CHAPTER - IV
CONUNDRUMS OF INDO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP
UNDER INDIRA GANDHI 1971-76

Midway through the Bangladesh war, Mrs.Gandhi asserted India's national pride when she exclaimed at a public rally, 'perhaps, foreigners are not aware of the mettle we are made', and the victory in the war vindicated her position. It was of some significance that despite hostile reaction from Peking over the creation of Bangladesh, India consented to the North Vietnamese request for an exchange of ambassadors. Perhaps an additional factor that worked upon India to agree to this was the desire to convey to Washington that India did not hold super power pressures in awe. India had also demonstrated during the crisis that it had in no way played a subordinate role to the Soviet Union. In fact by breaking up Pakistan, India seemed to have consolidated her own independence vis-a-vis the super power who could no longer threaten to tilt towards Islamabad in order to strengthen their influence in New Delhi. India appeared to have become less reliant on either super power with regard to her regional strategic interests. When the war ended the Chinese consul in Dacca commented 'we used to think that there is a force behind India, now we consider India as a force'.

In the final analysis, however, it appears that the super powers accepted reluctantly, though, India's preponderance in the region, primarily because the
territory in question was not of strategic significance in the global balance of power and consequently neither Moscow nor Washington opposed its secession, a demand that received strong support by India. Hence the Indo-Pakistani crisis of 1971 did not itself directly affect India's non-aligned status because the issue of Bangladesh was not of major long-term importance in the relations between the super powers. In that parlance the Indo-Soviet treaty did not signal the complete termination of India's non-aligned policy vis-a-vis the super powers, although as mentioned earlier, it did represent a technical abandonment of the traditional non-alignment as practised by Nehru. While indicating India's dependence upon Soviet military aid, it constituted a necessary adjustment to the dynamic contemporary environment as advocated by the original theory of non-alignment. As a matter of fact there was no obligation in the treaty to formulate an identical approach to internal issues, and indeed the Soviet Union did not recognise Bangladesh until 1972, two months after New Delhi had done so. To emphasise her non-aligned status and also compelled by her economic weakness, it became imperative on India's part to continue to seek assistance from both Soviet Union and United States. Kissinger's remark at a WASG meeting, on Mrs. Gandhi's stance that the 'lady is cold blooded and though and will not turn into a Soviet satellite merely because of pique,' explains Mrs. Gandhi's position.
vis-a-vis the super powers. Commenting on India's role in South Asia in 1971 a western newspaper stated the Indian Government has been motivated primarily by its own recognised self-interest. It has not been a cat's paw for any foreign power. This India no longer knuckles under when Washington cuts off aid. But it does not follow that it also dances to the strings pulled in Moscow.\(^7\).

One of Mrs. Gandhi's traits had been that she never denied herself the opportunity of talking to people with whom she had differences, or even of trying to come to know their points of view. Without exclusively depending upon her official establishment or being dogged to any single report, just as in internal politics, she kept all her channels open, in foreign policy too, she tried to reach out to all without ever giving the Soviet Union the opportunity to consider India to be its particular sphere of influence.\(^8\).

Mrs. Gandhi recognised that the Nixon administration's support for Islamabad during the Bangladesh crisis notwithstanding, it had not seriously damaged India's relations with the United States for the long term. New Delhi's cause after all, had been supported by the bulk of the U.S. legislature, the press and public opinion. Ironically enough despite the
successful operation of the Indo-Soviet treaty in 1971, by 1972, New Delhi sought to reduce its dependence on Moscow for its diplomatic support in South Asia. The first fragile indications that both United States and India would prefer to move toward more normal relationships came about in early 1972. Both seemed to have sound reasons to develop friendly relations. Having won the contest within the subcontinent, India needed to bring her international relations back into some sort of balance. On the American side, it was clear that in future any dealings of significance within the subcontinent would inevitably bring the United States into contact with India. This was made clear by the U.S. recognition of Bangladesh. Also continuing contacts with Pakistan helped make certain that the United States like the Soviet Union would maintain working relationships with all three countries.

Though Indo-Soviet relationship was apparently stable and useful both militarily and diplomatically, the framework of consultation outlined in the treaty was not explicitly well-defined in the sense that consultation did not necessarily imply cooperation or collaboration or the development of an Indo-Soviet bloc in international politics. While the convergence of Indo-Soviet interests had become the basis for international cooperation, one could not assert that this convergence would likely be
permanent or that India would be willing to align itself with Moscow at the expense of its relationship with United States and Europe⁹. In this context Mrs. Gandhi's statement of December 3, 1971 was significant when she explicitly emphasized the importance of friendly Indo-American relations which took into account the new realities of the subcontinent¹⁰. Mrs. Gandhi's letter of December 15, 1971, was an earnest appeal to President Nixon to judge facts impartially and help in bringing about a change in the thinking of the White House¹¹. President Nixon's call for a 'serious dialogue' in his 1972 Foreign Policy Message to the U.S. Congress seemed to indicate a change in attitude towards India since the message accepted India as a great power and admitted that India's victory was bound to affect great power relationships and it also 'recognised that a U.S.-China alignment was fanciful'¹². But India was soon disillusioned for the message failed to have any reassuring effects. Coming as it did on the heels of the 1971 message by Nixon, there seemed to be no change in the basics of Nixon's view of the subcontinent. The 1971 message had argued that the U.S., U.S.S.R. and China had legitimate interests in the subcontinent and Indian objections that only the South Asian states could properly have such interests failed to influence official U.S. thinking. The 1972 message showed no change in this
viewpoint and expanded it by suggesting that a 'constructive relationship' between India and the U.S. would depend upon India's relationship with Moscow and how India treated its South Asian neighbours.

The central thrust of India's post—Bangladesh diplomacy was to keep the subcontinent free from 'outside security managers from the process of conflict management'. Thus, implicit in this policy was seeking exclusion of all great powers including the Soviet Union. It was of some significance that Mrs.Gandhi on December 31, 1971, calculatedly excluded the possibility of a Tashkent style peace negotiation and instead insisted on bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan. In other words, Indian foreign policy at this point was pointedly aimed at shaping viable relations with the USSR, U.S. and China. A revised basis for a new and a strengthened Indo-U.S. relationship therefore largely depended upon the degree of slant towards the Soviet Union. However, unless U.S. developed a reliable relationship with India in the light of the revised power balance in South Asia after the December war and considered India as an emerging element in the balance of power in Asia, it was likely that Indo-Soviet alignment would harden and create complexities for United States in the region. In this sense, the course of action India pursued
vis-a-vis the Soviet union depended upon the kind of policy preferences made by Washington. But a veteran cold warrior that Nixon had been, he found it extremely difficult to extricate himself from the cliches of the cold war. Despite the initial promising prospects of a turn for the better in Indo-U.S. relations and a positive role for the U.S. in the subcontinent, Nixon showed no specific keenness in the region and for him the region was of only peripheral interest in world politics. His Emerging Structure of Peace report to the Congress revealed it all when he stated that 'It was out of question that the U.S. could compete with the Soviet Union to match the political ties that existed between Moscow and New Delhi. Apart from Nixon's well-known stance towards Pakistan, what continued to worry India was the linkage between United States and the Chinese-Pakistani relationship. Bhutto's journey to Peking in early 1972 coincided Senator Kennedy's disclosure that the U.S. administration intended to continue arms supplies to Pakistan. In a configuration were India remained important for Soviet diplomacy as a possible counterweight to China, but was of only peripheral value to the American foreign policy, China being the security problem for both the USSR and India, but not for the U.S., it seemed logical that the convergence of Soviet and Indian interests vis-a-vis China developed into a convergence of interests against
the U.S. because of the latter's attempt to promote China.

In this context it would be worthwhile to mention that India's views on the Asian continent were apparently closer to the Brezhnev Doctrine than the Nixon Doctrine. It was of concern to India that President Nixon had set out to create a 'generation of peace' and an Asian order that was based upon cooperation between the U.S., U.S.S.R., China and Japan. In contrast, the Brezhnev proposal for collective security in Asia, though far-fetched, appeared by implication to reject the Nixon view that it could ever be possible to have an Asian order without major Asian powers having the incentive not to upset the stability of the region. Besides, China's intemperate language and overtly hostile behaviour, sharpened India's need for Soviet support vis-a-vis China wherein additional guarantees against the Chinese were welcome to India.

Nixon's view of the Soviet Union as an immutable adversary coloured all his foreign policy calculations and unable to view India anything other than a Soviet surrogate, Nixon showed no inclination for bettering ties with India. Mrs. Gandhi, herself was unable to fathom the contradictions in U.S. policy when she stated that 'the original misunderstanding with the United States had arisen because of our contacts with China, the Soviet
Union and Eastern Europe. We find it difficult to understand why, when the U.S. policy toward these countries changed, the resentment against us increased.17 Nixon's anti-Indian stance could, however, be explained by India's strong indictment of the American role in the Vietnam war and by the diplomatic recognition granted to East Germany. But the coincidence of the signing of the Paris Peace Accords on Vietnam in January 1973 and the arrival of Daniel Patrick Moynihan as U.S. Ambassador to India were optimistic developments for fostering better Indo-U.S. relations. Moynihan's assertion of a desire to build realistic and pragmatic new relations with India was based on mutual interests;18 and the release of the frozen aid to India and the beginning of the talks on the disposal of PL 480 wheat loan fund seemed to put back Indo-U.S. relations on the rails.

