CHAPTER 4
RUSSIA'S GROWING SECURITY CONCERNS AND PAKISTAN

Introduction

The dissolution of Soviet Union brought about a fundamental transformation in the geo-political structure of the world. In this changed context, Pakistan began to get more importance in Russian foreign policy due to its close proximity to the newly Independent Central Asian Republics and proximity to Afghanistan. Russia also considered the support of Pakistan as a crucial factor to any political settlement in Afghanistan, and its help to get back its Prisoners of war (POW) held by Mujahideen forces in Afghanistan. This new situation provided an opportunity for a fresh beginning in Russian and Pakistan relations. Pakistan had hoped to develop good and friendly relationship with new Russian state.

In December 1992, a joint communique issued at the time of Vice-President Alexander Rustskoy visit to Pakistan said that it was the policy of Russian government to develop relation with Muslim States on new principles, devoid of ideological obstacles based on mutual respect, good will and mutual benefit (Arun Mohanty, 2001). Moreover, the supply of US arms to Pakistan having stopped in 1990, Pakistan was in search of new allies and sources of military hardware. It tried to move closer to Russia. However, relations could not develop as expected by both the countries. There were fundamental differences between the two on many issues relating to security. This was largely because Russia and Pakistan had divergent political, economic, and strategic interests. These differences were exacerbated because of the religious factor. In Russian
perception there was a linkages with Chechnya, Pakistan and Taliban. They increased Russia’s problems in Chechnya in order to discourage Russian government from supporting anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan. But the terrorist attack on U.S. in September 2001 incident had drastically changed alliance at the regional and international level. The global war on terror had led to a degree of cooperation between Russia and Pakistan. This chapter is an attempt to understand Russian perception of Pakistan and its role in the emergence of Taliban where as in Central Asia, religious extremism, terrorism and drug-trafficking.

Diplomatic Relations

With dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991 many changes took place. As mentioned in chapter two, Russian foreign policy goals underwent reconsideration. Russian approach to South Asia also came up for review. In the initial period of Russian foreign policy, two opinions existed regarding India and Pakistan. One opinion favored that the special relationship with India should be retained. According to other view, the special relations with India should be ended, as it had adversely affected the country’s relations with Pakistan. This change was due to a combination of domestic, political pressure and instability in the near abroad especially in the Muslim-majority states of Caucasus and Central Asia. At the beginning of the 1990s steps were taken towards expanding relations between Russia and Pakistan, especially in the political sphere. Russia sent the first clear signals of its intention to improve relations with Pakistan when it voted in favour of a Pakistan’s proposal at United Nation in November 1991. Russia supported a Pakistan proposal at UN for declaring South Asia as non-nuclear zone, sending
shock-waves to India. Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoy visited Pakistan in December 1992. This visit marked the first official contact in the history of Russian Federation and Pakistan. The Joint Communiqué issued during visit was very significant in many ways. It welcomed Pakistan proposal for a five-nation conference on nuclear non-proliferation in the region. The two sides also expressed happiness over the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Russia. The two sides agreed to set up a joint commission to reaffirm and review the existing agreements and work out new agreements (Arun Mohanty, 2001). Agreement in principle was reached on a visit to Russia by the Pakistani Prime Minister and draft agreements were prepared on many subjects like trade, economic, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation. In short, the visit thawed the relations and opened a new vista for the development of meaningful relations.

This indicated Russian desire to upgrade relations with Pakistan. This was a radical departure from the earlier Soviet day policy of treating Pakistan as an adversary. In 1992 Russia was very close to signing a deal with Pakistan for the supply of Su-27 fighter Jets. However, the leaders of powerful military-industry succeeded in convincing President Boris Yeltsin that by one way sale of arms to Pakistan, Russia would ultimately lose the huge Indian market. Therefore, speaking at a news conference in New Delhi, Yeltsin declared that Russia would not provide any military aid to Pakistan (Jyotsna Bakshi, 1999).

