CHAPTER VII

NON-ALIGNED PERCEPTIONS

The significance of a Treaty and its impact on the foreign policy of the contracting parties should be studied in terms of its provisions and the circumstances under which the Treaty was signed. But a significant factor to be reckoned with, is the performance of the two parties subsequent to the signing of the Treaty with regard to the implementation of its provisions. Hence it is not the letter of a treaty but the performance of that is important. This chapter attempts to analyse the impact of the Indo-Soviet Treaty on India's Non-aligned Policy and also to know whether the signing of a bi-lateral treaty was a deviation from India's policy of non-alignment.

No foreign policy can survive in a rapidly changing world unless it adapts itself to changing international situations. From this point of view, non-alignment can claim to have survived the pulls and pressures from many quarters and has become a viable policy especially suited to the needs and aspirations of the Third World. It is so mainly because after emerging from the shackles of imperialism and colonialism, the newly independent countries needed peace more than anything else in order to make up for lost time. Non-alignment served it's purpose during the time of Jawaharlal Nehru as a "positive and constructive" dynamism of foreign policy.
of India to minimize the conflicting elements and encouraging the forces of peace in the clear ages of international politics.

The non-aligned movement is a movement made up of a large number of countries widely differing in size, level of development, strategic location and importance. In such a gathering it is but natural that there should be differences of opinion and approach to national and international questions. Since the first Non-Aligned Conference held in Belgrade in 1961, different leaders have emphasized different sets of goals to be achieved by each nation. Notwithstanding their differences in approach and attitudes, the non-aligned countries have consistently sought to evolve a common ethos and common objectives through the policy of non-alignment. Foremost among these common objectives is reform of the present international political and economic system. The non-aligned countries have refused to accept a world system dominated either by the West or by the East or by both. In fact, it is possible to trace the evolution of non-alignment to a justifiable impatience with the world political and economic system as it has obtained.

1. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs used the expression in order to contradistinguish India's policy from neutrality, Constituent Assembly of India (legislative), Debates, Vol.2, No.2, (New Delhi, 1949), Cols. 1257-62.

The policy of non-alignment evolved at a time when the world was getting divided into two powerful military blocs, each headed by a super power, with the dangerous possibility of a major break down. India had pursued a policy of 'equidistance' between the two power blocs in the 1950's, and an informal 'bi-alignment' with both the super powers during much of the 1960's. In contrast, India's relations with the super powers in the 1970's were characterized by the establishment of an institutionalized security relationship with one, the Soviet Union, and for the first time a basic conflict of interests with the other, the United States.

India's Conception of Non-Alignment

India was one of the first countries to gain independence after the second world war and Jawaharlal Nehru was the first important Asian leader to articulate the idea underlying non-alignment. The main principles and objectives of the foreign policy of India remain relevant - peace and co-operation - especially in Asia and the sub-continent, elimination of racialism and remnants of colonialism, support to the newly independent nations and collective efforts with the developing nations to reduce the vicious development gap and above all, the perennial and complicated tasks

4. Ibid.
of advancing national interests. Ever since the liquidation of colonialism from the subcontinent and emergence of India as an independent nation state, non-alignment has become a basic foreign policy strategy. The international environmental contingencies made non-alignment the only "rational choice of strategy".

Nehru made non-alignment a long-term strategy of India's foreign policy. He focused non-alignment not as a policy of expediency, but raised it to the level of an abstract theory. Just before independence, Jawaharlal Nehru declared: "We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale". If a world war came any way, India was to be guided by its own interests. We are not going to join a war if we can help it; and we are going to join the side which is to our interest when the time comes to make the choice, declared Nehru a little later.

As a matter of fact, our national interest can be best safeguarded by pursuing a policy of non-alignment. The same interest dictated that India retained its own independence of judgement rather than being subordinated to alliance politics. Our national interest


basically demanded strengthening of our national security and maximization of economic development.

