

RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS**" submitted by **Mr. Narayan Mahapatra** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, has not been submitted previously for any other degree of this or any other University and is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. Shashi Kant Jha
(Chairperson)

Prof. Nirmala Joshi
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*Dedicated to ...
My Mother*

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PREFACE

The sudden demise of the Soviet Union in December 1991, witnessed a tectonic shift in world affairs. The transition from a bipolar world to a uni-polar one and the emergence of the United States as the sole superpower at the end of fifty years of the cold war have necessitated a shift in the priorities and goals of the nation-states. The renunciation of the socialist ideology, the emergence of the Capitalist Market Economy and re-emergence of the former Soviet Republics as new independent states, all served to shift the global focus from geo-politics to geo-economics.

The present work is an attempt to understand the problems and perceptions of Russian Foreign Policy in an area that is crucial for Russia. In its South Asia relations, India and Pakistan constitute an important dimension of its policy.

The work has been divided into five chapters. Chapter I deals with a short introduction while Chapter II focuses on Soviet perspective of Indo-Pak relations. Chapter III deals with the evolution of Russian Foreign Policy under President Yeltsin and its approach towards the Indo-Pak relations. Likewise, Chapter IV concentrates on the Russian Foreign Policy priorities under the Presidency of Vladimir Putin.

The final Chapter provides some conclusions regarding the obvious tilt of Russian foreign policy towards India than Pakistan.

Chapter-I

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

In its South Asia policy the Soviet Union/Russian Federation has showed a marked preference for India as against Pakistan. This is understandable because India is the largest country in the region, it is a big market and is a vast reservoir of technical and skilled manpower. But more important was the coincidence of interests between the two countries. In the Soviet period this coincidence of interests augured well for Soviet relations with India, and later after the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991 it was once again the same interests that have brought the two countries closer. Soviet / Russian attempt to befriend Pakistan have had their limitations, and hence the relationship did not proceed beyond a limit.

Russian policy towards the Indian sub-continent can be traced back to the modern period in Russian history, to the time of Peter-the-Great, when Tzarist Russia issued a special decree for the protection of Indian traders and emperor Aurang-Zeb expressed his gratitude to the Russian Emperor by giving him an elephant.¹ The Russian rulers were especially lured by the riches of India and often dreamt of extending Russian influence as far as the Indus. The famous Russian traveler Afanasi Niktin also described about India in his book – “A Journey beyond three seas”. This is why India always occupied an important spot in Russia foreign policy. In the colonial era the Tsarist and the British empire developed rivalry over India. This is the reason due to which the British did not allow Russian Empire to expand beyond the territory of Iran as India was quite close to it. After decades of diplomatic tug-of-war with Britain, Russia opened its consulate general in Bombay in 1900.²

¹ B. Yegrov.: Indo-Russian relations – Past and Future”, *National Herald* (New Delhi), 24 January 1993.

² *ibid.*

However, the victory of October revolution in 1917 over-throwing the Tzarist Empire and the subsequent birth of a socialist republic altered the politico-strategic situation of the world. The Bolsheviks wanted to demolish colonial rules globally in which India became a focal point in their strategy. Lenin the undisputed leader of the revolution favourably viewed the bourgeois democratic National movements in Asia because of their anti-Imperialistic character.³ As a result, M.K. Gandhi and other Indian leaders in the Congress accordingly received sympathetic appraisal in the Communist International or Comintern circles, as popular leaders of the Indian National Movement. In this regard, it is a well known fact that the Indian freedom struggle against British colonialism was greatly inspired by the October Revolution.

Diplomatic relations between India and the Soviet Union were established on 13 April 1947. There was, however, a big change in Soviet Policy towards India on the eve of India's independence. Initially the partition of India in August 1947 was not seen as a favourable development in Moscow. The Soviet Union not only regarded the division of Indian sub-continent as "the divide and rule" strategy of British policy in India, but also expressed doubt whether Pakistan would be a genuinely independent, democratic country. Indian independence was considered just a deal between the big bourgeoisie in India and the British imperialist.⁴

India's decision to adhere to the policy of Non-Alignment neither pleased Stalin nor the western leaders. Again India's decision in April 1949 to remain in the Common-Wealth and Nehru's announcement on May 1949 that he had accepted an invitation to visit the United States in October created much suspicion in the minds of Soviet leaders. As a reaction to this possible leaning of India towards the West, the Soviet Union immediately

³ Jyotsna, Bakshi, *Russia and India – From ideology to Geo-Politics* (Dev Publication, New Delhi), 1999, p.2

⁴ J.P. Jain, *Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan and Bangladesh* (New Delhi, 1974), p.31.

extended an invitation to Pakistan's prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan to visit Moscow. But surprisingly, Liaquat Ali Khan went to United States instead, thus shelving his visit to the Soviet Union. No official explanation was given for this decision to explain the preference to first visiting the U.S. instead of USSR from which it had received the prior invitation.⁵ In the following years, Pakistan's decision to join the Western Security Alliance System SEATO in 1954 and CENTO in 1955 was also not appreciated by Moscow as it had direct security bearing on the Soviet Union. It interpreted these decisions by Pakistan as a link in the containment strategy against it by the United States.⁶ Therefore, paradoxical it might seem, the confrontational character of Cold War politics of that time prompted Soviet Union to rethink about Non-Aligned India.

In this context, Nehru's visit to the USSR in June, 1955 and Nikita Khrushchev's and A Bulganin's return visit to India in November-December of the same year provided an opportunity for a big display of friendship for each other. Khrushchev's public speech at Srinagar was of crucial importance for India when he said: "That Kashmir is one of the states of the republic of India has been decided by the people of Kashmir".⁷ This provided, Indo-Soviet relationship a firm ground and a promising future. And from mid-fifties Moscow established itself as an important player in the region. A broad coincidence of interests and a certain commonality of beliefs and values accounted for uninterrupted friendship between New Delhi and Moscow.

It is noteworthy to mention here that even when Soviet relations with Pakistan were at their lowest, the former did not completely shut its doors

⁵ Adan Ali Shah, "Pakistan-Russia relations : Post Cold War Era" *Strategic Studies*, Summer, 2001, p.36.

⁶ Ibid., p. 37

⁷ Vijay Sen Budhraj, *Soviet Russia and the Hindustan Subcontinent* (Bombay, 1974), p. 122.

for Pakistan.⁸ Efforts to wean Pakistan away from the West and subsequently from China also continued with the offers of trade and aid. President Ayub Khan's visit to Moscow in April, 1965 and signing three agreements on trade, economic co-operations and cultural exchanges were important developments in this regard. But, when a full scale war broke out between India and Pakistan in September 1965, the Soviet position on the problem was consistent with its manifest support to India. Yet its commendable role in facilitating an India-Pakistan agreement in early January 1966, at Tashkent, the capital city of the Soviet Union's Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan, on preventing the outbreak of further hostilities, and restoring peace and stability in the region proved to be a landmark event in international politics that highlighted the Soviet Union's South Asia connection.⁹

In December 1971 when India and Pakistan once again went to war leading to the liberation of Bangladesh, the Soviet contribution too was not insignificant. Its pro-Indian stand came in the form of the Twenty-Years Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation signed in August, 1971. Pakistan construed the Soviet stand as an interference in its internal affairs.¹⁰ In the subsequent years, Soviet-Pakistan relations sunk to their lowest point ever following the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. When Mikhail Gorbachev succeeded in 1989 in withdrawing Soviet Forces from Afghanistan and achieving a rapprochement with China and when the Cold War ended in the following years, the Soviet approach to the region changed markedly.¹¹ In the

⁸ Jyostna Bakshi, "Russia and South Asia," *World Focus*, October-December 2000, p.55.

⁹ Sumit Chakravarty, "USSR and South Asia," *World Focus*, (New Delhi) Annual No.10, November-December 1990, pp.17-22.

¹⁰ Adan Ali Shah, "Pakistan-Russian relations: Post Cold War Era," *Strategic Studies*, Summer 2001, p.41.

¹¹ H. Donaldson Robert and Joseph L Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems and Enduring Interest*, M.E. Sharpe, Inc (Armon, New York), 1998, p.268.

radically altered geo-political and geo-strategic perspective of Moscow, India was no longer needed as a “strategic-ally” as was in the case of the Cold War Period against the West and China. However, Soviet-Indian friendship continued to be valued in Moscow but with a different interest and focus.¹²

Soviet policy towards India-Pakistan relations reveals the very fact that Russia has consistently recognized the centrality and Geo-Political weight and importance of India. It is significant that in its relations with the other states of the sub-continent like Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc., Soviet Union was consistently guided by its policy of friendship with India. But at the same time Moscow never lost the sight of geo-political importance of Pakistan, the second major South Asian State, which happened to be situated in the close proximity to the southern underbelly of the Soviet Union. Soviet Union tried to enhance its presence in South Asia with an ambition to counter the influences of its global and regional rivals – the USA and China.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent end of the Cold War, when Moscow relinquished the policy of competing with the West in political, ideological and strategic terms and sought understanding and partnership with the West, uncertainty began to prevail between Indo-Russian relations. The new Russia initially ended the special relationship with India. The stand taken by India during the abortive coup of August, 1991 did not particularly endear her to the new Russian rulers. Russia stopped economic, military, educational and scientific help which she gave to India during the Soviet period. A section of Russian scholars and politicians seemed to be suggesting to treat India and Pakistan on an equal footing. A section of Russians believed that their relations with Pakistan

¹² Jyostna Bakshi, “*Russia and India: from Ideology to Geo-Politics*,” Dev Publication (Delhi), 1999, p.169

deteriorated in the past due to Soviet Union's special relationship with India.

Immediately after the collapse of Soviet Union, the Russia vice-president, Alexander Rutskoi visited Pakistan in December 1991 where he announced that the right of self-determination of Kashmir People should be decided under the UN auspices and in accordance with its resolutions. At the same time, a joint-communiqué which was signed between Russia and Pakistan mentioned: "*The Russian side acknowledged Pakistan's position and expressed the hope that the issue would be resolved peacefully through negotiations between Pakistan and India on the basis of international agreement.*"¹³ India considered this new Russian position on Kashmir was against the spirit of Shimla-Agreement which provided a possible solution of any dispute through peaceful negotiations between India and Pakistan. India's anxiety was further aggravated following the report in Pakistani press which said that the Russian vice-President Rutskoi, while talking to the then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Lahore, had assured Pakistan of help for supply of arms on request. It was also reported that Pakistan had succeeded in getting Russian support for its proposal on Nuclear Weapon free zone in South Asia. At that time president Boris Yelstin had expressed his desire for a Friendship Treaty with Pakistan and extended an invitation to then Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan through Rustkoi to visit Russia.

President Boris Yeltsin visited India in January 1993 which marked the revival of the old friendly ties between Russia and India. President Yeltsin almost unconditionally declared Russia's support to India on all the issues including Kashmir.¹⁴ Following his visit India once again occupied an important place in Russian strategy in South Asia and at the same time

¹³ Sumit, Chakravarty, "The Yelstin's visit: Secret of Success," The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 11 February, 1993.

¹⁴ *Pakistan Times*, 31 January, 1993.

Russia's Pro-West tilt had already received a shock therapy from the Western powers who could not show any sincere indication to rescue Russia from its economic crises. It was a good lesson for the Post-Communist Russia. Russian attempts to befriend Pakistan came to a naught because of the latter's greater affinity with the cause of religious extremism. Pakistan's support to the Taliban further dampened Russia's effort to win over the country. Russia's own problem with religious extremism alienated Pakistan. Hence it was natural for Russia to support India.

The growth of Islamic fundamentalism further provided an opportunity to both Russia and India to come closer as Pakistan was helping not only Islamic terrorists in Kashmir but also the Taliban in Afghanistan, who are trying to help and ferment Islamic Holy-war in Russia Federation particularly in Chechnya and the neighbouring Central Asian States. In this way, Pakistan was posing a danger to Russia's national integrity as well as to that of India. In this regard Russia showed enough indication to cooperate with India and it supported India's position on Kargil Conflict against Pakistan.

In October 2000, the newly elected Russian president, Vladimir Putin's visit to India further strengthened close cooperation between both the countries. The most significant development during his visit was signing a document related to 'Strategic Partnership' which involved co-operation on the issues of defence, economic matters and international terrorism. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention here that Russia had already reached on a conclusion that its Chechnya problem is similar to that of the Kashmir in India. This approach suited both the countries which later on reflected in the 'Moscow Declaration' signed by the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, on Nov 5, 2001. Apart from many other economic and bilateral agreements, the issue of global terrorism occupied a central position in the Joint Declaration. Both India and Russia agreed to extend support to American initiative to weed out terrorism in

Afghanistan, but on the condition that there would not be double standards in identifying terrorism and dealing with it. The leaders of both the countries have categorically asserted that there are no good or bad terrorists. It was an important observation because prior to the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11th September 2001, the US and its Western allies considered the terrorist activities in Kashmir and Chechnya as the expression of their rights of self determination and were often critical of India's and Russia's policies in the concocted name of human rights violation.

