

**SOVIET VIEW OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY : 1964-1975**

**SOVIET VIEW OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY : 1964-1975**

by

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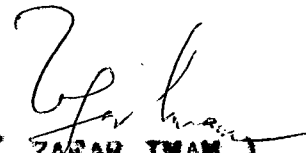
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before the examiner for evaluation.



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PREFACE

## P\_R\_E\_F\_A\_C\_E

The Indo-Soviet relations have been studied from various angles for the past several years. As a result, there is no dearth of research works on this subject. This however does not preclude the possibility of striking yet a fresh angle of looking at the subject. In the light of ever growing friendly relations and scientific and technological co-operation between the two countries, it is imperative to investigate into the Soviet perspective of India's foreign policy. The present study is a modest attempt at analysing India's foreign policy as seen by the Soviet Union as an outside power.

Soviet view of Indian foreign policy during the period is the subject of this study. As Soviet view of India's foreign policy is a part of its overall perspective of the Third World countries in general, we begin, in the first chapter, with a theoretical framework with an attempt to find its relevance for our study. The second chapter presents a historical background in both colonial and post-independence Nehru era. The third chapter makes a detailed study of the subject on the basis of various issues of individual, bilateral and international interests of the two countries. Finally, we correlate the above in assessing the totality of the Soviet view.

The study is based on source materials available in English and translated from Russian.

I am extremely thankful to Dr Zafar Imam, my Supervisor, for his helpful and valuable guidance at every stage of my work. I am also thankful to Dr R.R. Sharma, the Chairman of the Centre, and Dr Arvind Vyas for their constant encouragement in making my efforts a success.

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Finally, it is needless to say that the views expressed are entirely my own.

New Delhi,  
December 1980.

Rajendra Jha  
Rajendra Jha

**CHAPTER I**

## CHAPTER I

### INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY : THE SOVIET PERSPECTIVE

The role of ideology in various fields of Soviet policy, including its policy-making and behaviour in international affairs, has long been a subject of debate. The claim that Soviet policy-making in international field is entirely guided by the declared ideology of the state has been seriously disputed by a number of scholars. To them the national interest has always compelled the Soviet state to sacrifice ideology, and thus ideology remained on the level of mere propaganda. Even those who conceded the point that ideology does play its role, disagree on the degree of influence it is able to exert in Soviet foreign policy-making. The sum total of this view suggests that ideology in any case has remained in the background without ever assuming the role of a primary determinant factor. The Soviet literature on international politics, on the other hand, has always highlighted ideology as the supreme guiding principle of the state activity both in domestic and international fields.

It is not, however, necessary for our purpose to go into the details of this debate. Suffice here to point out that ideology is an important element of Soviet view of international politics and foreign policy. The fact that the

Soviet Union is a one party state system where ideology, i.e. Marxism-Leninism, has played a crucial role cannot be denied. The ideology, therefore, must necessarily involve our primary attention though we cannot deny such important factors as history, traditions and geopolitical environment their due importance. The purpose here is to present a model of Soviet perspective of international politics and foreign policy and then to discuss the relevance of this model for the Soviet understanding of the foreign policies of the Third World nations, in general, and India, in particular.

Soviet view of international politics is characteristically distinct in nature. The first main input of this view is the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. In order to construct a conceptual framework of such a view it is essential to begin with Marxian formulations on international politics, as well as even more relevant, later contributions to them by Lenin.

From the writings of Marx on international affairs, one can take into account of two basic criteria for an understanding of international politics.

First of all, Marx has rejected the view that international politics is primarily determined by the nation-states and their leaders. On the contrary, he advanced the idea that international politics is determined by two main social forces, and their clash and convergence of interests. These two social forces according to Marx are labour and capital. In other

words, international politics is an extension of class struggle raging within nation-states while they themselves play simply a formalistic role.

The other, the formalistic role of nation-states is itself dependent on their socio-economic formations; the interests of the ruling classes as well as the internal class conflict between the ruling classes and others, the proletariat and exploited in particular are projected in its external behaviourism. In other words, Marx was the originator of the idea that domestic compulsions very much affect foreign policies.<sup>1</sup>

With this conceptual framework the founders of Marxism were certainly aware of the role of the colonies and semi-colonies.

Ever since the days of "Communist Manifesto" the fate of the colonies and semi-colonies of the European imperialist powers occupied a place of importance in the discussions of international working class movement. While writing on European conditions, in 1847, Marx posed the problem: "The proletariat's victory over the bourgeoisie means at the same time elimination of all national and industrial conflicts that now give rise to enmity between the peoples. That is why the proletarian victory over the bourgeoisie sounds at the same time a call

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1 These are based on Soviet writings. For example, see, Sh. P. Sanakoyev, N.I. Kapchenko, Socialism & Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), pp. 17-25.



for freedom for all oppressed nations."<sup>2</sup> Such a debate was initiated by Marx himself mainly by his writings on India and China in which he projected the view that the colonial exploitation was sustaining capitalism in mother countries as well as it was planting the seeds of its own destruction through inevitable socio-economic changes in the colonial and semi-colonial world. Furthermore, he was the originator of the idea that the colonial and semi-colonial world was a potential force against capitalism in international politics and the proletarian revolution in Europe was interlinked with the colonial emancipation in the East. This idea which sought to combine the proletarian revolution in Europe with the colonial revolution in Asia was first advanced by Marx in 1853 with respect to India. In his famous article "The Future Results of British Rule in India", he wrote: "The Indians, will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie, till in Great Britain itself the new ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindoos themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether."<sup>3</sup>

The First International headed by Marx recognized the above view in the context of Irish national struggle against

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2 K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected works (Moscow, 1955), vol. 4, p. 371, Russian edn.

3 K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1973), in 3 vols., vol. 1, p. 498.

Britain. The International, however, was not well organized and because of its own internal differences this idea could not be put into practice.

Later the Second International began to debate on the future of the colonial and semi-colonial world as a response to immediate problems of the National question in Europe. The Stuttgart Congress of the Second International in 1907 was the dividing line. For the first time after a fierce controversy the Social Democratic Movement came out with a formulation on the problem by a simple majority of 19 votes. It postulated that the future of the colonial and semi-colonial world was inseparably linked with the future of capitalism in mother countries; if capitalism in Europe was defeated the colonial world would automatically be led to emancipation, whereas if it remained in power their future was doomed. In other words, the West had the precedence over the East from the viewpoint of socialist revolution in the West.<sup>4</sup>

Lenin had attended this Conference as a delegate and was very much against such formulation as a "Socialist Colonial Policy". His understanding of the colonial problem was stimulated by the cumbersome problems of nationalities in Europe in general and inside the Tsarist Empire in particular. Initially, he tried to provide a solution to this problem by advocating the

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<sup>4</sup> Kafar Imam, The Impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution on the National Liberation Movement of the People's of Asia, Africa and Latin America - A Conceptual Framework, A Paper presented at the International Scientific Conference, held at Baku (USSR), May 24-27, 1977.

right of self-determination of all nationalities in Europe. In the Second International itself, unlike others Lenin realized the basic issues of national question i.e. suppression and domination of one nation by another, had much in common with the colonial question. While advocating the right of nations to self-determination, he extended its application to include the colonial world - and established a link between the colonial and national question - through a common policy for them. Later it became the guiding principle of Soviet policy.<sup>5</sup>

The new Soviet state on the very day of its establishment openly condemned colonial exploitation and unequal relationship in international politics. It came out with unequivocal support of right of self-determination and emancipation of colonies and semi-colonies.

However, it was in the Second Congress of the Third Communist International which met in July 1920, Lenin once again returned to the problem which had been left without any concrete solution by the Second International. While debating the question, Lenin finally put an end to the old controversy on the question of precedence of west over the East for the future of socialist revolution in the former. He formulated that the socialist revolution in the West was inseparably linked with the emancipation of the colonies and semi-colonies in the East as well as the process of their socio-economic development;

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5 Asaf Ali, Colonialism in East-West Relations: Soviet Policy Towards India and Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-47 (New Delhi, 1969), p. 4.

indeed both the Proletarian Movement in the West and National Liberation Movement in the East, were like two streams of a river joining together into a mighty wave that might wash away capitalism.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the future of socialist revolution in the West and that of the colonial and semi-colonial world were interdependent and mutually complementary. This proved to be a very significant formulation at the most crucial formative stage of Lenin's ideas on international politics.

Such a formulation was indeed an extension of Marxist ideas on international politics.

Lenin like Marx was of the view that contradiction and harmony among these social forces determined international politics; while nation-state played only a formalistic role in it. The role of the nation-states was itself dependent on their internal socio-economic formation, above all, on the social composition of the ruling class controlling power and influence. Thus international politics was characterised as essentially an extension of class struggle between labour and capital from nation-states to an international level. In this form of class struggle the use of force was justified but it was not fatalistic or inevitable.

Lenin identified three main forces in international politics: the Imperialist-Capitalist countries, the Proletarian

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6 See Full Report of the Proceedings of the Second Congress of the Communist International (America: Publishing Office of the Communist International, 1921), pp. 111-22.

Movement achieving its first success by capturing power in Russia, and the third, the National Liberation Movements in the East.

From the above Lenin proceeded to the exposition of the typology of relationship among these three forces and the quantum of their role in determining international politics. These may be summed up as under:

- (i) The proletarian movement exerts its influence as a rule in unity and solidarity and in harmony with the national liberation movement directed against Imperialist-Capitalist states.
- (ii) The Imperialist-Capitalist states invariably play their role in contradiction with proletarian movement as well as national liberation movement in the East.
- (iii) The unity of the Imperialist-Capitalist states is beset with its own internal contradiction mainly because of rivalry among them; on the other hand although the proletarian forces invariably act in solidarity they may act differently in a peculiar given situation, e.g., under the conditions of being swayed by a false consciousness of 'nationalism' and 'national interest'.
- (iv) The proletarian movements invariably act in unity and solidarity in the same way as the Imperialist-Capitalist states are united against it.
- (v) The national liberation movements represent a force, incipient yet potentially strong, against Imperialist-

Capitalist states, although they may waver from time to time.

- (vi) Finally, the proletarian movement and the national liberation movements, being interdependent have common interest in weakening Imperialism-Capitalism.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the primary contradictions are identified as between socialist and capitalist world systems, while the secondary contradictions between Imperialism-Capitalism and National Liberation Movements.

Hence Soviet view of international politics is a complex exercise of assessing the primary contradictions as well as of identifying the potentialities of secondary contradictions as related to the primary one, thereby to strike a balance of all these social forces in a given period of time or in a crisis situation and specific issues. In other words, for a correct understanding of international politics in Soviet view, "one must seek to establish correlations of various social forces that are dynamically co-existing within a given society, identify their pattern of behaviour and their likely effect on its internal and external policies".<sup>8</sup>

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7 The formulation is based on Zafar Imam, Soviet View of Non-Alignment. A paper presented at the Seminar on Non-alignment (29 September- 3 October 1980) on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

8 Zafar Imam, Ideology and Reality in Soviet Policy in Asia: Indo-Soviet Relations, 1947-60 (Delhi, 1975), p. 104.

We may point out that in these ideas the role of what may be called, traditional factors like geo-politics, national security and defence, is taken into account. Indeed the very concept of contradictions and their interrelationship underlines it. However, the exercise of identifying a Soviet perspective of international politics and foreign policy, must necessarily take into account the problem of striking a balance between a purely ideological framework and the reality as it may exist. Hence the point is to identify the role of the ideology and its efforts to grow with a given reality.

Such is the essential Soviet perspective of international politics which has been the guiding force behind Soviet foreign policy even in a complex international environment during the sixties and seventies.

At this stage it is worthwhile to explore the inter-relationship between Soviet framework for international politics and foreign policy and Soviet view of foreign policies of the Third World countries in general, and India, in particular. Here some essential features may be identified.

Firstly, the fact that the international politics is viewed as a complex pattern of interaction of antagonistic and non-antagonistic social forces logically gives a crucial importance to the role of Third World countries in world affairs. Further, the Soviet framework for international politics identifies the role of the Third world countries in world affairs as of considerable significance in determining the balance of world social forces.

Secondly, as pointed out earlier, the Soviets view the role of the Third World countries in world affairs as primarily non-antagonistic to the Soviet Union and its socialist allies. Therefore, the relevance of the foreign policies of the Third World countries for the Soviet Union becomes obvious.

Finally, Soviet framework for international politics and foreign policy is also based on the premise that the external behaviour of a country is dependent on and linked with the internal social structure and the social position of the ruling classes and their power elite. Therefore, foreign policy of the Third World countries are indeed considered to be a viable indicator of their internal social structure as well as the dynamics of social changes. In other words, the fact that Soviet policies towards the Third world countries operate at a varying and multi-dimensional level, underlines the crucial importance of the foreign policies of the Third world countries.

From the above, it can easily be seen that external behaviourism of the Third World countries does exercise a considerable influence on Soviet policy towards the Third World countries and consequently on the varying level of Soviet goals and objectives vis-a-vis Third world countries.

Seen in this perspective the relevance of Indian foreign policy for the Soviet Union can easily be understood. As a matter of fact, India does provide a classic example of inter-connection between Soviet framework of international



politics and foreign policies of the Third World countries. All the three indicators, discussed above, are applicable to Indian foreign policy.

Against the background of the Soviet framework of international politics, India's policy of non-alignment thus becomes an important ideological input in the making of Soviet view of India's foreign policy. More so, when the objectives of India's policy of non-alignment on such vital issues as freedom of colonies, struggle against neo-colonialism and racialism and in general directed against traditional interests of Imperialist-Capitalist states, all these were seen by the Soviet leadership in terms of convergence and community of its interests.

Moreover, India's geopolitical location as a neighbour to the Soviet Union and its own historical problems with common antagonistic forces, namely, China and Pakistan, have indeed given an added importance to Indian foreign policy for the Soviet leadership. Hence the increasing level of Soviet commitments to India during the period under study and a consistent appreciation of Indian foreign policy postures.

The discussion above underlines the relevance of a framework for understanding Soviet reaction to external behaviourism of the Third World countries. Likewise, it also stresses the need of correlating this framework with an actual reality keeping in view its historical background and

specific features. The obvious example here is the case study of Indian Foreign Policy. This exercise we propose to undertake in the following chapters of our study.

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**CHAPTER II**

## CHAPTER II

### THE BACKGROUND

#### I. The Colonial Period

The world outlook of the Indian Nationalist Movement and in particular its attitude towards the Soviet Union were conditioned primarily by two interrelated factors: (a) The position of India as a colony under British empire, and (b) the socio-political background of the various shades of nationalist movement and above all of the leaders of its most important organization, the Indian National Congress. The colonial rulers of India maintained a consistent policy of hostility towards both the Tzarist and the Soviet Russia. In a condition of extreme political repression it was difficult for the Indians to develop even a favourable attitude towards the Russian revolutionary movement fighting against Tzarist autocracy. Likewise, a proper appreciation of the merits of Russian revolutionary movements and the acts of the Bolshevik power was not possible as the news from that side was censored or highly distorted.

However, the Indian leaders never believed in the officially inspired propaganda of Russian bogey. They were

very much aware of the "geo-political conditions" that neither before nor after the revolution was Russia ever "in a position to extend its control over the subcontinent by force of arms"<sup>1</sup> and "consequently did not share the apprehensions" of the British rulers. The Indians, on the contrary, felt that the Russians were friendly towards them and "might even help the latter in throwing off colonial bondage".<sup>2</sup>

The revolution of 1905-7 provided a fresh opportunity to the Indian nationalists to appreciate the merits of the Russian working class movement and grasp its tactics. The Russian events brought the two movements even closer. Many Indian leaders found common ground between the two and tried to apply the methods of Russian struggle to the situation in their country. In particular they saw in the methods employed by the Russian revolutionaries the only means of overthrowing British rule under the conditions of ruthless suppression of every political activity. Their ideas were expressed by Madame Cama at the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart in 1907 when she boldly declared: "The day will come when the nations of India will awaken and follow the example of our comrades in Russia to whom we send our particularly fraternal greetings."<sup>3</sup> Such a feeling towards the Russian movement

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1 Arthur Stein, India and the Soviet Union: Nehru Era (Chicago, 1969), pp. 4-5.

2 Bimal Prasad, Indo-Soviet Relations, 1947-1972: A Documentary Study (New Delhi, 1973), p. 4.

3 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 9.

continued to grow among the Indian revolutionaries.

