CHAPTER - IV

TREATY IN OPERATION

India faced a serious crisis in 1970-'71 when 10 million refugees from Bangladesh crossed the border to India. While the international community showed indifference to India's difficulties, USA, China and Pakistan were determined to pull down the prestige of India. But the Indo-Soviet Treaty gave India the assurance needed to deal with Pakistan, without inviting Chinese or US interference. In fact, India made the Treaty a triumph by liberating Bangladesh with the help of Soviet Union.

In signing the Treaty, India did not give the USSR more than what was expected to get from their side. But India secured, perhaps, more than what she hoped for. India claimed to have ended her isolation as a result of this treaty while safeguarding her independence and territorial integrity and placed a deterrent to aggression from any quarter. The main purpose of the Treaty, from the Soviet point of view was to expand and strengthen their friendly relations and to consolidate security in Asia and throughout the world. There is no doubt that the Treaty

---

1. India, Ministry of External Affairs, Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi), Vol.XVII, No.10, October, 1971, p.248. (hereafter cited as FAR...).
strengthens positions of peaceful forces and is a major contribution to the struggle of nations for peace and security which is particularly important in the obtaining international situation. Another important aim, from the Soviet point of view, to sign this Treaty with India was its ambition to become a dominant global power and to contain Chinese influence in the region. It means, China was the main enemy of USSR. To prevent China from becoming a dominant power in Asian continent, Soviet Union joined hands with India.

In the meantime, Soviet Union considered that the Treaty was to formalise and extend Russian influence for the immediate purpose of stabilizing the situation in South Asia, both by deterring the Pakistani and their Chinese patrons, and by providing a psychological crutch to the Indians designed to forestall an emotional drift towards war on the part of New Delhi. Technically, the Soviet Union was under no greater obligation to give material assistance to India in case of attack than they had been prior to the signing of the Treaty. In fact, even in the absence of the Treaty, the Soviet umbrella was likely to have been extended to cover India if she had become involved in a war with

2. Ibid.

Pakistan supported by China. India on the other hand, had solemnly declared her intention to consult the Soviet Union in the event of any attack, thus formalising the strong Soviet political influence in the affairs of the sub-continent. Of course, the interpretation placed upon the Treaty by Mrs. Gandhi's Government was that it served to strengthen India's traditional policy of non-alignment, and indeed the treaty formally noted the Soviet "respect" for that policy. In a speech, Podgorny stated

It is noteworthy that the treaty confirms the confidence of our two countries in each other's foreign policy and in particular the respect of the Soviet Union for the policy of non-alignment pursued by the Indian Government.

The Treaty generated the most stimulating debate on foreign policy in the history of India, a debate that was conducted not in terms of the principles of non-alignment but in terms of power politics, sphere of influence and mutual gain. The test of the Treaty, according to the elite consensus, lay in how India could use it to gain its own strategic objectives in the sub-continent,

4. It is worth noting the similarity between the absence of formal military obligations on the Soviet Union in this treaty and in the Soviet-Egyptian treaty of May, 1971. In either case, however, there may exist secret protocols which spell out the Soviet commitment more explicitly.

5. See FAR, n.1.
namely, by securing Bangladesh by risking war with Pakistan, if necessary, but without getting involved in a war with China.  

A few days after the conclusion of the Treaty the Soviet Union assured President Yahya Khan that the Indo-Soviet Treaty was not directed against Pakistan and that it would not bring any change in the Soviet policy towards Pakistan. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government advised Pakistan to seek a political settlement of the East Bengal crisis and to avoid escalating tension with India. As a mark of its friendship with Pakistan, Moscow was willing to receive a special envoy of President Yahya Khan to hear Pakistan's viewpoint on the crisis in the sub-continent. The Soviet attempt was to woo Pakistan which indicated that Moscow was ready to assume the role of a mediator for a peaceful settlement of the crisis. A settlement of dispute in the sub-continent under the Soviet good offices was expected logically to boost Moscow's prestige in Pakistan and prepare the way in enlisting Islamabad for the Brezhnev project for Asian Collective Security. India did not raise any objection to the Soviet mediatory efforts provided it was done according to the legitimate rights and interests of the people of East Bengal.