In the wake of terrorist attack on Indian Parliament on 13th December 2001, when India was considering the military option for attacking terrorist bases inside Pakistan and the Pak-occupied Kashmir, Russia's public advice to India to maintain restraint and its intense diplomatic efforts to defuse the crisis did not make a favourable impression in both official and non-official circles in India.¹⁵ During such a grave crisis, its neutral posture of pleading for a "dialogue" with Islamabad did not go well with the Indian Establishment. It created a suspicions in the Indian mind regarding Moscow's apparent tilt towards Pakistan.

However, in the recent Kaluchak Massacre of 14 May 2002, in which more than 30 civilians were killed by terrorists, though Russia joined the Western powers in advising India to keep emotions under control¹⁶ and used its diplomatic options in restraining India at Almaty while President Putin met Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee to avert a war between India and Pakistan, but at the same time it firmly accepted India's position and unambiguously told the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to stop cross-border infiltration permanently. Not only it indicated to help India in the

¹⁵ Devendra Kaushi, "Islamabad-Moscow New Delhi", *World Focus* (New Delhi), October-December 2001, pp.58-60.

¹⁶ *Hindustan Times*, 16 May 2002.

United Nations but also waived of some regulations so that war materials could reach India immediately.¹⁷

It seems that though Russia has expressed its real concerns over an Indo-Pak war leading to a bigger nuclear catastrophe in South Asia, but nevertheless, it expressed its honest understanding of India's position with regard to Pak-sponsored cross border terrorism and firmly stood behind India as a trustworthy strategic partner in its lonely battle against terrorism.

Hence we find that if in the past as well as in the present the Soviet Union/Russia has derived to develop close and friendly ties with India, it is because of their shared geo-political interests. As there has been no such sharing of interests between Russia and Pakistan because of one reason or the other their relationship has not grown so far.

¹⁷ Saurabh Shukla, "Russia Opens Military Supply line for India," in *Hindustan Times*, 27 May 2002

Chapter-II

CHAPTER – 2

SOVIET PERSPECTIVES ON INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Soviet policy towards India from the time of the Bolshevik Revolution to Indian Independence was part of the overall Soviet policy towards the colonies and the semi-colonies of Asia, which seems to have been primarily determined by the interests of the Soviet state and the Marxist ideology. The state of relations between the Soviet Union and British India, however, occupied an important place in the Soviet plan for the Asian countries. This was not only because India was a country of enormous size, population, and resources but also because India was an important colony of Great Britain, a significant and powerful enemy and an obstacle to the world Socialist revolution. Thus India's Independence, in the Soviet View, was a major setback for British imperialist power.

Joseph Stalin and India-Pakistan Relations

In the post-Second World War period when India became free the international politics was being dominated by the super power rivalry. At the same time following the division of India, Pakistan emerged as a new Islamic nation. Thus the twin countries presented certain problematic situations before the foreign policy makers of many countries regarding their approach towards India and Pakistan and for Stalin, the complexity of choice was all the more difficult.

(a) Partition of India

In fact, the partition of India on the basis of religion was not seen as a favorable development in Moscow. The Soviet Union regarded "The Mountbatten Plan", according to which India was granted independence, as the "divide and rule" strategy of British Policy in India. Soviet leaders equally held.

The Indian National Congress and the Muslim league responsible for playing the imperialist game and subverting an historical process of popular revolution in the Indian sub-continent. According to the official soviet doctrine of that time Mahatma Gandhi who had done so much for the revival of India manipulated people in the name of Bourgeoise.¹

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Soviet publicity media paid no attention whatsoever to the proclamation of Indian independence. The Kremlin did not deem it necessary to extend felicitations to Pakistani leaders on the occasion of the formal inauguration of their state. “How primitive it is to create a state on the basis of religion”, Stalin told an Indian diplomat. He even expressed the view that a federation between India and Pakistan would be the ideal solution.² Soviet commentators had serious doubts about the prospects of Pakistan surviving as an independent state. Not only did Pakistan consist of geographically two separate and disunited part, but the two wings of the country were also culturally, racially and linguistically distinct from each other. The sole link between two parts was only “a common religion.”

(b) Non-alignment

At the height of Cold War politics there were only two courses in the Soviet Union’s scheme of things – the path of “socialism and progress” followed by the soviet bloc and the path of “imperialism and decay” adopted by the West, India’s decision to adhere the policy of non-alignment neither pleased Stalin nor the western leaders. Soviet Union came down heavily on the policy of non-alignment, the so-called “theory of a third force”. Soviet leaders resented and dubbed Nehru as a reformist when he talked of a middle course for both India’s economic and industrial development and India foreign policy, and refused to subscribe to the view that the west was all evil and the east all good. This line of argument meant compromising with the

¹ B. Yegrov, “ Indo-Russian Relations-past and future,” *National Herald*, 24 January 1993.
² K.P.S Menon, *The Lamp and the Lampstand* (London, 1967), p. 24 Cited in J.P. Jain, “ *Soviet Policy towards Pakistan and Bangladesh*.” (New Delhi, 1974, p. 31.

enemy, instead of destroying it altogether. It was very different from the revolutionary strategy adopted by Moscow at that time.³ In soviet view there cannot be neutrality between peace and War. Hence Indian stance was negative .

India's decision in April 1949 to remain with the Commonwealth also invited the same Russian criticism. It was argued that the membership in Commonwealth made it obligatory for Indian government to consult with London on questions of foreign policy.⁴ Nehru's announcement on May 1949 that he had accepted an invitation to visit the United States in October again created much suspicion in the minds of the Soviet leaders.⁵ Addition to these, during 1948-49 period, Nehru government was also accused of deliberately pursuing anti soviet policies, exemplified in the ban imposed on soviet films, the banning of the conference of "progressive writers", refusal to give permission to soviet writers to come to India and participate therein and the alleged refusal of the Indian government to issue *visas* for 15 Russian citizens connected with anti Fascist organizations to participate in a conference organized by the "All India students federation."⁶ Above all, Nehru's visit to USA and his statement in New York that India "shall not be neutral" where "freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place"⁷ not only caused much alarm in Moscow but also contended that India was moving closer towards the American camp.

(c) Attempt to Cultivate Pakistan

Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that Stalin, deemed it necessary to cultivate Pakistan for pragmatic reasons. A number of delegation including a trade-delegation were despatched to Pakistan. Moreover, with a view to establish good rapport at the highest level with the

³ Vijay Sen Budharaj , "*Soviet Russia and the Hindustan Subcontinent.*" (Bombay, 1974), p. 57.

⁴ T. Yershov "Indian version or Bourgeois Pseudo-Democracy," *New Times*, 15 March 1950 (No. 11) p. 3 Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵ S.M. Burke, "Pakistan's Foreign Policy : An historical Analysis" (London , 1973) p. 99.

⁶ J.P. Jain, n.2, p.41

⁷ Vijay Sen Budharaj, n. 3, p. 45

rulers of Pakistan, an invitation was also extended to Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan to visit Moscow. It is said that when invitation came, “there was a great enthusiasm” in Pakistan for the prime ministers projected visit to the USSR.⁸ It seemed like, by extending an invitation to Liaquat Ali Khan Moscow sought to convey its displeasure to New Delhi for latter’s moving closer to the western powers and also a warning that such a step was fraught with dangers and obvious risks which India should not forget.

But surprisingly, Liaquat Ali Khan went to USA instead, thus shelving his visit to Russia. No official explanation was given for this decision to explain the preference to first visiting the US instead of USSR for which it had received prior invitation. But what is interesting was that, Liaquat Ali Khan’s visit to USA proved highly rewarding. US economic (and later military) aid began to pour in Pakistan and with that Pakistan’s policy started moving rapidly towards the greater alignment with the west. While in the US Liaquat Ali Khan repeatedly stated that Pakistan had much to gain in the agricultural field through better relations with the Soviet Union and the Pakistan government had no intentions of having relations with the US at the expense of relations with the Soviet Union and it was the bare need of economic and military aid for development and defence purposes along with the intention to solve the Kashmir dispute with India that the fledgling Pakistan government had to take the more expedient route, yet,⁹ USSR-PAK relations were subjected to severe strains and stresses in the early part of the 1950s and relations between the two deteriorated steadily as rapport between the United States and Pakistan developed further. The Soviet disquiet and concern were aired in the Soviet press and other news media. Virulent personal attacks were also leveled against Liaquat Ali Khan and his policy. He was accused of turning Pakistan from “a British Colony” to “an American colony”.¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 47.

⁹ Hameed A.K. Rai, “*Readings in Pakistanis Foreign Policy*”, Vol. II, (Lahore, 1981), p. 698.

¹⁰ J.P. Jain, n. 2, p. 35

Pakistan's effort in the direction of pan-Islamism -the forging of closer links among the Muslim states by organizing an All Muslim Conference which was held in Karachi in February 1949, and the International Economic Conference in 1949 and 1950 was also denounced by the Soviet Union. The Pan-Islamic movement based as it was on religion, was criticized by the Soviet leaders as reactionary and harmful partly because it threatened to retard the progress towards democratization of Muslim countries and stand in the way of the spread of communism and partly because it had grave political implication for the USSR which had a sizeable Muslim population, particularly in its central Asian region.¹¹ It was alleged that the US Embassy in Karachi had borne the expenses and the very purposes of Pan-Islamism seemed to be to set-up a "military and political bloc". Pakistan not only wanted to obtain the leadership of Muslim countries but also desired to strengthen its prestige in the international field and its position *vis-à-vis* India.¹²

The Pakistan government attempt to crush the communist movement within Pakistan and its alleged complaint of a Soviet hand in the conspiracy to overthrow the government and the Soviet denunciation of those attempts created further strains in the relations between the two countries. The Soviet Union was also very critical of Pakistan toeing the line of the western powers on various international issues. Not only was Pakistan strongly condemned for its support of the US position in Korean crisis but also warned of deplorable consequences if such a policy was perused.¹³

At a time when India refused to take part in the Sanfrancisco conference on a separate peace treaty with Japan, Pakistan's support to Washington on this issue could hardly have appealed to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, when Pakistan joined in the US scheme of middle-East command, the USSR-PAK relations were characterized by heightened tensions and much bitterness. Soviet relations with India on the other hand,

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 36

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ *New Times*, No. 28 (1950). Cited in *ibid*.

showed a marked improvement. Both countries were opposed to western sponsored military pacts. India's anti-imperialists posture and its neutral role in Korean crisis were considered a positive force by Moscow. This facilitated Indo-Soviet collaborations in the following years.

(d) Kashmir Issue

So far as Kashmir issue is concerned, Soviet Union initially had taken a neutral stand in the United Nations. For the first time, when India took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations on Jan 1, 1948, invoking article 35 of the charter of the United Nations and complained that Pakistan was engaged in aggression against India, Soviet Union, as a permanent member of Security council, had two options. Firstly, it could stand by India or Pakistan and secondly it could remain neutral. At that time, since USSR did not see any difference between policies pursued by India and Pakistan and considered both the governments in Karachi and New-Delhi reactionary. Therefore, it decided to remain neutral. Its delegate did not take any interest in the security council debate and abstained from voting.¹⁴ Development taking place in an area that was of strategic importance to it did not go unnoticed in the Soviet Union.

In the passing years, when Moscow came to know about the Anglo-US machination in Kashmir, it began to give expression to its sensitivity by adopting an anti-west strategy in the security council on the Kashmir issue, which indirectly, to a certain extent favored Indian position on the issue. Thus, on 30th April 1951, Malik the representative of the Soviet Union, voiced criticism of the nomination by the UK and the USA of Frank P. Graham for appointment at the United Nation's representative for India and Pakistan. He also criticized Washington for complicating the Kashmir issue and for harbouring strategic interest in the area.¹⁵ In 1952, the Soviet delegate opposed the introduction of foreign troops in Kashmir and desired the status

¹⁴ Vijay Sen Budhraj . n.3, p.74

¹⁵ J.P. Jain, n.2, p.38.

of Kashmir to be decided by its Constituent Assembly. Malik stated that the emphasis laid by the UK and USA on assistance through the United Nations was a mere pretext for an annexationist, imperialistic design to convert Kashmir into an Anglo American colony and a military and strategic base.¹⁶ In December 1952, the Soviet representative, V.Zorin, repeated the substance of Malik's earlier speech and criticized the British and American governments for interfering in the Indo-Pakistan dispute and rendering its solution more difficult.¹⁷

By persisting in a more or less non-committal stand in the matter the kremlin was probably trying to impress upon the people of both Pakistan and India that, unlike the imperialist powers, the Soviet union had no desire to intervene in the Indo-Pakistan dispute left over by history. The thrust of Soviet policy was safeguards its own interests rather than take sides.

