CHAPTER 1
SOVIET SECURITY INTEREST IN SOUTH ASIA:
A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

In Soviet strategic thinking South Asia has always occupied a position of vital importance. The Soviet Union's southern periphery had always been highly vulnerable. For the Soviet Union, South Asia was one of the regions in which global competition between it and the United States of America and also between it and China was taking place. South Asia was also the region of major wars, and domestic and political conflicts. These events had an impact on the Soviet and American relations. During the Cold War period, USA and the Soviet Union had close relations with the two major countries in South Asia, namely Pakistan and India respectively.

Even in the past Soviet Union had deep interest in South Asia, although it was under colonial rule. During the Tsarist period, it had the British Empire as its principal rival. The Soviet Union strongly supported the emancipation of South Asia from the hands of British imperialism. The successor state to Tsarist Russia, namely the Soviet Union, imparted a totally new dimension to the competition with the West. Emerging as a super power after the Second World War and especially during the Cold War, the Soviet Union's main security concern in South Asia has been to prevent the region, or any part of it from falling under the dominance of the USA and later China. The Soviet Union looked to the United States as
the principal enemy, both in ideological and military terms. The United States was feared as a military power, and as a global adversary, because it alone had the military power to frustrate the Soviet Union. Other main concern for the Soviet Union was to reduce China's involvement in the South Asia after its own differences came out in the open. The understanding that came about between China-US-Pakistan in the seventies is possible that it led to the Afghan crisis later. This alliance also was potential link in a border security system which had an effective impact on Soviet policy. The focus of this chapter is to analyse Soviet security interest in South Asia, during the Cold War period. This chapter analyses these security interests especially in South Asia, and the bilateral relations with India and Pakistan have also discussed. However, before that an examination of Soviet security interests is necessary.

**Soviet concept of Security**

The security concept has undergone a tremendous change in the Soviet Union from the days of Lenin to Gorbachev. The Soviet Union handled security questions in a very diplomatic way, because, the Cold-War between these two super powers, made the security issue very sensitive. The strategic dimension of security dominated over other considerations particularly that of ideology. In Soviet ideological thinking security was perceived as no dealing with the capitalist world. The goal of World Revolution once achieved would ensure security. It was natural that Russia promoted such revolutions and helped them to sustain itself.
Therefore, the physical survival of Russia became very important security concern.

Security clearly was not confined within the old frontiers of Russia, or within the areas where the Russian revolutionaries held influence. It became consciously and deliberately contingent on events well beyond those territorial confines. Yet the capacity of the Russian revolutionaries to affect events beyond the border of Soviet Union, and even within their own area of more or less tenuous control was highly circumscribed (Helmut Sonnenfeidt and William G. Heyland, 1985). Thus there emerged an extended concept of security that involved the territorial integrity of both Soviet Union and the Socialist Bloc. The needs and concerns of Soviet Union were, however, given a top priority.

The triumph of the Socialist revolution in Soviet Union posed new challenges for the young state. The problem of the foreign policy to be pursued by a socialist state. Therefore, Lenin’s foreign policy was based on a sober analysis of the objective reality and on a comprehensive account of the correlation of world forces. Proletarian internationalism and the peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems became the main principle of the practical foreign policy of socialism (O. Bykov, V. Ramzmerov, D. Tomasaevsky, 1981). In short, Bolshevik Russia favoured contact with the west only after all hopes of a revolution breaking out in the west was clashed.

As the Soviet Union was the only socialist country surrounded by capitalist bloc Lenin enunciated the concept of Peaceful Co-existence
among all states which different social system. But in Lenin’s thinking peaceful co-existence was a temporary phenomena. A respite was necessary to catch up with the west. Lenin advocated peace with Germany as it was most important for Soviet Union to save its revolution. He took the decision to sign the treaty of Brest-Livoski in 1918 against opposition from some members of the party. Lenin was realist and prepared to take any assistance from anywhere if that helped stabilize the Russian revolution.

Lenin tried his best to avert World War to secure peace. He developed good and cordial political and economic relations with other countries. As he pointed out “the Russian socialist federation wishes to life in peace with all people and devote all its efforts to internal development” (V.I.Lenin, 1964). Lenin stressed on New Economic Policy (NEP) for rebuilding economy affected by the war and safeguarding the economic viability of the Soviet Union. Thus, under the dynamic leadership of Lenin, Soviet Union ensured both internal and external security. Lenin realised that socialism as only panacea to reduce and redress the sufferings of the people and maintain peace and security in Soviet Union and rest of the world. Keeping this in mind, he developed friendly and warm relationship with other counties on the basis of respect for their independence and equality. He supported the struggle of these countries against colonial atrocities and neo-colonial imperialism and for universal peace and security (V.I.Lenin, 1964).
Stalin’s Perspective of Security

In the early years of Stalin’s rule attempts to be friend the western nations were rebuffed. The Kellog-Briand pact and appeasement policy only added to Soviet fears of intervention. He, however, continued the policy of Peaceful Co-Existence. Stalin was more obsessed with security threats, both internal and external. His security conceptions were based on Cold-War calculations and West’s open opposition to the communist regime. He was committed to safeguarding the country’s security from anti-Soviet alliances. Stalin laid equal emphasis on military as well as political means for safeguarding security. Stalin, preoccupied with the task of building socialism in one country, and accepted the fact that the country was not ready for another major conflict. His non-aggression pact of 1939 with Germany was in that direction. He was aware of the threat from Nazi Germany, but not fully prepared to meet it alone. He tried to stop German advance in Poland by trying to have an arrangement with Britain and France, but did not receive a positive response from them. So he was left with no choice to deter Hitler form embarking an invasion of Russia. Therefore, he entered into a non-aggression pact with Germany.

With the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Cold War began. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s speech at Fulton in the **U.S that an iron curtain** has descended over Europe and the intention to roll back socialism heightened Soviet sense of insecurity. One of the highlights of the Cold War was the formation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) a military alliance aimed at the Soviet Union. It
was created under the leadership of USA, comprising of counties in Western Europe. In a counter move to this military alliance, the Warsaw Pact was created in 1955 under the leadership of Soviet Union to protect the interest of the Socialist Bloc. During this period, military security was the prime concern of the Soviet Union; therefore, Stalin gave more importance to modern warfare.

Stalin’s conception of security in the post War period was not confined to the physical protection of the Soviet Union against renewed military threats. Rather Stalin saw the East European satellite empire as more than a military buffer. He regarded them as constituting the outer lines of defence against various forms of ideological and psychological challenge that emanated from the “capitalist” world. To protect its western periphery the Soviet Union pressed forward with reconstructing the industrial bases of those countries and to maintain large military forces there. If the East European buffer states were to play this role, it became, as essential to identify the survival of their regimes with physical security of the countries themselves as was the case with the Soviet Union herself. Thus, there emerged an extended concept of security which involved the territorial integrity of both the Soviet Union and its allies.

