CHAPTER IV

PUTIN'S APPROACH ON KASHMIR
Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin appeared on the political scene in Moscow in August 1999 when the then President, Boris Yeltsin appointed him prime minister. Before that Putin was little known in both national and international circles. However, within few months in office, his popularity rose high. The major reasons behind the meteoric rise of this former KGB official and deputy mayor of St. Petersburg were: the mature handling of the Chechen problem, better performance of the economy in the last quarter of 1999 and his pragmatic approach to various issues. Ailing Yeltsin left the reins of power in the hands of Putin on 1 January 2000 as his desired successor because he could, Yeltsin believed, ‘respond to any challenge’.\(^1\) Putin emerged as a symbol of continuity for Yeltsin’s ruling group and at the same time a significant portion of society saw him as a “guarantee of change, a farewell to decrepit Yeltsin and an era they would like to see behind them”.\(^2\) Hence, Putin at once symbolized the factors of change and continuity in Russian politics and this dimension of his personality influenced the decision making process. As one Russian commentator, Roy Medvedev observed, the main reason behind Putin’s success as a leader stems from “his policies and statesmanship, as well as his independent decisions, for which he added complete responsibility”.\(^3\)

One important reason behind Putin’s early popularity was his handling of the Chechen situation. The second Chechen campaign conducted under his leadership in August 1999 was a major success in contrast to the first one conducted under the leadership of his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin. The first Chechen war was a failure. The

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Khasabyurt agreement signed between Chechen leader Alan Maskhadov and Russian
General, Alexander Lebed on 30 August 1996 was not successful in bringing peace to
the war-torn Chechnya. Rather there was lawlessness and disorder. The situation
reached low ebb when the Chechen terrorists under the leadership of Basayev,
Jadauddin and Khattab attacked Dagestan on 8 August 1999 in order to make it a free
Islamic republic. The response of Russian army was swift. The new Prime Minister,
Vladimir Putin launched a vigorous campaign to root out and destroy the terrorists.
His successful campaign in Chechnya brought him fame as a strong and nationalist
leader. As a strong proponent of united Russia, Putin abhorred any suggestion for
negotiation with separatist leaders. Speaking before the Chechen businessmen and
public figures at Kremlin on 10 November 2002 Putin disclosed his mind: “I state
quite unequivocally: there will be no second Khasavyurt”. And, further, speaking
before the government officials on 28 October 2002 Putin justified his strong action
by saying: “we pay heavy price for the weakness of our state and inconsistence (sic)
of our actions.” As a result while the “majority of the Russians considered the first
Chechen war (1994-1995) criminal … by contrast, in November and December 1999,
between 61 and 70% of those polled approved of the operation in Chechnya”.

The sudden death of Chechen leader, Akhmad Kadyrov in a bomb blast while
watching the victory parade in Grozny on 9 May 2004 complicated the peace process
in Chechnya. The following possible implications emerged from the death of pro-

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4 This lawlessness and disorder has been vividly described in, Aleksei Volin and Michael
Margelov, ed., Chechnya: the White Paper (Moscow: RIA Novosti and Russian Information
Centre, 2000).
5 Alexander Chubarov, Russia’s Bitter Path to Modernity: A History of Soviet and Post-Soviet
11(137), 2003, p. 34.
7 Ibid, p. 30.
8 n. 1, p. 3.
Moscow leader, Kadyrov. First, Moscow may find it difficult to control the terrorist activities in the region. In the absence of a pro-Moscow regime in Grozny, the task of controlling terrorists may prove difficult. Second, the volatile situation in situation in Chechnya may help widening the terrorist network across borders. The spill over impact of this volatile situation into the Central Asian states and Afghanistan cannot be ruled out. Third, the vacuum in the Chechen political set up may lead to ugly struggle between different power-hungry factions, thus giving more headaches to Putin administration to bring peace in Chechnya. However, Putin strove hard to handle the Chechen situation effectively. Conferring Star of Hero of Russia on Kadyrov posthumously, during his visit to Grozny on 11 June 2004, Putin called the tragedy “yet another lesson”\(^9\) and promised stern action against the terrorists who committed the crime. Regarding the problem of succession to the deceased leader, Putin closed the door for speculations and hinted his preference for Chechen Interior Minister, Alu Alkhanov as the desired successor.\(^10\)

After being nominated as acting President on 1 January 2000, Putin lost no time in devising a framework to pursue foreign policy objectives. Known as Foreign Policy Concept of Russian Federation, the document framed under the supervision of Putin set the goal before the establishment to make Russia a great power.\(^11\) Putin made it clear that Russia is no more going to succumb to external pressure; rather time has come to adopt an independent foreign policy. The Concept asserted: “The Russian Federation is pursuing an independent and constructive foreign policy. It is

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based on consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism.”  

