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# STUDENT ESSAY

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INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE GREAT POWERS AND PAKISTAN:  
PRESENT STATUS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

BY

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and Pakistan. The Soviet Union enjoys a special relationship with India and will be committed to continuing those ties. The United States will look for ways to break through the cold formality that has surrounded past associations. The Peoples Republic of China will be anxious to resume talks on the border issue that has overshadowed their once warm ties. Pakistani and Indian relations have reflected the deep-seated instability that persists on the Asian subcontinent. Both Prime Minister Rajiv and President Zia have publicly pledged efforts to find a process for ameliorating their differences. All in all, numerous opportunities will be available for governments to develop mutually beneficial ties with India without compromising existing relations so long as initiatives are well planned and effectively executed.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE GREAT POWERS AND PAKISTAN:  
PRESENT STATUS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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15 April 1985

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ABSTRACT

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Present Status and Implications for the Future

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The assassination of India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984 followed immediately by the succession of her son Rajiv will likely lead to a reassessment of Indian domestic and foreign policies. There are sufficient differences between mother and son in leadership style and background to deduce that in the ensuing months the character of the new government will be quick to take shape. This will also be a period when the new administration will review its foreign contacts and be more responsive to advances from other states for renewal or reformation of relations, particularly with the Great Powers and Pakistan. The Soviet Union enjoys a special relationship with India and will be committed to continuing those ties. The United States will look for ways to break through the cold formality that has surrounded past associations. The Peoples Republic of China will be anxious to resume talks on the border issue that has overshadowed their once warm ties. Pakistani and Indian relations have reflected the deep-seated instability that persists on the Asian subcontinent. Both Prime Minister Rajiv and President Zia have publicly pledged efforts to find a process for ameliorating their differences. All in all, numerous opportunities will be available for governments to develop mutually beneficial ties with India without compromising existing relations so long as initiatives are well planned and effectively executed.

India's Relations with the Great Powers and Pakistan:  
Present Status and Implications for the Future

INTRODUCTION

India's foreign policy grew out of a turbulent period of transition from colonialist possession to independent state. In its efforts to create a sharp distinction between itself and its former British rulers, India evolved a foreign policy that articulated principles of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, and peaceful coexistence. In this context India sought and gained a leading role in the Cairo Conference of 44 non-aligned nations held on October 2, 1964 and is still recognized today as the chief force in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).<sup>1</sup> For the past forty years, India's foreign policy has been expressed consistently in terms of its relations with the Soviet Union, the United States, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and its neighbors. This continuity in the past has been due to the relative stability of India's leadership since independence and the establishment of a dynastic tradition of succession. The brutal assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984 followed by the swift installation of her sole surviving son as her successor, however, could represent a watershed in Indian foreign policy. Rajiv Gandhi has a clear objective of a rapidly modernized India achieved through application of hi-tech systems in organizations restructured for efficiency and production. He is also committed to domestic programs that will rely on external support. To accomplish these goals and facilitate change, Indian foreign and domestic policies will be obliged

to break with past traditions. The degree and speed with which these changes will occur are yet to be assessed. This paper examines the present state of relations between India, the Great Powers, and Pakistan--representing the legacy of Mrs Gandhi-- and then discusses the implications for the future of these relations under India's new Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. Some conclusions concerning the role the United States can and should play in the region are also offered.

#### BACKGROUND: Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv in Indian Politics

Mrs Gandhi was born to politics and power. Her grandfather Motilal Nehru was an early leader of the Indian independence movement. Her father Jawaharlal Nehru led the infant nation as prime minister through its first 17 years after independence from Britain in 1947. Mrs Gandhi was elected Congress Party president in 1959, and after her father's death in 1964, became minister of information and broadcasting in Prime Minister Shastri's Cabinet. When Shastri died 18 months later she became India's third prime minister. Her years as the leader of India's masses were turbulent. The highpoint of her popularity came in late 1971 when the Indian Army moved against Pakistan troops trying to quell the separatist movement in then East Pakistan. The victory created Bangladesh. By 1974, however, her popularity was waning due to economic stagnancy and demographic pressures from refugees created by the war with Pakistan among other reasons. In June 1975 Mrs Gandhi declared a state of national emergency as a reaction to deteriorating conditions and public demands that she resign. Thousands of her opponents were jailed, civil rights were curtailed, and rigid censorship was clamped on the press. During the next 21 months her regime tightened governmental powers of preventive detention, forced sterilizations, destroyed slums, and retroactively amended the Indian Constitution to make it all legal. Then in 1977 she unexpectedly ended the emergency and called for elections. She apparently miscalculated the effects