Some Western observers expressed concern that India might seek "to take advantage of the assurance given by the Treaty". India, however, wanted the Soviet Union to demonstrate its friendship with India by taking certain positive steps to solve the refugee problem and to use its influence with Pakistan to secure a political settlement of Bangladesh crisis. This was highlighted by Indira Gandhi when she conferred with the Soviet leaders on the Bangladesh crisis during her visit to Moscow in the fall of September 1971. While appreciating India's point of view, Kosygin wanted "to prevent further straining of relations between India and Pakistan". Soviet Union requested both India and Pakistan to keep restraint on themselves and not to endanger peace in the sub-continent. The Soviet anxiety was to arrest any further deterioration in Indo-Pakistani relations and to find a peaceful solution for the problems confronting them. In a joint statement issued at the conclusion of the talks, both sides announced that they would seek "urgent measures" to reach a political solution "with due regard to the wishes, inalienable rights and lawful interests of the people of East Pakistan". However, the Soviets also "took into account" Mrs. Gandhi's statement of India's determination "to take all necessary measures to stop the inflow of

refugees” and to ensure their speedy return. While the Soviets would do everything possible to maintain peace on the sub-continent, they “expected” from Islamabad an early political settlement of the crisis.8

Thus even after the signing of the Treaty, the Soviet Union seemed to follow a cautious policy towards the Bangladesh issue. Soviet Union hesitated to identify herself with any particular type of political solution. It showed Soviet unwillingness to give up all its options vis-a-vis Pakistan. Soviet Union held the view that her friendship with either India or Pakistan would not be at the expense of the other. In short, Soviet Union wanted to establish her pre-eminence on the sub-continent and reduce the influence of China and the U.S. in Pakistan for this purpose. Soviet Union had to maintain leverage with both Pakistan and India.

Bangladesh Crisis

War was very much in the air by October and November 1971. As Pakistan’s hostility and threats to India continued Mrs. Gandhi, in response to an invitation from the Soviet Government, paid a visit to the USSR from 27 to 29 September 1971. The purpose of the visit was to continue the talks that had begun in New Delhi in August in the same year at the highest level. The talks covered

many important subjects relating to the Indo-Soviet bi-lateral relations, particularly the Bangladesh Crisis. Indira Gandhi returned from Moscow with the assurance of Soviet help if she was compelled to intervene militarily in Bangladesh. But when the level of tension rose, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Firyubin arrived in India on 22 October for talks with Indian leaders which were in accordance with the obligation for "consultations" stated in Article IX of the Treaty which stipulated that

...each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other party. 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 such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries. 9.

To reinforce the subject of consultations concerning "effective measures to remove the threat to India, Soviet Air Marshall, Kutakhov arrived in New Delhi shortly after Firyubin's departure. The Izvestia Political Observer, V. Kudryavtsev in his talks with the representatives of the Indian Press, described the struggle in

9. The Text of the Treaty, See Appendix No.II.
Bangladesh has "a national liberation movement with elements of a civil war."¹⁰

Statements in support of the Indian position were accompanied by considerable increase in the flow of arms from the Soviet Union to India. In the period between August and the end of November 1971, eight shiploads of Soviet arms were reported to have arrived in India¹¹. In fact, Soviet Union was publicly counselling against war, and at the same time ensured that India would be well-armed should it find a military solution necessary.

By November 1971, Soviet commentators were echoing the Indian line that the refugee problem was 'no longer an internal affair of Pakistan'. Meanwhile, the influx of refugees from across the borders had created a big security problem for India. As the situation continued to deteriorate, India decided to take some effective steps in solving the year long problem of the East Bengalis. But before doing so Mrs. Gandhi undertook a six-country tour in October and November in order to explain personally the realities of the situation and to influence world opinion to exert itself towards securing a political settlement.

¹⁰ Kudryavtsev was also the first Soviet Political leader to describe the Bangladesh struggle as a war of National liberation. See in Times of India (New Delhi), 16 November 1971 and Jagdish Vibhakar, A Model Relationship: 25 years of Indo-Soviet Diplomatic Ties (New Delhi, 1972), pp.53-54.

Mrs. Gandhi's next major step after visiting Moscow was to make a diplomatic tour to the West. She obviously desired to emphasise her independent role with regard to the Super Powers by undertaking so soon after the Indo-Soviet pact a trip to the major capitals of the Western world, Brussels, Bonn, Paris, London and Washington. The chief aims of the tour were to outline the evolution of Indian policy to the West and to show that the Indo-Soviet treaty did not automatically damage relations between India and the West. In Washington Mrs. Gandhi stated that "...while under the treaty we shall consult with the Soviet Union should any dangerous situation arise, what decision we take, what steps we take, well, that is entirely a matter for India to decide by herself" 12.

As the internal situation in Pakistan deteriorated and the demand for autonomy in East Pakistan grew leading to the crisis, the Indian Government expected that the U.S. would modify its arms aid policy to bring about a settlement in Pakistan. But the U.S. administration refused to use aid as a lever to bring about a political settlement in Pakistan, and when questioned on this attitude by the Indians, the American officials reminded them that the Indian leaders had always protested against any strings being attached to aid.

