Chapter 5

The International Setting (1963-1991)
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India-China relationship, although essentially bilateral in nature, has been compounded and even shaped greatly by external factors of regional and global settings. The previous chapter deals with the regional setting of India-China interaction. This chapter encapsulates the global setting and international aspects of India-China relations. India-China interaction, which is multidimensional, was shaped on the one hand, by the shifting nature of politics at the global level, and on the another hand, by the divergent interests and strategies of India and China, on many international issues. Further, the role of USA and USSR, the two superpowers and their relations in turn with the two concerned Asian Powers, also influenced India-China interaction. Therefore, the international setting and aspects assumes importance in any comprehensive study of India-China relationship.

As far as international politics was concerned, the period beginning in 1963 was characterised by the west as one of détente, and by the Soviet Union as a relaxation of tension. For American leaders, ‘détente’ implied that neither state would challenge the status quo because such challenges tended to produce tension between the two superpowers. The world community had already witnessed the
consequences of tension following Cuban missile crisis in October, 1962 and the need to avoid it in future.\textsuperscript{1} Further, the Americans assumed that the Soviets would be willing to cooperate in the protection of the status quo in order to avoid tension in bilateral relations with the United States. For the Soviet leadership, relaxation of tensions like 'peaceful coexistence applied only to the relations between the two superpowers. The Soviets were not interested in preserving a global status quo. Certainly there was to be no truce in the ideological war.

For a decade, notwithstanding the differences both superpowers could design mutually acceptable norms for their own interactions. This trend, born during Cuban missile crisis, was central to world politics in this decade. It marked the end of the cold war, in which both the Superpowers perceived each other as hostile and aggressive, pursued incompatible goals and manifested relatively high risk behaviours to protect their interests.\textsuperscript{2} In 1963 both Superpowers took steps to reduce tensions. Firstly, in June 1963 there was 'Hot Line' treaty, by which a direct communications link between power centers in Washington and Moscow was established. Secondly and more importantly, in August 1963 a multilateral Test Ban Treaty was agreed upon, by which the Signatory powers including USA and USSR agreed

\textsuperscript{1} For details See, Graham Allison, \textit{Essence of Decision} (Boston).

not to test nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, outer space or under water.

The most important international event of 1963 was the open rift between Soviet Union and China, which had in fact brewing since late fifties but had been kept as a secret. There were many factors underlying the Sino-Soviet dispute.² It began with the 20th congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union in 1956 and involved issues of ideology, revolution, international situation and Chinese interests. China was opposed to dialogue with the wanted state disturbed by the talks of 'peaceful coexistence' and more interested in revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin American. The Soviet Union refusal to provide China with a sample of an atomic bomb and technical data concerning its manufacture widened the rift between the two communist nations. India also figured as one of the factors underlying the rift. In 1963 during the exchange of polemics with the Soviet Union, the Chinese media wrote that 'one of the important differences of principle between the Soviet leaders and ourselves turns on the Sino-Indian boundary question.'³

In early August 1963 the Soviet Union unfolded a powerful campaign against China. In a series of three articles Pravda publicly sided with India and denounced the Chinese leaders for exploiting the

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⁴ "The Truth about how the leaders of the C.P.S.U. have allied themselves with India against China", *Beijing Review (Beijing)* no.45, 8 November 1963, p.19.
Cuban Crisis for aggression against India. It added that the fact has not escaped the attention of all countries that it was precisely when Cuba was threatened with terrible danger, when all peace loving people considered it their international duty to mobilize their forces to repel the threat of aggression against Cuba, the hostilities on the India–China border increased significantly.\(^5\) In the opinion of Soviet Union, the Chinese attitude towards the Sino-Indian frontier issue had "nothing to do with ideology". It was purely nationalist in origin, and it had done "untold harm to the cause of socialism" quite apart from "encouraging the Indian reactionaries to exploit the border conflict and push India away from its nonaligned foreign policy and planned economy". Pravda also blamed the Chinese leaders for trying to destroy Soviet relations with India.

China rejected the Soviet charges that it had committed aggression against India. China denounced Pravda for allegedly serving as Nehru's "accomplice in evil deeds". Beijing described the Soviet stand on India-China crisis as "the first instance in history in which a socialist country, instead of condemning the armed provocations of the reactionaries of a capitalist country, condemned another fraternal socialist country when it was confronted with such armed provocations.\(^6\) China continued to attempt to prove that Soviet policy towards India was wrong and protested loudly for betrayal of the socialist camp and for abandonment of proletarian

\(^5\) *Pravda* (Moscow) 10 August, 1963.

\(^6\) *People's Daily (Beijing)* 27 February 1963.
internationalism. China alleged that "the leadership of the C.P.S.U. and its press.

Openly sided with Indian reactionaries, condemned China for its just stand on the Sino-Indian border conflict and defended the Nehru government. Two-thirds of Soviet economic aid to India have been given since the Indian reactionaries provoked the Sino-Indian border conflict. Even after large scale armed conflict on the Sino-Indian border began in the autumn of 1962, the leadership of the C.P.S.U. has continued to extend military aid to the Indian reactionaries.

By now Soviet Support to India was evidently a major issue in Sino-Soviet rift. For the Chinese it was this particular action of Soviet Union which rankled most. China fully comprehended that the USSR's stand provided the Nehru government with a tremendous political lever. Hence, it understood Nehru's Statement that "Soviet neutrality in the India-China Conflict was of greater help to India than all the military aid which India received from the west". China also noted that the Indian government had made it an important aspect of its foreign policy to exploit Sino-Soviet differences and to widen these further.

China was enraged by the fact that both the superpowers helped India and condemned China. As already mentioned USA under Kennedy administration adopted a friendly approach towards

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7 For details see "The origin and Development of the differences Between the leadership of the C.P.S.U. and ourselves", in Beijing Review, no.37, 13 September 1963, pp.6-20.
8 ibid, p.18.
democratic India. Kennedy, it may be recalled, had perceived India as the key area in Asia and wanted it to win the political and economic race against China. Arthur M. Schlesinger recalls Kennedy's famous remark: "We want India to win the race with China... If China succeeds and India fails, the economic development, balance of power will shift against us". The Kennedy administration responded promptly to the Chinese attack of 20th October, 1962. In a communique issued on 21 October, the State Department stated that the United States was "shocked at the violent and aggressive action of the Chinese communists against India. "It further stated that any Indian request" would be considered sympathetically.

Meanwhile, faced with the imminent collapse of its military in the north-east region, India was compelled to seek military equipments from the U.S.A. U.K. and U.S.S.R. On 26 October, India sent a general appeal for "Sympathy as well as support" to all governments. In making this appeal Prime Minister Nehru underscored the vital significance of the conflict between India and China. "this crisis is not only of India but of the world and will have far reaching consequences on the standards of international behaviour and on the peace of the world". President Kennedy promptly sent an enthusiastic reply. The process of closer ties between India and USA was hastened by the

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Kennedy administration's recognition of the Indian position on the McMahon Line. On 27 October, Ambassador Galbraith made the first official declaration about recognition of the McMahon Line: "the McMahon Line is an accepted international border and is sanctioned by modern usage. Accordingly, we regard it as the northern border of the NEFA area.

The United States started an emergency arms air-lift to India and for a week (in November 1962) 10 U.S. jet fighters, airlifted on a round-the-clock basis 60 plane loads of automatic weapons and ammunition to India from various stocks in the U.S. and Europe.

When the conflict ceased on the Himalayan battleground, Kennedy faced the task of responding to Nehru's request for long term assistance to India. So as to effectively deter further Chinese attacks. A fact finding political-military mission headed by Auverill Harriman was sent to India.