President decision not to provide any military aid caused both disappointment and concern in Pakistan. Immediately Foreign Minister
Kozyrev was sent to Pakistan to remove Islamabad's misgiving, and to prepare the ground for the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister to Russia. The Russian dilemma in its policy towards South Asia was obvious. Kozyrev conveyed a personal message from President Yeltsin that Russia would like to maintain a balance in its relations with Pakistan and India, both of which were perceived as good and friendly neighbors. He also affirmed Russia’s desire to promote an all round development of bilateral relations on a comprehensive basis, and stated that there would be no limit on cooperation (Rizwan Zeb, 2004). Kozyrev also requested assistance in the repatriation of Russian prisoners held in Afghanistan by Majahideen groups. To this request Pakistan agreed to help in every possible way. It was against this background President Boris Yeltsin extended an invitation to Pakistan Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, to visit Russia.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Assef Ahmad Ali visited Russia in July 1994; the two sides discussed a number of international and bilateral issues— the situation in South Asia, Kashmir problem, Afghanistan and Central Asia, including developments in Tajikistan, and Bosnia. Foreign Minister Assef Ahmad Ali and his Russian counterpart Andrei Kozyrev signed two documents of cooperation. The agreements included a protocol on holding regular consultations between two countries and an agreement on visa abolition for holders of diplomatic passports of two countries (Sardar Assef, 1994). Later speaking to journalist, Andrei Kozyrev told that both countries had identical views on regional and international issues. He also said that relations between the
two countries had assumed a new dimension which would be developed on an objective basis. Sardar Assef said in an interview to Russian newspaper *New Daily* that Russia is Pakistan's important neighbour. Prospects for improved relations between two countries, especially collaboration in the field of economy and trade, were very bright as Pakistan could provide Russia easy access to Gulf and Asian markets (Sardar Assef, 1994). The signing of these two agreements signified the fact that Pakistan – Russian relations had come a long way from the animosity of Cold War era to cooperative era. While the cold war logic was no longer there, Russian relations with Pakistan did not improve drastically.

During the meeting Ministers touched upon all the issues. While discussing the issue of release of former Soviet POW held captive in Afghanistan, Russian side expressed its gratitude to Pakistan for the assistance extended in resolving this humanitarian problem and stressed that it expected Pakistan to use all means to solve the issue completely. Russian Foreign Minister appreciated the interest of Pakistan in expanding cooperation with Central Asian countries. Russia would like to see Central Asia developing in peace and stability. The Russian side stressed that it would be in the interest of Pakistan too to create an environment for interaction between Russia and Pakistan in this direction.

The next high-level contact between Pakistan and Russia took place in 1997 when Pakistan Foreign Minister, Gohar Ayub Khan, visited Russia for talks
with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov. Pakistan signed four agreement with Russia in 1997 in the field of (1) culture; (2) science and education; (3) consular relation, and (4) illicit trafficking of drugs (Hafeez Malik, 2001). These political agreements did not raise the level of bilateral political cooperation significantly. The reason for this low profile development was that by this time Pakistan’s involvement in Afghanistan through Taliban was evident. It had negative impact on the growing cooperation. At the Press conference after the talks Primakov cautioned Pakistan that by backing Taliban and involving itself more deeply in Afghanistan it was committing same blunder as Soviet Union. But Ayub Khan insisted that its recognition of Taliban regime was legitimate as it controlled the capital and most of the territory of the country. He also denied Pakistan’s interference in Afghanistan (Vinay Shukla, 1999). But there is no doubt that Pakistan’s involvement with Taliban escalating militancy in Chechnya and growing ties with India in a way hampered the development of close ties between Russia and Pakistan. In March 1998, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin Visited Pakistan for foreign ministry level consultation on bilateral and regional issues, including Afghanistan settlement. Talking to visiting Foreign Minister Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said that Pakistan considered Russia as an important country and wished to develop close relation with it for peace and progress in the region. He also said that both countries can work together to seek peaceful settlement of Afghanistan problem and bring the warring parties on the negotiating table for the purpose. He informed Foreign Minister about the steps taken by Pakistan government for a comprehensive political settlement of Afghanistan problem. In response, Russian Foreign Minister said that Russia had a
keen interest in upgrading the existing bilateral relation with Pakistan (POT, March 19, 1998). Pakistan welcomed an “offer of mediation” between Pakistan and India on the Kashmir dispute, which was made by Russian Foreign Minister. Answering questions at his routine briefing the Foreign Office spokesman said Pakistan regarded Russian mediation offer significantly helpful as it indicated the success of Pakistan’s effort to spotlight, at the international level, the existence of Kashmir dispute. The spokesmen, however, parried a question whether Karasin had made the offer on his own or in response to a request, and made no comment when asked whether there was shift in Russian stand on the Kashmir issue (POT, March 23, 1998). On the Kashmir issue Russian position had favoured a bilateral approach.

