

Note on conversations between the Prime Minister of India and Mr. A.I. Mikoyan, First Deputy Premier of the U.S.S.R., in the Prime Minister's House on March 26, 1956, at 4 p.m.

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Also present:

- U.S.S.R.
1. Mr. S.R. Rashidov
  2. Mr. M.A. Menshikov.
  3. An interpreter.

India

1. Shri N.R. Pillai
  2. Shri Rishi, Interpreter.
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The question was first discussed of the establishment of a direct Air Service between Moscow and Delhi via Kabul, to be operated by Indian and Soviet Air Lines. Before such a direct Air Service could be established, it would be necessary for the Soviet Union to obtain from the Pakistan Government permission to fly over Pakistan territory; India already had flying rights over Pakistan. Until this was done, the Indian and the Soviet Air Lines now operating services to Kabul should work to a mutually convenient time schedule, linking up their respective services at Kabul.

2. Mr. Mikoyan then spoke about his visit to Karachi and the talks he had there with the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. His reception at Karachi was correct, but formal. But after the first meeting and the talks which then took place, his Pakistan hosts began to show some warmth. In regard to

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Kashmir, the Pakistan authorities suggested to Mr. Mikoyan that the Soviet Union should not take sides and indicated that the Pakistan Government would like the Soviet Government to say that they had made a mistake in making the declaration which they actually made on the subject of Kashmir. The Pakistan press also had made an attack on the Soviet Government on this issue. Mr. Mikoyan replied that no mistake had been made and that he fully confirmed the statements that had been made by Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev.

3. The President of Pakistan next told Mr. Mikoyan that the Soviet attitude to the Pukthoonistan issue implied that the Soviet Government were in favour of the dismemberment of Pakistan. Mr. Mikoyan denied this, and said that the Soviet attitude was dictated by their adherence to the principle of self-determination to which the Soviet Government had long been committed.

4. The Prime Minister of Pakistan discussed with Mr. Mikoyan the SEATO and the Baghdad Pact and Pakistan's position as a member of these Pacts. Mr. Mohamad Ali told him that these Pacts were intended to strengthen Pakistan's capacity for defence against India and Afghanistan. Pakistan had no animosity towards the Soviet Union, and would not at any time fight against the Soviet Union. Nor would they tolerate any aggression against the Soviet Union from bases in Pakistan. Referring to Pakistan's disputes with India and Afghanistan, Mr. Mikoyan said that these should be settled by the parties themselves, and expressed concern lest imperialistic powers should take advantage of local

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differences and animosities in order to re-establish themselves in this region of the world. The commitments made by Pakistan under these Pacts might result in Pakistan being used by imperialistic powers as an instrument for furthering their aggressive designs against the Soviet Union.

5. Talks then took place about the steps to be taken to improve relations between the U.S.S.R. and Pakistan. The President of Pakistan said that the first essential was an improvement in the relations between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Turkey and Iran on the other. But when Mr. Mikoyan made an approach to Mr. Menderes, the Prime Minister of Turkey, who was in Karachi at the time, the latter told him that a general improvement in international relations was an essential prerequisite to better relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey. On this being reported to the Pakistan leaders, they promised to speak to the Turks and to the Shah of Iran, who was passing through Karachi at the time, and advise them that they should meet the Soviet Union half-way. When Mr. Mikoyan met the President of Pakistan on March 25, the latter gave him the impression that he had spoken in this sense to the Shah and to Mr. Menderes. Both the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan expressed their desire for a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, but Mr. Mikoyan found it difficult to fathom their minds. Though they obviously tried their best to speak frankly, he doubted whether they were free agents. On the whole, the contacts he made in Pakistan and the talks that he had had been useful, though he could not say to what extent these talks

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would influence Pakistan's policy in the future. It was clear to him that the Pakistan leaders were anxious about the fate of their country and its security. His visit to Pakistan must have made some impression on the minds of the Pakistan leaders, and the Soviet Union would now work to counteract and destroy U.S. influence in Pakistan.

