CHAPTER – III

RAJIV GANDHI’S FOREIGN POLICY

The characteristics of the personality of a leader play an important role in the making of a country's foreign policy, irrespective of the nature of its political system. Therefore, it is leadership that determines the strength and direction of a country's foreign policy. In a Parliamentary form of government the leader plays decisive role in making the foreign policy. However, in every political system the leader basically influences the decision. Hence, the study of leadership has acquired immense importance and has become one of the most important domestic determinant factors in the making of the foreign policy. It is because of the growing significance of the study a large number of scholars and researchers are taking up such studies with great enthusiasm and interest. Therefore, in this chapter an attempt is made to discuss the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi in the formulation of India’s foreign policy.

Rajiv Gandhi became the youngest Prime Minister of the biggest democracy on 31st October 1984. In fact, the year 1984 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of modern Indian politics more particularly in the political life of Rajiv Gandhi. He assumed the office of the Prime Minister at the critical juncture, after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. At that time the situation
was quite grave all over the country, and in that hour of uncertainty and confusion Rajiv Gandhi accepted the responsibility of guiding the Indian ship to the right destiny. Naturally, in that hour of confounded confusion he had to face many internal and external problems. The internal problems, like language problem, communal rights, Khalistan Movement, border disputes (States) and separatist tendencies in the Northeastern States of India were challenges to the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi. Above all, the crisis of Center-State relations in which states were demanding more autonomy. On the external front (Internationally), Rajiv Gandhi also came across many problems namely, the terrorist activities along Indian border supported by Pakistan, the refugee problem of Bangladesh, China’s strained relations with India and the complex ethnic issue of Tamils in Sri Lanka etc. In fact, these issue especially the ethnic issue posed a great challenge to the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi.

Rajiv Gandhi with his charismatic leadership and multi faceted personality greatly influenced not only the domestic policy but also the foreign policy decisions. In order to make the country’s foreign policy sound and strong, he decided to resolve all the domestic problems. Since the foreign policy of a country is the projection of its domestic policy, it should remain stable and strong. Unless the domestic policy is strong and stable there cannot be a sound and good foreign policy. In fact, British Prime Minister, Gladstone has rightly said that, “the first condition of a
good foreign policy is a good domestic policy”.

Therefore, Rajiv Gandhi being a new comer on the international horizon showed a great deal of dynamism and enthusiasm in resolving most of the domestic and international issues.

Apart from the domestic issues, he also determined to resolve some problems that had been created in the international field chiefly aimed at undermining his eminence among the non-aligned countries and in the Commonwealth. The leaders of the hostile countries countered him by sparking trouble for him in the form of Khalistan on the one hand and the war on Tamils in Sri Lanka, the demand for Gorkhaland in Bengal and, above all, the Chinese intrusion in Arunachal Pradesh on the other. As a result, Rajiv Gandhi spared no efforts to resolve both the domestic and the international issues. He even as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement had to deal with various problems such as South African problem of apartheid, liberation of Palestine, Iran-Iraq war, campaigner for nuclear disarmament etc. This naturally made Rajiv Gandhi an internationalist. However, some people criticized him for his active role in the international affairs and opined that the country’s foreign policy should be quite different from our domestic policy. However, Rajiv Gandhi brushing aside the criticisms said that, “The domestic policy was interlinked with our foreign policy. Unless India played an important role in international sphere, our

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1 A.Appadorai & M.S.Rajan, India’s Foreign Policy and Relations, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p-3.
domestic policy of internal unity and integrity could not be strengthened" He further said, "India is to play a very important role in the international diplomacy. It could not confine itself only to South-East Asia. Today India is enjoying a very high reputation in the country of nations all over the world because from the very beginning India had pursued a policy which had been enunciated by Jawaharlal Nehru".  

Rajiv Gandhi though a new entrant in the international horizon, has undoubtedly proved himself an internationalist. In a short span of time, like his mother, he too had gained a unique familiarity with most countries of the world through Indian diplomacy. He strove hard in diffusing international conflicts and tensions and tried to achieve harmony among the countries of the world with a view to promoting world peace. Rajiv Gandhi, as the Prime Minister of India, extensively toured most of the countries of the world and met leaders and addressed international summits, gatherings with an object to promote international peace and cooperation. His visit to all the continents, both Communist and non-Communist was an event extraordinaire in the history of India's foreign policy. What Rajiv Gandhi did in a short span of five years as Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru in his seventeen years in office and Indira Gandhi in her Sixteen years in office could not do in so far as the visits to the foreign countries was concerned.

2 Hindustan Times, 7th November 1987.
As far as India’s foreign policy is concerned, Rajiv Gandhi followed in the footsteps of his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru, and his mother Indira Gandhi who were the guiding spirits in the pursuit of foreign policy goals. In this background once Rajiv Gandhi said, “there was no shift in the foreign policy of India. India was following the foreign policies which late Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Indira Gandhi had formulated and pursued”. However, the approach of Rajiv Gandhi was a little different, from that of his predecessors. His proclivity towards West to get technological know how was the best instance, wherein one can find that he had slightly deviated from his predecessors who were more inclined towards East than West. But this may not be construed as a change in India’s foreign policy or deviation from the actual path set forth by his predecessors. Therefore, J.N.Dixit the then High Commissioner to (Colombo) Sri Lanka has rightly pointed out that “the policies of a country like India did not change with leadership because the country’s interests remained unchanged. There could be different policy interpretations, but the basic directions and content remained the same”. He was commenting on the reports that there has been, of late a change in India’s foreign policy.

Rajiv Gandhi as Head of the Foreign Policy Mechanism:

Rajiv Gandhi as head of the foreign policy decision-making mechanism through his pragmatic approach influenced the world.

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3 Hindustan Times, 7th November 1987. (Delhi)
4 Hindustan Times, 22nd October 1985.
as far as the international issues were concerned. As Prime Minister, he exercised his authority more directly in matter of State-to-State relations. Like his grand father, Rajiv Gandhi too had kept foreign policy and diplomacy mostly under his control and guidance. Rajiv Gandhi who had training in the art of conducting the foreign policy since the days of his mother enjoyed the power of both External Affairs Ministry as well as Prime Minister. (Brief period as External Affairs Minister) In his five years term as Prime Minister, he has kept the foreign affairs portfolio un to himself for nearly two years. Further, it is interesting to note that in a period of five years there were five External Affairs Ministers. It is evident that Rajiv Gandhi played a dominant the foreign policy decision-making. Commenting on the role of Rajiv Gandhi in the formulation of India’s foreign policy P.Shivashankar the External Affairs Minister in Rajiv Gandhi’s cabinet made it clear that “External Affairs claims a good deal of attention from the Prime Minister, who chalks out the policies. The Ministry implements them”.  

Rajiv Gandhi, as a key foreign policy maker made substantial contributions to the field of India’s foreign policy. The principal plank of Rajiv Gandhi’s foreign policy was to maintain good and friendly relations with all countries of the world including India’s immediate neighbours. Rajiv Gandhi during his first ever broadcast to the nation on 31st October, 1984 after assuming the office of the Prime Minister said that, “India’s traditional foreign policy  

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5 Hindustan Times, 28th July 1986.
with its commitments to non-alignment, co-existence and friendly relations with all, will remain unchanged."6

It is pertinent to note that apart from guiding foreign policy, Rajiv Gandhi also played a crucial role in resolving several international issues thereby strengthening friendly relations not only with India's immediate neighbours but also with the Super Powers. Further, his multifaceted roles as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, Chairman of the SAARC countries, Chairman of the AFRICA Fund, Crusader against apartheid, persuader of Super Powers on INF Treaty, Leader of Six-Nation Initiative on disarmament and peace etc demonstrates what kind of leader he was. His role as great statesman in transferring technological know-how from US was highly noteworthy. Above all these, his role in normalizing the Sino-Indian relations, signing of Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement were of great importance in the history of Indian foreign policy. In fact, these developments helped Rajiv Gandhi to prove his leadership in the international horizon. As such, these three important developments have been dealt with separately in the next Chapters.

a) Rajiv Gandhi and the SAARC:

Rajiv Gandhi played an important role in the South Asian Regional Co-operation movement ever since its launching. It was a great honour for him to witness four SAARC Summits in a row.
including as its Chairman during his period as Prime Minister of India. His leadership enabled to get for the forum a unique position not only in the South Asian region but also in the international sphere because of his principle of co-operation and co-existence. Rajiv Gandhi, a dynamic Prime Minister of India, assumed the mantle of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Chairmanship (1986-87) when the forum was facing internal bickering among the leaders of the forum. It was he who infused a sort of enthusiasm in the SAARC regional forum with an object of achieving an all-round development of the member countries. Under his stewardship, the SAARC forum became one of the strongest regional forums of the world in a short span of time after its birth. Besides, it became a forum for promoting mutual understanding and coexistence. The forum consisted of the non-aligned countries as its members' whose main objective was to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation. Further, a body of seven nations, SAARC provided an opportunity for regional heads of state to meet each other and sort out bilateral differences and promote regional cooperation.

**Origin and Development of SAARC:**

The Association of SAARC, which found its expression during the second half of 1980s, is one of the remarkable events in the history of South Asian countries. Like other countries, India too thought of having a regional forum for the all-round development of
the South Asian countries on the model of ASEAN Forum. Accordingly, "The South Asian Regional Cooperation (popularly known as SARC) scheme was formally launched in August 1983 by the first joint meeting of foreign ministers of the seven South Asian states".\(^7\) It was mainly the efforts of these countries and preparations made by the secretaries of the respective countries since 1980 were mainly responsible for launching the SAARC. The launching of the SAARC is, no doubt, a boon to the South Asian countries to further the cause of friendship and co-operation and co-existence among the countries concerned. In this regard the efforts made by Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India and Zia-ur-Rehaman the then President of Bangladesh are really appreciable. The main object of the two leaders was to resolve the problems amicably between the south Asian countries, thereby creating an atmosphere of cooperation, mutual understanding and friendship. Therefore, the credit of launching the SAARC Forum is conferred on these leaders. The forum was designed to serve as an agency of promoting economic and cultural co-operation among its member countries.

