

August 21, 1968

**Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to
the Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

Report on the results of Indian President Zakir Hussain's visit to Moscow, including discussion of Soviet-Indian relations broadly and India's relations with Pakistan, as well as on Soviet efforts to pressure India to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

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It is known that during Prime Minister Kosygin's visit in India, among others, an agreement was reached that the two countries would conduct regular consultations about foreign policy with each other, at the level of the foreign ministries. On the basis of the earlier agreement, the first such consultation should have taken place in Moscow in July, but President Zakir Hussain's visit to Moscow created an opportunity for the exchange of ideas about issues of international politics as well, and thus there was no need for a consultation at the level of foreign ministries.

Afterwards, however, the Indian side proposed that the representatives of the two foreign ministries should meet each other in Delhi between November 4th and 6th. The Indians proposed Delhi as the venue of the meeting on the grounds that their similar consultation with the Americans - [Attorney General Nicholas] Katzenbach - also took place there. The Soviet side accepted the Indian standpoint and the invitation. True, the Indian side wished the MID delegation had been headed by Comrade Gromyko, but he declined to do so on the grounds that he was engaged, and for this reason the delegation will be probably headed by Comrade Firiubin.

The consultation has no pre-prepared agenda, the Soviet side is prepared to discuss all those international and bilateral problems which currently seem to be topical in Soviet-Indian relations.

Of the international issues, it is likely that the issues of Vietnam, the Middle East, and the problem complex of European security will be raised. Furthermore, in the context of the British withdrawal from the area of the Indian Ocean, the Soviet side would consider it appropriate to make the Soviet point of view unmistakably clear about those plans which are aimed at establishing regional blocs of a military, political or economic character, and of a narrower or broader scope, in the area of the Indian Ocean. Namely, the Soviet side is of the opinion that [the establishment of] these blocs would eventually result in the dominant capitalist states - above all, the USA and Japan - retaining, and even reinforcing, their influence in this part of the world by taking advantage of these new forms of relationship. In addition, they are of the opinion that it will be necessary to repeatedly raise the issue of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, for two reasons: On the one hand, India - as I also noted in an earlier report of mine - is conducting a very shrill propaganda campaign against the treaty, whose primary reason is presumably its fear of the prospect that the broader the circle of the treaty's signatories becomes, the more isolated the country will be in the international arena. On the other hand, however, they have information that in the Congress Party, and even in the closest circle around Indira Gandhi, there are significant forces which profess that signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty would suit India's national interests better than keeping away from it. This creates certain opportunities for the socialist countries to counter this highly annoying Indian activity.

Concerning bilateral relations, the Soviet side considers it possible that they will also raise a few economic problems at the meeting. For instance, they disapprove of the fact that the reports on the profitability problems of the state-owned enterprises built with Soviet assistance, which were written by the six delegations of Soviet experts who recently visited India, have not had any effect yet. They intend to protest against the discriminatory commercial policy India pursues vis-à-vis the Soviet Union - and the other socialist countries, that is, against the fact that the Indian authorities hinder the development of trade relations between the Soviet Union and Indian private companies.

Of course, the question of Indian-Pakistani relations might also crop up during the discussions. Our comrades are of the opinion that these [relations] are not stagnant; in recent months there have been positive developments in several concrete issues, though, regretfully, the standpoints have become more inflexible in certain other questions.

The positive developments are the following: the demarcation of borders in the area of Kutch, and between East Pakistan and West Bengal, has been nearly completed. To avoid possible border incidents, the staffs of the two armies have established direct contacts with each other, telegraph and telephone connections have been restored, an agreement is being prepared to allow military planes to enter each other's air-space, etc.

In her National Day speech, Indira Gandhi reiterated the proposal Shastri had made in Tashkent to conclude a non-aggression treaty between the two countries. This apparently indicates a sensible Indian policy. Of course, it is questionable – but this does not modify the previous evaluation – whether Ayub Khan is currently able to react to this proposal more positively than he did in Tashkent, when he stated that at the given moment one should not go further in this respect than what the Tashkent Declaration said about the necessity of solving the unsettled issues between the two countries in a peaceful way.

Concerning the negative aspects: the question of dividing the water output of the Ganges has aggravated the relationship between the two countries. According to the Indians, this issue is an Indian domestic affair, and they are willing to negotiate about it at a technical level at most. Pakistan considers the Ganges an international river, and demands that negotiations be conducted at a political level. Moreover, Foreign Minister Arshad Hussain made a declaration in which he ranked this question with the problem of Kashmir, and when he spoke about the latter, he did not reiterate those more moderate expressions (“Pakistan does not regard the issue of placing the Kashmiri question on the agenda as a precondition of resolving the other unsettled questions,” etc.) which Ayub had used this spring and which seemed to indicate that the Pakistani standpoint was becoming somewhat more flexible.

In the opinion of our [Soviet] comrades, the start of Soviet arms supplies to Pakistan evoked a certain – partly anti-Soviet, partly anti-Pakistani – hysteria in India. However, the anti-Soviet campaign launched by [Indian] reaction has failed, because the sensible and responsible circles of the Indian leadership eventually showed understanding – though, of course, not approval – towards Soviet policy on this issue.

In its talks with the Indians, the Soviet side strove to justify its arms supplies to Pakistan in a detailed and convincing way. They emphasized that this was a political action which assisted Pakistan to pursue such a more independent and non-aligned policy that would encompass both a reinforcement of relations with the Soviet Union and a realistic and sensible policy toward India. In spite of Indian statements to the contrary, the Soviet side is of the opinion that these arms should be considered of a truly defensive nature, it is inappropriate to present the affair in such a way as “they may be used only against India (or Afghanistan).” Besides, Ayub Khan assured the Soviet Union that Pakistan, “whose military power is in a proportion of 1-5 to the power of India,” naturally did not want to, and would not, attack India. It closed down the American base at Peshawar, and is no longer active in any sense in CENTO and SEATO. Finally, the Soviet side highlights the merely symbolic size of the military supplies to Pakistan: its volume is about one-tenth of the military aid provided to India. The arms delivered are old and of a non-offensive nature – in fact, Ayub Khan asked precisely for such types, as he himself stressed the primarily political nature of his request.

(signature)
ambassador