It was apparent, however, that the development of Indo-U.S. relations depended upon the degree of American tilt towards India's bitterest rival, Pakistan, and from that perspective, efforts by both for the betterment of relations always remained tentative. But what compelled Mrs. Gandhi to look upon United States for help was the appalling food situation in India during the years 1972-74, besides the imperative of ensuring India's independence and flexibility in foreign policy. Thus, in 1973, though not willing to confront the USSR in India,
the U.S.A. made only feeble attempts to 'erode even if slightly, the Indo-Soviet relationship'. In the same year the U.S. Government reactivated a project to construct a radar and communications network along India's border with China. The project worth $20 million had been suspended in 1971. At the end of that year the Indian Finance Minister Chavan made a remarkable achievement in being able to reach agreement with U.S. on the disposition of the enormous rupee holdings in India. The accord removed what both sides called 'a major irritant' in bilateral relations. In mid-1974 the United States agreed to participate again in the Aid India Consortium which had been suspended in 1971. Nixon's resignation after the revelation in Watergate, in August 1974 seemed propitious for India for with him the man responsible for the tilt towards Pakistan was out of the White House. The new President Gerald Ford's meeting with Swaran Singh were stated to be 'positive and helpful'. Secretary of State Kissinger's visit to New Delhi in October, offered to open new grounds in the relationship, when he pledged 'to renew the longstanding friendship, remove old misunderstandings and to build a new and mature relationship'. Apart from acknowledging India's claim to the status of a major power and promising urgent food aid to battle India's desperate food situation, the most important outcome of the Kissinger visit was the establishment of an Indo-U.S. Joint Commission for Economic, commercial, Scientific,
Technological, Educational and Cultural cooperation. Yet, from the 'frank' submissions in the joint communique it was apparent that areas of divergence were still at large, particularly pertaining to the U.S. naval base in Diego Garcia, U.S. arms for Pakistan and of course, India's nuclear programme. However, the U.S. promised to stand by an earlier decision of the Atomic Energy Commission to proceed with a scheduled shipment of uranium ore to India's Tarapur plant under the provisions of a 30 year agreement. But even the slow halting process of normalisation in Indo-U.S. relations was shortlived.

Bhutto's entreaties to President Ford in February 1975 to lift the arms embargo on Pakistan on the ground that its security was threatened by both India and Afghanistan, was favourably received. Indeed, India was surprised at the great resilience Bhutto showed even after defeat, and his success in keeping both United States and China under his spell. Bhutto's diplomatic skills precluded any Indian initiative either in the Islamic Middle East or in South East Asia where Chinese influence was turning out to be paramount. Bhutto demonstrated that his recognition of Bangladesh came not as a result of any pursuasion by India in Shimla or even by the Soviet Union, but he chose the Pan-Islamic Conference in Lahore in 1974 to grant recognition to an essentially fraternal Islamic Country.
In the mid-seventies, to India's dismay, the overall balance of forces continued to be to India's disadvantage. Pakistan's links with China and the United States as well as with Iran and the oil rich Arab countries kept India isolated from most of the world. In fact Bhutto's links bolstered his intransigence and he was under no compulsion to submit to India's primary in the subcontinent. Moreover, communist victories in Indo-China enhanced Pakistan's importance in American perception and as the Washington Post reported in March 1975, 'In the eyes of American foreign policy makers, it is no longer in American interest to keep Pakistan defenseless. Thus, only weeks after Bhutto left Washington, the U.S. State Department formally announced the end of the embargo. The implication of this decision was not lost upon India and the Indian Ambassador to the United States T.N. Kaul cautioned Kissinger that such a move would impede the normalisation of bilateral relations and so would it also be a destabilisation of relations in the subcontinent. Mrs. Gandhi, who was always sensitive to U.S endorsement of Pakistan's moves described the action as a 'reopening of old wounds', and announced that Foreign Minister Chavan's trip to the United States for the Joint commission meeting stood postponed. Expectedly Washington announced the cancellation of Ford's trip to India. Clearly, the strenuous efforts to rebuild a ruptured friendship was
again torn to shreds. For the Soviet Union the development was indeed welcome for, though Moscow preferred a detente with Washington at the super power level it was not inclined to encourage a close rapport between India and United States at the regional level. Though Moscow had never been overtly concerned with the changing pattern of Indian behaviour with the United States, for it knew that India's differences with U.S. over Indian Ocean and Pakistan were too fundamental to be overlooked yet the bonhomie displayed after the Kissinger visit to India did cause some concern in Moscow. For all intents Moscow prized and sought to perpetuate its special relationship with India which could only guarantee its continued presence in the subcontinental structure.

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's declaration of a single party Presidential state in February 1975 could not have come at a more inopportune moment for India. It ended the similarity between Indian and Bangladesh political systems which was deemed to be a major Indian gain from the 1971 war.

The victory of the Communists in Indo-China bore ominous portents for India since there was every possibility of the Naga and Mizo rebels to be actively aided by the Chinese. Taking clues from the Khmer Rouge activity in Vietcong, the prospect of an acceleration of the pace of insurgency in North-east India was too
disturbing. If the Chinese outbursts on the Indian integration of Sikkim into the Union was any indication, it was evident that Peking would further harden its stance vis-a-vis India, which it considered a foothold for Soviet expansion in Asia. Besides, Chinese denunciation of the Indian position in Kashmir seemed provocative enough to 'rekindle chauvinistic aspirations in Pakistan'.

Moreover, the Shah of Iran's projection of Iran as a South Asian power and his declaration in 1972 that an attack on Pakistan would be tantamount to an attack on Iran committed Teheran not only to the defence of Pakistan, but created several dilemmas for India. Thus, China's overt belligerence towards India and Iran's pronounced indulgence of Pakistan greatly impinged upon India's status as the primary power in the subcontinent. For India, therefore, an intensification of Sino-Soviet competition for influence and power in South Asian affairs coupled with the emergence of Iran as a dominant regional power combined to weaken India's security and tended to diminish its primary and integrative role in South Asian affairs. Hence, India's self-esteem was not of any vital concern to the United States which while conceding India's primacy in South Asia interpreted the Indian victory of 1971 to be an extension of the long arm of Soviet influence and power. Bhabani Sen Gupta's contention that in a strictly bipolar system, regional powers are denied
an autonomous role, they can at best be semi-autonomous agents of either power bloc, sounds convincing. The Chinese too perceived India to be a minor actor and a pliant tool used by Moscow to establish its hegemony over South Asia and the Indian Ocean and to make war with China. Even the third world of Afro-Asian nations saw the Soviet power looming largely at the background of India's newly acquired glory. Thus India's primary task of reshaping the subcontinental structure and giving the area a strategic harmony remained deceptive since the Chinese and the Americans perceived the Soviet Union and not India, that appeared to dominate the South Asian political and security scenario.

The already strained Inod-U.S. relations nosedived with the declaration of emergency in India by Mrs. Gandhi on June 26, 1975. Though initially the United States underplayed its criticism of the emergency in India, there were nevertheless enough subtle official comments to indicate its total disapproval of the move. It was not as if the United States had an unblemished record in supporting the cause of democracy, far from it, the U.S. track record showed that it supported some of the most notorious dictatorial regimes in the world and some of its clients had been the worst perpetrators of crime against human rights. But in India's case in 1975, the U.S. in an
exaggerated concern over the demolition of democratic traditions, sought to vindicate its allegation that India under Mrs. Gandhi wanted a perpetuation of one party rule, similar to that of the Soviet Union. The pro-Indian group in the American Congress and a section of the press which had been supporting India since 1971 seemed to have lost their cause in democratic India after the declaration of emergency. But Mrs. Gandhi had been quite categorical in stating that 'emergency made no difference' to inter-governmental relations. Besides, Mrs. Gandhi observed that since U.S. support for 'democratic' India had been none too encouraging, it hardly made any difference to her when the U.S. criticised her emergency rule. In fact she pointed out that the contradiction had been more apparent on the U.S. side, for, it was the United States which had for long been sponsoring a military dictatorship in Pakistan and of late had been courting Communist China.

The emergency came in for sharp criticism in India too. T.N. Kaul is of the opinion that had it been a temporary affair to deal with the situation that arose around 1974-75, one could perhaps have understood it. But to continue it beyond six months proved counter productive.

Ironically enough, it was during the period of emergency that Mrs. Gandhi veered towards the right. As
mentioned later in this work: ..., economic necessities forced India to move closer to the United States and to institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, which resulted in an enhancement of trade between the two countries during 1975-76. However, though Mrs. Ghandhi desperately needed an exit to the West and particularly to the United States, her constant harping on the 'foreign hand' theme greatly embarrassed the United States and caused much indignation there. But, there was some truth in what she said since those were the years when both the CIA and the KGB were active in almost all parts of the world, and sought to dislodge governments which proved recalcitrant. Acutely conscious of her own position and 'a very frightened timid individual' that she was, she did not know who was out to get at her\(^28\), and she suspected a sly, underhand pushing by the Americans to dislodge her from power. After all, the world was full of stories of the machinations of the CIA and the multinationals and the ouster of Salvador Allende in a coup in Chile was fresh in everyone's mind. Beyond that, however, her talks of the foreign hand was 'merely rhetoric' meant for 'internal consumption'\(^29\) to safeguard her position. The Americans interpreted it as a deliberate policy by Mrs. Gandhi to deflect Indian public opinion from her own shortcomings and misdeeds. It would be worthwhile to mention here that the emergency rule of Mrs. Gandhi witnessed the rise to
prominence of her younger son Sanjay who was enamoured of everything West. His aversion for the Left and his uninhibited preference for private enterprise were enough indications to American officials who saw possible openings to counter Soviet influence over New Delhi. It was left to the successor Janata Government to improve upon the opening made by Mrs.Gandhi's Government during the last phase of her first term in office.
The overall development of Indo-Soviet relations during the post-Bangladesh war period indicated a realisation on the part of both for a broadening of mutual ties. India and Soviet Union seemed convinced about the fact that they had 'a broad range of interests in common and they knew how to work together successfully to achieve their aims as well as how to keep their differences from getting out of hand. In the aftermath of the conflict in the subcontinent, the Indo-Soviet Treaty did not seem to outlive its utility as perhaps many would have expected. The treaty's beneficial effects upon the Indian economy had in fact been guaranteed within two months of signing the treaty when the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission had been formed. It aimed at further perpetuating the cooperation begun long ago in the field of technology and in fact Mrs. Gandhi's September 1971 visit to Moscow, apart from other issues took particular care in giving a boost to the functioning of the Commission. Soviet-Indian relations were further strengthened on the basis of cooperation in cultural and aid programmes and with exchange of high level official delegations. The Planning Minister Subramaniam's visit to Moscow in March 1972 with a Science and Technology agreement was a major development of the period. Besides, the functioning of cultural groups and societies, particularly the ISCUS (Indo-Soviet Cultural Society), of which a great patron was the
redoubtable K.P.S. Menon, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union seemed to infuse a degree of warmth and cordiality into the relations between the two countries that was unprecedented. Perhaps the finest manifestation of cultural cooperation between India and the Soviet Union was witnessed in the signing of a cultural, scientific and economic agreement as well as strengthening of mutual cooperation and friendship between the people of the Soviet Union and India, by the society for Soviet-India Cultural Relations and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society in 1971. In the field of scholarly exchanges, particularly the period saw its zenith.