Initially the forum identified certain areas of cooperation thereby taking pains to handle regional intricacies carefully. The SAARC included nine areas of co-operation – agriculture, rural development, health and population, transport, scientific and

\(^7\) Lok Raj Baral, SARC, But No "SHARK", South Asian Regional Cooperation in Perspective, Pacific Affairs, 58(3), fall 1985, p-411.
technological cooperation, telecommunication and meteorology, postal services, sports and arts and culture." In addition to this, study groups came into existence for identifying the other areas of co-operation among the members of the SAARC.

But the roots of SAARC may be found in the sincere efforts of Zia-Ur-Rahaman the then president of Bangladesh, when he proposed a South Asian regional forum consisting of Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in December 1980. Initially India was reluctant to join the forum because, its relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh, the two major countries of the region, were going through a difficult phase. Further, the relations with Sri Lanka also were not cordial due to ethnic crisis.

Under the circumstances Indira Gandhi (it was) anticipated that ‘the grouping would be more an arrangement to exert various kinds of pressure on India rather than as an instrumentality to forge regional cooperation’.

Despite the reservations, India under the leadership of Indira Gandhi agreed in principle to join the forum. Though the SAARC was launched at the initiative of Zia-ur-Rehaman the then President of Bangladesh with an idea of co-operation and co-existence yet it was India under Indira Gandhi’s leadership that played a predominant role in developing the forum into one of the strongest regional force in South Asia.

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8 Lok Raj Baral, Supra No.7, p-411
The SAARC as a forum, based on the principle of mutual understanding greatly helped to further the cause of friendship, co-operation and co-existence among its members. In this regard the initiative taken by Zia-ur-Rehaman the then president of Bangladesh to establish a regional forum was really of great importance and deserved appreciation. His main object was to resolve the problems faced by the South Asian countries thereby creating an atmosphere of cooperation, friendliness and mutual understanding. It is believed that the establishment of SAARC could reduce the tensions and conflicts in the South Asian region, where conflicting views and drifting strategies are ever present. This naturally paved the way for improving the ties among the member countries of the SAARC. Talking on the gravity of regional conflict Rajiv Gandhi during his visit to USSR in May 1985 said, “world peace and tranquility were closely linked and a regional conflict could easily turn global and we must all be concerned about this. India had initiated discussions with its neighbours to improve the total environment of regional peace and co-operation. We desire South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to make a contribution to better, mutually beneficial relationship among the countries of the region”.10

The formation of the SAARC gave a moral boost to the seven South Asian countries. Perhaps, SAARC was considered a milestone of regional cooperation despite inherent differences

among its member countries. It also provided an opportunity for the member countries in the region to settle their differences amicably without the interference of the outside forces. Following are the major objectives of the SAARC.

1) "To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life.

2) To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials.

3) To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia.

4) To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another’s problems.

5) To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural and technical and scientific fields.

6) To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries.

7) To strengthen co-operation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest; and

8) To cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes".11

The First SAARC Summit:

The First Summit conference of the SAARC was held in Dhaka on 7 and 8, December 1985. Gen. Irshad hosted the first summit conference. "The Dhaka Summit was a historic event in south Asian history as it provided a unique opportunity for the first direct contact among the leaders of the region at the summit level". The leaders also described the first meeting as a ‘tangible manifestation of their determination to cooperate regionally, to work together towards finding solutions towards their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding and to the creation of an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits'.

The summit adopted the declaration for the creation of SAARC with President H.M.Irshad of Bangladesh as its first Chairman. The seven South Asian countries, "reaffirmed their commitment to the UN Charter and the principles governing sovereign equality of states, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs and non-use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of other States. The leaders reaffirmed their deep conviction in the continuing validity and relevance of the objective of the Non-aligned Movement as an important force in international relations'.

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13 http://www.saarc-sec.org/
14 http://www.saarc-sec.org/
Organisational setup:

At the bottom of SAARC are the Technical Committees, assisted by study groups and teams of experts. Technical Committees shall be responsible for monitoring the programme in their respective areas of cooperation. Standing Committees comprising the Foreign Secretaries has the responsibility of monitoring and coordinating the programme of cooperation... Council of Ministers consisting of Foreign Ministers of the countries is primarily responsible for formulating the policies of the Association. At the apex of the SAARC institutional framework is the summit”.15 The Charter also provides the setting up of Secretariat with Secretary General, Directors and General Services Staff. The important feature of the SAARC Charter is that the Heads of States would meet once a year, or more, if necessary.

The Dhaka Summit not only gave the “Charter of the Association but also set up two study groups – one to examine the problem of terrorism and the other of drug trafficking and abuse. It further agreed to convene conferences of Ministers to consider the issues of the New International Economic order and the improvement of the World Trading System through GATT taking particularly into account the interest of the least developed among the developing countries and the participation of women in development”.16

15 http://www.nipa-khi-edu.pk,
16 Quoted in Suman Sharma., India And SAARC, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2001, p-89.
Rajiv Gandhi:

The first ever summit of the SAARC held at Dhaka was one of the great events in the history of South Asian countries. In fact, the Dhaka Summit heralded a new era of regional co-operation among the South Asian countries, despite the hostile atmosphere in the region. The bilateral concerns among the member countries were the major obstacles in for strengthening the SAARC. However, Rajiv Gandhi while addressing the first Summit meeting said, "Certainly we have problems and difficulties and these do impose constraints on us. Enduring co-operation is co-operation adapted to the realities of our condition. The model we have evolved for ourselves is a model, which is in accord with our realities. Our compulsions are our genius. We have not sought to melt our bilateral relationships into a common regional identity, but rather to fit South Asian co-operation into our respective foreign policies as an additional dimension. We have evolved modalities, which do not allow bilateral stresses and strains to impinge on regional co-operation. Our co-operation tempers enthusiasm with pragmatism, and initiative with consensus. At the same time, in the light of our experience of the recent past, we have every reason to hope that the practice of regional cooperation will have a beneficial impact on bilateral relationships.\(^{17}\)

Further, commenting on the unique culture and character of the South Asian people Rajiv Gandhi said, "the South Asian region has been one of the great crucibles of human creativity. Here, an indigenous civilization, whose origins stretch back into an unfathomed antiquity, interacted with peoples and races who poured in from distant parts of the world. Out of the intermingling of their ideas, philosophies and ways of life grew the nobler heritage to which all our seven countries can lay claim".18

The Dhaka Summit laid the solid foundation for co-operation and co-existence among the South Asian countries in the region. In fact, the formation of the SAARC was considered an event extraordinaire in the history of South Asia, whose endeavour was to establish a regional forum for cooperation among the South Asian countries. The first SAARC Summit generated high hopes and expectations among the member countries as far as regional cooperation and coexistence is concerned. Above all, the summit paved the way to foster peaceful and good neighbourly relations between the member countries. Further the Dhaka Summit also decided to broaden the areas of co-operation by considering a few more subjects.

The Second SAARC Summit:

It was in November 1986 Rajiv Gandhi hosted the Second SAARC Summit at Bangalore, which was attended by all the heads

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18 Ibid., p-400.
of the member countries. The said Summit was a major event in the history of India that dealt with several issues of both regional and global interests. Further, the Bangalore Summit assumed special significance because in the summit meeting the agenda was not only confined to mere economic, technical and cultural issues but also dominated the issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking and bilateral political disputes. It was during the said summit Rajiv Gandhi took over as the Chairperson of the SAARC from President H.M.Irshad of Bangladesh. While taking over the Chairmanship, Rajiv Gandhi reaffirmed the commitment of all the seven countries to make SAARC a success.

The Bangalore Declaration:

The Bangalore Summit Declaration called for “increasing involvement of the people for ensuring the Success of regional cooperation. It emphasised the need for promoting greater contacts among the people of the region through such action as regular and frequent interchange of scholars, academics, artists, authors, professionals and businessmen. The Declaration welcomed the establishment of the Technical Committee on women in Development, and on the Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse.¹⁹ On the global issues, “the summit called for an end to the nuclear arms race and early conclusion of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. It called for the adoption of a regional

¹⁹ http://www.mofa.gov.bd/
approach for obtaining favourable terms of trade and assistance from the developed world and the revival of the North-South dialogue. It emphasized closer SAARC consultation and cooperation in relevant international economic conferences and institutions.20

**Rajiv Gandhi's Stance:**

As discussed above the Bangalore Summit emphasised to global issues, such as drug trafficking, terrorism etc. Therefore, on the eve of his inaugural address at the Second SAARC Summit, Rajiv Gandhi expressed deep concern over the growing menace of terrorism in South Asian region and urged the leaders of the world to curb all types of terrorism, and said that “terrorism must be severely condemned, that each of us must do nothing that condone terrorism or gives aid and comfort to terrorists. As responsible members of the international community and as good neighbours within our region, each of us must ensure that our territory is never used as a sanctuary or launching pad for terrorism anywhere in the region”.21 But, on the contrary Pakistan and Bangladesh the two major countries of the region and also members of the SAARC were indirectly supporting terrorist activities and also allowed training camps for terrorists across the borders including sheltering the terrorists on their land, which is (mockery) contradictory to the principle of cooperation, coexistence and mutual understanding on which the forum is established.

20 Suman Sharma, Supra No.16, pp-93-94.
Rajiv Gandhi in his address on the objectives SAARC said, "Ours is not a political Association. We have much to gain from peace, progress and stability in our neighbourhood. This is the logic of our working together. Bilateral relations have their difficult moments. SAARC reminds us that at such moments we should seek what unites us and not what divides. We have consciously decided not to burden SAARC with our bilateral concerns." Accordingly, it was decided to keep the bilateral issues away from the SAARC forum. Even the SAARC at the insistence of India "two important pre-conditions – no bilateral and contentious issues to be discussed at SAARC and the principle of unanimity for decision making- were incorporated in the SAARC Charter as "General Provisions.""23

However, it was on the occasion of the Second SAARC Summit at Bangalore that the SAARC provided a unique opportunity for informal bilateral discussions among the leaders of the member countries on the fringes of the Summit. Therefore, SAARC Summit not only became a platform for issues of regional co-operation but also for the informal bilateral concerns of the member countries. When Rajiv Gandhi and J.Jayewardene made use of the fringes of the summit for informally discussing Indo-Sri Lankan relations, which later on resulted in signing the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord to find a lasting solution to the ethnic problem.

