Chapter-6

HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF SECURITY
Humanitarian aspect of security was the soul of the concept of security during *Perestroika*. It is a fact that humanitarian concern was one of the important factors which motivated Gorbachev for developing his concept of 'comprehensive universal security' which tried for ensuring peace and security in the world. As already discussed in previous chapters, various aspects of security are inter-related and humanitarian elements are present in all the aspects of security. So this chapter deals with the necessity of humanitarian security; main proposals of the humanitarian dimension of security during *Perestroika* phase; its impact on strengthening the peace and security of the world and particularly the security of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

6.1. The Rationale Behind Humanitarian Security

Humanitarian aspects of security, which stressed on inter-state relations and contact between people as well, believed that normal relations were not possible without mutual trust and understanding. A rational solution to the humanitarian problems, solution of global problems by international laws could be possible only through such relations. It also tried to change the attitude of the west by following a course of all round development of such cooperation on a sound basis, earlier who alleged socialist countries and particularly Soviet Union as the violator of humanitarian principle. Thus, it provided no space to USA and the West to use this human rights issue against Soviet Union as the interferer in the internal affairs of other countries as it did earlier.
The most important issue relating to this aspect of security was the issue of human rights. The UN Charter has incorporated human rights and fundamental freedom as the basis of Universal international security system. The preamble of the UN Charter stresses "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity ad worth of the human person, in the equal right of men and women and of nations large and small". Article 1 of the UN Charter proposes "to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion".1 These and other provisions in the UN Charter integrate human rights and humanitarian problems with the problem of maintaining peace and security and with economic and social issues.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says in this respect that recognition of the inherent dignity of every member of the human family and his equal and inalienable rights is the basis for freedom, justice and universal peace, that disregard of human rights has led to acts of barbarity that outrage the conscience of mankind; that the creation of a world in which man will have the freedom of speech and conviction and be free of fear and need is proclaimed as a lofty aspiration of the people.2


The suppression of information, personal dignity and the fundamental human rights and freedoms in Soviet Union and other parts of the world made it necessary to incorporate these humanitarian aspects in the Soviet model of security during Perestroika. Gorbachev had rightly said, "The world can't be considered secure if human rights are being violated".

6.2. Major Dimensions of Humanitarian Security

The humanitarian aspects of security concerned with Soviet human rights policy both as a domestic issue and the issue of foreign policy.

6.2.i. Domestic Dimensions

In the domestic sphere, Gorbachev called for democratisation and glasnost (openness). He encouraged people for open debates and discussions in various fields by giving adequate freedom to them. During this Perestroika phase, there was radical changes in the internal dimensions of social security which encompassed political, economic and socio-cultural fields. As it was explored in early chapters, these fields had importance since it was key to all other issues and problems including humanitarian ones. Soviet leader Gorbachev realized that economic conditions of human life were the material basis for the solution to the humanitarian problems. Humanitarian issues could hardly be solved if the essential conditions for a decent life were lacking in Soviet Union. So, he
took adequate steps for providing a decent living to the people by improving Soviet economy.

An open political culture by introducing multiparty system, freedom to the people to participate in the process of election, open discussions with people and leaders for the solution of the political problems also added a human face to this concept of security.

Human rights reforms which were started by Khrushchev got prominence by Gorbachev who tried seriously for an open democratic society. Thus Stalin's close society where human rights were violated, controversial books were banned, art and literature critical of Communist ideology were suppressed, was replaced by a new open culture free from the violation of human rights, suppression of information. On the other hand, there was dignity of the individuals, respect for socio-cultural diversity and autonomy of nationalities and ethnic groups, promotion of creative and innovative spirit in educational, scientific and intellectual activities, recognition of the democratic rights of trade union and professional groups, in order to sustain the foundation of multi-nationality socialist federation as a moral entity of enlightened and free citizens.³

6.2.ii. External Dimensions

In the foreign policy sphere, the focus was on dealing with human rights issues in USSR and its influence over other countries. The human rights issue developed in 1975 Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and its follow-up meetings. But the actual CSCE negotiations took place in Geneva between September 1973 and July 1975. The Conference approved the Final Act on August 1975. The Final Act was not a treaty and the signatories were not bound to comply with the provisions but it helped in improving the relations between East and West and set the agenda for the next decade of East-West relations, particularly in the sphere of human rights.