The crisis in the sub-continent in 1971 was, of course, embarrassing to the United States than to the Soviet Union. But President Nixon was unwilling to support the Soviet efforts for a peaceful settlement of the crisis as he feared that a support to the Soviet mediatory efforts in resolving the dispute would increase the Soviet prestige in Pakistan. In 1966, the Chinese leaders resented the Soviet mediation of the Indo-Pakistan conflict. Their opinion of the Tashkent Declaration had not changed; neither had their resentment of Soviet coddling of India.

The Nixon administration continued to ship arms to Pakistan to boost her military capacity and gave unreserved support to Islamabad on all matters directly affecting the sub-continent. Thus it was obvious that the U.S. military aid to Pakistan caused great harm to India because that emboldened Pakistan to launch aggression against India, and use American Sabre Jets, B-57 bombers and Patton tanks freely in the 1971 Indo-Pak war. Pakistan was given military hardware worth 15.40 million from the U.S. at a throw-away price, as the market value of these arms was estimated to be 150 million. This deal consisted of 18 supersonic interceptors, 78 57 bombers, 6F-104 jets and 300 armoured personnel carriers, which were termed as "replacements"\(^1\)\(^3\) probably to stave off opposition in the Senate. On 13 April 1971 the State Department

\(^{13}\) Times of India, 10 October, 1970.
conceded that the United States had been selling approximately 2.5 million worth ammunition per year to Pakistan since 1967 as "non lethal" equipment.\(^{14}\)

Even when the US Administration had conceded that US F-16 aircraft tanks and other deadly weapons were being used to crush the movement in East Pakistan, arms continued to reach the military dictator of Pakistan. In a testimony before the Senate Sub-Committee of refugees, the General Accounting Office, watchdog of US Congress, admitted that the US Airforce was air lifting to Pakistan on a priority basis, five lakh dollars worth of aviation spare parts in July 1971\(^ {15}\). This is how during the Bangladesh crisis, Washington was doing everything possible to escalate tension and there by create conditions for an armed conflict between India and Pakistan.\(^ {16}\).

The American public opinion was greatly critical of the stand taken by the U.S. Government in the conflict between West Pakistan and East Bengal. It is a well-known fact that in August 1971 the House of Representatives passed a resolution calling for the suspension of U.S. military and economic assistance to Islamabad.

\(^{14}\) Leela Yadava, "India's Reaction to U.S. Military Aid to Pakistan", in Surendra Chopra (ed.), *Studies in India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi, 1971), p.86.


\(^{16}\) *Ibid.*
Early in October the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate also proposed a ban on all forms of U.S. aid to Pakistan until conditions in East Pakistan were suitable enough for the return of the refugees. Many prominent Senators insisted on tougher measures against Pakistan. Senator Edmond Muskie, the Democratic Senator, charged the U.S. Administration with deceptions and half truths in its attitude towards the East Pakistan crisis. Criticising Nixon's evenhandedness and self-righteousness, he pleaded for diplomatic support to India. The Department of State also did not contemplate to antagonise India.

President Nixon, however, in his efforts to help General Yahya Khan and his military regime, criticized India severely. While admitting that India had grievances in relation to the crisis in East Pakistan, he stated that it was difficult for the US to understand India's recourse to military force to deal with the situation. A postcript to this statement was issued from the White House to the effect that President Nixon was not anti-Indian, but that he was 'just annoyed' with India for using military force against Pakistan before peaceful means had been exhausted. It would have been interesting at this point in time to have had access to the reports from his embassies in India and Pakistan.

19. Ibid., pp.145-146.
20. Ibid., p.146.
On the otherhand, the US attitude hardened towards India. This attitude could be traced to President Nixon's perception, for, his liking for Pakistan and hatred of India, were well known. Moreover, he was using Pakistan as a means to improving relations with China.

By the year 1971 a consistent pattern of the American policy towards China had evolved. President Nixon accorded China the big power status in Asia and encouraged her to play the role of a Great Power. These gestures were to reinforce the anti-Soviet attitude of the Chinese leaders. This in turn guaranteed the possibility that, in future the Chinese support be enlisted for the US policy in the region.

Less than a week after Kissinger's meeting with Chou-En-lai, Communist China abandoned her cautious policy towards the East Bengal issue and invited Pakistan to send a military mission to discuss the possibility of arms aid to Pakistan. The Chinese leadership seized this opportunity to reinforce its earlier stand on the Bangladesh crisis. The Chinese version was that the Bangladesh crisis was no longer a matter concerned with other nations but an internal affairs of Pakistan. The Chinese indirectly referred to India's "ulterior motives". And Chinese assistance was assured, if Pakistan was subjected to foreign aggression, "in their just struggle to safeguard state sovereignty and national independence".21

