The early phase of the 1970s, unlike the late 1960s, were ones of growing optimism over the success of Soviet policy in the third world. The American entanglement in Vietnam made it less and less important as a factor hindering Soviet actions or harming Soviet interests in the third world. And, the third world as a whole was perceived as a natural ally of the Soviet Union against the imperialist West and chauvinist China. It was during these middle-Brezhnev years that the policy of arms transfers to select third world countries was deemed to have been successful by the Soviet military, especially with regard to Vietnam. The events that inspired Moscow to such a conviction was the withdrawal of American forces from Indo-China and the fall of the Saigon Government which the U.S. had supported for so long. The U.S. had suffered a major defeat, while communist forces had scored a stunning victory, and not only had the U.S. lost a war, it appeared that it had also lost the will to become involved in other third world countries. The final withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam was largely interpreted to be due to effective Soviet military assistance to the Vietnamese communists. The failure to achieve a military victory led to an erosion of American political will to continue the struggle which in turn further hindered the U.S. from fighting effectively.
Thus, only a relatively small degree of Soviet involvement in a third world conflict in the form of arms transfers was considered to be extremely effective in halting a large scale American military operation.

The apparent change of position of the Soviet Union and the West in the third world during the 1970s was largely due to the unwillingness and inability of the West, including the United States, to pursue a coherent course of action in its policies. The U.S. debacle in Vietnam, the Watergate scandal and the exposure of various CIA operations during the mid-1970s made it virtually impossible for Washington to initiate an effective response to Soviet activities in the third world. Moreover, the policy of detente in the 1970s did well to help the USSR in its overall worldwide expansion as well as reduce the likelihood of an American retaliation to the extension of Soviet involvement throughout the Southern hemisphere. The Soviets evidently conveyed the message to the West that improvements in direct bilateral relations between the East and the West were far more important than developments in other regions of the world. It was this environment that convinced some U.S. leaders that the period of U.S.-Soviet conflict characterised by the cold war had come to an end and the political atmosphere in the United States was not conducive to
checking Soviet attempts to expand its international role by taking advantage of conflict situations throughout the third world. In both Angola and Ethiopia, the Russians assumed correctly that they would be able to intervene without the danger of effective American resistance since the United States considered them to be beyond its defense perimeters and were far from the centres of primary U.S. interest. In the third world the Soviet Union demonstrated its capacity to provide its allies with effective military assistance and proved that this assistance could be adequate to change the local balance of power in favour of the recipients of the Soviet support. In return, they were provided with access to naval and air facilities which they deemed would be useful of them in potential future conflicts with the West. Thus, by the middle of the 1970s the Soviet Union had become a state with both global interests and global capabilities. Since the early 1970s, the Soviet Union had been providing substantial support to countries of potential importance to her strategic and global interests. Though there was a steady involvement of the Soviet Union in Africa during the mid 1970s, the Soviet interest was concentrated heavily in the arc of countries that bordered the southern flank of the U.S.S.R. Hence the Soviet goal remained the reduction of
Western influence and military capabilities and the necessary expansion of the military and political capabilities of the Soviet State. This explains the political and military support to such countries as India, Iraq, Syria and South Yemen. In several cases the Soviet Union signed treaties of friendship and co-operation with important South Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries for example, India, Iraq and Egypt. In fact, during the 1970s the Soviet Union made efforts to improve its relations with countries known to be close to the West. Turkey and Iran were offered economic assistance and even military sales as a means of reducing their dependence on the United States. It is significant to note that during the 1970s the United States offered the Soviet Union a partnership in controlling and settling major conflicts in Southeast Asia as well as in the Middle East.

Almost in every developing country where the Soviets had successfully established a medium or long term relationship, it depended heavily on the Soviet ability to respond to the interests and concerns of the developing states. More significant was the Soviet ability to provide to a large number of developing countries military and security support. Egypt under Nasser and Somalia prior to 1977 were two outstanding examples. The same held good in Angola, Syria and Vietnam. Yet, the fact remained that as
the security demands of the client state increased, the interests of the USSR and its client diverged, since a very deep commitment could have increased the prospect of a direct confrontation with the United States. That, put the USSR in a dilemma, whether to increase its military involvement with the client state or deny its requests, risking the alliance which it had so assiduously built. The Soviet Union was discreet in at least three cases and opted for the latter. In Egypt after 1971, the interests of Sadat increasingly conflicted with the Soviet policy. In Somalia, which proved to be a reckless client, the Russians found greater long term advantages in aligning themselves with opponents, Ethiopia. In Mosambique the Soviet unwillingness to increase her security support forced Mozambique to negotiate a security arrangement with South Africa.

With India, however, which held a central place in Soviet third world policy, the relationship was distinctly different. This relationship, was by far the strongest and the most stable over the previous two decades. It was based largely on a coincidence of security and political interest of the two states, especially concerning possible Chinese expansion in Asia and on the role of the United States, and its major regional ally, Pakistan, in the subcontinent. The demand of the relationship did inhibit
Soviet efforts to normalise relations with Pakistan in the early 1970s and resulted in India's extraction from the USSR very favourable terms for the purchase of sophisticated armaments.
In the 1970s, the USSR attained both a global position and an influence in the third world, that was commensurate with that position. On the political front, very few in the 1970s thought in terms of staying away from the Soviet Union. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the strategic nuclear power of the United States was effectively neutralised by the countervailing Soviet capabilities. The nuclear stalemate between the two superpowers reestablished an environment in which conventional weapons, thought to be obsolete, were employed in certain circumstances. Among the most important aspect of this development was the construction of an ocean-going navy and a world wide merchant fleet that also engaged in military related reconnaissance. During the early 1970s, the Soviets had created a naval capability that permitted them to play an important military role in various international crisis situations, such as the 1971 Indo-Pak war, the Middle East War of 1973 and other conflicts. Besides, the Soviet Union also created a network of agreements with a number of less developed countries that gave access to naval facilities for the maintenance of this new ocean-going fleet. Thus, on the strategic level, the Soviet Union did acquire port facilities and overflight rights that gave them the necessary world wide infrastructure to exercise their power. On the economic level, Soviet involvement in the
development plans of many countries provided for profitable deals as well as durable sources of influence. Moreover, and that was important, the West recognised the Soviet presence in the third world and did not seek to dislodge it.

It was often necessary for Soviet military advisers to train progressive forces in the use of Soviet weapons effectively. Sometimes the need for training was so great against a perceived imperialist threat, that a vast number of Soviet military advisers were required, as in Egypt. While the actual fighting was done by the indigenous third world state troops, the role of the Soviet military advisors was that of aiding and assisting them. However, it is important to observe that while the military may have had a greater knowledge about conflict in the third world, the military did not formulate policy toward the third world by itself, nor did it formulate positions in opposition to the Party. All Soviet military writing had to be approved by the Party and the Party did not entertain serious opposition to its policies on the part of the military, nor would the military ever oppose the party.

Among the new changes in Soviet military thought that was more favourable to greater Soviet involvement in
the third world were the belief that the Soviet Union could prevent local wars from becoming world war, that peaceful coexistence was not incompatible with Soviet military assistance to national and social liberation movements, and that guerilla armies could successfully bring about socialism, example Angola. These changes reflected the change in the correlation of forces between the East and the West at a time when the West appeared to be on the retreat, especially after Vietnam. American opposition to Soviet involvement was no longer as forceful and so the USSR did not fear the possibility of US Soviet confrontation arising from Soviet involvement in third world countries.

Yet, however, during the early 1970s, Soviet policy in the third world did indicate a change, which though tentative, was clearly discernible. Hitherto Moscow's bilateral operation in the third world showed signs of a multilateral relationship based on a degree of collaboration with the West. This was most evident in the Middle East. Some observers believed that Moscow's insistence that the Arab-Israeli problems be settled in the United Nations was a move to diminish the increasing American influence in the area. There were others, who claimed that this move indicated a realisation that neither super power was in a position to unilaterally take
the responsibility of bringing peace in the Middle East. Hence, the USSR regarded it safer and wiser to rely on a collective security. R. Ulianovsky, who headed the research unit that advised the CPSU Central Committee on relations with the third world, wrote that given the general detente the less developed countries could more effectively resort to trading with the two systems and obtain aid from both the socialist and capitalist world. The Soviet-German agreement providing for joint projects in third countries was an indication of the Soviet shedding of mistrust and fear of Western aid.

Significantly, it was during the later phase of Brezhnev's tenure as chief of the CPSU, Soviet views tended to become more pessimistic as regards Soviet foreign policy gains in the third world. Despite Soviet success in Angola, the defeat of Somalia by Ethiopia, the triumph of Vietnam over PolPot, the success of the Marxist Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the Soviet Union suffered serious setback in the third world. This reversal of uninhibited Soviet success in the third world could directly be attributed to the failure of detente with the United States. The inevitable signs of discord in detente were made apparent with the refusal of the American Senate to ratify SALT II. Not only were Egypt and Somalia lost to the Soviet Union, Moscow was unable to achieve fully its
goals in Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia and Afghanistan, in spite of its becoming more directly involved in these third world conflicts, than it was at any time previously. Instead of serving as a boost to further gains, these conflicts served primarily to drain the resources of the USSR. In the circumstances, India proved to be the most stable and effective strategically in South Asia, which along with the USSR was successful in deterring the American and Chinese moves in the subcontinent.
Mrs. Indira Gandhi's massive mandate in the mid-term elections of 1971 was a clear vindication of her progressive policies. The rout of the 'Indian reaction' and most of its stalwarts was widely hailed in Moscow as a fortuitous development. Yet, there was a feeling of discomfort, too, for, a powerful Prime Minister with a strong Party backing, implied less dependence on the Communist Party of India, and thus, perhaps on the Soviet Union as well. Mrs. Gandhi, however, sought to emphasize the fact that relations with the Soviet Union were in no way connected with the Congress's electoral alliance with the CPI. On the contrary, it was stated that Indo-Soviet relations were formulated keeping the national interest in view. Relations with the Soviet Union were cultivated on a Government to Government and a country to country basis and owed nothing to the CPI's support of Mrs. Gandhi during the critical period of 1969 after the Congress split. Hence it was elaborated that Indo-Soviet relations would have been what they were even if the CPI was not favourably inclined towards the Congress. Given Moscow's proclivities towards bourgeois-democratic governments in third world countries and its attitude towards nascent left movements in these countries, India's justification of its Soviet policy to be framed on its merit, sounded reasonable enough.
In sharp contrast to the stability in India after the March 1971 elections, were the ever worsening situation in Pakistan. The Eastern wing of Pakistan under Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's Awami League having won a landslide victory to the Constituent Assembly, was denied a share in power by the wily chief of the Pakistan People's Party, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. In the resulting confusion, President Yahya Khan of Pakistan postponed indefinitely the meeting of the National Assembly, and goaded by Bhutto, sent in the Pakistani army to suppress the Bengalis of East Pakistan. In was this obscure controversy between the two wings of Pakistan that soon escalated into a major conflagration that engulfed the subcontinent and soon sucked in the two superpowers and China.

Islamabad's friction with its eastern wing was exacerbated further with a steady deterioration of relations with New Delhi over Kashmir. Civil war in Pakistan was imminent after the massive induction of troops upon the 'entire people of East Bengal' and India which could hardly stay indifferent to a conflict of such magnitude, expressed its solidarity with the people of East Bengal and demanded the 'immediate cessation of the use of force and the massacre of defenseless people'. It assured the people of East Bengal that 'their struggle and
sacrifice will receive the whole-hearted sympathy and support of the people of India.

West Pakistan's involvement in a bloody war with its eastern wing had serious ramifications at the international level and soon Pakistan's major allies, the United States and China were engaged in actions that posed serious threats for both India and the Soviet Union. The initial Sino-U.S. response and their decision to work in tandem in supporting the Yabhya Khan regime was the source of all tension in India. China's unambiguous support for Pakistan while accusing New Delhi of 'gross interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan' and promising that 'should the Indian expansionists dare to launch aggression against Pakistan, the Chinese Government and people will as always firmly support the Pakistani Government and people in their just struggle to safeguard state sovereignty and national independence, sent on unequivocal message to India that there was every possibility of facing a multipronged Sino-Pak attack.

India's relations with the United States continued to deteriorate in direct proportion to the improvement of relations between the United States and Pakistan. While Indian hostility to the U.S. role in Vietnam was escalating, the US-China thaw raised the real questions
about whether Washington would assist New Delhi as it had in 1962, if another war with China broke out. Lack of support from America for Bengali nationalism in East Pakistan and its total indifference for the refugees who began pouring out of East Pakistan after the war began, caused serious misgivings in India as regards the real intentions of the United States.

