had shown an incorrect boundary alignment between the two countries and had consequently incorporated some 50,000 sq. miles of Indian territory with China. Mr. Chow-En-lai then sought to treat these Chinese maps as merely a reproduction of old Kuomintang maps and said that the People's Republic of China had no time to revise them.¹ In fact one could trace the first discordant notes, which eventually culminated in the pandemonial climax and the consequent Indian debacle at Chinese hands, to this particular point in history.

The physical nature of the Sino-Indian dispute centred around the issue of the boundary line between India and China. The Sino-Indian border extends to over 2,400 miles from the tri-junction of Afghanistan, China and India in the North to the tri-junction of Burma, China and India in the East. Briefly, the Indian alignment runs along the Eastern boundaries of Kashmir of which Ladakh forms a part, the Eastern frontiers of Panjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and the Northern frontiers of Sikkim, Bhutan, and the NEFA. This boundary has taken shape on the basis of the natural features of the area and has been recognised for centuries by the peoples and Government of the countries concerned.²

An interesting as well as conclusive evidence of the validity of the boundary line between India and Tibet which is

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

commonly known as the McMahon Line is provided by the Sino-Burmese Agreement of January 1960. It shows that there was

- (i) A coincidence between the boundary now agreed upon and that delineated in the McMahon Line in the Simla Convention of 1914;
- (ii) Traditional boundary between China and Burma running along the Himalayan Water-shed; and
- (iii) that earlier Chinese maps showing the boundary of China with Burma included some 25,000 square miles of Burmese territory and the agreement corrects the error. ¹

23 January 1959 witnessed the first official repudiation by the Government of China of this traditional boundary between the two countries. Nehru's letter of 14 December 1959 had drawn the Chinese Prime Minister's attention to a wrong delineation of the Sino-Indian boundary in an official Chinese journal.² In reply Chou En-lai contended that the Sino-Indian boundary had never been formally delimited and that there were certain differences between the two sides over the issue. He signified that the Government of China had not raised the issue in 1954, because "conditions were then not ripe for settlement" and added further that the McMahon Line had never been recognized by the Government of China. Chou En-lai claimed that the boundaries drawn on the Chinese maps were consistent with those on earlier maps. Thus, not only going back on all their previous assurances, but also violating the Agreement of 1954, the Chinese laid claim³ to about 50,000 square miles of Indian territory.

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

The Chinese raised two points on the border issue. First of all, they said that the India-China border had not yet been formally delimited, and therefore, had to be negotiated between the two governments and settled through joint surveys. Secondly, they claimed that the boundary which India considered legitimate had been a legacy of British imperialism and no country which believes that colonialism is an evil has a right to benefit by the fruits of British aggression on China when India was under British rule.¹

Taylor in his book A Treatise on International Public Law gives us an insight into the basic law that prevails on the issue which is raised by the first question. He clearly states that where there is a real doubt or ignorance as to a frontier, and no express agreement concerning it, certain general rules have been accepted which may be summarized as follows: "Where the two states are separated by ranges of mountains or hills the water divide marks the boundary line or frontier". This principle has been universally accepted in international law.

The revolt in Tibet in 1959 led to strained relations between China and India. During the days preceding the revolt, there existed a possibility that China might have been willing to accept the McMahon Line and might have agreed on granting de jure recognition, but of course only after negotiation (as was the case with Burma). But however the Indian Government tended to regard it as a closed issue, was insistent that the

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

McMahon Line was the ultimate in the North Eastern border and made this a prerequisite for negotiation.

The Tibetan revolt was followed by a forwarding of their border posts by both sides towards their claim lines, thus narrowing down the no man's land. In the NEFA sector, where considerable Chinese troop movement was reported, India began setting up posts along the McMahon Line. On 7 August there was a minor clash at Kinzamani.¹ This was followed by a more serious clash at Longju nearby on 25 August.² Allegations from the Indian side of Chinese incursions had been continuing ever since 1954, besides which the construction of the Askai Chin road had taken place. However the seriousness of the border problem came to the surface with the Longju clash.

Between the Tibet revolt and the Longju clash, certain important developments took place. The 1957 agreement on nuclear aid to China was unilaterally scrapped by the Soviet Union. This was one of the first instances when the Sino-Soviet ideological rift was extended to State level relations. Secondly, the Soviet reaction to the Sino-Indian clash revealed her differences with China over the Sino-Indian border dispute for the first time. It clearly showed that the Soviet Government harboured reservations in giving all out support to Communist China against non-Communist India.

After the Longju clash another followed at Kong-ka Pass in Ladakh in October 1958. These border clashes were a gradual drift towards an actual confrontation. As both sides stepped up

1 Mohan Ram, Politics of Sino-Indian Confrontation, pp. 80-86.

2 Ibid.

military preparations, the border dispute escalated into a military conflict in 1962.

Outcome of the Dispute :

On 8 September 1962, Chinese troops crossed at points on the McMahon Line and later on 20 October launched a massive attack on Indian territory.¹ The international boundary in the region under dispute was the McMahon Line which runs along the watershed of Tangal or Thagla Bridge.

Till 20 October the fighting was taking place on an undulating plateau on the Southern slopes of the ridge near the ravine. Here, the fighting dragged on for several days without any apparent gain by either side. The Chinese were not able to penetrate any deeper into Indian territory or interfere with the lines of communications of the Dhola post² before they launched their massive attack on 20 October.

The Dhola post located at 91 degrees 42 minutes East and 27 degrees 46.5 minutes North is just over a mile from the Chejao bridge. The auxiliary Indian post attacked by the Chinese was a little further away.³

Meanwhile the Chinese Press and Radio exaggerated and gave one sided versions of the fighting to create a world-wide impression that the Indian army was conducting a limited offensive operation in the area.⁴

1 Asian Recorder, 26 November - 2 December 1962.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

On 20 October China launched an all-out attack on the North Eastern Frontier Agency along a 12 mile sector. More than 20,000 Chinese troops armed with heavy mortars and medium machine guns, completely overtook the Indian troops. The Khinzemane post fell in the morning and the main Dhola post, the same afternoon. It was reported by a Government spokesman that at about 5 a.m. the Chinese launched their attack both in NEFA and in Ladakh.¹

China claimed on 21 October that her troops had recovered seven posts from aggressive Indian troops in continued fierce fighting at the Eastern end of the disputed Himalayan border. The New China News Agency named these posts as Jungputin, Chekopu, Keningnai, Jilitingpu, Tang, Haingpa and the Drokum Bridge. The agency added that the Chinese troops had cleared Indians from several strong points in fierce fighting at the Western end of the border.²

Quoting a Chinese Defence Ministry statement, the Agency claimed that the Indian troops had crossed the so-called McMahon Line, invaded and occupied large tracts of the Chinese territory and launched large scale attacks on the Chinese Frontier Guards. "Thus the Indian Government have once and for all broken the bounds of this line". More important, it added "Now the Chinese Government formally declared that in order to prevent the Indian troops from staging a comeback and launching fresh attacks, the Chinese Frontier Guards fighting in self defence no longer need

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

to restrain themselves to the bounds of the illegal MacMohan¹ line."

Official circles in New Delhi underlined that experience during the recent years clearly indicated that Chinese claims to territories and frontiers had never been in accordance with customary and traditional treaties or agreements but kept shifting according to their capacity to extend them by military action. A Government spokesman said "The limit is the Chinese capacity to take the territory physically by force. India considers it ludicrous on the part of the Chinese Government to suggest that the India-China border changes with the progress of the Chinese forcible intrusions."²

However 25 October saw reports about the occupation of Torang after a prolonged and bitter fighting. Towang is the farthest road-head in the North Western part of NEFA.³

By 5 November an estimated 2,000 square miles of territory had been seized by the Chinese invaders in Ladakh. Together with this, the Chinese were in occupation of all the 14,000 square miles of territory claimed in their 1960 map.⁴ The key Eastern Sector town of Boundla was taken on 18 November. On 21 November China announced an abrupt, unilateral ceasefire to take effect from the next day and to be followed by withdrawal of troops but not "Civil Police" by 20 kms behind the line of actual control, which meant that the Chinese forces would be far behind their

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

1

8 September 1962 positions.

Soviet Attitudes :

Soviet Union's reaction to the Sino-Indian dispute is of great relevance, both from the standpoint of pragmatism in foreign policy as well as from its ideological implications. Of even greater significance is the fact that, unlike on the Goa issue Soviet reaction in the case of the Sino-Indian dispute was neither consistent nor continuous.

Soviet neutrality on the Sino-Indian border skirmishes of 1959 was indeed a departure from its erstwhile policy line. Such neutrality had a special significance, for it was the first time that the Soviet Union had remained neutral in a dispute which concerned a Communist State against a non-Communist State. In the actual military confrontation of 1962, initially Soviet Union fully endorsed Chinese views and extended full moral support to China.² However, later on she again returned to a position of neutrality. Finally she gave all-out support to India, and criticized China bitterly for her military moves.³

Starting with the border skirmishes of 1959, Soviet neutrality on the issue was announced through a Tass statement on Indo-China relations, dated 9 September 1959 which reads:

-
- 1 Tass statement on India China Relations, 9 September 1959, Bimal Prasad, op. cit., p. 186.
 - 2 Pravda editorial of 26 October 1962, C.D.S.P., vol. XIV, no. 43, 21 November 1962, p. 17.
 - 3 Pravda, 13 December 1962, C.D.S.P., vol. XIV, no. 52, pp. 7-8.

Of late, definite political quarters and the Press in the Western countries have started a noisy campaign around the incidents which recently took place on the Chinese-Indian frontier in the area of the Himalayas. The campaign obviously has the purpose of driving a wedge between the two biggest countries of Asia - The People's Republic of China and the Republic of India, whose friendship is of great importance for safeguarding peace and international cooperation in Asia and throughout the world. Its inspirers are trying to discredit the idea of peaceful co-existence between states with differing social systems, and to prevent the strengthening of the Asian People's solidarity in the struggle for the consolidation of national independence.

The statement went on to say:

The incident on the Chinese Indian frontier is certainly deplorable. The Soviet Union maintains friendly relations with both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India. The Chinese and Soviet peoples are linked by the unbreakable bond of fraternal friendship based on the great principles of socialist internationalism. Friendly cooperation between the USSR and India is successfully developing in keeping with the ideas of peaceful coexistence.

Criticizing the wide publicity given to the border dispute in Western circles, it continued:

Attempts to cash in on the incident which took place on the Chinese Indian frontier for the purpose of fanning the cold war, and crippling friendship between the peoples are worthy of condemnation. Soviet leading quarters express the confidence that the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of India will not allow the forces which do not want to ease the international climate but to strain it, which serve to prevent the beginning of relaxation of tension in relation between states, to capitalise this incident.

Projecting its neutrality clearly, the statement ended by saying:

The same quarters express confidence that the two governments will settle the misunderstandings that have risen, taking into consideration mutual

interests and in the spirit of the traditional friendship between the peoples of India and China.

This non-partisan position was reaffirmed in Khrushchev's Report on the international situation to the Third Session of the Supreme Soviet on 31 October 1959 in which he equated "fraternal" China and "friendly" India and further expressed his "regret" over the India border incident. In his long report on foreign policy, the India-China border problem received just a mere paragraph.

He said:

We keenly regret the incidents which has lately taken place on the border of the two states friendly to us - the Chinese People's Republic to which we are bound by unbreakable bounds of brotherly friendship and the Republic of India, with which we have friendly relations that are coming along well. We are specially aggrieved that these incidents have resulted in losses of life on both sides. For the parents and near ones of the men who perished, nothing can make amends for the permanent suffered.

He further added:

It would gladden us if there were no repetition of the incidents on the Sino-Indian border and if the frontier disputes were settled through friendly negotiations to the mutual satisfaction of both sides. 1

It is interesting to note that there was a veritable lacuna of commentary in Soviet academic literature, on what is generally regarded as a complicating factor in Indo-Soviet relations - the eruption of Sino-Indian hostilities. For example, after the border clashes in 1959, just one editorial in Problemy Vostokovedeniia appeared. This restated the official version, and said that the imperialists were trying to use the border conflict

1 C.D.S.P., vol. XI, no. 44, p. 8.

to activise rightwing forces in India and thereby alter Nehru's¹ foreign policy of non-alignment.

However the scene in 1962 was rather different from the one that prevailed in 1959, and so also was the Soviet reaction. Soviet attitudes during the actual Sino-Indian military confrontation of 1962 may be divided into three phases:

- (1) On 25 October after an initial embarrassed silence, Soviet Union adorned a pro-China garb endorsing Chinese views.
- (2) On 5 November the pro-China attitude was discarded and the Soviet Union returned to a position of studied neutrality.
- (3) By December, definite Soviet leanings towards India became quite clearly discernible.

China launched her major offensive on 20 October 1962. After five days of complete silence, Pravda wrote its first editorial on the Sino-Indian conflict on 25 October 1962. This editorial was frankly pro-Chinese.

The article entitled, "In the Interests of the Peoples, in the name Universal Peace", started by reiterating Soviet desire for peaceful conditions for building a new society and developing the world socialist system. Criticizing the wide publicity given by imperialist circles to the border issues of the new states, it noted:

The young sovereign states have inherited many complicated problems from the unhappy past. The imperialist circles miss no opportunity to make capital of the difficulties related, in particular to the border issues and disputes of all sorts. American imperialism, as well as its principal allies in NATO, SEATO and other military blocs,

R.B.

1 As cited in/Ramanek, Soviet Policy Towards India, p. 172.

pin social hopes in their reactionary aspirations on exploiting the unresolved border issue between the Chinese People's Republic and India.

The immediate Soviet reaction was clearly visible in the next paragraph which said:

The problem of the Chinese-Indian border is a legacy from the days when India was under the sway of the British colonialists, who carved and recarved the map of Asia at their pleasure. The notorious 'Mac Mohan Line' was imposed on the Chinese and Indian peoples; it was never recognized by China. The imperialist circles have done everything in their power, capitalizing on the border conflicts the Mac Mohan Line has brought on, to provoke an armed clash. The imperialists dream of setting these great powers at odds, as well as disrupting the Soviet Union's friendship with both fraternal China and friendly India.

Commenting separately on her ties with each of the States, the Soviet Union strove hard to maintain a position of neutrality which was weighted in favour of China.

Writing on ideological bonds and similarity of objectives with China, Pravda (25 October 1962) emphasized that:

The Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic are linked by an inviolable friendship of long standing. This friendship rests on a community of aims - the building of socialism and communism. Its indestructable foundation is an economic base of the same type and a single ideology - Marxism/Leninism. The Soviet Union, China and all the socialist countries are united in the struggle against imperialism for world peace.

On the other side of the coin, commenting on ties with India, Pravda (25 October 1962) noted that,

the Soviet people derive deep satisfaction from the developing cooperation between the Soviet Union and India. We rejoice in the successes of the Indian people, understanding their difficulties and readily broadening our cooperation, which is helping to advance the economy and cultural level of a country that has thrown off

the colonial yoke. The Soviet people set great store by sovereign India's contribution to the fight for peace and international security, against colonialism and the imperialist military blocs.

Thus the Soviets did not reject the Indian method of functioning or the Indian method of development in its entirety. However, Soviet alarm over the dispute was voiced -

The Soviet people, like all who love peace, are concerned over the development of events over the Indian-Chinese borders, especially of late when matters have come to the point of armed clashes. This turn of events is out of character with the relations existing between China and India and adverse to the national interests of both states. The exacerbation of relations between India and China benefits only the common enemy of these states - international imperialism.

However, one cannot overlook the fact that it was not merely Soviet alarm that was voiced. There was a clearcut endorsement of Chinese views. There was definite support for Chou En-lai's proposals for ceasefire, the conditions of which had already been received unfavourably by the Nehru Government.

Pravda (25 October 1962) reported:

The Soviet Government and the Soviet people ... will unquestionably welcome the new move of the Chinese Government aimed at peaceful settlement of the dispute with India.

Quoting the Chinese statement, the editorial continued "This move is a statement by the Government of the Chinese People's Republic".

"It is utterly inconceivable", the statement declares, "that the Chinese Indian boundary issue should be resolved by armed forces. China and India are two big countries in Asia, they bear a great responsibility for peace in Asia and throughout the world. They are the initiators of the five principles of

peaceful coexistence and participants in the Bandung Conference. Although the relations between China and India are now badly strained, there are nevertheless, no grounds for abandoning the five principles of peaceful coexistence and the spirit of the Bandung Conference." Most significant during this first phase was the fact that Soviet Union gave full backing to the Chinese peace proposal.

"The Chinese Government has proposed embarking on negotiations for settling the Chinese Indian boundary issue. It has expressed the hope that the Indian Government will agree that both sides respect the line of the de facto control along the entire length of the Chinese-Indian border and draw their armed forces back 20 kms from that line to avoid contact. The Chinese Government is of the opinion that at a time suitable to both sides, a new meeting should take place between the Premier of China and the Prime Minister of India."

Commenting on the domestic situation within India, it said:

the kindling of conflict between the two great powers of Asia serves the interests not only of imperialism but of certain reactionary circles inside India that have most closely cast their lot with foreign capital, with the imperialist forces inimical to the Indian people. Peaceful settlement of the conflict calls for redoubling of efforts on the part of India's progressive forces.

In what must have been an obvious reference to the Communist Party of India, it noted that

the fact must be faced that the exacerbation of relations of the kind now occurring, even some progressive minded people may succumb to

1 Pravda, 26 October 1962, G.D.S.P., vol. XIV, no. 43, 21 November 1962, p. 17.

nationalistic influence and take a chauvinistic stand.... This sort of attitude does no good....

Finally showing Soviet appreciation and enthusiasm for the Chinese efforts for peace, the statement declared:

As for the Soviet people, they see the statement of the Chinese as evidence of sincere concern over relations with India and eagerness to bring the conflict to a halt. The proposals made by the Chinese Government are in our opinion constructive. Without impairing the prestige of the parties, they represent an acceptable basis for opening negotiations and peacefully settling the disputed issues with regard for the interests of both the Chinese People's Republic and India.

The editorial in Izvestia on 26 October 1962, took an identical stand. Completely endorsing Chinese views, it said:

The former alien rulers of India, who were driven out by the people, left behind an apple of discord - the frontier question. The notorious McMahon Line was established by Britain at one time. Britain carved and recarved the map of South East Asia without regard for the national interests of the peoples living there.... At that time, China was a weak state. But even in conditions of inequality of strength, she never recognized the unilaterally established McMahon Line.

Backing the Chinese peace proposals, Izvestia wrote:

Soviet people view the new statement of the C.P.R. Government as an important manifestation of goodwill, as evidence of a sincere desire to resolve the China-India border dispute through negotiations....

Blaming India for holding up the negotiations, it said:

In this connection it is necessary to emphasize the constructive spirit of the C.P.R. proposals to conduct negotiations on the border issues without prior conditions. It would be true statesmanlike wisdom, if the Indian side showed a proper understanding of the peace-loving initiative of the C.P.R. 1

1 C.D.S.P., vol. XIV, no. 43, p. 17.

On 29 October 1962, the Soviet-sponsored World Peace Council refused to discuss an Indian motion on the Chinese 'aggression' on India.¹ In the United Nations General Assembly, India was asked by the Soviet delegation, headed by Velarin Zorin,² to accept the Chinese peace proposal for ending the border conflict.

However Soviet Union was soon to revert to its earlier position of neutrality. An editorial in Pravda, on 5 November 1962 announced this shift back to neutralism. This was Pravda's second editorial on the Sino-Indian dispute, after the commencement of armed hostilities. It called for prompt negotiations and urged China to stop the fighting immediately. In fact it was entitled, "Negotiation in the way to settle the conflict".

Putting forth very valid reasons to both sides for an immediate end to armed hostilities, Pravda (5 November 1962) asked "could the Chinese People's Republic or the Republic of India have an interest in developing armed conflict? and it answered "by no means".³ "The Chinese people are devoting their efforts to creative labour, working enthusiastically at carrying out the plans of socialist construction. The desire for war is alien to the very nature of a socialist state. Likewise military complications would only impair the situation of the Indian people. The continuation of the conflict is draining India's economic resources, limited to begin with, and deflecting the Indian people from accomplishing the tasks they face in the social and cultural regeneration of the country in carrying through to the full, the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist

1 R. Vaidyanathan, International Studies (New Delhi), vol. v, no. 51-52, July-October 1963, p. 72.

2 R. Vaidyanathan, "Reaction of the Soviet Union and other Communist States".

3 Pravda, 5 November 1962.

revolution.¹"

This editorial (5 November 1962) pointed out that only the imperialist camp could benefit from an enlargement of the scale of military operations. It said that the imperialists were exploiting the situation by "persistently offering weapons and aid to one of the sides on hopes of thereby enlarging the scale of the conflict"². It said that the Soviet Union had always from the very beginning urged for the settlement of the dispute through negotiations between the two sides.

Going back to its original neutralist theme of 'fraternal China' and 'friendly India', the Soviet Union insisted on a ceasefire and called for negotiations without the imposition of any preconditions. Reflecting her anxiety, it said that the Soviet people could not remain indifferent when "the blood of our brothers and friends - the Chinese and the Indian peoples - is being shed. Therefore the Soviet people believe that in the situation that has arisen, not only is it necessary to cease fire but also without any conditions to sit down at the round table of negotiations."³

Pointing out that the Asian people as a whole had a strong desire to end the conflict, Pravda (5 November 1962) quoted the appeals for cessation of military operations by several Asian states which had participated in the Bandung Conference. It reminded the two parties that if the fighting

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

continued, the conflict would be further aggravated and "An ever greater role will be played, not so much by questions of disputed territory as by considerations of prestige"¹.

Opposing anything that would aggravate the situation, the Soviet Union vehemently declared "The bloodshed cannot be permitted to go on"². This could be interpreted as a warning to the Chinese for a quick cessation of military operations. The 5 November editorial concluded by reiterating Soviet faith in a peaceful settlement of the conflict:

... The most important thing is to ceasefire and open negotiations on peaceful settlement of the conflict. They (Soviet people) sincerely desire that the representatives of India and China take their seats at the negotiating table as soon as possible. It is necessary to consider the disputed issues patiently, to show a spirit of understanding and cooperation, to make efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution. Such a solution would suit the interests of the Chinese and Indian peoples and serve the cause of preserving and strengthening peace in Asia and throughout the world.