The Indo-Soviet Treaty was felt in the United States as a threat to President Nixon's plan to divide the sphere of influence in Asia with Communist China. The Treaty had its impact on the Sino-American relations with Pakistan. As a result of the Treaty Pakistan was inclined to follow Soviet advice to seek a peaceful settlement of the East Bengal crisis. It was an attempt to exercise the Soviet influence in India. The United States and the Communist China on the other hand, were alarmed by the prospect of Pakistan's accepting the Soviet good offices to resolve the dispute in the sub-continent. They were, therefore, willing to co-ordinate their policy to encourage Pakistan to resolve the crisis in her own way. On 12 October 1971 the US Ambassador to India, Keating, conveyed Mrs. Gandhi an American warning that if India did not "cease aid to dissidents in East Pakistan", Pakistan would attack her from the West. The United States also tried to frighten India by raising the threat of a Chinese invasion. On the eve of his departure for Peking in October 1971 Henry Kissinger warned the Indian Ambassador to the United States, Jha, that if New Delhi became involved in a war with both Pakistan and Communist China, she could not count on the US aid\textsuperscript{22}. It is therefore, safe to assume that Kissinger went to Beijing mainly to co-ordinate the Sino-American policy towards the sub-continent and to encourage China to give up her reserved attitude towards the East Bengal issue.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Hindustan Times} (New Delhi), 1 January, 1972.
**Indo-U.S. talks**

When Mrs. Gandhi visited the United States during the first week of November (3-7), Kissinger, felt that Chinese interference in the sub-continent's crisis was improbable, but he repeated that the United States would not aid India if China did undertake military action. India, therefore, was fully convinced that under no circumstances would India receive help from the United States against Beijing. The US public opinion was against external involvements and Nixon's personal preference for Pakistan, and the importance of his China initiative still continued. On the other hand, Mrs. Gandhi made no promise that she would not attack Pakistan, and stressed her belief that Peking would not intervene. Thus, Nixon's aim had been obviously to deter New Delhi by pointing to the danger represented by a possible military response from Beijing.

Mrs. Gandhi held fruitless conversations with President Nixon, who was in violent mood against India. Bhutto went to China to seek support in the event of armed conflict with India. Returning home, he said that China would intervene if Pakistan were attacked, though the Chinese gave no assurance to Islamabad regarding their intervention on behalf of Pakistan.

There was also no expression of support to the territorial integrity of Pakistan. At a reception given by Bhutto, Chinese Foreign Minister Chi Pengfei said:

Our Pakistan friends may rest assured that should Pakistan be subjected to foreign aggression, the Chinese Government and people will, as always, resolutely support the Pakistan Government in their just struggle to defend their state sovereignty and national independence.

The Chinese were resolved not to take any measures against India in the event of an Indo-Soviet Treaty. At the time of the signing of the Treaty in August Gromyko was reported to have assured New Delhi that in the event of open hostilities, the Soviets would manoeuvre their troops along the frontier of Sinkiang Province, so as to keep the Chinese troops stationary there. A few days later Lix. Xiannian, while denouncing the Soviet Union for supporting India and threatening China, said:

We maintain that the dispute should be settled by two parties concerned through peaceful consultations. The Chinese Government resolutely support the Pakistani Government and the Pakistani people in their just struggle against foreign aggression in defence of the state sovereignty and national independence.

The Soviet Stand

On 24 October, Pravda, accused Western media of making dishonest attempts to shift the blame on India. On 11 November, Marshal Greckho, Soviet Defence Minister, assured Indian Ambassador Dr. K.S. Shelvankar that the Soviet Union would act as per the provisions of the treaty. Moscow rejected a call by Nixon that the Soviet Union should do everything to prevent escalation of the border clashes. Washington was, indeed, ignoring the basic issue—the denial of democracy in East Pakistan.

In November 1971, the Soviet Union found fault with the Pakistan for displaying "Crush India" placards and provoking daily clashes on the border. It held Yahya's measures responsible for the creation of the critical situation in the sub-continent, thereby castigating those who equated India and Pakistan in the matter. Soviet Union asserted that the situation arose due to the refugee influx caused by Pakistan's military administration.

In Pravda commentary entitled "Indian Sub-continent Needs Peace", A. Mollennikov and V. Shurygin blamed the Pakistani military administration for the political crisis in East Pakistan which was said to have been the consequence of its refusal to hand over power to the duly elected representatives of the people. The East Pakistani refugee problem, both in scale and in nature, they stated, had become, an increasing tension in the relations between the two states and posed "a direct threat of a military conflict".
Realizing the harmful consequences-economic, social and political-of an armed conflict, the Soviet commentators urgently called for a political solution of the crisis. They pinned their hopes on the sober voices "heard of late" not only from Mrs. Gandhi but also "on the part of individual politicians and statesman in Pakistan".27.

