Already on a comeback trail after her election to the Lok Sabha from Chikmagalur constituency in Karnataka, Mrs. Gandhi stunned even her most optimistic supporters with her party's emphatic mandate to the Lok Sabha in the elections of January 1980. The Soviet Union was quick in seizing the opportunity to hail Mrs. Gandhi as 'a prominent political figure and statesman of India, as a consistent adherent of the course of Jawaharlal Nehru who stood at the source of the Soviet Indian-friendship'. More significantly, however, she was praised for her 'personal contribution' to the 'expansion and deepening of Soviet-Indian relations'. Caught in the quagmire of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union was in desperate search of trust-worthy allies who would at least present the Soviet cause more rationally in the face of a massive propaganda campaign against it let loose by the United States, the West, China and Pakistan. Of all third world countries in the non-aligned movement, India seemed to be the most suitable choice, for not only did India's interest clash with China and Pakistan, it was bound by a treaty with the Soviet Union. Brezhnev reminded Mrs. Gandhi of all that she had said in favour of the Soviet Union during India's hour of trial and in 1980 when the Soviet Union was in need of a 'voice of support' and assistance, 'words of sympathy and 'a helping hand', it was but logical for Moscow to expect support from New Delhi after all that the
Soviet Union had done for India.

Mrs. Gandhi had returned to power at a time when U.S.-Soviet relations had reached a new low and for her the choice was not easy particularly when the Soviet entry into Afghanistan had created a crisis for all the countries in the region of South West Asia, the non-aligned movement, and the United Nations. A notable feature of Mrs. Gandhi's second stint was Prime Minister was her persistent effort at revitalising the non-aligned movement by extricating it from the grip of bloc oriented politics and carving out niche for the movement in the international area.

What actually seems to have gone against the Soviet Union was its very indifferent behaviour towards Mrs. Gandhi during the period when she was out of power and she could never come to reconcile with such treatment. The Soviets had indeed proved to be true professionals who refrained from having any relations with a leader disgraced at the hustings and nursing her wounds in solitude. What had upset Mrs. Gandhi was not the wooing of the Janata Government by the Soviet Union but the treatment of a pariah meted out to her by the Soviet Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov. Even when Gromyko visited India in April 1977 he refused meeting Mrs. Gandhi, though she had been expecting a call from him. It was a clear demonstration by the Soviets that they recognised only the
ruling elite in a friendly country and that they had no time for the opposition. Indeed the element of personal warmth, so evident in the relations between the two countries particularly since 1971, was lacking after 1980. Thus, perhaps Brezhnev's statement later in 1980, that 'I make no secret of the fact that we have always had a particular liking for Mrs.Gandhi, that outstanding political and state figure of contemporary Asia', made little impact on Mrs.Gandhi who no longer had any illusions about Soviet views on 'personal relations' in the international power game.

By contrast, Mrs.Gandhi was overwhelmed at the courtesy shown by western dignitaries like the British Prime Minister James Callaghan, the German Chancellor Willy Brandt and even the American President Jimmy Carter, when they personally called on her. That probably explains Mrs.Gandhi's willingness to open out to the West and indicated her ability of befriending both Mrs.Thatcher and Mr.Reagan and a time when their policies were generally adverse to India's. As an Indian diplomat has remarked that 'being very much of an Indian aristocrat with 'liberal' tendencies, she was able to react with both Mrs.Thatcher and Mr. Reagan very well.' Veteran parliamentarian Madhu Limaye corroborates this view by stating that during the 1980-83 period Mrs.Gandhi seemed to turn more and more towards the West and that she had
been able to build up an equation with President Reagan, though in the final analysis nothing much came out of it.

It has often been speculated that Mrs. Gandhi's Soviet policy in 1980 was directed more by her son Sanjay. Given his distaste for socialist planning, this argument seems plausible, but to say that Mrs. Gandhi was completely guided by Sanjay's views on foreign policy seem far fetched. In the 1980s, India's relations with the two super powers were largely evolved as a response to the situation created by the Afghan Syndrome. The importance attached to Mrs. Gandhi's views on foreign policy were apparent when the Charan Singh Government sought her advice on the course India should adopt after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It was obvious that Mrs. Gandhi's views were different from that of the foreign office. Prime Minister Charan Singh expressed India's deep concern at the Soviet action and made it clear to the Soviet Ambassador that the Soviet actions would have 'far reaching and adverse consequences' for the entire region. In the interest of all, it was emphasized, that Soviet troops should be withdrawn for securing a return to normalcy. But the general line of approach under Mrs. Gandhi was to rationalise the entire issue and interpreting it on the lines that had it been possible for the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan, it would have withdrawn. She did also show a deep
understanding and appreciation of the Soviet desire to help India and from the point of view of India's national interest it would have been injudicious to do away with the Soviet friendship. For India in 1980, it was not the Soviet entry into Afghanistan that was dangerous, but the American decision to lift the arms embargo on Pakistan, thus escalating an arms race in the subcontinent that bore dangerous and unpredictable portents for the future. Hence the Indian Ambassador to the United Nations, Brijesh Mishra, was advised at absenting from voting for an American sponsored resolution condemning the Soviet action in Afghanistan. Mishra's appeal to 'all states' to refrain from interfering in Afghanistan and without identifying the troops involved, his call for an 'immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan', was interpreted in Western circles to be blatantly pro-Russian. His implicit pointer to the United States, China and Pakistan not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan by training, arming and encouraging subversive elements to create disturbances inside Afghanistan and his endorsement of the Soviet line that Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan when requested to do so by the Afghan Government, was bitterly resented to by the United States, China and Pakistan. Indeed India's position on the Soviet action in Afghanistan bore a striking resemblance to its response to the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia in 1968.
But with the Afghan crisis showing no signs of a solution, India's position became increasingly difficult, for neither could it endorse whole-heartedly the Soviet position in Afghanistan, nor could it afford to overlook the training and provision of weapons to Afghan rebels by China, Pakistan and the United States. Making her first official statement on Afghanistan, Mrs. Gandhi, however bluntly stated that 'no country is justified in entering another country'.' In another interview Mrs. Gandhi expressed her 'disapproval' of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. It was significant, however, that Mrs. Gandhi pointed out that Soviet troops were sent into Afghanistan only after Pakistan started training the Afghan rebels and sending them to topple the Government there. Thus, she emphasized that the Soviet action in Afghanistan was not an 'one-sided affair'.

In the regional configuration, the Soviet entry into Afghanistan, made India's position extremely precarious. In fact Soviet occupation of Afghanistan could not have come at a more difficult time for India. It not only heightened India's anxiety vis-a-vis Pakistan which now became a recipient of highly sophisticated weapons from both the United States and China, but the overwhelming disapproval of the Soviet action in the non aligned camp virtually put a question on India's
non-aligned credentials. Mrs. Gandhi's refusal to openly condemn the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was interpreted by many to be in line with Nehru's refusal to join the West on the issue of the drive across the 38th parallel by North Korea. For the United States, its interests in the Gulf region and in the northwest quadrant of the Indian Ocean were being safeguarded by its allies Iran and Saudi Arabia. But the fall of the Shah of Iran and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union enlivened the fearful prospect of a Soviet capture of the entire Gulf. Hence, the Carter Doctrine that the Persian Gulf was an area of vital interest to the United States, which would be defended with military force if necessary, assumed considerable significance. However, President Carter himself was among the 'doves' in the American administration who worked against demolishing detente with the Soviet Union and it was significant indeed that despite grave provocation by the Soviet Union, Carter and Brezhnev had signed the SALT II. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the Carter Doctrine could not have come at a moment more propitious for Pakistan. At one stroke it transformed Pakistan into a frontline state of the United States in its policy of the 'strategic consensus'. In 1979 U.S.-Pakistan relations had reached their lowest point when President Carter had invoked the Symington-Glenn amendment against Pakistan and had cut off
aid after the U.S. discovery of Pakistani efforts to reach a nuclear weapon capability. General Zia's popularity had been waning in Pakistan and particularly among the Islamic nations after the execution of Bhutto. Within Pakistan too, there was a strong clamour for elections. But the Zia regime's fortunes seemed to have changed overnight when Soviet troops marched into Afghanistan and nothing could have been more ominous for India.

India could not but grudge the Soviet action for, it had again aroused fears of India's security, of which India had not been particularly worried throughout the period 1972-79. The subcontinental security structure so delicately woven by India in the aftermath of the 1971 war, seemed to be shattered with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Yet there was no way India could have extricated itself from its Soviet connections. With an impressive and a formidable array of the United States, China, Japan, Pakistan and the West on one side and with most non-aligned countries disapproving of the Soviet move, India had to tread reluctantly a path it believed was the best for its national interests. As the United States and Pakistan moved closer together in assisting the Afghan 'Mujahideen' and with the United States providing massive aid in modernising all of Pakistan's military capabilities, India felt too threatened to risk rupturing its Soviet link.
Mrs. Gandhi's announcement of a major role for free enterprise in the Indian economy and the 'restructuring' of money-losing state-owned industries to bring efficient management, represented a significant departure from the earlier economic stance adopted by her government. The new industrial policy and the policy of liberalisation stemmed from her concern over the alarming economic slide in which both industrial growth and exports had fallen. The production of coal, steel, energy and other key state-owned industries had declined. It seemed to herald a new beginning in Indo-American relations. Speculation was rife that the increasing cost of oil imports and a widening trade gap would compel India to seek special assistance from the International Monetary Fund. A senior Indian Government Official was reported to have said in Washington that in all likelihood, India would have to seek assistance from a special IMF fund set up to help oil importing countries. It implied that any borrowings by India were likely to be from the Trust Fund established by the IMF's executive board in 1976 which provided balance of payments assistance in concessionary terms to developing member countries. Faced with a widening trade deficit and diminishing foreign exchange reserves the pressure on the Indian economy was to step up exports which were on a trend rise of 25-30% a year until the collapse of successive governments of Morarji Desai and Charan Singh brought a decline in industrial output in the
economy. To give a boost to exports and not being in a position to cut back on vital imports it seemed imperative for Mrs. Gandhi's government to continue with the liberal trend in the economy, beginnings of which could be traced back to the Union budget of 1974. Though India's relations with the United States appeared to be on a better keel than with China, yet, however, chronic bilateral problems made it apparent that prospects for an improvement in relations were still distant. Primarily, it was the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan than seemed to have blocked a speedy reconciliation in Indo-U.S. relations. Indian apprehensions had been aroused with the Carter administration's decision to renew arms aid to Pakistan. The United States, however, sought to ease India's apprehensions by assuring Mrs. Gandhi through the American Ambassador Robert Goheen that the U.S. desired to improve the security of both India and Pakistan after the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. American analysis of India's reaction to the Afghan crisis noted that although public statements showed shifts of nuance and emphasis, India had taken no irrevocable stand and was still evolving its position and studying options. While Mrs. Gandhi had responded to the crisis with 'calculated imprecision' her Govt. was pursuing a number of initiatives including high level talks with Pakistan. Nevertheless, to soothe Indian tempers President Carter's special
emissary, Clark Clifford visited New Delhi at the end of January to convince India that the U.S. aim was only to prepare Pakistan as a bulwark against the Soviets. India, however, rejected this and questioned the wisdom of a United States-China 'combination' to provide military aid to Pakistan which would pose a danger to India and the rest of the third world. The other major irritant hindering the growth of mutual trust revolved around the shipment of heavy water for India's nuclear reactor at Tarapur. President Carter's assurances on the sale notwithstanding the move was finally dropped by the United States.