Significantly, however, in 1972, there was evidence of India's determination to act independently and that produced friction in Indo-Soviet relations. For, though India and Soviet Union demonstrated a convergence on many vital issues, yet Moscow with all its prestige and economic support for India failed to elicit total commitment from India on many specific political issues. In other words the oft-repeated American allegation of India being under the influence of the Soviet Union was more a myth than otherwise. 'This non-accretion of influence is traceable to India's long-standing sensitivity to its independence, its newly heightened sense of national self-respect and sovereignty.
regionally. Perhaps the most striking example of India's desire to maximise her independence vis-a-vis the Soviet Union was her very attitude toward the 1971 treaty. While the Soviets did attach a considerable significance to the treaty, India seemed to lessen its importance and sought to convey the impression that the treaty had essentially been a matter of expediency dictated by the exigency of the Bangladesh crisis. Any deeper meaning into the treaty should not have been read into. This indeed explained New Delhi's reported refusal to Moscow's request that the Brezhnev visit of 1973 coincide with the second anniversary of Soviet-Indian friendship treaty. Besides, New Delhi's refusal to label the fifteen year economic agreement signed during the Brezhnev visit as a 'treaty' was a pointer in the same direction. New Delhi intended to convey the view that the Indo-Soviet treaty had been necessitated by abnormal circumstances and giving an economic agreement the status of a treaty would initiate a precedent that would confirm American and Chinese allegations of India's professions of non-alignment to be fake. Moreover, a second treaty with the same power in normal circumstances would have gone against the very spirit of non-alignment.

Mrs. Gandhi's vast majority in the Lok Sabha made her non-receptive to the CPI's demands and the breakdown
of the political truce between Mrs.Gandhi's Congress and the pro-Soviet CPI was a development whose significance was not lost upon Moscow\textsuperscript{35}. To counterbalance the CPI, Mrs.Gandhi even began recruiting the support of right-wing politicians from the splinter Congress\textsuperscript{36}. In spite of the Treaty and the crucial Soviet backing during the 1971 war, differences in perception in both economics and politics, between the two countries continued to persist. Mrs.Gandhi's comments on Indo-Soviet relations pertaining to the strong Soviet political and military support in the war was revealing. She asserted that 'we are unable to display gratitude in any tangible sense for anything. Countries help one another because they need one another,' and emphasised that Indian foreign policy was still based on nonalignment despite the treaty with Moscow\textsuperscript{37}. In a candid exposition she made it clear that New Delhi's proximity with Moscow was largely influenced by its poor relations with Washington and Peking indicating vividly enough that an improvement of relations with Washington and Peking could have led to a redressing of the balance in the subcontinent. It was apparent that the Bangladesh crisis being resolved to the satisfaction of India, India needed the Soviet Union much less from a diplomatic point of view, than the latter needed New Delhi to maintain its status in South Asia. It continued to be important to New Delhi to welcome United States to play at least a minor
role in South Asia if India's ideal of counter-balancing powers was to be viable. After all, the Indo-Soviet treaty had merely readjusted and had not destroyed New Delhi's fundamental perception of its national interests.

The conclusion of the Simla Agreement with Pakistan in July 1972 was perhaps the last in the series of outstanding successes Mrs. Gandhi had been achieving vis-a-vis the superpowers since the onset of the Bangladesh crisis in 1971. The Simla agreement for all its intents appeared to be a turning point in South Asian affairs as it represented Pakistan's official acknowledgement of the changed power relationship. It required Indo-Pak differences to be settled bilaterally, which in fact was a reflection of India's desire to minimise the role of superpowers in South Asian affairs. When the Soviet Premier Kosygin hinted at Moscow's willingness to offer its good offices to normalise Indo-Pak relations, Mrs. Gandhi politely but firmly declared in Parliament in April 1972, that 'the Soviet Union is the friend of India. However, anyone who imagines that we shall allow ourselves to be dictated by third parties in our negotiations with Pakistan or in any other matter, foreign or domestic, is quite off the mark'. Indeed, India's Soviet connection and the massive inflow of arms and economic aid that followed had not been
without a quid pro quo. While the bilateral aspect of the treaty clearly highlighted the development of a reliable working relationship between India and the USSR, it also indicated 'the development of a viable bargaining relationship between the two countries in which there could be trade-offs between economic, military and political issues'. The basics of the 'trade-off' were reflected in different forms. For example, in return for Soviet military supplies to India which were not forthcoming from any other foreign source, the trade-off on the Indian side were that India continued to be 'against' China and had to function as a vital political flank of the USSR. Second and more important was the exchange rate of the Indo-Soviet trade and aid agreements were advantage for the Soviet Union. Thus, the trade-off was between essentially military imports on one side and a political and economic pay off on the other side. In other words, a military utility could be traded-off for an 'economic' and 'political utility. From the Soviet viewpoint, however, Moscow saw no trade-off for it had gone out of its way to assure India's international role by the treaty and its involvement on India's behalf was also assured in the event of a conflict between India and China.

Another feature of the discord between India and the Soviet Union, despite the successful working of the
treaty was the apparent lack of interpenetration of the bureaucracies. In the Soviet Union, a stagnating bureaucratic functioning was evident since most of the vital departments were run by the same people heading the same posts for more than thirty years. Having served the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods, the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union was too familiar with the problems and nuances of interbureaucratic functioning which often led to a lack of spontaneity and enthusiasm. Firyubin, for example, had been in the Foreign office for too long to be able to overcome the lethargy and monotony of the day to day functioning of the department and was thus unable at times to deal with issues expeditiously. This long drawn continuity in one specific post hindered a spontaneous growth of warmth and pleasantness which was so evident on the Indian side. T.N. Kaul, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union is more forthcoming when he says that bureaucracy in the Soviet Union was perhaps even worse than the bureaucracy in Indian or the United States, and that created problem. But for the understanding and equation at the higher political level, it would have been very difficult to overcome the 'bureaucratic bottlenecks in the Soviet Union. Recounting his experience as Ambassador to that country, he states that there were times when he had to meet Khrushchev personally to remove some of the objections of the state committee of Foreign Economic Relations and sometimes he even had to go to the Defense
Minister who overruled some of the objections of his subordinates. Recent studies have revealed that within the entrenched Soviet bureaucracy, were powerful elements inimical to India and critical to the special treatment given to it. Unlike the United States, where the bureaucracy was often reshuffled with the change from party to party in the Presidential elections, the Soviet Union being a one party state, the bureaucracy remained committed to the CPSU and that eventually led to its stagnation. In the United States a diversified functioning of the bureaucracy through the State Department, the Pentagon, the will of the Congress and most importantly through the media, did exert a considerable influence upon the working of the Chief Executive. On the otherhand, in the Soviet Union, the decision of the Party ran down to the lowest rung of the bureaucratic functioning which had virtually no influence upon the Secretary of the CPSU or even the President and the Premier of the Soviet Union. As a result of this mechanical functioning of the bureaucracy which lacked initiative and discretion, the Soviet bureaucracy was getting jammed and for a lack-lustre, unimaginative bureaucracy all countries receiving Soviet aid were the same. Thus, India had no special importance for the Soviet bureaucracy. As a matter of fact, on the Soviet side, too, one could perceive a rethinking in Moscow,
which aimed at returning to its earlier posture of promoting South Asian stability. For Moscow the primary objective remained the denial of hegemonistic aspirations of China in the region. Hence, while granting primacy to India in the subcontinent, Moscow sought to develop relations with Pakistan on the basis of the pre-1971 days.

Yet, despite appearances of visible strains in the relationship, Indo-Soviet friendship continued to indicate an upward trend which had characterised itself during the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty. The circumstances that compelled the two countries to be bound by a treaty in 1971 continued to manifest themselves more sharply, and whether by conscious will or not, the Indo-Soviet embrace became more formidable. An easy inference to be drawn was that India's need for the Soviet Union was as much as the Soviet need for India and it was this mutual need that, throughout the decade of the seventies demonstrated a remarkable convergence of interests. In fact it would not be out of place to observe, that the Soviet Union during the greater part of the decade was more the wooer than the other way round. In other words, strains in Indo-Soviet relations notwithstanding, New Delhi and Moscow continued to hold each other in the highest esteem since the exigencies of circumstances were beyond their control and thus throughout the decade of the seventies, India did not loosen its grip over its Soviet connection. Though India
expressed its dissatisfaction at the Soviet initiative to normalise relations with Pakistan, there was nothing specific to show that the Soviet Union actually intended to restore a parity between India and Pakistan. President Bhutto's visit to Soviet Union early in 1972 wherein he sought to enlist the support of Moscow for the repatriation of Pakistani prisoners of war went almost unheard, for Premier Kosygin responded 'by passing over in silence the specific issues and reiterating Soviet concern for direct negotiation between the parties involved (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), without any outside interference, (i.e. China)'. Apart from restoring Soviet-Pakistan trade and aid programmes that had been broken off during the hostilities, the talks accomplished very little from the Pakistani viewpoint. In fact Kosygin took this opportunity in reprimanding his guest that the crisis in Bangladesh had been a clash of forces between a national liberation movement and an anti-popular military dictatorship'. He added, 'if history were to repeat itself, we would again take the same position because we are convinced it was correct'. Indeed, Moscow had not forgiven Pakistan for scuttling the Asian Collective Security Plan in 1969. The talks were a 'bitter disappointment' for Bhutto who admitted that prospects for a peace settlement were as distant as ever. Aparently, though Moscow was inclined to normalise relations with Islamabad, it would in no way go back to the 1968 position
and risk its relationship with New Delhi. Even so, Kosygin did offer substantial economic assistance to Pakistan if it reduced its dependence of China. But just as Bhutto had failed to wean Russia away from India, Kosygin had also failed to pull Pakistan away from China, and the inter-relationships among these four states with the United States constituted the vital strands in the relationship between the Soviet Union and India from 1972 onward.

