CHAPTER: IV

RUSSIA-CHINA STRATEGIC AND MILITARY
COOPERATION AND ITS IMPACTS ON INDIA'S SECURITY

Introduction

Relations between Russia and China - The world's two largest states from the point of view of territory and population respectively - have always had a strong impact on the course of global and regional politics. Among Asia's three major powers, the most substantial changes in Russian policy of the past decade have been with respect to China. The development of the relationship with China is arguably the greatest Russia foreign policy success of the post-Soviet period. During the Presidency of Boris Yeltsin, when Russia's international status and influence were in decline on nearly all fronts, the 'strategic-partnership' with Beijing represented a notable exception to the rule. Under Valdimir Putin the gains of the 1990's has been consolidated, and there is genuine substance to the official claim that relations are at an all time high, particularly after the signing of the Treaty of good neighbourliness, friendship and corporation in July 2001. Apparently, the success of Russia-China relationship at this level worried the Indian policy makers. And there are reasons for India to be apprehensive about it.

4.1. Intricacies for India’s Opposition

Emerging as new political entities after World War II, China & India confronted enormous problems of economic development, political restructuring, and social stability. Nonetheless, they appeared destined for competition almost from the movement of their creation as a modern state. Ever since the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, relations between China and India have remained unsettled. The overt tensions that dominated their interaction into the 1980s have dissipated equilibrium are not hard to find. India views China as the most important constraint on its search for security and status in Asia. China's Indirect strategy of confining India within South

Asia through the use of multiple “proxies” viewed by many Indian analysts as both deceptive and sinister. Insofar it allows Beijing to garner all the benefits arising from improved bilateral relations of a diplomatic level even as China implements a larger grand strategy aimed at containing India as a future competitor. As one Indian analyst concluded “while China professes a policy of peace and friendliness towards India, its deeds are clearly aimed at the strategic encirclement of India in order to marginalize India in Asia and be it down to the Indian sub-Continent”\(^3\), such perceptions gain greater credence in Indian assessment because of other outstanding issues such as the Chinese unwillingness to rapidly settle the disputed border; China’s disinclination to recognize merger of Arunachal Pradesh as Indian state; Insistence on India’s recognition of Tibet as an in alienable part of China; the fear that China might resume support for the insurgency in the Indian northeast; and the persistent Chinese reluctance to admit that its nuclear capabilities threaten India. Taken together, these issues leave many Indian elites and policy makers distrustful of China.

Because, as states, India is weaker than China New Delhi is more concerned about China’s capabilities intensions and policies than Beijing is concerned about those of India. Such a pattern is not surprising because in any relationship between unequal, the weaker is usually more anxious about the policies of the stronger. Given the peculiar relationship between unequal states, China’s supposed indifference towards India cannot be used to justify the conclusion that New Delhi’s concerns about its northern neighbour are misplaced. Pakistan’s ability to mitigate its unfavourable position is rooted in the assistance it has received from extra-regional states, especially China. Chinese activities in Myanmar exacerbate the problem further for India. If perceived in the context of Chinese initiatives vis-à-vis the other small South Asian states, these actions are seen as an effort on Beijing’s part to undercut New Delhi’s natural dominance in South Asia: they compel India to commit resources towards maintaining its pre-eminence within the subcontinent instead of allocating them towards expanding its sphere of influence in other areas that might be of greater significance to China.

\(^3\) Colonel Gurmeet Kanwal, “Countering China’s Strategic Encirclement of India”, Bharat Rakshak Monitor, vol.3, No.3 (November-December 2000).
Moreover, Where Sino-Indian interactions are concerned, the individual bilateral relations both country enjoy with Russia are far more important to their strategic future than any chimerical strategic triangle. Astutely, managing these bilateral relations has become all the important because India, a former Soviet ally, is at best another friend, while China, a former adversary, is increasingly Russia’s largest customers of sophisticated weapons. Russia’s own search for an independent foreign policy choices too, are determined entirely by interest rather than ideology. In such circumstances, the grand strategic choices of all three countries are far more fluid. In post disintegration, Sino-Russian and Indo-Russian relationship are driven largely by the laws and logic of the market, rather than any other conviction. This reality is what makes Russia so interesting from the perspective of Sino-Indian relationship. While Moscow has become increasingly sensitive to the problem of both nuclear proliferation and the growth of new powers in Asia, its own precarious economic condition has created a new willingness to sell advanced military and technologies to any country based on simply on its ability to buy. As we have seen in the last chapter arms sales become critical to the survival of Russian defence industry because state cannot afford to procure weapons for its own military purposes. Export remain practically the soul source of income, and although many Russian firms receive subsidies of one sort or another, arms export are still their principal means of survival.

In this context, the Chinese and Indian desire for advanced arms matches Russian need. Both countries taken together currently account for more than 60 percent of Russia’s arms export. China, for example, has purchased from Russia su-27 and su-30 fighter jets aircraft, kilo class diesel-electric submarine, and sovremenny-class destroyers, in addition to advanced surface to air missiles, and other munitions. India similarly purchased SU-30 fighter aircraft, long range theatre bombers, major surface combatants, kilo class diesel-electric submarine, advanced surface to air missiles, and the T-90, Russia’s main advanced battle tank. The consequence of such unconstrained Russian sales to both China and India could be significant from the viewpoint of Sino-Indian competition over the far term. First, it makes relative economic performance even more central to the maintenance of a stable bilateral balance of power: superior China’s economic growth in this context could lay the basis for eroding India’s current military superiority along the Himalayan border.
Second, it paves the way for the creation of two rival military forces armed with similar weaponry; this by itself creates interesting operational challenges as warfighting outcomes would increasingly depend on relative tactical proficiency, imaginative strategies, and concepts of employment, rather than on gross differences in technology. How India will cope with these challenges is not entirely clear, so in this background the chapter try to make out the overall development of Russia China strategic and military cooperation to understand the depth of the relationship of two erstwhile adversaries and how it has aggravated India’s security.

4.2 Historical Perspective

Sino-Soviet relations before the disintegration of Soviet Union were characterized by a number of ups and downs. In February 1950, just four months after the establishment of People’s Republic of China (PRC), the two countries signed the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and mutual cooperation. The first half of the 1950’s was a honeymoon period. However, by the late 1950's difference in national interests and ideologies emerged, leading to serious disputes in the early 1960's which developed into acute conflict and border clashes in 1969. Hence, in the late 1960's and 1970's the Soviet Union regarded China as one of its main rivals and stationed approximately 1 million troops and one third of its SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles along the Sino-Soviet border; threatening to make a "surgical" first strike on China' nuclear bases. Under serious threat, China had to prepare for a military intrusion from north. However, in the 1980's the two countries, came to the realization that tense relations were not in the interests of either side and they made efforts to alleviate the situation.4 Thus the initial changes in Russian policy towards China may be traced back to the period of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980. With the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, troop’s reduction in the Russian Far East and a more balanced approach to the settlement of Cambodian crisis, the USSR largely responded to China's preconditions for a normalization of relations. Gorbachev’s visit to Beijing in May 1989 put a formal end to the period of mutual distrust and alert. Gorbachev’s policy brought changes in attitude to China among the Soviet conservative ruling elites and military. Cooperation between Soviet and

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Chinese defence bodies, including cooperation on the issues of arms, become one of the cornerstones of the new partnership. However, the declaration of Beijing in May 1989 by two sides about the full normalization of their relationship disappeared just a few years later when Chinese troops put down a pro-democracy rebellion in Tiananmen square and Beijing's internal and external policies abruptly returned to conservatism. China and USSR once more moved in opposite directions, relations cooled, and mutual suspicions resurfaced.

4.3 Changing Equation in New Realities from Normalization to Strategic Partnership

However, in December 1991, the Soviet Union disintegrated into 15 independent republics and Russia succeeded it as a permanent member of UN Security Council. Shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, China and Russia reached a number of agreements that showed their determination to develop the relationship beyond the 1991 normalization of relations and make the transition successfully form Sino-Soviet to Sino-Russian relations. The two countries agreed to develop good-neighborly and friendly relations based on five principles of peaceful coexistence, negotiated mutual reduction of military forces, along their shared borders, and pursue confidence building measures and other negotiations about the border areas. On the other side, there were number of practical problems involved with Russo-Chinese bilateral relations, and the problem had to be dealt with daily. The border issue, the movement of people across the frontiers, the sharing of river resources, the questions of disarmament - these and many other problems attracted the attention of the Russian government regarding its relationship with China. Nonetheless, Sino-Russian relations had developed in a smooth and healthy direction as one Russian official pointed out, "You can sometime forget about friends of they live far away but necessity makes you understand that you have to cooperate with close neighbours even if they are different and not to your liking".