Non-ratification of the SALT II was a prominent feature in Ronald Reagan's successful bid for presidency in 1980. In U.S. parlance the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had killed it and with it also ended the detente between the two super powers. A representative of the 'Hawks' in the American Congress, Reagăn's preconceived notions of India being a Soviet stooge precluded any sincere effort of the U.S. administration's part to cultivate fruitful relations with India. Thus, despite Mrs.Gandhi's call for a 'new beginning' in Indo U.S. relations and to continue negotiations on arms sales to India especially the TOW antitank missiles it was apparent that problems would remain. One of the very
first acts of the Reagan administration was to confront the Soviet Union in all key oceans, particularly in the Indian Ocean. The United States also indicated its willingness to provide arms to the Afghan rebels, a move which could only escalate tension in the region. Of unpredictable consequences, however, was the move of the American Congress when it waived the anti-proliferation Symington Amendment against Pakistan and lifted the aid ban imposed on it in April 1979, thus clearing the way for President Reagan's sanctioning of the first instalment of a six-year $3.2 billion programme of economic and military assistance. Congress also approved a foreign military sales transaction of $1.1 billion to be paid in part by Saudi Arabia, and for forty high performance F-16 tactical aircraft, six of which were to be delivered within one year. The programme indeed dwarfed the Carter administration's $400 million aid offer made in February 1980, which President Zia had disdainfully dismissed as 'peanuts'. The Reagan administration package gave Pakistan access to an array of sophisticated military hardware, including attack helicopters, self-propelled howitzers, armoured personnel carriers, medium tanks, guided missiles and radar equipments. In March 1981, after extensive talks between the Secretary of State Alexander Haig and the Pakistan Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, it was announced that the United States had agreed
to offer Islamabad a military and economic aid package on easy credit terms. The Pakistan government officially announced its readiness to accept a U.S. offer of combined military economic aid in the amount of more than $3 billion. The deal that was struck provided for immediate delivery to Pakistan of the newest American armaments including the F-16 fighter bombers which were capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Pakistan thus became an instrument of U.S. foreign policy schemes and gradually turned into a staging area for realisation of Washington's strategic plans in South and South West Asia. The Indian daily Patriot wrote, in supplying Pakistan with modern weapons and ignoring the existence of a programme there for building an atom bomb, American strategists were particularly hopeful of getting from General Zia the right to use the port of Gwader as a military base. According to the Pentagon's scheme it was to become a base for the Rapid Deployment Force. Mrs. Gandhí accused the United States outright of attempting to turn Pakistan into the policeman of the region in place of Iran and she announced that the U.S. was "showing hostility toward India since it does not fit in with the U.S.'s global strategy." Thus India's greatest fears in the wake of the USSR's Afghan invasion was coming to pass—Pakistan was being armed further.
There were several motives for Washington's action—alarm over the chaos in Iran, the shock of Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and the belief that a militarily strengthened Pakistan would prove an important element in the deterrence of further Soviet expansion in the direction of the West's vulnerable oil lifeline. The Washington policy makers saw in Pakistan a frontline state that would be effectively used for the containment of Soviet power. As 'an essential anchor of the entire south west Asian region, it was therefore in urgent need of ground and air force modernisation.'

Critics of the American aid programme to Pakistan, however, contended that it would severely compromise American nuclear nonproliferation policy and in departing from President Carter's allegedly more even-handed approach to subcontinental politics, the U.S. encouraged an arms race and thus heightened the risk of war between Pakistan and its arch rival India.

The Reagan administration while admitting its reversal of the Carter administration insisted that Pakistan's military modernisation would bolster the entire south and south-west Asian region against Soviet pressures from neighbouring Afghanistan, that it would not upset the existing military balance between India and Pakistan and that Islamabad would be more likely to curtail its nuclear
weapons programme if the rehabilitation of its conventional forces were undertaken. Given Reagan's view of the Soviet Union as the 'empire of the evil', he was willing to go to any extent in rearming Pakistan if that could act as a deterrent for the Soviets. In fact, there was evidence of a rare unanimity in Washington where almost everyone thought of upgrading Pakistan's armed forces for, they considered it to be Pakistan's 'legitimate defence requirements'. The only controversy, if there was any, was over the priority Washington gave to arming Pakistan rather than to improving Indo-Pakistan and Indo-American relations as a way to meet the threat of Soviet expansion. There were, in fact debates in some quarters as to how to satisfy Pakistan's legitimate defence requirements without supplying arms that could be used to undermine India's security. But in actual point of fact, the Reagan administration by supplying large scale conventional arms to Pakistan, only sought to advance the legitimate defence requirements of the United States itself. In maintaining that its military assistance package of conventional weapons for Pakistan reinforced American nuclear non-prolifiration efforts, Washington only tried to befool others, for the Zia dictatorship continued to plunge ahead with a clandestine crash programme aimed almost certainly towards bringing Pakistan to the threshold of a nuclear test within a few
years. But the conviction among many top policy makers in Washington that close ties with Islamabad was the only way to facilitate 'bleeding' the Soviets in Afghanistan and expecting Islamabad's co-operation in this endeavour as a quid pro quo form American arms, made the United States commit itself to the defence of Pakistan and overlook its nuclear weapons programme.

The United States in its obsessive preoccupation with modernising Pakistani defences, to be used against the Soviets in Afghanistan, failed to grasp the fundamental inconsistency of its decision that Pakistan's strategic preoccupation was with India and not with the Soviet Union. Hence, under the pretext of standing up as a frontline state of United States in its policy of strategic consensus, Islamabad acquired sophisticated weapons to match the strength of its large and 'hostile' neighbour, India. Despite pressure on the Afghan border, Islamabad refused a troop withdrawal from the Kashmir front, thereby confirming India's contention that Pakistan knew well that it had no threat perception from the Soviet Union and even if the Soviet Union were to violate Pak borders, Pakistan with all American help could not stand up to the might of the Soviet military machine. Thus, the acquisition of sophisticated American weapons by Pakistan were aimed obviously at India. Indeed, Pakistan's
inherent weakness in comparison to India became a strong motivating factor in Islamabad's willingness to renew the defence relationship with Washington. Pakistan was worried not merely because the Indian military possessed more of practically everything but also because it had vastly greater resources and more dependable sources of supply to fall back upon. Moreover, India's own superpower supporter, the Soviet Union, had been not only demonstrable more reliable than the United States, but considerably more generous as well. Hence, it was for such reasons that Pakistan in spite of the presence of a large and growing force of Soviet troops across the Afghan border continued to reckon its security requirements largely in relation to India, its traditional adversary. In moving closer to Islamabad, Washington obviously strained its own relations with India, but the fact of the matter was that Pakistan's interests in a regional balance of power had always converged with America's global cold war interest. New Delhi though became increasingly apprehensive of Pakistan's designs, it also expressed a deep anxiety over the wider implications of Moscow's adventure in Afghanistan.

Mrs. Gandhi on her part, did not want further deterioration of Indo-U.S. relations. In October 1981, at the Cancun Summit, she accepted President Reagan's
invitation to visit the United States. In an interview with an American reporter, Mrs. Gandhi made an objective assessment of the situation when she said 'No two peoples get along better on a personal level than Americans and Indians. At the governmental level relations are good. The tilt against India as you describe it, is basically a result of America's perceptions of its global role. As a big power the USA wants the whole world to adjust to its assessment of its global intents and act accordingly. How is this possible? We have our own international assessments and national interests.' Mrs. Gandhi described her Washington visit of July 1982 as a 'friendship and goodwill trip' and an 'adventure in search of understanding and friendship', while President Reagan called it a 'dialogue of discovery '. In Washington Mrs. Gandhi made a candid exposition of the Indian stand. She questioned the very basis of the U.S. arms to Pakistan saying that in no way could the United State justify to exploit the Afghan issue for military aid to Islamabad. She emphasized that the arms could not be used against the Soviet Union. India had faced three aggressions by Pakistan and saw no logic for arming that nation. Appearing at the NBC television Mrs. Gandhi said that Indo-Soviet friendship would in no way come in the way of relations with the United States. She explained that India might seem to be pro-Soviet but 'we have not allowed one friendship to overshadow another or influence our
decisions or actions. She further explained India's policy towards Afghanistan and said India opposed any interference in the affairs of any country and wanted foreign troops to withdraw from Kabul. Finally, Mrs. Gandhi stressed that India and the United States had differences in foreign policy, but each country decided its foreign policy according to its geographical location and historical necessities. Amidst other things she made a plea for concessional loans for India's economic development suggesting that New Delhi considered a favourable American response to Indian requests for loans from multilateral agencies as a measure of its intention towards India. Nothing much came out of the U.S. visit for, 'In the spirit of Canun, economic and, needless to say, military assistance will be extended when it is judged to enhance the politico-military interests of the United States.' However, the only major agreement reached during her visit was a decision to permit France to replace the United States as the supplier of enriched uranium to the U.S. built Tarapur nuclear power station. But on security matters such as U.S. arms supplies to Pakistan, Afghanistan and the militarisation of the Indian Ocean, the two sides failed to reach any agreement. Thus, the prospects of a genuine improvement of Indo-U.S. relations remained dim. Despite India's efforts at economic liberalisation and a general opening out to the
West and the United States, the notion of India being a Soviet surrogate stuck in American minds.

