CHAPTER 2


President Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev on 25 December 1991, in a televised broadcast said, “we live in a new world. The cold war is finished…” after the collapse of the Soviet Union, losing its super power status but holding the permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The impact of the Soviet disintegration on Indo-Russian relations was enormous including every aspect of bilateral relations. There are many explanations which describe the collapse of the Soviet Union. The first one is totalitarian school of thought which is related to western scholars led by L. Schapiro, M. Fainsod and Z. Brzezinski. This school of thought focuses that the failure was destined from the beginning of the Bolshevik revolution because the capture of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917 “was an anti-democratic coup d’état leading necessarily to a one party rule. The transition from Lenin to Stalin was a logical one and the Stalin’s Industrialization through forced collectivization was the corollary to the dogma on state planning, even when growing weaknesses came to light, every attempt at radical reform, political or economic, from within came to naught because of the incompatibility with the monopoly power of the party-state”.

Second school of thought which explained the collapse of the Soviet Union views dismal economic performance of the system was responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev blamed command-bureaucratic system for the economic ills. The third explanation given by Bhupinder Brar is based on Gramscian notion of hegemony. This notion holds that the hegemonic group is always successful in establishing its “moral, cultural and political values as the values of the whole Universe” and that such values are not imposed on the universe rather they are “internalized by it”. The Bolshevik values acquired hegemonic character when the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) acquired absolute position in USSR and other Communist Parties being under the hegemony of CPSU. For Gorbachev, Bolshevism was flawless in its original form, but was blemished later by Stalin and

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Brezhnev. According to Gorbachev, openness and democracy are central to Socialism and Soviet system has become ‘totalitarian masquerading as Socialism’. It is argued that Gorbachev was far from reality as he observed reality as an ideologue rather than as a statesman- perceiving reality from the perspective of long-term goals while remaining close to the ground realities. Secondly, his notion of Bolshevism was based on what his colleagues believe and not what his predecessors believed. Therefore, this explanation is based on the thesis that had there been created a better viable structure before derailing prevailing structures, Soviet Union would not have been disintegrated. Therefore, Gorbachev was responsible for Soviet Union’s disintegration. Fourth explanation which explains the collapse was nationality factor. H.S. Deol is the main supporter of this explanation which focus on that economic crisis created problems for constituent republics and they simply refused to stay together. The failure was economic as well as federal. USSR has increasingly developed towards centralism and authoritarianism which has a great impact on nationalities. Right to self-determination was completely ignored and slowly progressive regionalism distorted the process of Russification. Fifth major explanation highlights that the denial of democracy in the political system as well as in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, negative aspects of Stalin’s personality at the expense of positive aspects, were responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union.²

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the initial two years (1991-93) were the most difficult years in bilateral relations. Russian economy was passing through a difficult phase of transition from a socialist society to a market-oriented economy. In this difficult scenario, it was natural that Indo-Russian relations were facing difficult situation. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia became legal successor state, facing several political, economic and domestic problems (Chechnya) etc.

One of the problems of foreign policy development in the new Russia has been that different institution and groups have, to some extent, been following their own contradictory policies. This is a clear reflection of lack of central authority.³ Russia was also facing economic problems and wanted aid from International Monetary Fund (IMF)

