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AUTONOMY AND DEPENDENCE IN INDIA'S RELATIONS
WITH THE SOVIET UNION SINCE THE TREATY OF 1971

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This sub-thesis is my own work

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INTRODUCTION

Systemic differences in terms of political, social and economic values have not always prevented nations from collaborating with each other nor have affinity in values prevented them from fighting with each other. Nevertheless when the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation symbolising a closer relationship between the two states was signed on August 9, 1971 it created a flutter among observers of politics among states.

It evoked an impassioned debate, both in India and the West at large. At the esoteric level the discussions involved philosophical polemics amongst the erudite about the parameters of nonalignment. Interest focussed on theoretical questions relating to the nature, scope and relevance of nonalignment and on such matters as the similarities and differences between nonalignment and neutralism. At the much more substantive level the issue that stimulated responses from all and sundry was whether the treaty could be interpreted as a visible manifestation of India's new status as a Soviet client. While the passions generated in the wake of the treaty have long since subsided the shadow cast by the substantive issue has lingered on.

This sub-thesis is an enquiry on that enduring theme. The primary purpose is to evaluate whether India's close relationship with the Soviet Union constrained Indian foreign
policy postures and enhanced dependence\textsuperscript{1} on the Soviet Union economically and in the sphere of arms trade. In other words the sub-thesis is an assessment of the autonomy and dependence in India's relations with the Soviet Union.

In pursuit of the aims outlined above the operation of Indo-Soviet relations during the first decade of the treaty relationship is reviewed from the vantage point of the 1980s.

The sub-thesis does not pretend to be a comprehensive account of Indo-Soviet relations from August 1971 to July 1981. Instead of covering the entire gamut of Indo-Soviet relations the focus is deliberately limited to those major political, economic and arms trade interactions which are likely to highlight the autonomy and dependence in India's relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In essence the sub-thesis is a series of case studies strung together.

The format is chronological. As a prelude to the main thrust Chapter I examines the context in which India and the Soviet Union entered into a treaty relationship. Following

\textsuperscript{1} The term 'dependence' here implies excessive reliance. In this sense any country can become dependent on another because of concentration of foreign trade, or because of reliance for a large proportion of economic assistance or arms purchases from a single owner. This use of the term should not be confused with the meaning of 'dependence' in the 'dependencia' tradition where it is used to describe certain characteristics of the economy as a whole and is intended to trace certain processes which are causally linked with its underdevelopment. For an elaboration of the differences in the two usages of the term 'dependence' see International Organisation, Special issue on 'Dependence and Dependency in the Global System', Winter 1978.
this, Chapter II analyses Indo-Soviet interactions during the South Asian crisis of 1971. The rest of the period from 1972 to 1981 is divided into three segments in order to coincide with the changes of government in India. Each segment constitutes a separate chapter wherein the major political, economic and arms trade interactions are examined.

Chapter III covers the period from January 1972 to February 1977 when the Congress party led by Mrs Gandhi was in power. Chapter IV deals with the course of relations from March 1977 to December 1979. This was the period when first the Janata Party led by Mr Morarji Desai and then a breakaway faction of the Janata, the Lok Dal, led by Mr Charan Singh, held office. Chapter V covers the period from the return to power of Mrs Gandhi in January 1980 to July 1981, the end of the first decade of the treaty relationship. Finally, the trends discerned in the review spreading from Chapter II to V are drawn together in the Conclusion to put forth an assessment of the autonomy and dependence in India's relations with the Soviet Union.
CHAPTER I
THE CONTEXTS OF THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY

The conclusion of the Indo-Soviet treaty was a watershed development in the relations between the two countries. It reflected the fact that Indo-Soviet relations had reached a level of closeness previously thought highly unlikely in New Delhi, probably in Moscow too, and certainly in the rest of the world. It is obvious that this proximity did not emerge overnight. This chapter attempts to explain the factors that facilitated the signing of the treaty by charting the contexts in which it was concluded.

Broadly the treaty can be placed in two contexts: (a) the evolution of Indo-Soviet relations since India's independence in 1947; (b) the international (regional as well as global) situation in 1971.

I
Evolution of Indo-Soviet Relations: 1947-1971

From 1947 to 1971 Indo-Soviet relations can be said to have evolved through four discernible phases. (Although such a division runs the risk of over-simplification it does serve to map the contours of Indo-Soviet relations.) In the Stalinist period from 1947 to 1953 the interactions between the two countries were minimal. It was followed by the euphoria of the Khrushchev era from 1954 to 1964. Relations became extremely friendly. This in turn gave way,
from the end of 1964, to a significant cooling down of the friendship and the development of strains in the relationship. However from 1969 onwards there was an upturn in relations and by 1971 a large measure of the former euphoria was restored.

(a) **1947-1953**

Even though the USSR was one of the few countries with which India established diplomatic relations a few months prior to gaining independence, the relations between the two countries did not progress much further during this period.

In the Stalinist perception India had not gained genuine independence by the transfer of power. According to Soviet assessment a superficial political document granting independence could not impinge on the reality of continued British economic and administrative dominance in India. Thus India was deemed to be merely enacting an elaborate charade. Consequently the domestic policy of the Congress government was described as being reactionary and its foreign policy was seen as drawing India into the war machinations of the Anglo-American bloc in the guise of pursuing a middle course. Even when India in pursuance of its non-aligned policy adopted stances which were acceptable to the Soviet Union - such as on the Korean question, on the issue of the

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Japanese peace treaty and on the seating of the Peoples Republic of China at the UN - Soviet commentators interpreted such stances not in terms of the spontaneous decisions of the Indian government but as a result of the fact that 'Indian ruling circles are forced to reckon with the Indian people's clearly expressed will for peace'.

On the Indian side too, despite its espoused non-alignment and Nehru's declaration that the Soviet Union was India's neighbour with whom 'we shall have to undertake many common tasks and have much to do with each other', there was some hesitation to get closer to a state which did not fully recognise Indian independence and which Indians suspected had close ideological links with the Communist Party of India (CPI), whose role in domestic politics was then, to say the least, unsavoury.

Towards the end of this period there were signs of changes in Soviet attitude. The Kremlin's growing interest in India was reflected in Stalin granting an interview to the Indian Ambassador, Dr S. Radhakrishnan, in April 1952. It was the first time that Stalin had met an Indian Ambassador since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Moreover, just a few days prior to

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2 I. Lemm, 'Fruits of Imperialist Domination in India and Pakistan', Voprosy Ekonomiki, No.1, 1953, p.73.

3 Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961 (Publications Division, New Delhi, 1961), p.3.
his death, Stalin met the new Ambassador Mr K.P.S. Menon in February 1953. Yet it was only subsequent to Stalin's death and the rise of the new leadership that the two countries drew significantly closer.

(b) 1954-1964

This period witnessed a remarkable growth in relations. The new Soviet leadership began reassessing Soviet foreign policy. As part of this overall process attitudes towards India underwent a change. The first hint of this change was provided in Malenkov's speech to the Supreme Soviet on 8 August 1953. He praised India's role in the Korean armistice and indicated that the process of further strengthening of relations between the two countries was underway. In December 1953 the first trade agreements were signed; in the May Day 1954 slogans of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) India made its first appearance and was listed first among non-communist countries in Soviet greetings.

While these developments created the necessary atmosphere for the growth of Indo-Soviet relations the single most important event which drew India and the Soviet Union closer towards each other was Pakistan joining the military alliance system that was set up along the southern flanks of the Soviet Union and China, by the Eisenhower Administration.

To India the notion of a defence alliance to protect South East Asia and, shortly after, the Middle East against Chinese and Soviet attacks, respectively, was abhorrent on

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4 Pravda, August 9, 1953.
5 Naik, op.cit., p.168.
several counts. Firstly, such an alliance contradicted India's passionately held view that military blocs generally were steps towards war rather than peace. Secondly, the inclusion of Pakistan introduced a system of military blocs into India's immediate neighbourhood, thus converting the Indian sub-continent into a theatre of cold war at the very time when India was making strenuous efforts to make it the centre of a 'peace area'. Thirdly, and probably most importantly, the prospect of US military assistance to Pakistan threatened to strengthen that country not only in relation to the Soviet Union and China with whom it hardly had any quarrel, but also in relation to India with whom important issues were still outstanding. Therefore despite US assurances that military assistance to Pakistan was not and would not be directed against India, Nehru expressed India's distaste for the whole project.

As a response to this development India adopted a two-fold strategy. First it devoted a considerable part of its diplomatic efforts to bring together all like-minded countries with the object of giving definite shape to non-alignment as an international force. Second, it sought to improve relations with China and the USSR.

The Soviet Union equally disturbed by Western attempts to ring its border recognised the importance of having a close relationship with India. Thus began a new stage in Indo-Soviet relations. The metamorphosis in the Soviet attitude towards India was striking. The Congress party was transformed from 'a tool of the most reactionary elements
of the Indian bourgeoisie' to a champion of Indian progress. In January 1955 Pravda endorsed India's domestic and foreign policies.\(^7\)

Soviet support of India's position on Kashmir, which had hitherto been indirect, became explicit. Twice (in 1957 and 1962) Security Council resolutions unacceptable to India were vetoed by the Soviet Union. When Indian troops occupied the Portuguese enclaves of Goa, Daman and Diu in 1961 the Soviet reaction contrasted markedly from that of the West. The Western reaction was hostile. A Western sponsored motion intended to censure India was introduced in the Security Council. On the other hand, the Soviet President Brezhnev, then in India, assured Soviet support for the Indian action\(^8\) and the Soviet Union vetoed the Western sponsored resolution, effectively putting the lid on further international involvement on that issue.

More importantly, when relations between China and India deteriorated and led to border clashes in 1959 the Soviet Union adopted a line of neutrality by equating 'fraternal China' and 'friendly India',\(^9\) but when the Sino-Indian war broke out in October 1962 the Soviet Union momentarily abandoned its impartiality. In an editorial on 25 October 1962, Pravda denounced the McMahon line as an imperialist creation and approved Chinese cease-fire proposals.\(^10\)

\(^7\) ibid., p.111.
\(^8\) ibid., p.121.
\(^9\) TASS, September 9, 1959.
\(^10\) Pravda, October 25, 1962.
However, it is now generally recognised that this shift in Soviet attitude was dictated by simultaneous events in Cuba which forestalled the Soviet Union from unduly antagonising China at such a critical juncture. With the ending of the Cuban tension the USSR resumed its former line of neutrality. This was unprecedented. For the first time the Soviet Union had adopted a neutral line in a dispute between a communist and a non-communist state, and it was widely interpreted as indirect Soviet support for India.

As Sino-Soviet relations worsened the Soviet comment on the Sino-Indian border dispute became correspondingly more critical of China and was sympathetic to India, thus indicating that common perceptions of China added another strand to bind Indo-Soviet relations.

While on the one hand the USSR had extended diplomatic support to India, on the other it sought to enhance India's status in the world. The Soviet press carried articles asserting that India had emerged as a great power on the international scene and its involvement was essential in solving problems not only in Asia but also throughout the world.¹¹ That this was more than empty flattery became evident in 1958. In the wake of the Lebanon-Jordan crises which followed General Kassem's seizure of power in Iraq Khrushchev suggested India's inclusion in a proposed summit conference at Geneva along with the USSR, USA, Britain and France.¹²


Economic interactions between India and the USSR was also enhanced. This was reflected in the growth in trade turnover and increase in aid to India. While in 1953-54, the annual trade was Rs.28 million by 1959-60 it had increased to Rs.750 million and in 1963-64 it stood at Rs.1,900 million. From 1954-65 Soviet aid to India amounted to $1,022 million, which represented 20.3% of Soviet economic assistance to developing countries. Admittedly this was substantial but US to India aid in the corresponding period was much more. It totalled $5,901 million. Nevertheless the impact of Soviet aid on the Indian economy was considerable since it was primarily concentrated on heavy industry in the public sector - an area to which Indian decision makers had given top priority. The Bhilai steel plant and the agreement to build the Bokaro plant (after withdrawal of US offer), the Heavy Engineering Corporation at Ranchi, the coalmining machinery plant (Durgapur), the Heavy Electrical plant (Hardwar) and the oil refineries at Barauni and Koyali were some of the most prominent examples of Soviet economic assistance in setting up the basic industrial infrastructure. Finally from 1960 onwards military assistance was also extended to India.

That India was well aware of the advantages of the close ties it had forged with the Soviet Union was evident by the restraint in Indian responses to Soviet actions that did not infringe directly on Indian interests.

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15 ibid.
India did not place the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 on par with the Anglo-French incursion in the Suez, which occurred at the same time. On the one hand the Anglo-French intervention was vocally denounced by India in the UN and elsewhere. On the other India declined to support the General Assembly resolutions which were critical of Soviet actions and proposed holding elections under UN auspices. Pandit Nehru himself was careful in expressing views on the Hungarian situation. While consistently calling for a withdrawal of foreign troops from Hungary and mildly criticising some of the Soviet actions, he cleverly neutralised any adverse effect such criticism might have on the Soviet Union by referring to the instigations that emanated from outside Hungary. The obvious differences in the attitudes of non-aligned India exposed Pandit Nehru to severe criticism both in India and the West. Undoubtedly the realisation that India might need Soviet support in repelling Western attempts to get India to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir under UN supervision. However, considering that the degree of Indian political and economic dependence on the Soviet Union in 1956 could hardly be termed substantial, reading into India's stance on the Hungarian issue the operation of Soviet influence on Indian foreign policy would be farfetched.

Again, when the Soviets resumed nuclear testing in 1961, on the eve of the Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade, the

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16 See The Suez Canal Crisis and India (Information Series of India, New Delhi, 1956).
Indian Prime Minister did not specifically condemn it. Instead, he expressed in general terms that India was opposed to all forms of nuclear testing. But, there are no grounds to believe that Mr Nehru's reaction was inhibited by fear of incurring Soviet displeasure.

Nonetheless it is true that there was a certain prudence in Mr Nehru's pronouncements relating to Soviet actions on issues that did not concern Indian interests which was not evident in his rebukes to the West on similar issues. According to a knowledgeable Western commentator,

Nehru's reasons for this were complex. Although he himself frequently said that he could afford to be franker with Westerners because of a shared background, it is also clear from his writings as far back as 1927 that the Soviet Union in his eyes 'carried no stain of original sin' for Western colonialism in Asia.

This is not to say that India did not openly express views different from those of the USSR. On the Congo crisis, and the Soviet proposal to replace the UN Secretary General by a 'Troika', India adopted stances contrary to those of the Soviet Union.

Judging from the sum total of the statements and actions of the Indian Prime Minister Mr Nehru it could be said that he regarded Soviet friendship as a counterweight to India's heavy dependence on the West, and from 1959 onwards as a guarantee against China. In both senses, therefore, India's relations with the USSR were seen as defence of non-alignment and an essential part of it.

18 G. Jukes, op.cit., p.120.
19 ibid.
(c) 1964-1968

In comparison with the euphoria of the Khrushchev era this period witnessed a relative cooling down of Indo-Soviet relations. A complement of factors account for this. Firstly, since Stalin's death the conduct of Indo-Soviet relations at the highest level had depended on continuity of contact between Khrushchev and Nehru who shared mutual regard for each other. In May 1964 Nehru died and in October Khrushchev was deposed. Although the impact of the personalities of the two leaders on Indo-Soviet relations need not be exaggerated, it is obvious that the new leaders in both countries did not share the warmth and regard for each other that Nehru and Khrushchev had.

Secondly, in the year following Khrushchev's ouster Soviet policy towards the Third World underwent significant changes. The former policy of devoting attention to a handful of developing Afro-Asian states such as Guinea, Egypt and India gave way to a new approach. The keynote of this policy was a more equitable distribution of Soviet favours over a greater number of developing states, with less attention to the internal complexion of the regimes concerned. The implications of this general change in Soviet foreign policy, as far as the Indian sub-continent was concerned was that while India was still considered important it lost its position of centrality in Soviet perceptions and the Soviet Union began to cultivate closer relations with Pakistan.

Another factor specific to the Indian sub-continent which prompted the Soviet Union to enhance its relationship with Pakistan was the Soviet desire to broaden its support base along its southern border so as to counter the trend of increasing Chinese influence in Pakistan. The latter too was not averse to a closer relationship with the Soviet Union. It had progressively grown disillusioned with the benefits accruing from the membership of the Western sponsored alliance system, especially since Western support for its traditional rival India had increased in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian border war of 1962. Thus there was progress in Soviet-Pakistani relations from 1965 onwards. Although there was no dramatic change in the relative positions that India and Pakistan occupied in the order of Soviet priorities it was clear that the gulf between India and Pakistan in Soviet estimation was no longer as yawning as it had been only a few years earlier. The Indo-Pakistani dispute on the Rann of Kutch issue and subsequently the Indo-Pakistani war in September 1965 witnessed the Soviet Union adopting a neutral line between the two countries.21

Initially this so-called policy of 'even handedness' seemed to be paying dividends as the Soviet Union was successful in mediating an Agreement between India and Pakistan at Tashkent in 1966. But the Soviet attempt to pursue an autonomous policy towards Pakistan coincided with the appearance of some stresses and strains in Indo-Soviet relations. While most of these strains had their origins

21 Naik, op.cit., p.137.
in issues which were far removed from Indo-Pakistani and Soviet-Pakistani relations, not a few of them took on for Indians a special significance beyond their intrinsic importance and were exacerbated because of developments in Soviet-Pakistani relations.

Briefly, the surface tensions in Indo-Soviet relations related to such matters as Soviet 'cartographic aggression' - an Indian euphemism for Soviet maps depicting the disputed areas of Aksai Chin and Northeastern Frontier Agency as belonging to China; the broadcasts of 'Radio Peace and Progress' which were portraying the Congress Party and some of its leaders in a very unflattering light; the brusque criticism by S.A. Skachkov, Chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic relations, of the managerial inefficiency of the Indians in following through on Soviet-aided projects; the reluctance of the Soviet Union to carry the burden of the devaluation of the Indian rupee in the bilateral trade; finally, the Soviet decision to sell military equipment to India's arch-rival Pakistan.

While most of the frictions which developed between the two countries were insignificant in themselves taken together they make this period the most uncomfortable in Indo-Soviet relations since the Stalinist era. Although Soviet economic and military assistance to India continued, the eventuality which the Soviet Union had sought to prevent - that improved Soviet-Pakistani relations could only be achieved at the cost of Indo-Soviet relations - began to take on reality.
(d) **1969-1971**

The downward trend evident in the earlier phase of Indo-Soviet relations was reversed during this period. The primary factor facilitating this upturn in relations was the convergence of Soviet and Indian interests due to the reinforcement of the shared perception of China as a potential threat.

