CHAP. IV

POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE GULF STATES
(IRAN, IRAQ, KUWAIT, & SAUDI ARABIA)

Indo-Gulf relations have a long history, and we do have a few competent studies on the nature, magnitude and significance of these relations. The ancient civilizations which flourished on the banks of the Euphrates, the Nile and the Indus may well be regarded as representing a sort of relavence of human culture. The expansion of Islam beyond the confines of the Arabian peninsula all the way to the land of the Ganga set off a process of acculturation and gave rise to many movements of social egalitarianism in the Indian subcontinent. A competent Indian scholar identified the medieval period as 'a golden age of Indo-Gulf relations' owing to the large scale fruitful exchange that then occurred between India and the Gulf region in the fields of culture and sciences. This was followed by a period of limited contacts. Finally with the emergence of national self consciousness in the colonial world, a new era of appreciation of each other's political aspirations dawned both in India and in the Gulf states. Thanks to the perspective afforded by this appreciation, the Indian National Congress was able to perceive the colonial machinations in Palestine for the creation of a sectarian state for a global community. The government of the peoples of India was able to adopt a well-defined stance on the Palestinian question as a cardinal principle for its foreign policy. In recent years the policy has paid dividends by way of grateful appreciation.
the part of the Gulf states and, in a way, paved the way for friendly Indo-Gulf ties.

Relations between India and the Gulf States are generally regarded as constituting an essential component of the legacy on Indo-Arab relations. This is not absolutely preposterous. The people of the Gulf states, with the single exception of Iran, are of Arab stock, speaking the Arabic language and are heirs to Arab cultural heritage. Of course in a sense, India’s relations with Gulf states are qualitatively different from its relations with the rest of the Arab world and as such, deserve a distinct treatment. As a peripheral region, the Arab coastal belt had for a long time in history kept out of the main stream of Arab cultural development. Unlike those who lived in the land-locked towns, the inhabitants of the coast had vast uncharted oceans before them, and they felt little need to unravel the mysteries of the mirage land of the desert. Instead of carrying out raids and engaging in trade along the various caravan routes, they devoted their energies to piracy and maritime trade. Their contribution to Arab culture consists in developing the science of navigation and in making geographical discoveries. Their adventures took them far away from their homes to the mysterious lands of Asia and Africa. They established settlements in areas as far away as Canton in China, Malabar in India and Sofala in East Africa. They acquired mastery over the physical features of the earth and gained a perspective.

of comparative cultural ecology. They kept up their contacts with widely scattered regions of Asia and Africa and became the chief means of cultural communication in a vast area of the World. The study of India’s political relations with the major Gulf states is undertaken as follows:

1 R.L., I.C.S W.I., pp. 89-90

As we have seen in the previous chapter India has been having contacts with Iran even before the dawn of history. After India’s independence the Indo-Iran joint Commission was set up and the periodic meeting of the Commission took place regularly. At the third meeting of the Commission held in Teheran in December 1970 an agreement was reached for the import of certain chemicals over the next few years and the possibilities of cooperation in various fields (economic, cultural, and technical) were explored. The only obstacle affecting the cordial relation between India and Iran has been the latter’s affinity with Pakistan until the Khomeini revolution. Iran has been candid and outspoken regarding her relation with Pakistan. In an interview with the Times of India in August 1973 the Shah made a statement that India could be completely reassured that unless it attacked Pakistan, it would not face either direct or indirect, the arms Iran was acquiring. Apparently sensitive to the possibility that his qualification regarding an attack on Pakistan might be misunderstood in India where his massive purchase of highly sophisticated military hardware have already caused some concern, the Shah took pains to emphasise that he was convinced that India had no interest in working for the dismemberment of what remained in Pakistan. On the contrary in his view India was as alive to the dangerous consequences

2. IBID. pp 89-90

3. INDIA, a reference annual (1971-72), p.528
of the break up of Pakistan and Iran. He also said that not only was he not encouraging intransigence on the part of Pakistan, but he was implying it to pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence and indeed active cooperation with India because it was evident to him that there could be no stability in Asia without it. Iran's own interest required peace in the subcontinent. The Shah was known to be unhappy that his statement affirming support for territorial integrity of Pakistan should have been interpreted in India to imply a willingness on his part of transfer military hardware to Islamabad. That is presumably why he used the occasion provided by the interview to make it clear that he did not doubt India's bonafides.

The exchange of visit by the heads of the two states and identity of stances on divergent national and international issues also give testimony to the longstanding cordial relations between them. The then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi paid a four day official visit to Tehran in April 1974. She was given a warm and affectionate welcome by the thousands of chanting people of Iran. She was received by the then Prime Minister of Iran Mr. Amir Abbas Hoveida, the then Foreign Minister Mr. Shah Ali Khalatbary and other dignitaries. She was accompanied by the then Internal Affairs Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh, the then Foreign Secretary Mr. G. S. Dhillon, the Prime Minister's Secretary Mr. P.N. Dhar and other Foreign Ministry officials. At a State dinner Mrs. Gandhi said that Iran and India had inherited similar problems and there was wide scope for developing the range and depth of mutual industrial and scientific cooperation. "We welcome Iran's emphasis on regional cooperation in trade and economic development. Idealism and pragmatism are not always in conflict for our own strength we should work for the economic development of entire region." At a press conference on the Security of India.

