CONCLUSION

The perspectives of South Asian States on the external environment since the withdrawal of the British from the subcontinent have varied widely over time, but there has been a considerable degree of consistency in their respective responses to the involvement of outside powers in the subcontinent. While this has been determined primarily by the specific circumstances surrounding both regional and extra-regional developments, there is also a wide variety of historical and cultural traditions that continue to influence policies and attitudes on foreign policy and security issues in the politics in South Asia.

To cultivate India as the major South Asian nation which steered clear of any alliance with the U.S. was the leitmotif of Soviet South Asian policy in the 1950s. Another important strand joined this one in the 1960s, viz., India as a counter-weight to Maoist China which increasingly challenged the ideological authority of post-Stalin Soviet leadership. In 1960 Moscow withdrew all aid from China. In October that year it concluded an agreement with India in the latter's purchase of various types of Soviet aircraft. This was followed by further orders in 1961 and 1962. In August 1962, or the eve of the Sino-Indian border clash, Moscow concluded an agreement to grant license to India to produce MIG-21 jet fighters. This may have been the first such licensing outside the U.S.S.R. including the Soviet bloc. The military dimension of Indo-Soviet relations developed significantly enough against the background of a major incident on the 2,500 mile Sino-Indian
border leading to loss of lives in October 1959 and mounting border tension between the two most populous nations of the world.

The post-Khurshchev Soviet leadership, consisting of the triumvirate of Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny was more restrained in its policy towards the South Asian subcontinent. The Indo-Pak war of 1965 led to Moscow's mediatory role early next year in Tashkent. The summit between president Ayub and Premier Shastri in that Soviet city revealed two interesting features. First, Moscow had become an important factor in South Asia. Second, Kremlin's new leaders were taking a more balanced stance on the Indo-Pak dispute, an important reason for which was the growing Sino-Pak link. Indeed Moscow even extended limited arms aid to Pakistan in the late 1960s, to neutralize Chinese influence there, thereby running into Indian indignation.

The 1962 debacle awakened India to the new realities. The America of Dulles was unwilling to accept the genuineness of non-alignment and described it as dishonest. In the context of South Asia, Pakistan was the focal point, being an ally. Inevitably, India did not get American sympathy or support, even though the U.S.A. and U.K. did not approve China and had kept it out of the U.N.

Moscow's growing role in South Asia was exemplified by its successful mediation in the 1965 war and its attempt to build up its influence with Pakistan by offering arms aid to it in 1968. The Soviet Union tried to mediate in the 1971 war between India and Pakistan, but its offer was turned down by India, which preferred to negotiate bilaterally. Moscow hoped that the Treaty of Friendship concluded with Mrs.Gandhi's government would be the precursor to India's acceptance of the
Brezhnev Doctrine. But the doctrine still remains a dis­embodied spirit. While Soviet interests have undoubtedly prospered in the area, they have not reached a point where the Soviets can hope to play a pre-eminent role in the policies of India or of the other countries of South Asia.

The Soviet Union chose its options with skill, taking full advantage of the opportunities which offered. When the U.S.A. began to arm Pakistan, Soviet military assistance to India became readily available. Soviet political support over Kashmir helped to neutralise American backing of Pakistan, while the United States looked askance at India's socialistic five year plans with their emphasis on industry, the Soviets welcomed the planning process and helped in the building up of heavy industry. The rupee trade agreement provided new export markets for India's developing skills and an outlet for its industrial products. In the war with China and the recurrent clashes with Pakistan, Soviet military and political support was invariably extended to India. The Soviet image in Indian eyes was therefore that of a loyal and steadfast friend, whose support can be counted upon in good times as in bad.

But while there was this spectacle of competition and sometimes of confrontation between the super powers in India and South Asia, their basic aims were not so divergent after all; they were common, complementary or compatible. But they were also competitive. American strategic interests were not directly involved in the Indian Ocean area except to the extent of safeguarding vital oil supplies from the Gulf and West Asian states. Soviet strategic interests were also largely limited to keeping the lines of communication open with its Eastern provinces and blocking their attempts to build up anti-Soviet groupings in the area. India's
insistence on keeping the Indian Ocean area a zone of peace, free from great power rivalries, affects both superpowers equally.

Superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean is a threat not only to India but other countries of the region. It is of the utmost importance to them that superpower military presence should be gradually reduced and eliminated from there. For this purpose, India and other littoral countries are demanding that the Indian Ocean be declared a zone of peace.

The Soviet Union is in favour of turning the Indian Ocean into a peace zone, as was proposed by the nonaligned states. It is also for the withdrawal from this region of all the naval fleets not belonging to the coastal states. The Soviet Union considers it necessary to hold an international conference to discuss the question of turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and expresses its readiness to resume the talks suspended by the United States on a limitation and then reduction of military activity in the Indian Ocean. The U.S.S.R. resolutely called for convening an international conference on the Indian Ocean in the first half of 1986, in accordance with the U.N. Special Committee's decision. Gorbachev had put new proposals for enhanced military and political stability in the Indian Ocean in his speech in the Indian Parliament during his visit to New Delhi in November 1986.

One of the most important Soviet foreign policy lines is the struggle for peace and security in the Asian continent—the Soviet Union builds its relations with the countries of Asia on the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has always considered the struggle to
reduce threat of war and curb the arms race a major foreign policy task of the Soviet Union. At the 26th Party Congress in February 1981, it put forward a series of new constructive proposals of a political and military character, some of which directly concerned various Asian regions from the Near to the Far East.

However, it is Soviet intervention in Afghanistan that has introduced a strong role of divergence in Indo-Soviet relations, and altered India's strategic perspectives of the region in a radical manner. The geographical distance between India and the Soviet Union was an essential element of friendly Indo-Soviet relations. Nonaligned Afghanistan was a buffer between the two countries. India was not exposed to pressures or interferences from this quarter except from Pakistan. Soviet troops could not pose an immediate threat to India, but it was decisively important for India to seek a solution to the Afghan problem so as to enable Soviet troops to withdraw and restore Afghanistan's nonaligned status.

The emerging Afghanistan-Pakistan scenario heralds dangerous portents for India. One such consequence is that Pakistan has been receiving massive quantities of arms from the U.S.A. on the pretext of the Soviet threat; whether or not Pakistan will be able to take on a superpower is a different question. But it has been the Indian experience that whenever Pakistan has received huge quantities of arms for other purpose, these have, in fact, been used against India.

Superpower confrontation on India's border would be extremely disastrous for India. On the other hand, the last decade witnessed an equally significant development in South Asia. India emerged as a regional power after the birth of Bangladesh. Consequently India's strategic perceptions underwent
a change. A truncated Pakistan was no longer a serious threat. India's military capability along with her rapid economic development could safeguard her western frontier. At the same time, the threat from China had lost its intensity. China was too preoccupied with the Soviet threat in the north. The defeat and withdrawal of American power from Vietnam and the Soviet Union exacerbated the situation from the Chinese point of view.

For Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Moscow visit of October 1982 had restored the balance of power in the South Asian region. Whatever clouds had fallen on the relationship as a result of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had passed. Mrs. Gandhi did tell Brezhnev that India would like him to pull out his troops from Afghanistan.

If one analyses the developments in Afghanistan after the total withdrawal of Soviet troops (February 1989) an impression is created that the Kremlin does not have a long-term Afghan policy. Gorbachev's leadership seems to be on trial in Afghanistan, and if he fails to pass the test, the interests of both the Soviet Union and India will be compromised. The Soviet Union is seriously disturbed by the continuing U.S.-Pakistan support for the Mujahideen and their consequent refusal to accept anything less than Kabul government's surrender. But Soviet Union does not seem to be thinking in terms of replacing president Najibullah with some one who, in its view, may be more acceptable to Mujahideen as an interlocutor for a possible rapprochement.

It is of utmost importance for Soviet Union and India to realise that in the context of US-Pakistan-Iran designs for installing a fundamentalist regime in Afghanistan, new schemes dangerous for both the countries are in preparation.
which Moscow and New Delhi will be ill-advised to ignore. By any reckoning developments in Afghanistan would have a critical bearing on the security of both the Soviet Union and India.