However, behind Moscow's attempt at normalising relations with Pakistan lay a well planned move. While apprehending hostile reactions in Middle Eastern countries, the Soviet Union was not too sure of India's support for active Soviet involvement in the Indian Ocean Zone. Besides, the Soviet Union was sceptical of a long-standing friendship between India and Bangladesh and Moscow apprehended that Bangladesh would not for long wish to be 'protected' by India. Islam being a great cementing factor, Moscow perceived rather sooner than later, Bangladesh, an Islamic country, would rise above the bitterness of the past and would be willing to form a loose federation with Pakistan. Such a move, Moscow calculated would be opposed by India, and in that case Soviet influence in Bangladesh would be greatly compromised. The Soviet Union, therefore, had to make
alternative provisions in case such an eventuality came about. Moreover, personality factors also played a part in the Soviet change of attitude towards Pakistan, for Bhutto, after all was considered a socialist and a shrewd political strategist who could successfully wrest political power from the unpopular military junta.\(^{53}\)
Again, Sino-American support had helped Pakistan in retaining its regional power status and unlike as perhaps was anticipated Pakistan had not broken up into linguistic ethnic states like a separate Baluchistan or Pakhtoonistan despite the secession of Bangladesh.\(^{54}\)

Nevertheless, Moscow's preference for New Delhi was amply demonstrated during Swaran Singh's visit to the USSR in April 1972. Coming close on the heels of Bhutto's departure from Moscow, the contrast in the reception of Swaran Singh to that of Bhutto was significant. The Indian Foreign Minister was received by Brezhnev and he had important discussions with Kosygin and Gromyko. During the meetings which proceeded in a 'warm and cordial atmosphere' a wide range of questions concerning mutual Soviet-Indian interests were touched upon. The most striking commitment from the Soviet side was its assertion that a speedy and peaceful political settlement in the subcontinent could only be possible through a direct negotiation between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. 'The
Soviet Union and India considered that a normalisation of the situation on the subcontinent that truly took into account the political realities of today would be in keeping with the fundamental interests of the peoples of that region and with the cause of a more stable peace. The exchange of opinions reaffirmed the coincidence of Soviet and Indian position on a broad range of international problems and further reiterated the friendly and fruitful cooperation of the two countries in the international arena in the interest of peace in Asia and in the whole world. Upon his return Swaran Singh emphasized on a 'complete identity of views' between the two countries on the situation in the subcontinent and rejected outright all speculations of a possible Soviet mediation in the subcontinental affairs. Whatever interest Moscow might have envinced, was essentially 'through behind the scenes pressure to expedite a settlement', which in any case was rejected by India. Later reviewing the July 1972 Simla agreement on delimiting a cease-fire line and normalising Indo-Pakistan relations, the Soviet Union endorsed the Indo-Bangladesh position that tripartite negotiation on the repatriation of POWS and related issues had to be preceded by a Pakistani recognition of Bangladesh. With the return of the Pakistani POWS and the subsequent recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan, the Soviet Union seemed to have
achieved its cherished desire of restoring normalcy in the subcontinent without its direct involvement.

Since the June 1969 pronouncement on Asian collective security, until late 1972, virtually no Soviet leader had spoken on the subject except Gromyko, who made a casual reference to it in his address to the 25th Jubilee session of the UN General Assembly. His main purpose was to dispel the anti-Chinese orientation the Soviet proposal had acquired in Asian minds. Gromyko induced the participation of all Asian states in an Asian regional cooperation. The Soviets had enough reason to be disappointed with the response the Brezhnev proposal had received in Asia and outside. Nixon had countered the Brezhnev Doctrine by propounding the Guam Doctrine only a month after the Brezhnev speech and in the Nixon scheme the Soviets had not been given a particularly gratifying partnership in a new security order for Asia. As for the Chinese, they condemned the Collective Security concept as a move to encircle China and therefore warned Asian countries to have nothing to do with it. Except for the Indian Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh's initial support for the Soviet proposal, only to make a hasty retreat almost all Asian leaders spurned the idea as an anti-Chinese move. Hence, Brezhnev's report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU in early 1971 was sternly anti-imperialist and the
peace programme it offered, called for anti-imperialist solutions of the conflicts in the Middle East and South east Asia and for detente with the Western powers, especially the United States.

With the victory of the communist forces in Indo-China and the triumph of India over Pakistan, Kosygin and Brezhnev were encouraged to revive the prospect of a collective security in Asia, once again in 1972. The situation in the Middle East and Asia had greatly changed in favour of the Soviet Union and working upon the thesis that "peace is indivisible", Moscow sought to link up detente in Europe to 'the need for collective security which was no less pressing in the area of Asia and the Pacific Ocean',\textsuperscript{59}. Brezhnev stated, 'In our view, collective security in Asia should be based on such principles as the rejection of the use of force in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and the inviolability of borders, non-intervention in internal affairs, and extensive development of economic and other cooperation on the basis of full equality and mutual benefit. We support, and will continue to support such collective security in Asia and are prepared to cooperate with all states in implementing this idea'.\textsuperscript{60} Brezhnev contended that since almost two-thirds of the Soviet Union's territory was located on the Asian continent, it was but imperative that Asia should have generated
increasing concern in the Soviet scheme of things. The Soviet foothold in Asia had been strengthened by fraternal relations with Mongolia, North Korea and North Vietnam and it had very good relations with Iran and Turkey showed a steady improvement. The strength of Soviet relations with India and later Iraq were symbolised by the treaties of friendship with those countries. Bangladesh by virtue of its treaty relations with India, largely modelled on the Indo-Soviet treaty was another newfound Asian friend of the Soviet Union, with Pakistan there being 'no contradiction of interest' and relations with Japan showing a turn for the better, Brezhnev thus made a bold attempt to knit together a multilateral security pact.

But as in 1969, so in 1972 and beyond, the failure of the Soviet Union to present a concrete, credible theoretical framework as regards the purpose and utility of a security system in Asia, the scheme remained unattractive and barren to most Asian nations. While the true intention of the scheme was never in doubt—denial of an accretion of influence to the United States in Asia in the aftermath of Vietnam and the creation of a security system against China — 'its shrouding in lofty phrases lent to its impotency. Almost all Asian states perceived a balance of forces between the two super powers in the continent to be in the best interests of Asia, for, any diminishing of American interest and influence would have
invited the fearful prospect of a competition between the Soviet Union and China. Besides, an obvious consensus of Asian states conveyed the impracticability of a system in Asia which did not have the participation of China. The Chinese lampooning of the Brezhnev scheme made it apparent that the idea was unworkable. Moreover, if the Soviet Union had perceived of the scheme as an answer to American sponsored alliances in other parts of the world certainly Moscow was bound to fail. Moscow remained naive to the fact that a symbiotic relationship existed between security-oriented schemes and their full-fledged economic backing. While being vocal on the former, Moscow remained vague on the latter, putting the burden of economic initiative squarely upon Asian shoulders. No security system or military alliance could be sustained without strong economic nourishment and the success of the NATO had been guaranteed by American economic aid to its allies in some form or the other since the days of the initial Marshall Plan (European Recovery Programme). Given the Soviet economic commitment to its Warsaw allies and the concurrent ineffectiveness of the Soviet economy, leading to its gradual stagnation, it was virtually impossible for the Soviet Union to provide economic support to Asian countries which indeed was their primary need.
The initial Indian reaction in 1972 was rather equivocal. Individual Indian ministers sometimes spoke in favour of Asian Collective Security, but Mrs. Gandhi's public posture set at rest all speculations about India's views on the idea. In a candid statement Mrs. Gandhi mentioned that India was not interested in any military pact and emphasized that all that India wanted was some sort of an economic cooperation amongst Asian nations. In 1971, at the time of the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet treaty, the Soviets had not pressed India for a formal ratification of the collective security proposal. In fact the idea was deliberately played down so as not to provoke hostile Sino-American reactions to the probable launching of an embryonic security system in Asia. But the Paris Peace Talks having opened between the United States and North Vietnam largely through Soviet mediation, conferred on Moscow the coveted status of a peace maker in Southeast Asia and therefore, the Soviet Union came round to the view that the time had come for launching Brezhnev's favourite scheme. The support of India to the Brezhnev scheme was imperative if it was to make any impression upon Asian minds. 'Indeed, the Soviet public build up of India's international prestige since 1972 could largely be explained in terms of their efforts to win India's sponsorship of the plan.' On the eve of the Brezhnev visit to India in 1973, the Soviet media focussed a great attention on the scheme so as to convey India that
its endorsement of the scheme was the main purpose of the visit.

India, however, conveyed that it would be one of the last and not one of the first countries to formally endorse the Soviet security model for an Indian sponsoring of the Soviet scheme would have given it a blatantly partisan colour and could well be 'the kiss of death' for the concept as far as Pakistan and other smaller Asian nations were concerned. Thus despite Soviet wooing the joint declaration released at the conclusion of the Brezhnev trip conspicuously omitted any reference to Asian collective security. Yet, however, the Soviet Pravda commentator V. Shurygin interpreted the declaration to be not far from the basic ideas espoused in the Brezhnev plan. Not only did the joint statement confirm 'that long range stabilisation of the region could be achieved through the gradual development of trade and economic cooperation', but also contained resolutions on the subject of stability in Asia—a position acceptable to India given the disposition of the Kashmir dispute.