Non-alignment has to be even more a flexible equation dependent on changing circumstances and the particular impact of the policies of the powers on the national interests of the country. Thus Mrs. Gandhi wrote: "We must have a certain amount of flexibility and manoeuvrability, but ... it must be consistent with national interest and honour and we cannot manoeuvre or change where basic convictions and basic ideals, aims and objectives are concerned". But non-alignment is not a bi-lateral relationship but a multilateral one: it is an international commitment. One must judge each act of omission and commission of the super powers on its merits and not on a comparative basis of the overall past record of the super powers or their current record and, above all, not on the basis of their relationship with oneself.

Non-alignment is a dynamic policy. Any concept that cannot stand the stresses and strains, pulls and pressures of a fast changing and dynamic society is bound to fail sooner or later. In order to survive in a multi-dimensional world, a concept must possess some basic principles which can be successfully adapted

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and applied to the changing environment. Shifts and changes have occurred as and when demanded by the exigencies of time and situation. Non-alignment was, thus, construed to serve the purpose of a rational and realistic policy. It is right to remember the words of Mrs. Gandhi that: the non-alignment does not mean that we should have no friendship with any country. It means that each issue should be judged purely on its merits. India would not allow its independence to be affected in any way. Furthermore, it felt that non-alignment was India's policy option: 'I think it is the only hard-headed, practical path that is open to any country which wants to keep itself independent.'

In internal and external compulsions had forced India to follow a policy of non-alignment. At the time of independence Prime-Minister Nehru believed that a policy of non-alignment was very good for India to get economic assistance from both blocs. He did not see why India should act in one way or other or why she should become a part of the conflict taking place between the power blocs. "We have to keep aloof from that", he said, "and at the same time develop the closest relations with all nations of the world.”


Thus from the very beginning India tried to escape from the cold war power politics and kept away from the two power blocs. India realized the fact that "alignment with one bloc means enmity with the other".

India's non-alignment sought to promote the furtherence of her national interest based on peace and justice. India has been following the policy of non-alignment in order to keep the freedom and independence to judge each and every issue purely on its merits. The Indian leaders understood non-alignment unambiguously that the conduct of foreign policy was not an exercise in sainthood and, therefore, pursuit of national interests should have primacy over all other objectives. National interest of India, is determined by her geo-political, economic and other considerations obtaining at a particular point of time. The core of the policy of the non-alignment consists in a country's urge to safeguard its independence, national integrity and national interests and in its freedom to choose its own path in international development.\textsuperscript{13}

Non-alignment was non-bloc in character and for India it was never been a policy of equidistance from power blocs. India has established her relationship with other countries without

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considering whether that country or countries are aligned with either of the power blocs. India's relationship was in accordance with the needs and requirements of her national interests. As a result of the close relationship between the socialist state systems and non-aligned countries Soviet Union held the view that non-alignment is a "natural ally"\(^{14}\) of the Soviet bloc. Jawaharlal Nehru addressing the American Congress on 13 October 1949, said that, "we are neither blind to reality nor do we propose to acquiesce in any challenge to man's freedom from where ever it may come. Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral"\(^{15}\).

India's non-alignment, thus, rooted in her national interest which consists in economic development and independence of action internationally. It is meant a non-bloc policy, rejecting the concept of "natural ally" on the one hand and the theory of mechanical equidistance from the other blocs.

**Soviet Understanding of Non-Alignment**

For several years after India's independence, i.e., the

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14. Since the 1973 Algiers Summit of the Non-Aligned Countries Fidel Castro of Cuba led a radical group in the Non-Aligned movement and put forward the thesis that the Soviet Union was the "natural ally" of the non-aligned countries.

15. Jawaharlal Nehru, n.6.
period before the Korean War, the Soviet Union was highly critical of the non-aligned policy of India. The Soviet Union believed that India had not achieved genuine political independence and that Nehru's objective was to include India within 'Anglo-American imperialist bloc'. Later, the Soviet Union realized that the non-alignment was not a tool of imperialism but an independent movement suited to the particular needs of the developing countries and stood for certain vital principles such as peace and international security, peaceful settlement of dispute and co-existence between different social, political and economic systems of the world.