of her Draconian measures during the emergency period, for she lost her position to an old political rival of the Nehru days, Morarji Desai. Mrs Gandhi remained active in the political arena, however, and by January 1980 had regained stewardship of the nation. Sensing that she had allowed too much freedom and authority at the state level in the past, she began a process of centralizing power and thereby came in direct conflict with some states that sought greater autonomy.<sup>2</sup> The Punjab was one such state where the majority Sikhs felt threatened by an ongoing, gradual cultural assimilation into Hindu India. Mrs Gandhi, committed to a unitary system of government, refused to deal with the issues raised by Akali Dal, the political party representing Sikhs, and jailed its leaders. This set the stage for the more militant Sikhs to express their demands in more violent fashion culminating in June 1984 in an attack ordered by Mrs Gandhi on their holy temple in Amritsar, which had become a fortress and command post for the Sikh terrorists. It was this act that led, on October 31, 1984, to her assassination by her personal bodyguard. Twelve hours later her son, Rajiv Gandhi, was sworn in as Prime Minister of India and later elected to the office in a landslide vote.<sup>3</sup>

Rajiv was born in August 1944. He attended India's prestigious Doon School and Cambridge University in London. On his return to India he trained as a commercial pilot with no further ambition than to fly jet aircraft for Indian Airlines. His younger brother, Sanjay, was active in politics at the time and was favored by Mrs Gandhi to be her successor. In June of 1980, however, Sanjay crashed in a stunt plane and died, forcing his mother to turn to Rajiv to fill the dynastic vacuum created by Sanjay's death. Rajiv agreed to come into politics to satisfy his mother with no real desire for the power that would eventually be his. In 1981 he won a by-election to fill the seat vacated by his brother by a massive majority. He began his political education under the watchful eye of his mother, and, in February 1983, he became the General Secretary of Congress (I) Party.<sup>4</sup> As his power and experience grew, he established a reputation of being "Mr Clean" by dismissing corrupt and disreputable officials, many of whom had got their jobs



through Sanjay's help. The mystique of the Gandhi name is so strong that immediately upon his mother's death, Rajiv was chosen by a hastily called cabinet session to succeed her even though the senior cabinet member would normally assume temporary leadership in these circumstances. However, in this case, domestic instability and upcoming general elections urged a decision in favor of sensibility rather than propriety, and Rajiv came to power with consensus of the Cabinet.<sup>5</sup> Rajiv's swift installation as prime minister exercised a stabilizing influence on a potentially dangerous trend of events and, at the same time, placed him in an almost invulnerable political position. At the conclusion of elections on December 24, 1984, his party achieved an 80% majority in the 547-seat Indian Parliament and then followed this enormous mandate with successful state elections held in February 1985. Any concerns his party officials may have had about Rajiv surrounding himself with his classmates of the Doon School were set aside when he diverted some of them to junior posts within the government, following the election campaign. When asked who would influence him the most, Rajiv said that his policy will be to consider all points of view before taking a decision, including the Parliamentary Board and Cabinet. Rajiv's greatest challenges will be to heal religious, communal, and ethnic divisions; reduce excessive centralization of power; and stabilize India's economy. In contrast to his mother's policies, Rajiv has expressed an interest in reducing controls in the private sector of the economy and turning more to the West for technological assistance in all sectors. In this regard, the West may find him more accommodating than Mrs Gandhi, but any tilt in this direction will not be forthcoming soon for reasons discussed later in this paper.<sup>6</sup>

Following this brief background, the remainder of the paper will be devoted to a discussion of present foreign policy issues behind India's relations with the Soviet Union, United States, PRC, and Pakistan. Also included is a presentation of probable future courses of action of the Rajiv government as it comes to terms with problems in international relations.

## STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS: India, the Great Powers, and Pakistan

### General

India has always recognized the importance of maintaining a balanced relationship with the major powers in the region while exploiting interstate ties where it can. From independence in 1947, foreign influence has been strong in the shaping of affairs in the subcontinent. Although Mrs Gandhi played an active role in developing India's independence from extra-regional states, she remained conscious of the realities of world economics, politics, and security issues. To this end Mrs Gandhi sought the type and level of ties that would get the most for India and give up the least. In a shrewd move she placed India at the head of NAM while relying heavily on the Soviet Union for military assistance and the United States for aid and markets for India's exports. She justified close ties with the Soviet Union without compromising her position in the NAM by claiming anything was possible as long as it was in India's interests.<sup>7</sup> Hence, India's interaction with the great powers is significant in shaping events in the subcontinent and will be the subject of the following discussion. In order, India's relation with the Soviet Union, United States, China, and Pakistan will be considered.

### India and the USSR

Relations between India and the Soviet Union made significant progress as a result of the Chinese invasion of India's northwest region in 1962. It is important to note that India turned to the US for support initially, but US reluctance to get involved with a country that was the enemy of Pakistan, a staunch US ally in this time period, caused the US to turn down India's request. That rejection has never been forgotten. The Soviet Union saw an opportunity here simultaneously to counter Chinese expansionism while offsetting US gains in Pakistan. From that time to the present, relations with the Soviets continued to grow positively in both the political as well as military areas. In 1971, the

Soviets negotiated a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation with India that formalized the commitments between the two nations.<sup>8</sup> Soviet objectives in India are no secret. They see India as a dramatic and immovable wedge in the geographic encirclement of Soviet Asia, and so long as their relations remain friendly, Soviets gain considerably in power projection capabilities. On Indian Ocean issues, for example, where India advocates demilitarization and no foreign bases, the Soviets support New Delhi's position. Moscow explains its presence there as follows.

"The Soviet Union has demonstrated and is demonstrating restraint, and it has refrained from the establishment of military bases in the Indian Ocean. Our limited military presence there is much less significant than that of the US and its allies. We do not strive for competition of any kind, although the military situation in the Indian Ocean is a direct military threat to our national territory."<sup>9</sup>

Presumably the Indians agree with this Soviet justification for its military buildup in the area for it reflects the same tone heard in official statements directed at Washington to withdraw its forces from the region.

Further, Soviet identification with the largest democracy in the 3rd World allows the Soviets, through India's good offices, to stimulate actions that are favorable to Soviet interests among other 3rd World countries. While a case can be made that India is not in the Soviet camp; nevertheless, the Soviets exploit this relationship whenever they can. From the Indian side, they see the Soviets as a country with security interests in the region willing to give India whatever it wants. The costs for the Soviets in providing arms to India at cut-rate, very soft loan terms are well worth it when balanced against the benefits the Soviets derive from the relationship. That is not to say India does not gain from these ties. On the contrary, India's perception of the threat to the north and northeast from China and to the northwest from Pakistan is adequately compensated by its dependence on what has always been a reliable and predictable ally.<sup>10</sup>

Indo-Soviet ties, however, are not without their problems. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan concerns New Delhi for a number of reasons. Afghanistan was used as a buffer between the Soviet and British empires during the colonial period principally to avoid direct confrontation between the two powers. With Afghanistan now occupied by the Soviets the historical buffer has been removed and the Soviets stand at the gates to the subcontinent. India's borders, therefore, would be at greater risk in the unlikely event that Moscow-Delhi ties change for the worse. Second, the Soviet presence in Afghanistan represents a greater threat to Pakistan and is the justification for US involvement in the region. This creates two problems for India. It not only leads to a Pakistan of growing military strength as it receives support from the US but also increases the potential for superpower confrontation in the subcontinent, as Washington becomes more involved in Islamabad's security developments and Moscow digs in deeper in Kabul. It is true that India was one of the few non-communist nations that refused to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, claiming the Soviets had the right to protect their interests. Still, India continues to demand Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan as soon as possible. As serious as this problem may appear to the region, Indo-Soviet ties will not be affected by the Afghanistan issue either in the short or in the long term.<sup>11</sup>