The Soviet Union has developed its relations with the other South Asian countries. In April 1980 Moscow had signed a scientific and cultural agreement with Maldives, a nation of over 1,000 coral islands with a Muslim population. Nepal too has been successful in receiving Soviet aid. The Soviet Union helped in the construction of some projects in Nepal. However, the Soviet Union has not shown any involved interest in Nepalese affairs except its concern for the increasing influence of China in Nepal. It appears that the Soviets are inclined to view with favour any government in Nepal which could maintain internal stability and status quo in the country.

Soviet Union adopted a differing posture on the Bangladesh crisis than India. When the crisis erupted in March 1971, the Soviet approach to the problem was merely to counsel President Yahya Khan to end brutalities in East Pakistan and negotiate with its leaders. This approach persisted even after the Indo-Soviet treaty was signed, while the Indian stand was that conditions must be created in East Pakistan for the return of the refugees in honour and safety.

More importantly, the Soviet Union did not visualise the prospect of an independent Bangladesh till the very end. Given the emerging Sino-Pak-American axis, war in the western sector with the backing of China and the U.S.A. close to the Soviet border was viewed as a security hazard for the Soviet Union. That is why the Soviet Union was keen for a political settlement of the Bangladesh crisis within the framework of
Pakistan. However, when full scale war between India and Pakistan broke out in December 1971, the Soviet Union supported India. Its firm diplomatic support in the United Nations was valuable and enabled India to liberate Bangladesh.

II

The Soviet-Indian relations serve as an example of multifaceted cooperation between states with different social systems. This friendship dates many decades back but only after India won independence was the striving for friendship translated into reality.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, outstanding Indian leaders, spent much time and effort to consolidate Soviet Indian friendship and cooperation. Jawaharlal Nehru proposed establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union even before India won independence. Four months before the proclamation of independence he wrote that cooperation between the two countries would benefit both nations and contribute to peace and progress world over. His active work resulted in fundamental bilateral agreements opening the way to broad-based fruitful cooperation in economy, trade, science and culture. Nehru's historical perception was indeed prophetic. He clearly saw the advantage of sending his very first diplomatic mission to Moscow to symbolize a major turn in Indian history.

Nehru placed an even greater premium on more cooperative relations with the U.S.S.R. and the West. His diplomacy in this era proved successful, for both powers were interested albeit for different reasons in Indian political stability
and economic development. Each provided India with material assistance without pressing for a change in her basic international relations. In retrospect Nehru's policy has been vindicated with regard to Russia but it did not succeed in the case of China. As the years passed, Nehru learned sometimes in a painful way, of limitations on his power to influence international events.

Khruschev's visit to India in November 1955 was a turning point in Indo-Soviet relations which from that modest beginning had assumed a multi-dimensional character by the end of the sixties. A marked feature of these wide ranging relations was the cordiality and warmth. It is obvious that the development of close and friendly relations between the two countries belonging to opposite social systems must have been motivated by their vital interests.

The first major area where Indo-Soviet interests converged was Pakistan. On the Indian side Pakistan wholly dominated the Indian strategic perception since independence. The trauma of partition coupled with a territorial dispute over Kashmir soured Indo-Pakistani relations from the very beginning.

The Soviet Union also shared India's strategic perspective on China. Sino-Soviet relations worsened even further when China laid claims to Soviet territory. On this issue the two socialist countries fought a border war in the Far Eastern region in March 1969. Convergence of strategic interests on China provided an additional incentive to friendly Indo-Soviet relations. Two decades ago the security needs of India determined the level of Indo-Soviet relations. Today, the Indo-Soviet political relations determine the Indian security position.
All of this shows that if Indo-Soviet relations were close and friendly, it was largely because of the convergence of their national interests. Issues, which had a vital bearing on India's security considerations also impinged on Soviet strategic perceptions. In the process, India received valuable support on some of its major foreign policy issues and came to occupy a pivotal place in Soviet security considerations. The Dullesian strategy of containing communist and the rift with China aroused Soviet fears of encirclement which would have been complete but for India which had kept out of these alignments. Thus the Soviet Union developed a vital stake in India's nonalignment.

India's nonalignment was the minimum requirement of Soviet security interests. That is why the Soviet Union publicly castigated China for provoking a war with India which was bound to throw the latter into Western arms. Fortunately for the Soviet Union, western interest in India waned after the escalation of the American conflict in Vietnam. This also explains Soviet eagerness to cooperate with India on the economic level. Had Western aid started flowing into India, it is likely that India would have acquired a state of dependence at some point. However, from the late fifties onwards the Soviet Union was the sole supplier of Indian weaponry and military hardware. Military and economic dependence on the Soviet Union throughout the late fifties and sixties contributed in strengthening Indo-Soviet relations which by the late sixties, had acquired a wide ranging character, and were close.

