

IS INDIA A SOVIET ALLY ?

by M. R. Masani

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I

The Backdrop

It is worth while casting a glance backwards to consider the backdrop to the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 9th August, 1971, in order to assess the full significance of its long-term effects, before endeavouring to answer the question put to me by the Editors.

Such a long-term view is called for by the fact that the authors of the Treaty have, contrary to popular impressions, publicly declared that the Treaty had nothing to do with the developments at that time in East Bengal, now known as Bangla Desh. Thus, Mr. T.N. Kaul, then India's Foreign Secretary and now Ambassador in Washington, on the very day of the signing the Treaty, said : "We have been working for this Treaty for over two years. It has nothing to do with the developments in East Bengal or the attitude of the United States."

So too, speaking in the Indian Parliament a day later on 10th August, Mr. Swaran Singh, the Minister of External Affairs, told the Lok Sabha : "This Treaty has nothing to do with Dr. Kissinger's visit to Peking, but the timing of it has been such that it was very well received by practically all sections of the people". This undoubtedly was a reference to the general expectation that the Treaty was primarily linked with the popular slogan of the liberation of Bangla Desh. There is no reason to doubt the basic honesty of these two statements which appear to reflect reality.

That reality is that work on the project had been proceeding from some time in the middle of 1969. This would mean that the Soviet project was an effort to implement the Brezhnev Plan for collective security in Asia, which was publicised around that time in June 1969.

Pravda, on its part, corroborated all this on November 25, 1973, on the eve of Mr. Brezhnev's visit to Delhi, when it wrote : "This Treaty not only recorded the achieved level of our relations but put them on a long-term basis".

Why the proposed Treaty was kept a secret during the intervening two years, it is not possible for anyone to guess, but evidently public opinion and the climate were not right and the developments in East Bengal, as Mr. Swaran Singh has admitted, came in handy to facilitate the selling of the Treaty to the Indian public at large.

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In a way, perhaps, the genesis of the Treaty goes back even much further back. Speaking in Delhi on the same platform as Mr. Leonid Brezhnev on November 26, 1973, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, India's Prime Minister, while conceding it was difficult to set a date for the origin of Indo-Soviet friendship, claimed that "it was even before our Independence", referring perhaps to the ~~severely~~ pro-Soviet attitude of her father, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, from as far back as 1935, when he got involved in the Front Populaire and the People's Front against Fascism". Many of those who shared that world view in the mid-thirties learnt from subsequent events and changed their position, but unfortunately, Nehru was not one of them. A great deal of his foreign policy for the first two decades of India's freedom can only be understood against this background.

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It is not generally recalled that in his Presidential Address to the Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress in April 1936, Nehru frankly adopted the Marxist World view :

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"Everywhere conflicts grow and a great depression overwhelms the world ~~we said~~ and there is a progressive deterioration everywhere except in the wide-flung Soviet territories of the U.S.S.R. where, in marked contrast with the rest of the world, astonishing progress is made in every direction. Two rival economic and political systems face each other in the world and, though they tolerate each other for a while, there is an inherent antagonism between them and they play for mastery on the stage of the world. One of them is the capitalist order which had inevitably developed into vast imperialisms which, having swallowed the colonial world, were intent on eating each other up; powerful still and fearful of war, which might endanger their possessions..... The other is the new socialist order of the USSR which goes from progress to progress, though often at terrible cost, and where the problems of the capitalist world have ceased to exist.

"Capitalism, in its difficulties, takes to fascism with all its brutal suppression of what Western civilisation has apparently stood for; it becomes, even in some of its homelands, what its imperialist counterpart have long been in the subject colonial countries. Fascism and Imperialism thus stand out as the two faces of the new decaying capitalism..... Socialism in the West and the rising nationalisms of eastern and other dependent countries oppose this combination of Fascism and imperialism. Nationalism in the East, it must be remembered, is essentially different from the new and terribly narrow nationalism of Fascist countries; the former is the historical urge to freedom, the latter the last refuge of reaction.

