

RUSSIA'S POLICY TOWARDS KASHMIR, 1991 – 98

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Certified that the Dissertation entitled **Russia's Policy Towards Kashmir, 1991-98**, submitted by **Mr. Debidatta A. Mahapatra** is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University, or any other University and is his own work.

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

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(Chairperson)

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***DEDICATED TO
MY PARENTS***

CONTENTS

CHAPTERS	PAGE
PREFACE	i-ii
I THE BACKGROUND; SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS KASHMIR	1-19
II IMPACT OF SOVIET DISINTEGRATION ON RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA, 1991-92	20-32
III CHANGE AND ADJUSTMENT IN RUSSIA'S POLICY TOWARDS KASHMIR, 1993-96	33-49
IV EMERGING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL EQUATIONS AND KASHMIR, 1997-98	50-64
V CONCLUSION	65-74
BIBLIOGRPAHY	75-87

P R E F A C E

Russia's policy towards Kashmir witnessed perceptible changes after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This change occurred not in vacuum but because of changes in international political scenario in the aftermath of the disintegration, and its subsequent reflection on Indo-Russian bilateral relationship. The same politics of compulsions and pragmatism which initially forced Russia to toe the line of Western Powers, later registered a major shift from orientation to the West to some consideration for the East. Indo-Russian bilateral relationship again picked up, and the two adopted even a common stand regarding Kashmir issue. Keeping all these developments in mind, the present study is relevant for all those interested in Russia's policy towards Kashmir and its implications.

Though there are several studies on Indo-Russian relationship after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, no research work has been done on Russia's policy towards Kashmir after the disintegration. Naturally, a study on this subject is timely and should be appropriate.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with the historical background: the Soviet policy towards Kashmir. The second chapter analyses the impact of the disintegration of the Soviet Union on Indo-Russian relations. The third chapter discusses how the changes in strategic policy equations influence Russia's policy towards India, and as a result, on Kashmir. The fourth chapter specifically analyses the emerging factors of common concern both for Indian and Russia which has led to convergence of approaches regarding Kashmir issue. The fifth chapter contains the main conclusions of the study.

This study is based on published primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the documents of perestroika period, visits of the Russian President Boris Yeltsin to India in January 1993, the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to Russia in June-July

1994. etc: relevant United Nations Security Council Official Records: Treaties: and interviews. etc. These are further supplemented with select books, academic articles and important press coverages, from India and abroad.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Professor Zafar Imam for his able guidance, encouragement and assistance during the course of my research. Without his help this work would never have been completed.

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The responsibility for what I say in this dissertation, however, is mine.

J.N.U., New Delhi
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17/7/1999
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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND :

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS KASHMIR

The Soviet Union soon emerged as a super power after the Second World War. The Cold War, which followed the Second World War, gradually led to the creation of two opposing blocs of nations and an ideological tussle between them ensued. In this scenario some newly independent countries spearheaded non-aligned movement, and India was one of them. As it turned out, the dynamics of Cold War brought India and the Soviet Union closer for mutual interests. Meanwhile India got embroiled in a conflict with its neighbour, Pakistan and soon Kashmir emerged as a major issue for India. The policy of the Soviet Union towards India, particularly towards Kashmir issue was not supportive of India during the period of Stalin. But, it emphatically came out to support India's stand on Kashmir during the leadership of Khrushchev. Such a stance on Kashmir was subsequently followed by the Soviet leaders till the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

Stalin was very much strategic in adopting policies towards the countries of various regions. Though India adopted the path of non-alignment so as to remain aloof from the politics of super power blocs, it was interested in maintaining good relationship both with the USSR and USA. But Stalin thought otherwise. He considered India like Pakistan clearly leaning towards Anglo-American bloc, and maintained equidistance both from Indian and Pakistan. He indeed did not show interest in the region as a whole and, as a consequence his approach towards the Kashmir problem was non-committal. In the pursuit of such a stance when the

Kashmir question came up for discussion in the United Nations Security Council in 1948 the Soviet representative remained absent during voting.¹

The fact of the matter turned otherwise afterwards. After Pakistan expressed its desire to maintain diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1948, the Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was invited by the Soviet leadership to visit Moscow. But this process of developing good relations between the two countries was short-lived. In 1948 the Jewish State of Israel became independent, much to the dislike of Pakistan. But the independence of Israel was hailed by the Soviet Union. As a result of which thousands of Pakistanis demonstrated outside the consulate of Moscow in Karachi. This demonstration annoyed the Soviets. The Soviet Union called off its proposed participation in the International Economic Conference held in Karachi same year. So, starting with a posture of good relationship, Soviet-Pakistan relationship cooled off abruptly.

In 1949 the Pakistani Prime Minister visited Washington to develop bilateral relationship between USA and Pakistan. The US-Pak axis grew thereafter. Pakistan accepted the membership of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 1949. USA assured Pakistan of help both economically and militarily and supported the Pakistani version of Kashmir issue. Further, Pakistan's signing of Baghdad Pact in 1955, and its membership of SEATO in 1954 created grave concern in the minds of both the Soviet and Indian leaders.

¹ Pointed out by Hemen Roy (1985) *How Moscow Sees Kashmir*, Bombay, Jaico Publishing House, p. 9.

Afterwards certain developments compelled the Soviet Union to reappraise its policy towards the region. In 1948, the USA succeeded in persuading Pakistan to establish an air base in Pak-occupied Kashmir. It was taken by Pakistan as an important step towards increasing its military build up to facilitate the process of annexation of Kashmir from India. USA also took this as a novel step to set its foot in the region. The Soviet Union was alarmed by such development. It was strongly critical of US interaction in the region. Because it took Kashmir ^{as} a region of strategic military importance. Though the location of Kashmir was not in close proximity of the Soviet Union, but the distance between its boundary and Kashmir was a narrow strip of Afghanistan. The Soviet Union took such an intervention by the US as a move to turn Kashmir into a military strategic base against her. Though Soviet leaders were conscious of the development in the region, they were not fully prepared to support the Indian stand at the time. That was why the representative of USSR remained absent when Kashmir question came up for discussion in United Nations Security Council in 1951 and 1952.

After Stalin the Soviet policy towards India, Kashmir in particular witnessed a major change under the leadership of Krushchev. Krushchev realized the importance of India in the region. India was the leader of the non-aligned countries and unlike Pakistan, adopted the policy of no-alignment with any particular power groups. The policy guidelines of the non-aligned countries was motivated by the desire to bring end to cold war and maintain good relationship with countries irrespective of their ideological principles. This non-aligned policy of India attracted Krushchev. He also thought that friendship with the Indian sub

continent with huge potentialities, which was also leader of the NAM. a counter weight could be made against the capitalist powers of the West. All these dynamics of cold war enhanced Indo-Soviet relationship during the period of Khrushchev. As a result of which India earned the unequivocal support of the Soviet Union regarding Kashmir issue.

During their sojourn to India in 1955, President Khrushchev and Prime Minister Bulganin declared Kashmir as an integral part of India in very clear terms. In his public speech in Srinagar, Khrushchev declared that the “question of Kashmir, has been settled by the people of Kashmir”. Indicating the role of USA and UK in the Kashmir conflict he accused “certain states” of encouraging Pakistan to invade Kashmir and said that the Soviet position in regard to Kashmir is one of the States of the Republic of India. He upheld secularism in India and said the “Religion is a a question of individual conscience (He also regretted the partition of India and said that it had come about not because of religious differences, but imperialist power exploiting difference in accordance with the policy of divide and rule).

The future of Kashmir, as Soviet leaders thought had a direct bearing on Soviet interest and therefore, Khrushchev wanted Kashmir to remain with friendly India. He was critical of the Western opposition to India’s stand on Kashmir, because Kashmir under India should secure better its interests than under Pakistan which had already joined American-sponsored military alliance and provided America with military bases. At the same time Khrushchev saw Kashmir as a

leverage to strengthen Soviet influence in India in order to keep New Delhi on Soviet side. At a press conference in New Delhi Khrushchev and Bulganin described Kashmir as a “part and parcel of India”² and declared that “as far as Kashmir is concerned, we witnessed, while in Kashmir, with deep joy that the people of Kashmir appreciated its national liberation considering its territory as an integral part of the Republic of India”.

Returning home, in their speeches to the Supreme Soviet, both Khrushchev and Bulganin reiterated that Kashmir was an integral part of India and that the Kashmir question had already been settled by the people of Kashmir themselves. Bulgarian declared that “Kashmir question has already been settled by the people of Kashmir. They consider themselves as an integral part of the Republic of India and strive to build in the fraternal family of Indian peoples. We became deeply convinced of this during our meetings with the people of Srinagar and our conversations with Prime Minister Gulam Mohammad Bakshi and his colleagues. The Soviet Union supports India’s policy in Kashmir, because it fully corresponds to the interest of strengthening peace in this part of Asia. We declared when we were in Kashmir, confirmed this at a press conference in Delhi and declare it today”³. He said that the Kashmir problem had been created by the states, which pursued certain “definite military policy” in this area. Under the pretext of supporting Pakistan, “they are trying to entrench themselves in this part of India. They try to separate Kashmir artificially from India and turn it into a

² Pravda, 14 December 1955, quoted Heman Roy (1985) *How Moscow Sees Kashmir*, Bombay, Jaico Publishing House, p. 38.

³ Pravda, 30 Dec. 1955, quoted in Hemen Roy, *opcit*, p. 38.

military base. The people of Kashmir oppose this imperialist policy⁴.

When the Kashmir issue came before United Nations Security Council in February 1957, the Soviet attitude was one of total opposition to the UN resolution and of complete support to the Indian position. On 14 February 1957, the US, Great Britain, Australia and Cuba sponsored a draft resolution which was unacceptable to India. The resolution noted that "demilitarization preparatory to the holding of a free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices has not been achieved in accordance with the resolutions of the UN Commission for India and Pakistan". It called for the "use of temporary UN force in connection with demilitarisation". On 19 February the Soviet representative, Sobolev, told the Security Council that in his government's opinion the Kashmir question had in fact already been settled by the people of Kashmir, "who consider their territory as an integral part of the Republic of India. The Security Council cannot disregard these facts⁵.

In September 1957, during the Security Council debate on the Jarring report, the Soviet representative, Sobolov reiterated his government's view that the people of Kashmir had "definitely" decided their future and that Kashmir was an "inalienable part of the Republic of India", and "do not wish to see any intervention in their affairs on the part of any unwanted tutors". "It is quite obvious that any sort of proposal to send international troops to Kashmir and to

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Security Council Official Records, 773rd meeting, 1957.

refer the question for consideration to various arbiters and mediators primarily represent the blatant attempts to exert pressure on India".⁶

He criticised Pakistan for being a member of SEATO, "The fact that Pakistan has allowed itself to be drawn into the orbit has left its mark on the Pakistan government's policy with regard to the Kashmir issue as well. As a result of Pakistan's policy, which has found support among that country's partners in SEATO, the situation in the Kashmir area continues to be strained."⁷ He also notified the Security Council that Soviet would be available to check any Western attempt to impose resolutions unfavourable to India.⁸

In March 1959 a Soviet delegation led by A. Andrew visited Kashmir to demonstrate that the Soviet Union regarded Kashmir as an Indian state. Shortly after his arrival in Srinagar, Andrew described Kashmir as "the most beautiful place of the world" and reiterated that the Soviet Union regarded "Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Republic". Pointing out that Kashmir "is not far from the southern frontier of the Soviet Union", he declared that, "in your struggle we are your comrades". He also praised the land reform and the economic program of the state.⁹

In April 1959 when Karan Singh visited the Soviet Union, he was received by leading Soviet leaders, including Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev. At a

⁶ Security Council Official Records, 799th Meeting, 1957.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Izvetia*, 15 March 1959, quoted in Heman Roy, *Op cit.*, p.46.

reception, Khrushchev welcomed the guest from “friendly India” and reiterated the Soviet support to the Indian policy in Kashmir. In his reply Karan Singh thanked the Soviet leader for his unequivocal support to India and said that the Soviet policy towards Kashmir was well known¹⁰.

