

SOVIET- INDIAN RELATIONS (1984-89)

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PREFACE

P_R_E_F_A_C_E

Although the Soviet-Indian relations have always been cordial and friendly since the early fifties and never faced any serious crisis, there has been an undercurrent of divergence in the approaches, perceptions and at times even the concrete objectives pursued by the two countries in the international sphere and bilateral relations. On account of the predominance of a euphoric view in a situation of regional conflicts with neighbours in which Moscow extended crucial support to India, the growing trend towards divergence has not been adequately analysed in the various studies devoted to Soviet- Indian relations. The present work is a modest attempt to present a balanced view of the relations between the two countries during the period of Rajiv Gandhi's stewardship as the Prime Minister of India.

Nehru's pro-west tilt in the pre-1955 period notwithstanding, his tenure as Prime Minister of India witnessed a steady strengthening of the Soviet-Indian relations in both political and economic fields. Soviet-Indian relations during the regimes of Nehru's successors grew further, attaining new heights.

After coming to power in 1980 Mrs. Indira Gandhi

was not as eager as before to pursue the populist line of the seventies. A shift towards pragmatism and desire to improve relations with China and the United States marked her policies during 1980-85 period. These new factors acted as a constraint on the development of Soviet-Indian political relations. Soviet relations with India which had become clouded due to Soviet military presence in Afghanistan and Moscow's efforts to mend its fences with Beijing after the death of Brezhnev, underwent a period of stress and strain.

Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister (1985-90) witnessed a further deepening of the pragmatic trend in the Soviet-Indian relations which first emerged under Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The growing trend towards pragmatism under Rajiv Gandhi resulted in some short lived divergences which were ultimately overcome giving way to a new convergence on the basis of a pragmatic real politik approach recognised by both sides.

The work is based on primary sources like works of important Soviet state and party leaders their statements, speeches, reports and policy statements as well as secondary sources like important Soviet and Indian news papers and periodicals.

I am indebted to my Supervisor Prof. Devendra Kaushik for his invaluable guidance. I am also thankful to the Librarian and staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Library for their help and cooperation in consulting the material for completion of this work. I remain grateful to my Brother Manjunath, sister Chitra and to my friend Shiva for helping me in various ways and cheering me up in course of my work on the dissertation.

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(SEEMA RANI CHOUHARY)

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Soviet-Indian relations have played a vital role in strengthening India's security as well as in promoting her economic and cultural development. The Soviet Union has also gained considerably from her cordial relations with India - a leading third world country. The successful development of political, economic and cultural relations between these two countries with divergent socio-political systems has been held out as a model relationship based on peaceful co-existence. It has also been a great source of support to India in its fight against colonialism and for world peace. The Soviet-Indian relations are, however, not based merely on calculations of national interest. Their roots lie deeply embedded in the minds and hearts of the Indian and Soviet peoples making their bilateral relationship a part of the national tradition of both the countries.

The steadily developing Soviet-Indian relations are based on a historical and spiritual affinity of the two great nations which was predetermined by the objective course of mankind's social development. There is an unbreakable natural interconnection between 1917, the year of the Great October Socialist Revolution, and 1947 - the year India won its independence.

The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia brought about a qualitative change in relations between the new Soviet state and people on one side and the Indian nationalist and Revolutionary movements on the other. In the first place, the revolution itself became a great source of inspiration to the Indian people, who were then entering the second phase of their struggle for independence after the collapse of the war-time hopes. "The October revolution marked the first breach in the citadel of imperialism, and victory of Soviet arms against fascism and emergence of the world socialist camp created objective conditions for India and other Afro-Asian countries to win their freedom."¹

A few months before India achieved independence, in March 1947, Nehru convened the Asian Relation Conference. It is significant that he invited representatives of the central Asian Republics of the Soviet-Union to this conference. He thus emphasised the importance of the historical, geographical and geopolitical links between India and the Soviet Union. India's strategic position as a bridge between South-East and South-West Asia and between Central and South Asia makes India's policy of nonalignment and peaceful coexistence a very important

¹ Devendra Kaushik, "Historical Perspective: Successful Advance", World Focus, Vol.8, No.4, April 1987, p. 3.

factor for the maintenance of peace, security and cooperation in the whole of Asia. Similarly, the Soviet Union's strategic position as a bridge between Asia and Europe and its military and economic strength make it an important factor which can not be ignored by any power in the world.²

In view of ever growing goodwill between India and the USSR, the governments of both these countries considered it proper to cement their already existing ties in the form of diplomatic relationship on 14 April 1947, that is four months before independence was formally proclaimed. Welcoming the event, the Hindustan Times, considered to be close to the Indian National Congress, in its issue of April 15, 1947, expressed the hope that "arrangements will be made at an early date for the training of Indian scientists in Russia and the engagement for short periods of Soviet technicians to advice the provincial and central governments in this country regarding the applicability of Russian experience to Indian economic problems". Earlier, on March 14, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru stated in the Central Assembly that he expected to send an economic mission to Russia to study

2 T.N. Kaul, " Indo-Soviet Friendship", Mainstream, Nov 22, 1986, p. 27.

the working of the Russian five-year plan soon after diplomatic relations were exchanged.³

There are not many other examples of a stable bilateral relationship between countries of the size and significance of India and the USSR over a long period of four decades. The secret of their crisis free, by and large smooth relations, lies in the shared perceptions of a basic community of interests between the mutually complementary forces of world socialism and national liberation which have provided a firm basis for their further growth.

It may be recalled that even during the 1947-1955 period when these two countries had not yet forged bonds of close economic cooperation, they had successfully cooperated at various international forums, including the UN, on issues like opposition to colonialism, racism and military alliances. It was a deep conviction about the anti-imperialist character of Soviet power which sustained the friendly feelings of Indian people and their national leadership towards it, notwithstanding its occasional rigid ideological posture. This fact was highlighted

3 Devendra Kaushik, op.cit, p.3.

by Jawaharlal Nehru in his address to a group of students in Calcutta as early as 1928 wherein he said: "In spite of her many mistakes she (Soviet Russia) stands today as the greatest opponent of imperialism and her record with the nations of the East has been just and generous."⁴

The Indo-Soviet relations started developing since the mid 1950s and their foundation was laid by none else than Jawaharlal Nehru whose vision and farsightedness was a unique asset to Indians. After assuming the responsibilities of the Prime Minister of independent India, he lost no time in directing the two distinguished Menons - V.K. Krishna and K.P.S. - to establish contacts with the Soviet delegation which had come to attend the first session of the UN General Assembly. He had already set the ideas in motion by stating about the Soviets: "They are our neighbours in Asia and inevitably we shall have to undertake many common tasks and have much to do with each other."⁵

In a significant manner, Jawaharlal Nehru provided ideological basis to Indo-Soviet relations by enunciating

4 Ibid.

5 K.P. Misra, "Nehru, Indira, Rajiv: Their Roles", World Focus, Vol.8, No.4, April 1987, p. 26.

the basic framework of our foreign policy, the pillars of which were nonalignment, peaceful coexistence and anti-colonialism. These were the concepts which were closer to the foreign policy principles of the Soviet Union also.

What helped the initial growth of the Indo-Soviet relations was Jawaharlal Nehru's concern about the cold war politics and its effects. During the 1950's, when the United States and its friends and allies attempted to create a network of military alliances systems in different parts of the world in order to contain what they called the "communist menace", it was not to this country's liking. The creation of the NATO and the SEATO was seen in India as steps towards increasing tension in international relations.

Referring to this situation Nehru said in parliament on September 29, 1954: "Honourable members may remember the old days when the great powers had spheres of influence in Asia and elsewhere....it seems to me that particularly Manila Treaty is inclined dangerously in the direction of influence to be exercised by powerful countries.....After all, it is the big and powerful countries that will decide the matters and not the two or three weak and small Asian nations that may be allied to them."⁶

It was in this general context that soon after the Bandung Conference, Nehru visited the Soviet Union for seventeen long days in June 1955. This was a significant visit in cementing the relations between the two countries. This was followed by the historic return visit of Soviet leaders Khrushchev and Bulganin in November 1955. This exchange of state visits ushered in an era of warm Indo-Soviet relations. The joint communique issued after Nehru's visit reaffirmed the faith of both countries in Panchsheel and expressed their desire for promoting further cultural and economic cooperation. It asserted that the five principles of peaceful coexistence were "capable of wider application and that in the observance of these principles by nations....lies the main hope of banishing fear and mistrust from their minds and thus of lowering world tensions".⁷

The year 1955 was a turning point in Soviet-Indian relations. The mid-fifties saw the anti-imperialist, anti war and anti-colonial potential of Indian diplomacy again in strength and scope. In the same period, positive changes occurred in Soviet foreign policy; it became more flexible and dynamic, and its trend towards promoting

7 Devendra Kaushik, op.cit., p. 4.

relations with Third World countries assumed a more open and pronounced character.

"During Nehru's prime ministership, the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the Kashmir issues became a factor of some importance in the relations between the two countries. The Soviet Union gave significant support to India and this was greatly appreciated by the Government and the people of India. Right from the early 1950s, the Soviet Union openly recognised Kashmir as an integral part of India. When the UN Security Council in February 1957 debated the proposal put forward by the US and the UK about stationing UN troops in Kashmir, the Soviet Union stalled a decision by exercising a veto. On India this had a good impact."⁸

Another notable support to India was on the question of Goa, when India took military action in Goa in order to liberate it, the matter was taken to the Security Council of the United Nations. The Western powers, notably the US and UK were critical of India's action and wanted to condemn it but the Soviet veto once again prevented this situation. Not only this the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union complimented India for the latter's

8 K.P. Misra, op.cit., p. 26

initiative and said that India had made a great contribution to the cause of noble struggle of the people for complete and immediate abolition of the disgraceful system of colonialism.

In his Report to the Supreme Soviet on his Asian trip, Khrushchev spelt out the Soviet objectives in developing friendly relations with India in very clear terms. He said: "we are...glad when our friends develop friendly relations with other states which for some reason or another we may have strained and cold relations. Through our friend...India we hope to improve relations with these states."⁹

Khrushchev also declared that both we and our Indian friends would like to develop and strengthen our friendly relations in a way which would not change the friendly relations of India or of the Soviet Union with other states.¹⁰ The state visits of 1955 thus marked the beginning of a mature understanding of the basis of Indo-Soviet relations. This understanding was further developed by the 20th Congress of the CPSU which noted the "emergence in the world arena of a group of peace-loving

9 Pravda, December 30, 1955.

10 Ibid.

European and Asian states which have proclaimed non-participation in bloc as the principle of their foreign policy."¹¹

The 20th CPSU Congress expounded the concept of a "zone of peace" consisting of peace-loving socialist and non-socialist states of Europe and Asia. It referred to India as one of the great powers along with the People's Republic of China. Speaking in the Indian Parliament Nehru called the 20th Congress "a step towards the creation of conditions favourable to the pursuit of a policy of peaceful coexistence...important for us as well as others".¹² Nehru firmly believed that internal reforms in the USSR would contribute to an easing of international tensions.