The Ussuri river clashes between the Soviet and Chinese border contingents over Damansky (Zhen Bao) island in March 1969, heightened tension between China and the Soviet Union. Their common 4,500 mile border underwent rapid militarisation. The perceived threat from a 'militaristic and aggressive' China dominated the Soviet foreign policy outlook. The USSR, therefore, increasingly felt the need for firm allies responsive to the Chinese threat. Whatever influence the Soviets had in India was too limited to enable them to include India as such an ally. Steadily this need moved the USSR towards closer relations with India, since Pakistan's continuing friendly relations with China indicated that the Soviet attempt to wean it away from China the basis of the 'even handed policy' had not proved successful.

On its part India too was responsive to Soviet needs since its suspicions of China were significantly heightened by Sino-Pakistani road building activities on the borders of 'Pakistan-occupied Kashmir' and China. Moreover in July 1969, there was a new clash on the Sino-Indian border and there were reports of Chinese troop concentrations along the border with India. Since the US was then in the process of disengagement from the Asian mainland it was not possible
for India to turn to it for help. Hence India responded to the Soviet need for a closer relationship between the two countries. Thus although Mrs Gandhi was eager to deny that 'New Delhi has increasingly been turning to Moscow' she nevertheless admitted that 'it is, in fact, Moscow which has turned more towards us'.

Concrete evidence of a shift in Soviet policy was provided by Soviet efforts to rapidly resolve the problem areas in Soviet-Indian relations. The consignment of Soviet arms to Pakistan, which was to have been sent in the second half of 1969 was stopped. The heat was taken out of the debate of 'cartographic aggression' by the Soviet assurance that a new map would be published. The Kremlin's extremely restrained response to the uproar caused by the Indian 'discovery', due to an on-site accident, that the Soviets had been building an 'unauthorised' cultural centre at Trirandrum in the state of Kerala was another example of the attempt to minimise as much as possible the embarrassment to Mrs Gandhi's government. Finally, the Soviet press comment on the direction of India's domestic policy was more favourable than it had been in the earlier period.

On the economic front too there were significant changes. When S.A. Skachkov, the Chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations and V.E. Dymshits, First Vice-Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers visited India in

\[22\] Quoted in Ian Clark, op.cit., p.182.
February 1970 there was no hint of the severe criticism that Skachkov had made of Indian handling of Soviet-aided projects. While there was a recognition of problem areas, Skachkov and Dymshits on more than one occasion, expressed their satisfaction with the progress of the projects and explained that many of the difficulties were natural growth problems that were not peculiar to India. At the conclusion of the visit agreements were signed pledging Soviet help for further extension of Bokaro's capacity and Soviet assistance in setting up new petrochemical and fertilizer plants in India.

In December 1970, the two states signed a new five-year trade agreement. While at one level it was a continuation of a long-term trade relationship, on another it also marked a qualitatively new stage, a 'landmark' in the 'development of Indo-Soviet relations'. For the first time the USSR agreed to trade such needed items as ships and tankers as well as more steel, various metals and new industrial goods. More importantly India was to export a larger percentage of manufactured goods, including those from Soviet-aided projects. This was a development that reflected changes in the structure of the Indian economy and would provide important markets for India.

The development of extremely close relations between India and the Soviet Union by early 1971 was acknowledged by Brezhnev in his report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU.

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He declared,

Our friendly relations with India have developed considerably. The Indian Government's pursuit of a peaceable, independent line in international affairs and the traditional feelings of friendship linking the peoples of the two countries have all helped to deepen Soviet-Indian cooperation.²⁴

The above survey of the broad contours of Indo-Soviet relations indicates that in the post-Stalin era the bilateral relationship had evolved into one of close cooperation. After a period of strains during the later part of the 1960s Indo-Soviet relations had entered the 1970s on a very positive note. In fact the couple of years prior to the signing of the treaty were a period of development of increasingly close ties and a growing communality of interests between the two countries. Thus there was evidence of a bilateral dynamic fostering closer cooperation. From this perspective it can be argued that the treaty was but another, albeit a major, landmark in the broad development of Indo-Soviet relations over a period of more than one and a half decades. The significance of the treaty can therefore be interpreted as providing a legal framework for the existing political, economic and cultural relations, developed during the preceding fifteen years, and also emphasising that these relations would, for the duration of the treaty relationship, develop along similar lines. This perspective is not entirely without validity. However, such an interpretation does not take sufficient account of the timing of the treaty. When the

revealed that it had been under discussion for some two years. This underlines that 'the needs of the moment must have clinched the treaty'. The 'bilateral argument' does not adequately explain the 'needs of the moment'. In order to shed light on this aspect the treaty needs to be placed in the context of the regional and global situation in 1971.

II

The International Situation in 1971

The principal development at the regional level on the Indian subcontinent in 1971 was the eruption of the long simmering differences between the eastern and western wings of Pakistan into a civil war in the eastern wing as a consequence of the military crackdown on 25 March 1971.

Given the deep mistrust that exists between the physically contiguous yet psychologically distant neighbours, India and Pakistan, much of their foreign policies were shaped as responses to each other's actions. Therefore, the political crisis in East Pakistan progressively sucked India into its vortex.

The influx of 7-10 million refugees who fled into India from East Pakistan, in order to escape the reign of terror of the West Pakistani army, created new economic, social and

25 New Delhi Radio, August 9, 1971, cited in Ian Clark, op.cit., p.211.
26 The Times (London), August 10, 1971.
political problems of massive proportions for the already beleaguered government of India. The events in East Pakistan became the overriding issue in India's internal politics. Many among the Indian elites viewed the crisis as an opportunity to undo the 'unnatural' balance of power in the subcontinent, and to cut Pakistan down to a size at which it could no longer vie to be an equal with India or remain an enemy to be afraid of. As a knowledgeable Indian commentator, whose views summed up the feelings most observers, put it,

Opinion makers in India built up systematic pressure on the government to act on behalf of the BanglaDesh movement. No government could have survived in New Delhi if it had taken a neutral, hands-off attitude to the political upheaval in East Pakistan.27

As the crisis in East Pakistan continued there were several indicators that India was well on the way to committing itself to the formation of Bangladesh as an independent entity. First, on March 31, the Indian Parliament passed a resolution which condemned 'the massive attack by armed forces from West Pakistan ... unleashed against the entire people of East Bengal ...' 28 and assured 'the 75 million people of East Bengal ... the wholehearted sympathy and support of the people of India'.29 Thus already at this early stage East Pakistan was being referred to as East Bengal, the precursor of Bangladesh, and India was overtly sympathetic and supportive of the aspirations of the people of East

29 ibid.
Pakistan. Second, given the nature of Indo-Pakistani animosities the very fact that the Government of India after deliberation decided not to close the borders but to allow the refugees to come in is indicative of (in a sense) 'the commitment of the government of India to the liberation of BanglaDesh'. Third, the provisional 'government' of Bangladesh was permitted to be set up on Indian soil, and although India did not accord it 'de jure' recognition it gave the 'government' the hospitality it needed to function as such. Fourth, the partisans of the Bangladesh Liberation Army (Mukti Bahini) were allowed sanctuary in India for regrouping and were permitted to operate from the Indian side of the border. Moreover from April-May onwards the Indian armed forces and paramilitary personnel actively trained the new recruits of the Mukti Bahini.

The Soviet Union's response to the events in East Pakistan differed significantly from that of India. The avoidance of war in the subcontinent was something that the USSR had worked for at least since the Tashkent agreement of 1966. The Soviet line of thinking was that an Indo-Pakistani conflict would redound to China's benefit since it would increase Chinese influence in Pakistan, whereas if India and Pakistan instead of expending their energies in quarrelling between themselves, could move towards closer cooperation,
then the scope for increase in Chinese influence would be limited and therefore the security of the southeastern flank of the Soviet Union would be markedly heightened.

Faced with a situation of deteriorating Indo-Pakistani relations in the wake of the events in East Pakistan the Soviet Union pursued a policy that would lessen, if not remove, the crisis before it worsened. On 2 April, the Soviet President Podgorny wrote to Pakistan's President, General Yahya Khan, outlining the Soviet position. In the letter he warned that 'continuation of repressive measures and bloodshed in East Pakistan will, undoubtedly, only make the solution of problems more difficult and may do great harm to the vital interests of the entire people of Pakistan' and therefore advised 'turning to methods of a peaceful settlement' so as to 'meet the interests of the entire people of Pakistan and the interests of preserving peace in the area'. Thus while the USSR made it clear that it was opposed to the use of force to settle the crisis the use of the diplomatically correct East Pakistan (in contrast to East Bengal used in the Indian Parliament's resolution of 31 March) and the emphasis on 'entire people of Pakistan' (mentioned twice) in the message revealed that the USSR had no interest whatsoever in the breakup of Pakistan. The reference to 'peace in the area' indicated the Soviet desire to stave off war in the subcontinent.

34 ibid.
35 ibid.
When President Tahya Khan maintained a hard line position in response to the Soviet appeal, instead of escalating tension with Pakistan the USSR switched to restraining India. Although within India pressures intensified rapidly to adopt policies regarding the flood of refugees into the country, it was not until May that Pravda even mentioned the problem. Moreover, during the close consultations between Soviet and Indian officials the thrust of the Soviet message to New Delhi was to urge circumspection on India and to suggest that India should not be the first nation to recognise the independence of East Pakistan.\textsuperscript{36}

At this stage a new element was introduced into the situation in South Asia. In July it was revealed that Henry Kissinger while on a visit to Pakistan had made a secret journey to Peking (arranged through the good offices of Pakistan) marking the biggest diplomatic breakthrough of our times. It was also announced that Nixon would be visiting China in 1972. These developments indicated that there was underway a major restructuring of great power relations.

Since Pakistan had been actively aiding the rapprochement the Indians perceived that the new Sino-US linkage could work in South Asia only to the detriment of India. In the Indian assessment the development was seen as an instance of Pakistan coordinating its policies with China and USA

while India stood isolated. The Indian desire to secure Soviet support so as to end India's isolation and counter the perceived Pakistan-China-US axis was indeed great.

The Soviet Union was also concerned over the prospect of Sino-American rapprochement. It saw in the Indian need an opportunity not only to gain influence in New Delhi, so as to serve its own global strategic purposes of countering the Sino-US alignment, but also to stave off war in South Asia so as not to provide China with greater scope to increase its influence in Pakistan.

The needs of both the sides were sought to be served by the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet Treaty in August 1971. From the Indian point of view the Treaty ended India's isolation and ensured Soviet support in the face of the perceived Pakistan-China-US axis, and also placed additional pressure on President Yahya Khan to reach a political solution in East Pakistan. From the Soviet viewpoint the Treaty was geared to formalising and extending Soviet influence in India, not only as a long term counter to the Sino-US accord but also for the immediate end of stabilising the situation in South Asia, both by deterring the Pakistanis and their supporters from adopting aggressive military postures and by providing a psychological crutch to the Indians designed to forestall an emotional drift towards war.

In conclusion, if an explanation is to be provided for India and the Soviet Union entering into a treaty relationship there are strong grounds for arguing that it is best cast in terms of a combination of both the bilateral as well as
the situational dimensions. While the existence of a bilateral dynamic in Indo-Soviet relations was an essential prerequisite it was by no means sufficient by itself to consolidate the Indo-Soviet relationship in 1971. It was the 'situational logic' that clinched the issue and cemented the Indo-Soviet relationship with a twenty year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation on 9 August 1971.

III

The treaty consists of a preamble, which focusses on Indo-Soviet friendship and the need for world peace, and twelve articles.\(^\text{37}\)

Article One declares enduring friendship, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and non-interference in internal affairs in relations between the two states. Articles Two and Three emphasise the support of both the parties for general and complete disarmament and their opposition to colonialism and racialism in all forms. Though these are mentioned in general terms it needs to be noted that the Soviets had been accusing the Chinese of 'racialism' from the days of the Sino-Soviet split and the Indian government was accusing the West Pakistan military regime of pursuing policies of colonialism and racial domination in East Bengal. By implication these articles criticise China and Pakistan.

Article Four confirms Soviet respect for India's policy of non-alignment' and also expresses India's respect for

\(^{37}\) Text of Treaty reproduced in Appendix.
the USSR's 'peace-loving policy'. Articles Five to Seven deal with the maintenance of regular contacts and economic, technical, scientific, cultural and other kinds of cooperation between the two countries.

Articles Eight to Ten are explicitly concerned with the security aspects of the relationship. Article Eight expresses the undertaking of the two 'High Contracting Parties' not to enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other Party. The first part of Article Nine goes a step further and states that each side would 'abstain from giving any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other Party'. The second part guarantees that if either of the Parties is attacked or threatened with attack then India and the Soviet Union 'shall immediately enter into mutual consultations with a view to eliminating this threat and taking appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security for their countries'.

Article Ten reinforces this mutual commitment. The message of the security aspect of the Treaty was clearly Soviet support for India.

Finally, Article Eleven stipulates that the duration of the treaty was initially for a twenty year period, while Article Twelve stipulates that any differences in the interpretation would be settled bilaterally.
CHAPTER II

USSR, INDIA AND THE BIRTH OF BANGLADESH

The primary concern of India and the Soviet Union after they entered a new era in their relations was the turmoil in East Pakistan. This chapter surveys Indian and Soviet attitudes on this issue, subsequent to their entering into a treaty relationship, in order to assess whether the Soviet Union was able to utilize this closer relationship to influence Indian foreign policy in the South Asian crisis of 1971.

(a) August 9-October 15

While the treaty symbolised a closer Indo-Soviet relationship in the face of a perceived Sino-US-Pakistan axis in South Asia, differences between India and the Soviet Union over the events in East Pakistan remained. The Joint Statement issued on August 12, at the end of the talks which had led to the Treaty bears testimony to that. The Communiqué did not refer to East Pakistan as East Bengal, though this was what India desired, and was the term the Indian Parliament had used in its resolution of March 31. Furthermore, the Indian foreign minister was described as having explained to his Soviet counterpart the burden the refugees were placing on India, but there was no mention of what the Soviets felt about this. Apparently the Soviet

1 Pravda, August 13.
2 ibid.
Union did not as yet appreciate the problems created for India, and therefore did not share India's perception of the imminent need to take action against Pakistan so as to alleviate the refugee crisis.

Additionally, the Joint Statement carried a non-use of force declaration. It is possible that this had been prompted by Soviet concern that India might use force to solve the Bangladesh crisis. Alternatively it could have been a reflection of India's concern about Chinese intentions. Given the situation then prevalent it is very likely that the Soviet concern vis-a-vis India was the predominant factor accounting for the insertion of the clause about peaceful solutions. For, despite its verbosity since 1965, China had actually acted with restraint towards India and in fact in 1970 the requirements of normalisation were discussed between Indian and Chinese diplomats in various capitals.

Despite the continued differences in the attitudes of the two countries, in September at the United Nations the Soviet Union consistently blocked Pakistan's attempts to obtain UN intervention in the crisis. That this did

3 ibid.


5 R. Jackson, South Asian Crisis: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Chatto & Windus, IISS, 1975), p.83.
not mark a coincidence of Indian and Soviet views was evident when amidst mounting pressure in India to act decisively, Mrs Gandhi visited Moscow in late September.

According to an India analyst, 'the Russians were tireless in trying to persuade Mrs Gandhi out of any intention to intervene militarily'. The Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin reportedly advised Mrs Gandhi that the conflict in East Pakistan was an internal problem of Pakistan and it was for the people of Pakistan to decide what sort of political security they should have. Speaking to Indian correspondents at the time of Mrs Gandhi's departure Kosygin made it clear that the Soviet Union was firmly opposed to India going to war with Pakistan, even after all efforts to find a peaceful solution had failed. In fact he reportedly invoked the principle of non-intervention to justify the Soviet point of view.

On her part, despite Soviet pressure, Mrs Gandhi held that

the government of India is determined to take all necessary measures to stop the inflow of refugees from East Bengal to India and to ensure that those refugees who are already in India return to their homeland without delay.

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8 Girilal Jain, 'Divergent Approaches to Bangladesh', *Times of India*, October 6, 1971.
9 *Foreign Affairs Record* (Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India), September 1971, Vol.XVII, No.9, pp.187-190.
On the issue of whether the events in East Pakistan were an internal matter of Pakistan, Mrs Gandhi stated

> What has happened in East Bengal - or Bangladesh, as the world has begun to call it - can no longer be regarded as Pakistan's domestic affair.\(^\text{10}\)

The differences between the Indian and Soviet perceptions were manifested dramatically by the contrast between the Indian and Soviet versions of the Joint Declaration issued at the culmination of the visit. While the Indian version referred throughout to 'East Bengal',\(^\text{11}\) the Soviet version spoke only of 'East Pakistan'.\(^\text{12}\)

Although in the aftermath of Mrs Gandhi's visit there was a marked increase in the hostility of Soviet press reports on Pakistan's policies, yet there were limits on how far the Soviets went at this stage. As one commentator noted, 'the major thrust of the Soviet press commentary was still on the need to avoid war on the subcontinent'.\(^\text{13}\) That the Soviets were still attempting to restrain India from taking actions which might lead to war was made clear by the Soviet President Podgorny. When he stopped over at New Delhi on October 1, on his way to Hanoi, Podgorny declared, 'We consider that the further sliding towards a military conflict must be prevented'.\(^\text{14}\) If there was any doubt on

\(^{10}\) ibid., p.191.

\(^{11}\) ibid., pp.187-190.

\(^{12}\) Pravda, September 30, 1971.


\(^{14}\) Pravda, October 2, 1971.
this point it was removed by the reference in the Soviet-Algerian communique issued at the conclusion of Kosygin's visit to Algeria in early October that both parties affirm their 'respect for the national unity and integrity of Pakistan'.

The Soviet diplomatic pressure on India brought about the first shift in India's stance on Bangladesh. On October 8 the Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh publicly acknowledged that India did not regard sovereign independence as necessarily the only solution to the Bangladesh problem. Addressing the All India Congress Committee, the policy making caucus of the Congress party at New Delhi, he stated that a political solution even within the framework of a united Pakistan was acceptable to India, provided it was approved by the elected representatives of East Bengal. It appeared that the Soviet Union had succeeded in exerting influence on India to modify its stance.

The shift however proved only momentary. As the monsoons ended in October, tension between India and Pakistan rose sharply. Pakistan with US assistance was making progress in weaning away a faction of the Awami League leadership. In a televised broadcast on October 12, General Yahya Khan spoke of all out war and on the pretext of military exercises

15 ibid., October 9, 1971.
17 The Anderson Papers on U.S. Handling of Situation in Indian Sub-continent (New Delhi, December 1971), pp.119-120.
Pakistani troops were moved towards the Indian border, in both East and West Pakistan.\(^\text{19}\)

The Indian policy reaction was swift. High level discussions were held in New Delhi. The Indians seized the opportunity that Pakistani actions provided them to escape from the position they had adopted under Soviet pressure. On October 14, Mrs Gandhi announced that Swaran Singh had been misquoted and that India saw independence as the only way out of the crisis in East Bengal.\(^\text{20}\) Since the logical extension of this line would be Indian recognition which in turn could possibly result in an Indo-Pakistani war, Mrs Gandhi seemed to be indicating that if need be India was willing to 'go it alone', irrespective of Soviet support.