Nikita Khrushchev and India-Pakistan Relations

In the post Stalin period, when Nikita Khrushchev came to power, the Soviet perception drastically changed in favour of India. This happened only when Pakistan disregarded soviet overtures and tilted towards the western camp. Pakistan government's decision to join the western security alliance system CENTO in 1954 and CENTO in 1955 was not appreciated by Moscow and put a severe strain on Pakistan's relations with the Soviet Union. As it had direct bearing on security concerns of the Soviet Union, it viewed these decisions by Pakistan government as a part of the containment strategy against it by the United States.¹⁸ Therefore, paradoxical it might seem, the confrontational character of Cold War politics of this time prompted Soviet Union to step up its efforts to cultivate India even at the expense at Pakistan.

¹⁶ UN Documents S/PV, 570 (17 January 1952), pp.11-13. Cited in *Ibid*, p. 39.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, S/PV. 610.

¹⁸ Adan Ali Shah, " Pakistan – Russia relations: Post cold war era" *Strategic Studies*, (Summer, 2001), p.37.

The official seal to this friendship was given on the occasion of the anniversary of the October revolution in 1954, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) issued a slogan for India for the first time. The slogan said: “may the friendship and co-operation between the people of India and the Soviet Union widen and strengthen for the protection of peace in the whole world.” The slogan was thirteen in order and placed next only to slogans on China and Korea at a time when no other Afro-Asian country proved eligible for such a favored treatment.¹⁹ Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s first state visit to Russia on June 1955 was of historic significance as it laid down a strong foundation of the close relationship between the two countries. The joint communiqué issued by Bulganin and Nehru on the occasion not only reaffirmed their faith in the *Panchsheel* but also expressed their desire for promoting further cultural and economic co-operation between the two countries.

(a) Khrushchev and Bulganin Visit to India, 1955

Khrushchev’s and Bulganin’s return visit to India in November-December of the same year provided an opportunity for a big display of friendship for each other. The spontaneous and the mammoth receptions that the Indian people gave them helped in strengthening the friendly attitude of the visitors towards India. The visiting Soviet leaders made a major policy statement on Kashmir when they visited Srinagar on 10th December 1955. In reply to a reception given to them by the people of Srinagar, Khrushchev said in unqualified terms that the question of Kashmir, which was created by some colonial power had been solved by the people of Kashmir in their decision to join the Indian republic and the Soviet government has accepted this position.²⁰

¹⁹ *Pravda*, 28 October 1954. Cited in *Ibid.*

²⁰ J.A. Naik, n. 19, p. 91.

He further said that the question of Kashmir “as one of the states of the Republic of India, has already been decided by the people of Kashmir.”²¹ Khrushchev even went to the extent of disapproving the very partition of the Indian sub continent on religious grounds and doubted the wisdom of creating Pakistan. From the Soviet perspective Pakistan’s membership of the Western sponsored alliance system impinged on its security. Soviet Central Asia was proximate to Pakistan. Not only this, he also mentioned about Goa and forecasted its early freedom. As he said in Calcutta. “Sooner or later this will happen and Goa will free itself from foreign rule and will become an integral part of the Republic of India.”

So far as Kashmir issue is concerned, it is important to remember here that prior to this tour, the Soviet Government had never taken any side between India and Pakistan on Kashmir dispute. The shift in Soviet policy was part of a major change in Soviet foreign policy. For the first time the Soviet government’s policy on Kashmir was publicly pronounced in favour of India. Soviet support to India on Kashmir dispute emphasized the importance of India in over-all Soviet foreign policy. For India support of the Soviet Union on an issue of crucial importance was significant. The Soviet union was a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations (UN). It is also said that Khrushchev used his Kashmir policy not merely as a tool to strengthen Soviet ties with India but also as a stick to beat erring Pakistan²². In this way, Bulganin’s and Khrushchev’s India tour provided Indo-Soviet relationship a firm ground and a promising future.

It is noteworthy to mention here that even when Soviet relations with Pakistan were at their lowest, the former did not completely shut its door for Pakistan²³. Efforts to wean Pakistan away from the west and subsequently from China also (after Sino-Soviet rift) continued with the offers of trade and aid. Even when Khrushchev extended support to Indian’s stand on the

²¹ Vijay Sen Budharaj, n. 3, p. 122.

²² J.A. Naik , n. 19, p. 91.

²³ Jyostna Bakshi, “Russia and South Asia,” *World focus* (October –December, 2000), p. 55.

Kashmir question, he at the same time and same place expressed his desire to have friendly relations with Pakistan. At Srinagar he also said that the Soviet union would like to have friendly relations with Pakistan. In his words, "it is no fault of ours if such relations have not so far developed. In the interests of peace, however, we shall steadily strive for an improvement of these relations."²⁴ Mikoyan subsequently stated: "Pacts or no pacts, the Soviet Union wanted cordial relations with Pakistan."²⁵

In February 1956, the Soviet Premier Bulganin offered Pakistan Russian technical know how in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes²⁶. In moscow, the Pakistani Republic day celebration was attend by the Soviet foreign ministers, V.M. Molotov, who hinted that the Soviet Government would be willing to construct a steel mill in Pakistan, as it had done in India.²⁷ In a good will gesture the USSR government announced a gift of 16,500 tones of rice to help Pakistan tide over a food crisis. Also in the same month both countries concluded a trade agreement which accorded each other the status of the most favoured nation" regarding imports and exports. Like the Bhilai Steel plant the Soviet Union offered assistance in constructing the Karachi Steel Mill. Not only this the Soviet government once again invited the Prime minister of Pakistan to visit USSR, but the visit could not materialize because of international political developments within the country²⁸. There was however, no good response from Karachi to Soviet offers to economic and technical assistance that were repeatedly and constantly made. There were however limits to developing relations with Pakistan. By the early sixties Indo-Pakistani relations had been caught in the vortex of the Cold War.

As we have seen the Pakistani factor brought Soviet Union and India closer to each other. India received valuable support in the UN when on a

²⁴ N.A. Bulganin and N.S. Khrushchev, *Speeches During Sojourn in India, Burma and Afghanistan*, (New Delhi, Tass 1956), pp. 88-89. Cited in Vijay Sen Budhraj n. 3, p. 123.

²⁵ *Dawn*, 30 March 1956 cited in J.P. Jain, n. 2, p. 64.

²⁶ Vijay Sen Budhraj, n.3, p. 126.

²⁷ *Pakistan Times* 25 March 1956. Cited in *Ibid*.

²⁸ Adan Ali Shah, n. 18, p. 39.

resolution on Kashmir, the Soviet Union cast its veto in view of its ties with India. Later on the question of the liberation of Goa in 1961, the Soviet veto in UN enabled India to complete its liberation. In the Sino-Indian war of 1962, India received Soviet support. Defence co-operation between India and the Soviet Union added a new dimension to the relationship.

(b) Improvement In Soviet-Pakistan Relations

Though the Soviet relations with Pakistan had never been close, yet certain events in 1960s, provided a major break through in their relations. The U-2 Spy plane incident induced both nations to realize the dangerous implications of geographical proximity to each other's border. The 1960 presidential election in the United states brought Democrats under John. F. Kennedy who adopted a benevolent and friendly attitude towards India created a process of disenchantment or dissatisfaction towards Washington in the Pakistani mind. Further, the extension of military assistance to India by U.S.A in the wake of the Chinese aggression and after alienated Pakistan from the western powers. Islamabad viewed such assistance as an unfriendly act upsetting the balance of power in the subcontinent to Pakistan's disadvantage.²⁹ The beginning of *détente* and cooperation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union also encouraged Pakistan to look forward to improving its' relations with Moscow without being misunderstood in the west . The growing friendship between China and Pakistan after the Sino-Indian war also caused a serious concern to the Soviet Union. Because by that time a growing rift with Peking was emerging. And above all, the Kremlin's anxiety about India being drawn in to the American camp because of the massive economic and military aid rendered by the USA, also impelled both the USSR and Pakistan to come closer to each other. As it is rightly observed by the S.M.Burke, a Pakistani writer that the Sino-Indian conflict furthered the process of Soviet-Pakistani rapprochement for a variety of reasons.

²⁹ M.P. Jain , n. 2, p.65

A beginning in that direction was made in march 1961, when Pakistan accepted a \$30 million Soviet loan for the exploration of Oil, thereby departing from its previous stand of depending almost exclusively on the western powers with regard to matter of aid. A civil aviation pact (a Karachi- Moscow air route agreement) was signed in October 1963. A further \$11 billion credit was given in June 1964. When an agreement on cultural and scientific exchange was also signed. Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Zafrullah Khan, stated in June 1963 that the impression he got from his talks in Moscow with premier Khrushchev and foreign minister Gromyko was that the USSR would be very responsive" to any move by Pakistan to establish closer relations not only in the economic but in other spheres as well.³⁰ Pakistani observers came to notice a " Perceptible Soviet shift ³¹ from their earlier position of unqualified support for India on Kashmir, in the remark of the Soviet delegate to the Security council in may 1964 that the dispute between India and Pakistan should be settled by the two interested parties" by peaceful means³². This was interpreted as a subtle change in the Soviet posture in so far as it amounted to Soviet recognition of the existence of a dispute over Kashmir.

Leonid Brezhnev and India-Pakistan Relations

A change in the leadership in the Soviet Union was a matter of concern to India. However, while assuring India of its continued support, the Soviet Union did not slacken its efforts to befriend Pakistan.

(a) Indo-Pakistan Armed conflict of 1965

As tension between India and Pakistan mounted the Soviet Union did not want any military confrontation to develop in the Indian sub continent. It adopted a non-partisan attitude during the Rann of Kutch conflict between

³⁰ Dawn, 26 June 1963. Cited in *Ibid*, p. 68.

³¹ S.M. Burke, n. 5, p. 300

³² UN Document S/PV, 1091. Cited in J.P. Jain , n. 2, p.65.

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India and Pakistan in April, 1965, Yet Pakistan launched another military adventure again at a place where it's army had an edge over India. Thus on August 5, 1965 Pakistan sent into Kashmir thousands of Armed guerillas to begin "a war of National liberation," India hit back with force and fighting broke out between regular army units. In the course of next seventeen days an un declared but intense war waged between the two countries resulting in heavy losses in men and material on both sides . Neither side achieved decisive victory, although India had slight edge over Pakistan as it occupied more Kashmir territory than Pakistan occupied Indian territory.

In fact, Soviet stand on the issue, was initially quite restrained and it seemed to adopt a non-committed attitude in the matter. No mention was made of Pakistani infiltration in Kashmir till 6 September 1965. The Soviet representative in his speech in the security council on 4 September 1965 emphasized that India and Pakistan themselves should find a way out to put. " an immediate end to the bloodshed in Kashmir and to halt this conflict"³³. On the some day, prime minister Kosygin also took a diplomatic initiative by writing letters to Shastri and Ayub³⁴ in which he stressed the Soviet interest in the maintenance of peace in the Subcontinent. He suggested that the emphasis at this stage, should not be on determining who was responsible but on halting the tanks and silencing the guns. The parties are advised to stop fighting and execute a mutual withdrawal of troops behind the cease-fire line established by the 1949 Indo-Pakistani agreement³⁵ to be followed by a negotiated settlement of all Indo-Pak disputes including the questions relating to Kashmir" . He also offered the Soviet good offices in this regard if the two countries found them useful.

But when the Chinese stepped up their support for Pakistan and threatened India with a possible second front in the war, the Soviets, under this circumstances found it necessary to emphasize Soviet – Indian friendship, while pressing for an early cease-fire. Speaking at the Soviet

³³ UN Document S/PV, 1237, cited in *ibid*, p. 73.

³⁴ *Pravda* , 12 September 1965. Cited in jyostna Bakshi , n. 30, p. 55.

³⁵ Vijay Sen Budhraj, n. 3,p. 159

Rumanian friendship rally in Kremlin on 10 September, Brezhnev in a thinly veiled reference to China, warned against the “ Third forces’ that tried to benefit by the aggravation of India. Pakistan relations and sometimes added fuel to the fire.³⁶ The *Tass* statement of 13 September 1965 was even more specific in criticizing China, though again without naming it. It blamed the forces of imperialism and reaction, that were said to “ benefit from spreading hostilities further. At the same time it accused “those who facilitate the widening of the conflict by their provocation statements and policies.” The statement significantly added that” if these forces were permitted to succeed “ many states might find themselves drawn in to the conflict one by one”³⁷ This implied a clear warning to the Chinese against intervening in the war.

