CHAPTER - I

THE BASIC DETERMINANTS

United States and India are two important democracies of the world while the US is the strongest, India is the largest democracy of the globe. Both the countries share fundamental values concerning liberty, individual dignity, freedom and human rights. Several provisions of the Indian Constitution such as fundamental rights, federalism, independence of Judiciary etc. have been inspired by the American constitution. New Delhi and Washington could therefore have acted as natural friends. Unfortunately, however, the United States and India have been described as "unfriendly friends". Their relations have been characterized as strained, thin, uneasy, fragile and a "cold peace". Despite a broad consensus about the nature of US-India relations, there is no agreement among analysts about the sources of its dissonance. This chapter seeks to identify the determinants of United States-Indian discord. But this requires a brief sketch of evolution of the US policy towards India till 1980s.

THE BACKDROP

The United States had certain dealings with India even before this country's independence in 1947. A few American traders, missionaries and soldiers had worked in India and some Indian immigrants had settled in the U.S. Traffic in ideas also occurred, especially when Swami Vivekanand popularized Hinduism in the United States. But these contacts where neither deep nor wide-spread. India was a British colony and America's relatively limited activism in world affairs had not extended to India. The first
significant U S -Indian encounter involved India's quest for independence from England. It was not altogether satisfactory from either country's perspective. While many Indians appreciated the Roosevelt administration's support for Indian independence, others believed the U S did not do much and did that only half-heartedly.

Meanwhile, some Americans viewed India as insufficiently appreciative of America's intervention on its behalf with a stubborn British government. The basic problem was that the U S viewed halting German and Japanese expansionism for which British co-operation was required, as the immediate priority while India was focused on achieving its freedom. This was not to be the last time that different U S - Indian preoccupations created tension in relations.

Notwithstanding the occasional frictions of the pre-independence period, India's formal independence in August 1947 generated hopes for amicable and constructive ties. But hopes were soon tempered. The Indo-Pakistani war over Kashmir in 1948 caused the first significant disillusionment. The U S doubted India's commitment to holding a plebiscite in the disputed region while many Indians suspected American sympathy for Pakistan. This was the first though not last manifestation of U S - Indian differences regarding Pakistan. U S - Indian relations in the immediate post World War II era were also complicated by the Cold War. Specifically differing responses to the Soviet Union caused much friction. The issues relevant to U S - Indian discord is discussed in greater detail below. In this wider context, several post-war international matters (e.g., the Communist victory in China and the Korean War) further hampered amicable relations. India viewed the Communist victory in China with sympathy, whereas the U S did not. India thought the U S overplayed its hand when it invaded North Korea. While these
disputes, blunted expectations for positive bilateral relations. A serious blow was dealt to them in 1954 when the U S signed formal military alliance agreements with India's rival, Pakistan.

The U S and India did not disagree on every international issue in the 1950s. For instance, the two countries reacted similarly to the Suez Crisis. And despite the political and security divergences, U S-Indian ties during the 1950s were not altogether uncooperative. In the economic sphere, the U S provided significant bilateral assistance to India. However, even economic ties were limited in scope and not completely insulated from discord. Economic cooperation in the 1950s was largely confined to U S financial and food aid for India. There was little trade, investment, or technology collaboration. Many Indians suspected that even U S aid was begrudgingly given and only with political motives. The U S, and especially many members of Congress, resented India's apparent ingratitude for American largesse. Aside from the economic dimension, U S-Indian co-operation in nuclear energy also began in the 1950s, but on a very small scale. In 1956, the U S provided heavy water for India's civil nuclear program.

Though the formative decade of relations resulted in diminished expectations about future ties, by the early 1960s a U S-Indian rapprochement began. Mainly as a result of growing tension in Sino-Indian ties and continuing hostility between the U S and Red China, India and the U S found common cause. This convergence of interests reached its height during the 1962 Sino-Indian war, when the U S provided military assistance to India. However, even this flirtation soon withered as the nature and motives of collaboration began to be questioned in both countries. The subsequent outbreak of the second Indo-Pakistan War in 1965 led to a U S arms embargo.
on both belligerents and ended an era of relatively significant American involvement in the region.