When the Security Council met again on 27 April 1962 to discuss the Kashmir issue, the Soviet representative, Platon Morozov, gave India total and unequivocal support. In his speech Morozov declared that “the question of Kashmir, which is one of the states of the Republic of India and forms an integral part of India, has been decided by the people of Kashmir themselves. The people of Kashmir have decided this matter in accordance with the principle of democracy and in the interest of strengthening relations between the people of this region¹¹”.

Meanwhile, Zafurallah Khan’s threat that a “powerful neighbouring country may be drawn into the vortex of Kashmir” gave evidence to the report that Pakistan had offered to China an advantageous border settlement in return for its aid on the Kashmir issue. On 30 April 1962, Prime Minister Nehru declared that, “We are quite prepared to meet the aggression in Kashmir whether by tribesmen or others”. He also disclosed that for some months Pakistan had been recruiting tribesmen and asking them to go to Kashmir. He warned that if a tribal invasion

¹⁰ Pravda, 1 May 1959, *ibid*, p-46.

¹¹ Security Council Official Records, 1000th Meeting, 1962.

about which Pakistan had been speaking in the Security Council was ever attempted, the result would be on all out war¹².

When the Security Council met again on 21 June 1962, a resolution was introduced by the representative of Ireland, supported by the British representative. It was quite clear that the “principal aim” of the draft resolution was the holding of plebiscite and this would be nothing but “flagrant interference” in the domestic affairs of India. The Soviet representative Morozov urged the Council to reject the Irish resolution and said that the resolution was “basically in line with the resume of the United States’ representative of the previous day”. When the Irish resolution was put to vote on 23rd June, the soviet representative vetoed it and the resolution was not adopted. Morozov declared that the question of holding plebiscite in Kashmir was “dead and outdated” and the Kashmir question had been solved “once for all”.

The Soviet Union also supported Nehru’s decision to withdraw the special status given to Jammu and Kashmir and to integrate the state into the Indian Union. At a reception at Rumanian embassy in Moscow, Khrushchev declared that the Soviet Union extends its “full support” to the integration of Kashmir to the Indian Republic. He also said that his attitude towards Kashmir had not changed since his visits to India in 1955 and 1960¹³.

¹² The Hindu (New Delhi), 2 May 1962, quoted in Hemen Roy, *Opcit*, p.49.

¹³ Agency France Press dispatch from Moscow, 10 August 1963, quoted in Hemen Roy, *Opcit*, p. 55.

When the Kashmir question came before the Security Council in February 1964, the Soviet representative, Federenko, reiterated his country's view that the question of Kashmir had already been settled "once for all". He also supported the Indian contention that a Council resolution would aggravate the situation and thought that the Indian proposal for a ministerial meeting to discuss the communal question and a non-war treaty constituted a "realistic approach" in the interests of peace in Asia and the whole world¹⁴.

After the unexpected disappearance of Khrushchev from the Soviet Scene, the Soviet envoy to India, Benediktov reassured New Delhi that the Soviet attitude towards Kashmir had remained unchanged. "Our policy towards Kashmir remains the same", he said¹⁵. In Moscow the new Soviet Prime Minister Alexi Kosygin told Mrs. Gandhi that the Soviet support for India's policy in Kashmir had remained unchanged and that Moscow regarded "Kashmir as an integral part of India"¹⁶.

Several months after Khrushchev's dramatic disappearance, there were indicators that a new Soviet policy towards Kashmir was in offing. The new Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, decided to move away from the Soviet policy towards Kashmir followed by Nikita Khrushchev. He envisaged using Kashmir for rapprochement between India and Pakistan and to turn the subcontinent into a peaceful arena under the aegis of the Soviet Union. He

¹⁴ Security Council Official Records, 1087th and 1903rd Meeting, 1964.

¹⁵ Patriot (New Delhi), 24 October 1964, Roy Hemen. *Op cit*, p.57.

¹⁶ *The Hindu* (Madras), 31 October 1964, *ibid*, p.57.

thought that Soviet interests in the sub-continent could be advanced if India and Pakistan could be developed as an independent counterforce free of American and Chinese influence. If Pakistan could be reconciled with the Soviet Union, it would help in improving Indo-Pak relations and would fulfil the Soviet dream of India – Pakistan-Soviet alliance. Such a triangular alliance, if it could be forged, would be a great bulwark against American and Chinese intervention in the sub-continent.¹⁷

The Soviets also believed that by encouraging Pakistan to establish closer economic and political relations with Moscow, they could easily eliminate the American influence there and at the same time prevent Pakistan from moving closer to China. It was in this context that the Soviets inaugurated their new policy to use Kashmir as a device for furtherance of Soviet foreign policy objectives and invited Pakistan's President Ayub Khan for a visit to Moscow. They could not recognize the growing nexus between Pakistan and China.

On 3 April 1965, Ayub Khan arrived in Moscow on his first state visit, and met Brezhnev, Kosygin and other Soviet leaders. Ayub's visit was concluded with a joint communiqué containing a formula on national liberation movements, ambiguous enough to be applicable to Kashmir and, indeed, was so interpreted by Pakistan government and its controlled press.¹⁸

Despite the suitable attempts to appease Pakistan, there were evidence that the Soviet Union always preferred India. This was clear from frequent attempts

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.73.

¹⁸ Dawn n . 11 April 1965; Pakistan times, 12 April 1965, *Ibid.*, p-76

made by the Soviet leaders reiterating the Soviet policy that Kashmir was an integral part of India. As late as 24 August 1965, reiterating that the state of Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India, Pravda pointed out that, “the main thing is to find a way to stop the bloodshed immediately and to liquidate the conflict. The Kashmir problem, which has become an obstacle in the establishment of good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan, is essentially the heavy legacy of colonialism. The Kashmir conflict is playing into the hands of the American imperialists... The Soviet Union is concerned for the immediate cessation of the conflict”.

After the war started between India and Pakistan in 1965, Soviet Union came up with a timely warning to all, whose policy had caused the conflict. “No government has any right to pour oil in the flames,”¹⁹ TASS reported on 14th September 1965. Alarmed by the Chinese support to Pakistan on 4 September 1965, in an identical letter to Shastri and Ayub, Kosygin appealed for immediate ceasefire, counselled the withdrawal of armies of both countries beyond the 1949 ceasefire line, called upon the Indian and Pakistani leaders to settle their dispute through peaceful means and offered Soviet’s good offices.

On 17th September, in an identical message to Shastri and Ayub, Kosygin reiterated the Soviet offer for a meeting in Tashkent to reach an agreement on the

¹⁹ Pravda, September 14, 1965, quoted from A. Vavilor, “India – 1965, the Indo-Pak conflict and its cessation”, in Zafar Imam, ed. (1977) *Soviet View of India*, Delhi, Kalyani Publication p.95.

restoration of peace. In a surprise move pressing the Soviet peace offer, Kosygin offered to take "if both parties so desire"²⁰

After the war between India and Pakistan brought to a close by the resolution of 22 September 1965, the Soviet became very active. In a new communication to Shastri and Ayub, Kosygin reiterated his offer for a meeting at Tashkent to discuss all issues underlying the Indo-Pakistan conflict.²¹ India made it clear that in Tashkent Conference Kashmir could not be discussed because it was an integral part of India and a constitutional unit of the Federal Union of India.²² Pakistan wanted to keep alive the question of Kashmir. The Soviets, therefore, advised both India and Pakistan to avoid discussing major issues at Tashkent and to regard the meeting as the first of a series of bilateral discussions.²³

Shastri and Ayub agreed to meet at Tashkent on 4th January 1966. At the request of both the parties Kosygin attended the meeting. On the 11th of January Shastri and Ayub signed the Tashkent Declaration. The important points in the Declaration were: withdrawal of armed forces of both sides not later than 25th February 1966 to former positions (held on August 5, 1965), observance of conditions of cease-fire in Kashmir, stoppage of hostile propaganda, resumption of diplomatic relations, renewal of normal diplomatic functions²⁴, etc. The leaders of both the nations expressed sincere thanks to the Soviet Government, and to A.N.

²⁰ Pravda, 20 September 1965, quoted in Hemen Roy, *opcit*, p.90.

²¹ Pravda, 26 September 1965, quoted in Hemen Roy, *opcit*, p.92.

²² *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 29 November 1965.

²³ *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 3 December 1965.

²⁴ A. Vavilov, "India-1965, The Indo-Pak Conflict and its Cessation" in Zafar Imam, *OpCit*, p.97.

Kosygin personally, for the constructive, friendly and praiseworthy role in organizing the meeting that brought about mutually accepted terms.

In June 1966 a high-level Pakistani military mission went to Moscow to explore the possibilities of Soviet arms supply to Pakistan. New Delhi warned that Soviet arms to Pakistan would weaken Indo-Soviet relations²⁵. To allay India's fear the Soviet Union assured India that their policy in regard to Kashmir had not changed and they regarded Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Republic.²⁶ To demonstrate Moscow's sincerity, the Soviet political *New Times* published a map of India showing the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir as a part of the Indian Union. The map included the areas occupied by Pakistan as well as Gilgit.²⁷

Despite pious assurances, in March 1968 a group of Soviet senior naval officers led by Vice-Admiral Smirnov arrived in Pakistan to explore the possibility of cooperation between the two navies. In April 1968 Kosygin came to Pakistan in a steady effort to develop Soviet relations with Islamabad. On 6 June 1968, a Pakistani military mission led by General Yahya Kahan arrived in Moscow to negotiate the first Soviet Pakistani arms agreement. On the next day, it was announced that the Soviet Union had agreed to supply arms to Pakistan. Immediately, thereafter Moscow began deliveries of tanks, artillery and armored personnel carriers. Protests from India were ignored.

²⁵ Indian Express, 29 July 1966, quoted in Hemen Roy, *opcit*, p.102.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

The Pakistani refusal to endorse the Soviet proposals for South Asian regional trade and transit treaty and an Asian collective security system annoyed the Soviets. The disillusionment finally led to a reappraisal of Moscow's policy towards Pakistan and an abrupt end to the arm supplies.

Thereafter, the reestablishment of amicable relations with India became the focal point of Soviet politics in the sub-continent. On 9 August 1971, the Soviet Union and India signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation for a period of twenty years as a legal and political basis of Soviet-Indian Cooperation. It was the only Soviet Third World Treaty which included 'peace' in the title²⁸. The treaty declared that "the further development of friendship and cooperation meets the basic national interests of both the states as well as the interests of lasting peace in Asia and the World..." Article 9 of the treaty provided that the contracting parties would consult each other in case of attack or threat thereof to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security of their countries.