Pakistan Prime Minister paid an official visit to Russia, the first one in 25 years in April 1999. This visit was termed by the Russian as a new chapter in relations between the two countries oriented into the 21st century (Adan Ali Shah, 2001). But the two sides failed to sign any significant agreement. The only agreement reached was the creation of an Inter-Governmental Commission for Trade and Economics. The Joint Press Statement issued at the end of the visit said “two sides attach great importance to substantiate, in depth and frank exchange of views on bilateral matters and global and regional issues of contemporary importance and relevance. The outcome of these exchanges and discussions had provided a basis for a qualitative new relationship between the countries on the eve of the 21st century” (Arun Mohanty, 2001).
The government of Pakistan sent Director General Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt General Mahmud to Russia in September 2000. He met his counterpart Mr. Nikolai Partrushev, Chief of Russian Federal Security Service and Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev. This visit later helped to arrange the meeting between President Vladimir Putin and General Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of UN Millennium Summit in New York 2001. Though it was brief talk but helped to allay Russian fears of Pakistan's involvement in terrorism in Chechnya, Central Asian States and Afghanistan. Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesmen described the meeting as cordial and positive.

The Security chief of Russian Government, Sergei Yastrazhembsky visited Pakistan in September 2000. Afghanistan was on the top of the Agenda in the discussion that took place during his visit. The Russian chief termed his trip as having inspired a cautious optimism, dependent on Political declarations being followed by concrete deeds. On the possibility of a visit by President Vladimir Putin to Pakistan, security chief added it was conditional on whether Islamabad showed its readiness to heed Russia's concerns regarding the Pakistan's support to Taliban and its military training camps for the terrorist groups who were fighting in Chechnya and other parts of the world. He urged intensifying interactions with Pakistan on regional issues, especially Afghanistan, conceding that Russia had gained nothing from not engaging Pakistan on the problem of Afghanistan (Rizwan Zeb, 2004).
However, shift in Pakistan’s Afghan policy after September 2001 helped in improving its relations with Russia. That welcomed Pakistan’s role as a frontline state in the war against terrorism while offering joint efforts to curb terrorism (Syed Junaid, Ahsan, 2004). Bilateral relations have developed more energetically, especially after Pakistan joined in the counter terrorist coalition. President Musharraf visited Russia in February 2003 at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin. President asked Pakistan’s assistance to control Islamic Jihadis in Chechnya. And he also said that Russia wants a stake in any oil and gas pipeline likely to be constructed from Central Asia to Pakistan’s ports. Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf discussed trade and defence ties with Russian President during his visit. Their talks also focused on the international war against terrorism. After his meeting with President Musharraf, President Putin said that Moscow and Islamabad “have a good basis for developing bilateral relations, of course without detriment to Russia’s relations with its traditional partners” (Natalla Babasyan, and Dmitry Litovkin, 2003). At the conclusion of his visit, Musharraf told reporters that Pakistan “speaks in recognition of the territorial integrity of Russia and regards Chechnya as an internal part of Russia.” He further guaranteed that “Pakistan territory will not be used for terrorist action against other countries, including Russia.” (Shireen T. Hunter with Jeffrey L. Thomas and Alexnder Melikisvili, 2004) General Musharraf described Russia as great country with Glorious history which is playing an important role in the resolution of international conflicts and tensions. He called for a new working relationship with Russia. He said that “We should bury our past and make a new beginning in relations between two countries” (POT, February 18, 2003).
Russia was satisfied with the President Musharraf’s assurance regarding its concerns. According to the Joint Statement, the two countries agreed that a comprehensive approach was needed to combat terrorism and this should include firm measures against manifestation of ethnic and religious extremism, trafficking of illicit materials and drug as well as transnational by organized crime. Such measures also are directed against those states organizations and individuals who indulge in terrorism or support, finance and encourage terrorism or offer terrorist shelter. Russia and Pakistan declared their interest in establishing constructive interaction in fighting international terrorism in all its forms and manifestation (Natalla Babasyan, 2003). They have established joint working group on counter terrorism and other challenges to international security. President Vladimir Putin, while addressing the Press conference, made it clear that Russia would like to strike a balance in its relations with both Pakistan and India. “We have made good basis for intensifying our bilateral relation without prejudice to our traditional partner” (POT, February 18, 2003), p 940.) President said this in clear reference to Russian ties with India.

