

## **December 22, 1980**

### **Information about Results of the Visit by L. I. Brezhnev in India (8 to 11 December 1980)**

#### **Citation:**

"Information about Results of the Visit by L. I. Brezhnev in India (8 to 11 December 1980)", December 22, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, BArch-SAPMO, DY 30, No. 13941 (TsK-Department International Relations, SED). Translated by Bernd Schaefer. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119279>

#### **Summary:**

Description of Brezhnev visit to India (1980 December), and summary of his discussions with Indira Gandhi and the Communist Party of India (ICP). With Gandhi, Brezhnev discusses a wide range of international issues, including increased US military presence in the Indian Ocean, the Iran-Iraq conflict, and Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. Gandhi both expresses sympathy for Soviet situation in Afghanistan but also calls for withdrawal of troops. Both sides criticize Pakistan for taking action to destabilize region, and both sides criticize China for policy on sub-continent; Soviets accuse china of "direct support for imperialist policy."

#### **Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

#### **Original Language:**

German

#### **Contents:**

Translation - English

22 December 1980

4 copies

Confidential

[handwritten: Circulation in Politburo, EH [Erich Honecker], 22 December 1980]

[Soviet] Information

About Results of the Visit by L. I. Brezhnev in India (8 to 11 December 1980)

The most important results of the visit are reflected in the Joint Soviet-Indian Declaration, as well as in decisions made by the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the USSR Council of Ministers. Respective documents were published in the Soviet press on 12 and 13 December. In addition, we want to inform you about the following.

The current relevance of this visit primarily derives from the actual international situation. The latter has become decisively more complicated due to activities by the forces of imperialism and expansionism. When the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee made its decisions for this visit following an invitation from the Indian leadership, it was guided by the following efforts: To continue the proven practice of Soviet-Indian contacts at the highest level, to give a new impulse to our friendly relations with India in order to further develop and deepen them and to influence India's foreign policy in the interests of the entire socialist community and the causes of peace and détente.

Those tasks were fulfilled. As a result of the visit, contacts between [CPSU General Secretary ] L. I. Brezhnev and [Indian Prime Mnister] I. Gandhi have become even more familiar. An important step was taken to further deepen the mutual understanding on both sides concerning basic international problems. The entire complex of Soviet-Indian relations was raised to a higher level. This opens up additional opportunities for the development of relations by all socialist fraternal countries with this large Asian country.

Indira Gandhi received support at a difficult time for her. Her opponents on the right want to build a united front against the government by exploiting the political and economic problems of the country. The visit contributed towards solidifying the global prestige of I. Gandhi as a leading politician in today's Asia and one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement.

When discussing bilateral relations, mutual satisfaction was expressed about the high level of these relations. Both sides stated their conviction of the need and the usefulness to solidify them further. The great importance of the Soviet-Indian Treaty about Peace, Friendship and Cooperation from 1971 was reiterated and emphasized, both with regard to the development of bilateral relations and to maintain peace and stability in Asia.

During the course of exchanging opinions on international problems, we explained to the Indian leadership our assessment of the global situation, including our principled positions regarding the attempts by the ruling circles in the United States to tilt the current global military balance in their favor. We unmistakably stated our willingness to talk to the new American leadership, but only under the condition that they abandon their futile and peace-endangering policy to aggravate the international situation and to create new hubs of tension.

In particular, we referred to the dangerous situation created in the Indian Ocean by the expansion of US military presence there. The proposals made by L. I. Brezhnev in his speech before the Indian parliament are of particular importance for normalizing the situation in this region. This new Soviet initiative has the potential to serve as a real basis for reducing the danger of war, not only in the Persian Gulf region, but also in Asia and the entire world-provided that countries concerned acknowledge these proposals with proper understanding and undertake steps to implement them. Our proposals were met with understanding and support by the Indian side. The latter spoke out against a militarization of the Indian Ocean with more insistence than in the past.

In discussions about the situation in the Middle East, Indian representatives reiterated their assessment of the situation in this region. It is mostly identical with our evaluation, but like in the past, they refrained from a condemnation of the United States, Israel and Egypt. We underlined that the already dangerous situation in the Middle East has been further aggravated by the military conflict between Iraq and Iran. Again we opted for a peaceful resolution of the conflict as soon as possible and without outside interference. The Indians agreed to that, but without making any concrete proposals of their own.

