Historical Background of Indo-US Political Relations
CHAPTER: 1
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INDO-US POLITICAL RELATIONS (1947-1980)

This chapter represents the nature of the historical background of the relationship of the two largest democracies in the world during the period of 1947-1980. It covers the administrative period of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Mrs. Indira Gandhi in India and President Theodore Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan in the United States of America. The relationships between the two countries during this period were not very smooth and warm, despite the similarity of domestic political set up and dedication to liberal democratic values. Before independence, Indo-US relations were very limited while India was under the British colonial rule. There were no official and political contact between India and the USA. It was due to the advent of the Second World War that India could draw American attentions on the question of struggle for freedom in which America played a significant role and supported in the people struggle for freedom. This role was much appreciated by India. However, when the war was over and India achieved independence, their relationship went wrong as both the countries had a different view in respect of their foreign policy, on a number of regional as well as international issues.

For a clear understanding of the historical background of Indo-US relations, it is relevant to examine the early phase of their relations. Therefore, a retrospect of Indo-US relations has been presented in this chapter.

According to W. Norman Brown “American contacts with India had started before the American Revolution through soldiers and seamen who had lived both in the American colonies and in India”¹ Soon after the American Revolution, the first American merchantman landed at Indian ports, first at Pondicherry and Calcutta. Since then India and the United States are maintaining their relations in commerce, culture and diplomacy. American interests in having consular with India grew out of the commercial needs for Indian commodities such as cotton and spice. The first official contact (under the British India) between the two countries commenced on

November 19, 1792 with President’s nomination of Benjamin Joy of Boston as the first American consul at Calcutta. However, the functions and duties of the Consuls were limited and did not include official relations with the Indian.

The American consuls played an important role in developing commercial relations between India and the USA. The trade relations between them commenced in 1785, as American wanted to tap new and more profitable market. Indo-US trade received a tremendous boost with the signing of the Jay Treaty in November 1794. By this treaty the United States obtained the most-favoured nation status in Indian trade from Great Britain.

The United States had also extended their missions in India through other activities. In 1812, the early American merchants arrived in Calcutta along with the first Christian missionaries and later the East India Company expelled them from the port. The missionaries then came to establish the American Morathi Mission in Bombay in 1815. This US missions were then spread far and wide in many places. Missionaries from America; however did a good job in developing relations between the two countries at the beginning of nineteenth century. By 1912 the number of American missionaries was much increased as second to that of British missionaries.

US Contribution for India’s Independence

In the nineteenth, with the rise of Indian Nationalism and the growth of the Indian National Congress, the American missionaries in India had also informed home about that growing strength of Indian Nationalism. These missionaries had also played a good role for the Indian National Congress’s demand for Indian freedom. The way they supported was that by writing articles in some American magazines. Some of them began to echo the contention of the Indian leaders that

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2 M.V. Kamath, *The United States and India 1776-1976*, (Washington, D.C: The Embassy of India, 1976), P. 71
4 M.V. Kamath, n. 2, pp. 132-33
India could never get rid of her gigantic social and economic problems as long as the British control remained in India.\textsuperscript{7} American missionaries were also appreciated by India due to their works of, founding and operation of many fine hospitals, schools, colleges, and other institutions, and the selfless labor and dedication of a large number of American missionaries and their family in India.\textsuperscript{8}

India and the United States had also Intellectual contacts with each other. This was started around the middle of the nineteenth century when some American writers like Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Kopkins and Whitney began to appreciate India’s glorious heritage in their works.

During the latter half of nineteenth century PC Mazumdar and Swami Vivekananda, two important Indian intellectuals, visited the United States of America and lectured extensively in that country. In the beginning of the twentieth century, an Indian Saint, Swami Ram Tirtha’s visit to USA had a profound impact on American people. His visit was followed by those of Lala Lajpat Rai in 1905 and Rabindranath Tagore in 1912, 1916, 1920 and 1930. Through his interviews, lectures and published articles, Tagore was able to expose an unprecedented number of Americans to Indian culture and thought. He also carried back to India with many revolutionary ideas and views from the United States, which contributed in infusing goodwill between the two countries.\textsuperscript{9}

During India’s struggle for freedoms, a few patriots and intellectual took refuge in the United States as they were expelled from British India due to their campaigning for India’s independence. As a result many Indian got more chance to go to the United States and educating the American official, Congressman, Senator, editors, other general public about the Indian demand for independence, as they won the whole-hearted support of the Americans to the Nationalist Movement.\textsuperscript{10} The influence of Mahatama Gandhi and the Indian way of life also attracted Americans, which further stirred the struggle for Indian independence.\textsuperscript{11} One of the most active and influential of the religious leaders to espouse the Indian cause was Reverend

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 13
\textsuperscript{9} Harinder Sekhon, n. 3, p.29.
\textsuperscript{10} M.V. Kamath, n. 2, p. 103.
John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church in New York, preached a famous sermon on Gandhi, whom he called “the greatest man in the world today”, he praised Gandhi and other Indian nationalist and championed their struggle against British rule. A number of other clergymen and lay leaders also joined in the same cause.12

Indians living in the United States were also tried to plead Indian cause in America. In February 1914, the first conference of Indian revolutionaries’ abroad was held in Stockton, California. The best known of the revolutionary’s movements, Ghadar party, mainly Sikh party13 favored the Indians in the United States to work for the ‘Ghadar Movement’. The objective of this movement was to liberate India from the British yoke14 and to enlist US support for the cause of India’s freedom. Many other Indian organizations such as the India Home Rule League of America, the Indian League of America and the National Committee for India’s Freedom were set up in the United States. Prominent American citizens who supported India’s freedom were William Jennings Bryan, Reverend John Haynes Holmes, Roger N. Baldwin, William E. Barah and Robert M. La Follete.15

For the struggle of India’s independence, the influence and some ideas of the American Declaration of Independence were also regarded as a good pattern for the Indian National Congress to issue a Declaration of independence for India in 1930.16 “We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of the growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally

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12 Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p.17.
13 Ibid.
14 M.V. Kamath, n. 2, p.104.
and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence".  

The advent of the World War II brought significant changes in the American official policy towards India. After the Japanese bombardment of Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, the American was in need of India's co-operation in carrying on the war operation. The United States did not enter the war officially till 1941. But before that, the US had been giving aid to Great Britain and her allies under the 'Lend-Lease Act of 1940'. Great Britain did not consult any Indian nationalist group in declaring that India had also to enter the war with Germany in 1939. The Indian National Congress then demanded the British to grant immediate self-government to India and an independent India would fight more effectively than as an enslaved India. The Indian nationalists had also urged the American Government to use its moral pressure upon the British to extend immediate dominion status to India, as the British need of the US aid in war effort. Jawaharlal Nehru and some sympathizers of India sent the Indian viewpoint in American newspapers and magazines.  

In August 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Churchill of Great Britain presented the Atlantic Charter to the world embodying the allied war-aims. One of its aims was that to allow the various people of the world the right to regulate their own political destiny. The Indian leaders hoped that such declaration was also meant for India after the war. But their hope was again not fulfilling when Churchill told that the Atlantic Charter was meant for the nations under the Nazi oppression. Therefore, both India and the United States resented to the statement made by Churchill. Just one month later, Mahatama Gandhi asked the American government for assistance against the British and called upon the US President to make its aid to the Britain dependent on the application of the Atlantic Charter to India. It was surprisingly that President Roosevelt ignored the appeal made by Gandhi, even though on previous occasions, he had expressed his opinion against imperialism. This may be because that the American government

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18 Tripta Desai, n. 6, p.5.  
19 Ibid.,p.6
was facing the dilemma situation in Indian case i.e. if the United States did not intervene actively in support of Indian nationalism, the Indian support for the war against Japan could be lessened, on the other hand, if the US government chose to initiate much positive move to support the Indian national cause, the Great Britain would get highly irritated. The American, at that time, chose to tag along with the Britain so that the war unity between the two would continue.  

The American Congress had also contributed for Indian national struggle, just after the American entry into the war, some committee members urged the US Government to persuade the British Government that favorable concessions be made to the Indian demand within the framework of the Empire to elicit maximum Indian support for the war against Japan. "We should demand that India be given a status of autonomy," they asserted that India could be successfully exploited for the Allied cause only if Gandhi's political formula was accepted. 

During the war, the US aims and strategy in the Far East could not hope to succeed without India's wholehearted cooperation to restrain and prevent Japan from making it way along the southern coast of Asia to the border of India. Thus the question between British imperialism and Indian nationalism become the serious concern of American diplomacy during the Second World War.  

As Japan had become a big threat to the Indian safety in 1942 while the Indian National Movement for freedom had also intensified. The result was that the pressure was brought upon the Churchill government to calm down the Indian political agitation. This pressure came from the US government as well as liberal forces in the British parliament. 

Under these circumstances, the United States, by agreement with the British, exchanged diplomatic representatives with the British Government in India. In 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps, an acknowledged Liberal, was appointed to lead the Cripps Mission to India. As early as 1939, Cripps had expressed support for more substantial home rule for India if the anti-British and isolationist force in the USA

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20 ibid., p.8  
21 ibid., p. 10.  
22 Harinder Sekhon, n. 3, p.36.  
23 Tripta Desai, n. 6, p.10.
were to be weakened. However, the Cripps’ Mission failed to achieve any satisfactory compromise with the Indian national leaders. The failure was blamed by the British protagonists upon the intransigent Indian demand. Louis Johnson was then, in the same year, dispatched to India as the “personal representative” of President Roosevelt during the Cripps Mission to act as an intermediary in 1942. Despite, his attempt to intercede on behalf of the Indian demand was failed as Churchill, standing behind the Cripps mission, refused to relent.