Though the U.S. had placed an embargo on arms sales to Pakistan in March 1971, there was enough evidence to show that American arms were after all reaching Pakistan. Indian entreaties to the United States to intercept ships with arms were of no avail since it was apparent Islamabad would be allowed to receive whatever had been 'sold' prior to March 25, 1971. India noted with concern that the U.S. was not prepared, despite the carnage in East Bengal, to guarantee that future shipments would not take place. There was an obvious contradiction between the U.S.' attitude regarding the arms supplies and the public posture it adopted in mid-June to endorse the World Bank view that Islamabad would not get fresh aid till Yahya Khan arrived at a credible political settlement with the elected representatives of East Bengal. Political observers in the U.S. rightly speculated that New Delhi's stand on the proposed Bangladesh would harden in view of the 'acute disappointment' over the U.S. failure to act
decisively in favour of a peaceful solution. The contradictions, according to these qualified observers stemmed from the divergencies within the U.S. administration and Washington's 'vacillation may well compel India to reconsider the options open to it'. Whereas outside the confines of the White House substantial parts of the American public, media and Congress were indeed expressing outrage at the happenings in East Bengal and wanted an end to the arms aid to West Pakistan, the President himself and his National Security adviser Henry Kissinger were totally insensitive to these happenings and to India's security concerns. In White House Years, Kissinger provides an 'aggressive defence' of the Nixon administration's controversial handling of the nine month Bangladesh crisis in 1971, characterising it as 'perhaps the most complex issue of Nixon's first term'. As if to protect the White House opening to China, President Nixon chose to remain mute to the Pakistani army's repression in East Pakistan for not only was Islamabad a steadfast ally of Peking, but Nixon himself had first broached the idea of an American overture to China to Yahya Khan, when he visited Lahore in July 1969. That a cleavage between the Department of State and the Chief Executive did exist became apparent over the issue of arms supplies to Pakistan. It was not because the State Department had any emotional bias towards India that it sought to suspend the arms aid to Pakistan, but because it was convinced in the
light of clear evidence that U.S. supplied tanks and aircraft were being used against Bengalis. Strong media and Congressional reaction to such use made the Department impose a 'hold' on military equipment for Pakistan, pending a formal White House decision. But although the State Department thought it had stopped all military supplies to Pakistan, and had conveyed the impression to the Congress and to India that only small amounts of arms which had been purchased under licenses issued before the hold action, were shipped after March 25, the report in the New York Times in late June that Pakistan freighters had sailed or were about to sail from U.S. ports with arms, created an obvious credibility gap with the Congress and the Government of India. The Indian Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh had just returned to New Delhi from Washington with what he thought were assurances no arms were being shipped. This apparent breach of faith proved to be worthwhile for the Indian propaganda machinery to expose the American 'tilt' in favour of Pakistan. Though the actual amount of arms supplied to Pakistan after March 25, 1971 were not large and though the exact amount would never be known, the fact remained that the White House had acted unilaterally in defiance of all sane advice and that gave India an opportunity for making a propaganda riot as well as a pretext for looking for options to ensure its security.
Kissinger in his memoirs is highly critical of the State Department's initial reaction to the crisis which took the form of action to stop U.S. military supply to Pakistan and to hold up U.S. economic assistance. He attributes both actions, which he says, were taken without White House clearance, to the Department's ignorance of the China initiative and its traditional 'India bias'. Christopher Van Hollen is in agreement on both these aspects and says that the State Department was totally ignorant of the China initiative for not until three months later when Kissinger was about to board a Pakistani aircraft for Peking was the Department's 'hapless leader' Secretary of State William P. Rogers —informed of Kissinger's secret trip to China — the most important foreign policy initiative of the Nixon years. Of the second he says the State Department did in fact have an 'India bias', not because as Nixon was fond of saying it was staffed with 'soft headed India lovers' but because there were hard headed reasons for the priority attached to U.S. relations with India.

The disclosure that Nixon had personally authorised the continuing shipment of arms and ammunition of Pakistan came as a shock to the traditional supporters of the American foreign policy, who had convinced themselves that Nixon had been able to overcome his cold war prejudices
and could provide the U.S. the kind of leadership it desperately needed to regain credibility both at home and abroad\(^{23}\). The revelations in Jack Anderson's Papers were startling, for during the Indo-Pak war over Bangladesh, Anderson's columns carried excerpts from secret White House meetings at one of which an 'exasperated' Kissinger warned Government officials that he was getting hell every half-hour from the President that 'we are not being tough enough on India', 'the President does not believe we are carrying out his wishes.' Kissinger complained, 'he wants to tilt in favour of Pakistan\(^ {24}\). Thus, India's assertion of an American 'tilt' in favour of Pakistan stood vindicated and the policy became an integral part of the American political lexicon\(^ {25}\).

Indian apprehensions over Nixon's cynical behaviour was but understandable, for, there was evidence that the President had very often said one thing and did quite another. He extended the war to Campodia and Laos while talking of withdrawing U.S. troops from Vietnam. Even if one were to admit that in Vietnam, Nixon was caught in a difficult situation, he hardly had any excuse for Pakistan which was not an ally of America except in a technical sense. The U.S. administration had no legal or other obligation to help it in carrying on its war on the people of East Bengal in driving out millions of human beings.
just because they professed a different political or religious faith. Unlike in the case of Vietnam, Nixon could not even remotely claim to be a helpless victim of his predecessors' policies because President Johnson had virtually abrogated the Mutual Security Pact with Pakistan by ending free military supplies to it in 1965. If he only wished he could have withheld arms deliveries to Islamabad without inviting the charge of letting it down. His preconceived political bias of India being a Soviet surrogate prevented him from rationalising facts and exposed him to the charge of 'being a prisoner of his own cold war past. It would have been easier to appreciate the U.S. action in Pakistan had the initiative come from the Pentagon. The American generals who had a long and close association with the Pakistani army and a strong preference for military regimes in under-developed countries, found it as a rule easier to deal with them, than with democratic Governments like India's. But in this case, even the Pentagon for once showed a better appreciation of the situation in the subcontinent than the President and his staff in the White House. Nixon's reaction to South Asia was influenced by his long standing dislike for India and the Indians and his warm feelings towards Pakistan and since these feelings were evident to anyone who had close association with Nixon, Kissinger was not credible when he told the press in December 1971, that
he was not aware of the President's preferences for Pakistan, leaders over Indian leaders. His memoirs, however, reveal more when he says that 'the military chiefs of Pakistan were more congenial to Nixon than the complex and apparently haughty Brahmin leaders of India. When Yahya Khan visited Washington in October 1970, Nixon assured him that 'nobody has occupied the White House who is friendlier to Pakistan. And, when Mrs. Gandhi's actions ran counter to White House desires, she was referred to by Nixon by the most unprintable epithets. Undoubtedly, Nixon's personal dislike for Mrs. Gandhi coloured his judgments in 1971.

Kissinger's July 1971 visit to New Delhi in no way allayed India's suspicion of actual U.S. motives. In response to queries about the quantities of military hardware still in the pipeline, the letter from Nixon to Mrs. Gandhi brought by Kissinger carefully skirted the issue and offered no indication whatsoever on the line the U.S. proposed to take about arms sales or the resumption of economic aid to Pakistan. Observes in New Delhi concluded that Washington was so deeply committed to bailing out Pakistan's generals that criticisms from liberals at home and abroad or from India hardly mattered. By indulging in double talk, the U.S. administration merely confused the issue further and Kissinger's
dismissal of Indian queries on the arms shipment to Pakistan as a mere 'bureaucratic muddle' was far from convincing. It could well have been Kissinger himself, despite his assurance to India that Washington would support India in the event of a Chinese attack, who may have been the architect of the decision not to withhold arms supplies to Pakistan. His volte face on return from China that if China intervened in the conflict in the subcontinent, the U.S. would stay neutral confirmed India's suspicion of a complicity between Nixon and Kissinger to continue with the arms supplies to Pakistan. This explains the U.S. Government's pressure on the World Bank to black out the report submitted by Peter Cargill after his fact finding tour of East Bengal. The Times of India reported that 'Even the watered down version of the story that he tells is too grim and hair raising for anyone to believe any longer that normalcy is being restored in that stricken part of the world.'

A major confrontation between the executive and the legislative followed President Nixon's flat refusal to cut off military and economic assistance to Pakistan. The House of Representatives authorised the suspension of 'all military economic or other assistance to Pakistan until the President reported to Congress and normality along
recognisable and well defined lines had come to East Bengal\textsuperscript{35}. Nixon, however, refused to go by the sentiments expressed by the House and maintained that he was 'not going to engage in public pressure on the Government of West Pakistan.' It was his belief that cutting off economic assistance to Pakistan would 'seriously jeopardise its ability to create some stability\textsuperscript{36}.' In other words, his statement confirmed the belief widely held that the Nixon administration would stand by the military clique in Pakistan at all costs.

That President Nixon had made up his mind on the crisis in South Asia from its very start is apparent from Kissinger's White House Years. Kissinger has referred to the convening of the SRG (National Security Council's Senior Review Group) meeting, attended by senior representatives from State, Defense and CIA to review U.S. options in face of mounting tensions between the two West Pakistani leaders, Yahya Khan and Z.A.Bhutto and the East Pakistani leader Mujibur Rehman. At this first SRG meeting on South Asia, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Alexis Johnson expressed the State Department view that the crisis was neither an issue between the two major powers nor a matter of U.S.-India confrontation. The Soviets, Indians and Americans, Johnson asserted, all considered that their interests were
served by continuation of a united Pakistan. Johnson suggested that one option for the U.S. was to try to discourage President Yahya from using force in East Pakistan against Mujib and his Awami League followers. But he did not press the point after Kissinger cautioned SRG members to keep in mind President Nixon's 'special relationship' with Yahya—a relationship that 'surprised' and 'perplexed' the participants. The President, he said, would be reluctant to suggest that Yahya exercise restraint in East Pakistan, adding that the Pakistanis 'would give a damn', if the U.S. Ambassador were instructed to weigh it with Yahya. Following this cautioning note, the SRG members concluded that 'massive inaction' was the best policy for the United States.

Nixon's insensitivity to press reports and even to the pleadings made by leading Senators, was perplexing indeed. The New York Times editorially criticised the President's stand on aid to Pakistan when it said that Mr. Nixon's hope of helping General Yahya to create some stability in East Pakistan through continued economic aid was misplaced. The U.S. seemingly condoned crimes against humanity unequalled since Hitler's time. In a report from Washington, Senator Frank Church severely indicted the President saying that the President and his advisor favouring Yahya Khan's ruthless regime stand alone in America today. The Republican Senator Charles Percy was
more forthcoming when he expressed deep concern over the fast deteriorating relations between India and the U.S. which had reached an all time low. Stating that the condition of the evacuees were impossible to describe, he asserted that Pakistan had been given arms to defend the country against aggression and not for using it against her own people. Visible moved by the misery of the refugees Senator Edward Kennedy, Chairmain of the U.S. Senate Foreign Affairs sub-committee on Refugees, said the legacy of East Bengal is a great human disaster of our time. The release of Mujib from arbitrary imprisonment by Pakistan authorities demanded by India was supported by Senator Kennedy who accused Pakistan of perpetuating a genocide in Pakistan. The fake trial of Mujib was a 'travesty of the fundamentals of international law' and expressed his belief that only a political settlement could bring an end to the tragedy. He conceded, however, it would be very difficult to stop assistance to Pakistan which was already in the pipeline but he would strive to stop fresh military and economic aid to Pakistan till a political settlement was reached on East Bengal. He, in fact, congratulated the Indian leaders for showing 'great restraint and courage in their approach towards the problem and commitment to a political solution instead of a military one.'
Hardly had the Senator asserted on stopping military aid to Pakistan, reports disclosed that U.S. arms from Vietnam were being covertly supplied to Pakistan. Whether it was really being done or not was a matter or speculation, for the State Departments' inability to give quick replies to questions on arms supplies evoked the suspicion that either it was in the dark over decisions taken elsewhere or was under orders to be circumspect. But from the Indian point of view, it seemed it would be easier for the United States to provide arms to Pakistan from the surplus stocks in Vietnam as American troops were being withdrawn. It is worthwhile to note that it took the State Department a long time to admit that arms were in fact being supplied to Pakistan long after March 25 when prior to that it was being stated that the decision to halt arms supplies after March 25 was final.