Khrushchev’s Perspective of Security

Nikita Khrushchev’s (Stalin’s successor) security policy was different from that of his predecessors. This was mainly due to changes in the international relations after end of the Second World War. Consequently, the perception of the Soviet Union on security also
changed. It was not just physical security of the Soviet Union, but also that of the East European countries and political survival of the Socialist Bloc. The nuclear issue also assumed more urgency and the competition with Untied States came to be judged more and more in terms of the strategic nuclear balance. Therefore, Khrushchev’s formulated his policy based on the concept of peaceful co-existence which unlike the earlier concept was permanent and not temporary.

These changes were introduced at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956. At this Congress Khrushchev not only began the de-Stalinization process but also sought to change the Stalinist world view. He declared the end of capitalist encirclement and said that wars were no longer “fatalistically inevitable”. He also tried to correct the Soviet image abroad, declaring that the Soviet Union did not believe in the export of revolutions and all nations were free to choose independently the path of development. The main reason being that any war in the future could escalate into a nuclear was annihilating everyone. Hence, war as a means had to be ruled out. So, Khrushchev’ stressed on peaceful co-existence as it was the objective necessity (Arvind Gupta, 1993). Another consequence was the enunciation of the doctrine that “all roads lead to socialism” making it to easier to develop relations with the developing countries including India.
Brezhnev's Perspective of Security

The Soviet concept of security became closely associated with the concept of equality during Brezhnev period. He was concerned with achieving military rather than economic parity with the West. Hence, seeking strategic nuclear parity with the NATO became the sole aim of military policy of the Soviet Union. A policy of meeting any threat based on the worst possible scenario was adopted. The safety of the homeland was the principal consideration; the inviolability of soviet predominance in Easter Europe was a close second; friendly powers elsewhere on the Soviet periphery were next; and entitlement to a role at least equal to that of the United States elsewhere came last (Helmut Sonnenfeidt and William G. Heyland, 1985). It was only after an equality of military forces between East and West and the equality in nuclear and other weapons the Soviet Union began to address itself to the strategic Arms limitations talks. Thus, Brezhnev and his colleagues had inherited from Khrushchev's the conviction that Soviet Union could not and should not be satisfied with securing the border of the homeland in its western outpost, but should strive for a status resembling to that of United States.

However, Brezhnev was realistic enough to see the failing of this conception. He realised that the increase in nuclear weapon was not leading to any corresponding increase in the USSR's security. Although there was no imminent danger of war but the pace of which nuclear stockpiles were built in the name of equal security was feverish. This was indeed the paradox of the nuclear arms race. Nuclear weapons did not
provide additional security and yet they were built in the name of security, so, he changed his approach to security. He stressed on détente for the security of Soviet Union. It was under his chairmanship that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR ratified the 1963 Moscow Treaty banning nuclear weapons test in the atmosphere, in outer space, and underwater, which was one of the first positive signs of change in the long—tense relations between the United States and the Soviet Union (Leonid I. Brezhnev, 1982). He developed new friendly equation with Europe, China and others countries. Importantly, the Moscow Declaration of 1970 when President Richard Nixon traveled to Moscow it implied that the Soviet Union was acknowledged as a super power capable of projecting its power anywhere. All these changes were reflected in the Twenty Fourth Congress of CPSU in 1971. In this Congress he highlighted on the peaceful co-existence and normal mutual cooperation. He declared the Soviet Union's loyalty to these principles. "The Soviet Union followed and will continue to follow Lenin's policy of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social system," Brezhnev said. "It is directed averting a nuclear World War, to settling disputes between states by negotiation, to respecting the right of every people to choose its social and state system and settle questions of its internal development by itself our country is for settling outstanding problems by step by step and consolidating peace." (Leonid I. Brezhnev 1982) Although the Soviet Union was secure from the West, its eastern flank bordering China was
now highly vulnerable. This Sino-Soviet war of 1969 added to Soviet insecurity.

**Mikhail Gorbachev’s Security perspective**

Gorbachev reassessed the approach to the security as it had evolved since the end of Second World War. He brought about radical changes in security structure of the world by reorienting the basic components. He stressed more on the political and economic aspects than the militaristic approach. This change was a result of his deep thinking about the world situation. Gorbachev believed that world is integral and inter dependent and required a new approach.

Gorbachev’s ‘New Political Thinking’ was a direct off shoot of Perestroika, it completely changed the traditional concept of security and emphasized on universal values over class interest, unwinnability of nuclear war, joint efforts to solve global problems, freedom of choice to all countries and peoples. He has tried to de-ideologies his foreign policy. That meant that ideological difference could not be allowed to come in the way of deepening of cooperation with other countries.

The existence of a number of problems of global nature and the existence of nuclear stockpiles which threaten mankind had completely changed Gorbachev views on security. He believed that in such a situation, there could be no place for polices that led to confrontation and war. Both capitalism and socialism were realities and had no alternative but to co-exist peacefully, and actively cooperative with each other to solve the pressing problems facing mankind. In this regard his proposal
for a ‘Common European Security’, for peace and security in the Asia-
pacific region, for converting the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and
ensuring a world free from violence and nuclear weapons were a few
important proposals.

Gorbachev in his report to the Twenty Seventh Congress in 1986 of
the CPSU described the “struggle against the nuclear threat, against arms
race, for the preservation and strengthening of universal peace” as the
main direction of the party’s line on international affairs (M. S.
Gorbachev, 1986). Emphasizing on the realities of nuclear age, he says.
“The arms race, just like nuclear war, is unwinnable from the security
point of view; the arms race has become an absurdity because its very
logic leads to the destabilization of international relations and eventually
to a nuclear conflict. Nuclear war is senseless; it is irrational. There
would be neither winners nor losers in a global nuclear conflict: World
civilization would inevitably perish (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1984). For him
basing international politics on moral and ethical norms that are common
to all humankind, as well as humanizing interstate relations, which had
become a vital requirement. Dealing with the concept of security, he
reiterated that security is no longer being assured by military means—
neither by the use of arms or deterrence. Diverting huge resources from
other priorities, the arms race is lowering the level of security, impairing
it. It is in itself an enemy of peace (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1984). Therefore,
he concluded that the task of ensuring security should be increasingly
seen as a political problem, which could be resolved by political decision.
At the Twenty Seventh Party Congress, he propounded the idea of comprehensive, universal security. That regarded military dimension as one amongst several dimensions it guaranteed the security of a country and other dimensions being political, economic and humanitarian. The main aim of safeguarding the security of a country should be political and not military. The concept of comprehensive security considered that security must be universal. In this integral and interdependent world, the security of any one country would not be at the expense of another one.

Gorbachev's comprehensive universal security had four major dimensions – military, political, economic and humanitarian. The military aspect concerned "renunciation by the nuclear powers of war against each other or against third countries both nuclear and conventional (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1986). In this direction in 1986 he proposed a nuclear -free world by the year 2000. At Raykjavik, he accepted the so-called zero-option. That is, removing all intermediate range weapon from Europe (INF-Treaty). Although the INF treaty reduced the total number of nuclear weapons in the world by only 4 percent, it was significant breakthrough in arms control; this led to significant changes in the character of US-USSR relationship form confrontation to cooperation.