However, the basic premise of new Soviet policy seeking to acquire influence in both the countries of the subcontinent was not abandoned. The Soviets continued to be neutral in the conflict and pressed for a peaceful settlement with the use of soviet good offices, if possible. It was the neutral posture assumed by the Soviet Union and the western powers towards the conflict that brought the conflict to an end on September 23, 1965. Both India and Pakistan accepted the Soviet mediation to meet at Tashkent and it became evident that the soviets had come to have some influence on the decision makers in both the countries.

(b) Tashkent Declaration

Before Prime Minister Shastri left India for Tashkant; it was stated that India would not agree to withdraw from Hajipur, Tithwal and Kargil, Strategic Posts in Pakistan – occupied Kashmir though which infiltration from Pakistan crossed into the Kashmir valley, captured by India during the armed conflict. President Ayub Khan, on the other hand, insisted on the settlement of the Kashmir dispute or the establishment of a machinery for its settlement, before disengagement could take place. For a “ no. war pact”

³⁶ *Pravda*, 11 September 1965. Cited in J.P. Jain, n. 2, p. 77

³⁷ *Jyostna Bakshi*, n. 30, p. 58.

with India also, he insisted on the same Pre-condition. Yet, it was the hard work, sincerity, honesty, integrity and above all statesmanship of premier Kosygin that in the Tashkent declaration India agree to Vacate Hajipur, Tithwal and Kargil and Pakistan agreed to disengagement because the second clause of the declaration bounds the parties to withdrawal their armed personnel to the position they held prior to August 5, 1965. Pakistan also agreed not to have recourse to force” in its relation with India, while the basic problem remained unsolved.³⁸

In this way, Tashkent represented a great diplomatic victory for Moscow *vis-à-vis* both China and the U.S.A, Peking in Particular. It made the Soviet presence felt in the Indian sub- continent and confirmed the status of the USSR as an Asian power, while Chinese image was tarnished as one of a mischief maker, that of the Soviet union as a peace – maker, received a boost. As a result Soviet influence was greatly enhanced in the entire Indian subcontinent and Moscow was able to consolidate it’s ties with both India and Pakistan . In so far as it helped in effacing the impression created by Khrushchev of Soviet Partisanship for India,³⁹ it greatly facilitated the improvement of USSR – PAK relations. Henceforth, Moscow began to extend large scale economic assistance to Pakistan for a number of projects and also trade relations considerably strengthened.

The Tashkent Declaration was significant for two reasons (1) it reduced the Soviet over commitment to India on the Kashmir issue. If friendship with Pakistan had to be sought a degree of neutrality on this question was essential (2) It showed that the Cold War had receded into the background. It was now possible for the USA and the Soviet Union to co-operate in certain specific areas.

³⁸ Vijay Sen Budhraj, n. 3, p.169

³⁹ Zubeida Hasan, “Pakistan’s relations with the USSR in the 1960s” *World today*, (Jan, 1969), p. 31.

(c) Soviet Arms for Pakistan

In the post Tashkent period, the relationship between Soviet Union and Pakistan marked a distinct improvement when president Ayub Khan, upon the invitation of the Soviet government, visited Moscow from 25 September to 4 October 1967 while Speaking at the official banquet of the Kremlin, Ayub not only supported the Proposed Non-proliferation treaty but also acknowledged the right of the vietnamese people “to settle their own destiny without foreign interference as envisaged by the 1954 Geneva agreement”⁴⁰ It was clear that to please Moscow, Pakistan had moved closer to the Russian view than to that of American on the Vietnam issue. He also assured the Soviet Prime Minister that his country remained ready and willing to negotiated with India on all issues on the spirit of the Tashkant Declaration. It was said that President Ayub Khan was quite Successful in Persuading Soviet leaders to continue economic aid to Pakistan and also to accept the invitation to visit Pakistan . Even some observes point out that he was also successful to persuading the Soviet government to advance arms aid to Pakistan.

However , the proposed Arms aid to Pakistan materialized when the Soviet Premier Kosygin paid a 5 day official visit to Pakistan on 17 April, 1968; After holding a Private talk, for nearly four hours, the soviet Premier reported to have reached an agreement in principle with president Ayub Khan on the delivery of Soviet arms to Pakistan.⁴¹ Soon after, a Pakistani military mission headed by General Yahya Khan, Commander in Chief of the Army visited Moscow and later reports indicated that Russia agreed to supply to Pakistan Mig- 19 and Mig 21 Jets, 11.28 Bombers, T-54/55 Tanks and 130 mm guns.⁴²

Arms supply to Pakistan , even though on a moderate scale, marked a significant shift in Moscow arms policy towards the Indian subcontinent. The decision to supply arms to Pakistan amidst the face of loud “Protests

⁴⁰ Vijay Sen Budhraj, n. 3, p.178.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p.181.

⁴² *Ibid*.

and opposition” from India was based on the realization that no amount of economic assistance would be as effective as a token supply of arms in creating an impression on the Pakistan mind. It was meant to bolster Soviet influence in Pakistan as it was asserted would act as a deterrent against China as well as the west.

(d) Brezhnev’s Plan for a System of Collective Security in Asia

Despite all the efforts, when Soviet union failed to weaken Pakistan’s ties with either Peking or Washington, Premier Kosygin During his visit to Kabul and Islamabad in 1969 not only urged for the settlement of differences between Afghanistan and Pakistan and Pakistan and India but also proposed, for the first time for a Regional Constructive Economic Co-operation among the three countries on a tripartite basis and promised that Soviet Russia would do all it can on it’s part promote this.⁴³ Encouraged by Pakistani President Yahya Khan’s initial response to the Regional Economic Co-operation plan, Moscow went ahead with the second plan, when at the International meeting of communist and workers parties held in Moscow in June 1969, the General secretary of the CPSU, Leonid Breznev, emphasized the need for the creation of a system of collective security in Asia.⁴⁴

Thus it was clear by the middle of 1969 that the Soviet leaders wanted to achieve what the united states attempted to do in the late 1940’s in Europe, when she came out with the true man doctrine and Marshal Plan which are directed against the alleged expansionist policies of the USSR. The Soviet plans were definitely directed against the expansionist ambitions of the people’s Republic of China , at least , this is what the Chinese understood. They, therefore, denounced them as plainly directed against the great socialist China and the revolutionary movement of the Asian People and alleged that the Soviet leaders had “expansionist designs” and confidently declared that Moscow’s efforts in rigging up an anti-china

⁴³ “India wants peace , says Kosygin” in *Hindustan Times*, 1 June 1969.

⁴⁴ Vijay Sen Budhraj, n. 3, p. 198

military alliance cannot harm China or the Asian people's revolution. Like Nixon and Company, Breznev and Company.....can not escape complete destruction.⁴⁵

Though, the government India did not show any marked enthusiasm for the regional economic co-operation plan and the system of collective security proposal in Asia for its own reasons. Yet it indicated that if the Soviets were successful in persuading Islamabad, New Delhi would consider to joining it. Her past experience with Pakistan did not encourage her to take any enthusiasm towards these plans. In the meantime when president Yahya Khan became consistent enough of his hold over the country, he flatly, rejected the Afghan invitation to meet in Kabul to consider jointly with Iran, Turkey, India and Afghanistan, the soviet Sponsored talks for regional trade and transit facilities Pakistan was not prepared to divorce trade from politics and what was more important, feared that Indian's sheer size and economic power would tend to make it possible for New Delhi to dominate the regional co-operation arrangements and for this reason the plan did not get off the ground. Pakistan was neither prepared to move away from China even by a millimeter nor wanted to normalize its relations with India in the Tashkent spirit.

(e) The Bangladesh Crisis of 1971

When over the issue of autonomy, civil war started in Bangladesh in March 1971, India was immediately sucked into the war by the huge influx of refugees which threatened to impose an intolerable burden on it. Under this circumstances, though the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, was under heavy Public Pressure to intervene in the Bangladesh struggle, by recognizing the government in exile and to help to raise a liberation Army, What Mrs. Gandhi demanded was a political settlement between the Pakistani government and the Awami League leader, Mujibur Rahman, that

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

would enable the refugees to return to their homes “in peace and with honour.”⁴⁶ In other words, she supported the establishment of Bangladesh within or outside Pakistan.

In the following days, when tension mounted between India and Pakistan, the soviet Union was the first major Power to intervene openly in the Pakistani crisis. On 13 April 1971, Nikolai Podgorny sent a message to Yahya Khan, in his capacity as head of the Soviet state, expressing concern at the sufferings and Privations of people of Bangladesh and urging an immediate stoppage of the bloodshed and a “ Peaceful Political settlement” with the elected leaders of the people. In itself the message was an assertion of the role the Soviet Union had acquired in Tashkant 1966 as the conflict manager in the subcontinent. But the Pakistani President not only ignored the warning which was followed up with diplomatic pressure but also appeared in July to be succeeding with U.S. help in setting up a civilian regime in East Pakistan.

(f) Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace Friendship and Co-operation-1971

The secret visit of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to Peking that was arranged through Pakistan and the announcement of an up-coming Nixon visit to China created identical perceptions in India and the USSR of an emerging alliance between the United States and China that would be directed against the Soviet Union. It was also presumed that since Pakistan was firm ally of China, the new Sino-US linkage could work in South – Asia only to the detrimental of India. Indian apprehensions were further accentuated when Kissinger told the Indian Ambassador in Washington. L.K. Jha, on 16 July 1971 that in the event of China intervening in an armed conflict between India and Pakistan on Pakistan side, India should no longer rely on U.S. help as she did in 1962 and there after.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Bhabani Sen Gupta , “*Soviet Asian relations in the 1970s and Beyond.*” (New York, 1976, p. 145.

⁴⁷ *Times of India*, 7 August 1971

Encouraged by the overt support of Peking and Washington Yahya Khan now began to utter war threats against India and sought to turn the crisis in East Bangladesh into an Indo-Pak issue. On 2 August, *Pravda* published, prominently on the front page Pakistani President's statement that Pakistan was very close to war against India. Thus, perceptions of a looming threat to the vital interests and even the survival of India further cemented the Indo-Soviet relations and on 9 August, 1971, the Soviet foreign minister, A Gromyko on official visit arrived in New Delhi and signed a 20-year Treaty of Peace Friendship and Cooperation with India.⁴⁸ The treaty marked the beginning of a new high in Indo-Soviet relationship. It committed the Soviet Union to meet the security needs of India. In the event of aggression or threat of aggression.

(g) Indo-Pak war of 1971

The real war between India and Pakistan started in the evening of December 3, 1971, when Pakistan launched a massive attack on India's western frontiers as Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi returned from Moscow with the assurance of Soviet help if she were compelled to intervene militarily in Bangladesh. On December, 4 Pakistan announced that it considered itself at war with India. A Pakistan government spokesman said that the army had been ordered to strike "as deep as possible."⁴⁹ The war that was fought between India and Pakistan for two weeks in December was a great disaster for Pakistan. It received no support from either of its major allies, China or the United States. The Soviet Union on the other hand, stood firmly by India. Two days after the outbreak of war, the Soviet Union warned all nations to keep out of it: The message was obviously addressed to Peking. The Soviet union blamed the war on the refusal by Pakistan to come to a Political settlement with the elected leaders of Bangladesh people. It called upon for the speediest ending of bloodshed, and in the UN security council it

⁴⁸ Jyostna Bakshi, n. 30, p. 108.

⁴⁹ Vijay Sen Budhraj, n. 3, p. 232.

vetoed three resolutions. Not only this, when the U.S. government dispatched a naval task force in the bay of Bengal , presumably to intervene in the Bangladesh war , the Soviet moved their naval units in to the same waters. The Soviet Ambassador assured the Indian government that the Soviet union will not allow the Seventh fleet to intervene” in the Bangladesh war.⁵⁰

It could well be that Moscow risked a collision with the two other major powers because it was convinced that neither the United States nor China would physically intervene on behalf of Pakistan. An Indian attempt to recover portions of Kashmir could have led to a wider war. This neither the Soviet Union nor the India wanted. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a unilateral cease-fire on December 16, Immediately after the Pakistani Surrender in Bangladesh . Twenty four hours later Pakistan reciprocated Indians unilateral decision to halt the fighting and thus, the third Indo-Pakistani war came to an end on December 17. Whether Indira Gandhi did this on her own or under Soviet pressure, it was the crowing success for Soviet diplomacy during the war. According to well known scholar Prof. Bhabani Sen Gupta the USA thanked the Soviet Union for restraining India and spreading the war to West Pakistan. Similarly, the Pakistan elite, too, looked upon the Soviet Union as a Savior of Pakistan.⁵¹

(h) Soviet Military Intervention in Afghanistan

The Soviet Union decision to intervene militarily in Afghanistan in December 1979 to prop up the Marxist-regime there not only evoked wide spread condemnation of the Soviet action around the globe but also witnessed some unprecedented geo-political changes in the region. It once again reinforced the American factor in South Asia and led to the re-militarisation of Pakistan⁵²

⁵⁰ Jack Aderson in *The Washington Post*, 10 January 1972. Cited in Bhabani sen Gupta, n. 48, p.146.