U.S.-Indian relations from 1965 until the early 1970s largely involved continuing, if discordant economic ties. The Johnson administration placed India on a "short tether" for food aid, provoking Indian resentment. Many Indians regarded the treatment as not only economic pressure, but punishment for India's shrill criticisms of U.S. policy in Vietnam. India's 1966 rupee devaluation done partly at U.S. urging also caused acrimony. India criticized the U.S. for not providing the support which would have mitigated the adverse impacts on the Indian economy, and which the U.S. had promised to give. Another dispute occurred over India's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968. Despite this disagreement, bilateral nuclear co-operation continued according to the terms of the 1963 Tarapur agreement, including the successful negotiation of a bilateral safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1971. Only a decade later did India's refusal to sign the NPT become a major obstacle to nuclear co-operation.

U.S.-Indian relations in the 1970s opened on a very sour note. In 1971 the Nixon-Kissinger administration "tilted" towards Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistani War over the creation of Bangladesh. The U.S. failed to condemn Pakistan's suppression of East Pakistan's struggle for independence, named India as the aggressor in the ensuing military conflict, and sent an aircraft carrier towards the Bay of Bengal in purported warning to the Indians. The episode severely strained U.S.-Indian relations then and left a bitter legacy. It appeared to confirm many Indians' suspicions that U.S. policy in the region was designed to weaken, contain and balance India vis-a-vis Pakistan. Moreover, by its many implications, e.g. the Indo-Soviet
Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation and perhaps the testing of India's first nuclear explosive device three years later), the affair shaped the poor state of relations for the next several years. Meanwhile, in the economic sphere relations moved toward disengagement. In late 1972, the U.S. Agency for International Development office was all but closed. In essence the early 1970s were an especially cool and discordant period of U.S.-Indian relations.

During the next few years relations were generally quiescent. A small success was the negotiated end in late 1973 to the rupee debt owed by India to the U.S. for previous credits and loans. It was agreed to write off some of the debt and use the remainder to finance U.S. diplomatic expenses and educational, cultural and scientific programs. India's test of what it called a "peaceful nuclear explosive" device in 1974 created a short-lived furor. While the event was to have profound implications for U.S. nuclear non-proliferation policy and eventual U.S.-Indian nuclear co-operation, its immediate impact on bilateral relations was relatively muted. The Indian emergency of 1975-1977 had relatively little impact on official relations. While American supporters of India were dismayed by the suspension of civil liberties, the inter-governmental relationship was not irreparably harmed. By 1977, when Jimmy Carter took office as U.S. President, the Emergency ended, and the Indira Gandhi-led Congress government was replaced by the Janata coalition, and hopes for substantial cordiality and co-operation were revived. These expectations were dashed largely on the rocks of American legislation regarding nuclear non-proliferation. Earlier disputes over the NPT and India's nuclear test came to a head with the passage of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act (NNPA) of 1978. This legislation was
a unilateral and retroactive attempt by the U.S. to alter the conditions of existing bilateral nuclear co-operation to conform with new policy goals. As a result of the American move, an area of U.S.-Indian co-operation, however minimal and troubled, became an area of vociferous discord. The 1970s thus ended on a rancorous note.

The 1980s threatened to exacerbate old and create new disputes relating to Pakistan, nuclear co-operation, economic ties and a whole host of international political security and strategic issues. Tumult in South West Asia, the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan prompted the Carter administration to offer military assistance to Pakistan. It also held talks with China regarding joint commitments to Pakistan—heightening Indian fears of a U.S.-Pakistani-Chinese anti-Indian axis. Differences vis-à-vis security matters were exacerbated by divergent outlooks on important international political and economic issues such as Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea, Indian recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the U.S. embargo on Iran, the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and proposed reductions in U.S. funding to international organisations and financial institutions. Strictly bilateral ties were tense because negotiations for the largest arms deal between the two countries collapsed, the bitter dispute over the Tarapur nuclear relationship continued to fester, and the U.S. refused to sign a waiver of its right to impose countervailing duties on Indian imports. It was against this immediate and historical background that U.S.-Indian relations in the 1980s were conducted.

