Chapter – I

INTRODUCTION
BACKGROUND: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

"By Policy we mean a continuous process of decisions and their implementations taking place within the organizational structure of the state".¹ Foreign policy has been defined by Joseph Frankel as the "decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others"². We include in this, relations between the state and the external non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

"Like internal policy decisions, decisions in foreign policy are taken in the name of the public interest, and it is the fact which legitimates them in the eyes of the citizens."³

"The formal agency responsible in all countries for the making of foreign policy is generally termed the ministry of foreign affairs."⁴

There are always some forces behind the foreign policy which drive it, can be seen as goals. Some prominent political thinkers have described the goals of foreign policy; Morgenthau (1973) for example has advanced three goals pursued by nation-states: status quo, imperialism, and prestige, Aron (1966) has argued for the centrality of security, force (power), and glory objectives in foreign policy.⁵

Generally speaking the factors which determine the foreign policy of a country are: geographical location and its geopolitics, neighbourhood, a sense of collective security, territory and climate, resources,

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³ Peter Calvert, The Foreign Policy ......., n. 1, p. 1.
⁴ Ibid, p. 4.
The foreign policy of Russia has been affected by these elements too.

**Geographical Location and its Geopolitics** — The Russian Federation, or Russia, consisted the major part of the USSR, providing some 76% of its area and approximately 51% of its population in 1990. It is bounded by Norway, Finland, Estonia and Latvia to the north-west and by Belarus and Ukraine to the west. The southern borders of European Russia are with the Black Sea, Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea and Kazakhastan. The Siberian and the Far Eastern regions have southern frontiers with the People's Republic of China, Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The eastern coastline is on the Sea of Japan, the sea of Okhotsk, the Pacific Ocean Barents Sea, and the northern coastline & on Arctic Ocean. The region around Kaliningrad (Formerly Konigskaag in East Prussia), On the Baltic Sea, become part of the Russian Federation in 1945. Separated from the rest of the Russian Federation by Lithuania and Belarus, its borders Poland to the south, Lithuania to the north and last and has a coastline on the Baltic Sea.6

In the course of the last century, one of the central issues in decisions on Russia's foreign policy was how to balance its European and Asian interests. Frequently, those discussions acquired an ideological content: the matter was essentially whether to support or to reject the values of western civilization. As Bruce Porter has written, "there was not only the liberal west of the enlightenment, so beloved by many Russian 'Westernizes', but also the other west — militarized regimented, technological, juggernaut" embodied by the armies of Charles XII, Fredrick the great, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Ksier Wilhelm. Whereas Russia's internal cohesion and the power of state were threatened whenever it emulated the reforming democratizing

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west, the frequent interaction with the military might of the west helped ensure that "this maps the west that Russia actually emulated".  

As Hugh Seton-Watson demonstrates in his study of the Foreign Policy of Imperial Russia, occasionally the Tsar would permit manifestations of Pan-Slavism to be expressed, when it suited his policy. But he could also turn it off again, if it threatened to get out of hand.  

The new Russian diplomacy, on the other hand, has always been pragmatic. Artificially opposing the West with the East as incompatible directions within Russia's foreign policy contradicts state interests. Since the era of Peter the great, Russian diplomacy has undoubtedly looked toward Europe first and foremost. "As early as the mid-eighteenth century, our country actively participated in European affairs. Particularly after the defeat of Napoleon in the 19th century, it became a full member of, and a leading power in, the European "concerts"."  

At the same time, Russia's active European policy in no way prevented it from establishing versatile contacts with China, Japan, and the United States, all of which were not the key actors in the world arena at that point in history. "Actually that period spawned the idea of a multilateral foreign policy that has now become one of the most fundamental principles undergoing contemporary Russian foreign policy."  