Thus, unlike the previous editorial,³ there was no mention of the McMahon Line or any homily on its origin, nor was there any support for the Chinese ceasefire proposal. At the same time, it did not go anywhere near branding China as aggressor or even of suggesting a major Chinese responsibility in the armed conflict. The editorial tended to project a stance of strict neutrality which indicated an anxiety from the Soviet side for ceasefire.

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Pravda, 25 October 1962.

Kosygin's speech on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the October Revolution also portrayed the abandoning of the pro-China attitude. He stated:

The Soviet people cannot but express their regrets over the events that are happening in the Sino-Indian border, where so much blood has been shed through armed conflict. This conflict strengthens the hands of imperialists only, who are doing everything to spread war and destroy the friendship between the great peoples of China and India.

The instigators of the war, want to make use of anti-democratic circles in India for their own objects, who are obstructing the progressive strength in the country and who want India to be included in the aggressive war blocs.

We think that the right decision would be to cease fire and carry out reasonable steps towards negotiations between India and the P.R.C. (prolonged applause) because there are no such fundamental opposition and differences which cannot be settled through round table conferences.... 1

By December 1962 one sees a further shift in Soviet policy - a definite move towards India and away from China. With the further aggravation of the Great Debate, and the consequent Sino-Soviet rift, Moscow even abandoned its position of neutrality; and in the face of bitter Chinese criticism on the Soviet stand on Cuba the Soviet Union issued a scathing criticism of Peking's role in the Sino-Indian border conflict.

In fact, even before December, the well known Soviet academician and theoretician Boris I Ponomoriev, who was a member of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. indirectly attacked China for committing aggression on India. In what was

1 Pravda, 7 November 1962, p. 2, as cited in J.A. Naik, Soviet Policy Towards India, p. 156.

an obvious reference to the Chinese attack on India, he declared that "One could preach about the struggle against imperialism and simultaneously carry on provocative actions which could not strengthen but only undermine the cause of peace and socialism."¹

It is probable that strong Soviet diplomatic pressure on China might have been an important factor responsible for the latter's announcement of the "unilateral ceasefire" offer. On 22 November, all the main Soviet newspapers printed both the Chinese ceasefire offer and the statement made by Prime Minister Nehru on this issue on 21 November in the Lok Sabha.² On 11 December again, the texts of the Chinese note and India's reply to it appeared side by side in the Soviet papers. Before this, Yu. Mansurov in an article in Za rubezhon had urged "representatives of India and China, to meet as soon as possible for negotiations and to display mutual understanding and cooperation with the aim of finding a mutually acceptable solution to the frontier question."³

At the Italian Communist Party Congress, held in December 1962, F. Koslov criticized the Chinese party of what he called "adventuristic position" on the Sino-Indian border conflict. "Those who are certain of their historic position", he said, "have no need to play with fire and endanger all the achievements of civilization."⁴

1 Pravda, 18 November 1962.

2 As cited by R. Vaidyanathan, "Chinese Aggression and India", International Studies, Special Double Issue, vol. V, no. 1-2.

3 Za rubezhon (Abroad), no. 48, 1 December 1962, p. 14.

4 New York Times, 4 December 1962.

However, the most authoritative, comprehensive and detailed pronouncement, that clearly marked the pro-Indian shift, was the one made by Prime Minister Khrushchev on 12 December 1962, before the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. While welcoming China's unilateral withdrawal of troops, he however insinuated that China had started the war.¹ Taking the Chinese to task for getting involved in a conflict over territory of no value, he said:

The areas disputed by China and India were sparsely populated and of little value to human life. The Soviet Union could not possibly entertain the thought that India wanted to start a war with China. The Soviet Union adhered to Lenin's views on boundary disputes. Its experience of over forty five years proved that there was no boundary dispute which could not be solved without resorting to arms.²

Further rebuking China, he said:

It may be asked - How can you claim that this was a reasonable step, when it was taken so many lives had been laid down and so much bloodshed? Would it not have been better if the sides had not resorted to hostilities at all? Yes, of course this would have been better... Of course people could be found who say: Here is the C.P.R. now withdrawing its troops actually to the line on which the conflict began, wouldn't it have been better not to have moved from positions where they formerly stood? These arguments are understandable, they show that people display concern and regret over what has happened.³

Reacting to Peking's charge of Soviet withdrawal before American arms over Cuba, Khrushchev continued,

1 Pravda, 13 December 1962, pp. 1-5, C.D.S.P. vol. XIV, no. 52, pp. 7-8.

But comrades, there are people who try to put another interpretation on the decision taken by the Government of the C.P.R. They say: Is this not a retreat?.... Is this not a concession on the part of the Chinese comrades?.... Some are already saying that China ceased hostilities because India began to receive support from the American and British imperialists who are providing that country with arms. 1

Pointing out that the conflict had only served to strengthen the reactionary forces within India, he stated:

Tomorrow if the war continues, anyone who utters a word against the war will be considered a Communist. Consequently pacifists will also be based in this category. Here you have a debauch by reactionary forces by the most brazen militarists and reactionaries. Evidently the Chinese Comrades also took this into account when they decided the question of cease fire and withdrawal of troops. 2

Soviet reaction to the Sino-Indian dispute during the last phase can also be obtained from the indignant Chinese. On 15 December 1962, the People's Daily in its editorial complained that China was "censured" for the Sino-Indian border dispute "as if China had precipitated a disaster"³. It went on to say in scolding tones:

The strange thing is that some people who claim to be Marxists/Leninists have forgotten Marxism/Leninism completely. They have never bothered to make analysis from the class view point of Marxism/Leninism of the Nehru Government's reactionary policy. Those who accuse China of having pushed the Nehru Government to the West are mistaking the very cause for the effort. Throughout the Sino-Indian boundary dispute, they have all along confounded right and wrong pretending to be neutral, calling China "brother" while actually regarding the Indian reactionaries as their kinsmen. 4

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Sunday Standard (New Delhi), 16 December 1962.

4 As reported in Dawn (Karachi) 17 December 1962.

The same charges were reiterated against the Soviet Union and her allies by the Chinese delegate, at the Berlin Congress of the East German Socialist Unity Party held in January 1963. Here, Wu Hsiu-Chan said that it was highly regrettable that "the Nehru Government is also supported and encouraged by some self styled Marxists/Leninists, who have disregarded facts, ignored Chinese explanations and reversed right and wrong."¹

The C.P.S.U. secret letter despatched in January 1963, to other Communist parties, while revealing the Sino-Soviet divergence as a whole, also sheds light on the nature of Soviet response to the India-China border issue in particular. Even though the letter acknowledged the McMahon Line as artificial, it however contended that its artificiality could not be held as a stimulant for provocative military operations, "which were bound to throw India into the arms of the capitalists"

The very fact that Soviet Union continued her economic assistance to India including military supplies and the fact that she gave assurance to honour all commitments to India provided additional proof of her pro-Indian stand.

Defending Soviet arms supplies and Indo-Soviet relations, the above mentioned letter, stated:

The policies of India and the U.S.S.R. have much in common. India tried genuinely to find a path to neutral absolute independence and there were many socialist elements which it was worth encouraging. 3

1 Link (New Delhi), 27 January 1963.

2 As cited by David Floyd, Mao Against Khrushchev, p. 366.

3 Ibid.

The letter censured China for trying to undo years of Soviet effort towards building up Indo-Soviet friendship.¹ It further continued "Not only that - today the capitalists are supplying arms to India because Chinese aggression forced them to do so". In an obvious reference to the ouster of V.K. Krishna Menon from the Nehru Cabinet, Khrushchev said, "The Chinese aggression also had the consequence that we lost one of our most faithful friends among the Indian leaders and that because he relied on our help."²

The beginning of 1964 (and after) saw an absolute concretization of the Soviet pro-Indian stand. In February 1964 Suslov in his Report to the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party condemning Chinese policy towards India said:

No matter how the Chinese leaders try to belatedly justify their behavior at the moment, they cannot escape their responsibility for the fact that by their actions they essentially helped the extreme reactionary circles of imperialism, thereby aggravating an already complicated and dangerous situation in the world. 3

Reproving the Chinese leaders for joining hands with Pakistan in an anti-India alliance, Suslov said:

While allowing relations with India, which as everybody knows is not a member of military blocs, to deteriorate sharply, the Chinese leadership has factually made an alliance with Pakistan, a member of SEATO and CENTO, which are threatening the peace and security of the

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Suslov's Report on "Struggle of the C.P.S.U. for the Unity of World Communist Party", New Times, no. 15, supplement 1964, p. 49.

Asian peoples.... How is it possible, it may be asked, to abuse and slander the socialist countries and the communist parties, and, at the same time, with the whole world watching shower compliments on the reactionary government in Pakistan? 1

Shortly afterwards, Pravda devoted a major editorial on India, as a rebuff to Chinese criticism of Soviet policies of supporting India against China. 2 It stated:

The Chinese leaders, however, are dissatisfied with the Soviet Union's peaceful stand. Perhaps they wished to solve the frontier dispute with India by military means and hoped to receive Soviet assistance in this matter. If this is what the Peking leaders wanted, well, then they do have reasons to be "angry" at the Soviet stand. 3

Reasons for Soviet Perspectives

It will be interesting to trace the course of this transformation of Soviet policy; a transformation so dextrously executed that it hardly left any rough edge while reversing the policy; endorsement of the Chinese view to start with, then a position of neutrality and finally full support to India. What kind of influences were at play behind this seemingly vacillating attitudes of the Soviet Union during the Sino-Indian border dispute? This particular phase of Soviet perspectives reveals an interplay of doctrinal polemics and operational strategies.

It is essential to relate Soviet perspectives on Sino-Indian affairs to the wider ideological rift between the Soviet

1 Ibid., p. 50.

2 "Dangerous Seat of Tension in Asia", Pravda, editorial, 19 September 1963.

3 Ibid.

Union and China. It is indeed significant that as Indo-Soviet relations improved, both Sino-Soviet as well as Sino-Indian relations deteriorated.

A major factor responsible for the emergence of polemics between Soviet Union and China was the contradictions between Khrushchev's version of Marxism/Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's version of Marxism/Leninism. These were serious contradictions which pertained to the fundamental principles of Marxian theory and practice, which included the assessment of the international situation, the kind of strategy and tactics that the Communist bloc should adopt in its confrontation with the West, and the role to be played by the newly emerging nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.¹

Briefly the Soviet version stood for an adaptation of the ideology of Marxism to combat existing realities. World War II had revealed the fatal potentials of the bomb. Post-Stalinist leadership argued that the possession of nuclear weapons by both Moscow and Washington necessitated the ruling out of an armed confrontation between the capitalist and socialist forces for bringing about social change. A nuclear confrontation between the two forces would in no way further the cause of communism but only result in the extermination of all social systems. Therefore, it was essential that the two forces avoid actual conflict but tolerate one another in a peaceful coexistence. At the same time the Communist goal of world revolution would

1 For a detailed analysis of the Sino-Soviet dispute see W.E. Griffith, The Sino-Soviet Rift (London, 1964); The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1966-61 (New York, 1966).

be achieved through a peaceful transition to socialism. This in turn entailed the designation of a progressive role for the national bourgeoisie of the Third World countries, for they were representative of the intermediary stage between full-fledged capitalism and the establishment of socialism. Hence, Moscow argued that Communist support should be given to these non-capitalist (though still non-Communist) economies, so as to at least keep them disengaged from the West.¹

Peking repudiated each one of these arguments. According to Mao Tse-tung, the capitalist forces could be defeated only by a continuous offensive against them; and this must be particularly so in the underdeveloped nations for they were the areas that were most vulnerable.²

Soviet position in the ideological polemics carried to operational levels of foreign policy, led to Soviet neutrality on the Sino-Indian border skirmishes of 1959.

With particular reference to India such a Soviet reappraisal of Marxian philosophy, gave rise to two important developments -

- (1) In the envisaged atmosphere of detente, non-alignment had a significant role to play. Indian non-alignment was even more important, for India represented the bridge to other non-aligned and Third world states.
- (2) With the recognition of the national bourgeoisie as a progressive force, economic and political support for the Nehru Government was justified.

1 Harish Kapoor, Soviet Union and the Emerging Nations, pp. 72-73.

2 Ibid.

Therefore, on the one hand, the Chinese divergence from the Moscow line had become increasingly apparent to the Soviets. On the other hand, by 1959, the Soviet Union's patient efforts towards the non-aligned world had borne fruit - Soviet Union had already established substantial economic and political relations with most of the non-aligned states and had succeeded in maintaining their disengagement from the West. Soviet Union thus had little enthusiasm for undoing those achievements.

Here then was the USSR taking the unprecedented stand of neutrality in a dispute between Communist China and non-Communist India ! The neutralist style made Tass talk in terms of "regret" over the incidents at the Sino-Indian border which were "tragic" and "deplorable". It would urge "friendly India" and "fraternal China" to seek a negotiated settlement. It then stated in rather ambiguous terms that the inspirers of international tension were trying to discredit the idea of peaceful coexistence between States with different social systems.¹ By proclaiming such neutrality, the Soviet Union showed the first signs of its growing detachment from China.² One Indian author remarks, "Khrushchev decided not to remain neutral by proclaiming neutrality".

Behind the scenes, the Soviet tilt towards India was even more apparent. As disclosed later by the Chinese, the C.P.S.U. Central Committee had informed the C.P.C. in verbal notification that "one cannot possibly seriously think that a state such as

1 Pravda, 10 September 1959.

2 Bhabhani Sen Gupta, The Fulcrum of Asia (New York: Pegasus, 1970), p. 81.

India which is militarily and economically immeasurably weaker than China would really launch a military attack on China and commit aggression against it".¹

Later in June 1960 at a closed session of a Communist gathering, Khrushchev is said to have censured the Chinese for having acted as "pure nationalists" on the border disputes.²

In fact the Sino-Indian conflict formed a major bone of contention in Sino-Soviet differences and played an important role in the Sino-Soviet rift. It was in the Sino-Indian dispute that Sino-Soviet differences first bubbled to the surface. The exact extent of the inroads already made into the monolithic nature of the Communist bloc was brought out by the Chinese reaction to the Soviet stand of 1959.

In a later Jin-min Jih-pao editorial, the Chinese themselves noted:

The truth is that the internal differences among the fraternal parties were first brought into the open, not in the summer of 1960, but on the eve of the Camp David talks in September 1959 --on 9th September 1959 to be exact. On that day a socialist country, turning a deaf ear to China's repeated explanations of the true situation and to China's advice, hastily issued a statement on a Sino-Indian border incident through its official news agency. Making no distinction between right and wrong, the statement expressed regret over the border clash and in reality condemned China's correct stand. They even said it was tragic and deplorable. Here is the first instance in history in which a socialist country instead of condemning the armed provocations of the reactionaries of a

-
- 1 "Truth About How the Leaders of the C.P.S.U. have Allied Themselves with India against China", People's Daily, 2 November 1959, as quoted in Harish Kapoor, "India and the Soviet Union", Survey, vol. XVI, no. 1, 1970, p. 204.
 - 2 Cited by Richard Siegel, "Chinese Efforts to Influence Soviet Policy in India", India Quarterly, vol. XXIV, no. 3, July-September 1968, pp 224.

capitalist country, condemned another fraternal socialist country when it was confronted with such armed provocation. 1

For the next couple of years, Sino-Indian relations deteriorated while Indo-Soviet relations improved with astonishing speed.

However the scene was slightly different in October 1962, when the Chinese launched their major offensive. The timing of the Chinese action was perfect. It caught the Soviet Union unawares and put her in an extremely embarrassing position. Moscow maintained a careful silence on the outbreak of hostilities on the Sino-Indian border for five days, and then suddenly made a volte face from her earlier position of neutrality and squarely sided with the Chinese. Why did the Soviet Union react in such a manner?

Within a few days of the Chinese offensive on India, the American President declared the Cuban blockade (24 October) on the ships carrying war material to Cuba. This Cuban blockade was far more disconcerting to the Soviet Union than the Sino-Indian war, for it was a sudden and complete challenge to Soviet diplomacy.

The Chinese military action synchronized perfectly with the Cuban missile crisis, leaving the Soviet Union doubly embarrassed and in a most unenviable position. The immediate Soviet response to the Cuban blockade was head on collision with America. On 24 October and 25 October, Soviet ships, with

1 See Great Debate (People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1963), p. 70. The book contains a collection of important documents in the Sino-Soviet conflict.

obvious directions to shoot their way through the U.S. blockade,¹ were seen advancing towards the Caribbean Sea. In such a crisis situation it was essential for the Soviet Union to rally Communist support for her actions in Cuba. In order to solicit such support from her Communist ally Moscow was forced to barter her neutrality on the Sino-Indian conflict.

Consequently, the first Pravda² editorial on the dispute after the outbreak of military operations talked of the "notorious Mac Mohan Line, which has never been recognized by China, and endorsed the Chinese peace proposals as constructive and as evidence of sincere concern over relations with India."³

However, as soon as the Cuban crisis subsided, and the Soviet Union decided to withdraw her missiles in Cuba, Moscow's need for Peking's support also diminished. Therefore, Moscow could not afford to discard her pro-Peking garb and return to her original line of neutrality. This she did through the second editorial of 5 November 1962.⁴

This editorial on the border question did not even mention the McMahon Line and made no reference to the Chinese proposals for peace. It simply urged for an immediate ceasefire and prompt negotiations between the sides to find a mutually acceptable solution to the problem.⁵

1 The Statesman (New Delhi), 25 October 1962, as cited by J.A. Naik, Soviet Policy Towards India, p. 154.

2 Pravda, 25 October 1962.

3 Ibid.

4 Pravda, 5 November 1962.

5 Ibid.

Thus the initial Soviet endorsement of Chinese views was merely tactical and resorted to for the specific purpose of meeting a particularly complex situation. Soviet global strategy of achieving peaceful coexistence remained unchanged. The first editorial was written after the Cuban blockade had already come into effect. If India was not unduly irked by this Soviet stand it was because she was aware of the Soviet dilemma at that moment. In fact Nehru went to the extent of stating that he understood Soviet difficulties on the issue. He said:

The Soviet Union has been, as the House knows, consistently friendly to us. It has been put in a very difficult position in this matter, because they have been and are allies of China and hence the embarrassment to them as between a country with which they are friendly and a country which is their ally. We have realized that and we do not expect them to do anything which would definitely mean a breach over there. It is not for us to suggest to any country. But we have had their good will all along, even very recently, and that is a consolation to us and we certainly have that in the future. 1

Further, even though the Soviet Union was hesitant to give military aid to India during the war period, she made it obvious that no strong objections would be raised, if India sought assistance from the USA provided there was no military pact between New Delhi and Washington.

With the escalation of the Sino-Soviet dispute, Soviet Union even abandoned her neutrality and swung completely in India's favour. One stimulus for the aggravation of the Moscow-Peking discord was the stiff attitude of the Chinese on

1 Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Prime Minister on Chinese Aggression, p. 87.

Soviet actions during the Cuban crisis. China stood for a direct Soviet confrontation with the USA on Cuba. Soviet withdrawal, therefore, met with Chinese criticism. Denouncements of Soviet policy gushed forth in torrents. Peking insinuated that Moscow had behaved in a "cowardly", "capitulationist" and "irresponsible" manner allowing herself to be intimidated by the superficial power of the American "paper tiger"¹.

Peking, therefore, could not be silenced by Soviet neutrality. Besides, rumbles of suspicion about Soviet friendship were beginning to be heard in India. The combined result was a scathing criticism by Moscow of Peking's role in the border conflict.

While welcoming the Chinese withdrawal, Khrushchev pointedly asked, "It may be asked how can you call this a reasonable step when it was taken after so many lives had been lost and so much blood shed? Would it not have been better if the sides did not resort to hostilities altogether? Yes, of course, it could have been better."² Accusing China of their deliberate timing, Suslov in his Report to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. stated:

It is a fact that when the Caribbean crisis was at its height, the P.R.C. Government extended the armed conflict on the Sino-Indian frontier. No matter how the Chinese leaders try to belatedly justify their behaviour at that moment they cannot escape their responsibility for the fact that by their actions they essentially helped the extreme reactionary circles of imperialism, thereby aggravating an already complicated and dangerous situation in the world. 3

1 Peking Review, vol. V, no. 51, 21 December 1962, p. 8.

2 Pravda, 13 December 1962.

3 New Times, no. 15, supplement 1964, p. 49.

Castigating China for contriving with Pakistan - a member of the SEATO and CENTO military blocs - against a non-aligned India, he declared, "it is a fact, that having discarded their 'revolutionary phrase-mongering' the Chinese leaders are steering a course that can hardly be regarded as compatible with the principled position of the socialist countries with respect to imperialist blocs."¹

Soviet support for a non-Communist but non-aligned India against a Communist China, stemmed from sources primarily ideological abetted by pragmatic considerations.

By their attack on India, the Chinese were not merely claiming tracts of uninhabited, snowbound territories, but were forcing the more fundamental question of ideology by challenging Khrushchev's assessment of India. In Chinese calculation Soviet support for India would mean public Soviet denunciation of fraternal China and in the process the Soviet Union would be stigmatizing herself among the nations of the Communist bloc. On the other hand, Soviet support for the Chinese would not only have undone years of Indo-Soviet rapprochement but also dealt a blow to the Khrushchevian strategy of peaceful coexistence in which non-alignment played a big role.

The Chinese attack certainly put Indian non-alignment to a severe test, for India was forced to seek military aid from the West - this inevitably led to Soviet discomfiture for the Soviet leadership had made India the model of non-alignment and peaceful transition to socialism via national democracy. The Chinese were out to prove that Indian non-alignment was in

1 Ibid.

reality a farce and that its national bourgeoisie whom the Soviet Union was supporting was far from progressive.

