The general elections of 1967 witnessed a Congress, rout in as many as nine states and Mrs. Gandhi, herself held a precarious majority in Parliament. Domestic political constraints she had been facing since 1966 worsened after the elections of 1967. A party in which she felt her position was not secure on account of its being controlled by the elderly 'big bosses', her position as the head of the Government too appeared shaky and unstable. Leading a Government whose important members were years senior to her in age and experience—many of them were her father's colleagues—she found it increasingly difficult to conduct affairs as she would have liked. Her internal political compulsions often inhibited her action both in domestic and foreign affairs. Throughout the 1967–69 period her actions appeared tentative and she seemed particularly vulnerable to pressure in the external sphere. There were instances though, as in the case of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, when she tried to assert herself in Parliament and made it accept her point of view, but such instances were not very frequent. The lurking suspicion of the gradual emergence of an unholy alliance between the right wing opposition and the rightist members of her party, kept her on tenterhooks. Her priority during this early phase of her career as Prime Minister lay in preparing herself for the intense power struggle that was
brewing within the Party and the Government. Her domestic preoccupations prevented her from getting too deeply involved in the intricacies of global politics and exerting herself to the maximum to safeguard India's interest at the international level. In any case, she was left with very little choice, for during this period not only did the United States prove to be very difficult to deal with, the Soviet Union's indifference too, left many in India pondering over the future of Indo-Soviet relations. Mrs. Gandhi showed considerable political sagacity in not turning away from Moscow, but continued with the friendship as India's defense mechanism was still in the process of being modernised with Soviet armament in the face of an increasingly hostile America. Besides, Indo-Soviet trade was too strong an incentive for India to turn away from the Soviet Union.

The bonhomie with the United States had evaporated with America's disastrous involvement in Vietnam which had far reaching consequences at home and abroad. One such consequence was the re-evaluation of America's foreign commitments which were deemed to help the U.S. contain the menace of Communism. U.S. embroilment in Vietnam compelled it to withdraw from areas which were now not considered to be of any strategic importance. America found it difficult to deal with the Third World,
especially the non-white nations in a framework of equality that the international system demanded. It is of some interest to note therefore, that it not only found problems in assigning a place to India, but after 1965, Pakistan was an American ally more in name than in function. For all the talk of an ideological affinity between the 'world's largest democracies', all that the U.S. wanted was a subservient 'poor relative' in the Indian Ocean region, to whom the United States demonstrated its magnanimity by delivering it emergency food aid under the PL-480 scheme. India irritated the United States with its 'special relationship' with the Soviet Union and soon America perceived India to be of not much consequence. By 1969, the fact that U.S. strategic imperatives placed Pakistan in the category of an ally in a global confrontation and India being accorded a low priority, was indication enough that in American perception India was one area which was of little significance to the United States.

Vietnam perhaps best demonstrated Mrs. Gandhi's vulnerability to American pressure. Throughout the late 1960's Mrs. Gandhi adopted an equivocal attitude to the issue. While in 1966 in Washington, she agreed to refrain from publicly criticising the U.S. policies in Southeast Asia, back home she talked of the 'ineptitude' and
'insensitivity', and the racism and brutality displayed by the U.S. in Vietnam. In 1969, when the Nixon administration informed India that it would consider India's upgrading of its representation in Hanoi to ambassadorial level to be an unfriendly act and would retaliate by terminating economic assistance, Mrs. Gandhi delayed sending an ambassador to Hanoi till January, 1972. President Nixon, however, converted India's equivocal stance over Vietnam into a pretext for making Pakistan an 'exception to the arms embargo policy in 1970'.

Her other decision, however, made in February 1968, not to sign the nuclear non proliferation treaty gained for her political credibility in India for upholding India's independence and for taking a principled stand against a discriminatory treaty. In all probability Mrs. Indira Gandhi would have signed the treaty, but for a high powered bureaucratic coalition led by her foreign secretary, T.N. Kaul who read the mood in the Indian Cabinet and the public correctly. In other words, during her initial stint as Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi was actually working along these lines and adopted only those policies which would ensure her position and enhance her party's prestige. During the 1966-69 period Mrs. Gandhi's priority being consolidation
of her base in Indian Politics, it appears quite plausible that perhaps there was not a carefully considered assessment of the national interest governing the entire gamut of the nuclear issue\(^5\). It is difficult to otherwise explain Mrs. Gandhi's cancellation of Shastri's decision in late 1965 to authorise India's atomic energy establishment to actively pursue the development of an Indian nuclear weapon option, in January 1966. The cancellation of the project reversed the scientific and political momentum of test planning. The decision was momentous because had India tested in 1966 even a crude device it could have escaped the pressure of the NPT regime. It could have become a nuclear weapon state in terms of the treaty's language and could have saved India from much subsequent diplomatic pressure by both the West and the Soviet Union to join the Treaty and to reject the Indian nuclear option\(^6\). Nuclear non-proliferation was one major issue where the American and Soviet interests merged. In 1966, the internal situation being too difficult, Mrs. Gandhi probably had no other choice but to bow to American pressure in waiving India's nuclear option. The alternative of a domestic turmoil combined with external pressure and treat would have been too huge a task for her to comprehend during this very critical period. Mrs. Gandhi is not known to be a person who normally bowed to pressure but in the earlier case of
waiving India's nuclear option and in the latter case of not signing the NPT she succumbed to both external and internal pressure for the sole consideration of safeguarding her position.

The idea of the NPT being discriminatory, which later became and continues to be the main plea for India not signing it was mooted by the bureaucracy. As ambassador to the United States, T.N. Kaul challenged the nuclear weapons powers in his press conference addressed to the National Press Club in Washington D.C. He asked the nuclear weapons powers to sign a treaty banning the testing, use, production of nuclear weapons and freezing the existing stockpiles. 'If they would sign it, we would sign it too. In fact we would be the first to sign.' The Washington Post highlighted this point. But, what was witnessed later merely confirmed India's apprehensions—the preamble to the treaty merely paid lip service to nuclear disarmament and despite the talk of NPT, nuclear arsenals of respective nuclear powers were on the rise.

Kuldip Nayar, a noted Indian journalist explained India's stance on the NPT more explicitly when he stated India's objection was that the treaty sought only to prevent the non-nuclear countries from acquiring or manufacturing nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices while permitting the existing nuclear countries to develop
and stockpile more weapons—they were free to proliferate weapons and their nuclear reactors and facilities were immune from international inspection and safeguards. Furthermore, the treaty prohibited non-nuclear countries from developing explosive devices for peaceful purposes. The sponsors of the treaty contended that a nuclear explosive device was indistinguishable from a nuclear weapon. India felt, however, that distinction could and should be made between explosive devices that were used for testing weapons.

In 1968, unlike the United States, the Soviet Union did not seem as vociferous in its demand for signing the NPT. One plausible reason for the Soviets being unable or even unwilling to put considerable pressure on India to sign the NPT was that Moscow had gravely compromised its position in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

For Mrs. Gandhi, the period between 1967-68 remained one of trials and tribulations which consumed her energy in coming to grips with the domestic political scene which showed no sign of improvement. Her preoccupation being essentially internal, Mrs. Gandhi adopted a low-key, low-profile approach to foreign affairs or perhaps she even lacked the will to exert herself to the maximum to
put forth India's viewpoints in a proper perspective with the superpowers. India during this period merely tried to maintain a balance between the two superpowers with neither of them showing any special concern for India.

What actually caused concern to India and compounded Mrs. Gandhi's problems was the Soviet attitude of indifference which was in sharp contrast to the exuberance of the Nehru era. Particularly, during the general elections of 1967, the Soviet Press, which had hitherto shown no exaggerated concern for India's internal political development resorted to open anti-India propaganda through Radio Peace and Progress. Besides personally attacking the right-wing leaders of the Congress, the broadcasts blatantly supported the left opposition in the elections. The Communist Party of India which had always been cautioned by Moscow to support the ruling Indian National Congress, in keeping with its policy of supporting bourgeoisie-democratic Governments in the third world, was advised an aggressive stance vis-a-vis the right-dominated Congress party. In fact, the Communist (Marxist) dominated Governments that came to power in Kerala and West Bengal were welcomed as barriers against the danger of right-wing reaction. In May 1967, the building of a united left-front was put forward as the duty of every patriot, of every democratic party, while the communists were described as the genuine defenders of
the interests the working people. Even Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet was considered as a coalition of the ruling party's centrist and rightist elements. Protests of the Indian Government to the Soviet Union for interfering in the internal affairs of India were disowned by Moscow on the ground that broadcasts emanating from Radio Peace Progress were by a private and independent organisation and not an official concern.

