An important element of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union is its relations with India with her great influence and traditional wisdom with specific political experience and huge economic potential. Even before 1947 India and the Soviet Union had friendly contacts and maintained commercial, scientific and cultural relations. The best minds in Russia and India showed traditional deep interest in each other's history and political, ideological and philosophical outlooks.

People in Russia followed with great attention and sympathy and sided with the national liberation struggle of the Indian people against the British colonialists for freedom and independence. India received with great enthusiasm the views of the victorious Great October Socialist Revolution and followed compassionately the heroic struggle of the Soviet people against German fascism and firmly believed in Soviet victory.

In his radio message in Delhi on September 7, 1946, the first Prime Minister of independent India and outstanding Asian statesman Jawaharlal Nehru said welcoming the Soviet people: "They are our neighbours in Asia and inevitably we shall undertake many common tasks and have much to do with each other". The Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with India back in April 1947, i.e., before India officially became independent.

(A) The Early Phase

When the British Raj in India was dissolved in 1947, and the sovereign states of India and Pakistan emerged, the Kremlin leaders, unlike their Czarist predecessors, paid
little attention to the subcontinent. Stalin and his ruling elite were preoccupied with East European affairs. Moreover, they harboured prejudice and misunderstanding about the great events during the liquidation of the British Empire in India. They dismissed the whole process of the peaceful transfer of power as "a set of new imperialist devices to retain British political, economic and strategic influence in South Asia... their dogmatic interpretation of major political events in strict accord with Marxist-Leninst theory, blinded them to political realities and dynamics in Asia."¹

Stalin contended that the ratio for bourgeoisie in colonial countries would split into the revolutionary group and the compromising group. In a colonial country such as India where capitalism was already more or less developed, the compromising bourgeoisie, according to Stalin, had come to an agreement with imperialist powers.² The founding of the Indian National Congress was itself a manifestation of anti-imperialist feeling among the Indian intelligentsia, which gradually percolated down to the Indian masses in the course of the Indian freedom movement. Although at the initial stage this protest was primarily against British rule in India, but after First World War imperialism started being regarded as an evil everywhere in the world.³ One of the deep impressions on Nehru's mind during his visit to Moscow at the end of 1927 was what he considered to be the complete absence of the racial prejudice in Soviet society and when he became the Prime Minister of the Interim Government of India in 1946, he declared that anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism were the "kernal of our

¹ G.W. Choudhry, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Major Powers, Collier Macmillan Pub., New York, pp.7-8
² See Hugh Seton Watson, "Five Years of Cold War" in George W. Keeton and George Schwarzenberger, eds. The Year Book of World Affairs, as quoted in G.W. Chaudhury, op.cit., p.8
³ J. Bandopadhyaya, Making of India's Foreign Policy, Allied Pub., New Delhi, 1980, p.32
foreign policy, and this policy was occasionally followed by Nehru's successive governments. India is opposed to any form of colonialism or imperialism and is wedded to the policy of uprooting domination of one country by another.

Colonialism is economic exploitation of one people by another by political domination. The cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy was always to align herself with peoples fighting for the eradication of the consequences of colonialism. India's anti-imperialist and anti-racialist stand brings her slightly closer to the Soviet Union and a little far from western countries, as the Soviet Union also fights for the same principles and supports all those who have the same foreign policy orientations.

Thus, India's anti-imperialist postures in international affairs have also some bearings in shaping Soviet policy towards India. Though not deeply involved in South Asia at the time of Indian independence, the Soviet Union, alone among the great powers, had a comprehensive theory to back up its policy towards the new countries of Asia.

As Vice-President of the Interim Government of India, Nehru declared at his first press conference on 7 September 1946, that it would be the policy of his government to build up good relations with both the great powers — the Soviet Union and the United States. In his very first statement he outlined free India's non-aligned policy, maintaining that it

4 Ibid., p.75
6 S.R.Patel, Foreign Policy of India, Bombay, 1960, p.75, Also see S.K.Raman Pillai, Indian Foreign Policy, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1969, pp. 172-191
7 D.Cherkov, "The USSR and Developing Countries; Economic Relations", International Affairs, Moscow, No.8, Aug 1972, p. 54
would try "to keep away from the power politics of groups aligned against one another which have led in the past to two world wars and which may again lead to disaster on an even vaster scale." 

In December 1946 the Indian Science Congress, at the instance of Nehru, invited some Soviet scientists to visit India. The first Indian Ambassador to the Soviet Union was appointed on 25 June 1947. On Nehru's instructions the first step of sounding the Soviet Union about the establishment of diplomatic relations had been taken much earlier. V.K. Krishna Menon and K.P.S. Menon met the Soviet Foreign Minister, M.Meltov, in Paris on 28 September 1946 for the purpose. Meltov welcomed the idea.

According to K.P.S. Menon, relations between India and the Soviet Union after independence may be divided into two phases — passive phase and active phase. The active phase, in his opinion, began in 1955. A period of transition may be marked from 1953 to 1955. In fact, a slow change can be discerned towards the end of 1952 and early 1953 in the last days of Stalin. The establishment of diplomatic ties between India and the U.S.S.R. did not lead to an immediate development of close economic and cultural relations. There were many psychological barriers to be crossed. "Some Indians", wrote K.P.S. Menon, "still suffered from the fear of a relic of British days, that the U.S.S.R. was out to turn the world red by hook or crook, and many Russians thought that though India was nominally free, it was economically bound hand and foot to the chariot of western imperialism."

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8 The Statesman, Delhi, 8 Sept 1946
9 Devendra Kaushik, Soviet Relations With India and Pakistan, Vikas, Delhi, 1971, p.27
10 News and Views from the Soviet Union, New Delhi, No.3, 1961
11 K.P.S. Menon, Lenin Through Indian Eyes, Delhi, 1970, pp.67-8; also see Devendra Kaushik, op.cit., p.28
The warming of Indo-Soviet relations initiated a new era of cultural, economic, military and diplomatic cooperation. The Soviet Union always emphasizes the importance of cultural understanding in achieving closer relations with other countries and India, in the mid-1950s was no exception. Since 1955 there has been a regular annual exchange of delegations of scientists, artists, writers and others between India and the Soviet Union. In 1954, the U.S.S.R. organised the first festival of Indian films in Moscow.

Until the mid-1950s India's economic relations with the Soviet Union were confined to trade, but this changed with the improvement of relations. Now much emphasis was laid on Soviet help in capital construction and development of heavy industry. In September 1954 the U.S.S.R. indicated its willingness to assist India in constructing a steel mill and in February 1955 an agreement was signed for the much publicized steel plant in Bhilai. The steel works in Bhilai was the first major industrial enterprise to have been built with the assistance rendered by the U.S.S.R. and other member countries of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. India had received external help during its First Five Year Plan launched in 1951, from the west. During the Second Five Year Plan western aid continued to be much higher, but Soviet assistance was significant. Between November 1957 and February 1961 the U.S.S.R. extended credit to India totalling $670 million. Soviet aid in India's industrialization programme was even more extensive during the Third Five Year Plan. Most of the Soviet aid was utilised for industrial development. 12

India obtained a large amount of economic assistance from

12 G.W. Choudhury, op.cit., p.22
both the U.S.S.R. and the western countries during the
height of the cold war in the 1950s because of its special
role as the leader of the 'third block'. Through the 1960s
India and Egypt received more Soviet arms and military
equipment than any other non-communist country. In the mid-
1950s, when Pakistan began to receive U.S. arms through various
military pacts, a powerful section of the Indian public started
to campaign in favour of soliciting Soviet military assistance.
Since 1962 Moscow has become New Delhi's almost only source
for the supply of sophisticated weapons. Peking took the
view that Soviet military assistance to India was directed
against it and alleged that the Russian 'revisionists' were
colluding with Indian 'reactionaries', American 'imperialists'
and Japanese 'militarists' to encircle their country. \(^\text{13}\) Nehru,
however was cautious in relying solely upon one super power
for military assistance and although Soviet arms assistance
had increased enormously, his policy in this respect is still
followed.