and the World Bank as well as from other western countries. Security problems in Central Asia, increasing Chinese influence, and Western attitudes towards Russia were also matter of concern for Russia. Yeltsin and his team was specially pro-America.4 A.S. Tumines in her book “Nationalism and Interest in Russian Foreign Policy” categorized nationalists into four type: liberal nationalists, who focused upon the Russian agenda as primarily defence and internal looking to restore and defend the physical and spiritual well-being of land and people. Second, Westernizing democrats, who emphasized on democracy, market reform and integration and participation in the international community. Thirdly, Statist nationalists, who reject communism and advocate a larger, leading role for Russia in the former USSR and want to defend Russian national interests. And lastly, National patriots, who were leftist and rightist including Stalinists and who wanted to see Russia in its former position as great imperial power. The latter two positions particularly the last tilted towards increased international tensions.5 After the demise of the Soviet Union, there was also debate from a geopolitical point of view between Atlanticists and Eurasians. Atlanticists like President Yeltsin and his team advocated marketization, democratization, liberal economic policies and the adoption of Western Cultural values. On the other hand, Eurasians were against the Atlanticists. Their focus was that Russia cannot ignore its unique relations with its Islamic and Southern neighbours. They also argued that Russia has a unique integral civilization different from Europe.6 Russia emerged as the legal successor state of the former USSR. But there is also controversy over the beginning of its foreign policy. Some scholars mentioned the beginning of Russian foreign policy from 12 June 1990, when declaration of sovereignty was adopted by the Supreme Soviet (Parliament) of the RSFSR, then constituent republic of the state of USSR. On the other hand, some scholars argue that real beginning was made on 25 December 1991 when the USSR was dissolved and President Gorbachev resigned and handing power over to the President Yeltsin. But the activities related to foreign policy of the new state of Russia from June 1990 to December 1991 could not be

5 Shaw, n. 3, p. 275.
6 Ibid., pp. 275-76.
pursued by an independent state because it is so simple that Russia was still part of the USSR like other republics, it was also not recognized as an independent entity by any state and it had no diplomatic relations with other states. But on the other hand Boris Yeltsin, President of Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR the official name of the Russian Federation in the Soviet period) did act and behave as he was head of an independent sovereign state. His action related to foreign policy like the recognition of three Baltic states, as separate entities from the USSR. He also made visits to European countries like Germany and Italy. From aforementioned, it is clear that the real beginning of Russian foreign policy is from the formal demise of the USSR i.e. 25 December, 1991. After the demise of the USSR, there were three priorities in Russia’s foreign policy. According to Peter Sharman, the first priority was toward ‘near abroad’ members of the CIS; second was to establish and maintain relations with the third world. According to Anita Inder Singh, Russian foreign policy had ten priorities, the CIS was the first and US, Europe and South Asia were fourth, fifth and seventh. “Russia and India low Priorities of Russia, an article in Russian periodical. Russia’s priorities in January 1993 were (i) the CIS (ii) arms control and international security (iii) economic reforms (iv) the United States (v) Europe (vi) Asia-Pacific regions (vii) West and South Asia (viii) the Near East (ix) Africa an (x) Latin America. The new foreign policy makers in the Russian government were novice and had very narrow understanding of international problems. Like 1950s, Russia was much concerned about its economic and political problems. Russia was facing economic problems. Its economy was based on arms industry and Gorbachev’s policies of Perestroika and Glasnost which favoured disarmament. Its aid to third world countries totally ruined its economy and political problems. During the year of 1993, there was openly growing struggle between executive and legislative wings. Chechnya problem had paralyzed its functioning. In these circumstances, India was rather a low priority in overall Russian policy at that time. Like the former Soviet Union, Russia did not consider the special relationship with India in its

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politics-strategic point of view because Russia maintained friendly cooperative relations with both the West and China. Unlike the former Soviet Union, new Russia was no longer interested in championing the cause of the third world countries because it has no economic resources to spare for the third world countries. During that period, India was also facing many problems such as lack of political stability and economic crisis. The grave economic crisis pushed Narasimha Rao government to liberalize economy, dismantle strict regulations, remove all barriers. The IMF and World Bank, imposed some conditionalities for opening up economy to foreign investment. Moscow was not willing to act as the guardian of India’s interests at international level and was also not able to provide soft currency for military equipment. Economic and military hard realities of economy and security forced India toward the West, the US, Germany, Italy, Japan, Israel and even Taiwan. Indian diplomats were talking more about the need to integrate Indian economy with the world economy. India has no option but to nurture close links with the West. Since the mid 1980s, there were indications of close Indo-US relations. Washington gave its approval to India’s military interventions in Sri Lanka in 1987 and the Maldives in 1988. On the other hand, during the Gulf War, India allowed US military aircraft to use refueling facilities at Bombay. In December 1991, India was also in favour of US backed UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. Under Yeltsin’s period, Russia had its own problems, above all economic weakness, criminality, corruption and political divisions etc. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new Russia lacked wherewithal for operating beyond its borderlands in Asia. President Yeltsin and his administration also quickly made a conscious turn-away from the third world. Yeltsin’s Foreign Minister Kozyrev tended toward “civilized world”. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party lost power and Democratic opposition seized the power and launched radical market reforms. Government overtly adopted pro-Western

