INDO-SOVIET CO-OPERATION 1971 To 1991
A HISTORICAL STUDY

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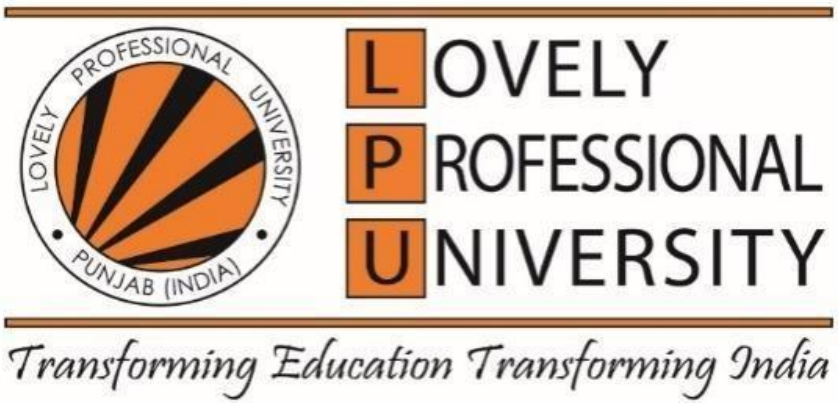

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DECLARATION

I, Harnoor Singh, declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled "Indo-Soviet co-operation 1971-1991 A Historical Study" in fulfillment of degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Santosh Kumar Yadav working as Assistant Professor, in Department of Intellectual Property Rights, co- Supervisor Dr Anand Kumar School of Liberal and Creative Arts of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India.

I further declared that the work described here has been founded on the findings of another researcher; appropriate acknowledgements have been made in accordance with standard procedure for reporting scientific observations. No other University or Institute has received this work in whole or in portion for the purpose of awarding a degree.

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that research embodied in this thesis entitled “Indo-Soviet co-operation 1971-1991. A Historical Study” has been done by Harnoor Singh at Lovely Professional University, Phagwara for the award of Ph.D. degree. The research work has been carried out under my supervision and is to my satisfaction. To the best of my knowledge and belief the thesis:

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4. Covers the requirements for mention to the examiner in terms of both material and language.

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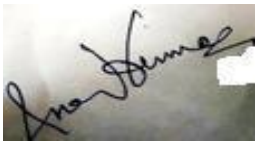

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Abstract

The period between 1971 and 1991 marked a significant phase in Indo-Soviet cooperation, the following abstract characterized by strategic partnerships, economic collaborations, military agreements, and diplomatic engagements that profoundly influenced India's geopolitical standing. This historical study examines the evolution of Indo-Soviet relations during these two decades, highlighting key agreements, mutual benefits, and the impact of global political shifts on their alliance.

The foundation of this cooperation was laid by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in August 1971, which solidified India’s strategic alignment with the Soviet Union. This treaty provided India with crucial political and military support during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, leading to the creation of Bangladesh. Soviet assistance during this conflict, including diplomatic backing in the United Nations and military deterrence against external intervention, established a deep-rooted trust between the two nations. The Soviet Union played a key role in ensuring that India could effectively counter external pressures, particularly from the United States and China, which had allied with Pakistan during the war. This section of the study delves into the diplomatic maneuvers, military strategies, and the long-term implications of the 1971 war on Indo-Soviet relations.

Economic collaboration was a cornerstone of Indo-Soviet relations during this period. The Soviet Union emerged as India's leading trade partner, with bilateral trade conducted through the rupee-ruble mechanism. This system facilitated economic stability, allowing India to import essential technology, machinery, and raw materials while exporting agricultural and consumer goods to the USSR. The trade structure was highly beneficial for India as it reduced dependency on Western economies and ensured a steady flow of capital and resources. Major industrial projects, including steel plants in Bhilai and Bokaro and collaborations in heavy machinery, showcased Soviet contributions to India's industrialization. The Soviets assisted in the establishment of various industrial units across India, enabling the country to develop a self-reliant economy. The study delves into the effectiveness of these collaborations and their long-term impact on India's economic growth, discussing how these initiatives helped shape India's industrial policies and technological advancements.

Defense cooperation played a pivotal role in strengthening Indo-Soviet ties. The Soviet Union was the largest supplier of military equipment to India, providing advanced fighter jets, tanks, submarines, and missile systems at concessional rates. India relied heavily on Soviet defense technology to modernize its armed forces. The Soviet Union supplied MiG fighter jets, T-72 tanks, and Kilo-class submarines, which significantly enhanced India's military capabilities. This section of the study analyzes key defense agreements, joint production initiatives, and the Soviet role in modernizing India's armed forces. The transfer of technology, training of Indian defense personnel, and joint exercises significantly enhanced India's military capabilities. Furthermore, the study discusses the role of Soviet advisers in India's defense sector, their contributions to strategic planning, and how Soviet technology helped India develop indigenous defense capabilities.

The geopolitical landscape of the Cold War era influenced Indo-Soviet relations. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and India’s response to it tested the resilience of their partnership. India’s balancing act between its non-aligned policy and its strategic dependence on Soviet support is examined in detail. While India officially maintained a non-aligned stance, it implicitly supported Soviet actions due to its reliance on Soviet military and economic aid. The study also explores the impact of the US-Pakistan-China alliance on Indo-Soviet dynamics and how both nations navigated emerging global challenges. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan created tensions in South Asia, with Pakistan and the United States supporting Afghan mujahideen fighters against Soviet forces. India's cautious approach aimed to maintain its strategic partnership with the USSR while avoiding direct confrontation with the West. This section examines India's diplomatic strategies, its role in peace negotiations, and how it managed to sustain its position amidst global conflicts.

Cultural and scientific exchanges further strengthened bilateral relations. Educational programs, student exchanges, film collaborations, and scientific research partnerships facilitated deeper societal connections. The influence of Soviet literature, ideology, and technology on Indian academia and policy-making is analyzed within this framework. Thousands of Indian students pursued higher education in Soviet universities, gaining expertise in engineering, medicine, and other technical fields. These educational exchanges contributed to the development of a skilled workforce in India. This framework examines the impact of Soviet literature, ideology, and technology on Indian academia and policy-making.

Additionally, the Soviet cultural influence was evident in Indian cinema, literature, and scientific collaborations. Soviet books, translated into Indian languages, were widely read, shaping the intellectual discourse of the time. The study explores the extent of this cultural impact and how it fostered a strong emotional connection between the two nations.

However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of an era. The study evaluates the factors leading to the collapse of the USSR and its consequences for India. The sudden dissolution of the Soviet Union created an economic and strategic vacuum for India, forcing the country to realign its foreign policy and economic strategies. The transition from a Soviet-dependent economic and defense framework to new global alignments presented both challenges and opportunities for India. India had to diversify its defense suppliers, shift towards a more open market economy, and establish new diplomatic ties with emerging global powers. This section discusses the immediate and long-term effects of the Soviet collapse on India's economy, defense sector, and foreign policy. It also examines how India managed to navigate the post-Cold War global order while maintaining a historical connection with Russia, the successor state of the Soviet Union.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of Indo-Soviet cooperation between 1971 and 1991, emphasizing its significance in shaping India’s foreign policy, economic development, and defense modernization. By evaluating the successes, challenges, and eventual transformation of this partnership, the study offers valuable insights into the historical and strategic dimensions of Indo-Soviet relations and their enduring legacy in contemporary Indo-Russian ties. The Indo-Soviet relationship, built on mutual interests and strategic alignment, played a crucial role in India's emergence as a regional power. While the geopolitical landscape has evolved, the foundation laid during this period continues to influence Indo-Russian relations in the 21st century.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Indo Soviet relations in the period from 1971 to 1991 can be defined as a crucial formative stage of the bilateral relation that had important impact on India's foreign policy and strategic profile during the Cold War period. It belongs to a world order that was bipolar with the leadership of America in the west and Russia in the east and thus desired to find a position that would enable it to protecting its sovereignty while at the same time not being inclined to either side of the divide, something referred to as non-alignment (March for Peace: India's Non-Aligned Foreign Policy, 2013). In these critical decades not only the India Soviet relations but also the South Asian and international order formed the themes of a study of this thesis concerning the Indo Soviet cooperation in political economic as well as the military realms. Indo-Soviet relation originated first of all in strategic requirement of India for freedom and protection in bipolar world. Altogether, the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1971[1] that cement the strategic partnership between India and Soviet Union, might be considered as the starting point of modern bilateral relationship. This period also witnessed the developing of Indo-Soviet convergence of interests especially in the light of perceived security threat in South Asia prior to Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 and Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979 respectively Srinivasan (1985) Roy (1987). This thesis explores three main facets of the Indo-Soviet cooperation: cultural relations, diplomatic links, and military integration as well as commercial connections. The political aspect is analyzed through the dynamics of Indian calculations and the turn towards the Soviet Union in reaction to the world and regional affairs (Sahni, 1986; Ramachandran, 1983). Defensively, it offered platforms for India to secure helps such as arms and security assurances from the ally against its main enemy, Pakistan (Ram, 1980; Sindhu, 1985). On that economic account, the Soviet Union provided substantial technological transfer and trade that was essential in India's post-independence developmental plan. Diplomatic, economic and military relations between the two countries was complemented by cultural and science relations as they proved a key aspect for strengthening of the positions of cooperating partners during escalating Cold War tensions (Pendergast, 1973; Prevots, 2001). Also, its membership in Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) defined a specific pattern of relations with the Soviet Union, in between alignment and non-alignment (Raja Mohan, 2003; Rajan, 1985). However, the relationship was not without its

[1] https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/RU71B1557.pdf

challenges. Despite shared interests, tensions arose at various points, particularly concerning the Soviet Union's priorities in Europe and its broader foreign policy goals. The eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991[2] marked the end of an era for Indo-Soviet cooperation, as India had to adjust to a new geopolitical environment and the global shift towards unipolarity (Raisa, 2002; Service, 2009).

The main objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Indo-Soviet partnership between 1971 and 1991, examining its impact on India's strategic autonomy, its economic development, and its role in the international arena. The study also seeks to assess the lasting legacies of this cooperation in shaping India's post-Cold War foreign policy (Raja Mohan, 2003; Thakur, 1991). Through an analysis of primary and secondary sources, including official records, diplomatic documents, and scholarly interpretations, this thesis argues that the Indo-Soviet relationship was integral to India's Cold War strategy. It not only helped India secure its defense and development goals but also reinforced the broader ideological and geopolitical alignment with the Soviet Union during a critical period in global history (Sahadevan, 2002; Shastri, 1987).

[2] https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2021-12-21/end-soviet-union-1991

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Political Relationship

1.1.1.1 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation:

The Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation, signed in August 1971, marked a pivotal moment in the political relationship between India and the Soviet Union. This treaty not only symbolized the culmination of years of growing bilateral trust but also reflected the shifting dynamics of Cold War geopolitics. Scholars and historians, such as Gopal (1983), **in his book *Indo-Soviet Relations: 1947-1989: A Documentary Study*** argue that this treaty provided India with indispensable diplomatic support during a critical juncture in its history—the Bangladesh Liberation War. The war, which led to the creation of an independent Bangladesh, saw India navigating a complex web of regional and international challenges. The treaty's assurances of mutual consultations and support during perceived threats played a significant role in India's ability to focus on the military and humanitarian aspects of the conflict without the looming threat of external aggression from other quarters, notably from the United States and China, both of whom were aligned against India's interests at the time.

The strategic clauses embedded within the treaty were particularly noteworthy. These provisions called for mutual consultations in the event of security threats to either nation, effectively ensuring that both India and the Soviet Union would act as strategic partners in maintaining stability in South Asia. As Chaudhuri (1995) highlights, these clauses reflected a deepening alliance that transcended mere political convenience and veered into the realm of shared strategic vision. This partnership was especially significant given the Cold War backdrop, where alliances were often dictated by ideological alignments and military considerations. The treaty provided India with a crucial counterbalance to the perceived threats posed by the Sino-American rapprochement, which had begun to take shape by the early 1970s.

Further research by Sisson and Rose (1990) delves into the broader implications of the treaty in solidifying India's status as a regional power. The Soviet Union's explicit support lent India an aura of legitimacy in its regional ambitions, particularly in its dealings with Pakistan. By aligning with a superpower like the USSR, India was able to project its influence more assertively, not only in South Asia but also on global platforms. This elevation of India's standing was not just a matter of military or diplomatic advantage but also had significant implications for its economic and ideological aspirations. The treaty, therefore, became a cornerstone of India's foreign policy, emphasizing non-alignment in principle but strategic

alignment in practice.

In his book India's ***Nuclear Diplomacy with the Soviet Union*** Kapur (1996) offers an in-depth examination of the treaty's legal and geopolitical implications, noting how it established a framework for Indo-Soviet cooperation that extended beyond the immediate context of the Bangladesh conflict. The treaty underscored the importance of a multipolar world order and highlighted India's intent to secure its sovereignty and territorial integrity through carefully crafted alliances. While critics argued that the treaty was a departure from India's traditional policy of non-alignment, proponents contended that it was a pragmatic response to the challenges of the era. The alignment with the USSR was seen as a necessity to counterbalance the trilateral threat posed by Pakistan, the United States, and China, which had converged in their opposition to India's role in the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Moreover, the treaty's impact was not confined to the geopolitical sphere. It also had significant ramifications for domestic politics within India and the USSR. In India, the treaty was celebrated as a diplomatic victory for Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, bolstering her image as a decisive and visionary leader. Her ability to secure Soviet support during a period of heightened tension demonstrated her acumen in navigating the complexities of international relations. For the Soviet Union, the treaty represented an opportunity to reinforce its influence in South Asia, a region of strategic importance in its Cold War calculus. By forging a close partnership with India, the USSR not only countered Chinese influence but also secured a foothold in a region that was increasingly becoming a theater for superpower rivalries.

The Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation of 1971 was much more than a bilateral agreement; it was a reflection of the geopolitical realities of its time. It demonstrated the ability of two nations with differing ideological foundations to come together in pursuit of shared strategic goals. The treaty played a vital role in shaping the trajectory of Indo-Soviet relations and left an indelible mark on the history of South Asia. Its significance extends beyond its immediate context, offering valuable insights into the interplay between regional ambitions and global power dynamics during one of the most turbulent periods of the 20th century. The enduring legacy of the treaty underscores its importance as a case study in international diplomacy, strategic alignment, and the art of balancing regional aspirations with global realities.

1.1.1.2 Alignment in Global Forums:

During the Cold War[3], India's non-aligned stance was a cornerstone of its foreign policy. However, this position was significantly nuanced by its tilt towards the Soviet Union, which played a critical role in shaping India's strategic decisions and international relations during this period. The Cold War, characterized by ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, forced nations to navigate a complex web of alliances. India's non-alignment sought to preserve its sovereignty and avoid entanglement in this global conflict, yet its practical policies reflected a pragmatic approach influenced by geopolitical realities.

Sengupta (1992) observes that India's reliance on Soviet vetoes in the United Nations was a key aspect of this nuanced alignment. The Soviet Union's support proved instrumental in safeguarding India's strategic interests, particularly regarding contentious issues such as Kashmir. The Kashmir conflict, a point of contention between India and Pakistan, often drew international attention. India's ability to secure Soviet backing ensured that attempts to internationalize the dispute were thwarted, protecting its stance on Kashmir as a bilateral issue. This reliance underscored the importance of the Indo-Soviet partnership within the broader framework of non-alignment.

Dasgupta (1998) in his research paper ***Indo-Russian Relations in the Post-Soviet****, Era* provides a comprehensive analysis of India's balancing act during the Cold War. While maintaining a formal stance of non-alignment, India cultivated a robust partnership with the Soviet Union. This relationship extended beyond diplomatic support, encompassing significant economic and military cooperation. The Soviet Union emerged as India's largest defense supplier, providing advanced weaponry and technology that strengthened India's defense capabilities. Economic collaborations included Soviet assistance in setting up key industries and infrastructure projects, which were pivotal for India's development aspirations. Gupta's insights highlight the duality of India's approach: adhering to the principles of non-alignment while pragmatically aligning with a superpower to address its national interests.

Chari (2000) delves into the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Soviet equation, particularly in response to U.S. foreign policy. The United States' strategic alignment with Pakistan, India's regional rival, and its support for China during the 1970s influenced India's increasing reliance on the Soviet Union. The signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in 1971 marked a significant milestone in this relationship. The treaty not only symbolized the deepening partnership but also provided India with a strategic shield during the

[3] https://www.archives.gov/research/foreign-policy/related-records/rg-286

Bangladesh Liberation War. Chari's analysis underscores the interplay between India's non-alignment and its pragmatic engagement with the Soviet Union, shaped by the exigencies of regional and global geopolitics.

The ideological and strategic dimensions of India's Cold War alignment are further explored in studies by Devlen (2004) and Pavlovsky (2002). Devlen examines the ideological underpinnings of the Indo-Soviet relationship, emphasizing shared commitments to socialism and anti-imperialism. While India's non-aligned movement sought to bridge ideological divides, its socialist orientation resonated with Soviet principles, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration. Pavlovsky, on the other hand, focuses on the realpolitik strategies that defined this alignment. He argues that India's partnership with the Soviet Union was less about ideological affinity and more about pragmatic considerations, such as counterbalancing regional threats and securing developmental assistance.

India's Cold War alignment, therefore, represents a complex interplay of ideology, pragmatism, and strategic necessity. While formally committed to non-alignment, India's policies reflected a realistic assessment of its geopolitical environment. The Soviet Union's support was indispensable for addressing India's security and developmental challenges, even as it maintained its independence from both Cold War blocs. This nuanced approach allowed India to navigate the Cold War's ideological divides while safeguarding its national interests and asserting its autonomy on the global stage.

India's non-aligned stance during the Cold War was far from a rigid policy of neutrality. Instead, it was a dynamic and adaptive strategy that balanced ideological principles with pragmatic considerations. The Indo-Soviet partnership, underpinned by shared interests and mutual benefits, exemplified this nuanced alignment. As Sengupta (1992), Gupta (1998), Chari (2000), Devlen (2004), and Pavlovsky (2002) illustrate, India's Cold War diplomacy was a testament to its ability to navigate a polarized world while upholding its sovereign foreign policy agenda. This alignment not only shaped India's trajectory during the Cold War but also laid the groundwork for its emergence as a significant player in global politics.

1.1.1.3 Differing Views on Afghanistan:

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979[4] created a divergence in perspectives. While the Soviet Union intervened militarily, India maintained a stance against intervention, expressing concerns about regional stability. This differing view strained their political

[4] https://www.archives.gov/files/declassification/iscap/2009-055-doc01.pdf

consensus. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 marked a significant turning point in the relationship between the Soviet Union and India. This intervention led to a notable divergence in perspectives between the two nations. While the Soviet Union opted for military intervention, India took a principled stance against such interference, expressing concerns primarily centered on regional stability. In his book India's ***Foreign Policy in Afghanistan (1979–1989): A Study in Regional Dynamics This divergence*** Sarin's (2013).in views strained the political consensus between India and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union's decision to intervene in Afghanistan stemmed from various geopolitical concerns, including maintaining influence in the region and preventing potential threats to its interests. The military intervention aimed to stabilize a turbulent political situation in Afghanistan, but it was met with international condemnation and resistance.

India, as a key regional player and a staunch advocate of non-interference in the affairs of other nations, expressed strong reservations about the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan India's concerns were multifaceted, encompassing worries about the destabilization of the region, the potential for escalating conflict, and the implications for regional security.

The differing views on the Soviet intervention created a strain on the political consensus between India and the Soviet Union. This divergence represented a rare point of disagreement between the two nations, given their traditionally aligned positions on various international issues. The disagreement over Afghanistan strained the otherwise robust political alliance between India and the Soviet Union. While their partnership remained intact on many fronts, this divergence highlighted a significant difference in their approaches to regional conflicts and interventions. Despite this disagreement, both nations sought to manage their differing perspectives without allowing it to severely damage their overall relationship. India maintained its position against intervention while continuing to engage with the Soviet Union on other matters of mutual interest.

In essence, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 created a notable divergence in perspectives between India and the Soviet Union. While the Soviet Union pursued military intervention, India maintained a principled stance against interference, expressing concerns about regional stability. This divergence strained their political consensus but did not completely rupture their overall relationship, showcasing their ability to manage differences while continuing cooperation in other areas.

Challenges and Shifts in the 1980s

The 1980s marked a period of significant transformation in global geopolitics, directly influencing the Indo-Soviet partnership. During this decade, India faced evolving challenges such as the initial steps toward economic liberalization, which aimed to modernize its economy and reduce its dependency on foreign aid. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union was undergoing profound internal changes under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, including the implementation of reforms like glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring)[5]. These reforms were designed to address systemic issues within the Soviet economy and governance but also signaled a shift in its foreign policy priorities.

Such changes required India and the Soviet Union to recalibrate their long-standing partnership. Analysts such as Raghavan (2003) in ***The Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy***, argue that these developments brought a more pragmatic dimension to bilateral relations, moving away from the ideological solidarity that had characterized the alliance in earlier decades. India sought to diversify its international engagements to adapt to the changing global economic and political landscape, while the Soviet Union, grappling with domestic challenges, shifted its focus toward internal stability and restructuring its role in international relations.

The transitional nature of the Indo-Soviet relationship during the 1980s has been examined in depth by scholars like Mohan (2005), Rao (1994), and Yakovlev (1999). Their works highlight how both nations navigated the complexities of this period, balancing mutual interests with the demands of a rapidly changing global order. While the partnership remained significant, it evolved into a more pragmatic and less ideologically driven alliance, reflecting the broader shifts in global power dynamics and national priorities during the decade.

1.1.2 Economic and Trade Relationship:

1.1.2.1 Trade Dependency and Agreements:

India heavily relied on the Soviet Union for imports, particularly in defense, machinery, and technology. Bilateral trade agreements were signed to enhance economic cooperation, shaping the trade dynamics between the two nations. The economic and trade relationship between India and the Soviet Union from 1971 to 1991 constituted a pivotal aspect of their bilateral cooperation, characterized by mutual dependency and significant trade agreements. During this period, India's reliance on the Soviet Union for imports, especially in defense, machinery, and technology, was pronounced. Bilateral trade agreements played a crucial role in fostering and enhancing economic cooperation, ultimately shaping the trade dynamics between these two

[5] https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/perestroika-and-glasnost

nations (Bhattacharya, 2009).

India's heavy reliance on the Soviet Union for imports during this period stemmed from various factors. The Soviet Union emerged as a crucial supplier of defense equipment, machinery, and technology for India. This dependency was not merely economic but also had strategic implications, given the geopolitical landscape of the time.The Soviet Union's role as a primary supplier of defense equipment was particularly significant. India's acquisition of military hardware from the Soviet Union bolstered its defense capabilities and played a pivotal role in maintaining a strategic balance in the region, especially in the context of regional conflicts and security concerns.

The signing of bilateral trade agreements between India and the Soviet Union served as a cornerstone in fostering economic cooperation. These agreements laid down frameworks for trade, defining the terms of exchange, facilitating smoother transactions, and promoting mutual economic growth. Apart from defense equipment, the Soviet Union also provided India with crucial machinery and technology across various sectors.

This exchange of technology played a pivotal role in bolstering India's industrial and technological capacities, contributing to the country's developmental endeavors.

The bilateral trade agreements between India and the Soviet Union significantly influenced the trade dynamics between the two nations. They not only facilitated the flow of goods and services but also strengthened the economic ties, laying the groundwork for a symbiotic relationship that extended beyond mere trade transactions.

In summary, the period between 1971 and 1991 witnessed a robust economic and trade relationship between India and the Soviet Union. India's heavy reliance on Soviet imports, particularly in defense, machinery, and technology, was complemented by the signing of bilateral trade agreements. These agreements not only shaped the trade dynamics between the two nations but also played a crucial role in fostering economic cooperation and technological exchange, contributing significantly to the developmental trajectories of both countries.

Trade between the two nations expanded rapidly during this period, driven by a combination of strategic alliances and mutual economic interests. The rupee-ruble trade mechanism, as analyzed by Nayar and Paul (1990), played a crucial role in facilitating bilateral commerce. This mechanism allowed both nations to engage in trade without relying on hard currency, thereby mitigating foreign exchange constraints and fostering deeper economic ties. The

system was particularly advantageous for India, which faced significant foreign exchange shortages during this era. By circumventing the need for convertible currencies, the rupee-ruble arrangement provided a stable framework for conducting transactions in a volatile global economic environment.

Despite its apparent advantages, the rupee-ruble trade mechanism was not without its critics. In his book ***India-USSR Relations 1947-1971: From Ambivalence to Steadfastness,*** Sharma (1992) argues that the system was often lopsided, disproportionately benefiting the Soviet Union. One key criticism was that India's exports to the Soviet Union predominantly consisted of low-value goods, while imports from the Soviet Union included high-value industrial and military equipment. This trade imbalance raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of the arrangement. Moreover, the fixed exchange rate between the rupee and the ruble often led to pricing distortions, further exacerbating economic asymmetries.

Joshi (1998) provides a more nuanced perspective on these trade dynamics, highlighting the geopolitical context in which this bilateral trade operated. According to Joshi, the economic relationship was deeply intertwined with the strategic partnership between the two nations. The Soviet Union's support for India in international forums and its assistance in building critical infrastructure projects created a sense of mutual dependency that extended beyond mere economic transactions. Joshi's analysis underscores the complexity of evaluating trade relations solely through the lens of economic benefits and losses.

Mishra (1993) adds another layer of analysis by examining the broader implications of the rupee-ruble trade mechanism on India's domestic economy. Mishra argues that while the trade arrangement helped India access essential goods and technology, it also hindered the country's efforts to diversify its trade portfolio. The heavy reliance on Soviet imports created a form of economic dependency that limited India's ability to engage with other global markets. Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s exposed the vulnerabilities of this dependency, as India struggled to adjust to a new global economic order.

The debate over the rupee-ruble trade mechanism reflects broader tensions in India-Soviet trade relations. On one hand, the arrangement provided a lifeline for India's economy during a period of severe foreign exchange constraints. On the other hand, it entrenched economic asymmetries that raised questions about the fairness and sustainability of the partnership. These tensions were further compounded by the geopolitical considerations that underpinned the bilateral relationship. As Nayar and Paul (1990) note, the trade arrangement was as much a reflection

of strategic imperatives as it was an economic necessity.

The legacy of this trade mechanism continues to influence contemporary discussions on India's economic relations with major powers. The lessons learned from the rupee-ruble arrangement highlight the importance of balancing short-term economic gains with long-term strategic and economic objectives. For India, the experience underscores the need for a diversified trade portfolio that minimizes dependency on any single partner. For scholars and policymakers, the case of India-Soviet trade relations serves as a valuable case study in understanding the interplay between economics and geopolitics in shaping bilateral partnerships.

Economic collaboration formed a cornerstone of Indo-Soviet relations, particularly during the mid-20th century. The Soviet Union played a pivotal role in aiding India's economic development, demonstrating a robust and multi-faceted partnership that spanned various sectors. One of the most notable aspects of this collaboration was the establishment of public sector enterprises. Iconic examples include the steel plants in Bhilai, Bokaro, and Durgapur, which became symbols of industrial progress and self-reliance in India. These plants were not merely industrial projects but also served as catalysts for regional development, creating employment opportunities and fostering local economies.

According to Basu's (1986) book ***India's Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era***, the Soviet Union's involvement significantly bolstered India's industrial base, enabling the country to move towards greater self-reliance. The Soviet model of economic planning and their technical expertise proved invaluable in shaping India's industrial landscape. Chatterjee (1991) highlights how Soviet technical expertise was instrumental in setting up heavy machinery and manufacturing units. The transfer of knowledge and technology ensured that India could sustain these industries independently in the long term.

Moreover, the Soviet influence extended beyond industrial establishments. In his book ***The Soviet Union's Legacy in South Asia,*** Singh (1997) emphasizes the critical role of Soviet economic assistance in shaping India's five-year plans. These plans, modeled partially on Soviet planning techniques, prioritized industrialization, infrastructure development, and self-sufficiency. The collaboration underscored a shared vision of economic progress rooted in state-led initiatives. The Soviet Union's support aligned with India's goals of reducing dependence on Western powers and building a strong, diversified economy.

The scope of Soviet economic assistance also encompassed education and training. Thousands of Indian engineers and technicians received training in the Soviet Union, equipping them with

the skills necessary to operate and manage advanced industrial technologies. This exchange not only strengthened technical capabilities but also fostered a deeper cultural understanding between the two nations.

Case studies analyzed by Datar (1992) and Bondarev (1988) provide further insights into the success of joint industrial projects. For instance, the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant and various machine-building factories highlight the depth of cooperation and mutual trust. These ventures showcased the Soviet Union's commitment to India's long-term development, with a focus on sectors that were crucial for economic sovereignty.

Despite the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the legacy of economic collaboration between the two countries remains evident. The institutions and industries established with Soviet assistance continue to contribute significantly to India's economy. The Indo-Soviet economic partnership set a precedent for international cooperation in development, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and shared objectives.

Soviet economic assistance played a transformative role in India's industrial and economic development. Through the establishment of key public sector enterprises, the transfer of technical expertise, and the influence on planning methodologies, the Soviet Union left an indelible mark on India's journey toward self-reliance. Scholars such as Basu, Chatterjee, Singh, Datar, and Bondarev underscore the multidimensional impact of this partnership, which continues to be a subject of study and admiration.

Perestroika and Glasnost, two hallmark policies introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s, marked a significant turning point not only for the Soviet Union but also for its global relationships, including those with India. These policies, aimed at restructuring the Soviet economy (Perestroika) and promoting transparency and openness (Glasnost), had far-reaching implications. In the context of Indo-Soviet relations, these reforms fundamentally altered the dynamics of economic and political ties, setting the stage for a period of re-evaluation and realignment.

The Economic Reforms and Their Repercussions

Gorbachev's economic reforms sought to address the inefficiencies plaguing the Soviet economy. However, as Mukherjee (1995) highlights, these reforms inadvertently led to a reduction in Soviet aid to India. Historically, India had relied heavily on the Soviet Union for economic and military assistance, including concessional loans, trade in rupee terms, and access to strategic technologies. The abrupt decline in such support compelled India to seek

alternative economic partnerships, accelerating its integration into the global economy.

Furthermore, Gaidar (1993) underscores how the dissolution of centralized economic planning in the USSR disrupted established trade patterns. India's trade with the Soviet Union, which had been characterized by long-term agreements and stable prices, was replaced by uncertainty and market-driven fluctuations. This shift not only impacted key sectors such as defense and heavy industry but also necessitated a recalibration of India's trade policies.

Diversification of Economic Partnerships

The disruption of Indo-Soviet trade forced India to diversify its economic relationships. In his book ***The Making of India's Foreign Policy,*** Patnaik (1994) notes that this period marked a pivotal shift in India's foreign policy, as it began to engage more actively with Western nations and multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These engagements were not without challenges; India faced pressure to liberalize its economy and adopt structural adjustment programs. Nonetheless, the necessity to adapt to a changing global landscape ultimately set the stage for India's economic liberalization in the 1990s.

1.1.3 Defense and Strategic Relationship

1.1.3.1 Historical Context

The foundation of Indo-Soviet defense cooperation was laid in the 1950s and gained momentum in the subsequent decades. The geopolitical landscape of the Cold War, characterized by bipolarity and ideological competition, necessitated strategic alliances. For India, non-alignment was a guiding principle; however, the need for reliable defense partners became apparent after the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 and the Indo-Pakistani wars of 1965 and 1971. The Soviet Union, with its advanced military technology and willingness to engage in long-term partnerships, became a natural ally for India in this domain.

Nature of Arms Supplies

The Soviet Union provided India with advanced military hardware that formed the backbone of its armed forces for decades. Key among these were the MiG (Mikoyan-Gurevich) series of fighter aircraft, which revolutionized the Indian Air Force. The MiG-21, for instance, became synonymous with India's aerial defense strategy, with its induction marking a significant leap in India's combat capabilities. Similarly, the acquisition of T-72 tanks enhanced the Indian Army's armored divisions, ensuring superior firepower and mobility on the battlefield.

Additionally, the Soviet Union supplied a range of naval equipment, including submarines and

frigates, bolstering the Indian Navy's blue-water capabilities. This comprehensive supply of arms extended to other critical areas such as missile technology, radar systems, and artillery, creating a well-rounded defense infrastructure for India.

The defense collaboration with the Soviet Union provided India with a degree of strategic autonomy that was unparalleled at the time. By reducing dependency on Western nations, particularly during periods of strained relations with the United States, India was able to pursue an independent foreign policy aligned with its national interests. In his book ***India's Role in Global Affairs: An Overview***, Pant (2004) stressed that these arms supplies were not merely tools of warfare but instruments of strategic leverage, enabling India to navigate the complexities of global geopolitics effectively.

Several landmark agreements defined the Indo-Soviet defense partnership. The 1962 deal for the production of MiG-21 aircraft in India under license was a game-changer, marking the beginning of India's indigenous defense manufacturing capability. This agreement was followed by other significant contracts for the supply of advanced weaponry and technology transfers. In his book ***Indo-Soviet defense agreements and their legacy***: ***Defense Studies Review***, Jain (2000) notes that these agreements were instrumental in creating a self-reliant defense ecosystem in India, a vision that continues to guide the country's defense policies today. In his studies ***Soviet support during India's wars: A historical analysis***, Reddy (1996) emphasizes the role of Soviet arms supplies in India's victories during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The timely provision of tanks, aircraft, and naval assets ensured that India could execute its military strategy effectively, leading to the liberation of Bangladesh. ***In his book Soviet military supplies to India and their long-term impact,*** Korolev (1999) highlights the long-term implications of these agreements, particularly in fostering a defense partnership that survived the dissolution of the Soviet Union and evolved into a modern-day collaboration with Russia.

1.1.3.2 Strategic Support and Cooperation:

India received substantial strategic support from the Soviet Union in building defense infrastructure and technological advancements. This support played a pivotal role in shaping India's strategic positioning in the region. The period from 1971 to 1991 witnessed a robust defense and strategic relationship between India and the Soviet Union, marked by significant support and cooperation, which had a profound impact on India's defense capabilities and strategic positioning in the region. The assistance and collaboration provided by the Soviet Union played a pivotal role in shaping India's defense infrastructure and technological

advancements, significantly enhancing its strategic prowess as stated by (Pant, 2009) in his work ***India's Role in Global Affairs***.

The Indo-Soviet cooperation in defense and strategic realms stemmed from the geopolitical realities of the time. India, navigating a complex regional landscape, faced security challenges, including conflicts with neighboring countries. The Soviet Union, seeking to expand its influence and counterbalance other global powers, found an ally in India, fostering a strong defense partnership. The support extended by the Soviet Union to India was comprehensive, encompassing various aspects of defense cooperation. This included the supply of advanced weaponry, military equipment, and technology transfers. The Soviet assistance played a transformative role in augmenting India's defense capabilities.

The collaboration between India and the Soviet Union facilitated the development of defense infrastructure in India. This encompassed the establishment of defense production facilities, research and development centers, and the modernization of military equipment, significantly bolstering India's defense preparedness. Moreover, the technological advancements facilitated by the Soviet Union were instrumental in enhancing India's defense capabilities. The transfer of cutting-edge technologies enabled India to strengthen its indigenous defense production capabilities, reducing its dependence on external sources for military equipment. The strategic support and cooperation from the Soviet Union had a profound impact on India's strategic positioning in the region. It provided India with a significant edge in regional power dynamics, enhancing its deterrence capabilities and consolidating its position as a formidable force in South Asia. The legacy of Indo-Soviet defense cooperation during this period continues to influence India's defense policies and capabilities even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Many of the military technologies and infrastructure developed during that time remain integral to India's defense architecture.

Joint Military Exercises and Training

Joint military exercises and personnel training further cemented the defense partnership between nations, serving as a cornerstone of bilateral relations. These collaborative activities not only enhance operational readiness and interoperability but also build mutual trust and understanding between the participating countries. Over the decades, such exercises have evolved to include complex maneuvers, reflecting the growing sophistication of defense ties.

Scholars such as Karnad (1998) emphasized in his book ***The Soviet role in the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971***, that Soviet support during critical conflicts, particularly during the 1971 war,

demonstrated the depth of the defense relationship. This support extended beyond material aid to include strategic guidance and shared expertise. The 1971 war, which led to the creation of Bangladesh, marked a significant chapter in military collaboration. The Soviet Union's backing was pivotal, showcasing the power of coordinated military and diplomatic efforts.

In his book ***Defense collaboration and joint military training: Historical perspectives,*** Bhonsle (1995) highlights the role of structured training programs in fostering long-term defense cooperation. These programs often involve exchange visits, joint drills, and technical training, providing armed forces with the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences. For example, Soviet advisors played an instrumental role in training Indian military personnel in the use of advanced equipment and tactics, laying the foundation for modern defense strategies.

In his book ***Institutional mechanisms of Soviet-Indian military cooperation***, Chernov (2002) added valuable insights into the institutional mechanisms that facilitate these collaborations. According to him, bilateral agreements and joint commissions have been critical in formalizing and streamlining military cooperation. These frameworks ensure regular interaction and the alignment of strategic objectives, thereby reinforcing the partnership's durability.

The significance of joint military exercises extends beyond immediate tactical benefits. They also serve as a platform for cultural exchange, helping to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers. This aspect of defense collaboration often leads to a broader understanding and appreciation of each nation's military ethos and operational philosophies.

Modern-day military exercises have expanded in scope to address emerging threats, such as cyber warfare, terrorism, and natural disaster response. These developments underscore the adaptability of defense partnerships in addressing contemporary security challenges. Through joint training sessions, participating nations can develop innovative solutions and share best practices, ensuring a robust and dynamic defense relationship.

The joint military exercises and training remain a vital component of defense partnerships, embodying the principles of mutual respect and shared goals. Historical instances, such as those detailed by Karnad, Bhonsle, and Chernov, illustrate the enduring value of these collaborations. As global security dynamics continue to evolve, the importance of such initiatives is likely to grow, further solidifying the bonds between allied nations.

Strategic Implications

The Indo-Soviet defense partnership also had broader strategic implications. In his book ***Strategic implications of Indo-Soviet relations in South Asia***, Cheema (1993) indicates that this relationship was instrumental in countering regional threats, particularly from Pakistan and China, while enhancing India's position in the global power hierarchy. Additional analyses in books ***Cold War geopolitics and Indo-Soviet relations*** by Sengupta (2000), ***Regional power dynamics in the Cold War era***, by Oberoi (1998), and ***Geopolitics and regional balance in South Asia,*** by Dubey (1997) contextualize these developments within the larger framework of Cold War geopolitics.

This partnership significantly influenced the regional balance of power in South Asia. With the Soviet Union as a reliable supplier of military hardware, India was able to modernize its armed forces rapidly, thereby deterring potential aggression from its neighbors. The provision of advanced weaponry and technical support gave India a strategic edge, particularly during critical periods such as the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War[6]. The Soviet Union's diplomatic support during this conflict further underscored the strategic depth of this partnership, as it shielded India from international pressures, including potential intervention by the United States and China.

From a geopolitical perspective, the Indo-Soviet alliance served as a counterbalance to the United States' support for Pakistan and its broader interests in the region. During the Cold War, South Asia became a theater of proxy competition between the superpowers, and the Indo-Soviet relationship provided India with a strategic ally capable of offsetting the influence of the U.S.-Pakistan-China axis. This alignment not only bolstered India's defense capabilities but also enabled it to assert its sovereignty and pursue an independent foreign policy.

Furthermore, the defense partnership had economic and technological dimensions that extended beyond mere arms supply. The Soviet Union's willingness to share technology and provide training for Indian personnel facilitated the growth of India's indigenous defense industry. Joint ventures, such as the production of MiG aircraft and T-72 tanks, marked the beginning of a self-reliant defense manufacturing ecosystem in India. This collaboration also paved the way for technological advancements in other sectors, including space exploration and heavy engineering, thereby contributing to India's broader development goals.

The ideological underpinnings of this partnership were equally significant. Rooted in mutual non-alignment and anti-imperialism, the Indo-Soviet alliance resonated with India's vision of

[6] https://web.archive.org/web/20110606195040/http://www.acig.org/artman/publish/article_326.shtml

a multipolar world order. This shared outlook strengthened bilateral ties and provided a framework for long-term cooperation. Additionally, the Soviet Union's support for India's position on contentious issues, such as Kashmir, further solidified this strategic relationship. By aligning with the Soviet Union, India was able to garner support in international forums, thereby enhancing its diplomatic leverage.

However, the Indo-Soviet defense partnership was not without its challenges. Critics have argued that India's dependence on Soviet military supplies created vulnerabilities, particularly in terms of spare parts and maintenance. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 exposed these weaknesses, forcing India to diversify its defense procurement strategy. Despite these challenges, the legacy of the Indo-Soviet partnership continues to influence India's defense and foreign policy.

The Indo-Soviet defense partnership had profound strategic implications for India. By countering regional threats, enhancing military capabilities, and fostering economic and technological growth, this alliance played a pivotal role in shaping India's trajectory during the Cold War era. The partnership's broader impact on regional and global geopolitics underscores its enduring significance in the annals of international relations.

1.1.4 Cultural Relationship:

Cultural exchanges between India and the Soviet Union played a pivotal role in shaping the socio-political and academic landscapes of both nations. These exchanges were deeply rooted in mutual respect and shared aspirations of progress. Educational and scientific collaborations, in particular, stand out as the cornerstone of this relationship, fostering a dynamic environment for intellectual growth and cross-cultural understanding. Over the decades, these initiatives left an indelible mark on India's scientific and academic communities.

Educational and Scientific Exchanges

One of the most significant aspects of cultural relations between India and the Soviet Union was the large-scale educational and scientific exchanges. These collaborations saw thousands of Indian students pursuing higher education in Soviet institutions. The Soviet Union's emphasis on technical and scientific education aligned well with India's post-independence goals of industrialization and modernization. Soviet universities and technical institutes offered scholarships and specialized programs that attracted Indian students from diverse fields such as engineering, medicine, and natural sciences.

The experience of studying in the Soviet Union was transformative for Indian students.

Exposure to advanced scientific methodologies, state-of-the-art laboratories, and a structured educational system broadened their horizons. Many of these students returned to India equipped with knowledge and skills that significantly contributed to the country's scientific and technological progress. For instance, the establishment of research institutions and the expansion of industries in India during the 1960s and 1970s were, to a large extent, driven by professionals who had trained in the Soviet Union.

Additionally, joint scientific research projects flourished during this period. Indian and Soviet scientists collaborated on various initiatives ranging from space exploration to agricultural development. The Indo-Soviet space cooperation program, which led to the launch of Indian satellites such as Aryabhata, exemplifies the profound impact of these exchanges. Such collaborations were not merely transactional but were built on a foundation of shared goals and mutual trust.

Cultural exchanges were further strengthened through academic conferences, workshops, and bilateral agreements. These events provided platforms for scholars and researchers to share their findings, discuss emerging challenges, and explore innovative solutions. As in his research article titled ***Academic collaborations and cross-cultural understanding: The Indo-Soviet model***, Rajaram (1987) notes, these interactions fostered cross-cultural understanding and paved the way for long-term partnerships. Studies in their research paper ***Educational exchanges between India and the Soviet Union: An enduring partnership*** Mitra (1994) and in article ***Scientific collaborations and their long-term impact: The Indo-Soviet experience***, Vinogradov (1989) have also highlighted the enduring influence of these exchanges on India's academic and scientific communities. According to their research, the knowledge transfer and collaborative spirit established during this era continue to shape India's educational policies and research priorities.

Moreover, the cultural impact of these educational exchanges extended beyond academics. Indian students in the Soviet Union had the opportunity to immerse themselves in Russian culture, art, and literature. They developed an appreciation for the rich heritage and traditions of their host country, which often inspired them to promote cultural dialogue upon their return to India. This cross-cultural engagement nurtured a generation of Indians who became ambassadors of Soviet-Indian friendship, contributing to stronger bilateral relations.

The educational and scientific exchanges between India and the Soviet Union were more than just collaborative ventures. They represented a shared commitment to advancing knowledge and fostering goodwill between the two nations. The impact of these exchanges resonates even

today, reflecting the enduring legacy of a partnership that transcended geographical and ideological boundaries.

Media and Literature

The Soviet Union's cultural diplomacy in India was a multifaceted endeavor that extended deeply into the realms of media and literature. During the Cold War era, the Soviet government actively sought to project its image as a progressive and modern state, leveraging the power of cultural products to foster goodwill and ideological alignment with India. This effort was not merely coincidental but part of a broader strategy to counter Western influences and cultivate strong ties with nations in the Non-Aligned Movement, of which India was a prominent member.

One of the most notable aspects of this cultural diplomacy was the widespread dissemination of Soviet literature. Publications like Sputnik, a magazine that offered a window into Soviet life, technology, and culture, gained immense popularity among Indian readers. Scholars such as Kumar (1990) in his research article ***The role of Soviet literature in shaping Indian perceptions: A Cold War case study***, highlights how Sputnik and similar publications were meticulously curated to present the Soviet Union in a favorable light. These publications were often priced affordably or distributed freely, ensuring their accessibility to a wide audience, including students, intellectuals, and the working class.

The allure of Soviet literature extended beyond magazines. Translations of Russian classics and contemporary Soviet works into Indian languages became a common feature in Indian bookstores and libraries. Iconic works by authors like Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Maxim Gorky were not only translated but also adapted to resonate with Indian cultural sensibilities. This influx of literature played a crucial role in shaping Indian perceptions of Soviet society as egalitarian, intellectual, and culturally rich.

Beyond literature, Soviet films emerged as another powerful medium for cultural exchange. Soviet cinema was frequently showcased in Indian theaters and film festivals, offering Indian audiences an alternative narrative to Hollywood's dominance. Films like Ballad of a Soldier and The Cranes Are Flying found a special place in the hearts of Indian viewers for their poignant storytelling and humanistic themes. The Soviet government's sponsorship of film screenings in urban and rural areas ensured that these narratives reached a diverse demographic, fostering empathy and admiration for Soviet ideals.

The impact of Soviet media extended into journalism and news. Soviet-funded news outlets and radio broadcasts, such as Radio Moscow, provided an alternative perspective on global

events, often highlighting anti-imperialist struggles and championing the causes of developing nations. These narratives resonated with India's post-colonial aspirations and its struggle to carve out an independent identity on the world stage. In his article entitled ***Soviet media in India: Cultural diplomacy and public opinion***, Datta (1988) observes that these efforts were instrumental in creating a positive perception of the Soviet Union among Indian intellectuals and policymakers.

In his book ***India and the Soviet Union: Cultural and Educational Exchanges (1971-1991)***, Krishnan (1993) delves into the strategic use of cultural products by the Soviet Union to influence Indian public opinion. He argues that the Soviet approach was not just about showcasing their achievements but also about aligning with India's cultural and ideological ethos. For instance, themes of socialism, equality, and anti-imperialism prevalent in Soviet media found a receptive audience in India, particularly among the youth and left-leaning political groups. The integration of Indian cultural elements into Soviet productions further reinforced this connection, creating a sense of shared values and mutual respect.

The role of Soviet cultural diplomacy in shaping Indo-Soviet relations cannot be understated. The media and literature disseminated by the Soviet Union served as more than just tools of propaganda; they became bridges of understanding and channels for ideological exchange. By engaging with Indian audiences on cultural and intellectual levels, the Soviet Union managed to establish a lasting legacy of camaraderie and cooperation.

Cultural festivals and exhibitions

Cultural festivals and exhibitions have always played a pivotal role in strengthening people-to-people ties across nations. These events serve as bridges, connecting diverse cultures and allowing for a deeper understanding of one another's heritage, achievements, and aspirations. Festivals and exhibitions, particularly those held during the mid-20th century, were instrumental in fostering such connections between nations.

One notable example is the series of cultural exchanges between India and the Soviet Union during the Cold War era. According to Banerjee (1989) in his published article ***Cultural festivals and exhibitions as tools of diplomacy: Indo-Soviet perspectives***, these festivals and exhibitions were carefully curated to showcase Soviet achievements in various fields, particularly science and technology. The exhibits displayed advancements in space exploration, industrial machinery, and scientific research, portraying the Soviet Union as a progressive and technologically advanced ally. This strategy not only impressed the Indian populace but also aligned with India's aspirations for industrial and scientific growth during that period. The

cultural displays included performances by Soviet artists, exhibitions of traditional crafts, and screenings of Soviet films, all of which created a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect between the two nations.

In his article ***Indo-Soviet cultural exchanges and their socio-political implications,*** Singh (1992) delves deeper into the sociocultural dynamics of these interactions, highlighting how these events were not merely about showcasing achievements but also about forging emotional connections. The festivals often included collaborative performances featuring artists from both countries, symbolizing unity and shared aspirations. Indian audiences were introduced to the richness of Soviet culture, while Soviet audiences gained insights into the vibrant traditions of India. This mutual exchange fostered a sense of solidarity and partnership that went beyond political alliances.

Similarly, in his research paper ***The impact of international exhibitions on educational aspirations: The Indo-Soviet connection,*** Malhotra (1997) emphasizes the role of exhibitions in promoting education and intellectual growth. For many Indians, these events were eye-opening experiences that provided exposure to global advancements. Students, scholars, and professionals found inspiration in the technological exhibits, which often included interactive demonstrations and informative sessions. These exhibitions also encouraged academic collaborations, with Soviet experts frequently engaging with Indian counterparts to discuss innovations and potential areas of cooperation.

The impact of these cultural exchanges was not limited to the urban elite. Efforts were made to ensure that exhibitions and festivals reached smaller towns and rural areas, thereby broadening their influence. Mobile exhibitions, for instance, traveled across the country, bringing Soviet innovations and cultural artifacts to regions that had limited access to such events. This inclusivity played a crucial role in shaping perceptions of the Soviet Union among the Indian masses, creating a widespread sense of admiration and goodwill.

