PREFACE

Russia's policy towards the Kashmir issue can be seen in a broad paradigm of continuity and change in foreign policy of USSR and Russia. A thread of continuity is marked in Russia's (the USSR) approach towards Kashmir throughout, except for a brief period of two years after the disintegration. That change, though brief, took place not in vacuum but it became evident because of changes in international political scenario in aftermath of the Soviet disintegration and its subsequent reflection on Indo-Russian relationship. The politics of compulsions and pragmatism, which initially forced new Russia to woo the line of the West, witnessed major changes in Russian foreign policy approach afterwards. Indo-Russian relationship again picked up and new Russia started appreciating India's stand on the Kashmir issue. Hence, while the element of continuity remains intact, the factors shaping the policy have changed. Keeping all these developments in mind, the present study is relevant for all those interested in new Russia's policy towards Kashmir and its implications.

The first chapter in the thesis deals with the historical background: the Soviet policy towards Kashmir. It makes a critical survey of the Soviet policy towards the Kashmir issue to make the understanding of the later developments smooth. The second chapter analyzes the immediate impact of the disintegration of the Soviet Union on Indo-Russian relations. It basically analyzes the factors that prompted the Russian leadership to tilt towards the West at the cost of traditional friends like India. This distancing of relationship, further compounded by controversies and misunderstandings, had its obvious bearing on bilateral relationship. As a result, Russia's policy towards Kashmir favoring India received setback. But this uneasy period in bilateral relationship lasted
only for a short span of two years. The Yeltsin visit in 1993 ended all speculations of doom in Indo-Russian relations.

The third chapter focuses on Russia’s Kashmir policy during the Yeltsin period. The Yeltsin period witnessed major ups and downs in bilateral relationship. While in the year 1991 Russian Vice President supported Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir, in year 1993, President Yeltsin declared Kashmir an integral part of India. The rapid turn of events provided opportunities for both the countries to come closer and forge common approach on various issues. The bilateral relations never looked back afterwards despite the hurdles. The fourth chapter further extends the period and analyzes Vladimir Putin’s approach towards the Kashmir issue. Putin who succeeded Yeltsin in 2000 further built up ties with India with renewed vigor. This attitude is reflected in the Strategic Partnership document signed by the two countries in 2000 and the double visit of the Russian leader within a period of four years. Putin adopted the same approach in appreciating India’s position on Kashmir.

The fifth chapter deals with the factors that emerge after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This chapter deals with the change dimension in the paradigm of continuity and change. Now, the factors: terrorism, multipolarism, democracy and economic imperatives provide the common ground for action for both the countries. While Russia suffers from terrorist activities in Chechnya, India suffers the same in Kashmir. Both the countries are against any sort of unipolarism and both are strong advocates for a multipolar world structure. Both are democracies and Putin expresses the view that Russia can gain from the Indian experience in democracy. Regarding economy, leaders of both the countries
agree about the immense potentials for joint ventures and cooperation. The last chapter contains the main conclusions of the study.

There are several studies on Indo-Russian relationship after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. However, no research work has been done specifically on Russia’s policy towards Kashmir after the disintegration right up to the emergence of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia. This indeed is a micro study on foreign policy of Russia, hence timely and appropriate.

This study is based on published, primary and secondary sources indicated in the bibliography. Primary sources include materials collected during a two-month visit to Moscow (15 November 2003 to 15 January 2004) under a scholarship granted by the university. The main purpose of the visit was to study the perceptions of Russian scholars and public on the Kashmir issue. The author conducted interviews with scholars at the Moscow State University, Institute of Oriental Studies and the Institute of World Economy and International Affairs. The questionnaire circulated among the scholars prior to interview has been given in the Appendix I with a note. To ascertain the opinion of the students, a different questionnaire (multiple choice type) was circulated among students of the Moscow State University, and has been given in the Appendix II with a note. The author also had to hold some orientation sessions for the students to make them familiar with the research topic.

The primary documents also include the documents of visits of the Russian President Boris Yeltsin to India in January 1993, the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to Russia in June-July 1994, the visits of President Putin to India in 2000 and 2002, the visits of Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee to Moscow in 2001
and 2003; United Nations Security Council Official records; Treaties; and interviews, etc. These are further supplemented with relevant books, academic articles and press coverage.

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The responsibility for this thesis, however, is mine.

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