An important question to answer in the context of this relationship is to what extent can Moscow influence New Delhi? It appears that the Soviets, through their broad security assistance programs, have considerable leverage in India. After all, a Soviet threat to cut off arms and spare parts to India would have great impact on this security-conscious country, notwithstanding its own capability to produce and maintain equipment for its military establishment. India is highly sensitive to foreign interference in its affairs, however, and Moscow treasures its ties so highly with India that it respects those sensitivities and would not consciously take any steps that would endanger the relationship. Soviet attempts to influence the Indian

government indirectly, such as through the various legitimate communist parties in India, are on-going but have been limited in their results. Both countries remain satisfied that each is accomplishing its objectives in regard to the other and to the extent that these interests can be expanded into a more broad regional, and perhaps global, context.<sup>12</sup>

#### India and the US

Relations between India and the United States have run the gamut from hostile to barely correct. In no case have they ever been friendly. Several reasons account for this attitude. The US, in Indian eyes, represents a carry-over of the 'British Raj' as Washington has attempted to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of the Empire in neo-colonialistic style. India's adverse experiences with being dominated by a great power still remain a fresh memory and continue to dictate development of foreign links. Another reason is that not only did the US fail to support India against China in the early sixties but also has a history of propping up governments in Pakistan, a declared enemy of India.

Perhaps the main obstacle in the way of warm relations between Delhi and Washington is seen in the context of US-USSR relations. India views the expansion of superpower disagreements into the region as a direct threat to Indian dominance on the subcontinent. India recognizes that the Soviets have a legitimate interest in the area and so long as the Soviets pursue these interests in a friendly way, India will tolerate their presence. On the other hand, the US is viewed as having marginal interests, especially since the US is no longer dependent on Middle East oil.<sup>13</sup> Also, the boundary between the US Central Command and Pacific Command lies on the Indo-Pakistan border. This adds to India's skepticism that the US views the area as merely a geographic flank of two unified commands and not terribly important.

Washington, for its part, continues to be concerned with this region and the growing Soviet threat there. While the US no longer requires oil from the

Persian Gulf states, close friends and allies of the US, such as Japan, Korea, and Western Europe, depend heavily on this source.<sup>14</sup> Improved Soviet capability to project its power over this vital resource requires US presence and response to protect its interests. The invasion of Afghanistan set a powerful precedent in Soviet projection and made it clear that the Brezhnev Doctrine<sup>15</sup> would be supported, through force, if necessary. The potential for Soviet expansion beyond the Afghan borders into Pakistan and Iran is further justification for US policies in the region, notably expressed by its support for Pakistan and US naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

US relations with Pakistan are seen as dangerous and somewhat naive from an Indian point of view. The danger comes from a strongly armed Pakistani military that could embark on some adventure in Kashmir to act as both a catalyst to Pakistani unity and a vigorous resurgence of Kashmiri autonomy. US naivete is seen in its belief that just because US conditions for arms sale to Pakistan prohibit use of these arms against India, Pakistan will comply. India says whatever is in the interest of Islamabad, it will do, regardless of US policies to the contrary. India's position on US-Pakistan relations is plain.<sup>16</sup> Washington must not deal bilaterally with Pakistan but rather in a multilateral form that includes India as a minimum. These issues make difficult, if not impossible, close ties between the United States and India, but there are areas that may provide common ground on which to develop a meaningful relationship in the future.

#### India and the PRC

India has never forgotten the humiliating defeat its military suffered at the hands of the Chinese in their brief conflict in 1962 over border problems. The unilateral withdrawal of Chinese forces shortly after the invasion from most of the areas India claimed as its own averted a major crisis, which could have led to the collapse of Indian security. India learned well this lesson of the Chinese and completely reorganized its military structure and programs so as never again to

permit such a devastatingly embarrassing loss.<sup>17</sup> So, in a positive sense, the events of 1962 played a large part in the development of India's security forces as we know them today. There are still areas in the north and northeast that China occupies but the issue no longer has the aspect of threat that it had two decades ago when India and China were at war. Neither country now gains a significant advantage from its occupied positions and the de facto border is largely accepted by both sides. Moreover, the border question is an issue on which India and China can agree to talk and, in the context of these discussions, widen the scope to other issues.