On 10 March 1942, President Roosevelt had sent a long cable to Prime Minister Churchill on the Indian problem “Of course this is a subject”, he observed: “which all of you, good people, know for more about than I do and I have felt much diffidence in making any suggestions concerning it”. His mains contention, however was to transfer power to the Indian and at least to provide “a new thought on the question”. Prime Minister Churchill responded to this efforts as “unwarranted and effort to advance American interests at the expenses of the British”. President Roosevelt’s envoy, William Phillips proposed a round table conference of Britain and India under American chairmanship in March 1943. Phillips suggested to President Roosevelt: “I feel strongly, Mr. President that in view of our military position in India, we should have a voice in these matters. It is not right for the Britain to say that is none of our business when we alone presumably will have the major part to play in the struggle with Japan”.

Thus, the United States and India were drawn closer during World War II. The Americans official were keen to maintain friendly relations with the Indian leaders and suggested the continuation of the negotiation with Britain for India’s independence after the war. Even before the end of the war, the United States also plays an important role in the release of the Indian leaders and in the organization of the Shimla conference of June- July 1945. Despite the failure of the conference, the Indian National Congress acclaimed the role of the US Government.

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., pp. 11-12
28 Lawrence K. Rosinger, n.16, p.21.
29 B. Rahamathulla, n. 11, p.6
Roosevelt was known to be one of the supporters of greater concessions to India, leading to independence. This role was appreciated in India and was often referred to by Nehru and other leaders of independent India even sometimes he ignored the Indian demand to put his pressure upon the British Government. Some American businessmen also expected that if India became fully independent, it would give the enormous economic benefits to the United States, as a free India was to industrialize rapidly in order to catch up with the west, which would accelerate the trade between the United States and India.

The goodwill toward the United States generated in India during the World War II continued during the postwar period. Even before independence, the interim government created in India in 1946, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, established formal contacts with the United States and appointed Asif Ali as the first Indian's ambassador to the United States in 1946. In the US side, Henry F. Grady was nominated as the first US ambassador to India.

After independence: An uneasy relationship

The United States viewed with approval the steps leading to the transfer of power in India in 1945-1947, however it did not play any significant role in the protracted negotiations during these periods. On 14 August 1947, President Truman sent a telegram of good wishes to Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General of the new Dominion of India that was about to celebrate its independence, in which he declared: “We welcome India’s new and enhanced status in the world community of sovereign independence nation, assure the new Dominion of our continued friendship and good-will, and reaffirm our confidence that India, dedicated to the cause of peace and to the advancement of all people; will take its place at the forefront of the nations of the world in the struggle to fashion a world society founded in mutual trust and respect”.

After attainment of Independence on August 15, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of India. Nehru had tried to develop friendly

32 Norman D. Palmer, p.1, p.20
relations with all nations as can be seen in his speech in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on December 4, 1947, “We propose to keep the closet terms of friendship with other countries unless they themselves create difficulties. We shall be friends with America. We intend in cooperating with the United States of America. We intend in cooperating fully with the Soviet Union”.  

However, Indo-US relations, after the independence did not grow smoothly. There were many factors, which prevented the two countries from coming to close to each other. Two important factors stood out above all other things from the very beginning. One was the preoccupation of the United States, as leader of the Western group of states and its policy of containment of communism for the prevention of spread of Soviet influence in Europe and in Asia. This preoccupation led to the Cold War and accompanying policies toward the South Asian region that severely exacerbated Indo-US relations. These policies also gave an effect to the second factor, which was India’s preoccupation under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru with a policy that fundamentally rejected the premises of the Cold War, military alliances and power blocs. In other words, we can say that the policy of non-alignment pursued by India was a refusal to join any power blocs.

India’s policy of Non-Alignment: Different in principles of foreign policy

When India attained independence, it found the world divided into two camps, based less on ideologies and more on political interest, that we may say the game of bi-polar. For this it appeared that the mutual distrust, fear, and apprehension mixed with a basic conflict of interest lay at the root of this dangerous development. India, at that time was in critical and difficult position and being pressured by both the superpowers to join either of their blocs. It was Nehru, who was realized that to remain free in international affairs, to get economic assistance for the development of the country and to ensure the security of the country, the policy of nonalignment is the right policy. While speaking for friendly cooperation with the countries of the world, he said that “We do not propose to accept anything


35 Ibid., p.82.
that involves in the slightest degree dependence on any other authority...Our policy will continue to be not only to keep aloof from power alignment but to make friendly cooperation possible”. He advised that “we should be flexible in mind and we should be receptive but I have no doubt at all that we should not allow ourselves...to be swept off our feet by any wind from anywhere”. Nehru wanted to make friends with all countries and his non-alignment does not mean indifference to international affairs; it only means an independent foreign policy. He believed that non-alignment helps in maintaining “friendly cooperation with both the conflicting blocs and act as a means of communication between them in times of crisis and conflict”. Non-alignment was against cold war and military. Similarly we are “unequivocally committed against the evil forces of fascism, colonialism, racialism and aggression”.\textsuperscript{36} In Nehru, non-alignment was the best way to help maintain world peace and to protect India’s own interest. He also considered that non-alignment was a technique, a method by which one keeps out of trouble by decreasing tension.

American viewed with suspicion the Indian non-alignment. It wanted that India as a democratic country should join the American alliance system and thereby strengthen the struggle against communism. America considered non-alignment as an unrealistic policy. The American attitude stemmed from a sense of betrayal over Jawaharlal Nehru’s unwillingness to declare India a capitalist society and decisively commit India to the western bloc of nations and indeed to take the lead in trying to induce others to follow India in this regard. However, Nehru pointed out to the reason what make American view become so, he pointed out that it was naturally when people were full of fear of one another, any person who tried to be neutral was suspected of sympathy with the other party.\textsuperscript{37}

The US administrations, however, did not accept this policy, they held that if one was not with them, he was against them. Secondly, India’s policy posed a barrier to the US aim of containing communism. The US feared that it could lead to the creation of an “additional world force based on a political mobilization of national elites in Asia and Africa rather than on military capabilities”. This new


power centre would threaten to reduce American influence. Thus, the Indian policy of non-alignment was condemned as an “obsolete and an immoral and short-sighted conception”.  

Thus, India and the USA came to adopt different and opposed principles. America regarded cold war and security alliance as the best means for pursuing containment of communism and the securing of international peace. As against this, India regarded non-alignment as the principles of peace and peaceful co-existence. Therefore India’s policy of non-alignment became contradictory to the main US foreign policy objectives viz., the containment of Soviet communist bloc through a system of military alliance. This difference in respect of fundamental principles of the foreign policies of India and America came to be a big hindrance and negative way of the development of Indo-US relations from the very beginning and continued to differ on many issues over the regional and international level.

Anti – Colonialism, Racialism and Support of Afro – Asian Interest

Apart from non-alignment, India pursued a strong anti-colonialist policy. Nehru observed that “the crisis of the time in Asia is colonialism Vs anti-colonialism”. For India, the colonial evil seemed to be greater threat than communism as perceived by the USA. The United States, however, could not appreciate as why India failed to recognize that colonialism was on decline and communism was the real threat to the newly won independence of Asian nations. India was a staunch advocate of the cause of anti-colonialism and gave high priority to abolishing European colonialism in Asia and Africa, since it had suffered the colonial rule itself. Though the US supported the cause in principle, it was unable to implement it due to its preoccupation with communism. This Indo-US difference was witnessed with respect to their policy towards Vietnam and the liberation of Goa. The two countries also held different views with respect to the American concept of “Soviet colonialism”.

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Racialism has also posed a major threat to cordial Indo-US relations. India was vocal of its condemnation of the policy due to its emphasis on the principle of brotherhood and because its own citizens were being discriminated on its basis. India was also critical of US discrimination against coloured people. The US, on its part, was opposed to racialism in principle. However, its preoccupation with communist expansion again led to an "anemic" stance against racialism. At the same time, the countries which practiced this system, like South Africa, were significant members of the "free world" working under the US guidance. Thus, America attempted to ignore the practice on the ground that it was "a matter within domestic jurisdiction of states". 41

Though India advocated the cause of all free nations, it was especially sympathetic towards the Asian and African countries and gave high priority to their representation in the international arena. It charged the US of awarding lesser significance to these nations than was deserved by them. At the same time, the US and India differed in their approach. While India was interested in their economic and social development, the US gave greater emphasis to military advancement and their protection from the communist threat. India was also opposed to their military advancement because it would distract the underdevelopment of these countries from the needed objective of social and economic advancement and also threaten the security of the "neighbours of recipient country". 42

The most significant determining factor in Indo-US relations has been constantly influenced by India's foreign policy and her relationship towards three of the important neighbours i.e. Pakistan, China, and the Soviet Union as well as Asia and Africa.