"Thus we see the world divided up into two vast groups today - the Imperialist and Fascist on one side, the Socialist and Nationalist on the other. There is some overlapping of the two and the line between them is difficult to draw, for there is mutual conflict

between the Fascist and Imperialist Powers, and the nationalism of subject countries has sometimes a tendency to Fascism. But the main division holds and if we keep it in mind, it will be easier for us to understand world conditions and our own place in them

If the future is full of hope it is largely because of Soviet Russia and what it has done, and I am convinced that, if some world catastrophe does not intervene, this new civilisation will spread to other lands and put an end to the wars and conflicts which capitalism feeds. "

It is thus correct to say that the Indo-Soviet Treaty is nothing but a legitimisation of a liaison that had existed for several years and which could now be publicly admitted. On the other hand, Mrs. Indira Gandhi's statement that "from the beginning, the Soviet Union's understanding and sympathy" towards the struggle of the Indian people for freedom had been there is palpably incorrect. For years after India achieved independence from Britain, the Soviet Union and the Russian Communists refused to accept the fact that India was free. They maligned Gandhi as a reactionary and insisted that India's independence was a sham. The year India became a sovereign independent republic, A.M. Dyakov, a Soviet Asian expert, wrote :

"The political and military strategic dependence of both dominions (Indian and Pakistan) on England and the US found its expression in agreements which were concluded between these two countries and England at the Imperial Conference in October 1948, and in April 1949..... On January 26, 1950, to deceive the masses, India was proclaimed an independent republic".

Another example of the attitude was to be found in the Soviet Encyclopedia, 1951 :

"The National Congress in India.... are obedient executors of the will of the British American imperialists, their mainstay in the colonies."

The signing of the Treaty marks the end of the era of India's non-alignment and in that sense it represents a break with the past. Notwithstanding the fact that Prime Minister Nehru's non-alignment had always been a loaded one, with a double standard of morality -- a very strict and censorious one for the US and the West and a lax and easy one for the Soviet regime -- the giving of juridical recognition even to an existing relationship marks a point of no return.

The prestigious Sueddeutsche Zeitung was not wrong when it wrote : "More than ever before India's resolves, moves and non-moves will reflect those of the Soviet Union. It will come as a sad blow to many that this is what has come of India's proved policy of non-alignment."

II

Is It An Alliance ?

We can now turn to the nature of the Treaty and seek to ascertain whether or not it is in the nature of an alliance between the two countries.

It is true that Article IV of the Treaty gives expression on the view that India on the one side respects the peace-loving policy of the USSR and, as part of the deal, records that the USSR "respects India's policy of non-alignment".

This verbal reciprocity is, however, more apparent than real since the Soviet understanding of non-alignment has always been quite different from what is understood by it elsewhere. According to a Soviet document :

9 "The Soviet Union and socialist countries support the non-alignment policy of the developing countries. But the success of this policy depends on the unity of thought and action of the developing countries and the socialist countries in international affairs, in the anti-imperialist struggle.

"Washington's call to non-aligned countries to keep at an equal distance from military-political blocs, from Moscow and Washington, fit in with the theory of 'pure non-alignment'. But this is part of Washington's strategy to detach the non-aligned world from their principal ally - the socialist countries. Non-alignment can rest only on anti-imperialist foundations, because objectively the interests of the third world as a whole and of separate developing states basically run counter to the policy of the imperialist powers."

More recently, as reported in the Swiss paper Neue Zurcher Zeitung on November 23, 1973, the official central organ of the Communist Party in Moscow, Problems of Peace and Socialism, commented critically on the non-aligned conference in Algiers. They were accused among other things of ignoring the "peace offensive of the communist countries". The article went on to say that the non-aligned countries ought to redefine their role and take up a clear position in the conflict between the world's two social systems : capitalism and communism. The Soviet writer ended with an example : Castro's Cuba !

5/ It is Article IX and X that clinch the argument in regard to the nature of the Treaty. Article IX which, at a first glance, might be construed to be a mere commitment to mutual consultation, turns out to involve a commitment of a more far-reaching nature. Commencing with an agreement by both states to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other Party, the Article then goes on to provide that, "in the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into

mutual consultations in order to remove such a threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security of their countries."

