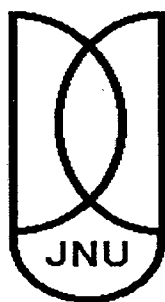


RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA DURING YELTSIN PERIOD

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in Partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy*

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA DURING YELTSIN PERIOD**” submitted by **HANAMANT KALLOLIKAR** in Partial fulfilment of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (M. Phil)** is his original work and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.

The dissertation may ^{be} placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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DEDICATED

TO

GRAND MOTHER

PREFACE

Broadly speaking, this is a study of Russian foreign policy in the specific context of China. For Russia the system had changed in 1991 but geography remained. China thus continued to be Russia's one of the closet neighbours in Asia. After initial confusion Russian moved towards dealing with its strategic neighbour China and gradually developed a warm and close relations by the end of nineties. Why and how it did so during the period of Yeltsin this precisely is the subject of our study.

This study is divided into four chapters. First chapter deals with the effects of Soviet disintegration on Russian policy towards China. Chapter two analyses the issues between Russia and China, especially border disputes, trade and sale of arms and how progress in these issues helped in bettering bilateral relations. In the subsequent chapter, we analyse the issues at national and international levels that brought both the countries closer to protect their national interests and to establish some balance in the world order. The last chapter seeks to assess record of the Yeltsin years vis-à-vis China.

This study is based on published primary sources, mainly speeches and official statements. These are further supplemented with the relevant books, academic articles and press coverages. A Bibliography of sources used in our study is appended at the end of the dissertation.

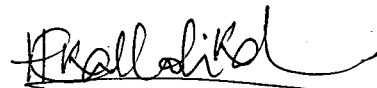
I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Zafar Imam under whose guidance this work has taken a concrete shape. He showed a great understanding and saw that my work is completed in time.

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In the end, I am solely responsible for all the mistakes in this work.



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CHAPTER - I

SOVIET DISINTEGRATION AND ITS EFFECT ON RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA

INTRODUCTION

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, many changes have taken place in Russia as well as at International level. Russia was facing economic crisis and political instability. It lost the super power status and consequently its traditional influence in international politics. Besides, at the International level, the global power equation had altered in favour of the western industrialized and capitalist nations led by the United States. Besides, the collapse of the Soviet Union had its effect not only at global level but also at the regional level.

Russia's relations with China faced a rough weather during the initial period of Russian Federation. Russian foreign policy orientations was towards the west during the early period. It neglected Asia, and other states of the erstwhile Soviet Union. But it did not take long time for Russia to realise that its geo-political and strategic interests did not coincide with that of the US and western allies. On the other hand, China received a great deal of attention from Russian policy makers. The reasons for this attention are obvious. Given the length of the long border between the two countries, each was in the position to pose a range of security threats to the other, and the

of coping with them could be considerable. Another important reason is china's market for Russian goods as its economy grows. At this stage, it should be worthwhile to look quickly at the state of Russia's –China relations during the closing years of the USSR.

RELATIONS WITH CHINA BEFORE THE DISINTEGRATION.

Ever since the nineteenth century, relations between Russia and China had been affected by competition and mutual suspicion. The Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s added an ideological dimension to these divisions and led to massive military build up along the two countries 4,300 kilometer border. The Sino-Soviet split had resulted in Chinese claims of 35,000 square kilometers of Soviet land in the Far East and Central Asia. The Sino-Soviet border had become one of the most heavily militarized regions in the world¹.

The military build up along the border damaged the Soviet Union both economically and strategically. The split with China opened a second front in the West's confrontation with the Soviet Union that was exploited by both Beijing and Washington throughout the 1970s and 1980s. China isolated the Soviet Far East by shifting its trading relations. The number of Soviet ground forces in the Far East, and The Central Asia had increased between 1965 and 1985.

¹ Jennifer Anderson, The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership, Adelphi Paper 315, London, 1997, p.9.

By the early 1980's, leaders in the Soviet Union realised that friendly relation with China was key to reducing its military expenditure and exploiting its vast Far Eastern resources. Relationship between Russia and China took a new turn with the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as Soviet General secretary in 1985. Gorbachev had begun the process of overhauling the Soviet foreign policy immediately after he took over the leadership of the country. His new thinking in international relations certainly seeks to add some new dimensions to the very framework of the Soviet foreign policy by its novel ideas and concepts. Its aims appear to be mid -course correction and adjustment, and not a replacement of the traditional framework of Soviet foreign policy. By his new thinking Gorbachev wanted to update it, and in this process, he put Soviet foreign policy on a new course².

As a consequence of new thinking in international relations Soviet policy in Asia had logically moved to acquire a new look during the second half of the eighties. It marked the activation of Soviet policy in Asia-Pacific region. Soviet policy is poised of negotiations and compromises and it is currently striving to build normal economic and political relations with almost all states of this vast region.

Improvement of relations with China was included in Gorbachev speech to the central committee on March 1985. Gorbachev and his supporters wanted to establish a rejuvenated socialist grouping on the basis

² Zafar Imam, Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1990, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1991, pp.156-157.

of a new type of Soviet-Chinese relationship. The creation of a new socialist community in which due respect towards other viewpoints could be assured, was one of the Gorbachev's initial aims. The Soviet Union also sought China's cooperation against US military strategy in the Asia Pacific region in the name of socialist grouping.

Another important change took place at the 27th Party congress. The notion of reasonable sufficiency' in the defense had been introduced at this congress as a product of the effort to reduce defense spending³. Gorbachev knew that the reduction in Soviet force level could not be achieved without agreement with China on the border and his goals of Asia -Pacific policy could not be achieved in the face of Chinese opposition.

Gorbachev decided to accelerate the drive towards normalizing relations with China, which had been stalled since Sino-Soviet negotiation on normalization were initiated in October 1982. Earlier the Soviet leadership made no serious attempt towards meeting Chinese demands that the Soviet Union remove "three obstacles" to normalization.

On the other hand, Chinese also, took some steps towards renewal of the relationship in 1982. It brought necessary changes in its foreign policy based upon internal needs. China was worried about the American arms sales to Taiwan. At the party congress in September 1982 China made declaration in favour of an independent foreign policy. This declaration dashed the

³ Leszek Buszynski Gorbachev and Southeast Asia, Rountledge, London, 1992, p.54.

American hopes for a tight strategic alignment with China against the Soviet Union. The US-China relation after 12th party congress became normal as China moved to assert an independent posture in international relation.

However, at the 12th party congress the Chinese insisted that the Soviet Union should remove the 'three obstacles' for normalization of relations between the two countries. These three conditions were, Soviet forces should be reduced along the Sino-Soviet border and withdrawn from Mongolia, Soviet force should be withdrawn from Afghanistan and Vietnamese forces should be with drawn from Combodia.⁴

In a speech at Vladivostok in July 1986, Gorbachev addressed China's three preconditions for normalizing the relations. He announced troops reductions in Afghanistan and Mongolia, voiced support for normalized Sino-Vietnamese relations' and agreed to settle disputed river boundaries between Soviet Far East and Northern China in accordance with international law. China reciprocated to these development by dropping reference to a Soviet threat' from official discourse. Later the two countries agreed to discuss the situation in Combodia, and in April 1989 Vietnam announced that it will withdraw all its forces from Cambodia.

Gorbachev's foreign policy's immediate aim was to normalise the Sino-Soviet relations. That would deprive the United States and Japan to play the "Chinese Card" in the strategic game against the Soviet Union. He

⁴ Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noger^c, The Foreign Policy of Russia Changing System Enduring Interests, M.E. Sharpe, London, 1998, p.96.

tried to negotiate with China on its own terms in early period, but it changed its policy during later period when it accepted three conditions of China for normalising the relations.

Apart from change in the strategic equation some important developments took place in economic field also between the two countries. A "trade and payment agreement" with China for the period 1986 to 1990 was signed when Chinese Deputy Premier Yao Yilin visited the Moscow in July 1985. Agreement was also reached on Soviet assistance for the construction of seven new factories in China.

The First Chinese trade exhibition was held in Moscow in August 1986. First Deputy Premier and Chairman of Gosplan, Nikolai Talyzin visited China in September 1986 and discussed joint ventures and industrial cooperation. Chinese also expressed interest in Soviet participation in the technical modernization of enterprises in Northeast China. Russia emphasized the importance of border trade with the China in the economic development of the Soviet Far East region.

Further attempts were made on the both sides to improve the relation between the two countries. On 8 January 1986 the Soviet Union renewed the call for a non-aggression Treaty with China and in April 1986 Shavarnadze, then foreign minister of Soviet Union met Chinese Deputy foreign minister Qian Qichen and proposed the summit conference between the two countries.

In May 1989 a Soviet -Chinese summit took place which is regarded as a historic event. Gorbachev's announcement aspired a new type of socialism which demanded collaboration on the basis of equality. Assuring the Chinese that the new socialism would not be a Soviet imposition. Gorbachev stated that, 'we build our relations with all other socialist states on the basis of complete respect for their independence and sovereign right to chose the terms and method of their social development'.

The ideological rift between Moscow and Beijing formally ended with the restoration of party -to - party ties during May 1989 Deng-Gorbachev summit. In Beijing on May 1989, Gorbachev reiterated that Soviet armed forces would be reduced by 500,00 which would include 120,000 from the Soviet Far East. He also announced the beginning of the second phase of the Soviet withdrawal from Mongolia in which the 50,000 strong Soviet Contingent would to be withdrawn by 1992.

Soviet commentaries claimed that internal reform brought the Soviet Union and China together, as both countries sought mutual support for common task. The past problem in Sino-Soviet relation arose from the absence of synchronicity in their domestic developments. Under Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping domestic development were synchronized. Hence, new developments have taken place.

The enthusiasm of the 1989 summit was short lived. Gorbachev was hailed as a reformer by Chinese students during the demonstrations that accompanied his visit to Beijing but he was regarded as a threat by the

leaders with whom he conducted negotiations. It was no wonder, that Gorbachev failed to obtain a common statement on socialism during his visit.

The holding of the 1989 summit defused military tension along the Sino-Soviet borders. Though Gorbachev failed to obtain Chinese agreement on the neutralization and mutual force reductions along the border.

This summit helped removing Chinese concern for the presence of Soviet troops along the common border and in Mongolia. This was the result of an improvement in Sino -Soviet relation that began before Gorbachev came to power, as a long process rather than a single event.

Thus keeping the above background in mind if we observe Gorbachev's policy towards China in totality, the most significant gain has been the steady improvement in relations with China. Although the Soviet - China normalization started in the early 1980s, it was only under Gorbachev that the relationship had begun to move further. The new Soviet initiative had substantially addressed the "three obstacles", Afghanistan, Cambodia and Soviet troops reduction on the Chinese border as referred by the Chinese. Further, the two sides also resumed negotiations on the border questions for the first time since 1978. Another important achievement of Gorbachev's policy was the encouragement in bringing about a change in the foreign policy orientation of Beijing from a "united front against hegemonism" in the late 1970s to "independence".

EARLY FORMATIVE YEARS OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY VIS-À-VIS CHINA

As we can observe the relations between Russia (USSR) and China were improving in the past when suddenly in 1991 the Soviet Union itself disintegrated. The disintegration of the Soviet Union was a historical event of global significance⁵. Relations between the two neighbours, Russia and China could not have therefore escaped the global effect of this historic event.

By all counts, China neither was enthusiastic nor worried over the disintegration of the Soviet Union⁶. It appeared that it simply took the view that disintegration of the Soviet Union and emergence of new Russia under Yeltsin were mainly internal events of Russia. China was only concerned about its impact on foreign policy aspects of the new state. We may now look at these issues in little detail.

The new Government of Russia appeared to ignore the need for further developments of its relations with China from the point where the Gorbachev had left during 1989-91. The reasons were obvious. President Yeltsin and his Government were pre-occupied with Russia's relation with USA and Western Europe. Beside, they were also pre-occupied with a series of domestic problems arising out of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

⁵ Zafar Imam, "How and Why The Soviet Union Disintegrated", International Studies, New Delhi, Oct-Dec 1992, pp. 377-402.