Beyond their immediate impact, these cultural festivals and exhibitions left a lasting legacy. They laid the foundation for future collaborations in education, science, and culture. Many Indian students who were inspired by these events went on to pursue higher studies in the Soviet Union, further strengthening bilateral ties. Additionally, the shared experiences of these festivals contributed to a unique bond between the two nations, one that was rooted in mutual respect and a shared vision for progress.

1.1.5 Shifts and Changes:

1.1.5.1 Impact of the End of the Cold War:

In his research article ***India and the Soviet Union: Reassessing the Post-Cold War Relationship,*** (Jha, 2016) states that the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s marked a significant shift in global politics. This event posed challenges to the Indo-Soviet relationship, necessitating a reevaluation of their ties in the post-Cold War era. The period from 1971 to 1991 witnessed a robust Indo-Soviet cooperation that significantly shaped the geopolitical landscape of the time. However, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s heralded a monumental shift in global politics, consequently impacting the longstanding Indo-Soviet relationship. This event posed substantial challenges, necessitating a comprehensive reevaluation of their ties in the post-Cold War era. The Indo-Soviet cooperation during this period was multifaceted, encompassing political, strategic, economic, and diplomatic dimensions. Both nations collaborated extensively on various fronts, including defense, technology, and regional alliances. This partnership played a pivotal role in shaping regional dynamics and countering global power influences.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s marked the end of the Cold War era, a seismic shift that reverberated across the globe. For India and the Soviet Union, this event had profound implications. The collapse of their primary ally altered the geopolitical landscape and posed a challenge to the established norms of international relations. The dissolution of the Soviet Union created numerous challenges for India. It meant the loss of a significant ally and supporter in various international forums. The sudden geopolitical realignment necessitated a reassessment of India's foreign policy priorities and diplomatic engagements. For India and the erstwhile Soviet states, the post-Cold War era demanded a reassessment of their bilateral relations. India had to adapt to the changing global dynamics and recalibrate its foreign policy strategies. The newfound realities prompted both nations to reevaluate their historical ties in a world that was witnessing rapid geopolitical transformations. While the end of the Cold War posed challenges, it also paved the way for the evolution of Indo-Russian relations. India continued to nurture its ties with Russia, the successor state to the Soviet Union, forging a strategic partnership based on mutual interests and shared concerns.

In conclusion, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s had a profound impact on the Indo-Soviet relationship that had thrived for decades. It necessitated a fundamental reevaluation of ties for both nations in a changing global order. Despite the challenges posed by this seismic geopolitical shift, India and Russia continued to nurture and evolve their relationship, establishing a strategic partnership in the post-Cold War era.

1.1.5.2 Economic Reforms in India:

In his book, ***India: The Emerging Giant,*** (Panagariya, 2008) states that post-1991, India underwent economic liberalization, reducing its reliance on Soviet aid and trade. This shift impacted the dynamics of the Indo-Soviet relationship, requiring adjustments in their engagements. The period between 1971 and 1991 witnessed a profound and dynamic Indo-Soviet cooperation, significantly impacted by the economic reforms India underwent post-1991. This era marked a crucial phase in their relationship, characterized by strategic alliances, economic cooperation, and political alignment. However, the advent of economic liberalization in India post-1991 brought about a paradigm shift that altered the dynamics of the Indo-Soviet relationship, demanding significant adjustments in their engagements.

The Indo-Soviet relationship during the 1971-1991 period was multifaceted, spanning political, economic, and strategic collaborations. The Soviet Union provided substantial economic aid and technological assistance to India, contributing significantly to its industrial, agricultural, and infrastructural development. The economic reforms initiated by India in 1991, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, ushered in an era of economic liberalization. These reforms aimed to open up India's economy, reduce government control, encourage foreign investment, and integrate into the global economy. The shift towards economic liberalization had a profound impact on the dynamics of the Indo-Soviet relationship. India's reduced reliance on Soviet aid and trade necessitated recalibrations in their engagements. As India diversified its economic partners and sought foreign investments, the dependence on Soviet support decreased significantly. The Indo-Soviet relationship, once heavily reliant on economic cooperation, had to adapt to these new circumstances. Both nations had to realign their engagement strategies to accommodate India's changing economic landscape. The focus shifted from economic aid to a more diversified and balanced partnership.

The post-1991 period witnessed a transformation in the Indo-Soviet relationship into a more pragmatic and balanced partnership. While historical ties and political alignment persisted, the relationship evolved to encompass broader aspects such as trade diversification, strategic cooperation, and diplomatic engagements beyond the confines of economic dependency. In conclusion, the period from 1971 to 1991 marked a significant phase of robust Indo-Soviet cooperation, especially in economic realms. However, the economic reforms initiated by India post-1991 heralded a shift in this relationship, necessitating adjustments and recalibrations in their engagements. This shift from economic dependency towards a more diversified and balanced partnership underlines the resilience and adaptability of the Indo-Soviet relationship

in navigating changing geopolitical and economic landscapes.

1.2 Research Gap

The period between 1971 and 1991 marks a significant era in Indo-Soviet relations, characterized by profound political, economic, and cultural exchanges. While extensive research has been conducted on the strategic and diplomatic interactions during this time, notable gaps remain in the comprehensive understanding of the nuanced dynamics that shaped this bilateral relationship. Existing studies often emphasize high-level political maneuvers and major economic agreements, yet they frequently overlook the grassroots cultural exchanges, technological collaborations, and the socio-economic impacts on both nations. Addressing these research gaps is essential for a more holistic understanding of the Indo-Soviet partnership, providing insights into the multifaceted nature of their interactions and the legacy on contemporary international relations. The following are some of the research gaps that were inferred from the review of available literature.

1. Existing literature often emphasizes military and strategic aspects, with less attention given to economic, cultural, and scientific collaborations.

2. Detailed studies on the evolution of trade agreements, commercial exchanges, and economic dependencies between India and the Soviet Union are relatively scarce.

3. There is a lack of comprehensive studies on how Indo-Soviet relations affected regional dynamics in South Asia, particularly with neighboring countries like Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan.

4. Insufficient exploration of cultural diplomacy, including educational exchanges, media collaborations, and people-to-people connections that shaped mutual perceptions.

5. Insufficient literature regarding the extent and impact of technological and industrial cooperation, including space exploration, energy, and heavy industry.

1.3 Research objectives of the present work

(1) To explore the political relationship of India and Soviet Union from 1971 to 1991.

(2) To examine the economic and trade relationship between India and Soviet Union.

(3) To analyze the defense and strategic relationship between two countries.

(4) To highlight the cultural relationship and programmes of cultural patronizing between the two.

1.4 Research Methodology

1.4.1 Research Design

The methodology employed in the present research plays a critical role in shaping the depth and understanding of the subject matter. In this context, the research design outlined in the text adopts a historical analysis approach to delve into the intricate dynamics of Indo-Soviet relations between 1971 and 1991. Historical analysis as a methodology holds significant weight due to its ability to unearth the complexities embedded within historical events. By choosing this approach, the researchers intend to navigate through the historical timeline of Indo-Soviet relations, scrutinizing the interwoven threads of decisions, events, and policy changes that defined this crucial era in international relations.

One of the primary strengths of historical analysis lies in its capacity to reconstruct the past using documented evidence and contemporary discourse. By leveraging available records, archives, and historical narratives from the specified time frame, this research design aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Indo-Soviet partnership. This process involves piecing together fragments of historical data, dissecting official statements, diplomatic cables, academic literature, and other pertinent sources to construct a holistic view of the relationship. The choice of this research design aligns with the intention to offer insights into the evolution of the Indo-Soviet relationship, shedding light on its trajectory from its inception in 1971 to its evolution until 1991. Through a meticulous examination of historical events and the contextualization of decision-making processes within the broader geopolitical landscape, the researchers aim to provide a thorough analysis of the partnership's intricacies. Moreover, the flexibility inherent in the historical analysis approach is particularly advantageous when dealing with the fluid and dynamic nature of diplomatic relations. Indo-Soviet relations during the specified period witnessed various shifts in geopolitical landscapes, policy priorities, and global events that significantly influenced the bilateral dynamics. The adaptability of historical analysis allows the research to accommodate these complexities, ensuring that exploration captures the nuances of the relationship and the changes that occurred over time. This methodology also enables a critical reevaluation of the narratives surrounding the Indo-Soviet relationship. By revisiting historical events and examining them through a

contemporary lens, the research aims to provide a fresh perspective. It allows for a nuanced interpretation that goes beyond the surface-level understanding often presented in historical discourse, offering a deeper understanding of the motives, actions, and implications of the key stakeholders involved. In summary, the choice of a historical analysis approach as the research design for examining the Indo-Soviet relations between 1971 and 1991 reflects a deliberate strategy to leverage historical evidence, documented records, and contemporary discourse. This methodological approach aims to offer a comprehensive, nuanced, and flexible exploration of the multifaceted nature of the partnership, capturing the evolution and complexities inherent in diplomatic relationships within the specified time frame.

1.4.2 Data Collection

The section "1.4.2 Data Collection" suggests a critical aspect of a research methodology, emphasizing the significance of a comprehensive approach to gather information. This particular research prioritizes the reliability and depth of its historical analysis by integrating an extensive range of data sources, encompassing primary and secondary materials. The term "robustness" in the context of data collection implies a strong and resilient foundation for the research's historical analysis. This robustness is achieved through a deliberate and inclusive approach towards data acquisition. By utilizing a diverse array of sources, the researchers aim to capture a holistic perspective, thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of their findings. The distinction between primary and secondary materials is crucial in understanding the breadth and depth of the data collection process. Primary sources refer to original documents, artifacts, or records from the specific period under study. These sources offer first-hand accounts and direct evidence, often coming directly from the time or individuals involved. Examples of primary sources include historical documents, letters, diaries, eyewitness accounts, photographs, and artifacts. On the other hand, secondary sources involve the interpretation, analysis, or discussion of primary sources. These sources are created after the period in question and can include scholarly articles, books, commentaries, and analyses that provide insights into the primary materials. While secondary sources offer valuable perspectives and analyses, they are reliant on the interpretation of the primary data by other scholars or researchers. The deliberate integration of both primary and secondary sources in this research indicates a comprehensive approach aimed at triangulating information, cross-referencing perspectives, and validating findings. This convergence of diverse sources is fundamental in historical research as it allows for a nuanced understanding of events, contexts, and perspectives. By drawing from primary sources, the research can access direct, unfiltered

information from the historical period, minimizing the risk of bias introduced by interpretations in secondary sources. At the same time, the inclusion of secondary materials provides a broader context, allowing the researchers to evaluate and compare various analyses and interpretations by different scholars. The emphasis on the reliability and credibility of findings underscores the importance of methodological rigor in the research process. Utilizing multiple sources not only helps in corroborating information but also enables researchers to identify discrepancies or conflicting accounts, encouraging a critical examination of historical events or phenomena. This critical approach enhances the robustness of the analysis by ensuring that the conclusions drawn are well-supported and grounded in a wide array of reputable sources. Furthermore, by acknowledging the necessity of diverse sources, the research demonstrates an awareness of potential biases and limitations inherent in individual sources. Historical documents, for instance, might reflect the biases of their creators or the limitations of the historical context in which they were produced. By cross-referencing these sources with others from different perspectives or periods, the researchers can mitigate the impact of such biases, thereby enhancing the overall credibility of their findings.

The emphasis on a diverse array of data sources, encompassing both primary and secondary materials, serves as the cornerstone of a robust and credible historical analysis. By meticulously collecting and integrating information from various perspectives and timeframes, the research aims to create a comprehensive, nuanced understanding of the subject matter. This approach not only strengthens the reliability of findings but also highlights the methodological rigor and critical examination inherent in the research process, contributing to a more informed and substantiated analysis of historical events or phenomena.

1.4.2.1 Primary Sources

Primary sources serve as the bedrock of historical analysis, providing invaluable insight into past events, cultures, and societal dynamics. Within the realm of historical research, the significance of primary sources cannot be overstated. They constitute the foundational elements upon which historians construct narratives, unravel complexities, and derive interpretations of historical events. In this context, the exploration of Indo-Soviet relations highlights the indispensability of primary sources, encompassing a spectrum of materials such as official documents, diplomatic correspondences, speeches, and contemporaneous records. At the crux of their importance lies their authenticity and immediacy.

These sources originate from the period under study, offering a direct connection to the thoughts, intentions, and actions of key historical figures involved in shaping the course of

Indo-Soviet relations. By delving into government archives, diplomatic cables, and public addresses by political leaders, researchers gain access to unfiltered accounts of events, policies, and perspectives as they unfolded in real-time. Official documents encapsulate the policies, decisions, and agreements between nations.

They serve as concrete evidence of the formal positions adopted by governments, shedding light on the political, economic, and social motivations behind specific actions. Through the analysis of treaties, agreements, and official statements, historians can discern the underlying principles and objectives that guided the Indo-Soviet relationship. Diplomatic correspondences, comprising letters, telegrams, and memoranda exchanged between diplomats and government officials, offer a nuanced understanding of the intricate diplomatic maneuvers undertaken by both nations.

These exchanges unveil the behind-the-scenes negotiations, conflicts, and compromises that shaped bilateral interactions. They provide a glimpse into the intricacies of international relations, revealing the strategies employed and the challenges encountered in the pursuit of common goals or in moments of contention.

The significance of speeches as primary sources cannot be underestimated. Public addresses by political leaders serve as windows into the ideologies, rhetoric, and public narratives that influenced domestic and foreign policies. Analyzing these speeches allows historians to gauge the ideological underpinnings of government actions and the strategies employed to garner public support or convey diplomatic messages to both domestic and international audiences. Contemporaneous records, including newspapers, journals, and eyewitness accounts, offer diverse perspectives and grassroots insights into societal perceptions, reactions, and sentiments towards the Indo-Soviet relationship. They capture the pulse of the public opinion, reflecting how the alliance or interactions between the two nations were perceived, debated, and experienced by the populace. While primary sources are invaluable, their analysis requires a critical lens. Researchers must navigate inherent biases, omissions, and contextual limitations present within these materials.

Governments often filter information in official documents to serve their political agendas, diplomats may craft messages strategically, and public speeches might be tailored to influence public opinion. Therefore, historians engage in meticulous scrutiny, cross- referencing multiple sources, and triangulating information to corroborate facts and discern a comprehensive understanding of historical events.

Furthermore, the interpretation of primary sources necessitates an appreciation for the broader historical context. Understanding the socio-political milieu, economic conditions, cultural dynamics, and global events of the era in question enriches the interpretation of primary materials. This contextualization enables historians to discern the motivations behind actions, comprehend the implications of decisions made, and evaluate the long-term consequences of Indo-Soviet interactions within the larger framework of global geopolitics.

Primary sources stand as indispensable pillars in historical research, especially in the exploration of Indo-Soviet relations. They offer direct access to the thoughts, actions, and intentions of key historical actors, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in bilateral interactions. However, their analysis demands a judicious approach, considering biases and contextual limitations, while contextualizing within the broader historical framework. These sources, when meticulously examined and interpreted, form the cornerstone upon which comprehensive and insightful narratives of history are constructed.

1.4.2.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources play a vital role in understanding historical events by providing an interpretive framework and context for primary materials. In the realm of Indo-Soviet relations, they encompass various mediums like books, articles, academic papers, and publications. These sources don't provide direct eyewitness or first-hand accounts but offer analyses, interpretations, and historical accounts of the specified period. Let's delve deeper into the significance, types, and implications of secondary sources in comprehending the dynamics of Indo-Soviet relations. Firstly, secondary sources serve as a bridge between primary materials and the comprehension of historical events.

They act as interpretive lenses, offering diverse perspectives and analytical insights that aid in comprehending the complexities and nuances of Indo-Soviet relations. For instance, a scholarly article analyzing diplomatic correspondence between India and the Soviet Union might shed light on the underlying motives and implications behind certain agreements or disagreements. Moreover, these sources often undergo rigorous scholarly scrutiny, ensuring a level of credibility and reliability. Academic papers, for example, go through peer review processes, where experts in the field evaluate the accuracy, methodology, and validity of the research. This validation enhances their utility as trustworthy resources for understanding historical contexts.

The breadth and diversity of secondary sources contribute significantly to understanding

multifaceted historical narratives. Books, with their comprehensive analyses, provide in- depth explorations of specific periods or aspects of Indo-Soviet relations. Meanwhile, articles and publications offer more focused discussions on particular events, policies, or diplomatic encounters. Furthermore, secondary sources evolve with time, incorporating new research, methodologies, and perspectives. Revisiting historical events through updated analyses and interpretations allows for a more nuanced understanding. For instance, a recent scholarly paper might re-examine archival materials using modern analytical frameworks, offering fresh insights into Indo-Soviet interactions previously overlooked.

However, secondary sources come with inherent limitations and biases. Interpretations can vary based on the author's perspective, historical context, or ideological leanings. For instance, a book authored during the Cold War era might exhibit biases influenced by the prevalent political climate of that time, shaping its interpretation of Indo-Soviet relations. While secondary sources provide valuable context, they necessitate critical evaluation. Readers must consider the author's credentials, the publication date, and potential biases. Distinguishing between scholarly rigor and opinion-based narratives is crucial in discerning the reliability and usefulness of these sources in understanding Indo-Soviet relations. In examining Indo-Soviet relations during a specified period, secondary sources offer a panoramic view, connecting disparate primary materials into a cohesive historical narrative. They aid in understanding not only the events but also the motivations, consequences, and broader implications of diplomatic, economic, and cultural exchanges between India and the Soviet Union.

Secondary sources serve as indispensable tools in comprehending historical events and their significance in the context of Indo-Soviet relations. They provide interpretive frameworks, analyses, and historical accounts that enrich our understanding by offering diverse perspectives and contextual depth. Despite their limitations and potential biases, their credibility, evolution over time, and comprehensive nature make them crucial components in the study of history and international relations.

1.4.2.3 Archival Materials and Expert Interviews

The pursuit of historical understanding often relies on a multifaceted approach to sourcing information, a principle underscored in the passage discussing the utilization of archival materials and expert interviews within the context of researching Indo-Soviet relations from 1971 to 1991. At its core, this text outlines a strategic methodology for comprehensive historical analysis. It acknowledges the conventional primary and secondary sources typically used in historical research, which serve as the foundational pillars for understanding past

events. However, it also emphasizes the significance of incorporating additional resources—archival materials and expert interviews—to enrich and deepen the analysis. Archival collections, a treasure trove of historical artifacts, encompass a wide array of materials, such as declassified government documents and personal papers.

These documents are particularly valuable as they often provide unfiltered, first-hand accounts of events, policies, and decision-making processes. Declassified government documents, in particular, offer unparalleled insights into the workings of political systems, shedding light on policies, negotiations, and strategic maneuvers during the Indo-Soviet period under scrutiny. Meanwhile, personal papers, letters, and diaries offer a more personal perspective, revealing the thoughts, emotions, and individual roles within the larger historical context.

The mention of expert interviews introduces another layer to this research methodology. Consulting with scholars and diplomats who possess specialized knowledge and experience in Indo-Soviet relations adds a human dimension to the analysis. These individuals bring their expertise, interpretations, and nuanced insights to the table, potentially bridging gaps that might exist in the available primary and secondary sources. Their perspectives can contextualize events, provide alternative viewpoints, and offer a deeper understanding of the intricacies of diplomatic relations and geopolitical dynamics during the specified time frame.

The rationale behind this multifaceted approach is to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. While primary sources offer direct glimpses into historical events, they might lack context or comprehensiveness. Secondary sources, while valuable in providing analysis and interpretation, could be limited by the biases or interpretations of the authors. By incorporating archival materials and expert interviews, researchers aim to fill potential gaps, corroborate information, and offer a more holistic view of the Indo-Soviet relationship.

This holistic approach to data collection is fundamental in historical research as it aims to mitigate biases and limitations inherent in individual sources. It acknowledges the complexity of historical events and the necessity to explore multiple perspectives to construct a more accurate narrative. The combined utilization of diverse sources, primary and secondary, archival materials, and expert interviews serves as a checks-and-balances system, cross-referencing information and enhancing the credibility of the analysis.

Moreover, by synthesizing various sources, researchers can create a more nuanced and detailed narrative of the Indo-Soviet relationship. This approach goes beyond a mere chronological account of events; it delves into the motivations, ideologies, and contextual factors that

influenced diplomatic decisions and bilateral interactions during the specified period. The synergy between primary and secondary sources, archival materials, and expert interviews is crucial in bridging gaps in historical knowledge. For instance, if primary sources provide limited information on a specific event, archival materials or expert interviews might offer crucial details or alternative perspectives. Similarly, if secondary sources present conflicting interpretations, consulting primary sources or experts could help in reconciling disparities and arriving at a more accurate depiction of historical events.

In essence, the approach outlined in the text highlights the importance of a comprehensive and multidimensional methodology in historical research. It emphasizes the necessity of triangulating information from diverse sources to construct a well-rounded understanding of complex historical phenomena like the Indo-Soviet relationship. By integrating primary sources, secondary sources, archival materials, and expert interviews, researchers aim to craft a nuanced, balanced, and insightful narrative that captures the depth and intricacies of this crucial period in history.

1.4.3 Data Analysis

To unearth the underlying themes, patterns, and critical turning points in the relationship between India and the Soviet Union during the specified period, this research employs qualitative content analysis as the primary analytical tool. Qualitative content analysis involves a systematic and in-depth examination of textual data to identify recurring themes, ideas, and historical narratives. In the context of this research, the approach encompasses the following steps:

1.4.3.1 Data Organization:

In any research endeavor, the process of data organization is critical to extracting meaningful insights and conclusions. The passage you've provided highlights the importance of systematically organizing collected data to enable effective analysis. Let's delve deeper into the significance and methods involved in this crucial stage. Data organization involves structuring and arranging information in a coherent and accessible manner. It begins with the collection phase, where data is gathered from various sources such as primary and secondary sources, archival materials, and expert interviews.

These diverse sources contribute unique perspectives and information, enriching the overall dataset. Once collected, the next step is systematic organization. This involves categorizing and classifying the data based on relevance and context. Categorization involves grouping

similar types of data together, while classification involves assigning labels or tags that denote the nature or significance of the data within each category. For instance, primary sources could include original documents, surveys, or first-hand accounts directly related to the research topic. Secondary sources might encompass scholarly articles, books, or studies that interpret or analyze primary sources. Archival materials could consist of historical records, manuscripts, or any documents preserved for their historical value. Expert interviews provide valuable qualitative data based on the insights and opinions of knowledgeable individuals in the field.

The process of categorization might involve creating folders or databases dedicated to each type of data source. Within these categories, further classification can be applied based on specific themes, time periods, geographical locations, or any other relevant criteria. This hierarchical organization facilitates easy retrieval and ensures that data is easily navigable for analysis. Moreover, relevance and context play pivotal roles in organizing data effectively. Information deemed relevant to the research question or objective is prioritized and allocated appropriate storage or indexing. Understanding the context in which the data was collected or generated helps in interpreting and utilizing it accurately during analysis.

Consider a historical research project exploring the impact of a specific event on society. Primary sources like eyewitness accounts, official reports, and letters from the time period are categorized under 'Primary Sources.' Within this category, further classifications could segregate the documents based on their relevance to different aspects, such as societal impact, economic repercussions, or political aftermath. Similarly, secondary sources analyzing the event might be classified under 'Secondary Sources - with sub categories based on different scholarly perspectives or theories. Archival materials providing context or background information about the era could be organized separately under 'Archival Materials - Historical Context.' Expert interviews, where scholars or individuals knowledgeable about the event share their insights, could be transcribed or summarized and categorized under 'Expert Interviews - Event X.' These could be further classified based on the interviewee's specialization or viewpoint. By systematically organizing data in this manner, researchers can efficiently access and analyze information pertinent to their research questions. It streamlines the analysis process, enabling researchers to draw connections, identify patterns, and derive conclusions based on a comprehensive understanding of the data.

Additionally, the organized structure facilitates collaboration among researchers working on the project. Clear data organization allows team members to access and comprehend the collected information easily, promoting synergy and coherence in the analysis process. In

conclusion, the systematic organization of collected data is a fundamental aspect of any research endeavor. By categorizing and classifying data from various sources according to relevance and context, researchers create a structured framework that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of data analysis, ultimately leading to more robust and informed conclusions.

1.4.3.2 Coding and Thematic Analysis: Coding, in this context, refers to the systematic labeling or tagging of specific segments, phrases, or ideas within the sources being studied. Researchers scrutinize the content, identifying significant elements that relate to the Indo-Soviet relationship. For instance, segments discussing diplomatic meetings, trade agreements, cultural exchanges, conflicts, or ideological shifts might be earmarked for further analysis. These codes serve as markers that help researchers organize and categorize the information. As the analysis progresses, patterns start to emerge from the coded segments. These patterns might include recurring themes such as periods of cooperation, instances of tension, shifts in political ideologies, economic collaborations, or military alliances between India and the Soviet Union.

Once a considerable number of codes have been identified and linked, researchers move to the next stage, where these codes are grouped into broader themes. These themes represent overarching concepts or narratives that encapsulate the essence of the coded segments. For example, themes like "Economic Cooperation," "Political Alignment," "Cultural Exchange," or "Strategic Alliances" could emerge from the coded data. By clustering codes under these thematic umbrellas, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the historical dynamics and key developments in the Indo-Soviet relations. This process allows for a structured and systematic analysis of the complexities and nuances within this relationship over time.

The resulting thematic analysis provides a comprehensive framework that reveals the evolving nature of the Indo-Soviet ties. It not only highlights the pivotal moments and significant events but also sheds light on the underlying factors that shaped these relations. For instance, it might uncover how political ideologies influenced diplomatic decisions or how economic interests drove cooperation between the two nations during specific periods. This approach to analysis isn't just about summarizing historical events. It's a methodical way to distill complex historical narratives into meaningful themes, enabling a nuanced understanding of the Indo-Soviet relationship. Moreover, it provides a foundation for further research and discussions, offering valuable insights for historians, policymakers, and anyone interested in comprehending the intricacies of international relations between India and the Soviet Union.

1.4.3.3 Interpretation: The process of interpretation within the context of identifying themes and patterns serves as a pivotal stage in constructing a comprehensive historical account. This

phase encapsulates a multifaceted approach aimed at deriving meaningful insights and narratives from the collected data, illuminating the nuances and dynamics of the subject under scrutiny. At its core, interpretation involves the extraction of significant themes and patterns that emerge from the wealth of information gathered. These themes could range from societal dynamics and cultural shifts to economic fluctuations or political upheavals, depending on the context of the relationship being studied. By discerning these recurring elements, researchers can start to piece together a coherent narrative that transcends mere data points, delving deeper into the underlying fabric of the relationship's evolution.

The process of interpretation also involves contextualization. It requires researchers to situate these identified themes and patterns within the broader historical, social, and cultural context. This contextual lens enables a more holistic understanding of the relationship, shedding light on the factors that influenced its trajectory. For instance, in studying the evolution of international diplomatic ties between two nations, understanding the geopolitical landscape, historical events, and socio-cultural factors becomes imperative in interpreting the observed patterns accurately. Moreover, interpretation goes beyond merely identifying patterns; it involves deciphering their implications. By discerning the significance of these patterns, researchers can unravel the relationship's complexities, highlighting its challenges, milestones, and pivotal moments. This deep dive into the implications of identified themes facilitates the extraction of invaluable insights into the relationship's dynamics, allowing for a nuanced understanding of its progression over time.

Furthermore, interpretation plays a crucial role in constructing narratives that recount the sequence of events and weave a cohesive story of the relationship's evolution. By connecting the dots between identified themes, researchers can craft narratives that elucidate the causal links between different phases, showcasing the cause-and-effect relationships that shaped the relationship's trajectory. The significance of interpretation lies in its ability to transform raw data into meaningful insights that resonate with the broader context. It enables researchers to not just present a chronological account but to elucidate the underlying factors driving the relationship's evolution. This process empowers the construction of a comprehensive historical account that captures the essence of the relationship, its triumphs, trials, and enduring consequences. Ultimately, interpretation is the cornerstone of historical analysis, allowing researchers to transcend the surface level and delve into the depths of the relationship, unraveling its intricacies, and providing a nuanced understanding that goes beyond the mere documentation of events. It empowers the creation of a rich and multidimensional narrative

that not only informs but also enlightens, offering a profound insight into the complex tapestry of human interactions and relationships across time. The data analysis process allows for the extraction of meaningful historical narratives and the identification of significant events, decisions, and trends that shaped Indo-Soviet relations during the specified period. By combining the historical analysis approach, extensive data collection methods, and qualitative content analysis, this research endeavors to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the multifaceted Indo-Soviet relationship from 1971 to 1991.

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Chapter 2

Indo-Soviet Political relations

2.1 Indo-Soviet Camaraderie (1971-1980)

The official trade agreement was established in 1953, marking India's inaugural long-term pact with a foreign nation. The inclusion of provisions enabling clearance in Indian rupees and a self-balancing system, mandating both parties to bolster trade based on mutual needs, greatly fueled the dynamic expansion of Indo-Soviet trade. Starting with a humble sum of Rs.13 million in 1953-54, the trade turnover surged to Rs. 431 million by 1958-59.

The deepening connection between India and the Soviet Union was notably evidenced by the substantial Soviet support for India's economic progress. An illustration of this is the significant surge in trade volume between the two nations over twenty years, from 1955 to 1974. During this time, trade escalated dramatically, soaring from Rs.55 million to Rs.5,500 million by 1974. Following this, a second five-year trade agreement was established in 1958, witnessing a near-tripling of turnover to approximately Rs.1,559 million by its conclusion.

In 1963, a third five-year trade agreement was initiated, later extended until 1970 by mutual consent, resulting in trade between both nations amounting to Rs. 3,269 million. Subsequently, the fourth trade agreement, inked in 1970 for another five years, introduced a novel clause concerning potential collaborative efforts in other countries, fostering new avenues for industrial cooperation and augmenting trade exchanges across traditional and emerging sectors.

During Brezhnev's 1973 visit to India, a comprehensive 15-year agreement was reached, revitalizing Indo-Soviet trade. This revitalization propelled trade volume from Rs.4,300 million in 1973 to Rs.6,500 million in 1974.

Moreover, this growth trajectory persisted, with total trade surpassing the Rs.700 million milestone in 1975. The proposed five-year trade agreement from 1976 to 1980 aimed to achieve a doubling in trade, fulfilling the aspirations of leaders such as Mrs. Gandhi and Leonid Brezhnev. Enhancing trade with the Soviet Union presented notable advantages for India. It helped break away from the colonial trade dynamics with the capitalist world, where India was compelled to accept unfavourable prices for raw materials and pay excessively high costs for finished goods. This shift, primarily due to the emergence of the

Soviet Union as a viable alternative market, significantly benefited India. The expansion of Indo-Soviet trade increased in volume and diversified substantially. Starting with only a few export items in 1953, India expanded to exporting over a hundred goods by 1976. Initially focusing on tea, coffee, jute products, hides, skins, wool, and spices in the 1950s, by 1976, India emphasized more manufactured or semi-manufactured goods like engineering products, leather shoes, knitwear, ready-made garments, chemicals, essential oils, paints, and varnishes.

Moreover, rupee trade evolved beyond a mere exchange of commodities, becoming crucial for India's foreign exchange challenges and facilitating balanced trade with the Soviet Union. Stability characterized the trade relationship, free from the fluctuations experienced in capitalist economies due to the Soviet Union's planned economy. Imports and exports remained steady, unaffected by economic depressions that troubled capitalist nations.

Evolution and Expansion of Indo-Soviet Trade Relations (1971-1976)

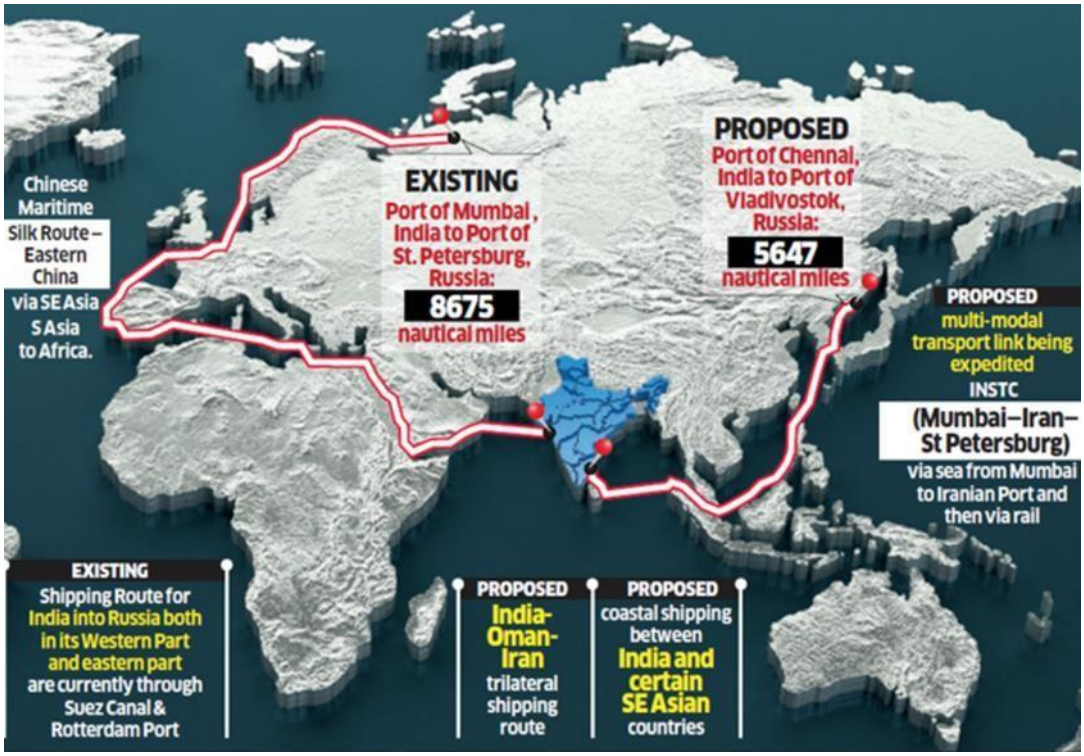

Fig. 1 Existing and proposed Indo-Russia trade route[7]

Imports from the Soviet Union diversified significantly over time. Initially limited to machinery and equipment, by 1976, the imports expanded to include advanced electronic items, industrial raw materials, and, notably, petroleum products. From 1971 to 1975, petroleum

[7] Existing & Proposed Route

product shipments totalled 3.6 million tons, with 1 million tons supplied in 1974 alone, a 112% increase, specifically to fulfil India's urgent requirements.

India's import of industrial raw materials comprised crucial commodities like ferrous and non-ferrous metals, melted steel, newsprint, chemicals, and asbestos. Within the same period, India received 1 million tonnes of fertilisers (a 30% increase from the previous five years), 68,000 tons of zinc (55% more), 240,000 tons of steel products (50% increase), 86,000 tons of sulphur (9 times more), and 140,000 tons of asbestos (3 times more).

By 1976, the Soviet Union became India's largest trade partner among socialist nations and ranked among the top four globally. India, in turn, stood as the Soviet Union's second-largest partner among developing countries. Given Brezhnev's reaffirmation at the 25th CPSU Congress of fostering close economic cooperation with India, it was anticipated that their economic, trade and overall relations would further strengthen. Trade teams from the Soviet Union and India in 1976 explored avenues for expanding trade, including potential production sharing, hinting at deeper economic cooperation. According to the Economic Times, the substantial trade transactions between the two nations were directly linked to India's comprehensive development program. Following the Bangladesh War of 1971, D.P. Dhar, then the Planning Minister and former Indian Ambassador to Moscow, resumed discussions initiated by Mrs. Gandhi during her 1971 Moscow visit. This led to the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Soviet-Indian Commission on Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation in 1972, aiming to facilitate the annual exploration of means to expand Indo-Soviet cooperation.

The Commission's joint production projects entailed Soviet export of raw materials, which would be processed into finished goods and re-exported to the Soviet market. Additionally, the Soviets committed to providing technical cooperation in developing Indian metallurgical industries, petroleum refining, fertiliser production, electronic industries, as well as atomic and space research. Dhar's initiative culminated in the 1973 Indo-Soviet Commission meeting in New Delhi and the signing of a protocol encompassing various areas of Soviet economic and technical assistance and Indo-Soviet cooperation (Government of Pakistan, 1971).

The advancement in economic collaboration between India and the USSR encompasses multifaceted joint ventures and the redirection of both nations' five-year plans. A pivotal aspect of this collaboration lies in the agreement for USSR support in India's upcoming fifth- five-year plan, slated to commence in 1974. The Soviet commitment extends across various

domains such as steel, non-ferrous metals, oil refining and exploration, chemicals, power generation, shipping and transport, as well as electronics.

The Brezhnev visit of December 1973 held significant weight within the sphere of economic cooperation. Despite India's endeavors in 1973 to broaden its trade and despite emerging trade opportunities with the West, Brezhnev's visit strongly signaled the enduring nature of Soviet economic connections with India. Notably, the focal point of the visit was predominantly economic rather than political, although discussions about Asian collective security did transpire between Brezhnev and Indian leaders. Brezhnev's address during the Indo-Soviet friendship rally at the Red Fort in New Delhi extensively emphasized the potential avenues for fostering Indo-Soviet economic cooperation. He expressed satisfaction in observing that the relationship between India and the USSR was not solely confined to political realms but also encompassed economic considerations (United States of America, Government of Richard Nixon, 1972).

The analysts from the Soviet Union, discussing Brezhnev's visit, mentioned that India would receive assurance against any unforeseen events in the progression of its industrial growth. Brezhnev highlighted that the true measure of the friendship between the Soviet Union and India relied on establishing joint production projects, previously finalized but stalled due to regional crises. Following the Soviet approach of initiating projects to leverage labor costs in developing nations,

Brezhnev stressed the importance of maximizing the advantages of fair and mutually beneficial trade. He aimed to kickstart a mutually advantageous collaboration between the Soviet Union and India, proposing a cooperative framework built on joint operations and the complementary use of each other's economic strengths. The Soviet Union primarily sought economic collaboration with India to bolster its economic foundation. Brezhnev's visit to India carried significant weight for the Soviet economy, especially following the breakdown of attempts to foster East-West cooperation in extensive projects spanning 30-50 years.

Initially, Brezhnev and top Soviet officials pushed for increased economic and technological ties with the West, which aligned with Brezhnev's new foreign policy direction. This push was driven by the urgent requirement for credit, machinery, and support in technological advancement to ensure sustained economic growth for both the Soviet Union and other Comecon nations, as outlined in the comprehensive program developed in 1969 and ratified in 1971. The Soviet Union likely aimed for enhanced collaboration with the West to accelerate the growth of their consumer goods sector and elevate living standards. This approach aligned

with the spirit of détente predominant through much of the 1970s, possibly influenced by Nixon's three-step strategy involving confrontation, negotiation, and cooperation (Government of the USSR, 1976).

Brezhnev initially showed a cooperative stance towards influential members of the American Congress who wanted to tie granting the USSR most-favored nation status under the proposed 1974 Foreign Trade Act to demands for easier emigration for Soviet Jews and dissidents. Following the American Congress's blockage of the 1972 Soviet-American trade agreement, Brezhnev dismissed the idea of linking the status to the emigration issue. Consequently, efforts to rapidly expand Soviet-American commercial relations collapsed. Blocked from the broad economic and technological cooperation he sought with the U.S., Brezhnev had to seek out other areas for joint economic projects to compensate for the severe damage inflicted on numerous ongoing Soviet-American projects. While nothing could fully compensate for the loss of American partnership, efforts were made to limit the damage by initiating joint production projects elsewhere.

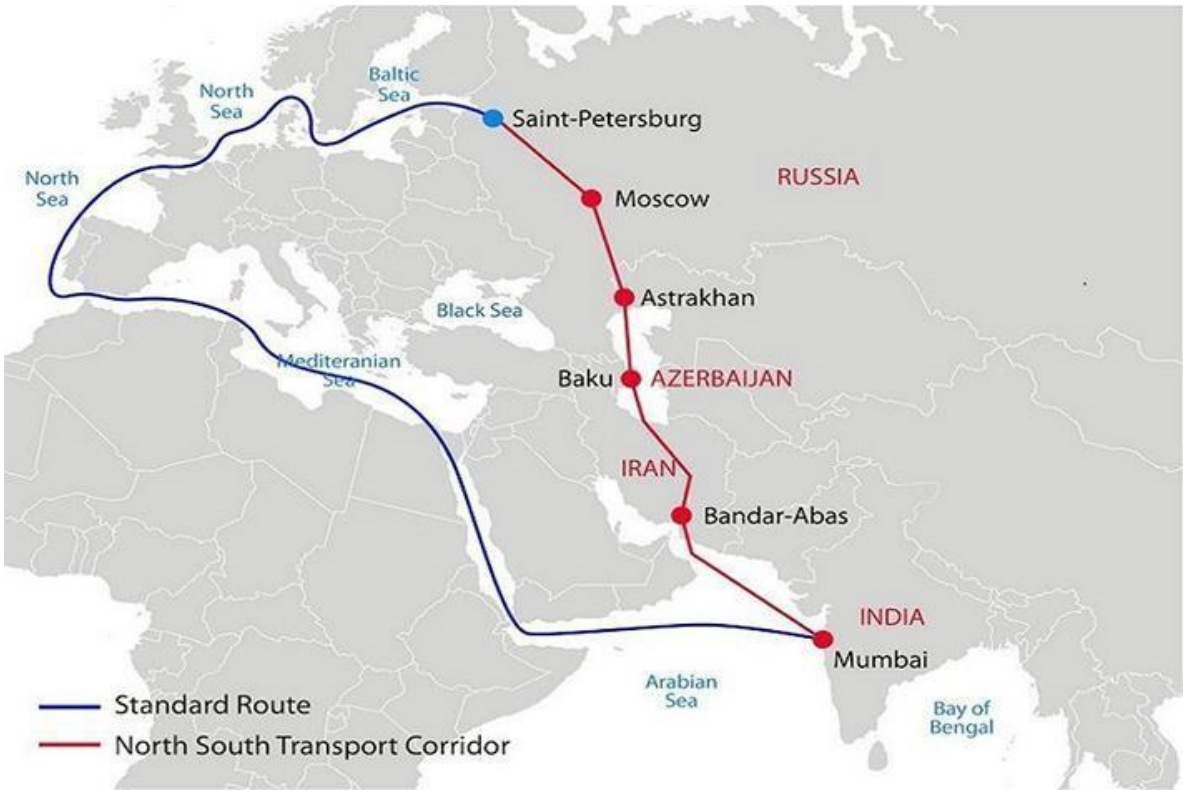

Fig. 2 Indo-Soviet Suez Canal Route[8]

[8] Bilaterals

Challenges of Indo-Soviet Relations (1970-1980)

Initially, the Soviet Union desired to cultivate joint economic ventures with the USA, implicitly recognizing the expanding capacity of the American economy. However, given the limited flexibility of the Soviet economy primarily tied to Comecon countries in trade, it became crucial for Moscow to explore areas where the Soviet economy could potentially expand and become more flexible. Among third world countries, India, with its growing public sector and large population, seemed the most suitable partner for the Soviet Union.

The significant expansion of Indo-Soviet trade in 1972, growing by over 20% to 451 million roubles, was largely driven by Soviet efforts to fill the gap left by the sudden halt in U.S. deliveries of non-ferrous metals, newsprint, rolled steel, and fertilizers after the December 1971 War. Despite the surge in Indo-Soviet trade post the 1971 war, Indian economists recognized the necessity to diversify trade, foreseeing limited prospects for sustained growth in this relationship. Notably, the production collaboration pacts inked in 1973 between India and the Soviet Union were significant. These agreements dictated that the USSR would export raw materials to India, and the finished products would be marketed in the Soviet Union—e.g., Soviet cotton into sewing threads, wool into knitwear, steel into cutlery, etc. Brezhnev emphasized that more than half of the Soviet Union's purchases in India comprised products from India's burgeoning industry (Novosti Press, 1971).

These initiatives greatly benefited the USSR and were welcomed in India due to employment generation. Bhilai and Bokaro remained prominent Soviet-backed projects. Brezhnev expressed satisfaction that Bokaro, the biggest metallurgical plant in South-East Asia, would soon commence full-capacity operations. To address India's energy crisis, the USSR helped Indian specialists explore petroleum in Gujarat, extracting over 3 million tons. A petroleum refinery was established in Mathura.

Additionally, in 1973, a protocol was signed by the Soviets for oil drilling, rapid development of oilfields, and optimal use of wells (Lok Sabha Debates, 1969–1988). India's coal industry, though nationalized, was fragile. An agreement on December 27, 1973, outlined Soviet assistance to enhance open-cast mines. Simultaneously, the USSR offered technical aid for Calcutta's first subway. Seeking deeper economic ties, a 15-year trade and economic pact was signed in December 1973, improving credit terms with longer grace and repayment periods.

A joint team of Soviet Gosplan and Indian Planning Commission members was also formed to address supply issues and planning. The Soviet Union motivated India to build heavy industrial complexes like the Ranchi facility to reduce dependence on the West. The goal was to increase Indo-Soviet trade by 50–100% by 1980, which seemed achievable if joint production programs

advanced steadily. A trade protocol was negotiated in January 1974 by a Soviet delegation led by Deputy Minister I.T. Grishin. It focused on increased exports of kerosene, fertilizers, and newsprint to India. However, trade imbalances persisted—e.g., in 1972, India exported goods worth 312.5 million roubles but imported only 138.5 million roubles in return.

The USSR didn't import as many Indian manufactured goods as promised. There were issues like price hikes—kerosene prices doubled from 1973. The Reserve Bank of India questioned trade with East European countries, citing higher import prices and lower export returns. 'Switch Trading', where Indian goods were re-exported to hard-currency nations, was also criticized. In 1974, Indo-Soviet trade relations strengthened. Projects included:

- New coal resource development
- Iron and steel equipment plant in Durgapur
- Expansion of the Ramgarh coking plant
- A 200 MW power plant in Hardwar
- Delivery of tankers
- A Soviet machine tools pact signed on September 23, 1974.

By 1974, Soviet exports to India led all other nations, and USSR ranked second in Indian imports. Trade volume reached 588 million roubles—over 100 million more than in 1972. Over half of India's exports to the USSR were now industrial products (UN, 1974–1987).

While joint ventures appeared promising, trade faced inherent problems due to 'managed trade'. Soviet shortages in critical goods like non-ferrous metals and fertilizers, combined with India's over-reliance, made diversification essential. Asha Datar noted that Soviet/Eastern Bloc aid was limited to specific equipment types—e.g., surplus fertilizer equipment was offered on credit mainly to challenge capitalist control, not always meeting India's needs.

Indo-Soviet Trade Relations During the Cold War Era

The Soviet trade faced a significant drawback due to the socialist countries' limited familiarity in managing a mixed economy. While a centrally planned system like the Soviet Union left

domestic buyers with no alternatives, a mixed economy like India provided buyers the flexibility to explore other local sources or import goods. The primary flaw in Soviet planning for joint ventures with India lay in neglecting the preferences of Indian customers. Additionally, Indian buyers were not compelled to purchase goods produced with Soviet assistance.

It was additionally highlighted that only a small number of joint ventures with the Soviet Union were fully executed, revealing the pressing issue of marketing that needed addressing. Many of these initiatives experienced underuse due to various reasons, such as inadequate planning by Indian authorities. An instance illustrating the marketing challenge in Soviet- supported projects emerged when the United States declined to purchase equipment from Ranchi's heavy machine building plant. Consequently, India was limited to exporting solely to the USSR.

The suggestion was made that previously, the Soviets provided crucial machinery and equipment for diverse industries. However, the primary hurdle in enhancing trade between the nations stemmed from the inadequate coordination between them. For a developing nation like India, the challenge lay in aligning its production and trade strategies with the centrally planned economies. Failure to do so would inevitably lead to obstacles in securing the necessary imports. Hence, the major dilemma faced by a developing nation was finding a balance: benefiting from guaranteed sources of supplies and connected markets without becoming overly reliant on them (Vajpayee, 1978). India found significant motivation to receive Soviet aid primarily due to the provision of Soviet credits earmarked for bolstering heavy industry within the public sector, an area where other contributors hesitated to extend support. This assistance was pivotal in breaking the dominance of the private sector in India. Additionally, owing to the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War, other aid providers responded to the USSR's aid initiatives by increasing aid volumes, offering more favorable loan terms, and widening the scope of credit utilization.

Although Soviet aid enhanced India's negotiating stance among other aid providers and facilitated the disruption of foreign firms' monopoly, it did not substantially alleviate India's reliance on alternate financial sources and markets. Despite experiencing a notable surge in trade with the Soviet Union, India continued to predominantly depend on other nations for both imports and exports, with prevailing trends indicating a sustained continuation of this reliance. Consequently, many in India resisted the notion of forging an exclusive economic alliance with the Soviet Union. For instance, officials within the Ministry of Heavy Industry, aligned with India's pursuit of economic self-sufficiency, declined procurement of Indian thermal power

equipment from the Soviet Union, despite the shorter delivery timeframe of two years, opting instead to place orders with the state-sector heavy machine building plant.

The lasting impact of three military conflicts over ten years, especially the Bangladesh war, significantly affected the Indian economy and made a lasting mark. Immediately following Mrs. Gandhi's triumph in the war and her landslide victory in the 1972 Assembly elections, she faced the daunting challenge of revitalizing an economy that showed no signs of recovery. Coping with the aftermath of a two-front war and the influx of refugees proved overwhelming, especially given the decade-long stagnation and lack of growth in the economy. Mrs. Gandhi grappled with persistent inflation, escalating prices, extensive urban and rural unemployment, widespread corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and incompetence, exacerbating her difficulties.

In 1973, consecutive monsoon failures and the depletion of government granaries—already strained by feeding ten million refugees from Bangladesh—undermined India's claims of a successful Green Revolution. This also exposed the hollowness of Mrs. Gandhi's 'garibihatao' populist rhetoric, as economic growth alongside social justice appeared more like an unfounded claim. The shortage of fertilizers and electricity significantly hindered India's pursuit of agricultural self-reliance. Adding to these challenges, the abrupt quadrupling of petroleum prices led to what officials termed the most severe economic crisis since independence. India was pushed into a position comparable to the 'Fourth World,' an outcast category in a global hierarchy determined by wealth and oil resources (Gandhi, 1975).

