Chapter - IV

Foreign Policy Content: Parties and Issues
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In this chapter, we shall examine the content of Indian foreign policy and its relation to the different Indian political parties. However, Indian foreign policy is too wide an area for concentrated and detailed analysis. We have, therefore, taken up for such analysis three major issues that dominated Indian foreign policy during the period of our study. (A) The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation, (B) the Bangladesh Crisis, and (C) the Simla Agreement. In the case of each issue we propose to discuss the official policy as well as the differing policy positions adopted by the various parties.

(A) Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation

(a) Historical Background

Indo-Soviet relations are one of the most important
constituents of our foreign relations, affecting India's relations with the United States, China, Pakistan, Britain and other countries. Despite the ideological divergence between India and the Soviet Union, there has been cordial and friendly relations between the two. With regard to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security, both the Communist bloc and India are not only agreed on the goal (as contrasted with India vis-a-vis the West) but also on the means. Both are opposed to military pacts and alliances, especially between unequal nations, to the giving of military aid by the big powers, and to the establishment of foreign military bases.\(^1\) Despite opposition from some of his colleagues, Nehru was among the first few leaders of the noncommunist world to forge friendly but nonaligned relations with the Communist bloc. He was also among the first statesmen of the newly independent nations to clearly distinguish between, and combine, anti-communism in domestic politics with co-operation with communists in foreign policy.\(^2\)
The Soviet Union was critical of the partition of India as it was the outcome of the political compromise of the "Indian bourgeoisie". After the formation of the interim government Nehru sought to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Though India had a distinctive foreign policy of its own, it appeared that it was leaning towards the West, soon after independence. Hence, the Soviet Union took a critical attitude towards India during the period 1947-1955.

The improvement of Indo-Soviet relations was initiated in 1955 after the end of the Stalin era. By this time, the Soviet Union recognised that India had an independent policy, opposed to Western policy, and that it had geo-political importance in world politics. The first issue which demonstrated clearly India's stand was the Korean war. In the UNO, India supported the American resolution, declaring North Korea the aggressor. But when the USA moved a resolution declaring China the aggressor, India did not hesitate to vote against it. Secondly, India's firm
stand on recognising the Peoples Republic of China and on
the question of United States-Japan Treaty also produced
a considerable impact on the Soviet attitude towards
India. Thirdly, the decision of Pakistan to join the
Western military pacts in 1954 was a major factor in the
enhancement of the geopolitical importance of India to
the USSR. The development of Indo-Soviet relations
during the period 1954-56 took three forms: the concreti-
sation of the earlier vague good-will and friendly feeling
towards each other through numerous steps, the most
important being the good will visits exchanged by the
Prime Ministers of the two countries, increasing cultural
exchanges, and economic co-operation. 3

A few years later, when Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian
relations began to deteriorate, the Soviets began to
provide military aid to India to enable it to stand
upto the Peoples' Republic of China as a means of
maintaining balance of power in the area. 4 The gradual
decline of the cold war, the conflict between the USSR
and China, Moscow's success in developing friendly
relations with India and a large number of noncommunist states, have only further strengthened those aspects of the Soviet Policy motivated not by ideology but by the need to make Moscow a military and diplomatic power. The Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian relations got strained by the 1960's. The Second World Communist conference in 1960, with 81 parties attending, failed to patch up the differences between the Soviet Union and China. The Sino-Indian border tension pushed Pakistan closer to China. Apart from this, Pakistan was also critical of the Anglo-American support to India in the 1962 war which was a fundamental factor in the improvement of relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union.

During the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, China supported Pakistan, displeasing Russia. Soviet diplomacy therefore, was directed in the mid-1960's to win over Pakistan and to promote co-operative relations between India and Pakistan. Hence in this context the Soviet Union took the decision to supply arms to Pakistan in 1968, incurring the displeasure of India.
Subsequently, the significant developments were the Sino-Soviet initiation of Sino-American detente, the proposal of the USSR to establish the Asian collective Security system and the Chinese entry into the UNO in 1971. The Tashkent agreement of 1966, the regional economic co-operation plan of May 1969, the collective system for Asia of June 1969 and the 1971 treaty of friendship and co-operation with India were all meant to strengthen close links among the subcontinental nations.

The Soviet Union was apprehensive about Indian domestic politics, especially of the rightist forces in Indian politics in the early 1970s. The nationalisation of 14 banks, the split of the Congress party, the abolition of the Privy Purse, the constitutional amendment to the property right and the Congress(B) victory of the 1971 elections convinced the Soviet Union that India was shifting to the left. The USSR along with other communist countries felt very happy
at the election of Indira Gandhi's party to power in the parliamentary elections held in February 1971, as a defeat of the rightist forces in Indian politics. They also felt that with a comfortable majority in her support she would be able to go ahead with her socialist programme.

Strategically the formation of the USA, Pakistan and China axis was a basic compulsive factor in the international environment, affecting India's position. As a matter of fact, India was badly in need of the support of Russia, and equally badly Russia wanted an ally in Asia. Here it seems that the chief objective of the Soviet Union was containment of China. The international environment forced India and the USSR to sign the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-Operation. Since then it has been one of the central issues of India's foreign policy in the third decade after independence. During the Bangladesh crisis, India got wholehearted support from Moscow. The visit of Brezhnev to India in 1973 and of Indira
Gandhi in 1976 to the USSR further strengthened Indo-Soviet relations.

The drastic change in domestic politics in 1977 with the emergence of the Janata Party, replacing the OPD system, raised the hope for a two-party system in India. It created fears about the possibility of change in India's foreign policy, specifically with regard to Indo-Soviet relations because the constituents of the Janata Party had been earlier critical of Indo-Soviet relations. In the sixth Lok Sabha elections campaign, some of the Janata Party leaders promised to abrogate the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 if they came to power. But nevertheless, foreign policy issue was not a major electoral issue. The Soviet Union supported Indira Gandhi consistently during the 1969-1977 period. It considered her as a progressive leader in India in 1971 and supported India in the Bangladesh war. Despite the general Soviet opposition to nuclear proliferation, Moscow refrained from any adverse public comment on India's nuclear explosion of
1974. It supported the emergency and criticised the J.P. Movement and the rightist parties as reactionary.

Immediately after being sworn as Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, addressing a press conference on 24 March 1977, remarked that the country's foreign policy would be a "properly nonaligned one", involving friendship based on reciprocity with all countries and no special relationship with any country. But during Andrei Gromyko's visit in April 1977, at a luncheon Vajpayee paid tribute to the Soviet Union's sustained support to India" in difficult times "and declared that "the bonds of friendship between the Soviet Union and India are strong enough to survive the demands of the divergent systems, the fate of an individual or the fortunes of a political party." Undoubtedly the Janata Government accepted the Indo-Soviet Treaty. As the joint statement issued at the end of Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit to the Soviet Union in October 1977 spelt out, the friendship between the two countries rested on the spirit of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation.
India's foreign policy tilted towards the Soviet Union during Indira Gandhi's regime in the 1970's but it should be noted that she was trying to correct it. The process of correction of the tilt was continued by the Janata Government on the lines of equidistance. It is evident that there was no basic change in India's relations with the Soviet Union under the rule of the Janata Party.

The return of the Congress Government with a majority of more than two thirds of seats in the Lok Sabha in 1980 was immediately followed by a return to a more pro-Soviet foreign policy. The visit of Breznev to India in December 1980 was meant to strengthen India's relations with the USSR. The unreserved endorsement of Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan could have weakened India's genuine nonalignment in world politics. But the approach of India on the Afghanistan issue, on the contrary, seems vague and non-committal. Hence it may strengthen nonalignment and peaceful forces.
Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971

India and the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation on 9 August 1971, a landmark in the evolution of Indian foreign policy since independence. The treaty consists of 1300 words and 12 articles. This treaty is the latest fruit of Indo-Soviet friendship, which, for twenty years, was being nurtured against formidable odds by the Government of India and by that section of the Indian National Congress which has now become Congress(N) by all radical and even liberal parties and by such representative organisations as the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society. However, this treaty was primarily a response to the prevailing international situation. The Indo-Soviet Treaty was the subject of a nationwide debate. In this debate, the Indian political parties have shown widely varied reactions.
(b) Political Parties and the Treaty

We shall examine these reactions on a party-wise basis. First we shall examine the overall reactions of parties and then go into the specifics.

The Indian National Congress(R)

According to the Congress(R) the Indo-Soviet friendship was based on the common objectives and ideals, shared by the two countries. The Soviet Union stood for anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, economic and social progress of the newly independent countries, international peace and equality, which were also the main objectives of India. In the view of the Congress(R), the treaty was a 'landmark' in India's foreign policy.

The Congress(R), in its Resolution in 1971 stated:

1. The Working Committee of the Indian National
Congress meeting in New Delhi on 24 August 1971 wholeheartedly endorses the treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation signed and ratified by the Republic of India and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

2. The overwhelming support received by the Treaty in Parliament and from our people, testifies to its soundness in serving India's national interests;

3. These interests remain permanently rooted in the safeguarding of India's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the defence of peace in Asia and in the world in promoting international co-operation between states with different social and political systems on the basis of sovereign equality of all nations, peaceful co-existence, noninterference in internal affairs of other states and nonaggression;

4. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and co-operation gives juridical shape to the growing relations of friendship and co-operation between the
two countries in various fields and is based on mutuality of interests in safeguarding of peace in Asia and in the world. 14

The Indo-Soviet treaty was not a sudden development but it was the outcome of a process spread over preceding two years. It was not merely in India’s interest but it was in the mutual interest of both the countries. Sardar Swaran Singh, addressing the AICC Session of Simla 8-10 October 1971, explained the content of the treaty in terms of four aspects:

1. First and foremost the two countries agreed to work constantly, assiduously and energetically, for the elimination of remnants of colonialism and for ending racist regimes wherever they were.

2. Secondly, the important aspect of the treaty was Soviet Union’s acceptance of the policy pursued by India. It was for the first time that the Soviet
Union accepted the validity of non-alignment as a major force conducive to peace and reduction of tensions throughout the world;

3. Thirdly, the treaty provided for co-operation between the two countries in the scientific and technological fields, as well as in other fields, for mutual benefit.

4. Fourthly, it included an important provision, about which quite naturally a great deal of popular anxiety had been demonstrated in the country about its security aspect. The considered view of the Congress(R) was that India should avoid war and conflict and strengthen the forces of peace. The Congress(R) denied it was a defence or military pact. Swaran Singh, justifying the treaty, told the AICC meeting, "I would like to say that unlike military pacts or defence pacts by entering into this treaty neither of the two countries will get
automatically involved if the other party is involved in a military conflict.\(^{17}\) Apart from this Swaran Singh, answering criticism in the Lok Sabha debate, said "Even if this has to be argued that this treaty is different from the Warsaw pact, I think I cannot convince Fidel Castro about anything. He has only to read the clauses of the Warsaw pact and compare them with the articles here and the answer will be there. But for a person who refuses to see things, I cannot show any light."\(^{18}\)

The Congress(R) wanted the country to remain nonaligned, and felt that the treaty did not alter the policy of nonalignment. The view of the Congress(R) was that the treaty, in fact, strengthened the policy of nonalignment. To the criticism of the opposition that the treaty deviated from nonalignment the Congress(R) justified the treaty on the basis of Article IV of the treaty. Rejecting criticism, the Congress(R) said "if a careful scrutiny of this criticism is made both from inside the country or
from certain quarters abroad, it will be clear that

generally this criticism has come not from nonaligned
country but from countries which themselves are
aligned and are members of military pacts.19 The
Congress(R) did not agree that the treaty affected
India's freedom to act. Indira Gandhi told the
AICC meeting in Simla, "it had been explained
very clearly that in the treaty with the Soviet
Union or any other country, India would never lose
her freedom to decide the way to be adopted."20

The Congress(R) claimed that this treaty was
not directed against any other third country.
The clauses of the treaty, their wording, and
the commitments they reflected, the twenty-year
term and the provision for its automatic extension,
clearly meant that both governments regarded it from
a long term perspective. They saw in it an instru-
ment for peace, not only in a particular area, but
in the world as a whole, especially at a critical
time in world history.21
The Congress(O), naturally, showed a critical attitude towards Congress(R)'s foreign affairs. It held the view that the Congress(R) was subordinating India's interest to that of the Soviet Union to get the support of the communists. Though critical, the Congress(O) extended support to it. But Congress(O) held that the success or failure of this treaty would largely depend on two conditions, namely improvement in the Bangladesh situation and preservation of India's nonalignment in foreign policy.  

India claimed that it was attempting to stop the conflict and tension between the two super powers. in Asia. S.N. Mishra, explaining the impact of the treaty on balance of power in Asia, said: "This indeed means that this will have long term impact on the balance of power in Asia. One balance that was emerging, was that of China and the United States on the one side, and on the other side the balance of power was lacking. Probably, this might redress the balance of power to some extent. I may say that
India's role has always been preventing Asia becoming the playground of the superpowers." 23

The Congress(o) felt the Indo-Soviet Treaty could affect nonalignment. It argued that even in the darkest hours of history, India had not given up nonalignment. Hence, the Congress(o) leader argued that nonalignment should be followed faithfully. The party held the view that the Indo-Soviet Treaty reflected inequality between the two parties. 24 Another Congress(o) leader felt that mere words of peace and security did not mean that the Indo-Soviet Treaty implied no commitment in the military field. 25

**The Communist Parties**

**Communist Party of India**

editorially" This treaty is a landmark not only in Indo-Soviet relations but in the worldwide struggle for peace, friendship and co-operation among peace-loving nations and collective security against war or threat of war with this treaty, a new chapter begins in India's march to its cherished future." A CPI member of Parliament declared that it was "a treaty which is in entire conformity with our principle of non-alignment a treaty which does not make us play a subordinate role to anybody' a treaty which has nothing in it of the nature of the subsidiary alliance which is a feature of even the PL480 Pact which we signed with the United States, a treaty which is between independent partners all on a level of equality" The National Council of the CPI in a resolution stated "Coming in the immediate context of the glorious struggle of the people of Bangladesh for freedom, of India's fraternal support to the liberation fighters in Bangladesh and the threat of aggression by the West Pakistani military Junta against our country, this treaty will serve as a powerful deterrent to President Yahya Khan's designs against India, clearly supported by the USA and China and help the just struggle of the
The CPI felt that the Indo-Soviet treaty would serve as an instrument in the cause of independence, social progress and peace in Asia, and isolate the collaborators of imperialism, including the Maoist leadership.

