CHAPTER II

GENESIS OF INDO-SOVIET TREATY

The sudden and unexpected death of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri created doubt in the Soviet leaders about India's future attitude towards the Tashkent Declaration. In a letter to Indian President Radhakrishnan Soviet President Podgorny and Premier Alexie.A.Kosygin expressed hope that India would honour the Declaration. The Soviet apprehension was due to feelings of right-wing political parties in India that Shastri had gone back on his pledge not to yield Haji Pir and Kargil, two strategic places of Kashmir for Pakistani infiltration. Many believed that the declaration was signed by India because of Soviet pressure and Soviet Union would follow a neutral stand on Kashmir issue. In response to the Soviet apprehension, President Radhakrishnan in a speech delivered on 12 January 1966 praised Soviet Premier for his "leading, noble and heroic part" at Tashkent. Soviet concern was that who would be the next Indian Prime Minister and what would be India's domestic and foreign policies? The Soviet leaders assured the Indian Government that the Soviet policy towards India will never change.

The emergence of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India in the period following the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri had created an expectation among the Russian leaders that the Indo-Soviet relations would be strengthened further on a sound basis. The Soviet leaders realized that Mrs. Gandhi's close acquaintance and contact with them through Jawaharlal Nehru would be greatly helpful in continuing the friendship between the two countries on the basis of mutuality of interests and trust. It was also a relief to the Soviet Union that they would not have to deal with a new person and go through the process of getting to know the viewpoints of each other. Immediately after assuming as Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, declared on 26 January 1966 that

The fundamental principles laid down by my father, to which he and Shastriji dedicated, continue to guide us. It will be my sincere endeavour to work for the strengthening of peace and international co-operation so that people in all lands live in equality, free from domination and fear.

At the same time, Indira Gandhi's assumption to prime ministership raised high hopes in the United States that she would be more pragmatic than her father, Nehru and would act free from ideological considerations. Mrs. Gandhi's attitude towards the US economy and her subsequent visit had created a sense of hope to the

leaders of Washington. She articulated throughout her visit to the United States the capacity of the Indian people to meet the difficulties, both internal and external, with their own strength. She warded off all US attempts to browbeat India when at the White House dinner she spoke up:

We also know that our 'great society' must and can rest securely on the quality and extent of our own effort. This effort we are determined to make, we owe it to our friends, and even more so we owe it to ourselves.3

The Prime Minister also set at rest the speculation that she had gone to the United States for economic aid. No aid that "saps our strength or hurts our self-respect" would be acceptable.4 Here was the authentic voice of India expressing the Indian point of view in a forthright manner.

The Soviet leaders feared that India was going more friendly towards Washington. They thought that India was tilting towards the United States. The Soviet apprehension was particularly concerned that right wing forces were rapidly gaining influence in the political and economic spheres. India's policy of opening up protected industries to penetration by foreign capital, yielding to pressure brought to bear by the United States to devalue the Indian

4. Ibid., p.178.
rupee\textsuperscript{5}, and various other steps taken to give a boost to the private sector of the economy seemed to indicate that India was becoming pro-western in its general orientation. They saw their political influence in India jeopardized by a growing polarization and political instability. They were particularly incensed by the permission granted to the Western capital to enter the fertilizer industry\textsuperscript{6}.

Soviet anxiety in regard to India's internal politics became acute during the months leading up to the fourth general election. The appointment of Morarji Desai as deputy prime minister in charge of the finance portfolio could not have been to the Soviet Union's taste. Even more worrying to the Soviet Union was a growing tendency within Indian National Congress to remove prominent left wing politicians and replace them with conservative figures\textsuperscript{7}. Soviet leaders interpreted

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5. The sudden devaluation of the rupee had an adverse effect on Indo-Soviet trade which had to be discontinued for a period of at least two months - at a time when Soviet Union's trade with other non-communist countries was steadily increasing.


7. For example, Krishna Menon - a well-known left-winger, confidante of Nehru and former Defence Minister - was forced to withdraw his parliamentary candidature from the prestigious constituency of Bombay (South) which he had represented in the Lok Sabha for 10 years. His removal was engineered by S.K. Patil (also a former member of Nehru's cabinet), president of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC), who was known to have close links with the big business houses in the city.
such changes as representing a decisive shift not only in the composition of its personnel, but also the Government of India's developmental and economic policies.

As a result, the Soviet Union took a very critical attitude towards India. The Soviet Union felt that Mrs. Gandhi was trying to tie India more closely to the United States at the expense of relations with the Soviet Union. However, the Indo-Soviet friendship continued vaguely albeit in an atmosphere of goodwill, mutual trust and identity of mutual interest between them. In fact the warm relations between the two countries had disappeared for sometime due to lack of understanding and failure to appreciate each other. Consequently, the Soviet Union reversed its policy in South Asia. This is evident from the Soviet decision to supply arms to Pakistan which annoyed India. The Soviet Union firmly decided to expand its relations with Pakistan. In June 1966, a military delegation led by Air Marshal Nur Khan paid a visit to the Soviet Union. Nur Khan was told by the Soviet leaders that Moscow was considering the sale of arms to Pakistan. There were unconfirmed reports that Moscow had agreed to sell arms to Pakistan on the same terms as it was selling them to India.