⁶ Xuewu Gu, "China's Policy Towards Russia", Assen Politik, Hamburg, Germany, Vol. 44, 1993, p. 289.

However, what little emerged from Russian foreign ministry during its early months showed neither hostility nor friendship towards China. It appeared during the first six months that Russia felt satisfied to leave the matter as it was on the eve of demise of the USSR as far China was concerned. We may now look at these issues in some detail.

Russia emerged as an independent entity after the collapse of the USSR. It became one of the independent republics along with the other fourteen constituent republics of erstwhile USSR. During the first few year of independence Russian Federation was characterized by wide of internal debate about the direction of Russia's political and economic reforms, its external relation and its interest in international politics.

Russia's domestic factors have played very important role in the formulation of Russian foreign policy during the initial period. The economic crisis of the early 1990s produced ntional humiliation. Unemployment increased and a large number of people were pushed below the poverty line. Russia incurred huge domestic and foreign debts in addition to the nearly \$100billion former soviet debt it inherited. It is estimated that Russia's foreign debt amounts to about \$150 billion including the old Soviet debt of \$100 billion⁷.

The combination of all the above mentioned factors have played a major role while defining the national interest in the foreign policy of the

⁷ Jyotshna Bakshi, "Moscow Grapples With Political and Economic Crisis Implication For Foreign Policy", Strategic Analysis, New Delhi, Vol. XXIII, No.2, May 1999, p.313.

new Russia. Foreign policy of any country sets the border framework and priorities of a country. Without understanding this, it is not easy to analyze its relations with other countries.

Since the collapse of the USSR and birth of Russian Federation, the country was engaged in internal debate about the foreign policy. There were two schools of thought within Russia the Atlanticists and the Eurasians. The former pressed the Moscow to adopt a pro-western foreign policy. They supported joining forces with the west in various multilateral fora such as United Nations, the IMF, the 'World Bank. But the Eurasians emphasized the balance between east and west and more emphasis on "near abroad"⁸

The task of articulating the basic principles of the Russia's foreign policy in the early period fell on the foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev. He emphasized Russia's new solidarity with the west. Andrey Kozyrev argued that the country's fate was inextricably linked to the west by its commitment to democracy, and market economy, and that Russia's long term economic development and security depended on close cooperation with United States, Western Europe and Japan⁹.

Economically and technologically Russia felt that the west was in the best position to bail Russia out of its economic problems. Kozyrev believed that the support and recognition of the west, especially the US, was deemed

⁸ S.Bilveer, "East Asia in Foreign Policy: A New Russo-Chines Axis?". The Pacific Affairs Review, Columbia, Vol.II, No.4, 1998, pp.486-487.

⁹ Chikahito Harada, Russia's place in North-East Asia, Adelphi Paper 310, London, 1997, p.14.

vital for the new Russia to take its rightful place in the world. Yelstin and his associates had no plans, little coherent ideas, except of course slogan like promoting democracy, civil society and building a prosperous "Civilized" Russia¹⁰. The main aim of Yelstin and his foreign minister was to get economic assistance from the west for its economic and political reforms. They neglected their neighbours and allies of erstwhile Soviet Union.

The Russian president emphasized on several occasion that Russia and the United States have "common interest" and that they support stable, well defined relation based on partnership. Speaking at the session of the UN Security Council January 1992, Yelstin underlined that Russia considers to the US and other western countries to be not only its partner but also its allies. The president explained that now Moscow and the West share same view regarding the chief foreign policy principles; rule of democratic rights and freedom of individual, legality and morality.

Russia's look west foreign policy was best evident in the foreign policy documents on 1992. It defined the country's national interest as involving the achievement of; a dynamic economy; concern for human rights; Promotion of democracy, abandoning the past aggressive outlook with use of force to be justified only for the purpose of defense, and in a view of the 'new order', emphasis was to be paid on arms control and

¹⁰ Zafar Imam, Foreign Policy Of Russia: 1991-2000, New Horizon Publishers, New Delhi, p.6.

cooperation with the US in the hope of constructing a global defense system as to eliminate all tactical nuclear weapons¹¹.

This foreign policy document is nothing but what Kozyrev had been saying and practicing since his appointment. In this document important change was the description of the former soviet, republics as the regions with most promising partner rather than one with vital interest. However, the western oriented policy was short lived. Both the foreign policy and Russian economic reform were criticized by conservatives and nationalist. The criticism leveled against the Yeltsin Government has increased when nationalist and communist elements dominated the December 1993 elections to Russian Duma.

In addition to the strong domestic pressure against Yeltsin foreign policy, the Government also experienced problems in its external relations and realized that it would have to modify its policy orientation. Its distrust of the west have been strengthened by the progress of NATO's enlargement. Russia was marginalized from international affairs in Europe and Asia. It was also facing the difficulties in its attempts to integrate into international economic institutions such as World Trade Organization.

It was the actual experience of conducting itself in international relations during its early years, that brought the realization in Russia that its foreign policy must not pre-occupy itself with only the west and that it must

¹¹ "Kozyrev Offers Draft Foreign-Policy Guidelines", The Current Digest of The Post-Soviet Press, Ohio, Vol. XLIV, No.48, 3 December 1992, pp.14-15.

also pay attention to the East, particularly to its close Asian neighbours and to the nations of the "near abroad. "

RUSSIA-CHINA RELATIONS SINCE MID -1992

From the above we can observe that new Russia soon began to have serious doubts about its foreign policy orientation which was mainly devoted to the west. By mid 1992 new Russia made moves for making adjustments. In this exercise, it logically turn to its giant neighbour China. Finally, after necessary preparations President Yeltsin paid an official visit to China in December 1992.

China recognised the Russian Federation on Dec 1991 and emphasized the willingness to fulfil the treaties it had signed with the former Soviet Government. In January 1992, Yeltsin pledged to respect the 1991 agreement on the border demarcation principles. The Supreme Soviet ratified the agreement on 13 February 1992, and further economic and border negotiations were resumed in the following month. Despite, the normal relation between the two counties during the early period, there were still some concern in their bilateral relations. China was concerned about Russia's western foreign policy orientations. Kozyrev, expressed Russia's concern for China's human rights behavior during his visit to China in early 1992¹². China also brought up the matter of Russia's relations with Taiwan. It was worried about a rapprochement between Russia and Taiwan.

¹² Robert A. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noger, op,cit.,p. 240.

Russia's strategic partnership with the USA in the Asia -Pacific region and sharing of its security responsibility was another concern for China. In February 1992, Yeltsin wrote to Japanese Prime Minister suggesting that Japan is alliance partner. However, all these policies began to change gradually. Russian conservatives criticized Yeltsin's support for US position on arms control and its policies towards former region of Soviet influence such as Eastern Europe and Middle East. Yeltsin policy towards Japan also came under attack because of its territorial concession to Japan. In September 1992, Yeltsin cancelled his official visit to Tokyo four days before the schedule date. During his visit to South Korea in November 1992, he declared that nowadays our policy is being transferred from the western European and American lines to the Asia-Pacific region and my visit is the first move in this process¹³.

Russia was changing its foreign policy priorities because of its disillusionment of western cooperation. This change can be observed during Yelstin Beijing visit in 1992. In Beijing he announced that developing Russia-Chinese relation has priority in Russia's foreign relations¹⁴. A Joint declaration between the people Republic of China and Russian federation was issued on 18 December 1992. According to this declaration China and Russia look upon each other as a friendly countries and have decided to develop good neighbourly, and mutually beneficial cooperative relations. During this summit other documents were also signed concerning future

¹³ Jennifer Anderson, op. cit., p.17.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.18.

Sino-Russian cooperation in various field, thus laying the diplomatic foundation for the overall development of relations.

The change in Russian foreign policy was also made public by Yeltsin himself in January 1993 during his visit to India. He said that Russia's 'one-track' focus on the west had come and gone, observing that; The recent series of visit to South Korea, China and now India, is indicative of the fact that we are moving away from a western emphasis in Russian diplomacy¹⁵.

The foreign policy concept paper drawn up by the Russian security council and approved by the Yeltsin in April 1993, clearly demonstrated this policy shift .It emphasized that Russia should remain and be treated as a great power and declared for the first time in an official document that the country's national interests differed form those of the United States¹⁶. There was also growing recognition among the Russians that the country should balance its ties with the west by expanding its links to the east. In his annual message to the Duma in Feb 1994, President Yeltsin described strengthening Russia's relations with Asia -Pacific as one of the country's diplomatic task.

Russia has given more importance to China in its foreign policy during later period because of some compulsions. Both the countries have common border 4,300 km. In addition there is a border of another 3,000km between China and Central Asia, and this Moscow views as a its sphere of

¹⁵ S. Bilveer, *op.cit.*, p.489.

¹⁶ "Yeltsin Okays, Russian Foreign Policy Concept", Current Digest of The Post-Soviet Press, Ohio, Vol. XLV, No.17, May 1993, pp.13-14.

interests and as such it wanted stability along the border. Arms sales also brought Russia and China closer. Russia's arms sale to China become an essential source of revenue for Russia. China in turn, needed Advanced military technology and modern weapons at low price to counter US arms sales to Taiwan and for its military modernization.

Initially China approached Russia cautiously. It gave importance to normalization of relations but shield away from any suggestion of reviving the Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s. As the Jiang Zemin explained when he visited Moscow in May 1991, that China would not enter into alliance or establish strategic relations with any big power.¹⁷ However, China changed its earlier policy once it felt isolation in international politics after Tianamen square massacre incident. The victory of the US led coalition over Iraq in the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 heightened Chinese fear about United State's global intentions. China saw a multi-polar post- cold war world as most likely to foster its political and economic development. As a part of convergence of interests both the countries have pledged not to interfere in each other's internal affairs. China considered the Checheniya problem as a internal matter of Russia and fully supported Russia to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia also made it clear that Taiwan and Tibet are internal part of China and it has full control over them¹⁸. Another indicator of the growing ties between the two countries is the

¹⁷ Chikahito Harda *op. cit.*, p.18.

¹⁸ Summary of World Broadcast, FE/ 2596 G/3, 26 April, 1996.

improved military and trade relations. Since 1992, there have been regular high-level military exchange.

Towards the end of May 1994, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin paid a four-day visit to China. He had fruitful talks with Chinese leaders and a number of agreements were signed. Economic matters, notably marine transport the protection of natural resources, and fisheries were the focus of discussion between the two countries during this visit¹⁹.

Both the countries have moved closer because of their domestic and international pressure. In late 1994, Jiang Zemin informed the Russian Prime Minister that China is willing to join Russia in raising Sino-Russian relations to new level²⁰. During their first presidential summit in September 1994, Yeltsin and Jiang issued a joint statement outlining a constructive partnership and claiming their determination as they look towards the 21st century. At this summit China and Russia have agreed to stop targeting each other with their strategic nuclear weapons²¹. Also, foreign ministers of both the countries have signed an agreement on the western part of the Russian-Chinese State border. This agreement solved their long standing border problem and helped them to extend their cooperation in other areas.

¹⁹ Amin Saikal and William Maley, "From Soviet to Russian Foreign Policy" in Russia in Search of its Future, Edited By Amin Saikal and William Maley, Cambridge, 1995, p. 113.

²⁰ Ibid., p.20.

²¹ Summary of World Broadcast, FE/2092 G/3, 5 September, 1994, also see, Watanabe Koji, Engaging Russia in Asia Pacific, Japan Centre for International Exchange New York, 1999, p.55.