This feeling received its further stimulus from the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. As it caused tremendous excitement among the Indian nationalists, it also provided further source of anxiety to the British rulers in India. To them the Tzarist Russia posed only a military danger whereas the Bolshevik Russia posed both military and ideological threats, the latter being capable of stimulating the broad section of Indian masses against the British rule.<sup>4</sup> The British, in retaliation, censored the news of the Bolshevik revolution and subsequent developments in Russia. The consistent effort of the British Government to quarantine its colonial subjects from Leninism along with the poor press coverage of the Russian events created a great amount of confusion among Indians. However they felt that "anything which the British Indian government sought so hard to discredit must have merit".<sup>5</sup>

The most important change in the Indian nationalist attitude towards the Soviet Union was brought about by Jawaharlal Nehru. He was the "only nationalist leader of repute and standing who progressively realised...that Soviet Soviet Russia was not only building a new society but also that here

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4 Arthur Stein, n. 1, p. 14.

5 Ibid.

the was/lone and potentially powerful force against imperialism".<sup>6</sup> With the growing menace of fascism Nehru's conviction became even more strong. His first strong exposure to the Soviet Union came when he visited that country in 1927 after attending the Conference of League Against Imperialism held in Brussels. While in the Soviet Union, he was particularly impressed by the effort of the new government towards socio-economic leveling for the purposes of creating a "new society". In one of his letters home he wrote that "the contrast between extreme luxury and poverty are not visible, nor does one notice the hierarchy of class or caste".<sup>7</sup> Nehru also seems to have been impressed by the manner in which the Soviet Union tried to solve the problems of minority and language and he duly recognized the possible relevance of Soviet experiences to Indian problems. He believed that "India's path would be made easier" if the Soviet Union were to find satisfactory solutions to the problems of poverty, illiteracy and need for industrialisation.<sup>8</sup> He wrote of his impressions later: "I must confess that the impressions I carried with me from Moscow were very favourable and all my reading has confirmed those impressions, although there is much that I do not understand and much that I do not like or admire."<sup>9</sup>

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6 Zafar Imam, Ideology and Reality in Soviet Policy in Asia: Indo-Soviet Relations, 1947-60 (Delhi, 1975), p. 19.

7 Quoted in Arthur Stein, n. 1, p. 16.

8 Ibid., pp. 16-17.

9 Jawaharlal Nehru, Soviet Russia: Some Random Sketches and Impressions (Bombay, 1949), p. 34.

In spite of his reservations, Nehru's favourable view was, in large measure, influenced by the fact that the Soviet Union was the only European country which called for an end to British colonial rule in India. He said: "But in spite of her many mistakes she stands today as the greatest opponent of imperialism and her record with the nations of the East has been just and generous."<sup>10</sup> He further emphasized that unlike Britain, the Soviet Union did not hinder India's national aspirations. He imagined that when India became independent "Russia and India should live as the best neighbours with the fewest points of friction....Is there any reason why we in India should inherit the age-long rivalry of England and Russia".<sup>11</sup>

It is a well-known fact that Nehru had a dominant role in the formulation of India's foreign policy. Before independence, his interest in international affairs was "greater and more sustained" than that of anyone else in the Indian National Congress. His outlook was a synthesis of both internationalism and committed nationalism. In 1936 he had established within the Congress a foreign department for the study of world affairs. While in prison in 1932-33, he spent a good deal of time in thinking about the world events and analysing the world situation. Nehru came to the conclusion that the choice before the world at

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<sup>10</sup> Jagat Bright, ed., Before and After Independence I A Collection of the Important Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru, 1922-50 (New Delhi, 1950), p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 9, p. 131.



that time was one between Communism and Fascism and he found himself for the former. As the President of the Congress in 1936, he was instrumental in making his perception of international politics the basis of the world outlook of the Congress. In his Presidential address, he called upon the Congress to identify itself with the "socialist and nationalist forces in the world struggling against imperialism and fascism". Between 1936 and 1939, the Congress, following the lead given by Nehru, extended its sympathy and support to all victims of fascism in Abyssinia, Spain, China, Palestine and elsewhere. Implicit in all of Congress' declarations and resolutions as also in Nehru's writings and speeches in this period "was a strong liking for the Soviet Union and its stand on various world problems. Even explicitly he hailed the Soviet Union as the leading opponent of fascism and praised the "United Front" strategy adopted by the Comintern in 1934. Although he was puzzled by the Russo-German Non-aggression Pact in 1939, he thought that the Soviet Union had no other alternative after their efforts to contain Germany through common action with the West had failed.<sup>12</sup>

At the time of German attack on the Soviet Union Nehru, along with most of the Congress leaders, was in jail. But immediately after his release in December 1941, he took the first opportunity to laud the heroic struggle of the Soviet people<sup>13</sup> and to declare soon afterwards that the

12 See Jawaharlal Nehru, China, Spain and the War (Allahabad, 1940), and A Bunch of Old Letters (New York, 1960).

13 Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 10, p. 197.

progressive forces of the world were united with the group represented by the Soviet Union, China, the United States and Great Britain.<sup>14</sup> In one of its resolutions adopted in December 1941, the Congress Working Committee expressed its sympathy with the Soviet Union. It declared that the Soviet Union had stood for certain human, cultural and social values which were of great importance to the growth and progress of humanity and it would be a tragedy if the war destroyed that endeavour and achievement.<sup>15</sup> So much so that even at the time of Quit India Movement (1942) the Congress took opportunity to convey to the Soviet people its dismay at their setbacks on the front and high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. Also during the brief period, from 1945 to 1947, the Congress gave clear indication that it would look forward to close collaboration with the Soviet Union. It is evident from Nehru's broadcast on 7 September 1946, as the Vice-President of the Interim Government. He conveyed his greetings to the Soviet Union and said: "They are our neighbours in Asia and inevitably we shall have to undertake many common tasks and have much to do with each other."<sup>16</sup>

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14 Ibid., p. 204.

15 Congress Bulletin, 5 February 1942.

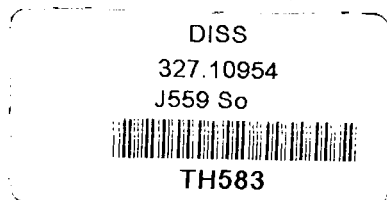
16 Quoted in Bimal Prasad, n. 2, p. 48.

It would be appropriate here to discuss, in brief, the Soviet policy towards India. The immediate post-revolutionary attention of the Soviet state was fixed on the West. However, it did not forget the East in the midst of the turmoil of civil war. They did pay considerable attention to India. Their attitude towards India was expressed in a Soviet Blue Book published in 1918 which revealed how important the Soviets considered the British possession of India to be to the cause of world imperialism. It read, "there cannot be a social catastrophe in the West while the West can still live and exploit itself upon the East, while there is still a submissive object of exploitation." Furthermore, a revolt in India could touch off a series of upheavals in other Asian lands.<sup>17</sup> The Comintern's policy towards India's nationalist movement has been discussed in the previous chapter. It will suffice here to point out that the Comintern, on Lenin's insistence, pragmatically appealed to the young communist movement to collaborate with the much stronger bourgeoisie in the struggle for national independence. It was emphasized that independence should first be won from the imperial rulers; then Communists, utilizing the situation, could win power from the bourgeoisie.

The Indian Communists collaborated with the Indian National Congress, for a very short time, but turned away

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Arthur Stein, n. 1, p. 6.



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after Gandhi called off his massive non-cooperation campaign in February 1922. Between 1923 and 1926 the Communist policy towards the Congress vacillated. But after 1927 Chinese Communist debacle at the hands of Kuomintang, the Sixth Comintern Congress hardened its general policy towards the "bourgeois democrats". Under the new "leftist strategy", Gandhi was denounced as "idealising the most backward and economically reactionary forms of social life" and called Nehru a "stupid reformist". Under this directive the Communist Party of India continued its strong opposition to the Congress until 1934-35 when once again the Soviet Union appealed to the Communist parties of various countries to co-operate with non-Communists in combating the rising menace of fascism. Meanwhile the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact confused the whole situation and bewildered many including the Communists. The things became clear when Germany invaded Soviet Union in 1941 and the latter called upon the Indian Communists to rally behind the British war efforts against fascism. It was only after Anglo-Soviet relations deteriorated in Europe and the Soviet Union became critical of her wartime ally that the Indian Communists also started joining the mass anti-British demonstration. The Mountbatten Plan of 1947 was criticized by the Soviets as the means "to perpetuate imperialist control" by dividing the subcontinent. Thus towards the lag end of the British rule, the CPI, on Soviet advice adopted a "united front from above" policy of co-operation with the Congress. It even supported

the Nehru government's efforts to quell the communal disorders in the months before and after the partition of India in August 1947.<sup>18</sup> From the foregoing, it is evident that since the late 1920s until India's independence, the Soviet Union did not keep Indian National Congress on its primary agenda, rather the Soviet policy kept on shifting. Nehru in any case remained consistent in his favourable attitude to the Soviet Union. However, the contact between the Indian Provisional Government and the Soviet Union in 1946-47 were reasonably cordial. Both sides on 14 April 1947 announced their intention to exchange diplomats.

## II. Nehru Era in Indian Foreign Policy (1947-1964)

The Nehru era in India's foreign policy and the Soviet view thereof can be divided into three phases. The first phase (1947-50) was a passive phase when independent India's foreign policy was not duly recognized by the Soviet leadership. The second phase (1951-58) saw the emergence of sympathetic view towards India. The third phase, 1959-64 may be called an active phase when the role of independent India in international field was recognized and appreciated. Thus the relationship between the two nations started with a hostile disposition engendered by a number of misunderstandings between the two. But as soon as the critical phase of misunderstanding and

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-10.

confusion was over, their relations grew steadily so much so that before Nehru died in 1964 the firm foundation of friendship and co-operation was laid. It is on this foundation that the relationship between the two nations have been thriving in the post-Nehru era also.

(a) The First Phase (1947-50)

The passive first phase of Soviet view of India's foreign policy was what might be called the result of post-war compulsions both domestic and foreign. It was as much the result of the rigid "two camps" theory of the Soviet Union and Cold War as of misgivings created by initial enchantment of the new Indian government with the West and some of its deeds. We shall now proceed to analyse these factors for the understanding of this phase.

It is important to note that the legacy of the colonial period had much to do with India's foreign policy in the immediate aftermath of independence. In most respects India in this period remained oriented toward the West. The remnants of British law and administration, the retention of Commonwealth ties and considerable volume of commerce all marked the continuing links between India and Britain. Before 1947 the National Congress had pledged <sup>itself</sup> to severe close ties with Britain. Yet after the independence Nehru thought it advantageous to continue the close economic and political

ties with the British. Even the continuance of Commonwealth membership of India was not considered incompatible with non-alignment inasmuch as it did not envisage any military ties. From the Soviet perspective of viewing the non-Communist world from the rigid "two camps" theory, it appeared that India's profession of non-alignment was meaningless and it only served the causes of British imperialism.<sup>19</sup> The domestic scene of India at that time was even more gloomy. The overriding concern of the Indian Government at the time of independence and for several years afterwards was the political and social reconstruction of a partitioned land. Consolidation of statehood, the struggle against communalism and rehabilitation of millions of refugees, and the adjustment to the reality of Pakistan were the top priority tasks. In such a turmoil Nehru had to shape India's foreign policy which obviously occupied a secondary place for the time being. Nehru's foreign policy was, at this time, more oriented to maintaining status quo. It is also quite revealing to note that he did not want to disturb the national bourgeoisie by suddenly cooling off relations with the West and drawing closer to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union did not recognize the Indian reality as such. Her criticism of India became more vocal and direct. But the preoccupation with her own problems also contributed

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19 Arthur Stein, n. 1, pp. 26-27.

much towards Soviet outbursts against India. The Berlin blockade, formation of NATO and Yugoslavian episode demanded much more attention than recognising the emergence of independent India in proper perspective. Thus Moscow's attitude towards India should be viewed in the background of Cold War and Soviet fear of Western Powers' military threat to the Communist bloc.<sup>20</sup>

The relationship between the two nations in any case was marked by continued Soviet vitriol against India which was even more fomented by some of the actions of Indian Government in this period. The first such provocative action of the Indian Government was to quell Communist insurrection in Telangana in Andhra Pradesh and in some places in Bengal and to declare the Communist Party illegal. The Soviet Union severely criticized the Indian Government on this occasion.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, the economic policy of the Government of India was criticized. Till 1951 Britain held "85 per cent of the foreign holdings of government securities and 78 per cent approved foreign investment of long-term capital in India."<sup>22</sup> Forty seven per cent of India's export of raw materials and 22 per cent of the total foreign trade were tied with Britain.<sup>23</sup>

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20 Vijay Sen Budhraj, Soviet Russia and the Hindustan Subcontinent (Bombay, 1973), p. 37.

21 New Times, no. 3, 1949; Pravda, 27 February 1949.

22 Zafar Iman, n. 7, p. 26.

23 D.P. Chatterjee, "India and Soviet Union : Partners in Progress", in Socialist India, vol. 7, no. 27, 27 November 1975, p. 17.



Nehru had spoken in 1948 that "there should be no sudden change (in the economic structure) which might upset the present structure without its being replaced....We should not waste our resources at the present moment in trying to nationalise existing industries."<sup>24</sup> Likewise some of the other acts of Indian Government were not liked by the Soviets. In 1949 Indian Government supplied arms to nationalist government of Burma against Communist uprisings there. It decided to provide transit facilities to French Government for war in Vietnam and did not recognize the government of Ho Chi Minh. In January 1949, India called an Asian Conference on Indonesia but Asian Republics of the USSR, China and North Vietnam were not invited. In Singapore in 1950, Nehru called Communism the enemy of nationalism in Asia. The Soviet criticism of India was thus obviously provoked. It denounced India's policy of non-alignment by saying that it "does not change the basic fact that in the present conditions, the neutrality...profits only the US and British imperialists".<sup>25</sup> It was perhaps in this vein that in the UNO in 1947, the Soviet Union opposed India for a Security Council seat.

In spite of low level of relationship and strained attitude towards each other, the two sides did make some sporadic attempts to improve relationship which indeed created

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<sup>24</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, September 1946 - May 1949  
(New Delhi: The Publication Division, Government of India)  
vol. 1, pp. 112-13.

<sup>25</sup> New Times, no. 43, October 1950, p. 28.

an atmosphere for the growth of cordial relationship in the second phase of the Nehru era. For example, Soviet Union tried to maintain economic relations with India by sending grain in exchange for jute and tea in 1949. On the other hand, India was the first non-Communist country to recognize Communist China which led Soviet Union to show a favourable gesture towards India. Thus to prove its sympathy, in the UNO the Soviet representative spoke against Anglo-American interest in Kashmir. Such a conciliatory gesture was revealed in some articles in New Times which criticized the rightist elements in the Congress but spared Nehru.<sup>26</sup>

(b) The Second Phase (1951-58)

The beginning of the decade of 1950s saw some important changes in India's domestic situation as well as international relations which evoked favourable response from the Soviet side. The First General Election gave Congress Party a clear cut majority for a stable government. At the same time the ban on the Communist Party of India was lifted and it even contested in the General Election with by no means unimpressive results. The bitterness over the Kashmir issue was also giving an indication of cooling down for a fruitful negotiation. The emergence of Communist China had changed the Asian balance of forces in favour of Communism. Nehru was quick to realize

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26 New Times, no. 32, August 1948.

this reality and he even went to the extent of supporting Communist China's claim for a seat in the Security Council. Then came the Korean War which for the first time gave India an opportunity to prove its neutral profile in the eyes of the Soviet Union.

The Korean War was the first international problem which provided India with a chance to play an important role in international field. India refused to join the Western powers in condemning the Chinese entrance into the Korean War in October 1950. The USSR afterwards was generally satisfied with India's stand on the Korean question and noted with approval the growing divergence between India and the USA on the Korean and the Chinese questions. During his last years Stalin had begun to realise that Nehru was genuinely interested in pursuing a course independent from the Western Powers on Cold War issues in Asia. Therefore, the Soviets made a number of gestures towards India in 1952-53. As a starter, the Soviet Union directed the CPI to work within the parliamentary framework of Indian system. They also began to pay some attention to the Indian diplomatic personnel in Moscow as is evident from Stalin's meetings with two successive Indian Ambassadors -- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and K.P.S. Menon. The talks with the Indian diplomats were among the few granted to the foreigners in 1952. In the same year the Soviet Union participated in an International Film Festival and International Industries

Fair held in Bombay. Again, the Soviet Ambassador to India put forth an offer to increase Indo-Soviet trade. In 1952 a Russian trade union sent India a relief shipment of wheat, rice, condensed milk and 25,000 rupees during a severe famine.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Indian and Soviet delegates at the United Nations consulted each other more frequently than before. The major areas on which the two nations agreed and tried to make a common cause were questions of racialism and colonialism in Asia and Africa. Thus the Korean conflict was a watershed in India-Soviet relations.<sup>28</sup> As Malenkov, the Soviet Premier after the death of Stalin, pointed out in 1953: "In the efforts of peace-loving countries directed towards ending the Korean war, India made a significant contribution. Our relations with India are becoming stronger and our cultural ties are growing. We hope that in future relations between India and the USSR will grow stronger and develop in a spirit of friendly cooperation."<sup>29</sup>

The favourable shift in relationship between the two nations in this period was also brought about by three major factors: The coming of the Cold War to India's border in the shape of growing US-Pakistan relationship; hardening of western

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27 K.P. Karunakaran, India in World Affairs, 1950-53 (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 239.