The Soviet commentators welcomed the Shimla Agreement signed by India and Pakistan on 2 July 1972, as "an important instrument for the relaxation of tension in Asia and for peaceful co-existence". The agreement to resolve the Kashmir issue through bilateral discussions without outside interference manifested "their sincere striving for normalisation of relations and preservation of peace in the sub-continent". The Shimla agreement had been "approved by all

²⁸ Pointed out by Zafar Imam (1983) *Towards A Model Relationship, A Study of Soviet Treaties with India and Other Third World Countries*. New Delhi, ABC Publishing House. p. 51.

those, who have at heart peace and stability in the area. It should become the corner-stone of peace and cooperation between India and Pakistan.²⁹

After the defeat of the Indian National Congress in general elections in 1977, Indo-Soviet relationship was not so enthusiastic. That was why compared to his 1976 description of India and Indo-Soviet relations, Brezhnev's 1981 characterisation in the CPSU was briefer, milder and far less enthusiastic. It was apparent that relations in early 1981 did not occupy the same lofty status as in early 1976. The events of the intervening period had caused a certain loss of enthusiasm in Moscow: Indira Gandhi's defeat in 1977 by the more conservative and 'pro-Western' Morarji Desai and his Janata Party government, the general increase in instability within India, increased Indian attempts to improve relations with China and the US and then India's somewhat disappointing stance on the Afghan issue.³⁰ With these developments there was no mention of Kashmir issue in course of bilateral relationship afterwards. Also the Kashmir issue remained cool during this period.

Morarji Desai made two visits to Moscow during his brief tenure in office. Although there were changes in the degree of closeness between the states, in short, the fundamentals of the relationship were unaltered. The same had been true since Rajiv Gandhi. Although Rajiv's Western orientation had been stressed, his first official visit abroad after becoming Prime Minister was to the Soviet Union.

²⁹ Pravda, 6 July 1972; Izvestia, 6 July 1972, quoted in Hemant Roy, *opcit.*, p.106.

³⁰ Robert C. Horn, "The Soviet Union and South Asia: Moscow and New Delhi Standing Together", in A. Korbonski and F. Fukuyama, eds. (1987) *The Soviet Union and the Third World, The Last Three Decades*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, p. 221.

Relations with the West were to be improved, it was true, but they were to be improved within the framework of the significance of Indo-Soviet ties. The basis of Indo-Soviet relationship was so well rooted at that time, though Kashmir was not mentioned during course of bilateral relationship, it was implied that the Soviet Union was supporting India on the Kashmir issue.

The Delhi Declaration signed during the visit of Gorbachev to New Delhi in 1986 was unprecedented. It demonstrated an entirely new approach to interstate relations. The recognition of the priority of universal human values in this space and nuclear age formed the philosophical and ethical foundation. Though the document was elaborated by two countries, its significance went far beyond bilateral and regional boundaries.³¹ Gorbachev appreciated India's role in securing international peace and security. In his banquet speech in the honour of the visiting Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on 21 May 1985, Gorbachev said, "we highly appreciate India's contribution to the cause of strengthening peace and international security, and to enhancing the role of the non-aligned movement in this matter." It could be inferred from this that Russia was supportive of Indian approach towards bilateral and international issues.

With the introduction of the policy of perestroika there appeared changes in the Soviet policy approach towards India. Mikhail Gorbachev's address to the 27th Congress in February 1986 provided no additional insights. Although India was not mentioned by name, neither was any other Third World State except

³¹ M.S. Gorbachev, (1987) *Perestroika, New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, London, Collins, p. 185

Afghanistan. Indeed, there was no separate discussion of the Third World at all. This was because of the adoption of new policy approach. Gorbachev was interested in enhancing relationship with the West, arms cut and opening the polity and economy to the forces of globalisation, marketisation and democratisation. As a result of this Indo-Soviet relationship was looked in a wider perspective, affecting Soviet stand on the Kashmir issue. However, Gorbachev era witnessed no diversion in the traditional Soviet stand on the Kashmir issue.

The policy of the Soviet Union to support Indian stand on the Kashmir issue continued in the same pace till the breakdown of the Soviet system. It was the introduction of the policy of perestroika which marked change in the Soviet outlook towards international as well as internal problems. The disintegration of the Soviet Union altered its priority of interests in the South Asian region, consequently affecting Soviet policy towards India and, particularly, Kashmir.

CHAPTER II

IMPACT OF SOVIET DISINTEGRATION ON RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA, 1991-92

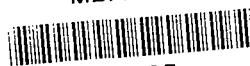
The impact of the end of Cold War was all over the globe. Strategic and other significant policy equations changed around the world. The Soviet Union was replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Russia became the successor state of the USSR alongwith veto power in the United Nations Security Council. Like every sphere of activity Russia's foreign policy also registered many vital changes. Russian foreign policy was now guided by transition with chaos and confusion. First, it was in the formative stage. Second, Russia, unlike the Soviet Union, was not a global power with world-wide projections and this served as a constraint to discern a clear policy on vital issues affecting various countries. Lastly, its policy towards India, particularly Kashmir, was affected by the first two, and as such Kashmir was not a crucial issue for Russia and it was subject to changed perception of Russia regarding bilateralism, global peace and security, territorial integrity, violation of borders, etc. *Dix*

*V, 44; 1958 N9
N9*

It is true that break down of USSR brought change in Russia's policy towards India in a major way. The disintegration itself provided varied implications. The world became unipolar, led by USA. The role of Russia in international politics reduced drastically. The launch of policies of globalisation and market economy made the health of economy crippled. It reversed its earlier stand to pursue an independent foreign policy and toed the line drawn by Western powers to boost its sagging economy and support the process of liberalisation. So, there was no other way but to pursue vigorously the policy of pro-Western

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romanticism or Atlanticism. This wilful submission to foreign dictates was clearly evident in the course of Gulf-War, even during the Gorbachev years. In this sense there was a kind of continuity from the past in foreign policy of new Russia.

But soon Russian foreign policy makers had divergent concepts on the direction of foreign policy after the disintegration. While Gaider-Kozyrev combine was strongly advocating for a pro-Western tilt, there was also Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Party which was pleading to maintain the same 'special relationship' of Soviet era with India. Russian foreign Minister, Kozyrev alongwith his supporters believed¹ that a major weakness of the foreign policy outlook of the earlier Soviet period was that it had utopian character and different from the more "realistic western" concept. For instance, in case of Yugoslavia, initially he was against sanctions and went to Yugoslavia on a peace mission at a time when most of Western diplomats were leaving the war-torn country, but later, blaming the war on "Communist-Belgrade regime", he went ahead and supported the Western sanctions against Yugoslavia.

It is not correct to assume that all the Russia foreign policy experts were pro-Western. The extreme pro-Western orientation of Kozyrev was criticised by various scholars and political leaders. Sergei Stankevich, Russian Federation State Adviser on Political Questions, said that a policy that is built only on interest is very vulnerable, and in Russia, it is simply disastrous.² Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Russia's Liberal Party Leader, adopted a radical stand. To Zhirinovskiy, there

¹ *Patriot* (New Delhi), 16 June 1992

² *Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press* (Ohio), Vol.44, No.13.29 April 1992, p.1.

would have been no conflict if Kashmir had been with India. He was in favour of stretching the territory of Russia up to the border of friendly India.

The International Committee of the Supreme Soviet also witnessed sharp division³ regarding the policy approach of Russia towards South Asia in the context of Yeltsin's proposed visit to India on Jan 28, 1993. Georgy Kunadze, a Deputy Foreign Minister responsible for Russia, argued against retaining the 'special relationship' with India that the Soviet Union had cultivated in the interests of Cold War confrontation with the United States and China. The Foreign Ministry position was heatedly contested by a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Yevgeny Pudovkin, who said it was a major mistake of Russian diplomacy to renounce the special relationship with India. He said there were few countries in the world with which Moscow had such a long-standing cordial relations as with India and it is an asset that should not be squandered. The head of the South Asian Department of the Foreign Economic Relations Ministry, Viktor Koptevsky, also took objection to Kunadze's claim that trade with India had not always been advantageous to Russia. He said India provided a large market for Russian industrial plant while over a half of all imports from India had consisted of goods Russia could not buy elsewhere or had to pay a far high price for. Academician Yevgeny Chelysev, an authority on India, said it was deeply distressing to see Russian – Indian relations coming to ruin because of Moscow's pro-Western orientation. India is a great power, while Pakistan and other countries are just states like others, said the academician. He said Yeltsin's visit to India

³ *The Hindu* (Madras), 22 January 1993.

should serve to restore the ties between the two countries to their old level. Gennady Burbulis, the Secretary of State, often spoke of “enlightened pragmatism”⁴ to back up Indo-Russian relations.

So, it was difficult in part of Russia, after disintegration, to adopt a particularistic policy approach towards India in the emerging world, full of complexities, uncertainties and asymmetrical power configurations. The emerging world-order was characterised by the fact that the geo-strategic considerations have now been replaced by geo-economic thinking: “Co-operation – Competition” in the economic sphere was likely to be the hallmark of the present times. Global warfare had now been replaced by rising regional and local conflicts, ethnic strifes, and trans-border terrorism. These changes inevitably affected Russia’s policy towards India and as a result of it, the former’s position on Kashmir.

There were indeed divergent views regarding conceptual patterns for Russia’s foreign policy outlook. According to Olga Alexandrova⁵ there were four main conceptual patterns in Russia’s foreign policy: the Westerners; the Russian nationalistic frame; the Eurasian; and the geopolitical realist school of thought. To another view there were three order of priorities in Russia’s foreign policy choices: first priority was towards the members of commonwealth of independent

⁴ *Times of India* (New Delhi), 24 January 1993.

⁵ Olga Alexandrova “Divergent Russian Foreign Policy Concepts”, *Aussen Politik* (Hamburg), Vol. 44, No.4, 1993, pp.363 – 372.

states (policy of near-abroad); second was to develop relations with the West; and the last priority was to establish or maintain relations with the Third World.⁶

According to another view, Russia's foreign policy had ten priorities where in the CIS was first and the U.S., Europe and South Asia were fourth, fifth and seventh respectively.⁷ According to the article, a Russian periodical stated Russia's priorities in January 1993 as follows: (1) the CIS; (2) arms control and international security; (3) economic reforms; (4) the United States; (5) Europe; (6) the Asia – Pacific regions; (7) West and South Asia; (8) the Near East; (9) Africa; and (10) Latin America. The pro-West policy appeared to come up for review by Kremlin as the Russian Leadership began to focus more sharply on the country's Asian neighbors. The change in Russia's foreign policy was termed, "from romanticism to pragmatism".

This changing perception in the Russian foreign policy outlook was clearly evident from the document of Russian Foreign Ministry, No. 1615/ IS, dated January 25, 1993. Addressed in the form of letter from Foreign Minister Kozyrev to Yevgeny Abratsumov, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Relations, entitled "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation", the letter revealed Russia's equidistance approach between India and Pakistan. It said.⁸ "Economic and geo-political considerations demand close ties with India. Russia's

⁶ See Peter Shearman, "Russia's Three Circles of Interests" in Ramesh Thakur and Carlyle A. Thayer, eds. (1993) *Regional Relations : Asia Pacific and the Former Soviet Union*, Colorado, Westview Press, pp 45-64.

⁷ See Anita Inder Singh, "India's Relations with Russia and Central Asia," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Vol. 71, 1995, p.72.