The Soviet decision to supply arms to Pakistan shocked India


which in fact undermined the Indo-Soviet relations during the previous years. Thus it became obvious that the Soviet policy towards Pakistan threatened to shake the very foundations of Indo-Soviet relations during the mid 1960's.

The notable event of this period was the visit of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to the Soviet Union from 12 to 16 July 1966. One distinct gain of her visit was that she convinced the Soviet leaders of India's sincerity with regard to the implementation of the Tashkent Agreement. And she reiterated India's firm commitment to the cause of peace and unflinching opposition to all forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism and described Indo-Soviet friendship as "unshakable". Elaborating on India's foreign policy she stated:

India stands for friendship with all countries, for non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. The cordial relations between the Soviet Union and India vividly demonstrate the possibility not merely of peaceful co-existence but of close co-operation and collaboration between States with different social systems on the basis of equality, mutual trust and mutual benefit.

The complete identity of views between India and Soviet Union was duly embodied in the Joint Communiqué issued at the end


of Mrs. Gandhi's visit. This Communique reaffirmed the determination of the two States "to be guided in international policy by their common goal of ensuring peace". The two Governments called for immediate cessation of the US bombing of North Vietnam, the dissolution of all military alliances and foreign bases, and the conclusion of a German peace treaty, recognising both Germanies. They also expressed their determination to fully implement the Tashkent Declaration.

The year 1967 marked the 20th anniversary of both India's independence and the establishment of Indo-Soviet diplomatic relations, as well as the 50th anniversary of the Great October Revolution of the Soviet Union. Mr. Morarji Desai, the then Deputy Prime Minister of India, while speaking on the occasion of the completion of two decades of Indo-Soviet diplomatic relations marked on 13 April 1967:

The friendship between our two Governments and between our two peoples has gone on growing without any interruption and with hardly any misunderstanding. I hope and trust that we shall continuously behave in such a manner that this friendship is not only impaired but that it grows stronger and stronger, so strong that nothing can come in its way at any time in future.

The close friendship between the two countries was also

13. Ibid.
expressed through the widespread celebrations in India held on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1967. On 7 November 1967 Indira Gandhi participated as a special guest in the 50th anniversary celebrations in Moscow. Leonid Brezhnev, on this occasion, tried to identify Indo-Soviet relations and stated that

Indo-Soviet friendship plays a very positive role in international life. India is one of the largest nations on our planet. The Soviet Union and India have already acquired quite a lot of experience in fruitful co-operation. We believe that hence-forward when these relations will grow in the spirit of friendship, peace and co-operation, our co-operation would deepen more. The strengthening of democratic progressive and anti-imperialistic forces in India, as well as the policies of the Indian Government led by Indira Gandhi augur well for this objective.  

Another opportunity to further cement the friendship was Premier Kosygin's visit to India in the last week of January 1968. Welcoming Kosygin at one of the functions held in his honour, Indira Gandhi said:

The developing friendship between the Soviet Union and India is a good example of international co-operation. It has been of mutual benefit and it has helped freedom and peace.  


In his reply, Kosygin declared:

The present international situation persistently demands from all, who cherish peace and security of peoples, to take united action aimed at combating aggressive forces of imperialism and colonialism....We like all the friends of India and Pakistan, would like to see Hindusthan as a region of stable peace, a region where the foundations of friendly co-operation between India and Pakistan could be laid.\(^{16}\)

The year 1968 was also to be noted for some minor friction aroused between India and Soviet Union. The Soviet Union began to woo Pakistan in order to wean it away from the close alliance of both China and USA. Hence, India cannot afford to move closer to the United States at the expense of its relationship with the Soviet Union, for a Pakistan aligned with the Soviet Union would be more harmful for India than Pakistan aligned with the United States. Following the Tashkent meeting in January 1966 Soviet Union signed a barter agreement with Pakistan. Before the end of the same year another agreement was signed between the two countries which offered economic assistance to Pakistan, as also financial and technical, to some industrial projects. This was followed by a number of exchanges between the two countries. In fact, all these gestures on the part of both the USSR and Pakistan did not loosen the ties which bound Pakistan to China.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p.329.
While Pakistan moved closer to the Soviet Union, Washington banned arms sales to Pakistan. During this time China emerged as the major arms supplier to Pakistan. Pakistan's reliance on China was largely due to Washington's ban on arms supply as well as its refusal to support Pakistan at UN over the issue of Kashmir. In these circumstances Pakistan believed that it could make a favourable response from Moscow without losing its leverage either with China or the USA. During Ayub Khan's visit to Moscow, Islamabad had a common interest in preventing the emergence of a new nuclear power. He had India in mind, for after the Chinese exploded the first bomb in 1964, there had been demands in India that it should go nuclear. On that occasion Ayub Khan also declared that the Vietnamese people should be allowed to settle their problems without foreign interference. The Soviet demand and the Ayub Khan's declaration to withdraw all foreign troops from Vietnam especially of America coincided. Pakistan's stand, which was regarded as a genuine shift in Pakistan's policy towards USA impressed the Soviet Union. Immediately after Ayub Khan's visit, the Soviet Premier, Kosygin visited Pakistan. Soon after Kosygin's visit, Islamabad wanted the Americans to wind up the US communication facilities in Peshawar. This decision of Pakistan was appreciated by Soviet Union which ultimately led to the supply of arms to Pakistan by the Soviet Union.
India's Responses to the Soviet-Pakistani Arms Deal.