The Soviet Union viewed the Indian political and economic scene to have undergone a great change in its ideological content. But perhaps as a justification for non-intervention in the client third world states, the Brezhnev leadership refrained from any direct interference in India, and the emphasis in Soviet pronouncement was soon on the lengthy timetable that would be required for the new states to achieve the heights of socialism. As Brezhnev himself put it in his address marking the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth, 'the path toward socialist development in the third world was not likely to be an immediate or direct one. 'In his opinion 'this road of development' as Lenin said, 'must include a whole series of gradual and preliminary stages of special transitional measures.' It was further stated that the forcible implementation of one country's will upon another was not only alien to Marxism-Leninism, but worse, it could lead
to thermonuclear war. The people's socialist countries should concentrate their main efforts on the building of socialism and communism in their own countries, for this was their chief contribution to and the decisive precondition for development of the liberation movement. This explicit recognition of the complex and extended nature of social change in the third world, was a far cry from the confident optimism concerning the prospects for rapid development toward socialism that had characterised the Khrushchev years.

Given the enormity of Soviet interests in India, the current Soviet view, however, was highly critical of the Indian leadership due to a growing polarisation of class forces and a general deviation from the original internal and external policies. Prof. R. Uljanovsky, Deputy Head of the International Department of the Soviet Central Committee, tagged India with Pakistan and rated it much below most newly independent African countries in its revolutionary content. He was particularly critical of the functioning of the state sector which he said was gradually being converted into a means of speeding up the development of privately owned industrial capitalism. The effect of this and other retrograde tendencies, he elaborated were against the 'concept of a progressive Indian foreign policy which in turn would affect friendly
relations with the Soviet camp. A very critical analysis of the socio-economic alignments in India appeared in an article in International Affairs, which pointed towards a radical shift within the system of Indian big business and in the Indian monopolies who had severely extended their control over vital sectors of the Indian economy and who in co-operation with Western monopoly capital were putting pressure on the Government to abandon its progressive policies. While praising the projects funded and aided by the Soviet Union, another New Times article criticised the Congress Party in India for its 'inconsistent and hesitant' approach to agrarian problems opening way to an onslaught of the right, its recourse to foreign, that is, American aid in food emergencies, and its record as instanced by the list of disturbances of arousing popular discontent and sharpening social conflict.

In 1967, differences between the two countries were no longer confined to a few political issues only. The much publicized Indo-Soviet economic relations too, came under severe strain. Difficulties and differences surfaced on the issue of trade and on the development of a favourable trade balance for India. From the Indian point of view, however, Soviet economic aid was held in the highest esteem. Economic relations between the two
countries which began since the mid-1950s had been growing rapidly. It was the basic orientation of the Soviet economic aid that was so vital for India since it was directed towards the public sector. Besides, Soviet Union projected an image of aid without strings and this was what India advocated in international forums when it spoke of international economic cooperation. The most important aspect of Soviet economic aid was the barter trade which was a standard aspect of Soviet economic relations with developing countries which were chronically short of free foreign exchange and export markets. Efforts were made to keep imports and exports balanced. The turnover of trade between India and the Soviet Union had increased immensely from about Rupees one and a half crores in 1951 to about 176 crores in 1965\textsuperscript{21}. Mrs. Gandhi remarked 'Economic relations with the Soviet Union are easier for us since we pay them through the export of our commodities. This mode of payment makes the Soviet credits self-liquidating\textsuperscript{22}'.

Problems actually arose when a favourable trade balance for India began to surface in 1964 and had reached the figure of 210 million rupees in 1967\textsuperscript{23}. This trend was expected to continue in view of the fact that with the growth of an important industrial infrastructure, Indian needs for capital equipment had significantly declined which till then were met by the Soviet Union.
India's new demand for commodities like fertilizers, newsprint, industrial raw material and non-ferrous metals could not be met by Soviet Union. But Soviet Union insisted upon the fact that India must continue to buy from her in order to balance the trade and payments between the two countries. The controversy over buying the Soviet TU-134 for domestic Indian air services demonstrated the differences that had surfaced between New Delhi and Moscow. While Moscow insisted that such an aircraft would be advantageous to India by virtue of her being allowed to pay in rupees, it would further help in reestablishing a balance of trade and payments between the two countries. India was reluctant to accept the offer of the Soviet aircraft on account of its high operating and maintenance costs. Hence India declined the offer and finally opted for one of the western aircrafts. The decision was delicate indeed, for the political fall out of the decision was none too encouraging for India. Moscow was now hesitant to conclude an agreement to buy 54,000 railway wagons from India.

There were difficulties also in some other projects set up by Moscow. Some of them were ill equipped, while there was a lack of demand for others which were in the field. The Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. was a case in point, which incurred a loss from the very outset.
because of faulty equipment, rising costs, designs unsuitable for Indian conditions and delays in delivery. During his January 1968 visit to India, Kosygin indicated his concern for the poor performance of some Soviet sponsored projects and called for greater efficiency.

In December 1968 a high powered Soviet delegation led by Chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations, Skachkov visited India with the intention of looking into the USSR's lagging projects in India. Several of the completed heavy engineering plants were operating far below capacity and a number of incomplete projects required further Soviet technical co-operation, including assistance in fulfilling production targets and planning new lines of production. Skachkov was reported to have told India to pay more attention to quality standards, so as to increase the export potential, to raise labour productivity through bonus incentives and to strive for greater co-ordination among ministries responsible for public sector projects. Though his visit did not imply an actual crisis in the Soviet aid programme, there were, nevertheless reports that he was 'brusque' in his meeting with Indian officials and that he recommended, further nationalisation particularly in the steel industry and demanded greater efficiency in the working of the projects. His forthright comments were indicative of not only strong Soviet displeasure over
Indian functioning but they were substantial enough to lead to reports that further Soviet aid would be discontinued until these projects started functioning smoothly and at capacity.29

At an article in the American Quarterly Review questioned the strategy of Soviet development aid and its boosting of the public sector in third world countries. It has, for example, been pointed out that Soviet aid to the public sector of India's steel industry resulted in the production and sale of steel at a subsidized price. However, most of the fabricating plants which benefitted from both Indian and Soviet subsidies on the steel they used, were privately owned. Thus Soviet contribution to India's economy, squeezed out of a still modest Soviet standard of living were indirectly promoting the expansion of the private sector of the Indian economy.

To Skachkov's recommendation for nationalising more industries, even some Soviet commentators suggested that it was unwise for a developing country to nationalise foreign or local enterprises prematurely. If the local Government is then unable to operate the nationalised firms effectively, its hasty action may actually discredit the ideal of socialism by identifying inefficiency with public ownerships and good management with private
ownership. In any case, these economic realists pointed out, both the nationalising of existing plants and the planning of new enterprises must be based upon careful preliminary studies of the availability of raw materials and markets, of the cost of production, of probable contributions to the country's foreign exchange balance and requirements of sound and profitable management, rather than on a hasty emotional decision to plunge down the road of nationalisation regardless of the cost.

It is apparent from the above analysis that the Soviet leadership tended to overlook the basic structure of the Indian economy, which though put a great emphasis on the public sector, did not intend neglecting private enterprise. Any hasty decision of nationalisation would inevitably have been detrimental to Indian interests particularly at a time when India depended on the emergency food aid from the U.S.
In February 1967, the Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces Marshal Zakharov, accompanied by senior officers of the Soviet Army and Air Force came to India. After a customary meeting with the Chiefs of Staff of all three branches of the Indian armed forces, India's defense requirements were discussed. The meeting however, turned out to be a show of Soviet concern for filling the vacuum in the Indian Ocean zone after the withdrawal of the British from the east of the Suez by 1971. Speculating an American entry the Soviets tried to preempt the American move by demanding naval bases in the Laccadive and Andamans, where Soviet naval ships could cruise. Kosygin specifically made the request to Mrs. Gandhi during her Moscow visit of November 1967, which she refused to grant.

Kosygin's January 1968 visit to New Delhi, apart from other political engagements concentrated on the needs for a strong Indian Navy. Unable to obtain bases for the Soviet Navy in Indian islands, Kosygin made a plea for the building up of the Indian navy with strong Soviet backing as in his opinion the strategic importance of India would be greatly enhanced with the proposed withdrawal of the British from the Indian Ocean zone. As an inducement to India the Soviet Union appeared more than willing to provide India with 100 SU-7 fighter bombs to bolster her
air defence. Besides, it also provided India a fleet of 4 submarines to strengthen the Indian Navy. In February 1968, the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy admiral Sergei Gorshkov accompanied by senior naval officers came to India to discuss the Soviet assistance to expand the Indian Navy.