At the meeting with Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng in New York on January 31, 1992 Yeltsin stressed that different social system could not prevent two neighbouring states from cooperating with each other. Following his visit to China in April 1992, Russian Foreign Minister Anderei Kozyrev stated that not withstanding some differences between the two countries, it was necessary to give priority to bilateral relations with such close neighbours. The two countries exchanged ratification papers on the agreement on the Russo-Chinese border in the east. At the meeting with Li-Peng and Qian Qichen, Kozyrev reiterated a desire to press on with the establishment of bilateral relations in all areas. Qian also confirmed an invitation extended to Yeltsin to visit China. Kozyrev added that the forthcoming reduction of the Russian military forces by 70,000 would include the Asian region. He also promised that the retargeting of nuclear weapons would not lead to growth in the military potential of Russia in the east. Kozyrev also praised Beijing's decision to join the treaty on the non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The next stage in Russo-Chinese dialogue was the arrival of Russian Deputy Premier Andrei Shokhin in Beijing on May 3, 1992. Shokhin pointed out that the main task now was to utilize the potential of Russo-Chinese cooperation to put it into practice through concrete agreements and action's. The two sides expressed a desire to make Yeltsin's visit a very successful one and to turn their high level bilateral political dialogue into a regular forum. Most of the bilateral disagreement was found to be on the road to a solution. However, human rights were discussed, but this time in low key affairs without polemics. The only international problem on which Moscow attempted to tackle China was Cambodia, Qian did not bend, confirming the usual Chinese stand. In an interview on the result of his talks in Moscow, Qian sounded a great deal more optimistic than before, he predicted that Sino-Russian relations could have a brilliant future.9

Yeltsin's official visit to the China on December 17 to 19, brought Russo-Chinese relations much closer to an alliance and further away from the animosity of the 1960's and 1970's. During this visit more than twenty documents covering all manners of cooperation were signed in Beijing. Among the most important was the

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joint declaration on the foundation of relation between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. The declaration stipulates the basic principles of Sino-Russian relations; China and Russia look upon each-other as friendly cooperation and have decided to develop good neighbourly, friendly and mutually beneficial cooperative relations; the one shall respect the other's right to choose freely the path of domestic development; neither side would participate in any military or political alliance directed against-the other, nor ally itself with a third party to the threat the sovereignty or security interests of others; and Russia agreed not to develop official relation with Taiwan.10 Thus in final analysis, the joint declaration should not be perceived as an attempt to revive the 1950's Russo-Chinese alliance. Rather, it aims at leaving behind the legacy of mutual confrontation, according to which both Moscow and Beijing acted in collision with other nations against one another. In other fields both sides signed a memorandum on principles of military- technical cooperation; an agreement that Russia would construct nuclear power station in China; China food credits to Russia; and a memorandum on a drastic cut in military forces in the areas adjacent to their common border. They also reached on agreement in the areas of terrorism, organized crime, and illegal trafficking in weapons and narcotics.

After President Yeltsin's visit to China, Sino-Russian relations entered a new stage of development by becoming active in range of different areas, including political, economic, military, scientific and technological, and cultural. In September 1994 Chinese President- Jiang Zemin visited Russia for a second summit meeting with Yeltsin. At that time, both sides were interested in maintaining a favourable development of Sino-Russian relations. The joint declaration signed at this summit proclaimed that the two countries had established a new type of constructive partnership that was geared to the twenty-first century. It was agreed that the relationship would not be affected by changes taking place in the domestic situation of either country or in the international situation. In this summit, both partners, also concurred not to aim nuclear weapons at each other and reached agreement on the western section of the Sino-Russian border. The two leaders signed an agreement delineating the 55 kilometre western sector of the Sino-Russian border.11

summit meeting brought Sino-Russian relations to a new stage, which could be termed the stage of Constructive Partnership.

4.3.1 Towards Constructive Partnership

In May 1995 Jiang visited Russia to attend The 50th ceremony commemorating victory in World War-II. During this visit, Russia confirmed its support for the one China policy and its opposition to Taiwan joining the UN. It also stated that it would abide strictly by the Sino-Soviet eastern border agreement despite some opposition from local officials in the Russian Fareast. China confirmed once again that Chechnya issue was an internal matter for Russia and that no other country should intervene, expressed its support for Russia's application to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), and suggested that the two countries might cooperate further in UN affairs. This visit consolidated and developed the constructive partnership. 12

4.3.2 Forging a Strategic Partnership

In April 1996 the third Sino-Russian summit meeting was held in Beijing. Jiang and Yeltsin signed a new joint statement proclaiming the forging of a strategic partnership of equality and trust oriented towards, the 21st century. 13 China stated that it understands the Russian position against NATO expansion eastwards and supports Russian actions to preserve the federation, treating Chechnya issue as an internal matter. Russia in its turn reiterated that the Chinese government was the only legal administration to represent all of China and that Taiwan was an integral part of Chinese territory. Russia would therefore not establish or have official contacts with Taiwan.

On 26 April, the heads of states of China, Kazakhstan, Russia and Tajikistan met in Shanghai and signed an agreement on confidence building in the military field in the border area. This summit pushed Sino-Russian relations yet further forward. The premier of the two countries visited each others in December 1996 and June 1997, while Presidents Jiang and Yeltsin again traded visits in April and November 1997. At the time of President Jiang visit to Moscow in April, China and Russia also

12 Chen Qimao in Gennady Chufin (ed.), op.cit. p. 290.
signed "deceleration on the multipolarizations of the world and established of a new international order", which expounded corresponding Chinese and Russian views on the international situations in the post cold war era. And the heads of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also signed an agreement on the "Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in Border areas". It constituted a new kind of security mechanism in central and north-east Asia. Jiang and Yelstin also announced setting up a committee on Sino-Russian Friendship, peace and development for the 21st-Century.  

In November 1997 President Yeltsin made his third visit to China for the fifth summit meeting since 1992, The Chinese and Russian President announced that all the issues related to the demarcation of the eastern Sino-Russian border had been settled. The most important outcome was the accomplishment of 4300-kms eastern border, thus setting a long-standing disputes and leaving only the questions of there small island to be settled by future generations. In addition, the two sides reached consensus on the development of trade and economic cooperation and declared the goal of expanding bilateral trade from US$ 6.8 billion in 1996 to US $ 20 billion in 2000. Demarcation of the 55km western sector of the border was completed in 1998.

During President Vladimir Putin's inaugural trip to Beijing a joint statement issued in July 2000 expressed "deep worry" over the U.S. plan, which "boils down to striving for unilateral superiority." Strict compliance with the ABM Treaty was declared to be of "vital significance," and its destruction "would trigger off a new stage of the arms race and turn back positive trends in global politics that appeared after the end of the Cold War." Addressing a particular concern of China's, Putin and Jiang voiced a "resolute protest" over any plan to involve Taiwan in any form of the contemplated missile defense system. During Putin's July 2000 visit, Jiang sought to retain a modicum of balance in Beijing's ties with Washington by stating that Sino-Russian relations were "not an alliance, not confrontational, and not aimed at any third country." Nevertheless, the two sides reportedly agreed during this visit to prepare their new treaty relationship—to be signed during Jiang's trip to Moscow in

July. The treaty would call the world's attention to how close the relations between the former adversaries (and former allies) had grown. In the estimate of Lu Nanquan, deputy director of the Russian Studies Center of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, "now is the best it has ever been...China and Russia have come this far because of the United States." 17

4.3.3 The Treaty on Good Neighbourly

The Treaty on Good Neighbourly Friendship and Cooperation Between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, signed in Moscow on July 16, 2001, was not, according to its signatories, a traditional "alliance." China's President Jiang Zemin and Russia's President Vladimir Putin were both at pains to insist that the agreement was not directed against any third country. In their joint statement, they declared that it formalized a new type of relationship, aimed at furthering a "just and rational new international order." 18 Spokesmen for both parties further declared that the treaty was not about military cooperation. 19 Without a doubt, Russia and China have travelled a great distance from the darkest period of the Sino-Soviet conflict. But the legacy of those years, overlaid with the present incongruities in their circumstances and incompatibilities of their viewpoints, makes it difficult indeed for the two states to establish a strong and durable partnership.

