ABSTRACT

The Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Soviet Policy in South Asia With Special Reference to Indo-Soviet Relations, 1965-82" is an attempt to study the pattern of Soviet policy in South Asia and to analyse the various factors and trends of Indo-Soviet relations which have grown very cordial and strong in the post-war era. Relations between these two countries have now come to occupy an important place not only in the Subcontinent but also in world politics.

Both geographically and in terms of socio-cultural continuities and economic infrastructure, India occupies a central place among all South Asian countries. The other countries of the region like Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka have individually and separately more in common with India than with each other.

The Soviet presence in this Asian region has proved to be more effective and durable than those of its two rivals, the United States and China. The search for peace, stability, and security in South Asia is a subject of global importance in our independent world. The US arms connection with Pakistan is said to be the prime cause of many of the problems of the subcontinent, reflecting the thesis that the security threats to the subcontinent come from outside powers and from the military build up of local
states. The intrusion by outside powers (and specially the US) constituted an interference in the natural order of things.

Soviet Union was directly involved in intra-regional affairs in South Asia in the mid-1950s and this reached its high watermark in the Tashkent Declaration of 1966. India's military reverses in its border clashes with China brought into sharp focus the limitation of the South Asia policy that the Soviet Union had followed till then which was almost exclusively India-centred.

China's growing role in Pakistan compelled Soviet Union to establish its presence in Pakistan and counter China's growing influence there. There was a reshaping of Soviet policy towards the South Asian region in general and towards Pakistan in particular. President Ayub Khan's visit to Moscow in 1967 resulted not only in trade agreement, economic cooperation, cultural exchange but also Soviet supply of arms to Pakistan. India protested against Soviet decision. The Soviet Union had assured India that Pakistan would not use Soviet arms against India. Since 1970s the Soviet Union started getting more involved in the affairs of South Asia. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed on 9 August 1971. The real purpose of the treaty was to safeguard India's security and strengthen its defence capability.

One of the main objectives of the Soviet foreign policy is the development of relations of friendship and comprehensive
cooperation with India. Despite the differences in their socio-economic systems, the two countries are united by a common loyalty to the cause of peace and detente and the ideals developing relations between the two states on a just and democratic basis. India and the Soviet Union have no conflict of national interests because of geographical proximity. It is in their common interest to develop and strengthen peaceful cooperation and friendly relations.

Indo-Soviet relations started to be built up in the early 50s and have developed steadily after Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in 1955, followed by the visit of Soviet leaders Khrushchov and Bulganin to India in the following year. The Soviet Union has stood by India in times of need and supported India's policy of nonalignment, peace and national independence, India has also supported the Soviet Union's policy of peace and cooperation. The open support to India by the Soviet Union on Kashmir issue was a landmark in Indo-Soviet relations. In 1957 and 1962 the Soviet Union exercised its veto in the Security Council against the Western resolutions on Kashmir which supported Pakistan.

Since the Indo-Pak war of 1965, the Soviet Union has been enjoying a special position in the Indian subcontinent among the superpowers. The Bangladesh crisis and the Indo-Pak war 1971 had further strengthened the position.
The Soviet Union and India cooperate effectively on the international scene, including in the UN and other international organisations. Both the countries consistently support the strengthening of detente in international relations and its extension to all regions of the world, universal and complete disarmament under effective international control, the elimination of war from human existence and the affirmation in international relations of such principles as the right of each people to choose its own political system, the refusal to use force or the threat of force, respect for sovereignty and the inviolability of frontiers, noninterference in each other's internal affairs and cooperation in economic and other spheres on the basis of equality and mutual advantage.

On the economic front, the high momentum of Soviet aid to India, witnessed in the fifties and in the first half of the sixties, could not be maintained in the changed economic environment of the second half of the sixties, and particularly in the seventies. Since the second half of the sixties, utilization of Soviet aid declined sharply. At the same time, with the devaluation of the rupee in 1966, the debt repayments mounted up. In recent years, India also began to make repayments in advance. The combined effect of all these was that Soviet aid turned negative in most of the years except when the Soviet Union gave a wheat loan in 1974-75. However, even the wheat loan was repaid
in 1977 and 1978. With this India has repaid more than what it received from the Soviet Union. Thus, in the 1970s there was not only 'zero aid', but there was also a reverse flow of resources from India to the Soviet Union.

Similarly, the trade between India and the Soviet Union increased at a phenomenal rate in the fifties and sixties. Within a short period, the Soviet Union acquired a significant position in India's exports and imports. However, 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 ECN, ESCAP, Latin America and OPEC counties. And also there was no dramatic change in the composition of India's exports to the Soviet Union during the seventies.

In many ways, despite criticisms within the apparatus of government and outside, the connection has grown and become a major dimension of the Indian reality. The relationship can be interpreted in many ways, although it will be generally agreed that it has been mutually beneficial for both countries particularly in times of crisis.

The study has been divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the importance of South Asia in international
politics. The geographical location of South Asia, its strategic
importance and its significance in world politics have been
discussed in this chapter.

Soviet policy in south Asia is the subject matter of dis­
cussion in chapters II & III. The Soviet approach to various
developments in the subcontinent and its role performance in
South Asia has been thoroughly examined. An attempt has been
made to study the Soviet foreign policy in this area in all its
aspects.

Since the main thrust of this study is on Indo-Soviet Rela­
tions, more space has been devoted to this subject. The whole
gamut of Indo-Soviet relations has been taken up for a close study
of actions and inter-actions of the two very important powers in
world politics. Though the subject is too wide and broad, an
attempt has been made to cover almost all crucial areas of a most
friendly and cordial relationship. Areas, both of cooperation
and misapprehensions, have been covered.

Chapter VI of this thesis focuses on economic and cultural
ties between India and the Soviet Union without which the study
would remain incomplete. Economic and cultural aspects of rela­
tions between the two countries can be termed as catalysts for
bringing the nations together.
The study ends with some concluding remarks. The conclusions drawn in this chapter are based on the totality of the pattern of Soviet approach in South Asia and the relations between India and the Soviet Union.