Moscow took the earliest opportunity to gauge the mood in New Delhi and within a month after Mrs. Gandhi's outstanding electoral success, Gromyko was in New Delhi, in February, 1980. Clearly his primary objective was to convince India of the Soviet intentions in Afghanistan and to get a stamp of approval by the Indian Government. In a very harsh and hard hitting speech, which at times became embarrassing for hosts India, Gromyko squarely put the blame on the United States, China and Pakistan for the developments in Afghanistan. Gromyko stated that the responsibility for this rests fully with the imperialists. 'In order to camouflage their designs, the architects of this Washington policy are trying to concoct fabrications about a "Soviet threat". The imperialist forces that organised the aggression against Afghanistan clearly needed it to strike another blow against the easing of tensions in the world. They could not help but know that Afghanistan would stand up in defense of its independence and that the USSR would respond to its request for aid. The Soviet Foreign Minister emphasized that the provision of assistance to Afghanistan was in full conformity with the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Co-operation between the USSR and the
Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and with the UN Charter and was not directed against any neighbouring states and as such would not pose a threat to security and stability in this part of Asia or in the world as a whole. Gromyko pointed out that as a camouflage to its meddlesome policies in Iran and its frantic naval, military build-up in the Gulf and in the Island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, the United States had deliberately whipped a frenzy over the Soviet action in Afghanistan. In a terse warning to Pakistan, Gromyko reminded it that if it followed the path of the United States and China, it would derive no good, and its position as an independent state would be undermined. He further advised Pakistan to live in peace and friendship with Afghanistan and that it ought to stop the incursions into Afghan territory from Pakistani territory and that 'this stoppage should be effective and guaranteed. In other words Gromyko's mission to India has been made to reinforce the Soviet perception into the Indian thinking that the United States had been 'playing a dual role of first causing the crisis and then prolonging it through its military response. Though the Indian Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao seemed much more restrained in his address, the Foreign Office, all the same, issued a statement that blamed the United States for hampering efforts to get the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops.
But India's position was made unequivocally clear to Gromyko. It was apparent that though the two countries were linked by a security pact, the Indian and Soviet positions on the Afghan issue remained far apart. India failed to get a commitment from Moscow on a time-frame for withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and Gromyko's posture was tough and inflexible. Further, Gromyko's attack of Pakistan for aiding Afghanistan guerillas, evidently caused India immense embarrassment since Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Government had been seeking a new rapport with Pakistan as part of its efforts for a regional initiative to defuse the crisis. Gromyko's inflexible stance had been anticipated in India for, on the eve of Gromyko's mission, the Afghan President Babrak Karmal told a visiting Indian journalist that it was neither necessary nor possible to set a deadline for such withdrawal. Though Gromyko did not tell Indian leaders that Soviet troops would stay in Afghanistan forever the joint statement at the end of the visit did not mention the Afghan crisis at all. The Indian explanation that it was a bilateral issue between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union and was therefore outside the purview of the statement, was far from convincing. In any case, there was little hope of any regional initiative emerging after the damper provided by the tough Soviet stand. Moreover, it was becoming increasingly clear that Gromyko's demand of a Pakistani guarantee to stop intrusions into Afghan
territory could hardly ever be acceptable to Pakistan and that made India's initiative more difficult. After all Pakistan could not seal off the border, given the difficulties of the terrain and could well pose the question of what was preventing the Afghan government from sealing the border itself. India thus saw the Afghan invasion as only part of a pattern of super power competition and the regional spill-over was merely an extension of superpower conflict—an ominous and fearful manifestation of the cold war just across its borders.

India expressed its unhappiness to Gromyko that it was not consulted or informed before the Soviets intervened in Afghanistan which according to India was against the spirit of the 1971 treaty that provided for such consultation in the event of a threat to the security of either country. It was a clear demonstration of a super power acting on its own without taking into confidence a treaty partner whose security interests were vitally linked. Obviously India interpreted the Soviet intervention plus the American response to it as undoubtedly having security implications for India. It was significant that this was the first time since the 1971 treaty that New Delhi and Moscow had differed sharply on an international issue. India's position on Afghanistan remained unchanged after the Gromyko visit. While not joining the chorus of condemnation of the Soviet
Union it wanted an early withdrawal of Soviet troops. Apparently Gromyko's intention had been to obtain a total endorsement of its action by India, but the most that India could have done had already been demonstrated by its abstention from the U.N. General Assembly vote on January 11, 1980, over an American sponsored resolution. Its reluctance to condemn openly the Soviet action had not only blunted the blatancy of its dissent, but was probably the only satisfaction that Gromyko derived from his visit. Nevertheless, bilateral relations at the end of the visit were hailed to be as strong as ever. The justification put forth was that it was not as if India had never condemned a superpower openly for it had in the past thirty years denounced the U.S. on many occasions but had maintained reasonably cordial relations with it. But the big difference this time was that India had given up its policy of condemning one superpower and condemning the other.

Amongst the pleasanteries exchanged during the visit the Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao took special care to mention that Gromyko's visit came at a time when the two countries were celebrating the silver anniversary of their economic co-operation. Within ten days of Gromyko's visit, I.V. Arkhipov, Vice Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and Soviet Co-chairman of the Indian-Soviet Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and
Technical co-operation, visited New Delhi to take part in a festive celebration of the important anniversary. Narasimha Rao stated that 'we are convinced that such visits are evidence of the two countries' allegiance to the noble cause of the further development of co-operation for the benefit of our peoples and will enable us to continue a fruitful dialogue on important problems that face mankind today. Thus, despite differences and in the face of problems arising in the early 1980s, Indo Soviet relations maintained a remarkable degree of stability. Arkipov's visit became the occasion for the two countries to continue further talks on collaboration in establishing a steelplant in Nigeria and a nuclear power plant in Libya. Besides the Soviet Union consented to do business with the Indian private as well as the public sector. From all accounts it was apparent that Moscow made all efforts to publicize the beneficial effects of the friendship between the two countries. In fact from the Soviet point of view, India's stance of not putting the entire blame on Moscow for developments in Afghanistan was of some satisfaction and Moscow's effort was aimed at keeping it at that.

Hence to infer that India contemplated a drastic reversal of its relations with the Soviet Union in 1980 would be unrealistic for, New Delhi was too deeply linked with Moscow to make such a move and if statistics were any
indication, in the eighties, India was still dependent on the Soviet Union for its economic, scientific and technological enhancement in a large way. According to a Moscow radio interview Prem Budhawar, economic attache at the Indian Embassy in Moscow stated that enterprises build with Soviet help produced 80% of India's metallurgical equipment, 60% of its heavy electrical equipment, 30% of its overall output of steel and 20% of its electricity. Bhilai still remained a deep Soviet commitment and Kramatorsk engineers completed the manufacturing of the basic equipments for a 3600 sheet mill for Bhilai iron and steel works in India. The estimated production from this unit was stipulated at 1,000,000 tonnes of rolled steel a year. In March 1980 the second working meeting of delegates of the USSR Chamber of commerce and Industry and the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was held in Moscow. As Boris Borisov, President of the USSR Chamber remarked, mutual trade in 1979 totalled 13,000 million rupees and it was planned to exceed that by 50% in 1980. Hari Shankar Singhania, President of the Indian Federation said that during the talks concrete measures were set out to implement the programme of having more expensive ties in such fields as ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, oil prospecting and production, engineering and medical industry. Special attention was given to the transfer of Soviet technology to Indian firms on a
commercial basis and to broaden cooperation in the markets of third countries. In fact, in early 1980 Indo-Soviet Cooperation was diversified to other areas such as irrigation and Ivan Arkhipov signed a protocol in Moscow on joint work on irrigation projects in India.

However, it is pertinent to observe that Moscow continued to have a balanced policy of trade and commerce with the other subcontinental power, Pakistan. Perhaps one of the last acts of the Soviet Government to maintain cordial relations with Pakistan before acrimonious quarrels ensued with that country over Afghanistan was to enhance each other's commercial transactions. In April 1980, a four-member delegation led by Izharul Haque, the Federal Commerce Secretary of Pakistan visited Moscow to negotiate a new commodity exchange protocol for 1981. It provided for expanding credit turnover by 10% and it stipulated Soviet exports of machinery equipments, fertilizer and rolled metal. Pakistan would supply consumer goods.

Firyubin's April visit to New Delhi was precisely aimed at carrying forward the unfinished mission of Gromyko in February. It was of some significance that Firyubin's visit coincided with the visits of the Cuban Foreign Minister and the Vietnamese Prime Minister. Both were among the staunchest supporters of the Soviet Union and there could be no doubt that Moscow had roped them
into convince India to fall in line with them. Though the Soviet Union appreciated Mrs. Gandhi's comment at Dar-es-Salam that 'those who are talking most loudly about the interference of Soviet troops did not say a word when China invaded Vietnam', there was no way that Moscow with its allies could have influenced India to endorse the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Despite the best efforts of Cuba and Vietnam, India refused to move further than it had already done on the Afghan issue. The overall success of Pham Van Dong's visit notwithstanding, the Vietnamese leader conceded that there were differences with India on the Afghan issue.

Nevertheless, with U.S. arms for Pakistan being a certainty, India had to make a swift move to renew its military contact with the Soviet Union and in that context Mrs. Gandhi was more decisive than Morarji Desai in concluding a large scale arms deal with Moscow. In relations between states Mrs. Gandhi sought to delink issues and though differences persisted between India and the Soviet Union over Afghanistan, India explained that such differences would not affect 'bilateral defence supplies arrangements'. The statement was gratifying to the Soviet Union, particularly after the feeling of a let down by India since the Jagwir deal with Great Britain. The Soviet Union in its exuberance offered to provide India the most favourable terms in quantity, repayment
terms, kinds of weapons and license producing. Thus, India in response to the U.S decision in 1980 to bolster Pakistani defenses, became overwhelmingly dependent upon the Soviet Union for about 60-65% of its arms imports. Though the total value of military sales were not published and it was difficult to estimate, and in any case would have been misleading because of the unquantifiable element of subsidy, it was nevertheless, suggested that the total was not more than 15% of the aggregate of the Soviet-Indian trade. The CIA estimated the total value of Soviet arms transfers to India for 1980-85 as $4,200 million or 69% or a total $6,700 million of Indian arms imports. Indian sources, however, reported the proportion to be rather lower. But this degree of dependence in itself made India's link with the USSR strategically important quite apart from any military or diplomatic support India might receive from Moscow in a conflict.