Ocean Mrs. Gandhi said it was not a matter on which two of them could take a decision. They could only express their view that there should be peace and lessening of tension. She further said although there was no direct threat to India the presence of any one Power in the Indian Ocean would provoke other Powers. This was how tension escalated. It was not for her to say anything about Iran's position but her impression was that Iran would like to see that the Indian Ocean remained an area of peace. Asked for her views on the Shah's idea on having a common market for the Indian Ocean area, she said India had always believed in multilateral and regional cooperation. In today's world it was more important than ever before. That was why any kind of economic cooperation was very welcome. First, it would strengthen the region as a whole. If peace and stability could be achieved through economic cooperation it could do a lot of good to the international situation. Any kind of regional cooperation should not be directed against any country. According to a joint communique issued on 2 May 1972 at the conclusion of Mrs. Gandhi's visit Iran was expected to provide credits in excess of one billion dollars to India to help maximise the capacity of its expert oriented industry, establish a joint shipping line with an initial capacity of five lakh tonnes and triple the capacity of the Kudremukh iron-ore project to seven million tonnes. It was for the first time that Iran had agreed to extend soft loans to India. The two countries were now closer to each other in their assessment of the situation in the Indian subcontinent, the Indian Ocean region and West Asia. Mr. Hoveida supported all efforts to settle outstanding disputes.
between India and Pakistan through bilateral negotiations and through peaceful means. The two sides also felt that an overall settlement of the West Asia problem could be achieved only through the full implementation of the Security Council resolution of 1967 calling for complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and the just solution of the Palestinian problem. They reviewed the developments in the Indian Ocean and reaffirmed their support for declaring it as a zone of peace in accordance with the UN resolution. The two sides also decided to form a joint shipping line with financial assistance with an initial capacity of five lakh tonnes to operate between the two countries and other routes, which might be agreed upon by the two countries. The memorandum of understanding provided for increasing the production of the Kudremukh iron-ore project in Karnataka from 3.5 million tonnes of pellets per year to 7.5 million tonnes to be exported to Iran as also a study on increasing the capacity of the alumina project to three lakh tonnes, over which Iran would have the first option.

The Shah of Iran and his wife the Shahbanou arrived in New Delhi on 2 October 1974 on a three day state visit. In his welcome speech Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad the then President of India, referred to the earlier visits of the Shah in 1956 and 1969. He said the constant and frequent exchanges at the highest level were a happy feature of Indo-Iranian relations. At a state banquet Shah referred to the numerous treaties, agreements and accords between the two countries. A joint

5. The HINDUSTAN TIMES, New Delhi, 3.5.74.
commission for economic, commercial and technical cooperation had also been set up. Before a press briefing Shah emphasised Iran's attitude towards India and Pakistan:

"We will never assist Pakistan if they start an aggressive war against India. I am sure India is not going to start a war for the sake of it. We will support no country in an aggressive more. The question of arms supply to Pakistan is irrelevant in the light of Iran's friendship with India and our cardinal policy of peace in the region. We shall do everything to avoid antagonism between the countries."

He did not think CENTO would have any significant role in the event of another confrontation between India and Pakistan. The heads of both countries reaffirmed their conviction that a peaceful and secure world order can only be achieved by strict adherence by all countries to the principles of the UN Charter, non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations, respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the inadmissibility of the use of force in international relations for settling outstanding disputes or obtaining territorial gain. Iran and India welcomed the admission of Bangla Desh to the UN and looked forward to Bangla Desh playing its rightful role in the world community. As the members of the UN adhoc committee on the Indian Ocean, India and Iran noted with satisfaction that the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace free from Great Power rivalry, tension and military escalation, was gaining wider acceptance and support and that there was a growing realisation among states that the implementation of the UN resolution in this regard would contribute towards strengthening international peace and security and promoting the true interest of the littoral States of the Indian
Ocean. They called upon the Great Powers to extend their cooperation in establishing the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. They agreed that the peace and security of these areas should be the concern and responsibility of the littoral states and that there should be full cooperation among them to achieve this objective. Reiterating their support to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus, they called for the fulfilment of the resolutions of the Security Council on Cyprus and expressed the view that the future political arrangements in Cyprus should be worked out through consultations between the two communities in a peaceful climate free from external pressures or interference. Reviewing the situation in Vietnam, they agreed on the urgent need for the full implementation of the Paris Agreement by the parties concerned in order to restore peace and tranquility in that region and enable the people to live free from suffering and war. They also agreed on the necessity of achieving complete and universal disarmament including nuclear disarmament under effective international control. In this connection the Indian Prime Minister welcomed the proposal of Shah to 29th session of the UN General Assembly for the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East and expressed the Indian Government's support for this proposal.

The Shah of Iran, accompanied by the Shahbanon visited India during Janata rule also. They arrived in New Delhi on 2 February 1978 to a warm welcome. At a news conference when asked about rejection by Pakistan of his idea of an Asian Common Market, he said he would get a first hand idea about Pakistan's attitude during his stopover at Islamabad. The idea of a common market of Indian ocean riparians was not new in the three
years since he had proposed it, "many countries have rallied to this idea." He said "his proposal was not in the interest of a few to the detriment of the rest. I think they will all profit by it." On Arab-Israel conflict, he said stand on the conflict was based on the principles of the UN charter that no one could use force to take over other people's territory and on the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people. In a joint communiqué issued on 5 February 1978 at the end of the Shah's visit, Iran offered India additional crude supplies annually on credit terms or lumpsum payment to participate in or finance approved projects such as the alumina project for the eastern coast deposits of bauxite, paper and pulp factory for Tripura and the second stage of the Rajasthan canal. Crude supplies which would be on credit terms would be at OPEC price. The Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai accepted the lucrative offer. Official sources said the additional crude supplies would not be a gift. The detailed agreement would later spell out terms of credit and its repayment in cash or kind. The bulk of repayment was likely to be through products made possible through approved projects. The two leaders reaffirmed their solidarity with the people of Southern Africa in "their just struggle against the forces of racialism, colonialism and exploitation." They hope that the last vestiges of colonialism and racial discrimination in every form would be ended without delay. The two sides agreed on the necessity of achieving complete and universal disarmament, specially nuclear disarmament under collective international control. While reviewing the question of peaceful uses of nuclear energy the Shah reiterated his Government adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Both sides have
have agreed to cooperate with each other for the development of nuclear science for peaceful purposes. The Shah and Mr. Desai stressed the urgent need for the speedy establishment of a new international economic order based on interdependence, equality and justice. They laid particular stress on the need to reform the international trading system on these principles so as to bridge the gap between the industrialised and the developing countries which if unattended to, would threaten the prospects of peace in the whole world. The two leaders called upon the developed industrial nations to respect the right of developing countries to fair and equitable prices for their export commodities and to have access to advanced technology.