The second proposal of military aspect is concerned about the concept of Self sufficiency". The prevention of an arms race in outer space, cessation of all nuclear weapons tests and the total destruction of such weapons, a ban on the destruction of chemical weapons, and renunciation of the development of other means of mass annihilation
(Mikhail Gorbachev, 1986). Gorbachev wanted outer space should serve the cause of peace. In pursuit of this goal, the Soviet Union submitted a radical proposal of banning the use of force in outer space in relation to earth. These moves were aimed at avoiding a costly new arms race, at a time when Soviet Union wanted to pay attention to its domestic economic development. The Soviet Union also took a unilateral step not to deploy anti-satellite weapons in outer space.

Other proposal in the military sphere was a "strictly lowering the level of military capabilities of countries to limits of reasonable adequacy" (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1986). The most important concept which formed the basis of the new thinking on security was that of 'reasonable sufficiency". As mentioned in the Twenty Seventh Party Congress report, military security, in the changed world situation should be based on the recognition that nuclear war was unwinnable and should not be fought. The reasonable sufficiency aims at the reduction of military budget and lowering of military capabilities of the counties to the level of reasonable sufficiency. This led to drastic restructuring of the armed forces, unilateral defense cut and the beginning of cardinal military reforms in the country. This was a break form the past when expansion in armaments and numerical party at high level were the norms. The reasonable sufficiency was aimed to extricate USSR from a crippling arms race.

The political aspect of Gorbachev's security was emphasized on the "strict respect in international practice for the rights of each people to
choose the ways and forms of their own development independently” (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1986) Every nation was entitled to choose its own way of development, to dispose of its fate, its territory, and its human and natural resources. Different political systems in different countries were the result of the choice made by the people. National choice should be used in international relations in such way that they should not trigger conflicts and military confrontation. Gorbachev’s political aspect also included a just political settlement of international crisis and regional conflicts. He wanted to find the political solution to regional conflict through unbiased dialogue, national reconciliation and by peaceful means. In this context, Gorbachev’s speech at Vladivostok in 1986 was path breaking. He showed willingness to address the “three obstacles” of China and offered important concession to the west to reduce tensions.

The Economic aspect of Gorbachev’s concept of security had two main aspects. First, to boost up the stagnant Soviet economy through its integration into the emerging global economic order, his concept of comprehensive international security envisaged stable economic relations, mutual trade and aid among socialist and non-socialist countries on equal basis. For achieving this objective, he emphasized on restructuring international economic relations and establishing New International Economic order (Evenest Obninsky and Andrei Bugrov, 1998). On the international front, an important proposal was made on this regard aimed at exclusion of all forms of discrimination from international practices, renunciation of the policy of economic blockades and sanctions if this
was not directly envisaged in the recommendation of world community (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1987). It also stressed on normalization of international economic relations among various states. It was essential for the economic development of the countries whose economic backwardness was the result of exploitation by capitalist policy of neocolonialism.

Other proposal of economic security was the joint quest for a just settlement of the problem of debt. The most important proposal in the concept of economic security was establishment of a new world economic order guaranteeing equal economic security to all countries. Soviet Union tried seriously within and outside United Nations framework to cooperate with interested parties to remove all types of discriminatory restrictions form international economic relations. During this phase, Soviet Union and other socialist countries developed equitable economic relationship with the rest of the world. The fourth proposal in the economic security stressed on elaboration of principles for utilizing part of funds that was saved, as result of reduction of military budget for the betterment of the world community. Soviet Union under Perestroika emphasized on disarmament for development rejecting the earlier nation of armament for development. Thus, we find Soviet security concerns were deep, but it always sought to deal with them on its own. But we find after its war with China, Soviet Union brought forward a proposal that involved other countries as well. It was the collective security for Asia.
Asian Collective Security Scheme

The Soviet Union was aware of the geo-strategic importance of Asia. Its approaches to Asian Security were based on neutralizing United States and China's influence in the region. So, the Soviet security approach to Asia in general and South Asia in particular was influenced by the policy of China and America.

The Soviet support to the Asian National liberalization and independence movement played a very meaningful role in determining its future political and security role in Asia. The decolonization of Asia, the formation of Western alliance system the central treaty organization (CENTO) and South East Asia Treaty (SEATO) and British withdrawal form the East of Suez were important developments which have helped the Soviet Union to formulate its policy in Asia. To protect its security interests, Soviet Union on a number of occasions presented its plan for Asian Security which had received mixed response from the Asian Countries.

General Secretary Brezhnev announced his Asian collective security scheme in 1969. Ironically his proposal did not receive enough encouragement from the Asian countries. Their main objection was that the plan was directed against China. Countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia refused to subscribe to the scheme. Even India did not endorse Brezhnev's security plan overtly. Elaborating the importance of his security proposal Brezhnev spelt out in his speech
at the fifteenth Congress of the Soviet trade union in 1972 that a collective security system in Asia “must be based on such principle as renunciation of the use of force in relation between states, in respect of sovereignty and inviolability of frontiers, non interference in each other’s internal affairs and development of economic and other forms of cooperation on the basis of complete equality and mutual benefit (Leonid I. Brezhnev--1982). Security through economic cooperation and sovereign equality thus featured as the pre-requisite of Brezhnev’s security plan.

While responding to the Soviet proposal, Pakistan did not publicly comment on this plan, but it vowed to strengthen ties with China. Pakistan asserted that China was a sincere and reliable friend and that Islamabad could not be a party to “anti-Chinese alliance” (Moonis Ahmar, 1989). On the other hand, India, despite having very close ties with the Soviet Union ostensibly opposed joining alliance with great powers and also security pacts sponsored by the superpowers.

In her public statement, the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi Stated that India was opposed to any alliance that would appear to be a “ganging up” of nations against People’s Republic of China. She expressed the hope that China would “pose no real threat to India in spite of border issue” and asserted that in case the withdrawal of British forces created vacuum, the regional powers could fill it “or the UN should guarantee the security of the countries affected” (Moonis Ahmar, 1989).
Therefore Brezhnev’s Asian collective security system could not make much impact on Asian countries.

During Rajiv Gandhi visit in 1987, Gorbachev expressed his views about the proposed Asian security plan. He acknowledges that Asia was marred with numerous cleavages. These contradiction and disputes were the result of imperialist intervention. He urged the Asian countries to resolve their conflicts through negotiations. He advised Asian countries to establish Asian forums for an exchange of opinions and joint search for constructive solutions, of their conflicts and cleavages. Gorbachev in his proposal gave India and China equal position in initiating regional discussions, either on bilateral or multilateral level to resolve conflicts and evolve a climate for durable peace and security in Asia. As compared to Brezhnev’s plan of 1969, Gorbachev’s plan was not directed against China and called for a rapprochement between India and China both Brezhnev and Gorbachev in their Asian security proposal had given much attention to South Asia. This shows how South Asia was important for Soviet Union.