Besides the political provisions, Basket I also contained a general human rights provision which included "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion". Basket III also contained numerous humanitarian provisions including "freer movement and contacts" among the people of Europe, "contacts on the basis of family ties", "reunification of families", interactions between citizens of different States for the purpose of marriage, expansion of tourism and cultural contacts. It also covered "freer and wider dissemination of information of all kinds" including wider circulation of

---

printed information, films and broadcasts. As discussed, Soviets had come to Helsinki for an agreement on the Commission. But the US linked up it with human rights agenda. Though the USSR accepted the 'trade off' of the human rights provision of this Act for several reasons but the Soviet and American leaders characterized the Final Act's impact on human rights in different terms.⁵

In the post Helsinki period, Soviet Union changed its defensive position on human rights to offensive in Belgrade (1977), Madrid (1980-83), Ottawa (1985) and Vienna (1986-89) Conferences and started blaming the West for violating human rights by ignoring the right to speak of the commoners by the people those in power. Again the Soviet Union considered the political freedoms of the West was meaningless as there was no social and economic rights like employment, housing and healthcare for the people which was stressed by the socialist systems. The Soviets insisted that any review of compliance with Basket III that enquired Soviet treatment of national minorities, freedom of religion, emigration policy and political dissident must be linked up with the racial discrimination prevalent in USA, the treatment of the American Indians, restriction on immigration into US and the situation in northern Ireland including imprisonment for political reasons.⁶


However, under Gorbachev, real changes were brought in the humanitarian sphere of Soviet policy, which weakened the human rights campaign of the West. The 27th CPSU Congress which dealt with the concept of 'Comprehensive Universal Security' contained specific proposals on the subject. The first proposal concerned "co-operation in the dissemination of the ideas of peace, disarmament and international security; greater flow of general objective information and broader contact among peoples for the purpose of learning more about one another, reinforcement of the spirit of mutual understanding and concord in relations between them".7

This proposal was elaborated in numerous UN documents on human rights. It considered the 'enemy image' was one of the chief obstacles in the way of dialogue and contact between Soviet Union and US. It ruled out the possibility of peaceful co-existence, with an enemy which it considered impossible and incorrect without changes in the attitudes of the people. In fact, the 'enemy image' did not promote restraint and civilized behaviour in international relations, but instead hampered international contacts and co-operation.8

The 'enemy image' was created by the mass media of both the countries. The US media deliberately created distorted, outrageous


pictures of the Soviet People which was reported by the American TV network ABC on February, 1986. The editor in chief of Die Zeit – Marion Donhoff said that "US cultivated vulgar anti-communism and blamed Russians for all ills".\(^9\) In this context, Gorbachev wrote:

"Some people in the United States, it turns out, 'need' the Soviet Union as an enemy image. Otherwise it is hard to understand some films, the inflammatory American broadcasts from Munich, the spate of articles and programs full of insults and hatred toward the Soviet people. All this dates back to the forties, if not earlier".\(^10\)

George Kennan, a well-known diplomat of US also expressed his irritation in the same way:

"This endless series of distortions and over-simplifications; this systematic dehumanization of the leadership of another great country, this routine exaggeration of Moscow's military capability and of the supposed inequity of Soviet intention, this momentous misrepresentation of the nature and the attitudes of another great people- and long suffering people at that, surely tried by the vissitudes of this past century, this ignoring of their plight, their hopes- yes, even after their illusion (for they have their illusion, just as we have ours, an illusion too deserve respect). This reckless application of the double standard to the judgment of the Soviet conduct and our own, this failure to recognize, finally the community of the many of their problems and ours as we both move inexorably in to the modern technological age, and this corresponding tendency to view all aspects of the relationships in terms of a suppose total and irreconcilable conflict of concerns and of aim. these, believe me, are not the marks of the maturity and discrimination one expects of the diplomacy of a great

---


\(^10\) Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, p. 217.
power; they are the marks of an intellectual primitivism and naivety unpardonable in a great government".  