In May 1980, Mrs. Gandhi's Government signed a $1,630 million credit for India, repayable over fifteen years at 2.5% interest, in Moscow. This deal however, ensured both the continuation and escalation through the 1980s of the longrunning South Asian arms race. Mooted eighteen months ago, the deal ironically was clinched after India objected to a Pakistani move to acquire new
weapons in response to the threat it saw in the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan. Apprehending that big power rivalry could upset the strategic balance in the subcontinent, India was left with no choice but to approach the Soviet Union with an expanded list for new and sophisticated weapons. It was deemed that the latest Soviet credit would enable India to buy MIG 25 Fox bat aircraft, fast attack boats and T-12 tanks besides advanced weapons like the latest version of the Atoll air-to-air missile (AA2) now installed on the MIG 25. There was also a probability of India opting for the Ash (AA5) air-to-air missiles which could be used within a range of 30 kms and fitted with an infra-red or radar housing device. Much as India would have preferred a diversification of its weapons sources, dependence on Moscow had gone up to such a degree that it would have been difficult to switch over so quickly. The Indian Foreign Minister journeyed to Moscow in June 1980 with this extended list and also implicit in his visit was the purpose of convincing the Soviets for an unconditional withdrawal from Afghanistan. But the tone and tenor of the meeting had already been set when the Soviet foreign Minister Gromyko had put it very categorically that Afghanistan was not negotiable—'Any discussions concerning this, any attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan are pointless.
The Soviets made yet another futile effort to bring India round to their view. It was evident that neither side had been able to influence the other and the fact that Afghanistan was again not mentioned in the joint communique made it abundantly clear that both sides had stuck to their respective positions. The two sides, however, reiterated the hackneyed, lofty sentiments for one another and the 'conversation and talks were held in a warm and friendly atmosphere'. The two sides examined the development of bilateral relations, as well as a wide range of international problem of mutual interest. They agreed to continue exchange of opinion on such questions and entering into contacts for this purpose. The two sides reaffirmed their determination to continue in every way to develop and strengthen close relations between the USSR and India in the interest of both countries' peoples. After exchanging opinions on the principal international problems the two sides noted with satisfaction the 'Closeness of the positions' held by the Soviet Union and India. It was significant that the terms used was 'closeness' and not 'identity' of interests. Finally the joint communique reaffirmed the two countries' conviction that the process of easing of international tension was to be extended to all parts of the world, as well as their allegiance to the principles of peaceful coexistence and the mutually advantageous and equal cooperation of states. They expressed their firm intention to continue to
support the struggle for an end to the arms race and against imperialism, neocolonialism, racism and all forms of domination. Back in New Delhi, Narasimha Rao admitted that he had failed to influence the Soviet Union on Afghanistan and if his assessment of the Soviet mood was correct he said he believed that the Soviet 'assistance' to the Kabul government would continue and the Soviet Union would stay put in Afghanistan for the near future.

President Sanjiva Reddy's visit to the Soviet Union in September 1980 was devoid of any spectacular achievements except for the very ceremonial welcome that he was accorded. Brezhnev again harped on extolling the virtues of India's foreign policy based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and non-alignment. 'In our time', Breznev remarked, 'there can be no foreign policy that is more moral, more ethical in the full sense of the word, and closer to the hearts and minds of the peoples than a policy of peace, detente, and curbing the arms race. We are glad that in striving to achieve these goals, we are marching together with India'. In the same breath he reminded his Indian guest of the American atrocities in Vietnam and cautioned against 'the Afghan counter revolution and the incitement to Pakistan against its neighbours, the creation of more and more new military bases in the Indian Ocean area and in the countries of the Middle East and Africa'. On his part, President Reddy
profusely thanked the Soviet Union for all the help it had rendered India in evolving its five-year plans and in laying the foundations for India's industrial infrastructure. The joint communique issued on the occasion hailed the Soviet-Indian relations which were developing successfully in the interest of the peoples of both countries and in the spirit of the 1971 treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. It was further emphasized that the mutually advantageous cooperation between the USSR and India was based on a long term programme of economic, trade and scientific technical co-operation and had a brilliant future. Whereas the Indian side highly appreciated the Soviet Union's constructive steps aimed at ensuring a genuine turn from the arms race to disarmament and the just and lasting political settlement of existing conflict situations, the Soviet Union took into consideration the important contribution that India was making to the struggle against the threat of war and for the consolidation of peace and security of peoples at international forums and in and non-aligned movement. Finally, the two sides attached great importance to the advancement and realisation of concerted maintenance of a constructive dialogue between states belonging to different social systems. Though a call for an end to the war between Iran and Iraq was made in the joint communique, it deliberately skirted any mention
of Afghanistan. Apparently, when there was a near unanimity between the two countries on almost all bilateral and international issues, it was Afghanistan that embittered feelings on either side. The Soviet Union accorded 'tremendous significance' to Brezhnev's visit to India in December, 1980. The fact that the visit came about despite Brezhnev's failing health attested to the importance attached by the Soviet Union to this visit. A massive propaganda campaign was let loose by the Soviet press to emphasize upon the significance of this trip. Accompanied by a large contingent of 300 people, the Brezhnev visit seemed to indicate that the future development of Indo-Soviet relations largely depended upon the outcome of this visit. His entourage included Gromyko, I.V.Arkhipov and other important officials. Brezhnev was accorded a full-dress ceremonial welcome by Indian officials, but significantly enough, there were demonstrators protesting the Soviet move into Afghanistan and amidst maximum security Brezhnev's motorcade was forced to detour and took a different route. The reception was in sharp contrast to the tumultous and spontaneous welcome Brezhnev received in 1961 and 1973. Yet, however, the Indian leadership's effusive welcome to Brezhnev was an important indicator in the direction that Indo-Soviet relations had not gone out of steam and, that in itself was a great satisfaction for the Soviets. There
could be no doubt that Afghanistan remained on the top of the agenda and to obtain Indian approval on the issue Brezhnev had brought with him economic and technical co-operation and trade inducements for 1984-85.

But, just as Gromyko had set the guidelines for discussion when Narasimha Rao visited Moscow in June 1980, President Reddy too fixed the framework, when during the banquet speech he candidly remarked 'We in India remain opponents of all forms of interference overt or covert' by outside forces in the internal affairs of the region.

The President further contended that 'we are convinced that lasting peace can be restored by a political settlement reached through talks based on complete respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries in this region and for their status as non-aligned states.'

Brezhnev, in his speech eulogised Indo-Soviet relations in glowing terms. 'We in the Soviet Union attach paramount importance to relations with India. It has the sincere sympathy of the Soviet people and the respect of the Soviet leadership. Without fear of exaggeration, one can say that India has reliable friends in the Soviet people and their leadership. Friends in good times and in bad, in rain and in shine. Clearly, the compulsions that had brought Brezhnev to India aimed at
removing the misunderstandings that had cropped up with Mrs. Gandhi personally during the Janata regime. But far more important for the Soviet Union was to make a vital policy announcement from New Delhi on the developing situation in the region in order to placate the non-aligned nations which continued to vote against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. However, speculation was rife in both Western and Indian media as regards the real purpose of Brezhnev's four-day visit to India in December 1980. There seemed to be several possible answers. But in any case there was a general consensus that the visit was not meant to be a symbolic one although in New Delhi according to sections of the media, 'one seriously doubted its (visits) utility\textsuperscript{69}. For, it was considered that Brezhnev's aim was to obtain India's support for the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan as that would have gone a long way towards restoring the damage caused to the Soviet Union's image as a friend of the third world non-aligned countries. Indian opinion by and large, however, continued to be disturbed at the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Mrs. Gandhi apparently did not endorse it in her talks with the Soviet leader and the meetings between Mrs. Gandhi and the Soviets were referred to as 'frank' which implied disagreement. From all accounts it was evident that both Brezhnev and Mrs. Gandhi merely reaffirmed their earlier positions on the issue of Afghanistan. Mrs. Gandhi explained that India could not
overlook military intervention and on his part, Brezhnev was not prepared to make any firm offer of withdrawal from Afghanistan unless threats to the country were ended. Brezhnev reiterated that the 'Soviet Union will thoroughly fulfil its duty in providing assistance to friendly Afghanistan. At the same time we are doing everything to promote a political settlement and to help Afghanistan to uphold its status as a sovereign and non-aligned state. The conversation thus bogged down around the Afghan problem and the matter apparently was dropped from consideration in future talks. In the USSR itself the Soviet media merely repeated that in the course of three meetings the two leaders' reviewed the international situation in the general context. Hence, in the final statement there was no mention of Afghanistan just as it had not in all the meetings since the invasion. India's position on Afghanistan, thus made unequivocally clear, Gromyko, Firyubin and Arkhipov were more concerned with maintaining and supporting India's position on Afghanistan. In other words, if the Soviets were unable to influence India to change its position, they would certainly strive to keep New Delhi from moving further away from Moscow. In the foreground of the meeting of non-aligned foreign ministers scheduled for February 1981, such a policy stance was the only alternative that Moscow could have striven for.
In the course of their discussions the leaders of the two sides further exchanged opinions on the situation in the Indian Ocean region including the Persian Gulf and condemned the build up of military activity there. Both sides spoke out in favour of dismantling all foreign military bases and turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. The Soviet leadership had however, scrupulously avoided the mention of its own increase of naval strength in the region. But, going by President Reddy's initial banquet speech where he observed with grave concern the growing naval presence the Indian Ocean, which is taking the form of rivalry, and attempts to change the non-alignment policy pursued by littoral countries and to secure new bases or expand existing ones, such as Diego Garcia. It was evident that there were differences in perception between the Soviet Union and India over the Indian Ocean zone. The joint communique was a compromise and the wording was carefully made so as to satisfy both sides—they called for the dismantling of all existing foreign military and naval bases in this region, such as Diego Garcia and for preventing the creation of new bases, and they condemn all attempts to build up a foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean under any pretext whatsoever.

India failed to realise that its call for converting the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace was a myth.
and in the circumstances it was futile chasing an illusion. China's ambitious amphibious programme and the deeply entrenched American navy in the Indian Ocean could hardly ever have allowed the Soviet Union to withdraw from these strategic waters. In fact, India's security was best guaranteed with the presence of the Soviet navy in the Indian Ocean zone and prudence lay in accepting this reality rather than making frantic idealistic calls for the withdrawal of all navies from the Indian Ocean Zone.

The highlight of the Brezhnev visit to India, however, was his proposal on the Gulf, which he announced in his address to the joint sitting of the Indian Parliament. Brezhnev had unexpectedly launched his new scheme in which he proposed a dialogue on the Indian Ocean and on the Gulf and its maritime oil route. In the opinion of a section of the Western Press the Soviet leader made the visit to New Delhi only to launch this new proposition for a dialogue on the Indian Ocean and on the use of the oil route. 'The region of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean is becoming a region of tension and conflict', Brezhnev declared. 'On the false pretext of protecting their vital interests, the Western powers situated thousands of kilometers from this region have coacerntrated their arsenals, accumulated armaments enlarged the network of the military bases. Naturally we
cannot remain indefinitely in different to what is happening in a region so close to our borders. In the picture thus presented to the Indian Parliament, Brezhnev proposed to the U.S. the Western Powers, China, Japan, and to all the interested states to conclude an agreement on five points.