⁸ Quoted in *Patriot* (New Delhi), 29 December 1994.

policy must be formed with considerations of India's significance as a country affirming itself as a regional power among the developing countries. At the same time, we must also consider the factor of the Indo – Pakistani opposition... which has an affect on the entire region... Our policy must not provide ground for other states to perceive it a deliberately and strictly pro-Indian or become a hindrance to the development of relations, especially with Pakistan. The task consists of "bringing up" ties with Pakistan to the level of relations with India, so that they are aimed not at being equally remote, but at being equally close." But it is unlikely possible to maintain close relationship with both India and Pakistan when the Kashmir issue comes to the fore. It is well known that both India and Pakistan possess widely divergent views regarding the Kashmir issue. So, this approach led to distancing of good relationship between India and Russia. Mutual distrust and lack of vision in the leadership of both India and Russia further accentuated the distressing relationship. There were also differences between the two countries relating to auctioning off of the debt (rupee–rouble controversy), signing of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), etc. which furthered the lowering of the relationship. To take all these development into account a Russian commentator⁹ commented that the Moscow – Delhi ties lost their basis with the end of cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The gap in mutual understanding between Russian and Indian leaders was one of the important factor which led to distancing of relations between the two

⁹ Volsky, Dimitri, *New Times*, No. 43, October 1992, quoted in S.N. Verma, "Russia and India: From Hiatus to Resurrection," *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Vol. 28, No. 4 July 1995, pp. 575-76.

countries. The response of government of India to the August Coup of 1991 was uncalled for. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's remarks that the overthrow of Mikhail Gorbachev was an instructive example of over-enthusiastic reformers annoyed¹⁰ the pro-reformist leaders. Yeltsin himself was a self-proclaimed radical reformer. Indian policy-making showed its own weaknesses in dealing with the turbulent changes in the former Soviet Union. In the absence of new initiatives, the bureaucracy clung to the tradition of putting all faith in a single leader, Gorbachev. The Indian policy-makers were also deeply prejudiced against Yeltsin; much of this prejudice was gained through Western media. Because of such prejudices they were slow and reluctant in dealing with Yeltsin's leadership. When Yeltsin offered to sign a treaty with India during the Foreign Minister Madhav Singh Solanki's visit to Moscow, it was quietly rejected much to the chagrin of the Yeltsin government.¹¹

Several factors had contributed to the immobility in Indo-Soviet (Russian) relations after the August 1991 coup. Soon after the coup, the Russian government quickly established its control over the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and subsequently took it over completely. Once the control was established, the Western-Oriented new policy-makers in the Ministry gave a decisive thrust to the Russian foreign policy towards West completely ignoring the former friends and allies in the Third World. The new foreign policy makers in

¹⁰ R.S. Yadav, "Implication of Soviet Coup for Indo-Soviet Relations", *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Feb. 1992, p. 1257.

¹¹ Jaysekhar, "Burbulis Visit to India," *Mainstream* (New Delhi), Vol. 30, No. 32, 30 May 1992, p. 27.

the Russian government were immature, inexperienced and had a very narrow perception of international problems.¹²

However, Burbulis came to India to assure the Indian leaders that Russia attached considerable importance to its relations with India though on the basis of “inspired pragmatism” and “new realities”. But it was mere assurance. Burbulis surprised his Indian counterparts by declaring that Russia would honour its commitments on transfer of the rocket technology on the basis of neutral international expert opinion. While Burbulis was holding talks with the Indian leaders including the Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, in new Delhi, the U.S. State Department’s Chief Spokesperson, Ms. Margaret Tutwiler, warned both India and Russia on May 4 that Washington would impose penalties on both unless the deal was revoked.¹³ Bringing in a third party into the picture was not the liking of India. This clearly vindicated how Moscow was vulnerable to Western pressure to withdraw its earlier promise to supply cryogenic rocket technology and engines to India.

At the same time, the Indian foreign policy also came for review because of the end of the cold war and adoption of the policy of economic liberalisation by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. In June 1991, when he assumed country’s leadership, problems were mounting in Indo-Soviet trade relations because of erratic supply of Soviet goods. Soviet oil deliveries to India fell short by \$1.5

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

billion in that year.¹⁴ India had already been facing of irregular supply of spares for soviet weapons. Rupee-rouble controversy made the situation worse. Russia's Economy Minister, Andrei Nechayev said that India continued to want bilateral trade in the traditional form of Russian credits. But he made clear the Russian position that the new credits would be at double the existing interest rate and with one-tenth of the payment being made in advance.¹⁵ Russia was not ready to adjust with its devalued rouble with India's rupee. It might be recalled that India closed trading accounts with the Soviet Union on 28 December 1991, immediately after the formal disintegration of the Soviet Union, and new accounts were opened in the name of the new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).¹⁶

India could not afford to ignore the smooth supply of Russian weapons and spare parts. Consequently, numerous high-level military cooperation discussions took place beginning with Defence Minister Shree P. V. Kelkar's visit to Russia in September 1992. He met Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and the Secretary of State and was assured of uninterrupted delivery of spare parts to India. Moreover, he was told that India remained "a priority" for Russia. Kelkar expressed India's keenness to purchase an improved version of the Mig 29 fighter.¹⁷ Though Kelkar described his visit to Russia as successful, bilateral relations remained unsatisfactory. Either in a desperate effort to meet Indian defence needs or to convey a message to Russia that there were other military sources to fulfill India's defence requirements, Kelkar went to Ukraineⁱⁿ October

¹⁴ *Summary of World Broadcast* (London) (hereafter written as SWB), 5 May 1992, P-SU/1372 A3/2

¹⁵ *SWB* (London), part-3, 5 May 1992, P-FE/1372 PA ½ and Part 1, p.SU/WO 230 A/9

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *SWB* (London), Part 1, 11 September 1992, P-SU/148; A1/3 and 12 September 1992, p.SU/1489 C2/5.

1992. Ukraine had been lobbying to sell weapons to India since, January 1992. Kiev was a major weapons manufacturing centre in the former Soviet Union and in the past supplied arms to India under Indo-Soviet defence contracts. Ukraine agreed to supply armaments and spare parts to India in return of medicines and cloths, and partial payment in hard currency. Immediately, Moscow offered a variety of military holdings to India.

Russia's policy towards Kashmir witnessed a perceptible change with the visit of Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi to Pakistan. He announced, during his visit in December 1991, a very significant change in his country's stand on Kashmir by saying that the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people should be decided under UN auspices and in accordance with its resolutions.¹⁸ The Russia-Pakistan Joint Communiqué¹⁹ issued on December 22, reads, alongwith other things, "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 agreements".²⁰ This was in clear negation of the Indian stand on the Kashmir issue, it was also against the provisions of the Shimla Agreement. Thus, by abandoning the Soviet Union's stand that Kashmir was an integral part of India, Mr. Rutskoi reciprocated Pakistan's decision to accord diplomatic recognition to Russia and the Central Asian Republics.

¹⁸ *Asian Recorder* (New Delhi), Vol.38, No.6, Feb 5-11, 1992, p.22140.

¹⁹ For the text of the Communiqué, See *Mainstream* (New Delhi) Vol.33, No.10, 28 December 1991, p.31.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

In another report newspaper *Nation* reported that Rutskoi, during his talks with the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, at Lahore, had assured Pakistan of help for supply of arms on request.²¹ Russia reversed its stand on the issue of a nuclear weapon free-zone in South Asia and voted for the Pakistan sponsored proposal.²² The Russian President Boris Yeltsin offered Pakistan a treaty of friendship and extended an invitation for visiting Russia to his Pakistani counterpart, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, through Rutskoi.

Russia's policy towards India, and particularly on Kashmir was thus not identical with earlier Soviet policy. Russia slipped from the traditional approach towards India and other related problems. The shift in the foreign policy approach appeared because of emergence of new problems and prospects after the Soviet disintegration, as had already been discussed in this chapter. The impact of Soviet disintegration on foreign policy of new Russia was all-embracing. It was thus inevitable that its relations with India, particularly its stance on the Kashmir issue, should get affected in 1991-92. But to view it as a radical change was, however, premature, as later years showed.

It was now clearly evident that Russia was interested to maintain good relationship with Pakistan. But, it was as difficult to maintain good relationship with both India and Pakistan, as it was to walk on razor's edge, when Kashmir issue came up for discussion. Though, initially, after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Russia showed interest in the Pakistani stand on the Kashmir issue, as was

²¹ *Asian Recorder* (New Delhi), Vol. 38, No. 6, Feb. 5-11, 1992, p. 22140

²² *Ibid.*

evident from Ruskoi's visit, it could realise gradually India's importance and role in the region. But this came in later years.

CHAPTER III

CHANGE AND ADJUSTMENT IN RUSSIA'S POLICY TOWARDS KASHMIR, 1993-96

We have dwelt upon in the preceding chapter how the emerging world order after the disintegration of the Soviet Union affected Indo-Russian relationship. As a result, we notice perceptible changes in the Russian approach to the Kashmir issue. But this dizzy relationship remained short-lived. The Yeltsin visit to India in January 1993 marked the beginning of a new era in Indo-Russian relationship. This visit was a leap in forward direction and thereafter the relationship between the two countries hardly looked backward. They were much more concerned with each other's problems with a pragmatic approach. This was clearly indicated during the Yeltsin visit when he declared in almost a Khrushchevian tone the "unwavering" support of Russia to India regarding Kashmir issue.

Indeed the roadblock in establishing a smooth relationship did not continue for long. Russian leadership soon realise that they were treading on a wrong path. The pro-Western romanticism could not bring desired results to Russia. As noted earlier, in May 1992, Gennady Burbulis, then Russian State Secretary, had come to India to assure the Indian leaders that Russia attaches considerable importance to its relations with India though on the basis of "inspired pragmatism" and "new realities". Burbulis spent a considerable part of his time during the visit to assure the Indian leaders and public that Russia would honour its commitment to transfer technology under the contact.¹ More important was Burbuis's reaffirmation on

¹ Jaysekhar, "Burbulis Visit to India", *Mainstream* (New Delhi), Vol. 30, No. 32; 16 May 1992, p. 28.

continued military supplies to sustain the combat readiness of India's armed forces. During the visit, Burbulis signed a five-year agreement on trade and economic cooperation. It accorded the most favourable nation treatment to India and Russia. An important outcome of Burbulis visit was the agreement to establish joint commission on trade, economic and technological cooperation. He declared that "India is the central plank of the Russian foreign policy". Even the so-called Westernist Foreign Minister Kozyrev said "India remains the highest priority"². The stage was thus set for Yeltsin's visit which came in January 1993.

The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, signed by India and Russia during the Yeltsin visit in January 1993 provided the juridical base for strengthening the relations between the two countries in the changed international circumstances. The treaty committed both countries to the security of each other's territorial integrity and prohibited them from taking any action which might affect either country's interests. Speaking at a meeting with Indian businessmen, Yeltsin clearly stated that, "We stand for the integrity of India. We support the settlement in Kashmir according to the Indian version so as to maintain integrity and unity of India. We support it. And in whatever international organizations it may be – the United Nations Security Council – we shall stand by this point of view"³.

Major irritants in Indo-Russian relationship were solved with the visit of Yeltsin to India. Not only that, besides the friendship and cooperation treaty, ten

² *The Observer* (London), 26 January 1993.

³ Except from the speech of B.N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, at a meeting with Indian Businessmen in New Delhi, 28 January 1993, *Strategic Digest* (New Delhi), Vol.23, No.4, April 1993, p. 586.

agreement were signed between Russia and India. The major rupee-rouble controversy was sorted out. The Russian side, in a climb down, agreed to the rupee-rouble rate of Rs. 19.9 per rouble existing as on January 1, 1990 and April 1, 1992 rate of Rs. 31.57 per rouble for re-estimating the size of past size of past Soviet credit. The total debt of 9.87 billion roubles on January 1, 1990 rate came to Rs. 19,643 crore, while at April 1992 rate, the debt was Rs. 31,903 crore. It was agreed that while Rs. 19,643 cr. would be paid according to 1978 protocol till 2010 A.D, the differences between the two figures – Rs. 11,450 crore would be paid over a period of 45 years, carrying zero rate of interest, with no exchange rate protection. Over the repayment period, India would actually be paying about Rs. 1500 crore in terms of present value of the rupee to clear this debt of Rs. 11,450 crore. Taking these figures together, the composite exchange rate for rouble worked at Rs. 21.37 for a rouble as against the composite rate of nearly Rs. 24 for a rouble asked for by Russia in negotiations earlier.