Today this principle harmoniously combines Russia's 'traditional European orientation' with its 'natural wish to secure its interests in Asia'. "Being an integral part of the Asian space, Russia actively engages in the dynamic processes of economic development and

10 Ibid.
integration in the Asia-Pacific reason. It strives to deepen its relations with major Asian powers, such as China, India and Japan. Russia also believes it must urgently contribute to strengthening security and stability in Asia, in particular on the Korean peninsula."\(^{11}\)

It is worth noting that Russia’s deep involvement in European policy and its close historic ties with West European countries did not free intergovernmental relations of problems and controversies. “More often than not, Russia has had to protect its interests in difficult and sometimes extremely unfavorable conditions”. \(^{12}\)

Russians realize that they still have potent influence within their immediate neighbourhood and that if that neighbourhood is important to the larger world, Russia must be important as well. \(^{13}\) Russians are well aware that most of the violence in the world occurs within failed or failing states in regions that may not be of pressing concern to the international institutions capable of stopping the violence- and that several of these regions border Russia. Russians also worry that regional trading blocs and regional markets are becoming the most powerful economic formations in an increasingly interdependent world. \(^{14}\)

**Territory and Climate:** The climate of Russia is extremely varied, ranging from extreme Arctic conditions in northern areas and much of Siberia to generally temperate weather in the south. The average temperature in Moscow in July is 19°C (66°F); the average for January is -9°C (15°F). Average annual rainfall in Moscow is 575 mm (23 ins). \(^{15}\)

The foreign policy of Russia has been affected by its vast territorial zone and extreme cold climate condition. Russia, the successor to the largest of the USSR’s fifteen republics, has an area of 6,592,850 square

\(^{11}\) Ibid, pp. 10-11.

\(^{12}\) Ibid, p. 11.

\(^{13}\) Robert Legvold, “Russia’s Unformed Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs* (New York), September / October 2001, vol. 80, no. 5, pp. 63-64.

\(^{14}\) Ibid, p. 68.

\(^{15}\) “The Russian Federation……, n. 6, p. 3348.
Chapter 1

miles – still the largest of any country in this world and almost twice the size of second ranked Canada. From east to west, it spans more than 6,000 miles and eleven times zones; from north to south, it extends about 2,800 miles. However, much of this vast land is inhospitable. Located in the high northern latitudes, with no mountain ranges in the north to shield it from frigid winter. About one- half of the country is in the permafrost zone. Where the subsoil is permanently frozen; most of Russia’s major ports and rivers are frozen for part of the year. The harsh climate, inhospitable territory, and lack of natural barriers make the Russian Federation unable to protect its boundaries and vulnerable to foreign invasions. To overcome its vulnerability the Russian rulers - whether in its Tsarist, Soviet, or democratic form – followed an expansionist foreign policy. By increasing its political, ideological or territorial influence, Russia always wanted to keep away the aggressors from its own territory.

Most of the ports of Russia remain frozen almost whole of the year. This makes it difficult for the Russian navy to operate its forces for the protection of the boundaries from the attacks by the aggressors. Thus there was a need of such ports which could be operational for the whole year. This made the Tsars of the imperial Russia to search for the warm water ports.

Resources: Russia is richly endowed with natural and human resources, which are a potential source of great economic strength. However, Soviet central planning skewed economic development in favour of heavy industry, making intensive use of energy and raw materials and defence-related branches, and neglecting consumer goods and agriculture. As well as favouring some industrial branches over others, central planning gave rise to inefficient resource use within most industries. Much production was not only insufficiently profitable at market prices, but probably value-destroying as a result of the wasteful application of unpriced or under priced inputs, particularly

energy. In addition, the high levels of industrial waste tolerated by the Soviet authorities have had a serious adverse environmental impact.

Of particular concern is the nuclear industry. There are 12 nuclear reactors of the RBMK (Chernobyl) type still in operation, considered to be inherently unsafe and essentially unrepairable. The oil industry is also a major polluter, since the obsolete infrastructure is a source of repeated spills and leaks. Household waste from urban centres is also inadequately treated, and the drinking water is generally deemed to contain around twice the level of chemicals permitted in Western countries, and over that around large industrial centres such as Kemerovo, headquarters of the coal giant Kuzbass.

The role of resources of any country is equally important as the location, political systems, the historical past etc. in framing the foreign policy. If the country is stronger in terms of economy or rich in resources, the more influential foreign policy it can pursue. Be it trade, financial aid, it can have a strong influence in neighbouring countries or poor countries by the use of these factors as the bonding elements for making diplomatic ties.