Anti-western feeling was growing in Russia before the Yeltsin's second visit to China in 1996. The aid and investment from the west were not adequate to address Russia's economic revival. NATO's expansion, economic hardship, danger of secession, terrorism and religious fundamentalism, all compelled the Russian leadership to rethink and reorient its foreign policy. By mid nineties, more so, after the appointment of Primakov as a foreign minister, Russia's foreign policy focus began to shift towards near abroad, while strategic partnership with important Asian countries, like China, India etc, commenced.

Primakov had a very different vision of Russia foreign policy priorities than that of Kozyrev. As head of the foreign intelligence service during first half of nineties, Primakov had urged the Kremlin to strongly oppose NATO's eastward expansion and pay more attention to economic and political relations with the former Soviet republics of Asia. As a former head of the foreign intelligence service Primakov had been a central figure in Russian foreign policy. With his appointment in January 1996, adjustment were made in Russian foreign policy by making balance between east and west. He advocated balancing the US power through relation with China and developing parallel strategic partnership with India and Iran. Under Primakov, Russian foreign ministry officially claimed priority status of the relationship with Beijing.

President Yeltsin again visited China in April 1996. Both the countries declared at this summit that they were determined to develop an

equal and mutually trustful "strategic partnership of cooperation" aimed at the 21st century. This was one step forward from their earliest "constructive partnership" agreement signed in 1994. Another result of Yeltsin visit was that the leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed an agreement or "strengthening confidence in the military field in the border area". This summit pushed Sino-Russian relation further forward.

Yeltsin's visit also came just after tension between Beijing and Washington had arisen dramatically when China conducted a series of military exercise in Taiwan strait in March 1996. The US responded by dispatching two carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait. Given this US show of military strength and NATO's eastwards enlargement, both Beijing and Moscow had an interest in sending a strong message to the west, particularly to US by demonstrating their closer bilateral relations.

Russia continued to improve its relation with China. In the year of 1997, a strategic partnership of mutual coordination between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation was further developed and enriched. The cooperation between the two countries in politics, economy and trade, culture and science and technology field deepened and broadened.

The Chinese President Jiang Zemin made yet another official visit to Moscow in April 1997 and issued a joint political declaration on multi-polarization of the world and establishment of a new international order. They declared the formal setup of the Sino-Russian friendship, peace and development committee. Besides, the countries signed various agreements

jointly with Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan and Tajikistan on important confidence building measures.



In 1997 during Yeltsin's visit to Beijing, Russia finally put an end to the longstanding territorial dispute and agreed to a framework for constructing a gas pipeline for carrying Russian gas to China. In December, these were followed by an agreement for the construction of this gas pipeline at a cost of US\$ 3billion²². This indeed was major breakthrough for the development of Russia's Far East. During this visit both the countries signed the joint statement on the basic orientation of cooperation in Economy and Science and Technology.

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Russia's relation with China kept on turning and warmer in the year 1998. At the invitation of premier of the Russian Federation Government Chernomyrdin, Premier Li peng paid an official visit to Russia in late November 1998. The summit created history as it took place in a Russian hospital where Yeltsin was undergoing medical treatment. It was thus obvious that relations with China had matured into a mutually cooperative and beneficial one with Russia at last finding a secure expanding market for its arms sales.

During this summit both sides signed five bilateral cooperation documents. i.e, cooperation of high speed ship building field, on settlement of debts of Government loans, on economic and trade cooperation , on

²² Zafar Imam, Foreign Policy of Russia:1991-2000, New Horizon Publishers. New Delhi. 2000, p.30.



simplification of formalities by Russian citizens to enter the Chinese side of mutual trade area in the Sino-Russian border, on setting up international railway passenger and freight transportation ports from Hunchun (China) to Mahalino (Russia) in the Sino-Russian border.

The following years witnessed a steady rise in their level of cooperation and interaction between the countries. In August 1999 summit, both China and Russia agreed to adopt and promote a common approach to security threats in the region, presumably from Taliban in Afghanistan and from orthodox militant Islamic movements.²³ Later in August 1999, the “Shanghai Five” met in Bishkek and endorsed this agreement. Both sides reiterated that they firmly oppose all forms of hegemonism and power politics, and continued to make great efforts in maintaining peace and stability in the region and the world as well.

During his final year, Yeltsin took particular care in felicitating China. He declared publicly on its national day that “equal trustful partnership aimed at strategic cooperation in the 21st century was formula of Russia–Chinese relations that was oriented to the future”. In other words, the concept of strategic partnership between Russia and China with a view to challenging the uni-polarity by the west had gradually taken some concrete shape.²⁴

²³ Ibid., p.105.

²⁴ Ibid., p.41.

Since 1991, Russian and China have seen some upside-down in their relations. They have progressed from one between "friendly countries" to "constructive partnership" and then to a "strategic partnership" of cooperation. Russian–Chinese relations have made great progress in trade and military cooperation by solving their border problems. Both the sides strictly followed the principles of mutual respect, equality and non-interference in each other internal affairs. Mechanism has been established for reciprocal visits between the two countries. Each side respect and understands the others efforts to safeguard national unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

In all the summits and meeting at the highest level, promotion of bilateral trade and sale of arms to China were invariably taken up and agreements reached. Progress in these issues helped both the sides to come closer. Thus at the turn of century when President Yeltsin suddenly left office, Russia's relation with China had become close, co-operative and mutually beneficial.

The preceding pages analytically review the beginning, development and growth of policy of new Russia towards China. We have tried to focus attention on the effect of Soviet disintegration on Soviet policy towards China and then on how it gradually moved towards necessary adjustment under the leadership of President Yeltsin.

Now we take up in the next chapter, the investigation of various important issues in Russo-Chinese relations.

CHAPTER-II

ISSUES IN RUSSO-CHINESE RELATIONSHIP

INTRODUCTION

After initial pause, since the close of 1992 Sino-Russian relations have grown fast. They have shown a steady growth. It was obvious by in mid 1992 that both the countries needed each other. Besides, their close geographical proximity, China was a huge market for the sale of Russian arms. The Chinese were more willing to buy Russian arms in their drive for modernization of their defense capabilities. On the other hand, Russia's growing dissatisfaction with the west had compelled it to seek alternate source of investment for coping with its recurring economic crisis. Thus Russia saw an opportunity in selling arms to China and grabbed it with both hands.

To facilitate this mutual need both Russia and China showed keenness to resolve longstanding irritant issues in their relationship. For most among them was of course, the border dispute between Russia and China. Then there was the issue of normalizing and developing trade relations between the two countries. First we take up the border issue.

BORDER DISPUTE

Border dispute between Russia and China is not new one. This problem had existed during Soviet period also. Despite Gorbachev's efforts,

Soviet Union could not fully resolve the problem. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the successor state Russia was in political and economic crisis. It was worried about the new independent states on its Southern borders because it is home for 10 millions ethnic Russians. On the other hand, China also had new neighbor countries on its Northwestern side in addition to Russia. China is very cautious about the instability and Islamic movement in the Central Asian region, as it can affects its border area. So both China and Russia realized the importance of border stability for the economic and political development within their country. Therefore, both the countries along with the Central Asian Republic have taken many steps in solving the border problem. In this regard they have made significant progress. IN 1991 and 1994 border agreements were signed by both the countries.

Progress in the border problem have helped both the countries to extend cooperation in other areas like trade, arms sale and technology transfer. In fact, development in these areas have helped in resolving the border problems. Trade and arms sales have been at the centre of both the countries' relationship. To understand Russia-Chinese relations in depth , we have to look at the above issues in detail.

Presently Russia and China share 4,300 km long border. During 1960s, Sino-Soviet borders were hotly disputed and witnessed armed conflict. However, beginning with May 1991 agreement dealing with the eastern section of the border some improvements have taken place. Progress

has also been made in resolving Sino-Central Asian Republics border disputes along with the Sino-Russian borders.

Also, the Sino-Soviet political and ideological rift which came into open in the early sixties has found its expression in border disputes. The Soviet Union was super power and was playing dominant role in regional and world politics. But the People's Republic of China was still not recognized by some leading western countries. It was represented by Taiwan in the security council of United Nations as a permanent member. Therefore, China questioned earlier signed treaties as unequal, which were imposed by the Tsarist Russia on China.¹ Despite the tension between the two countries, discussions were held in 1964, in Beijing for six months but they could not find the solution.

Border incidents worsened in the later half of the decade during China's cultural revolution. Two countries seemed too close to open warfare in 1969. During this time large troops and artillery were placed at their far eastern frontier along the Ussuri River. With both sides maintaining massive forces at the borders, there were rumours during the summer of 1969 that the Soviet Union might be considering a preemptive nuclear strike against China.² In view of overwhelming Soviet military superiority and super power status, the Chinese avoided agreement on the border disputes with the Soviet Union. Chinese insisted on disengagement and withdrawal of troops

¹ Jyotsna Bakshi "Russia-China Boundary Agreement; Relevance for India," Strategic Analysis, New Delhi, Vol xxiv, No. 10 January 2001, p. 1837.

² Robert H. Donaldson, Joseph L. Noger, The Foreign Policy of Russia Changing System Enduring Interests, M.E. Sharpe, London, 1998, p.81.

from the disputed territories against the soviet proposal of a non-aggression pact. Moscow did not accept this condition because it amounted to an unilateral concession to China.

By the beginning of the eighties there was some improvement in Sino-Soviet relations. Due to Gorbachev tension between the two countries was slightly reduced but, he was unsuccessful in eliminating it totally. Gorbachev took a major initiative towards improving relations with China. In his famous Vladivostak speech on July 28, 1986, he declared, relations between our countries have improved noticeably in recent years. In this regard he said "I would like to reaffirm that Soviet Union is prepared at any time, any place and at any level-to enter into discussion with China on additional measures for establishing an atmosphere of good high neighborliness. We hope that the border dividing us (I would prefer to say linking) will become in the near future a line of peace and friendship".³

To materialize the same Gorbachev made some significant changes in Soviet foreign policy and brought some changes in the international environment under his program of "Perestroika" and new thinking in intersectional relations. The totality of 'New Thinking' has certainly drawn the Soviet Union and China together. The famous three conditions, set by China for improvement in Sino-Soviet relations (namely, Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan; withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea; and

³ V.D. Chopra,(ed) Mikhail Gorbachev's New Thinking Asia-Pacific A Critical Assessment, Continental Publishing House, New Delhi, 1988, p. 37.

dismantling of Soviet nuclear installations and withdrawal of Soviet troops from Soviet-Chinese border areas) have been squarely and unconditionally met by the Soviet Union. In fact, one of the main objectives of Soviet foreign policy was to improve relations with China, and bilateral relations are certainly poised to regain their lost warmth.⁴ A joint Soviet Chinese commission began to work on resolving the border disputes along Amur and Ussuri Rivers in 1987. The Beijing summit of 1989 further helped in solving border problems. At Beijing Gorbachev announced a substantial unilateral cutback of about 20,000 troops in the Soviet Far East and proposed demilitarization of the entire Sino-Soviet border.⁵ All the above-mentioned development has brought down tension along the border of the both countries.

Further in May 1991, an agreement was signed dealing the eastern border, which was defined largely by the River Amur and River Argun in the north and the Ussuri in the East.⁶ The agreement was ratified by the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation on February 13, 1992 after the fall of Soviet Union. Ratification papers were exchanged in Beijing on March 16, 1992. However, no agreement was reached on some disputed Islands, viz the Islands near Khabarovsk and Bolshoi Island on the Argun, which were delinked from the Agreement and left for the future discussion.

⁴ Zafar Imam, New Russia, Disintegration and Crisis A Contemporary Chronicle, 1988-1994, ABC Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995, p. 15.

⁵ Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noger, op.cit., p.96.

⁶ Rajan Menon, "The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China" Survival, London, Vol. 39, no. 2, Summer 1997, p.103.

The border in the western sector comprised only a 55-km stretch and did not involve any disputed territory. The agreement on the western sector of the border was signed on September 3, 1994 in Moscow. The signing of this agreement virtually completed the legal drawing up of the whole line of the border between the two states for the first time in the history of their relations.⁷ China ratified the agreement in December 1994 and by Russia in May 1995.