The Suez crisis revealed the common approach of India and the USSR to the predatory character of western colonialism. At the London conference on the Suez canal the Soviet Union supported the proposals made by the Indian delegation. The 1956 events in Hungary put a severe strain on the rapidly-growing Indo-Soviet understanding which eventually emerged unscathed out of this crisis. The Indian delegation with those of Ceylon and

11 Devendra Kaushik, op.cit., p. 4

12 Ibid.

Indonesia moved a resolution urging the Hungarian government to permit observers designated by the UN Secretary General. The Soviet delegate voted against this resolution, but showed great consideration for its sponsors.

The Soviet Union was the only great power that supported India's world role. In July 1958 it proposed a summit of great powers including India to discuss measures to end the crisis in West Asia. It also sought to associate India with a summit conference of the Big four on disarmament which it proposed in late 1958.

The Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962 put Indo-Soviet relations to yet another test. The simultaneous eruption of the Cuban crisis further complicated the Soviet Union's difficulties. On October 25, Pravda published an editorial which spoke of the "notorious McMahon line" and supported the Chinese proposals for ending the conflict, describing them as constructive. As the Cuban crisis passed, the new Soviet stand surfaced in the form of an editorial in Pravda on November 5 which almost amounted to ordering China to stop fighting India. Despite speculations in certain quarters to the contrary, Soviet supplies of MIGs arrived without much delay.

"During the 1955-1964 period, the Indo-Soviet economic and technical cooperation took rapid strides following the first agreement for assistance in the construction of the Bhilai Steel Plant in February 1955, the Soviet Union extended credit for the Ranchi Heavy Machine Building Plant, the Korba Coal Mining Project and the Neyveli Thermal Power Station in 1957, Drug and Pharmaceutical Project at Hyderabad, Singarauli Power Station, Kotah Precision Instruments Projects, Korba Thermal Power Station, Barauni Oil Refinery and Hardwar Heavy Electrical Plant in 1959, the Koyali Oil Refinery, Bhakra Right Bank Hydro-Electric Power Station, Kathara Coal Washery and Ankleshwar and Combay Oil Exploration and production in 1961."¹³

The Soviet Union thus helped India in a big way in laying the foundation of its heavy industries in the public sector enabling the country to march ahead along the path of self-reliant economic development in the face of considerable pressure of the western monopolies.

Jawaharlal. Nehru was the chief architect of this policy. Thus, notwithstanding Nehru's initial pro-west tilt in the pre-1955 period, fascination with the Mountbattens, Anglophil proclivities and nostalgia for Fabian socialism,

13 Ibid.

his prime ministership witnessed a steady strengthening of the Indo-Soviet co-operation in both political and economic fields on the basis of common anti-imperialist aims.

After Nehru, the Soviets organised the Tashkent meeting subsequent to the Indo-Pakistani war when Lal Bahadur Shastri was India's Prime Minister. The Tashkent agreement between India and Pakistan in which the Soviet good offices played an important role, was an indication of its widening interest in the developments in the Indian subcontinent. In other words, the Soviets developed some interest in Pakistan also, though it was only shortlived and could not go far enough.

Indira Gandhi's Prime Ministership, in all lasting for about fifteen years in her two political incarnations, was extremely significant from the point of view of Indo-Soviet Relations. This was a period full of important happenings, domestically as well as internationally. She gave a dynamic direction to India's foreign policy with a view to meeting unprecedented challenges. India's problems with Pakistan had not come to an end. What was still more important was that our difficulties with another neighbour, China, began to take a turn for the worse.

Within months after assuming office Indira Gandhi visited the Soviet Union in July 1966. During her discussions with the Soviet leaders she convinced them that she was essentially following the basic framework of policy laid down by her father in all important areas, whether it was nonalignment or Indo-Soviet relations or Vietnam or disarmament.

In the early 1970s, India faced a grim situation on account of the happenings in what was then East Pakistan. On the basis of elections there the Awami League and its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should have been allowed to hold governmental power. Instead, the popular verdict was disregarded and military suppression was restarted to. This led to millions of people coming to India as refugees, thus creating socio-economic and security problems for the country.

Indira Gandhi worked tirelessly to mobilise world public opinion against the military rulers of Pakistan. The west turned a deaf ear to her. Since the pressure on India was almost intolerable and the repression on Bangladesh too grim, she thought of arming India with the Indo-Soviet Treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation and concluded it on August 9, 1971. It was, and continues to be, the watershed in Indo-Soviet relations.

Though it was not a military alliance and was also not antithetical to the basic principles of nonalignment, it did give much - needed political psychological support to India at a time when there was a fear that China and the US might support Pakistan. The Treaty greatly facilitated India's support to freedom fighters of the then East Pakistan which resulted in the creation of a new state, Bangladesh.

The Indo-Soviet treaty is generally viewed to have established a special relationship between the two countries. This has been evident in the increasing contacts in almost all spheres of activity. Yet India tried to correct its overwhelming dependence on Moscow. Accordingly, India gave Pakistan peace with honour at Simla in 1972 and opened negotiations with China for normalisation of relations, reassuring that country that Indo-Soviet treaty was not directed against her. More significant was India's rejection of Brezhnev's proposal of collective security in Asia, thereby denying the Soviets a pre-eminent role in Asia. Thus even during the trying times of the 1970s New Delhi did not become totally dependent on the USSR, nor did it ever give up its search for better relations with Washington or Beijing.¹⁴

Yet New Delhi did not seek better ties with other

14 India Backgrounder Service, "Indo-Soviet Ties: Updated", Vol. X No.52(500) March 24, 1986, p. 1168.

states at the cost of Indo-Soviet relations. Soviet leaders had their moments of nervousness in 1977 when the Janata Party came to power. The Soviets had supported the internal emergency imposed on the country by Mrs. Gandhi and had condemned Janata Party as "reactionary". The emphasis on "genuine" and "proper" nonalignment by the new government was viewed with concern in the Kremlin and the then foreign minister Andre Gromyko dashed to Delhi to reassure himself that nothing was wrong with the Indo-Soviet concord.

Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980 strengthened Indo-Soviet cooperation in pursuit of peace. She thought it paradoxical that while the west talked of peace, it made weapons of destruction more sophisticated and for more deadly. For the west peace seems to grow out of the barrel of a gun and rearmament is recommended as the best way to disarmament. Nuclearization of army, navy and airforce; deployment of missiles all over Europe takes the world nearer to self-destruction where neither capitalist nor socialist will survive.

"Co-existence, acceptance of political and economic differences; peaceful resolution of conflicts, are the only alternative to human extinction. Mahatma Gandhi

said so on the spiritual plane, Nehru advocated it at the political level with his Panchsheel and Lenin defended it dialectically. But those who get enmeshed in the orthodoxies of dialectical materialism do not always apply it as a dynamic concept to unravel the complexities of a high-tech society in which means of production and forces of production have under gone a material change while the world hangs by a slender threat thanks to the nuclear armageddon.¹⁵ Indira Gandhi in her last years of premiership continued to warn the world of the peril to which war mongers were pushing it. Soviet Union supported Indira Gandhi in her efforts towards peace and disarmament.

Briefly, during Mrs Indira Gandhi's time, relations with the Soviet Union continued to grow practically in all spheres and the variations in perspectives on certain issues did not adversely affect them.

15 S.C. Parasher, "Gorbachev Visit: A Historical Perspective", India Quarterly, 42(4); Oct-Dec, 1986, p.456.

CHAPTER - I

TOWARDS A NEW CONVERGENCE BASED ON PRAGMATISM

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TOWARDS A NEW CONVERGENCE BASED ON PRAGMATISM

When Mrs. Gandhi fell to the assassins bullets on 31 October 1984, India's relations with the Soviet Union had already begun to show signs of strains despite an outward affirmation in official documents of an identity of views on various major global and regional issues. The earlier perception of mutually converging interests was gradually beginning to give way to relations between India and the USSR in terms of the rules of real politik. The USSR began - increasingly to perceive its interests as a global power and India as a regional power which gave rise to an undercurrent of caution in Indo-Soviet relations.

In fact, a trend towards divergence in Soviet Indian relations can be discerned in 1973 itself. Moscow failed in its attempts to persuade India to sponsor its Asian collective security proposal. New Delhi reportedly turned down Moscow's request to arrange for Brezhnev's 1973 visit to coincide with the second anniversary of the Indo-Soviet Treaty. Again, in 1981, it politely declined to oblige the Soviets who desired a state visit by the Indian Prime Minister to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the Treaty. The celebration in New Delhi were deliberately kept at a low key. Neither Mrs. Gandhi nor her Foreign

Minister showed up at the functions organized on this occasion by the "Friends of the Soviet Union" an organization set up at Mrs Gandhi's instance to split the pro-CPI Indo-Soviet cultural society. Gromyko's article in Pravda - highly enlogistic of the Indo-Soviet Treaty - did not evoke any response from his Indian counterpart.

The talk about a "special relationship" notwithstanding, the late Soviet President Brezhnev's visit to India in 1980 was not followed by the customary return visit by the Indian Prime Minister until September 1982. It was postponed once in 1981 - in view of the forced postponement of the Indian Prime Minister's visit to the USA and even when it materialized Mrs. Gandhi took care to visit the United States first before going to the USSR. Mrs. Gandhi availed herself of the Cancun meet in October 1981 to hold talks with President Reagan and to visit Rome and Paris in the fall of 1981.