During this visit President Yeltsin never pressed India for signing the NPT. Instead, Russia signed a Military Technical Cooperation Agreement on January 28, 1993, during his visit. Yeltsin had Kashmir in his mind when he said, “the thrust of that agreement is to assist India in protecting its sovereignty, its independence, its integrity and unity”. The Russian President obviously had US pressures in mind when he told Prime Minister Narasimha Rao that neither side should resign from an agreement signed by them because of third party intervention¹. This was reassuring Russian. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was

¹ *Patriot* (New Delhi), 30 January 1993.

among the minister accompanying Yeltsin. That was important because he was believed in his country to be an “Americanist” who wanted Russia to toe the US line on India.

The visit of Yeltsin marked the phase of de-ideologisation in Indo-Russian Relations. Addressing the members of the Parliament and other dignitaries at Central Hall, Parliament House on 29th January 1993, he said, “Today, just as the West, Asia is a priority in the foreign policy of Russia, something that is very essential. A universal approach, non-discrimination, overcoming ideological rigidity are the main principles of our Asian policy⁵. Thus the visit of Yeltsin marked a watershed in the development of a new relationship between the two countries. It again pointed to Russian support to the Indian stand on Kashmir. It was the impact of New World order and emerging realities, which pushed the two countries, for the sake of their mutual interests, to seek new ways and means for establishing good relationship. This attested the convergence of both India’s and Russia’s approaches towards the Kashmir issue, as well.

In New Delhi, Yeltsin tried to remove the impression that Russia, wanting to be a rich west, has turned its back on India. He repeatedly referred to the Eurasian geography of his country. In the early months in office, he had to look to the West to pull him out of the difficulties in which his country found itself. This

⁵ Except from the speech of B.N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, in the Central Hall, Parliament House, New Delhi, 29 January 1993. *Strategic Digest* (New Delhi), Vol. 23, No.4. April 1993, p. 592.

was necessary to facilitate the transition of a command economy into a free market economy.⁶

There were some emerging factors, which led to the cementing of Indo-Russian relationship after the disintegration. This was acknowledged by Boris Yeltsin during his visit to New Delhi, when he spoke at the Central Hall of Parliament House: “Basic interests of our states coincide”, and “our relations are those of equal partners. We face mostly the same problems. We are to cope with enormous economic and social tasks, and cooperation between India and Russia in this area. In this area could prove useful and important”⁷. In this connection the Russian tone was reassuring regarding Indian stand on the Kashmir. Those common problems can be discussed here briefly.

Russian Federation was facing crises in the CIS states. Even the formation of CIS could not settle a number of issues including the demarcation of borders between Russia and neighbouring states. Under the new foreign policy guidelines, Russia believed that. “inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of states he maintained”⁸ and “if some change is needed, then it should be in accordance with international law, peaceful means and by agreement”⁹. In this light the Shimla Agreement (between India and Pakistan), which accepted the pacific settlement of the Kashmir issue on a bilateral basis, was a valid treaty under international law.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Foreign Policy concept of Russian Federation, FBIS – USSR – 93 – 037, 25 March 1993, quoted in R.S. Yadav, “Russia’s Kashmir Policy: A study of Trends in the Post-Soviet Foreign Policy Outlook”, *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), June 1995, p.441.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Hence, Russia's support in favour of India, which insisted on the settlement of the Kashmir problem under such agreement, was inevitable.

The new Russian elites especially Gaidar-Kozyrev combine, as well as Yeltsin, in their approach to foreign affairs were aiming to achieve stable relations with the US on the basis of 'strategic partnership' and in the long-term perspective, even a 'union'.¹⁰ Simultaneously, India was also moving closer towards the USA and was even engaged in strengthening defence cooperation with the latter. The friendly relations of both Russia and India with the USA might bring Russia and India closer to each other due to their common perceptions. These ties might have a positive impact on as their estranged relations with the USA during the Cold War era.

Trans-border terrorism was another area where the views of the two states converged. When India was facing Pakistan's relentless support to terrorist activities in Kashmir, Russia was also worried about the ethnic clashes in Tajikistan with linkages to both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Influences of such activities were also found in other states of Central Asia. These activities posed challenges to the secular credentials of both Russia and India. Besides, these tendencies created disturbing trends for the multi ethnic societies and a challenge to the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of both the countries. Expressing concern regarding this common factor, Yeltsin, during his visit to India, said, " we know how topical are the issues of preservation of the ethnic

¹⁰ For this approach see Andrei Kozyrev, "*Logging Partnership*" (New York), *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.73, No. 3, May-June 1994 pp.59-71.

harmony in today's India. Thanks to our own experience we are aware how difficult are the endeavours to achieve this goal."¹¹ Hence, this commonly perceived threat brought them together to fight such nefarious designs in the region and to evolve a common perception regarding Kashmir issue.

On the issue of establishment of peace and security in the world, both India and Russia favoured the approach of complete disarmament and control over existing arms. On the issue of nuclear proliferation and NPT, though both adopted divergent views, Russia never pressurised India to sign NPT, showing understanding to India's security problems.

Even in the changed scenario when ideology had been replaced by economic considerations in foreign affairs, India occupied a unique position in Russian calculations. In the grim battle of reforms and sluggish economic growth in Russia, India could be of help to it in a number of ways. Till the western technology was transferred to Russia (though this was unlikely despite repeated assurances by the G-7 countries), Indian technology could fill the void as an alternative means. Moreover, India could meet the soaring Soviet demand for consumer goods.

These common perceptions and understanding helped Russia's attitude of friendship towards India, and in earning Russia's "unwavering" support to India

¹¹ Excerpt from the speech of B.N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation in the Central Hall, Parliament House, New Delhi, 29 January 1993, *Strategic Digest* (New Delhi), Vol.23, No.4, April 1993, p. 592.

on Kashmir issue because, as Yeltsin pointed out, "here India is in the right."¹² Concerning over the similar problems in Russia, Malghinov, first deputy head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Department on International Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights who was a member of the Russian Delegation in the last year's session of the Commission of Human rights in Geneva where Pakistan withdrew its bid to press for a vote on the human rights situation in Kashmir, during his visit to New Delhi, stressed: "We have the same problems here in Russia. We cannot encourage separatists who use pseudo-democratic slogans"¹³. He told the correspondent of *The Pioneer*: "Our opinion was and is that this issue (Kashmir issue) is being artificially politicised and that human rights slogans are being used for non human rights ends". He added, "We are for India's integrity and we think that manipulating human rights slogans to give an additional argument by those who stand for its disintegration is a bad practice". This was an implied criticism to Pakistan's continuous bid to internationalise the Kashmir issue in clear negation of the Shimla Agreement.

Returning to Moscow on 28 January 1993 after completing his first official visit to the republic of India, Yeltsin, when asked by ITAR-TASS on the outcome of his visit, said: "I am extremely satisfied with my visit"¹⁴. He signalled that his trip to New Delhi was another move towards balancing Russia's foreign policy between East and West. "Russia has had its own independent foreign policy for

¹² Text of the Joint Press Conference of B.N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, and P.V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India, New Delhi, 29 January 1993, *Strategic Digest* (New Delhi), Vol.23, No. 4, April 1993, p.598.

¹³ *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), 6 June 1994.

¹⁴ *SWB* (London), 1 February 1993, p. SU/1601 A1/3.

only a year", the President recalled, "and at first we had to decide on significant nuclear weapons cuts with the United States. That was the main issue, and it has been resolved, now our policy is equally balanced between West and East. Russia is a Eurasian country, moreover, more of its lands lie in Asia than in Europe. We cannot overlook this fact"¹⁵. From the above statement it became clear that Yeltsin was no more prepared to follow one-sided approach ignoring the emerging realities. "No single state can rule the world and influence everything that happens", he said.

In the wake of Hazaratbal crisis in November 1993, Russia came forward to the rescue of India¹⁶. In diplomatic exchanges, the Russian government assured the Indian government that it sees Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of India and the happenings there as an internal affair of the country. The meetings there as an internal affair of the country. The meetings between the Indian and Russian diplomats took place in New Delhi and Moscow following the seize of Hazaratbal wherein Russia supported India and its action in the wake o the crisis.

The visit of Prime Minister of India, Narasimha Rao, to Moscow in June 1994 was also significant. It was aimed at strengthening Indo-Russian relations, and infusing in them the warmth and sincerity of the old Indo-Soviet ties. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and President Boris Yeltsin signed two declarations on 30th June. The first was the Moscow Declaration¹⁷ on protecting the interests of

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), 20 November 1993.

¹⁷ For the text of the Moscow Declaration, see *National Herald* (New Delhi), 5 July 1994.

pluralistic states and the second a declaration on the further development and deepening of cooperation between Russia and India. Yeltsin noted that the signing of these and other documents would facilitate the restoration of the close political, scientific, cultural and economic relations, which the countries had enjoyed before the USSR's disintegration. Following his one to one talk with the Indian Prime Minister ITAR – TASS quoted Yeltsin as saying that “there are no differences at all”¹⁸ between the two countries in international and bilateral issues. “We work very harmoniously and in a coordinated manner and we understand each other well”, Yeltsin said.

The Moscow Declaration was a joint response to the growing threats from aggressive nationalism, religious and political extremism, terrorism and separatism, striking at the unity of large countries like India and Russia which share a common pluralistic and federal identity. The Declaration stated: “Both countries are convinced that destabilisation of relations between ethnic or religious groups, efforts to forcibly replace them, ethnic cleansing and promotion of internal and transborder terrorism, motivated by vested interests which lead to annihilation of all the positive and constructive elements accumulated by mankind during the many thousands of years of its existence”¹⁹. In a crucial move, India and Russia supported each other's territorial integrity and underscored their resolve to guard themselves against attempts to redefine norms of self-determination and sovereignty.

¹⁸ *SWB* (London), 1 July 1994, p. SU/2036.B/16.

¹⁹ *National Herald* (New Delhi), 5 July 1994.

The implications of the Moscow Declaration were considered enormous for both India and Russia which were facing serious challenges from the cross-border threat of armed militancy in Kashmir and in Tajikistan, where Russian troops were battling insurgents based in Afghanistan with Pakistani links. Such a declaration was quite timely in the context of problem faced by the two countries. By expressing concern at these problems, Russia and India alerted world opinion and presented a true picture before the world community. Taking all these points into account. Indian Foreign Secretary K. Srinivasan told newspapers, “ it is the first time that any such document has been signed between two governments”²⁰

During his return flight from Moscow, on July 2, Prime Minister Rao said his visit to Moscow had “helped in achieving a real break-through in bilateral relations”²¹ between India and Russia which had sagged with the process of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Describing the Moscow Declaration which enshrined the principles of protecting plural states as “epoch making”, the Prime Minister said it concentrated on the main problems the world was facing in the post bloc situation – namely such as religious exclusivism, political extremism and terrorism springing from these. Though the Kashmir issue was not mentioned categorically in the declaration, it was implied that both the countries were opposed to nefarious designs being carried out by separatist forces to disturb territorial integrity and unity of India. To facilitate the process to check transborder terrorism an Extradition Treaty was agreed to be signed between India and Russia during the

²⁰ *The Pioneer* (New Delhi), 1 July 1994.