28 Arthur Stein, n. 1, pp. 30-31.

29 Quoted in Zafar Imam, n. 7, p. 16.

attitude towards India's policy of non-alignment and their reluctance to provide aid to the growing need for Indian planned economic development; and increasing organizational strength of the Indian Communist Movement trying to bring pressure on the Nehru government. In 1954, Pakistan signed the US-military pact. The Soviet press severely criticized the treaty and praised India for refusing to join it. In fact "India's refusal to join the imperialist bloc...helped to safeguard the Soviet Union, especially as India's stand encouraged a large number of young states not to support the imperialist policy".<sup>30</sup> Though India could not participate due to US opposition in the Indo-China Conference in Geneva, the Soviet and Chinese representatives maintained close contact with Indian representative and exchanged views on many international problems. Later Molotov proposed India's name for the chairmanship of Neutral Nations' Commission on Indo-China. We also find at this time the growing appreciation by the Soviets of India's policy of non-alignment which was taking the shape of a real movement of the Third World countries. The visit of the Chinese Premier to India and 'Panchsheel' declarations of the two was hailed by the Soviet press as the principles whose acceptance "by the Asian as well as other countries would diminish the possibilities of war, serve to

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30 E.N. Komorov, "Historical Roots and Contemporary Development of Soviet Indian Cooperation", in Soviet Review, vol. 12, no. 14, March 1975, pp. 46-47.

lessen tensions in world community and improve the valuable co-operation between the countries."<sup>31</sup> The Central Committee of the CPSU spoke in similar vein on the anniversary of the October Revolution: "May the friendship and cooperation between the peoples of India and the Soviet Union grow and strengthen for the protection of peace in the world."<sup>32</sup>

The period 1955-56 were important for many reasons. The high level exchange of visits took place between the two countries. Molotov announced in the Supreme Soviet: "It is a fact of great historic importance that colonial India is no more and there <sup>is</sup> an Indian Republic instead."<sup>33</sup> He added: "India's international prestige as a new and important factor of peace and friendship among nations is steadily rising".<sup>34</sup> In the historic Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955, India adopted a pro-Soviet stand. Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union was given a wide coverage in Soviet media. When Bulganin and Khrushchev visited India in 1955, they hailed India's policy of non-alignment and its role in international affairs. They also supported India's claim on Kashmir and Goa. Bulganin declared: "...There is not a single problem in Asia - and not only in Asia - that can be settled today without the participation of People's Republic of China and India."<sup>35</sup> The 20th Congress

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31 Quoted in Zafar Imam, n. 6, p. 70.

32 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 60.

33 New Times, no. 7, 1955.

34 *Ibid.*

35 Visit of Friendship to India, Burma and Afghanistan (Moscow: Foreign Language Press, 1956), p. 151.

of the CPSU in 1956 gave a solid foundation to this trend. The Central Committee Report said: "The great Indian Republic had made a big contribution to strengthening of peace in Asia and the whole world"<sup>36</sup> and suggested "to consolidate untiringly the bonds of friendship and cooperation with the Republic of India".<sup>37</sup>

As noted above, the second important factor that brought the two nations closer was the question of economic aid. India had adopted a policy of planned economic development with the declared objective <sup>of</sup> creating a powerful industrial base in Public Sector. Economic aid and supply of technology were the precondition for the fulfilment of this objective. The West denied aid in this sector and instead hardened its attitude towards non-alignment. It was at this moment that the Soviet Union declared its intention of providing aid in public sector. Bulganin declared at the time of his visit: "We are prepared to share our experience in the construction of industrial enterprises...and utilisation of the atomic power for peaceful purposes."<sup>38</sup> It was the beginning of massive aid programme and multifaceted co-operation between the two nations.

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36 Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 20th Congress (Moscow, 1958), p. 31.

37 Ibid., p. 47.

38 Visit of Friendship, n. 35, p. 131.

The third important factor was the increasing organizational strength of the Communist Movement in India and its pressure on the government which also coincided with the growing anti-Western mood of the masses in general. The Communist Party of India presented an impressive performance in the Second General Elections in 1957.

The period between 1956 and 1959 was marked by two major international events - the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian problem. While the Suez crisis provided the two nations to come closer and criticize Israel, US and the West, the Hungarian problem created certain misunderstandings between the two. However, the Soviet Union did not allow the Hungarian crisis to affect its bilateral relations with India. It continued to support India through diplomatic initiatives. In 1959 when in the UNO proposal came for sending a UN team in Kashmir, the Soviet Union used its veto in favour of India.<sup>39</sup> It increased economic aid to India's Second Five Year Plan.

(c) The Third Phase (1959-64)

The third phase of the Nehru era in India's foreign policy, as noted above, began in 1959. The relations between the two nations in this period were characterized by India's

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<sup>39</sup> News and Views from the Soviet Union (New Delhi),  
23 February 1959.



growing border problems with China. In August 1959, when Sino-Indian border clash took place, the Soviet Union, in order to maintain its neutrality, simply published the Chinese and Indian versions of the incident. Later in October Khrushchev said: "We would be happy...if the existing frontier disputes were settled through friendly negotiations to the satisfaction of both parties."<sup>40</sup> This was a blow to the Soviet Asia policy which Khrushchev did not want to risk. But because of the continued Chinese hostility, he had to make a choice. On 26 January 1960 he praised Nehru and his efforts for peaceful co-existence and international co-operation. A delegation headed by President Voroshilov visited India and praised India's achievements. When Khrushchev himself visited India in 1960, he further reiterated Soviet support for India's industrialization programme. Soviet aid of 1,500 million Roubles for India's Third Five Year Plan was also announced. Khrushchev also criticized China's policy and rigid attitude of its leadership. The CPSU Central Committee criticized it as "narrow nationalist attitude". It was at this time that India took a bold step to liberate Goa, a Portuguese colony, which was supported by the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries.

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40 N.S. Khrushchev, World Without Arms. World Without Wars (Moscow, 1959), p. 399.

The Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962 once again complicated the whole situation. India's military debacle was attributed to the non-alignment policy by the rightist forces and there was a strong pressure to change this stance. The West tried to blackmail India by demanding a settlement on Kashmir with Pakistan in exchange for military help. Nehru, of course, withstood this pressure. Khrushchev said about this situation: "For the imperialists this conflict is a gold mine."<sup>41</sup> The Soviet Union criticized Chinese policy as "adventuristic" which "rendered great services to imperialism...."<sup>42</sup>

After the Sino-Indian conflict was over India started<sup>getting</sup> military help from the Soviet Union. By May 1964, the total military help amounted to 130 million dollars.<sup>43</sup> By the same time thirty enterprises had been built up with the Soviet aid. Trade turnover with the USSR increased up to worth 600 million rupees.

However, once again in 1963-64, India had to face problems like Colombo Proposal put forth by Ceylon, Egypt, Burma, Ghana and Indonesia for the settlement of its border problems with China which it accepted in principle. Pakistan

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41 N.S. Khrushchev, "On the Sino-Indian Border Issues", News and Views from the Soviet Union, vol. 21, no. 82, 15 December 1962, p. 9.

42 Quoted in Harish Kapur, The Soviet Union and the Emerging Nations (Geneva: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1972), p. 79.

43 New York Times, 4 August 1965.

again raised the question of Kashmir and demanded a special UN session to discuss the issue. During all these critical days India received clear support from the Soviet Union. In February 1964, when the question of Kashmir was raised in the UN Security Council, the Soviet representative opposed it and said: "...from the legal and constitutional standpoint Jammu and Kashmir is and continues to be Indian Union territory".<sup>44</sup>

The above discussion underlines the fact that the community and convergence of interests between India and the Soviet Union led to the gradual coming of these two countries together in friendship and co-operation. It also emphasizes the importance that both the countries have attached to their relationship. It is abundantly clear that such an assessment of India's importance was expressed in a consistent Soviet appreciation of Indian foreign policy, marked since the beginning of the fifties.

Hence, we may conclude that Soviet appreciation of Indian foreign policy has concrete roots in the historical make up of these two countries in modern times as well as in the complimentary roles they have played in world affairs. It was therefore, no surprise that the Soviet view of Indian foreign policy in post-Nehru era was very much conditioned by its background as discussed in the preceding pages.

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Bimal Prasad, n. 2, p. 271.

**CHAPTER III**

## CHAPTER III

### THE SPECIFIC FEATURES

Jawaharlal Nehru's death in May 1964 was a watershed in the history of contemporary India. Like all aspects of Indian society, the Indian foreign policy as pursued by Nehru faced confusion and uncertainty. The very basis of India's policy of non-alignment and its developing close relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries were the target of attacks by the opposition parties. Demands were raised by the Swatantra Party in its Bombay session, held in July 1964 for the fundamental change in India's foreign policy, "as developed and followed by Nehru", on the ground that it had "outlived itself". These developments were a source of uneasiness to the Soviet leadership. For example, Soviet news media came out with strong criticism of attacks on Nehru's foreign policy launched by the opposition parties in India; likewise, a marked concern was noticeable about India's internal problems.<sup>1</sup> Very soon the doubts were set at rest as far as Indian foreign policy was concerned.<sup>2</sup>

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1 See, Reviews for years 1964, 1965 in Zafar Iman, ed., Soviet View of India, 1957-1975 (New Delhi, 1977), pp. 77-93.

2 Ibid.

However, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri lost no time in declaring his intention of continuing India's policy of non-alignment and close co-operation with the Soviet Union; he took practical steps to demonstrate the adherence of his government to Nehru's foreign policy by taking an active part in the second Conference of Non-aligned countries held in Cairo in October 1964. Moreover, towards the end of 1964, President Radhakrishnan and leading members of Shastri Cabinet like Indira Gandhi, Swaran Singh and Y.B. Chavan paid official visit to the USSR. Thus it was quite clear that against heavy odds, both internally and externally, there was a marked continuity in the Indian foreign policy.

The continuation of Soviet appreciation of India's foreign policy thus remained uninterrupted.

We have, in our last chapter, summarized the general features of Soviet appreciation of Nehru's foreign policy. In this chapter we propose to highlight the continuity of Soviet appreciation of India's foreign policy even after Nehru's death against growing internal and external problems in India. We propose to undertake this task by highlighting three types of issues in a systematic manner. These are: (a) Issues where direct Indian interests were involved, e.g., China, Pakistan, Bangladesh; (b) Issues where direct Soviet interests were involved, e.g., the German Question, Czechoslovakia, NPT, Sino-Soviet border conflict; and (c) Issues of world importance where community of interest between India and the

Soviet Union was marked, e.g., Colonialism, Racialism, Peace and Disarmament. We must necessarily look at these issues as interlinked and not in isolation because they have bilateral importance as well as regional and world relevance.

Moreover, it is generally accepted that common interests and reciprocity of goals and objectives are the basis of interdependence and friendship among nations. These factors may vary at a given period of time or on a given issue, but they remain operative if bilateral relation among nations become closer and continues to develop. Likewise, common interests and reciprocity of goals and objectives must necessarily be seen in the context of world issues, and those where interest of two or more countries are involved. This indeed is very true of India and of the Soviet Union.

The essential framework of Soviet appreciation of Indian foreign policy has been conditioned by India's adherence to the policy of non-alignment and its active role in it, while India's geo-political position and its domestic compulsions are considered no less important. On the other hand, an exploration of the very basis of the Soviet appreciation of India's foreign policy must necessarily begin with an investigation of Soviet stand on issues where India's direct national interests were involved.

(A) Where Direct Indian Interests Were Involved

One of the basic objectives of Indian foreign policy has always been the creation of a conducive international

environment so as to safeguard its territorial integrity, promote its own chosen programme of internal socio-economic development and to play an active role in regional affairs in general. Needless to add, that the creation of a conducive international environment has provided various important directions to Indian foreign policy such as its effort to promote peace and maintain stability in the world.

However, the very task of creating a conducive international environment, problematic as it is, has involved India in soliciting support and encouragement where its direct interests were involved. We may generally identify these issues as under:

- (1) Problem of India's Economic Development through Foreign Aid
- (ii) India's Relation with its Immediate Neighbour - China and Pakistan

On all the above issues the Soviet Union has consistently and unequivocally provided support and sustenance to India. Let us examine this by taking up these issues systematically and in sequence during the period under review, 1964-75.

- (1) Problem of India's Economic Development through Foreign Aid

Traditionally, India has received economic aid both from the East and the West. After the initial controversy over India's path of economic development, a pattern of foreign economic aid began to emerge. After failing to exercise



pressures on India for changing its planned development of economy with emphasis on industrialization under state sector, the Western countries gradually settled down, by the mid-fifties, to provide aid to India in the corporate sector for servicing the economy and developing infra-structure like transport and communication. Along with this, the per capita provision for Western aid to India consistently became less and less as compared to other developing countries. The net result has been that the Western aid has managed to strengthen private sector and to maintain the considerable influence on Indian economy through multinationals.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union has traditionally provided economic aid to those sections of Indian economy where the Indian policy-makers had priority choices, yet they were hard pressed to implement them namely, heavy and manufacturing industry under state control and development of energy sources. Such a pattern of Soviet aid certainly provided India a much needed support where its direct national interests were involved.

A quick glance at the comparative structure of Soviet and Western economic aid to India clearly underlines their differences in their objectives. Table I below is self-explanatory.

Table I

SECTOR-WISE PATTERN OF SOVIET & AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE  
(As on March 31, 1965)

Soviet Union		USA	
Steel	40 %	Steel, Iron Ore	1.8 %
Power	18.1%	Power, Irrigation	7.3 %
Oil, gas	19.1%	Railway	3.8 %
Coal Mining	6.5%	Transport & Communication	1.1 %
Heavy-Machine Building	7.2%	Industrial Development	25.0 %
Heavy Electrical Plants	4.9%	Grants for technical assistance in health, agriculture, social, educational fields	5.3 %
Drug projects	3.1%		
Miscellaneous	1.1%	1951 wheat Loan, PL 480, 665 Food and Commodity Assistance	55.9 %

Source: P.J. Eldridge, The Politics of Foreign Aid in India (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1969), pp. 11-13.

Moreover, leaving aside the rupee payment of Soviet loans and credits, the comparative rates of interest charged and the periods of repayment for different loans are given in Table II from which the favourable rates of interest of the Soviet is offset by the shorter repayment periods is quite clear.

**Table II**  
**COMPARATIVE RATES OF INTEREST AND REPAYMENT PERIODS FOR LOANS**

Loans	Rates of interest (in per cent)	Period of repay- ment (in years)
Russian	2.5	12*
German	3 to 6	12 to 25
British	5 to 6.5	25
American Eximbank	5.25 to 6	13 to 16
DLF (Infrastructure projects)	3.5	15 to 20
DLF (Industrial development and non-infrastructure imports)	5.5 to 5.75	10 to 15

\* 7 for Drug projects.

Source: Merchant, K.T., "Soviet Aid For Economic Development", in Vadilal Dagli, ed., Indo-Soviet Economic Relations - A Survey (Bombay, 1971), p. 23.

Thus Amiya Bagchi, an Indian economist, comparing the terms of aid of socialist and capitalist countries points out that the effective rate of interest (after considering the difference in the nominal interest rate and the grace period) on credits of socialist countries is lower.<sup>3</sup>

We can appreciate the full implication of Soviet economic aid if we look at its detail during the period under review.

### Soviet Aid

The vast structure of economic alliance between India and the Soviet Union has grown rapidly around a variety of arrangements, agreements and pacts ensuring economic and technical co-operation in different fields of economic activity. These range from long-term credits to transfer of technical know-how, training of technical cadres, exchange of knowledge and results of research and development. The impact of Soviet economic assistance on major spheres of Indian economy has since 1955 increased.

The signing of the historic agreement on 2 February 1955, on the construction of Bhilai Steel Plant, marked the beginning of this fruitful and highly beneficial cooperation. It accelerated the pace of India's speedy and balanced industrialization. At present Soviet economic and technical

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<sup>3</sup> Amiya Bagchi, "Aid Models and Inflow of Foreign Aid", Economic and Political Weekly, Annual No. (1970), p. 231.

co-operation encompasses fields like iron and steel, heavy machinery, machine-building industry, electrical machinery, oil drilling and refining, mining, pharmaceuticals, non-ferrous metals etc.