In the circumstance, New Delhi's protest to the U.S. over what India considered as 'hostile acts' were not out of place. India expressed its indignation to Washington to the sending of arms to Pakistan on the quiet while assuring India to the contrary. It was felt that the U.S. was directly involved in the West Pakistan army's war in East Bengal and the military and diplomatic support it was giving to Pakistan was aimed directly against India. Mitchell Sharp, Canada's Foreign Minister, reporting on the situation in East Bengal remarked that a
division of Pakistan may turn out to be the only solution, though the Canadian Government would not regard it as the best solution. In a letter written to the Toronto Press, he stated the best solution would be a duly elected democratic Government in Pakistan, but he acknowledged this seemed to be a remote possibility. Of all Western Governments Canada was the most outspoken and the only country to take some decisive action to stop the flow of arms to the Yahya regime. The Canadian Government stopped shipment of spare Sabre jet parts which were scheduled to be loaded on the Padma, the Pakistani ship reportedly carrying US arms. Ottawa made it clear that its bar on arms supplies to Pakistan was going to be enforced strictly. Even the Netherlands which had suspended fresh aid and subjected existing contracts to close scrutiny showed a clear appreciation of the East Bengal realities. The West German Chancellor Herr Brandt was believed to have done much to influence the opinion of the Aid Pakistan Consortium in favour of the democratic forces in East Bengal. But in comparison the British Government's attitude had not been very helpful to East Bengal and if Conservative members of Parliament like Mrs. Jill Knight succeeded in convincing Mr. Heath and his colleagues that 'nothing was seriously wrong in East Bengal, certainly Nixon and Kissinger could count on strong
support from Great Britain, China, of course was continuing to provide massive aid to strengthen Yahya's hands and by a strange coincidence was the closest parallel to U.S. action.

Throughout the nine-month Indo-Pakistan crisis President Nixon adopted a closed door approach without little direct communication between him and top officials other than Kissinger. As Kissinger himself suggests in describing one of the NSC (National Security Council) meetings, the problem, was that the President's efforts to express his wishes 'as usual' were 'so ambiguous that they made things worse'. As a result many of the staff studies and option papers sent from the bureaucracy to the White House were often either ignored or considered irrelevant to the larger unexplained Nixon-Kissinger game plan. The essentially technical guidelines transmitted back to the bureaucracy were hardly helpful in providing senior departmental officials with a conceptual appreciation of the broader geopolitical principles, which, one now learns, were the mainsprings of White House policy. Nixon and Kissinger had a global point of view and their global configuration was essentially either Soviet oriented or Europe oriented. Washington's opening to Peking was primarily aimed at preventing Soviet machinations in Asia from getting out of control. In
justifying Washington's China policy the Nixon-Kissinger combine emphasize the importance of China particularly after it was admitted to the United Nations as a large power. On the contrary, India irritated the United States which considered it to be a nuisance. In almost all policy matters of vital concern to the United States, India opposed American moves. Apart from Vietnam, India's ambivalence on Israel attracted far stronger American disapproval. Though India recognized the existence and legitimate security needs of Israel, it could by no means forgive Israeli military and thus did not raise its diplomatic representation to ambassadorial level. In the Security Council, India adopted a blatantly pro-Arab stance and identified itself more and more with the Arab stand on Palestine. Ambassador William Saxbe angrily remarked that 'this nonsense about the PLO has to stop. I know of no better friends India has in the U.S. than the Jews.' These secondary issues may have been overlooked if India and the United States could have developed a mutual trust in one another. But New Delhi could not condone the 'repeated rearmament of Pakistan by the U.S.' For India the U.S. intention was malafide. Washington could not forgive India's dependence on the Soviet Union, but made no effort to diminish this dependence. Thus U.S. arms supplies to Pakistan and Indian proximity to the Soviet Union became the main sticking points in Indo-U.S. relations in 1971.
By the summer of 1971, Kissinger writes, on no other issue, except perhaps on Cambodia was the split between the White House and the Departments so profound as on the Indo-Pak crisis. Issues which Kissinger dismissed as "trivial" were after all, not that "trivial" as he would have thought. The State Department was convinced it would be impossible to resolve the crisis shot of war unless Yahya was encouraged through private diplomatic channels to make genuine political concessions looking toward greater autonomy for East Pakistan. Kissinger was equally convinced that Yahya would accept advice on such questions as relief assistance for East Pakistan but he would not be amenable to US suggestion for political accommodation with the members of the outlawed Awami League. Hence, the Nixon-Kissinger strategy was to separate the humanitarian aspects of the policy from the political, a strategy that had a double purpose. By expending large sums of money for the refugees in India the White House hoped to reduce the barrage of criticism it was receiving from the media and the Congress, led by Senator Kennedy. More to the point, it hoped that this strategy would defuse pressures upon the White House to exert influence on Yahya to make meaningful political concessions. Almost to a person the officials working on South Asia were convinced that the White House strategy would not work. Particularly, outrage at the Pakistani atrocities was most directly felt
by members of the American Consulate at Dacca, the bureaucracy was genuinely convinced that unless there was progress on the political front, the refugees would not return to East Pakistan, India, would not stop supporting the guerrillas of East Pakistan (the Mukti Bahini), it would be impossible to administer humanitarian relief in East Pakistan and the prospects of war between India and Pakistan would mount.

Another fundamental difference between the White House and the bureaucracy was their midsummer assessments of Indian and Soviet intentions. In building up his case in White House Years, Kissinger indicates that by the middle of 1971 Mrs. Gandhi had made a decision to launch an attack on East Pakistan. He believes the Indian leaders were also considering the destruction of West Pakistan as well and were being encouraged by the Soviet Union which 'played a highly inflammatory role acting throughout like a pyromaniac'. Kissinger writes that, 'encouraged by the isolation of Pakistan, the diplomatic and military support of the Soviet Union, the domestic strains in China, and the divisions in the United States, the Indian Prime Minister decided in the spring or summer of 1971 to use the opportunity to settle accounts with Pakistan once and for all and assert India's pre-eminence on the sub continent.' After the decision every concession by Pakistan was used as
a starting point for a new demand escalating the requirements and shortening the timespan for a response to the point that showdown was inevitable. Taking full advantage of the favourable international environment and Pakistan's instability, India achieved her long-standing desire for predominance in South Asia. But as later testimonies reveal that though India was engaged in military contingency planning and Mrs. Gandhi was under strong political pressure to act more decisively, there was no firm evidence that India by mid-summer had made a definite decision to go to war or that the Soviets wanted war. In fact the CIA Director Richard Helms and Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco did not foresee war to be imminent.

In defending their stance Kissinger explains that he and Nixon faced a dilemma — 'The United States could not condone a brutal military repression in which thousands of civilians were killed and from which millions fled to India for safety, but the East Pakistan crisis burst upon us while Pakistan was our only channel to China. We had no means of communication with Peking. While the first point demonstrated American insensitivity to the atrocities in East Bengal— the administration's official silence was interpreted as condoning the atrocities — the second point was factually incorrect for there were in fact two
channels to Peking, one through Pakistanis and the other through the Roumanians. Thus, Kissinger's comments that there was 'justified outrage' when reports began to come in from the Pakistani atrocities in Bengal, were the words of the elder statesman-author, viewing events retrospectively. They were not the words of the Assistant to the President in March April 1971. At no time during that period was Kissinger on record as voicing outrage or humanitarian concern as the Pakistani armed forces fell upon the helpless East Bengalis with a vengeance.

With the American administration emitting confusing signals to the crisis in the subcontinent, which, however, were interpreted in India to be pro-Pakistan, the Soviet Union saw in the crisis a threat to the balance in the subcontinental structure. Since the onset of the crisis till the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, and even beyond that, Moscow diligently pursued a policy of urging restraint, on India. Though pressure mounted on the Indian Government to adopt bold measures to meet the problem of the influx of refugees and Moscow was informed of Indian apprehensions, it was not until May 1971 that Pravda even mentioned the problem and it was still a long time before the Soviets promised to help India on the refugee issue. The Soviet equivocation could be discerned from the fact that all East European countries had been curiously silent on the refugee issue as well as its
political fall out on the subcontinent. Though Moscow continued to be critical of Islamabad's policies it was not known to have thaken any effective action to stay Yahyas hands\textsuperscript{57}. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was the first among the great powers to declare its position when the Soviet President Podgorny issued an 'urgent appeal' on 2nd April 1971 urging modernation upon the Pakistani President. Podgorny stressed Moscow's concern for the 'entire people of Pakistan' revealing that it did not favour the latter's disintegration. The reference to 'peace in the area' showed that the Soviet Union felt that strife within Pakistan could extend into a conflict between Pakistan and India, a possibility that the Kremlin was anxious to avoid\textsuperscript{58}. The visits in June of Jayaprakash Narayan and the Foreign Minister Swaran Singh to Moscow, seeking its help for sending back the refugees did not yield encouraging results. The Indian Express termed Swaran's mission a 'failure', for though Moscow was willing to side with India it called for an end to the influx of refugees from East Pakistan and the creation of conditions that would lead to their return, it was not willing to go so far as India in calling for specific kinds of settlements in East Pakistan or in making political demands on Islamabad\textsuperscript{59}. New Delhi and Moscow had entirely different perceptions on the 'social, economic and political problems created by the course of
Basically, the Soviet Union, had not been able to get over the illusion of Tashkent, where maintaining a balance in the sub-continent by evenly pitting India and Pakistan still seemed to be an imperative. The crisis in the subcontinent had all the ingredients of escalating into a full fledged conflict between the two hostile neighbours and from the Soviet point of view it was essential to preempt any such move by India by adopting an unbiased attitude to the entire issue. Besides, Moscow was not inclined to incur the displeasure of its Arab clients by openly aligning itself with India. It seems Moscow misinterpreted India's call for 'political settlement' in East Bengal as a call for independence of the eastern wing of Pakistan from the Western and hence rescinded from concurring with any such Indian move. The idea of dismembering a member state of the United Nations was so enormously frightening that Moscow thought it had to be prevented at all costs. The call for an independent state of Bangladesh was a later development, made by the leaders and the people of East Bengal and India had to endorse the demand in order to stop the genocide by the Pakistani army and to effect the return of the refugees to their homes. Later revelations showed that till almost the very last moment India was 'really
playing safe' and 'there was no such game plan as to go to war with Pakistan'. In fact D.P. Dhar, Mrs. Gandhi's emissary in Moscow, emphatically assured Kosygin that India had no intention at all of doing anything in the western sector. It was deeply committed to the return of the refugees and wanted that problem to be solved. 'Dismembering Pakistan had not been intended by the Indian policy makers'. The war in the West was essentially a reactive measure and Bangladesh was the outcome.

Pressure on Mrs. Gandhi to act more decisively was mounting everyday and even the Director of Indian Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis declared, 'what India must realise is the fact that the break-up of Pakistan is in our interest, an opportunity the like of which will never come again.' But Mrs. Gandhi refused to take recourse to 'mad adventures.' However, as the summer wore on, it became increasingly clear to the Indian political establishment that the crisis in all likelihood would assume a military character. Mrs. Gandhi had some presentiment that a war with Pakistan may become inevitable and though it is difficult to explain if she had actually decided upon a war, she did ask the armed forces to prepare for a campaign in case such a campaign became inevitable. Her later pronouncements do
indicate that she would have been much happier without a war provided India got what it wanted. In any case, she wanted the country to be adequately prepared to meet any challenge from across the borders. There were nevertheless definite indications that the Indian Government was preparing for a war and had unequivocally identified the United State with Yahya's ruthless regime. If Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram's statement in the Lok Sabha in July 1971 were any indication, certainly India had been working along these lines. The very significant statement that the Minister made assumed great importance for it was categorical in prasing the "indomitable courage of the fighters of the Mukti Fouj" who were fighting an "imperialist army" despite great handicaps and his hope that soon these freedom fighters "would be able to realise their dream and establish Bangladesh". The Defence Minister also remarked that the preparations by Pakistan of piling arms and raising new regiments were actually meant to "extinguish the flames of freedom and democracy in the subcontinent". He also pointed out that "those who were helping the military dictators of Pakistan in piling up arms could not escape their responsibility of helping the military dictatorship in its attempts to do this". Besides he gave some hints about the defence preparedness of India and stated that "our growing strength has been such that our adversaries
are disconcerted". He assured the members in the Lok Sabha that the country had put 'enormous efforts' into strengthening 'the striking power of army, navy air force and missiles'. Equally significant was the statement of Foreign Minister Swaram Singh on a calling attention motion in the Lok Sabha. The Minister pulled up the Jana Singh leader Jagannath Rao Joshi for equating the Soviet Union with the United States over the issue of arms sales in the sub-continent. Swaran Singh emphasized that while the U.S. was continuing arms shipments to Pakistan and had refused to give any assurance of stopping it, the Soviet Union had not only not supplied any arms to Pakistan from April 1970 onwards, but had even stopped supplies of spare parts. But despite the Minister's claim, the issue raised by the Jana Sangh leader was not out of context for there were reports that small quantities of Soviet arms — perhaps spare for equipment supplied after the 1967 arrangement between Moscow and Islamabad had found their way to Pakistan. The issue had come to the notice of the Indian Government and New Delhi was actually checking the veracity of the information.

