CHAPTER V

A NEW POLICY TOWARDS KASHMIR? CONVERGENCE OF APPROACHES IN RESOLVING THE ISSUE
As we have discussed in the third and fourth chapters in brief reference, the emerging realities in the post cold war scenario provide opportunities for both India and Russia to forge common stand on various issues. In this chapter, these emerging areas have been discussed elaborately to corroborate the hypothesis that because of these factors both India and Russia have come closer and adopt common approach on various issues including Kashmir and Chechnya. International terrorism, multipolarism, democracy and economic imperative are those factors, which have provided levers for both the countries to come closer.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, which also inaugurated end of the cold war, witnessed drastic changes in international politics. Bipolarism was receding to the vanishing point, the spirit of democracy was in upswing and the forces of market economy were in full drive around the world. This change was clearly evident in the speech of the first Russian President, Boris Yeltsin at a special summit meeting of the United Nation Security Council: “We rule out any subordination of foreign policy to ideological doctrines or a self-sufficient policy. Our principles are simple and understandable: the supremacy of democracy, human rights and liberties, legality, and morality.”

At the domestic level Russia was confronted not only with a fragile economy and a vulnerable polity but also the emerging threats of separatism and terrorism. Hence, it was understandable when the Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, after assuming the charge of office in 1996, enumerated these policy tasks, among others, as priorities:

strengthening territorial integrity, strengthening centripetal tendencies, stabilizing the international situation at the regional level including the Central Asian region, etc. India has been concerned with these issues in a similar manner. The commonality of approaches of both the countries on these issues has been highlighted by the Russian Ambassador to India, Alexander Kadakin who in his speech delivered at United Services Institution of India on 26 September 2001 focused on factors like international terrorism, multipolarism, democracy, economic relations, etc. as areas on which interests of both India and Russia converge. Hence, Indo-Russian relations can be seen in a wider framework of convergence. For this purpose these issues of common concern need separate analysis so that their importance in reinforcing the element of continuity in Russia’s Kashmir policy can be assessed in detail.

Terrorism

Russian President Vladimir Putin called terrorism, ‘the plague of the 21st century.’ Not only Russia in Chechnya, India in Kashmir, the US in New York and Washington, the menace of terrorism has affected badly many countries. However, the surges of terrorism as suffered by India in Kashmir and the surge of terrorism as suffered by Russia in Chechnya are strikingly similar. With both Russia and India being multi-

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cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious states, the problems related to heterogeneity, both horizontal and vertical, are similar. So also are the factors arising from internal and external linkages. Whether it is Chechnya or Kashmir, destabilization threats with immense debilitative potential are common elements of anxiety. In fact, Kashmir itself has to be seen as part of the wider question of ethnicity in pluralist societies. In the case of India and Russia these areas also happen to contain a majority population belonging to different religious faiths. For Russia, endorsement of the Indian position on Kashmir is, therefore, part of an inherent psychological urge, given its own propensity to ethnic clashes. As a former Indian Foreign Secretary puts it: "herein lies the most significant of the emerging New Delhi-Moscow perceptional convergence."  

However, before going into details regarding the commonality we would take up Chechnya and Kashmir for individual analysis and then see the similarities emerging out of them.

The Chechen republic, situated in the Transcaucasian region, is a part of the Russian Federation. In November 1991, the Chechnya republic declared independence taking into advantage of the fragile character of the federal polity, centered in Moscow. It refused to sign the Federation Treaty in Moscow on 31 March 1992. But the tiny Chechen state fell victim to lawlessness and disorder. Chaos was raging in Chechen politics with several National Assemblies, each representing a political trend. Looting, arson, robbery and dacoity were the order of the day. In 1993 alone at the Grozny section of the North Caucasian railway 559 persons were raided and about four thousand wagon

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and containers were robbed either completely or partially. Damage was estimated at 11.5 billion roubles. This lawlessness also led to large-scale migration. According to one report, till 1999, over 200,000 Russians and 600,000 Chechens fled Chechnya, paralyzing normal life there.

The Chechen separatist leader, Dzohokhar Dudayev in his book issued in 1993 made explicit his dream to set up an all-Caucasian republic covering all Caucasus including Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. To check this process of separatism, the Yeltsin government started military operation in Chechnya in September 1994, which ended in a failure. After that the process of negotiation followed. As per negotiations in Khasavyurt in 1996, Chechnya was granted de facto independence, but not secession from the republic. According to President Yeltsin, "if Chechnya were granted independence, it would immediately become a seat of international terrorism flowering thanks to Arab money injections and Chechen would be turned into pseudo Islam...."

Russia was also afraid of the spill over effect of secession on other constituents of the federation. However, despite the sanction of defacto independence, the Maskhadov government in Chechnya failed to impose law and order and the state quickly confirmed its reputation as a lawless society, dominated by clan violence, kidnapping and murder. By 1999, more than 1300 Russians, Degestanis or Ingush had fallen victim to this

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
lawlessness and disorder.\textsuperscript{10} For the Westerners, the violence was exacerbated by a series of brutal seizures and killings. The most notorious of these incidents include the murder of six Red Cross workers in the Chechen capital, Grozny in December 1996, the kidnapping of Camilla Carr and Jon James in July 1997 in Grozny, and the beheading of four British based telecom engineers.\textsuperscript{11} In fact Chechnya was turning itself into a 'gangsters paradise.'\textsuperscript{12}

Russian stand towards Chechnya received a shock when on 8 August 1999, some 2000 Islamic/Chechen militants moved into Dagestan from southern Chechnya under the command of Basayev, Khattab and Dagestani Islamic leader Jadji Bhauddin.\textsuperscript{13} Their intention was to declare Dagestan, a constituent republic of Russian Federation, and Islamic republic against the will of the Dagestanis.\textsuperscript{14} The next day the Russian forces, under the direction of newly appointed Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, began bombing of Chechen guerrilla positions. On 13 August 1999, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov warned Islamic states not to interfere in Chechnya\textsuperscript{15} and on 17 August 1999 the Ministry of Defence took control of the war. The new Prime Minister promised to have the rebels out of Dagestan within a fortnight. On 18 August 1999 the Russian air force bombed TV and radio stations in Karamakhi and Chabanmakhki, villages held by the militants. Later

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} n. 10.
\textsuperscript{14} n. 12, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{15} n. 10, p. 307.
Russian artillery strikes against enemy positions in the Botlikh region were increased, leading to withdrawal of militants from Dagestan.