The Soviet-Indian security link continued to develop. In February 1975 a top level Soviet military delegation consisting of Defence Minister Grechko and the Air and Naval Chiefs visited India. The visit came against the background
of Chinese arming of Pakistani forces (including two new Pak divisions) and the reported move by the U.S. to resume military supplies to Islamabad. The result of the high level Indo-Soviet military consultations was an agreement to expand defence production in India with Soviet aid. This would include production of an improved version of the MIG-21. The Indian Navy also stood to benefit. In April that year an agreement provided for delivery to India of 8 Nanuchka missile patrol ships. The Soviet team was reportedly impressed by India's defence industry and Marshal Grechko declared that a strong India was vital for peace in the subcontinent.

Developing with each passing year, these relations reached maturity and found expression in the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed on August 9, 1971, which proved its worth for bilateral relations and for peace in Asia. Summit contacts and meetings between Soviet and Indian leaders were particularly important for strengthening bilateral relations.

In November 1973 Brezhnev paid a visit to India, the first Asian State to be so honoured by the CPSU General Secretary. Besides signing a 15-year trade and economic agreement, he told India's Parliament that there was need for a "thorough and comprehensive" discussion of the concept of Asian collective security. The absence of any specific reference to that concept in the Joint Declaration, however, reflected New Delhi's steady reluctance to accept what had come to be widely suspected as Soviet strategy for isolating China.

Brezhnev and his colleagues apparently did not show any strong reservations about Delhi's efforts to normalize relations with Beijing. The Soviet stake in cultivating India
for strategic reasons was remarkably evident that year when
Moscow granted a wheat loan to India despite its own shortages
in food grains. The stake was again seen the following year.
Barely a month after India's nuclear explosion at Pokharan,
a Pravda article on India's foreign policy was all praise
for New Delhi while being critical of Beijing. But there was
no mention of the nuclear test despite the fact that Moscow
happened to be a most conservative co-sponsor of nuclear
nonproliferation. When External Affairs Minister Swaran
Singh paid a visit to Moscow in September that year, Brezhnev
reiterated firm and consistent Soviet support for Mrs. Gandhi's
government. Moscow lived up to its words by supporting the
emergency rule in India which was clamped down the following
year.

Mrs. Gandhi visited Moscow in June 1976. The 25th CPSU
Congress had concluded with Brezhnev making warm references
to India in mid-April. The Sino-Indian decision to exchange
Ambassadors had been made public. The rosy picture was
tarnished somewhat by Bhutto's statement that the Chinese
were helping Pakistan troops construct a road connecting
Skardu (which had an air base) in the North-Western Frontier
Province with the Karakoram highway, and by Premier Hua's
reiteration to him of Chinese support for the Pakistan stand
on Kashmir the same month. In Moscow, the Indian and the
Soviet leaders reiterated familiar views like the Indian
Ocean should be treated as a zone of peace, with the Soviet
side deriving obvious satisfaction at the pin-pointing
of U.S. presence in Diego Garcia by both sides. But China
was not mentioned, reflecting India's strong desire to
preserve and develop the recent movement in Sino-Indian
relations.

1 N. Shurigin's article in Pravda on June 13, quoted in
The Hindustan Times, 14 June 1974
During 1970-80, India's relations with the Soviet Union has been fashioned on the anvil of choice. The inevitable necessity to choose imparted to Indo-Soviet relationship an in-depth strategic dimension in 1971. India had to choose to intervene in the Bangladesh liberation struggle with force; the choice was picked up from among several options. Once the decision was made, it was necessary to forge close cooperation with one great power to neutralise the resistance put up by Pakistan and its international allies to the implementation of the Indian decision. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship was born out of the necessity of choice. The necessity was nationally shared; hence the support the treaty received in 1971 even from quarters that were cool towards the U.S.S.R.

Leonid Brezhnev had paid an official visit to New Delhi in December 1980. This visit had proved very significant. In September 1978, External Affairs Minister Vajpayee went to the U.S.S.R.

