



**Directorate of
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The Soviets in India: Moscow's Major Penetration Program



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An Intelligence Assessment

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*GI 85-10315
December 1985*

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The Soviets in India: Moscow's Major Penetration Program

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An Intelligence Assessment

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This paper was prepared by [Redacted] Office
of Global Issues, with a contribution by [Redacted]
[Redacted] Office of Near Eastern and South Asian
Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and
may be directed to the Chief, Foreign Subversion
and Instability Center, OGI, [Redacted]

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The Soviets in India: Moscow's Major Penetration Program

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 1 November 1985
was used in this report.*

The Soviet Union has exploited its close ties to India, its official presence there, and Indian concerns about US policies in the region in a far-reaching campaign to bind India closer to the USSR and drive a wedge between India and the United States. While the Soviets have encountered a less receptive political climate

they continue to manipulate and exploit selected issues and politicians. More important, through a wide range of overt and covert activities conducted during the last three decades, the Soviets have built up substantial influence capabilities in India.

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we believe that Moscow has undertaken activities to penetrate virtually every sector of Indian society:

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- Moscow provides substantial financial support to the ruling Congress-I Party, the two Indian Communist parties, and individual politicians of various parties, according to US Embassy. This funding has helped to ensure significant Soviet access to Indian Government and political leaders.

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- The Soviets enjoy nearly unfettered access to the pages of Indian newspapers, largely through the efforts of the Soviet Information Department. Moscow overtly and covertly placed more than 160,000 items (original articles plus replays) in the Indian press, widely regarded as the freest in the Third World. Access to Press Trust of India, the largest English language news service, has become so automatic that some Soviet officials have come to call it "Press TASS of India."

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- The Press Section of the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi is a KGB operation that specializes in fast-breaking disinformation campaigns, principally targeted against the United States. In recent years, this KGB operation has taken the lead in efforts to implicate the United States in the assassination of Indira Gandhi, to prevent the posting of a US Foreign Service officer to India, and to link former US Ambassador to the United Nations Kirkpatrick to a bogus US plan to balkanize India.

- In addition to placements in Indian newspapers, the Soviet Information Department in New Delhi covertly finances the publishing of books in India and distributes some 25 million magazines, books, and pamphlets a year.


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- The Soviets orchestrate the political activities of at least a dozen front groups in India—including the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, the local affiliate of the World Peace Council, and a professional journalists' organization. 

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These Soviet activities constitute a massive assault on the Indian political process and, in our view, have yielded several benefits to Moscow:

- Ready access to many Indian Government and political leaders has helped Moscow influence some of these leaders to criticize US foreign policy and undertake actions supportive of Soviet foreign policy.
- The substantial Soviet propaganda effort in India, which has capitalized on significant Indian gains from close Indo-Soviet ties and Indian fears about US foreign policy, has helped to persuade educated Indians—including the political elite—of Moscow's attractiveness as an international partner. In a turnabout from favorable attitudes toward the United States just after Indian independence, the urban, educated public has rated the Soviet Union more favorably than the United States in the large majority of opinion polls during the last 11 years.
- Soviet disinformation activities have had considerable success in putting the United States on the defensive in its diplomatic and commercial dealings with India. US diplomats and information officers in New Delhi and elsewhere devote much time and effort to rebutting Soviet-placed articles in the Indian press, and one Soviet campaign jeopardized completion of a trade deal between the Indian Government and a US firm.
- The substantial apparatus that they have built up in India provides the Soviets with a credible nonaligned base for their influence activities throughout the Third World. 

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Despite Soviet inroads into Indian political life, most Indians are neither ideologically inclined toward Marxism-Leninism nor sympathetic to Moscow's political system. We believe that Moscow's public standing in India could be vulnerable on such issues as Soviet manipulation of the United Nations, the woeful performance of the Soviet economic system, and Moscow's poor track record on human rights domestically and abroad.



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The success of Soviet activities in India depends largely on the attitude of the Indian Government. Although India, under Indira Gandhi, quietly expelled some Soviet Bloc intelligence officers and, under Rajiv, has recently placed some minor restrictions on access, New Delhi continues to permit the Soviets a fairly free rein. Many Indians apparently believe that these activities merely reflect superpower competition and are of no concern to India. Rajiv Gandhi's current campaign to combat corruption and streamline the Indian bureaucracy could lead him to limit Soviet activities should he calculate that such restrictions would not endanger the substantial Indian gains from Soviet economic and military ties. Nonetheless, given his preoccupation with domestic and regional affairs, he is unlikely to expend the necessary political capital to curtail Soviet activities substantially. Thus, we expect Soviet efforts to continue for the foreseeable future, and, in the event of a serious crisis or political instability, we have little doubt that the Soviets would make a full court press to draw India even closer to Moscow.

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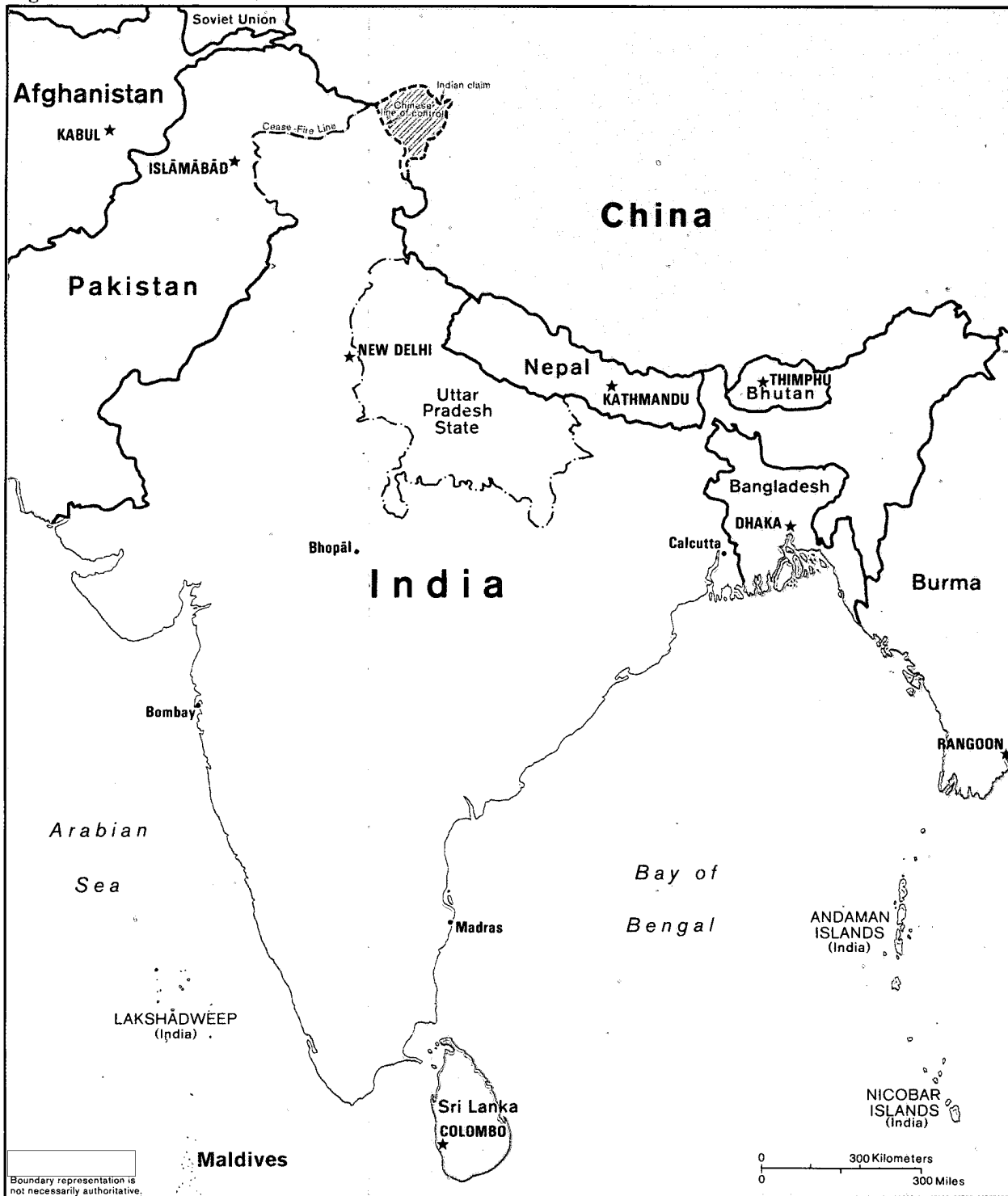
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Figure 1



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The Soviets in India: Moscow's Major Penetration Program

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Introduction—Moscow's Special Relationship

The Soviet Union has spent substantial economic and diplomatic resources over the past three decades to cultivate and maintain a "special relationship" with India. For Moscow, India's appeal lies in its geographic proximity, its position as the dominant power in South Asia, its potential as an Asian counterweight to China, and its leadership role in various Third World forums. The Indo-Soviet relationship—one of the Soviets' strongest with a non-Communist country—has been cemented at the government level by:

- Soviet support for India during the 1965 Pakistan war, the 1971 Bangladesh war, and Mrs. Gandhi's Emergency Rule (1975-77).
- Soviet reliability in providing sophisticated military equipment (\$7 billion since 1980) at concessional rates and with dependable supplies of spare parts, even during wartime.
- Moscow's position as one of India's major trading partners, based on special arrangements that allow India to purchase Soviet goods without hard currency, and its responsiveness to Indian aid requests.
- Soviet public support for India in such international bodies as the United Nations and the Nonaligned Movement and for India's "independent foreign policy."