However, during the next eleven months, i.e., until the end of the Kennedy administration, progress towards further U.S. arms aid to India was slow. In the meantime, a series of talks started between the United States and Britain regarding India's defence needs and other related matters. From April to May, 1963, two important Indian missions visited Washington. The first was a team of experts

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13 ibid.

14 J.K. Galbraith, n.11, p.386.

15 See K. Subrahmanyam, "U.S. Policy Towards India", China Report (New Delhi) January-April, 1972, particularly the Section on 'Military aid to India', pp.43-44.
led by S. Boothalingam, Secretary, Ministry of Economic and Defence coordination and this was essentially a mission for procuring defence equipment and stores needed for the Army's overhaul. In early June the President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, came to United States on a state visit. In a Joint Statement issued on 4 June, Presidents Kennedy and Radhakrishnan agreed that their two countries "Share a mutual defensive concern to thwart the designs of Chinese aggression against the sub content." In the meeting between Kennedy – Macmillan in Brich Grove, Sussex, U.K., the two statesmen reaffirmed their policy of "continuing" help to India by providing further military aid to strengthen its defence against the threat of renewed Chinese attack.

The Indian government was a bit disillusioned with the United States modest offer. Any systematic development of India's defence potential as envisaged under a five-year defence plan (1954-69) – in view of the Chinese threat – called for sizeable capital and technical input. An additional Indian concern was to ensure the continued progress of its economic development. Under these circumstances, India found Soviet Union quite understanding. The growing Sino-Soviet rift underlined India's vital importance to the Soviet policy makers. Therefore, the Indians found Soviet Union all set to favourably respond to their request. Be that as it may, the U.S.A.

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16 Hindu (Madras) 29 April 1963.
17 For text See, Foreign Affairs Record (Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi), 1963, p.438.
support to India boosted India's sagging morale at a crucial juncture. The support which India received from both the superpowers, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. rankled China.

By the end of 1963, China found itself ranged against both the superpowers which for different reasons were aiming at isolating it and hence were eager to support India. The fact that India stood to gain out of the situation was provocative enough for China to began a counter-offensive on the diplomatic front. It therefore, spared no effort to criticise the Soviet action in propping up a regime which it described as having sold out to the west. China tried hard to link India with the US and the Soviet Union imagining that there was some kind of collusion against China.19 With the support of the Soviet Union, India would be able to continue wearing “the cloak of non-alignment” and to use Soviet aid to cover up the fact that it was a protégé of the United States and with Soviet Support would be able to attack China.

The Soviet Union rebuked the Chinese leaders for asserting that the Nehru government was “imperialist” and “expansionist” and expressed doubt that in the light of such “false allegations” it was difficult to believe the Chinese wanted to resolve the border dispute peacefully. It also questioned “why the Colombo powers asked only China to withdraw and not India?”20

20 Pravda, 9 September 1963.
The Chinese response to the Soviets forms the most comprehensive indictment of the Soviet stand on Sino-Indian differences. The Chinese media contrasted what it described as Soviet partisanship with the strict neutrality of the Afro-Asians. It declared that the stand and the policy of the Soviet leaders on the Sino-Indian boundary question amply proved that they no longer considered the "imperialists, headed by the U.S." and the reactionaries of all countries to be their enemy. "It is the Marxist Leninists... China in particular who are their enemy.... They have openly declared their alliance with the Indian reactionaries. They probably think that by joining with all the scoundrels in the world in shrieking abuse, they can discredit and isolate China." 21 It followed that Sino-Soviet polemics on India-China conflict had become an important function of the intense antagonism which emerged as fundamental between the two communist powers. A détente with the west remained high on Soviet priority as was evident in its compromise on Cuba and the Signing of the partial test ban treaty of August 1963 and on Inner space in 1964. 22 The Soviet Union also founded it necessary to isolate China as it challenged the entire edifice of Soviet perspective and goal on international affairs. By the end of 1963, the contradictions between the two communist protagonists were taking precedence over other issues. China had become the principal adversary against which Soviet Union was sharpening its criticism. By this time, Sino-Soviet

21 Beijing Review, 8 November, 1963, p.27.
22 Quoted in T. Karki Hussain, n.9, p.157.
differences on their 4,500 miles long frontier in the Far East and Central Asia had become an additional factor in their mutual hostility.23

In view of what has been noted above, it inevitably followed that in the post-1962 period, Soviet policies towards South Asia were formulated to offset Chinese influence and to restrain China from disturbing the status quo on the Sino-Indian border. Since the 1962 war had exposed India's military vulnerability, the Soviets effectively demonstrated the fact that they would not only watch over India's Security interests but also assist it substantially. China in turn deliberately contributed towards enlarging the scope of the cold war by getting further involved in South Asia, particularly on the Indo-Pak question and simultaneously, continued to maintain its political-diplomatic confrontation against India.

China claimed that "massive military aid" to India from the Soviet Union had opened a "new chapter of collaboration" between the Soviet Union and the United States to align India against China. The Chinese media widely quoted the statement of Indian Defence Minister, Chavan replying to members of parliament's stated Categorically that India could use the Soviet Migs and tanks 'against China'.24

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23 In March 1963, China brought out the question of unequal treaties of past and present between China and the Soviet Union. For details see, Dennis J. Doolin, *Territorial Claims in the Sino-Soviet Conflict: Documents and Analysis* (Stanford, 1965).

The fall of Khruschev in October, 1964 delighted the Chinese leaders, who regarded the event as a "major victory" of their policy. The new Soviet leaders however, refused to make any concession on the frontier question and other fundamental issues. The Soviet stand on India hurt them the most. China felt slighted.

To the Chinese, India become the most vital issue in their relations with the Soviet Union, India was seen as having poisoned Sino-Soviet relations. This infuriated the Chinese to the point of irrational hatred. India, on its part, was concerned that when the world was moving towards a peaceful settlement of the grave problems and when the Soviet Union and the USA are striving to their utmost ability to put an end to the cold war, there should be this relapse into violence and aggression on the frontiers of India. The gulf between Moscow and Beijing over India widened further. In May 1965, when Prime Minister Shastri visited Moscow, China alleged that the "Soviet revisionist clique and the Indian reactionaries are bedfellows in opposing China... now Khruschev's successors are pursuing Khruschev's line to form an anti-China alliance with Nehru's successors'. India's foreign policy of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence was another major target of Chinese criticism and condemnation. For China, the policy of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence stood in the way of their war like theory of uninterrupted struggle and confrontation with the "imperialists" and "the

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revisionists". The fact that India's foreign policy played some part in bringing about relaxation in the cold war and in the détente between the two power blocs was particularly disliked by China. During the year 1965-66 the Chinese tried hard to link India with the US and the Soviet Union imagining that there was some kind of collusion between these three powers against China.26

In the Indo-Pakistan conflict in the Rann of Kutch and subsequently over Kashmir in 1965, the Chinese sided with Pakistan. When the Soviet Union came up with an offer of good offices to end the conflict; China alleged, What the Soviet leaders intend to do is, in the name of good offices, to aid the Indian aggressors to force Pakistan to accept India's annexation of Kashmir as legitimate.27 On 9 December, 1965, Soviet Media announced that Indian Primer Shastri and Pak President Ayub had agreed to the Soviet proposal to meet in Tashkent on 4 January, 1966. Despite the basic difference in the Indo-Pak approaches due to Soviet mediation, Shastri and Ayub reached an accord at the end of the week long secret confabulations. The Chinese Government was the only nation to have been displeased with the accord reached at Tashkent. China attacked the Tashkent talks as "a product of joint US-Soviet planning" and charged that the Soviet Union had "instigated and encouraged the Indian aggressor and brought crude pressures to bear on Pakistan". It was evident that the Chinese government considered the restoration of peace on the Indian

subcontinent as a setback to their own plans and designs. The Chinese charged that Soviet leaders had feigned neutrality in the Indo-Pak conflict but had in fact backed India at every step and that those “adding fuel to the flames” in the situation were precisely the Soviet leaders, in addition to the U.S. imperialists and they wanted to start another anti-China campaign on a global scale. Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri repudiated the Chinese pretension to be a guardian of Asian countries and asserted that “no self respecting nation in Asia, large or small, strong or weak, will accept the dominance of the Chinese”.