India is in fact the largest recipient of Soviet aid among the developing countries. Starting with the construction of the Bhilai Plant, the Soviet Union has assisted India in setting up about 70 more enterprises. By 30 April 1977 the total Soviet credit facilities to India had reached Rs1,920 crores. The Soviet Union has so far provided long-term credits of Rs1,237 crores.<sup>4</sup>

These long-term credits have helped India to emerge as one of the industrial states in the world map. Today Soviet-aided projects in India account for 85 per cent of heavy engineering goods, 60 per cent of turbo-generators and heavy electrical equipments, 31 per cent of steel, 20 per cent of electric power, 70 per cent of oil products and 16 per cent of iron ore.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Soviet economic assistance in the sphere of petroleum and drugs has not only been impressive but has succeeded to a great extent in breaking the Western drug monopoly in India.

#### (a) Steel Industries

It is worth recalling that it was the Soviet Union

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4 R.K. Sharma, Indo-Soviet Relations : Economic Analysis (New Delhi, 1980), p. 37.

5 Subrata Banerjee, "Indo-Soviet Economic Co-operation and Struggle against Neo-colonialism", Amitv, vol. 9, nos. 2-3, February-March 1980, p. 36.

which initially agreed to set up a steel plant in India whereas other western countries had refused to do so. It was only after the Soviet Union agreed to set up a plant in the public sector that Britain and West Germany came forward. There are four major foreign aided steel plants in our public sector: (i) the Soviet-aided Bhilai Steel Plant; (ii) the Soviet-aided Bokaro Steel Plant; (iii) the West-Germany-aided Rourkela Steel Plant, and (iv) the British-aided Durgapur Steel Plant.

The terms of credit given for the Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela plants have been summarised in Table III to bring out their comparative merits.

Table III

## TERMS OF CREDIT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL PLANTS IN INDIA

Steel Plants	Interest rate (%)	Repayment period (years)	Grace period (years)
1. Bhilai	2.5	12	1
Bhilai extension	2.5	12	1
2. Durgapur	Consolidated Fund Rate (5.5 to 6) + ½ management fee	11	8
Durgapur extension	-do-	25	7
3. Rourkela	6.3	3	3
" Service & Maintenance	3.0	20	7
" Extension	5.75	20	5
" Refinance	5.50	12-16	variable

Source: P.J. Eldridge, The Politics of Foreign Aid in India, p. 137.

It is clear from the Table III that the West Germany's aid to Rourkela and the British aid to Durgapur steel plants had purely a commercial character. Conversely, the terms of Soviet credit for the construction of the Bhilai Steel plant were extremely favourable.

The Bhilai Steel Plant, the biggest in India, is one of the three integrated iron and steel works managed by the Steel Authority of India Limited. It contributes more than 30 per cent of the total production of steel in the country. Since the beginning of operation in 1959 and by the end of 1975-76, the plant with the capacity utilisation of about 94 per cent has registered cumulative production of 25 million tonnes of ingot steel and that of 20 million tonnes of sellable steel. It was the first steel plant to reach its rated annual capacity of one million tonnes in 1962-63, and was subsequently expanded to 2.5 million tonnes in 1967. The plant is under process of expansion to 4.0 million tonnes to be completed by December 1981.

Even in respect of the capacity utilization of the three steel plants, the performance of Bhilai has been the best.<sup>6</sup> In 1974-75 the profit-wise performance of Bhilai was extremely impressive. Out of the total profit of Rs.400 million made by the Hindustan Steel Limited, Bhilai contributed Rs.360 million.<sup>7</sup> Today, Bhilai is the most profitable metallurgical

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6 See, for details, Vinod Mehta, Soviet Union and India's Industrial Development (New Delhi, 1975), p. 46 and R.K. Sharma, n. 1, p. 43.

7 The Patriot (New Delhi), 26 May 1975.

plant in India.

A substantial amount of Bhilai's production is exported to more than 40 countries, thereby earning a considerable amount of foreign exchange. Till March 1976, it had exported 4.4 million tonnes of steel worth ₹.248 crores.

Besides this, Bhilai has served as a training ground for the future metallurgists of India. Nearly 800 Indian engineers from this plant have already undergone training in the USSR and more than 10,000 have been trained at the plant itself and at the Bhilai Technical Institute.

#### Bokaro Steel Plant (Bihar)

The Bokaro Steel Plant agreement with the USSR was signed in January 1965. Before that Government of India sought US help to build this plant, but after long and frustrating negotiations, the US finally refused co-operation. The talks failed on the sensitive question of management and control. Only after that India approached the Soviet Union to provide technical and financial aid to set up this plant.

Most of the equipment utilized in this plant is supplied by Indian plants already completed with Soviet assistance. About 90 per cent of the building structures, 100 per cent of the technological structures, 65 per cent of the mechanical equipment, 48 per cent of the electric



equipment, 80 per cent of the instruments and 60 per cent of the refractories have been found from indigenous sources - all from Soviet-aided plants.<sup>8</sup>

Within ten years of the foundation-stone of the Bokaro plant some of its major units were completed. The first stage, with a 1.7 million tonnes steel ingot capacity was ready for operation in 1973. The second stage of the plant has already made much headway to raise the capacity of the plant from 1.7 million tonnes to 4 million tonnes. The protocol signed with the USSR in February 1970 provided assistance from the utilized Soviet credits for the developments of its second stage.

Meanwhile, Bokaro has emerged as the biggest supplier of pig iron to the foundries of the country, thereby meeting 45 per cent of the demand. In June 1974, it completed despatch of one million tonnes of pig iron valued at over Rs.380 million - of which 660,000 tonnes were sold at the home market and 334,000 tonnes were exported to the Soviet Union and Japan, earning Rs.110 million in foreign exchange.

The capacities of Bhilai and Bokaro are to be expanded to seven and ten million tonnes respectively, under the 15 years economic and trade agreement of 1973 between India and the USSR.

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<sup>8</sup> R.K. Sharma, n. 4, p. 48.

As shown in Table IV, below by 1975-76, the share of the Soviet assisted steel plants in India's total steel production was nearly 32 per cent.

Table IV

SHARE OF THE SOVIET AIDED STEEL PLANTS IN INDIA'S  
STEEL PRODUCTION

	1974-75	1975-76
Total in India (million tonnes)	7.14	8.10
Public Sector "	4.14	4.96
Bhilai & Bokaro "	2.12	2.55
Bhilai & Bokaro - share in Public Sector Production (%)	51.20	51.40
Bhilai & Bokaro - share in total production (%)	30.00	31.60

Source: Ministry of Steel & Mines, Report (1975-76).

(b) Oil Industry

Initially, after the independence India was dependent exclusively on foreign supplies of mineral oil and oil products. In the absence of any comprehensive survey to estimate oil deposits in India, it was generally believed that India was poor in oil resources. In fact, at one stage, the Government of India had requested Western firms which monopolised the oil trade in India to assist in locating and prospecting oilfields in the country but they were very sceptical of India having any oilfield even in the near future. Some of our geologists too had the same doubts of any success in this area. The credit for locating 36 viable oil deposits in India both on-shore and off-shore goes to the Soviet oil experts like Dr N.A. Kalinin. In December 1955, Soviet and Indian experts arrived at a conclusion that oil and gas bearing structures can be located in Assam, Bengal Basin and the off-shore region of Bombay-High, Gujarat and Punjab etc. The organization of ONGC, set up in 1955 with the assistance and advice of the USSR has helped us drill over 1300 wells and discovered more than 36 deposits of oil and gas in the country.

The ONGC has already extracted about 45 million tonnes of oil and more than 5,000 million cubic metres of natural gas.<sup>9</sup> In 1968, output from the oil fields was three million tonnes and exceeded the rated capacity. In the beginning of

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<sup>9</sup> Sharma, n. 4, p. 55.

1969, the daily output from the oil fields in the public sector of India reached 9,400 tonnes of oil and 1.2 million cubic metres of natural gas.<sup>10</sup>

Within a period of two decades, India's oil industry has made an impressive progress. In 1972-73 oil production was 7.2 million tonnes. In 1975-76 it rose to 8.3 million tonnes. The Soviet-aided public sector oilfields contribute more than 60 per cent of the country's total oil production which is very much clear from the Table V. It also indicates total oil production in India from 1971-72 to 1975-76 and the share of the ONGC in it.

Table V

OIL PRODUCTION IN INDIA  
(in million tonnes)

Year	Total	ONGC production	ONGC share in total production (per cent)
1971-72	7.2	3.95	55.0
1972-73	7.4	4.10	55.4
1973-74	7.2	4.10	60.0
1974-75	7.5	4.30	57.3
1975-76	8.3	5.20	62.6

Source: Ministry of Petroleum, Report (1976-77).

10 Commerce Research Bureau, "Soviet-Aided Projects in Indo-Soviet Economic Relations - A Survey", Commerce - Economic Studies (Bombay), vol. 8, 1971.

The Soviet assistance has been equally remarkable in exploring the country's off-shore oil and natural gas potential. The seismic Sea Survey undertaken with the aid of Soviet Seismic-ship lasted from 1964 to 1966. Nearly, 124,000 square kms. of shelf area are extremely promising according to the provisional estimates.<sup>11</sup> It was during these operations that the presence of a large structure, the Bombay High, was discovered.

The Soviet Union has made the most valuable contribution in the field of necessary skills for our oil industry. Nearly 1,500 oil experts have visited India to assist the ONGC and more than 400 oil engineers and workers have received training in the USSR and 500 other Indian oil specialists have been trained directly at the work sites.<sup>12</sup>

The Soviet Union has not only helped in the field of prospecting, drilling and production of crude oil but also in setting up oil refineries in the public sector at Barauni, Koyali and Mathura. The Barauni refinery started production in 1964 for which the agreement was signed in September 1959. The capacity of this refinery was expanded from two million tonnes to three million tonnes in November 1967. The two million tonnes annual capacity at Koyali was also built with Soviet assistance. It was commissioned in October 1965 and its

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11 See, for details, V.B. Singh, Indo-Soviet Relations, 1947-77 (New Delhi, 1978), p. 38.

12 D.D. Narula, "Indo-Soviet Economic Cooperation and Struggle for National Self-Reliance", Amity, n. 5, p. 24.

capacity was expanded to three million tonnes in September 1967.

These two public sector oil refineries account for more than 30 per cent of the capacity of all refineries operating in the country. As shown in Table VI, the share of these two Soviet aided oil refineries in the total oil refined in India has increased from 24.6 per cent in 1967-68 to 30.3 per cent in 1975-76.

Besides this, the Soviet Union agreed to assist India to set up a six million tonnes annual capacity, Mathura Oil Refinery, the foundationstone of which was laid on 2 October 1973. It will be the biggest enterprise of its kind in the whole of South-East Asia whose construction is progressing according to schedule.

The Soviet Union has made noticeable contribution to the development of other industries like heavy engineering, power, coal, drugs and pharmaceuticals, apart from steel and oil.

**(c) Heavy Machine Building Plant (Ranchi)**

The Heavy Machine Building Plant at Ranchi is producing 80 per cent of all the metallurgical equipments made in India. In 1971-72 this plant produced the equipment of 34,000 tonnes which increased in 1975-76 to above 44,000 tonnes, and the value of the same increased from Rs.32 million to Rs.600 million simultaneously. This plant earned a net profit of Rs.10 crores in 1975-76.

Table VI

## SHARE OF SOVIET AIDED REFINERIES IN TOTAL OIL REFINED IN INDIA

(in million tonnes)

	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
Koyali Refined Oil	1.92	2.96	3.45	3.56	3.58	3.68	3.58	3.79	4.07
Barani Refined Oil	1.63	1.77	2.10	2.22	2.28	2.38	2.63	2.82	2.94
Share of the two refineries in total oil refined in India (%)	24.6	27.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.3	30.3

Source: The Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., Annual Reports.

Besides steel plant equipments, the Ranchi Plant has been manufacturing various sophisticated mechanical and metallurgical equipments required for the development of oil, mining, and other industries.

#### (d) Coal Industry

Soviet assistance in coal industry has been equally vital. There are already four projects in the coal industry built with Soviet assistance - the Banki Project with an annual capacity of 0.6 million tonnes; Surakachhar Project with 1.1 million tonnes; coal quarry in Manikpur with 1.0 million tonnes of coal and coal washery at Kathara with a capacity to process 3 million tonnes of raw coal per year.<sup>13</sup> In 1975-76, these enterprises made a profit of about Rs. 100 lakhs. Apart from so many other valuable technical assistance in the development of our coal industry, the Soviet Union has assisted us also in the Mining and Allied Machinery Plant at Durgapur with a capacity of over 45,000 tonnes of mining equipment annually.<sup>14</sup> In 1975-76 it earned a net profit of Rs. 70 lakhs.

#### (e) Power Generation

The Soviet Union has been assisting India for more

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13 See, for details, V. Gordopolov, "Soviet-Indian Co-operation in Coal Industry", Soviet Review, vol. 11, no. 15, 28 March 1974, pp. 20-21.

14 For the details, see Gryaznov, E., "India Fully Equipped to meet Coal Target", Soviet Review, vol. 11, no. 5, 31 January 1974, pp. 32-33.



then twenty years in building both thermal and hydro-power stations. Till now, 16 power stations have come up with Soviet assistance, capable of generating 3,044 MW of additional electricity, which accounts for more than 20 per cent of the total power production in the country. The Thermal Power stations at Neyveli, Obra, Patratu, Harduaganj, and Kobra; the Hydro Power Stations at Bhakra (Right Bank), Mettur (Tunnel), Hirakund, Lower Sileru and Balimela; the captive power plants at Bhilai, Barauni, Koyali, Hardwar, and Bokaro -- all have been built with Soviet assistance.<sup>15</sup> The Neyveli Power station is the first in South East Asia to use lignite for its operation.

The Heavy Electrical Equipment Plant at Hardwar also set up with Soviet assistance was an important landmark in the development of our power industry. Presently it is meeting more than 50 per cent of the demand for large power generators and a substantial part of the demand for large size industrial motors. This is a technologically advanced plant which produces turbines with a capacity of 200,000 kilowatts. Not a single developing country except India is manufacturing such machines.<sup>16</sup>

The other industries in which Soviet co-operation has been received for organising production on large scale are: antibiotics, synthetic drugs, surgical instruments, ophthalmic-

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<sup>15</sup> See, Vinod Mehta, n. 6, pp. 57-58; and R.K. Sharma, n. 4, pp. 60-64.

<sup>16</sup> Soviet Review, vol. 13, no. 39, 26 August 1976, p. 36.

glass, precision instruments and metallurgy of aluminium. Agriculture is another sector in which the USSR has assisted India in establishing large-scale mechanised farms.

(f) Defence

Till 1962 India was dependent upon the Western countries for the supply of arms for various wings of its defence forces. However, the deal with the Soviet Union had already started.

In October 1960 came the first agreement of India's purchase of various types of Soviet aircrafts. It was followed by further orders in 1961 and 1962. On the eve of Sino-Indian border clash, in August 1962, a major agreement was concluded on the construction of a plant in India for the production of MIG-21s.<sup>17</sup> It may be noted in this connection that USA put pressures on India to back out of the agreement. Nehru retorted to the Americans by saying that it was "our freedom to buy anywhere we like and what we like" and added that "no independent country would agree to the proposition that India's purchase of aircraft or anything could be vetoed by another country."<sup>18</sup> Under the agreement of 1962 India received six MIG-21s from the USSR. Again in 1964-65 when India failed to get submarines from the Western countries, the Soviet Union offered four submarines to India.

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17 Jyotirmoy, Banerjee, India in Soviet Global Strategy (Calcutta, 1977), p. 157.

18 Indian Affairs Record, vol. 8, no. 7, 1962, p. 172.

Since 1964 India's dependence on the USA and other Western countries for the supply of sophisticated military equipments had declined. Today the Soviet Union is a major supplier of sophisticated military equipments to India. The terms on which the Soviet Union has been supplying military hardware to India are very easy. The payments have to be made in Indian currency and <sup>over</sup> a long period of time.<sup>19</sup> Even quality-wise Soviet arms are comparable to those of the West and America.

In spite of massive supply to India, there is no any military alliance between these two nations like CENTO and SEATO. Instead India and the Soviet Union have signed a 20 years Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation (August 8, 1971), in which Article 9 provides, the two countries would immediately enter into consultations when any one of them or both of them are attacked by a third country or there is a military threat to any one or both of them. This provision of the treaty was invoked during the Bangladesh liberation movement and Pakistani aggression on India in 1971. Apart from material help, the Soviet Union provided political and diplomatic support during the third war with Pakistan in December 1971.<sup>20</sup>

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19 See, for details, V.B. Singh, n. 11, p. 70.

20 V.S. Budhraj, "Major Dimensions of Indo-Soviet Relations", India Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 1, January-March 1975, p. 17.

The total cost and details of Soviet supply of arms have not been officially disclosed. The estimates, mainly from Western sources, vary from one billion dollars to two billion dollars. However, it is safe to assume that it is of substantive quantity in terms of value and volume. The essential point is that the Soviet arms supply to India has contributed to India's desire for self-reliance and its defence needs.

Soviet military assistance has helped India in many ways. First, it has reduced its dependence on the West, and second, it has provided an alternative and reliable source of defence hardware in critical times. Thus the USSR has helped India to become self-sufficient in the production of strategic materials and strengthening its defence potentials.

