Chapter V

Summary And Conclusion
October Revolution was a radical transformation of world politics. The philosophy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels was translated into reality by Lenin. A proletarian revolution broke out on the political landscape of world, with two main doctrines:

1. Inevit-ability of world revolution; and
2. Lack of co-existence between capitalism and communism.

The capitalist States wanted to kill the new Soviet State into its cradle through allied intervention. This unwarranted intervention during the early days of Soviet Union developed subsequently a siege mentality amongst its leaders. Lenin gave 'New Economic Policy' so as to forestall the apprehensions amongst the capitalist and Soviet people. Nevertheless, Stalin responded to the hostile strategic environment by declaring socialism in a single State as an ultimate goal of Soviet ideology. In the context of hostile Western attitude, Stalin developed paranoid feelings and thus he resorted to pogroms of the opposition as well as the critics of his policies. The adverse impact of 'Soviet regimentation' in late 1920's and 1930's was that effective sovereignty of the national republics was reduced to a practical subordination to the dictates of Stalin. The constitutional guarantees were subverted in
the name of revolution and socialism. Notwithstanding his crimes, Stalin developed the power resources of the Soviet Union and the State achieved atomic parity with United States in early 50's.

One very ugly feature of Soviet domestic policy was artificial division of the ethnic groups and the Central Asia's ethrographic transformation. The ethnic divide was more oriented to keeping the nationality question in check and demonstrating that socialism had resolved the contradictions of the nationality questions. The death of Stalin dislodged the rock and worms came to light.

The de-Stalinization process combined de-centralization with some relaxation on domestic front. The 20th Congress of CPSU evolved the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, which ultimately led to modus - vivendo, between the two super powers and Cuban missile crisis became a watershed inasmuch as it brought the realization of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction). The terror of balance and deterrence evolved modus - operandi, gradually leading to enlargement of areas between Soviet Union and United States.

The Brezhnev period, although marked by collective leadership, centralized the political, strategic and
economic decision making. Its worst feature was
unwarranted intervention in Afghanistan, which proved
a bleeding wound for Soviet Union. Analysts point
out that in the ultimate collapse of Soviet Union, the
humiliating defeat in Afghanistan was one of the factors.

Thus Soviet system had reached a critical point,
where it needed a radical reformer to restructure polity,
economy and society of that country. Gorbachev was the
product of this historical juncture. Gorbachev shrewdly
understood that Soviet system needed a drastic surgery.

In order to survive as a super-power, he realized
that without a significant decentralization of economic
and political decision making processes and without a
broader democratization of the political system, the
Soviet Union was in danger of collapse. One corrective
measure towards the realization of this programme was
decentralization of decision making process. He wanted
to give an opportunity to long suppressed grievances to
surface and for national aspirations to focus the
quest for effective control over the potentially
significant local instruments of power.
The contemporary trends towards increasing nationalism and the breakdown of authoritarian regimes have increased interest in the problems associated with the transition to democracy in multi-ethnic states.

Intensity in inter-ethnic violence became possible in different republics, the first manifestation of its kind was witnessed in Alma Ata, followed in Armenia - Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh region, which later broke out in hundreds of localities, with a heavy bloodshed of life in communal violence.

Three aspects of Gorbachev's reform programme played critical roles in bringing nationalities problem to be forefront of politics. First and foremost was the impact of glasnost, which gave enormous impetus to the expression of long simmering grievances by legitimizing public discussion of issues that were previously taboo and allowing the Soviet media to become the setting for genuine public debate.
The democratization of Soviet society knocked down the old barriers and the latent set in motion perestroika (restructuring).

Democracy per se could not be a plausible explanation for the emergence of ethnic tensions in Soviet Union. The limited expansion of democracy coupled with the abandonment of socialism became the springs for the growth of ethnic conflict.

To strengthen the political system and to come out of stagnation - the two major policies that Gorbachev launched to fashion a more efficient and humane form of socialism were glasnost and perestroika.