6. One of the things he mentioned to the Pakistan authorities was the question of the appointment of an Ambassador to Moscow, where the Pakistan Embassy had, for some years, been looked after by a Charge d'Affaires. The Pakistan Prime Minister said he would look into this matter immediately, and Mr. Mikoyan had since seen a press report to the effect that Pakistan would soon send an Ambassador to Moscow.

7. The Prime Minister said he was glad that Mr. Mikoyan had paid a visit to Karachi. India's relations with Pakistan were somewhat peculiar. There was the bond of past associations between the two countries, and many families had been divided between India and Pakistan, with the close relatives of persons in one country living in the other. But, between the leaders of the two countries, there was a fundamental difference arising from their early background and experience. Today Pakistan was being ruled by officials and ex-officials. Not that the politicians who were previously in control had taken any part in the long struggle for freedom in undivided India; on the contrary, they had worked against the national movement and given their support to the continuance of the British regime. Immediately after independence, many of the British officers, civil and

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military, whose services were dispensed with by India, were given employment in Pakistan. These officers were bitter towards India, and caused much trouble between the two countries in the early years after partition. But for these men, whose dislike of India coloured all their outlook, many of the problems between India and Pakistan could have been settled. Many of these British officers had since retired, but large numbers of Americans were now employed in Pakistan as expert advisers, technicians and so on. British influence was thus being driven out by U.S. influence in Pakistan, as in many countries of Western Asia. The British did not, of course, like this, but retired British officials continued to do propaganda against India and in favour of Pakistan, more because of their dislike of India than of any fondness for Pakistan. Those of them who lived in Africa were now in the habit of describing India as an imperialistic country.

8. Turning to the Pukthoonistan issue, the Prime Minister said that India was friendly with, and sympathetic to, Afghanistan, because Afghanistan had been for many years under pressure from the U.K., the U.S. and Pakistan. Upto now, however, India had only expressed her broad sympathy with Afghanistan. In the days of the Indian national struggle, the leaders of the popular movement promised a large measure of freedom to the Pukthoons. But now the Government of India refrained from making any public statement about this though one of India's national leaders had been a Pukthoon, Khan and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who spent many years in British jails/ was later imprisoned for as long as six years by Pakistan.

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Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan only desired autonomy for Pukthoonistan, not independence. The North West Frontier State had, however, recently been merged in West Pakistan and its individuality destroyed. Pakistan was continually accusing India of fomenting trouble and of giving arms and money to the Pukthoons. There was no truth in this whatever. The loan of Rs. one crore given to Afghanistan some years ago had no connection with this at all. Mr. Mikoyan intervened to say that the President of Pakistan had made no such accusation. The Prime Minister pointed out that the Pakistan press was constantly making these charges against India. He went on to say that the people of India and Pakistan were essentially the same people, with common friends and memories. There was a wide difference between West Pakistan and East Pakistan. West Pakistan was in no way different from the adjoining States in India, but presented a striking contrast in essential respects to East Pakistan. It was to be remembered, too, that there were 40 million Muslims in India, a larger number than the total population of West Pakistan. The conflict that existed between the two countries was at the top, and not at the peoples' level, though it was true, of course, that the people could be excited. Mr. Mikoyan said that the President of Pakistan had assured him of his Government's intention to give equal rights to all, irrespective of the religion they professed. The Prime Minister pointed out that large numbers of people were still coming away from East Pakistan, as many as 50,000 having migrated to India

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last month alone. It was obvious that these people were being squeezed out, and, whatever the intentions of the leaders at the top, it was clear that their instructions were not being carried out by officials in authority. The position of Muslims in India presented a striking contrast, as evidenced by the statements made by the King of Saudi Arabia and the Shah of Iran. The Prime Minister went on to say that the issues between the two countries were political, not religious and that these problems were only aggravated by the intervention of outsiders. With this Mr. Mikoyan fully agreed.