Russia endorsed Pakistan’s efforts to end cross-border infiltration in Kashmir and removing militant groups as it promised to strive for the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan. Russia stressed the need to work consistently to resume dialogue between two countries. President told a joint press conference after both sides completed their discussion. Endorsing arguments of both India and Pakistan on Kashmir
issue, President Vladimir Putin, however, was quick to add that dialogue should be held in accordance with the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Accord (POT, February 18, 2003). General Pervez Musharraf, in his statement that Kashmir issue must be resolved through dialogue in accordance with UNSC resolutions and wishes of the Kashmir people. Early resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India was essential to address the core dispute of the Kashmir (POT, February 18, 2003).

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov’s visit to Pakistan in June 2003 was another step towards improving relations. It helped to maintain the momentum of growing ties in different spheres including consultations on the issues of regional security and renewed economic cooperation particularly in the steel industry. Before Foreign Minister visit to Pakistan, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksander Yakovenko said that “Pakistan has an important special place among Russian foreign policy priorities, determined by the country’s political weight both in the region adjacent to CIS Southern borders and the Islamic world as a whole” (Russian Foreign Ministry, Pravda, 2003). This visit was followed by visit of Pakistan Minister for Information Technology and Minister of Industries and Production visited in September. This shows emerging cooperation in various sectors between Russia and Pakistan. The diplomatic initiatives were keeping with Russian policy of engaging Pakistan. It was keen to rein in Pakistan in order to control the situation in Chechnya and also to maintain peace and stability in Central Asia.
Russia's Security Concerns in Afghanistan and Central Asia vis-à-vis Pakistan

Despite the interest shown initially on both sides to establish a constructive and positive relationship, certain issues continued to have their negative impact against the establishment of cordial relationship with Pakistan. These issues were the situation in Afghanistan, support to religious extremism, terrorism, threat of destabilization in Central Asia and transnational network of drug trafficking. From Russian perspective Pakistan has been directly or indirectly been responsible for its concerns especially in the three specific areas. To recapitulate they were: the Taliban government, its role in spreading militancy in Central Asia and support for the Chechens rebels fighting the Russian army. Closely associated with Russian concerns are the developments in Afghanistan, as mentioned.