China also alleged that India was toeing U.S.’s line on Vietnam. China misunderstood India’s constructive role as chairman of the International control commission. When Indian Premier Mrs. Gandhi went to U.S.A. in 1966, the Chinese media stated that “each time an Indian Prime Minister goes to the USA there is the task of begging for help to keep the government's head above water. China continued to blame Soviets and stated that “the Soviet revisionist clique spares no expense to rear anti-China hatchet men in Asia, the Indian reactionaries . . . . this clique has given the reactionary Indian Government nearly 900 million U.S. Dollars worth of military aid since

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1962 This amount far exceeded the 340 million dollar military aid U.S. imperialism gave India over the same period.\textsuperscript{33}

In the meantime, there were reports of Sino-Soviet border tension at the end of 1965, and again in the spring of 1966 Moscow renewed its defensive alliance with outer Mongolia and there were reports of substantial movement of Soviet troops into eastern outer Mongolia.\textsuperscript{34} The net result of simmering tensions Sino-Soviet orders was the intensification of armed patrols by both sides. On 2 March, 1969, Soviet and Chinese forces fought a two-hour battle for control of Damansky island in the Ussuri River. During the months following the Ussuri clashes of March 1969, the Soviet union rapidly built up forces along and near the Chinese border and stated that unless Beijing agreed to hold formal talks on the territorial issue it might be subjected to invasion or the destruction of its nuclear installations.\textsuperscript{35} In June 1969, the Soviet leader Brezhnev announced the Soviet project to promote the creation of a Collective Security System in Asia to erect barriers to the expansionist ambition of China in Asia.\textsuperscript{36} The Chinese reaction was predictably sharp.\textsuperscript{37} They denounced the Soviet project as a new move on the part of the “Soviet revisionist leaders to rig up a military alliance against China.”\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{33} ibid, no.20, 17 May 1968, p.24.
\textsuperscript{34} Quoted in Harold C. Hinton, \textit{China’s Turbulent Quest} (New York, 1970), p.133.
\textsuperscript{35} ibid, pp.160-61.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Pravda}, 9 June 1969.
\textsuperscript{37} Xinhua, 28 June 1969
\textsuperscript{38} ibid 5 July 1969.
Subsequent Soviet Statements sought to counter the Chinese charges. Soviet Premier Kosygin said that the Soviet proposal was aimed at "uniting the peace-loving forces in Asia, not for war but as a "barrier" against aggressions. Nevertheless, he urged India, Pakistan and Afghanistan to join together to face "the new hegemonic forces in Asia".\textsuperscript{39} India, it not may be noted here did not show any enthusiasm for the Soviet project. Still, China stated that "every one knows that the Soviet revisionist renegade clique views the Indian reactionaries as important partners in its anti-China line up.... Thus, by the end of 1969, Sino-Soviet hostility had scaled new heights and India became an important factor in Sino-Soviet rift. The potential for war following the border incidents between the two communist giants would encourage momentous changes in the first half of the next decade.

II

The advent of the decade of the seventies witnessed shift from bipolar strategic balance to development of triangular diplomacy among the three countries i.e. U.S.A., U.S.S.R. – P.R.C. By now China had emerged as an Asian Power by virtue of its advance towards a viable nuclear force; followed by the historic decision in October, 1971 to admit People’s Republic of China in the United Nations. Communist China now became a permanent member of the Security Council. Internally, China emerged from the chaotic days of cultural revolution and leadership in the hands of moderate Zhou En Lai, under the

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Pravda}, 3 June 1969.
The tutelage of Mao Zedong. The early 1970s marked the convergence of American and Chinese thinking about their major common problem, i.e., the Soviet Union. For Beijing, the Soviet Union became major threat and following U.S.A.'s decision to reduce its military role in South East Asia, Vietnam in particular, China no longer considered U.S. as major threat. The new administration in U.S. under Richard Nixon was disenchanted with the Vietnam war. American foreign policy took into account the continuing Sino-Soviet hostility and its inescapable impact on Soviet-American rivalry and détente. By developing a triangular relationship with China and the Soviet Union, the United States could derive considerable diplomatic leverage from the dispute between the two communist giants, even while refusing to take sides. In 1970 and 1971, U.S. took many steps to send positive signals to China and once China made up its mind, the movement towards a Sino-American détente gathered considerable momentum. Meanwhile the relations between India and the USSR accelerated in early seventies, leading to consolidation of ties between Delhi and Moscow. The three developments, i.e. China's split with the Soviet Union, conflict with India and rapprochement with the USA meant that India and the Soviet Union had acquired a new geo-strategic commonality of interest.

The impending thaw in Sino-American relations added to the alarm in India over the pro-Pakistan position of both the United States and China in the South Asian Crisis, raising fresh apprehensions of a possible Sino-American Pakistani axis against India. The U.S.
Secretary of State Henry Kissinger warned the Indian government in July, 1971 that if war broke out in the Subcontinent, China might intervene. He further stated that if China attacked India this time, India should not expect the United States to provide military and other support, as it had done in 1962.40

South Asia witnessed escalation of Indo-Pakistani crisis over East Pakistan in 1971. Now, on the one hand, the triangular diplomacy contributed to the development of the crisis; and on the other, in turn was influenced by perceptions stemming from it.41 In fact, Nixon and Kissinger's main consideration initially was the China connection within the framework of the emerging triangular diplomacy. In mid-July, 1971, Kissinger secretly visited China via Pakistan and a direct American-Chinese link was established. Sensing the approaching Sino-U.S. accord and having played the role of messenger between U.S. and China, Yahya Khan boasted in July that, in a war with India, Pakistan will not be alone.42 On 17 July, 1971 it was announced that President Nixon would visit China before May 1972, and Dr. Henry Kissinger, who had been reported to be indisposed in Pakistan, was actually in Beijing conferring with Premier Zhou Enlai. U.S. tilt against India was adopted after the China connection was secured.

40 Quoted in Norman D. Palmer, The United States and India (Prager, 1984), p. 47.
41 Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston, 1979), p.854.
Indian and Soviet interests began to converge as the Soviet Union failed to resolve its disputes with China, and India failed to attract the benign attention of the Nixon administration of USA. On 9 August 1971, Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei A. Gromyko and Indian Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh Signed in New Delhi a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries.

The most significant section from the viewpoint of India's interests was article IX"--- in the event of either party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove any such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries". From a Soviet viewpoint, the treaty was probably understood as a part of the planned network of bilateral treaties which would underpin Brezhnev's Asian Collective Security System, and which was designed to isolate China. India's interests were more pressing: to deter China and the United States from intervening to help Pakistan and to ensure Soviet diplomatic support, especially in the United Nations.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty followed the dramatic Sino-US rapprochement. Specifically, it was an insurance policy taken out in case of China's military intervention in the Bangladesh crisis.