9. Analysing the situation further, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan was slightly frightened of India because of the progress India had made and of her own backwardness. In order to divert the attention of their people, the Pakistan authorities, who continued to have the British civil service mentality, had been putting out that their country was in danger from India. With regard to SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, the United States and the United Kingdom had always said that these military pacts were intended for defence against the Soviet Union. Mr. Mikoyan interjected to say that he had mentioned this to the Pakistan authorities, also that American Generals had blurted out that countries which had joined these pacts would provide the U.S. with bases against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union could not obviously ignore this. The Prime Minister confirmed this, and said that neither Mr. Dulles nor Mr. Selwyn Lloyd saw any danger from India to Pakistan, but feared that there might be from some other countries, meaning the Soviet Union. The

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bases that had been acquired, for instance the Gilgit base, were obviously meant to be used against the Soviet Union. Mr. Mikoyan said that it would be correct to conclude that these Pacts were directed both against the Soviet Union and India. In regard to India, they were intended as a threat and warning to her for continuing in her present policy. The Prime Minister referred to the U.S. military aid to Pakistan from which this threat to India proceeded. On partition, the Defence Services were divided between India and Pakistan in the proportion of 3:1. Because of the military aid, Pakistan was now getting stronger and this proportion had been completely upset. The Prime Minister was in possession of reliable information about the military supplies which had reached Pakistan, and he had received substantial corroboration of this information from Mr. Dulles, who had agreed in his talks with the Prime Minister that the aid given to Pakistan would make the Pakistan forces nearly equal to India's in size. In addition, the Pakistan forces would have better and more modern weapons, which would give them a further advantage. Pakistan troops were just as good as Indian troops, but their officers were probably not so good as India's, though it was to be noted that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of them were receiving training in the United States.

10. Mr. Mikoyan said that he had witnessed the military parade in Karachi and noticed that the armaments were old and obsolete. It was possible however that they deliberately did not put on show the best that their army had. The Prime Minister pointed out that it took time to bring modern weapons into use.

11. The Prime Minister then turned to the question of

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Kashmir. He said that he had himself not spoken about Kashmir to Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev, preferring them to find out the facts for themselves when they visited Kashmir. They had long talks with the Prime Minister of Kashmir and other leading persons in the State and came to their own conclusion. This conclusion, in the Prime Minister's opinion, was legally, constitutionally and practically the correct one. By virtue of its accession, Kashmir came to India in the correct constitutional manner. It was true that India had made a unilateral declaration to the people of Kashmir that they could decide their own future. But this was not an undertaking given to Pakistan.

12. Mr. Mikoyan said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan had told him that this problem should be decided by the decision of the U.N., that is to say, by plebiscite. Pakistan was unable to accept the verdict of the Kashmir Assembly. Mr. Mikoyan had thereupon pointed out to the Prime Minister of Pakistan that this was the only decision to be taken into consideration.

13. The Prime Minister, tracing the history of the Kashmir dispute, said that Pakistan committed aggression and that was the reason why India made an approach to the United Nations. Pakistan still held one-third of the Kashmir State territory. In her anxiety to settle this problem, India had agreed to the holding of a plebiscite under certain conditions. One of the conditions was that Pakistan should withdraw from the territory occupied by her. For her part India had agreed to remove the bulk of her army. Pakistan had however not yet withdrawn from the part of Kashmir held by her, and the question of the

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further steps to be taken did not therefore arise. India had repeatedly discussed with Pakistan the question of fulfilling the conditions precedent to a plebiscite. But Pakistan would not comply with the condition requiring her withdrawal from the occupied portion of Kashmir, and no progress could be made. As time passed, the Kashmir Government felt compelled to elect a Constituent Assembly and this Assembly had given its own decision. Many years had passed, and conditions had changed. It was now difficult to uproot people. For the first time there was no unemployment in Kashmir. As many as 50,000 tourists visited Kashmir last year. There was evidence throughout the State of marked economic development. In the Pakistan-held territory, however, economic conditions were in a bad way. Many people in that area wished to come over to India, which showed the wide difference in economic conditions on the two sides. In Kashmir they were now finalising their new Constitution, and in a year or two elections would take place on the Indian side of Kashmir in accordance with the new Constitution. In spite of Pakistan's aggression and her continued occupation of a part of Kashmir the Prime Minister had suggested last year to the Prime Minister of Pakistan and to Mr. Iskandar Mirza, now President of Pakistan, that the only practical solution was to accept the present partition of Kashmir, with minor boundary changes. They however would not agree. The Prime Minister could not see what more India could do.

