

CHAPTER - VIISECTION - IFOREIGN POLICY OF RAJIV GANDHIRajiv Gandhi's Political Grooming:

To grow up completely within the cultural and political milieu of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi was the unique privilege of Rajiv Gandhi. Nehru, follows Mahatma Gandhi in the building of the Indian heritage which is rightfully that of Rajiv Gandhi. Feroze Gandhi and Indira Gandhi are also part of this legacy. This heritage, combined with Rajiv's own orientation toward technology, Science and the industrial and agricultural potentialities of the largest democracy in the world developing toward the twenty first century, suggests a contemporary world leader of unusual stature. Rajiv's approach to both politics and statesmanship, moreover, incorporates basic human value and personal integrity with a wholesome pragmatism through which he seeks decent human living for the millions of his people for whom he openly expresses profound love and concern. He had been a member of parliament for three years. During his three years in parliament, Rajiv did not always agree with the judgements of his mother Indira, but he remained loyal to her. It is well to remember that Rajiv was practically born into the Government of India. Indira Gandhi was released from her imprisonment as a freedom fighter only three months before she gave birth Rajiv. His father Feroze, was still in prison when he was born. Though he was only a teenager when his father died, Rajiv Gandhi himself reveals best the influence of

Feroze on his personal character. From his birth, Rajiv lived continually in a political family. Eventually, he became a disciplined, hard working student of government.

Rajiv Gandhi was welcomed personally by his people as the best possible person to govern them, particularly in the time of crisis precipitated by his mother's assassination. The image of Rajiv presented to India was that of more than a new face as Prime Minister. He represented a new generation with possibilities for tremendous development, actually "the stuff of the Indian dream" To speak with his political companions in the first years of his Prime Ministership was to receive a surprising picture of his personal character. Rajiv Gandhi burst upon the Indian scene in December, 1984, as an individual different in personal character from Nehru and Indira. (1)

FOREIGN POLICY OF RAJIV GANDHI

After Indira Gandhi's tragic assassination in October 31st 1984, Rajiv Gandhi took over and soon after secured a massive electoral mandate to govern the country for Five years. In many respects this began a new era. The new Prime Minister was not a product of India's freedom movement and had no political and ideological baggage which his grand father or mother had. To begin with he made declarations about Modernisation, including computers and latest management techniques. His first visit to the U.S. created an impression that his economic policies may bring some transformation in India's foreign policy also. There was a feeling in some circles that this may adversely affect decades long political, economic and military relationship

with the Soviet Union.

India's emphasis on private sector economy and her search for high technology in every field, including defence production, might have tempted Washington to pull New Delhi away from Moscow. Subsequently the beginning of a definite and an overall improvement in Indo-U.S. relations has been recorded. But there is nothing to conclude that there is any move by Rajiv in the direction of a sudden change in the course of the country's foreign policy as chartered by his predecessors. India's traditional friendship with the Soviet Union continues to be the sheet anchor of her foreign policy under Rajiv's (2) stewardship.

Notwithstanding this initial situation, very soon it became evident that the compulsions of India's Foreign Policy were such that there was no scope of any major shift in Indo-Soviet relations.

To meet his official responsibilities, Rajiv Gandhi had to deal with the foreign delegations from the very first day he assumed the office of the Prime Minister. He decided to continue with the legacy of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the conduct of foreign relations. Soon after assuming the office of the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, ~~was~~ when he met eminent leaders and representatives of different nations of the world, made it clear that a India will continue to work for inter national peace, friendship and cooperation". He also pointed out that India and the Soviet Union had and continue to have common views regarding international peace, friendship and cooperation and hence it was logical that both India and Soviet Union should continue to work

together in future in international arena.

In his broad cast to the nation on November 12, 1984, Prime Minister said "we highly value the wide ranging and time-tested relationship with the Soviet Union, based upon mutual cooperation, friendship and vital support when most needed". Thus, he emphasised the valuable friendly relations with the Soviet Union that helped India in its political and economic development and also in maintaining her national integrity. The continuous stress on the historical India-Soviet relations led some to question the genuiness of India's foreign policy of non-alignment. Rajiv Gandhi took pains to clear the misconception. During his interview with Edward Bchr of News week International on January 3, 1985, in New Delhi, when it was said that there was a feeling in Washington that India's foreign policy was "titled towards the Soviet Union" Rajiv Gandhi immediately opposed the statement and quoted the Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who had said : "We are upright, we do not have a tilt". In his interview with the foreign journalists, Rajiv Gandhi had to repeatedly clarify India's closer relations with the Soviet Union. In April 1985, during his interview with John Elliot of Financial Times (London) he was asked to clarify future relationship between India and the Soviet Union. The Indian Prime Minister stated : "With the USSR, we have had a very strong friendship. They have helped in building our industries and they have stood by us at times of need and we appreciate that". Rajiv Gandhi, thus, highlighted the fact that India-Soviet relations are based on the policy of mutual benefit and reciprocity.

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DELHI DECLARATION

The Delhi Declaration of principles of a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world signed by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi on November 27, 1988 on behalf of one billion men, Women and Children of the two friendly countries (One-fifth of Mankind) is a historic document, whose significance transcends bilateral or regional frameworks. Its 10 basic principles mirror the New Political thinking and Philosophic approaches to the fundamental problems of interstate relations in the nuclear space age.

Before we look into the other salient features of the declaration it would be worthwhile to mention (the 10 basic principles set out in it. These are as follows:

- 1) Peaceful co-existence must become the Universal form of international relations.
- (2) Human life must be recognised as supreme.
- (3) Non-violence should be the basis of community life.
- (4) Understanding and trust replace fear and suspicion.
- (5) The right of every state to political and economic independence must be recognised and respected.
- (6) Resources being spent on armaments must be channelled towards social and economic development.
- (7) Conditions must be guaranteed for the individual's harmonious development.
- (8) Mankind's material and intellectual potential must be used to solve global problems.
- (9) The "balance of terror" must give way to comprehensive international security.
- (10) A nuclear weapon free and non-violent world requires specific and immediate action for disarmament.

ment.

Independent India's foreign policy of peace and non-alignment has had its genesis in the nation's ancient history and tradition. As one of the founders and front-ranking leaders of the NAM, India has always advocated that should be ruled out as a means of settling disputes, and that relations between states should be based on the principles of 'Panchsheel' and bandung, which are in consonance with the Leninist ideals of peaceful co-existence. ⁽⁴⁾ The motto of the Delhi declaration is that all must work together for the good of the individual, for growth and development, for the greater glory of mankind.