In September 1999, especially after a series of terrifying apartment-block bombings in Russian cities including Moscow, Putin ordered the troops to continue into Chechnya, to root out and destroy the rebels. Putin in his interview to ‘Breakfast with Frost’ show on BBC on 5 March 2000 justified his actions in Chechnya on the ground that even after the grant of large autonomy, “no state formation appeared in the territory in Chechnya. The extremist forces used that vacuum to break up Chechnya into small units. Each such unit was headed by a leader, the so-called field commander, who acted contrary to the constitution and laws, and we got a kind of a mini-Afghanistan.”\(^\text{16}\) He narrated the situation how the extremist forces were getting weapons, money and mercenaries from abroad. He reasoned: “we understood that if we do not strike at the terrorist base itself, their bases in the territory of Chechnya, we will never get rid of the disease and that gangrene”.\(^\text{17}\)

The erstwhile princely state of Kashmir became an integral part of India after Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir signed the instrument of accession with the government of India on 26 October 1947\(^\text{18}\). This fact was further corroborated by Alan Campbell-Johnson,\(^\text{19}\) the personal attache to Mountbatten, the then Viceroy, and Mehr Chand

\(^{16}\) n. 6, p.112.

\(^{17}\) Ibid, p. 113.


Mahajan\textsuperscript{20}, the then Prime Minister of Kashmir. According to Campbell-Johnson, “the legality of the accession is beyond doubt.”\textsuperscript{21} But India had to fight its hostile neighbour, Pakistan four times at the battlefield and a number of times in various international fora including the United Nations on the issue. Pakistan often violated agreements signed by both the countries to maintain peace and tranquility in the region. It violated umpteen times the mutually agreed principles of Simla agreement, 1972 and the Lahore Declaration, 1999. In utter disregard to the principles of Simla Agreement, which committed both the countries to resolve the issue bilaterally and peacefully, Pakistan launched moves to internationalize the issue and when it realized that it could not defeat India by direct fight it started proxy war against India in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{22} This Pakistani urge for proxy war saw its height in 1999 in Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir\textsuperscript{23} just after few months of the signing of the Lahore Declaration. Similarly, Russia was no exception to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Among the international sponsors of Chechen terrorists, one \textit{Moscow News File} listed following organizations from Pakistan: Pakistani-Chechen Friendship Association, Jihad World Front, Jamaat-i-Islami, Safa, Victory Force and six others\textsuperscript{24}.

It is worth mentioning here that Russian Federation, like India, is not a homogeneous polity. Some of its republics have clearly separate ethno-linguistic or religious identities. These are Adygei, Bashkiria, Buryatia, Chechnya, Chuvashia, 

\textsuperscript{21} n. 18, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{22} Dennis Kux “India’s Fine Balance”, \textit{Foreign Affairs (New York)}, vol. 81, no. 3, May-June 2002 p. 93.
\textsuperscript{24} n. 6, p. 125.
Degestan, Gorno-Altai, Ingushetia, Jewish Republic, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia, Karachevo-Cherkees, Karelia, Khakassia, Komi Republic, Mari Republic, Moldovia, North Ossetia, Tatarstan, Tuva, Udmurtia and Yakutia. Six or seven of them have a concentration of Muslim population. India too has concentration of Muslims in different states. The Russian motivation in suppressing the Chechen rebellion is obvious. A separatist victory would herald the disintegration of Russia. Chechen Ingush and Dagestan and such other autonomous republics are also rich in natural resources and losing them means economic instability for Russia. Russia's reaction to the Dudayev regime in Chechnya is also influenced by the evolving trends in the Central Asian Republics.

The Central Asian scenario remained fragile after the break down of the Soviet Union. This 'soft underbelly' of Russia was highly vulnerable to various extremist forces and terrorist upsurges. After the collapse of the Union, commentators were busy in writing, "how growing support for Islamic fundamentalism could threaten political stability, of possible inter-ethnic clashes between local Russians and Central Asians, of the dire economic consequences that would accompany the end of Moscow's 'hand-outs', of how regional security would be threatened by a Turkish-Persian rivalry for control of the region..." During his visit to Austria, the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev voiced concern over Islamic fundamentalism in Asia. The President expressed concern over the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism in the Asian

25 n. 5.
regions of the former USSR, and advocated a search for shared approaches to solve the problem within a CIS framework, primarily between Russia and Kazakhstan.\textsuperscript{27}

Maintenance of ethnic peace and economic development were issues of major concern for both Russians and Central Asian states after the Soviet collapse. Russia was worried about the protection of rights and legitimate interests of the ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers in the Central Asian region. Out of 25 million Russians that remained in other former Soviet republics, nearly 10 million happened to be in Central Asia. Out of the total 55 million population in Central Asia, the Russian diaspora constituted the second largest ethnic group after the Uzbeks.\textsuperscript{28} However, the breakout of civil war in Tajikistan in early months of 1992 and its fallouts upset the balance in the region. According to reports, in the Tajik civil war between the ex-Communist ruling elites and the coalition of Islamic opposition parties, the later was receiving aid and sanctuary in neighboring Afghanistan where various Mujahideen factions had come to power in April 1992. The Tajik militants were also getting support from Iran and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{29}

The ex-Communist ruling elites in all other Central Asian Republics were afraid of the spread of the ‘Tajik disease’. While they had come to terms with social and cultural resurgence of Islam, they were opposed to politically ambitious militant fundamentalist Islam. To check the spread of religions fundamentalism and terrorism, an agreement was signed by Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan whereby a 25,000-strong Russian Central Asian force was created to protect the Tajik-

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, p. 1582.
Afghan border to keep the militants at bay. Russia deployed its 201st Motorized Rifle Division in Tajikistan. The Islamic elements in Tajikistan received a resolute rebuff from these forces and the ex-communists were put back into power. On 29 April 1993 Nezavisimaya Gazeta remarked that Russia would defend the Tajik-Afghan border as its own. Russia has its own substantial Muslim population in north Caucasus and the republics of Tatarstan and Bashkirstan, etc. A significant reason for Chechnya's recent instability has been the importation into the republic of non-Russian Islamic militants, some of whom have spent their adult lives fighting Russians in Afghanistan. The most important of these are known as Wahhabis, a general term given to militants who practice austere form of Islam from Saudi Arabia.