In fact, the Pakistan propaganda machinery had made laboured attempts to project the Soviet Union as a
sympathetic power. For instance, Radio Pakistan made much of the Pakistan Ambassador's call on Mr Kosygin in Moscow during the last week of June. The Soviet Union it claimed had reaffirmed its friendly interest in Pakistan's development and progress. Kosygin was quoted as describing the recent developments as Pakistan's internal affair and expressing the hope that its problems would be resolved soon.

Mrs. Gandhi, however, did not give up exploring possibilities for a peaceful settlement of the crisis while simultaneously making contingency planning for a possible eventuality. For the first time India was coming out of its moral–ideological closet and went about explaining her point of view in a proper perspective to the world at large. Jayaprakash Narayan's tour of foreign countries and the world conference convened by him on Bangladesh in New Delhi helped mobilise world opinion in favour of India. Indian diplomatic missions had not only been active but effective too and in the United States particularly, the India Ambassador L.K. Jha took great pains to put forth India's point of view dispassionately and objectively. Kissinger himself conferred that in influencing the press, the Congress and the State Department, Jha 'outclassed him.'

Mrs. Gandhi's preparations were elaborate and meticulous
and she reckoned, a major task was to neutralise opposition to military action — if it came about — by as many major countries as possible. In presenting for the first time a national security policy, she had the entire country rallied behind her — 'a rare bonanza', as a diplomat has put it 70. Militarily, though India could take on Pakistan in the West and the East, it was of vital importance that China had to be kept out of the war. Besides, in the event of the United States taking sides in favour of China and Pakistan, it was imperative for India to strengthen its strategic position through diplomatic initiative and it was here Mrs. Gandhi made deft use of her Soviet card. A friendship treaty with the Soviet Union was deemed to be essential to insure India's position vis-a-vis the United States and China. Earnest diplomatic negotiations at the behest of India were initiated with the Soviet Union and the treaty which had literally been gathering dust since 1969 was formally signed in August, 1971.

Though Moscow confirmed 71 the denial of delivering arms to Pakistan after the eruption of the Bangladesh crisis in March, it was reluctant to accept the Indian point of view in totality. Soviet action focussed on providing reassurance to Pakistan by emphasizing that Soviet-Pakistani friendship would not
suffer despite Moscow's close ties with India and that Soviet economic assistance to Pakistan would continue. In other words, the jist of the Soviet stance was that the vital issue is not independence but the preservation of peace in the subcontinent.\textsuperscript{72} But, once the top Indian policy makers had made up their mind they apparently did not need to make much effort to convince Moscow about the desirability of the treaty, for it was Moscow which had initiated the idea and had been anxiously waiting for such an opportunity for over two years. Nevertheless, it could not be automatically assumed that Soviet plans and ambitions remained the same as in 1969. Much had happened since Brezhnev first staked the Soviet claim to be the dominant power in Asia and the Kremlin was aware that it had now to operate in an altogether different international environment. Important, however, was the fact that just as a convergence of interests and a coincidence of perceptions had brought New Delhi and Moscow closer together in September 1969, when the treaty in all probability was drafted, another confluence of events brought the two to the point of making their agreement public.\textsuperscript{73} The revelation by President Nixon himself that his National Security Adviser Kissinger, had in fact flown secretly to Pe'king from Pakistan to meet the Chinese leaders for laying the groundwork for a Presidential visit to China
in 1972, spurred the Soviets to action. Thus, it was primarily this circumstance in July 1971 that forced Moscow to choose between India and Pakistan. Pakistan's overt and ever growing proximity with both the U.S. and China, made policy makers in Moscow to revert back to the policy of the 1950s when Moscow saw a friendly India as a possible counterweight to China. From that point on, in gradual but in definite proportions, India became the Soviet Union's principal ally in Asia and one of particular importance when, at the end of the 1970s, the USA, Japan, China and Pakistan all appeared to be arrayed against the Soviet Union.  

Mrs. Gandhi's dexterous manipulation of her China option forced Moscow to acquiesce in the treaty. While acknowledging the importance of Soviet support for India in the ensuing crisis in East Bengal, Mrs. Gandhi sought to delink her Soviet policy from that of the Chinese. Being free from any bias against the Chinese, the Prime Minister was unwilling to endorse the Soviet line on China and she not only tried to dispel the notion of an overt influence of Moscow, she also tried to effectively demonstrate India's independence in foreign affairs. Mrs. Gandhi's letter to Chou Enlai in July, explaining India's position on Bangladesh and offering discussions at any level acceptable to the Chinese and without any
preconditions, was well timed. If there was anything that could deter Pakistan from the course it had opted for, it was through a possible thaw in Sino-Indian relations, wherein Chinese non-participation in an Indo-Pak war would have had a restraining influence on Pakistan. While, if India's initiative failed to have the desired effect on China, Moscow's apprehension about the reliability of India's anti-Chinese stance would force the Kremlin to make concessions to India. It was in this context that the former Indian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, D.P. Dhar was dispatched to Moscow to hold secret talks with the Chinese Ambassador there. Dhar's meetings with the Chinese Ambassador did not yield any encouraging result. However, the New York Times reported that diplomatic reports reaching Washington indicated that Peking which in July had publicly proclaimed its determination to help and defend West Pakistan was privately advising President Yahya to act 'with prudence'. Mr. James Reston, the paper's Vice President had a long interview with the Chinese Premier Chou Enlai in Peking, which he was 'under constraint not to report'. But the paper said that 'American officials and foreign diplomats are now reported to believe that neither Moscow nor Peking wishes to see a war in which they might be forced into a direct confrontation'. Quoting American analysts, the paper stated that
'involvement in an Indo-Pakistani war would run counter to all the interests of China's present foreign policy\textsuperscript{77}. A ranking U.S. official was reported as saying this is probably the first time when all of us — the Americans, the British, the Canadians, the Europeans, the Russians and even the Chinese have been working in the same direction in a major international crisis\textsuperscript{78}. 

It would be of some significance to mention here that the reading on China was corroborated by officials in the Indian Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Office was absolutely convinced that given the background of the Chinese\textsuperscript{79}, and the agenda they were following, it would be impossible for the Chinese to support Pakistan; Still not able to get over the trauma of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese could only go up to a certain level and not beyond that — they would not do anything to support Pakistan militarily on the war front. From all the subsequent information that the Foreign Office received, it knew that the Chinese had been cautioning Yahya on his brutal repression in East Bengal\textsuperscript{80}. It was evident that the Chinese had been in constant touch with developments in Washington and were convinced that the U.S. would not risk war with the Soviet Union for Pakistan, particularly when U.S. fortunes in Vietnam had been sinking. It was highly improbable that the U.S.
would risk detente and jeopardise the proposed Summit in Moscow in 1972, for the sake of Pakistan. With the U.S. not inclined to be directly involved in the conflict in the continent, China saw no reason to embroil itself in a conflict with the Soviet Union and India. The sweep and strength of the armed resistance under the auspices of the Awami League, had virtually reduced the Chinese to a 'prolonged, and embarrassed silence'. This would not have been so, if in their views, Pakistan had a reasonable chance of surviving as one country. But they were too shrewd to believe in such a fantasy. More pertinent for the Chinese leadership during this period was to safeguard itself from the intense power, struggle that was brewing within the hierarchy. Lin Piao's accusations against the Party leadership, virtually rendered the Chinese a fractured nation. Nevertheless, Indian overtures to the Chinese during the early half of 1971 did have the desired effect on Moscow.

D.P. Dhar's futile attempts to sway the Chinese to the Indian point of view made him initiate an intense political activity with Moscow. The other compelling factor that forced Moscow to succumb to Indian pressure for a treaty was Dhar's explanation of the Indian determination to recognise Bangladesh on August 9, 1971. According to Central Intelligence Agency reports, D.P.
Dhar who was acting as Mrs. Gandhi's envoy flew to Moscow to deliver the message to the Soviet leaders. The Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko told Dhar that 'India should act with caution and that he would use 'whatever pressure was necessary to dissuade Mrs. Gandhi from recognizing Bangladesh at that time' for Moscow apprehended that Indian recognition of Bangladesh could precipitate a war between India and Pakistan. Later, Gromyko said that if necessary he would personally visit New Delhi to convince Mrs. Gandhi. The visit was announced on August 6 and Gromyko reached Delhi on August 8. In the face of Yahya's warning of a 'total war' with India, it had become absolutely necessary for India to insure her security. The general may or may not have bluffed when he said that Pakistan would not be alone in a war with India, but its success in obtaining Washington's support for involving the United Nations in East Pakistan was ominous and it 'was an interference India did not want.' In the circumstances Gromyko's much publicized visit — he was given a tumultuous welcome — was India's way of conveying Pakistan that 'India was not alone either.' Since the announcement of Gromyko's visit to India came from Moscow the first reaction in some quarters was to see in it a new Soviet bid to bring about a 'second Tashkent.' Soon, however, the scepticism gave way to optimism after the Soviet Union endorsed the Indian stand of not converting.
the Bangladesh issue into an Indo-Pak problem. Moscow firmly said 'no' to U Thant's proposal to post observers on both sides of the India, Bangladesh border.

A brief explanation may be in order here about the institution and the individuals involved in the making of Soviet policy towards India. The principal institutions concerned have been the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Council of Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Military Defence. By 1971, the focus of initiative in foreign policy had shifted decisively to the General Secretary Brezhnev with Prime Minister Kosygin having a secondary role. The key position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in policy making was symbolised by the promotion of the veteran Foreign Minister Gromyko to be a full Politburo member in 1973. The party apparatus, however, clearly had a decisive role over the foreign ministry with the Central Committee departments exercising general oversight over the implementation of Politburo decisions by the foreign ministry and other non-party institutions. But, since 1973, the foreign minister held full voting membership on Politburo and acted as a personal adviser to the General Secretary. Andrei Gromyko, the foreign minister from 1957 to 1985, was the first career diplomat to be named to the Politburo. His promotion to the top leadership institution
seemed to increase his negotiating authority. Gromyko was not the first Soviet foreign minister to sit on the Politburo, but he certainly was the first 'civil servant' to be so honoured. His predecessors became foreign ministers by being important party officials, but Gromyko became a party dignitary by being foreign minister at a time when diplomacy was becoming more important for the leadership of the party. Arkady Shevchenko, a former adviser to Gromyko who was the highest-ranking Soviet official ever to defect, credits Gromyko with restoring the role and influence of the foreign minister in the decision making process and believes that Western analysts have seriously underestimated the former foreign minister's role in shaping Soviet policy over the past two decades. Besides Gromyko's influence over the International Department was considerable. Though the organisation of the Department was never discussed in Soviet publications, the institution seemed to draw on such groups as the research institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the various branches of the Soviet Intelligence services, the ministry of foreign affairs and various International front organizations in order to provide substantive inputs into Soviet decision making. The department was led for twenty five years by Boris Ponomarev whose ability to influence policy was limited by his 'acrimonious relationship with Foreign Minister Gromyko.'
Apparently, Gromyko's hurriedly arranged visit to India during this critical period instilled a sense of urgency in the development of Indo-Soviet relations and foreign diplomats viewed it as a gesture of solidarity in India's current dispute with Pakistan and an 'implicit warning that, USSR will support India in the event of India-Pakistan war. Official sources in New Delhi explained the importance of the visit by contrasting it with the American role which, they held, favoured and encouraged Pakistan. It was asserted that Gromyko's visit was meant to be a gesture of the Soviet Union's solidarity with India at that crucial stage — 'It is a visit of peace rather than one involving any kind of hysteria.' New Delhi took pains to explain to the Soviet foreign minister that the UN move to post observers in India and East Bengal was America inspired to shift the international focus from the tragic events in East Bengal. The U.S.' insistence on posting UN observers despite India's cautioning that such a move would be construed an unfriendly act, indicated a deliberate attempt by the U.S. to let the Bangladesh crisis degenerate into an Indo-Pakistani dispute. The Sino-American detente and its impact on the subcontinental politics came in for close scrutiny and Gromyko perceived 'the murky Chinese policy on Bangladesh' to be designed more to hurt India. The initial scepticism in India gave way to optimism after the
Soviet Union endorsed the Indian stand of not converting the Bangladesh issue into an Indo-Pakistani problem. Moscow's firm 'no' to U Thant's proposal to post observers on both side of the India-Bangladesh border, indicated strong Soviet support for India in its worsening dispute with Pakistani Army's suppression of an independent movement in East Pakistan. Gromyko's statement that his visit was aimed at strengthening peace in Asia and the world and to the expansion of Indo-USSR contacts in all fields made it emphatically clear.
In such circumstances— in a swift and dramatic development that took all by surprise Gromyko and Swaran Sinh, brought forth a bilateral agreement better known as the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. Evidently, the treaty drafts prepared earlier in a great secrecy were revised to meet the 'exigencies of the moment.' The New York Times reported that the USSR decision to lend official support India in the current crisis with Pakistan meant making an end of its 'ambiguously neutral role' in the subcontinent. The USSR had seized on the treaty formula as way of deterring any rash moves in the crisis and of deepening Soviet influence in India. The treaty was not a security pact in normal diplomatic sense, it did not oblige the Russians to support India in case of conflict, but left the impression that the USSR would join if necessary.