We may mention that the totality of the impact of Soviet economic aid to India is also reflected in the expansion of Indo-Soviet trade. For example, it is a common knowledge that trade turn over in 1979, since the signing of first Indo-Soviet Trade Agreement has increased by 1,000 times from Rs.1.3 crores to Rs.1,300 crores and in 1980, was expected to be Rs.1,800 crores. Likewise, in 1953 India supplied to USSR only three or four major items and by 1980 the number of items exchanged between the two countries stands well over 100.<sup>21</sup>

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21 See for details, N. Rodinov, New Vistas of Soviet-Indian Economic Cooperation, and Vinod Mehta, Indo-Soviet Trade: New Perspectives, Papers presented in the "Soviet Land" Round Table Conference (New Delhi), January 1981.

Yet another important aspect of Soviet economic aid programme is that it is a long term commitment for 5 to 10 years which ensures required planning and optimal utilization from the Indian side.

To sum up, we can conclude that despite some adverse criticisms,<sup>22</sup> Soviet economic aid programmes have promoted India's objective of self-reliance and economic stability and security. This indeed is the most vital national interest of India.

(11) India's Relations with Immediate Neighbours - China and Pakistan

Right from the beginning, Indian foreign policy was confronted with the problem of combining India's natural desire of playing a world role and of pursuing its interests as a dominant regional power in South Asia. In the earlier formative phase of Indian foreign policy there was a marked preoccupation with world problems. However, towards the end of fifties the growing problem with India's immediate neighbours like China and Pakistan compelled Indian foreign policy-makers to pay more attention to its regional role in South Asia. The shift began to occur as a result of Sino-Indian border conflict towards the beginning of sixties.

However, India's relation with China and Pakistan posed serious problems for India playing a regional role.

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22 Arvind Vyas, "Soviet Aid and Trade Policies and the Question of Social Imperialism: A Note", Amity, n. 5, pp. 29-31.

During the period under review India had to take arms against Pakistan twice and to increase its defence preparedness against possible repetition of humiliation it suffered at the hands of China in 1962. All these factors not only crucially affected the pace of Indian economic development, but also inhibited its role as a regional and world power.

No other country than the Soviet Union has shown a consistent record of appreciation of the problems India faced as a world and regional power. The Soviet Union has gone out of its way to support India in all its major diplomatic initiatives on world issues as well as to display a marked appreciation of India's policy in South Asia. For example, it welcomed India's efforts to develop relations with countries like Malaysia and Singapore and supported India's policy of regional economic co-operation. However, the most representative case in point is Soviet attitude towards India's problem neighbours, China and Pakistan.

(a) India-China Relations and the Soviet Union

Initially in 1959, the Soviet Union did not take sides on Sino-Indian border skirmishes, although it made it quite clear that it was not going to abandon India as a friend, in this hour of crisis.<sup>23</sup> During 1962 India-China border conflict the Soviet Union initially refrained from taking sides. However, when the Cuban Missile crisis had subsided an official Soviet declaration showed sympathy for India. Such a stand was

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23 See Taga Statement, 10 September 1959.

appreciated by Nehru who believed that though the Soviet Union had taken a neutral stand<sup>24</sup> on the border conflict, it had a 'slant in favour of India'.<sup>25</sup>

A few days later, the Soviet Union however did not spare China for its military action against India.<sup>26</sup> Indeed Soviet stand during the 1962 crisis contributed to worsening of relation between the USSR and China.

Thus after 1962 conflict relations between India and China became frozen till Mrs Indira Gandhi made moves to exchange Ambassadors in 1976. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union continued to display her willingness to assist India economically and militarily despite China's displeasure.

In May 1963 the Soviet Union offered India a new credit of 100 million rubles for the expansion of a number of Soviet projects already built in India and for the construction of new ones.<sup>27</sup> In early June the Soviet Union and India signed an agreement for the Soviet delivery of aircrafts and helicopters to India. This was followed by the Soviet invitation to India to send a military mission to Moscow to discuss new Soviet

24 As on 5 November, Pravda editorial neither mentioned the MacMahon line nor supported the Chinese peace proposals. Instead, a simple appeal was made to both sides to agree to a ceasefire and to discuss the whole question without imposing any conditions. See Pravda (editorial), 5 November 1962, p. 1.

25 The Sunday Standard, 10 March 1963.

26 See Pravda, 27 October 1962, and Tass Statement (English translation), 25 October 1962.

27 See Tass Statement, 25 May 1963.

arms aid.<sup>28</sup> After all these, in the same summer when India integrated Kashmir as one of the Indian states, Khrushchev gave his full support. Recalling his visit to Srinagar in 1955 he declared that if Kashmir was ever in trouble India had only to call for help and the USSR would come to India's aid.<sup>29</sup>

Following the Chinese invasion, the tempo of Soviet aid in the military field was really accelerated. The Soviet Union sent all types of armed equipment needed for mountain warfare. Apart from this the Soviet Union agreed to establish factories to manufacture MIG-21 jet fighters. By May 1964 the total military aid that India received from the Soviet Union was of nearly 130 million dollars -- surpassing the US aid to India in the same period.<sup>30</sup> Again in the month of September India received another 140 million dollars pledge in which the Soviet Union agreed to supply different kinds of warheads -- 44 MIG-21s, 50 ground-to-ground air missiles, nearly 70 light tanks, 6 submarines etc.<sup>31</sup> Thus the Soviet decision to supply India with large quantity of military equipments added a new complexity to the Sino-Soviet-Indian triangle.

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28 See Hemen Ray, Indo-Soviet Relations, 1955-71 (Bombay, 1973), p. 121.

29 Pravda, 29 July and 2 August 1963; The Hindu, 2 August 1963.

30 New York Times, 13 May 1964.

31 Ibid., 4 August 1964; and Link, 20 and 27 September 1964.



Meanwhile India drastically increased its defence potentialities and in this programme of increasing defence preparedness the Soviet arms aid played a determining role.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, the Soviet aid in the field of industries also increased - number of agreements were signed. The most important being the Soviet accord in January 1965 to construct the Bokaro Steel Plant, which was earlier supposed to be built with US help. Likewise Soviet news media on official statement consistently stepped up its criticism of China's policy towards India and increasingly supported India on its China policy.<sup>32a</sup> The Soviet stand on the issue was in close proximity with that of India. Like India, it wanted the border dispute with China to be settled through bilateral peaceful negotiations and to emphasize that Indo-Soviet relations are not directed against China.

The above clearly underlines the fact that the Soviet Union has consistently supported India on its policy towards a problem of crucial national interest - a fact which was consistently admitted by Indian spokesmen. For example, in the context of Vietnam war Indian spokesmen have not only supported Vietnamese struggle but also showed appreciation of Soviet policy towards China vis-a-vis India. Prime Minister

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32 On details of Soviet military aid to India see, K. Subrahmaniam, "Soviet Military Assistance", and Devendra Kaushik, "Soviet Contribution to India's Defence", in ISCUS, Indo-Soviet Co-operation (New Delhi, 1971), pp.36-49.

32a See Pravda, 23 July 1966; March 23, 1968; and October 23, 1969.

Indira Gandhi during the short interlude of being out of power declared in July 1979: "There is no ambiguity in our condemnation of the Chinese aggression against Vietnam or against India."<sup>33</sup>

(b) Indo-Pak Relations and the Soviet Union

Likewise, it is worthwhile to consider here Soviet policy on India's relation with Pakistan during the period under review.

After the independence from the yoke of colonial rule Pakistan became a separate entity when it was carved out of India in 1947. The two-nation theory planted among us by the British paved the way for many misunderstandings between the two countries. One of which, namely, the Kashmir issue proved itself so much infectious that it spread to every other point of contact between the two countries. In fact, Indo-Pak relations since 1947 have been pivoted mainly on the issue of Kashmir.

However, the question of Kashmir vis-a-vis Indo-Pak relations must necessarily be seen against the background of the problem of India's security.

The problem of India's security became more complicated after the United States succeeded in drawing Pakistan in its global military strategy directed against the USSR and

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33 China, Vietnam and Non-alignment, Proceedings of the Round Table Discussions held under the auspices of Krishna Menon Society (New Literature, Delhi, July 1979), p. 88.

its allies. Since 1954 when Pakistan signed defence pact with the USA and later when Pakistan joined US-sponsored military alliance, like SEATO and CENTO the problem of India's security assumed further dimensions. Against the background of US opposition of India's policy of non-alignment and the gathering storm over India-Chinese border the Indian leaders were rightly worried over India's security and territorial integrity.

Both these factors, namely, the question of Kashmir and problem of India's security, indeed proved crucial in bringing India and the USSR together and consequently Soviet support to India on its vital national interest vis-a-vis Pakistan.

The first major conflict that India had with Pakistan was in Kashmir, a part of which was occupied by Pakistan by force. The fact of aggression was noted by the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan. In a Resolution passed in August 1948, put it on record that "the Government of Pakistan agrees to withdraw its troops from the state". However, Pakistan continued to occupy the part of Kashmir, although a ceasefire was agreed by both sides as a result of the UN intervention in 1948.

Since the accession of Kashmir to India in 1947 it was only the USSR among the Great Powers, who categorically asserted that this state is an integral part of India. Whenever this issue has been raised in the United Nations,

the Soviet Union has come to India's support. The only exception was Soviet silence in the United Nations over the initial phase of Kashmir issue during 1947-49 when the Soviet delegate in the UN did not participate in the debate or voting on the Kashmir issue.<sup>34</sup> Such a Soviet stand has to be seen against the background of Soviet preoccupation with the West and with its own domestic reconstruction after the war.

However, the Soviet stand was made clear during the visit of Bulganin and Khrushchev to India during the winter of 1955-56. Both these Soviet leaders in their public speeches openly came out in support of India's stand on Kashmir and declared Kashmir as an integral part of India.<sup>35</sup>

It may be pointed out that the clear Soviet stand on the Kashmir issue was also influenced by the fact of Pakistan joining the US sponsored military pacts and alliances and India's policy of non-alignment.

Soviet support to India on the Kashmir question proved crucial in 1957 when the UN Security Council debated on this issue again. The Soviet Union vetoed the Western sponsored resolution of Kashmir directed against India and thus spared India from a great embarrassment in the international sphere at a crucial juncture.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For the details of this period see Sisir Gupta, Kashmir, A Study in India-Pakistan Relations (New Delhi, 1967), pp. 148-73.

<sup>35</sup> See, for details, N.A. Bulganin, N.S. Khrushchev, Visit of Friendship to India, Burma and Afghanistan. Speeches and Official Documents, November-December 1955 (Moscow, 1956), pp. 107-14.

<sup>36</sup> See Sisir Gupta, n. 34, pp. 320-23.

Such a Soviet stand continued during Nehru's lifetime and after.

With this background of Soviet support to India vis-a-vis India-Pakistan relations it is worthwhile for us to have a clear look at the Soviet stand on issues in Indo-Pak relation during the period under review, i.e. 1964-1975.

### Indo-Pak Conflict (1965)

Pakistan was ruled by a military Junta who could not easily think of settling their problem with India at the negotiating table. Instead it preferred the battle-field.

And so came the Pakistani attack on Indian territory of the Rann of Kutch by the month of April 1965. By August 1965, a full scale war over Kashmir broke out.

Meanwhile, the Soviet leaders sought to assure India. As Pravda put it: "attempt to improve relations with Pakistan did not contradict her friendship with India. The strengthening of better ties between the Soviet Union and Pakistan should be viewed as a part of the general policy which directed to securing peace in Asia. The Soviet-Pakistani relation like traditional friendship with India become a stabilizing factor for the situation in Asia and facilitate the normalization of relations between India and Pakistan".<sup>37</sup> In a private message to Shastri, P.M. Kosygin assured him that the Soviet Union was

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<sup>37</sup> Pravda, 24 August 1965.

not seeking Pakistan's friendship at the cost of her relations with India and reaffirmed Soviet position on Kashmir.

The Soviet Union was however alarmed at this new threat to peace in a region immediately adjacent to its frontier. Soviet P.M. Kosygin deplored the Indo-Pak conflict over Kashmir and wanted to see its quick end.<sup>38</sup> The Soviet concern over this conflict stemmed from her own interest in the sub-continent to ensure that it did not destroy the fundamentals of her policy. With this fear in mind Soviet diplomacy, therefore, moved forward and began to express concern over the manner in which the relation between the two countries continued to deteriorate. At first, however, the concern was limited to the making general statements stressing the urgency of finding a way towards the ending of bloodshed and conflict.<sup>39</sup> But when the dispute finally exploded in September 1965, Moscow put pressure on both sides for immediate cessation of military operation and the withdrawal of forces within the ceasefire line fixed in 1949 and called upon the Indo-Pak leaders to settle their dispute through Soviet "good offices".<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, the Soviet Union warned the Chinese, who had clear intention to add fuel to the fire,<sup>41</sup> "not to make

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38 Times of India, 25 August 1965.

39 Pravda, 24 August 1965.

40 Ibid., 12 September 1965.

41 The Chinese had sent an ultimatum to India on 16 September "to dismantle all its military works for aggression on the Chinese side". For details see, Ministry of External Affairs, Documents on China's Ultimatum to India (New Delhi, 1966), p. 12.

situation more serious, as many states might find themselves drawn into the conflict one by one".<sup>42</sup>

However, a ceasefire finally came on 22 September 1965. But a settlement had yet to be arrived.

### Tashkent Agreement

The Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin's repeated offers for arranging a meeting between the leaders of India and Pakistan were finally accepted in the end, and a meeting took place in Tashkent from 3 January to 10 January 1966. The agreement was signed on 10 January 1966.<sup>43</sup> Both governments agreed to settle their dispute by peaceful means and also to withdraw their armed forces to the positions they accepted before 5 August 1965. It was hoped that India and Pakistan will build up their relations on the principle of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, both Indian and Pakistani leaders agreed to resume normal diplomatic activity between the two countries. Kosygin held the view that the Tashkent Declaration was an "important political document". The Indian and Pakistani leaders praised the Tashkent Declaration as a "promising beginning" and "turning point" in their relations.<sup>45</sup>

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42 Soviet News, 14 September 1965, p. 113.

43 For details, see M.S. Rajan, "The Tashkent Declaration : Retrospect and Prospect", International Studies (New Delhi), vol. 8, July 1966-April 1967, pp. 1-28.

44 P. Kryukov, "Results of the Tashkent Talks", International Affairs, no. 2, February 1966, p. 4.

45 Indian Express, 11 January 1966.

Thus it can be said that the talk between Indian Prime Minister Shastri and the President of Pakistan Ayub Khan at Tashkent, was the beginning of a new stage in relations between India and Pakistan. And thus Soviet policy of peace and peaceful co-existence contributed significantly to restoring peace in the Indian subcontinent. The Soviets were highly satisfied with the Tashkent meeting because it represented a grand success vis-a-vis the West.<sup>46</sup>

Thus the significance of the Tashkent Declaration goes far beyond the bounds of the two countries and the Asian continent as a whole. Tashkent once again confirmed that international dispute howsoever acute, can be settled in a peaceful way by displaying sober-mindedness, a realistic approach and goodwill.

One of the effects of Soviet role in the Tashkent agreement was that the Soviet Union made moves for improvement of its relations with Pakistan. Official exchange of visits between Premier Kosygin and Pakistani President Ayub Khan followed during 1967-68.<sup>47</sup> Likewise reports started pouring in about increasing Soviet economic aid to Pakistan and above all, supply of Soviet arms to Pakistan. It was made known that during 1968 Soviet Union supplied arms to Pakistan.<sup>48</sup>

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46 Boris Leontiev, "World Significance of Tashkent", Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16 January 1966.

47 See, J.P. Jain, Soviet-Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 92-94 and 236.

48 See Dawn, 22 July 1968.



These Soviet moves naturally created apprehension in India. However, the Soviet Union appears to have once again conveyed to India that improvement of its bilateral relation with Pakistan would not in the least affect Soviet policy towards India.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, it was understood that one of the primary objectives of Soviet moves was to wean Pakistan away from the US sponsored military alliance and to encourage such trends to the Pakistani foreign policy as its support to Afro-Asian solidarity movement.<sup>50</sup>

However, the gathering storm in the erstwhile East Pakistan and India's growing concern over it, swept away any apprehension in Indian minds about Soviet policy towards India. Right from the beginning of the crisis the Soviet Union showed open appreciation and understanding of India's stand vis-a-vis the crisis.

The story of peak struggle of the emergence of Bangladesh is too well known to be repeated here. For our purpose suffice it to highlight Soviet reaction to India's stand and action vis-a-vis the emergence of Bangladesh.

As far as India was concerned, three basic issues were involved; the one, the security and instability of India's frontiers from hostile neighbour confronted with the prospect

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49 Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi), July 1968, p. 152; Times of India, 17 July 1968.