Russia is a country rich in natural resources, the harsh climate of Russia limits the ability to exploit them. Vast reserves of petroleum, natural gas, coal, gold, bauxite, and iron ore lie far from the most populated areas, and some are virtually inaccessible. Apart from its brutal effects on workers, the extreme cold hinders the operation of equipment, and the summer marshiness and omnipresent mud make transportation extremely difficult. The largely unfavorable combinations of soil conditions, temperature ranges, and precipitation produce a situation in which less than 15 per cent of the land is sown in crops.17

Although, Russia is rich in resources but its inhospitable and inaccessible conditions make them almost unavailable or costly affairs.

17 Ibid.
So, all these conditions make the Russian Federation to depend heavily on imports of these materials from the neighbouring countries. And for the friendly relationships with the neighbouring countries, the Russian Federation has to adopt a foreign policy according to their convenience. Because of these compulsions, Russia cannot practice an independent foreign policy without taking into the account of mutual advantages of the neighbours.

**Population:** According to preliminary results of the October 2002 census, Russia has a population of 145.29m, a decrease of around 2m since the previous census, carried out in January 1989. The decline in the population would have been much more pronounced had it not been for considerable net immigration in the early 1990s, when many ethnic Russians left other former Soviet republics to resettle in the Russian Federation. Although the demographic crisis has been exacerbated by the strains of the transition process, it is not a purely post-communist phenomenon: death rates for all age groups except those aged 11-20 began to rise in the 1960s. Male life expectancy peaked at 70 in 1971-72, and began to fall thereafter. An unprecedented development in an industrialized country in peacetime. Infant mortality, comparable with Austrian and Italian rates in 1960, was above those of Jamaica and Fiji by the mid-1980s. These long-standing Soviet-era trends became far more pronounced in the 1990s, when death rates and infant mortality rates rose rapidly. After a secular decline since 1985, improving economic conditions in 1999-2002 led to a rise in the birth rate from 8.3 per thousand population to 9.8, but this was still well below the death rate. By 2002, the mortality rate in Russia had reached 15.4 deaths per 1,000 populations, compared to under 7 in China and just over 9 in Poland.\(^\text{18}\)

A combination of territorial loss, war, famine, and political persecution showed the growth considerably, and in 1940 the Soviet Union had 194 million people. With more than 20 million lost in World War II, the

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\(^{18}\) *Country Profile 2003, Russia*, (London: Economic Intelligence Unit, 2003), p. 16.
Chapter I

USSR’s population had grown to 209 million by 1959. Russia, which had 147.4 million in 1989, the time of the last official census, was estimated to have declined to about 146.5 million by October 1997—a population smaller than that of the Russian Empire on the eve of the World War I. The natural decrease in the population attributed to an aging population, a low birth rate, and poor public health—was partially offset by migration into Russia from the other areas of the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the decline in the country’s population was expected by the state Statistical Commission to continue until at least 2010, dropping by an additional six million. The mortality rate, which had been increasing (especially for men) in the 19980’s and early 1990’s was said by the Commission in 1997 to have dropped again to 14.5 deaths per thousand and the birth rate to be holding steady at 9.1 per thousand.¹⁹

The shrinking tendency of Russia’s population results into shortage of manpower for the defence. Russia had already lost its huge manpower in World War-I and II as well as in conflicts with neighbouring states. Inside the territory, Russia has already lost a large number of defence personnel while fighting with separatist groups as well as terrorists. In other words, we can say that the Russian Federation has already taken this issue into its consideration while forming the foreign policy.