The long-standing personal friendship between Brezhnev and Mrs.Gandhi had steered the relationship through the 1960s and 1970s, in directions desired by both. Brezhnev's death (15 November 1982) could mean a vacuum. But Yuri Andropov, Brezhnev's successor took immediate care to fill the gap created by Brezhnev's death. A series of changes in international politics, resulting in a sharp aggravation in the US-Soviet confrontation, raised a number of issues which Andropov and Mrs.Gandhi had no occasion to sit down together to discuss to mutual satisfaction. Then early February 1984, Andropov died. His successor, Konstantin Chernenko, assured the Prime Minister at a brief cordial meeting in the Kremlin that there would be "no change" in the Soviet Union's policies.

towards India. The meeting was too short for a comprehensive exchange of views. The Soviet leadership therefore decided to send Politburo member Demitri Ustinov to India fully authorised to conduct summit level political talks covering the entire field of international and regional issues.

The Ustinov visit was one of the important landmarks in the 34 year old Indo-Soviet friendship. In political and strategic importance it is comparable to the India visits of Khurshchev and Brezhnev. The Ustinov visit had indeed two dimensions. First, Ustinov represented the collective CPSU Politburo leadership whose brief he was carrying. Secondly, as defence minister of the U.S.S.R., he was in a position to lend a strategic aspect to the political understanding distilled from his conversations with Mrs.Gandhi and her senior cabinet colleagues. To be sure, the Ustinov-Mrs. Gandhi talks were almost entirely political. However, at several points in the conversations, Ustinov assured the Prime Minister of "complete" and "unequivocal" Soviet support and backing if India were in trouble. A number of times, Ustinov mentioned the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 to reiterate Soviet support to India in any contingency that may arise.

Another augmenting factor of Indo-Soviet relations was the economic cooperation between the two countries. The Soviet Union supported the stress laid on heavy industry in the Indian economic strategy for development. India's first major project in the public sector was the Bhilai Steel Plant in 1954. It also assisted India's Second Five Year Plan and was willing to accept rupee payment. This helped

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4 Ibid.
India in conserving her limited foreign exchange and gave a big push to Indo-Soviet trade, providing the Soviet Union with a market for its industrial goods at a time when it was unable to compete in the world market due to poor quality. Over the years, economic cooperation between the two countries has grown vastly. Soviet aid and trade continue to play an important role in India's economic development.

In the fifties and sixties, economic links with the Soviet Union had acquired a prominent place in India's foreign economic relations. Both the depth and range of these links were quite remarkable. All significant sectors of the Indian economy such as steel, oil, machine building, power, pharmaceuticals, etc., received substantial and crucial assistance from the Soviet Union. The rate of growth of Indo-Soviet trade during the seventies slowed down considerably as compared to the growth in the first phase as well as in relation to the growth of India's trade with some other regions such as ECM, ESCAP, Latin America and OPEC countries and also there was no dramatic change in the composition of India's exports to the Soviet Union during the seventies.

Undoubtedly, Soviet Union has helped India to play a crucial role in attaining a large measure of self-sufficiency. Indo-Soviet economic relations can be projected to the third world as a classic example of economic relations between an industrially advanced socialist country and a developing country.
Meetings between Soviet and Indian leaders are always marked by warmth and cordiality, and deep trust and mutual understanding. They have a beneficial effect on the development of relations between these two countries. Years and decades pass, but the relations of friendship and cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and India continue developing on the ascending line. This is happening because these relations are built on a basic of equality and mutual respect, on coincidence or similarity in the positions of the two countries on the cardinal problems of recent times.

The state of Indo-Soviet relations is symbolised by the fact that India is the first Asian country that Gorbachev has chosen for a stage visit after assuming the leadership of the Soviet Union even as the U.S.S.R. was the first foreign country that Rajiv Gandhi visited as India's Prime Minister. This "respectful closeness, a sort of kinship", is a new phenomenon reflecting the new heights of Indo-Soviet cooperation and friendship. Rajiv Gandhi and Mikhail Gorbachev are building a glorious edifice on the sure and firm foundations laid by Nehru, Khurshchev, Indira Gandhi and Brezhnev.