Hence, in the pursuit of this mutually advantageous pragmatism, the Russian foreign policy makers engaged in building the image of Russia as “an integral part of the Asian space”, and to “deepen its relations with major Asian powers, such as China, India and Japan”. The concept, it appeared, marked a shift from the pro-West policy pursued vigorously during the initial years of new Russia. As a result Russia looked more favorably to its traditional allies like India. While expounding the basic principles of new approach Putin made it a point to develop relations with old allies like India. It is interesting to note in this context while his predecessor, Yeltsin visited only once during his ten-year tenure, Putin has already visited twice within four years of his office, in October 2000 and in December 2002.

A new development that took place after Putin came to power was the leader’s recognition of similarities between the issues of Chechnya and Kashmir. Putin utilized many occasions to draw parallels between the two issues. Some instances could be cited to corroborate this point of view. During his visit to India in October 2000, Putin shared a piece of information with the members of Indian parliament, which is ‘absolutely true and verified’ that, “the same individuals, the same terrorist organizations, extremist organizations are organizing and, very often, the same individuals participate in organizing, in conducting and igniting terrorist acts from Philippines to Kosovo including Kashmir, Afghanistan and Russia’s northern

12 Ibid, p. 673.
14 Ibid, p. 11.
Caucasus.”\textsuperscript{15} Again, when there was the seize of one Moscow theatre named Nord-Ost on 22 October 2002, Putin replied to those who advocated for negotiation with the terrorists, “Osama bin Laden, Taliban supreme Mullah Omar and their like minded are calling shots in Kashmir, West Asia, Chechnya and elsewhere in the world.”\textsuperscript{16} He rejected any possibility of talks with the terrorists. It is reported that alone in the year 2003 the terrorists killed about 300 people in Russia\textsuperscript{17}, and the case is worse in the case of India. It was the psychological urge, besides the pragmatic considerations, that brought leadership of both the countries together. In this background, it was no surprise to see the Russian leadership to urge Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism in India. This aspect of convergence between India and Russia would be dealt with elaborately in the next chapter. In this context it would be appropriate to mention that one \textit{Moscow News File} enlisted eleven terrorist organizations, established in Pakistan, being active in fomenting terrorism in Chechnya.\textsuperscript{18} Hence, it was natural in part of the Russian leadership to take cognizance of the Pakistani connection in promoting terrorism in Chechnya and Kashmir.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York and Washington captivated the attention of international leaders regarding the menace of terrorism and possible mechanisms for its control. Putin was quick to respond the emerging scenario and termed the terrorist menace, ‘the plague of 21st century’.\textsuperscript{19} He was the first world leader to call President of the US, George Bush aftermath of the terrorist attack and

\textsuperscript{15} Address of the Russian President Vladimir Putin to the Members of the Indian Parliament at the Central Hall of Parliament on 4 October 2000, \textit{Mainstream}, vol.38, no. 43, 14 October 2000, p.8.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Times of India} (New Delhi), 10 November 2002.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{The Hindu} (Delhi), 6 December 2003.

\textsuperscript{18} n. 3, p. 125.

offered support to fight against the terrorist menace. Putin played an active role in garnering support of various countries to make a broad coalition against the terrorist network. He made an extensive campaign against terrorism by conducting meetings with Palestine leader Yasser Arafat, the Iranian and Chinese leaders and Russia’s CIS partners in Central Asia. Putin was well aware that international cooperation was needed to target terrorist financial networks and to counter the flow of drugs out of Afghanistan and to prevent terrorists escaping across Afghan borders into Central Asia and further to Russia and other countries.