(b) October 16-December 16

The Soviet Union was faced with a discouraging yet clarified situation. India was not keen to compromise, and the Soviet Union realised that its attempt to restrain India had been unsuccessful. Therefore the Soviets evidently concluded that, given the circumstances, their interests would be best served by bowing to Indian objectives. On October 22, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin arrived in India for talks which were labelled as in accordance with the obligation for 'consultation' with a

\(^\text{19}\) R. Jackson, op.cit., p.88.

\(^\text{20}\) Times of India, October 15, 1971.
view to 'eliminating an attack or threat of attack' specified in Article Nine of the treaty. Moreover, for the first time since the beginning of the crisis both sides were stated to have 'agreed completely in their assessment of the situation'. A further display of change in the Soviet attitude was provided by the arrival in India of the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet airforce, Marshal Kutakhov. The fact that Pakistan refused overflight facilities to him underscores the importance of the trip to Indo-Soviet interactions on the Bangladesh issue.

In November there were no official Soviet pronouncements indicating the close convergence of the Indian and Soviet positions on the South Asian crisis. The tenor of Soviet press comment however became overtly critical of Pakistan's policy and expressive and demonstrative in its support of the liberation forces in Bangladesh.

When war broke out between India and Pakistan on December 3, the Soviet Union moved along several lines to translate its support into demonstrative action on behalf of its treaty partner. On December 5, TASS issued a statement branding Pakistan as the aggressor. When the UN Security Council discussed the matter the Soviet Ambassador vetoed ceasefire resolutions three times (on December 5, 6 and 13) while India completed its military operations in Bangladesh.

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22 Times of India, October 31, 1971.
On the military front the Soviet Union reportedly assured India that in case of a Chinese attack across the Himalayas, the Soviet Union would start diversionary action in Sinkiang. Finally when the US despatched a task force of the Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal as a show of force, the Soviet Ambassador Pegor informed the Indian government that the Soviet Union would not allow the Seventh Fleet to intervene. Three days after the US task force sailed towards the Bay of Bengal through the Straits of Malacca vessels of the Soviet Pacific Fleet followed suit. In short the Soviet Union held the international ring while India solved the Bangladesh problem to its own satisfaction.

From the point of view of the central question that this chapter addresses, that is whether the Soviet Union was able to influence India's foreign policy posture in the wake of the new relationship, the above survey provides interesting revelations.

The treaty in August did not represent any change in the attitudes of India and the Soviet Union towards the Bangladesh crisis. Probably differences in strategic objectives kept the two from complete agreement, and each sought to

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24 Jack Anderson's article in *Daily Telegraph*, January 10, 1972 reproduced in R. Jackson, *op.cit.*, p.231. Interestingly during the UN debate on the Indo-Pakistan war the Chinese delegate pointedly asked the Soviet representative for a categorical assurance that there would be no intervention in Sinkiang should China move in support of Pakistan. No such Soviet assurance was forthcoming. On this see Bhabhani Sengupta (1973), *op.cit.*, p.231.

25 Anderson, *op.cit.*
influence the other. As a perceptive Indian scholar commenting on the treaty noted:

the two entered into a coalition-type of relationship in which collaboration for the attainment of shared objectives did not preclude efforts by each to influence the other for the pursuit of its own strategic interests.\textsuperscript{26}

Until mid-October the Soviet Union prevailed in preventing India from taking further action that would lead to war and momentarily even succeeded in influencing India to change its posture. But the working out of historic local antagonisms proved too strong a force for Soviet diplomacy to arrest. Therefore commencing with Firyubin's October 22 visit Soviet policy became supportive of India, and the latter used the Soviet connection to its advantage. This is not to imply that India influenced the Soviet Union. For, if perceptions of interests are identical, one side cannot be said to be exercising influence over the other.

CHAPTER III

'HEY DAY' OF INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

In the aftermath of the Indo-Pakistani war the stage seemed set for further consolidation of Indo-Soviet cooperation. Soviet prestige in India was greater than ever before. Since Soviet support had played a key role in the Indian victory India was politically beholden to the Soviet Union. Moreover the Soviet Union had demonstrated its value as an ally and this had resulted in a broadening of support within India for closer ties with it. This chapter assesses whether this greater Soviet prestige resulted in India moving closer to the Soviet Union politically, economically and in the sphere of arms trade, during the period from 1972 to early 1977, while Mrs Gandhi's Congress party was in office.

I

The immediate postwar period witnessed a glorification of Indo-Soviet friendship in terms mere mortals would generally believe to be reserved for the other world. Official commentaries sang praise of the 'brotherly love', 'mutuality' and 'cooperation' existing between India and the Soviet Union. Joint Declarations stressed the cordiality of Indo-Soviet relations, and emphasised the 'profound' and 'deep' satisfaction of the two states regarding their relationship.

Below this surface of cordiality ran the current of an intensified Indian desire not to get burdened with Soviet
friendship. The most emphatic indication of this desire was provided by Mrs Gandhi during an interview with C.L. Sulzberger of the *New York Times* in January 1972. Replying to a question regarding India's relations with the Soviet Union in the light of the USSR's strong political and military support in the war Mrs Gandhi stated,

Countries help one another because they need one another. Obviously countries are not disinterested when they help one another.\(^1\)

She further added 'We are unable to display gratitude in any tangible sense for anything'.\(^2\)

Whether this line of thinking was translated into policy action or was a mere rhetorical flourish is the theme to be examined in this section by analysing Indian and Soviet attitudes on major international issues.

(a) **Indian Ocean: 'Zone of Peace' and Super Power Rivalry**

Amongst the major issues on the international agenda in the early 1970s was the question of super power rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Since the minimisation of external influence in the Indian Ocean region would enhance the potential for India exercising its own influence in the region India had from the late 1960s onwards constantly protested against militarisation of the Indian Ocean by external powers. It had characterised super power presence

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\(^1\) *New York Times*, February 17, 1972.  
\(^2\) ibid.
in the Indian Ocean as the re-emergence of gunboat diplomacy and a threat to the security of the littoral. It was one of the principal advocates of the campaign to exclude external military presence by declaring the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

All along the Soviet Union had objected to the move to declare the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace on the grounds that any attempt to prevent a Soviet military presence in the Ocean would be an infringement of the right of free navigation on the high seas. The Soviet stand was that it would be willing to support the 'Zone of Peace' proposal provided it was in consonance with 'international law'. In effect this meant that the USSR's right to send its navy into the Indian Ocean whenever and wherever it chooses to do so should be accepted.

On December 16, 1971 the United Nations General Assembly voted on the resolution declaring the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The resolution called upon the great powers to halt 'the further escalation and expansion of their military bases, military installations, logistical supply facilities' as well as any manifestation 'of great power military presence... conceived in the context of great power rivalry'. The differing strategic perceptions of India and the Soviet Union were reflected in their votes on the resolution.

3 Ian Clark, 'Autonomy and Dependence in Recent Indo-Soviet Relations', Australian Outlook, April 1977, p.161.

4 Text of UN Resolution 2832 is reproduced in Dieter Braun, Indian Ocean: Region of Conflict or Zone of Peace? (Croom Helm, Canberra, 1983), pp.214-215.
India, along with a majority of UN members voted in favour of the resolution. The Soviet Union abstained. Since then every year there have been regular UN votes on the implementation of the Zone of Peace resolution. The differing voting patterns of India and the Soviet Union have continued and are testimony of Indian unwillingness to move closer to the USSR.

A further demonstration of Indian reluctance to subordinate its interests to those of the Soviet Union is provided on the question of bases. Time and again there have been reports in the Western media about India granting special base facilities to the Soviet Union. There is no evidence to substantiate such contentions. The Indian government has denied all such reports every time it has been asked about them in the Indian Parliament.5

However, in a smaller way India did make concessions to Soviet sensibilities. A distinction was drawn in Indian public pronouncements between Soviet and US activities in the Indian Ocean. According to the Indians the Soviets had a naval presence whereas the US had a naval base,6 and therefore the latter was more objectionable than the former.7

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5 For example on December 5, 1974 the Indian defence minister categorically stated, 'No special facilities are being provided to ships from the Soviet Union in Indian ports', Lok Sabha Debates (Fifth Series), December 5, 1974, Vol.XLVI, No.16, Cls.159-160 (transcript translated from Hindi).

6 Deputy External Affairs Minister: 'I can only say that a military base is certainly different from a naval presence', Lok Sabha Debates (Fifth Series), December 12, 1974, Vol.XLVI, No.21, Cl.3.

7 In an interview Mrs Gandhi stated that while the establishment of a strategic base by the US on Diego Garcia added tensions Russian ships were just passing by and that was quite a different situation, Times of India, January 28, 1975.
Based on such reasoning Indian criticism focussed on US operations in the Indian Ocean while at the same time Indian references to Soviet operations were subdued. An American analyst in a particularly critical assessment of India's attitudes towards the super powers observed,

India excused, justified or ignored the naval power of the Soviet Union, but the U.S. navy and, more particularly, its base at Diego Garcia became the government's special scapegoat.

While such an assessment may be too harsh, the point that India was more tolerant of Soviet activities than it was of US operations is a valid one. Further evidence of Indian deference to Soviet sensibilities was provided during Mrs Gandhi's visit to the Soviet Union in June 1976. The Indian Prime Minister reiterated the distinction India had drawn between US and Soviet activities. Furthermore the Joint Declaration released at the end of Mrs Gandhi's visit stated that the two sides recognised that the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace would have to be in conformity with 'generally recognised principles of international law'. This was a formulation that the

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8 Mr Swaran Singh's speech on the Indian Ocean in the Lok Sabha on November 12, 1973 was a typical example of imbalance in Indian attitudes towards US and USSR operations in the region. See Lok Sabha Debates (Fifth Series), November 12, 1973, Vol.XXXII, No.1, Cls.252-254.

9 Joel Larus, 'India's Non Alignment and Superpower Rivalry in the Indian Ocean' in Clark and Bowman (eds), The Indian Ocean in Global Politics (Westview Press, 1981), p.49.


11 Pravda, June 14, 1976.
Soviets had long been using to defend their naval activities and to rebut calls for ending their presence in the Indian Ocean. Indian acceptance of this phrase revealed that India recognised the validity of Soviet objections.

The record thus indicates that while refusing to radically alter its stance on the Zone of Peace issue India did make concessions to Soviet sensibilities.

(b) **Nuclear Proliferation**

Two aspects of the nuclear proliferation problem which impinged on Indo-Soviet relations were the attitudes towards the Non Proliferation Treaty and towards the creation of a nuclear free zone in South Asia.

In the negotiations leading to the signing of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1969 the positions adopted by the two countries were diametrically opposite. The Soviet Union was amongst the most ardent advocates of universal adherence to the NPT. India, on the other hand, despite Soviet pressure,\(^\text{12}\) refused to support it on the grounds that it contained an imbalance of obligations weighted against non-nuclear states.\(^\text{13}\)

The closer relations that came into being between India and the Soviet Union after 1971 did not bring about any change

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\(^{13}\) For a detailed statement of Indian objections to the NPT see UN Document No.A/C.1.DV.1567.
in their respective policies. The Indian nuclear explosion, albeit a 'peaceful' one, on 18 May 1974, highlighted the potential divergence of interests of the two countries. The declarations made by the representatives of the two countries in the months following the Indian explosion testify to this.

On the one hand, Mr Brezhnev declared, 'The task of the more effective and universal application of the treaty on Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is becoming more urgent than ever before'. On the other hand, Mr Brajesh Mishra, the Indian representative at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament asserted,

We have considered and we continue to consider that the NPT is not an equal legal instrument. It is a discriminatory instrument and I must categorically state here that we will not become a party to that instrument as long as the discriminatory character of that instrument remains as it is today.

Thus India maintained its longheld reservations about the NPT while its ally lost no opportunity to stress the need for universal adherence to the NPT. What is more interesting is that notwithstanding this conspicuous divergence between the positions of the two countries the Indian nuclear explosion evoked no censure from the USSR. In fact as the annual publication of the International Institute for Strategic

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15 Foreign Affairs Record, July 1974, p.217.
Studies, the Strategic Survey noted, 'the Soviet Union, far from condemning the Indian explosion, seemed to endorse it'.\(^{16}\)

Given the well-known Soviet commitment to the NPT one cannot but agree with the assessment that it represented 'a very real Soviet concession to India'.\(^{17}\)

As a consequence of the Indian explosion the proposal to declare South Asia as a Nuclear Free Zone became an important issue. The Soviet attitude towards nuclear free zones was a logical extension of its position on non-proliferation. Since it was wedded to non-proliferation the USSR generally also supported nuclear free zones. On the basis of the general Soviet attitude towards such matters one can assume that it would have been consistent for the USSR to support moves for declaring South Asia as a nuclear free zone. Yet in the specific case of South Asia the Soviet Union did not lend its support.

In October 1974 when Pakistan's President Bhutto visited the Soviet Union he made a strong plea for the declaration of South Asia as a nuclear free zone, emphasising the positive contribution such a step would make to the goal of non-proliferation.\(^{18}\) Although this line of reasoning resembled that of the Soviet Union generally, the Soviet Union refused to be drawn. The Joint communique at the end of Bhutto's visit was silent on the question.\(^{19}\)


\(^{17}\) ibid.

\(^{18}\) For text of Bhutto's spech see Foreign Affairs Pakistan, October 1974.

\(^{19}\) Pravda, October 27, 1974.
In November 1974, both Pakistan and India tabled resolutions on this question in the UN General Assembly. The Pakistani proposal called upon all countries in South Asia to relinquish the testing, use, manufacture, production, acquisition or storage of any nuclear weapons or nuclear launching devices. The proposal got the backing of the UN Secretary General who felt it was necessary in connection with universal disarmament efforts. The Soviet Union did not support it.

On the other hand the draft put forward by India spoke of a denuclearised zone in South Asia 'taking into account its special features and geographical extent'. From the Indian point of view amongst the 'special features' were some which made the very idea a non-starter. In fact the Indian draft precluded any further discussion of a South Asian nuclear free zone in international fora. Nevertheless the Soviet Union supported it.

The Soviet action of supporting the toothless Indian resolution and not the tougher Pakistani one was not in consonance with the general Soviet attitude on such matters. It makes sense only as an instance of Soviet deference to Indian reservations.

20 D. Braun, op.cit., p.188.
21 Quoted in Ian Clark, op.cit., p.161.
22 The Indian representative to the UN Committee on Disarmament listed out several factors which 'make the situation inappropriate for the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the sub region of South Asia', Foreign Affairs Record, November 1975, p.297.
(c) **Asian Collective Security**

In the two issues examined so far the stakes involved for India were high. Consequently it would have been difficult for the Soviet Union to influence India to shift its posture. Conversely India would have found itself hard pressed to justify such a shift. On the issue of Asian Collective Security what was at stake was merely a statement endorsing the Soviet security model for Asia. Thus one can assume that it would have been easier for the Soviet Union to get India to endorse it.

Brezhnev had first floated the idea of Asian Collective Security in the context of acute Sino-Soviet rivalry in 1969. However the responses of Asian states, including India, were negative or at best lukewarm. This resulted in the issue being confined to the backburner.

By 1972 the situation in Asia had changed vastly in favour of the Soviet Union. The Soviets had signed treaties of Friendship and Cooperation with Egypt and Iraq in West Asia and India in South Asia. The use of Soviet good offices had, at least partly, contributed to the opening of the Paris peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam, thus conferring on Moscow the coveted role of a peacemaker in South-East Asia. It was in this context that Soviet talk

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of Asian Collective Security was vigorously renewed. Every head of government or foreign minister coming in contact with Soviet leaders was pressed to subscribe to the Soviet proposal for Asian Collective Security.

When Brezhnev visited India in December 1973 a major goal of his was to gain Indian endorsement of the Soviet scheme. Judging from the contents of the communique released at the end of Mr Brezhnev's visit his efforts were not successful. The term Asian Collective Security did not find any mention at all. The proposition which had enough merit to warrant Iranian support was not endorsed by the Indians.

This amounted to a striking display of India's determination to maintain its distance from the Soviet Union. Probably the Indians wanting to keep their option of a better relationship with China openly refrained from endorsing the Collective Security scheme.

The Soviets did not give up their efforts to enlist Indian support. At the 1976 Conference on Security and

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24 Although no agenda was made public most newspaper reports emphasised that Asian Collective Security would be a major issue. For example, see Michael Hornsby, 'Mr Brezhnev wooing the Indians', The Times, November 26, 1973; H. Smith, 'Brezhnev to Seek Backing in India', New York Times, November 25, 1973; Dilip Mukherjee, 'Mr Brezhnev's Coming Visit', Times of India, November 26, 1973.


26 The Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of the Iranian Prime Minister's visit to Moscow in August 1973 stated 'The two sides expressed the intention to promote the realisation of the idea of creating a system of Collective Security in Asia', Pravda, August 13, 1973.
Cooperation in Europe the USSR laid much emphasis on the notion of extending collective security to Asia. Soviet press reports cited India as one of the countries which had evaluated the Soviet idea of making Asia a continent of peace positively. However, the Joint Declaration following Mrs Gandhi's visit to Moscow in June 1976, was once again silent on the issue. When she was asked for her opinion about holding a conference on security in Asia similar to the Helsinki Conference Mrs Gandhi reportedly replied that security depends on many factors and in her view the most important was stability based on economic strength. Therefore she stated that bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation was the best way of ensuring security.

The evasiveness of Mrs Gandhi's reply coupled with the lack of explicit public mention of the collective security idea by the Indians indicates that the earlier resistance was maintained.

(e) **Super Power Detente: The Indian Response**

Superpower détente was the principal development on the international front in the early seventies. The Soviet Union regarded it as a major foreign policy success and never lost an opportunity to impress on other states the positive contribution of this development to the relaxation of international tension.

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28 ibid.
Despite the friendship between the Soviet Union and India the Soviet enthusiasm for détente did not strike a responsive chord in its Indian ally. In fact India was suspicious that in the mutual 'give and take' involved in the process of détente decisions could be taken that could adversely affect its interests. Indian spokesmen time and again expressed misgivings about it. A typical expression of Indian scepticism was voiced by Mrs Gandhi as follows:

Can we be certain that the new and more realistic relations between the great powers do in fact indicate a more stable world order? Or are they yet another attempt to reinforce the old concept of balance of power? ... We must be vigilant against big power arrangements for the creation of new spheres of influence.29

During Mr Brezhnev's visit to New Delhi in 1973 it is very likely that he attempted to convince the Indians to modify their interpretation of Soviet-American détente as super power hegemony. His public utterances on the matter constituted a warm endorsement of détente. The Joint Declaration emerging from the Brezhnev visit reflected Soviet failure to assuage Indian doubts. A glowing and detailed Soviet appraisal of détente highlighting 'the important contribution made to the improvement of the general international situation as a result of Soviet-American summit talks',30 was followed by a none too enthusiastic Indian response.