Cross-border terrorism has been a danger to international community with ever growing character. And the issue areas like Kashmir and Chechnya are special focus of attention of scholars because these territories are worse victims of it. Narrowing down the focus we can hold the view that cross border terrorism is a grave danger to peace and stability in both India and Russia. Pakistan's role in promoting and patronizing terrorism has become a matter of common concern because while India is situated in direct vicinity of Pakistan, Russia is not far from Pakistan. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has well-developed instruments in orchestrating instability and disorder in the region. In its system, there have been three levels of terrorist training camps, imparting different kinds of military training to recruits. Yossef Bondansky, Staff Director to US House of
Representatives' Task Force on Terrorism and Conventional Warfare revealed in a 30-minute documentary in 1995 entitled 'Terror Incorporated' that the camps around Muzaffarabad in Pak-occupied Kashmir train inmates in hit and-run tactics. In another kind of camps under the direct control of ISI, training is given to create havoc in India. The third kind of camps are more sensitive, meant to train terrorists for world-wide operations.

According to a report published in Punjab Keshari on 2 August 1996, several special training camps were established in the Chitral region in northwestern Pakistan. Earlier such camps were run in big number in the Khost and Jalalabad regions in Afghanistan. According to the report, later camps were organized in Muzafarrabad, Aliabad, Kahuta, Hazira, Mirpur, Rawalkot, Rawalpindi and in same places in the occupied Kashmir and Pakistan. Among the terrorist organizations, the Al-Badr II has been meant for trainees from Arab and Bosnia. In these camps lessons imparted are on bomb making, the use of automatic weapons, rocket launchers and anti-aircraft guns. There are religious classes, instructing trainees in the nature of Jihad. As regards the number of military training camps for recruits, by 1992, the ISI was operating 13 permanent, 18 temporary and 8 joint training camps for Kashmiri youth.

34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
Newspapers revealed that in an official secret report submitted to the government of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, it was admitted that 38 military training camps existed in Pakistan from where trained terrorists were being dispatched regularly to Kashmir, Bosnia, Palestine and some African countries on ‘Jihad’ campaigns. At the end of 1996, the number of active military training camps has been given as 73 in Pak-occupied Kashmir, 23 on Pakistan territory and 12 in Afghanistan.\(^\text{38}\) In 1995 Pakistan-based Harakat-ul-Ansar (HUA) claimed credit for having trained, since 1987 more than 4000 militants including Pakistanis, Indians, Arabs and a small number of Americans in making bombs, throwing grenades and firing assault weapons, According to an official Afghan source\(^\text{39}\), there were about 8000 members of HUA in 1994 who were “supporting” the Kashmir struggle. The Pakistani terrorist activities are not limited in Kashmir; they are well spread to the CIS, an obvious threat to peace and stability in the region. Under the patronage of ISI, informs a Pakistani monthly, *Newsl ine*,\(^\text{40}\) February 1995, Pakistani religious organizations established close contacts with clandestine Islamic movements in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

As in Kashmir, Pakistan’s machinations in Chechnya are also guided by religions fundamentalism and terrorist outlook. Engaged in a war of total secession from Moscow, Chechens had been extended various kinds of help and assistance from Pakistan. Citing


\(^{40}\) n. 33, p. 1022
Russian intelligence reports *Indian Express* disclosed that Pakistani instructors imparted subversive training to Chechen rebels.\(^{41}\) Russian officers alleged that hundreds of Afghans from refugee camps in Pakistan were recruited to fight the Russian forces in Chechnya. Leaders of Pakistan’s Jamaat-I-Islami confirmed, “their volunteers have been fighting alongside Dudayev’s forces”.\(^{42}\) As we have mentioned earlier the menace of international terrorism has not been confined to India and Russia, it has rather wider ramifications. For instance, apart from providing ideological and military training to militants in Xinjiang, Pakistan is said to have been arranging for extension of various kinds of assistance to Uighur Muslims of the north-western Chinese province. One Russian Scholar drew the attention of the author to this ‘united net of Islamic terrorism’.\(^{43}\) He remembered how, a year ago, Russian TV made the sensational news that the Chinese citizens from Xinjiang were supporting the Chechen terrorists, and how the noted terrorists like Basayev went Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia and further South to spread fundamentalism and terrorism.\(^{44}\) To cite another case: in a letter to the United Nations Security Council, the Ethiopian government stated that most of the terrorists who took part in an unsuccessful murderous attempt on the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak in Adis Ababa in June 1995 resided in Pakistan and were recruited there.\(^{45}\) Taking all these factors into account one strategic analyst commented that “herein

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\(^{41}\) A December 1995 report in the Russian daily Izvestia, cited in a PTI report in *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 22 May 1996.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.

\(^{43}\) Personal interview with Prof. Sergei Lounev, Major Research Fellow, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow on 13 January 2005, *Author’s Personal File*, p. 4.

\(^{44}\) Ibid.