The Soviet media were also not free from campaign against the USA. It portrayed US as an 'imperialist wolf'. It considered capitalist system as a rotten system which only produced unemployed people, oppressed national minority and greedy capitalist. This attitude of Soviet Union twined with ideological biases also fuelled mutual acquisition, suspicion and hostility. But during Gorbachev, under perestroika, there were dramatic changes in the traditional image that was formed over the decades in American public opinion of the Soviet Union, Soviet society and culture.

As discussed, Soviet Union and America took adequate steps for maintaining peace and security of the globe. Both the powers realized that there must be maximum truth in depicting the other side and oneself, that full information be made available and that its deliberate distortion and concealment not be allowed. They also prepared mentally and gathered the courage to picturise the other side and oneself in a proper manner.

---


12 Andrei Mellville, op.cit., p. 23
Under *Perestroika*, direct personal contacts in the field of culture on both individual and collective basis, as well as contacts between cultural institutions, associations of creative and performing artists and other organizations were encouraged in order to increase the opportunities for their citizens to acquaint themselves directly with creative works with other countries.\(^\text{13}\)

During this phase, Soviet Union also developed healthy relationship with other powers like Great Britain, France, Germany, etc. In 1989, Soviet Union and Britain held conferences on humanitarian questions and human rights which produced a major breakthrough towards new frontiers in the European process. These problems were also addressed in Moscow Conference in 1991. Soviet Union and Britain took joint efforts for the solution of the global problems particularly economic and environmental issues. Soviet Union expressed its willingness to faithfully abide by existing agreements and cooperation in international programmes.\(^\text{14}\)

Gorbachev’s visit to France, Germany, other European powers and Eastern Europe and talks on various issues for


\(^{14}\) Visit of Mikhail Gorbachev to Great *Britain*, (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1989), pp. 24-29.
maintaining peace and international security were positive in this direction. There was the second proposal in the humanitarian sphere dealt with the "extirpation of genocide, apartheid, advocacy of fascism and every other form of racial, national or religious exclusiveness and also discrimination against people on this basis."

The above mentioned facts were instruments for creating hatred and confrontation. Soviet Union believed that there was no place in civilized society for racism, nationalism and chauvinism. USSR opposed racism in South Africa where black majority was suppressed.

As discussed earlier, Soviet Union championed the cause of Palestine liberation movement and raised voice against the attacks and oppression of Indians, Turks and other Asians in Western Europe. Soviet Union also took steps for doing away with revanchism and terrorism which was common during 70's and 80's. As far as Soviet progress on these aspects of security were concerned, Soviet Union under perestroika took adequate steps in this respect. Restriction on the study and practice of religion were being removed. Citizens of Soviet Union were allowed to go through

---

15 Vadim Zagladin, op.cit., p. 118.
the bibles and in the Fall of 1988, Moscow ended the Soviet ban on the teaching of Hebrew.\textsuperscript{16}

During this phase, citizens including Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union to settle abroad. In 1986, during Gorbachev period, a new procedure for considering application for leaving the country to reunify with family members were enacted. Gorbachev in December 1988 speech to the United Nations pledged that in 1989, laws would be enacted for guaranteeing freedom of expression and freedom from religious persecution. He added that laws prohibiting emigration of a person with knowledge relating to the secrets of the Soviet security would be modified to include 'strictly warranted time limitations'.\textsuperscript{17}

The response of the United States was positive during Gorbachev's time. Soviet Union tried its best to involve US in solving the above mentioned problems and suggested to USA not to support fascism and revanchist for us of Germany as it would destabilize the peace and security of the world. US approval for participating in Moscow Conference of 1991 amply proved it.