Indian receptivity to Soviet initiatives has been reinforced by Indo-US discord over Washington's support for Pakistan in the 1965 and 1971 wars, its provision of large amounts of weapons to Pakistan, and its presumed failure to restrain Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

Nonetheless, Moscow has not been content to rely solely on governmental ties to ensure a continuing close relationship with New Delhi. In fact, the Soviet Union has capitalized on these ties, and on Indo-US discord, to undertake a variety of overt and covert activities to try to increase its political leverage within India. These activities are extensive and include: exploitation of a broad network of contacts among Indian politicians, government officials, and the military; substantial funding of Indian political parties



Figure 2. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Wide World ©

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and numerous individual politicians; the manipulation of front groups to promote pro-Soviet views among the Indian elite; and a massive program to place Soviet-prepared articles in the Indian press. These activities seek not only to bolster already strong Indo-Soviet ties but also to undermine US diplomatic initiatives in India and subtly ensure continued distrust between India and Pakistan.

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Soviet Presence in India

Moscow has exploited close Indo-Soviet governmental ties to establish a substantial presence in India and to develop an extensive network of personal contacts throughout Indian Government and society.

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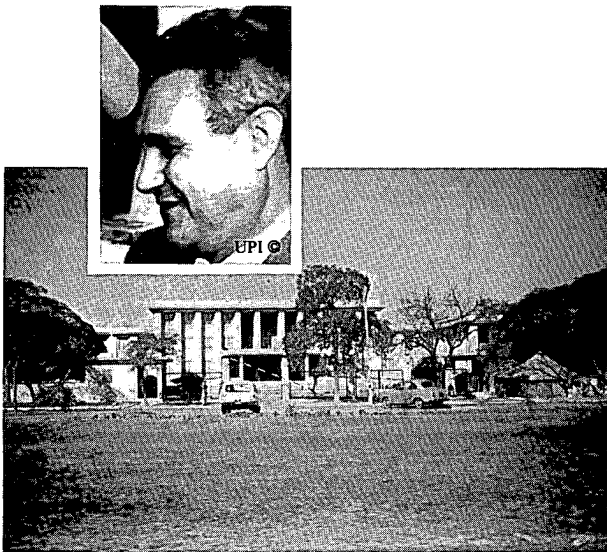


Figure 3. The Soviet Embassy in New Delhi and Soviet Ambassador Rykov.

Exploiting Government and Military Ties

Soviet diplomats have extensive contacts with both cabinet-level officials and the middle and upper levels of the various ministries of the central government in New Delhi. Although evidence is sparse, the Soviets, at a minimum, use this access to reinforce close Indo-Soviet governmental ties. To help maintain access, the Soviets offer Indian Government officials inducements, such as all-expense-paid trips to the USSR. One Congress-I member of Parliament (MP) estimated that about 150 MPs had made subsidized visits to the USSR since 1980. He told a US Embassy officer that, once an MP accepts a trip, he receives offers for additional trips and invitations to attend numerous functions in New Delhi sponsored by Soviet Bloc countries.

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Although the Soviets currently appear to have somewhat less than the nearly unfettered access to politicians and government officials they enjoyed under Indira Gandhi, they have retained entree within the Rajiv Gandhi government. Several key officials, including cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and prominent Congress-I politicians, have been active in pro-Soviet activities and have often promoted close Indo-Soviet ties. For example, H. K. L. Bhagat and Margaret Alva, MPs and cabinet ministers, have frequently taken pro-Soviet positions and advocated closer Indo-Soviet ties. The de facto foreign minister under Indira Gandhi, G. Parthasarathi, has consistently advocated close Indo-Soviet ties and frequently shown hostility toward the United States. Although his influence has declined under Rajiv Gandhi, he still holds a high-level foreign policy position.

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The Soviets have also developed substantial contacts with Indian military officers as a natural consequence of close Indo-Soviet military ties.

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[redacted] more than 800 Soviets are in India in some official capacity, including diplomats, information and cultural officers, trade mission representatives, staff employees, TASS and Novosti journalists, and Aeroflot representatives. The Indian Government estimates that at any one time another 1,100 Soviet economic and military technicians work at various locations throughout India. In addition, about 10,000 Soviet tourists visit India annually through Soviet-sponsored package tours.

Soviet intelligence officers make up a significant portion of the official presence.

[redacted] the known Soviet intelligence presence among Soviet officials in India exceeds 50 officers (both KGB and GRU), and an additional 30 are suspected of being intelligence officers. Given what we know of Soviet intelligence presence elsewhere, we believe that the intelligence presence is substantially larger than these figures suggest.

[redacted] Soviet intelligence officers call upon other Soviet Government officials in India—such as those in the Soviet Information Department (SID), the Soviet Trade Mission, and the Soviet Cultural Center—for assistance in conducting covert activities.

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foreigners. Nonetheless, some Indian officers are willing to meet discreetly with foreigners, including Soviets, without obtaining official permission. Discontent in the military—stemming from its recent use in maintaining domestic order, low pay levels, and a recent reduction in the status of officers relative to their civil service colleagues—provides conditions that the Soviets may be able to exploit for their own advantage. [redacted]

The Congress-I Party

[redacted] Soviets provide funding to Congress-I Party coffers through kickback arrangements with Indian businesses. [redacted]

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[redacted] Although precise estimates of total Soviet funding are not available, [redacted] Soviet contributions are substantial. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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Funding Political Parties and Politicians

[redacted] the Soviets are deeply involved in the Indian political process through covert contributions to the treasuries of political parties as well as to individual politicians. The Soviets direct most of their funds to the ruling Congress-I Party, the one truly national party in India and the party that has held power for 35 of India's 38 years of independence.¹ Moscow also funds several opposition parties, including the Communist Party of India (CPI)—which formerly was slavishly pro-Soviet but is becoming increasingly independent—and the more independent Communist Party of India/Marxist (CPI/M). [redacted]

The Two Communist Parties

Soviet funding reaches the two Communist parties, the CPI and the CPI/M, through a combination of kickback schemes, normal business transactions, and

² The Soviets also increased their own spending for high-level Soviet visitors to India and for Soviet propaganda in India to bolster Mrs. Gandhi's 1984 electoral chances. [redacted]

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¹ Today the Congress Party is known as the Congress-I (I for Indira Gandhi who split the party in an effort to gain control of it, jettisoning those factions not loyal to her). [redacted]

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direct cash payments.³ The Soviets have also devised several special methods to fund the CPI and its associated organizations. [redacted]

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• *Publishing house subsidies.* The USSR sells Soviet books and publications at a 60- to 65-percent discount to Peoples Publishing House (PPH), an Indian company wholly owned by CPI. These Soviet-supplied materials account for three-fourths of PPH's annual sales, which exceed 10 million rupees (about \$1 million) annually. In addition, the Soviets make interest-free loans to PPH with lengthy repayment schedules. Similar arrangements have been made with other CPI publishing houses.

pass cash payments to Indian Communist Party politicians, as well as smaller amounts to a few politicians in several non-Communist opposition parties. This cash reportedly is obtained from the favorable Soviet trade balance. [redacted]

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Although the Soviets search broadly for potentially vulnerable and cooperative politicians, they appear to target those more likely to have major political influence—such as sitting members of Parliament and MP candidates. [redacted]

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[redacted] as many as 40 percent of the Congress-I MPs in Mrs. Gandhi's last government had received Soviet political contributions. [redacted]

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[redacted] many Congress-I politicians are also businessmen who trade with the USSR; the Soviets reportedly seek out these individuals as trading partners because they know money from business transactions will be siphoned off for political purposes. [redacted]

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• *Soviet advertisements.* The Soviets place advertisements in CPI journals. The amount, approximately \$60,000 in 1984, is fixed annually by Moscow, but additional fees are sometimes paid for special advertisement programs.

There is also evidence that the Soviets focus on politicians whom they expect to be rising stars in Indian politics. [redacted] a former Congress-I politician—who was highly ambitious and capable and who had been a possible challenger to Mrs. Gandhi—is popularly believed to have received Soviet funds and, at least for a time, took positions very favorable to Soviet interests. [redacted]

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• *Visitors' expenses.* The Soviets provide both cash and airline tickets for visitors to the Soviet Union sponsored by the CPI or CPI front groups.

[redacted]

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Buying Individual Politicians

In addition to party funding, the Soviets channel money to individual Congress-I and opposition politicians through kickback arrangements and cash payments. For example, [redacted]

[redacted] the Soviet Embassy maintains a large reserve of rupees for various uses—including clandestine payments to Congress-I politicians. Soviet officials also

[redacted]

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While not all Indian politicians accede to Soviet financial inducements, individuals are free to "cut their own deals" with the Soviets and East Europeans. For example, a Congress-I politician noted that Mrs. Subhendra Joshi, a Congress-I candidate in 1977, lost the election that year despite 500,000 rupees (about \$50,000) in financial backing from East German (GDR) diplomats. She later became head of the GDR-Indian Friendship Society. [redacted]

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³ The CPI and CPI/M are two of several minor opposition parties in India. Both are in near total agreement with Moscow on international issues, but—despite their Soviet funding—both parties have major differences with Moscow on Indian domestic political issues. Moscow's ties to the CPI have been and remain more significant than its ties to the CPI/M. The CPI/M, once strongly pro-Chinese, exercises greater independence in its relations with Moscow. The CPI/M is more independent in part because it also receives funds from Beijing and because it dominates the West Bengal Left Front government, one of only two Communist-ruled state governments in India. [redacted]

