CHAPTER-1

Introduction

BACKGROUND OF INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

India’s friendly stance towards the USSR has greatly been exaggerated, misunderstood and misinterpreted in India and abroad. An examination of the subject appeared necessary in order to explain the nature, extent, direction and implications of India’s relations with the USSR. It is all the more essential as there is a noticeable tendency among some quarters to gloss over certain events and decisions which do not fall in line with their own view and heavily underscore those which do so. An attempt has been made here to analyze India’s policy towards the USSR and place it in proper perspective.

The ever growing friendly relations between the two neighbours are the result of many factors such as the complementarily of their national interests and the constantly changing national and international situations. The Soviet Union’s huge size, its vast potentialities and the geo-political situation compelled Indian leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru in particular, to realize, even before India attained independence, the need to develop close and friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

The changing pattern of Indo-Soviet relations from 1953 onwards and the analysis of the forces and factors which influenced the course of events. India’s attitude towards the USSR has been derived from its overall foreign policy objectives. In understanding and evaluating this attitude, it is therefore, indispensable to keep in view two important considerations: first, the assumptions, motivations, style, basic goals and the principles of India’s foreign policy which governed her relations with other States in general; second, the specific goals which India sought to achieve in her relations with the USSR. It is the inter-relationship between the general and the particular
objectives and the degree of their combination as well as contradiction that give
us an idea of the various phases of India’s relations with the USSR. Such an
analysis, however, should not be restricted merely to the conceptual level.
The interaction of such other factors as intimate geographical, historical and
economic ties between the two States, the influence of external factors and the
failure or success of Indian diplomacy at the international level should also
constitute a part of the analysis.¹

Jawaharlal Nehru, popularly known as the architect of India’s foreign policy,
had a clear idea of what a country’s foreign policy shall be. It must sub serve
its interests, both economic and political. On numerous occasions, he declared
that economic policy would determine foreign policy. He stated:

"Let us not imagine that foreign policy is like a
game of chess played by superior statesmen
sitting in their chancelleries. It is much more
complicated than that, for it is governed by the
aspirations of hundreds of millions of people
whose economic needs and objectives are
motivated by a variety of causes. . . Foreign
policy is thus no more a matter, as in the olden
days, of siding with one power against another in
return for some territorial possession or
advantage."²

India under Nehru’s leadership decided to expedite an historical process
which by the very fact of India’s independence was known to be well under
way. India realised the difficulties, the non-self-governing people were facing
in overthrowing the colonial rule. The achievement of freedom by India made
it necessary for her to follow a policy of resisting colonialism throughout the world. The opposition to colonialism in turn is directed to lend help and support to the dependent peoples in the achievement of their freedom. This policy was manifested in the Asian Relations Conference, the Asian Conference on Indonesia, and in the meetings of the Colombo Powers which initiated the Bandung Conference. Nevertheless, a closer examination of India’s foreign policy in this regard reveals that in everyone of these cases whether in her support to independence movements as in Indonesia or her hesitation to support them fully, as in the initial stages of the Suez Crisis, India’s policy has been first of all a policy of protecting her security and other vital interests. India demonstrated selectivity in championing the causes of dependent peoples. She refused to condemn Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe. India’s attitude towards the Soviet colonialism was the product of the lack of experience with the Soviet Union as against the experience with Western colonialism. In fact, India’s championship of subjected people was not based on moral grounds alone. It was part of India’s strategy to safeguard India’s independence and security.

Nehru was utterly realistic in his assessment of foreign affairs. The proof of India’s independence for Nehru was the posture of non-alignment in foreign relations. At the time of India’s attainment of independence the world was bipolar. The cold war was at its height. Nehru took the most realistic view of the situation and refused to make India anybody’s camp follower.

Before analyzing India’s relations with the USSR during the period 1953-1964, it seems imperative to go back a bit in history. It appears pertinently indispensable to briefly mention the principal facts and events that had taken place during 1917-1952. In what way the October Revolution affected India? What was the British India’s policy towards Russia? What was the
attitude of the Indian nationalists towards the USSR? How did the Indian revolutionaries look upon Russia? Did they share British Government views about Russia? How did the USSR behave towards India after independence? What was the state of relations between the two countries in the years immediately after India attained independence? Such questions merit close attention because their answers help in understanding the relations between the two countries during the period under study.  

However, a careful study of the Indian National Congress records reveals that the Indians did not accept the British theory about Russia’s aggressive designs on India even during the pre-October Revolution period. On the contrary, they were critical of the British policy which they declared to be motivated by imperial interests. The nationalist movement in India, wishing to drive away the Britishers, looked upon the British policy, as the means of an imperialist power to keep itself entrenched in India and hence against the interests of India. The Indian National Congress did not consider the threat from Russia to be real and consistently opposed the military expenditure of the government which the British sought to justify by referring to that threat. This disbelief in any danger from Russia turned into positive fascination as a result of the October Revolution.

The news of the Russian Revolution made an impact on India. It became a source of inspiration to the people in their struggle for freedom. They realised that the effects of the October Revolution would not be confined to Russia. Since the revolution was “against imperialism it might somehow help the movement for Indian independence which, with Mahatma Gandhi’s advent on the Indian scene, was taking a new turn.” As pointed out in Montague Chelmsford Report: The Revolution in Russia in its beginning was regarded in India as a triumph over despotism ... it has given an impetus to Indian political
aspirations. The Indian press as well as the political leaders generally showed a lively interest in the October Revolution and the new state. It would not be out of place here to refer to the comments in some of the leading newspapers and periodicals, particularly those associated with the nationalist movement.

The impact of the Russian Revolution on Indian nationalist intellectuals was sensitively reflected in the attitude of Jawaharlal Nehru. As a matter of fact, Nehru’s thinking was the most important factor in bringing about a transformation in the Indian nationalist attitude towards the USSR. Nehru held a prominent position in the Indian National Congress. He exhibited lively academic interest in the scientific outlook of Marxism as an interpretation of history. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that his attraction for Marxism was confined to its broad features rather than to its fine points. At no time he could be termed a doctrinaire Marxist. His intellect was too independent to be subjected to the rigid discipline of any dogma. Gandhi’s influence reinforced his dislike for violence.

His adherence to democratic values was always very strong. For him the central problem was how to combine democracy with socialism, how to maintain individual freedom and initiative and yet have centralised control and planning of democratic life of the people on the national as well as the international plane. Nehru’s participations as the Congress representative in the International Congress against imperialism held in Brusel1s in February 1927, followed by his visit to the USSR turned him into an enthusiastic though not uncritical admirer of the USSR. He returned from the USSR with very favourable impressions which he described in articles and talks, and which were reflected in the Congress pronouncements on the international scene from then on. He wrote on:
I must confess that the impressions I carried back from Moscow were very favourable and all my reading has confirmed those impressions, although there is much that I do like or admire.\textsuperscript{15}

The October Revolution and its aftermath had a different kind of impact on the most militant section of the Indian nationalists, the revolutionaries or terrorists as they were often called. They regarded the new Soviet regime as a potential source of strength for overthrowing the British rule in India. Many revolutionaries visited the USSR after the revolution. Some of them, notably Raja Mahendra Pratap and Barkatullah, President and Prime Minister, respectively of the provisional government set up at Kabul, were received by Lenin. Ambitious plans were made to bring Russian arms and trained hands of Indian revolutionaries into India via Afghanistan to overthrow British rule,\textsuperscript{16} but they could not succeed because of various reasons into which one need not go here. What is important to note is that in spite of this failure Indian revolutionaries continued to be inspired by the message of October Revolution and felt greatly attached to the Soviet Russia. This received the most poignant expression on the occasion of the Sixth anniversary of Lenin's death.\textsuperscript{17}

Soon after the formation of interim Government on 2 September 1946 Nehru, as its head, announced his policy of developing close and friendly relations with the USSR. In his very first policy speech on September, 1946 Nehru greeted the Soviet Union which, he said, 'carries a great responsibility for shaping word events' and added that as 'neighbours in Asia we shall have to undertake many common tasks and much to do with each other'. It was indeed a bold statement as at that time the USA with its then monopoly of the atomic secrets was speaking in very threatening terms to Russia. The cold war has reached a high pitch and it needed courage to make such a bold statement.
In January 1947 a delegation from the Soviet academy of sciences came here on invitation sent at the instance of Nehru to the session of the Indian Science Congress where on 7 January he told the guests that “once diplomatic relations are established, the door will be opened for close contacts in many fields of beneficial human activities.” Thus, the Russian Revolution laid the foundation for the building and expansion of new kind of ties between the Indian people and the people of USSR. These friendly relations naturally entered a new phase after India became an independent and sovereign state in 1947.