China's friendship with Pakistan greatly limits any opportunities for warm relations developing between India and China. China has supported Pakistan in its most recent wars with India, it provides security assistance and military equipment to Pakistan, and it supports Islamabad's efforts to bring pressure on the Soviets in Afghanistan. On the last point, any attempts to raise the costs to the Soviets in Afghanistan that would prompt them to strike back is seen by India as destabilizing regionally and the cause of friction in relations.<sup>18</sup> Also of deep concern to India is the extent to which China may be providing help to Pakistan in the latter's nuclear development program. It was China's advancement in nuclear technology that was the principal motivation for India to demonstrate its own technological self-sufficiency by exploding a nuclear device in 1974. Furthermore, while India's early nuclear policy was committed to peaceful uses, its option to develop nuclear weapons has been kept open due in large part to its uncertainty about China's motives and interests in the region. India's potential in this area is great, especially since New Delhi has already demonstrated an advanced missile capability with the launching of a small satellite into space using its own multiple-stage booster rocket in July 1980.<sup>19</sup>

In a way similar to India's reactions to US-USSR confrontations, New Delhi expresses grave concern over Moscow-Beijing enmity. India's view is that as

long as a conflict exists between these two powers the expression of the conflict manifests itself in regional politics without the concerned states having much say in the matter. In other words, the Soviets see India as a block to complete encirclement of Soviet Asia by forces friendly to the West just as the Chinese see Pakistan as a block between India and the Soviets to prevent the encirclement of China in the south. In this context, it is easy to see why India--and its neighbors--feel like pawns in a superpower game of chess.

#### India and Pakistan

Relations between India and Pakistan currently rest on five major issues: disagreements over Kashmir, support for dissidents, nuclear weapons development, potential for conflict, and relations with the Soviet Union, the United States, and the PRC. The problems over Kashmir began shortly after independence in 1947 when Pakistani demands for a plebescite in the muslim majority state to decide to which country it would belong were rejected by India. There followed in 1948 an attempt by Pakistan to wrest Kashmir forcibly from the Indian grasp. This failed operation set the stage for a constant barrage of charge and counter-charge that continues to the present.<sup>20</sup> In two subsequent wars that India and Pakistan have fought, Kashmir has been a key element in a strategic objective for both countries--Pakistan to take it and India to keep it. Even today, when political rhetoric between the two countries reaches an uncomfortable level, crossborder violations in Kashmir become more intense. While the potential for Kashmir to be the flashpoint of a wider conflict between India and Pakistan should not be underplayed, the line of control separating the two sides has remained essentially the same for the past 37 years and is generally accepted as the de facto frontier.<sup>21</sup> This last point more clearly reflects the Indian view, however, than that of Pakistan.

The unrest in the Sikh-dominated Punjab province of India is another source of continued friction between India and Pakistan. New Delhi accuses Islamabad of supporting the autonomous movement in the hope that by encouraging



Indian provincial demands for separation India will be too busy with its domestic problems to focus its attention on Pakistan. Not only does Pakistan deny these charges as an Indian ploy to divert attention away from its inability to deal with its own internal difficulties, but there is no substantiating evidence that such support is provided. For its part, Pakistan accuses India of supporting separatist demands in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh province, the home of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the source of political opposition to the Punjabi-dominated central government in Islamabad. Again, while these accusations provide a basis for some dialogue between the two nations, the extent to which the neighboring country supports these movements cannot be determined.<sup>22</sup>

A source of considerable anxiety in the region is the potential for nuclear proliferation. India, as mentioned earlier, has already demonstrated the technological capability to make and trigger successfully a nuclear device. The initial reaction to this event in Pakistan was one of panic. Indian motives for detonating a nuclear device could not be clearly discerned, but to the Pakistanis it represented an awesome advantage that India, at some point in the future, could threaten to use against Pakistan. India has rejected any claims that this event was an aggressive expression of military power but rather a test for peaceful purposes. In fact, India has not repeated this test and, as a matter of government policy, will not do so again. The Pakistanis, on the other hand, sensing that India was not totally honest about its intentions in this regard, sought ways to acquire their own nuclear capability.<sup>23</sup> To discourage Pakistan from considering a nuclear military option, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently tied "... US aid to Pakistan to administration certification that Pakistan has no nuclear device capable of use against other countries..."<sup>24</sup>

In a conventional arms perspective of the balance of forces, the scale dramatically tilts in India's favor.<sup>25</sup> This overwhelming superiority accounts for Pakistan's view of India being its biggest threat, and this perception remained

unchanged even though the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan brought a hostile superpower to Pakistan's border. The acquisition of weapons in both countries is motivated by the desire to maintain a modern, technologically sophisticated force to retain the prestige that attaches thereto, as well as developing a credible deterrent to military action. If the latter strategy is successful, and up to now it appears to be that way, then arms provided to both India and Pakistan are essentially stabilizing in their effect on relations between the two countries. This area is one in which the great powers play a significant role.