Towards a Friendly Neighbourhood and a Sense of Collective Regional Security

During the time of Tsars Russia practised an expansionist and imperialistic foreign policy. Under Peter the Great, Russia fought many wars with bordering states and won battles to ensure its territory from being invaded and captured by the enemy states. Behind this policy, there was a motive to keep the Russian territory safe and secured which were not protected by the nature (mountain, sea, peak etc.). After Peter

¹⁹ Robert H Donaldson and Joseph L Nogee, The Foreign Policy....., no. 16, p. 5.
the Great, many of his successors practised the same foreign policy of imperialism with the same motive.\textsuperscript{20}

But after the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991, the foreign policy of Russia became different from the Tsarist foreign policy. It is now based on friendly relationship with the bordering states to share the sense of collective security, peace and prosperity. As the then Foreign Minister and the architect of the post-Soviet Russia’s foreign policy Kozyrev says the removal of the bipolar confrontation of the past would be replaced by a new positive-sum politics, where Russia’s national interests would be defined not in terms of ‘geopolitical alignment’ but in the establishment of a high standard of living for its population and the preservation of human rights.’ Economic factors and priorities certainly became more important, but they had yet to present a serious challenge to the continuing primacy of geopolitics in Russian foreign policy. For all the talk and deeds of international cooperation in promoting political stability economic development, environmental protection and civil values, old-fashioned political-strategic competition showed few sings of abating. Indeed with NATO’s eastward expansion and the outbreak of the Kosovo conflict, geopolitical attitude within the Russian political elite hardened, if anything.\textsuperscript{21}

After December 1991, Russia’s most immediate foreign policy concerns were with the other former Soviet republics, known in Russia as the ‘near abroad’. Relations with Ukraine were initially, dominated by a dispute over the decision of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet, based mainly in Sevastopol, Crimea. “Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement on the division of the Fleet in June 1995, but Russia subsequently refused to implement the accord, owing to continued disagreement concerning the states of Sevastopol. In May 1997 an agreement was concluded with Ukraine, whereby Russia was to leave

\textsuperscript{20} For detail see, Robert H Donaldson and Joseph L Nogee, \emph{The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests}, (Armonk, New York: M.E.Sharpe,1998).
part of the city's naval base for a period of 20 years, and was to provide financial compensation for ships and equipment received from Ukraine. In April 1996, Russia and Belarus signed an agreement creating a 'Community of Russia and Belarus', according to which the two countries would preserve economic integration and close coordination of foreign and defence policies."22

The Russian Federation maintained significant political and military influence in many former Soviet republics, especially in those areas involved in civil or ethnic conflicts. "Russian troops were deployed in Tajikistan to support the Tajik Government against rebel forces during civil war of 1992-97, and remained thereafter to ensure the security of the Tajik-Afghan border and, in particular, to guard against the possibility of incursions by the militant Islamist Taliban, following their significant military successes in Afghanistan in 1996, these troops, which then numbered some 25,000 were reinforced following the assassination of the military leader of the anti-Taliban forces, Ahmed Shah Masood, in early September 2001."23

In other bordering states like Moldova, Georgia were creating problems for Russian Federation in the name of ethnic separatist movements, Russia faced many such ethnic separatist forces which resulted in border tensions. The ethnic tensions created a demand for a separate state for example Chechnya crisis is a well known issue.

Allegations persisted throughout the 1990s and early 2000s that the Russian government provided military support for separatist factions in Moldova and Georgia, although in late 1999, it was announced that all Russian troops in the (predominantly ethnic Ukrainian and Russian) separatist Transnistria region of Moldova were to be withdrawn by the end of 2002. Meanwhile, in December 1998 Russia and Georgia signed an agreement that provided for the incremented transfer of the control their mutual frontiers, from Russian to Georgian guards (control of the

22 "Russian Federation......, n. 6, p.3357.
23 Ibid.
frontier was however, complicated by the existence of separatist and rebel-controlled regions on both sides of the border — Chechnya within Russia and Abkhazia heightened tensions with Georgia, which subsequently increased further as the result of allegations, denied by Georgia, that the state was harbouring Chechen rebels and selling arms to the Russian separatist republic.24

While in the first two years of the Yeltsin era such sentiments were relatively restrained the emergence of NATO's enlargement as a live issue in the autumn of 1993, together with mounting policy disagreements over the Yugoslavia, engendered a feeling that Russia needed to take active measures in response to geopolitical encroachment from the West. As Primakov noted soon after becoming Foreign Minister, "expansion of the alliance would create a new geopolitical situation for Russia, one which it could not ignore. Later the Kosovo crisis and NATO's military operation against Slobodan Milosevic reinforced already strong sentiment about alleged nefarious intent on the part of the West."25