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

It is the Soviet Union who has been a friend and sympathiser of Non-aligned movement, since its inception. It has always regarded the NAM as an influential force of the modern times in its determined racism and has praised India's constructive role in NAM. Both India and the Soviet Union have opposed escalation of nuclear arms race and supported endeavours for peace. This became the basis of their mutual cooperation in international affairs. In 1984, during Indira Gandhi's Prime Ministership, the Heads of State and Government of Six Nations - India, Greece, Mexico, Sweden, Argentina, Tanzania. From five continents, called upon the nuclear weapons powers to halt the arms race, and appealed for the cessation of the testing, production and development of nuclear weapons and their

delivery systems. But this appeal was not responded to by the Western powers and United States of America. Rajiv Gandhi during his Moscow visit stated : "We are glad that the Soviet Union has responded promptly and positively to the appeal. (5) The new detente in 1988 was hailed by Rajiv Gandhi, as it vindicated the constant stand taken by the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) on matters of world peace and nuclear disarmament. In the changed environment, he wanted the non-aligned movement to edge the major powers forward on the road upon which they had already embarked and wanted them to be vigilant so that there was no slipping back.

The Indian Prime Minister tried to assess the roles played by the two super powers in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. Rajiv Gandhi also wanted the NAM to make the major powers feel aware that the new world order based on nuclear disarmament and peaceful co-existence could become a reality not through the power of the big two alone, but by the ~~wisdom~~ wisdom of all the countries. Rajiv Gandhi, thus, continued with the legacy of his predecessors especially on the practice of mutual consultation between India and the Soviet Union on different international issues. Both the countries pledged to work for peace and disarmament in and outside the UN and to strengthen the international mechanism, especially the UNO to enforce it.

Indo-Soviet relationship had acquired an independent momentum and raison detre based on high national interest of the two countries. The convergence and complementarily of interests of the

two countries had been time and again demonstrated during the decade 1966-76. For India particularly, this relationship subserved her vital interests and was of critical importance at many times of crisis for the country. Whether in the effort at industrialisation in order to become self reliant, or trade on mutually advantageous terms, or acquisition of modern technology in heavy industry or in the sensitive but vital field of defence supplies, or in the establishment of a defence industry which could gradually reduce India's external dependence, or shielding India from hostile big-power pressure, the Soviet contribution had been highly significant. The Western powers continued to ignore Indian national interests and tried to prop up neighbouring countries in order either to exercise pressure on India or to suit other interests in this region or in neighbouring regions. They took inimical stances whenever issues that touched the nerve points of India's territorial integrity arose. They were also not willing to provide the kind of assistance which in India's view would help her stand up on her feet. (6)

On most issues that concerned India and the third world, Moscow supported and voted with India and the third world at the UN and elsewhere. India certainly had established a strong and intimate relationship with the Soviet Union and would not treat Moscow on a par or as equidistant with the other big powers.

It is in this context that the relevance of the Indo-Soviet friendship and the Indo-Soviet Treaty has to be seen in the present day times. If it was the threat of a US-China-Pak axis which

brought about the Treaty, in the eighties this axis is considerably stronger and emboldened to embark on new adventures. Japan, too, has become an active partner of this axis. It looks that Asians in the eighties will be subjected to overt and covert tensions and conflicts. The Soviet Union, which has in its foreign policy almost identical goals with India, has stood firmly by our side. The Indo-Soviet friendship, therefore, has become the most important single factor in this region for stability and that explains why soon after Indira Gandhi's assassination, Rajiv Gandhi started consolidation of friendship between the two countries. What is of reassuring significance in the current explosive world situation is that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has again and again voiced India's concerns over the deterioration of the international situation and the growing threat of thermonuclear war. In his keynote address at the new Delhi bureau meeting of foreign ministers of the non-aligned countries he reiterated that India would do everything in her power to revive the spirit of detente, bring about real disarmament, secure dismantling of ~~xxxx~~ foreign military bases in the Indian ocean and make it a zone of peace. The stand of the socialist countries is almost similar. Again ~~xxxxxxxx~~ India has been supporting liberation movements and has been raising her voice against all foreign domination and racism.

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Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on a number of occasions has highly appreciated the peaceful policy of the Soviet Union which according to him, "comes out in favour of preserving peace and pre-

venting a new war", and that two at a time when the star wars programme enhances the danger of a nuclear war" and poses a threat to all states, including India. This shows that the basic objective of the two countries to firmly stick to the principle of peaceful coexistence has become more relevant.

NEW DELHI'S STAND ON AFGHAN ISSUE

India's stand on Soviet action in Afghanistan was reiterated on several occasions by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself. In an interview published in a Paris daily on 3 March, and reported by the Indian press, she said that "at stake" and when the Afghan rebels were being armed by West backed Pakistan, the Soviet did not have any other alternative then to intervene. "One of the real reasons for the crisis is the rapprochement between China and the US against the Soviet Union which feels encircled", Mrs. Gandhi added.

In a brief statement made before the Lok Sabha on 17 June, foreign affairs minister Rao that Soviet ~~max~~ action in Afghanistan was exaggerated by the outside forces and that aggression against this country still continued with the help of well trained and well-armed insurgents based on Pakistan territory. Referring to his recent talks with the Soviet leaders on the Afghan issue, the foreign Minister said that they expressed their "readiness to withdraw troops once a political settlement had been reached". From the account of India's attitude towards Soviet presence in Afghanistan, it becomes ~~xxx~~ evident that she looked upon it with enough

circumspection and moderation, because it was considered desirable in the enlightened self interest of the country. (8)

The new leadership of the both country. India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and General Secretary of the CPSU Mikhail Gorbachev exchange of views on matters of bilateral and international significance, including Afghan issue.

In reply to a question on the Afghan problem, the Prime Minister said that he discussed it with both Gorbachev and Reagan. He, however, stressed that unless the US gave firm guarantees of non-interference it would be difficult for the Soviet Union to withdraw her troops from Afghanistan. (9) As regards Afghanistan, the Soviet leader declared that "Six-regiments will be returned home from Afghanistan before the end of 1986He also said "If the intervention against the DRA continues" - Gorbachev warned "The Soviet Union will stand up for this neighbour." In a reply to a question at the press conference held on 8 August at the venue of the Mexico summit, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that the recent announcement of Soviet withdrawal of some troops from Afghanistan before the end of the year would reduce tension in that area.

At a separate press conference, held in our hotel, Lt. Gen. Boria Gromov, commander of the Soviet Military contingent in Afghanistan, stressed that the process of withdrawal of Soviet forces would be completed in nine months by February 15, 1989. (10)

India has a special place in the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. New Delhi recognises the legitimacy of the Afghan

Government, and is deeply committed to the independence and territorial integrity of a non-aligned Afghanistan. Events in Afghanistan are of immense historical and geo-political relevance to India. India has all along attempted to help resolve the Afghan crisis, and has provided economic and technical assistance to Kabul.