23 Suman Sharma., Supra No.16, p-87.
Further, it was on the same occasion that the informal talks between India and Pakistan led to diffusion of tensions between the two countries to some extent. Indeed, the summit at Bangalore laid the foundation for informal bilateral political discussions among the leaders of the member countries on its realm. Even, Rajiv Gandhi at the Kathmandu Summit acknowledged, that, “the summits also provide annual opportunities for meetings outside the conference premises. These are by no means confined to questions of regional cooperation, but range freely over bilateral and international issues. None of us underestimates the value of these meetings. The SAARC Summit has become an important fixture in our calendar for bilateral discussions and the exchange of views”.24

But the countries, like Pakistan and Sri Lanka were not in favour of discussing the bilateral talks on the fringes of the Summit forums. However, taking into consideration the tension between India and Sri Lanka, President Jayewardene said at the Bangalore Summit “We cannot build this association if we allow bilateral issues to grow. If we bring bilateral issues to this forum then, may be, we would be crippled before we could walk...The SAARC ship has set sail [and] it has started its journey. There should be no mutiny on board.25 Contrary to this Jayewardene himself discussed the Tamil issue on the realm of the SAARC Summit at Bangalore as reported in one of the newspaper” that Sri Lankan President

24 Rajiv Gandhi, Selected Speeches and Writings, Vol-III, 1987, Publication Division, Govt. of India, New Delhi, p-407.
25 http://www.southasianmedia.net.Magazine
Jayewardene's arrival some three hours ahead of others made it possible for him and Prime Minister of India to exchange views on the airport itself”. 26 Therefore, the bilateral discussions, which took place between the countries on, some occasions was certainly outside the SAARC Forum. Even Rajiv Gandhi while replying to a question during the debate in Parliament once again reiterated that” SAARC is not a bilateral forum and we will not use it to sort out bilateral issues. We have direct contacts and we deal directly on bilateral issues”27

In spite of inter-state rivalries, particularly between India and Pakistan, on the one hand, and between India and her smaller neighbours, on the other, the bilateral discussions at the Bangalore Summit, greatly helped in reducing marginally the political tensions and inter-state rivalries among the major countries of the SAARC, including Sri Lanka. Rajiv Gandhi made sincere efforts to normalize and strengthen the bilateral relations between India and her smaller neighbours through SAARC. It is proved beyond doubt that the South Asian countries despite internal bickering, have stood unitedly for the cause of regional co-operation thereby upholding the principle of mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. In this regard Rajiv Gandhi played an important role in diffusing the regional tensions and keeping the SAARC forum out of the inter-state rivalries.

27 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Statement on Foreign Policy, April-June 1988, Ministry of External Affairs, p-8.
Further, the second SAARC Summit at Bangalore also took a major step towards institutionalizing SAARC by establishing a Secretariat to co-ordinate the proper implementation of SAARC programmes. In this regard SAARC Foreign Ministers listing the role, functions and funding of the Secretariat, which was to be established at Katmandu in the ensuing third SAARC Summit, signed a memorandum of understanding. Therefore, the Bangalore Summit will be remembered for taking an early lead in deciding to set up SAARC Secretariat.

Perhaps, the SAARC Summit at Bangalore showed the entire world that India was still on a high pedestal of leadership, particularly as an architect of non-alignment. India also continued to swear by anti-terrorist and anti-racial postures. Rajiv Gandhi as the leader of the SAARC played a significant role in strengthening the regional cooperation. He took initiative to cause to introduce several new areas of co-operation wherein the member countries had an opportunity to participate and interact in so far as the issues of regional cooperation is concerned. In the Summit, he also sought greater of cooperation among the member countries to tackle drug trafficking and terrorism.

The Third SAARC Summit: Kathmandu

The Third SAARC Summit was held at Kathmandu in November 1987 under the Chairmanship of Rajiv Gandhi. In fact, the Third SAARC Summit under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi was
no doubt a path-breaking event in its history. It was during the said Summit that several important decisions were taken to introduce new areas of cooperation, apart from enlarging the areas of co-operation. Further, the Summit held at Kathmandu was one of unique kind in so far as the issues of far reaching implications and regional issues were concerned. In the summit meeting it was resolved to pursue the areas of co-operation, which have been adopted in the previous summits, with great vigour, apart from introduction of new areas. The summit Meeting witnessed signing of the two important agreements – “one on establishing the SAARC Food Security Reserve and second for a SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. The Summit also decided to commission a study on the “Protection and Preservation of the Environment and the causes and Consequences of Natural Disaster in a well-planned comprehensive framework. The decision of establishing the permanent SAARC Secretariat at Kathmandu was one of the important decisions taken at the Summit meeting.

In Kathmandu, the summit leaders emphasized the need for strengthening inter-governmental efforts with increased people-to-people cooperation and called for greater participation of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including professional bodies in the private sector, in the process of promoting socio-economic and cultural development as envisaged in the SAARC Charter. On international issues the leaders welcomed the understanding

28 Quoted in Suman Sharma., Supra No.16, p-97.
reached between the United States and the Soviet Union on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF)... and called for the early conclusion in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Convention to Ban Chemical Weapons.29

The Summit leaders also expressed satisfaction at the launching of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange Programme, which coincided, with the opening of this summit. While, taking note of the dates for institution of the SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships and commencement of organized tourism among SAARC member countries, they directed that the Schemes for the SAARC Documentation Centre and the SAARC Youth Volunteer Programme be implemented at the earliest. They welcomed the first annual review of the situation of Children in the SAARC member countries.30

**Rajiv Gandhi's Stance:**

As discussed above, the Kathmandu Summit introduced new areas of co-operation and wanted to expand the scope of cultural co-operation and bring the issue of co-operation in trade and industry on SAARC agenda. Rajiv Gandhi addressing to the Summit said, "There is also much more we can do in the area of culture, especially forms of culture which draw in large numbers of people as participative spectators. We might consider a South Asia..."
Festival, which brings together from all parts of our region a diversity of arts and crafts, poetry and songs, dance and drama, and traditional sports. He further said" Our planning experts have foreseen the advantages of cooperation in trade and industry, money and finance. It would be useful to authorize studies on the scope and modalities of cooperation in these sectors. We would make an objective determination later as to whether the balance of advantage lies in our entering the fields.31

Rajiv Gandhi raised the issue of Terrorism and Drug Trafficking at the Bangalore Summit and it became a subject of focus at the Third Summit also. The leaders irrespective of the differences expressed concern over the growing menace of terrorism and sought immediate action on the same. Taking into consideration the terrorists activities sponsored by certain member countries (without naming Pakistan) against other states, President of Sri Lanka J.Jayewardene took a strong exception and warned that those who adopted violence against other states should be “outside the pale of our friendship and protections" At the same time, he also commended the Agreement his country had signed with India to usher in peace in a country which, he painfully recalled, had struggled with groups of terrorists calling themselves separatists for years until the signing of the Agreement “through the good offices of India”32 In fact, Jayewardene lauded the role

31 Rajiv Gandhi, Supra No.17, p-406. (Vol-1)
played by Rajiv Gandhi in bringing peace to the war-torn Sri Lanka by signing the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord.

The notable feature of the Third Summit pertains to the most debatable political issues sought to be discussed by India at the Summit Meeting. These issues were – India's move to support Afghanistan's application for membership of SAARC and to welcome the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord in the summit declaration. The application for Afghanistan's entry into SAARC was opposed by most of SAARC countries including Pakistan. However, Pakistan a betenoire of India categorically stated that “the issue of giving admission to Afghanistan was a political one”. Further, Pakistan also objected to the second move as well questioning the principle as to “whether SAARC under the provisions of the Charter, could discuss a bilateral and contentious issue and, in the context of the presence of Indian Forces in Sri Lanka (and) also drew a parallel between Afghanistan and Sri Lanka”. However, there was lack of unanimity among the members of the SAARC on the ethnic issues. But the SAARC Standing Committee was asked to look into the matter of admission of new members since the Charter contained no such provision.

The Kathmandu Summit was mainly responsible for introducing the new areas of co-operation at the initiative of Rajiv Gandhi and expanding the existing sphere of co-operation with a

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34 Suman Sharma, Supra No. 16, p-99.
view to achieving greater degree of cooperation among South Asian countries. The Summit also stood as a model for its greater unity despite certain misperceptions and sharp differences among the Member countries.

**The Fourth SAARC Summit:**

The Fourth SAARC Summit, which held at Islamabad in December 1988, assumed significance in the light of the certain important developments that took place. Firstly, it was held in the backdrop of the signing the INF Treaty by USA and USSR aimed at elimination of nuclear weapons. Secondly, Pakistan the host country restored democracy just before the Summit, which coincided with “Benazir Bhutto’s electoral victory and coming to power in November 1988”.35 Thirdly, the signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord and change of guard in Sri Lankan political system, i.e., Premadasa becoming President.