Rajiv's Moscow visit in May 1985 took place along somewhat predictable lines. Two agreements, negotiated earlier, were signed in Moscow. The more significant of the two was a 15-year economic and commercial agreement on the pattern of the one signed by Mrs. Gandhi setting out cooperation between the two countries till the year 2000. True to the long-range Soviet policy of sponsoring a Moscow supervised Asian Security System, Gorbachev pointedly referred to "constructive initiatives... to ensure certain aspects of the security of the Asian continent and some of its regions".
suggesting a comprehensive approach to these problems. 5
Rajiv Gandhi was noncommittal and told a press conference in
Moscow that the issue was discussed but no specific proposals
came up. India had signed with the Soviet Union a protocol
on cooperation in the power sector on 27 December 1985. The
working programme of cooperation between India and the
Soviet Union for 1986-90 is directed towards increasing power
generation and reliability. The programme is to be carried
out by way of joint execution of power projects, both thermal
and hydel and modernisation of existing ones.

The Soviet Union is assisting India in the construction
of the first phase of Vindhyachal Super Thermal Power Station
in Madhya Pradesh consisting of six units. Soviet assistance
is also available in the construction of the Kahalgon Super
Thermal Power Station in Bihar consisting of four units.

Mr. Gorbachev described the visit of Mr. Gandhi to the
Soviet Union as "a big event in the life of our two states". He
further said that the personal relationship he and the
Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi have already established
would strengthen the personal contacts and friendship between
the two countries. 6

During the speech at the Kremlin dinner in honour of
Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 1985, Mr. Gorbachev
said that "a special place is held by the Soviet Union and
India's concurrent efforts to remove the threat of war and
end the arms race. No one can ignore the fact that friend­
ship and cooperation between our two countries are playing
a more and more important and beneficial role in the entire
system of international relations. By force of example,
these relations are helping assert the principles of peaceful

5 The Statesman, New Delhi, 1 June 1985
6 The Times of India, New Delhi, 22 May 1985
coexistence and work for stronger peace and security of all
the peoples. These aims are well served by our Treaty of
Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. 7

Several positive steps have been taken by the leaders
of both the countries to improve relations. Gorbachev’s
visit of November 1986 is remarkable in this direction. He
had paid an official friendly visit to India. In his welcome
speech at the Delhi airport Mr. Rajiv Gandhi said that Mikhail
Gorbachev relentlessly works for peace and disarmament. "His
bold peace initiatives, particularly those which he put
forward at Reykjavik, reflecting the sincere and consistent
foreign policy course of the Soviet Union, have won universal
approbation. Hence, it was with great warmth and pride that
India welcomed this honoured guest". Rajiv Gandhi noted
that Indo-Soviet relations had gained depth and maturity with
the passage of time and that those relations had remained firm
and steady through the twists and turns of international
politics.

The visit of Mr. Gorbachev to India was a great and
significant event not only from the point of view of this
country but also for the cause of world peace. The high level
of Soviet-Indian relations enabled the sides to produce a
truly historic document. On 27 November 1986, Gorbachev and
Rajiv Gandhi signed the historical Delhi Declaration on the
principles for a nuclear weapons free and nonviolent world.
This important document sets forth 10 principles to build a
world free from nuclear weapons and violence. "Peaceful
coexistence", says one of the ten points of the Declaration,
"must become the universal norm of international relations

7 Mikhail Gorbachev, Selected Speeches and Articles,
Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1987, p.77
so that in our nuclear age confrontation is replaced by cooperation, and conflict situations are resolved through political and not military means".

On the same day, an agreement on economic and technical cooperation was signed by Vladimir Komentsev, Deputy Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, and Mr. N.D. Tiwari, India's Minister of External Affairs. A protocol on the festivals of the U.S.S.R. in India and of India in the U.S.S.R. to be held in 1987-88 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of India's independence was signed by Eduard Shevardnadze, Foreign Minister of U.S.S.R. and P.V. Narasimha Rao, India's Minister for Human Resource Development.