4.3.4 Reasons for Closer Cooperation

Since establishment of diplomat relations in 1991, the Sino-Russian relationship had progressed from one between friendly countries' to a constructive partnership and then to strategic partnership of cooperation. Sino-Russian relations have made great progress in the areas of; trusted each others and followed strictly the principle of mutual respect, equality, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs; respected the path chosen by other and understands the other's effort to safeguard national unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence. Second, Mechanism has been established for reciprocal visits between the two countries presidents, regular meeting of the two primers, and consultation between the

two foreign ministers in order to promote mutual communication and understanding. Third, coordination on essential international issues had been enhanced, along with joint efforts to maintain world peace and promote international cooperation, and development.20

The Sino-Russian rapprochement was basically a reaction to the Changing' balance of power in world politics, enabling the two countries to act in parallel rather then as allies. Their efforts to develop a strategic partnership seek to counter the U.S. line of preserving a unipolar, international system and seek the establishment of multipolarity with both countries playing the most independent roles possible. The objectives of joint action by China and Russia were concurrent self. Determination, independent influence and separate bargaining position rather then close military and political alliances. It was symbolic the search for terms to define the stages of there bilateral cooperation had been mostly a search for labels to attract the attention of third parties. At the same time it was constantly stressed that it was not an alliance relationship.

China seemed to have clearer idea than Russia what to do with possibilities that were open to it. In its turn, it was given the opportunity for constructive dialogue with USA. As Li Finglin, Chinese ambassador to Russia put it," the Chinese -Russian strategic partnership does not rule-out relations of partnership between other countries. Moreover, if the worlds major power established relations of partnership, this would benefit global peace and stability.21

Practically China tried to balance its relations with Russia by promoting ties with the USA. The formula of strategic partnership that was to characterized the Sino-Russian relationship in 1996-97 was discussed by China and the USA as well. In a joint statement- released following the US-China summit meeting in October 1997 stated that presidents were determined to build towards a constructive strategic partnership between the United States and China through increasing cooperation to meet international challenges and promote peace and development in the world. 22

20 Li Jingjie, “Sino-Russian Relations in Asia Pacific” in Watanbe Koji (ed), Engaging Russia in Asia Pacific (Japan Centre for International Exchange, Tokyo, 1999), pp.56-57.
21 Li Fenglin, “Chinese-Russian Relations After the Fifth Summit in Beijing”, (Problem Dalnego Vostoka, no.1, 1998, p.4 (in English)).
In the new international situations China was keen to continue its policy of maintaining independence and keeping the initiatives in its own hands. That means that it intended to determine its position in the world arena independently, refused to participate in any alliance or arms race, and was developing cooperation with all the nations of the world on the basis of five principles of peaceful co-existence. In his report to the 15th congress of Chinese communist party, Jiang Zemin stressed the 5 basic principles of China foreign policy and stated that we would not yield to any outside pressure or enter into alliance with any big power or group of countries, nor should we established any military bloc, join in the arms race or seek military expansion.23

Essentially China tried to be pragmatic and did not want any ideological affinity or dispute to determine its international relations. It had mostly removed Ideological constraints on its foreign policy in order to avoid letting, ideological and geopolitical factors prevail over economic expediency. Moreover China recognized that the present orientation of the international system was toward peace, cooperation, and development. The factors favoured world peace had increased and it was realistic to strive for a stable and peaceful international environment. Indeed, China showed the theme of the present epoch as peace and development, rather than war and revolution. The disintegration of the Soviet Union marked the end of the bipolar era and the beginning of a system of multi polarity, the exact shape of which would take a while to become apparent. China felt that a multipolar system was much more favorable for world peace, stability and development then a bipolar or unipolar system.

Also, China recognized that the trend was towards economic regionalization, globalization, and interdependence. Blocking communication at national borders can only mean backwardness for that nation and international competition had shifted from military competition for competition for comprehensive national strength to focussing economics and science and technology. However, despite the end of cold war, the world was not tranquil, even in post cold war era. The reason China felt were, that the cold war mentality still persisted. Hegemonies and power politics threaten world peace military blocs and alliances of cold war era were strengthened.

International economic order was still harmful to the interest of developing countries, and there were frequent local conflict caused by ethnic, religious, territorial and other factors.\textsuperscript{24}

At the same time, Russia's foreign policy goal included the formation of good neighbour zone, around itself. The stability of Russia's western and southern border areas was threatened by the complex territorial and national problem existing between Russia and the newly independent republics, and armed conflict in eastern Europe, Transcaucasia, and central Asia. In contrast 4300kms border with China became, secure and stable. The chronic instability of Russia's other border areas had heightened the necessity for Russia of maintaining good relations with China.

Russian and Chinese strategic interest had also converged to considerable degree in their mutual desire for secular stability in central Asia. China was particularly sensitive to its Islamic nationalities in Xingjian province, of which the Uighurs were by far the largest, numbering, about seven million, being infected by nationalist and secessionist fervour from the newly independent states of Central Asia.\textsuperscript{25}

So far the central Asian government, especially those of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, had been responsive to Chinese concerns and had taken the measures to quell cross border Uighur nationalism. The Russian interest in stability in central Asia stems from concerns about ethnic Russian populations, which were considerable in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as the possible emergence of Islamic rather than secular Government in the region which might influence the Muslim populations in Russia. Given its current economic problems, Russia would be extremely hard pressed if large number of refuses streamed across the border because of discriminatory treatment or civic unrest. The civil war in Tajikistan had served as a cautionary tale for China and Russia and both had been reluctant to criticize central Asian government for human right violations and political repression because these governments had ensured internal stability.

\textsuperscript{24} Lijingjie op.cit. pp. 54-60.
The other key factors that contributed to improved relations was the growing gap of perceptions and alienations from the wests near identical view regarding the desired structure of post cold war international order; primary of UN in global decision making and the precedence of national sovereignty over western concoctions of humanitarian intervention, and limited sovereignty. They aspired to a Multipolar world, in which few great powers- The Russia, Western Europe, China, India, Japan- made the big decisions.

Throughout the 1990's China encountered challenges from the west on question of human right, its stance on Taiwan, its military programmes and especially activities around the Taiwan straits and South China sea islands. Russian concerns lie elsewhere, namely, in the general trend towards a more assertive foreign policy, periodically diverting attention to the situation in the Baltic countries, Iran, Iraq, Libya and the former Yugoslavia, and in the intensifying dispute over NATO extension- issues which remained remote from China. However, the general trend of thinking in both sides was such that they were pursuing the policy which has been distancing them from the west. They also rejected the model of US led international community, an insisted on the need for a multipolar post cold war international system. Both sides also adopted similar positions on the war against terror, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and international conflict management, most recently in the context of Iraq. They were supportive of each other's direct security concerns. Beijing had publicly backed Putin over his handling of Chechen conflict, while Moscow had reciprocated on Chinese efforts to suppress separation in Xingjian and had given its unequivocal support to the 'one China' policy towards Taiwan. Both had also a major stake in peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

The record of achievement was even more impressive in respect of the bilateral agenda. Somewhat remarkably given the historical record, there were currently no serious disagreement but many issues were in pending. The two countries had also reached at tacit understanding over their respective roles in central Asia.

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With Beijing effectively conceded Russia’s leading position, the threat of renewed Great game in the region had been deferred.

Economic ties too, once the weakest dimension of the strategic had expended in recent past. Two way official trades had nearly tripled during president Russia’s first presidential term from US $5.7 Billion in 1999 to US $15.7 Billion in 2003. In 1990’s Sino- Russian economic cooperation developed in very slowly and chaotically in comparison to their political relations. Though since 1992 annual trade had exceeded the highest figure achieved in Soviet times, but it was very slow in comparison of China’s total foreign trade. It was less than 2 percent of China’s total foreign trade by value, and less than 10 percent by value between China and Japan. Moreover, the growth of the trade was not stable and it fluctuating form year to year. However, the leadership of both countries understood the importance of stable economic growth for an effective political relationship and continuously worked on diversification of the economic ties, other than arms trade. As a result, a commercial relationship once dependent an arms and shuttle commerce had shown sign of diversification. In addition to cooperation in civilian nuclear energy and space technology, there was also growing trade in trans-Asian infrastructures and especially energy (oil and gas) projects could be seen as diversification of the economic ties. Nevertheless, the most important factors that contributed to improved relations were the expansion of Russian arms sales to China and increased military-technical cooperation between the two.