The operative words here are "in order to remove such threats and to take appropriate and effective measures." It is thus made clear that the consultations are not to be of a platonic nature, as in the case of the Franko-Soviet Protocol of October 13, 1970, but will be entered into for the specific purpose of removing the threat that might be posed to one or other party from a third quarter. This is, for all practical purposes, a commitment to go to the aid of the Party attacked and clearly savours of a defensive military alliance.

The unequal nature of this commitment is also ominous. While the Soviet commitment will be limited to the Sub-Continent, the Indian Commitment is global, since the USSR could claim to be threatened by the USA or Communist China or indeed even by Yugoslavia, Hungary, or Czechoslovakia, as has actually been alleged in the past ! In all such cases, India would have to join with its Soviet ally "to remove such a threat" and the Soviets would call on India to take "appropriate effective measures" to this end.

Article X is equally relevant. It starts with a declaration that neither side shall "enter into any obligation, Secret or public" with one or more states which is incompatible with this Treaty." It then goes on to commit both parties to a declaration that "no obligation exists, nor shall any obligation be entered into, between itself and any other State or States, which might cause military damage to the other party."

The wording of this article is significant. Similar articles in the Warsaw Pact and the Treaty entered by the USSR with Czechoslovakia preclude the parties from concluding "any agreement whose purposes are incompatible with the provisions of this Treaty". The Soviet-Hungarian Treaty of September 7, 1959, used the word "engagement". The use of the word "obligation" in the case of the Indo-Soviet Treaty involves a constraint which is more far-reaching and wider than an engagement, agreement or treaty, and it thus ties the hands of India more rigidly in this particular context than those of the participants to the other Treaties with the Soviet Union, including those entered into by the captive countries of Eastern Europe. It is not difficult to visualise a Soviet allegation that might develop that India's relations with the United States, Communist China or any other nation involve an "obligation" incompatible with India's commitment to the USSR.

It is clear from a reading of the terms of the Indo-Soviet Treaty that it is a treaty of alliance and that, by entering into it, the Government of India accepted the position of a Soviet ally.

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The Dangers

An alliance between two countries is a perfectly legitimate and honourable development. Or, to put it more accurately, it is morally neutral and it can be a factor either for good or for ill. It can either be in a particular country's interest or it may be inimical to that country's interest. The question arises as to whether the Indo-Soviet Treaty and alliance of 1971 are good for India. There are several criteria on the basis of which this could be answered.

The first of these criteria is the character and nature of the two contracting governments. Is the ally that India has acquired one that believes in genuine co-existence and equality between States? Or does it have extra-territorial ambitions, a desire to dominate the world ideologically, and a Fifth Column operating in other countries? That apart, is it a regime that has respected other treaties and agreements and alliances made earlier by it?

It is true that the Soviet Government talks incessantly of peaceful co-existence but, when the record is examined, it appears that what Kremlin means by peaceful co-existence is something entirely different from what the rest of the world understands and that it is in fact only a formula for continuing the cold war and attempting world domination by other means.

Thus, PRAVDA, in a recent editorial on August 22, 1973, wrote :

"Peaceful co-existence does not at all mean an end to the struggle between the two world social systems. The struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, between world socialism and imperialism will go on until the final and complete victory of communism on world scale..... While consistently upholding the principles of peaceful co-existence, or states with the different social systems, the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community vigorously rebuff any attempts at interference in their internal affairs."

Nikita Khrushchev had, in his time, anticipated such a formulation when in 1951 he said : "The policy of peaceful co-existence.... is a form of intense economic, political and ideological struggle of the proletariat against the aggressive forces of imperialism."

The World Marxist Review of Moscow had in 1965 written :

"The policy of peaceful co-existence....has never been a policy based on the acceptance of the status quo in world relations. It has been and it remains a weapon of struggle -- a struggle in which both hands are used -- with one hand, the aggressive forces of world imperialism are held back; with the other, full support is given to the forces fighting for national independence, and to the peoples moving towards a socialist goal."

Mr. G. Arbatov, Director of the Soviet Institute for American Studies, only continued this consistent line of thought when, in March 1973, he observed :

"Relations with the capitalist nations will remain the relations of struggle, however successful normalisation and detente may be.... The essential question is what form that struggle will take."