China also shares a common border with three Central Asian Republics (CAR's) Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which inherited the Sino-Soviet boundary dispute in Central Asia. This region is very important for both Russia and China. The above mentioned three republic are situated on the southern border of Russia and it is home for 10 million ethnic Russians. On the other hand for China, Central Asia is an unpredictable zone from which Islamist ideologies could radiate into its Xinjiang Province. Due to the above reasons both countries didn't want any instability in the Central Asian region. Therefore, three Central Asian States bordering on China have decided to negotiate the border issue with China collectively along with Russia under the CIS joint commission.

In December 1992, China and the CIS joint commission agreed on a number of Confidence-Building measures on the border to prevent any

⁷ Summary of World Broadcast, FE/12092 G/4, 5 Sept, 1994.

possibility of conflict. It was decided to establish a 200km-stability zone of “decreased activity along the border”.⁸

Russia and China along with the three bordering Central Asian Republic (CAR's) have signed an agreement on April 25, 1996 in Shanghai known as Confidence-Building in the military field in the border areas.⁹ It has been agreed to set a limit on military forces, short-range aviation and anti-aircraft defenses deployed on the 200-km border zones. These Confidence-Building measures along the border have helped both the countries to increase their border trade and to reduce military force from the border areas.

The implementation of the 1991 and 1994 border agreements have naturally involved surrender of some territory which were in Russia's possession. There was strong opposition in Russia, especially in the bordering regions against the demarcation. The Primorski regions Governor opposed the transfer of land in the lake Khasan region to China, which contains the graves of Russian Soldiers.¹⁰

Both the border agreements did not cover all the disputed areas between the two countries. The agreement on the eastern section was reached in 1991 by leaving three Islands-Boshoy Ussurisk and Tarabarov, at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri River near Khabarovsk and Bolshoy,

⁸ Jyotsna Bakshi, “Russian Policy Towards Central Asia-II”, Strategic Analysis, New Dehi, Vol. XXII., No. 11, February, 1999, p.1782.

⁹ Summary of World Broadcast, FE /12092 G/6, 5 Sept 1996.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

in the upper reaches of the Argun River in Chitinskya Oblast region. Whose return did Russian Regional and military leaders oppose. Yeltsin was under domestic pressure because of territorial concession to China and NATO's expansion toward the East. Yeltsin has made it clear that these Islands are non-negotiable. Just before his meeting with Chinese president in 1996, Yeltsin insisted that "there are instances in which we agree to no compromise. For example the issue of to whom the three Islands-Bolshoy Ussuriisk and Tarabarov Island in the Amur River not far from Khabarovsk and Bolshoy Island in the Argun River in Chita region-should belong. With regard to this our position remains firm. The border should be where it lies now."¹¹

China was keen to recover these Islands and it continued negotiations. But the Russian officials hoped that they will be dropped once agreement is reached on the 1991 demarcation, however, the details of 1991 accord have proved troublesome. The precise principles by which disputed areas were to be demarcated have never been made public. Gorbachev had provided the basis for demarcation when he agreed in 1986 that the basis for demarcation should be 'the middle of the main navigable channel in navigable streams or the middle of the River in non-navigable streams.'¹²

The 1991 agreement enshrined these principles and provided for the joint border demarcation committee to determine the national status of the

¹¹ Summary of World Broadcast, FE /12092 G/1, 25 April 1996.

¹² Jennifer Aderson, The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership, Adelphi Paper, 315, London, 1997, p. 44.

disputed Islands in the River borders. Concerning the three areas involving territorial disputes in the Maritime territory, Moscow's foreign ministry was reported to be of the opinion that Russia should go ahead with the 1991 accord. It was reported that the transfer would involve around 1500 hectares of land.¹³ This shows that Russian not ready to make any territorial concession to China regarding three disputed Island.

The demarcation of the border near Khasan closes to the mouth of Tumen River, where the border of Russia, China and North Korea meet, was important for Russia. Russia apprehended that China was planning to build a post on the Mouth of the River Tumen. The Governor of Maritime territory Nazdratenko, who accompanied president Yeltsin's delegation to Beijing in November 1997 expressed satisfaction over the demarcation agreement. However, Governor did register his dissatisfaction regarding the decision to surrender territory in the Ussury region. Despite the opposition from the regional leader on the border demarcation, Yeltsin issued the decree in 1996 requiring strict conformity with 1991 agreement and promised that demarcation would be complete by the end of 1997. Finally during the summit between Yeltsin and Jiang in Beijing in November 1997, the two leaders declared that the border disputes were resolved. President Yeltsin remarked on the occasion that "we have solved a problem which remained

¹³ Jyotsna Bakshi, op.cit., p. 1850.

unsolved for several decades, this is a concrete embodiment of friendship between the two nations”¹⁴.

During 1997 demarcation agreement, 25-mile in the eastern sector was left unresolved. The joint statement issued during the 1997 summit said that the both sides will continue negotiations for reaching fair and reasonable solutions of remaining border problems in order to define their common border. On November 13, 1997, Russia and China signed an agreement on joint economic use of several Islands and water areas adjacent to them.

The work on the plan for dividing the River Islands between the two countries continued. The Russia-Chinese border commission initiated two protocols on the demarcation of the eastern and the western sections of the border on April 1999. The border was demarcated under the agreement signed in 1991 and 1994. The two sides have defined the eastern 4,195.77km stretch and the western 54.57km stretch. The commission has also defined on a bilateral basis the ownership of 2,444 Islands and shoals, with Russia receiving 1,163 and China 1,281 of comparable area.¹⁵ But both the countries could not find solution to some Islands. Russia continued to claim sovereignty over Islands of Ussuriisky and Tarabanov, which were left out of the demarcation. Russia claimed that the Island were “definitely” Russian. A Government spokesman said these Islands are ours... I am dealing with

¹⁴ S. Bilveer, “East Asia in Russia’s Foreign Policy A New Russo-Chinese Axis?”, The Pacific Review, Columbia, Vol. II, No.4, 1998, p. 499.

¹⁵ IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin, UK, Spring 1999, Vol. 7, No.1, p. 41.

this problem thoroughly. We shall solve it in accordance with the state of reason and our conscience.¹⁶

Russia and China are making progress in all other areas, but they are not able find solution to disputed Islands. Opposition is increasing in the border areas against any territorial concession to China.

While commenting on agreement reached in early 1999 on their border demarcation, the Khabarovsk territorial Governor, said that “The existing status quo must be left in force.” With regard to the Bolshoy Ussuriisky and Tarabov Islands as they were of “particular strategic importance”. It was reported that the issues of disputed Island were left unresolved in recent negotiations.¹⁷ Following the demarcation of the eastern sector of the Sino-Russian border in 1999, Russia gave 170 km of its territory to China on January 2000. However, the Island of Menkesili, which fall within this area has not yet been officially transferred to China.¹⁸ On March 2000, Leonid P. Moiseyev, director of the first Asia desk (China) of the Russian ministry of foreign affairs said that Russia and China have signed a maintenance of status quo agreement regarding the Bolshoy Ussuriisky and Tarabarov Islands. It means that Russia’s control will continue on these disputed island till the final agreements.

Thus on the basis of the above said discussion at various levels, both the countries have solved their border problem with the help of 1991 and

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁷ IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin, Autuman 1999, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 38.

¹⁸ IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin Summer 2000, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 51.

1994 agreement, except some border demarcation and border transit. If both the countries, follow the 1991 and 1994 agreements sincerely it would further help to strengthen stability and cooperation in other areas like, economy political and military. With the progress in border problems both the countries have entered into demilitarization and Confidence-Building measures along the border.

As demilitarization and Confidence-Building measures have its roots in border dispute, the settlement of the border dispute provided a boost to mutual confidence and cooperation in the border areas. They also accelerated the negotiations on joint reduction of military forces in the border areas and confidence building in the military field.

Also, negotiations on force reductions along the border which had begun under the Gorbachev, have continued during later period . At the eight round of negotiations in December 1992, both sides agreed that their troops would be pulled back 150 km from the border. Offensive weapons, tanks, strike aircraft, artillery and tactical nuclear weapons-are to be reduced in the resulting 250 km zone, implementing this arrangement will prove more, complex for Russia, because repositioning of its substantial numbers of troops to the interior, and building new infrastructure for them will involve substantial costs for Russia's already over burdened economy. A 150km Pull-back will also require Russian forces to be withdrawn in some sectors – particularly along the River Ussuri-behind the trans-siberian railways, a vital supply line for the Far East.

In May 1994, Russia and China signed an agreement on the Sino-Russian border management system. Two months later, agreement was reached to prevent military accident such as unintentional border crossing and radar Jamming; inadvertent missile launches and violations of airspace¹⁹. On Sept 1994, a joint communiqué pledged no first-use and non-targeting of nuclear missiles.

At the end of the eighteenth round negotiations on troops cuts and CBM'S in Moscow in January 1996, the concept of a "100km weapons free zone" remained intact. Specialists drafted guidelines on troop reductions and CBM'S along China's 7,500km border with Russia, Kazakistan, Kyrgyzsten and Tajikistan. The provisions- which include a pledge of non-aggression, force reductions, limit on the number and types of exercises permitted within 100 km of the border were incorporated in the agreement signed by the four CIS states and China in Shanghai during the Yeltsin's April 1996 visit²⁰. The commitment to troops reduction was renewed during Li Peng's visit to Moscow in Dec. 1996.

At the end of the twenty-second round of talks on force reduction and CBM'S held in Beijing in Dec. 1996 China and the four CIS states reached a final agreement. A formal agreement was signed during Yeltsin's April 1999 Summit with Jiang Zemin. A protocol of cooperation was signed between Russian and Chinese border guards on a Sept 1999. Both the parties pledged

¹⁹ Jennifer Aderson, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

²⁰ Summary of World Broadcast, FE/2597 G/1, 27 April, 1996.

to step up efforts aimed at maintaining the border regime, promote the practice of joint measures to protect the frontier, and continue cultural ties. They also planned joint raids along the Amur and Vasun Rivers to prevent illegal fishing²¹.

As Sino-Russian friendship has developed over the years, dozens of cities along the border became trading ports. Rapid growth of border trade and tourism was misused by the smugglers and criminals. Border crimes have caught the attention of leaders of both the countries. Prime Ministers of China and Russia signed an agreement on a Russian-Chinese boundary administrative system. The Chinese Ministry of public security also signed an agreement with Russia on frontier inspection cooperation. The agreements have enabled frontier guards across the border to take strong measures against border crimes. China and Russia have increased the number of high-level visits as well as military and cultural exchanges between their borders defense forces to develop better relations between the two countries.

In the light of the above issues the successful settlement of the Russian-Chinese border and Confidence Building measures contributed to the cause of peace, tranquillity, stability and prosperity in the border areas of Russia and China. It also helped in strengthening trade relations between the two countries.

²¹ Summary of World Broadcasts, SU/3637 B/4-10, 11 September, 1999.

TRADE RELATIONS

Trade and economic cooperation is another area where both countries have common interests in developing their economies. China is a large country with a huge manpower resources, a large market and a good agricultural and industrial base but is relatively lacking in natural resources, including oil and natural gas, water, forest and arble land and is relatively weak in high technology sector. In most of these areas Russia is quite well developed but it faces lack of labour resources. Thus, the cooperation between the two can be of immense mutual benefit.

Cross-border trade, was resumed in 1982. It was conducted largely in barter. With the progress in border dispute, there has been rise in cross-border trade and movement of goods, traders between the North-East China and Russia Far East. Gorbachev played very important role in these developments. He initiated liberalised visa regime in 1988 and improved infrastructure of River ports and airports, roads and bridges, rail connections and border crossing points. Since Russian independence bilateral trade has developed rapidly. However, border trade and barter trade took a big share in the trade volume. But during later period border trade and barter trade declined significantly mainly because both the Government's switched to hard-currency payments. They also put restriction on cross border trade because of illegal trade.