Soviet Security Interests in South Asia and its Relationship with India

The Soviet security interests cannot be understood in isolation without understanding its overall policy in Asia. Two-third of the Soviet Union’s territory lies in Asia, and so the concern for peace and security in the region was, therefore, an urgent need for the Soviet Union. It kept in mind, the Geo-political conditions while making its policy towards Asia.
The Soviet action here has been intended primarily to enhance Soviet security and secondarily to increase Soviet power. The Soviet Union had built its policies and expectation on dealing with regimes in power and on state-to-state relations.

Soviet Union's principal concern in South Asia was to prevent the region, or any part of it, from coming under the influence of the USA and China. This has been the central factor influencing Soviet policy towards India and Pakistan. Soviet Union wanted to have friendly states on its borders. In fact its southern periphery has always been vulnerable and it was protected at a great cost. The U-2 spy plane incident of the fifties highlighted Soviet concerns. Soviet Union was also worried about nuclear proliferation in South Asia. For a better understanding of USSR's interests, it is essential to study its policy towards India.

Soviet Union had recognized the centrality and geo-political importance of India in its South Asian Policy. This was due to its Cold War extension to its southern periphery. For Soviet Union its interests lay in seeing that India should remain non-aligned. Hence, Soviet cooperation with India ranged from political support on issues of crucial importance, economic cooperation, strategic alignment and defense cooperation. In this context, Soviet Union needed a strong India in maintaining regional peace and stability and to ensure its own strategic and security interests. It also wanted to counter the influence of its regional rival-China.
During initial years of independence both the countries did not have cordial relations. This was mainly because, the Soviet Union held the view that India is still under the control of imperialist power. In fact they dubbed nationalist leaders like Gandhi and Nehru as "Lakeys of Imperialist" and betayers of their nations." (Maqbool Ahmed Bhatti, 1994). Stalin viewed the independence of Pakistan and India as a myth, and continued to regard them as appendage of Anglo-American Imperialism. During Stalin period Soviet Union preoccupied with the West, due to its Cold War. It took note of development in South Asia mainly in relation to their impact on this rivalry. India’s decision to remain in the Commonwealth came in for severe criticism by Soviet leaders, mainly because it was seen as confirming their theory of continued subservience to the British. Another point was that Soviet leaders had no direct experience of India. Hence, they applied Marxist generalizations. This made them to come to wrong assessment of the Indian situation. But once Stalin was out of political scene of Soviet Union, the policy of Peaceful Co-existence between different social systems became of the fundamental basis point of foreign policy. From mid 1950s, there has been a considerable acceleration in their relation without looking back.

The Indian’s role in Korean War changed its image in Soviet’s eyes. It began to look at the policy of non-alignment as a positive force in international policies. India’s high-profile position in the third world, based on its leadership role among neutralist states and its no-aligned
movement held a strong appeal for policy makers in the Kremlin, because of a close relationship with New Delhi appeared convenient vehicle by which the Soviet tried to attain credibility as a great power globally, in Asia and the third world. A number of developments like the election of Eisenhower as the President of U.S and his policy of containment towards the communist bloc and Pakistan joining Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and Baghdad pact in 1955 have changed the attitude of Soviet Union towards South Asia. In India also, the signing of Pakistan-U.S. Defence Agreement was seen as a development of the greatest concern, which in the world of Nehru, not only did these moves bring the Cold War into South Asia but they also meant arming of India’s major adversary Pakistan, which was a member of both alliance.

In the context of the growing cordiality between Pakistan-U.S. relations, the Soviet leaders acknowledged India as a great power. In fact, during Khrushchev and Bulganian visit to India in November 1955. They extended unresolved support to India’s claim on Kashmir. The two leaders went on to state that “the question of Kashmir, as one of the states of the Republic of India, had been settled by the people of Kashmir when they decided to join the Indian Union. Soviet Union accepted their verdict (Jyotsna Bakshi, 1999). Soviet Union demonstrated its economic support for India by offering to finance public sector projects and by providing more favorable terms than the West: lower interest rate, longer repayment period, and repayment in Indian currency. The Bhilai steel plant and the ruble 4 India with an alternative.
Sino-Soviet differences coincided with Sino-Indian hostility, thereby providing a valuable input into Indo-Russian relations. By the end of 1950s China had replaced United States as the major external factor motivating the Soviet Union's influence-seeking policies in South Asia. When Dalai Lama proclaimed Independence in 1959. Later he fled to India with thousands of his followers and was granted asylum. The sympathy he received and the apparent Indian support to cause became a factor increasing Chinese unhappiness, and Sino-Indian tensions worsened as the boundary difference between two countries led to border clashes in 1962. During this crisis, Soviet Union expressed the hope that the two countries would settle their dispute peacefully, but in the later period, the Soviet attitude changed from neutrality to tacit support for India (Jessica Theresa Dias, 1989). It was their common hostility towards China, which provided a significant area of mutual interest. Soviet Union viewed India as an important ally to counter to Chinese power and Indians welcomed Moscow's support, since it also strengthened their hand against Pakistan.

The Soviet leadership under General Secretary of the CPSU Brezhnev moved towards a more flexible policy in order to contain Chinese influence on Pakistan, and even made subtle overtures to promote a settlement in Kashmir. The policy of reducing Pakistan’s dependence on China led Soviet Union to adopt a neutral position on the clash between Indian and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch in 1965. Pakistan got a mention for the first time in May Day slogan in 1965 which also reflected the
desire to take advantage of growing anti-pact and anti-American trends in Pakistan (Raghunath Ram, 1983).

The Soviet attitude since the Tashkent Conference had been to maintain a balance in relations with the leading countries of South Asia. In fact, the Soviet Union had started supplying weapons to both India and Pakistan, trying to build a good relation with the former and weaning the latter from US and Chinese influence. Soviet Union did not want another flashpoint of South Asia when Vietnam War was going on. More importantly, USSR enunciated its own geopolitical doctrine regarding South Asia, which stressed the security of Soviet Union. The conflict was thus viewed with concern because of the close proximity of Soviet borders' with the threat of these events (Jyotsna Bakshi, 1999).

Though Soviet Union wanted maintain balance in Indo-Pak relation and tried to help them in solving their problems. However Henry Kissinger's visit to China in late 1971, via Islamabad changed the situation dramatically. The prospect of American-Chinese-Pakistan entente created an acute feeling of isolation in India due to crisis in East Pakistan. The prospect of Pakistan getting support against India not only from China but also from the United States was disturbing. Sino-Soviet relations were also low at this time. In March 1969 there were clashes on the Ussuri River, and at the same time Brezhnev put forward proposal for a collective security system in Asia. The proposal aimed at containing China by associating the surrounding states, including both India and
Pakistan. India decided that this is ripe time to get assurance from Soviet Union against any attack from Pakistan. Therefore, both countries signed Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1971. Mrs. Gandhi stressed the security side of the treaty, while the Soviet Union aimed in signing the treaty was to achieve progress in the concept of Asian Collective Security directed mainly against China. India's objective was to deter Chinese or American intervention in a possible Indo-Pakistan war.