10 J. Mohan Malik, “India Copes with the Kremlin’s Fall”, Orbis, Vol. 37, 1993, pp. 62-72.
12 Imam, n. 7, p. 98.
foreign policy and accepted the role of a junior partner to the “civilized world” (Civilized World means West, NATO, the Euro-Atlantic Axis etc.)\textsuperscript{13}

Finally Kozyrov, Boris Yeltsin’s team mate and Foreign Minister adopted the “Foreign Policy Guidelines” towards the end of 1992. In his Foreign policy guidelines, he focused on foreign policy of close cooperation with the West in a democratic and transparent manner. But on the other hand, Russia was facing domestic crisis. The growing struggle between executive and legislative wings of the Russian polity had paralyzed its functions and Yeltsin proved that he was far from a perfect democrat.

He used force to crush the Russian Parliament in 1993, bulldozed into place a new constitution that increased Presidential power and exclude some parties or individuals from competing in a handful of national and regional elections.\textsuperscript{14} The initial years after the Soviet disintegration was for us a period of disappointment and frustration. The Foreign Minister A. Kozyrov believed that there was no need to preserve the special relations with India as were in the Soviet era.\textsuperscript{15}

From economic point of view, Yeltsin period was described as decade of lost. For economy, most valuable resources has been transferred to private hand during this period.\textsuperscript{16} On the eve of 1992, Russia’s economy was in a bad situation. Decline in production, fall in investment, growing deficits, massive borrowings, budget and trade deficit, or had led to an economic crisis. The new leaders of Russian economy has chosen as monetarist strategy and E.T. Gaidar, A. Shokin, A. Chubais and P. Avan, were the main supporters of this strategy.\textsuperscript{17} (Monetarism: An economic doctrine which argues changes in the general-price level. This also argues that minimal economic intervention

\textsuperscript{13} Alexender Lukin, “From a Post Soviet to a Russian Foreign Policy”, \textit{Russia in Global Affairs}, Vol. 6, No. 14, October-December 2008, p. 55.


\textsuperscript{17} Imam and Romanovsky, n. 4, p. 58.
by government and an emphasis on the free play of market forces. The term was first coined by Karl Brunner in 1968).

Between 1992 and 1998, Russian economic policy zigzagged between the economic crisis and Russian society did not share a common view about how to reform the economy.

IRRITANTS IN INDO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING YELTSIN ERA

There were many irritants during Yeltsin era which proved obstacles in close cooperation between the both time-tested friends. These irritants included like cryogenic engine issue, Kashmir issue, Rupee-Rouble issue etc. The cryogenic deal was signed by the Soviet Space Agency Glavkosmos and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) in 1991 worth 2.35 billion rupees. According to this deal, Soviet Union was to provide Soviet Cryogenic space technology to India and also training of Indian specialists. Russia became legal successor of the Soviet Union and declared that it would abide by all the treaties and agreements signed by its predecessor. But the US objected to the agreement on the ground that it was violation of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The US objection was based on the argument that the cryogenic engines were of dual use which could also be used for developing ballistic missiles. On the other hand, one reason behind this was US commercial interests. The US did not want India and Russia to become a competitor in the world market and space field technologies.\(^\text{18}\) Cryogenic Deal showed that Russia could not follow an independent foreign policy in the initial years.