It was stated that India welcomed the relaxation of tension between the USA and USSR since 'this step facilitates the easing of world tension'.

A perceptive Indian journalist reporting about the Soviet-Indian haggling on this point made the interesting observation that there was nothing in the view that the super powers were seeking to carve the world into spheres of influence. Thus although the Indians had toned down their criticism their distrust of superpower détente seems to have remained.

(e) India's Chinese Policy Shift

As has been noted earlier probably the most important factor cementing Indo-Soviet friendship is their common perceptions of China as a potential threat and therefore their mutual desire to stem the spread of Chinese influence in South Asia. Thus Indian attitudes towards China are of relevance in assessing whether Indian stances were in consonance with Soviet desires.

Sino-Indian relations had thawed out somewhat around 1970, for the first time since the border conflict of 1962. The requirements of normalisation were discussed between Indian and Chinese diplomats in various capitals. The events of 1971 ended any prospect of an immediate breakthrough.

31 ibid.
After the Indo-Pakistani war India attempted to probe the prospects of an improved relationship with China in order to enhance its own diplomatic 'elbow room'. China, however, did not respond. In subsequent years China tried to isolate India in South Asia, supported insurgencies in North-East India so as to undermine domestic order, and attempted to discredit India as a 'lackey of Moscow'. Thus normalisation of relations was not possible.

In early 1976 there were several indications that India was making fresh overtures towards China. India invited China to participate in a UNESCO Conference, supported Chinese candidature for membership of the Asian Development Bank and Mrs Gandhi signed the book of condolences in the Chinese Embassy when Chou En-lai died. China also reciprocated such gestures.

These developments caused concern in Moscow. The Soviets made several attempts to wean India away from the drift towards normalisation with China. Soviet propaganda emphasised the importance of Indo-Soviet ties. At the Twenty Fifth CPSU Congress Brezhnev condemned China and vowed to continue an uncompromising struggle against its reactionary policies. He followed this up by praising India to a degree unprecedented in the forum. In addresses to the Congress


and in interviews on Moscow television CPI Chairiman S.A. Dange and General Secretary Rao also attacked China and sought to remind Mrs Gandhi of the dangers of dealing with Beijing.36

Oblivious to Soviet concern on 15 April 1976 it was announced in the Parliament that India was upgrading its diplomatic representation in Beijing to the ambassadorial level. The Soviet Union's response to this major step towards normalisation of Sino-Indian relations was decidedly unenthusiastic. When the Indian Prime Minister visited Moscow in June 1976, just prior to the arrival of the Indian Ambassador in Beijing, China was a subject of discussion.37 The Joint Declaration released at the culmination of the visit was curiously silent on the issue.

The omission is unlikely to have been accidental since the communique dealt at length on the similar decision by India and Pakistan to exchange ambassadors and welcomed it.38 Thus it is more likely that disagreement between India and the Soviet Union about the importance of the move resulted in its not being mentioned.

The above examination of the major political issues that dominated Indo-Soviet relations during this period does not highlight any glaring instance of India adopting foreign policy postures closer to those of the Soviet Union which it

36 See FEER, March 19, 1976, pp.22-23.
37 Mrs Gandhi herself admitted this at a press conference in Moscow, Times of India, June 15, 1976.
38 Pravda, June 14, 1976.
would not have done in the absence of Soviet pressure on it. Here it needs to be pointed out that on a wide variety of international issues such as support for the Palestinian quest for a homeland and opposition to South Africa the Indian and Soviet stances were similar or identical. But such common positions were arrived at by both the countries pursuing their own interests.

Nevertheless, India did at times how deference to Soviet sensibilities. The most obvious instance was in the Indian attitude to superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean. India not only drew a distinction between Soviet and US activities in the Indian Ocean and consequently channelled its criticism towards the US base at Diego Garcia, but also accepted the validity of the Soviet objection to the 'Zone of Peace' proposal. Yet it never did abandon or even reduce its support for the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. To do so would have been contrary to a major Indian goal of enhancing its influence in its own region. Thus while there was a change of style the essence of Indian opposition to superpower presence remained.

Such deference was however not one-sided. Despite its well known advocacy of nuclear non-proliferation the Soviet Union chose to ignore India's potentially destabilising detonation of a nuclear device and also indirectly supported Indian opposition to declaring South Asia as a nuclear free zone. In short Soviet concessions to India were as conspicuous as the reverse.
While there had been mutual 'give and take' this period was also marked by Indian suspicion of the Soviets and a desire on the part of India to keep its distance from the Soviet Union. Indian criticism of détente testifies the former observation while its reluctance to endorse the Asian Collective Security plan and its desire to normalise relations with China indicate the validity of the latter assertion.

There is little evidence to support the perception that in the wake of the signing of the treaty India pitched its diplomatic posture closer to the Soviet Union and the two worked together on all international issues.

A combination of factors account for Soviet inability to influence India to adopt postures closer to its own despite the close ties between the two countries. The Indians seemed to have assessed that India-Soviet friendship cost the Soviets precious little. Mrs Gandhi once revealed 'The U.S.S.R. has come to our support at the right time at no cost to them'.\(^{39}\) While Soviet support for India had intensified Sino-Soviet verbal denunciations it had not led to a Sino-Soviet confrontation. The US did not accuse the Soviets of 'expansionism' in India and had not made Soviet support for New Delhi an issue in negotiating détente. The awareness of low cost to the Soviet Union for its support for Indian enhanced India's bargaining position and decreased Soviet ability to influence India.

\(^{39}\) Quoted in Bhabhani Sengupta, op.cit., p.154.
Domestically, there was a progressive weakening of the pro-Moscow lobby in India. The Communist Party of India's (CPI) leverage over the government had weakened drastically. The overwhelming Congress victories in the March 1971 Parliamentary elections and the 1972 state elections reduced Mrs Gandhi's earlier need for CPI support. Furthermore, the certification of the progressive credentials of Mrs Gandhi by Soviet leaders diminished the CPI's ability to criticise the ruling party's policies as insufficiently radical, thus leaving it a redundant appendage in Indian politics. For an indigenous Communist party which ceases to criticise had no intellectual basis for continued existence.

Finally whatever little influence the CPI had by virtue of its parliamentary support to Mrs Gandhi vanished with the imposition of the 'emergency' and the reduction of the parliament to a mere 'rubber stamp'. The composition of the group of top advisers to Mrs Gandhi, which had been pro-Moscow also underwent a change. The death of D.P. Dhar, considered to be the architect of the Indo-Soviet treaty, and Mohan Kumaramangalam (an influential Minister in Mrs Gandhi's Cabinet and a former Communist party member) and the retirement of P.N. Haksar (Personal Secretary to the PM, who's anti-American sentiments were hardly disguised), roughly coincided with the rise in the influence of the Prime Minister's rabidly anti-Communist son, Sanjay, in 1975.

41 G. Jukes, Soviet Union in Asia, p.113.
The lack of responsiveness of India to Soviet pressure may at least partly be attributed to this diminution in the fortunes of the pro-Moscow lobby in India.

More importantly the inability of the Soviet Union to translate the close ties and prestige into influence over India on specific issues stems from the reduction of Indian need for the Soviet Union. During the era of indissoluble Pakistan India had a constant need for Soviet support since Pakistan sought the help of external powers in attempting to maintain parity with India and denying India predominance in South Asia. India's dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 resulted in its emergence as the dominant power in South Asia. Ironically, the Soviet Union by helping India became the unchallenged indigenous power in South Asia had thereby contributed to reducing Indian need for Soviet support. It is this reduced need that largely accounts for India being able to maintain its distance from the USSR.

Though diminished, India's need for Soviet support continued. Partly it was because of India's inability to translate military success into political influence. After the initial honeymoon relations with Bangladesh deteriorated rapidly, especially after Mujib-ur-Rehman's death in August 1975. Pakistan ingeniously manoeuvred to maintain its distance and it was only in 1976 that ambassadorial level contacts were restored between the two countries. Partly, also, because relations with the USA, which had reached their nadir in 1971,
although showing some improvement remained low key. Probably much more important that for much of the period Sino-Indian relations remained deadlocked (the movement towards normalisation began only in 1976) and India needed the Soviet Union to counter perceived Chinese hostility. But since this need was mutual even here Soviet bargaining capacities were not very strong. This mutual need was reflected in both sides making concessions in deference to each other's sensibilities.

II

The theoretical underpinnings of Indo-Soviet economic relations as enshrined in the treaty were forthright enough to serve as the basis for closer and deeper economic ties between the signatories. Article VI declared:

Attaching great importance to economic, scientific and technological cooperation between them, the high contracting parties will continue to consolidate and expand mutually advantageous and comprehensive cooperation in these fields as well as expand trade, transport and cooperation between them on the basis of principles of equality, mutual benefit and most favoured nation treatment.42

The thrust of this section is to assess whether the actualisation of this provision resulted in India's economy becoming increasingly reliant on the USSR.

42 See text provided in Appendix.
Indo-Soviet Joint Commission and 'Dovetailing' of Plans

Just over a year after signing of the treaty, on September 19, 1972, an agreement was signed to set up a Joint Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation. This was to establish an institutional framework to carry out the provisions of Article VI.

Its novelty lay in that its principle task was to 'dovetail' the five year plans of the two countries. In effect this meant that in areas of cooperation decided upon, each country adjusted its production plans to fit those of the other. Thus this first step resulted in linking the two countries more closely economically.

This step however cannot be interpreted as being similar to the arrangement between COMECON countries. The arrangement was a bilateral one limited to certain specific economic units. Membership of COMECON entailed integrating a country's economy into a system of multilateral arrangements extending over most areas of economic activity.

The principle involved in the bilateral arrangement made sound economic sense. Since both countries were planned economies if they were to help each other their plans needed to take each other's requirements into account. This was no different

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43 BBC SWB, SY/4098/A4/2.
45 For such interpretations see ibid.
from the argument that India was pressing upon the EEC countries to vacate in their own interests those areas of production in which developing countries were qualified to specialise.

Therefore, while a certain amount of coordination came to be established between the planning bodies of the two states, India resisted the Soviet proposal for 'integration' of the two economies. Furthermore, despite speculation that India may join COMECON Mrs Gandhi persistently denied any such intention.

Trade and Aid

While trade and aid have different meanings and are to be distinguished, in common usage the USSR does not make any distinction between the two. Indeed trade is considered as a special kind of aid. Since in Soviet perception the two are inextricably interlinked they are dealt with together here. Besides there is a sound economic reason why the two cannot be treated separately. India's trade with the Soviet Union is an essential part of the credit arrangements. There is an automatic conversion of aid as well as debt repayments into trade flows.

46 Bhabani Sengupta, op.cit., p.150.
47 See Rao, op.cit., p.798.
49 For an elucidation of this aspect see Dharm Narain, Aid Through Trade, UNCTAD Document No.TD/B/C.3/57.
The distinctive feature of all economic transactions between India and the Soviet Union is that since 1958-59 they are covered by comprehensive non-convertible rupee payment arrangements. From India's point of view in the 1960s the advantages of such an arrangement were fairly obvious. First, given the extreme shortage of foreign exchange in the Indian economy the introduction of rupee trade added to India's import capacity, at the same time underwriting an expansion in exports. Second, in the absence of this trade, economic assistance from the USSR in the form of development credits would have been greatly reduced. Third, debt servicing burden was reduced since repayments were not in scarce convertible foreign currencies but in exports or domestic currency. What is more it helped India in reducing its dependence on the West.

In view of these advantages the growth in India's trade with the USSR was very rapid in the 1960s, as the table shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the growth in trade in the 1960s, the closer political ties in the 1970s and the emphasis placed in the Treaty on expanding trade, it could have been expected that Indo-Soviet trade would grow and enhance the Indian economic links on the USSR. This seemed to be the apparent trend in the years following the signing of the Treaty. One scholar noted that between 1972 and 1974 the two countries concluded as many as forty agreements of an economic nature.\(^50\) The most important one was the 15 Year Agreement on Economic and Trade Cooperation, signed during Brezhnev's visit in November 1973, with both sides pledging to enhance their trade relations.\(^51\)

Although the USSR continued to be one of India's major trade partners and annual trade turnover rose from just over Rs 4,000 million in 1973 to about Rs 7,000 million in 1975\(^52\) much of this rise was due to increase in prices, especially of petroleum products, fertilisers and newsprint, which were a major sector of Indian imports. This increase was not expected to continue. The 5-year trade agreement signed in April 1975, to cover the period 1976-80, envisaged an increase of Rs 2,350 million for the period.\(^53\) Even progress towards achievement of this target was tardy and the concern of the two countries

\(^{50}\) Bhabhani Sengupta, op.cit., p.150.

\(^{51}\) Foreign Affairs Record, November 1973, p.446.


\(^{53}\) Economic and Political Weekly, April 17, 1976, p.581.
was expressed in the Joint Declaration at the conclusion of Mrs Gandhi's visit. The communique exhorted both countries to explore new areas and new methods of cooperation.\textsuperscript{54}

Notwithstanding such concern, the growth in annual trade between the two countries from Rs 3,150 million in 1970-71 to about Rs 7,700 million in 1976-77\textsuperscript{55} is impressive and suggests increased reliance on the Soviet Union. This increase in Indo-Soviet trade was far surpassed by the increase in total Indian trade with USA as well as EEC members. The following tables put the picture in perspective.

Table 2: India's Imports
(Value in Thousand US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USSR</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>EEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>102,920</td>
<td>551,967</td>
<td>603,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>102,690</td>
<td>316,369</td>
<td>664,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>119,861</td>
<td>560,191</td>
<td>837,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>492,194</td>
<td>710,216</td>
<td>937,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>258,236</td>
<td>1,407,591</td>
<td>1,311,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>181,001</td>
<td>1,343,284</td>
<td>986,975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: India's Exports
(Value in Thousand US Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USSR</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>EEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>280,994</td>
<td>331,583</td>
<td>373,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>367,790</td>
<td>369,599</td>
<td>510,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>389,565</td>
<td>403,934</td>
<td>671,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>469,920</td>
<td>509,552</td>
<td>869,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>509,444</td>
<td>486,077</td>
<td>881,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>483,114</td>
<td>634,863</td>
<td>1,332,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{54} Pravda, June 14, 1976.

\textsuperscript{55} RBI, Report on Currency and Finance 1977-78.
Not only was the growth in Indo-Soviet trade outstripped by growth in India's trade with USA and the EEC states, but in fact the relative weight of Soviet imports and exports in the total picture, after peaking in the early 1970s, declined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the aid sphere the record was no better. In the 1950s and 1960s all significant sectors of the Indian economy such as steel, oil, machine building, power, pharmaceuticals etc. received substantial and crucial assistance from the Soviet Union. While it is true that the magnitude of Soviet aid was less than aid from the West in qualitative terms it was impressive. The momentum of Soviet aid waned towards the end of the sixties and there were no new Soviet credits extended during the period under survey. The last instance of Soviet aid was the 300 million rouble aid package granted in
1966, and two thirds of that had yet to be utilised by the end of 1976. In contrast from 1971-72 to 1976-77, the economic assistance provided by the 'Aid India Consortium' consisting of Western industrialised countries was Rs 67,524 million.

The above survey not only indicates that the Soviet position in India's external economic interactions was not dominant but also suggests that the relative prominence of the Soviet Union since the treaty had not been enhanced. This stagnation in trade and deceleration of aid can be primarily attributed to the changed needs of the Indian economy.

During the 1950s and 1960s Soviet aid to India generally involved project aid to the public sector for heavy industrial equipment and Indian imports from the Soviet Union were largely capital goods. Utilising external assistance from the Soviet Union and the West, India pursued a policy of industrialisation with an emphasis on heavy industry. By the late 1960s growth of industry created a potential for a self-sustaining and self-accelerating process of technological change and development. The high degree of self-reliance achieved shifted India's demand away from capital goods. The expansion and diversification of the production structure led to significant changes in India's economic requirements.

57 Calculated from Economic Survey (Ministry of Finance, Government of India), 1981-82.
As its industry had come of age India's need was for intermediate products or maintenance imports such as fertilisers, newsprint and raw materials such as oil and non-ferrous minerals. Therefore the traditional pattern of Soviet exports and economic assistance was no longer appealing. Since the Soviet Union was either hard pressed to fulfill such needs or for variety of systemic and political reasons refused to adapt, there was a fall in Indian utilisation of Soviet credits and also in Indian imports from the USSR.

There was also other factors which contributed specifically to the stagnation of trade and fall in aid. On the trade front there was an increased Indian awareness that Soviet economic behaviour, in essence, was no better than the behaviour of the so-called Western imperialists. Two instances of Soviet economic behaviour were particularly galling, as far as the Indians were concerned. The first occurred in 1974 when the Soviets demanded Rs 4,200 per ton for newsprint as compared to Rs 2,848 charged by Canada and Rs 3,393 by Bangladesh. This resulted in negotiations being stalled and led to a newsprint shortage in India. Many newspapers had to sharply cut back the number of pages and most sections of the Indian press termed the Soviet actions as 'newsprint blackmail'. Nevertheless the Soviets did not give in and India had to agree to the price demanded.

Another incident of the apparent Russian quest for one-sided

advantages occurred in 1975. A Soviet trade delegation negotiating the export of fertiliser, wanted a 60% to 70% increase in price. When the Indians refused to comply the Soviets scaled down the increase to 35% to 40%. Moreover, there were recurrent charges of 'switch trading' by the USSR. The contention was that the Soviet Union re-exported Indian commodities to the West and earned hard currency. This reduced India's markets and also was a loss for India in terms of earning foreign exchange since all Indo-Soviet trade was in rupees. While such charges were difficult to substantiate there was some evidence of such practice. Such Soviet behaviour is likely to have dampened Indian enthusiasm for trading with the Russians.