**The Islamabad Declaration:**

The Fourth SAARC Summit witnessed several important declarations on Social, Economic and Cultural issues. “The Heads of State of Government expressed satisfaction at the progress so far made in the development of the SAARC integral Programme of Action and took note of the measures to streamline and re-orient various SAARC activities to make them more action oriented. They

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35 J.N.Dixit, Across Borders, Fifty Years of India's Foreign Policy, Picus Books, New Delhi, 1998, p-197.
welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Agricultural Centre (SAIC).36

The Summit leaders at Islamabad “decided to declare 1989 as the “SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking”, and directed the Technical Committee concerned should examine the possibility of a Regional Convention on Drug Control. The leaders decided to declare 1990 as the “SAARC Year of the Girl Child”. The Summit also agreed to expand the new areas of cooperation and it was emphasized that all Member States should identify areas of core interest in their national perspective plans and consolidate them into a regional plan to be called “SAARC – 2000: A Basic Needs Perspective”, with specific targets to meet by the end of the century.37

**Rajiv Gandhi Stance:**

The Summit at Islamabad began with certain political disputes, sensitive issues and debatable points. Further the summit witnessed some adversaries also on the periphery of the summit. It all started when Premadas assumed the office of the President of Sri Lanka, the relations between India and Sri Lanka reached the lowest ebb. He demanded the immediate withdrawal of IPKF stationed in the Island, which was turned down by Rajiv Gandhi on the pretext of fulfilling the terms of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. The demand of Premadas and refusal of Rajiv Gandhi

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37 Ibid.,
with regard to withdrawal of IPKF obviously plunged the region and the SAARC process into a crisis. However, Premadasa criticized India's stance and as a mark of protest, he decided not to host the Fourth Summit till the withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka. Though initially he "offered to host the Fourth (SAARC) Summit in 1988 in Sri Lanka" which was accepted by the leaders at the Kathmandu Summit.

Despite the political dispute between India and Sri Lanka, the venue of the Fourth Summit at Islamabad witnessed the friendly atmosphere with regard to Indo-Pak relations, when Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto signed three important bilateral agreements on the periphery of the summit during December 1988. These related to an agreement against attacking each other's nuclear installations, avoiding double taxation and promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries." Further, both the countries decided to settle the vexatious Kashmir issue with bilateral discussions, and also to respect the Line of Control in the mutual interest.

The notable sensitive issue at the summit related to the issue of trade co-operation. At the Summit meeting when Rajiv Gandhi expressed concern over the lack of co-operation in the core economic areas, particularly trade, and suggested for inclusion of the same in the SAARC agenda. In one of his speeches he said, "We

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38 www.saarc-seoora.org
also need to strengthen linkages between ourselves to give us strength, individually and as a region. This calls for increased economic exchanges within our region, covering the gamut of economic activities from agriculture to industry-infrastructure, technology and human resource development. Economic co-operation must lie at the heart of a regional co-operation. There has to be a degree of harmonization to ensure that complementarities in our economies are matched to give strength to our respective economies and strength to our voice and influence in world forums.... Yet we shy away from trade and economic co-operation.40

But Pakistan expressed its reservation on the issue of economic co-operation, particularly “trade” among the SAARC countries and considered it a sensitive issue. Further, the smaller countries in the region feared that India would obviously dominate the trade in the South Asian region because of its size and vast economic potential. However, “the proponents of the South Asianism suggested that there might be some small costs in the short and medium term but all countries of the region, including India, would stand to gain from trade and economic cooperation”.41

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in his address to the summit pointed towards the ‘momentous events’, which had taken place and were “fundamentally altering the world and the world order”. He pointed out in this regard the following events:

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40 Quoted in Suman Sharma, Supra No. 16, pp-100, 101.
41 Ibid.,
I) The Treaty concluded between the US President Reagan and the Soviet President Gorbachev on dismantling of nuclear weapons systems;

II) Geneva Accord on Afghanistan which could lead to the establishment of a government based on national consensus, ensuring a sovereign, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan

III) end of the Iran-Iraq war

IV) proclamation of Palestinian State by Yasser Arafat and Commencement of dialogue between the United States and the PLO;

V) possibilities of a solution to the conflict in Kampuchea, promise to the Namibian people for implementation of the Independence Plan adopted by the Security Council ten years ago;

VI) revival of cooperation between India and China in working towards a new world order based on the Panchasheel, the Five Principles of peaceful coexistence;

VII) progressive defusion of the tension between the Soviet Union and China; and

VIII) Indian response to the request for assistance from the Maldives to thwart the invasion by foreign mercenaries aimed at subverting the democratic will of the people; and democratic
elections in Pakistan leading to the installation of a new government in that country."  

In spite of the developments that had taken place in the international arena, the Summit at Islamabad was a mixture of tensions, conflicts, co-operation and had to bear the brunt of the serious political disputes of the member countries. Even, it was during the Summit meeting that several political leaders and analysts expressed the apprehension that the SAARC would be divided on the ethnic issue of Sri Lanka. However, the SAARC Summit at Islamabad survived its first test and proved that it was still respecting the principle of co-operation, mutual understanding, the base on which it was built. Therefore, the credit for smooth travel and survival of the SAARC to a greater extent goes to Rajiv Gandhi, who was instrumental in convincing and bringing an agreed settlement on the contentious issues of the member countries at the Islamabad Summit.

b) Origin and Growth of Non-Aligned Movement:

The concept of non-alignment found expression during the second half of the 20th century and it can be regarded as one of the recently emerged political forces. The policy of non-alignment, which took birth in those days of alignments and Cold War, was a product of historical processes and circumstances. In fact, the end of the Second World War is said to be the turning point in the

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history of non-alignment. Soon after the Second World War the Super Powers started their rivalry for supremacy by expanding their sphere of influence in the world politics. The globe was virtually divided into two ideologically opposed blocs: the socialist bloc led by the USSR and the capitalist bloc led by the US. The bipolar world order posed a great threat to India’s hard won independence. As a result, the newly achieved independent countries under the leadership of India determined to remain aloof from the power blocs to assert their political and economic independence and to overcome the colonial hegemony of the imperialistic powers. Further, India rejected the Cold War paradigm whose shadows were already appearing (looming) on the horizon, and instead of aligning with either of the blocs, chose the thorny path of non-alignment.

The roots of the non-alignment may be found in the sincere efforts made by Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister of India. Indeed, the role played by Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of the Non-alignment was a unique development. The idea of non-alignment was not new to India. However, the roots are found in the philosophy of Buddha, Ashoka and Mahatma Gandhi who preached peace, tolerance, compassion and universal brotherhood. Therefore, “Nonalignment is the translation in international affairs of the Gandhian concept of tolerance, for it connotes constant efforts towards peaceful co-existence and cooperation” as Indira
Gandhi said in a speech in Mauritius in October 1976. Therefore, non-alignment was not new to India. It was in the history, culture and tradition of India. However, the term “non-alignment” was coined by Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech in 1954 in Colombo, Sri Lanka when he came across Super Power rivalry in the world politics. Later on the idea of non-participation, non-commitment non-entanglement and non-alignment with the blocs found expression in the name of Non-alignment. Explaining India’s stand, Nehru said, “We have sought to avoid foreign entanglements by not joining one bloc or the other. The natural result has been that neither of these blocs looks upon us with favour”.

**Rajiv Gandhi as Chairman of the NAM:**

India was Chairman of the NAM for more than three years. Initially Indira Gandhi led the movement from March 1983 to October 1984. After her assassination, NAM’s Chairmanship was passed on to Rajiv Gandhi, the new Prime Minister of India. The period of Rajiv Gandhi as the Chairman was one of important and extraordinary events in the history of the NAM. Because Rajiv Gandhi played multi-faceted role in the movement as its Chairman with a view to resolving the most of the complicated issues that the NAM confronted and which were also hindrances in the way of development of the international community. Taking into

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44 Times of India, 18 September 2006.
45 Quoted in K.Raman Pillai, India’s Foreign Policy: Basic Issues and Political Attitudes, Meenakshi Prakashan, 1989, p-28.
consideration Rajiv Gandhi's contribution to the movement, Prime Minister Mugabe paid a handsome tribute to Rajiv Gandhi for the "dynamism and prudent manner in which (he) you steered the movement... with dignity and skill". He also said that he was inheriting the Chairmanship of the NAM after it had been given India's "healing touch".46

Rajiv Gandhi, the follower of Nehru and Indira Gandhi's principles, reiterated his commitment for the continuation of non-alignment as India's foreign policy, which was being followed since pre-independence days. During his broadcast to the nation on 12th September 1984, he said, "Jawaharlal Nehru bequeathed to us a foreign policy which Indira Gandhi so creatively enriched. I shall carry it forward. I reaffirm our adherence to the United Nations, to the Non-Aligned Movement and to our opposition to colonialism, old or new. We determined to work for narrowing international economic disparities". 47

Rajiv Gandhi was the youngest Prime Minister of India to become the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, the biggest political force with a membership of more than 100 and odd countries of the world comprising nearly two-thirds of the human race. Like Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi too was a charismatic leader. When he determined to lead the caravan of Non-Aligned Movement, the greatest responsibility fell on him. He shouldered

47 Rajiv Gandhi., Supra No-17, (Vol-1), pp-7, 8.
the responsibility of leading the movement when there was a threat to the international peace and security. Further, it was also during Rajiv Gandhi’s period as Chairman that there developed some differences among the leaders of the non-aligned countries over certain international issues such as apartheid and imposition of sanctions against racist Pretoria regime. However, with the timely initiative taken by Rajiv Gandhi the differences were sorted out and consensus was reached. As the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, Rajiv Gandhi played multiple roles in resolving several complicated international issues such as apartheid, Iran-Iraq war, Palestine problem and Nuclear disarmament. Besides, Rajiv Gandhi through his multi-faceted charismatic personality influenced the leaders of the world to join the Non-Aligned Movement, whose main object was to establish international peace and security on the one hand, and to reduce the arms race in the globe on the other. Therefore, the period of India’s Chairmanship of the NAM was extraordinary in terms resolving the issues.