The Soviet view was that the non-aligned movement and the Soviet Union were both firmly opposed to imperialism, neo-colonialism and racialism. Article 3 of Indo-Soviet Treaty also condemned colonialism in all forms and manifestations on the basis of equality of all nations and peoples. Both India and USSR pledged to co-operate with people struggling against colonialism. They were obviously determined to support all movements of National independence. The Soviet Union provides support to the non-aligned countries in the political, economic and military fields in their fight against imperialism.

The basic framework that has emerged out of the Soviet view of non-alignment is that the non-aligned movement is of a transient character. Specifically it belongs somewhere between the external behaviourism of the socialist states and the imperialist-capitalist states. This transient character of the movement depends directly on the level of socio-economic development of its adherents. As the level of socio-economic development changes and varies, the external behaviourism of the non-aligned countries also becomes complex, multi-dimensional and above all, inconsistent and vacillating from issue to issue. Besides, the Soviet Union sympathizes, and has always broadly sympathized, with the quest of the non-aligned movement for a New International Economic Order, Disarmament and Peaceful Co-existence. Consequently it feels that there exists a wide area of congruence of interests between the non-aligned movement and itself.

In the context of these fundamentals let us take into account the major thrust of India's foreign policy in the backdrop of the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

The fundamental basis of the Indo-Soviet relationship was the synchronization of some of their major national interests. Most important of all, there are trade connections and Soviet economic and military assistance to India which entered the relationship between India and Soviet Union : further more, the former continued to support the latter's non-aligned doctrine. Indira Gandhi
explained:

In the international field we have a close identity of views on major world problems. We have stood together in the councils of the world in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism and the exploitation of man by man. We share a common belief in peaceful co-existence and co-operation of states with differing social systems. We agree that the policy of non-alignment pursued by India is a dynamic force which can help to reduce tension in the world.

Economic relations with the Soviet Union are easier for us since we pay them through the export of our commodities. This mode of payment makes the Soviet credits self liquidating.

It should not escape our attention that Indo-Soviet relations are based on political necessity and mutuality of interests. The terms of the treaty pledged the two countries to maintain mutual friendship and to respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. This meant that Soviet Union consistently supported India on Kashmir issue, until 1965, in all Security Council debates. The Soviet Union upheld Kashmir accession to India and opposed the efforts of the US bloc to impose a solution favourable to Pakistan. In 1957 and 1962 Soviet Union exercised its veto in the Security Council against the Western resolutions on Kashmir which supported Pakistan.

17. Indira Gandhi, Speeches, n.11, p.725.
The two parties promised to consult each other on international matters of mutual concern and to increase their co-operation in various fields particularly political and economic. Article IX of the Treaty has become most controversial. It provided that in the event of an attack on any of the contracting parties to "enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threats". But, India has offered to sign similar pacts with other big medium and small powers on the basis of reciprocity, equality and mutual respect. They undertook the obligations not to enter into any military alliance directed against either of them and not allow the use of their respective territories for any action detrimental to the other party. While neither party should support any third state in a military aggression against the other party, they promised to consult each other in case of such an aggression in order to take appropriate measures to protect their security. Thus the Soviet Union posed a threat to those who were against India's interest in the 1971 sub-continental crisis.

The real purpose of the Treaty was to safeguard India's security interests and strengthening its defence capacity. Under the Treaty Soviet support to India was guaranteed in the case of any intervention either by China or United States. The Treaty was not a defence pact. It was not opposed to India's policy of non-alignment but it established special relationship between the two countries to counterbalance Sino-US support to Pakistan in the border dispute. Basically non-alignment means the will and the
determination of a nation to ask, whenever it is confronted with a major international problem, the question not who is right but what is right? If the Treaty had been a military pact India would have mounted an attack on Pakistan earlier on Kashmir issue.