"Of course, when Mrs Gandhi eventually visited the Soviet Union in September 1982 on a seven day state visit, following her nine day visit to the United States, she was received with warmth and hospitality and had wide-ranging, cordial talks with top Soviet leaders. The Indo-Soviet joint Declaration issued at the conclusion of Mrs. Gandhi's

visit expressed "profound satisfaction" at the results of the visit and noted that relations between the two countries were "characterised by respect and trust between the leaders and peoples and by the diversity of spheres and forms of cooperation". That it took more than thirty-six hours of tough negotiation between high officials of the two countries to finalise the joint Declaration speak's about the growing divergence in the perceptions of India and USSR."¹

Even during Mrs Gandhi's 1982 Moscow visit a divergence of views surfaced in Brezhnev's banquet speech of 20 September Brezhnev warned India against Pakistan's offer of a no-war pact, which he described as a camouflage for Islamabad's plans to acquire more American weapons.² But in her speech at a reception organised in her honour by Soviet public organizations, Mrs. Gandhi reaffirmed India's intentions to persist in its efforts to reduce tension with its neighbours, including China and Pakistan. "Neighbours are given to us by geography. Evidently it is better to live with them in friendship than in bitterness", declared Mrs Gandhi,³

1 Devendra Kaushik, "India, USSR and East Europe: Emerging trends under Rajiv Gandhi", India Quarterly, Vol.41, 1985, p.7.

2 Ibid.

3 The Tribune (Chandigarh), 22 September, 1982

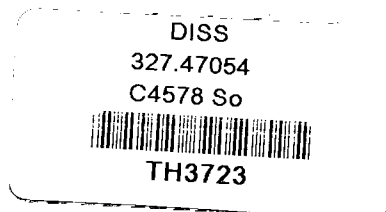
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The convergence between Moscow and New Delhi on such global issues as disarmament and detente was also more illusory than real. An Indian journalist, Girilal Jain aptly commented, "when Mrs. Gandhi deplores the nuclear arms build-up, she is by no means saying that the other side (the west) is (only) to blame for it".⁴ Mrs Gandhi's reluctance to endorse Brezhnev's proposal, made in his banquet speech of 20 September 1982, that the leading nations of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty should make a statement recording their refusal to extend the sphere of activity of these alliances to Asia, Africa and Latin America, is a case in point. Brezhnev, it may be recalled, had expressed the hope that "India as well as other peace-loving independent states of these continents would take such a step."⁵ Yet Mrs. Gandhi did not choose to react to it at all. Nor did the joint Declaration mention it. Obviously, India would not like to offend the west European members of NATO who had vital stake in some African countries.

Thus a certain caution, if not mistrust, continued to persist in Indo-Soviet relations through the years 1982-84.

4 Devendra Kaushik, op.cit., p. 7.

5 Ibid.



← N 54



After the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi took over the government in New Delhi as Prime Minister. The Soviet President, Chernenko in his condolence message to Rajiv Gandhi recalled the great importance that Mrs. Gandhi attached to strengthening friendship and developing comprehensive cooperation between the USSR and India and affirmed the resolve of Soviet leadership to strengthen relations of friendship with India. In turn, Rajiv Gandhi assured the Soviet Premier Nikolai Tikhonov on 2 November, that his government will continue the same policy as had been pursued by JawaharLal Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi in strengthening friendly ties with the Soviet Union and other countries.

The repeated references to the desirability of continuing Nehru's and Mrs. Gandhi's foreign policy contained in the statements and speeches of top-ranking soviet leaders were in a way a reflection of their anxiety about the course India might adopt under the stewardship of Rajiv Gandhi. The optimistic note struck by high-ranking American statesman and diplomats like Senator Moynihan (who said that the new government under Rajiv Gandhi will be less ideological than the government of Indira Gandhi and therefore more likely to be flexible in its dealings with the United States)⁶. The bilateral relations between

6 Ibid.

the United States and India that began to improve in the last days of Indira Gandhi were expected to grow closer under Rajiv Gandhi.

A high-level dialogue between the United States and Rajiv Gandhi began when a delegation led by the Secretary of state, George Shultz visited New Delhi for Mrs. Gandhi's funeral. Subsequently a number of United States, Congressmen and Senators, both in groups and individually, met Rajiv Gandhi and most of them returned convinced that time was ripe for achieving a breakthrough in Indo-US relations. Secretary of state Shultz is reported to have assured Rajiv Gandhi that the United States Administration would try to improve its relationship with India by striving for a better balance in its involvement in the sub-continent without in any way weakening its links with Pakistan. Shultz was convinced that the \$ 3.2 billion package of economic and security assistance by the United States to Pakistan could be effectively used to reduce the latter's motivation to acquire a nuclear bomb. In fact, Pakistan was reported to have substantially cut down its nuclear programme by reducing the size of its Kahuta plant in response to the United States pressure to accommodate India. New Delhi signed a memorandum of understanding with Washington to ensure transfer of American technology.

There were reasons to believe that both sides preferred to proceed cautiously to work out an agreement

which had some strategic aspects as well. The visit of a United States seventh fleet ship to Goa (second visit in a year, this time extended to two days) at a time when Newzealand under its new labour Government declared its ports out of bounds for the nuclear-weapon carrying American vessels gave an idea of the slowly unfolding strategic dimension of a new understanding between India and the United States.

All these developments were bound to have a disquieting effect on the Kremlin even though it fought shy of admitting its anxiety publicly. One wonders if the real object of display of extra cordiality and warmth in Soviet relations with India - the Politburo resolution, the Council of Ministers' Message and the gesture of giving Rajiv Gandhi precedence over other leaders of the non-communist world at the funeral of Chernenko - was to conceal the strains and stresses that Moscow's relations with India were then subjected to. Nevertheless, for the present Moscow appeared to be quite determined to seize every opportunity to strengthen its cooperation with India. By a protocol signed in December 1984, India and the USSR agreed to increase their trade turnover to a record Rs.4,620 crores in 1985 - an increase of about 20 per cent over the 1984 turnover of Rs.3,840 crores.⁷

7 The Statesman (New Delhi), 8 December, 1984.

Thus, the relations between India and the Soviet Union were confronted with the problem of sustaining their old high level in the face of a fast eroding objective base. Having built an infrastructure of basic industries with Soviet assistance, the Indian ruling elite had started looking to the west for import of a new higher technology. Anti-imperialism which sustained this relationship in the past was getting diluted over the years. A policy of increased cooperation with the MNCs in the name of pursuit of the "High Tech" track for a leap into the 21st century was bound to adversely affect the successful growth of India's multifaceted cooperation with the USSR.

No perceptible change took place during Rajiv Gandhi's period. The fifteenth anniversary of the Indo-Soviet treaty in 1986 did not witness any high-level official celebration even though the USSR did send its Vice President Tatliyev to participate in a public function organised by the FSU to mark the occasion. Only the Vice President of the Congress(I), Arjun Singh, shared the platform with the visiting Soviet dignitary.⁸

Their divergent approaches were once again highlighted in the views of their respective leaders on problems of peace, Security and Cooperation in Asia.

8 Davendra Kaushik, "Historical Perspective: Successful Advance" World Focus, Vol.8 No.4, April 1987, p. 6.

During his May 1985 visit to the USSR, Rajiv Gandhi curtly dismissed Gorbachev's new plea for Asian Security as an "old concept". India's Prime Minister expressed himself against nations "interfering or intervening in areas outside their own", thus rejecting by implication the Soviet Union's claim to be considered an Asian power. Instead he emphasised the Indian support for the South Asian Association for regional Cooperation (SAARC).⁹

The Indian-Soviet joint statement issued at the end of November 1986 visit of Gorbachev merely recorded that the Soviet side "explained in detail the Soviet Union's concrete programme for maintaining peace and security and establishing cooperation and interaction in the Asian-Pacific region" and that the Indian side "elaborated on its consistent policy of reducing tensions, promoting good neighbourliness with all countries in the region, and the steps taken by India along with other countries in building cooperation at the regional level through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation without outside interference."¹⁰

The convergence on the question of disarmament, particularly nuclear, was also somewhat illusory.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

New Delhi's sharing of Soviet concern about the danger of a nuclear holocaust and its rejection of SDI's supposedly peaceful character, does not mean that it endorsed the various Soviet proposals on disarmament. India no longer adheres to the Soviet and nonaligned movement's generally approved course of supporting the establishment of nuclear - free zones of peace.

Even on the question of setting up a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, Rajiv Gandhi appeared to be shifting India's known stand when he remarked at a joint press conference in New Delhi with Gorbachev that " we must look for the whole world as a zone of peace."¹¹

Initially India had differences with the Soviet Union on the Asia-pacific proposal, but these were only short-lived. With Gorbachev's state visit to India New Delhi sought clarification on the issue of Asia-pacific proposal. Gorbachev clarified his conception of the proposal.

New Delhi had every reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the four-day (Nov 25-28) 1986 visit of the Soviet leaders Mikhail Gorbachev. The visit not only

11 Ibid.

marked an upswing in economic and technological cooperation between the two countries but resulted in a welcome Soviet clarification of important political issues which had of late caused much concern in India.

New Delhi had anxiously watched the increase in military activity in the Indian Ocean. In particular, there had been disturbing reports of unusual movements of US ships in the Arabian sea, presumably as a part of the American bid to raise the level of US-Pak military cooperation. Gorbachev signalled his appreciation of India's anxiety on this score by reiterating Soviet support for convening an international conference in 1988 to take up the implementation of the UN declaration of the Indian ocean as a zone of peace. He in fact put forward a five point plan for a gradual reduction of the size and activities of naval forces in the Indian Ocean. New Delhi was studying this plan closely. There could be no objection in principle to the multi-lateral negotiations envisaged in the plan for different purposes. But India and other littoral states will naturally be keen to ensure that wider arrangements of any kind will not infringe their own right to take all legitimate measures of self defence.¹²

12 The Indian Express, 29 November, 1986.

The two sides noted the urgent need for improving the political climate in the Asian continent and its adjoining areas, and search for ways of ensuring lasting peace, stability and development of economic co-operation. Progress in this direction could gradually be made, in particular, through normalising the situation, creating an atmosphere of confidence and constructive cooperation at bilateral and regional levels.¹³

The two sides expressed serious concern over the continuation of hotbeds of tension in South-West Asia and reaffirmed their conviction that the problems of the region demand peaceful political solutions, paying full respect to the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of the countries. They called upon the countries of the region to expeditiously terminate armed conflicts, to exercise restraint and cooperate constructively for reducing tension and restoring peace.

They expressed their concern at the persisting tension in South-East Asia. They reaffirmed their conviction that a solution to the problems of South-East Asia should be found by the states of the region themselves.