The third proposal of the humanitarian aspects of security dealt with “extension while respecting the laws of each country – of international co-operation in the implementation of the political, social and personal rights of people. This proposal was also closely linked up with the fourth proposal, “The decision in a humane and positive spirit of questions related to the reuniting of families, marriage and the promotion of contacts between people and between organizations”.

6.3. Impacts of Humanitarian Security

As discussed, the incorporation of these principles of human rights and freedom into the Soviet security system during perestroika phase stemmed from the UN Charter. Soviet scholars during 80’s argued that Soviet Union tried its best to observe the principles of the universal declaration of Human Rights but it was deliberately violated by USA and the West. Soviet Union also guaranteed socio-economic and personal rights to the people and ensured equalities of all nations and nationalities by law. But USA and West interfered in the internal affairs of Soviet Union taking the plea of the violation of human rights which was the prime cause of the bitter relationship between the two power blocs.

18 Gorbachev, Perestroika, op.cit., p. 231.
In this context, Victor Chebrikov, a member of the politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and the chairman of the Committee of State Security said:

"Lately, certain quarters in the West have been repeated by bring up the subject of alleged violations of political and personal rights and freedom in the Soviet Union, and put forward groundless demands and claims. All this is designed to fire up the anti-social ambitions of some renegades among the Soviet citizens, to push them towards openly hostile activities. All those who oppose socialism are revered; things have gone so far that even hardened criminals are now taken under protection. What are the rights demanded for these people by their Western advocates? The right to break the laws of our socialist state with impunity. We shall never give such right to any one". 19

Whatever might be the claims of the Soviet Union pertaining to the achievements in the direction of humanitarian aspects of security, but in actual practice, there was suppression of political and personal rights of the people of the Soviet Union and other parts of the world. During this perestroika phase, Soviet Union genuinely tried to ensure socio-economic rights such as right to work and right to housing for its citizens. The provisions of the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights were formalised not only in the constitution of USSR, but also in the fundamentals of labour legislation. Soviet Union concluded bi-lateral

---

19 Quoted in Vadim Zagladin, op.cit., p.121.
agreement with most socialist countries for ensuring their social security and social insurance.

The international legal terms relating to the political and personal rights of citizens were also manifested in the legislation of Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{20} A Commission for humanitarian cooperation and human rights were set up in 1987 within the framework of Soviet Committee for security and cooperation in Europe for ensuring the implementations of the Helsinki Final Act. In 1988, a delegation of the international Helsinki Human Rights Committee visited the Soviet Union for exchanging experiences in the field of observance of human rights. There was exchange of ideas between the Western delegates and the representatives of Ministries and departments of USSR. As discussed, Soviet Union revisioned certain norms of internal legislation in order to promote the process of democratization and to provide political, social and personal rights to the people.\textsuperscript{21}

During Gorbachev period, Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakarov's wife, was permitted to go to the West for eye and heart treatment. Sakarovs were released from the exile in Gorky and permitted to


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., pp. 93-94.
return to Moscow. He was also allowed to address an international conference on disarmament where he expressed his viewpoints and appreciated Gorbachev's reforms and initiatives taken in this field.  

Criminal codes were revised to eliminate the crimes of "anti-Soviet defamation" (Article 190-191 of the RSFSR Criminal Code). A new glasnost law was drafted. Anatoli Shcharansky — the symbol of human rights and religious repression in the former USSR along with other prisoners were released from the prison under perestroika. Abuses of psychiatric treatment to political dissidents were exposed and stopped. Amnesty International started playing a significant role in Moscow. Soviet Union took genuine steps for reuniting of families, marriage and the promotion of contacts between people. Many Soviet-American married couples were permitted to re-unite in the West who were separated for years by Soviet policy. Marriages took place between the people of Soviet Union with Europeans and Americans.  

Soviet Union's relationship with socialist countries was cordial. Interaction with the leaders and parties of socialist countries was taken a new form. Inter-party meetings became frequent. Soviet leader Gorbachev gave importance to the

---

22 Zwick Peter, op.cit., p. 280.
23 ibid., p. 280.
cooperation for promotion of scientific and technological progress. The relationship with China was normalized. During this phase, equitable friendly relations with newly freed countries were developed. Soviet Union put adequate efforts for the solution of their debts and abolished the unfair international economic relations.