The geopolitical strain was the chronic instability in Russia's periphery. "The Post-Soviet transition in countries such as Georgia and Azerbaijan had proceeded more smoothly. But what enhanced the appeal of geopolitics was the presence of ongoing conflicts in a number of neighbouring republics, plus the opportunities this instability appeared to offer to outside power to increase their influence at Russia's expense. Unlike regional economic cooperation (for example, in transitional pipelines) which demanded and expanded time-frame, conflict resolution becomes a preoccupation of the here and now. Beyond the CIS, too, geopolitics had an immediacy lacking in others aspects of foreign policy. NATO's enlargement, and the crisis in

24 Ibid.
Bosnia, Iraq and later Kosovo, were more tangible than long-term economic phenomena such as globalisation.”

The Historical Tradition and its Experience

The origins of Russian foreign policy can be traced to the period (1482-1505) when Ivan III (Ivan the great) reigned over the Muscovite state. The year 1480 saw the formal collapse of the two-and-one-half century-long “Tatar Yoke”, as the domain of the Mongol warrior Genghis Khan and his successors over Russia is popularly known. Ivan had already begun to undermine Tatar power through his policy of “collecting of Russian lands.” Ivan the great was the first ruler of Moscow to use the title “Tsar”. Tsar Ivan was determined to build a strong centralised state based on his hegemony over the princely family—a policy that drove him to acquire additional land with which to reward his followers. This linkage of strong rule at the centre and expansionism continued under Ivan IV, who ruled from 1533 to 1584. Externally, Ivan IV began the expansion of the Muscovite power into non-Russian territories with the conquest in 1550s of the southern Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan. Gaining access thereby to the Caspian Tatar empire, on the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea. The full blooming of Russian foreign policy took place under the strong leadership of Peter I (Peter the great) who reigned from 1689 to 1725. Not only did Peter transform his country into one of the great powers of Europe, but in 1721 he renamed it the Russian empire and himself Emperor of Russia.”

Most analysts find the foreign policy of Russia under the tsars as that of expansionism. There are variations in this explanation given for this four-centuries-long pattern of expanding the boundaries of the Russian state. Some analysts stress factors that portray Russia as an unprovoked aggressor fulfilling some messianic or autocratic urge, and others depict a regime haunted by its vulnerability to invasion and

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26 Ibid, p. 102.
obsessed with the search for security. Russia’s geopolitical situation explains several facets of Russian expansionism. The vastness and openness of the Russian landmass, and the absence of natural barriers within or around it, help to account for the obsessive concern by Russia’s rulers for its security, as these factors permitted easy invasion by neighbouring powers and, alternatively, relatively easy outward expansion of Russian power. 28

The foreign policy experience of Soviet Union was even more equivocal. Certainly, the new Russia cannot consider itself a successor to the USSR as the champion of the theory of a global “class struggle” which had once served as an ideological basis for confrontation with the West as well as for the well-known use of force in “Europe and Asia.” 29

The interests of the state often prevailed over ideological directives even then. Soviet efforts to prevent a global nuclear conflict and to settle international crisis, as well as to sign agreements on arms control and disarmament and to establish the United Nations itself – whose charter still constitutes the basis of international law- prioritized interests over ideology. 31 Martin Malia, a scholar who argues that “Russian exceptionalism was largely confined to the Soviet period, makes the case against ascribing Russian expansionism largely to ideological motives:

“In fact, however Russian foreign policy under the old regime was no more ideological than that of any others European powers. Like all other powers, Russia was expansionist, but essentially for geographical reasons.......” 30

Chapter I

The history of the Cold War is instructive. Even in the most democratic and difficult periods, the USSR and the United States were able to establish sufficiently reliable mechanisms, and corresponding instruments of international law, to maintain strategic stability. In particular, the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 still remain the pillars of international security.\(^{31}\)