As is evident from the preceding review, the general character of U.S.-Indian relations between 1947 and 1981 was indeed cool rather than cordial, discordant rather than cooperative. Ties were never, however, so poor as to lead to armed conflict or even the
temporary severing of diplomatic relations. Nor was there an absence of cordiality and co-operation. In essence, discord and harmony co-existed, though not in equal proportions. Another feature of relations was frequent oscillations between discord and harmony. These "ups" and "downs" occurred not only over time, but also regarding major issues such as Pakistan, and nuclear, economic and defense co-operation. For example, bilateral nuclear co-operation continued over many years despite disagreements on broader nuclear matters. What is the explanation for the essentially discordant and oscillating U.S.-Indian relationship?

THE ROOTS OF TENSION

The under currents of tension in U.S.-India relations have generally been explained in terms of the fallouts of the Cold War. It is usually believed that as the United States was interested in containing the former Soviet Union and India developed friendly ties with the later, Washington had to cultivate Pakistan at the cost of India. But this explanation begs the question that why the United States chose Pakistan rather than India for containing the Soviet Union. In fact, India was more capable than Pakistan of checkmating Soviet influence in view of its strategic location, vast natural resources, and a population larger than that of the two super powers combined. It was, the seat of a great civilization in ancient times. It was, besides one of the leaders of the Third World. Above all, its foreign-policy elite were also largely pro-Western. This was evident in many ways. India not only joined the Common Wealth of Nations in 1949, but its leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, had clearly manifested his pro-Western proclivities. While preparing for his official visit to the United States, he had asked the Indian High Commissioner in Britain.
VK Krishna Menon. Why, in view of its requirements, particularly of food, machinery and capital goods, India should not align itself with the United States some what and build up our economic and military strength". On the other hand he had expressed serious reservations regarding the Soviet Union during the initial years. He had wanted it to be published that "Asian Peoples had no sympathy for Soviet expansionism". To him, "International Communism was aggressive and the Soviet Policy in Southeast Asia was wholly destructive". He had also made it clear even to the Western powers, that "there was not even the least chance of India living up with the Soviet Union in war or peace". An important reason behind his version to the Soviet Union during those early years was the Soviet disapproval of his policies and also open support for communist uprising in various parts of India, the most serious being the violent movement in Telangana."

It is therefore obvious that if Nehru later turned towards the Soviet Union he did so reluctantly not voluntarily. Surprising as it may appear he was left with no choice but to do so by the United States itself through its support for Pakistan against India on the issue of Kashmir which was vital for India's survival as a secular state. Besides, he could not ignore the Soviet use of its power of veto in the Security Council in defence of India's stand on Kashmir.

This Soviet support for Indian and US opposition to it were at least partly an outcome of the fact that while the United States, being a global power, disliked India emerging as an independent centre of power and its leadership of the Nonaligned Movement, the Soviet Union, being less powerful economically and militarily, was inclined to strengthen India's autonomy in international relations and thereby circumscribe US global influence at least in South Asia.
This is why the United States refused to strengthen and modernize India’s defence capabilities after the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and its public sector industries, whereas the Soviet Union readily agreed to do so. Except during the food crisis in the 1960’s and the consequent need of food aid from the United States, and on a few similar occasions, India consistently refused to toe the US line. Several scholars have, therefore, rightly concluded that the US policy of containment was directed not only against the Soviet Union, but also against all independent centres of power including India. By helping Pakistan the United States thus sought to create a balance of power in South Asia unfavourable to India.