India established diplomatic relations with the USSR quite promptly. A press communiqué issued in New Delhi on 13th April, 1947 stated that the Governments of India and the USSR had agreed to exchange diplomatic relations at the ambassador’s level. It means that diplomatic relations were established between the two countries four months before India actually became independent. The initiative and the promptness on the part of India in this regard well demonstrated Nehru’s intense desire to establish contacts with Moscow as early as possible. The importance that India attached to the USSR was manifested when Nehru appointed his own sister as ambassador to the USSR. It was in a sense, symbol of India’s desire for close relations and cooperation with the USSR. With a powerful and resourceful country like the USSR, India wanted to maintain friendly but not subservient relations. In the course of a foreign policy speech, Nehru said in the Constituent Assembly:

*We intend cooperating with the United States of America and we intend cooperating with the Soviet Union.* On the other occasion, Nehru emphasized the need for cultivating the USSR in these words: The Soviet Union being our neighbor, we shall inevitably develop closer relations with it. We cannot afford to antagonize Russia.
In the first place, the USSR pointedly refused to acknowledge India’s sovereign status for some years after India became free in August 1947. The news of transfer of power in the sub-continent was never published in the Soviet press. One of the secretaries of the CPSU, Zhdanov declared in September 1947 that the imperialists were keeping China and India in ‘obedience and enslavement’. This clearly indicated that the USSR considered India’s status after August 1947 at par with that of China under Chiang Kai-shek. Similarly, F. Zhukov, a Soviet writer on eastern affairs, ridiculed the US secretary of state Acheson’s contention India was free and China was not. The Soviet government official organ published an article entitled “The colonial policy of British laborite” as late as September 1950 in which the author argued that the British act of granting independence to India had in no way change the latter’s status in the British empire. These extracts amply demonstrate that the USSR did not accept the genuineness of India’s independence for quiet sometime.

At the same time in the United Nations, the USSR successfully opposed India’s candidacy for a seat in Security Council in June 1947. The USSR supported the Ukraine while the United States backed India. India lost the bid as a result of previous understanding between the USSR, UK and China commenting on this, K. M. Pannikar wrote:

*It was clear that Russia had become uncertain of India’s attitude and was generally suspicious of our approach to questions of vital impotence.*

The question of Kashmir which came before the Security Council in January 1948, the USSR took up an indifferent attitude. An analysis of speeches made by the Soviet delegate on this issue reveals that right up to early 1952, when the Council discussed the Graham Report, the Soviet
representative rarely participated in the deliberations. On an occasion when he spoke he dealt either with some procedural matters or referred to some aspects of a resolution under consideration. Being indifferent to the issue, his participation in the Kashmir debate, was, on occasions, pointless. His behavior was of an uninterested observer who had nothing to say on the question under discussion. Even on the issue of Indonesian freedom raised in the UN, during this period, there was divergence of opinion between India and the USSR. The Dutch-Indonesian agreement was condemned by the Soviet delegate in the UN. While India put her seal of approval on it. As a matter of fact, right up to the time when the Security Council had seized of the Korean question, India remained a neglected country in the eyes of the Soviet delegate in the United Nations.

However, despite mounting Soviet criticism, Nehru kept the door open for cordial relations with the USSR. Although dismayed by the verbal assault, Nehru was not too surprised, for over the past twenty years he had observed the fluctuations of Soviet policy and was accustomed to its abrupt shift. Illustrative of Nehru’s attitude towards this treatment by the Soviet media is the following incident recalled by H.V.R Iengar. One day he brought a sheet of extracts from radio Moscow broadcasts which described Nehru as a tool of British imperialism. Nehru glanced cursorily at the extracts, smiled a little wanly, and said. “The heat is not against us though its look likes it. The heat is against the British. The British have always tried to keep Russian out of this sub-continent, and the Russian cannot believe that the policy has changed. Let us wait and see. If we show the world that we are, in fact, an independent country, the world will changed its attitude to us. In the mean time, you may study these things, but do not get bowled over by them.”
An objective analysis of India’s relations with the USSR in the years immediately following independence makes it clear that it was not USSR but India that had offered the hand of friendship. The main reasons for India’s overwhelming desire for Russia’s friendship may be surmised.27

The first reason was India’s desire to keep on the right side of a mighty neighbor. The USSR was the most powerful neighbor of India and had a common border. Powerful neighbors should not be provoked or alienated. Thus, it was in recognition of its geographical importance that India sought Russia’s friendship. From the point of view of India’s security, friendship with the Soviet Union appears to have been more important for geographical reasons.28

Secondly, as discussed earlier in detail, Jawaharlal Nehru, the main architect of India’s foreign policy, had a soft corner for the USSR. He did not envisage any danger to India from the USSR. Nehru assumed that as the Soviet society is transforming itself from a backward to an advanced economy and the pent-up consumption of the Soviet people is seeking satisfaction, there is bound to be an increasing stake felt by the USSR in the peaceful solution of world problems. Also, in the age of declining colonialism, it is difficult for any great power to view with equanimity the prospect of adding to its empire, especially when Communist theory, on which such an empire is based implies the impossible task of underwriting allied economies.29 He firmly believed that ordinarily the two countries should live as the best of neighbours with fewest points of friction.30

Thirdly, friendly relations with the USSR were of tremendous importance for internal development of India. During this period India was facing grave economic crisis. There were famine conditions in some parts of
India. It badly needed help and assistance from all possible quarters. Thus, even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, Nehru as the head of the Interim Government, instructed V.K. Krishna Menon, who was then in London, to get in touch with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, with a view to securing food aid from the USSR.\(^{31}\)

Another reason was their identical views on questions of colonialism and imperialism. Whatever their motives, their positions were highly compatible. India’s championship of freedom movements was very much similar to that of the USSR, as their close collaboration in U.N. forums during the period would suggest.

Nehru’s policies of peace, nonalignment and creating a new balance of power in Asia could have a chance of success only with the active cooperation of the USSR. Because she was the leader of the Communist bloc and much depended on her about the prospects of world peace.\(^{32}\)

**Indo-Soviet Relations: Stalin Era:**

Indian independence according to the Soviet press was the outcome of the Political Compromise" of the “Indian bourgeoisie”, the Indian leadership in Soviet assessment continued to be “lackeys” and “vassals of Anglo-American imperialism.

After the collapse of Kuomintang regime in China, Dyakov wrote that the Nehru government was turning India into an “Anglo-American colony in the East”, and that, “recent lessons of history show that the role of imperialist comes to a sad end for those who choose to assume it”. For Soviet press, India’s decision to join the commonwealth was tantamount to remaining a part of British Empire.
The early Soviet attitude towards India was summed up in Stalin's unconcealed disdain for Nehru's bourgeoisie government. Russia refused to recognize the reality of Indian independence. The Soviet commentators refused to believe that the British had abandoned control and instead argued that it had merely altered its style of control. The anti-colonialist and peace championing worth of nonalignment was denied. It was characterized as a hypocritical play between the two camps. The sincerity of the desire to achieve economic independence was completely denied. The violent movement of subversion started by the Communist Party of India was the direct result of this verdict on India by the Soviet leadership. The real reason behind the Soviet attitude of deliberate affront to India seemed to be that it was banking on the ultimate communist seizure of power through armed struggle. Because of this belief an influential group in Moscow Supported Ran dive's "Left Strategy" of condemning Nehru's government as an ally of imperialism and supporting the genuine liberation struggle launched by the C.P.I. Encouraged by Moscow's support, the C.P.I. started the Telengana movement. The first clear indication of the radical line the CPI came through the Soviet theoretician Zhdanov's famous Report in 1947 in which he asserted that Nehru's policy was only leading to the Anglo-American imperialist camp.33

This might have created the impression that there was complete lack of understanding between the two throughout the period 1946-1952. During this period the relations between the two countries were far from cordial and much less friendly. It was mainly due to the failure of the Soviet leaders to understand the new India, their pre-occupation with Europe and America, the low priorities they gave to India at that time and the tremendous internal problems they were facing after World War II.
Post-Stalin Era

The shift in Soviet policy came soon after Stalin’s death, almost as soon as Malenkov came to power the Soviet ceased being hostile to India. In a speech to Supreme Soviet on August 8, 1953, Malenkov said: The position of such a considerable state as India is of great importance for strengthening of peace in the East. Recognizing India’s role in ending the Korean War, he said, we hope that relations between India and Soviet Union would continue to develop and strengthen with friendly co-operation as their keynote.

Several factors contributed to Indo-Soviet amity directly or indirectly. It appears pertinent to take into account all such factors and analyse them objectively. Because only then the real nature of India’s relations with the USSR during this period can be explained.

In the first place, the Western bloc was not quite in sympathy with India’s policy of nonalignment. It was often critical of it. The new Republican Administration under the influence of all powerful Secretary of State, Dulles had adopted an attitude of “those who are not with us are against us”. India’s role during the Korean War had made many American leaders feel that India would be an uncertain ally in any future show down with the Communist Camp. This led them to oppose India’s participation in the political conference on Korea, on the flimsy ground of her being a non-belligerent. Such an indifferent attitude on the part of the United States contributed a good deal to India’s coming to a better understanding with the Soviet Camp.

Closely related to this, was the continuing desire of India to play its part in world affairs. The only way India could make herself felt in international
arena, in the face of the growing Western curbs on her, was to cultivate and strengthen her relations with the Communist bloc.

Thirdly, the Western nations had failed to support India's stand on Kashmir issue, where India's vital interests were concerned and in respect of Goa question, where Indian emotions and sentiments were deeply stirred. On the other hand, the USSR until 1955 had at least remained neutral with the inherent possibility that some day she might throw the weight of her support in India's favour.

Another reason for India desiring to cultivate the USSR was the economic consideration. It was India's long-term interest to diversify the sources of external assistance for her economic development, instead of continuing to depend, as hitherto on solely the Western source. This economic factor was greatly reinforced by the political desire to protect her independence by not entirely being dependent on Western economic assistance. An independent and nonaligned foreign policy cannot remain as such unless it was backed by at least a reasonably and relatively independent foreign economic policy. And this could only be achieved by developing economic relations with the Soviet bloc. Obviously, this was possible only by following a parallel course of action on the political planes too.