Finally, Soviet diplomacy, guided by state interests, sometimes even promoted state civilization and weakened the most odious manifestations of internal control. Preparing and signing the Helsinki Final Act, for example committed the Soviet Union to unprecedented international obligations in the field of human rights.\(^{32}\)

Thus the main lesson from Russia’s foreign policy in recent centuries is that Moscow rejects ideology in favour of national interests. “Our choice is to create favourable conditions for sustaining economic development strengthening governance, and raising the living standards of our citizens.”\(^{33}\)

Origin of Russian Foreign Policy

According to some scholars the date of Russian Foreign Policy begins with its declarations of independence and sovereignty of Russia in 1990, when Russia was part of the constituent of the USSR.\(^{34}\) However at that stage Russia was certainly not fully a recognised state by International Community up till 25 December 1991, before the collapse of Soviet Union. Therefore we take that date is the beginning of the Foreign Policy of Russia.

The break-up of the USSR also created a number of other problems for Russia. The most pressing of these had been that of the large Russian

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\(^{33}\) Igor Ivanov, “The New Russian Identity…...”, n. 9, p.10.

Chapter I

speaking population residing in new neighbouring states, to whom Russia had extended guarantees of protection. Some 25 million Russians spread throughout all the successor states, the potential for the conflict was manifested, involving outright hostilities in Moldova and simmering disputes with the Baltic states and with Ukraine over largely Russian-populated Crimea.

At the same time Russian economy was in a bad shape. Russia needed foreign assistance for its economic restructuring. During the Gorbachev period many of the central foreign policy pursuits had an economic rationale. Nuclear and conventional disarmament allied to reductions in military expenditure after 1988 were part of a military budget. This concern with economic objectives was continued by Russia. In some respects this had been linked to developments in the security sphere, in that Russia's improving relationship with NATO had permitted projected conventional and strategic arms procurement of fall considerably during 1992.

It was against such a background that new Russia began to organise and operate policy. Several dates are of significance in pinpointing the birth of the Russian foreign policy. In June 1990, for example, marked the adopting of a declaration of "State Sovereignty". The government of RSFSR thereafter engaged in a range of ostensible foreign policy activities. Andrei Kozyrev was appointed as the Foreign Minister in October 1990. Prior to August 1991, some success was apparent in the cultivation of international ties. Declarations of friendship and cooperation were made with Poland (October 1990), Mongolia (February 1991), and Czechoslovakia (May 1991), and a number of agreements were reached with the federal units of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Germany. However, the integrity of Russian "foreign policy" was still not recognised in the absence formal diplomatic recognition.

The failed coup d'etat of August 1991 changed the balance dramatically in favour of Russia. In the four-month period which
followed, the USSR entered a period of dissolution. Efforts promoted by the centre to preserve some form of union structure failed and constituent republics declared their independence. Moreover, Soviet foreign policy institutions were subverted by the Union republics, and the RSFSR's international community.

The issue of diplomatic recognition, meanwhile, was partly overcome by the formation of the CIS and finally resolved on 25 December 1991, with Gorbachev's resignation as Soviet President and Commander in-chief, and the formal end of USSR by the decision of the Supreme Soviet the following day, which paved the way to Russia's swift and full entry into international community.

Pinpointing December 1991, as the key date in the inception of Russian foreign policy is not, however, to overlook the relevance of the international activities of the RSFSR prior to that date. What is important is that so long as the USSR existed, that republic was not a legitimate foreign policy actor in the eyes of other states and international institutions.

During the seven decades after 1917, the discussion of international affairs in Moscow was confined within the constructing framework of an elaborate structure of ideas concerning Soviet Union's role in the world – as the champion of international progress and proletarian revolution. The crumbling of Soviet Union was accompanied by the collapse of this whole structure of ideas. Shock waves traversed the field of discussion of foreign policy in Russia. A tendency to swing from one extreme to another developed. Yet, there also emerged a clear underlying trend, a flight from what is described as 'ideology' and a pragmatic concern with what writers refer to as the concrete national interests of the new Russian State.

