

December 5, 1988

Report on the Visit of the Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to India

Citation:

"Report on the Visit of the Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to India",
December 5, 1988, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/13941.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/122490>

Summary:

This document describes events during the visit of the Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to India in November 1988. Talks cover the question of nuclear disarmament and a number regional conflicts. With respect to Afghanistan, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi supports the Geneva Agreement and the initiation of an inner-Afghan dialogue. He stresses the importance of keeping President Najibullah in power. During the visit several agreements on trade and cooperation in scientific matters are signed.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

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5.12.1988

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From November 18-November 20, 1988 Mikhail Gorbachev paid a friendly visit to India. In the Soviet Union this visit is considered as a significant event in the development of our relations with this country.

The negotiations between Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi were extremely constructive and fruitful. It was possible to develop clear guidelines for further joint practical steps by the two states to implement the principles of the Delhi Declaration of 1986, to strengthen new political thinking and to design a reliable system of comprehensive global security.

The Indian leadership fully supported our initiatives in the field of nuclear disarmament. It welcomed the start of the implementation of the INF Treaty and our efforts to reach an agreement on halving strategic offensive weapons. The USSR and India reiterated their support for the establishment of international control of new technologies which could potentially be used for military purposes, for the conclusion of an international convention prohibiting the use and threat of the use of nuclear weapons, and for a global convention on the comprehensive prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, including binary weapons.

The state of the settlement of regional conflicts was discussed in detail.

During the exchange of views on the Afghanistan problem, Rajiv Gandhi reiterated India's support for the Geneva Accords and the process of national reconciliation in Afghanistan. He stressed in particular the need to ensure that power remains in the hands of President [Mohammad] Najibullah. Of fundamental importance are the appeal at the highest level in the joint Soviet-Indian declaration for the convening of an international Afghanistan conference with the participation of the UN and the appeal to the UN Secretary-General to immediately implement the mandate given to him by the Afghanistan resolution of the UN General Assembly, in which the necessity of an intra-Afghan dialogue for the formation of a government on a broad basis is underlined. The Indian leadership undertook to support the initiation of such a dialogue on existing contacts with Afghan emigration.

The agreement to exchange information on the situation in Pakistan and to coordinate the foreign policy actions of the USSR and India with regard to that country was reaffirmed.

The Indian side reiterated its willingness to continue efforts to resolve the Kampuchea problem and stressed the importance it attached to activating its contacts with Sihanouk in order to have a positive impact on the process of national reconciliation in Kampuchea.

Both sides consider that a major contribution to improving the situation in Asia would be to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula and to engage in a broad and constructive dialogue in the interest of the Korean people.

In discussing the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, the sides noted that, without good-neighborly relations between all the States of this great region of the world, and in particular between of the Soviet Union, India and China, no change for the better can be achieved in this respect. Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi informed each other in detail about the status of Soviet-Chinese and Indian-Chinese relations,

respectively, and agreed to coordinate their China policy.

The concern expressed by the Indian side about the possible consequences of the militarization of Japan deserves attention.

The broad mutual understanding which has been achieved in the course of the frank and trusting negotiations with the Indian leadership on practically all important international problems, creates the conditions for India to be more effectively involved, inter alia through its possibilities in the non-aligned and six-state group movements, in supporting our initiatives and in new joint or parallel constructive actions in the UN and other international organizations.

Within in a broad international context, the visit has given new impetus to the fight for the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons and violence, in particular the strengthening of cooperation between the East and the South. The visit has largely neutralized the fears in India and other developing countries that the improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States and the other countries of the West could lead to a weakening of our interest in cooperation with the liberated states.

Mikhail Gorbachev informed Rajiv Gandhi in detail about the domestic political development in the USSR, about the course of the transformation. The leading representative of India presented his assessment of the domestic political situation in the country.

He explained that the ruling party had begun practical preparations for the parliamentary elections. Rajiv Gandhi regards the prospects for the upcoming elections as favorable both for the Indian National Congress (I) and for himself personally.

Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to India contributed to the development of the agenda of bilateral Soviet-Indian relations in trade, economy, science, technology and culture. The conclusion of several intergovernmental agreements on cooperation in the construction of a nuclear power plant in India, on long-term cooperation in the exploration and peaceful use of space, etc., as well as agreements on the further activation of cultural exchange in the continuation of the Soviet-Indian festivals, the expansion of contacts between the friendly societies, the professional and artist associations, the women's, youth, sports and other organizations, created further favorable opportunities.

The Soviet-Indian summit in Delhi confirmed that both sides are interested in further strengthening and perfecting mutual cooperation. Its findings contribute significantly to achieving a new quality in this cooperation, both in bilateral and international matters, in accordance with the 1971 Treaty on Peace, Friendship and Cooperation and the Delhi Declaration of 1986.