The only concession India granted was shore and repair facilities to the Soviet Navy, but not for setting up Soviet naval bases on Indian Ocean islands, as desired by the Soviet Union. Mrs. Gandhi and Foreign Minsiter Swaran Singh were categorical that no bases were granted to the Soviet Union. India's objectives of keeping the Indian Ocean zone free from super power rivalry was too obvious to allow the Soviets naval bases in the Indian Ocean. In this context, K. Subramanyam's analysis was most appropriate when he said it is necessary for the people of this country to clearly recognise that the Soviet military assistance to India has a very strong element of Soviet self interest in it. The Soviet arms assistance is based on a recognition of theirown vital interest in this part of the world and therefore it is not necessary for India to offer any quid pro quo by way of operational facilities for Soviet vessels on Indian ports. The aspect appears to be fully recognised by the Indian policy makers.
Soviet vessels could use the facilities of Indian ports on the same terms as the navies of all friendly countries i.e. a peaceful mission and prior permission of the Indian authorities. In 1968, the Soviet Union offered India non-military forms of co-operation on the sea, like a fishing agreement similar to the one concluded between the Soviet Union and Pakistan. But India declined the offer. Subsequently India also turned down Soviet proposals to combine Soviet trawlers with Indian crews for deep sea fishing off the coast of India.

Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia put India in a difficult spot. This was one issue where it was difficult to explain whether India's views converged with or diverged from those of the Soviet Union. Senior members of Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet like the Deputy Prime Minister, Morarji Desai and the Communications Minister Ram Subhag Singh along with the non-communist opposition demanded an outright condemnation of the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia on the ground that the Soviet Union and its allies had violated the United Nations' charter. Mrs. Gandhi, however, tried to blunt the edge of Indian criticism when the term 'invasion' was avoided in Parliament and a censure of Moscow was not resorted to.
The Government was vehemently criticised for its failures in foreign policy revealed by its 'timidity' in dealing with Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Indian indictment of the Soviet action was all too apparent for the Russians to overlook. Mrs. Gandhi's statement in Parliament was far too strong than the initial Indian position had been on the Hungarian crisis in 1956. Mrs.Gandhi stated, 'our relations with the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria are closer and many sided. We value these friendships and wish to preserve and extend them. However, we cannot but give expression to our anguish at the events in Czechoslovakia. I am sure I reflect the opinion of the House when I express the hope that the forces which have entered Czechoslovakia will be withdrawn at the earliest possible moment and the Czechoslovakian people will be able to determine their own future according to their own wishes. In order not to hurt Soviet feelings further she observed: provocative language gained nothing...after all political realities remain and a Government cannot be swept away by emotions. Moscow's sensitivity and displeasure over this Indian stance was conveyed to India during the September visit of the Deputy foreign Minister Firyubin. Though the west would have liked India to be more forthcoming in its reprimand of Moscow, Mrs.Gandhi deliberately did not allow an extreme posture to be taken.
over an issue which had little direct impact on India's interests. In the Security Council India supported all operative clauses of the resolution that favoured self determination, the withdrawal of foreign troops and the restoration of the territorial integrity and political independence of Czechoslovakia. But India refused to 'condemn' the Soviet action and instead wanted the resolution to be changed to 'deplore'. Unable to have the operative word of the U.S. sponsored resolution changed from 'condemn' to 'deplore' India abstained on the vote. If the U.S. pressure on India in 1966 led to the resignation of the then Finance Minister T.T. Krishnamachari, Indian equivocation at the UN led to the resignation of Mrs. Gandhi's Planning Minister Asoka Mehta in 1968. Frequent references were made by Indian political leaders and journalists to India's critical military dependence on the Soviet Union, which was but a fact and indeed in 1968 'India lacked the power to oppose both super powers at the same time.

Soviet annoyance was reflected in the 'generous cartographic concessions to China', where Soviet maps showed disputed areas of Aksai Chin and NEFA as belonging to China. This act of the Soviet Union was unfair to India particularly when New Delhi had accepted Moscow's version of the Sino-Soviet border.
taken up with Firyubin, he remained 'generally evasive and non-committal' by saying the complaint would be 'looked into'. The Statesmen observed that the Soviet attitude at the Indo-Soviet bilateral talks held in Delhi in 1968 was that of an imperial power dealing with a dependency. It did not even observe the elementary diplomatic courtesy as they brushed aside one Indian query after another, and studiously refused to offer satisfaction to the host country on any matter of direct concern to her.

However, the issue that evoked instant and spontaneous reaction in India, was over the Soviet decision in 1968 to supply weapons to Pakistan. Ever since the U.S. military cut off to Pakistan in 1965, it had been angling for Soviet military assistance. Its logic was simple—if the Soviet Union wished to keep the balance even in the subcontinent, it had either to stop its military assistance to India or undertake a similar programme with Pakistan. Ayub Khan's visit to the Soviet Union in September 1967 set the ball in motion and the Soviet decision to supply arms to Pakistan was conveyed during Premier Kosygin's first ever visit to that country in April, 1966. Moscow's willingness to supply arms to Pakistan was conditioned by the Pak closure of the U.S. spying base at Peshawar and a grant of refuelling and other facilities to the Soviet Navy in Pakistani ports.
Prior to Kosygin's visit in March 1968, Vice Admiral Smirnov, Deputy Chief of the Soviet Navy, visited Pakistan for exploring the possibilities of using the ports of Gwadur in the Persian Gulf and Chittagong on the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal. Pakistan complied with the Soviet request by closing down the US spying base at Peshwar in May 1968 in accordance with its policy of developing bilateral relations on the basis of friendship and mutual understanding with all countries including the Soviet Union. Yahya Khan's June 1968 visit to Moscow was the occasion for granting port facilities to the Soviet Navy. Kosygin, thereupon announced the Soviet decision to supply arms to Islamabad. 'While earlier, minor consignments to Pakistan included army jeeps and trucks and a few helicopters, the latest decision provided Pakistan with MIG jets, IL 28 bombers, tanks and guns. Pakistan's gratitude was evident in its abstention on the Security Council Resolution on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet decision came in for the sharpest possible criticism by both the left and the right opposition parties in India. Soviet assurance to the contrary, notwithstanding, Moscow's sincerity in retaining its traditional warmth for India came to be seriously doubted. The Jan Sangh leader A.B. Vajpayee
questioned Soviet assurances on the premise that when the U.S. itself could not prevent Pakistan from using American arms against India, what guarantee could prevent Pakistan from using Soviet weapons against India. The pro-Soviet Communist Party of India was also taken aback by this 'sudden and rather objectionable shift in Soviet policy in favour of a state that continued to remain a member of SEATO and the CENTO'. The General Secretary of the CPI, Rajeshwara Rao declared 'we are against any which jeopardises the security of our country'. The CPI(M), attacked the Soviet policy in its mouthpiece People's Democracy, saying that the old days of exclusive Soviet-Indian friendship are gone for ever.

Mrs. Gandhi's annoyance was apparent when she stated 'we are not happy' (with the Soviet decision). Yet, she prudently made it clear that Indian foreign policy would not undergo any change. President Zakir Hussain's impending trip to Moscow was not cancelled, on the contrary, the President made a serious effort in Moscow to impress upon the Soviet leadership the difficulty and the tension to which India was being subjected on account of the recent Soviet shift in policies. The Soviet leadership, however, came out with hackneyed phrases like friendship with India would continue, Moscow would not let Pakistan use the arms against India, the establishment of Soviet influence in Pakistan were in India's interests.
since that influence would be used to restrain Pakistan and finally, the arms were modest in scope. It was not the quantum of arms supplied to Pakistan that was serious, but it was the very change in the attitude of Moscow that caused concern to the Government of India. A rift within the Congress Parliamentary Party seemed imminent when Morarji Desai questioned the very 'soundness' and the 'relevance' of the Indo-Soviet relations. Mrs. Gandhi herself observed 'that the Government had been noticing a shift in Soviet thinking ever since the Tashkent agreement. In her statement she showed considerable concern to this 'further accretion of strength to Pakistan', for it would' inevitably accentuate tension in the sub continent and add to our responsibilities in regard to the defense and security of our country. She further stated that though the Soviet Union was entitled to form its own judgment as to where its interests lay and how to promote them, yet India was bound to express her misgivings and apprehensions to the Soviet leaders in all frankness. Without questioning either the motives or the good faith of the Soviet Union, she emphasized that 'we are convinced that this development cannot promote the cause of peace and stability in the subcontinent. She, however, refrained from adopting a resolution deploring the Soviet action for
two reasons—Parliament had not passed a resolution in 1954 when the United States decided to supply arms to Pakistan and more importantly the Government's reaction to the Soviet move had been conveyed already.