As a result of Tiananmen square incident sanction had been imposed on China by the west which restricted the supply of modern arms and military technology while the underfinanced Russian military industry, experiencing decline in domestic sales benefited form the increase in demand from China. China soon became its largest customer and one that usually eager to expand its purchases. Many Russian military and security analysts had questioned the wisdom of the weapons sales because they

29 Chen Qinao on Gennday Chifrin(ed.) op.cit. p. 293.
viewed China as a potential long-term security threat. Indeed, former defense minister Rodinov referred to China as a potential threat" in speech in December 1996. Likewise, Russian naval officer had expressed dissatisfaction that the destroyers sold to China would have been deployed in the Russian fleet if economic conditions had allowed. Some analysis argued that the Russian government had lost great, deal of control over the system of technologies that ending up in Chinese hands. Pavel Felgengaur, a Russian journalist for Sgodnya, had written that some Russian arm's manufacturers had confirmed reports of Chinese intelligence success in obtaining classified information and documentation on some of Russia's latest weapon system. Numerous reports had also surfaced indicating that underemployed Russian defence scientists an engineers were finding work in China. US intelligence indicated that two 'Russiatown' in China, one near Shanghai which housed scientists and researchers, specializing cruise Misille and another in Changdu which was staffed mostly by aeronautical engineers.

Those defending the sale argued that these transferred technologies were not cutting edge Su-27 and kilo-class submarines, for example, had been in production for over a decade. The problem for Russia was that many of the newer generation designs remain on the drawing board or in experimental samples that had never gone into serial production. In addition Russia sold most of the off the shelf system during the 1990's. If the arms sales was to grow as each side seemingly desires, then Russia would be forced to sell state of the art system and technologies.

However, Russia's primary focus in Asia in the near to medium term may be to reconstitute its economic and political power and ensure the security of its borders, reinforcing the need to reduce sources of potential instability and political - military threat. With China, which until well into the 1980's rendered as avowed adversary of

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32 ‘Can a bear love a Dragon’? The Economist, 26 April 1994, p. 20.
the Soviet Union intent on frustrating its geo-political goals across Asia, Russia had resumed a substantial arms transfer relationship after a three decade hiatus, paralleling a more long standing relationship with India. Russia's predominant policy goals in Asia over the coming years assumes an complementary of interest with Asia's major powers, although agenda with each of three would, necessarily vary.

4.4 Military Technical Cooperation:

Sino-Russian friendship- fostered by their mutually advantageous Military-Technical Cooperation (MTC)-gave both the countries opportunity to counter the western pressure and press for much heralded multipolar world. It gave Russia greater manoeuvrability in its relations with the USA-led west and NATO as well as Japan, which had claim on the four kurile island in the Asia-pacific region. In the 1990s, arms trade became the stable sector for solid foundation of Russia-China relationship. During the early and mid 1950's, the Soviet Union provided China with a wide array of military hardware. This period of Sino-Soviet strategic cooperation however, gave way to an era of enmity by the early 1960s. All military cooperation between the two countries ceased. After a 30 years period of hostility, military contracts were resumed and the framework of a policy of rapprochement established by President Mikhail Gorbachev at the May 1989 Sino-Soviet Summit meeting. The two governments opened negotiations on a series of agreements on mutual force reductions, the demarcation of disputed border areas, the resumption of military to military exchanges and greatly expanded economic relations.

Sales of weapons and defence technology were at the heart of this new military relationship. The first discussion on arms sales began during a June 1990 visit to Moscow by General Liu Huaging, Vice Chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission. This was followed by extensive and frequent dialogue between the two sides on the transfer of advanced weapons systems despite the collapse of the Soviet Union and the domestic crisis in Russia. It was President Boris Yeltsin who concluded the most extensive military agreement with China since 1950s, after

visiting Beijing in December 1992 he promised to sell China the most sophisticated armaments and weapons.\(^{39}\)

In contrast with the military cooperation of the 1950’s, when Soviet Union generously shared weapons and military technology with China, current Russian policy was more influenced by economic than by strategic or ideological considerations. At the same time, Russia regards China (alongwith India and Kazakhstan) as an important pillar of Eurasian Security System in the Post Cold War era. China made it clear that it supported Russia in its existence to NATO enlargement.\(^{40}\)

Since the resumption of their military cooperation, Russia had become China’s leading arms supplier. Their military technical cooperation included purchase of military equipment and its production under license in China, technology transfer, exchange of visits by high level defence officials of the two countries and training of Chinese defence personnel in Russia. The first and most significant contracts between Russia and China was regarding the supply of 26 SU-27 fighter aircraft, including 2 Su-27 UB trainer versions, which were delivered in the year 1992.\(^{41}\) The SU-27 deal concluded while the Soviet Union was still there. In keeping with the agreement around 200 Chinese airmen began studying the management of SU-27 in the Krasondam Aviation Institute in February 1992. The Russian government announced in 1992 that it was selling Beijing $1.8 billion worth of SU-27, II 76 transport aircraft and other weapons for air defence purposes.\(^{42}\) On December 18, 1992 Russia and China were reported to have signed an inter-governmental memorandum on military and technological cooperation outlining its guiding principles.\(^{43}\)

In 1992, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) became the first export customer to receive the Russian S-300 surface to air missile. In 1992 China ordered from Russia 4SA-10C/SA-S-300 PMO Surface to Air Missile (SAM) systems, which

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\(^{40}\) “Russia, India, China Could Serve Guarantors of Asian Region Security”, *New From Russia* (New Delhi), vol.3, no. 10, 10 march 2000, p.10.


were received between, 1993-1994. Between, 1993-97, China also received 144SA to crumble/SVSSR SAMS for the SA-10C/SA-300 PMO SAM system. In 1993 China received 1 II-28 Beagle from Russia. Between 1992-96, China also received from Russia 6 Ilyshin - 76 long range transport aircraft – the likes of which it did not possess earlier, as well as 4 to 22 Backfire bombers. China was reported to be getting the Russian and Israeli early warning system fitted in IL-76 freighters that would convert them into AWACS. 

Sino-Russian arms deals and defence industrial cooperation had become the focal point of China’s efforts to engage Russia in a substantive military relationship and to obtain advanced military equipment and technology in order to modernize the inventory of the PLA, enhanced its air and naval capability’s and advance its power projection in Asia. In renewed and further developed bilateral military-technical cooperation, the two countries had agreed on many disputed issues and gave the new lease of relations. Russia had provided parts, materials, and technologies pertaining missile system. The rational for military cooperation between Russia and China had numerous reasons to cooperate with each other. Their common grievances against the USA and other similarities had promoted their relationship. According to Stephen J. Blank “Russo-Chinese ties signal a relationship that was being driven by China’s strategic interests and the private interests of Russia’s arms dealers and other western elites as much, if not more than by reasoned calculation of Russian strategic or national interest”. In addition, when speaking of China and Russia military relations, the US Ambassador to China from 1989-1991, James Dilley said, “The Russian have the technology, hardware and the personnel, and they are starving to death the Chinese have got $140 trillion in foreign exchange it makes sense”.

On the other side, since the end of Communism, Russian defence industry faced drastic cut in its defence budget and lower military procurements. This had created pressure for exports in order to obtain hard currency and sustain the defence industrial base. This necessity had promoted arms and weapons related factories to look outside Russia for customers. China’s willingness to pay for arms and

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44 Jasjit Singh op.cit., p. 47.
45 Swaran Singh op.cit., p. 197.
46 Cited in “China’s Missile Imports and other Assistance from Russia” http://www.mti.org/db/China/imrus.htm.
technologies had substantially supported Russia's economy throughout the last decade. This trading relationship was more significant for Russia than it was for China because, while the exchange composed only a small portion of China's economy Russia was dependent on Chinese financial support. At the same time, China was attempting to increase its military strength in order to raise the cost for the US to engage in conflict with it, especially concerning Taiwan. China started dealing with Russia, because it lacks some of necessary technology to develop advanced weapons and because of US ceased arms sales to China after the 1989 Tiananmen incident and other human rights violation. Russia pointedly ignores China's domestic repression of human rights which remained a source of tension in the Sino-US relationship. In addition, Russia's level of technology in the past greatly surpassed that of China due to Cold War competition with the United States, and therefore, China had much to gain from cooperation with Russia. Finally, the US missile defence intentions had caused China to align more closely with Russia.47

However, there were other important factors, which also promoted Sino-Russia military technical cooperation. Russian leaders believed that China's interest in military cooperation with its northern neighbour would help further development of a stable bilateral relationship and lead to greater flexibility in the resolution of common problems. Despite some security concerns among elements of the Russian military and some politicians, most prominently the Yabloko Party, the Yeltsin Government and a majority of defence experts were confident that China would not use its growing military potential against Russia.48 In spite of the fact of military confrontation between China and Russia in the recent past, Pavel Grachev, then Russian Defence Minister, used his visit to China in May 1995 to state his view that China would never pose a military threat to Russia again. Russian leadership perception was that the China's military threat had disappeared for the foreseeable future and Russia no longer plans for a general war to preserve its territorial integrity against a potential Chinese invasion. Some contended that Russia was selling military equipment to China as part of an effort to remain vigilant against two potential threats

to the integrity of Russia: the possible growth of Islamic fundamentalism within Russia and the resurgence of regional power with an Islamic background.