According to the CPI, the treaty strengthened the anti-imperialist content of Indian nonalignment. It was a pact of nonaggression and it was not directed against any country.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist)

The CPM also welcomed the treaty, and held that it was "a move towards the Soviet Union and against the US imperialism" and "shows the realisation that has been forced on the Indian ruling class, that friendship with the Soviet Union is necessary to defend their sovereignty and resist US blackmail." The resolution of the Central Committee of the CPM stated "Coming
in this background the Indo-Soviet treaty should have helped to overcome all hesitations and vacillations on the part of the government of India and the government must come forward to accord immediate recognition to Bangladesh and utmost moral and material assistance. In fact usefulness of the treaty will be judged on this basis. A CPM member of the Rajya Sabha characterised the Treaty as a "fight against imperialism and colonialism". The CPM leader, A.K. Gopalan declared in the Lok Sabha "Coming to article 9, there is clear declaration that the USSR will abstain from giving armed assistance to any country at war with us and that is welcome. We trust that this term of this article will act as a deterrent to the suberattling of Yahya Khan talking of unleasing a war on India." The CPM supported the policy of cultivating friendly relations with the socialist world on a basis of equality and the five Principles enunciated by the Panchasheela doctrine. It felt that this was the only way to reduce dependence on imperialists and strengthen Indian
independence and sovereignty. The CPM held that this treaty did not automatically mean strengthening India's defence and economic capability. Further the CPM maintained that Indian defence capability and economic strength depended primarily on independent strength. Hence it urged the struggle for democracy and against anti-people policies.33

The CPM, however, was concerned that the Treaty was not and should not be against China. The Party Organ, Peoples Democracy, stated "Once again we have warned that if this treaty becomes an instrument for conspiracies against China, then its whole purpose will be lost and India's national interests cannot be defended."34 The Party urged that steps should be taken to improve India's relations with China in order to consolidate the gains of the treaty and use it to strengthen independence and economic capability of the country. According to the CPM it was necessary to counteract Pak-American threats and to follow a really independent anti-imperialist and anti-colonial
The CPM considered that the class interests of Indira Gandhi were also served by the Treaty. It opposed the CPI view that the basic class nature of the Congress party altered merely because of this treaty, as "rather too cheap an argument for somebody who claims to be communist." The stand of the CPM was critical of not only CPI's position but also of the characterisation of Indira Gandhi's Government by USSR. The CPM leader M. Basavapunniah argued, "Our right communist friends, if they are on the look-out for blind anti-Chineseism, blind pro-Sovietism or blind pro-Congressism, would better not search for it inside the Communist Party of India (Marxist), since it doesn't give any quarter to varieties of such, 'half blinds' 'blinds' and 'pure-blinds.' It denounced the Soviet policy of 'praising the bourgeois landlord government in our country as progressive in every respect, totally ignoring the basic class character of the regime." The CPM criticism of the
CPI position was shared by some independent observers.38

The CPI's interest in cordial and friendly relations with China, influenced its attitude to the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

The Socialist Party

The Socialist party considered Washington-Pindi-Peking axis as a compulsion on India in its search for friends in the interest of its security. Therefore, friendship with the Soviet Union was welcomed by the Socialist Party. Samar Guha, its spokesman, said in the Lok Sabha, "I feel that realism of the situation demands that we should have friendly relations, very close relations with Soviet Russia." But he was not wholly happy with its time dimension of 25 years. But he welcomed it and felt that it would enable India to play a positive role in regard to Bangladesh.39
The party held the view that friendship did not mean a formal treaty. But for it, India could have been more free to recognize Bangladesh. A long-term Indo-Soviet treaty reduced the Indian initiative and freedom of action in the areas of foreign policy and defense. The treaty had made India's recognition of Bangladesh more dependent on Soviet Russia than ever before.

The Socialist Party felt that in the context of the Sino-Soviet conflict and the world situation, the treaty could create apprehension in China that it was directed against it. Therefore, the Socialist Party urged the removal of such fears on the part of China.

The Socialist Party viewed the treaty as a historic departure from the policy India had pursued for the past two decades. It regarded the treaty as involving a political, military and total alignment with the Soviet Union. Samar Guha remarked
"The doctor will say when a man is dead, but a poet will say he has passed into eternity. Likewise they say it is an extension of nonalignment but it means burial of nonalignment." Besides, the Socialists expressed two fears: first, whether the Treaty gave India freedom to carry on its peaceful nuclear explosion test and second, whether it provided scope for the Soviet Union to build up its bases in the Indian Ocean.

The Socialist party opposed begging either from Moscow or Washington or any other country. It wanted India to stand on her own legs. The Socialist party did not lend unqualified and unconditional support to the treaty. It stood for the revision of the terms of the Treaty in the national interest.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh

The BJS believed in friendly relations with the
USSR, but in the seventies its criticism was that India was becoming a Russian satellite. The Party's President A.B. Vajpayee, said "We can develop good relations on the principle of mutual respect for each other. If India allows its dependence on the USSR to grow to a dangerous level and permits itself to be used by Russia as a power in international politics, this will not only undermine India's newly gained credit with the world community, it will adversely affect our national interest also. The BJS did not extend uncritical support to the treaty. The treaty was welcomed only to the extent that it countered the continued American policy of arming Pakistan and present Chinese intervention in Indo-Pak affairs, and reduced the isolation of India.\(^4\)

From the viewpoint of the BJS, not only India was in need of friends but also both the USSR and the USA were also in need of friends. The BJS welcomed the treaty because it won a friend, especially
against possible Chinese intervention in case of Pakistani attack on India. In a statement, Vajpayee said "If this treaty paves the way for having a real friend we will perforce have to welcome it." The party's official resolution reflected this attitude.

Vajpayee, commenting on Article VII of the Treaty, said 'according to this article, the Soviet Union will have influence over the entire gamut of our activities. The BJS hoped for noninterference in the internal affairs of India by the USSR and expected that it would rectify its maps showing Indian territory as Chinese.

The BJP felt that India was left friendless because of inefficient handling of its foreign affairs. It questioned the claim of the Congress Government that the treaty was 'historic', and the government's hypocritical assertion that the Treaty did not make any change in India's foreign policy position. The Party's Resolution on the Treaty asked "If there is no basic change why we should
describe it as 'historic'. The considered opinion of
the BJS was the treaty put an end to nonalignment.
Article IX clearly binds India and the Soviet Russia
to mutual consultations in the event of attack by
third parties and article X forbids either party from
entering into agreement with a third party which may
be incompatible with this Treaty. In view of these
articles article IV which says that "the USSR
respect India's policy of nonalignment is only an
eyewash." 47

The BJS's view was that the treaty might curb
India's freedom to take decisions and it might
also push India towards communism. Vajpayee felt
that the Soviet Union was isolated from the comity
of nations and it tried to maintain its influence in
Asia through the treaty with India. 48 The BJS
had objection to the duration of the treaty, namely
20 years. It had apprehensions about the possibility
of secret clauses in article X of the Treaty, as
defence treaties usually contained such clauses.
This has turned out to be a misapprehension, as shown
by subsequent experience of the Treaty. In order to strengthen its position in the world, the BJS held that India should develop similar friendship treaties with Asian countries like Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia and Japan.

The foreign policy ideal of the BJS was to see that mutual advantage went to both countries. Ultimately it hoped India to become an independent power. The BJS emphasised the objectives of self-reliance, without which, it argued, the treaty could become harmful to the country. To avoid such a possibility, development of nuclear capability was of utmost importance. The basic attitude of Janata Sangh towards China and Pakistan seems to have influenced its position on the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

The Swatantra Party

The Swatantra Party was critical of India's relations with Russia in the seventies. It held the
view that Indira Gandhi pursued a foreign policy which would gradually reduce India to the status of a Soviet satellite. The Swatantra party opposed the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971.

The Swatantra Party held that the Sino-American detente isolated the Soviet Union and that this opened some important options for India. The Party held India had signed the Treaty with the Soviet Union because of the fear that otherwise India would be isolated. Therefore, the Indo-Soviet Treaty reduced our options. The Swatantra party felt that there was no threat from either Pakistan or China. Piloo Mody, in a seminar paper, remarked "I do not see that there was great threat from Pakistan except perhaps a little fooling around in Kashmir with infiltrators in order to embarrass us. I believe that we have taken some stringent measures. China would not want to interfere between India and Pakistan, certainly not over Bangladesh." 30

The Indo-Soviet Treaty marked the end of the era of nonalignment, according to the Swatantra Party. It argued that the Warsaw pact was also written in the same
language, with the exception of a clause or two, which deal with an united military command. The Swatantra Party did not see any benefits for India from the Indo-Soviet treaty. Therefore, it did not welcome the treaty. As the Soviet Union was looking for bases in the Indian Ocean, the Swatantra Party cautioned against the Soviet Union using the Treaty to build bases in the Indian Ocean.

This stand of the Swatantra Party was inconsistent with its basic foreign policy position. In its 1967 election manifesto it had made clear that it would ensure security through alignment with powerful nations. Hence proper alliances with reliable powers were not only legitimate but were also expedient. Thus the views of the Swatantra Party in 1967 manifesto and its reactions to the Indo-Soviet treaty were inconsistent which probably might have been prompted by its anti-communism.

1) The Overall Situation

The political parties almost unanimously welcomed
the treaty in the Lok Sabha. All the political parties accepted the need for India's friendship with the Soviet Union against America-China-Pakistan axis and the short term goal or objective of extending help and support to Bangladesh. The position of the parties demonstrates a national consensus on both fundamental and short range goals. As far as means were concerned all parties stood in favour of the Indo-Soviet treaty excepting the Swatantra Party. The Swatantra Party was of the opinion "We could have derived all benefits of the Treaty without ever having signed it and at the same time keeping our options completely open."52

The parties were divided on the evaluation or interpretation of the treaty. Between the Congress(R), Congress(0) and CPI, no fundamental dissensus existed over the Indo-Soviet Treaty. Very little disagreement can be found between the two Congress parties over the interpretation of the Treaty and no basic disagreement existed. The Congress(0)'s fear was that the treaty involved commitment in the military field.
The Swatantra Party and the Socialist Party were worried that the Treaty could provide scope or opportunity to the Soviet Union to build bases in the Indian Ocean. The CPM and the Socialist Party held the view that the treaty should not be directed against China. Both the BJS and the Socialist Party raised their objection to the duration of the treaty for 20 years.

(ii) Security Aspects in Indo-Soviet Treaty

A crucial aspect of the Treaty related to the issue of security. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the evaluation of the Treaty by different parties on this issue.

Mutual security pacts or alliance between two nations imply three assumptions

1. parties to the pact aim to defend their individual interests ;
2. they have some perception of a common threat; and,

3. since such arrangements are generally between unequal parties, the weaker party implicitly loses part of its independence of policy in exchange for security, which is assured by the stronger Party.

The political parties recognised the need for internal strength as one of the factors to ensure security. The BJS and Swatantra Party differed from other parties in the interpretation of the key article IX of the treaty, which defined the nature of the treaty. From the viewpoint of the BJS, it bound both India and the USSR to mutual consultation in case of attack by a third party, while the Swatantra party compared the treaty to the Warsaw pact. The content of the treaty comprised political, economic scientific and technological co-operation. But one Indian Foreign policy analyst declared "The language of the treaty makes it clear to me that it is not a defence treaty. It may be that after consultations are over, it may result in a defence treaty."
Another commentator, a former Indian Ambassador to Russia, K.P.S. Menon, also argued that the alliances with the USSR was not a military pact and it did not affect adversely India's freedom of actions. Whether the Indo-Soviet Treaty is a defence pact is a question that can be settled only by how both countries would use and interpret it. The treaty certainly nowhere mentions military aid. But Article IX states that "in the event of either party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the high contracting parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultation in order to remove such threat and to make appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security of their countries". Here 'effective measures' may or may not include military assistance and its interpretation determines how one conceives the nature of the treaty. If the measures include military aid, then it will be a defence pact but otherwise it will not be a defence pact.

(iii) Indo-Soviet Treaty and nonalignment

The nonalignment policy evolved as a long-range
strategy of India's foreign policy. The basic compulsion of Indian foreign policy in the 1950s was noninvolvement in military blocs in order to pursue and independent foreign policy. In a bipolar world nonalignment could be mostly negative because the only alternative was alignment and loss of independence of action. In the seventies Indira Gandhi had to re-define nonalignment in a changed international situation.

The USA-China-Pakistan axis constituted a basic element in the international environment, affecting our foreign policy. Indira Gandhi's task now was how to face the threat against Indian security. Under the Congress Government of Indira Gandhi the earlier pro-Soviet foreign policy was pushed further, as the Soviet Union functioned as the main supplier of arms to India and subsequently a treaty was made with Moscow in 1971 which incorporated clauses of a "quasi military nature." After the defeat of Indira Gandhi in 1977, the Janata Party interpreted nonalignment as the maintenance of equidistance from both powers. The
genuine nonalignment of the Janata Government went against taking sides in the basic conflicts between East and West. Though Nehru's foreign policy was closer to the Soviet Union, it rejected direct military dependency. But Indira Gandhi was politically compelled to seek military dependence on Moscow. Morarji Desai's policy implied genuine neutrality based on equidistance.58

The BJS, the Swatantra Party and the Socialist Party, held that the treaty put an end to nonalignment. According to the CPI, the treaty led to an erosion of nonalignment. The two Congress Parties and the CPI considered the treaty as strengthening non-alignment.

In the seventies, the content of nonalignment changed but it implied, in fact, a continuity in change. With the emergence of a multi-polar world, its negative aspects became less operative than its positive aspects.59 Before we examine the impact of the treaty on nonalignment it is necessary to understand what we mean by nonalignment.
Nonalignment is a policy, a strategy and a theory about international system. In the words of one distinguished foreign policy watcher, "It would be shown here that as policy, nonalignment is dead; in fact it lost its meaning long before the Indo-Soviet treaty was signed. As strategy it very much survives; as an international system, it is a fact of life and we are part of it, whether we call ourselves non-aligned or not."  

Nonalignment never excluded bilateral alliance if India felt it necessary for her security. Nehru had clearly made provisions for such modifications by asserting that nonalignment did not mean the same type of relationship with every country. This would be determined by the circumstances at the time. Nehru sought military assistance from both the USA and USSR in the Sino-Indian war of 1962. Even after signing the Indo-Soviet treaty, India then continued as a nonaligned country.