The Chinese criticized Nehru (this criticism incidentally came just after the pro-China editorial) as a royal representative of the ruling class alliance and described the Nehru Government as reflecting "reactionary nationalism". The Soviet Union was asked to denounce the Indian bourgeoisie as the underdog of imperialism - and this when Soviet Union had all along been supporting the Nehru Government as "progressive" ¹! A natural consequence was the editorial of 5 November 1962, ² announcing Soviet neutrality and later, the more explicit attack on the critics of the national bourgeoisie. Soviet Union in September 1963 attacked China's efforts to prove that "Nehru's Government is imperialist; that it strives allegedly to create a huge empire which would be bigger than the British Empire. In the light of such claims, it is difficult to believe the sincerity of the Chinese leaders, who make assurances that they are striving to achieve a peaceful settlement of the frontier dispute with India". ³

Defending Indian non-alignment and Soviet support for it, Soviet Union said, "The policies of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. have much in common. India tried genuinely to find a path to neutral absolute independence, and there were many socialist elements which it was worth encouraging." ⁴

1 Pravda, 25 October 1962.

2 People's Daily, 27 October 1962.

3 Pravda, 5 November 1962.

4 Pravda, 19 September 1963.

5 C.P.S.U., "Secret letter of January 1963 to other Communist Parties, as cited in David Floyd, op. cit., p. 366.

Accusing the Chinese for trying to undo years of Indo-Soviet rapprochement the letter stated:

We begged - yes, we begged - the Chinese to stop the military operations immediately and we offered immediate mediation for which India was ready. We wanted to prevent India from being forced to turn for military aid to the United States and Great Britain, who had been waiting for such an opportunity from the Chinese who call themselves communists. Thus, years of hard striving for Indian friendship and Indian neutrality went for nothing. 1

1 Ibid.

Chapter IV

THE INDO-PAK CLASHES AND SOVIET REASSESSMENT OF SOUTH ASIA

Two clashes took place on the Indo-Pakistan border in 1965 :
in the Rann of Kutch and in Kashmir.

The Rann of Kutch Dispute :

The Rann of Kutch covers about 900 square miles of territory and has been described as "a vast expanse of naked tidal mudflats, a black desolation flaked with saline efflorescences"¹. Most of the area lies below 6,000 feet. This arid region lies between the dry shores of Sind and the fluctuating flank of the Arabian Sea branch of the monsoon.²

The official gazetteer of the province of Sind published in Karachi in 1907, described the boundaries of Sind as follows:

Bounded on the East by the native states of Marwar, Jaisalmer and Bhawalpur, on the North by a small corner of the Punjab and by the arid sandy portion of the territories, of the Khan of Kalat known as Kachhi; on the West by the mountainous part of the same territories, the boundary line running along the ridge of Kirthari range and the Habb river; and on the South by the Arabian Sea and the Rann of Kutch. ³

It was thus known that the Rann of Kutch was regarded even in 1907 as being outside the province of Sind.

A concise historical survey of Kutch reveals that for hundreds of years, the Rann protected Kutch from attack from the North and that Mutch was in the hands of the Rajputs in the fourteenth century (A.D.). In 1930, however, Kutch became a

1 Asian Recorder, 18-24 June 1965, p. 6511.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

part of the Mughal Empire and remained so for the next one hundred and twenty-five years. In 1815, the Maharao of Kutch was defeated by the British. A Chief Commissioner's State¹ after independence, Kutch was eventually merged in Gujerat.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India published by the then British administration (1909) also stated that the then Province of Sind "was bounded on the South by the Rann of Kutch and the Arabian Sea"². In 1908, the Province of Sind raised a minor claim on the territories under the rule of the princely ruler of Kutch. This was settled by the British Government of Bombay in its Resolution No. 11 of 24 February 1914, in which the Government laid down the boundary between Kutch and Sind.³ Demarcation on the ground by the placement of pillars pursuant to this Resolution was also undertaken with the full knowledge of the Sind Governor, the Kutch princely state and the British Government as the paramount Power and extended to the Trijunction of Karachi and Hyderabad districts and the northern limits of the Rann. As a result of this Resolution of 1914, a roughly triangular boundary portion of the territory was awarded to the Province of Sind and continues to be a part of Sind today.⁴ The fact that Pakistan retains this triangular portion awarded to Sind by the British administration in 1914 is a confirmation of the validity of that Resolution.

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

Such historical data is of extreme importance here because the central cause of the Indo-Pak dispute of April 1965, was the claim made by Pakistan for incorporating within her own boundaries certain areas in the Rann of Kutch. This claim was first put forward by Pakistan in 1948, and three reasons were advanced by her in its support. However all three were answered by India.

The first reason put forth by Pakistan was that the Rann of Kutch was invaded by a King of Sind in - to which India replied that there was nothing to show that this King maintained jurisdiction amounting to domain over the Rann of Kutch, and that the garrison established by this King was soon withdrawn by his son. The second argument put forth by Pakistan was that in 1875, a Sind official reported that the Kutch-Sind boundary lay at Dharmasala which is in the middle of the Rann. India's reply was that the paramount Power always accepted the jurisdiction of the Kutch durbar over the whole of Rann. The third Pakistani claim was that the Rann is either a landlocked sea or a boundary lake and according to international law, the boundary in this case must run through the middle of this area. To this, India answered that in 1906 the Foreign Department of the Government of India had conclusively decided that it was more correct to show the Rann as a marsh than as a lake.¹

After an examination of the Indo-Pak border by the Prime Ministers of both countries, the demarcation of the entire Indo-West Pakistan borders was entrusted to the Central Surveys of

1 Ibid.

India and Pakistan. Though the Punjab-West Pakistan and Rajasthan-West Pakistan borders were fully demarcated and despite repeated requests by the Indian Government, the Survey Department of Pakistan did not attend a meeting to arrange for the early demarcation of the Gujerat-West Pakistan border.¹ In an Indo-Pak ministerial level conference of 1960,² both countries agreed to collect further data regarding the Kutch-Sind boundary as well as to hold discussions later "with a view to arriving at a settlement of this dispute".³ An official spokesman denied in New Delhi on 8 May that the Swaran Singh-General Sheikh communique of 11 January 1960, made any reference to any dispute over the Kutch Sind border; he said that the word "dispute" in the communique was not regarding any territory or even boundary. "The dispute is that India maintains that the frontier is undisputed and Pakistan maintains the contrary".⁴

This was the background to the Indo-Pak clashes of April 1965.

Duration and Outcome :

On 7 April 1965, the Indian Minister of Home Affairs Mr. G.L. Nanda told the Lok Sabha that Pakistani authorities had "disturbed the status quo in the Kutch-Sind border and illegally set up two standing posts about 1000 and 2000 yards within our territory". On 8 April, the Indian Ministry of

1 Ibid.

2 11 January 1960.

3 Asian Recorder, 18-24 June 1965, p. 6512.

4 Ibid.

External Affairs, handed a note to the Pakistani High Commission reiterating India's demand that Pakistan immediately withdrew its two posts in the Rann of Kutch and restore the status quo. The Pakistani High Commission's reply evaded both the question of the restoration of the status quo ante as well as the Indian proposal for a joint meeting of the area commanders of the two sides.¹ Meanwhile border skirmishes continued, specifically at the Indian border posts of Kanjarkot, Sardar and Vigokot. On 15 April, India accepted Pakistan's proposal of ceasefire which was to be followed by a meeting at the official level for the restoration of status quo ante and thereafter by higher level talks to discuss the boundary question.

However further clashes occurred on 20 April, 50 miles East of Kanjarkot. In a letter to the President of the UN Security Council, India drew his attention to "Pakistan's unprovoked and aggressive military acts on Indian territory in Gujerat". It clearly stated that before the partition of India, the Province of Sind, which now formed part of Pakistan, and the state of Kutch and Gujerat had well-defined boundaries "which were not altered in any way by the partition". It also stated that the boundary between Kutch and Sind was clearly depicted in the pre-partition maps published by the Surveyor General of India.²

On 23 April 1965, the Pakistani army launched a series of massive attacks simultaneously at four points along a 50 mile stretch on the Kutch border but these were repulsed with heavy

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

casualties. These attacks were launched at the four posts of Sardar, Vigokot, Chadbet and one about 30 miles East of Kanjarkot. A general mobilization of armed forces was ordered in Pakistan. On 30 April, Pakistan rejected an Indian ceasefire proposal and instead suggested that India and Pakistan should withdraw from the "disputed" territory. This was obviously not acceptable to India who maintained that no territory was under "dispute", that all borders were clearly marked and that the territory occupied¹ by Pakistan was Indian territory and not "disputed" territory. On 3 May Prime Minister Shastri reiterated that there could be no ceasefire in the Rann of Kutch without simultaneous agreement on the restoration of the status quo.

Finally on 30 June, India and Pakistan signed simultaneously in Karachi and New Delhi an Agreement for ceasefire in the Rann of Kutch to be operative from 6 a.m. on 1 July. According to the agreement, troops of both countries would withdraw from Kutch² within a week.

Soviet Attitudes :

Before presenting the Soviet views on the Rann of Kutch, it is essential to point out certain developments which could have had an important bearing on later Soviet attitudes:

(a) It was disclosed by Shastri after the Pak aggression in Kanjarkot area that certain documents captured from Pakistani soldiers revealed that the "plan for assault was drawn up in the second week of March, the orders for attack were given on

1 Asian Recorder, 1965, p, 5463.

2 Asian Recorder,

April 7th and the actual attack was launched on April 9th¹.

(b) Pakistani President Ayub Khan paid a visit to both Peking and Moscow in March and April 1965 respectively.

(c) The joint communique issued at the end of the talks between the Pakistani and Soviet heads of State at the conclusion of the abovementioned visit, condemned colonialism and imperialism and supported the people who were fighting for their right of self-determination.²

(d) The Chinese began a military build-up along the Sino-Indian boundary exactly during the time that Pak aggression was taking place on the Indo-Pak border.³

Soviet Union's views on the Rann of Kutch clash between India and Pakistan were strictly objective and non-partisan. This neutral stand was officially announced by the Soviet Union only on 9 May 1965 - almost a month after Indo-Pak fighting began. Soviet news releases in the meanwhile maintained a posture of rigid and objective neutrality. This neutrality was to later enable Kremlin to reap a rich harvest in the international field.

The Soviet attitudes on the issue were made clear first by Tass statement of 8 May and secondly by the views expressed by Kosygin on 16 May.

Summing up the dispute, the Soviet pronouncement stated:

On one of the Indian-Pakistani frontier in the area of the Rann of Kutch, border incidents took place which grew into an armed conflict. According to foreign Press Reports, formally this

1 Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs), vol. XI, no. 4, April 1965.

2 Dawn, 12 April 1965.

3 Patriot, vol. III, no. 23, 21 April 1965.

conflict stemmed from a different interpretation by India and Pakistan of the border line in the uninhabited area of the Rann of Kutch.

At present big army forces have been concentrated in the area. As a result things have heated up. It is not hard to see that a military settlement of the Indian Pakistani conflict runs counter to the interests of both states. The events in the Rann of Kutch further strained relations between the two countries; the course of events far from leading to the settlement further aggravate the dispute. If the conflict is not extinguished, its further development will sap the strength of both countries, bring more casualties and endanger peace in Asia. 1

It said that only the imperialist quarters of Western Powers were interested in this development of events. Pointing out that both countries had already realized the need for a peaceful settlement of the Indo-Pak dispute, the statement said:

The head of the Government of India - a country whose policy of non-alignment finds broad international recognition - Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, as far back as April 16th stated that India was ready to hold talks with Pakistan in as much as it always seeks to settle international conflicts by peaceful means. 2

"Speaking in the Parliament of India on 28 April in connection with the events in the Kutch areas, Prime Minister Shastri said: "We are prepared to go along the road of peace but we cannot go alone. Pakistan must decide to renounce military actions." 3 The statement further said:

the President of Pakistan Mohammad Ayub Khan stated on April 27th that Pakistan seeks to settle its difficulties peacefully by negotiations and that Kutch - the area of latest incidents - is not fit for life and not worth

1 Tass Statement, 8 May 1965.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

quarrelling about. On May 1st he said that Pakistan was ready to sit at a conference table and settle the conflict peacefully. 1

It concluded by declaring that Soviet

circles express the hope that the Government of India and Pakistan will display necessary restraint and patience, will find ways of settling the conflict by peaceful means. It is sincerely hoped in the Soviet Union that the differences between India and Pakistan will be settled by them by way of direct talks with consideration for the interests of both sides. 2

On 14 May, Mr. Kosygin told Indian newsmen that it would be better if the status quo ante was restored in the Rann of Kutch. He said that the Soviet Government felt that a war between India and Pakistan would result in the loss of millions of lives and cause much misery. He said, "I feel therefore that it would be better if the status quo ante is restored in the interests of peace." 3

He further said that India and Pakistan should not let the imperialists drive a wedge between them; there existed no inherent hatred in one country against the other and that any act of provocation would only mean playing into the hands of those who wished to create conflict. 4 He then asked "what can India and Pakistan gain by going to war? Neither India nor Pakistan will surrender territory." 5

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

However, even prior to these pronouncements, Soviet neutrality on the Indo-Pakistan disputes was manifest through certain more subtle gestures. One such was the omission of any mention of the Kashmir question in the joint communique issued at the end of President Ayub's visit to Moscow in April 1965. In fact the communique gave full support to "the people who were fighting for self-determination"¹. Pakistan opted to interpret this as support for her stand on Kashmir -- that the people of Kashmir should decide their own future.²

Yet another indication of Soviet neutrality was that despite the extremely warm welcome given to Premier Shastri on his State visit to Moscow in May 1965, the joint communique issued by Shastri and Kosygin on 19 May contained no reference to the Kutch dispute -- this in spite of China's vociferous support to Pakistan.³ The communique simply said that all international disputes, including border and territorial disputes should be settled by peaceful negotiations.⁴

The Kashmir Dispute :

Ever since India's independence and Pakistan's emergence Kashmir has been a bone of contention between the two states. In 1947, Pakistani troops marched into the state of Jammu and Kashmir and forcibly occupied territory, which later came to be known as 'Occupied' Kashmir. But Pakistan aimed at the

1 Dawn, 12 April 1965.

2 Ibid.

3 Foreign Affairs Record, vol. X, no. 9, September 1964.

4 Asian Recorder, 1962.

incorporation of the whole of the state of Kashmir within itself. And thus one witnesses continuous and persistent violations of the ceasefire line in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. In fact the then Defence Minister Y.B. Chavan said in the Lok Sabha on 26 April 1965 that within the short time span of six days i.e. between 25 March and 31 March 1965, Pakistan had committed sixty-four violations of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir.¹ However the incidents leading to the Indo-Pakistan war of September 1965, were of a rather extraordinary nature.

As early as June 1965, there were violations of the ceasefire line by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir when Pakistani troops fired at the Indian posts in Thidwal, Uri, Mendhar Nowshera and Akhnur sectors on 4 and 5 June. In fact Pakistani troops were seen digging on the Indian side of the ceasefire line on 3 June. There were repeated Pakistani attacks on Indian position in the Kargil sector in a bid to cut off the Srinagar-Leh road and choke supplies to Indian troops guarding the Sino-Indian border.²

With the aim of initiating a "local uprising" in Kashmir, around four to five thousand Pakistani soldiers disguised in civilian clothes began infiltrating across the ceasefire line in Kashmir into the state of Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 1965.³ Many attempts at sabotage were carried out causing great concern⁴

1

2 Ibid.

3 Report by Secretary General on the current situation in Kashmir, Official Records of the United Nations Security Council (SCOR), 8/6651, 3 September 1965.

4 Asian Recorder, 10-16 September 1965.

to the Indian Government. Indian security forces were alerted in order to round up these infiltrators. At this Pakistani troops crossed the ceasefire line resulting in encounters between the Indian and Pakistani forces. A heavy clash between the two occurred on 14 August in the Chamb sector, when a determined bid by Pakistan to cross the ceasefire line in battalion strength was foiled.¹ A spokesman of the Defence Ministry disclosed in New Delhi on 16 August that Indian forces had recaptured three Pakistani posts in the Kargil area following repeated Pakistani attempts to cut the vital Srinagar road. On 22 August yet another attempt at a major thrust into Indian territory was beaten back. The Indian forces crossed the ceasefire line in the Uri sector in order to prevent huge concentration of armed Pakistani infiltrators from entering the Kashmir valley, Bedor, and Haji Pir were occupied by India.²

On 1 September there was a massive attack by Pakistan on the Chamb sector.³ As a counter action, India launched a three-pronged offensive into West Pakistan in the vicinity of Lahore.⁴ This greatly jeopardized Pakistani defence.

A Resolution was passed by the Security Council on 4 September calling for immediate ceasefire in Kashmir.

To add fuel to fire, China accused India of "aggression" and gave full diplomatic support to Pakistan. In an intimidating

1 Asian Recorder, 10-16 September 1965.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4

tone she said that if the war was continued, India "must bear full responsibility for all consequences"¹.

On 8 September, India opened a second front in the vicinity of Karachi. The Pakistani forces suffered yet another setback when India launched an attack on two more sectors in Gadra and Siakkot on 9 September 1965.²

Perturbed at Pakistani setbacks and in order to divert Indian armed forces, the Chinese sent an ultimatum to the Indian Government on 17 September threatening of "grave consequences"³ within three days, if certain alleged military bases along the Sino-Indian border were not immediately dismantled. On 19 September, after moving her troops closer to Sikkim and Ladakh, China extended the deadline to another three days.⁴

Meanwhile in identical letters to Mr. Shastri and Mr. Ayub Khan, on 12 September, U Thant proposed a cessation of hostilities "in the entire area of the conflict" between the two countries with effect from 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 14 September. But Pakistan did not accept this ceasefire. On 20 September, the UN Security Council passed a Resolution "demanding" that India and Pakistan immediately order a cease-fire and withdraw their forces to their positions on 5 August. India immediately accepted the proposal and Pakistan on 21 September, thus ending the undeclared war between India and Pakistan.⁵

1 Peking Review, vol. VIII, no. 37, 10 September 1965.

2 New York Times, vol. 60, 9 September 1965, p. 1.

3 Peking Review, vol. VIII, no. 38, 17 September 1965, p. 14.

4 New York Times, vol. 60, 19 September 1965 supplement, p. 1, as cited in Kulkarni

5 Asian Recorder, 10-16 September 1965.

However, within four days of the conclusion of ceasefire, fresh Pakistani violations were reported. In fact, Pakistani Foreign Minister Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, went on to say that a permanent ceasefire was possible only if the Kashmir problem was solved and he formally refused to withdraw troops to the pre-5 August positions unless "immediate steps were taken to settle the Kashmir issue"¹.

Soviet Attitudes :

The late forties saw a Soviet Union who was almost apathetic to the developments in Kashmir; a Soviet Union almost disinterested in the outcome of these developments. Thus, during the first Indo-Pakistani encounter of 1948, when the Pakistan aided tribal forces attacked Kashmir, Soviet Union was an uninvolved outsider and a more or less objective account of the events was released by the Soviet Press. A Tass report on "the war in Kashmir" wrote:

At that time the preparations for intervention were already in full swing. In the areas along the Afghan border, British agents holding out promises of easy plunder incited the war-like Pathans (mountain tribes of Afghan origin) to march on Kashmir as "saviors of Islam".

On October 22nd, the invasion began. Some 2000 warriors of various tribes - equipped in Pakistan with modern weapons, trucks and patrol crossed and sacked the town of Baramulla, on 26th Oct. they appeared at the approach to Srinagar. ²

Pravda commented that the "Muslim Army" which attacked Kashmir was planned by a British General, Noel Baker³.

1 Ibid.

2 New Times, no. 40, 1948, p. 25.

3 Pravda, 3 November 1948, p. 4.

This neutrality was a natural resultant of a lack of Soviet involvement with the interests of either side. The Soviet Union at that time was just too preoccupied with her own various problems particularly that of rebuilding her shattered economy, to bother about the Kashmir problem. This attitude was also reflected in the Security Council where the speech of the Soviet delegate was brief to the extreme. In fact throughout 1948, when Kashmir figured prominently in the proceedings of the Security Council, the Soviet Union's attitude was that of an observer whose only interest in the issue emanated from the geographical proximity of the tension area (Kashmir) to the Soviet border.

This again was an inevitable consequence of the overall Soviet attitude towards the newly-independent Asian-African nations.

The first major speech of the Soviet Union in the Security Council, on the Kashmir issue was made during the consideration by the Security Council of Graham's Second Report on the Kashmir dispute. It was more an attack on Anglo-American interests in Kashmir, than a support for either India or Pakistan. However it so chanced that it proved favourable to India -- Pakistan was leaning heavily on American support and so any diatribe against the US position would pepse favour India.

Soviet involvement in the Korean affair and India's role as mediator, the news of Anglo-American construction of military bases in Occupied Kashmir to draw Pakistan into a Western-sponsored military alliance were factors which led Kremlin to review its earlier non-committal stand on Kashmir. Moreover, as the Soviet outlook on the Third World countries and particularly India underwent a change, a distinct shift in Soviet position on the Kashmir issue was also clearly discernible. The Soviet Union

gradually abandoned her negatively neutral stand in favour of India's position.

It was however in 1955, that Soviet Union declared unequivocal support for India. During the visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin to India in November-December 1955, Khrushchev openly declared in Srinagar that the question of Kashmir had been solved for "the people of Kashmir had already decided to join the Indian Union"¹. Again in his Report on "The visit to India, Burma and Afghanistan" to the Supreme Soviet, Bulganin reiterated, "The Kashmir issue has already been settled by the people of Kashmir themselves; they regard themselves as an integral part of the Republic of India, and desirous of working within the fraternal family of the Indian peoples.... The Soviet Government supports India's policy on the Kashmir issue because it fully accords with the interest of peace in this part of Asia.... 2

Pakistan's signature on various Western-sponsored military pacts³ further strengthened the pro-Indian Soviet position on Kashmir. In the Security Council too, Soviet support for India was complete. In 1957 and again in 1962, the Soviet Union vetoed Security Council Resolutions in defense of India's stand on Kashmir.⁴

Therefore ever since 1955, the Soviet stand on Kashmir was well-known -- it considered Kashmir to be part and parcel of Indian

1 New York Times, 11 December 1955, p. 1.

2 Bulganin went on to say, "We declared this when we were in Kashmir, we confirmed this declaration at the Press Conference in Delhi on December 14th, and we declare it today."