**Kashmir Issue: US support Pakistan**

The first issue, which caused strains in Indo-US relations, was the sensitive issue of Kashmir. India found the US approach in this respect as hostile toward India. United States involvement in the Kashmir dispute dates from the earliest stages of its reference to the United Nation Security Council. The dispute resulted

41 Ibid., pp.159-162.
from the power vacuum created by the withdrawal of the British from this strategic area close to the Soviet Union and involved the protection of interest that it had already identified in South Asia. The United States activities reflected the reallocation of influence in this area into which Soviet influence might flow. The Kashmir conflict and its reference to The United Nation did provide the United States an opportunity to establish its strategic influence in this region. At first, the United States sought primarily to work with India in seeking a resolution of the conflict that was satisfactory to Washington. When Pakistan proved to be more adaptable to American foreign policy in the Korean dispute during 1950, the United States become increasingly sympathetic to Pakistan on the Kashmir question and many Indian officials perceived there was a causal connection.

On 22 October 1947, Kashmir, as an independent state under Maharaja Hari Singh was invaded by approximately 2,000 tribesmen mostly from the frontier region of Pakistan armed fully with modern weapons and the command of trained generals. The invasion was spreader through many places of Kashmir. The state forces of Kashmir were not in a position to face the invaders as a result Maharaja had eventually decided to execute the instrument of accession with the Indian Dominion. On 27 October 1947, the Governor General of India, Lord Mountbatten was accepted the accession, but the infiltrators had continued with their activities from the bases in Pakistan. The Government of India thereafter made a complaint to Pakistan for its activities in providing training and arms to the infiltrator. Ultimately India had decided to take the case to Security Council on 1 January 1948. The US adopted an unfriendly attitude towards India and wanted the UN Security Council not to sit in judgment over Pakistan aggression but to decide on the terms of a plebiscite to determine whether the states should be a part of India or Pakistan. The US did not condemn Pakistan as aggressor. Moreover it pressurized

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India at the United Nations to hold the plebiscite quickly even, before Pakistan vacated the aggression.\textsuperscript{46}

The Soviet Union was sympathetic to the Indian cause and expressed the view that America had failed to correctly assess the situation and that the people of Kashmir had already finalized the issue.\textsuperscript{47} In spite of its vocal support the Soviet Union abstained from voting on the resolution that called for a plebiscite and the ten members of the Security Council adopted it.\textsuperscript{48} However, the Soviet Union did veto another US sponsored resolution which called for the reintroduction of the United Nations force. A series of resolutions followed, which were accepted due to the abstention of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{49}

The resolutions convinced India that the US and Britain regarded the Kashmir problem as an Indo-Pak dispute and not as an instance where Pakistan had used force to prevent Kashmir’s accession. India presumed that the US was guided by Britain, which had a pro-Pakistan lobby. The downward trend of relations which had started over plebiscite issue accelerated with the American arms supply to Pakistan. Thus, India refused to hold the plebiscite, taking shelter under the “technical point” that Pakistan had not abided to its part of the agreement of withdrawing its troops from the occupied territory.\textsuperscript{50}

India was not so happy by what it regarded as an unsympathetic and even hostile, American attitude towards Kashmir question from the time that the question was introduced in the Security Council. It felt that the United States was siding with Pakistan, the aggressor, against India, the victim of aggression. It blamed the United States for allowing the question to be broadened and confused by transforming it into “the India-Pakistan question”. It claimed that the United States was taking a pro-Pakistan and anti-India stand on this issue.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{47} S.C. Tewari, n.15, pp.51-52.
\textsuperscript{48} S.Nihal Singh, “Can the United States India be Real Friends?”, Asian Survey, September 1983, p. 1015
\textsuperscript{49} S.C. Tewari, n 15, p.52
\textsuperscript{50} S.Nihal Singh, n 48, p. 1013
\textsuperscript{51} Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 121.
India had also suspected that the United States support to Pakistan was tied up with the American hope of acquiring military bases in the Pakistan's occupied Kashmir adjoining the Soviet Union and China. The US-Pakistan security link in 1954, with President Eisenhower's announcement to extend military assistance to Pakistan and to enter into various security arrangements with India's sub-continental rival was against India's national interest and India was forced by these circumstances to establish close relationship with the Soviet Union to counterbalance US supports to Pakistan.

The US and Britain again tried to pressurize India into starting negotiations with Pakistan, when India was in a “weakened state” after the 1962 Indo-China War. In spite of six rounds of talks between Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan and Mr. Swaran Singh of India, from 27th December 1962 to 16th May 1963, no agreement was reached. In February 1964, the discussion on Kashmir was again started in the UN Security Council. Thus, we can say that the US stand was constantly supportive of Pakistan and was seen as a threat by India to its territorial integrity. The differences over Kashmir issue remained a major irritant and adversely affected Indo-US relations in a serious way for many years.

Recognition of China

Another difference between India and the USA came when China emerged as a communist country in 1949. At that time America was vigorously pursuing its policy of containment of communism and as such was opposed to the development of relations with China. This US policy became instrumental in preventing the entry of communist China in the United Nations. It wanted other states also should not grant recognition to the communist China. Indian’s decision, on the other hand, to grant full recognition to the communist government and has also been persisting the United States for recognizing the communist government “realities”. India also supported the Chinese entry to the United Nation, and urged that the United Nations

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52 T.V. Kunhikrishnan, p. 46, p. 166.
53 Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 123
54 S.C. Tewari, n.15, pp. 54-55.
should not be an exclusive club of like-minded nations but should reflect the world as it is.\textsuperscript{56}

When Nehru visited the United States for the first time in October 1949 on “a voyage of discovery”, the Secretary of States, Dean Acheson found him as “one of the most difficult man to deal with”.\textsuperscript{57} On the crucial question of containing the two communist powers the Soviet Union and China – the Indian and American views remained poles apart during Nehru’s visit. India also questioned the utility of the western led military alliance to contain communism in the new states of Asia where political sentiment was consolidating around nationalism. Thus this difference in respect of the issue of recognition to China also created strong differences between the two countries.

As Indian support of People Republic of China disrupted Indo-US relations during the Formosa Straits crisis of 1954-55. The two islands of Formosa and Pescadores were significant for American Pacific policy and thus, it wanted them under the control of a supportive government. Since China was not favourably inclined towards it, USA wanted to encourage the disintegration of China by equipping the anti-communist Nationalist Government. Any retaliation of China would be avoided by the regular patrolling by the Seventh Fleet in the Formosan Straits. India had granted recognition to China, and expected the US to leave the Formosan Straits, which were a part of Chinese territory.\textsuperscript{58} Due to their divergent approaches Indo-US relations were strained.

However, the Second Formosa Crisis (1958) resulted in a cooperative atmosphere since both India and the US were in favour of an immediate ceasefire in the Formosan Straits. In order to end the communist attack they asked the Nationalist Government to surrender the two islands to China. India had always regarded the breakdown of the Geneva talks as major reason of the crisis. It, therefore, welcomed the US acceptance to resume ambassadorial talks with China.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{57} Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 306
Different over Korean crisis

In the early 1950, the Indo-US relations developed differences and strains of the divergence approach towards the Korean issue. Though both India and the United States agreed that North Korea was an aggressor, but they differed in the way of resolving the crisis. When North Korea invaded South Korea along the entire length of the 38th parallel on 25 June 1950, the United States called the Security Council meeting to consider the situation. The Council adopted a resolution by nine votes to nil asking the North Koreans to withdraw to the 38th parallel and to cease hostilities. India accepted this resolution. On 7 July 1950, the Security Council passed another resolution that sponsored by the United States “Uniting for Peace” Resolution in which it wanted the United States to nominate a commander for the UN forces in Korea. India was opposed to this resolution60 abstained from the voting. President Truman appointed General MacArthur as the commander of the United Nations Forces. The United States requested the signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to help to the extent they could to increase their contribution to collective defence. President Truman recommended top the US Congress to increase 11.6 billion dollars for national defence in addition to the 15.5 billion dollars already included.61

India did not join the United Nations Armed Forces to participate in the Korean War nor was it a party to an American inspired resolution of the Council, which accused China as aggressor by a vote of 44 to 7.62 The reason was that according to the Indian view the Korean issue should be settled peacefully by establishing cease-fire along 38th parallel and ultimate unification and independence of Korea. The Indian parliament was, indeed, critical of the Korean crisis. The majority of members were in favour of the role pursued by the Government of India. B. Shiva Rao, Member of Parliament asserted “so far as Korea is concerned, India has always asked for the creation of an independent and united Korea by means of free elections”.63

60 Norman D. Palmer, "India As A Factor In United States Foreign Policy", in Varinder Grover (ed.), International Relations and Foreign Policy of India: USA and India's Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1992), p. 60.
61 B. Rahamathulla, p. 11, p.11.
62 Ibid.
When General MacArthur was contemplating a push north of the 38th parallel, India’s representative in Peking, Sadar K.M. Panikhar, sent word that this action would bring the Chinese into the fray, a prophetic warning that Indian Government immediately conveyed to the US authorities, and that they ignored. ⁶⁴

Nehru was critical of the United States role in Korea, however he had expressed “there is another bitter truth we have to understand and realize today. In the fighting in Korea, the main burden of the United Nations has fallen on the forces of the United States. They have suffered greatly and I think our sympathy should go to them”. He was convinced that the Korean problem would be solved only with cooperation of China. He observed: “I can only hope that the negotiations between President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee will bear fruit and lead to some peaceful way out of this predication. In any case, I can not conceive of a peaceful solution in the Far East, unless the great country of China is taken into account.” ⁶⁵

In January 1951, India was the only non-communist state that voted against a US sponsored resolution in the United Nations General Assembly, condemning the Chinese invasion of Korea.