But the first break for Nehru's policy of befriending
the communist neighbours was achieved in Beijing, rather than
Moscow. The Korean War had broken out in 1950. Although
Nehru initially supported the U.S. in condemning North Korea's
aggression, an attitude which was widely criticized in India,
he changed his stand. Nehru's objective became the evolving
of a formula for peace, and he was soon to become a constant
advocate of according China its rightful place in the United
Nations and the world.

A significant change in the Soviet attitude took place
in 1952. The Soviets had previously not participated in U.N.
debates on Kashmir, but in the January debate (1952) they
attacked the U.S. and Britain by charging them with seeking

\(^{13}\) Grilal Jain, 'India-Soviet Treaty', \textit{IDSAJ}, The Institute
for Defence Studies and Analysis Journal, 2(1), July 1969,
p. 37
to convert Kashmir into their colony. Nehru's initial reaction was one of embarrassment because he did not want the question to be involved in the cold war. In fact, he informed Washington and London that India had not sought Soviet support on Kashmir. 14

The real change in the Soviet attitude came only after the death of Stalin in 1953. Nehru's first visit to the U.S.S.R. in June 1955 improved friendly relations between the people of India and the Soviet Union. Nehru succeeded in allaying Soviet doubts about India's foreign policy. He impressed the Soviet leaders with the policy of Panchsheel which coincided with the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence. On 18 November 1955, Marshall Bulganin and Khrushchev reciprocated the Indian Prime Minister's visit. In June 1956 Vice-President Dr. Radhakrishnan, paid a 9 day goodwill visit to the Soviet Union. In his speeches during his tour Dr. Radhakrishnan made a point to commend the Soviet Union for taking steps for easing world tension and also for dissolving the Cominform. He referred to the remarkable liberalization in the Soviet Union since the days when he was ambassador in Moscow, he expressed the hope that the Soviet people would march steadily towards welfare state. 15

In 1956, Nehru and his government's attitude towards Soviet atrocities in Hungary was mild compared to their severe condemnation of Anglo-French-Israeli action in Egypt. "The Hungarian crisis", as one commentator put it, "produced a much discussed illustration of the Indian leader's kindly treatment of Soviet misdeeds." 16 In the U.N. General Assembly

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15 The Hindu, Madras, 18 June 1956
India, alone among the non-communist countries, voted with the Soviet bloc against a resolution calling for free elections in Hungary. Nehru, whose foreign policy was for the first time criticized inside his country for its "apparent dual standard of morality", tried to justify the Indian vote at the U.N. on the grounds that a U.N. supervised election in Hungary might create a bad precedent elsewhere. Kashmir was obviously his concern. He eventually responded to the criticism at home and abroad by modifying his stand. Later he told the Indian Parliament that the great majority of the Hungarian people wanted a change of government and that the Soviet forces which had suppressed their revolt should be withdrawn. In response, the Soviet government, pointedly reminded Nehru of India's many pressing domestic problems, particularly the Kashmir problem for which Soviet help was desired. Similarly when Nehru expressed concern in May 1958 over the worsening Soviet-Yugoslav relations, Premier Khrushchev was reported to have told the Indian Ambassador that India should not interfere. The Soviet government also resented Nehru's late 1958 article "The Basic Approach", which criticized all dogmatic ideologies including communism.  

Nehru reacted vigorously to the Anglo-French attack on Egypt condemning it in no uncertain terms, although he felt Nasser's original step was precipitate and had moved to try to resolve the dispute. After the ceasefire he took a hand in bringing about a speedy settlement and again activated his peripatetic foreign policy advisor, Krishna Menon.  

Perhaps stung by the western criticism and the sharp protest of the respected Indian leader Jayaprakash Narayan,  

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17 G.W. Choudhury, op. cit., p. 24  
Nehru publicly expressed his sympathy for Hungarian national forces on November 5, 1956 and condemned the Soviet conduct. Hungary, however, took second place to Egypt in the Indian Foreign Office. 19

Thus India's policies generally favoured Moscow during 1954-62 and the Soviet dropped their neutrality on the Kashmir dispute and openly and unequivocally supported India. War between India, the befriending of which had enabled the U.S.S.R. to gain much influence in the third world, and China, fraternal member of the communist bloc, initially strained the Indo-Soviet relations that had developed so well during the preceding eight years. Khruschev described the border fighting as "an outright godsend for the imperialists", 20 and, according to Pravda, he had good reason to despair about a conflict in which he did not have to favour one side over the other.

Prior to the war, India had hoped that the U.S.S.R. would restrain China and in the event of a major armed conflict, remain neutral. This hope was not entirely without foundation: the Soviet Union did not want to lose the close friendship of India and make it look to the west for help. The U.S.S.R made its position clear in September 1959, three years before the outbreak of war, declaring for the first time that it took a neutral position in conflict between a communist and a non-communist country. But when the war erupted in the midst of the Cuban crisis, unity within the communist bloc against the western countries was vital and the Soviet Union felt compelled to show some fraternal leaning towards Peking.

19 Subimal Dutt, With Nehru in the Foreign Office, Minerva Associates, Calcutta, 1977, p.177
20 Pravda, 13 Dec and 25, 1963
During the period that followed not only did Sino-Indian relations deteriorate, but the relations between India and Societ Union were strengthened considerably — from now onwards more Soviet leaders began to visit India and among those were Khrushechev, Brezhnev, Kosygin, Suslov, Kozhlov and Mikoyon. Indeed, Khrushchev preferred to be in India on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Agreement of Friendship and Alliance of 1950, which incident, according to a leading expert of Chinese affairs, tended to add to Mao's irritation against Khrushchev and India.21

(B) Phase-I : 1965-71

The first test of the strength of Nehru's foreign policy came immediately after his death. There were fears expressed that India would have moved away from non-alignment and the Soviet Union. But this did not happen and when Mrs. Gandhi took over as Prime Minister, all such fears were set at rest. But in early 1964 Lal Bahadur Shastri was eminently placed to succeed Nehru. At the initiative of the Government of the U.S.S.R. Prime Minister Shastri paid an official visit to the Soviet Union from May 12 to 19, 1965. He had meetings and talks with Brezhnev, and other leading statesmen of the Soviet Union. During these talks held in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding, the two sides exchanged views on major international problems and discussed questions pertaining to the further development of Soviet-Indian relations and mutually profitable cooperation.

The most significant development was Pakistani President

21 Sisir Gupta, "India and the Soviet Union", Current History, March 1963, p.146; Also see J.A. Naik, Soviet Policy towards India : From Stalin to Brezhnev, Vikas Delhi, 1970, p.152
Ayub Khan's visit to Moscow in April 1965.

