

# Shift in the Soviet Policy and the Cold War Dynamics

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**Abstract:** *India's friendly stance towards the USSR has greatly been exaggerated, misunderstood and misinterpreted in India and abroad. An examination of the subject appeared necessary in order to explain the nature, extent, direction and implications of India's relations with the USSR. An attempt has been made here to analyze India's policy towards the USSR and place it in proper perspective. The ever growing friendly relations between the two neighbours are the result of many factors such as the complementarity of their national interests and the constantly changing national and international situations. The Soviet Union's huge size, its vast potentialities and the geo-political situation compelled Indian leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru in particular, to realize, even before India attained independence, the need to develop close and friendly relations with the Soviet Union.*

**Keywords:** India, USSR, Kashmir, Cold War Dynamics, South Asian region, Khrushchev

## 1. Stimulating US Pakistan Relations

The later years witnessed dramatic changes in the international political scenario. The US-Pak axis grew to a new height. In 1948, Pakistan offered a base to the US in Gilgit area of Pakistan occupied Kashmir. For the Soviet Union the US presence in the South Asian region was a threat to its security. In 1949, when the Pakistani Prime Minister visited the US, he was offered military and economic support. The US policy towards Kashmir at that time was favorable to Pakistan and "unsympathetic and even hostile" towards India.<sup>1</sup> Pakistan joined the Baghdad pact in 1955 and South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), sponsored by the US in 1954. These steps of Pakistan created grave concern in the minds of both, the Soviet and Indian leaders. The developments led to reorientation in their foreign policies as a result of which both moved closer to each other.

## 2. USSR and India

It took four years for the Soviet Union to take any stand on Kashmir since the inception of the issue. When the United Nations Security Council met on 17 January 1952 to discuss the issue in its meeting, the Soviet delegate, Jacob Malik, spoke at length on the problem. Referring to various plans put forward by London and Washington, he observed that those plans "instead of speaking a real settlement, were aimed at prolonging the dispute and at converting Kashmir into a trust territory of the US and the UK under the pretext of giving it assistance through the United Nations."<sup>2</sup> In support of his argument, he quoted from Pakistan and the US newspapers. On 9 August 1952 *Pravda* published a TASS report on the proceedings of Indian Parliament and supported the proposal made by CPI members, A.K. Gopalan and H. Mukerjee, in their debate on 7 August 1952 to withdraw the Kashmir question from the United Nations.<sup>3</sup>

The initial response of India to the Soviet offer of closer relationship was lukewarm. The Soviet support to India on the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council 1952 was not taken seriously by the Indian leadership. It appeared that India did not want Kashmir to be a factor in bloc politics between the two super powers. K.S. Shelvanker from *The*

*Hindu*, attributed somewhat similar reasons to the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's position: ". . . I understand that this is precisely the sort of development Indian diplomacy had been endeavoring to avoid from the beginning involvement of the Kashmir dispute in the Conflict between the rival power blocs and the propaganda and Passions of the cold war."<sup>4</sup> *New York Times*, on 21 January 52, wrote, "Indians fear Malik statement on Kashmir may complicate settlement of the dispute", that the "general feeling here is that India wants an early settlement of the long-standing issue before the UN and that the manner in which the Soviet delegate delivered his frontal attack against the West has hardly contributed towards that end. It is feared in informed circles that Mr. Malik'S speech although it reflects Indian sentiment, might pose new problems and further complicate the dispute."<sup>5</sup>

Khrushchev criticized Pakistan's policy as it is not guided by the vital interests of their people, of their state, but is dictated by monopoly circles of other countries. The proximity of Pakistan with the US and its membership of the 'notorious' Baghdad Pact, 'the aim of which is anything but peace', and its sanctioning of its territory for establishing American military bases, were considered detrimental to its security interests. This factor provided impetus for growing Indo-Soviet friendship. Bulganin, in a press conference in New Delhi on 14 December 1955 said, "As for Kashmir during our visit there we saw how greatly the Kashmirians rejoice in their national liberation, regarding their territory as an integral part of India."<sup>6</sup>