In the nineteenth century due to its strategic location Afghanistan became the focal point of intense rivalry between Tsarist Russia and Britain. Later, Afghanistan remained at the centre stage of international politics during the Cold War period. In the post-Cold War era, Afghanistan had been witnessing the rise of religious extremism and terrorism and in fact had emerged as the hub of international terrorism.

The Tajik civil war is a testimony to this. This poses a serious threat to Russia's Security and to that of its allies in the region (Igor S. Ivanov, 2002). The Taliban's aspirations to expand their brand of extremist
and obscurantist Islam into Central Asian countries were viewed with apprehension by Russia. The frontline state in this context is Tajikistan. Some Tajik Islamic groups have got assistance from Taliban. Therefore, Russia had repeatedly called for the mobilization of international efforts for decisive and coordinated action against the threats coming from the Afghanistan.

Russia initially viewed the crisis in Tajikistan as an internecine struggle for power between rival groups, in which it did not wish to get involved. The Central Asian Border and their Russian commanders, who under the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) unified command, did not receive adequate support from Russia after the dissolution of USSR. This showed that Russia in the early years was not concerned about the incident happening on the southern border of CIS. However, in response to Nabiyev's request for assistance, Russian Vice-Premier, A. Shokhin visited Tajikistan in July 1992 and reached an agreement on the status of Russian troops in Tajikistan. It was agreed that Tajik-Afghan and Tajik-Chinese borders would be reinforced by Russian subdivision. Subsequently, President Yeltsin issued a decree placing the border troops stationed on the Tajik border under Russian jurisdiction. Nabiyev's ouster on September 1992 by the Islamic extremist parties and escalation of fighting in Tajikistan provoked strong reaction from Russia and neighbouring Central Asian States. It was by then the danger posed by extremism and its consequences for Russia began to be understood clearly. Steps had to be taken to curb this menace. Hence Russia and its Central Asia issued warning to the government and political organizations of Tajikistan describing the unrest as a danger to CIS. They also announced their collective
decision to deploy CIS troops along the 1300 km long Tajik-Afghan border to stop the large scale smuggling of arms and cross border movements of armed bands. During the Tajik-Afghan border clash in 1992, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said that Russia and Commonwealth’s other members reserve the right to take any measures necessary to safeguard their borders (Kommersant Daily, August 11, 1998).

Despite Russia’s success in mustering the support of four CIS states, it were Russian forces which bore the burnt of defending Tajik-Afghan frontier. The massacre of more than 25 Russian border guards on Tajik border post in July 1993 sent shock waves in Russian officials. President Yeltsin called a special session of Russian Security Council on July 26, 1993 to take stock of the situation and adopt remedial measures. Taking border incident seriously, President Boris Yeltsin described Tajik-Afghan border as “the frontier of Russia” (Afghanistan Factor in Central Asia and South Asian Politics, http://www.Kashmir-information.com/Afghanistan/Warikoo.html). It was the first time that a comprehensive Russian policy aimed at settling the problem on Tajik-Afghan border and at normalizing situation in Tajikistan was worked out and adopted in the form of a Presidential decree. Having set the task for his government, President Boris Yeltsin organized a summit meeting with President of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan at Moscow on August 7, 1993, on Tajikistan issue. He stressed the need to neutralize the growing threat to Central Asia and ensure stability. Yeltsin called upon the leader of these states for concrete joint action to reinforce the Russian border troops in Tajikistan on equal basis.
Russia feared that instability in Afghanistan could destabilise the Central Asia. There are close links between Afghanistan and Central Asia due to their proximity. Afghanistan not only shares its borders with Central Asian States of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, but the majority of people settled in Northern Afghanistan are also of Central Asian stock. About 4 million Tajiks, 1.7 million Uzbeks and half a million Turkmen are living in Afghanistan.

Russia was concerned that Taliban would consolidate their power by defeating Northern Alliance and then they support Islamic uprising in Central Asia and beyond, thereby destabilizing the entire region. Russia blamed Taliban to be behind the uprising in Chechnya, Dagestan and problems like terrorism, drug trafficking, etc. The alliance between the Chechen separatists and Taliban poses a serious danger to Russia. Russia regarded the Taliban’s escalation of military operations as a very real threat on the border of CIS.