In the aid sphere the attraction of Soviet aid waned not only because of Soviet inability to change the form of its aid but also because of the changes in the attitudes of Western donors. Western donors were willing not only to extend aid to public sector projects but had also liberalised the terms of aid. When the USSR first entered the field of aid in India its terms were generally considered to be the most favourable. Repayments were spread over some 12-20 years at 2 1/2 per cent per annum interest. In the 1970s Western


donors made significant changes. In 1973 Britain stopped charging interest and stretched repayment periods to twenty five years\textsuperscript{61} and from 1975 provided all assistance in the form of grants.\textsuperscript{62} Belgium cut its rate of interest from 2 per cent to 1 per cent and West Germany offered its aid on IDA terms.\textsuperscript{63} While the Aid India Consortium members made changes in their terms to make them more attractive the Soviet terms remained the same as they were in the 1950s. Indian attempts to persuade the Soviets to provide more flexible terms were of no avail.\textsuperscript{64} In fact the Soviets made efforts to unilaterally revise the rupee-ruble exchange rate from 11.39 to 8.66 rubles per hundred rupees. This would have meant an addition of $160 million to an Indian debt which in mid-1976 stood at $450 million.\textsuperscript{65} During the period under survey the Indians resisted stubbornly and the issue remained unsolved. Such Soviet behaviour coupled with the liberalisation in the Western terms of aid made India look more often towards Western donors and consequently Soviet credits were utilised at a slow pace.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Times of India}, November 10, 1973.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Economic Survey}, 1975-76
\textsuperscript{63} Ian Clark, op.cit., p.149.
\textsuperscript{64} Although Indian spokesmen rarely refer to such sensitive matters Finance Minister Chavan reporting to Parliament on his trip to Moscow in 1974 stated, 'Opportunity was taken to hold discussions with Soviet authorities on matters of mutual economic interest like softening of the terms of Soviet credits ...' \textit{Lok Sabha Debates} (Fifth Series), July 26, 1974, Vol.XLI, No.5, Cl.2.
\textsuperscript{65} R.H. Donaldson, op.cit., p.19.
Thus one can conclude that there were factors of a fairly permanent character holding back the elevation of Indo-Soviet economic ties to a qualitatively different plane.

III

The nexus between USSR as a supplier and India as a purchaser of military equipment is an important facet of the bilateral relationship since it is often asserted that India's dependence on the Soviet Union for arms supplies provides the latter an important form of leverage over Indian policies. This section therefore assesses the extent of India's dependence on the Soviet Union for military equipment in the aftermath of the Treaty.

As a prelude to assessing arms flows from the Soviet Union to India from 1971 onwards it needs to be stressed that the emergence of cordial Indo-Soviet ties in the mid-1950s was not immediately followed by the supply of Soviet military equipment to India, unlike the USSR's simultaneous courting of Egypt. In the 1950s the vast majority of the arms bought by India came from Britain and major acquisitions from either super power were avoided.66 Partly in response to the emerging strains in the Sino-Indian relationship India's procurement policy shifted in 1960 with the purchase of Soviet transport aircraft and helicopters, ostensibly of a non-combat

66 For a listing of weapons acquired by India in the 1950s see Arms Trade with the Third World (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Almquist and Wiksell, 1971), pp.833-836.
nature. Further progress along this line was made in August 1962 when an agreement was reached, in principle, to supply Soviet MiG-21 aircraft to India. But it was only after the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 that major arms deliveries were made to India by the USSR, as well as by USA, Canada, France, Australia and the traditional supplier Britain.

From 1965 onwards, India increasingly began to acquire Soviet weaponry. The factors explaining India's increasing dependence on the Soviet Union include the cutback in US arms sales to South Asia, the intersection of Soviet and Indian security interests owing to a shared concern regarding China, and the Soviet willingness to accept repayments for arms purchases in the form of exports by India.

Thus by August 1971 all the three branches of the Indian armed services were using Soviet equipment. The holdings of the Indian Army included 450 T-54/T-55 and 150 PT-76 tanks, substantial number of 100 mm and 130 mm guns, SA-2 Surface-to-Air missiles, OT-62 armoured personnel carriers. The airforce had 8 MiG-21 squadrons and 6 SU-7 squadrons as well as Mi-4 and Mi-8 helicopters. The Navy had an assortment of naval craft such as Foxtrot-class submarines, Petya-class frigates, Poluchat-class patrol boats and Osa-class torpedo boats.

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67 Girish Mishra, Contours of Indo-Soviet Cooperation (New Delhi, Allied, 1976), p.120.


In terms of the general supply of Soviet military equipment to India, it does not appear that the signing of the Treaty marked any significant change of policy. The following table illustrates the nature and extent of major Indian arms purchases from the USSR since 1971.

### Table 5: Comparison of Soviet Arms Supplies to India

**Before and After the Treaty of 1971**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1963-71</th>
<th>1972-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armoured Vehicles</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT-76 tanks (150)</td>
<td>T-54/T-55 tanks (450)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-54/T-55 tanks (450)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aircraft</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiG-21 combat a.c. (117)</td>
<td>MiG-21 MF combat a.c. (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU-7 combat a.c. (150)</td>
<td>IL-38 Maritime reconnaissance (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An-12 tpt a.c. (16)</td>
<td>KA-25 ASW helicopter (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi-4 helicopters (82)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiG-21 UTI (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naval Vessels</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Polnocy' class landing craft</td>
<td>'Polnocy' class landing craft (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Poluchat' class fast patrol boats (6)</td>
<td>'Osa' class torpedo boat (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Petya' class frigates (2)</td>
<td>'Petya' class frigates (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Foxtrot' class submarines (4)</td>
<td>'Foxtrot' class submarines (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Nanuchka' class corvettes (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** The Arms Trade with the Third World (SIPRI); Annual Issues of Military Balance 1970-77; World Armaments and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook 1972-77, and Jane's Fighting Ships, 1972-77.

The above figures reveal, although there was no change in the tempo or range of Indian acquisitions from the Soviet Union, that India's main air and naval strike force acquisitions were supplied by the Soviet Union. This however
should not be misconstrued to mean that the Soviet Union was virtually India's sole supplier of military equipment. Prior to passing any judgement on the degree of Indian dependence on Soviet arms supplies the extent of diversification in arms purchases as well as the extent of indigenous defence production need to be taken into account.

India has highly developed policies in both these areas. While the majority of new acquisitions continued to be of Soviet origin some interesting examples of diversification were evident. In the case of Britain the most prominent examples were the arrangements with Hawker-Siddeley for the manufacture of the Gnat by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), and the licensed production of Leander class frigates. The Vijayanta tank was being produced in India under license from Vickers since 1967. India also purchased 6 Westland Sea King helicopters and Seacat missiles during this period. From France the purchases included Alouette III helicopters and patrol boats, besides licensed production of assorted missiles. While there is no gainsaying the fact that the USSR was India's major supplier, neither can the degree of diversification be totally ignored.

On the question of the capacity of India's indigenous defence industry it must be highlighted that amongst Third World countries India has one of the most ambitious and sophisticated defence programmes. The requirements of small

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70 See World Armaments and Disarmament, SIPRI Yearbooks 1972-77 and also Military Balance, 1971-78.
arms, bombs and munitions are fully met by domestic production.\footnote{71}{World Armaments and Disarmament, SIPRI Yearbook 1977, pp.304-305.} In addition various small naval vessels, aircraft bodies and engines are produced or are under development. Furthermore India has for long been pursuing a policy of increasing the proportion of indigenous content of its license produced equipment. Although this policy has not been an unmitigated success there are some impressive achievements. Ajeet lightweight aircraft has an indigenous content of 90%, similar was the case of MiG-21M fighter produced by HAL. The Vijayanta medium battle tank has a 95% indigenous content.\footnote{72}{ibid., pp.298-299.}

Such progress notwithstanding, India continued to be reliant on foreign suppliers since deploying scarce resources for developing only the defense production sector would have been a chimerical pursuit that would have distorted the macro-economic structure and created tensions within the socio-political system.

In the light of the above discussion while admitting that the bulk of India's most impressive military equipment originated in the USSR, on balance it could still be argued that there is no evidence to indicate an increase in Indian dependence on Soviet weaponry. Furthermore there was some diversification and an increasingly important domestic capacity.
The reasons for India continuing to purchase Soviet arms in view of its not attaining self-reliance were largely similar to those that have been outlined earlier in explaining India's shift towards Soviet equipment in the mid-1960s. One final point needs to be made. In the context of India's policy of reducing dependence on external suppliers of defence equipment Soviet arms are especially suitable.

Changes in Soviet weaponry proceed gradually from one generation to another. This ensures the availability of a larger percentage of interchangeable parts in each family of Soviet weaponry. In practical terms this permits progressively more sophisticated armaments to be inducted easily into the armed forces. The problem of maintenance and improvisation is simpler with established engineering facilities. Western equipment, on the other hand, generally progresses from one generation to another through radically new design concepts. As new generations of weaponry are procured different logistics arrangements are required. A recipient country's dependence upon Western suppliers is consequently unlikely to decrease over a period of time. 73

IV

Summing up the major dimensions of Indo-Soviet relations it could be said that while both sides valued the relationship highly there is little evidence of an increase in Indian

73 This line of reasoning is drawn from P.R. Chari, op.cit.
dependence on the Soviet Union and an enhancement of Soviet leverage over Indian foreign policy. In short the Soviet 'quest for the spoils that go with victory' did not achieve the desired success.
CHAPTER IV
THE JANATA INTERREGNUM: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Thirty years of Congress rule in India ended in March 1977, when a hastily assembled electoral front, the Janata Party, was voted into power. Although the election was contested almost exclusively on domestic issues all indications were that foreign policy too would undergo changes.

It was a matter of record that some groups that now constituted the Janata Party had been consistently critical of trends in Indo-Soviet relations under the previous regime, the former Jana Sangh and Swatantia groups having expressed particularly strong reservations about the Indo-Soviet treaty. During the election campaign Mr Morarji Desai (later to become Prime Minister of the Janata government) had stated that if his party came to power the treaty might 'automatically go'. Additionally, in the past the Soviet Union had eulogised the Congress government and had lent enthusiastic support to the declaration of the 'state of emergency' under which many members of the new government had been imprisoned.

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1 For criticism of the Indo-Soviet treaty by Janata (and pro-Janata) stalwarts such as Morarji Desai, Piloo Mody, J.B. Kripalani and M.R. Masani, expressed at a New Delhi seminar, see A.P. Jain (ed), Shadow of the Bear: The Indo-Soviet Treaty (New Delhi, P.K. Deo, 1972).


Even while the election campaign was underway the Soviet press supported the Congress and denounced the Janata as a group of 'extreme reactionaries'. Finally, the implacable hostility of the rightist constituents and the suspicions of the leftist constituents of the Janata towards the pro-Moscow CPI appeared to signal a further decline of the pro-Soviet lobby's ability to influence foreign policy decisions.

On assumption of office the Janata was quick to underline its foreign policy. While it reiterated India's commitment to non-alignment it emphasised, time and again, that it would be 'genuine' or 'proper' non-alignment, the evident implication being that in the past India's close relations with the Soviet Union had compromised its non-aligned status.

This chapter assesses the functioning of Indo-Soviet relations during the era of 'genuine non-alignment' under the Janata government (March 1977-July 1979) and the short-lived coalition government headed by Mr Charan Singh (July-December 1979), the leader of a breakaway faction of the Janata, which succeeded it.

I

Despite expectations to the contrary the close relations between India and the Soviet Union were maintained by the

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5 For major statements highlighting genuine non-alignment see report of Desai's first press conference in Times of India, March 25, 1977 and Foreign Minister Vajpayee's address to Lok Sabha on June 29, 1977, Lok Sabha Debates, June 29, 1977, Vol.3 (Sixth Series), No.16, Cls.191-206.
Janata government. It had been expected by many that the Indo-Soviet treaty would be terminated. A balanced relationship with the superpowers, envisaged by 'genuine non-alignment', it was felt could not be achieved as long as the treaty linking India and USSR remained in force. Yet, the Janata government did not scrap or even modify the treaty. In fact the new government made it explicit that it wanted to maintain the friendship existing between the two countries.\(^6\) Once the initial misgivings regarding the continuance of Indo-Soviet ties were allayed, cordial relations were maintained throughout the Janata period.

The continuity in Indo-Soviet relations underscored above should not be construed as suggesting that the relationship was on a par with that existing while Mrs Gandhi was in office. Within the broad framework of continuity there were several significant changes of style, substance and emphasis.

Firstly the Janata government enhanced the manoeuvrability of its foreign policy by improving relations with the USA considerably. President Carter and Prime Minister Desai exchanged visits. The Indo-US Joint Commission took a number of steps to intensify cooperation in a variety of fields. While the US continued to be India's most important trading

partner further plans were laid to increase growth in trade. The cordiality in Indo-US relations seemed to be on the scale of the early Kennedy years, the period of the warmest relationship.

To be sure, there were differences. The outlooks of the two countries diverged on a number of international issues, particularly on the Middle East and on super power rivalry in the Indian Ocean. These differences were however not allowed to infringe upon the bilateral relationship. The issue that caused discomfort in bilateral relations related to the supply of low-enriched uranium (LEU) by the US for the Tarapur power plant. There were escalating US demands that India submit its nuclear installations to full scope safeguards in return for continued US shipments of LEU. The Indians refused since it would have meant de facto signing of the NPT. While in the long run the matter remained unresolved the tensions were dissipated by President Carter's gesture of clearing shipments to meet immediate needs.

Secondly, and more directly related to the Indo-Soviet relationship, there was a notable change in the manner in which the Indo-Soviet treaty was referred to in official communiques. During the past the two sides used to declare

7 When asked in Parliament whether India had requested USA to dismantle Diego Garcia, Vajpayee replied that India did not 'regard Diego Garcia as a bilateral problem between India and the USA', Lok Sabha Debates, June 16, 1977, Vol.2, No.5, Cls.157.
their resolve of strengthening their relations 'on the basis' of the treaty. In the Janata era the reference was to carry forward relations 'in the spirit' of the treaty. This was a subtle diminution by India of the treaty's role. It confirms the interpretation given in usually well-informed circles that the Janata government had insisted to the Soviet Union that it was a distortion to base Indo-Soviet relations on the treaty alone and that the treaty was no more than a symbol of decades of cordial Indo-Soviet relations.

Thirdly, the tenor of communiques promulgated at the conclusion of the high-level visits was not as warm as in the earlier period. Thus while in communiques issued after Mr Brezhnev's 1973 visit to India and Mrs Gandhi's 1976 visit to Moscow the talks were described as being characterised by 'trust, friendship and mutual understanding', during high level visits in the Janata era the term 'trust' was conspicuously absent. Similarly whereas the two sides had expressed 'profound satisfaction' or 'deep satisfaction' at the level of their relations in 1973 and 1976, this was expressed merely as 'satisfaction' in 1977 and 1978.

Finally, the exchanges of political compliments had become an integral part of high-level visits in the Gandhi era. For

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8 See Foreign Affairs Record, April 1977, p.72 and Pravda, October 27, 1977.
9 Dilip Padgaokar, 'Mr Desai's Soviet Visit', Times of India, October 29, 1977.
10 See Foreign Affairs Record, op.cit., and Pravda, op.cit.
11 R.H. Donaldson, Soviet-Indian Alignment, p.22.
example, during Mrs Gandhi's 1976 visit she paid glowing tributes to Mr Brezhnev and his associates for the management of the Soviet political system. In return Mr Brezhnev had lavished fulsome praise on the visiting dignitary and had commended her efforts against 'reactionaries at home and abroad'.

While individually these signs may appear to be obscure and remote, cumulatively they indicate, in general, a relative cooling down of Indo-Soviet relations.

On specific issues too, the earlier trend of lack of Indian responsiveness to Soviet needs was maintained (or enhanced further in cases where there had been some responsiveness earlier). This can be highlighted by examining Indian and Soviet attitudes towards major political issues that impinged on their relationship.

(a) **Asian Collective Security**

While the zest it had displayed in attempting to enlist Asian support for its Collective Security scheme in the first half of the seventies was no more evident, the Soviet quest to gain endorsement of the proposal had continued. Thus when the Janata came into office several members of the Indian Parliament were eager to probe the government's attitude towards Collective Security. The matter was raised in the Lok Sabha and the government was closely questioned. Mr Desai told the House that as far as he was aware the

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12 *Foreign Affairs Record*, June 1976, pp.182-188.
Soviet Union had not fully spelt out the content and implications of the proposed security design. He however assured the members that if the plan meant the formation of a bloc or alliance his government was not interested in it.\textsuperscript{14}

During Mr Desai's visit to Moscow in October 1977 Mr Brezhnev implicitly brought up the collective security idea.\textsuperscript{15} The Janata government was no more forthcoming than the previous regime. As had been the case earlier once again the final communique did not mention it indicating Soviet inability to gain Indian endorsement.\textsuperscript{16} All subsequent Indo-Soviet communiques in the Janata period were silent too.

(b) Indian Ocean: 'Zone of Peace' and Super Power Rivalry

Confirmation of the differing attitudes of the two countries towards declaring the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace continued to be provided in votes that India and the USSR cast on the Indian Ocean resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly. While the Soviet Union continued to abstain India voted in favour of the resolution every year. In fact there is evidence to indicate that there was a further divergence in Soviet and Indian attitudes on the Indian Ocean issue.

\textsuperscript{14} Lok Sabha Debates, July 14, 1977, Vol.IV (Sixth series), No.29, Cls.1-3.
\textsuperscript{15} Pravda, October 22, 1977.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., October 27, 1977.
The Indo-Soviet Joint Declarations during this period while referring to the Indian Ocean no longer carried the usual Soviet disclaimer on international law. (Unlike the Joint Declaration after Mrs Gandhi's 1976 visit.) Furthermore in the communique issued after Mr Desai's visit in 1977 the reference was to an 'exchange of opinions', indicating that agreement could not be arrived at.

More importantly, it may be recalled that Mrs Gandhi's government had distinguished between Soviet and US activities in the Indian Ocean and consequently had focussed criticism on US operations. This distinction was blurred by the Janata government. Mr Desai is on record as having stated,

It is wrong to state that the Soviet Union has no base whatsoever. It has its spheres of influence in the Indian Ocean. That cannot be denied. It is a race between the two powerful nations. It is from this that we have to save Asia.

The implication was that the Soviet as well as US operations were causing tension and insecurity in the littoral. The External Affairs Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, made this explicit. In a statement to the Lok Sabha he asserted,

The house is fully aware of the government's view that the military presence of the great powers in the Indian Ocean is a cause of tension and insecurity in the area.

17 For example see Foreign Affairs Record, op.cit., and Pravda, October 27, 1977.
18 Pravda, October 27, 1977.
19 Lok Sabha Debates, op.cit., Cl.6.
20 Quoted in R.H. Donaldson, op.cit., p.36.
Also, a cursory glance at the parliamentary pronouncements by the External Affairs Minister on this subject reveals a noticeably less biased and more balanced Indian approach towards superpower rivalry. The earlier Indian deference to Soviet sensibilities was no longer evident.

(c) The Chinese 'Challenge': Differing Attitudes

The new government's position on normalisation of relations with China was that while it was willing to do so the initiatives for further improvement must come from China. From the end of 1977 there were indications that China was willing to further the process of normalisation.