After completing his visit to India, Burma and Afghanistan, Bulganin in his report to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR argued that, "on the pretext of supporting Pakistan on the Kashmir question certain countries are trying to entrench themselves in this part of India in order to threaten and exert pressure on areas in the vicinity of Kashmir. The attempt was made to sever Kashmir from India artificially and converts it into a foreign military base." But, he said, the people of Kashmir are emphatically opposed to this imperialist policy. "The issue has been settled by the Kashmiris themselves; they regarded themselves as an integral part of India. We became profoundly convinced of this during our meetings with the people in Srinagar, and in

our conversations with the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Mr. G. M. Bakshi, and his colleagues". Further he said, "The Soviet government supports India's policy in relations to the Kashmir issue, because it fully accords with the interests of peace in this part of Asia. We declared this when we were in Kashmir, we reaffirmed our declaration at a press conference in Delhi on December 14, and we declare it today. Khrushchev in his speech expressed similar sentiments, "In Kashmir we were convinced that its people regarded its territory as an inalienable part of the Republic of India. This question has been irrevocably decided by the people of Kashmir."<sup>7</sup>

As a mark of growing friendship, the Soviet Union in the Security Council proceedings on Kashmir, in February 1957, applied its first veto on a resolution to use UN force to facilitate demilitarization. It was co-sponsored by Great Britain, the US, Australia and Cuba. The resolution was unacceptable to India. The resolution noted the importance the Security Council "attached to the demilitarization of the state of Jammu and Kashmir preparatory to the holding of a plebiscite" and "Pakistan's proposal for the use of a temporally United Nations force in connection with demilitarization". The Security Council held "that the use of such a force deserved consideration."<sup>8</sup> The Security Council authorized its president Gunnar Jarring to visit India and Pakistan to bring about demilitarization or further the settlement of the dispute.

Sobolev, the Soviet delegate, on 18 February 1957, proposed amendments to the above mentioned resolution. He argued "the situation in Kashmir has changed considerably since 1948 when the Security Council had first called for a plebiscite. The people of Kashmir had settled the question themselves and now considered their territory an integral part of India."<sup>9</sup> In his resolution the Soviet delegate deleted reference to "the use of a temporary UN force in connection with demilitarization in Kashmir. After his amendments were rejected by the other Security Council members, he vetoed the Western sponsored resolution on 20 February 1957. He justified it by arguing that the resolution, as it stood, favoured Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> In his government's opinion the people of Kashmir had in fact already settled the question.

In March 1959, a Soviet delegation led by A. Andrew visited Kashmir to demonstrate that they regarded Kashmir as an Indian state. He described Kashmir as 'the most beautiful place of the world' and reiterated that they regarded 'Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Republic.' Pointing out that Kashmir "is not far from the Southern frontier of the Soviet Union" he declared that "in your struggle we are your comrades."<sup>11</sup> The following month Karan Singh visited the Soviet Union. At a reception Khrushchev welcomed the guest from 'friendly India' and reiterated the Soviet support to the Indian Policy in Kashmir. Karan Singh thanked them for their unequivocal support to India, especially in the case of Kashmir.

To discuss the Kashmir issue, when the Security Council met on 27 April 1962, Platon Morozov (the Soviet delegate) declared that Kashmir is an integral part of India and the people of Kashmir have decided this issue. In its meeting on 21 June 1962, the representative of Ireland, supported by the

British representative, introduced a resolution. According to Morozov, the 'principal aim' of the draft resolution was the holding of plebiscite and that would be nothing but 'flagrant interference' in the domestic affairs of India.<sup>16</sup> He, therefore, urged the Council to reject the Irish resolution, which according to him was basically in line with the dictates of the US. When the Irish resolution was put to vote on 23 June 1962, the Soviet representative vetoed it. He declared that the question of holding plebiscite in Kashmir was 'dead and outdated' and the Kashmir question had been solved 'once for all.'

### 3. Conclusion

The Khrushchev period witnessed a close relationship between India and the Soviet Union. It supported the Indian stand on Kashmir at Various fora. It also supported Nehru's decision to withdraw the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and to integrate the state into the Indian Union fully. The Soviet attitude towards Kashmir has not changed since his visits to India in 1955 and 1960.<sup>12</sup> When the Kashmir question came before the Security Council in February 1964, the Soviet representative, Fedorenko, reiterated his country's view that the question of Kashmir had already been settled 'once for all'. He supported the Indian contention that a Security Council resolution would aggravate the situation.<sup>13</sup>

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