The post-September 11, 2001 situation also provided the required opportunity to expand Russia’s relationship with the West. Pursuing a pragmatic policy, Putin accepted the reality that the US is the world power but at the same time he harped on the long-term objective to make Russia a modern great power, raising the country’s status in relation to both America and Europe. Hence, while Moscow stretched its hand of cooperation with the US in matters of terrorism, disarmament and problem areas like Afghanistan; on the matters concerning Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Moscow widely differed from the US. However, in spite of differences, Putin could be able to maintain a balanced relationship, resulting in a kind of quid pro quo with the US. For instance, while Washington considered the ‘Chechen separatist movement as illegitimate, and Chechen separatists themselves to be terrorists’, Moscow provided advanced information about possible terrorist attacks by Iraq on the

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21 Ibid.
In this context what Charles Pena, a defence analyst at Cato Institute, Washington says is noteworthy. He argues that President Putin should be given credit for developing warmer ties with the West, and the US and other Western countries should welcome such initiatives of Putin.\textsuperscript{25}

After coming to power in 2000 one of the priorities of Putin was to build up strong and reliable ties with the CIS countries in the changing milieu. The security problem in these states, their strategic location and economic importance were taken into consideration by the Putin administration while formulating policy towards these states. Putin endeavoured to assert Moscow’s influence on the erstwhile members of the Soviet Union in various ways, e.g. appointing a special representative on CIS states, establishing CIS Anti-terrorism Centre and opening military bases in these states and playing crucial role in the regional organizations like Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Ivanov revealed one unofficial military doctrine in October 2003, which said about pre-emptive strikes anywhere in the world and suggested that Russia could take military action in CIS states, especially the less stable ones, if it felt under threat.\textsuperscript{26} For Ivanov, the possible reasons for intervention could include, “‘ethnic or political conflict’, in these countries and other dangers to Russia’s economic welfare”.\textsuperscript{27}

The matter of concern for India and Russia was the fact that Taliban-ruled Afghanistan had accommodated many insurgent groups operating in Central and

\textsuperscript{24} http://thestar.com, 18 June 2004.
\textsuperscript{25} n. 23.
\textsuperscript{26} Roy Allison, “Strategic Reassertion in Russia’s Central Asia Policy”, International Affairs (London), vol. 80, no. 2, March 2004, p. 280.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
South Asia, the Middle East, and beyond. In addition to Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network, the Mujahideen-e-Khalq of Iran, the Xinjiang Liberation Front of China, the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan and the Hizbul Mujahideen operating in Jammu and Kashmir all took advantage of Taliban hospitality and military training they could receive in Pakistan. And it was only the Taliban regime, which recognized Chechnya as an independent state. Hence, the Taliban regime proved to be “potentially mortal danger to regional stability, pro-Russian regimes, Russian influence and ultimately, Russia’s own borders.”

Russia’s interests in Central Asian states are manifold. One leading Russian specialist on Central Asia, Dmitry Trofimov rightly summarized Russia’s national interests in Central Asia in the following points: stability in the region based on close partnership with the regional states; unimpeded rights of transit across Central Asia to maintain partnership relations with China, India and Iran; the maintenance of a common economic space with Central Asia which in future could assist Russia’s economic modernization; the use of the region’s geo-strategic potential for practical military needs and to preserve Russia’s status as a world and regional power; and international recognition of Russia’s leading role in the region. It could be mentioned here that Russia has been worried about the surge of terrorism from Afghanistan and Central Asia to its territory. Another factor of importance for Russia is that the Caspian sea and Central Asian region is rich in oil and natural gas resources and in order to retain Russia’s influence in this region, Putin adopted in his pragmatic style a

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30 Quoted in n. 26, pp. 283-284.
pro-active policy in this region without breaking the delicate balance in its relations with the West or the regional powers.

India’s approach to the situation in Afghanistan and Central Asia was not much different from that of Russia. The terrorists active in Kashmir had (and still have) their base in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In May 2000, the Northern Alliance Foreign Minister, Abdullah Abdullah stated that 5000 Pakistanis were training in Taliban-run camps for guerilla war and terrorism in Kashmir. In this context, both India and Russia had common stakes in the turn of events in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Russian Ambassador to India, Alexander Kadakin rightly pointed out in the background of Prime Minister Vajpayee’s visit to Moscow in November 2003 that “New Delhi’s views on the situation in Afghanistan and Iraq are consonant with the assessments of our diplomacy.” The joint declaration issued during the same visit stated that, “India and the Russian Federation strongly believe that Afghanistan should emerge as a peaceful, strong, prosperous, united and independent nation that would be free from external interference and living in peace and harmony with its neighbours. It could be mentioned here that the emerging political scenario that emerged after September 2001 provided the opportunity for leaders of both India and Russia to understand each other’s concerns; and this mutual understanding in turn led to the convergence of approaches of both the countries in tackling the terrorist menace in Chechnya, Kashmir and elsewhere.