\(^{45}\) *Times of India* (New Delhi), 20 June 1996.
terrorism) lies the most significant of the emerging New Delhi Moscow perceptual convergence". 46

It would be appropriate here to mention that the focus on international terrorism has been manifold especially after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001. Both India and Russia could be able to treat the incident as a major security threat and as an opportunity to reshape international politics. In his televised message to the Russian population after the attacks, Russian President Vladimir Putin affirmed that “today’s events once again underscore the urgency of Russia’s proposals to unite the efforts of international community in the fight against the terror…." 47 Similarly, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in his address to the nation on 14 September 2001, aftermath of the terrorist attacks, affirmed the Indian stand that the international community must come forward to take concerted effort against the ‘evil’. He proposed for a comprehensive convention against Terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations to fight against the menace. 48 This growing concern in part of the US with regard to international terrorism and its wider ramifications led to the emergence of a sort of global consensus against fighting terrorism 49 and, contrary to the previous

46 n. 5.
47 n. 4.
48 For the text of the address see, Strategic Digest, vol. 31, no. 10, October 2001, p. 1375.
stand, the US recognition of Chechnya as a part of Russia, and its pressure on Pakistan to take steps to stop cross border terrorism against India.

It is worthwhile to point out that Russian and Indian convergence on various aspects of terrorism is not a new one. It has since been emerging from the beginning of Yeltsin era in Russian politics. This was made explicit during the visit of President Yelstin to India in January 1993. Casting off Indian apprehension regarding Russia’s dismal approach on the Kashmir issue, Yeltsin made clear Russia’s unequivocal support of India on the issue. He appreciated India’s position and said, “we know how topical are issues of preservation of the ethnic harmony in today’s India. Thanks to our own experience we are aware how difficult are the endeavors to achieve this goal”. He further added, “Russia and India are, at the same degree, interested in strengthening each other’s stability and territorial integrity.” Russian position was in tune with India’s because it was also facing the border problems. The search for a political settlement of the existing situation was one of the most important task of Russian foreign policy, in fact a vital problem of all CIS countries. President Yeltsin hosted a meeting with the Central Asian leaders in Moscow in August 1993 to resolve the problems. He was worried about the Tajik ‘freedom fighters’ who were being trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan, posing grave threat to the stability of Kyrgyzstan. This was also threatening stability in other parts of the Central Asian region. Regarding border dispute, the new foreign policy

51 Speech of B. N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, in the Central Hall of the Parliament House, on 29 January 1993, in Strategic Digest, vol. 23, no. 9, p. 593.
52 n. 26, p. 339.
guideline of Russia unequivocally supports India's stand on the Kashmir because India also believes in 'inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of states' as envisaged in Russia's foreign policy guideline of 1993.\(^{53}\)

Moscow Declaration, signed during the visit of Indian Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao to Moscow in June 1994, was one of the milestones in bilateral relationship and in affirming joint stand in protecting the interests of multiethnic states. Both the countries affirmed their stand to check growing menace of religious fundamentalism, separatism and terrorism, which often struck at the unity of pluralistic countries. Both the countries were convinced that "destabilization of relations between ethnic and religious groups, efforts to forcibly replace them, ethnic cleansing and promotion of internal and transborder terrorism, motivated by vested interests which lead to annihilation of all the positive and constructive elements accumulated by mankind during the many thousand years of existence".\(^{54}\) During his return flight from Moscow on 2 July 1994, Prime Minister Rao declared the Moscow Declaration as 'epoch making' as it concentrated on the main problems the world was facing in the post-bloc situation, such as religious excluvism, political extremism and terrorism springing from these.\(^{55}\)

Vladimir Putin who succeeded Boris Yeltsin as the president of Russia took a pragmatic and tough stand towards terrorism. This was clearly discerned from his way in tackling the situation in Chechnya, especially when the Chechen militants attacked neighbourhood Dagestan. Putin ordered the army to expel the Chechens from Dagestan.


\(^{54}\) For the text of the Moscow Declaration see, *National Herald* (New Delhi), 5 July 1994.

\(^{55}\) *The Hindu* (Chennai), 3 July 1994.
and then to march to Chechnya to destroy the rebel establishment. Hence his first India visit in October 2000 was a step further to delineate common approach on terrorism. He agreed with the Indian leadership on the issue of Kashmir and rejected ‘any foreign interference’\(^{56}\) in resolving the issue. Russian leadership took the same stand on the Chechnya issue. It rejected Chechen leader Dudayev’s proposal for third party mediation for resolution of the issue. Kozyrev curtly summed up this attitude of Russian leadership in December 1994 when he commented to the Russian press: “settlement of the Chechen crisis is an internal affair of the Russian Federation. We need no foreign mediations for that.”\(^{57}\) This above comparison between the issues of Kashmir and Chechnya gives ample evidence how both the countries were forging common stand on issues of common concern.

During his address to the Indian Parliament on 4 October 2000, President Putin deviated from the prepared text, revealed the information, which was ‘absolutely true and verified’. According to this information, “the same individuals, the same terrorist organizations, extremist organizations, are organizing, in conducting and igniting terrorist acts from Philippines to Kosovo including Kashmir, Afghanistan and Russia’s Northern Caucasus.”\(^{58}\) These common problems of ‘self-determination,’ terrorism and separatism whether in Chechnya or in Kashmir were causes of grave concern for both India and

\( ^{56} \) See the text of the address of the Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Central Hall of Parliament on 4 October 2000 in, *Mainstream*, vol. 38, no. 43, 14 October 2000, pp. 7-9.


\( ^{58} \) Ibid, p.8.
Russia. Hence, among many common goals between the two countries, one important was to wage ‘decisive fighting against Islamic extremists.’

As the tensions mount up along the Indo-Pak border aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, the Russian Foreign Ministry came with a timely warning for Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism. In its press release, the Ministry expressed deep concern over the tensions, “the main reason for which is the unending antinational activities of the extremist groups, based on the territory under Pakistani control.”

Further, in a joint statement on 3 February 2002, both the countries gave the call for a ‘comprehensive, long-term, multi-dimensional’ cooperation among the members of the international community to fight against “the existence of extensive ties between the Al Qaida and Taliban with terrorist organizations active in other parts of the world, including Chechnya, the Central Asian Republics and the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.” The Al Qaida played a vicious role in the Chechen conflict. According to Putin’s assistant, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, terrorists captured by the Americans in Afghanistan and sent to the Guatanamo military base are testifying to the connection between international terrorism and the situation in Chechnya. The organization called, Beneficence Islamic Charity, found under the guidance of Al Qaida, sent in the four months of 2000, 700,000 dollars to the separatists in Chechnya in 19 electronic transfers.