Referring to the situation in Afghanistan, we emphasized the ongoing normalization of the situation in this country. We reiterated that the Soviet Union will fulfill its obligations of support for its friendly partner of Afghanistan until the end. We will continue to do everything to establish a political settlement, which will be facilitated through proposals made by the government of the DRA [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan].

Overall, the Indian side adopted a position favorable to us, though it was not fully consistent in each respect. I. Gandhi repeated her understanding for the causes behind the aggravation of the situation in Afghanistan and the deployment of a limited Soviet military contingent. At the same time, she also said that India would welcome a withdrawal of these troops "as a matter of principle," as well as for the reason that their presence in Afghanistan allegedly leads to negative reactions among Indian Muslims.

As a result of negotiations, we succeeded in finding mostly common ground between the Soviet Union and India with regard to assessing the situation in Southwest Asia, as well as to the paths leading to a solution of problems in the region. We are considering this as certain progress in moving India's position on this issue closer towards the position of the socialist countries.

We provided an according evaluation of the policy by Pakistan, which is playing the role of the most destabilizing factor in the region. The Indian representatives shared this assessment to the fullest extent. Both sides were in agreement and declared that there exists a link between the reactionary domestic policy of the military regime and the adventurous foreign policy course of the Pakistani leadership, which also serves the interests of certain other countries.

Our exchange of opinions about the situation in Southeast Asia made clear that positions held by both sides are similar. We emphasized that India's recognition of the People's Republic of Kampuchea [Cambodia] and its development of friendly relations with other states in Indochina will bear positive influence on the situation in the region.

During the exchange of opinions about the situation in Asia, references were made to the negative role played by China's policy on this continent. Though right now it is still difficult to say where the current changes in China's domestic situation will lead, we emphasized how obvious it is that China's international role has not become more

positive by one iota, or more useful for the cause of peace and détente. To make it worse, when looking at American-Chinese convergence in military terms, the expansionism of the Chinese leadership has recently added an even more fateful touch. In this context, it was noted that the People's Republic of China's current role in the Afghan events testifies to a direct support for imperialist policy.

India's leading politicians and Indira Gandhi herself were talking about ongoing subversive activities by Beijing against India. They explained how India's attempts to normalize relations with China were so far not met by any respective resonance on the Chinese side. It was notable how India is concerned about Beijing's efforts to strengthen Chinese positions in Pakistan and other countries of South Asia.

In general, the meetings and talks with India's leading politicians have again confirmed the similarities of positions held by the Soviet Union and India on key international issues. Clearer than before, the Indian side opted in the Joint Declaration for an expansion of collaboration between the USSR and India on international questions, especially to eliminate hubs of tension in Asia.

On some issues, India also displayed during negotiations a certain lack of consequence. Such is due on one hand to the class character of the policy conducted by India's ruling circles. Yet there are also objective conditions the Indian government cannot afford to ignore such as, for instance, being a participant of the Non-Aligned Movement.

L. I. Brezhnev also met with the leadership of the Communist Party of India [CPI] and informed them about the content of his negotiations with Indira Gandhi. There was a brief exchange of information about the activities of both parties in fulfilling the tasks assigned to them by the XXV Party Congress of the CPSU and the XI Party Congress of the CPI. It was emphasized how the CPSU is solidly behind the struggle of the Indian communists for a progressive path of development in their country. The friends had high praise for L. I. Brezhnev's negotiations with India's leading politicians. They welcomed the CPSU's course for peace and its contributions towards further development of Soviet-Indian friendship and cooperation.

The CPI leadership was of the opinion that the opportunity to form a leftist-democratic government in India has not yet matured. They stated their support for the foreign policy course of Indira Gandhi's government and their intention not to collaborate with the rightist parties on any issue. Overall, the CPI leadership provided a positive assessment about the development of its relations with the Communist Party of India (Marxists) [CPI (M)].

In our opinion, the visit by L. I. Brezhnev to India was an important step for Soviet foreign policy at the eve of the XXVI CPSU Party Congress and a major contribution to the struggle for securing peace in Asia and the entire world. It again illustrated the Soviet Union's love for peace and the active and constructive character of its policy. We stated unequivocally that further development and deepening of Soviet-Indian relations is not directed against any third country.

There is no doubt that the results of the visit will have a positive impact on the further course of development of cooperation between the Soviet Union, as well as the other countries of the socialist community, and India in the interest of peace, security, and détente.