When peace talk on Korea started in July 1953, India and the United States remained disagree on the issue of exchange of prisoner of war (POWs), which again threatened to start fresh hostilities, India took a mediating role and prepared a plan to resolve the deadlock. Although the US finally accepted the Indian plan and Dean Acheson, the US Secretary of State, praised Krishna Menon for his dedication to peace. ⁶⁶ But it was unforgettable to Washington for a long time the firm stand India took against the United States on Korean issue. The US failure in Korea made Washington more suspicious not only of communist regimes but also of India. Thus, Indo-US relations reached a crisis stage. The experience of the Korean War left a legacy of suspicion between the United States and India that lasted for years. In the Indian perceptions, the Truman administration was using the Korean imbroglio to strengthen the anti-Communist for its policy of military bases, alliance, and encirclement in Asia against China and Russia. India also viewed the United States as not in a mood to resolve the Korean crisis.

⁶⁴ Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 21
⁶⁵ B. Rahamathulla, n. 11, p. 12.
⁶⁶ T.V. Kuntikrishnan, n. 46, p. 121.
Japanese Peace Treaty

In 1951, amidst the Korean issue, some bickering was caused between India and the United States due to India’s attitude towards the Peace Treaty between United States and Japan. India had received an invitation to the San Francisco Conference where the US, UK, draft of the Treaty was to be signed. India was opposed to the draft on three grounds. The Treaty did not award complete sovereignty to Japan and the US retained control over the Ryuku and Bonin islands. Secondly, the provisions related to the US-Japanese security arrangement were seen as “a threat to the peace of Asia”. India further objected to the draft since it did not provide for the return of Formosa to Communist China. The US, however, was not in favour of making changes since the issues were considered strategically relevant to its policy in South-East Asia and the Far East. The issue was further complicated by the fact that Mr. John Foster Dulles, the pilot of the treaty, had always been regarded by India as being antagonistic to its interests. Thus, India did not attend the Conference and added another irritant to those existing in the Indo-US relations.

However, all this does not mean that India and the United States failed to cooperate in any way. Despite differences in the political sphere, they continued to grow in the economic, cultural and educational spheres, it also made available to India huge quantities of food grains to tide over the problem of food-shortage facing the country. The US agreed to supply wheat to meet the acute food shortage in India, under the India Emergency Food Aid Act 1951. Economic relations between India and the US were initiated by the Point Four Programme on 28th December 1950, which provided for the investment of American capital in under-developed countries. It was followed in 1952 (5th January) by an American grant of developmental assistance worth $ 54 million. The United States also aided the First and Second Five Year Plans of India. The Technical Cooperation Mission (TCM) was established in 1952.

68 S.C. Tewari, p.15, p. 120.
69 Chester Bowles, “America and Russia”, In Foreign Affairs (India), 49 (4), July 1971, p. 638.
Containment of communism & The US arms aid to Pakistan

An anti-Soviet strategy was worked out by the US to “contain” the expansion of Soviet power in the fifties. Mr. John Foster Dulles “roll back the Soviet-tide” theory caused the initiation of US arms supply to Pakistan and its involvement in the US sponsored alliances. Since Independence of India and Pakistan, the United States had chosen Pakistan as its ally as India’s “quest for self-reliance” did not coincide with its designs.

In 1953, Eisenhower became the President of the USA, his Secretary of States, Mr. Dulles developed the doctrine of massive retaliation and under it, America strengthened the derive against communism through the strengthening of military alliance into other parts of the world. Cold War and power politics, through device of military alliance, came to dominate the US foreign policy. This was opposed to Indian non-alignment, which regarded cold war, military alliances as dangerous instrument. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, in particular, pursued his anti-Communist policy with an almost crusading zeal and relied primarily upon military responses. This was quite opposed to Nehru line of thinking.

Due to the policy of containment of communism, in May 1954, the Pakistan and the US signed the Mutual Defence Agreement Pact whereby the former undertook to provide arms to Pakistan for its defence. Later the same year, Pakistan also joined South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), a multilateral security pact sponsored by US, primarily directed against China. A year later 1955, Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact, which afterwards came to be known as CENTO. Subsequently, Pakistan started receiving huge military aid from America. This was strongly opposed by India. Nehru reacted to these development that “In effect Pakistan became practically a colony of the US... the US imagine that by this policy, they have completely out flanked India’s so-called neutralism and will thus
bring India to her knees. Whatever the future may hold, this is not going to happen. The first result of all this will be an extreme dislike of the US in India”.  

India strongly oppose the military aid to Pakistan by the USA on the ground that the US arms would harden the Pakistan’s attitude towards India and that it would provide encouragement to Pakistan’s leadership for attempting a military solution of the outstanding Indo-Pakistan disputes, particularly to Kashmir dispute. However, the US Government assured that the US weapons were meant to strengthen Pakistan to contain communism and that they would not be used against India. The US authorities asserted that “this is allocated to Pakistan for defence against Russia and China “.  

In a public letter of explanation to Prime Minister Nehru dated February 25, 1954, President Eisenhower reiterated: “I am confirming publicly that if our aid to any country, including Pakistan is misused and directed against any other, I shall undertake immediately and in accordance with my constitutional authority, appropriate action both within and without the United Nations, to thwart such aggressions”.

It is obvious that the US military aid to Pakistan caused great harm to India because that emboldened Pakistan to launch aggression against India and used American Sabre, Jets, B-57 bombers and Patton tanks fully in the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pakistan wars. The Government of India pointed out and protested over and over again to the US authorities that Pakistan had used the American weapons against India. Though aid was suspended to both India and Pakistan, no action was taken against Pakistan in spite of US pledges to the contrary.

In March 1959, the US- Pakistan military ties were further reinforced. They signed another Bilateral Agreement of Cooperation, which was in effect, a second Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement. This contained a pledge that in case of

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75 Ibid.
aggression against Pakistan, the US would take appropriate action, including the use of armed force.  

By forging close defence links with the US, Pakistan was seeking to change the regional balance of power in a way favorable to itself particularly in terms of acquiring parity in defence with India and assuming a strong posture on the Kashmir issue. The US was aware of the implications of its arms supplies to Pakistan for India. The US knew Pakistan’s limitations in serving as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. Still, it deliberately wanted to build down India by building up Pakistan militarily.

By this move of the US actually wanted the tension to continue, so that Pakistan could permit the United States to have more influence in Pakistan and even let the United States to have bases in the northern areas of Kashmir, under Pakistan occupation. Therefore, apart from many perceptual differences, the US military relations and aid to Pakistan became another stumbling block to the prospects of good Indo-US relations.

**India’s friendship with Soviet Union**

Against the background of these conditions, India drew closer to Soviet Union in order to balance the power in the region. This caused further bitterness in the Indo-US relations. USA looked upon India’s growing friendship with Soviet Union as a threat to its policy of containment of communism.

In June 1955, Nehru undertook his first official visit to the Soviet Union. He appreciated the Soviet passion for peace. Nehru visits were reciprocated by a visit by Khrushchev and Bulganin in November 1955. Nehru’s visit to the Soviet Union proved a great success. India’s authority was recognized by a great power. The Indo- Soviet joint communique noted that “the relations between the Soviet Union and India happily rest on a firm foundation of friendship and mutual understanding”. Even the New York Times admitted the success of Nehru’s visit, which wrote that Nehru was the first non-communist leader who was given the rarest honour of addressing a public meeting at Moscow “the most tremendous reception”

indeed. Successes of Nehru’s visit to the USSR, however, created some heartburning in the American press. During Nehru presence on the Soviet soil, New York Times warned him that he might be skillfully mouse trapped. 78

In February 1955, the Soviet Union signed an agreement for financing a steel factory. In April 1955, Nehru scotched the campaign of some Afro-Asian statesmen at the Bandung Conference to criticize the Soviet domination in Eastern Europe, the Bandung Conference adopted a declaration of ten principles, including Panchsheel enunciated by India and China in 1954 as the five principles of co-existence. 79

The Soviet leaders expressed their support to India on the Kashmir issue. At a press conference in New Delhi on 14 December 1955, they clearly stated that Kashmiri people regarded their territory as an integral part of India. The Soviet Prime Minister also reiterated that India’s demand for the liberation of Goa was justified and lawful. While the US that lined up with Portugal by saying that Goa was “a Portuguese province”. 80

From the above facts, Washington seems to be annoyed to see the success of Russians leaders. The editorial of the New York Times read as follows: The Joint Communique (issued by Nehru and Bulganin in Delhi) and Mr. Nehru’s toleration of Soviet anti-Western attacks on Indian soil have aligned him so closely with Soviet policies as to put a large question mark behind his professed neutrality. 81 On 14-15 December, New York Times criticized Nehru and questioned his “professed neutrality”. It published views of leading Americans saying that Nehru and Tito were both “aides and allies of communism.” The US daily further assailed the Indo-Soviet joint statement, which it said, was highly controversial. 82

80 S.P. Singh, n. 78, p.53-54
81 Moti Lai Govila, n. 55, pp. 231-232.
82 S.P. Singh, n. 78, p. 54.
The event of 1956: Brought attitude of each other changed

Two subsequent events in 1956 brought India and the United States together. The first event was that American intelligentsia debated over the neutral policy of India on the basis of its performance in the Hungarian crisis that Indian hesitation in criticizing Soviet intervention in Hungary. India also opposed to the American involvement in Lebanon in Middle East.