The Soviet decision to sell arms to Pakistan cast a shadow on the good relationship between India and Pakistan. It created widespread criticism in India. Many considered it as an anti-Indian move from the part of the Soviet Union. Many critics blamed Indira Gandhi for her policy of friendship with Moscow. In India Political Parties like Janasangh and Swatantra Party held anti-Soviet rallies and accused Moscow of "betrayal of India's friendship". Even the members of the Congress Party called upon the government to develop maximum self-reliance and restore India's political manoeuvrability by mending fences with China.\(^17\).

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed her deep concern over the matter. However, she did not question either the motives or the good faith of the Soviet Union. But she felt that these developments in the region could not promote the cause of stability and peace in the sub-continent. The Soviet Union insisted that the arms deal with Pakistan was a "symbolic" one, which would not upset the military equilibrium in this region. Mrs. Gandhi informed Kosygin about the strain an arms deal would place on Indo-Soviet friendship. Kosygin promptly assured her that nothing would undermine the genuine friendship and co-operation between the two countries. He also declared that "every country in the world could

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17. AICC Economic Review, 1 August 1968, pp.3-4.
envy Indo-Soviet relations. This fact is accounted for by the trust and confidence which exist between our nations as well as the development of political and economic co-operation.\textsuperscript{18}

From the discussions with the Soviet leaders regarding Soviet arms deal with Pakistan, it becomes clear that Prime-Minister Indira Gandhi tried her best to put things in the right perspective. She appraised the Soviet leaders of India's concern for Soviet arms deal to Pakistan. The situation required diplomacy and persuasion. However, she maintained unflinching balance and adopted an independent and cautious approach to the problem. She succeeded to a considerable extent in moulding public opinion in the country and resisting aggressive opposition in Parliament.

Mrs. Gandhi told her countrymen that the Soviet supply of arms was not capable enough to threaten India. She also told them that the USSR had promised many times that the arms given to Pakistan would not be used against India. She in turn informed the Soviet Government that Pakistan had no reasonable justification for expanding its armed strength since India did not threaten Pakistan. Moreover, she explained that Pakistan also had possessed a large quantum of arms as gifts from America. She also drew attention of the Soviet Government to the Chinese supply of arms to Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi continued, "these arms made Pakistan

\textsuperscript{18} Hindusthan Times (New Delhi), 25 July 1968.
more intransigent and aggressive in its attitude towards India, not less so. But the Soviet leaders gave the same assurance to India. Soviet Union maintained that friendship with India would be continued and it would not let Pakistan to use arms against India.

However, India continued to criticise the Soviet arms deal to Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi stated that her Government had been noticing a shift in Soviet thinking ever since the Tashkent. The reaction of the right-wing opposition parties to Soviet arms deal with Pakistan was, however, quite sharp. The opposition leaders in India during a debate in Lok Sabha on 22 July 1968 rejected the Soviet assurances and promises and blamed Moscow for arms supply to Islamabad. They argued that "when the United States could not stop Pakistan from using American arms against India what was the guarantee that the Soviet Union would be able to do that?" Mrs. Gandhi in partial agreement with the opposition leaders stated:

In these circumstances we cannot but view with concern this further acceleration of armed strength to Pakistan. The unavoidable consequences would be to accentuate tension in the subcontinent and to add to our responsibilities in regard to our defence and security of our country.

It would make Pakistan even more intransigent than it had been. Indeed, some recent pronouncements made by leaders of Pakistani Government confirmed this. India clarified to the Soviet Union that Pakistan had no reasonable justification to seek the augmentation of its armed forces and pointed out that Pakistan had received, by

way of gift, vast quantities of arms and equipment during the period between 1954-1965 as a member of military alliance system. India apprehended the use of these weapons in case of Indo-Pak war. The attention of the Soviet Government has been drawn to the fact that Pakistan was getting arms not only from its allies, but also from China in large quantities. India further pointed out to the Soviet Union that Pakistan does not, in fact, face any external threat. She is accumulating arms only to use against India. The Soviet Union like any other country is entitled to form its own judgement as to where its interests lie and how to promote them. But India was bound to express her misgivings and apprehensions to the Soviet leaders in all frankness. India would not question either the motives or the good faith of the Soviet Union, but was convinced that these developments would not promote the cause of peace and stability in the subcontinent.