He made a considerable impression on the Soviet leadership.22 The Soviet leaders declared publicly that the Soviet-Pakistani detente did not involve any sacrifice of India's interests. Kosygin put it thus in his speech at the Kremlin reception for Shastri: "When the Soviet Union is striving to improve its relations with a third country this does not have to be at the cost of Soviet-Indian friendship."23

The Soviet policy of friendship to both India and Pakistan was put to severe tests during 1965, but it emerged successfully with added confidence and trust. When a crisis arose over the Rann of Kutch in April-May 1965 the Soviet Union appealed to India and Pakistan to resolve it through direct negotiations.24

In order to resolve the problems between India and Pakistan and create conditions in which both would be joined to the Soviet Union in ties of friendship and in a benevolent relationship, Soviet Premier Alexie Kosygin took the initiative in arranging a high level conference between India and Pakistan (in January 1966 after the Indo-Pak War) in which he himself actively participated. The conference, meeting at Tashkent attended by the Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistan President Ayub Khan with their senior aides grappled with the issues dividing the two countries and at crucial moments when deadlock threatened to stall further progress, Kosygin's deft intervention saved it from failure and finally resulted in an Indo-Pak declaration and various other allied agreements. Moscow, according to

22 T.N. Kaul, Diplomacy in Peace and War: Recollections and Reflections, Vikas, New Delhi, 1979, p.157
23 Pravda, 16 May 1965
24 Ibid., 9 May 1965
V.P. Dutt appeared to have scored an important diplomatic triumph and to have considerably advanced its objective of taking the entire subcontinent together with it into the international arena. 25

All this, however, did not mean that the conference proceeded smoothly. On the contrary, it ran a very complicated course and its outcome was difficult to foresee right up to the closing day. If the conference succeeded, this was in a large measure due to the great pains taken by Premier Kosygin to bring the two sides closer. As M.S. Rajan wrote "... the Soviet Prime Minister firmly stuck to the letter and spirit of the offer of good offices. He did not make at any stage any proposals or pressurise either of the leaders to accept the proposals of the other. Contrary to inspired and malicious press reports, there was no Soviet arm-twisting of India or Pakistan. All that the Soviet Prime Minister tried to do was to bring to bear on the two leaders his tremendous powers of persuasion to make them see each other's point of view in the interest of peace in the Indian subcontinent. 26

Shastri felt that the declaration had achieved "very tangible results," Kosygin expressed the hope that the declaration might become "the symbol of eternal friendship between India and Pakistan" and would also "strengthen friendship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union". He also said the declaration "lays down the real foundations for the creation of conditions of peace in this most important area of Asia." 27

27 *Soviet Review*, New Delhi, Information Department of the USSR Embassy, 14 Jan 1966
Even while striking up a more balanced posture towards the two major countries of the subcontinent, Moscow made a point of reiterating its continuing interest in India. In September 1964, the Soviet Union gave India military credit for forty-four MIG-21s, twenty helicopters and seventy PT-76 tanks, among other items. More significantly, they made technical and financial arrangements for MIG production and agreed to improve MIG capabilities for Indian requirements. India's decision on the major arms deal with Moscow was made after repeated rebuffs from western sources.

The Post-Tashkent Period: 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 communique 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 of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam and abolition of military alliances. It also emphasised the need for consolidation of peace in Europe, solution of the human problem, elimination of Portuguese colonialism in Africa and apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia and realisation of nuclear disarmament.

By the mid-sixties, western donors became increasingly critical of India's development strategy and took measures to change it through the lever of economic assistance. President Johnson has recorded that both India and Pakistan had used U.S. weapons, leading to doubts the value of military and economic aid. Mrs. Gandhi undertook a visit to the U.S. towards the end of March 1966. President Johnson told senators that they must help "this little lady".

In January 1968, Kosygin had paid an important visit to New Delhi. His purpose was to give assurances of Soviet support to India against the background of the deepening political crisis in the country, the intensification of the Vietnam war and the intended British withdrawal from Asia by 1971.

Summit meetings between the Indian and Soviet leaders have become a regular feature, each time providing a fresh impetus to the further consolidation of friendship and to the development of all round cooperation between the Soviet Union and India. From 8 to 18 of June 1968, the President, Dr. Zakir Husain paid a friendly visit to the U.S.S.R. The communique said: "The U.S.S.R. and India are determined not only to maintain the relationship already established but also to develop these relationships in all spheres — political, economic, scientific, technical and cultural".

When Alexie Kosygin, the Prime Minister of U.S.S.R. visited India in May 1969 to attend Zakir Husain's funeral,

32 Uma Vasudev, Indira Gandhi, Vikas, New Delhi, 1974, p.359
33 Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Moscow, Peking and the Indian Political Scene," Orbis, Summer 1968
he not only assured Moscow's support to India in her conflict with China but stated that India should become strong economically, politically and militarily. Moscow deemed to have reverted to Khrushchev's policy of building up India so that it could shoulder the responsibility of defending the subcontinent from what Prime Minister Kosygin described as "the adventurist encroachments on the part of outside forces which are out for a hegemony in Asia."34

Kosygin made a significant speech at the Red Fort in New Delhi on May 6, 1969. He said: "The Soviet Union has always had complete understanding for the Indian people's peace-loving aspirations and their desire to live in peace with their neighbours, since without this, it is impossible to resolve big and crucial tasks in the area of economic and social progress."35 In September 1969, the foreign minister of India, Dinesh Singh, paid an official visit to the U.S.S.R. He was received by the General Secretary of the CPSU, L.I.Brezhnev, Kosygin and he had talks with the Soviet foreign minister A.A. Gromyko. Indo-Soviet relations and other matters were discussed.

Cultural ties between India and the Soviet Union are putting on firm foundation. The holding of joint symposia on problems of culture and art, the sharing of experience in choreography, music and musicology and exchange of visits of painters became regular. An Intergovernmental agreement on cultural, scientific and technical cooperation was signed between the two countries on February 12, 1960. This laid the firm foundation for coordination at first in an annual and later from 1967, on a biennial basis, of the programmes

34 Indian Express, New Delhi, May 8, 1969. Also see The Patriot, May 17, 1969
35 Tass, Condensed text in the Current Digest of Soviet Press, 21(9), 21 May 1969
of cultural exchanges. This cooperation has since grown in scale, and now embraces various aspects of social life, like education, all forms of art, literature, radio, films, TV, sports, etc.\textsuperscript{36}

The study of the Russian language is becoming more and more popular in India. Today Russian language is being taught at many of the Indian universities. By 1970, the Soviet Union had emerged as the second largest buyer of Indian goods; it was the main source for heavy industry and main supplier of sophisticated military equipment. In view of the heavy payments involved for economic assistance and arms, there was a negative aid flow, estimated at 28 million for 1970-71.\textsuperscript{37}

Indo-Soviet relations improved further in 1970. The visit of President Giri to the U.S.S.R., in September 1970, took place in an atmosphere of sincerity, friendship and mutual understanding. In the communique it was noted that this visit and further strengthened relations between the U.S.S.R. and India for the good of both the countries. The Indian press gave a very glowing account of the meeting between Indira Gandhi and Kosygin in Moscow in October 1970. While discussing a host of important international problems, the identity of views of both the countries was noted.\textsuperscript{38}

(C) The Indo-Soviet Treaty

Mrs. Gandhi decided in December 1970 to seek early

\textsuperscript{36} The Times of India, Delhi, 24 Nov 1987
elections in the hope of changing the minority nature of her government. She probably figured that things would have been much worse a year later. Prices of goods were sharply going up, unemployment was rising, there were demands for wage increases and the 1971 crop prospects did not seem too encouraging. She surprised her opponents and the world by winning a landslide victory, obtaining 359 seats in the Lower House of 521. A slogan she used to telling effect was garibi hatao (banish poverty). 39