The most widely recognised criticism was that with the Indo-Soviet Treaty, non-alignment of India came to an end. But those countries who criticised India never accepted that India was ever non-aligned. While lamenting the end of non-alignment, these countries proposed the names of a number of countries with whom they wanted India to sign such treaties. So far as the allegation regarding the end of India's policy of non-alignment is concerned, the critics have expressed their concern over the nature of Article IX of the Indo-Soviet Treaty. This Article, they contended, is similar to some of the provisions of Moscow sponsored military alliance, like the Warsaw Pact (1955) and the Soviet-UAR Treaty (1971).

A comparative study of the relevant articles of the three above-named treaties, however, reveals the unsoundness of this criticism. Article IV of the Warsaw Pact maintains that in the event of a foreign attack all the signatories would render, immediate assistance "with all such means ... including armed force". Article V and VI provide for the establishment of a political consultative committee in each participating state and the institution of a joint command in order to provide for mutual and
in strengthening the individual and collective defence capacity. Article IX of the Indo-Soviet Treaty doubt envisages "mutual consultations" between the signatories for removing the threat, but not the institution of a "joint command" for strengthening their individual and "collective defence capacity". Apparently, the two treaties can not be compared. The second of the Indo-Soviet Treaty is distinctly on "consultations" between the two signatories in the event of threat, whereas the Warsaw Pact clearly emphasizes the urgency of "immediate assistance" 'including the use of armed forces'. Similarly it is different from a treaty like the Soviet-UAR Treaty.

The Soviet Union promised to respect Indian non-alignment. In fact, Article IV of the Treaty expressed appreciation of India's policy of non-alignment and reaffirmed that this constituted an important factor in the maintenance of universal peace and international security and in the lessening of tensions in the world. The External Affairs Minister took pains to explain in Parliament that the Treaty was in conformity with India's policy of non-alignment. Mrs. Gandhi, addressing a Congress rally in New Delhi said: "The pact with the Soviet Union is in no way a reversal


19. The Text of the Treaty, See Appendix No.II.
of India’s policy of non-alignment. The External Affairs Minister said in the Lok Sabha: "It strengthens our policy of non-alignment for which is expressly mentioned in the treaty. It is evident from all this that the contents of the treaty in themselves did not violate the spirit of non-alignment, in fact they affirmed it.

It is incorrect to say that the Indo-Soviet Treaty has prevented India from taking an independent stand in the field of foreign policy. Various foreign policy decisions of the Government of India in the post-treaty period show the independent course India adopted in determining her freedom of action. The Treaty in fact, gave to an extent, psychological and political boost to India in a very difficult situation. The influx of 10 million refugees from East Pakistan, forced to come to India by the terror unleashed by the West Pakistan military rulers, posed India with a problem of enormous proportions. It was not easily possible for India to cope with the situation. With the background of the Treaty India could help the creation of Bangladesh and protect her own independence and integrity.

The Western press vehemently criticised the Treaty as a departure from India’s fundamental policy of non-alignment. Daily Times of India (New Delhi), 10 August 1971.

Telegraph wrote: "India today discarded its policy of non-alignment and entered into a formal alliance with the Soviet Union". The Treaty was interpreted as "a death certificate on non-alignment".

The treaty certainly marks a shift in India's concept of non-alignment from what it was over the first two decades of her independent history. But this shift was inevitable as far as the situation of 1971 was concerned. The right of self-preservation is a right which belongs to states. It includes the protection of State's honour and its possession and the lives and property of its citizens. The Treaty is in conformity with India's national interests. Moreover, non-alignment reflects a country's own view of the world, looking at the world through one's own eyes and not through the eyes of others.

Apart from the immediate context of Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 India's international behaviour during the past decade was instructive. India had fairly close relationship with the Soviet Union in the political, economic and security spheres. These spheres cover domestic as well as international aspects. The help and assistance of the Soviet Union in the cases of Kashmir and Goa, in our oil exploration, industrial development and in making available some security equipment have served India's interests and thus strengthened non-alignment in a different way. The Soviet

Union in return also derived economic and political advantage from this relationship.