On the other side, Stephen J. Blank has opined in different perspective. According to him, the Russian Government had lost its control over its arms sales programme but could not dares to react negatively, despite the military implication of such transfer for its own security. 49 If we accept his views, it clearly indicts that due to fundamental flaws in Russian arms industry, government deliberately ignoring the security of the nation, giving the free hand to arms industry to protect itself from extinct. It was evident with high ranking Russian military visits to Beijing in 1998 to promote this cooperation.

Russian arms suppliers were promoting sales to China despite objection from certain military circles. Former Russian Minister of Defence Igor Rodinov, for example, called China a potential opponent. 50 The giant military production complex created Soviet times had lost orders from the government, as Russia was not able and did not need to support such enormous amounts of military production. China’s attempts to increase its regional role by modernizing its army proved the great financial support for the ailing Russian defence industry, which Russia could not turn its basis on the potential Chinese market.

Chinese interests in expanding contracts with Russia was to be explained by a number of factors, including ideological, political and strategic considerations, such as the prevention of further expansion of ‘bourgeois ideology’, the ‘peaceful evolution’ of the socialist nations to capitalism, counteracting western pressures, and overcoming China’s isolation after the Tiananmen square incident. Sino-Russian contacts were also significantly boosted by Chinese adoption of plans to modernize the People’s Liberation Army. 51

Modern Russian arms had provided China with a unique opportunity to close the technological gap between it and the military superpowers. Russia had supplied and plans to supply the most advanced weapons to China. They included SU-27

51 Yuri V. Tsyganov in Gennady Chufrin, (ed.) op. cit., p. 311.
fighter aircraft, S-300 Mu-I air defence missile complexes, Kilo class submarines, sovremenny class destroyer eight of the most modern Moskit antiship rocket launchers and two stihl air defence guided missile launchers, T-80U tanks and the Tor-MI (SA-15) air defence missile complex Rusian Il-76 aircraft may become the basis for installing the Falcon early warning system, the delivery of which China successfully negotiated with Israel in July 1996. In 1996 it brought from it a Sukhoi license for producing 200 SU-27 fighter aircraft in Shenyang. Delivers of finished weapons system from Russia greatly outweigh the technology transfer. China wished to reverse this process.52

Russian arms supplies were specially important for China not only because of the western embargo but also because China built its technological base the help of Soviet experts. Modern Russian armaments helped to raise the level of Chinese professionals and to educate military personnel to use modern methods of warfare.

4.4.1. Land Force

According to Russian military sources, in 1992 China agreed to buy roughly 50 T-72 MBTS and 70 BMP Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicles (AIFV) at cost of about $250 million.53 According to another unconfirmed reports, these tanks were delivered at the end of 1993. The transfer involved the latest model of the heavily armed and relatively modern G-72 family – an improved version of the T-72 M1, if the T-72 were to replace the immense Chinese inventory of older tanks, this would represent a major increase in China’s capability. During a visit to China by President Yeltsin in April 1996 purchases of, for example, tanks, tank fire control system and BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers (APC) were discussed.54 Unconfirmed reports suggested that China would order about 200 BMP-SS from Russia. In October 1992 the PLA became the first export customer to receive the Russian S-900 PMU-11 surface to air missile (SAM), designated the SA-10C Grumble by NATO.55 The PLA had no system with similar performance, and the S-300 PMU-1 would give a significant boost to its air defense capabilities. In 1993 1200 AT-II sniper antitank

52 Ibid., pp. 311-12.
missiles were ordered and received in 1995 for use in T-80 U tanks. During President Yeltsin’s visit in April 1998 Russian and Chinese specialist apparently discussed the modernization of older Chinese tanks with new fire control system and the possible transfer of the BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers.

4.4.2. Air Force

Before China resumed military cooperation with Russia, it had a fleet of 5000 obsolete combate aircrafts, most of them based on old Soviet designs such as the Mig-21 and Mig-19 fighter aircraft and the TU-4 bomber. Chinese helicopters were also mostly based on Soviet designs, the MiG-4 and MIG 8/17 series.

In 1990, China introduced the F-871 finback but this aircraft was not comparable to contemporary western or Russian aircraft. The failure of the finback programme forced the PLAAF to find alternative aircraft, and the dramatic reduction in tension between China and Russia made Russia an obvious choice as a supplier. In 1992 China received 26 Su-27s, Russia’s most advanced air superiority fighter, including two trainer versions.

The SU-27 was a designed for air to air combate and was equipped with Russia’s most advanced avionics. Among other features, it had multiple-target engagement with look down shoot down capabilities. It had a combat radius of Approximately 1600kms, which could be extended if China was able to acquire in fight refueling capability an acquisition priority.

The SU-27 deal was followed in 1992 by a contract for 100 Kalimov RD-33 aircraft engines, which Russia uses to power its Mig-29 fighter and China intended to employ to upgrade its export oriented super F-7 fighter or after its cancellation – the Fe-I fighter and some other aircraft.

There were also reports that China was prepared to buy 24-36 MIG-31 interceptor and 40 MIG-29 fighter aircraft as well as 12 SU-24 fighter bombers but these plans were later cancelled. According to some accounts, in July 1994 China’s
state council approved an additional $5 billion worth of arms imports from Russia, including an unspecified number of SU-30 MK and SU-35 fighters. Russia apparently refused to sell the advanced SU-35 but offered the SU-27 and the Su-30 MKAS as an alternative.

In addition to these fighter aircrafts, Russia had apparently offered the supersonic TU-22 M backfire bomber (4000 km unrefuelled range) to replace China's obsolete H-6 bomber force. Following President Yeltsin's April 1996 visit, China reportedly ordered 118 sets of missile system and four TU-22M long range bombers.

There were some reports that China had also agreed to buy an unspecified number of A-50 airborne warning and control (AWAC) aircraft and long range early warning radar system. China may also procure the Russian AS-15 airs launched cruise missile, which had a 3000 Km range and was capable of being launched by PLAAF's B-60 bombers. The status of this potential transaction remained uncertain.

In 1996-97, China was given approximately 144 AA-10 Alamo air-to-air missiles and approximately 96 AA-8 Aphid air-to-air missiles. In 1997-98, China was given 15 SA-15 SAM systems as well as approximately 255 SA-15 Gauntlet/9M330 missiles. Russia agreed to give 10 Kamov Ka-28 Helix helicopters from 1997-99. Two were delivered in 1997 and the rest were scheduled to be delivered by 1999. In 1998-99 China received from Russia/Ukraine technology for the DF-31/41 ICBMs, which were displayed for the first time at the military parade in October 1999.

Aircrafts such as the SU-27 and the Tu-22M would give China a credible tool for military intervention beyond its borders. In lines of actual combat, such aircraft would stand as a symbol of Chinese power and prestige and offer an effective deterrent. Modern military aircraft would also add to the PLAAF efforts an effective combined arms capability. Between 2000 and 2005 Russia would deliver 60 Su-30MKK multi-purpose aircraft to China. The deal is likely to provide a very significant qualitative boost to the Chinese air force. The Sino-Russian Su-30 MKK

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64 Jasjit Singh, op. cit., pp. 47-49
deal was particularly significant because in 1996 India had ordered 40 Su-30s. Russia was upgrading them to Su-30 MKI according to Indian specifications with Indian, French and Israeli avionics. During Indian Defence Secretary Ajit Kumar's visit to Moscow in November 1998, Russia had given an assurance that Su-30MK multi-role fighter aircraft would not be sold to China or any other country in India's neighbourhood. China was reported to be interested in the aircraft.\textsuperscript{65} However, subsequently Russia had decided to go ahead with the sale of similar aircraft to China, which was named Su-30MK and was being fitted with avionics according to the Chinese specifications. The delivery of the first Su-30 aircraft to China was expected in the year 2000. Russia was also slated to transfer technology to China for licensed production of 200 Su-30 MKK aircraft. The acquisition by China of an aircraft similar to the state-of-the-art aircraft in the Indian Air Force is bound to have security repercussions for India. In the year 2000, Russia had given to China Ka-31 AEW helicopters. Between 2000 to 2005, it would also give 4 SA-300 PMV Sam systems and missiles.\textsuperscript{66}

4.4.3 The Navy

Sino-Russian military technical cooperation in the naval field started in 1991. In February 1994 the Nizhniy Navgorod Mushzavod plant signed a contract with the plan to supply three ship borne 77-mm automatic artillery systems. In March 1995 Chinese specialists were trained at Mashzavod to use these guns, which were to be delivered by the end of the year.