Events in Pakistan, meanwhile, had been taking an ominous turn. In later years President Ayub Khan had given the army a back seat after appeasing it with pay increases and choice plots of land in the new capital of Islamabad. He ruled through civil servants and "basic democrats", who received money and privileges and provided the regime with support in the villages. 40

The December 1970 General Elections brought to surface serious and basic differences between the two wings of Pakistan. In the eastern wing the Awami League headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman achieved landslide victory. The Awami League, resplendent with victory, once again raised the issue of complete autonomy. Mujib stood for the implementation of the six point programme which called for full autonomy for the provinces with the federal government looking after defence, foreign affairs, and subject to certain conditions, currency. The programme envisaged complete control of economic affairs including foreign trade and aid by the provinces. 41

40 Ibid., pp. 80-81
(1) **The Bangla Desh Factor**: All these demands aroused in West Pakistan a resentment against Mujib. The military rulers of Pakistan arrested the Awami Leaders including Sheik Mujib, let loose a reign of terror in March 1971 to suppress the popular movement in East Bengal. As a result about three million Bengalis were massacred and ten million people were forced to leave their homes for India as refugees. India tried in vain to persuade the international agencies and the U.S. to prevail on Pakistan to facilitate the return of the refugees. The situation created by the Bangladesh issue can be viewed as a major factor in the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

Pakistan was encouraged by the U.S. and China in its attempt to crush the revolt in East Pakistan. In 1970, the U.S. supplied arms to Pakistan in violation of embargo. Henry Kissinger went to Peking and Nixon’s visit to China was announced in July 1971. All these events made India panicky and it began to search for security. Thus the price of better relations between Washington and Peking was an improvement in relations between Moscow and New Delhi.\(^\text{42}\)

Suspecting Washington-Peking-Rawalpindi collusion over the Bangladesh issue, India was forced to enter into a treaty agreement with the Soviet Union. This treaty marked a new phase in Indo-Soviet cooperation. It does not merely involve a commitment to peace, friendship and cooperation as the title suggests but to a limited yet significant extent it is a treaty of military cooperation. Foreign Minister Swaran Singh told Parliament on August 10, 1971 that the negotiations on the treaty had been going on for the previous two years and secret talks had taken place at various levels.\(^\text{43}\) Swaran Singh was in Moscow in June 1971 for important high

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\(^{42}\) Robert Jackson, *South Asian Crisis*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1978, p.157

\(^{43}\) *The Statesman*, Delhi, Aug 11, 1971
level talks. S. Nihal Singh says that discussions on the treaty were held in a desultory fashion from the second half of 1968. On the Indian side, the negotiations were largely conducted by foreign secretary T.N. Kaul and Ambassador D.P. Dhar, Indira Gandhi's trusted political aide. Indeed, it seems likely that Dhar's appointment to Moscow in the first place, in January 1969, was made by Mrs. Gandhi with an eye on the treaty.44

(ii) The China Factor: It would thus appear that the treaty was initially offered by the Soviet Union in the wake of China's Ninth Party Congress; the watershed marking the end of the Cultural Revolution and the country's self-imposed international isolation and perhaps around the time of the World Communist Parties Conference in Moscow in March/April 1969. In the same year, the CPSU chief Leonid Brezhnev, for the first time had proposed Asian Collective Security which ever since has become an anathema for Peking. This was also the period of Sino-Soviet clash at Ussuri river and a series of armed clashes on the Sinkiang-Kazakhstan border. After these clashes, Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin and Premier Chou-En-Lai had their dramatic meeting in August 1969 at the Peking airport and the Sino-Soviet border talks commenced in Peking. SALT discussions had begun in September 1969, between the two superpowers. Meanwhile China continued to make progress in the nuclear field. Its first hydrogen bomb was tested in June 1967, which was followed by two thermonuclear and one underground tests in 1969 and a series of test firing of MRBMS and a few IRBMS in 1968. Finally on 24 April 1970, it entered the space age by orbiting a 173 kg satellite, thus demonstrating its capability to develop powerful boosters.

44 S. Nihal Singh, op. cit., p. 67
Since late 60s, the Soviet Union had established a nominal presence in the Indian Ocean that became the target of repeated attacks by Peking which in early 1970 announced its intention to build a powerful modern navy to counter the Soviet "gunboat diplomacy". Simultaneously the Soviet Union and China were engaged in winning over as many third world countries as possible the tussle being keen in Africa and West Asia.

All these strategic developments are relevant to a correct appraisal of the Indo-Soviet Treaty and the motivations behind it, since they "served to emphasise that the international power game was being transformed from a two power adverse partnership... into a more complex (triangular) one", which according to K. Subrahmanyam, in view of standing Sino-Soviet conflict was likely to be more unfavourable to the Soviet Union.

Keeping in view its security, Moscow decided to initiate steps to counter this game and the offer of the treaty to India appears to be one of these measures. The Soviet Union had started looking for a "balancer" and India by virtue of its geopolitical importance locations, population, resources, armed potential, etc., and strained relations with China could serve the purpose. India, since early sixties, had been facing a possible combined threat from China and Pakistan and was greatly concerned with the U.S. sophisticated military supplies to Pakistan. India was in need of Moscow's firm support. Thus, India had accepted Moscow's offer to sign this treaty and came close to Moscow.

Though the offer of the treaty had been made and the discussion regarding the treaty already had taken place between Moscow and New Delhi much before (in 1969) but it was officially signed when India's security was threatened by Pakistani military junta backed by China and the U.S.A. Thus, the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation formalised Soviet political, economic and military help, and served the cause of Indian security admirably.

The first Chinese comment on the treaty came on September 2, 1971 when a member of a visiting Chinese trade delegation, making a brief reference to the treaty, reportedly said in Georgetown (Guyana) that China "certainly does not regard the signing of the Indo-Soviet treaty as a friendly act so far as it is concerned". He also said that China was watching the "growing USSR-India collaboration against China." 47

In a statement in the U.N. General Assembly on 26 November, 1971, Vice Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua severely criticised the Soviet policy in the Indian subcontinent and said that the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty was, in fact "the basis of bare-faced armed aggression against Pakistan". This, he added, fully revealed the true features of the "foreign policy of peace" pursued by the Soviet leaders. 48

Speaking in the Security Council on 10 August 1972, the Chinese chief delegate Huang Hua, said that the Soviet social imperialism was continuing to play "a most insidious role in the development of the situation in the South Asian continent". The Indo-Soviet Treaty, he added, was "in essence, an aggressive pact of military alliance, whereby the Indian Government had "finally and openly dropped off its cloak of nonalignment". 49

47 The Hindu, 4 Sept 1971
48 The Statesman, Delhi, 28 Nov 1971
49 Ibid., 12 Aug 1972
Mrs. Gandhi's primary aim in taking up the Russians on their offer of a treaty was to break the new compact between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. Her domestic compulsions had not become as urgent as they did after President Zakir Husain's death in early May, 1969.  

Mrs. Gandhi had written to Kosygin on July 10, 1968 on the dangers of giving arms to Pakistan. In his prompt reply Kosygin referred to the close Indo-Soviet relations, suggesting that even if Pakistan received arms it was in the larger interests of the region. After Tashkent, Kosygin had emerged as the dominant voice in shaping Soviet foreign policy. Perhaps he also felt that he was responsible for forcing the Tashkent Declaration on Ayub, thus weakening his position domestically.