As for the treaty that was signed in 1971 and the one that had been drafted in 1969, there were 'only minor changes.' The Soviet idea of the treaty was designed on the framework of the treaty they had signed with Egypt. Such a treaty would have been on a party to party basis, which did not find favour with India. Maintaining that political parties may be transitory, but a Government functioned in perpetuity, India demanded and got the treaty on a Government to Government basis. The Soviet
draft made no mention of Non-alignment, but upon India's insistence Article 4 of the treaty made a specific mention of India's non-aligned status. Articles 5-8 were mere incorporation of the ideas of the respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, disarmament, joint stand against colonialism, racism, and the maintenance of regular contacts in economic, scientific, technical and cultural fields. Art.11 set the term of the treaty for 20 years and Art.12 provided for the means of resolving differences through negotiations. While Articles 1-3 committed the two nations to non-agression against each other, to efforts to strengthen peace in Asia and the world and to the expansion of Indo-USSR contacts in all fields, the operative part of the treaty and its most significant aspects were detailed in Articles 8-10. Art.8 pledged the two High Contracting Parties not to enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party. Art.9 stipulated that the two sides would abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engaged in armed conflict with the other party. In the event of either party being subjected to attack or threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties should immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such a threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security of these
countries. Art. 9 was an improvement upon the earlier Art. 6 by being more specific in introducing the 'immediate consultations' clause and that is how the Soviet Union was brought into picture to ward off a physical treat to India. Article 10 reiterated that there were no obligations, secret or public, which conflicted with the treaty and that neither side could enter into an obligation which might cause military damage to the other party.'

The treaty did acquire a strategic significance in 1971 which it otherwise would not have attained in 1969. It was not so much a question of the clauses or the wording of the treaty, but it was the setting and the context in which the treaty was signed. The diplomatic situation in the subcontinent and in Asia lent credence to the argument that the treaty was a response to the announcement of the secret Kissinger–Chou talks which were held in Peking during July 9–11, 1971. While India's China experts in the Ministry of External Affairs may have anticipated the possibility of U.S.–China talks, it was the timing and effect of the announcement in the context of India's position on Bangladesh that urgently necessitated a diplomatic counter weight against the U.S. and China. A similar calculation seems to have induced Moscow to seek a firmer legal and political basis for
Indo-Soviet co-operation in Asia. Apart from the flow of arms and equipments the treaty provided India with valuable defense assistance to fight the war which broke out in December. The treaty was welcome in India for it not only gave her a feeling of confidence and the reassurance of a super power backing, but it also had the desired effect on the Chinese who were deterred from nurturing any aggressive intentions on India. In fact, for the Chinese the treaty came, as the greatest surprise. 'The Chinese have been so used to India's posture—a policy of non-retaliation and accommodation—that in all probability it did not even occur to them that it would ever sign a regular treaty with the Soviet Union.'

The general reaction to the treaty in India was encouraging. Though initially the Jan Sangh leader Vajpayee said there were secret clauses in the treaty, he subsequently supported the treaty for having 'won a friend for India at a critical juncture'. The rightist member of Parliament Frank Anthony stated that the pact had brought a 'sense of realism' to the 'sacred barren cow of non-alignment'. However, Asoka Mehta dubbed it an 'unequal treaty.' He compared the Indo-Soviet Treaty with the treaty between the UAR and the USSR and observed that unlike India, the UAR had no alternative but to enter into a treaty with the USSR because a) its territory was occupied by Israel, b) it was twice defeated.
by Israel, c) it had received massive aid from the Soviet Union amounting to $2,000 million. Morarji Desai, speaking at a public meeting at Khadia said he doubted the wisdom of the pact between the weak (India) and the strong, which only helped the strong (USSR). Indian officials were reported to be 'buoyant' over the treaty. Mrs. Gandhi, herself, displayed 'ebullience before hundreds and thousands of people gathered in New Delhi for the Independence Day rally organised by the Congress to demonstrate solidarity for Bengali independence movement.' She said 'empty vessels make loud noise–allusion to Yahya Khan's threat of total war. She declared further that 'we are convinced that the present Treaty will discourage such adventurism on the part of the countries which have shown a pathological hostility towards us.' Mrs. Gandhi and Swaran Singh told Parliament that the Treaty contained no secret clauses and Indian spokesmen offered to conclude a similar treaty with any other state, indicating that the Indo-Soviet Treaty had not established an 'exclusive relationship'. T.N. Kaul invited the ambassador of the United States, Great Britain and France and offered them the same treaty, but there was no response from any one of them. India privately assured the U.S. that the new friendship treaty with the USSR was not directed against the United States or its allies. Ambassador L.K.Jha met the
Secretary of State William Rogers who received him without indicating any displeasure on the part of the Nixon administration. Rogers expressed the hope that the effect of the treaty would be positive. Yet, U.S.-India relations deteriorated further as a result of the treaty despite Roger's repeated acceptance of India's assurances.

From the Soviet point of view the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship was the price that Moscow was willing to pay to persuade an angry Delhi to put off the recognition of Bangladesh indefinitely. The Russians who were originally supposed to be not very enthusiastic about signing the pact, which had been under preparation for two years, were understood to have finally agreed to do so as a last resort. Diplomatic and intelligence sources reported that the USSR dissuaded India from formally recognising Bangladesh as an independent nation by quickly signing the 20 year Indo-Soviet Friendship Pact. Infact, after the signing of the treaty, though Mrs. Gandhi was under tremendous pressure at home to recognize the 'rebel' nation and increase aid to the guerillas, Mrs. Gandhi held back from granting recognition to Bangladesh. It was understandable that Gromyko could not agree to the use of the term 'Bangladesh' in the joint statement. But objecting even
to the use of 'East Bengal' implied his keenness to reassure Islamabad that the Soviet Government still favoured one Pakistan. The statement also made no reference either to the Awami League or to Mujibur Rahman who was currently being tried on trumped up charges by a military tribunal in West Pakistan. These omissions aroused misgivings on the treaty, particularly in the context of the use of the phrase 'Political solution' in stead of 'political settlement.' Thus the joint statement on Bangladesh was open to the interpretation that the Soviet Union remained committed to the concept of one Pakistan and that India had yielded to it on this point of critical importance, which led Vajpayee to charge the Indo-Soviet Treaty to be a stab in the back of Bangladesh\(^\text{114}\). Misgivings on the treaty were compounded by official statements which sounded apologetic. Swaran Singh's submission that the treaty had been under discussion for over two years and that India would be ready to sign similar pacts with other countries of the region reflected a defensive, nervous approach. It needlessly invited the charge that India had concluded the treaty not so much under the compulsion of circumstances—Chou's promises to support Pakistan, Nixon's arms to Pakistan—as under Soviet pressure\(^\text{115}\). The second part of the statement created an impression that it was at Russia's behest that India was trying to work
out a series of inter-locking arrangements which could help to contain the U.S. and Chinese influence in the region. It is also possible that in the Indo-Soviet Joint Statement fears that India might use force to solve the Bangladesh crisis—this became a serious option during July 1971 and after—prompted the non-use of force declaration. Thus it seems likely that the clause about peaceful solutions reflected Soviet concern about Indian intentions, and to a lesser extent, India's concern about Chinese intentions. The Soviet concern vis-a-vis India seemed to predominate because as Indians saw it despite its verbosity since 1965, China had actually acted with restraint vis-a-vis India and had little to gain and much to lose by using force against India in the Himalayas. Besides, Gromyko's speech immediately after signing the accord where he merely stressed the previous record of co-operation between the Soviet Union and India was at variance with Swaran Singh's statement in the Lok Sabha the same day where he emphasized that 'the Treaty should act as a deterrent to any powers that may have aggressive designs on our territorial integrity and sovereignty'.

Having committed itself to the treaty, however, the Soviet Government recognized that its capacity to influence the actions of the military junta was strictly
limited and that it was in its own interest to enable India to clinch the issue in East Bengal. Any equivocation on its part would have given its American and Chinese opponents an opportunity to frustrate its entire strategy in the region. Opting for New Delhi, it could no longer 'look back with nostalgia to the bygone days when it could claim influence in Islamabad as well'117. Hence, the USSR warned India's unfriendly neighbours Pakistan and China that they will have to reckon with the Indo-Soviet peace treaty with all its implications 118. In his speech to the Supreme Soviet Presidium Gromyko declared, that 'from now on no one can make policy in relation to the Soviet Union or in relation to India without taking this treaty into account'119.

In retrospect, it is evident that but for the Chinese support to Pakistan and its growing rapport with the United States, Moscow would not have opted for a treaty committing itself so deeply to India. Given Moscow's inclination to perpetuate normal economic transactions with Pakistan, a treaty with India seemed unlikely. The history of Indo-Soviet interactions in Bangladesh during March—December 1971 reveals a persistent Soviet effort to promote a political and peaceful solution in East Pakistan and Mrs.Gandhi's willingness to 'go it alone' militarily in Bangladesh
suggests that even though India was able to use the
Indo-Soviet treaty to its advantage during the December
war, it is by no means certain that the Soviet sponsors
of the treaty wanted it to be used in that manner.
Besides its involvement with the United States for making
a success of the SALT I negotiations and its commitment
to detente, it is difficult to visualies a scenario of
Soviet overcommitment to India. It was not the U.S. arms
to Pakistan but the crucial Peking-Washington-Islamabad
nexus that forced Moscow to succumb to Indian pressures
for a treaty and finally tilted the scales in favour of
India. But having given into the treaty Moscow went
around for making the best use of it, for the fact
remained that a treaty alliance went extremely well with
the Soviet scheme of things for gaining access into the
third world, non-aligned, influential and strategically
vital countries. For the Soviet Union the idea that a
major non-aligned country was a treaty partner was
something very important for, it involved not only India,
but it enhanced Moscow's credibility in the entire
non-aligned community. Moscow readily justified the
treaty on the ground that it further strengthened the
friendship between two countries which had no national
conflict no border problem, no problem in internal
affairs, but a great fund of goodwill between the two
peoples. So, a rather second rate motivation was that
the Soviets had a great deal of satisfaction in signing pacts with countries having Moscow as the benefactor. A treaty, Moscow believed gave a sacrosant character to a friendship. That explains Moscow's propensity for initiating a network of bilateral treaties during the period 1971-76. In the rather 'fussy' mind of Brezhnev and probably even Gromyko these treaties represented the beginning of a collective security system which Brezhnev had been talking since 1969. The Indo-Soviet Treaty, the USSR believed was the most conspicuous and vital string in this network in which the epicenter was Moscow.

Gromyko's claim of Asian security being an objective of the treaty quite apart from bilateral commitments induced the belief that the Soviet Union regarded the treaty as a first step towards the evolution of a system of collective security for Asia. The Soviet attempt to build a general security system in Asia around India with the somewhat vague provisions of the Indo-Soviet Treaty as a model for other members was rejected by India, which backed away from any such regional identification with the Soviet Union against China and stressed only the economic and non-security aspects of the treaty.