In course of time, the Indian leaders balanced their assessment by citing the significance of the totality of Indo-Soviet relations and assurances of the USSR regarding friendship with India. Therefore, the Indian government opposed the resolution deploving the Soviet arms deal to Pakistan. This was mainly for two reasons. First, Parliament had not passed a resolution in 1954 when the United States decided to supply arms to Pakistan. Secondly, the government's reaction to the Soviet policy had been

already conveyed to the Soviet leaders. As a result the resolution was defeated by a vote of 200 to 61. In the meantime, in September 1968, Moscow sent Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin to India. His attempt was to pressurise New Delhi, in order to accept the Soviet neutrality between Pakistan and India. But India refused to succumb to Soviet pressure because it complained against Soviet arms aid to Pakistan, Moscow’s stand on Kashmir and also continued publication of wrong maps. Soviet Union learned painfully that Indo-Soviet friendship and co-operation was not a one way road. India’s dissatisfaction with Moscow became very deeper, but the Soviets continued their efforts to identify with the view points and policies of Pakistan. However, India’s economic and military dependence on the Soviet Union led to repeated emphasise in the Lok Sabha as well as Indian and Western press on New Delhi’s lack of option but to rely on Soviet aid. What was more significant, in fact, was that the passive Indian reaction exceeded the expectation of the Soviet Union. Indian protest continued until 1969 and led to great friction. In brief Soviet arms supplies to Pakistan ended as early as in 1970, which was a development that seems to suggest Indian influence over the Soviet Union.

Undoubtedly Soviet arms deliveries to Pakistan had definitely left a scar on Indo-Soviet relations. During the visit of A.N. Kosygin to New Delhi in January 1968, the joint communiqué revealed

the differences between the two countries. The communique was silent on India’s efforts to normalise relations with Pakistan, and it carried no criticism of America on various issues. However, India refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on 1 July 1968. But, being a sponsor of the treaty Soviet Union had hoped that as a friendly country, India would sign it inspite of its objection to the Treaty.

India’s Concern over Events in Czechoslovakia.

The events in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 were another test of Indo-Soviet relationship. When the Soviet, Polish, Bulgarian, Hungarian and East German Armed forces occupied Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the anti-Soviet feeling reached its zenith in India. The right-wing political parties in India promptly accused the Soviet Union of her policy of colonialism. In fact, the intervention of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia produced a very sharp reaction in India. One of the leaders of the ruling Congress Party proposed a resolution blaming the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi gave vent to her feelings on the issue in her address to the Lok Sabha, when she said:

The right of nations to live peacefully and without outside interference should not be denied in the name of religion or ideology ... we have always stood for the right of every country to its own traditions, attitudes and genius. India has always
raised her voice whenever these principles have been violated\textsuperscript{24}.

But she was also counselled the cautious approach. She introduced a resolution which was accepted by the Lok Sabha which said:

This House will no doubt wish to convey to the Soviet Union and its allies our view that they should carefully consider all aspects of the situation which has arisen as a result of the action by their armed forces and its possible consequences\textsuperscript{25}.

India then depended heavily on the Soviet Union for arms. Though it did not want to antagonize the Soviet friendship it had to abstain from the Seven Nation Resolution of the UN Security Council asking the Soviet Union and its allies to withdraw from Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was more sensitive to continue positive relationship with India and this was expressed during the visit of Firyubin, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, to India in September 1968. On that occasion Firyubin delivered a detailed account of the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia. But he noted the Soviet displeasure with the degree of disapproval New Delhi voiced in the UN resolution.

\textbf{Collective Security in Asia.}

In early June 1969 at the Moscow International Meeting of

\textsuperscript{24} Indian and Foreign Review, 1 September 1968, p.5.

\textsuperscript{25} Kuldip Nair, Between the Lines, (Bombay, 1969), p.101.
Communist and Worker's Parties, the Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev advocated the creation of a collective security system in Asia, which was essentially a combination of nations against China. He stated, "we are of the opinion that the course of events is also putting on the agenda the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia." More precisely since the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, the concern for South Asian stability voiced by the Soviet Union insistently had begun to take a more concrete form during Premier Kosygin's travels in South Asia in the late spring of 1969. During his visit to New Delhi, Kabul and Islamabad, Kosygin urged for the settlement of differences that existed between Afghanistan and Pakistan and also between India and Pakistan. He urged increased regional economic co-operation constructively among the three countries on a tripartite basis. The Soviet Premier promised that his country "would do all it can on its part to promote this".

Obviously, the proposal had at least two essential goals; the first was to establish the Soviet Union as a major power in Asian affairs by virtue of membership in the collective system. Secondly, to create some kind of grouping against People's Republic of China. There was strong reaction against the proposal of collective security system from China. But the Soviet Union denied

27. The Hindustan Times, 1 June 1969.
the contention that the proposal was directed against certain countries and emphasized the need of such a proposal that would stabilise countries in Asia. Soviet Union argued that such a system would ensure peace and peaceful co-existence, guarantee equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Asian states. These statements by the Soviet Union, in fact, pointed against China. Izvestia's first comment on the subject was basically an outline of the dangers inherent in the proposal for Asia in the foreign policy of People's Republic of China because China was depicted as the greatest menace to peace in Asia. In a Radio broadcast to South Asia calling for some kind of collective security on 8 July, Vladimir Volokho Lansky asserted that "mankind cannot but feel anxiety at the world tensions created by some states which seek to capture foreign territory so as to dominate other countries".  