Relations between India and Pakistan are guided largely by their relations with the Soviet Union, PRC, and the US.<sup>26</sup> India views Pakistan's relations with China and the US as a threat to India's role as the dominant power in the region. India claims that a belligerent Pakistan, with help from the US and PRC would feel secure enough to settle existing differences, particularly in Kashmir, by the use of force. In this scenario the US would deploy a carrier task force to the Arabian Sea--as they did to the Bay of Bengal during the 1971 war between India and Pakistan--in order to discourage the Soviets from venturing across the border from Afghanistan, and the PRC would fix Indian forces deployed against them in the north. The effect would severely limit Indian military flexibility. It is interesting that the Pakistanis view India in much the same way when discussing India's relations with the Soviet Union. Their scenario envisions a combined Soviet and Indian attack into Pakistan with India and the Soviet Union dividing up Pakistan, perhaps along the Indus River, giving Baluchistan province to the Soviets and their long-desired access to warm water ports, while the agriculturally-rich Punjab province would go to India. In spite of what the US may think of the feasibility of these scenarios, there are high-level government officials on both sides who view these options seriously.<sup>27</sup> As long as the US, USSR, and PRC interests clash in this area, relations among the regional powers are bound to be affected.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE: Relations with the Great Powers and with Pakistan

### General

The assassination of Mrs Gandhi represents a watershed in both internal and external politics of India. Although the Gandhi dynasty continues, there are some differences--mentioned earlier--between mother and son that open the way for possible change to present policies. Rajiv appears anxious to put his personal stamp on the development of India's future course and, hence, will make some significant and dramatic changes, particularly in the domestic arena. These changes are likely to be a relaxing of bureaucratic controls in the economic sector, reforming of programs in public and private industry, and attempts to eliminate graft and corruption, as well as a new look at population control measures and revamping the educational system.<sup>28</sup> As for foreign relations in the future, much will depend on how other governments react to the new Indian administration as well as Rajiv's perceptions of what is best for India.

### India and the USSR

In the short-term it is unlikely that there will be any dramatic change in present India-USSR relations. India is deeply involved in the negotiation and purchase of arms from the Soviet Union,<sup>29</sup> and the Indian military, in spite of its apolitical role, still has great influence in the government when it comes to expanding the defense establishment.<sup>30</sup> In the long-term, however, the young Rajiv is likely to consider seriously a readjustment of policies that have placed India in a militarily dependent position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. India's indigenous capability to support its military is growing in every area. By the end of the century, India will be able to manufacture all but the most sophisticated military hardware and its reliance on the Soviet Union for these items will likely diminish.

Further, New Delhi would like to expand its ties with other, more economically viable, countries for support in various aspects of India's infrastructure. India has been restricted in strengthening relations with other countries because of its Soviet ties and this lack of flexibility has limited developmental opportunities.

The situation in Afghanistan will continue at its present level of active stalemate in the foreseeable future and, therefore, India's position of refusing to denounce the invasion will not likely change. Although the Indians would like to see the Soviets leave Afghanistan, the continued occupation is not a major hindrance to Indo-Soviet ties and India's deliberate avoidance of the subject attests to its policy to keep it as low key as possible. In the distant future, as the Soviet Union succeeds in stabilizing the political and military situation there, the issue will become an even less controversial one, reinforcing the stand India took in the first place.

The Soviet Union, for its part, will do all it can to preserve the close relationship it presently enjoys with India. Moscow will make it difficult for New Delhi to disengage to the point where other countries will gain an advantage to the detriment of the Kremlin. The Soviets have several options in countering this development, should it occur. In a negative way they can pressure India through threats to withhold key spare parts for the more technologically sophisticated Soviet hardware in India's military inventory. In the political sphere they could increase their involvement in parties sympathetic to strong ties with the Soviet Union and thereby try to undermine New Delhi's central power and control over the states. Since negative approaches always have an inherent danger of back-firing and producing opposite of the desired effect, the Soviets will more likely take the positive approach. This can be done by offering more lucrative sale terms for military hardware and by offering top-of-the-line equipment presently provided only to Soviet units and not normally sold to other countries. Also, Moscow might try to extend its influence in India through more aggressive use of Friendship Centers and other mechanisms used for the spread of Soviet propaganda and disinformation.