The 1971 crisis revealed the propensity for India's external policy to be more flexible
(opportunistic) when an international issue was considered to involve her vital national interests. Mrs. Gandhi was compelled to make decisions under international circumstances which were beyond her control and had to renovate and reorient India's non-aligned policy, broadening its interpretation and practising greater manoeuvrability at the operational level. As an operational ideal non-alignment was substantially modified in its framework in the early 1970s to denote non-alignment between super powers but alignment with either or both the United States and USSR over particular international issues. The treaty, despite all claim to the contrary, reflected a departure from Nehru's view that India should not formally participate in security oriented alliances. Even though strictly speaking the treaty was not a military alliance, it nevertheless was a technical violation of India's non-aligned policy. In as much as Indo-Soviet relations could be structured through the treaty, the political basis of the relationship acquired a formal and comprehensive cast. Yet, working upon Nehru's contention that India could not afford to be neutral where her national interest was involved, Mrs. Gandhi in 1971 formalised a deal with the Soviet Union with a minimum possible compromise on the policy of non-alignment. Mrs. Gandhi repeatedly stressed that
India had not transgressed her non-alignment policy. 'This treaty has not affected non-alignment in any possible way. We retain our freedom to make our own decisions and to take our own actions. What it (non-alignment) means is that we do not automatically follow any group or any given international issue. Russia will not affect our decision making. We will not be a party to any bloc, we are not allowing military bases to any country. And while under the Treaty we shall consult with the Soviet Union should any dangerous situation arise, what decision we take, what steps we take, well, that is entirely a matter for India to decide by herself. It is not a defense treaty in the sense that it is immediately decided that we will have military help. It was apparent that the USSR-Indian friendship was influenced by India's desperate sense of isolation in the Pakistani crisis and by Indian and USSR fears over growing rapprochement between the United States and China. The New York Times held that the United States by continuing military aid to Pakistan 'has rendered USSR a major foreign policy coup.' For India, however, a treaty with the Soviet Union had almost become inevitable. Under the circumstances prevailing on the Asian continent, New Delhi would have sooner or later concluded the treaty with Moscow, even if there had never been a Bangladesh crisis, because India felt that in view of her hostile relationship with Peking, it needed to have the
guaranteed support of one of the super powers, which
could only mean the Soviet Union, as the latter was still
in rivalry with China. There indeed, was not a real
series of precedence of previous treaties except the
Soviet-Egyptian treaty for other earlier treaties were
mere bland friendship treaties. Taking into account the
conditions prevailing in 1971 the Indian leadership was
absolutely convinced that a treaty with the Soviet Union
was necessary. In any case the treaty signed in
August 1971, though shrouded in controversy, tended to be
and naturally so, Indo-centric. After all the
Indo-Soviet treaty had only one purpose—to build the
power of India.
Mrs. Gandhi was a pragmatist and a tough practitioner of the art of realpolitik. To her, the pursuit of national interest and personal interest were the supreme goals. Kissinger acknowledged this when he said that 'Indira had few peers in the cold blooded calculations of the elements of power. She was no doctrinaire and her approach to politics, national or international, was shorn of emotions and sentiments. Even her attitude to the Soviet Union was unsentimental, she used friendship with the USSR for her own purposes. She had an "intuitive" grasp of the compulsions of power politics. Henry Kissinger, echoing Nixon, wrote that 'Indira Gandhi was a strong personality relentlessly pursuing India's national interest with single-mindedness and finesse.'

The first consultations subsequent to the signing of the Treaty occurred in Moscow in late September. Mrs. Gandhi, before embarking upon the trip had indicated her preference for simultaneous consultations with the Soviet triumvirate. It means she was particularly interested in holding direct talks with Brezhnev, who by 1970, had clearly emerged the leading figure at the Kremlin. Brezhnev's rating had particularly risen after his successful Ostpolitik negotiations with the Federal Republic of Germany. Besides, Brezhnev was to lead the Soviet Union during the Summit talks with President
Nixon, proposed for January 1972. Mrs. Gandhi took great exception to Brezhnev's absence from Moscow\textsuperscript{136} when she arrived there. She declined to attend the reception arranged for her at the Kremlin and instead informed the Indian Embassy to arrange for a meeting with the Indian residents in Moscow\textsuperscript{137}. Brezhnev's return from Bucharest was the occasion for Mrs. Gandhi's elaborate talks with the Soviet leadership. For the first time in recent memory the three main Soviet leaders Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny had simultaneously held talks with a foreign leader. From the Indian point of view, the Prime Minister's talks were not quite satisfying since all the three Soviet leaders advised her not to undertake armed intervention in 'East Pakistan', despite Mrs. Gandhi's pursuasion that the people of Bangladesh wanted independence and that an independent Bangladesh would be neither pro-west nor pro-Peking\textsuperscript{138}. The entire Soviet thrust continued to be on peace and on preventing war. While condemning the atrocities of Pakistani authorities in East Pakistan, Kosygin, reiterated Soviet determination 'to do everything possible on its part to maintain peace in this region and to prevent the outbreak of an armed conflict\textsuperscript{139}. As an Indian analyst remarked, 'The Russians were tireless in trying to persuade Mrs. Gandhi out of any intention to intervene militarily\textsuperscript{140}. 
However, Mrs. Gandhi obtained a reluctant concession from the Kremlin that she be allowed to pursue whatever policy she believed would solve the South Asia crisis. Moscow was forced to take into account the Prime Minister's statement that the Government of India is fully determined to take all necessary measures to stop the inflow of refugees from East Pakistan to India and to ensure that these refugees who are already in India return to their homeland without delay. Though the Soviet Union for the first time stated that it 'highly appreciated' and 'understood' the 'difficulties confronting friendly India in connection with the mass inflow of refugees', it still clung to its call for peace as set forth in Podgorny's letter of April 2. It may have been that probably for the first time Moscow saw things from the perspective of New Delhi, yet ultimately Soviet policy did not change and an unequivocal Soviet support for India was as distant as ever. Perhaps, the joint communique best revealed the distance. Whereas, the Indian point 'to pursue whatever policy she believed would solve the South Asia crisis' was placed in a unilateral Indian paragraph, the Soviet statement was placed in another where it 'would make every effort to maintain peace in South Asia and that she 'expected' from Pakistan a quick political settlement of the crisis. Besides, in the communique whereas the Indian version
referred to 'East Bengal', the Soviet version retained the traditional 'East Pakistan'.

Indian discomfiture was heightened after Kosygin's endorsement of the Algerian stand for 'respect for the national unity and territorial integrity of Pakistan'. Reaction in India was immediate and the Times of India editorialised that Kosygin's endorsement of the Algerian position 'only provides further evidence that far from promoting the prospects of an independent Bangladesh the Indo-Soviet treaty is intended at least by Moscow, to function as a brake'. On October 14 Mrs. Gandhi announced that India considered independence as the only way out of the crisis in East Bengal. To add to Moscow's troubles was Yahya Khan's public rebuff of Soviet calls to negotiate with Mujib and other elected leaders of the Awami League. Having failed to influence developments in either state, Moscow finally decided to cast its lot with India. In response to the worsening conditions in the region, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Firyubin arrived on a hastily arranged visit in New Delhi on October 21. Soviet concern on the eve of Mrs. Gandhi's departure to six Western capitals was understandable and Firyubin lost no time in military talks with the Prime Minister and other Indian officials like the Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, Defense Secretary
K.B.Lall, T.N.Kaul, D.P. Dhar, President Giri and officials of the External Affairs Ministry. It was soon revealed that talks were held under Article Nine of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, which was the provision that called for immediate mutual consultation 'with a view to eliminating' an attack or threat of attack and to taking 'appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security for their countries.' For the first time since the conflict had begun in March, Moscow came out with an unequivocal support for India. 'Both sides agreed completely in their assessment of the present situation.' While Firyubin still advocated restraint, Mrs. Gandhi left India with the reassurance from Moscow, that Soviet support would be forthcoming for India should a conflict ensue. By virtue of Firyubin's visit taking place under the provisions of Article Nine of the treaty, the Soviet Union thus became a formal party to the crisis.' An important part of the agenda were the military discussions Firyubin had with the Indian leadership and not surprisingly his visit was quickly followed by the visit of the Soviet Air Marshal Kutakhov, Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, to New Delhi. The growing military aspects of Indo-Soviet relationship were symbolised by this goodwill visit. Thus, Dinesh Singh's contention that 'As agreed to by me, it (the treaty) was compatible with non-alignment. But it was later amended
the crises created by Pakistan. On Mrs. Gandhi's part she had every reason to be satisfied for there was in Britain a considerable appreciation of the restraint with which New Delhi had conducted itself under the gravest provocation. An agreed solution of the Bangladesh issue was as inclusive as ever but some of the points which Pakistan wanted to exploit had been pre-empted. These included proposals for an India-Pakistan dialogue, for United Nations observers and for the withdrawal of troops from the border.

In this top level diplomatic exercise during her tour of six Western capitals, it seemed that halfway through her tour Mrs. Gandhi had been able to clarify the purpose of her visit. Though her cordial reception at Brussels and Vienna might not have caused much discomfort in Washington, there could be no doubt that the reactions of the leaders in London, Bonn and Paris would have a deep bearing upon the policy makers in Washington. It was reasonable to assume that in spite of significant differences Western Governments had a fundamental community of interests which Washington could hardly ignore. India did have reason to be gratified if the views expressed in Bonn and Paris did not differ much from what Mrs. Gandhi had been told by the Belgian, Austrian and British leaders for by all accounts they had been highly appreciative of India's position.
Mrs. Gandhi's visit to France was more successful in the sense that the French President had stress on the need for a political solution which he said had to have a consent of the peoples concerned. In other words, it was an endorsement of the Indian stand that the only 'credible personalities enjoying the confidence of the East Bengal people were those who were elected in December'. The French President apart from stating that all arms supplies to Pakistan had been suspended also referred to India as the 'most profoundly peaceful country.' Mrs. Gandhi left France with a distinct feeling that the Indian stand on the East Bengal issue had received 'something more than sympathetic hearing.' However, Mrs. Gandhi revealed her assessment of the situation while answering French journalists when she said 'it looked as if an independent Bangladesh was now inevitable'. At this stage it is apparent, that the Indian Prime Minister had made up her mind on the division of Pakistan for she was convinced that President Yahya would not conform to reason.

In Germany too, Mrs. Gandhi found the German Chancellor to be receptive to Indian concerns. Chancellor Willy Brandt assured Mrs. Gandhi of his country's sympathy with India in her present plight. In an extremely cautious statement, though, he called for a 'political solution of the East Bengal crisis and
stressed the need for efforts and prudent action to avoid a military confrontation with Pakistan. The conflict in East Pakistan according to the Chancellor's view was essentially a Pakistani affair and any effort to find a solution must consequently be made mostly by Pakistan.' Mr. Brand told Indian correspondents accompanying Mrs. Gandhi that he was 'moved by Mrs. Gandhi's exposition of the problems of the Indian subcontinent.'

Whether the Western endorsement of the basic Indian stance in the Bangladesh crisis did have an impact on Washington or not is debatable, the fact that western nations were at variance with the United States implied a major diplomatic success for the Indian Prime Minister. Later developments in the United States and China indicated that both had taken cognisance of the fact that in case of a conflict in the subcontinent, if the U.S. were to stand behind Pakistan, it would not be getting unqualified support from its clients in the European continent.' Indeed, in Mrs. Gandhi's efforts at winning international public opinion were inherent the functioning of a popular democratic Government in contradistinction with that of a military dictatorship. Whereas President Yahya remained self-content with his actions in East Bengal and confident of support from the United States and China, India's democratic tradition
prompted the Indian Prime Minister to take the world at large into confidence and awaken international morality against acts in East Bengal, which to say the least were barbaric. In the final analysis, Mrs. Gandhi did take her own decisions, but no accusing fingers could be pointed at her for she had given enough warning of an impending disaster.

Unlike her tour of the Western capitals where the leaders sympathised with India's cause Mrs. Gandhi's talks with President Nixon in Washington remained a 'dialogue of the deaf'. It had to be so, particularly in view of Mrs. Gandhi's luncheon address to the Foreign Press Association. Reiterating that India had no intention to start a war with Pakistan, she however, stated, that 'if war is forced on us, we will not be forgiven if we do not take steps to defend ourselves'. She emphatically declared that her Government would never agree to unilateral withdrawal of Indian troops from the border with East Bengal, 'When no one is suggesting the withdrawal of Pakistani troops from the border.' It was emphasized that the present situation on the Indo-Pak border was created by Pakistan which had sent large number of troops to East Bengal and threatened the security of India. Even so, she indicated her willingness to discuss with President Yahya questions of
interest to both India and Pakistan 'I am prepared to shake hands, but not with a clenched fist\textsuperscript{159}.' Nevertheless, she emphasized, that a mere return of the refugees would no longer solve the problem of East Bengal 'which must find a viable and political solution\textsuperscript{160}.' It was this assertion that convinced many in Washington that a 'political solution' implied a separation of the eastern wing of Pakistan from the West which could only be possible after a war between India and Pakistan. Of the complicity between India and the leaders of the Awami League Washington had no doubt and it was because of this that Washington was bent upon providing aid to Pakistan so as to bolster its security vis-a-vis India, which in any case was in receipt of huge military aid from the Soviet Union; President Nixon's exceptionally warm and endearing terms\textsuperscript{161}, while referring to Mrs. Gandhi and India were intended to camouflage his real views: Kissinger himself attests to the 'two most unfortunate meetings Nixon had with any foreign leader\textsuperscript{162}.' Groomed in the tradition of Senator McArthy, Nixon had risen to political prominence during those years of rabid anti-communism when Americans suspected infiltration of the communist menace into every branch of the American system. He could never reconcile to India's Soviet connection and in fact his opening to China symbolised his attempt at keeping the Soviet Union in place.
Both in his address of welcome and at the state dinner, Nixon carefully skirted the one issue of immediate relevance—the desperate situation in East Pakistan. In effect, he downgraded the East Bengal crisis in American eyes by ignoring it completely while playing up to the Indian gallery in referring to Mrs. Gandhi's problems made all the more difficult by the recent floods and devastation in the eastern part of India. The Times of India reported that all that he could bring himself to talk about was the typhoons and floods in Orissa as if somehow the shootings 'Killings, the rape and pillage in East Bengal and the uprooting of the millions of people had escaped his attention or was totally irrelevant.' As some observers pointed out, 'for a performance of calculated cynicism there has been nothing to match the President's utterances in recent times'. President Nixon's reference to the Indo-Soviet treaty to be based on 'mere mundane considerations of security' while America's friendship with India was on a 'higher and profound morality' was hardly convincing to the Indian delegation, coming as it did from a head of state who was 'deliberately ducking moral implications'. Mrs. Gandhi, in her reply was candid enough to remind her host that to the natural calamities of drought, flood and cyclone has been added 'a man-mad tragedy of vast proportions.' With equal persistence
she remarked that the occasion was 'too serious for scoring propaganda points'. In any case the U.S. administration's insensitivity to the issues involved in the Bangladesh problem did not come as a surprise to the Indian delegation. The American stand was made known to Mrs. Gandhi shortly before her departure to the United States.