The talks held in New Delhi during the visit of Dr. Najibullah in May 1988 should be viewed as a part of the efforts which India is exerting to ease the tension in South Asia and other areas of Asia and the Pacific, while demonstrating Delhi's constructive and realistic stand on the settlement of regional conflicts. All through the years of the existence of the Afghan issue, India has favoured a comprehensive and just political settlement of the Afghan situation with a view to ensuring Afghanistan's status as an independent and non-aligned state. (11)

The Afghanistan issue created some difference of opinion, for India was not in favour of the presence of foreign troops and stood for an overall political settlement that would ensure withdrawal of Soviet troops as well as cessation of interference from across Pakistan's frontiers in the shape of material assistance to rebel elements. India's views on the undesirability of presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan were forcefully conveyed to Moscow privately, notwithstanding the restrained public stand. India had also supported the UN conciliation mission, but Washington's lack of interest in a political settlement frustrated any such likelihood.

NEW DELHI'S STAND ON AFGHAN ISSUE

Rajiv condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan requires special clarification. While a few of India's politicians and many journalists insist that Gandhi should "speak more plainly" and that he is too much concerned about "rubbing Russia the wrong way" a survey of Rajiv's own statement reveals a very definite stand against the Russian invasion. Certain dissenters believe that Gandhi does not condemn the Afghanistan invasion in the same ringing terms with which he attacks apartheid in South Africa. But Rajiv makes it quite clear that South Africa represents for him the last vestige of the absolute in humanity of racism. South Africa thus represents a unique situation as contrasted with all warfare or invasion in today's world. Moreover, since Mahatma Gandhi's searing attacks upon racism in South Africa in the late nineteenth century, India has held a special world position in total condemnation of racism.

Supporters of Rajiv Gandhi also add that India is vulnerable and needs the arms she can purchase from Russia; that a certain self-interest exists in the actions of every nation; and that India's self-defence calls for a definite but low-keyed condemnation of the Russian invasion on Afghanistan. Rajiv must protect India. The official position of the Indian government is the following. Russia maintains that the United States has attempted to destabilize and overthrow the established Government of Afghanistan. The United States maintains that Russia is an invader supporting a puppet government. India desires that Afghanistan determine its own

destiny through negotiation of a political settlement to insure no interference from anywhere outside of Afghanistan. India believes that the United Nations Secretary General can achieve such negotiation if the United States and Russia will improve their relations: distrust between the superpowers is Central problem.

Even a brief chronological check of Rajiv Gandhi's own statements clarifies his position on Afghanistan so lucidly that one wonders why the ~~many~~ misinterpretations of his position: For example:

- (1) India desires to "stop the interference and the intervention in Afghanistanbring normalcy back.....get the refugees back home and have a good non-aligned government in Afghanistan.
- (2) Both the Soviet troops" in Afghanistan and "interference from across the Pakistan border" must be stopped.
- (3) It "all the parties concerned can get together, "a "solution" is possible.
- (4) "Our position has been clear from the beginning and we have not shifted our position. "We are against any interference or intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and we would like to see it stopped"
- (5) India has stated its position on Afghanistan in 1983 and 1985. Intervention and interference must be stopped. I think nobody has even read what we have said for the last five years".
- (6) We want "a neutral, non-aligned Afghanistan".
- (7) Question "you want the Soviets out of Afghanistan?" Answer: "Yes".
- (8) It is really a problem between the United States, the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, who are the four countries involved in this particular dispute".
- (9) "I do not think we have betrayed the friendship of Afghanistan at all".
- (10) "India's position is not ambiguous. We

are against both intervention and interference in Afghanistan, and we would like Afghanistan to be an independent non-aligned state. (12)

Rajiv Gandhi with Western Reporters

Of all possible misunderstandings of India's relations with the major world powers - Russia, China and the United States perhaps the relationship most misunderstood by Western countries is that of India and Russia. Since Gandhi's accession to power, the question Western reporters ask him most frequently concerns India's supposed "tilt" toward Russia or "balancing act" between Russia and the United States. To read all of Rajiv's speeches offered at home and abroad and all his responses in press interviews over more than two years concerning India's relations with the superpowers in an enlightening experience. His answers to repeated questions concerning Russia have never varied! Yet the questions persist. The reasons that Gandhi's responses are not really heard seem to be the following: First, certain questioners believe that non-alignment is impossible, even where it is evidently successful; Second, these cross-examiners also suspect that if India does not always support their own judgements in voting within the United Nations, India is therefore opposed to them on all issues; third, politicians of certain countries believe that other countries must be "For" them or "against" them with regard to questions that concern their own positions of power. Each time that India votes against a certain American policy, for example, one is likely to read in the West that India "tilts" towards Russia. These judgements amaze Rajiv Gandhi, who wearily refutes them over and over again. He anticipates questions

concerning "tilting" and "balancing" even before they are asked only five months after his election, he responded to an American reporter in the United States." We have not tilted toward the Soviet Unionand we are not carrying out a balancing act between the United States and the USSR. We are being non-aligned. Being non-aligned means having the right to speak our own minds having the right to speak our own minds on every issue as we think correct. It is in a way raising democracy to a World level where every nation has the right to speak it's mind."

The very same ~~was~~ week, an article in U.S. news and World Report suggested that Rajiv was doing "a high-wire act between East and West". Gandhi explained patiently that India wants to strengthen relationship with both the United States and Russia. India desires the modern technology and free enterprise expertise the United States can supply to India. But this desire does not imply that India must disagree with Russia on every issue.

Shortly after Rajiv's election, Russia offered India 1.2 billion in Soviet aid, and renewed economic accord between the two countries ~~until~~ until the year 2000. On the otherhand, the United States is India's biggest trading partner. At the same time, India can not be happy about the billions in military aid given to Pakistan by the United States. Pakistan has used American military supplies to attack India three times since India became independent in 1947. Again much of the military weaponry given to Pakistan by the United States for the defense of the Afghanistan querrillas is

not the type of armement that can be used in the terrain of Afghanistan ! In the case of Pakistan, the United States continues its old error of supporting dictatorships which often eventually humiliate America. Some observers believe, for example, that the experience of the United States in the Philippines, Iran, and Chile is being repeated in Pakistan. In plain terms, Pakistan is in no sense the democracy that India is. Zia-ul-Hoq is in no sense a Rajiv Gandhi. Yet American leaders often can not seem to trust the democracy of the latest free country in the world.

As pointed out by S. Nihal Singh, it is unreasonable to think that India could become a Soviet dependency. One can not imagine Moscow suffering from such a delusion. India has its interests; the Soviet Union has its own. Moreover, the two countries are not in competition and they need not be. Rajiv Gandhi has stated that India has two approaches to Russia Geographical and Political. He adds : what can be learn from Russia's economic system? Undoubtedly it has certain good aspects. But it is impossible to govern India by a system other than democracyWe can learn from them (13) (the Russian), but we can not copy their system.

As for Rajiv Gandhi himself, he repeats consistently that Russia has helped India when India-needed help since back in the 1950's. Then insisting on democracy and non-alignment, Rajiv adds. "But we want to keep our option of individuality open. We stand by certain principles, certain ideologies, and we don't compromise on them, whether it is the Soviet Union or the United States.