Consequently, India experienced a growing security gap and became more reliant on external powers to maintain its economy. Although acknowledging the support from the Soviet Union in economic matters, India highlighted the ease of economic relations with them, citing the export of goods as payment, which allowed the Soviet credits to be self-sufficient. Mrs. Gandhi was committed to diversifying India's economic needs, even amidst potential criticism for pursuing conflicting objectives. However, driven by India's economic vulnerabilities and developmental aspirations, she sought assistance from the Soviet Union and the United States.

The economic crisis demanded foreign aid, leading to a shift away from radical policies toward economic liberalization and concessions to foreign investors, relinquishing some previously held principles. In a bid to showcase India's non-aligned stance, Mrs. Gandhi sought aid from both the United States and the Soviet Union, despite her socialist leanings, gradually distancing herself from past policies. While initially fostering growth in the public sector, she later embraced economic liberalization, granting substantial autonomy to the private sector,

replacing populist programs with a more pragmatic approach. However, facing resistance from communists and leftists within her party, critical of this shift from socialism, she occasionally made concessions, such as imposing land ownership ceilings, to appease radicals.

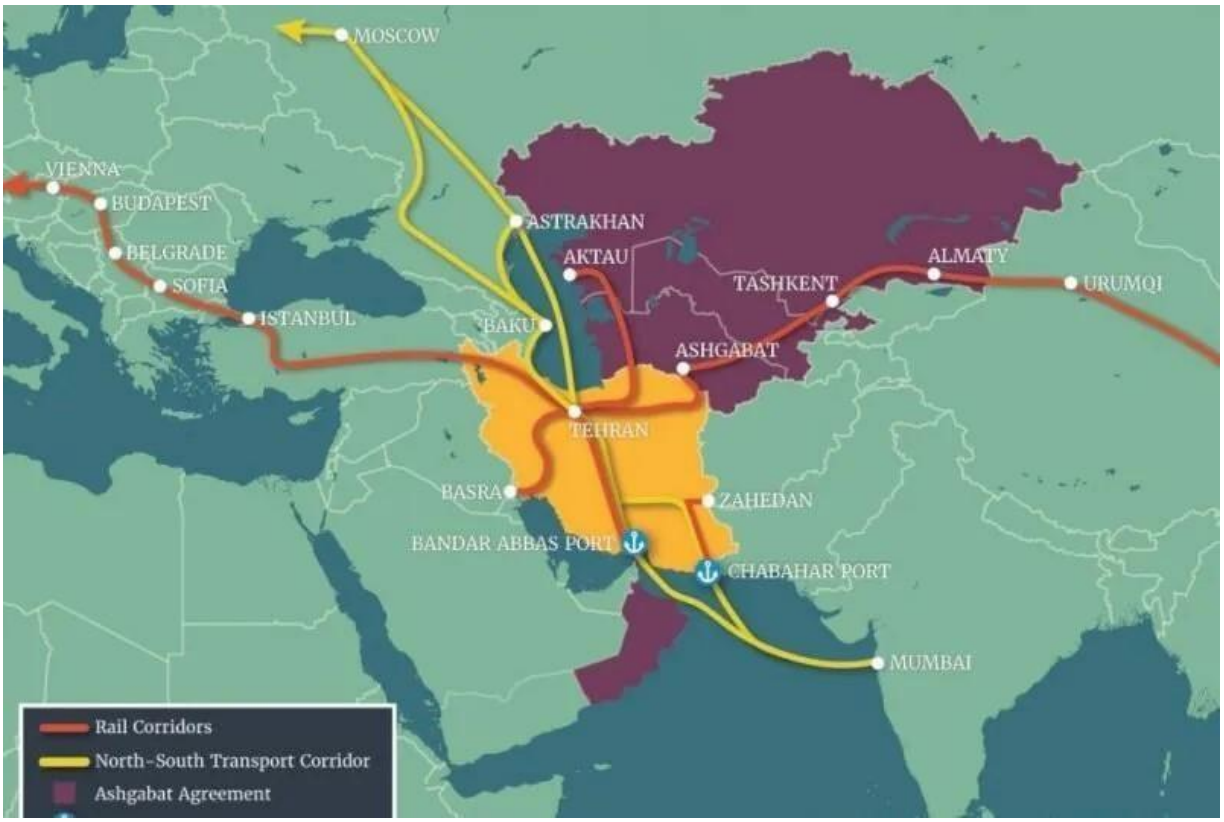

Fig. 3 Indo-Soviet Route via Asghabat Agreement[9]

By August 1973, India's economy faltered, prompting Brezhnev's significant visit in December, although Soviet aid wasn't adequate to rejuvenate the struggling economy. India then appealed to the World Bank and IMF for urgent assistance, subject to conditions set by the international bodies. Despite the apparent backtrack from the economic strategy of 1971, Mrs. Gandhi acknowledged the necessity, accepting the inevitable unpopularity of her decisions, emphasizing the need to do what must be done for the country's sake.

Though subtle, the alteration in India's economic focus in 1974 was clear and did not escape the notice of the Soviet Union. Despite the affirmed 'unshakable' bond between both nations emphasized during the September 1974 visit to Moscow by Indian Foreign Minister Swarari Singh, the Soviet Union couldn't ignore India's emerging liberal tendencies. Signs of strain appeared when Moscow hesitated to support India's plea for Soviet financial assistance to meet the targets of the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-78). Discussions on this matter had to be delayed

[9] Ashgabat Agreement

from March to September 1974. India's appeal for an urgent loan of 4 million tons of wheat was rejected twice due to shortages faced by the USSR, causing resentment in India. The substantial rise in oil prices by 1974 severely impacted India. By the year's end, approximately 70 per cent of India's oil needs relied on imports, straining the country's foreign exchange reserves. Despite requests made during Brezhnev's and Grishin's visits, India's plea for crude oil was denied, leading to friction over currency resources and delivery delays. However, the Soviets did agree to supply refined petroleum products like kerosene and fertilizers, and to collaborate with India in oil exploration and production.

Nonetheless, there was a noticeable stagnation, if not a cooling, in Soviet-Indian relations during this period, particularly in credit dealings. The potential for increased Soviet capital aid and better credit terms for India had been discussed in Moscow as early as June 1974 during a one-week visit by Indian Finance Minister Chavan. His Soviet counterpart Garbuzov agreed to consider the 'important' points raised and pledged that they would factor into formulating a stance on this issue (Achuthan, 1988).

However, simultaneously, it appears that he suggested to Chavan that he should approach Comecon's International Bank. Following Chavan's visit, negotiations were initiated by his State Secretary Kaul with the Bank. Unfortunately, these negotiations did not yield any tangible outcomes. According to an Indian source, Comecon representatives expressed their willingness to extend credit for projects in India, but their preference was for projects that benefitted Comecon countries. They were prepared to provide favorable credit terms for ventures that aligned with their own production interests. Despite this, the USSR remained India's primary trading partner, with the total trade volume expected to increase from 2.3 billion in 1973 to 6.5 billion rupees in 1974. By March 1975, differences in perceptions between India and the Soviet Union became more pronounced.

These differences stemmed from India's decision in December 1971 to delink the rupee from the gold standard by floating it in conjunction with the pound sterling. The Soviet Union's adoption of a tough stance towards India was influenced by their ability to achieve higher returns for their exports due to sharp increases in prices for raw materials and energy resources on global markets. As a result, Soviet leaders gained confidence in dealing with capitalist trading partners and became less inclined to make concessions (Kaul, 1980).

In 1966, when the rupee underwent devaluation, credits owed to the Soviet Union were automatically adjusted by 57.5%. Moscow sought to establish this as a precedent, though the

approach needed refinement due to the gradual depreciation of the £ and the rupee from 1972 to 1974. India's stance was that exchange rates had been predetermined in all trade and payment agreements with Russia and Eastern European nations, thus negating the need for such revaluation from the Russian perspective. However, it seemed that the Russians might not have pursued this issue if it pertained solely to 'non-commercial' transactions, as these held relatively little significance. Yet, outstanding credit posed a different challenge due to its substantial amount. Essentially, the Soviet Union clarified that the revaluation of the rouble or the devaluation of the rupee only applied to non-commercial dealings with them. Consequently, it wouldn't have impacted the Indian economy or Soviet assistance for various projects in India.

India rejected the Soviet argument that the altered parity rates would solely impact non-commercial uses. They argued that since exchange rate foundations were previously established, the changes made by the Soviet bank were unjustified from India's perspective. The core issue stemmed from the clarity of the rupee's gold content versus the unilateral prescription of the Soviet bloc currencies' content. These rates were set during the trade agreements' signing.

India's stance rested on the belief that the Soviet Union's unilateral action could disrupt Indo-Soviet transactions outside the rupee trade framework. Additionally, as the rupee wasn't convertible, its value shouldn't affect the Indo-Soviet balance of payments. India strongly reacted against the attempt to make them pay more in rupee terms due to the rupee's depreciation against the sterling. They argued that the floating rate had always been factored into prices of goods traded with the Soviet Union. Any further adjustment as proposed by Moscow would amount to double payment. Furthermore, India emphasized that the non-convertibility of the rouble meant the Soviet Union couldn't legitimately apply a hard exchange rate to other 'soft' currency nations (Asopa, 1990).

The fundamental challenge both nations faced was the absence of a foundation for a rational resolution. Their differing perspectives stemmed from the inherent nature of their respective currencies. While the pound sterling influenced the rupee's value and subject to international market pressures, the rouble remained detached from global markets, lacking any external benchmark to gauge its value. Finding common ground for comparing these currencies within an international monetary system that didn't acknowledge gold as a standard proved immensely challenging. The Soviets argued that since December 1971, the rupee had depreciated by approximately 28% based on the official gold price of $42 per ounce. In contrast, the rouble had maintained its value, pegged at nearly one gram of gold. However, India rejected the Soviet

claim (Ayoob & Subrahmanyam, 1972).

It seems that the Soviet Union highly valued the ongoing dispute. Initially planning a three-day visit, the Soviet delegation extended their stay to three weeks, showing readiness for further negotiation if a resolution seemed possible. India, concerned about the possibility of Moscow maintaining a tough stance on credit exchange rates, attempted to sway the Soviet Union's position during talks, hoping to reach an agreement on debt restructuring. However, India's internal political and economic circumstances prevented it from severing ties with Soviet economic aid and trade.

Indo-Soviet Cooperation During the Emergency Period (1975-77)

Consequently, the 1975 dispute was postponed. Despite their differences, India's sustained collaboration with the Soviet Union stemmed from mutual efforts to expand economic cooperation. Nevertheless, the primary driver behind Soviet economic aid to India during the emergency period (1975-77) was largely India's strong inclination to normalize relations with China. Moscow reluctantly increased economic incentives and aid to India to counter any shift in India-China relations. Subsequently, the third session of the Intergovernmental Soviet-Indian commission in April 1976 in Moscow showcased progress in various projects, including joint ventures and production cooperation. Following this, Soviet Deputy Premier Arkhipov visited India to formally open a rolling mill at the Bokaro Steel Mill, praising Mrs. Gandhi and emphasizing the significance of Indo-Soviet friendship and Soviet cooperation in India's economic growth. The Soviet approach seemed more like an appeal to win over India from aligning with China rather than that of a major economic supporter.

The signing of a long-term trade agreement for 1976-80 in New Delhi during mid-April appeared to lack the previous enthusiasm typically associated with such events. According to Indian press reports, the subdued statements conveyed this sentiment during the occasion. It was noted that talks had commenced in 1974, followed by two rounds in 1975, and a Soviet trade delegation had worked on it in January and February 1976 (Bajpai, 1982). India's push to normalize relations with China prompted action from the Soviets, culminating in the 1976 accord with India. This marked a pivotal shift in India's economic ties with the Soviet Union early in 1976. There was a significant transformation in the volume and diversity of trade and the nature of collaboration. The agreement finalized in Moscow after Mr. Haksar's visit outlined plans for establishing new industries in India with Soviet support. These ventures were to be reimbursed partially through exports generated from these enterprises. This integration aimed to align specific sectors of both economies to meet the Soviet Union's need for improved

consumer goods, elevating living standards, and high-quality producer goods to boost its industries.

The 1976-1980 trade agreement was negotiated within this broader framework. Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, India's Commerce Minister, highlighted that this agreement would embody structural changes, serving as a robust catalyst for fostering bilateral trade growth. In this context, he mentioned the Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin's report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU. He highlighted the Soviet leadership's focus on broadening economic and trade ties with developing nations based on fair and democratic principles. The aim was to bolster the economic autonomy of these countries (Bhatia, 1984).

Prof. Chattopadhyaya conveyed India's gratitude for the Soviet leadership's decision to approve the repayment of the 2-million-ton Soviet wheat loan by accepting Indian goods and commodities. This allowed India to bolster its wheat reserves and marked a significant concession by the Soviet Union. The trade agreement spanning from 1976 to 1980 was signed in Moscow by the N.S. Patolichev and Mr. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, representing their respective nations, aimed to achieve a turnover of Rs. 935 crores in 1980 and an overall Rs. 4346 crores within the 1976-1980 timeframe at constant price levels. Notably, industrial exports to third countries in 1980 were expected to surpass Rs. 1000 crores, with India contributing Rs. 800 crores.

As part of this agreement, the USSR committed to supplying India with various crucial resources such as oil drilling equipment, kerosene, fertilizers, and non-ferrous metals necessary for projects supported by Soviet aid. They also agreed to continue providing fertilizers, asbestos, sulphur, and newsprint, all vital components for India's economy. In return, India pledged to export non-traditional items in the engineering and chemical domains, including storage batteries, garage equipment, electronic instruments, software, pharmaceuticals, medicines, alongside traditional goods like tea, coffee, spices, oil cakes, leather shoes, and jute products. Moreover, the USSR agreed to import new items like pig iron, freight containers, dry core telecommunication cables, aluminum foils, and wood veneers. An important aspect was the agreement to repay the wheat loan extended by the USSR in 1973. Reflecting the amicable relations between the two nations, the USSR accepted India's proposal to settle the loan through the export of specified goods and commodities, which had already been integrated into the Trade Plan for 1976-80. This new trade agreement, initially discussed in February 1976 at the official level, took effect in 1976 and also maintained the existing rupee trading pattern through a single clearing account system for the next five years, as outlined in the agreement. The treaty

showcased the Soviet commitment to maintaining the momentum seen in the development of Indo-Soviet relations. This was done to refute claims suggesting a slowdown in Indo-Soviet trade (Cassen, 1985).

Moscow aimed to highlight the continuous growth of Soviet trade with India through this agreement. However, the evidence showed that these claims were not entirely baseless. In 1955-56, India's imports from the Soviet Union accounted for less than 1% of its total imports. By 1974-75, this number had risen to nearly 9%. Conversely, India's exports to the Soviet Union in 1955-56 comprised just over 0.5% of its exports, increasing to more than 12% by 1974-75, although the highest point was reached in 1972-73 at 15.5%. While the absolute volume of Indo-Soviet trade grew almost every year, partly due to increasing prices, Moscow's portion of India's trade diminished.

The Soviet share of India's imports decreased to approximately 6% in 1975-76 and 1976-77, and its share of India's exports declined to 10.3% and 8.6% for those respective years. Despite being India's primary export market in 1974-75, the Soviet Union fell to fourth place by 1976-77, trailing behind the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan. In terms of imports, the Soviet Union ranked fourth after the United States, United Kingdom, and Iran, facing pressure from West Germany and Japan. In 1974-75, Moscow held over 10% of India's total trade, securing second place. However, by 1975-76, this share dropped to less than 8%, and the Soviets slipped to third place. Subsequently, by 1976-77, the figures dwindled to 7%, securing a fourth-place ranking (Clark,1979).

However, the trade between the Soviet Union and India held significant importance throughout the 1970s. Notably, India's trade growth with the Soviet Union, from the 1950s until the mid-1960s, surpassed that with any other country. The Soviets provided reliable markets for Indian goods that might otherwise have struggled in the global market competition, aiding India in saving foreign exchange through increased exports in repayment of aid programs. This trade relationship also helped India lessen its reliance on the West economically. Despite this, persistent disagreements over the rupee-rouble ratio and the Soviet Union's reluctance to switch to program assistance hindered the future prospects of Indo-Soviet trade.

Efforts were made to settle the rupee-rouble exchange rate, especially during talks in Moscow in May-June 1976, prior to Mrs. Gandhi's visit to the Soviet Union. Agreement seemed attainable as the rupee had gained strength since its delinkage from the declining pound sterling in September 1975, being tied to a diverse 'basket of currencies.' Aligning with a similar

strategy in 1976, it was anticipated that agreeing on a mutually acceptable rupee- rouble exchange rate wouldn't be overly challenging. Nonetheless, the issue of valuing old credit repayments to the Soviet Union from India remained unsettled. Mrs. Gandhi, ahead of her Moscow trip in 1976, commended prior Soviet assistance and emphasized the pursuit of new forms of cooperation to sustain the development pace in their relations without any slowdown (Chopra, 1986).

Brezhnev echoed Mrs. Gandhi's sentiments regarding Indo-Soviet economic collaboration. He expressed a desire for the deepening of relations between India and the Soviet Union, stating that the Soviet Union was prepared to explore innovative avenues for economic cooperation. The joint declaration between the Soviet Union and India emphasized the importance of bilateral cooperation in economic trade, scientific advancements, and technical fields. Both parties were satisfied with the ongoing and robust growth of their collaboration, which aligned with the agreements made during the summit in New Delhi in November 1973. This progress is consistent with the objectives and pledges articulated in the joint Soviet- Indian Declaration by both nations (Chopra, 1974).

The collaborative statement further specified that, aligning with India's intent to fortify its economic self-reliance, the Soviet Union pledged affirmative support to facilitate India's attainment of this objective. Their economic and technical collaboration broadened to encompass pivotal sectors like metallurgy, machine building, electric power, petroleum and natural gas extraction, coal and mining, agriculture, and other mutually beneficial fields. Despite both parties emphasizing economic concerns, the anticipated surge in Indo-Soviet economic cooperation did not materialize primarily due to the unresolved rupee-rouble exchange rate issue, persisting from the preliminary economic discussions preceding Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Moscow. Although efforts were made to introduce new forms of economic collaboration, the Soviets acknowledged that their economic ties with India were stagnating. Notably, a significant shipping agreement was signed in July, yet little progress ensued until August, when a long-awaited protocol identifying fresh areas of cooperation in joint projects with third countries was finally agreed upon.

This accord marked India's inaugural participation in heavy industrial construction beyond its borders. Subsequently, in September, another pact was signed, wherein India committed to supplying 30,000 tons of metallurgical equipment manufactured by the Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC) in Ranchi to steel plants in the Soviet Union. These agreements aimed to boost Indo-Soviet cooperation, leveraging India's public sector production to maximize

industry output. Deputy Foreign Minister Grishin's visit to India in December 1976 resulted in the formulation of a trade protocol with Indian counterparts, outlining a targeted trade turnover of Rs. 900 crores (Clark, 1979).

Additionally, the Soviet Union agreed to import various Indian non-traditional goods, including machinery from the HEC, freight containers, fork-lift trucks, and machine tools. In return, India would maintain its import of petroleum products, non-ferrous metals, and engineering goods, among other items. However, the pivotal aspect of the Grishin visit was the unprecedented Soviet offer to sell crude oil to India for the first time.

Indo-Soviet Trade and Defense Cooperation in the 1970s: Navigating Challenges and Strengthening Ties

During the early seventies, when oil prices soared and India faced continuous shortages, it had sought crude oil from the Soviet Union. Initially, Moscow declined sales to New Delhi, citing its domestic and East European consumption being almost equivalent to its production capacity. The reality, however, was that with oil becoming a lucrative commodity, Moscow prioritized regions that could provide hard currency.

Despite offering kerosene and diesel fuel during the 1974 energy crisis, the Soviets refrained from selling crude oil until Grishin's announcement in December 1976. Grishin disclosed Moscow's readiness to provide crude oil on a long-term basis, proposing an exchange for Indian pig iron, which India had in surplus. The Soviet offer included 5.5 million metric tons of crude, with 0.1 million to be delivered in 1977 and 1.5 million annually for the next three years. This trade arrangement, swapping oil for pig iron, fueled optimistic projections that bilateral trade might hit the 1980 target as early as 1977. Furthermore, India was expected to receive approximately 7 to 10 percent of its crude oil imports from the Soviet Union without significant foreign exchange costs.

Considering India's persistent requests for crude oil and the Soviet Union's prior reluctance, the agreement to trade crude oil on a rupee or barter basis held immense significance, showcasing India's substantial influence. However, it remained unclear what India offered in return or what prompted the Soviets to ultimately agree. Given India's potential alignment with China, the Soviets perceived the provision of crude oil as a crucial step to underscore Moscow's commitment to its relationship with New Delhi and potentially sway India from gravitating towards China, especially considering India's critical need for oil (Duncan, 1980).

The 1977 Indo-Soviet trade protocol, signed in Delhi, outlined a bilateral trade valued at

Rs.900.00 Crores. This represented an 8.4 percent increase over the 1976 target set in the trade plan. Given that the actual turnover in 1976 fell short by about Rs.75.00 Crores from the anticipated trade plan, the proposed rise for 1977 was substantial. Additionally, a separate agreement was imminent for the Soviets to supply a million tons of petroleum crude, offset by India's export of pig iron and steel products. Notably, the Soviet crude acquisition wouldn't draw on free foreign exchange under the rupee payment arrangement, while the export of pig iron and steel products aimed to alleviate an existing surplus.

The million-ton import formed part of a long-term program for Soviet crude supply. However, negotiations on the price were pending, and the Soviet Union was known for tough negotiations. Even its East European allies had to pay higher crude prices; hence India wasn't likely to receive special treatment. Despite India theoretically having a pricing advantage for its exports to the Soviet Union, the actual benefits were limited. The trade plan encompassed a broader spectrum of exchanged products. The Soviet Union agreed to purchase new items such as freight containers, fork-lift trucks, machine tools, medical instruments, aluminium foil, and wood veneers. This move aimed to invigorate struggling industries within India. A significant provision was the Soviet Union's commitment to purchase machinery and equipment worth Rs.5.00 Crores in 1977 from Soviet-assisted projects in India, like the Heavy Engineering Corporation.

However, the challenge of diversifying Soviet exports to India, which partly hindered reaching the 1976 target, remained unresolved. Efforts were underway to acquire Soviet machinery and equipment for export-oriented coastal cement plants. Collaboration plans progressed, with contracts valued at approximately Rs.33.00 Crores signed for supplying Indian equipment to Soviet-aided steel and metallurgical projects in countries like Cuba, Turkey, and Bulgaria.Furthermore, a proposal was forming for India to manage the civil construction aspect of Soviet-aided projects in West Asia and elsewhere. The evolving industrial and commercial requirements of both countries presented new opportunities but complicated the coordination of needs and capacities (Dutt, 1984).

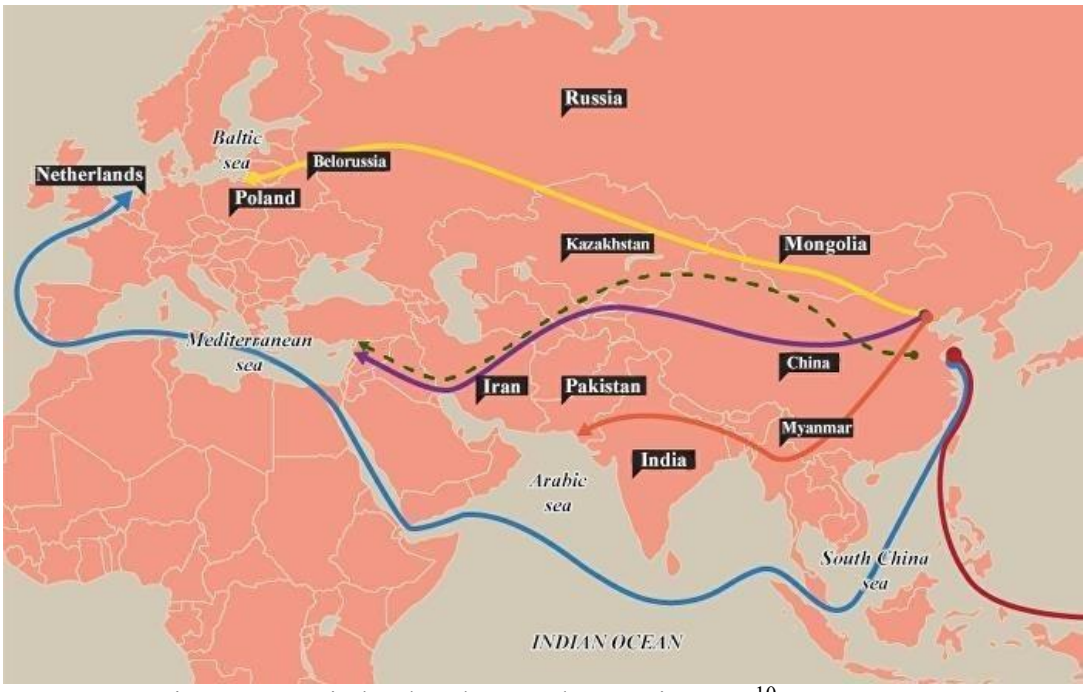

Fig. 4 Strategic land and sea Indo-Russia route[10]

Looking back, it's clear that without significant economic support from the Soviet Union in the tumultuous seventies, India would have faced much greater challenges. With ongoing American hostility and limited aid from the West, India would have had no choice but to rely on the Soviet Union for economic sustenance. Despite any hidden motives the Soviets might have had, their backing during India's crucial times was immensely important. This support extended beyond economic ties to include military cooperation, which significantly influenced India between 1966 and 1977. Following the setback of the 1962 conflict, India shifted towards prioritizing military modernization, reflected both in bureaucratic and political spheres. Indira Gandhi, shaped by this new approach, departed from Nehru's idealistic internationalism and embraced realpolitik and power dynamics, seeing them as vital for internal stability and India's global standing. Though elements of Nehru's idealism persisted in Indian diplomatic thinking during Indira Gandhi's tenure, they were significantly overshadowed by a more pragmatic approach. Moving away from Nehru's idealistic peace- focused diplomacy towards a more pragmatic approach rooted in military power, Mrs. Gandhi significantly enhanced India's military capabilities through modernization efforts, with substantial support from the Soviet Union.

The Soviet connection played a pivotal role in strengthening India's armaments sector. With

[10] Land & Sea

the Kremlin's strategic shift towards engaging with the Third World, providing arms became a tool for wielding political influence. The Soviet Union saw India's empowerment as a counterbalance to China, viewing the enhancement of Indian defense as advantageous to its own interests. This partnership not only bolstered India's defense but also cemented the Soviet Union's position in the region, fostering a mutual perception of aligned interests between the two nations. Consequently, the Soviet Union was willing to take the risk of sharing advanced military technology with India (George, Litwak, & Chubin, 1984).

The Soviet Union's decision was significant because, despite the licensed production agreements starting in 1962, by the mid-1970s, they had only shared military expertise with a select few nations. India was among this small group, and its consistent purchases of advanced weaponry kept Soviet production lines active while controlling costs. This initial arms transfer from the Soviet Union to India occurred in the early 1960s, aligning with India's urgent need to bolster its defense capabilities in response to security concerns.

India sought an alternative to reliance solely on the United Kingdom, aspiring to cultivate an independent defense industry. V.K. Krishna Menon, the Defense Minister at the time, strongly favored the Soviet Union, believing Moscow was the key to modernizing India's military and achieving self-sufficiency. Moreover, acquiring arms from the Soviet Union was crucial for India's defense against China. In the 1950s, India primarily procured arms from Britain. However, by the early 1960s, Britain, the United States, and France showed reluctance to fulfill certain Indian requests, doubting India's capacity to handle specific naval weapons and denying credit. The U.S. declined to provide F-104 Starfighters and C-130 transport aircraft that they were supplying to Pakistan. In 1964, after a disappointing experience in Washington, Defense Minister Y.B. Chavan turned to the U.S.S.R. for assistance, receiving more support than expected, as noted by then U.S. Ambassador to India Chester Bowles (Ghatate, 1972).

The Soviet Union, previously providing India with restricted amounts of weaponry since 1960, proposed defense loans with a ten-year duration at a 2% interest rate. Although the precise details of the terms governing the Soviet Union's arms provisions to India remained undisclosed, according to P.R. Chari, the Defence Director at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, India acquired loans totaling $270 million at a nominal 2% rate over a ten-year period starting in 1964. It can be reasonably assumed that the terms accepted in the mid- 1960s were concessional. The compactness and comparative simplicity of the Soviet-supplied weapons were advantageous for the Indian Army. Originally trained under British influence, the army reluctantly embraced Soviet weaponry due to necessity, later transforming into its

staunchest supporters (Jain, 1971).

During the 1960s, Soviet cooperation in defense was favored for several reasons. Aside from fostering self-sufficiency, the terms of credit were favorable, and the expenses were significantly lower compared to Western hardware. India's cost-conscious bureaucracy welcomed Soviet equipment enthusiastically. India sought assistance from the Soviet Union due to the cost-effectiveness of the loans and to garner symbolic support against China and counter America's provision of supersonic Starfighters to Pakistan. According to Nihal Singh, only the Soviet Union showed sympathy towards India's aspiration to establish itself as a robust military force with an independent defense industry. In 1964, the collaboration between India and the USSR in defense significantly expanded. A fresh agreement was established, granting India four squadrons of MiG 21S, helicopters, light tanks, missiles, and other advanced weaponry. India was slated to pay for these provisions in rupees or domestically manufactured goods spread across a decade. During the 1965 war between India and Pakistan, while the United States halted military equipment supplies, the Soviet Union continued delivering to India. Consequently, from 1967 to 1977, India heavily relied on the Soviet Union for approximately 81% of its arms imports. As the
U.S. and Britain couldn't provide India with a submarine, the Soviet Union stepped in, offering four polnoncy type landing craft, new 2,300-ton F-class submarines, two poluchet class fast patrol boats (such as Osa and Komar missile firing classes), as well as other rocket- firing types. Additionally, the offer included two petya class frigates and six motor torpedo boats, all aimed at reinforcing India's sea defense.

In 1968-69, India received two submarines, followed by two more in 1970, all preceding the 1971 conflict where the alliance between the U.S. and China aimed to weaken India militarily. During the war against Pakistan in 1971, the Indian Navy effectively blocked the Pakistani Navy in Karachi, closing off the route to the Bay of Bengal and preventing reinforcements for Pakistani troops in East Bengal. The Indian Navy's strategic maneuvers in Karachi surprised even the Soviets, as they used defensive armaments offensively. This reliance on Soviet supplies made the Indian Navy heavily dependent, with the entire submarine fleet being of Soviet origin.

A notable aspect of USSR-India defense collaboration was providing advanced military hardware and aiding India in achieving self-sufficiency in defense. The Soviet assistance in establishing domestic factories was crucial, enabling the production of MiG-21 supersonic jets, radar equipment, and missiles within India. The weapons supplied by the Soviet Union

encompassed various aircraft like AN-12, IL-14, and T4-124, helicopters such as HI-4 and MI-8, fighter interceptors like MiG-21, trainers, and fighter bombers. Additionally, they included a range of missiles such as K-13 Atoli air-to-air missiles, SA-2 surface-to-air missiles, SS-N-2 'Styx' surface-to-surface missiles, along with tanks, armored personnel carriers, landing craft, patrol boats, frigates, submarines, and motor torpedo boats (Kozyrov, 1985).

A brief examination of India's air force reliance on Russia since the early 1960s is relevant. Initially acquiring a few tactical transport aircraft and utility helicopters from the USSR in 1961, the IAF then received its initial non-western combat aircraft in 1962-63. The introduction of the MiG-21 presented challenges with its early model limitations, yet the IAF eventually maximized the potential of this supersonic fighter, later opting for its licensed production in India. Despite initial Soviet skepticism following the limited involvement of MiG-21 PFs in the brief 1965 conflict, by December 1971, the IAF boasted several air defense squadrons equipped with the MiG-21FL version.

These aircraft, equipped with improvised gun sights, showcased the prowess of a top-tier air force piloting superior fighters. The MiG-21s notably outperformed the F-104 starfighters, achieving a 4:0 kill ratio. While the Russians and Mikoyan OKB Design Bureau were pleased, the IAF fully leveraged the MiG-21's potential, surpassing the designers' expectations. Subsequent MiG-21 MF and MiG-21 bis variants integrated technological advancements, fostering a fruitful relationship between the IAF and MiG OKB. It's fair to say that without the IAF, the MiG-21 wouldn't have developed as it did, and without the MiG-21, the IAF wouldn't have expanded as it did.

Indian skill enhanced the MiG-21M, resulting in a more advanced model with improved range, speed, and striking capabilities. Additionally, the MiG factory ensured the production of necessary accessories and spare parts for both MiG-21s and MiG-21Ms. The military correspondent of the Indian Express reported this information73. The military correspondent from the Indian Express highlighted that significant Soviet support had aided in modernizing the Indian armed forces during a critical phase when Western supply channels had diminished. K. Subramanyan, a Defense Analyst, acknowledged the pivotal role played by the Soviet military alliance in India's defense readiness since 1964. By 1972, the indigenous contribution to the MiG-21 had increased to 60 percent. Comparatively, Soviet weaponry was deemed superior in quality to Western arms, as evidenced by Indian-made MiGs outperforming American F-104s and French Mirages in combat.

The terms of the Soviet arms deals did not impose restrictions on weapon usage nor curtail India's freedom to explore other military hardware sources. However, it's crucial to note that India turned to the Soviet deal primarily due to the lack of viable alternatives. The reliability and effectiveness of Soviet weapons were tested and affirmed during the Bangladesh War, prompting an uptick in India's arms acquisitions and production in the early 1970s to bolster national security and replenish losses incurred during the conflict.

India's emphasis on defense production was heightened post the Bangladesh War, leading to collaborations with France for licenses to manufacture aircraft like HAL SA-315 'Cheetah', HAL SA-316B 'Chetak', and SS 11 Bharat ATM warheads. Additionally, licenses from the UK enabled India to produce various aircraft, the 'Vijayanta' medium battle-tank, and the 'Leander' type frigate. Subsequent to the Bangladesh War, India acquired tanks, patrol boats, landing craft, missiles, and warheads from the Soviet Union. Despite the acceleration in the production of aircraft like Gnats, MiGs, and HF-24 in India, an excessive reliance on Soviet armaments raised concerns. Hence, despite Soviet support during the Bangladesh War, Mrs. Gandhi initiated efforts in the mid-1970s to diversify arms imports, leading to engagements with France and Britain. This move aimed to broaden India's procurement options and negotiate more favorable terms with Soviet suppliers. However, following the 1971 War, Moscow displayed reluctance to transfer sophisticated weapon technology fully, signaling a shift in Soviet attitudes. Notably, Indo-Soviet relations had recurrent tensions concerning the complete transfer of advanced technology (Donaldson, 1981).

Indo-Soviet Dynamics of Dependency and Diplomacy (1971-1977)

India was manufacturing an upgraded MiG-21 with a Soviet license. However, reports indicated that the Soviets maintained significant authority over the aircraft's production in India. This control stemmed from their exclusive ownership of intricate designs and the supply of advanced components. Additionally, the Soviets exhibited a knack for tough negotiations and were frugal when it came to providing spare parts across various technology levels.

The Soviets were unresponsive to India's plea for MiG-23s, SAM-6, and SAM-7 weapons post the 1973 Middle East War despite their proven effectiveness. Following the 1971 Indo-Pakistan conflict, the Soviets rejected Indian appeals for advanced aircraft, leading Mrs. Gandhi to explore alternatives like the Anglo-French Jaguar. This resistance hinted at the Soviet reluctance to commit further to India in terms of sophisticated weaponry. During Brezhnev's 1973 visit to India, there was a deliberate avoidance of discussing arms trade, evident from the absence of any mentions in his speeches. Concerns were raised about the

deficiencies in Soviet equipment, particularly regarding the performance of SU-7 bombers (Mishra, 1977).

It was claimed that despite the initial affordability of Soviet equipment, the subsequent costs for spare parts and additional necessary components were expensive, and their availability was uncertain. Additionally, the Soviet commitment to confidentiality hindered the complete exchange of technical expertise, which was vital for India's defense industry's future progress. There was clear evidence of a lack of substantial interaction between Russian instructors and Indian servicemen, whose connection was limited solely to technical training. Mrs. Gandhi's administration discouraged close ties between Indian servicemen and both their Russian and American counterparts. The respective governments tightly regulated Indo-Soviet military collaboration, focusing solely on technical guidance for Indian servicemen without any political influence. According to a Soviet official, Indian officers were seen as consistently maintaining a bourgeois mindset (Drieberg, 1974).

Soviet observers often made critical remarks about the perceived conservative nature of the Indian economy and political leadership, along with the disagreements between Mrs. Gandhi and Soviet leaders on global matters. Indian officers were barred from attending Soviet staff or War colleges, where strategic thinking was nurtured. Opportunities for Indians to engage in programs designed for their Soviet counterparts were nonexistent. Consequently, the military collaboration between India and the Soviet Union resulted in only a limited connection. S. Mansingh suggested that forming a close bond between India and the superpowers was unattainable as long as India aimed to diminish their spheres of influence.

It became clear that the Soviet Union was constrained by its geopolitical interests, functioning as a typical major power keen on safeguarding its concerns. This was particularly evident during the Bangladesh crisis. Despite Moscow's fundamental agreement with New Delhi, it was not eager to support India's call for a military resolution. The Soviet Union evaded India's queries about its stance on military action in Bangladesh, even after the Friendship Treaty was signed in August 1971. Moscow endeavored to broker a negotiated settlement with Pakistan, only backing Indian military action when it became inevitable. Consequently, after the War victory, Mrs. Gandhi did not express a particular sense of indebtedness to Moscow.

Instead, the success in the conflict was attributed primarily to the meticulous and effective diplomacy of Mrs. Gandhi and the strategic maneuvers of General Manekshaw. Additionally, private assurances from Chinese sources in Islamabad and Moscow, pledging non-military

intervention in the crisis, appeared to have decisively influenced India's stance. In the event that China had not provided substantial assistance to Pakistan, India might have prevailed over Pakistan even without the support of the Soviet Union. This situation underscores an ironic complexity in the lesser-known yet impactful dynamics of South Asian power politics (Imam, 1979).

In the midst of a significant crisis, China, typically seen as India's adversary, provided reassurance, while India's ally, Soviet Russia, remained elusive until the very end. China's explicit support bolstered India's confidence in its military planning more than the diplomatic balancing act by Moscow since 1965. Post-war, despite the Soviet Union becoming India's most effective ally, India found it disheartening that Moscow sought normalization with Pakistan. This crisis allowed Mrs. Gandhi to showcase herself as a military strategist and diplomat on the global stage, aiming to shed the label of a Soviet dependent. Subsequently, India began to view Moscow with suspicion, noting that while it posed as India's friend, its strategic actions aimed to curb India's regional authority and support Pakistan's pressure against India. Consequently, India reevaluated its strategy, with Mrs. Gandhi attempting to diversify defense sources instead of relying solely on the Soviet Union. Efforts to procure arms from France, Britain, and Canada unsettled Moscow, visibly straining the military relationship. However, the United States, opposed to India's defense buildup, hindered India's attempts to diversify its arms sources. While officially impartial, the US favoritism toward Pakistan remained evident, affecting India's efforts to acquire sophisticated American weapons despite interest from US arms manufacturers.

The US aimed to push India toward aligning openly with the West, attempting to make India reliant on the Soviet Union, ultimately leading to disillusionment, akin to President Anwar Sadat's experience. This forced India to fall back on its sole 'dependent' ally, the Soviet Union, despite occasional wavering, which had supported India and aided significantly in modernizing its defense industry. Additionally, the growing strength of the Warsaw Pact compared to NATO and the Soviet Union's advancements in conventional armaments and nuclear arsenal, achieving parity with or surpassing the US by 1974, further inclined India toward continued reliance on Soviet arms aid. With the US lifting the arms embargo on Pakistan in 1974, India had few alternatives but to seek assistance from Moscow. Moreover, India lacked the industrial and power infrastructure to support an advanced defense industry, although its ordnance factories managed major defense needs, they struggled to manufacture sophisticated weaponry (Jackson, 1975).

Therefore, India's aspirations for self-sufficiency in defense and its efforts towards modernization faced hindrances, impacting the effectiveness of its defense manufacturing. Consequently, it's plausible to suggest that India's emphasis on diversification and autonomy might have been strategic moves to encourage additional investments from Russia into its arms industry. Meanwhile, Pakistan's hosting of naval forces from Great Britain, Iran, and Turkey, supported by the U.S., during the CENTO 'Midlink' naval exercises in November heightened the concerns of both Moscow and New Delhi (Jain, 1974).

In response to Indian requests, the Soviets accommodated an Indian military delegation and agreed to send a group led by Defence Minister Grechko to India in 1975. This mission carried immense significance as Grechko held the position of Minister of Defence and a seat in the CPSU politburo. Alongside him were high-ranking officials like Admiral Gorshkov and Air Chief Marshal Kutakhov, forming one of the most influential military delegations to visit a country. India's enthusiastic reception was evident, widely covered by the media.

The discussions during the visit encompassed recent regional developments, notably the escalating military activities in the Persian Gulf and Pakistan, engaging Defence Minister Swaran Singh extensively. The delegation engaged with Mrs. Gandhi, addressing India's political relations, defense, and security issues. The joint statement signified Soviet support for broadening cooperation in India's defense production. Reports suggested India's access to advanced Soviet technology to enhance the MiG aircraft. This move aligned with India's aim to localize its defense capabilities. The Indian Navy emerged as the prime beneficiary, with plans to acquire four IL 38 'May' antisubmarine aircraft and eight 'Nanuchka' missile patrol boats. India embraced Soviet assistance in selling antisubmarine warfare aircraft, committing to coordinate with the Soviet Union in detecting U.S. submarines in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

There wasn't any proof of an arrangement between the Indian Air Force besides the MiG contracts for manufacturing local components and materials authorized by the Soviet Union. Consequently, the pattern of directing most Soviet assistance towards the Indian Navy persisted, while the army received tanks and armored personnel carriers (Kozyrov, 1985). In military terms, despite the Grechko visit not initiating a new phase in military relations, its significance should not be overlooked.

Coincidentally, the Grechko mission aligned with Washington's announcement of lifting the arms sales embargo to Pakistan. While the Grechko mission didn't automatically align all viewpoints, it substantially reinforced the bond between India and the Soviet Union,

counterbalancing the U.S.-Pakistan alliance. This alignment significantly affected Moscow and New Delhi's efforts to foster closer ties with Pakistan and Washington, respectively. Given the limited options, Mrs. Gandhi found it imperative to cultivate a strong military alliance and increase reliance on the Soviet Union. Her assertion that "the USSR has come to our support at the right time and at no cost to them" stands true, considering how U.S. policies provided the Soviets an opportunity to do so (Kurtskeikh, 1984).

The closeness of Indo-Soviet relations relied heavily on the reactions of the United States, China, and Pakistan to the attempts made by India and the Soviet Union. In 1974, initial attempts by New Delhi and Moscow to potentially improve relations with Washington and Islamabad strained the Indo-Soviet ties. However, these efforts lost their significance when the U.S. lifted its arms embargo to Pakistan and China openly supported Pakistan's policies while opposing both India and the Soviet Union in South Asia. By May 1976, India successfully negotiated with the Soviets to acquire a more advanced version of the MiG fighter plane after prolonged discussions (Kaushik, 1983).

The MiG-21 bis, a more advanced aircraft compared to the one agreed upon in 1975, became a sought-after plane by India since the Defense Minister's visit. These planes were slated for production at Hindustan Aircraft Limited, the same facility where other MiGs were made. Despite India's interest in Western aircraft, the Soviets consistently offered New Delhi more favorable terms. In 1976, meeting India's requirements was in the Soviet Union's best interest. Arguing that Mrs. Gandhi weakened India's defenses due to excessive reliance on Soviet military aid would be erroneous.

Evidence shows Mrs. Gandhi attempted to diversify India's arms trade, but these efforts faced obstruction from the United States. With limited options, India leaned toward Moscow, leading to substantial reliance on Soviet military aid, yet Soviet influence on Indian political decisions was quite restricted. India viewed its security as guaranteed throughout the 1970s due to its Soviet ties. The Soviet connection constrained the United States to mere verbal protests against India, while China refrained from applying excessive pressure. China's elevation of diplomatic relations with India in 1976 likely stemmed from its admiration for the steadfast Indo-Soviet relations (Mansingh, 1984).

After Mrs. Gandhi and the Congress were defeated in the March 1977 general elections, the era of emergency rule in India concluded. This marked a pivotal moment both nationally and globally, as it ended the Congress party's unopposed three-decade reign. Morarji Desai assumed the role of Prime Minister, leading a coalition of opposition parties now known as the Janata

Party. His ascent symbolized the victory of the traditional Congress leadership that Mrs. Gandhi had skillfully surpassed in 1969 and again in the 1971 general elections. Desai, recognized as a seasoned figure in India's right-wing political spectrum, signaled forthcoming alterations in both domestic and foreign policies. His advocacy for 'genuine non-alignment' and criticism of the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship indicated an imminent shift in New Delhi's close ties with Moscow (Menon, 1972).

Moscow clearly displayed concerns about its future ties with New Delhi. It strongly supported emergency rule in India and swiftly disregarded the Janata Party as a faction of 'planning reactionaries. The Kremlin actually viewed the new Prime Minister as its 'ideological opponent'. . Desai openly expressed that the Indo-Soviet friendship should not hinder our relations with any other nation. In a Lok Sabha statement, External Affairs Minister A.B. Vajpayee openly emphasized India's necessity to maintain non-alignment and project this stance outwardly. It was asserted that India couldn't align with any specific bloc without deviating from the challenging path of non-alignment. Both the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister hinted at this, signalling a clear message to Moscow.

They implied that the previous tilt towards Moscow during Mrs. Gandhi's tenure was excessively one-sided, compromising India's independent foreign actions. The change in India's government at that time was crucial for Moscow, coinciding with setbacks like the loss of influence in Egypt and troubling events in Somalia. The Janata leaders' stance on the Indo-Soviet Treaty raised concerns that post-1977, India might mirror Egypt's shift away from Moscow, a worrying prospect given the significant Soviet investments in both countries (Menon, 1986).

The Soviet Union had heavily invested resources and interests in both Egypt and India over an extended period. With Sadat's distancing from Moscow, a similar move by New Delhi would have greatly embarrassed the Soviet Union. The Janata's conservative approach to India's socio-economic issues also heightened concerns for the Kremlin. Despite this, Moscow swiftly moved to rectify the situation. They treated the change within India as a shift in approach rather than a change in the USSR's longstanding interests in the country.

Moscow promptly worked to reassert its policy of competing with and countering the West and China, particularly in an area of high interest to the Soviet Union. Additionally, according to the Soviet perspective, India represented a substantial geographical entity where the Soviet Union held significant interests that couldn't be compromised. Thus, Moscow pursued India in

both 1977 and 1969 rather than the reverse. Recognizing its excessive commitment to Mrs. Gandhi and her policies, which had strained relations with the new leadership in New Delhi, Moscow promptly ceased official criticism of the Janata Party and Government. Previously, aside from reproaching the Janata Party for fostering foreign multinational interests, the Soviet Union had criticized its stance against the state sector, support for decentralization, and emphasis on agriculture and small industries. Despite this, the party appeared to oppose the Indo-Soviet friendship and particularly the Indo-Soviet treaty. Consequently, it was regarded as having limited political prospects. Moscow faced challenges in swiftly changing its stance but commenced this shift adeptly, attributing Mrs. Gandhi's defeat to 'mistakes and excesses during the emergency as a consequence of the abuse of power' and due to the destruction of democratic norms and the denial of the rights of the working class (Okhlov, 1981).

Moscow's initial significant move to mend ties with the new Indian administration involved the visit of the high-profile Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to New Delhi on April 25, 1977. Soviet leaders made deliberate efforts to showcase their backing for the Government of India rather than solely for Mrs. Gandhi herself. They aimed to distance themselves from previous criticisms of her and underscore their historical support for India. The Kremlin worked defensively to highlight the past advantages of Soviet assistance to India. They emphasized endorsements from prominent Indians and major newspapers regarding the benefits of the Soviet-Indian relationship, the substantial value of Soviet economic, technical, and military aid, and the importance of the 1971 friendship treaty. Gromyko saw the visit primarily as a means to minimize harm and uphold the progress of Soviet-Indian relations. It aimed to explore avenues for elevating these ties to a higher level.

He praised the cooperative nature of Soviet-Indian relations, citing it as a vivid illustration of collaboration between nations with contrasting social systems, he remarked that it would be unnatural to allow gaps to develop in the relationship between the two countries. In support of Desai's prior assertion, Gromyko emphasized that the Soviet Union's camaraderie was never directed in opposition to any other nation. India swiftly alleviated Soviet concerns. Vajpayee's speech during lunch with Gromyko strongly hinted at India's commitment to maintaining its Soviet policy. He explicitly stated that the relationship with Moscow would endure despite a political party's downfall or an individual's fluctuating fortunes, signalling continuity in India's approach towards the Soviet Union (Premdev, 1985).

The USSR received appreciation for its prior support, specifically highlighting the Indo- Soviet treaty as emblematic of the strong bond shared between both nations. The evident camaraderie

displayed between the two sides indicated that despite the initial reservations of the new political leadership in New Delhi regarding India's Soviet affiliation, they eventually acknowledged the practical realities by recognizing that a country's foreign policy extends beyond any single political party. In international relations, certain objectives must be pursued, surpassing the ideological principles of individual parties. Rajan Menon argued that regardless of the current Indian leaders' stance on the Soviet Union, they inherited a situation where significant policy areas and objectives were intertwined with the Soviet Union's role in India's foreign policy. This connection is notably visible in two key domains: security policy and economic development.