Another crisis that brought the two countries closer was the Suez crisis as India showed her appreciation for the American stand on the Suez crisis and condemning of Anglo-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt. This was viewed as 'compromising the neutralism' in favor of the communist bloc. However, Nehru's visit to the United States in December 1956 helped to clear the misconception the Americans had in their minds about India's foreign policy. Indeed, the visit of Nehru was a great triumph that the Americans understood the role of India's foreign policy as a serving bridge of understanding between the two blocs of cold war. Thus, all these events changed the former attitudes of the two countries towards each other and led to a rapprochement.

The goodwill generated from the US side was the US interest in India that evidenced by the support for amendment to the Mutual Security Bill of 1958, introduced by Senators Cooper and Kennedy. In 1958, U.S.A also accepted the Indian policy of non-alignment. There were general agreements with Averall Harriman when he said in 1958 that India's non-alignment did not mean that it was "neutral on those things which are basic to our own constitution and the principles on which our nation is founded."

In 1959, President Eisenhower made a state visit to India, which turned out to be far more than a routine affair. He received a tumultuous welcome. Eisenhower responded warmly. He declared that India and the United States "ought to be closer." His Indian visit made a deep impression on him. India was again turning toward America at a time when its previous euphoria regarding China and the Soviet

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64 M.S. Venkataramani, "Indo-American Relations", Commerce, Annual Number, December 1962, p. 46.
Union was being tempered by its difficulties with the two communist giants and by its apprehensions regarding the consequences for India of the developing conflict between China and the Soviet Union. Hence, Eisenhower's visit to India came at a more propitious time than had existed for several years. His visit undoubtedly helped to improve the tone of Indo-American relations, but its influence in improving the basic relations between the two countries should not be exaggerated. Ambassador T.N. Kaul's appraisal, written several years later, is probably accurate: "his visit created a very good impression and aroused great enthusiasm but it was based more on sentimental and emotional emphasis than on a mutuality of interests and outlook".\textsuperscript{85} The fundamental differences between India and the United States still remained.

**Liberation of Goa**

Throughout the 1960 Indo-US relations were marked by differing perspectives on issues of strategic importance. Although there were occasions when Indo-US relations warmed up, on the whole differences continued to persist. When Indian troops entered Goa and liberated it from the Portuguese rule in December 1961, the US, under Kennedy Administration, criticized its action. President Kennedy called it as "India's invasion of Goa" and deplored it as "most unfortunate". When the UN Secretary Council discussed the issue of Goa, the US mounted scathing criticism of India for using force and violating the UN Charter. This came as a rude shock to India and created bitterness in Indo-US relations. Fortunately, however, the Goa issue was not dragged on and the two countries continued their attempts to co-operate in the 1960s.

Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, wife of President Kennedy, visited India during the Holy Festival which is known for its fun and frolic.\textsuperscript{86} Thus, good relations were continued. Another factor that made it possible for India to overlook American opposition to India on the Goa issue was the American help to India, after the Chinese aggression of October 1962.

**Indo – China Border War 1962: New era of Indo – US relations**

\textsuperscript{86} R.C. Hingorani, \textsuperscript{36}, p. 37
During the Chinese aggression in 1962 the United States gave a substantial military and economic aid to India. President Kennedy himself was in favor of military assistance to India to thwart China's incursion. On 14th November 1962, an Indo-US military agreement declared China as the enemy and provided for American and British assistance in the event of Chinese air attacks. Emergency shipments of military equipment worth $70 million were airlifted to India. In December 1962, Washington provided emergency military aid worth $120 million to India, fifty per cent of which was meant to equip six Indian mountain divisions. The US also signed an agreement with India in 1964, in spite of Pakistan's objection, for building and modernizing ordnance factories.

Though the US assisted India in the 1962 war, India never offered any support to the US in its programmes of containment of communist. However, the goodwill generated during the 1962 war led India into agreeing to support the US in its effort to defend South-East Asia, if attacked by China. Mr. Nehru, granted landing and refueling facilities to the U-2 planes of their way into Tibetan airspace. In the early months of 1964, the US was also allowed to install a remote sensing device operated by a nuclear battery near the peak of Nanda Devi in the Himalayas, to secure information about the development of missiles by China. In 1963, both the countries also signed an agreement by which America agreed to provide 8 million dollars to India for setting up of an Atomic Power Plant at Tarapur. It also agreed by 30 years treaty to supply enriched uranium to India. This was to be used as atomic fuel in the Tarapur plant. India as such was the number one recipient of US non-military foreign aid to all countries during the period 1959-65. However, if economic assistance is computed on a per capita basis, India has continually received less support than other developing nations. As regard military program authorization for India has always fallen below other countries (e.g., Pakistan, Turkey, Israel, Taiwan, South Korea, and Thailand).

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88 Chester Bowles, n.69, p.640.
89 M.G. Gupta, n. 87, p.246.
However, in spite of a high point in the Indo-US relations. The American moral and material help to India during and after the Chinese Aggression created an atmosphere in which it seems like a sign for a distinct improvement in Indo-US relations.

But even in such ideal atmosphere, Indo-US relations continued to suffer because of certain negative developments. The United States did not offer help to India without putting indirect pressures and precondition. It was under American pressure that India had to open negotiation with Pakistan over Kashmir. The differences between India and the United States over Vietnam issue, which India openly opposed and criticized the US policy that India viewed it as a policy to support colonialism. With the above factors along with the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963, the chance of improvement of Indo-US relations was reduced.

After the death of Nehru in May 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri had become the Prime Minister in June 1964. During Shastri era, Indo-US relations were making slow but definite progress. This was due to the maintaining of liberal policy towards India under Johnson administration as had been initiated by President Kennedy. The December 1963 agreement regarding the supply of enriched uranium fuel for India's Tarapur Atomic Power station and continued American food aid to India had made the atmosphere healthy for the growth of Indo-US relations. However, there were two major sets back in the relationship during Shastri era, a short period of 18 months in power. Firstly, Vietnam issue and secondly the 1965 War between India and Pakistan.

Vietnam War

When American involvement in Vietnam greatly escalated and bombed over North Vietnamese position in 1965, this move was very strongly opposed and criticized by India. To Vietnam issue, India was a firm supporter of the liberation of Vietnam and unity of Vietnam. It believed that the future of Vietnam should be settled according to the wishes of the people of Vietnam and no nation should

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attempt to impose a particular system on Vietnam. But American was greatly interested in keeping Vietnam away from communism. American as such came out to help the French, and later on the Bao Dais Government. This was strongly resented by India because it showed the American support for colonialism. Indo-US relations became very sharp when the President Johnson refused to receive Prime Minister Shastri in USA in May 1965.\(^{93}\) The result of this American decision was regarded as an insult to India and gave rise to the strong anti-US feeling in India.

**Indo – Pakistan War 1965**

In September 1965, the second Indo-Pakistan war broke out. In fact, it was the massive stockpile of US weapons in Pakistan that had emboldened it to attack India and settle the problem of Kashmir militarily. According to Stephen P. Cohen, “the transfer of US arms to Pakistan undertaken in mid-1950s had become a Pakistan asset and an Indian problem by 1965”.\(^{94}\) The US weapons, most notably the M-47 and M-46 Patton Tanks, F-86 Sabre aircraft, F-104 Super Sonic fighters B-57 light attack jet bombers were all used against India during this war.\(^{95}\) India, therefore, strongly protested to the US Government that Pakistan used American arms against India despite the assurance of President Eisenhower to India that these US arms to Pakistan would in no way be used against India, but if they were, the United States would take an action to prevent its misuse. Amidst strong Indian protests the US cut off its military and economic assistance to both India and Pakistan except the food aid to India under P.L.480. The Indian Government was angered that the US without taking into account which country was wrong, equated the aggressor and the aggressed party by cutting off aid to India and Pakistan simultaneously.\(^{96}\)

The role of the Soviet Union during the fighting and after the war was more appreciated in India than that of United States. India and Pakistan accepted a Soviet offer to bring the two countries together in the Soviet city of Tashkent. Both India

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\(^{95}\) Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 30.

\(^{96}\) A. Appadorai and M.S. Rajan, n. 77, p. 242.
and Pakistan finally agreed to the so-called Tashkent Declaration. After short time of signing Tashkent Declaration, Lal Bahadur Shastri had died of a heart attack at Tashkent.  

Under Mrs. Gandhi: Relations reach to the lowest ebb

After the sudden death of Shastri, Mrs. Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister in January 1966. During her period also the process of developing close relations with super powers continued. As such, she was able to secure large financial and military assistance from USA and cultivated intimate relations with Soviet Union, which culminated in the conclusion of Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1971. During her period also witnessed a great tilt toward the Soviet Union and somewhat cooling of relations with the United States.

In March 1966 President Johnson invited Mrs. Gandhi to visit USA for improving relations between the two countries and for future cooperation. However, in the same month, the United States announced of a decision to resume sales of certain “non-lethal” military equipment again to India and Pakistan. India was, therefore, quite critical of this US decision because India was of the view that the United States would adopt a policy of pro-Pakistan again as it was. However, on March 28, 1966, Mrs. Gandhi visited America as President Johnson invited. At the White House dinner in honor of Mrs. Gandhi, Johnson proposed that an Indo-US Education Foundation be established to be financed mainly from counterpart funds credited to the US government from the Rupee that had accumulated from the sale of PL480 shipment of food-grain. But when she returned to India, she found that there was a great deal of opposition to the proposed foundation, and in July, by mutual consents the much-publicized plan was quietly shelved. One tangible outcome of the visit was that the US government approved an emergency shipment of 3.5 million tons of food-grains to India to relief a serious food shortage in addition to the 6.5 million tons that had already been approved for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1966.  