Gorbachev's keen interest in promoting an Asian Collective Security System is well known. Proceeding from

13 INDIA BACKGROUNDER SERVICE, Vol. XI No.36(557)
December 1, 1986, p. 1487.

the obvious understanding that global peace is indivisible, Gorbachev aptly pointed out in his speech at Vladivostok on July 28, 1986: "Yet in each part of the world it looks different. Therefore, while being here in Vladivostok, it is natural to look at international policy issues from the Asian-Pacific standpoint"¹⁴. He did not mince words in acknowledging that the Soviet Union had its own "national interest" in promoting the security of the region. The Soviet Union has a "greater part of its territory" in the east of Urals, in Asia, in Siberia and far-East. The 27th Party Congress has assigned "many national tasks" to be carried out in the region. Hence the Soviet interest.

However, his concern for the security and development of the region appears to be equally strong: "Everything is in motion here, far from everything has settled.... which direction will socio-economic and political development take in the region? What processes will prevail in inter-state relations? These issues will largely determine the destinies of the whole world"¹⁵.

14 R.R.Sharma, "Soviet Perspective of Asia-Pacific Security," Mainstream, November 22, 1986, p. 31.

15 Ibid.

He rightly points out that the countries of the region are suffering from "hundreds of glaring problems, problems inherited from the colonial past and emerging out of the contradictions of the present day development. And these states are being dragged into blocs; the freedom of utilising their own resources is being curtailed. They are being forced to increase their military budgets, and are being drawn into the arms and militarisation of the economy and the entire social life."¹⁶ This obviously leads to major distortions in the internal developmental processes, creating tensions and hampering the normalisation of relations between nations and states. Thus the conflict situations have arisen and these are slowly getting exacerbated.

Of course, Gorbachev pointed out that the region has not been "as yet militarised to the extent Europe has"¹⁷. However, it has the potential of turning into a bigger zone of conflict, because the major nuclear powers are located here, and large land armies, navies and air forces have come up in the meantime. Also since the second half of seventies, USA has already built up its armed forces in the Pacific Ocean. And the "militarised triangle of Washington, Tokyo and Seoul is being set up under its pressure."¹⁸ Consequently the Pacific Ocean is

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

is fast turning into an arena of military and political confrontation. Hence the pressing need to immediately initiate the process of establishing international security and peaceful cooperation in this vast region.

In the light of this, Gorbachev elaborated his proposal for the security in the Asian-Pacific region, which "takes into account the experience of the past and of today". His proposals include (A) settlement of all major regional issues; (B) non-proliferation and no buildup of nuclear weapons in Asia and the Pacific Ocean, proclaiming and guaranteeing the southern part of Pacific as a nuclear free zone; (C) reduction of the activity of naval forces in the Pacific, etc; (D) reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Asia; (E) practical discussion on confidence building measures and the non-use of force in this region.¹⁹

He significantly pleaded that these proposals, and others, must be considered in a conference, "in the mould of the Helsinki Conference, which may be held at a suitable place, possibly Hiroshima, which could become the 'Helsinki for Asia'." Appealing to the Asian and Pacific nations, he urged them to lend their "cooperation for the sake of peace and security."²⁰

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

Gorbachev's proposals differ from those enunciated by Brezhnev in his collective security formulations and, therefore, have had a receptive ear in India too. India perceives that the Vladivostok proposals have a greater chance of success and acceptability since they do not exclude any country of the region, nor do they exclude the United States, from the responsibility for their implementation. In that speech, Gorbachev referred warmly to the activities of the non-aligned movement towards creating the conditions for both global and regional security. "The movement", he said, "is trying to come up with its own response to the challenge of the time, is actively working for overcoming the world's division into military blocs, and is seeking its own ways of reducing the nuclear threat. In rejecting and condemning exploitation, the policy of aggression and neocolonialism, the nonaligned movement is urging mankind to work for unity, for cooperation in combating hunger and the acute poverty of hundreds of millions of people."

For India, and the initiatives it has taken in the cause of regional and global security, Gorbachev had

21 S. Viswam, "India: Should play increased role", World Focus, Vol.10, No.2, February 1989, p. 24.

high praise indeed. "The great India", he said, "with its moral prestige and traditional wisdom, with its specific political experience and huge economic potentialities, is the recognised leader of this movement. We highly value its contribution to establishing standards of equal coexistence and justice in the international community."²²

After becoming fully convinced of the desirability of the Asia-Pacific Security plan to which Gorbachev was referring in his speech at Valdivostok, Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, virtually endorsed the general principles underlying the Soviet proposal for Asia-Pacific Security. He said that the Soviet Communist Party Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, had made "major contribution" to problems of peace and stability in Asia and the Pacific.²³

Rajiv Gandhi described Gorbachev's "reflections on the theme" Vladivostok as "thought provoking" and said that the fundamental postulates of Panchseel Bandung and non-alignment to which Gorbachev had made a reference "provided the framework of thinking through the complex and historically specific problems of peace

22 Ibid.

23 The New Times, 26 November, 1986

and stability in Asia and the Pacific.²⁴"

In an obvious reference to the American backing of Pakistan, Rajiv Gandhi said: "Bilateral mechanisms must be given a chance to work without outside interference". He also wanted regional arrangements to be encouraged to enhance trust, stability and cooperation all of which come close to the principles underlying Gorbachev's proposals on Asia-Pacific Security.²⁵"

Thus ended the short lived divergence in the perceptions and approaches of the two countries on the vital question of peace and security in one of the world's most important regions. Political relations between the governments of the two countries and their joint moves in the international arena are by far the most important area of Soviet-Indian cooperation. This co-operation is particularly important now that the situation in the world has started showing signs of general improvement in the wake of improved Soviet-US relations and successful advance towards nuclear disarmament. In this situation, joint initiatives and actions of all states, regardless of their political system, size of territory and geographical location, towards

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

eliminating the nuclear threat and safeguarding lasting peace and security acquire special importance.

The Soviet Union and India may serve as an example of how two different countries can co-operate in dealing with critical issues, especially that of war and peace. The initiatives made by the Soviet Union and India in this direction, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, have the full support of all peace loving forces in the world.

The Soviet Union and India are united in believing that the United Nations occupies a special place in international relations. It is not only a rostrum from which practically all countries of the world state their views but also an instrument of constructive co-operation. The Soviet Union is doing every thing to ensure effective use of the United Nations' mechanism in tackling the most complicated international issues and for the attainment of jointly formulated goals, the most important of which is "to save succeeding generations from the scourage of war."

In a message to the participants in the UN General Assembly Session held to mark the 40th anniversary of the United Nations, Mikhail Gorbachev said: "Today it is more important than ever that we say openly and at the top of

our voice that the main goal formulated in the UN Charter has not been achieved. No guarantees of lasting peace have been created. It is more important today than ever that countries and peoples pool their efforts to remove the threat of nuclear catastrophe from the world. In practical terms, this requires that we terminate the arms race on Earth and prevent it in space.²⁶"

India's political programme was spelled out by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in his address to the 40th Session of the UN General Assembly. We, members of the non-aligned movement, the Indian Prime Minister said, believe in co-existence. Yet, international order and nuclear weapons cannot co-exist. Without disarmament the threat of nuclear catastrophe remains. That is why six countries situated on five continents, developed and developing, worked out in Delhi a practical programme for disarmament. We demand an immediate cessation of nuclear weapon tests and a ban on the development and production of nuclear weapons and systems that carry them. We want this step to be followed by a substantial reduction of nuclear stockpiles, would eventually lead to the elimination of the frightening weapons of mass destruction.²⁷"

26 The Indian Express, 25 November, 1986

27 Ibid.

"The Indian Prime Minister said, that the chief duty of all UN members was to commit themselves to the cause of peace and save the world from the madness of nuclear militarism. Yet the creative genius of man serve the cause of prosperity, not armament, Rajiv Gandhi said."

At all the sessions of the UN General Assembly held in the past few years india took an active position on all critical international issues and had the full support of the Soviet Union. India sponsored many General Assembly resolutions on major political issues, especially those related to the halting of the arms race, freezing and subsequent reduction of nuclear arsenals and the prevention of militarisation of space. The 40th session of the UN General Assembly provided the most shining examples of India's approach to international issues. As is known, the session focussed on a large-scale Soviet proposal on peaceful cooperation in space and its non-militarisation. India supported the Soviet proposal that the General Assembly discuss as a key subject international co-operation in the peaceful exploration of space and co-authored Resolution 40/87 "Prevention of an Arms Race in Space" which reflected the main idea of the Soviet initiative.

The resolution called for Star peace as an alternative to the sinister star wars plans and urged international co-operation in peaceful uses of space, including the creation of an international peace space organisation.

To carry out these ambitious plans, said India's representative in the General Assembly's first committee, the General Assembly must resolutely and unconditionally reject arms race in space.

The resolution was eventually adopted by an overwhelming majority of states. Only two countries abstained, the United States and its satellite, Grenada.

Throughout the work of General Assembly, India spoke up most emphatically on all issues involved in nuclear disarmament. Its position was spelled out in a statement made by the head of the Indian delegation, Khursheed Alam Khan, in the course of general political discussions. "The Indian delegate said that a reduction of nuclear arsenals was the only way to strengthen trust between states. India co-sponsored a series of resolutions calling for immediate practical steps towards preventing nuclear war (Resolution 40/1520) and urging nuclear states to freeze their nuclear armaments (Resolution 40/151E)".²⁹

The Soviet Union voted for all the draft resolutions sponsored by India on the prevention of nuclear war, the halting of the arms race, especially in the area of nuclear arms, on earth and the prevention of an arms race in space.

In January 1985, India hosted the six-nation conference on nuclear disarmament which sought to outlaw nuclear weapons. The Delhi Declaration was the outcome of this meeting. The Delhi Declaration called for a full ban on nuclear testing and on the production and deployment of nuclear weapons and systems that carry them and also on space weapons, which should be immediately followed by deep reductions in nuclear forces. The Soviet Union enthusiastically supported the six-nation initiative. "Allow me to express the hope that the efforts in this direction, stimulated by the voice of the authoritative leaders of the states that signed the Delhi Declaration (...) will bear fruit, "Mikhail Gorbachev wrote in a message to the Delhi six leaders, "In this noble effort you can always count on Soviet support."³⁰

The session forcefully demonstrated the identity of the fundamental interests of the Soviet Union and India in major areas of world politics. It showed that both

countries were committed to the cause of removing the threat of nuclear war, defending the foundations of peace and preventing a new round of the arms race which may spread into space. Thanks to the mutually complementing actions of our two countries, the overwhelming majority of the UN member states adamantly rejected militarist plans, which threaten to make the whole world a hostage of nuclear adventurers. The desire to curb armaments and bring about disarmament was reflected in the adoption at the session of 71 resolutions, most of which envisaged measures in this direction. It is highly significant that the United States voted against 28 resolutions, six times being the only country against and eight times in company with one or two other countries.