**Concern for India’s Security**

The concern for national security is an essential component of a foreign policy and the Treaty was signed out of security interests. The security of India has been threatened several times either by Pakistan or China or by both supported by the United States. Under such conditions India went closer to the Soviet Union to get assistance to protect its security and territorial integrity. The source of threat to national security normally lies at the global, regional and domestic levels.\(^\text{24}\) Jawaharlal Nehru observed in Belgrade in 1961 where the first Non-Aligned Conference was held: "When there is a crisis involving the possibility of war, the very fact that we are non-aligned should stir us to action, should stir us to feel that now more than ever it is up to us to do whatever we can prevent such a calamity coming down upon us".\(^\text{25}\)

India’s experience from the humiliating defeat during the Chinese aggression of 1962, was crucial. Up to 1962 India observed strict non-alignment. It paid little attention to military and

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defence preparedness. India was very late to realize the fact that non-alignment should be accompanied by military preparedness in the interests of national security. India could not afford to lose her very existence for the defence of ideologies. Moreover, experiences have shown that non-alignment may serve the cause of national security to a large extent so long as there is no actual outbreak of conflict. Once there is conflict, non-alignment may have to be adjusted and altered, if not given up. India was compelled to adopt slight changes over its traditional non-aligned posture because India could not remain idle when war clouds were appearing on the Indian subcontinent. The objective of foreign policy is the achievement of self-interest. It is natural that special requirements of the situations may demand to the taking of national security decisions that are not compatible with non-alignment. Therefore, the Treaty could be justified for national security.

**India's Non-aligned Position Upheld**

The signing of a Treaty and operating it within the framework of its provisions was in no way affected the non-aligned posture of India. Within a short span of ten years covered by this study a host of menacing developments took place in and around

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27. Rasheeduddin Khan, n.2, p.140.
the sub-continent such as the Bangladesh crisis, the development of nuclear device by India and the superpowers naval presence in the Indian Ocean. On several such occasions the Indo-Soviet interests had not clashed and both held more or less identical positions. But there are other occasions such as the Czechoslovakian crisis, Hungarian crisis, the Afghanistan crisis, the announcement of the Soviet proposal for an Asian Collective Security system when India explicitly expressed her non-aligned stance.

First, let us begin with the Asian Collective Security Proposal. In June 1969 General Secretary of the Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev, announced at the International Communist Conference, the Soviet intention to promote a collective security system in Asia. The proposal had been shelved shortly after its introduction in 1969 and it was not until the fall of 1971 that the Soviets revived it. In 1973, the proposal appeared. But India did not respond positively to the Soviet proposal. Brezhnev again addressed this issue more forcefully in New Delhi than anywhere else. Although India resisted the Soviet leader's urgings, Brezhnev was able to get Mrs. Gandhi's consent to a paragraph in the joint declaration on principles for the relations between all states. This paragraph repeated almost verbatim Brezhnev's list of principles for Asian Collective Security.28 Still, India refused its explicit endorsement.

The Soviet leader returned empty-handed but continued his efforts to obtain Indian support for the system of Asian Collective Security. He reminded India of the Chinese threat to India, and also by continuous blame over China for Asia's security continued to push Soviet proposal with less intensity particularly towards Asian countries and especially to India. Nevertheless, New Delhi's desire to avoid what seemed to be an anti-Chinese alliance and to avoid bringing an outside power into the region permanently led it to be more forthcoming. In fact, in Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Moscow in 1976 and Morarji Desai's in 1977 and 1979, the Indians if anything, backed further away from Moscow's proposal.