31 n. 19.
33 For the text of the Joint Statement see, The Hindu (Delhi), 13 December 2003.
After the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001, Russian Foreign Ministry warned in strict terms to Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism and to create conducive atmosphere to make bilateral dialogue and consultation possible. To tackle the menace of terrorism jointly both the countries signed the Moscow Declaration on terrorism during the visit of Prime Minister, Vajpayee to Moscow in November 2001. And both the countries set up joint working group in December 2002 during the visit of President Putin to India. Moscow strongly condemned the terrorist attack that took place on 26 March 2003 in the Nandimarg village of Kashmir, killing more than twenty people. Russian Foreign Ministry Department of Information and Press, besides condemning the terrorist attack, expressed support to the measures taken by India to stop the activity of terrorist forces. Hence, taking into account all these positive developments, it would not be illogical to emphasize the point that terrorism is one of the most important contributory factors for perceptual convergence between the two countries. And this convergence has led Russia to support India’s stand on Kashmir and vice versa. For instance, Indian Foreign Ministry’s official spokesman praised the referendum in March 2003 in Chechnya under the guidance of the Russian government as an important stage of the restoration within the democratic framework and the normalization, rehabilitation and economic reconstruction of Russian Federation’s Chechen republic. Similarly the Russian Foreign Ministry release, aftermath of the general election in Jammu and Kashmir in October 2002, said that, “the very fact of holding elections is an evidence of the

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36 News From Russia (New Delhi), vol. 6, no. 13, 28 March 2003, p. 221.
striving of Delhi and the population of Jammu and Kashmir to restore the normal situation in the state. Despite the attempts of the extremist elements to frighten the population of Kashmir, they could not hinder the voting.”

President Putin, besides recognizing the problem of terrorism as a common point of reckoning, could see other areas of convergence between the two countries. He emphasized on the multipolar world structure as the emerging era. India has also been a strong advocate of multipolarism. This common concern found expression in joint agreements and declarations. For instance Putin hailed the Strategic Partnership document signed between the two countries during his visit to India in October 2000 as a ‘practical document’, because “it was very important one for the two countries for a multipolar world order.” Putin continued the policy of supporting India’s claim to be a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, as it would promote the spirit of multipolarism. Besides the strong advocacy for multipolarism, Putin appeared to have inspired by the functioning of democracy in India. During the same October visit he praised Indian democracy because he was of the view ‘this positive experience’ would be valuable for Russia. These factors of convergence would be dealt with elaborately in the next chapter. Suffice here to say that Putin was pragmatic enough to identify emerging areas of cooperation and concerns between both the countries. And this mutual understanding obviously strengthened the bilateral ties and helped understanding of the issues of Chechnya and Kashmir. It could be mentioned here while democratic elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir in

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38 n. 15.
39 Ibid.
October 2002, the same took place, one year after, in Chechnya in which Akhmad Kadyrov was elected as President with the support of 85 percent of electorate.\footnote{Mark McDonald, “Chechens Elect Kremlin-backed Kadyrov as President”, \url{http://www.ohio.com}, 6 October 2003.}