In March 1992, each party conferred most-favoured nation trading status on the other. They have established Sino-Russian intergovernmental

committee on economic, trade and technology cooperation to discuss how to widen the areas of economic trade, and technological cooperation. These consultations and meetings have resulted in agreement, whereby bilateral cooperation has expanded to the field of oil, natural gas, transportation, nuclear energy, aviation and military cooperation. Such cooperation has become an important part of the strategic partnership.

China is interested in Russian Industrial equipment and technical assistance to modernise plants built with Soviet aid in 1950s. On the other hand, Russia has agreed to assist in the construction of hydroelectric and nuclear power plants in China. Chinese investment in the Russian Far East has also increased. Chinese investor have been participating in a big way in this region. In 1992-93, there were nearly 800 joint ventures and since then Chinese enterprises have grown significantly²². Chinese workers have found employment in the building industry as labourers. The region's exports to China has grown substantially. Russian region which is suffering from lack of labour and capital is likely to benefit from its strong links with North-Eastern China.

Trade relations are not constant between China and Russia. It reached 7.5 billion dollars in 1993 and fluctuated between 5 and 7 billion dollars from 1994 to 1997. In 1993 China was Russia's second largest trading partner after Germany²³. Russian exports to China includes aircraft, cars,

²² Rajan Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 104.

²³ Summary of World Broadcast, FE/2092 G/4, 5 September, 1994.

trucks, agricultural machines, mining and oil processing equipment, chemical products, timber and so on. Fertilizer and ferrous metal continue to be leading export goods and are worth over half of total exports.

The economic crisis and other problems in the Far East have its effect on overall trade between the countries. Due to the economic crisis Russians were largely unable to repay Chinese exports. Corrupt business practice and poor-quality goods were widely reported on both sides. As a result, Russian exports were neither profitable nor reliable. These problems were compounded by the visa-regime negotiation of 1993 and Moscow's subsequent decision to impose steep import and export duties. As a result of all these, two-way trade dropped drastically.

Concerned about the sharp drop in trade in 1994 and the difficulty in selling its goods in Russia, China have stressed economic ties in recent meetings of top leaders. It has offered a vision of economic partnership to boost the strategic partnership. In 1996, leaders agreed to a crash program to raise bilateral trade to 20 billion dollars by the year 2000²⁴.

In recent years Russia and China took many steps to improve trade relations. A protocol was signed on trade and economic cooperation in 1994. The document boosted the bilateral trade and economic relations, as well as cooperation in the reconstruction of enterprises built by the (former) Soviet Union²⁵. The document fixed the amount of interstate delivery. Russia

²⁴ Rajan Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

²⁵ Summary of World Broadcast, FE/ 2092 G/4, 5 September, 1994.

exports equipment for Chinese Industrial facilities including three major thermal power stations, as well as aviation machinery and other technical products. In its turn, China supplies food and consumer goods. The protocol ensures the Chinese obligation on hard currency payment for passage of Russian deliveries. This agreement with removal of visa restriction and reopened border crossing helped in recovering bilateral trade.

Recently bilateral trade was increased from \$ 5.5 billion in 1998, reversing the downward trend since late 1996. In December 1997, agreement worth US \$300 million was concluded. It was described as Russia's most valuable foreign contract of the year, whereby Russia would provide nuclear generating equipment to China, to be used in new power plants²⁶. At the end of 1999, both countries have signed \$ 3.2 billion nuclear power project in China's, Jiangsu Province. This is the largest joint Governmental investment by Moscow and Beijing. The Russian generator, which have the advantage of a high peak-load operating capacity compared with western equipment's, will be the two largest nuclear generator in China when they are put into commercial operation in 2004 and 2005.

Border trade also witnessed a major comeback for the first half of 1999 with a 45 percent increase over the last year²⁷. Traditionally, cross-border barter trade constituted a third of the bilateral trade. It started to decline in 1996 after the conversion from barter to hard currency trade in

²⁶ Zafar Imam, *op.cit.*, p. 104.

²⁷ Bin Yu, "Coping With The Post-Kosovo Fallout", *Comparative Connection*, 1999, p. 501.

1994. Russia's domestic instability and economic hardship also caused the steep drop of border trade. The revival of border trade in the first half of 1999 was somewhat caused by the partial return to barter trade, which minimises risks linked to cash trade as a result of the Russian financial and economic crisis.

However, expanded border trade had its own negative repercussion for Russian, Chinese relations. A number of Russian politician in the Far East were putting pressure for border control, citing estimates of one million illegal Chinese in the Russian Federation, with border crossing of 200000 daily²⁸. The response from Moscow has been the reinforcement of the border troops and the establishment of new regulations requiring visas from both sides, In August 1995, Russia also signed an agreement with China on strengthening cooperation in guarding their joint border. The agreement was designed to provide for better informations on both sides, such as smuggling and poaching.

While accepting the 1994 constructive partnership proposal during the September Moscow Summit, Jiang Zemin addressed the trade crisis at length. He explained that, as long as the overall goal of developing stable relations was born in mind, these problems accompanying our advancement and development are not difficult to solve²⁹. Two countries have been continuing their negotiation to solve trade related problems. Recently the

²⁸ F. Seth Singleton, "Russia and Asia. The Emergence of Normal Relations", in The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, (ed) Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin, Macmillan Press, London, 1997, P.112.

²⁹ Jennifer Aderson, op.cit., p.34.

two sides agreed to actively support production and shipbuilding, and to enlarge jointly in forest logging, wood processing and processing of agriculture products.

Both the countries further agreed to increase border trade and promote economic ties. There are 17 major posts operating along the 4,300 km Chinese-Russian border. A border trade has developing significantly in recent years. A Chinese spokesman said that China mainly exports of everyday use like grains, fruits, vegetables, clothing and machinery to Russia and import chemical fertilizers, steel, timber and transportation vehicles. To increase the overall trade China introduced a new regulation in April 2000, allowing Russian to cross the border without visa, for the purpose of conducting business. The regulation applies to crossing a Manzholuli, in north China's inner Mongolia Autonomus region. By introducing the new regulation China hopes to benefit from its cross border trade.

SALE OF ARMS

The history of arms sales goes back to the 1950s when the two countries signed the treaty of alliance. Moscow extended massive aid to Beijing that laid the foundation of its heavy industry as well as defense industry. However, later period was marked by political and ideological rivalry between the two countries coupled with serious border disputes which affected relationship. During 1980s some improvements started in their bilateral relations. With the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev many

changes have taken place in the country's domestic and foreign relations. He undertook bold initiative to improve the relations with China, keeping in mind the importance of Asia-Pacific region.

The resumption of Sino-Russian military contact and subsequent military transactions since the beginning of the 1990s, were the most significant development in the both countries bilateral relationship. The speed, scope, and volume of military sales between the countries has surprised many observers. Since late 1990, Beijing and Moscow have completed major transactions in military equipment.

Military ties were officially restored between the two countries in the following thirty years³⁰. Following these initial contacts, the two sides started a series of formal exchange of military delegation. In April 1990 China sent its first military delegation to the USSR in 30 years, and the Soviet Union paid return visit to China. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia-China military cooperation expanded and took a regular form. Today China, along with India, is one of the two biggest importers of Russian military hardware.

Both Russian and China have come together in military cooperation because of their own domestic and international compulsions. China was committed to military modernization, its cooperation with the western countries could not help it to acquire important weapons and technology for

³⁰ Bin Yu, "Sino-Russian Military Relations Implications for Asia-Pacific Security", Asian Survey, Berkeley, Vol. XXXIII, No.3, March 1993, p.306.

its Army. After the Tiananman square incident, the western countries imposed military embargo on China. On the other hand, the crisis in Russia's defense industry and problems of Russia's economy forced Moscow to sell the arms to China. Russian weapons contributed to military modernisation and power projection, these are two important priorities for Chinese military planners. Arms sales to China helped Russia to keep defense enterprises, a significant employer, afloat at a time when orders from the Russian Government and arms sale in other markets are plummeting.

United States also helped in bringing the two countries together in military cooperation. The Bush administration reportedly tried to pursue a long term policy of accelerating the decline of Russian defence industry by preventing US and western countries from purchasing arms from Russia³¹. This policy made an already desperate Russia to be more aggressive in its marketing drive.

The Gulf war provided another stimulus of People's Liberation Army (PLA), modernisation. China's leaders and military establishment were much impressed by the accuracy and the speedy victory of the coalition forces. They also realized their military's backwardness in field military technology. This sense of military backwardness in the wake of the Gulf war seemed to accelerate the negotiating process between China and Russia on arms sales.

³¹ Ibid., p.307.

Thus all the above mentioned factors clearly explain why there has been significant expansion in military cooperation between Russia and China.

Further frequent exchanges between top Russian and Chinese military and civilian officials since the beginning of 1992 indicate the possibility of more military sales to China. In August 1992, China and Russia signed an agreement on cooperation in developing aerospace technology³². In November 1993 speech at a defense plant in Tula, Yeltsin emphasized the importance of capturing Russia's position in global arms trade, noting China's importance as key market. Chinese purchase helped to keep production lines open and lower procurement costs for the armed forces. They also provide hard currency to finance imports by enabling Russia to sell the manufactured products.

Sino-Russian cooperation in the military sphere resumed in 1990 after a long break. During the first half of the 1990s, military cooperation with China remained at the level of arms purchase, and Russia always set restriction for those transfers. This was largely due to Russia's initial honeymoon with the west after the end of the Soviet empire.

Since mid-1990s, particularly during 1995-96 Taiwan strait crisis and NATO's eastward expansion in 1997, some breakthroughs were made in areas of Russian military technology transfer to China. But the real turning

³² Xuewu Gu, "China's Policy Towards Russia", Assen Politik, Hamburg, 1993, Vol. 44, p. 293.

point came in the aftermath of Kosovo crisis when General Zhang Wannian visited Russia and met Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev. Since then negotiations for arms deals and technology transfers increased significantly. China's state procurement agencies have been placing orders worth billions of dollars with Russia's arms makers, and have been able to secure transfer of Russian technology-mainly for aircraft-building, that will eventually enable China to make more better arms of its own.

The first and most significant contract between China and Russia was regarding the supply of 26 Sukhoi-27 fighter aircraft's which were delivered in the year 1992³³. This deal was concluded during the Soviet period. The SU-27s can be refueled in flight and thus are capable of extending China's range of influence including air delivery of nuclear technology. In 1992, China decided to purchase about 50 T-72 tanks. It also decided to buy 70 BMP-1 armoured infantry fighting vehicles. The tanks were delivered at the end of 1993. In 1993, China was reported to have placed order for 200 T-80U main battle tanks.

In February 1994, the Mashzavod Plant in Nizhny Novgorod signed a contract with the PLA Navy to supply three Shipborne 77-MM Caliber automatic artillery system. During latter period Chinese specialist were trained at Mashzavod plant to use these guns which were delivered by the end of the year.³⁴ Both the countries have signed another agreement for 4

³³ Ibid., p.301

³⁴ Jyotsna Bhaksi, op.cit., p.643.

diesel -powered kilo -class submarines and 6 S-300 air defense system with 100 missiles. Earlier PLA did not possess these weapons.

In July 1994, China's state Council approved an additional \$5 billion worth of armaments imports from Russia. China was keen to purchase SU 30-MK and SU-35 fighters. It was subsequently reported that Russia was not ready to sell more advanced SU-35, but was prepared to sell SU-27 and SU-30. The Sino-Russian joint statement issued at the time of president Yeltsin's visit to Beijing in April 1996 did make a special mention of their military-technical co-operation. Both sides expressed their readiness to further develop "friendly exchanges between their military forces at various levels and further strengthen their co-operation in military technology. Further they maintained that the development of military relation and their co-operation in the field of military technology are not directed against any third country or country block.³⁵

In 1996 Russia agreed to sell China the technology and licenses needed to manufacture SU-27's at a factory in Shenyang Province. There was strong opposition in Russia against this license permission. Russia justified it on the ground that it would allow Russia to have some control over the number of aircraft manufactured along with significant monetary benefits.