The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) was also modernizing its submarine fleet in 1994 China sought four Kilo class (877 EKN) submarines from Russia and apparently intends to obtain the eights to manufactured additional Vessel in China. The first was delivered as early as February 1995 and the second and third in 1996-97 respectively. The fourth was expected to be delivered by the end of 1998. Some reports contend that China may ultimately obtain upto 22 kilo submarine, but sources in China with a closer knowledge of the programme dismissed this. It was reported in March 1995 that China had struck another deal with Russia for the purchase of six more submarines, but only the order of two types 636 submarines was

\textsuperscript{65} The Statesman, November 13, 1998.
\textsuperscript{66} Jasjit Singh, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
confirmed. The kilo was considered to be an advanced conventionally powered vessel that was extremely effective in the coastal defence role with a range of 9650 Km and an ability to remain at sea for up to 45 days, these vessels represent a significant addition not only to PLA’S coastal defence but also to its offensive potential. The PLAN had also become the first export customer for the Type 636 variant of the Kilo. The Type 636 was a slightly larger and quieter derivative featuring improved sonar and a longer range.

A deal for two sovereign destroyers submarine worth $800 million was finalized during a visit to Moscow by Chinese Premier Li Peng in late December 1996, although no mention of the agreement was made in the official communique issued at the conclusion of the visit. The class, which first entered Soviet service in 1980, was primarily a surface strike Combatant. Ships were normally armed with eight launched for the sea swimming SS-N-22 sunburn surface to surface missile (SSM), which had a range of up to 150 km, two SA-N-17 Grizzly 5Am launchers and two twin 130 mm guns. The Chinese vessels were likely to be an improved version of the original design with provision for up to 24 Sunburn SSMS.

In August 1999 Hong Kong press published reports of a deal regarding the sale of two typhoon-class nuclear-powered submarines valued at a billion dollars between Russia and China. The deal was reported to have been reached during the Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov’s visit to China and endorsed by President Yeltsin and President Jiang during their meeting in Bishkek on the occasion of the summit of Shanghai-5. According to the report, the nuclear-powered submarines capable of launching nuclear warheads are aimed at deterring the US Seventh Fleet from intervening in any cross straits clash between China and Taiwan. The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesmen denied the report as "an absolute lie". However, the main arms exporting agency of Russia, Rosvooruchene refused to

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comment on the subject. It spokesman told Interfax, "We customarily do not comment on military-technical cooperation with China."\textsuperscript{71}

4.4.4 Military Technology Transfer

China's military industry had a well documented history of problems with reverse-engineered systems and some Chinese copies of foreign designed weapons, such as the Soviet T-62 tank and MIG 23 fighter bomber and had never reached the production stage.

Since resuming military cooperation with Russia, China had been extremely cautious in signing deal to purchase Russian military hardware, Chinese official would prefer to purchase technology and production licenses rather buy equipment 'off the shell'. Some reports suggested that China would try to reverse the ratio of purchases of weapons and technology, which was 70:30 in favour of Russia. Russia had considered transferring of advanced technology even at the risk of its long term adverse impact on the regional balance of power. This willingness had stemmed from the desperate economic straits of the Russian defence industry and pressure from the defence industry and defence ministry officials to overrule the objections of their foreign ministry counterparts.

The military-industrial complexes of the two countries were developing about 100 joint projects. Of these, about 30 were targeted at adapting Russian basic models to Chinese standards; the remainders should result in the creation of new weapon systems and ammunition.

It was reported that China had negotiated with Russian official for a technology exchange that could include joint development of an advanced fighter aircraft 'with capabilities falling midway between the MIG-29 fighter and the MIG-31 high-attitude interceptors. According to other accounts, Russia would move some production of the MIG-31 to China. It was suggested that 150-300 MIG-31 foxhounds could be made in China over an eight year period. This was a high attitude interception with superior extended range radar and multiple target engagement.

\textsuperscript{71} The Indian Express, September 3, 1999.
capabilities. However in view of the SU-27 co-production programme and China’s budget constraints, these plans could not implemented.\textsuperscript{72}

In addition to advanced fighter technology, China has been trying to acquire in flight refuelling capabilities from Russia, which could enable the PLAAF to extend its reach. China was developing its next generation fighter (F-10) and such technology transfer of relatively concession prices would be of a considerable help. China was also attempting to purchase ESW technology and technical data on the design and construction of airframes.

China had shown keen interest in acquiring missile technologies from system known to be capable of being equipped with multiple independently -targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVS). According to a leaked US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) report, China had been attempting to acquire SS-18 (Russian designation RS-20) Satan intercontinental ballistic missile( ICBM) technology, possibly including engine and guidance technology, from Russia and /or Ukraine China made no secret of this claiming that it would be used to improve its commercial space launch capabilities. The SS-18 was probably linked to China’s strategic force modernization.\textsuperscript{73} Some experts suggest that with Russia assistance China would be able to produce an ICBM with a range of upto 12000 Km (instead of the current 8000km) by 2005, with such a missile China could threaten not only the Asia-Pacific region but also the United States and Europe.

In May 1996 US Defence Secretary William Perry confirmed that China had been seeking to obtain SS-18 technology from Russia and possibly Ukraine. “We believe that it would be significant mistake to transfer the SS-18 technology to China and have so represented our position to the Russian government,” Perry said.\textsuperscript{74}

China has also reportedly received information on the SS-24 scalped and SS-25 Sickle ICBMS, designed at Russia’s Nadiradze design Bureau and Ukraine’s southern machines building plant this information could prove useful since both missiles were MIRV capable. The SS-24 (Russian designation RS – 22 or 12T – 230) was a rail mobile and soil based solid fuel ICBM that can carry up to 10 MIRVED

\textsuperscript{73} Jane’s Intelligence Review, June 1997, p. 267.
\textsuperscript{74} Jane’s Defence Weekly, 29 May 1996, p. 3.
warheads. The SS.25 was a road Mobile solid fuel KBM that could be around with single or multiple warheads.\(^75\)

Military technology transfers were combined with exchange of personnel and expertise. According to Russian ministry of defence sources, more than 1000 Russian defence scientists and technicians had travelled to China since 1991 on defence industrial exchange, there were around 300-400 Chinese defence specialists in Russia. It was expected that 300 of these Russian expert remained with long term commitments. Some of the Russian scientists were believed to be based permanently in China. They were experts in the fields of cruise missiles, anti submarines warfare, missile launching experiments and nuclear explosions.\(^76\) Chinese defence scientists and technicians were working at Russian aerospace institute, including some in Moscow, Ryazan, Samara and Saratov. Some were studying at organization such as the central institute of Aircraft dynamics in Moscow.\(^77\) Though there was no confirmation from any side that the Russian scientist had been recruited by Chinese agency. But after the electronic revolution, it was no longer essential for any scientist to travel abroad to assist foreign partner. In this area, already in 1993, Russian defence laboratories and their Chinese counterparts were linked by electronic mail.

4.4.5 Other Programmes:

China and Russia agreed to engage themselves in a other form military cooperation, other than state's technological transfer to conversion. Their defence ministers signed an agreement in 1994, to prevent incidents such as those involving the combat aircraft of one country crossing into the other's airspace. It also regulated unannounced missile launches, the use of lasers which could harm the other side and the jamming of communication equipment.\(^78\)

NPO Machinostroyenia holds an important place in the Russian aerospace complex. It was one of the only Russian companies, which during the Soviet era, managed to integrate tactical missile, strategic missile and space systems into complete combat systems. Today it sells the YAKHONT 300km+ supersonic tactical

\(^{75}\) Ibid., (op.cit - 62) p. 267.


\(^{77}\) Jane’s Defence Weekly, 19 Feb 1994, p. 28.

\(^{78}\) Asian Recorder, 6-12 Aug. 1994, p. 24144

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missile, cued by its KORNET-E radar satellite and associated electro/optical satellite, which in turn can be launched by STRELA, a space-launch vehicle based on the RS-18 ICBM that also designed by NPO Mashinostroyenia. While NPO Machinostroyenia has its competitors in all these areas within the Russian military complex, it is also one of the more successful in using foreign sales to sustain product development.