It would, however, be unrealistic to explain the entire period of US-India ties in terms of America’s containment of India. Though India-Soviet friendship was not the cause of tensions in US-India relations once however India moved closer to the USSR, this complicated US-India ties. It is in this sense that the impact of Cold War in souring of US-India equations cannot be ignored.

The impact of international milieu apart, domestic systems of both the countries also generated obstacles in their ties. And for this ironically similarities between the two countries have been responsible. Commonalities of the two states such as democratic political system, a free press, a shared language among elites, and a self perception of their world-historical significance accentuated rather than alleviated conflicts of interest arising from their differing preoccupations. The ability of the US and India to display disagreements in their open, mutually comprehensible media and government deliberations has assured that major or minor disputes receive a full, often impassioned airing. Thus, there is not so much a “dialogue of the deaf” as one of the two well and — easily
understood. Furthermore, both countries are convinced of the correctness of their positions and therefore they often adopt a moralizing and lecturing posture towards each other. Hence the ability and willingness of India and the US to discuss their differences easily and passionately derive from their commonalities.

Similarities have also been detrimental because they have engendered unrealizable expectations. One hears from both capitals, for example, the need for good relations because of shared democratic values. While the goal and its basis are laudable, the over-simplification does a disservice. For such pleas not only misrepresent by exaggeration shared interests but concurrently raise expectations which cannot be fulfilled. The cycle breeds and sustains mutual disappointment.

Two less tangible factors have been also contributed to US-Indian dissonance. Perhaps most important has been a perceptual or psychological difference especially in terms of US views of India. Partly due to the paucity of contact prior to the official relationship established in the late 1940s, images of India in the US have been ambiguous, even largely negative. India's perception of the US has also suffered from over-simplification and ambiguity. Moreover, the lack of friendship and trust between the leaders of the two countries, especially at critical junctures (such as in the 1971 crisis), has complicated relations.

In essence, the puzzling reality of US-Indian relations is that the two countries are both different and similar. Similarities, instead of soothing tensions caused by differences, exacerbates them. Perceptual problems and personality clashes have further heightened friction. Perhaps the best way to appreciate these roots of US-Indian
tension is to examine their different global, regional and domestic priorities and perspectives towards the post-1945 international system and order.

The Global Context

Several distinctive features characterized the global order after the end of Second World War, when Washington commenced its official relations with India in 1947. The major European states which had played significant roles in international politics in the preceding three centuries were either victorious or vanguished in the Second World War. Several new states that emerged in the global system were either immediately dominant or potentially powerful players. In the first category were the US and the USSR and especially the former. In the second category were Asian, African and South American states. India was a member of these latter groups. India was in some respects a leading state in this category by virtue of its size, location and resources and stature of leadership.

The most distinctive feature of post-war international system was the rivalry between its two most powerful members, the US and the USSR. The major European states, excepting France, were associated with one or the other super powers. In essence, the multipolar state system which existed before World War-II was altered substantially after it.

The weekening of Euro centric international system and rise of a hostile Soviet power forced the US to reexamine its policy of isolationism. Many US leaders recalled America’s self-imposed isolationism during the inter war years, when threats to peace and stability had been emerging as having been a mistake. Accordingly
after 1944 the US adopted an activist foreign policy which was global in orientation and infused with both real politic and modernism. This role was facilitated by the enormous economic and military resources that the US could bring to bear in its pursuit.

It was at this juncture that India emerged as an independent country. By virtue of its strategic location, natural resources big size, democratic political system, rich civilization and aspirations of its leaders, India could not confine its role as a camp follower of any super power. It attempted to play an active role through its policy of non-alignment. While India challenged forces of colonialism, imperialism and arms race, America being a Global power interested in preserving its influence did not like India's activist role. This explains why the then US Secretary of States John Foster Dulles described India's policy of nonalignment as immoral." This forced India to move closer to the Soviet Union. This in turn complicated US-India relations.