3 CENTO, SEATO, Baghdad Pact etc.

4 New Times, no. 2, supplement 1955, pp. 9-10.

territory. Throughout the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, Soviet Union was unhesitating in her constant support for India on her Kashmir stalemate.

However, the Soviet reading of the situation was somewhat different in 1965, and so also was her reaction to the Indo-Pak war in 1965. There was no outright support for India on the Kashmir issue as in earlier cases. Instead the Soviet Union maintained the strict line of neutrality that was adopted by her in the earlier Rann of Kutch dispute. Therefore, in one sense it was a continuation of this Rann of Kutch neutrality. But on the other hand it was for the first time since 1955, that Soviet Union had openly taken a neutral stand on the Kashmir dispute. Therefore, even though the Soviet stands on the Rann of Kutch and Kashmir disputes were identical, the significance of the latter was much deeper.

Also significant was the fact that even in spite of China's vociferous support for Pakistan, the Soviet Union did not deviate from the path of neutralism. Chinese protest notes to India and the troop movements by her along the Sino-Indian frontier did not produce the responses anticipated by China -- that of forcing Moscow to take sides. Soviet Union continued to remain the anxious onlooker.

Soviet Union officially announced its neutrality through an editorial in Pravda on 24 August 1965. This editorial not only gave an objective account of the war in Kashmir but also appealed to both India and Pakistan to end the war immediately. It not only refrained from taking sides but also declared that the main task was to stop bloodshed as war benefitted only the imperialists.

Entitled "Stop Bloodshed in Kashmir", the editorial simply stated, that there was "alarming news from the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. In the valleys of Kashmir, shots are resounding, the people's homes are burning and blood is flowing. An armed conflict has broken out between the two states." The strictly neutral position of the Soviet Union was clearly revealed by the following sentences:

The Indian and Pakistani Press give different versions of the situation. We will not go into a discussion here of which of these versions more precisely reflects the course of events. The main thing is to find a way to stop the bloodshed immediately and to liquidate the conflict.

Contending that Kashmir was "a grim colonial legacy", Pravda said that such a conflict would only benefit the imperialists. Stating that neither India nor Pakistan could afford a war, it said, "India and Pakistan are occupied with solving complicated domestic problems, first of all questions of their economic development which requires vast resources and the efforts of their peoples. India is completing the drawing up of its Fourth Five Year Plan, the fulfillment of which would be a new step on the road to the further strengthening of its economic independence." As for Pakistan, Pravda noted, "Pakistan has set about the implementation of its third five year Plan. Its peoples, who recently rejected the economic blackmail of the U.S.A. demand an independent foreign policy." The Soviet Union then urged for a peaceful settlement of the dispute through negotiations. Pravda also took the opportunity to deliberate upon Soviet relations with both India and Pakistan. Reaffirming her "longstanding, traditional ties with India", the editorial stated "the Soviet people highly value the general

course of India's foreign policy and its adherence to the principles of peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems", and it further reiterated support for India's policy of non-alignment.

Writing on ties with Pakistan, it noted, "The Soviet Union's relations with Pakistan are improving. We have often noted the steps taken by Pakistani statesmen that are arrived at developing these relations."

The non-partisan attitude was clearly brought out by Pravda's admission that the situation was complex. (The earlier attitude had stated in fairly simplistic terms that the Kashmir dispute had already been solved by the people of Kashmir.) The editorial stated:

The Soviet people are sincere friends of India and Pakistan. They understand the complexity of the present situation. But of course there is a way out. It can be found if the disputed problems are approached realistically.

A Tass report of 3 September included both Indian and Pakistani versions of events. It did not even mention the fact that Pakistani army had violated India's international frontier in the Chamb sector of Jammu, but merely stated that "In the course of August stubborn battles took place on the territory of the Indian part of Kashmir, between Indian police forces and troops on the one hand, and 'violators of the ceasefire line' on the other...."¹

The Tass statement of 7 September expressed anxiety over the developments on the Kashmir front. It said:

1 As cited by Bhagat Vats, Foreign Intrigue Against India (New Delhi, 1967), p. 131.

... The military conflict between India and Pakistan is causing serious concern in the Soviet Union for whom the course of preserving peace is dear. This concern is intensified still more by the fact that the conflict is taking place in an area directly contiguous to the borders of the Soviet Union. 1

Then, for the first time on the Kashmir issue, the Soviet Union offered to mediate to bring about a peaceful settlement of the dispute. The statement of the Soviet Union had called on both sides - on India, "whose policy of non-alignment" had won wide international recognition, and on Pakistan, to cease military operations immediately and to execute a mutual withdrawal of troops behind the ceasefire line established by the 1949 Indo-² Pak agreement. It then stated that the Soviet Union hoped that the two sides would enter into negotiations on a peaceful settle-³ ment of the conflict. It then declared that "both sides" could "count on the benevolent cooperation of the Soviet Union or as it is the established practice to say, on its good offices", if both sides considered it useful. The statement also drew attention to the urgency of the matter, and concluded in its neutralist tone by stating that hope was "being expressed in the Soviet Union that leaders of India and Pakistan" would "heed the⁴ voices of the friends of the Indian and Pakistan peoples." In fact this neutralist line can be traced in all official soviet reactions.

1 Pravda, 8 September 1965, p. 4.

2 Ibid.

3 Emphasis added.

4 Pravda, 8 September 1965.

On 12 September, Pravda published the messages of A.N. Kosygin to Prime Minister Shastri and President Ayub Khan in which the vital need for settling all disputes by peaceful means was stressed. In almost identical letters, the Premier pointed out that "the main emphasis should not be placed on the question of the causes of the conflict or on ascertaining who is right or wrong. The main efforts should be concentrated on an immediate cessation of military operations, on halting the tanks and silencing the guns."¹

Even though the Chinese note of 8 September was unable to force the Soviet Union to openly support India, the note certainly did not go unnoticed by the Soviet Union. A Tass statement in 14 September Pravda, after giving a brief description of the mounting military operations between India and Pakistan changed its tone considerably in its latter half. Clearly the finger was pointed at China when the statement noted

... There are also forces trying to derive advantages for themselves from the exacerbation of Indian Pakistani relations. Through their inflammatory statements they are instigating a further heating up of the military conflict. However such a turn of events could only worsen the situation and lead to the development of the present events, into a conflagration on an even larger scale. 2

Warning China of dire consequences if she did not abandon her intimidatory methods, the statement said in quite precise terms,

If matters take this course, many states one after another, may find themselves drawn into the conflict. This is a dangerous prospect.

1 Pravda, 12 September 1965, C.D.S.P. vol. XVII, no. 37.

2 Pravda, 14 September 1965, p. 3 and Izvestia, 14 September 1965, p. 1.

As historical experience affirms, this could have the gravest consequences not only for the peoples of the area where the conflict began but far beyond its borders as well. 1

That Moscow was not letting China go scot free for her outrageous accusations was made abundantly clear by Tass's reiteration of her warning in the concluding paragraph which said that "those who through their inflammatory statements and their policies are promoting the heating up of the conflict must be warned by the whole world, by all states, that they are thereby taking upon themselves the grave responsibility for such policies and such actions. No Government has the right to add fuel to the fire. The dangerous development of events must be stopped and peace must triumph on the borders between India and Pakistan."²

At the same time, Moscow did not show in any manner that she had foresaken her neutral position. On the other hand, she only reaffirmed her neutral position by stating that "no matter how one assessed the causes for the outbreak of military operations between India and Pakistan, one thing is clear: Their further expansion will profit only the forces of imperialism and reaction." Further, she once again appealed to both states for an immediate ceasefire and renewed her offer of "good offices"³ in the matter if the two sides so wished.

Soviet anxiety to end the war can be gauged by the numerous acts of persuasion undertaken by her. These efforts at persuasion were not merely verbal. In fact the first important step towards

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

the road to Tashkent was made as far back as 20 September 1965.

This policy of maintaining neutrality even as she was criticising China required the USSR to do some tight rope walking. She did it with much agility as can be seen in the line which Mr. Mikoyan adopted on 15 September at a Kremlin luncheon given in honour of the Burmese Premier, General Ne Win. He said that it was not possible for the Soviet Union to go into the merits of the conflict, or into the question of who was right and who was wrong. "The Soviet Union has clearly and unequivocally expressed its attitude to this regrettable and anxious event. The friends of the Indian and Pakistani peoples must prevent those who would like to pour oil on the flames, must do their utmost so that the conflict, far from spreading, be immediately liquidated."¹

In the messages of A.N. Kosygin to Shastri and Ayub Khan, on 20 September an important Soviet initiative was revealed. The letters suggested that a meeting be arranged between the two heads of State of India and Pakistan, and further² offered the Soviet city of Tashkent as a suitable meeting place. It also stated that "in the event that both sides should desire this, the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers could also take part in the meeting."³

The Soviet annoyance at the renewal of Chinese provocative notes to India was expressed on 23 September 1965 when a major article in Pravda was devoted to the situation on the Chinese-

1 As cited in Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 146.

2 Pravda, 20 September 1965, p. 1, G.D.S.P., vol. XVIII, no. 38.

3 Ibid.

Indian frontier. It was in the nature of a commentary presenting the Soviet assessment of the Chinese notes to India, and the movement and concentration of Chinese troops on the borders of India. Pravda said that such reports could not help but evoke the anxiety of all those interested in the earliest elimination of the India Pakistan conflict. The manner in which the commentary had been presented is revealing for it indirectly exposed the non-credibility of the Chinese charges against India.¹

As early as 13 September 1965, the Soviet weekly journal, Za Rubezhom, was critical of Chinese support to Pakistan. It said, "While Afro-Asian countries are concerned over the fratricidal conflict between India and Pakistan and want it to end so that Afro-Asian solidarity may not be disrupted, the Chinese Government has taken a different position. It has officially accused India of deliberate aggression and has expressed its conviction that the Pakistani people will boldly carry the struggle for defending the country and in the final account with the help of peaceloving countries and peoples of Asia and the whole world will give a rebuff to Indian aggression."²

In the Soviet political weekly New Times, D. Volski stressed that the conflict over Kashmir did not spring from a composition of the population (as against what Pakistan had claimed) of that State, but from the policy of British colonialism.³ It talked of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir and said that it was "because of"⁴

1 Pravda, 23 September 1965.

2 Za Rubezhom, 13 September 1965, as cited in Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 145.

3 New Times, 17 September 1965.

4 Emphasis added.

London's efforts that Kashmir became a bone of contention between the two states."¹ On the same day, Investia also published an item, which indirectly censured the Chinese action by stating that "outside forces are trying to make the situation worse by indiscriminately supporting one side."²

On 22 September, Pakistan also accepted the UN Ceasefire Resolution which India had already accepted a day earlier. On 23 September, Tass published the texts of Kosygin's congratulatory messages to Shastri and Ayub. The identical letters expressed Soviet relief at the ending of the conflict and praised the two leaders for displaying "realism, restraint and an understanding of the serious consequences that further development of the armed conflict would have."³

Soviet Press releases following the conclusion of ceasefire also revealed a continuation of the stand of neutrality. Neither party was blamed for instigating the war.

On 13 October 1965, New Times in an article entitled "Kashmir Conflict: Some Antecedents" stated that the Kashmir issue had been "aggravated all along by imperialist interference and intrigue". It said that America had become Britain's senior partner in exploiting the Kashmir situation.⁴ "London thought that Kashmir would be lost if it remained in India. So they entrusted to the U.S.A. the task of creating a powerful military

1 New Times, 17 September 1965.

2 Cited in Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 149.

3 Pravda, 24 September 1965, p. 1.

4 New Times, 13 October 1965.

outpost of the West in Kashmir. It strongly condemned U.S. intervention in Kashmir under the cloak of the United Nations.¹

An assessment of the Kashmir question after the ceasefire was also published in Literaturnya Gazeta of 27 October 1965. Though maintaining Soviet neutrality, a slight pro-India leaning can be deciphered at the same time. In it, S. Mikoyan said that India had to take "defensive action by proceeding towards Lahore to divert Pakistani forces. He accused Mountbatten for having engineered the "plebiscite" proposal and said that it had grounds² to regard the accession of Kashmir as a fait accompli."

That Moscow had no desire to prejudge the merits of either side's case cannot be seen more vividly than in the attitude adopted by her in the UN Security Council. In September 1965, Soviet Union for the first time abstained from employing its earlier unqualified veto to block a Resolution on the Kashmir hostilities. So far unequivocal support to the Indian stand on Kashmir had been a regular feature of Soviet diplomacy in the Security Council. Conversely, the Soviet anxiety to portray strict neutrality in the Indo-Pak War of 1965 was manifest by the fact that a 6 September Taga account of U Thant's Report to the UN Security Council based on General Nimmo's observations, significantly omitted Nimmo's statement that evidence clearly pointed to Pakistan's initial infiltration of irregulars into Kashmir from 5 August 1965.³

1 Ibid.

2 Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 176.

3 Simon W. Sheldon, Asian Survey, March 1967, "The Kashmir Dispute in Sino-Soviet Perspectives".

Throughout November/December 1965, the Soviet Union relentlessly strove to bring about peace and stability in the subcontinent. Continuous ceasefire violations spurred Soviet anxieties and led to a renewal of the offer of Soviet "good offices"¹ for a peaceful solution of the Indo-Pak conflict. Pravda disclosed on 6 December that Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Mohammed Ayub Khan of Pakistan have agreed to the Soviet Government's proposal to meet in Tashkent on 4 January 1966. It further stated that "in accordance with the wishes of both sides, A.N. Kozygin, Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, will preside in the meeting when necessary."²

This in itself was a diplomatic victory for the Soviet Union. That the two non-Communist states of India and Pakistan had agreed to meet on Soviet soil after accepting Soviet good offices was a major diplomatic breakthrough in itself notwithstanding the outcome of the meeting.

Right from the beginning of the meeting till its conclusion, the Soviet Union maintained strict neutrality. In fact, the Soviet determination to make a success of the Tashkent meeting, itself necessitated the exercise of meticulous impartiality by her. It was this position adopted by the Soviet Union on the Indo-Pak disputes of 1965 that finally culminated in her Tashkent triumph.

1 Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 188.

2 Pravda, 6 December 1965, p. 1.

Analysis of Soviet Perspective :

What were the factors which led to the adoption by Soviet Union of a neutral stand in the two Indo-Pakistan clashes of 1965? Why did the Soviet Union abandon her earlier position of total support to India on the Kashmir issue? What caused the Soviet Union in 1965 to declare that the Kashmir problem must be solved peacefully, when she had, as early as 1955, stated that the Kashmir problem had "already been solved" by the people of Kashmir? Did this shift evolve out of a complete reversal of Soviet foreign policy perspectives or was it the result of a minor adjustment of Soviet strategies in the subcontinent? Did the Soviet anxiety to maintain peace and stability in the South Asian subcontinent emanate from a mere desire to project Soviet benevolence or was it to counter certain deeper forces which were operating therein that the Soviet Union decided to adopt such a policy?

Soviet refusal to budget from a position of neutrality was the result of various interrelated factors kaleidoscopic in their dimensions. However, it basically stemmed from a desire to maintain stability and peace in South Asia. This desire for stability was in turn, a concomitant of the new Soviet foreign policy towards the subcontinent as a whole.

What were the causes for the subtle rearrangement of foreign policy priorities that could be discerned in Soviet attitudes ever since the Sino-Indian confrontation?

The Sino-Indian war and the events following it had brought into sharp relief the unbridgable gulf between the Soviet Union and China. And with the emergence of China as a Big Power, Sino-Soviet

antagonism had assumed Cold War proportions. This new Cold War was, in turn, bound to have its repercussions on the tension-ridden subcontinent. Soviet Union had already openly laid down her stakes on India in 1962. In the circumstances, it was only a matter of time before India's self-proclaimed perennial enemy and her newfound one joined hands. And on the lines of the age-old theory, 'the enemy of an enemy is a friend', a steady escalation of Sino-Pakistan relations was witnessed.

Therefore on the one hand, Soviet Union had already lost 'comrade' China; on the other, China was gaining dangerous foothold in the subcontinent via Pakistan. Such a situation threatened to endanger the Soviet position in international power relations. One strategy to overcome this threat was to cultivate Pakistan herself. Such a move would prevent the former from turning to China leading to a simultaneous recess in Chinese influence in the area. This however did not mean breaking off ties with India or anything so drastic. It merely meant that the Soviet Union looked for a more stable relationship with the strategically important subcontinent as a whole, i.e. with both India as well as Pakistan.

There thus followed a swift improvement of Soviet relations with Pakistan. This is not to suggest that such relations were non-existent before the mid-sixties. There had been sporadic endeavours by the Soviet Union to befriend Pakistan ever since the early 1950s. But these were not reciprocated by Pakistan. For example, a friendly invitation from the Soviet Union to Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, to visit Moscow was rebuffed despite its formal acceptance.¹ Besides, Pakistan

1 J.P. Jain, Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi, 1974), p. 33.

chose to place all her eggs in the Western basket; her signature on the various military pacts which were concluded with the aim of containing communism certainly did not set the ball rolling in favour of friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

Therefore, it was during the post Sino-Indian war period that serious efforts were made by both sides to step up friendly relations. Two factors contributed to this breakthrough. One was the ouster of Khrushchev; Soviet neutrality received moral as well as operational credibility when practised by a new set of leaders who had not earlier made pronouncements (as Khrushchev had done) to the opposite effect.

The second factor was Pakistan's growing disillusionment with the policies of the West and particularly the USA. Pakistan's disappointment with the West for its failure to unconditionally support Pakistan against India led to a policy of disengagement from West. The pouring in of American and British arms aid to India during the Sino-Indian conflict further disillusioned Pakistan. Thus, Soviet disengagement from total support to India and Pakistan's disengagement from the Western camp and the adoption of a ^{more} independent foreign policy were factors contributing to a build-up of ^{Soviet-} Indo-Pakistan friendship. This was greatly enhanced by President Ayub Khan's visit to the USSR in April 1965. A tangible consequence of such a build-up was the adoption of a neutral position by the Soviet Union on the Rann of Kutch dispute between India and Pakistan in May 1965.

Another important factor leading to Soviet reconsiderations of her South Asia policy was the fact that in the atmosphere of a growing detente with the West, the role of Third World nations was cut to the minimum. Since India was one of the foremost of

the non-aligned countries, a decline in the relevance of non-alignment itself inevitably led to a decline in the importance of India in world politics.

Further, the inglorious Indian defeat at the hands of the Chinese had done nothing to further India's prestige in the eyes of the world. China, within the short span of three weeks had proved to the world that she was without doubt, the number one power in the Asian mainland. India's loss of prestige, especially in the Afro-Asian bloc -- countries of which had hitherto looked to India for guidance in socio-political affairs and economic development, was almost irreparable.

These variant forces put together resulted in the "low profile" in Soviet attitudes to India and her international territorial disputes.

This change in Soviet attitudes towards the subcontinent became apparent soon after Ayub's visit to the Soviet Union. For the first time, Pakistan was listed in a May Day slogan issued that year with a wish for a growth of "friendly relations" between the Soviet and Pakistani peoples. Ayub Khan's visit also strengthened the Soviet-Pakistani economic ties to a considerable degree. It was agreed to "double or treble" the volume of Soviet-Pakistani trade within three years. The sensitive Kashmir question was discussed though it was not incorporated in the communique. Again while publishing the text of Aruna Asaf Ali's speech of 12 August, at the time of her receiving the Lenin's Peace Prize, Pravda carefully deleted her reference to Soviet support for India on Kashmir. On the other hand, references to

1 Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 126.

India and the internal situation in India ceased to be as rose-tinted as they were during the time of Khrushchev. Khrushchevian efforts of relegating to India a great-power position were discontinued, for instance, India was not included in the first post-Khrushchev Soviet proposal of December 1968, for a summit conference on the Middle East crisis.¹

This "low-profile" on India, was in part, also a function of the renewed Soviet assessment of the ruling party in India and the "progressive role" played by it. Criticism of the Congress party became quite open. The party's "inconsistent" and "hesitant" approach to agrarian problems resulting in an "onslaught of the right", its resort to foreign aid in food emergencies; and its record, as instanced by the list of disturbances, of "arousing popular discontent and sharpening social conflict" were stressed upon by New Times.² The article also noted India's increasing dependence on aid from the United States and "the growing strength of the capitalist monopolies with their close foreign ties".³

The internal domestic situation of India after the Sino-Indian war did not portray the stability that it had reflected in the early sixties. Together with a shrunk national self-confidence, India was beset by economic problems. Such an internal situation would have dissuaded the Soviet Union from

1 As cited by J.A. Naik, Soviet Policy Towards India (New Delhi, 1967), p. 136.

2 New Times, 11 August, as cited by Harish Kapoor, The Soviet Union and the Emerging Nations (Geneva, 1972), p. 108.

3 Ibid.

banking solely on India to counter Chinese influence and spurred her on, in the search of a more stable subcontinent as a whole. This inevitably led to her cultivation of Pakistan.

This is not to say that India was totally discarded or even substantially disregarded by Soviet diplomatic circles. Not at all. In fact, on the contrary, India still remained the major lever for the exercise of Soviet influence on the subcontinent. The very size of India, her strategic location, her explicit anti-China stand and her policy of non-alignment, notwithstanding her vast market, favoured the retention of Indo-Soviet friendship. That the Soviet Union had no intention of detracting from existing Indo-Soviet ties, was made amply evident by the Soviet leaders on various occasions. Kosygin made this quite clear during Lal Bahadur Shastri's visit to the USSR in May 1965, when he said, "there is nothing in development of Soviet-Indian ties that could be directed against other peace-loving countries and peoples". "And when Soviet Union tries to improve its relations with other countries, it does not do so at the expense of Soviet Indian friendship"¹.