Thereafter, the re-establishment of amicable relations with India became the focal point of Soviet politics in the subcontinent. The Soviets thought that new gestures of friendliness towards New Delhi would remove all doubts created by Soviet arms supplies to Pakistan. In the pursuit of this policy the Soviets began to play up the danger of Pakistan's new aggression on Kashmir and assured New Delhi that Moscow regarded the state as an integral part of India. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union urged New Delhi to sign a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation in return for Soviet promises of help to defend India's security against foreign aggression and for more economic and military assistance. Proceeding with some caution, New Delhi finally welcomed the changed Soviet attitude.

50 S. Nihal Singh, op. cit.
51 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
Thus on August 9, 1971 the Soviet Union and India signed a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation for a period of twenty years. The treaty bound both the Soviet Union and India to extend to each other full support in the event of an outside aggression. Swaran Singh stated in Indian Parliament that it "will provide a pattern for similar treaties between India and other countries in the region." 54

Article IX of the Treaty stipulated that in the event of either party being subjected to an attack or threat thereof, the signatories would immediately enter into mutual consultations to take "appropriate effective measures", to ensure peace and security of their countries. Under this article if Pakistan, supported by China, threatened India with military damage in Kashmir, the Soviet Union was obliged to consult India and provide her with appropriate assistance to resist the aggression and ensure peace and security of India. Though the treaty did not specify military assistance in the event of armed aggression, the term "appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security" could be implied to mean military peace and security. The statement by Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko that "no one is any longer capable of basing the policy be it vis-a-vis the Soviet Union or vis-a-vis India without taking into account the treaty", seemed to provide Soviet military support to India in the event of an aggression. 55 Boris Ponomarev indicated that the treaty had guaranteed Soviet military support to India in the event of an aggression by her hostile neighbour. "In the event of an attack on one of our countries or the threat of such an attack", he explained, "the treaty provides for  

54 The Times of India, New Delhi, August 10, 1971  
55 Pravda, 14 Aug 1971, Also see New Times, Aug 1971
effective measures to be urgently taken by both contracting parties to guarantee peace and security. This commitment is aimed at serving the cause of defending peace and prevent the unleashing of aggressive acts." Another Soviet spokesman emphasized that the treaty had guaranteed peace in South Asia against any potential aggressor. The treaty got adverse press criticism. Three leading newspapers of New Delhi pinpointed various aspects of the treaty in their lead editorials right after the event. The Times of India observed that the treaty represented "a departure from the policy of nonalignment as interpreted all these years." The Statesman held that the treaty gave "every sign of being hastily conceived." And The Hindustan Times argued that "in a situation of real crisis, Soviet support would have been forthcoming without a treaty."

The Soviets achieved yet another objective. The treaty strengthened Indo-Soviet ties, made India more dependent on Soviet Russia and above all, abandon the policy of nonalignment. The Statesman described the treaty as "virtually a military arrangement". Though Article IV of the treaty stated that Moscow respected New Delhi's policy of non-alignment, "there is every evidence of alignment in a treaty almost distinguishable from a defence pact."

Thus it became a controversial issue whether the Treaty amounts to an abandonment of India's policy of nonalignment.

56 Ibid., 13 Aug 1971
57 Ibid., 12 Aug 1971
58 The Times of India, Editorial, New Delhi, 10 Aug 1971
59 The Statesman, Editorial, New Delhi, 10 Aug 1971
60 "Was this Necessary", Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 10 Aug 1971
61 The Statesman, 10 Aug 1971
62 Ibid.
It appears a valid point of view, says V.M. Tarkunde that the policy of non-alignment would be compromised by this treaty. Formerly, there were pacts like NATO and SEATO and they were defence pacts which provided that if any party was attacked, the other party would give military aid and support to that party. That is the slight difference between this treaty and those pacts because in this one it is said that if one party is attacked, the other party shall enter into "mutual consultations" to take "appropriate" effective measures to ensure peace and the security of that country.63

In Tarkunde's opinion, the difference is not very significant. He says, formerly the world was divided into two blocs—the Russian and the American. And if one signed a treaty of mutual defence with Russia, it implied an anti-American stance in foreign policy. The opposite would hold true about a treaty with America. That was the reason why even defence treaties were regarded as alignment because it implied alignment in a situation in which the world was bipolarised. Though the policy of non-alignment might not technically be continued by this treaty, whether the world is the same as it was about ten years ago. According to Tarkunde, the world is no longer bipolarised. There are at least three blocs and more are likely to emerge. Therefore, a defence treaty with one power does not necessarily imply enmity or some sort of non-alliance with another power. We are in a situation in which a treaty with Russia necessarily implies some sort of antagonism to America. But a treaty of common defence does not necessarily imply alignment when the world is not bipolarised and when there are several power blocs. This Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation

between India and Russia, concludes Tarkunde, does not necessarily imply antagonism or a stance against the U.S.A. 64

The treaty got wide support in India. During the debate on it in Parliament only three MPs voted against it. Only the rightist parties expressed doubts on the need for the treaty. Thus The Hindustan Times wrote that the treaty "in a way breaks with the traditional Indian policy of non-alignment." 65

Giving a rebuff to the rightists and defining the reality of Indian foreign policy, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated: "The cornerstone of our foreign policy continues to be non-alignment. This is a dynamic policy and means that the nation will not belong to any military pacts. India is prepared to support friendly relations with all countries and to respond to manifestations of friendship by any country. Precisely because of this the Indo-Soviet Treaty on Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed. This treaty in no way harms the policy of non-alignment and does in no way bar India from concluding similar treaties with any other nation." 66

This treaty marked a turning point in India's foreign policy. It formalised the Indo-Soviet friendship and according to Gromyko, gave it a durable international legal basis. It assured India solid and secure support of the Soviet Union in case of any aggression against her. The latter too got in India a friend to counterbalance the growing Peking-Washington axis. The treaty attested to the shared world view of India and the Soviet Union.

From 27 to 29 of September 1971 on the invitation of the

64 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
Soviet government Indira Gandhi paid a visit to the U.S.S.R. to develop further friendly Indo-Soviet relations. During the visit she had talks with the Soviet leaders over a large range of subjects of mutual interest. "In strengthening peace in Asia", said A.N. Kosygin, Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R., "the Soviet Union and India are strengthening peace all over the world." 67

As a matter of fact, the Indo-Soviet relationship is not based on personalities or ideologies but on equality, national interest and common purpose. As long as the interests of the two countries converge the Indo-Soviet ties are continuing to expand. In both countries Indo-Soviet friendship has become a deep rooted popular tradition.

(D) Phase-II: 1972-77

The friendly relations between India and the U.S.S.R. continued to grow in the spirit of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. The domestic situation of India was deteriorating fast. In a brief stopover in New Delhi on 1 October 1971, Soviet President Podgorny said that 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 Treaty followed as the U.S. under Nixon took a tough stand trying to bend India in Pakistan's favour. 68

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,

67 Ibid.
political and diplomatic moves by the U.S.S.R. in India's support at the U.N. thwarted all Sino-US attempts to block Bangladesh's independence. Again it was Indo-Soviet coordination in accordance with the Treaty which failed the designs of the U.S. government in its despatch of a Seventh Fleet task force to the Bay of Bengal just on the eve of Bangladesh's freedom from the oppressive Yoke. 69

Talks to C.L. Sulzberger of the New York Times shortly after the war, Mrs. Gandhi said, "we are unable to display gratitude in any tangible sense for anything." 70 As for the United States, she assumed that Washington policy towards India changed when U.S. policy towards China changed. 71 Even earlier, on December 31, 1971, she emphasized the importance of friendly Indo-U.S. relations, taking into account the "new realities" on the subcontinent. 72

The policy of the Indian government to ensure peaceful development of relations in the Asian subcontinent received the backing of the Soviet leaders. As stated by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, L.J. Brezhnev in March 1972, establishment of secure peace and good neighbourly relations between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh would be "a great contribution in improving the political atmosphere in Asia." 73 In Brezhnev's report on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Union, it was stated: "Indo-Soviet friendship plays a very positive role in international life.