The role of Pakistan and support in emergence of Taliban had its shadow over the relations between Russia and Pakistan. In the Afghanistan conflict, Russia and Pakistan had concerns about their national security interests. Pakistan would not like to have a hostile government on its Western side. Its long-standing objective in Afghanistan has been to have a government which would be friendly and can protect Pakistan’s its security interests. Pakistan’s support for Taliban had been an open secret. It has supported all activities of Taliban. Pakistan military personnel not only provided the direct logistic support for Taliban operations but also took part in hostilities. In Russian eyes, Pakistan and its intelligence service
contributed significantly to the emergence and successes of Taliban. This was proved when Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister said that Taliban’s successful offensive in Northern Afghanistan has been made possible by direct assistance from Pakistan. Russia had repeatedly reported that regular Pakistan troops, including air force units, were fighting with Taliban against Northern Alliance (Martin Malek, 2004).

Following Taliban’s capture of Kabul in September 1996, the first direct military contact between ISI’s Afghan Bureau and Taliban were reportedly established. Russia had issued a direct demand to Pakistan that it halt Taliban offensive. Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister called on “authoritative political and military officer” to use all available means to influence Taliban ((Kommersant Daily, The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, August11, 1998).

Russia believed that there was a link between terrorist groups fighting in Chechnya, Kashmir and other trouble spots of the world. This was proved right when Afghanistan’s Shariat newspaper, the official mouthpiece of Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers, has called on Muslims throughout the world to wage holy war against Russia. Moscow’s barbaric aggression against Chechnya has transcended all bounds. The author of the article first and foremost appealed to the leader of the Muslim countries. The Muslim world must not remain silent on Russia’s aggression in Chechnya. The Islamic countries must lead Muslims in a holy war against Russians. Taliban’s call may not be taken up seriously
by Muslim countries leaders. It could, however, give further impetus to mounting anti-Russian feeling among the people of countries, a factor that could in turn result in an increase in the number of foreign mercenaries in Chechnya.

Pakistan had recognised the Taliban government and maintained regular contacts. Russia was not happy with Pakistan’s approach towards the Taliban and its activities. In 1998, Pakistan ambassador to Russia, Mansur Alam, was summoned to Russian Foreign Affairs, which called his attention to a report in the Pakistan news media about a recent meeting between Minister for Religious and Minorities Affairs and representative of Chechen Government who were visiting Islamabad. At that meeting, Pakistan spoke of giving full moral support to the Chechen Muslims in their noble cause. But Pakistan denied such kind of meeting. However, Pakistan’s connections with Taliban and Chechnya were proved when ZelimKhan Yandarbiyev, Ambassador of so called Chechen state to Afghanistan visited Pakistan in 1999. He had given the freedom to make anti-Russian speeches openly and allowed to collect funds for Chechnya’s cause. Zelimkhan urged Afghanistan and Pakistan to form a military alliance to counter Russian aggression. The Russian Foreign Ministry issued harsh condemnation of aspiration of certain circle in Pakistan to create another centre of international terrorism, drug trafficking and Islamic extremism (Rossiikaya Gazeta, January 15, 1998)
The Chechen-Taliban connection could not have been established without the support of Pakistan. According to Russian sources, Yanderbiev was not the only Chechen leader to visit to Pakistan. In July 1999, prominent Chechen rebel commander Ruslan Gelaev reportedly traveled to Pakistan and met with Pakistan intelligence officials and Taliban representative. This visit occurred just before the armed incursion of Chechen militant into Dagestan, raising the possibility of Pakistan’s and Taliban’s involvement in this event.