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Soviet Funding Mechanism

[redacted] to fund political parties and individual politicians, the Soviets—usually using Indian trading companies as intermediaries—enter into arrangements with Indian businessmen wishing to trade with the USSR. When these businessmen sell to the Soviet Union, the Soviets agree to purchase their goods for an inflated price. The Indian businessman is instructed to deliver only a portion—perhaps as little as half—of the products specified in the sales contract, but receives payment from the Soviets for the full order. He then keeps payment only for the goods he actually delivered, plus a small fee, and passes the balance to a designated individual or makes a contribution to a specified political party or other organization. The Soviets channel money in this fashion by importing Indian grain (especially rice), woolen and leather garments, tobacco, coffee, silk, handicrafts, mica, and electronics. [redacted]

When the Soviets sell to Indian businessmen or to the Indian Government, they routinely take advantage of the common practice among Congress-I government officials of granting business contracts and business or import licenses in exchange for party contribu-

tions. The Soviets channel contributions to the Congress-I Party or make payments to individuals in return for approval of oil and natural gas contracts and to import such items as Soviet defense equipment and crude oil. Although we have no direct evidence, the Indian officials and businessmen involved in these deals probably also profit. Similar kickback arrangements are also used in trade deals with East European countries. [redacted]

These kickback schemes are facilitated by the Indo-Soviet rupee trade, a bilateral arrangement eliminating the need for hard currency. Paper credit and debit slips are charged against a rupee trade balance held by the Reserve Bank of India. Such paper transactions can disguise Soviet kickback payments to Indian political parties or individuals. Despite exposes in the press and Parliament in 1982 and 1983 that the Soviets use the Indo-Soviet rupee trade to finance their covert activities, the Soviets have been able to prevent substantial reform largely because of the economic importance to India of this trade and the support of several senior Indian politicians with well-known, close ties to the Soviets. [redacted]

Orchestrating Front Group Activities

Complementing their efforts to cultivate Indian Government officials and politicians, the Soviets orchestrate the political activities of at least a dozen organizations in India. According to the US Embassy, the Soviets fund and openly work with the CPI-controlled Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS), with 2,500 branches and a claimed membership of 200,000, and the All India Peace and Solidarity Organization (AIPSO), the Indian affiliate of the World Peace Council (WPC), the largest Soviet international front.⁴

⁴ Upon Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980, the Congress-I, with Mrs. Gandhi's blessing, made an effort to disassociate itself from the CPI-controlled Indo-Soviet Cultural Society by forming a new parallel organization called the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU). FSU was to channel Indo-Soviet activities in ways that would be easier for the Congress-I party to control. Attendance by Congress-I members at ISCUS functions was forbidden. Eventually this and other restrictions proved difficult to enforce, and Mrs. Gandhi's alternative friendship society became more of a skeleton group. ISCUS, however, continues in its activities. [redacted]

The Soviets and other Bloc countries provide large sums of money to at least five Indian trade unions, including one of the three major unions in India, the CPI-controlled All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). [redacted]

[redacted] The Soviets also work with organizations that are not generally known to have a Soviet connection, such as the recently created Institute for Regional Studies, run by long-time Indian friends of the Soviets, and the Institute for South Asian Studies. [redacted]

Soviet front groups in India frequently issue public statements and conduct conferences and other events in support of Soviet propaganda and disinformation.

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The Soviets also use them to extend their own contacts and their formal links to non-Soviet-controlled organizations:

- In 1984, the Soviets engineered the affiliation of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ), the larger and more left-oriented of the two major associations of Indian journalists, with the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), a Soviet international front based in Prague. According to a defector, the fact that a journalists' association from a leading nonaligned country is a member of the IOJ allows the Soviets to showcase the IOJ as a broad-based organization.
- At the annual Indian Science Conference in Lucknow, India, in January 1985, the CPI and the WPC solicited the participation of pro-Communist Indian scientists and professors to form a new WPC group to mobilize public opinion in support of nuclear disarmament and peace. [redacted] a meeting held by this group in early 1985 was attended by Soviet, East German, Czechoslovak, and Greek diplomats, as well as Indian scientists, at least half a dozen of whom hold high-ranking administrative positions at Indian universities and research institutes.
- In February 1985 in New Delhi, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), a Soviet international front also based in Prague, staged the Asian and Oceanic Trade Union Conference. According to the US Labor Counselor in New Delhi, working through the CPI-controlled Indian union, the All India Trade Union Congress, the Soviets were able to establish formal, ongoing links in New Delhi between the Soviet-controlled WFTU and one of the two free international trade union organizations, the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

The Soviets continually use front groups to mobilize support for Soviet-backed positions. At a minimum, these activities, which are for the most part unhindered by the Indian Government, help to create an aura of "grassroots" activism on a diverse set of issues even when the issues are not supported by the Indian public. [redacted]

Soviet Propaganda and Disinformation Activities

Over the last three decades the Soviet Union has developed a substantial capacity to plan and orchestrate large-scale propaganda and disinformation campaigns involving the placement of articles with the major Indian wire services and a wide range of Indian newspapers. The Soviets support these campaigns through wide distribution of magazines and books and through the orchestration of front groups. According to a defector, these Soviet propaganda and disinformation activities in India are aimed at creating a favorable image of the USSR in the mind of the Indian public, countering ostensibly anti-Soviet propaganda, and driving a wedge between the United States and India by undercutting US interests and policy initiatives in India.⁵ [redacted]

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To this end, the Soviets openly and covertly place materials in Indian newspapers on selected themes to generate press campaigns. The CPSU Central Committee and Novosti, the Soviet press agency, develop an annual propaganda plan for India, which identifies approximately 20 propaganda and disinformation campaigns to be conducted on worldwide and regional issues. A defector reports that, while most of these planned campaigns are on global issues, such as the Strategic Defense Initiative and the 40th Anniversary of the Victory Over Fascism, several are on issues specific to India. In addition to these long-term campaigns, the Soviets initiate timely campaigns in response to changing events. Moreover, Moscow media, including Radio Moscow, cite Soviet-placed articles as if they were Indian news stories and opinion in news items aimed at both their domestic and international audiences. [redacted]

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Soviet propaganda and disinformation campaigns play skillfully on Indian fears and aspirations. These articles mix factual information—often drawn from the Western media—with innuendo and provocative interpretation. Except in the more blatant placements, even the astute newspaper reader has difficulty discerning a Soviet hand. [redacted]

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⁵ The Soviets also currently target Pakistan, and they targeted China in the late 1970s and early 1980s. [redacted]

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Campaign Themes

The major Soviet press campaigns during the last several years have concentrated on charges that the United States, other Western powers, and Pakistan encourage and support separatist movements in India. These campaigns not only play on historical Indian fears of separatism but also, according to several Embassy officials, take advantage of the Indian penchant for blaming their country's problems on foreign involvement. For example, a major theme of many Soviet placements in the Indian press is that the United States has devised a plan to balkanize India into several smaller, independent states. Some of these articles allege that the United States dislikes India's "independent foreign policy" and that it wishes to exploit the country economically. [redacted]

To this end, the Soviets have, over the past year or so, orchestrated a major campaign alleging that the United States and Pakistan support, finance, and train Sikh separatists and terrorists in India and that the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States harbor Sikh terrorist leaders and financial contributors.⁶ [redacted]

[redacted] the following articles were part of this campaign:

- The 12 May 1984 edition of the *Hindustan Times* carried an article alleging the existence of Canadian training camps for Sikh terrorists, citing as evidence a two-year-old Vancouver newspaper article. When asked about the story by his editor, the journalist was unable to produce his source.
- In early August 1984, the *Hindustan Times* reported that Sikh separatist leaders in exile in the West, Ganga Singh Dhillon and Jagjit Singh Chauhan, were on the payroll of the US Defense Intelligence Agency.
- The 14 September 1984 edition of *The Times of India* ran an item entitled "Pakistan is CIA Base For Recruiting Guerrillas." The story had been given to the author by a Soviet Information Department Indian employee.

⁶ Soviet propaganda campaigns also charged China with supporting separatism in India until the Soviets ceased targeting the Chinese in 1982. [redacted]

- In early November 1984, the prestigious Calcutta dailies, the *Statesman* and *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, and the Madras edition of *The Hindu* ran stories based on the Czechoslovak news agency Cetak's report that the CIA had set up centers in Pakistan to train agents for subverting the Afghan and Indian Governments. The story was carried by Reuters, which labeled it part of a Soviet disinformation campaign, and by the Indian news service PTI, which did not. The Indian papers carried the story uncritically as a news item. [redacted]

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According to Embassy reporting and our own analysis, other Soviet campaigns of the last several years include:

- Promotion of the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and charges that the United States violates this principle by establishing military bases in the region. 25X1
- Exploiting US arms sales to Pakistan, charging Pakistani aggressive intentions toward India. 25X1
- Charging the United States with failing to restrain the Pakistani nuclear weapons program. 25X1
- Reiteration of Soviet worldwide campaigns on arms control and the US Strategic Defense Initiative.
- Charging the United States with putting undue economic pressure on India, and alleging that multinational corporations seek profits in the Third World at the expense of human life and welfare.
- Charging the United States with responsibility for the downing of Korean Airliner 007, and most recently using that campaign to try to link the United States to the Air India crash off Ireland in the summer of 1985. [redacted] 25X1

Much Soviet propaganda is designed to be supportive of the Indian Government and to reflect Indian sensitivities. Many Soviet-placed articles laud Indo-Soviet ties and portray Soviet respect for Indian heroes Nehru and Gandhi. The Soviets also publicize

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HINDUSTAN TIMES

Dhillon and Chauhan on US payroll

'Khalistan' Big 2 on US payroll

From Bharat Karnad

WASHINGTON, Aug 3—Gang of British intelligence as well as the American "Khalistan" group, which was formed in the Punjab, has supplied Mr Dhillon and Mr Chauhan with money to help them in their activities. The group is reported to be on the payroll of the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), according to a high-level diplomatic source here.