Rajiv Gandhi and Non-alignment Movement

When Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984, Rajiv Gandhi assumed her role as Chairperson of NAM and planned the Eighth ~~summit~~ summit held at Harare in Zimbabwe, August-September 1986. The meeting was also the occasion of the twenty fifth anniversary of NAM. Rajiv declared this summit to be a watershed in its history as members reaffirmed their faith in "a world community, united for peace, disarmament, and development". Indeed, the Harare meeting did present a new and different NAM. Journalists who attended the ~~max~~ conference reported that Fidel castro appeared to be more gentle as well as older. Kenneth Kaunda, too, looked older, but more serene. Yasser Arafat was flamboyant as always, but strain and stress were visible in his countenance. Those in attendance were made aware of the dynamism and youth ~~of~~ of Rajiv Gandhi, Afterall he was twenty six years younger than Indira. Indian leadership had skipped a generation. Rajiv's speech as retiring chairperson of NAM somehow struck a chord of completion of a crusade for freedom and human dignity.

The non-aligned movement, Rajiv declared, is the road to peace through equality and peaceful co-existence; "From Belgrade to colombo through Cairq Lusaka and Algiers, from Havana to New Delhi, we have grown in numbers and we have gained in strength. Divergenæes, however, still persist. Gorbachev's desire to revive the idea of an Asian collective security system clashes with Gandhi's firm insistence on Non-alignment. Rajiv was either played down the idea of collective Asian security of distanced himself from it. And he has just as consistently emphasized the need for South Asian

Regional cooperation. The approach of the majority of member countries of SARC has been to keep South Asia free of the rivalry between the two super powers. It is also possible that India and Russia may diverge in the future on the question of the Indian ocean as a zone of peace. Rajiv agrees with both the united nations General Assembly and non-aligned movement in his interpretation of the IOZP doctrine. He favours the broadest possible interpretation of this concept, adding that "not only the Indian ocean but the whole world should be a zone of peace". A third possible area of divergence between India and the Soviet Union, although unlikely, is India's development of nuclear weapons capability if forced to do so in response to Pakistan's acquisition of the nuclear bomb. (14)

For the time being, Gorbachev has declared satisfaction with India's position of Non-alignment. And Rajiv Gandhi disregarding the risks of divergence, has slung firmly to his own position on Asian security. While the two super powers are once again involved in a cold war Rajiv knows that India can play an important role by "tilting" to neither side.

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SECTION - IIRAJIV AND THE SOVIET UNION POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

In its message of warm congratulations to Rajiv on his grand electoral victory in December 1984, the council of Ministers of the USSR re-affirmed its support to the Indian people. Hailing Rajiv Gandhi as a firm follower of the course of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, the Soviet Government expressed the hope that under his able leadership, the traditional friendly relations between India and the Soviet Union would continue to develop in all directions. (1) Kostantin Chernenko died on 11 March 1985. Rajiv Gandhi visited Moscow to take part in the funeral of the departed Soviet Leader. In his talks with Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU, the Indian Prime Minister expressed the hope that his country's relations with the Soviet Union would continue to develop. Rajiv Gandhi observed that Gorbachev was "a man of with a clear perspective". He observed that under Gorbachev's leadership the USSR would emerge stronger.

In May 1985, Rajiv Gandhi visited the USSR. He met Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the CPSU and both the leaders got a chance to exchange their views on many international problems. In a banquet hosted by Gorbachev in Kremlin on May 21, 1985, Rajiv Gandhi expressed his appreciation for the Soviet Union and pointed out the importance of Mutual visits of Indian and Soviet leaders in the post. He said "Every visit of a Soviet leader to India and of an Indian representative to the Soviet Union is a

further step in strengthening the close friendship that exists between our two great peoples and contributes to world peace. He further said "friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union are an Integral element of our foreign policy.

Our people regard the Soviet people as friends who have stood by them in times of need. The splendid record of India Soviet relations owes much to the vision and exertions of the leaders of both our countries over the last three decades. ⁽²⁾ The Soviet leaders told the Indian Prime Minister that they appreciated India's concern at Pakistan's acquisition of sophisticated weapons with its plan to develop a nuclear bomb.

On May 22, Rajiv and Gorbachev signed two documents basic guidelines for economic, trade, scientific and technical co-operation between USSR and India for the period ending the year 2000. As a result of these two agreements India got a massive Soviet credit of about Rs. 1100 crore to finance a package of important projects like the Kahalgaon thermal station with a capacity of 840 MW and a large number of open-cast mines to extract power generating and ~~making~~ cooking coals. The two sides would also cooperate in comprehensive prospecting of hydro-carbons using Soviet equipments and specialists in two mutually agreed areas in Establishing an institute to design coal-dressing factories, a working design section at the central institute of planning and designing coal enterprises, retooling the paterdikh coal dressing factory, introducing new technology, modernisation, and reconstruction in ferrous metallurgy

and machine building. Provision was also made for large-scale production cooperation as well as for participation of Indian organisations in building civil and industrial project in the USSR. These agreements provided for the participation of Indian organisations in Industrial projects in the USSR in a form and manner to be mutually decided in specific cases where such cooperation would be deemed necessary. The two sides considered cooperation in their joint ventures in third countries. ⁽³⁾ In November 1985, while coming back from New York, Rajiv Gandhi had a short stay in the Soviet Union. After coming back to India he made a statement in parliament on his foreign visit saying that he had an extensive and useful exchange of views with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev which carried forward the earlier discussion between them.

Speaking at the banquet he hosted for the Indian Prime Minister, the Soviet leader said that some thought should perhaps be given to the idea of an overall comprehensive approach to the problem of Security in Asia and possibly to joining the efforts of Asian states in this direction. Mr. Gorbachev concerned that it was not easy to achieve the goal proposed by him, but he also noted that the road to Helsinki was not simple or smooth either. "Here one could think of various methods to be employed, from bilateral talks or multilateral consultations to Asia wide forum, to be held some time in the future, for an exchange of views and a joint search for constructive solutions", He said. He believed that India, as a great power that enjoyed high standing and respect both in the Asian countries and throughout the world could play a very important role

in this process. "We highly value India's contribute on to strengthening peace and international security and to enhancing the role played in this respect by the non-aligned movement". There was considerable approximation in Indo-Soviet views. Rajiv Gandhi described his talks with Soviet leaders "extremely good" and said that the two agreements signed in Moscow were indication of the "friendly and growing relations" between the two countries. He believed there were "a lot of implication" in the economic agreement which covered a wide spectrum and will help both countries in their economic development.

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Another important milestone, as Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi described it, was the visit to India of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and Mrs. Rais a Gorbacheva in November 1986. The visit enlarged the area of economic cooperation and introduced New Philosophic elements in the identity of views on world peace and disarmament, although many questions about future developments in the region remained unanswered.

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In h'ss welcome speech at the Airport, Indian Prime Minister described the Soviet leader as "a tried and trusted friend" in "hours of need" and hailed Mikhail Gorbachev as a "crusador for peace." He further said that friendship between India and the Soviet Union was based on mutual respect Rajiv Gandhi drew attention to the India-Soviet relations that have remained stable and well-tested.

