We have discussed in detail the fact that Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Chief architect of India's foreign policy had always acted on the conviction that a non-violent and peace-loving country like India, believing in mutual co-operation and co-existence, would never need strong defence. As a result very little attention was paid towards raising a strong army even for defensive purposes. But the myth of this idealism was badly shattered by the aggressive postures of China in the early 1960's. However, the Indo-China conflict of October 1962, the Chinese explosion of the Atom Bomb, and lastly the armed conflict with Pakistan in September 1965 forced India to review her foreign policy in the light of new developments. Despite the Chinese aggression and her intriguing role to break Afro-Asian solidarity, India persisted in her devotion to non-alignment and peaceful co-existence.

The Socialist Parties of India in principle, supported the persuasion of a foreign policy which aimed at securing national interests and promoting world peace. They subscribed to non-alignment, opposition to colonialism and racialism in all forms. They unanimously opposed India's link with Commonwealth of Nations. Despite the close similarities among the socialist parties, each one has looked upon the various national and international issues from its own point of view in consonance with its ideology. The differences are minor which
inevitably lead to vagueness and shifting of grounds. The Communist Party of India which claims to have worked for strengthening India's nascent parliamentary system and stood for the peaceful way of India's progress, conceded to the Congress policies generally. It too pursued a policy of peace, non-alignment and anti-colonialism. It is the Communist Party alone in India which actively adopted its programme and strategy with regard to India's foreign policy. The CPI starts with the assumption that imperialism, in any form, is an evil to humanity and the foreign policy of India which reflects close ties with imperialism is dangerous to our national interests and territorial integrity. The party does not favour compromises with or aid from the western powers dominated by United States. The American economic aid to India, according to the communists, is nothing but a sinister design to toe India to its line of thinking. The Party believes that the only way by which India can preserve its freedom is by adhering to a policy of peace and anti-colonialism, or friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, by making for independent development and last but not the least by advancing the country's democratic movement.

The CPI (M), holds that India's foreign policy, under the Congress rule, is rapidly losing its independence and is becoming subservient to imperial powers like the U.S.A. Assailing India's foreign policy as tied up with imperialism,
the CPI (M) advocates for an independent foreign policy based on opposition to imperialism, nuclear and imperialist wars, promoting peace and peaceful co-existence or a policy of firm friendship with all peace-loving countries, firm solidarity with Afro-Asian people and a break with British Commonwealth. The Party also believes in maintaining healthy relations with our two neighbours, the People's Republic of China and Pakistan.

The Praja Socialist Party, which stands for a democratic socialist society, fully supported the objectives and means of India's foreign policy including the policy of what is called active neutrality. The persistent criticism of the Party only related to certain specific aspects of the government policy, e.g., the Commonwealth membership and its differences with the Ruling Party on and the Goa issue. The Party believes that the government had not succeeded in making clear the distinct and independent character of India's foreign policy. In its view the impression created abroad was that India was alternatively leaning towards one bloc or the other.

The PSP sought an independent foreign policy. It opposed military alliances. It aims at strengthening the United Nation, safeguarding the Indian ocean against exploitation by the big powers and strengthening the struggle of the people suffering under imperialist and neo-imperialist regimes. The Party criticized the lukewarm attitude of the Congress policies and expressed the view that the manner in which, Government dealt
with 'Western imperialism' and 'Russian imperialism' was an indication of double standards.

The Samyukta Socialist Party condemns India's foreign policy as a weak-kneed policy, which in its opinion has brought disasters to the country. The Party alleges that government's over dependence on foreign powers has robbed Indian foreign policy of all initiatives and dynamism. The Party vehemently criticizes the government for its half-hearted approach to such crucial problems as disarmament, which a policy the SSP holds has failed to check the growing imperialism in the world. The SSP stands for bringing the two powers together to enable them to chalk out plans for reducing the mounting tensions between them serving thereby the smaller nations from the cold war politics of the East and West. Such a policy would ensure world peace and prosperity of mankind.

Broadly speaking these parties not opposed to the general principles of India's foreign policy, yet on various national and international questions they have often criticized the government.

In its early years the CPI was opposed to the policy of non-alignment and alleged that the Government was playing in the hands of the east and west. But from 1955 onward the Party reversed its former attitude and it not only supported non-alignment but laid more emphasis upon its need; and utility and held that non-alignment alone could serve the national interests
and ensure world co-operation. The Party further stressed that the policy of non-alignment should be further strengthened and should be based firmly on active and consistent imperialism and anti-colonialism. The CPI (M), however, does not approve the manner of implementing the non-alignment policy. It agrees with the broad principles of Indian policy of non-alignment but regrets seriously India's association with the Commonwealth and its dependence on foreign capital, especially the so-called "almighty" American dollar.

The PSP and the SSP have no differences as far as basic policy of the Government is concerned. They, however, differ in regard to its implementation. Like the CPI they favoured strong adherence to non-alignment, yet they also pointed out the defection of the policy from the rigid path of non-alignment. The PSP believes that Government's non-alignment policy has never been security-orientated and, therefore, called the policy as timid and opportunistic. The SSP on the other hand complains that non-attainment of complete security, freedom and the cause of democracy has rendered the policy and modes of non-alignment absolutely meaningless and illusive.