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and money were turned into cash in Tbilisi and Riga. Hence, the emerging Al Qaida factor has become a major concern for both India and Russia.

The signing of Moscow Declaration in November 2001 on International terrorism was a concrete testimony of joint endeavor of both the countries to fight the terrorist menace. Signed between the two countries when Indian Prime Minister, A. B. Vajpayee visited Moscow in November 2001, the declaration emphasized, among other things, "in multiethnic and democratic countries such as India and Russian Federation, violent actions being perpetuated under the slogan of self-determination, in reality represents acts of terrorism." Both the countries agreed to continue effective interaction on Afghanistan, in the framework of the Indo-Russian Joint Working Group on Afghanistan established between the two countries in October 2000 so that the spilling over of the conflict beyond the boundaries of the region could be averted. It can be mentioned here, "the spread of radical Islam from Afghanistan into the bordering Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan often referred to as Russia's 'soft under belly'- something Moscow fears, especially as its war against Islamist insurgents in Chechnya continues."

The siege of the Moscow theatre by Chechen terrorists in October 2002 and their threat to blow up the theatre with hostages if their demand for an immediate roll out of the Russian Army from Chechnya were not met, further confirmed Moscow's resolution

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63 Ibid.
64 For the text of the Declaration see, Strategic Digest, vol. 31, no. 11, November 2001, pp. 1474-1475.
65 Ibid.
to fight against terrorist onslaught with an iron hand. Rejecting the demands for a political
dialogue with the Chechen terrorists, President Putin said, "Osama Bin Laden, Taliban
supreme Mullah Omar and their like minded are calling shots in Kashmir, West Asia, Chechnya and elsewhere in the World." He cautioned, anybody at home or abroad urging for talks with the terrorist leadership in Chechnya would be seen by Kremlin as 'an accomplice of terrorist.' Professor Alexandra Safronova of the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University justified this position of President Putin. After analyzing the terrorist bomb blast near her Institute on 9 December 2003 in which some of the innocent students died along with many injured, she told the author, "after that what can we say to negotiate, with whom? How to negotiate with the killers? ... when I think about the situation in Kashmir, I think the same." It can be mentioned here according to reports some 300 Russian people killed in the terrorist attacks in the year 2003.

Most of the Russian students, who responded to the questionnaire circulated among them to elicit their opinion on the Kashmir issue, agreed with the view that Pakistan has played a lead role in fomenting terrorism in Chechnya and in Kashmir (12 out of 15 students agreed with this view point). Majority of them (9 out of 15) agreed with the view that the same terrorist organisations play havoc both in Chechnya and

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67 Times of India (New Delhi), 10 November 2002.
68 Personal Interview with Prof. Alexandra Safronova, Department of South Asian History, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University, on 11 December 2003, Author's Personal File, p. 8.
69 The Hindu (Delhi), 6 December 2003.
Kashmir. Almost all of them agreed that both India and Russia can work together to fight the terrorist menace in their regions.\textsuperscript{70}

The heightened situation of International terrorism provided the base for both the countries to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on counter-terrorism during the visit of President Putin to India in December 2002. The aim of JWG was to put an “end to this common threat through preventive and deterrent measures nationally and bilaterally.”\textsuperscript{71} This JWG was necessary, as “recent terrorist acts in various parts of India, in Moscow, Bali, Mombassa and elsewhere have shown that terrorism is seeking ever-new targets.”

The Joint Working Group in its first meeting held in Moscow on 29-30 September 2003 “examined the matter relating to mutual interaction between India and Russia in this area (terrorism) in the Unite Nations and other international fora”, and it gave special attention to “the progress in the United Nations on India’s Draft Comprehensive Convention on international terrorism and Russia’s Draft International Convention against acts of Nuclear terrorism.”\textsuperscript{72} President Putin during December 2002 visit agreed with the Indian position that for the normalization of relations to be successful, it is not only important that Islamabad would cut the ways of infiltration of militants into Kashmir through the control line to the state of Jammu and Kashmir but would also increase its work to liquidate the whole terrorist infrastructure acting in this region.”\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{70} Author’s Personal File. For the text of the questionnaire one can refer to Appendix II.
\textsuperscript{71} See the Joint Press Interaction on 4 December 2002 during the visit in, Strategic Digest, vol. 32, no. 12, December 2002, p. 1420.
\textsuperscript{72} News from Russia, vol.6, no. 21, 3 October 2003, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{73} n. 70.
President Putin endorsed the Indian stand when he emphasized that the renewal of
the peaceful dialogue between India and Pakistan would have any value when both
parties adhere to the principles of Simla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration
of 1999. Among the areas of convergence between India and Russia, the issue of
international terrorism has become prominent. Both the countries suffered and are still
suffering from its menace. “Why, then, the Kremlin make exorbitant spending and
channel tremendous efforts to Chechnya, while the economy was in a fragile condition”,
asked, The White Paper and it itself replied that, “it was hard to foresee the results of
secession”. Obviously, both India and Russia were made to be staunchest allies when
the issue of secession comes and specially, when both suffer this menace in their
territories. Both gain to a large extent when stand together on the issue and their
difference on the issue would likely fasten divisive tendencies not only within their
territories but also without.

The visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Moscow from 11 to 13 November 2003
further confirmed the Russian support to India’s position on cross-border terrorism. The
Joint Statement issued on 13 November 2003 at the end of the visit urged Pakistan to
“implement in full its assurances to prevent infiltration of terrorists across the line of
control,” and “to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-controlled
territory as a prerequisite for a purposeful dialogue between the two countries.” Hence,
in this background, as discussed above, it becomes natural to see both the countries

74 Ibid, p. 1425.
75 n. 6, p. 57.
76 Quoted in The Hindu (Delhi), 14 November 2003.
adopting common approach on issues like terrorism, whether it is terrorism in Kashmir or in Chechnya.