³⁵ Summary of World Broad Cast, FE/2596 9/4, 26A; April 96.

Russia delivered 30 Mi-17 Helicopter to China between 1995-97. China has received 144 AA-10 Alamo air-to-air missiles and 96 AA-8 April air-to-air missiles. Russia agreed to give to Kamov ka-28 Helix helicopter between 1997-99. China received technology from Russia for the development of DF-31/41 inter-continental Ballistic missiles.³⁶ China also ordered for two Sovremenny class with supersonic anti-ship ZM-80E Moskif Cruise missiles for its navy. It is believed that its shipyards are capable of producing ships of all classes.

In 1999 an agreement was signed between Russia and China on the sale of SU-30 MKK jet fighter to China. Experts have estimated the value of the contract about 2 billion dollars. This was Russian's largest arms contract in the last few years. The deal is likely to provide very significant indicative boost to the Chinese air force. The following table shows the extent of arms transfer from Russia to China since 1992.

Russian Arms Transfer to China. 1992-99 ³⁷	
Time	Items
1992	26 SU-27 Fighters delivered
1994	Agreement for 4 diesel powered Kilo-class submarines.

³⁶ Ibid., P. 645.

³⁷ Sipri Year Book 1999 Armaments, Disarmament's and International Security, New York, 1999, p.461. also see Bin Yu, "Coping with the Post-Kosovo Fallout", Comparative Connection, 3rd Quarter 1999. p. 101.

1994	Agreement for 6 S-300 air defense systems with at least 100 missiles
1995-96	48 SU-27 (36 one -seal SU-27SK and 12 two -seal SU-27UB).
1996	License to produce 200 SU 27 SK planes :
1997	Agreement to buy 2 sovermenny -class guided missile destroyer armed with supersonic anti-ship ZM -80E Moskit crise missiles
1999	Agreement for purchase of 50 SU -30MK, with a consent for future licensed production of the place by China.

Defence sales have been the highest-profile element of Russian's trade, with the exception of a brief lull. In 1993, Russia's share of the Chinese arms market has grown steadily making it China's largest source of overseas arms thus far. Between 1990 and 1995, the Soviet Union / Russia sold weapons worth between \$ 2.9 billion and \$ 6 billion. In 1996, Russian export to China reportedly exceeded \$ 2.1 billion amounting to nearly 70% of China's total arms imports³⁸. China concluded the largest military contract in Russia's history in 1995. It was \$ 2 billion-plus deal for the technology and licence to manufacture the SU-27 at a factory in Shenyang Province.

³⁸ Ibid., p.36.

A quantum jump in trade turn-over was mainly the result of large scale arms sales to China, Russian arms sales had doubled during 1994-96 reaching a total of \$ 3.4 billion by 1996. This included arms sales to the major recipient countries, China and India, thus Russia had regional its position as the second largest exporter of arms after USA³⁹.

Modern Russian arms have provided China with a unique opportunity to close the gap between its potentiality and that of the super power. Russian arms supplies are especially important for China not only because of western embargo, but also because its technological base is built on Soviet technology.

Development in this field has been criticised. Some influential opinion-makers in Russia have criticized the sale of Russian arms and technology to China. Aleksei Arbatov, director of the center for Geopolitical and military forecasts in Moscow, has warned that China will obtain conventional military superiority over Russia in the Far East " only if Russia supplies it with modern weapons and military technology including advanced SU-27 and Mig-31 fighters, the famous S-300 missiles⁴⁰. He argued that China was paying for Russian SU 27s and other advanced military equipment partly with hard currency and partly consumer goods. More over, these goods were often of bad qualities.

³⁹ Zafar Imam, *op.cit*, p. 105.

⁴⁰ Peggy Falkenheim Mayer, "Russia Post-Cold War Security Policy In North East Asia", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol, 67. No.4, Winter 94-95, p.503.

In response to these domestic adverse reaction, Russian foreign ministry and defense officials have repeatedly promised to place strict limits on arms sales to China. Mikhail Mikhailovich Belyy, head of the ministry of foreign affairs first Asian and Pacific Administration, stated in July 1993 that Russian military sales to China were guided by the "three no", do not harm your own security, adhere to all international obligations, particularly those limiting the protraction of missile technology and strive not to upset the military and political balance in the region⁴¹.

Later as a bilateral relations turned better and Russia's sale of arms got a boost such apprehensions proved to be unfounded.

Progress in dealing with various areas, especially in trade and arms sales, have brought two countries close together in their bilateral relations. This eventually, towards the close of the Yeltsin year, helped to develop a strategic partnership between Russia and China.

⁴¹ Ibid., P. 506

CHAPTER -III

TOWARDS WARM REALTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The roots of strategic partnership can be traced to President Yeltsin's visit to China in December 1992. This visit reactivated the process of the development of the friendly relations between the two countries. Since then, top level leaders had frequently made exchange visits. There was also exchange in the area of economy, trade, science, culture and military technology. In this way, the two countries gradually institutionalized their consultation and cooperation on major domestic and international issues.

Both the countries had faced growing internal tension and they have perceived mounting external challenges to their respective national interests. Although both have significantly departed from their past ideological legacies, they have faced a fast- changing, unfriendly, and even increasingly dangerous international environment. This was particularly true in their relations with the United States. The concerns, of China and Russia about Washington were clearly reflected in the joint statement in which Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin repeatedly emphasized the role of United Nations, international law, and international treaties in the world affairs.¹

¹ Summary of World Broadcast, FE/3073 G/3, 11 Nov1997.

For Moscow and Beijing, the US hegemony is not just unilateralist but interventionist as well. This dual nature of US foreign policy is bolstered by Washington's move towards actual deployment of the Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) system and the National Defence (NMD) system. Moscow and Beijing were alarmed by the unrestrained and unopposed power of the United States during the Kosovo crisis in early 1999 when UN was bypassed, Russia was sidelined, and Chinese embassy was bombed. In addition, Russia considers that its security was threatened by NATO's eastward expansion, while China objects to the US pressure on its human rights record, trade policies, Taiwan and Tibet issues.

Issues of sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity were also key issues between both the countries, as both Moscow and Beijing were challenged by what they term separatist movement and their internationalization. Both pledged support for each other's effort for national unity. In this regard President Jiang Zemin and President Yeltsin signed a joint statement in Beijing, declared a strategic partnership of mutual coordination of equality, trust and orientation towards the 21st century. This partnership is not a formal military alliance but rather an attempt by both the countries to identify areas where both the countries can work together and coordinate their policies for mutual benefit.

STRATEGIC AND FOREIGN POLICY PARTNERSHIP

The disintegration of the Soviet Union marks the end of the bipolar era. The new situation become more favourable to China than it was in the

past, partly due to the removal of the military threat from the North. As China is following the path of economic reform and it needed favourable international condition to pursue its economic reconstruction. The chief objective of Chinese foreign policy has been to develop good relations with the states on its periphery to assure a stable regional environment.

Russia was facing economic crisis, its nuclear capability was the most obvious source of strategic significance. It will ensure Russia's status as a formidable military power. Establishing and maintaining friendly relations with Russia is important to China's long-term national security interests, both from a foreign policy perspective and from the point of view of domestic economic development.

Russia was interested in promoting cordial relations with its neighbouring countries. The stability of its western and southern border was threatened by the complex territorial problems existing between Russia and the newly independent republics and armed conflicts in Eastern Europe. In contrast, Russia 4,300km border with China is secure and stable. The instability of Russia's other border has compelled Russia to maintain good relation with China. Similarly, China wanted a peaceful and stable environment on its periphery. Indeed, Chinese and Russian National Security interest coincide and complement each other.

After the breakup of the USSR, China was no longer important to the west as was in the past in containing the Soviet Union. Problems started creeping up with respect to trade, human rights and democracy between

China and western countries. During this crisis China got support from Russia to counter western political pressures. Russia voted against condemning China for human rights abuse at the UN Human Rights commission in Geneva².

In the strategic relations between Russia and China. The Central Asia always plays an important role as both countries are keen to preserve political stability there. For Russia it is very important than China as Kozyrev explained in October 1993, Russia would not countenance losing geopolitical position that took centuries to conquer³. Moscow sought a continued stake in the region's economic development, exploitation of fossile fuel resources and protection of ethnic Russians.

In recent times there are several reasons for the improvement in Russian-Chinese relations. The problems that bedeviled the relationship in the past have disappeared. Mutually beneficial ties have been established in trade, economic cooperation and arms sales. There is also a considerable degree of strategic convergence China and Russia both are uneasy about a military unipolar postcold war world dominated by the U.S.⁴ These factors are reinforced by a convergence on regional issues.

² Kjlans Fritsche, "Russia Refocuses on China", Assen Politik, Hamburg, Vol.46, No. 4, 1995, p.379.

³ Jennifer Anderson, The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership, Adalphi Paper 315, London, 1997, p.48.

⁴ Rajan Manon, "The strategic Convergence Between Russia and China", Survival, London, Vol. 39. No.2 Summer 1997, p.115.

Apart from strategic relation in Central Asia both countries have common interest. Due to multiethnic politics, both nations face the problem of ethnic nationalism and militant Islamic movements. For Russia, Central Asia has become a volatile Southern defence perimeter and home for 10 millions ethnic Russians. For China, Central Asia is now an unpredictable zone from which Turkic nationalism and Islamist ideologies could radiate into Xinjing. Xinjing is China's Far west province. It has petroleum reserve in the Tarim River Basin and contains the country's principal nuclear test site. But anti-Han Chinese sentiment among the indigenous Turkic Muslims people are strong and has been manifested in increasingly overt forms since the Soviet Collapse⁵. Both China and Russia agreed to adopt and promote a common approach to security threats in the region, presumably from Taliban in Afghanistan and orthodox militiaman Islamic movements⁶.

Far from challenging Russian hegemony in Central Asia, China regards it as a force for stability and complains that with the end of the Cold War, Western Nations including the United States have been manouvering in Central Asia and throwing their weight in order to advance their own strategic interests. China also supported Russia's opposition to NATO's relentless eastern expansion, even though it does not directly affect Chinese security, and identifies this expansion as one of the trends that necessitates a strategic convergence between two countries.

⁵ Ibid., p.116.

⁶ Zafar Imam, Foreign Policy of Russia: 1991-2000, New Horizon Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, p. 105.

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union challenged both states' sense of security. Russia, lost its traditional borders and with them the bulk of its defences. It faced potential separatist movement across its southern border. Russia feared the spread of Islamic fundamentalism from Afghanistan into newly independent Central Asian Republics.

Many steps have been taken to maintain stability in Central Asian region by both the countries. In April 1996, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan and Tajikistan signed a military Confidence- Building agreement relating to their border areas⁷. A subsequent agreement, signed in April 1997, stipulates that the number of each country's ground, and air defense forces within 100 kilometer from the border do not exceed 130,400 persons. This agreement is of great political and strategic significance for relations between China, Russia and the Central Asian States.

The military cooperation also played important role in both the countries relationship. The victory of the US led coalition over Iraq in the Gulf crisis underscored Beijing's limited military capabilities. Gulf war also heightened Chinese fears about US global intentions. In the post-Tiananmen era, China has been the target of political, human rights attacks and it is not getting western military technology and arms for its PLA modernization programme. So Russia emerged as its major defender in the world fora and provided military technology and arms.

⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

Russia provided this help because of its own compulsions. The Russian economy was rapidly declining as radical economic reforms were introduced. Unemployment was increasing in military industry because of troops reduction in border areas. Russian arms manufacturers were in crisis as their own. Government held back on arms orders due to the national economic crisis and refused to continue to subsidize arms shipments to friendly countries.