⁵¹ Bhabani Sen Gupta, n. 48, p.147.

⁵² Moonis Ahmar, *The Soviet Role in South Asia 1969-87* (Karachi, 1989), p. 113.

Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan undoubtedly put the Soviet Union's carefully nurtured relationship with India under some strain. Though, New Delhi defended Moscow's Intervention on the ground that it had been under taken ' at the request of the Afghan Government" Yet, widely –noted abstentions from International condemnation of the Soviet Intervention did little to bolster it's claim to leadership either within it's own region or among the Non-aligned nations.⁵³ Many Western Observers, along with some members of the Indian Political opposition, accused New-Delhi of sacrificing Indian's long term interest in Afghanistan's Independence to the momentary advantages of it's alliance with the soviet union. The Soviet military action in Afghanistan, they argued posed unique dangers for India threatening to undermine it's hard-own dominance in it's own region as well as to provoke increased great power rivalry in the subcontinent.

India was particularly concerned that a Sino-American- Pakistani-Islamic alliance would develop as a response to the Soviet invasion. Though India failed in its attempt to persuade the Soviet foreign minister Gromyko to set forth a Specific plan or time table for Soviet troops withdrawal when he visited Indian February yet , New Delhi made no attempt to hide it's differences with Moscow over this matter. New Delhi felt it essential to remain on good terms with Moscow because of the widespread Indian belief that any arms sent to Pakistan by any country are likely to be used by that country's military rulers to suppress their own people or to threaten India. India was not in a position to admit the Western version of Soviet invasion that soviet troops on Afghanistan pose a serious security problems to Pakistan as well as to the entire sub-continent.

Mikhail Gorbachev and India-Pakistan Relations

When Mikhail Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the CPSU its ties with India and Pakistan were under strain. With India though it did

⁵³ Robert G. Wirsing, "Soviet relations with Pakistan and India Prospects for change," *Strategic Studies* (Summer , 1988), p.60.

not publicly criticize the Soviet Union for its military intervention in Afghanistan, nevertheless fighting in its neighbourhood was not in India's interest. On the other hand Pakistan's ties with the USA which were losing their shine, suddenly received a big boost. As a frontline state Pakistan received full support from the USA. In the Super Power rivalry Pakistan was the biggest beneficiary in terms of money, acquisition of arms etc. Hence Gorbachev had to keep in mind this scenario while dealing with the Indian sub-continent.

(a) Rajiv Gandhi's Moscow Visit May 1985

When Gorbachev was trying his best to find a way out of several dead-ends, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Moscow in May 1985. Being young and dynamic, both leaders were forward looking and shared a modern and scientific outlook unhampered by ideological dogmas and hangovers of the past. Two leaders were expected to cut new grounds and infuse new dynamism in bilateral relations particularly at a time when Soviet-Pakistan relations had sunk to their lowest point ever following the Soviet Military interventions in Afghanistan from December 1971.

During the visit, both the leaders not only expressed their similar views on serious international issues but also decided to further consolidate and expand their co-operation in economic, scientific and other fields on a long term basis. During that time since both the countries were trying to improve their relations with both China as well as with the West, therefore, they reaffirmed that any improvement in their relations with the third countries would not be at the expense of Indo-Soviet friendship. Gorbachev, through in a cautious manner, revived again the issue of collective security in Asia on the pattern of Helsinki accord in Europe. He proposed at some point of time in the future "an all-Asian forum for an exchange of opinions and a joint search for constructive solutions." He added: we think that India as a great power enjoying much prestige and respect both in Asian countries

and throughout the word, can play a very important part in the process⁵⁴. However Rajiv Gandhi's response was cautious and non-committed and on the same line as had been New Delhi's response to Breznev's proposal of Asian collective security system earlier.

(b) Gorbachev's New Delhi Visit – November 1986

Gorbachev's New Delhi visit of November 1986 was crucial in the sense that New Delhi was the first Asian capital which Gorbachev visited heading a large and impressive delegation.⁵⁵ The General secretary of the CPSU came to India after a gap of thirteen years after Breznev's visit in 1973. Though the visit was aimed at cementing and refurbishing old ties and seeking new areas and forms of co-operation, yet, it was symbolic to reassure Indian people that improvements in Soviet relations with China would not be at the expense of India.

Although, Moscow had ample reasons to be greatly dissatisfied with Pakistan's policy of aiding and abetting the Afghan rebels and for being closely enmeshed with Washington's strategic plans in the region, still Gorbachev not only extended an Olive branch to Pakistan from New Delhi but also favoured a peaceful settlement of Indo-Pak issues. Moscow also wanted an easing of tension in all the hot-beds of conflict, including Afghanistan, which was costing it dearly in terms of man and materials and goodwill in the whole world.

(c) Geneva Accords on Afghanistan – April 1988

After more than eight years of bitter counter insurgency warfare, the signing of Geneva accords on Afghanistan on 14 April 1988 constituted an important mile stone aimed at promoting peace in the region. The agreement paved the way for complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan by 15 May 1989 in return for mutual undertaking by Pakistan and

⁵⁴ Darshan Singh, "*Soviet Foreign Policy Document 1985*," (New Delhi, 1986), p. 127.

⁵⁵ Jyosthna Bakshi, n.30, p. 180

Afghanistan not to interfere in each others internal affairs.⁵⁶ The U.S.A and the U.S.S.R were the joint super power guarantors of the accord . Though the signing of Geneva Accord and the Subsequent withdrawal of Soviet troops did not Silence the guns and usher in peace between various afghan factions, but a substantial improvement in Soviet Pakistan relations and Sino-Soviet relations were expected.

In the subsequent years, after the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, when Gorbachev achieved a rapprochement with China and when the cold war ended in the following years, the Soviet approach towards the region changed markedly.⁵⁷ In the radically altered geo-political and geo-strategic perspective of Moscow India was no longer needed as a “strategically” as was in the cold war period against the west and China . However Soviet – Indian friendship continued to be valued in Moscow but with a different interest and focus.

Thus we find that the past record of Soviet-Indian ties was good. The Soviet Union and India extended support to each other on issues of crucial importance to each other. For India support on the Kashmir issues has been valuable. As a major developing country Indian support to the Soviet Union on issues like China, or its muted criticism of Afghanistan were helpful. Their near similar perception of developments in Pakistan was a major inputs into friendly relations between the Soviet Union and India.

⁵⁶ Ibid , p. 189.

⁵⁷ H. Donaldson Robert and Joseph L. Noguee, *The foreign policy of Russia: Changing systems and enduring interests* (New York, 1998), p. 268.

Chapter-III

CHAPTER-3

RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF BORIS YELTSIN

Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 brought about a fundamental transformation in the geo-political map of the world. The Soviet Union broke up into fifteen sovereign independent entities. In the break up the Russian Federation emerged as the most prominent among the successor states of the Soviet Union. Russia inherited formidable military powers of its predecessor yet found itself suddenly reduced to a regional power. The decision to opt for a liberal democratic polity and a free market economy resulted in untold difficulties. Economic chaos and political uncertainty at the internal level further compounded its predicament. In the early years the orientation of Russian foreign policy was towards the west. The orientation towards the west was partly to ensure that the economic agreements initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev were not disrupted, and partly to ensure that large scale economic and technological aid from the advanced western countries and Japan would help in the rapid modernization at Russian economy and make the transition from state-controlled to market economy smooth and less painful.¹ However, in the subsequent years with the growing disenchantment with the west, Russia tried to follow a more balanced policy towards the West and the East.

In the changed geo-political scenario that emerged after the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia sought to build relations with Pakistan. It accorded greater attention to Pakistan and other Muslim countries on its southern periphery. Russia under a new dispensation believed that it was possible to

¹ Hannes, Adomeit, "Russia as a great power in world affairs: Images and Reality", *International Affairs*, (RIIA) vol.71, no.1, January 1995, p.36.

build good ties with both India and Pakistan. Many analysts believed that if Russian relations with Pakistan did not develop in the past, it was because India was accorded a special treatment. However, the Yeltsin visit to India in January 1993 marked the revival of old friendly ties between India and Russia. All those misunderstandings created in the immediate aftermath of the post-Soviet collapse period were removed. The initial freeze in Indo-Russian relations began to recede and India once again came to occupy an important place in Russian foreign policy priorities.

The Evolution of Russian Policy towards India-Pakistan Relations under Yeltsin

The signing of Alma-Ata Declaration and the subsequent resignation of Mikhail Gorbachev, as the last President of the USSR, on 25 December 1991, paved the way for Boris Yeltsin to become the first President of the new Russian Federation. The new Russia Foreign Policy was no longer an ideological one. National interest of the country had to be pursued and that was the objective of its policy. Russian policy wanted to project a new face of a refurbished post-communist Russia devoid of previous baggages.

Following such considerations the Russian Foreign Ministry under Andrei Kozyrev tilted completely towards the West and he went on record to say that “Russia was basically an European country and the most important task before Russia was political and economic integration into the west”.² He also claimed that “the developed countries of the west are Russia’s natural allies”³ and therefore its interest was linked with the West. President Yeltsin also hoped to make use of economic and political support of the west in his struggle with his domestic opponents. Thus in the initially post Soviet period, Asian countries including India were for sometime ignored. Russia’s new

² Alexie, Arbotov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy alternatives”, *International Security*, vol.8, no.2, Fall 1993, p.11.

³ Jyostna Bakshi, “Russian policy towards South Asia”, *Strategic Analysis*, November 1999, p.1373.

leaders wanted to pursue a different policy towards the Indian sub-continent from the former Soviet Union. As mentioned Russian foreign policy makers did not wish to have special relationship with any one country at the expense of other. The Treaties of peace and friendship had lost their shine in the new Russia. Following such developments it was felt as if India was no more any strategic point in Russian global framework.

Low Priority to India

Under these circumstances uncertainty began to prevail between Indo-Russian relations. The special relationship with India was seen as a legacy of the past and therefore, the new Russia initially ended the special relationship with India. The stand taken by India during the abortive coup of August, 1991 also did not particularly endear her to the new Russian rulers.⁴ Russia stopped all the economic, military educational and scientific helps which she was giving to India during the Soviet period. A section of Russian scholars and politicians seemed to be suggesting to treat India and Pakistan on equal footing. Not only this, as mentioned earlier, even some believed that relationship with Pakistan had deteriorated in the past due to Russia's special relationship with India. If in the past Russian relations with Pakistan could not develop, it was because of its complete support to India on the Kashmir issue. This was the core issue, which did not help in the promotion of Soviet-Pakistani ties. In the meantime, the proposed arms sale by certain CIS countries to Pakistan created an alarm in India. In view of the above changing perception of Russia towards the Kashmir problem also created suspicion in India.

Rutskoi's visit to Pakistan-December 1991

Immediately after the collapse of Soviet Union, the Russian vice-President, Alexander Rutskoi visited Pakistan in December 1991 where he proclaimed that the objective Russia was to build of new and positive relations

⁴ _____, "Russia and India: from ideology to geo-politics", (New Delhi, 1999), p.20.

with Muslim states in south and central Asia, including Pakistan, to be established with the idea of equal distance between New Delhi and Islamabad⁵ and announced that the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people should be decided under the UN auspices and in accordance with its resolutions. The joint communiqué which was signed between Russia and Pakistan mentioned: “*the Russian side acknowledged Pakistan’s position and expressed the hope that the issue would be resolved peacefully through negotiations between Pakistan and India on the basis of International agreement*”.⁶ India considered this new Russian position on Kashmir was against the spirit of the Shimla-Agreement which provided a possible solution of any dispute through peaceful negotiations between India and Pakistan.

India’s anxiety was further aggravated following the report in Pakistani Press which said that the Russian Vice- President Ruskoi, while talking to the then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Lahore, had assured Pakistan of help for the supply of arms on request. It is important to remember here that the supply of US arms to Pakistan had already stopped in 1990 and the latter was in search for new allies and sources of military hardware. On the other hand, Indian dependence on Soviet/Russian arms is quite substantial. Hence Indian anxiety on this score was valid. An apprehension was also felt in India that the “garage sale of Russian arms” in a desperate bid to earn hard currency would only fill the armories around India’s neighborhood, more particularly in Pakistan and China posing a threat to the country’s security.⁷

It was also reported that in November 1991, when the Soviet Union was breathing its last, in a dramatic change of policy, Pakistan had succeeded in getting Russian support at the UN for its proposal on Nuclear weapon Free

⁵ Adan Ali Shah, “Pakistan- Russian Relations: Post –Cold War era”, *Strategic Studies*, Summer 2001,p.45.