India being a non-aligned country remained aloof from power blocs without joining either of the blocs. Like his predecessors, Rajiv Gandhi too maintained equal distance from the Super Powers of the world. However, he took a slight deviation from the actual policy of non-alignment thereby influencing India’s foreign policy. During his tenure as Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi gave the impression that he was softer towards West than East because of his liberalized policy. Besides, it was also his endeavour to get the
sophisticated technological knowhow from US for the economic
development of the country, it was he who had a great vision to
take India to the 21st century. But, Rajiv Gandhi while getting
technological knowhow from the US did not compromise with
India’s interest nor did he mortgage the interest of the Non-Aligned
Movement at the cost of the said technology. He even refuted the
allegations levelled against him by the leaders of the Non-Aligned
Movement at the Harare Summit that the Non-Aligned Movement is
tilting more towards the West. However, Rajiv Gandhi while
addressing the members of the Congress-I Parliamentary Party
meeting at New Delhi refuted the criticisms and said, “It was a
matter of amusement that certain other countries of the world had
been so enamoured by India’s foreign policy that they had started
emulating India’s foreign policy. Further he said,” We have indeed
not shifted even an inch from our foreign policy which had been
followed ever since India became independent”.48

c) Eighth NAM Summit: 1986

The Eighth Summit conference of the non-aligned countries
was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in September 1986, which brought
together heads of states and other political leaders from over a
hundred countries of the world, of which more than half were
African, should go down in history as having signified Africa’s
qualitative as well as quantitative dominance of the movement.49

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48 Hindustan Times, 7 November 1987.
Further the Summit held in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, a frontline African country was said to be an historical event in the history of Non-Aligned Movement. The holding of the 8th summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in the beginning of September 1986 was an event of special importance because it was during the said period that the Non-Aligned Movement successfully completed 25 years of its formation and was celebrating its silver Jubilee year during the said period. The first summit of the non-aligned nations was held exactly 25 years ago i.e., on 1st September 1961 at Belgrade, Brussels. At Harare, more than hundred members along with several other countries as observers attended the Summit meeting. Rajiv Gandhi happened to be the Chairman of the said Summit, and he transferred the Chairmanship of the NAM to the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. India, under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi, played an important role in making the Harare Summit a memorable success.

During the Harare Summit meeting several issues of international importance came up for discussion and got possible solution. The issues that have been discussed at the meeting were delicate in nature and posed threat not only to the global peace but also to the economic development of the respective countries. For Example, the Kampuchean issue, Iran-Iraq war, question of Palestine, attack on Libya, Problem of apartheid, independence to Namibia, etc., were the major ones. However, during the summit meeting the issue of apartheid and economic assistance to the
frontline countries dominated the agenda of discussion without losing sight of other issues. In fact, the Harare Summit began with great confidence, optimism and a sort of desire for fresh thinking on certain issues unlike other earlier Summits, which began with tensions. But there were also some pressures and pulls during the Harare Summit from the disgruntled elements outside the movement. Despite all this, the Summit meeting was fruitful and satisfactory and was made successful. The important issues such as disarmament, nuclear holocaust, apartheid, independence to frontline African countries dominated the deliberations.

Rajiv Gandhi's role at the non-aligned summit, September 1-6, 1986 at Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, definitely earned him good dividends. The leaders of the member countries appreciated his speech at the special session to commemorate the NAM's silver Jubilee. The Harare Summit undoubtedly built on the Delhi Summit of 1983; the NAM in 1986 was a more united body and had regained its momentum. The general belief was that unity could be achieved primarily due to India's leadership. However, India had to face an embarrassing situation during the Summit meeting when India was asked to chair a sub committee on Afghanistan in Harare although it had made clear its stand on Afghanistan.

The Harare Summit brought out "Rajiv Gandhi's statesmanship, which certainly has placed India at the helm of the
comity of nations; it also secured India’s position on substantive issues. It helped frontline states get ready to tackle with confidence the issue of economic sanctions against South Africa. The Summit also consolidated India’s position in the peace movement and Rajiv Gandhi’s contribution was recognized by general consensus.\textsuperscript{50} Prior to the summit meeting even in the preparatory meeting in New Delhi, the non-aligned foreign ministers had taken a major initiative for defusing tension in the Mediterranean, vociferously condemning terrorism. Even, Rajiv Gandhi, as Chairman of the NAM, strongly condemned the United States bombing on Libya, including the Presidential palace in Tripoli in April 1986. The decisions taken both at the Summit level as well as at the preparatory meetings India emerged as a consensus builder and its Chairmanship was applauded.

The sincere efforts made by Rajiv Gandhi as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement in resolving most of the international issues resulted in defusing the tensions, conflicts thereby establishing peace in the globe to certain extent. The contentious issues such as Palestine issue, the problem of apartheid, independence to Namibia reached a stage to find a lasting solution. However, the intricate problems of international importance such as Middle-east crisis, Iran-Iraq war, issue of Kampuchea reached deadlock because of lack of co-operation from the (adversaries) parties concerned in resolving the issues peacefully. However, Rajiv

\textsuperscript{50} Asian Survey, 37, (2), February 1987, p-41.
Gandhi spared no efforts to persuade both Iran and Iraq and made them to come to the negotiating table to end the war. In fact, the NAM, under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi, made substantial contribution to maintain world peace, safeguarding independence and sovereignty, struggle against colonialism, imperialism, hegemonies and racism. Commenting on the achievements of the NAM, he stated “we have moderated areas of conflict and forestalled a scramble for allies. Without the NAM, disaster might have already overcome the world”.51 As a result, the NAM had greater influence in world affairs primarily due to the dynamic role played by Rajiv Gandhi as its Chairman.

**The Summit Declaration:**

The leaders at Harare Summit unanimously adopted the Harare Declaration on several complicated issues of far reaching consequences, which came up before the Summit meeting for discussion. The Summit's political declaration “called upon the Super Powers to refrain from taking any measures aimed at developing, testing or deploying weapons and weapons-system in outer space pending negotiations and conclusion of an agreement preventing extension of arms race into this area... The declaration welcomed the Six-Nation appeal and the offer to lend their good offices for the establishment of verification mechanisms to monitor moratorium”.52 Further, the Summit's political declaration strongly

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51 Quoted in K.P.Misra Supra No. 46, p-55.
condemned the United States for attacking Libya and described the US involvement in Angola as aggression.53

The Economic Declaration gave a call for the establishment of new international economic order for whose creation the movement had fought so hard. It urged the industrialized countries to join the efforts in restarting global negotiations. It laid particular stress on the need for South-South co-operation.

Apart from political and economic declaration, at the Summit meeting it was resolved to impose sanctions against racist South African regime and also urged the UN Security Council to adopt a comprehensive mandatory sanctions without any further delay. The summit resolved to establish AFRICA Fund to help the frontline African countries economically with a view to supporting their struggle against colonialism and imperialism. The Summit also accepted the idea mooted by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to establish AFRICA Fund to assist the African frontline countries.

The Summit also decided to set up a standing Ministerial Committee, to review and harmonize policies and programmes of non-aligned and other developing countries with respect to international issues.

d) Ninth NAM Summit 1989:

Rajiv Gandhi had the privilege of attending and addressing the Ninth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement at Belgrade, the

capital of Yugoslavia, in September 1989. The Belgrade Summit had the honour of holding the Ninth Summit of the NAM on its land, which was responsible for giving birth to the movement “exactly 28 years ago when Jawaharlal Nehru, Josip Broz Tito, Gamel Abdel Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah and Ahmed Sockarno met, along with twenty other colleagues, to chart an alternative vision of the world order”.

The Belgrade Summit mainly focused on several unaccomplished global tasks, which had been discussed at the Harare Summit. The major issues such as apartheid, colonialism and imperialism, issue of Afghanistan, disarmament, dominance of Super Powers over the global economy, early independence to Namibia, etc. However, “the summit called for a political solution to the Afghanistan problem, resolution of the Kampuchean question, early independence to Namibia, democratization of Latin America and restoration of legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The racist Pretoria regime came in for severe criticism for its policies of apartheid and aggression against the frontline African countries”. The Summit level meeting also concentrated mainly on the issues, which had been discussed at the Harare Summit in order to find a lasting solution.

The highlight of the inaugural session at Belgrade was the presentation of a report on the AFRICA Fund by Rajiv Gandhi in his

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Rajiv Gandhi at the Belgrade Summit in September 1989, highlighting the growing concern over the global pollution, "proposed the establishment of a Planet Protection Fund, under the aegis of the United Nations. The Fund will be used to protect the environment by developing or purchasing conservation-compatible technologies in critical areas which can then be brought into the public domain for the benefit of both developing and developed countries".57

Summit Declaration:

On the political side, the agreed formula on Afghanistan reiterated that the non-aligned countries should continue to support the UN efforts in seeking a just and durable solution. On

57 M.K.Rasgotra, Supra No-54, p-64.
the Iran-Iraq issue, the declaration said that the Movement actively supported the UN Secretary-General in his efforts to reach a comprehensive, just, honourable and durable settlement. On the economic situation, the declaration said that as 15 years ago, the new international economic order remained a difficult but valid goal. The declaration called for structural changes in the world economic order so that conflict between affluence and poverty could be ended. On terrorism, the declaration said that all forms of it including State terrorism violated the fundamental rights of the individual, threatened stability within and among nations and deserved to be universally condemned and countered by every legal means possible. The principle of shared responsibility was necessary for combating drug trafficking.58

e) Rajiv Gandhi's Contribution to the AFRICA Fund:

Rajiv Gandhi, as the Chairman and forefront leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, played a predominant role in mobilizing the resources for the economic development of the South African frontline countries in their struggle against colonialism and imperialism. Rajiv Gandhi the crusader against apartheid provided all possible assistance to the frontline countries to make them economically strong and politically stable, to withstand the pressure/hegemony of the racist South African Government. Rajiv Gandhi, who was bent upon eliminating apartheid, waged a

relentless war against South Africa for its inhuman practice of apartheid. His visit to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola and the United Republic of Tanzania in May 1986 was widely welcomed as "a timely gesture of solidarity with the frontline States and support for their relentless struggle against the apartheid regime". It was because his relentless efforts/endeavour that the frontline countries in South Africa were able to see the economic prosperity and the independence of Namibia. In fact, Rajiv Gandhi who spearheaded the global movement against South African colonial regime was a source of inspiration and voice of the people of the South African frontline countries.