India was, however, getting seriously perturbed by the intolerable situation which was aggravated by the massive exodus of refugees into India. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, stated in the Parliament that

... at great cost to ourselves, we have been shouldering an intolerable burden of looking after nearly 10 million terror-stricken men, women and children, who have fled from Pakistani oppression. The refugees want to return to their homes under credible guarantees of safety and human dignity .... Pakistan's armed forces have been shelling our border areas inflicting damage on life and property.28.

Soviet Union criticised the unhelpful attitude of USA to the urgent need for a political settlement of Bangladesh crisis. Reporting on Mrs. Gandhi's talks with President Nixon it quoted an American commentator saying that the two leaders failed to agree on measures to mitigate the present difficulties in the sub-continent. It carried another comment from the American press to suggest that


the USA gave no indication of its readiness to influence Yahya Khan in favour of a political settlement. The TASS carried a report of Mrs. Gandhi’s address to the Washington Press Club in the course of which she was quoted as saying that the essence of the problem was to settle relations not between India and Pakistan, but between West and East Pakistan. It also gave due emphasis to Mrs. Gandhi’s statement that India would not pull back its troops from the border because it was India which had lived through two aggressions Pakistan making it incumbent upon the country to take all necessary steps not to be caught unprepared.

Speaking about the Sino-American support for Pakistan on 5 November, President Yahya Khan stated that Indo-Pakistan relations had reached the "point of no return" and confirmed that war was the only possibility between the two countries. On the following day he assured his countrymen, that in the event of an Indo-Pakistan war, China will intervene on behalf of Pakistan. Z.A. Bhutto also predicted that the "future war against India will be a house to house conflict." Thereafter, Pakistan proclaimed emergency in the country and called up her reservists, indicating that the war with India was not very far off. By that time Western newspapers also began to report that Pakistan was


preparing to launch pre-emptive attacks on India to cripple her air-power.

**Indo-Pak War of 1971**

All efforts of India for a peaceful settlement of the East Pakistan problems were bound to fail. By the end of November, the Sino-Pak-US axis was forged to the satisfaction of Pakistan. Confident of getting help from the United States and China, Pakistan started vigorous troop movements towards the Indian borders in East and West\(^31\). After declaring national emergency in Pakistan instances of intrusion by the Pakistan Airforce in the Indian territory were reported in the third week of November. While tension continued to mount President Yahya Khan declared that he would himself go to the front to fight the war with India. His 'war-in-ten-days' statement of 25 November 1971, he said that, "in ten days, I might not be herein Rawalpindi. I will be off lighting a war"\(^32\).

Nixon went a step further by accusing India of frustrating all efforts to find a settlement. Meanwhile, the United States suspended the licensing of arms shipments to India. It was

\(^{31}\) B.L.Kak, *The Fall of Gilgit: The untold Story of Indo-Pak Affairs from Jinnah to Bhutto (1947 to July 1977)* (New Delhi, 1977), pp.74-76.

declared that no further export licences were to be issued. The US action was obviously an attempt to initiate further aid to Pakistan which was facing difficult military situation.

Alarmed by Pakistan's escalation of tension, Soviet Union warned Islamabad against involving India in East Bengal crisis. Nevertheless, Moscow once more endeavoured to persuade Pakistan to resolve the crisis peacefully and suggested that the Brezhnev project for Asian Collective Security offered the "enduring basis" for peace and stability in the Asian continent. When Pakistan did not respond to the Soviet offer Moscow viewed it as a challenge to its policy. The Soviet Union now lost her hope of a peaceful solution on the crisis and decided to support the steps taken by India to defend the nation's frontiers. A Soviet military mission led by Air Marshal Koutakhov arrived to discuss new Soviet arms aid to India. In Moscow, the Soviet Defence Minister, Marshal Greckho, assured the Indian envoy that in the event of a war India would receive "every assistance in keeping with the Indo-Soviet Treaty".\(^{33}\)

With Pakistan's ill-conceived blitzkrieg and reckless strafing of a number of airfields in North-West India including Kashmir in December 1971 the armed clashes on the Indo-Pak borders in the east turned into an all-out shooting war between the two countries. Inspiring his country's "120 million mujahids" to wage a "jehad against the Indian kafirs", President Yahya Khan declared.

\(^{33}\) Hindustan Times, 12 November, 1971.
"Pakistani's friends would come to her aid .... Pakistan counted on the support of China in the past"[^34].

Recalling those days, T.N.Kaul, the then Foreign Secretary wrote:

The Bangladesh war was an example of how calm, cool and determined leadership with confidence in the civil and military authorities and complete co-operation between them, can produce results. Throughout the Bangladesh struggle for freedom, we used to meet every day, sometimes twice a day, to co-ordinate our thinking and plans and watch their full charges as Prime-Minister and showed remarkable qualities of leadership[^35].