After signing of US-Pakistan military pact, the importance of the USSR to India enhanced tremendously. Because of all these factors, Nehru continued his efforts to cultivate friendly relations with the USSR with greater vigor.34

India's reaction to Stalin's death in March 1953 was illustrative of India's keenness to demonstrate its friendly feelings to Soviet Union. Indian
leadership showed effusiveness in consoling the Soviet people. The Indian Parliament was adjourned as a mark of respect to the departed leader. In his speech on the occasion, Nehru made one of the most moving orations. It was remarkable for its stress on the greatness of Stalin. While paying glowing tributes to him, Nehru termed him as a man of great Stature who moulded the destinies of his age and proved himself great in peace and war. At a time when Stalin's contribution to the 'cold war' was by no means small, Nehru could express the belief that "his influence was exercised generally in favour of peace."

In view of the fact that the USSR had sent no message of condolence on Gandhi's assassination and that Stalin was responsible for formulating the hostile Soviet line to India, Nehru's tribute and his emphasis on Stalin's positive contribution could be regarded as a gratuitously friendly gesture towards Russia. Other Congress leaders expressed their sympathy in a similar vein. Among the few public figures who raised their voice against effusive condolences was P.S.P. leader Ashok Mehta. He called Stalin a "great tyrant" and added that "the deranged, however diabolical, deserve one's understanding." As a matter of fact, Stalin's death provided an occasion for the assessment of the depth and extension of pro-Soviet feelings among the Indian people.

There can hardly be two opinions that so far as India was concern it almost always earnestly desired friendly relations with the USSR. In spite of the earlier indifferent attitude of the USSR, it consistently made friendly gestures and tried its utmost to establish cordial relations with her most powerful neighbour. However, relations between two countries cannot be developed unilaterally. Bilateral relations develop on reciprocal basis. Indo-Soviet relations remained formal, passive and even indifferent during the early
phase because the USSR failed to reciprocate India’s gestures of cordiality. It was largely due to Soviet Government’s lurking Suspicion that behind a facade of independence and the policy of non-alignment, India was actually pro-West and was not fully free from Western influence, in particular British influence.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that Stalin’s personality was an obstacle in the development of cordial Indo-Soviet relations. He had nothing but scorn for India. Nehru’s efforts to cultivate friendly relations with the mighty neighbor were cold-shouldered by Stalin. However, Stalin’s departure from the Russian political scene heralded a new era of liberation in the Soviet system. The new Soviet leadership displayed remarkable flexibility towards the third world countries. They acknowledged both the importance and independence of nonaligned states, by adopting an attitude of “those who are not against us are for us” instead of earlier thesis- those who are not with us are against us. In the words of K.P.S. Menon:

*The new government was animated by a spirit of accommodation.*

The new Soviet leadership realized that the development of friendly ties with India would help the Communist world’s efforts to break out of its diplomatic isolation. Equally important was the Soviet need to counter the Western alliance system.

New Delhi watched keenly for indication of the future direction of the Soviet foreign policy. The signing of the Korean armistice agreement in July 1953 on the basis of the original unamended Indian formula removed one of the main causes of Indo-Soviet misunderstanding. New Delhi regarded it as an important step in the desired direction.
The first overture by the USSR to India was made shortly after the death of Stalin. The Soviet Prime Minister Malenkov in his address to the Supreme Soviet on 8 August 1953 made the first truly friendly reference to a non-Communist state, India. He observed:

_In the efforts of peace-loving countries directed towards ending the Korean War, India made a significant contribution. Further he expressed the hope that in future relations between India and the USSR will grow stronger and develops in a spirit of friendly cooperation._

This was a clear indication that the USSR had become appreciative of India's nonaligned foreign policy. This statement was a tactical Soviet effort to establish close relations with India. This was the first attempt by the Soviet leaders to endorse the position of non-alignment.

The USSR recognized India's desire to be included in any conference where the future of Asian people was being discussed. Thus, the USSR was among the 27 countries who voted in the General Assembly Political Committee to include India in the Conference on Korea, while the United States was among 21 nations who opposed. At the Conference Malotov appraised Indian's status in unambiguous language:

_Who can deny that a country like India with a population of more than 300 million people has entered into a new, historic arena? Not long ago India was a colonial country. But now nobody can deny that India is occupying a very important place among the countries which are_
consolidating their national independence and striving to secure her weighty place in world affairs.\textsuperscript{42}

The USSR also proposed India’s name for a neutral nation’s commission to supervise the ceasefire in Indo-China. From 1954 onwards the USSR also worked for the inclusion of India in all international forums on disarmament. For instance, it called in 1954 for the addition of the Communist China, Czechoslovakia and India to the UN’s Disarmament Commission.\textsuperscript{43}

By the end of 1954, the Soviet media began to speak highly of Nehru Government. Some articles praised the peace-loving nature of the Indian people while others the diversity of the Indian culture. In an editorial Pravda acknowledged India’s valuable contribution for strengthening peace.\textsuperscript{44} Referring to the rapid shift in the Soviet treatment of India, a Congress party back bencher S. N. Sinha pointed out in the Indian Parliament:

\textit{Formerly they (Soviets) used to criticize us and say that our Government was a tool of British imperialism . . . Any Soviet paper you will find today is all praise for our culture, for our government, for our Prime Minister.}\textsuperscript{45}

Reflecting the changed official attitude towards India the writers A.M. Dyakov and V.V. Balobushevich reversed their earlier condemnation of Nehru’s policies. They now started praising, India’s struggle for peace, its attitude towards the Korean conflict and its support for the seating of Red China in the United Nations. By January 1955 the Soviet press was hailing India as a factor of peace in Asia. In a report to the Supreme Soviet on 18th February 1955, Malatov referred to the increasing recognition of India in world affairs:
India's international prestige as a new and important factor for peace and friendship among nation is increasing.\textsuperscript{46}

The changed Soviet posture towards India began to find expression in the Soviet Government’s moves to establish cultural and economic ties with India. It was reflected in the warm receptions accorded to a number of Indian delegations and individuals that visited the USSR. India’s Health Minister Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, on her return from the Soviet Union, told a press conference that the Soviet Union wished warm friendly relations with India, and Soviet people ardently desire peace.\textsuperscript{47} In the following month, Indra Gandhi paid a visit to the Soviet Union. After her return, she too testified the warm feelings of friendship towards India prevalent everywhere in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{48} The frequency of the exchange of delegations rose considerably and continued high hereafter. However, the most important being the goodwill visits exchanged by the premiers of two countries in 1955.

The Soviet reappraisal of India’s role in world affairs coincided with the increase in Indo-American differences. Deep, abiding frictions arose between India and the United States on issues such as recognition of Red China, the Japanese Peace Treaty, the Kashmir dispute and the formation of military alliances.\textsuperscript{49}

The signing of Pakistan-US military pact in May 1954 marked a watershed in Indo-Soviet relations. India’s reaction to the alliance was sharp. Indian leaders and press bitterly criticized the agreement. Nehru who had tried to prevent the Asian countries from being dragged in the cold war expressed deep concern. According to Indian leaders the US military assistance to Pakistan would change the entire regional balance of power and Pakistan
would be inflated out of all proportions to her size. It appeared like a dragger pointed at India. As Nehru said at a press conference:

*It is matter of greatest concern to us and something which will have far-reaching consequences on the whole structure of things in South Asia and especially in India and Pakistan.*

The entire country was emotionally charged in its opposition to the U.S. move. As a matter of fact, America’s military pact with Pakistan inevitably set in motion a chain of events which could not but bring India closer to the USSR. The anti-Western lobby came out very much stronger and those elements which were neutralists, as between the two blocs, got rudely shocked. The wave of anti-Americanism in Indian public opinion reached a high watermark. This could not result but in India and the USSR seeking to build up their friendly relations on a firmer foundation of trade and technical cooperation, and exchange of art and culture. Both India and the USSR joined in condemning the pact. Their interests had converged in this respect, but for different reasons. Though the Government of India was not opposed to the American policy of containment of communism, it was disturbed at American policy of checkmating their aspirations in South East Asia and West Asia, by pinning it down in the sub-continent to deal with a hostile now militarily armed neighbor. In any case, the pact helped the development of better understanding between India and the USSR. India started looking towards Soviet bloc for her security. The most glaring indication of this trend was Nehru’s Peaking visit in 1954 and his acceptance of the Soviet invitation to visit the USSR.

Nevertheless, despite his outspoken opposition to the US-Pakistan Pact and later on to the SEATO, Nehru did not publicly mention the acclaim his stand was receiving from the Russians. The praise of Communist nations was
probably embarrassing to him as it nurtured a belief in the West that India was moving towards an acceptance of the Communist bloc line in world affairs. Nehru wanted a modus vivendi with the Communist world but not at the expense of rapidly worsening relations with the West.

The ties between India and the USSR were strengthened by the mediator's role which India played during the Korean Peace Conference in Geneva in May-July 1954. The conference offered the USSR an opportunity to capitalize on Indo-American tensions. The US opposition to India's participation in the Conference heightened Moscow's campaign to demonstrate its friendship for New Delhi. The USSR pleaded for India's inclusion and recognized India's desire to be included in the Conference where the future of Asia would be discussed. The American effort to exclude India from the Conference was criticized by the Soviet delegate at the U.N. and the Soviet press played up the American opposition in an attempt to stimulate anti-American feeling in India. Although India was not invited to the Conference an Indian delegation headed by Krishna Menon had an active role behind the scene. Menon had several meetings with Molotov. In his memoirs the then British Prime Minister A. Eden who kept in close touch with the Indian delegation during the Conference recollected that his strategy and that of Menon was to convince the Communists that there was a balance of advantage to them in arranging a girdle of neutral states in Indo-China.