50 See Jain, n. 47, p. 112.

of instability and disintegration. The other was the immediate problem of the refugees pouring in India from the erstwhile Pakistan. And finally, the problem of making South Asia secure from outside interference particularly from the USA and China and thus ensuring the primacy of India's interest on the subcontinent.

On all these three counts, the Soviet Union came out in support of India as the crisis developed. First of all, the problem of India's security, both from a short-term and a long-term point of view, was helped by the signing of Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation.<sup>51</sup> As a result, Soviet commitment to India's security and integrity was confirmed.

Secondly, India's stand on the problem of economic burden on it as a result of large influx of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan was publicly endorsed by the Soviet Union. As Premier Kosygin put it: "It is impossible to justify the actions of the Pakistani authorities which compelled over eight million people to leave their country, land, property and to seek shelter in neighbouring India".<sup>52</sup> In the joint statement issued at the conclusion of Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi's visit to the Soviet Union, it was stated

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51 See, for details, K.P.S. Menon, The Indo-Soviet Treaty: A Setting and Meaning (Delhi, 1971), pp. 47-53, and Jagdish Vibhakar, "Indo Soviet Treaty - A Vital Factor for Peace", Soviet Review, vol. 9, no. 37, 8 August 1972, pp. 45-49.

52 Jagdish Vibhakar, A Model Relationship - 25 Years of Indo-Soviet Diplomatic Ties (New Delhi, 1972), p. 52.

that "the interests of the preservation of peace demand that urgent measures should be taken to reach a political solution of the problem which have arisen there paying regards to the wishes, the inalienable rights and lawful interests of the people of the East Bengal as well as for the speediest and safe return of the refugees to their homeland in conditions safeguarding their honour and dignity".<sup>53</sup>

Pravda in a long article joined this issue with Western circles whose attempt was to shift the blame for the tragic refugee situation from "the guilty heads" to India. It condemned the regime of military occupation in East Bengal and praised India's stupendous and selfless efforts to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees. It said: "Lately Western journalists and politicians in a number of countries are deliberately exaggerating the situation of East Pakistani refugees in Indian territory, which is undoubtedly tragic, and are making dishonest attempts to shift the blame from the guilty heads to the innocent one, namely, to accuse India, who had so generously extended the hand of assistance to the millions of East Pakistanis in their time of difficulty and is carrying the responsibility for relief of their suffering."<sup>54</sup>

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53 New Times, no. 49, December 1971, pp. 10-13.

54 Pravda, 24 October 1971.

Even before the crisis culminated into a full-scale Indo-Pak conflict Kosygin tried his best to prevent the straining of relations between India and Pakistan. This was evident from his remarks that "the USSR was doing and would continue to do its utmost for the maintenance of peace in that region and for the prevention of an arm conflict".<sup>55</sup>

It is worthwhile here to recall the appeal made by President Podgorny to Yahya Khan on 2 April 1971, in which expressing his concern at "the arrest and persecution of Mujibur Rahman and other politicians", he appealed for the adoption of "the most urgent measures to stop the bloodshed and repression against the population in East Pakistan and for turning to methods of a peaceful political settlement."<sup>56</sup>

#### Indo-Pak Conflict (1971)

Finally, the crisis erupted in December 1971 with Indo-Pak war. During the short period of the war Soviet news media favourably reported on India's military action and successes. The Tass statement of 5 December 1971 found fault with the Pakistani Government for trying to blame India for the growing resistance by the East Pakistan population to the mass repression and persecution and for aggravating relations with India by stepping up military preparations. It accused

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55 See "The Joint Statement on the Visit of Sat. Indira Gandhi to USSR", Soviet Review, vol. 9, no. 3, Supplement, 18 January 1972, pp. 52-53.

56 Quoted in Y. Lugovsky, "For a Lasting Peace on the Indian Sub-continent", International Affairs, no. 2, February 1972, p. 78.

Islamabad of starting the war by bombing and strafing a number of towns in north-western India. The statement also warned the Governments of all countries of the world against "involvement in the conflict which would lead to a further aggravation of the situation in the Hindustan Peninsula".<sup>57</sup> Premier Kosygin blaming the Pakistan Government for the conflict, said on Danish television: "The Soviet Union will do everything it can, to see that the situation is resolved by political means."<sup>58</sup>

In this context, the threat of the United States and Chinese intervention against India was particularly noted. Mikhail Krylov, an APN commentator in his commentary entitled "Stop Bloodshed and Ensure Non-Envolvement", noted with grave concern about the support given by the USA and over China's 'open encouragement' to the dangerous actions of Islamabad, which had disregarded the sober appeals of the USSR in this matter. He adjudged that the involvement of outside powers in the conflict would bring about a further aggravation of the situation and declared that "developments in close proximity to its southern borders" could not but infringe upon the interest of the USSR's security.<sup>59</sup>

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57 See, for the details of Soviet reaction on the Indo-Pak Conflict, Asian Recorder, vol. 18, no. 1, 1-7 January 1972, pp. 10543-4.

58 Ibid

59 See, Soviet Review, n. 55, pp. 52-53.

Furthermore, Pravda's political commentator V. Mayevsky observed that by showing solidarity with the US, Peking actually encouraged the US to intervene militarily in the Indian subcontinent under the pretext of discharging their commitments under CENTO and the SEATO. He added: "China's stand certainly was one of the factors which encouraged the US to send the ships of the Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean",<sup>60</sup> Immediate ceasefire, as demanded by the Chinese representative, he pointed out, "could only mean a continuation and aggravation of the conflict" in Indian subcontinent.<sup>61</sup>

As Moscow realized the dangers inherent in Chinese and the US involvement in the conflict, it came out strongly in support of India. More importantly the Soviet Union took practical action during the war to supply India with military hardware and logistic support.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, it was no other than the Soviet Union which rendered valuable political support to India in the United Nations against the Western inspired condemnation of India vis-a-vis Bangladesh. For example, the USSR vetoed the US proposal backed by China calling for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of troops in the subcontinent<sup>63</sup> without any reference to the development in Bangladesh which had been the root cause of the critical situation.

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60 See, for details, Soviet Review, n. 55, pp. 68-72.

61 "Peking Leaders : Traitors to the National Liberation Movement", Soviet Review, n. 55, p. 71.

62 See, for details, V.B. Singh, n. 11, pp. 67-70.

63 See Asian Recorder, n. 57, p. 10544.

In his statement at the UN, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Jacob Malik strongly defended India against Chinese charge that New Delhi had created the refugee situation. He said that the situation in East Bengal has arisen because of the action of the Pakistan military authorities. And as a result of terror and force used against the people of East Bengal, millions of them had fled to India as refugees. Stressing on this reality he said that it would be a grave mistake to put India and Pakistan on the same footing. He characterized the US draft resolution as one-sided and for that matter, unacceptable. He made a strong plea for inviting the representation of Bangladesh to participate in the discussion.

Again on 6 December the Soviet Union exercised its second veto within 24 hours to kill a US-backed resolution calling for a ceasefire and withdrawal by Indian and Pakistani forces.<sup>64</sup> The Soviet delegate pointed out that withdrawal of forces without a political settlement in East Pakistan would only mean encouraging the Pakistani troops to continue their atrocities. Meanwhile, China had tabled a resolution demanding strongest condemnation of India's role in Indo-Pak conflict and a ceasefire with withdrawal of forces from the Indo-Pak borders. The Soviet representative said that the Chinese resolution was unacceptable to the Soviet Union and indicated that he would vote against it.

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64 Ibid.

At the same time, the Soviet Union put forward its own draft resolution calling for a political settlement in East Pakistan "which would inevitably result in a cessation of hostilities. But this resolution was not taken up for voting.

Again on 13 December the US move calling upon India forthwith to accept a ceasefire and a withdrawal of its armed forces as agreed upon by Pakistan fell through in the UN Security Council following a Soviet veto.<sup>65</sup>

After the Indian Government ordered a ceasefire and Pakistani troops surrendered in Bangladesh, the Soviet representative desired that the Council should take a decision welcoming the cessation of hostilities in East Pakistan. After much deliberations the Security Council on 21 December 1971 adopted resolution 307 which demanded "a durable ceasefire and the cessation of all hostilities until withdrawals take place, as soon as practicable, of all armed forces".<sup>66</sup>

Pravda in an article, lauded India's unilateral declaration of ceasefire in the West and said that "the restraint, sober approach and self-control shown by the Indian Government should be highly appreciated". It stressed that, up to the last moment, India had refrained from taking steps which could have complicated a political settlement in Bangladesh.<sup>67</sup>

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65 Ibid., 19-21 January 1972, p. 10573.

66 Jagdish Vibhakar, n. 52, pp. 63-64.

67 Pravda, 16 December 1971.



On 25 January 1972 the USSR also formally recognized Bangladesh. India and the USSR contributed a lot in the birth of this new nation.

There is no doubt that Soviet role during the crisis proved beneficial to India. Indeed, had India not got the support of the Soviet Union, the security environment of India would have been highly uncondusive to India's interest. The emergence of India as a dominant power in South Asia was thus facilitated by Soviet support at a time when both its short-term and long-term interests were involved. Thus Maslennikov rightly observed that "the Indo-Soviet Treaty acted as the shield which protected South Asia from the interference of outside forces during the Indo-Pak conflict."<sup>68</sup>

#### Simla Agreement and the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union continued to show an involved interest in normalization of relation between India and Pakistan and stability in South Asia. India's efforts in that direction culminating in the Simla Pact, were widely welcomed in the Soviet Union.

On the outcome of the Simla Pact, the Soviet Press thus reported favourably: "It is with great satisfaction that the Soviet people learnt about the success of the Simla negotiations and regard its outcome as a victory for the forces

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<sup>68</sup> See, Soviet Review, 8 August 1972, p. 38.

of peace and progress, a triumph of the policy of peaceful coexistence of states".<sup>69</sup>

Speaking at the 15th Congress of the Soviet Trade Unions, Brezhnev said: "Our relations with India have invariably strengthened throughout the years of its existence as an independent state. The Soviet-Indian Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation is the result precisely of this development. I would like to stress that, at the same time, we stand also for good relations with Pakistan, with which we have no conflicts and no controversies to strain our relations."<sup>70</sup> He further added the Soviet Union's desire to promote close relation with all the countries in the region. He said: "We are also consistent supporters of establishing relation of lasting peace and good neighbourliness among India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This would be a substantial contribution to the improvement of the political climate throughout Asia."<sup>71</sup>

With a view of gradual normalization of relations, India and Pakistan took steps, to resume postal, telegraphic, sea and other communications, and above all for the return of Pakistani prisoners of war. The Soviet Union welcomed these measures and said: "The result of the Simla Summit holds a promise that statesmanship will prevail and that other mutually acceptable solution will be found which would enable the nations

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69 Izvestia, 5 July 1972.

70 Quoted in V. Nakaryakov, "Soviet People Welcome Simla Accord", Soviet Review, vol. 9, no. 35, 25 July 1972, p. 25.

71 Ibid.

of the sub-continent to build relationships of peace, friendship and cooperation".<sup>72</sup>

As the process of normalisation was making headway, on 29 November 1973 India and the Soviet Union in a joint communique declared:

Both sides recognise some existing outstanding issues in the region...which can and must be solved through negotiation between the countries concerned without any outside interference. Simla agreement would meet the interests of the people of the countries of that area....

Both sides expressed their belief that -

Joint Declaration between Bangladesh and India at the same time, agreement between Pakistan and India constitute important steps towards the complete normalization of the situation in the subcontinent. <sup>73</sup>

Our discussion on Soviet role on vital issues of direct concern to India underlies the fact that security and self-reliance must go hand in hand. India certainly has this objective in view which is also shared by the Soviet Union.

We may now sum up Soviet stand on India's vital national interest, namely its relations with hostile neighbours against the background of the United States-China policy towards the sub-continent. It is amply clear that while endeavouring to counter-act the US and Chinese policy the Soviet Union upheld and supported India on these very vital issues crucial to its security and stability.

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72 G. Kudin, "The Simla Summit", New Times, no. 23, 27 July 1972, p. 8.

73 Foreign Affairs Record, November 1973, p. 442.

Likewise India's relation with China and Soviet stand on it clearly support the view that no other major power than the Soviet Union had proved a deterrent to China vis-a-vis India. This significant aspect of Indo-Soviet Treaty is not fully appreciated because of its short-term relevance to Indo-Pak relations. Moreover, Indo-Soviet Treaty also established a viable mechanism against direct US involvement in the sub-continent contrary to India's long-term needs of internal stability and security. We may add that the US strategy of using the Indian Ocean as a military base is the direct response to India's emergence as a dominant power in South Asia with Soviet help and support, however, this is the problem that India faces in the 1980s.

As a matter of fact, by mid-seventies the Soviet Union had based its policy towards India on the assumption that it has emerged as a dominant power in South Asia. In a speech given in honour of Mrs Gandhi during her visit to Moscow (1976), Brezhnev said: "Life confirms the farsightedness of the course of the Indian National Congress Party led by you, the course aimed at industrialization of the country, construction of an independent economy and creation of a strong public sector. It is thank to that course that India has emerged as a powerful state, playing an important role in world politics."<sup>74</sup>

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74 L.I. Brezhnev, "May the Tree of Soviet-Indian Friendship Blossom", Soviet Review, vol. 13, no. 28-29, 21 June 1976, p. 17.

(B) Issues Where Direct Soviet Interests were Involved

At this stage it is appropriate to bring into our discussion the most vital Soviet interest namely, the weakening of Imperialist-Capitalist states, the USA in particular, against the background of India's relationship with these states. We had occasions to point out earlier that the Soviet Union was one of the first among leading Western Powers to appreciate and support India's policy of non-alignment. In fact, since the mid-fifties the Soviet Union has a consistent record of applauding India's policy of non-alignment.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the Soviet Union did not take critical stands on India's policy towards the West, although it has consistently shown its concern on the growing hold of Western monopoly capital over Indian economy.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, it has also repeatedly shown uneasiness over India's domestic pressures in favour of close relationship with the West.

However, the Soviet leadership has taken an overall world view of Indian foreign policy, as a policy of non-alignment which in its view favourably influences bilateral relations between India and the Soviet Union as well as world politics.

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<sup>75</sup> See, for details, Zafar Iman, Soviet View of Non-alignment, A Paper presented at the Seminar on Non-alignment, 29 September- 3 October 1980, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

<sup>76</sup> For example, see Shirokov, G.K., Industrialization of India (Moscow, 1973).

Against such an overall perspective it is logically fruitful for us to explore Soviet assessment of India's stances on such issues where direct Soviet interests were involved. For our purpose we may identify the following such issues during the period under study:

- (i) The German Question
- (ii) The Czechoslovakia Crisis (1968)
- (iii) Sino-Soviet border conflict (1969)
- (iv) Arab-Israeli Conflict (1967, 1973)
- (v) Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968)
- (vi) Growth of Soviet role in the Third World and Brezhnev's Proposal for Collective Security in Asia

Against the background of Super Powers relationship the most pressing and vital Soviet interest during the period under study has been the recognition of the status quo between the two systems in Europe. This was a problem with which the Soviet leadership has occupied itself since the end of the Second World War. From the mid-sixties onwards when detente had set in between US-Soviet relationship, this problem acquired two major dimensions from Soviet viewpoint. One was the regularization of the German Question, and the other was status quo in East Europe. To cope with these dimensions of the problem Soviet diplomacy was geared to a formal agreement on peace and security in Europe. The culminating point of these efforts was the signing of the Helsinki Agreement in 1975.

In between, the German Question developed its own momentum resulting in the signing of the formal treaty with West Germany in 1970 followed by similar agreements between West Germany and East European socialist states. Thus by the beginning of the seventies the German Question was resolved to the satisfaction of the Soviet Union and its allies.

However, the problem of maintaining the status quo in Europe was confronted with difficulties. Foremost among these was the Czechoslovakia crisis of 1968. The details of this crisis need not detain us here. It is enough to point out that the Soviet Union somehow withheld this crisis and maintained the status quo in East Europe. This success finally contributed to the formalization of the status quo in Europe by the signing of the Helsinki Agreement in 1975. In this connection it may be noted that India extended an unqualified welcome to the Helsinki Agreement and lauded Soviet role in it. As Indira Gandhi declared in a speech in Moscow in June 1976: "We have warmly welcomed the steps towards detente taken by the Soviet Union during the last five years which have led to the Helsinki Conference."<sup>77</sup>

However, for our purpose we may focus our attention on India's reaction towards Soviet policies on these crucial questions directly affecting Soviet interests.

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<sup>77</sup> Soviet Review, n. 74, p. 27.