This, rather low keyed reaction of the Indian Government was interpreted by the West as evidence of India's being under the spell of Moscow. But for India, with its critical dependence on Soviet Union for its military and economic needs, its lack of options were too evident to allow it to distance itself from Moscow.

India's resentment over Soviet attitude was nevertheless reflected in its policy towards Vietnam. India was unwilling to go as far as Soviet Union wanted in condemning U.S. policies in Vietnam. India maintained the position by declaring that peace could only be restored in Vietnam by a political settlement and India, in fact, looked to Soviet Union for genuine peace initiatives in the Indo-China region. But far more significant at this period, which hit Moscow at its tenderest spot were Indian overtures to China. Soviet insensitivity to Indian concerns regarding its military aid to Pakistan activated the Indian foreign office to look for options which could make Soviet Union feel India's importance for its strategic needs. After having failed to convince Moscow
that Pakistan needed no more 'arms than it already had from the United States and China, Mrs. Gandhi tried to break the 'one way street' approach in Moscow's dealings with New Delhi. The most effective way to do so was to play the China card. Reaction in Moscow was instant and it exposed Soviet vulnerability. Eiryubin, for example, became highly, critical of India's desire to resume dialogue with China. China's willingness to improve relations with India were testified by Mrs. Gandhi's and Mao's recently exchanged tentative overtures to peace. The famous Mao's smile episode during the May Day celebrations in Peking when Mao reportedly smiled at the Indian Charge de' Affairs was given wide publicity in India. Mrs. Gandhi herself took the 'initiative in instructing officials in Peking, Cairo and particularly D.P. Dhar in Moscow and probably in some other capitals too, to enter into discussions with respective Chinise Ambassadors for a prospective improvement of Sino-Indian relations. In January, 1969, Mrs. Gandhi even offered to resume border talks with China with no preconditions. According to A.K. Damodaran, Brijesh Mishra, the then Charge de' Affairs in Beijing was of the opinion that had Mrs. Gandhi's advisors been a bit more responsive to Chinese gestures, Indira Gandhi would have been more than willing to speed up relations with China. It seems probable that Mrs. Gandhi's advisors were more inclined to uphold the
Soviet connection rather than befriend China.

The political group opposed to any serious understanding with China was of the view that all Chinese overtures had been 'cosmetic' in nature and there never was any basic change in the Chinese attitude towards India. Even the much talked of Mao's smile was not given much credence by this group. With the wisdom of hindsight, this view seems more credible since Chinese gestures towards India were made keeping in view China's fast deteriorating relations with Soviet Union. It was specifically aimed at neutralising India during a probable clash between the Soviet Union and China. In fact, during the initial phase of the Sino-Soviet border clash in March 1969, Mrs. Gandhi remained publicly silent. By 1970 it had become apparent however, that China had been pursuing two parallel lines of approach in its dealings with India. Line I of this policy sought to normalise relations with India through friendly discussions while Line II encouraged insurgency in Nagaland and Mizoram apart from the fact that it gave arms to Pakistan and open and vocal support to its claim in Kashmir. Before long, it was evident that China had opted for the second course when all discussions between Indian and Chinese officials were suspended amidst overwhelming developments in the erstwhile East Pakistan.
What is important during this period (1967-69) from the Indian point of view was the Indian will to demonstrate its regained confidence by trying to correct the distortion in the power hierarchy in the region that had crept in as a result of the conflicts with China and Pakistan during 1962-65. The indication of this restlessness was evident, though, in a small way, in a couple or border skirmishes with China in 1967 and 1969 in the Nathula and the Thagla regions. These skirmishes were essentially aimed at conveying the message that Indian Military preparedness was of a much higher calibre than one would have imagined and in any case its military potential was of a much higher order than it had been in either 1962 or 1965. Thus, India, too had been pursuing a two pronged policy towards the Chinese which could be altered according to the Chinese response. In any case, India's flirtations with China did not quite impress Moscow and Indian reference to the desirability of resuming her dialogue with China was highly disturbing to Soviet Union, which by this time was in need of strong allies to back it up in the event of a possible Chinese attack on its borders.

The Sino Soviet clash along the Ussuri river in the north-east as well as in the south-west sector of their common border during March 1969 made it imperative for Moscow to look for stable, reliable allies in South Asia
and though relations with New Delhi had been visibly strained, Moscow still clung to its policy of trying to wean Pakistan away from China. The Tashkent spirit which was all but dead was still being invoked by Moscow in its misconceived zeal for bringing together India and Pakistan. Soviet Union had apparently learnt no lessons from the failure of the earlier American policy in the subcontinent when the United States had tried to balance India and Pakistan with itself at the vertex. Indian anxieties were heightened during the first half of 1969 when Kosygin visited Pakistan and through a communique issued after the visit, stated that the Soviet—Pakistan relations were not aimed against any third country. During his March visit to Pakistan, the Soviet Defence Minister's reported statement 'Pakistan needed to be strengthened against its enemies', along with the supply of submarines for the Pakistan navy, accentuated India's apprehensions. Besides, Soviet persistence with the publication in the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia of 1969 of the erroneous maps in the NEFA and the Aksai Chin region, continued to bother Indian leadership. Soviet strategy seemed all too evident—a probable success with Pakistan would have left India with no option but to depend on Moscow on its terms. India's failure to attract the attention of United States, particularly after Nixon's enunciation of the Guam Doctrine in which he stated the
U.S. intention of reducing its commitments in Asia after American withdrawal from Vietnam, virtually left India without a friend in the region. Mrs. Gandhi's repeated cautioning to Soviet Union against escalation of arms supplies to Pakistan seemed to have no effect on Soviet leaders and Defence Minister Swaran Singh admitted in the Lok Sabha that he had failed to convince the Soviet Defence Minister on the inherent dangers of the policy of Soviet arms supplies to Pakistan. Ironically enough it was Pakistan which virtually bailed India out of this situation when it unequivocally indicated its deep-seated attachment with China which prevented it from adopting an anti-Chinese stance for the satisfaction of Moscow. Having gained very little by was of influence in Pakistan against China, as Kosygin thought he could by using his Tashkent success, Soviet Union now sought to safeguard its position in the larger subcontinental power. The risk of losing Indian goodwill in south Asia without having gained any success with Pakistan seemed pointless to Moscow. Thus, was initiated a process of Soviet wooing of India that culminated with the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971.

During his visit to India in March 1969, the Soviet Defence Minister Grechko sought to establish a nexus between the Sino-Soviet border clash on the Ussuri and the
Sino-Indian territorial problems, indicating a common threat from China. Grechko's mission was aimed at impressing upon Indian leaders the seriousness of the threat to all South Asian nations from China and particularly India which had an unsettled border dispute with China. The initial silence of the Indian Government to the issue of the Sino-Soviet border clash was broken by Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh who stated in Parliament that the Government supports the Soviet stand for upholding respect for historically formed frontiers and for the non-use of force for settling bilateral questions.  

The April 1969 letter of Mrs. Gandhi to Kosygin made a pointed reference to the fact that Moscow's efforts to maintain a parity between India and Pakistan was wrong, for India was much larger a country with wider commitments, and that the Soviet arms aid to Pakistan would only make it more intransigent. Kosygin's 1969 visit to India was futile in the sense that despite his reassurances on the intent of the Soviet-Pakistan relationship, which would in no way endanger Indo-Soviet relations or diminish their importance for one another, Mrs. Gandhi maintained, that there was no way Moscow could wean Pakistan away from China. The Kosygin visit did nothing in the way of improving the strained relations between India and Soviet Union, on the contrary the Chinese interpreted
this visit as a provocation against her in the formation of an anti-Chinese alliance. The Chinese speculations seemed justified since Kosygin's visit essentially was aimed at securing a firm commitment from India against China.

The apprehension of losing Indian goodwill probably made Kosygin lead a high level delegation on an unexpected visit to New Delhi in May 1969 to attend President Zakir Hussain's funeral. It seems likely that Kosygin making a speech after the funeral, which was never published in India, in his exuberance made an 'enormous mistake', by pledging that if ever India was threatened, Russia would help. In other words, he offered India a treaty relationship in 1969, and two years later when India needed a strong card of great power backing, the Soviet Union could hardly demur at a treaty initiated by itself. R.C. Horn sees 'a strong evidence that points to a significant alteration in the Soviet—Indian relationship in 1969 which can be attributed to this meeting. Implicit Indian support against the Chinese was only forthcoming in late April 1969, most likely as an inducement to Moscow to rethink its policy towards Pakistan.