East-Pakistan crisis in 1971 was another testing time for Indo-Soviet relations. America tilted towards Pakistan during the crises. It gave arms to Pakistan despite a declared embargo. America also sent seventh Fleet into Bay of Bengal at the height of conflict. Meanwhile, Soviet Union once again demonstrated that their priority was India. Throughout the crisis Moscow stood as New Delhi's reliable ally, substantially increasing its arms deliveries to India, casting three vetoes in India's favour in the United Nations, deploying its own ships and warning other states, China among them, to stay out of the conflict (Robert C. Horn, 1987).

In November 1973 Leonid Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromyko visited India. This was the Brezhnev's first foreign trip to Asian states since becoming General Secretary. Brezhnev promoted his scheme for an Asian collective security system, but Mrs. Gandhi was unresponsive and concept was removed from the final communiqué. But both countries signed other agreements related economy and defense.
After discussing the multifaceted cooperation between two countries, Brezhnev pointedly said that "we attach special importance to friendship with this great country." Referring to the 1971 treaty, the CPSU leader asserted that "during the past year period Soviet-Indian relations rose to a new level" (Robert C. Horn, 1987). Even in this brief time, India's enormous importance for our bilateral ties and its role as a stabilizing factor in South Asia and on the continent as a whole have been clearly demonstrated. But latter period due to nuclear explosion in 1974 and political change he said in India and Afghanistan invasion by Soviet Union, political relations were at low level for some time. The news of the Indian underground explosion of a nuclear device in May 1974 was not well received in USSR. Although it was described as a peaceful nuclear explosion but India got the capability to produce nuclear weapons. As one of the States possessing nuclear weapons which was also signed the non-proliferation treaty along with the USA and UK, Soviet Union opposed to diffusion of nuclear weapons. It was also concerned about the consequence of India's action for stability in the region.

The Soviet Union support to Goa liberation was also very important. Goa was appropriated by the Portugal in 1510. Soon after Indian Independence, the British withdrew completely from India a few years later, the French also gave up their Indian holdings. It was expected that Portugal would follow in the foot steps. But Portugal refused to give up its colony. India's demand was for the restoration of its sovereignty over Goa. The Soviet Premier supported India's action in Goa. They said
that the people of Asia were living through the turning point in the history. Through many decades and even centuries they were living under the rule of foreigners and fighting for their freedom and existence. But colonial regime were collapsing and slipping down into an unreturnable past. Certain Europeans countries even did not understand that time was past and there was no return to old colonialism (Brojendra Nath Banerjee, 1980).

The military intervention of Afghanistan in 1979 threatened to put relationship under strain. The caretaker government led by Charan Singh informed the Soviet Ambassador of India’s ‘deep concern’ and spoke of far-reaching and adverse consequence for the whole of South Asia. It demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops. But after Indira Gandhi came back to power, she put the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in context of other countries involvement. She said on 2 January 1980. ‘I am strongly against any interference. But in Afghanistan the Soviet interference is not one-sided other interference are going on there (Peter J.S. Duncan, 1989).

In Indian strategic, Afghan crisis was the result of US-Chinese-Pakistan adventurism. Pakistan and Chinese supported Afghan rebels even before the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan. India held Pakistan, China and US responsible for driving Kabul to the Soviet embrace. When Afghan issue came before United Nations in January 1980, Indian envoy Brajesh Mishra appealed to all states to refrain from interfering in Afghanistan. A military build-up in South Asia made it difficult for the
Soviets to leave Kabul. He declared that "India cannot look with equanimity on the attempts by some outsider power to interfere in internal affairs of Afghanistan by training, arming and encouraging subversive elements to create disturbances inside Afghanistan. We are against the presence of foreign troops and bases in any country. The Soviet Government has assured our government that its troops have gone to Afghanistan at the request of the Afghan Government. And we have been further assured that the Soviet troops will be withdrawn when requested to do so by the Afghan Government (Hemen Ray, 1989).

India's position in the United Nations on Afghan issue was similar to its attitude towards Soviet Intervention in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. On Afghan Crisis, India did not support the seventeen nation’s resolution in the General Assembly of United Nations. It wanted UN to play a bigger role in Afghanistan in bringing down the situation under control without allowing other countries interference. And at same time, India had made it clear that Soviet army must leave Afghanistan and this had been accepted by the Soviet leaders.

Though India was shocked by the Soviet move on Afghanistan, but American and Chinese activities in arming Pakistan had forced Mrs. Gandhi to take a "realistic view of the situation. Explaining India's reaction to American and Chinese activities in turning Pakistan into an arsenal, Mrs. Gandhi said. "We cannot but feel disturbed by the reaction of some powers over the development in Afghanistan. Billions of dollars
have been asked for and hundreds of millions have already been committed to Pakistan by Americans. Other powers are being pursued to make their own contribution to convert Pakistan into an arsenal. The China has also pledged to provide arms and other necessary assistance to Pakistan. Contrary to the expressed desires of littoral states, a naval build up has taken place in Indian Ocean and a huge army was being deployed in the Arabian Sea. The Indian Ocean has become an arena of super-powers rivalry; old treaties are being invoked and new ones are being forged. We know from our experience who and against whom these weapons have been used in the past (Peter J.S Duncan, 1989). India feared that invasion of Afghanistan would lead to the rearming of Pakistan. The American military aid indeed allowed Pakistan to assist the Afghan resistance and develop its own military forces. This was disturbing from India's point of view. Soviet Union was isolated internationally due to its invasion in Afghanistan. Therefore, it regarded India as its most important ally in the Afghan crisis. Friendship with India offered Moscow the opportunity not only to counter Sino-American activities in South and West Asia, but also in the Indian Ocean and within the non-aligned member countries.

After the assumption of leadership by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, Soviet Union began a gradual change in its international relationship by shifting from confrontation to accommodation with former adversaries. Soviet Union was also seeking to promote détente and disarmament in order to facilitate the reform process. This shift in the Soviet Union's
internal and external policy was due to many factors. The enormous expenditure on the arms race incurred by United States and Soviet Union had caused many economic difficulties. The Arms did not give the security, in fact, it increased insecurity. They came to conclusion that arms race and economic development cannot go together. Gorbachev was aware of his country's economic situation. There was decline in Soviet economy and he knew that if this deterioration continues, was sure to affect the Soviet Union as world power. Therefore, the hard choice before the Soviet Union was to slow down either arms race or economic development. Another factor which contributed towards new thinking was the emerging correlation of international forces for peace and for effective measures for halting the suicidal nuclear arms race. After careful consideration of the situation, he came to the conclusion that relaxed international environment was necessary to improve the Soviet Union's economic conditions.

In line with these ideas a significant departure was made on the question of peaceful co-existence in the draft presented to 27th CPSU-1971 Congress, it was stated that ‘peaceful co-existence” was the continuation of proletariat revolution which had already won its victory. In the future, especially in a nuclear era, it will become pre-condition for the survival of all human beings. Further, he was cognizant of the danger posed by the threat of nuclear weapon and he rightly had the view that in the nuclear age, war cannot be an instrument of achieving social, political, economic or strategic objectives. He was convinced as many
others are that nuclear war cannot be limited and is not winnable (The Basic Goals and Directions of the Party’s Foreign-Policy Strategy, The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, March 26, 1986).