Irregular supply of spare parts for Soviet weapons was another irritant factor which further deteriorated Indo-Russian relations. For the smooth supply of Russian weapons and spare parts, Sharad Pawar, India’s Defence Minister, visited Moscow on 6 September 1992, sensing the possibility of obtaining an improved version of the Mig-26 fighter. He also discussed the further deliveries of spare parts to India. In the context of deliveries of spare parts, Gorbachev admitted that the transitional period after the collapse of the Soviet Union had slowed down the development of Russia’s relations

with India. For Procurement of spare parts, India also diversified its strategic-military relations. Sharad Pawar also visited other countries such as Ukraine in 1992 for defence-cooperation.\textsuperscript{19} Ukraine agreed to supply armaments and spare parts to India in return of medicines and cloth and a partial payment in hard currency. The issues of Kashmir and NPT also contributed in worsening the bilateral relations during the initial years of 1991-92. Russia did not have any clear-cut policy towards Kashmir. Initial foreign policy of Russia was pro-west, therefore, it was not surprising to see changes in the Kashmir policy on unexpected lines. During the visit of Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskai to Pakistan in December 1991 he took very different stand on Kashmir by saying that the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir should be decided under the United Nations auspices and in accordance with its resolutions. This was a clear negation of the Indian stand on the Kashmir issue. It was also against the provisions of the Shimla Agreement signed a the Kashmir issue bilaterally without any third party medication.\textsuperscript{20} Over the Russian stand on Kashmir, Kesava Menon wrote “it is now possible that Russia which takes the Soviet Union’s seal on the United Nations Security Council will not exercise veto in favour of India”.\textsuperscript{21} On the nuclear non-proliferation issue, Moscow was now not showing a special relations from Indian point of view. Russia now was compelling India for signing the NPT under the international pressure particularly USA.\textsuperscript{22}

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were two stages in Indo-Russian relations (i) 1991-93, (ii) 1993-2000.\textsuperscript{23} First phase of the Russian foreign policy toward India was not identical with that of the erstwhile Soviet Union. During the first stage there was turbulence in every aspect of Russian society, polity, economy and


\textsuperscript{20} Mahapatra, no. 8, p. 43-44.

\textsuperscript{21} Kesava Menon, “Pak’s ties with Russia on the Upswing”, \textit{The Hindu}, December 23, 1991.

\textsuperscript{22} Bakshi, no. 9, p. 221.

culture. The leadership gave up the special approach towards its old allies including India. In the post-confrontation and post communist world, the focus was on democracy, market reforms and pluralism. Russian leadership considered that western aid was essential. But over all this phase proved costly for the Russia. Unilateral activities by USA, Gulf crisis, Yugoslavia bomb-bardment and Cryogenic rocket etc. were proof of Russia’s weakness. The year 1993 was a lean period in Russian foreign policy for a number of reasons: first there was struggle between President Yeltsin and legislature and result of this struggle was the implementation of new Constitution which provided supremacy of the Russian President over other institutions of Russian political system. Second, Russia was worried about NATO expansion towards East Europe. And finally there was decline in Russian arms export under the US pressure.\textsuperscript{24} US withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) system under the pretext of an Iranian threat. Its plan to establish National Missile Defence System in Poland and the Czech Republic snubbing Russia’s well-founded concerns. Unilateral actions in the context of Iraq, Sudan etc. and most recent example of unilateral action performed by the US in Kosovo separation from Serbia and intervention in Georgia.\textsuperscript{25} But during that period there was also indication that reassessment process of Russian foreign policy had started.

**THE YELTSIN VISIT: JANUARY 1993**

The time from 1993 to 2000 can be called the second phase in Indo-Russian relations in the post-cold war scenario which was to revive the old friendship. President Yeltsin postponed his visit to India twice. It was a sign of Russian reluctance to further develop relations with India. During his visit to India, President Yeltsin replaced the 1971 treaty with the new treaty of friendship and cooperation, which excluded the security clauses, which in the cold war era were against the United States and China.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} Imam, no. 7, p. 100.