The primary cause behind India's refusal to endorse the Soviet plan was its unwillingness to unnecessarily offend the Chinese. Mrs. Gandhi, in her effort to impress upon the world that there never was an unholy Indo-Soviet
collusion, tried to keep her options open while dealing with China and therefore sought to publicly distance herself from the Soviet Union. Thus as long as normalisation of relations with China were in progress it was likely that India would continue to publicly demonstrate its independence and distance from Soviet Union. Though the project of establishing an Asian collective security advocated by Soviet Union, evoked at best cautious approval from the governments to which it was primarily addressed the USSR nevertheless, retained it in 1974-75 as one of the main elements of its policy in Asia. The only country to have unequivocally supported the Soviet Asian collective security scheme project was Afghanistan. During a visit to the Soviet Union, the Head of State and Government of Afghanistan, Mohammed Daud expressed his support in a communique of 8th June 1974, stating that 'the creation of a security system by collective efforts of all states in Asia would correspond to the interests of the Asian people. However, the Soviet leadership was disappointed by India's attitude. Whereas Moscow had expected New Delhi to endorse the project wholeheartedly, it only expressed conditional approval obviously in deference to Chinese sentiments, particularly at a time of serious domestic political trouble. The Iranian attitude towards the proposal was outlined in the communique issued after the Shah's Moscow visit which only
stated that both sides had paid some attention to the problem of whether it was appropriate to intensify the work for the establishment of a security system in Asia on the basis of joint efforts of all Asian states. Japan professed herself not to be interested in the project as long as the USSR was unwilling to make concessions on the problem of the Kurile islands, Kunashiri and Etorofu.

The Brezhnev visit to India in December 1973 was imbued with considerable significance. Of concern to Soviet Union was the growing influence of China in the subcontinent. While Brezhnev's speech at the Red Fort was largely on the need for greater economic cooperation between the two countries, his address to the joint sitting of the Indian Parliament dwelt at length upon political issues of vital consequence to both countries. In reminding India of the help rendered by the Soviet Union and of India's need of the Soviet Union in future, Brezhnev emphasized upon the relations that had developed between the two countries and called them 'a model of peaceful coexistence'. "This is peaceful coexistence between two neighbouring states with different social systems—honest and true coexistence permeated with a love for peace which was useful to both countries. In extolling the virtues of peaceful coexistence and cooperation as enshrined in the principles of Bandung and
also the policy of Panch Sheel, 'which is especially dear
to India', Brezhnev made an obvious hint at the Chinese
efforts to discredit the Soviet image among the states of
the Asian continent and among the non-aligned states.
Eulogising India's new role, its increased prestige and
influence in the world, Brezhnev stated it was 'not to
everyone's liking and some people are even trying to
oppose this'. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned,
we welcome this historic change'. Fears of a possible
'Sino-Indian rapprochement made the Soviet leadership
portray the Chinese as the disturber of peace in the
subcontinent and this became a major theme of Brezhnev's
discussions with Mrs. Gandhi.

Another major theme of Brezhnev's discussion with
the Indian leadership revolved on the proposal for turning
the Indian Ocean into a zone a peace. This proposal along
with 'the idea of the neutralisation of southeast Asia and
a search for formulas governing relations among states of
south Asia that would guarantee good neighbourly
cooperation among them', received considerable applause
from the Indian Parliament. It was evident, however, from
the Brezhnev-Indira Gandhi talks that Moscow would not
accept a unilateral withdrawal from the Indian Ocean zone.
The joint statement sought 'a favourable solution to the
question of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace
by all interested states on an equal basis. Just what such a 'favourable solution' meant had already been intimated by the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister and former Ambassador to India, Pegov. He was reported to have said that the first step in the direction of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace would be the dismantling of all foreign bases including British, American and French—a proposal which was certainly consonant with India's desire to eliminate a major big power presence in the area, and thereby leave India as the dominant regional power.

What India resented was the Soviet abstention along with the United States on an Indian sponsored UN resolution setting up a 15 member committee to explore further the proposal for a demilitarised Indian Ocean. To be fair to the Soviets, it was logical for the USSR to keep its options open on the issue in view of the American upgradation of its naval communication station in the island of Diego Garcia. The Soviets had increased the size of the Soviet Indian Ocean squadron to offset the emerging prospect of a Soviet-American confrontation in the Indian Ocean. The American moves were justified on the ground of anticipated Soviet expansion into the area following the opening of the Suez canal. In response, the Soviets accused the Pentagon of deliberately fabricating a
Soviet naval menace for a pretext to enhance its own designs of establishing a permanent naval presence in an area of recognised strategic significance astride the Persian Gulf oil life line and within the range of missile bearing submarines for the targets in the USSR's southern borderland. India, however, was opposed to the permanent Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean which had increased during 1973 and stood at about 12 to 18 combat and supply vessels. But it was expected that this number would rise if the Suez Canal were opened as scheduled in June 1975. The ports of call most frequented by the Soviet naval units were in Somalia (Berbera, Mogadishu and Kismayu), South Yemen (Aden), and Iraq (Basra and Um Qasr). The net of ports used by the Soviet Navy for supplies, maintenance and repairs included ports in Bangladesh (Chittagong and Chalna) and the Indian ports of the Andamans and Vishakhapatnam. After Mozambique's independence from Portugal, it was thought that the Soviet Navy would also be able to use port facilities there. It would be pertinent to observe that the American charge regarding the establishment of Soviet bases along the Indian subcontinent's littoral was never substantiated. The Soviets were merely allowed recreating facilities in Vishakhapatnam and for that matter, the Soviets even allowed open inspection of the salvage operations in the Bangladesh ports.
In the context of the American build up in the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Union helped India in propping up its navy. The Soviets assisted India's efforts to increase her naval strength by supplying several 'F' class submarines, 'Petya' type patrol boats and 'Osa' class missile boats. Encouragement for this naval buildup came from Admiral Gorshkov, who while on a visit to India in April 1972, was quoted as stating that India needed a strong navy.

In his last important reference during his address to the Indian Parliament, Brezhnev laid great stress upon the benefits of detente. 'The Soviet Union firmly intends to continue to advance along the chartered path of detente and peaceful cooperation.' But, Mrs. Gandhi had always been sceptical of detente as a device by the super powers to carve out the world into spheres of influence. Despite Brezhnev's repeated assurances in his speeches and in his talks with Mrs. Gandhi that detente, apart from serving the fundamental long time interests of both the Soviet and American people's, was aimed also at safeguarding the interests of world peace, India remained till the very last unconvinced, for detente had not been successful in eradicating the scourage of war and the race for armaments among nations. The most that could be said in favour of detente in the joint declaration was that the
'Indian Prime Minister welcomed the relaxation of tension between the USSR and the USA since the step facilitated the easing of world tensions. India's scepticism of the concept of detente was understandable, for, any relaxation of tension between the super powers implied a weakening of the bargaining position of India, and as if justifying Indian apprehensions, the slow Soviet pace in processing Indian requests for additional arms were matched by the denial, though temporarily, to Bhutto of his request for military aid during his September 1973 visit to Washington. It appeared that both super powers were anxious to avoid an arms race on the subcontinent and from the Indian point of view it was the logic of detente that was at work. India, however, found herself at a disadvantage since both the United States and China soon resumed full fledged arms aid to Pakistan. Nevertheless, Mrs. Gandhi sought to create the impression that India did not intend over-committing itself to the Soviet Union. She took particular care during her speech at the Red Fort in reminding her honoured guest 'that 'there was no reason why friendship with the Soviet Union should be directed against any third country. This statement was interpreted to have been made for the benefit of the Chinese.

In spite of her intentions to maintain at least a semblance of balance in relations between the Soviet Union
and the United States, Mrs.Gandhi found it increasingly difficult to detach India from an ever increasing dependence upon the Soviet Union. American indifference coupled with Chinese and Pakistani belligerence notwithstanding, India's problems during the post-Bangladesh war period were compounded by a fast deteriorating economic situation. Throughout the 1972-75 period, Mrs. Gandhi had to fight conflicting pressures and pulls and this combined with the compulsion of harsh circumstances inevitably led to confusion in both policy and personnel. A major factor impeding a balanced decision making was the steadily worsening factionalism within her Congress party. The three strands which often were at loggerheads sought to drive the party towards their own views and that often led to acrimonious debates regarding the functioning of the party. The traditional Congressmen wedded to Nehru's modern outlook were essentially socialist and wanted the socio-economic programme of the party to be streamlined to meet the needs of the poor and the weak. The second and the more outspoken group comprised of the members of the former Praja Socialist Party who had joined the Congress during the sixties. The group consisted of such young, fire-brand leaders like Chandrasekhar and Mohan Dharia who were subsequently termed as the 'Young Turks'. The third and the most well-knit group were the ex-Communists who
had joined the Congress after being expelled from the Communist Party or had voluntarily opted for the Congress, influenced by Mrs.Gandhi's liberal and radical views. It was to the great disappointment of the second group that Mrs.Gandhi during the initial phase, that is from 1969 to 1974 tended to rely heavily on the advice and support of the third group. During this phase the Congress's countrywide alliance with the CPI made the ex-Communists within the Congress more powerful and influential. It was of some satisfaction to the Soviet Union that in pursuance of the ideal of establishing a socialist order, members of the Communist Party, knowing that the Party by itself would not be of much consequence in bringing about a social change, had infiltrated into the Congress with the objective of making common cause with 'progressive' Congressmen and compel the party leadership to implement its own socialist policies. The most influential person in this group was Mohan Kumaramangalam who had been a friend of Mrs.Gandhi's since her days in England. Appointed as the Minsiter of Steel and Mines, one of his very first acts was the nationalisation of the coal industry which could not but make Moscow happy. Soon the Congress was polarised between the former communists organising themselves into a pressure group within the party known as the Congress Forum for Socialist Action and the former socialists and traditional Congressmen setting
up the rival Nehru Forum. Mrs.Gandhi was at first inclined towards the Socialist Forum but later struck a balance and veered around the two and finally ordered both to be disbanded. Mrs.Gandhi's political truce with the Communists continued till the death of Kumaramangalam in 1973 after which Mrs.Gandhi showed increasing signs of getting closer to the right of centre members within her party as well as in the Parliament.