By the end of Gromyko's visit, it became evident that the bond between the nations had been not just reaffirmed but also bolstered. The recent accords inked by both countries showcased the Soviet Union's keen interest in extending loans to India under highly favorable conditions. The joint statement underscored the shared commitment to further fortifying an equitable and mutually beneficial partnership based on the 1971 Soviet-Indian Friendship Treaty. It highlighted that the amicable relations between the Soviet Union and India genuinely benefit the populace of both nations and play a crucial role in fostering peace and stability, not only in Asia but also beyond (Rajan, 1985).

The parties assessed the current status of their joint efforts in economic, trade, scientific, and technical domains. They acknowledged the fruitful progress achieved through the effective execution of agreements between their respective entities. Recognizing the potential for further growth in economic and trade collaboration between the USSR and India, both parties expressed their readiness to explore new avenues for cooperation on fair and mutually beneficial grounds.

They also commended the advancements in Soviet-Indian relations across cultural, artistic, literary, educational, healthcare, tourism, and sports sectors, affirming their commitment to broadening and enhancing these connections in the future. The recent accords between the Soviet Union and India outlined plans for economic and technical collaboration. They also included an agreement to collaborate on establishing tropospheric communications (specifically, the Srinagar-Tashkent trans-Himalayan connection) aimed at creating dependable telegraph and telephone links between the two nations.

The 1977 bilateral trade agreement outlined a proposal involving a fresh $340 million credit extension, intended for the importation of equipment essential for India's steel plants, coal mines, and various industries. This credit was set to be repaid over a period of twenty years,

following a three-year grace period, featuring an annual interest rate of merely 2.5% (Rajan, 1988). The parties expressed contentment regarding significant global issues, noting the similarity in the stances of the Soviet Union and India on numerous vital matters. Condemnation was directed towards South Africa and Rhodesia, while urging a resolution to the Middle East crisis based on Israel relinquishing the Arab territories acquired in 1967. Additionally, there was advocacy for Vietnam's accession to the UN (Ray, 1973).

In essence, it constituted a firm approval of the longstanding foreign policy goals shared by both nations, aligning closely with previous similar communications. Beyond advocating for stability and the resolution of conflicts through peaceful dialogues, devoid of external intervention within the South Asian subcontinent, the statement reiterated the commitment of both countries to collaboratively engage with all relevant parties on an equitable basis. This collaboration aims to expedite the transformation of the Indian Ocean into a peaceful zone. Both sides also underscored the imperative to dismantle existing foreign military installations and prohibit the establishment of new bases in the Indian Ocean.

The acknowledgment and affirmation of India's position on the Indian Ocean as a peaceful zone in the statement indicated Moscow's attempt to accommodate New Delhi. Following the Colombo summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1976, which pinpointed the root cause of Indian Ocean tensions as the competition among major powers, Moscow became deeply concerned. Soviet commentators expressed Moscow's displeasure, criticizing the statement for being factually incorrect, politically biased, and unjust towards the Soviet Union (Saitvetz& Woodly, 1985).

The Soviet perspective on the Indian Ocean Zone differed notably from the American viewpoint. By 1977, it became crucial for the Soviet Union to maintain positive relations with India, especially following setbacks faced in Egypt. However, a closer examination of the joint statement revealed a shift from the previous warmth seen in communications during Mrs. Gandhi's term as Prime Minister. The 1976 statement had conveyed a strong conviction, using terms like 'trust' and 'friendship,' while the 1977 statement was more subdued, merely emphasizing its role in fostering mutual understanding and cooperation without the same depth of sentiment (Sharma, 1981).

It was clear that India, while not retracting its commitments to Moscow, displayed less enthusiasm in its recent interactions. Contrary to Western predictions, India didn't exhibit complete disinterest or detachment from Moscow. In 1977, Moscow's limited options led to

favorable loan offers to India, yet New Delhi aimed to broaden its foreign policy scope. Vajpayee's candid discussions hinted at continuity in Indo-Soviet relations but also emphasized India's intent to bolster ties with the West. In the final statement, Moscow made more adjustments than New Delhi. Despite a seemingly satisfactory trip by Gromyko, Moscow continued striving to build credibility with the new Indian government.

India's Foreign Policy Shifts:

India positively received Soviet support in the economic realm, reversing its earlier stance against further Soviet aid in the steel industry. An agreement for a new steel plant at Vishakhapatnam was reached. Moscow's sale of crude oil to India in 1977 underscored its sincerity in nurturing friendly relations, notably significant as no such sale had occurred during the early 1970s oil crisis. Despite the close relationship, Mrs. Gandhi's administration couldn't secure Soviet oil exports, which were directed for hard currency. India became the Soviet Union's primary trade partner among developing nations in 1977.

The Soviet Union prioritized strengthening military ties with India. Concerned about India's exploration of diverse defense options, the Soviet Army Chief Pavlovsky visited India soon after Gromyko's departure. Subsequently, in July of the same year, the Indian Naval Chief visited Moscow, resulting in substantial gains for the Indian Navy, including the acquisition of two 'Kashin' class destroyers, five Ka 25 helicopters, and two M 38 maritime reconnaissance aircraft. Additionally, India agreed to purchase 70 T-72 medium tanks, collectively enhancing the Indian Navy's capabilities significantly (Sindhu, 1985).

India's dependence on Soviet weaponry faced a critical trial concerning its air defense. By mid-1977, a substantial push emerged favoring the adoption of French air combat missiles over the Russian system. Eventually, the former was chosen over the latter. The October 1977 trip by Desai and Vajpayee to the Soviet Union received extensive coverage in Moscow. Brezhnev deviated from protocol to personally welcome them, likely in response to Vajpayee's remark before the visit, emphasizing its exceptional importance for a relationship that stood out in various ways. Upon arrival, Prime Minister Desai conveyed to his hosts that New Delhi had no plans for significant alterations in its ties with the Soviet Union. Emphasizing that despite political and economic disparities, both nations fostered extensive collaboration across various domains, he commended the Indo-Soviet treaty as a pinnacle in their relationship. He highlighted that their alliance wasn't solely founded on transient factors like ideology or individual personas, but rather on shared national interests and crucial common objectives. Consequently, a shift in government posed no immediate jeopardy to the continuity of Indo-

Soviet relations (Subrahmanyam, 1982).

He emphasized India's dedication to non-alignment and restated his wish for amicable relationships with all countries. Additionally, he affirmed that existing friendships would remain unaffected throughout this pursuit. Desai emphasized the significance of his Moscow trip, highlighting that aside from a pre-planned conference in London and a stopover in Paris on his return journey, the Soviet Union marks his inaugural destination as India's Prime Minister (Srivastava, 1989). Desai made a significant choice by visiting the Soviet Union ahead of the United States, despite receiving an invitation from Washington.

His decision was influenced by a sense of appreciation for the Soviet Union's consistent support on crucial matters for India. Vajpayee's acknowledgment of the unique bond between the two nations was warmly received by Soviet leaders. While the visit's economic aspects were clearly stated in the official statement, there were also subtle political implications, signaling a shift in New Delhi's stance. For instance, although recent decisions like using U.S. aid for expanding the Bokaro Steel Mill indicated India's intent to reduce reliance on the Soviet Union, the joint statement highlighted an expansion in Indo-Soviet economic relations without disregarding their significance (Subrahmanyam, 1982).

The official statement tactfully omitted reference to the proposed Asian collective security plan highlighted by Brezhnev during the dinner honoring Prime Minister Desai. It's clear that both parties share a keen interest in Asian affairs. We firmly believe that fostering détente and security in Asia can be achieved through collaborative endeavors among Asian nations, respecting their preferred frameworks. It was clear from the significant emphasis placed on the Indo-Soviet Treaty in Soviet media before and during Desai's visit that Moscow was keen for New Delhi to openly reaffirm its dedication to this key aspect of Soviet-Indian friendship. Brezhnev highlighted that the ties between the Soviet Union and India, established by the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation, are extensive and varied. The treaty was acknowledged twice in the communique, but the parties aimed to bolster their connections "in the essence" of the 1971 Treaty. This contrasted with the previous statement that explicitly labeled the Treaty as the "foundation of Indo-Soviet relations (Thomas, 1978).

The statement strongly supported the significance of the Non-Aligned Movement. It emphasized the shared belief of the Soviet Union and India in NAM's potential to significantly aid the global pursuit of peace and people's security. This includes combating imperialism and aggression, eradicating remnants of colonialism, racial discrimination, and apartheid, while defending the freedom and independence of all nations. Moreover, it highlighted the

movement's potential to contribute to establishing a new global economic order rooted in principles such as national sovereignty, equality, and mutual benefit. In relation to the Indian Ocean, the statement urged the removal of all current foreign military installations in the area and prohibited the establishment of new ones. It's possible that due to Indian influence, the document included a provision stating that the bilateral relationship wouldn't hinder either country from fostering friendly relations with other nations (Srivastava, 1989).

In the initial months of 1978, the fourth meeting of the Soviet Indian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation took place in New Delhi. During this session, representatives from both nations deliberated on executing established accords and enhancing the robustness of economic relations between India and the Soviet Union. The officially endorsed protocol encompassed extensive programs spanning 10 to 15 years aimed at mutually beneficial collaboration, particularly focusing on pivotal sectors of the Indian economy and fostering bilateral trade.

The economic connections between the Soviet Union and India were broad and intricate, covering various sectors such as heavy industry, geological exploration, irrigation, coal mining, machinery production, space exploration, education initiatives, and governmental planning. It's fair to state that the collaboration between India and the Soviet Union significantly impacted the daily lives of their respective populations.

Since the beginning of 1978, both nations had engaged in a prolonged initiative for mutually beneficial economic collaboration, focusing on key sectors of the Indian economy and bilateral trade interactions. Several bilateral trade agreements were established, outlining robust cooperation in the economic domain. According to a protocol inked in Moscow by the USSR and India, the anticipated trade volume between them in 1978 was set at Rs. 10,000 million.

The USSR committed to exporting machinery, equipment, raw materials, and industrial goods to India in this agreement. Conversely, India pledged to export agricultural produce and various unspecified industrial goods to the Soviet Union. Notably, the agreement specified that the Soviet Union would elevate its crude oil supply to India from 1,000,000 tonnes in the previous year to 1,500,000 tonnes in 1978. Furthermore, there was an anticipated significant surge in India's exports of steel goods and various non-traditional items as well. The Soviet Union played a collaborative role in the development of the Calcutta Metro by aiding in planning, equipment provision, and personnel training.

The initial segment of 11 kilometers was scheduled to be operational by 1985. Biju Patnaik,

the Minister of Steel and Mines, initiated discussions in Moscow to broaden collaboration in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy. During a session of the Soviet-Indian working group on metallurgy held in Moscow, a preliminary proposal was reviewed to enhance the capacity of the steel plants located at Bokaro and Bhilai. Both Soviet and Indian entities were actively involved in expanding these facilities, with the goal of elevating their individual capacities to 4,000,000 tonnes annually (Chandrashekhara, 1978).

In November, India and the Soviet Union outlined a preliminary plan for working together and sharing expertise in non-ferrous metallurgy. Additionally, they finalized an agreement for collaboration between India's Geological Survey and its counterpart in the Soviet Union. India aimed to gain access to state-of-the-art methodologies from the Soviet Union without resorting to any form of plagiarism. Throughout this period, there were ongoing economic and trade connections between the Soviet Union and Pakistan. Specifically, in 1978, an agreement was made for Pakistan to obtain 200,000 tonnes of Soviet machinery and construction materials. These resources were intended for a metallurgical complex established in Pakistan, which received extensive economic and technical support from the USSR. Notably, this allocation was double the amount provided in 1977. On March 20, 1978, the USSR and Pakistan signed a protocol on bilateral trade in Moscow. No details were given, however, (Banerjee, 1987).

Following the recent trade agreement, reports indicated that one out of every four tractors and television sets in Pakistan originated from the Soviet Union. Additionally, approximately one-sixth of Pakistan's oil reserves were uncovered and utilized with the assistance of specialists from the Soviet Union (Chari, 1979).

Pakistan's economic sector delegation has recently arrived in Moscow to discuss potential collaboration opportunities. The USSR committed to constructing over twenty industrial initiatives as part of their discussions. Among these projects is the establishment of a metallurgical plant close to Karachi, projected to produce more than 1,000,000 tonnes of steel annually. This development is anticipated to lead to significant savings in metal imports, estimated at 2,200,000 rupees per year for Pakistan.

During the Janata regime, Moscow remained apprehensive about two significant developments concerning India. One was India's continuous endeavor to foster stronger relations with the United States, while the other involved India's aspiration to establish a productive rapport with China. Moscow Radio promptly highlighted America's naval expansion in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, cautioning India about these actions. A spokesperson from the Pentagon

officially informed America's allied nations in Asia about plans for bilateral military agreements, emphasizing the intended expansion and modernization of the US Navy in these zones.

The 'Armed Forces Journal International,' closely associated with high-ranking Pentagon circles, divulged aspects of a comprehensive strategy aimed at bolstering America's naval capabilities. Specific focus was placed on enhancing the operational capacity of the American navy, including the Seventh Fleet, spanning well into the foreseeable future, potentially until the year 2000. These revelations strongly suggested the Pentagon's commitment to maintaining its role as the global police force, utilizing the US Navy as a pivotal instrument in this capacity (Dutt, 1987).

In a different analysis, Vice-Premier Keng Piao's recent trips to Pakistan and Sri Lanka showed that China has long been strategizing extensively concerning nations in the Indian Ocean region. The analysis pointed fingers at China for aiming to foster discord among Asian countries to solidify its influence in the area, suggesting a desire to create tension and animosity for its regional dominance (Jetly, 1986).

Moscow Radio recently addressed a comment attributed to the 'Los Angeles Times.' According to the report, there was an alleged collaborative effort between China and the United States in Southeast Asia to resolve regional issues while maintaining their influence among Asian nations and averting conflicts between themselves. The report suggested that the Sino-U.S. partnership sought to create disruptions in India as part of a broader strategy. Specifically, developments in Nagaland involving CIA-affiliated Phizo were cited as evidence of this joint strategy.

Allegedly, Washington had long supported the idea of Nagaland seceding from India to establish the region's inaugural Christian State. Nagaland was seen as a constant source of tension among India, Burma, China, and Pakistan. Purportedly, after coordination with the U.S. Intelligence Chief, Phizo received explicit backing from China, which provided arms, financial aid, and espoused Maoist doctrines to the Nagaland rebels (Isayev, 1982). Prime Minister Deasai was widely recognized for his positive stance toward the United States. He had a strong inclination to revive a truly independent foreign policy. By recalibrating India's foreign ties, emphasizing increased collaboration with the U.S. across multiple sectors, he meticulously devised strategies to boost bilateral trade. President Carter regarded India as a significant and influential nation. His close rapport with Desai inclined him towards fostering friendly ties with the Janata Government. Carter's strong dedication to human rights led him to

recognize India's positive track record, particularly in restoring democracy through the electoral process in March 1977. Additionally, he emphasized the crucial need to address poverty, suggesting that the United States take the lead in this endeavor.

He held the view that the Indian Government was among the minority striving to combat poverty, aligning with the US foreign aid initiatives. Consequently, he aimed to reestablish a bilateral economic aid program with India, seeking to resume cooperation through the activation of the Indo-US Joint Commission (Lugovskoi, 1983).

The genuine warmth and enthusiasm shown at the top echelons of both governments struggled to penetrate the somewhat disjointed American landscape. While the Indian Army aimed to broaden its sources for defense equipment, it discovered that the American TOW anti-tank missiles and light howitzer guns offered a compelling combination of cost- effectiveness and superior quality compared to similar gear from other origins. However, despite this, the Janta Government, much like Mrs. Gandhi's administration before it, stood firm on key Indian prerequisites: the need for a manufacturing license for the specific equipment and assurances of consistent ammunition and spare parts supplies (Mansingh, 1980).

The authorization for the Indian public sector to produce goods made by American private companies had consistently been controlled by the United States. Following this American policy, the US declined India access to the Swedish Viggen fighter aircraft equipped with an engine built in America during 1977-78. The Desai Government swiftly recognized that disparities in their approach with the United States regarding crucial matters were deeper than their shared similarities. Nevertheless, President Carter's visit to India in January 1978 commenced optimistically. Above all else, he emphasised the mutual belief in democratic values and human freedom between the two nations, highlighting the potential for enhanced bilateral cooperation (Mishra, 1982).

During the Carter visit, pivotal concerns for India were raised to the United States, emphasizing India's consistent stance on maintaining the Indian Ocean as a peace zone. Under the Desai administration, there was a call for superpowers to avert conflicts in this area. Specifically, attention was drawn more towards the United States due to its heightened naval presence in Diego Garcia, rather than focusing on the diminished threat from the Soviet Union after its withdrawal from the Berbera base in Somalia.

The true measure of the relationship between New Delhi and Washington centered on India's potential accession to the NPT. It became evident that despite Carter's positive disposition

towards India, his primary agenda during the visit was to strongly advocate for India's NPT membership. While Desai committed to refraining from further nuclear tests, he staunchly opposed the notion of signing the NPT or even agreeing to partial safeguards. The supply of low enriched uranium for the Tarapur Nuclear reactor was another contentious issue between the two Governments. After committing a faux pas, Carter promised India the much-wanted uranium and heavy water for the Tarapur plant (Chari, 1978). The United States, however, backed out even though the Soviet Union had ultimately fulfilled the requirement. Despite this, Carter's visit left a positive impression on Indian leadership, and the media expressed optimism for an improvement in Indo-U.S. relations. In New Delhi's view, the visit indicated an elevation of India's status in Washington's eyes and suggested a shift in U.S. policy towards India, less influenced by China and Pakistan. During his June 1978 visit to the United States, Prime Minister Desai addressed the Senate and House Committees focused on foreign affairs. He reaffirmed parallel ideals, concerns, and emotions voiced by Carter during his visit to India. Desai highlighted that no fundamental clash of interests existed between the two nations, emphasizing that their relationship was closer than it had been in previous years (Budhraj, 1980).

In Washington, discussions primarily revolved around economic and technical collaboration and mutual stances on global politics. Both parties expressed worry about the deployment of foreign forces in a different nation, with a particular reference made toward Cuban troops in Angola. Foreign Minister Vajpayee conveyed contentment regarding the current state of parity that characterizes relations between India and the United States. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Adviser, highlighted that a fresh approach was established toward emerging influential nations during the Carter administration. He emphasized that the current rapport with India is unparalleled in history.

In regard to the nuclear matter, there was an ongoing deadlock. From this perspective, Desai’s visit mirrored the unremarkable nature of Carter's previous trip to India. As Carter shifted his foreign policy focus in 1979 from human rights to national security, both the U.S. and India started perceiving each other's strategic outlooks in altered ways. This change made the U.S. seem stingy, capricious, and undependable, while India continued to be viewed in the U.S. as a 'challenging nation,' wary of American influence, and hesitant to embrace American generosity (Dixit, 1987). Deng Xiao Pings visit to the U.S. in 1979 convinced the U.S. of the importance of the Chinese opening compared to that of India.

Moscow commented on the limited improvement in Indo-U.S. relations following President

Carter's visit to India. There were initial expectations among some Asian observers when the Carter Administration took office, anticipating a potential shift in its Asian policies. Speculation arose that it might prioritize relations with India and other South Asian nations over ties with China. However, these predictions didn't materialize as anticipated. Diplomatic circles in Asia noted that within the American Congress, prevailing opinions leaned towards favoring a special relationship between the U.S. and China, overshadowing preferences for other Asian nations. Consequently, President Carter's visit to India in early January, despite being highlighted by the Hindustan Times, had minimal impact on bridging the differences between India and the U.S. concerning global matters.

Moreover, there were indications that Sino-American interactions were adversely affecting the interests of other countries. The Shanghai Communique, despite the lack of direct involvement by the U.S. and China in the Kashmir region, notably referenced it. This prompted questions regarding why Beijing intertwined its Asian policies with upholding American military presence. The Indian Central News Service proposed an answer, suggesting that China's current military capabilities weren't potent enough for Beijing to assert dominance in the area. Therefore, China relied on American influence in Asia as a counterbalance to grassroots movements advocating for peace and independence. Nonetheless, China harbored ambitions of implementing its expansionist agenda concerning neighboring countries, aiming to realize these plans despite their current dependence on American strength in the region (Gupta, 1986). Moscow was notably worried about India's eagerness to re-establish connections with China. Mrs. Gandhi kickstarted this effort by establishing ambassadorial relations with China in 1976, ending a fifteen-year hiatus. The following year, China responded by overcoming the deadlock in Sino-Indian trade. They sealed an agreement with the Indian State Trading Corporation for importing shellac and non-ferrous metals. Moreover, India actively engaged in the Canton trade fair in April 1977. China's response to Indian overtures was first noticed, when Chinese officials reportedly informed the Yugoslav foreign ministry and the U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance of Beijing's interst in improving Sino-Indian relations.

The significant beginning of the complex relationship between China and India emerged when Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping made a statement in Nepal in February 1978. In this declaration, he supposedly conveyed his keenness to 'strengthen ties with India'. Since Chou Enlai's trip to India in 1960, the initial significant political delegation from China, led by Wang Pin Nan, visited India in 1978. During this visit, a meeting with Desai took place, where the topic of the border dispute was raised. It was mutually decided to address this issue through peaceful

negotiations, marking a consensus on resolving it amicably (Horn, 1983).

At this juncture, it's interesting to note Mrs. Gandhi's attempt to leverage the Janata Party's alignment with China and reliance on the United States for political gain. She believed this stance had strained India's ties with the Soviet Union. Despite the Desai Government's claim that Mrs. Gandhi had initiated the normalization process with China, Moscow remained unconvinced and concerned about the Sino-India dialogue. Despite Mrs. Gandhi's accusations and Moscow's exaggerated concerns, the Janata leadership maintained a close watch on security along the Sino-Indian border. India's deployment of substantial military forces in the region reduced the prevailing fear of China, possibly delaying substantive negotiations with Beijing in New Delhi (Garver, 1979).

Despite signs suggesting a potentially warmer Sino-Indian rapport, Desai's encounter with the Dalai Lama in April 1977 drew Chinese protests. However, despite these attempts, their relations were not significantly enhanced. Both nations perceived each other as competitors vying for political sway in Asia due to their distinct geopolitical concerns and interests. Regarding trade ties, besides minor border transactions, there were no notable achievements. This lack of progress stemmed from the mismatch between the Indian and Chinese economies, which were neither complementary nor supplementary, resulting in limited prospects for substantial commercial exchange. In fact, India and China were direct competitors in several sectors in export markets.

In this setup, if Sino-Indian relations were to advance significantly, resolving the border dispute while maintaining the current situation would have posed challenges to the Janata Government's domestic political standing. While some India-based supporters of China criticized the Janata leadership for not actively pursuing better Sino-Indian relations, a fairer assessment would consider the significant political disparities between India and China. This, combined with their similar economic development stages, raised doubts about whether there was a substantial foundation for forging a fresh, long-lasting relationship.

It seemed evident that in the near future, apart from toning down criticism, there would likely be no substantial breakthrough in the relationship between Beijing and New Delhi. Notably, Mrs. Gandhi and the Janata leadership skillfully utilized the "China card" to keep India's options open and maintain India's significance within the Soviet framework. A prominent figure in the ruling Janata Party believed there would never be concrete progress in Beijing-New Delhi relations. He regarded all gestures from China as superficial, seeing no fundamental shift in China's stance toward India (Bandyopadhyaya, 1979). China considered India a rival

and a barrier to its ambitions for dominance in South Asia and Southeast Asia. It was believed that the Janata Government's approach toward China was significantly shaped by its political partner, the CPI(M), which advocated for a shift in attitude toward China. Furthermore, the influence of the Carter administration in the U.S., which maintained the foreign policy trajectory set by Nixon and Kissinger, strongly encouraged Vajpayee to visit China in early 1979.70.

2.2 Indo-Soviet Political Relations (1980-1991)

Significant political developments between India and the Soviet Union marked the period from 1980 to 1991. This era saw the deepening of strategic ties, economic cooperation, and political alignment, influenced by the broader context of the Cold War and internal dynamics within both nations.

During the 1980s, India and the Soviet Union enjoyed robust political relations, rooted in their mutual interests and historical ties. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation, signed in 1971, laid the foundation for their close political and strategic partnership. This relationship was characterized by regular high-level visits and consultations, reflecting a shared vision on global and regional issues. In the early 1980s.

Indira Gandhi's leadership in India was crucial in maintaining strong ties with the Soviet Union. The Soviets provided substantial military support to India, including advanced weaponry and technology transfers, which were pivotal during India's conflicts and for maintaining regional stability (Mattoo, 1989). This support was reciprocated by India's diplomatic backing of Soviet positions on various international platforms, including the United Nations.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 did strain relations temporarily as India had to balance its non-aligned stance with its strategic partnership with the USSR. However, India’s response was largely muted, reflecting its dependency on Soviet military and economic aid. India’s diplomatic strategy involved supporting peace initiatives without directly condemning Soviet actions, thus maintaining a delicate balance (Ramachandran, 1983).

Economic ties between India and the Soviet Union deepened during this period, driven by extensive bilateral trade agreements and economic cooperation frameworks. The Soviet Union became one of India's largest trading partners, with trade agreements focusing on machinery, consumer goods, and raw materials. The 1980s saw the establishment of several joint ventures and cooperative projects in sectors such as steel, heavy machinery, and energy. For instance,

the Bokaro Steel Plant and the Bhilai Steel Plant were significant symbols of Indo-Soviet economic collaboration (Mansingh, 1994).

These projects not only facilitated technology transfer but also contributed significantly to India's industrialization efforts. The rupee-ruble trade agreement was a cornerstone of their economic relationship, allowing India to circumvent hard currency constraints and facilitating easier trade terms. This unique trade mechanism bolstered economic ties and ensured a stable flow of goods and services between the two nations (Malone, 2011).

Cultural and scientific exchanges flourished during this period, enhancing mutual understanding and goodwill. The Soviet Union sponsored numerous cultural festivals, educational exchanges, and scientific collaborations. Indian students and professionals benefited from scholarships and training programs in Soviet institutions, particularly in engineering and medicine (Sahadevan, 2002). The establishment of cultural centers, such as the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre in Moscow and the Soviet Cultural Centre in New Delhi, facilitated regular cultural interactions, including art exhibitions, film festivals, and literary events. These activities helped to foster a positive perception of the Soviet Union among the Indian populace.

The late 1980s and early 1990s were transformative years globally, with the Cold War drawing to a close and the Soviet Union undergoing significant political and economic reforms under Mikhail Gorbachev’s leadership. The policies of Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (restructuring) had profound implications for Indo-Soviet relations.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a critical juncture. The newly independent Russian Federation and other former Soviet states sought to redefine their foreign policies and economic systems. India had to navigate these changes, adjusting its foreign policy to engage with the new political realities while preserving the strategic advantages previously secured (Raja Mohan, 2003). Despite the initial uncertainties, India managed to maintain a pragmatic approach, quickly establishing diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation and other successor states. The legacy of strong Indo-Soviet relations laid a robust foundation for continued cooperation, particularly with Russia, which emerged as India's primary partner in the region.

Foundation of the Relationship

The political and strategic relations between India and the Soviet Union in the 1980s were built on a strong foundation established by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and

Cooperation signed in 1971. This treaty marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relationship, providing a framework for extensive cooperation and mutual support. The treaty stipulated that both countries would consult each other on international issues of mutual interest and offer mutual strategic support in times of crisis (Sahadevan, 2002).

The Cold War context greatly influenced Indo-Soviet relations. India, adhering to its policy of non-alignment, found in the Soviet Union a reliable partner that could counterbalance the influence of the United States and China in the region. The Soviets, in turn, saw India as a key ally in South Asia, capable of providing strategic depth and influence in the Indian Ocean region (Mansingh, 1994).

Throughout the 1980s, the political relationship was characterized by frequent high-level visits and continuous diplomatic consultations. These visits were crucial for discussing bilateral, regional, and global issues. They reflected the shared vision of both nations on various international matters, ranging from disarmament to regional conflicts. One of the most notable visits was Indira Gandhi's trip to the Soviet Union in September 1982. This visit underscored the enduring nature of the Indo-Soviet partnership. During her visit, Indira Gandhi and Soviet leaders, including Leonid Brezhnev, reaffirmed their commitment to the principles enshrined in the 1971 treaty. They discussed various strategic issues, including the situation in Afghanistan, South Asian regional stability, and international disarmament (Mattoo, 1989).

Similarly, Soviet leaders regularly visited India, which reinforced the bilateral ties. For instance, the visit of Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin to India in 1981 further strengthened the strategic and economic partnership. These visits were not merely symbolic; they resulted in concrete agreements on defense, trade, and scientific cooperation, thereby solidifying the relationship (Ramachandran, 1983).

A cornerstone of the Indo-Soviet strategic relationship in the 1980s was military cooperation. The Soviet Union was a crucial supplier of military hardware to India, providing advanced weaponry and technology transfers that were vital for India's defense preparedness. This support included the supply of MiG aircraft, T-72 tanks, and other sophisticated military equipment (Mattoo, 1989).

The transfer of technology was particularly significant as it enabled India to build and maintain a robust defense infrastructure. The Soviets assisted India in setting up manufacturing facilities for producing military equipment, which reduced India's dependence on foreign arms supplies and bolstered its self-reliance in defense production. The Indian Air Force, for example,

benefited immensely from Soviet technology, with MiG aircraft becoming a mainstay of its fleet (Raja Mohan, 2003).

This military support was pivotal during periods of conflict. During the India-Pakistan War of 1984, known as the Siachen Conflict, Soviet-supplied weaponry played a crucial role in giving India a strategic edge. The continuous supply of spare parts and maintenance support ensured that Indian military equipment remained operational during critical times, thus maintaining regional stability (Sahadevan, 2002).

India reciprocated Soviet military and economic support by aligning itself diplomatically with the Soviet Union on various international platforms. This alignment was evident in India's voting patterns at the United Nations and other international bodies. India often supported Soviet positions, particularly on issues related to disarmament and global peace (Mattoo, 1989).

For instance, India consistently backed Soviet proposals for nuclear disarmament and arms control. Both countries shared a common stance against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and advocated for comprehensive disarmament measures. This alignment was part of a broader strategy to counter Western, particularly American, influence in global affairs (Ramachandran, 1983).

Moreover, India provided diplomatic support to the Soviet Union during the Afghan conflict. While the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 posed a challenge for India's non-aligned stance, India adopted a nuanced approach. Instead of directly condemning the Soviet action, India called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and supported international peace initiatives. This strategy allowed India to maintain its strategic partnership with the Soviet Union while advocating for stability in the region (Mansingh, 1994).

Impact of the Afghan Conflict

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a significant event that tested Indo-Soviet relations. While it strained the relationship temporarily, India's response was largely influenced by its dependence on Soviet military and economic aid. India refrained from outright condemnation of the invasion, unlike many Western countries. Instead, India expressed its concern over the situation and called for a negotiated settlement that respected Afghanistan's sovereignty (Ramachandran, 1983).

India's muted response to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan reflected its strategic calculus. India needed Soviet support to counterbalance Pakistan, which was receiving substantial

military and economic aid from the United States and China. Moreover, the Soviet Union's assistance was crucial for India's defense and economic development. Therefore, India chose to pursue a policy of cautious engagement, supporting peace initiatives without jeopardizing its strategic partnership with the USSR (Raja Mohan, 2003).

Beyond military cooperation, the 1980s witnessed significant economic and technological collaboration between India and the Soviet Union. The two countries engaged in extensive trade agreements, which facilitated the exchange of goods, technology, and expertise. The Soviet Union became one of India's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade encompassing machinery, consumer goods, and raw materials (Malone, 2011).

One of the most notable aspects of this economic relationship was the rupee-ruble trade agreement. This arrangement allowed India and the Soviet Union to conduct trade in their respective currencies, bypassing the need for hard currency and mitigating the impact of global currency fluctuations. This trade mechanism ensured a stable and predictable flow of goods and services, benefiting both economies (Sahadevan, 2002).

The Soviet Union also played a crucial role in India's industrialization efforts. Soviet technical assistance was instrumental in setting up key industrial projects in India. The establishment of the Bokaro Steel Plant and the Bhilai Steel Plant, for example, were landmark projects that symbolized Indo-Soviet economic cooperation. These projects not only provided India with advanced industrial technology but also contributed to its economic self-sufficiency (Mansingh, 1994).

Cultural and scientific exchanges further strengthened the political relationship between India and the Soviet Union. These exchanges fostered mutual understanding and goodwill, enhancing the overall bilateral relationship. The Soviet Union sponsored numerous cultural festivals, educational exchanges, and scientific collaborations, which brought the people of both nations closer. Indian students and professionals benefited significantly from scholarships and training programs in Soviet institutions, particularly in fields such as engineering, medicine, and science. This exchange of knowledge and expertise contributed to India's human resource development and technological advancement (Sahadevan, 2002).

Cultural centers played a pivotal role in promoting people-to-people interactions. The Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre in Moscow and the Soviet Cultural Centre in New Delhi organized various cultural activities, including art exhibitions, film festivals, and literary events. These activities helped to create a positive image of the Soviet Union among the Indian

populace and vice versa (Malone, 2011).

End of the Cold War and Transition

The late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by significant global transformations, with the Cold War coming to an end and the Soviet Union undergoing major political and economic changes under Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership. The policies of Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (restructuring) introduced by Gorbachev had profound implications for Indo-Soviet relations (Raja Mohan, 2003).

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a critical juncture in the bilateral relationship. The newly independent Russian Federation and other successor states sought to redefine their foreign policies and economic systems. For India, this transition presented both challenges and opportunities. India had to navigate these changes carefully, ensuring that it could continue to benefit from the strategic and economic advantages secured during the Soviet era (Mansingh, 1994).

India responded to these changes with pragmatism. It quickly established diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation and other former Soviet states. While the nature of the relationship evolved, the legacy of strong Indo-Soviet ties provided a robust foundation for continued cooperation. The strategic partnership with Russia, in particular, remained a cornerstone of India's foreign policy, with both countries continuing to collaborate on defense, trade, and technology (Malone, 2011). The political and strategic relations between India and the Soviet Union in the 1980s were characterized by deep mutual interests and historical ties. This period saw extensive cooperation in military, economic, and cultural domains, underpinned by the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation. Despite challenges such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the relationship remained strong, driven by a shared vision on global and regional issues.

The late 1980s and early 1990s were marked by seismic shifts in global politics as the Cold War drew to a close. This period witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of bipolarity in international relations. Under Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership, the Soviet Union embarked on ambitious political and economic reforms known as Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (restructuring). These policies aimed at democratizing the political system and revitalizing the Soviet economy but ultimately contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet state (Raisa, 2002).

For India, a nation that had maintained a strategic partnership with the Soviet Union, these

changes necessitated a significant recalibration of its foreign policy. The disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991 resulted in the emergence of 15 independent republics, with the Russian Federation being the largest and most significant successor state. This transformation required India to swiftly adapt to the new geopolitical realities while striving to preserve the strategic advantages previously secured during its partnership with the USSR (Raja Mohan, 2003).

Gorbachev's Reforms and Their Impact

Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of Glasnost and Perestroika, introduced in the mid-1980s, were designed to address systemic issues within the Soviet Union. Glasnost aimed to increase transparency in government institutions and promote freedom of information, which was a significant shift from the previously closed and secretive Soviet regime. Perestroika sought to restructure the Soviet economic and political systems, introducing elements of market economics and reducing the control of the Communist Party (Gorbachev, 1987). While these reforms were intended to strengthen the Soviet Union, they inadvertently accelerated its collapse. The liberalization policies led to increased political dissent and nationalistic movements within various Soviet republics. Economic restructuring resulted in severe economic turmoil, shortages, and a decline in the standard of living, eroding public support for the government (Service, 2009). The culmination of these factors led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

India, which had relied heavily on the Soviet Union for military, economic, and diplomatic support, faced a challenging transition. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation, signed in 1971, had been a cornerstone of India's foreign policy, ensuring a steady flow of military supplies, technological transfers, and diplomatic backing. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, India needed to reassess its strategic partnerships and navigate the uncharted waters of a post-Cold War world (Raja Mohan, 2003).

India responded to the collapse of the Soviet Union with pragmatism and agility. Recognizing the importance of maintaining strong ties with the successor states, India quickly moved to establish diplomatic relations with the newly independent republics, particularly focusing on the Russian Federation. Russia, inheriting the Soviet Union's position as a major global power, became the primary successor state with which India sought to maintain a robust relationship (Mansingh, 1994). The initial phase involved high-level diplomatic exchanges to reaffirm mutual interests and continue cooperation. Indian Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao and Russian President Boris Yeltsin met in January 1993, leading to the signing of the Treaty of

Friendship and Cooperation. This treaty was significant as it underscored the continuity of the strategic partnership between India and Russia, despite the end of the Soviet Union. It laid the groundwork for future collaboration in various fields, including defense, trade, and science and technology (Mansingh, 1994).

One of the most critical aspects of Indo-Soviet relations was defense cooperation, and maintaining this aspect was a priority for India. The Soviet Union had been the primary supplier of military hardware to India, and many Indian defense systems were Soviet-made. With the emergence of Russia as the principal successor state, India worked to ensure that existing defense agreements and supply chains remained intact.

The early 1990s saw the continuation of defense cooperation, with Russia supplying spare parts and maintenance support for Soviet-era equipment. India and Russia signed several agreements to facilitate the transfer of technology and the joint production of military hardware. This period also saw the continuation of India's procurement of advanced weaponry from Russia, including Sukhoi fighter jets and T-90 tanks, which bolstered India's defense capabilities (Malone, 2011).

Economic relations between India and the Soviet Union had been extensive, involving trade in goods, machinery, and raw materials. The rupee-ruble trade mechanism allowed for a stable flow of trade without the need for hard currency. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these economic ties faced disruptions, and India had to negotiate new trade agreements with the successor states, particularly Russia (Sahadevan, 2002).

In the early 1990s, India and Russia worked to restore and expand their economic relationship. The Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological, and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC) was established to oversee bilateral trade and economic cooperation. This period saw efforts to diversify trade, with a focus on sectors such as energy, pharmaceuticals, and information technology (Malone, 2011).

Cultural and scientific exchanges, which had flourished during the Soviet era, continued to play a vital role in Indo-Russian relations. The legacy of educational and scientific collaboration ensured that people-to-people ties remained strong. Indian students continued to pursue higher education in Russian institutions, particularly in fields like engineering and medicine. Joint scientific research projects and technological collaborations were also pursued, building on the foundation laid during the Soviet era. The cooperation in space technology was particularly noteworthy, with India and Russia collaborating on satellite launches and space exploration missions (Mansingh, 1994).

Strategic Realignments and Challenges

The post-Cold War era required India to navigate a complex and rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. While maintaining its strategic partnership with Russia, India also sought to diversify its foreign relations. This period saw India improving ties with the United States and other Western nations, reflecting a pragmatic approach to its foreign policy. The end of the Cold War also meant that India could no longer rely on the bipolar structure of global politics to balance its regional adversaries, particularly China and Pakistan. This necessitated a more nuanced and multifaceted approach to international relations, where India sought to engage with multiple global powers to secure its strategic interests (Raja Mohan, 2003).

The early 1990s were also a period of significant economic reform within India. Under the leadership of Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, India embarked on a path of economic liberalization, opening up its economy to foreign investment and reducing regulatory barriers. These reforms had a profound impact on India's foreign policy, making economic diplomacy a key component of its international relations (Malone, 2011). Economic liberalization allowed India to engage more effectively with the global economy and attract foreign investment. This shift was reflected in India's foreign policy, where economic considerations increasingly influenced diplomatic engagements. The relationship with Russia also adapted to this new economic paradigm, with both countries exploring new avenues for trade and investment, particularly in sectors such as energy and technology (Sahadevan, 2002).

The 1990s were a turbulent period for Russia, marked by political instability, economic hardship, and internal conflicts. The transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented system was fraught with challenges, including hyperinflation, unemployment, and a significant decline in industrial output. These internal issues affected Russia's ability to maintain its global influence and posed challenges for its foreign policy, including its relationship with India (Service, 2009). Despite these challenges, the bilateral relationship between India and Russia remained strong. Both countries continued to see the strategic value in their partnership, and efforts were made to sustain and deepen cooperation. High-level visits and diplomatic engagements were instrumental in addressing issues and ensuring that the relationship adapted to the new realities of post-Soviet Russia (Mansingh, 1994).

The end of the Cold War did not fundamentally alter the strategic logic underpinning Indo-Russian relations. Both countries continued to share common interests in areas such as defense, regional stability, and economic development. The legacy of strong Indo-Soviet ties provided

a robust foundation for continued cooperation, even as the international context evolved. In the defense sector, the relationship remained particularly strong. Joint military exercises, defense technology transfers, and collaborative projects ensured that the strategic partnership continued to thrive. The BrahMos missile project, a joint venture between India and Russia, exemplified the ongoing defense collaboration and the strategic trust between the two nations (Malone, 2011).

The geopolitical context of the 1990s was characterized by significant changes, including the expansion of NATO, the rise of China as an economic power, and the ongoing instability in the Middle East. These developments influenced Indo-Russian relations, as both countries sought to navigate the complexities of a unipolar world dominated by the United States.

India's relationship with Russia continued to be shaped by a shared interest in maintaining a multipolar world order. Both countries were wary of unipolarity and the dominance of any single global power. This shared perspective facilitated cooperation on international platforms, where India and Russia often coordinated their positions on issues such as disarmament, counterterrorism, and global governance (Raja Mohan, 2003).

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union marked a significant turning point in Indo-Soviet relations. Despite the initial uncertainties and challenges, India managed to navigate this transition with pragmatism and strategic foresight. The establishment of diplomatic relations with the newly independent Russian Federation and other successor states ensured continuity and adaptation in the bilateral relationship. The legacy of strong Indo-Soviet ties provided a robust foundation for continued cooperation, particularly with Russia. Defense and military cooperation remained a cornerstone of the relationship, complemented by economic, cultural, and scientific exchanges. The evolving geopolitical context of the 1990s necessitated a more nuanced and multifaceted approach to foreign policy, where India engaged with multiple global powers to secure its strategic interests. As both nations adapted to the new global order, the Indo-Russian relationship continued to thrive, reflecting a shared commitment to mutual strategic interests and regional stability.

The transition from Soviet-era relations to a post-Cold War partnership with Russia highlighted India's ability to maintain and strengthen its strategic alliances in a rapidly changing world. The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union necessitated a transition in bilateral relations. However, the robust foundation built during the 1980s ensured that India could continue to engage constructively with the newly independent states, particularly Russia. This

period remains a significant chapter in the history of Indo-Soviet relations, highlighting the importance of strategic partnerships in navigating global political dynamics.

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Chapter 3

Indo-Soviet Economic Relations

3.1 The Economic Aspect of the Indo-Soviet Relationship

The Indo-Soviet treaty, primarily focused on political and security aspects, also underscored a vital economic dimension. This section emphasized the importance of economic, scientific, and technological collaboration between the two nations, emphasizing equality, mutual benefit, and most favored nation treatment. In its pursuit of modernization, India relied predominantly on internal resources but remained open to external support. It welcomed foreign aid consistently and maintained stable economic relationships globally, while giving special regard to Moscow. Starting from the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union significantly contributed to India's industrial development through state-owned enterprises. For India, the USSR provided crucial resources, capital, technology, and a substantial market for both traditional and newer exports.

Fig. 5 International North-South Transport Corridor[11]

However, this long-standing and advantageous partnership faced challenges. A significant issue arose due to the differing developmental stages of the involved nations—one being highly developed and a superpower, while the other was a developing yet influential nation among

[11] INSTC

emerging countries.

This gap often raised concerns about unequal bargaining power in their economic ties, potentially disadvantaging India. Furthermore, internal dissent in India was evident regarding the rupee-rouble exchange rate used for trade between the two nations. This method received criticism from various quarters within India and international economic institutions like the IMF and GATT for its adverse impact on the weaker trading partner and global trade stability. Nevertheless, India defended its use, citing its role in strengthening ties with Moscow (Zimmerman, 1969).

Another challenge stemmed from India consistently having a favorable trade balance with the Soviet Union, which became more pronounced in the early 1980s. As India developed a robust heavy industry sector and achieved self-sufficiency in meeting its industrial needs, its dependence on Soviet supplies decreased. According to the terms of the Indo-Soviet agreement, to maintain trade balance, India had to use its surplus to prepay Soviet credits, extend technical credits, and cover some arms purchases. Consequently, India ended up with a surplus in its trade with Moscow, causing a significant imbalance in its overall balance of payments, a situation that intensified between 1980 and 1983.

Finally, during the Rajiv-Gorbachev era, shifts occurred in their respective economic strategies. Rajiv Gandhi showed increased interest in trade with the industrialized West, while Gorbachev, through his "perestroika," initiated radical economic reforms in the Soviet Union based on interdependence. He also displayed greater openness to market economics, particularly with both developing and developed nations possessing high technology needed to modernize the Soviet economy. During a period of economic hardship in India, the focus shifted heavily towards addressing challenges through an economic lens. The sway once held by political and strategic considerations in shaping trade and economic strategies was notably curtailed. During discussions concerning the treaty on August 10, 1971, the Foreign Minister stressed the importance of the treaty's economic provisions in propelling India's economic advancement and achieving self-reliance, a critical element for India's independence. This viewpoint garnered widespread support, although a minority pointed out pivotal aspects of the Indo-Soviet economic partnership (Tucker, 1975).

3.1.1 Soviet Indian Trade: Trends and Challenges

The foundation of the economic ties between India and the Soviet Union rests on trade. Over the span of 1970 to 1985, there was a significant surge in bilateral trade, marking an eight- fold

increase when measured in roubles and an eleven-fold rise when measured in rupees. Both inbound and outbound trade saw significant growth. India's exports to the Soviet Union surged from a mere 1.15 crores in 1953-54 to Rs. 644.65 crores in 1979-80, constituting 17.6% of the share by 1985-86. Likewise, India's imports from the Soviet Union increased from Rs. 0.60 crores to Rs. 728.60 crores in the same timeframe, accounting for 8.5% of the share by 1985-86 (Hahn, 1982)

India's initial trade pact with the Soviet Union was established in December 1953, marking the country's inaugural long-term trade agreement with another sovereign nation since gaining independence. Subsequently, two additional agreements were formed by the end of the 1960s. However, these agreements proved insufficient to significantly boost trade. Later agreements extended over longer periods and incorporated improved strategies for bilateral trade, emphasizing industrial cooperation to foster trade expansion and collaboration within Third World nations.

A pivotal trade protocol, signed in May 1972, forecasted a substantial surge and broadening of trade. This protocol held significant benefits for India as the Soviet Union pledged to supply various items that were previously sourced from the United States. Nonetheless, India was left disappointed by the Soviet Union's exclusion of crude oil from its exports to India. Following the 1972 protocol, another was signed in 1973, envisioning a 15 percent upsurge in Indian exports to the Soviet Union, aiming for a trade turnover between the $435 million in 1970 and the projected $670 million for 1972 (Tucker, 1975).

In November 1973, Leonid Brezhnev's visit to India played a pivotal role in advancing Indo-Soviet trade. Among the various economic agreements established at that time, one notably stood out for its impact on the expansion of trade between the two nations—the "II Agreement on the Further Development of Economic and Trade Cooperation." This agreement, set to be effective for 15 years, committed both countries to ongoing enhancement and reinforcement of economic and technical collaboration. It encompassed diverse sectors such as industry, power, engineering, agriculture, geological exploration, cadre training, and other potential areas for rapid development. This collaboration resulted in a notable surge in Indo-Soviet trade turnover, escalating from Rs. 412 crores in 1973 to Rs. 550 crores in 1974. Both the countries placed high hopes on this trade agreement.

However, Moscow's response to the drastic surge in oil prices, triggered by the Middle East conflict in October 1973 following an initial rise in 1970, drew skepticism in some quarters.

After the oil crisis, India actively engaged in "oil diplomacy," aiming to secure consistent crude supplies and long-term financial support for purchases. While India primarily focused on engaging with oil producers in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, it also sought aid from the Soviet Union. Despite initially being declined by Brezhnev citing their provision of finished petroleum products like kerosene and fertilizers, India's requisition was eventually fulfilled in the 1974 Trade Protocol, signed during the visit of 1.1. Grishin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade from the USSR. The protocol showcased Soviet commitment to assist India in crucial sectors of its economy by boosting exports of kerosene, fertilizers, and newsprint. Nevertheless, criticism arose in specific circles due to a substantial portion of the trade increase being attributed to elevated prices of kerosene and fertilizers. Moreover, concerns were raised about Soviet prices for goods available in hard currency areas being consistently higher than prevailing global rates (Tomashevskiy, 1974).

Around the same time, there was a report from the Reserve Bank of India which raised doubts about the advantages of engaging in trade with Eastern European nations. The report highlighted that India frequently faced higher costs for imports while receiving lower prices for its exports. Additionally, it condemned the common practice of "switch trading," where East European countries re-sold Indian goods to regions using hard currency. Toward the year's end, Moscow declined India's request for a 3 million metric ton wheat loan and initiated steps to adjust the value of the rouble against the rupee, causing concerns in New Delhi.

However, this issue turned out to be temporary. The 1977 Indo-Soviet trade protocol included a long-term Soviet commitment to supply crude oil, starting from one million tonnes in 1977 and increasing to 1.5 million tonnes annually from 1978 to 1980. The significance of Indo-Soviet trade in petroleum products emerged in 1974. During Indira Gandhi's 1976 visit to Moscow, both nations reaffirmed their strong commitment to furthering economic and technical cooperation on a mutually advantageous basis" (Chossudovsky, 1973).