Criticisms of India in Chinese media in general were sharply curtailed. In February 1978, Vice Premier Deng Xiao Ping, during a visit to Nepal was reported to have stated at a press conference that China was eager to establish closer relations with India. Also in February a trade delegation and a political delegation from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries arrived in New Delhi. These were the first of their respective types since 1962. The Indian Foreign Minister was extended an


22 Times of India, February 5, 1978.

invitation to visit Beijing and it was accepted in principle. However there were continuing problems. The inauguration in June 1978 of the Karakoram Highway linking China and Pakistan was a reminder of the outstanding differences. The road passed through disputed Kashmir (or according to India 'Pakistan Occupied Kashmir') and would tie into a highway linking Tibet with Sinkiang passing through the Aksai Chin area which China had occupied in 1962.

Despite the slow pace of progress towards normalisation and the continuing differences in Sino-Indian relations the Soviet Union was disconcerted by these developments. It perceived Chinese gestures towards India as part of a global challenge mounted by China against it. In Soviet assessment the Chinese overtures were designed to undermine Soviet influence in South Asia and were linked to other Chinese moves such as the conclusion of Sino-Japanese treaty, the escalating tensions between China and Vietnam, Chairman Hua's provocative visit to Yugoslavia and Rumania and the sudden progress in Sino-US relations.

Thus Soviet discomfort was clearly evident at every step that seemed to be indicating progress towards Sino-Indian normalisation. The Soviet press mounted a campaign to lecture India on the dangers inherent in Peking's courtship. When

24 ibid., p.358.


26 For example see A. Turanov, 'Road for Chinese Expansion', New Times, No.21, September 21, 1978; SWB SU/5906/A3/2, China's 'Subversive Activities' Against India.
Mr Vajpayee visited Moscow in September 1978 just six weeks prior to his scheduled visit to Beijing, he was exposed to a barrage of anti-Chinese rhetoric by Soviet leaders. For example Mr Gromyko criticised the Chinese actions as follows:

> Recently, the aggressive essence of the Peking leadership's great-power hegemonistic policy has been exposed more and more clearly ... Can one show any vacillation in this situation? The schemes of the forces that are hostile to world peace and international security in Asia should be rebuffed, and rebuffed decisively. It is necessary to unmask and frustrate their aggressive designs and expansionist proclivities in time.\(^\text{27}\)

The Indian Foreign Minister avoided identifying with such a line of thinking. While he assured Soviet leaders that normalisation of relations with China would not be at the cost of Indo-Soviet ties he did not make any explicitly anti-Chinese remarks. The differences in Indian and Soviet perspectives precluded any mention of China in the final communique.\(^\text{28}\) In short Moscow's attempt to influence India proved futile.

Although Indian concern about the implications of closer Sino-US ties was undoubtedly heightened as a result of Deng's trip to Washington, Vajpayee cautiously went ahead with his visit to China in February 1979 (postponed earlier because of Vajpayee's hospitalisation). In many ways the results exceeded the anticipation. The Chinese agreed to India's

\(^{27}\) Pravda, September 13, 1978.

\(^{28}\) ibid.
view that the border problem in fact existed and held the key to further progress of normalisation. Therefore the two sides agreed that steps be taken to resolve the issue. Moreover China seemed to have indicated that its support for secessionist rebels in North Eastern India was a thing of the past. Additionally there were agreements on cultural, scientific and other exchanges as well as plans to expand trade. On matters of global concern such as the logic of disarmament, the inevitability of war and the prospects for detente, the two sides 'agreed to disagree'.

The positive achievements were obscured by China's incursion into Vietnam while the Indian Foreign Minister was still in China. Mr Vajpayee abruptly cut short his visit and returned to India earlier than scheduled as a protest against the Chinese action. India's friendly relations with Vietnam left the government with little choice but to decry the Chinese action. Anti-Chinese hostility was aroused in India by the similarity of China's action in Vietnam to its attack on India in 1962. More than 100 members of the Indian parliament demanded that resolutions be adopted condemning Chinese aggression. Although the government made its opposition to the Chinese action plain and called on China to withdraw its forces it never went to the extent of branding China as the 'aggressor'.

29 See Vajpayee's report of his China's visit to Parliament, Lok Sabha Debates, February 21, 1979, Vol.XXII (Sixth Series); No.3,Cls.243-251.
When the Soviet Premier Mr Kosygin visited New Delhi in March 1979 he lambasted the Chinese action in every public statement he made. Clearly the Soviet Union adopted the diplomatic gambit of seeking to create the image of bilateral agreement by unilaterally enunciating positions. Referring to the Chinese issue in his address to the Indian Parliament not only did Mr Kosygin condemn it as brazen aggression but also asserted that forces had emerged in the world that would not allow such an outrage. Such forces, he said, include India and the Soviet Union.\(^{30}\)

On his part Mr Desai was adroit in not identifying India with the Soviet assault. Though he deplored the events in Indo-China and called for withdrawal of troops he rarely mentioned China specifically, and apparently made it clear that the process of normalisation of relations with China would continue when circumstances permitted.

The joint communique called for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese forces from Vietnam; but this was no great achievement for Mr Kosygin since India had held this position from the commencement of the crisis. More significantly, while the Soviet Prime Minister had consistently referred to Chinese 'aggression' in the course of his pronouncements in India, the joint communique refrained from the use of this term and instead alluded to the Chinese 'attack' on Vietnam.\(^{31}\)

\(^{30}\) *Times of India*, March 10, 1979.

\(^{31}\) *Foreign Affairs Record*, March 1979, p. 72.
That Soviet and Indian perspectives were not identical was borne out during Mr Desai's June 1979 visit to Moscow; just a month prior to the fall of his government. Although the Soviets warned of the danger that Chinese actions created for Asian countries Mr Desai defended India's dialogue with China on the basis of the need for peaceful settlement of disputes and reduction of tensions. In the final communique China was not mentioned at all indicating once again that India and the Soviet Union could not come to an agreement on the subject.

(d) Recognition of Kampuchea

The overthrow of Pol Pot and the installation of the Vietnam-backed Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea received Soviet recognition and enthusiastic support. During his visit to Delhi Kosygin reportedly made strenuous efforts to obtain Indian recognition of the new regime in Kampuchea. While India expressed outrage at the atrocities of the Pol Pot government it did not follow the Soviet line and extend recognition to the Heng Samrin regime. The Indian position was that it was willing to recognise the new government once it was satisfied that the Heng Samrin regime was in effective control of the country. The silence of the final communique

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32 ibid., June 1979, p.120.
33 ibid., pp.122-124.
34 Times of India, March 16, 1979.
on this issue indicated that agreement could not be reached.\textsuperscript{36}

That the differences continued throughout the rest of the Janata period was testified by the lack of mention of Kampuchea in the Joint Declaration after Mr Desai's last visit to Moscow.\textsuperscript{37}

(e) Change of Government and Indo-Soviet Relations

The internal bickerings in the Janata party resulted in the fall of Mr Desai's government in mid-July 1979. The new government led by Mr Charan Singh failed to win a vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha. The House was dissolved and Mr Charan Singh was asked to continue as a caretaker Prime Minister until the elections. Once elections were scheduled for early 1980, foreign policy assumed low priority. Nevertheless there was no change in Indo-Soviet relations.

The lack of Indian responsiveness to Soviet needs was maintained. The Indian performance at the Sixth Non Aligned Conference in Havana in early September confirms this. At the conference concerted efforts were made by a group of 'radical' states to gain acceptance of the thesis that the Soviet Union was the 'natural ally' of the non-aligned and therefore the thrust of the movement had to be exclusively anti-Western. Cuba was at the forefront of those that advocate this line. India was one of the opponents of this thesis and was successful in preventing the acceptance of the 'natural ally' thesis.

\textsuperscript{36} Foreign Affairs Record, March 1979, pp. 69-73.
\textsuperscript{37} ibid., June 1979, pp. 122-124.
II

On the economic front while the close and by no means inconsiderable links were maintained, the general trend (highlighted earlier) of lack of qualitative deepening of Indo-Soviet economic ties either largely continued or was enhanced further.

(a) Trade and Aid

While annual trade turnover increased, Indo-Soviet trade was still less than India's trade with USA and the EEC countries. Moreover the Soviet share of India's imports and exports remained fairly stagnant. The following tables highlight these two points.

Table One: India's Annual Trade with USA, USSR and EEC

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<th>1977</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1,543,122</td>
<td>1,727,242</td>
<td>1,754,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>877,182</td>
<td>790,110</td>
<td>1,111,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>3,136,202</td>
<td>3,753,822</td>
<td>4,223,576</td>
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When the Indian Prime Minister Desai visited Moscow in October 1977, the two sides in a bid to increase their trade decided to look into the possibilities for production cooperation on a compensation basis, conversion deals and joint ventures. This would

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38 Pravda, October 27, 1977.
have resulted in further interlocking of the two economies and consequently in further Indian dependence.

Contrary to the publicity such proposals received, the progress in these areas was tardy due to differences in perceptions. The Soviet Union sought to utilize the opportunity created by production cooperation to push more of its machinery and equipment but India wanted to utilize the opportunity to exploit the unutilized capacity in its industries, especially the Soviet aided ones. Conversion deals received a jolt when the USSR tried to dump its surplus cotton at a time when India had a bumper harvest. Finally, the promise of joint ventures had not yet been put into practice by the end of the Janata era.

This Indian reluctance to sacrifice its interests was further highlighted in two other cases. First, the Soviet Union had in 1976 signed an agreement with Mrs Gandhi's government to supply 200 tons of heavy water, 50 tons of which were supplied immediately without any formal safeguards agreement.\(^{39}\) In 1977 the Soviets began insisting on comprehensive safeguards. After negotiations India agreed in 1978 to partial safeguards under International Atomic Energy Agency inspection.\(^{40}\) This was similar to the agreement India had for its Tarapur plant. Early in 1979, however, it became known that India had decided not to make use of


\(^{40}\) R.H. Donaldson, op.cit., p.57.
Thus the Soviets encountered the same extremely sensitive nationalism that the US had run into. In fact the declining of the Soviet offer meant that India was not even willing to go to the extent it had gone in accommodating the US by accepting LEU under partial safeguards.

Second, the Janata was as resolute in its opposition to the Soviet move to revise the rupee-ruble exchange rate as Mrs Gandhi's government had been earlier. After protracted and acrimonious negotiations agreement was reached, at the beginning of 1979, to continue using the old exchange rate on already existing indebtedness but employ a revised rate of exchange for new debts incurred by India. While it is apparent that both compromised their earlier position it appears that the Soviets gave more.

It was highly unlikely that India would in the near future incur fresh debts from the USSR. Prior to the Janata coming into office the last Soviet loan had been in 1966 but by early 1977 the balance of unutilised loans was Rs.2,551.8 million. The rate of utilization had been so slow that it would take another ten years to use the credits provided up to 1966. In this context it needs to be mentioned that

41 R.C. Horn, Soviet-Indian Relations, p.170.
44 ibid.
in March 1977 the Soviet Union had extended a new loan of 250 million roubles, thus further increasing the amount of unutilised Soviet credits.

The details of the loan had been worked out while Mrs Gandhi was Prime Minister. It was sought primarily for expansion of the Bokaro steel plant and also for the development of Singrauli and Raniganj coal mines. However, the Janata government decided to fabricate all the equipment for Bokaro indigenously and not to go in for Soviet assistance for the expansion. Thus the main rationale for the loan had disappeared.

As a political gesture it was mutually agreed to use the loan for any other projects decided upon by the two governments. But as the Janata had decided to shift its investment priorities away from heavy industry and towards agriculture and small scale industries the prospects of utilising the new loan or going in for fresh loans had become more remote than ever before.

(b) Winds of Change in the Public Sector

A major development during the Janata era that needs to be highlighted was the large scale switch over to Western technology by public sector undertakings, most of which had been set up partly or wholly with Soviet know-how. But, due to the Janata's predisposition for acquiring the best available technology (in most cases this meant Western technology) and the considerable improvement in the foreign
exchange reserves several public sector projects opted for non-Soviet sources of know-how in their expansion and diversification programs.

The Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) was created and run for more than a decade with Soviet assistance. This proved inadequate for offshore exploration, so the ONGC opted for American and French expertise. Later even for its onshore program it sought US and Hungarian assistance.45

The Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) had used Soviet collaboration for manufacturing 200 MW turbogenerators but was unable to find markets for them. It therefore switched over to West German collaboration for its 500 MW sets.46

The Mining and Allied Machinery Corporation signed five new collaboration agreements, none of which was with the USSR.47

The Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (IDPL) had been set up with Soviet help. The production of drugs by the IDPL was nowhere near its licensed capacities and some drugs were not produced at all. The main reason for the dismal performance was the inherent defects of the equipment. These defects caused lower efficiencies, higher time cycles and a very high rejection rate. The IDPL entered into

47 S.S. Aiyer, op.cit.
collaboration with Formafin of Italy in order to achieve higher yields per lower consumption of raw material.\textsuperscript{48}

However, it would be wrong to exaggerate the state of affairs. In several fields such as metallurgy, mineral exploration, heavy engineering India continued to use Soviet expertise. The fourth session of the Joint Commission in February-March 1978 led to the signing of a long-term protocol for the expansion of economic, trade, technical and scientific collaboration.\textsuperscript{49} More specifically agreements were reached to provide Soviet assistance to set up a steel plant\textsuperscript{50} and an alumina plant in Andhra Pradesh;\textsuperscript{51} and a troposscatter link between the two countries for reliable telecommunication.\textsuperscript{52}

Thus Soviet technology was by no means thrown overboard by India. But certainly the overwhelming dependence on Soviet technology because of the special climate of the 1950s and 1960s was sought to be rectified.

\textbf{III}

The arms procurements of the Janata regime provide the most compelling evidence of a reduction in the intensity of the Indo-Soviet relationship. It has been observed earlier that the major part of Indian military purchases

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} Jayashekar, op.cit., p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{49} \textit{Foreign Affairs Record}, March 1978, p.158.
\item \textsuperscript{50} ibid., December 1978, p.366.
\item \textsuperscript{51} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{52} ibid., April 1977, p.72.
\end{itemize}
since the mid sixties was of Soviet origin. The Janata endeavoured to alter this asymmetry by further diversification.

The acquisition of a deep penetration strike aircraft to replace the Indian Air Force's (IAF) aging Canberras and Hunters became a major priority in the late seventies. The alternatives considered were the Soviet MiG-23, the Anglo-French Jaguar, the Swedish SAAB-37 Viggen and the French F-1 Mirage. Initially, the Janata government chose to ignore the Soviet offer and narrowed the choice down to the Western aircrafts. The official explanation was that the Soviet aircraft did not meet the technical requirements. But there is not much evidence to indicate that the IAF endorsed this view. According to a well informed Indian defence analyst 'the MiG-23 was perceived by some Air Force technical experts, Defence Ministry officials ... as the most suitable plane to succeed the aging British Hunter fighters and Canberra bombers'.

While the relative merits of the British, French and Swedish aircrafts were being debated the Soviets made a renewed bid to get India to opt for the Soviet aircraft. In March 1978 Air Chief Marshal Kutakhov visited India. A few days later there were press reports that following a fresh Soviet offer for an improved version the government

55 ibid.
56 Raju G.C. Thomas, op.cit., p.93.
was reconsidering the MiG-23.\(^{57}\) Soviet handouts circulated in New Delhi reviewed the merits of the MiG-23 comparing it with the Western aircraft. The Soviet plane was projected to cost Rs.25 million apiece against an average of Rs.80 million for each of the Western planes.\(^{58}\) Besides, the cost could be paid through Indian exports and in non-convertible rupees. Nonetheless the Janata did not change its position and continued to argue that the MiG-23 did not meet the combat needs of the IAF.

In October 1978, it was finally announced that India had opted for the Jaguar.\(^{59}\) The cost of the agreement to purchase outright 40 aircraft and for licensed production of 110 more was estimated at approximately $2.5 billion,\(^{60}\) the biggest defence contract that India had ever entered into. The enormity of the purchase can be understood by the fact that from 1967 to 1976 Indian purchases from the Soviet Union had totalled only $1.365 billion.\(^{61}\)

Though enormous this was not an isolated instance of diversification. Soon after the Jaguar deal was made public the Defence Minister Mr Jagjivan Ram announced that the navy was to acquire British V/STOL Sea Harriers for the


\(^{58}\) Raju G.C. Thomas, Orbis, op.cit., p.94.

\(^{59}\) Times of India, October 7, 1978.

\(^{60}\) Raju Thomas, Orbis, op.cit., p.85.

aircraft carrier Vikrant. Simultaneously it was also indicated that India was looking for submarines in the Western market. This was in contrast to the almost exclusive naval cooperation with the Soviet Union in the late sixties and early seventies.

The army continued to be self-reliant with the minimum requirements for external purchases. Only the equipment needs of the Army's two armoured divisions and some armoured brigades required such items as import of tanks, anti-tank devices and some artillery pieces. Even in this there seemed to be some interest in acquiring Western equipment. Contrary to widely circulated reports that India had placed an order for Soviet T-72 tanks the Defence Minister made it clear that a final decision had not been made. The West German Leopard and a modified version of the British Chieftain were reported to be under consideration. When the Desai government fell a decision had yet to be made.

Notwithstanding the conclusion of major agreements with Britain, and an increased interest in Western technology in general, acquisitions from the USSR continued. Some significant, although not major, purchases were made. They included Il-38 maritime reconnaissance aircraft, Ka-25 and Mi-8 helicopters and SA-3 surface to air missiles.

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62 The Overseas Hindustan Times, October 26, 1978.
63 ibid.
64 For naval acquisitions under Mrs Gandhi's government see Raju G.C. Thomas, 'The Indian Navy in the Seventies', Pacific Affairs, Winter 1974-75, pp.500-518.
65 The Overseas Hindustan Times, June 21, 1979.
Thus in the sphere of arms acquisitions, as in the economic sphere, the Janata maintained the ties with the USSR but endeavoured to reduce Indian dependence on it.

IV

In summary, it could be said that while the Janata's policy modifications did not radically alter India's relations with the Soviet Union, unlike the 'about turn' in Egypt's relations with the USSR under President Sadat, nonetheless the overall impact of the sum total of changes of style, substance, emphasis and content was a diminution of India's Soviet connection.
CHAPTER V
'NORMALCY RESTORED'

The turmoil that had characterised India's domestic politics in the latter half of 1979 ended with Mrs Gandhi's overwhelming electoral success in January 1980. The Congress (Indira) won a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha. Mrs Gandhi was now re-established in almost as strong a position as in 1971. On the international front super power relations had towards the end of 1979 deteriorated into what some observers had begun to call the 'new cold war'. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the super power naval buildup in the Indian Ocean transformed India's vicinity into an arena of potential super power confrontation. This chapter examines Indo-Soviet relations, in this changed environment, from January 1980 to August 1981, the end of the first decade of the treaty relationship.

I

In comparison with the general state of relations during the Janata era this period witnessed an increase in the degree of closeness of the bilateral relationship. A variety of disparate but significant indications underscore this observation.