Glasnost and democratization were, for Gorbachev, means to an end, that end was the improvement of Soviet economic structure. Economic reform was the Central feature of Gorbachev's radical transformation programme.
Glasnost enabled the Soviet people for the first time to speak the truth about their history and their lives. The policy of glasnost relaxed bureaucratic controls on information, broadened the parameters of permitted discussions and thereby enabled the Soviet citizens to say more, here more and learn more about their past and to make their contributions.

Informal activist groups began to be established. Industrial growth caused immense damage to the environment. Together with this the Centre and centralized administrative - command system were held accountable for the general economic and ecological damages in the USSR. So the glasnost enabled the Soviet citizens to lay claim to the public sphere after seven decades of exile from it. The people openly aired their grievances and the beginning was made with the formation of different Ecological Protection movements in different republics. For instance in Erevan (Armenian capital) protest demonstrations were held against the pollution on 17th October, 1987, but the demonstrators put Nagorno Karabagh issue at the top of agenda.

Glasnost has been one of the casualties of the
ethnic conflict in the Trans-Caucasus, just as it was
during the first ten days after the Nuclear disaster
at Chernobyl.

Commentators, both western and Soviet, put forward
a variety of causes responsible for ethnic struggle—
religious, national and socio-economic.

A growing number of articles, letters and roundtable
discussions in the Soviet media began to speak out
against an overcentralization that undermined the very
principle of federation, against economic ministries
that rode roughshod over local needs and interests,
against language and cultural policies that were
tantamount to forced Russification and threatened the
extinction of national identities, against the
multilateral of national histories and the repression
of national elites.

Several sizable nationalities demanded that
their status be upgraded. Other groups demanded
the restoration of their state structures abolished by
Stalin.

Initially in the Baltic republics as elsewhere
'glasnost' meant campaigns against safe subjects, such
as alcoholism and corruption. By 1987, however...
Within the republics, official organisations such as the cultural (e.g. writers) unions, unofficial and societies spawned by the new era, and a series of commemorative demonstrations helped to keep up the pressure on the authorities.

Informal and unofficial organizations devoted to the variety of political and social causes (with environmental issues high on many agendas) proliferated, aided by new communication technologies—helped them to produce the circulation of a myriad of newsletters etc.

Various groups, which surfaced, sought restoration of their religious, cultural and political rights. Within a period of three years a variety of popular fronts emerged in Central Asia. Their views and agendas differed: these could be characterized as political, nationalist or independence movements, although all had a political dimension.

Democratization had enabled the legitimate national movements to increase their activity and the number of their active members, and to strengthen their organization. This has allowed them to make the transition from small-
scale agitations and the filing of complaints in Moscow to organization of strikes, mass meetings, and campaigns of civil disobedience.

While these new political movements embraced a broad spectrum of causes and orientations, common nationality and shared historical grievances were among the most powerful of all potential bonds, and the scale of the national republics and density of contacts among their intellectual elites offered a natural basis for organization.

The ethnic problem in Central Asia assumed serious proportions since 1987 when violent inter-ethnic clashes rocked Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirgizistan. Ethnic conflicts have been influenced by ethnic seclusion, nationalist and religious resurgence, poor economic performance, crisis in the official ideology and particularly in one of its key components—inter-nationalism. Paradoxically this may have resulted from the fact that the Soviet Union had become increasingly integrated with the global community and is increasingly exhibiting features of such global trends as the worldwide ethnic revival. In the former Soviet Union nationalism, often combined with religion, seemed to be filling the vacuum left by the discredited official ideology.
The social conditions under which ethnic conflicts have developed in different regions of Soviet Union are one and the same. The key elements are: a diminished standard of living, a lack of confidence in tomorrow, fears of the loss of savings as a result of inflation, rumors of monetary reforms, the possibility of unemployment, rumors of resettling refugees of different republics and even the difficulty of locating even the most consumer goods. These factors in and of themselves caused sharp increase in social tensions, but were particularly unsettling in a society such as former Soviet Union, where the people had been accustomed to stability for decades. This crisis in the social sphere had led to strikes, mass meetings and clashes with government representatives, in a situation of acute politic-economic conflict, as well as to a significant increase in the crime rate. In areas of ethnic conflict the same conditions provoked or significantly increased the probability of extremist actions, clashes and the use of force.
Political conditions, within which ethnic conflict had developed significantly, changed since the launching of perestroika, and this had resulted in a significant aggravation of such conflicts. First of all, democratization and glasnost have done far more than simply enabled them to open discussion of ethnic situations and broaden the search for mutual acceptable solutions. Democratization and glasnost permitted the dissemination of nationalist and even openly chauvinist propaganda, as well as the publication tendentiously selected historical facts in the local media. This activity on the part of certain elements with the local ethnic intelligentsia has strongly affected the thinking of ethnic groups throughout. Stimulating the development of nationalism, or at the least, endowing it with an aura of respectability.