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43 Surjit Mansingh, India's Search for Power (New Delhi, 1984), p.142.
45 Surjit Man Singh, n.43, p.88.
reacted strongly to Indo-Soviet treaty. The first Chinese comment on the treaty came on 25 September, 1971 when a member of a visiting Chinese trade delegation reportedly said that China "certainly does not regard the signing of the recent Indo-Soviet treaty as a friendly act so far as it is concerned". He also said that China was watching the "growing USSR-India collaboration against China".\(^{46}\)

On its part, the Indian Government behaved with great restraint even in the face of grave provocations and stressed the need for better relations between India and China. In the Parliament many members underlined the need of fluidity vis-à-vis China. The External Affairs Minister of India, Shri Swaran Singh stated that "inspite of the hostile and bellicose statements made by China against us, we have deliberately refrained from being provoked in order not to increase tensions." In this connection, he also clarified that the Indo-Soviet treaty did not stand in the way of India's normalising of relations with China, and was not directed against China or any other country. The minister further stated:

> We cannot accept any conditions that the normalisation of relations with any country may deter us from developing friendship with any other country. The Soviet Union itself has been trying to normalise relations with China and would be happy to see the normalisation of relations between India and China as we would be happy to see normalisation of relations between China and the USSR.\(^{47}\)

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\(^{47}\) *Lok Sabha Debates*, vol. 14, 1972, Cols-216-17.
The Indo-Soviet Treaty also had ramifications for Sino-American relations with Pakistan. They coordinated their policy to encourage Pakistan to resolve the crisis in its own way. The U.S. endeavoured to frighten India by raising the threat of a Chinese invasion if India did not cease its aid to the dissidents in East Pakistan. This and other moves of the U.S. encouraged the Chinese to strike an aggressive posture towards India. A week after Kissinger's meeting with Zhou, China abandoned its cautious policy on East Pakistan. Chinese foreign minister, Ji Pengfei denounced the freedom struggle in East Pakistan as "unpatriotic" and accused India of "interference" in Pakistan's domestic affairs. Emboldened by Sino-U.S. support, Yahya Khan threatened on 6 November, 1971 that Indo-Pakistani relations had reached the "point of no return" and declared that the war was the only possibility between the two nations. The following day he assured his countrymen that in the event of an Indo-Pakistan war "China will intervene on behalf of Pakistan".48

In a statement, the Soviet Union, on its part, warned the Chinese against intervening in the conflict and said that in the event of (Chinese) interference the Soviet Union would not "remain in different to the developments taking place in direct proximity of the borders of U.S.S.R. and involving its security interests.49 The Chinese accused Moscow of "instigating India to commit large scale aggression against Pakistan" and vociferously attacked the Indian expansionists.

48 Times of India (New Delhi) 8 November 1971.
49 Tass (Moscow), 5 December 1971.
for trying to "dismember" Pakistan and establish a "puppet state" in East Pakistan like the Japanese set up in Manchukuo. Reacting sharply to the Chinese criticism of the Soviet stand on the Indo-Pakistan conflict the Soviet Union denounced the Sino-American designs to prevent normalisation of conditions in the subcontinent and accused them of planning to establish a "Sino-American condominium" there.

From the beginning the American policy in this crisis was guided by the fact of Chinese connection. The U.S. position was influenced by the strong Chinese support for Pakistan. As the war proceeded, the U.S. took a firm stand in favour of the Sino-Pakistani position. Kissinger wrote that "we have to prevent India from attacking West Pakistan." On 10 December, U.S. decided to send the U.S. Navy and the air craft carrier USS Enterprise along with 2000 combat ready marines, towards the Bay of Bengal. As a scholar has put it, this decision indicated the U.S. resolve to support China. The aim was to "demonstrate to China that we were a reliable country to deal with, and that we stand for a mutual friend". The U.S. position was above all with an eye to its new relationship with China.

India however, achieved its main objective, the independence of East Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh, despite Chinese and American opposition. India continued to base its policy on its own

50 H. Kissinger, n.41, p.903.
interests. It found Soviet support but at the same time it was careful not to move too close to the Soviet Union.

China, however regarded India's victory over Pakistan as an increase of Soviet influence on China's Southern flank. Following developments in Bangladesh, China took a consistently hostile stand against India and supported the Pakistan Government vis-à-vis Bangladesh. Both inside and outside the United Nations, China violently criticised India. China regularly and consistently condemned India as having committed "aggression" on Pakistan with the help of Soviet "Social imperialism". 52 When the war came to an end, the Chinese began to seek ways of reducing the Soviet presence in the sub continent and welcomed the Shimla agreement of 1972 between India and Pakistan.

Following the new Sino-US rapprochement in 70's China leaned with U.S.A. against its current enemy U.S.S.R. As for the U.S., the new dialogue with China formally spelled the end of the containment policy of the 50's and 60's. China had finally won western acceptance and universal recognition of her vastly enhanced status in the emerging global balance of power although China still lacked sufficient economic and military resources to conduct a global diplomacy on the scale of either superpower. Nevertheless, China's enhanced diplomatic status, her ideological influence in the third world, and, above all, her geopolitical importance in Asia had forced the United States and the

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Soviet Union into a triangular relationship. Now, one of the primary aims of Mao's revolutionary diplomatic line was to take advantage of the interacting forces in the Moscow-Washington-Beijing triangle to weaken Soviet Union.

One of the most interesting characteristics of the triangle was that while each party was antagonistic to the other two, yet none of the three bilateral relationship, i.e. U.S.-U.S.S.R., U.S.S.R.-China, China-U.S. was exclusively antagonistic. For China, the principal objective in playing the triangular game was to reduce Soviet-American Collusion to a minimum, mount opposition to the two superpowers by highlighting such collusion, and contain Soviet expansionism by threatening collusion with the United States.

In China's perception, between, the two superpowers, the Soviet Union was clearly the more aggressive. The Soviet policy of détente was dismissed by the Maoist leadership as a propaganda exercise intended to conceal the imperialist ambitions of the Soviet revisionist leadership. China's conception of her own role in confronting this challenge was essentially two fold: to alert the world to the real nature of hegemonism and to mobilise a new united front capable of defeating it. It was in order to pursue this struggle and form the broadest possible United front against Soviet Social-imperialism that China had moved towards détente with the United States.

The decision on full normalisation of relations between the United States and China from 1 January, 1979 was announced in Beijing by Premier Hua Guofeng on 16 December, 1978. The Joint Sino-U.S. Communique stipulated that the U.S. recognised the Government of the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China and that within this context the U.S. would maintain cultural, commercial and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan. The U.S. also added that “acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China”. Both Countries reaffirmed the principles of the Shanghai Communique of 1972. This relationship fitted in with Deng’s policy of opening to the world. The core of this policy was the utilisation of the opportunities for trade with the west, accessibility to U.S. market and western technology for the modernisation of Chinese economic structure.

As far as Sino-Indian relations were concerned, the Soviet factor remained as important as ever. The defeat of Mrs. I Gandhi in the 1977 general elections emboldened the Chinese to believe that Soviet-Indian relations were based on thin ice and it was possible to wreck this relationship by adopting a friendlier attitude with the new Janata regime in New Delhi. In a commentary Xinhua declared that “the outcome of the national election showed the unpopularity of the

56 For details see, Michael Yahuda, Towards the End of Isolationism: China’s Foreign Policy After Mao (London, 1983).
internal and external policies of the congress party government. With the support and connivance of Soviet social imperialism the Congress government pursued for years a policy of expansionism and thus isolated itself not only in South Asia but also in the whole world. Only the Kremlin mouthpiece Tass described the internal and external policies of the Congress Party as "Progressive"... Soviet attempt to influence the Indian election is futile. Moscow, however, reminded New Delhi that despite sweet words of "normalisation of relations with India", China remained a "serious menace" to the security of India. They warned that the Karakoram highway built by the Chinese across the Indian territory illegally occupied by Pakistan represented the "greatest danger" to India. "The road is constructed to serve China's military strategic aims" and "cannot but disquiet India".