The Regional Context

At a time when the US was searching for allies to contain Soviet Union and India refused to toe the US line, Pakistan was in search of a plus factor against India. As explained by a scholar, the founder of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, was totally dissatisfied with the size of Pakistan which he described as "Moth eaten". Pakistan therefore gladly joined American military alliance system including the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). While one may debate about the US intentions of bringing Pakistan into its military alliance system, no one can dispute that Pakistan's only intention in joining the American camp was to neutralize India's military and other kinds of superiority. It was this American connection that encouraged...
Pakistan to fight three wars with India. India naturally resented American Pakistani military alliance and tried to persuade the US leaders about the consequences of US-Pakistan strategic understandings.

Pakistan's significance in American strategic perceptions increased after the US lost monitoring facility in Iran in 1979, i.e., after the overthrow of the Shah regime in Iran. The Soviet occupations of Afghanistan in that year deepened America's reliance on Pakistan. For no other country could have been more suitable for the US to compensate the loss of its friendly regime of the Shah than Pakistan in view of Pakistan's Islamic identity coupled with its military presence in the West Asian countries (excepting Egypt, Israel, North and South Yemen) and particularly in the Gulf. Not only did the Pakistani forces play a critical role in evolving military integration of the Gulf country but also allowed Washington to avoid a direct military presence, especially in military technical roles. Besides, Quetta in Baluchistan emerged as a major post and operational base for US intelligence on Iran. Also, American P-3 anti-submarine warfare aircraft had access to refueling facilities near Karachi since 1984 and CIA had full access to Pakistani regions bordering Afghanistan in order to conduct its war against the Kabul Government.

Pakistan thus evolved itself into a regional gendarme to US interest in the Gulf region. The extent of Pakistani integration into the US global and regional strategy was indicated by the fact that Pakistan was one of the three countries excluded from major Congressional cuts on foreign aid (Israel, Egypt were the other two). On the other hand, Pakistan's military ruler, General Zia-ul-Aq's search for international legitimacy forced him to be friend of a
democratic country like the US. He had to depend upon the US for supply of arms for satisfying his chief constituency, the Army, whose fascination for sophisticated weapons is well known. As against this, Indian leaders had hardly any domestic political imperative which could compel them to integrate India into the US-strategic design.

**The Domestic Context**

As indicated earlier, though both US and India share similar democratic political systems, this complicates rather than contributes to smooth relation between the two democracies. For it is easier to influence a military dictator who is relatively free from the constraints of democratic politics, it is relatively difficult to influence the leader of a democratic political system whose freedom for international behavior is circumscribed by the constraints of democratic forces. This explains the Americans preferences for authoritarian regimes of Pakistan, Iran, Philippines, etc. rather than democratic countries like India or Mujibur Rahman's Bangladesh.

Also, various lobbies within the US, especially in the Congress play a significant role in influencing USA's domestic as well as foreign policies. That is why anti-India forces employed professional lobbying firms in the US to influence Washington's policy against India. Unfortunately till 1993 India neglected this vital input in the making of US foreign policy and depended solely upon its diplomatic mission in that country though they could never match the resources, reach, and expertise of professional lobbying firms employed by anti-India forces in that country. This neglect of lobbying contributed to misunderstandings in US-India relations.

In addition, India's socialist economic policies that created 'license quota permit raj' in India failed to attract American
Unlike today, Indo-American community within the US was also not very actively organised in influencing US policy towards India. Under these circumstances, only a few Americans interested in spiritualism, or yoga etc. were interested in India while the majority of common Americans viewed India as a country of 'snack charmers'. Further, inadequate cultural exchanges between these two democracies compounded the lack of economic interactions and strategic understandings.