Pravda stated Soviet policy quite explicitly in August, "... strengthening the ties between the U.S.S.R. and Pakistan must be regarded as a part of the general policy aimed at ensuring peace in Asia and throughout the world. We would like Soviet-Pakistan relations, like our traditional friendship with India, to be a stabilizing factor in the situation in Asia and to contribute to the normalizing of relations between India and Pakistan."²

1 Pravda, 16 May 1965.

2 Pravda, 12 May 1965.

Neither did the maintenance of outward neutrality mean psychological neutrality. This psychological support was manifest in many ways. First of all, economic aid to India increased. 900 million roubles were offered as aid to India for fulfilling her fourth Five Year Plan objectives.¹ More important, the Soviet Union's supply of military arms to India continued without a hitch during the Indo-Pak military hostilities.

In October 1965, the Soviet Union gave India surface-to-air missiles for the defence of major Indian cities and promised to provide her with more submarines - this at a time when cease-fire violations were continuing on the Indo-Pak frontiers.

Subtle Soviet tilts towards India were also manifest in the utterances and articles of some of the leading Soviet commentators. As early as 8 September 1965, I. Balyaev, editor of the Afro-Asian Department of Pravda made a lucid commentary on Moscow television. In this, he stressed that Kashmir was an integral part of India. He told Moscovites that Kashmir had a majority of Muslims but that it was a part of India though Pakistan had occupied some territories of the Kashmir State in 1947.²

Throughout the period of military operations, the Soviet Radio and Press emphasised on its close ties with India. To take one instance, Moscow Radio on 17 September announced that "The Soviet Union has very close ties with India -- a friendship which has been becoming stronger year by year".³

1 Pravda, 16 May 1965.

2 Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 137.

3 Ibid., p. 149.

I. Belyaev of Pravda in a commentary in Moscow News again indirectly criticised Pakistan for resorting to force, to settle the Kashmir issue. He said, "where is the way out of the situation? Events of 1949 made it clear that the dispute could not be settled by military means. There is but one way out, to stop hostilities as soon as possible, to exercise wisdom and patience, and to settle all disputed issues by peaceful means alone."¹ Another instance of such leanings was the Soviet diplomatic approach to Indonesia on 30 September 1965, asking her not to supply Soviet military equipment to Pakistan. Indonesia was also advised to keep out of the Indo-Pak conflict.²

It did not either mean that India was to be kept out in the Cold in the UN Security Council. Despite its official neutral position, the Soviet delegate threatened to veto any resolution not acceptable to India, for example any resolution that might be brought forward by the Western Powers criticizing India for crossing the international boundary towards Lahore.³ In fact, the Pakistani Government complained on 10 September that the Security Council had "almost adopted the Indian line".⁴ Chagla, India's special representative to the Security Council, disclosed to the Indian Parliament that the ceasefire resolution of the Security Council on 20 September was to India's liking. Later Chagla thanked the Soviet delegate for his "considerable"

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., p. 163.

3 Ibid., p. 137.

4 Peking Review, no. 39, 24 September 1965, p. 14, as cited in Kulkarni, op. cit., p. 113.

assistance.¹

Again on 1 October, strong criticism was voiced in Moscow against the United Nations Secretariat's move to send observers to Kashmir from NATO countries. Izvestia sharply condemned the "backdoor intrigues" to send these NATO observers in the guise of United Nations representatives to supervise the ceasefire.²

But it did mean that the Soviet Union would not go out of her way to support any one side against the other, in the event of a dispute ensuing between the two. And once such a policy of neutrality was formulated, it was persistently followed, irrespective of Indian reaction to it.

Thus on the Rann of Kutch dispute in May 1965, the Soviet Union took a position of strict neutrality. She blamed neither side for the conflict but merely appealed to both sides to end the military operations immediately and settle the dispute through peaceful negotiations. In spite of Shastri's endeavours, he could not make the Soviet Union give open support for India.

In the later and the more serious Kashmir war, Soviet Union stuck to her stand of impartiality. But however, in both these conflicts, the Soviet Union was not the disinterested onlooker as was the case in 1947, but on the contrary, she was the involved and anxious friend of both the sides. In 1965, stability on the subcontinent had become imperative to Soviet national interest.

This could not be realized without peace prevailing between India and Pakistan. Soviet Union wanted a stable South Asia which could counter Chinese influence. And she realized that this

1 Ibid.

2 Bhagat Vats, op. cit., p. 164.

stability could not be achieved as long as fighting between the two neighbouring states continued. She realized that fighting between India and Pakistan would only invite Chinese involvement and consequently enlarge Chinese influence in the area. It would at the same time place the Soviet Union in an embarrassing position. Therefore, during both the conflicts of 1965, Soviet efforts were fully geared for seeking means for ending the conflict, for extinguishing "the hotbed of war"¹.

She genuinely endeavoured to find an amicable solution to the problem and tried her level best to bring the warring factions together. In such a situation, it was inevitable that she remain neutral; in fact nothing short of neutrality would have sufficed.

Another factor of extreme significance is that this Soviet neutralism continued unchanged even when China gave verbal support to Pakistan during the Rann of Kutch dispute, and, later sent provocative messages and threats to the Indian Government besides lending vociferous support to the Pakistani stand during the Kashmir war.

Chinese intentions were self-evident. By these provocative and intimidatory gestures, China was obviously trying to force the hand of the Soviet Union. Noting that a development of Soviet-Pakistani relations would clearly undermine China's position in South Asia, the Chinese objective was to push the Soviet Union to the point of taking a clear stand between India and Pakistan - to force Russia to take

sides in the dispute. In the case of the Soviet Union siding with either party, China would stand to gain.

If the Soviet Union supported India — as the Chinese most probably hoped and expected her to — Pakistan would then be left entirely free for Chinese manipulations; on the other hand, if the Soviet Union lent its support to Pakistan, the Indian position would be considerably weakened and this would anyhow be of advantage to China.

These were the objectives which triggered off the Chinese "dramatics" on the Sino-Indian front during the Indo-Pak war.

But however contrary to Chinese calculations, Soviet Union skilfully stepped over the trap. She outwardly maintained her neutrality and at the same time accused China of fanning the conflict and thus obstructing the path to a peaceful solution of the dispute. By this she not only saved her own skin, but also succeeded in putting China on the wrong foot.

The Soviet Union probably perceived that minus Chinese interference the Kashmir dispute had hardly any scope for widening. The USA was keen on ending the conflict and so also was Britain and the other NATO powers. Soviet Union herself wanted a quick end to the fighting. Moreover, once China entered the fray, on the Pak side, the NATO machine would have to willy nilly start operating, for the chief objective of the organization was to contain communism.

Taking all these factors into consideration, the Soviet Union continued to remain neutral. And this renewed neutrality would have no doubt gone a long way in building up Pakistan's faith in Soviet impartiality, enabling Moscow to hold the

Tashkent meeting the following year. Moscow's unstinting efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement was amply rewarded. The Tashkent meeting was an unprecedented triumph for the Soviet Union.

Throughout the period of factual fighting as well as during the period following it, Moscow had shown that nothing but the interests of both the states had influenced Soviet policy. She endeavoured initially to stop the fighting and later played the role of peace-maker most successfully. She first got the two parties to sit together without preconditions for talks and later helped to find an amicable solution to the problem.

The Tashkent Declaration was a crowning glory for the Soviet Union in more than one respects. First of all, it was the first time that two disputant non-Communist states had sought the "good offices" of a Communist power in resolving their dispute. Of even greater poignancy is the fact that one of them was still officially a member of the Western bloc and its corollary NATO and SEATO.

By holding the meeting and presiding over it, the Soviet Union asserted her position as being not merely a European power but also as a major Asian power who could exercise considerable influence over the vast mainland. Most important, it was a triumph over the Chinese, a triumph not in the narrow connotation of neutrality versus partisanship but in the broader context of it being a challenge to the Chinese claim of predominance over the Asian continent. Another unusual feature about the meeting was that it was conducted with the blessings of all Western

countries including the United States. One lone exception was China. However the West regarded it also with a sense of loss for until then, the mediator's role had been reserved for it, at least where non-Communist nations were concerned. It is interesting to note the comments of certain leading newspapers when Soviet Union first put forth her proposal for a Tashkent meeting.

Daily Telegraph of London wrote, "... it is at least odd and thought provoking that when two Commonwealth countries fall out, it is Russia which steps forwards as an intermediary."¹

The Guardian commented that the Western detachment had been "fatal". "By their neutrality, they have driven Pakistan into the arms of China, and, they may yet drive India into the arms of Russia."² Both India and Pakistan being members of the Commonwealth family, Britain might have been able to don the peace-maker's role had she played her cards right.

The Tashkent Declaration revealed the increased sophistication of Soviet operational manoeuvres. It certainly added a great deal to Soviet prestige and power in world politics.

1 Daily Telegraph, 13 September 1965.

2 The Guardian, 13 September 1965.

Chapter V

EMERGENCE OF TRIANGULAR DIPLOMACY

In 1971, two simultaneous and interrelated events in South Asia not only caused major shifts in the power balance on the South Asian subcontinent but also created tremors within the global power structure. One was the fourteen day long Indo-Pakistan War of December 1971 which resulted in a decisive victory for India; the other, the cause as well as the outcome of the first, was the revolt of the Bengalees of East Pakistan against the repressive policies of the Pakistani military regime and the subsequent emergence of the independent state of Bangladesh.

In this period the Big Powers were clearly divided between the two contesting sides, with America and China opting for Pakistan and the Soviet Union supporting India. Soviet involvement in any possible Indo-Pakistan war had been indicated with the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, as early as in August 1971. However, vociferous Soviet support for India ensued only after the actual war began on 3 December 1971.

In fact, a survey of Soviet attitudes on the Indo-Pakistan confrontation of 1971 which dates back to the beginning of the influx of refugees into Indian territory, reveals that the intensity of Soviet reaction was directly proportional to the gravity of the crisis.

Before embarking on an analysis of Soviet attitudes towards the Indo-Pak war of 1971, one is forced to go back to the genesis of the crisis. The events that led to the emergence of Bangladesh already suffer from over-exposures, but a brief

recounting of these events here seems unavoidable, for as already stated Soviet reactions to the issue greatly depended on the existing intensity of tension in the subcontinent.

The Dispute :

The factors which lead two or more countries to wage war against each other are numerous - territorial ambitions, ideology, religious fanaticism or simply thirst for power. However, the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 and the factors leading to it have few parallels in world history.

The verdict of the first ever general elections held in Pakistan gave Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the East Pakistan based Awami League Party, a clear majority. The Six-Point Programme on which the Awami League fought and won the elections envisaged an autonomous status for East Bengal within a Pakistani Federation with a parliamentary form of government both at the Centre and in the federating units and with the central subjects limited to defence and foreign affairs. It also included a separate currency for the two wings, with the federating units enjoying almost complete autonomy in the fiscal field.¹

However after the elections, Z.A. Bhutto, the leader of the People's Party boycotted the National Assembly session which was then postponed by the President, General Yahya Khan. Meanwhile martial law was promulgated in East Pakistan. Against this, a civil disobedience movement was launched by the Awami League party. Talks began between Yahya and the Sheikh and

¹ J.A. Naik, India, Russia, China and Bangladesh (New Delhi, 1972), p. 5.

while these "talks" were in session, the Government ordered a military crackdown on the civilians, letting loose a reign of terror in the area.¹ The indiscriminate massacre followed by the arrest of Mujib on 25 March 1971, flung the history of Bengal and Pakistan on a collision course. For therefrom sprang the/^{demand} for an independent, separate and sovereign Bangladesh. In fact, the Sheikh's party set up a provisional government of Bangladesh on 28 March, and on 17 April, proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, with Mujibur Rahman as President, Sayed Nasrul Islam as Acting President and Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister. This move was followed by a genocide conducted with ruthless cruelty by the military consisting of the torture and massacre of innocent civilians.² This triggered the massive exodus of refugees who poured into neighbouring Indian territory in an attempt to evade the guns and escape the rape and torture.

The toll of refugees increased at frightening speed, bending the already overburdened Indian economy to breaking point. Therein began the Indian involvement in the liberation struggle. The refugees had to be sent back if the Indian economy was to survive -- 15 million rupees was the daily expenditure of the Indian Government on refugees -- and it was becoming increasingly clear that they could be sent back only to a free Bangladesh, for all possibilities of a peaceful settlement between the two wings of Pakistan had come to naught.³

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., p. 6.

3 Ibid.

Meanwhile the Bangladeshis began setting up their own guerilla force - the Mukti Bahini which received training from both the Bangladesh Government and from India.¹ At the same time tension along the Indo-Pak border mounted. When all efforts for a political solution seemed futile and when the refugee problem became unbearable, the inevitable happened - war broke out between India and Pakistan on 3 December 1971, with Pakistani air raids on 13 Indian air bases. Within 3 days, India gave official recognition to Bangladesh; within another 11 days, the combined forces of the Mukti Bahini and the Indian armed forces defeated the Pakistani forces. The Indian army entered Dacca and the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistani army in East Bengal, General A.A.K. Niazi surrendered unconditionally to Lt. General Arora² of the Indian Army.

In the Western sector too, the Indian army had made considerable headway into Pak territory. So when India offered a simple ceasefire in the West after the fall of Dacca in the East, Yahya Khan had no choice but to accept it. Thus ended the fourteen-day war of 1971. This comparatively short war, however, saw vast changes which affected the power balance not only in its immediate vicinity but also in the wider international arena.

Soviet responses on the Bangladesh issue taken as a whole, reflect an implicit support to India tempered by varying degrees of caution. The extreme agility with which Soviet Union conducted her diplomacy during this period can be seen from the fact that Kremlin succeeded in maintaining parallelism between two

1 Ibid., p. 7.

2 Ibid., p. 8.

inherently conflict^{ing}/policy considerations. These two under-currents which stand out with striking clarity in a review of Soviet responses were - (a) the underlying Soviet support for India and (b) the Soviet desire to continue their policy of maintaining peace and stability in the subcontinent.

The Soviet policy of cultivating both India and Pakistan to achieve a stable subcontinent that would act as a territorial as well as psychological bulwark against China, once again prevented her from adopting an extreme pro-India position in the beginning of the crisis. Initial Soviet responses reveal a policy of neutrality, which later developed into a progressively pro-India drift, culminating in complete support for India.

In fact, Soviet attitudes depict a constant interplay of these two above said basic policy lines, with subtle shifts in Soviet positions corresponding to the amount of weightage given to one or the other by Kremlin. As the desire for a continuation of the Soviet policy of cultivating both India and Pakistan diminished, the Soviet support for India increased. Interestingly, both these Soviet reactions, corresponded to the intensity of tension prevailing in the crisis area.

Considering all these factors, Soviet attitudes on the issue, crystallized, with a series of subtle shifts: from a neutral stand to an unambiguous pro-India position.

The desire to bring stability to the area induced the Soviet Union to stress the absolute necessity of a "political settlement". This was a major theme in all Soviet articles and statements right up to the middle of November 1971. But even within this pre-war period, the tone used by the Soviet Union

varied considerably. In fact, Soviet Union utilized the "tone diplomacy" so dextrously that the shifts in Soviet stands could hardly be pinpointed or traced to any particular time-period. However, two subtle shifts seem to have been executed by the Soviet Union during this pre-war period.

The first phase, as earlier pointed out, was marked by the Soviet desire to continue with her policy of cultivating relations with and between India and Pakistan with the aim of achieving a stable and peaceful subcontinent. Understandably, Soviet Union did not wish to abandon her already operative policy on the Indian peninsula, with the crisis still in its infancy. Thus, in early 1971, there existed no Soviet desire to alienate Pakistan; and even more so, no desire for a severed Pakistan.

Victor Mayevsky, therefore (in March 1971) hailed Pakistan's "reduced participation in SEATO and CENTO, and talked of the 15th anniversary of the (Pakistani) Republic's successful progress", before referring to the "domestic crisis" prevailing there. Soviet interest in an integrated Pakistan was clearly brought out, as pointed out by Mayevsky: "... The Soviet public sends the Pakistani people its sincere good wishes for success in the struggle for the strengthening of its national independence and progress."¹ He further said that the Soviet Union's relations with Pakistan were "founded on the principles of good neighbourliness cooperation on a basis of equality and friendship. The Pakistani Press has noted more than once that economic cooperation between the two countries is important for the consolidation of Pakistan's

1 Pravda, 26 March 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 12, p. 32.

2017

independence"¹. He also reiterated the fact that "some thirty industrial projects" were "being built or planned in Pakistan with the Soviet Union's assistance"².

Soviet Union at the same time could not have relished the use of brute force against the pro-Moscow Awami League members. This, as well as the knowledge that the use of such force would only serve to inflame the demand for a separate independent state of Bengal would have prompted Moscow to take a hard line on a "peaceful solution" of the problem from the very beginning. Both these sentiments were reflected when Mayevsky stated, "The Soviet people, who are closely following events in Pakistan wish their neighbour a peaceful solution to the complicated problems that the Republic faces today -- a solution that will be in the interests of all the Pakistani peoples."³

However, the very next report in Pravda, followed up by Podgorny's letter to Yahya Khan indicated that even though the Soviet Union continued to remain interested in a united Pakistan, she would certainly not remain a dispassionate observer on the developments in the subcontinent.

Alongside the Karachi report claiming the situation in East Pakistan as normal, Pravda (28 March 1971) thought it fit to publish a Western agency report saying the very opposite!⁴

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. Emphasis added.

4 Pravda, 28 March 1971.

Both Soviet anxiety for an unsevered Pakistan as well as her simultaneous criticism of Pakistani atrocities were made quite apparent by the fact that Kremlin warded off any foreign involvement (in the Pak crisis) by declaring the "most serious political crisis in the history of Pakistan" as "undoubtedly an internal affair of the state"¹, while at the same time condemning the Pakistani army atrocities in East Pakistan "as nothing other than crude arbitrariness and violences, which arose the serious concern of the Soviet people."²

Podgorny's direct letter to Yahya was an early indication that Moscow was reconsidering her policy of neutrality in the subcontinent. At this particular stage however, Soviet Union still wanted to keep her policy options open. The rather strongly worded letter conveyed that "the report that the talks in Dacca have been broken off and that the military administration has found it possible to resort to extreme measures and has used armed force against the East Pakistani population, has been received with great alarm in the Soviet Union."³ The Soviet concern for Mujib was rubbed in right at this initial stage -

"The arrest and persecution of Mujibur Rahman and other political figures who received such convincing support from the overwhelming majority of the East Pakistani population in the recent general elections have also aroused concern in the Soviet Union."⁴

1

2

3 Pravda, 24 April 1971, p. 1, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 14.

4 Ibid.

Insisting on a democratic solution, Podgorny stated, "We have been and remain convinced that complicated problems that have arisen in Pakistan of late can and must be solved by political means, without the use of force. The continuation of repressive measures and bloodshed in East Pakistan surely will only make the solution of these problems more difficult and may be highly detrimental to the vital interests of all the Pakistani people." Stressing the urgency of the issue, he said, "We consider it our duty Mr. President to address to you, on behalf of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet an insistent appeal for the adoption of the most immediate measures to stop the bloodshed and repression against the populace in East Pakistan and to turn to methods of a peaceful political settlement."¹

At this juncture, the Soviet focus was on the purely domestic nature of the crisis. In fact the Soviet Union took pains to emphasize that no considerations other than "humanitarian principles" and "concern for the welfare of the friendly Pakistani peoples had guided the Soviet appeal to the Pakistani President"².

The refugee problem was still comparatively insignificant and Kremlin saw no need for any reference either to India or to Indo-Pak relations. The accent throughout the period, in fact till the end of November, was on a "political settlement". In this period, i.e. till June, "political settlement" implied a peaceful settlement within Pakistan without the use of military force against the East Pakistanis. Later "political settlement"

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

stood for the prevention of armed conflict between India and Pakistan.

Therefore, right until May, Soviet accounts of events in Pakistan avoided any mention of India. Obviously, Soviet Union at that time, would have harboured no desire to take sides in another Indo-Pak confrontation. This was reflected in I. Ratnikov's emphasis on the "domestic" nature of the conflict. While writing in Pravda (1 May, p. 5) "The acute domestic political crisis is affecting the lives of millions...."¹ Nevertheless, Soviet condemnation of West Pakistani atrocities gathered momentum. Also, for the first time one sees the word "Bangladesh" being used. The combined air and tank attacks of the Pakistani regime on the civilians of East Bengal, Ratnikov notes "had driven the uncoordinated and hastily organized paramilitary detachments of Bangladesh into the North and N. Eastern regions."² Urging for a "political settlement" (and reverting to the use of the term East Pakistan), he noted:

The situation in East Pakistan, which has taken a tragic turn of late and whose principal victim is the peaceful population, indicated that it is precisely a political settlement and not a military solution that would correspond to the interests of the entire Pakistani people, and to the cause of maintaining peace in this region and throughout the world. ³

The flow of refugees into India inevitably brought the crisis to India's doorstep. The influx of refugees made inroads into Indian territory as well as the Indian economy. Moscow now

1 Pravda, 1 May 1971.

2 Ibid., p. 5.

3 Ibid.

executed very deftly, another subtle shift in India's favour. Soviet responses became definitely sympathetic to the Indian cause. The plight of the refugees was dwelt upon in detail, while condemnation of Pakistan became more vehement. But the main theme remained the achievement of a peaceful solution, Moscow made it abundantly clear that nothing but a political settlement would be acceptable to her.¹ The report by S. Bulantsev and V. Skosyra put forth explicitly the difficulties faced by the refugees and by India. It acknowledged that the inability to create peaceful conditions in East Pakistan for the safe return home of the millions of refugees was the root of the problem.²

Commenting on the cause of tension between India and Pakistan, V. Vasin noted:

The problem of Pakistani refugees creates particular strain in the relations between the two countries. The condition of violence against the civilian population in the Eastern portion of Pakistan forced millions of residents, chiefly peasants to abandon their land, property and shelter and seek refuge in neighbouring India ... they now exceed 6 million.³

Soviet appreciation of India's difficulties was made explicit. "Furthermore, so massive an influx of refugees also has an extremely adverse effect on India's already tight (strained)⁴ economy. This creates additional difficulties in solving the socio-economic problems confronting the country.