At the 2002, Zhuhai Airshow a Chinese official involved in the PLA’s satellite program stated that there had been cooperation with NPO Mashinostroyenia since at least 1997. When offered this statement at MAKS, a NPO Mash official first blanched, but was then quite willing to acknowledge cooperation with China’s “civilian” Earth observation satellite program, which it noted was different from its “military” program, with which it did not cooperate. One NPO Mash official noted that they were soon to sign a contract for cooperation toward China’s first radar satellite.

4.5 Implications for India

The scope and results of Sino-Russian military cooperation are impressive, especially in view of the former enmity between them and the speed of their rapprochement. Russia has a vital interest in the resumption and development of military cooperation with China. The immediate background for the recovering of the military relationship has been the need for Russia to support its defence industry. At the same time, China and Russia assumed that their bilateral military ties would provide them with a strategic counterweight to a number of threat and challenges of the post-cold war era. These might include US hegemonies, the rise of Japanese power, or a militant Islam and so on. But certainly India was not anywhere of point of discussion between them. Russia shared very cordial relationship with India even after temporary hiccup in early 1990’s. It signed a strategic partnership treaty with India in October 2000. In addition, India was one of the second largest arms customers of Russia after China, till mid 1990s India was largest one. Moreover, India even in remote sense would not pose any security threat to Russia. On the other hand, relationship between India and China is improving. Both countries are cooperating with each other in many regional and global issues. But the historical legacy of schism and unresolved border disputes restrained them to be a partner for long term. Simultaneously, China is considered in
India as a major security threat, and main hurdle in India’s aspiration to be regional and global power. China’s cooperation with Pakistan in its nuclear and defence field generates apprehension in India. Moreover Persistent problem of borders, Kashmir, Tibet, territorial claims creates gives more credence to this thinking.

Border issue has been one of the major hurdles in improvement of their relations. It led a brief border war and as a result of, creeping Chinese military moves over the years, China occupied approximately 33,000 sq.kms. In the western sector largely in Ladhak region China crossed the traditional border, the McMahon line in the North East of India, now Arunachal Pradesh, but went back to its original position. However, it kept alive claims to about 90,000 sq.kms. of territory in this area. The dispute in the middle sector of the border involves about 2000 sq.kms. Leaders of the both sides have been continually trying to solve the problem but except the establishment of joint working Group (JWG) on the boundary question, no further development has been achieved. During the China visit of Prime Minister P.V. Narshima Rao (September 1993), an agreement on maintaining peace and tranquillity on the border was signed. It was agreed that both sides would respect the line of control (LoC) on border. Experts from both sides would jointly verify and determine where the LoC lies. Other agreements, specifically related to the border, were as follows: (a) decision to reduce military forces on the border in accordance with the principal of mutual and equal security; (b) prior information of military exercise on the border above the threshold to be mutually agreed upon in mutually identified zones and (c) measures to ensure that air intrusions would not occur. These confidence measures were further clarified during President Jiang Zemin’s visit to India in November 1996.

These confidence building measures have basically been implemented and progress achieved in identifying the line in the middle sector which was least controversial one. In fourteen years since the discussion began, the forward movement achieved so far remains glacial or if one may use the expression, tectonic.

80 Asian Recorder, (New Delhi), 1993, pp. 23439-41.
China was more interested to the so-called ‘Swap deal’. It means “you keep what you have and we keep what we can control” originally propounded by late patriarch Deng Xiaoping of China. Chinese sources claimed that this deal was identical to the one proposed by late Premier Zhou Enlai in 1960. The reality was different because, the deal reflected the post 1962 border war situation.81 Further, there has been no fresh proposal from China in the last 26 years. In sum, the border question remained a knotty vexation issue in Sino-Indian bilateral interaction. Kashmir was another one, where China is controversially shifting its position in 1990s. In early 1990’s China gradually shifted its position on Kashmir, which had pro-Pak bias, to one of neutrality. However, during the crisis of 1998 a Chinese statement called for a big power conference to secure peace in Kashmir thus indicating that China has option to internationalise the issue – a line consistently pursued by Pakistan.

Tibet remained an important issue in Sino-Indian interaction at least from Chinese point of view. It may be said that at the outset that since the flight of Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama to India in 1959, after the Tibetan revolt that was crushed by Chinese authorities, and a sizeable number of his followers seeking refuge in India, Tibet has remained an irritant in Sino-Indian relations.

India and China’s relationship on these issues continuously differed even in decade of 1990s –when the proposal moved by Russia for strategic triangle between three countries. A minor crisis between them had blown the situation from normal to tense. The Year of 1998 could be identified as an example of hollowness of their relationship and gradual process of normalization. The observation made by then Defence Minister George Fernandes, to the effect that China is India’s enemy number one provided an angry reaction from Beijing.82 Secondly, the personal letter to American President Bill Clinton by the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that India had exploded its nuclear device due to constant threat posed by Chinese nuclear warheads, had also shown the cosmetic progress of Indo-China relationships.83

82 The Hindu, 13 May. 1998.
83 The Indian Express, 16 May 1998.
A significant result of the failure of both sides to resolve outstanding disputes was that these problems would cease or remain primarily localized matters but appeared instead as part of a larger struggle for power and security in Asia. Some other reasons were also became important in new context, especially, concurrent Chinese and Indian economic growth, the unavoidable engagement with the United States, and the critical interactions with various Asian states led a new rivalry between two sides. But it is also likely to receive a fillip from several other factors: first, the increasing emphasis by both sides on the “indirect approach” to competition, in addition to all the old instruments of direct rivalry; second, the emerging changes in military technology, which would compel both sides to operate across wider geo strategic spaces; third, the ongoing efforts by both sides to develop extra-South Asian strategic relationships that would inevitably expand this competition; and, fourth, the complexity of evolving Sino-Indian relations, which have expanded to include both economic instruments relating to prosperity and ideational and institutional instruments pertaining to the recognition of status. Therefore, even purely bilateral Sino–Indian interactions are certain to carry over to the Asian continent writ large simply because of their growing multidimensionality. Since every major regional actor in Asia, not to mention the United States, is likely to be involved in these interactions over the next two decades, it should not be surprising to find that what began as a local affair could potentially have wider geo-strategic consequences.

However, following the dramatic Sino-Russian rapprochement after the disintegration of USSR, India’s role in countervailing China had diminished significantly in Russia’s strategic calculus. The defence and strategic ties between Russia and China in 1990’s overlooked the China’s threat to India by Russia, which was not in the case of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union gave prime importance to India’s threat perception and saw China as an adversary of both the nations interest. But in changed international scenario, Russian approach towards two regional adversaries was completely different. As a major supplier of military hardware to both India and China, Russia was more interested in promoting triangular cooperative relationship. Perception was that a triangle could work as an effective counterweight to the western dominance of the world. There was no doubt that India, Russia and China had a common interest in building a multipolar world; in strengthening the norms of international law; promoting respect for national sovereignty; opposing
unilateral action by the only military political bloc NATO without the UN mandate etc. Despite, these commonalities their priorities areas were completely different. However, the fact was remained the same that India could not digest the rapid growth of Russo-Chinese military-technical cooperation. India became very suspicious and cautious towards regional security environment of 1990s that features resurgent China, its growing nexus with Pakistan, lack of stability in central and caucuses region, and the fear of religious irredentism along the extended north-western neighbourhood. Experts remained ambivalent about the Russian policy of supplying conventional weapons systems and technologies to both India and China. Russian official claimed that such arms deliveries could not break the balance of force in the Asia Pacific region but rather help to restore it. Some Indian scholars sounded alarm at the scale and pace of Russian-Chinese military cooperation. In addition to well published deals, it is claimed that the least known, and most threatening aspect is Russia’s contribution to China’s revision of its military doctrine, which lately had shifted from active defence to fighting high technology, limited wars that soon could influence regional and global issues. The opposite view had been also voiced consistently by Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SPIRI) researcher Eric Arnett, according to whom the idea that India faces a threat from China flies in the face of 10 years of Chinese military reforms, improvement in Sino-Indian relations, and the reality that apart from rhetoric- India did not believe as if China was nuclear threat. His observation was that China was not figured in India’s military planning or arms control policy.