14. The Prime Minister then said that he had very interesting talks with Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev,

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when they were here, about the international situation, and asked Mr. Mikoyan whether he would give his appraisal of the present situation.

15. Mr. Mikoyan said that, though some small changes had taken place, broadly speaking the same tendencies had been developing, so far as the international situation was concerned. The Soviet Union continued to attack the NATO and other Pacts, and was gradually wearing down the other side. They were doing many things now which they did not do before. They believed in full and frank talks. European powers were frightened that the Soviet Union would attack them and so out of fear became members of the NATO. The Soviet Union was now patiently trying to convince these countries that it had no aggressive intentions. Long conversations had taken place between the Norwegian Prime Minister and Messrs. Bulganin and Khrushchev. As a result, the Norwegian Prime Minister had been "disarmed from an ideological point of view". But Norway could not leave the NATO now. In the opinion of the Soviet leaders, their talks with the Norwegian Prime Minister had been successful, though nothing substantial appeared to have happened. The same was the case with the talks with the Danish Prime Minister. The Swedish Prime Minister was shortly expected in Moscow, and it would be the endeavour of the Soviet leaders to try and convince him also of their peaceful intentions. The forthcoming visit of Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev to the U.K. was also being undertaken with this purpose in view. Naturally

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the Soviet Government did not expect the U.K. to leave NATO, but they would hope that some kind of rapprochement would be possible, also that progress could be made with the discussions on disarmament. The Soviet Government had no intention to allow the initiative to slip from their hands. The French Premier was expected in Moscow in May. It always looked as though France was forced to enter NATO. The Soviet leaders hoped to succeed with France to the extent of making her change her present position. France was in a difficult position with regard to Algeria. She wanted to suppress Algeria by military force. M. Auriol, who recently visited the Soviet Union, wished to find out the Soviet reaction to the Algerian question and wanted the Soviet Government to advise Col. Nasser not to give arms to the Algerians. Naturally, the Soviet Government could not do any such thing, and so told M. Auriol that they could not discuss that subject, but advised the French Government that they should seek a peaceful solution. M. Auriol said that, if France lost Algeria, she would sink to the same level as Spain. On the whole, the Soviet Government thought that the attitude of the present French Government was better than that of any previous French Government.

16. The U.K., said Mr. Mikoyan, was in a difficult position in Cyprus. The Balkan Pact had been shattered completely. The Soviet Union drew Yugoslavia out of that Pact, and through British action Greece had now got out of the Pact. Only Turkey now remained, and Greece was acting both against the U.K. and Turkey.

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17. In the Middle East (Western Asia) the situation was shaky. The Baghdad Pact was "hardly breathing", for it did not give to the countries of that area what they expected from it.

18. Soviet foreign policy continued to be as before. But it had recently received the proper theoretical foundation, and the Soviet Government could now go forward courageously. The Twentieth Congress did not formulate a new foreign policy; what it did was to give a more precise character to the policy which had been developed, more particularly since last year.

19. Italy was another country which seemed to be inclined to settle matters in a friendly way. The President of Italy was "positively minded".

20. The Parliamentary Delegation from Iran had very frank conversations with the Soviet leaders. They said that Iran desired friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and asked the Soviet leaders how a way could be found out of the present situation. On the return of the delegation to Iran, the members of the delegation were prevented by the Shah from making public statements, for fear of popular reaction in favour of closer understanding with the Soviet Union. It was the intention of the Soviet leaders to speak frankly to the Shah when he should go to Moscow. The Shah's brother had expressed his own views frankly to Mr. Mikoyan at Karachi on the previous day.

21. Turning to Japan, Mr. Mikoyan said that the Soviet Government had agreed to terms more favourable to Japan than those of the San Francisco Treaty, but Japan continued to prolong the negotiations presumably under pressure from the U.S. Japan probably thought

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she could get better terms by prolonging the negotiations. The Japanese envoy who attended the Karachi celebrations approached Mr. Mikoyan several times, and Mr. Mikoyan told him that, if Japan was showing no desire to hasten the talks, it was hardly for the Soviet Union to show such desire.