As was discussed, it maintained and developed relations with capitalist countries on the basis of peaceful co-existence. The fifth provision of the programme of the 27th CPSU Congress in the humanitarian aspects of security was the "strengthening of and quest for new forms of cooperation in culture, art, science, education and medicine". It was a fact as most of the Soviet experts argued that cultural cooperation was given importance before 'perestroika'. Inter-governmental agreement on cultural cooperation was signed. There was also exchanges of artistic groups between Soviet Union and other nations.

After the Bolshevik revolution, books by authors from nearly one hundred and fifty nations had been published on Soviet Union. International film festivals were organized in Moscow and Tashkent. Soviet citizens were allowed to go on tourist trips to abroad; the same was true of the number of tourists who were coming to USSR. But in actual practice, it was bit different as ideological interpretation was the motivating factor for cultural cooperation. As discussed that
was the reason for banning controversial books, art and literature critical of communist ideology.

State suppression in the cultural sphere was very much there in the pre-perestroika phase. But under perestroika, Soviet Union had undergone a tremendous change. Glasnost, i.e., openness, was introduced even for the purpose of cooperation. Soviet leaders tried to improve relationship with Western countries through cultural exchanges which led to ‘cross cultural fertilization’. Soviet Union invited Westerners as juries to 15th Moscow International Film Festival, which took place in July 1987. Robert de Niro was named as the Chairman of the Jury in the feature film category.

Soviet Union embarked on a bold and sweeping campaign of Westernisation, not because like Peter the Great, they believed that appropriation of western technology and to a certain extent, western mentality was needed for the prosperity and survival of Soviet Union. Soviet Union also stressed on the changes in cultural leadership to get the support of ‘intelligentsia’, which was badly needed for the success of perestroika.

A revitalized culture was also considered as an important instrument for indoctrinating the alienated youth to the existing mainstream ideas of Soviet Union, i.e. perestroika. In this context,

Vladimir Maslov, a Central Committee lecturer and supporter of Gorbachev put it, "We have lost those who are now between the age of fifteen and thirty. We have to win them back, because there is no one besides them to carry out perestroika".\(^{25}\)

Cooperation in the sphere of art, literature, science, education and medicine was given importance. People of USSR were given chance to meet the artists. Talent of Kandensky was recognized. Unexpected materials were available in print and electronic media. Controversial books were published. Writers, who could not publish their poetry two or three years ago – Semen Lipkin,\(^{26}\) Aleksandr Kushner,\(^{27}\) Inna Lisnyanskaya,\(^{28}\) Yergeniy Reyn,\(^{29}\) and Boris Chichibabin\(^{30}\) - shared pages with controversial poets of various eras, from the 1920s émigré Don Aminado\(^{31}\) to émigrés of the 1970’s like Naum Korzhavin\(^{32}\) and Joseph Brodsky.\(^{33}\) Movies were being screened in theatres and aired on television and

\(^{25}\) Quoted in Ibid., p.35.

\(^{26}\) In for instance, Oktyabr', No. 8, 1988, pp. 118-120.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., no. 6, 1988, pp. 82-85.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., no. 11, 1988, pp. 130-32, in Novyy Mir, no. 6, 1988, pp. 6-7.

\(^{29}\) In Novy Mir, no. 2, 1988, pp. 93-95.

\(^{30}\) In Druzhba Narodov, no. 11, 1988, pp. 197-219.

\(^{31}\) In Oktyabr, no. 9, 1988, pp. 143-46.

\(^{32}\) Ibid, no. 8, 1988, pp. 143-50.

\(^{33}\) Druzhba Naradov, no. 8, 1988, pp. 226-236.
paintings were being exhibited that even five years ago would not have been reached their intended audiences.\textsuperscript{34}

In the sphere of science and medicine, western technology and scientific innovation were introduced. There were joint efforts and exchange of ideas between Soviet Union European countries and America to develop science, technology and education, which could provide better living standard to the people of the world. There were also attempts for inventing new medicines for saving the valuable lives of the people from diseases like AIDS.