Though one of Mrs. Gandhi's closest advisors P.N.Haksar refuses any knowledge of this 'alleged secret
treaty, both T.N. Kaul and A.K. Damodaran have made references to the offer of such a treaty by Kosygin to Mrs. Gandhi. Mr. Kaul's claim that there were 'only minor changes' to the original draft of 1969 which was eventually signed in 1971 clearly implies that the offer was indeed made. Mr. Damodaran is more forthcoming, for he believes that despite differences Mrs. Gandhi at this point of time had developed a bit of a personal rapport with Kosygin who had been visiting India frequently in the near past, and he very clearly conveyed the message that whenever India wanted a treaty with the Soviet Union, the latter would be ready to offer one. It seems probable that Mrs. Gandhi was contemplating the offer and had not disclosed her mind except to those very close and immediate advisors like T.N. Kaul. Hence, perhaps Mr. Hakkar had no personal knowledge of the treaty offer. Madhu Limaye, a leading member of the Opposition is of the opinion that Mrs. Gandhi did not accept the Offer in 1969 as she did not think it necessary to do so, there was no strategic need for a treaty at that point of time.

Moreover, she was then involved in a bitter power struggle within her own party and the Government's fiasco at the Rabat (Islamic) Conference for which she was bitterly criticized in Parliament, made her adopt a deliberately low profile instead of taking the drastic step of signing a treaty with the Soviet Union. Besides, it would not
only have alienated China further, it would virtually have made India a Soviet surrogate. Most importantly, it would have been a severe blow to the Non-Aligned Movement when it was bracing up for the Lusaka Summit of 1970.

Despite the offer of the treaty, the Soviet Union, convinced of its long term strategic gains, continued wooing Pakistan. Foreign Minister Gromyko's statement to the Supreme Soviet in July, 1969 that, 'there is a readiness on the part of both side Pakistan and Soviet Union— to exert further efforts to coordinating mutual friendly...... and developing cooperation in the economic, cultural and other spheres in future too', was an evidence of Soviet indulgence to Pakistan. But Pakistan's unequivocal pledge of support for China and the growing possibility of a Sino-American thaw in 1969 greatly increased the danger to Soviet security. Kremlin's reassessment of its South Asia policy made it revert back to the Khrushchevian ideas of keeping of Moscow's charm with New Delhi.
Throughout the late 1960s India's commitment to the Non-aligned Movement remained steadfast and showed no signs of being diluted. It was on the cover of non-alignment that India refused to endorse Soviet proposals for a collective security system in Asia. Invoking the objectives of the NAM, India conveyed its scepticism to Soviet moves in the Indian Ocean. From the Soviet point of view, however, as the Soviet Indian relations developed, a major aim of the Soviet Union was to secure Indian backing for Soviet positions in global forums. The support of India, world's largest democracy, was seen in Moscow as important for both practical and propaganda reasons. But Mrs. Gandhi's contention that 'foreign policy must be determined by hard-headed analysis of international affairs and events and 'at all times this analysis has to be devoid of emotions and sentiments', gave a clear indication of India not being a pliant tool in the hands of Soviet Union. Yet, Mrs. Gandhi also stated, 'we must have a certain amount of flexibility and manoeuvrability, but it must be consistent with national interest and honour and we cannot manoeuvre or change were basic conditions and basic ideals, aims and objectives are concerned'. Perhaps the finest assessment of New Delhi's position was made by Henry Kissinger when he said, 'If New Delhi tilts at a specific time towards one or the other super power, the
step is solely tactical, and intended to fulfil the needs of a particular situation. Mrs. Gandhi spoke in the same ideological tones as did Jawaharlal Nehru, but she had a better understanding of the harsh realities of international power politics which led President Nixon to regard her as a cold-blooded practitioner of power politics.'  

After a gap of six years a Summit of the Non-aligned was to be held at Lusaka in 1970. Unlike the all out support given to the movement in 1961 during the Belgrade Summit, no such enthusiasm was forthcoming from Moscow on the eve of the Lusaka Summit. The fear of criticism of Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 put the Russians on the defensive and prevented them from encouraging the convening of the Non Aligned Summit in 1970. Moreover, the Middle Eastern crisis of 1967 had clearly demonstrated that no ceasefire in the region could be enforced through any number of resolutions by the non-aligned in the Security Council as long as the two super powers did not give their stamp of approval. In other words, where Soviet Union could act on its own, it refused to take into partnership the non-aligned group of states. Thus the Middle Eastern crisis was defused primarily through the moderating influence of the two super powers on the belligerents and not because of any
Soviet respect for the non-aligned group's resolution in the Security Council. It is interesting to observe that the Soviet Union remained strongly opposed to the idea of the non-aligned movement forming a third force. This was evident from the Soviet rejection of the idea of the non-aligned as a 'third force' between the great Powers. Moscow put forth the argument that the decision of the non-aligned states at the 1961 Belgrade Conference against the formation of a bloc remained binding. Evidently, Moscow's encouragement of the non-aligned group during the early 1960s and then during the 1970s war purely motivated by tactical considerations rather than any involvement of principle. Hence the non-aligned group was encouraged from time to time to adopt a political programme which would conform with Soviet strategic interests in the third world.

Though the Algiers non-aligned summit later endorsed detente, during the late 1960's and even in the early 1970's detente did not find favour with most non-aligned states including India. Super power detente apart from having greatly decreased the comparative significance of major non-aligned states like India, had also contrary to the expectations of the non-aligned, failed to enhance the security of the weaker third world states. The Lusaka summit noted that the tendency towards
detente had not yet contributed to the security of the small, medium sized and developing countries or prevented the danger of local wars. The Summit concluded that the arms race acted at a spur to limited wars and the support among the non-aligned for the Chinese point of view that the Soviet Union was colluding with the West to freeze the status quo in the third world in exchange for strategic understanding at the super power level, began to gain credibility. In fact, the Soviet policy of detente with the West was considered by the Chinese as indicative of yet another aspect of its 'hegemonistic policy'. Similarly, agreements for arms control between the U.S. and the Soviet Union were looked upon as providing a camouflage for further arms expansion and war. The Peking Review observed that though Moscow engaged in disarmament and arms control discussion, its real intention was to disarm the people of other countries, both psychologically and militarily, and thus submit them to its 'pressure and manipulation'. The fact that Moscow had not renounced the idea that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons had an adverse impact on the third world non-aligned countries. Hence nuclear non-proliferation remained a point of disagreement between the Soviet Union and many non-aligned countries including India. Moscow therefore had to recognize that the perceived national interests of several members of the
non-aligned group continued to prevent the emergence of a consensus among them on the non-proliferation issue. The Lusaka non-aligned summit of 1970 did not endorse the NPT and subsequent non-aligned conferences have refrained from doing so.

The non-aligned group of states and India particularly were keen to keep the Indian Ocean Zone free from super power rivalry. The Indian Ocean was to be denied to Moscow for its proposed encirclement of China more so because its very presence there would make it vulnerable to nuclear attacks from American submarines located in the Arabian Sea region, endangering thereby the security of all littoral states. The policy of keeping the Indian Ocean a 'zone of peace' and a 'nuclear weapons free area' was also supported by the Chinese as that would have prevented the Indian Ocean from becoming a site of military bases and a scene of great power competition. From the Indian point of view, however, the Soviet conducted of tentative probes for military access in South Asia in 1969 after a warming up in Soviet-Pakistan relations by which the USSR was willing to help Pakistan construct a naval base for submarines at Kwadar near the Pakistan-Iranian border and the developing of Iranian naval base at Chah Bahar was a disturbing development. In India, this Soviet move was interpreted as a counter to
India's refusal to offer bases to the Soviet navy. The project, however, was eventually dropped, but reports appeared in the Western press in the early 1970s of Soviet use of Indian port facilities, especially the naval base at Vishakhapatnam. In reality, the USSR may have hoped for but did not ask for bases, but only sought limited facilities for berthing and recreation. This has remained so despite close Indo-Soviet military links which developed during the 1970s.