In so far as India was concerned, there was no question of her joining any alliance. But she showed some sympathy to the alliance system if the proposal meant co-operation in economic and other related fields. The proposal remained vague, and on account of lack of support from countries like India faded fully out of discussion. Some Westerners tried to say that Indo-Soviet Treaty represented the first link in the chain visualized in the so-called Brezhnev plan, a view which was entirely falsified by later developments. Thus India did not buy the idea of Asian Collective Security and kept its independent non-aligned posture.

Secondly, there is incompatibility of interests between India and Soviet Union in respect of nuclear proliferation. India marked a significant breakthrough in its atomic development programme
with the successful underground test of its nuclear device on 18 May 1974 at Pokharan, in Rajasthan. Mrs. Gandhi and other leaders made it clear that the explosion was for peaceful purposes. It obviously showed differences in the interests of the two countries, spread over the non-proliferation treaty and the question of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Moreover, the attempt of the Soviet Union to adopt a balanced position between India and Pakistan pushed New Delhi further toward a reassessment and a development of opinion options. The best indication of India's evolving position was its refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Despite guarantees in the treaty and repeated assurances from these three powers separately that they would guarantee India's security, New Delhi refused to sign NPT and there was a rapid increase in India's public discussion of becoming a nuclear power. 29

The nuclear explosion actually enhanced India's stature as a leader in Asia, the Third world and the Non-Aligned bloc. Furthermore, the nuclear device signified that India had options in its foreign policy beyond its relationship to the Soviet Union. In fact, the US-Soviet detente and US-Chinese rapprochement could not serve to deny India its legitimate interests. India's goals and interests were not going to be sacrificed to the furtherance of any

29. Ibid., p.96.
normalization among the external powers. Thus, New Delhi had
atleast symbolically demonstrated, its continuing independence even
from Moscow. Also, the two countries have opposite views and
policies on the NPT. As we know, the Soviet Union is for adhering
to it while India is totally opposed to it because, in her opinion,
it is unjust to try to prohibit horizontal proliferation without
placing any restrictions on vertical proliferation which is more
expensive and immensely more dangerous. It is India's basic
contention that the NPT seeks to create a regime which would
perpetuate the present international order based on domination and
exploitation of the non-aligned world. Of course, it is not the
interest of a county like India to accept such a regime. It would
restrict India's options, circumscribe its independence and this
impair her policy of non-alignment. But the real problem is that
peaceful nuclear explosions (PNE) might undermine the basic motivations and purposes of the NPT. The Indo-Soviet divergence remained
notwithstanding the fact that the Soviet Union did not condemn the
Indian position.

Another area of divergence between the two countries has
been the Indian Ocean where super-power rivalry is a cause of
concern for the littoral states. When the UN General Assembly

passed a resolution tabled by Sri Lanka and other non-aligned countries envisaging the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, India supported it unequivocally but the Soviet Union abstained. Moreover, while India needed the Soviet Union as an ally, it had no desire to blindly support Soviet policies that might lead to a situation wherein Moscow would become the exclusive super power in South Asia or the Indian Ocean. Such an eventuality—however distant, would jeopardise India's vision of its own interests and its predominant role in the region.

India's displeasure with Moscow's abstention on a resolution that she was enthusiastically supporting was quickly tempered by super power behaviour in the Indo-Pakistani conflict. As part of its support for India in the conflict, the Soviet Union had added to its naval presence in the Indian Ocean and this was increased when Nixon ordered the dispatch to the Bay of Bengal of the US naval tasks force. Consequently, the Soviet Union was encouraged to accelerate its involvement in the Indian Ocean in order to play a more significant naval role there. India, too, became more interested in a more active role and intervention in the region for its navy. A major effect of Soviet policy on India was to force New Delhi to be acutely aware of the important Soviet role in deterring or counterbalancing other powers, particularly the naval capability of the United States.

The Soviet Union never had desired to establish any military
or naval bases in the Indian Ocean region. Indeed, Soviet ships and vessels have never posed a threat to anyone in that region. In accordance with the existing rules of international law and with universally recognized international practice they are engaged in training causes and in the search and recovery of Soviet spacecraft that splash down in the Indian Ocean. It must also be born in mind that transit routes from the European parts of the USSR to the Soviet Far East pass through the Indian Ocean and that accordingly, in order to ensure the safe passage of ships and vessels, the Soviet Union is conducting scientific investigation in the region.\[31\].