It would be relevant, in fact necessary to make the point that the Delhi Declaration is the result essentially of India's initiative if only to dispel the impression that it is part of the Soviet "peace offensive". India has been wanting such a declaration to be endorsed by the U.N. General Assembly and must regard the Soviet acceptance as a significant gain. The Soviet side has, of course, made a vital contribution to the formulation of the declaration and the ten principles accompanying it. But again it is early to see that the principles embody the same spirit which has informed India's approach to human relations. Witness the references to non-violence as the desirable "basis of community life", recognition of human life as "supreme" and creation of conditions for "the individual's harmonious development". Mr. V.N. Rykov, Soviet Ambassador to India had said that Gorbachev's visit to India in November 1986 opened new vistas for broadening of bilateral cooperation and interaction on the key issues of the day averting nuclear threat and developing new equal international relations.⁸

⁸ The Times of India, New Delhi, April 13, 1987
The extensive exchange of views between Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi on issues of bilateral relations, international problems and the agreements, signed during the visit gave Soviet-Indian relations a new powerful thrust and filled them with more concrete contents.

One of the provisions of the Delhi Declaration is about outer space. Near earth space surrounds the whole of mankind, and so it cannot be immaterial to anyone how this environment is used. Both the Soviet Union and India favour keeping space peaceful. In advancing a programme for "star peace", the Soviet Union considers it necessary to enable every developed or developing country wishing to join in the exploration and utilisation of outer space to do so on the basis of broad international cooperation.9

The Festival of India in the U.S.S.R. and the Soviet Festival in India have helped the peoples of both the countries to enrich their knowledge about each other's country. The level of interaction between the two peoples has been the highest form. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi went to Moscow in July 1987 to inaugurate the Festival of India in the Kremlin. The Soviet Prime Minister Mr. Nikolai Ryzhkov had come to Delhi to inaugurate the U.S.S.R. Festival in India on 24th November 1987. The holding of the Festival was possible only due to the high level of relations which shaped between the leadership of the two countries, whose bright manifestation was the exchange of official friendly visit of Gorbachev, to India and Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the U.S.S.R.

Mr. Gorbachev had paid another visit to India on 18 November 1988. This time he came to receive the Indira Gandhi International Peace Award and to attend the closing of Soviet

Festival in India. He had received the Indira Gandhi Award for Outstanding Contribution to Peace, Disarmament and Development. On this occasion he said that "Soviet-Indian friendship rests on a firm foundation and has nothing to do with any transient consideration or schemes." This visit of Gorbachev is not only a step towards peace but also a step in further deepening a time tested friendship.

The Soviet Union and India hold similar views on the comprehensive system of international security. Proof of this is the coincidence of the Soviet initiatives advanced on the January 15, 1986, statement of Mikhail Gorbachev and documents of the 27th Party Congress, and of the proposals elaborated by Rajiv Gandhi in his action plan for ushering in a nuclear weapon free and nonviolent world order tabled at the Third General Assembly Session on Disarmament. In the coalition for peace Soviet Union and India are called upon to play a major part in this understanding. Indo-Soviet relations prove that cooperation between states with differing social orders can be fruitful if these countries pursue common goals of peace, security and justice for all.

The Chinese Factor: It is indisputable that Indo-Soviet friendship, as it has developed since Bulganin-Khruschev visit to India in 1955, has been deeply influenced, if not shaped, by two cold wars in which the Soviet Union had been caught, one with the West led by the U.S. and the other with Communist China. The point about the cold war with China needs to be underscored because it has not attracted the attention it deserves, especially in discussions of Indo-Soviet friendship.

It is to the credit of Nehru, writes Girilal Jain, analyzing Indo-Soviet relations, that he was among the first world
figures to recognise that Communist China was not and could not be a Soviet satellite in view of the strength of Chinese nationalism. Nehru was quick to realise that the Khruschev-Bulganin visit was intended to reassure him not only in respect of U.S.-armed Pakistan but also in respect of Communist China. It is ironical, though understandable, feels Girilal Jain, that while the fact of Soviet support to India in its conflict with Pakistan should have been over-emphasised, it has been greatly de-emphasised in relation to our difficulties with China. Ironical because the latter have been by far more important in cementing Indo-Soviet bonds than India's conflicts with Pakistan. India turned for military supplies to the Soviet Union in view of the conflict with China and not with Pakistan. 10