Asian countries especially India did not welcome the Asian Collective Security system as it envisaged to fill the power vacuum created by the withdrawal of British naval presence from Indian Ocean. India wanted no Soviet substitute in terms of military powers. Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi's response was not in favour of the Soviet proposal. Her response to Brezhnev proposal was one of opposition to its "military overtones" and disagreement with its assumptions of a "power vacuum" facing Asia with the

planned British withdrawal in 1971. So Moscow had to reorient its approach to the expectations of the Asian countries. During his May visits to India, Afghanistan and Pakistan Kosygin had been busy proposing the idea of regional economic co-operation. As a reaction to the collective security idea, the Soviet Union turned increasingly towards the regional co-operation approach. The new Soviet move for a regional economic co-operation for Asia enthusiastically was welcomed in India. This was evident when Mrs. Gandhi told the Congress Parliamentary Executive that "India has responded favourably" to the USSR suggestion for a conference of the countries of the region, which even included the Soviet Union "to discuss economic collaboration". She said "this proposal was in keeping with India's policy that economic co-operation was the best way to strengthen the economies of the Asian countries", and was then, fully "in accord with India's own consistent stand in the matter".

The Brezhnev proposal, in fact, was a sequel to Moscow's efforts to bring about detente and co-operation in Europe. Such a proposal was a move to bring about stability in the region in the pursuit of their same objective. Moreover, even Moscow's interest in close economic relation with both Asia in some way related to the Asian security plan, for it believed that economic co-operation was a

29. Hindustan Times, 19 June and 1 July 1969 respectively.

30. Ibid., 17 June 1969.
pre-requisite to political unity. But Pakistan saw it as anti-China move and, therefore, rejected its outrightly. Anyway, whatever might have been Moscow's detailed plans for the successful promotion of Asian collective security system, it never explained the details of that system. As such, it failed to evoke much interest in Asian countries.

So far as India's attitude towards Brezhnev's proposal was concerned, it was very encouraging. India's initial approach on this issue was one of caution, because there was every chance of China's sharp reactions to it. After some elaboration of Soviet proposal in the official circles of the USSR, the Indian Government found itself in a better position to express its view on the matter. Undoubtedly it is in the context of collective security that the main thrust of the Indo-Soviet treaty must be viewed and analysed.

Indian concern over Soviet maps of the Sino-Indian border.

Among some of the other abrasive issues between the two countries during this period was the question like the Soviet maps which still showed territory claimed by India as within the territorial jurisdiction of China. The arrival of the latest Soviet maps in February 1970 showed large parts of India as Chinese territory which roused strong criticism against the Soviet Union. In November 1969 also Soviet Union published a map showing Aksai Chin area of Ladakh and NEFA as Chinese parts. Besides in 1970 the "Great Soviet Encyclopaedia" published another map of India which
showed the entire NEFA and Aksaichin as the territories of China. In fact, ever since 1965 the Soviet Union continued to publish faulty maps of India. When Nehru drew the attention of the Soviet leaders about the faulty map of India, they promised to correct them. Despite the repeated promises, Soviet Union published incorrect maps, which created strong protests in India. External Affairs Minister, Swaran Singh had to reply to a number of sharp questions in Parliament. The minister conceded while replying to the Rajya Sabha on 6 August 1970, that the Indian Government had not yet come across any officially published maps of the Soviet Union correctly showing India's northern boundary, although India had been taking up the matter with the Soviet "authorities through diplomatic channels and at higher levels." But he also pleaded with the members not to get over exercised as the Soviet authorities had explained that the matter had been dealt with "in a technical manner by their cartographers and specialists". The Soviets had assured that there was no political significance attached to it and that they continued to respect India's territorial integrity.

Moscow had further told India that it completely respected India's territorial integrity and that any wrong depiction of boundaries in such maps did not in any way affect or reflect the Soviet Government's understanding of and respect for India's frontiers.

32. Ibid.
The Soviet Union was a friendly country, Swaran Singh pleaded, and India would continue her efforts to see that the maps corrected as "the continued printing of wrong maps would have long-range implications on India's boundary dispute with China."

The matter came up possibly for discussion among the officials of the two countries during President Giri's visit to the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1970. The purpose of the visit of the Foreign Secretary, T.N. Kaul to Moscow in late October was related to the question of Soviet position on Chinese claims on Indian territory and Soviet arms supply to Pakistan. It was reported that the Foreign Secretary had brought back the impression of modification of the Soviet stand on both matters. The Foreign Secretary also came back with the impression that as regards the map issue, the Government clarified subsequently in the Rajya Sabha on 7 April 1971, that neither had the Government made any written protest about Soviet maps, nor had it received any written assurances in this regard. However, the issue had been taken up bilaterally and there was an oral assurance that Moscow, would try to incorporate Indian views as far as possible.

35. Hindu, 8 April 1971.
Domestic Developments in India.

The stability of the Indian political system has been the product of the convergence between democratic political processes and party system that prevailed in the country. The decay of one need not lead to the decay of the other. For the continued survival of a political system, continued survival of the existing party system and its balance may be essential. But in India, the dominant one-party system faced a real challenge during 1967 when the Congress lost its control in as many as eight states in the fourth general elections. During the 1967-69 period the defections from the party were obviously attributable to unsatisfied demands for patronage and power from various sections in the states. The defeat of the Congress changed the role of the opposition factions as pressure groups and then, they joined together to form a non-Congress coalition in eight states. Then, India's first phase of the post-independence politics ended by disturbing the stability of the Indian political system.