1. No military bases to be established in the Gulf nor on the adjacent islands. No nuclear weapons or armaments capable of causing massive destruction to be introduced there.

2. Respect for the status of non-alignment chosen by the Gulf States. No initiative to draw them in a military alliance which would include a nuclear power.

3. No threat of the use of force to be employed in the Gulf region, nor any interference in their internal affairs.

4. Respect for the status of non-alignment chosen by the Gulf States. No initiative to draw them in a military alliance which would include a nuclear power.
4. Respect for the sovereign rights of the states of the region over their natural resources.

5. No obstacles or threats to be employed in the matter of trade and commerce and the use of the sea lanes linking the states of this region with other countries of the World.

It was generally believed that this new proposal had in fact, been ready for several months in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. In March 1980 one of the members of the Central Committee responsible for international affairs, Nikolai Portugalov, had explained the issue at some length in the Soviet Journal 'Literary Gazette', but one actually did not know the importance attached to it by the Soviet Union, nor the manner in which it was to be launched. That Brezhnev should have chosen to launch it not from Moscow but before the two houses of the Indian Parliament in New Delhi was indeed interesting. It had been a careful and a calculated move to swing Indian opinion in his favour. Any agreement on the various points raised would envisage the demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean and its conversion into a zone of peace—a notion which had been a major theme of Indian diplomacy from the time of Mrs. Gandhi's father Pandit Nehru. His parliamentary audience initially received the unfolding of
his plan in silence, but when it perceived the link between the Soviet and Indian objectives in the Indian Ocean to be identical, it gave Brezhnev a thunderous applause. But in his talks with Mrs. Gandhi Brezhnev found her response to the plan to be cautious and non-committal, for, 'the plan bristled with obvious difficulties for many powers involved'. Mrs. Gandhi's choice of words that 'it appeared to be a constructive suggestion and was worthy of careful consideration', seemed to have conveyed all to the Soviet leadership. Nevertheless, Brezhnev derived some comfort that the parliamentary applause would perhaps make the Indian Government give a second look at his plan.

It was evident that the Middle Eastern States and the Western powers, so long as the latter depended on Middle East oil were likely to regard the Soviet plan as something sinister, and would oppose it. In that case, Moscow's quid pro quo would be to withdraw from Afghanistan in return for the acceptance of its five point plan for the Gulf. But this move was not likely to succeed in the emerging international atmosphere.

In the final analysis, it would be worthwhile to mention that the joint communique seemed to produce two conflicting declarations in a single document—one as interpreted by Moscow and the other as intended by New
Delhi. For the Soviets, it was incontestable that the Indian visit of the head of the CPSU was a total success, the five pages of the declaration testified to this. On all major issues, as desired by the USSR, there was total unanimity, such as on reduction of armaments, the necessity for detente, for the peaceful solution of conflicts, for the reduction of naval forces in the Indian Ocean and in Diego Garcia. More importantly, it was emphasized that the alert and attentive Soviet reader would notice that Afghanistan did not figure in the Declaration. But from the Indian point of view, however, there was a carefully concealed allusion to it in the following words 'India and the Soviet Union reiterate their opposition to all forms of foreign interference in the internal affairs of countries of this region. In this case 'foreign interference signified equally to the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan as intended by India. A careful study of the joint declaration revealed that India's views on the overall Indian Ocean Persian Gulf area were only 'similar' to Moscow but not 'identical'. The similarity, though, was close to Moscow than to Washington. Thus the U.S. assertion that as long as Soviet troops remained in Afghanistan it could not take seriously the Brezhnev–Gandhi proposals for reducing tensions in the Persian Gulf area, was not surprising.

The most successful outcome of the Brezhnev visit, however, lay in the prospects for the further development
advantageous co-operation in economic fields. Economic co-operation is becoming an increasingly important factor for our two countries. Important landmarks on the path of this co-operation are the industrial giants of India, built with the Soviet Union's assistance that Jawaharlal Nehru called "new temples"—from the metallurgical plant in Bhilai, the first born of our friendship to the giant combine in Bokaro. In particular the Soviet Union expressed its willingness to provide India with assistance in increasing the output of the country's existing oil wells and help in improving the operational efficiency of India's power stations and to study the possibility of the USSR's participation in the creation of a major power engineering complex in India and in the further development of metallurgy. The agreement for Soviet assistance in the implementation of these broad ranging projects totalled over Rs.40 billion in India's next five-year plan. Apart from oil exploration, steel and aluminium expansion were given particular emphasis. By 1980, the Soviet Union had become India's third largest trading partner and the second best customer for Indian exports. Hence a new five-year trade protocol was signed that pledged the two sides to double the total value of trade again by 1985. But, by far the most outstanding contribution that Brezhnev made to India was the Soviet decision to raise its crude oil supplies by one million
tons per year. This was an agreement of tremendous significance for India particularly when the Soviet Union, to meet India's needs, had resorted to cuts in its supplies to western Europe at the cost of precious hard currency. The oil deal was extremely well received in India and it went a long way in restoring Soviet–India relations on a plane that they had been enjoying during the early 1970s. Mrs.Gandhi in her statement to the parliament reciprocated the Soviet action with the word 'we appreciate this friendly gesture'. Testimony to the developing relations between the two countries was best described as one of 'friendship and trust' in the joint Soviet–Indian declaration.

In Mrs.Gandhi, the Soviet Union perceived a leader who would not trade India's national interest for the sake of economic–military aid. As mentioned earlier, Mrs.Gandhi's political acumen convinced her that the successful working of a relationship depended upon the wisdom of judging every issue on merit. Thus, though Mrs.Gandhi had systematically refrained from giving unequivocal support to two of Brezhnev's favourite schemes the Asian collective Security system and the five point formula on the Persian Gulf the fact that in almost all other issues of vital international importance India sided with the Soviet Union, it was of considerable satisfaction...
to Moscow. And from that point of view neither New Delhi nor Moscow saw Brezhnev's visit in December as a failure. If Mrs. Gandhi's statement to the Lok Sabha after Brezhnev's departure that, 'though India's perceptions of global problems did not always tally with the Soviet Union's, the two countries were careful to see that these differences did not come in the way of their bilateral relations or affect their common commitment to strive for world peace', was any indication, surely Moscow, could be confident that despite differences with Mrs. Gandhi, it could still rely on her and in her policies.

The Brezhnev delegation had also indicated its willingness to supply India with the MIG 25 and the Indian Air Force expected the first lot within a short time. To give shape to the economic and military aid to India initiated by Brezhnev, the First Vice-Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers I. Arkhipov made another visit to India in January 1981 and jointly chaired the session of the Inter-Governmental Soviet-Indian Commission with Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao. An important decision was taken to set up a superthermal power station at Vindhyachal and the two governments established joint commissions in several areas including energy and coal. This was followed by a signing of a trade protocol for 1981 which provided for a further increase in turnover
from an expected Rs.19 billion in 1980 to Rs.22 billion.
In the military sphere discussions were initiated for the
multirole Swing-wing Mig 23 'Flogger' aircraft and this
negotiation assumed significance particularly after the
Jaguar deal had run into rough weather^.

In the early 1980s, therefore, what inhibited
India's fondness for the Soviet Union was primarily in
response to the situation created by the Afghan syndrome
than anything else and that also gave direction to India
in evolving its policy towards the other superpower, the
United States. However, keeping in view past Soviet help
to India over Goa, Kashmir and the 1971 Bangladesh War,
bilateral relations could hardly ever be affected over the
Afghan crisis. India needed continued Soviet support in
a period of insecurity in its political and security
environment.

Internally, Mrs. Gandhi's relations with the
Communist party of India remained strained. The Prime
Minister in her speech during Brezhnev's visit referred to
the divisive role the CPI had been playing in India.
Visible irritated by the activities of the C.P.I.,
Mrs. Gandhi pointed out to Brezhnev that 'Understandably
we face onslaught from the Right and not so understandably
from the so-called Left as well^'. It was an unmistakable
reminder to Brezhnev that indulgence and pampering of the CPI would be detrimental to the interest of Indo-Soviet friendship. With the CPI and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society projecting themselves as the special link between India and the Soviet Union, there was strong resentment within the Congress party. To clip the wings of the so-called 'custodians' and 'self appointed guardians of Indo-Soviet friendship, Mrs. Gandhi revived the Friends of the Soviet Union Society which had been extremely popular during the post-independence years under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Mrs. Gandhi asserted that 'Indo-Soviet friendship rested on firm foundations and was beyond the purview of those who regarded themselves as professional friends or professional foes of the Soviet Union. The friendship was national and not partisan. Further elaborating on the theme she emphasized and that was significant—'We are gratified with and are proud of our friendship with the Soviet Union. It is a time-tested friendship and has been of much help to us in our times of difficulty. It has had a beneficial economic aspect enabling us to strengthen our industrial and machine building base and also to diversify our trade. But it has not been at the cost of our friendship with any other nation'. In the context of Mrs. Gandhi's efforts to open new channels to the United States and China, the remark indeed was a pointer to the CPI, the ISCUS and even the pro-Soviet members of the Congress, that an exclusive
relationship with the Soviet Union was undesirable in the national interest of India. In other words, Mrs. Gandhi sought to drive home the point that the USSR supported India in things she had always stood for, while India did not support the USSR any more than it did the U.S.

Yet, however, it is significant to observe that there still was a strong pro-Soviet lobby in India which did have supporters in the ruling Congress Party and this group had been circulating its proposal among government circles and a selected audience of sympathizers. The group calling itself the Committee for Democratic Action (CDA) kept its membership purposely vague because according to one informed source close to it "they are nuclear scientists, economists, diplomats present and past and present or future policy makers who are in possibly sensitive positions and prefer to keep a low profile". The two men deeply associated with the CDA were K.R. Ganesh, ex-Minister of State for Finance in Mrs. Gandhi's proemergency cabinet and Ganesh Shukla, Editor of the New Wave Magazine. The CDA's membership was said to represent one trend of the pro-Soviet lobby in Indian politics made up of former Communist Party of India and others who joined the pro-Soviet leftist faction of the Congress Party before the Emergency and wielded some influence before Sanjay Gandhi's ascendency. The CDA
report stated the goal of placing India in the front ranks of the world's modern industrial nations and if the group's plans were implemented, India would within forty years resemble the Soviet economy of the eighties.\(^91\)

Sensing Mrs. Gandhi's determination to prevent the communists from exploiting Indo-Soviet friendship for their benefit, the Soviet Union sent a delegation headed by the Vice President of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society, Rovnin, to reassure Mrs. Gandhi that the Soviet link with the fraternal CPI would in no way hinder the progress of Indo-Soviet relations. Mrs. Gandhi asked the Soviets to delink themselves from the communists for the benefit of Indo-Soviet friendship. The Soviets promptly declared that relations between 'our two countries should not be endangered over the question of the CPI'. As a gesture of Soviet goodwill, Moscow abandoned its intention of inviting leaders of the CPI(M) to attend the 26th Congress of the CPSU.