**Multipolarism**

The disintegration of the Soviet Union altered the power equations in international politics. Though Russia remained a military power it lost its erstwhile dominance in the matters of economy and politics. It remained no more a super power. The US was the only superpower, reigning over the instruments of world economy and politics. The role of Russia in shaping international events reduced drastically. Even in many cases, the American led Western bloc simply ignored its proposals. For instance, the Russian proposal during the Yugoslav crisis regarding the implementation of Vance-Owen plan was rejected by the US.\(^77\)

Hence, the scene after the collapse of the Soviet Union seemed to be ripe for a unipolar world led by the US. Even Russia's circumstances and preferences were ignored in consulting what bodies should be used to develop its cooperation with other countries. Russia preferred the CSCE (Council of Security and Cooperation in Europe) route for developing close relationship with the West. But, developing a new security system through CSCE was not a priority for other post-communist states in Eastern Europe, which were more interested in membership of NATO and the emerging EU foreign policy. They saw this as their best guarantee of safety from Russia and as a means of

supporting their applications for European Union membership. Because of these calculations, Russia was soon pushed aside in discussions about the European Security.\textsuperscript{78}

However, the year 1993 saw vigorous assertion of independence of Russian foreign policy in international politics. The Russian leaders appeared to give up 'Atlanticism' and adopted pragmatism. This position was in line with the stance that had begun to emerge the same year as the replacement of Atlanticism in the 1993 Foreign Policy Concept, later called multi-polarism by Yevgeny Primakov. In Yugoslavia, this meant that Russia continued diplomatic action through the Contact Group, the international body set up to try for a negotiated settlement to the Bosnian conflict. But at the same time Russian representatives to the Balkans, most notably Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaly Churkin, worked to stop NATO bombardments of Serb forces, and Russia protested Western actions in strong, often confrontational language. Russia also demonstrated that it no longer considered that it was bound to support Western actions, by vetoing the extension of sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs at the United Nations Security Council in 1993.\textsuperscript{79}

The other main area where Russia confronted the West was over the NATO expansion into Eastern Europe. In July 1997, NATO voted to begin the process of admitting Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic, and observed that other east European states would be considered for membership at a later date. Russia opposed the expansion and argued that this process would undermine Russia's efforts to manage European

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, p.143.
security through bodies like the OSCE. The protests, as with the NATO actions in Yugoslavia, did not stop the West from going ahead with the expansion. Hence, it would be right here to point out that while the West, led by the US was not interested in the development of new international order based on multipolarism, Russia took the lead in propagating the idea of a multipolar structure in the world.

Yevgeny Primakov, well known for his balanced policy approach, took a number of steps for the evolution of a multipolar world structure. For instance, during his visit to New Delhi in December 1998 as Prime Minister of Russia, he expressed himself in favour of a ‘strategic triangle’ covering India, Russia and China for peace and stability in the world and to check unipolarism. In reply to a question he said, “if we succeed in establishing a strategic triangle, it will be very good.” Primakov was critical of ‘global policeman’ role of the US. He strongly criticized military assault of US-UK combine on Iraq. A Russian Foreign Ministry source said, “the India visit offers Mr. Primakov a happy chance to launch a new drive against a unipolar world in which the US cast itself in the role of a global policeman.” The source further said, “by punishing Iraq the Americans sent us as a message that we better stop defying them over such issues as nuclear or defence Cooperation with countries like Iran and India, Primakov’s visit to India will give them a worthy reply.” Primakov conceded the view that India is a fit candidate for the permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. To this effect he declared that India was a “strong and appropriate candidate to occupy a seat in a

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80 Ibid, p.144.
81 The Hindu (Chennai), 20 December 1998.
82 Ibid.
reformed UN Security Council". Both the countries held the view that the US bombardment of Iraq in 1998 was an attempt by Washington to undermine multilateralism, so as to discourage the emergence of a genuine multipolar world. Both India and Russia are also committed to the dispersal of power and influence across the globe and both envisage a powerful role for a reformed United Nations in the international system.

Russian ambassador to India, Alexander Kadakin was forthright in his assessment of the changing world order. According to him the end of cold war turned out to be more protracted and complicated. There were attempts aimed at the creation of a unipolar world based on diktat of one country or a group of military and technical powers.83 Similarly, the National security Concept of the Russian Federation, January 2000, vigorously asserted, “the age of bipolar confrontation is over.”84 It declared that the main threats in the international sphere are determined by the striving of the individual states to undermine the role of international bodies like the United Nations. It also declared its firm opposition to the emerging trend in which attempts had been made to reorient-international relations based on “the domination of developed Western countries, led by the USA”, which provides for “the unilateral solution of the key problems of global politics, above all with the use of military force, in violation of the fundamental norms of the international law”.85 The national security concept also made clear the Russian

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83 n. 3, p.476.
84 For text of the concept see, Strategic Digest, vol. 30, no 3, January 2000, p. 297.
85 Ibid.
objective to facilitate the development of an ideology of the creation of a multipolar world order.

The Russian drive to promote multipolarism in international politics had its strong support in India. During the visit of Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee to Moscow in November 2001 both the sides reaffirmed, in the Joint Statement, their commitment “to cooperate bilaterally and at the multilateral level on strategic issues for the development of a multipolar world based on a new cooperative security order.” During this visit both the sides signed the Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism, which gave emphasis on the collaborative efforts of the international community to fight the menace. In this declaration, both the countries reaffirmed the central role of the UN in the international efforts against terrorism “on the basis of international law including the UN charter”. In this connection they stressed the importance of strict implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on terrorism including the resolution 1373. This common position was further reiterated during the visit of President Putin to India in December 2002. In their joint statement, both the sides reaffirmed their determination to “contribute to the establishment of a just multipolar world based on principles of respect for the UN charter and international law in the interest of removing threats to international peace and security.”