Nehru himself defined nonalignment also to
mean independence in foreign policy. The BJS and the Socialist Party felt that the treaty would affect Indian freedom of action. No doubt the treaty imposed limits on India's freedom of action, but the more important question is the purpose of such freedom of action. If the limits served the purposes of independence, then logically India should not worry about it.

The language used by the two Congress parties and the CPI in their reactions was mild, while the BJS, Swatantra party and Socialist party used a harsher language. The CPM's was in between the above two styles. However, in retrospect, the Indo-Soviet treaty has contributed to the development of favourable international conditions for the liberation of Bangladesh.
References


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18. Lok Sabha Debates 7(67) 10 August 1971, Col. 334-35.

19. Congress Marches Ahead n.15, p.34.

20. Ibid, p-64


23. Lok Sabha Debates p.18, Col.294.


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33. Ibid, Col.235.

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38. J.D. Sethi "Indo-Soviet Relations and Limits of Bilateralism" China Report 8(6), November - December 1972, p.50.
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46. A.B.Vajpayee's statement in Lok Sabha n.44,p.28.


51. Lok Sabha Debates n.18, Col.310.

52. Piloo Mody N.50, p.69.


56. J.D.Sethi n.53, p.333.

58. Ibid., p.236.
59. J.D. Sethi, n.53, p.333.
60. Ibid., n.53, p.328.
62. Bimal Prasad, "An Overview", in Bimal Prasad (Ed.)
   "India's Foreign Policy: Studies in Continuity and Change"; New Delhi, Vikas, 1999, p.493.
63. A. Appadorai, n.54, p.112.
(a) The Background

The Bangladesh Crisis is essentially rooted in the wider problem of Indo-Pakistan relations.

The Indian Independence Act of 1947, divided India into two independent States, namely, India and Pakistan, which came into being on 15 August 1947. The Indian leaders accepted the fact of partition, but not the two-nation theory which was behind the emergence of Pakistan.¹

Pakistan has been since then a major factor in the formulation of India's foreign policy. After the partition and mostly because of it, Indo-Pakistan relations have dominated the politics of South Asia, and through it, world politics.²
India and Pakistan share a common history, common cultural traditions, and an interdependent economy. Given their experience of a struggle for independence, both the new nations guarded zealously their newly won freedom of decision-making and shared a dislike of crude manifestations of Western colonialism and realism.  

Domestic politics in India and Pakistan influence each other's foreign policy most significantly.

India right from the start adopted a good neighbourly policy, especially with Pakistan, China and other neighbouring countries, but India's relations with Pakistan had been under strain right from 1947. The fundamental reason for the strained Indo-Pakistan relations has been mainly Pakistan's fear of India. But the conflict between India and Pakistan is both one of ideology and of power.

Besides the clash of national interests, ideologies and power between India and Pakistan, Indo-Pakistan
relations were further complicated by the existence of two wings of Pakistan.6

The external environment affecting both India and Pakistani foreign policies towards each other has four important aspects:

1. Pakistani foreign policy ever since its inception has tried to change significantly the political and military status quo in the subcontinent, especially by changing the status quo in Kashmir.

2. In order to achieve this goal in the context of its incapacity to compete with Indian military and political resources, Pakistan has logically opted for a policy of “borrowing” military and political “power” from the outside, particularly the American and Chinese arms and political support in its relations with India.

3. India’s natural desire to function as the pre-eminent power in the subcontinent, given its size,
population and resources, and to stabilise the South Asian political status quo, prompted Indian policy makers to adopt a strategy of minimising external political intervention in the region, which could undermine India's superiority in the subcontinent. Whenever thwarted in this objective, India has worked to restore the balance by invoking external support on its own such as Soviet support. But such support has been asked for, usually in response to the external support acquired by Pakistan. 7

In April 1950 Liaquat went to Delhi to sign with Nehru an agreement which conceded that Pakistan would henceforth base her nationhood on a territorial basis and not on an ideological one, as earlier embodied in the objective Resolution adopted in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly the previous year. 8 Jawaharlal Nehru proposed a no-war pact with Pakistan but, unfortunately, Pakistan persistently rejected it.

The decision of Pakistan to join military pacts
in 1954 made a basic change in Pakistani foreign policy. This change in Pakistan's policy in world affairs affected and brought the cold war to the subcontinent.\textsuperscript{9} This development had a substantial effect on the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the subcontinent. Until 1965 the USSR was neutral on the Kashmir issue but from 1965 onwards, the Soviet Union, supported India. It vetoed the Security Council resolution on Kashmir in 1957 and 1962 and in December 1961 on Goa. Thus the change in Pakistan's foreign policy influenced significantly the subsequent course of Indo-Soviet relations as well as the developing foreign relations in Asia and Africa.\textsuperscript{10}

China has an important stake in the conflict between India and Pakistan because this conflict provides it a certain political leverage in the subcontinent against India's interests.\textsuperscript{11} Pakistan from 1954 till 1969, opposed Chinese admission into the UNO understandably. The Sino-Indian war of
1962 brought Pakistan and China closer. But it also brought Anglo-American support to India in 1962 and this was disapproved by Pakistan. During the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, China supported Pakistan. During 1969-1969, the relations between China and Pakistan improved.

The improvement of Sino-Pakistan relations and the USA's pre-occupation in Vietnam war affected USA's position during Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. American preoccupation with the Vietnam war prevented its playing an active role in maintaining balance in South Asia. The United States was not happy with the role played by the Soviet Union and in September, 1965, it suspended the armed supply to both Pakistan and India. The suspension of arms supplies affected Pakistan more significantly than it did India, because of the former's heavy dependence on the United States for its arms supplies since 1954. The USSR adopted a policy of noncommitted and neutrality in regard to the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965. The Soviet Union was anxious that the Indo-Pakistan dispute should be resolved.
peacefully and it offered Soviet good offices in this behalf. The Tashkent agreement was signed on 10 January 1966 by the then Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and President Ayub Khan hoping for resolving the disputes between the two countries. But Pakistan did not adhere to the real spirit of the Tashkent declaration.

In September 1967, President Ayub Khan visited the Soviet Union, which indicated that he was closer to the USSR. Prime Minister Kosygin visited Rawalpindi in April 1968 and agreed to sell arms to Pakistan. India was naturally unhappy with the Soviet decision to sell arms to Pakistan. Thus 1969 was a turning point in Soviet policy in South Asia as it involved condemnation of Peking for the Sino-Indian dispute. This was also the year of realignment of forces in domestic politics in India.

By the 1970's the changes in the international situation affected significantly the foreign policy of India. In the Bangladesh crisis, China and the
United States supported Pakistan whereas the Soviet Union stood by India. The USSR again used its veto power in the Security Council on the resolution on Bangladesh War in December 1971. China vetoed the admission of Bangladesh to the UNO. Eventually India and Pakistan concluded the Simla Pact in July 1972. The United States policy was a continuation of its 1954 position based on its distinctive interest in supporting Pakistan. In the words of one perceptive commentator, "United States military and economic aid to Pakistan symbolised that role, although Pakistan did not share anti-communist feeling of the United States and the latter did not fully share the anti-Indian objectives of Pakistan. The United States had its own interest in India which dictated a different policy than one desired by Pakistan." 15

The Simla Pact began a process of normalization in Indo-Pakistan relations. The talks between India and Pakistan governments on 14th May, 1976, led to a restoration of diplomatic ties between the two countries.
A fundamental change occurred in the domestic politics of India when the Congress party government was replaced by the Janata Party government at the Centre after 1977 elections. A.B. Vajpayee and some other members of the Janata Party had been critical of the Congress policy towards Pakistan when they were in opposition. Therefore, naturally apprehensions were expressed in regard to the continuation of Congress foreign policy. Such fears turned out to be unfounded because the Janata Government continued the process of normalisation of relations with Pakistan. The visit of A.B. Vajpayee to Pakistan in 1978 demonstrated the commitment of the Janata Party to the spirit of the Simla Agreement and the Congress policy towards Pakistan. The dismemberment of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 improved relations between the Congress-ruled India and Bhutto's Pakistan and the Janata Government improved these relations further.16

Bangladesh Crisis

There was nothing in common between West Pakistan
and East Bengal except for the fact that their religion was one. The two constituent units geographically were separated by 1,200 miles. They speak different languages (Urdu in the West and Bengali in the East) different foods (meat and grain in the West, fish and rice in the East) and have opposite cultures, the Punjabis are solid types who prefer soldiering and government; while the Bengalis are volatile and love politics and literature. The Bengalis had supported the demand for Pakistan in the pre-independence period only on the basis of their affinity with Islam.

In 1947 the Prime Minister of Pakistan Liqaut Ali Khan declared that Pakistan was a Muslim State and that its language was Urdu. This led to a strong protest in East Bengal leading to the demand for the recognition of Bengali. When Jinnah addressed the Dacca University Convocation in 1948, students demanded the recognition of Bengali language. Several students were arrested and some 13 students were killed. The cultural resurgence of Bengalis
resulted in their protest against the repression by West Pakistan. It was in this context that the Awami League was born in 1949.16(b)

In 1950, the Bengalis demanded the declaration of Bengali as an official language, recognition of the identity and internal autonomy of East Bengal. In 1954 Bengali became one of the State languages.

The Muslim League suffered a blow in 1954 when the Awami League came to power and formed a government in East Bengal. West Pakistan did not welcome the victory of the Awami League. So it maneuvered to get dismissed the popular government of the Awami League. From 1954, the Bangladesh people carried on a struggle for nationhood, for the ending of the unequal treatment meted to them by the military rulers of West Pakistan and for their right to use and develop their language.17 The Martial Law was imposed in 1958, which was a further step towards the political and economic domination of West Pakistan over East Bengal. At this time the Bengali leaders demanded regional autonomy and equitable distribution of
economic and political power between the centre and the provinces. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then General Secretary of the Awami League, and other leaders, were arrested. The students of East Bengal protested against the regime of Ayub and demanded the restoration of parliamentary democracy in the province. In 1958 the name of East Bengal had been changed to East Pakistan.

Ayub tried to bring changes piecemeal, but in 1962 he gave Pakistan a Constitution which proved unacceptable to the people as it failed to reflect their feelings. For the East Bengali people, the more important problem was struggle against the military dictatorship. But the democratic movement in East Bengal was crushed by West Pakistan.

On 12 February 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced his six-point concept of autonomy, which became the main issue in the subsequent conflict between East and West Pakistan. For this view Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested, falsely implicated
in the Agartala conspiracy case in January 1963 and accused of conspiring to establish East Bengal as an independent sovereign State with the connivance of India. This provoked the people of East Bengal and the unrest spread to every nook and corner of the province. People demanded that Ayub Khan should release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Finally Ayub Khan had to bow down before the agitation and release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman after withdrawing the false charges.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was then invited to a round table conference in March 1969, in which he demanded full regional autonomy. This demand for autonomy was rejected, Martial Law was re-imposed in March 1969, and the Central Government dissolved the National and Provincial legislatures.

Domination of West Pakistan over East Pakistan

The revolt of East Bengal was based not merely
on linguistic and cultural factors but it was born of profound socio-economic discontent due to economic inequalities, imbalances and exploitation. Though the population of East Bengal constituted 60% of Pakistan its interest was subordinated to that of West Pakistan. The extent of this domination is illustrated by the following tables (Please see from table No. I to Table No. IV on page Nos. 224-227).

The national elections of 7 December 1970 constitute a crucial event in the development of the Bangladesh crisis. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman fought the elections on the basis of his 6 point programme of regional autonomy within the framework of a federal system. The six points were:

1. Establishment of a federation on the basis of the Lahore Resolution and the Parliamentary framework of government with supremacy of legislatures, directly elected on the basis of adult franchise;
Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Annual Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue Rs.6,000 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure on Defence Total 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Expenditure Total 40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

East Pakistan provided 60% of total revenue, but it received only about 25% of its expenditure while West Pakistan's revenue was only 40% while it received 75% of the total expenditure.
Table II

Percentage of allocation of funds for Development Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>West Pakistan</th>
<th>East Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Exchange for various developments</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Aid (excluding U.S.AID)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.Aid</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Industrial Credit &amp; Investment Corporation</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Development Bank</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Building</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table demonstrates the fund allotted for development project. While West Pakistan got 77% of the total allotment, East Pakistan had to do with a meagre 33%. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Civil Service</th>
<th>84%</th>
<th>16%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Service</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Head of Missions</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army : Officers of General Rank</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy Technical</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy - Non technical</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force Pilots</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces(Numbers)</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Airlines(Numbers)</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.I.A. Directors</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.I.A. Area Managers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Board Directors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table represents the domination of West Pakistan in the Civil service.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Pakistan</th>
<th>East Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>56 million</td>
<td>75 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of doctors</td>
<td>12,400</td>
<td>7,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Health Centres</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Community Development Centres</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV shows the extent of disparity between West and East Pakistan in the field of Social Welfare.

2. Federal government should deal with only two subjects, that is defence and foreign affairs, and all other residuary subjects should vest in the federating state;

3. There should be either two separate but freely convertible currencies for the two wings or one currency for the whole country provided that effective constitutional provisions were made to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. There should be separate banking reserves and a separate fiscal and monetary policy for East Pakistan;

4. Denial to the Central Government of the right of taxation; vesting of tax provisions in the hands of the federating states with the Central Government receiving a fixed share;

5. In foreign trade, five steps should be taken;

   a. There should be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings;
b. The earning of East Pakistan should be under the control of East Pakistan and the same for West Pakistan;

c. Foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be set by the two wings either equally or in a ratio to be fixed;

d. Indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings;

e. The Constitution should empower the unit Governments to establish trade and commercial relations, set up trade missions in and enter into agreements with foreign countries.