India exerted big efforts to settle regional conflicts and eliminate the vestiges of colonialism. Speaking in the course of the general political discussion, India's representative resolutely condemned the policy of interference, intervention and threat of force against Nicaragua and said that central America's problems could be resolved only by peaceful means, through political dialogue and negotiations.

India actively supported all General Assembly resolutions on the Middle East, which said that peace in that region should come through a comprehensive, fair

and lasting settlement under the aegis of the United Nations and in conformity with its resolutions calling for a full and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied territories including Jerusalem, and granting the Palestinian people led by the PLO their inalienable rights, including the right to return, and the right to self-determination, national independence and the creation of an independent sovereign state. An overwhelming majority of member countries, including Soviet Union and India, voted for all the 25 resolutions on the Middle East, whereas the United States voted against 20 resolutions.

The 40th General Assembly devoted special attention to the question of decolonization. "Addressing its anniversary session, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said that Namibia remained enslaved. Twenty-five years have passed since the United Nations adopted a declaration granting independence to colonies and seven years ago the Security Council unanimously adopted measures to grant independence to Namibia, he said. Those were seven years of murder. Those were seven years of hardships. The world is longing to see Namibia independent."³¹

31 Ibid.

India co-sponsored nine resolutions containing emphatic condemnation of the inhuman regime of apartheid. It also voted for Resolution 40/64 A calling for comprehensive sanctions against the racist regime of South Africa and condemning the policy of "constructive engagement" and active co-operation with the apartheid regime, pursued by a number of Western countries, especially the United States. That resolution once again called on the Security Council urgently to take measures on comprehensive and binding sanctions. On this matter too, the Soviet Union and India adopted a joint stand.

Our two countries also hold identical position on the creation of a peace zone in the Indian Ocean. As is known, in 1971 the United Nations adopted a declaration on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. However, the Indian representative said, India has a feeling of great dissatisfaction in connection with a decision further to postpone the convocation of a conference on the Indian Ocean be convened as soon as possible to bring about peace to that region.

Our co-operation results from the identity of fundamental interests of our two countries in most areas of international relations. The determination of the Soviet Union and India to work together towards strengthening peace and universal security was further reaffirmed at the, 41st session of the UN General Assembly. Speaking

in the course of general political discussion on September 26, 1986, the head of the Indian delegation said that nuclear weapons now threatened not only countries and peoples but all life on our planet. The United Nations has a unique role to play in all areas of disarmament, he said.

The important event in the context of the relations between the two countries was the organisation of the year-long festival of India in the Soviet Union beginning with July 1987. The inauguration of the festival in Moscow was attended by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.³² The festival of the USSR in India, opened in November 1987 by Nikolai Ryzhkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, drew to a close during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to New Delhi. It contributed its share to the further reciprocal enrichment of our peoples in the cultural sphere, made it possible to continue exchanges of cultural values and familiarised numerous ordinary Indians with the Soviet people's life and economic cultural and social achievements.³³

32 K.P. Misra, "Nehru, Indira, Rajiv: Their Roles", World Focus, Vol.8, No.4, April 1987, p. 28.

33 Andrei Flalkovsky, "USSR-India: Together into the Third Millennium", International Affairs, December 1988, p. 7.

In 1987, when Anatoly Dobrynin, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, was in India, he made a statement which described the Soviet perspective correctly. He said: " I would like to emphasise once again that we attach great importance to the talks we had and are satisfied with their results. We are sure that Soviet Indian relations have a great future."³⁴

All in all, it is clear beyond any shadow of doubt that there is considerable convergence of interests between the two countries. Though India and the Soviet Union have different social systems, they are helpful to each other in many respects. This does not have anything to do with communism or anti-communism. Really it has a lot to do with national interest. In India, one does not have to be a communist to support our solid relations with the Soviets. It is enough if one is a nationalist.

The compulsions of their respective national interests and convergence in broad perspectives of their foreign policies are too strong and significant to permit a loosening of the Indo-Soviet ties.

34 K.P. Misra, op.cit., p. 28.

CHAPTER - II

OVERCOMING MUTUAL ANXIETIES EMANATING FROM
INDIA'S ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION AND MOSCOW'S
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Since independence India has been following the path of import-substituting industrialisation under stringent quantitative restrictions on international trade and domestic production. Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to declare that along with the government, private sector would be granted adequate scope for growth and development. Infact he was a strong votary of a synthesis of public and private sector, and he was a true socialist.

Recently a gradual shift towards a more liberalised outward - looking economic regime is beginning to take place in India. The Indian government is permitting a more liberal import of capital goods, other essential inputs and technology: restrictions on industrial capacity creation are being relaxed; procedures relating to industrial licensing, import and export are being simplified; quantitative restrictions on imports in many cases are being replaced by tariffs; the average rate of protection for Indian industries is being brought down and deliberate attempts are being made to promote a more efficient and competitive industrial structure which is more in tune with the principle of comparative

advantage.¹

The new policy instruments activated in the 1985-86 are based, on the one hand, on a sharp critique and repudiation of direct, physical and discretionary controls, and on the other, on substitution of private enterprise for public sector as the prime agent of growth.

The share of private sector industrial investment has been raised to unprecedented levels. For the first time, public investments has been planned at a level lower than that of the private sector.²

Rajiv Gandhi's economic policy has departed from Nehru's economic policy. Comparing Nehru and Rajiv on the economic parameters, there is little difference between the two. Nehru had to proceed more cautiously on a path that had seldom been trodden before. His analysis of the economic situation was the fountainhead on which all the other Prime Ministers - Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv proceeded to achieve certain targets. And there is no denying that when

1 Alok Ray, "Economic Liberalisation in India: Balance of Payments Implication", Economic and Political Weekly, July 11, 1987.

2 Patriot (New Delhi) 14 February, 1987.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi took over India was on the threshold of a new economic era.³

Nehru, according to Afanasyev former Pravda editor began a reorganisation of India's socio-economic system inherited from its colonial past. The 500 odd feudal principalities and large estate of feudal lords and land lords were abolished. India's administrative system was reorganised. The government adopted a policy of industrialisation and of establishing a major public sector in the economy on the basis of development according to plan. The foundation of India's foreign policy, with non-alignment as its cornerstone was also laid down under Nehru. Commenting on Indian National Congress declaration about its goal of a socialist pattern of society, Afanasyev stressed that the elimination of the private ownership had not been envisaged. A mixed economy coexisting with public and private sector was declared on economic basis. "That is how matters stand today as well"⁴ - observed Afanasyev.

The Indian National Congress government headed by

3 National Herald (New Delhi) 8 January, 1986.

4 Mahavir Singh, Soviet View of the Indian National Congress, New Delhi, 1991, p. 107.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, effected a number of progressive socio-economic reforms. The main private banks, system of social insurance and some enterprises of coal and textile industries were nationalised. Pensions and other privilege of Maharajahs and Rajahs were abolished. Laws were passed on reducing the permitted limits of landownership by individuals and on distributions of surplus land among landless peasants. The practical implementation of these laws was actively resisted by the propertied classes. In spite of sufficient economic progress, social inequality continued growing in India.⁵

Rajiv Gandhi's oft-expressed interest in modern technology especially from the west, and a tentative revival of closer ties with the United States led some Soviet journalists to allege that the imperialists "are now trying to lull India's public vigilance and to create the impression that the USA truly wants good and friendly relations with India".⁶ Referring to the high ranking visitors from Washington, Senators and Generals harping on propaganda assertions of common adherence of India and the USA to ideals of democracy, he observed, "This 'diplomacy of smiles' is complemented by Washington's

5 Ibid.

6 V. Georgiev, "India: A milestone on the path of independence," International Affairs (Moscow), April 1985.

increased attempts to use in its own interests the growing need of the Indian economy for modern industrial equipment, specifically electronic equipment, computers and advance technology".⁷ This growing trend towards liberalisation of Indian economy caused some anxiety in the Kremlin which feared losing advantages through its bilateral trade at a difficult time for Soviet economy. The Soviet public responded with satisfaction to the statement by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that his government would continue to pursue the policy 'bequeathed' by Jawaharlal Nehru and creatively enriched by Indira Gandhi. The government policy laid special stress on modernising the national economy through developing both the public and private sectors and introducing advance technology and other achievements of the scientific and technological revolution on a large scale. Much hope is pinned on raising the efficiency of state owned enterprises and making more productive use of them.

Ever since Rajiv Gandhi declared his resolve to open up the economy, there have been rumblings from party men and leftist political parties that he was taking the country away from the socialist path.

7 Ibid., p. 42.

"Rajiv Gandhi, however, asserted that the government would stick to the socialist path and the public sector would continue to have a commanding role".⁸ V.P.Singh's assurances given in the Parliament early in December 1986 were perhaps more significant, in so far as his measures of tax liberalisation had in the first instance created doubts about the government's attitude to socialism and a dominant public sector.

At the centenary session in Bombay in 1985, Rajiv Gandhi asserted that he would not bother about "ideology if the steps were necessary in the interests of the nation".⁹ He said, "If we need to associate foreign investment on our terms to attract technology or to enter markets, we will do so."¹⁰

Since his main critics on this score were the leftists, Rajiv Gandhi pointed out that both the Soviet Union and China, who are "far more cautious than us," were also experimenting with such new concepts which they considered heretical until a few years back.¹¹ Going a

8 Financial Express (New Delhi) 27 December, 1986

9 Indian Express (New Delhi) 24 April, 1988.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

step further, he asserted, " There is nothing in any ideology which says that adaptation and change are regressive."¹² He made it clear that he was "looking afresh at the entire system of controls and regulations."¹³

The programme of the Indian National Congress(I) under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi continues to draw appreciation from influential party intellectuals in the USSR. Thus writing in the 1985-86 Soviet year Book on India published from Moscow in 1987, P.V. Kutsobin observed, "At the present time the Indian National Congress(I) sees its main tasks in the preservation of unity and territorial integrity of the country, in implementation of technical modernisation of economy and declares the necessity for struggle against poverty. At the May 1985 meeting of the All India Congress Committee, faith in socialism and principles of planned development was again declared and the state sector was viewed as the basic instrument for raising the level of industrialisation."¹⁴ He added, " At the same time these practical steps of the government, the new budget which made important concessions to big business in the form of liberalised imports expansion of economic and trade relations with the west and the

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Mahavir Singh, op.cit., p. 105

trans-nationals corporations, could lead to considerable negative changes in the economic policy of ruling party."¹⁵

The liberal tax frame has benefited the private sector in a big way. The changes in the MRTP frame have themselves been so exhaustive as to warrant misgivings about the government's attitude to concentration of economic power. Industrial licensing has also undergone a substantial modification. The economic environment now is so different from the past that apprehensions about the future of public sector would seem quite natural, if not justified.¹⁶

Unlike in the west, private enterprises in India also have to contend with public financial institutions, which frequently assert themselves in corporate management on the basis of their equity stake.