The crisis in India soon affected the Congress Party's leadership, as well as Mrs. Gandhi's Government. One section of the leadership decided to move a little to the right and tried to remove Mrs. Gandhi from the Prime-Ministership. On the contrary, she, on her part, moved a little to the left and staged a coup against her rival group. As a result, the Indian National Congress was split up into two in the autumn of 1969, and Mrs. Gandhi headed
a majority section of the Congress Party. But she represented a minority government in Parliament. But she could continue in power only with the support of the leftist groups in the Lok Sabha. Faced with the problems of survival, she took some bold steps. First in mid-July, she announced her government's decision to nationalise fourteen major Indian banks, which was a step the left wing Congress had been demanding for a long time. Later, she forced Morarji Desai's resignation as Deputy Prime Minister by taking the Finance Portfolio from him. Being the leader of the Congress right wing, Desai was regarded by the Soviets and many others both inside and outside India, to be the most significant spokesman and representative of Indian monopoly houses. The Desai-Mrs.Gandhi struggle resulted in to a polarisation within the Congress which led to still another Mrs. Gandhi initiative in August. The Prime Minister proposed V.V. Giri as her own candidate to be President of India in opposition to her Party's nominee, Sanjiva Reddy who had been fully supported by the right wing party leaders. She was supported in Parliament by a larger section of the Congressmen, and also by some opposition parties including regional parties. As a result a general belief developed in India, that a progressive direction had been given to Indian politics and there was now more assured talks within the Congress party of socialism as their goal. Thus, at a single stroke, Mrs. Gandhi seemed to have established her left wing credentials as a progressive left wing leader not only within India but also in the eyes of the Soviet Union.
... There is genuine pleasure here at the routing of the old guard by her (Mrs. Gandhi). For the Soviet Union has a good deal at stake in India, and galloping march of the right-wing forces has worried Moscow greatly in recent years. Mrs. Gandhi's victory is the first positive sign that the trend is not reversible and this comforts Moscow.

Since the Soviet Union believed that the victory of the left forces leads to the establishment of an advanced Democracy, it also opens a way to Socialism.

These trends were to become increasingly significant from Moscow's point and from Indira Gandhi's firmness that led to the split in the Congress Party in November 1969. The Soviet leaders were unmistakably pleased with the development in India. The formal split in the Congress party was viewed by Soviet leaders as heralding for the time, after Nehru's death, a non-capitalist path of development for India. But the crisis was by no means over the political struggle for India's future between the right and left forces was bound to intensify. In that forthcoming struggle, the Soviet Union put itself on the side of the progressive elements and called for the unity of all left forces in India. The parliamentary party of CPI responded to the Soviet Union's call by giving its support in parliament to Mrs. Gandhi's government. CPI(M) and Marxist - Leninist groups were severely criticised for refusing to

pay heed to the Soviet Union's call to all left and progressive forces to rally to the side of Mrs. Gandhi's government.

It is appropriate to point out that the stand taken by the two main communist parties on the question of whether Mrs. Gandhi's government should be supported or opposed was strongly influenced by their popular support bases in the country.

The CPI, lacking a support base in depth anywhere, but possessing various degrees of electoral support over a wide portion of India, adopted the tactical line of united front from above, and regarded the ruling Congress faction, after the Congress split, to be a progressive force eligible for the national democratic front. The Marxists, on the other hand, were more concerned with protecting and enlarging their regional base in Bengal and Kerala; their tactical line aimed at a united front from below, and they regarded Mrs. Gandhi's Congress faction as the party of the bourgeoisie and landlord classes. The CPI tactics were aimed at sharing power with the democratic parties at the national level as well as in the states. The marxist tactics were to build up regional areas of deeply entrenched Communist strength, to bring together leftist fronts under Communist hegemony, and to confront the central government. Put another way, the CPI appeared to believe that it could influence India's national politics as a significant partner of the national democratic front. The Marxists were skeptical of getting power at the national level, and were aiming at building strong regional bases first, and from those bases, to attack the national government.37

Thus the Soviet Union's reading of the political situation in India was essentially correct became evident from the result of the fifth general election (February) in which Congress(I), under Mrs. Gandhi's leadership, won 350 out of a total of 521 seats in the Lok Sabha.\footnote{Further details, See Kuldip Nayar, \textit{India: the Critical Years} (New Delhi, 1977), pp.362-67.}

It can be seen that Moscow was very sensitive to the developments in India. They believed that these developments would have a definite impact upon India's foreign policy. India, in fact, might be able to move more decisively and act less passively in international affairs, but whether or not these developments would be in Moscow's interest were impossible to predict. Therefore, they decided to sort out the misunderstanding that arose over the Soviet arms deal to Pakistan. As a result the Soviets undertook significant efforts to support Mrs. Gandhi and to strengthen Indo-Soviet ties.