During the closing years of the 1960s, though the American loss of face in Vietnam gave an added prestige to the Socialist bloc, yet by no means had it brought about an actual increase in objective Soviet capabilities. The most important effect of the American defeat in the war in Vietnam, occurred more in the internal political situation in the U.S. than in any real shifting of the global balance of power in favour of the Soviet Union. the economic strain of conducting the war as reflected in an 'inflated federal budget and increased tax burdens' led American public opinion by the late 1960s to oppose not merely the war in Vietnam but the entire foreign policy course that had resulted in American participation in the war. Though the achievement of strategic parity with the United States was an essential pre-condition for Soviet-American detente, yet, however, the soviet concern
was magnified by the conviction that in spite of its reduced weight in the post war world, the U.S. remained inarguably the greatest global, if not also the strategic power\textsuperscript{82}. If the American economy got a drubbing in Vietnam, the USSR had no spectacular achievement to boast of, either. In fact Moscow found it increasingly difficult and too costly to allow the third world non-aligned countries to veer around it as their only source of economic succour. The Soviet dismissal of economic problems of developing countries in international conferences as a matter to be remedied by 'imperialist' powers was not helpful to New Delhi\textsuperscript{83}. India's dependence on Soviet Union during the late 1960s was largely attributable to American indulgence of Pakistan and wooing of China. It was American indifference that forced upon India a critical dependence on Soviet Union.
Soviet advocacy of some form of collective security in Asia was first broached in June 1969 by Brezhnev while addressing the Moscow International Meeting of Communist and Workers Party. Picking up a clue from V. Matveyev's article in Izvestia that the power vacuum in Asia after the proposed withdrawal of the British from the east of the Suez by 1971, needed to be filled, the Soviet Union gave an indication of its intention by showing its willingness to step in when the British would have left. Though Brezhnev's statement sounded vague and tentative there could be no doubt about its anti-Chinese overtones. The floating of the idea, though termed as a 'mere testing of the wind', turned out to be one of Brezhnev's favourite schemes, for the Soviet Union, repeated the benefits of the idea, over and over again through out the 1970's. The importance attached to the scheme was revealed by the fact that without exception all Asian Ambassadors visiting the Soviet Union were advised on the mutual advantages of signing such a pact. It aimed as creating a network of multilateral and bilateral military and economic alliances with Soviet Union at the apex. But given the conditions of global geopolitical situation, this expectation was 'foolish optimism', and logically enough the idea got a cold reception in all Asian capitals. The Indian Foreign Minister, Dinesh Singh's initial enthusiasm in Moscow in September 1969, to the
proposal, was quickly doused in New Delhi when he made a hasty retreat by saying the 'Indian Government did not believe in the notion of big powers acting as the guardian of security for India and her neighbours'.

Shirin Tahir Kheli's observation that Mrs. Gandhi spoke in favour of the collective security scheme needs to be substantiated, since all reports point to the contrary. Her reaction to the Soviet proposal was extremely cautious. She conveyed her opposition to the military overtones of the proposal and disagreed with the assumptions of a 'power vacuum facing Asia'. India, however, sometime back had been talking of a loose 'Eastern Locarno Pact among an unspecified number of Asian countries. In that context Mrs.Gandhi had responded favourably to the Russian suggestion for a conference of the countries of the region, even including the Soviet Union to discuss economic collaboration—a proposal mooted by Kosygin during his travels in May to India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This proposal, she said was in keeping with India's policy that economic cooperation was the best way to strengthen the economies of the Asian countries and was in accord with India's own consistent stand in the matter. In fact, during her visit to Japan, she talked of economic co-operation between India, Japan and Australia to enhance regional cooperation 'so as to preserve independence and further economic development'.
The idea, was an indication of India's desire to move away from extreme dependence on Soviet economic aid. Indeed, India's reservations about the Soviet Collective Security scheme was an emphatic indication of its determination to maintain distance from pacts that had the forebodings of a military alliance.

Pakistan's forthright rejection of both the Asian Collective Security Scheme and the idea of economic cooperation on the ground that it had no desire of getting involved in any arrangement which could cast doubts on Sino-pakistan relations, abruptly put an end to Moscow's search for a new balancing role in South Asia. Pakistan's intentions were most clearly put forth during Air Marshall Nur Khan's visit to China when in his presence the Chinese Premier Chou En-lai made a stinging attack on Moscow as the 'Modern revisionist renegade clique' and endorsed the Pakistani stand on Kashmir. Nur's remark that China did not pose a threat to any nation in the region and that it had been a establishing factor in the maintenance of peace in the region unequivocally confirmed the failure of the Soviet policy in South Asia. Though Moscow had been successful to a considerable degree in reducing Pakistani dependence on United States, there was no way it could have done the same with Pakistan's ties with China. The Pak need for
China as the bulwark against a possible Indian attack made Moscow's efforts in swinging Islamabad away from Beijing, futile.

From the Indian point of view, the situation in the region was alarming. The near completion of the highway linking Pakistan and China through the Aksai Chin region convinced New Delhi of a collusion between two hostile neighbours of India. Lin Piao in his speech to the CCP at the Ninth Party Congress adopted a very hard stance towards India and branded it a tool of the Soviet revisionists. Besides, the Sino-Indian border clash in July 1969, during Nur Khan's visit to China sent a clear message to India of a Sino-Pak axis which bore ominous portents for the future. The Sino-Soviet clash in March 1969 and the Sino-Indian clash in July 1969, firmly established the Soviet contention that China had been working on a definite game plan of altering by force all disputed border issues to its favour. At this point of time, it was coincidental that the Soviet Union and India found themselves on the same side in their confrontation with China.

It was in these circumstances that Mrs. Gandhi while on a trip to Tokyo and Jakarta made a proposal to the super powers to underwrite peace in Asia, which was
rejected by the United States. President Nixon during his Asian trip in mid-1969 announced through his Guam Doctrine that the United States proposed to disengage itself from Asia and particularly from South Asia and that in future Asian countries would be responsible for their own security. Yet, in Pakistan he adopted a blatantly partisan attitude by being sympathetic to Isalmabad's appeals for arms aid. Moreover, he not only endorsed the Sino-Pakistani alliance, he secretly advised Yahya Khan to initiate a possibility of opening a channel between Washington and Beijing. That such a proposal was made by Nixon was revealed much later, for according to Madhu Limaye, it is really doubtful whether the Indian intelligence or the External Affairs Ministry knew anything about the future visit of U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger to Peking. Kissinger, however, has mentioned in his memoirs of the 'intricate minute' that ensued between the U.S. and China in 1969. He describes a well concealed two year process that finally brought U.S. and China together after Kissinger's secret trip to Peking in July, 1971. The two nations acting as conduits to bridge the gulf between Washington and Beijing were Roumania and Pakistan and indeed it was Yahaya Khan who became the courier and cover for Kissinger's trip to Peking.
This shift in America interest gave an entirely new dimension to U.S. policy in Asia. It was evident that the American policy of relying on India as a counterpoise to China in Asia, had suddenly undergone a dramatic change. When Mrs. Gandhi was asked where Indo-U.S. relations went wrong, she replied, she supposed that U.S. policy towards India changed when U.S. policy towards China changed. Pakistan's disinclination to negotiate a 'no war' pact offered by India strained Indo-Pak relations further by the middle of 1969.

In the circumstances, India's distance from the Soviet sponsored Asian Collective Security Scheme was relegated to the background, for, what was of immediate concern to both Moscow and New Delhi was to stand up to the challenge posed by the Washington-Islamabad-Peking axis. Nevertheless, India's refusal to endorse the Asian Collective Security Scheme not only indicated its independence of will and action in foreign policy, but also was a rebuff to those who accused India of being a Soviet surrogate. India's refusal was imperative, particularly on the eve of the Lusaka Non-aligned Summit, for any sign of softening on the Soviet scheme would have seriously jeopardised India's non-aligned character.

The complex situation emerging out of the Washington-Peking-Islamabad axis was further complicated
during 1969 with Pakistan's internal situation undergoing a rapid deterioration. Hitherto, Moscow perceived Pakistan's internal stability to be a contributing factor to its own decision of putting at par both India and Pakistan. The turning to the right and the instability in India after Nehru's death had made Moscow circumspect in not putting too much on the side of India. But political stability in Pakistan turned out to be a transitory phenomenon when the two wings of Pakistan were embroiled in a fratricidal war leading to the fall of the Ayub regime. His successor Yahya Khan was even more ruthless in his dealings with the erstwhile East Pakistan and soon it became apparent that a solution to the Pakistan problem was getting out of hand. For New Delhi the developments in Pakistan bore ominous portents as an unstable and unpredictable Pakistan posed a serious threat to the very security of India.