When India's External Affairs Minister A.B. Vajpayee visited to Soviet Union in September, 1978, he assured his hosts that his forthcoming visit to China would in no way affect Indo-Soviet friendship and that India had "her own experience with China and her eyes and ears are wide open". In February, 1979 when Vajpayee was in China, China invaded Vietnam. Much to the embarrassment of India, Deng Xiaoping stated that China was determined to teach a lesson to Vietnam and linked China's attack with earlier at lack of India in October, 1962. Vajpayee reacted by cutting short his trip to Beijing. After Vajpayee's visit to China, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev

57 Xinhua (Beijing), 24 March 1977.
58 Pravda, 23 April 1978.
reportedly told Premier Morarji Desai: "Your Foreign Minister's visit to China was not well received by our public. I do not know how your people reacted to it but our people took it very ill.\textsuperscript{59} The Soviet Union cautioned the Indian leadership against dangerous intention of China and advised not to trust China.

After wards Vietnam occupied centre stage of international politics. In 1978, Chinese living in Vietnam began to flee northward, claiming persecution by the Vietnamese government. Border incidents became common. The Indo-China Cauldron was boiling. The murderous policies of the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot and the impending trouble in the peninsula were followed by the Soviet – Vietnam Treaty of Friendship and Mutual alliance. As a result China charged that Vietnam had become "the Cuba of the orient.\textsuperscript{60} Meanwhile, relations between Vietnam and communist Cambodia (renamed Kampuchea) worsened. Historic animosities, persecution of Vietnamese in Kampuchea, and the Savagery of the Kampuchea government encouraged Vietnam to invade Kampuchea in December, 1978. China perceived that its legitimate zone of influence was being disturbed and it retaliated in February, 1979. China sent its troops into Vietnam to retaliate against Vietnamese border provocations, but in effect to punish Vietnam for sending its troops into Cambodia and toppling the Khmer Rouge regime and installing in its place a pro Chinese Government. The Soviet Union harshly condemned the

\textsuperscript{59} Arun Gandhi, \textit{The Morarji Papers} (New Delhi, 1983), p. 29.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{New York Times}, 9 November 1978.
Chinese attack as an unprecedented brazen bandit attack in which the Chinese rulers revealed fully to the world the perfidious, aggressive essence of the great-power policy pursued by them.61

On the Kampuchean issue, India and China differed widely. While Beijing Supported Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot regime, New Delhi Supported Heng Samrin regime. China perceived India's stand in Kampuchea was influenced by India's close relationship with the Soviet Union. The differences on Kampuchean issue affected India-China normalisation process for a while.

III

Sino-Soviet ties were, further worsened by developments in Afghanistan. In April, 1978, one such coup brought to power members of the two rival factions of the Afghan communist party and this was termed as the Saur revolution. The religious groups in Afghanistan did not accepted this turn of events and they began to resist the new regime. Rivalry among the communist factions produced another coup in 1979 and generated more instability. Therefore, in December, 1979 the Soviets decided to send their troops into Afghanistan. The Soviets claimed that the Afghan government had requested it. The Soviet leader Brezhnev pledged to withdraw the forces when stability returned and foreign interference in Afghanistan ended. President Carter of U.S.A. rejected the Soviet allegation of Western meddling and demanded an immediate Soviet withdrawal.

61 Quoted in Gangi Dutta and V.P. Dutt, China After Mao (New Delhi, 1990), p.279.
The Afghanistan issue put relations between the two superpowers on a new footing and a new cold war loomed on the horizon for the next decade. China's attitude towards Afghanistan changed significantly in the aftermath of the 1978 revolution. Even before the alleged Soviet invasion, the Afghan revolution was seen as part of the Soviet grand strategy, having global rather than purely regional implications. With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, the situation became critical. In China's perception - the Soviet Union was determined to become the dominant power in Asia and Beijing was alarmed. The massive Soviet military deployment on the Sino-Soviet border was in itself disturbing for China. There were reportedly some 48 Soviet divisions on the border and another 10 in Mongolia equipped with the most modern weaponry.

Afghanistan crisis signalled the return of the cold war between superpowers but this time the theatre changed from Europe to Asia. Though the global triangular diplomacy remained intact, but gradually there was subtle shift within it. These subtle changes no longer remained subtle over the next two years when China adopted "independent foreign policy." In 1982 China's foreign policy was transformed by objective changes in international situations and Chinese priority. In his report to the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the General Secretary of the party said the policy is based on "the five principles of peaceful co-existence" and

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62 Turmoil in Afghanistan, in Foreign Broadcasting Information Service (hereafter FBIS), CHI-113, 18 June 1979, F/2.
establishing and developing normal, friendly relations with all the countries that treat China as an equal; strengthening unity and cooperation with other third world countries and friendly nations; and opposing hegeonism and maintaining world peace. 63 The essential feature of this new foreign policy was that China "will not attach itself to any big power or bloc of nations and will not submit itself to the pressure of any big power". The general principle was to oppose hegeonism and to promote peace.64 China was noting and responding to other changes that were taking place in the international scene. The most important was the "decline of the Super powers", which was in the offing. Both the super powers were facing reverses.

In 1980, Moscow and Beijing traded charges and counter charges on Afghanistan. The Chinese called it blatant aggression while the Soviets accused China of having teamed up with the West to send counter-revolutionary gangs into Afghanistan. China announced in January 1980 its decision not to resume talks with the Soviets on improving relations because of what it called Soviet "invasion of Afghanistan".65 The Soviet presence in Afghanistan also created major threats to the Security of China's close ally, Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan was assigned a crucial role: a frontline state, providing sanctuary on its territory for the Afghan Mujahideen. Such an operation was discussed by Chinese and American officials during Defence Secretary Harold

63 For details see, Samuel S. Kim, ed, Chinese Foreign Policy in the 1980s (Colorado, 1984).

64 Gargi Dutt and V.P. Dutt, n. 61, p. 207.

Brown's January 1980 visit to Beijing. During those talks, China and U.S.A. agreed to cooperate in aiding Pakistan. In terms of diplomatic support, China urged the U.S. to renew its lapsed security relation with Pakistan, and encouraged the U.S., Western Europe and Japan to provide economic assistance.

In regard to Afghanistan, India called for a political settlement through negotiations among the parties concerned on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops, stoppage of all forms of outside interference and the preservation of the independence. Sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to power in January, 1980 and she was determined to reconsolidate India's bond with the Soviet Union which she believed the Janata government had weakened. Consequently, she hosted Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev's visit to India in December 1980. During President Brezhnev's visit, Mrs. Gandhi directly expressed India's 'opposition to all forms of outside interference in the internal affairs of other countries, whether through induction of regular troops or through infiltration.' Soviet-Indian economic and military cooperation expanded substantially during 1980-84, with large new Soviet trade credits and supply of a wide range of advanced military equipment. At the same time, however, Mrs. Gandhi was apprehensive.

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68 Annual Report 1981-82, Ministry of External Affairs, p. VI.
69 Quoted in Surjit Man Singh, n.43, p. 157.
of becoming tied too closely to Soviet Union. She was aware of the potential dangers posed to India's long term Security interests by Soviet troops entry into Afghanistan. These concerns led India to seek to diversify Indian diplomacy by expanding its ties with Western Europe and the United States.

Equally importantly, India wanted to improve relations with China and stressed its role in the non-aligned movement. China, too was interested in improving relations with India after the developments in Afghanistan. China tried to facilitate normal relations with India by avoiding the Kampuchean issue where both nations were pursuing altogether different policies. India was one of the main supporters of Vietnam and Kampuchea at the United Nations and within the Non-Aligned Movement. The exception to this was China's Virulent criticism of India's recognition of the Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea in July 1980. India's close friendship with the Soviet regime in Kampuchea led China to suspend Foreign Minister Huang Hua's long scheduled trip to India. Despite China's ardent desire by that time to improve relations with India for the sake of lessening Soviet influence throughout the South Asian region, it took China ten months to swallow its anger over India's Indochinese policy and reschedule Huang Hua's India visit in June 1981. The Chinese termed India's move in Kampuchea "a foolish decision that completely discredits the Indian government


internationally”. It alleged that India's move was due to the stepped-up Soviet aid to India.