Prelude to the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

Though the Soviets were heartened by the favourable developments in India, they were troubled by some events in Pakistan during the same period. In Pakistan, strains began to develop between Eastern and Western wings in 1969 which had forced Ayub Khan to step down in March 1969. When General Yahya Khan assumed power, the Soviet Union hoped that he would bring back stability in Pakistan and assured Moscow's continuing friendship. During his visit in May, Kosygin gave further
assurances of his country's sympathy. Meanwhile, the East Pakistan upsurge magnified, and Yahya Khan took repressive measures. After protracted negotiations between Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Yahya Khan the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman emerged as the single largest party by securing 167 out of the 169 seats allotted to the Eastern wing in a house of 313 members. The results of the elections brought out serious differences between the two wings of Pakistan. The Awami League called for the transfer of power to the duly elected representative of the people. However, this was rejected by the Pakistan Peoples Party leader Z.A. Bhutto and President Yahya Khan. President Yahya Khan in utter disregard of the verdict of the election in East Pakistan decided to use armed forces. And, Martial Law was imposed on 25 March and a reign of terror introduced in East Pakistan.

India, as one of the close neighbours of East Pakistan, was the most immediate victim of the events in East Pakistan. India was faced with a unique type of aggression when Pakistan compelled nearly 10 million of her citizens move across the borders of India. This was an imposed burden on India. The Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram observed about this problem as follows:

A Defence Minister can face open aggression. But this type of aggression forcing 10 million people of a country to go to another country and create not
only political, but sociological and economic problem is very difficult to combat with ....

The continued flow of refugees was quite unbearable to India's already strained economy. This danger ultimately resulted in the liberation of East Pakistan. In order to divert the attention of his own people and of the outside world from his trouble in Bangladesh, Yahya Khan deliberately incited border incidents against India. He continued his attempt hypocritically to deceive the world of the crisis in East Pakistan as a border problem with India. Meanwhile, India attempted to reach a political agreement between East and West Pakistan. But Pakistan was unwilling to be persuaded. General Yahya Khan firmly believed that the USA and China rescue him and he would be able to survive the crisis in Bangladesh.

Indo-Pak relations had also deteriorated along with the domestic crisis in Pakistan. When Pakistan moved toward a civil war, tension between the two countries began increasingly felt. The mass slaughter during this period was vehemently condemned in India. Mrs. Gandhi warned that New Delhi could not remain "indifferent" to "the macabre tragedy being enacted so close to our

border" and demanded immediate cessation of the massacre of defenceless people.\(^{40}\)

In the meantime, Mrs. Gandhi made efforts to bring international pressure on Yahya Khan to stop the merciless killing in East Pakistan. She also tried to make it possible for the ten million refugees of East Pakistan to go back to their homes. But her efforts were in vain. However, she succeeded in developing a favourable public opinion against the genocide in East Pakistan all over the world.

The first major power which came forward with a clear-cut stand on the tragic situation in the subcontinent was the Soviet Union. The Soviets had sought to ensure stability and peace on the subcontinent during the post-Tashkent period. But the developments in East Pakistan upset the Soviet policy of bringing India and Pakistan closer together. With a view to defusing the tense situation and bringing about a political solution of the problem, President Podgorny, in a letter dated 2 April 1971 appealed to President Yahya Khan "to stop the bloodshed and repression" and "to turn to methods of peaceful settlement".\(^{41}\) He also said that the people of the Soviet Union could not, but be concerned over the events in East Pakistan. Nevertheless,

\(^{40}\) Statesman, 1 April 1971.

\(^{41}\) Pravda, 4 April and 1 May 1971.
Yahya Khan was unmoved and on April 5 replied that the situation in East Pakistan was quite normal.

Despite Soviet concern for what was happening in East Pakistan it was not in favour of breaking up Pakistan. So it wanted no war in the subcontinent because, according to them, it would lead not only to the weakening of the two states but also to the emergence of reactionary forces. Therefore, the Soviet Union advised Pakistan to seek a political settlement in East Pakistan. At the same time it advised New Delhi to be cautious in her approach to these developments. In fact the Soviet Union was convinced that in order to normalize the situation on both sides of the India-Pakistan borders millions of refugees must return home. It believed that General Yahya Khan would soon hand over power to the elected representatives of the people and thereby create conditions of safety to facilitate the return of the refugees to their homes.

Yahya Khan, however, reacted sharply to Podgorny's letter. Making a dig at his reference to a universal declaration of human rights, President Yahya Khan wrote: "the open and unashamed interference by India in the present situation in my country has only one objective, that is, influence the situation further by encouraging and materially assisting a handful of people. This would be a negation of the United Nations Charter as well the Bandung

42. Izvestia, 26 June 1971.
Principles". He further asked Podgorny to use his "undeniable influence with the Indian Government" in order to impress upon it the need of restraining it from interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs, of resorting to any action that might aggravate the situation and lead to irretrievable consequences.\(^43\)

The reaction of China towards the crisis in Pakistan was entirely different. It accused India of interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan. The New China News Agency, on 7 April, accused India of interfering in Pakistan's internal problem and on 9 April, it published the full reply of Yahya Khan to Podgorny's letter. While lashing out at the "subversive elements" in East Pakistan, the official statement of the Chinese government offered its outright support to Yahya Khan.\(^44\) Besides, China criticised the Soviet Union for its support to India, particularly Podgorny's letter to General Yahya. The People's Daily pledged the support of the Chinese people to Pakistan against "foreign interference and aggression".\(^45\) The Premier of China, Chou-En-Lai, did not move by the horror in East Pakistan and he was firmly committed to support Pakistan when he promised that


\(^44\) Ibid., Vol.14, No.15, 9 April 1971, p.20.