At the Eighth Harare NAM Summit, it was resolved to establish AFRICA Fund with an avid intention to help the frontline African countries economically in their fight against colonialism and racial discrimination of South African racist regime, which was practising the apartheid. In fact, Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India was accepted unanimously at the summit meeting, basically mooted the idea. It was a matter of credit to India when, Robert Mugabe, the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and the incoming Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement announced the name of Rajiv Gandhi as the Chairperson of the AFRICA Fund (Action For Resisting Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid). President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia was chosen as the Vice-Chairman of the AFRICA Fund. The principles laid down at the

59 Quoted in K.P. Misra, Supra No.46, p-60.
Summit meeting were that the prime duty of the Fund would be to assist the frontline countries and also freedom fighters in South Africa. Further, the Summit designed the Fund as “Solidarity Fund for Southern Africa”. Rajiv Gandhi, while addressing at the Africa Fund Committee meeting at New Delhi, on 25 January 1987, said, “The Fund will provide emergency assistance to the Liberation Movements in South Africa and Namibia. It will strengthen the economic infrastructure of the Front-line States. It will help them resist the blackmail of the racist regime. The AFRICA Fund will supplement the activities of SADCC (Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference) and other organizations engaged in promoting the long-term development of Southern Africa”. The Fund will also promote political and diplomatic initiatives in support of the struggle for dismantling apartheid and establishing a truly multi-racial democratic government in South Africa”.60

Rajiv Gandhi, who ventured into mobilizing the funds to the frontline African countries, made Herculean efforts to achieve the same. He pledged “Rupees 500 million in kind to the Fund”61 as first contributor to the Fund. Therefore, India had the honour of making the first contribution. Further, he also appealed to all countries of the world both developing and developed, members and non-members of NAM to contribute generously to the AFRICA Fund. In response to his appeal all the countries of the world

60 Rajiv Gandhi, Supra No. 24, p-354.
61 http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/historysolidarity
irrespective of their economic position contributed to the cause of the frontline states in their struggle against colonialism and imperialism. Even, the nations with severe resource constraints like Peru and Equador, Nicaragua and Venezuela, Ghana and Kenya, Congo and Cameroon, Guyana and Vietnam had contributed to their might. Commenting on the overwhelming contribution to the AFRICA Fund, Rajiv Gandhi at the Belgrade NAM Summit said, "I am happy to inform you that the world at large has responded to our appeal in a most heartening manner. Fifty four nations and several international organizations have pledged to our cause the equivalent of almost half a billion US dollar – 476 million dollars to be exact – in cash, kind and technical assistance". However, at a Summit level meeting of the Fund Committee at Belgrade, rich nations, like the United States, Britain, West Germany and Japan came in for sharp criticism for not making any contribution to the Fund. Despite the non-co-operation from the Western countries, Rajiv Gandhi as the Chairman of the AFRICA Fund worked categorically to build up a substantial resource for the envisaged purpose.

The role of Rajiv Gandhi in bringing the frontline African countries under one banner for common cause i.e. for dismantling the apartheid was highly appreciated by all the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. This naturally put Rajiv Gandhi's name on the diplomatic map of the world. Further, his role in

62 M.K.Rasgotra, Supra No.54, p-223.
mobilizing the resources for the Fund to improve the basic infrastructure in the field of communication, transport with a view to reducing substantially the dependence of frontline African countries on South African racist government, was lauded by the international community. It is because of Rajiv Gandhi that the frontline countries of South Africa became economically strong enough to withstand the hegemony of the South Africa's racist regime. Perhaps, the economic assistance to the frontline countries helped them achieve their independence and stand on their own with a view to dismantling colonialism and imperialism. Therefore, it is because of Rajiv Gandhi's efforts that the last bastion of colonialism began to disappear from the South African continent.

In fact, Rajiv Gandhi in his speech as Chairman of the AFRICA Fund at the Belgrade Summit in September 1989 rightly anticipated and said, "The curtain is finally beginning to be drawn over the era of humiliation, racial discrimination, oppression and exploitation to which Africa has been subjected. We must continue to stand together. The AFRICA Fund is the earnest to our commitment to stand by the people of South Africa as destiny carries them to a famous victory." Further Rajiv Gandhi said, "since the Fund was created at the Harare Summit, Southern Africa had witnessed important changes. The process of Namibia's independence was gathering momentum".

64 M.K.Rasgotra., Supra No.54, p-227.
f) Crusader against Apartheid:

Apartheid is a curse to human civilization and is a crime against humanity in the modern world. The obnoxious practice of apartheid is a great insult to the human kind in the world of equality, fraternity and brotherhood. Therefore, apartheid needs condemnation from all sections of the international community wherever it exists. India, a land of great philosophers and spiritual leaders advocated the cause of non-violence, equality, brotherhood etc., to wipe out all forms of discriminations that existed in some parts of the globe. Since pre-independence days, India had been the chief exponent of the cause of apartheid. It was Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation who spearheaded the movement against the racial discrimination and was actually a victim to the said practice when he had been to South Africa to defend a case. Commenting on the horrifying conditions, Mahatma Gandhi said, "When I went to South Africa (1893), I knew nothing about that country, yet, within seven days of my reaching there I found that I had to deal with a situation too terrible for words". Since then Mahatma Gandhi vowed to fight against the inhuman practice (racial discrimination) and succeeded in drawing the attention of the world community, thereby mobilizing the opinion against apartheid in order to eradicate it.

Apart from Mahatma Gandhi, leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi also made sincere efforts during post-
independence days to end the racial discrimination that existed in South Africa. Nehru took keen interest in eradication of apartheid; it was under on his initiative that India made contributions to the Organization of African Union (OAU) Assistance Fund with a view to helping the African frontline countries in their struggle against colonialism and apartheid. After all it was Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister who played a predominant role in creating international awareness among the world community about the racial discrimination and its impact on the modern civilized society. Further she also believed that a racial inequality in the world, especially as a system of apartheid, is a constant threat to the international peace and security. In August 1985, the Indian Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution condemning apartheid and appealing to all countries to apply mandatory sanctions against South Africa regime. Intervening in the discussion, Rajiv Gandhi said, "There was no other answer to the present struggle in that country except freedom of blacks. The struggle in South Africa was not only a struggle of a few million people in South Africa. It was a struggle for all humanity". It is this basic condition and fear that made India a pioneering crusader against racial inequality anywhere for many years. It was not only the blacks of South Africa but also the people of Indian origin who happened to be the victims of racial discrimination in South Africa or Fiji. Indira Gandhi, a staunch believer in equality, once while

67 Asian Recorder, 31(41), Oct 8-14, 1985, p-18545.
inaugurating the One Asia Assembly in New Delhi, in February 1973, remarked that she believed in the "one world" concept; but pungently asked, if the Vietnam war or the savage bombing which had taken place in Vietnam would "have been tolerated for long, had the people been European".68 In other words, India was concerned not only with the obvious causes and symptoms of non-peace but also with violation of human rights, racial discrimination, narrow national interests etc.

However, it was during Rajiv Gandhi's regime that the burning issue of apartheid became more serious than during his predecessors'. He was determined to fight against apartheid, a social evil to eradicate it from the earth. The issue of apartheid has been raised at several international forums and the attention of the world community was drawn to its gravity and its impact on the human civilization. He considered the practice of apartheid as a bane to the world community/human kind and waged a crusade against the same irrespective of the forums. Rajiv Gandhi, while addressing the Global preparatory meeting of Parliamentarians for removal of apartheid said that, "Apartheid is a blot on our civilization. It is a crime against humanity. It has become a structure of institutionalized terror sustained by racist domination and economic exploitation. Apartheid means a small bigoted minority overwhelming and holding a majority by bondage, keeping

68 Quoted in M.S.Rajan, Supra No.43, p-88.
thousands in prison every year". Therefore, Rajiv Gandhi as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement spared no pains to annihilate the dreaded practice of apartheid from the African land. He was one of the main leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement to suggest comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South African Government to get rid of apartheid.

It was prior to Harare Summit that the members of the Non Aligned Movement differed on the agenda of imposing sanctions against South African racist regime. Since there was no consensus among the leaders of NAM and Commonwealth on the ways and means of imposing sanctions against South Africa, some leaders, particularly radicals suggested that the best way to dismantle the apartheid was military action. But most of the Black leaders within South Africa were against any armed conflict. Commenting on the military solution to the apartheid, the Commander-in-Chief of the military wing of the African National Congress, Joe Modise, said in Harare: "We have very good reason for working very hard to prevent this struggle from becoming black-versus-white. We need these whites; we need all the people of South Africa, to develop that country". Therefore, it is believed that military solution to the apartheid issue was not advisable because the frontline countries were no match to South African military capability as it was well equipped with sophisticated weapons.

70 Quoted in K.P. Misra, Supra No.46, p-54.
On the other hand, a group of leaders of the NAM also suggested comprehensive mandatory sanctions against Pretoria regime to wipeout apartheid, to which most of the leaders agreed barring certain Western countries particularly United Kingdom. Because, the Western countries who had economic and military interests with South African regime were not in favour of imposing sanctions against South Africa. Therefore, Rajiv Gandhi in his speech in August 1987 rightly said, “Apartheid survives because of economic infusion from some developed countries. It survives because Pretoria is integrated into global political and defence strategies of certain countries. It survives because conscience has been subordinated to other considerations. All, all over the world, must realize that by not co-operating in ending apartheid, they are not in the long run serving even their own geo-political, military or economic ends. They are jeopardizing those very interests by their support to Pretoria today”. Even the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Person gave an unambiguous answer; “The termination of apartheid with relatively less upheaval is possible provided all economic and military sustenance to Pretoria ceases”.