Pakistan formally declared war on India on the morning of 4 December 1971. India responded in full force. In such a situation, it was not possible for the Soviet Union to adopt an equivocal attitude. Apart from military support and assistance, Moscow rendered valuable political support in the UN. The Soviet delegate to the Security Council, Yakov Malik insisted on his proposal that the representative of Bangladesh should be invited to take part in the deliberations of the Council. Above all, he used veto power, which set at naught all attempts aimed at censuring India or imposing a solution on her. It was realized that with the emergence of an independent Bangladesh, friendly to both India and


the Soviet Union, Moscow would be in a better position to meet the challenge posed by Sino-US detente. A more satisfactory balance of power in the Asian continent could thereby be preserved. APN commentator, Mikhail Krylov, in his commentary entitled "Stop Bloodshed and Ensure Non-Involvement of Outside Forces", emphatically asserted that apart from "purely human motives", Soviet leaders had "other important reasons" for preserving peace in the Indian sub-continent. He noted with concern the support given by the USA and China's "open encouragement" to the dangerous actions of Islamabad, which had disregarded the sober appeals of the USSR in the matter. He adjudged that the involvement of the outside powers in the conflict would bring about a further aggravation of the situation and declared that developments "in close proximity to its southern borders" could not but infringe upon the interests of the USSR's security.\textsuperscript{36}

Bangladesh Issue in UN.

On 3 December Pakistan made a pre-emptive air attack on six Indian airports causing considerable damage to property. The Indian government registered a formal complaint with the Secretary General U Thant, to this effect.\textsuperscript{37} India was not prepared to take

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Patriot (New Delhi), 3 December 1971.
  \item \textsuperscript{37} See report of the UN Secretary General relating to the situation in East Bengal to the Security UN, Document, Security Council Official Record, S/10410/3 December 1971, also see S/10410/Add. 4 December 1971. (hereafter cited as SCOR...).  
\end{itemize}
the matter to the Security Council because there were unhappy experiences in the past on similar occasions against Pakistani aggression.

An emergency session of the Security Council, was held on 4 December at the request of nine countries: Argentina, Belgium, Burundi, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Somalia, the UK and the USA \(^{38}\). At the very commencement of the meeting, the Soviet and Polish delegates proposed that the representative of Bangladesh should also be invited to present his nation's case. The Chinese delegate opposed it on the ground that participation of 'this rebellious organisation' would be equal to interference in this internal affairs of Pakistan. Pakistani delegate threatened to withdraw from the Council deliberations if Bangladesh representative was invited to address the Security Council. The American spokesman also opposed this proposal. The matter was not pursued further.

From the beginning of the war, Soviet Union realized the dangers inherent in the Chinese involvement in the conflict. It came out strongly in support of India both in and out of the United Nations. It issued a statement, to contain the conflicts in which it appealed to all governments" to keep away" from involvement in the Indo-Pakistan war. It blamed Pakistan for the war and warned

\(^{38}\) See report by the Secretary General on the situation along the ceasefire line in Kashmir, SCOR, S/10412/4, December, 1971 and S/10412/add. 1,5, December 1971.
that "the Soviet Government finds it necessary to state to the Pakistan leaders with all clarity about the grave responsibility that they assume following this dangerous course.". Soviet Union found fault with the Pakistani Government for trying to blame India for the "growing resistence by the East Pakistan population to the mass repressions and persecutions", and for aggravating relations with India by building up military preparations. It accused Islamabad of starting the war by bombing and strafing a number of towns in north-western India. Soviet Union also warned the Governments of all countries of the world against "involvement in the conflict" which would lead to "a further aggrevation of the situation in the Hindustan Peninsula". In New Delhi, the Soviet Ambassador, Pegov provided close contact and co-ordination with the governments of the two countries.

The representative of Pakistan in the UN, Shahi, stated regarding the Indo-Soviet treaty and of the Soviet supplies of military hardware to India. He criticised Moscow for "making it possible" for India to launch "subversion and aggression" against Pakistan and yet seeking to invoke the Tashkent spirit. He took note of the Tass statement of 5 December which in effect said that "Pakistan was following a dangerous course in defending itself and resisting a military occupation and implied that Pakistan's action

even posed a threat to the Soviet Union's security interests". Shahi also found fault with Moscow for referring to Pakistani attacks on 3 December and ignoring, as he said, "large scale attacks on East Pakistan from all sides, which commenced on 21 November". The Soviet representative, Malik, refused to enter into an argument with Shahi but simply quoted the following innocuous excerpts from the Tass statement to refute Shahi's accusations:

Guided by concern for the maintenance of peace, the Soviet Government repeatedly expressed ... its concern over the situation in the East Pakistan that had developed in the Hindustan Peninsula in connection with the events in East Pakistan. The Soviet Government viewed the Pakistani arguments from a different perspective and acted in accordance with the principles of humanitarianism, wishing the Pakistan people well in the solution in a democratic way, of the complex problems facing the country.... In the face of the military threat now hanging over Hindustan, to which not a single peace-loving country can remain indifferent, the Soviet Union calls for a speedy end to the bloodshed and for a political settlement in East Pakistan on the basis of respect for the lawful rights and interests of its people.40

During the Indo-Pakistani war, China stepped up its political and diplomatic support to Pakistan. China lent strong diplomatic support to Pakistan in the United Nations. Its delegate branded India as an aggressor in East Pakistan. China voted in the Security Council in favour of the US resolutions asking for ceasefire, withdrawal of troops and posting of UN observers along

the Indo-Pakistani border. Explaining his vote on the resolution the Chinese delegate observed:

The present armed aggression by the Indian government against Pakistan is being carried out with the connivance, support and shielding of the Soviet Union. Countless facts have proved this. It has encouraged India in its scheming activities to subvert and dismember Pakistan, and has at the same time openly exerted all kinds of pressures on the Pakistan Government.

China's reaction was similar to that of the USA, on 4 December itself, China outrightly condemned India for her "armed aggression against Pakistan".

In the Security Council on 4 December China and the US took a united stand against India and the USSR. Both the Indian and the Soviet delegates requested the Council to first listen to the representative of Bangladesh. USA made India accountable to the tragedy in South Asia and US representative George Bush asked for immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of troops from both sides. In this proposal, while Pakistan accepted it, Bush suggested posting of UN observers along the Indo-Pak borders until the voluntary return of the refugees. The Chinese delegate, who spoke strongly

42. SCOR, S/PV, 1607, p.121.
43. Peking Review (Beijing), Vol.14, No.50, 10 December 1971, p.3.
44. SCOR, n.40, pp.19, 22-23.
in support of Bush, alleged that India "provoked large-scale armed conflict" and dismissed its plea, that it acted in self-defence, as "a sheer gangster logic". Huang Hua asked the Council to strongly "condemn the aggressive acts of the Indian Government... perpetrated with the support of the social imperialists" 45.

When the US delegate moved his draft resolution, it was supported by China and vetoed by the USSR. Justifying his veto, the Soviet delegate observed that the passage of any such one-sided resolution would have shifted responsibility "from the guilty to the innocent" and "justified military dictatorship against national liberation movement and crushing of democracy" 46.

Later, on 5 December, the Soviet delegate brought his own draft resolution demanding a political settlement in East Pakistan and termination of all acts of violence, which had led to the straining of the situation. But the Soviet Union failed to adopt this resolution due to lack of adequate support. The same day, when another draft resolution was introduced in UN asking for a simple cease-fire, eight non-permanent members of the Council opposed it and the Soviet delegate vetoed it on the ground that it was not linked to "the elimination of the root cause of the conflict",

45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
i.e., "the will of the East Pakistani population as expressed in December 1970 elections"\(^{47}\).

The Chinese draft proposal, which consisted of condemnation of India, was in some respect similar to that of the US, and vetoed earlier by the USSR. It was not put to vote. The Chinese delegate, however, used the opportunity to decry the USSR, as the "supporter, encourager and protector of the Indian aggression against Pakistan"\(^{48}\).

The US Government, on the other hand, brought up a resolution in UN Security Council seeking immediate ceasefire. It claimed that India had attacked Pakistan without justifiction, and that Moscow, while failing to restrain India, was in fact promoting its own interests. Washington took immediate steps against New Delhi in two directions. It increased pressures on India and the USSR on the diplomatic front and simultaneously mobilised world opinion in favour of Pakistan through a resolution in the General Assembly. The USA took steps not "to make it easier for the Indian Government to sustain its military efforts". On 6 December, she suspended even her general economic assistance, which amounted to one-third of America's aid to India in that year. In an apparent


\(^{48}\) Ibid.
bid to put pressure on New Delhi, several allies of Washington (Belgium, West Germany and Japan) suspended their economic aid to India. Washington also cut off an aid package to India. The Soviet delegate at UN, Yakov Malik vetoed the US Resolution on the ground that it was unrealistic, since it did not address itself on the cause of the conflict, namely, the repression in East Pakistan. While the US Ambassador to the UN called India the "aggressor", Kissinger threatened that Nixon's proposed visit for the Moscow summit might have to be re-considered. In the Security Council, the USSR vetoed three resolutions backed by the United States and China calling for a ceasefire and withdrawal of troops, and it fully supported the Indian position. This was the 106th veto used by the Soviet Union in the 26 years of history of the UN. As regards the Soviet veto Indians felt that never was Big Power veto used for a better cause than the one exercised by the Soviet Union in the Security Council on Bangladesh issue.