Sir William Hayter, the former British Ambassador in Moscow, puts it in his own way when he says :

"To us peaceful co-existence suggests the lion lying down with the lamb (or the bear). To the Russians, it means 'intensification of the struggle of the working class, of all the Communist Parties, for the triumph of socialist ideas.' Peaceful co-existence, in fact, is the Russian for Cold War."

It is tragic that the world had to be reminded of these facts by an eminent and valiant Russian intellectual, Dr. Andrei Sakharov. According to the text of his Statement published by the Times (London) on September 5, 1973, he said :

"Detente without democratisation, a rapprochement when the West in fact accepts our rules of the game in this process of rapprochement, such a rapprochement would be very dangerous in that respect, and would not solve any of the world's problems, and would mean simply a capitulation to our real or exaggerated strength. It would mean an attempt to trade, to get from us gas and oil, neglecting all other aspects of the problem, I think it is very dangerous. By liberating ourselves from problems we can't solve ourselves, we could concentrate on accumulating strength, and as a result, the whole world would be disarmed and facing our uncontrollable bureaucratic apparatus. I think that detente without any qualifications, accepting our rules of the game, would be very bad."

We turn now to the record of the Soviet Government in the way of observing its obligations to its allies. Here the record shows that the majority of solemn pledges given by the Kremlin over the last forty years have been broken and that the Soviet record of perfidy is perhaps unsurpassed in civilised history.

Lenin had laid down the doctrinal basis of this when he said : "Promises are like pie-crust made to be broken. It would be mad and criminal to tie our hands by entering into an agreement of any permanence with anybody." Stalin had added : "Words have no relation to actions. Otherwise, what kind of diplomacy is it ? Words are one thing, actions are another."

The facts are that the Yalta Agreement, the Potsdam Agreement and the Atlantic Charter signed by the Big Powers at the end of the Second World War were shamelessly broken by Stalin who destroyed, in violation of these treaties, the independence of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Rumania.

There are also many specific instances of violations of this particular kind of Treaty by the Soviet Government. Take the case of Poland. On July 25, 1932, the Soviet Union signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Poland. On May 5, 1934, it was extended for ten years. On August 23, 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed which contained a secret additional protocol for the partition of Poland. On September 1, 1939, German troops invaded Poland. On September 17, 1939, Soviet troops invaded Poland to help the Nazis. On September 23, 1939, the USSR and Germany signed an agreement partitioning Poland.

Similar treaties were signed with the Baltic countries of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, treaties of friendship and cooperation. Later, their independence was destroyed and they have been absorbed in the Soviet empire.

Then there is the case of Finland. On January 21, 1932, a Treaty of Non-Aggression was signed between the Soviet Union and Finland. On November 28, 1939, this Treaty was unilaterally denounced by the Soviet Union. On November 30, 1939, Soviet military forces invaded Finland. It was only the courage of the little Finnish people that helped them survive the Russian onslaught.

Again, take the case of China. The Republic of China and the Soviet Union had a treaty of the same nature signed on August 21, 1937. On August 14, 1945, a Treaty was signed for 30 years. On October 2, 1949, the USSR broke off relations with the Republic of China and recognised the Mao Tse-Tung regime which it had helped to establish. On February 14, 1950, the USSR signed the same Treaty, in the same language, for another 30 years with the Communist regime that it had now recognised.

Iran is another example. On January 29, 1942, Iran, the USSR and Britain signed a Treaty of Alliance against Germany, providing for the military use of Iranian territory only until the end of the war. But, strangely enough, at the end of the war, the Soviet Union refused to withdraw its troops. Ultimately, it did so in return for a promise given by Mossadeh for oil concessions, which was later rejected by the Iranian Diet and withdrawn.

Czechoslovakia, of course is a well known example of the treachery of the Soviet Union. On December 12, 1943, the USSR and the Czech Government signed a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. On February 25, 1948, the Soviet Government gave an ultimatum to the Benes-Mazaryk Government destroying the democratic government of Czechoslovakia and imposing a Communist dictatorship. The same treachery was repeated twenty years later. On August 3, 1968, the Bratislav Agreement was signed between the Dubcek Government and Kosygin and Brezhnev. On August 20, Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia without warning

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and occupied the country. Dubeck commented later on hearing of the invasion: "How is it possible? I devoted all my life to cooperate with the Soviet Union and now they have done this to me. It is the tragedy of my life. He is not likely to be the last victim of Soviet perfidy."