Rajiv Gandhi made it clear that the Government could not let its suspicious of 'protection' against competition enjoyed by the large private sector companies slow down or hold up the process of opening up that it has initiated after considerable deliberation. It was in no position

15 Ibid.

16 Financial Express (New Delhi) 27 December, 1986

to undo the various steps taken towards liberalisation in the last one year (1985) or so, even if it wants to, he added.

It is possible that recognition of this is behind statements reaffirming policy makers' earnestness about keeping the basic frame of socialism intact. But the question is, why should the leadership now feel the urge to go backwards after having taken several big steps forward, especially in a situation where socialist economies are increasingly taking to capitalist ways and the Soviet Union itself is launching a reform of the price system as well as legitimising private enterprise in a number of areas so as to improve efficiency.

There was reference earlier to New Delhi's demonstration of economic affinity with Moscow. It would appear that the government bent backwards to please Gorbachev. Nothing has been more glaring than the provision for Soviet option of receiving repayments of credits provided to India in US dollars. Since there is no evidence that our own trade surplus in recent years has been settled in this fashion, this could be an unfair arrangement.¹⁷

In any case, since substantial credits have been received from the Soviet Union, the provision for Soviet

17 Ibid.

Union getting repayments in US dollars will make India a less equal partner, apart from obvious implications for the country's foreign exchange reserves position.

Pleasing the Soviet Union and keeping the latter well disposed towards us might be warranted by the military build-up in Pakistan and growing US indifference to our security perceptions. It may seem preposterous to suggest that the recent declarations about socialism and the public sector might have been prompted, among other things, by the need to keep the Soviet Union firmly on our side, but this might well be the truth.

The mandarins of the External Affairs Ministry might have decided that the Soviet Union needed assurances that the liberalisation drive would not weaken Indo-Soviet economic ties, particularly in the wake of a sharp fall in Soviet exports under the rupee trade agreement during 1986 - Rs.1500 crores against a target of Rs.2,250 crores.¹⁸

That the drive itself was a factor in the shortfall in our purchases from the Soviet Union was indicated by a surge in hard currency imports during 1985-86, leading to a trade deficit of Rs.8,616 crores, and a total import of

18 Ibid.

Rs.9,239 crores during the first half of the current financial year.¹⁹

The Soviet Union was well aware of India's reservations about the quality of its technology and capital goods. Our reluctance to purchase Soviet machinery and equipment was recognised as a factor in India's trade surplus in recent years.²⁰

The process of liberalisation initiated by the government was designed to make our manufacturers cost and quality - efficient through exposure to overseas competition and technological upgradation. The spurt in the country's hard currency imports in the last financial year and its continuance in the current year was thus easily explained.

As this process gathered momentum, there was the prospect of increasing dependence on western technology and correspondingly the danger of progressively diminishing reliance on Soviet technology and generally on economic assistance.

The massive Soviet credit offered during Rajiv Gandhi's

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

earlier visit to Moscow and again during Gorbachev's talks in New Delhi were some reflection of Kremlin's anxiety to prevent the liberalisation drive taking a direction that would effectively reduce Soviet role in India's economic growth.²¹

By accepting the credits all too readily, New Delhi has shown little economic sense but might have given Moscow the assurance on continuing bilateral economic co-operation. Moscow, no doubt, sought, for, with an unutilised World Bank aid of \$ 10 billion, we really should not be needing any external development assistance.

India also expressed its grave concern regarding Sino-Soviet rapprochement. The Sino-Soviet normalization of relations has not only brought to an end the strain in the ties of the two socialist giants, but also paved the way for some significant geo-strategic changes in South Asia in general and India in particular.

In the last ten years, the events around South Asia have brought about a major change in global politics. These events include the revolution in Iran, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Vietnamese intervention in

21 Ibid.

Kampuchea, and Iran-Iraq war- the longest conventional armed conflicts in modern history. In recent years, South Asia itself has witnessed conflicts between India and Pakistan over Siachen Glacier, two major insurgencies (the Sikh and Tamil) and four major movements for democracy in Pakistan, China, Bangladesh and Burma.

In the present regional Scenario, however, the most important question is how Sino-Soviet rapprochement would influence South Asia inter-state relations?

The Soviet Union was the first state which ^{formally} recognized the People's Republic of China in 1950. The two countries also signed a Treaty of 'friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance', ²². The Sino-Soviet split can be traced back to the 20th Congress of the Soviet communist party held in 1956. At the Congress, China refused to endorse the new Soviet approach to socialist thought which emphasized that the socialist countries should peaceful co-exist with the western capitalist world. The Chinese leadership concluded that the Soviet Union was deviating from the socialist path, and like any other bourgeois state, was using the name of socialism. It branded the new Soviet lines as 'Social Imperialism'. In 1959, their relations grew worse when

22 Sheikh Mutahir Ahmad, "Sino-Soviet Rapprochement: Its Impact on South Asia," Pakistan Horizon, 1990 p.80.

Nikita Khrushchev visited Beijing to attend the 10th anniversary of the people's Republic of China. The talks held between Khrushchev and chairman Mao failed to defuse tension between the two states. Relations were finally snapped when the Kremlin withdrew all its 1,390 technicians from China and also stopped China's economic aid.²³ In 1969, there were military clashes between the two countries on the eastern sector of the border. The process of normalization of relations between China and the United States began in the early 1970s. Deployment of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea, arrival of Soviet vessels in Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam, and finally Moscow's intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, strengthened Chinese ties with the west.

On 3 April 1979, the Chinese Foreign Minister had informed the Soviet side in a note that the standing committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China had decided not to extend the 'Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance' between China and the Soviet Union. But it was stated that this decision should not obstruct the development of normal relations between the two states on the basis of five principles of peaceful co-existence. The Chinese

23 Ibid.

government proposed to the Soviet Union that negotiations should be held for the solution of outstanding issues and the improvement of their relations. After Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, the Chinese government suspended its talks with the Soviet Union. Talks between the two countries resumed in 1982, after a gap of three years. In March 1982, the late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev delivered a landmark speech in Tashkent in which he said that 'There has never been any threat to the People's Republic of China on the part of the Soviet Union. We never had any territorial claims to the PRC on the part of the Soviet Union, and we are prepared at any time to continue negotiations on the outstanding border questions to reach mutually acceptable decisions. We are also prepared to discuss the problems of possible confidence building measure vis-a-vis the Chinese-Soviet border.'²⁴ He called for an end to the 20 years of hostility with Beijing and stated that the Soviet government recognized China as a socialist state, recognized its claim to Taiwan land had no territorial demands on China.²⁵ The Chinese leadership, on the otherside, put forward three conditions for the normalization of relations with

24 Ibid., p. 81.

25 Ibid.

the Soviet Union:

- i) withdrawal of the Soviet troops along the Chinese border;
- ii) settlement of territorial disputes with the Soviet Union;
- iii) Soviet troops withdrawal from Afghanistan and an end to its support to the Vietnamese backed regime in Kampuchea.

China's relationship with the Soviet Union remained frozen until the three obstacles were removed.

The next move in the normalization process was made by Mikhail Gorbachev. on 28 July 1986, during his speech at Vladivostok, he clearly indicated Soviet willingness for withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan, acceptance of the boundary at the mid channel of the river along the Sino-Soviet border and withdrawing its troops from Mongolia.²⁶

Mikhail Gorbachev has made unilateral moves to ease tension on all fronts. At the global level his major initiatives have been avoidance of the use of force for solving regional conflicts, global arms reduction, and easing of tension between the super powers. Two other

26 Ibid., p. 82

stands of Gorbachev's foreign policy relate to the concept of the common European Home and the primacy of China and Japan in Asia.²⁷ In the context of Asia, Gorbachev has announced 14 per cent cut in the Soviet military spending, reduction of armed forces by 500,000 men, 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 800 combatant aircraft in the next two years. The Soviet Union has also removed all the three obstacles in the normalization of relations with China. On 15 February 1989, Vietnam announced the withdrawal of its military from Kampuchea by 1990. Mikhail Gorbachev also offered to settle the border dispute and to reduce the number of Soviet troops along the Sino-Soviet border. During his visit to China (15-18 May 1989) 'full normalization of relations' between the two ruling communist parties were finally announced. China's acceptance of the Soviet offer to normalize relations has also to do with a primary domestic goal, i.e. to modernize its economy and society. Normal relations with as many countries as possible would ultimately help China to develop fast.²⁸

The People's Republic of China, after the Sino-Indian conflict gave economic and military assistance as well as moral and political support to most of the South Asian countries, particularly Pakistan.²⁹ The changing

27 Ibid.

28 Jachim Glaibitz, "Rapprochement between China and Soviet Union: Background and Prospects," Aussen Politik, Third Quarter 1989, pp. 251-52.

29 A.K. Abdur Sabur, "Sino-Soviet Rapprochement: Implications for South Asia", Biiss, March, 1989, pp.274-76.

posture of Chinese leadership towards the outside world and the prospects of a Sino-Soviet rapprochement have, however, compelled India to normalize its relations with China. In recent years both China and India have been trying to normalize their relations.³⁰ Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China, in December 1988, restored contacts at the summit level between the two neighbours after a period of 34 years. During Rajiv Gandhi's visit the two countries signed agreements in the fields of science and technology, civil aviation and cultural exchanges.³¹ In October 1989, during his visit to India, Chinese Vice Prime Minister Wu Xuequan, stated that the boundary question 'was a legacy of the past'. He hoped a 'settlement would be arrived at soon and the boundary would in future become one of peace, stability and amity, a bond of friendship between our two peoples.'³² According to him the significance of a 'fair and reasonable' settlement would 'go far beyonds the bounds of our two countries.'