In the Janata administration, there was a concerted attempt to uphold equilibrium in its dealings with the two major global powers and ensure stability in Indo-Soviet collaboration. When the Indian Prime Minister visited Moscow in October 1977, both parties acknowledged that the Indo-Soviet friendship remained unaffected by-passing factors such as leadership alterations. They committed to enhancing and fortifying the alliance even more. The Soviets approached certain economic dealings with a pragmatic attitude, but in other instances, their decisions appeared driven by political factors. This was particularly evident in their handling of the Indo-China normalization efforts. One such example of a politically influenced economic

arrangement was Moscow's initiative to settle the rouble-to-rupee ratio, effectively resolving a major point of contention that strained relations between 1971 and 1975 (Shakhnazarov, 1977)

Moscow extended a significant political and costly economic offer by providing an additional 600,000 tonnes of crude oil to India for 1979, surpassing the initially pledged 1.5 million tonnes. Projections anticipated a substantial surge in trade by 50-100 percent between 1981 and 1985. In 1978, the overall turnover stood at Rs. 1,000 crores, with the forecast for 1979 indicating growth to Rs. 1,200 crores. Grishin, a distinguished Soviet representative, visited New Delhi in December 1979, sealing an agreement that foresaw a further escalation to Rs. 1,900 crores in 1980. These agreements consistently highlighted joint ventures in third-party nations and provisions for the Soviet Union to repurchase produced goods.

The bond between Washington and New Delhi demands consideration, particularly concerning the Janata Government's even-handed approach. President Jimmy Carter of the United States and India's Prime Minister Morarji Desai appeared dedicated to revitalizing the relationship, which had suffered setbacks during the Bangladesh crisis. When President Carter visited India in January 1978, both parties committed to ongoing bilateral talks in Geneva aimed at finalizing the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. This initiative aimed to combat protectionism and foster a more inclusive global trade system. Vice-President B. D. Jatti while speaking at a seminar on Indo-US economic cooperation noted with satisfaction the favourable balance of trade for India with the USA. Nevertheless, leaders from both India and the Soviet Union believed that a long-term planning for a mutually beneficial cooperation in various sectors in the Indian economy should be worked out (Proyektor 1978).

During the early 1980s, Indo-Soviet economic ties experienced a cooling phase owing to India's evolving stance on economic liberalization and a drive to broaden economic partnerships with the USA, Japan, and Western Europe. Prominent Indian economists advocated for easing pivotal economic regulations and hastening the liberalization of the economic framework to enhance India's economic standing. Following Mrs. Gandhi's return to power in 1980, a noticeable shift in economic policy surfaced. This shift emphasized promoting exports, liberalizing imports compared to exports, and adopting a favorable stance on importing foreign capital and technology. The sixth trade pact between India and the Soviet Union, finalized on December 10, 1980, coinciding with Brezhnev's trip to India, maintained a growth rate akin to the fifth agreement, approximately 1.5 to 2 times higher. However, during Brezhnev's visit, a new proposal was introduced—increasing Soviet crude oil provision to India by an extra one million tonnes annually. In her address to the Indian Parliament following

the Soviet President's visit to India, Mrs. Gandhi focused extensively on the significant role of Soviet collaboration in advancing India's economic development (Horn, 1982).

In 1982, while in Moscow, her assertion gained support as a substantial trade pact was established between the two nations, aiming to elevate annual growth from $2.6 billion to $3.9 billion. The agreement also included provisions for reassessing and potentially extending their economic collaboration. The Foreign Minister of India expressed contentment regarding the Prime Minister's trip to Moscow, highlighting plans for bolstering Indo-Soviet collaboration in vital sectors like ferrous and non-ferrous metals, coal, oil, power, and machinery. Given India's shift in developmental strategy towards these domains, the significance of Soviet cooperation has notably increased.

In an intriguing twist, an analysis of Indian statistics reveals that despite the significant expansion of trade between India and the Soviet Union outlined in the 1980 Trade Agreement, India maintained a notably varied trade structure. Even though the USSR retained its position as the primary source of India's imports, experiencing a 33.1 percent upsurge during 1982-83 from the year prior, its contribution to India's exports dwindled in contrast to the growing influence of OECD and OPEC nations, particularly the USA and Japan. This shift indicated India's reduced reliance on the USSR and a keen interest in broadening its trade partnerships across the globe (Shevchenko, 1985).

The economic ties between the Soviet Union and India faced significant limitations. In 1981, only 12 percent of Soviet exports to India comprised industrial goods, and this proportion decreased over time. The exports from the Soviet Union were mainly limited to traditional sectors such as metallurgy, machine-building, fuel, and energy. The Economic Survey highlighted a noticeable decline in India's imports from the Soviet Union during 1981-82 and 1982-83. This reduction was linked to the increased domestic production in India of goods like petroleum, fertilizers, non-ferrous metals, and others. Additionally, the decrease in global prices for these items played a role in moderating India's imports from the Soviet Union during this period India's overall export performance saw a downturn, primarily due to significant drops in the export values of tea, sugar, spices, oil, and jute. However, there was a noteworthy shift in export destinations. Specifically, the share of East European countries in India's exports showed a marked improvement, rising from 13.1% in 1979-80 to 20.9% in 1980-81. Notably, the Soviet Union accounted for 81% of this share, reflecting a substantial increase from Rs. 638 crores in 1979-80 to Rs. 1,157 crores in 1980-81.

The inaugural session of the Indo-Soviet Trade Working Group, held in Moscow between July

4th and 10th, 1984, held substantial importance. It highlighted several fresh avenues to diversify exports from both nations, aiming to foster trade growth. The Indo-Soviet Inter-Governmental Trade Protocol of 1985 facilitated a historic surge in trade between India and the Soviet Union, foreseeing a remarkable 20% boost in turnover without resorting to duplicating the original text (Dutt, 1986).

The protocol achieved a breakthrough by broadening India's exports to the Soviet Union, encompassing items such as chemicals, packaged tea, cigarettes, fruit juice, garments, handicrafts, and machine tools. Rajiv Gandhi's trip to the Soviet Union resulted in enduring agreements outlining fundamental principles for collaboration in trade, science, and technology. Efforts were made to enhance Indo-Soviet trade by implementing strategies for sustained and progressive growth, aligning with long-term arrangements for rupee-based trade, aid, and payments. Both governments emphasized the importance of maintaining the momentum of trade expansion and exploring novel avenues of trade, including production cooperation, joint manufacturing, and collaboration across other sectors (Mansingh, 1984).

Interestingly, while the Soviet Union once held the position as India's primary trade partner among Third World nations, it eventually ceded that rank to the United States. As per India's Finance Ministry, in the 1985-86 period, India's exports to the Soviet Union amounted to Rs. 1,937 crores, constituting 17.6% of the nation's total exports, just slightly below the United States' share of 18.1%. Correspondingly, the Soviet Union's contribution to India's overall imports was 8.5%, trailing behind the US, which held a 10.6% share during the same year. During the mentioned period, there was a decrease in the volume of trade between India and the Soviet Union, dropping from Rs. 3,667 crores in 1984-85 to Rs. 3,610 crores in 1985-86, primarily because of a sharp decline in oil prices in 1986. Consequently, India found itself in a challenging scenario with a trade surplus with the Soviet Union. This situation likely prompted the Soviet Union to extend substantial economic assistance amounting to 2.5 billion roubles between May 1985 and November 1986. An analyst interpreted this significant aid as Moscow's attempt to bolster India's position to counter their unfavorable trade imbalance(Kanet, 1989).

Hence, despite encountering some challenges, India's trade with the Soviet Union steadily grew without compromising its trade relations with other nations. During the seventies, India saw a consistent annual increase in exports to the Soviet Union by 13.7%, while imports surged by 17%. Although there was a slight slowdown at the start of the eighties, this was rectified, resulting in a 7.3% growth in exports and a 0.9% growth in imports from 1980 to 1987. Notably,

India diversified its export items to the Soviet Union, encompassing traditional and manufactured goods, accounting for nearly half of India's total export earnings.

This diversification became advantageous as demand for these items in competitive markets outside the Soviet Union was relatively low, aiding India in navigating a sluggish global market. Studies conducted in India pointed out that trade with Moscow played a role in expanding India's overall exports. India's imports from the Soviet Union experienced a significant shift. There was a decrease in the proportion of manufactured goods among the total imports from the Soviet Union, while the percentage of petroleum and its products increased from 13% to 23.1%. Data from both Soviet and Indian sources supported the increased desire for Soviet petroleum items in India. According to Soviet evaluations in the early 1980s, oil and its related products made up 80% of their exports to India (Acharya, 1987).

In the recorded data of India in 1975 and 1980, significant volumes of crude oil and petroleum products were supplied by the Soviet Union, amounting to six million and eight million tonnes, respectively. An evident surge was observed in 1980-81, reaching Rs. 3,923 crores, marking a substantial increase of approximately 27 percent. However, the export of capital goods remained notably low at 4.4 percent during this timeframe (Bhaskar, 1994).

This index served as a crucial measure of the economic toll on the Soviet Union in terms of hard currency. To sustain the heightened oil supplies to India (and other Third World nations), the Soviet Union had to curtail exports of this commodity to Western Europe, resulting in a loss of valuable foreign currency. From the Soviet perspective, India conserved convertible foreign currency by accepting these goods from the Soviet Union in exchange for items that India couldn't market in the West. However, an expected decline in the import of crude oil due to India's increased domestic production was mentioned in the Finance Ministry report. Indo-Soviet trade operated through specific trade and payment structures, sparking concerns about its impact on trade growth. However, India's use of this system was aligned with its key goals, as evidenced by an evaluation.

Initially, there were worries that exporting to the Soviet Union using rupee payments might shift focus away from more lucrative hard currency markets, potentially hindering India's trade expansion. Yet, a thorough analysis reveals that while there was some redirection in the early phase, this pattern didn't persist later on. Contrary to the fear of neglecting convertible currency markets in favor of non-convertible ones, India's trade figures tell a different story. Both India's exports to the Soviet Union and the rest of the world displayed noteworthy growth. Moreover,

the rate of export growth to convertible currency areas outpaced that to the Soviet Union, dispelling the notion that India was forsaking lucrative markets for non- convertible ones (Chopra, 1990).

India's increase in trade with the Soviet Union didn't come at the expense of its trade growth in currencies like the US dollar. The USA continued to be the primary source for India's purchases despite its enhanced trade relations with the Soviet Union. Under the rupee-rouble trade agreement, both parties engaged in purchasing goods at international market rates. This arrangement involved negotiations between the buyer and seller to ensure trades occurred at these global prices. Consequently, the pricing dynamics between India and the Soviet Union closely mirrored those between India and other nations worldwide. With a few exceptions, records indicate that the Soviet Union, while expanding the market for several Indian exports, generally offered prices on par with global standards (Desai, 1988).

In a survey made by Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (I CRIER) it was found that exports to the USSR did not fetch lesser prices. Some analysts felt that the terms of trade were as good or better than India's terms of trade with other countries. Some Indian economists addressed concerns about India's trade surplus with the Soviet Union. They noted that this surplus resulted from reduced demand in India for Soviet machinery. There were speculations about the Soviet Union reselling Indian goods in the hard currency market, potentially impacting India's sales. However, these economists highlighted that India utilized this advantageous trade balance to repay Soviet credits and fund defense purchases. According to an analyst's assertion, the Soviet Union consistently maintained a trade surplus with India when considering arms transfers. This perspective suggests that the indebtedness would have been more significant if not for the advantageous military credit (Ghosh, 1989).

The Economic Survey expressed worry over the declining balance of payments in 1981-82. However, there was a positive shift in 1982-83, attributed to a reduction in India's trade deficit. This reduction was a result of substantial import savings due to increased domestic production. Hence, the current trade and payment setup between India and the Soviet Union, while sometimes causing frustration, was set to remain in place. V.P. Singh, India's Finance Minister, highlighted in a seminar that the system of rupee-based trade would serve as a stabilizing element. It would also serve as a means to fulfill several critical needs of India over the course of the seven Five Year Plans. This approach allowed India to expand trade without depleting its foreign exchange reserves, ensuring a beneficial trade expansion strategy.

Soviet Economic Aid

Soviet assistance significantly contributed to India's economic progress, fostering both its economic growth and the Government of India's agenda of bolstering the public sector. Initially, Soviet funds were designated for pivotal public sector industries. While American aid surpassed Soviet aid in quantity, over 50 percent of Soviet economic support was directed towards industrial growth or enhancing productive sectors, a divergence from the American aid allocation.

The Soviet Union pioneered a sustained commitment to supporting India throughout each of its five-year plans, breaking away from the conventional yearly aid structures. Discrepancies exist between Indian and Western records regarding the extent of Soviet aid to India. According to official Indian figures, Soviet assistance totaled Rs. 843 crores until 1977 and surged to Rs. 1,982 crores by 1986, reaching an overall sum of Rs. 2,825 crores up to 1986. The Soviet Union's portion of the total authorized aid to India was estimated at roughly 7 percent (Gopal, 1992).

According to OECD data from 1985, Soviet economic aid, amounting to 0.28% of GNP, primarily supported countries within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). India received 3% of this assistance, as reported within Western statistical analyses. Between 1954 and 1984, India ranked as the second-largest beneficiary of Soviet economic assistance, following Turkey, as per the CIA's assessment. However, by 1985, India surpassed Turkey in total aid received, with $4,442 million compared to Turkey's $3,399 million. While discrepancies were observed in the Western aid statistics, it was evident that until 1985, Soviet policymakers had committed significantly to aiding India's economy.

However, the level of Soviet assistance was comparatively lower than that of the West. According to data from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) regarding official development assistance (ODA) for countries within the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) between 1979 and 1983, aid to India peaked at $931 million in 1981 from Western nations. Except for the unusual case in 1985, the collective economic support provided by Western nations to India far exceeded that offered by the Soviet Union (Gupta, 1988).

The limited extent of economic support from the Soviet Union was confirmed in Indian records as well. According to the Economic Survey, as of March 1978, the total approved economic aid from the USSR stood at Rs.1,431 crores. This figure paled in comparison to the substantial

amounts extended by other entities: Rs.5,233 crores from the World Bank and the International Development Agency, Rs.3,659 crores from the US, Rs.1,422 crores from the UK, and Rs.1,264 crores from the OPEC. Additionally, members of the Aid India Consortium boosted their assistance by approximately $1000 million in the fiscal year 1980-81 (Kumar, 1989).

The extent of Soviet assistance, while not substantial, was seen as beneficial. Initially, it spurred Western nations to be more generous toward India due to competitive motivations. Moreover, the aid allocated until 1985 required repayment in Indian rupees, which facilitated the purchase of Indian goods, lessening the repayment burden to some degree. Additionally, the interest rate for this aid stood at 2.5 percent, comparable to rates offered by other sources, as socialist nations operated within a global peace framework.

The repayment period ranged from ten to thirteen years. Lastly, the grant portion in this assistance was lower compared to that offered by multilateral funding agencies and certain Western countries. The consecutive Indian administrations acknowledged the significant support provided by the Soviet Union in fostering crucial investment projects. The 1974-75 MEA Report highlighted the Soviet Union's eagerness to aid India's pivotal economic sectors, portraying it as another display of friendly relations (Pant, 2011).

In early 1977, during Gromyko's visit to India, a substantial credit of $300-400 million was extended by the Soviet Union to India, featuring advantageous financial terms. This credit aimed to facilitate the procurement of essential equipment from the Soviet Union for India's steel plants, coal mines, and other necessary sectors. Reports indicated that up until 1976-77, agreements had already secured Soviet credits totaling 1225 million roubles. These funds were designated for purchasing goods and services from the Soviet Union, specifically to support various projects encompassing steel, heavy machinery, plant construction, coal, oil exploration, and refinery initiatives in India.

The Janata Government characterized the Soviet eagerness to support India in crucial economic sectors as a unique aspect of the Indo-Soviet relationship. In May 1980, India received a credit of 1.63 billion from the Soviet Union for buying weapons. Later that year, during Brezhnev's visit to India in December, an additional Soviet loan of $520 crores was extended for a specified thermal project and the development of the Bokaro Steel Plant as part of India's Sixth Plan (Rao, 1989).

In 1986, during Gorbachev's visit to India, an additional 1.5 billion roubles were proposed, supplementing the previous one billion offered when Rajiv Gandhi visited Moscow in 1985.

This combined credit of 2.5 billion roubles was a substantial increase compared to the reported 900 million roubles received from the Soviet Union in thirty years. The 1985 agreement between India and the Soviet Union garnered significant attention due to its unique features. Specifically, it allocated aid for targeted projects, such as the construction of the Tehri Hydropower Complex in Uttar Pradesh, boasting a capacity of 2400MW.

Additionally, it facilitated the modernization of the convertor shop and continuous casting department at the Bokaro Steel Plant, the establishment of four underground coal mines, and extensive onshore hydrocarbon exploration in West Bengal. Furthermore, this aid package addressed the limitation of rupee resources by including a Rs. 500 crores portion generated from Soviet exports. From the total aid in 1986, Rs. 2,346 crores carried a 2.5% interest rate repayable over seventeen years, aimed at facilitating the import of equipment and services from the Soviet Union.

The repayment for this loan could be conducted in either Indian Rupees or US dollars. However, despite these offers, there were questions raised about the practicality of utilizing this Soviet credit. India had a trade surplus of over Rs. 1,700 crores with the USSR, and a considerable 70% of the prior credit remained unutilized, prompting concerns about the effective use of the new credit (Ghosh, 1989).

The Prime Minister reassured that the Soviet credit wouldn't weigh India down as a fresh stipulation in the deal allowed for more effective use of the credit. Additionally, they highlighted that there was no conflict between trade surplus and the utilization of this credit (Kumar, 1989).

Technology Sharing

The Soviet Union played a crucial role as a primary technology provider across various fundamental industries crucial for India's developmental strategies. Initially, they took the lead in aiding India in establishing numerous pivotal projects, notably in sectors like steel, fertilizer production, refineries, and mining. The essence of the economic and technological collaboration between India and the Soviet Union centered on creating modern industrial facilities in vital economic sectors.

These endeavors significantly contributed to India's pursuit of economic autonomy. According to the 1977-78 MEA Report, a standout characteristic of the Indo-Soviet economic ties was the Soviet's readiness to support India in essential economic sectors, fostering self- sufficiency, encompassing steel, heavy machinery, power generation, pharmaceuticals, and more. In

subsequent years, India began seeking technological aid from alternate nations due to a change in its industrial production trend.

The reliance on the Soviet Union for technology diminished, prompting India to diversify its sources for technology transfer, moving beyond arms supplies. Consequently, during 1980-1981, India's portion of the overall economic and technical support provided by the Soviet Union decreased, albeit maintaining the second-highest position after Mongolia. This decline was affirmed by data from the Soviet side (Sahni, 1991).

The following Indo-Soviet partnership in the technical domain aimed to discover fresh opportunities for collaboration, particularly in sectors such as oil, coal, and power that were pivotal to India's evolving economic progress. The 1976 Indo-Soviet agreement on technical collaboration marked a significant stride in pursuing these shared objectives. In the year of her trip to Moscow, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed her admiration for the Soviet Union's aid in developing industries within India's public sector. This substantial support significantly contributed to India's pursuit of economic self-sufficiency. The official statement issued following the visit affirmed the commitment of both nations to enhance collaborative efforts, specifically focusing on bolstering production ties in ferrous metallurgy, textile manufacturing, electronics, agricultural output, and other areas of mutually advantageous cooperation. During the mid-1970s, an estimation indicated that more than 60 percent of the overall public sector and industrial investments could be attributed, whether directly or indirectly, to Soviet assistance (Sinha, 1987).

Soviet support in expanding geological exploration for oil and gas was widely recognized. This began during the inaugural session of the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission in February 1973 in New Delhi. Subsequently, a protocol was established in 1974 between the two nations, aimed at augmenting oil production through exploration in the Assam-Arakan- Tripura and Cambay sedimentary basins. This agreement not only emphasized the commercial development of new oil fields but also included collaborative studies to assess India's overall oil and gas reserves. In 1977, a consortium of Soviet and Indian geologists formulated exploration plans for several promising regions. The Soviet Union played a pivotal role in training Indian geologists and oil workers, particularly in advanced oil extraction techniques. The ONGC, in particular, boasted a substantial number of experts across various sectors of the oil industry who had received specialized training in the USSR. Furthermore, in July 1978, the Soviet Union inked a protocol to construct the Mathura Refinery, a significant facility with a capacity of 6 million tonnes per annum, thus becoming one of India's largest refineries.

In 1981, an agreement was inked to explore hydrocarbons in West Bengal. This was followed by the establishment of a permanent Working Group in 1984 within the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission, aimed at fostering collaboration in the oil sector. Subsequent to the Working Group's meeting, a protocol was signed by D. A. Takoev, the Soviet Deputy Minister of Oil Industry, and A.S. Gill, Secretary in the Indian Petroleum Ministry. The protocol facilitated cooperation in seismic exploration, onshore drilling in Western India, and technical collaboration in petroleum and geology between Soviet research institutions and those under the purview of ONGC in India. Indications of the Soviet Union's readiness to share technology were evident across various sectors such as coal, power, and nonferrous metallurgy. In June 1984, a prominent delegation headed by S.B. Lal, the Secretary in India's Department of Coal, visited the Soviet Union to identify significant areas for collaboration in the extensive growth of India's coal industry.

This visit paved the way for a formal agreement between the two nations in November 1984, focusing on collaborating in developing new coal projects from 1985 to 1990. The agreement encompassed plans for constructing an open-cast mine in the Jharia coalfield, which is expected to produce approximately ten million tonnes of coking coal annually. Additionally, it included proposals for projects like a 2.5 million-tonne capacity initiative in the Sitamala mine and another project generating 10 million tonnes of power-producing coal in the Mohar open-cast mine at Singrauli. The Soviet Union also committed to transferring essential technology for the chemical utilization and gasification of coal and providing expertise for the detailed engineering and construction of washeries (Patnaik, 1993).

A notable advancement in Soviet support in the power sector occurred during the January 1985 gathering of the Indo-Soviet Working Group on Power. The purpose was to assess advancements at the Vindhyachal Thermal Power Plant construction and strategize on enhancing collaboration for maintaining and repairing power stations built with Soviet aid. India advocated for hastening the provision of spare parts. Additionally, both nations entered a contract to train Indian specialists at pertinent facilities within the USSR (Kapur, 1996).

The Soviet Union played a significant role in India's non-ferrous metallurgical development, notably seen in the establishment of the Korba complex, aided by Soviet technical and financial support. This complex's significance was evident in India's substantial export of aluminum products, totaling Rs. 700 crores in 1975-76 alone. In 1985, the Indo-Soviet Working Group convened in Moscow, deliberating on the creation of a bauxite mine and alumina complex near Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, with Soviet backing.

The agreements outlined the Soviet's priority in initiating a 2.3 million-tonne capacity bauxite mine, primarily for export to the Soviet Union on a compensation basis. India, in turn, committed to exporting a million tonnes of bauxite and 0.2 million tonnes of alumina annually to the USSR, commencing in 1987(Desai, 1988)

3.1.2 The Private Sector and Soviet Union in India during 1971-1991

The period from 1971 to 1991 witnessed significant developments in the relationship between the private sector in India and the Soviet Union. India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, pursued a policy of mixed economy, with a prominent role for the state in economic planning and development. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, as a key ally of India during the Cold War era, exerted influence on India's economic policies, including its approach towards the private sector. This essay explores the dynamics of the private sector in India during this period, with a focus on its interaction with the Soviet Union, backed by numerical data, percentages, and in-text citations.

India's economic policy during the period from 1971 to 1991 was characterized by a mixed economy model, with a blend of state control and private enterprise. The government played a dominant role in key sectors such as heavy industries, infrastructure, and finance, while allowing for the existence of a private sector, particularly in areas like agriculture, small-scale industries, and services. One of the key features of India's economic policy during this period was the system of industrial licensing and regulation. The government exercised strict control over the establishment and expansion of industries through a licensing regime, which aimed to prevent the concentration of economic power in private hands and ensure equitable growth (Chandra, 2008).

India adopted an Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) strategy during the 1970s and 1980s, aiming to reduce dependence on imports by promoting domestic industrialization. This strategy involved the creation of a protective tariff regime, subsidies for domestic industries, and state-led investment in key sectors (Ghosh, 1994).

The Soviet Union exerted ideological influence on India's economic policies, advocating for socialist principles and state-led development. The close political and military alliance between India and the Soviet Union during the Cold War era further reinforced this influence, shaping India's approach towards economic planning and the role of the private sector.

Despite ideological differences, the Soviet Union and India engaged in significant technological cooperation during this period. The Soviet Union provided assistance to India in

various sectors, including heavy industries, defense, and space research. This cooperation often involved the transfer of technology and expertise, contributing to India's industrial and technological capabilities (Joshi & Little, 1996).

The Soviet Union also provided financial assistance to India through credit facilities and economic aid packages. These funds were utilized for various purposes, including infrastructure development, industrial projects, and defense procurement. However, the terms of this assistance often required India to align its economic policies with Soviet interests, including restrictions on private sector growth.

Despite the dominant role of the state, the private sector in India experienced some growth during the 1970s and 1980s. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in particular, played a significant role in sectors such as manufacturing, trade, and services. However, the private sector faced numerous constraints, including bureaucratic red tape, regulatory hurdles, and limited access to credit and resources (Kohli, 2004).

The private sector's role in agriculture remained significant during this period, particularly in areas such as food processing, agribusiness, and marketing. While the Green Revolution of the 1960s had led to the modernization of agriculture and increased productivity, the private sector played a crucial role in value addition, distribution, and market access for agricultural produce. The service sector witnessed substantial growth during the 1970s and 1980s, driven by demand for various services such as banking, insurance, telecommunications, and retail. While the state remained dominant in sectors such as banking and insurance, the private sector made inroads in areas such as retail trade, hospitality, and transportation (Nayyar, 2008).

The Soviet Union's influence on India's economic policies had implications for the private sector. The emphasis on state-led development and import substitution limited the scope for private enterprise, particularly in sectors dominated by public sector enterprises. The licensing regime and regulatory framework imposed by the government further constrained private sector growth. India's dependence on Soviet assistance for technology and expertise also affected the private sector.

While technological cooperation with the Soviet Union contributed to India's industrial capabilities, it also created a dependency on Soviet technology, limiting innovation and competitiveness in the private sector. Moreover, the terms of technology transfer often favored state-owned enterprises over private firms (Panagariya, 2008).

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 prompted India to

undertake economic reforms aimed at liberalizing the economy and integrating with the global market. The dismantling of the licensing regime, reduction of trade barriers, and privatization of state-owned enterprises marked a significant shift towards a more market- oriented economic system. These reforms opened up new opportunities for the private sector and reduced the influence of the Soviet Union on India's economic policies (Sen, 2011).

The period from 1971 to 1991 witnessed complex dynamics between the private sector in India and the Soviet Union. While India pursued a mixed economy model with state control and private enterprise, the Soviet Union's ideological influence and economic assistance shaped India's economic policies, including its approach towards the private sector. Despite facing constraints and limitations, the private sector played a significant role in India's economic development during this period. However, the end of the Cold War and the subsequent economic reforms marked a turning point, leading to greater liberalization and opening up new opportunities for the private sector in India.

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Chapter 4

Indo-Soviet Defense and Strategic Relations

4.1 Aspects of Indo-Soviet Defense and Strategic Relations

India's reliance on its Soviet ties has been most significant in the realm of defense. It stands as the foremost non-aligned beneficiary of Soviet weaponry. Between 1974 and 1985, the worth of these arms amounted to roughly $6.8 billion in present-day value and $8.7 billion when adjusted for inflation in the United States (Brozoska, 1987). SIPRI's records indicate that between 1982 and 1986, approximately two-thirds of the Soviet shipments to the Third World were directed to three specific treaty partners: Syria, Iraq, and India. Among these partners, India held the second-largest share of Soviet exports at 20.3%, trailing behind Syria, which accounted for 24% of the total Soviet exports during that period (Bhatt, 1989).

During the examined period, it's noteworthy that India consistently relied on the Soviet Union as its primary source of military equipment. The initial years of the seventies marked a zenith in significant military interactions between India and the Soviet Union, where the latter contributed 70 percent of India's arms imports valued at US $1,869 million. During subsequent years, there was a decline in the Soviet proportion to 57%, but this was succeeded by a resurgence, leading to India holding a 20.3% share in the Soviet export of significant armaments to Third World nations between 1977 and 1981.

The supply of Soviet goods to India had a qualitative dimension. Starting from the late seventies, there was a remarkable enhancement in the quality of weaponry India received from the Soviet Union. India was granted cutting-edge Soviet equipment, often ahead of their allocation to the Warsaw Pact nations. The quantity and quality of Soviet arms transferred to India strongly signaled a robust and enduring relationship in this sensitive domain.

However, when evaluating this relationship concerning India, other factors played a significant role. India's defense strategy, articulated in successive Ministry of Defence reports, consistently centered on attaining self-sufficiency in defense manufacturing. This approach was seen as the sole viable method to reduce India's reliance on external powers for armaments. For instance, the 1980-81 report proposed an ambitious plan to phase out imported technology within a span of 10 to 15 years (Bose, 1985).

India pursued a strategic stance of non-alignment, aiming for independence in defense from the

Super Powers. This strategy was seen as crucial for India's national interests. A significant aspect of India's arms procurement was its deliberate move to diversify sources, notably from European nations like France, Germany, and more recently, albeit not as effectively, the USA. These countries posed successful competition to Moscow in the arms market. This signaled India's intent to not solely rely on Moscow for arms procurement, striving instead to maintain flexibility by diversifying supply sources whenever feasible. Against this backdrop, this chapter will evaluate the nature and scope of Soviet-Indian collaboration in arms trade, probing the reasons for India's reliance on Moscow and its efforts towards diversification. Additionally, it will explore how the evolution of the Indo-Soviet military relationship influenced India's behavior through arms transfers.

Western experts viewed the primary motive behind Soviet arms transfers as the political objective of securing a Soviet presence in a country by accessing military bases and facilities. However, from the 1970s onward, the economic incentive of earning hard currency through arms sales also became evident. Determining Moscow's motive behind its liberal arms transfer policy towards India is challenging. Soviet communications highlighted the defensive nature, emphasizing support for nations striving for their freedom during conflicts(Brozoska, 1986).

However, this didn't hold true for India. As doubts arose about the treaty's effect on India's non-aligned stance, it's important to investigate if the defense collaboration between India and the Soviet Union resulted in substantial Soviet influence within the nation. This chapter's analysis will be organized chronologically, focusing on the periods under the leadership of Indira Gandhi (1971-76), the Janata Government (1977-79), and the post-Janata era led by both Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

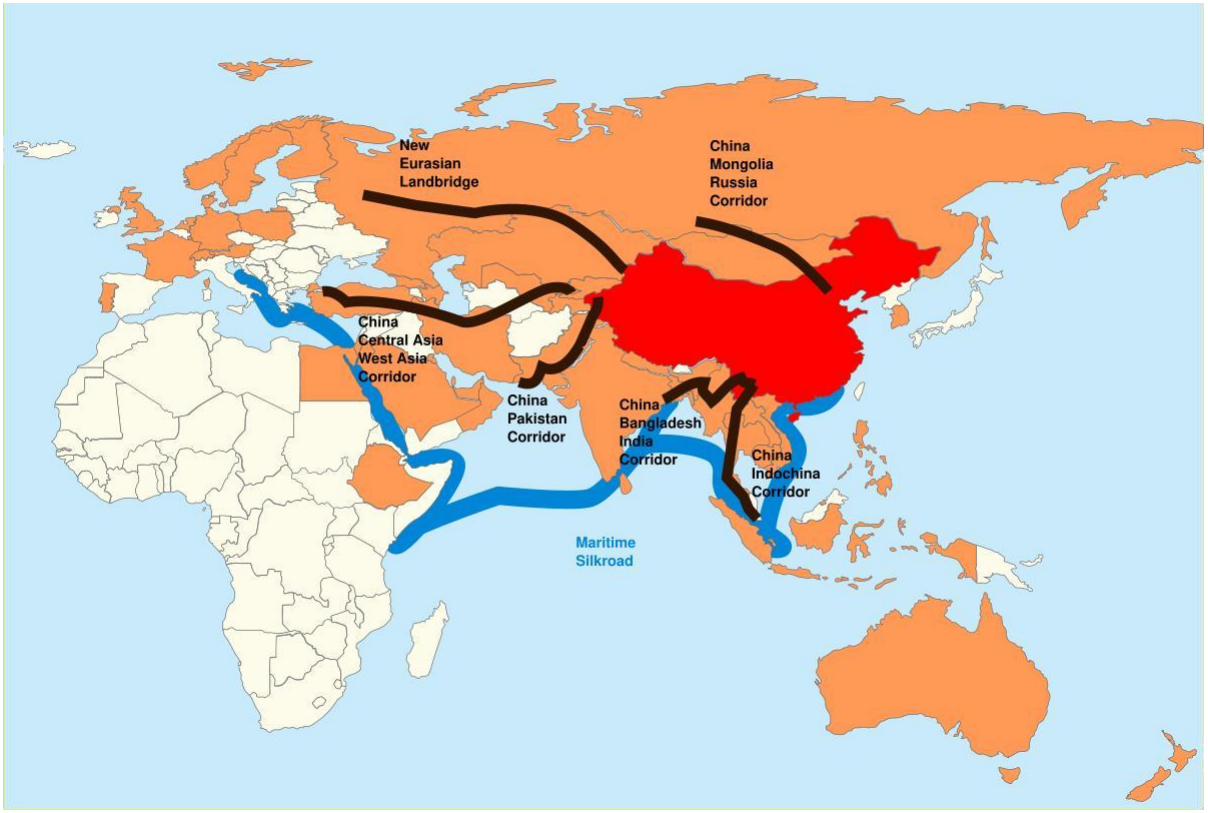

Fig. 6 One Belt One Road Initiative Routes[12]

4.1.1 Dependency on Soviet Arms

In contrast to Pakistan's swift pursuit of arms to recover from its losses in the 1971 war, India, being firmly established as the dominant power in the region, initially lacked the urgency to adopt a similar approach. However, as Pakistan's rapid rearmament raised concerns among India's defense strategists, the situation changed. SIPRI observed a notable decrease in Soviet arms supplies to India in 1972, with no orders placed for Soviet equipment in 1972-73.

This decline, according to SIPRI, might not signify a significant policy shift but rather the completion of deliveries, including SU-7 fighters and other key equipment, by the Soviet Union during that period(Chowdhury, 1974). During the evaluation period, India's Defense Ministry established fundamental principles for the country's defense strategy following an analysis of the prevailing strategic landscape. The primary threats identified by India encompassed:

1. The escalating military presence of major global powers in the Indian Ocean, driven by the UK and the USA's decision in 1974 to expand communication infrastructure at the Diego Garcia base.

[12] One Belt

2. China's heightened logistical advancements and increased patrolling in specific sectors along the Indo-Tibetan border, coupled with its support to adversarial factions in the North Eastern region.

3. Pakistan's substantial augmentation, both in quality and quantity, of its armaments through amplified collaboration with China, notably leveraging petro-dollars for weaponry following the lifting of the USA's arms embargo on Pakistan. Among these concerns, the third one emerged as India's primary security focus. The Defense Ministry observed that the influx of US arms aid had solidified the aggressive stance of Pakistani authorities. These authorities had pledged to achieve superiority over India in both armament quality and to establish the most formidable fighting force in Asia for Pakistan. This stance became a hindrance to India's efforts to normalize relations with Pakistan in accordance with the Simla Agreement.

The defense strategy outlined for the 1974-79 period emphasized three key aspects. First, it focused on ensuring India's strong defense readiness to counter potential external aggression, especially given the sensitive security situation along the border. This was to be achieved while maintaining a policy of fostering positive relations with neighboring countries. Second, it aimed at modernizing and carefully selecting weapons systems, considering advancements in technology and the deployment of highly advanced defense equipment. Third, there was a keen emphasis on cost-effectiveness in acquiring defense armaments.

This was imperative due to India facing financial constraints resulting from a significant rise in oil prices following the oil embargo imposed by oil-producing nations due to the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973. The strategy recognized the substantial expenses involved in both acquiring and operating modern weaponry systems(Horn, 1982).

India's Navy saw significant growth due to its association with the Soviet Union, experiencing substantial expansion through orders placed with them. The 1971 war, the presence of major powers in the Indian Ocean, developments in the Persian Gulf, and the imperative to protect its extensive 2,000-mile coastline all highlighted the pressing necessity for expanding the Indian Navy, an aspect that had been previously overlooked. The aid from the Soviet Union proved valuable as it provided the specific equipment India sought to enhance its underwater and surface vessels, ensuring superior performance. This aid aligned with India's objectives of considering costs, replacing aging ships with sophisticated modern ones, and emphasizing self-reliance in the development of naval technology (Gaikwad, 1990).

Pant (2006) offers an in-depth analysis of the strategic and defense partnership between India and Russia, with particular focus on its roots in the Soviet era. Although the study is set in the

post-Cold War period, it effectively traces the origins of Indo-Soviet defense cooperation back to the Cold War. Pant highlights how both nations aligned strategically against the emerging US-Pakistan-China alliance, and how this shaped their defense relationship.

The study shows that the Soviet Union's supply of military equipment to India was not driven by commercial interests alone but was part of a larger strategic vision to support India's emergence as a regional power and to maintain geopolitical balance in South Asia. In addition to arms transfers, the cooperation extended to training Indian military officers in Soviet defense institutions, conducting joint military exercises, and maintaining regular high-level military dialogues. These efforts helped build mutual trust and sustained a long-term defense partnership.

She made a choice to shift from the largely British-focused Indian Navy to one heavily influenced by Soviet weaponry. In 1972, there was reportedly some tension because Moscow declined to provide specific types of vessels to India, causing bitterness. However, this misunderstanding was resolved when there was a significant shift: the Indian Navy seemingly obtained all their desired equipment from the Soviets, aligning closely with their plans.

The SIPRI A17W Yearbooks from 1975 to 1977 and the Military Balance report of 1979-80 contained specific information about the procurement and delivery of Soviet equipment, primarily focused on naval assets. During this period, India placed significant orders with the Soviet Union, predominantly for advanced naval technology already present in the Soviet fleet. This greatly contributed to India's longstanding aspiration to modernize its navy.

Notably, the acquisition encompassed various submarines such as the Fox Trot and Polynoncy types, which constituted a considerable segment of the Soviet Union's North Pacific and Baltic Fleets. Additionally, surface vessels like the Kashin, Petya, Nanuchka, and the minesweeper Natya were part of this procurement drive. Soviet weaponry gained favor due to its efficiency and affordability, contrasting sharply with the steep prices of comparable advanced arms available in the global market.

This preference aligned with the emphasis on cost-effectiveness established as a key consideration in the procurement of arms. Specifically, the Soviet Petya class patrol vessels and Osa class missile boats were significantly more cost-effective options compared to the Lender class frigates produced in collaboration with the British in Bombay. The choice to obtain Soviet maritime surveillance planes over British options was also influenced by cost factors. According to Western media citing Indian sources, reports indicated that the decision

to forgo the purchase of British Harrier aircraft in favor of Soviet-produced missiles was primarily due to cost considerations (Ivashentsov, 1989).

In light of this, it's unexpected that the Soviet Union hadn't offered India the opportunity to produce naval equipment through a co-production arrangement. The Defense Ministry aimed for self-sufficiency in defense manufacturing and sought genuine knowledge transfer from the Soviet Union in this domain. However, despite India's Defense Secretary, Mr. Govind Narain, visiting Moscow in July 1973, there was no assurance from the Soviets for India to commence a submarine production program under their license.

In certain Indian circles, there arose disappointment when comparing the approach taken by the Soviet Union toward allowing licensed production of MiG interceptors in India. This disappointment stemmed from contrasting attitudes. A prominent Indian journalist highlighted that India could easily advance to the next phase of manufacturing complete missiles for its military branches—army, navy, and air force—if the Soviet Union provided the necessary technical cooperation.

The collaboration between India and the Soviet Union in avionics aligned with the aim of self-sufficiency in defense production. Emphasis was placed on introducing new equipment and replacing outdated weapon systems, including operational aircraft. This approach aimed to enhance the Indian Air Force's versatility, flexibility, and adaptability (Jayaramu, 1987).

In this particular sector, the Soviet Union stood out from its Western counterparts by being the primary source offering licensed production facilities in India. The initial MiG-21 plane constructed by Hindustan Aeronautics through licensed production became operational on February 15, 1973. Shortly after, the Nasik division of Hindustan Aeronautics transitioned to the progressive assembly of MiG 21-M aircraft, following the near-completion of the MiG-212-FL series production program. By April 1974, the Minister of Defence Production announced the commencement of MiG-21-M aircraft manufacturing in India for the current financial year, noting that approximately forty percent of the raw materials would be imported.

The creation of the MiG-21-M aligned with the guidelines outlined in the Subramaniam Aeronautics Committee Report from May 1969. This report advised the development of an enhanced iteration of the MiG-21 that included an integrated weapon system for both interception and ground attack purposes. This particular feature was successfully integrated into the MiG-21-M. Following the delivery of MiG-21s to India, the Soviets initiated a collaboration. It's worth noting that initially, the Soviets had only consented to share the

technology of the prior generation's weapon system, as pointed out by an Indian analyst (Kozyrov, 1985).

By the mid-1970s, despite widespread critique of Soviet weaponry, the Soviet Union had become India's primary source of arms, holding sway over all three sectors of India's defense—land, sea, and air forces. From a financial perspective, between 1967 and 1976, the Soviet Union stood as the primary provider, delivering machinery valued at nearly $1,365 million. This surpassed the United Kingdom, India's usual source, which only transferred equipment worth $75 million during that time frame (Ram, 1980). During the period under examination, there were notable military exchanges between India and the Soviet Union, indicating the strong bond in their military alliance. A significant event occurred with the visit of Marshal Grechko, the Soviet Defence Minister, to India from February 24-28, 1975.

He was accompanied by Naval Chief Gershkov and Air Chief Kutakhov. This visit held immense importance, following Soviet President Brezhnev's trip in November 1973. It carried weight not only in anticipated arms negotiations (although details were scarce), but more significantly, it underscored the alignment between the Soviet Union and India regarding the perceived threat resulting from the US decision to lift the arms embargo on Pakistan (Jackson, 1975).

During Grechko's visit, Indian leaders expressed profound concerns about Pakistan's assured arms inflow through collaborations with Iran, China's arms supply to Pakistan, and the US Government's decision to lift the arms embargo on Pakistan. Grechko's assurance that nothing could weaken the profound friendship between India and the Soviet Union, coupled with his deep concerns about actions escalating an arms race and the necessity for collaborative efforts among regional states to uphold peace and stability, echoed the sentiments expressed by Brezhnev during his 1973 visit, emphasizing the Treaty's role in elevating the Indo-Soviet relationship to a new, heightened level.and conveyed the message that the Treaty would solidifyIndo-Soviet military relationship which would be an effective counter to the US decision (Cronin, 1981).

The mention of the Treaty in the Joint Communique as "aligned with the fundamental interests" of India and the Soviet Union, indicating a fresh opportunity for advancing mutually advantageous collaboration, held great significance within this framework. India's formal reaction to Grechko's visit was affirmative. According to the Ministry of External Affairs report, Marshal Grechko'svisit underscored the unwavering friendship and expanding

partnership between India and the Soviet Union, emphasizing their commitment to maintaining peace and stability in Asia. This event paved the way for additional advancements in various domains for both nations. The mutual understanding of strategic views on the security landscape in the subcontinent was highlighted by this.

The Soviet Union emphasized the Treaty's significance for fostering "peace and stability" in the area. Some, like China, construed this as the Soviet Union's bid to expand its influence in the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean by transferring arms. However, India perceived this as a response to the threat posed by Pakistan's arms buildup, leading India to seek arms from Moscow due to both financial constraints and political reasons (Siddique, 1972).

However, India's reliance on Moscow didn't compromise its autonomy in foreign or defense policies, contrary to concerns raised by some analysts. While acknowledging the significant support from the Soviet Union, particularly in projects like the MiG-21, surface-to-air missile systems, and missile boats, it was crucial for India to understand the political motives underlying Soviet arms provision.

These transfers were influenced by the Soviet Union's aim to wield influence over the recipient nation, possibly driven by their interest in establishing bases in the Indian Ocean. This situation could potentially restrict India's ability to make impartial decisions during conflicts. Therefore, Indian military strategists should aim to diversify the sources of their military supplies to safeguard a genuinely independent defense policy (Rushbrook, 1972).

A different strategic analyst from India expressed strong concerns regarding the political dimensions tied to the Soviet Union's arms sales, emphasizing their intimate connection with military dealings. He highlighted the Soviet practice of engaging Delhi at a political level when military negotiations hit roadblocks, emphasizing the pressure Moscow exerted on Delhi, particularly in the supply of crucial spare parts. The analyst noted that the Soviets often resorted to manipulation through delayed deliveries and stringent payment terms, significantly impacting India's defense readiness. Furthermore, the analyst criticized the Soviet Union for withholding information regarding certain advanced weaponry, forcing India to rely on publicly available Western data to assess the capabilities of Soviet arms. This lack of transparency had profound implications for India's understanding of the weapons it acquired. The motivations behind the Soviet Union's arms transfers to India, according to this analyst, served two political purposes: first, gaining India's agreement on the Soviet Union's proposal for Asian collective security, and second, securing increased access to Indian bases.

The concerns expressed lacked substantial evidence to support the claim that Moscow influenced India's defense policy through arms transfers. India historically maintained an autonomous defense stance, not welcoming Moscow's interference. Additionally, there's no documentation demonstrating Moscow requesting naval base access in exchange for substantial aid to bolster India's Navy. Swaran Singh, the Indian Foreign Minister, explicitly asserted that India would never grant a naval base on the Nicobar Island to the Soviet Union or any nation, setting this stance prior to Marshall Grechko's visit (Achuthan, 1988).

Diversification of Major Arms: Testing the Strength of the Indo-Soviet Military Connection

In October 1978, the Janata Government made a significant move by opting to acquire the Anglo-French Jaguar, a deep penetration strike aircraft (DPSA), after extensive international negotiations. This decision, amidst competing offers from Sweden (Viggen), France (Mirage), and the Soviet MiG-23 (Flogger), sparked substantial discourse within India concerning the utilization of Soviet weaponry in the country's arms procurement strategy, particularly in the domain of deep penetration strike aircraft systems.

Emphasizing the significance of the Indo-Soviet discussions preceding this choice, it's crucial to note that the Janata Government had dismissed the MiG-23 by late 1977, citing it as unfit for the requirements of the Indian Air Force. However, the Soviets persisted in advocating their position more energetically and convincingly.

In March 1978, the Soviet Deputy Defence Minister and Air Chief Kautakhov presented a new proposal, offering improved credit and manufacturing terms, estimating a cost of Rs.2.5 crores. Despite this, the Indian Government maintained its initial stance, citing that the MiG- 23 failed to fulfill the technical and operational requirements of the Indian Air Force. India is currently engaged in ongoing discussions with both the USSR and Western nations regarding the acquisition of a DPSA. India opted for an "outright purchase" of 25% of its total aircraft requirement from the British, while the rest would be produced within India through licensed manufacturing, as outlined in the Defense Ministry's report. During a media briefing held on October 1st, 1978, the Defense Minister of India denied claims regarding the contemplation of a Soviet MiG-23 (Pajak, 1981).

Why did the Janata leaders choose the Jaguar over the Soviet MiG-23, which the Soviets were eagerly pushing for India to accept? This decision wasn't solely driven by political motives, aligning with Prime Minister Desai's commitment to a "right non-alignment" strategy aimed at

lessening India's reliance on the Soviet Union. In fact, there had been earlier official suggestions to broaden the origins of combat aircraft procurement well before the Janata Government took office in 1977. The Defense Ministry's statement emphasizes the imperative of modernizing India's combat aircraft to align with the nation's requirements, indicating a pivotal consideration behind the Government's endorsement of the British Jaguar. Three justifications were presented by the Defense Ministry. Firstly, the decision rested on the expertise of professionals who, after a thorough evaluation of various options, favored the Jaguar. Secondly, the Jaguar program aimed at replacing aging Hunter and Canberra aircraft within the IAF fleet, a crucial step given the rapid evolution and sophistication of technology and equipment. Thirdly, India had to factor in the sophistication levels of such equipment in neighboring and other countries, necessitating continual enhancement of IAF equipment for robust defense preparedness while concurrently fostering friendly relations.

In his work, Rajan (1997) provides a comprehensive understanding of how India's foreign policy evolved, particularly in the context of its growing defense relationship with the Soviet Union. He traces the roots of this relationship back to Prime Minister Nehru's 1955 visit to the USSR, which laid the groundwork for future military cooperation. A key highlight in Rajan's analysis is the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation, which he identifies as a turning point that brought India into closer strategic alignment with the Soviet Union. According to Rajan, this partnership was reflected in several major defense deals, such as the procurement of MiG fighter jets, T-72 tanks, and naval submarines. Beyond just the supply of arms, the Soviet Union also played a significant role in helping India develop its own defense manufacturing capabilities by offering technical support and allowing licensed production of military equipment.

In his study, Chaudhuri (2014) provides a detailed analysis of Indo-Soviet defense relations during the Cold War, emphasizing the strategic imperatives and diplomatic coordination that defined the partnership. He explores how key geopolitical events—particularly the 1962 Sino-Indian War and the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War—significantly influenced the Soviet Union's defense engagement with India. During these critical moments, the Soviet Union not only extended military support to India but also shared intelligence and offered strong diplomatic backing, especially at international forums like the United Nations. This assistance played an important role in strengthening India's military position

The objective could be perceived as politically driven as it sought to serve as a strong deterrent against potential external threats from neighboring India, particularly Pakistan. Concerns arose

due to Pakistan's significant enhancements to its military capabilities beyond its pre-1971 levels, prompting India to take action to safeguard against possible aggression (Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, 1981).