⁶ Sumit Chakravarty, “The Yeltsin’s visit: Secret of success” in *The Hindustan Times*, 11 February 1993.

⁷ K. Subrahmanyam, In *the Tribune*, 26 June 1992.

zone in South Asia to the great consternation of India.⁸ It seemed for some time in the changed geo-political scenario that Moscow accorded greater attention to Pakistan in the pursuit of its policy of equidistance. Pakistan was considered additionally important because of its proximity to the troubled state of Afghanistan and the former Soviet Central Asia. Not only this, President Boris Yeltsin also expressed his desire for a Friendship Treaty with Pakistan and extended an invitation to then Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan during Vice President Rutskoi's to visit Russia. Apart from these, an international conference was also held in Moscow in April 1992 focusing on relationship between Pakistan and the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS), which marked the growing warmth in Russian-Pakistan relations.⁹ All these developments certainly caused wariness in Indian mind.

It is also note worthy to mention here that on the eve of Soviet collapse, it took certain steps that went against India as well as its own long term geo-political interests. The Soviet Union abandoned President Najibullah of Afghanistan, who was steadfastly defending Kabul and other Afghan urban centres after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 from repeated attacks by Pakistan-backed Mujahideen groups and pursuing a policy of national reconciliation and economic and political pluralism within a secular framework. In November 1991, a delegation of Afghan Mujahideen was received in the Soviet Union and the two sides agreed on the 'necessity of the transfer of all state power in Afghanistan to a transitional Islamic government'. Significantly, even the five-point UN peace proposal talked of only a "broad based transitional government" and not an "Islamic government". It is said that the major concern of Moscow at this time was to get back its POWs that were in the custody of various Mujahideen factions based in Pakistan. Another development that did not augur well for Russian relations with India was the Gennady Burbulis's

⁸ Jyostna Bakshi, "Russia's post-Pokhran dilemma", *Strategic Analysis*, August 1998, p.122.

⁹ Ramesh Thakur, "South Asia" in the book (eds.) Ramesh Thakur and Carlyle, A. Thayer, *Reshaping Regional relations: Asia Pacific and the Former Soviet Union* (Boulder, 1993)p.176.

visit to India in May 1992. During the visit of Burbulis Russia back tracked from its earlier decision to provide India with the Cryogenic engines and also to transfer the related technology. Under pressure perhaps from the USA, Russia reversed its earlier decision. This viewed in contrast to the developing friendship with Pakistan did not add to Indo-Russian ties.

However, in the following days when domestic political crisis particularly the struggle between the President and the parliament emerged as a preventive measure for radically changing Russian perceptions in the foreign policy and economic conditions of the country deteriorated heavily, it is said, Yeltsin was so helpless that he had no other options but to follow a more balanced policy towards the East and the West. Since by that time Russia's pro-west fill had already received a shock therapy from the western powers who could not show any sincere indication to rescue Russia from economic crisis, Yeltsin simply needed Indian orders to keep so many factories from grinding to a complete halt. India was not only the largest buyer of Russian military equipments and a major trading partner but also both the countries shared the legacy of long indo-Soviet friendship and co-operation and their basic geo-political interest did not clash. Under this circumstances, now the stage was set for the state visit of Boris Yeltsin to New Delhi in January, 1993.

President Yeltsin's Visit to India – January 1993

President Boris Yeltsin's much awaited visit to India in January 1993 marked the revival of old friendly relations between India and Russia. All those misunderstandings created during early post-Soviet collapse period gradually began to recede after his visit as Yeltsin almost unconditionally declared Russia's support to India on all the issues including Kashmir.¹⁰ He not only extended unequivocal support to India on Kashmir issue but also categorically stated that on Kashmir "the truth was on Indian side". After giving assurance of Russian support to India on this issue in the UN Security

¹⁰ Pakistan Times, 31 January 1993.

Council and other world fora. He openly made it clear that Russia would not give any military and technical aid to Pakistan. However, at the same time he added that Russia would like to maintain some kind of relations with Pakistan. Thus in January 1993, following Yeltsin's visit. The dichotomy between the two approaches in Russia with regards to keeping special relations with India or Pakistan seemed to have been resolved in India's favour. It is also likely that Russia may have realized that there were limits to its equidistant policy.

During his visit, the two countries signed a new twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, unlike the Indo-Soviet treaty the Word 'peace' was not retained in the new treaty signifying that the Treaty did not have any strategic dimensions. Also in the new treaty the security clause of Indo-Soviet treaty (article-9) was not included. This clause was meant for immediate "mutual consultations" and "appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security of their countries". However, both the countries agreed to refrain from taking any action that might affect the security interests of each other. President Yeltsin particularly emphasized that Russia's policy aimed at Friendship with all and was opposed to "axes, triangles, polygons and in general any blocs". He added, we do not at present regard anyone in Asia even as a potential adversary of ours.¹¹

Another additional achievement of the visit was the resolution of the Rupee-Rouble debt issue. The most ticklish issue of repayment of nearly 10 billion rouble Soviet debt to India and the rupee-rouble exchange rate connected with it were settled. It was very much important for Yeltsin because by that time Russia was facing acute economic hardship and shortage. The two sides also agreed to continue and further expand co-operation in various fields and envisaged an increase in trade from 1.5 billion dollars in 1992 to 2.5 billion dollars in 1993 and 3.5 billion dollars in 1994. Apart from these, Yeltsin also publicly declared that Russia would support India's candidature for the

¹¹ Anita Inder Singh, "India's relation with Russia and Central Asia" *International Affairs*, (RIIA), vol.71, no.1, January 1995, p.12.

permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council whenever the question of expansion of the security council arose.

What was more, Yeltsin not only affirmed that Russia would go ahead with the Cryogenic Rocket engine deal with India but also said that Russia would not be dictated by a third country in determining its bilateral ties with India.¹² It was one of the many such instances when the Western powers tried to impose uneven conditions on Russia for further good relations with them. Russia ultimately got fed up with such western conditions and decided to look forward to revive its intimate ties with the old friends. The shift in Russian foreign policy towards a greater balance benefited India. Besides, Russia had enjoyed truly multi-dimensional relations with India and there was no need to wish away the past. The old relationship could be preserved under different circumstances. This is how Russian perception of India came back to old track and most importantly different Russian leaders began to claim that they were Eurasians and not simply European.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's Visit to Russia – July 1994

After a gap of one and half years of President Yeltsin's visit to India Prime Minister P.V. Rao's visit to Moscow from 29 June to 2 July 1994 not only achieved a real breakthrough in Indo-Russian relations which had been 'muted' for the last couple of years but also marked the opening of new vistas in their multifaceted cooperation. During the visit both the leaders signed the historic "Moscow Declaration" on the Protection of the Interests of Pluralistic States which reflected the commonality of interests of both the countries in the political front. The declaration, a first such document in international relations was a joint response to the growing threats from aggressive nationalism, religious and political extremism, terrorism and separatism, striking at the unity

¹² *The Tribune*, 30 January 1993.

of large countries like India and Russia which share a common pluralistic and federal identity.¹³

Importantly, the agreement upheld the territorial integrity of each other. For India it implied that on the Kashmir issue Russia was committed to supporting India. While for Russia it implied Indian support to the Russian stand on Chechnya. The Chechen problem was assuming a threatening posture with the rise in militancy and insurgency. It was the geopolitical interests of the two countries that once again brought them closer to each other. These interests lay in the space that separated India and Russia. It was in their interests to see that the stability of the region particularly in Afghanistan and Central Asia was not disturbed by forces of religious and political extremism. The two countries signed as many as nine agreements including two in the sphere of defence, making the beginning of a restructured Indo-Russian military relationship. The agreement on setting up a joint venture project for manufacturing spares for military air craft of Russian origin like the MIG-21 fighters as being widely hailed as a show piece of Bilateral relations. The proposed Indo-Russian Aviation Pvt. Limited with a 400 million dollar equity base shared equally by Indian and Russian firms not only made India the first country outside Russia to offer maintenance facilities for Russian aircraft but also symbolized a new type of defence relationship between India and Russia from 'buyer-seller' to participation to interaction.¹⁴

Even though sensitive issues like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in South-Asia did not figure in the 50 minute one to one meeting between Mr. Rao and Mr. Yeltsin. India and Russia in the declaration reiterated their fundamental commitment to all measures aimed at complete and universal elimination of weapons of mass-destruction. They agreed in particular to make every effort to facilitate the early conclusion of multilaterally negotiated

¹³ Rajiv Tiwari, "Moscow Declaration seeks to uphold territorial integrity: Rao- Yeltsin sign historic pact", in *The Pioneer*, 1 July 1994.

¹⁴ Asian Recorder, 10-16 September 1994, p.24-25.

comprehensive treaties on the universal ban on nuclear tests and the cessation of the production of fissile materials for weapons purpose.

Besides the two defence agreements, the other seven agreements envisaged co-operation in science and technology, tourism, exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, information technology, protection of environment and natural resources, standardization, metrology and certification and meteorology. The need to restore cultural relations to the level that existed in the Soviet era was also focused during Mr. Rao's visit. It has been agreed to include ministers of culture in the Indo-Russian joint commission in a measure that will facilitate revival of cultural festivals in the two countries.

The outcome of Prime Minister Rao's visit was aptly summed up by the Russian deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Turiyarov who said that "India and Russia have completed the stage of learning how to work in new conditions". There is no doubt that Russian-Indian ties were now on a firm footing with Russian support on the Kashmir issue assured.

Chernomyrdin's Visit to India – December 1994

Another landmark in Russia's ties with India was the visit of Prime Minister Victor S. Chernomyrdin's on 23rd December 1994. It proved that Indo-Russian relations have started assuming the same warmth and closeness that existed in the days of Soviet Union. During his visit it was decided to establish a 'hot-line' between Moscow and New Delhi. Along with efforts to streamline their economic co-operation, the two countries also decided to further enhance their cooperation in the field of security and combating cross-broader terrorism which was emerging as an area of common concern to both. During his speeches in India, Chernomyrdin not only prominently alleged Pakistan for its involvement in Chechen crisis but also claimed that the war in

Chechnya was mostly being fought by foreign mercenaries from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, West Ukraine and some other countries.¹⁵

Primakov's visit to India – April 1996

Later on, Yevgeny Primakov as new Foreign Minister of Russia, visited India in April 1996 and openly declared that the Kashmir issue should be solved within the framework of “Shimla Agreement”. He also assured India of Russian support for its permanent membership in the security council of the United Nations in future. In this way, Primakov's visit to India proved the fact that Indo-Russian bilateral relations and interests are binding and will not be affected by electoral results in their country.¹⁶

India's Nuclear Tests – May 1998

Though Moscow had refrained from criticizing India for her peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974 and had consistently showed greater understanding for India's nuclear position on various international forums, yet, when in May 1998 India conducted its nuclear tests a little irritation was visible in Russian attitude towards India. In its official response Moscow unequivocally criticized the tests. President Yeltsin lamented that “India has let us down”. The official statement issued by the foreign ministry on May 12, not only expressed “alarm and concern” but also urged India to reverse its nuclear policy and sign the NPT and CTBT. An apprehension was also expressed that India's policy may lead to a chain reaction in South Asia and beyond. Russian foreign Minister Primakov remarked that India's decision to carryout nuclear explosion was “short sighted” and “unacceptable” as far as Russia was concerned. He felt that there was a serious risk of India- Pakistan conflict and added “we specially would not want Pakistan to follow India's footsteps.”¹⁷ Russian position was understandable. Being a signatory to all the nuclear non-

¹⁵ *The Hindustan Times*, 24 December 1994.

¹⁶ I.K, Gujral, “The Primakov visit” in *Hindu* (Madras), 30 March 1996.

¹⁷ Jyostna Bakshi, no.4, p.267.

proliferation treaties it was not possible for it to openly support India. The fact that the Russian criticism was muted showed that there was a convergence of basic interests between the two. It is not easy to discount the possibility of a nuclear conflagration in the Indian subcontinent. Although the Indian nuclear doctrine is defensive in nature, Russian concerns have also to be kept in the mind.

However, unlike the USA and some other countries, Russia decided not to impose any sanctions against India. Russia considered sanctions as ineffective and going against Russia's own economic interests. But what was more interesting that, far from imposing sanctions or recalling their ambassadors, as others did, Russian officials went out of their way to reassure India that all was not lost and that Indo-Russian relations would not be adversely affected in any way. Even while voicing Russia's concern about Nuclear proliferation in the subcontinent, Russia's Ambassador to India went as far as to state that his country is willing to recognize India as a nuclear weapons state if it is signed the CTBT and NPT.¹⁸ Apart from these, Russia also announced its co-ordination with India in the civilian nuclear sector and despite US pressure, decided to go ahead with the building of a nuclear power plant in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu in keeping with 1988 Indo-Soviet agreements.¹⁹ Moscow made it ample clear that India's nuclear strategic programme was purely indigenous and there was no question of transfer of Russian military nuclear technology to India.