All available evidence only confirmed the Indian belief that the American role over the Bangladesh affair had been less than helpful not only to India but to the cause of peace in the subcontinent. President Nixon's reluctance to concede the Indian view that a dialogue between the military rulers and the elected representatives of Bangladesh would lead to a settlement became clearer after Mrs. Gandhi's visit. So was his unwillingness to regard American leverage in Pakistan to be of sufficient importance to influence General Yahya Khan. There was also no indication that the 'man made tragedy' made any perceptible impact on Nixon's conscience. Having encountered resistance by India to the UN plan of troop withdrawal and posting of UN observers, U.S. made the preposterous suggestion to New Delhi of India absorbing the ten million refugees in return for enhanced financial commitments. This dangerous suggestion was enforced with the argument that in the
interest of peace in the subcontinent India which was geographically large enough to absorb even twice that number should think more in terms of dispersing the refugees from West Bengal and less about ensuring their return. The feeler were accompanied by discreet assurances of America's willingness to underwrite expenditure for a specific period.

Actually, two separate sets of principles were involved in the policies of India and the United States in this instance. India assessed the Bangladesh issue in terms of the Wilsonian self-determination. The U.S. Government on the other hand chose to stand on the concept built into the U.N. character that protected the sovereignty and integrity of member nations against interference by external powers. Ironically, in the Kashmir debates in the United Nations the principle of national integrity was being defended by India and the concept of self-determination by the United States. Somehow the two countries looked at different issues from different perspectives. Kissinger's meeting in the October with a top Indian emissary made no bones about the growing strains between the U.S. and India over developments in the subcontinent. Declining to put pressure on Pakistan, Kissinger had maintained that it would appear at that juncture to be 'blackmailing' a
'good' and 'loyal' friend like President Yahya when the Bangladesh leaders and their Indian supporters had been consistently maligning President Nixon. Kissinger's annoyance was evident when he referred to the 'spontaneous reception accorded to recent visitors to this country from the U.S.' The reference obviously was to Senator Edward Kennedy and Kissinger was believed to have remarked that the Indian leaders were making use of Mr. Nixon's political opponents, feasting them and erecting triumphal arches in their honour to create difficulties for the U.S. President personally. Though there were extended Indo-U.S. talks on Bangladesh no Joint Communique was issued and though both Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Nixon remained calm they apparently also stood firm to previous positions. However the USA assured Mrs. Gandhi that it would make an early announcement of stopping arms aid to Pakistan.

Thus, achievement wise, there was little India could boast of during Mrs. Gandhi's Washington trip except perhaps a vague assurance by the U.S. administration to stop the shipment of arms to Pakistan. But the point Mrs. Gandhi scored was that she had been frank and forthright in the exposition of the Indian point of view in private while being correct and restrained in public. It was by any standard a
statesman-like performance, for, the Nixon administration could now no longer claim that it was ignorant of the issues involved or of India's position. Nor could it complain that New Delhi had been over-hasty. Mrs. Gandhi had shown that she had been patient beyond measure and had explained how best a greater tragedy could be averted. She had been extra-courteous in doing all that not through the usual diplomatic channel but by personally coming to Washington and pleading with the person who really mattered in the U.S. administration. Even if the visit had been unfruitful it was both necessary and worth-while\textsuperscript{175}. New Delhi could justly claim that it had done all that it could in the cause of peace. Mrs. Gandhi gave ample warning that if war came it would be despite her best efforts to prevent it. 'India is not responsible for the savage military repression in East Pakistan that has sent millions of hungry and homeless people swarming across her frontiers' said the Washington Evening Star at the conclusion of Mrs. Gandhi's visit\textsuperscript{176}

In White House Years, however, Kissinger builds up a thesis that while U.S. diplomacy worked actively during this period to urge restraint on all parties and pursuaded Yahya to make 'significant political concessions', Mrs. Gandhi, despite professions of peace,
had already made a decision to go to war and establish, Indian supremacy on the subcontinent. It is apparent that the Nixon-Kissinger combine had their personal prejudices which coloured their perceptions of Mrs. Gandhi. According to Kissinger, Mrs. Gandhi listened to his presentation—that the U.S. had accomplished through pursuasion' with Yahya, the appointment of a civilian Government in East Pakistan, proclamation of an amnesty, the promise not to execute Mujib and fixing a clear timetable for a political solution implying a civilian Government would be established in Pakistan by March with independence shortly thereafter with 'aloof indifference'. He then goes on to make a preposterous statement that 'Yahya's mounting concessions aggravated Mrs. Gandhi's problem because of the near certainty they would lead to a favourable outcome'. 'Mrs. Gandhi was going to war', he says, 'not because she was convinced of our failure, but because she feared our success'.

Christopher Van Hollen has rejected outright Kissinger's contention by saying 'this was an extraordinary claim'. Going by the President's February 1972 Foreign Policy Report to the Congress, written by Kissinger and his staff, he candidly admitted that the 'United States cannot be certain that the steps it proposed would have brought about a negotiation, or
that such a negotiation would have produced a settlement. But later in his memoirs Kissinger asserted emphatically that the 'near certainty' of 'our success' drove Mrs. Gandhi to war. Van Hollen, on the contrary suggests that it is most improbable that any negotiations which had not even begun at the time would have succeeded even if the imprisoned Mujib had been brought into picture. Since Mujib by late 1971 would not have settled for anything less than independence, a demand Yahya could not meet any negotiations were doomed to failure—which helps explain why they never occurred.

Similarly, it is highly unlikely that Yahya's timetable for political evolution would have succeeded. There was after all no assurance that the civilian Government he planned for late December would have included any Awami Lenguers who reflected the views of Mujib. Since the Awami League had been banned, it was very likely that some sort of a puppet regime, unrepresentative of the people of East Bengal would have been set up. Given Yahya's unbending attitude, he would by no means have allowed the Awami League to form a Government. Hence, there is no basis for Kissinger's anticipation of early autonomy for East Pakistan. The view he expressed to the press in December 1971 was closer to reality when he said, 'that the time required
to bring about a political evolution might be longer than the Indian capacity to withstand the pressure generated by the refugees. Like Kissinger, President Nixon too believed, that Mrs. Gandhi intentionally deceived him and that while they were talking in the White House, she knew her generals and advisers were planning to intervene in East Pakistan and were considering contingency plans for the West. Nixon also believed that by the time Mrs. Gandhi returned back to India a combination of factors combined to make the military option increasingly attractive to India-unrelieved pressure of the refugees, a perceived lack of progress toward political accommodation, assurances received from the Indo-Soviet treaty and the probability that China would not intervene.

To the cool, calculative political mind of Mrs. Gandhi, it seemed certain that the Chinese would not intervene in a Indo-Pak War and hence throughout the period of the crisis she kept her options open with the Chinese. In Washington she was reported to have stated that she thought the Chinese attitude towards the world had changed and that 'Peking might not get involved with conflicts elsewhere'. Surprisingly, optimism about the Chinese was even in
sharp contrast to the leader of the Communist group in the Lok Sabha, Prof. Hiren Mukherjee who stated 'the help to Islamabad by China only reflects Peking's pernicious, \^{183} cynicism'. But Mrs. Gandhi's observations about the Chinese had not been without content. The Rawalpindi Correspondent of The Times, London, reported on November 13, that China had advised Pakistan to act with restraint and not attack India and try for a political settlement of the East Bengal problem. The despatch post haste of a high level Pakistani delegation headed by Z.A. Bhutto to China was an indication of the lack of solidarity between the two countries, despite contrary, claims by the military junta in Islamabad. 'Bhutto's 'resurrection' from political wilderness to lead an official delegation was indeed a desperate exercise in personalised diplomacy\^{184}. Though, Peking would by no means have liked a pro-Indian Bangladesh, yet being the champion of liberation struggles it could not accept the genocide perpetrated by Pakistan. It was significant that the Chinese regarded such aid as Delhi was giving to the Bangladesh refugees as 'crude interference' in Pakistan's internal affairs and not as 'aggression' and were deliberately vague about the extent or nature of 'support' they would give in case there was 'aggression'. That China was keeping its options open while seeming to lean on Pakistan's side was however, no comfort to the Indian Government. For all their difference of approach
and emphasis there was a remarkable degree of common ground between Washington, Peking and Moscow on the East Bengal issue in the sense that they were all against the crisis being resolved through war and they all wanted a settlement which whatever the concessions, made to East Bengali national sentiment, preserved the unity of Pakistan. Though the Russians undoubtedly urged the Yahya regime publicly to come to terms with Mujib, the Americans and the Chinese maintained a 'cynical' silence on this point. Again, while the Russians repeatedly demanded a situation to be created for the return of the refugees, the Americans and the Chinese remained unresponsive. But all were nevertheless, opposed to applying the kind of sanctions which alone could have forced the military regime in Islamabad to seek a democratic settlement with the duly elected leaders of the people of East Bengal. In the event, Swaran Singh's declaration that New Delhi could count on a total support of Moscow in case of a conflict seemed as extravagant as of course, was Bhutto's claim that there was a complete identity of views between Peking and Islamabad.\[185\]

Upon Mrs.Gandhi's felicitations to the Chinese premier Chou Enlai of China's admission to the U.N., Chou, reciprocated in a message to Mrs.Gandhi that he hoped that the 'friendship between the Indian and the
Chinese people would grow and develop daily'. The message was the first to be exchanged between the heads of the two Governments in many years. China, which seemed to be backing the military junta in Islamabad to the hilt, when the crisis first erupted in March, had substantially altered its tone and tenor. It appeared China sought to quietly disengage itself from the crisis in the subcontinent and the Chinese news media in recent times covered developments only perfunctorily. The fact that China did not lash out against India's treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union as many feared it would, was significant.

The CIA report of Mrs. Gandhi's intention to 'straighten out the southern border of Azad Kashmir and to eliminate Pakistan's armour and air force capabilities, confirmed the Nixon-Kissinger suspicion of India's 'grand design' to dismember West Pakistan. Nixon considered the report as one of the few really timely pieces of intelligence the CIA had ever given him, without ever confirming the authenticity of the report. Much as Kissinger accused the State Department of 'regional outlook' and 'blew the' trumpet of his geopolitical perspective' and much as he and Nixon tried to rationalise their invented fiction' that India's real
military aim was not to liberate Bangladesh but to attack and destroy West Pakistan, the fact remained that Mrs. Gandhi had no such plan. The most that the Indian Government did was to shift its support for a united Pakistan before the civil war to support for an independent Bangladesh when it became apparent that the leaders and the people of East Bengal would not acquiesce with anything other than independence.

An avoidable controversy was raked in Parliament over the reported statement by the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad Mr. J.K. Atal. He was reported as saying "that the quick formation of a civilian regime in Pakistan could cut the chances of war by half". Further it was stated that "in connection with India's demands that East Bengal refugees return home, I am sure my Prime Minister would have more patience to wait longer because the formation of a National Government soon would be a sign that something was happening in the right direction." The issue was raised by Indrajit Gupta who said "I think the Prime Minister and other authorised spokesmen of the Government in the country made it quite clear that this will make no difference to the situation because it is a sham thing. There could be no question of a political settlement till Mujib is released and a Government by elected representatives is formed." Replying to the charge Swaran Singh stated "I would like
to say that this statement has come through Associated Press of America. It is not uncommon that statements which are made in Pakistan are distorted in transmission. Our own means of communications with Pakistan are extremely limited. As regards the Government's position I have clarified it so that nobody should be in any doubt."189

For Mrs. Gandhi the temptation to encourage secession in NWFP, Baluchistan and Sind was indeed great, but she knew that she could work upon only those objectives that could be achieved. She attempted what was achievable for, she knew that there were limits to the USSR's support and she also knew that she could play upon the patience of the Americans and the Chinese only upto a point. It was evident that the Soviet Union would not risk a confrontation with the United States over a local subcontinental conflict.