Finally, personality clashes and differences of perception also contributed to bitterness in US-India ties. Nehru's relations with Truman, Eisenhower, Dulles and Kennedy (and later his daughter's with Johnson, Nixon and Kissinger) failed to create a sense of cordiality that might have blunted policy differences. Similarly, there had persisted an inability of the two countries to overcome their misperceptions about each other. The US had its difficulty in comprehending India's place in and intentions towards the world. India, given its own cultural and philosophical outlook, has found it difficult to appreciate the main springs of America's concerns about the world. Finally, the particular mood and moment of the early post-war era, with the intense tensions and uncertainties arising out of US-Soviet hostilities, lent to US-Indian relations a sort of shrillness that exacerbated already the tangible objectives differences.

THE REAGAN ERA

Resurfacing of the Old Roots of Discord

The above mentioned roots of discord continued to plague US-India relations in varying degrees till the down of 1980's, when
President Ronald Reagan occupied the White House as the American President. Though the world had changed to an extent between 1945 and 1980 European states had regained some of the power which they had lost in the Second World War and a number of Asian, African and Latin American states had been incorporated into the world political and economic system. Inequalities in power and resources still existed. The U.S.-Soviet Cold War still constituted the compelling fact of international relations. And disagreement over world order issues, whether nuclear or economic, continued to occupy a prominent place in international relations. Indeed those factors which had done so much to produce and sustain U.S.-Indian discord now appeared likely to be exaggerated for two reasons, the advent of the Reagan administration to office in the United States and more generally, the state of the world.

Perhaps most alarming for India (as it was for much of the Third World and even some of America’s European allies) was the dogmatism which appeared to characterize administration thinking. This was expressed in a series of provocative statements, which did nothing to soothe concerns about America’s intentions. Foremost was the Reagan administration’s talk of American values. Deeply rooted as these were in the Western Judeo-Christian tradition, and contrary to so much of the background in the larger part of the world, there could not but have been some anxiety about the re-assertion of American moralism in the style of the Dulles-Eisenhower era.

But the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig’s talk of re-structuring “an international environment that is hospitable” at least to the value that “Americans cherish” could be dismissed as nothing more or less than the obligatory call to nationalism by any new government in Washington, D.C. in the state. The qualitative difference in such
pronouncements made in America, however, was that it was a
dominant world power more capable than most states of taking
actions to achieve the re-structuring it sought. The implications of
this strain in Reagan foreign policy were natural disconcerting to New
Delhi, which not only rejected some of the value American wanted
to perpetuate, but which viscerally resented America dominance in
the world system and order.

Even more apprehension was caused in India by the centrality
accorded by the Reagan administration to the U.S. conflict with the
Soviet Union. For the President and his associates, the most
pressing priority in American foreign policy was addressing what it
perceived as the expansion of Soviet power. The late R. J. Vincent
of Oxford University described administration impulses thus:

Negotiations from strength, liberation as well as mere
containment these were notions reminiscent of Dean
Acheson and John Foster Dulles. And one of the themes
for the interpretation of the Reagan administration’s foreign
policy in its first year was that of a return to the simplicities
of the Cold War. The Soviet Union was an adversary, not
an adversary-partner.

This renewed focus on the Cold War was a source of discomfort
in India for precisely the same reasons that it had been in the initial
years of evolving U.S.-Soviet rivalry of the post-1945 era. To India,
this preoccupation in world affairs not only had the potential of leading
to a catastrophic nuclear conflict, but it diverted attention from those
issues which it considered to be far more important to its national
interest and which still remained inadequately addressed.

A corollary of the Reagan administration’s obsession with the
Soviet Union was its perspective on the Third World. It viewed the
World almost entirely through the prism of its usefulness (or not) to the central concern of containing Soviet power in tandem with increasing America's own. As one analyst bemoaned, "In the Third World generally Reagan's reflexive anticommunism and cold war mentality caused him to view developing countries as irrelevant to American policy except as battlegrounds in the East-West struggle".