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69 Ibid.
70 The New York Times, Feb 17, 1972
71 The Indian Express, Delhi, Feb 18, 1972
India is one of the largest nations on our planet. The Soviet Union and India have already acquired quite a lot of experience in fruitful cooperation. We believe that hence forward when these relations will grow in the spirit of friendship, peace and cooperation, our cooperation would deepen more. The strengthening of democratic, progressive and anti-imperialistic forces in India, as well as the policies of the Indian government led by Indira Gandhi, augur well for this objective.\textsuperscript{74}

On the 15th August 1972, India observed the 25th anniversary of its national independence. Marking as it did, the silver jubilee of India's independence and 50th anniversary of the formation of the U.S.S.R., 1972 was a momentous year for both the countries. The gigantic third Asian International Trade Fair — Asia 72 — which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 3 November provided an opportunity for the two states to present a panoramic view of their achievements. Trade deals at the U.S.S.R. Pavillion had been quick and sizeable. On the very first day of the fair, five contracts were signed between the Soviet Union and Indian trading firms. The Soviet organization "V/o Zapchasterport" undertook to import shirts manufactured by Indian firms like Wings, Liberty, Milton and excel. Contracts for imports from the Soviet Union of polygraphic machines, excavators and mining machinery had also been signed. Under a contract signed on 13 November 1972, the Soviet firm "V/o Techmastexport" undertook to supply the Indian Express a rotary printing machine of the volta type. According to the director of Soviet Pavillion, contracts worth Rs. 150 million had been concluded by 22 November 1972. "Indian industrialists", he said, "are interested in our machine tools, electronic equipment and agricultural machinery. I hope many more trade deals will be struck in the coming days."\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Sovietland, Nos. 23-29, issued by the Soviet News Agency, Tass, at New Delhi, p.6
**Indo-Soviet Commission for Stronger ties:**

The proposal to set-up an Indo-Soviet Joint Commission to strengthen the ties between the two countries in the economic, scientific and technical fields was cleared at the highest level on 17 August 1972. The Union Planning Minister, D.P. Dhar, represented India on the Commission. The decision to have a joint Commission was taken at the talks the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi had with the Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin in Moscow in September 1971. At that time the need to further strengthen the ties in various spheres was recognized during the talks. A formal agreement for this purpose was signed in Moscow on 19 September 1972.  

Mr. Y.T. Shah, Additional Secretary, Indian Ministry of Foreign Trade, after signing Indo-Soviet Trade Protocol on 25 November 1972 at New Delhi said that the volume of trade between the two countries was growing at such a rate as to be worth of the cooperation between the two countries. He added "we are happy that the Soviet Union and India have now become big partners in the economic and trade relations."  

The Soviets were now satisfied with India’s attitude towards their country. They hoped to further strengthen the bonds of friendly cooperation to build a barrier against China. The Soviet commentators welcomed the Simla Agreement signed by India and Pakistan on 2 July, 1972, as "an important instrument for the relaxation of tension in Asia and for peaceful coexistence." The Agreement to resolve the Kashmir issue through bilateral discussions without outside interference manifested "their sincere striving for normalization of relations and reservation of peace in the sub-continent."

76 **The Statesman**, New Delhi, 20 Sept 1972  
77 **The Times of India**, 26 Nov 1972
The Simla Agreement had been "approved by all those, who have at heart peace and stability in the area. It should become the cornerstone of peace and cooperation between India and Pakistan." Izvestia said on 4 July 1972 that the summit meeting had shown that the path of peace and friendship was a realistic one for the countries of the subcontinent to follow.

The Indo-Soviet joint commission which was set up in August 1972, began its first meeting in New Delhi on 9 February 1973 with leaders of the teams from both the sides agreeing on the immense possibility of expanding economic cooperation and collaboration on a mutually beneficial basis. While India's emphasis was largely on trade expansion, the leader of the Soviet team, S.A. Skachkov, underlined Soviet capability to assist India in developing key industries.

The leader of the Indian team, Planning Minister D.P. Dhar, in his opening remarks spoke of the great scope for cooperation in the field of production which he described as "a new and exciting field". "We are prepared", Mr. Dhar said, "to enter into long-term understanding with the Soviet Union." He pointed out that the recent expert level discussions between the two sides had opened up new vistas of cooperation.

The leader of the Soviet team expressed satisfaction on the points that the trade between the two countries has risen nearly six times in the last twelve years. He was also proud of the fact that there were 90 Soviet aided projects of which 50 were in cooperation.

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78 Pravda, 6 July 1972
79 Izvestia, 5 July 1972
80 The Times of India, New Delhi, 27 Dec 1972
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
Brezhnev's Visit to India - 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 U.S.S.R. 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 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." 83

The talks which were held in an atmosphere of trust, friendship and mutual understanding, covered a wide range of subjects concerning Indo-Soviet bilateral relations and perspectives of their future all-round development as well as topical international problems of common interest. Both sides noted with satisfaction the broad identity of views on the questions discussed and expressed their profound satisfaction at the successful development of relation of friendship and cooperation between India and the Soviet Union in all fields. 84

In course of an exchange of views on topical international problems the two sides expressed their satisfaction at the coincidence or proximity of the positions of India and the U.S.S.R. or major questions of the international situation. 85

83 Sumit Chakravarti, op.cit., p.97
85 Ibid., p.401
Yet another issue of importance to India, which came up for discussion was the U.S. and Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean. India wanted the ocean to be declared a "zone of peace". The Soviet Union was in favour of reducing this naval presence on a reciprocal basis as a first step to declaring the Ocean a zone of peace. The joint statement nonetheless, was more positive than the earlier ones. It said: "the two sides reaffirm their readiness to take part together with all interested states on an equal basis, in the search for a favourable solution to the question of turning the Indian Ocean region into a zone of peace."