The Twenty-Sixth Congress of the CPSU held in February 1981 became an occasion for reviewing the status of Indo-Soviet relations. One could perceive that Brezhnev's references to India were far less enthusiastic than they had been earlier and that the relations in early 1981 had not gained the lofty status they had occupied in early 1976.\(^92\) Yet, however, India was the only country that was singled out for more than a passing
reference when Brezhnev declared that joint action with peaceful and independent India will continue to be one of the most important areas of Soviet foreign relations.

Despite the apparent strain in the relations between the two countries over Afghanistan, in 1981, several Soviet delegations came to India to discuss further co-operation in economic, scientific, technical, cultural, military and other fields. In March 1981, contracts for the purchase of Indian woollen and cotton knitwear garments were made and in April India and the Soviet Union signed a barter agreement amounting to Rs.6 billion for Indian rice, barley, maize, groundnuts and aluminium in exchange for Soviet crude oil and petroleum products. It was noteworthy, however, that in January 1981, USSR refused to hike the price of Mica. When India demanded an 18 to 26% increase over the 1980 price, the Soviet Union refused to concede to India's demand for an increase and the Soviet delegate went back without placing new orders. The Soviets also backed out of the Indian leather market in January 1981.

In April 1981 a high level Soviet military delegation visited New Delhi to discuss ways for new co-operation in the defence field and inspected the Indian armed forces units. The Soviet team offered the MIG 25 and MIG 27 planes for the Indian Air Force and agreed to
An upswing in Sino-Indian relations was witnessed during the early part of 1980 when China evinced a keen interest in improving relations with India. Though one of the harshest in denouncing Soviet action in Afghanistan and viewing the Indian stance with scepticism, the posting of a new ambassador by Beijing almost immediately after Mrs. Gandhi came back to power were indications of Beijing's intentions of bettering ties with India. Chinese and Indian perceptions seemed to converge on Afghanistan when both stated that as a precondition to normalisation in the region it was imperative for the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan. The Afghan crisis thus appeared to contribute to the desire to resolve differences.

China's sincerity in be-friending India was further demonstrated when the Chinese leadership refused to take up the Kashmir issue, though the Pakistan dictator Zia had raked it during his visit to Peking in May 1980.

Mrs. Gandhi's meeting with the Chinese leader Hua Guo Feng in Belgrade during President Tito's funeral was the first such high level meeting between the leaderships of the two countries after almost two decades. The meeting was held in an extremely cordial atmosphere and clearly, China expressed its appreciation of the non-aligned stand that India had taken instead of supporting the cuban thesis of the Soviet Union being the 'natural ally' of the non-
aligned group of countries. The two leaders sought to promote peace and stability in Asia and also aimed at settling bilateral problems through mutual consultations. It was further suggested by Hua that 'both countries should concentrate on the present and the future and put aside past differences'. Yet, despite claims of an uptrend in Sino-Indian relations, the Chinese approach in the early half of the eighties was more tentative than positive. A semblance of stability in relations between the two countries could only be discerned after Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China. Nevertheless, trends indicating a slight improvement in Sino-Indian relations were more evident by June 1980 when it was announced that Huang Hua would soon visit India. Xinhua announcement said there were 'no conflicts of fundamental interest between the two countries' and that the 'key problem' of the border could be solved by mutual concessions by China in the Eastern sector and by India in the Western sector.

The Soviet Union could not but view these developments with great concern. Time and again the Soviet media published articles cautioning India against the proposed move for a normalisation of ties with China. Moscow especially warned India of the evolving Washington-Peking-Islamabad axis which essentially was a 'cooperation on a militarist basis'. Obviously the Soviet
Union was sore with India's attempts to strike a balance between its continuing special relationship with Moscow and an equally beneficial accord with the West and China particularly in the kind of cold war situation then prevailing. But India was no less dismayed by the Soviet propaganda campaign to frighten it by conjuring visions of a bigger gang-up against the country by China and the U.S. acting in close concert with Pakistan. In a report the Hindu stated, 'a series of scare stories have already been emanating from Soviet sources about joint military exercises by China and Pakistan in occupied Kashmir, establishment of a naval base by China near Karachi the construction of six air bases in Pakistan with Chinese assistance, and the preparation of a test site close to Indian border for the first nuclear explosion by Pakistan. All these reports have been found to be baseless on inquiry by the Indian agencies dealing with security problems.'

India's desire to further stabilise and normalise relations with China became more apparent when the Foreign Secretary Eric Gonsalves visited that country in June 1980. It was of considerable significance when in the banquet in honour of Gonsalves the Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that China intended to further improve ties with India on the basis of the Five
Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The most crucial development, however, was the Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping's statement implying the dropping of Chinese endorsement of the Pakistani line on Kashmir and dealing it to be a bilateral problem between India and Pakistan. Second, though Vice Chairman Deng Xiaoping's remarks that the border settlement 'should be along the line of actual control were not greeted favourably in India, China's opening of the Tibet border to more trade with India and other neighbouring states were seen in a positive light in India.

But even with the noticeable improvement in relations between the two countries, Huang Hua abruptly cancelled his proposed visit to India in 1980 on the pretext that he was "too busy". China had obviously taken offence to India's recognition in early July of the Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea. The move indeed elated the Soviets who considered it to be a big gain for Kampuchea as it implied that more and more non-aligned countries would come in to recognise the Heng Samrin regime, and the Chinese hegemonic schemes in Indo-China would be effectively thwarted. It also implied a total rejection of the 'bloody Pol Pot' regime which China had been propping up for long. Clearly, India's recognition of the Heng Samrin regime had strengthened the Soviet-
Vietnam-Kampuchean base in Indo-China. However, to interpret that India had acted under pressure from Moscow would be fallacious, for even during Narasimha Rao's visit to Moscow in June 1980, the 'issue had not been given much importance'. Essentially, India had its own time-table and had acted in its own national interest. The recognition of the Heng Samrin regime apart from being a part of the election manifesto of Mrs. Gandhi's Congress, the Government of India did also care for its friendly ties with Vietnam which indeed had been sustaining the Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea. The timing of India's recognition was significant. It aimed at sending a clear message to China that it could not take India for granted and that the process of normalisation between them did not imply an alienation from the Soviets. Besides, it was also aimed at reminding China, that it should be equally sensitive to others' feelings and should not have invaded Vietnam in 1979 when the Indian Foreign Minister Vajpayee was still in Chinese territory. Finally, it was the Indian way of pointing to the Chinese that its border proposals were not acceptable. Moreover, the state of Sino-Indian relations also worsened by the problems caused when a pro-Dalai Lama group visiting Tibet received such strong signs of popular support that Beijing became concerned. The launch on 18 July of an Indian satellite signalling a potential missile capability also added to China's
suspicions of New Delhi's motives. Over and above, a major cause for concern to India about the Chinese was in the context of the World Bank and the IMF where China's entry was expected to mean that some loans that would have otherwise gone to India would now be diverted to China. The only positive sign in Sino-India relations in the later part of 1980 was the return in mid-August of 40 Indian army personnel who had strayed into Chiha. Effectively however developments in Sino-India relations also served to mollify Soviet sentiments that an improvement of relations with China would in no way loosen India's special ties with the Soviet Union.

Significantly, however, in moves which were most unlike the Chinese, China indicated its desire to improve Sino-Indian. By December 1980 it was felt that China wanted to resume negotiations for bettering relations and interestingly enough the Chinese call for normalising relations gathered momentum as Brezhnev's December visit to India was getting closer. Once again Soviet apprehensions became apparent when Moscow cautioned India on the deceit inherent in China's desire for normalising ties with India. Encouraged by the Indo-Soviet differences over Afghanistan and interpreting that Brezhnev did not get everything he wanted, during his visit to India, the Chinese regarded the Afghan issue to be a fortuitous
opportunity to drive a wedge between New Delhi and Moscow. Huang Hua appealed to India to join China against the Soviet Union because 'the turbulent and tense international situation places a greater obligation on both China and India to promote mutual understanding and cooperation'. But the Chinese contention justifying Sino-American assistance to Pakistan 'under the present situation' could by no means be acceptable to India since 'it poses a danger to India and the third world'.

Nevertheless in continuation with the spirit of conciliation, in early 1981 Deng ignored the niceties of protocol when he received the Indian Parliamentary Leader Subramaniam Swamy. He asked Swamy to convey to Mrs. Gandhi his personal gratitude for allowing a cultural troupe to visit India. Deng also noted that China regarded India as an 'elder brother' in the subcontinent and that Peking had advised Pakistan and Bangladesh to improve their relations with New Delhi. It was also stated that 'India' was no longer a Soviet Client State. By June 1981 the Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang gave enough signals of Peking's desire for a breakthrough in Sino-Indian relations. Speaking in Kathmandu, Zhao not only set the scene for the Chinese Foreign Minister's scheduled trip to Delhi but unlike the earlier Chinese stance of showing the longstanding border issue, declared, 'We believe a
package solution of the boundary problem between China and India will be possible so long as both sides have a spirit of mutual understanding and accommodation. We hope the Indian authorities will respond to our positive activity.

Mrs. Gandhi pointed out the differences in China's and India's perceptions on the Afghan issue and cautioned Beijing from taking a negative attitude toward India in the context of super power politics, particularly concerning India's relations with the Soviet Union. The Chinese, however, continued to provide military hardware to Pakistan. In June 1981, Prime Minister Zhao Zhiyang visited Pakistan and promised more sophisticated arms to that country. The Pakistani Foreign Minister Agha Shahi's visit to China in December was also aimed at seeking new delivery of arms from China. The Soviets were right in stating that Pakistan had become China's Chief Client for arms, and the American arms aid to Pakistan was also severely criticized in the Soviet media which accused Pakistan to be sliding down the 'slippery path'.