\(^45\) People's Daily, 16 April 1971.
... should the Indian expansionists dare to launch aggression against Pakistan, the Chinese Government and the Chinese people will always firmly support the Pakistani government and people in their just struggle to safeguard state sovereignty and National Independence.

In addition, the press in China blacked out all accounts of the tragic events in East Pakistan. Meanwhile Peking announced interest-free loan of $211 million to the Yahya regime. This was followed by several military and economic credits to Pakistan. Moreover, China continued to support Pakistan in their efforts to suppress the uprising in East Bengal. They also permitted Pakistani military aircraft to use China's airspace to fly armaments of East Bengal. In short, China offered her full assistance to Islamabad for suppressing the rebellion in East Bengal.

The Washington Government was equivocal about the domestic crisis in Pakistan from the very beginning itself. While it expressed concern for the loss of life, according to it, there was no sense of outrage. Even it went to the extent of justifying itself by saying that the US arms were not involved in suppressing the crisis in East Pakistan. The New York Times pointed out that "though it had trained and equipped the Pakistani army, it had a special responsibility to withhold military aid to Yahya Khan. There were strong


47. Z.A. Bhutto, Six Steps to Submit (Delhi, 1971), p.125.
feeling in the US Congress against the Yahya regime and also the US role in the crisis. In view of this Nixon urged Yahya to arrive at a "political accommodation" with the leaders of East Pakistan.  

Simultaneously, President Nixon informed the Indian Prime Minister of his government's discourses with Islamabad on the direction of achieving "a peaceful political accommodation" and "of restoring the condition under which the refugee flow would stop" and the refugees would be able to return to their homes. He also wrote Mrs. Gandhi that India had a special responsibility in the region. All these were in fact sincere attempts to placate public opinion at home. In brief, the US leaders were conscious about the break up of Pakistan and the independence of East Pakistan.

The events in Pakistan, ultimately became an overriding issue in India. It could not remain a passive onlooker of Pakistani slaughter of East Bengalis. On the contrary, Pakistan began to threaten India with a war. This was mainly due to their expectation of support both from China and the United States. The Pakistan President talked of declaring a "general war" on India.


49. Ibid.

Pakistan's growing friendship with China, compelled Mrs. Gandhi to make a last attempt at rapprochement with Peking. She wrote a letter to Chou-En-Lai explaining India's stand on Bangladesh issue and offering to hold talks with China on the crisis in Bangladesh. Therefore, she sent, D.P. Dhar, former Indian Ambassador to the USSR, to Moscow to hold secret talks with the Chinese Ambassador there. But all these efforts were in vain. China decided to continue its hostility against India and made it clear that it would stand by Pakistan in any crisis situation. China also expressed its desire to help Pakistan military if a war had occurred with India.

The Soviet Union became aware of this situation and sought to find ways and means to solve the crisis in Pakistan. However, contrary to the expectations of the Soviet Union Yahya Khan did not open negotiations with the elected representatives of East Pakistan. The immediate result was the visit of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Gromyko to India.

Soviet Foreign Minister's visit reflects the sense of urgency in the Indo-Soviet relationship at this time. Upon his arrival on 8 August, he announced the purpose of his visit as prompting "the cause of further developing and deepening the friendly co-operation between India and the Soviet Union, which would end in "the consolidation of peace in Asia and throughout the world".

Gromyko and his Indian counterpart Mr. Swaran Singh produced a significant bilateral agreement - the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation. This was essentially Mrs. Gandhi's response to the 'tilt' of Washington in favour of Pakistan and against India. As Jawaharlal Nehru once said: "One cannot be non-aligned towards a threat to one's own sovereignty and independence". In the light of this neither Washington nor Peking, much less Islamabad, could ignore the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

The Joint statement issued at the end of Gromyko's visit summed up the position of India and the Soviet Union on the treaty. It said: Both sides believe that the conclusion of this Treaty is an outstanding historic event for both countries. This Treaty logically follows from the relations of sincere friendship, respect, mutual trust and comprehensive relation which have been established between the Soviet Union over many years and which have stood the test of time. It meets the basic interests of the Soviet and Indian peoples and opens up broad prospects for raising the fruitful co-operation between the USSR and India to a still higher level. Apart from other points referring the bilateral Soviet-Indian relations, the treaty provided for maintaining regular contacts by the two sides on major international problems and for holding mutual consultations inorder to take appropriate effective steps to safeguard the peace and security of both countries.

The Treaty between the USSR and India is a genuine act of
peace expressing the common policy and aspirations of the USSR and India in the struggle for strengthening peace in Asia and the world, and for ensuring international security. All its provisions serve these aims. The Treaty is not directed against any one, but is called upon to become a factor for the development of friendship and good-neighbourly relations in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.

The Governments of the USSR and India are convinced that the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation will meet with the full approval from all, who are genuinely interested in the preservation of peace in Asia and the entire world and from Government's of all peace-loving states\textsuperscript{52}.

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\textsuperscript{52} Hemen Ray, n.46, pp.37-38.