CONCLUSION
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Due to geo-political importance South Asia, has always occupied important position in the Soviet Russian strategic thinking. Russian federation's Southern periphery had been highly vulnerable largely because of the terrain. It was protected at a great cost. During this period, Soviet Union's main concern was to prevent the region from falling under the influence of the United States of America. Soviet Union considered U.S. as its principal enemy; both in ideological and military terms. American involvement in South Asia began as an adjunct to its overall policy of containing communist expansion. To contain the spread of communist threat in the Middle East and South Asia had led to Western sponsored a defensive alliance, in which Pakistan was their chosen partner in South Asia. Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO alliance. Pakistan also signed a Defence agreement with U.S. Moreover U-2 spy incident in 1962 highlighted the vulnerability Soviet Union's Southern periphery. In addition, concern for Soviet Union was to reduce China's involvement in South Asia when its own differences came out open by late 1960s. The alliance between U.S.-Pakistan-China during Afghanistan crisis also became potential link in a border security system which had an impact on Soviet policy. All these developments increased Soviet Union's concern in South Asia.

In this context, Soviet Union recognised the centrality and geo-political importance of India. Being democratic country and founding member of NAM, India had a high profile position among the third world countries. Therefore, its Non-Alignment policy attracted the policy makers in Soviet Union. Close relation
with India appeared useful for Soviet Union. It needed a strong non-aligned India in maintaining regional peace and stability and ensure its own strategic and security interests. In that direction it built strong and long lasting commercial ties with India. In fact, during this period defense cooperation started between India and Soviet Union. Later this defense cooperation played key role in Indo-Soviet relations. The Soviet offered India MiG-21 aircraft and other equipments at mutually acceptable terms and at lower rates when Western countries. An important dimension was the Soviet willingness to transfer technology to India. In the context of growing cordiality between U.S-Pakistan-China, Soviet leaders acknowledged India as a great power in the region and they extended support to India’s claim on Kashmir issue especially the Soviet diplomatic support in the United Nations was very useful.

Soviet Union also later tried to improve its relation with Pakistan especially after Tashkent Agreement of 1965. It provided limited quantity of arms to Pakistan. This policy change was meant to reduce American and Chinese influence on Pakistan. But the Soviet differences with China in late 1960s and China’s influence on Pakistan did not allow USSR-Pakistan relation to grow. These differences were come into the open during Bangladesh crisis in 1971. During this period, Soviet Union stood as India’s reliable ally. It voted in favour of India in UN. In Bangladesh crisis Pakistan again become a close ally of China and U.S. After Bangladesh problem there were some improvements in bilateral relation between Pakistan and Soviet Union. But military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 by Soviet Union reverted to an atmosphere charged with bitterness and hostility. Pakistan served as the main base for Afghanistan
opposition forces with the help of America and China. This really affected Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

The dissolution of Soviet Union brought about a fundamental transformation in the geo-political structure of world and was significantly felt in South Asia also. The systemic transition launched after the break-up brought about economic chaos and political uncertainty. Its security environment apparently appeared friendly and peaceful. However, new threats and challenges emerged, which were different in nature than those that prevailed in the Cold War period. These challenges were terrorism, drug trafficking, religious extremism and separatism. India considered the dissolution of Soviet Union as a great loss and it expressed its concern over the developments took place in Russian Federation. India also faced same challenges to its unity and territorial integrity. And also both countries had common perception on the sources of these threats. After the dissolution there were no super power rivalry in South Asia but ‘geopolitical importance’ brought India-Russia closer. Both considered the region between them as crucial from their security perspective. After passing through many hurdles in the initial years, Indo-Russian cooperation finally embarked upon a path based on pragmatism, mutual good will and support to each other’s national interests. This was due to common challenges they faced to their unity and territorial integrity.

Terrorism has emerged as a main threat to Russia and India in the post Cold War era. The threat to Russian territorial integrity was more real especially in the North Caucus, where the Chechen problem had created several difficulties.
The Chechen separatists had close contact with different terrorist groups in other parts of the world. Many of Chechen field commanders in Russian perception had received training at camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan. There was in Russian view sufficient evidence connecting Al-Quida with Chechen rebels. India was also facing similar problem in Kashmir and there was close interlink between terrorist groups fighting in Chechnya and Kashmir. At least the same source from where insurgency received support extremism and terrorism posed a threat to both the countries. In this regard both countries have signed many important agreements and Joint Working Groups are functioning to contain this problem. That is why there is an urgent need for 'coordinated approach’ from all countries in eliminating these forces and there should not be double standard to fight terrorism.