'Neither Washington nor Islamabad now conceals the fact that this generous flow of American arms is meant to transform the Pakistani Army into a real threat to Afghanistan and India, suppress internal opposition to Zia-ul-Haq's regime and provide a continuous supply of arms
for the Afghan counter revolution which has entrenched itself in Pakistan. It was in this atmosphere in June 1981 that Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua arrived in India for talks on normalisation of relations between the two countries. Huang's visit not only irritated the Russians but the Soviets tried everything through their media to convince India of the futility of this effort. A Soviet commentator in Pravda remarked 'What did Huang Hua bring to New Delhi'. The traditional Chinese smile and no specific proposals whatever. Rightly as the Russians had foreseen, in the course of the talks, sharp differences became evident in New Delhi's and Beijing's views on the most vital problems of South and South East Asia. They included the arming of Pakistan and the tension that was being generated over Afghanistan, Vietnam and other Indo-China countries. Moreover, the Indian press stressed, disagreements came to light as to both the nature of the problems and the approach to their solution. At a press conference in New Delhi, Hung Hua was forced to admit publicly that nothing had changed in China's policy toward the countries of South and South East Asia and 'consequently Peking would continue to adhere to its great power hegemonistic policy there. On the issue of the settlement of the border and territorial questions, the Chinese emissary consented to their beginning in the foreseeable future. This grudging consent actually was
the chief and the only result of the official Chinese Indian talks in New Delhi, although at the conclusion of the visit, neither a communique nor any joint statement was signed. Pravda, thus commented that 'in the view of local political commentators it would be unrealistic and premature to hope and expect that Huang Hua's statements would be followed by concrete deeds on Peking's part. China's entire current foreign policy gives precious little justification for such hopes'. Relations between the two countries showed a downward trend in 1982 when China refused visa to a member of the visiting Indian Parliamentary delegation on the ground that he belonged to Arunachal Pradesh. Besides, India's protests over a Sino-Pak protocol on the opening of the Khunjerab Pass in disputed Kashmir was dismissed casually by China on the ground that it had nothing to do with the disputed territory and was mainly intended to facilitate trade between China and Pakistan. Nevertheless border talks were resumed between India and China in December 1982. Great secrecy shrouded the talks and no agenda was announced. Apparently, the motive behind Chinese moves were aimed at curtailing new Delhi's dependence on Moscow. In the eighties China seemed to have perceived that befriending India was the only alternative to an overwhelming preponderance of the Soviet Union in South Asia.
In February 1981 the NAM foreign ministers met in New Delhi. As part of the Soviet campaign to lobby India to promote the idea of the Socialist commonwealth as the 'natural ally' of the movement, the Soviet press carried articles recalling how the USSR had repeatedly stood by India in its hour of need. Moscow hoped that the Ministers would refrain from calling for a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and a Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea. The initial response to the Soviet wooing of India seemed to have worked, for the Indian draft declaration, was closer to the Soviet position on the three vital issues of Afghanistan, Kampuchea and the Indian Ocean. The stance thus adopted appeared clearly anti-United States and pro-Soviet. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was not mentioned, but only a casual reference 'to deescalate tensions and seek a political settlement there' was incorporated. Kampuchéa, too was not mentioned in the draft, and on the Indian Ocean while the American base at Diego Garcia was referred to, no mention was made of the Soviet bases in South Yemen and Ethiopia. The draft failed to receive the approval of a majority of the members of the NAM and for India the cohesion and integrity of the movement and its own credibility as a truly non-aligned state were more vital than receiving Soviet, gratification. Hence, on demand by a majority of the NAM members the final draft on Indian Ocean 'regretted big power presence in all forms
and manifestations'. Despite Vietnam's cautioning against the mentioning of Kampuchea by name, the final draft called for the withdrawal of 'all foreign forces' from Kampuchea. On the most important issue of Afghanistan too, India had to make a retreat and a compromise was effected. It called for a settlement on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops and the strict observance of non-intervention and non-interference in the country's affairs.  

Though reactions in the West were sharp and the Times observed that 'as a host country, India has been partly to blame for trying to mute criticism of the Russians', yet subsequently the general impression that gained ground in the West was that the 'pro Soviet tilt' that had manifested in the movement had been ended'. The final declaration, for all intents, was a compromise since the Soviet Union or Vietnam were not specifically mentioned or blamed for developments in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. While on the face of it the Soviet media expressed satisfaction with the New Delhi Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of the Non-aligned countries and observed that this document proved to be a befitting rebuff to the Sino-U.S. attempts at splitting the movement, yet there could be no doubt that the Soviet reaction was one of disappointment. Moscow was apparently unimpressed with India's efforts and the Soviet media
categorised India's contribution to the movement below the states of Vietnam, Laos, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Afghanistan and a number of other countries. In the Soviet view India had too readily accepted to compromise and had thus belied Soviet expectations. Contrastingly, however, Moscow praised the representatives of Havana, Hanoi and Kabul to have exerted a tremendous pressure in favour of Moscow. For India, ensuring the unity of the movement was much more vital.

Shortly after Hua's visit to India, Narsimha Rao travelled to Moscow to reassure the Soviet leadership that 'normalisation' of India's relations with China would not be achieved at the cost of its friendship with the Soviet Union. During the course of his discussions with Gromyko, Rao pointed out that the NAM could play a significant role in international politics only if its 'unity and integrity were strengthened'—a veiled hint to Moscow to refrain from prejudicing the movement through its 'leftist' clients, as it had tried to do in the recent NAM Foreign Ministers meeting in New Delhi. The Indian Foreign Minister tried to impress upon his Soviet counterpart that to settle issues as Afghanistan and Kampuchea and the complexities involved therein, the NAM needed the 'opportunity' to be impartial. From Rao's discussions with Gromyko and Brezhnev it was apparent that India tried to avoid a total
indentification with the Soviet Union. By all intents India wanted to portray itself as distinct from the 'committed' friends of the Soviet Union. In fact, in comparison to the leftist friends of Moscow like Cuba and Vietnam, India did have a policy of its own and it was best reflected in Rao's visit to Karachi for a dialogue with his Pakistani counterpart Agha Shahi for bringing about a settlement to the vexed Afghan issue.

The tenth anniversary of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 was celebrated with much gaiety and fanfare. Pravda recorded Gromyko's reviews of the Soviet-Indian relations as an effective factor for cooperation and peace. In his statement on the occasion, Gromyko asserted that, 'today no one can construct a policy with respect to the Soviet Union or with respect to India, without taking this treaty into consideration. There are important reasons to state that it has firmly established itself in the ranks of the fundamental documents of present day international relations that are effectively working for peace. These relations are a graphic example of the practical embodiment of the principles of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. At the same time they are an important element in the might solidarity front of socialist and nonaligned countries—a front that is opposed to the aggressive policy of the most
reactionary circles of imperialism and to the great power aspirations of the Peking hegemonists and impedes their actions aimed against peace, freedom and the independence of peoples. The Soviet Union makes no secret of the fact that it wants to see friendly India strong and able to successfully defend its independence and strengthen the cause of peace in Asia and international security. Therefore it is giving that country the necessary assistance in strengthening its defense capability. However, this co-operation, in full accordance with the spirit of the Soviet-Indian Treaty, is not directed against any third country and is not intended to damage anyone's legitimate interests. In their messages to President Reddy and Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi, Brezhnev and Tikhonov stated that 'the present decade vividly demonstrated that the Soviet-India Treaty serves well the interests of the peoples of our two countries the cause of peace and international co-operation.' President Reddy and Mrs. Gandhi expressed their conviction that all round relations between our two countries will continue to grow stronger in the interests of our two people and make positive contribution to strengthen world peace and security.

The continueance of massive delivery of military hardware by the United States and China to Pakistan were
becoming a perennial source of tension for India and reinforced its feeling of a necessity for cooperating with the Soviet Union to prevent any upset of the military balance in the subcontinent. Shortly after her American trip Mrs. Gandhi visited Moscow in September 1982. She had wide ranging talks with the top leadership in the Kremlin including Brezhnev, Tikhonov, Gromyko, Marshal Ustinov, Arkhipov and Patolichev. The gist of her talks centred on the arms race in South Asia and her efforts to convince the Soviet leadership of the permanence of Indo-Soviet friendship. India's efforts to improve relations with China and the United States, 'will not be at the cost of any trusted friendship with the Soviet Union'. Brezhnev, as usual, in his dinner address was euphoric about Mrs. Gandhi and described her as an 'outstanding stateswoman and daughter of the great Indian people widely known in our country and throughout the world'. The joint declaration stated that India and the Soviet Union resolved to continue to develop and strengthen friendly relations in the interests of the peoples of the two countries and international peace. During this visit of Mrs. Gandhi, the Soviet Union offered to set up a 1000 MW nuclear power station in India. The most significant aspect of the visit, however, was the Indian decision to go in for the most modern Soviet weapons technologies. Mrs. Gandhi's decision in 1980 to opt for the West German submarines or the British harrier jump-jets and the
sea-king helicopter had been worrying the Soviets and of
greater concern to Moscow had been the Indian decision to
buy the French Mirage 2000 fighters partly taken to
counter the F-16s sold by the U.S. to Pakistan which could
reach over half of Indian territory. The Soviet alarm
over the Mirage purchase was manifest when in March 1982 a
high-powered military delegation headed by Marshal Ustinov
visited New Delhi. He reportedly offered the T-82 tanks
and licensed production of the MIG-27 ground attack
fighters with the aim of trying to persuade India to drop
the Mirage deal. The Indian decision nevertheless to go
ahead with the Mirage deal did not deter Moscow in its
efforts at convincing India of the advantages of the
Soviet systems. Clearly, the Indian objective during 1980-
82 had been to diversify its arms deals without resorting
to an excessive dependence on Moscow. But soon it was
well perceived that the Soviet Union was the only reliable
source for India's increasing arms needs. During this
visit of Mrs. Gandhi too, was decided to further examine
the possibilities of co-operation in ferrous and non-
ferrous metallurgy, coal and oil, machinery building and
power and to raise the trade turnover by 1.5 to 2 times by
1986. Also expanding co-operation in some key areas of
science and technology were agreed upon. On Afghanistan,
Mrs. Gandhi declared that India had always believed in a
political settlement of problems. She said, 'we believe
there is interference in Afghanistan's affairs. The insurgents are supplied with weapons from outside; and insisted that the problem ought to be viewed in its totality.

Brezhnev left behind a legacy of a strong bond of friendship between India and the Soviet Union. Yuri Andropov who took over as General Secretary of the CPSU on 13 November 1982 assured Mrs.Gandhi that the Soviet Union would continue the friendship with India and perpetuate the course chartered by Brezhnev. The Red Star particularly, paid tribute to New Delhi for its successful foreign policy and greeted India on the eve of the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit which was to be held in New Delhi from 7th March to 11 March 1983^{127}.