The domestic political scene in India during the latter part of 1969 was in flux. Mrs. Gandhi, by stripping the finance portfolio from the Deputy Prime Minister, Morarji Desai had struck at the very roots of the 'Old Guard' in the Congress party. Not quite reconciled to the devaluation of the rupee in 1966 at the behest of the right wing members of the Congress, Mrs. Gandhi sought to redeem the party of its inertia and
lethargy by adopting radical measures as against traditional, obsolete ideas perpetuated by the old guard. The nationalisation of fourteen major banks and the withdrawal of privy purses to the princely states of India were hailed as highly progressive measures, essential for maintaining the socialist ethos of the party. Despite the inherent populism evident in these and other catchy slogans, Mrs. Gandhi sought to exploit public opinion in her favour by denouncing the shortcomings of the party due to the overbearing control of it by the reactionary old guard. The confrontation with the party veterans climaxed with Mrs. Gandhi's opposition to the official party nominee for the President of India. The Syndicate of the Old guard reacted swiftly by expelling the Prime Minister from the party and thus brought about a vertical split within the party organisation. The victory in the Presidential election of Mrs. Gandhi's nominee, the veteran labour leader V.V. Giri signified a major triumph of the progressive policies that Mrs. Gandhi stood for. The Communist Party of India's qualified support to Mrs. Gandhi provided her the requisite majority in the Lok Sabha. Having cast off the shackles of the Congress Party Working Committee, Mrs. Gandhi unequivocally opted for a radical populist posture for she was now in a much more secure position than at any time during her tenure as Prime Minister. She carried India further to the left than most
thought likely or possible.  

For quite sometime now, Mrs. Gandhi's advisors and associates were people drawn from the Congress Forum for Socialist Action. 'Young Turks' like Chandra Sekhar, Krishna Kant, Mohan Dharia and K.D. Malaviya were among the most vocal supporters of Mrs. Gandhi's radical policies. Others such as K.R. Ganesh, Inder Gujral, Rajni Patel, Nurul Hasan, D.P. Dhar and Mohan Kumaramangalam, who formed the inner coterie of Mrs. Gandhi's advisors had brief stints in the Communist Movement. They infused, into the Party, now, termed the Congress R(Requisitesionists), a considerable degree of radicalism that greatly enhanced the popular rating of the party. The induction of P.N. Haksar as Principal Secretary created, according to one biographer 'a stir of expectation for the cohesion and implementation of a forward policy of radical reform. For the members of the Congress led by Mrs. Gandhi, carrying a leftist image became quite fashionable and this identification with left radicalism came to stay with Mrs. Gandhi and her party virtually throughout her tenure as Prime Minister. Gradually, the building of pressure groups and lobbies were encouraged and before long a pro-Soviet lobby came into active operation in India.
For Moscow, this was a highly gratifying development, as, in Indira Gandhi, it found a leader who had not only been successful in rescuing India from the right wing forces which had worried Moscow greatly in recent years but a leader who by going back to the Nehru line of progressivism had opened new opportunities for Moscow. Moscow's ideas of a bourgeoisie-democratic country with a progressive outlook, fitted perfectly with the set up presented by Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party. Thus, another Soviet reassessment of India followed the 1969 split in the Congress Party. Prof. Ulianovsky wrote an article on Indian Politics which advocated a united front of 'leftist and democratic forces' against the right wing.  

In further consolidating and accelerating the pace of the friendship between the Soviet Union and India, cultural societies and groups played a significant role. The Indo-Soviet Cultural Society founded in 1952, was by far the most important of all such societies which popularised the idea of mutual complementarity between Moscow and New Delhi. It had always been a fact that the Soviet Government attached a great deal of importance of building up favourable opinion in India since its courtship with this country began in the 1950s. The Soviet Union permitted scholarship to Indian students and
extended hospitality to individuals and groups attending meetings or celebrations in the Soviet Union. The 1960s were a period when Soviet publications were distributed free by the Soviet Embassy. The Soviet propaganda drive in India was however, apparent, when the Soviet Union turned out to be one of the biggest publishing house by a foreign Government, operating in India. The Morning News castigated it of 'making a massive propaganda direve in India which outstrips any other country. Some of the Soviet publications are printed here but majority are brought in from Soviet Union. There are exactly 49 news bulletins and magazines distributed here, some of them in hundreds and thousands of copies. The Soviet Union is the sole foreign country which publishes, edits and distributes material in four main cities New Delhi, Bombay Calcutta and Madras. Apart from circulation in Hindi, English, Urdu, Panjabi and Malayali, there is printing and circulation in the Russian language. In sharp contrast to this, the idea of raising an Indo-American Education Foundation in India never actually came through. After 1967, particularly, the number of American and Indian scholars visiting each other's country at the cost of the U.S. Government declined. This, however, did not mean the U.S. was absent from propaganda battle in India. It distributed nine publications 4 in New Delhi, 3 in Calcutta and 2 in Bombay.
The first positive 'indication coming from Moscow was during Kosygin's stop over at Delhi while en route to Hanoi to attend Ho Chi Minh's funeral. Here he met Mrs. Gandhi without aides for an hour and though Moscow had not yet given up its policy of befriending Pakistan, his reference to the meeting as 'useful', 'important and necessary', indicated a degree of proximity of views between Moscow and New Delhi which had hitherto been lacking. On his way back Kosygin stopped at Calcutta on September 10 to make a far reaching policy statement which brought the Soviet Union and India closer than ever before. He declared, we would never exchange our friendship with India for anything else. We will keep this friendship as we value it above everything else. Perhaps indicating the urgency of the situation Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh left for Moscow the very next day to conduct 'high level' talks with the Kremlin Leaders on the question of stabilising peace in Asia, India-Pakistan relations and the Soviet supply of arms to Pakistan.

The significance of this visit for both India and the Soviet Union can be gauged by the various rounds of discussion, Dinesh Singh had with his counterpart Gromyko, Defence Minister Grechko, Primier Kosygin and Secretary Brezhnev. Official reports emanating from the Soviet foreign office were full of reference to the warm and friendly atmosphere of the talks and on the question of
strengthening and further developing relations between the Soviet Union and the Republic of India as well as with certain urgent questions on the international situation 'including the situation in Asia'. It was apparent that talks were centred on each others' relations with China. The problem areas of Indo Soviet relations were rapidly resolved during and after the September 1969 visit of Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh. Indian anxiety over Soviet arms to Pakistan was sufficiently allayed when the Indian Foreign Minister was informed that no date had been fixed for the impending visit of Yahya Khan to Moscow. Apparently, the initial enthusiasm in welcoming a Pakistani leader to Moscow had diminished considerably—when Yahya sought further arms aid from Moscow, he was politely turned down. The only arms shipped to Pakistan were deliveries under the 1968 agreement which were made in March and May 1969 and the third slated for August had not been sent. Moscow, showed particular concern for Indian apprehensions of a possible Chinese thrust into India in an effort to retrieve the morale of the Chinese army which had suffered in recent clashes with the Soviet Union. Defence Minister Swaran Singh's visit to Moscow in October 1969 was encouraging in the sense that he was 'highly satisfied with the visit, the strength of Indo Soviet friendship and the remarkable coincidence of views and complete understanding between the two countries.
on regional and global issues. Significantly for the first time since mid-1968, there was no report that the issue of Soviet arms to Pakistan had been discussed.
It would be simplistic to dub Mrs. Gandhi's Soviet policy during late 1969 and beyond that, to be purely guided by her domestic political compulsions. Her adoption of a left of the centre profile was in no way aimed at wooing Moscow. It had become absolutely essential for her to adopt a stance that would have demonstrated to the country, her distance from the old guard's obscurantism and there was no better way than portraying herself as a leader with progressive, radical and socialist outlook. It was purely coincidental that Soviet and Indian policies converged in 1969 due to circumstances which were beyond their control. It would be more in place, therefore, to say that her Soviet policy in 1969 was guided more by strategic and geopolitical considerations than otherwise. As a matter of fact, for the cementing of Indo Soviet bonds during the latter part of 1969 the stronger motivation came from the Soviet Union and not the other way round.\(^{112}\)

Moscow's perceived threats from China and New Delhi's apprehension of Pakistani designs coincided in 1969, which gave an entirely new dimension to relations between the Soviet Union and India. For Moscow, the Chinese aggressive intent was too apparent when China indicated its overt concurrence for a rapprochement with the United States. A possible U.S.-Chinese-Japanese-Pak
axis held for Moscow the dreadful prospect of facing a multipronged attack to its security. It is worthwhile to observe that but for Pakistan's steadfast alliance with China, Moscow would not have sided with India, the way it did after 1969. For the future development of Indo-Soviet relations, it was the overwhelming Chinese belligerence, which received tacit American support, that swung Moscow in favour of a pro-Indian and a get-tough policy towards Pakistan, in the subcontinent.