During his visit, two countries signed agreements and announced a renewed focus on bilateral economic cooperation. Yeltsin made it clear that Russia would deliver cryogenic engines and space technology for India’s space programme under US $ 350 million deal between the ISRO and Glavkosmos inspite of the imposition of sanctions on both organizations by the US. Before this decision, Moscow earlier scrapped the deal under US pressure. He also expressed strong support for India’s stand on Jammu and Kashmir issue. He also assured continued supply of Russian arms and spare parts to fulfill India’s military requirements. Big issue during Yeltsin’s visit to India was Rupee-Rouble debt agreement. India has nearly ten billion rouble debt to former Soviet Union which Russia wanted to be settled in profitable manner because his country was facing serious economic crisis. During Yeltsin visit, the agreement was concluded that 63 per cent of debt would be paid in the next twelve years at the rate of rupees 1990 to a rouble with 2.4 per cent interest and the remaining 37% was to be paid over 45 years with no interest at the rate of 31.57 rupees to a rouble. Rupee-rouble agreement was only applied to the servicing of India’s debt to former Soviet Union. Future trade between the two countries was to be governed by hard currency.

THE RAO VISIT: 29 JUNE-2 JULY 1994

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao’s visit to Moscow from 29 June to 2 July 1994 further strengthened the bilateral relations. Rao and Yeltsin signed two declarations on 30 June 1994. The first was the Moscow Declaration which was related to protecting the interests of pluralistic states and second was related to further development and deepening of cooperation. Moscow Declaration highlighted the facts that both the countries were facing challenges of terrorism, India in Kashmir and Russia in Chechnya. Increasing Islamic Fundamentalism in Central Asian region was a matter of great concern for both countries.


28 Bakshi, n. 9, pp. 221-23.

CHERNOMYRDIN VISIT: 22-24 DECEMBER 1994

During Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin’s visit to India from 22 to 24 December 1994, eight agreements were signed. Russian Prime Minister allayed the Indian fears regarding Moscow’s arms supply to Pakistan. He made it clear that their relations with Pakistan are fully transparent and open. He said that they are not supplying any weapons to Pakistan today and they had no intention of doing that in the future. In the context of Chechnya war, he said that it had domino effect. Facing the problems in Chechnya, Russia was able to realize the problems that India was facing in Kashmir.30 In return of the chernomyrdin visit in 1994, Indian Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee visited Moscow from 3 to 5 August 1995 which further strengthened the bilateral relations.

YEVGENY PRIMAKOV’S VISITS 1996, 1998

During Andrei Kozyrev as Russian Minister of External Affairs, Russia tilted toward west. But After Kozyrev, Yevgeny Maksimovich Primakov became the Minister of External Affairs on 9 January 1996. While Kozyrev was known for his pro-western orientation, Primakov was interested in maintaining good relations with the old allies. He followed a new course in Russian foreign policy under the “New Course” designed to correct the Western tilt. In India, despite the friendly relations with USA and Europe, Russian relations remained important in South Bloc and among the strategic fields.31 In April 1996 Foreign Minister Primakov described the four priorities of Russia’s foreign policy:

a) Creation of suitable external conditions for Russia’s territorial integrity.

b) Pursuing stability at international level as well as regional level.

c) Cultivate inter-state relations and check on nuclear proliferation.

Primakov had also mentioned the US, the European countries, the EU, China, India, Japan, the Middle East, Canada, Asia Pacific countries as important areas where Moscow should expand its relations.32

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30 Bakshi, n. 9, pp. 243-45.


32 Imam and Romanovsky, n. 4, pp. 189-90.
In fact, Primakov was first Russian Foreign Minister to visit India since Gromyko’s visit some sixteen years ago in 1980. During the Primakov’s visit, issues of convergence between India and Russia were discussed. Both countries were worried about increasing influence of Islamic Fundamentalism in the region of Central and South-West Asia. Primakov expressed the view that the territorial integrity of both countries are of primary interest.