So both countries found convenient partner to solve their problems. Two sides signed many agreement on range of weapons to modernize key frontier units. These agreements have paved the way for increasing interaction between both countries armed forces and defence industries. More recently the Chinese have stepped up their purchases of aircraft and other defence equipment, such as SU-27 long range fighters, ships, such as kilo-class diesel-electric submarines.

Chinese defence minister has signed the contracts worth of \$100 million with Russia in arms purchase during his visit in 1997. Russia has agreed to allow China to manufacture SU-27 under licence in Shenyang⁸. The PLA has begun sending officers to train in Russian military academies. Apart from these there were regular meetings between Moscow and Beijing defence ministers and chief of general staff. It should be emphasised that these developments do not constitute a formal defence alliance. This is

⁸ Russia and China, The Economist, April 26th 1997, p.20.

pragmatic relationship which has developed out of common interests. During Yeltsin's visit to China in 1996, both the countries maintained that the development of military relation and their cooperation in the field of military technology which are not directed against any third country or country block⁹.

China and Russia also stands for the principles of mutual respect and equality in bilateral and international relations. They do not interfere in other countries internal affairs. Both sides also stress that different social system and ideologies are not an obstacle in developing state-state relations¹⁰.

Unlike the west, China has not taken advantage of Russia's internal crisis and difficulties to exert the pressure on it. Russia also did not join with the west to launch an attack on China's human right violations and democracy. In handling their relations, both countries have accorded to each other respect and dignity.

Following the principles of mutual respect and equality, China and Russia support each other in an effort to maintain their national sovereignty and territorial integrity. China supported actions taken by the Russian Federation in safeguarding its national unity and holds that the question of

⁹ Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/2596 G/4, 26 April, 1996.

¹⁰ Li Jingjie, "Sino-Russian Relations in Asia Pacific", in Engaging Russia in Asia Pacific (ed) by Watanabe Koji, Japan Centre for International Exchange, New York, 1999, p.60.

Chechnya is a domestic affairs of Russia. In response the Russian Federation reiterates that the Government of the Peoples Republic of China is representing the whole of China and Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Chinese Territory. Russia also reiterates that it will not establish official relations nor enter into official contact with Taiwan. Russia always recognizes Tibet as an inseparable part of China¹¹.

The Sino-Russian relationship has flourished in recent years because both sides have earnestly practiced the principles of mutual respect and equality in their contact. At this stage we turn to examining growing partnership in foreign policy of the two countries.

In Russia the initial expectations about the possible speed and success of economic reforms as well as large scale western assistance were quickly dashed. Kozyrev's one-sided pro-western foreign policy faced hostile criticism from nationalist politicians. The West, especially the US was far from welcoming Russia into the international community. It was trying to keep Russia weak, so as to ensure that never again would she face a challenge. This affected Russia's position in the world. Kozyrev's replacement by Primakov in 1996 accelerated the process of foreign policy realignment. Russia sought to play a more independent role in the world, one which was more suited to a Eurasian state than western one. US plan to NATO enlargement in East and Central Europe in spite of the objections

¹¹ Summary of World Broad Cast, EF/2596 G/3, 26 April, 1996.

from Russia also encouraged Russia to reduce its dependence upon the west and search for other partners.

Meanwhile China had become increasingly irritated by the growing American pressure. The sanction that followed Tiananmen square incident and the victory in the Persian Gulf War by US –led coalition, as well as the increasing complaints over human rights abuses. All these undermined the co-operative relationship with the west dating from the 1980s. China was also worried about the US arms selling to Taiwan and it was unhappy about NATO expansion towards the east. Because if Russians were allowed to join, it would bring the alliance to the Pacific and to China's longest land frontier.

So there was an increasing convergence of views between Moscow and Beijing over the need to create alternative poles in world affairs to the one dominated by the US. During Yeltsin's visit to China in 1996 both countries have agreed to develop a strategic partnership aimed at the 21st century based on equality and mutual benefit¹². This strategic partnership offered both countries the opportunity to overcome possible isolation in international affairs and helped them to assert their specific national interest. During this summit both countries signed agreement with three Central Asian Republics on "strengthening confidence in the military field in the Border areas". This agreement helped them to stop spreading of Islamic

¹² Summary of World Broadcast, FE/2596 G/2, 26 April, 1996.

fundamentalism in their border areas, largely fuelled through Iran and Afghanistan.

China and Russia also enjoy wide ranging consensus in understanding of the contemporary world. Both maintain that post-cold war international relations are characterised by multipolarity and are determined to promote the development of multipolarity and the establishment of a new international order¹³. China and Russia have constantly enhanced their constructive cooperation and Mutual trust in handling international affairs which will help to promote the healthy development of the world situation.

President Yeltsin said that the objective of Russia's foreign policy is "to establish international relations which abide by the principle that our world is a multi-polar one. It is unnecessary that only one power dominates¹⁴. Russia and China oppose attempts by the United States to establish a uni-polar world and they believe that hegemonism and power politics are the major threat to world peace. In this regard, both the countries have special responsibility to oppose power politics and attempt to impose one country's will on other countries. China and Russia insist that the relationship between various nations should be equal. President Yeltsin has said "we do not need a dominator, the world should not be divided into so-called leading countries and countries to be led¹⁵.

¹³ Summary of World Broadcast, Fe/13156 G/2 20 February, 1998.

¹⁴ Li Jingjie, "Sino-Russians in Asia Pacific" in Engaging Russia in Asia Pacific, Edited by "Watanabe Koji, New York, 1999, p.61.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

For both the countries, the visit of President Jiang Zemin in April 1997. For both the countries, the visit would not have come at a more important time, especially in terms of their increasing indignation towards west, mainly the United States. Moscow was feeling the pressure of NATO's eastward enlargement while Beijing was under pressure from the west to liberalize its trade regime and improve its human rights record. In many ways the US was the single factor that accounted for the growing amity in Russo-Chinese relations. Both neighbours viewed their closer ties as aimed at reducing Washington's influence in the world.

The west, under US leadership looks upon Russia as a major potential threat in Europe and has enlarged the NATO to contain it. Russia views NATO's expansion into the former territories of USSR, as a security threat. Primakov in 1993 strongly opposed the enlargement of NATO. He repeated his opposition to NATO's expansion in 1997 on the grounds that it represented a renege of earlier promises during the issue of German unification and liquidation of the warsaw pact that this eastward expansion would not take place. Due to this Moscow would regard NATO's eastward expansion as a threat to Russia¹⁶.

¹⁶ S. Bilveer, "East Aisa in Russia's Foreign Policy A New Russo-Chinese Axis?" The Pacific Review, Columbia, 1998 Vol.11, No.4, pp. 501-502.

Conservatives in Russia have argued that, if NATO is enlarged Russia may be forced to abandon START II, treaty and will be forced to strengthen ties with the CIS states. General Pavel Grachev, the former Russian defence minister, on 9 Feb., 1996 in Belgrade, warned that if NATO went ahead with its plan for enlargement, Russia would seek to take some counter measures to safeguard its own security. It would seek partner among the countries of eastern and Central Europe and among the member states of the CIS, in order to form a future military- political alliance. It will also force Russia to seek partner in the East¹⁷.

China is also concerned about NATO's eastward expansion and Central Asia's Republics Participation in NATO's partnership for peace (PFP) programme. Expansion brings nuclear weapons very close to its order. Beijing is less directly affected by NATO expansion but it oppose NATO expansion as a policy of Block. President Jiang Zemin expressed his understanding and supported Russia's position on NATO's enlargement, and stated that expanding the Atlantic alliance went against the current of the times¹⁸. During Jiang visit to Moscow in 1997, both countries criticised the west for attempting to expand NATO. Two sides expressed concern over attempts to enlarge and strengthen military blocks because such a tendency may pose a threat to the security of some countries and aggravate regional and global tension.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 491.

¹⁸ Chikahito Harda, Russia and North-East Asia, Adelphi Paper 310, London, 1997, p. 41.

NATO bombing of Yugoslavia also helped in bringing together two countries. China and Russia are opposed to the domination of the world by sole super power- United States, being permanent member of the UN Security Council. They opposed unilateral action by the US led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia over the question of Kosovo autonomy without an UN mandate. Russia was sidelined during this crisis. President Yeltsin issued a tough statement the next day; "Russia is profoundly indignant with NATO's military action against sovereign Yugoslavia, which is nothing less than an outright aggression". He had even talked of the possibility of "a war in Europe, or may be worse"¹⁹. He suspended its contacts with NATO, but abstained from military intervention on the side of Yugoslavia and sought to play the peacemaker's role. The bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade aroused large-scale protest demonstration in China. This was viewed as a deliberate act of aggression against China²⁰.

The west also view China as a major potential threat in Asia and has attempted to strengthen the US-Japan alliance to contain it. The type of policy pursued by the west has actually put Russia and China in similar positions. Both the countries do not like to see the US-Japan alliance strengthened and do not wish Asia-Pacific to be dominated by one country or a group of countries. China and Russia have given importance to arm reduction and disarmament. Two sides have welcomed the indefinite

¹⁹ Zafar Imam, Foreign Policy of Russia: 1991-2000, New Horizon Publishers, New Delhi, 2000, p. .

²⁰ Jyotsna Bakshi, "Russia-China Military-Technical Cooperation Implication For India: Strategic Analysis, July 2000, Vol XXIV, No. 4, pp. 654-655.

extension of Non-Proliferation Treaty(NPT) and will cooperate with other countries for an early ratification of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty(CTBT)²¹. They have worried about US rejection of CTBT and its intention to amend 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile(ABM), Treaty to build National Missile Defence (NMD) system, because these actions leads to arms race in the world.

Russia and China have jointly opposed the US plan to revise the 1972 ABM Treaty and to build a National Missile Defence (NMD) system²². Russia regards 1972 ABM Treaty as the cornerstone of maintaining strategic stability in the world and is strongly opposed to its revision or violation by the USA. All the agreement on the prohibition of nuclear tests, the elimination of chemical weapons and the reduction of conventional armed forces are based on the ABM Treaty. If the foundation is destroyed, this interconnected system will collapse, nullifying 30 years of efforts by the world community.

By planning to deploy a National Anti-Ballistic missile system prohibited by the ABM Treaty, the United States is heading in the opposite direction. This is the cause of much concerns for Russia and many countries, including the closets allies of the US. If the United States unilaterally withdraws from the ABM Treaty, Russia will no longer be

²¹ Summary of World Boradcaste, FE/2596 G/5 26 April, 1996.

²² The Hindu, Friday, June 15, 2001, p. 12.

formally bound by its obligation to reduce strategic armaments, and the very process of nuclear disarmament will be inevitably terminated²³.

The creation of a National Anti-Missile defence system would also have negative international consequences that would destabilize not only Russia-US Relations but others as well. China would be expected to take counter measures. A new nuclear arms race would be expected in South Asia and other parts of the world. According to a classified US national intelligence estimate released in August 2000, China's response to NMD would be a qualitative and quantitative build up of its nuclear forces. Its strategic arsenal could swell to 10 times its present size as a response to the NMD²⁴. To achieve such a buildup, China may decide both to equip its nuclear missiles with multiple independent re-entry vehicles and to resume nuclear tests.

Russia and China are also opposing the US-Japan idea of building a theatre missile defence (TMD) system in East Asia. The TMD provides protection against small scale nuclear attack²⁵. Commander Jonathan Sears of the US Navy defines the TMD as a system that provides both deterrence as well as war fighting capabilities against accidental, unauthorised, or deliberate limited Ballistic Missile strikes²⁶. Ostensibly, the proposed TMD system is directed against the North Korea missile threat but China regards it

²³ Igor Ivanov, "The Missile-Defence Mistake Undermining Strategic Stability, and The ABM Treaty", Foreign Affairs, New York, September-October 2000, p.16.