The advent of Gorbachev’s “new thinking” has not affected the Soviet Union’s basic orientation in the sub-continent. The priority of retaining close ties to India was unchanged, and India continued to be the focal point of the Soviet attention in the region. Therefore, on the eve of Rajiv Gandhi’s visit in 1985, Gorbachev told that “We proceed from the promise that united strong peace-loving India is an integral and very necessary part of the Modern World” (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1984). India’s location, regional stature, and longstanding political and military ties provided to Moscow one of the most valued friend in this region.

During the visit, Rajiv Gandhi found that the Soviet leadership sympathetic towards India’s security concerns, viz, militarization of Pakistan by the USA, Pakistan’s nuclear programmer, the presence of big powers navy in the Indian ocean, the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan and continuing civil war there. This visit had taken place at a time when both Indian and Soviet Union were trying improving ties with the West as well as China. This development had not affected both the countries relation like earlier time. Therefore, two countries reaffirmed that any improvement in their relations would not be at the expense of Indo-Soviet friendship. The visit of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi contributed to the further widening and deepening of the entire range of relations between
the two countries. It strengthened their bilateral cooperation in the cause of safeguarding world peace and security.

Indo-Soviet joint Statement issued during the visit noted the similarity in the position of India and USSR on Major world issue. Their common concern for peace found expression in the signing of “Delhi Declaration on Principles for a Nuclear- Weapons Free and Non-Violent world” by the two leaders in November 1986. In this declaration they mentioned that “Nuclear weapons threaten to annihilate not only all that man has created through the ages, but man himself and even life on earth. In the nuclear age humanity must evolve a new political thinking, a new concept of the world that would provide credible guarantees for humanity’s survival. People want to live in a safer and more just world. Humanity deserves a better fate than being a hostage and despair. It is necessary to change the exiting world situation and to build a nuclear free world, free of violence and hatred, fear and suspicion (Security in the Asia-Pacific Region, Documents and Materials, Novosti, 1998). The Indo-Soviet Joint state statement described relations between India and the Soviet Union as a “model of peaceful coexistence” based on the principles of equality, mutual respect, strict observance of sovereignty and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs. They stated that Indo-Soviet friendship and co-operation constituted a “factor of peace and stability in Asia and throughout world”. They also expressed “deep satisfaction with the treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation signed in August 1971. The strong bonds of friendship between the two countries
contributed towards “strengthening and deepening the mutual trust and confidence between two countries in the context of the changing world situation”. India and Soviet Union “are of the firm conviction that the most important objective facing mankind today is to strengthen peace and remove the threat of a nuclear catastrophe”. Therefore, they urged all nations of the world “to do their utmost in the interest of nuclear disarmament and universal peace”. The Soviet Union and India expressed “concern” over “further aggravation” of the situation in the Indian Ocean and called for “dismantling of all foreign military and naval bases in the area (Soviet – Indian Joint Statement in Dialogue between Trusted Friendship Official friendly visit by the General Secretary of the CPSU, 1986). The visit of Gorbachev made it clear to the world that India continued to play the key role in Soviet International policy. The relations with India have become a vital factor of the Soviet policy. Though there was change in domestic and foreign policy due to Gorbachev’s new thinking but common geopolitical interests continued to bind the Indo-Soviet relations. Both valued Indo-Soviet treaty, multi-faceted, planned and long-term bilateral cooperation in various fields.

In the late 1980s, some important developments took place in international relations. The INF treaty was signed by the USA and USSR on short range missile. There was the Geneva Accord on Afghanistan in 1989. These constituted an important milestone aimed at promoting peace in the world and created political understanding and mutual trust between the two blocks and ultimately helped to end the cold war.
With the end of Cold War and deterioration in the domestic, economic and political situation in Soviet Union, doubt began to emerge in Indian regarding its relationship. The special relationship between India and Soviet Union was under cloud when the coup took place in Moscow. India has lost its special status position with the Soviet Union disintegration. This change has manifested openly when the Soviet Union for the first time voted for a Pakistan-sponsored resolution in the United Nation in November 1991 for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in South Asia (Jyotsna Bakshi, 1999). Soviet Union had abstained for years on this issue in difference to India’s opposition to such move (Jyotsna Bakshi, 1999). This decision created deep concern in India and it conveyed its unhappiness to Soviet leaders. However, the geo-political factors that brought the two countries together during the Soviet area did not totally disappear even after the fall of the Soviet Union.

**Indo-Soviet Economic and Trade Relations**

Economic relations between the Soviet Union and India have diversified both qualitatively and quantitatively since 1955. The history of Indo-Soviet trade and economic relations can be taken as the best example to illustrate how newly liberated country could falsify the belief that neo-colonial pattern of economic growth was its inescapable fate. The Rupee payment arrangement between India and Soviet Union found a new pattern of economic and trade relationship which was not accepted or agreed by any of the Western countries and US. This arrangement on
these policies gave a new design for traditional economic and trade relationship which was underway for the recently decolonized country like India. Under this agreement Soviet Union supplied machines, equipment, technical know-how and certain raw materials required for setting up new plants or running the existing ones (Girish Mishra et al, 1986). When Western countries used always technology as the instrument of domination, Russia was not willing to be a mere dominating super power with India. On the other way, it helped India to gain some scientific knowledge and experience by transferring some of the science and technological know-how. Since the payment was to be paid in the rupee it led to boosting up of India’s export trade. India found markets for its new products as well as for old ones.

The trade with Soviet Union was based on a clearing account in rupees. All import was paid for by Indian imports in rupees which go in a central account maintained by the Reserve Bank of India. All other transactions between India and Soviet Union also pass through this account resulting in accumulation of rupees. This money was used to buy goods from India. Larger the import larger was the money available in this account with the result that Indian exports to the Soviet Union increased in the same proportion.

In order to meet the exigencies of temporary nature when either side wishes to buy more than its export permit for a temporary period, a technical credit was provided which enables, if the rupee balances in the
Indian account were small, to purchase goods from India for use in Soviet Union. Similarly when India wishes to import, it pays in rupees and balance accumulates in the Soviet account, if the Soviet purchasing is not very large. This mechanism ensured a balanced trading over a period of time. The balancing mechanism was provided by the central account with the Reserve Bank of India (V.D. Chopra, 1986). This mechanism stood the test of time since 1958 when it was introduced for the first time.

Credit for import of machinery was another important aspect of economic relation. This policy was available when any importable goods brought from Soviet Union under the terms of deferred payment protocol signed between the two countries which have been extended for the period 1986-90. The mechanism was available on down payment of at 4% interests (V.D. Chopra, 1986). Such a supply, on credit machinery which in some areas was most modern has enabled Indian importers to develop and expand their manufacturing base in order to export to both rupee currency areas and free foreign exchange countries. These trade arrangements have stood the test time.