Yet, however, the fact that the treaty was kept away from public acknowledgement in India was indicative of strong reservations on the part of New Delhi which had no intention of diluting its non-aligned character. Conditions still did not appear to have been so hopeless as to warrant the degree of Indian commitment to the treaty as Moscow would have preferred. The strategic content which the treaty bore in 1971 was clearly missing in 1969. Besides, Mrs. Gandhi had still kept her options open by striving to improve relations with both China and Pakistan. Hence it was generally felt that the treaty would come into operation only when Sino-Soviet and Indo-Pak confrontations over a common issue merged together, which indeed happened in 1971. As long as China and Pakistan were held at a different parlance in New Delhi and Moscow—China was the cause for
concern in Moscow and for New Delhi it was Pakistan. No identity of interests between the two could be envisaged. Security considerations for both Moscow and New Delhi were imperative after the Washington—Peking—Islamabad axis became a reality. Such a power configuration however implied that in future if the Sino-Soviet or Indo-Pak relations changed for the better, it could have a direct bearing upon the Soviet and Indian policy toward one another. But in 1969 a mutual need for one another and a need to avoid isolation made both seek each other out.
In the decade of the 1970s Indo-Soviet relations developed into a more positive and dynamic bond of friendship. Yet, in 1970, the Kremlin as well as Mrs. Gandhi's Government in India were careful enough not to make the relationship look too obvious so as to give the opposition in India a pretext to talk of the 'Soviet Influence'. The agenda for Moscow in this environment was to find those areas where relations could be improved and strengthened and to meet Indian interests and needs while not isolating the Soviet Union's own objectives.

Moscow's new found interest in India was reflected in the February 1970 visit of a high powered economic delegation to New Delhi, under S.A. Skachkov, Chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations. Two protocols signed at the end of the visit pointed to a further extension of Soviet economic assistance. By the first, and expansion of Bokaro's capacity was agreed upon while the second pledged further orders for products from two major Soviet aided projects and agreed to help in setting up new petrochemical and fertilizer plants in India. Though not willing to make major concessions to India as India would have liked, the Russian delegation, nevertheless tended to gloss over the problem areas of the Indian economy and emphasized only on the positive aspect of the relationship. Thus not much came from the Skachkov
visit on the Soviet purchase of Indian built railway wagons. Besides, the delegation showed no keenness for the Indian request to Moscow for placing orders with Soviet aided plants in India for Soviet projects elsewhere in the Third World. However, in sharp contrast to Skachkov's earlier visit to India in 1968 when he was extremely critical of Indian operation of Soviet aided projects, the 1970 visit was held in a much more relaxed and congenial atmosphere. This was indeed some indication of Moscow's change in attitude towards India where 'domestic politics and foreign policy had taken substantial turns for the better from Moscow's viewpoint.'

Skachkov's visit to New Delhi was followed up by an Indian delegation in May led by Foreign Secretary T.N. Kaul. The Indian delegations' meetings with Kosygin, Gromyko and Firyubin were held in a warm and friendly atmosphere' and the two sides 'noted with satisfaction that there has been a marked strengthening of cooperation in all fields and particularly in trade, industry, education, science and Technology. Significantly, this meeting revealed an identify of views between the two countries on major international issues. On Vietnam, though, Indian perception differed from that of Moscow, probably due to Vietnam's close ties with China. The resumption of the bombing raids over North Vietnam by the
United States was not condemned by India as the Soviet
Union would have preferred. Yet, however, a change in
India's stance towards Vietnam was clearly perceptible
after this meeting. New Delhi extended an invitation to
Mme Nguyen Thi Binh foreign Minister of the People's
Revolutionary Government of Vietnam. It seems probable
that Mrs. Gandhi had her own views on Vietnam and she
modulated her policy according to the exigencies of the
situation. Though both Moscow and New Delhi were
sympathetically inclined towards Norodom Sihanouk, who had
been ousted in Cambodia by the United States and had been
replaced by Lon Nol, yet both found 'it difficult to back
Sihanouk unequivocally' because he seemed to depend too
heavily on China\textsuperscript{118}.

It was China, that engrossed the attention of both
the delegation in Moscow. But the Indian delegation still
indicated its will of trying to improve relations with
China. Surprisingly, though Brezhnev's collective
security proposal was referred to by an Indian report as a
new development of some significance'; it did not give
'unqualified endorsement' to the proposal; thereby keeping
the door to better relations with China open\textsuperscript{119}. The
basic purpose of the Indian delegation to Moscow was to
convince Moscow of the dangers inherent in further supply
of arms to Pakistan. Though immediate reports on Moscow's
attitude were not encouraging, in June it was revealed that the Soviets had assured the Indian delegation that it would not give fresh military aid to Pakistan.\textsuperscript{120}

It is apparent that Soviet exasperation with Pakistan reached a height after Yahya's visit to Moscow in June 1970. Despite Soviet cautioning of Pakistan not to drift too close to the 'imperialists', the United States and the 'leftist adventurerist forces' meaning China, Yahya refused to be deflected from Pakistan's chosen path of adhering to extremely close ties with China and the United States.\textsuperscript{121} G.W. Choudhury writes 'When Yahya raised the question of continued arms shipments to Pakistan, the Kremlin leaders demurred'. Kosygin told Yahya "you cannot expect Soviet arms while you are unwilling to endorse our Asian Security System.\textsuperscript{122} Yahya's unequivocal endorsement of Pakistan's China connection ended the Soviet effort at establishing a balanced relationship in the subcontinent. Yahya's request to Moscow for mediating with India on the Farakka Barrage and Kashmir disputes went unheeded. It was obvious India would not have entertained any such mediation by the Soviet Union on either of these issues, particularly after New Delhi's disappointment with the Tashkent affair.

Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet reshuffle in June was of some interest and concern to Moscow. The replacement of Dinesh
Singh by Swaran Singh as Foreign Minister caused some apprehension in Moscow, which interpreted it as a change of line in India's foreign policy priorities. Fiyubin's July visit to India was indicative of the importance Moscow attached to India in the changed circumstances. Moscow's fears were allayed when he was informed that Dinesh's dropping from the cabinet did not in any way imply a change in India's stance towards the Soviet Union. After all Dinesh Singh did not formulate India's foreign policy and Mrs. Gandhi wanted someone less 'independent' and 'controversial' in the position because she was interested 'in more directly shaping the country's foreign policy herself. It would be naive, to infer, however, that there was a total identity of views between Moscow and New Delhi on all international issues. Mrs. Gandhi's stopover at Moscow in October 1970 while en-route to New York for the General Assembly session was occasion for an 'exchange of views' on various problems confronting the world. Even when Moscow showed appreciation of the recently concluded Lusaka non-aligned summit for its anti-imperialist posture, Kosygin was still reluctant to do away with the Soviet efforts to establish influence in Pakistan. Disagreement between Soviet and Indian perceptions on Soviet maps of the Sino-Indian border continued to vex
It is important to note that while finally the Soviet Union acknowledged Kashmir as entirely Indian and part of the North East Frontier Agency was granted to India, the rest of it and the disputed Aksai Chin area were still shown as Chinese.

From the Soviet point of view, 'persistent Indian feelers' to China, were detrimental to the further development of the relationship with India. For all Moscow's warnings to India to go slow on the China track, India was equally determined to play its China card, independently.

Nevertheless, what was significant was that India's overall relationship with the Soviet Union stood in marked contrast with New Delhi's relations with either Washington or Peking and to Moscow's ties with Pakistan. During Mrs. Gandhi's stopover at Moscow, it was stated that, 'on bilateral relations both sides expressed the view that time had come to investigate greater possibilities and new areas of collaboration and cooperation.

Yahya Khan's visits to the United States and China provided the much needed boost to further cement Indo-Soviet ties. In Washington, President Nixon pledged
support for Pakistan and offered 'limited defence equipment' to Islamabad', and in China where Yahya was accorded 'one of the biggest welcomes', clearly drew the dividing lines for the subcontinental politics. Referring to both India and the Soviet Union, the Chinese Vice Chairman Tung Liwu remarked that 'although some people are displeased with the continuous development of Sino-Pakistani friendly relations, we firmly believe that the joint effort of our two Governments and people would frustrate all their attempts'.

With India's and the Soviet Union's major adversaries thus closely aligned, and with the alignment being supported by Washington, India and the Soviet Union had but to turn to one another in 1970.