6. Allow the setting up of a military or para-military force by East Pakistan.22

In the December 1970 elections, the Awami League won a spectacular victory, securing 167 seats out of 169 seats allotted to East Pakistan in a national legislature of 313. This outcome displeased the
military regime of Islamabad. The military regime of Yahya Khan was reluctant to transfer power to the elected representatives. It was feared that Mujibur Rahman was a future Prime Minister of Pakistan. But East Bengalis hoped that the Constitution of Pakistan would be based on the six points of regional autonomy. The National Assembly was scheduled to meet on 3 March 1971 and it was supposed to draft the Constitution within 120 days after the meeting. Bhutto decided to boycott the National Assembly Session of 3 March 1971. When Bhutto and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman failed to agree on a new Constitution, President Yahya Khan postponed the convocation of the National Assembly and stepped up the powers of the military on 1 March 1971. He put off the session of the National Assembly indefinitely on the ground that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bhutto had substantial disagreement on the question of the draft Constitution of Pakistan.23

The Bengali Governor of East Pakistan was removed and martial law was imposed on that province.
This was a denial of basic rights to the Bengalis. In response to Mujibur Rahman's call for non-co-operation and disobedience, people struggled for the restoration of their legitimate rights. Then Yahya Khan announced on 4 March 1971 that the Assembly would meet on 25 March 1971, but Mujibur Rahman laid down four conditions for his participation in its activities:

1. Immediate end of martial law;
2. Withdrawal of troops from East Pakistan;
3. An enquiry into the killings of the strikers and;
4. Immediate handing over of power to the people's representatives.

Yahya conceded only the last condition. The remaining three, however, merely implied formal recognition of a de facto situation. Sheikh Mujib, pushed by extremist students and workers in his following and not fully aware of the risk of a military confrontation, refused to compromise.
Perhaps he feared that if he did so, the West Pakistani power elite would succeed in depriving the Bengalis of their newly won legitimate political power. Yahya Khan himself went to Dacca on 15 March 1971 for negotiations. But he once again postponed the National Assembly Session on 22 March 1971, under the pretext of finding first a solution to the East Bengal crisis. But on 25 March even as the negotiations were under way the army moved into Dacca with tanks and rockets and other heavy weapons against an unarmed civilian population. As a result entire hutment colonies of the poor were destroyed.

Yahya Khan, Bhutto and other leaders of West Pakistan flew back to Rawalpindi. On the night of 26 March 1971, the army was ordered to put down what President Yahya called an "armed rebellion" but what was perhaps a "legitimate" struggle by the Bengalis to enforce the rights they had won through the December 1970 elections. The people of East Bengal themselves then proclaimed on 26 March that
they were independent. Soon after Mujib’s arrest, representatives of the Awami League party established a provisional government of Bangladesh on 17 April 1971, with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as President, Sayed Nazzul Islam as acting President and Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister. The West Pakistan Government suppressed ruthlessly the autonomy movement. West Pakistanis were let loose to kill unarmed people in East Bengal. “Women were raped, children were mercilessly butchered, lawyers, Scientists, Professors, Doctors and other intellectuals were murdered”. The refugees flooded into India. By one estimate, by November, 1971, 98 lakh refugees had fled to India. This was a heavy burden for India. Pakistan challenged this estimate and claimed that it was not more than two million. Further it asserted that they were mostly Hindus, instigated by India.

India attempted to educate the world opinion on the real situation in Bangladesh. To do this, India despatched 13 ministerial delegations to 70 countries
Swaran Singh, then foreign minister, travelled to Moscow, Bonn, Paris, Ottawa a Washington and London, to discuss with the heads of the States the problem of Bangladesh. Indira Gandhi herself visited six countries—Belgium, Austria, Britain, USA, France and West Germany. Simultaneously Pakistan was also trying to propagate its views and its case on Bangladesh. Indira Gandhi attracted sympathy for the Indian side of the case. But these countries, however, did not demonstrate any keen interest in the issue. 

China supported Pakistan while the Soviet Union supported India. But the USA was sitting on a fence. The USA provided aid to India for refugees but it also supplied arms to Pakistan. The UN observers posted in Bangladesh could not prevent guerrilla activity. Thus the region was plunged in chaos. 

In this situation Pakistan attacked India on 3 December 1971 by bombing a number of airfields in the western sector. This action was approved by China and USA. The United States suspended its aid to India. But
fear of Russia prevented them from getting involved on a large scale. 32

In the ensuing conflict Pakistan was defeated. On 16 December Indira Gandhi announced the surrender of the enemy, and also India's unilateral ceasefire on the Western front with effect from 6 pm on 17 December. 33

III. Party Positions on the Bangladesh Crisis

The Indian National Congress(R)

The Congress(R), characterised the action of Pakistani military regime as unprovoked aggression on the rights of the people of Bangladesh. Sardar Swaran Singh, moving the resolution of the Congress working committee argued that the repression and killing of "our brethren and neighbours" in Bangladesh affected India. 34 The Bangladesh issue, according to the Congress(R), was not confined only to Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and West
Bengal nor was it only a national problem. It was also an international problem. In Bangladesh it was a problem of the very survival of the people. Indira Gandhi, speaking in the Lok Sabha, remarked, "It is a problem created by calculated genocide that is resulting not only in the murder of ten thousand of men and women and children but also forcing many more to seek refuge and shelter in India. It is a problem that threatens peace and security of India and indeed, of Southeast Asia. The world must intervene to see that Peace and Security is reestablished and maintained." The Congress(R) regarded the Bangladesh issue as a threat to the security and stability of India and hence a kind of aggression. Therefore, the Congress(R) gave call to the people of India to extend wholehearted support to the people of Bangladesh and appealed to all nations to take constructive steps to put an end to these inhuman atrocities. The AICC(R) welcomed the resolution of the Parliament, denouncing the barbarous atrocities of West Pakistan.

Congress(R) ruled out military solution to
the problem of East Bengal. Sardar Swaran Singh, in the AICC meeting in Simla, emphasised the need for a political settlement, which would be acceptable to the people of Bangladesh. He also pointed out that the Sheikh and the Awami League had full popular support as shown by their electoral triumph. The Congress(R) was the opinion that its approach to political settlement was not inconsistent with the position of the government of India. Indira Gandhi, in an interview on the BBC TV, said, "In the various capitals I have visited on this tour I have been asked what solution India would like. The question is not what we would like, or what one or other big powers would like, but what the people of East Bengal will accept and what solution would be costing one. It is an illusion to think that the fate of a country can be decided without reference to its people." The Congress(R) considered the basic question to be what the people of Bangladesh wanted and not India or any country. Therefore, it was not a good strategy for India to explain the content of that political solution but it had to be something which
the people of Bangladesh would support on a wide scale. This, of course, meant that the political solution must be "acceptable to those who have been elected with overwhelming majority, that is led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman." Further Swaran Singh wanted the creation of conditions in Bangladesh favourable to a return of the refugees who were becoming a tremendous economic and social burden on India.

He declared, "our principal objective has to be to create political conditions in Bangladesh which reverse the present trend, which in first instance stops the forced exodus of people from Bangladesh into Indian territory and secondly that this flow turns backward and these people go back and we are convinced that this can happen only if there is a solution which is accepted by those who have already been elected by the people." The Congress(B) considered the problem of refugees as a national as well as an international problem. Hence it hoped that this issue would not be reduced to a merely communal
level.

According to the Congress(R) the issue of recognition of Bangladesh was an internal affair and India should not complicate matters. The Congress(R) made it clear that Bangladesh would be recognised at the right time. Swaran Singh appealed to the opposition parties in the Parliament not to make the issue a partisan matter. He added that he was speaking from full knowledge of the situation. Indira Gandhi stated in the Lok Sabha, "The word recognition has echoed from every side, as if recognition itself would solve the many difficulties which confront the people of Bangladesh or the many difficulties which our country faces, especially our states on the border, that in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya. Whatever decision we take on this, or other issues is guided by our own independent assessment of the situation and how our interests in the broadest sense are served." The Congress(R) denied that
it had adopted a negative approach to the issue of recognition of Bangladesh. The main objective of the visit of the Indian delegations was to create the right international opinion by appealing to the conscience of the world, drawing its attention to the truth about the situation in Bangladesh. Also India could not sit back and watch the Bangladesh crisis, because it affected India's own security and stability. Swaran Singh claimed that in his visit to Moscow, Bonn, Paris, Ottawa, New York, Washington and London he could persuade the foreign leaders to agree on the following position.

1. That there was no military solution and that all military action in East Bengal should cease forthwith.

2. That the influx of refugees into India from East Bengal must cease.

3. That conditions must be brought about to enable the refugees to return to their homes in peace and security and this meant that the refugees
must be assured of a secure future in their respective homes in East Bengal.

iv. That only an appropriate political solution acceptable to the people of East Bengal could restore normal conditions.

That the existing situation was a serious threat to the peace and security of the region. India warned that it would not hesitate to take any action it deemed necessary. Indira Gandhi's speech at Columbia University on 6 November 1971 made this clear. She said, "Basically in the world every individual ultimately is alone and India is prepared to fight alone for what it thinks worth fighting for. Fortunately our philosophy teaches us that we must do right regardless of whether it brings pleasure or pain whether it brings success or failure." In India, some one hundred members of Parliament blamed the US Government for "trying to convert Bangladesh into another Vietnam." The Congress(R)
condemned the support of the USA to Pakistan during the Bangladesh war as a violation of human values. At a press conference on 31 December 1971, Indira Gandhi, referring to the American and Chinese support to Pakistan, argued that every country promoted what it regarded as its national interest. But a country might also take a global perspective. India was no exception and it tried to harmonise national interest with national ideals.47

The Congress(R) approved of the good Indo-Soviet relations and welcomed the fact that during the Bangladesh crisis Indo-Soviet friendship became deeper. This was because the Soviet Union shared the Indian view of peace, anti-colonialism and anti-racialism. The party pointed out that on issues concerning India's national security and integrity such as Goa, Kashmir and more lately Bangladesh, the Soviet position did not differ significantly from the Indian.48 That was why India could get the strong support of the USSR at a critical juncture.
The Arab position during the Bangladesh crisis was not favourable to India. But Indira Gandhi did not think of any change in Indian policy. She assured, "we base our policies on certain basic matters, ideas, ideals and so on and there is no cause for us to change our policy. So far on reviewing it or giving it a fresh look is concerned that is done constantly by our foreign office." 49

The Congress(R) maintained that the issue should be above party politics. It felt that the issue was misrepresented by some parties such as the Jana Sangh which gave a communal colour to the Bangladesh problem. 50 The Congress(R) accused the Jana Sangh of exploiting the delicate situation of Bangladesh for party ends, disregarding national interest.

Congress(R) was firm that it did not want territorial expansion. Its concern was not only pragmatic; it was also to promote the ideals of democracy and nationalism. The Party agreed that
the liberation of Bangladesh enhanced the belief of the people in the capacity of the centre to effectively tackle critical situations.51

The Congress(R) was convinced that, as a result of the liberation of Bangladesh, relations among the countries of the subcontinent and the neighbouring region could improve, and that it was right that Indian diplomacy should promote this end.52

The Congress(R) did not basically differ from the Congress(0) on Bangladesh issue, but it was critical of certain aspects of government policy. It held that the barbarous genocide that followed would undoubtedly remain one of the blackest chapters in human history.53

The Congress(0) was also for a political settlement and it was critical of the super powers and the non-aligned nations in regard to their position on the Bangladesh problem. It felt that neither the nonaligned powers nor the super powers had accepted the need for a political solution acceptable to the
representatives of Bangladesh. They also did not urge that the refugees should go back to their homeland. The Congress(0) supported the recognition of Bangladesh. It felt that the Government seemed to lack the courage to take timely action. It argued that if human rights were not restored in East Bengal, through a political settlement, and if the refugees could not return and if the national interests of India suffered severely, then the blame would have to go fully to the Government of India. However, the Government had failed to stop the flow of refugees from East Bengal and persuaded the return of the refugees, because that could lead to war, which would attract adverse world public opinion.

The Congress(0) was unhappy that the nonaligned countries did not say even one word about Bangladesh. It also criticized the Indian Government for its poor information network. It also felt that the UNO continued to be passive in regard to Bangladesh. According to a spokesman of the Congress(0),
"The attitude of one super power is indeed unmistakably Pro-Pakistan, an attitude of active aid and abetment to the genocide by Pakistan. But the attitude of the Soviet Union also is evident from the communique issued after the meeting of our foreign minister with his counterpart, is quite disappointing."57 The Congress(0) opposed any aid from the USA for refugee rehabilitation. The Congress(0) feared that there was an implicit acceptance of the condominium or the 'sphere of influence' idea of China in this region.58 The Congress(0) feared that China would intervene in the matter.

The Congress(0) attacked the Congress(R) party for claiming the national victory of Bangladesh as a personal victory of the Prime Minister and her ruling party. The Bangladesh victory became a main issue in the Assembly election campaign at this time. To cover up her failure to fulfil the electoral promises of Garibi Hato, it was claimed that the Prime Minister publicised the return of the refugees, the liberation of Sheikh Mujibur
Rahaman and of Bangladesh as if these were merely
party achievements, not national achievements. In
particular, the crucial role of India's armed forces
was underplayed.59

The Communist Parties

The CPI considered what happened in East Bengal
as a revolution by consent. Placing the liberation
of Bangladesh in a wider context, the CPI felt that
it contributed to the cause of international struggle
for freedom, democracy and social progress.60

The CPI wanted India to extend all help to Bangladesh
until final solution was accepted and implemented.
According to the CPI "It is futile to comfort oneself
with the thought of a so called political solution.
There can be no solution except on the basis of
freedom for Bangladesh and this is what India should
impress upon the nations of the world. But our best
argument is our action." A CPI spokesman demanded in the Parliament that the Government should tell the Parliament when and what action it would take about the Bangladesh crisis.

The CPI firmly stood for the recognition of Bangladesh and it felt that it was chiefly the responsibility of the Government of India. The refusal to recognise Bangladesh meant war. H. N. Mukherjee, speaking in the Lok Sabha, pointed out that the Government must carry out the commitment Parliament had made to the people and that was that Bangladesh would be recognised and that firm and quick action would be taken towards this end. The CPI argued that the continued non-recognition of Bangladesh would be interpreted by world opinion as indicating India's acceptance of West Pakistan's domination over East Pakistan. Therefore, the CPI urged the recognition of the Government of Bangladesh, which represented the will of the people. India should categorically state that it did not recognise the authority of the military regime
Reacting to the Prime Minister's pronouncement on the question of creating conditions for the return of the refugees, the CPI leader, H.N. Mukherjee, stated "The die having been cast as far as Bangladesh is concerned, recognition of Bangladesh is an absolute pre-condition of activity for such settlement." 64

The Party condemned China and US imperialists for supporting Yahya Khan, and regarded Bangladesh as a challenge to the left and democratic forces. Peking's approval of General Yahya Khan and his policy of genocide in Bangladesh were condemned. The CPI was critical of the Naxalites and the CPM for looking upon the Chinese party as a revolutionary party. 65 The CPI organ, the New Age, editorially criticised the US arms supply as an indication of U.S. approval of the genocide in Bangladesh and its desire to instigate Pakistan against India. 66

The CPI wanted the UNO to support a free sovereign
Bangladesh. But it held that peace and security in the subcontinent depended, not on security council or the UN General Assembly, but on the liberation struggle in Bangladesh and friendship and co-operation between India and the Soviet Union as embodied in the Indo-Soviet Treaty. The Chinese opposition to the admission of Bangladesh to the UNO was also denounced by the CPI.