The economic cooperation between India and Soviet Union had enabled India to build up huge industrial complexes which have become of decisive importance for the national economy. This also enabled the country to undertake the task of industrialization, modernization of products and overcoming economic imbalances.
Soviet Union's security Concern and Pakistan

Relationships between Soviet Union and Pakistan have never been consistent. There were a number of factors regarding an indifferent nature of relationship between the two countries. The most important factor was Pakistan's decision to join U.S. sponsored military alliance in Asia. Pakistan joined SEATO in September 1954 and the Baghdad Pact in 1955. Thus, it became an important ally of the U.S in the South Asian region to contain Soviet's influence. Pakistan also signed defense agreement with U.S. These developments increased Soviet Union's concern due to its enmity with America. It linked U.S. Military aid to Pakistan to the establishment of American military bases on Pakistan's soil. The signing of the SEATO pact was described by the Soviet Foreign Ministry as being directed against "the security interests of Asia and the Far East, and, at the same time against the freedom and national independence of Asian people". The Baghdad pact was seen as a threat not only to Soviet Union "but also to all the peace loving peoples of Asia and Africa (Moaqbool Ahmed Bhattay, 1994). The Soviet view was based on the fact that Pakistan was strategically situated on the border of USSR and the U.S would use Pakistan Military bases for its purpose and which it did when the U2 spy plane which took off from Peshawar was shot down by Soviet military.

Pakistan also had its own compulsion to join the US-led military alliance. One of these compulsions was Soviet Union stand on Pashtun
and Kashmir issue. Premier Bulganian expressed sympathy for Afghanistan’s policy on this issue in 1955. Soviet Union stood for a just settlement of the Pashtun question which could be properly solved “only if the vital interests of the peoples inhabiting Pustunistan are taken into account (J.P. Jain, 1985). Thus, Soviet Union went to the extent of extending its unequivocal support to Kabul on the Pashtun issue. On Kashmir also, Soviet Union had always taken a position that was favorable to India. Pakistani leaders perceived Soviet strategic goal in South Asia and its unqualified support to India as contrary to their legitimate interest in the region.

Soviet Union continued to issue warnings to Pakistan against the increasing collaboration with the Western power in the military field under the Western alliance system. In 1954 Soviet Union sent a protest note to Pakistan Government. It referred to press reports about negotiations between Government of Pakistan and USA on an agreement to set up American bases on Pakistan territory. The note stated that Moscow could not remain indifferent to such reports as the establishment of US air bases in close proximity to Soviet borders and that Pakistan’s adherence to the so-called Middle Eastern bloc had “a direct bearing on the security of Soviet Union” (J.P. Jain, 1985). The U-2 spy incident exposed the Soviet Union’s strategic targets in the South and made a larger part potentially vulnerable. After U-2 spy plane incident, Premier Khrushchev told to the Pakistan that in the future, if any American plane
is allowed to use Pakistan soil as a base of operation against Soviet Union, we will retaliate immediately (Hafeez Malik, 1994).

Although USSR Pakistan relations were at low ebb during Khrushchev leadership, Pakistan was not written off completely by the rulers of Soviet Union. Even when Khrushchev extended support to India’s stand on the Kashmir question, he at the same time, expressed his desire to have friendly relations with Pakistan. But the growing intimacy between China and Pakistan after Sino-Indian conflict caused strain in Indo-Pak relations. It was also cause of serious concern to Moscow, which did not wish to see Islamabad come under hostile influence of China. Thus, Moscow realized the importance of cultivating relations with Islamabad. Ayub Khan’s visit to Moscow in April 1965 was an important event in USSR- Pakistan relations. Thereafter, a visible shift in Soviet policy towards India and Pakistan became noticeable this found reflection in the attitude adopted by Moscow during the Rann of Kutch crisis in 1965.

Soviet Union tried to develop good relations with Pakistan, provided that it would abandon its policy of alignment with the West. Its efforts were stepped up after Tashkent agreement. Cooperation between two countries had increased significantly in many fields. In fact, Soviet Union supplied limited quantity of arms to Pakistan. This policy changes were meant to reduce Chinese and American influence on Pakistan. From Tashkent Conference to 1971 war, the bilateral relations between Soviet
Union and Pakistan improved remarkably. Tashkent represented a great diplomatic victory for Moscow. It made the Soviet presence felt in the Indian sub-continent and confirmed the statues of the USSR as an Asian power. As a result, Soviet Union was able to consolidate its ties with both India and Pakistan. Tashkent declaration greatly facilitated the improvement of USSR-Pak relations. Henceforth, Moscow began to extend large-scale economic assistance to Pakistan for a number of projects.

However, events in Pakistan, especially the East Pakistan crisis changed situation dramatically in south Asia. During this period, the Soviet-Pakistan relationship, overshadowed with bitterness and suspicious with the spillover effect of Soviet Union's role during Bangladesh crisis. Soviet Union's role during the Indo-Pak war of 1971 had been marked in contrast to the attitude it had adopted during the 1965 conflict. In 1965, Moscow had adopted a fundamentally neutral stance. In 1971, Soviet Union publicly and supported India. The change in Soviet Policy during Bangladesh crisis was primarily due to the fact that the circumstances in 1971 were quite different from those existing in 1965. Soviet Union's assistance to the liberation of Bangladesh was not without any substantial interest. Neutralisation of China and American role in South Asia were considered imperative for the Soviet policy makers.

There were some improvements in bilateral relation when Z.A. Bhutto visited Moscow in March 1972. However, Soviet military
intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 reverted to atmosphere charged with bitterness and hostility. During Afghanistan crisis, Pakistan served as the main bases for the Afghan opposition forces. It was acting on the American and Chinese direction to aid the Mujahideens. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan led to re-militarization of Pakistan. This development undermined Soviet's security interest and affected its role in South Asia. While addressing a press conference in New Delhi, a leading Soviet academician A.I. Chichenov warned that the militarization of Pakistan by the United States was a direct threat not only to India but also to the Soviet Union and its other allies (Moonis Ahmar, 1989).

Soviet Union took a two-track approach to Pakistan during Afghan crisis. On the one hand, they urged Islamabad to reach an agreement with the regime in Kabul and held out the carrot of economic assistance. On the other hand, they put pressure on Pakistan to stop its aid Mujahideen, issuing repeated strong warning. However, Pakistan persisted in its support to Afghan resistance and proceeded to back up with the mobilization of world opining against Soviet Union. When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, relations with Pakistan were at an all-time low due to its cooperation with the West and its close relationship with China, and particularly its total identification with the Afghan freedom struggle. In his meeting with Pakistan leader, General Zia-Ul-Haq, in March 1985, Gorbachev reportedly threatened the general with dire consequence if Pakistan continued its policies in Afghanistan (W. Raymond Duncan and Caroly Migitesse Ekedahi, 1990). Even after the signing of the Geneva
Accords, Soviet threats continued. In spite of this Soviet Union hoped to take advantage of the change in Pakistan's leadership which followed the death of Zia-Ul-Haq in August 1988. But Benazir Bhutto shared Zia-Ul-Haq's opposition to the pro-soviet regime in Kabul. After taking power, she quickly made clear her intention to continue close ties to the United States and China and to maintain support for the Afghan Mujaheddin (W. Raymond Duncan and Caroly Migittest Ekedahi (1990).