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Let us now turn to the character of the present Government in New Delhi. It is led by a Prime Minister who saw nothing wrong in attending, in October 1967, the 50th Anniversary celebrations by world communist parties of the Communist Revolution in Russia. As it happens, apart from President Kekkonen of Finland who, for geographical reasons felt compelled to do so, not a single head of another democratic country or government in the world attended the celebrations. The Government led by a Prime Minister successfully prevented the Indian Parliament from condemning the brutal Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Whether it is in regard to Vietnam, West Asia, Chile or Guinea Bissau, the Indian Government's position has faithfully echoed the Soviet line.

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Among the members of the Indian Cabinet are former card-holding members of the Communist Party of India whose resignations are known to have been purely "tactical". One of these, who had, in a secret document circulated in communist circles, preached the desirability of communists leaving their Party and infiltrating into the Congress and who became a Cabinet Minister, died recently in an air crash. But there are still others in the Government and at least three or four others of this category could be identified. One of them is a General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee who recently led a 280-men delegation, including 50 Members of Parliament, from India to Moscow to participate in the World Congress of Peace Forces in October 1973.

The present Government in Delhi is one that has permitted massive infiltration of the civil service, of the press and of national life in general. Mr. Peter Sagar's excellent research, embodied in his book Moscow's Hand in India, published by the Swiss Eastern Institute in Berne in 1966, revealed a most alarming picture of the extent that this infiltration had reached.

It is necessary to mention this because an analysis of the character of those who have entered into an alliance with the Soviet Union is highly relevant in analysing the pros and cons of such an alliance.

When President Sadat of the UAR signed his Treaty with President Podgarny, it had a particular character because President Sadat had already locked up Sabry and several others for alleged pro-Soviet and treasonable activities.

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Had Sabry and not Sadat signed the same Treaty, would it not have had an entirely different connotation? The crucial point here is that Indo-Soviet Treaty was signed by the Sabrys of India and not by the Sadats, and its motives and implications for the future security of India cannot therefore but be suspect.

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* Mr. Sol Sanders summed up the position quite accurately in his article in the first issue of Asian Affairs when he wrote, "Mrs. Indira Gandhi, following a lifetime of fellow travelling along the major currents of Soviet thought" has made India "a stalking horse for Soviet interests in the strategic Indian Ocean".

Another criterion for judging the nature of an alliance could be the relative balance of forces and strength between the two parties. Is it an alliance between two more or less equally strong countries? Does it partake of the nature of an alliance between equals? Or is it an alliance between two extremely unequal parties, one of which inevitably dominates the other by reason of its military and economic superiority? The answer to this is fairly obvious, and the economic agreements and relationship between the two governments which were recently made more firm and far-reaching during Mr. Leonid Brezhnev's visit to India show the measure of the inequality. The country's dependence on the USSR for military supplies is, of course, well known.

Another test of the desirability or otherwise of the alliance would be the effect it has had on India's relations with other countries. The immediate reaction to the signing of the Treaty answers this question. A report from Karachi spoke of widespread jubilation that India had done what was wrong from its point of view and right from the Pakistani point of view.

Mr. S. Mihal Singh of the Statesman, reporting from Europe, wrote : "Europe's reaction to the Indo-Soviet Treaty is a sad commentary, because it underlines how far in West Europe's estimation India has already slipped." Mr. Das of the Indian Express reported on Britain's misgivings on the Indo-Soviet Treaty. Mr. Narayan reported from Japan that the Indo-Soviet Treaty has shattered Japan's hope of maintaining peace in Asia and of keeping Russia out of the Indian Ocean.