22. With Yugoslavia, Soviet relations had been steadily improving. Their best hopes, when they set out on their policy of promoting understanding with Yugoslavia, had been realised. Marshal Tito was proposing to visit Moscow in the summer. He had been keeping the Soviet Ambassador in Belgrade fully informed about his foreign policy.

23. In the U.N. the Soviet Government were still holding the initiative, as evidenced by the part they played in the admission of the 16 nations to the U.N. The United States was completely taken aback by the flexibility shown by the Soviet Union. With the admission of these new members, there would be many more countries in the U.N., and it would be more difficult for the United States to obtain a majority for themselves by means of their customary manoeuvres. The U.S. still had the means, however, of pushing through their proposals by mustering the full support of Latin American countries.

24. In India, Burma and Indonesia, the success of Soviet policy had improved the international situation by the strengthening of peace.

25. In regard to Thailand, Mr. Mikoyan said that the Thai Envoy in Karachi had spoken to him about raising their respective Legations to Embassy level. Mr. Mikoyan thought that this went some way towards

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strengthening the relations between the two countries though it was a small thing in itself. Thailand was still clearly under strong U.S. influence.

26. Mr. Mikoyan then spoke about Indo-China. Cambodia was neutral. In Laos the situation was not quite stable, but there had been no recent deterioration. In South Vietnam the Americans had a complete hold on the Government and were squeezing out the French. But all this, Mr. Mikoyan said, must already be known to the Prime Minister. In North Vietnam the situation was improving, and the standard of living had risen greatly. President Ho Chi-Minh, when he was in Moscow, had asked Mr. Mikoyan to visit North Vietnam to discuss means of further improving economic conditions. Mr. Mikoyan intended to visit North Vietnam for this purpose on his way to China.

27. The Prime Minister, continued Mr. Mikoyan, must be fully aware of the position in regard to the implementation of the Geneva Agreement in Vietnam. That position was far from satisfactory. On this issue the Soviet Union and India understood each other, and the U.K. and France came close to their way of thinking. But South Vietnam was intent on torpedoing the agreement. The Soviet Union would press for the full implementation of the agreement, and therefore agreed with India that the two Co-Chairmen should meet and discuss the question of the further steps to be taken in Vietnam. In reply to a question by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mikoyan said that <sup>Mr.</sup> Molotov would not be going to London with Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev but that the representatives of the two governments would take the opportunity of the visit

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of the Soviet leaders to the U.K. to discuss this question and endeavour to come to agreed decisions.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the matter was becoming very urgent as the French were thinking of withdrawing next month, though they had been persuaded to stay on a little longer. The South Vietnam Government had not accepted the responsibilities imposed by the agreement but were taking advantage of the protection afforded them by the agreement.

Mr. Mikoyan then asked what measures were considered necessary by India to rectify the situation in Vietnam. The Prime Minister replied that it was difficult to say what precise steps should be taken, but what was needed was that the International Commission should be enabled to function effectively and that the agreement should be fully implemented. Mr. Mikoyan agreed and added that the South Vietnam Government was pursuing a cunning policy, utilising the Commission when expedient, without extending to them formal recognition. There was every reason for insisting on the strict fulfilment of the agreement, as all countries concerned were in favour of this, except Mr. Diem and the U.S. Government.

28. Asked about the position as between Israel and the Arab countries, Mr. Mikoyan said that he had a talk with the Egyptian envoy in Karachi on the subject. The situation was a difficult one, and it was not possible to give a proper appraisal. It was clear, however, that without the knowledge or consent of the U.S. and the U.K. neither side could start hostilities. Egypt seemed to think that Israel would attack. But without the consent

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of the U.S. Israel would not do so, and it would not be in the interest of the U.S. to give such consent. There was the danger also that an open clash between Israel and the Arab countries might lead to something far more serious. That would put the U.S. in a difficult situation in the Security Council. The Soviet view was that Egypt would not attack, and was only interested in defending itself. It looked as though the present unsatisfactory situation would continue. It was clearly a dispute which the parties concerned should settle among themselves without getting assistance from third parties. The situation was far more serious than in Kashmir.