It is worth noting that shortly after the Geneva Conference Indo-Soviet contacts increased markedly. India accepted the Soviet offer of assistance for her Second Five Year Plan. It may be inferred that Nehru attached considerable significance to the Soviet behavior at Geneva. The atmosphere between New Delhi and Moscow began to clear rapidly after the negotiated settlement on
Indo-China at the Geneva Conference. Any Indian reluctance to request Soviet assistance disappeared.51

In September 1954, the Soviet Union made an unexpected and dramatic offer to build a giant steel plant in India to help India and to develop its iron and steel industry. Nehru welcomed the Soviet offer and indicated India’s readiness to accept the Soviet aid because Soviet help would “go a long way in the rapid industrialization of our country”.52 He also regarded the Soviet offer as a welcome alternative source for the supply of capital and machinery and also a bargaining counter to the West. On 2nd February 1955 the USSR and India signed an economic agreement providing the Soviet assistance for the construction of a giant steel mill at Bhilai. The agreement came at a time when a negotiation with Britain for another steel plant was bogged down on technical grounds.

In meeting with the Yugoslav leader Tito in December 1954, Nehru received a first hand reappraisal of recent developments in the USSR. Ousted from the Cominform in 1948, Tito successfully withstood Stalin’s pressure. The new Soviet leadership had recently put forth the olive branch of reconciliation hoping to bring Tito back within the fold. This reorientation of Moscow’s policy towards Belgrade was watched carefully by New Delhi. Considerable significance was attached to the gradual Soviet acceptance of Yugoslavia’s non-alignment in the cold war. From Tito, Nehru gained insight into the nature and extent of the Soviet ‘thaw’. The Soviet treatment of Yugoslavia provided Nehru a barometer with which to assess the trends of the Soviet policy over the coming years. Shortly after his talks with Tito, Nehru accepted a formal Soviet invitation to visit the USSR.
State visits are generally tedious affairs dominated by protocol. Normally they generate limited and short lived goodwill. But sometimes they crystallize a national mood or dramatically demonstrate it. The exchange of visits by Nehru and Soviet leaders, however, earned landmark significance. They were events of international significance too. Undoubtedly, these visits marked a watershed in Indo-Soviet relations. It seems imperative to discuss them at length and assess their importance and impact of Indo-Soviet relations.  

Nehru visited the Soviet Union in June 1955. On the eve of his visits Nehru made it clear that he was not going to the Soviet Union “to negotiate on any issues between blocs or intervene in any dispute.” His object was merely to exchange views on world problems of mutual interest. This was necessary because of the active role India was playing in world affairs as well as friendly relations with both the blocs of nations. No doubt, he also intended by his visit to strengthen Indo-Soviet relations as well as acquaint himself, first hand with the conditions within the USSR about which there was much misunderstanding in the Western press. Perhaps, he also intended to mitigate a little, the isolation imposed by the West on Communist countries.

At the huge public meeting at the end of his visit, Nehru congratulated the Soviet people and Government on the several steps taken by the latter which had lessened world tensions and contributed to the cause of peace. He assured the Soviet people that India never harbored any ‘unfriendly’ feelings towards the Soviet Union, even though the methods of achieving their respective national goals were different.

In the joint communiqué issued at the end of Nehru’s Visit, it was resolved that relations between the two would continue to be guided by the
principles of Panchsheel. Significantly enough, the third principle of non-interference in each other’s internal affairs was elaborated with the addition of the words ‘for any reason of an economic, political or ideological character’. The two Prime Ministers also affirmed that in the observance of these principles by nations in the conduct of their mutual relations lies the main hope of banishing fear and mistrust from their minds and thus lowering world tensions. In the rest of the communiqué they commended the results of the Bandung Conference, and urged the representation of Red China in the United Nations and peaceful settlement of the Formosa dispute.\textsuperscript{58}

From the joint communiqué it becomes evident that the Soviet leadership accepted the Panchsheel and made it plain that despite different social systems, there would be no bar in economic, cultural and technical cooperation. The Soviet attitude, when viewed in conjunction with India’s own needs for the development of heavy industry, must have been greatly comforting to Nehru.

The Moscow visit enabled Nehru to speak of Soviet intentions with confidence and authority. After personal observation of the Soviet life and direct talks with the Soviet leaders, India was heard by Western powers with greater respect and credibility.

The fact that Nehru made the Soviet leaders agree to an effective international control of any measures for disarmament (in view of the earlier stand on it) was also no inconsiderable achievement. So also the express assertion of non-interference in other countries affairs, especially of an ideological character. Nehru had the Soviet Premier committed to a peaceful settlement of the Formosa question. In short, as a result of all this, India’s status in international affairs was undoubtedly enhanced.
Apart from all this, Bulganin had accepted Nehru’s invitation to visit India—a rather unusual step for the Soviet Government to agree to. The USSR had also ‘gladly offered’, according to Nehru, to help India in its industrial development by supplying machinery and technical assistance and personnel.59

All these were no grater achievement. But the greatest of all was the lasting impression left on the mind of Nehru and the Indian people of the affection and regard of the Soviet people for India. The feeling in India was one of exultation over the triumphant tour of their national hero. In most quarters in India, Nehru’s visit was considered a success. “Deeds, it is often said, speak louder than words. Yet it would be unfortunate to underestimate the considerable capacity for restraint contained in the words of Mr. Nehru and Bulganin”60

Indeed, foundations of Indo-Soviet friendship were laid deep. Nehru’s visit was a milestone in the development of Indo-Soviet relations. It was a momentous event in cementing Indo-Soviet friendship. Just as Eisenhower’s visit to India in 1959 marked the end of Dullesian rejection of nonalignment, the visit of Nehru closed the chapter of Soviet antagonism and indifference towards India. The thaw in the relations had, of course, started much earlier. Nehru was profoundly impressed by the personal conduct and the manner of approach to problems of the Soviet leaders.61

The return visit to India by Bulganin and Khrushchev in November 1955 marked another watershed in Indo-Soviet relations as India was the first non-Communist country they visited. The visit demonstrated a change that was coming over in the relations between the USSR and non-communist nations.
Its importance was magnified many times more because of the statements made by the Soviet Leaders in the course of their visit. It is worth pointing out that by the end of 1955 Pakistan had become the Western anchor of the SEATO and the Eastern anchor of the Baghdad Pact. By then Pakistan had also signed mutual defense agreement with the United States and had received substantial military and economic assistance from that country. On the very day of the Soviet leaders’ arrival in India, the US had announced an offer to construct 20 million dollar airfield in Pakistan.62

In the context of the above-mentioned developments, the Soviet leaders enjoyed tremendous popularity and welcome in India. Wherever they went, they received tumultuous popular welcome. They were greeted with slogans Hindi-Rusi Ek Hai and Hindi-Rusi Bhai Bhai. Speaking at a Delhi civic reception to the visitors. Nehru spoke for all Indians when he said:

*This day will go down in history as a very important event. The two visitors represented more than the meeting of the leaders of two great countries. ...They signified something deeper and more far-reaching, viz, the meeting of the two great people, and this had a great significance.* 63

However, from India’s point of view the most important pronouncements of the Soviet leaders were the Soviet pledge of unreserved support to its claim on Kashmir. India’s stand was publicly and categorically endorsed. In his speech at Srinagar, Khrushchev declared:

*The question of Kashmir was a matter for the Kashmiris to decide. But the question of Kashmir as one of the states of the Republic of India had been settled by the people of Kashmir*
when they decided to join the Indian Union. The Soviet Union accepted their verdict.  

Equally important was the unequivocal Soviet support to India’s stand on Goa. During their visit the Soviet leaders attacked Portugal for refusing to withdraw from Goa and emphatically supported India’s claim on it. Practically in all major speeches Khrushchev mentioned Goa and forecast its early freedom.

In the joint communique issued at the end of the visit, both governments agreed to exchange trade representatives to look after their growing trade. The USSR also agreed to supply machinery and necessary help for oil exploration and construction of hydroelectric projects in India. Of special importance to India was the observation that the representatives of the two countries would meet and discuss later further mutually advantageous forms of economic and technical cooperation between the Soviet Union and India.

In reviewing the significance of the Bulganin-Khrushchev tour, Sisir Gupta listed “the promise of Soviet aid; the endorsement of India’s unity; the acceptance of its national leadership as a progressive and desirable phenomenon; the promotion of India’s status in the world; and the use of Soviet influence to prevent the irresponsible functioning of its followers in India as providing the basis for India’s friendly relations with the USSR in the following years.

The visit demonstrated a historic transformation that was coming over in the relations between the Soviet Union and non-Communist nations. The visit was highly successful enterprise in public relations. It made a deep impact on Indian people about the USSR’S sincerity in the pursuit of peace in spite of her
enormous nuclear power and also her genuine appreciation of India’s nonalignment and extension of peace area. The statements of the visiting Soviet leaders, with reference to further Indo-Soviet cooperation in various fields and on Kashmir and Goa, evoked great satisfaction and goodwill in India. The Soviet posture was obviously appreciated in India, especially in the context of the current Republican attitude in the USA, which equated nonalignment with immorality and by including Pakistan in the SEATO and the Baghdad Pact gave India a sense of encirclement.