The CPI was critical of the Jana Sangh’s position on Bangladesh issue. According to the CPI, the Jana Sangh perceived Bangladesh problem as a Hindu-Muslim problem. The Jana Sangh’s equating the super powers in Udaipur Session was also condemned by the CPI. It argued that Jana Sangh’s sympathy for Bangladesh was a trick “to distort these genuine sentiments and divert them into disruptive channels.” The CPI was also critical of the CPM. It accused the CPM of promoting “their partizan ends even at the cost of Bangladesh.”

The considered view of the CPI was that the
leaders of the CPM excelled in attacking the Soviet Union and expressed doubts that their pet enemy, Indira Gandhi, would really help the liberation of Bangladesh. It accused the CPM of spreading doubts about the intentions of the Government of India during the Bangladesh War. It criticised the CPM for taking a sectarian and negative position on the issue. In fact, the CPI regarded the CPM position as holding an "anti-Marxist-Leninist ideological position". 70

The CPI supported the Government of India during the Bangladesh crisis. It claimed that, "It helped to rouse not only the masses in our country in favour of Bangladesh and for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, it also played a great role in mobilising the international communist movement and democratic and peace loving world public opinion for this course. It rendered great political, moral and material aid to the people of Bangladesh and their glorious Mukti Bahini." 71 However, the CPI did not approve of
the tax imposed by the Government in connection with the Bangladesh war.

The CPM did not consider that what was happening was a civil war, but viewed it as a war between military dictatorship on the one side and the democratic wishes and aspirations of the people of Bangladesh on the other. According to it, the people of Bangladesh were fighting against the military regime and against the suppression of their basic democratic rights and liberties. Their struggle was yet "another glorious chapter to the history of people's revolts." The CPM condemned West Pakistan's brutal attack on the people of East Bengal and gave full support to their struggle. It urged the people of India and the Indian Government to provide full assistance to the people of Bangladesh.

The CPM was afraid that the joint Indo-Soviet communiqué on political solution of Bangladesh might ignore the issue of recognising Bangladesh. This was because the joint communiqué referred only vaguely to
a political solution of Bangladesh. Earlier a political settlement had meant the freedom of Bangladesh but now the Indian foreign minister was referring to solutions within the framework of Pakistan itself, and not necessarily one between the Yahya government and the Bangladesh government. The CPM asserted that though it was for the people of Bangladesh to decide their own future, it was necessary that the democratic movement in India should support them in their efforts.

Thus the CPM urged wholehearted support to the struggle of Bangladesh. The CP felt that mere words of sympathy and support were not enough. Hence the CPM demanded first a recognition of the provisional government of Bangladesh and then all material help to enable it to overcome the aggression of Pakistan army. The onslaught of the military regime drove the people of East Bengal to seek refuge in India, creating great problems for India. The PB of the CPM held Government of India responsible for the care of the refugees, until they could go back to Bangladesh without fear. The imperialist powers of the world pretended sympathy for
the refugees in India and even hypocritically lauded India for its restraint in not intervening in the freedom struggle but they were also helping to save the Yahya regime.78

The CPM felt that any half-hearted support by India led only to a strengthening of the West Pakistan military rulers and helped the imperialists in their attempts to bring about a compromise at the cost of the freedom fighters of Bangladesh.79 If a policy of delaying the recognition of Bangladesh continued, the people of Bangladesh would suffer, and this would affect adversely the people of India also. The entire economy of India would be disrupted by the influx of millions of refugees.80 As all the democratic parties had demanded the recognition of Bangladesh, Indira Gandhi's Government had no reason to postpone recognition other than its own partisan interests.81 The CPM suspected that India could be under pressure from the US and allied sources.

In this connection, the PB of the CPM welcomed the Government of India's rejection of the US proposal
to send observers to the border between Bangladesh and India as direct interference. The party believed that the US imperialists were doing their best to support Yahya Khan in his efforts to suppress the national liberation movement of the people of Bangladesh.82

The CPM appreciated of the Soviet policy of backing the Government of India during the Bangladesh crisis. But it felt that both the Soviet Union and China were guided by their narrow foreign policy interest, though they knew that the Bangladesh struggle was for national liberation. The PRC supported Pakistan as its close ally and only the USSR stood by India during the crisis. Yet the Soviet stand did not imply direct support to the liberation struggle.83 The CPM clearly disapproved the position of China against the freedom fighters in Bangladesh. It hoped that China would realise the true nature of the situation. The CPM regarded China's stand as revisionist and hoped that the people's Republic of China would abandon this position.
and extend support to the liberation struggle of Bangladesh people. The CPM organ, People's Democracy, declared, "We have welcomed the Soviet stand, condemned the Chinese position but we cannot subscribe to the slander that the right communists are spouting when they take about a Washington-Peking axis equating Socialist China with imperialist gendarme... of the world reaction."

Jyotirmoy Basu criticised the Government of India for not understanding properly the US position. He made a reference to the incompetence of the Indian Foreign Minister and the External Affairs Ministry. He said that the US was indulging in "double or multi dealings". The CPM took the CPI to task for "tailing behind the ruling party and even in regard to Bangladesh its support to the liberation struggle was conditioned by it". The CPM criticised the Congress(R) for following a foreign policy of equating the imperialist camp with the socialist camp and it opposed the government's imposing taxes in the name of meeting the expenditure of the refugees as a burden on the common man.
The CPM considered the Government's policy as neglecting its "class outlook and its caution in regard to big imperialist powers." The CPM leader Basavapunniah argued that, "It is not the CPI(M) supporting the Government of bourgeoisie and landlord government, (but) supporting the issue of democracy and national liberation." The CPM felt that the Jana Sangh did not extend genuine support to the freedom fighters in Bangladesh and it was interested only in the disintegration of Pakistan. The Jana Sangh was also creating communal tension in the country by interpreting the issue a struggle between Hindus and Muslims. The CPM stated that "the Jana Sangh leaders have loudly denied that they are injecting a communal slant to the situation but this is what the Organizer says; this is a struggle for power between leaderless persecuted Hindu populace and compact minority of audacious adventures." On this basis the JS has launched a mass Satyagraha campaign ostensibly to demand 'the recognition of Bangladesh' but in reality to pursue its own rabid communal policies. Further the CPM believed...
that the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra and the Congress had become the American lobby, working to weaken the friendly relations with socialist countries.\textsuperscript{91}

According to the CPM the victory of Bangladesh was a defeat to American imperialism as it weakened its capacity to use Pakistan against India. It was happy that the crisis had brought the people of both India and Bangladesh closer against American imperialism and its stooges in West Pakistan. The CPM gave credit for this to the people of both countries though the Congress had used its position as a ruling party to take full credit for itself for the liberation of Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{92}

The Socialist Party

The Socialist party regarded the freedom struggle as an electoral success of "the people of Bangladesh over the obscurantist dictatorship of Pakistan". It was convinced that finally the forces of liberation
would succeed. It argued that the conflict between the two wings of Pakistan could not be resolved easily because it was a fundamental conflict between "those who believe in democratic methods of governance and a foreign policy based on peace and friendship on the one hand and those who believe in autocratic rule, colonial exploitation and cold or hot war approach". In an official resolution the PSP stated the Bangladesh struggle was fought for "the values of democracy, socialism and secularism".

The struggle had shown again the total impotence of the UN when faced with an entire people's strength organised for liberation against a state apparatus out to oppress them and keep them. It also exposed the brutal nature of the real politics which lay behind the policies of world powers, whether they claimed to follow democracy, Marxism or Maoism. It had revealed that the otherwise friendly Islamic countries had failed to support India's stand and condemn the
suppression of the Bangladesh people. Finally, the PSP felt that the Bangladesh war had shown the inability of the Indian Government to follow an independent policy in its foreign relations, especially during critical situations. 95

The PSP demanded that all help should be given to the people of Bangladesh. The Socialist party stood for a reorientation of the Bangladesh policy. It, therefore, wanted to mobilise public opinion in an organised manner against the foreign policy of the government and press for its change. If warned the government that the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman enjoyed full mandate from the people and if Yahya Khan was allowed to undermine it then East Bengal as well as the whole region would become a pawn in the hands of imperialists. 96

According to the Socialists the Government of Pakistan aimed only to commit genocide in Bangladesh but it also wanted to expel the people of Bangladesh out of their land so that they could flood India,
endangering its security, dislocating its socio-economic system and aggravating the communal tensions. The party argued that the problem of the refugees could be settled only if an independent Bangladesh came into being. According to the Socialist Party, the influx of millions of refugees was a direct result of the policy of Government of India, which had delayed recognition of Bangladesh, and imposed taxes on the people in the name of Bangladesh problem.

The Socialists held that any political settlement must first accept independent Bangladesh. Samarat Gunia, speaking in the Lok Sabha, remarked "The people of Bangladesh have already made the political solution for their fate. They have declared war, they have declared independence". The only political settlement, therefore, was to negotiate with the West Pakistan Government about "the withdrawal of the army occupation of Pakistan from Bangladesh, the repatriation of Bengali civil servants, military officers and other Bengalis who are in West Pakistan and following them constitute a constituent Assembly of the elected
representatives of Bangladesh to frame their own national constitution. 99

The socialists advocated that both India and the Soviet Union should immediately recognise the government of Bangladesh and initiate diplomatic moves to persuade other world powers to do so. It felt that such recognition would give strength to the freedom fighters in Bangladesh. It would reinforce their confidence in their final victory. 100 In this connection the Socialist leader Samar Guha declared, "you have two alternatives; either to go to war with Pakistan or if you want to avoid war, the other alternative is to give immediate recognition to Bangladesh. 101 He felt that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister by using frequently the term 'Bangladesh' had accorded de facto recognition to Bangladesh. 102

Regarding the government's position that India would recognise Bangladesh at the proper time, the Socialist party wanted from the Government clarification about the meaning of "right time". Samar Guha
during the Lok Sabha debate, argued that formal recognition would regularise India's diplomatic relations with the Government of Bangladesh and clear India of the charge by Pakistan and other powers that it carried on secret relations with Bangladesh. He said that it would technically authorise India to extend military, political and economic support to Bangladesh on the basis of mutual obligations between two independent countries. India then could legally train the Mukti Bahini on Indian territory. India could, if necessary, send easily military experts, technologists and volunteer forces to strengthen the Mukti Bahini in their liberation war. Guha argued that a positive decision by India to recognise Bangladesh would encourage world powers and the UNO to give recognition to Bangladesh. The Socialists believed that recognition would not result in a war between India and Pakistan, but it would help the freedom struggle. Also the Socialist party observed the All India Bangladesh Week in November 1971.

The Socialists felt that the country had adequately
mobilised world public opinion in support of Bangladesh. But it felt that the visit of the Indian delegation had not succeeded in putting pressure on Yahya’s regime to transfer political power to the elected representatives of Bangladesh. The Mukti Bahini and the people of Bangladesh had successfully challenged the Pakistani Junta in Bangladesh, and hence it would be a betrayal of Bangladesh if a political solution based on the framework of Pakistan was enforced, as desired by the world powers. The Socialist party was very critical of the USA and China. It believed that the big powers did not want Pakistan to break up because they considered that in the context of rivalry for world supremacy a balance between India and Pakistan would help them to put pressure on India.

The Socialists also criticised the USSR. The Party argued that America’s crimes in Vietnam matched the Soviet crimes against freedom fighters of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Therefore, they had no moral basis to support Bangladesh. However, it gave credit to the Soviet Union for its help during Bangladesh crisis. The Socialist leader Madhu Limaye,
moving a resolution in the citizens' conference on war aims, in Bombay, on 12 December 1971, said that he was happy that the USSR had given up its policy of equating India and Pakistan and finally supported India's attempts to speed up the liberation of Bangladesh. The Party did not approve of the position of the Arab countries on the Bangladesh issue. The Socialist Party regretted that the Afro Asian countries had not given clear support to Bangladesh, despite their own past experience of being the victims of colonial exploitation. It was also critical of the UNO, and especially of the role of the Secretary General, who had failed to protect the right of the Bangladesh People to live in freedom.

According to the Socialist Party, Bangladesh problem was basically a national problem. Hence it required a genuinely national approach, removed from party politics. It called on the government of India to establish a refugee council on an all-party basis. When the Indo-Pakistan war broke out
the Socialist party supported the Government. Swar Guha, extending support to government, in Lok Sabha described Indira Gandhi as "the flaming sword of Mahashakti", out to destroy Pakistan's war machinery and give the people of Bangladesh freedom and democracy. During the war all political parties supported the government of India. But after the war, the Socialist Party was critical of the ruling Congress Party for exploiting a national victory to serve party interests. Madhu Limaye paid glowing tributes to the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, crediting him with having persuaded Russia to see the real issues in the Bangladesh crisis and of even turning the BJP leader, Vajpayee into a secularist.

The Socialists believed that the Bangladesh victory had increased Jana Sangh's acceptance of secularism. As for the Communist Parties, the CPI because of its uncritical pro-USSR position, supported the government but the CPM became confused because of the role of China in the crisis.
The Socialist Party urged as a final objective a confederation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Socialist Party advocated the following developments:

1. A greater federalization of the Indian political system involving devolution of power right from the States to the Panchayats;

2. Total demoralisation and defederation of Pakistan; and

3. Confederation of the three independent Sovereign states of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.118

Bharatiya Jana Sangh

The Party's position on Bangladesh was based on its understanding of history. It believed that the partition of India against the desire of the people of India was the result of a conspiracy between the imperialists and the Congress leaders. East Bengal was illogically included in Pakistan. The Bangladesh problem was thus a product
of history. The BJS blamed for this the two nation theory which "assumed that Decca could feel itself closer to Lahore and Islamabad some 1200 miles away than to Calcutta and that a citizen of West Punjab than with his next door non-muslim Bengali neighbour" and called it preposterous, illogical, unscientific and unrealistic. The BJS viewed the developments in East Bengal as a proof of the untenability of the two-nation theory.