In a joint statement issued simultaneously in New Delhi and Tehran on 2 May 1982 India and Iran called for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Afghan question on the basis of the withdrawal of "all foreign troops and the principles of non-interference and non-intervention. The Statement urged all concerned to work towards such a settlement which would ensure that the Afghan people would determine their own destiny free from outside interference. Actually Russian intervention in Afghanistan had sparked off controversy over India's stance on this issue. Iran the neighbouring country of Afghanistan vigorously condemned Russian move due to her security interest and expected India to join her in the chorus. But the fact that India has not been candid in denouncing Soviet Russia created misunderstanding between India and Iran. But this phase of Indo-Iranian strained relations proved short-lived and the joint

7. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, New Delhi, 6.2.78
statement by the spokesmen of their respective countries dispelled all suspicions and the cordial relations between the two countries were resorted to. On the Iran-Iraq war, the statement said that the Iranian side had briefed the Indian side on their views. The Indian side had expressed the hope for a just solution of the dispute in the near future. India as a member of the coordination bureau of the non-aligned movement made considerable attempt to end the war but due to intransigent attitudes of both the warring parties and apparently indifferent views taken by the superpowers all talks of peace proved infructuous. Also as the chairperson of the non-aligned movement India's bid for peace has been commendable.

Reviewing the situation in West Asia, the two Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people with the Palestine Liberation Organization as their legitimate representative. The two sides agreed to set up in the near future an Indo-Iranian Joint Commission to give a fillip to their bilateral relations in economic, trade, industrial, science and technology, cultural and other fields. They drew up a detailed programme for enhanced economic cooperation.

2. RELATIONS WITH IRAQ:

Iraq is first and foremost an Arab, hence an ardent supporter of Arab cause. Besides, in the wake of revolution in 1958 she assumed the character of a non-aligned nation.

8. THE TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi, 3.5.82.
The fact that India has been consistently supporting Arab cause and a founder member of non-aligned movement has contributed to strengthening the relations between the two countries in modern times. There has been frequent exchange of visits by the officials and leaders of the two countries. A goodwill delegation comprising Mr. A.P. Sharma the then M.P. and Mir Qasim, a political leader of Jammu & Kashmir, visited Iraq in July 1970. The then Deputy Minister for External Affairs also paid a goodwill visit to Iraq in September 1970 and annual trade talks between the two countries were regularly held. An agreement was signed for increased turnover.

A four member Iraqi delegation led by the then Planning Minister Dr. Hashim Jawaid met the then Indian Minister of Planning Mr. D.P. Dhar and members of the planning commission in New Delhi in December 1972 and decided to set up an Indio-Iraqi Joint Planning Committee. The Committee had to study and utilize planning activities of the two countries for mutual benefit. The two sides also agreed that consultancy organizations of the two countries, which have already had preliminary discussions during the visit of the delegation, would hold further discussions to arrive at specific collaboration arrangements between them. These contacts are indicative of the fact that both the countries have will to strengthen relations and to benefit from each other.

The then Vice President of Iraq Mr. Saddam Husain was given a warm welcome on his arrival in New Delhi in early 1974 on a three day official visit. Mr. Husain who is one of the top policy makers in his country was received by the then Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her cabinet colleagues. Mr. Husain had wide-ranging talks with Indian leaders on bilateral matters particularly the strengthening of economic relations.

10. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, New Delhi, dated 24.12.72
Iraq was the first among the oil producing countries to have committed to an agreement with this country for supplying crude for ten years. Virtually speaking relations between India and Iraq grew progressively ever since the Ba'th party came into power in the country. According to the communique issued, an agreement finalized the establishment of a permanent joint commission charged with overall responsibility for locating new areas of cooperation in economic and cultural fields and their implementation. The joint commission came into existence in 1973 by an exchange of letters between the two Governments. Both leaders expressed their common resolve to see the Indian Ocean develop as a zone of peace. They also expressed the support for Arab cause—vacation of all occupied Arab territories by Israelis and establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

The Indian Prime Minister Late Mrs. Indira paid an official visit to Baghdad on 19 January 1975. Mrs. Gandhi and the then Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council Dr. Saddam Hussein later held talks in which they stressed the need for Asian countries to stand up against outside interference. Both leaders affirmed their desire to develop and diversify cooperation between the two countries. They also acknowledged that the trade relations had not always been as smooth as could be desired because of occasional bureaucratic delays. On 20 January 1975, Baghdad University departed from its tradition in conferring on Mrs. Gandhi an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws—an honour usually reserved only for Heads of State. Mrs. Gandhi stressed that Indo-Iraq friendship dated back thousands of years and both countries were pioneers of maritime commerce.