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From the long range stand point the two leaders issued a document entitled "Delhi Declaration on principles for a

nuclear weapon free and non-violent world". This declaration lays down 10 principles for building a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world issued on behalf of one billion peoples of the two countries, who constitute one fourth of mankind, it strikes an optimistic note. Its concluding paragraph says.

The gathering strength of the coalition for peace embracing the efforts of the non-aligned movement, the six-nation five continent initiative for peace and disarmament, all peace loving countries, political parties and public organisations gives us reason for hope and optimism. (7)

Mikhail Gorbachev also addressed the joint session of Indian parliament on November 27, 1986. He opined that fact that differences of socio-political system and ideology and other distinctions have not hampered the friendly dialogue between the two countries was extremely important as a guiding example for others. During Gorbachev's stay in India, Rajiv Gandhi reiterated the importance of Indo-Soviet relations and pointed out the common ground for its continuation. Before departure of the Soviet leader, he highlighted the fact that the India Soviet friendship was characterised by a deep appreciation of each other's aspirations, interests and concerns, it has gained depth and maturity with the passage of time, and it has remained firm and steady through the twists and turns of International politics. He believed that both India and the Soviet Union have not viewed this relationship only as a means to achieve mutual gain. (8)

Another milestone in Indo-Soviet relations has been the visit of the Prime Minister of India to the Soviet Union in July 1987 in connection with the inauguration of the festival of India in Cathedral square in Kremlin Mikhail Gorbachev said on 3 July : "We are opening to-day another remarkable page in the Chronicle of Soviet-India friendship". Once again during this visit, the two countries reaffirmed their determination to do everything to avert the threat of a nuclear catastrophe, and to promote a peace settlement of contentious political issues. The essence of this bilateral relationship was fully reflected in the statement issued by the political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee. The relevant para said:

The intention to steadily continue to pursue the ~~policy~~ policy of all round development of Soviet-Indian relations on the basis of the principles of independence, equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual benefit was reaffirmed. (9)

In contemporary international relations the position of the Soviet Union and India is far from ordinary. The Soviet Union is a super power, with all its attendant characteristics. India of course is in a different category. But its potential as a major power can not be denied. Apart from its territory, population and various kinds of resources, it has played an important role in maintaining peace and stability in South Asia particularly. It ranks among the top 20 nations in so far as industrial production is concerned, it has the fourth biggest military force in terms of scientific and technical manpower it is the third in the world. Thus

it is a relationship between two important powers. It is a happy coincidence that there is considerable harmony in their thinking on world affairs which is based on their respective national interest. Their policies with respect to peace and disarmament have many common points. There is also considerable cooperation in so far as economic development is concerned. That is why in India governments have changed, different political parties have come to power but our relations with the Soviet Union have continued to grow. On the other hand in the Soviet Union leaderships have changed but their views about cooperation with India have remained consistent. In a word, mutuality of interest has induced the two countries to continue to widen and deepen their relations during the last thirty years.

On his return to New Delhi, he was asked by the press reporters whether India was pushing towards the communist bloc as a result of the signing of the Delhi declaration with the Soviet leader. Rajiv Gandhi answered : "Not at all". He explained that India-Soviet relations were governed by certain principles like disarmament and non-violence which were basic to India's foreign policy. Rajiv Gandhi further said that the Delhi declaration had marked a new phase in India-Soviet relations. Rajiv Gandhi also referred to attempts by the Soviet Union to normalize her relations with China. He dispelled fears expressed in many quarters of India that in her attempt to normalise relations with China, the Soviet Union might overlook or neglect India's interest. Rajiv Gandhi emphatically stated : "I don't think that the Soviet talks with China will pose any problem for us.

It was from November 20-25, 1987 that the Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov paid an official friendly visit to India to inaugurate the Soviet festival of India. In a dinner meeting in honour of the visiting Soviet dignitary by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on November 20, 1987, Nikolai Ryzhkov observed about the India-Soviet relations that the recently concluded accords between the two countries have given new dimension to many faceted cooperation. Rajiv Gandhi in his speech at the dinner meeting observed: "Our relationship is a unique blend of stability and dynamism. The evolution of this friendship sustained over the years, arises from the mutually shared ideals of human equality and social justice. It is a friendship rooted in our common commitment to peace and international understanding. (10)

The year 1987 witnessed a more fruitful and closer cooperation between India and the Soviet Union. The visit of Rajiv Gandhi to Soviet Union in July 1987 and the return visit of Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov to India in November 1987 confirmed that both Soviet Union and India attach special importance to question of removing the nuclear threat, curbing the arms race, disarmament and the attainment of the tasks set by the Delhi declaration.

On November 18, 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the presidium of the USSR supreme Soviet arrived in New Delhi of a three-day official friendly visit at the invitation of the Government of India. In his ~~wix~~ welcome speech, president R. Venkataraman said: "We hail not just a worthy leader of your great nation but as a

world statesman of vision and courage who has made pioneering attempts to draw mankind away from the nuclear precipice", According to R. Venkataraman Mikhail Gorbachev has initiated a fundamental change in the climate of international relations by encouraging trust where there was mistrust and dialogue where there was stalemate. He described Gorbachev, as a Shantiduta ~~and~~ an ambassador of peace. He called perestraila in the Soviet Union as revolutionary in content and of global significance. He wished Gorbachev, all success in implementing perestrake a second revolutionary in Soviet Union since the October Revolution of 1917. He also lauded Mikhail Gorbachev role in trying to usher in a ~~best~~ better international environment when he stated "A change in the international atmosphere is already being felt. The Treaty on the elimination of intermediate nuclear forces, has been historic, your excellency we in India note with profound admiration your own role - in bringing it about". In his speech at dinner hosted by the President of India on November 18, 1988 Mikhail Gorbachev highlighted the commonness between the Indian and Soviet perceptions and said "We mutually support the initiative and actions that serve the cause of universal security and help in the settlement of regional conflicts; we expand our co-operation in the field of trade and the economy, science and technology because it benefits equally the interests of both nations and is useful and advantageous to their peoples"

Mikhail Gorbachev was quick in pointing out the unity in diversity in India-soviet relations and observed : "It is also unique that we are speaking of friendship even though our two countries are quite unlike each other and have different socio-

4. Agreement of long-term cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;
5. Agreement on avoiding Double Taxation and
6. Programme of cultural, Scientific and Educational Exchange for 1989-1990.

In December 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev announced in the UN General Assembly, a unilateral curtailment and withdrawal of Soviet armed forces from Eastern Europe. He also proposed for a cease fire in Afghanistan and a 100 year moratorium in the Third World debt. Rajiv Gandhi praised these initiatives and said that Gorbachev's proposals were completely in consonance with the spirit of the Historic Delhi declaration. Rajiv Gandhi recognised and praised the Soviet role in tackling important global issues and stated that the Soviet proposals were aimed at reducing international tensions and creating a climate of confidence in the comity of nations.