97 Norman D. Palmer, n1, p.30.
In 1966, after Mrs. Gandhi’s visit to the United States till 1967, the relations between the two countries were not so friendly due to some factors. First, the devaluation of the Rupee in 1966, which Mrs. Gandhi yielded to devalue it according to the advice of the US government and the World Bank on the ground that this currency was greatly overvalued and, therefore, particularly weak in world markets. Thus, the Indian government announced a huge devaluation of 36.5 percent of the Rupee. As a result of adverse affect of India’s export and import. It is disappointingly for India that neither the World Bank nor the International Monetary Fund nor the United States nor any other country gave the kind of extra assistance to India. Hence Mrs. Gandhi herself came under considerable criticism in India for the drastic devaluation and its consequences, and so did the United States and the World Bank, which was often called an American front. The experience apparently strengthened Mrs. Gandhi’s resolve to resist American and other foreign influence and to emphasize a policy of nationalistic self-reliance. The greater strain on Indo-US relations came in the fall of 1966. India’s still openly opposed the US policy towards Vietnam and criticized the US policy of resuming military assistance freely to Pakistan. In the same year, Mrs. Gandhi visited Soviet Union and agreed to call the policy of President Johnson as “imperialists in South Asia” in a joint communiqué. Indo-US relations grew increasingly distant. When the government of India began to sign economic cooperation pacts and trade protocols with Soviet-bloc nations in 1967, India also strongly criticized US policy towards Arab-Israel conflict during the six days Arab-Israel war. Mrs. Gandhi was present in Moscow for the celebration of the anniversary of the Russian Revolution in 1967.99 All these factors had kept the relations between the two countries cool and without warm during the early stage of Indira Gandhi.

India says no to NPT

During Mrs. Gandhi’s period, the United States and the Soviet Union worked together to shape the Non - Proliferation Treaty in an effort to bar further proliferation. Although India came under heavy pressure from both countries to adhere to the NPT, New Delhi in the end refused. The policy debate in India focused on a number of issues, but two were primary. First was India’s contention that the

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99 Ibid., pp. 31-32

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NPT was an “unequal” arrangement between nuclear haves and have-nots. In contrast to the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, which India signed and which imposed obligations on all parties, New Delhi found the NPT a one-sided affair. Only the have-nots had to make concessions, forgoing any further prospect of developing nuclear explosions, even for peaceful purposes, and had to accept safeguards on all nuclear facilities. The Indians complained that the nuclear weapons states—the haves—neither moved toward disarmament nor placed their own nuclear facilities under international safeguards. Secondly was Indian concern about the threat a nuclear China posed, especially in the hostile atmosphere that prevailed after the 1962 Sino-Indian War. New Delhi found the NPT silent on the question of security guarantees for non-nuclear powers against the threat of nuclear attack. However India maintained a position of ambivalence. Its refusal to sign the NPT kept open the nuclear option. Thus, the question of signing NPT remained an irritant in Indo-US relations for many years.

**US resumed arms sale to Pakistan**

In 1968, to prevent Pakistan’s growing dependence on Communist China, the United States resumed arms sales to Pakistan. The ‘indirect sales’ of M-47 tanks and transport aircraft to Pakistan through Italy, Turkey and Iran by United States was arranged to avoid India’s criticism. From 1969 onwards, the United States tried to come closer to Pakistan as well as China. The US decision to resume arms aid to Pakistan was prompted by two factors—firstly, the former wished to use the Peshawar airbase for surveillance purpose and secondly, she wanted Pakistan to provide ‘bridges’ for friendly relations with China.

After Richard Nixon became the President of the United States in 1969. His prejudices against India and preference for Pakistan have been mentioned. This new element was introduced in the situation when the new President started taking step to normalize relations with china, in which he incidentally took Pakistan’s help. For India this meant that it would not only have to contend with a more pro-Pakistani

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US administration but also that India could no longer count on US support against China. In fact, on the eve of Henry A. Kissinger’s visit to Peking in July 1971, Washington indicated in clear terms that in case of Chinese intervention in India-Pakistan war, New Delhi should not expect any US help.\(^\text{102}\)

**India’s Bond with Moscow**

Throughout Mrs. Indira Gandhi era, Indo-US relations were very strained and even reach to the lowest ebb. This was due to many factors. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in 1971\(^\text{103}\) became another irritant factor in Indo-US relations. America viewed India as a pro-Soviet country. The US continued arms supply to Pakistan till the end of 1970, which caused considerable tension in India. The Indian government against this aid on the ground that these arms would disturb the peace and stability of the sub-continent, as aggression committed against India in the past by Pakistan were made possible by the US arms.\(^\text{104}\) These arms were also used against India during Indo-Pakistan War in 1971.

The Indo-Soviet relations had become closer as a consequence of the Sino-Indian War, the Indo-Pak War and the Sino-Soviet schism. However, India had not conceded to Mr. Brezhnev’s proposal for an Asian Security Arrangement. In August 1971 a reversal was witnessed in India’s policy due to the growing Sino-American relations, Mr. Kissinger’s visit to China and the possibility of another Indo-Pak war due to the East Bengal crisis. India entered into a “Mutual Assistance Pact” with the Soviet Union,\(^\text{105}\) to secure itself from China as well as provide a boost to its trade. Soviet Union becomes India’s major supplier by providing fighter aircrafts and warships at low prices, arranging for technology transfer and establishing “generous” licensing agreements.\(^\text{106}\) The US condemned the Treaty since it compromised India’s non-alignment as well as enhanced its military capability to assist East Pakistan and cause a division of Pakistan. The Indo-US relations, thus, reached their lowest point due to the Treaty.


\(^{106}\), Daryl A Plunk "A Changing India’s Opportunities for the United States", Asian Studies Centre Backgrounder, 49, 4 August 1996, p.4.
The subsequent exchange of visits between India and the Soviet Union, including those of Mrs. Gandhi, Russian President, Mr. Podgorny and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Nikolai Firyubin, continued to rouse American suspicion. Thus, the bond between New Delhi and Moscow emerged as a major irritant in Indo-US relations from the early 1950s and continued to condition them till the time of Mr. Reagan assumed Presidency.

**Indo – Pak War of 1971**

In 1971 the Indo-US relations reached the lowest ebb due to the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. During the Bangladesh crisis, in the early stage, India was careful not to interfere on the ground that it was an internal affair of Pakistan. However, the inhuman atrocities of Pakistani soldiers that took innumerable innocent lives became a question of human rights to which India could not remain indifferent.

Due to the endless problems of the refugees from east-Pakistan to India, India became a direct party in the problem. Many members of parliament including member from the opposition side pleaded with the government to recognize Bangladesh as an independent country and to extend more support to the Mukti Bahini forces fighting for freedom. The US tried its best to end the crisis through a peaceful settlement, which however would be favorable to Pakistan. It was thus that even the West Pakistan atrocity escalated in East Bengal. The US refrained from condemning Pakistan and endorsed the view that the crisis was an internal matter of Pakistan.

As Pakistan has deployed troops, India also did the same for self-defense on her side of the borders. Therefore, when the US proposed for the withdrawal of troops on both sides, India turned down the proposal on the plea that Pakistan military bases were close to the border while India was located far behind. With

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107 Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, pp. 48-49.
110 S.R. Sharma, Bangladesh Crisis and India's Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Young Asia Publication, 1978), p.221
these skirmishes, army deployments and Pakistan’s continued an atrocity in East Bengal, the stage was set for another Indo-Pakistan War.

The serious situation between India and the United States had already started a week before the war breakout in the Indian sub-continent. The US rushed plane loads of arms to Pakistan on 29 November 1971 to provoke India much before to war breakout between these two countries on 3 December 1971.111 The US suspended arms supplies to India with immediate effect and also cancelled other commitments made earlier.112

When the war breakout, the American stood in favor of Pakistan become clear as ever, the US described India as an aggressor in the war and condemned Indian acts. The US opposed to India and did all that it could do for Pakistan at the United Nations.113 Nixon abruptly terminated the whole US aid to India. India did not however, succumb to the US pressure. In a swift move, it recognized Bangladesh on 6 December.

The US continued its arms supplies to Pakistan. Though, formally it had stopped doing so. It sent them through Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Turkey.114 India reacted very sharply to this American military aid to Pakistan especially during wartime. The US did not take any heed but Nixon instead appealed to the Security Council on 12 December to take emergency action to halt the fighting and asserted that “East Pakistan is virtually occupied by Indian troops”.115

When Pakistan was likely to be defeated, the US decided to interfere in the war, almost directly by ordering its Naval Task Force of seventh fleet led by world’s biggest aircraft carrier enterprise to the Bay of Bengal on 13 December 1971. This posed a direct threat to India security. The US threat was averted somewhat by the Russian warships that trial close behind. But, before the enterprise could get into action, the West Pakistan forces had surrendered in Bangladesh. The reaction in

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113 Ved Vati Chaturshreni, Indo-US Relations, (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 270-271., See also B. Rahamathulla, p. 11 , p. 44
114 S.P. Sharma, p. 110, pp. 234-35.
115 V.P. Dutt, India’s Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1987), p. 103.
India from all sections of the people was however most bitter procession, demonstrations, slogans, new reports and resolutions against the sailing of the Task Force were recorded against the US military imperialism in Asia. Thus the Bangladesh crisis led a wide gulf in Indo-US relations bordering an almost direct confrontation between the two countries.