When Mr. Swaran Singh went to Jakarta, it is known that he was received coolly by the Indonesian Government, even though it is certainly a non-aligned country. The Antara News Agency reported on his visit in a most scurvy manner. Speaking at Singapore on April 16, 1972, Mr. Adam Malik, Indonesia's Foreign Minister, revealed that Indonesia had rejected the Soviet offer of a pact on the lines of the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

Writing on the eve of Sardar Swaran Singh's visit to Ceylon, the Daily Sun of Colombo captioned its article : "Swaran Singh - the Aligned Non-Aligned" and asked the question : "As much as he is Minister of External Affairs of India, is Sardar Swaran Singh a contact man for Moscow?" Much more authoritative was the note of caution struck by no less a person than the leader of the Opposition, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene who said in the Ceylonese Parliament:

"The present Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi follows the great heritage bequeathed by her father. As one who knew him well, I wish his daughter would dispel from the minds of the smaller nations in the Indian Ocean the fear that the Soviet-Indian Treaty is harmful to their interest."

Insofar as Japan is concerned, the Indian attitude and that of the Japanese Government are poles apart. In an exclusive interview given by Mr. Tanaka, the Japanese Prime Minister, to the U.S. News and World Report, published in its issue of November 26, 1973, Mr. Tanaka expressed the view that not only his nation but China as well are convinced that peace in the far East depends on the presence of US forces. When asked whether this meant that the US should keep its military forces in Asia, Prime Minister Tanaka answered in the affirmative : "Certainly, this is part of what I mean by staying in Asia."

The US-Japan security treaty is the basic framework of stability for all of Asia, not just for Japan. Likewise, the presence of the U.S. Seventh Fleet is in Asia not merely in the interests of the U.S. and Japan. In fact, it is basic to the security of Asia as a whole."

Perhaps the biggest single hurdle raised by the Treaty is against the possibility of the normalisation of relations between India and Communist China. As is well known, the Chinese Communists have throughout the past two years held the view that not only does the Treaty reduce India to satellite status vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, but that the main thrust of the Treaty of the Treaty is to seek to isolate and encircle Communist China in the Soviet interest.

It is thus clear that this alliance has isolated India in the councils of the world and cut it off from friendly nations like Iran, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. It is difficult to counter the proposition that the alliance has also limited India's options.

Finally, since foreign and domestic policies cannot be placed in water-tight compartments and each must influence the other, what are the implications of the Treaty for the domestic scene in India?

The lining up with the leading totalitarian Super Power and its consistent glorification has been accompanied by moves to weaken and subvert the democratic Constitution of the Republic. Two of these moves have taken the form of the 24th and 25th Amendments to the Constitution which have sought to emasculate the Supreme Court and destroy the Fundamental Rights of the citizen embodied in the Constitution by seeking to make Parliament which, under the Constitution, is a subordinate limb, like the Executive and the Judiciary, a sovereign Parliament like that in Britain, where there is neither a written Constitution nor any Fundamental Rights which Parliament may not abrogate. Alongside of this process, there has been far reaching infiltration in the national life of the country, not excluding the press, education, the administration, the police and the armed forces.

It is clear that the Indo-Soviet alliance aggravates the already existing threats of infiltration and disruption to the free way of life of the Indian people. After the Brezhnev visit, New Age, the organ of the Communist Party of India, triumphantly carried in its issue of December 9, the banner headline: "New Possibilities Opened Up for Advance of Left and Democratic Forces."

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The Brezhnev Visit

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It was not long after the Treaty was entered into in 1971 that second thoughts began to prevail and come to the surface in Delhi, not only in the press but also, to some extent, within official circles. It was felt that the Treaty, alongside of India's complete dependence for armaments on the Soviet Union, had made India over-dependent on the Soviet Union and therefore vulnerable. Some of those who had supported the signing of the Treaty when announced began to urge that India should end the state of affairs where India appeared to have cut herself off from the rest of the world and that an effort should be made to edge away a little from the Soviets and balance a little better between the USSR, the USA, Communist China and other countries like Japan, West Germany and the countries of South East Asia.