11. THE TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi, dated 29.3.74
In a joint communique issued on 21 January 1975, at the end of Mrs. Gandhi's visit, India and Iraq expressed confidence in increasing possibilities of collaboration between the two countries in the development of the oil industry, setting up of Industrial and transporation projects and developing potential of agriculture and water resources in Iraq. The two leaders said that just peace could not prevail in the Arab region without liberation of all occupied Arab territories and restoration to the Palestinians of their full rights. They reiterated full support of their Governments to the struggle of Palestinian people to regain their homeland. They agreed on the importance of maintaining unity and solidarity of the non-aligned movement and resolved to cooperate actively to ensure success of the movement. The two leaders stressed the importance of the Indian Ocean being a zone of peace; free from foreign military bases and Great Power rivalry and tension. The two leaders called on developed countries to place their economic relations with developing countries on an equitable and just basis. They reaffirmed their conviction that developing countries should also strengthen economic and technical cooperation among themselves in order to achieve and all round progress. They strongly condemned the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa in defiance of the UN resolutions.

The then Vice President of Iraq Mr. Taha Marouf visited India in the first week of July 1978 during which he held talks on bilateral matters with the erstwhile Prime Minister of India Mr. Morarji Desai and other leaders. A joint communique was issued on 7 July 1978 in which India and Iraq called for unity and cohesion of the non-aligned movement.

so that it remained an effective forum for fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas. The two countries were satisfied that the movement had successfully and effectively emerged as a formidable moral force against all evils confronting mankind, particularly all forms of colonialism, zionism, alien domination and apartheid. The two leaders emphasized the urgent necessity for the recognition by the developed countries of the legitimate rights and aspirations of all the people of the world for economic and social progress. The talks between the two leaders reflected the traditional close ties between the two countries and the earnest desire of both sides to further consolidate their friendship and to expand the areas of mutually beneficial cooperation in all fields. Both the leaders reaffirmed their unflinching support for Arab cause.

It would not be irrelevant to dwell upon six year old Iran-Iraq war while discussing political relations of India with these two warring states. For one thing, this development has a bearing on Indian diplomacy and for another India is one of the founder members of the non-aligned movement and both the warring countries are the members of the movement. This is different thing that both are competing in defeating the very objective of the movement—establishment of peace. As a result of the persistent efforts of Yugoslavia to have some mechanism of conflict resolution for the member states within the movement, The Belgrade Ministerial Conference in July 1978 accepted the principle of resolving the disputes bilaterally, through various forms of good offices or within the framework of regional organisations. The Ministerial Conference also agreed that:

the Non-aligned Movement can also help parties to a dispute to prevent, in time, such disputes from developing into armed conflicts and involving foreign interests. In this regard, the Conference examined the possibility when the parties to a dispute do request, of establishing informal adhoc groups for providing good offices to parties in dispute and encouraging peaceful settlements through negotiations, mediation, good offices and other measures embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. The composition of these groups would be determined in the light of concrete situations, the nature of conflict and the views of the countries involved in the dispute.

The provision of an adhoc group to help settle conflicts between non-aligned states was included in relation to the Iran-Iraq war. The New Delhi Ministerial conference asked the Foreign Minister of Cuba, India, Zambia and the Head of the Political Department of the PLO to exert all possible efforts to resolve the conflict. The group was asked to work on the basis of the principles of non-use of force, non-aggression, territorial integrity, sovereignty and non intervention (para 86, New Delhi Declaration). After nearly 18 months of tireless efforts the group has almost confessed its failure at its meeting in Geneva in early July 1982, owing to the "absence of any response from Iran." Thus the attempt on the part of India and other members of the movement to end of the Gulf war yielded no result.

14. Part II, Paras 43 and 44, BELGRADE DECLARATION 1978, as mentioned in the article 'Non-alignment in Asia' by S.D. Muni, published in IDSA JOURNAL Volume XV Number 1 July-September 1982, New Delhi, pp 11-12

15. The TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi, 14.7.82
3. RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA

The political relations between India and Saudi Arabia are marked by the willingness of both the countries to have cordial relations with each other. The facts that Muslims in India constitute second largest majority, Islam emanated from Saudi Arabia and this country has been having an old cultural contacts with India, gave rise to such willingness. It was incumbent upon our country to ensure that the birth of Pakistan as a sovereign independent Islamic state did not come in the way of friendly relations between her and Saudi Arabia. It is true that Pakistan emerged as an adversary to India and has religious affinity with Saudi Arabia still this princely state has been respecting Indian attitude towards the Muslims and has been commending her secular character. The frequent exchange of visits by the officials, diplomats and the leaders of the two countries speak of the truth.

As a routine course Indian good will delegation visits Saudi Arabia at the time of Haj. India has been consistently supporting Arab cause and in pursuance of this policy the official spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs issued the following statement on the Saudi Plan for peace in West Asia on 20 November 1981.

"The Fahd Plan has been welcomed by us as a declaration of the basic principles of peace in West Asia. The Saudi Peace initiative enunciated by Crown Prince Fahd in his statements elaborating the 8 point peace plan has attracted world attention and is becoming.

16. INDIA (A Reference Book 1971-72) p. 530
an instrument of new hope in the region. The Saudi initiative has rightly included the recognition of the Palestinian issue as one of the important elements of any comprehensive and durable West Asian settlement. As clarified by Crown Prince Fahd himself to the Saudi Press agency later, the plan stressed the need for recognition of the PLO as a reality and as the one legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Without PLO's no Palestinian State can be set up. The Saudi initiative is in line with India's general position; consistently stated in various national and international fora. India therefore welcomes the Fahd Plan, as already stated by the Foreign Minister.