In India, there are two opinions about the Sino-Soviet rapprochement. There are those who think that their country should always be attached to the goodwill of the Soviet Union to counter China people belonging to this opinion are bound to feel disappointed at the new found

30 The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 15 May, 1989

31 Sheikh Mutahir Ahmad, op.cit., p. 84.

32 The Hindu (Madras), 21 October, 1989.

indulgence Moscow is showing to the People's Republic of China. The other perception is that Indian foreign policy must give up its rigid posture and acquire enough room to manoeuvre in a changing situation.³³

The Soviet Union, from the beginning of the cold war has maintained friendly relations with India. It has helped India in the fields of economic, scientific and technological development, and has been providing military assistance on a generous scale. There are three main reasons for closer cooperation between the two countries: (i) common threat perception against Pakistan's closer alignment with the United States; ii) containment of China; (iii) The American naval military build up in the Indian Ocean.

On the question of China the Soviet Union explained the recent moves to normalize its relations with that country and also to sort out its border problem. The Indian side also gave a review of the efforts that were being made to normalize relations with China.

It was pointed out that there had been increase in mutual exchanges between the two countries, the Chinese

33 The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 12 May, 1989.

continue to take an unrelenting position. Since India regarded the border question central to its relations with China, normalisation could not be achieved unless the boundary dispute was resolved. Apprehensions were also expressed lest softening of relations between the Soviet Union and China led to the latter taking up a stiff posture on the question of resolving the boundary dispute with India.

The Soviet side explained that it would not enter into any agreement with China which would in any way jeopardise India's interests.³⁴

During Gorbachev's visit to India he expressed the view that if there was a continuing improvement in relations between the great powers of the region, principally China, India and the Soviet Union, he did not foresee the development of a critical situation between India and China. Gorbachev said: "I think that India, ofcourse, will act very responsibly in this situation" and, in relation with India "I think that the Chinese government will also act responsibly".³⁵

34 The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 27 November, 1986

35 The Times of India (New Delhi) 26 May, 1987.

CHAPTER - III

IMPACT OF GORBACHEV'S NEW POLITICAL THINKING
ON SOVIET-INDIAN RELATIONS.

CHAPTER III

IMPACT OF GORBACHEV'S NEW POLITICAL THINKING ON SOVIET-INDIAN RELATIONS.

The Soviet foreign policy gives priority to relations with India. This is only natural: India is a major world power and a close neighbour of the USSR in Asia. Considering the place and role of the Soviet Union and India in the contemporary world, friendship and cooperation between them becomes a factor of global significance.

The world since Gorbachev's ascent to power in 1985 has been a different one. It has been virtually dominated in its discourse and dialogue on all the major global issues by the new creative thrust and innovative slant given to it by the Soviet leadership. The world mind has been fascinated by Gorbachev's diplomatic brilliance. The new thinking that he had set in motion has changed the world agenda, and what is more, the basic approach to the items of that agenda. He has succeeded in dramatically changing the focus from confrontation to cooperation, from arms race to (what he prefers to call) "non-violent nuclear-weapon free world."

"Never in the history of international relations since the 1815 Congress of Vienna, such dramatic and drastic changes have taken place that have altered

radically the basic premises of inter-state policies and indeed of global politics. Never have the principles of coexistence of diverse socio-political system in peace and cooperation with each other, been underlined as the only genuine and realistic basis of international politics as has been done as a consequence of the Gorbachev phenomenon since 1986. No Soviet leader has had so many summit meetings with American Presidents, as Gorbachev - Geneva, Reykjavik, Washington, Moscow, Malta, Washington. That is six top-level talks in five year - 1986 to 1990!¹

Mikhail Gorbachev has now initiated new thinking on relations between the states in an atmosphere of peace. An excellent example of it is provided by India and the USSR which have different social and political systems but have lived in peace and amity with each other. Both states perceive the contemporary multifarious and contradictory world as a single and interconnected entity. They consider international security - global and regional, military, political and economic - to be indivisible. For decades they have been making unilateral and joint efforts to bring about a fundamental change for the better in international affairs: to eliminate the nuclear threat facing mankind, untangle crisis situations, ensure equality

1 Rasheeduddin Khan, "New Thinking in International Affairs", World Focus, Vol.11, No.4, April 1990, p. 8.

and justice in international economic relations, and to work for peace, security and development for present and future generations.

Panchseel as propounded by Nehru has shown the way to peace and security in the world. The West, however, has not yet given up its doctrine of "Balance of Power" which has now been amplified into "Balance of Terror", It must give way to "live and let live" if the world is to survive into the twenty first century. Gorbachev in his historic address to the 27th Congress of the CPSU (Feb 1986) gave a call for "new and increasingly persistent efforts aimed at curbing the forces of aggression, stopping the arms race delivering mankind from the threat of a nuclear catastrophe and consolidating peace on earth."² He follows Lenin's advice: "Don't set about new tasks on the basis of old approaches because nothing will come out of it."³ On his visit to Delhi in November, 1986 Gorbachev observed that "survival of mankind must be placed above all interests, and the security of any one state is inconceivable without security for all."⁴ "The situation, therefore, "urgently calls for a new approach

2 XXVII CPSU Congress Documents And Resolutions, (New Delhi: Allied Publication, 1986), p.222.

3 Dialogue Between Trusted Friends, (New Delhi: Allied Publisher, 1986), p. 35.

4 Ibid.

to security issues, a new thinking in politics and a new philosophy in international relations."⁵

Gorbachev laid stress on "principles of peaceful coexistence". He reiterated that "the high degree of interaction between the USSR and India makes for greater potential for the forces of peace and for a more secure future in the world."⁶ He praised non-aligned movement as "a unique force in modern times" and supported "the United Nations Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace", calling for the "Demilitarization of Indian Ocean."

There are various distinct areas of Soviet global diplomacy of the Gorbachev era, emerging directly from the domestic reforms and the new thinking in foreign policy initiated by him, in which Indo-Soviet cooperation would remain crucial and would be mutually beneficial.

Firstly, the new Soviet thrust for global peace and nuclear disarmament, reduction of conventional arms and greater control of their export into the third world; the banning of the chemical and bacteriological weapons. Gorbachev feels that new thinking in foreign policy has become imperative in our times. The armament race and

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

the advance of military technology, he feels, leaves no option but to accelerate the disarmament process in order to avoid the destruction of humanity. That is why the USSR has put this problem at the top of its agenda. Gorbachev's meetings with Reagan in Geneva in 1985, later in Reykjavik, Washington and Moscow, primarily on Soviet initiatives, were designed to rid the world of nuclear danger, to resolve the regional conflict situations in the third world and to bring a new climate of cooperation in international relations. Indian support to Gorbachev's initiatives to ban nuclear weapons and to prevent an arms race in space has time and again been reiterated from the forums of the non-aligned movements and the "Delhi Six".

A new way of political thinking also implies the admission of dialectical relationship between the simultaneous existence of the capitalist and socialist systems, on the one hand, and the indivisibility of the world, on the other. In the situation obtaining, "confrontation between capitalism and socialism can proceed only and exclusively in the forms of peaceful competition and peaceful contest."⁷

A convincing example of inter-state relations based

7 Tatiana Shaumian, "Stability of Indo-Soviet Relations", Mainstream, November 22, 1986, p.33.

on the principles of peaceful co-existence is provided by relations between India and USSR. They demonstrate the fruitfulness of relations between states with differing social systems and are characterised by respect and trust between the peoples and leaders in both countries. As Mikhail S. Gorbachev correctly remarked, Soviet-Indian relations by force of their example help to assert the principles of peaceful coexistence and work for peace and international security.

Another important feature of the new political thinking is the recognition of objective interests of different countries, the desire to look for the spheres of co-incidence of these interests and to take the required measures for bringing them close together. It is safe to say that the Soviet-Indian relations are actually based on mutual respect for each other's interests, on the principles of equality and mutual benefit. Such an approach favours fruitful cooperation between India and USSR both on a bilateral basis and in working out the two countries' positions on global and regional issues. This does not imply that the two countries hold identical views on all international issues. The existing differences do not, however, impair, their close cooperation which takes into account the interests and requirements of each of the partners on the basis of equality.

"In his Vladivostok statement Mikhail S. Gorbachev said that "tens, hundreds of arduous problems - ones inherited from the colonial past and ones emerging out of the contradictions of present-day development," the efforts to drag the developing countries into blocs, to create conditions which would force them to inflate military budgets, sweep them into the arms race, "all this deforms the processes of internal development, generates tension and, naturally, stands in the way of normalising relations between nationalities and states."⁸

In his new political thinking, Gorbachev has given much importance to Soviet relations with India. He underlines that a 'United, strong and peace-loving India is essential to the world today' and characterizes Indo-Soviet relations as a 'unique and priceless heritage'. Not only Gorbachev highly acclaims the role India plays in the world arena as leader of the non-aligned movement but also a nation committed to principles in international relations. In a unique affinity to restructure global relations Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi signed in November 1986 a historic declaration - The Delhi Declaration.

The Declaration is a logical combination of most important Marxian values, Leninist foreign policy of the

8 INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE (Paris), 26 Nov. 1986.

Soviet Union, humanism, great Indian traditions of culture and history, and aims and tasks set before Indian politics by Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

'The Delhi Declaration', which provides the philosophical basis for a new world order, was a significant move to draw world attention to the essentials of the problems of our times- the need to banish nuclear weapons and to create a world without violence. These are stages in the evolution of our awareness of the human predicament. It was the birth of the bomb which made us realise that war could no more be fought in a nuclear age. Now we realise that if war is not to be fought, then we can not allow violence to become a part of our life. 'The Delhi Declaration' could become the matrix of principles for new global relations.

A first step in this direction was taken by President Reagan and Gorbachev at their Geneva Summit in November 1985 when they jointly agreed that a nuclear war cannot be won and consequently that it should not be initiated. The convention proposed by India and the Soviet Union goes considerably further in that accession to it would be more effective as a moral force than a mere declaration as is the case with the no- first- use pledge.

Indeed, the ten principles set out in the 'Delhi

Declaration' provide a sound basis for enabling the international community to conduct a less tense and more pragmatic dialogue to rid the world of nuclear armaments.

Today humanity stands at a crucial turning point in history. Nuclear weapons threaten to annihilate not only all that man has created through the ages, but man himself and even life on earth. In the nuclear age, humanity must evolve a new political thinking, a new concept of the world that would provide credible guarantees for humanity's survival. People want to live in a safer and a more just world. Humanity deserves a better fate than being a hostage to nuclear terror and despair. It is necessary to change the existing world situation and to build a nuclear-weapon free world, free of violence, and hatred, fear and suspicion.