The opposition of the Soviet Union has been on the ground that the zone of peace idea attempts to create a special regime in the Indian Ocean which, if implemented, would prevent the foreign naval presence including that of the Soviet Union. For many years the Soviet Union continued to go along with the United States and its allies and friends. But after some time, the Soviet voting behaviour on this issue in the UN changed and it began to vote in favour of the resolution along with India and the other non-aligned countries. India has always been in the forefront in demanding a peace zone in the Indian Ocean. As a super power involved, the USSR cannot but view with irritation Indian efforts calling upon the super powers to de-escalate the situation by

eliminating their military presence. Of late, however, the USSR is inclined to support the zone of peace proposal.

Another point of divergence between the two countries is the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. When the Afghan crisis first erupted in late December 1979, India was under a caretaker Government headed by Charan Singh. The Government of India was officially informed by the Government of the Soviet Union of the events in Afghanistan on 29 December 1979. The Government of India always "opposed any outside interference in the internal affairs of one country by another"32. This position expressed India's earnest hope that "no country or external powers would take steps which might aggravate the situation and that normalcy will be restored there early"33. Two days later Prime Minister Charan Singh summoned the Soviet Ambassador to make it clear that in India's view the sending of troops would have "far-reaching and adverse consequence for the entire region"34.

On 16 January 1980 at a Press Conference in New Delhi, Indira Gandhi stated clearly that India did not support the Soviet

32. Ministry of External Affairs, India's views on the Afghan situation (hereafter cited as India's views....), External Publicity Division (New Delhi, 1980), p.51.

33. Ibid.

34. Indian Express, 1 January 1980, p.1.
action in Afghanistan. She commented "no country is justified in entering another country". On 18 January 1980, at a Press conference in Trivandrum, she warned of the "danger closer to our borders" because of US decision "to expedite arms aid to Pakistan".

In the first week of Indira Gandhi's return to power, the US and Soviet Ambassadors called at New Delhi's Foreign Office separately. The Soviet Ambassador was told that the sooner Moscow pulled out its forces from Afghanistan, the better it would be for "all concerned", on the other hand, the longer the troops stayed, the more difficult it would to be extricate them from the quagmire. The US Ambassador was told that the proposed arms aid to Pakistan was unacceptable to India because it would only escalate local conflicts. On January 23, the then Minister of External Affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao's statement in the Lok Sabha, however, reflected that India's major concern regarding the Afghan issue was the proposed US arms aid to Pakistan. His speech expressed India's grave concern that the induction of US arms into Pakistan

35. MEA, India's Views..., p.43.
36. Ibid., p.44.
38. Ibid., p.111.
"could convert the South Asian region into a theatre of great power confrontation and conflict", which would threaten the security of India and decelerate the process of normalization with Pakistan. The sharpness of India's criticism of the US policy seemed to prevail over what he said at the end of this statement which was no more than a generalization regarding India's opposition to the "presence of foreign troops in any country" and expression of the hope that the "Soviet forces would be withdrawn from Afghanistan".

The first major effort of the Soviet Union to evolve such a common support was made in February 1980 when Gromyko, the Foreign Minister and Politbureau member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union visited India. He arrived India in an effort to bridge the gap between Moscow and New Delhi regarding the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. But the divergences between the two countries could not be eliminated after several hours of discussion with the then Indian Foreign Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, and the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi. India, obviously did not share the Soviet perception of the developments in Afghanistan which had actually dominated Gromyko's talks in New Delhi. The


40. Ibid., p.20.
joint declaration issued at the end of his visit was conspicuous because of the absence of any reference to the developments in Afghanistan and their impact on the region. India’s refusal to share the Soviet perception of Afghanistan, indeed was a clear proof of India’s adherence to the policy of non-alignment.