In fact, as Russian scholars would argue, there are no differences between the two countries in their approaches to various bilateral and international issues. Even some scholars would have us believe there are no minute differences.\footnote{All the Russian scholars interviewed during the author’s field trip to Moscow hold this viewpoint. Prof. Belokrenitsky of the Institute of Oriental Studies believes “even minute differences are absent”. Personal interview with Prof. Belokrenitsky, Head, Near and Middle East Department, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, on 29 December 2003, \textit{Author's Personal File}, p.4.} Whether it is the US attack on Iraq, West Asia peace process, the issue of terrorism, the restructuring of the United Nations, both the countries have adopted almost same positions. For instance on the issue of Iraq, Putin, during his speech at 58\textsuperscript{th} session of General Assembly of United Nations on 25 September 2003, said, “Russia’s position is consistent and crystal clear: it is only through the United Nation direct involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq that its people will get an opportunity to decide their own future.”\footnote{Excerpts from the speech of Putin at the 58\textsuperscript{th} session of General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2003, in \textit{International Affairs} (Moscow), vol. 49, no. 6, 2003, p. 1.} Putin was of the firm belief that “United Nations should preserve its leadership in international affairs.”\footnote{Ibid, p. 5.} Regarding Israeli-Palestine conflict, Russia along with India called for the “prevention of the failure of the road map to settle the problem.”\footnote{n. 23.} Both agreed that any failure of the road map, backed by the quartet of Russia, the US, the UN and the EU, might result in the situation in Israel and Palestine, as also the entire West Asia, spiraling beyond control.\footnote{Ibid.} Russia has reiterated its support for India’s claim for a permanent membership of the United
Nations Security Council, describing her as “a deserving and strong candidate for the permanent membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council.”

However, despite all these signs of commonalities, it would be amateur to assume that Putin supports India’s stand on Kashmir in toto. One Russian scholar described the new formulation on Kashmir in these words: “Moscow does not use the formula as it used during the period of Khrushchev and Bulganin—that Kashmir is the integral part of India”; and, “our government is not so enthusiastic in repeating this sharp formula.” Unlike Yelstin who at one point of time (during his visit to India in January 1993) declared Kashmir as an integral part of India, Putin preferred to walk the tight rope in wooing Pakistan and at the same time maintaining ‘special’ relationship with India. Had not Putin said to Al Jazeera, the Qatar TV channel that, (“we have always been allies of a great many Moslem and Arab states.”) He attended the 10th summit of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Malaysia in October 2003 as a guest. He even wanted Russia to join OIC and hoped that “Russia can and must be a bridge between East and West.” Pakistan, a big Muslim country, with its strategic location in close vicinity of Central Asia and Afghanistan, Putin might have calculated, could provide Moscow some kind of leverage in the region. Keeping this objective in view, Putin received Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf in Moscow in February 2003 and discussed with him various issues including the

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46 Ibid.
47 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. 3.
48 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
Indo-Pak peace process. But at the same time Putin was cautious enough not to displease Indian leadership. Hence, before conferring with the Pakistani leader, Putin took time to inform Prime Minister Vajpayee about his talks via hotline.

Putin’s approach on Kashmir sometimes creates a sense of unease in bilateral relationship. Putin’s attempt to play the role of mediator for the resolution of the Kashmir issue during the Conference on Interactions and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CRCA) in June 3-5, 2002 was such a case in point. After the failure of the UN to play the successful mediator, India has consistently opposed any kind of third party intervention for the resolution of the issue. One Russian scholar called this attempt of Putin, “a mistake which would never be fulfilled.” He juxtaposed this attempt of Putin with the successful mediation of Moscow in 1966 at Tashkent to bring peace between India and observed, “both the cases are different.” The time has changed. India now opposes any third party mediation, whether it is the United Nations, or any regional power, or great power or blocs, for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. In this background, Putin’s offer was not in consonance with the basic principle India upheld- that the issue is a bilateral one and it should be resolved bilaterally. Putin himself supported this standpoint during his visit to India. Hence, his shift in approach was not welcome to Indian leadership and as a result, his offer to play mediator was expectedly rejected by India.

52 Ibid.
54 Personal Interview with Prof. Sergei Lounev, Major Research Fellow, institute of World Economy and International Relations, on 13 January 2004, Author’s Personal File, p. 4. Prof. Tatiana Shaumian, Head, Centre for Indian Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies agrees with this viewpoint.
55 Ibid.
However, it would result in stretching logic too far if, from the above incident, one arrives at the generalization that Putin’s approach on Kashmir is not in consonance with that of India’s position. His one time attempt at mediation may be an exception. This becomes clear from the statements made by Putin during his visits to India in October 2000 and December 2002. Speaking before the members of the Indian parliament on 4 October 2000 Putin made the statement: “This issue (the Kashmir issue) can be resolved on a bilateral basis on the basis of a compromise and on an unconditional respect for the line of control. Any foreign interference should be stopped.” The same position he further reiterated during his visit to India in December 2002. During joint press interaction, Putin supported the Indian position that for the resolution of the Kashmir issue, India and Pakistan should adhere to the principles of Simla agreement and Lahore declaration. This position of Russia is in consonance with the position of India. India has always advocated for peaceful resolution of the issue by bilateral means.