On other international issues like tensions in the Middle East and the Gulf, both the countries held common position. Regarding the US military strike on Iraq in 2003,
both the countries opposed any unilateral action against Iraq bypassing the United Nations. During the Putin visit in December 2002, both the countries, in their joint statement, strongly opposed “unilateral use or threat of use of force in violation of the UN charter” and stressed that a comprehensive settlement of the situation in Iraq is possible only through “political and diplomatic efforts in strict conformity with the rules of international law and only under the aegis of the United Nations.”

Russian President, Vladimir Putin in the pursuit of his pragmatic approach adopted an accommodative posture towards the Western powers. In this spirit, he tried to improve Russia–NATO relations, put forward an initiative for a European missile defence system while appearing to keep an open mind on American ideas for missile defence cooperation and undertook a number of other measures. But he refused to accept any sort of unilateralism, which became a major focus regarding the US maneuver to ‘disarm’ Iraq in 2003. He agreed with his US counterpart that Russia is no longer an adversary but has become a partner, but contended that, “this does not mean that their opinions on international problems can not differ. If we want the world to be safe place to live in, such world must not be unipolar.” He said that the joint statement of Russia, Germany and France on the situation of Iraq was the “first step towards establishing a multipolar world...” Former Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev made a scathing criticism on the US maneuver to attack because the operation would result in “all death

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88 Ibid, p.1425.
91 Ibid, p.5.
and destruction of the Iraqi people” and it would also give a “heavy blow at the United Nations Security Council as the foundation of the international community”.

He wrote, “we do need a new world order but the US administration seems to think that the world should become a big American bailwick where US interests would take precedence and the interest of all other states would be ignored.” According to Gorbachev the problem lies with the US, and as a former spin-doctor in the Soviet Union, he prescribed the medicine of ‘perestroika’ to remedy the US approach to various issues.

India has often taken the same stand along with Russia regarding the question of multipolarism. During his visit to Moscow on 19 February 2003, Indian Foreign Minister, Jaswant Sinha, reaffirmed the Indian stand that the Iraq issue should be resolved under the international norms. Talking about the situation in Iraq, he noted that New Delhi advocated the destruction of all available Iraqi mass destruction weapons; nonetheless, all decisions with regard to the deweaponisation should be approved by the United Nations. This approach gave clear indication of opposition to unilateralism and support for multipolarism by both the countries. Prime Minister Vajpayee further reiterated this common position for the evolution of a multipolar world structure during his visit to Moscow in November 2003. In his address before Russian Academy of Sciences on 12 November 2003 Vajpayee said, “we are both opposed to unilateralism in international

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93 Ibid.
matters.”

Hence, besides terrorism, this factor of multipolarism has emerged as a post-Cold war reality on which approaches of both the countries converge.

Democracy

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the leadership of Russia adopted the path of democracy for the development of Russian society and polity. The initial years (1991-1993) of Russian democracy was fragile. The elementary apparatus of democracy still did not hold the ground. Even some writers predicted the failure of democracy in Russia because “Russian culture was in the main anti-democratic and anti-liberal.”

During the first years, contending political forces fought their battles by means of character assassination, threats, wild demagoguery, and finally tanks and bullets. However, the prediction of doom to Russian democracy did not come true. By the year 1995, political conflict was likely to be waged with no-confidence votes, vetoes, and rival public relations campaigns. It was made clear during the US President Bill Clinton’s remarks to students at Moscow University on 10 May 1995 when he applauded Russians’ democratic effort and said, addressing them, “you have embraced, instead, the cause of

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95 The Hindu (Delhi), 13 November 2003.
98 Ibid.
tolerance. The vast majority of Russians have neglected those poisonous arguments and bolster your young and fragile democracy.”

First Russian President Boris Yeltsin tried to adopt principles of democracy in his own characteristic fashion. His interest in democracy was made clear during his speech at the United Nations Security Council on 31 January 1992: “our principles are simple and understandable: the supremacy of democracy, human rights and liberties, legality and morality.” The Russian constitution of 1993 incorporated the principle of popular franchise and in 1994 the Law of Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights of the Citizens of the Russian Federation was passed. However, the incorporation of democratic principles in the Russian society has become slow. The reasoning of one Russian scholar can well be accepted for the slow evolution of democracy in Russia. According to her, “we have only started to be democratic. Russia has a very bad tradition of democracy. Russia, three hundred years (it) was under Tsarist, autocratic regime. After that it was Stalin regime. And we do not have experience in democracy... there are a lot of things to study from India.” Hence, in the early years of new Russia political situation was not so developed but later, one could find “competing elites agree let the voters decide, to face the consequences of defeat and to allow the losers a fresh chance in a few years’ time.”

It is interesting to observe that because of the spirit of pluralism and democracy Russia has never faced dearth of political parties to represent diverse interest of the

100. n. 2, p.190.
diverse people. In Russia, half of the 450 seats in the parliament's lower house, Duma, are filled through national party list elections and the other half through elections in 225 single member districts. In 1993, 13 parties ran on the national party list and in 1995 the number rose to 43. On 14 March 2004 Presidential election, 6 presidential candidates and 10 major political parties participated. In a survey, majority of Russian people chose, among various indices, join whatever organization you wish (75% agreed; just 7% thought things had become worse). Majority of participants in the survey agreed, 'there had been a great increase in freedom of conscience' (79% thought there was more freedom of choice in religious matters and just 5 % thought the opposite).

Hence, one can safely assume the transition of Russian society from command system to democratic system was proceeding in a smooth manner.

Both India and Russia have the same goal of democracy. Both "are resolved to further reinforce the fundamentals of democracy, to impart maximum transparency to their respective social, economic and political system...." Russia can learn from rich democratic experience of India. In order to strengthen the democratic process in Russia, both the countries, in 1998, signed an agreement on establishing the Indo-Russian Inter Parliamentary Commission co-chaired by the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the State Duma. Its first session was held in New Delhi in March 2000. In this session

106 n. 3, p. 482.
both the countries discussed about the democratic conditions in each country and focused on exchange of democratic ideas between the two countries.