Like Western countries even, United Kingdom a member of the Commonwealth was also reluctant to impose sanctions against South Africa, because of its close contacts with South Africa. However, it favoured only limited sanctions against South Africa. As a result, Britain also differed on the agenda of imposing

71 Rajiv Gandhi, Supra No.24, (Vol-III), pp- 392,393.

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sanctions against South Africa. In fact, this was proved at the Commonwealth Summit held in Vancouver in October 1987 when “The Programme of Action relating to sanctions on South Africa, was adopted by all Commonwealth countries with the exception of Britain. The isolated stand of the British Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher on the sanctions evoked strong resentment from the leaders of the world particularly NAM and the Commonwealth. Even, Rajiv Gandhi, as a mark of protest against United Kingdom, which was perpetuating apartheid, boycotted the Commonwealth Games held in Scotland in 1986, by not allowing the Indian team to go to the Commonwealth Games.

When, the leaders of the world differed and started treading different paths on imposing sanctions against South Africa. Rajiv Gandhi anticipated danger to the movement and warned that there would be attempts by South African Government and its Western allies to divide the movement at the eighth summit. Taking into consideration the delicate nature of the apartheid and the urgency of imposing the sanctions against South Africa, Rajiv Gandhi in his address to the Harare Summit declared, “freedom in South Africa was going to “brook no further delay”. He said the options were “Liberty now, with innocent lives saved, or liberty later, in a welter of blood”. Therefore, he urged the leaders of the world to apply

72 Rajiv Gandhi, Supra No.24, p-415.
73 Rajiv Gandhi, Supra No.21, (Vol-II) p-348.
74 Quoted in K.P.Misra, Supra No.46, p-63.
immediately the sanctions against the Pretoria regime to dismantle apartheid. However, at the end of the Harare Summit there emerged consensus on the urgent need to put a swift end to the racist monster in South Africa. But most of the leaders of the non-aligned countries were of the opinion that practical measures were necessary in support of the African frontline countries, which were likely to be worst hit by the impending sanctions. Therefore, much care was taken before a decision was taken on the agenda of imposing sanctions against South African racist regime. After prolonged consultations, the summit made a remarkable advance on the issues relating to Southern Africa. This was evident from the 13-point programme adopted by the conference dealing with sanctions against South Africa. These were:

"- Prohibition of transfer of technology to South Africa;

- Cessation of exports, sale or transport of oil products to South Africa;

- Cessation of further investments in and financial loans to South Africa or Namibia and of any government insurance guarantee of credits to the racist regime;

- An end to all promotion of the sale of or support for trade with South Africa, including governmental assistance to trade missions;

- Prohibition of the sale of Krugerrands and any other coins minted in South Africa;
- Prohibition of imports from South Africa of agricultural products, coal, uranium, iron and steel, etc;

- Enactment of legislation or adoption of other measures to comply with United Nations decree No.1 for the protection of natural resources of Namibia enacted by the United Nations Council for Namibia in 1974;

- Termination of any visa – free entry privileges and the promotion of tourism to South Africa;

- Termination of air and shipping links with South Africa;

- Cessation of all academic, cultural, scientific and sports relations with South Africa and of relations with individuals, institutions and other bodies endorsing or based on apartheid;

- Suspension or abrogation of agreements with South Africa, such as agreements on cultural and scientific cooperation;

- The termination of double taxation agreements with South Africa; and

- A ban on government contracts with majority owned by South Africa;"  

However, Rajiv Gandhi played an important role in persuading the world leaders to arrive at a consensus on the issue of comprehensive sanctions against the Pretoria regime.

75 K.P. Misra, Supra No.52, pp-64, 65.
Rajiv Gandhi, who all along waged an unrelenting struggle against the racial discrimination, reiterated that comprehensive mandatory sanctions were the only effective peaceful means left to force Pretoria to dismantle apartheid. Accordingly, he, as the leader of NAM went all out to pressurize South Africa to accomplish the task of removing apartheid from the African Continent itself. After a lapse of certain time South Africa realized the pressure of the non-aligned countries and started mending its attitude towards frontline countries. Therefore, addressing at the Ninth NAM Summit at Belgrade Rajiv Gandhi said, "within South Africa, there were stirrings of change and indications that at least some sections of the white community had begun to realize the need for fundamental political reforms leading to the dismantling of apartheid".76

Therefore, Rajiv Gandhi, who waged a crusade against obnoxious practice of apartheid, succeeded in accomplishing the laborious task of removing the inhuman practice from the South African Continent. It is because of Rajiv Gandhi's ardent effort that today there is a racial equality in the land of racial discrimination and inequality.

Rajiv Gandhi, speech at New Delhi on 25, November 1986 said, " One way to limiting future bloodshed and dismantling apartheid is through comprehensive mandatory sanctions. There is

world wide popular support for sanctions. But action is slow and halting on the part of these governments who are in a position to make sanctions effective. The march of history cannot be halted. Apartheid will crumble. Freedom and racial equality will triumph.77 The efforts of Rajiv Gandhi at the Eighth Summit, which contributed systematically, to arrive at a consensus on sanctions made him emerge as a successful leader.

g) Leader of the Six-Nation Initiative on Disarmament and Peace:

The age of nuclear weapons dawned just before India achieved her independence. Since then India has been in the forefront of the campaign for complete disarmament in the globe. “In fact, in 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to bring the problem of proliferation of nuclear weapons to the attention of the world and also of the World Organization”.78 Further, the issue has also been raised at most of the forums both within the country and abroad i.e., the United Nations, the NAM Conferences, the Commonwealth forum, and so on. Besides, India which has also been persistently opposing the proliferation of nuclear weapons was critical of the Great Powers, especially the nuclear weapon powers that are mainly responsible for the arms race in the globe by producing and stockpiling them as well as by aiding and abetting the arms race among the non-nuclear nations. This obviously endangered not only the global peace but also the stability and

78 Quoted in M.S.Rajan., Supra No. 43, p-82.
security of the developing countries in the present world. Further, the very survival of human race is at stake since the advent of the nuclear weapons. Therefore, the world's most pressing need today is disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament.

Rajiv Gandhi stood for promoting friendship, cooperation and good will with the countries of the world. It was his main objective to eliminate the nuclear weapons and to reduce the arms race in the world. Therefore, the role played by Rajiv Gandhi as persuader of Super Powers to sign the INF Treaty, thereby saving the world from nuclear holocaust was one of unique contributions to world peace, which was greatly appreciated by most peace loving leaders of the world. His ardent efforts helped achieve peace in the conflict-torn world. The Super Powers, which were caught up in the proliferation of arms, were reluctant to reduce the nuclear arsenals and come to terms, because each of them expected the other to take the initiative. In the process no body came forward because of superiority complex and egoism. However, it was under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi that the group of Six-Nations took the initiative in bringing the two Super Powers to terms and to conclude an early agreement on Intermediate Nuclear Weapons. Accordingly, the historic INF Treaty was signed between the President Reagan of America and General Secretary Gorbachev of USSR in December 1987.
The First Summit of Disarmament:

The initiative for convening the meeting of the nations came from Rajiv Gandhi who was eager to establish world peace thereby making an attempt for mass destruction of the nuclear weapons. A meeting of the heads of state representing Argentina, Greece, Mexico, Sweden, Tanzania, and India was convened at New Delhi on 28 July 1985. This meeting was attended by, among others, the distinguished African statesman and former Tanzanian President, Julius Neyerere, who launched what came to be known as the Six-Nation-Five-Continent Initiative on Nuclear disarmament. The Initiative, which was very much in keeping with the grand old tradition of Indian opposition to nuclear weapons and their harmful implications for the conduct of international relations, urged the nuclear weapon states to halt testing and to conclude an early comprehensive test-ban treaty. It also called for prohibition of development, and use of all weapons in space. It urged that outer space must be for the benefit of mankind as a whole—not as a future battleground.\textsuperscript{79} Even the leaders at the meeting unanimously urged the nuclear powers (countries) to halt the destructive arms race and to essentially banish the spectre of nuclear death.

In the context of this, a summit meeting of the President of United States and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of

\textsuperscript{79} Quoted in M.S.Rajan, Supra No.43, pp-90-91.
the Soviet Union was held in Geneva in November 1985 to deliberate on the nuclear disarmament issue. After the meeting both declared, “their objective was “to prevent an arms race in space and terminate it on earth, ultimately to eliminate nuclear arms everywhere”. A nuclear war can never be won, they said, and so it must never be fought”.80 Great hopes were set on the Geneva Summit Meeting and even the leaders of the Six-Nation anticipated a positive and constructive development on the issue. But the anticipation of the leaders went wrong when the nuclear arms race continued unabatedly in spite of the Summit meeting of the two leaders. “In fact, in the form of the Strategic Defence Initiative a new and far more dangerous dimension was added to the already explosive situation”.

Delhi Declaration: 1986

India believed in “a nuclear-weapon free” and a “non-violent world”.82 As such, Rajiv Gandhi spared no efforts to achieve this great task which had fallen on his shoulder both as the leader of Non-Aligned Movement and leader of six nation initiative on disarmament. Even while pursuing multilateral efforts, the Soviet Union, a trusted friend of India, appreciated its efforts and urged the need for a nuclear-weapon free world. “On the occasion of President Gorbachev’s visit to New Delhi in November 1986, Prime

80 Rajiv Gandhi., Supra No.21, p-280.Vol-II.
81 K.P.Misra, Supra No.46, p-51.
82 M.S.Rajan, Supra No-43, p-92.
Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Soviet President spelt (in the "Delhi Declaration") specific and immediate action for disarmament through, among other things, complete destruction of nuclear arsenals before the end of the century, banning all weapons from outer space, banning of all nuclear weapons tests, banning of chemical weapons, and reduction of the levels of conventional arms and armed forces". Taking the advantage of the occasion, the two leaders proclaimed: "A nuclear war should never be fought and can never be won". 83 This is the crowning achievement of Rajiv Gandhi's efforts in the field of disarmament, and it naturally added feature to his cap.