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU stressed that in the present world of today the growing desire of the majority of states for international detente and for the settlement of outstanding problems by negotiations is becoming ever more pronounced. Positively appraising the important contribution made to the improvement of the general international situation as a result of the Soviet-American summit talks, the Soviet Union considers that the agreements reached in the course of the talks will serve the cause of developing peaceful cooperation and improving the international climate. It attached great significance to the conclusion of the Soviet-American Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War which not only meets the interests of the people of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., but also serves the cause of strengthening universal peace. Indira Gandhi welcomed the detente between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. as a step towards relaxation of tensions in the world. On this connection, she highly appreciated the efforts of the general secretary of the central committee of the CPSU and expressed the hope that

this relaxation will also spread to other areas of the world and bring an end to the nuclear arms race which is a threat to mankind. 87

The importance of Indo-Soviet relationship was emphasized by Brezhnev in his report to the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. He said, "We attach special importance to friendship with that great country. In the past five years, Soviet-Indian relations have risen to a new level. Our countries have concluded a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. And even this short period has clearly shown the tremendous significance of our bilateral ties and its role as a stabilizing factor in South Asia and the continent as a whole." Close political and economic cooperation with the Republic of India, he said, was the constant policy of the Soviet Union. The Soviet people appreciate, and now, are in solidarity with India's peace loving foreign policy and the courageous efforts of her progressive forces to solve her difficult socio-economic problems. We wish the people and government of India complete success in these efforts, he added. 88

The delineation of the Sino-Indian border in Soviet maps had been a contentious issue between New Delhi and Moscow for years. The Soviets had been either evasive or vaguely sympathetic, but had refrained from expressing full support. Russians' nervousness over Indian moves for a rapprochement with China in the late sixties was both explicit and implicit. They now perhaps wanted to make a thaw in Sino-Indian relations more difficult to achieve through their belated support. 89

87 Ibid.
88 Patriot, New Delhi, 18 March 1973
India exploded its first nuclear device on May 18, 1974. The Indian Atomic Energy Commission announced that the explosion had been carried out more than 100 meters underground. H.H. Sethna, the then Chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, reported that the yield of the plutonium device exploded equals 10,000 to 15,000 tons of TNT. No radioactive fallout exceeding the safe limit has been registered. The aim of the experiment, he said was "to obtain information on the crater formation effect and on the possibility of blasting hard rock by means of the atom". The device has been designed exclusively by Indian scientists and built of Indian materials, Sethna said.90

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who also held the post of Minister of Atomic Energy and Electronics, told a Delhi press conference that the explosion was part of the nuclear research programme. "We firmly stand for the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes," she said.91

The explosion sent shock waves throughout the world and particularly in Pakistan. Pakistan believed itself to be threatened. It had all along been Pakistan's effort to convey to the world a justification for some kind of a parity between the two countries for the good of the world itself and to relate every Indian action to this yardstick. Reaction in Pakistan was predictably highly inflamed. The media carried alarming forebodings and sinister implications. Bhutto described the explosion in a statement on 19 May 1974 as a "fateful development", and said that Pakistan would never succumb to nuclear blackmail and would not accept Indian domination over the subcontinent. The explosion, he claimed, had put an end to the possibility of a no-war pact between India and Pakistan.92

90 R.K. Jain, op.cit., p.415
91 Ibid.
92 Asian Recorder, 4-10 June, 1974, p.12035
Buutoo disclosed that he was having the matter raised in the forthcoming meeting of CENTO, that he was sending emissaries to China, France, Britain and Canada and that he himself would take up the matter with the Soviet leaders during his coming visit to Moscow. The Indian explosion no doubt, raised alarm bells in Islamabad, but part of the exercise of vigorous denunciation and cancellation of talks with India on normalizing relations was to prod the Americans to tilt further towards Pakistan and to redress the balance. Part of it was also for home consumption to stiffen the morale.  

India's Minister of External Affairs, Sardar Swaran Singh, paid an official visit to Moscow from September 8 to 10, 1974, at the invitation of the Soviet Government. Swaran Singh was received by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev. Talks were held between the Members of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and the Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. Gromyko and India's Minister of External Affairs Swaran Singh.

The Soviet Defence Minister, Marshal A.A. Grechko, visited India on 27 February 1975. In his meeting with the Prime Minister of India, there was an exchange of views on some major international problems of interest to both the countries as well as on questions concerning further development of bilateral cooperation. He met the Minister of External Affairs, Y.B. Chavan and he also had several meetings and talks with Swaran Singh, Minister of Defence of India. The Soviet side positively assessed the progressive and anti-imperialistic direction of the non-aligned movement, of which India was one of the leaders, and expressed support for the aspirations

93 V.P. Dutt, India's Foreign Policy, Vikas, New Delhi, 1987, p. 212
94 R.K. Jain, op. cit., p. 423
of the non-aligned countries to promote the consolidation of world peace, security and cooperation. Both sides noted with satisfaction that the visit of the Soviet Defence Minister has significantly contributed to further strengthen the friendship and understanding between the peoples of India and the Soviet Union.  

(ii) Emergency in India and Soviet Support

The political and economic situation in India had deteriorated rapidly during 1974 and early 1975 resulting finally in the proclamation of the emergency in June 1975. The left in India was split and while the CPM denounced, welcomed it in order to "stem the rightwing tide" unleashed by many opposition parties. Moscow, too accepted this rationale of the need for emergency. Tass carried a long interview with the Congress President P.K. Baroah explaining the background of rightwing offensive against which the Emergency was proclaimed and the need to boost the economy and improve the living conditions of different section of the people.  

From the declaration of the State of Emergency in India on June 26, 1975, until the electoral defeat of the Congress Party in March 1977, the Soviet posture towards the measures adopted by Mrs.Gandhi was one of unequivocal support. Pravda, in an article entitled "India: On the Road to Peace and Progress" maintained that "the emergency had been necessitated by the attempts of internal reaction aided by external forces to capitalize on the difficulties posed by the 1975 economic crisis to create an atmosphere of pandemonium."

Western press reports on the curtailment of civil liberties in India were discounted since "there were few who questioned the timeliness and expediency of the measures undertaken by the government."  

95 Ibid., p. 428  
96 Indian Express, 7 July 1975  
97 Pravda, 25 Jan 1976
In the economic realm, there was enthusiastic coverage of Mrs. Gandhi's Twenty Points Programme, and the Soviet media were effusive in their praise for the beneficial impact that the emergency had on inflation, agricultural and industrial production, land reform and the extension of credit to the poor. In short the emergency was perceived as a means for attending to the "diverse and complex problems" encountered enroute to social and economic development. A Soviet political commentator concluded that it was for this reason that "the actions taken by the Indian government against internal and external reactionaries were responded to with full understanding in the Soviet Union." 

During this period India's relations with the United States continued to be strained because of Washington's attitude on the Bangladesh issue and arms supply to Pakistan. However, the successful meeting of the Indo-US Joint Commission lifted to some extent the gloom cast by the second cancellation of President Ford's visit to India. It was in this context that India's Foreign Secretary Kewal Singh visited Moscow in November 1975 for the annual consultations between the two countries. He carried a personal letter to Kosygin from Indira Gandhi. He had talks with Kosygin and Gromyko as also with Brezhnev. The Soviet leaders reiterated their support to the emergency at a time of growing world-wide criticism against it. They also expressed their admiration for the courageous way in which Indira Gandhi had dealt with a difficult situation and welcomed the socio-economic reform she had introduced. They equally stood by Indira Gandhi on the Bangladesh issue, and shared India's concern over the negative trends in that country.

98 Ibid., 10 Feb 1976
99 Y. Tsaplin, "The Sound Foundation of Indo-Soviet Ties, International Affairs, No. 8, Aug 1976, p. 73
100 The Statesman, 30 Nov 1976
Indira Gandhi indeed gone out of her way in early 1976 to make some friendly gestures towards China. These were reciprocated by Peking, though there was no warmth in all these. However, on April 15, 1976 Foreign Minister Chavan announced that India was sending back its ambassador to Peking after 14 years. In September, the same year, the Chinese envoy took up his charge in New Delhi.\textsuperscript{101}

Apparently Moscow was not unduly perturbed over this process of normalization in Sino-Indian relations, for at the 25th Congress in February 1976, L.I. Brezhnev praised India and the leadership of Indira Gandhi in effusive language.