Chapter I

The first phase, which got under way well before 1991 was dominated by a wholesale reaction against traditional Soviet foreign policy doctrine. It had two main aspects. The first was a rejection of Stalinist militarism and economic isolationism. It culminated in the endorsing of visions of a new, peaceful and increasingly economically integrated world order. This had a dramatic effect on the Soviet Union’s international image and they helped to ease Soviet acceptance of the International retreats and climb down of 1990 and 1991.37

The second aspect of reaction against the pre-existing Soviet doctrine was the swing towards an almost unconditional Westernism. This became most evident in statements which came from the Russia Foreign Ministry in the First months of Foreign policy of Russia that it intended ‘to enter the club of the most developed democratic countries; and that it was the lost link with the democratic Northern Hemisphere’ and that it was about to ‘return to Europe’ and so on.38

While a minority of conservative minded writers tended to emphasis in military and security means, self described ‘realist’ felt that Russia had no option but to throw its lot with the west whatever the underlying tension and conflicts of interests. They were not calling for a strategic change in policy, they said, but simply for a more clear-eyed application of it. Criticism of particular aspects of the foreign policy of the new post-communist Russian government was not slow in appearing, however.

This change in the turn of foreign policy however did not mean that Russia had totally broken away from the legacy of the Soviet Union. The foreign policy of Russia continued to be influenced by the legacy of the USSR. Its self-proclaimed status as the legal successor of the Soviet Union binds it to all the international commitments entered into by the former regime, not least in the sphere of nuclear and conventional disarmament and military withdrawal from East-Central.

38 Ibid.
Europe. In the areas in which no legal obligation pertained, Russia had the choice of either continuing or forsaking the options pursued, but not necessarily completed, in the latter period Soviet foreign policy. Consequently, issues like abandonment of Third World allies had been of topical concern to the Russian leaders. Moreover, while Russia had succeeded to the borders of RSFSR, where frontiers had coincided, it inherited a number of unresolved issues. These included the issues of force deployment near the borders with China and the deadlock with Japan over the Kurile Islands. 

Development of Russian Foreign Policy

During 1992, arguments tended to centre around the question of geographical priorities. Critics of the Foreign Minister argued that far too much attention had been paid to the "far abroad" and not enough to the "near abroad", i.e., to the countries which had emerged from the former Soviet Union. Sergei Stankevich, a senior foreign policy advisor to President Yeltsin declared in March 1992 that Russian policy makers should be focusing on the developing of the crisis in their own backyard. Russia should avoid being drawn into a North-South anti Islamic confrontation in which it would suffer disproportionately because if its location and because of its own substantial Muslim minority population. "It is obvious" he wrote: "that we should seek a new balance appropriate to the present day situation of Russia between Western and Eastern orientations. Meanwhile, the first thing to do is to strengthen our position in the East correcting the evident distortion crated by the autos of 'common European home' conception. "Stankevich labeled his new policy orientation 'Eurasianism'. This approach had been described as 'demo-patriotism' and is an increasingly influential currently, which is fundamentally Westernist in its attitude but sees a pragmatic need for a more assertive foreign policy.

39 Mark Webber, "The Emergence of Foreign Policy......, n. 35, p. 252.
Despite this dissenting option, Yeltsin and his team were able to act independently at first. In foreign policy Andrei Kozyrev deemed to be almost exclusively emphasising on Russian solidarity with the West. This in fact was an extension of the policy pursued in the last two years of Mikhail Gorbachev’s rule. Originally labeled the new political thinking, this proclaimed that the USSR would not challenge but would work in cooperation with the US. It stressed the right of each state to choose its own path of development, called for the de-ideologisation of foreign policy and urged the substitution of ethnical norms and the recognition of mutual security interests for the use of force in international relations.