The president of the BJP, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, attempted to draw the attention of the Government of India to the historical consequences of the partition of India. He referred to (1) the refugees immediately after the partition, (2) the sufferings of the Hindus in East Bengal and (3) the infiltration of Muslims from East Pakistan into the North Eastern areas in order to convert them into Muslim majority areas and to strengthen the anti-national elements in Nagaland and Mizoram. He felt that Pakistan would suppress the East Bengali revolution in the context of these developments. The BJS criticised Pakistani aggression.
on the unarmed and innocent people of East Bengal, the killing of Hindus, supporters of Awami League, intellectuals and youth and the mass rape and destruction of the property, but the only crime of the East Bengal people was that they exercised their democratic rights and wanted to live in honour. The BJS condemned Yahya Khan as an enemy of mankind and a symbol of beastliness.

In the resolution of 15 AIS, Udiapur, 27 July 1971, the BJS identified three objectives Pakistan's policy. They were (1) "to exterminate all those who had dared to challenge in any shape or form the basic ideology of Pakistan", (2) "to cut down the population of East Bengal to enforce the principle of parity between West Pakistan and East Bengal in any future constitution of Pakistan", and (3) "to eliminate every Hindu from East Bengal as they had done in West Punjab to make East Bengal too a homogeneous Islamic area with no trace of heresy."

The BJS demanded that the government should clearly
take a stand on whether to help free East Bengal seek a solution involving East Bengal's freedom or a solution, which kept East Bengal as a part of Pakistan. The people of East Bengal were not prepared to compromise with freedom. It was suspicious of "repetition of the phrase political solutions by New Delhi", as it did not imply a definite commitment to the liberation of Bangladesh. So the BJS urged the Government to make it clear what it meant by political solution. Further it demanded that "political settlement should be made only with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League and not the puppets of Yahya Khan." The Jana Sangh described sarcastically the visit of Indian delegation to the various countries as "wasting valuable time by sending cabinet ministers to world capitals with wagging tongues and begging howls to canvas sympathy for India and beg help for the refugees." Instead of doing this, the Government should have taken a firm stand and given the country a strong lead.

The BJP urged the government to take the following steps:-
1. Immediate recognition of the democratically elected government of Swadhin Bangladesh and effective moral and material help for it, and efforts for the early release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

2. Location of the camps for the refugees mostly on the Bangladesh border to facilitate their return to their homes as soon as Pakistani occupation ended; screening of the refugees to detect Pakistani agents amongst them and military training for refugees youth;

3. Effective military action against Pakistani aggression on our border;

4. Effective curbs on Sheikh Abdullah Mujlis-i-Mushawarat Jamia-e-millat and Jamit Islam, Muslim League and other bodies in India consistently refusing to condemn the military regime for its genocide in Bangladesh.

5. Securing of co-operation of all patriotic organisations and bodies in the task of countering Pakistani aggression; securing of justice to the people
of Bangladesh and protection of the honour, integrity and security of India.

6. A critical re-examination of India’s foreign policy in all its aspects.120

The BJS asked its units to organise public opinion to force the government to take action on such lines.

The BJS maintained that Pakistan did not want a real political settlement. It feared that Pakistan’s intention was to establish a puppet government in Bangladesh.121

The BJS urged the Government to disregard the policies of big powers and work out a programme of concrete action. It believed that the people of India were ready to make any sacrifice for the liberation of Bangladesh. Vajpayee warned that if we fail to act in time not only would Bangladesh be destroyed but the security, peace and progress of India also would
Denouncing Indira Gandhi's statement that the refugees would have to return within six months, the BJS asked the Prime Minister to spell out the criteria for defining this period. Further it demanded to know what action the Government would take if Pakistan refused to transfer power to the elected representatives of East Bengal and if other countries did not pressurise Pakistan. The BJS held that the refugees did not need to return until they were given security and the troops were evacuated from Bangladesh. The BJS urged the Government strongly to raise the Bangladesh genocide issue in the UNO.

The BJS firmly supported recognition of Bangladesh. Vajpayee addressing the Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha at Udaipur, in July 1971, remarked "When an independent Sovereign Bangladesh was established on April 15, New Delhi began to say, how can we give aid to Bangladesh government so long as we do not recognise it? And when
demand to recognise it was made, we were told that the
time has not come to do so. It is also said that
recognising Bangladesh would be harmful to its own
interest, as if Bangladesh leaders who are demanding
recognition do not know where their interest lie.\textsuperscript{124}

The BJS organised a Satyagraha in Delhi from 1st
to 12th August 1971 to press for the recognition of
Bangladesh. The Sarvodaya leader, Jaya Prakash
Narayan, was invited to lead the demonstration on 12th
August 1972. The basic purpose of the Satyagraha was
to persuade the Government to recognise Bangladesh.
The BJS felt that already recognition had been delayed
and unless it was done, India could not legitimately
extend help to Bangladesh. A party document noted,
\begin{quote}
"So long as we do not recognise the independent
existence of Bangladesh, Pakistan will keep trying to
drag India into the international forum on the plea
that all the assistance given to Mukti Bahini amounts
to Indian interference in internal affairs."\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

The BJS accused the Government of India of
reluctance to recognise Bangladesh under Russian and American pressure. According to the BJS, Pakistan wanted to create the impression that India was keen on aggravating the situation and hence was not interested in the UN's playing a constructive role. Pakistan also calculated that the presence of UN observers in Bangladesh would prevent the Mukti Bahini from getting India aid. In any case the situation could be used to discredit India.126

The BJS believed that Pakistani war-strategy was to choose the time and place of an armed conflict. It wanted to choose either Rajasthan or Gujarat for a possible attack. Therefore, the BJS urged the Government of India to be prepared for surprise attack on the frontier but it felt that the government's strategy could succeed only if Bangladesh was recognised.

The BJS rejected the Congress charge of inciting communal passions on the Bangladesh problem. It asserted, "As a matter of fact, the Congress has
raised the bogey of communalism to divert the people's attention from the utter failure of Governments Bangladesh policy. ¹²⁷

The BJS denounced the Muslim League's pro-Pakistan stand of opposition to the recognition and its refusal to sign the petition of the members of Indian Parliament to the UN Secretary General to save the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It criticised the Congress Party's attitude to the Muslim League and related it to the fact that "in Kerala it exists on the mercy of Muslim League and in the whole country it wants Muslim League's support for Muslim votes."¹²⁸

The BJS strongly condemned Indira Gandhi's statement at a Congress(I) rally that she was like a lion while the other parties were like flies and mosquitoes. Her attack was primarily directed against the RSS and the BJS, reacting to this, said ".... by using indecent language about her political opponents, she has discredited the office of the Prime Minister". He demanded an apology for her.¹²⁹
The BJS regarded Bangladesh as a national problem and demanded that it should be taken as a national challenge and tackled unitedly. Therefore, it appealed to the Prime Minister to give up party politics in the hour of national crisis and unite the whole nation against the danger to the country. In general the BJS regarded the foreign policy of India as neither rational nor national.

The BJS felt that India's refusal to yield American and Chinese blackmail during the Indo-Pak had enhanced India's international prestige but its dependence on the USSR should not be allowed to the point at which Russia used it as a pawn in international politics.

The BJS disapproved the pro-Pakistan position of Britain, USA, China and Russia, as it was designed to keep Pakistan strong as a counter to India. The party wanted a change in India's policy towards Arab countries in view of their position during the Bangladesh crisis. The BJS argued that if the Arab
countries could be friendly with both India and Pakistan. India could equally be friendly with Arab countries and Israel.

It welcomed the unity of all parties and sections during the crisis as an indication of a genuine concern for national security. The BJS itself assisted the security force in a number of ways and contributed to the war efforts.131

However, it criticised the manner of formation of defence and citizen's committee as "unashamedly partisan". The BJS did not approve of the Government's way of cancelling the decision to postpone Assembly Elections during the Indo-Pakistan war. While the decision to postpone had been arrived at after consultation with the opposition parties, the subsequent decision to drop the postponement after the end of the war, was unilateral. But the ruling party maintained that it was right in taking the decision as the need for postponement had disappeared with the end of the war.132
The Swatantra Party

The Swatantra Party also held the view that historically and geographically India and Pakistan constituted one entity. It blamed the Congress party for the creation of Pakistan on the basis of religion. According to the Swatantra Party, the Bangladesh issue involved a struggle against the tyranny of minority. But this was not merely an internal matter for Pakistan. It was, in fact, an international issue and had to be tackled at that level. Therefore, it wanted to raise this question before the Commission on Human Rights at the UNO, the Afro-Asian Conference and other international forums. A Swatantra leader in the Lok Sabha declared, on behalf of the Swatantra Party, "I associate myself with the spontaneous and popular upsurge of 75 million people of Bangladesh and support their aspirations for autonomy for which they got a clear mandate in elections of December 1970."133

The Swatantra felt that the Government of India's policy towards Bangladesh assumed that the conflict
there was between Pakistan and Bangladesh and that it consistently stood for a settlement, embodying the aspiration of the people of East Bengal, and creation of conditions favourable to the return of refugees with security. The Swatantra Party fully agreed with these objectives but it wanted the government to spell out how it expected to achieve them. It was also not satisfied with the mere sending of delegations abroad, as the government was doing.134

The Swatantra Party viewed the problem of refugees as a long-term one. It was not merely a question of finance and amenities, but it involved a number of other problems. The Swatantra leader, Firoo Nody, pleaded that the government should act rightly, take the opposition into confidence and see that the nation was united on the issue.135

In a resolution on Bangladesh, the party's General Council charged the Government with not taking steps to see that the refugees returned to Bangladesh.136
According to a Swatantra Member of the Lok Sabha, the recognition of Bangladesh was less important than the fact of its de facto emergence as a free nation after a long struggle. However, the Swatantra Party did consider recognition of Bangladesh as a first step in the right direction.

The Party opposed the suggestion to seal Indian frontiers. The safe return of the refugees was an Indian responsibility. Their safe return could be ensured either by the setting up of a government led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman or by direct military action.

According to another Swatantra leader, H.M. Patel, the recognition of Bangladesh should be accepted as the first step and military action must follow the recognition as soon as possible. The party disapproved the attitude of those countries which provided arms aid to Pakistan.
National Consensus on Bangladesh Crisis

A national consensus evolved on the fundamentals of Bangladesh issue. All the political parties agreed on some basic aspects of Bangladesh crisis. But they also differed in their formulation of the Bangladesh problem and their evaluation of the international situation. According to the Congress(R) Party, Bangladesh problem was not just a political or economic problem but it was a problem of the survival of the people of Bangladesh. The Congress(0) did not differ from this understanding of the Bangladesh crisis. The CPI regarded the Bangladesh crisis as a struggle for freedom, democracy and social progress. In its opinion the national liberation revolution followed the election of December 1970. The CPIM defined the problem of Bangladesh as a war between military dictatorship on the one side, and the democratic wishes and aspirations of the people of Bangladesh on the other. To the PWP, the Bangladesh problem was basically a conflict between two wings of Pakistan, believing in opposed ideologies - democracy and a foreign policy based on
peace and friendship, on one side, and, on the other, the autocratic rule, colonial exploitation and cold or hot war. The BJS held the view that the Bangladesh problem was nothing but the collapse of the two-nation theory, but developments in East Bengal destroyed the two-nation theory, the very basis on which Pakistan had been created. The Swatantra Party defined Bangladesh issue as a struggle against the tyranny of a minority. It held that the Bangladesh issue was not an internal issue for Pakistan alone but it was an international issue to be dealt with as such.

The political parties differed in their evaluation of the international situation. The international situation was shaped basically by the policies of the USSR, China and USA. So the parties expressed different attitudes on the role of the USA, USSR and China. All the political parties criticised the attitude of the USA and China towards Bangladesh. The CPI was a critic of the Chinese attitude towards Bangladesh while the CPM denounced both the USSR and China. The CPI's criticism of Indira Gandhi's policy was mild, but it
denounced strongly the CPIM who policy was guided by its basic understanding of the class character of Indira Gandhi's foreign policy. The Congress(0) was not only a critic of the super powers but it also criticized the nonaligned nations in regard to their position on the political solution to the Bangladesh problem. The BJS denounced the pro-Pakistan stand of America, China and Russia.

All parties, however, were unanimous in advocating a political solution to the problem of Bangladesh. But they differed in the means to be adopted to find a political solution. The Indian political parties reached a consensus on extending full moral and material support to Bangladesh. All the parties believed in the mobilisation of world public opinion but they differed in evaluating the success of Indian government in mobilising world public opinion through the visit of Indian delegations to different countries. The BJS did not agree with the view that world public opinion could help to resolve Bangladesh problem. The argument of the BJS was that the various governments
adopted different attitudes on the question of Bangladesh. Therefore, it was difficult to mobilise world public opinion. Despite such differences in opinion, the political parties agreed that there was need to mobilise the world public opinion in order to explain the realities of Bangladesh. Whatever the partisan evaluations, the fact remains that Indira Gandhi's diplomacy made some dent on world public opinion and on the thinking of most governments.  

On the question of recognition of Bangladesh, all the opposition political parties, as well as some members of the ruling party, were in agreement. Though the Swatantra Party accepted the need for the recognition of Bangladesh, it gave it a secondary importance. The BJS even organised a 12-day satyagraha in August 1971 to press for the recognition of Bangladesh. One observer has stated that "with a timing that suggests design the Indo-Soviet treaty was announced just before the climax of these demonstrations, completely deflating opposition pressure."
According to one view, India's premature recognition could have been regarded as intervention by world opinion. Recognition by a single state creates difficulties that could be overcome "only by collective recognition." Therefore, India attempted to create first the right climate for recognition through mobilisation of international public opinion in order to force Pakistan for a settlement. After its failure to persuade international community and consistent with its principle of noninterference, India recognised Bangladesh.

Despite domestic pressure, India did not compromise its position on the Bangladesh issue. The United States became more pro-Pakistan in 1972 even at the risk of poor relations with India, in order to use Pakistan as a channel through which it could establish relations with China.

Pakistan charged India of interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan by encouraging secessionist sentiment in East Bengal. However, Pakistan's disintegration was due to its inability to create an
But all political parties forgetting their differences stood as one man to support Indira Gandhi during the Bangladesh crisis.

The year 1971 started with an impressive internal triumph for Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha elections and ended with a great victory for her foreign policy. She not only enhanced her personal stature, but she also raised India's prestige. Despite the criticism, her policy on the Bangladesh crisis was democratic in spirit and also pragmatic.