In fact, the Indian criticism against the Soviet action in Afghanistan was a mild one. The Soviet Union pointed out that the USSR had remained India’s "most faithful" friend always ready to help it "in good days and in bad days". They also warned New Delhi that US "imperialists" and Chinese "hegemonists" were vainly trying to split India and the Soviet Union apart on the question of Afghanistan. But the Sino-US attempts would not succeed because "of the identity of this awareness of their fundamental historical interests".41

However, it can be seen that the Soviet Union wanted to gain India’s support for their move in Afghanistan and hoped that Brezhnev’s visit to India and his talks with Mrs. Gandhi might induce India to change her view about the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The relations between the two countries have developed in a natural way according to changing international

environnent that India had to face and have imparted a feeling of security, to India without compromising its honour or, its role in world affairs as a non-aligned country.\textsuperscript{42}

While Soviet Union had its own explanations for military intervention in Afghanistan, India also had a strong case in seeking a political solution to the Afghanistan problem including the withdrawal of the Soviet Union. India felt that Soviet presence in Kabul provided the Western countries an opportunity to continue to induct sophisticated weaponry into Pakistan, which posed a grave threat to Indian security.

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan indirectly threatened India's security mainly due to the US military aid to Pakistan. The United States declared the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan "the greatest threat to peace", a gross violation of regional status quo and a direct threat to the stability of Iran and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{43} As a retaliatory measure the US President, Jimmy Carter asked the American Senate to delay the approval of SALT-II concluded with the Soviet Union, and also announced to give military and economic aid to Pakistan, which in part has provided a viable strategic base for the United States. Obviously with the

\textsuperscript{42} Girish Mathur, \textit{New Afghanistan} (New Delhi, 1983), pp.22-29.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp.18-23.
collapse of Iran as ancillary surveillance centre of the US alliance system in South West Asia, Pakistan has assumed greater strategic importance in US foreign policy calculations. India saw no justification for the supply of sophisticated weapons to Pakistan as there was no fear of an attack on it by Afghanistan. Moreover, Pakistan was already in a position to face any challenge to its security from Afghanistan. India exposed its concern as the US arms supply to Pakistan because of its past experience that whenever arms aid was given by USA to Pakistan for internal security and self-defence, it was used by Pakistan against India. India's growing concern on the matter arose further when the Reagan Administration frankly acknowledged that Pakistan wanted military help from USA mainly to build up its military posture vis-a-vis India and refused to give any assurance to India that US would not let Pakistan to use its weapons against India. In fact, the US military aid to Pakistan inspite of full knowledge of its intention was a well calculated move against India because United States wanted Pakistan to act as a "counterpoise" to India.

Against this background India felt that United States by its arms and other support to Pakistan may one day tempt Pakistan to force

44. Times of India, 2,3 September 1982.

a war on India to change the balance in its favour. This spoiled India's security environment and forced India to spend more on defence and reaffirmed, its friendship with the Soviet Union to counter balance Sino-US support to Pakistan.

Since India strongly asserted her independence in thinking and action on the Afghan problem to show that the two sides agreed to disagree on a vital question of regional as well as international importance without sacrificing mutually advantageous bi-lateral relations. Adherence to the principles of peaceful co-existence was the important guide on which Indo-Soviet friendship was developing fruitfully in the international forums like the UN. Both the countries always strongly upheld the implementation of effective disarmament measures. Inspite of the bi-lateral treaty, the essential thrust of India's foreign policy has been independence of action in a manner most subservient to protect her vital national interests.

Since the conclusion of the treaty a decade ago, India's non-alignment, both in its theory and practice, has remained what it was before. No provision or clause of the treaty and no

instance of India's foreign policy behaviour would suggest otherwise. Strictly speaking, India and Soviet Union are good friends for the last thirty-five years and will remain so, as long as their national interests do not clash and India is preserving its adherence to the policy of non-alignment.