Brezhnev reiterated Soviet appreciation of India's continuing commitment to progressive transformations in the face of heavy pressure from reactionary circles both at home and abroad.\textsuperscript{102} And his statement, "We attach special importance to friendship with India", must have been very reassuring to Indira Gandhi.\textsuperscript{103}

Brezhnev concluded by saying with regard to the emergency imposed in India that "close political and economic cooperation with Republic of India is on steady course. Soviet people are sympathetic towards more than that, they feel solidarity with India's peace loving foreign policy and the courageous struggle of that country's progressive forces to solve the difficult social and economic problems confronting it. We wish the people and government of India, complete success in their struggle."\textsuperscript{104}

Mr. Firyubin, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister visited India in February 1976. Moscow's main concern at that time was that

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{101} Vinod Bhatia, \textit{Indira Gandhi and Indo-Soviet Relations}, Panchsheel, New Delhi, 1987, p.77
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
India should not open up a chasm in Indo-Soviet relations while trying to bridge the one between itself and China. There was undoubtedly no prospect for such developments in view of the abiding friendship between India and the Soviet Union and also because India continued to depend on Soviet arms even though it had sought aircraft from both France and Britain. And Moscow was also emerging as the most important source of assistance and raw materials at a time when India was under heavy economic strain.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi had paid an official visit to the Soviet Union between 8 and 13 June 1976. Mr. Brezhnev, welcoming the Indian Prime Minister, said that experience had confirmed the foresight of the policy pursued by the Indian National Congress led by her — the policy aimed at industrialization, building of a self-sustained economy and the establishment of a strong public sector. This was the first time that the Soviet Party Chief had referred to the Congress Party in such laudatory terms. "Indeed it is due to this policy that India has become a powerful state which plays an important part in world politics", he maintained and added, "we highly value the constantly strengthening Soviet-Indian friendship and unity of the two great forces of today — the world of socialism and the countries that have liberated themselves from the colonial yoke and have embarked on the road of independent progressive development." The joint communique issued after the visit spoke of an atmosphere of "trust, friendship and mutual understanding."

The Soviet expressed their "full understanding of the efforts of the government and the people of India aimed at solving the complicated socio-economic tasks facing the country" and high appreciation of the "peace loving foreign policy of India, its important positive role in the non-aligned
movement and its great contribution to the struggle for peace and against colonialism and racialism", the policy which had "won for India a well deserved and high prestige in the international arena." Indira Gandhi visited Moscow with two main objectives. She wanted to assure her hosts that she would do nothing to damage Indo-Soviet ties while promoting normalisation of relations with China. And she wanted to raise the level of Indo-Soviet cooperation in view of the continuing oil crisis and adverse international economic development.\footnote{106}

The Soviet Union and India expressed their unanimous opinion on the usefulness of the many faceted ties existing between them in the field of scientific and technical cooperation including fundamental research, applied sciences and technology, medicine, agriculture and other fields. The two sides attach great importance to the practice of Soviet-Indian political consultations which has proven its value. They decided to develop this practice making these consultations systematic and substantive and paying special attention to using them in assisting the implementation of agreed measures to strengthen peace, international security and cooperation on the basis of equality between states.\footnote{107}

Following the split in the Indian National Congress in 1969, Indira Gandhi successfully projected a radical image of herself. The Soviet Press and leaders sincerely believed that she represented the progressive forces in India, that her commitment to socialism was deep and firm, and that her opponents, who established the Janata Party eventually in 1977, were all reactionaries representing pro-western.

\footnote{105} Asian Recorder, 1-7 July, pp. 13233-35
\footnote{106} Vinod Bhatia, \textit{Indira Gandhi and Indo-Soviet Relations}, \op.cit.
\footnote{107} R.K. Jain, \op.cit., pp.66-67
pro-monopoly, anti-communist, Hindu chauvinist elements in Indian Politics. When Indira Gandhi clamped Emergency rule on the country in June 1975, and when the government arrested most of those who formed the new cabinet in March 1977, Moscow strongly and consistently backed her. The political commentator of Pravda argued on 13 July 1975, that the "Right wing opposition" had been trying for some time to create "an atmosphere of chaos, anarchy and lawlessness in the country" and that the steps taken by the Government were timely and necessary. Two other political commentators observed that "the intrigues" of the Indian "Right-wingers" had "forced Indira Gandhi's government to declare a state of emergency" on 25 June 1975.

The Soviet press repeatedly supported the Indian Government's Emergency measures till the eve of the March 1977 elections. For example, New Times wrote in January 1977 that these measure were necessitated by the attempts of the "Rightist parties backed by the imperialists... to topple the Gandhi Government and seize power in the summer of 1975. Another Soviet correspondent wrote two weeks later that the Emergency was proclaimed in view of the "reactionaries acting in contravention of the constitution and democratic norms and laws." The Congress Party, however, paid a heavy price in electoral terms for the imposition of the Emergency and for the excesses committed during June 1975 and December 1976. For the strength of the Congress in the Lok Sabha was reduced from 352 in 1971 to 153 in 1977. Of the forty-nine Ministers of the Indira Gandhi Government who faced the electorate in March 1977, as many as thirty-four were defeated, including Indira Gandhi herself.

108 Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 6 Aug 1975, p.17
109 New Times, Moscow, No.27, July 1975, p.11
110 Ibid., No.6, 1977. p.21
111 Ibid.
The Soviets were not prepared for the defeat of the Congress Party although Mrs. Gandhi's own reading of the situation was considerably less sanguine. At any rate, Moscow did not like the look or the policies of the Janata leaders. In the election campaign in February 1977, Morarji Desai, who would soon become Prime Minister, charged Mrs. Gandhi's government with doing "whatever the Soviet Union does" and declared that if Janata came to power, the Indo-Soviet treaty might "automatically go".  

Moscow received the news of the Congress Party's rout at the polls with deep embarrassment and, possibly some alarm. It, however, hastened to overcome the embarrassment of dealing with those they had been running down until the eve of the March 1977 elections, for within five weeks of the election results, Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko landed in New Delhi to mend Moscow's fences with the Janata Government. Pravada of 10 May 1977 described the Janata Government's decision to welcome the Soviet Foreign Minister "as a practical step affirming continuity of friendly policy of India towards the Soviet Union."

A new government has been formed in India following the elections to the Lok Sabha in March 1977. Analyzing the poll results, the CPI central executive committee arrived at the conclusion that they were not a "verdict against the nationally accepted progressive policies of economic self-reliance, strengthening of the public sector, radical socio-economic reforms, secularism, anti-imperialist non-alignment, and friendship and cooperation with socialist countries." On March 2, 1977 Morarji Desai, veteran Indian politician and Chairman of the Janata Party, was elected leader of its

112 The Indian Express, New Delhi, Feb 11, 1977
113 Times of India, New Delhi, 12 May 1977
parliamentary group. He was sworn in as Prime Minister on the same day and began forming a new government. 114

At his first press conference Prime Minister Desai said his government's main task would be to eliminate poverty and unemployment. In foreign policy, he said India would follow a policy of genuine and complete non-alignment. India's relations with other countries would be good and cordial, provided they reciprocated, he said. 115

Congratulating Mr. Desai on his appointment as Prime Minister, Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin expressed confidence that the traditional relations of friendship and all-round cooperation between the Soviet Union and India would continue to grow and develop in the interest of their peoples, peace and international security. 116

114 A. Usvatov's Commentary on change of Government in India, April 1977 in R.K. Jain, op.cit., p.475
115 Ibid., p.477
116 Ibid.