Soviet ability to strengthen ties through economic means will be extremely limited in the future and not likely to be an area it can exploit. This is especially true since the US replaced the Soviet Union as India's largest trade partner in 1983 with a two-way trade valued at \$4 billion, and the US position continues to improve.<sup>31</sup> On balance, Soviet efforts to prevent any loss of its prestige in India will depend greatly on the extent to which India can become self-sufficient and the degree to which other powers can offset Soviet successes.

### India and the US

The steps the US takes in the near future in its relations with India will establish the framework for how the Rajiv government will deal with Washington. For previously stated reasons this is a sensitive and vulnerable period for both powers. India's stated desire is for close relations with the West but not at the expense of its other ties. So, the United States would do well to explore areas where a mutually beneficial relationship can develop that does not directly attack Indo-Soviet ties. One area of rather obvious expansion of links is in the economic arena. By encouraging Western investment and assistance in technological development in India, the US would gain not only nationally but also personally with Rajiv who desires to bring the economy of India rapidly into the twentieth century. There are also opportunities in military assistance, as India will want to reduce its present, almost exclusive, dependence on the Soviets for hardware. Because the issues are exceedingly complex and sensitive, plans must be carefully thought out and gradually implemented so as not to create a backlash that would run counter to US interests.

The US position is doubly complicated because of Washington's close ties with Islamabad. India would like US policy in Pakistan to take greater cognizance of India's dominant role in the subcontinent. The fact that it does not is the source of misgivings and misunderstandings on the part of all countries involved. One option is to bow to India's demands and develop regional policies that have the blessing of India. This would be a serious step for the US to take. Relations

between Pakistan and the US would be so gravely damaged that normalization in the future would be extremely remote. Also, US credibility as an ally would be brought further into question, particularly with Pakistan's Islamic supporters in Southwest Asia, thus jeopardizing US interests beyond the subcontinent. In any case, the gains from this policy shift would be unpredictable. Clearly, US policy concerning Pakistan cannot be dictated by India. That is not to say that the US should disregard the impact of its policies on India. On the contrary, these implications must be taken into account and every effort made to communicate the rationale for decisions affecting regional politico-military affairs. Settling of Indo-Pakistani differences would do much to ease the dilemma confronting the US in this area.<sup>32</sup>

#### India and the PRC

Perhaps the best way to describe future ties between New Delhi and Beijing is one of quiet stability. Although it is highly unlikely that relations will normalize to the point of warm friendship as they were prior to the 1962 attack, the border problems that have existed since that time will not be a significant future issue. Rather, each eventually will recognize the other's position with full acceptance of the status quo and thus provide the basis for positive discussions in other areas.<sup>33</sup>

As in the case of the United States, Sino-Indian relations are governed more by the support of Pakistan than any other issue. There is a difference of degree, however, as New Delhi recognizes Chinese support is limited to relatively old equipment and, aside from the potential for transfer of nuclear technology, does not present as grave a threat in Indian eyes as does US support for Pakistan. The Soviet Union also plays a crucial role in this calculus and India's ties with China will develop only to the extent that will not alter the balance that favors Soviet power. Closer relations between India and Pakistan would also improve the opportunity for a more flexible relationship. The only power not to benefit from this development would be the Soviet Union.

## India and Pakistan

The roller-coaster course of relations between India and Pakistan make specific predictions about their future difficult at best. However, the abrupt passing of Mrs Gandhi, who strongly opposed Pakistan on almost every issue from the beginning, may lead to a more productive relationship than previously. President Zia of Pakistan, anxious to reduce the threat from India, was the first head of state to offer Rajiv condolences after the tragic events of October 31, and to announce his commitment to search for ways to bring the two countries closer together.<sup>34</sup> So, prospects appear better now than they have in a long time for settling differences. In all likelihood it would be overly optimistic, however, to expect any resolutions of the major controversies. Instead, gradual development of common areas will lead to greater expansion of discussions into more sensitive issues. In any case, the assumption here is both countries desire to find a higher degree of compatibility in their ties.