Continued from page 1 col 3
feared, which would outrage for "Khalistan". The group, formed of an umbrella group of Sikh extremists, has Mr Singh as its leader. Mr Singh is reported to be on the payroll of the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), according to a high-level diplomatic source here.

The names of these two extremists are reported to figure in DIA account books. Mr Chauhan is reported to be on the payroll of the "rabidly anti-communist" North Carolina legislator from the state of North Carolina.

Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq, with whom Mr Chauhan has close ties, is believed to have assured Mr Dhillon and Mr Chauhan for communication in turn, reportedly these men have established a network of agents in India, the American and the Soviet Union.

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India's National Newspaper Coimbatore, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Madurai.

"More than 100 CIA training centres in Pak."

VIENNA, Nov. 7. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has set up training centres in Pakistan for agents to subvert the Afghan and Indian governments, the Czechoslovak news agency Ceteka said on Tuesday.

In a report from Kabul, the agency said the CIA had plans to split up Afghanistan and India into smaller States and increase U.S. influence in the region.

Ceteka has already suggested that CIA operations lay behind the killing of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi last week.

The agency spoke of "the formation of a net of paramilitary centres for training subversive and terrorist units in the Eastern and Western border regions of Pakistan."

It said the U.S. press had characterised this as one of the most extensive covert CIA operations, but referred only to one publication, the magazine *Counterspy*.

Ceteka quoted *Counterspy* as saying more than 100 training centres had been set up in Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Provinces and dozens more in Pakistani Punjab.

Figure 4. Examples of Soviet placements in the Indian press.



The Gandhi Assassination Campaign

The Soviets reacted quickly to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination on 31 October 1984, immediately initiating a massive propaganda campaign to implicate the United States. Within hours of her death, Radio Moscow declared that the persons responsible for Prime Minister Gandhi's assassination "received their ideological inspiration" from the CIA and accused it of involvement in the assassinations of such other Third World leaders as Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba, Chilean President Salvador Allende, and President Torrijos of Panama. It claimed that US motives in those cases were to "destabilize the situation" and "clear the way for reactionaries," and charged that this US policy toward independent states was one of "state terrorism." [redacted]

The day after the assassination, two pro-Soviet Indian papers, the Bombay daily and the Patriot in New Delhi joined in the campaign. The Daily noted that President Reagan's condolence message came a half hour after Mrs. Gandhi's death was officially announced, implying US foreknowledge; the Patriot ran a major story referring to a frequently alleged US plan for the balkanization of India, noting that the United States wanted to dislodge Mrs. Gandhi from power and that "since this appeared to be a very difficult task, someone has now done their job by killing her." Playing to its Bengali audience, the CPI Hindi paper Janayug alleged a CIA role in the killing of former Bangladesh leader Mujibar Rahman and contended that "CIA and CIA-organized extremist forces" were also involved in Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. [redacted]

Also on the day after Mrs. Gandhi's killing, a large English language daily in New Delhi, the Hindustan Times, reported that "an overwhelming majority of Supreme Court advocates" belonging to the Congress-I believed the United States had a role in the assassination. The story implied belief among some other Congress-I leaders of US involvement. [redacted]

By the third day, two major English language papers stated that no evidence of a conspiracy existed and reported US denials of the charges. Yet, five days after the assassination, the respected daily The Times of India and the National Herald, a small government-controlled New Delhi paper, ran the Soviet accusations. On the sixth day, the Hindustan Times, in an editorial, acknowledged that the Soviets had used the event as a "golden opportunity to mount cold war propaganda against the US . . ." and questioned the timing of the Soviet accusation. The editorial went on to say, however, that the United States could not disclaim knowledge of the secessionist activities of Sikh militants in the United States. [redacted]

Beyond the Indian press coverage, these conspiracy charges appeared in media worldwide, both as legitimate reporting and as placements, receiving coverage in East European countries, as well as in Greece, Malta, Spain, Tunisia, Argentina, and Colombia. The campaign eventually forced the US Secretary of State personally to issue a denial. [redacted]

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visits of Soviet officials and scholars, such as visits by Soviet or Czechoslovak scholars who have conducted extensive studies of Hindu literature and the Hindi language and have allegedly found close cultural ties between India and Soviet Central Asia. [redacted]

Soviet Placement Agencies

Two major Soviet agencies in India conduct propaganda and disinformation campaigns by placing materials in the Indian press: the Soviet Information Department in New Delhi, with branches in Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta; and the Press Section of the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi, which is run by the KGB. SID and the KGB-run Embassy Press Section together provide Moscow with a substantial ability to place pro-Soviet material—propaganda and disinformation articles, editorials, phony letters to the editor, full texts of official speeches of Soviet leaders, and newspaper supplements on special topics—in the Indian press. [redacted]

The Soviet Information Department. According to a defector, the SID, which is physically separate from the Soviet Embassy, directs and coordinates most Soviet propaganda activities in India, including the placement of most Soviet-originated articles in the Indian press. SID is staffed principally by Novosti information and propaganda officers and is under the authority of Novosti headquarters in Moscow—the Soviet news agency that staffs information departments in foreign countries—and the Soviet Ambassador. SID in India has an annual operating budget of approximately \$20 million. (See inset and figure 5.) [redacted]

According to a defector report, the head of the SID in New Delhi and several other high-ranking SID Soviet officials believe that the Soviets have a “free hand” in placing propaganda materials in India. Further, they believe that India permits greater freedom for Soviet propaganda activity than any other place in the non-Communist world. In 1984, according to a recent defector, the SID achieved approximately 160,000 reproductions (that is, initial placements of articles plus all replays) in India. This estimate—a substantial increase from an estimated 100,000 reproductions in 1980—does not include the much smaller number of KGB placements. [redacted]

These figures probably underestimate Soviet success in gaining access to the pages of Indian newspapers. The same defector reported that the New Delhi SID often lowers its reproduction totals to avoid an unrealistically high goal from Moscow in the succeeding year. This practice, and the general difficulty in monitoring and accurately counting placements and replays in India, leads to an acrimonious debate annually between SID New Delhi and Novosti headquarters in Moscow over the actual number of reproductions in India. Nonetheless, according to a defector, SID New Delhi in 1984 accounted for nearly 70 percent of all Novosti reproductions (placements plus replays) worldwide; it is the largest Novosti operation in any country outside the Soviet Union and is regarded by the Soviets as one of the best, if not the best, Novosti outlet in the world. [redacted]

With the more evenhanded tone toward the superpowers set by Rajiv Gandhi and the impact of the Indian spy scandal, the Soviets reportedly encountered some difficulties in placing materials in early 1985. Journalists were more reluctant to take the risk of placing stories, fearing unfavorable repercussions, and the number of placements appears to have dropped during the spring and summer of 1985. The Soviets, however, have continued their efforts to place materials widely and in large volume. The US Embassy in New Delhi expects the reported reluctance of some journalists and newspapers to publish Soviet-produced materials to be temporary and the high volume of placements to resume. [redacted]

Soviet Embassy Press Section: A KGB Operation.

The Press Section of the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi is the central point for KGB press placement operations in India. Although we know little about its internal workings, this group initiates press campaigns independently of Novosti’s annual plan, often in response to changing events. According to a recent defector, the KGB initiated the following operations:

- The campaign to implicate the United States in the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

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The Soviet Information Department in India

Nikolay Fedin, Head of the Soviet Information Department in New Delhi. [redacted]

Evolving from a one-person TASS office in the late 1940s, SID in India, according to a defector, has become the largest Soviet propaganda office outside the USSR. The head of SID, Nikolay Fedin, is a senior information officer who has served more than 10 years in India. Fedin and most of his Soviet staff are Novosti employees. He coordinates SID activities in India closely with the Embassy—with both the Soviet Ambassador and a Minister Counselor in the Embassy—and reports to Moscow as well. [redacted]

Fedin runs SID in New Delhi with 23 Soviet propaganda, information, and administrative officers, including at least two KGB officers, and employs approximately 200 Indian nationals. The New Delhi office is divided into a Press Section (which includes a special Counterpropaganda Group), a Magazine Section, a Distribution Section, and several administrative units (figure 5). [redacted]

In addition to the main SID office in New Delhi, Fedin directs the activities of three smaller branch offices in Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. These branches are each staffed by three Soviet officers, usually two of whom are KGB officers. The three

branches together employ an additional 200 Indian nationals; Madras is the largest with almost 100 Indian employees. The defector estimates that about half of SID's \$20 million budget goes to the operating budgets of the three branches. [redacted]

Probably the most important section in the New Delhi SID is the Press Section, which either places directly or edits and rewrites materials sent from Moscow for placement in Indian newspapers in English, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi. The Counterpropaganda Group also adapts Moscow-prepared materials for press placement, focusing on countering "anti-Soviet" propaganda. In addition, both units prepare their own locally written materials for placement. [redacted]

For Indian nationals, getting a job at SID is highly competitive; applicants usually must have personal contacts in one of India's two Communist parties. Once Indians secure employment, however, they use their political contacts to protect their jobs and thereby reduce the managerial discretion of Soviet officers and the level of competence in certain sections of SID. Discipline for failure to perform adequately is rare because such attempts usually provoke a great outcry from the employees' Indian Communist contacts. A defector reported that one complaint letter even went to Brezhnev, much to the consternation of Soviet officers in New Delhi. According to the defector, some Soviet officers in SID decry the incompetence of many of the Indian employees and their own inability to manage them effectively.^a [redacted]