By April 1992, when the Sixth Congress People’s Deputies met, Yeltsin was, however, openly challenged and he was brought to the realisation that political leadership must accommodate the interests and views of the dissenters too. Foreign policy towards to build on a wider domestic policy base. As far as policy towards the West is concerned, the changes have been cautions, a matter of tone and detail, there has been a sharper focus on economic issues. The most striking changes have come in the politically sensitive sphere of policy towards the “near abroad”. Already in the summer of 1992, the Deputy Foreign Minister began to work on an new more active strategy and his report argued that Russia must win international recognition for its role as the leading role in ensuring stability of the former Soviet Union. In February 1993, Yeltsin announced that Russia was going it push for greater integration with the CIS and that it would not neglect its special responsibilities.41 Thus, amid all the confusion and ambiguity what seem to be emerging was a policy shaped as a constantly fought over compromise between pragmatically conceived longer term interests and shorter term interests of influential groups. In others words, the transitory character of the new framework was put in sharp focus with a mix of continuity and change.

41 Ibid, pp. 30-31.
The initial three years, 1991-93, of foreign policy of new Russia thus may be seen as in a state of transition. Although traditional ideological goals were discarded, some new total however appeared to have acquired some permanency and consensus among every interest group. A major one of these, was of course, close and co-operative relationship with the West, particularly the USA. The other was the need for delinking foreign policy with military power and super power ambitions. The main direction of foreign policy appeared to be moving towards Europe and CIS states. However, its role in Asia was yet to be defined. Another major point to be noted was transparency in its making and in its operation. These certainly appeared to be major inputs of the emerging framework of Russian foreign policy during the period under review.

Moreover, the emerging framework had distinct element of continuity from Gorbachev’s foreign policy framework. It may even be argued that there was more continuity than change in this respect. In any case, this emerging framework was strongly influenced by a mix of continuity and change, certainly upto 1993, if not later. Yet its transitory character need not be forgotten, as it was linked with the entire gambit of socio-political structure of new Russia, which in itself was in transition. In other words, the issues by the end of 1993 was far from settled. Yet it was flexible enough to adopt practical policies and measures in the area of foreign policy, particularly where crucial Russian interests were involved.

Thus we can see that foreign policy of Russia was in transition and developed in various stages. The first stage, as we have described above, covered the years 1991-93, was indeed the formative year. It was also during this period Russian Foreign policy under Foreign Minister Kozyrev, followed a pro-western policy particularly subserving to the USA. After mid 1992 it was slowly realised that new Russia must not forget Asia, as Russia itself lies almost half in

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Asia. From 1993, efforts were made to readjust between east and west but real breakthrough came on the eve of 2nd presidential election in 1996. In April 1996 Kozyrev was dismissed from the post of Foreign Minister and Primakov was appointed in his place. With a background of academic in the foreign policy between the east and west. Thus the Primakov years of Russian foreign policy began.

However a new issue, the expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe cast a shadow over Russian Foreign Policy. Inspite of his best effort Primakov as Foreign Minister had to pay full attention to this problem and thus he got diverted. However the trend of developing useful strategic and economic partnership with India, China and Iran continued.

Thus the second stage transition of Russian Foreign Policy, covering the year 1997-98, was characterised by the strained relations between the east and west, on the one hand and on the other closer economic and strategic relations with China, India and Iran. Russian Foreign policy in CIS also devoted more than its due share of attention to Ukraine and Kazakhstan, while its general policy to CIS remained confused and operated in a zigzag way.43

However Russia was not able to disallay impression in CIS, particularly in Central Asia, that it really wanted to dominate them. Russia’s misadventure in Chechenya during 1994-95 also did not help much in this regard.44

Suddenly on the eve of the New Year 2000 Yeltsin resigned and Vladimir Putin took over as active President. Earlier during much of the year 1999, Putin had acted as Prime Minister of Russia and virtually was in-charge of the nation because of the recurrent illness of President Yeltsin. In many cases during 1999, Putin was preoccupied in savage war in Chechenya and paid not much attention to foreign policy.

At the start of the new millennium Yeltsin era had formally ended, yet its aftermath was felt in foreign policy. Russian foreign policy remained at a stand still with strained relations with USA and European Union, while on the other hand, strategic and economic relations continued to run a steady course in case of China, India and Iran and even near abroad, that is to say CIS countries. It was, however, obvious that given Russia's strong linkages with the West since 1991, such a situation may not last long. Transitory character of Russian foreign policy thus continued in 1997-99 period.