At the invitation of Crown Prince Fahd the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Saudi Arabia on 18 April 1982. She was accorded a colourful royal reception in Riyadh and was warmly greeted by Prince Fahd. It was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 26 years. The Saudi Prince expressed the hope that her visit would turn a new leaf in Indo-Saudi bilateral relations. Thanking him Mrs. Gandhi said that India greatly valued its relations with Saudi Arabia. The high power Indian delegation included besides the Finance Minister, Mr. K.P. Narkerjee, two Ministers of State, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, four full-fledged Secretaries (of chemicals and Fertilizers, External Affairs, Petroleum and Commerce), the Economic Advisers in the Department of Economic Affairs and quite a few other officials. On 19 April 1982 Mrs. Gandhi and King Khalid decided to make a joint endeavour

17. ASIAN RECORDER 1981, New Delhi p. 16368
to curb Super-Power influence in the region. They agreed that if the
countries of the region got themselves trapped in big Power designs,
it would only exacerbate tensions and lead to more conflicts and con­
frontations. Both sides expressed grave concern at the continuing Iran-
Iraq war and called for renewed efforts by the non-aligned group of
four and the Islamic Conference to halt it. Despite the fact that Saudi
Arabia is pro U.S. for all practical purposes Prince Fahd said the super
Powers had vested interests and that developing countries should guard
against their moves. Mrs. Gandhi reiterated her opposition to foreign
intervention of any kind in other countries. She said such interferences
should be condemned and opposed whenever they occur. On Afghanistan she
said that India had expressed its views openly as well as in private
conversations with the Soviet leaders. Prince Fahd said he understood the
significance of India's relations with the Soviet Union and appreciated
India's efforts to improve its ties with the U.S.A.

In a joint communique issued on 20 April 1982, at the end of Mrs.
Gandhi's visit India and Saudi Arabia underlined the importance of maintaining
an atmosphere conducive to further negotiations between Pakistan and
India to attain the objectives of non aggression and non-use of force. They
agreed that consolidation of Indo-Pak relations would contribute to the
security, stability and peace in South Asia and the entire region. India
stressed its desire to establish peaceful and harmonious relationship
with all countries, including Pakistan. The two sides agreed that the
stability and security of the Indian subcontinent and the Gulf-region

18. ASIAN RECORDER 1982 New Delhi, p 16639
were closely interlinked. It announced the decision to set up a joint Economic Commission which would hold its first meeting in October 1982. It was proposed that a delegation of Saudi businessmen and industrialists should visit India soon to further explore the possibilities of mutual beneficial cooperation. The Saudi side appreciated India's consistent and firm policy of support for the Arab cause. Mrs. Gandhi reiterated that India would continue this policy. In this context, she welcomed Crown Prince Fahd's eight point peace plan as a "constructive initiative towards achieving a just and durable solution to the West Asian problem."

Noting with grave concern the escalation of Great Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, the two sides urged these powers to "reduce progressively and eliminate eventually their presence." India welcomed the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council and appreciated the "resolves of its members to keep the region free from any interference." The two sides recalled with profound satisfaction the age old Indo-Arab relations and stressed that in the recent years India's traditional relations had developed into a multi dimensional relationship with Saudi Arabia as also with other Arab countries.

In pursuance of the decision taken during Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Saudi Arabia to set up a Joint Economic Commission, its first meeting was held in August 1983. At the end of the first meeting of the Commission in New Delhi on 11 August 1983 India and Saudi Arabia agreed to further strengthen their bilateral cooperation in various fields. Besides signing

19. Ibid.
a protocol on cooperation and an agreement on a Rs. thirty crores Saudi assistance for the Koraput Raigad railway line project, the two countries also agreed to consider long-term arrangements for the exchange of Indian iron-ore with Saudi sulphur. The leader of the Saudi delegation and co-chairman of the Joint Commission Sheikh Mohammad Abul Khail and the then Commerce Minister Mr. Vishwanath Pratap Singh discussed the possibility of exchange of Indian iron-ore and Saudi sulphur during their meeting. They agreed that the joint Commission could be used for strengthening trade ties and finding new avenues for commercial exchanges. They also considered scope for joint ventures consultancy services in the context of expanding economic cooperation. Mr. Singh suggested that Saudi Arabia should lift the ban on import of meat from India in view of the tightened quality control and pre-shipment inspection by Indian authorities. The Saudi Minister promised that once his country's conditions were satisfactorily maintained the matter would be reviewed. All the five committees of the joint Commission completed their work before the protocol was signed.

4. RELATIONS WITH KUWAIT:

Among the major Gulf states Kuwait is the only state which has evolved a system of responsive government. Besides, this is the only country in Arab world that bears true character of a non-aligned nation. These two facts are sufficient to bring this country close to India which is the largest democracy of the world and is a founder member of the non-aligned movement. It was due to this affinity that the then External Affairs Minister of India Sardar Swaran Singh visited Kuwait.

20. THE INDIAN EXPRESS, New Delhi, 12.8.83
in February 1973 and the two countries agreed on 15 February 1973 to form a special committee to study Joint ventures.

The Kuwait Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad informed that their talks had centred on boosting economic and industrial cooperation. India and Kuwait agreed to set up an inter-government joint committee for economic and technical cooperation. The committee would meet at officials' level at least once in a year in India and Kuwait alternatively. The two sides reaffirmed their dedication to the policy of non-alignment and stressed the necessity of coordination among the non-aligned countries for making a positive contribution to world peace. The two countries reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of peaceful co-existence, mutual respect and non-interference in others' internal affairs. The Kuwaiti side shared India's stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on the African peoples struggle against colonialism and racialism.

Sheikh Jaber-Al-Ahmad Al-Jabar Al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait received a very warm welcome when he arrived in New Delhi on 9 September 1980 from Islamabad on a three day visit. This was the first visit by an Emir of Kuwait to India. The President Mr. N. Sanjiva Reddy, the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, her cabinet colleagues, Defence Services Chiefs, Senior officials and diplomats greeted the Emir. Recalling the age-old contacts between the Kuwaitis and Indians, he said India was a cradle of an original civilization that flourished thousands of years ago. "This land has witnessed such monumental sublime vestiges of Islamic civilization.