National, cultural, linguistic and historical injustice played a significant role, the cause of conflict in ethnic revival and the roots of ethnic conflict go well beyond these three causes. These not tied directly to ethnicity. Many of the causes of ethnic conflict are essentially socio-economic and political problems—has either acquired a national coloration in the multi-national mix of soviet society or that come to be evaluated from the standpoint of nationalism.
According to 1989 census the highest growth was registered in the Central Asian republics (22-34 per cent) followed by Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan (13-17 per cent respectively). The principal cause of the Muslim population explosion is the stability of the Muslim family. Divorce is rare, early marriage is frequent and women tend to stay home, which in turn allows them to have more children. Figures are revealing that an average central Asian Muslim woman expects to have between 5.93 and 6.26 children as opposed to two children norms the Russian woman.

All the Turko-Muslim nationalities of Central Asia, increased their share in the population of their home republics in 1970's. Since the mid 1970's the Russians and other Europeans have begun to move back to the Russian Federation from central Asia and Trans-Caucasia (Table 3) with significant acceleration.

Differential mortality also affected the ethnic composition of the population. There has been significant rise of life expectancy among central Asian nationalities.

Fertility played an important role in the ethno-demographic structure of central Asia. The total fertility
of turko-Muslim population of central Asia is highest in the world.

So the demography had a direct political ramification in Soviet Union where the peripheries for higher status were denied, led towards ethnic separatism. The titular nationalities due to their population explosion increased their representation in the composition of Parliament and different political institutions whereas Soviet representation decreased both in people of Soviet Deputies as well as in the Supreme Soviet.

The Soviet anti-religion policy and atheistic teachings resulted in utter failure and evoked negative sentiments which, in turn, are obstacle to cultural assimilation. In 1970's - 1980's were marked by an increasing tendency among Muslims of Central Asia towards national exclusiveness and ethno-centrism. Despite govt's anti-religious policies, Islam in Central Asia has shown a remarkable capacity to survive the most important factor responsible for the maintenance of strong Muslim influence of religion is the reported existence of underground movement of sufism and muridism.
Islam and nationalism are inseparable – interest of national culture never decreased, rather it increased with the penetration of Islamic awareness. Glasnost and Perestroika made easy the return of Islam. It had started earlier to the Launch of Perestroika & Glasnost. Underground islam led by Mullahs (part of Charkhans were converted into underground mosque) In early 1980's it was argued and beyond doubt that sovietization of the Muslim population had reached its climax, that could not play any vital role in the future development of Muslim Soviet. But all this proved failure, there took a religious revival, there is strict observance of different muslim rites and rituals and beliefs of different levels, religious marriages, performance of daily prayer and large attendance at mosques.

Soviet intervention had a direct impact on the religious awakening of the people. The first hand information collected and brought to central Asian troops who were initially deputed to Afghanistan. They (troops) before hand used to inform Afghans about the operations to be launched against them by the Soviets. The troops bought Holy Quran when they were being deployed for duties. Hizb-i-Islam played a significant role in smuggling islamic literature to Central Asia, Iran
also played its part. Different radio stations increased their national feeling and awakened the people.

Ethno-demographic and ethno religious factors had an impact and the titular nationality desired to gain privilege over non titular groups. This generated inter-ethnic discord the emotional and symbolic implications of ethnic preference in university admissions and at different professional institutions of indigenous populations with others escalated into broader conflict with others.

The disintegration of Soviet Union was effected through very causes, political, economic, cultural and social. The collapse of this super-power demonstrates that regimentation of a Soviet by any kind of political ideology could produce such disrupted tendencies that ultimately tumbled down even great power.