(1) The German Question

On the German Question India has traditionally, right from 1947, had taken a stand conducive to Soviet interest.<sup>78</sup>

Following this tradition Soviet treaty with West Germany was welcomed by India. As President V.V. Giri declared in an official luncheon during his visit to the Soviet Union (September 1970): "Your country (Soviet Union) ~~has~~ signed a treaty of non-recourse to force and of co-operation with the Federal Republic of Germany. May I take the liberty of complementing your Excellency and your Government under the distinguished leadership of Chairman Kosygin on your wisdom, foresight and statesmanship in sincerely pursuing the path of peace and reconciliation?"<sup>79</sup>

(ii) The Czechoslovakia Crisis

However on the Czech crisis India's reaction was not entirely to the liking of Soviet leadership. For example, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the Parliament on 21 August made following statements:

I express the hope that the forces which have entered Czechoslovakia will be withdrawn at the earliest possible moment and the Czech people will be able to determine their future according to their own wishes and interests, and that whatever mutual problems there may be between Czech and its allies will be settled peacefully....The right of nations to live

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78 See Zafar Iman, Ideology and Reality in Soviet Policy in Asia (Delhi, 1975), chap. III.

79 For the text of the speech see, Times of India, and Patriot, 24 September 1970.



peacefully and without outside interference should not be denied in the name of religion or ideology. 80

Ashok Mehta resigned from the Central Cabinet over differences with the Government on its stand on the Czech crisis. He said that there was no question of being unfriendly to the Soviet Union, but argued that friendship should not have prevented the country in voicing its protest and regret when the Russians committed what he called "a grievous mistake".<sup>81</sup> On the other hand the Indian Press was generally critical. For example, on 12 September 13 prominent writers in a statement expressed their deep concern at the freedom of "independent-minded" Czech writers, intellectuals and journalists, which they felt, "is not secure", expressed the hope that "dissatisfaction all over the world at the military intervention in Czechoslovakia would receive the attention of the Soviet leaders and that they would help normalize the situation there by withdrawing their armed forces immediately". Besides, they said, "the military action by the Soviet Union has increased the sense of insecurity, felt by smaller and weaker nations as well as their fear and suspicion of the strong powers".<sup>82</sup>

However India showed caution in not condemning Soviet stand on the crisis. For instance, India abstained

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80 Foreign Affairs Record, vol. 14, no. 8, August 1968, p. 169.

81 Asian Recorder, 23-29 September 1968, p. 8544.

82 Tribune, 13 September 1968.

on the Western sponsored resolution in the Security Council condemning Soviet intervention.<sup>83</sup> Indian Prime Minister explained India's stand in Rajya Sabha on 23 August that India had abstained in the voting of the United Nations Security Council resolution on Czechoslovakia only because it contained the word 'condemn' in relation to the Soviet Union's action. She further explained that if there had been a paragraph-by-paragraph voting on the resolution, India would have voted for all the paragraphs except the one in which the word 'condemn' was used.<sup>84</sup>

Reiterating India's support to the Czech people, Mrs Gandhi said: "We should not take any stand which would make it more difficult for us to help the Czech people."<sup>85</sup>

Thus, it is quite clear that while not totally supporting Soviet stand, India took a cautious stand so as not to antagonise the Soviet Union. This stand was certainly appreciated among the Soviet leadership, as was evident by the absence of critical reference to India's stand on the crisis in the Soviet Press.

#### (iii) Sino-Soviet border Conflict

Likewise it is relevant to bring into focus Sino-Soviet border clash. There is no doubt that both the government spokesman and Indian news media showed a marked sympathy for

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83 Asian Recorder, n. 81, p. 8544.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

Soviet stand. As statesman reported:

It is the acceptance, on both sides, of the inevitability of an armed confrontation which inexorably increases the chances of war that could engulf not only all Asia but the entire world. President Nixon has made it clear that he has no interest in taking sides and there is certainly no point in India being so interested. Yet events in the Asian heartland may affect India's own security. In spite, its pre-occupation with its northern frontier, China has not reduced the strength of its forces on its borders with India. 86

Likewise, it was argued:

Against the background of troublous developments in Tibet it may be little wonder if the Sino-Soviet war spills into that country. In that case India will have grounds for grave disquietude. Time and again India has been unjustly accused of conspiring with the Soviet Union in forging a ring round China. As such, a diversionary attack on India by China, with overt or covert help from Pakistan cannot be wholly discounted if, of course, things move to their climax. 87

It, however, may be said that such an Indian stand was more directed against China than was dictated by sympathy for Soviet stand. However, the totality of India's stand on the Sino-Soviet border conflict showed a marked disposition towards the Soviet Union.

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86 The Statesman, 18 August 1969.

87 Northern India Patrika (Allahabad), 19 August 1969.

(iv) Arab-Israeli Conflict (1967, 1973)

Likewise, it may not be out of place to mention here Soviet stand on Arab-Israel conflicts of 1967 and 1973 as well as Soviet stand on Non-proliferation Treaty. As far as the Arab-Israel conflicts were concerned, there was a marked convergence of Indian and Soviet stakes in the war. As Prime Minister Indira Gandhi commented on 6 June 1967 in the Lok Sabha:

On the basis of information available, there could be no doubt that Israel has escalated the situation into an armed conflict. The world today faces a disastrous war in West Asia the armed forces of Israel and those of UAR and other Arab countries are locked in combat, and the situation becomes graver by the hour. If not stopped, this war is likely to expand into a much wider one, drawing into its vortex other countries and developing perhaps into a world war. 88

Furthermore in January 1968 Kosygin paid an official visit to India. During his stay, Indo-Soviet joint communique was signed on 31 January. In it, both sides made a comprehensive review of the situation in West Asia, and once again emphasized "the necessity for the implementation of the resolution of the Security Council of the 22nd November 1967, and the withdrawal without delay of the Israeli forces to the line which they occupied prior to June 5, 1967."<sup>89</sup>

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88 Asian Recorder, 25 June- 1 July 1967, p. 7779.

89 Foreign Affairs Record, vol. 14, no. 1, January 1968, p. 15.

Likewise the 1973 war in which the Soviet Union was more involved echoed such reaction. For example, Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi at Bhubaneswar on 17 October reaffirmed India's stand that "the West Asian crisis should be resolved on the basis of the Security Council resolution of 1967 which called on Israel to vacate the territory it occupied".<sup>90</sup>

Likewise Indira Gandhi reiterated India's "total sympathy" with the Arab world, engaged in the West Asia conflict, as the victim of Israel's aggression. She said: "We have certain principles and the whole world knows India has never compromised on principles". Further she pointed out that "we have always stood for the vacation of territories occupied by aggression, irrespective of the countries involved, e.g., we vacated the territories of Pakistan which our forces had captured during the Indo-Pakistan conflict."<sup>91</sup>

The Joint Communiqué issued during the Brezhnev's visit to India in November 1973 took note of the situation in West Asia. Both sides declared:

The establishment of a lasting peace in the area is inconceivable without complete liberation of the Arab territories occupied by Israel and the ensurance of the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine. The sooner Israel vacates the occupied Arab territories, the speedier can peace be ensured in West Asia.

Both sides declared that -

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90 The Hindu (Madras), 18 October 1973.

91 Hindustan Times, 21 October 1973.

durable peace in this region is possible only through the Soviet implementation of the Resolution of the Security Council which will constitute the most reliable guarantee of the security and respect for the rights of all countries and people of the area.

Both sides further declared "their firm determination to continue giving all round support to the just cause of the Arab states and peoples".<sup>92</sup>

Later, Brezhnev speaking in the Parliament expressed his reaction on the stand taken by the Government of India in the following words:

We highly appreciate the position taken with regard to the Middle East events by the Republic of India which resolutely and unambiguously supported the just case of the Arab peoples. The stand taken by India is not fortuitous, on the contrary, it is indicative of her general role in the present international relations as a peace-loving state actively fighting for the cause of peace and the rights of the peoples. <sup>93</sup>

Indeed it may be argued that there was a convergence of interest between India and the Soviet Union over

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92 See the text of Joint Indo-Soviet Declaration in Trevor Drieberg and others, Towards Closer Indo-Soviet Cooperation (Delhi, 1974), pp. 137-8.

93 L.I. Brezhnev, Our Course: Peace and Socialism, A Collection of Speeches (January-December 1973), (Novosti Press, Moscow, 1974), p. 213.

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93 L.I. Brezhnev, Our Courses: Peace and Socialism, A Collection of Speeches (January-December 1973), (Novosti Press, Moscow, 1974), p. 213.

the Arab-Israeli conflicts, involving the basic issue of imperialism and neo-colonialism trying to suppress the just and legitimate rights of the Arab people. Further, these were commonly seen as a part of the struggle of the national liberation movement for its role in world affairs. However, the point here is that India showed a marked appreciation of Soviet stand on the crisis.

(v) Non-Proliferation Treaty

On the other question namely the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, India has never criticised directly Soviet adherence to the Treaty. On the other hand, it has consistently stressed that India has a right to use energy for peaceful purposes and such an option must be left in the interest of technological revolution in India and the Third World. Moreover, India has always declared that it does not intend to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi replying to Lok Sabha debate on 5 April 1968 said:

It is important for the nuclear weapon powers to undertake earliest possible meaningful negotiations...but unfortunately, the non-participation by some nuclear weapon powers will make it only partially effective. The nuclear weapon powers insist on their right to continue to manufacture more nuclear weapons. This is a situation which cannot be viewed with equanimity by non-nuclear countries, especially as they are called upon to undertake not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons for their own defence. Moreover, Government of India do not propose to manufacture nuclear weapons. 94



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India's stand was taken note in the Soviet Union and it was not adversely commented upon. As the Indo-Soviet communique of 1965 declared:

Both sides attach great significance to effective measures taken against any proliferation of nuclear weapons through their direct transfer by nuclear states to non-nuclear zones or through military alliances, groupings and associations of countries, or by any other means. 95

It further provided:

The decision of the Government of India not to use atomic energy for the production of nuclear weapons but to channelize it for peaceful purposes exclusively is welcomed by the Soviet Government. 96

Such warning emanating from Soviet sources as "Those who wish to adopt a blackmailing and bargaining attitude towards the treaty would assume a grave responsibility"<sup>97</sup> was indeed directed against Western Powers than countries like India. Besides, such a Soviet reaction to India's stand must be correlated with Soviet desire to help India in the development of peaceful nuclear energy.

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95 Indian Foreign Affairs, vol 8, no. 5, May 1965, p. 40.

96 Ibid.

97 V. Matveyev, "Further Headway Should be Made", Soviet Review, vol. 5, no. 49, 13 July 1968, p. 30.

(vi) Growth of Soviet Role in the Third World and Brezhnev's Proposal for Collective Security in Asia

It is widely known that the Soviet Union began its economic aid programme to the Third World countries since the mid-fifties. Thereafter, the programme continued to grow covering about fifty countries of the Third World by mid-seventies.

Earlier, right from the beginning of the Soviet state the Soviet leadership had supported the cause of freedom of colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism and it has consistently claimed special relationship with the Third World countries conducive to their interest.<sup>98</sup>

However, it was by the mid-sixties, as a result of the Tashkent Agreement that the Soviet Union began to play a more active role in the characteristic problems of the Third World countries, like the territorial conflicts, Arab-Israel disputes, Ethiopia-Somalia dispute. The high watermark of Soviet involvement in these problems of the Third world countries during the period under study, was Soviet role in Africa, Angola<sup>99</sup> in particular, and Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973. Further, Brezhnev's proposal on Asian Collective Security, first, publicly mooted out in 1969 were another indication of

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<sup>98</sup> See Chapter I of our study.

<sup>99</sup> For Soviet role in Africa and Angola, see, David E. Albright, "Soviet Policy", Problems of Communism (Washington), January-February 1978, pp. 20-39.

Soviet desire to play a more active role in Asian affairs.<sup>100</sup> Obviously these Soviet moves were directly linked with the overall aims and objectives of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>101</sup>

These Soviet moves were generally welcomed by India. As a matter of fact India highly appreciated these moves particularly in the context of India's problem with China and Pakistan. We have earlier taken into account of these problems. It is enough to point out here that India viewed with favour Soviet policy towards the Third World as a stabilizing factor countering Western influence and China's diplomatic moves. For example, India took an identical stand on Angola, e.g. in a message to President Neto of Angola, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi almost echoed Soviet stand:

We have been deeply impressed by the sacrifices of the heroic people of Angola in the struggle to overthrow nearly five centuries of colonial rule. Your success in this struggle will form an indelible part of the history of the liberation of colonial peoples against imperialistic domination. 102

However India did not respond to Brezhnev's proposal on Asian Collective Security. Apparently for fear of compromising its policy of non-alignment as well as because of

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100 For details of Soviet view, see, Socialist India, no. 22, 1973, pp. 5-6; no. 23, pp. 4-29, and also V. Mayevsky, "Collective Security in Asia", Soviet Review, vol. 9, no. 32, 4 July 1972, pp. 38-41.

101 See Zafar Imam, "Soviet Asian Policy Today", Contemporary Review (London), July 1966.

102 Hindustan Times, 22 January 1976.

the absence of conducive climate or regional co-operation and stability as a result of its growing difficulty with Pakistan and China.<sup>103</sup>

But it is interesting to note that Soviet leadership showed an appreciation of India's stand and did not press for the acceptance of this proposal by India. The absence of any reference to Asian Collective Security in the Joint Indo-Soviet communique clearly testifies to such a Soviet stand.

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The preceding pages have amply shown that India has displayed a marked disposition in not directly criticising Soviet stand on vital issues of Soviet interest. Moreover, on such issues as Brezhnev's proposal on Asian Collective Security, the Czech crisis and NPT, the Soviet Union did not adversely react to India's lukewarm attitude; indeed it appears to have ignored it in the interest of bilateral relationship.

Moreover, other issues like Arab-Israeli conflicts, Soviet role in Angola, and growing Soviet role in the Third World particularly in Asia, India has shown a convergence of interest with basic Soviet policy towards these issues.

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103 See for example, "Soviet Proposal for Collective Security in Asia: Asian Reactions", China Report, vol. 6, no. 3, May-June 1970, pp. 49-55, and also Zafar Imam, "Soviet View of the Treaty: Non-alignment Plus", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 6, no. 40, 2 October 1971, pp. 2101-3.

The totality of India's views on issues directly concerning the Soviet Union thus is not entirely to the dislike of Soviet leadership. The fact that any lingering doubt, that the Soviet leadership may have on India's stand on these issues, has not affected the totality of Soviet view of Indian foreign policy and bilateral Indo-Soviet relations, towards India in general and Soviet appreciation of Indian foreign policy in particular, during the period under study, speaks for itself. As a matter of fact, it may not be totally out of mark if we take the view that India's cautious yet conducive stand on these issues contributed to the totality of the Soviet view of India's foreign policy during 1964-1975.

(C) Issues where Common Interests were Involved

We have earlier pointed out that common interests and reciprocity of goals and objectives are bases of interdependence, co-operation and friendship among nations. It is certainly very true of Indo-Soviet relations. As a matter of fact, there has always been, since mid-fifties, the emergence of interests between India and the Soviet Union on world issues like colonialism, racialism, peace and disarmament. Although there were differing approaches to the Congo crisis (1961), and dismay felt in India over the resumption of nuclear test by Soviet Union in 1961, the Soviet Union constantly applauded India's stand on these vital world problems. Moreover, the

convergence of interests on these vital issues had also in the past prompted Soviet leaders to associate India with all the major diplomatic moves that they made during the Nehru era of Indian foreign policy.<sup>104</sup>

As a matter of fact, it can be easily seen that, it was India's stand on these issues which form the bases of Soviet overall view of Indian foreign policy as a policy of non-alignment directed towards strengthening the international position of the Third World countries vis-a-vis colonialism and neo-colonialism. Broadly speaking, Soviet foreign policy had the same objectives in relation to the Third world and Western state system. Here we find the convergence of interests between India and the Soviet Union and thus such a convergence provided the bases of Soviet appreciation of Indian foreign policy.

By the time Nehru died, international environment was already showing signs of change. The process of detente had set in, old forms of colonialism had nearly died down while the new emergent countries had begun to show solidarity vis-a-vis the Western countries in spite of growing diversities among them. More and more Third World countries had started moving towards non-alignment while the movement itself was formally launched in 1961.

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<sup>104</sup> See, for details, Zafar Inam, n. 78, Chapter II.

The Soviet Union was confronted with growing difficulties with China while the war in Vietnam had begun to escalate. Besides, the armament race had shown no sign of slowing down.

India was in a state of transition to post-Nehru era. Economic difficulties were piling up, relations with Pakistan were constrained, while its non-aligned posture was under direct pressure from Anglo-American bloc.

Against such a background of international environment, it is indeed interesting to note that the Soviet Union continued to show appreciation of India's stand on crucial world issues, while Soviet diplomatic support and Indo-Soviet friendship and co-operation continued to register an upward trend.