In the aftermath of Brezhnev's December, 1980 visit to India, China concluded that India had not yet capitulated to Soviets. It noted that "Brezhnev did not get everything he wanted .... He had not been able to alter India's stand on the Afghanistan issue, despite his going to India in person."72 In June, 1981 Chinese foreign minister, Huang Hua arrived in India. In India, Huang Hua called for India and China to "seek common ground on major issues while preserving differences on minor ones," and noted that "the basic starting point for Chinese foreign policy is to oppose hegemonism." During Huang's 1981 visit the two sides agreed to begin discussions on the border issue and other bilateral exchanges.

Nevertheless, India was concerned over the re-emergence of Cold War Scenario in Asia. During a debate on Demand for Grants of Ministry of External Affairs for the year 1981-81, a congress member of Lok Sabha, Eduardo Faleiro stated:

We are living in a region which has turned into one of the major theatres of super power confrontation. During the Nixon Kissinger era the strategy was to contain the USSR by allying with China. In recent times, it seems that the strategy has been revived. And it is in this context that the arming of Pakistan must be viewed. These arms are to be used against this country. 73

Another member Mr. R. L. Bhatia stated:

72 Beijing Review, no. 51, 22 December 1980, pp. 8-10.
China has always been mocking at our philosophy of peace and non alignment. They have been directly or indirectly interfering in our affairs. So long as China believes in revolution as a way to freedom, and in aggression in the case of disagreement, there is no possibility of having normal relations with it . . . . If they are sincere, and if they want friendship with us sincerely, they must remove the impediments which stand in the way of a good friendship. 74

The Soviet concern about the possibility of improvement in Sino-India relations was heightened by the visit of Huang Hua to India. The Soviet media devoted even greater space than usual to 'exposing' China's policy in Asia and China's threat to peace and security in the region. 75 China was denounced for its destabilising manoeuvres relating to India's internal situation, the border problem and other differences with India. A long article in New Times shortly after the first round of Simo-Indian talks enumerated China's various "anti-Indian" activities, like occupying Indian territory, arming Pakistan and supporting separatist insurgencies in India's north east. Clearly, China's intent, the article warned, was to weaken Soviet-Indian friendship. 76

During Mrs. Gandhi's September 1982 visit to Soviet Union, the Soviet leaders warned her that China's ultimate aim was to dominate all of Asia and Brezhnev himself reminded her that the Soviet Union was threatened "from both east and west." Mrs. Gandhi assured Soviet leaders that India's efforts to improve relations with China would not be

74 ibid, Col. 351.
at the cost of its "trusted and tested friendship" with the Soviet Union.77

At a Moscow news conference the Indian Prime Minister also said for the first time that she "would like Soviet troops to leave Afghanistan".78 India, it was clear was following an independent approach in its relations with both China and the Soviet Union.

China significantly modified its relations with the superpowers. It scrapped its earlier talk of a united front (with the United States) against (Soviet) hegemonism, and began gradually to expand cooperative relations with the Soviet Union across a whole range of areas. It toned down its criticisms of Soviet foreign policies and began to balance criticism of Soviet moves with criticisms of American moves. Simultaneously, it reaffirmed China's membership in the Third world. Collectively these adjustments were known as China's "Independent Foreign Policy." As a result, by distancing itself somewhat from the U.S. and engineering a limited improvement in Sino-Soviet relations, China put itself in a better bargaining position with the U.S.79

An analyst of Chinese foreign policy believed that China's desire for better relations with India also played a role in its adoption of an "independent foreign policy" in 1982.80 China saw a limited disengagement from the U.S.A. and limited rapprochement with the superpowers.

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78 Times of India (New Delhi), 11 September 1982,
Soviet Union as a way of demonstrating to India that China was not pro-
American and anti-Soviet. Therefore, improved Sino-Indian relations
would not undermine India's relations with the Soviet Union. The same
demonstration would also reduce Soviet opposition to closer Sino-Indian
ties and discourage Soviet Union from using its influence to block Sino-
Indian rapprochement.\textsuperscript{81} China also stressed its opposition to
imperialism, its struggle for development and its membership of the
third world. Thus, China affirmed its fraternity with India and thereby,
created an atmosphere conducive to Sino-Indian friendship.

As a result, both India and China agreed to discuss various
international issues with the fourth round of Sino-Indian Official level
talks in October, 1983. Both sides hoped that agreement on broad
international issues would facilitate improvement of bilateral ties. Prior
to departing for the fourth round of talks in 1983, the head of the
Chinese delegation Hong Dafei told journalists that China and India
shared common views on many international issues, such as
safeguarding world peace, the North-South dialogue and South-South
dialogue, so this time I will be glad to exchange my ideas with Indian
friends."\textsuperscript{82} This exchange of views on international issues continued
through the next round of talks. After the sixth round of talks in
November 1985, Indian external affairs minister, BaliRam Bhagat
enumerated nuclear disarmament, South Africa and North-South

\textsuperscript{81} ibid, p. 71.

relations as areas of agreement. Commentary in influential Chinese media enumerated other international issues i.e. Israel's aggression and expansion, Namibia and the American invasion of Grenada on which India and China agreed, and stressed the two countries common commitment to non-alignment, development of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and their common struggle against imperialism.

By 1984, China began to emphasise its independent foreign policy and demonstrated it by strongly criticising USA on issues on which it said U.S. was pursuing hegemonist policies. Sino-U.S. relations were stabilised in the 1984 when Chinese Premier, Zhao Ziyang visited U.S. Zhao he underlined the economic dimension of the relationship and confessed that there were "still some difficulties in the current Sino-U.S. political relations." Meanwhile, China's relations with USSR also improved China condoled the death of Brezhnev. Some progress in expanding relations took place in the wake of a week long visit of Soviet Vice-Foreign Minister, M. Kapitsa in September, 1983 During the 1983 U.N. General-Assembly Session, the Chinese foreign minister, Wu-Xueqian, reversed previous policy and announced his decision to meet the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko. China took one step further towards restoring some balance in relations with the two big Powers with Wu declaring that "Sino-Soviet relations and Sino-U.S. 83

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relations are two different things and they cannot be linked together."\(^{86}\) China was trying to nudge both super powers into offering more concessions to it. Relations between China and the USSR could still not stand comparison with its relations with USA, but the movement ahead was unmistakable. In 1984, the new Soviet President, Konstantin Chernenko reaffirmed his country’s desire for better relations with China. China and the Soviet Union also concluded four new agreements, including the first long term trade pact after their rift.

Meanwhile, in India, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated in October, 1984 and was succeeded by Rajiv Gandhi. Throughout 1985 there was a virtual explosion of optimistic statements from both sides. According to one Indian analyst, during 1985 New Delhi was optimistic about a possible breakthrough in Sino-Indian relations because of the post-1982 thaw in Sino-Soviet relations and the greater distance between Beijing and Washington.\(^{87}\) In mid 80’s Indo-US relations were warming up. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited U.S. in June, 1985. The new Premier was tending to open up and widen his options, in terms of closer ties with western nations rather than depending largely on Soviet support. Rajiv’s visit to the United States was successful, the Americans reduced the limits on technological exports, and Government of India agreed to improve conducive

\(^{86}\) Xinhua, 17 September 1983.

conditions for American business. As a result there was substantial changes in Indo-U.S. relations.