1 Pravda, 9 June 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 23.

2 Izvestia, 26 June 1971, p. 4. Ibid. article entitled "Tragedy of the Refugees".

3 Izvestia, 10 July 1971, p. 3.

4 Ibid.

The Soviet people view with understanding the problems that India has encountered because several million East Pakistani refugees are staying on her territory and they are extending the country assistance in overcoming these difficulties.... 1

That the main theme in Soviet perspectives continued to be the pursuit of peace and stability in South Asia, can be deduced from the following lines of Vasin's:

The sooner these problems are solved by political means the sooner a relaxation of tension on the Hindustan Peninsula will be achieved.... There is no doubt that the fact that only under peaceful conditions can countries that are on the path of national development handle the cardinal tasks in the area of strengthening their political and economic independence....

... The Soviet Union being guided exclusively by a sincere desire to promote good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan has always favoured the peaceful resolution of problems arising between these two countries. It is firmly convinced that just this sort of course would align with the national interests of the peoples of India and Pakistan and help maintain peace on the Hindustan Peninsula. For this reason Soviet people heard with understanding the announcement that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India had issued, a statement containing criticism of those who would like to prod the country into war with Pakistan. 2

For the first time, there ensued a Soviet criticism of the Chinese stand. China in the meanwhile had all along been supporting Pakistan and criticising India for enticing East Pakistani citizens into Indian territory. The shaft was undoubtedly aimed at China, when Vasin declared:

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

Any other course of events (other than maintenance of peace) would undoubtedly play into the hands of circles within India and Pakistan and forces beyond their borders that are striving to damage India and Pakistan by pursuing their own definite political purposes. These forces operate actively. Motivated by greedy interests, they utilize every opportunity to heighten tension in this region.... 1

Therefore, Izvestia maintained, that "the only correct path was "the maintenance of peace on the Hindustan Peninsula".

The uncertainty regarding the ultimate outcome of the liberation struggle would most certainly have prevented the Soviet Union from advocating a military solution. A political settlement at this stage would mean -

- (a) An integrated and stable Pakistan leading to a stable South Asian subcontinent; on the other hand a military solution would only lead to greater Chinese leverage in the subcontinent.
- (b) A rehabilitation of the pro-Moscow Awami League Party within Pakistan.
- (c) A return of the status quo in the subcontinent in which Soviet presence was predominant.

Consequently in July, when tension between India and Pakistan began to surface rather prominently, Soviet Union continued to press for a "political solution".

In fact, mid-1971 highlights the remarkable dynamism that Soviet diplomacy had acquired. Chinese support to Pakistan was no doubt an irritant to Soviet operational tactics. But such support was only to be expected and Soviet Union was certainly not caught napping. Moscow's modus operandi was far too sophisticated to be taken in by the now-familiar Chinese tactics of eliciting open Soviet support for India through

1 Ibid.

Peking's advocacy of the Pakistani cause. Soviet Union once again successfully played the tight-rope walking game — and this time the feat required her to simultaneously carry out four policy aims while giving them the appearance of an integrated policy. No doubt, she accomplished the task successfully.

1. Soviet Union insisted on a "political settlement" of the issue and thereby indicated her desire for an integrated Pakistan. This was in Pakistan's interest and thus helped in preventing complete alienation of Pakistan.

2. She criticised China for supporting one of the sides and thus preventing the above said political settlement.

3. She succeeded in conveying her basic support to India by sympathising with India's plight and by calling upon Pakistan to immediately create conditions for the return of the refugees.

4. She displayed her soft corner for the Bengalees of East Pakistan by severely condemning the West Pakistani military atrocities committed on them, as well as through front organizations¹ like the World Peace Congress.

This remarkable feat of pleasing all parties in the dispute enabled the Soviet Union to keep her options wide open for future policy moves. Certainly neither China nor USA at that time could boast of such manoeuvrability on the subcontinental chessboard.

The surprise packet of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation came in August 1971. This Treaty set the final seal on Indo-Soviet friendship; it also clearly indicated the nature of Soviet leanings in a possible Indo-Pakistan confrontation. Two articles in the Treaty draw special

1 J.A. Naik, op. cit., p. 51.

attention to this fact.

The first is Article VIII which said: "In accordance with the traditional friendship established between the two countries, each of the high contracting parties solemnly declares that it shall not enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party.

Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from any aggression against the other Party and to prevent the use of its territory for the commission of any act which might inflict military damage on the other High Contracting Party."

More important is Article X which said: "Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from providing any assistance to any Third Party that engages in armed conflict with the other Party. In the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security of their country.

More than anything else, it was the formation of the Sino-American axis with its definite pro-Pakistan, anti-Indian and anti-Soviet angles that prompted both Soviet Union and India to institutionalize existing Indo-Soviet relations, thereby according them ample publicity. Soviet weightage on India's side was considered essential at the time for a return of the balance in the subcontinental power structure to equalize the massive tilt in Pakistan's favour that emanated from the

1 Bimal Prasad, Indo-Soviet Relations, 1947-1977

2 Ibid.

Washington-Peking axis. On the home front, the refugee problem was going from bad to worse. The already severely strained Indian economy seemed close to breaking point. India was in dire need of support -- financial as well as psychological. The Indo-Soviet Treaty catered to this need admirably.

Gromyko's speech after the signing of the Treaty was a sure pointer to underlying Soviet sympathies for India - "We have been together in all times, good and bad. This was so in the past. It is occurring in the present." The Pravda editorial of 11 August talked of "the friendly relations between U.S.S.R. and India" which "exert a favourable effect on the decision of pressing international issues including acute problems in Asia" -- the most acute problem at the time in Asia being the refugee problem. The joint Soviet-Indian statement was even blunter when it reiterated that the Treaty provides for "mutual consultations in order to take appropriate effective steps to safeguard the peace and security of both countries." ¹ ^{2(a) (b)}

In keeping with the prevalent policy, Soviet distaste for a showdown at this stage was also made quite explicit. In fact at this time the Indo-Soviet Treaty served mainly as a bulwark against which to fall back if necessary. This is apparent from the fact that the signing of the Treaty, by itself, does not seem to have caused any immediate vitriolic outbursts in official Soviet comments. She continued her cautious pro-

1 Pravda, 10 August 1971.

2 (a) Pravda, 12 August 1971, p. 4, C.D.S.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 32; Izvestia, 13 August 1971, ibid., (b) emphasis added.

India stand with its insistence on a "political settlement". The joint Indo-Soviet statement itself testified to this fact when it stated, "there can be no military solution of the problem"¹.

The visit of S.M. Khan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan to Moscow in September and his "timely and useful" talks there² as well as the Indo-Soviet joint statement of 30 September which called for the "adoption of urgent measures to achieve a political solution of the problems arising there" was a reaffirmation of the Soviet stand.

The pro-India trend, however, became more pronounced after September 1971. The tension between India and Pakistan had intensified. In both India and Pakistan, cries for a "total war" were not infrequent. While there was not yet an open shift in the Soviet position, it was evident to any astute observer that all that remained of the earlier non-committed stand was the insistence on a political settlement of the problems of the subcontinent.

However, the use of strong language by Pravda commentators in their condemnation of Pakistani military atrocities was the only evidence of this subtle shift in emphasis. Witness Pravda 3 October 1971 entitled "Stop the mass repression", which expressed "profound alarm" over the persecution of East Pakistani progressive leaders.³ Instead of "appealing" as Podgorny

1 Pravda, 12 August 1971, p. 4, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 32. Also Izvestia, 13 August 1971, p. 2.

2 Pravda, 4 September 1971.

3 Pravda, 3 October 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 40.

had done in his April 1971 letter, Pravda now demanded that "the repressions against the peaceful population and the persecution of the progressive leaders of East Pakistan be ended, that the Kangaroo Court trial of Mujibur Rahman be called off, that conditions be created for the return of the refugees to their homes and that they be guaranteed complete security and the opportunity to live and work in peace."¹ Not only did Soviet journalists "in the name of justice and humanism" "call upon the Pakistani authorities to stop the mass repressions against the population of East Pakistan",² Pravda also reported a protest by Soviet women against the reprisals against Mujibur Rahman.³ Orekhov reflected the high degree of Soviet indignation on the actions of the Pakistani authorities when he declared, "There is no justification for these actions. The people of the world cannot remain indifferent to the human tragedy that is being suffered by millions of innocent people today. The public expects the Pakistani authorities to take immediate and effective measures...."⁴

Borisov's article portrays yet another instance of this change in the tone of Soviet responses. "Soviet people vigorously protest this judicial reprisal. They demand freedom for Mujibur Rahman, a political settlement of the situation in East Pakistan that takes into account the will, inalienable rights

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Pravda, 4 October 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, vol. 40.

4 Pravda, 7 October 1971, ibid.

and legitimate interests of the people of the Province and the safe return of the refugees to their homes.¹"

The Tass statement of 16 October seems significant in more than one respect. Entitled "Prevent Armed Conflict" it stated:

The Press Trust of India reports that the concentration of Pakistani troops in Kashmir has increased considerably in the past several days. According to reports coming in here, sizable troop movements have been observed on both sides of the border particularly in Kashmir. In the Southern Indian city of Belgaum, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi yesterday told correspondents, "We will do everything within our powers to prevent conflict. But at the same time, the country must be prepared to repulse a threat...." There followed a criticism of Pakistan's anti-India stand which served to "impede the normalization of the situation". It said, "A extremist organization "Crush India" has been set up and is active in West Pakistan. Political observers are of the opinion that the existence in Pakistan of the advocates of a "hard-line" in relation to India is the chief obstacle on the part of eliminating conflict and of solving Pakistan's fundamental problem — the problem of East Pakistan. 2

The very fact that Pravda thought it prudent to publish Indira Gandhi's statement and then follow it up with a criticism of Pakistan's anti-India stand, was an implicit vindication of India's stand. The statement further revealed that in Soviet understanding, the basic problem was the problem of East Pakistan and not Indo-Pak conflict. It also indicated that Moscow was not unprepared for an Indo-Pakistan war.

The 28 October Tass report in Pravda further confirmed Moscow's implicit support to India stating that consultations

1 Pravda, 10 October 1971, *ibid.*

2 Pravda, 16 October 1971, p. 5.

between N.P. Firiyabin (USSR Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs) and T.N. Kaul (Foreign Secretary of Indian Ministry of External Affairs) had been held in connection with "the tense situation that has taken shape on the Hindustan Peninsula", the report announced that "both sides agreed completely in their assessment of the situation"¹. Again, an earlier Tass statement was quite content to quote a Press Trust of India Report of the situation without supplementing it with a Pakistani version. It said, "According to P.T.I. Pakistani artillery is continuing to shell Indian territories in various sectors of the border with East Pakistan."²

Of great significance is the fact that "mutual consultations" between Marshall of Aviation, P.S. Kutatkhov, Commander in Chief of the USSR Air Force and Air Chief Marshall P.C. Lall, Chief of Staff of the Indian Air Force began as per schedule -- no doubt an indicator to the rest of the world that Moscow had no intention of taking her Treaty obligations lightly. So also was the Izvestia publication of Mrs. Gandhi's statement that "India has no intention of withdrawing its troops from its border with Pakistan ... and that it has a duty to take all steps to avoid unpreparedness."³ Yet, had the Soviet Union completely shrugged off her ambitions for a stable subcontinent? Apparently, she still entertain^{ed} a grain of hope in this regard. Her hesitancy in the matter prompted her to continue using the

1 Pravda, 28 October 1971, p. 4.

2 Pravda, 28 October 1971, p. 3.

3 Izvestia, 8 November 1971, p. 4, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 45.

term "East Pakistan" instead of "East Bengal" and more important prompted her to insist on a "political settlement" rather than a military one.

Meanwhile the tension in the area had been mounting with increasing rapidity. This intensification saw an inevitable parallel in Soviet responses. There was an explicit increase in the vehemency both in her support for India as well as in the condemnation of Pakistan. Pravda's perspectives on the crisis were quite unmistakable, when commentator's column declared:

... the refugees situation has turned into an acute international problem. Moreover, there are hotheads and extremists in Pakistan who are inclined, contrary to all logic, to blame India (1) for the situation that has arisen and to inflame the conflict between the two states. 1

The problem according to Soviet opinion was therefore no longer "domestic" but "international".

Also projected with considerable clarity by commentator was the Soviet awareness and even insistence that if there was to be a return of peace in the Indo-Pakistani borders there had to be first a solution of the problem of East Pakistan. "The Soviet Union hopes for a peaceful settlement of the existing complications on the basis of the solution, first of all, of the problem of East Pakistan. The Pakistani authorities must stop their repressions against the population and create conditions for the return of the refugees to their homeland. Only then will the India-Pakistan border once again become a

1 Pravda, 9 November 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 45. Emphasis added.

border of true peace and good neighbourliness.¹ In other words, war was almost inevitable if the refugees could not return.

The Soviet viewpoint was made even clearer by Kondrashov in his article in Izvestia sympathising with India on the refugee problem. Kondrashov noted that "as a result of the conflict between the military administration and the East Pakistani population, a burden unprecedented in modern history is being thrust on India. This is creating extraordinary difficulties² for the country's economy."

This article of 16 November was blatantly anti-Pakistan in content. Accusing the Pakistani Government of false assertions of a normalized situation in East Pakistan, the article also implicitly justified the Indian stand. It said:

According to Associated Press Reports 250,000 Pakistani soldiers are massing on West Pakistan's borders with West Pakistan's borders with India. The Indian Press Reports that the Pakistani Command is concentrating ten infantry and two tank divisions of India's North West border.... The Pakistani authorities are also intensifying military preparations in East Pakistan. They are moving man-power and equipment towards the border with India.

In connection with the growing tension, India is bringing its own armed forces to a state of combat readiness. ³

Blaming Pakistan for exacerbating the situation, the article said,

... an anti-India campaign is being waged in Pakistan by chauvinistic circles.... The Pakistani Press is continually publishing inflammatory articles written in a spirit extremely hostile to India. Extremist

1 Ibid.

2 Izvestia, 16 November 1971, p. 2, C.D.S.P., Vol. XXIII, No. 46.

3 Ibid.

elements are hammering together various organizations imbued with hatred for India. At present certain Pakistani political parties are also setting up unusual formations of a paramilitary nature... including the ultra-reactionary religious party Jamaat-i-Islam which is waging a fanatic anti-India campaign. 1

Even so Moscow continued with its insistence on a ² "political settlement". Even as late as 23 November, Pravda reiterated that the refugee problem "should not be a reason ³ for military conflict".

The war between India and Pakistan broke out in December 1971, and along with it ^{was witnessed} the final abandonment of a Soviet pursuit of a political settlement in the subcontinent. Soviet support to India during the war was total. This unhesitating and continuous support was manifest on almost all fronts.

The Soviet Union for the first time since 1965, enunciated a distinctly anti-Pakistan position by condemning Pakistan as the chief instigator of war. This time unlike in 1965, there was no reticence to lay the blame squarely on Pakistan's shoulders.

Soviet support to India was also exhibited through Soviet diatribes on the pro-Pakistani stands of the United States and China. Pravda and Izvestia certainly showed no lacuna of literature in this regard.

On the UN front, Soviet backing was naturally of immense value. Undoubtedly it was the Soviet veto that prevented a freezing of the Bangladesh issue by the United Nations. The

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Pravda, 23 November 1971, p. 5, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 46.

aid aspect was no less important. Soviet material generosity was extended in the form of both economic assistance as well as military aid. Of equal importance was the fact that this generosity helped in the creation of a psychological bulwark against which India could lean in times of acute crisis. The significance of this was later demonstrated during the gunboat diplomacy pursued by the USA.

Nothing prevented Moscow this time from openly holding Pakistan responsible for igniting war flames. Izvestia, 7 December stated in unmistakable terms, "The Soviet Government deems it necessary to state very clearly to the Pakistani leaders the grave responsibility that they assume in following this dangerous course."¹ They further declared that "an armed attack against India by Pakistan, under whatever pretext it might be made, would evoke the most resolute condemnation in the Soviet Union."²

Again, supporting India in all her actions, Viktor Mayevsky in Pravda (9 December) summed up the situation thus:

The Indian Government more than once appealed to the Pakistani leaders to stop the repressions and normalize the situation in East Pakistan in order to make it possible for the refugees to return to their homes. However, the Pakistani Government took no steps towards a political settlement in East Pakistan, continued its repressions against the population and stepped up military preparations against India. In East Pakistan resistance to the terror mounted and guerilla detachments were formed. A Government of Bangladesh was formed. The development of events from that point is well known. The

1 Pravda, 6 December 1971, p. 5; Izvestia, 7 December 1971, p. 4, C.D.S.P., Vol. XXIII, no. 49.

2 Ibid.

situation became exacerbated when Pakistani troops, as the Indian Government has officially stated, attacked India from the territory of West Pakistan. 1

That Kremlin entertained no second-thoughts on its branding Pakistan as aggressor was made quite explicit in a later article by V. Shurygin:

The restraint, moderation and self possession that the Indian Government displayed in these conditions should be highly praised. Until the very last moment, India refrained from steps that might impede a political settlement in East Pakistan. India recognized Bangladesh only after Pakistani armed forces on December 3 launched largescale military actions against India in the West and bombed 12 Indian airports.... 2

Meanwhile, Chinese support for Pakistan and her anti-Indian as well as anti-Soviet statements continued unabated. Soviet Union was certainly irked; and this time the Peking leadership got it back tooth and nail, for this time Soviet Union did not have to guard against upsetting her 'neutrality' between India and Pakistan. In fact Chinese support for Pakistan, afforded the Soviet Union an opportunity to censure the Chinese

In moralistic terms,

Pursuing its own selfish aims, Peking propaganda has embarked on a path of justifying the mass repressions and terror the Pakistani authorities are using against the population of the Eastern part of the country, a path of defending the bloody reprisals against the civilian population of East Pakistan. Articles appearing in Peking maintain, contrary to known facts, that the problem of the East Pakistani refugees was allegedly created by "subversive activity and propaganda" on the part of India. 3

1 Pravda, 9 December 1971, G.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 49.

2 Pravda, 16 December 1971, G.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.

3 Pravda, 8 December 1971, p. 5, G.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 49, p. 2.

Mayevsky voicing Soviet apprehension as well as indignation of Peking's methods of gaining influence in the subcontinent, writes: "The Peking leadership has invariably played an instigator's role in the exacerbation of the situation on the Hindustan peninsula. Peking has a direct connection with the present events and is playing an exceptionally provocative role in them."¹ Accusing the Chinese of duplicity, the Pravda observer pointed out, that "on the one hand, the Maoists tried in every way to worm their way into East Pakistan, and with the help of their agents, preached a "people's war" there. On the other hand, they advertised their support for the military regime in Pakistan, striving to turn it into an instrument of their chauvinist, great power course in Asia."² The writer underlined the fact that the leaders at Peking were using Pakistan "as a puppet in the unscrupulous game they are playing in the international arena" and that "in fanning the Indian-Pakistani conflict" the Maoists were "trying to carry out a policy of setting Asians against Asians, a policy openly resembling the U.S.A.'s "Guam Doctrine".³

V. Kudrayavtsev was actually challenging the Chinese, when he scornfully declared, "The Peking Government has taken a very noisy and at the same time a politically absurd position. Noise has never served as an argument in major political questions. It is usually used to cover up the weakness of arguments or their absence...."⁴

1 Pravda, 9 December 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 49, pp. 2, 3, 4.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Investia, 12 December 1971.

Nor was the USA spared Soviet acrimony for its so-called impartiality Kudryavstev of Izvestia wrote:

The U.S. ruling circles want to demonstrate their "impartiality" in the Pakistani Indian conflict declaring that they hold a neutral position in respect of it. But this centrality, it turns out, consists in the fact that the U.S.A. is applying economic sanctions to India (and only to India!). Incidentally ... this step by the U.S. Government shows once again that the U.S.A. extends aid "not to strengthen independence of the developing countries but to strengthen its own position in these countries. 1

Just how impartial, US "impartiality" was, can be gleaned from the US Secret documents brought to light by Jack Anderson. Within four and a half hours of the Pakistani air attack on India, the Washington Special Action Group of the American Government met. During this session, Henry Kissinger is reported to have said:

I am getting hell every half hour from the President that we are not being tough enough on India. He has just called me again. He does not believe that we are carrying out his wishes. He wants us to tilt in favour of Pakistan. 2

This 'tilt' was reflected in the application of economic sanctions against India; it became quite glaring when Washington tried to freeze the issue through the United Nations. At the meeting of the United Nations Security Council on 4 December, the US delegate held India responsible for the outbreak of the war, sponsored a Resolution calling for immediate ceasefire, and a withdrawal of forces and insisted that the Resolution be put to vote immediately. Obviously, in US calculations, a

1 Ibid.

2 Mohammad Ayooob and K. Subrahmanyam, The Liberation War (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 227-28.

ceasefire which would be followed by the posting of UN observers on either side of the border would ultimately lead to a freezing of the issue. Pakistan would be left intact and so also US leverage in the subcontinent. India would eventually be left with the burden of caring for 9 million refugees while Pakistan would be free to carry on its nefarious activities in East Bengal and that too, minus the burden of a huge chunk of its dissident Bengalee population (who had already fled to India or been exterminated by military authorities). West Pakistan's hegemony would then be complete.