In the context of the recent efforts for a Sino-Soviet rapprochement when Rajiv Gandhi said in the Rajya Sabha that China was unimportant in Indo-Soviet relations, The Times of India termed his statement as extraordinary. Justifying its stance, the paper commented editorially that "to begin with the possibility of reasonably cordial relations between India and China was one reason for the Soviet overtures to India even before Khrushchev emerged as the top leader. Subsequently when Sino-Indian relations began to sour in the latter half of the fifties, Indo-Soviet ties grew strong precisely on that count. 11

By providing a squadron of MIG-21s to India in 1961, both India and Soviet Union wanted to give an indirect warning to Peking that it must not push New Delhi on the border issue. Soon after the 1962 war it became evident that Soviet sympathies were engaged on the side of India. In 1965 India sought and secured hardware from the Soviet Union. Since then

10 The Times of India, New Delhi, 22 Nov 1988
11 Editorial, The Times of India, New Delhi, 24 Nov 1988
U.S.S.R. has been India's principal arms supplier. There can be little doubt that China will continue to be a source of anxiety for India even if there is a visible improvement in their relations for the simple reason that the Chinese see themselves as being entitled to a preeminent role not only in South-East Asia but also in South Asia.

In an acerbic comment the editorial says: "Unless we are willing to fool ourselves into believing that we are about to move into an era of goodwill and harmony in our neighbourhood, we have to be vigilant in respect of China. It does not, of course, follow that we need Sino-Soviet hostility in order of look after our interests vis-a-vis China. But it does follow that China will remain a factor in Indo-Soviet relations". Geography has made the Soviet Union, China and India neighbours and ties between any two of them must have a bearing on the third country's relations with those two.12

Relations with India are a priority in Soviet foreign policy. The most important aspect of Indo-Soviet relations is tradition, friendship covering a period of many years and cooperation in bilateral and international affairs. There is a legal foundation for these relations, the 1971 Treaty. The tremendous importance of continuous, intensive and constructive political dialogue between the Indian and Soviet leaders as a factor cannot be ignored.

Indo-Soviet cooperation could serve the interests of both both and continue to contribute to a better world. Ties between the two countries have indeed attained a new level of harmony and mutual understanding in the recent years.

12 Ibid.
The relations are guided in the new objective by the Delhi Declaration of November 1986 which symbolises the common aspirations. Mr. Gorbachev asserted that the Soviet Union is not changing its priorities or becoming cool towards India. The relationship rests, he said, on a firm foundation.

For more than three decades, India and the Soviet Union have enjoyed a close relationship. Today it can be justly claimed that much of the new thinking about disarmament and the new world order drives from the relationship between India and the Soviet Union. Both the countries have been an example to all the world of peaceful coexistence at its best, of two different socio-economic systems working in close cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual understanding and mutual trust.

Indo-Soviet friendship, in the words of Rajiv Gandhi, has benefitted millions and harmed none. It is a relationship built by the peoples of the two countries over decades. It is a demonstration, said the Prime Minister, of what can be achieved through goodwill, mutual respect and trust. The Delhi Declaration has placed the bilateral relationship in a larger global context. It signals the joint endeavours of the two countries to work together, and with others towards world peace and world cooperation.

Indicating new directions of Indo-Soviet cooperation, Gorbachev said that it is significant that at a time when mankind stood at the crucial watershed in its development, the Soviet Union and India are among those who strive to put an end to confrontations and to achieve radical turn for the better in world affairs. Science and technology have emerged as an important area of Indo-Soviet collaboration with a
potential for onward thrust into highly sophisticated fields.

Major changes taking place in the Soviet Union and India present both a challenge and an opportunity. The policy of Glasnost and Perestroika (Openness and Restructuring) underway in the Soviet Union is revolutionary in content and has a global significance. The Indian people are following with deep interest the attempts of the Soviet people under Gorbachev's leadership to bring about a second revolution in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union and India, as representatives of the world of socialism and the world of national liberation, the world of development, have been fruitfully cooperating for years and decades in the interest of their peoples and all the people. This cooperation serves as a fine example. Both the countries would like to see these relations develop further.

Indo-Soviet relations opened broad vistas for strengthening political and economic interaction of socialist and non-aligned states, the East and the South in general. This interaction is an example of restructuring international economic relations on the basis of equality and justice. Indo-Soviet relations help strengthen the potential of peace, reason and goodwill, the basis of a new democratic world order, the essence of which as Nehru said is "the free cooperation of free nations".