The Seventh Non-Aligned Summit was the higher water-mark of Mrs.Gandhi's second term as Prime Minister. In her keynote address to the Summit, Mrs.Gandhi had words of caution for both super powers and an effort was, made to project India's upright position. 'The Non-aligned Movement', Mrs.Gandhi asserted,'is history's biggest peace movement, 'and 'development independence, disarmament and peace' were its steadfast goals^{128}. 'We regard non-interference and non-intervention as basic laws of international behaviour. Yet different types of interventions, open or covert, do take place in Asia, in
Africa, in Latin America. Interference leads to intervention and one intervention attracts another. No single power or group of powers has the justification or moral authority to do so interfere or intervene. You cannot condemn one instance but condone another. Each situation has its origins. Whatever they be, solutions must be political and peaceful. All states must abide by the principle that force or the threat of force will not be used against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state. We hope for early normalcy in Afghanistan\(^\text{129}\). Another issue on which we stand as one is in opposing the intensive militarisation of the Indian Ocean and the nuclearisation of the Diego Garcia base. The LDCs, the NAM and the UN have declared time and again that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace\(^\text{130}\). 'In spite of Ottawa, Cancum and Versailles the dialogue between the developed and developing has not been begun. Only in a few in the North realise that the sustained social and economic development of the South is in its own interest\(^\text{131}\).

In more ways than one, however, the proceedings of the seventh NAM Summit reflected a repetition of NAM Foreign Ministers Conference of 1981. As at the Foreign Minister's meeting, the Soviet concern centred on Afghanistan and Kampuchea. India prevented the former
Cambodian leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk from addressing the Summit and Kampuchea's seat was left vacant. Nevertheless, the draft declaration presented by India was seen by many of the participating delegations as driving the movement in a pro-Soviet direction on Afghanistan, Kampuchea and the Indian Ocean. In the course of the Summit, however, India retreated and the final statement called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and Kampuchea and the resumption of negotiation on the Indian Ocean. It condemned the U.S. fifteen times and criticized the Soviet Union only twice\textsuperscript{132}.

But Moscow was reported to be dissatisfied with Indian performance. As in the past, during the Seventh NAM Summit too Moscow and lobbied strongly to prevent NAM from taking a position hostile to the Soviet Union on Afghanistan. Moscow's expectation of a return for all the past help it had rendered New Delhi, had been in vain. In fact for the Soviet Union, the New Delhi meeting marked a shift from left to centre for the NAM. The Soviet observers believed that India had again yielded too easily to the attacks on the original draft. Yet, the U.S. State Department described the declaration as 'in many respects an unbalanced and polemical document which does not reflect the principles of non-alignment\textsuperscript{133}. It was
observed, that until the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet link had advanced India's influence in the NAM. Since then, even some Indian observers admitted that India paid a political price for the connection and had sought to make plain its dependence on Moscow. It was not surprising that a Soviet analysis of the NAM published in 1986, but probably written much earlier, included India as one of the countries in the political centre of the NAM than on the left. These countries were described as having 'a progressive foreign policy course but being unwilling to openly confront with imperialism'. In the final analysis, one could say that by successfully treading the middle path not only did India thwart the designs of the committed followers of Moscow who sought to convert the NAM into an instrument for Soviet propaganda, but also in the long run made the United States perceive India of being a state with an independent foreign policy.

In continuation with Mrs. Gandhi's policy of buying arms from the Soviet Union the Defence Minister R. Venkataraman visited the Soviet capital in 1983. The Soviet Officials showed him the plans for the MIG 29 Fulcrum and MIG 31 Foxhound which they said would perform better than the F 16s and F 15s. They also offered improved versions of the T-72 and T-80 tanks. At the same time by a combination of diplomatic pressure and the offer
of low prices and easy credit, the Soviets sought to stop India from buying machine guns, TOW missiles and howitzers from the U.S. Secretary of State Shultz of the United States visited New Delhi in July 1983 and expressed American willingness to sell weapons to India. But finally the Soviet efforts prevailed. Obviously, the report that the 'United States clearly hopes to get what it wants in future years through the leverage provided by a military aid'137, restrained India from opting for U.S weapons. After all Iskander Mirza's over-throw by General Ayub and the removal of Bhutto by General Zia were believed to have had U.S. approval. 'This is where those who compare Pakistan's arms relationship with the U.S. with that of India and the Soviet Union fail to understand the crucial difference between the two relationships'138. Mrs.Gandhi, thus came round to the decision to scrap the part of the Mirage deal relating to license production and to go in for the MIGs instead. The Indian Defence Minister and the Foreign Minister visited Moscow in June and September 1983 respectively and signed contracts concerning the MIGs and T-80 tanks. The decision was of immense signification for the MIG 29 was yet to enter the service of the Warsaw Pact allies. The value of the deal was reported as nearly 3 billion139. The MIG 31s were stipulated to enter into service with India almost as soon as they would with the Soviet forces—an unprecedented
situation for Soviet arms transfer. The visit to New Delhi of Ustinov, Gorshkov and Akhromev in March 1984 set the seal on this enhanced Soviet commitment to India's defense. The liberal Soviet offer of advanced technology in arms, to meet India's defense requirement came at a time when otherwise it would have been extremely difficult for the Indian arms forces to maintain an effective combat force. Indeed, the Soviets during this crucial phase had given India almost anything that had been asked for. Apart from combat aircrafts and close air support and helicopters, the Soviets had offered India the entire MIG series besides providing license production and technology transfer.

The Soviets also kept open their offer of heavy water for India, but continued to demand safeguards and refused any supplies of other fuels such as low enriched uranium. Though Moscow was opposed to any further nuclear testing by India, it refused to allow this opposition to affect Soviet-Indian relations. In sum, except in relations to Afghanistan and the NPT, the Soviet Government seemed to be prepared to support Indian foreign policy aims in almost every other sphere.

In December 1983, I.V. Arkhipov led a Soviet delegation to New Delhi to attend the Eighth session of
the Soviet-Indian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation. He was received by the President Zail Singh. The Indian side was headed by the Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao. The session discussed the state of and prospects for Soviet-Indian ties in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, machinery, manufacturing, power, engineering, the coal and petroleum industries and other branches. Specifically, the sides took note of the successful development of cooperation in building the first section of the metallurgical combine at Vishakhapatnam, expanding the production capacity of the metallurgical combines at Bhilai and Bokaro, reconstructing the mill at Burnpur and constructing India's largest power-engineering complex consisting of the Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station and the Nigali Opencut Coal Mine as well as in building other facilities. An agreement was reached on expanding production cooperation between Soviet enterprises and machinery plants built with USSR assistance in Ranchi, Durgapur and Hardwar. The Commission also discussed possible cooperation in constructing a number of new facilities in the fields of electric power engineering and ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy in India as well as guidelines and forms for developing ties in the petroleum and coal industries. The sides expressed satisfaction with the achieved level of Soviet-Indian trade and signed a protocol on trade between
the two countries for 1984 and called for a further increase in volumes of reciprocal deliveries covering a broader range of goods. The commission further endorsed the results of Soviet and Indian research organisations' joint work in implementing the programme of co-operation between the USSR and India in the field of science and technology in 1980-83. A new programme for co-operation in this field in 1984-87 was also signed. The commission also reviewed the progress in the drawing up of basic guidelines for economic, commercial, scientific and technical cooperation between the USSR and India for the period after 1990.

Speaking at the ceremonial signing of the sessions protocol, the Indian Foreign Minister noted that the commission's work had been performed in the spirit of friendship and mutual understanding, characteristic of relations between the two countries. The Minister stressed that economic, scientific and technical ties between India and the Soviet Union have 'bright prospects'. In his statement Arkhipov expressed confidence that the documents signed at the session and the plans outlined would serve the further development of economic, scientific and technical ties between the two countries and the strengthening of Soviet-Indian friendship.
Mrs. Gandhi's last visit to Moscow was in February, 1984, this time to attend the funeral of Andropov. Her talks with Andropov's successor Konstantin Chernenko were extremely cordial and from all intents it appeared that the talks centred on India's defense preparedness. Since the arrival in Pakistan of the first three F-16s of the 40 that the U.S. had pledged to deliver to Pakistan as part of a military and political deal, tension in India had been mounting. According to Soviet information, 'In exchange of military assistance, the U.S. obtained the right to establish on Pakistani soil, bases for which the interventionist Rapid Deployment Force will operate. Pakistan agreed to quarter in Karachi the U.S. Central Command (Centom) for directing military operations in the region'. Thus, the high level military delegation headed by Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Dmitri Ustinov and accompanied by Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, Chief of the Soviet Navy, in March, 1984 was given the full honours of a visiting Chief-of-State. The Ustinov team visited a number of military establishments, including the Nasik aircraft factory, Vishakhapatnam naval establishment, the Avadi tank factory were T-12 tanks were being produced under Soviet licences and the Indian Military Academy. Ustinov offered India a wide variety of updated jet aircrafts, warships, missiles, tanks and electronic surveillance systems to boost India's military power. He declared that 'the current militarisation by Washington of
a number of countries in South Asia, including those in the neighbourhood of peace-loving India, and the build up of U.S. military presence in the Indian Ocean area cannot but arouse legitimate concern of India. The Soviet Union regards with understanding the striving of the Indian Government to strengthen the country's defence capacity. The space flight of a joint Soviet Indian crew in which the Indian cosmonaut Rakesh Sharma joined the Soviet cosmonauts in April 1984 opened yet another new field of cooperation between the two countries.

In the 'eighties politics in the sub-continent was hinged to the issue of Afghanistan. In more ways than one Mrs. Gandhi had reasons to be annoyed with the Soviet action in that hapless country. The fear to India's security had never been so imminent and so real as it became after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. For once India faced the fearsome scenario of being isolated and Pakistan seemed to have seized the initiative with open arms to talk from a position of strength and appeared to be playing at brinkmanship. The liberal and lavish military aid by the United States to Pakistan had let loose a mad arms race in the subcontinent whose consequences seemed frightful and unpredictable. Despite Mrs. Gandhi's best efforts to convince the U.S. of India's non-partisan approach to the Afghan issue and
despite her pleadings to the U.S. to restrain itself in providing arms to Pakistan, the Reagan administration seemed possessed by the 'evil' in the Soviet empire. In such a scenario Mrs. Gandhi found herself in a cul de sac where she would either have to depend on Soviet aid for safeguarding India's security or face the threat of a full blown war with Pakistan which was brandishing its sophisticated armoury acquired from the United States. For the Reagan administration the Dullesian dictum still held good—there could be no two ways in Afghanistan. Since India sought to rationalise and opted for a non-partisan approach Mrs. Gandhi was dubbed a pawn in the hegemonistic game of the Soviet Union. For Mrs. Gandhi, the choice indeed was too difficult, but then, sensing America's commitment to Pakistan being too deep, she decided India should have to fall back upon the reliable ally which had time and again rescued India from distress.