All the parties seem to agree with the Government's stand on colonialism and have rendered support to most of the acts of the Government aiming at the elimination of colonialism and racialism. But all these parties hold that India's stand on colonialism and racialism has not been firm, clear and consistent
They condemn the Government's weaknesses and vacillations and charge it with playing the role of almost an imperialist.

All these parties are also against India's link with the Commonwealth of Nations. The CPI finds no advantage in India's continued association with the Commonwealth and insists that India should quit it as soon as possible as it hampers its economic progress and stands in the way of the building up of a self-reliant strong defence potential. It is opposed to the Commonwealth membership as it considers that USA and other members of Commonwealth paid scant regard to India's vital interests and sided with India's opponents. The SSP is also in favour of termination of Commonwealth membership and has accused Britain of International anis-conduct by refusing to recognize Kashmir as an integral part of India. It believe that India's disassociation from the Commonwealth is necessary not only for economic reasons but for meeting the growing Chinese influence in the Afro-Asian region. All these socialist parties deplored the attitude of Britain and other members of Commonwealth in relation to the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council.

All these parties persistently argued for maintaining cordial and friendly relations with Pakistan. The CPI pledged itself to safeguard the Tashkent spirit and wanted normal relations between the two countries. The Party stands for an all out war against reactionary forces which have obstructed
establishment of normalcy and cordial relationship between India and Pakistan and accuses the imperial powers for the continuing tension between the two countries. The CPI's policy with regard to Kashmir is not very rigid. It wants to settle the issue of Kashmir by getting the cease-fire line and demands the withdrawal of the issue from the Security Council.

The CPI (M), has a distinctly different approach from that of CPI in relation to Pakistan. The CPI (M) demands a peaceful settlement of all disputes and friendly relations with Pakistan. It welcomed the Tashkent summit as a way of direct discussion between the two countries on their problems without the interference of the third party. The party always supported the retention of special status for Kashmir within the Indian Union and favoured the release of Sheikh Abdullah. It believes that any talk on the future of Kashmir are not complete without the Sheikh.

The PSP like the CPI, also advocated cordial and friendly relations with Pakistan and stressed the need for mutual discussion and understanding between the two countries. It also objected to the intervention of the third party in the matter. But unlike the CPI, it criticized the Tashkent Summit for leading to chain reaction in the sub-continent. It has always contended that the accession of Kashmir to India is complete, de jure as well as de facto. It criticized Government's Kashmir policy as guided by vacillation and procrastination. The SSP believes
in a permanent solution to the problems of two countries and strongly advocates for a confederation of India and Pakistan. Although, the Party did not organize any demonstrations against the Tashkent declaration, yet it criticized its implications and hazards. The policy adopted by the Party on Kashmir issue is also not very sentimental and agitational.

Though these parties entertained different views on Indo-Pak problem yet it may be said that there are similarities among them in their outlook on India’s foreign policy. All of them criticized the Western Powers for giving arms to Pakistan - the sole factor which instigated Pakistan to attack India.

With regard to India-China relations the attitude adopted by the CPI is not inconsistent with other socialist parties. Although the Party openly accused Communist China of unleashing aggression on India, it declares that despite the continued hostile attitude of China it is in the interest of India to have a peaceful settlement, with China either directly or through the good offices of friendly neutral powers the Party also speaks of a ‘No-War Pact’ with China.

As regards China the CPI (M) adopted a different line. When China attacked India, the party seems to be propagating that China can never be the aggressor. It condemned the Government for using the word ‘aggression’ in relation to China.

The CPI (M) still insists on re-establishing friendly relations with China and believes in peaceful settlement of all
the outstanding differences between the two countries, as such a step would, in the opinion of the party, be in the best interests of both India and China in particular and Asia in general.

Unlike the CPI, the Praja Socialist Party considers that a settlement with China is not in the national interest unless aggression is vacated. It gives its full support to the Government in all its efforts to defend the integrity of the country but warned the Government of the dangers of a weak-kneed policy towards the aggressor. It proposes constant liaison with other Asian countries against Chinese expansionism. The Party also stands for the immediate recovery of Indian territory lost to China and Pakistan.

Like PSP, the SSP considers China as an aggressor. The party strongly assailed Government for not taking appropriate, drastic and retaliatory actions against the aggressor. Even the diplomatic ties were not served. The SSP further charged the Government for adopting an ambiguous, infirm, slippery and compromising policy towards China, which not only amounted to surrendering the national territory but also betrayed the strong will of the people to defend the integrity and sanctity of their national frontiers.

It may be stressed that all these parties more or less, stand by the general principles inherent in government's foreign policy. There is a consensus among all these parties to fight
back the evil forces of imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racialism in all their forms. They give paramountcy to the defence and protection of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India against all probable perils and threats. However, lack of complete identity in their remote aims and objectives, both on international and domestic issues, prevents their approach or ideas becoming unanimous. In an endeavour to give India’s foreign policy a new look and a fresh orientation heterogeneity has been persistently maintained. The recent developments have, however, established the supremacy of the Governments approach and have belied all the apprehensions expressed from time to time by the socialist parties with regard to India’s pro-West or Pro-America and therefore ‘pro-imperialist’ stance. India’s treaty of friendship, peace and cooperation with the Soviet Union has taken the sting out of the socialist opposition to government’s foreign policy. Recent developments have also established the fact that Indian government is capable of taking initiative and pursue an independent foreign policy, giving new dimensions to its policy of non-alignment.