²¹ *The Hindu* (Madras), 3 July 1994.

visit Indian Home Minister S.B. Chavan to Moscow in the first week of September 1994.

Russia reiterated its stand of unequivocal support to Indian stand on Kashmir issue on many occasions after the Moscow Declaration. During his visit to India Russian Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, in April 1996, reiterated the Russian position that the resolution of differences over Kashmir should be within the framework of Shimla Agreement. Russia also backed India's candidature on an expanded security council of the United Nations. While on the nuclear issue Russia and India had different views, these differences were soft pedalled and never allowed to cast their shadow on the relationship.

So, the changing realities, in many ways, provided opportunities to develop closer relationship between India and Russia. It seemed that India acquired a special place in the foreign policy priorities of Russia regardless of upheavals in world politics. Their friendship and cooperation was time tested and rare. No two countries had such deep relationship (in every field), as between India and Russia. Their relationship restricted not only to political and economic relationship but permeated to cultural activities of the people of both the countries. So, while crude realities momentarily brought a searing relationship between the two countries, people were patient enough for dawning of a new relationship between the two countries.

Defence co-operation between two countries was immense and time tested. It was no secret that Indian military establishment had been dependent upon

Russia for spares as well as for its modernisation. The ratios of dependence for spares in India are 40,64 and 80 percent²² for the Army, the Air Force and the Navy respectively. Though starting with a disappointing note, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Russian cooperation in the field of defence increased gradually. It agreed to upgrade 125 MIG 21 fighters and giving of 10 MIG-29s and some Tanguska air defence missiles. Another agreement was signed under which Russia agreed to offer Sukhoi-30 fighter planes to be inducted in Indian Air Force.

Indian Defence Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav, and his visiting Russian counterpart, General Igor Rodionov signed an agreement²³ on October 22, 1996 on certain new areas of military cooperation between the two countries. The accord envisaged reciprocal training of the services personnel at each other's training institutions, joint military exercises and deputation of observers to each other's practices. With this new pact military steering groups were to be established by all the three services whose activities would be coordinated by Russia's Main Directorate of International Military Cooperation and India's Defence Planning Staff. The two sides were to exchange views and information on the operational doctrines of common military hardware. Other components of the agreement were related to deputation of military specialists for the maintenance of arms and communication, visit by senior officials, participation in seminars and symposiums, joint sporting and adventure activities. During his visit to Moscow Defence Minister Mulayam Singh in the same month, preceding the above

²² *National Herald* (New Delhi), 26 October 1996.

²³ *Ibid.*

agreement, signed an agreement²⁴ to extend military cooperation would last till the year 2010. During the discussions, the Russian President repeatedly referred to his country's relationship with India as 'brotherly'.

The relations between India and Russia acquired special significance from a viewpoint of security in Central, Western and South Asia. After the break-up of the Soviet Union the balance of forces in these regions changed quite significantly. This led to the formation of temporary political vacuum. This vacuum, though was quickly filled up with forces which posed a security threat not only to the countries of Central Asia but also to Russia. The situation in Afghanistan and Tajikistan..

However, it should not be correct to assume that Russia's policy projections towards India were totally devoid of some of the harsh realities of emerging world order. As it was pointed out earlier that, after disintegration, the condition of Russia, both internal and external in all aspects, was shaky. So, when pursuing an India-friendly policies, many times it had adopted dwindling policy postures in its relationship with India. On many occasions it had succumbed to emerging complexities and compulsions.

On December 28, 1993 President Yeltsin wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, expressing himself in favour of a "just solution" of the Kashmir problem. But it was in contrast to his earlier stand that Kashmir was an integral part of India. During his visit to New Delhi in January 1993 he had assured India

²⁴ *National Herald* (New Delhi), 10 October 1996.

of support on Kashmir issue in international forum. But his letter expressing "just solution" was simply ambiguous. Diplomatic sources interpreted its contents to mean that Russia had moved closer to the US position on Kashmir.²⁵

The Russian Prime Minister Victor Chornomyrdin's visit in December 1994 did not bring any remarkable development in bilateral relationship. There were basically three reasons behind it. At that time Russia was in deep crisis with civil war, gang lords and political instability threatening to throw the nation's state and civil society into chaos and confusion. Even as chornomyrdin was speaking to a section of the Indian press²⁶, Russian aircrafts were bombing Grozny, the capital of Chechnya. Secondly, Russia was still hopeful of massive economic aid from West. It was looking for partners who could help make its transition from a planned socialist economy to a free market one. That was why it succumbed to Western pressure not to supply cryogenic rocket engine to India. Lastly, it was the new policy framework of Russia which insisted on relationship with both India and Pakistan on equal footing.

Similarly, Primakov during his visit to India in April 1996, both privately and publicly, advocated that India should sign not only the CTBT but also the NPT. That was of little value in his admission that Moscow was appreciating Indian reasons for both the treaties. After nuclear tests by India, Primakov suddenly approved of big power intervention to settle the Kashmir issue, which was uncalled for. His proposals, known as "Helsinki Initiative" were a major set

²⁵ *The Hindu* (Madras), 29 December 1993.

²⁶ *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 25 December 1994.

back in friendly relations among the two friendly countries. Speaking at Helsinki, he stressed on the big powers stepping up “efforts for resolving the Indo-Pakistan conflict in Kashmir and sorting out all other outstanding differences between the two countries.”²⁷ All these were against the Indian stand which stressed solution of all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan to be sorted out by bilateral negotiations. Much of these changes and adjustments were also influenced deeply by domestic instability in Russia and by the transitory nature of Russian foreign policy, in general.

²⁷ *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 4 June 1998.

CHAPTER IV

EMERGING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL EQUATIONS AND KASHMIR, 1997-98

The emerging world order after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, in many ways, provided opportunities for strengthening bilateral relationship between India and Russia. These pertained to significant areas of convergence that were emerging between India and Russia. Both had vital stakes in the emergence of an international system that consisted of multiple dependencies, one in which the constituent units could balance each other. The Soviet collapse had sharpened the contours of a unipolar world with the US as the only superpower. Russia and India had, on the other hand, shared stakes in global multipolarity.

Another area with potential for confluence was in the outlook towards a restructuring for the global economic order. At the geopolitical level, certain factors assumed significance. The one was border dispute and cross-border terrorism, the other factor was related to a possible spill over of fundamentalism into the central Asian heartlands, constituting a threat to the Russian diaspora contained therein. It would also pose a threat to secular India with its already grave Kashmir problem. At the societal level, the similarities appeared rather striking with both states containing multi-ethnic population. Strands of multiple ethnicities, at different levels of identity formation, were interwoven into regional and sub-regional boundaries and operated within the broad parameters of democratic governance. How all these factors contributed to bilateral relationship between India and Russia and prompted Russia to support Indian stand on the Kashmir issue need elaboration.

Some similarity between Chechnya and Kashmir situations may well be kept in mind. The one was of territorial integrity of states vis-à-vis separatist movements. Compared to Chechnya, Jammu and Kashmir was bigger in both size and population. Both the Chechen autonomous republic and Jammu and Kashmir were states of strategic importance to Russia and India respectively. There was also similarity in strategic and socio-ethnic terms if one took into account the ripple effect these movements could generate. But, the point to remember was that Russia had acted with ruthless decisiveness to suppress violent separatism in a much smaller area compared to the threats that India faced in a much larger area with greater strategic significance.

The separatist movement in Chechnya turned into a violent confrontation between the Yeltsin government and the tiny republic in the Caucasus. Since the last week of December 1993 Boris Yeltsin resorted to the use of direct and overwhelming military force to suppress the separatist movement. There were also similarities in what Kremlin was facing in Chechnya and what India had been facing in different parts of its north-east, more contemporaneously in Kashmir. The evolving situation in Chechnya and the international reaction to it were of interest to India in more than one way, in terms of the socio-ethnic and political ingredients of crisis, in terms of the manner in which it is being sought to be brought under control, and the reaction of Western countries to the Russian approach to Chechen separatists.

The Russian Federation is not a homogeneous polity. It has 22 republics, some of which have clearly separate ethno-linguistic or religious identities. These are Adygei, Bashkiria, Buryatia, Chechnya, Chuvashia, Dagestan, Gorno-Altai, Ingushetia, Jewish Republic, Karbardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia, Karachevo-Chenkess, Karelia, Khakassia, Komi Republic, Mari Republic, Moldova, North Ossetia, Tatarstan, Tuva, Udmurtia, and Yakutia. Six or seven of them have a concentration of Muslim population. India too has concentration of Muslims in different states. The Russian motivation in suppressing the Chechen rebellion is obvious. A separatist victory could herald the disintegration of Russia. Chechen inguish and Dagstan and such other autonomous republics are also rich in natural resources and losing them means economic instability for Russia. Russia's reaction to the Dudayev regime in Chechnya is also influenced by the evolving trends in the central Asian Republics.

With both Russia and India being multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious states, the problems related to heterogeneity, both horizontal and vertical, are strikingly similar. So also are the factors arising from internal and external linkages. Whether it is Chechnya or Kashmir, Tatarstan or Punjab, Turkey or Pakistan, destabilisation threats with immense debilitating potential are common elements of anxiety. In fact, Kashmir itself has to be seen as part of the wider question of ethnicity in pluralist societies. The problem of a conflict in heterogeneous states has a symbiotic relationship with the nature and demographic contours of ethnic groupings. The problems of nation building in such societies are bound to be similar. They are bound to throw up problem areas like Chechnya and

Kashmir. In the case of Russia and India, these areas also happen to contain a majority population belonging to different religious faiths. For Russia, endorsement of the Indian position on Kashmir is, therefore, part of an inherent psychological urge, given its own propensity to ethnic clashes. As a former Foreign Secretary of India points out: "Herein lies the most significant of the emerging New Delhi-Moscow perceptual convergence."¹ An indirect reference of this common perception made during the course of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to Russia in June 1994, when Moscow Declaration on the interests of Pluralist states was signed.

The Moscow Declaration was a joint response against transborder terrorism, religious fundamentalism, revivalistic nationalism, etc. The Declaration stated, "both countries are convinced that destabilisation of relations between ethnic or religious groups, efforts to forcibly replace them, ethnic cleansing and promotion of internal and transborder terrorism, motivated by vested interests, lead to annihilation of all the positive and constructive element accumulated by mankind during the many thousands of years of its existence."² Prior to that Russian President Boris Yeltsin during his visit to New Delhi in January 1993 traced the commonality of problems of both the countries, "we know how topical are the issues of preservation of the ethnic harmony in today's India. Thanks to

¹ J.N. Dixit, "Chechnya and Kashmir: Western Double-Speak", *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 31 January 1995.

² For the text of Moscow Declaration, See *National Herald* (New Delhi), 5 July 1994.

our own experience we are aware how difficult are the endeavors to achieve this goal.”³

The resolve of Russia and India to fight the menace of terrorism was further evident during Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee’s meeting with Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin at Moscow in August 1995. The menace concerned both countries directly and indirectly and they reflected on the undesirable role being played by Pakistan in this field.⁴ The Russian media openly referred to these mercenaries who had been trained in Pakistan and were fighting in Chechnya and Tajikistan. In this connection, the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union, now independent and sovereign states, such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan, also figured prominently.