²⁴ The Hindu, Thursday, June 14, 2001, p.11.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 648.

²⁶ Ritu Mathur, "TMD in the Asia-Pacific: A View from China" Strategic Analysis, November, 2000, Vol. XIV, No.8, p.1446.

as being directed against it and is vehemently opposed to the idea of including Taiwan in the proposed system. Chinese analysts have conducted simulation to study the impact of TMD on China's strategic missile capability, their studies shows that the capability of TMD systems extends to strategic ballistic missiles²⁷ thus China argues that the proposed TMD system "will trigger a new round of arms race and will be no guarantee for the nuclear disarmament process.

IRRITANT ISSUES

Sino-Russian relations have been developing fairly smoothly and have a bright future. However, this does not mean that there are no problems in Russo-Chinese relations. There are various political, economic, geo-political and geo-strategic constraint which have and will place brakes on the full blossoming of Russo-Chinese ties.

The Russo-Chinese relations were strained by illegal Chinese immigration to the Siberian and Far Eastern Provinces of Russia. The Russian population in the Far East was 8 million, out of a population of 150 million. Russia feels the full weight of the Chinese demographic superiority in the region.²⁸ This number have been decreasing slowly as many have become dissatisfied with life there and returned to European Asia. Already Russian companies in the Far East are signing contracts with authorities in Heilnjiang province of China to supply contract labour for jobs for which no

²⁷ Ibid., 1447.

²⁸ Dev Murarka, Russia and China A Hollow Alliance, Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, August 2, 1997, p.1955.

Russians are available. This shows the decreasing Russian population in the Far East.

There is an element of exaggeration also in this problem. Several politicians in the Far Eastern region are using the Chinese card, along with other issues in their internal political fight and have attempted to keep Sino-Russian relations frozen. But there can be no denying that in conditions in which the authority of Moscow has virtually collapsed and continues to collapse in the far-flung regions of the country.

Chaos resulted in 1992-93, when China and Russia opened the border that had been closed for several decades. A large number of Chinese crowded into Russia to do business and poor-quality Chinese goods were carried across the border by Chinese and Russian traders. It also created problems in both countries bilateral relationship. Russian nationalist suggested that the large-scale emigration was an attempt by the Chinese Government to realise a territorial claim. Fortunately both the Governments have taken steps to improve the situation.

The military cooperation had also become the subject of controversy. Until the 1980s the Soviet army surpassed the PLA both qualitatively and quantitatively. Now, however, the position has changed. At least for the moment, Russia is a declining power and the China is growing one.

Russia has become one of the most important arms suppliers to China. Intensive collaboration is also developing in the field of military

training and technological cooperation. If it continues to increase the transfer of technology to China, that will change the strategic balance in China's favour. This is viewed critically in Russia; adverse consequences are feared for the country's relation with Southeast Asia, and the question is raised whether a "future enemy" was not being provided with arms²⁹.

Furthermore, a territorial problem still exists. The 1991 border agreement laid down the principles, according to which the concrete course of the frontier was to be fixed in demarcation work. Two aspects, however, remained controversial and were deferred to a later date. In the meantime, a conflict has flared up over the border demarcation. According to the provisions made, Russia must like China to hand over a number of small uninhabited islands and an additional 15 square metres of territory in the region of Primorye. This meets with vehement opposition in the Far Eastern regions of Russia, which call for a revision or at least an adjustment of the border agreements.³⁰ These examples show that improved Sino-Russian relations are also constrained by regionalism and nationalism in each country.

Some Russians are very suspicious about China and are concerned that, China's rapid economic development and the prolonged economic crisis in Russia will help China become very powerful country. If this happens,

²⁹ Kjlans Fritsche, "Russia Refocuses on China", Assen Politick, Hamburg, Vol.46, No.4, 1995, p.381.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 380.

they fear that China might become more aggressive in regional and global affairs.

Another problem is the under-development of Siberia and Russian Far East region. They are largely left to their own devices. The transportation and communication cost alone made economic interaction between the Far East and the European part of Russia very inefficient. At the same time, the reduced resources at the disposal of the Central administration do not allow Moscow to control its remote territories as much as in the past. The local authorities increasingly view themselves as sovereign rulers. Therefore, they tend to ignore the directives of Moscow. The great autonomy has exposed the local leaders to the corruption in foreign firms, especially, Chinese. This is a factor of major political significance for the future relations.

The Chinese are anxious about the Uighur nationalist movement in its province of Xinjiang³¹. This area is well known for a large number of rebellions against China in the past. Now, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, this movement with strong Islamic overtones is attempting to reunify with the Uighur living in Central Asia. The Uighur movement could possibly provoke China to initiative action against them, such activity would have unpredictable consequences for Russian- Chinese relations.

To conclude, Sino-Russian relations developed in the nineties to become the closest ever in the history of their bilateral relations. Both the

³¹ Dev Murarka, Op.cit., p. 1956.

countries have worked closely on many fronts at national and international levels to protect their common national interests. The prospects for the strategic partnership seem to have substance and a future. It is based on common interest. It has not yet reached the warmth and intimacy of the fraternal relation of the 1950's. Given their current common interest and needs, Russia and China will continue to strengthen their cooperation, at least in the short-term. But the relations contain inherent tensions which could become overt in the long run if domestic and external circumstances change.

CHAPTER-IV

AN ASSESSMENT OF YELTSIN'S

CHINA POLICY

Foreign policy is the means to ensure the objective of any country's national interest. Domestic factors play a decisive role in defining any foreign policy. Similarly Russian foreign policy is influenced to a substantial degree by the domestic process of political and economic reform. This can be observed in Yeltsin's foreign policy priorities during his tenure. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the successor state of Russia was in crisis-politically and economically. It started restructuring of its polity and economy and needed financial help and technological assistance for this restructuring process. The west was obvious choice.

President Yeltsin first priority was towards the west during the formative years of Russian foreign policy, mainly because of economic and political reasons. He was looking at western countries, especially USA to bail out Russia from its crisis. On the other hand, he neglected countries of "near abroad" and allies of erstwhile Soviet Union. But it did not take long time for Yeltsin and his foreign minister to realise that the interests of Russia and western powers do not always coincide. The aid and investments from west were not adequate to address Russia's economic revival.

This change can be seen during his first state visit to Beijing in 1992, when he announced that developing Russian- Chinese relations was a priority in Russian foreign relations¹. By a year later, Russia's relations with China had significantly improved. The political chaos and economic crisis in Moscow, which compared unfavourably with China's growing economic prosperity diminished Chinese concern that the fall of socialism in Moscow would present a threat to their own legitimacy. On the Russia side, widespread disappointment with the fruits of a pro-western policy induced the Yeltsin regime to reorient Russian policy away from its one sided focus on the west and strive for better relations with China. By mid-1993, Russian foreign policy definitely began to change directions.

Initially Russia gave importance in solving the bilateral problems with China. Both the countries took significant steps in resolving the border disputes. In this regard they have signed two agreements in 1991 and 1994 on eastern and western section respectively on their border. According to these agreements, they have completed demarcation process, except for some disputed Islands. Russia and China have been continuing their negotiation to find solution to these disputed islands. Apart from these, both have signed many other agreements on reduction of military troops along the border and to increase their bilateral trade.

¹ Jennifer Anderson, The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership, Adelphi Paper, London, 315, 1997, p.18.

Progress in the border problem helped Russia and China to extend their cooperation to another areas like trade, arms sale and transfer of technology. These have become very important in further developing bilateral relations and helped in solving some of their problems. Russia got much needed financial support by selling arms to China. This also helped China to modernise its army and counter the US-western countries' arms sales to Taiwan. Also, Russia and China have signed agreements on technology transfer. Russia agreed to sell China the technology and licences needed to manufacture SU-27s at a factory in Shenyang Province. Recently China ordered deliveries of the SU-30 attack jet, a more advanced version of the SU-27.

During Yeltsin's second period of presidency Russia and China have moved much closer and established strategic partnership. Both the countries corporated to resolve regional and international problems. Russia was totally sidelined by US and its allies on international issues. US decision to expand NATO towards the east and its intervention in Yugoslavia unilaterally without UN mandate was criticised by many Russians. This criticism increased pressure on Yeltsin to take some steps to protect Russia national interests. Yeltsin found China as a convenient ally to counter US's unilateral decision and its hegemony in the world politics. As Yeltsin said in 1997, "Someone is always dragging us towards a unipolar world and wanting to dictate unilaterally, but we

want multipolarity”². Such statement on the part of Russia have been especially frequent since the United States announced its plans for expansion of NATO. Although China is not directly affected by NATO expansion, it supported the Russian stand on NATO expansion.

At the same time, Beijing’s relations with Taipei, Washington and Tokyo weakened in the run-up to the first Taiwanese presidential elections, culminating in a stand-off in the Taiwan strait in March 1996. Relations were also strained by the reaffirmation of the US-Japan treaty. China is also concerned about its difference with the US on trade and human rights. All the above mentioned factors compelled China and Russia to seek each other’s support in countering US intervention in internal affairs and its unilateral, decision on international issue. Both the countries have signed joint declaration in 1997 on the to counter US hegemony by establishing New International Order, which expounded corresponding Chinese and Russian views on the international situation in the post-cold war era. China and Russia have also opposed the proposed plan of US to develop national missile defence (NMD) system as this poses serious threat to their National Security and will increase the arms race in the world.

As a result of all these issues, the feeling has become widespread among the Chinese that there is a “broad western conspiracy” against

² Robert H. Donaldson Joshep L. Noger, The Foreign Policy of Russian Changing System, Enduring Interest, M.E. Sharpe, London, 1998, p. 241.

China, Similar feelings can probably be found among many Russians, given Russia's dramatic fall from superpower status and its helplessness in the face of NATO expansion into Eastern Europe and the bombing of Serbia.

So looking at the above up's and downs in Sino-Russian relations, one can very rightly say that future Sino-Russian relations will remain in flux. There are great opportunities for co-operation, but there are also significant challenges. To some extent the relationship between the two states will depend upon their relations with other powers especially the US and Japan. If relations between China and the US deteriorate further, there will be greater Chinese pressure on Russia to take its side. Yet Russia and China need large-scale foreign investment to restructure their economies and neither can contribute much of that for each other. So Russian and Chinese leaders will be extremely reluctant to shut themselves off, whatever their resentment at western treatment.

Further, it is also quite possible that both China and Russia are simply using each other as bargaining chips in their relationship with west. However, they may find themselves being pushed by the US into a genuine alliance. Since there are powerful anti-western forces within the both countries they also want such an alliance. For the moment both the Government will co-operate and keep their fingers crossed. Nothing has yet happened which conclusively determines or rules out a particular

direction of their relations. Whatever emerges will partly be the result of developments elsewhere in the world.

“Strategic alliance” in due course between Moscow and Beijing is very unlikely because both countries are rivals in major regions in the struggle for hegemony. Despite all the progress in the development of mutual relations there are deep-rooted discords. As, Robert Scalapino has quite rightly remarked that the friction between the two countries is currently so light because they are both primarily preoccupied with their internal problems, but that the end of rivalry had not come yet presently³. Evidence from cross- border relations, domestic opinion and politics, and bilateral economic relations suggests that, in the absence of a breakdown in the global system, China and Russia have no alternative but to redirect their energies from bilateralism towards multilateralism.

Thus to take an overall view of Russian Policy towards China during the Yeltsin years (1991-1999), it was certainly asuccessful one, although crucial time was lost in early years. It is worth while to point out that president Yeltsin favourable policy towards China was generated in the main by the compulsion of post-soviet international politics, as well as of Rusisa’s domestic needs.

³ See, Klaus Fritsche, “Russia Refocuses on China”, Assen Politics, Hamburg, Germany, 1997, Vol.46, No. 4, p. 383.

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(Note: Important Relevant Speeches and Declarations of Russian Leaders on Foreign Policy During Yeltsin Period are Consulted).

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