The successor of Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin was of the firm belief that Russia could become a great power by combining the principles of market economy and democracy with Russia’s realities.\(^\text{107}\) During his first India visit in October 2000, he highly praised the democratic system in India and said, this “positive experience is very valuable” for Russia because “Russia, like India, is a huge pluralistic state.”\(^\text{108}\) He agreed that the democratic system in Russia was relatively new and like every new democratic system, suffered from mistakes and errors; and in order to establish democratic ethos, he expressed to desire to learn from Indian democratic experience. Seen in this light, the democratic bases of both the countries provided the ground to come closer to take common positions against non-democratic countries like Pakistan, in which the military regime was providing shelter to terrorist groups to strike against multi-ethnic and pluralistic societies like India and Russia.

Hence, one can find the convergence of interests of India and Russia in the wide spectrum of democracy towards which the world is moving at large. President Putin was forthright while pronouncing that the emerging world order in the 21\(^\text{st}\) century must be based on the principle, ‘unity through diversity’ because ‘pluralism is an integral part of democracy’.\(^\text{109}\) According to Putin, “democratic countries have much that unites them. We must prevent the situation where differences in tactical approaches would undermine

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\(^{107}\) n. 12, p. 257.

the unity of nations on international organizations participating in the solution of world problems".\textsuperscript{110} Looking at this observation it becomes amply clear that both India and Russia have common stakes in the preservation and smooth functioning of democracy in both the countries and around the world.

**Economic Imperatives**

Both India and Russia launched the policies of liberalization and market reforms in 1991. Both were facing, as President Yeltsin saw, 'mostly the same problems', and for the solution of these problems the Russian leader suggested "we are to cope with enormous economic and social tasks, and cooperation between India and Russia in this area could prove useful and important."\textsuperscript{111} It is worth remembering here that after the withdrawal of excessive reliance on the Western help, Russia turned its face towards the old allies including India. Russia recovered slowly later and the major irritants between India and Russia like rupee-rouble controversy were resolved during the Yeltsin visit in 1993, thus paving the way for smooth economic cooperation.

In the field of economic cooperation India and Russia can work together for mutual benefit. What India lacks can be fulfilled by Russia and similarly what Russia lacks can be fulfilled by India. While India can fill the consumer market voids in Russia, Russia can meet the Indian requirements in arms, oil, natural gas, mineral resources and metallurgy, etc. Under integrated Long-Term Programme of Scientific and Technical

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{111} Excerpt from the speech of Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation in the Central Hall of Parliament on 29 January 1993, in *Strategic Digest*, vol.23, no.4, April 1993, p. 592.
Cooperation (ILTP), signed during President Putin’s visit to India in October 2000, both the countries undertook more than 150 joint scientific projects which could provide relatively cheap technologies in various fields from biomedicine to semi-conductors, computer chips, new materials and energy sources. During the visit of Indian Petroleum Minister Ram Naik to Moscow in February 2001, the Indian Oil Company, ONGC Videsh Ltd. and the Russian Rosneft signed an agreement on the joint exploration of hydrocarbon resources in the Russian Far-Eastern island of Sakhalin. During the visit of President Putin to India in December 2002, both the sides signed the Joint Declaration on strengthening and developing economic, scientific and technological cooperation. A document on economic cooperation between Indian State of Karnataka and Samara region of Russia, and another document on telecommunication, were signed during the visit.

The last quarter of 2003 witnessed some positive developments in economic relations between the two countries. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) opened its office at the Russian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in October 2003 to facilitate the process of economic cooperation between the two countries. During the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Moscow in November 2003, 85 Indian businessmen accompanied him to study the prospects of investments and joint collaborations with Russian companies. The Secretary General of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Amit Mitra, accompanying the prime minister during the visit,

\[^{112}\text{n. 3, p. 484.}\]
\[^{113}\text{For details of the Joint Declaration see, Strategic Digest, vol. 32, no. 12, December 2002, pp. 1430-1432.}\]
\[^{114}\text{The Hindu (Delhi), 10 November 2003.}\]
estimated that the bilateral trade might reach at least $5 billion by 2005. He said such a
breakthrough could be made through close cooperation in oil and gas industry,
telecommunications and information technology, metallurgy and energy.\textsuperscript{115} There have
also been prospects of cooperation in terms of joint research and development ventures,
such as the Brahmos missile and the fifth generation jet fighter, in the fields of
biomedical and other technologies and joint space efforts, and joint collaborations in
Central Asian republics.\textsuperscript{116} Among the ten accords signed during the visit, there was an
agreement on cooperation in space research, which included Russian assistance in an
Indian lunar mission.

One of the long hassled defence deal finally came to an agreed settlement after
India signed its biggest ever defence deal ($1.5 billion or over Rs. 7000 cr) with Russia
for the purchase of the aircraft carrier, Admiral Gorshkov, in New Delhi on 20 January
2004. Defence Ministers of both the countries, George Fernades of India and Sergei
Ivanov of Russia rightly called the deal a 'historic landmark'\textsuperscript{117} in bilateral ties. The
Russian carrier would replace India's only aircraft carrier, INS Virat. Its induction in
2008 would ensure that the navy does not lose its expertise in handling aircraft carriers.\textsuperscript{118}

From the above discussions, it becomes clear that the factors of terrorism,
multipolarism, democracy and economic imperatives brought both the countries together.
The objective of the chapter is confined to show how these factors act as forces bringing
both the countries together and then help them in forging common stand on various issues

\textsuperscript{116} Times of India (New Delhi), 17 November 2003.
\textsuperscript{117} Times of India (New Delhi), 21 January 2004.
\textsuperscript{118} The Hindu (Delhi), 21 January 2004.
including Kashmir. The post-Soviet pluralistic Russia like India has been fighting terrorists in order to maintain its territorial integrity and sovereignty, hence it seems obvious that Russia comes to the rescue of India when Kashmir comes to the fore. Besides the factor of terrorism, the factors like multipolarism, democracy and economic imperatives act as cementing factors for peace and friendship. These are the factors, which supply credentials to the element of change in Indo-Russian relations in the post-cold war scenario though the element of continuity in Russia's policy towards Kashmir remains almost the same.