Observation made by Eric Arnett was far from the truth. Though the China-Russia military technical cooperation was based on many other realities, like countering the US hegemonies, promoting the multipolar world, enhancing their defence industry, and promoting their military capability. But, it could be only true in global context and in interest of Russia. But as far as China’s policy towards South Asia was concerned, its clear intention was that through promoting Pakistan, India could be prevented from becoming a regional and global power. India also could not

85 ibid,p.158
afford to ignore certain other discomforting reports regarding the re-export of Russian conventional arms and technology through China or other former Soviet republic to Pakistan, despite repeated and categorical Russian assurances to India that it would not sell military equipment to Pakistan, it has been reported that the Russian engine RD-33 may have used in multi-purpose fighter plane FS-1, which was being jointly developed by China and Pakistan. Report published by PIR centre, Moscow entitled "re-export of Russian conventional arms may intensity", said that although political interests and bilateral commitment impede Moscow to sell arms to Pakistan, Taiwan and Iran, but in view of decreasing contracts and increasing competition in the worlds arms market, Russian defence industry may resort to re-exports of arms to the above mentioned through third countries.

Moreover, the hard reality of India-Russia relations is that their relationship in post Cold war era is not based on any ideological or strategic calculus. It has been in fact based on give and take relationship, aimed to strengthen their economy and sale and purchase of arms, and transfer of technology. Apparently, in these terms, China was far ahead of Russia as compared to India. It might thus be said that perhaps the best course for Russia was to maintain the status quo in its relation with India and China and ideally it would prefer to institutionalize the strategic triangle between itself, China and India. While expanding military-technical cooperation with China, Russia did not want to lose India as the other major customer of its military hardware. India and Russia had a long term programme of military-technical cooperation upto the year 2010. By becoming the single largest source of sophisticated military equipment to both India and China, Russia had presented India with a fait accompli, which was not easy to ignore, change or accept. With the bulk of Indian defence equipment being of Soviet/Russian origin, it was not easy to bring about a sudden and radical change in the country's weapons procurement policy.

In these circumstances, India seems to have no other option but to try to achieve greater self-reliance, diversify sources of weapons purchases and avoid overwhelming reliance on any single source. At the same time it would be in Indian interests to ensure that Russia is not pushed into an even closer embrace with China in the military-technical field due to the formers financial compulsions in case of being edged out of the Indian arms market. There is a need to put every arms deal of Russia with China and India to a very careful scrutiny by both technical and strategic experts
and study the likely impact on India’s security. A more proactive diplomacy may be required to pull together Indian and Russian interests and compulsions and seek a mutually agreeable solution. A mechanism may be evolved to ensure that Russian arms deliveries to the third countries—above all China—would not endanger Indian security. It would be in keeping with the provisions of the Indo-Russian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in January 1993. India could prevail on Russia to ensure that Russian weapons and technologies would not be passed on to Pakistan by China. At the same time it should be kept in view that Russia can still be a valuable source of defence equipment and advanced technology for India that may not be easily available elsewhere.

More broadly, China’s economy continued a second decade of robust growth. In 1947, India started ahead of China in terms of economic development and scientific capabilities, including atomic energy, and therefore it thought that India would win the contest to be the leading power in Asia. However by the 1990s, China had surpassed India by most indices of economic modernization and wherewithal. The rest of the world spoke of China as the rising great power on the world scene. India was seen as a still-struggling poor country with good potential China’s economic expansion facilitated military modernization. While India’s conventional force improvements from the mid-1960s onward led to superiority over China in the relevant theaters of potential conflict, China’s strategic capabilities outclassed India’s. But after rapprochement of relationship between Russia and China and the resumption of supply of military technology between two erstwhile adversaries, India’s was almost outshined in conventional force superiority. In missile defence technology India was already lagging comparatively to China. The Agni missile, which was tested thrice before Defense Research and Development Organization, declared that the missile was ready for production, have a range of 2000kms far short to target any important Chinese cities. Its range still falls more than 1,000 kilometers short to China’s major cities, the most logical targets if the India deterrent is to be robust. India would need a test-proven ballistic missile with a range of at least 3,500 kilometers to hold targets such as Chengdu, Chongqing, and Yichang at risk and a missile with 5,000 kilometer range to target Beijing and Shanghai. As the Indian Air

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Force recently concluded in a classified report quoted in India Today, the range of "Prithvi is too short to qualify as a nuclear platform. Agni is some distance away from being operational. The only vector is the aircraft and will be so for about a decade".\textsuperscript{89} A new variant of the Agni could someday achieve the former, but an entirely new missile system would be necessary to go beyond 3,000-3,500 kilometers. Thus, India remains probably more than a decade away from an extensive missile-based deterrent against China. India does not have a real alternative vis-à-vis China, insofar as India could not locate and target China's concealed and mobile nuclear weapons. This so-called counter value targeting is the third operational principle of India's nuclear doctrine.

In addition, Beijing's condescending attitude toward India and its unabated claim on Arunachal Pradesh exacerbated resentment and concern in New Delhi. China's could be pursued more forcefully in the future, as Chinese economic and military power grew. China could also seek to challenge India's influence in the territory and waters abutting the subcontinent. It can be expected that as India and China's influence would increase in international sphere, rivalry could be surfaced directly and in that case China could be tempted to bully India with its economic as well as military might in the future. It compelled many of us to rethink our national security in new perspective and re-orient our security and military compatibility in such a way that we could not be victim of idealistic perception of our founders fathers of 1962 war. Theoretically also it would be un-pragmatic to rely on the nation, which moved from ideology to market oriented relationship. In this regard too, China's position is far ahead from India.

It was ironic that while Russia had decisively moved away strategically and politically from India by 1990, India turns no steps until 1998 to move away from its Russian military and diversify to other sources. Russia had enabled China to overcome and surpass the qualitative edge that India enjoyed in the conventional weapon field. Russian supplies of advanced weapons to China have led to a significant accretion of Chinese offensive capabilities. This would result in China's intrusive naval presence in South Asian waters. The naval dimension had added to the existing land threat to India. However Russia's military build-up of China could not

be defined as contributing to its traditional friendship with India as one did not build up adversaries against one's friends. All these development suggested that India was needed to diversify its military dependence on Russia.
### Table 4.1: Transfer of Major Conventional Weapons by Russia to China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipient/ Supplier (S) or Licencer (L)</th>
<th>No. ordered</th>
<th>Weapon designation</th>
<th>Weapon description</th>
<th>YEAR OF order/licence</th>
<th>Year(s) of deliveries</th>
<th>No.of delivered produced</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>Il-76 M Candid - B</td>
<td>Transport aircraft</td>
<td>(1997)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possibly newly produced aircraft from Uzbekistan sold via Russia; possibly refurbish in Russia before delivery; for modification to A-501 AEW &amp; C aircraft in Israel; option on more; delivery 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>Su-30K Flanker</td>
<td>FGA aircraft</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>SA-15/T or MI</td>
<td>Mobile system SAM</td>
<td>(1997)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Deal worth $2b; no. ordered could be upto 45; delivery from 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soveremenny Class</td>
<td>Destroyer</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Originally ordered for Soviet/Russian Navy but cancelled before completion and sold it to China; delivery 1999-2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

173
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>System/Weapon</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Top plate</td>
<td>Surveillance radar</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny class destroyers</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bass tilt</td>
<td>Fire control radar</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny class destroyers; for use with AK-630 30 mm guns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kite Screech</td>
<td>Fire control radar</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny class destroyers; for use with AK-130 130mm guns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Palm Frond</td>
<td>Surveillance radar</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny class destroyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SA-N-7 ShAMS/Shil</td>
<td>ShAMS system</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny class destroyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Front Dome</td>
<td>Fire control radar</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny class destroyers; for use with SA-N-7 ShAMSs</td>
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<td>132</td>
<td>SA-N-7 Gadfly/Smerch</td>
<td>ShAM</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>(66)</td>
<td>For 2 Sovremenny Class destroyers; cold be Sa-N-12/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SS-N-22 ShShMS</td>
<td>ShShM system</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny Class destroyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>SS-N-22 Sumburn/ p-80</td>
<td>ShShM</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>For 2 Sovremenny Class destroyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>AK-130 130 mm</td>
<td>Naval gun</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>On 2 Sovremenny Class destroyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Searchwater</td>
<td>AEW radar</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deal with $62m; for use on Y-8 MP aircraft or possibly SA-341/Z -8 helicopter; status uncertain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.2 Imported Weapons to China in 1992-2004
(Values expressed in $ million at Constant (1990) Prices)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Russia</td>
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<td>772</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>1066</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td>1694</td>
<td>2917</td>
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<td>1184</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>1797</td>
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<td>2586</td>
<td>2038</td>
<td>2238</td>
<td>18216</td>
<td>1000</td>
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Source: Sipri, Arms Transfer Database.