#### (i) Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

One of the crucial world issues where both India and the Soviet Union had common interest, was the problem of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Immediately after Nehru's death, Dr Radhakrishnan paid an official visit to the USSR in September 1964. The Joint Communique after the visit thus took note of this problem. Both India and the Soviet Union reaffirmed "their loyalty to the decision of the United Nations and other international organisations which envisage the need to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism and imperialism and to grant independence to all countries and peoples under foreign domination with a view to achieve their liberation from all

forms of colonialism and imperialism",<sup>105</sup>

On the occasion of Lal Bahadur Shastri's visit to the USSR in May 1965 the joint declaration was more emphatic in condemning "the continuation of colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, South Rhodesia and Southern Arabia and express their resolute support for the courageous struggle of the peoples of these countries for freedom and independence",<sup>106</sup>

Further, India and the Soviet Union expressed "their determination to work in close co-operation with one-another at the United Nations and elsewhere to ensure the liquidation of colonialism without further delay, and to oppose manifestations of imperialist domination at any part of the world",<sup>107</sup>

When the Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi paid an official visit to the USSR (in July 1966) a Joint Indo-Soviet Communique was issued. In it, the community of interest on this issue, was reaffirmed:

Being convinced that every people should enjoy the right to determine their destiny in their own way, the two sides express themselves in favour of the complete elimination of the remaining colonial regimes in accordance with the Declaration of the Granting of

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105 Asian Recorder, vol. 10, no. 46, 11-17 November 1964, p. 6138.

106 Indian Foreign Affairs, n. 95, pp. 40-41.

107 Ibid., p. 41.



Independence to Colonial countries and peoples, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1960. 108

✓ In 1973 during Brezhnev's visit to India the joint declaration emphatically declared:

Both sides note the persistence of areas of tension in some region of the world and stress the need to continue the efforts to liquidate the remaining vestiges of colonialism, neo-colonialism, racial discrimination and the policy of apartheid, and their support to all governments in their struggle against the forces of reaction and imperialism. 109

As a matter of fact, on all important bilateral declarations and talks between India and the Soviet Union the community of interest on this issue was emphasized and stressed.

Moreover, as the war in Vietnam began to threaten world peace towards the end of sixties, though India and the Soviet Union viewed Vietnam's struggle against the USA and its allies as a struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism. The 1968 Indo-Soviet joint communique after Premier Kosygin's visit to India declared:

In accordance with the Geneva Agreement of 1954, the people of Vietnam must be offered the opportunity to exercise their right to freely determine their destiny...reaffirmed their support for Cambodia in her determination

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108 Bimal Prasad, Indo-Soviet Relations : 1947-72 : A Documentary Study (New Delhi, 1975), p. 342.

109 Foreign Affairs Record, vol. 19, no. 11, November 1973, p. 441.

to preserve her sovereignty, independence and neutrality in accordance with the Geneva Agreement of 1954 and agreed that there was no justification to violate Cambodia's frontiers. 110

Likewise, the 1973 Indo-Soviet Joint Communiqué signed on 29 November 1973 during L.I. Brezhnev's visit to India declared:

India and the Soviet Union resolutely come out in favour of strict and full implementation of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam of January 27, 1973, as well as, the signing of the Agreement on Restoring Peace and Achieving National Concord in Laos, by all parties, and early settlement in Cambodia in accordance with the national interest of the people of Cambodia. 111

Moreover, both India and the Soviet Union closely co-operated in the United Nations on the issue of colonialism and neo-colonialism, on the other hand, India's stand on Vietnam war was in close proximity with that of the Soviet Union, a fact which irked United States.

#### (11) Racialism

Closely connected with the issue of colonialism and neo-colonialism was the problem of racial discrimination. Traditionally both India and the Soviet Union had taken identical stand on the issue and almost all the bilateral discussions

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110 Foreign Affairs Record, n. 89, p. 15.

111 Foreign Affairs Record, n. 109, p. 441.

during the period under review stressed their community of interest, for example, the 1965 Indo-Soviet declaration affirmed that "the two sides severely condemn the racist policy of apartheid pursued by the Government of South African Republic which continues a crime against humanity". It further declared, "as this policy contradicts the UN Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights, the two governments call upon states, which have not yet implemented the decision of the UN regarding the South African Republic to do so and to end all cooperation and relations with the Government of that country so as to compel it to grant legitimate rights to the population of the Republic of South Africa".<sup>112</sup>

Likewise, the Joint Communiqué issued during the visit of L.I. Brezhnev to India in November 1973 declared that "two sides strongly condemn racism and apartheid in all forms and manifestations wherever they exist".<sup>113</sup>

Here we once again notice convergence of Soviet and Indian interests on this very vital world issue.

#### (111) Disarmament

Disarmament has been a burning question in international politics for many decades. After the spread of the nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction the question had assumed quite an urgency. Historically speaking, the Soviet Union was concerned

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<sup>112</sup> Indian Foreign Affairs, n. 95, p. 41.

<sup>113</sup> Foreign Affairs Record, n. 109, p. 443.

with this problem right from the formative period of the Soviet state. Later in the sixties and the seventies one of the important goals of Soviet foreign policy in relation to the West was the search for agreement on the reduction of arms, particularly nuclear weapons. These efforts finally led to the Soviet adherence to such treaties as NPT and SALT I and SALT II. However, the problem in Soviet eyes remains far from resolved.<sup>114</sup>

India has also traditionally championed the cause of disarmament inside and outside the United Nations. So much so, even in those areas where its direct interests were involved. India welcomed moves towards reduction of armaments. A relevant example of this policy was India's stand on NPT. As pointed out earlier India refrained from signing NPT on the grounds of keeping its option open for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We thus find that the common interests were involved between India and the Soviet Union in helping to resolve the problem of disarmament although their approaches may not have been entirely identical. It is confirmed by the fact that this question was always included in almost all official Declarations and Communiques issued by India and the Soviet Union during the period under study.

In this connection we may cite some examples. The Indo-Soviet Joint statement issued in May 1965 says:

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<sup>114</sup> See Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's speech to the 31st Session of the UN General Assembly, 1976; 29 September 1976 in Daily Review of the Soviet Press (Moscow) (for the English text).

Both sides consider it necessary to emphasize the great importance of partial measures aimed at limiting the armaments race and easing international tension, the implementation of which might contribute to general and complete disarmament...denuclearized zones in various areas of the globe. 115

Similarly, the Joint Communiqué issued in September 1971 on the official visit of Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi to the USSR declared:

Both sides believe that the cessation of the arms race and the achievement of general and complete disarmament, covering both nuclear and conventional types of weapons under strict and effective international control, are of primary importance for the preservation and strengthening of peace and security. 116

Likewise during the visit of L.I. Brezhnev to India, the Joint Communiqué issued on 29 November 1973 declared:

"Both sides believe that the cessation of the arms race and the achievement of general and complete disarmament, embracing both nuclear and conventional weapons, under effective international control, are of paramount importance for the preservation and consolidation of peace." They again re-affirmed their belief that "time has come to proceed to practical preparations for convening the world disarmament conference", and to this end they declared "their readiness to

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115 Indian Foreign Affairs, n. 95, p. 40.

116 See the Text of the Joint Communiqué, Foreign Affairs Record, vol. 17, no. 9, September 1971, p. 189.

lend support to the work of the UN Special Committee".<sup>117</sup>

The above declarations amply show that there was a marked convergence of interest between the two countries on this question. However, we may point out that the problem of disarmament kept on assuming new dimensions during the period under study. In the sixties, control over protection of nuclear weapons became a necessity and in the seventies the proliferation of nuclear weapons and extension of arms race in the Third World particularly in India's neighbourhood (e.g., Indian Ocean and West Asia) became equally important. Thus disarmament as a goal became a general and complete disarmament while in practice, and as a short-term measures, became a limitation of arms race in the Third World and demilitarization of Indian Ocean. In other words, the problem became closely connected with the problem of regional security and balance, a problem in which India was directly interested.

Both India and the Soviet Union showed awareness of these aspects of the disarmament problem and displayed a broadly common approach to their solution. For instance, the Soviet Union supported India's stand on the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean. The 1973 Joint Communiqué says: "The two sides reaffirm their readiness to participate, together with other states concerned, on an equal basis, in finding a fair

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117 Foreign Affairs Record, n. 109, p. 443.

solution of the question of making the Indian Ocean a 'Zone of Peace'." 118

Moreover, the Soviet Union supported the stand of littoral states on declaration of the Indian ocean as a peace zone in the United Nations during the 26th session of the UN General Assembly (1971) and later. As late as June 1979, after the conclusion of Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit, the issue was thus formulated by both sides: "India and the Soviet Union reaffirm their readiness to co-operate for the implementation of the UN Declaration on the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a 'zone of peace'....The Indian side highly appreciates the readiness of the Soviet Union to resume bilateral talks with the US on the question of the Indian Ocean." 119

Our discussion above, clearly shows that there has been a convergence of interests between India and the Soviet Union on the issue of disarmament. Moreover, such a convergence was marked not only in relation to the long-term and difficult goal of complete and general disarmament but also on those aspects of disarmament, for example, limitation of arms race in the Third world and demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, where India was directly involved and deeply interested.

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118 Ibid.

119 See Saral Patra, ed., Indian Ocean and Great Powers (New Delhi, 1979), p. 36.

Thus such a convergence of interests appears to have become one of the important grounds on which a favourable Soviet image of Indian foreign policy was built.

(iv) Peace, Regional Security and Stability

World peace has been the most crucial international issue since the Second World War. Like all other nations India and the Soviet Union have an important common stake in preserving and maintaining them. Moreover both the countries have generally agreed on the ways and means of preserving peace, like reduction of armament programme, dismantling of foreign military bases and military pacts and the non-use of force in settling international disputes.<sup>120</sup>

However, in the specific context of geo-political position of India and the Soviet Union the problem of regional stability and security was of particular significance for both the countries. The fact that the Soviet Union was encircled in Asia by the US allies and a hostile China and that India was poised against two hostile neighbours provided the main hallmarks of their common concern for regional security and stability.

Earlier we have discussed India's relations with its immediate neighbours vis-a-vis Soviet role in them and thus

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120 For a cogent presentation of Soviet view on the subject in the context of convergence of interests between India and the Soviet Union, see, Etinger, Y. and Malikian, O., The Policy of Non-Alignment (Moscow, 1966).



it was shown how Soviet Union came out in support of India's vital national interests.

Ever since the disintegration of Pakistan and emergence of India as a dominant power in South Asia, the Soviet Union has consistently upheld India's policy in the region viewing it as a policy of promoting regional stability and security.

The Soviet reaction to the Simla Pact and India's relation with Bangladesh as we have pointed out earlier, was warmly welcomed by the Soviet Union. As the Communique issued during Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi's visit to the USSR in June 1976 amply summarize this situation:

The Soviet Union and India are in favour of promoting good neighbourly relations between themselves against any instigation from outside and against any attempt by external forces aimed at aggravating the situation in this region. They welcome the recent steps towards further normalization of the situation, restoration of confidence, mutual understanding and good neighbourly relations between all states in the sub-continent. 121

It is thus clear that by supporting India as a dominant power in South Asia the Soviet Union was promoting its own interest in common with that of India. The problem of regional security and balance, therefore, may not be viewed in isolation of the problem of peace in general, an issue of world importance

where India and the USSR had vital common interests. Hence we find logical ~~conclusion~~ that both India and the USSR have consistently stressed during the period under review on the effectiveness of the UN and their co-operation in its work. As the 1976 Indo-Soviet Joint Communique declared:

Recognising the positive contribution of the United Nations to easing international tensions, the two sides reaffirm their resolve to work for the further strengthening of the United Nations and the enhancing of its effectiveness in maintaining universal peace and security of people on the basis of strict observance of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. 122

We may thus conclude that the issue of peace and regional stability and security was seen by India and the Soviet Union both in the context of peace in general as well as in the perspective of regional stability and security in particular. Such an approach appears to have been based on the common interests of both the countries on an issue which is of world importance, as well as of regional significance.

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At the beginning of this chapter we have pointed out that community and convergence of interests, in spite of the differing social systems, are the real bases of Indo-Soviet

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122 Ibid., p. 38.

friendship and consequently Soviet view of Indian foreign policy. Further we set out to identify these bases by an analysis of three sets of issues namely -

- (a) Issues where direct Indian interests were involved, e.g., China, Pakistan, Bangladesh;
- (b) Issues where direct Soviet interests were involved, e.g., German Question, Czech Crisis, Sino-Soviet border conflict, Arab-Israel Conflict, NPT;
- (c) Issues of world importance where community of interest between India and the Soviet Union was marked, e.g., colonialism, racialism, disarmament, peace etc.

Needless to emphasize that all the above three sets of issues are seen as interlinked and not in isolation, although the relevance may vary from bilateral, regional to world issues of importance.

With this objective in view the preceding pages in this chapter have already shown that Soviet appreciation of Indian foreign policy has a firm basis conducive to international environment and convergence of interests.

However, we have concentrated on foreign policy issues. This, however, does not imply that the Soviet Union has not shown awareness of the domestic difficulties that have generated problems for Indian foreign policy postures. These problems were largely attributed to India's economic difficulties, multi-level socio-economic development and

above all, to the onslaught of Indian reaction encouraged by Western monopoly capitalism.<sup>123</sup>

However, the very fact that Soviet Union went out of the way to show an appreciation of Indian foreign policy postures during 1964-1975 was itself symbolic of Soviet efforts to encourage India in continuing the basic aims and objectives of its foreign policy.

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123 See, for Soviet assessment of domestic scene year by year during 1964-1975, Zafar Imam, n. 1, pp. 77-183.

**CHAPTER IV**

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TOTALITY OF SOVIET VIEW

The totality of Soviet view of Indian foreign policy during 1964-1975 is remarkably uniform and consistent, indeed closely linked with that of the period 1951-1964. The hallmark of this uniformity and continuity is an unqualified appreciation of Indian foreign policy postures and its aims and objectives. Even India's lukewarm stand on a number of issues directly affecting Soviet interest, e.g., the Czech Crisis, was largely ignored by the Soviet leadership and it did not affect the totality of Soviet view of Indian foreign policy. The bases of such a favourable Soviet view are the community of interests of India and the Soviet Union as well as Soviet efforts to identify its own interests with those of India.

The framework of these bases is Soviet view of international politics and India's role as a powerful and active non-aligned nation. This framework when applied in practice was further facilitated by the fact that both India and the Soviet Union are neighbours, strategically located and have a history of absence of clash of interests.

However, it would be an over simplification to explain the favourable Soviet view of Indian foreign policy in isolation of Soviet perception of India's domestic scene. The totality of Soviet view of India's domestic scene vis-a-vis its foreign policy is seen as a consistent struggle between what the Soviets call reactionaries and progressives. For example, one of the reasons for India's postures on international issues is said to be "progressive socio-economic development, helped by Soviet economic aid and the growing role of the working class movement led by the Communist Party of India (CPI)".<sup>1</sup> In other words, the interconnection between India's domestic compulsions and foreign policy postures is recognised; likewise the difficulties generated by it is also taken into account by the Soviet Union.

The totality of Soviet view of India has three dimensions, namely, bilateral relationship, regional context, and finally international perspective. These are indeed interrelated and integrated. Each one of these has contributed to the strengthening of the bases of Indo-Soviet friendship and co-operation as well as to the totality of Soviet view of Indian foreign policy. On the other hand, while showing constraints, India has also contributed to the totality of Soviet view of its foreign policy in all these

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<sup>1</sup> For the discussion on this aspect see, Zafar Inam, ed., Soviet View of India, 1957-1975 (New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers, 1977), pp. vii-xxii.

three major dimensions. Thus we may look at the totality of Soviet view of Indian foreign policy in a bilateral context, from the point of view of regional relevance and finally in the perspective of international politics.

In the bilateral context it has institutionalized Soviet role in the security and stability of India both on a short-term basis and a long-term basis. In the regional context it has stressed a primacy of India's role in South Asia and also it has secured a part of the South-Eastern flank of the Soviet Union from hostile powers. Finally, against the background of international politics, it has encouraged India continue to play an active role in world affairs as a leading non-aligned power; likewise, it has helped the Soviet Union to strengthen and consolidate Third World in its confrontation with the West, thereby weakening the role of the West in world affairs.

There is no doubt that a favourable Soviet image of Indian foreign policy has greatly assisted India in pursuing its two most vital and inter-dependent objectives, namely, security and self-reliance.

Likewise, it is very clear that the Soviet Union attaches great importance to India in its regional and global foreign policy and would like India to continue to play an active non-aligned role in world affairs.

We may sum up the totality of Soviet view of Indian <sup>foreign policy</sup> by quoting L.I. Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the



Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the President of the USSR from his speech to Members of the Indian Parliament on 10 December 1980, during his latest visit to India. He said: "What has been the contribution of this vast country with its own ancient cultural heritage to international relations? I would say that, first of all, it is the course of peace-ability and considered realism, readiness to develop good relations with other states and promote a healthier international climate."

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