Shortly after Rajiv Gandhi's 1985 state visits to USSR in May and to USA in June, Chinese media noted the similarities between Indian and Chinese policy towards the superpowers in article in People's Daily (Renmin ribao) in August 1985. For the sake of achieving a stable international environment, the article noted, Rajiv Gandhi was pursuing a "two friend policy" of striving to develop friendly relations with the United States while maintaining such ties with the USSR. China was then attempting to do precisely the reverse, to develop friendly ties with the USSR while maintaining cordial ties with the United States. The article also noted Indian reluctance to cooperate with the Soviet Union against Chine: "India and the USSR have many common views on international issues. However, there are differences in some aspects. India did not respond to the Soviet proposal on holding a Pan-Asian peace and security conference" during Rajiv Gandhi's May 1985 visit to Moscow. Thus, by improving relations with Moscow, the degree of convergence between Indian and Chinese policies had increased and facilitated improvements in Sino-Indian relations.

The Soviet response to the thaw in Indian-China relations in 1984-85 was more restrained than its earlier response. In contrast to the virulent criticisms during the 1978-79 and 1981-82 periods, Soviet

propaganda in 1985 did not attack China's efforts to improve ties with India. Nor did it warn New Delhi of Beijing's evil schemes. The Soviets depicted a comprehensive United States- Pakistan alliance directed against all "progressive" countries in South Asia, including Soviet allied Afghanistan and India. India was concerned over the reemergence of Cold War atmosphere and threat posed to India's security by the inclusion of military equipments being acquired by Pakistan from the USA and China. Only in late 1985 the Soviet Union accused China of arming Pakistan against India.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev took over as General Secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Union and began to take unprecedented new initiatives that in many ways were to change the face of the world. Included in these initiatives was a serious new approach towards China. A month before his July 1986 Vladivostok speech, Gorbachev briefed Indian External Affairs Minister P. Shiv Shankar on "major Soviet foreign policy initiatives." Both leaders reportedly "voiced their mutual satisfaction" with Soviet-Indian "trust, friendship, and cooperation" and pledged to develop those bonds further. Even in his Vladivostok speech Gorbachev praised India at some length, and before his bid to China, said "the friendly relations between the USSR and India have become a stabilising principle on an important scale".

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91 Annual Report 1983-84, Ministry of External Affairs, p. IV.
In his famous speech at Vladivostok on 28 July, 1986, Gorbachev sincerely proposed to improve relations with China. He made a series of offers to China to reverse the ideological as well as inter-state disputes which had marked their relationship. He also offered China talks for the reduction of the military built up by the two countries on their borders. He also gave an obvious concession to China by agreeing to take midstream as the dividing line of the border between the two on the Ussuri river as the Chinese had been demanding. Gorbachev's attempt was part of the general Soviet drive towards the relaxation of international tensions and an easing of the arms race. Vladivostok was only a beginning; the full implications of the Soviet leader's new diplomacy was felt over the next three years. Both sides decided to move forward in developing relations. Another break through was the resumption of Sino-Soviet border talks suspended for the past nine years. The resumption of border talks symbolised that Sino-Soviet relations were on the mend.

The first test of Soviet support for India under the new initiatives taken by Gorbachev for Sino-Soviet rapprochement came in the summer of 1986; when Chinese and Indian patrols in Sumdorong Chu valley of Arunachal Pradesh came within eyeball to eyeball range. This generated a border crisis which continued till spring 1987, with both sides stepping up their patrols in the disputed area, and moving substantial

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96 Xinhua, 8 February 1987.
military forces in the region. There was widespread concern about the possibility of a India-China conflict and India naturally looked towards Moscow for signals of support. USSR however, remained silent. The pressure on India increased further in October 1986 when American defence secretary, C. Weinberger visited India and delivered a message from Deng Xiaoping that either India stop "nibbling" at Chinese territory or face dire consequences. Weinberger then moved to Pakistan where he announced that the U.S. intended to supply Pakistan with AWACS aircraft, M1 Abrams tanks, and an improved version of the F-16.

India was concerned over these developments. During a Lok Sabha debate on Demand for Grants of Ministry of External Affairs for the year 1987-88, a prominent member of opposition, Shri Syed Shahabuddin stated that "Our relations with China are also running into difficulties day-by-day, especially in the context of new posture that China has adopted....My colleague here said about the nexus between China and Pakistan. I also feel that there is a gang-up between China, Pakistan and America. Intervening in the debate Minister of External Affairs, Shri N.D. Tiwari stated that "we, as a matter of principle, are committed to resolving the border problems with China through peaceful means. But let China also reciprocate. We are amazed to see in

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98 Ibid. 4 June 1987, pp. 42-43.
this context that the activities of the Chinese in the Sumdorong Chu valley have not been helpful.\footnote{ibid, Col. 294.}

It was in these circumstances that Gorbachev visited India in November, 1987. Throughout his visit Gorbachev reiterated that improved Sino-Soviet ties would not be at the expense of Soviet relations with India. He said that "what we are doing to improving our relations with China will not weaken our relations with India."\footnote{\textit{Beijing Review}, no. 48, 1 December, 1986, p. 10.} The Soviet Union also extended generous economic and military assistance including MIG-29s to India. Notwithstanding this, Gorbachev refused to take India's side in its growing tension with China. During the press conference, he pleaded ignorance regarding the Sumdorong Chu incident and refused to take sides. Instead he called for better relations between the Soviet Union, China and India, so no one will have to choose sides.\footnote{FBIS-DRSU, 2 December, 1986, pp. D29.} He called for a political approach.\footnote{\textit{Hindustan Times}, 10 December 1986.}

In the meantime, the international politics witnessed dramatic changes. The superpowers increasingly resorted to resume dialogues to ease tense relations between themselves. President Reagan and Gorbachev held a summit at Reykjavic in Iceland in October, 1986. Though the summit had failed but it raised the hopes for achieving success in advancing the process of nuclear disarmament. Finally, both USA and USSR signed INF Treaty in December, 1987 to eliminate a
particular class of all land based nuclear-missiles. This was the first
time that Moscow and Washington agreed to reduce their nuclear
 arsenals instead of only limiting them.\textsuperscript{104} Further, Afghan imbroglio
which remained an important issue in US-USSR-PRC triangular
relations throughout the eighties, was showing signs of being resolved.
This led to the conclusion of the April, 1988 Geneva Accord on
Afghanistan to which Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Soviet Union and the
United States were the Signatory powers. The four instruments of the
agreement called for the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops by 15
February 1989, the voluntary return of Afghan refugees under
Safeguards and the restoration of Afghanistan's status as an
independent, non-aligned nation. China welcomed the signing of the
Geneva accord and termed it as a "positive development."\textsuperscript{105} India
welcomed the Geneva agreement and tried to help the process of
reconciliation.