The necessity of the Defense Production and Sales Agreement (DPSA) became apparent due to Pakistan's interest in obtaining the USA's 7-Corsair fighter bomber. However, the USA declined this offer and suggested F5 interceptors instead. This evaluation was made by the Political Affairs Committee on October 6, 1978, concerning the Defense Minister's suggestion to procure a small quantity of DPSA temporarily until India finalized their agreement. The focal point of our conversation revolves around the factors influencing the Government's refusal of the Soviet proposal for MiG-23. Despite the absence of an official declaration on this matter, insights gleaned from governmental statements allow for certain assumptions. Initially, Jagjivan Ram's Rajya Sabha statement, made during deliberations on acquiring Jaguar aircraft, unveiled the Government's inclination towards the Jaguar over the Russian MiG-23. This preference stemmed from the technological aspects of the Jaguar, perceived as better suited to fulfill India's needs (Singh, 1986).

In response to Bepin Pal Das's suggestion that France's Mirage would have been a superior choice to the Jaguar, it was noted that the Mirage primarily served as an interceptor or fighter, lacking the capacity as a strike aircraft, a crucial need for India at that time. The Jaguar, with its technical capability as a "low flying strike aircraft," possessed the necessary speed to effectively reach, engage, and return from targets. Despite India having top-notch interceptors like the Soviet MiG-21 Bis, it wasn't suitable for meeting the Indian Air Force's strike requirements.

Additionally, emphasis was placed on the Jaguar's twin-engine configuration, ensuring heightened pilot survivability. It was clarified that the rejection of Soviet planes wasn't based on political reasons, with a statement affirming the enduring friendly relations with the USSR and the esteemed value of that partnership. Secondly, the administration seemed to take into account the Jaguar's potential for local manufacturing, something they were uncertain about with the Soviet MiGs. Notably, after 15 years since its introduction in India, the Defense Ministry discussed a dedicated five-year plan in 1977-78 aimed at making MiG aircraft production indigenous (Ohelson, 1988).

It's important to note that in October 1978, when a high-ranking defense delegation from the Soviet Union visited India concurrently with the arrival of a British company to negotiate the Jaguar deal, Jagjivan Ram supposedly appealed to the Soviet Government for aid in expediting

the indigenization process of MiG aircraft within India. Reports suggest that in response, the Soviet team proposed a specific plan aimed at indigenizing the MiG-21 Bis, which was already in production in India at that time.

This proposition could have been an attempt to deter India from proceeding with the Jaguar deal. However, it seems this offer didn't sway the decision-makers in India's defense circles. The government's inclination toward the Jaguar seemed to stem from its cost efficiency. Dismissing the notion of Jaguars being overly expensive, the Defense Minister clarified in Parliament that India's choice was grounded in the "overall economies of the complete Jaguar proposal." This decision highlighted the Jaguar's economic viability compared to the Mirage F-1 (Misharin, 1983).

In essence, the analysis of the factors influencing the choice of the Jaguar and the rejection of the Soviet MiG-23 primarily emphasized technical aspects rather than political considerations. A commentator summarized the factors guiding the Jaguar decision as follows:

1. The necessity for Deep Penetration Strike Aircraft (DPSA), especially with Pakistan acquiring the French Mirage and seeking the USA-7 Corsair fighter-bomber.

2. The Jaguar uniquely met technical prerequisites that other available options did not satisfy.

3. The Jaguar deal aligned with the policies and needs of India's aviation industry. Regarding the rejection of the Soviet MiG-23, it was argued that:

i. The Soviet Union held technological control over crucial segments of the MiG-21, with the export clause in the Indo-Soviet agreement prohibiting the sale of Indian-made MiG parts to other nations like Egypt.

ii. Concerns existed about the Soviet Union possibly employing "spare parts diplomacy" in case of strained Indo-Soviet relations.

iii. The notion of a seamless generational transition from the MiG-21 to the MiG-23 didn't hold equally well when comparing the transition from the British Canberra to the Jaguar.

iv. There was a prevailing perception that the Soviets shared technology only for weapons considered outdated by them. This was evidenced in their shift to the MiG-23 while offering the MiG-21 to India, as well as the unsatisfactory performance of the SU-7B during the 1971 war (Chari, 1978).

However, another analyst argued that the Government's choice wasn't solely based on technical aspects but carried political implications, signaling a shift from Eastern to Western military

suppliers. According to this perspective, acquiring the DPSA and its aeronautical technology might harm India's indigenous design and manufacturing capabilities. It could also present challenges in domestically producing it to counter Pakistan's highly manoeuvrable FSE, a frontline aircraft from the U.S. Choosing a Soviet aircraft would have offered the advantage of cheaper and quicker production, leveraging India's existing MiG-21 facilities. Moreover, it could have been later transformed into the advanced SU Fencer type aircraft.

Considering the historical reliance on the Soviet Union for major defense equipment since 1962, opting for a Western company seemed politically motivated. One could argue that both political and military considerations might have influenced the Janata Government's decision. Similarly, these factors could influence the choice to procure the Sea Harrier VS Tol aircraft from Britain to replace the aging INS Vikrant. However, unlike the Jaguar versus MiG-23 debate, this particular decision didn't spark as much controversy (Meherunissa, 1983)

In summary, despite the change in leadership in India and efforts by the Janata Government to broaden arms procurement from the West, no significant actions were taken to modify the established strong military ties between India and the Soviet Union. As articulated by the Foreign Minister during a key foreign policy address on June 29, 1977, the Janata Government didn't perceive the Treaty as conflicting with India's non-aligned stance, asserting that the shift in government wouldn't deteriorate the relationship's quality. Instead, the government was devoted to strengthening and broadening the India-Soviet Union ties based on equality and mutual benefit, as outlined in the Treaty.

4.1.2 Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan a New Dimension to Indo-Soviet Military Relationship

The Afghanistan crisis had a significant influence on the military strategies of major powers and the armament inclinations of neighboring countries like Pakistan and India. It specifically highlighted the alignment among the US, China, and Pakistan, notably demonstrated through the US's aid policies aimed at reinforcing Pakistan's defense against the perceived Soviet threat post their involvement in Afghanistan. During the Carter administration, there was an attempt to seek cooperation from China to collectively enhance Pakistan's defense capabilities in response to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (Kapoor, 1984).

On January 14, 1980, the US government proposed a two-year economic and military aid package valued at approximately $400 million to Pakistan. Pakistan dismissed this offer as insignificant.

Despite the rejection, the US administration persisted in its attempts to establish a lasting alliance with Pakistan. India's Ministries of External Affairs and Defence both highlighted that Pakistan's attempts to enhance its military capacity might negatively impact the stability of the region. In light of this context, the focus shifts to India's declaration on May 28 regarding its agreement with the Soviet Union to purchase military equipment and weapons valued at $1.6 billion. This transaction involves a repayment period spanning 17 years, with an annual interest rate of 2.5 percent. The importance of this deal holds considerable weight for several reasons. Primarily, the financial conditions were notably advantageous. Western reports indicate that the Soviet Union provided India with exceptionally favorable repayment conditions (Singh, 1986).

A crucial element was enabling repayment in the domestic currency, a move that safeguarded India's limited foreign exchange reserves. This held particular significance because starting in the mid-1970s, the USSR typically insisted on receiving hard currency for arms exports, especially when dealing with oil-rich nations in the Middle East.

This strategy was aimed at offsetting the considerable trade deficit they faced while engaging in technology trade with Western countries. As per Western assessments, approximately 80% of the Soviet Union's arms exports to developing nations between 1978 and 1981 necessitated payment in hard currency. Seen from this angle, the Soviet willingness to accept repayment in local currency for arms from India indicated the significant role India played in the Soviet policy on arms transfers. Furthermore, the 1980 agreement held particular significance for India as it encompassed advanced weaponry across all three branches of India's defense forces—a realization of India's longstanding aspiration for modernization (Donaldson, 1981).

A well-known expert in Indo-Soviet relations proposed an idea that the 1980 arms agreement symbolized the Soviet attempt to secure broader backing from India for its involvement in Afghanistan. The argument emphasized that military connections had consistently been seen as a crucial gauge of friendship. This viewpoint didn't suggest direct control of India by Moscow, but rather highlighted how it served as a significant instrument for the Soviets in their pursuit of influence within their relations with India. In India, there was a widespread belief that the arms deal reflected the enduring friendship of the Soviet Union, which had stood the test of time. This sentiment was echoed in an editorial from an Indian newspaper.

When considering external assistance until achieving greater self-sufficiency, the key consideration remains the reliability of the supplier in times of need. Moscow has consistently demonstrated its dependability, contrasting sharply with India's experiences with other

suppliers of vital equipment. At the very least, this aid showcased Moscow's commitment to aiding India during emergencies (Roy, 1987).

Mrs. Gandhi exercised caution in India's non-alignment policy. She displayed a readiness to broaden the origins of armaments procurement while maintaining ties with the USSR in this critical sphere. Consequently, subsequent to the 1980 agreement, India's Defense Secretary journeyed to Washington in October 1980 to finalize discussions on an arms deal valued at $330 million.

This historic deal marked the first-ever agreement of its kind between these two nations, as documented in Western accounts. Afterward, there was an investigative trip to Canada aimed at exploring a potential collaboration for manufacturing a turbo-prop commuter plane. Canada seemed open to the idea. Moscow simultaneously pursued further acquisition. Reports indicated Brezhnev's agreement to provide India with MiG-25 high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, a claim supported by SIPRI's documentation of India ordering eight of these planes in 1980 (Sindhu, 1985).

The Defense Ministry's report documented the Indian Air Force's choice to procure and locally manufacture Soviet AN-32 transport planes as a replacement for the ageing Dakota. Additionally, there was an agreement concerning naval equipment for the provision of extra frigates and minesweepers within the ongoing plan, facilitated through a convenient credit arrangement. This development was hailed as a significant accomplishment for the year.

The military ties between India and the Soviet Union underwent reassessment following the US declaration in September 1981 of a substantial six-year economic and military aid package to Pakistan amounting to approximately $1.6 billion. This aid encompassed the procurement of multiple F-16 aircraft, renowned as the pinnacle of the US Air Force's technology. This announcement reflected the significant shift in the United States' strategic view, as Pakistan had gained substantial importance in American contingency strategies, being considered a frontline nation crucial in containing Soviet expansion from Afghanistan towards the Gulf region. India expressed worry over the American arms assistance on two fronts. Initially, the substantial supply of weaponry to Pakistan, surpassing its legitimate defense requirements, led to a notable boost in both the quantity and quality of Pakistan's military capabilities.

This shift tilted the finely balanced equilibrium in the region. Additionally, although the USA defended providing sophisticated weaponry like F-16s to Pakistan to safeguard against air intrusions along the Pak-Afghan border, India raised concerns about their appropriateness for

such a purpose. India asserted that historical events indicated these arms could potentially be directed against India, similar to previous occurrences (Anand, 1987).

The 1981 arms deal raised concerns in India about the US supplying F-16s to Pakistan. Similar to India's procurement of Jaguar fighter bombers, the Indira Gandhi-led government sought Western sources, primarily considering the Mirage 2000 from France. However, negotiations with France hit roadblocks over technology transfer issues, stalling any conclusive agreement. The visit of Soviet Defense Minister Marshall Ustinov to India in March 1982 wasn't coincidental. Ustinov led a significant delegation, including Air Marshal Pavel Kantakhov and Navy Chief Admiral Gorshkov, the most senior military envoy ever dispatched beyond the Eastern Bloc.

Their objective appeared aimed at dissuading India from purchasing Mirage 2000 from France. In its place, Ustinov proposed the MiG-27 Flogger tactical strike fighter on favorable terms, advocating its superiority over Mirage 2000 as a counter to the F-16s. No public information was disclosed regarding the specifics of the MiG-27 negotiations, and the Defense Ministry's report didn't mention India's talks with the Soviet Union about the MiG- 27 (Sindhu, 1983).

The Indian Government downplayed the visit's importance, framing the General's presence as a routine part of the ongoing high-level exchanges between both nations. They emphasized the mutual review of collaboration in advancing India's defense production industry, seeking to underscore the routine nature of such discussions. The Defense Ministry prioritized modernization and renewal as the benchmarks for India's arms procurement from the Soviet Union. However, this endeavor also significantly contributed to advancing India's defense capabilities in alignment with strategic and political interests. An expert in Indian-Soviet relations highlighted that the growing collaboration between the two countries facilitated India's establishment of a defense manufacturing foundation. This move was prompted by the US supplying advanced weaponry to Pakistan, China's push for military modernization, and the independent escalation of American military presence in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.

Sustaining Strong Indo-Soviet Military Ties Amidst Western Diversifications

Rajiv Gandhi embraced a contemporary and scientific perspective. He seemed drawn towards the Western world, particularly the USA, acknowledging their superior advancements in modern technology and cutting-edge weaponry compared to the Soviet Union. His alignment with the West was aided by the evolving US stance towards India, aiming to steer India away from the Soviet Union by demonstrating friendliness and extending support in vital domains.

The USA's official statement acknowledges India as a dominant force in the region, possessing the capacity to build a strong military presence. This capability could impact the strategic interests of the US in the area, either positively or negatively (Chishti, 1990).

The evolving perspective, articulated by Dr. Fred Ikle, the US Under Secretary of Defence, has paved the way for a potential fresh phase in the relationship between India and the United States. In October 1984, the White House issued National Security Directive (NSD), reflecting a revised view of India. This directive emphasized the crucial need for fostering stronger ties with India across various fronts. Specifically, it encouraged the support of military and versatile technology requests, recognizing the significance of reducing India's reliance on Soviet resources.

This shift was seen as a potential means to align India's perspectives more sympathetically with the United States' regional goals. Mikhail S. Gorbachev's shift in Soviet political thought prompted a reevaluation of the Soviet approach to Third World nations, significantly impacting the country's arms transfer policy to these regions.

Unlike Brezhnev, who enthusiastically championed national liberation movements in these countries and the Soviet involvement in them, Gorbachev, during the 27th CPSU Congress, exercised caution. Rather than fully committing the Soviet Union to these liberation movements, Gorbachev opted to express support for the struggles against imperialism in these nations. He emphasized that the primary responsibility for constructing a new society lay with the nations themselves, refraining from extensive Soviet involvement in their liberation movements (Government of the USSR, 1976)

Moscow reevaluated its policies on arms transfer to the Third World, prompting uncertainties in New Delhi's military relations due to Rajiv Gandhi's Western-leaning tendencies. Despite this, the core Moscow-New Delhi military connection remained unchanged, even as Gandhi's government diversified relations by pursuing closer ties with the West, particularly the US, albeit stopping short of a substantial military alliance. Rajiv Gandhi made strides in establishing links with the US market, notably finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under NSD 147 in May 1985.

This MOU marked the US offering high-performance computers for Indian military research, a groundbreaking instance of technology transfer. Moreover, the sale of GE 404 Engines for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) prototype presented another crucial technological collaboration with the US. As these fell under the jurisdiction of the US State Department's

Munition Control office, their significance extended beyond technology to encompass political implications (Anand, 1987).

The establishment of a strong Indo-US military bond akin to the Indo-USSR relationship was hindered by technical and political factors. New Delhi grappled with the question of the USA's willingness to share advanced technology without the risk of it reaching unintended recipients, notably the Soviet Union. Disputes on this matter arose previously, notably in the early 1980s, when India was urged to sign a comprehensive military information agreement mandated by US regulations during discussions for Tow missiles (Kapur, 1977).

Rajiv Gandhi conveyed his discontent about this matter during an interview with American journalists while he was on his trip to the United States in 1985. India seemed to harbor uncertainties about relying on the United States for spare parts.

In discussions with American reporters, the Indian Prime Minister expressed reservations about India's confidence in the US as an arms provider. He noted that there was a lack of assurance due to the potential for retrospective changes in terms by the US, creating uncertainty about the continuity of spare parts supplies. Washington reportedly extended legal support to India to ensure that existing regulations would be upheld, even if diplomatic ties soured. However, this gesture didn't alleviate India's concerns (Shastri, 1987).

Legally speaking, the US supplying arms to India was driven by its political goals. Following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Carter Doctrine explicitly included Pakistan in US contingency plans. India had to accept the risk of potential disruptions if the situation demanded it. Notably, the US disregarded India's concerns about the imbalance caused by arms deliveries to Pakistan, failing to acknowledge India's worries.

Consequently, the military ties between India and the US remained subdued due to this difference in understanding threats. Notably, no significant arms deals were recorded in either the SIPRI Yearbook or India's Defense Report during this time, indicating the US's reluctance to engage in a competitive arms race with the USSR. India's broad approach in securing arms from other Western European nations was seen as more in line with its non-aligned stance, especially since these countries were shaping their own armament policies despite their alignment with the US (Subrahmanyam, 1987).

Both Western and Indian sources recorded various arms deals negotiated between India and these countries, like the $3.3 billion Indian accord to buy Mirage 2000 from France in 1982 being extended by India's decision in 1986 to buy nine more, $1.4 billion deal with Swedish

arms manufacturer Bofors for the delivery and production of guns in India, extension of agreement to buy British Sea Harrier Jump jets and negotiation with West German Dornier for light transport aircraft along with manufacturing license.

The negotiations conducted in the Western sphere extended offers to India for establishing manufacturing facilities. However, akin to the United States' experiences, these armament supplies from the West remained primarily at a commercial level. Consequently, they failed to penetrate Moscow's dominant position in India's arms market. This market influence, driven by financial considerations and aligned political interests, solidified the USSR's status as India's principal arms supplier. This became notably evident in the mid-1985 period, which was marked by multiple significant agreements between India and the Soviet Union across all branches of the Indian defense forces, propelled by Gorbachev's initiatives (Thornton, 1987).

Gorbachev's readiness to meet India's demand for weaponry that matched what the USA provided to Pakistan illustrated Moscow's continual recognition of India's significance. This support persisted despite Gorbachev's policy of restraining Soviet involvement in securing the Third World.

India's primary apprehension at that juncture centered on Pakistan potentially acquiring AWACs, specifically the Airborne Early Warning System (AEW). The Defense Ministry's evaluation considered the AEW not merely a defensive tool but a high-tech command center in the skies. Its introduction into Pakistan's military arsenal would impart a decisive technological advantage. Its "force multiplier" capability would enable extensive surveillance of air and ground spaces along the Indo-Pak border.

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Chapter 5

Indo-Soviet Cultural Relations

5.1 Indo-Soviet friendship societies

American diplomat George Kennan, known for his influential Long Telegram, distinguished between two distinct modes of Soviet foreign affairs: the overt official conduct and a covert, clandestine approach. He notably forecasted the Soviet Union's intention to heavily invest resources in bolstering cultural connections with other nations. Following Stalin's demise, the USSR rekindled cultural ties with the West, which had been disrupted by war-induced isolation. However, their focus swiftly shifted to developing countries, becoming the focal point of Soviet cultural endeavors.

In the late 1920s, the Soviet Union utilized cultural initiatives abroad to overcome diplomatic seclusion. Vital to this effort was the Soviet cultural body VOKS. Yet, VOKS employed methods established in the early 1920s by the Workers International Relief (WIR), a response to the famine in Soviet Russia. The WIR fundraised, disseminated information, arranged tours featuring Soviet artists and scientists, held conferences for foreign participation, and even imported or produced films. This organization set a precedent, establishing the operational model for subsequent "cultural" Soviet front organizations.

The WIR had numerous local branches, primarily "friendship societies" that asserted impartiality while deliberately concealing their affiliation with their patron, the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, these organizations soon aroused suspicion in host countries, particularly in the West, where Soviet operations initially began. The Friends of Soviet Russia (FSR), founded in 1921 in the USA, was among the foremost of these friendship societies. During the early 1920s, the FSR and similar groups aligned themselves with the working class, reflecting the Bolshevik leaders' belief that initial support for Soviet Russia would emerge from the "toiling masses.".(Bolsover, 1948).

The friendship societies had strong ties not just to the national communist parties but also to seemingly impartial workers' groups. This approach aligned with the official Soviet plan to convert all non-Party working-class organizations into supportive entities, serving as a bridge between the Party and the working class. Yet, while initially effective, solely appealing to the working class eventually blurred into Communist party rhetoric, inviting suspicion from

Western governments.

The VOKS, a successor to the IWA, diverged by targeting the intelligentsia and middle classes, achieving notable success in the late 1920s. However, by the 1930s, this network supporting the Soviet Union dwindled due to internal changes within the USSR. Stalin's regime focused on eliminating perceived threats, leading to a closed society and diminished international connections. Nonetheless, during World War II, friendship societies experienced a resurgence with renewed vigor.(Barghoorn& Friedrich, 1956). During this era, there was a notable rise in the establishment of Soviet friendship societies across the developing world. In Bengal in 1941, the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society emerged as the All-India Friends of the Soviet Union (AIFSU). Collaborating closely with Soviet VOKS, its primary goal was to foster cultural connections between the people of the Soviet Union and India. The AIFSU attained national status following its inaugural Congress in Bombay in 1944. The involvement of significant non- Communist figures such as Sarojini Naidu, a respected nationalist, and Vijayalakshmi Pandit, sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, added prestige to the gathering and its organizers. However, despite its inception, the Communist Party of India (CPI) maintained actual control over the AIFSU.

The organization faced a decline among its non-communist supporters, allegedly due to the widespread anti-communist sentiment following the CPI's opposition to the Quit India movement. However, in the early 1950s, the group experienced a revival thanks to the Soviet Union's increased global engagement and their "peace offensive." This led to greater support and resources directed towards friendship societies. In February 1952, a committee in Bombay laid the groundwork for an Indo-Soviet Festival and Convention. This event, held on March 12, 1952, welcomed a Soviet delegation led by Nikolai Tikhonov, a prominent Russian writer and former chair of the Union of Soviet Writers in the 1940s. Out of this convention emerged the revamped Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS)[13] (Achutan-Sahai, 1983).

A.V. Baliga, closely affiliated with Jawaharlal Nehru, assumed the role of chairman, while S. Mahmuduzzafar, a longstanding CPI member, became the organisation's general secretary. The ISCUS held its second conference in Delhi in 1954. Within its initial two years, ISCUS expanded its presence by establishing branches in major Indian cities such as Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay. The Indo-Soviet Cultural Society engaged in various activities like publishing journals and books, organizing symposiums, conferences, exhibitions, and film screenings

[13] https://www.indianembassy-moscow.gov.in/india-russia-cultural-relations.php

across India, in collaboration with the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society.

Unlike its precursor, AIFSU, ISCUS faced challenges in garnering support from notable figures in Indian politics initially, hinting that the Indian political elite might have been cautious about aligning directly with a CPI-led association promoting Indo-Soviet amity during India's active pursuit of independence in foreign affairs. It's likely that direct involvement with the CPI-controlled ISCUS, advocating Indo-Soviet friendship during a period of India's assertiveness in international relations, might have been deemed inappropriate. The year 1955 marked a pivotal moment for Indo-Soviet relations and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society. During Khrushchev's visit to India that year, the Society hosted a dinner attended by dignitaries from both the Soviet Union and India (Clarkson, 1973).

The media covered an event that boosted ISCUS's status and introduced it to a broader Indian audience. It marked the Society's first chance to showcase the Soviet Union positively, reaching beyond its regular attendees. From 1954 to 1957, close to 200 Indian delegations comprising engineers, artists, and scholars visited the Soviet Union, with Indian cinema playing a central role in this cultural exchange, captivating Soviet audiences.

A pivotal moment in fostering Indo-Soviet cultural relations was signing the Indo-Soviet Cultural Ties agreement on February 12, 1960. This agreement formalized ongoing cultural, scientific, and academic exchanges while expressing a commitment to establish direct bilateral ties between universities in the Soviet Union and India. Indo-Soviet commission, created to examine the realization of the agreement, worked according to a two-year plan of activities (Abbas, 1966).

Establishing cultural and scientific programs laid clear guidelines for exchanges between the Soviet and Indian parties. These developments in Indo-Soviet cultural endeavors garnered significant attention in the United States. According to the New York Times, there was an active cultural exchange between India and the Soviet Union, yet there was no formal cultural agreement between the two nations at that point. Frol Kozlov, the second secretary of the CPSU, and Kliment Voroshilov, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, led a Soviet delegation to India.

Following the signing of the cultural agreement, Kozlov issued a statement hinting at a potential increase in Soviet economic aid to India. The New York Times expressed dissatisfaction, noting that despite the USA having granted India three times more aid than the USSR, only Soviet officials received warm receptions in India. In the context of the United

States, it became evident that the Soviet Union was initiating a fresh cultural initiative within emerging nations.

In 1965, the CIA published a report titled "Communist Cultural and Propaganda Activities in Underdeveloped Regions." This document underscored the significance of cultural agreements as an initial strategic move by Communists to gain influence in less developed countries (Frankel, 1969). The Bhilai steel plan and a few trade agreements preceded the 1960s cultural accord in India. While the mid-1950s saw significant Soviet efforts to gain India's favor, the early 1960s marked a substantial advancement in Indo-Soviet relations due to circumstances detailed in the previous chapter. According to a CIA report, the functioning of Soviet cultural agreements involved broad language referencing planned exchanges across various activities. However, annual protocols provided intricate details of these exchanges.

These agreements typically encompassed delegations, performing groups, exhibitions, publications, films, educators, and specialists across fields. Additionally, many agreements offered scholarships for studying in Communist countries and called for collaborative efforts in radio, television, and print media. The agreements and protocols were crafted to give the impression of balanced and reciprocal exchanges (Horelick, 1974).

The document precisely delineated the primary features of Soviet cultural agreements, emphasizing meticulous attention to detail and consistently advocating for reciprocity and equality between the involved parties. Particularly noteworthy in the Indo-Soviet agreements was the emphasis on equality, often expressed through formulations that affirmed the equal status of both parties—a significant aspect for a country like India, which had recently emerged from colonial rule.

The expansion of formalized cultural relations injected fresh momentum into the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, drawing active interest from various governmental and diplomatic figures. The association underwent organizational restructuring to enhance its functionality, establishing several committees: Russian Language Training, Higher Education, Mutual Understanding Promotion, Films and Exhibitions, Authors Committee, Lecture Committee, Literature Service, and Publishing Committee (Pendergast, 1973).

Each organization had distinct responsibilities. For instance, the Literature Service distributed Soviet literature to the public interested in it. The Committee for the Promotion of Mutual Understanding oversaw the implementation of the Indo-Soviet cultural agreement. Meanwhile, the Committee for Higher Education awarded grants and invited Indian students to pursue

studies in the Soviet Union. Arun Som, a Bengali translator employed at the Soviet Progress Publishing House in Moscow, received support from ISCUS to study the Russian language at Moscow State University.

Upon completing a year-long language course, he, like other Indian students of Russian, was required to teach the language for two years at ISCUS-affiliated branches upon returning to India. Publishing Committee, as the name suggests, concerned the ISCUS's publishing activities. The Society issued three periodicals: Amity, a quarterly magazine in English, Sahajati in Bengali and a fortnightly ISCUS bulletin in English (Chattarjee, 2012).

Fig. 7 Maritime Silk Road Routes of Trade and Cultural Exchange[14]

The ISCUS publishing activities were notably limited in comparison to the multitude of periodicals published in various Indian languages by the Information Department of the Soviet Union Embassy in India. In March 1965, the ISCUS held its annual conference in Ludhiana, Punjab. During this event, K.P.S. Menon, a former Indian ambassador to the Soviet Union, assumed the role of President of ISCUS, while T.N. Kaul, then the ambassador and a close associate of Indira Gandhi, became the Vice-President. By the mid-1960s, the cultural relations between India and the Soviet Union were well-established, and collaboration across all sectors was on the rise.

[14] Belt-Road Initiative

Consequently, Indian political figures actively engaged with ISCUS, which maintained direct connections with Moscow. Throughout Indira Gandhi's tenure, her key advisors such as P.N. Haksar, P.N. Dhar, T.N. Kaul, alongside members of parliament, the government, and prominent Indian universities, participated in ISCUS activities. On occasions, Indira Gandhi herself delivered opening addresses at ISCUS conferences (Clarkson, 1973).

In 1972, Congress socialist Chandra Sekhar pointed out that former CPI members were utilizing Soviet-backed cultural organizations as a means to infiltrate the Indian government with the ultimate goal of seizing control of the Congress party. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the ISCUS evolved into an extension of Indian politics, reflecting the intricate dynamics within Congress-CPI-Soviet Union relations. A CIA report from 1965 highlighted the Soviet strategy of establishing friendship societies and cultural centers as a prominent method for fostering closer ties with specific nations.

Notably, this document revealed insights into the financial operations of these Soviet cultural associations: "The annual expenses of a friendship society could vary significantly, ranging from several thousand dollars to as much as a million dollars, contingent upon the breadth of activities, the membership size, and the importance Communists assigned to these endeavors in the concerned country (Ouseph, 1979).

In the mid-1950s, India became a key factor in Soviet strategic planning, evident in the US mid-1960s report singling out India for having the most active Soviet-sponsored friendship societies. The report raised questions about funding sources for these associations, especially considering the strong Indo-Soviet ties in the 1970s. However, during the 1960s, there was a need for discretion in funding, as indicated in the report: "To mask their involvement in the friendship societies' activities and sidestep official objections, Communists often used indirect financing methods. In 1964,

The Indian-Soviet Cultural Society sought a donation of $21,000 worth of records and stamps from the USSR, intending to sell them in India for the Society's ongoing expenses. Additionally, the USSR planned to boost the Society's funding by between $500,000 and $1 million by sending a cultural troupe to India and contributing proceeds from their performances. Mohit Sen, a Marxist thinker and a member of the Communist Party of India, affirmed that the CPI received substantial assistance from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

He highlighted that a significant avenue for financial support was through the sale of literature,

including books and magazines either imported from the Soviet Union or produced by its branches in India. Additionally, Sen noted that the CPI's publishing enterprises and distribution hubs received financial backing in the form of loans from the USSR. (Parks, 1983).

The funding methods of the CPI and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, as mentioned in the US report, exhibit notable similarities. During the 1970s and 1980s, the relationship between the CPI and ISCUS garnered significant attention. ISCUS, akin to its predecessor AIFSU, was completely under the control of CPI. At the association's 1965 annual conference, a resolution was adopted outlining objectives such as expanding ISCUS's network, involving more leftist elements from the Congress party and progressive intellectuals, endorsing Nehru's principles of peace and coexistence, and promoting collaboration with the CPI. During that time frame, the Communist Party of India was reevaluating its position regarding the ruling party, transitioning away from its previous opposition toward collaborating with the Congress.

Around the mid-1960s, the ISCUS aimed to distance itself from suspicion by actively seeking members with more impartial backgrounds, aspiring to appeal to a broader audience and establish itself as a more mainstream and acceptable organization. Concomitantly, former CPI members who shifted allegiance became part of the Indian National Congress. Mohit Sen, reflecting on his involvement in the Indian communist movement years later, advocated for Soviet-sponsored organizations like the ISCUS, emphasizing they weren't solely "tourist agencies" funded by the Soviet Union.

He highlighted that the ISCUS wasn't instigated by Communists but initiated by Dr. Baliga, a close associate of Jawaharlal Nehru, and Aruna Asaf Ali, a prominent political activist and influential publisher. However, this assertion holds partial truth as several CPI members actively contributed to the founding of the ISCUS, and Aruna Asaf Ali had ties with the CPI. In the 1950s, A.A. Ali established the Link publishing house, overseeing the daily newspaper Patriot and the weekly Link, publications characterized by Sen as "leftist, pro-Communist, and pro-Congress." (Klinghoffer, 1976).

During the 1940s, she was affiliated with the Congress Socialist Party (CSP). However, following India's independence, she distanced herself from her previous colleague, the socialist J.P. Narayan, who became involved with the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), a US-supported competitor of the ISCUS. By the 1950s, Aruna Asaf Ali became closely involved with the CPI. When questioned about the shift in her views toward the CPI, she attributed it to a "reassessment of the Soviet Union" and her belief that the nation stood as a "firm anti-imperialist force and a genuine ally of India." (Malik, 1967).

In 1965, Aruna Asaf Ali was awarded Lenin Peace Prize, the Soviet equivalent of Nobel Prize. At the beginning of Indira Gandhi's premiership, Ali's publications and those of the CPI fiercely attacked the new Prime Minister. 1966 I. Gandhi wrote to T.N. Kaul: "As I told you long ago, Aruna and her group of newspapers have always been against me." Kaul referring to Ali suggested to Indira Gandhi to "keep in touch with her directly and not through intermediaries", instructing his PM to "maintain direct and personal contacts with leaders of public opinion, both inside and outside the country." (Mishra, 1990).

Later on, Aruna Asaf Ali and Indira Gandhi resolved their differences, leading to a shift in Ali's newspapers' stance, such as the CPI, becoming supportive of the Prime Minister and her party during the 1970s. Simultaneously, the ISCUS emerged as a key avenue for fostering Indo-Soviet relations, actively utilized by the USSR, the CPI, and the Congress Forum for Socialist Action.

The Soviet propaganda film "From Heart to Heart" (1976) praised the Indo-Soviet Society's standing in India. During Brezhnev's visit to India amid the Emergency, he addressed numerous delegates from 1,500 regional ISCUS branches. In his speech, Brezhnev once more hailed the Indo-Soviet friendship, referring to India as a "genuine friend" and emphasizing its significance as a "treasure for millions of people from both the Soviet Union and India." (Ouimet, 2003).

In 1977 following Indira Gandhi's loss of power, the Communist Party of India (CPI), a key supporter of the former PM and a vital component of the ISCUS, began reconsidering its position regarding both Gandhi and the Congress Party. A definitive anti-Indira Gandhi stance was formalised during the Eleventh Congress of the CPI in 1978. The party aimed to establish "a left and democratic alternative" in collaboration with the CPI(M), a related party that had splintered from the CPI in 1964.

The CPI highlighted that instead of isolating and suppressing right-wing reactionary elements, Gandhi's emergence back into power actually allowed them to exploit public dissatisfaction and seize authority through a widely supported mandate. During the Eleventh Congress of the party, G.A. Aliev, a member of the Politburo, drew attention by attending, sparking speculation about Soviet approval of the new direction.

Before 1978, the Communist Party had already shown two distinct viewpoints on aligning with the Congress. S.A. Dange, CPI Chairman and influential trade union leader, asserted in 1977 that the government's "progressive" policies hadn't notably shifted. In contrast, Rajeshwara Rao, the Party's Secretary, led a faction arguing that the close Indo-Soviet ties no longer

guaranteed government support for the CPI (Nye, 1990).

One faction emphasized the importance of aligning with the splintered CPI(M). Practical and ideological motives may have driven the CPI's shift away from supporting Indira Gandhi. When Indira Gandhi declared the emergency, the CPI remained unaffected by the government's political crackdown and mass arrests.

The CPI regarded the Emergency as a "necessary and justified" measure, seeing it as a manifestation of heightened ideological conflicts within Indian society. The party actively sought opportunities to draw closer to the Congress Party throughout the emergency period. In 1976, Mohit Sen served on the CPI's Central Executive Committee and believed that the unity between Congress and CPI had become "stronger and more extensive than ever before

Nevertheless, the triumphs were fleeting, as the outcomes of the post-Emergency elections proved calamitous for the political party. The parliamentary seats secured dwindled from 23 to 7, and the electoral support plummeted from 4.89% in 1971 to a mere 2.82% in 1977. Apart from electoral setbacks, even advocates of the pro-Congress stance could not overlook specific internal shifts within the governing party. Sen observed the emergence of anti- communist and reactionary tendencies within Congress(Lockwood, 2016).

During the Emergency period, Sanjay Gandhi wielded significant influence within the Youth Congress, serving as the front for his political maneuvers in New Delhi. Within the CPI, Sanjay represented the conservative factions within the nation. In an August 1975 interview with Surge magazine, Sanjay created shockwaves by openly criticizing his mother's government policies such as nationalization. He went as far as advocating for the gradual demise of the public sector. Additionally, he openly praised multinational corporations and large enterprises while advocating for reduced economic and governmental regulations.

He went on to label his mother's ally, the CPI, as "highly corrupt. Indira Gandhi was unaware of the interview until its publication. While awaiting her principal secretary P.N. Dhar, she hastily penned a message: "Sanjay has made an incredibly foolish remark about the Communists. This comes at a highly critical and sensitive moment, not only causing significant harm to those (the CPI) who have supported and continue to support us domestically but also creating severe complications with the entire Socialist Bloc. I'm deeply concerned – it's the first time in years that I am genuinely distressed. How do we convey this to the USSR and other nations? What explanation can we provide or devise? Should I issue a formal statement (Mankekar & Mankekar, 1977).

To halt the spread of information, the choice was made to retract Surge's interview and remove it from all publications. Additionally, there was a push to persuade Sanjay to "clarify" his stances on the CPI and issue a statement. This scenario highlighted Indira Gandhi's limited influence over her son, who had established a robust, anti-communist, and anti- socialist faction within the Congress party. The CPI's 1976 report lamented the rise of conservatives within the Youth Congress and indirectly pointed fingers at certain segments of the Congress for grooming Sanjay as Indira Gandhi's successor, following a highly reactionary dynastic succession model. Sanjay's ascent symbolized a significant shift to the right within the PM's party, but it wasn't the sole issue impacting Congress-CPI relations.

The consistent assaults on her son led Indira Gandhi to an almost unimaginable action. In the late 1976, she reprimanded the CPI, alleging their collaboration with the British during the Quit India movement and condemning their past severe criticisms of her father's government, which had aligned with Soviet perspectives on India at the time. She fervently stood up for her son, asserting that Sanjay was insignificant and that the CPI's attacks on him were ultimately aimed at her (Sanjay, 1990).

The CPI began questioning its longstanding pro-Indira Gandhi stance, leading to opposing views within the party. One faction, led by Dange, advocated continued support for I. Gandhi, while Rajeshwara Rao's group considered this approach disastrous and ultimately prevailed. The internal conflict within the CPI became evident in the correspondence between Rajeshwara Rao and S.A. Dange. The rift began a few months prior to the Eleventh Congress of the CPI, where the party officially adopted an anti-Congress line. On December 4, 1977, S.A. Dange made a speech at the Krishna Menon memorial meeting, expressing his personal belief that "Indira Gandhi should be forgiven for all her wrongdoings" and openly supporting her. Just one day before the party formally condemned his actions, Dange resigned from the Chairmanship via telegram, citing health reasons as justification for his abrupt action. R. Rao heatedly reminded S.A. Dange that his pro- Congress stance do not conform the Party's policy and that he could not accept his resignations by telegram (Singh, 1973). In the aftermath, Dange stayed within the party, yet confusion emerged within the CPI's stance when I. Gandhi pushed for fresh elections in 1977. On one side, the CPI continued to uphold the PM's foreign policy as "progressive." Conversely, the party urged its supporters to signal opposition against the government's recent "reactionary" economic policies. However, the party was not prepared to distance itself from Indira Gandhi, who at that time had solidified a lasting alliance with the Soviet Union.

By 1979, the Janata government collapsed due to various issues, unable to alter India's pro-Soviet foreign policy. Their aim to annul the Indo-Soviet treaty remained unrealized, and formally, the Soviet Union persisted as India's most dependable international ally when Indira Gandhi returned to power that same year. Nevertheless, during her final tenure, the Indo-Soviet relations couldn't replicate their past successes as a sense of distance and likely fatigue seeped into the once cherished friendship.

This shift in both domestic and international paradigms had two primary causes. Firstly, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979 placed the Indian government in a political quandary, given India's deep-rooted connections with the country. Simultaneously, to Indira Gandhi's surprise, the Soviets, who had previously seemed intent on bolstering her domestic position, in the 1980s, declined to engage with the "undisciplined" CPI, which was turning away from her.

The Afghanistan situation troubled India for evident reasons, as the Soviet Union had physically encroached closer to Indian borders. The invasion occurred during the final months of the Janata government, leaving the newly elected Indira Gandhi responsible for articulating India's stance on the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. She directed the External Affairs team not to explicitly condemn the Soviet invasion but to express firm opposition to such interventions in any nation. Beijing and Washington deemed the Soviet invasion an offensive move, while their Indian counterparts reckoned it publicly a defensive one (Budhraj, 1978).

India abstained from participating in the UN Security Council discussion regarding Afghanistan. While not formally condemning the Soviet incursion, India persistently urged, albeit unsuccessfully, for the withdrawal of Soviet troops through diplomatic means and sought support from neighboring nations like Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

The visit by Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, to New Delhi aimed to convey the Soviet government's stance that they had no plans to remove their troops from Afghanistan. In early 1980, shortly after Indira Gandhi took office, Gromyko visited India to advocate for Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. During this visit, he presented a detailed analysis of the Afghan situation from the Soviet perspective to the Indian Prime Minister. When Gromyko questioned her stance on the Soviet position, Indira Gandhi unequivocally stated that she did not support it (Mishra, 1990).

After some time, India chose to separate the Afghanistan issue from the framework of Indo-

Soviet relations, which brought relief to officials from both the Soviet and Indian governments. Despite the consistent rhetoric between India and the Soviet Union during this period, it became evident that this was not a temporary hiccup but a deeper issue. Additionally, internal developments significantly impacted the Indo-Soviet relationship.

The Communist Party of India's (CPI) stance in favor of Indira Gandhi was causing a significant rift within the party. A pivotal event occurred during Brezhnev's visit to New Delhi in December 1980. Prior to his visit, Indira Gandhi, alongside Indonesia's President Sukarno, had called for a resolution to the Afghan conflict, signaling India's attempt to sideline the sensitive matter of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. During her address at Brezhnev's civic reception, Gandhi notably refrained from the usual expressions of mutual admiration and friendship between nations. Instead, she focused on the internal situation, subtly referencing the leftist opposition against her within the CPI.

This comment was both a plea for Soviet involvement in the matter and an indication of the CPI's reluctance to support her. In the days following, Brezhnev met with a CPI delegation and referenced the Prime Minister's statements. However, he did not explicitly push for a change in the CPI's stance (Vasudev, 1977).

The Soviets remained ambiguous about their stance concerning the tensions between the ruling Congress and the CPI. However, speculations arose from the late 1970s suggesting Soviet support for R. Rao's faction and their "left unity" approach aiming for reconciliation with the CPI(M). An insignificant incident wasn't until 1982 that shed light on the Soviet position towards S.A. Dange and his followers. Specifically, on February 10, the USSR declined to issue a transit visa to S.A. Dange, preventing his attendance at the annual meeting of the Soviet-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Havana. Observers from India strongly believed that the refusal of the visa by the Soviet consulate was "clearly under the direction of the CPSU, which oversees the government's official and unofficial activities abroad.

Additionally, an awareness of Dange's supportive stance toward Indira Gandhi sparked debates within India about the Soviet Union's continued endorsement of the Prime Minister. Certain individuals perceived S.A. Dange's unwavering support for Indira Gandhi as a potential conduit between the Soviet leadership and the Prime Minister, a connection that Moscow might utilize in times of necessity. The veteran communist himself said that it became apparent that Moscow’s fraternization of I. Gandhi was “tactical” while its relations with Indian communists were held of “strategic” importance (Mehrora, 1990).

In essence, the primary goal of the Soviet Union was to foster the amalgamation of the CPI(M) and the CPI, aiming to restore unity within the Indian communist movement. There were indications that Moscow supported the evolving dynamics within the Indian communist movement. The CPI, having previously aligned with Mrs. Gandhi's faction, faced challenges in repositioning itself within the broader left movement in India.

During this phase, the General Secretary of the CPI, Mr. Rajeswara Rao, commended his party for successfully reaching an understanding with the CPM. Before the full disclosure of the Soviet stance on Dange and his supporters within the CPI, revealing a strain in Indo- Soviet relations, significant events unfolded. The internal divisions within the CPI led to the establishment of a breakaway faction called the All-India Communist Party (AICP) in 1981, spearheaded by Roza Deshpande, Dange's daughter, and supported by his loyalists.

The CPI(M) expressed willingness to collaborate with the former, and apparent Soviet approval of this new approach prompted the prime minister to address the brewing late 1970s political crisis in a unique manner. In 1981, amid escalating tensions with the CPI and cooling Indo-Soviet relations, Indira Gandhi established a competing entity known as the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) to challenge the CPI-dominated Indo-Soviet Cultural Society.

The official launch of FSU occurred on May 27, coinciding with Jawaharlal Nehru's death anniversary. The association's name referenced the historical All-India Friends of the Soviet Union, which was later restructured into the ISCUS. The announcement about the formation of this new cultural organization had already been made by the end of February. From the outset, Indian reporters emphasized the political significance of this action. Moreover, the organization expressed its desire to distance itself from factions aiming to disrupt stability and from certain segments of the left aligning with the right-wing attack (Kitsenko, 1980).

A few days into March, R. Rao, the general secretary of the CPI and an advocate for "left unity," participated in the CPSU Congress in Moscow. Upon returning to India, Rao released a critical statement directed at Indira Gandhi and her party. This action indicated to the prime minister that the Soviet leaders did not compel Rao to alter the CPI's anti-Congress stance. In response, Indira Gandhi urged the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) to informally advise party members against engaging in activities organized by the CPI, such as the Indo- Soviet Cultural Society, the Peace Council, and the Afro-Asian Solidarity organization.

When it came to dealing with the Soviets, the prime minister's role was to prevent any confusion and ensure that the disengagement of Congress members from the CPI-managed

cultural organization didn't imply Congress adopting an anti-USSR stance. This action was possibly Indira Gandhi's endeavor to pressure the Soviet government and compel them to articulate a distinct stance on their support for her. By the conclusion of March 1981, S.A. Dange was officially removed from the party due to "indiscipline." A number of members of the CPI's national council resigned in objection, asserting that numerous other CPI members were likely to do the same. Additionally, it was anticipated that pro-Dange factions within the ISCUS would depart from the organization and align themselves with I. Gandhi's recently established group, the Friends of the Soviet Union (Surendra, 1982).

The establishment of the FSU served as a clear message to both the CPI and the Soviets, forcing them to decide how to uphold and potentially improve cultural ties between India and the Soviet Union. Both individuals encountered some unease and uncertainty when establishing an alternative friendship group. L.I. Rovnin, serving as the vice-president of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society, led a ten-member delegation from the Soviet Union to the inaugural convention of the Friends of the Soviet Union.

However, few Soviet officials attended the ISCUS event held two days later. Rovnin and Y.M. Vorontsov, the Soviet ambassador to India, delivered speeches emphasizing that the ISCUS should remain the primary platform for nurturing and advancing Indo-Soviet friendship. This directive was despite the Congress (I) forming a competing organization with the Prime Minister's support. Notwithstanding, Y. M. Katon, the cultural consul of the Soviet Union, declared that the Soviet people had welcomed the foundation of a new society of friendship (Ray, 1989).

S.A. Dange participated in the inaugural FSU convention where K.R. Ganesh, the General Secretary, invited Dange to speak to approximately 1000 delegates representing diverse segments of our national populace from across the country. Ganesh, previously mentioned, was a former member of the CPI who later joined the Congress and became part of the Congress Forum for Socialist Action (CFSA). He actively supported I. Gandhi and was appointed Minister for Revenue and Expenditure in the early 1970s due to his loyalty. Notably, the FSU's organizing committee included other individuals with similar backgrounds, such as Nurul Hasan, a former Minister for Education, and Shankar Dayal Sharma (Palanyandī, 1985).

The contentious issue relations among Indira Gandhi, the CPI and the Soviet Union continued well into 1981. T.N. Kaul, who still was close advisor of the PM, on July 31, 1981, confidentially met Nikolai Pegov, the former Soviet Ambassador to India (1967-73). The

Soviet government and party fully supported Mrs. Gandhi then and does so now. But we do not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of other governments or parties. Kaul recognized the Soviet Union's apparent desire to distance itself from India's internal affairs.

However, he wasn't naive enough to accept their feigned reluctance to engage with the situation. He acknowledged their stated goodwill but pointed out that, in reality, the CPSU did engage in discussions and shared thoughts with allied parties like the CPI. He proposed that the CPSU should counsel the CPI regarding their adoption of misguided and self-destructive policies. Pegov confidently stated his intention to report the matter to the authorities.

Kaul posed another uncomfortable query for the Soviets, sharing confidential rumours from the CPI suggesting Ambassador Vorontsov's encouragement of an anti-Indira Gandhi stance. Pegov responded by asserting that opposing the Soviet government's support for the PM and her administration was futile. Regarding the Friends of the Soviet Union, Kaul emphasized its role in fortifying Indo-Soviet relations, highlighting the necessity of its revival due to ISCUS's CPI dominance and its pro-Janata, anti-Indira Gandhi stance during Janata rule. He stressed the ruling Indian party's concern, fearing its adverse impact on Indo-Soviet relations (Banerjee, 1985).

Pegov suggested that the Soviet side found this move rather bothersome and vexing, precisely the reaction that Indira Gandhi had purposely intended to provoke. He expressed regret over the situation: "It's regrettable that this occurred. ISCUS has been doing commendable work for three decades and rightly deserves acknowledgment for it. With the establishment of FSU and given Mrs. Gandhi's endorsement, it is here to stay.

Nevertheless, it would be beneficial to devise a method to merge both entities into one body, namely FSU, incorporating some longstanding and dependable ISCUS elements. Naturally, the leaders should be individuals selected and trusted by Indira Gandhi. However, a statement from FSU acknowledging ISCUS's prior contributions would reassure its numerous branches and workers. Following that, they could unite with FSU and collaborate within it, fostering a sense of camaraderie." After their discussion, Kaul recommended to Pegov the idea of exploring a potential visit to India, either in an official or unofficial capacity, to investigate the feasibility of the suggestion.

The ambitious endeavor by Indira Gandhi to bolster Indo-Soviet cultural ties underscored the importance of cultural exchange between these nations. There were speculations within India that Sanjay, the Prime Minister's son, had proposed this initiative before his tragic death in an

airplane accident in 1980 (Rosenberg, 1982).

The move stirred discontent within the Soviet and Indian Communist circles and became a focal point in official and informal discussions between the two nations. India's ties with the Soviet Union were primarily seen through a political lens. The Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, responsible for nurturing these ties, had long been under the control of the Indian Communist Party since its inception. However, by the late 1960s, the CPI began a strategy to extend its reach by forging an alliance with the Congress Party, aiming to infiltrate its ranks.

This strategy utilized the Congress Forum for Socialist Action, which saw an influx of former CPI members. Consequently, the ISCUS also saw an increase in members from the Congress party who held "progressive" viewpoints. The decision to break the CPI's stronghold on Indo-Soviet cultural relations likely prevented a political clash that Indira Gandhi might not have weathered well, considering the tumultuous domestic situation during her final term, which tragically concluded with her assassination.