The opposition parties, however, strongly criticized the ruling party for exploiting a national victory over Bangladesh to serve narrow party ends. But the peculiarity of the one party dominant system is that the ruling party can attribute the success of any policy to itself while blame the failure on other parties. The victory of Bangladesh and its impact on
Assembly elections of 1972 demonstrated how the ruling party could use a national victory for political purposes, ignoring the substantial contribution of opposition to the success of the foreign policy, as in the case of the Bangladesh crisis.
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C) The Simla Agreement

The Background

In the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, the ceasefire was announced by India on 17 December 1971. After the ceasefire India initiated the process of normalisation of its relations with Pakistan. Samar Sen, the Indian delegate to the UN, stated in a note to the Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, on January 12, that India was ready to start bilateral negotiations with Pakistan on mutual troop withdrawal on Western and Kashmir fronts. The note suggested that the Indian troops would be withdrawn from the Bangladesh only after the government of India and Bangladesh considered the situation warranted it. Bhutto, the then President of Pakistan, reacting to this offer said that Pakistan would not negotiate if India laid down pre-conditions for the withdrawal of troops or for the repatriation of the POWs. On 14 February
1972 India responded saying that it would start direct talks with Pakistan "at any time, at any level and without pre-conditions". Bhutto stated that the question of recognition of Bangladesh could be settled only after his discussion with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But Sheikh Mujibur Rehman rejected the offer of talks. He said he would not talk unless first Pakistan recognised Bangladesh.

Bhutto, on 3 March 1972, said that he was looking forward to negotiations with India as well as with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and requested the release of the prisoners of war. But Indira Gandhi revealed that she had not yet got any clear answer from President Bhutto to the Indian offer of 14 February. She added that although India had agreed to talk at any level, it might be useful to hold preliminary discussions at the official level, leaving scope for subsequent negotiations.2
The statements and counter statements reduced the differences between India and Pakistan. As a result, an official communication went from the Indian Prime Minister to President Bhutto early in April 1978, suggesting a preparatory meeting of special emissaries for the summit talks. It was also announced that D.P. Dhar, then Chairman of Policy Planning Committee in External Affairs Ministry, would head the Indian delegation, and Aziz Ahmed, Secretary-General Pakistan Foreign office, the Pakistani delegation. A joint statement issued on April 30 said that the special emissaries had agreed on the modalities for the meeting between President Bhutto and Indira Gandhi to be held in New Delhi towards the end of May or beginning of June. It also specified the subjects to be discussed. The Indo-Pak summit talks to be held in late May or early June had to be put off to the end of June as President Bhutto unexpectedly decided to go on a 13-day tour of African and West Asian countries (29 May to 10 June 1972) Since Indira had also planned to visit various European
countries from 12-24 June, the summit could not be held before the last week of June.  

The Indo-Pakistan summit between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the Pakistan President Z.A. Bhutto started on 28 June 1972 in Simla. An agreement was signed on 2 July 1972, popularly known as the Simla Agreement. The importance of the Simla Summit consisted in the fact that for the first time, Indo-Pakistani negotiations went beyond a particular problem or a specific set of issues. From the Indian perspective it meant the working out of a new arrangement for peace on the subcontinent, taking into account the power equations in South Asia. The agreement which initiated the process of normalisation between India and Pakistan and its spirit, has continued to promote speedy normalisation of their relations. More recently, for example, the President of Pakistan, Zia-Ul-Haq in an interview, said "A number of journalists and friends have often asked me about the need of a
no war pact between the two countries. My answer has always been that the Simla Agreement is virtually a no-war pact if we can implement it in letter and spirit."  

**The Indian National Congress (R)**

As the progress of the subcontinent depended on peace, the Congress (R) believed in peace and security to be achieved through cooperation, not confrontation. According to the Congress (R) all the nations of this region had a common enemy which was poverty and economic backwardness. Therefore, the Congress party wanted the nations of this subcontinent to work collectively for the removal of poverty. For the Congress (R), the major issue was whether the interest of India and Pakistan were complementary or conflicting.

The CWC, welcoming the Simla pact, stated
it in its resolution "It is therefore, appropriate that a country like India, always wedded a peace, should succeed in persuading Pakistan that hereafter relations between the two countries shall be governed by principle of bilateral negotiations, so that no outside foreign get an opportunity to disturb the peace of the subcontinent. It is in this spirit and the earliest hope of complete reconciliation between India and Pakistan that the Simla Agreement represents a historical document. We hope that this is the commencement of a new era of peaceful relations between the peoples of the two countries whose real interest lie in the growth and preservation of democracy, eradication of poverty and peaceful co-operation in pursuit of common aspiration for their economic development."

The Socialist India, the official organ of the Congress(R), found the Simla Agreement to possess a two-fold significance, "bilateralism in Indo-Pakistan negotiations" and the spelling out of in "fairly explicit terms the ground rules for
a durable peace between the two countries in its first two articles.\footnote{8}

Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha debates declared, "The time has come when Asia must wake up to its destiny, must wake up to the real needs of its people, must stop fighting amongst ourselves, no matter what our previous quarrels, no matter what the previous hatred and the bitterness. The time has come today when we must bury the past. We should see in what way we can wake the people of Asia, who were rich not only in talent but in culture in heritage, once more regain I would not say past glory, because I do not believe in that kind of glory, but certainly a status in the world whether they can guide the destinies of the world, they can also mould the future in order to make the world a fit place for man to live in.\footnote{9} The Congress(R) claimed that it did not regard Pakistan or the big powers which attempted to maintain their influence, as its enemy. It believed that its greatest enemy was poverty and underdevelopment."
For the Congress(R) the Simla agreement was
a mere beginning and a first step towards peace,
friendship and co-operation in the sub-continent.
Sardar Swaran Singh, describing the Simla pact as
a good package, said in the Lok Sabha "Firstly there
is agreement that all differences between the two
parties will be resolved, by peaceful means.
Secondly, it says that it will be done by bilateral
negotiations. Thirdly it says that neither side
will unilaterally alter the situation. Fourthly,
it says that both shall prevent the organised
assistance or encouragement of any acts determinental
to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations.
Fifthly it says that neither side will interfere in
the internal affairs of the other. Then about
withdrawal also, it is a complete packet in the
sense that Indian and Pakistani forces shall be
withdrawn to their side of international border
and further that in Jammu and Kashmir, the line of
actual control will be respected. So there are
several important points upon which there is
agreement."10
The Congress(R) believed that the Simla pact would not only normalise Indian relations with Pakistan but would also become a basis for co-operations between the two for peace and prosperity. The Congress(R) argued that any intervention of outsiders made Indo-Pakistan relations difficult. As for the POWs, the Indian Government declared that the delay in POWs release was due to Bhutto's unwillingness to recognise the situation in Bangladesh.

As Swaran Singh pointed out, the government realised that the agreement would succeed only if it was sincerely implemented. Indira Gandhi at a press conference, commented thus on the Simla Agreement "We do not have agreement or discussions with other countries on the basis of gain and loss, and I think that would be a very narrow-minded and short-sighted way of looking at any governmental action. The question before us is if it the interest of India and Pakistan to work in co-operation, or is it in their interest to have continuous confrontation in their short-term interest as well as the long term interest?"
The Congress(R) Government asserted that the Simla Agreement was perfectly consistent with the domestic and foreign policies India had always accepted. Right from the time of independence, the Congress Party had followed a policy of peaceful and friendly relations with Pakistan. The Congress(R) rejected the criticism that the opposition was not consulted before the Simla Summit. Indira Gandhi explained in the Lok Sabha that a meeting with the leaders of the opposition had been held on the 19 May at which the Government had briefed them as much as possible. She said that the CPM did not attend the meeting but all the other parties, including the Jana Sangh, had participated. She asserted that "It is not true to say that we did not put our views before them. Naturally, we could not know the details. We did not know how things would proceed." 

Indira Gandhi, at a press conference, rejected
the criticism of the BJS that there was a secret understanding with Bhutto and that the Simla Agreement was signed under certain foreign pressure. She claimed, "You also know that we have not yet been able to keep anything secret from the Indian press." She denied that someone had telephone to her during the talks in Simla. She said, "I categorically declare that nobody spoke to any foreign country at all. We did receive a large number of messages from various countries hoping and wishing that the talks would be successful, but nobody gave us any advice as to what we should do for the good reason that they know that our reaction to such advice is not very good. Nobody from outside, however, great a friend or enemy can tell us what is in the true interest of India. We knew as I have said, that nobody from outside can be interested in our strength; it is only ourselves who are concerned." Answering the criticism of the BJS that the Simla agreement did not produce result, G.M. Stephen,
Congress(R) leader, pleaded... If it is not yielding results, there will have to be patience. The question is whether we must have peace in the subcontinent or not.  

Reacting to the Socialist demand that there should be confederation, Swaran Singh argued in the Rajya Sabha that "nothing can cause a cloud on the friendly relations between us and our neighbours more than talks of confederation. I will be quite frank because the country has been divided. They are sovereign independent countries and any suggestion that there should be a confederation, whatever may be the intentions, means that you want that their sovereignty may partially be compromised". He maintained that any reference to confederation would create confusion, leading to tension in the subcontinent. The Congress(0) thought that the birth of Bangladesh had meant a new situation in the subcontinent. In this context, Pakistan had to choose
between friendly relations with India or "heavy dependence on some super powers and trouble and unrest at home."¹⁹

The Congress supported the Simla pact and saw in the agreement two components: a narrow one relating to issues concerned with the war with Pakistan and the ceasefire, and a wider one involving the principles to govern the relations between the two countries, including the basic issues that had dominated their relations for the past twenty-five years.²⁰ The steps proposed in the Simla Agreement for normalization of relations were welcomed by the Congress as a "New Chapter" in Indo-Pakistan relations.

The Congress believed that conflicts and differences between India and Pakistan must be resolved only bilaterally, without any third party and a faithful implementation of the agreements arrived at.
The Congress(0) hoped that Bangladesh would be recognised and the outstanding problems in Indo-Pakistan relations settled in the coming summit. S.D. Sharma of the Congress(0), speaking in the Rajya Sabha, pointed out that, despite all efforts of past 25 years, there had been no bilateral talks no war pact and settlement of Kashmir issue. He added, "If the foreign minister can bring the the above results, we will be happy". The Congress(0) agreed that the Simla pact would be judged in terms of whether it would remedy this situation.

The Congress(0) hoped that the subcontinent could be freed from external influences, because that would mean Pakistan would be freed from external influences. One of its leaders said, "Much depended on India's ability to show self-reliance in the defence and economic development". The Congress(0) feared that some diplomatic pressure was being exerted in Simla, on behalf of the super powers.
The Congress(0) working committee regretted that the ruling party had excluded the opposition parties from all crucial consultations on issues which were national and non-partisan. The Congress(0) leader S.N. Mishra challenged Prime Minister's claim that the opposition had been consulted. Referring to the so-called 19 May consultation, he said, in the Lok Sabha "At that time the agreement was not even in a period of gestation. If the Prime Minister is pleased to say that the meeting on the 19th related to the processing of the agreement, I must say, the Prime Minister is neither fair to herself nor to the opposition."25

The Communist Party of India

The CPI wanted more than "detente" between India and Pakistan. In fact, it stood for "a union of minds and hearts between the two neighbours in a shared quest for peace that shall never be menaced"
and for friendship that shall never be broken." 26
The CPI welcomed the Simla Agreement as "a significant constructive step in the direction of the
normalisation of relations between the two
countries and of establishing amity and co-operation
between them." It blamed the policy of hostility
with India on the pro-imperialist monopolists and
landlord circles as well as the military cliques in
Pakistan. 27

In the party's view the emergence of Bangladesh
demonstrated the relevance of India's secularism and
the failure of imperialism because the bilateral and
peaceful framework of the Simla pact could help
resolve the major issues, including Kashmir between
India and Pakistan. The CPI urged the faithful
implementation of the agreement as of crucial
importance. 28 The CPI hoped the process of
improving the relations between the two countries
would be in the spirit of the Simla Agreement and it
wanted the restoration of normal diplomatic relations
to be resumed without delay. Also the CPI demanded the immediate withdrawal of the UN observers on Kashmir.

The CPI felt that the Simla pact promoted peace and friendly co-operation between India and Pakistan and brought about durable peace in the subcontinent. It wanted to mobilise the people for the full implementation of the Simla Agreement. 29

Regretting the non-recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan, the CPI maintained that the problem of the POWs could not be solved without the involvement of Bangladesh. It was a problem facing all the three countries. The question of the trial of the POWs concerned Bangladesh and Pakistan, and it required the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan.

According to the CPI, the support of the United States first and later Peking to Pakistan lay behind the policy of confrontation between India and Pakistan. US imperialism and Peking
were behind the break-down of efforts at normalisation of Indian relations with Pakistan, including the historic Tashkent Agreement. But the Simla Agreement meant a blow against the policies promoted by Washington and Peking. The National Council of the CPI was bitterly critical of the efforts of the Peking regime to block the admission of Bangladesh to the United Nations and denounced it as "an act calculated to obstruct the cause of peace and normalisation of relations in this subcontinent." 30

The CPI disapproved of the agitation of the BJS against the Simla Agreement, because "It has nothing in common with our national interests or international pursuits but is intended only to rouse communal and chauvinistic passions among certain sections of the people to gain narrow partisan political advantage. It also opposed National Council the annexationist aspirations of the Jana Sangh" 31 While the party welcomed the Simla Agreement as "a positive step forward", it also emphasised that the "history of 25 years could not
be changed overnight". The important thing was that the first step had been taken "opening of a new vista on the basis of bilateralism". The bilateralism of the Simla pact was a new idea absent in the Tashkent agreement. The CPI also made it clear that this did not mean that the external forces could raise the Kashmir issue either in the UNO or any other international forum. It criticised Vajpayee for accusing only China in this connection, while he did not mention America.

The CPI also welcomed the Simla Agreement, "because it has kept before us a perspective that if the steps incorporated in the agreement are strictly pursued and followed, it will lead to the establishment of a permanent and lasting peace".

In a statement, the CPI declared that it stood for the development of good neighbourly relations with Pakistan. The party claimed that it had always advocated a durable peace in the region. It felt that after the emergence of Bangladesh the situation
had made it possible for India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to live as good neighbours, whatever the history of the last 25 years. Now they could solve the basic problems of people in the subcontinent. Basic issues like the Kashmir problem, the repatriation of the prisoners of war and the civilian internment would also be settled through negotiations and mutual understanding. The CPM warned against the imperialist agencies which had created tensions in the region. The CPM hoped that both India and Pakistan would not let America and other foreign imperialist powers destroy the prospects of peaceful settlement and relations between them.