The Soviet leaders made their happiness about Mrs Gandhi's return to power obvious, praising her 'personal contribution' to the expansion and deepening of Soviet-Indian relations.¹

and declaring 'we have always had a particular liking for Mrs Gandhi'.\textsuperscript{2} Communiques released at the conclusion of high-level contacts between Indian and Soviet leaders stressed the atmosphere of 'mutual trust and cordiality' or 'friendship and trust' that prevailed during the discussions.\textsuperscript{3} As has been pointed out earlier the term 'trust' had been conspicuously absent from the communiques during the Janata interregnum and had last been used during Mrs Gandhi's Moscow visit in 1976.

Again, the Joint Declaration after President Brezhnev's December 1980 visit stated that 'special significance is attached by the two sides to Indo-Soviet meetings and contacts at the highest level'.\textsuperscript{4} This was remarkably similar to the 1976 Declaration which also highlighted the 'special importance of meetings at the highest level'.\textsuperscript{5} The Joint Declarations in the Janata period were silent on the 'importance' and 'significance' of high-level contacts.

Finally, in the December 1980 communique the two sides expressed 'profound satisfaction' at the state of the relationship.\textsuperscript{6} This was akin to the 'deep satisfaction' and 'profound satisfaction' expressed during Mr Brezhnev's 1973 visit and Mrs Gandhi's visit in 1976. The practice in the Janata period was to merely express 'satisfaction'.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{2} Foreign Affairs Record, December 1980, p.284.
\textsuperscript{3} For example see ibid., February 1980, p.47 and also December 1980, p.298.
\textsuperscript{4} ibid., p.301.
\textsuperscript{5} ibid.
\textsuperscript{6} ibid., p.301.
\textsuperscript{7} See Chapter IV.
This does not mean that the relationship had reverted to the level of closeness of Mrs Gandhi's earlier stay in office. The diminution of the role of the treaty in the bilateral relationship that the Janata government had introduced by specifying that relations would be strengthened in the 'spirit of the treaty' instead of the Soviet preferred 'on the basis of the treaty' was maintained by Mrs Gandhi's government.  

According to the reports in usually well-informed quarters Soviet delegations were kept waiting in New Delhi for days before the previously accessible Indian Prime Minister finally met them.  

More significantly the references to India in the General Secretary's reports to the CPSU Congresses have usually provided a good indication of the state of Soviet-Indian relations. In 1976 Brezhnev's report to the Twenty Fifth CPSU Congress had praised India in unprecedented terms, thus indicating the intensity of the bilateral relationship. In contrast the references to India in Brezhnev's report to the Twenty Sixth CPSU Congress were briefer and less enthusiastic, signalling that relations, although important, were not back to the level of the earlier years.

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8 See Chapter IV.


10 See Pravda,
Probably the most significant indicator of the Indian desire not to be too burdened with Soviet friendship was provided by Mrs Gandhi turning down Soviet suggestions to celebrate the tenth anniversary on a grand scale.\textsuperscript{11} Her 'message of greetings' was a minimal acknowledgement of the event.

What all this points to is that while there was in general an increase in the degree of closeness the level of intensity that marked Indo-Soviet relations from 1972 to early 1977 was not fully restored.

Having made this broad assessment it remains to be seen what impact this increase in the degree of closeness had on Indian attitudes towards specific issues that impinged on Indo-Soviet relations. The rest of this section is devoted to such an analysis.

(a) \textbf{India and the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan}

The events leading to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 are too well documented to need resurrection here.\textsuperscript{12} The concern here is to analyse Indian reaction to the Soviet move. The Soviet intervention posed a serious dilemma for Indian decision makers. Given its consistent opposition to super power intervention in

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Foreign Report}, op.cit.,

\textsuperscript{12} For example, see Jiri Valenta, 'The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: The Difficulty of Knowing Where to Stop', \textit{Orbis}, Summer 1980, pp.201-218.
the Third World India could hardly have looked upon the Soviet action favourably, whatever its interpretation of the events leading to the intervention. On the other hand, the US and Chinese responses to the Soviet action affected Indian interests in a way that the Soviet move did not. Pakistan was elevated to the status of a 'front line' state by the US and the arms embargo to it was lifted. Similarly China too promised military assistance.

For the USA and China as well as for most other states Afghanistan was a global issue of blatant Soviet invasion but for India it gained regional importance. The US and Chinese pledge of supplying arms to Pakistan was viewed by India as threatening its security, since in the past Western arms had been used in Pakistan's wars with India. Thus there was a perceptible increase in India's perceived need for the countervailing support of the Soviet Union. The issue of a rearmed Pakistan became of primary importance for India while the Soviet role in Afghanistan, since it did not directly affect Indian security perceptions became secondary. Nevertheless India could not ignore the invasion of a non-aligned state. The Indian stance in Afghanistan reflected these conflicting pressures.

When the crisis first erupted India was in the throes of a general election, with a caretaker government in charge. Mr Charan Singh, as the head of the government, summoned the Soviet Ambassador and made it clear that in India's view the sending of Soviet troops would have 'far reaching and adverse consequences' for the region as a whole. He also
expressed his desire that the Soviet troops be withdrawn as soon as possible, reminding the Soviets that in June 1979 both India and the Soviet Union had expressed their common opposition to any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.\footnote{Times of India, January 1, 1980.}

At the same time the other strand of the official Indian perception that a major danger of the Afghan situation was the likelihood of an arms race in the subcontinent was also stressed. India's 'grave concern' at the US move to rearm Pakistan was conveyed to the US Ambassador.\footnote{ibid.} A Foreign Ministry statement expressed the 'hope that no country or external power would take the steps which might aggravate the situation'.\footnote{Overseas Hindustan Times, January 10, 1980.} US efforts to persuade India that the arms for Pakistan were intended only to contain Soviet intervention along Pakistan's western borders did not cut much ice with the Indians.

The initial actions of Mrs Gandhi's new government emphasised the second strand while underplaying the first. When the UN General Assembly debated the Afghan issue the Indian representative under instructions from Mrs Gandhi spoke in a vein extremely sympathetic of the Soviet Union. Mr Mishra declared that India was against the presence of foreign troops and bases in any country but immediately qualified it by stating that 'India cannot look with
equanimity on the attempts by some outside powers to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan by training, arming and encouraging subversive elements to create disturbances inside Afghanistan'.

His essential conclusion was:

"The Soviet government has assured our government that its troops went to Afghanistan at the request of the Afghan government first made by President Amin on December 26, 1979, and then repeated by his successor on December 28, 1979. And we have been further assured that Soviet troops will be withdrawn when requested to do so by the Afghan government. We have no reason to doubt assurances, particularly from a friendly country like the Soviet Union with whom we have many close ties."

The speech momentarily shocked most UN members. Shorn of its veneer it was implicitly a defence of the Soviet position and created the impression that India was toeing the Soviet line. That Indian and Soviet perceptions were not identical soon became apparent, however, when the resolution calling for 'the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan' (the Soviet Union was not specifically mentioned) was voted upon. The resolution was supported by 104 countries. The Soviet Union was amongst the 18 who voted against it, while India along with 17 others abstained.

Can this be described as Soviet influence on New Delhi? While it is true that the Soviets attempted to persuade India to support their stance the Indian approach was a

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16 Times of India, January 11, 1980.
17 ibid.
historically consistent one. In 1956 on Hungary and in 1968 on Czechoslovakia, India had adopted similar approaches. It had refused to condemn the Soviet Union on both occasions, although Indian disapproval of the Soviet action had been made clear both times. Another similarity in the Indian approach was the emphasis it placed on recognising 'realities' in such situations. In this case in Indian perception the 'realities' included external subversion in Afghanistan, undeniable Soviet interests there and the fact of the USSR's substantial present commitment. This points more to similarity in Indian and Soviet views rather than Soviet influence. To the extent they were similar the Indian delegate's speech echoed Soviet perceptions but since they weren't identical the voting reflected the difference.

Nevertheless the Indians realised that their action at the United Nations had hurt India's stature, in that vaguest of forums, world public opinion, since it had created the impression that India was justifying the Soviet action. Thus Indian leaders began clarifying their position by emphasising their opposition to the Soviet action. After a meeting with Lord Carrington on January 16, Mrs Gandhi made her first public statement since assuming office, declaring that no country was justified in entering another country. Soon after in an interview with Time magazine, she went further and stated that she 'disapproved of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan'.

18 ibid., January 197, 1980.
The External Affairs Minister Mr Narasimha Rao in a statement to the Lok Sabha said,

As the Prime Minister has clearly indicated, we are against the presence of foreign troops and bases in any country. We have expressed our hope that Soviet forces will withdraw from Afghanistan and went on to declare that India had never endorsed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.  

At the same time India maintained a high profile program of seeking to limit the global and regional response that might threaten its interests. Its criticism of the US decision to supply arms to Pakistan continued thus maintaining the anti-Western aspects of the Indian stance on Afghanistan. The US proposal for a regional security arrangement conveyed to Mrs Gandhi by President Carter's special envoy Clark Clifford was also turned down on the grounds that it was bound to heighten tensions.

As the initial fears generated by the US response subsided and in February it became clear that the US pledge of military aid to Pakistan was a limited one which was not overtly threatening to it, Indian criticism of Pakistan and China grew progressively muted. More so after General Zia formally rejected the US offer on March 5. On the other hand, the differences in Indian and Soviet perceptions came into bold relief.

In mid-February the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko visited New Delhi. His goal undoubtedly was to obtain Indian support for Moscow's intervention. The reports of

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20 Lok Sabha Debates (Seventh Series), January 23/198, Vol.1, No.3, Cl.47.
the discussions that he had with Indian leaders indicate that the controversy over Afghanistan dominated the meetings. The talks with Gromyko were described as 'tough' and 'chilly'.

Gromyko was said to have 'explained the Soviet point of view' while Indian leaders 'conveyed ... India's assessment'. The joint statement skirted the Afghan issue completely. This obviously signified substantial disagreement.

The pattern was similar in all other high level visits in 1980. The Indian Foreign Minister Rao visited Moscow in June, the Indian President Reddy journeyed to Moscow in September and the Soviet Party General Secretary Brezhnev came to New Delhi in December. On all three occasions Afghanistan was the principal subject of discussion, and in every instance the communiques issued at the conclusion of the visits did not mention Afghanistan, thus indicating that the differences in attitudes persisted throughout 1980.

1981 saw a new President take over in Washington. The initial actions of the Reagan Administration were seen in India as detrimental to its interests. President Reagan indicated that he would consider any request for weapons from Afghan 'freedom fighters'. Also the new administration began discussions with Pakistan on the resumption of large-scale military aid. Predictably this drew an adverse reaction from India, and the anti-Western strand once again surfaced.

22 Times of India, February 12, 1980.
It was in this atmosphere that the non-aligned Foreign Ministers' Conference was held in New Delhi in mid-February. The Soviets had done a great deal of lobbying with New Delhi. While their optimum goal was to get India to change its position, at a minimum they wished to keep India from drifting further from the Soviet stance.

Initially the Soviet pressure seemed to be yielding dividends. India as the host country had prepared the draft declaration. The Indian draft was an overt attempt to shield criticism of the Soviet move into Afghanistan. It did not refer to foreign intervention at all but merely stated the need to de-escalate tensions and seek a political solution. Several non-aligned states took exception to the 'toothless draft' and sought to amend it. \(^{24}\)

Whatever influence the Soviet Union had exerted on India proved to be momentary. In the face of a general consensus for a stronger indictment of the Soviet action India backtracked. In fact it did not even lobby for the acceptance of the original draft as Cuba, Vietnam and Afghanistan did. The final declaration called for a settlement on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops and observance of the principles of non-intervention and non-interference. \(^{25}\) The formulation was viewed as


\(^{25}\) Times of India, February 14, 1981.
unfavourable to the Soviet Union both in the West and in India. That India was party to it expresses the divergence in Indian and Soviet perceptions.

In the months after the non-aligned meeting, as it became evident that the US was planning to supply arms to Pakistan on a massive scale, the anti-Western aspects of the Indian posture were once again accentuated. The differences between India and the West were clearly displayed during Mrs Thatcher's visit in April 1981. Yet this did not mean a reduction in the distance that separated Indian and Soviet views. The statement released at the conclusion of Foreign Minister Rao's annual trek to Moscow in July was once again silent on the Afghanistan issue.

In essence, as one commentator has noted, the Indian stance 'wandered' between total support of the Soviet action and complete indictment of it, the two scenarios many had predicted. At times India had stressed the anti-Western aspects of its stance but it had consistently expressed its desire for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, although this was largely low key.

(b) Super Power Rivalry in the Indian Ocean

As part of the US response to the unstable international situation in the late seventies President Carter had reversed

26 For example see ibid. and New York Times, February 14, 1981.
27 Overseas Hindustan Times, July 30, 1981.
his March 1977 pledge of demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean and had increased the US presence there, until by December 1979 the US flotilla was larger than ever before. The Afghan invasion became the justification for a further buildup.

According to one source the number of US ships grew from about 24 at the beginning of 1980 to more than 40 by September. Meanwhile the Soviet naval presence in the region had increased from 24 to 32 in the same period. The Soviet Union nonetheless sought to highlight the 'imperialist threat in the Indian Ocean' and attempted to ignore its own buildup.

The Indians were hardly taken in by this Soviet strategy. During Brezhnev's visit President Reddy expressed India's strong disapproval of the 'upward spiral of competitive naval presence of non-littoral states in the Indian Ocean'. Mrs Gandhi's concern over the increased naval strength of external powers was also made clear to the Soviets. The differing perceptions of the two on the Indian Ocean issue - Moscow's of a US buildup and New Delhi's of increase in the strength of non-littoral states - was further indicated by the restrained Indian response to Brezhnev's five point proposal for peace and security in the Persian Gulf.

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29 R.C. Horn, Soviet-Indian Relations, p.198.
30 ibid.
31 See International Affairs, June 1980, p.103.
33 Times of India, December 10, 1980.
34 Mrs Gandhi's reaction was 'it appeared to be a constructive suggestion and was worthy of careful consideration, Overseas Hindustan Times, December 25, 1980.
The Joint Declaration was ambiguous enough for each side to interpret it to suit its own position. Diego Garcia was specifically mentioned as an example of a base that needed to be removed. This was followed by a condemnation of 'any attempts to build up foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean under any pretext whatsoever'.

At the non-aligned Foreign Ministers' meeting New Delhi shifted its stance expressed during Brezhnev's visit just a couple of months before. Its draft attempted to de-emphasise the notions of super power rivalry by focussing on US presence in Diego Garcia while ignoring Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean. This move was frustrated by dissenters, who demanded that the declaration either name both Soviet and US bases or none at all. Once again India backtracked and agreed to abide by the majority decision. The Delhi Declaration did not specifically mention any base but voiced an omnibus disapproval of big power rivalry in the region in all forms and manifestations. This once again reveals the momentary nature of Soviet influence.

(c) The China Factor in Indo-Soviet Relations

China's response to the Soviet invasion further worsened its already tenuous relations with the Soviet Union and India. While it was China's vociferous denunciation of the Soviet

35 Pravda, December 12, 1980.
36 See Mohan Ram, op.cit.
37 Times of India, February 14, 1981.
action that escalated the tension between China and the USSR in the case of Sino-Indian relations, it was the Sino-US decision, in early January 1980, to increase military aid to Pakistan that generated fears in India of a Sino-US-Pakistan axis.

Sino-Soviet relations showed little improvement in the period under review but Sino-Indian relations began to rebound almost immediately after the initial downturn. The early signals for better relations were provided by China. For the first time in twenty years the Chinese Foreign Minister attended India's Republic Day celebrations at Beijing on 26 January 1980. China sent a new Ambassador to India after Mrs Gandhi took over without waiting for India's replacement to arrive in Beijing. Further evidence of China's desire for better relations with India was provided during Pakistani President General Zia's visit to Beijing. The Chinese refused to be drawn on the Kashmir issue despite General Zia raising the theme in his speeches. For its part India too realised that the Chinese response to Afghanistan, of military aid to Pakistan was more measured than New Delhi had anticipated. Once the misapprehensions were allayed India too expressed cautious optimism towards establishing better relations.

Mrs Gandhi met the Chinese Foreign Minister at Salisbury in April and Chairman Hua Kuo Feng at Tito's funeral in May.

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FEER, May 16, 1980.
The Belgrade meeting was the first contact at that level since the Chou-Nehru parleys two decades earlier. The Chinese leader apparently told Mrs Gandhi that his country was 'more than ready' to improve relations. The Indian Prime Minister too reciprocated such sentiments saying India was also anxious to do the same. In effect the two leaders agreed that better Sino-Indian relations were essential to promote peace in Asia. 39

Soviet concern with these developments was obvious. The Soviet press warned with new intensity the threat to India of a Washington-Beijing-Islamabad axis. Against the background of General Zia's visit to Beijing a Tass commentary stressed that the 'close alliance between the Beijing chauvinists and the Pakistani military dictatorship' was not only a threat to Afghanistan but 'it was well known that the Chinese-Pakistan rapprochement had above all an anti-Indian thrust'. 40 Various other Soviet press reports emphasised the strategic dangers to India of the Karakoram Highway, China's threat to Asian security and Sino-Pakistani nuclear cooperation. 41

In the face of this barrage of Soviet warnings the Foreign Minister Rao assured the Soviet Union that normalisation of relations with China would not be at the

41 For example see Pravda, May 26, 1980; Pravda, August 7, 1980 and New Times, No.21, May 1980.
cost of Indo-Soviet friendship. At the same time there was no letup in furthering the process of normalisation of Sino-Indian relations. A high level delegation led by Mr Eric Gonsalves, Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, was sent to Beijing in June.

The visit enhanced the prospects for better relations. At a banquet in Mr Gonsalves' honour the Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that China was 'willing to further improve its relations with India on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence'.

More importantly, while Gonsalves was in Beijing, Vice-Premier Deng Xiao-ping in an interview with an Indian defence journal called for improved relations. He also underscored this Chinese desire by making two concessions. First, he stated that Kashmir was a bilateral problem between India and Pakistan and should be settled amicably. This was an implicit confirmation of the shift in overt Chinese support for Pakistan's goal of 'self-determination' in Kashmir. Second, he renewed the 'package' offer, to solve the border problem (Chou had first proposed this prior to the 1962 war), suggesting that China would give up its claims of territory beyond the McMahon line in North-East India if India agreed to the status quo in Aksai Chin along the Kashmir border. While this was hardly what India

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42 Times of India, May 17, 1980.
44 Times of India, June 23, 1980.
wanted as a final solution New Delhi welcomed it as a starting point for negotiations.\(^{45}\)

Whatever little optimism had been generated by the Gonsalves visit was shortlived. Little more than a month later further progress was 'frozen' by the Indian recognition of the Heng Samrin regime of Democratic Kampuchea and the consequent postponement of the Chinese Foreign Minister's visit to India. This once again brought to the fore the tenuous nature of progress in Sino-Indian normalisation efforts. Obviously Moscow viewed it with relief.