21. THE TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi Dated 16.2.73
as the entire humanity has to be proud of." Indian skilled workers were already playing a significant part in the development of Kuwait which has attracted eighty thousand Indians in the wake of its oil boom. Kuwait which has the highest per capita imports in the world has about eight hundred Tata buses plying on its roads. India ranks seven on the list of exporters to Kuwait. Indian exports include traditional and non-traditional items. The Emir and the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi viewed with grave concern the growing escalation of Great Power rivalries in the region which lead to increasing tensions and conflicts. They called on all concerned to convert the Indian Ocean into Zone of peace and keep the Gulf free of Great Power rivalry. India appreciated the courageous stand taken by Kuwait against foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean. The two leaders viewed with gravity the developments in West Asia which had assumed ominous dimensions because of Izrael's expansion, aggression and intransigence. They emphasized the urgency of finding a just and durable solution based on complete withdrawal of Izrael from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories including Arab Jerusalem. The Kuwaiti side expressed its appreciation of the consistent and solid support extended by India to the Arab cause. They reaffirmed their adherence to the basic principles of non-alignment. The two leaders fully supported the just struggle of the peoples of South Africa and elsewhere against colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination. Mrs. Gandhi expressed her appreciation of the financial assistance offered to India under the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development. The fund would attach importance to the programme of development that fell within its specialisation, particularly those related to the energy sector.

22. ASIAN RECORDER 1980, New Delhi, p. 15705.
Mrs. Gandhi visited Kuwait in May 1981 and had discussions with the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Jabar Al-Sabah and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al-Saleem Al-Sabah. The communiqué issued after her visit to Kuwait showed close similarity in perceptions and views on a wide range of issues which were covered during the talks in Kuwait. In the discussion on world situation, the leaders of the two countries noted with concern the deterioration in international environment, the persistence of tension. In this connection, it was stressed that the policy of non-alignment was indispensable for the promotion of international peace, cooperation and progress. It was felt that there was need more than ever before to reassess the role of the non-aligned movement as an independent non-bloc factor in international relations and as a positive moral and political force for preserving and strengthening peace and security in the world.

The two sides reaffirmed their unflinching support to the Arab cause and were convinced that no solution of the problem could be found without the participation of PLO as a full partner in any negotiations. The two leaders condemned the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and Israel's illegal intervention in the internal affairs of that country, and called for an urgent and peaceful solution based on the maintenance and respect for sovereignty, independence and unity of Lebanon.

On the situation in Afghanistan, the leaders called for an urgent, peaceful and comprehensive political settlement of the question on the basis of the full respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan, the withdrawal of foreign troops and strict observance of the principles of non-intervention and non-interference. Expressing deep concern and distress at the Iran-Iraq

23. ASIAN RECORDER 1981, New Delhi, p. 16093
conflict, the leaders hoped that Iran and Iraq would resolve their differences peacefully. They expressed their full support for the efforts being made to restore peace between the two States. The leaders called for total support of the decisions taken by the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers' meeting on Namibia held in Algiers in April 1981. The leaders expressed their grave concern over the increasing exalation of Great Power presence in the Indian Ocean area notwithstanding the express wishes of littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean. They reaffirmed the need to redouble efforts for the speedy implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Mrs. Gandhi expressed her satisfaction at the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council and her sincere wishes for the success of this step. On the international economic situation, the leaders noted with deep concern the acute crisis facing the world economy and in particular the developing countries. They underlined the urgent need to make structural changes in the present international economic system that alone could enable the effective application of the new international economic order. Reviewing bilateral relations between India and Kuwait Mrs. Gandhi expressed her Government's appreciation for the assistance that had been extended over the past few years by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. In mid 1981 Govt. of India made relaxations by permitting equity investment from oil exporting developing countries in industrial and other projects in India.

The Problem with the study of Indo-Gulf relations has been that we don't have abundant authentic material on this subject. We get indirect references to these relations while studying the ancient civilizations.

24. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, New Delhi, dated 12.5.81.
which developed and prospered in course of time along the banks of India, Nile and Euphrates. Those civilizations have had positive effects on the people of the Indian subcontinent due to the remarkable quality of assimilation they possess. In consequence, a process of acculturation set in and the land of the Ganga witnessed the dominant movement of social egalitarianism. The medieval period should be taken as honey-moon era of Indo-Gulf relations due to the cultural and scientific contacts of wide dimensions during the period between the people of the two regions. Thereafter the contacts between them marked a decline until the awakening of national self-consciousness among these peoples in the modern period. The edifice of colonialism suffered a severe jolt when the realisation of independence, sovereignty and the idea of self determination dawned upon the people of these regions. The Governments of the two regions identified the similarity of interests and political aspirations and perceived the ill-designs of Great Powers in Palestine for the creation of a Zionist State to serve the interest of her benefactor. The Indian National Congress adopted a clear position on Palestine and articulated a firm opposition to new colonialism and expansionism.