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In fairness to the Indian Government, it must be conceded that efforts were made more than once during the past two years to move towards a restoration of normal relations with Communist China. Nevertheless, these moves did not evoke any response from the Chinese Communists who evidently had made up their minds that the Treaty in itself was a threat to them. Perhaps the way in which Mr. Swaran Singh, the Minister for External Affairs, has been repeatedly saying "that India's friendship with China cannot be at the cost of Indo-Soviet friendship" which he described as "basic in our external policy attitude" has not exactly encouraged the Chinese Communists. They, in fact, stepped up their propaganda campaign noticeably during Mr. Brezhnev's visit to Delhi by accusing India of collaborating with the "Soviet revisionist new Czars" who were giving effect to the traditional Czarist imperialist ambition of breaking through to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

Japan has, as always, been cool and aloof. The South East Asian countries, who had looked to India for leadership for the last two decades, appear to have lost confidence in India's foreign policies. The US Government also appear to have lost interest in the affairs of the sub-continent which they do not consider of primary concern to their national interests and which is now rated low down in the list of American priorities.

Unless, therefore, New Delhi is to make a basic change in its attitude, of which there is as yet no indication, it may be difficult for it to restore a better balance with the various elements in the multipolar world that has evolved.

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The effusive welcome given by official New Delhi to Mr. Brezhnev in November 1973 gives every indication that Delhi intends to deepen the commitments of the Indo-Soviet alliance. On the other hand, the joint declaration emerging from the discussions, omitted any reference to the Brezhnev Plan and, as far as one can make out, the Government of India has not so far committed itself to participate in the promotion of the Brezhnev plan to which, however, the Communist leader made pointed reference in his speech to Members of Parliament in New Delhi. The Indian Government's spokesman has also announced in Parliament that no concessions have been made in the way of providing a base for Soviet naval forces in Indian ports.

Mr. Brezhnev in the course of a public speech in Delhi had described the Indo-Soviet Treaty as "a compass which indicated the direction which the two countries had to take." Commenting on this, Mr. Bharat Wariavwalla of the Institute of Defence Studies in New Delhi wrote in an article in the Hindustan Times of December 10, 1973, that "even the friendliest of states had found it difficult to chart out a common political course." According to him, the position of the Indian Sub-continent in Asia might be a possible source of discord between the two parties:

"A regional power like India would see the stability of the sub-continent as an end in itself. A global power like the Soviet Union would regard a stable 'Hindustan peninsula', as the Soviets call it, the lynch pin in their design for an Asian continent organising its security through collective efforts. "

Turning to the attitude of the two parties to Communist China Mr. Wariavwalla wrote :

"The Soviet sponsored collective security system is directed against China. To say, as Moscow does repeatedly, that it is not is self-deception at best, hypocrisy at worst.....India has its own misgivings about China but it does not share with the Soviet Union all its misgivings about China. India has a dispute with China which may remain unresolved for some time. The Soviet Union has a conflict with China whose resolution seems impossible to conceive."

"The bearings of the compass could point in the right direction if Moscow accepts the fact that a concerted Indo-Soviet policy towards China is neither possible nor indeed desirable. "

The main thrust of the Delhi Agreement appears to be in the field of economic relations where there had already been a gross distortion in the pattern of India's foreign trade as a result of governmental pressure to force trade into channels that led to what were called "the rupee payment countries", the theory being that, while others demanded payment in dollars, marks, yen and pounds sterling, the Russians sold to India against the rupee. This myth was blown sky high at the time of the devaluation of the rupee in 1966 when the Soviet and Yugoslav Governments made it clear that the rupee they had in mind was not the Indian rupee at its depreciated value but the gold content of the rupee. This meant that they too had been making us pay in hard currency. On the eve of the Brezhnev visit, the loan repayments by India far exceeded fresh aid receipts from the USSR.

So too, the scandal of the "switch trade", by which the Soviets and its Eastern European satellites buy cheap from India and sell at a high profit to hard currency countries, has become well-known. By and large, it is alleged that the Soviet Union sell commodities to developing countries at prices 15 to 20 % higher than world prices and make their purchases from them at 15 to 20 % lower than world prices. Evidence for these propositions is to be found in books like The Net Cost of Soviet Foreign Aid by J.R. Carter, J. Berliner's Soviet Economic Aid, Marshall

I. Goldman's Soviet Foreign Aid, Vassil Vassilev's Policy in the Soviet Bloc on Aid to Developing Countries (OECD Developing Centre Studies), and Kurt Muller's The Soviet Bloc and the Developing Countries.