After a period of inactivity once again there were growing signs of progress in Sino-Indian relations. In April 1981 Deng told the visiting Janata leader, Dr Subramaniam Swamy, that the first item on China's agenda was normalisation of relations with India.\(^{46}\) In May it was announced that the long-postponed visit to New Delhi of the Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua would take place in June.

Once again the Soviet press launched a campaign to remind India of the dangers that China posed to it. China's occupation of 'sacred Indian land', Beijing's support for secessionist movements in India, its strategic linkages with Pakistan and the imperialist powers, and the 'truth' behind China's 'false diplomacy of smiles' towards India were

\(^{45}\) ibid., July 3, 1980.

\(^{46}\) *Overseas Hindustan Times*, April 23, 1981.
highlighted. As Huang Hua's visit drew nearer the bluntness of such warnings increased once again indicating that the Soviet Union did not regard Sino-Indian normalisation favourably.

During the Huang Hua visit the two countries succeeded in making a fresh start on the border negotiations so that the larger aspects of bilateral relations could be spared the dispute's debilitating impact, thus signalling that both sides were keen to renew relations which had remained dormant for more than two decades.

The above discussion does not indicate that there was a major reconciliation between India and China which affected India's relations with the Soviet Union. Such a development was probably years away. However it does suggest that India was willing to brook Soviet disapproval in order to enhance its diplomatic manoeuvrability. In short Indian attitudes towards China are yet another instance of India's unwillingness to subjugate its interests to Soviet desires.

(d) Indian Recognition of Kampuchea

On 7 July 1980 India recognised the Heng Samrin-led government of the Peoples' Republic of Kampuchea. The move was clearly one that worked in favour of the Soviet Union. It was a gain for Soviet supported Vietnam in its continuing contest with China. The adverse affect this had on Sino-Indian

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47 For example see BBC Summary of World Broadcasts SU/G715/A3/3; SU/6730/A3/2; SU/6738/A3/1; SU/6739/A3/2; SU/6759/A3/2.
relations has been noted earlier. Most Western newspaper reports regarded it as a clear case of India accommodating Soviet interests.\(^{48}\) Does the record support such an assessment?

While it is true that the Indian recognition was in Soviet interests there is no evidence to suggest that the decision was one that was adopted under Soviet influence. The closest contact between India and the Soviet Union prior to the Indian recognition was during Foreign Minister Rao's trip to Moscow in June. The fairly extensive record of Rao's discussions provides no indication of Kampuchea being a major issue and there was no hint of unusual Soviet pressure on India or Indian policy change.

On the other side of the coin there is some evidence of India arriving at the decision independently. The Congress (I) election manifesto released in December 1979 had made a clear commitment to recognise the Heng Samrin regime if the party were elected.\(^{49}\) Thus Mrs Gandhi could not have gone back on it unless some dramatic development obliged a review of the promise. In May during the meeting of the Consultative Committee of Parliament for Foreign Affairs there was a general consensus among all members (including those from the opposition) that the Heng Samrin

\(^{48}\) For example see 'India's Gesture to Moscow', The Times (London), July 9, 1980.

government should be recognised. The Foreign Minister assured the committee that the recognition would be granted as soon as possible. Finally, India's close relations with Vietnam are a matter of record. Thus the available evidence points more to India independently reaching the decision and less to such a decision having been adopted under Soviet pressure.

The above survey of Indian and Soviet attitudes indicates that despite the increase in the degree of closeness of the bilateral relationship there were significant differences between the two countries on most issues. There was very little evidence of India adopting foreign policy postures simply to accommodate Soviet interests. While at times India had under pressure shifted its stance closer to that of the Soviet Union such shifts were momentary indicating Indian unwillingness to make major sacrifices in order to facilitate Soviet objectives.

II

While the political arena witnessed a slight increase in the closeness of the bilateral relationship in the economic sphere, there was no significant deepening of economic dependence, although the beneficial linkages continued to be significant.

During Mr Brezhnev's visit an agreement was signed pledging Soviet assistance to a broad range of projects

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50 Times of India, May 17, 1980.
to be covered during India's Sixth Five Year Plan.\textsuperscript{51} In January 1981 during the session of Inter-Governmental Commission it was decided to establish a Joint Commission in such areas as coal and energy.\textsuperscript{52} Such agreements did not enhance but rather continued economic cooperation.

The annual trade turnover rose from Rs 14.63 billion in 1979-80 to Rs 21.3 billion in 1980-81.\textsuperscript{53} This however did not mark a radical increase in Soviet share of India's overall trade. The relative Soviet position continued to be third behind the EEC and the US.

| Table One: India's Trade with USSR, USA and EEC (in percentage) |
|---------------|-------|-------|
|               | USSR  | USA   | EEC (ten) |
| 1979-80       | 9.4   | 11.2  | 25.3      |
| 1980-81       | 11.0  | 12.3  | 21.9      |

Source: Economic Survey, 1981-82

The increase in overall trade was largely because of the expansion in Soviet imports from India rather than Soviet exports to India. Acute foreign exchange shortage to pay for imports from the West led the Soviet Union to shop for consumer goods from India's duty-free export

\textsuperscript{51} ibid., December 11, 1980.
\textsuperscript{52} ibid., January 28, 1981.
\textsuperscript{53} Economic Survey, 1981-82, p.135
promotion zones. Soviet imports from India increased by Rs 5.19 billion while exports to India increased only by about a fourth of this value, Rs 1.3 billion. Even this rise in the value of Indian imports was almost entirely due to increase in the quantity as well as the cost of crude oil and petroleum products. But this was hardly enough to offset the increase in Soviet imports. Thus the Rs 1.86 billion trade deficit in 1979-80 was transformed into a Rs 2.02 billion surplus in India's favour by 1980-81.

Such a development was hardly to the liking of the Soviet Union. The Soviet desire to get India to import more was apparent. In trade negotiations Soviet officials attempted to put pressure on their Indian counterparts to buy more. The Soviet Union initiated discussions to collaborate with India in the setting up of a steel plant in Nigeria and a nuclear plant in Libya. Finally the Soviets offered to extend the sphere of collaboration to private industry so as to enhance exports to India. However, by the end of the period under review the Soviets had not achieved any success.

III

The enhanced perception of threat to its security prompted substantial military purchases by India to meet

54 ibid.
55 ibid.
56 *Times of India*, February 24, 1980.
57 ibid., February 21, 1981.
perceived needs. In May 1980 the Soviet Union extended a $1.6 billion credit to the purchase period.\textsuperscript{58} The terms were extremely favourable with 2.5\% annual interest and repayment over 17 years.\textsuperscript{59} The equipment India was to purchase included T-72 tanks, MiG-23 fighter aircraft, MiG-25 reconnaissance aircraft, anti-tank missiles, air to air and air to surface missiles.\textsuperscript{60}

Significant deals were made with Western countries too. Two West German HDW-1500 submarines were purchased outright at a cost of about Rs 500 million each and two more were to be built in India under license.\textsuperscript{61} Mrs Gandhi reapproved in 1980 the order held in abeyance since 1976 to purchase two Boeing 737-200C transport aircraft from the USA. Also, as part of a $340 million deal with the US more than 200 self-propelled howitzers and about 3,700 BGM-71 Tow anti-tank missiles were acquired.\textsuperscript{62} Finally, in order to counter Pakistan's acquisition of F-16 aircrafts negotiations were at an advanced stage to purchase Mirage-2000 fighter/strike aircraft from France.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{58} International Herald Tribune, May 28, 1980.
\textsuperscript{59} ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} World Armaments and Disarmaments, SIPRI Yearbook, 1981.
\textsuperscript{61} The Indian Express, July 11, 1980.
\textsuperscript{63} R.K. Gandhi, 'From Russia With Arms', Business India (Bombay), September 14-27, 1981, pp.51-52; the Mirage deal was finalised in 1982.
Thus while Soviet weaponry continued to be the mainstay of Indian defence purchases the earlier pattern of diversification of sources of arms so as to reduce dependence on the USSR continued.

IV

The major themes that emerge from the above discussion of the political, economic and military dimensions of Indo-Soviet relations in this period seem to broadly conform with those discerned in the earlier phases of the relationship. While there was in general an increase in the level of intensity of the relationship from that existing in the preceding period, there was very little evidence that it was translated into increased economic and military dependence. True the asymmetry in the defence links continued but efforts to reduce it were also maintained with the trend of diversification of sources of arms acquisition being continued. Nevertheless in the actual diplomatic performance, Indian and Soviet views were far from complementary. Indian unwillingness to subjugate its interests to those of the Soviet Union was as conspicuous as it was earlier.
CONCLUSION

The theme that has surfaced persistently during the examination of Indo-Soviet relations in the first decade of the treaty relationship is that there is no evidence to support the grosser tales of enhancement of Indian dependence on and subservience to the Soviet Union consequent to the treaty of 1971.

Indeed strong economic and military ties bind India to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless Moscow's position in India's external economic interactions was neither a dominant one nor was its relative prominence enhanced. In fact the trend has been for the Soviet Union to be unable or unwilling to meet the needs of the changed requirements of the Indian economy.

In the sphere of arms trade the picture is significantly different. Although the signing of the treaty did not result in an increase in Indian reliance on Soviet arms the Soviet Union continued to be the major source of Indian defence purchases. While India's efforts to work its way to greater independence through expansion of its domestic defence industry, through diversification of its sources of supply, and through domestic production under foreign licence achieved considerable success the asymmetry remained, albeit at a reduced level.

Politically the partition of India's traditional rival Pakistan in 1971 brought a radical change in the South Asian balance of power and enhanced Indian dominance in the region.
The possibility that any major external power would again stake its global reputation on backing a diminutive Pakistan in a confrontation with India was reduced. Consequently Indian reliance on Soviet support to manage sub-continental affairs also declined. However India still required Soviet support since the possibility of external support for Pakistan, although lessened, had not been eliminated. Moreover, Soviet support for Indian security was necessary in the case of a conflict with China. On the other hand continuing Sino-Soviet hostility had ensured continuing Soviet need for Indian friendship; to a lesser extent Moscow also valued India as a counter to US influence.

While it is true that during the period surveyed there was a declining Indian need for the Soviet Union in contrast to the continuing (and even increasing) Soviet need for India, on balance it could still be argued that the Indian need seems to have been greater. However this did not result in Moscow gaining leverage of a substantial nature.

At times the Soviet Union has been able to bring about shifts in Indian stances. The changes that have occurred have always been momentary. The shift during the South Asian crisis of 1971 from a preference for an independent Bangladesh to a reluctant acceptance that independence need not be the only solution to the turmoil lasted just more than a week. At the first available opportunity India reverted to its preferred position. Then again at the Non Aligned Foreign Ministers' meeting at New Delhi in 1981 the Indian
draft sought to ignore the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and Soviet naval activities in the Indian Ocean. On both scores India backtracked and agreed to formulations which were not favourable to the Soviet Union.

On other issues a slightly different type of leverage has been manifested. On the question of the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in the early 1970s although the Soviet Union was unable to change the essence of the Indian support for the Zone of Peace proposal, New Delhi at one stage accepted the validity of Soviet objections and Moscow was successful in channelising Indian criticism away from it and towards Washington. Even this was temporary. The Janata government as part of its 'genuine nonalignment' refused to accept the Soviet objections and also disapproved of both US and Soviet presence in the Ocean.

On a wide variety of issues India has refused to align its conduct with Soviet preferences where doing so would have involved a sacrifice of major interests. During the 1971 crisis in South Asia the Soviet Union had consistently counselled restraint but its diplomacy was unable to arrest the drift towards war as a last resort. Similarly despite Moscow's approval of NPT as a regulatory regime its efforts to get India to subscribe to it did not succeed in altering the Indian position. In fact the Soviet attitude towards the Indian nuclear explosion was a significant instance of Soviet deference to Indian sensibilities.

Again, India has steered clear of becoming an instrument of Soviet policy against China. Although the Soviets made
concerted efforts to win India's approval for the Asian Collective Security scheme there was a clear awareness in New Delhi that Beijing viewed the scheme as a Soviet effort to construct a coalition of states to contain China and therefore India never endorsed it. On the other hand notwithstanding Moscow's unremitting efforts to convince India of the danger which China has represented to it New Delhi has made efforts to normalise Sino-Indian relations. True Sino-Indian normalisation is still far away and progress has been painstakingly slow, but this has been largely due to the inherent problems in Sino-Indian relations rather than Soviet success in dissuading India.

Also, Indo-Soviet friendship has not prevented India from expressing grave doubts about super power detente. It is a matter of record that Mrs Gandhi as well as other Indian spokesmen criticised detente as an attempt by the super powers to carve out global spheres of influence at the expense of lesser powers.

Thus the available evidence indicates the existence of a very limited Soviet ability to get India to conform to Soviet preferences. Major policy changes have not been produced. Soviet leverage has operated only on the margin or periphery of relations.

This is not to say that Soviet economic assistance, the benefits of trade with Moscow, the importance of the Soviet Union as the principal source of arms and a factor in Indian security has had no impact on India. It has provided for a relatively stable relationship between India
and the Soviet Union. An illustration of the value of such a situation for the Soviets can be seen in 1977.

When the Janata came to power all available indications were that Indo-Soviet relations would undergo drastic changes. Given the problems that the Soviets were then encountering in their relations with Egypt a setback in India would have underscored their diplomatic isolation in the Third World. Egypt and India are two countries in which the Soviets have invested a considerable amount of resources over a long period of time. After Sadat's move away from Moscow a repeat performance in India would have compounded the Soviet problems among the developing states.

Despite the predispositions the Janata leaders realised the substantial benefits accruing to India from relations with the Soviet Union. Therefore while they introduced changes which resulted in a diminution of India's Soviet connection these changes took place within the broad framework of continuity of close relations. Thus the Indian need for Soviet economic and military assistance has provided New Delhi with an incentive for avoiding sharp discontinuities in its relationship with Moscow.

In sum it could be concluded that there seems to have been a decrease in Indian dependence on the Soviet Union in the first decade of the treaty relationship. Nevertheless there still exists a mutual need for each other. While this has provided for a relatively stable relationship it has not resulted in the Soviet Union acquiring a substantial and predictable leverage over Indian foreign policy.
Wishing to expand and strengthen the existing relations of sincere friendship between them,
considering that the further development of friendship and co-operation meets the basic national interests of both states as well as the interests of a lasting peace in Asia and throughout the world,
being determined to contribute to strengthening world peace and security and to work tirelessly to bring about a relaxation of international tension and the final abolition of the remnants of colonialism,
reaffirming their firm belief in the principles of peaceful co-existence and co-operation between states with different political and social systems,
convinced that in the present-day world international problems can be solved only through co-operation and not through conflict,
reaffirming their determination to follow the objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter,
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, on the one hand, and the Republic of India, on the other, have decided to conclude the present Treaty and with this aim in view have appointed the following plenipotentiaries:
on behalf of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - the Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. A.A. Gromyko,
on behalf of the Republic of India - the Minister of External Affairs of India Swaran Singh,
who, upon presentation of their credentials, found in due form and proper order, agreed on the following:

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare that there shall be a lasting peace and friendship between their two countries and their peoples. Each shall respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other Party. The High Contracting Parties shall continue to develop and strengthen the relations of sincere friendship, good-neighborliness and all-round co-operation existing between them, on the basis of the above-mentioned principles as well as the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

Article 2

Guided by a desire to contribute in every way towards ensuring a lasting peace and the security of their peoples, the High Contracting Parties declare their determination to continue efforts towards maintaining and strengthening peace in Asia and throughout the world, ending the arms race and achieving general and complete disarmament covering both nuclear and conventional weapons under effective international control.
Article 3

Guided by their devotion to the lofty ideal of equality of all peoples and states, irrespective of race or creed, the High Contracting Parties condemn colonialism and racism in all forms and manifestations and reaffirm their determination to strive for their final and complete abolition.

The High Contracting Parties shall co-operate with other states in achieving these aims and to support the just aspirations of the peoples in their struggle against colonialism and racial domination.

Article 4

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics respects India's policy of non-alignment and reaffirms that this policy is an important factor for maintaining universal peace and international security and for easing tension in the world.

The Republic of India respects the peaceful policy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics aimed at strengthening friendship and co-operation with all peoples.

Article 5

Being deeply interested in ensuring world peace and security, and attaching great importance to mutual co-operation in the international arena to achieve these aims, the High Contracting Parties shall maintain regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting the interests of both states, through meetings and exchanges of opinion between their leading statesmen, visits by official delegations and special representatives of the two governments, and through diplomatic channels.

Article 6

Attaching great importance to economic, scientific and technical co-operation between them, the High Contracting Parties shall continue to strengthen and widen their mutually advantageous and all-round co-operation in these fields and also to expand their co-operation in the fields of trade, transport and communications on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual advantage and the most favoured nation principle in compliance with the existing agreements and special agreements with neighboring countries, as it is stipulated in the trade agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and India of December 26, 1970.

Article 7

The High Contracting Parties shall promote the further development of the relations and contacts between them in the fields of science, art, literature, education, health care, the press, radio, television, cinema, tourism and sport.

Article 8

In accordance with the traditional friendship established between the two countries, each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declares that it shall not enter into or participate in any military alliances directed against the other Party.
Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes to refrain from any aggression against the other Party and not to allow the use of its territory for committing any act that may cause military damage to the other High Contracting Party.

Article 9

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes to refrain from giving any assistance to any third Party taking part in an armed conflict with the other Party. In the event that any of the Parties is attacked or threatened with attack, the High Contracting Parties will immediately start mutual consultations with a view to eliminating this threat and taking appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security for their countries.

Article 10

Each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declared that it shall not undertake any commitment, secret or open, with regard to one or more states incompatible with the present Treaty. Each of the High Contracting Parties declares further that it has no commitments towards any other state or states and shall not undertake any commitments that may cause military damage to the other Party.

Article 11

The present Treaty is signed for a term of twenty years and shall be prolonged automatically for every subsequent period of five years unless one of the High Contracting Parties declares its intention to terminate its operation by notifying the other High Contracting Party 12 months before the expiration of the term of the Treaty.

The Treaty is subject to ratification and shall come into force on the day the instruments of ratification are exchanged, which will be effected in Moscow within one month after the signing of the present Treaty.

Article 12

Any differences in interpreting any article or articles of the present Treaty that may arise between the High Contracting Parties shall be settled on a bilateral basis by peaceful means in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

The above-mentioned plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty in Russian, Hindi and English, all the texts being equally authentic, and affixed their seals thereto.

Done in New Delhi on August 9, 1971.

For the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
A. GROMYKO, Minister of Foreign Affairs

For the Republic of India
SWARAN SINGH, Minister of External Affairs
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