The world we have inherited belongs to present and future generations and this demands that primary be given to universally accepted human values. The right of every nation and every person to life, freedom, peace and the pursuit of happiness must be recognised. The use of threat or use of force must be abandoned. The right of every people to make their own social, political and ideological choices must be respected. Policies that seek to establish the domination by some others must be renounced. The expansion of nuclear arsenals and the development of space weapons undermine the universally accepted conviction

that a nuclear war should never be fought and can never be won.

On behalf of the more than one billion men, women and children of our two friendly countries, who account for one fifth of mankind, the leaderships of India and USSR call upon the peoples and leaders of all countries to take urgent action that would lead to world free of weapons of mass destruction, a world without war.

Soviet Union and India have set forth of the following principles for building a nuclear-weapons free and non-violent world:

- I. PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE: In the nuclear age it is necessary that international relations are restructured so that confrontation is replaced by co-operation, and conflict situations resolved through peaceful political means, not through military means.
- II. HUMAN LIFE SUPREME: It is only man's creative genius that makes progress and development of civilisation possible in a peaceful environment.
- III. NON-VIOLENCE : Philosophies and policies based on violence and intimidation, inequality oppression, and discrimination on the basis of race, religion

or colour, are immoral and impermissible. They spread intolerance, destroy man's noble aspirations and negate all human values.

IV. UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST: Mistrust, fear and suspicion between nations and peoples distort perceptions of the real world. They engender tensions and, in the final analysis, harm the entire international community.

V. RIGHT TO POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE: A new world order must be built to ensure economic justice and equal political security for all nations. An end to the arms race is an essential pre-requisite for the establishment of such an order.

VI. RESOURCES MUST BE CHANNELLED: Only disarmament can release the enormous additional resources needed for combating economic backwardness and poverty.

VII. INDIVIDUAL'S HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT: All nations must work together to solve urgent humanitarian problems and cooperate in the areas of culture, the arts, science, education and medicine for the all round development of the individual. A world

without nuclear weapons and violence will open up vast opportunities for this.

VIII MANKIND'S POTENTIAL: Solution must be found to global problems such as shortage of food, the growth of population, illiteracy and environmental degradation through the efficient and appropriate uses of the resources of the earth. The world's oceans, the oceans floor as well as outer space are the common heritage of mankind. A termination of the arms race will create better conditions for this purpose.

IX THE "BALANCE OF TERROR": The world is one and its security is indivisible. East and West, North and South regardless of social systems, ideologies, religion or race must join together in a common commitment to disarmament and development.

International security can be guaranteed through the adoption of integrated measures in the field of nuclear disarmament using all available and agreed measures of verification, and confidence building; just political settlement of regional conflicts through peaceful negotiations; and cooperation in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres.

X DISARMAMENT: It can be achieved through agreements
ons

- complete destruction of nuclear arsenals before the end of this century;
- barring of all weapons from outer space, which is the common heritage of mankind;
- banning of all nuclear weapons tests;
- prohibition of the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction;
- banning of chemical weapons and destruction of their stockpiles;
- reducing the levels of conventional arms and armed forces."⁹

Pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, India and the Soviet Union propose that an international convention banning the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be concluded immediately. This will constitute a major concrete step towards complete nuclear disarmament.

Addressing the Indian Parliament on November 27, 1986 after he signed the Delhi Declaration, Mikhail Gorbachev quoted the words of Buddha: "The only real victory is one

9 "INDO-USSR Ties After Gorbachev's Visit"
INDIA BACKGROUNDER SERVICE, Vol.XI, No.36, (557)
December 1, 1986, p. 1484-85

in which nobody is defeated and all are equally victorious."¹⁰

He further said: " This great maxim, proclaimed on Indian soil more than two and a half thousand years ago, turns out to be even more relevant today, In the age of nuclear arms the only possible victory is the victory of reason. Let us jointly work for it"¹¹

Gorbachev's scheme for the Asia-Pacific Security outlined at Vladivostok in July 1986, also gave top precedence to Indian ethos and it naturally evinced much interest. Delhi hailed the proposals for consolidating stability in the Asia and Pacific region which Mikhail Gorbachev put forward in September 1988 in Krasnoyarsk. It stressed that the proposals are aimed at strengthening Asian Security and create additional prerequisites for Soviet-Indian cooperation in building a common Asian home.

Both countries realise that a new system of relations in Asia is by no means an abstract idea but a perfectly feasible goal. To attain this goal, it is necessary that

10 Dialogue Between Trusted Friends,
(New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1986), p. 32.

11 Ibid., p. 51.

new political thinking takes firm root on the vast Asian continent and that every state contributes on a par with the Soviet Union and India to the general process of stabilising the situation in the Asia and Pacific region. After all, the Vladivostok and Krasnoyarsk platforms and, for that matter, the Indian approach to the problem of strengthening Asian Security amount to an invitation for all the parties concerned without exception to join in dialogue and a search for mutually acceptable compromises.

The new Soviet initiatives towards strengthening the UN system and democratising it to enable the UNO to play a central role in the maintenance of global peace and security is in sharp contrast to the present hostility expressed by the United States and some of her western allies like Britain towards the UN system in view of the solidarity among a section of the non-aligned countries on some global issues of common concern. The UN is being systematically atrophied.

The recent Soviet drive towards the creation of a new, more democratic, international economic order based on universal human interests and human values. This has echoed warm responses in countries like India as since the early sixties, the efforts of the developing countries

as well as the non-aligned movement for a just economic order have been frustrated by those who want to perpetuate the status quo. Before mankind can move to this new era, Gorbachev believes, the urgent problem of debt burden of developing nations must be resolved. In this respect, Gorbachev calls for a collective action to provide debt relief to the economically weak countries and a long moratorium (upto 100 years) on debt-servicing by the least developed countries. The Soviet Union has also promised the developing countries better economic assistance in the future depending on strides made in the disarmament sphere.

All these areas of new thrust in Soviet global diplomacy as a consequence of its domestic reform package and new political thinking process, correspond with India's national interests and are in conformity with India's global diplomacy. Both India and the Soviet Union would find in each other a more enthusiastic partner in pursuit of all these goals to their mutual advantage.

CHAPTER - IV

CONCLUSION

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The diplomatic relations between India and the Soviet Union began even before India won her freedom struggle in 1947. Owing to the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister and the architect of modern India, the Soviet-Indian relations of free India started on a firm friendly footing. So cordial has been the understanding between India and the Soviet Union since the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, that these relations have only grown and improved for the better.

The prime factor behind the successful shaping of Soviet-Indian political relations is the correct understanding and proper appreciation of each other's policies. The Soviet Union is the first major power to have recognized the policy of non-alignment, espoused so ardently by India. In its turn, New Delhi has appreciated the policy of peaceful co-existence, practised consistently by the Soviets in the field of their foreign relations. The success of Indo-Soviet political relationship can thus be ascribed to the identical nature of some of the basic principles of their foreign policy and to the convergence of their vital interests.

A close scrutiny of political ties between New Delhi and Moscow shows that on several important issues like

colonialism, imperialism, racism, peace and disarmament - both the sides have reacted almost identically. Their approaches to problems like China's recognition and admission to the UN, war in Korea, conflict in Indo-China, crisis in the Middle East and several other important international issues have brought them quite nearer. Both the countries have held a common approach on important matters like world wide extension of detente, use of atom for peace and nuclear disarmament.

Various changes in the leadership of the two countries - India and the USSR - have not adversely affected the growth of relations between them. The contributions of Indira Gandhi to this effect hardly needs to be over emphasised. The tradition of close and friendly relationship was continued by Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime Minister especially when he accepted the mediation of the Soviet Union to bring an end to the unfortunate Indo-Pak War of 1965. So great mutually beneficial and well entrenched have been the India-Soviet ties that even Janata Party Government which remained in power for a brief period of 1977-79 continued with the close Soviet-Indian relations of the predecessor congress governments.

The consistent growth of Soviet-Indian political ties is a welcome and rare development in inter-state

relationship in the post-war period. This is indubitably the solitary instance of ever-increasing multi-dimensional ties between two great countries having great authority in world affairs. Political exigencies have never staled their relationship.

India and the Soviet Union have shown genuine concern for peace and stability in South Asia. The US naval build-up in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf and the crisis around Afghanistan have posed problems for the security environment in this area. The massive US military assistance to Pakistan has augmented New Delhi's and Moscow's anxieties. These developments call forth further strengthening of Indo-Soviet political relations in the interest of preserving peace and stability in the sub-continent.

The Soviet-Indian close relations especially since Rajiv Gandhi assumed the office of Prime Minister on October 31, 1984 have transcended all barriers of bilateralism; they have become a fascinating saga of outstanding friendship. These relations have improved in a phased manner and both Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi have concertedly worked for bringing Soviet Union and India closer.

The relations between Soviet Union and India are of autonomous character. While preserving their traditional

ties and friendship with the other countries, both the sides have maintained a close rapport with each other. The recent improvement in Sino-Soviet relations created much anxieties in India, but Moscow justified its Sino-Soviet rapprochement that it is not at the expense of Moscow's ties with New Delhi. Of late, India has tried to improve her relations with the USA in various ways and the latter's response has also been encouraging. But from this it does not follow that such a development will adversely affect relations between India and the USSR. India's recent efforts to seek some of her imports of military hardware from the western countries do not indicate any cooling off in Soviet-Indian relations.

The growing accent on pragmatism in the domestic policy during the Indira Gandhi period and its further intensification in the Rajiv Gandhi period, the policy of economic liberalisation and pursuit of high technology with western assistance resulted in the erosion of the earlier conceptual basis of Soviet-Indian relations largely oriented towards anti-imperialist ideology. Having built an infrastructure of basic industries with Soviet assistance, the Indian ruling class started looking to the West for import of a new higher technology. All this resulted in acceleration of the pragmatic trend and

growing divergences in policy approach and perceptions between New Delhi and Moscow. This divergence in turn again gave way to a new convergence, with Moscow giving up its role as a rival power bloc signifying an end of the cold war.

Thus both India and the USSR are agreed upon conducting their relations on the pragmatic basis of national self-interest. The leaders of the two countries, however, feels that there was still potential for further improvement in the Soviet-Indian relations. It is hoped that with the Soviet-Indian relations becoming further strengthened in the years to come, the two countries will be able to contribute effectively towards the establishment of a nuclear-free non-violent world as envisaged in the Delhi Declaration.

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