The leaders of some opposition parties in Russia took a different stand from that of the government. Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov and the leader of the ultra-nationalists liberal democratic party, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy actually congratulated India on its newly acquired status of a great power. Others in Moscow, including the high profile speaker of the Russian Duma, Gennady Seleznev, were delighted that yet another country defied America and

¹⁸ Smita Rajgopalan, "India is now a power in Russia's vision of multipolar world", in *Times of India*, 12 June 1998.

¹⁹ *The Statesman*, 20 May 1998.

the Western world. Hence, when American imposed sanctions on India, Russian analysts used this opportunity to lash out at the west by accusing America of “Sancto-mania” and western Europe suffers from an “imperial hang over”. According to them the western world especially the UK still regarded India ‘as a colony rather than a full fledged sovereign state with the right to make it’s own independent decisions.’²⁰

Pakistan goes Nuclear – May 1998

As was expected, when Pakistan carried out it’s own Nuclear tests on May 28, 1998, “deepest concern” was expressed by the Russian foreign ministry. Hope was expressed that Pakistan as well as India should show foresight and wisdom and refrain from taking actions able to escalate tensions in the region. On the same day, President Clinton and President Yeltsin held a telephonic talk to discuss the situation created by the Pakistani tests. Foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov, who was at Luxemburg at that time conferring with the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright expressed ‘extreme alarm’ at the race of nuclear arms between India and Pakistan. The western concern including that of Russia was that given the existence of the Kashmir issue, considered as a “hot spot,” the nuclearization of South Asia could set off a conflict escalating into a nuclear one. Such a prospect was highly dangerous. Primakov stressed that in the existing circumstances the international community must take radical steps to make India and Pakistan sign the treaties on non-proliferation and termination of nuclear tests.²¹

However, at the same time, Primakov opposed sanctions and embargo against Pakistan as in the case of India earlier. He not only along with other P-5 countries, made it clear that Russia was not prepared to recognize India and Pakistan as nuclear weapons states (as according to the NPT, those states which had nuclear weapons or had exploded a nuclear device prior to January 1967

²⁰ Smita Rajgopalan, n.18.

²¹ Jyostna Bakshi, no.4,p.274.

can be regarded as nuclear weapon states) but also said that the “new nuclear powers” should not be excluded from international dialogue.²²

Russian Prime Minister’s Visit to India – December 1998

Following the nuclear tests of May 1998, when India was facing many challenges both on the national international fronts, Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov’s visit to India on 20 December 1998, signified the importance of India in the strategic thinking of Russia. The political significance of the trip lay in the fact that it took place the first by a head of government of a member of the P-5 since Pokhran –II.²³ During his visit, Primakov not only for the first time, formally proposed of a “strategic partnership between India, China and Russia but also described the Indo-Russian bilateral relations as “consistent and continuous.” By then the problem of Islamic militancy had gained centre stage attention in both Russia and India. The Taliban representing a medievalist variant of Islam was threatening these countries. The level of militancy and international terrorism had arisen to a great extent. A Talibanised Afghanistan was a threat to the countries of the region. The Primakov visit, thus, signified a transparent attempt by Russian government to regain some of the mystique of the old bonhomie and qualitative leap to capture the dynamic mood of the post-cold war era in global politics. It also underlined the fact that India remains central to Russia, the same way Moscow is central to New Delhi.²⁴

Nawaz Sharif’s Visit to Moscow – February 1999

Immediately after the “Lahore declaration” was signed by both the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif in February 1999 which showed some sort of peace initiative in the subcontinent in the post nuclear era, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz

²² _____, “Russia’s post-Pokhran Dilemma”, *Strategic Analysis*, August 1998, p.730.

²³ *Indian Express*, 23 December 1998.

²⁴ Nandan Unnikrishanan, “India-Russia: tested ties”, in *National Herald*, 13 April 2001.

Sharif's visit to Moscow in April, 1999 marked a significant development in Pakistani-Russian relations. The visit was termed by the Russian President Yeltsin as "a new chapter in relations between the two countries oriented in to the 21st century."²⁵ Prime Minister Sharif's visit, the first by a Pakistani Premier in 25 years, may have broken the ice in bilateral relations, but the two sides failed to sign any further significant treaty after the political treaty initiated in 1994. The only agreement reached was the creation of an intergovernmental commission for trade and economics. Both the countries signed a bilateral document on trade and economic co-operation to replace the 1956 agreement. Pakistan failed to elicit any further favourable response from their Russian counterparts regarding the increased sale of military hard ware to Pakistan. Not only India's counter diplomatic moves succeeded in limiting the defence deal with Pakistan but also the Kremlin leaders could no longer ignore the basic geo-political fact that India remained by far the more important partner for it in South Asia in comparison with Pakistan, which had been a major buyer of Russian military hardware and a major partner of the Soviet Union during the days of the cold war.²⁶ Another factor that may have been responsible for the chill in Russian approach to Pakistan was, the latter's support to Taliban and the Afghan-Pakistani support to militant activity in Chechnya.

Islamic Terrorism-a Common Concern for Both India and Russia

The growing Islamic fundamentalism in the region further provided an important opportunity to both Russia and India to come closer, as Pakistan was helping not only Islamic terrorists in Kashmir but also the Taliban in Afghanistan who were trying to help and ferment Islamic holy-war in Russian federation particularly in Chechnya and neighboring central Asian states especially in Tajikistan. This development irked Russia badly and it tried to make a common front against Islamic terrorists activities to contain Taliban

²⁵ Adan Ali Shah, n.5,p.46.

²⁶ *ibid.*

involving India. It was considered to be a serious point in growing relations between Russia and India as both countries were facing terrorist threats in the same name of Islam. In this regard Russia showed enough indication to cooperate with India when it fully supported India's position on Kargil conflict against Pakistan in early May 1999.

Thus we find that during the Yeltsin period Russian-Indian relations, after the initial neglect, were placed on a sound footing. From the Indian perspective Russian support to the Kashmir issue was crucial. Throughout the decade old Presidency of Yeltsin Russia strove to develop relations with Pakistan, but the divergence of interests hampered the Russian objective.

Chapter-IV

CHAPTER-4

RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF VLADIMIR PUTIN

Following the voluntary resignation of president Boris Yeltsin from his office on 31 December 1999, when Vladimir Putin assumed office in an acting capacity and ultimately achieved a clear victory in the presidential election held on 26 March 2000, it was widely regarded in Russia and abroad as a sign of consolidation and resurgence of Russian state after the years of drift and decline under a sick and ailing president. The rise to power of young and energetic president Putin and was seen as a positive development everywhere. His landmark visit to India from 3 to 5, October not only marked the beginning of a new era in their bilateral relations but also opened up a prospect of Indo-Russian co-operation in the regional context.

Yasterzhembsky's Visit to Pakistan – September 2000

Prior to the scheduled state visit of the new Russian President Vladimir Putin to India in October 2000, the visit by Sergei Yasterzhembsky, the special envoy of president Putin, to Islamabad on 26th September 2000 created much enthusiasm in Pakistan. His statements, during the visit that, "Terrorism has no religion", "traditional Islam and enlightened Islam has no tolerance for violence", "we have a better understanding of Pakistan's position on Chechnya", "Putin has been invited to Pakistan" conveyed that Moscow "meant business" where it came to improving Pak-Russian ties.¹

In a significant departure from its earlier policy of blaming Pakistan for so-called "terrorism" in the region, the presidential envoy clearly

¹ Nasim Zehra, "Pak-Russian Relations: A bid to turn around," *Geo-Political Affairs*, (Islamabad), October, 2000, p.90.

appreciated Pakistan's own policies and practices from what was taking within the region. In fact Yasterzhembsky also conceded that Moscow has no evidence of any Pakistani national fighting in Chechnya.² All these statements conveyed Yasterzhembsky's positive posturing on Pak-Russian relations. However, the visit was an tactical exercise on the part of Russia in engaging Pakistan so that the latter could be persuaded to restrain the Taliban and Islamic extremist from creating problems for Russia in Chechnya and the central Asian republics bordering on Afghanistan.³

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India – October 2000

President Putin's visit to India in October 2000, the first visit by a Russian head of state since the January 1993 visit by the then President Bori's Yeltsin, essentially aimed at importing a new dimensions to the bilateral relationship, notably in sensitive political and technology related matters, apart from the long term perspective in defence co-operation.⁴ The most significant development during his visit was signing a document related to "strategic partnership" with India which explained that the two sides hope to "impart a qualitatively new chapter and long term perspective to their multi-faceted relations."⁵ However, so far as the term "strategic" was concerned, it was made clear that partnership is not directed against any other state or group of states and does not intend to create a military-political alliance.

The declaration on Strategic Partnership and the agreements signed during the visit marked a continuity in Indo-Russian relation – a step forward from the Treaty of 1971 and 1994. Moscow declaration of Indo-

² Ibid.

³ Jyostna Bakshi, "Russia and South Asia," *World Focus*, October-December 200, p.57.

⁴ K.K. Katyal, "New Dimensions to Bilateral ties" in *The Hindu* (Madras), 27 September 2000.

⁵ *National Herald*, 6 October 2000.

Russian co-operation on the protection of the interests of the Pluralist states.⁶ To ensure enhanced co-operation, provisions were also made for convening of annual summit meetings, regular bilateral, political and foreign office consultation on issue of mutual Concern, closer co-operation in the "United Nations" and "joint initiatives on key international and regional issues."⁷

Much more significant was their decisions to coordinate their strategy in dealing with Taliban-dominated Afghanistan, which was a source of worry for both the countries. The two countries decided to set up a Joint Working Group on Afghanistan with a view to evolve joint approach for combating cross-border terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking and contributing to the efforts for bringing peace and stability in the region.⁸ Mr. Putin stated that the two countries intend to co-ordinate their military and political line on the situation. This co-ordination would cover "the activities of all the agencies involved, including the special services of both the countries."⁹

During the visit a defence deal worth \$3 billion was also signed including major weapon systems for all the three branches of India defence forces. India-Russia Joint Government Commission on military technical co-operation was set up with a view to further promote the co-operation in this field including defence research and Development (R&D).¹⁰ It was also decided that the commission on Defence co-operation would be chaired by the defence ministers of the both countries.

Considerable attention was devoted to the task of boosting trade and economic co-operation. The declaration specifically mentioned for "further enhancing the quality and competitiveness of their goods by, inter alia, promoting the joint development and sharing of the latest technologies", and

⁶ I.K. Gujral, in *the Hinduism Times*, 8 October 2000.

⁷ *National Herald*, 6 October 2000.

⁸ Jyotsna Bakshi, "Russia and South India," *World Focus*", October-December 2000, p.58.

⁹ *National Herald*, 6 October 2000.

¹⁰ Jyotsna Bakshi, n.5.

taking advantage of the new opportunities from the integration process under way in the world economy.¹¹ It is important to remember here that on 14, September 2000, India, Russia and Iran signed a North South transport corridor agreement in St. Petersburg providing for the transit of goods from Indian ports to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas across Iran and Caspian Sea to Southern Russia and beyond.¹² It was expected that this route would reduce the transit time to and from Russia by ten days as well as the transport cost of goods and there by help in expanding trade between them. Besides, bolstering co-operation in the traditional areas, new areas of Co-operations including information technology were specified. It has also been decided to further expand co-operation in the field of Nuclear technology.

Speaking in some details on the Kashmir issue, the visiting President Putin stated the Russian view which was barely, different from the Indian position. The points he made were: “Kashmir has been the cause of tension between India and Pakistan”, “foreign interference should be stopped “the issue should be resolved on a bilateral basis through compromise” and there must be “unconditional respect for the line of control.”¹³ It is important to mention here that, the Americans had also echoed the similar sentiment during the Kargil conflict when they had stressed on the inviolability of Loc. In this regard President Putin’s statement in the Indian Parliament was significant.

During the visit, President Putin not only extended his country’s support to India’s claim for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council but also made it clear that neither he nor the Russian Foreign Minister had planned to visit Pakistan. The statement removed all the doubts and misconceptions that were created in the Indian mind during Yasterzhembsky’s visit to Pakistan regarding the forthcoming visit of

¹¹ *National Herald*, 6 October 2000.

¹² Jyostna Bakshi, n.5.

¹³ Neena Vyas, “Putins against Foreign Interference in Kashmir” in *the Hindu* (Madras), 5 October 2000.