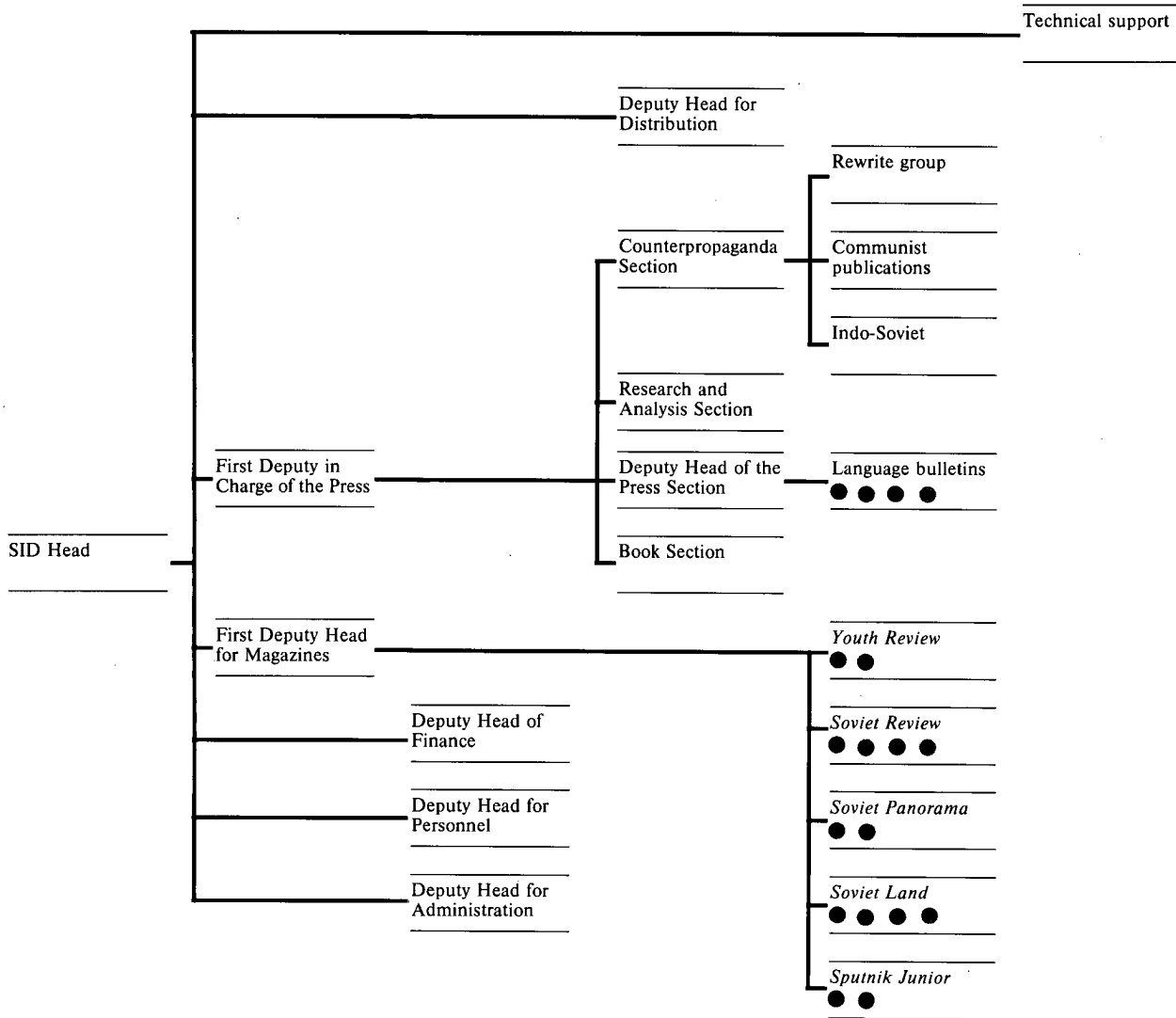
^a Soviet propagandists in India also have problems in their dealings with Moscow. According to a defector, Soviet SID officials in New Delhi complain about delays in receiving materials from Moscow and the poor quality of those materials. They also complain about the lack of response from Novosti headquarters to SID suggestions and requests for additional materials. [redacted]

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Figure 5
Organization of the Soviet Information Department in New Dehli

- English
- Hindi
- Urdu
- Punjabi



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- Charges following the Bhopal tragedy that the United States had previously tested chemical and biological weapons at the Union Carbide plant and that, under the guise of relief efforts, it used victims of the tragic leak as guinea pigs for biological-weapons-related testing.
- Accusations that former US Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick had helped devise a plan to balkanize India and other Third World countries.
- The disinformation campaign that led the Government of India to block the posting of US Foreign Service officer George Griffin to New Delhi.
- Charges that the United States was breeding "killer mosquitos" in Pakistan for use in the region. [redacted]

The Embassy Press Section often uses Indian employees of the Soviet Information Department to plant KGB materials. The KGB, which also has several officers within SID, tasks SID to participate in KGB-initiated press campaigns and uses at least one senior SID Indian employee to collect political information on Indian journalists. [redacted]

According to a defector, KGB officers in the Press Section do not have the SID officers' professional propaganda and information training and have less experience working in India. In general, their campaigns are based primarily on disinformation, are directly and blatantly targeted against the United States and Western intelligence services, and are less carefully adapted to Indian sensitivities. [redacted]

Cultivating Journalists To Place Articles

Although all Soviet placements in Indian newspapers and news services are made by Indian employees of SID or its branch offices, Soviet officers regularly entertain and cultivate Indian journalists. [redacted]

[redacted] although Indian journalists often are initially offended by the Soviets' transparent efforts to influence them, many eventually succumb to the repeated invitations. [redacted] most Soviet and East European journalists in New Delhi are bright and personable, and a substantial proportion of them speak either Hindi, Urdu, or

Bengali. [redacted] the Soviets and their East European colleagues have considerable success in developing strong personal and professional ties to Indian journalists. [redacted]

A defector estimated that the Soviets use 40 or 50 journalists annually to place materials and that, during the last several years, they have used between 200 and 300. Most journalists, however, agree to place materials only periodically so as to not attract attention and to preserve their reputations. [redacted]

Placement Techniques

According to a recent defector, the Soviets' goal in most of their propaganda and disinformation campaigns is to place materials in the larger, prestigious English language press. Placement of an article in the blatant pro-Soviet press (for example, the *Patriot* in New Delhi or *Blitz* or the *Daily* in Bombay) is insufficient to establish the credibility of a story with most Indian audiences. The defector reported that SID considers six or seven English language papers to be the most influential in the country. These papers carry more international news than most others, and their stories are more likely to be replayed than those of smaller, less prestigious papers outside New Delhi. The defector reports that, although the Soviets make some effort to place materials in the Indian language press, stories in an Indian language paper will probably be replayed only in that particular language. The English language press in New Delhi is more likely to be a source for replays in smaller Indian language papers. [redacted]

Many Indian papers, especially the more prestigious English language press, are reluctant or unwilling to publish an article without a source. Consequently, according to a defector, the Soviets use at least two different techniques to develop a bogus source for the anonymous articles produced by Novosti headquarters in Moscow and the SID in New Delhi. [redacted]

The Soviets sometimes get a source attached to an article by placing it in the pro-Soviet or Indian Communist press. The Soviets then try to get a journalist to place it or a spinoff article in one or more

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Lanka VOA station seen as cover for spying system

Colombo, Feb 17 (PTI)—The proposed Voice of America (VOA) station in Sri Lanka will be a perfect cover for a planned secret communication centre and an electronic listening post for the United States Navy, says the journal *Forum*, published here.

Reporting that the VOA station, to be set up in west coast city of Chilaw, will be the most powerful of its kind outside the United States, the journal said several highpowered transmitters, including one of 500 KW, will be located about ground while hidden beneath the surface will be a network of kilometres of antennas of the "Elf" system.

In addition, sophisticated electronic listening devices will monitor all forms of communication in the region. The data received will be transmitted through a satellite link to the Pentagon, *Forum* said.

The "Elf" system is described as consisting of one or more shore-based transmitters connected to a vast network of long horizontal wire antennas. An Elf signal can travel great distances with low loss, as well as penetrating sea water to considerable depth. The transmitted signals are sensed by an antenna on the submarine and decoded in a sophisticated computer-based receiver.

Analysing international political implications of the VOA station, the opposition Freedom Party journal also observed that the establishment of an electronic spy system on Sri Lanka soil will undoubtedly cause great anxiety to India. In such an event, India, already alarmed by a spy scandal, may be less responsive to overtures of the Sri Lanka Government in finding a solution to its ethnic problem, it noted.

Meanwhile, the Colombo Government paper *Sunday Observer* today said Indo-Sri Lanka dialogues will definitely be continued "on a regular basis at a political level" in the future.

"Political circles agree that there has been a better understanding of India's position by Sri Lanka in India was for upholding Sri Lanka's unity," the paper said.

Meanwhile, the paper today published a London Times report which mentioned former US State Secretary Dr Henry Kissinger's name as a possible mediator between India and Sri Lanka.

However, he would be unlikely to be acceptable to the Indian Government although he was recently in Delhi and met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi — and he would not be acceptable by the Tamil militants who are uniformly left wing, it quoted the *Times* as reporting.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

U.S. planning 'data post' in Lanka

COLOMBO, February 17 (PTI).

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Figure 6. Soviet disinformation campaign in Indian press against new Voice of America station in Sri Lanka. This campaign used the Press Trust of India wire service to place anti-US articles in both the pro-Soviet and the establishment press in New Delhi in February 1985.