Nevertheless, these visits had hardly any effect on India’s general outlook on world affairs or her own basic foreign policy. The mere formal and joint repetition of views already held individually and separately by the two governments did not imply that after the exchange of visits there was greater agreement between the two governments on those or other world issues than before. However, what pleased India was the fact that, unlike the West, the Soviet leaders publicly and clearly expressed themselves in favour of India continuing to follow her own policy of nonalignment. Indians also received the psychological and emotional satisfaction that in their stand on two issues involving India’s national interest (Kashmir and Goa) a great power and a permanent member of the Security Council had, practically, for the first time, expressed support to India. This was undoubtedly a source of great strength to the Indian people, even though it did not have much significance to the Government of India’s continuing efforts for a solution of these questions. For India, the acceptance by the USSR of the Panch Sheel, India’s concretely defined version of co-existence in the joint communiqué provided public witness to the fact that Moscow preferred good relations with the Indian Government to support of the C.P.I. Finally, the visits also resulted in the expansion of Indo-Soviet relations, both in extensive and intensive terms, in the fields of commerce, science and culture.
Misgivings about the growing rapport between India and the USSR were often sublimated in the Indian press also, but sometimes came to the surface. Such an instance occurred over the treatment of Gandhi in the 1954 edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. As before, Gandhi was termed “one of the initiators of the agreement by the Congress leaders with British imperialism in 1947 which led to the division of the country.” Gandhism was characterized as the reactionary political doctrine of Gandhi. Protests were made by the Indian press and government that the treatment of Gandhi was completely opposed to the professed Soviet friendship and respect for India.

To sum up, it may be said that India’s relations with the USSR during this phase improved considerably. This was a period when the USSR became India’s source of strength in international affairs and a major supplier of India’s defense requirements. Trade was opened between India and the Soviet bloc. Numerous cultural and economic delegations exchanged visits. The mutual relations which began to improve since 1953 reached its high watermark by the end of 1955. The year 1955 ended with India and the USSR well on their way to securing better mutual understanding and friendly relations. The statements of Indian and Soviet leaders during this period evolved “a more stated basis of Indo-Soviet relations.”

A new understanding was reached. The visits of Nehru to the USSR and the Soviet leaders created an atmosphere of exuberant friendship summed up in the phrase “Hindi-Rusi Bhai Bhai” (Indians and Russians are brothers). The USSR not only made amends for the earlier ‘indifferent attitude towards India but also made several gestures of goodwill and friendly feelings. India responded enthusiastically to USSR’s active friendship. It was in keeping with India’s policy of nonalignment. It secured badly needed political support for India’s critical relations with Pakistan without necessitating a formal alliance.
Finally, the trade with the USSR enabled India to make good the ground lost in the Western markets.

The period between 1956 to 1958 was one of strengthening of ties between India and the USSR. India’s foreign policy moved towards more cordial relations with the USSR during these years. An increasing cooperative relationship with the USSR had become by middle of 1956 a cornerstone of India’s foreign policy. On the other hand, the Soviet courtship of India continued in 1956 with an admixture of promises, praise, and economic assistance. The relationship between the two countries had reached a point where neither could withdraw from its commitments to the other without strong repercussions. Several developments had taken place which helped India coming closer to the USSR. It seems pertinent to analyse objectively all such developments.

The Suez crisis revealed the common approach of India and the USSR. Nehru’s reaction to the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt was prompt and sharp. The USSR too reacted sharply to the Western powers attack on Egypt. At the London Conference, the USSR supported the Indian proposals. The Soviet Foreign Minister termed the Indian proposals “a plan for a just and peaceful settlement of the Suez problem”. In short, in policies and attitudes, India and the USSR were alike on the Suez issue. This identical attitude on this issue greatly reinforced Indo-Soviet friendship.

In a work on India’s relations with the USSR, India’s stand on the Hungarian crisis deserves special and careful attention. Severe criticism has been poured on India’s apparently “cautious” and hesitant behaviour during the crisis. In the words of K.P.S. Menon:
Nothing has caused much misunderstanding regarding India's foreign policy than her attitude towards the Hungarian revolution.

However, before discussing and analyzing India’s stand and its impact on her relations with the USSR, it appears pertinent to give a brief summary of the broad facts of the Hungarian tragedy.

In October 1956, the Hungarian people revolted against the USSR. Their main demands were: democratization of government, withdrawal of Soviet troops (who were stationed there under the Warsaw Pact) and restoration of Imry Nagy to power. A civil conflict broke out. Several developments followed. On October 31, the new Hungarian Government headed by I. Nagy informed the U.N. Secretary-General about Hungary’s decision to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. It appealed the U.N. to guarantee Hungary’s permanent neutrality. Moreover, after Soviet forces withdrawal, there was a good deal of mutual killing. A rival government under J. Kadar was set up, and finally at dawn, on November 4, the Soviet troops, which had encircled Budapest, suddenly reentered and started suppressing the revolutionary movement with an iron hand. Ultimately, they succeeded in crushing the popular upsurge in a ruthless manner.

India was among 15 states who abstained on the November 4 resolution condemned the Soviet intervention, called for immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops, upheld the Hungarian peoples’ right to choose their own form of government and instructed the Secretary General to set up a committee which would thoroughly investigate the situation within Hungary.
India found the tone and content of the resolution objectionable as was evident from the speech of the leader of the Indian delegation, Krishna Menon. Explaining his abstention, Menon held that the abstention did not mean unconcern or lack of interest. He pointed out India’s disagreement with certain portions of the resolution. He took exceptions to the parts condemning the Soviet action and calling for an investigation under U.N. auspices into Hungary’s internal affairs. He proceeded to maintain that the Assembly could not deal with a UN member state as in the case of a colonial country where the people had no representation. "We cannot in any circumstances", he argued, "disregard the sovereign rights of Members". The chief Indian delegate attempted to explain that while India was "not neutral where human freedom is concerned", the tone and content of the resolution required India’s abstention. It is worth pointing out that the resolution was put to vote only as a whole, not in parts.

Most of the assessments of the Indian Government’s reaction to the Hungarian revolution have failed to notice the fact that there were several distinct phases to India’s stance on Hungary. Undoubtedly, the critical nature of the Hungarian situation was not immediately recognized in India. A number of factors may be attributed to India’s somewhat slow reaction.

In the first place, India had no authentic report of the facts of the situation on which it could express a quick opinion. No senior Indian diplomat was present at Budapest at the outbreak of the revolution. There were also difficulties resulting from the breakdown of communication within Hungary. Of course, the Government of India received reports from various sources but many of them contradicted each other. To quote Nehru:
The broad facts regarding the Suez conflict were 'completely clear' to the Government and hence they expressed very clear and definite opinion about it. In regard to Hungary, however, the broad facts were not clear.\textsuperscript{77}

Moreover, as the nature of events in Hungary became clearer, Nehru felt an urge to speak out as he had done on Suez canal crises. This phase started after the Anglo-French forces had ended its Egyptian venture. India was then able to look at the European scene with a cooler perspective. More importantly the inception of the phase coincided roughly with the end of the effective resistance by the Hungarian insurgents against the Soviet troop. Nehru’s reaction prior to this time was indicative of his primary concern that the conflict should remain localized. By November 10, the question whether Hungary should withdraw from the Warsaw Pact had been decided by force of arms. With this matter was resolved, Nehru’s concern centered on how the sufferings of the Hungarian people might be relieved. He strongly supported food and medical shipments and other relief measures sponsored by the U.N. He also began to consider ways that the Soviets might be gradually induced to withdraw forces from Hungary. At the AICC meeting, Nehru stated that the growth of democracy should be encouraged in Hungary and that the Hungarian people should decide about themselves without any external pressure. The meeting passed a formal resolution to that effect. Speaking in parliament, Nehru sharply criticized the Soviet intervention in Hungary. He held that it created a grave crisis of mind; compelling (Indians) to think afresh of the hitherto acknowledged virtues of democracy, socialism and communism.\textsuperscript{78}

Nehru condemned the Hungarian episode as a gross and brutal exercise of violence and armed might against weaker countries.
Nehru called for the eventual withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. This change was evidenced in a joint statement issued by the Premiers of India, Burma and Indonesia, after their meeting in New Delhi to discuss Suez and Hungary. The statement regretted the reentry of the Soviet troops into Budapest and called for their speedy removal. The Hungarian people should then be permitted to determine their own form of governments free from external interference.79

It may be said that Nehru’s views on the Hungarian revolution and its aftermath provided an interesting case study of his thoughts about and policy toward developments in the communist world.

India’s foreign policy was moving towards more cordial relations with the USSR during this period was evident, for instance from Nehru’s efforts at the Commonwealth Conference held in July 1956. There Nehru sought to persuade others to accept his basic approach in dealing with Russians. His stance was reflected in the resultant joint statement which indicated the participants “willingness to facilitate increased contacts with the USSR”. In the same month, during his visit to the West Germany Nehru refused to condemn the Soviet domination of the Eastern Europe to be a species of colonialism because of different historic reasons.80

On 21st November, the Soviet delegate announced that his country would veto the 5-Power resolution if it was put to vote. Thus, twice in 1957, the USSR came to India’s rescue when India’s position was being jeopardized by the Western powers siding with Pakistan. The 1957 debate served notice that Soviet veto or threat of veto would readily be available to check Security Council resolution on Kashmir unfavorable to Indian position. This undoubtedly brought India closer to the USSR and strengthened Indo-Soviet ties. This Soviet support made it possible for Nehru to develop close and
friendly relations with Moscow without being the part of the Communist camp.  