5.2 India's involvement within internationally supported groups promoted by the Soviet Union

The Indo-Soviet Cultural Society wasn't the sole organization affiliated with the Soviet Union functioning in India. By 1966, there were 53 Indian organizations that had varying degrees of connection with the USSR. A broad spectrum of organizations existed, including friendship societies, cultural groups, youth and student associations like the All-India Youth Federation, literary and professional societies, women’s groups, workers and farmers unions, as well as peace and disarmament alliances, among numerous others.

A significant portion of these groups served as local chapters affiliated with larger international bodies. For instance, the All-India Peace Council (AIPC) operated as a local division of the influential World Peace Council (WPC). According to certain reports, the associations linked with the Peace movement in India were regarded as exceptionally dynamic and advanced among all the Communist-affiliated organizations (Okulov, 1981).

During the 1950s, American observers noted the commencement of the Soviet "peace offensive." The World Peace Council (WPC), formally established in 1950, served as the primary advocate for this initiative. The WPC's beginnings trace back to the Cominform's effort to engage socialist intellectuals in the 1948 World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace. Originally planned for Sheffield, the British Labour Government influenced a change in location, leading to the inaugural Congress being held in Wroclaw, Poland. At a gathering in

Wroclaw, the renowned Indian English-language writer Mulk Raj Anand was present.

He was soon to be involved in leading roles within the most active Soviet cultural organizations in India. Subsequently, a year later, the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Midtown Manhattan hosted a Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace. D.D. Kosambi, a distinguished Indian mathematician and polymath, also engaged in Soviet initiatives, attended this event. During the 1950s, the World Peace Council was overseen by the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, which operated under the guidance of the Soviet Peace Committee. This committee didn't overtly advocate Soviet foreign policy but purported it to represent the desires of those who championed global peace (Deery, 2002).

The WPC, much like its predecessors VOKS and WIR in the past, endeavored to obscure its direct ties with the Soviet state machinery. This approach had been a longstanding practice within the Soviet state. Nevertheless, unlike its forerunners, the World Peace Council achieved a notably higher level of success in this regard. During the early 1950s, the WPC managed to attract renowned intellectuals such as Jean Paul Sartre, Diego Rivera, Pablo Neruda, W.E. Du Bois, and even Pablo Picasso. Notably, Picasso contributed by creating the WPC's symbol, featuring a white dove. The World Peace Council consistently criticized the United States' "militaristic" strategies and opposed nuclear weaponry and aggressive military actions by capitalist nations. The organization's early achievements and the broader "peace offensive" attracted notice from Western governments. During the McCarthyism era in 1951, the Committee on Un-American Activities compiled a detailed report titled "The Communist 'Peace' Offensive: A Campaign to Disarm and Defeat the United States." This report alarmingly labeled the peace offensive as "the most perilous deception ever concocted by the global Communist conspiracy (Surendra, 1982).

The primary concern for the United States regarding the peace movement stemmed from the involvement of Communists and their associates, who were leading this movement across various settings within the country. They were active in cities, communities, meetings, street corners, shops, residences, educational institutions, media outlets, and broadcasting platforms across all spheres of society. The earlier Soviet advocacy for global revolution was concerning, but not as alarming as the peace messages resonating in the USA.

The former isolated the majority of the middle class and those preferring stability over drastic change. Peace seemed harmless but subtly influential, propelled through various channels that significantly boosted communist propaganda. Additionally, the participation of prominent

intellectuals greatly elevated the movement's prestige. However, the influence of the WPC in the West diminished when the organization failed to demonstrate impartiality by overlooking the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and endorsing USSR's nuclear tests while condemning those by the USA.

Consequently, some intellectuals distanced themselves, and Western affiliates of the WPC began questioning the organization's claimed "neutral" stance. Similar to the IWA's decline in the West three decades earlier, the WPC fell out of favor. However, this was not the case in the Third World. During the 1950s, as the Third World became a focal point of ideological and military conflicts arising from the Cold War, efforts to engage Asian and African intellectuals in organizations like the WPC gained substantial momentum.

The All-India Peace Council, an Indian branch of the World Peace Council, emerged in 1951 following the Warsaw congress organized by the parent WPC, where the Communist Party of India was also a participant. Political figures like Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Pandit Sundarlal, Ajoy Ghosh, and A. K. Gopalan were among the organization's founders, alongside eminent cultural personalities. This included acclaimed film actors Prithviraj Kapoor and Balraj Sahni, distinguished writers Krishan Chander and Rajendra Singh Bedi, as well as renowned poets Vallathol and S. Gurbaksh Singh (Duncan, 1980).

Romesh Chandra, a pivotal figure in the AIPC and broader peace movement, became involved with the Indian branch in 1952. Previously a member of the CPI since 1939, by 1952, he held a position in the Central Committee of the Party. Six years later, he ascended to the Central Executive Committee. Chandra's primary focus lay in the cultural realm, overseeing the party's artistic and editorial endeavors. Notably, from 1963 to 1966, he directed the party's English-language weekly journal, New Age.

In 1966, the party contemplated launching a Hindi weekly journal with the aim of countering reactionary and communal propaganda prevalent in the Hindi-speaking regions while disseminating progressive and communist policies to the masses. S.A. Dange directed the editorial team to operate under the supervision of the Secretariat, led by Romesh Chandra. During the 1971 Bangladesh crisis, Chandra was dispatched to Moscow to garner support for Bangladesh within the USSR. Nevertheless, Rajeswara Rao accused the reports of being untrue. Chandra swiftly assumed the role of General Secretary upon joining the All-India Peace Council.

His trajectory continued as he joined the World Peace Council in 1953, marking the start of an

impressive journey. By 1966, he ascended to the position of General Secretary, eventually becoming President in 1977, a position he held until 1990. In 1969, a potentially precarious situation arose that could have threatened his leadership within the peace movement. Reports suggested that Chandra's criticism of Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia and his ambitious plans for the World Council of Peace might lead to his downfall sooner than anticipated (Sharma, 1999).

During the 1950s, the Hungarian events and the subsequent failure of the World Peace Council (WPC) to denounce the Soviet actions led to the estrangement of numerous members from the organization. The Soviet behavior in Czechoslovakia posed a similar risk of alienation among developing countries. Eventually, Romesh Chandra reconciled his disagreements with the Soviet sponsors, securing his prominent position within the peace movement. When Chandra Sekhar asserted that the Communist Party of India (CPI) and its former affiliates, now part of the Congress, aimed to infiltrate the Indian National Congress, he emphasized their exploitation of "Afro-Asian Solidarity and Peace Council organizations" for their objectives.

It's worth noting that during the time of I. Gandhi, the Congress Forum for Socialist Action (CFSA) served as the political conduit for "infiltrating Congress." Sekhar subtly implied Soviet scrutiny of the dynamics within the Indian government through these channels. Notably, the CFSA members' names frequently appeared in ISCUS-related documents, corroborating Sekhar's assertions. Additionally, Sekhar alleged that the Peace Council constituted an even more critical avenue for the CPI and its former members to advance their agenda. Intriguingly, the available personal papers of Romesh Chandra in the Indian archives don't provide extensive insights into his role and activities within the World Peace Council and its Indian branch (Singh, 1973).

Sekhar's claims could be corroborated with just a few scattered notes. For instance, in September 1972, the All-India Congress for Peace of Solidarity convened in Calcutta, boasting a participant list that echoed names previously linked with the CFSA and ISCUS. Among these notable figures were Nurul Hasan, K.R. Ganesh, K.V. Raghunatha Reddy, Chandrajit Yadav (part of the "radical" faction of the CFSA), and Krishna Menon, a fervent supporter of Indira Gandhi and her party during the 1970s.

The event drew an attendance of over 5000 individuals, including MPs, MLAs, trade unionists, peasant organizers, women, members of the Congress, Communists, writers, lawyers, doctors, students, teachers, and thirty fraternal delegates hailing from Vietnam, Brazil, Palestine, the UK, France, GDR, Iraq, USSR, Bangladesh, Ceylon, and Nepal (Awana, 1988).

The central office of the All-India Peace Council operated out of Asaf Ali Road in Darya Ganj, a historically significant book district in Old Delhi. Romesh Chandra, in 1967, received the esteemed International Lenin Peace Prize, comparable to the Nobel Prize in the Soviet sphere, often bestowed upon prominent non-Soviet communists and those regarded as "friends" of the Soviet Union. Among the notable laureates were W.E. Du Bois (1959), Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1962), Pablo Picasso (1962), Fidel Castro (1961), and Salvador Allende (1973).

Indian recipients were not uncommon: Saifudin Kitchlew (1952), the inaugural president of AIPC, Sahib Singh Sokhey (1953), C.V. Raman (1958) from the Indian Academy of Sciences, Rameshwari Nehru (1961), a social activist, Aruna Asaf Ali (1965), a freedom fighter, K.P.S. Menon (1979), former Indian ambassador to the USSR, and posthumously, Indira Gandhi (1985).

The evident politicization of entities like the All-India Peace Council is demonstrated not solely by the involvement of specific political figures in its operations. During Indira Gandhi's tenure, she severed the "lifeline" of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and established the rival organization Friends of the Soviet Union to counter the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society's influence. Nevertheless, this move did not exclusively target ISCUS.

It appears that Indira Gandhi made a daring and ambitious effort to weaken the dominion of the WPC's Indian division. She urged the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) to unofficially advise party members against engaging in the activities of CPI-sponsored bodies such as the Peace Council (Hopkirk, 2006).

A former foreign correspondent in Moscow, Nihal Singh recounted an unusual event. Singh claimed that Indira Gandhi established a separate World Peace and Solidarity organization to weaken the WPC's influence. This move was a strong message to the Soviets, who were backing the CPI. Additionally, Romesh Chandra, a prominent figure within the CPI, led the WPC. Singh referenced N.V. Goldin, the Soviet Minister of Heavy Industry, urging certain Congress members not to forsake the WPC.

Goldin reminded them that an Indian chaired the organization. Given Gandhi's unorthodox methods in political movements, the initiative appears to be influenced by her. In India, the WPC and its branches served as channels for conveying the goals of Soviet foreign policy. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the All-India Peace Council consistently criticized US foreign policy, organizing numerous gatherings and debates across various Indian regions. Periodically, they conducted "peace marches" at the American consulates or the United States

Information Service (USIS) office.

The group released the monthly magazines Peace Herald and Antarjatika in Bengali, along with a Hindi publication. Like numerous other publications associated with Soviet-related organizations in India, these materials are nearly inaccessible in archives and libraries. Starting in the 1980s, the decline of the WPC and its affiliates began, coinciding with the socioeconomic decline of their primary supporter, the Soviet Union. The final leader of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, did not meet with WPC's president, Chandra.

There were speculations that the Soviet Peace Committee, which backed the WPC, deemed the Council obsolete in terms of political significance and usefulness. Additionally, maintaining such an expansive organizational network gradually depleted Soviet financial resource. During the 1970s, the WPC experienced its pinnacle of influence and prominence, notably attracting eminent intellectuals from the Third World into its fold. This period saw figures like Mulk Raj Anand assuming leadership within the All-India Peace Council's cultural commission.

Anand, among other colleagues, was actively engaged in the Afro-Asian Writers Association, a significant international body backed by the Soviet Union. In the Soviet realm, writers were highly regarded as "engineers of the human soul." Andrei Zhdanov, a dedicated ideologist under Stalin's tutelage and a proponent of the "two camp" theory, oversaw the Union of Soviet Writers through his allies. Zhdanov had boldly stated during the 1934 congress that "Our Soviet literature embraces its 'tendentious' label. Indeed, in an era of class conflict, literature inevitably becomes class-oriented and unavoidably 'tendentious', rejecting claims of being apolitical. The establishment of the Union of Soviet Writers served as a catalyst for writers in the Third World who embraced Marxist ideologies to create their own respective national unions. In India, the emergence of the Soviet organization in 1932 stimulated the need for a similar institution to unify Indian writers holding progressive perspectives.

Significantly, in December of the same year, in Lucknow, Angāre, a collection of 10 short stories of Indian Marxist authors, was published. The AIPWA manifesto, drawing from Marxist principles, emphasizes the imperative for Indian intellectuals to counter regressive and resurgent ideologies prevalent in contemporary literature. It advocates alternatives to adventure tales that merely serve as escapism from the harsh realities of casteism, communalism, oppression, patriarchy, and foreign control.

The manifesto stresses the importance of writers depicting authentic realities, locations, and societal landscapes. It encourages engagement with pressing social issues and an understanding

of the evolving dynamics in the country. The aim is to prompt authors to contribute actively to the dissemination of progressive ideals within Indian society. Some of AIPWA's members later actively committed themselves to the Afro-Asian Writers Organization and Peace and Solidarity Committee (Coppola, 1974).

Afro-Asian Writers Association (AAWA)

Since its establishment, the Soviet Union has held a strong interest in the colonial world. Its declared stance against imperialism attracted freedom fighters from colonial nations that benefited from USSR's political efforts and increased the popularity and attention toward Russian and Soviet literary works in these regions.

This cultural leaning towards the socialist nation stemmed from two primary factors: its proximity to Asia and the spreading anti-Western sentiment prevalent in the developing world. Stalin frequently emphasized the belief, dating back to the tsarist era, that Russia, due to its geographical location, was better suited to collaborate with non-European peoples compared to the West.

From the outset, the Soviets invested considerable endeavors to win favor with intellectuals from the Third World, although these efforts were temporarily paused during World War II and the immediate post-war years, only to be reignited with renewed vigor in the mid-1950s. As early as 1921, the Soviet Union directly engaged with Third World nations by establishing the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. Several students from this institution,

such as Nâzım Hikmet, Hamdi Selam, and Emi Siao, later emerged as prominent writers in the developing world and actively participated in Soviet literary initiatives. During the Comintern's third congress in 1921, there was discussion about the concept of Litintern, envisioned as the literary counterpart to the Communist International. However, despite the proposal, Litintern never materialized (Barghoorn, 1960).

A significant advancement in Soviet literary internationalism emerged with the establishment of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers (MORP) in 1930. This development took place at the Second Conference of Proletarian Writers held in Kharkov, Ukraine. Attended by 120 writers, the conference drew participants not just from Europe but also from regions including China, the Arab world, Japan, and Brazil (Sahni, 1986).

The purges of 1937-38, known as the Great Terror, resulted in the dissolution of much of the Soviet cultural internationalism. Post World War II, the Soviet Union became markedly

isolated from the world due to these events. As described in preceding chapters, geopolitical and ideological changes prompted the Soviet Union to reinvigorate its cultural mechanisms and actively engage in global initiatives.

However, this revived Soviet internationalism met robust opposition from American endeavors, notably the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), backed by the CIA. Originally established in West Berlin in 1950 to counter Soviet cultural dominance in the Western sphere, it later extended its influence to Asia and Africa through literary publications, cultural gatherings, and support for translated works (Shils, 1959).

For obvious reasons the CCF elicited attention among Soviet cultural bureaucracies that were alarmed by "Western efforts to manipulate Afro-Asian writers. In 1951, the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, a primary division of the CCF, was established in India. Mulk Raj Anand, a All-India Progressive Writers Society co-founder, became associated with the Soviet cultural sphere around the mid-1930s.

During this time, he engaged with the Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture, an anti-fascist organization funded by the Soviet Union. Anand was among the four non-Western writers who collaborated at the international bureau of this association (Frankel, 1969).

The loosening of Stalinist ideological control in the nation undoubtedly played a role in the increased involvement of the Soviet Union with Africa, Asia, and Latin America. However, the shift away from Stalinism wasn't the sole explanation for the country's swift engagement with the developing world. Concurrently, as the USSR underwent ideological changes, former colonial societies were undergoing decolonization, and the Bandung Conference in 1955 signaled the political rise of the Third World. International political endeavors like the Bandung Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement were quickly followed by cultural efforts aimed at affirming unity in the Third World.

This presented the Soviet Union with a significant opportunity to align with the cultural and political movements emerging in the Third World and thereby establish a formidable presence. The initial step toward a literary equivalent of the Non-Aligned Movement occurred in Delhi in 1956 when Mulk Raj Anand persuaded Prime Minister Nehru to host an international gathering of writers in the spirit of the Bandung Conference. At Anand's insistence, the Soviet delegation was invited to this event, despite not having attended the Bandung Conference (Nehru, 1980).

In October 1958, Tashkent welcomed more than a hundred writers from Asia and Africa for

the inaugural Afro-Asian Writers Congress, an event orchestrated by the USSR. The formal establishment of this association took place later, during the Second Congress in Cairo in 1962. Although the Soviets aimed to exert influence over the literary sphere of Afro-Asian writers, this congress served not only as a façade but also as a platform where writers, despite their geographical and linguistic differences, could engage. Simultaneously, it evolved into a battleground among powerful members like the USSR, China (prior to the Sino-Soviet split), Egypt, and India.

The association operated on national lines, with delegates primarily representing their respective states. Its functionality was intricately tied to geopolitical pressures, showcasing the USSR's diplomatic ties and interrelations between Asian and African member countries.

Krishnalal Shridharani, an Indian writer and journalist, took part in the inaugural Afro-Asian Writers Congress in Tashkent. He remarked that gathering around 200 writers from over 35 Asian and African nations marked an unprecedented moment in history, where discussions about their craft fostered new connections and collaborations. Shridharani described this event as the long-awaited emergence of a fraternity that should have materialized much earlier, finally coming to fruition in Tashkent (Shridharani, 1958).

Political concerns overshadowed the Indian writer's elation at meeting Asian and African peers. Feeling isolated amidst the Tashkent gathering, the Indian writer sensed a disconnection within their national delegation and the broader ideological spectrum. Despite this, it was the Indian writer who left a significant impression, not the Communist writer from India, who blended in with the uniform and predictable majority. Part of the Indian delegation cautioned against transforming the Afro-Asian Writers Association into a mere extension of political agendas, urging participants to avoid replicating the functions of other politicized bodies like the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, which risked becoming a quasi-official arm of Soviet foreign policy (Barghoorn, 1960). Following the inaugural congress held in Tashkent in 1958, a series of seven congresses ensued in subsequent years: Cairo (1962), Beirut (1967), Delhi (1970), Alma-Ata (1973), Luanda (1979), Tashkent (1983), and Tunis
(1988).

Despite warnings from members of the Indian delegation cautioning against transforming the AAWA into an arm of Soviet foreign policy, their concerns appeared to go unheeded. During the fourth congress in Delhi, one observer lamented that amidst a cacophony of fervent anti-U.S. and anti-Israel sentiments, the voice of Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Chairman of the Sahitya Academy (the Indian Academy of Letters), stood solitary in its rationality.

He attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, in his inaugural address as chairman of the Indian preparatory committee, to dissuade fellow organizers from veering into socio-political matters and steering the literary conference towards overt anti-Western propaganda (Gould- Davies, 2003).

During the early 1970s, the AAWA transitioned into essentially echoing Soviet rhetoric. At the 1970 Delhi conference, some observers noted that its resolutions closely mirrored those put forth a month earlier by the Presidential Committee of the World Council of Peace. This committee counted among its members well-known figures such as Mulk Raj Anand and Krishna Menon, along with Sajjad Zaheer, a founding member of the All-India Progressive Writers Society, and Kamil Yashen, a poet from Uzbekistan. It's worth noting that Mulk Raj Anand served as the Afro-Asian Writers Conference's general secretary during the Delhi Conference.

In approximately 1970, Bhisham Sahni, a renowned Hindi writer and essayist, became associated with the Afro-Asian Writers Association. His initial engagement with the AAWA, after having previously served as a translator for the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow in the early 1960s, was perceived as a valuable chance to establish connections within the Afro-Asian literary sphere. This affiliation provided him with multiple opportunities to return to the Soviet Union and travel to various nations across Asia and Africa (Parks, 1983).

Sahni, in contrast to certain Indian peers who viewed the AAWA as swamped with political concerns unrelated to fostering Afro-Asian literary unity, believed that the Soviet Union, as the AAWA's supporter, played a crucial role in uniting Afro-Asian nations, nurturing global peace, and advancing shared national objectives.

However, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the coalition among Afro-Asian nations disintegrated. Sahni's memoir delves into behind-the-scenes anecdotes from the Afro-Asian Writers' Association, offering a vivid account of the executives' gathering in Bulgaria. Following two days of meetings, a customary sightseeing itinerary was arranged. The entire delegation visited a local liquor factory where hospitality took center stage. The robust manager delivered a brief speech lauding the liquor's virtues before personally pouring small amounts into each of our glasses (Sahni, 1986).

In the final decade of AAWA's presence in the 1980s, Bhisham Sahni took the role of executive secretary and orchestrated the culminating Conference hosted in Tunis. Among the notable participants in the Indian delegation at the final AAWA congress were acclaimed writers such

as Kamleshwar, Joginder Paul, and Abdul Bismillah, among others. The Afro- Asian Writers' Association centered on four main pillars: global writers' gatherings, a permanent office, a multilingual literary journal, and an international literary award.

The scheduling of the congress was heavily influenced by political factors. For instance, the five-year gap between the initial and subsequent congresses stemmed from the rift between China and the Soviet Union. Daily operational decisions were made at the headquarters, initially situated in Colombo, Sri Lanka. However, due to Sri Lanka's alignment with China following the Sino-Soviet split, the headquarters relocated to Cairo. Consequently, political disputes significantly impacted the congresses and the bureau's activities. Nonetheless, the publication of literary journals served as evidence of the Afro- Asian literary landscape's existence. A literary quarterly, titled Afro-Asian Writings, emerged in 1967 and, following Mulk Raj Anand's insistence, was renamed Lotus in 1969 (Waltz, 1978).

Until 1991, the magazine was issued in French, English, and Arabic. One significant aspect of the Afro-Asian Association was the Lotus Prize. In an era where few Asian and African writers had opportunities to receive the Nobel Prize in literature, the Lotus Prize emerged as a quasi-Afro-Asian equivalent. To illustrate its significance, some recipients had already been honored with the Lotus Prize long before gaining recognition in the Western literary sphere.

The Lotus Prize was awarded based not only on specific literary contributions but also on active involvement within the Afro-Asian Writers Association. The political climate and the nationality of authors held considerable weight. According to a Soviet cultural official during the Brezhnev era, holding an official position within a national section of the Afro-Asian Writers Association improved one's chances of winning the prize. Bhisham Sahni received the Lotus Prize in 1979-80 and was honored with the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1983, an accolade established by the Soviet Land magazine (McGarr, 2016).

Publishing endeavors by the Soviet Union in India

The Soviet desire to share their culture and perspectives took a concrete shape through foreign-language publishing initiatives. India notably embraced Soviet books and magazines, becoming the largest consumer of Soviet print outside the socialist bloc in the 1970s. This enduring popularity is evident today in the revered status of Soviet literature, especially the beautifully illustrated children's books.

Contemporary forums and social media groups now abound with enthusiasts sharing their digitized collections, while Soviet magazines have become prized possessions for Indian

collectors. Pankaj Mishra, an Indian writer who, like many of his peers in the 1970s and 1980s, grew up immersed in Soviet literature, pointed out the subtle yet impactful nature of the Soviet influence. He highlighted the contrast between the Soviet cultural dissemination efforts, which reached even remote Indian towns, and the relatively minimal engagement by the US. Mishra attributed this phenomenon to India's political landscape and its role in the Non-Aligned Movement. According to him, India's alignment with Soviet cultural philanthropy was due to its strong communist parties, its constitutional commitment to a form of socialism, and its leadership in the non-aligned movement, which inclined towards the Soviets. Soviet-produced materials in India were broadly categorized into two groups: first, books and magazines that were translated and published in the Soviet Union, later distributed in India through a network of local publishing houses and bookshops; and second, materials printed within India, often by the Information Department of the Soviet Union's Embassy there.

The Soviet publishing industry had distinct characteristics on a global scale. The volume of published books and magazines was remarkable and unmatched by any other nation. According to Gregory Walker, an expert in Soviet book publishing, approximately 300,000 individuals were involved in the machinery of Soviet publishing, printing, and book distribution (Boškovska, Fischer-Tinè, & Miškovič, 2014).

The Soviet publishing industry stood out for its complete centralization, under the firm control of the Soviet government and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. They wielded significant authority over the publishing and distribution of printed materials. Unlike market-driven economies,

The Soviet state didn't operate on principles of consumer demand. Soviet officials drew a line between "demand" (spros) and "need" (potrebnost), advocating that production should align with the strategic requirements of the state, always prioritizing the overarching aim of building a socialist society. Consequently, cultural output wasn't intended to cater to audience preferences; instead, it was expected to be directed and molded to fulfill the explicitly defined needs of the Soviet state, with the goal of shaping the tastes of the Soviet populace accordingly (Singh, 1973).

The film and publishing sectors held a unique role in disseminating socialist ideals to the public and shaping the development of a socialist society. Within the USSR, printed materials were seen mainly as tools for ideology. Consequently, they were meant to be affordable, prioritizing accessibility over potential financial deficits. As an example, book prices were not intended to change, even if printing or paper expenses increased.

So, when Soviet-produced goods reached markets in Asia and Africa, the Soviet government's primary aim wasn't profit but spreading its socialist ideals and culture to people in those regions. Early on after the revolution, there was strong belief that sharing knowledge and literature from diverse cultures could foster global unity. Maxim Gorky, shortly after the October Revolution, pursued his dream by establishing the brief-lived World Literature Publishing House (1918-1924).

This venture aimed to compile a library of translated world literature in Russian, hoping it would unite peoples from various continents (Gallagher, 1976). Maria Khotimsky asserted that Gorky's endeavor possessed a dual essence, blending romanticism and politics, significantly influencing the evolution of the Soviet literary translation tradition over an extensive period. Throughout history, the ambitious Soviet project of translating books into numerous Asian and African languages, launched on a massive scale in the 1950s, finds its roots in longstanding ideas among

Soviet intellectuals. Rahul Sankrityayan, an influential Indian writer enamored with the Soviet Union following an extended visit from 1945 to 1947, identified two key aspects of Soviet publishing as a devoted Marxist. He noted the abundance and diversity of newspapers and magazines; alongside the unified opinions they presented—a medium primarily used for disseminating Soviet government propaganda. Initially, Soviet publishing focused on domestic consumption, with occasional efforts aimed at foreign readership until the mid- 1950s when book exports surged.

In 2002, Richard Hellie, an American historian specializing in Russian history, disclosed his involvement with the secretive Mezhkniga between 1959 and 1961. Mezhkniga, an abbreviation for MezhdunarodnayaKniga (International Book), served as the principal Soviet book export agency. Its origins trace back to 1921 when Lenin sanctioned a decree establishing a Russian German enterprise called Kniga in Berlin. However, despite its joint status, Kniga was under Soviet control, overseen by USSR's trade representative to Germany,
B.S. Stomonyakov, operating under the auspices of USSR's National Committee on Foreign Trade.

By 1922, Kniga established a Moscow branch and rebranded as the more recognizable MezhdunarodnayaKniga. Reports on Mezhkniga's activities in the West surfaced in 1941, drawing attention to the trial of three Americans accused of failing to register as propaganda agents with the Secretary of State, marking early signs of suspicion around the agency's operations (Hellie, 2002).

The evidence submitted in court and testimonies from witnesses demonstrated that within the USSR, Mezhkniga held exclusive control over the import and export of printed materials. Notably, the Soviet organization had successfully established its operations in the United States. Hellie, who collaborated with Mezhkniga in the late 1950s, shed light on the agency's operations after a span of forty years. According to his account, a certain Mrs. Rose, a lower-class businesswoman and sympathizer of the USSR, acquired a franchise from Mezhkniga to establish a bookstore in Chicago.

Despite likely not being a member of the Communist Party of the United States, Mrs. Rose engaged in business with the Soviets. Lacking proficiency in Russian, she enlisted the help of Hellie, a graduate in Russian history, to manage book orders. The bookstore specialized in selling dictionaries, Russian classics, and a range of Soviet literature covering history, mathematics, technology, science, geography, and even chess (Malone, Mohan, & Raghavan, 2017).

Books arrived through two channels: direct shipments from the Soviet Union and via established dealers in the US. Hellie often frequented the Four Continent Book Corporation, a branch of Amtorg established in the 1930s—a group noted with suspicion in a New York Times article. Mezhkniga, in its various locations, typically operated by securing a franchise to open bookstores and then sourcing books either directly from the USSR or through reliable dealers.

Between 1954 and 1957, around 200 Indian delegations comprising engineers, artists, and scholars journeyed to the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, Soviet printed materials entered India, even before the formal Indo-Soviet cultural agreement signed in 1960. Mezhkniga's exports to India encompassed books, magazines, and newspapers in Russian and various Indian languages. Notably, the volume of printed materials sent to India ballooned from 17,000 to 4,000,000 copies between 1955 and 1958 (Hellie, 2002).

In addition, books from the Soviet Union meant for the Indian market underwent translation into both English and various Indian languages to ensure wider dissemination. The significant visit of Khrushchev to India in 1955 resulted in mutual endorsement by both him and Nehru for increased cultural exchange between India and the Soviet Union. They viewed this as a key approach to eradicating mutual ignorance and fostering closer ties between these two independent nations (Khrushchev, 1974).

The Cultural and Scientific Exchange Programme of 1965/1966 outlined specific instructions for the Indo-Soviet cultural exchange. It established precise quotas for the exchange of technicians and cultural workers in both technical and cultural sectors and for Soviet teachers and students going to India to study Indian culture. Points 14 and 34 of the program specifically addressed printed material. Point 14 emphasized the mutual promotion of scientific journals, magazines, and periodicals published in each country. By the mid-1960s, India and the USSR had established an organized framework to manage their cultural exchanges effectively. Indians, particularly those raised in the 1970s and 1980s, hold strong memories of their engagement with Soviet literature. One instance is recounted by Indian writer and ornithologist Abdul Jamil Urfi, who reminisced about Aligarh, his hometown, where a bookstore named Naya Kitab Ghar/House of New Books specialized in Soviet literature.

This establishment was overseen by an enthusiastic member of the CPI, offering an exclusive collection of Soviet books. Urfi's contemporaries often viewed Soviet literature as emblematic of a top-down relationship. They primarily encountered the Soviet connection through propaganda materials distributed in India by Russian entities like FLPH (Foreign Languages Publishing House), Progress Publishers, Raduga (Rainbow), Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, and Mir Publishers (Gavrov, &Vostryakov, 2018).

In the 2011 Indian government Census, it was revealed that approximately 10% of the Indian population speaks English. During the 1970s and 1980s, English was predominantly used by the educated elite in India, but it also served as a language for administrative purposes, facilitating communication between linguistically diverse Indian states and the Central administration.

The Soviet Union's deliberate decision to publish materials in 13 Indian regional languages was a well-informed choice, reflecting their understanding of India's linguistic landscape. This strategic move by the USSR yielded substantial outcomes in propagating Soviet ideologies and culture. Moreover, their extensive distribution network significantly enhanced the success of this cultural dissemination. Interestingly, Soviet books weren't solely available in urban bookstores; they were also transported to the most remote villages through mobile shops on wheels, as remembered by readers in India (Gienow-Hecht &Donfried 2010).

The primary executor of this immense publishing endeavor was Progress Publishers, headquartered in Moscow. They emerged as the central entity responsible for translating, publishing, and disseminating Russo-Soviet literature across Asia and Africa. Moscow saw the

establishment of the Publishing Cooperative of Foreign Workers (ITIR) in 1931, initially dedicated solely to translating Marxist writings (Hixson, 1998).

Throughout its existence, the ITIR underwent multiple internal restructurings.

In 1938, it transformed into the Publishing House of Literature in Foreign Languages, later rebranded as Progress Publishers in 1963. Progress Publishers established significant partnerships with International Publishers in New York, Lawrence & Wishart in London, and People's Publishing House (PPH) in New Delhi. The People's Publishing House, initially established in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1947 and later relocated to New Delhi, served as the official publishing body of the Communist Party of India.

This institution played a significant role in importing, reproducing, and disseminating Soviet literature from Moscow's Progress and other publishing entities within India. During the 1950s, as the Soviet Union aimed to expand its influence in post-colonial regions, Progress and similar Soviet publishing houses, notably Mir focusing on scientific publications, became instrumental in this endeavor. To effectively communicate the USSR's ideals, worldview, and message across

India's diverse languages, the Soviets sought the assistance of Indian translators. Arun Som was one such translator, who was invited to Moscow and employed to translate Soviet literature for the Indian market. He initially worked with Progress publishers and later joined Raduga, contributing to this initiative (Prevots, 2001).

In Moscow, Indian translators typically engaged in contracts spanning 2 to 3 years, receiving significantly higher compensation compared to the prevailing translation rates in India during that era. Certain translators, such as Som, extended their stay in the Soviet Union for as long as two to three decades. Only the dissolution of the Soviet Union, resulting in a dearth of translation opportunities, forced them to return to India. Bhisham Sahni, a prominent Hindi writer, spent time working in Moscow from 1956 to 1963. T. Dharmarajan, who dedicated eight years in Moscow to translating Soviet literature into Tamil, disclosed that there existed no definitive literary framework or discernible reasoning governing the selection of works for translation.

This was primarily due to Soviet authorities overseeing this process and handpicking the texts beforehand. Furthermore, he highlighted that Tamil translators predominantly focused on translating from English renditions rather than directly from the original Russian texts (Sharma, 1999).

Dharmarajan's approach to work wasn't an isolated instance. Many texts arriving in India were translated from English to expedite the process. Among the Soviet literature exported to India, children's books formed the largest portion. Arun Som approximated this to be roughly 70-80% of all the literature brought in. He stated that the extensive presence of children's literature in the Soviet book export aimed to disseminate the Soviet worldview. However, it wasn't solely about spreading propaganda more effectively.

The emphasis on children's literature stemmed from its fundamental role in the deeply ingrained messianic ideology of the Soviet regime. In this ideology, children held a pivotal position as the harbingers of change, entrusted with the task of constructing communism. Consequently, the Soviet state sought to rescue the youth from traditions, old practices, and familial norms that obstructed their societal advancement, transforming them into "young comrades (Coppola, 1974).

The substantial presence of Soviet children's literature in India indicates a focused cultural initiative by the Soviets concerning the nation. Conversely, India grappled with significant educational challenges. In 1971, India's literacy rate was a mere 34.35%. In stark contrast, the Soviet Union had achieved nearly universal literacy by 1959. (Hornsby, 2016).

During the Bolshevik rise to power, literacy rates stood at 37.9% for males and 12.5% for females. This significant improvement stemmed from the Likbez campaign, a push to eradicate illiteracy conducted between the 1920s and 1930s. Across the Soviet Union, a proliferation of schools, reading spaces, and various educational establishments emerged, facilitating the widespread availability of affordable books, a key factor in achieving universal literacy.

The USSR's remarkable accomplishment captivated intellectuals in the Third World. Bhisham Sahni, who recounted his experience with both his children studying in Moscow, noted in his memoirs: " I didn't have to spend any money on my children's education. It was entirely free. This free education was accessible to all children in the Soviet Union. Prior to the revolution, the majority of Russians were illiterate. During our time there, every person— men and women—had not only attained literacy but secondary education had also become mandatory. I sit here praising conditions that have since been dismantled. Predictably, the Indo-Soviet Scientific and Cultural

Exchange initiatives also encompassed educational aspects. One specific example is found in point 34 of the 1965/1966 program, which outlined a commitment for both parties to sustain the exchange of textbooks, educational tools, children's literature, instructional materials, and

film slides (Duncan, 1980).

Another group of Soviet publications in India consisted of material produced by the Information Department at the Embassy of the USSR. The CIA estimated that by 1985 the number of Soviet books, magazines and pamphlets in India was around 25 million copies a year. The official data released during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s by the Indian government, found in Foreign Missions publications, unveils an intriguing trend in publishing activities.

This factual information not only reveals the publishing tendencies of major powers but also reflects the shifts in their approaches toward India. By 1966, the year when Indira Gandhi assumed the role of Prime Minister, the USSR took the lead in Foreign Missions publications, accounting for forty-two out of a total of ninety publications across 21 embassies.

The bulk of Soviet publications were in English (8), with additional materials available in various Indian languages: Hindi (3), Bengali (3), Malayalam (4), Marathi (2), Gujarati (2), Tamil, Telugu, Assamese, Kannada, and Oriya (3 publications each), Urdu, and Punjabi (2 each). The USA's distribution increased from 13 to 20 publications during the same period. The volume of printed material in English remained consistent, but there was a slight growth in publications in Hindi (Naik, 1995).

In 1973, the overall publications dropped to 106, primarily because several journals stopped their publication. Notably, the USA discontinued the release of the American Reporter in eight Indian languages. This deepened the contrast between the publication rates of the USA and the USSR.

The USA only had nine journals in contrast to the Soviet Union's forty-nine. The peak for the USA's publications occurred in 1971, reaching 20, but swiftly declined just a year later (Parks, 1983). In August 1971, India entered into the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, a move that led to the creation of Bangladesh from what was previously East Pakistan, much to the dismay of the United States. Subsequently, the US significantly reduced its focus on India.

The most informative report, "Press in India 1976," provides insights into the happenings of 1975. Notably, the Soviet Union took the lead among Foreign Missions with 50 publications, surpassing the USA, which ranked second with only a fifth of that count, showcasing a stark difference in their media presence (Sahni, 2015). Importantly, the report gives a full catalogue of publications. The most circulated Soviet publication was Soviet Bhūmi, a Hindi fortnightly that according to official data distributed 104,195 copies (Rotter, 2000).

In the late 1970s, the pattern of Soviet publishing remained steady. In 1976 and 1977, the Soviet embassy published 50 publications, while the number of USA publications declined further and remained at 8 publications (Rosenberg, 1982).

The 1980s did not bring significant changes as the number stood at 49 Soviet publications. The last report deals with the data for 1991. Even then, the number of Soviet publications remained unchanged (49). The 1980s and early 1990s reports lack information regarding the circulation and distribution of Soviet periodicals. Access to most of the USSR's embassy publications is scarce, with many ending up in Indian households or discarded. However, there has been a recent influx of nostalgic recollections from individuals who grew up immersed in Soviet literature. Pankaj Mishra, an Indian essayist residing in the West, reminisces about the anticipation he felt for the arrival of Soviet Life, a prominent Soviet magazine.

He recalls the stark landscapes of the towns he lived in, describing their sensory austerity—the constant sunlight casting over flat terrains interrupted only by occasional trees and bare rocks. Mishra attributes his eagerness for Soviet Life, the initial magazine he subscribed to, to its portrayal of Soviet advancements in science, agriculture, industry, sports, and literature in vivid illustrations (Satow, 2013).

A different individual who perused Soviet publications noted that every edition showcased cheerful Russian laborers, content families, tidy streets lined with luxurious automobiles, and factories boasting cutting-edge equipment. The portrayal was flawless, a deliberate effort to promote the ideals of communism, perceived merely as a publicity stunt. Some issues of the most circulated Soviet Bhūmi could be found in several libraries in the world, but often in closed collections (Sharma, 1999).

Soviet Bhūmi closely resembled Mishra's Soviet Life. Its content mirrored the latter, featuring articles covering Soviet metallurgical works, kolkhoz life, the diverse cultures within the Soviet Union, and its art and literature. With a straightforward style and language accessible to both children and adults, the magazine blended portrayals of remarkable technological advancements and foreign policy discussions with engaging children's stories and abundant visual elements. These Soviet magazines not only crafted a distinct aesthetic representing the Soviet Union but also advanced its foreign policy objectives within India. For instance, an issue from 1965 contained a detailed article titled "The Sacred Objectives of Soviet Foreign Policy," aimed at explaining the peaceful intentions of Soviet foreign policy to the Indian audience (Shourie, 1991).

As Indo-Soviet ties expanded across various domains, there was an increase in the number of articles discussing the friendship between the two nations. One such article highlighted the significance of August in the relationship between India and the Soviet Union. It pointed out the celebration of two crucial anniversaries during this month: the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and India's independence.

The piece vividly depicted the festivities held in both countries to commemorate these milestones. The visual imaginary present in these magazines is striking as well. For instance, the cover of 1985 issue was adorned by a photo of an immense Soviet ship named “Indira Gandhi” in memoriam of the first death anniversary of the Indian Prime Minister (Somerville, 2012).

During the peak of Indo-Soviet camaraderie, the magazine Soviet Bhūmi maintained a balanced mix of simplistic articles and images depicting various facets of Indo-Soviet relations and Soviet life. However, its English counterpart, Soviet Land in the 1980s, diverged notably. The December 1980 edition predominantly focused on Brezhnev's visit to India and the relationship between India and the Soviet Union.

This edition sporadically interspersed images of Russian individuals deemed beautiful and verses from Alexander Blok's poetry. Despite the cooling of relations between the Congress party and both the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of India following Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980, the rhetoric around Indo-Soviet relations not only persisted but intensified in its predictability.

During Brezhnev's arrival in India, "New Delhi's Palam Airport was a riot of colors, adorned with exquisite beauty; where throngs of individuals—men, women, and children—beamed with smiles, exuding warmth and joy. Beneath the flawlessly clear sky, in the radiant morning sunlight of December, the flags of the USSR and the Republic of India waved proudly in the gentle breeze, symbolizing the close bond akin to the intertwined hands of two friendly nations, inspired by the legendary hues over the passage of time." (Stern, 2007).

The children's magazine Misha gained popularity in India for its unique distribution. Unlike publications like Soviet Land and Soviet Bhumi, Misha was printed in the USSR and distributed to multiple countries. Available in English, Russian, Spanish, French, Italian, and Hungarian editions, Misha captivated young readers. One Indian who cherished the magazine recalls it as "the most stunning publication of my childhood." Its glossy pages showcased Russian folk tales, engaging riddles, puzzles, and intricate illustrations. For many, Misha

became a gateway to the world, almost as if Russia itself arrived at their doorsteps (Taubman, 2005).

Soviet magazines sent to India were notable for their extensive visual content. Particularly in English editions, aimed at a smaller portion of Indian society, the graphics were more pronounced compared to publications in Indian languages.

This emphasis on visual elements in Soviet English magazines enabled them to appeal to a wider audience, including those unfamiliar with the language. Images depicting Soviet life and Indo-Soviet relations conveyed powerful messages to Indian readers, transcending language barriers. In 1965, Soviet Land magazine and its vernacular counterparts established the Soviet Land–Nehru Award. This award recognized individuals in India for their exceptional efforts in advancing international understanding, goodwill, and fostering friendships between global communities (Taylor, 1995).

The award consisted of a medallion with in the scription “Long Live Indo-Soviet Friendship” both in English and Hindi, a cash prize thrangingrom 10.000 to 15.000 rupees. The Soviet Land-Nehru Award typically honored Indian writers, journalists, playwrights, and translators, though on occasion, it was also granted to film celebrities. In 1974, Nargis, a highly acclaimed Indian film superstar adored in the USSR, was presented with the award. She was recognized for her significant contributions to fostering Indo-Soviet friendship and peace, notably for her portrayal in the film Pardesi (Waller, 2009).

In 1981, Raj Kapoor, who collaborated with Nargis in several films, received an award. At the awards ceremony, O.P. Mehra, the Governor of Maharashtra, encouraged the recipients to persist in their endeavors aimed at fostering connections between India and the USSR. He emphasized the importance of showcasing the principles advocated by Pandit Nehru. A.G. Kashirin, the Soviet consul-general, expressed the admiration of the Soviet people for Nehru, recognizing him as a significant figure in fostering the strong bond between India and the Soviet Union (Donelli, 2019).

In fact, in the 1970s, the usual motivation for being awarded was “promoting Indo-Soviet friendship” and similar. Already in 1967, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who often participated in the Soviet Land award ceremonies, had stated that “Soviet Land Nehru Awards to writers, journalists and children would further strengthen the ties between India and the Soviet Union” and would “open a new door to the Indian people to know the Soviet people.” That year, Bhisham Sahni’s brother, Balraj Sahni, famous Indian theatre and cinema

actor, got the award for his travelogue Meri Rusi Safarnama/My Russian Travelogue (Gould- Davies, 2003).

Indira Gandhi noted that Indian children were recipients of the Soviet Land Nehru Award. This recognition was facilitated through children's painting competitions organized by the USSR Embassy via its magazines. Indian kids were asked to submit their artwork based on themes set by the Embassy. For instance, in 1968, the theme centered on "an Indian festival with Soviet friends," while in 1976, it revolved around "a visit to Soviet friends." Typically, five children would be honored with a month-long trip to the Black Sea at the "Artek" Young Pioneer's camp. This camp was a distinguished retreat, catering to children from privileged Soviet backgrounds or those from abroad (Hornsby, 2016).

In the 1970s, the chairman of the award committee was already familiar K.P.S. Menon, one of the most fervent friends of the Soviet Union. He had become the head of the committee in 1965 when the award was instituted and in 1979, he welcomed the audience for the 15th year in succession. K.A. Abbas, a prominent playwright known for his frequent visits to the USSR starting in the 1970s, held a position as the head of the advisory board for the Soviet Land Nehru Award Committee. Substantial shifts took place in the 1980s when T.N. Kaul, an advisor to the Prime Minister, assumed the role of chairman of the committee (Khotimsky, 2013).

Menon was replaced due to a fallout with Indira Gandhi between 1977 and 1980, coinciding with her declining relations with the CPI and the Soviet Union. In 1979, K.P.S. Menon received the Lenin Peace Prize. P.G.N. Nayar's congratulations hinted at uncomfortable truths. The Soviet Land magazine, with its various editions, wielded cultural influence beyond print. Primarily, it offered Indian readers a captivating glimpse into the Soviet Union's lifestyle and politics, serving as a platform for Indo-Soviet relations and foreign policy propaganda. In 1968, G. R. Okulov, the publisher of Soviet Land and chairman of its western regional advisory board, emphasized that the magazine was a vocal advocate for Indo-Soviet friendship and had amassed 500,000 subscribers by then (McGarr, 2016).

Reports from the Indian press highlighted a noticeable uptick in Soviet magazine distribution over the years, indicating a probable growth in readership during the subsequent two decades, likely achieving notably impressive numbers. The Soviet Land Nehru Award was allocated for two specific groups: Indian children and intellectuals.

The inclination toward the former could be attributed to the traditional emphasis on children within Soviet cultural ideology. Children, being more malleable and less attuned to the underlying nuances present in written texts and cultural diplomatic endeavors such as the Soviet Land awards, were considered a primary target. The deliberate focus on Indian intellectuals likely stemmed from the widespread belief, shared in both the West and the Soviet Union, that influencing those capable of influencing others was more effective than directly addressing the masses.

The fervent calls for a global workers' revolution had diminished after World War II. The Soviet Union, acknowledging the need to incorporate "national paths" to socialism, necessitated a shift in strategy. India, identifying itself as a "socialist" nation, served as an experimental arena for the covert methods employed by the Soviet Union to expand its influence in other countries. Setting aside the sensational assertions of Soviet defectors regarding the extensive scale of KGB operations in India aimed at disseminating misinformation, planting articles in the Indian press, or influencing Indian politicians through monetary means, it must be acknowledged that the Soviet cultural endeavor in India coexisted with active political, military, and economic engagements, potentially even surpassing them. Soviet books and magazines were highly affordable and readily accessible, catering to children from both liberal middle-class and working-class backgrounds

5.3 Collaborations between India and the Soviet Union in cinema, the Tashkent Film Festival, and the presence of Indian cinema in the USSR (People to People Relations)

Lenin considered cinema the foremost among the arts, and it played a pivotal role in Indo-Soviet cultural relations. India effectively shared its cultural identity through films. From 1954 to 1964, known as the Khrushchev Thaw during the Cold War, thirty-seven Indian films, mostly in Hindi, were screened in the Soviet Union. Additionally, Indian cinema festivals took root in the USSR during this decade. Notably, the movie "Awara" from 1951, featuring Raj Kapoor and Nargis, became a sensation in Soviet theaters, drawing an unprecedented 64 million viewers in 1954. Subsequent films like "Seeta Aur Geeta" (1972) and "Disco Dancer" (1982) matched this success.

However, the export of Indian films to the USSR was only one aspect, as filmmakers from both nations collaborated on joint projects. "Pardesi" (1957), a collaboration between

Most film Studio and Naya Sansar International, involved scriptwriters, directors, actors, set designers, and composers from India and the Soviet Union. Unlike Indian films in the USSR, Soviet movies in India didn't achieve comparable success. Nevertheless, the Soviets aimed to promote Third World cinemas, mirroring their approach with literature through the Afro- Asian Writers Association. This endeavor materialized as the Tashkent Film Festival, drawing significant filmmakers like Raj Kapoor.

Indo-Soviet cinematic co-productions

In 1968, the Soviet Lithuanian film magazine Ekranonaujienos/News of the Screen, similar to the Russian Sovetskii Ekran/Soviet Screen, featured an interview with Raj Kapoor, the iconic figure of Indian cinema. The magazine had received numerous requests from its readers, prompting the interview, as fans sought updates on the actor's upcoming films. By then, Raj Kapoor had gained widespread recognition across the USSR, reaching both its far eastern and western regions. Soviet enthusiasts were curious about India's prolific film production, prompting Kapoor to explain that "those who lack education often find cinema as their primary gateway to experiencing art. For those less fortunate, cinema serves as an escape and a portal to a different reality." (Salazkina, 2010).

Indian cinema gained popularity domestically due to its escapist themes and the prevailing low literacy rates in India. However, this escapism also appealed to Soviet audiences. The Soviet-Indian relationship began in the 1950s, initiating a cultural diplomacy primarily through cinema. The first significant step occurred in 1954 when a delegation comprising influential Indian filmmakers like Raj Kapoor, K.A. Abbas, associated with the CPI-affiliated Indian People’s Theatre Association (IPTA), and director Bimal Roy visited the USSR.