**Relations after the War**

The US policy towards South Asia after the war was directed towards promoting stability in the region and to prevent the Soviet Union from acquiring of US interest. It, therefore, advocated the idea of regional reconciliation including the Normalization of Indo-Pak relations because “encouragement of turmoil would invite the involvement of outside power”.

Even though both India and USA wanted to restore good relations and for the recognition of Bangladesh, the US finally accepted the new reality on the subcontinent. President Nixon on May 1973, stated in his foreign policy statement to the American congress: “India emerges from the 1971 crisis with new confidence, power and responsibility”. The US respects India as major country, we are prepared to treat India in accordance with its new status and responsibilities, on the basis of reciprocity because India is a major country, her action on the world stage necessarily affects our interest. Thus due to this statement, the US were keen to improve relations with India and accepted India’s role in world politics and recognized the importance of India as a major country.

Meanwhile, the United States officially announced in Washington on 14 March 1973 that the US had resumed sales of non-lethal military equipment and spare parts to both India and Pakistan. The US, however, made it clear that it had no intention to increase arms race in South Asia. India reacted sharply to this move and reiterated that any resumption of American arms supply to Pakistan would be a negative factor in normalizing India’s relations with both of them. The then India’s External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh, said in the Rajya Sabha on March 14, that

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116 Ved Vati Chathushreni, p. 113, p. 274.
any attempt to rearm Pakistan would impede the implementation of Simla Agreement (the agreement which signed by both India and Pakistan on July, 1972, with a view to end the strained and tense environment between them after 1971 war). He explained that “US military assistance to Pakistan had been a principal cause of strained relations between India and US as it encouraged anti-India and militaristic policy to Pakistan”.  

In October 1974, the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger visited India. During his visit, he stated that “the US had given up the policy of building Pakistan in parity with India”. But soon after his return, Washington announced a new arm supply program with the declared purpose of redressing the balance between India and Pakistan. However, Kissinger’s visit was quite significant despite its coolness in that “it offered an opportunity for redefining the priorities for Indo-US relations”. It may be noted that by the end of the 1974 Indo-US relations were once again on its normal track. This had been facilitated by Ambassador Daniel P Moynihan’s efforts that piloted the agreement between India and the United States, which resulted that the US agreed to write off 2/3 rd of India’s estimated debt of $3 billion rupees earned by the United States by sale of PL 480 wheat to India. Ambassador Moynihan was also reported working on a new US aid programme to India and it was announced that a $75 million US assistance program to India would start in summer of 1974. On 27 October 1974 Henry Kissinger also arrived in New Delhi and signed an agreement with Foreign Minister Chavan to establish Indo-US Commission for economic, commercial, scientific, technological, education and cultural cooperation. These good trends were, however, interrupted by differences and disputes between the two countries over Vietnam, Diego Garcia, CIA (indulging in various anti-India activities), and resumption of US military supplies to Pakistan in March 1973.

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121 V.P. Dutt, p. 115, p. 107.
124 Ibid., 27 April 1974.
India & Diego Garcia

During President Nixon era, India resented US decision to establish a naval-cum-communications station on a small British held island of Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean. This base, which was proposed to cost $29 million opened by the US Navy in 1973. Initially, it proposed to be manned by 274 Navy personnel and was to have a radio station, 8000-ft runway and a small harbor. It was later disclosed that base would be able to accommodate aircraft carriers and KC-135 tanker planes that were used to refuel B-52's, would ultimately cost $75 million and the runway would be extended to 1200 feet and the harbor would be made large enough to handle carrier tank force. In addition to the various US arguments in supporting to establish this base, it has been pointed out that there is “the vital necessity having a demonstrable US capability in the Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf area” and that it would serve as “reinforcement” for US efforts to bring the parties to the conflicts in this region to the peace table. In this connection other US attempts to bring peace in the intra-regional disputes of such as in Indo-Pakistan conflicts of 1965 and 1971 have also been mentioned. Keeping in view the US naval moves against India during 1971 Indo-Pakistani war all this cannot but cause anxieties in New Delhi. The Government of India has, therefore, pleaded to keep Indian Ocean as a ‘zone of peace’ and has expressed concern as well as protested to building of the Diego Garcia base. 126

India’s Nuclear and the US Reactions

The United States was also critical when India exploded on 18 May 1974 an underground nuclear device for peaceful purposes at Pokharan, which known as ‘Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE). There was a high-level interagency review of US aid to India as a result of this explosion. 127 India emerged as the sixth nation to conduct such a test. One reason, which imposed India to conduct test was that China also possessed and emerged as the fifth nuclear power nation, which posed a threat to India’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. India felt the need to conduct the nuclear program against a threat imposed by her neighbors- Pakistan and China. The

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126 Ibid., pp. 188-189.
old US- Pakistan relationship and the new US-China-Pakistan relationship appeared to India that posed a threat of enrichment.  

Government of India in its official announcement made it clear that it had “no intention of nuclear weapons” while speaking to newsman Mrs. Gandhi reiterated, the government’s strong opposition to military used of nuclear devices. She made it clear that India’s “nuclear program was designed for peaceful uses”. The Indian Atomic Energy Commission declared: “it was the part of the program to keep India a breast of development in underground explosion technology, particularly with reference to its use in the field of mining and earth moving operations”. Pakistan also reacted sharply that the people of Pakistan would be ready to offer any sacrifices and even eat grass to ensure nuclear parity with India.

Both the American officials and press were outraged by the Pokhara experiment and reacted rather angrily to the so-called nuclear proliferation. The US news, media, the conservative, the liberals, the writers, the cartoonists and the commentators condemned India for its over ambitious and audacious move. They regarded it as “moral and political sins”, “national hypocrisy” and “callous endangerment of humanity”. The US officials were of the view that the development of India’s nuclear capacity could disrupt Indo-US relations at a time when they are beginning to improve. They felt that questions would be raised in congress about New Delhi economic aid. As one of the official said “I do not see how this is going to grow more rice, which is what the India’s need”.

The US Senate decided by a voice vote to prohibit military aid or US grant sales of equipment to India except for military training purpose. The US also suspended the US economic aid, military assistance and sales credit to India to a combined total of $50 million, $25.6 million less than proposed by the administration. The officials had also suspended the delivery of uranium fuel to India, despite the Tarapur Atomic Power plant for over 30 years in accordance with

128 V.P. Dutt, p. 115, p. 111
129 Balwant A. Dessi (ed.), Atoms for Peace An Explosion of India’s Nuclear Policy, (New Delhi: An All India Congress Committee Publication, 1975), p.4
131 B. Rahamathulla, p. 11, p.69
the agreement signed between the two countries in 1963 that the US promised to supply uranium fuel to India. This was in the wake of India’s nuclear blast in May 1974. However, due to the Indo-American Atomic Agreement, that the US decided to modified the supply of uranium fuel to India on the condition that it would be only for power generation at this particular plant and not elsewhere for any other purpose without prior US approval.\textsuperscript{134}

Mrs. Gandhi attempted to appease foreign critics of India’s test by offering to accept a complete ban on all nuclear tests on the conditions that all other states agreed to do so.\textsuperscript{135} America seems not to believe India as she assured that the nuclear program of India was only for the peaceful purposes. It was of the view that this India’s nuclear test would give rise to the nuclear arm race in the South Asian region specially Pakistan. The US were not happy with this experiment because by possessing nuclear weapon, India would be able to play more independent role on her foreign policy in the region and that would also lessen US influence in South Asia.

Thus, the nuclear issue was another serious factor, which gave much strain on Indo-US relations during the period of 1974 and remaining for many years to come as India has always refused to sign NPT and continued her nuclear program for peaceful purposes.

**Last phrase of Indira’s first term as Prime Minister**

During the last phrase of Mrs. Gandhi first term as Prime Minister, witnessed a major disagreement between the United States and India that caused a marked deterioration in their relations. The disagreement and friction of American criticized the declaration of Mrs. Gandhi to impose National emergency. The US opinion, like that of many Western countries, was sharply hostile and critical. In an unusual comment at an informal press conference the US President (at interim) Gerald Ford said, “it was very sad that 600 million people have lost what they had since mid 1940 as I recall, and I think it is very sad development and I hope that in time there could be a restoration of democratic process as we know them in the US”.

\textsuperscript{134} *New York Times*, 3 August 1974.
He added due to his preoccupations he would not be going to India in 1975. Ford’s comments were not extraordinary but were bound to create hard feeling in New Delhi. An External Affairs Ministry’s spokesman, reacting to the US President’s comments and obviously reflecting the Government of India’s annoyance and expressed amazement that the US President should have chosen to comment on the issues involved. There were many aspects of internal policies of America, he added, on which it was possible to comment, including the situation about civil liberties and extraordinary powers exercised by the executive under certain circumstances, but accepted norms and courtesies of international relations did not permit an official comment from outside countries.  