It is significant to note, however, that the USSR continued to support India's ruling Congress Party to the point of embarrassing the Moscow oriented Indian Communist Party, headed by S.A. Dange, which was forced to restrict its criticism to the 'reactionaries' of the right-wing of the Congress Party, charging them with sabotaging the implementation of a truly socialist economic policy. Even Brezhnev's short meeting with the leaders of the Communist Party of India in 1973 was not of much significance. Later, though Dange's communist party failed to support the candidacy of the newly elected President, F.A. Ahmed, the latter was hailed in Moscow as a supporter of Soviet-Indian friendship.
Throughout the mid-seventies Soviet concessions to India continued to grow in proportion to Indian overtures to China but in the absence of any Chinese reciprocation it was unlikely that India should have remained indifferent to Soviet wooing. Chinese intentions of obstructing a negotiated settlement in the subcontinent was clearly revealed in 1972 when China apart from vetoing Bangladesh's entry to the U.N., called for a troop withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani forces to pre-1971 positions and also called for a settlement of the Kashmir question. This Chinese posture was interpreted by both the Soviet Union and India as outside interference in the affairs of the subcontinent and thus elicited strong Soviet support for India during the post-Bangladesh war period. For the first time after the fall of Khrushchev the Soviets openly reaffirmed their support for the Indian claim to Kashmir. The Soviet commentator G.G. Kotovskii stated that the Kashmiri people had clearly expressed their right to self-determination through the general elections held in 1972 in that state. What seems to have been worrying Moscow was the fear of a possible negotiated settlement of the Sino-Indian border between India and China. Non-acceptance of the Asian Collective Security plan by India was too small a price Moscow was willing to pay for continued Indian support for the Soviet position on the Sino-Soviet border dispute. Knowing that
Sino-Soviet territorial differences were far more intractable than Sino-Indian problems in the Aksai Chin and NEFA areas, the Soviet Union enticed India to stiffen its resolve vis-a-vis the Chinese by favouring the Indian position on the border dispute. Significantly for the first time Moscow overcame its earlier juridical position of acknowledging Chinese claims along the Sino-Indian border and in May 1973 Moscow altered its stand in favour of India. In a broadcast from Moscow Radio, it was stated that 'one of the methods of Peking's anti-India policy is to put forward a baseless territorial claim'. Evidently, while Moscow did not expect any softening of the Chinese attitude towards India, it nevertheless cautioned India that such a normalisation which could be detrimental to the interests of Soviet-Indian friendship should not be pursued. The Indian Government responded with assurances that this would not happen.

While the threat perception from the Chinese kept Moscow on the guard in Asia, it was all the same apprehensive of American policy in the region. Though the Chinese factor was crucial in the development of Soviet-Indian relations, it was of equal concern to both Moscow and New Delhi as to how the Sino-American collusion augured for the continent. Both super powers, after all had specific interests in seeking political and economic
stabilisation in the region. In that context the development of Indo-U.S. relations largely depended upon the degree of interaction between India and the Soviet Union. But if the Chinese and American attempt at bolstering Pakistan since 1972 was any indication, certainly there could not be normalisation of relations with the United States in the near future. As a replacement for its war losses of tanks and jets, China provided Pakistan with 'non-lethal' aircraft spare parts and the United States provided it with armoured personnel carriers 86.

More than this, however, the development that caused concern to both Moscow and New Delhi was the major military build up in Iran and the prospect of some of these arms finding their way to Pakistan. The reported Pakistani initiative for building up a limited collective security system including Pakistan, Iran and Turkey and patronised by the U.S. and China bore ominous portents for India and the Soviet Union 87. From the Soviet viewpoint it was an attempt at revitalising the CENTO to counteract the alleged Indo-Soviet-Iraq axis. It was surprising for the Soviet Union that during state visits to Australia and India, the Shah of Iran expressed understanding of the United States efforts to improve the Anglo-American system of bases in order to offset the military... and... the
strategic nuclear presence of the USSR in the Indian Ocean area. Though he also emphasized that he was basically in favour of the creation of a 'zone of peace' in the whole of the Indian Ocean, free of all military bases of all big powers, there could be no doubt that the Shah's remark was clearly aimed at the Soviet Union. The proposed economic cooperation in South Asia, in his opinion, would be an appropriate guarantee that 'no foreign powers (would) dare to penetrate into our waters'. This position was endorsed to varying degrees by Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and China. Though India supported Iran's stance on the Indian Ocean, it viewed the latter's support for Pakistan with great suspicion. Thus, the Soviet preference, aimed at excluding only non-Asian big powers from the area was supported primarily by India, Afghanistan, Iraq, South Yemen and Somalia.

India's efforts to normalies relations with China yielded no encouraging result and throughout the 1972-75 period China perceived in India a Soviet stooge bent upon perpetuating 'colonial expansionism'. Hence, the ever-growing cordinality between Pakistan and China continued to cause anxiety in India. The exuberance demonstrated by the Chinese in welcoming Bhutto to their country in May 1974 was deliberately overplayed as a
reaction to Indian welcome of Brezhnev in 1973. The Sino-Pak joint communique was severe in its condemnation of India and the Soviet Union for their individual ambitions for regional supremacy. While India was virulently criticized for its 'expansionism' in the communique, the Soviet Union was condemned for its 'hegemonism'.

Mrs. Gandhi's domestic and external political compulsions prompted her to go in for the nuclear option. India which had not been a signatory to the NPT in 1968, exploded a nuclear device in Pokhran, Rajasthan, in May 1974. Reactions in the United States, China and Pakistan were instant and bitter. For Mrs. Gandhi, however, this was a great opportunity to demonstrate India's vigorous independence in foreign affairs. Several Western diplomats in New Delhi predicted that the test would cool relations with the Soviet Union partly because India had rejected total dependence on the Soviet 'nuclear umbrella'. And the test was the surest way to blunt the edge of Chinese nuclear blackmail. Apart from giving India a position of leadership among the Third World and non-aligned nations, it sent a clear message to Pakistan of India's primacy in the subcontinental structure. Finally, the prestige that accrued to India went a long way in deflecting attention from mounting internal tensions.
Though the Soviet reaction was much more circumspect than that of the Americans or the Chinese, there was no doubt that the Russians were not very happy about it. In Sweden a Soviet scientist revealed his great displeasure at the event. Despite the Russian talk of routinely reiterating India's claim that the nuclear explosion was for peaceful purpose, the fact that the Russians along with the Americans had been stating since the end of the sixties that PNE (peaceful nuclear explosion) had no utility, it was unlikely that Moscow would be willing to buy the Indian argument. The Kremlin's discomfort was revealed when the Soviet ambassador in New Delhi was temporarily recalled for "consultation". It was reported that the Soviet Ambassador was known to have been 'very irritated' by the nuclear test; Moscow could hardly be pleased with a development that implied lessening of Indian dependence on the Soviet Union. But unlike the United States, Moscow seemed to have acquiesced in the development for as the New York Times observed, there was no sign that Moscow attempted overtly to use its diplomatic influence on New Delhi. It obviously did not like to face the possibility of losing a major ally by imposing powerful pressure against its nuclear policy, and this was probably the circumstance Moscow confronted with New Delhi. On the other hand, the Kremlin did have a motive for secretly
welcoming India to the nuclear club. As one correspondent in Moscow noted 'Although India cannot deliver nuclear bombs on any target, it is almost certain that the knowledge that India has a nuclear capacity will have a restraining effect on Chinese sabre-rattling against India. And to the extent that India's anxieties about China will now become more manageable, it will give India a new political flexibility in dealing with China. The Russians are hardly likely to welcome getting involved in a row with China on India's behalf. Thus, for the Soviets, the Indian test had a benefit that partially compensated for the costs. In any case the issue did not appear to Moscow at that time worth the risk of disrupting its ties with New Delhi.

The incorporation of Sikkim into the Indian Union in August 1974 as an 'associate state' was vehemently protested to by the Chinese. Peking accused India of 'regarding itself as a sub-super power'. The Chinese apprehension of a Soviet-Indian collusion for South Asian supremacy was exacerbated further when Moscow expressed its approval of the takeover of Sikkim, whereas the Chinese considered Sikkim to be part of a strategic buffer between China and India. Moscow not only refuted China's claim on the Sino-Indian border, but in effect it, was another major endorsement by the Soviets of India's position on the
border. It was significant that at this juncture the Chinese Vice-Premier Li Hsien Nien in Pakistan advocated vocal support for the Pakistan cause in Kashmir and lambasted 'Indian expansionists for its naked annexation of Sikkim'. Besides, Li endorsed Pakistan's proposal to establish a nuclear free zone in South Asia. Perhaps, the only area where Chinese and Indian perceptions converged was on the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. It was evident otherwise, that there had been no real change in Sino-Indian positions and both remained opposed to one another in almost all vital regional and international issues. For India, the Soviet Union remained the most effective security guarantor.