Due to the distinct situation of the coastal Arab states their contributions and activities differ from rest of the Arab world. Since they had vast seas before them they were not bothered about knowing the mysteries of the mirage land of the desert. They were not interested in trade along the various 'caravan' routes. Instead they concentrated in piracy and maritime trade. They developed the science of navigation and devoted their energies to making geographical discoveries. In pursuance of these objectives the Gulf people reached the rich lands of Asia and Africa and established settlements therein. Among the settlements they made in far away areas Malbar in India is noteworthy.
So far as India's relations with Iran in modern period, is concerned, the setting up of Indo-Iran Joint Commission and its yearly meeting deserve first mention. Through the meeting of the commission the two sides have been able to explore the possibilities of cooperation in various fields (economic, cultural and technical). Of course Pakistan's close relations with Iran (until Khomeini Revolution) has been a factor in India's policy towards Iran and an obstacle in the way of cordial relations between the two countries. In an interview with the Times in August 1973 the Shah tried to dispel the apprehension in India about Iran's arms transfer to Pakistan. He made it plain that Iran would not extend arms assistance to Pakistan unless she was attacked by India. Actually break up of Pakistan hurt the feeling of Shah as well as Iranian people. He emphasized that the peace in the subcontinent was in the interest of all parties—India, Pakistan and Iran. Shah was candid in stating that he did not doubt India's bonafides. During the visit of Mrs. Gandhi to Iran in April 1974 she stressed that both the countries were confronted with more or less the same problems inherited by the expansionist ambitions of Great Powers. There was wide scope to diversify the cooperation in various fields, specially science and industries between the two countries. She welcomed the Iran's proposal on regional cooperation in economic development and underscored the need to work for the economic development of the entire region. She pointed out the implied danger due to the presence of Big Powers in the Indian Ocean. She also agreed with the Shah on having a common market for the Indian Ocean area that should help achieve peace and stability in the region but simultaneously warned that it should not be directed against any country. Mrs. Gandhi's visit yielded tangible results. Iran was prepared to extend loan in excess of one billion dollars to India to maximise the capacity of its export oriented industry. Iran for the first time agreed to give soft loan to India and there was identity of views of the two leaders on international situation. The decision between
the two countries was not a mean achievement.

The constant and frequent exchanges at the highest level were a happy feature of Indo-Iranian relations. Shah reciprocated appropriately by paying a return visit to India in October 1974. It was not the first time that Shah visited India, earlier he had visited this country in 1956 and 1969. She stressed the basic principles of Iranian foreign policy as under:

1. Iran shall never be an aggressor.
2. Iran shall promote peace in the world.
3. Iran shall avoid antagonism between the countries.

The cardinal principles of Iranian foreign policy imply that by the early 70s Iran had adopted the character of a true non-aligned nation. In order to dispel the fear of India about her intention Iran recognized Bangladesh and welcomed her admission to the United Nations. India and Iran both as the members of the UN adhoc committee on the Indian Ocean promoted the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Due to their joint endeavour the concept gained wider acceptance and support at international forums.

Both the leaders supported the independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus and emphasized the need to implement the resolutions of the Security Council on Cyprus and warned against external interference or pressures. On the issue of Vietnam the two leaders stressed the need for the implementation of the Paris Agreements by the parties concerned for achieving peace and stability in that region. They also advocated total disarmament under effective international control. India also supported Iranian proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle
East. During Shah's visit to India in the wake of the installation of the Janata Government he dwelt upon his proposal of an Asian Common Market at length. He stressed that he would seek Pakistan's acquiescence with the proposal during his stopover at Islamabad. Actually Pakistan had expressed her displeasure with the idea. Shah made it clear that this proposal would benefit all the countries of Asia, it was not in the interest of a few to the detriment of the rest. In a joint communique at the end of his visit Shah reaffirmed firm support of his Government and people for the Arab cause. He offered additional curde supplies on the terms favourable to India. He also accepted to extend soft loans to our country to finance certain projects. The two leaders also expressed sympathies with the blacks of South Africa and strongly condemned the policy of apartheid adopted by Pretoria regime. Both sides advocated the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Both the leaders called upon the big powers to help in the establishment of a new international economic order based on interdependence, equality and Justice. They pleaded for the reform of international trading system and the abandoning of growing protectionism by the developed countries.

Two events brought about drastic change in the perceptions and the views of the leaders of the two countries—Khomeini revolution in Iran and Russian intervention in Afghanistan. In Iran in the wake of the revolution muslim fundamentalists came to power. The killing of Muslims in India during riots agitated the Iranian Government and India's stand on Russian intervention in Afghanistan further affected Indo-Iranian relations. An atmosphere of suspicion between the two countries prevailed.
This followed the frequent exchange of visits by the officials of the two countries. The old cordial relations were restored when the Indian Government assured its Iranian counterpart of the protection to the rights of Muslim minority and shared the Iranian concern for her security owing to the foreign intervention in her neighbouring country. In May 1982 India expressly condemned the outside interference in any country of the world including Afghanistan. The attempt on the part of India, as the chairperson of non-aligned movement to end Iran-Iraq war reinforced the Iranian confidence in Indian bona fide. Iran came closer to India on Palestinian issue after having severed her trade relations with Israel. Both the Government have agreed to set up an Indo-Iranian joint Commission to boost their bilateral relations in various fields.

So far as Indo-Iraq relations are concerned, the fact that Iraq is a staunch Arab and a member of the non-aligned movement is a natural cause for drawing India and Iraq closer to each other. India's consistent and unflinching support to Arab cause and her being a founder member of the non-aligned movement are common knowledge. The exchange of visits by bureaucrats and political elites of the two countries has contributed to strengthening the relations in various fields. The decision to set up an Indo-Iraqi Joint Planning Committee in December 1972 when Planning Minister of Iraq visited New Delhi, speaks of the fact that both the countries have the will to forge a beneficial relations between them. The visit of the then Vice President of Iraq Mr. Saddam Husain to India paved the way for the setting up of a permanent Joint Commission charged with the task of exploring new areas of cooperation in economic and cultural fields. Among oil producing countries Iraq was the first to have
committed to supply crude to India for ten years. Both the leaders expressed their willingness to see the Indian Ocean develop as a zone of peace. During Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Iraq in January 1975 the two leaders warned the Asian countries against outside interference. They acknowledged that the trade relations between the two countries could not reach desired level due to their ignorance of the areas of cooperation.