Besides supporting India’s position on Kashmir, Russia has expressed concern from time to time over the problem of cross-border terrorism from which India suffers. Russia agrees with the position of India that for any peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue, Pakistan must create conducive atmosphere and for this to be possible it must stop promoting and supporting, overt or covert, cross-border terrorism in India. After the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001, Russia came forthwith in criticizing the terrorist attack and warned Pakistan against

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56 n. 15.
providing any kind of help to the terrorists.\footnote{Joint statement of Foreign Ministers of India and Russian Federation, Jashwant Singh and Igor Ivanov on 3 February 2002 in New Delhi, Strategic Digest, vol.32, no.2, p. 135.} Indian Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal told press persons in Moscow during the Vajpayee visit top Moscow in 11-13 November 2003 that Russia had backed the Indian position on Kashmir- by reiterating that an end to cross-border terrorism and the dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan was a prerequisite for a purposeful dialogue.\footnote{The Hindu (Delhi), 13 November 2003.} During the visit, President Putin welcomed the initiatives taken by Prime Minister Vajpayee to improve relations with Pakistan. The joint statement issued during the visit expressed the hope that, “Pakistan will come out with a positive response”\footnote{Ibid.} to the Indian initiatives for peace.

As the tension mounted along the line of control aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, Putin came with a timely warning against Pakistan that it must take all steps to stop cross-border terrorism. At a press conference after the conclusion of one-day Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit at Almaty on 7 June 2002, Putin said, “if we think right, then the normalization of the conflict situation lies in the terrorist plane...we must urge the leadership of Pakistan to put an end to the terrorist activities being carried out from its territory against India in Kashmir.”\footnote{Vinay Shukla, “Putin Asks Pakistan to End Cross-border Terrorism”, \url{http://www.rediff.com}, 7 June 2002.} Further, during his talks with the US President, George Bush in St. Petersburg on 27 December 2002 Putin alluded to Pakistan’s role in promoting terrorism by referring to the presence of Osama bin Laden in that country. He also drew attention of his US counterpart to the dangers of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons of mass destruction passing into wrong hands.\footnote{G. Parthasarathy, “Putin Sets the Pace”, \url{http://rediff.com}, 27 December 2002.}
Therefore, though Russia under Putin strove to strike some kind of balance in its approach to South Asian region, it never lost sight of the practical concerns emanating from the menace of terrorism. The joint statement issued on 13 November during Prime Minister, Vajpayee’s visit to Moscow in November 2003 urged Islamabad, “to implement in full its assurances to prevent 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.” The joint statement further said that Russia supported the steps taken by India in Jammu and Kashmir in combating international terrorism, while India reaffirmed support for Russian action in Chechnya to protect its territorial integrity and constitutional order.

From the above discussions it becomes clear, given the current level of relations, the Putin administration in Moscow would unlikely change its position on the issue of Kashmir, because any contrary position would have its obvious bearing on the issue of Chechnya. Both Chechnya and Kashmir are regions infested with terrorist and separatist elements. As one Russian scholar rightly pointed out: “both the regions are fragile... and both the regions have implications for territorial integrity of both the countries.” Hence, in this background, it would be really difficult to sustain any deviation from the stated position on these issues, especially when the menaces of terrorism and separatism have affected badly both the countries and still continues to affect them. Hence, Putin’s approach on Kashmir would likely continue the same in his second tenure in office. As the post-cold war realities unfold, it has become some

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63 *The Hindu* (Delhi), 14 November 2003.
64 Ibid.
65 Personal interview with Prof. Tatiana Shaumian, Head, Centre for Indian Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow on 8 December 2003, Author’s Personal File, p. 4.
kind of imperative for both the countries to cooperate for the sake of mutual benefit. How these post-cold war factors—terrorism, multipolarism, democracy and economic imperatives bring both the countries together to forge common stand on various issues is the subject of analysis in the next chapter.