This attitude towards much of the non-Western world was not only psychologically insulting to a proud India which considered itself a spokesperson for it but had potentially negative implications in terms of social, political, economic and military issues impinging upon India and other lesser developed countries.

The Reagan administration's attitudes about America's role in the world (an activism based on power and suffused with moral righteousness) combined with the centrality accorded by it to the rivalry with the Soviet Union expressed itself in many ways in terms of the existing system and order. To these expressions there was bound to be opposition from India. The administration wanted to rebuild Western military power buttress existing alliances as well as form new ones it deemed helpful to the cause. It made no apologies for its belief in the utility of force in international relations and stated that it would not only undertake a massive military build up at home but would expand transfers of arms abroad. On other aspects of world order the administration was no less compromising. To cite Professor Derbe:

Multilateral organisations, such as the United Nations with its Third World majority and the international financial institutions were considered worse than irrelevant – forums
for bailing out bad Third World debts with American taxpayers' money and for beating up on the United States. Reagan sent Jeane [sic] Kirkpatrick to the U N to beat up on them, withdrew from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, cut voluntary contributions to a variety of U N programs and American support for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and withheld the assessed U S share of the U N budget to press for institutional reform.

These institutions of world order (whatever their deficiencies) were important to the Third World (despite its complaints about them) and thus any attempt to weaken them could not but be viewed with alarm. In essence, the advent of the Reagan administration exacerbated already existing U S -Indian divergences about the international system and order.

What made the context all the more detrimental for any improvement of U S -Indian relations was the extreme tension that characterized international relations at the outset of the decade. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War and the so-called second Cold War evoked the kind of polarization and tension in international politics not seen since the heyday of the early World War II period.

Finally, this period marked an especially inauspicious juncture for U S -Indian bilateral relations themselves. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the upheavals flowing from the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war had increased India's traditional rival, Pakistan is important for the US Sino-U S discussions about joint assistance to Islamabad further heightened Indian fears of an unfavorable security situation. The U S and India had adopted differing positions.
on a number of important international political and economic issues (e.g., Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea and the embargo of Iran).

Also, a proposed U.S.-Indian arms deal had been called off. The U.S. was threatening to impose economic penalties on Indian imports and both countries were embroiled in disagreement over nuclear cooperation.

While the overall outlook for relations was bleak, at least in one important way the context at the start of the 1980s was different from the early years of U.S.-Indian estrangement. That is, India's national, regional, and global preoccupations had undergone a definite, if publicly muted, shift. While India had made significant progress in terms of nation and state building in its first forty years of independence, it still faced enormous challenges.

For example, domestic separatist movements had increased the priority on internal security. At the regional level, too, there were some subtle changes. India's obsession with the regional threat posed by Pakistan had been declining, in part because India's regional primacy had been increasing. Most importantly, partly due to the death of Nehru, India's international stature had shrunk. India's international role was far less active and shrill. Gopal Krishna noted that "the Nehru aspiration to autonomy remains central to India's foreign policy but there has been a scaling down of India's global role. On the great political issues of contemporary international society her voice is muted, if not silent."

In effect, while India still resented certain structures of the international system and order, its resistance had become more quiet and less grandiose. This is an important point because, as already discussed, one of the key factors of U.S.-Indian discord has been..."
the mutual propensity to take lecturing postures towards major international issues. Moreover, India's criticisms of prevailing international structures had to a great extent found particular resonance in its discordant relationship with the U S ., which is viewed as the prime upholder of undesirable structures. Thus, to the extent that India's preoccupations had undergone change and that it had retreated from a strident international role, the development augured well for U S -Indian relations.

It was against this background, that U S -Indian relations during the 1980s were conducted. As the decade progressed, a definite though fitful and incomplete, improvement in ties occurred. There was a mutual pursuit of accommodation. What were the signs of this trend? What were the underlying factors motivating both the democracies? We propose to discuss these issues in the forthcoming chapters.
END NOTES


8. For details, see *ibid*, Chapter IV.