During this period, there was a close identity of views between the two nations on matters concerning arms control. On 22nd and 27th May 1957, the two Houses of Indian Parliament passed unanimous resolutions calling on the great powers to stop nuclear testing. It is worth pointing out that on 10th May 1957, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had made similar appeals to the British Parliament and the American Congress for the renunciation of the nuclear weapons. The representatives of the two countries consulted more frequently on this issue in the United Nations. In June 1957, the USSR backed India’s unsuccessful bid to send a delegate to speak at the forthcoming 5-Power Disarmament Commission in London. For sometime India had favored the enlargement of the UN Disarmament Sub Committee, contending that Indian representative on Committee discussing disarmament would give a voice to the vast majority of nations who neither had nuclear weapons nor wish to make them. Nehru told the Parliament:

*I suppose that the basic issues which perhaps govern other matters are that of disarmament. All kinds of proposals have been made, but the fact is that at the present moment, again, the Disarmament Commission faces a deadlock... it is not our desire to push ourselves in these committees or Commissions, but naturally we would like to help, we are prepared to do so.*

Thus, in the matter of disarmament, especially in their desire to suppression of nuclear tests, as also in the matter of elimination of foreign bases with a view to prevent surprise attacks- there was almost unanimity of approach between India and the USSR. This naturally resulted in bringing them
closer and strengthened the feelings of friendship between the two during this period.

**China as a Factor in Indo-Soviet Relations:**

India sought to cultivate the Soviet Union for immediate political objectives as well as for long-range policy goals. The year 1959 saw the addition of a new concern, namely, areas occupied by China. This added a new dimension to New Delhi-Moscow relationship. Significantly, the growing tension between China and the Soviet Union also came to the surface in the year 1959. The gulf between China and the USSR has a parallel in the gulf that existed, between China and India. China became a source of common concern to both the countries. This became an important and dominating factor in the development of India’s relations with the Soviet Union since then.\(^3\)

In mid-1959 border clashes took place between India and China. After maintaining a long silence on the Sino-Indian dispute, the Soviet Union came out with a cryptic statement on 8th September, 1959 in the TASS. The USSR had friendly relations with both China and India, built respectively on “fraternal ties” of international socialism and ‘friendly’ collaboration in accordance with the idea of peaceful co-existence. It expressed the hope that India and China with both of whom the Soviet Union enjoyed friendly relations would settle their disputes peaceably. In the following month, the third session of the Supreme Soviet while regretting the incidents between the two states friendly to it called for friendly negotiations for solving the disputed frontier question. A week later, Khrushchev termed the entire dispute “sad” and “stupid” in as much as the area under contention had no strategic importance, nor was it even inhabitable.\(^4\)

The Soviet reaction reflected the cautious neutrality of the Soviet position. For the first time, the Soviet Union had refused to side with its ally on a dispute with a non-Communist State. While the Soviets had not expressed any opinion publicly on the merits of the dispute, they had not supported the
Chinese. This was highly significant and reassuring to Indian leaders. The Government of India realized the significance of the Soviet attitude and regarded it as indirectly helpful to India.

However, the Chinese action did create misgivings in the minds of common people in India about the Communist world as a whole. Thus, in order to counter the suggestion that the Soviet Union being a communist nation, was unreliable and might turn against India, Nehru repeatedly drew a clear distinction between the conduct of the Soviets and the Chinese in his public utterances. Indo-Soviet friendship was put to test in the face of the Chinese hostility culminating in armed aggression in October, 1962.

This period witnessed further consolidation of cordiality between the two states. Contacts were increased in almost all spheres. New agreements were concluded to extend trade, technical assistance and cultural relations. Soviet efforts for the expansion of existing projects and the establishment of new ones made available. It seems pertinent to digress for a moment from the interplay of the Sino-Soviet-Indian triangle to consider and objectively analyze various developments that had taken place during these years and assess their significance in the growth of India’s relations with USSR.

The visits of high dignitaries continued as in the past. Both the President of the Supreme Soviet Voroshilov and the government chief Khrushchev visited India in early 1960. The President of India normally does not go to receive the visiting head of the government. When Bulganin and Khrushchev visited India in 1955, the President did not go to the airport to receive them. But this time the President was present at the airport to receive Khrushchev. The informality that grew during this period was indicative of the strength of close bounds that existed between two countries. However, it is worth noting
that the public enthusiasm for the Soviet premier in India did not compare with that of his earlier visit. Taya Zink in summed up the lack of interest in these words:

\[\text{To add insult to injury, Nehru fell asleep while his guest spoke at the civic reception in Delhi to an audience half the size that greeted him last time.}\]

Moreover, the bonds of friendship that existed between the two countries after the exchange of visit of the leaders of the two countries were visible in the public utterances of the Indian and Soviet leaders on the occasion of Khrushchev's second visit to India. In his address to the Indian Parliament, Khrushchev paid glowing tributes to Nehru and the Five Principles. Proposing vote of thanks, the Lok Sabha Speaker told Khrushchev:

\[\text{Last time you came here as a visitor, this time as a friend and when you come next time you will be relative.}\]

Khrushchev's second visit had a larger significance as event in the bilateral relations between the two states, as the Soviet leader was striving to patch up his differences with Mao during this period. At the time of his visit, Sino-Indian relations had reached almost a point of complete breakdown. Nehru on 13th January 1960 had refused to meet Chou for any further talks on the ground that such negotiations were unacceptable to India in view of the fact that China not India had committed the border aggression. The fact that at a time when Khrushchev was trying to improve Soviet relations with China, his acceptance of India's invitation to break journey in India was illustrative of his unwillingness to compromise with Mao on the question of Soviet ties with
India. Significantly, Khrushchev’s visit coincided with the tenth anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Agreement of Friendship and Alliance of 1950.

Khrushchev apparently urged Nehru to enter into negotiations with Chou on the border question. After talking with Khrushchev, Nehru told the Rajya Sabha:

As things stand now, I see no ground for a meeting, no bridge between the Chinese position and ours. There is no room for negotiation on that basis and there is nothing to negotiate now. But it may arise later.  

Yet Khrushchev’s request probably influenced Nehru’s decision several weeks later to extend an invitation to Chou for a meeting. This shift in the Indian policy was obviously the result of the Indo-Soviet talks. Anyhow, the visit provided an opportunity to both the leaders to exchange views on various issues particularly the emerging Chinese menace and to appreciate each other’s viewpoint.

The visit of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of India in June 1960 was another manifestation of warm feelings between the two countries. Welcoming the Indian President, the Soviet President said:

Warm friendship and wide cooperation between our governments and peoples is very bright evidence of the fact that nothing can stop the irresistible longings of the progressive forces from establishing new relationship based on principles of peaceful co-existence between countries.  

Speaking at a Soviet Indian friendship meeting, President Prasad noted the fruitful development of Indo-Soviet relations:

The USSR and India have shown to all skeptics and cynics on right and left that two great countries, adhering to different
traditions and to different philosophies, can cooperate freely and successfully in furthering not only the improvement of the well-being of the people, but also the consolidation of peace.

When the Indian President called on him, the Soviet President declared that “our friendship is greatly promoted by the exchange of visits between Soviet and Indian statesman”.

In September 1961, Nehru paid another visit to Moscow. The Belgrade Conference of nonaligned states had entrusted the task of conveying the concern of nonaligned world to N. Krumah and Nehru, who was, in fact, to visit the USSR on his way back which was fixed earlier. The public enthusiasm for the Indian Prime Minister in Moscow did not match with that of his 1955 visit. It confined chiefly to recalling previous meetings with Nehru. But he preferred to tell Khrushchev that in the world in those days many new important problems have come up and he would be glad to discuss them with Khrushchev. In Moscow Nehru repeatedly stressed India’s past and present opposition to nuclear experiments. He frankly told Khrushchev that the resumption of nuclear testing retarded disarmament talks and aggravated the international situation. In his major speech, Nehru told his audience at the Indo-Soviet friendship rally what had happened at Belgrade and why he came to Moscow—which was withheld from them by the Soviet media.

Soviet Support to India on Goa and Kashmir Issue

The Soviet support to India’s claims on Goa had been made public from the very outset. During their 1955 visit, the Soviet leaders had expressed the hope that Goa would soon become a part of India. The Soviet President Brezhnev, who was on a state visit to India at the time of Goa operation declared in Bombay that the Soviet Union had complete sympathy for the
Indian people’s desire to liberate Goa, Daman and Diu from Portuguese colonialism. On 18 December 1961, the day the world learnt of the liberation Brezhnev assured a civic reception of firm Soviet support for the action. The Soviet Prime Minister Khrushchev sent a telegram to Nehru saying that the resolute action of the Government of India to do away with the outposts of colonialism in its territory was absolutely lawful and justified.” He declared that the Soviet people unanimously approve of these actions. When the Westerners brought forward a resolution in the Security Council to censure India, the USSR blocked it with a prompt Veto. The Soviet delegate contended that his vote ‘represented a victory for the true principles of UN Charter:

*Today saw the expression of the will to defend colonial countries and peoples and their right to life, freedom and independence.*

Undoubtedly, the Soviet stand on Goa had made a very favorable impression on Government of India which was angered by the Western attitude. It definitely pleased the Indian public opinion. Some sections of the Indian press, usually more, circumspect about Indo-Soviet relations, now defended their nation’s policy in a surge of chauvinistic vigor.