Drug trafficking was another problem which affected both countries. It had potential to destabilise because of its links with organised crime and separatist, terrorist groups. In addition it also leads to corruption addiction and violence, and its impact on society. Russia was concerned about the massive increase in drug crops in Afghanistan. Moreover, drugs routes are passing through Russia. This has created many drug related problems. India also a victim of drug trafficking. It is not only being threatened by drug trafficking in the Golden Crescent on Western flank but also from narco-trafficking in Golden Triangle. India also route for illicit narcotics from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar. The linkages between weapons and drug trafficking have made terrorism more dangerous. Therefore, Russia and India believed that one of the most urgent challenges today is strengthening multilateral cooperation for countering the global narco-threat.
Terrorism, religious extremism and drug trafficking not only affected Russia and India but also it affected Central Asian States. This region was very important for both countries due to its geo-strategic location and for its natural resources. Russia considers Central Asia as its neighbourhood. It has security, economic, and ethnic interests. Russia was also aware of external interference in Central Asian States. India also considered the Central Asia as its extended neighbourhood. It was also a region of strategic, economic and political importance. India and Central Asian States share similar views on dangers of religious extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking. Therefore, India and Russian interests is seeing that Central Asian Republics remain secular and democratization process not disrupted by forces of religious orientation. Afghanistan is another area where both countries have common interests. It was breeding ground for terrorist groups during Taliban regime. As mentioned above, terrorism affected Russia and India very badly. Therefore, they should see to it that radical forces like the Taliban would not emerge in the future. Apart from these common threats, Afghanistan hold political and economic importance for both countries to transport gas and oil from Central Asian States to outside world, especially to India. It is in this context one can understand the support extended to Northern Alliance. Due to this commonality India and Russia are cooperating in post Taliban regime. The major responsibility on both countries in future is that they should try to root out Taliban kind of forces in Afghanistan. Apart from these non-traditional threats there were also traditional threats like NATO East ward expansion and its activities in Afghanistan. This was a matter deep concern for Russia.
Since these challenges are global in nature, hence there is a need for cooperation between all the countries. In this regard Russia and India had signed the Moscow Declaration on the Protection of Pluralistic States. The declaration also committed both the countries to uphold the territorial integrity of each other. This declaration defines the challenges to the security and national interests of two countries. Tension and violence still persists in the world. And there is a growing threat from the force of aggressive nationalism, religious and political extremism, terrorism and separatism which strike at the unity of secular pluralistic states.

Another important agreement between India and Russia was the Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism. This Declaration mentioned that in multi-ethnic and democratic countries such as India and Russia, extended support to each other to the territorial integrity. Both the countries also agreed to continue effective interaction with Afghanistan, in the framework of the Indo-Russian Joint Working Group on Afghanistan established between two countries in October 2000. Russia and India are also working through multilateral approach to eliminate these problems. In Russian perception, Shangai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is one of the leading organizations in the region in this regard. Presently India is having a observer status in the SCO. Russia would like India to be full-fledged member.

Defence was another area of cooperation between Russia and India. Indo-Russian defence cooperation had taken its roots from early sixties, was long standing, substantial, and formed as an essential element of the strategic partnership between the two countries. Russia and India have successfully
developed their cooperation on the basis of long-term defence programme, covering the period up to 2010. A significant feature of Indo-Russian defence cooperation is that it had moved beyond buyer-seller to joint research and development. As the post-Cold War era implicates the relations between India-Russia, this could be appreciated that it has moved from consumer (buyer-seller) to collaborator or co-partner, particularly in defense, nuclear energy. This is the great elevation for India and its bargaining power has gone up with strengthening of traditional relationship. This trend would open some other avenues further in future to improve bilateral relationship. Russia has given technology, related to very important equipments; best example was SU-30MKI aircraft. There is still scope to expand defence cooperation. They are planning to produce military equipment jointly and want to sell to the third country. In this regard both countries have signed agreements and are taking necessary steps. Future looks bright in defence cooperation. Still 60% all equipments are imported from Russia. India tried to diversify its sources but not able to do it due to its heavy dependence on Russia.