Cross-border terrorism is a grave danger to peace and stability in Asia-Pacific region and to the mutual interests of both India and Russia. In Pak-sponsored terrorist system there have been three levels of terrorist training camps, imparting different kinds of military training to recruits in Pakistan. The camps around Muzaffarabad in Pak-occupied Kashmir trained inmates in hit-and-run tactics. In another kind of camps under the direct control of the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), training was given to create havoc in India. The third kind of camps were more sensitive, meant to train terrorists for world-wide operations.⁵

³ Excerpt from the speech of B.N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, in the Central Hall, Parliament House New Delhi, on 29 July 1993, *Strategic Digest* (New Delhi), Vol. 23, No.4, April 1993, p. 592.

⁴ *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), 22 August 1995.

⁵ Interview with Yossef Bondansky, Staff Director to US House of Representatives Task Force on Terrorism and Conventional Warfare, in a 30-minute documentary entitled, “Terror Incorporated”, Telecast by the Public Broadcasting System (PBS), as reported in *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), 3 March 1995.

According to a report of 1996,⁶ several special training camps were established in the Chitral region in north-western Pakistan. Earlier such camps were run in big numbers in the Khost and Jalalabad regions in Afghanistan. But during the past couple of years, due to a drop in the number of Kashmir recruits, several of these camps were closed. Henceforth, camps were organised in Muzafarrabad, Aliabad, Kahuta, Hazira, Mirpur, Rawalkot, Rawalpindi and in some other places in the occupied Kashmir and Pakistan.⁷

After the Pak-raised, funded, equipped and supported fundamentalist Taliban militia seized power in Kabul in September 1996, two training camps in Khost were reopened. Camp Al-Badr. I is meant for Pakistan trainees being trained to fight in Kashmir. The Al-Badr II has been meant for trainees from Arab and other countries, being prepared to fight in Chechnya and Bosnia.⁸ In these camps lessons imparted “are on bomb-making, the use of automatic weapons, rocket launchers and anti-aircraft guns. There are religious classes, instructing trainees in the nature of Jihad.”⁹

As regards the number of military training camps for recruits, by 1992, the ISI was operating 13 permanent, 18 temporary and 8 joint training camps for Kashmiri Youth.¹⁰ Newspapers revealed that in an official secret report submitted

⁶ *Punjab Kesari* (Delhi), 2 August 1996.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ An eyewitness account of Caroline Rees, in *The Independent* (London), cited in *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), 22 November 1996.

⁹ A report by Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare by House Republic Research Committee, US House of Representatives. Washington D.C. (hereafter referred as Task Force Report), 1 February 1993, cited in P.B. Sinha, “Pakistan: The Chief Patron Promoter of Islamic Militancy and Terrorism,” *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Vol.21, No. 7, October 1997, p.1019.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

to the former Pakistan government of Benazir Bhutto it was admitted that 38 military training camps existed in Pakistan from where trained terrorists were being dispatched regularly to Kashmir, Bosnia, Palestine and some African countries on 'Jihad' campaigns. At the end of 1996, the number of active military training camps has been given as 73 in POK, 23 on Pakistan territory and 12 in Afghanistan.¹¹

By the beginning of 1993, an estimated 20,000 Young Kashmiris had been trained and armed by Pakistan to unleash the reign of terror in India.¹² In early 1995 Pakistan officials reportedly estimated that since the end of the Afghan war in 1989 at least 10,000 militants were trained by various groups in Pakistan Afghanistan border areas.¹³ The Harakat-ul-Ansar (HUA), which was created in October 1993 by merging two organisations (Harakat-ul-Jihad-I-Islami and the Harakat-al-Mujahideen) which were formed in 1992, had militant and terrorist operations targeting Kashmir as its main aim, but it also contributed to other ventures. Its headquarters is in Muzaffarabad in POK. The HUA, enjoying "full backing" of Pakistan has been involved in extremist activities in Tajikistan, Bosnia, Myanmar, apart from Kashmir.¹⁴ In 1995 the HUA claimed credit for having trained, since 1987 (obviously under some other name), more than 4000 militants including Pakistanis, Indians, Arabs and a small number of Americans in

¹¹ A Ministry of Home Affairs Document Government of India, cited in the Times of India (New Delhi), 5 January 1997.

¹² Task Force Report, *op cit*, p.45

¹³ *ibid*.

¹⁴ Al Farhan, a front group of the HUA, took six foreign tourists as hostage in Kashmir in July 1995. One of the hostages managed to escape and, another was beheaded by the terrorists. The fate of the remaining four hostages is not known with certainty.

making bombs, throwing grenades and firing assault weapons. According to an official Afghan source¹⁵, there were about 8000 members of HUA in 1994 who were "supporting" the Kashmir Struggle. The Pakistani terrorist activities are not limited in Kashmir, they are very well spread to the CIS, an obvious threat to peace and stability in the region. Under the patronage of ISI, informs a Pakistani monthly.¹⁶ Pakistani religious organisations had established close contacts with clandestine Islamic movements in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Pakistan's machinations in Chechnya are also guided by religious fundamentalistic and terrorist outlook. Engaged in a war of total secession from Moscow, Chechens had been extended various kinds of help and assistance from Pakistan. Citing Russian intelligence reports *Indian Express* disclosed that Pakistani instructors imparted subversive training to Chechen rebels.¹⁷ Russian officers alleged that hundreds of Afghans from refugee camps in Pakistan were recruited to fight the Russian forces in Chechnya. Leaders of Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami confirmed that "their volunteers have been fighting alongside Dudayev's forces".¹⁸ The Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin was quoted having said publicly in New Delhi that Pakistani mercenaries had also been fighting in Chechnya.¹⁹

¹⁵ International Herald Tribune (Hong Kong), 10 March 1995, quoted in Sreedhar and Kapil Kaul, "Politics of Islamic Terrorism in West Asia: Internal and External Dimensions," *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Vol. 19, No. 3, p.448.

¹⁶ Zahid Hussain, "Islamic Warriors", Newline, February 1995, cited in P.B.Sinha, *opcit*, p. 1022.

¹⁷ A December 1995 report in the Russian Daily *Izvestia*, cited in a PTI report in *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 22 May 1996.

¹⁸ *ibid*.

¹⁹ *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 5 January 1995.

Cross-border terrorism and instigation of religious sentiments by Pakistan is not confined to India or Russia, it has rather wider ramifications. Apart from providing ideological and military training to militants in Xinjing, Pakistan is reported to have been arranging for extension of various kinds of assistance to Uighur Muslims of the north-western Chinese province.²⁰ Similarly, in a letter to United Nations Security Council, the Ethiopian government stated that most of the terrorists who took part in an unsuccessful murderous attempt on the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak in Adis Ababa in June 1995 resided in Pakistan and were recruited there.²¹

A glance at the above discussion reveals how dangerous is the pace of religious fundamentalism in both India and Russia, largely under the patronage of Pakistan. One does not disagree with the 1993 US House Republican Committee conclusion, which holds true even now that, "the ISI's vast and highly experienced terrorist support infrastructure, tempered by years of assistance to such regional armed struggles as those in Afghanistan and India, is increasingly expanding its operations to include the sponsoring of global Islamist terrorism."²² This is one of the most important factor which brings both India and Russia towards each other to take a firm stand to defy such type of separatist tendencies. This convergence of approach prompts Russia not to give up entirely its support to India's stand on the Kashmir issue.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Times of India* (New Delhi), 20 June 1996.

²² Task Force Report, *opcit.*, p. 1019.

The formation of CIS could not serve a number of problems among the member states. Border dispute is a major irritant in this regard. The search for a political settlement of the existing situation is a most important task of Russian foreign policy. A vital problem of all CIS countries, the Central Asia, in the first place. The Moscow meeting²³ of President Yeltsin and the Central Asian leaders in August 1993, focussed on that problem. Under the new foreign policy guidelines, Russia believed that, "inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of states" be maintained. And if some change is required, then it should be in accordance with international law, peaceful means and by agreement. So, in consonance with the new foreign policy guidelines, the prevention of all attempts at the violation of Tajikistan's state boundary, being simultaneously the CIS border, was recognised by the meeting as a major task. Further, talks with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, the US and UN are envisaged to develop peace and stability in the region. India would certainly like to fully cooperate with Russia in accomplishing the required objectives. Regarding border dispute, the new foreign policy guideline of Russia unequivocally supports India's stand on Kashmir because India also believes in inviolability of borders and in the territorial integrity in the interest of international peace and security.²⁴

Another field where India and Russia can cooperate together is obviously economy. India can be of immense help to fill the consumer market void in Russia. The West cannot help Russia to the desired extent. Even, whenever it

²³ For discussions in the Meeting, See T. Shaumian, "Russians Eastern Diplomacy and India", *World Affairs* (New Delhi), Vol.2, No.2, December 1993, pp.24-26.

²⁴ R.S. Yadav, "Russia's Kashmir Policy: A Study of Trends in the Post – Soviet Foreign Policy Outlook," *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), June 1995, p. 441.

that "Russia and India have always agreed on the main issues"²⁶. Russian President's spokesman said talks on 25th March between Boris Yeltsin and Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda "manifested a high degree of confidence and proximity in relations between the two states"²⁷. It was also announced that Russia had agreed in principle, "ignoring protests from the United States", to supply two nuclear power reactors to India and would shortly draw up a detailed report on the deal. During Deve Gowda's visits two countries signed four intergovernmental agreements including on cooperation in financial and customs affairs.

The visit of Russian Prime Minister Primakov to New Delhi in December, 1998 proved highly successful in bilateral relationship. He expressed himself in favour of a "strategic triangle" covering India, Russia and China for peace and stability in the world to check unipolarism. In reply to a question he said, "if we succeed in establishing a strategic triangle, it will be very good". Though it was not materialized he was strongly critical of 'global policeman' role of U.S.A. He strongly criticised military assault of U.S.-U.K. combine on Iraq. A Russian Foreign Ministry source said, "the India visit offers Mr. Primakov a happy chance to launch a new drive against a unipolar world in which the US cast itself in the role of a global policeman."²⁸ The source further said, "By punishing Iraq the Americans sent us as a message that we better stop defying them over such issues as nuclear or defence cooperation with countries like Iran and India, Primakov's visit to India will give them give them a worthy reply". Primakov

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ *SWB* (London), 27 March 1997 P. SU/2878 B/7.

²⁸ *The Hindu* (Chennai), 20 December 1998.

supported India's bid to be a member in the Security Council of the United Nations. India was a "Strong and appropriate candidate to occupy a seat in a reformed UN Security Council". Primakov in response to a question said. Taking all these developments in to account it would not be illogical to hold that the new adjustments favour Russian stand to support India's on the Kashmir issue.

Both India and Russia are determined to check the hegemonistic tendency of U.S.. Both are committed to a multi-polar world order. Primakov, the Russian Prime Minister, during his visit to New Delhi on December 21, 1998 criticised the US-UK combine attack on Iraq. He said that Moscow was "categorically opposed to the use of power in Iraq."²⁹ Both New Delhi and Moscow see the attacks as an attempt by Washington to undermine multilateralism, so as to discourage the emergence of a genuine multipolar world. Both are committed to the dispersal of power and influence across the globe and envisage a powerful role for a reformed United Nations in the international system.