The conferring of the honorary degree of Dr. of Laws on Mrs. Gandhi is significant in that Baghdad University had made a departure from its tradition since the degree is usually meant for a head of the State. Mrs. Gandhi recalled the historical fact that India and Iraq had been pioneers of maritime commerce. The two leaders laid emphasis on increasing cooperation in industrial field in general and oil industry in particular. They reaffirmed the support of their Governments to the struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their homeland. They wished the maintenance of the unity and solidarity of the non-aligned movement and to actively work for its success. They lashed out at Pretoria Government for its illegal occupation of Namibia flouting the UN resolutions. During Janata rule there was no tangible change in Indian policy towards Iraq. The highlights of the communique issued at the end of the visit of Mr. Zaha Marouf, the then Vice President of Iraq, to India, were the same as those of the earlier communique issued during Congress rule. No doubt the India-Iraq war has had bearing on Indian diplomacy. It is reflected in India's attempt as the member of the Non-aligned Co-ordination Bureau to end the war. This is different thing that both the warring countries are the members of the movement and they are competing in defeating the very purpose of the movement—establishment of peace.
Indo-Saudi relations are based on the fact that Muslims constitute the second largest majority in India and Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam. It is in India's interest to have cordial relations with Saudi Arabia in view of the emergence of Pakistan, so that India is not isolated from the Islamic world and not exposed to risk of losing the benefit of oil bonanza. It is also incumbent upon India to show to the world the success and justness of her policy of secularism. It has to be established that the rights of the Muslims in India are better protected than the rights of those in Islamic states. A good-will delegation visits Saudi Arabia regularly at the time of Haj. India extended unequivocal support to Pahd Plan. The plan stressed the need for recognition of the PLO as a reality and as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The visit of Mrs. Gandhi to Saudi Arabia in April 1982 marked the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 26 years. During her visit it was hoped that it would turn a new leaf in Indo-Saudi bilateral relations. Saudi Arabia displayed extraordinary capacity to accommodate Indian sentiments by expressing readiness to make a joint endeavour to curb super Power influence in the region. It is noteworthy that Saudi Arabia is fairly pro-U.S. Both the leaders were concerned about continuing Iran-Iraq war and advocated to continue the efforts to end it through various fora. Saudi Arabia generally inimical to Soviet Russia, acknowledged the significance of India's relations with the U.S.S.R. and appreciated India's position on Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia stressed the need to maintain an atmosphere conducive to further negotiation between Pakistan and India on the basis of basic principles of non-aggression and non-use of force. Friendly relations between these two neighbours are a must if security and stability in South Asia have to be achieved. They affirmed that the security of the Indian subcontinent was closely interlinked with the security of the Gulf region. A joint Economic
Commission was also set up during Mrs. Gandhi's visit. India welcomed the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council and hoped that it would keep its activities free from Great Power influence. The Indo-Saudi Joint Economic Commission during its first meeting in New Delhi in August 1983 explored the possibility of expanding trade and increasing technical cooperation between the two countries.

India and Kuwait came close due to the fact that this is the only country in the Gulf that has broad-based democratic political institutions and that represents true character of a non-aligned nation. Her foreign policy can be termed as 'equidistance from both the superpowers.' On the issue of Iran-Iraq war while other members of GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) were in favour of inviting the U.S. for intervention, Kuwait was the only member which advocated self-reliance. During the visit of Mr. Swaran Singh (the then Foreign Minister of India) to Kuwait in February 1973, the Foreign Minister of that country Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad affirmed the basic principles of non-alignment and both the leaders underlined the need for cooperation among the members of the movement for furthering the cause of world peace. Both the sides agreed to set up an Inter Governmental Joint Committee for economic and technical cooperation.

The exchange of visits by the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Jabar Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi contributed to further strengthening the relations between India and Kuwait. During the Emir's visit to India the age-old contacts between the two countries were recalled and the Emir dubbed India as a cradle of
original civilization' that flourished thousands of years ago. The Emir acknowledged the role of Indian technicians and engineers in the development of Kuwait. India stands seventh on the list of exporters to Kuwait. The Emir and the Prime Minister expressed concern over escalation of Great Power rivalries in the region. They called upon all concerned to attempt to convert Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and the Great Powers to keep away from the Gulf and Indian Ocean areas. The two leaders also voiced their opposition to the expansionist and aggressive policy of Israel in West Asia. The views of the two leaders on other international issues such as Palestine and South Africa were also found identical. Mrs. Gandhi appreciated the offer of Kuwait regarding the financial assistance to India from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. This aid had to be utilized in energy sector.

During "Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Kuwait in May 1981 the two leaders underscored the relevance of non-aligned movement in present international context. They emphasized the need to reassess the role of the movement as an independent non-bloc factor in international relations and as a moral force for furthering the cause of peace in the world. They urged the importance of Palestinian participation in any peace talks for a just and durable solution of the problem. They also condemned Israeli aggression against Lebanon. India shared the Kuwait's concern over Russian intervention in Afghanistan. Though she (India) did not expressly condemn Soviet Russia but India along with Kuwait advocated complete withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of Afghanistan and restoration of independence, sovereignty and non-aligned status of Afghanistan. Both
the leaders were concerned about the continuance of Iran-Iraq war and hoped that both the warring parties would resolve their differences peacefully. Mrs. Gandhi hailed the establishment of Gulf Cooperation Council and wished it all success. Mrs. Gandhi opined that this organization could play a constructive role in bringing about peace in the Gulf-region. They pleaded for drastic reform in world economic system that alone could enable the effective application of the new international economic order in which there should be an equitable system of commodity exchange between nations and fair terms for transfer of resources, capital and technology.