Under perestroika, Western response to the humanitarian changes in the Soviet Union seemed to be positive, but in reality they were bit skeptical and cautious. Even Western scholars interpreted it as a master game by Soviet leader Gorbachev to overcome its crisis and to strengthen its security and finally to dominate American and European nations. But whatever the interpretation of the West may be, Soviet leader under perestroika genuinely tried for a secured world where they thought the security of the Soviet Union would be automatically secured.

As discussed, humanitarian aspects of security tried to guarantee human rights to the people of Soviet Union and the world. It also explored the possibilities for cooperation in various spheres like culture, art, science, technology and medicine. So far as exchange of cultures and imitation of western value patterns were concerned, Prokhanov rightly argued that Soviet Union lost its identity by blindly copying Western models, scientific apparatus, rock groups, methods of conducting interviews in the press, administrative and scientific models. Such a copying deprived us of a sovereign path and gave to an inferiority complex.\textsuperscript{35}

While formulating Soviet security policies, peculiarities of Soviet social structure, history and culture were not taken into consideration. On the other hand, ‘glasnost’ in Soviet culture, art, literature and emphasis on human rights give enough liberty to the people. The Western press also emphasized on these aspects of security and considered Gorbachev as the torchbearer of the world by declaring him “Man of the Decade”. In such a situation people those were suppressed for a long time started revolting against the state mechanism and tried to secede from the Soviet Union. Baltic Republic was first to follow this path. Had Gorbachev maintained slow pace so far as ‘Glasnost’ was concerned in comparison to his

\textsuperscript{35} John Dunlop, op. cit., pp. 34-56.
perestroika, the people would not be so assertive and Soviet Union might not be disintegrated.

Third and fourth proposals as we discussed helped in developing good relations with the West. But compromising attitudes of Soviet Union, imitation of West, relying on western science and technology provided enough space to USA and other European powers to penetrate into the internal security of the Soviet Union which ultimately helped in the process of disintegration.

Though Soviet Union is no more and Soviet concept of security did not able to save Soviet Union from the disintegration, but the humanitarian aspects of security has relevance in Russia (the true successor of the USSR) and the world. Russia is determined to take steps to further human rights both at the international and national levels. Russia is trying its best to uphold personal rights and freedoms inside Russia and other parts of the world.  

In the words of Foreign Minister Andrei V. Kozyrev:

"The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation has held for the first time hearings on international human rights and we will show persistent and keen interest in the strict, legal observance of the rights of our compatriots, including Russians and other nationalities. We cannot allow the consolidation of nations with the CIS (or those that did not become members of the commonwealth) to be accompanied

---

by any infringement of minority rights. As participants of the CSCE and members of the United Nations, newly created states must assume a very concerned and responsible attitude towards minority populations. Otherwise – and this has already occurred – no alternative exists but to use the mechanism of U.N. or the CSCE for the settlement of national, ethnic and for religious conflicts. If minority rights are not maintained, Europe may face a stream of military conflicts and refugees that will not only disrupt the Helsinki process, so important to the cause of peace and stability, but will also drown human rights under its wake".37

So far as economic and cultural interests are concerned, the people’s Congress of Deputies ratified the federal treaty for safeguarding the economic and cultural interests of every nationality in the territory of the Russian Federation, in accordance with national identity.38

Russia is also trying its best to keep friendly relations with West and other countries including East European countries. Andrei V. Kozyrev has rightly mentioned:

"The distinctive feature of our new era is that humanity is acquiring new dimensions in its developmental values common to all mankind dominate the century. Personal freedom and prosperity and the protection and development of the human being will be one of the cornerstones of international security. The "human dimension" of international relations reflects a transformation of the global international and political system toward the humanization of international politics".39

37 Ibid., p. 293.
38 Ibid., pp. 291-292.
39 Ibid., pp. 291-292.