Rajiv Gandhi paid a friendly visit for official talks with Mikhail Gorbachev again on July 15, 1989. The visit once again strengthened their friendly bond as the two leaders virtually discussed all major aspects of international problems and expressed almost identical views on most of the international issues. On July 15, the Soviet and Indian leaders gathered in the Kremlin for a second meeting. The friendly dialogue between Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi has now become a regular featured. The two leaders shared the impression of their recent talks with Western leaders during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Britain, West Germany and France, and Rajiv Gandhi's visit to ~~IX~~ Paris where he attended the celebrations of the bicentenary of the French revolution. The positive

tendencies in the European process, they said were gaining momentum, including the talks on disarmament and the lessening of the military confrontation, although a lot of obstacles are still to be cleared on Europe's road to peace. The two sides expressed confidence that a real solution to the problems of world significance can be found on the basis of and international effort and with the active involvement of the UN. They also expressed similar opinions on the recent events of China and were ready to develop good neighbourly relations with the great country. They also dwelt in detail on the cardinal aspects of bilateral Economic, Scientific and Technological relations, and on cooperation in the military sphere. Before his departure from Moscow, Rajiv Gandhi told TASS that Soviet Indian relations were developing very well. Our contacts are dynamic, he said, have reached a rather high level, and have a great potential for further improvement. (12)

INDO-SOVIET COOPERATION ON SEVERAL FIELDS

INDO - SOVIET TRADE

Soviet-Indian trade, Economic and Technological cooperation is regulated by corresponding inter-governmental agreements, the first of which was signed in 1953 for a term of Five years. The current seventh agreement covers the 1986-1990 period, and includes, as usual, a list of export-import goods. Over a period of more than three decades it showed a high rate of growth. In addition, the range of goods exchanged has been constantly increasing. The trade turnover increased from 17.5 million rupees in 1953 to 88 billion rupees in 1989.

Soviet exports to India include mostly machines, equipment, oil and oil products. In 1983-87, machines and equipment made up 25 per cent. Other Soviet exports are fertilisers, chemicals, news print etc. India gets 70 percent of its imported diesel fuel and Kerosene, 30 per cent of its newsprint, 20 per cent of its zinc and carbamide, and over 20 percent of its - crude oil from the Soviet Union. In return, India supplies to the Soviet Union its products of tropical farming and livestock-breeding, machines and equipment and ready-made consumer goods mostly - fabrics from India. The free trade zone at Kandla (Gujrat) supplies the Soviet Union with 90 percent of its out-put, notably electronics, metal goods, sports goods, perfumery and mak-up and equipment for the food and pharmaceutical industries.

Mikhail Gorbachev's November 1986 visit to India had opened vistas for bilateral trade. The two sides agreed that mutual trade should increase by 2.5 times to 5 billion roubles by 1992. The growth is planned to be achieved through changes in the structure of mutual trade.

(13)

In 1989, the Soviet Union accounted for nine percent of India's total foreign trade. By the same token nearly two percent of Soviet business was with India. Bilateral trade grew by 35 percent from 52 to 70 billion rupees, in line with the protocol for 1989 signed in November 1989. Raw materials ranked high on the list of Soviet exports to India, the most widely trade articles being ~~oil~~ oil and oil products, fertilizers, newsprint and

non-ferrous metals (Zinc, Nickel and Copper). The India also bought some machines and equipment and even aircraft (IL-76, AN-32) and helicopters (Mi-17, Mi-26). Soviet imports from India grew substantially, including the items always traded by India (such as tea, coffee, rice, spices, etc.) and manufactured goods, notably sewn and knitted articles and linoleum. Emphasis was laid on consumer goods and primary materials for consumer goods manufacture, such as leather and footwear blanks and jute products. With the Soviet suffering from temporary shortages of soap and washing detergents, the USSR also imported one billion rupees worth of these items above the volumes stipulated in the 1989 trade protocol. Trade between India and the Soviet Union, in line with an arrangement made in November 1989, is to amount to 88 billion rupees in 1990, with imports from India likely to reach 53 billion rupees. As in 1989, emphasis this year will be laid on imports of food, consumer goods and primary materials for consumer goods manufacture. In overall imports, these articles will amount to more than 60 percent. Already the countries have made deals according to which India will in 1989-1990 sell to the Soviet Union over six billion rupees worth of consumer goods. (14)

As envisaged in the joint statement signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 the trade with the Soviet Union could now be increased to Rs. 10,000 crores an increase of 2.5 times over the 1986-1987 level while with the other East European countries it could increase by two times by 1992. (15)

At present, India supplies to the USSR lathos, electric motors, containers for shipping, cables and wire, and equipment for the mining, chemical, food and other industries. The absence of discrimination or ban in Soviet-Indian trade ensures the smooth operation of many industrial enterprises in India which produce goods exclusively or mostly for the Soviet Union, such as container for shipping textiles, linen leather and shoeuppers.

The Indian private sector has been more and more actively involved in bilateral trade. The private sector accounts for about 80 percent of Indian exports to the Soviet Union and 30 percent of imports. It has been agreed that the Soviet foreign trade organisations will expand contacts with private Indian companies. It has also been decided to extend them a credit of 100 million roubles for buying Soviet made machines and equipment. A number of joint forming ventures have been started with private companies in India, with a total capital investment of 1.4 billion rupees or about 70 million roubles.

(16)

Exchange of trade and industrial delegation has helped promote Soviet-Indian trade. In 1985-1987, several Indian delegation v sited the USSR to study the possibilities and needs of both parties in this respect. The USSR regularly participates in the annual Indian international trade fair (IITF) at which it displays its exports. In 1988-1990, it is intended to conduct several new sectoral exhibitions, joint seminars and symposiums. Regular business ~~xxxxx~~ contacts between the representative of both countries are particularly important to day, because quantitative and qualitative improve-

ments are occurring in Soviet-Indian trade. In keeping with the trade protocol for 1988, the turn over rupees a 25 percent gain on the preceding year. (17)

THE USSR'S TRADE WITH INDIA
(Million Rupees)

Year	USSR's Export	USSR's Import	Turn Over
1953/54	6.0	11.5	17.5
1960/61	158.7	288.1	446.8
1970/71	1061.3	2098.5	3159.8
1980/81	10137.1	12262.9	22400.0
1986	15000.0	21000.0	36000.00
1987	20500.0	20500.0	41000.0
1988	25000.0	25000.0	50000.0

Source: Soviet-Indian Economic Relations - Andrei Muravyov.

SOVIET INDIAN COOPERATION IN OIL PRODUCTION:

Since the time India won independence it has created a modern oil industry. The industry now forms a vital element of the country's fuel and energy supply complex. During this period India's oil production has increased more than a hundred-fold; from 259,000 tons in 1950 to 30,340,000 tons in the fiscal year of 1986/87. India has established itself as a major petroleum producing country. At present India's commercial reserves of hydrocarbons on its continental mass and in its shelf amount to 1.1 billion tons, including 577

(18)
million tons of oil.