Interaction in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy constituted an important area of cooperation. Russia had played vital role in meeting our increasing energy requirements. Similarly, our cooperation in the peaceful use of space holds tremendous prospects for mutual benefit. In this regard India’s space agency ISRO and Russian space agency have been working together to help each other.
The other factor in the Indo-Russian cooperation was trade and economic cooperation. Despite many declarations Indo-Russian trade and economic cooperation’s has not developed at the expected level. Both countries strived to move from operations in traditional sectors like steel, pharmaceutical, power, oil and coal atomic energy into areas such as information technology, computerization and infrastructure developments. But bilateral trade and economic ties were not able to commensurate political relationships between two countries and do not correspond to the potential possessed by them. Therefore, there is need to take innovative steps to improve the bilateral trade. It is hoped that North-South corridor would facilitate economic ties.

Pakistan was other important country in South Asia. With the change in the political realities inside and outside the country, Russian foreign policy also has undergone a transformation. Russia wanted to develop good neighbourly relation with Pakistan due to its close proximity to the turbulent Central Asian Republics which were part of Russia’s security concerns. Pakistan on the other hand lost its relevance to U.S security interests in the region. Moreover, America’s arm embargo on Pakistan compelled it to search for alternative military sources for army. Therefore in the initial period after dissolution of Soviet Union there were improvements in the bilateral relations. But the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s support to its activities had negative impact on the growing relations. Moreover, training camps in Pakistan for terrorist groups also affected its relations with Russia. Russia believed that there is close link between terrorist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan and those that were fighting in Chechnya. Pakistan support to the Taliban forces could affect the secular character
of the Central Asian Republics. Russia was concerned about this development because not only it affected its interests in Central Asia but also its Muslim provinces closer to Central Asian States. All these development never allowed Pakistan—Russian relations to grow in the right direction.

After the end of Taliban regime in Afghanistan and U.S campaign against the Al-Qaeda activities there were some improvements in the bilateral relation. Russia has appreciated Pakistan role in fighting terrorist activities within Pakistan and also in Afghanistan. It is in the long term interests of Pakistan to establish mutually constructive relations with Russia. It should be based on confidence building measures and cooperation on issues like terrorism, threat of destabilization in Central Asia, and formation of a consensus based government in Afghanistan. Once the hurdles and mistrust between the two countries was removed, there is a possibility to develop fruitful cooperation in every sphere. Russia on its part, can take steps by allowing Pakistan to become a member of SCO, which is currently working towards addressing security threats faced by Central Asian Region and its member countries. Pakistan also should learn from the example of China and Russia, which were adversaries during the cold War, but today they are strategic partners in the 21st century.

Russia's another concern in South Asia was nuclear proliferation. The nuclear tests by both countries made this region even more dangerous. The pursuit of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is one of the important Russian foreign policy goals. Earlier, Soviet Union vigorously pursued efforts to eliminate the spread of nuclear weapons. After the Cold war, Russia considered regional
conflicts as threats to security. What makes these conflicts highly dangerous for peace is the likely proliferation and use of nuclear weapons by terrorist organizations. Therefore, Russia has interests in avoiding another war in South Asia to enhance regional stability. It also has to make sure that nuclear proliferation would not take place.

Since, Russia is founding member of the NPT and CTBT, it is against to the nuclear proliferation. Therefore, Russia has condemned the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan and urged them to sign the NPT and CTBT. But it did not apply any sanctions like western countries because of its own interest’s. Although, Russia had not taken any harsh action against India and Pakistan for their nuclear tests, it is nevertheless concerned about the nuclear proliferation, especially about the Pakistan’s recent connections with North Korea, Libya and Iran in nuclear proliferations. Moreover, there is no established strict control over the nuclear technology and this technology might reach terrorist groups and other threshold countries. All these developments concerned Russia very much because the number of countries like Iran, Iraq, and Israel are situated in the close proximity to the Southern border and thus had a direct impact on Russian security.

In this challenging world order, Russia is looking for its own positions for enhancing larger security perspective. The world, marked by geo-political rivalry, competition among nations to secure scarce natural resources, Euresian hub-Russia and South Asian hub-India can collaborate effectively for establishing a world based on equality and justice guided by the spirit of Indo-Soviet Treaty 1971 and Indo-Russian strategic partnership of 2000.