Yet, however, while Sino-Pak hostility was understandable, of concern to India was Moscow's renewed effort to rebuild its relationship with Pakistan. A shift in Moscow's stance on Kashmir was perceptible, for in place of Khrushchev's unequivocal support for India and Kashmir, the Brezhnev leadership, while equivocating on Kashmir seemed to remind India that Moscow had kept and was keeping an open mind on Kashmir. It was in this context that Foreign Minister Swaran Singh visited Moscow in September 1974. Though the joint communique had nothing significant of offer, yet the two sides expressed their deep satisfaction in the development of their
friendship', which was termed as 'unshakable'. Besides, the communique emphasized on cooperation in political, economic, scientific, technological and other fields. Shortly after Swaran's visit, Bhutto journeyed to Moscow apparently in a bid to obtain Soviet endorsement for the Pakistani plan of denuclearising South Asia. Bhutto also sought Soviet help to restrain the Afghan leader Daud from fomenting trouble along the Pak border and it was quite probable too that Bhutto needed Soviet economic and arms aid. It was only in the area of improving bilateral relations that Bhutto received encouraging support from Moscow, short of this, the Bhutto visit failed to generate anything spectacular. On Afghanistan the joint communique made bland references to settle Pak-Afghan differences by peaceful means on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence. On the economic front too Bhutto did not fare better except for a vague Soviet commitment to conclude a new trade agreement. But it was on the issue of denuclearisation that the Bhutto visit drew flak for, the Soviet leadership did not give any importance to the idea as was evident from the fact that neither TASS nor Pravda mentioned the proposal. Denuclearisation of South Asia was specifically opposed to by India and Moscow's endorsement of the Indian view was a clear indication of the importance Soviet Union gave to its Indian connection, particularly at a time when the
Sino Pakistani alliance was becoming more formidable. Nevertheless, the fact that the Soviets were making efforts to improve ties with Pakistan and the fact that Indo-Soviet relations had not been as warm as before, forced New Delhi to be on guard. Like a game of hide and seek, Moscow too kept a close vigil on India's behaviour in relation to the two other competitors, the United States and China.
In response to the adverse verdict of the Allahabad High Court which unseated Mrs. Gandhi from the Lok Sabha and the attendant political turmoil that followed, Mrs. Gandhi's Government declared an emergency on June 26, 1975. The declaration was immediately followed by the jailing of almost all leaders of the Opposition and for the next 18 months India's democracy was in a state of suspension. With the Parliament ratifying several amendments to the Constitution guaranteeing the position of the Prime Minister and with the sixth general elections postponed indefinitely, Mrs. Gandhi's government came to acquire an authoritarian character which could be matched only by the medieval despotic rules of most Arab States. Her actions, however, were totally unrelated to foreign policy, for, the period of the emergency saw her concentrating her energies on domestic politics to perpetuate herself and her party in power. While the United States' low keyed criticism of the emergency gradually became strident and the Chinese were vociferous in their criticism of the emergency, it was from the Soviet Union and its allies in the Communist bloc that the most unequivocal statements of approval and support came. Professor Ulianovsky wrote in the Pravda of the 'Unprecedented' step, which was justified by the situation obtaining in the country. Ulianovsky bitterly criticized the 'reactionary' opposition which ranged from 'profascist militarized organisations to 'vociferous pro-Peking
extremist groups. For Moscow, it was of little concern as to what India's internal political situation was as long as Mrs. Gandhi was at the helm of affairs. She had indeed been a major protagonist of close Indo-Soviet cooperation and there were no indications that such a position would change with an increase in her personal power. The Soviets had backed Mrs. Gandhi all along in her effort to bring about economic stability which was seen to be beneficial to Soviet interests. For the Soviet Union, the Indo-Soviet treaty was still of great relevance particularly in the aftermath of the Bangladesh war as it had acted as a catalytic motivating agent for economic cooperation. The Indo-Soviet economic cooperation had become a model for all non-communist countries, wherein the Soviet Union constantly reminded its friends of the successful working of this relationship. The treaty's relevance had become more and more pronounced during the mid-seventies when it was discussed in all cultural meetings of the ISCUS 'as well as at every COMECON gathering. 'India had become a part of the Soviet collective subconsciousness. The Soviets believed that the Chinese had let them down, the Egyptians and the Americans had let them down, but the Indians would stick to them which in the long run would be mutually beneficial.
Moreover, unlike the United States, the Soviet leadership did not have to be concerned with the importance of India's democracy, for in many non-aligned countries there were extreme and permanent emergency conditions which did not bother the Soviet Union. The emergency in Zambia had lasted for thirty years. Even Idi Amin of Uganda had made no difference to Soviet policy and compared to that Mrs. Gandhi's emergency rule was much more humane and polished. Thus Mrs. Gandhi's authoritarian rule was in a way tolerated and even accepted by the only one group of foreign countries and they were the authoritarian foreign countries, who were coldblooded about totalitarianism in other countries and by an accident of history they were the socialist countries. It was interesting that the Russians were not very happy with India's free press and on that count they were closer to Pakistan which did not have a free press. During the emergency in India, however, the press was highly censored and only the Government version was allowed to be published and this was to the liking of the Russians. It was here that Moscow found an identity of views for, it was here that a society which was absolutely comfortable with a controlled press found itself to be comfortable with a controlled press in another friendly country. The socialist world and the Soviet Union thus had nothing to do with this otherwise internal situation in India, and as
has been pointed out from Moscow's point of view, Mrs. Gandhi's actions were supportable because she was supportable. As for Mrs. Gandhi, she was most comfortable with the socialist countries during these years of the emergency as the only countries where she was welcome and which she could visit were the socialist countries. The most concrete proof of Moscow's steadfast support for Mrs. Gandhi was witnessed through the support of the CPI for the emergency. Though during the 1972-74 period Mrs. Gandhi had distanced herself from the CPI, yet during the early phase of the emergency, she derived much satisfaction with the political support she received from the CPI. Brezhnev had always advised the CPI to play a subordinate role to Mrs. Gandhi's Congress and in that context his meeting with the CPI in 1973 had been significant. It was said to have embarrassed the pro-Moscow CPI for it appeared that the Soviet stake in Mrs. Gandhi's Congress had heightened, leaving the CPI as a redundant appendage in Indian politics. The CPI, however, had to tread the path prescribed by Moscow and gave full throated support to the line adopted by the Pravda - 'supported by imperialism, these forces of reaction tried to remove the Government of Indira Gandhi from power, terminate the policy of social and economic reform and change India's independent foreign policy.'
Yet, however, Mrs. Gandhi's democratic upbringing soon began to weigh heavily upon her. Despite all efforts at legitimising her emergency rule, there was no way she could convince the very pluralistic societies of the west. With all the display of camaraderie and bonhomic with the Soviet Union and the socialist world, the 'democrat' in Mrs. Gandhi kept pricking her conscience. As a noted diplomat has observed, realpolitik may have forced her to be friendly with the Soviet Union, but in actual point of fact she was much more comfortable with the West. During the Bangladesh crisis she depended heavily upon the Opposition Democratic Party in the United States and very much upon the German Social Democratic Party and even the British Labour Party, though of course, 'Wilson was a nasty customer.' She did have a personal dislike for Nixon and Kissinger, but generally she was at ease and was comfortable with the West. She had come to realise that her real constituency was still the West and it was the critical western point of view that kept worrying her. Unable to get acceptance of the West, it was the criticism of the West that made her decide to go back to the people for elections.

Mrs. Gandhi's internal problems were compounded by developments in Bangladesh which virtually brought the United States, China and Pakistan to a close involvement
in that country. Mujibur Rehman's assassination in August 1975 brought about an immediate change in the country's foreign policy. The new leadership sought to emphasise its Islamic credentials and the secularism of the Mujib brand was dubbed to be phoney, meant to please its Indian and Soviet mentors. The new regime's feelers to Pakistan and China were promptly responded to by Islamabad and Peking and that greatly heightened India's anxiety.

What actually seemed to heighten tension in India was its steady deterioration of relations with China. Since the Pokharan nuclear explosion and the incorporation of Sikkim into the Indian Union, China had been relentless in its criticism of India, charging it to be acting in connivance with Soviet revisionism and social imperialism. At a time when Sino-Soviet relations were touching a new low in almost all forums such as the United Nations, China and India were engaged in a series of skirmishes along the disputed border. After one such border skirmish, reportedly initiated by the Chinese and said to be the most serious clash since the mid 1960s which left four Indian soldiers dead, New Delhi lodged a strong protest with the Chinese Embassy. Peking, however countercharged that it was the Indians who had crossed the line of actual control of 7 November 1959 at Tulung pass in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian border including
Though Mrs. Gandhi reacted by increasing the strength of the Indian troops at the border, she showed great restraint by not turning the clash into a major incident. Significantly enough the Chinese effort at defusing the crisis was noteworthy, for not only did the Chinese return the bodies of the Indian soldiers but treated the clash as an isolated event. It was in this context that Indian Foreign Secretary Kewal Singh traveled to Moscow in late November 1975 for consultation between the two countries. Kewal Singh also carried a personal message from Mrs. Gandhi for Kosygin, 'which reportedly affirmed the importance that India attached to cooperation with the Soviet Union.' The Soviet leaders expressed solidarity with India reiterating support for Mrs. Gandhi's declaration of emergency and more importantly the Soviets were said to "share India's concern at negative trends likely to effect the stability of the South Asia region." Significantly enough the Soviet Union took this opportunity to discuss the proposal for an Asian Collective security, particularly in the backdrop of the success of the Helsinki accords that included collective security for Europe. But once again the Indian Foreign Secretary remained ambivalent to the issue and it appeared that once again New Delhi had resisted Moscow's efforts to
influence its behaviour on this issue'. Networthy again, was the difference in perception of the two countries in their assessment of China. While the Soviet Union in all its pronouncements was bitterly critical of the Chinese and constantly warned India to beware of the Chinese, India deliberately adopted a muted profile in relation to China. With President Ford's visit to China in the offing, New Delhi did not wish to exacerbate relations with Peking and thus inviting a Sino-U.S. tie up against India. It was evident therefore that despite Soviet support for India on many vital issues, India had diverged from the Soviet Union in its attitude towards China and thus on two key issues of which the Soviets were deeply sentimental — Asian Collective Security and China — India demonstrated its distance from the Soviet Union.