The Indian Government and public were greatly appreciative of the profound sympathy and understanding of its aspirations by the USSR. The Soviet stand on Goa certainly helped in drawing India closer to the USSR and helped in consolidating the friendly ties.

In early 1962, Pakistan tried to use Western hostility to India due to liberation of Goa by asking the Security Council to reconsider Kashmir issue on the plea that the speeches of certain leaders revealed an Indian plan to
recapture the Pakistan occupied portion of Kashmir. In view of this, it was claimed that a serious situation was created which warranted an immediate consideration by the Council. Participating in the debate, the Soviet delegate pointed out that no new situation had arisen in Kashmir which warranted any fresh discussion by the Council. When the Irish delegate introduced a resolution urging the two governments to negotiate on the dispute at the earliest and settle it on the basis of a plebiscite, the Soviet delegate vetoed it. The Soviet delegate categorically declared that the question of holding a plebiscite in Kashmir was dead and out dated and the Kashmir question had been solved once for all. In January 1964, Pakistan once again raised the bogey or threat from India on Kashmir issue. During the debate the Soviet delegate held that the position of the Soviet was that question of Kashmir’s belonging to India had already been decided by the people of Kashmir. Fearing the veto on a resolution, the Western Powers raised the issue of consensus but the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia said that they would not agree to any so-called consensus whose contents are not acceptable to India. Thanks to the Soviet attitude, the debate ended without a resolution. Thus, the USSR once again came to India’s rescue when India’s position was being jeopardized by the Western Powers siding with Pakistan. This brought India closer to the USSR and further strengthened Indo-Soviet ties.92

It may be said that despite some irritants and their differences of opinion on various world issues, India’s relations with USSR were further consolidated. The friendly ties between the two countries were further strengthened as a result of unqualified Soviet support on Goa operation, the use of Soviet veto on Kashmir issue, economic aid, and military assistance and identity of views between New Delhi and Moscow with respect to China. On the one hand, it was essential to India’s security and her political survival as an independent nation to contain and withstand the pressure of Chinese aggressive designs.
Indo-Soviet Relations in the Post- Nehru Period

The death of Nehru in May, 1964 did not adversely affect the growing relationship between India and the Soviet Union. In fact, the relationship was sought to be consolidated by Lal Bahadur Shastri, when as the new Indian Prime Minister, and he paid an official visit to Moscow from 12 to 19 May, 1965. This was the time when the Indo-Pak conflict over the Rain of Kutch was developing. Shastri declared in Moscow that the Indian and Soviet peoples were already united together by genuine, strong and abiding bonds of friendship relying 'not upon any temporary expedients, but upon the sincere realization that the larger interests of humanity can be served best by promoting and enlarging the area of peace'. His pronouncements as well as the Joint Communiqué on the Shastri-Kosygin talks underlined that this relationship was not directed against any third country and is opposed to interference in any country's internal affairs. These were a direct allusion to Pakistan in the context of the developments in South Asia at that period of time. What is more, the two sides denounced the savage US bombing on North Vietnam and called for its halt forthwith.

Pakistan launched an attack on Kashmir engendering a full-scale Indo-Pak war in September, 1965. Well aware of the far-reaching repercussions of such a war, the Soviet Union took prompt diplomatic initiatives to stamp out the flames of tension in South Asia and primarily Kosygin’s peace efforts succeeded in bringing about the Tashkent Summit of the two neighboring countries from 4 to 10 January, 1966. Today when India and Pakistan are striving to conclude a no-war pact and treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation, the signal importance of the Tashkent Agreement cannot be minimized. It was through Kosygin’s painstaking endeavors that the state of war between India and Pakistan was brought to an end, diplomatic relations among them restored and cultural and trade contacts resumed. The agreement
did help albeit temporarily, in strengthening the forces of peace in South Asia and was yet another direct offspring of Indo-Soviet friendship.

After Shastri’s death immediately following the Tashkent accord, Mrs. Indira Gandhi took over the reins of power in India becoming the third Prime Minister of the Republic. Her first official visit to Moscow in that capacity lasted four days—from 12 to 16 July, 1966. Her speeches in the Soviet capital reflected her devotion to safeguard peace, a legacy of her father—something that has found concrete manifestation in her deeds over the years. The Joint Communiqué at the end of her talks with the Soviet leaders reaffirmed their common goal of ensuring peace and highlighted the need to renounce the use of force in inter-state relations. It urged an immediate end to the US bombing of North Vietnam and abolition of military alliances. It also emphasized the need for consolidation of peace in Europe, solution of the German problem, elimination of Portuguese colonialism in Africa and apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia and realisation of nuclear disarmament.

Mrs. Gandhi again visited the Soviet Union in November 1967 to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution. It was a gesture of goodwill—similar to the gestures of the Soviet Government seen in Kosygin’s visit to India accompanying the body of Shastri from Tashkent and on the demise of President Zakir Hussain in May 1969. It mirrored once again the Government of India’s desire to further improve Indo-Soviet ties. It was also noteworthy that Mrs. Gandhi was one of the only two heads of non-Communist states to be invited to the celebrations.

Kosygin visited India in January, 1968 and asserted that the deteriorating international climate persistently demanded from all who cherish peace and security of peoples, to take united action aimed at combating the aggressive forces of imperialism and colonialism. He spoke of the value USSR
attached to the Tashkent Agreement, adding: We, like all friends of India and Pakistan, would like to see Hindustan as a region of stable peace, a region where the foundations of friendly cooperation between India and Pakistan could be laid. The Joint Communiqué envisaged regular exchange of opinions on political issues at the highest level.

The year 1971 added a new dimension to both the political landscape of South Asia and Indo-Soviet relations. The West Pak authorities’ brutal suppression of the East Pakistani people’s aspirations for an independent state was directly responsible for the birth of a new state—the People’s Republic of Bangladesh—in the first half of the year. This coincided with the developing Sino-US alliance punctuated by Kissinger’s secret mission to Beijing via Islamabad and the declaration of US President Richard Nixon’s plea to visit China. As the influx of refugees to India escaping from Yahya Khan’s brutalities continued, war clouds gathered on the horizon with the concretization of the sinister Sino-US-Pak axis to keep India at bay and ensure Islamabad’s domination over Dacca. It was then that in order to defend peace and security in the subcontinent and raise Indo-Soviet ties to a qualitatively higher level that on August 9, 1971, the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed in New Delhi. The treaty provided for immediate Indo-Soviet consultations in the event of an attack or threat of aggression to remove such a threat and ensure peace and security of the countries, while at the same time upholding the Indian policy of non-alignment Soviet regard for which was expressively spelt out.

The situation was deteriorating fast. In a brief stopover in New Delhi on 1October, 1971, Soviet President Podgorny said the Soviet people were closely watching the “difficult and dangerous situation in the Hindustan subcontinent”. Intense Indo-Soviet consultations at various levels in conformity with the
The Treaty followed as the US under Nixon took a tough stand trying to bend India in Pakistan’s favour.

The Indo-Pak war broke out on 3 December, 1971 and ended with India unilaterally declaring ceasefire after the complete liberation of Bangladesh on 16 December. In the meantime, political and diplomatic moves by the USSR in India’s support at the UN thwarted all Sino-US attempts to block Bangladesh’s independence. Again it was Indo-Soviet coordination in accordance with the Treaty which foiled the nefarious design of the US Government in its dispatch of a Seventh Fleet task force to the Bay of Bengal just on the eve of Bangladesh’s freedom from the oppressive yoke.

The subsequent developments gave a fillip to all peace champions across the globe. The South Asian events flowing from the most positive and beneficial impact of Indo-Soviet relations in the world arena also made their contribution to the global process of detente that was set in motion with the Nixon-Brezhnev talks in Moscow in the summer of 1972.

Soviet Communist Party General Secretary, Leonid Brezhnev visited New Delhi in November, 1973. This visit was one of the most striking landmarks in Indo-Soviet relations next only to the historic visits to the USSR by Nehru in June, 1955 and to India by Bulganin and Khrushchev in November-December of that very year. Brezhnev used the visit to convey the intense Soviet feeling towards India—a feeling shorn of any trace of artificiality. “Friendship and cooperation with India”, he declared at the Red Fort grounds on 27 November, 1973, “is part and parcel of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. We were with you when India’s new statehood was emerging. We were with you in difficult and trying periods for India. We were with you when various external forces were trying to bring pressure on your country when it
was upholding its vital interests. We shall be with you in the days of joy and in the days of trial."³⁹³

He explained the essence of detente, and upheld the international significance of Indo-Soviet friendship cemented by the Treaty. The experience of Indo-Soviet relations he said “shows how close. Many- faceted friendly relations can unite states with different social systems when the policy of the states is inspired by the ideals of the struggle for peace and security of peoples, against aggression and all forms of colonialism”, and added: “This good example exerts and, we are confident, will continue to exert ever wider influence on the international life”.⁴⁴

Within less than a year, there was a change of leadership in India following Mrs. Gandhi’s defeat at the hustings Morarji Desai, who succeeded her as the country’s fourth Prime Minister, was reportedly averse to the Indo Soviet Treaty and initially sought to have it abrogated. This was, however, prevented by others running the Government and Desai, too, realized the importance of maintaining the relationship between the two States in the spirit of the Treaty. His visit to the USSR in October, 1977 found the Soviet leaders including Brezhnev extending a warm welcome and generous hospitality to him as a mark of tribute to India. The visit helped to underscore the continuity of Indo-Soviet relations.