During the visit Primakov said that India is a global power and priority partner of Russia. Issues regarding NPT and CTBT were not discussed because they could ruin the growing relationship.33

Primakov’s visit to New Delhi in December 1998 proved highly successful in the bilateral relations. He also floated the idea about strategic triangle including India, Russia and China for peace and stability in the world and also as a counter to unipolarism. But Primakov’s proposal was not received with great enthusiasm in Beijing or in New Delhi due to long-standing differences between India and China.34

INDIA’S NUCLEAR TEST (1998) AND INDO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

At the Pokhran event on 11 May 1998, Russia consistently refused to impose sanctions against India for her breach of nuclear ethics. Although Boris Yeltsin expressed his displeasure concerning the Indian action, but his criticism was mute.35 When India conducted three nuclear tests on 11 May 1998, same day the Foreign Ministry issued a statement, “the three nuclear tests carried out in India has pushed the world towards the proliferation of nuclear weapons and created additional difficulties for further reduction of nuclear weapons.36 Mixed reaction came from Russia towards India’s nuclear test. The Chairman of the State Duma Gannadey Seleznev offered his support to India. He said

35 Vasudevan, n. 31, p. 27.
that India acted correctly. Communist Party leader Gennedy Zyuganov also expressed his happiness over the nuclear test.

The nuclear test by India did not put an end to close and warmth relations between India and Russia.\textsuperscript{37} Indian nuclear tests were the first major proof of the imperfection model of the world order which was dominated by the USA. The US adopted a different attitude toward the nuclear missiles of its allies, Israel and Pakistan. After the Indian nuclear tests, Pakistan and China came close to each other and strains between India and China appeared. In response to Indian nuclear tests, Pakistan conducted nuclear tests on 28 May 1998 and at the same time, Primakov opposed sanctions and embargo against Pakistan as in the case of India. He said that the new nuclear powers should not be excluded from international dialogues. The use of carrot and stick policy by US to dissuade Pakistan from doing so was a sign of a decreasing American influence in the geo-politically important country of South Asia. The increasing influence of China on the other hand was also a matter of concern for the US. In the context of nuclear tests, the Russia diplomats made it clear that Russia’s policy toward India would remain same as was before the tests.\textsuperscript{38}

So the Indo-Russia relations during Yeltsin era can be divided into two phases. The initial two years were difficult in shaping the bilateral relations while the later years showed gradual evolution of relations in a steady manner. The Russian foreign policy in the first phase was totally guided by ‘enlightened pragmatism”. But Yevgeny Primakov, former Russian Foreign Minister and later Prime Minister, described it as neither enlightened nor pragmatic. The Russian Honeymoon with West particularly USA proved very costly. As a result, the short-lived first phase had to enter into the second phase. In this phase, Russia started considering itself a ‘Eurasian Country’ because more of its part lies in Asia than in Europe. Indo-Russian relations revived in the second phase. The two countries revived their relations in the context of changing world order. The Yeltsin visit to India in 1993 was considered first step in that direction. The initial two years period was nadir in Indo-Russian relation. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., pp. 89-93.

\textsuperscript{38} Bakshi, n. 9, pp. 269-76.
transition phase in Russia from the socialist pattern of society to market economy. Turbulence in every aspect of Russian society, polity, economy and culture witnessed. The leadership gave up the traditional approach towards its old allies including India. In this post-confrontation post-communist world, the focus was on democracy, market reforms and pluralism for which the leaders thought that the Western aid was necessary. The Russian response towards Gulf crisis, Yugolsavian crisis and Cryogenic rocket are proof of Russia’s weakness. The Yeltsin visit in 1993 provided a new direction to Indo-Russian relations. The overall Russian perception and attitude during Yeltsin period remained friendly. Barring the initial two years 1991-92, Russia distanced itself from its old stand regarding Kashmir issue. During Yeltsin visit many agreements were concluded and Indo-Russian relations came to an old track. During the Primakov rule, Indo-Russian relations reached a new height. Now Russia supported the Indian stand on Kashmir and India supported the Russian stand on Chechanya. Also issues like multipolarism, economic reforms and democracy brought both the countries together.