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of the prestigious English language papers, which establishes the credibility of a story with most Indian audiences and increases the chances that other papers will pick up the story. [redacted]

A second technique for attaching sourcing and planting articles is to place materials with an Indian news service, which then attributes its name to the story and telegraphically distributes the story to the wire services' newspaper subscribers. The Soviets have had immense success using this technique with the Press Trust of India (PTI), India's largest English language news service, and have several key PTI managers on the Soviet payroll. Depending on the type of story, PTI—at the Soviets' option—runs an article either with a dateline of PTI New Delhi or PTI Moscow (ostensibly meaning from PTI's Moscow correspondent) or as PTI only with no dateline. The Soviets also regularly place stories with the second-largest English language service, the United News Service of India; with the major Hindi service, Samacher; and with two much smaller Communist-owned or -controlled news services, India Press Agency and Central News Services. [redacted]

According to a recent defector, these techniques are sometimes used in tandem. The Soviets have such automatic access to PTI that when they pass an article to, for example, a prestigious English language paper, they also often place it with PTI to ensure that it gets published. A US information officer who served in India reported that it was impossible to go to PTI without seeing a car with a Soviet diplomatic license plate parked outside. Two Soviet defectors independently reported that among some Soviet officials the Press Trust of India was now jokingly referred to as "Press TASS of India." [redacted]

Dissemination of Books and Magazines

The Soviets have also developed a substantial apparatus to distribute Soviet-prepared and -sponsored books and magazines in India. Defector reports indicate that this material is distributed primarily by two agencies: the Soviet Information Department and V/O Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga, the Soviet agency that organizes bookfairs in India and distributes books at cut-rate prices through USSR Bookstores and Indian book-stalls. [redacted]

The SID distributes approximately 25 million propaganda items each year, including its own magazines, pamphlets, and books. The Magazine Section of SID publishes at least five magazines in India, targeted at various Indian audiences. Two of these—*Soviet Land*, a family-oriented magazine, and *Soviet Review*, geared to Communist and leftist intellectuals—are published in 13 languages. *Soviet Land* is published twice monthly with a circulation of 550,000; *Soviet Review* is a weekly publication with a circulation of 75,000. The Soviets also publish a magazine for teens, *Youth Review*; one for children, *Sputnik Junior*; and a photo magazine, *Soviet Panorama*. A defector reports that a proportion of each magazine's circulation must be paid subscriptions but that, in a few cases, 50 to 60 percent of a magazine's edition is given away. [redacted]

The Distribution Section of SID maintains a distribution list of 100,000 addressees divided into categories, such as doctors, lawyers, universities, and libraries. According to a defector, the Distribution Section recently began a pilot effort to assess whether several Soviet magazines were reaching their intended target groups. On the basis of responses to a mailed questionnaire, about one-third of the subscribers of the Hindi edition of *Soviet Land* were small businessmen (for example, shopowners), a far higher proportion of businessmen than SID intended to target. Presumably, such surveys will help the Soviets better direct their circulation efforts. [redacted]

SID openly distributes books in India, but it also secretly initiates and sponsors preparation and publication of approximately 20 books in India each year through Indian publishers, such as Sterling, Allied, and Pulse. Most recently, a portion of SID's covert book publishing was shifted to a publishing section of the newspaper, the *Patriot*. According to the defector, this covert book publishing costs the Soviets about \$200,000 a year. These books are usually printed under the names of Indian authors with no ostensible connection to SID or to the USSR. According to a defector, SID recently informed Novosti headquarters in Moscow that it has the capacity to double the number of books it covertly publishes each year. [redacted]

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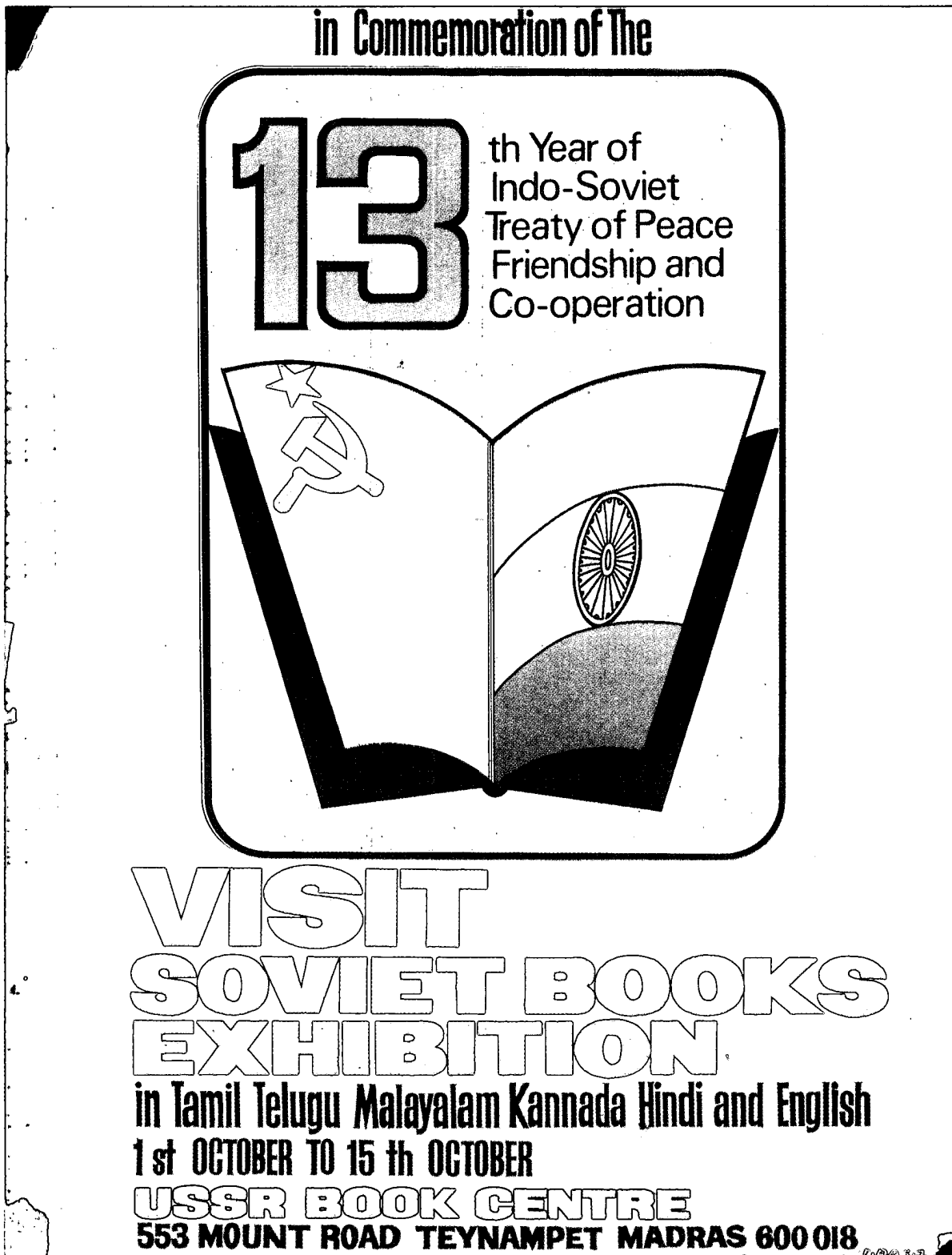


Figure 7. Poster advertising Soviet books.

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The other distributor of Soviet books, V/O Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga, hosts several bookfairs in India each year. These 10-day to two-week exhibits are held in several major cities and attract sizable crowds. The Soviets use these exhibits, USSR Bookstores, and Indian bookstalls to disseminate Soviet-produced textbooks—approved by the Joint Indo-Soviet Textbook Board, a body set up under bilateral agreement. The Soviets also distribute politically oriented volumes supportive of Soviet propaganda campaigns and critical of US policy through this network. [redacted]

Impact of Soviet Influence Activities

In our view, Moscow's massive political influence campaign has reaped handsome benefits for its foreign policy objectives in India and elsewhere in the Third World. It has:

- Influenced Indian political processes and public opinion, binding tighter the ties between the two countries.
- Created a reliable conduit for Soviet propaganda to the rest of the Third World.
- Undermined US interests in India and elsewhere.
- Built an infrastructure that helps to ensure continued Soviet influence in India. [redacted]

The broad range and sophistication of Soviet political influence efforts in India are unparalleled in the non-Communist Third World. Taken individually, each of the techniques employed—exploitation of government and military ties, funding of political parties and politicians, use of front organizations, and, especially, the huge volume of propaganda and disinformation—yields both tangible and intangible advantages to the Soviets. Together, they constitute a massive assault on Indian Government and political leaders and on the substantial Indian urban and educated public. During the last decade and a half, they have had the cumulative effect of creating a climate in India that is receptive to and uncritical of many Soviet policy initiatives, and suspicious of Western—and particularly US—initiatives. [redacted]

Covert funding of political parties and politicians has helped the Soviets develop an extensive influence network of close contacts and gain the cooperation of

individuals whose political favor can be used to Soviet advantage. We believe that the funding benefits Moscow in several ways. Specifically, it:

- *Helps maintain a pro-Soviet lobby within the Congress-I Party.* According to the majority of MPs interviewed by a US Embassy officer, the pro-Soviet lobby in the last days of Mrs. Gandhi's government consisted of some 10 to 25 MPs of the 346 Congress-I seats in Parliament, as well as other officials who have consistently promoted closer Indo-Soviet relations. The Soviets use party connections to get endorsement of their disinformation campaigns. For example, several months after the storming of the Golden Temple by the Indian Army to remove Sikh terrorists, the Congress-I published an official party pamphlet entitled "Conspiracy Exposed" in which it charged that the United States actively assisted Sikh separatists and terrorists in an effort to balkanize India. 25X1
- *Fosters access to government officials.* Because the Congress Party has governed India for all but three years since independence, Soviet access and influence within the party often translates into access and influence within the government. Politicians who have benefited from Soviet funding during their rise are naturally more likely than others to be accessible to Soviet diplomats when they reach positions of power, and some may even be willing to act as "agents of influence" on behalf of Moscow. 25X1
- *Induces favorable public statements.* Some Indian politicians accept Soviet money in exchange for making public statements favorable to Soviet policy and hostile to the United States. Such statements often carry little cost to an Indian politician since he can appear to be strongly nationalistic while criticizing the United States. On many occasions, often coinciding with a Soviet disinformation or propaganda campaign, Indian MPs have spoken out publicly in support of the USSR or critically of the United States. For example, in January 1983, the Soviets initiated a campaign charging former US Ambassador to the United Nations Kirkpatrick 25X1