Desai again went to Moscow in June, 1979 just when Brezhnev was about to leave for Vienna to sign the SALT II accord with the then US President, Jimmy Carter. While greeting this development, the two leaders expressed concern over the happenings in Afghanistan and Kampuchea. The Joint Statement at the end of the talks found both leaders agreed on the
question of opposing ‘any interference by outside forces in the internal affairs of Afghanistan’. 95

In 1980, Mrs. Gandhi returned to power with a thumping majority and Brezhnev came to India in December of that year. There was much to discuss, for world peace had suffered setbacks with grievous blows dealt on detente by revanchists of the Western military circles. SALT II was in cold storage, the arms race was spiraling, tensions had mounted in South-West Asia with the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan in the aftermath of Sino-US-Pak plot to overthrow the Kabul Government as a direct interference in Afghan affairs and in South-East Asia with the Chinese attack on Vietnam following the liberation of Kampuchea from Pol Pot’s inhuman yoke. The Iraq-Iran war was continuing and the Arab world stood divided after Egypt’s betrayal at Camp David. Nearer home, Pakistan was being armed to the teeth by the US, posing a new threat to India.

The visit of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to the Soviet Union from September 20 to 26, 1982, like her earlier ones, was yet another milestone in the further strengthening of Indo-Soviet relations. The talks of the Indian and Soviet leaders showed the close identity of views of the two countries on many international issues, particularly the preservation of peace and avoidance of a nuclear war. They were alarmed over the growth of the arms race, the emergence of new seat of tension and the proclamation of new military doctrines justifying a nuclear war. The Soviet and Indian people hold that today there is nothing which is more important than the preservation of peace. 96

Mrs. Gandhi’s visit also helped to strengthen Indo-Soviet cooperation. The summit talks reaffirmed that the relations between the USSR and India are based on the firm foundations of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and
Cooperation; that they meet the fundamental interests of the two countries and that they have a positive impact on the developments of the international situation. The Joint Indo-Soviet Declaration signed by Mrs. Gandhi and L.I. Brezhnev stated, The two sides reaffirm that the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation concluded between them is a symbol of the traditional friendship between the USSR and India and of their commitment to international peace and detente.

Both sides noted with satisfaction the large scale and high level of their cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, science and technology, which was being carried out on a planned basis and was of a mutually-beneficial and long-term character.

The relations between India and the USSR are a model of relations between states following different socio-economic system. They have been built by the peoples of the two countries over a long period of time and through persistent efforts based on goodwill and mutual trust. Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the late Soviet President L.I. Brezhnev have made outstanding personal contributions to the consolidation of these relations.

During their review of the international scene, both countries strongly condemned Israel's criminal aggression against Lebanon, encouraged by the USA and demanded immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. They also reviewed the situation in the Indian Ocean. The Soviet side fully supported the proposal of the littoral states to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. They also expressed concern over the continuing tension in South West Asia. They were of the view that both the problems of Afghanistan and Kampuchea should be settled through political discussions. The Soviet side noted the growing
significance of the nonaligned movement against imperialism, neocolonialism and racism.

Mrs. Gandhi expressed regret that events during recent years had not produced a congenial atmosphere in which the developing countries could effectively pursue their path of self-development.97

Bilateral Relations in the Post Brezhnev Period

India was assured after the death of Brezhnev in 1983 that Indo-Soviet relations would continue to be cordial and friendly. Bilateral trade continued to grow. After Mrs. Gandhi’s assassination in October, 1984, India’s leadership went into the hands of her son Rajiv Gandhi. In the USSR, after two short leaderships of Andropov and Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1985. Indo-Soviet relations were further consolidated during the period that two countries were led by Rajiv and Gorbachev. The two countries had more or less identical views on most of the international questions. Rajiv Gandhi asserted a number of times that the Soviet Union had stood by India in all difficult times. Therefore, Indo-Soviet friendship would be maintained at high level. Rajiv Gandhi went on 6 days visit to the Soviet Union in may 1985. He was assured by the Soviet leaders that they were aware of India’s anxiety caused by Pakistan’s nuclear weapon programme. Both the countries signed agreements for economic and technical cooperation whereby Soviet assistance to India was considerably increased.98

Gorbachev proposed to promote the idea of collective security for Asia originally initiated by late Brezhnev. He admitted that it was not easy to give practical shape to this proposal. Acknowledging India’s important role in Asia, the Soviet leader said that, we appreciate the contribution of India in
strengthening international peace and security, and applaud India’s contribution in promoting the role of Non-aligned Movement in this endeavor.

A significant Delhi Declaration was issued at the end of Gorbachev’s Delhi visit. It was signed by Rajeev Gandhi and Gorbachev. On his arrival in India Gorbachev had warned that if Indo-Pak disputes were not amicably solved then it could lead to serious consequences. He had expressed the hope that, like India, Pakistan would also behave like a good neighbor. Another significant announcement was made by him. He said that the USSR not attempt to improve relations even with China at the cost of Indo-Soviet friendship.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation were, as mentioned earlier, renewed in 1991 for a further period of 20 years. This was a proof of sustained ties between the two countries, and, in a way, brought India under the Soviet nuclear umbrella. The Cold War had ended at the end of 1989, but a new environment had been created in the Soviet Union by various reforms initiated by Party General Secretary Gorbachev. Meanwhile, in India the power was transferred from Rajiv Gandhi led Congress Government to a minority Janata Dal Government. After a brief period of lack of warmth, Prime Minister V.P. Singh paid a visit to the USSR in 1990. This renewed the warmth in the bilateral relations. The Soviet position on Kashmir was reiterated. It was decided to renew the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty, and it was decided to continue till 1995 the rupee-rouble trade arrangement. Thus, Indo-Soviet relations showed mature and stable friendship.

During 1990-91, India generally supported the position taken by the Soviet Union in the Gulf crisis. India, like the Soviet Union, had decided to further consolidate relations with the PLO and yet initiated steps to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. A minor irritant was noticed when Chandra
Shekhar Government allowed refueling facilities to US war planes flying towards the Gulf during the war.¹⁰¹

Most surprisingly the 1985-1990 period of Perestroika witnessed little substantial progress in the relations between India and the Soviet Union. The situation exacerbated by growing pro-western tilt of Soviet policy and the economic crisis it faced in the closing years of the perestroika period. Mikhail Gorbachev during 1986-87 was known for his policy of glasnost which provided a greater degree of freedom for mass media, and permitted free discussion of some previously censored aspects of Russian history as well as more critical views concerning contemporary Politics.¹⁰² Gorbachev also announced a programme of economic reforms known as perestroika the purpose of which was to liberalize the economic system by introducing market mechanism, competition and private initiatives. In his view, transformation of the communist economy would be possible by freeing Soviet industry from the stultifying effects of centralization and bureaucratization. He felt that the objective could be achieved making Soviet enterprises more accountable and therefore more efficient.

Despite his best efforts, when Gorbachev failed to achieve the objectives he had view particularly improvement in the economy, settlement of ethnic differences and rehabilitation of the administrative machinery through his two pet concepts glasnost and perestroika, he decided to give a chance to anew move. This he wanted to do through the signing of a Union Republican treaty which he proposed to get signed on 21 August 1991. This treaty sought to provide for a new decentralized set up in which the republics would be given more autonomy in a loose federation. The glasnost and perestroika, despite its limitations, a great impact on the thinking on foreign affairs. The Soviet decision to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan from 15 February 1989
represented a significant and crucial event in the rapid ideological, foreign and domestic reforms undertaken by Gorbachev. The Soviet withdrawal was important internationally because it bolstered the existing forces for reforms in the Soviet bloc.\textsuperscript{103}

The year 1991 saw numerous changes in the erstwhile Soviet Union and, what were known as its satellite states in Eastern Europe. Communism collapsed and democratic governments were installed one after the other in most of the East European countries. In the Soviet Union itself the reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev had tremendous impact on the society and the people aspired for and got full democratic rights. In a country that had totally controlled economy and politics for 70 years, \textit{Perestroika} and \textit{Glasnost} gave a new shape to the Soviet economy and politics. But the reforms also led to the end of monopoly of power of the Communist Party and introduction of multi-party democracy. An attempt in August 1991 to overthrow the reformist Gorbachev and restoration of communist power miserably failed. During the period of crisis in the USSR, India made a serious error by commenting that it would deal with the new government in USSR because overthrow of Gorbachev by the hardliners was the internal matter of that country. When the coup failed and Gorbachev came back to power, India faced a very embarrassing situation.

The Soviet Union suddenly disintegrated in December 1991 and the mighty state of USSR was replaced by 15 Republics. Russian Republic as recognized by the international community as the successor state of USSR. At the time of disintegration, a loose union of erstwhile Soviet republics was created and called the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). India has maintained friendly and cooperative relations not only with Russian Federation but also the other Members of CIS.\textsuperscript{104}
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