The Soviet delegate Yakov Malik not only prevented damage of this kind to India by vetoing the US proposal, he also put forth a strong plea for the inclusion of a delegate from Bangladesh in the deliberations of the Council. The Soviet delegate spared no effort to point out that no solution of the basic problem could be achieved by transforming Pakistan's domestic crisis into an Indo-Pak issue. The main cause of the conflict, he emphasized, was the "wellknown series of actions of the Government of Pakistan against the East Pakistani population. "The military actions have arisen as a result of the fact that the Government of Pakistan being unable to cope with the resistance of the 75 million persons of East Pakistan, instead of eliminating the genuine cause of the conflict decided to undertake military actions against India, including the bombing of Indian cities, attacks on Indian posts and the shelling and violation of Indian territory."¹

1 SCOR, yr 26, mtg 1607, pp. 62-75 and 112-16.

Emphasizing on the correlation between the domestic crisis and the international one, Malik continued:

Representatives in their statements referred to a cease-fire between India and Pakistan, and yet many of them did not correlate the question of the demand for a cessation of hostilities with the demand to the Government of Pakistan to eliminate the main cause of the conflict. Yet the course of this discussion in the Council has shown that the basic and essential cause is precisely the fact that the question of the hostile actions and the conflict in the Indo-Pakistan peninsula must be correlated with the demand to the Government of Pakistan immediately and unconditionally to recognize the stated will of the East Pakistan population as it was expressed in the elections in December 1970. 1

The Soviet stand reiterated time and again that unless the policies and actions of West Pakistani authorities were abandoned and a true political settlement with the representatives of the people arrived at, a ceasefire would only result in a continuation and even aggravation of the mass repression and tyranny in Bangladesh. Therefore he insisted that a ceasefire should be simultaneous with a political settlement in Bangladesh; the one could not be separated from the other. On 5 December, on the above mentioned grounds, the Soviet Union vetoed two UN Resolutions sponsored by the US and supported by the Chinese People's Republic calling for a ceasefire. In the General Assembly too, the Soviet delegate stoutly stood his stand. Meanwhile, N. Malik also put forth another Resolution (on 4 December itself) calling for both ceasefire and a simultaneous political settlement. On 12, 13 and 15 December the Soviet

1 Ibid.

2 SCOR, yr 26, mtg. 1606.

representative successfully vitiated the Sino-US stand and once again vetoed yet another Nixon sponsored resolution for ceasefire.

Besides fighting the United States in the United Nations, a battle against the UN Resolutions was also waged in the Soviet Press.

Viktor Mayevsky writing in Pravda said, "The main reason for the steadily increasing tension in relations between Pakistan and India has been and remains the situation created in East Pakistan as a result of the Pakistani Government's actions against the population of this part of the country." He continued, "It was revealed in the U.N.'s discussion of the Indian Pakistani conflict that some of this organization's members are trying to separate the question of a cease-fire in Hindustan from the necessity of a political settlement in East Pakistan although these two questions comprise a single whole."¹

Yuri Zhukhov of Pravda again called attention to this fact in an article entirely devoted to this subject:

The attempts, which have intensified in the past few days, to concentrate all attention only on a call for a cease-fire while ignoring the reasons that lead to the outbreak of the conflict serve precisely this goal. As is known in the past few days U.S. and C.P.R. diplomats in the U.N. have acted forcefully in just that direction and this has evoked wild joy in the most rabid reactionaries. 2

Stressing the fact that they were two aspects of one question, he said, "As Comrade L.I. Brezhnev justly emphasized

1 Pravda, 9 December 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 49, p. 2.

2 Pravda, 10 December 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 49.

in his speech to the 6th Congress of the Polish United Workers Party, the military conflict in Hindustan was engendered by the bloody suppression of the basic rights and clearly expressed will of the population of East Pakistan. These are two aspects of one question.¹ Referring to her own propositions for cease-fire, he said, "For this reason, the Soviet Union has distantly suggested and continues to suggest: (1) That all parties involved immediately as a first step, cease-fire and stop all military operations. (2) That the Pakistani Government simultaneously (simultaneously!) take effective actions aimed at a political settlement in East Pakistan immediately recognizing the will of the population of East Pakistan as expressed in the December 1970 elections. These two points are inseparably linked!"²

Censuring the Sino-American 'peace plan' which would only lead to an East Pakistan completely torn to pieces by punitive troops he said, "If one thinks it over, this is what the 'peace plan' amounts to, the plan that is so vigorously and so concentratedly defended by the Chinese and American diplomats who are persistently trying to depict the matter as if no East Pakistani problem exists and there is only a military conflict between two neighbouring states! At the same time, they are making persistent and hopeless attempts to accuse India of aggression although it is clear from the Report submitted by the U.N. Secretary General U Thant that the initial action was an incursion into Indian territory by Pakistani forces."³

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Pravda, 16 December 1971, C.A.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 49, pp. 4-5.

Izvestia of 12 December continued its condemnation of Peking's stand in the United Nations. It said, "The louder and more insolent the speeches that Peking's representatives make in the U.N. become, the more they reveal Pakistan's great power chauvinism, the more they demonstrate its de facto alliance with the imperialist powers.¹" Refuting Peking's allegations against India, the paper wrote, "The C.P.R. delegate in the U.N. General Assembly declared that India has constantly intimidated almost all its neighbours; If anyone has been intimidating its neighbours, it is the Maoist group, and no one in the world, especially in Asia has forgotten this."²

The writer, Kudrayavstev, once again drew attention to the impossibility of separating "the question of the cessation of military operations from a political settlement in East Pakistan", and pointed out that "herein lay the weakness of the U.N. Resolution".

Defending the Soviet veto on the American sponsored UN Resolution and refuting subsequent Sino-American attacks on the Soviet action, Izvestia denounced the Chinese and US "peacemakers" and their peacemaking - "Washington and Peking shout in unison that the Soviet Union 'opposes' the cessation of military operations, alleging that our country and other peace-loving states are responsible for the inaction of the U.N. Security Council. The hypocrisy of the Washington and Peking peacemakers is obvious. The Soviet delegation submitted a draft Resolution

1 Izvestia, 12 December 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.

2 Ibid.

calling for a cease-fire and a closely connected proposal for an immediate political settlement in East Pakistan. Who voted against the sensible proposal? The same false "peace-makers" -- the U.S.A. and China.¹

It was not merely on the UN rostrum that Soviet support was displayed. Equally invaluable was the material aid rendered by her to India. Economic assistance and military aid, together with the background of an Indo-Soviet Treaty provided a much needed material as well as psychological prop against Sino-American investments in Pakistan. Indeed, the political bombshell of the "ENTERPRISE" would have caused something more than just a ripple of anxiety in India, if it were not for the proximity of the Russian fleet.

This American adventure, or misadventure, was also decried by the Soviet Press. Krasnaya Zvezda declared in no uncertain terms, "The Indian Ocean is not an American Lake"². Accusing the White House of "crude blackmail" and of trying to exert "psychological pressure on India", V. Pustov said that excuses of "evacuation" could deceive no one.³

But mere verbal assurances to India that the "Indian Ocean will not be an American Lake" were not enough at that stage. Action was urgent. And Soviet realization of this was manifest by the very noticeable movement of one of her own naval fleets towards the subcontinent. This checkmate exhibited with clarity

1 Izvestia, 18 December 1971.

2 Krasnaya Zvezda, 16 December 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.

3 Ibid.

the true extent of Big Power involvement in the subcontinental crisis. But for the Soviet move, the US display of gunboat tactics, however belated, could have unnerved India. More than anything else, it showed that Kremlin was not unwilling to indulge in a bit of physical exercise if unduly provoked. Soviet stakes in India were, after all, no less weighty than US stakes in Pakistan.

Soviet responses revealed, first a neutrality emphasizing on the purely domestic nature of the crisis, followed by a series of successive pro-India shifts which culminated in complete support for India.

Coincidental or otherwise, one fact that again stands out is that Soviet attitudes once again revealed a convergence of ideology and political strategy. Support for all national liberation movements, which formed part of its basic doctrines, again found favour with Kremlin's foreign policy considerations. In supporting the emergence of an independent Bengal, Soviet Union could quite legitimately claim that she was toeing the anti-colonial policy line. East Bengal had become a virtual colony of West Pakistan. The reasons for such colonization are to be found in the very genesis of Pakistan.

Its very structure was not conducive to a united Pakistan. With more than a thousand miles separating its two wings and with neither ethno-cultural nor socio-political bonds to bridge this gulf, geographically, Pakistan was an incongruity. The history of the two wings made interesting but two separate

readings. Linguistically too, these were two separate identities.¹

With such substantive differences, continued existence of both wings as part of a united whole might have been feasible only through a strict maintenance of absolute equipollence between them. But the concentration of political authority in West Pakistan led to a complete domination of the Eastern Wing by the West. Nearly 90 per cent of the soldiers and officers of the Pakistani army and 85 per cent of its bureaucracy came from West Pakistan despite the fact that East Pakistani Bengalis constituted more than 55 per cent of the nation's population.²

An inevitable corollary to such political centralization was economic exploitation. 70 per cent of Pakistan's invisible funds went to its Western Wing and only 30 per cent to East Bengal. As far as revenue expenditure went, 75 per cent of the national revenue was spent in West Pakistan, while just 25 per cent was left to the East.³ In the field of foreign aid, the quantum of which is normally decided on the basis of the population, East Pakistan in spite of having 55 per cent of Pakistan's total population received only 20 per cent of the foreign economic assistance, whereas West Pakistan with just 45 per cent of the population enjoyed 80 per cent of such economic benefits. This exploitation was heightened by the fact that 50 per cent of

1 In fact, the Muslim League Resolution of 23 March 1940 visualized not one Pakistan but two Pakistans. This Resolution of the Muslim League clearly stated that there should be two "independent" and "sovereign" Muslim states in the Indian subcontinent, one in what is now West Pakistan and one in what was East Pakistan. J.A. Haik, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., pp. 2-3.

1

Pakistan's hard currency earning came from East Bengal. East Pakistan, for all purposes had suffered the status of a colony. Therefore, the call of the Awami League for a separate Bangladesh was a call for liberation from such colonization. And anti-colonialism and support for national liberation movements were basic tenets of Marxism/Leninism.

Soviet Union certainly scored an ideological edge over China when Pravda (16 December 1971) wrote, "... After the conflict broke out, the Peking leaders entered into a virtual alliance with American imperialism and acted as open enemies of the East Pakistani people who are striving for their liberation...." Earlier in the same article, while tracing the causes for the liberation movement, V. Shurygin pointed out:

It should be emphasized that the Awami League's programmatic documents had no clause on granting East Pakistan State independence. This demand arose from below during the mass demonstrations in reaction to the massive repressions the Government employed to impose its will on the absolute majority of East Pakistan's people. The Awami League's proclamation of an independent Bangladesh was a reflection of the people's indignation at the policy of the ruling circles.... The Soviet Union in accordance with the principles of foreign policy, invariably supports the struggle of peoples for their liberation. 3

This time, as in the case of Goa earlier, convergence of ideology and foreign policy strategy was complete. Stressing on the ideological aspect, Izvestia (12 December 1971) wrote:

... One can imagine what the scope of terror must have been if ten million people left their homes of many years and sought refuge in a neighbouring

1 Ibid.

2 Pravda, 16 December 1971, G.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.

country ! After this can anyone be surprised that the East Pakistani population organized resistance to the oppressors by creating Mukti Bahini guerrilla detachments, which began to defend the lives and property of the province's inhabitants.... Given the present scope of the national liberation movement throughout the world, it should not be surprising that the national interests of the people are to an increasingly extent breaking down the religious barriers cultivated by the colonialists. In such conditions the Bangladesh Government came into being. 1

Soviet Union could certainly afford to admonish the West for its hypocrisy and this is precisely what V. Kudrayavtsev proceeded to do. He wrote:

The same Western bourgeois circles that are now raising a fuss about India's alleged aggression, shed crocodile tears over the fate of the refugees and called for aid to be given to them. But the entire question is that the problem of the East Pakistani refugees is not so much a problem of humanism as it is a political problem. The bourgeois pseudo humanists close their eyes to this. Why didn't the "humanists" in the West take timely measures to defend democracy in East Pakistan and to protect the East Pakistani population from terror and extermination and all the horrors they suffered at the hands of the Pakistani army? Let us say candidly that discord between the two countries of Hindustan suited the imperial instigators ... since this weakened the anti-imperialist struggles of the Asian peoples. 2

The fact that Pakistan was still a member of the anti-Communist SEATO and CENTO, further justified Soviet support to India and Bangladesh. Izvestia was strictly adhering to ageold principles when it declared that "in fanning the flames of conflict on the Hindustan peninsula, the American imperialists act from the position of sponsors of and participants in two aggressive military blocs created by them -- SEATO and CENTO

1 Izvestia, 12 December 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.

2 Ibid.

(and Pakistan is a member of both these blocs) -- whose basic goal has been and continues to be the suppression of national liberation movements in Asia.¹

Peking was the worst hit by the confluence of ideology and strategy in the Soviet stand. Peking's vociferous support to Pakistan enabled Pravda to declare in righteous indignation that the Peking leaders were traitors to the national liberation movement. Thus wrote Kudrayavtsev in Izvestia (30 December 1971):

The camouflage has fallen from the Peking leaders, who lay claim to leadership of the "Third World" but in fact are betraying the 75 million people of East Pakistan in the struggle for their liberation. This conclusion is confirmed by the entire content of the Maoist leadership's policy.... The Peking leaders betrayed the movement of the people of Bangladesh for the sake of their alliance with the Pakistani militarists and their American protectors !2

The People's Daily found no weapon for retaliation when Victor Mayevsky wrote, "Reactionary bourgeoisie and Peking propaganda are trying to present the stormy events in Hindustan as only a military conflict between two states, India and Pakistan. But what took place on the subcontinent actually constitutes one of the most important battles fought by the national liberation movements, in recent decades, a battle between the 75,000,000 people of East Bengal, supported by India and other anti-imperialist powers against the forces of oppression and terror, supported by American imperialism, which acted in concert with the Peking leadership. The victory of the anti-imperialist liberation forces of Bangladesh -- land of the

1 Izvestia, 18 December 1971, p. 3, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.

2 Izvestia, 30 December 1971, C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 52.

Bengalees --is of paramount importance in strengthening the freedom and independence of the peoples on the Asian continent.¹"

The fact that the economic programme of the Awami League was far more radical than that of the People's Party further justified Soviet support for India and Bangladesh. Yet another factor which fostered a merging of Soviet doctrines and strategies was the Awami League's declared foreign policy perspectives. Among these, one was its adherence to the principle of non-alignment. (Ever since Khrushchev and the introduction of the concepts of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition into Soviet Communism, the principle of non-alignment had found favour in Kremlin's perspectives.) The second was the Awami League's refusal to adhere to the "Hate India" policy of the Yahya regime. It stood not merely for improved relations with India but for positive co-operation with India. It was but natural that this should blend in with Soviet foreign policy objectives.

Therefore thanks to the Bengal upsurge's acute resemblance to anti-colonial movements and to its progressive policy objectives, Soviet support to it not only enabled her to fulfil her treaty obligations to India but also placed her in the happy position of having adhered to ideological principles.

On the other hand, what was the share of the more pragmatic Indo-Soviet Treaty in shaping Soviet attitudes? The Treaty was signed at a time when the crisis on the sub-continent was already in the melting-pot. So Soviet Union

1 Pravda, 22 December 1971, G.D.S.R., vol. XXIII, no. 51.

walked into it knowing full well that such a Treaty would inhibit her manoeuvrability in a future South Asian conflict.

Should not the environment^{of} the impending war over the subcontinent have deterred the Soviet Union from committing herself to India? On the contrary, this atmosphere of tension facilitated the sealing of Indo-Soviet relations.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty had been on the anvil long before August 1971. In fact it is said to have originated in mid 1969 as a variant of the Soviet design of Asian collective security. In the late fifties, as a non-aligned nation India had mattered in Soviet perspectives. (The lessening of the Cold War and her defensive position in the conflict with China had lowered her prestige for a time.) In the late sixties and in the atmosphere of the new Cold War, Indian weight mattered -- not merely as a non-aligned nation but as a territorial bulk contiguous to both sides of the new Cold War.

By 1970, major global shifts had occurred. Sino-Soviet antagonism had settled down as a long-term prospect and consequently Soviet Russia was eager to formulate an equally long-term policy against China.

Soviet Union who had been pursuing a neutralist line between India and Pakistan in order to wean away Pakistan from China, suddenly found that not much headway had been made after all in this regard. And China took the first opportunity to proclaim vociferous support for Pakistan, sent military equipment for Pakistan's use and augmented Chinese economic aid to Pakistan.

On the other side, Nixon administration made no bones about its support for Pakistan.¹ Then came the dramatic opening of the Washington-Peking axis with Islamabad acting as chief courier. The obvious result was that Islamabad enjoyed the benign approval of both Peking and Washington in all its activities. It also meant that of the three Big Powers Soviet Russia was left out in the cold. (This axis more than anything else led to a cementing of Indo-Soviet ties.) On the sub-continental plane, India was the one to feel the chill. For the first time, she realized the precarious nature of her position with Pakistan leaning on 2 pillars and herself left with nothing tangible to hang on. No doubt Soviet Union realized it too. Moreover Soviet Union was anxious to retain its influence in the subcontinent via India and a probable Bangladesh and therefore it was in her interest to lend a strong arm to India. Further, antagonism to China was a common factor between the two states. Taking all these factors into account, India alone provided the requisite bulwark against Chinese "expansionism". Besides all this, the signing of the Treaty put to rest certain other Soviet anxieties. At the very least it ensured that India would not be used as a base of operations for anti-Soviet activities for a long time to come.

New Delhi was of course more interested in the immediate effects of the Treaty — a solid backing, both verbal and material, for India in all her actions from the Soviet Union.

1 See Robert A. Donaldson, "India, The Soviet Stake in Stability" *Asian Survey*, xii, No. 6, (June 1972) p. 477-78.

The Treaty, as mentioned earlier, provided the material and, equally important, the psychological prop for India against Sino-Pakistani intransigency. So the signing of the Treaty catered as much to Moscow's long-term strategy as it did to New Delhi's short-term interests.

In an analysis of any international negotiation, the domestic situation of the respective countries cannot be ignored. In the materialization of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, this factor assumed an added significance. The two major countries/^{of South Asia} seemed to be riding on two different wavelengths. The December 1970 elections in Pakistan flung that country into a tidal wave of instability. The March 1971 elections in India saw not only the return of Mrs. Gandhi with a massive majority, it also saw the return of stability to the Indian political scene. This was in direct contrast to the situation prevailing in 1965-66. Soviet Union was interested in stability. Between a stable India and a Pakistan torn by civil strife, Soviet Union picked the right horse.

This foresight of the Soviet Union no doubt stood her in good stead. China and America were unable to visualize future developments and this is precisely where Soviet planning and strategy triumphed.

The war ended with victory for the Bangladesh nationalists; certainly it was a triumph for India -- but it was Soviet Union that emerged with the greatest glory. India's power certainly increased vis-a-vis her immediate environment, and no doubt her prestige reached hitherto unscaled heights. But it was nothing like the Soviet triumph. Soviet Union had literally killed

two birds with one shot. She had faced alone and triumphed over a joint Sino-American bloc. The Sino-American axis certainly ^{did} did/seem to auger well for the involved parties. The very first issue that they pooled in their resources together cost them a lot of prestige and a certain amount of power that invariably went with it. More important, a question mark seemed to appear even before their power of patronage. The joint Indo-Soviet-Bangladesh triumph, therefore, upset the balance of power not only in the subcontinent but its reverberations were very much felt in the wider international field.

However, soon after the emergence of Bangladesh, there was no indication that Soviet Union was desirous of following a positively anti-Pakistan policy. On the contrary, Soviet Union after having won the battle, seemed to be making a return to her earlier stance of maintaining peace and stability on the subcontinent. This was yet another instance, in fact a natural outcome of Soviet ingenuity of planning in the international arena.

When a conflict seemed inevitable Soviet Union went all out to support India but once the crisis blew over, Moscow was anxious to maintain the status quo -- a status quo in which Soviet influence was predominant. This had the added promise of ensuring against Chinese penetration. Pakistan was not to be further antagonized, as Moscow was still interested in a stable subcontinent to act as a bulwark against China. So instead of peacekeeping in two states, Kremlin was now involved in peacekeeping in three states -- India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

Soviet responses to India's international disputes are the inevitable derivatives of the general Soviet policy towards India. When viewed through a long-range spectrum Soviet responses to these disputes seem invariably to reflect support to India. On closer scrutiny however, one detects various forces at play before such support fully materialized -- and in certain cases, as has already been revealed, Soviet support did not crystalize in concrete form.

Soviet reactions, thus, were the realistic indicators of the actual location of Kremlin's priorities, which in all cases were not uniform.

Since no foreign policy can function in isolation from the global environment, Soviet views on India's international disputes seem to have been conditioned by three major considerations:

- (a) The prevailing intensity of Super Power rivalry.
- (b) The emergence of polycentricism within the Communist ideology and particularly the meteoric rise of Maoist China.
- (c) Her own views on the importance of the Third World countries and the significance of the concept of non-alignment.

The year 1960 saw the Cold War at its zenith. Where Goa was concerned, USA had already committed itself to Portugal via SEATO and NATO. Dullesian policy could brook no alignment with non-alignment. The new-found dynamism in Soviet strategies at the time which discarded her past isolation, accommodated and even welcomed non-alignment and particularly Indian non-alignment. India was to be the isthmus to the Third World nations. The

support to India on Goa was, therefore, total and almost inevitable.

The circumstances leading to the Soviet support for India in the second issue are more interesting. During the incipient stages of the Sino-Indian confrontation, the Soviet Union due to her entanglement in the Cuban missile crisis, tended to placate China almost ignoring India. Subsequent Soviet retraction to neutrality and her ultimate support to India revealed that this was a purely evanescent posture. Not only did the Soviets give full support to India, they also published a scathing criticism of Chinese actions.