Some of the clauses of the working programme were concretised and further developed in subsequent agreements on economic and technical cooperation. These were signed at summit meeting on May 22, 1985 and November 27, 1986. Under the terms of these agreement the USSR is currently assisting India in comprehensive prospecting for carbohydrates in three agreed areas on land in North Cambay and Cauvery basin (agreement signed on May 22, 1985) and in West Bengal (agreement signed on November 27, 1986).⁽¹⁹⁾ Intensive prospecting operations have been going on in the area of North Cambay and Cauvery since 1987 - preparations are under way for the drilling of so-called parameter wells that will be 3000 and 4500 metres deep. They will provide vital information about the composition of rock in the ~~area~~ area following which exploratory well drilling will begin. One of the wells will be located in the area of path an (Cambay) and the other not far from Pondicherry, South of Madras comprehensive prospecting for oil and Gas in West Bengal has been going on at full speed in the past months. West Bengal is a promising region in terms of oil and Gas, but drilling conditions are ~~extremely~~ exceptionally complicated; structures that interest geologists the most lie at a depth of 5000 metres where pressures are immense. However, it is not the first time that Soviet Exports are encountering such a situation. The USSR has sophisticated equipment for drilling operation at great depths. Suffice it to say that Soviet experts have drilled a 11,000 metre deep well in the northern part of the USSR the Kola Peninsula. And this is not the limit.⁽²⁰⁾

As of November 1989, the Soviet organisations had come up with over 7,000 sq. km. of geophysical survey, with seismographs now being processed by Soviet computing centres. A total of 18 parametric and explorations wells were drilled. Some of the wells in the North Cambay and Kaveri river basins gave positive formation test results. Oil if flows proved to be commercial. The drilling of the first deep (5.5 km) exploration well has began in West Bengal. At the present mement, Soviet lease-contract teams are overhauling idle and low-yield wells in Western India. More than 100 wells have been repaired, accounting for an additional output of over one million tons of oil out of India's 34 million total in 1989.

Soviet-Indian cooperation in oil provides an example of equitable and mutally beneficial relations. Soviet specialists. Do good work and happily share their experience with their Indian colleagues, the ONGC Chairman told Novesti. Since cooperation between the Soviet Union and India in oil began nearly 3000. Soviet specialists and researchers have visited India giving in plant training to more than 10,000 Indian specialists. Simultaneously about 1,000 Indian workers and engineers have received training in the Soviet Union. In addition to the three oil refineries built in India with Soviet assistance, India plans to build another six refineries in the current five-year period. The Soviet proposal on the turn-key Karnal project (Six million tons annually) is being negotiated. Another project (a plant to produce 25000 tons of butyl rubber annually) is being contemplated.
(21)

In one word, cooperation between the USSR and India in the oil industry is developing steadily. Meetings of Soviet-Indian working

groups on the oil Industry are held on regular basis. They sum up the results of joint work and chalk out plans for the future.

COAL INDUSTRY

On May, 1985 an intergovernmental agreement was signed for aid to India in the construction of the Kumari open cast calliery with an annual output of 10 million tons, the Sitnala coal mine with an annual out put of 900,000 tons, coal dressing mills for the Jharia cooking coal field, the Mohar and Khadia open cast mines each with an annual out put of 10 million tons in the Singrauli coal field. An inter governmental agreement signed on November 27, 1986, provides for cooperation in the construction of a whole range of big coal-mining projects. The USSR is to aid India in the construction of four pits the Kapuria, Mahal, Parbatpur and Kharkharee Dhar Maband pits - in the Jharia field with an overall annual out put of about eight million tons of cooking coal. (22) Rapidly expanding cooperation with the Soviet Union is helping India achieve the targets of the seventh five-year plan. Thus, the plan provides an increase in India's coal production from 147.4 million tons in the fiscal year of 1984/85 to 226 million tons in the fiscal year of 1989/90. At present Soviet organisations are helping design and build 12 coal pits and open cast mines in several regions. The overall output of these facilities will exceed 70 million tons of coal a year.

POWER INDUSTRY

The Soviet Union and India are cooperating in the designing and construction of the Tehri Hydro power complex. Power Units

1, 2 and 3 of the Vindahyachal thermal power station, being built in India with Soviet assistance and the associated transmission lines to Jabalpur and Itarsi have been commissioned. The construction of Soviet aided Kahalgaon Thermal power station is progressing as per the agreed schedule. Preparatory work on the construction of the Dulhasti-Kishenpur-Srinagar transmission line with Soviet assistance is in progress. (23)

According to forecasts, in the year 2000 India will generate 558-600 million megawatt hours of electricity. At the same time, i.e. by the year 2000, India's per capita production of electricity will reach 578-621 kilowatt hours as against 226 kilowatt hours in 1985 (when the seventh five year plan was launched) and 362 kilowatt hours expected in 1990. (24)

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

In 1972, the Soviet Academy of Science and the Department of space research concluded an agreement under which the Soviet Union pledged to assist Indian space research programmes. In 1984 the first Indian cosmonaut, Rakesh Sharma joined the Soviet crew and worked at the orbital station salgut 7/Soyuz 1-10/Soyuz T-11. In 1988, a Soviet booster orbited an Indian research satellite (900 kg), designed to study weather conditions so as to help farming and mining. The comprehensive long-term scientific and technical cooperation programme adopted during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the Soviet Union in 1987, provides for the establishment of a joint scientific centre and groups for the development of new technologies. In April 1988, the Sixth

sitting of the Soviet Indian working group on computers and electronics was held. The Soviet side voiced preparedness to supply Elbrus 3-1 and ES 1068 computers to India. The two sides voiced interest in Joint production of school and personal computers in India for the Soviet Union and third world countries. The two sides agreed to exchange technical information on rail road electronics, including computers, signal equipment and software. Hence, the 1987 agreement raised the level of cooperation to a new high to cover important areas of science and technology between the two countries. (25) In the month of March 1988, a meeting of the Indo-Soviet joint council for Long term programme of cooperation in science and technology was held. Also in the same month, the Soviet Union helped India in launching one of its most sophisticated satellites weighing 90 kg. for ~~the~~ the remote sensing of the Indian land mass. The Soviet Union also extended a credit of Rs. 4800 crores to India at 2.5 percent interest. The Indo-Soviet cooperation in science, technology and economy increased enormously.

COOPERATION IN THE DEFENCE SECTOR

It is a well known fact that the Soviet Union has always provided military help in the form of arms and ammunition to India to meet her defence challenges; she is one of the important arms - suppliers to India. In the press conference in Moscow, the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi pointed out to this aspect of Indo-Soviet cooperation and acknowledged that the Soviet Union has always helped to strengthen the defence potential and capability of India. Referring to the visit of Indian Defence Minister to USSR which preceded this

visit, he said "Our Defence Minister had been to the Soviet Union just some weeks ago. I think he had very fruitful exchanges with the Soviet ministers. Our cooperation in that field is improving substantially. (26) In February 1988, India and the Soviet Union signed two protocols regarding scientific cooperation. The Soviet Union agreed to give India MIG-29 and other sophisticated defence aircraft besides latest technical knowhow.