These individuals were pivotal in the budding Bombay-based Hindi film industry and would later contribute significantly to Indo-Soviet co-productions. This visit marked the inception of collaborative efforts between the two nations in cinema, coinciding with the announcement of an era focused on "friendship and cooperation." In practical terms, this declaration paved the way for increased import/export of films between India and the Soviet Union, signaling the potential for joint co-productions. (Shridharani, 1958). Joint productions aimed to fuse cultural narratives and themes, creating universally beloved films that served as a testament to the authentic friendship between India and the Soviet Union. These collaborations not only sought to weave together the storytelling traditions of both nations but also emphasized equal representation in their teams.

This encompassed dual directors, scriptwriters, and a mix of Soviet and Indian actors. The inaugural Indo-Soviet film collaboration, "Pardesi/Khozhdenie za tri morya/Journey Beyond Three Seas," unveiled in 1957, recounted the voyages of Afanasy Nikitin, a Tver merchant who ventured to India in the late 15th century. Esteemed actors Oleg Strizhenov and Nargis assumed the pivotal roles in this production (Shils, 1959).

Actor Balraj Sahni, known for his progressive views, was part of the ensemble alongside director K.A. Abbas. Reflecting on his time in the Soviet Union in 1954, where the concept of a collaborative film arose, Sahni recalled the Soviet desire for the movie's content to resonate equally with Indian and Soviet audiences. This aspiration emerged from Sahni's conversation with Soviet writer Boris Polevoy, who shared the story of Afanasy Nikitin, a 15th-century Russian traveler. Nikitin's three-year sojourn among the peasants of Maharashtra and the inhabitants of South India intrigued Sahni, prompting him to propose this narrative to the Soviet counterparts, who readily approved the idea." (Pendergast, 1973).

Among the various collaborations between Indian and Soviet cinema, "Pardesi" stood out as a highly acclaimed domestically and internationally venture. Its recognition extended to a nomination for the Cannes Palme d'Or in 1958. The storyline revolves around Nikitin's journey to India and his extended stay, during which he develops a deep affection for an Indian woman named Champa. Nikitin is depicted as a foreigner whose motivations for coming to India differ from those of the British and other Europeans; he arrives not to exploit resources or people but out of genuine curiosity and fascination for an unfamiliar culture. Upon arrival, he dedicates himself to learning and comprehending Indian society and its traditions. Afanasy Nikitin frequently became emblematic in Indo-Soviet discourse in the ensuing years as a representation of authentic and mutual interest in each other's cultures, devoid of any mercenary intentions. Nikitin served as the initial tangible connection between the two nations, eventually leading to a sincere friendship built upon mutual respect during the 20th century.

After reflecting on the filming experience in India, Abbas recalled how they consistently reaffirmed their work's alignment with the spirit of friendship. A diverse array of individuals – from humble merchants, students, and peasants to fishermen, boatmen, and even temple priests – willingly aided the Soviet filmmakers upon discovering their collaboration with Indian counterparts." (Thakur, 1991).

In 1973, K.P.S. Menon, leader of ISCUS and the Soviet Land Nehru Award Committee,

suggested to ISCUS's Soviet counterpart, the Society of Soviet-Indian Cultural Relations, the creation of a collaborative documentary focusing on Afanasy Nikitin. V. Lobumudrova from the Soviet side expressed enthusiasm for the idea, stating that such a film "holds immense value as the 500th anniversary of his visit to India marks a significant occasion." Lobumudrova further informed Menon that the USSR State Cinema Committee was in the process of producing a comprehensive documentary on Soviet-Indian cooperation and friendship, emphasizing its importance..” (Tsipurski, 2017).

Menon responded to Lobumudrova mentioning that he had previously sought the involvement of Balraj Sahni, a highly esteemed actor and a strong supporter of the Soviet Union, who, as it is known, has since passed away. Sahni had shown significant enthusiasm for this particular project. Additionally, Menon had previously proposed the possibility of involving Sahni's son, Ajay Sahni, who had received cinematography training in Moscow. It appears that despite initial plans, the collaborative documentary never materialized. Nonetheless, the legacy of Afanasy Nikitin's travels persists beyond the Soviet Union's dissolution. An example of this endurance lies in the 21st century when India's Ministry of External Affairs sponsored "Footsteps of Nikitin," a documentary retracing the voyager's journey (Waltz, 1978).

In a recent analysis of Indo-Russian diplomatic ties penned by Arun Mohanty, it was noted that Nikitin's perspective in India differed from that of other Europeans. Nikitin, according to Mohanty, expressed his views in a fair and unbiased manner. Unlike typical Western travelers who often depicted Indians in a negative light, Nikitin didn't exhibit any disdain toward the locals and refrained from portraying them in an endlessly negative or derogatory manner. His observations were characterized by an absence of prejudice, demonstrating a wise and impartial approach when discussing his experiences.

In the present day, amidst the enduring and dependable relationship between India and Russia, Nikitin's journey and presence continue to be a significant cultural narrative endorsed by both nations. During the 1970s, three collaborative productions emerged: Black Mountain/Chernaya gora (1971), Rikki Tikki Tavi (1975) inspired by Rudyard Kipling's eponymous short story, and Mera Naam Joker/My name is Joker (1970). Among these, Mera Naam Joker stood out notably. Raj Kapoor directed, produced, and edited the film, also assuming the leading role, while K. A. Abbas penned the screenplay.

While the movie featured Russian actors, the entirety of direction and production lay in

the hands of Indian filmmakers this time. Spanning over four hours, this monumental saga portrayed the life of Raju, a clown obligated to evoke laughter from his audience despite bearing his own sorrows, and three women who shaped his journey.

The initial segment focused on Raju's formative years, while the subsequent part detailed Raju's collaboration with Soviet circus performers in Bombay and his romance with Marina, a Russian trapeze artist. The final section delved into his brief yet impactful artistic and romantic liaison with Meena, an orphan aspiring to become an actress. Crafting a film centered around the life of a clown struck Raj Kapoor after witnessing a Czechoslovakian State circus performance in Bombay in 1960 (Abbas, 2014).

The movie's second chapter stands out significantly by portraying Soviet entertainers arriving in Bombay to bolster Indo-Soviet relations. Despite the language barrier, the Soviet circus performers display warmth and cooperation towards Raju. Marina, in particular, feels a sense of empathy towards Raju right from the start, and this sentiment is mutual. Although they initially struggle to communicate, both gradually make efforts to learn each other's languages, fostering a growing understanding.

Eventually, Marina, heartbroken, must depart from India as she cannot stay. Interestingly, subtle details, such as Marina's admiration for Kapoor's Awara (1951), the inaugural Indian blockbuster in the USSR, add depth to the narrative. The positive depiction of the amiable Soviet circus artists might symbolize Kapoor's appreciation for the USSR and its audience, acknowledging the immense popularity he attained there (Ahmed, 2009).

In contemporary India, the film achieved cult status. However, upon its initial release, it failed commercially, likely owing to its extended duration. Kapoor later acknowledged that the film's underwhelming performance was due to its excessive length. Despite this setback, the movie found substantial success in the Soviet Union. In 1972, its three segments were released individually, garnering considerable success at the box office. Overall, an audience of approximately 73 million viewers watched "Mera Naam Joker." (Cornwell, 2001).

Sudha Rajagopalan, after analyzing Soviet records, suggested an alternate reason for the movie's lack of success in India. Raj Kapoor found himself in a dispute with IMPEC, the Indian trading organization accused of failing to adequately promote the film's distribution. Additionally, certain Indian factions critical of the Soviet Union had protested against the film being shown in Bombay (Acheson, 1969).

The costly and extensive prera Naam Joker" seproduction When the film failed at the box office in India, it left the Kapoor family in a precarious situation. To mitigate his substantial financial losses, Kapoor, identifying himself as a "sincere friend" of the USSR, sought help from the Soviet government. He approached them to purchase and distribute the movie. The USSR's Goskino, the State Committee for Cinematography, appealed to the Ministry of Trade for additional funds to acquire the film. They emphasized the potential for significant commercial success, noting Kapoor's significant influence within the Indian film industry and the importance of nurturing figures of his stature (Coppola, 1974).

Hence, this scenario highlighted the significance of Indian filmmakers' backing within the Soviet political strategy deployed in India. While the joint Indo-Soviet productions of the 1970s didn't meet high expectations, the 1980s saw a surge in successful films in India and the Soviet Union. "Ali Baba aur chaleeschor/Prikliucheniia Ali Baba isorokarazboinnokov/Ali Baba and the forty thieves" (1980), directed by Uzbek Latif Faiziyev and Indian Umesh Mehra, exemplified this shift. That year, this movie emerged as the most widely viewed foreign film in the Soviet Union, attracting 52.8 million viewers. It achieved "Silver Jubilee" status in India by running continuously in cinemas for twenty-five weeks. Ali Baba stood out as the most financially lucrative outcome of all collaborative Indo- Soviet cinematic ventures.

5.4 Film Industry

During the early 1950s, the USSR grew concerned about the operations of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, funded by the US, within developing nations. However, the Soviet government held a strategic edge: its global propaganda focused on anti-racism and opposition to colonialism, contrasting with ongoing criticisms of racism and segregation directed at the USA. The USSR consistently aimed to portray itself as a nation of diverse ethnicities coexisting peacefully. To persuade intellectuals in the Third World that it was distinct from other dominant white powers, the Soviet Union established several cultural entities in Central Asia, actively engaging with developing nations (Chary, 1995).

Throughout history, Central Asia has served as a crossroads for various Asian communities. The second chapter of this thesis highlights that the Russian Empire viewed Central Asia as a passage to the Indian subcontinent. Consequently, during the Soviet era, this area became a key point for interactions between Afro-Asian nations and the Soviet Union. Cities such as Tbilisi, Baku, Alma-Ata, Samarkand, and Bukhara were frequently

included in the travel routes of visitors from Afro-Asian and Latin American countries.

However, the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, stood out as the prime Soviet city for showcasing to the Third World. In 1957, during his visit to Tashkent, Khrushchev emphasized to the communist party members there that Soviet Uzbekistan ought to serve as a model for Soviet development, particularly for the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America who were either under colonial rule or in the process of liberating themselves from it (David-Fox, 2012). In 1958, the initial meeting of the Afro-Asian Writers' Association marked a pivotal moment, assembling intellectuals from the Third World in Tashkent. Following this, within a month, Tashkent was the venue for the Festival of Asian and African Film. Regrettably, this festival faded into obscurity, akin to a fleeting phenomenon, as a more prominent and widely recognized festival emerged a decade later, casting a shadow over its remembrance (Djagalov, 2020). In 1958, an initial effort to foster solidarity between Afro-Asian filmmakers drew the participation of twenty-two international delegations, predominantly composed of government representatives rather than actual film industry professionals. Subsequent festivals took place in Cairo (1960) and Jakarta (1964), but unlike the Afro-Asian Writers Conferences, these initial three film festivals failed to establish enduring frameworks and extensive connections among filmmakers, actors, and critics from the developing world. The early stages of Third World film events faced challenges not just due to the Sino-Soviet divide, which led China to resist Soviet attempts to unite Afro-Asian intellectuals.

While the Afro-Asian Writers' Association (AAWA) had effective methods akin to the established Union of Soviet Writers, Soviet cultural institutions lacked experience in creating global film networks similar to those in the Western world. It wasn't until 1965 that the Soviet Union of Cinematographers formed an international committee, enabling a more significant Soviet role in global film exchanges.

The Afro-Asian Writers' Association swiftly succeeded in establishing a distinct literary domain, in contrast to the modest achievements of the Soviet Union of Cinematographers. This discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that the Union of Soviet Writers had been established thirty years earlier than its counterpart in cinematography (Gavrov & Vostryakov, 2018).

In 1968, Tashkent hosted the inaugural First Tashkent Festival of African and Asian Cinema, drawing in 240 participants including filmmakers, actors, critics, and industry leaders from 49 African and Asian nations. Renowned personalities like Raj Kapoor

representing India, Fumio Kamei from Japan, and Ousmane Sembene from Senegal were among the notable attendees (Gienow-Hecht, & Schumacher, 2004).

The Afro-Asian Writers' Association sought to establish a literary space and awareness specific to the developing world. Similarly, the Tashkent Film Festival aimed to build a cinematic platform representing the Third World, challenging the dominance of Hollywood and European cinema. Post the inaugural festival, Ekranonaujienos, a Soviet Lithuanian cinema magazine initially focused on mainstream cinema, began featuring a series of articles about films showcased at the First Tashkent Festival. These articles provided Lithuanian readers with comprehensive coverage of films from Cambodia, Iraq, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, and India. (Weeks, 2001).

While Indian films reached Lithuania somewhat later than they did Soviet Russia, audiences in Lithuania, akin to their Russian and Uzbek counterparts, were well-acquainted with mainstream Indian cinema. According to Ekranonaujienos, the acclaimed director and actor Raj Kapoor, alongside Indian cinema luminary Nargis, held significant popularity both in India and internationally. Kapoor's films such as "Awara" and "Shree 420," which shed light on the deficiencies within capitalist society, highlighting social disparities and class biases that drive young individuals towards criminality, garnered immense global acclaim (Jankevičiūtė & Geetha, 2017).

The writer felt the need to highlight that films like Aandhiyan/Storms (1952) and Rahi/Wayfarer (1952), considered "progressive" in India, found favor with Soviet audiences. An article following the 1968 Festival focused on serious Indian cinema portraying the challenges of life rather than the fantastical world of songs and dances. Works like Apanjan (1968), depicting a childless widow's struggles in Calcutta against exploitation; Balika Badhu (1967), tackling child marriage; and Raat aur Din (1967), exploring a woman's dissociative identity disorder, were introduced. Despite this, festival organizers and journalists couldn't overlook the Soviet audience's preference for "traditional" Indian melodramas. These films were noted for their exaggerated drama, excessively tragic tones, and emphasis on destiny overpowering human helplessness (Kirasova, 2018).

The Soviet cultural authorities faced a challenge in balancing the public's preference for entertaining films and the goal of fostering a progressive cinematic landscape. In 1972, the second Tashkent Film Festival showcased 106 movies from 61 Asian and African

countries. Kinas, a prominent Soviet Lithuanian cinema magazine, published an extensive piece about the festival titled "Advocating for a Necessary Platform."

The article highlighted the struggle faced by emerging filmmakers, stating, "Renowned festivals like Venice and Cannes predominantly feature established, globally recognized cinemas. This makes it exceedingly difficult for newcomers to break into these festivals. Even within Moscow's festivals, which aim to welcome films from all corners of the world, movies from African and other developing nations get overshadowed by the influx of dominant Italian, French, and American productions." (Kitsenko, 1980).

The motivation behind initiating such a festival stemmed from the recognition that Afro-Asian cinema required support to emerge and stand against Western and American cinema. Festivals like the one in Tashkent provided a crucial platform for many filmmakers from the Third World, granting them the opportunity to showcase their movies, which often went unnoticed at Western festivals. Alongside film screenings, the Tashkent Festival also hosted discussions and meetings. In 1972, participants engaged in dialogues centered on the theme of "Cinema in the pursuit of peace, progress, and the liberation of peoples." Abdel Rahman elKhamesy, an Egyptian writer and filmmaker, cautioned others about the multifaceted nature of cinema, emphasizing that it could be harnessed for diverse agendas.

He pointed out that imperialist powers employed not just bullets but also literature and cinema to assert their influence (Rajagopalan, 2005). After having participated in the discussion, Latin America’s delegation asked for a more active participation in the festival as “the goals of Asian, African and Latin American countries are identical, the problems and hardships to overcome very similar.” (Prevots, 2001). The organizers heard the delegation’s pleas and eventually Latin America was granted an observer status in the next festival held in 1974.

By 1972, the festival had evolved into an authentic cinematic gathering representing the Third World. Unlike typical Western film festivals, Tashkent's event wasn't designed as a competitive platform; it lacked a jury to assess and reward films, eliminating any sense of rivalry among participants. The deliberate absence of a competitive framework in the festival's organization conveyed a clear message: every participant stood on equal ground. The distinction between nations representing established film industries such as India, Egypt, and Japan, and those with emerging cinematic traditions like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Mauritania, held no significance (Kirasova, 2018).

The Tashkent festival, as stated by its organizers, differed notably from Western festivals due to its absence of glamour and extravagance. They emphasized the prevailing atmosphere of warmth and expertise, with attendees preferring camaraderie over distinction. Despite this, cinema enthusiasts still held their beloved stars in high regard. For instance, Indian actress Nargis, renowned as Raj Kapoor's on-screen partner, received prolonged applause. Age and physique were inconsequential; to all, she remained the enchanting Rita from 'Awara'. In the festival-focused article, commendations were extended to the burgeoning new directions within Indian cinema: "A breath of fresh air is sweeping through the landscape of Indian filmmaking. While the conventional, highly profitable Indian films persist in contributing to the country's revenue, they are gradually making room for artistic endeavors that depict the genuine essence of everyday life." Raj Kapoor's Mera Naam Joker, showcased at the festival, received acclaim for its departure from the typical Indian cinema formula.

The festival showcased fiction films and documentaries that encapsulated the social and political nuances of the era, reflecting the evolving landscapes of developing societies. At the third Tashkent Film Festival in 1974, 313 guests and participants were in attendance. The festival's core focus remained consistent: to spotlight progressive cinema from the Third World, addressing pertinent social and political concerns. Notably, the renowned figures Raj Kapoor and his son Rishi, emblematic of Indian mainstream cinema, graced the event as guests, despite its emphasis on non-mainstream cinema. Organizers aimed to fortify the event's distinct reputation by emphasising a departure from the ostentatious Western festivals.

A journalist highlighted this distinction: Progressive filmmakers from African, Arab, and Latin American nations counter capitalist ideologists, fierce conquerors, and mercenaries on the cinematic stage. As per the observer, the filmmakers emphasized the importance of producing movies that oppose imperialism and war, considering that a generation had grown up without any firsthand exposure to colonialism or war. During that period, Tashkent symbolized a genuine paradigm of urban development, serving as a prime example of Soviet modernity within an inherently Asian nation. This city was presented as a representation of the progress achieved through collective efforts involving various Soviet nations.

More than 100 industries were established in the Uzbek republic, housing 188 scientific research institutes, 25 theaters, around 4,000 cinemas, and nearly 6,000 libraries,

contributing significantly to its growth and advancement. In 1976, the fourth Festival successfully drew delegates from 100 nations, a marked rise from the inaugural event which saw participation from 41 countries. Raj Kapoor's attendance further elevated the event's status.

The festival's documentation highlighted a focus on films addressing critical issues impacting numerous populations. Artists from three continents used their works to delve into the colonial histories of nations presently striving for their well-being and advancement, shedding light on the struggles for self-contentment and success. It appears that within the festival program, commercially successful and engaging mainstream movies took a back seat to the progressive cinema. By the mid-1970s, Soviet magazine reports about the festival became repetitive, focusing solely on attendance figures and participating countries.

The festival's narrative remained static, echoing familiar themes: the pervasive "friendship and solidarity" shaping the festival's ambiance, the warmth and hospitality of Uzbek people, and the Soviet Union's role in elevating the status of Third World cinema. Media coverage of the Tashkent festival notably dwindled during this period. A significant factor contributing to this decline in attention was the lackluster reception of progressive Third World films in the Soviet Union, as they attracted only a small number of cinema enthusiasts. In the monotonous climate of the Brezhnev era, Soviet audiences yearned for entertaining mainstream films, and this preference markedly restrained Soviet cinematic internationalism. As a result, dwindling public attention and waning interest marked the decline of the Tashkent festival.

The tenth edition in 1988 marked its final occurrence. Sebastian Alarcon, a Chilean filmmaker and writer, reflected on the festival’s downturn, questioning its future sustainability. He mentioned his continuous attendance since 1974 and observed a clear decline each passing year. He suggested a prevailing sense that the festival had lost its relevance, serving mainly the Uzbek authorities and various organizations like Sovexportfilm, Soyuzinfilm, and Sovinterfest. Alarcon raised the question of whether the festival had reached its endpoint. By the late 1970s, indications of fatigue within the Tashkent Festival had begun to emerge.

Throughout the following decade, the festival's decline paralleled the waning of several other Soviet global endeavors, such as the World Peace Council. Concurrently, internal

issues were besieging the USSR, the primary supporter of these initiatives, initiating an irreversible process that eventually led to the dissolution of the Soviet state.

Upon gaining independence, India encountered influences from both the USSR and the USA, despite not participating in the Cold War proxy conflicts witnessed in Vietnam or Afghanistan. The country's emergence on the global stage led to the need to safeguard its hard-won autonomy from these superpowers' potential economic, military, and cultural intrusions. Jawaharlal Nehru's nonalignment policy, advocating a neutral stance in global affairs, was a response to the escalating tensions of the Cold War.

During the 1962 Sino-Indian War, India received military aid from both the US and the Soviet Union. Some argued that this aid didn't compromise India's nonaligned stance since it didn't overly rely on either superpower. Others maintained that India's receipt of military support from both sides validated its neutral position. Even after the significant Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, signaling India's inclination toward the USSR,

The country continued to assert its nonalignment. This led to new justifications to uphold India's nonaligned status, asserting it was a means of balancing earlier affiliations with Western ideologies. The strained relationship between the USA and India, rooted in differing ideologies, pushed India closer to the Soviet Union. The USA disapproved of India's neutral stance during the Cold War and leaned toward strategically positioned Pakistan. The India- China conflict further influenced the dynamics between India, the USSR, and China, ultimately drawing India closer to the Soviet Union.

Indira Gandhi's political vulnerabilities in India prompted a turn toward socialist rhetoric, aligning her government more closely with the Soviet Union. This shift was orchestrated by her advisors and an alliance with the Communist Party of India, further strengthening ties between India and the USSR. This period saw peak cooperation between the two nations, even considering merging their economic systems.

Cultural exchanges between India and the Soviet Union were extensive, involving literature, cinema, and intellectual collaborations. India's Bollywood films gained immense popularity in the USSR, fostering a shared cultural memory between the two nations. The depth of these relations extended beyond official ties and significantly impacted collective memories in both countries.

The historical and geographical connections between Russia and India further supported

the depth of their relations, which transcended mere political or geopolitical factors. Cultural dimensions played a pivotal role in transforming formal relations into a shared collective memory. Even after the Soviet Union's collapse, India-Russia relations endured, maintaining collaborations in military, economic, and cultural domains. Recent joint declarations between the leaders of both nations reaffirmed their enduring partnership, emphasizing mutual trust and similar positions on global issues. In summary, the complex and multifaceted nature of Indo-Soviet relations, influenced by historical, geographical, and cultural factors, has persisted beyond the Cold War era, culminating in the enduring partnership witnessed between India and Russia today.

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Chapter 6

Conclusion

Indo-Soviet Political relations

The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1971 emerged as a pivotal foundation document following the India-Pakistan war, emphasizing mutual support against external threats. Signed on August 9, 1971, this treaty held historical significance in shaping the political landscape, contextualized within the South Asian geopolitics of the early '70s, notably after the India-Pakistan war that strengthened ties due to shared interests. It covered political, military, economic, and strategic facets, aiming to deepen the relationship between India and the Soviet Union.

This solidified a political alliance, emphasizing mutual support beyond military cooperation to encompass diplomatic backing, enhancing India's international position with Soviet support. Strategically, it reshaped the regional balance of power in South Asia, expanding Soviet influence while providing India with a strong ally. Economic aid and technological assistance bolstered various sectors of the Indian economy, strengthening their ties within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), showcasing shared perspectives on critical international matters.

Despite this cooperation, differences arose, notably concerning the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. India maintained a principled stance against intervention due to concerns about regional stability, straining the political consensus and highlighting differing approaches to regional conflicts. This strained the political alliance but did not severe cooperation in other areas. The Indo-Soviet collaboration from 1971 to 1991 significantly bolstered India's defense capabilities, with the Soviet Union being a primary supplier of military hardware. This strategic support, including weaponry, equipment, and technological transfers, profoundly impacted India's defense infrastructure and strategic positioning in the region. Cultural exchanges, academic interactions, and scholar exchanges also fostered deeper ties between the nations.

However, with the end of the Cold War and India's economic reforms post-1991, the relationship necessitated adjustments, shifting towards a more diversified and balanced partnership beyond economic dependency. Despite challenges post-Soviet Union dissolution, India and Russia forged a strategic partnership based on shared concerns,

evolving their relationship into trade diversification, strategic cooperation, and diplomatic engagements.

During Indira Gandhi's era (1972-1977), Indo-Soviet trade and economic cooperation witnessed substantial growth, marked by sequential five-year trade agreements and the establishment of comprehensive 15-year agreements. India benefited from a shift in trade dynamics, achieving stability unaffected by capitalist economic fluctuations, diversifying trade across various industries. However, challenges persisted concerning trade disparities, pricing issues, and limitations in joint ventures.

Post the Bangladesh war, India faced economic challenges, seeking assistance from both the Soviet Union and the United States. Disputes over credit dealings and exchange rates strained relations, yet agreements aiming for trade growth highlighted India's influence in securing crucial resources.

The Indo-Soviet defense collaboration, starting in the mid-1970s, addressed India's security concerns, evolving from basic arms transfers to more advanced weaponry. Despite concerns about overreliance and limitations in technology exchange, this collaboration significantly bolstered India's defense capabilities.

During the Janata administration (1977-79), shifts in Indo-Soviet relations occurred as new leadership signaled potential alterations in policies. Moscow showed concern but swiftly worked to mend ties, emphasizing historical support and economic aid. Efforts to diversify ties with the US faced challenges due to policy differences, impacting economic collaborations and geopolitical concerns.

Overall, the Indo-Soviet relationship, marked by multifaceted collaborations and challenges, evolved significantly, leaving a lasting legacy beyond the confines of economic dependence, influencing various aspects of both nations' relations.

The "Indo-Soviet Relations and the Tenure of Indira Gandhi: Afghanistan and its Aftermath (1979-1984)" discusses the complexities of international relations during Indira Gandhi's tenure as India's Prime Minister.

Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980 was celebrated by the Soviet Union, praising her commitment to Nehru's vision and her role in strengthening Soviet-Indian relations. However, her time out of power strained relations with the USSR, causing a shift in their once-strong personal connection. Gandhi's interactions with Western leaders like James

Callaghan, Willy Brandt, and Jimmy Carter signaled an openness to engaging with the West, despite differing policies

The Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan posed a dilemma for Mrs. Gandhi's government. While India expressed concerns about the regional implications, it didn't openly condemn the Soviet action. This move complicated India's non-aligned status and strained its relations with the US. The Carter Doctrine, aiming to defend the Gulf region against potential Soviet expansion, heightened tensions.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan transformed Pakistan into a key US ally. This shift alarmed India, reigniting security concerns and altering the subcontinent's security dynamics. The US-Pakistan alliance, seen as a strategic consensus, raised apprehensions in India due to Pakistan's bolstered armament and its historical conflicts with India.

Despite India's efforts to improve relations with the US, the perception of India as a Soviet proxy persisted in American thinking. Mrs. Gandhi's visits to the US in 1982 aimed to foster friendship but yielded limited results, especially concerning arms supply to Pakistan and the militarization of the Indian Ocean.

The Soviet Union sought India's support for its actions in Afghanistan but faced divergence in positions. India acknowledged the crisis as part of global power rivalries but refrained from openly condemning the USSR. However, Gromyko's visit underscored India's inability to align completely with Soviet demands or influence their stance.

The Soviet-Afghan conflict complicated India's efforts to improve ties with Pakistan. Pakistan's inability to secure its borders posed challenges in dealing with the Afghan crisis. The regional fallout from superpower rivalry caused turbulence near India's borders. Gandhi's government signaled a shift in economic policies, leaning towards free enterprise and seeking IMF assistance due to economic challenges. This shift hinted at potential changes in Indo-American relations but was hindered by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

The period between 1979 and 1984 was marked by complex geopolitical dynamics, with the Soviet-Afghan conflict significantly impacting Indo-Soviet, Indo-US, and Indo-Pak relations. India navigated these challenges while striving to maintain its non-aligned status and address economic concerns amidst global power struggles.

Indo-Soviet Economic Relations

The Economic Aspect of the Indo-Soviet Relationship was multifaceted and evolved significantly over time. Initially rooted in political and security aspects, the economic dimension, outlined in Article 6 of the Indo-Soviet treaty, emphasized collaborative opportunities in economic, scientific, and technological realms. India, in its quest for modernization, welcomed Soviet aid that significantly contributed to its industrial development from the mid-1950s onward. However, challenges emerged due to differing developmental stages, leading to concerns about unequal bargaining power, criticism of the rupee-rouble exchange rate, and an imbalance in trade.

The trade landscape witnessed substantial growth between India and the Soviet Union from 1970 to 1985. This period marked a significant surge in bilateral trade, supported by multiple trade protocols and agreements focusing on industrial cooperation. While trade expanded considerably, challenges arose, including disagreements over crude oil supplies, pricing concerns, and issues related to wheat loans and currency adjustments. India's dependency on Soviet supplies decreased over time due to its industrial growth and self-sufficiency, impacting the trade balance and prompting shifts in economic strategies.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed shifts in both Indian and Soviet economic strategies. India moved toward economic liberalization, diversifying its trade partnerships, and embracing policies to promote exports and liberalize imports. Conversely, Gorbachev's "perestroika" introduced radical reforms in the Soviet Union, aiming for economic interdependence and openness to market economics.

Despite the challenges and shifts in economic strategies, the Indo-Soviet economic ties remained significant. India saw consistent growth in exports and imports with the Soviet Union, albeit facing concerns about trade surpluses and their utilization.

The trade and payment structures, notably the rupee-rouble trade agreement, raised concerns about diverting trade from more lucrative hard currency markets. However, India's trade figures showed growth in both Soviet and convertible currency markets, dispelling fears of neglecting more profitable markets.

Soviet economic aid played a pivotal role in India's economic progress, particularly in bolstering the public sector. While Soviet aid was substantial, it was comparatively lower than Western aid. The aid primarily supported India's industrial growth and crucial investment projects, shaping the economic landscape during this period. The aid was extended through various credits and loans aimed at specific projects, and while concerns

were raised about effective utilization, both nations aimed to align these credits with trade and economic cooperation. The Indo-Soviet economic collaboration held substantial significance for India's industrial development and autonomy. Initially, the Soviet Union played a pivotal role in aiding India across various sectors like steel, fertilizer production, refineries, and mining, significantly contributing to India's pursuit of self-sufficiency.

This assistance constituted a significant portion of India's public sector and industrial investments, showcasing the USSR's involvement in various vital projects. Technological aid from the Soviet Union extended to diverse sectors such as oil, coal, power generation, and non-ferrous metallurgy. The Soviet Union supported India in geological exploration for oil and gas, established significant refineries, and contributed to the development of thermal power plants. Furthermore, the USSR's assistance in non-ferrous metallurgy, especially in establishing aluminum production complexes, significantly bolstered India's exports.

However, India's reliance on Soviet technology started diminishing by the early 1980s, prompting diversification of technology sources beyond arms supplies. India began seeking collaboration with the West, especially in domains like electronics and communication. Despite this shift, Indo-Soviet agreements continued, focusing on enhancing India's machine- building industry and exploring new avenues for collaboration.

The Soviet Union's economic restructuring during perestroika aimed to modernize its economy, presenting new opportunities for collaboration. The Soviets sought to engage with India's private sector, allowing for joint ventures and partnerships to improve trade relations. Although there were initial challenges and a lack of understanding regarding Soviet technology in India's private industry, efforts were made to bridge this gap.

The long-standing economic agreements between India and the Soviet Union, signed in the 1980s, facilitated sustained economic cooperation and technology exchange. India's capacity to provide advanced technology, like computers and software, was seen as significant, benefiting the Soviet Union without significant currency expenditure.

While India valued the Soviet Union's support in crucial developmental sectors, the shift towards seeking advanced technology from Western nations showcased a changing trend. Despite this shift, both countries continued seeking new ways to strengthen their economic ties, indicating untapped potential for further collaboration.

Overall, the Indo-Soviet economic collaboration was critical for India's industrial progress and pursuit of self-sufficiency, despite evolving dynamics and a gradual shift towards seeking technology from other global partners.

The complex relationship evolved over time, presenting both challenges and opportunities, yet laying the groundwork for enduring economic ties between the two nations. The Indo- Soviet economic relationship experienced growth, challenges, and adaptations, reflecting the geopolitical and economic dynamics of the time while playing a significant role in shaping India's economic trajectory.

Indo-Soviet defense and Strategic Relations

India's defense ties with the Soviet Union between 1971 and the late 1970s, highlighting the evolution of their relationship and India's reliance on Soviet weaponry. Initially, India's defense strategy focused on self-sufficiency, intending to reduce dependence on external powers for arms. However, India's threat perceptions from Pakistan's armament growth and geopolitical shifts compelled it to augment its military capabilities. During this period, India became heavily reliant on Soviet arms, particularly in the land, sea, and air sectors. The Indian Navy saw significant growth through Soviet aid, enhancing its underwater and surface capabilities. India's air force, while relying on the MiG-21, faced a dilemma regarding acquiring the more advanced MiG-25 due to financial constraints and concerns about aligning with India's defense needs. India's dependence on Soviet arms did not compromise its autonomy in foreign or defense policies. However, concerns arose regarding the political dimensions tied to Soviet arms sales, with suggestions of possible Soviet influence over India's defense policy through arms transfers.

The Janata Government in 1977-79 made a significant shift by opting for the Anglo-French Jaguar over the Soviet MiG-23, indicating a move towards diversification in arms procurement. This decision aimed to balance India's reliance on the Soviet Union and reduce dependence while modernizing the air force with better-suited aircraft. India's move to diversify its sources of major arms procurement from the Soviet Union demonstrated a strategic shift, driven by factors like technological suitability, local manufacturing potential, and geopolitical considerations. This decision didn't signify a shift in alliance but rather an attempt to balance its dependence on the Soviet Union with arms acquisitions from other nations.

The India's efforts to balance its strategic interests, self-sufficiency goals, and geopolitical

challenges within the context of arms procurement, highlighting a pivotal phase in India's defense ties, from heavy reliance on the Soviet Union to diversification in sources of major arms. In October 1978, amidst significant defense negotiations, India faced choices between Soviet MiG aircraft indigenization and the cost-efficient Jaguar deal.

The decision leaned toward the Jaguar due to its economic viability over the Mirage F-1. Concerns arose about the overall expenses tied to Soviet weaponry, highlighting not just unit costs but also spare parts and additional equipment expenses.

The decision-making primarily focused on technical aspects rather than political considerations, emphasizing the need for Deep Penetration Strike Aircraft (DPSA) and India's aviation industry needs. The rejection of the Soviet MiG-23 was multifaceted: concerns over Soviet control of crucial MiG-21 segments, potential use of "spare parts diplomacy," doubts about seamless generational transitions, and a perception of outdated technology sharing by the Soviets.

The decisions weren't solely technical but carried political implications, symbolizing a shift from Eastern to Western military suppliers. Despite efforts to diversify defense imports, India aimed to maintain strong ties with Moscow. The Indo-Soviet military relationship faced uncertainties, notably regarding part deliveries and sharing advanced weapon designs, leading India to broaden its arms procurement channels from Western sources.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan significantly influenced major powers' military strategies and neighboring countries' armament inclinations. The US sought to reinforce Pakistan's defense post-Afghan intervention, leading to significant arms aid proposals. India responded by securing a substantial $1.6 billion arms deal with the Soviet Union, showcasing advantageous financial conditions and encompassing advanced weaponry across India's defense forces.

However, the US's substantial arms aid package to Pakistan, including F-16 aircraft, raised concerns in India due to the imbalance it created in the region's military capabilities. India sought to balance this shift by procuring Mirage 2000 from France. The arms procurement landscape witnessed a shift, with subsequent deals between India and Western nations, displaying a keenness to diversify arms sources while maintaining ties with Moscow. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's actions reflected efforts to maintain India's non-aligned policy while establishing connections with Western nations. Despite exploring arms

procurement from the US and France, India remained mindful of Moscow's sensitivities, as Moscow continued to offer sophisticated weaponry, aiming to bolster India's defense capabilities.

The military ties between India and the Soviet Union evolved amid changing geopolitical dynamics, where India sought to balance its reliance on Moscow with diversifying arms sources, maintaining its non-aligned stance, and addressing regional security concerns. The decisions made by India in arms procurement underscored a delicate balancing act between strategic alliances, technological advancement, and geopolitical considerations.

The text dives into the Indo-Soviet military ties during the Gorbachev-Rajiv Gandhi era. Rajiv Gandhi's interest in Western technology created a shift in India's relationships, with the USA trying to lure India away from the Soviet Union. Despite this, India maintained a core military connection with Moscow while expanding ties with the US, albeit stopping short of a substantial military alliance.

Gorbachev's policies reshaped Soviet perspectives on Third World nations and reduced Soviet involvement in conflicts. This led to uncertainties in New Delhi's military relations due to India's Western-leaning tendencies. However, the USSR continued supporting India's demands for advanced weaponry, acknowledging India's significance, even amid their policy changes.

India sought advanced technology from the US but had concerns about reliability, leading to tensions and doubts about a robust military supply relationship. Despite attempts to diversify suppliers, the USSR remained India's principal arms supplier due to financial and political reasons, although concerns arose about inconsistent spare parts supply and less advanced weaponry.

The Indo-Soviet alliance evolved from political necessity against US arms support to Pakistan. India aimed for self-sufficiency in defense production while facing challenges with spare parts supply, technological assistance, and weapon quality. Yet, Soviet weapons offered affordability, simplicity, and integration into advanced systems.

Despite arms transfers, Moscow's influence over India remained limited, as India maintained an independent strategic thought. India allowed Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean but didn't align with Soviet interests, preventing Moscow from significantly influencing India's policies. Overall, the Indo-Soviet military bond during this period was driven more by political needs and security concerns than purely military rationale. India

sought autonomy in defense but relied on the USSR due to practical reasons, despite facing challenges in the relationship. The Soviet Union wielded limited influence over India's policies despite significant military cooperation.

Indo-Soviet Cultural relations

This section delves into the historical intricacies of Indo-Soviet relations, focusing primarily on the evolution and influence of Indo-Soviet friendship societies, particularly the Indo- Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS).

It begins by detailing the post-World War I era, highlighting the USSR's efforts to expand cultural connections globally, especially in developing nations. The emergence of friendship societies, like the All-India Friends of the Soviet Union (AIFSU), reflected this pursuit, initially involving significant non-Communist figures but gradually falling under the Communist Party of India's control.

The narrative moves through the 1950s, marking a significant resurgence of ISCUS with increased Soviet engagement, culminating in the formal Indo-Soviet Cultural Ties agreement in 1960. This agreement facilitated extensive cultural, scientific, and academic exchanges, emphasizing equality and reciprocity between the two nations. ISCUS played a central role in these cultural exchanges, with various committees established to manage activities like language training, education grants, publications, and collaborations. Notably, ISCUS's publications, while influential, were limited compared to the Soviet Union's broader array of publications in India.

The text details the interplay between political ideologies and the ISCUS, highlighting how CPI's involvement significantly shaped the society's trajectory. Over time, ISCUS faced challenges in aligning with Indian politics, facing shifts in CPI's relationship with the ruling party and internal ideological conflicts.

The narrative delves into the era of Indira Gandhi's leadership, reflecting ISCUS's complex relationship with the Congress and CPI. The analysis covers the political dynamics within the CPI and its varying stances towards Gandhi, culminating in a formal anti-Congress line adopted by the party. The text scrutinizes the Indo-Soviet relationship against the backdrop of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. India, balancing its ties with both the Soviet Union and its regional concerns, navigated diplomatically in response to the invasion.

The conclusion outlines the gradual decline of the once vibrant Indo-Soviet friendship,

marked by changing political landscapes both domestically and internationally. The evolving dynamics within Indian politics, the CPI, and Indira Gandhi's government significantly impacted ISCUS's role and influence, reflecting the intricate web of alliances, ideological shifts, and geopolitical considerations within this cultural exchange framework.

Overall, the narrative tracks the rise and fall of ISCUS, portraying how it acted as a cultural conduit between India and the Soviet Union, influenced by intricate political dynamics, ideological shifts, and evolving global scenarios.

The complex Indo-Soviet relations during the early 1980s, under Indira Gandhi's leadership, were marked by significant political maneuvering and internal conflicts. At the core were the dynamics between the Indian government, the Communist Party of India (CPI), and the Soviet Union. The tension started with Indira Gandhi's rejection of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, leading India to separate the Afghanistan issue from its relations with the USSR. This initial disagreement hinted at deeper rifts. Internal dynamics within the CPI, notably its support for Gandhi and subsequent rifts, played a pivotal role.

Brezhnev's visit in 1980 highlighted the strained relations. Gandhi, in her address, focused on internal matters, subtly indicating the CPI's reluctance to support her. However, the Soviets remained ambiguous, and speculation about their support for certain factions within the CPI arose. The USSR's refusal to grant a visa to S.A. Dange, a pro-Gandhi figure, shed light on the Soviet stance. This led to debates about the Soviet Union's endorsement of Gandhi and their strategic approach toward the CPI.

The primary Soviet goal appeared to be fostering unity within the Indian communist movement by merging the CPI and CPI(M). This move caused challenges for the CPI, aligning itself within the broader left movement in India. Internal divisions within the CPI led to the formation of the breakaway All-India Communist Party (AICP) in 1981, spearheaded by Dange's daughter, further exacerbating tensions. Dange's participation in AICP events led to his expulsion from the CPI. Indira Gandhi's establishment of the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) in 1981 aimed to counter CPI dominance within Indo-Soviet cultural ties. The move triggered discussions and unease among Soviet and Indian Communist circles.

Several Indo-Soviet cultural organizations existed, influenced by the Soviet Union's "peace offensive." These groups were part of a larger network of 53 Indian organizations

linked to the USSR, emphasizing peace, cultural exchange, and ideological alignment. The World Peace Council (WPC), with ties to the Soviet Union, had significant Indian affiliations, fostering peace initiatives and political alignment. Notably, Romesh Chandra played a pivotal role within these movements, influencing cultural and peace efforts and garnering international recognition.

Indira Gandhi's moves against the CPI-aligned organizations like the ISCUS and the Peace Council demonstrated her aim to challenge the Communist stronghold on cultural relations with the Soviet Union. Her establishment of the FSU further polarized relations between the CPI, the Soviets, and her government.

Overall, the early 1980s were marked by intricate power struggles, ideological confrontations, and attempts by Indira Gandhi to reshape Indo-Soviet relations, navigating complex internal and external dynamics. In the early 1980s, Indo-Soviet relations were marked by complex dynamics, influenced by internal political shifts in India and the Communist Party's role. Indira Gandhi's government showed resistance to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan despite historically strong ties between India and the USSR. Gandhi aimed to separate the Afghan conflict from Indo-Soviet relations, leading to a strain between the two nations.

The Communist Party of India's (CPI) support for Gandhi caused internal rifts. A pivotal event occurred during Brezhnev's visit in 1980, where Gandhi subtly hinted at leftist opposition within her party. Brezhnev met with a CPI delegation but didn't push for a change in their stance. Speculations arose regarding Soviet support for factions aligning with the CPI(M), indicating a strategic shift.

In 1982, the USSR declined a transit visa to S.A. Dange, a veteran communist supporting Gandhi, signaling his decreasing relevance. This action sparked debates in India about the Soviet Union's endorsement of Gandhi. The USSR aimed to unify the CPI(M) and the CPI, impacting the CPI's alignment and causing challenges in repositioning within the leftist movement. Internal divisions led to the establishment of the All-India Communist Party (AICP) in 1981,

Supported by Dange's loyalists. Dange's participation in the AICP Congress led to his expulsion from the CPI. Disagreements between Dange and Rao escalated, resulting in Dange's active involvement in the AICP. Gandhi, amid strained relations with the CPI and the USSR, established the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) in 1981, challenging the

CPI- dominated Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS). The FSU's formation aimed to create a distinct space from groups disrupting stability and signified Gandhi's dissatisfaction with the CPI's withdrawal of support.

The FSU's inauguration and subsequent events showed unease among the Soviets and CPI regarding Gandhi's move. While the FSU gained momentum, Soviet officials advocated for the ISCUS to remain the primary platform for Indo-Soviet friendship. India's involvement in internationally supported groups promoted by the Soviet Union extended beyond the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society. Over 50 Indian organizations had connections with the USSR, including peace councils and cultural societies. The World Peace Council's initiatives and their ties to Soviet interests were significant, with key Indian figures involved. Romesh Chandra, a prominent figure in the Indian peace movement, had a significant role in these affiliations. He navigated challenges within the peace movement, reconciling differences with the Soviets and securing a strong position within the World Peace Council.

Overall, the early 1980s saw a complex interplay between India's internal politics, the Communist Party's realignment, Gandhi's strategic moves to establish alternate cultural ties, and the intricate relationship between the Soviet Union and India through various affiliations beyond the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society.

The section explores the intertwining of political agendas and cultural movements in India, predominantly influenced by the Soviet Union, during the mid-20th century to the collapse of the USSR. It delves into organizations like the All-India Peace Council, their links with political figures, and their role in countering communist influence.

It discusses the establishment of groups like the Afro-Asian Writers Association (AAWA) and their alignment with Soviet ideals, often mirroring Soviet rhetoric and serving Soviet foreign policy objectives. The AAWA, despite its literary focus, became politicized over time, echoing Soviet ideologies in their resolutions.

The narrative highlights the Soviet Union's extensive cultural dissemination in India through translated literature and magazines. Soviet books became popular in India, disseminated even in remote areas through a comprehensive distribution network, influencing political and cultural attitudes. The Soviet Union aimed to shape the tastes and ideologies of the Indian populace, prioritizing accessibility over profits in their publishing endeavors. This expansive reach included publishing in 13 regional Indian languages and

distributing books through mobile shops, ensuring accessibility even in the most remote villages.

The discussion covers the USSR's publishing strategies in India, their centralization of the publishing industry, and the establishment of entities like Progress Publishers. The Soviet government's control over cultural output aimed to shape a socialist society, fostering global unity by sharing knowledge and literature from diverse cultures.

It also touches upon the Indo-Soviet cultural exchanges, which formalized cultural ties between the two nations, influencing policies, literature, and educational exchanges. The far- reaching impact of Soviet cultural dissemination in India, its influence on the political landscape, and the strategies employed to promote socialist ideologies through literature, magazines, and cultural exchanges.

The section explores the intricate cultural and diplomatic relations between India and the Soviet Union, particularly in the realms of literature, publishing, cinema, and collaborative initiatives. It traces the evolution of this connection, starting with the transformation of the ITIR into the Progress Publishers and its partnerships with various international publishing houses. These partnerships facilitated the dissemination of Soviet literature in India, particularly emphasizing children's books, aiming to shape societal ideologies and educational reforms.

The import and translation of Soviet literature into multiple Indian languages played a pivotal role in spreading the Soviet worldview across diverse cultural landscapes. Indian translators, such as Arun Som and T. Dharmarajan, were instrumental in this process, with their work significantly influencing the Indian literary sphere.

The Soviet Union's emphasis on education and literacy contrasted starkly with India's educational challenges, especially in the early '70s, when India's literacy rate was significantly lower than that of the Soviet Union. The Likbez campaign in the Soviet Union had effectively eradicated illiteracy, leading to almost universal literacy by 1959.

The presence of Soviet publications in India, including books, magazines, and pamphlets, expanded significantly over the years, showcasing a notable shift in the publishing trends of major powers and their approaches towards India. The USSR took the lead in the number of publications in Indian languages, particularly during Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister.

Soviet magazines like Soviet Bhūmi and Soviet Land played a substantial role in shaping perceptions of the Soviet Union in India. These magazines not only portrayed Soviet advancements but also discussed Indo-Soviet relations, emphasizing the friendship between the two nations.

In the realm of cinema, Indo-Soviet collaborations became prominent during the Khrushchev Thaw, marked by the screening of Indian films in the Soviet Union and the emergence of Indian cinema festivals there. Films like "Pardesi" showcased joint efforts between Indian and Soviet filmmakers, focusing on narratives that symbolized mutual interest and friendship between the two countries.

The significance of Afanasy Nikitin's travels to India and the attempts to create a collaborative documentary between India and the USSR, shedding light on the enduring legacy of cultural narratives between the nations.

Overall, the Indo-Soviet relations delves deeply into the multifaceted cultural exchanges, collaborations, and diplomatic efforts that characterized the relationship between India and the Soviet Union across literature, publishing, and cinema, showcasing the nuanced evolution of this historical connection.

The Tashkent Film Festival was a crucial cultural initiative by the Soviet Union in the late 1950s. It aimed to unite filmmakers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, showcasing cinema from the Third World and challenging Hollywood's dominance. Initially, it struggled to establish enduring connections among filmmakers but evolved into an authentic gathering representing the Third World by the 1970s.

Despite lacking a competitive structure, the festival became a significant platform for showcasing progressive cinema from developing nations, addressing critical social and political issues. However, it faced declining attention and interest by the late 1970s and eventually ceased in 1988 due to various factors, including shifting audience preferences and waning Soviet interest in progressive Third World films.

Indian movies played a fascinating role in Soviet cultural ties. Starting in the 1940s, the Soviet Union developed an interest in Indian cinema, eventually leading to the flourishing export of Indian films to the USSR. These movies gained immense popularity among Soviet audiences, especially Raj Kapoor's films like "Awara" and "Shree 420." Initially appreciated for their social realism, Indian films transitioned to more entertainment-focused narratives in the 1970s. Despite Soviet critics' reservations, Indian melodramas

continued to captivate audiences, offering an escape from the mundanity of Soviet life and showcasing aspects of human nature that resonated deeply with viewers. The emotional and cultural connections found in Indian movies appealed to the Slavic concept of "dusha," creating a bond that transcended political ideologies and contributed to the enduring Indo-Soviet cultural relationship.

India's stance of nonalignment during the Cold War, emphasizing neutrality in global conflicts, aimed to protect its autonomy from superpower influences. This balanced approach allowed India to navigate the tensions between the USA and the USSR, focusing on safeguarding its independence on the global stage.

The complex interplay between the Tashkent Film Festival, the export of Indian cinema to the Soviet Union, and India's nonalignment policy reflects the multifaceted cultural, political, and ideological dynamics during the Cold War era.

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