Indian and Soviet perceptions on China underwent a complete divergence when in April 1976 the External Affairs Minister Chavan declared in the Lok Sabha that India and China would resume normal diplomatic relations with an exchange of ambassadors between the two countries. The Parliament welcomed the policy initiative and within three months K.R. Narayanan assumed his post as India's Ambassador to China. Interestingly enough this policy initiative by India had been brought about as a result of subtle changes in the Chinese
attitude towards India. The most plausible explanation for this shift in Chinese attitude may be found in its quiet appreciation of India's non-ratification of the Asian Collective security. In the face of increasing Pakistani intransigence — it had started importing sophisticated weapons — and a steadily deteriorating relationship with Bangladesh, for India the only way out of the impasse in the subcontinent seemed to be a normalisation of relations with China. To the Chinese a loosening of Indo-Soviet ties were in its best interests and with India taking the initiative, China had decided to respond favourably this time. Perhaps the finest indicator of the Chinese response was its underplaying the Kashmir issue during Bhutto's visit to China in May 1976. Though Premier Hua Kuo Feng finally succumbed to Bhutto's pressure to insert the clause on "struggle" of the people of Jammu and Kashmir for the right of self determination, analysts, nevertheless were of the opinion that the Chinese had preferred to deemphasize the Kashmir issue.

The Soviet Union, however, throughout the period steadfastly maintained a policy of praising Mrs. Gandhi's policies and was almost unshakable in its efforts to keep India in good humour. Brezhnev's address to the Twenty-fifth Congress of CPSU was unusual for, it was in
this forum he praised Mrs. Gandhi for heading a regime that
'proclaimed socialist goals and was carrying out progressive transformations'. Besides, Brezhnev stressed on the 'special importance' that the Soviet Union accorded to friendship with India.

It was in the context of India's enthusiasm in normalising ties with China, that Firyubin made an unexpected visit to India during the early part of 1976. Apart from trying to extract a reassurance from India that any renewal of ties with China would not be at the expense of Soviet friendship, the Firyubin mission wanted a commitment from Mrs. Gandhi to visit the Soviet Union in the near future. It seems, Mrs. Gandhi was not too deeply inclined to make a visit to the Soviet Union, obviously due to the significant differences and irritants in the relationship between the two countries. However, given the two countries' strong ties in other areas, India underplayed the differences. Apparently what made Mrs. Gandhi make the trip to Moscow in June 1976 was the realisation that she was not welcome to any other country and in the circumstances a visit to Moscow would not only bolster her sagging popularity in the country, but also give her the opportunity of trying to convince the Soviet leadership of the reliability of India's friendship.
The twin purposes Mrs. Gandhi had in mind while embarking on her trip to Moscow were to end the speculation in the Soviet Union that a Sino-Indian rapprochement would be detrimental to the interests of the Soviet Union and to seek further Soviet support for new levels of economic cooperation. The significance attached to this visit by the Soviet Union was gauged from the active Soviet propaganda machinery which went full swing in welcoming Mrs. Gandhi. The entire top Soviet leadership including Brezhnev were at the airport to receive Mrs. Gandhi.

China, by all means dominated the series of discussions Mrs. Gandhi had with the Soviet leadership. Over and over again Brezhnev cautioned Mrs. Gandhi as regards the real intentions of China, when he questioned the sagacity of the move to normalise relations with a state that had been occupying thousands of kilometres of Indian territory. Brezhnev, in his tenacity in trying to convince Mrs. Gandhi of the benefits of Indo-Soviet relationship, did not fail in reminding her constantly that the 'Soviet Union regarded the Indo-Soviet friendship as a common treasure'. Yet, the Soviet Union was greatly disappointed when it failed to deflect India from its decision to move along the path of normalisation of relations with China. Not only was there no mention of China in the joint declaration, Mrs. Gandhi was quite
forthright when she stated that she did not consider India's decision to improve relations with China would in any way hinder the friendship with the Soviet Union and 'I think the Soviet leaders understand our position'. Perhaps irritated at the constant harping over the Chinese theme Mrs. Gandhi in her address at a banquet in her honour had a bit of an advice for the Soviet leaders when she said 'It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness'. In addition to international efforts to defend peace, each country must do its part to narrow the margin of suspicion and widen the sphere of goodwill.

In the final analysis, the Soviets failed to derive any positive commitment from Mrs. Gandhi on the favourite Soviet theme of Asian Collective Security. Though the joint declaration made only an oblique reference to the idea, Mrs. Gandhi in all her public utterances in Moscow stuck to her original view that the basic desire and commitment of every Asian country was to become economically strong. Emphasising her point she was reported to have stated that 'We believe that the chief threat to stability in Asia is economic stagnation and social injustice'. Thus, the concept failed to gain acceptance by one of those countries upon whom the Soviet Union had great hopes. With India staying passive to the idea, it had to wither away slowly.
On a broader spectrum, however one could witness a continuation of the traditional bond friendship between India and the Soviet Union. Even Mrs. Gandhi was quite candid when she confessed that, 'the foundation on which the edifice of Indo-Soviet Cooperation was built remained solid and stable and India would continue to strengthen it'. We, for our part, especially value the Soviet Union's aid both for its generosity and its diversity, since it has allowed us to create heavy industry in the state sector and strengthen India's independence. Our economic and trade exchanges have been growing steadily in volume and variety. We must constantly seek new paths and spheres of cooperation in order to expand our economic relations. This was gratifying to the Soviets. Beyond that, however, India asserted its independence and conveyed to the Soviet Union that in dealing with China, it would choose the path that it deemed best for its national interest. As per the logic of India's national interest, the Soviet Union again came in for disappointment at the Fifth summit of the Non-aligned Conference at Colombo. Unlike the previous summit at Algiers which was distinguished for its markedly pro-left stance, the Colombo Summit sought to rectify the deviation by adopting a more central position. Both United States and Soviet Union came in for a relatively balanced treatment and Mrs. Gandhi herself in her address to the
Summit made no special reference to Moscow and 'appealed on the need to avoid divisive issues.' Moscow's disappointment was compounded when the statement on the Indian Ocean placed the two super powers on the same parlance. The conference deplored the "increasing development of foreign naval power" and opposed "any manifestation of Great power rivalries", and both these charges embraced Soviet Union as well as United States. It was naive of Soviet Union to have expected India to be soft on the Soviet position since India had always been a very vocal protagonist of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and of keeping it free from the rivalries of super powers. Even on the issue of detente, the Soviet position was not endorsed by India and the reference was to "relaxation of tension between the Great Powers", which was not quite to the liking of the Soviet Union.

Yet, again, the voting pattern in the thirty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations revealed that India was closer to Soviet Union on a wide variety of international issues rather than to United States. On issues relating to the Third World, the Middle East and South Africa, the Soviet Union and India remained bound to one another as they had always been.

An area of vital concern to India was the continued supply of heavy water for its nuclear reactor in
Rajasthan. Ever since the PNE in May 1974, Canada which had been supplying heavy water to India, disengaged itself from the act and with the United States showing no willingness to make the offer to India, it had to be the Soviet Union which stepped into the breach. In December, 1976, the Soviets agreed to sell India between 200 and 240 tons of heavy water, one quarter of it to be shipped immediately. Though Moscow insisted on certain safeguards, in the ultimate analysis it failed to convince India on the imposition of safeguards and Moscow succumbed to Indian pressures for an agreement for the supply of the fuel.

In the field of science and technology too Indo-Soviet cooperation had made rapid strides. Of the several agreements on Science and Technical Cooperation between the two countries, the most outstanding had been the protocol between the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Indian Space Research Organisation of April 22, 1975. Prior to this agreement, however, Soviet assistance to India, had already been provided for its first artificial earth satellite and for its launching from Soviet territory by a Soviet carrier rocket. The successful launching of Aryabhata on April 19, 1975, helped India to enter the space age.

A five-year long term programme had been signed in February 1975 which embraced 22 spheres of applied science
and technology, namely: the problems of designing a new MHD generator, transmission of power with the help of super high voltage lines, the use of replenishable sources of energy, comprehensive processing and use of coal.\textsuperscript{137}

The Soviet Academy of Sciences also signed two other agreements, one with the National Committee on Science and Technology and the other with the Indian National Science Academy. These agreements provided for cooperation in research geology, nuclear physics, astrophysics, geo-physics, agro-biology, genetics and physical chemistry.\textsuperscript{138}

In January 1977, Mrs. Gandhi called for fresh elections to the Lok Sabha in March. But by this time not only had Mrs. Gandhi's views on the left movement in India and socialism as such had undergone a change, the Soviet Union too had become sceptical of Mrs. Gandhi's unpredictable moves. It was significant that during the period of the emergency Mrs. Gandhi had largely come under the influence of her younger son Sanjay whose contempt for socialism and the Communist Party of India were too pronounced to be of any comfort for the Soviet Union. To the CPI and to Moscow, Sanjay appeared to be an uncompromising representative of the reactionary right wing of the Congress. But what aggrieved Moscow was Mrs. Gandhi's own bitter denunciation of the CPI in late 1976 and various other programmes favouring the private sector.
and 'big business' in India. The plight of the CPI had indeed become pitiable for, having lost sympathy of the entire opposition for supporting the emergency, it had to plough a lonely furrow and go along with Mrs.Gandhi's Congress to face the electorate. As for the Soviet Union, the choice though difficult, was obvious. Moscow could by no means come round to accept a right wing conglomeration of opposition parties which had the support of the pro China Communist (Marxist) Party. By showing its preference for Mrs.Gandhi and her Congress in the elections of 1977, Moscow had stuck to its principle of supporting a leader who at least professed socialism, rather than a group of 'reactionaries' who spoke of 'genuine non alignment', and were known to have sympathy for the United States.