From the above discussions, it becomes clear that the emerging realities instead of breaking down relationship between India and Russia have provided avenues to develop and consolidate bilateral relationship. Pursuance of pragmatism does not require friends to distancing from each other. Rather it has strengthened relationship. The commonalities of approach between India and Russia in a number of policy postures, is unlikely to change, although there have been ups and downs. Two vast nuclear neighbouring countries indeed can hardly

²⁹ *Ibid.*

forget each other and so, the issue of Kashmir is likely to remain a focal issue in Indo-Russian relations for quite sometime to come.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

The discussions in the preceding chapters do show that Russia's policy towards India and the Kashmir issue, in particular has developed in the paradigm of continuity and change. The continuity of the Russian approach in supporting Indian stand on Kashmir issue is based on certain ground realities, while there is no doubt that with passage of time both countries sought to shape their relationship in the light of the emerging world order, after Soviet disintegration.

The support of Russia to India's stand on Kashmir dates back to the Post-Stalin era in the Soviet Union. At that time it was the cold-war dynamics which pushed the Soviet leadership to support India on the issue in unequivocal terms. It was deemed necessary as the policy could serve as a bulwark to check the growth of American dominance in world politics. This approach of Russia was further strengthened ^{after} Pakistan had tilted in favour of the US and the NATO bloc.

So, it can be said, in some ways, it was the super power rivalry that brought the Soviet Union and India closer, although geo-political realities were no less crucial. During the cold-war era when ideological issue was at its peak, there were some countries that decided not to align themselves with either of the power blocs. These non-aligned countries, led by India among others, emerged as a third force, raising their voice in various international fora and in its own summit meeting. Such a role of India attracted the Soviet Union. It stretched its hand of friendship to India which was a big country in South Asia with huge potentials. It

was also motivated by the spirit that India should not align itself to the capitalist Western power bloc, which might create danger near its border:

Another factor which made the Soviet Union support India on Kashmir issue was the strategic importance of the region. The larger part of the Soviet Union lay in Asia rather than Europe and Kashmir was not far from its Central Asian border. So, control of Kashmir by any power, not friendly to the Soviet Union, would have threatened its territorial integrity. This fear was accentuated when Pakistan tilted towards West. This tilt of Pakistan in favour of the US and its joining the US sponsored military pacts, development perceived as inimical by both the Soviet and Indian interests, prompted the Soviet Union to declare its unequivocal support to Indian stand on the Kashmir issue. Khrushchev during his visit to India in 1955 declared Kashmir as a "part and parcel of India". Later on in 1971, both India and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation which strengthened bilateral relationship and committed them to help one another when the security of either of them was at stake.

The same Khrushchevian policy was followed in essence by the later Soviet leaders. Though Brezhnev, the successor of Khrushchev, tried to woo Pakistan in order to maintain good relationship with both the countries, he failed. He sent Prime Minister Kosygin, in 1968, to develop good relationship with Pakistan. But Brezhnev initiative failed with the Pakistani refusal to endorse the Soviet proposals for South Asian Regional Trade and Transit Treaty and an Asian Collective Security System. This led to a hardening of Soviet policy towards

Pakistan, resulting in rejection of the agreement on arms transfer with Pakistan. The same policy, with minor differences, continued till the disintegration of the USSR.

Though afterwards, the Kashmir issue was not mentioned in the course of bilateral relationship, Soviet policy regarding the Kashmir issue was in favour of India. The Treaty of Peace, Friendship and cooperation signed by India and the Soviet Union in 1971 committed both countries to consult each other in case of attack or threat thereof (Article 9). The relationship was closer and based on mutual understanding. So, even without any open expression of the Kashmir issue, it was implied that the Soviet Union was supporting the Indian stand on the issue.

With the introduction of the policy of Perestroika Soviet foreign policy approach witnessed changes. Gorbachev was interested in enhancing relationship with the West, arms cut and opening the economy and polity to the forces of globalisation, marketisation and democratisation. His deideologisation drive had wider ramifications. As a result of this, Indo-Soviet relationship was looked in a wider perspective, and the Kashmir issue received no special attention. However, the Gorbachev period witnessed no perceptible change in the traditional stand of the Soviet Union on the Kashmir issue.

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought a total change in world politics. This drastic change in the global scenario also affected Russia's relations with India, and particularly, its stand on the Kashmir issue. Russia indeed was the victim of the emerging world order. Both internal and external constraints forced it

to pursue a dependent foreign policy. It lost its super power status with all its power blocs disappearing. With the end of ideological tussle (cold war) its role in international politics was drastically reduced and in many instances it simply followed the line of the West, led by the US.

With the breakdown of the Soviet System, Russia also entered an era of instability with economy in fragile condition. Problems, both internal and external, were so enormous that it could not focus on particular issues like Kashmir. Rather its policy towards Kashmir became a part of its broad policy approach towards the East and international problems. Instead of focussing particular issues like Kashmir, Russia remained preoccupied with its own problems much of the year 1992 and the West ensured that it did so. As a result of this kind of pro-Western romanticism, Russia's relationship with India received a setback. It could not be operationalised on its own as an independent foreign policy.

It was thus logical that in its relationship with India, in many cases, Russia succumbed to Western pressures. Confusion and misunderstanding between two old friends resulted. Some of the Russian leaders like Kozyrev thought that with the end of the cold war, 'special relationship' with India had ended. On its part India was unsure of and confused over Russia's intentions. It was too soon for India to perceive the changing realities of the globe. The matter did not improve when Russia reduced drastically the supply of arms and equipments and traditional commitments to India. Hence, Russia's stance on Kashmir remained unannounced during 1991-92.

However, a perceptible change in Russia's stand towards Kashmir was observed with the visit of Russian Vice President Rutskoi to Pakistan in December 1991. He openly supported the Pakistani stand on Kashmir issue that it should be resolved under international agreements and supervision, and this was contrary to traditional Russia's stand itself and clear negation of India's stand on the issue. Russia agreed to supply arms and offered a treaty of friendship to Pakistan. It also supported the Pakistani move to declare South Asia as a nuclear-weapon free zone. This change in Russia's stand was attributed not only to the Western pressure and other constraints but also to the misunderstanding between the leaders of the two countries.

But, this non-traditional phase of relationship between India and Russia could not last long. As we have pointed out in our discussions in a chapter (III) when Russia could not gain the required support from the West to boost its sagging economy, it realised gradually that the Western Powers would not help in establishing a viable polity and economy. It also realised that neglecting big neighbours like India, a strong power in Asia, and also also an old friend, would cost it heavy. Its reservation regarding India was cast away with the visit of President Yeltsin to New Delhi in January 1993. Yeltsin visit had marked as a pointer in Indo-Russian relationship and beginning of a new phase.

The visit of President Yeltsin removed all major irritants in Indo-Russian relationship. Both came closer to understand each other's problems. Major problems like Rupee-Rouble controversy were sorted out during his visit. Yeltsin

reiterated Russian stand to supply Cryogenic rocket engines to India. Russia also supported India's stand to have a berth in the United Nations Security Council. Yeltsin assured India of Russia's support regarding Kashmir issue in international fora and declared that "here India is in the right". He hailed secularism in India and acknowledged the fact how difficult it was to sustain a secular state. He pointed out that the world is multipolar and called for a greater role to be played by India. He assured Indian people that Russia was no more treading the Western path.

Moscow Declaration was a major step in reinvigorating Indo-Russian relationship. It declared in clear terms to protect the interests of the "Pluralistic states". The Declaration came heavily upon the separatist forces. It severely condemned those forces which instigated trans-border terrorism, religious fundamentalism, and other separatist tendencies, and it sought cooperation of both the countries to fight such forces. Later, during his visit Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao said in Moscow, "the geopolitical situation of the two countries enhances our interests in combating these new threats in the post-cold war era, which has to be a conflict-free era now." Though there was no direct mention of Kashmir issue in the declaration, it was implied that Russia was strongly against terrorism and other disturbing trends in the region, and this may well be seen as a support of Indian stand on the Kashmir issue.

Barring a few years after the disintegration, Russia's foreign policy regarding Kashmir is constant, that is to say, a support to the Indian stand on the

issue. This Russian stand has been reiterated many times during bilateral discussions and Indo-Russian relations were put on an even keel. During the visit of Indian Prime Minister to Moscow in March 1997, Russian President agreed to sell two nuclear reactors to India and assured of Russian support regarding Kashmir issue.

But it should be incorrect to assume that the driving forces behind the Russian support to India on the Kashmir issue remained the same as they were before the disintegration of the USSR. The driving forces before and after the disintegration were poles apart, as we have pointed out in the preceding pages (fourth chapter). It is the disintegration of USSR and end of the cold war, that ushered a new world order, and it provided ample opportunities for both India and Russia to redefine a common stand regarding a number of vital issues of the day. It is this convergence of approaches, rather than the old calculations of yester years that had brought India a guarded support of Russia on the Kashmir issue. It was obvious that such a Russian stance may not be always influenced by continuity in the paradigm of change and continuity of Russian foreign policy.

After the disintegration, there emerged a number of factors of common concern for both India and Russia, which provided opportunities to both countries to cooperate each other. India can be of immense help to Russia both politically and economically. It can fill the void in the consumer market of Russia at a cheap price in comparison to the West. It can be of great help by sharing its experiences in establishing democratic ethos and secularism in Russia of today.

Both India and Russia agree in essence that the world is multipolar and mutual cooperation is required to check hegemonistic tendencies of some of the developed countries, esp. the US. Primakov, during his visit, advocated for a strategic triangle between India, Russia and China, keeping in mind the global policeman role of the US., which had resulted in military strike in Iraq without the approval of the UN security council.

With the emergence of New World order, politics comes after economy. It is the economic imperatives, which bring nations closer together. India is emerging as a world economic power. It is moving closer to the US to develop its economy which, the US is also interested to develop its relations with India. So, the likely close relationship of both India and Russia with the US may develop bilateral relationship between India and Russia, if the US leadership could see the writings on the wall.

Russia's support to India's stand on the Kashmir issue may, in the final analysis, be viewed as governed by the paradigm of continuity and change. Indo-Russian (Soviet) relationship was continuous since India's independence. Changes in international political scenario have not been able to shatter the base on which Indo-Russian relationship stands, though there were periods of diversions, strain and misunderstanding. It is also true that rapidly changing international politics would shape Indo-Russian bilateral relationship with new pragmatic orientations. These may well ensure the continuity factor in Indo-Russian relationship, hence, Russia's support to India on the Kashmir issue.

There is no doubt, whatever may be the strategy adopted by Russian Foreign Ministry, India will have a special place therein. The essence of new found realism in Indo-Russian bilateral ties was defined in a meticulous way by the eminent Sovietologist, Prof. Zafar Imam, when he says, in an interview to the correspondent of *Times of India*, "Today's promise can be forgotten tomorrow". There is a greater amount of truth in it. It is also true that, in near future, unlike Russian foreign policy takes an U-turn towards India, a breather can be taken regarding its support to Indian Stand on Kashmir issue.

In this connection it may be noted that India's policy towards Kashmir has itself registered a change from about 1996, particularly after it conducted nuclear explosion in 1998. India has now been emphasising bilateral dialogue and negotiation with Pakistan in an effort to resolve the Kashmir issue under the Shimla agreement: it no longer wants to internationalise the issue or a third party intervention. Hence Russian stance on Kashmir may not be all that crucial for India after 1998 onwards as it was earlier.

In conclusion, it can be said that the beginning from the Soviet era up to the present, barring a short hazy period after disintegration, Russia's stand on Kashmir has been in favour of India. Today at the end of 1998, Russia appears tardy of the Westⁱⁿ formulating foreign policy positions. This may well ensure the continuity factor. Unless there is any major change or compulsions in Russia's foreign policy, the same policy of Russia to support India regarding Kashmir is likely to continue.

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