**Soviet Union’s Defence Cooperation in South Asia**

As mentioned earlier, Soviets main objective was to reduce the American and Chinese influence in South Asia. The other objective was to encourage the Indian government as a leader in the third world, to take positions on international issues as close as possible to those taken by Soviet Union. To achieve these objectives, the Soviets wanted to build strong and lasting commercial ties with India and other South Asian countries. In this context, defense cooperation played very important role. To understand the Soviet defence cooperation in South Asia and its objectives, it is very important to know what the American interests in South Asia were.

American involvement in South Asia began as an adjunct to its overall policy of containing communist expansion. In the Cold War period to contain the perceived Soviet threats in the Middle East and South Asia had led the US to form defensive alliances, in which Pakistan was their chosen partner in South Asia. Arms transfer became one of the main
instrument of US strategy, and their aid programme in this field were guided by the provisions of multilateral treaties-CENTO and other defense pacts (Nisha sahai Achuthan, 1988). To counter this Soviet Union started providing arms to South Asia. These trends had set the stage for arms transfer programmes of the two super powers in South Asia.

The signing of the US-Pakistan mutual defense assistance agreement in 1954 marked the entry of USA in this region. In 1959, USA and Pakistan signed the bilateral security agreement. There were converging interests between two countries. While USA was interested in Pakistan in order to contain communism, Pakistan entered into an alliance in order to improve her position vis-à-vis India. Military aid began to pour Pakistan in big way, bolstering her defense capacity and US gave support on the Kashmir issue in the Security Council. In return, the US used Pakistan air bases for gathering intelligence. Both the Soviet Union and India believed that US military aid to Pakistan would increase tension in South Asia, leading to an arms race in the subcontinent.

In this context, the underlying objective of Soviet Union’s military aid to India was designed to counter the American efforts to strengthen its alliance. By doing this Moscow hoped to undermine Western influence in India thereby linking New Delhi more intimately with the Soviet Union. The Soviet moves for establishing closer relation with India were also facilitated by India’s concern. India’s chief foreign policy objective has been to secure herself from external military threats, which she had
perceived as emanating from Pakistan and China (Alvin Z. Rubinstein, 1983).

Until 1960 India used to purchase military equipment from her traditional supplier. But the shift to Soviet Union for weapons supply began only after India’s debacle in the Sino-Indian war of 1962. India had obtained some Soviet Union supplies in the preceding years. The equipment delivered during in 1960-62 period was as follows. 1960-24 II-14; 1961-10 Mi-4 and 8 an-12. This was followed by the training of Indian crew in the Soviet Union for training these aircraft. In 1961, the Soviet Union offered to supply to India MiG-21 jet aircraft against rupee payment, further, they also granted a license for the manufacture of MiG-21’s in India. Pakistan was concerned about the Indo-Soviet MiG deal and it approached America for jet aircrafts. The US promised to Pakistan an early fulfillment of the supply of F-104 interceptor aircraft and of other sophisticated items. American military aid to Pakistan again facilitated a Soviet military aid Initiative to India. India MiG deal came under criticism from the Western powers also. Both US and UK feared that this would make India dependent on the Soviet Union. But India has its compulsion. The reluctance of the Western supplies to meet India’s requirement on mutually acceptable terms, and the attractive terms of Soviet Union offer led India to opt for the Soviet Union. The Russian unlike the Western powers indicated that they were prepared to receive payment in Indian currency or commodities and proposed to meet Indian requirement at a relatively low cost. Besides, India’s main aim was
military self-sufficiency. To achieve that goal it wanted to buy the weapons in the cheapest market, preferably for rupees.

The Sino-Indian war of October 1962 placed Moscow in a very difficult situation particularly with respect to its arms transfer commitments to India and its stand on this dispute, the continuation of arms to India would have enlarged Soviet relation with China, particularly at a time when the Soviet needed the support of the communist bloc against the West on the Cuban Missile Crisis. On the other hand, suspension of her aid commitments to India would not only jeopardized Indo-Soviet relations but could also have led India to turn to the West. Faced with this dilemma, Soviet Union initially urged both the sides to arrive at a negotiated settlement, without advancing any terms and preconditions. But latter it favored India’s position. In December 1962, the Soviets assured that a limited number of MiG-21s would be delivered. They also agreed to set up factories for the manufacture and assembly of the MiGs. The Chinese attack had dealt a crippling blow to India’s defense capability which had to be rebuilt, and for which purpose, Nehru requested long term assistance. But the reluctance of the Western powers to meet India’s critical requirement to reasonable level led her to go Soviet Union. The arms embargo of 1965 imposed by the West further served to shake the confidence in Western reliability and reinforce the Indo-Soviet military ties.
As the US had imposed an arms embargo on both India and Pakistan following the outbreak of the conflict in September 1965, Pakistan was looking to China for essential military supplies, and China had also extended diplomatic support to Pakistan. Following Air Marshal Asghar Khan’s visit to China in September 1965, China agreed to extend military aid to Pakistan. China supplied military hardware worth over $200 million, comprising 200 T-59 tanks, 120 MiG-19s, 11-28 bombers and equipment sufficient for arming two infantry division and other unspecified equipment (Nisha sahai Achuthan, 1988).

Having played a mediatory role between Pakistan and India, Soviet Union followed a more balanced approach to South Asia by agreeing to sell defense equipment to Pakistan. Ayub Khan visited Moscow thrice between 1965 and 1968. It was during Kosygin visit in 1968 that the USSR agreed to sell a modest quality of arms to Pakistan. The Soviet decision to provide arms aid to Pakistan stemmed largely from their hope of weaning Pakistan away from the US and China. In the years preceding the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, the alignment between the two South Asian powers and external actors polarized further. The year 1971 saw the emergence of US-China-Pakistan axis. Dr Kissinger paid a visit to Beijing via Islamabad in July 1971. This had created concern for both India and Soviet Union. Therefore, India and Soviet Union signed a treaty of peace and friendship that resulted in Moscow extending its full diplomatic and political support to India during the East Pakistan crisis.
After 1971, Pakistan’s relations with Soviet Union remained strained, and after the Soviet armed forces were sent into Afghanistan in December 1979, Pakistan's stand against the Soviet intervention resulted in further worsening of relations between them. The Soviet occupation ended in 1989 but considerable degree of resentment persisted in the political and military circles in Russia over Pakistan’s role in pushing the Soviet out of Afghanistan. India on the other hand capitalized fully on the relationship it had built up with Moscow during the years of the Cold War and maintained good relations.

Following the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a significant policy shift had taken place in Russian policy towards Pakistan will be discussed in fourth chapter. The next chapter will focus on Russian interests on India.