The New York Times, even, declared in an editorial in its July 28 issue that “Mrs. Gandhi authoritarian rule has subverted the largest democracy and has dishonored her father and Mahatma Gandhi”. Such criticism in major American journals was deeply resented by Mrs. Gandhi and her supporters. Indian Foreign Minister Y.B. Chavan charged that the state of emergency in India was misunderstood in the United States, largely because of “distorted and slanted” reporting in Western media.

Mrs. Gandhi herself came down heavily on the West in a speech at the Indian National Congress session in Chandigarh at year’s end and accused it of rank hypocrisy in its concern for the future of democracy in India after having played ball with every dictatorship in Asia. She had the impression that the West never displayed much friendliness towards India and that it was not particularly pleased with India’s independence stand in world affairs and her growing strength.

During this period there was also Indian resentment of the US decision to lift the embargo on arms shipments to India and Pakistan. Thus, during the last phrase of Mrs. Gandhi period (1975-1977), the American criticisms of Mrs. Gandhi’s decision to impose internal emergency in India, the US decision to lift the embargo on arms shipment to India and Pakistan, the increased Indo-Soviet co-operation, came as a very harmful and negative development of Indo-US relations.

136 V.P. Dutt, n. 115, p. 115
137 Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 79.
138 V.P. Dutt, n. 115, p. 115
147. Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 79.
However, the Indian decision to end emergency and hold elections, and the subsequent victory of the Janata Party were welcomed by the US as the noteworthy examples of the reassertion of democracy. At the same time, the assumption of Presidency by Mr. Jimmy Carter led the Indo-US relations on an upward path. This trend in the relations was mainly a result of “power considerations” on both sides. India had lost its dependence on Soviet assistance. It had created a new power arrangement in South Asia and achieved significant self-sufficiency in arms. Thus, India was willing to balance its relations with both the major powers. America was also ready to conduct its policy in the subcontinent without its concentration on the containment approach.

Janata Party came to power: Relations improved

The environment of Indo-US relations was a little changed and improved, when in the election of Lok Sabha in 1977 that reduced the Congress party led by Indira Gandhi to a minority for the first time since independence. It was now the Congress handed over the reign of power to a new party. That was Janata party led by Maraji Desai. Under this government, Prime Minister Desai and Foreign Minister A.B. Vajpayee were mainly responsible for foreign affairs during the Janata regime. Meanwhile, in the US Jimmy Carter assumed Presidency in January 1977.

The Janata period had shown some improvement in Indo-US relations. This was due to the US decision to resume uranium shipment, the cancellation of the A-7 bomber deal with Pakistan, and prospects of renewed bilateral economic aid. The United States also pleased by Desai’s prompt assurance that his Government intends to follow a policy of “genuine non-alignment” and would have no special relations with any country. This meant a desire to eliminate the tilt or special relations with the Soviet Union i.e. leaning towards the Soviet Union.

The hope of more improvement was high when Carter paid a state visit to India from 1-3 January 1978 and Desai paid a return visit to America in June. These visit helped in restoration of cooperation and friendship, though in a very limited

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140 Keesing’s Contemporary Archives, 8 July 1977, p. 28439
141 Baldev Raj Nayar, “United States and India; New Directions and their Context” Economic and Political Weekly, 5-12 November 1977, p.1905-14
way. America promised to increase economic cooperation. But, India did not agree to Carter’s request to sign the non-proliferation treaty, which India has always considered it as discriminatory treaty. President Carter got irritated and was reported to have told Secretary of State Cyrus Vance that “when we get back, I think we should write to him (Mr. Desai) another letter just cold and very blunt”.\(^\text{143}\)

**US stop supplying enriched uranium for Tarapur Nuclear Plant**

Carter had expressed fear that if India did not sign the NPT, the US might have to stop supplying of enriched uranium for Tarapur nuclear plant. The differences persisted between two countries on the issue of comprehensive safeguards and supply of enriched uranium by the United States. It became clear when, on 21 April 1978, Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) of America turned down a nuclear export licence. Justifying its action, the NRC cited the US Law, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act,” for its refusal to honour the contractual obligation to supply the fuel for the plant the USA sold to India”. It pointed out that India” had refused to accept comprehensive safeguards against extracting Plutonium from spent nuclear fuel”.\(^\text{144}\) These safeguards involved periodic and rigorous inspection under the aegis of International Energy Agency (IAEA).

India was very much resented this US move and Desai termed it as “breach of the agreement of cooperation (1963), and the contract of 1966. He insisted, “under the provisions of the contract, the US Government was bound to provide India with all the fuel for Tarapur up to 1994” He, however, regretted that even the promises made by Jimmy Carter in January “does not appear to have weighted with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in its deliberations over the matter”.\(^\text{145}\)

In 26 August 1978, America resumed development assistance to India with a commitment of 60 million covered by three separate agreements signed in New Delhi.\(^\text{146}\) It is pertinent to point out that earlier aid was suspended by Nixon Administration in the wake of ‘South Asian’ crisis of 1971. As the major issue that

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\(^\text{144}\) Ibid., p. 100.

\(^\text{145}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{146}\) Ibid.
was straining the mutual ties was related to nuclear proliferation and shipment of enriched uranium, this resumption of assistance failed to have much impact.

Apart from other issues, the question of Nuclear Non-Proliferation and supply of enriched uranium also got top priority. Desai “gave the assurance that India would not manufacture nuclear weapons even if it perished”. But, he made it clear that India considered the full-scope safeguards discriminatory by nature. On June 1977, Desai declared in Lok Sabha that “India would not undertake any more nuclear explosions” even for peaceful purposes. But, the USA did not satisfy with Indian declaration because USA wants India to accept nuclear non-proliferation treaty and to accept “comprehensive safeguards” on her nuclear installations. These comprehensive safeguards will enable USA to have veto on India’s future nuclear planning. However, India did not prepare to accept either non-proliferation treaty or comprehensive safeguards.

However, in March 1979, NRC approved the export of 16.8 tons of enriched uranium for the Tarapur power station. A major consideration, which compelled NRC to approve the supply to India was India’s “unambiguous warning that if the United States broke the bilateral agreement, India would free to do what it pleased and that all the safeguards, even for Tarapur would no longer be binding”.

**Charan Sigh replaces Desai**

In 1979, the political position was seriously undermined by disagreements among the top leaders of the Janata party. This became so serious that the coalition began to fall apart and in June 1979, Desai was forced to resign as Prime Minister, and then Charan Singh became Prime Minister. The new Prime Minister had different views from those of Desai on the desirable course of India’s nuclear policies. On August 15, he declared that Pakistan’s alleged plans to develop and test a nuclear device posed a threat to India’s “peace and security”. He warned that India might be forced to acquire a nuclear weapons capability “if Pakistan stick to its plans to assemble a bomb”.

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147 Ibid.
148 Ibid., p. 102
149 Ibid.,
150 Norman D. Palmer, p. 1, p. 85
Charan Singh was also forced to resign and although he stayed on as a caretaker Prime Minister until new general elections could be held.

Prime Minister Charan Singh’s Government lasted for an even shorter period, i.e., from August 1979 to January 1980. During his period, a significant event to his foreign policy was the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan and he had initial cut – and – dry reaction to the crisis.  

Soviet intervention into Afghanistan

The relations between India and Afghanistan had been cordial since Indian independence. The Janata Government continued the traditional policy and expressed itself in favour of Afghan independence. It supported the Soviet Union in its opposition of any foreign intervention in Afghanistan by the Joint Statement issued on 14th June 1979. When the Soviet forces entered Afghanistan in December 1979, the Desai Government had been replaced by the care – taker government of Mr. Charan Singh. Mr. Singh criticized the stationing of troops in a neighbouring, non – aligned country, which had proved a useful buffer between India and the Soviet Union, since it was contrary to the Joint Statement of June 1979. He expressed his deep concern at the substantial involvement of Soviet military forces in Afghanistan and asked for their withdrawal.

However, a shift was seen in the Indian position with the coming to power of the Congress, under the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi. A Foreign Minister spokesman stated on 1st January 1980 that India did not intend “to sit in judgment” of the Soviet action. This change adopted a pro-Soviet form when India presented the view that the Soviet troops had gone on invitation and would not remain in Afghanistan when they were not needed. It emphasized that the US decision to rearm Pakistan was a severe security risk for India.

151 J.N. Dixit, Across Borders; Fifty Years of India’s Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Picus Books, 1998), p.133.
152 Keesing’s Contemporary Archives, 12 October 1979, p. 20880.
As Indian opposed the foreign presence in principle and supported the withdrawal of troops but she did not regard the Soviet Union as the only offender. The blame was placed on the US, China and other powers which were attempting to convert Pakistan into an arsenal."  

This Indian stand was conspicuously different from the one held by the other Third World countries, and more supportive of the Soviet Union than that of Cube and other communist countries. Later India abstained from voting in the General Assembly on the resolution asking for "immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan." While dismissing the crisis as an 'internal matter' of Afghanistan, the US described the Indian reaction as "deplorable and alarming ambivalence and at worst a decided pro-Soviet bias".  

Thus, we can conclude from the above analysis that from the beginning of India's independence till 1980, the global and regional situations have played an important role in determining and conditioning Indo-US relations. Despite the common democratic tradition of the two countries, which provided an opportunity for developing co-operations in diverse fields, but the cooperation was possible only in the economic sphere in the form of the economic assistance, the two countries were unable to come close to each other because of differences persisted between them on major regional and global issues and policies pursued by them to resolve these issues.

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156 Norman D. Palmer, n. 1, p. 87-88.
157 Ibid., p. 186.