Nuclear proliferation on the subcontinent is one area of future concern. Pakistan is not disposed at the present time to demonstrate a nuclear capability beyond electric power generation because the effect this would likely have on continued US arms supplies. The motivation for Pakistan to develop a nuclear alternative, however, will remain strong. Islamabad will continue to see India as a potential nuclear power willing to use the threat of that capability to support its own regional interests. If Pakistan goes ahead with developing and exploding a nuclear device, India would consider this an aggressive act in spite of any reassurances to the contrary that may precede or follow the detonation. New Delhi's response would likely be along the lines of reassessing its present policy with strong consideration given to stockpiling nuclear weapons and possibly conducting a preemptive strike against Pakistani nuclear facilities. This action would lead immediately to an escalation of the conflict and declaration of war.

While worst-case scenarios argue for confrontation, the actual potential

for conflict between India and Pakistan in the future is slim. Islamabad has seen defeat in three previous wars, the last resulting in the division of Pakistan.<sup>36</sup> Indian military dominance is so significant that a war between the two countries would end in India's favor. Further, the causes of a future war are not readily perceptible. Kashmir will not be the source of difficulty as it has been in the past. Although a solution to this problem is not likely soon, converting the line of control to a mutually recognized border may not be so unacceptable as first reactions may prompt.<sup>37</sup> Settling this dispute would go a long way toward bringing peace to the subcontinent. Also, mutually supported initiatives such as the No-War Pact will lead to relations within which commitments can be made to avoid the destructive forms of competition and channel aggressions into other more productive aspects.

The future of Indo-Pakistani relations will also depend a great deal on who and what type of government follows the martial law of President Zia. The Peoples Party of Pakistan of former prime minister Bhutto will continue to be a strong political force and if it comes to power within this decade, serious domestic turmoil is likely to result. The PPP's platform is one of accommodation with the Soviet Union and disengagement of the link with the United States. Although Benazir Bhutto, leader of the party, also claims that rapprochement with India is part of this package, it is unlikely that this can take place during a major adjustment in the balance of great powers, which must take place following initiation of this PPP platform.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, should the transition of government in Pakistan proceed from military to civil rule in a peaceful way, India will likely be more receptive to discussions on future relations with a Pakistan that is politically and militarily stable.



CONCLUSIONS: The United States' Role in the Region

Circumstances in the subcontinent are ripe for policy reassessments both within the region and in relations between the United States and local governments. Rajiv Gandhi has already made it clear that he is going to make changes in the way India does business primarily in its internal structure but also in its external relations.<sup>39</sup> The US approach to maximizing any advantage should be gradual and cautious. While there is a note of optimism in possible future developments, expectations should not be high that any substantial changes will take place at least in the near-term. India's relations with the Soviet Union are based on the firm ground of credibility and mutual benefit, and any US attempts to weaken these ties directly will not likely succeed. Washington can, however, gain a stronger position than it presently enjoys by participating in discussions on non-controversial subjects initially that could lead to addressing the more complex issues in the future. Assistance in the economic area is but an example of a way to expand US involvement in the region without compromising its ties with India's neighbors. Indo-Pakistani relations will not see a sudden warming, although it would certainly be in US interests for this to happen. Notwithstanding the hostility that is plainly evident in all areas of contact between New Delhi and Islamabad, the US should encourage a settling of differences at least to the point where talks can proceed without the damaging rhetoric that usually accompanies these contacts. This can be done by increasing the number of high-level visits to both countries, providing a better balance of economic and military assistance, and by facilitating hi-tech transfers that will help develop badly needed socio-political programs. It is important for the US in these efforts not to abandon its commitment to Pakistan, a country that represents the US stand against the USSR in the region. This very real dilemma for the US can be solved through a more balanced approach to both governments in the context of a clear articulation of the US position and interests combined.

with mutual understanding among all actors. As relations between the US and PRC continue to warm, which they are likely to do, opportunities will increase for the US to improve its status on the subcontinent providing yet another alternative to achieving its objectives. While there are numerous ways for relations to improve between India and the United States, the danger of deterioration is also genuine. The sooner Washington can engage Rajiv Gandhi in meaningful dialogue, the better chance exists for reducing Soviet influence, softening Indo-Pakistani hostilities, and creating an environment for multilateral growth and development in South Asia.<sup>40</sup>

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