Here it is important to note India's role in the Sino-Soviet split. The increasing Soviet preoccupation with India, the political and economic support to India by Kremlin on earlier occasions and even more, the attitude of "friendly India" and "fraternal China" during the Sino-Indian border frictions of 1959, no doubt scratched Chinese pride and made a significant contribution to her eventual alienation from the Soviet Union. To begin with, the Chinese divergence was explained in ideological terms; but the part played by national interest was of no less import. Till China became a power in her own right, it was in her own interests to be within Soviet patronage. But thereafter, when it was found that a non-Communist India was on the receiving end of almost equal patronage, and that too with no visible strings attached, Peking was quick to smell danger. National interest has to supersede ideology, if that ideology becomes an albatross around its own neck -- in this respect, China was no different from the Soviet Union. Just as Moscow found

it essential to reject pristine views and to jettison certain simplistic ideological evaluations so as to enable her to overcome past isolation, Peking found it increasingly necessary to dismember itself from the Soviet umbrella. India not only provided the anvil for this break but also proved to be a major factor in causing it. And in the changed circumstances, India was to play a pivotal role in Soviet containment of China.

With polycentricism an established fact, Soviet attitudes towards India began to undergo a perceptible change. The Soviet policies were no longer solely based on India, but took into account the whole subcontinent as a bulwark against Chinese expansionism. Therefore the stress was on a peaceful, stable 'Hindustan' peninsula, free of Chinese influence.

This factor and the diminished importance of non-alignment in Super Power perspective consequent upon the growing detente, revitalized Soviet overtures to Pakistan. This change was quite clearly portrayed in the two Indo-Pak wars of 1965. The Soviet Union was no longer rhapsodic about India; it was neutral in an Indo-Pak confrontation.

We have seen that by the beginning of the seventies Soviet postures underwent a marked change. Between 1965 and 1970 certain global shifts had occurred in the nature of international politics which led to closer co-operation between India and the Soviet Union. First of all, it had become clear that Chinese investments in Pakistan had come to stay -- independent of Soviet overtures. At the same time, American investments in Pakistan were renewed; and when these two combined with the third and most important development -- the formation of the Sino-American axis -- it necessitated a revitalization of Indo-

Soviet ties. This revitalization manifested itself in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 and in the Soviet support to India over the Bangladesh issue. The new Cold War situation now between the Soviet Union and China also provided an impetus to Indian non-alignment.

New Diplomatic Style

What really stands out in an examination of Soviet literature on India's international disputes is the extreme sophistication that Soviet foreign policy planning has acquired. Kremlin's mastery at transferring the tightrope walking technique to diplomatic spheres was fully exhibited during the Bangladesh crisis. Throughout the period 1960-71, Soviet diplomatic interaction with India has been so dexterous and has been conducted with such finesse that even major shifts in Soviet stands left no glaring discrepancies. A scrutiny of her responses has revealed her ability to retain the maximum manoeuvrability while simultaneously giving more support to one of the two contesting sides. It reflected not only the flexibility and resilience of Soviet strategy but also the pragmatic style of the post-Stalin, and later, the post-Khrushchev leadership. Such pragmatism, as we have already seen enabled her to turn every situation to her advantage. This was borne out first in her Tashkent triumph and later in her emerging victorious from the Bangladesh labyrinth.

Ideology and national interest need not and do not in reality always coincide. The intermeshing of power and interest gives precedence to national interest vis-a-vis ideology, and a compromise on ideology is inevitable when the nation's interest is at stake. The Sino-American axis and the Indo-Soviet Treaty

itself are indicators that this realism in international politics has come to stay.

Emergence of Ideology and Strategy

In Soviet foreign policy particularly vis-a-vis India scored a convergence between ideology and operational strategy on most of the disputes under consideration.

As noted earlier, on the Goa issue Kremlin had no difficulty in finding a happy meeting ground between her ideological tenets and her more pragmatic policy stands. The anti-colonial nature of the Goa liberation justified Soviet support to India in ideological terms, while the prevention of a possible US base in Portugal Goa was one of the several policy objectives achieved by such a stand.

It was only in the incipient stages of the Sino-Indian confrontation that the Soviet Union found herself in an embarrassing cul-de-sac. Soviet communism with its new stress on peaceful transition and peaceful coexistence had found no favour with China; and despite this ideological divergence, Kremlin had to back China -- because of the pressures generated by the Cuban crisis in the initial phase of the Sino-Indian confrontation. But her later support to India could be justified in ideological terms. As noted earlier, as soon as the Cuban crisis blew over, the Soviet Union returned to a stout defence of peaceful coexistence. China was castigated in no uncertain terms for trying to disturb peace in the subcontinent, and thereby in the international arena. Such criticism coincided with her support to India.

Throughout the sixties, the predominant theme in Soviet position on international politics was on peaceful coexistence.

Detente had gained considerable progress by the mid-sixties, Indian non-alignment had suffered a setback and India herself had lost much prestige. Chinese "expansionism" had become the major worry of the USSR. With this, 'a peaceful and stable subcontinent' became the new Soviet obsession. Thus her stand of neutrality during the two Indo-Pak conflicts of 1965 was quite in keeping with the principle of maintaining peace in the world. No one could accuse the Soviet Union of retracting on ideological principles when she pleaded for a quick cessation of hostilities, or, when she appealed for direct negotiations. On the contrary, taking sides would only have escalated the war -- as Moscow was quick to point out to Peking. Of course the practical advantages of such a stand were numerous as has been already enumerated in Chapter IV. But the fact remains that Moscow achieved her policy objectives without deviating from ideological norms.

Finally, where the Bangladesh issue was concerned, the convergence of doctrines and operational strategies was even easier to achieve than in the case of Goa. The Soviet support for India and to the people of East Bengal could be justified in both moral and ideological terms --

- (a) The support was to a national liberation movement with anti-colonial overtones (due to the subjugation of the Bengalees to an almost colonial status).
- (b) The support was to end tyranny and mass genocide.

Peaceful Coexistence and Peaceful Transition

Such a convergence between ideology and operational strategy was made possible by the introduction of the two concepts of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition into

Soviet Communism. The reassessment of theoretical principles and the introduction of these two concepts are of particular significance from the Indian viewpoint.

Peaceful coexistence meant that both the capitalist and the communist systems should exist together peacefully in order to prevent total annihilation through a nuclear third world war. This, in the beginning naturally gave impetus to those nations who were aligned to neither side. With the existence of a Cold War-oriented USA, it meant that non-alignment and especially Indian non-alignment was invaluable to the Soviet Union.

The concept of peaceful transition gave a new respectability to the national democratic fronts of the newly emerging nations. If during the Stalinist phase, Soviet indologists lent assistance to promote revolutionary , under Khrushchev they were now to provide rationalizations for fostering Indo-Soviet friendship. Thus the "progressive" role of the Indian bourgeoisie led by Nehru was now highlighted.

Therefore, Indian non-alignment fitted in with the newly developed Soviet concept of peaceful coexistence, while the national democratic front in India was considered progressive and, in fact, quite an essential stage in the process of peaceful transition to socialism.

Without these two principles, Kremlin would have found it difficult to conform its operational strategy with Marxist ideology.

Yet another factor that emerges from a study of Soviet responses is the extent to which her attitudes were conditioned by China. The major preoccupation of Soviet policy makers was

containment of China. From herein originated various other policy tactics. Except in the case of Goa (which was before the Sino-Soviet split) all attitudes were geared to contain Chinese influence in the area. In fact India herself was to act as a bulwark against Chinese expansionism. Later India was replaced by the subcontinent as a whole and as a result, one saw the stress laid by Kremlin on the maintenance of peace and stability in the subcontinent. The Soviet Union realized that with China already having stakes in Pakistan, to prevent any further penetration, peace and stability were of utmost importance. Confrontation on the subcontinent would inevitably lead to greater Chinese leverage through Pakistan. This, at all costs, had to be prevented. There thus ensued Soviet stress on political settlement and peaceful negotiations. Whether the underlying support to India existed or not, the public stand taken was one which advocated a cessation of all hostilities. It was so in the case of the Sino-Indian confrontation of 1962; it was even more clearly portrayed in the Indo-Pak wars of 1965, when Soviet Union remained neutral to the very end, in spite of vociferous Chinese support for Pakistan in order to stop war operations on the subcontinent. An end to the conflict was as much in Kremlin's interest as it was in Islamabad's or New Delhi's.

One witnessed a similar stand in the Indo-Pak war of 1971 too when despite her open support to India in the United Nations and through arms and other forms of aid, she continued to advocate for a peaceful settlement.

The Chinese divergence could also have been the cause for a marked feature in Soviet responses. Except on the Goa issue, Soviet attitudes reveal total commitment only at the very end. The pattern invariably began with a neutral stand, followed by successive pro-India shifts. This pattern was dominant during the disputes of 1962 and 1971. It was conducted with greater subtlety in 1965.

Domestic Ingredient of Soviet Policies

Just as the international environment of the new Cold War and the leftovers of the previous one were bound to affect Soviet relations with India, the Soviets were also cognizant of the significance of the domestic situation prevailing in the sub-continental nations. Her attitudes on India's international disputes, were to a certain extent reflective of the political conditions existing in the subcontinent. It would be interesting to make a comparative study of Soviet attitudes vis-a-vis the domestic situation prevailing in India during each of the four disputes under consideration.

In 1960, when the Goa episode began, India could boast of having developed a fair degree of political stability internally. The predominant political party, the Indian National Congress, enjoyed an overwhelming majority both at the Centre and in most of the states. The Soviet Union wholeheartedly supported the liberation of Goa by the Indian armed forces.

The situation in 1962 was only slightly different. Nehru's ability to win the support from almost all quarters had begun to wane. But even so, at the time of the breaking out of hostilities on India's North-eastern frontiers, stability continued to exist

on the Indian political front. The Soviet attitudes after initial fluctuations, settled down to a definite pro-India and anti-China note.

By 1965, the Indian political situation had undergone considerable change. The death of Jawaharlal Nehru and his replacement by Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime Minister was merely a superficial change. Much more fundamental were the underlying factors of a growing rift within the Congress, the increasing power of the opposition parties, and the consequent loss of stability at the Centre. In fact, instability can be traced back to the setback that India suffered at the hands of China in the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. Soviet reactions on the two conflicts of 1965 reflect the Soviet understanding of this instability within India. Soviet neutrality on the conflicts depicts, in no uncertain way, the influence of these internal conditions of India on Soviet foreign policy tactics. Certainly, by no means can one ignore the various other factors involved in the Soviet projection of neutrality; for instance the loss of prestige for India, the setback for Indian non-alignment due to detente and the leverage China had acquired in Pakistan. The Soviet Union at the time was also interested in a peaceful, stable territorial frontier that could effectively counter Chinese "expansionism". By 1965 it was clear to Kremlin that India alone was not sufficient for the task. There thus ensued Soviet neutrality on the Indo-Pak conflicts over Rann of Kutch and Kashmir. This neutrality assumes greater significance when one considers it in the background of the full support given to the Indian position on Kashmir by Kremlin on earlier occasions.

Mrs. Gandhi's massive victory at the polls in the March 1971 elections brought back stability to the Indian political scene.

Pakistan, on the other hand, was during this period ridden with internal instability. Z.A. Bhutto's People's Party, the dominant party of the Western wing, failed to secure a majority in the first ever elections to the National Assembly. Not only was the Awami League of the Eastern wing victorious at the polls, its demands had included the granting of an autonomous status to East Pakistan. This was not all. Sectarian chauvinism prevailed in Pakhtoonistan, Baluchistan and Sind.

During the Indo-Pak war of December 1971, there was no uncertainty about the Soviet stand.

Thus one sees that on all four occasions, domestic conditions have had their repercussions on Soviet stakes in India. Fluctuations in India's internal stability were inevitably reflected in Soviet responses.

Viewed in its totality, it is impossible to overlook the fact that Soviet attitudes on India's international disputes during the period 1960-1971, reveal a basic leaning towards India. At no time was the Soviet Union anti-India -- indeed, even when she professed neutrality during the 1965 disputes, certain pro-India inclinations could be discerned. Then in the very important sphere of economic aid, Soviet Union has emerged India's most significant benefactor. In terms of military aid also, the Soviet contribution has been considerable.

However, it was not India alone that benefitted from Soviet aid. Soviet support was forthcoming because it was in Soviet interests to render such support. To put it plainly, Soviet Union needed India just as much as India needed the Soviet Union. The pragmatic implications - of a Goa tied to NATO, of an expanding China with her own monolithic ideology, of a Pakistan dominated by Sino-American interests-structured Soviet attitudes on India's international disputes. Here then is a striking example of "mutual aid" being truly mutual. What is even more striking is that this pragmatic style coincided well with Kremlin ideological stands.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Appadorai, A., The Tashkent Declaration (
- Ayooob, Muhammad, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, 1975).
- Ayooob, M. and Subramanyam, The Liberation War (S. Chand and Co. New Delhi, 1972).
- Chopra, Pran, Before and After the Indo-Soviet Treaty (S. Chand and Co., New Delhi, n.d.)
- Dallin, David J., Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin (J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1961).
- Donaldson, R.H., Soviet Policy Toward India : Ideology and Strategy (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1974).
- Floyd David, Mao Against Khrushchev (Praeger, New York, 1963).
- Gupta, Bhabani Sen, The Fulcrum of Asia (Pegasus, New York, 1970).
- Gupta, Karunakar, The Hidden History of the Sino-Indian Frontier (Minerva Publications, Calcutta, 1974).
- Griffith, W.E., The Sino-Soviet Rift (London, 1964).
- Jain, J.P., Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh (Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 1974).
- Kapoor, Harish, Soviet Union and the Emerging Nations : A Case Study of Soviet Policy towards India (Michael Joseph Ltd., London, 1972).
- _____, The Embattled Triangle - Moscow-Peking-New Delhi (Abhinav Publication, New Delhi, 1973).
- Karunakaran, K.P., India in world Affairs February 1950 - December 1953 (Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1958).
- Kaushik, D., Soviet Relations with India and Pakistan (Vikas, Delhi, 1971).
- Kulkarni, Maya, Indo-Soviet Political Relations (Since the Bandung Conference 1955) (Vora & Co., Bombay, 1968).
- Maxwell, Neville, India's China War (Random House, New York, 1971).

- Memp, K.P.S., The Indo-Soviet Treaty Setting and Sequel (Vikas, Delhi, 1971).
- Naik, J.A., Soviet Policy Towards India (Vikas, New Delhi, 1970).
- Naik, India, Russia, China and Bangladesh (S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1972).
- Prasad, Bimal and Balabushevich, V.V., India and the Soviet Union (People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969).
- Ram, Mohan, Politics of Sino-Indian Confrontation (Vikas Pub. House, New Delhi, 1973).
- Rao, R.P., Portuguese Rule in Goa (Asia Publishing House, New York, 1963).
- Ray, A.K., Domestic Compulsions and Foreign Policy - Pakistan in Indo-Soviet Relations (Manas, Delhi, 197).
- Ray, Hemen, Indo-Soviet Relations 1955-1971 (Jaico, Bombay, 1973).
- Remnek, R.B., Soviet Policy Towards India (Oxford and IBH, New Delhi, 1975).
- Sager, Peter, Moscow's Hand in India (Eastern Institute, Berne: Swiss, 1966).
- Stien, Arthur, India and the Soviet Union - The Nehru Era (The Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1969).
- Subramaniam, K., Self-Reliance and National Resilience (Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1975).
- Vats, Bhagat, Foreign Intrigues Against India (New Delhi, 1967).
- Zimmerman, William, Soviet Perspectives on International Relations - 1956-1967 (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1967).

Articles

- Afonin, M., " Pravda, 17 August 1954.
- Appadorai, A., "Chinese Aggression and India", International Studies, Special Double Issue, vol. V, nos. 1-2, July-October 1963.

- Belyayev, I and Mukimov, Yu., "Before Meeting in Tashkent", Pravda, 4 January 1966.
- Borisev, I., "Roots of the Crisis", Pravda, 10 October 1971, p. 5.
- Borisev, O., "For Peace and Security in Asia", New Times, no. 39, 24 September 1971, p. 11.
- Bulantsev, S. and Skosyra, V., "Tragedy of the Refugees", Izvestia, 24 June 1971.
- Chaudri, M.A., "Pakistan's Relations with the Soviet Union", Asian Survey, September 1966.
- Commentator, "Urgent Necessity - Stop Bloodshed in Kashmir", Pravda, 24 August 1965.
- _____, "Hindustan Needs Peace", Pravda, 9 November 1971, p. 3; C.D.S.P. vol. XXIII, no. 45.
- Demaitre, E., "Soviet-Indian Relations, Neutralism and Communist China", Russian Review, no. 22, 1963.
- Gupta, Bhabani Sen, "Moscow, Peking and the Indian Political Scene after Nehru", Orbis, Summer, 1968.
- Gupta, Karunakar, "Indo-Soviet Relations in Retrospect", Afro-Asian and World Affairs, Autumn 1965.
- Gupta, Sisir, "India and the Soviet Union", Current History, March 1963.
- Hudson, F.G., "Sino-Soviet Dispute", China Quarterly, 1961.
- Kapoor, Harish, "U.S.S.R. and Indo-Pak Relations", International Studies, July-October 1966.
- _____, "India and the Soviet Union", Survey, vol. XVI, no. 1 (Winter) 1970.
- Karunakaran, K.P., "Soviet Stakes in Indian Capitalism", Far Eastern Economic Review, 24 December 1973.
- Kassis, V., "Guns must be Silenced", Izvestia, 16 September 1965.
- Kondrashov, V., "Hindustan Needs Peace", Izvestia, 16 November 1971, p. 5. C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 46.
- Kudryavtsev, V., "Flames over South Asia", Izvestia, 12 December 1971, p. 2; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.
- _____, "Hypocrisy of the Peace-makers", Izvestia, 18 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.

- _____, "Duplicity", Izvestia, 24 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 51.
- _____, "Maoists Betray the Third World", Izvestia, 30 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 52.
- Kuznetsov, A., "Strengthen the Unity of Progressive Forces", Pravda, 24 August 1963, p. 3; C.D.S.P., vol. XV, no. 34.
- Mansurov, Yu., "About the Frontier Conflict in the Himalayas", Za rubezhon (Abroad), no. 48, 1 December 1962, p. 14.
- Maslannikov, A., "Peking's Shameful Position", Pravda, 22 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 51.
- Mayevsky, Viktor, "Clash in Hindustan", Pravda, 9 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 49, pp. 2, 3, 4.
- _____, "The Peking Leaders are Traitors to the National Liberation Movement", Pravda, 22 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 51.
- Mezentsov, P., "Hindustan Awaits Peace", Pravda, 23 November 1971, p. 5.
- Nalin, Y., "NATO : Watchdog of Imperialism", International Affairs (Moscow), May 1961.
- Orekhov, B., "Tragedy of Millions", Pravda, 7 October 1971, p. 5.
- Orestov, O. and Skalkin, O., "Pravda, 4 August 1954.
- Pastukov, N., "Goa is an Integral Part of India's Territory", Pravda, 18 September 1957.
- Perevoshchikov, "Manouvres of the Colonizers are doomed to Failure", Izvestia, 11 December ; C.D.S.P., vol. II, No. 50.
- Pustov, V., "The Indian Ocean is not an American Lake - Where is Aircraft Carrier heading and why?", Krasnaya Zvezda, 16 December 1971.
- Rajan, M.S., "The Tashkent Declaration : Retrospect and Prospect", International Studies, vol. 8, July 1966 - April 1967.
- Ratnikov, I., "Crisis and its Consequences", Pravda, 1 May 1971, p. 5.
- Rubenstein, Z. Alvin, "Russia and the Uncommitted Nations", Current History, July-December 1962.

- Shchedrov, I., "It could not be kept secret - the true extent of the terror unleashed by Pakistani authorities in West Bengal is becoming known", Pravda, 3 January 1972; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIV, no. 1.
- Shurygin, CV., "For Peace in Hindustan", Pravda, 16 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 50.
- Simon Sheldon W., "The Kashmir Dispute in Sino-Soviet Perspectives", Asian Survey, March 1967.
- Stein, Arthur, "India and the U.S.S.R. : The post-Nehru period", Asian Survey, March 1967.
- _____, "India's Relations with the U.S.S.R., 1953-'63", Journal of Politics, February 1963.
- Stralnikov, B., "Latest Failure of Aggressive Course", Pravda, 24 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 51.
- Thimayya, S.K., General, "Chinese Aggression and After", International Studies, § "Chinese Aggression and India", Special Double Issue, vol. V, nos. 1-2, July-October 1963.
- Ul'ianovskii, R., "At new frontiers - on some features of the Present Stage of the National Liberation Movement", Pravda, 3 January 1968, pp. 4-5; C.D.S.P., vol. XX, no. 1, 9.
- Vaidyanathan, R., "The Reaction of the Soviet Union and other Communist States", International Studies : "Chinese Aggression and India", Special Double Issue, vol. V, nos. 1-2, July-October 1963.
- _____, "Some Trends in Soviet Policies Toward India and Pakistan", International Studies (Bombay), January 1966.
- Vasin, V., "The Only Correct Path", Izvestia, 10 July 1971, p. 3.
- Verin, E., "Events in Pakistan", Komsomolskaya Pravda, 2 April 1971.
- Vishnevsky, S., "The Hypocrites", Pravda, 20 December 1961; C.D.S.P., vol. XIII, no. 51.
- Yakubov, G., "Conflict in Hindustan and the Mao Groups Provocative Role", Pravda, 28 December 1971.
- Zubeida, Hasan, "Soviet Arms Aid to Pakistan and India", Pakistan Horizon, 4 November 1969.
- Zukhov, Yuri, "Where is the Way Out?", Pravda, 10 December 1971; C.D.S.P., vol. XXIII, no. 40, pp. 4-5.

Periodicals and JournalsPravda (Moscow)Izvestia (Moscow)New Times (Moscow)Security Council Official RecordsNew York Times (New York)Za Rubezhon (Abroad)Asian RecorderPeking ReviewThe Sunday Standard (New Delhi)Dawn (Karachi)Link (New Delhi)People's DailySurveyIndia QuarterlyThe Statesman (New Delhi)International StudiesDaily Telegraph (London)Asian SurveyPatriot (New Delhi)Foreign Affairs Records (New Delhi: Ministry of
External Affairs)Current Digest of the Soviet Press