The establishment of a MIG manufacturing plant by Moscow was only the beginning of relationship in a crucial field for India. A Washington report of January 25, 1966, for instance, said that India had begun to receive deliveries of about 100 SU-7 supersonic jet fighter ~~and~~ bombers from the Soviet Union. India regarded these planes as essential for defence against two hostile neighbours. The report mentioned that initially India had requested the United States for F-104 and later for F-1055. The Soviet Union had stepped in to fill India's air defence gap with MIG-21s and SU-7s. The supply of other advanced weaponry at a time when the USA and some other Western countries were unwilling to meet India's needs. (27)

Since then, the MIG complex of HAL has been producing improved versions of the MIG-21 in a long series of upgradations. New variants have also joined the IAF and these include the MIG-23 fighter interdicator; the MIC-25 Foxbat; the MIG-27 tactical strike and close support aircraft; and the MIG-29 Fighter joined the fleet in 1987, according to current indication.

Apart from the fighter component of air defence, the

Soviet Union has strengthened a transport fleet upon which depends to a very crucial degree much of the logistics support to Indian troops posted in the forward pickets in snow-bound Ladakh and strategic out posts in Arunachal Pradesh. For several decades the AN-12 was the mainstay of this lifeline along with the MI-8 helicopter for tactical support. In recent times these have been replaced by the mighty IL-76 long range freighter and troop transport, the AN-32 medium transport and the MI-17 helicopter which is combination lend to the Indian military establishment a rapid deployment capability over snowy mountains, desert, jungle and plains. Special mention must also be made of the MI-24 helicopter gunship the induction of which into the first has vastly enhanced the fire power and mobility of Indian troops. There is very possibility that MI-26 heavy lift helicopters will also be supplied. And the list of air defence weapons will not be complete without the surface to air pichora missiles which have since been augmented by the Kwadrat quick-reaction SAMS. (28)

In providing the Indian Army a massive punch and great mobility Soviet equipment plays a crucial part. Since the sixties the T-54, the T-55 and the amphibious PT-22 and PT-76 tanks have been in service with the front line troops, bolstered by the indigenous Vijayanta and the just retired centurions. This armour has been strengthened with the induction of the T-72 main battle tank which will be the mainstay till India's own main battle tank becomes operational hope fully in the 1990.

FESTIVALS OF INDIA AND FESTIVALS OF THE USSR

Festival of India in USSR and the Festival of USSR in India marked a new stage in the Indo-Soviet friendship. The history of Soviet-Indian relations, and probably, international relations in general, did not know such massive, large scale activities before. Millions of people in the Soviet Union and India got an opportunity to come into direct contact with the cultural wealth of the two great nations and become acquainted with their present day life.

The Festival of India in USSR, beginning in Moscow, spread to 130 other Soviet cities which had prepared for it in advance. The opening ceremonies were held in Leningrad and Tashkent. Soviet periodicals showered the readers with information on India. "There is a keen interest in Indian culture every where", wrote the newspaper *Sovetskaya Kultura*. Most publications were popularising Indian culture despite the fact that not many people in the USSR know what Kathak or Bharat natyam means. But even without this knowledge, Soviet audiences enjoyed the performances of Birju Maharaj, Padma Subramaniam and other artists. Articles by Indologists and experts on Indian culture had never been published so widely in the USSR as on this occasion. The Indian festival had run for about four months when the Soviet festival opened in India in November 1987. (29) Referring to the on-going USSR festival in India Mikhail Gorbachev said "Tomorrow we are to take part in the closing ceremony of the USSR festival in India. Six months ago a similar ceremony took place in Moscow to conclude the Indian festival in the USSR. I believe that their full significance for our peoples is yet to be fully assessed. But one

thing is certain. Both festivals have spot lighted the genuine interest and respect of Soviet and Indian people to each other, their yearning to communicate, to know better each others customs, arts, moral values and habits.

INDO-SOVIET COOPERATION IN SOME OTHER FIELDS

Below are listed some of the important cooperation projects between the two countries in various spheres.

*The Soviet Union has assisted India in the setting up of 70 major industrial and other projects and more than 50 are in the process of designing and construction.

*The projects set up in India with Soviet assistance account for 11 million tonnes of steel, 100,000 tonnes of aluminium, 6.5 million tonnes of oil, 18 million tonnes of oil-refining capacity, 6.5 million tonnes of iron ore, 125,000 tonnes of heavy machinery for power, steel and mining industries and about 30 billion kilowat hours of power.

* Soviet credit amounting to over 6,000 million roubles granted ~~during~~ during 1985-1988 are being utilised in the construction of 30 industrial projects; including thermal, hydel and nuclear power projects with an overall capacity of 6,000 megawatts and mines and open cast quarries for coal development and in the modernisation of steel and machine building plants.

* India will complete the construction of 70 hotels in the Soviet Union by the year 2000.

* About 60 joint ventures in the fields of electronics, instrumentation chemical industry, pharmaceuticals, light and food industries to be set up in India and the Soviet Union have been approved.

* Two plants are to be set up in India for the production of citric acid from sugar water with the help of Soviet technology and equipment.

* Two 1,000 megawatt nuclear power reactors are being acquired by India from the Soviet Union.

* The Bank for foreign Economic relations of the USSR has made available a credit of Rs. 100 crores to Industrial Development Bank of India for financing the purchases of Soviet equipment and techniques by Indian private firms.

* The Soviet Union and India are sharing radiation technologies for radiation sealing of cables, sterilisation of medical goods radiation disinfection of grain etc.

* The Soviet Union and India are conducting joint research on the treatment of viral hepatitis, cancer, AIDS, the diseases of the liver, etc.

* Sixty-one proposals for production cooperation are under discussion covering metallurgical equipment, turbo-generators and food processing machinery. Of these 17 contracts with a total values of Rs. 123 crores have already been finalised.

* An order for the supply of 73 automatic cone winding machines worth Rs. 29 crores to Soviet mills has been won by an Indian

firm.

* Another Indian company has won the order for the supply of textiles worth Rs. 30 crores to the USSR.

* The Indo-Soviet working group on machine building and production cooperation has proposed collaboration in a number of high technology areas like laser based equipment for industrial application, computer X-ray and electronic telephone exchange systems etc.

* The Soviet Union has agreed to set up a joint venture with India based on Indian technology for the manufacture of IBM compatible personal computers.

* The public sector joint Bharat Heavy electricals Ltd. has received an export order worth rupees three crores for the supply of alloy steel castings for turbines to the Leningrad metal works.

* Over one lakh compressors worth rupees six crores are to be supplied by an Indian firm to the USSR.

* A long-term programme for cooperation with the USSR in the development of sericulture has been drawn up by the Central silk Board under the ministry of Textiles.

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