The Nixon-Kissinger combine had been working upon a presumption that China would increase its assistance to Pakistan in the event of a conflict with India.190 And if the Chinese moved militarily the President and his National Security Adviser presumed that the Soviet Union would use force against China. In that event the United States would stand by China, even at the risk of a triangular Soviet-Chinese-American confrontation.191 On the night of December 3, Pakistan attacked India in the
West, when both the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi and the Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram were away from the capital. It was here that the Indo-Soviet Treaty came into active operation when Moscow issued a strong statement on December 5, blaming Islamabad for the war and warned all 'outside powers' to stay out of the conflict. The Soviet Union assured India that if any foreign power intervened, India would be adequately aided by the Soviet Union. Eventually, Moscow brought the issue to the UN Security Council where it defended India's position and vetoed U.S. backed resolutions supporting Pakistan by calling for a cease fire and withdrawal of troops.

President Nixon, however, without working out the precise nature of the assistance he planned to extend to the Chinese, ordered an eight-ship U.S. Navy task force headed by the carrier Enterprise to proceed to the Bay of Bengal. With no effective Chinese aid coming in for Pakistan the possibility of a Sino-Soviet clash seemed distant and it was the Chinese backing out at the crucial moment that emboldened the Russian submarine to chase the Enterprise which was forced to beat a hasty retreat. Thus, while New Delhi eventually had the complete support of the Soviet Union, Pakistan obtained only verbal and diplomatic support from the United States and China, but
no effective military assistance. The massive inflow of Soviet arms since the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty worked greatly to India's advantage over Pakistan. There could be little doubt whatsoever, that but for Moscow's unflinching support for India in the United Nations, it would have indeed been difficult for India to complete the liberation of Bangladesh. For India, except recapturing a few strategic points in the Pakistan occupied Kashmir, which Lal Bahadur Shastri had surrendered, India had no other aim in the West. Having secured the surrender of the Pakistan occupation Army in East Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi declared an unilateral cease-fire. Kissinger's contention that Mrs. Gandhi's offer of a unilateral cease-fire in the West was a 'reluctant decision' resulting from Soviet pressure that resulted from American insistence including the fleet movement and the willingness to risk the Moscow Summit, sounds far fetched. There was no indication that the task force had any impact on Moscow's decision making. As pointed out by the 1978 Brookings Institution study of U.S. armed forces as a political instrument, a careful examination of the Enterprise deployment concludes 'that it is important to emphasize that Soviet and Indian support for a ceasefire was not the result of U.S. military pressure generated by Task Force 74.
Mrs. Gandhi reached her decision of a cease-fire on the basis of several complex internal and external considerations, but not as a result of pressure exerted by the Soviet Union at the U.S. behest. At the time of the ceasefire Indian forces had achieved total military success in East Pakistan, they occupied about 2,500 square miles in Sind and Punjab provinces of West Pakistan and they held small parts of Azad Kashmir. But these military successes were at substantial external political costs. The Soviet Union had to cast two vetoes in the U.N. Security Council stalling the Indian withdrawal from East Pakistan, and India was isolated when a similar resolution passed the General Assembly by a 104-11 vote with 10 abstentions. No third world country except Bhutan supported India nor did any other country outside the Soviet bloc. Since many countries contained potentially dissident areas, Governments were understandably loathe — as the U.S. delegation understood — to endorse outside military intervention against a central authority. Thus, having achieved India's war aims in the East, Mrs. Gandhi's decision to declare a unilateral cease-fire was probably influenced largely by the strong, international climate favouring a cessation of hostilities.

Nevertheless, it is pertinent to bear in mind
that there was enough evidence to show that Moscow, despite its support for New Delhi was demanding an early settlement to its military operations in East Bengal. Moscow regarded a prolonged campaign to be untenable and the Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister V.V. Kuznetsov expressed his apprehensions of possible Sino-American intervention should the integrity of West Pakistan be threatened. In the circumstances, therefore, Moscow warned New Delhi that it would be difficult to oppose the American call for a cease-fire.

Once the military issue in East Pakistan was resolved, the Soviet Union did counsel India for a cease-fire in the West. At that point, Soviet and American aims were generally similar. But the Soviets were not influenced by American pressure nor by a potential Chinese military move. They were clearly motivated by independent Soviet interests in South Asia and elsewhere. Moscow, which had sought to mediate affairs of the subcontinent at Tashkent after the 1965 Indo-Pak war was anxious to prevent further military conflict and to retain its political relationship with Pakistan. But Mrs. Gandhi was successful in playing upon and was able to exploit 'the organic restraints upon the policies of the great powers in South Asian affairs, that is, the desire of Moscow, Washington and Peking to
avoid direct military involvement in a region that offers few advantages. Thus Mrs. Gandhi could declare in December 'Today we will do what is best in our national interest and not what these so-called big nations would want us to do. We value their friendship, help and aid, but we cannot forsake the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The contention that there was a major economic dimension in India's desire to create Bangladesh in 1971 was of some significance. Economic considerations, though imperative, were secondary, for the primary objective upon which India worked was that the return of the refugees could only be possible with the creation of a new state under the elected representatives of the Awami League. Since President Yahya could never reconcile to a Government by the banned Awami League a new Bangladesh State, according to India, was inevitable. Subsequently, however, the economic content of the crisis was highlighted since the eastern part of Pakistan always wanted to have closer relations with India for economic and cultural reasons.

American misreading of Indian and Soviet intentions were compounded by Kissinger's misjudgement of the Chinese. Kissinger believed as late as December 12
that Peking might take military action in support of Pakistan. There was, however, nothing to substantiate this belief for, China still embroiled in the Cultural Revolution showed no serious intention to become militarily involved. 'It was merely protesting an Indian border violations in the Sikkim area. 201 Even if the Chinese internal political tensions had not acted as a restraint any Government in Peking would have thought carefully before attacking across the Himalayas in winter. It was here indeed that Mrs. Gandhi had played her trump card. Moscow may have dissuaded India from recognising Bangladesh in August 1971 and as a price have consented to the treaty, but Mrs. Gandhi acquired in the Soviet advise for she apprehended an immediate outbreak of hostilities with Pakistan if Bangladesh was granted recognition in August. Not inclined to take any risks with the Chinese, Mrs. Gandhi sought to defer the August war till winter had set in and the mountain passes had frozen. This brilliant strategy outmanoeuvered the military rulers of Pakistan. India's success depended upon the isolation of Pakistan which Mrs. Gandhi was able to achieve in December. While providing sanctuaries, staging grounds and occasional artillery cover to the Bengali guerillas in the east, India deliberately delayed action on the Western front. When the Pakistani forces became desperate as a result of the tremendous pressure
upon them on the East, Yahya Khan declared war on the West in December in order to force India to fight a two-front war, but not before the Himalayas had frozen and the passes had closed, thus making the Chinese halt on their tracks if at all they intended attacking India in the north. Pakistan stood alone and isolated, for American weapons without Chinese physical backing were of little consequence. Thus the internal political turmoil coupled with the strategic limitation of the Himalayan winter, made it difficult for China to involve herself directly in any international conflict. For the sake of expediency China again played the role of 'paper tiger' and used only the threat of words against the Soviet Union and India. More so, the Chinese, despite the seemingly conciliatory exchanges between Chou Enlai and Mrs. Gandhi, were apprehensive of the Indo-Soviet treaty which the Chinese policy makers interpreted as yet another Soviet move to encircle China.202

For the United States, the defeat of West Pakistan came as a severe jolt to American prestige, coming as it did, close on the heels of its humiliation in Vietnam. Kissinger's boast that White House actions saved West Pakistan, notwithstanding, it was in fact the flawed Nixon-Kissinger geopolitical approach to South
Asia that warped President Yahya's judgement and made him embark on his disastrous campaign. Nixon and Kissinger had unnecessarily elevated a local crisis into one of U.S.-Soviet confrontation in keeping with their thesis that the U.S.-Soviet contest must be fought out at all levels and in all regions, and that the Soviets were to be held responsible for its 'client' India which was fighting a 'proxy war' for the U.S.S.R. The Nixon-Kissinger combine had clearly misinterpreted the political dynamics in the subcontinent and exaggerated the role and influence of the major external powers. 203

It was the misplaced trust that Yahya put on the United States that finally brought his fall. From all accounts it seemed that President Yahya had adopted a deliberate suicidal course and had run on the road to ruin. 204 Obviously, taking no lessons from Pakistan's experience with the Americans and the Chinese during the 1965 war, Yahya had put too much in the American and Chinese baskets in 1971 and both failed him. Yahya was befooled by Kissinger's verbal innuendos by which he never ceased to express his sense of gratitude to Pakistan and Yahya for their role as the 'channel to China'. The Pakistani President had gone so far on the line to commit his country to war that when time came for effective Sino-U.S. aid and it was not forthcoming Yahya had to
declare war upon India virtually alone. Although Nixon's message to Yahya tried to dissuade him from attacking India in the West to relieve the pressure in the East, the Pakistani President in a desperate suicidal move launched an attack against India in the West that was doomed to failure. His actions provided India with the opportunity it needed to move openly against East Pakistan.

In sharp contrast to the boisterous noise of the Pak military junta committing itself to war with India long before the war actually began, were the strategic, calculative moves of the Indian leadership. The differences in perception over working out a difficult situation, indeed revealed the vital difference between the functioning of a rash military dictatorship and that of a democratic set up, working by consensus. While Yahya's relations with Bhutto were not extremely cordial, Mrs. Gandhi operated with the help of a small group of extremely efficient advisers and assistants like P.N.Haksar, P.N.Dhar, G.Parthasarathy, D.P.Dhar, K.B.Eal and T.N.Kaul. The Political Affairs committee of the Cabinet comprised the stalwarts of Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet like Jagjivan Ram, Y.B.Chavan and Swaran Singh. India's Ambassador to the United States, L.K.Jha was one of those
diplomats who never ceased to put forth India's case in the most convincing manner in Washington. Thus, there was a perfect coordination in India's political, bureaucratic, diplomatic and defence outfits — the last being ably headed by Sam Manekshaw. The success of India was very largely due to this harmony between the various elements in policy making and at the head of it all was Mrs. Gandhi, personally supervising the developments to the minutest detail.

In the United States most commentators charged that the United States had badly blundered. It had placed itself on the wrong moral side of a civil war and on the wrong side of an international war. For the Soviet Union, its support for India, now the preponderant power in the subcontinent, it had been a major diplomatic triumph. The Soviet support, though hesitant and cautious initially, actively backed India during the final phase of the crisis, particularly in the United Nations. In any case, the Soviet Union now commanded an enviable position of being the mentor of a country, which with the help of Soviet weapons had beaten a country, whose entire military machinery was built with American and Chinese aid. In fact, the Russians never ceased to express their deep sense of satisfaction to India for its effective handling of Soviet weapons. Moscow was overwhelmingly impressed at the fact that India had successfully demonstrated the efficiency of Soviet
weapons in the international arms market. However, it was not the superiority of Soviet weapons to the American that finally decided the course of the war. Rather it was the weakness of the enemy, its ignorance in handling sophisticated American weapons, that gave the Indian army, which was far superior in the technical knowledge of using Soviet weapons and its overall superiority that decided the war in favour of India. It would have been a very difficult proposition for India if it were to face Israel fully equipped with American weapons. Nevertheless, for almost a decade and even beyond, after the 1971 war, Moscow was assured of a steady arms market in India. The Bangladesh crisis was an emphatic demonstration of Mrs. Gandhi's skill in conducting an extremely delicate international situation to her advantage. By adroitly playing the Soviet card, she proved to be more than a match to the 'closed' two-man Nixon-Kissinger combine. To say, however, that Nixon was outmanoeuvred by Mrs. Gandhi would be too egotistic, rather a better way of putting it would be to say that the President and his National Security Adviser were outdone by their own misjudgements, by their secretive inward looking personalised negotiations, by their overestimation of the effectiveness of U.S. actions, by their own public opinion and by the people of Bangladesh. The victory of the Mukti Bahini and the
Indian troops in Bangladesh and then the Indian victory over West Pakistan, exposed the bluff of the Nixon-Kissinger system which had alienated the White House from the Congress and had proved so damaging to the White House image. The fact that Kissinger was denied access to the Oval Office for several weeks after the December war only confirmed Nixon's frustration and sense of shame at the loss of face in Bangladesh. Throughout the entire period of the crisis U.S. straddled hopelessly trying to sustain an unpopular genocidal regime in Pakistan and its role drew worldwide attention and criticism. In India, particularly, it was regarded as a betrayal and U.S.-Indian relations plunged a new low. Washington still seemed to be wedded to its view of Pakistan as a 'balance' against India in the subcontinent. There was also a reluctance to abandon the huge U.S. financial investment in Pakistan and even more, to concede that the old policy of massive military and economic aid was on balance a failure.