Russian President Vladimir Putin to Islamabad. Regarding the media speculations about a strategic triangle between Russia, India and China, he made it clear that neither Russia nor India is interested in forming such a triangle power bloc. However, he said that if such a co-operation emerges, it would be beneficial for all.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to Moscow – November 2001

When Putin's visit to India envisaged a qualitatively new level of Co-operation and higher degree of closeness and dynamism, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Moscow in November 2001, reflected the collective will of Moscow and New Delhi to combat the menace of the "terrorist international" with its dangerous global spread. In a first major Initiatives India and Russia on 5 November 2001 signed the "Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism" affirming the position of the two countries that international terrorism is a threat to peace and security, a grave violation of human rights and crime against humanity.¹⁴

The two countries not only shared identical views on Afghanistan but also agreed to extend support to American initiative to weed out terrorism in Afghanistan, on the condition that there would not be double standards in identifying terrorism and dealing with them. The leaders of both the countries categorically asserted that there are "one good terrorist or bad terrorist, our terrorists and their terrorist".¹⁵ It was an important observation because prior to the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11th September 2001, US and its western allies considered the terrorist activities in Kashmir and Chechnya as expression of self determination and were often critical of

¹⁴ O.P. Verma, "Bajpayee, Putin Signed Moscow Declaration" in *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), 7 November 2001.

¹⁵ Chandan Mitra, "Ground War my clear Afghan war," in *the Pioneer*, (New Delhi), 8 November 2001.

India's and Russia's policies. Violations of Human Rights were often highlighted.

The declaration supported the adoption of decisive measures on the basis of international law, against all states, individuals and entities which support, harbour, finance, instigate or train terrorists or promote terrorism. In an obvious reference to Pakistan promoting cross border terrorism in Kashmir, The declaration said violent attacks perpetuated under the slogan of self-determination are in reality acts of terrorism mostly with strong international links. Multi-ethnic and democratic societies are especially vulnerable to acts of terrorism which are an attack against the values and freedoms enshrined in such societies, it added.¹⁶

Whatever be the motive of their perpetration – political, ideological, philosophical, racial, ethnic or religious, all terrorist acts are unjustifiable. The two sides also resolved to further develop co-operation in struggle against new challenges in international terrorism including in the nuclear, chemical, biological, space, cybernetics and other spheres. Both the sides noted the existence of close nexus between terrorism and illegal trafficking in narcotics, trade in arms and organized crime and pointed to the significance of the need for close interaction at the bilateral, as also at the multilateral level in combating these challenges in the interest of international stability and security.

Both the countries not only affirmed their faith in the central role of the UN in fight against terrorism but also opined that the struggle against terrorism has become one of the priority tasks of the world community. Therefore, they called for an early completion of comprehensive convention on international terrorism and convention for the suppression of acts of Nuclear terrorism. The declaration called for the creation of “a new co-

¹⁶ O.P. Verma, n.22.

operative security order” as the launch-pad for the development of “a multi-polar world”.¹⁷

In an obvious reference to the inclusion of ‘moderate Taliban’ in the future Afghan government as pronounced by Pakistani President Prevez Musharraf, both the leaders opposed this notion and Moscow affirmed that it will convey to the Bush Administration to “act decisively and ruthlessly” against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and dealing with the Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaida outfits.¹⁸ President Putin also accepted the Indian demand for expanding the six-plus two formula to involve countries like India in evolving a solution to the Afghan imbroglio. During the visit other agreements covering the diversified areas like Banking, education, culture, science and technology were also signed between the two countries to further strengthen and consolidate bilateral relations.

Terrorist Attack on Indian Parliament - December 2001

After the terrorist attack on the world trade centre on 11th September 2001, when United States of America was busy in fighting against the suspected Al-Qaida terrorist outfits and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan by making a common anti-terrorist front including its Western allies and also Pakistan, the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament on 13th December 2001, not only evoked wide spread condemnation but also marked the heightened tension in Indo-Pak Relation. The attack on Parliament represented an attack on India’s democracy. As the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, suggested, this was not a mere attack on a building but an assault on the very nation itself.

¹⁷ P.S. Suryanaryana, “India Russia Sign declaration to Combat Global terrorism,” in *Hindu* (London), 7 November 2001.

¹⁸ Hari Jai Singh, “Indo-Russian record on tacking terrorism Today” in *Tribune* (Chandigarh), 6 November 2001.

Responding to the terrorist attack on the Parliament House, when Vajpayee government asserted that “India will liquidate the terrorist and their sponsors wherever they are whosoever they are”¹⁹ and while the American secretary of state Colin Powell, at least recognized India’s right to take action in self defence, Russia’s public advice to India to maintain restraint and its intense diplomatic efforts to defuse the crisis did not make a favourable impression in both official and non-official circles in India.²⁰ The Russian President Mr. Vladimir Putin in a telephonic call to the Prime Minister Vajpayee not only sought to discourage India from launching any retaliatory strikes at Pakistan in the wake of the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament but also told that the attack could have been master-minded by Osama bin Laden to provoke an India-Pakistan conflict and facilitate his escape from the region.²¹ The fear was that any confrontation could escalate into a nuclear war having disastrous consequences.

Though the Russian foreign ministry issued a statement condemning the attack as an “outrageous manifestation of terrorism”, at the same time it joined the western nations in trying to keep India from attacking terrorists bases in side Pakistan. The assumption in Russia as elsewhere was that fundamentalist forces stood to gain from India-Pakistan conflict.

Kaluchak Massacre – May 2002

At a time when Indo-Pak relations were low following the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament on December 2001, the Kaluchak Massacre of 14 May 2002, in which more than thirty people, most of them children, were killed by terrorists, vitiated the atmosphere and escalated the already

¹⁹ Harish Khare, “Decisive Battle has to time place: PM,” in *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 14 December 2001.

²⁰ Devendra Kaushik, Islamabad-Moscow-New Delhi”. *World Focus*, (October-Deceleration, 2001) pp.58-60.

²¹ Vladimir Kadyahin, “Putin Urges India to Maintain restraint” in *The Hindu*, (New Delhi), 16 December 2001.

protracted offensive deployment in the border.²² Amidst growing public anger, prime minister Atal Bihar Vajpayee favoured a strong and appropriate action in response to the incident. India also indicated that it may be close to taking military action against Pakistan by placing all paramilitary forces on the border and along the line of control under the operational command of the Army and Coast Guard under the Navy.²³

As war clouds gathered over the sub continent, the issue became one of the main subjects discussed at the summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and United States President George W. Bush in Moscow in the last week of May.²⁴ Not only both the leaders expressed their willingness to help settle the dispute but also said; at a joint press conference in St. Petersburg, that their countries would take steps together to prevent the escalation of the Indian-Pakistan conflict. Though Russia joined the western powers in advising India “to keep emotions under control”²⁵ and did use its diplomatic options in restraining India at Almaty while President Putin met Indian Prime Vajpayee to avert a war between India and Pakistan, but at the same time it firmly accepted India’s position and unambiguously told the Pakistan to stop cross-border infiltration permanently.

As a new ally of NATO, Russia also tried to use its influence over India to find a diplomatic solution to the Indo-Pak stand-off. But significantly, it indicated that if need arises it will exercise its veto in India’s favour at the UN Security Council.²⁶ It is important to remember here that during the 1971 war the then Soviet Union had similarly acted on four occasions to prevent India from being declared as the aggressor. It also waived of some regulations to reach war materials and other military hardware on priority basis to meet India’s emergency war requirements. As

²² *The Hindu*, 15 May 2002.

²³ Saurabh Shukla, “India put forces in action mode”, in *Hindustan Times*, 20 May 2002.

²⁴ John Cherian, “Active Interventions”, *Frontline* (Chennai), 21 June 2002.

²⁵ *Hindustan Time*, 16 May 2002.

²⁶ Saurabh Shukla, “Russia Opens Military Supply line for India,” in *Hindustan Times*, 27 May 2002

the Kremlin official spokes person stated, “we have told India that war should be avoided but in case Pakistan does not respond to India’s demands and a military operations happens, Moscow will play it’s role as New Delhi’s strategic partner”.²⁷

It seems that though Russia has expressed it’s real concerns over an Indo-Pak war leading to a bigger nuclear catastrophe in South Asia, but nevertheless, it has expressed its honest understanding of India’s positions with regards to Pak-sponsored cross border terrorism and firmly stood with India as a trustworthy strategic partner in its lonely battle against terrorism.

²⁷

Ibid.

Chapter-V

CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

A close look at Russian policy towards India-Pakistan relations in the context of the changed geo-political scenario that emerged after the breakup of the Soviet union in 1991 reveals that Russia accorded greater importance to India than Pakistan in its foreign policy calculations. It is not only because Russia inherited a three and half decade old close and friendly relations with India but also their basic geo-political interests coincide in many areas. Initial attempts to befriend Pakistan had their own limitations.

From the foregoing it is clear that in its relations with India, in the context of Indo-Pakistani relations, Russia has accorded primacy to its relations with India. This is because the nature of the relationship is a strategic and political one. Both the countries are multi-ethnic and pluralist societies. Both are facing similar threats to their national integrity. India and Russia feel that these dangers emanate from Pakistan. In view of their near similar perception of Pakistan, Indo-Russian ties have developed along friendly lines. Pakistan is an important-factor in strengthening Indo-Russia co-operation.

With the emergence of five new Central Asian States, India and Russia share some common geo-political concerns. Both the countries are interested to see that the Central Asian region remain democratic and secular. In these context, India can play the role of strengthening these objectives. Since both the countries are facing similar problems of cross-border terrorism, being aided and abetted by some countries of the region in the name of Pan-Islamism and *jehad*, it is in their vital interest that both India and Russia should maintain a good relationship to effectively counter it.

Both India and Russia can be a perfect foil for any extremist-Islamic urges that may spill over the borders of the Central Asian states. The 'Moscow Declaration on the Protection of the Interests of Pluralistic States' signed by Prime Minister Rao and President Yeltsin in June 1994 gives expression to the conceptional and ideational understanding between India and Russia that underlines the commodity of interests and objectives in the region.

The growing Islamic fundamentalism in the region provides an important opportunity to both India and Russia to come closer as Pakistan is not only helping the Islamic terrorists in Kashmir but also the Taliban who are in turn trying to help and ferment Islamic holy war in Chechnya and other Central Asian Republics. The 'Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism' signed by Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Putin on 5th November 2001, affirmed their cooperation in this regard. Both countries are now sharing identical views on recent developments in Afghanistan.

Military factor is also equally important as it complements the geopolitical factor. Russia has lost its traditional customers for arms in Eastern Europe. India was an important customer of Soviet/Russian arms and weaponry. India also needs Russian assistance in the military field because its army is largely equipped with Soviet Weaponry. During Putin's visit to India in October 2000, the problems of spares and military hardware supply to India has been solved. Importantly, Russia has agreed to transfer the technology so that spare parts can be produced in India. It has also decided, in principle, to collaborate with India in military Research and Development (R&D) along with joint productions. What is of significance is that Russia has not entered into any military relationship with Pakistan because for it ties with India are important

In the international sphere also both India and Russia are sharing similar views. The two countries do not figure in each other's threat perceptions. There is no basic antagonism in their respective worldviews

despite some differences on nuclear issues. Russia has not only given unequivocal support to India on its crucial Kashmir issue but also at the same time it has favoured India's claim for the permanent membership in the United Nation's Security Council. Both favour, essentially, a multi-polar world order under the enhanced role of the United Nations along with the democratization of international institutions.

No doubt, due to its geographical proximity, Pakistan also occupies an important place in Russian foreign policy calculation. But because of its active involvement with the various Islamic terrorist organization and its overt and covert support to the Chechen rebels, it has redeemed its position in the eyes of the New Russian Federation. All the earlier efforts on the part of Soviet Union / Russian Federation to maintain an approximately good relationship with Pakistan has been proved to be a great failure. The latter's attempt to enmesh its aspiration over Kashmir with its independent relation with the Soviet Union/Russia has been the main bone of contention in improving their bilateral relations.

In a globalized world when nation states are busy in improving their relations *vis-à-vis* other states on the principle of maximization of their national interests, Russia's policy towards Indian sub-continent reflects its traditional inclination towards India. The signing of the Declaration of Strategic Partnership is a landmark event in their bilateral relations.

In the post 11th September 2001 scenario, after the fall of Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the geo-strategic advantage of Pakistan to Russia has been diluted. In this context, any possibility of substantive Pak-Russian relations at the cost of Indo-Russian bilateral relation is highly unlikely. Even if the Kashmir issue is resolved, Pakistan's bilateral relations with Russia can never be that of an ally. Indo-Russian relations have been proved to be a time-tested one. The up-coming state visit of President Vladimir Putin to India in December 2002 would be another step forward in warming up their bilateral relations.

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