In the UN Debate, the Soviet representative, Yakov Malik refuted the charge levelled by China against the Indo-Soviet Treaty. He said:

49. Statesman (New Delhi), 7 December 1971.

50. Times of India, 6 December, 1971. Also see S/1606. 4 December, 1971, p. 172.
We are proud to have friendship with India and we cherish it like the apple of our eyes. This is Lenin's dream that we have realized. The relations between India and the Soviet Union are genuinely fraternal. China says that India wants to attack it, but who will believe it. It is another fairy story for children.

The test of any Treaty or agreement between the two sovereign countries come in times of danger or difficulty to either or both. The relevance of the Treaty was going to be proved at India's door step. Earlier, Indian Foreign Minister had already told Parliament's Consultative Committee for External Affairs that all relevant articles of the Treaty would be invoked to deal with aggression and that India would count upon the Soviet Union for support in the event of an armed conflict.

While the Security Council was in session debating the US resolution, the US Seventh Fleet 'Enterprise' headed by the nuclear-powered air craft carrier moved into the Bay of Bengal on 13 December. The US resorted to gun boat diplomacy to threaten India as well as the Soviet Union. At the same time Soviet Union informed India that the Soviet naval units were being ordered into


53. The United States followed against the weaker nations as a part of US policy. It was the intimidation of the weaker state by means of superior US naval display.
the same area as a countermeasure. To India, Soviet Union's firm stand on her side, confirmed the efficacy of the Friendship Treaty.

The End of the War

The Soviet Deputy Prime Minister, Kuznetsov came to Delhi on 12 December 1971 and remained there till the end of the war. The Pakistani forces in Bangladesh over 90,000 men surrendered before the combined Indian and Mukthi Bahini forces. In a spectacular move to prevent the internationalisation of issues, Mrs. Gandhi immediately announced a unilateral cease-fire. Bhutto remarked about the failure: "We have not militarily been defeated by India, we have been defeated by Russia."

The war went India's way proving India superior in air, on land and at sea. Upon actual surrender by the Pakistani commander, India declared a unilateral cease-fire on the Western Front effective from 17 December from 8 P.M. President Yahya Khan

---

54. Basant Chatterjee, n.51, pp.135-36.


57. Times of India, 12 December 1971.
conveyed his acceptance of the cease-fire through US and Swiss diplomatic channels in New Delhi.

The war against Pakistan was a triumph of India's leadership, military tactics and civil organisation. Indira Gandhi's determined leadership played a crucial role in India's victory. The Pakistani forces were indeed ready to surrender nearly a week after the outbreak of the war. Yahya Khan, however, held back in the hope that the Chinese and American aid would come. It is not certain whether China ever thought of military intervention. In any case, it was deterred from doing so by reports that the USSR would take diversionary action in Sinkiang. Beijing could not ignore the fact that there had been skirmishes between its forces and Soviet troops along Chinese borders during 1968-1971.

The decisive end of the war facilitated recognition of Bangladesh. The first Big Power to announce its recognition of the new state was the Soviet Union. The war ended on 25 January 1972. It was also widely recognised that the liberation of Bangladesh was made possible because of the moral support extended by the Soviet Union. 58.

58. Ibid., 17 December 1971.
The Hindustan Times of 18 December 1971 said:

The Soviet Union had stood by this country and has shown genuine understanding of the underlying forces at work in South Asia. The Indo-Soviet friendship endangers none and is not a threat that has to be countered. Swaran Singh, the External Affairs Minister, said in an interview with the Soviet news agency Tass on 17 February 1972, that the Indo-Soviet Treaty has shown that it is an effective instrument for the maintenance of universal peace and international security and development not only "of our two countries but the region as a whole. The Treaty is, in a true sense, a Treaty of Peace".

The 1971 war really proved how the Indo-Soviet Treaty was effective to overcome external dangers and protect India's national interest. India could successfully overcome the danger only by the whole-hearted support of the Soviet Union. This war boosted India's prestige in the international areas which had considerably came down due to its humiliating defeat during Chinese aggression.

But it could not be denied that the dismemberment of Pakistan might have wounded the feelings of Pakistanis. Since then, they have been actively supporting the secessionist movements in India especially in the North East India.

The Bangladesh war also resulted in an enhancement of Soviet Union's international image, especially its position in Asia. The signing of the Treaty provided a solid basis to

further the relations between India and the Soviet Union in an unprecedented scale. India could effectively exploit the provisions of the Treaty to get security, economic and other needs till the fall of Mrs. Gandhi from power in March 1977. In a sense, the Treaty has been advantageous to both India and the Soviet Union. Its relevance and significance has been emphasized every year since the Treaty was signed. Despite the controversial implications in the different clauses of the Treaty, it has been best suited to India's national interest as a developing nation.