As the pace of Sino-Soviet rapprochement accelerated in 1988 the
Soviet Union continued to encourage improvements in Sino-Indian
relations. The linkage between Sino-Soviet-Indian relations was
apparent during the build up to the Sino-Indian and Sino-Soviet
summits of December 1988 and May, 1989. In October, 1988 the
Chinese top leader, Deng Xiaoping publicly announced at the same
time, his forthcoming meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Beijing Review}, no. 51, 21 December 1987, pp. 10-12.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Beijing Review}, no. 17, 25 April 1988, pp 9-10.
Gandhi.\textsuperscript{106} In the next month, November 1988 Gorbachev made his second visit to India. This visit came just a month before Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China and two weeks before Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen arrived in Moscow to pave the way for Gorbachev's May 1989, summit with China. Relations with China was an important agenda of Gorbachev-Gandhi's meeting of November, 1988. It was widely believed that Gorbachev argued that China could no longer afford to be confrontational because of the demands of its modernisation programme, and that India, USSR and PRC should simultaneously strive to improve relations. He also reassured India that Moscow was not reordering its Asian priorities in Beijing's favour and at New Delhi's expense. To help convince his Indian hosts of this, Gorbachev signed four agreements further expanding bilateral cooperation. Among these was the largest credit yet supplied to India by the Soviet Union, $234 million for 20 years at 2.5 per cent annual interest.\textsuperscript{107} The Chinese media commented on Gorbachev's efforts to nudge India towards better relations with China; Gorbachev and Gandhi reportedly devoted considerable time to discussion of Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian relations. Gorbachev in his open speeches emphasised China's rule in Asian and world affairs and said that a good relationship among China, the Soviet Union and India is vital for the fate of Asia and World progress. "We're glad to see the signs of improved Indian-Chinese

\textsuperscript{106} FBIS-DRC, 14 October 1988, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{107} Far Eastern Economic Review, 1 December 1988, p. 38.
relations," he said, adding, "Our own relations with China are also increasingly encouraging." 108

It was in this background that Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi visited China in December, 1988. His historic visit was in large measure successful and gave an impetus to India-China relations. Thus, the Soviet nudge was an important factor in India-China Summit of December, 1988. India's decision to go ahead to normalise its relations with China was clearly in response to changing global scenario, which was marked by easing of relations among the nations and increasing friendly relations among the nations.

There was a marked improvement in the international climate in the year 1988 confrontation gave way to dialogue presaging a trend towards a saner, safer world. The emergence of détente between the Soviet Union and the U.S. which had resulted in the INF Agreement raised the expectation of further steps towards nuclear disarmament and peace. The emerging détente also set in motion the process of conflict resolution in different parts of the world. 109 During a Lok Sabha debate on Demand of Grants of Ministry of External Affairs for the year 1988-89, the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi said that:

The world is changing very rapidly, especially international relations, in the last two or three years. New attitudes are developing, new ways of thinking are springing up and all this will pose new challenges to all countries in the world especially countries like India who play a significant role in international affairs. In such a situation, one cannot remain mired in the past. One must remain flexible. 110

110 Lok Sabha Debates, vol-38, 1988, Col 471.
Therefore, the cumulative effect of the change in the direction of international politics on India-China relations was distinctly positive. The relaxed atmosphere of international politics had a positive impact on India-China relations.

The Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev visited China in May, 1989. China and the Soviet Union announced a new starting point for the normalisation of bilateral relations on the first day of Gorbachev's historic visit to Beijing.\textsuperscript{111} China had already made a new theoretical assessment of the Soviet Union and had dropped its earlier view that the Soviet Union had degenerated into "Social imperialism". Both countries decided to reduce their armed forces on the Sino-Soviet border to a minimum. The joint communique underlined the Five Principles as constituting of the basis of their relationship. The Soviet Side favoured establishing "new political thinking" in international relation and the Chinese side in establishing a new international political order on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence.\textsuperscript{112}

By the beginning of nineties, India and China shared perceptions of the emerging world order. In August, 1990 when Iraq attacked Kuwait, the invasion provoked Strong international reaction. The two superpowers jointly condemned the aggressor and demanded unconditional Iraqi withdrawal. The U.S.A. sent a formidable force in

\textsuperscript{111} C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C.Khanna, n. 94, p.88.

\textsuperscript{112} See the text of Joint Communique in Beijing Review, no.21, 29 May 1989, pp.11-13.
the Gulf region and UN adopted resolution to end aggression.\footnote{ibid, n.35, 27 August 1990, p.4.} China in principle, opposed the involvement of foreign powers in regional conflicts. India and China were opposed to the use of force. But under the leadership of U.S.A., the western powers did use force and Iraq withdraw from Kuwait. After this both India and China were concerned at the growing assertiveness of USA in the face of declining importance of the USSR. The Chinese media noted that the world was becoming multipolar, with the two Super powers sharing more power with new emerging force such as Japan, Europe, India and Brazil. Neither Washington nor Moscow was able to unilaterally manipulate the world situation.\footnote{ibid, no.2, 14 January 1991, p.25.}

India and China opined that a new world order should be democratic, multilateral, just and fair. In August, 1991 the USSR disintegrated into many new independent states with Russia emerging as most important successor state. With this, the socialist system in Soviet Union and nearby Eastern European nations came to an end. China and India, were caught unawares by this dramatic change in international politics. The international political landscape was fast changing and India as well as China were left with no option but to adjust accordingly.\footnote{For details see, M. Rasgotra and V. D. Chopra, eds, \textit{India's Relation with Russia & China: New Phase} (New Delhi, 1997).} With the disintegration of USSR as a nodal power centre, India lost a reliable friend in international political arena. China
in consequence lost that importance it commanded in the strategic calculations of USA ever since seventies.

In December 1991, before his forthcoming visit to India, the Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng said that the present world situation was far from stable and in fact, had become even more turbulent. Li said the establishment of a new international world order was an important topic for discussion, which needs to be addressed immediately. He further stated that China and India could find common ground in this regard.

In the post Cold war era, China wanted a peaceful environment. China felt that whatever may have been the outcome of the cold war, it should acquaint itself with the new situation and consolidate its position. China's efforts to maintain peace and stability in surrounding countries turned its attention to its dominant South Asian neighbour, India. According to a leading analyst, "China particularly focused its attention or seeking out neighbouring countries with whom it had some basic territorial difference and with whom it had to face a conflictual situation during the Cold War." India-China rapprochement in the 1990s was marked by growing mutual confidence and a spirit of cooperation and accommodation.

Cooperation was facilitated by a shared perception of the opportunities and challenges in the post cold war world. A peaceful

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environment was needed for economic cooperation and development to tap the opportunities offered by globalisation. Both countries realised that "the challenge of the times is that economic struggle cannot be substituted by political struggles, nor won through tensions and confrontations. Since both countries are learning this lesson, it becomes easier for them to turn away from conflict and tension". Both were apprehensive of and wanted to resist US attempts to dominate the world order. Both looked forward to building greater economic cooperation and good relations in general with the Asia-Pacific nations. The volatile politics of the newly emergent Central Asian Republics posed an additional security threat to both these multiethnic and multi-religious countries.

In December, 1991 when the Chinese Prime Li Peng came to India, both countries emphasised on a world order which was equitable and where there is no international oligarchy, obviously the reference was to USA. It was decided that officials of both countries should keep in touch with each other on international issues. In his speech under the auspices of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations, Li Peng said Indian and Chinese leadership shared many identical views. He said while the old order had broken down, the new one was yet to take shape. Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao stated that:

We meet at a time when the world situation is subject to rapid and fundamental transformations. It is a time when imaginative

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approaches are called from the international community to build a
durable structure of peaceful and stable inter-state relations based
on mutuality of interests and credible guarantees for the survival
of mankind. We have to meet the challenges of terrorism, anarchy.
Fissiparous tendencies and violence. We must replace conflict by
dialogue and consensus. Together, India and China, must address
the common problems that lie before us - the problems of
population, environmental degradation and economic
development. I believe that the demands of our times is for
reconciliation, consensus and the cognizance that our own
interests lie in the reconciliation of the interests of all.\textsuperscript{119}

Under these circumstances, India and China stressed on
substantially improved bilateral relations and underlined the need for
stable situation around the borders. The bilateral relationship between
India and China continued to be, influenced in a large measure by the
emerging international political configuration in the post cold war world.

\textsuperscript{119} Selected Speeches of P.V. Narasimha Rao, vol. I, Publications Division,
Government Of India (New Delhi, 1992), p. 344.