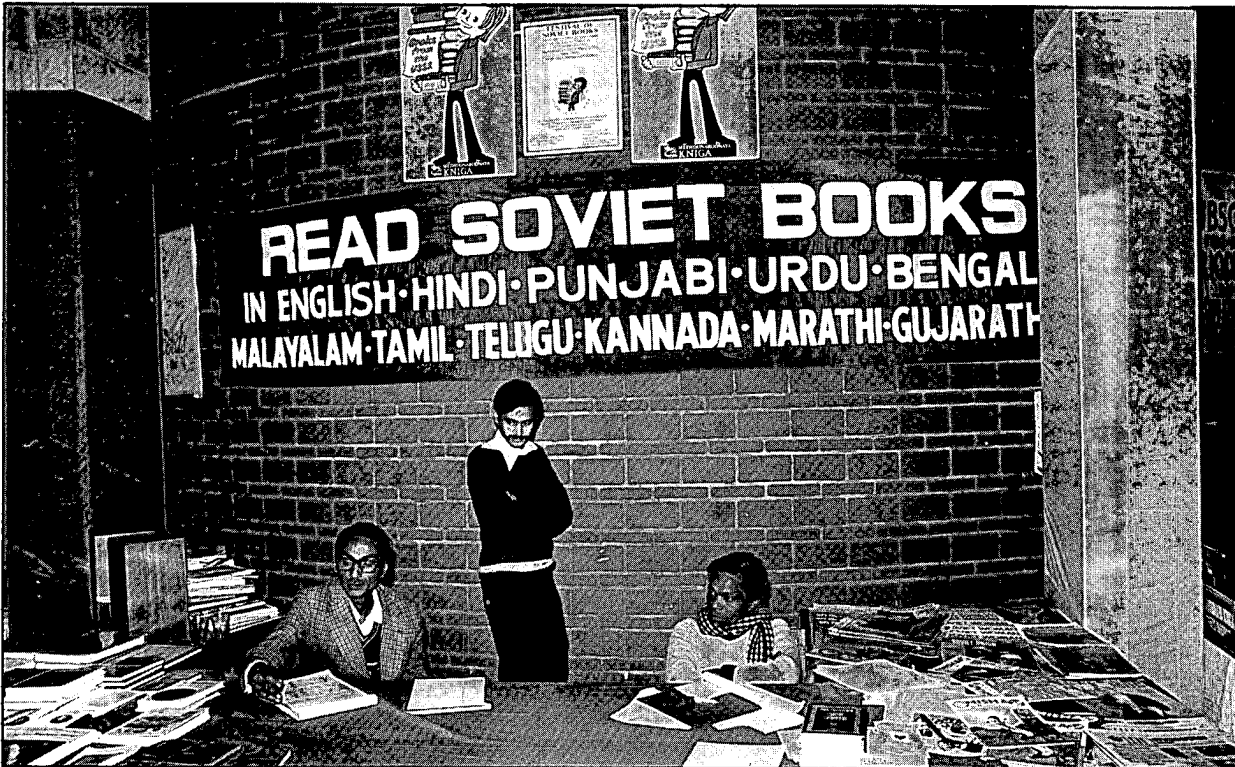
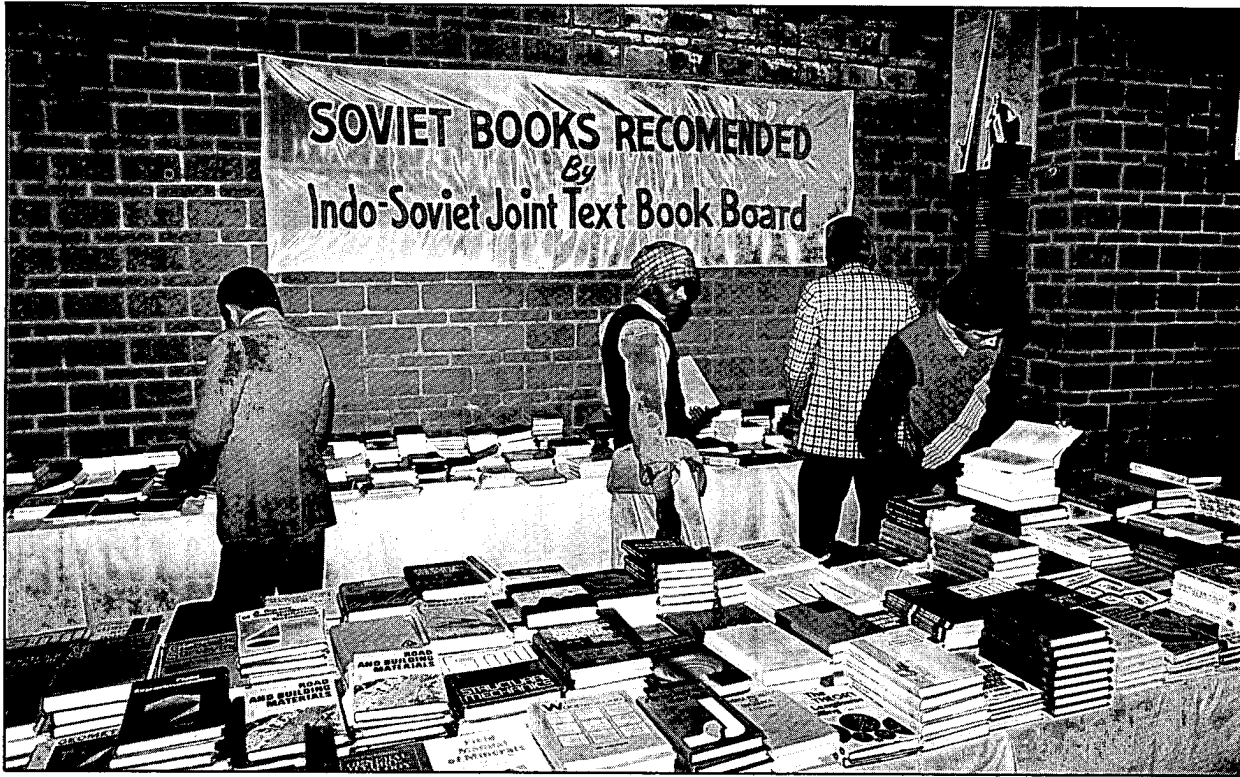


Figure 8. Soviet-sponsored bookfair in Madras

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with devising a plan to balkanize India. Although this charge was quickly discredited by several major Indian newspapers, six MPs made strident charges in Parliament supportive of the Soviet-placed article.

- *Helps promote Indian Government endorsement of Soviet activities.* While not solely attributable to covert funding, the Soviets have a track record of success in getting leading Indian Government officials to endorse Soviet-sponsored activities in India and elsewhere. Official greetings from the Indian Prime Minister are commonly read at Soviet-sponsored events in India, such as the Indian Vice President's address at *Soviet Land's* recent annual Nehru awards ceremony. Similarly, Rajiv Gandhi sent a brief videotaped message of greeting to youth delegates at the recent 12th International Youth Festival in Moscow.
- *Aids in the collection of political intelligence.* Through informal conversations, the Soviets routinely elicit information on developments in Indian politics. Soviet funding, gifts, and other inducements increase the responsiveness of politicians to Soviet requests.
- *Wins greater cooperation from the Indian Communist parties.* We believe the Communist Party of India and, to a lesser extent, the Communist Party of India/Marxist are more compliant and cooperative because of Soviet funding. CPI publications frequently print Soviet propaganda, and CPI officials work closely with the Soviets in orchestrating front group activities to mobilize public opinion. Nonetheless, both Communist parties steadfastly ignore Moscow's instructions to support the Indian Government on policy and not to compete electorally with the Congress-I Party. [redacted]

Use of front groups has allowed the Soviets to extend their links to organizations not popularly branded as Soviet or Indian Communist controlled. It enables them to function behind the scenes, manipulating a group's activities and mobilizing public opinion on specific issues. The dozen or more organizations whose activities are orchestrated by Moscow touch many facets of Indian life: business, academia, culture, science, and several specialized interests. [redacted]

By their own standards, Soviet propaganda and disinformation activities in India have been enormously successful: tens of thousands of placements each year, with substantial numbers of items placed in such prestigious Indian newspapers as the *Hindustan Times*, the *Statesman*, *The Times of India*, and *The Hindu* (figure 9). Their success, however, is reflected in more than just these numbers alone. Recent Soviet charges of US involvement in the assassination of Indira Gandhi constitute only one example of how Soviet media campaigns have put the United States on the defensive in India. Others include:

- A Soviet disinformation campaign against US Foreign Service officer George Griffin several years ago ultimately led the Indian Government to refuse to allow him to be posted to New Delhi.
- Within the past year, a Soviet campaign against Indian purchase of high technology from a US company seriously endangered completion of the deal. The Soviet campaign—which asserted that similar technology could be purchased much more cheaply from East Germany—along with protests from Indian scientists that India should develop the technology, forced Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to review the decision. Although New Delhi ultimately decided to proceed with the purchase, the Soviet campaign helped to delay the deal for several months and contributed to distrust of India by US businessmen just when efforts were being initiated to improve US-Indian relations through trade in high technology.
- The US Ambassador in New Delhi, the public information officer, and the Director of the US Information Service (USIS) in New Delhi must frequently respond to false charges about the United States in the Indian press. These US officials expend much time and effort in meeting with Indian Government officials to rebut these charges and writing or visiting newspaper editors and journalists to rebut and protest false or misleading stories. [redacted]

We believe that Soviet propaganda and disinformation activities—in conjunction with other Soviet political influence activities—have helped shape the

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Figure 9
Some Examples of Soviet Placements in Indian Press and Coverage in USSR Media by Theme, 1984-85^a

Sample of propaganda and disinformation themes		Indian Communist press ^b	Pro-Soviet press in India ^b	Major establishment Indian press ^b	USSR media	
Separatism	Kirkpatrick plan		● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●	
	Separatism as US policy	●	● ● ● ● ● ● ●	●	●	
	US, the West, and Pakistan train, finance Sikh separatists, terrorists		●	● ● ●	●	
	US, UK, Canada encourage, harbor Sikh terrorists overseas			● ● ● ●		
State terrorism	State terrorism as US policy				●	
	Gandhi assassination	US link implied or charged	●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	●
		US played active role	● ●	●	● ●	
		Was part of US plan of separatism, intervention, or espionage activities in India	● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ●	●
		Hardgrave book proves US role		● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		●
		US involved in other assassinations		●		●

^a Selective monitoring of Indian media permitted identification of Soviet propaganda and disinformation themes and a sampling of Soviet placements in the Indian press. Each dot represents a single placement monitored on that theme.

^b Indian Communist press includes *Dainik*, *Basumati*, *New Age*, *Satyajug*, and *Janajug*. Pro-Soviet press in India includes *Link*, *Patriot*, and *Daily*. Major Indian establishment papers include *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express*, *Statesman*, *The Times of India*, *Telegraph*, *Chandigarh Tribune*, *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, and *The Hindu*.

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attitudes of the urban, educated Indian public as well as the political elite. In the view of a USIS officer formerly stationed in India, Indian readers may not believe a story if they read it in the pro-Soviet *Blitz*, but, when the Congress-I MP from Uttar Pradesh repeats it, the story becomes credible. The constant reiteration of anti-US disinformation appears, at a minimum, to have exacerbated doubts among many Indians about the United States and its policies, doubts that Indian politicians are willing to exploit.



Public opinion polls also point up the success of Soviet propaganda and disinformation activities, particularly in playing on Indian concerns about US foreign policy and in developing a large reservoir of favorable public attitudes toward the USSR. In five public opinion polls conducted from 1981 through 1984 by a highly respected Indian affiliate of the Gallup organization, a large proportion of the educated urban population consistently ranked the Soviet Union higher than the United States in:

- Its perceived ability to act wisely in world affairs.
- Convergence of its interests with India's.
- The generosity of its assistance and trade.

Moreover, in 18 of 22 public opinion polls during the last 11 years, those surveyed indicated that they have a more favorable image of the USSR than of the United States, frequently by a wide margin. This prevailing attitude is a major turnabout of the favorable opinion toward the United States that existed in India in the immediate postindependence period.

Soviet use of India as a credible conduit for their worldwide disinformation efforts probably helps to shape attitudes outside India as well. Soviet placements in the Indian press are often replayed in the press of other countries and in Moscow's own media. Although gauging the impact of these replays worldwide is difficult, news sourced to India, rather than Moscow, is likely to have greater credibility in the Third World—particularly in view of India's position as a spokesman for the nonaligned countries.

Soviet Vulnerabilities

The success of Soviet activities in India largely depends on the acquiescence of the Indian Government. For example, despite gaining easy access to the pages of Indian newspapers, Soviet information officers have, according to a defector, failed to gain access to Indian radio and television, which remain under close government control. Moreover, according to a US official recently stationed in New Delhi, the Indian Government is currently investigating PTI, and a replacement for the long-suspected agent of influence who chairs the PTI board will be appointed by Rajiv Gandhi. Although several other PTI board members and employees are on the Soviet payroll, Gandhi's choice of a PTI chairman could be critical in determining whether the Soviets continue to enjoy unfettered access to the Indian press through PTI.

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Over the years, the strength of Soviet influence in the Congress-I Party has fluctuated with the political tone set by the top Indian leadership. Under Indira Gandhi, Soviet fortunes prospered. To date, Rajiv Gandhi has set a different tone, marked by the noticeable absence of statements hostile to the United States in his first 11 months, the government's refusal to prevent public disclosure of Soviet and East European involvement in the Indian spy scandal, and restrictions on the access of Soviet officials to Congress-I offices and leadership. The Soviets' reaction, has been to redouble their efforts to wine and dine new MPs in the most extensive campaign yet to influence members of Parliament.

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Although we believe that Gandhi will be unwilling to use the political capital necessary to restrict Soviet activities substantially, he has proceeded with an anticorruption campaign that has included public statements, personnel changes throughout the bureaucracy, and legislation. Legislation passed this spring made open contributions to political parties legal, thereby undercutting somewhat the need for secret contributions. Although this measure will not restrict the major means of Soviet covert funding—kickbacks through the Indo-Soviet rupee trade—it could make the general practice of covert funding less acceptable.

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The Soviets also see their position as vulnerable to Western political influence activities. According to a defector, Soviet propagandists in India are concerned about what they perceive as a large amount of Western-produced material flowing into India. For example, Soviet Information Department officials viewed US food assistance to Ethiopia and the publicity surrounding it not as a humanitarian effort but as a propaganda tactic to embarrass that Marxist government and the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, they felt powerless to counter the favorable publicity the United States received since they believed Indian readers would not be well disposed toward a campaign attacking the United States for giving food to starving people. Similarly, SID officials in New Delhi saw the US human rights policy of the late 1970s as a propaganda campaign: they feared US attention to what they considered an area of Soviet vulnerability and believed that the human rights theme was appealing to Indian audiences. [redacted]

We believe that these sorts of concerns among Soviet strategists in India have some basis in fact. Soviet publications and radiobroadcasts must compete with other publications and broadcasts, including many from the West; moreover, the Soviets are just now getting into the television and cinema markets. Despite the popularity of the USSR in opinion polls, appreciation of Soviet economic and military assistance, and gratefulness for Soviet support in times of crisis, most Indians—according to knowledgeable observers—are neither ideologically inclined toward Marxism-Leninism nor sympathetic to Moscow's political system. Our reading of Indian opinion suggests that the Soviets could indeed be vulnerable on certain issues:

- Soviet efforts to manipulate such international organizations as the United Nations and the Nonaligned Movement, institutions held in high regard by the Indian public.
- The "foreign hand" of Moscow and its allies in manipulating Indian internal politics for Soviet or Bloc benefit.
- Continuing Soviet economic failures—particularly in agriculture, a sector of India's economy that has received considerable assistance from the United States.

- Moscow's poor performance in providing disaster and relief assistance—even to such political allies as Ethiopia.
- Moscow's record on human rights, which the educated Indian public recognizes to be poor. [redacted]

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Outlook

We believe that efforts to woo Rajiv Gandhi and to limit his room to maneuver away from the USSR will dominate Soviet political influence activities in the near term. Moscow—striving to demonstrate its support and friendship—is making a determined bid to get Gandhi to affirm publicly that the strong Indo-Soviet ties that prevailed under his mother will remain unchanged. [redacted]

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Even if, as we anticipate, Gandhi continues efforts to steer India toward a more genuinely nonaligned course, he is not likely to move India significantly closer to the United States. Despite his generally pro-Western orientation and his desire for Western technology, he will probably continue to seek a position midway between the two superpowers and to play an active, but selective, role on issues of contention between them. We believe that, at least in the near term, he will be unwilling to expend the political capital necessary to turn off Soviet activities in India, and the Soviets are likely, therefore, to continue to operate in a permissive environment not greatly different from the one they enjoyed under Indira Gandhi. [redacted]

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Should something happen to Rajiv Gandhi, a successor seeking to establish legitimacy would probably be more vulnerable to Soviet influence activities. With their existing propaganda machinery and network of contacts and friends, the Soviets would have many opportunities for influence in an unstable political situation in India. The size and momentum of Moscow's political apparatus in India is such that it is unlikely to be easily derailed. The large Soviet presence, the extensive network of Indian political contacts and cash payoffs, the number of Soviet front groups, and the enormous investment in propaganda

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machinery assure the Soviets of a continuing voice in Indian political life. In light of Moscow's reaction to Rajiv Gandhi's government, we expect that the Soviet Union—in the event of any future regime change—would make extensive use of its assets to maintain, and, if possible, strengthen its special relationship with India.

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Because Moscow is bent on influencing Gandhi, the United States can expect an increasing challenge from Soviet activities in India:

- We believe Moscow is now mounting an effort to augment the number of its "old friends" in key positions, some of whom have lost influence in the new administration. Although we cannot identify specific younger leaders recruited by the Soviets, we have little doubt that the Soviets are making vigorous efforts.
- A recent shakeup in personnel at the Soviet Information Department in India probably indicates a reassessment and possible reorientation of the propaganda and disinformation effort. We expect Soviet activities to become more sophisticated—with renewed efforts to gain access to Indian electronic media and more emphasis on the key issues confronting Gandhi, such as the Punjab, Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, and the motives of the United States in India.
- In addition to the standard anti-US themes, we expect Moscow to continue to exploit Indira Gandhi's assassination and the Bhopal tragedy for maximum propaganda effect.

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