The Agreements signed in New Delhi during Mr. Brezhnev's visit to India threaten to aggravate the dominating position of the Soviet Union in India's international trade pattern. But what is even more objectionable is the agreement to dovetail the Indian Five-Year Plans into the pattern of the Soviet Five-Year Plans. While these developments are consistent with the general Soviet policy of economic relations, which is based on the motive of encouraging countries in the Third World to adopt "the non-capitalist path of development," the wisdom of thus tying India to the chariot-wheels of the USSR in return for the promise to supply certain scarce commodities like petrol, newsprint, power generating machinery, steel and edible oil may well be doubted.

There is no indication that the Indian Red Riding Hood at any stage reacted to the advances of the visitor to Delhi last November by saying, as well she might have: "Grandma, what big teeth you have!" On the contrary, all the talk about self-dependence and the oft-repeated desire to end foreign aid were happily forgotten during the euphoria of the visit.

The laws of economics have a habit of prevailing over political manipulations and distortions, and it will be some years before it is clear whether the effort to integrate the Indian economy with that of the USSR and its East European satellites has succeeded or failed. In any event, the total assistance assured is scanty when compared to the massive economic aid given by the USA during the past two decades which has yielded both countries such poor dividends.

What, then, has been the net upshot of Mr. Brezhnev's visit to India? Undoubtedly, one of the purposes was to whip up pro-Soviet sentiment and to strengthen the position of the present government in New Delhi, which has been losing ground in the way of popular support, as evidenced by public opinion polls in recent months.

While it is too early to judge the long-term effects of the visit, the rather lukewarm popular response to the officially organised demonstrations of welcome gives rise to doubts about the success of the Soviet objective. Though Mr. Brezhnev arrived accompanied by 300 Soviet officials and newsmen, observers report that there was nothing to greet him even remotely akin to the almost frenzied greetings that huge crowds gave to President Eisenhower in Delhi in 1958 or the affectionate popular welcome given in 1961 to Queen Elizabeth, the Head of the Commonwealth, or even to Nikita Khrushchev when he visited India in 1955.

It would not, however, be wise to give too much weight to the lukewarm character of the popular response in Delhi because the Government controlled TV and Radio gave an entirely different picture of the visit and the Indian press, on its part, discreetly did nothing to correct it.

Mr. Brezhnev also undoubtedly wanted to use the visit to impress the world with the importance he was giving to this Asian country by the use of new symbols and to use the alliance with India as a model in the hope of similar developments with other countries in Asia. Perhaps the restoration of his own credibility so badly damaged by the calling of his bluff in West Asia by the American alert may also have been one of the by-products hoped for.

Another objective may have been to help the Congress Party and the Communist Parties of Russia and India to move closer to one another. This was brought out when Mr. Brezhnev talked with the Congress President, on the one side and the leaders of the Indian Communist Party, whom Mr. Brezhnev met without any embarrassment to himself or any reaction from his Indian governmental hosts. During these talks suggestions were made that the Congress Party and the CPI should get closer and that there should be links and contacts between the Congress Party and the C.P.S.U. in Moscow.

Among the minor gains by the Soviet Communist leader should be noted the fact that India, in breach of protocol, accorded to the leader of the Soviet Communist Party, who occupies no position in the Soviet Government, honours reserved for the Head of a State and that, by signing the Agreements with the Soviet Communist Party leader, the Indian Government willingly accepted the fact that the Soviet Government is nothing but an instrument in the hands of the totalitarian Communist Party.

Perhaps the most balanced assessment of the over-all picture of the alliance as it emerges after the Brezhnev visit is that of one of India's most competent commentators, Mr. A.G. Noorani. "Make no mistake about it", he wrote, "the Russians have scored gains else their spokesman Zamyatin would not have talked of 'a qualitatively new and positive advancement of relations between India and the Soviet Union'..... While India turned down some Soviet proposals which would have cut off her options with other powers, it has, nonetheless, moved significantly closer to Russia to a point which bodes us no good. "