The CPM wanted the implementation of the Simla Agreement, in order to ensure durable peace in the subcontinent and prevent the intervention of big powers.

The CPM urged the settlement of all the problems between the two countries on a bilateral basis as
"the easiest solution to the problems of the subcontinent." The CPM took strong objection to the attempts of China in the UNO to block the entry of Bangladesh, which was a free country. CPM felt that China's action encouraged the reactionaries of the world and of this sub-continent.

The CPM, however, raised a procedural objection against the signing of the Simla Agreement. It argued that Indira Gandhi had not consulted the opposition parties before going to Simla. In the words of one of its representatives in the Lok Sabha, "The opposition was totally ignored and even the ratification was done just three days before the session of the Parliament. This is an expression of disregard to the parliament and to the opposition and I think this must not be repeated in the future."

The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party believed in the peaceful settlement of Indo-Pakistan disputes. It argued
that Peace was necessary in the interest of the subcontinent and the hard lesson of the last 25 years confirmed the need for peace. A Party spokesman stated that the talks would soon begin and deal with the following issues:

1. Recognition of Bangladesh as a sovereign independent state;

2. Agreement to renounce war as a method of resolving disputes and differences among the three states;

3. A common defence policy which would permit reduction of troops and scaling down of the mounting defence expenditure incurred by the three states;

4. A minority charter, with firm and binding guarantees for the protection of life and honour of all minorities in each of the three states;
5. Abolition of passports and visas among the three states of Hindustan.

6. The position of the two parts of Kashmir in the new political set up for Hindustan.

Welcoming the talks between Bhutto and Indira Gandhi at Simla, the Socialist Party urged a settlement based on genuine friendship, and not on ad hoc or patch-work compromises. Madhu Dandavate, then General Secretary of the former Socialist Party, commenting of the Simla Summit talks between President Bhutto and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said, "The agreement between India and Pakistan to abjure violence in all disputes including that of Kashmir and to oppose any intervention by foreign power is a welcome phenomena; however, no lasting peace can be ensured in this subcontinent unless Pakistan recognises the reality of Bangladesh and joint efforts are made by Pakistan, India and Bangladesh for the establishment of genuine peace."
The Socialist Party felt that the Simla Agreement contained pious words and vague commitments of peace and friendship. Apart from this, no positive step had been suggested to prevent any aggression against India. If the agreement had indicated "concrete guarantee and realistic sanction for the proper implementation of the peace objective, then our Socialist Party would have hailed it not from the ground but from the house tops." The Socialist Party leader, Madhu Limaye, in a press statement said "By agreeing to troop withdrawal without prior recognition of Bangladesh, common defence and foreign policy confederal initiative agreement on minority right and so on, the government let down the people of Bangladesh besides Bharat and the brave jawans. Most probably the government has done this to please Russia or America."

Another Leader Samar Guha, reacting to the Simla pact was more critical in the Lok Sabha. He pointed out that there was no genuine difference between the Tashkent Agreement and the Simla Agreement. He
questioned the claim that the Simla Agreement was a first step referring to earlier efforts of the same kind, he asked. What has been fate of last six steps that we had taken? Have they proved fruitful? If not what has been the outcome result? Naturally then we must have certain doubts and questions as to the justification, as to the correctness of this seventh step.44

The Socialist Party pointed out that before the ink of the Simla pact had dried there had already broken out dispute over the meaning of its clauses of bilateralism. It held that the decision of the government of India to release the prisoners of war would be a mistake unless durable peace was first established. It argued that the 16,000 civilian prisoners should have been released even prior to the Simla pact.45 In general, the party expressed doubts and reservations about the agreement.

Samar Guha argued in the Lok Sabha that India had made three basic mistakes. They were: first,
"premature move to negotiate with Pakistan before the political events, after the emergence of Bangladesh were allowed to mature inside Pakistan", second, "to proceed on the assumption that we fought two separate wars against Pakistan although our war with Pakistan was one single war. But we treated it as two wars, one on the eastern front and another on the western fronts" and tackle the problem of prisoners of war on that basis; and three, overs emphasise on "the politics of bilateralism". He emphasised that the three countries were inextricably involved in the subcontinent.46

Had India insisted that Bangladesh should be a party to the negotiation, then Pakistan would have been forced to recognise Bangladesh earlier, enabling its admission into the UNO.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh

When the Pakistani forces surrendered in Bangladesh hopes were raised that the government of
India would start a new chapter in Indo-Pakistan relations by setting all outstanding disputes. The BJS felt that this was a historic opportunity to wipe out the past history of hatred. The BJS did not oppose bilateral talks provided they were not confined to a few issues. It demanded that all the issues should be resolved, as a precondition for the release of POWs or withdrawal of troops. Vajpayee, addressing the AIGC at Bhagalpur, listed the issues to be settled before peace could be established. They included return from Pakistan of evacuee property worth of Rs.1000 crores, a prepartition debt of Rs.300 crores, Indian goods illegally confiscated by Pakistan during the 1965 war, and war reparations to India, suffered during the 1971 war.

From the viewpoint of the BJS, Kashmir, was a major issue in Indo-Pakistan talks. The BJS held the view that unless the Kashmir issue was settled there could be no permanent peace. It warned the government that there would be no second Tashkent Agreement.
The BJS was a critic of the Simla pact. It viewed the Simla agreement as a repetition of Tashkent in a worse form. It regretted that the politicians through their incompetence, had lost what the Jawans had gained for the country on the battlefield. It was sorry that the country had failed to safeguard its national interests.

The BJS blamed the government of India for the lost golden opportunity to end a conflict of 25 years. In a Central Working Committee resolution, it held that the government had been a sell out. The party believed that Bhutto had come to Simla with three objectives:

1. Recovery of lost territory;
2. Return of Prisoners of War;
3. Reopening of Kashmir issue

He had won the first and the third points and moved towards gaining the second, to be taken up after Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh. Bhutto was not prepared to sign a 'no war pact'. The BJS was suspicious about the clauses of bilateralism in the
Simla pact. The working committee of the party noted that good intentions had always characterised Indo-Pakistan agreements right from the inter-Dominion Agreement of December 1948 and from Nehru-Liaquat pact to the Tashkent declaration of 1966, "each one of which was honoured by Pakistan more in breach than in observance." The BJS noticed with concern that already the implications of bilateralism had been seen differently by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Bhutto. While the Indian Prime Minister interpreted it to mean that the Kashmir issue should be kept out of the UNO, President Bhutto felt that it could not prevent him from re-opening the Kashmir issue. In the Party's analysis, in spite of its assurance at the summit talks that it would recognise Bangladesh, Pakistan had instigated the Chinese to veto the entry of Bangladesh in the UNO. Therefore, Pakistan had not demonstrated its commitment to bilateralism. The BJS referring to the developments after the Indo-Pakistan war, believed that there had been an intensification of tension between the two countries. The Central
Working Committee of the BJS argued that the situation required that the Simla Agreement be abandoned and Pakistan asked bluntly to withdraw its forces and return territories recently occupied by it "as parts of an overall pending disputes".51

The BJS believed in the establishment of 'Akhand Bharat' but its interpretation of 'Akhand Bharat' was unusual. For it 'Akhand Bharat' "only meant friendship among the three countries in the subcontinent and not merger of their politics."52 The party also accused Indira Gandhi for not taking the opposition into confidence before leaving for the Simla Summit talks. Besides, it asserted that the Simla Agreement was against India's interest. Referring to Indira Gandhi's role, the Party claimed "Obviously she has succumbed to the pressure of big powers".53 The BJS appealed to the Indian President not to ratify the Agreement till it was cleared in a referendum.
The Swatantra Party

The Party did not blame the outside world for the Indo-Pakistan tension. According to it, what was wrong was the foreign policy of India, which tended to create suspicion and distrust in other countries about India's motives and actions, preventing active friendship towards her.54

The Swatantra Party felt that India had only won the war but it was more important to win peace. The Swatantra Party considered bilateral negotiations as "the best and the most logical way of settling the disputes with Pakistan". The Party praised Indira Gandhi for taking the initiative by inviting Bhutto for peace talks.55

The Swatantra Party regarded the question of the prisoners of war as the most significant issue in the Simla talks. Therefore, it urged India to refer the question to arbitration in consultation with Bangladesh. It wanted the talks to deal only with other outstanding
issues between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Swatantra Party hoped that before the beginning of the talks, Pakistan would recognise Bangladesh. On the whole the Swatantra Party supported the Simla pact, as it might lead to "a new beginning in the evaluation of a more effective and realistic policy."56

The Swatantra Party pleaded for a common market which could promote the common welfare, progress and mutual benefit of the countries in the Indian sub-continent. The party's spokesman in the Lok Sabha stated "I dream of Akhand Bharatvarsha for which we surrendered all we had at the feet of mother India."57

The party's organ, Swarajya, felt that though the Simla Agreement wanted that the future relations between India and Pakistan should be based on bilateral negotiations it also feared that a person like Bhutto might not follow genuinely bilateralism.58

A Swatantra member of the Rajyasabha was critical that
though she had consulted the opposition during the Bangladesh crisis, Indira Gandhi had not done so in connection with the Simla pact. 59

During the Janatha regime it was alleged that Indira Gandhi had a secret understanding with Bhutto on Kashmir during the Simla talks in July 1972. Vajpayee, later Foreign Minister of the Janata Government, speaking at Farukhabad said "The talks between India and Pakistan at Simla had got bogged down and the two sides could not resolve the deadlock. But at the last minute, Indira Gandhi and Bhutto met and came to some understanding which resulted in the Simla Agreement." 60 However, Vajpayee when he became Foreign Minister, made it clear that, though he was opposed to the Simla Pact in the past, he was now committed to the Simla pact. As minister, he told the Lok Sabha, "Since assuming the charge of the ministry of External Affairs I have made an effort to acquaint myself with not only various documents relating to the discussions but also have held personal discussions with the number of knowledgeable individuals. Piecing together all the evidence
from different sources, I cannot but reaffirm that some sort of secret understanding was reached by Indira Gandhi in her confidential conversation with Bhutto’.61

But Indira Gandhi denied this allegation. Addressing a large rally on the concluding day of the State Political Conference in Haryana, "she refuted allegations levelled by Vajpayee, External Affairs Minister, that she had made a secret deal with the then Pakistan Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto under the Simla Agreement. She added that had it been so, Bhutto would have exploited this alleged deal when he was facing the crisis. She said that the Simla Agreement was an open book and had led to the establishment of cordial relations between the two countries."62 Morarji Desai himself claimed that he had the knowledge of this issue but would not spell it out. The Indian Express editorially argued that it was in the public interest that nothing further should be said about the secret understanding especially because it did not limit the government's freedom in handling the relations with
Pakistan. It added Vajpayee, we are afraid, cannot have both ways. As a responsible minister, he owes it to the public to satisfy it that he has depended on more than hearsay to settle political scores with Indira Gandhi.63

The Overall situation

All the parties, excepting the BJP, evolved some consensus on the fundamentals of India’s policy towards Pakistan - friendly, harmonious and good neighbourly relations. On the objective of the Simla pact i.e. durable peace, all the parties broadly in agreement. But there was disagreement on the means as well as the interpretation and evaluation of the Simla Agreement. Though the parties believed in the settlement of Indo-Pakistan disputes as a pre-condition for durable peace, they differed on how to settle the Indo-Pakistan issues. The BJP was of the view that Kashmir was a major issue of Indo-Pakistan disputes. Therefore, it felt that durable peace could not be achieved unless
India settled the Kashmir issue first.

As far as interpretation and evaluation were concerned, the position of the parties demonstrates that they disagreed mainly on two aspects in their evaluation of the Simla pact. These were:

1. Bilateralism.
2. Implementation.

The BJS, Swatantra party, Congress(O) and Socialist party expressed apprehension regarding the genuineness of bilateralism of the Simla pact. But basically they did not oppose bilateralism itself. All parties stressed the need for a sincere and honest implementation of the Simla Agreement in accordance with its spirit. The Swatantra Party and the CPI held extreme positions on the cause of the Indo-Pakistan tensions. The Swatantra Party did not agree that the tensions of the Indo-Pakistan were created by the outside world. So it found fault with India's foreign policy itself. According to the CPI, the confrontation between India and Pakistan was created by US
imperialism and later by Peking. Here it should be noted that since independence, Indian foreign policy had sincerely and honestly attempted to minimise if not eliminate the confrontation between India and Pakistan. Undoubtedly, at least partly, the outside world was responsible for the confrontation. Despite this if the two countries realised the truth that confrontation would not solve their problems and promote their interests, then no outside force could create any confrontation in the subcontinent.

All the opposition parties, excepting the CPI, objected to the procedural aspect of the Simla pact. The opposition parties were critical of Indira Gandhi because she did not consult them before going to Simla. However, she explained in the Lok Sabha that she had consulted the leaders of the opposition before going to Simla on 19 May 1972. This was not accepted by the Congress(0) as revealed in the debate in the Lok Sabha. Nevertheless, the position of the parties regarding this issue illustrates the problems of a one-party dominant
system, in particular, how partisan and national interests become mixed up.

The BJS "Akhand Bharat", the Socialists' proposal for common defence and foreign policy, the establishment of a confederation the suggestion of the Swatantra Party for a common market on the pattern of the European common market and the general view of the Congress(O), demonstrate a basic similarity of views and broad agreement on policy. The foreign policy position of the four parties must have affected the formation of the Janata Party in 1977 as a significant factor.

There was general criticism by the parties that Nehru had neglected the immediate neighbours, especially China and Pakistan. Indira Gandhi, however consolidated India's relations with Pakistan through the Simla Agreement, and thus began the process of normalisation by re-opening diplomatic relations between countries in 1976. Though the principles followed by Nehru and Indira Gandhi were identical,
the latter implemented them more dynamically and courageously. As a result, India's prestige in the world rose. More to the point, the prospects of peace in the Indian subcontinent improved. The primary cause of Indo-Pakistan conflict in the past had been lack of trust. No doubt the Simla Agreement was a landmark in Indo-Pakistan relations because it was able to create some mutual trust. This mutual trust and the continuation of the process of improving relations, should continue to promote the interest of the subcontinent as a whole, and thus contribute to international peace and security.
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