**The Second Summit for Peace and Disarmament:**

Not relenting the efforts, Rajiv Gandhi sought an opportunity to raise the issue of disarmament at the Second Summit of the Six-Nations held at Ixtapa, Mexico in August 1986. The meeting of the Six Nations coincided with the 41st anniversary of Hiroshima tragedy. In his address to the conference, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi spoke strongly against nuclear weapons, branding them as a "crime against humanity" and reiterated that the earlier (1985) declaration had called for a binding international agreement, which would outlaw every use of the weapons. Rajiv Gandhi restated the demand for a comprehensive test-ban and commended the Soviet Union for unilaterally accepting a moratorium on nuclear tests, and

83 M.S.Rajan, Supra No.43.p-92.
extending it twice. He repeated the group's proposal to undertake verification of the moratorium by all nuclear weapons states. He also opposed the lodging of nuclear weapons in outer space, which is "the common heritage of all humankind".84

Rajiv Gandhi who was determined to establish world peace took several initiatives to achieve the same. He even succeeded in drawing the attention of the whole world to the repercussions of the nuclear war and its impact on humankind. Commenting on the magnitude of the probable destruction of humankind in the event of nuclear war, he expressed the view that, "Nuclear death will not inspect people's passport. It will not care for nationality as it will not care for life. There are no winnable wars or impregnable defense against nuclear weapons". As such, none of us, while safeguarding the interests of our nations, can overlook our duty to the human race".85

Due to the unrelenting efforts of Rajiv Gandhi, at last both Reagan, President of the US and Gorbachev, General Secretary of the USSR signed the historic INF Treaty in December 1987, thereby bidding goodbye to the arms race, if not wholly but gradually in the peace torn world. Commenting on the Agreement Rajiv Gandhi said, "it represents truly momentous development. It is true that it envisages the elimination of only around three percent of the combined nuclear arsenals of the United States and the USSR. But

84 M.S.Rajan, Supra No-43, p-91.
its historic significance is that it is the world’s first nuclear arms reduction agreement. It is also the first time that the United States and USSR have agreed to completely eliminate entire category of nuclear weapons. But the process of elimination of arms was quite slow as expected. Therefore, Rajiv Gandhi renewed his efforts and urged the nuclear power countries to carry out the destruction of nuclear weapons in a time bound manner. Accordingly, he came out with an Action plan for destruction of weapons in a phased manner.

In the context of continuing trends of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Rajiv Gandhi had proposed a definite time frame. It was in June 1988 that Rajiv Gandhi, in his address to the UN General Assembly (9th June 1988) on disarmament in New York, made comprehensive proposals for general, complete and non-discriminatory disarmament. The essential features of the Action plan are as follows,

1) There should be a binding commitment by all nations to eliminate nuclear weapons, in stages, by the year 2010 at the latest.

2) All nuclear weapons States must participate in the process of nuclear disarmament: all other countries must also be part of the process.

86 Rajiv Gandhi, Supra No.24, (Vol-lll), p-425.
3) To demonstrate good faith and build the required confidence, there must be tangible progress at each stage towards the common goal.

4) Changes are required in doctrines, policies and institutions to sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. Negotiations should be undertaken to establish a Comprehensive Global Security System under the aegis of the United Nations.87

Rajiv Gandhi in his address to U.N. General Assembly further said, “The heart of our Action Plan is the elimination of all nuclear weapons in three stages over the next 22 years, beginning now”.88

In spite of Rajiv Gandhi’s Action Plan for elimination of nuclear weapons in a time bound manner there was little headway and the results were not to the expected degree. However, taking into consideration the slow process of reduction arms race as agreed in the INF Treaty by the two leaders, the Six-Nation-Five-Continent group again met at Stockholm, on 31 July 1988, to continue to build up international pressure for the nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi congratulated President Reagan and Gorbachev on the INF Treaty and said, “This agreement is not, and should not be considered, as more than a beginning, still only a beginning – an historic beginning, a vital beginning, still only a beginning”. The survival of

87 J.N.Dixit, Across Borders, Fifty Years of India’s Foreign Policy, Picus Books, New Delhi, 1998, pp-203-204.
humanity depends on the nuclear weapon powers traveling all the way down this road to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The world will be really safe only when, as the Delhi Declaration puts it, “the balance of terror gives away to comprehensive international security”.  

Rajiv Gandhi strongly argued for establishing “a nuclear-weapon-free, and non-violent world left no stone unturned for achieving the greatest task that had fallen on him. It was also his endeavour not only to save the world from nuclear holocaust but also the life of millions of people from the jaws of nuclear catastrophe. The dynamic role played by Rajiv Gandhi as the leader of the NAM in achieving the same was appreciated by most of the peace-loving people all over the world. Commenting on the extraordinary role played by India under the dynamic leadership of Rajiv Gandhi in preserving peace and destruction of nuclear weapons, President Gorbachev of USSR said, “We greatly appreciate India’s contribution to the collective effort to preserve peace and remove the nuclear threat. As head of the Non-Aligned Movement, which has become a major factor in international relations, India is doing much to strengthen its unity and its beneficial influence in the world... We highly value India’s contribution to the strengthening of peace and stability in Asia, her realistic and considered approach to the key problems of the reign”.  

89 Rajiv Gandhi, Supra No.24, (Vol-III), p-425.  
h) Major Developments in the 1990s:

The year 1990 is said to be a turning point not only in the history of international relations but also in the external relations of India. The period also coincided with the end of Rajiv Gandhi's glorious era in the Indian political scenario. Besides, it was during this year that the process to end era of Cold War began and paved the way for political and economic developments in the international sphere. Further, it was also during the said period that instead of ideological struggle between the Communist and non-Communist States, the economic developments started gaining prominence in the international arena, which indirectly influenced the foreign policy of India which was already in the process of economic liberalization introduced by Rajiv Gandhi. The following are some of the major developments that took place in the 1990s, which had a great bearing on India's foreign policy during the post-Rajiv Gandhi's period.

End of the Cold War:

The first and foremost event that took place in the 1990s was the end of Cold War. The end of Cold War, indeed, marked the beginning of a new era in the history of international relations. The Cold War ended not with détente or mutual understanding or transience of conflicts but because of the collapse of one Super Power. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, an era of protracted conflicts and Cold War between the two Super Powers
came to an end. However, "the fall of Berlin Wall in November in 1989 was perhaps the most dramatic event that led to the process of ending Cold War. Besides, the major step was the Malta Summit between President Bush and Gorbachev in December 1989 can said to mark the virtual end of Cold War. During the joint press conference in December, President Gorbachev assured President Bush that;" the Soviet Union would never start a hot war against the USA". He further said that the two leaders were agreed that the world was leading "an epoch of Cold War" and entering "another epoch". The countries were "just at the very beginning of a long road to a long lasting peaceful period". There were other milestones too. But perhaps the major important event was the meeting of the heads of the government of the conference on security and co-operation in Europe at Paris in November 1990. Here they signed the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, which for the first time in the history of the world resulted in a multilateral agreement for a significant reduction in conventional military capabilities". In fact, the agreements between the Super Powers on reduction of weapons made the dream of Rajiv Gandhi who was bent upon establishing the nuclear free and non-violent order come true. Further, the end of Cold War is, no doubt, a

vindication of one of the foremost objectives of India's foreign policy.

**Collapse of Soviet Union:**

With the end of Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Union, India faced a peculiar security environment in which the regional situation was out of alignment with the international developments. Further, the end of sudden dissolution of Cold War, partly due to Gorbachev's policies and partly because of the collapse of Soviet Union itself made the non-aligned countries especially under the Indian leadership to think a fresh due to the vacuum created in the international scene. Besides, India that all along experienced the bipolar world order system has to face suddenly the unipolar (univocal) world order, with US becoming the power center, in the absence of the Soviet Union a strategic partner of India. This naturally put India in dilemma and forced her to look forward for alternatives in the international arena due to the collapse of Soviet Union. Therefore, India without going into the choice of alternatives decided to go ahead towards greater self-reliance and self-confidence in the world of insecurity and instability. Indeed this dramatic event on the international horizon led to further improvement of relations both with China and America. Perhaps, the end of Cold War and the disintegration of the “evil empire” diluted the American hostility towards India, which had friendly relations with Moscow.
Withdrawal of Troops from Afghanistan:

Another, important development that took place in the early 1990s was the complete pull out of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in accordance with the Geneva Accord. This naturally resulted in ending the Cold War between USA and USSR, which were at the loggerheads on the issue of Afghanistan. Indeed, the pullout of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the détente between America and Russia paved the way for balancing the power equations in the South Asian region. In fact, in the post-Cold War order, Pakistan lost its importance. Once it was strategically significant for Washington’s interests. Taking into consideration India’s emergence as the strongest third world country in the international arena, US started changing its attitudes and softened its hostility towards India. The role of Rajiv Gandhi in influencing the Soviet Union for early withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan was commended by the leaders of the world, which resulted in establishing a responsible government in Afghanistan.

Economic Reforms (Development):

The Collapse of USSR in the 1990s not only brought about many changes in the international arena but also in the global economy in general and in the economy of India in particular. India’s close economic relations with USSR had to face a peculiar situation soon after its disintegration wherein its economic interests were at stake in the unipolar world. Therefore, for India,
the economic struggle has become far more important than ever before, and started looking for new directions not only for its economy but also for its foreign policy as well. As a result, India in the 1990s decided to turn towards European Union, (EU-15) which is the largest, richest and most organized trading bloc in the world. India opened up its economic policies to integrate with global economy,(to the free market economy). Due to the economic reforms under taken by India, there began the regime of liberalization of the Indian economy.

**Sudden Eruption of Conflicts:**

The end of Cold War in the 1990s witnessed a sudden eruption of wide range of regional conflicts. The nature and cause of these conflicts differed from case to case, yet there were some common trends. These conflicts were in the nature of intra-state rather than inter-state. But the most interesting thing is that in these cases there was support either from vested interests or from the encouragement from outside powers. In fact, these intra-state conflicts, vowed their origin to ethnic assertions in the local region. Perhaps, even after the end of Cold War and with the emergence of unipolar world order there existed an era of “intra-state” conflicts in the world politics.