Chechnya and Taliban signed an agreement to establish diplomatic relations. Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil, Taliban Government’s Foreign Minister, said that Taliban would open an embassy in Groznyy at an appropriate time. He said that Taliban support the Chechens, who are waging a holy war against Russian army and that Taliban are prepared to place at their disposal “everything we ourselves have.” “Taliban will even give the Chechens military aid if the Chechen side requests it” (Kommersant, February 16, 2000), in The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press).

Despite international opposition, Pakistan recognized Taliban government in Afghanistan. Pakistan always maintained that Taliban as an indigenous movement and that it was in effective control of most of the country including the capital and it was the representative of all the country’s ethnic groups. Moreover, earlier successive government failed to maintain peace. The hostile behaviour of Rabbani Government together
with his growing understanding with India and Russia were major factors that made Pakistan tilt towards Taliban (Babar Shah, 2000).

Iran and Central Asian Republics had more concerns about Taliban Policies. Their concerns were quite open by the time Pakistan recognized Taliban as Sovereign Government. Russian own Position on Taliban had been a restrained. Russia occasionally warned the militia of dire consequences in case of their violation of CIS border. Russia’s main ambivalence on Afghan conflict was determined by two major streams of thought – one section advocated hard line to halt the militia at all cost, while the other cautioned against a repeat of past mistakes. Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India and Iran began supporting the opposition forces that took the shape of Northern Alliance.

Despite continued contacts and occasional sign of improved relations, Pakistan’s and Russia’s diverging geopolitical interests, especially regarding Afghanistan and Taliban, prevented any real improvement. Both Russian and Pakistan avoided a complete rupture in relations despite problems caused by the Taliban-Chechen connection, Pakistan’s close links with the Taliban, and the involvement of Pakistan nationals in Chechnya.

Central Asia

Russia could be a mute spectator to spread of militancy given the destabilizing impact it would have on Russia’s Muslim zones. Apart from these
concerns, Russia also has other interests. These were discussed in the second chapter. In the initial period of 1991 a civil war erupted in Tajikistan. Tajik opposition elements professing commitment to Islamic fundamentalism found refuge in a troubled Afghanistan where political uncertainty further complicated the evolving scenario in the region. The potential to destabilize Tajikistan was indeed real with the possibility of a spill-over effect in Central Asia and Russia. Briefly, Tajik-Afghan border which is 1500 kilometer long is porous and there is no strict regulation to control the flow of drugs and influence of religious movements from across the border. Tajikistan also had its pockets of extremist groups. In order to meet the threat to its territorial integrity President Rakhmonov had sought the help of Russia under Collective Security Treaty. Later they signed an agreement, which stipulated that the external border of CIS was the border of Russia. Since then, nearly 25,000 Russian troops along with those of other Central Asian States constitute the peace-keeping force guarding the Tajik-Afghan border. The Tajik militants conducted armed incursion into Tajik territory with the tacit support and connivance of the Taliban forces with the clear objective of bringing down the government and replacing it by an Islamic regime. While celebrating his country's independence in September 2000, Tajikistan's President Rakhmanov, expressed concern about the threat posed by United Tajik Opposition (UTO) (Poonam, Mann, Religious Extremism in Central Asia, Strategic Analysis, vol.XXV, no.9, December 2001, p-6). Islamic rebels living in Tajikistan are keeping the security forces engaged in the region and there is a considerable increase in the number of rebel forces in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.
Thus, these extremist forces are threatening the political leadership of all the three republics—Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Many of Taliban fighters and its followers were born in Pakistani refuge camps, educated in Pakistan madarassas. The Taliban forces captured Kabul in 1996. Since then they tried to control over the entire country. But for Russia, the raise of Taliban in Afghanistan had complicated its security interests in Central Asia and its own region. In addition to this, Russia perceived threat from the forces of aggressive nationalism and religious extremism that may spread within the country.

Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are most affected by radical Islam. Soon after its independence in 1991, Tajikistan had been engulfed by political conflict and violent inter-group clashes between the pro-communist and Islamist forces and their supporters. However, the establishment of Islamic government in Afghanistan led by Mujahideen factions gave a boost to Islamic fundamentalist groups in Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan had been the foremost CIS state to take strong notice of the development in Tajikistan and continuing crisis on the Tajik-Afghan border. The Uzbek President, Islam Karimov had been repeatedly warned against the “advance of Islamic fundamentalist and external forces from Afghanistan and Tajikistan” (Afghanistan Factor in Central and South Asian Politics, http://www.kashmir-information.com/Afghanistan/Warikoo.html). President Karimov’s fears are based on the belief that events in Tajikistan would not only consolidate the rapidly growing Islamic consciousness in Uzbekistan but also lead to its politicization. The
increasing clout of militant Wahabi radicals including the formation of armed bands in Ferghana valley and influx of Tajik refugees and even Afghan nationals into Uzbekistan further strengthened these fears. Presence of a sizeable number of ethnic Tajik, who constitute about a quarter of Uzbekistan’s population, is yet another factor for Uzbekistan to take disorder in Tajikistan very seriously.

Uzbekistan Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov accused Pakistan for their support to religious groups fighting in Uzbekistan. According to him, the rebels being trained in Pakistan were responsible for a series of attacks in the Uzbekistan’s Namagan region which resulted in the death of several government employees and innocent people. He also said that some 400 Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek rebels were undergoing training in illegal camps in Pakistan (Uzbek, Tajik Rebels Reportedly Being Trained in Pakistan, POT, vol.xxvi, no.48, March5, 1998, p496). But Pakistan’s Foreign office had denied the presence of training camps on the Pakistan’s soil. Reacting to Press reports regarding the statement of Uzbek Foreign Minister Kamilov, the spokesman said there was no camp in Pakistan where Uzbeks or any other nationals were being trained (Uzbek, Tajik Rebels Reportedly Being Trained in Pakistan, POT, vol.xxvi, no.48, March5, 1998, p496).

President Karimov initiated a series of steps to meet the perceived security threat to Uzbekistan. During 1992 when the Islamic opposition groups were in control in Tajikistan, Karimov launched suppression of the Uzbek opposition groups. He sealed Uzbekistan’s border with Tajikistan and Afghanistan and closed all traffic from that direction to prevent any
influx of arms and men. Karimov took the initiative in mobilizing regional response against external interference in Tajikistan. He called upon Russia to take into account the powerful offensive of pan-Islamic in the South and asked for continued presence of Russian forces in Tajikistan to control the Tajik-Afghan border. Karimov explained that the "border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan was not only border between these two states, it could turn into an open gate to all CIS countries from the point of view of arms smuggling, drug running etc" (Uzbek, Tajik Rebels Reportedly Being Trained in Pakistan, POT, vol.xxvi, no.48, March 5, 1998, p496). Karimov appealed to UN Secretary General seeking help in ensuring security and inviolability of border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. He warned that the continuing conflict in Tajikistan could become a powerful detonator of political and social upheavals in the region. In his address to leaders of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, he said that "We see Afghanistan as a serious external security threat, and we have a right to ask the world community to take up this problem in a serious and radical fashion" (Nezavisimaya Gazeta. April 26, 2000, in Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press). To contain this problem Central Asian States are working cooperatively.

The turbulence and strife in Tajikistan had spilled over into the neighbouring state of Kyrgyzstan was also evident by the influx of thousand of armed Tajik Islamic radicals. The republic leadership had been worried over the protected civil war in Tajikistan and the possibility of Tajik armed groups supplying arms to Kyrgyz criminal organisation.
The Kyrgyzstan President, Akayev publicly expressed his concern over the steep increase in the crime rate witnessed in Kyrgyzstan during 1992 and most of this crime was related to drugs.

National Islamic movements in Central Asia did not had adequate social base during the first half of the 1990s except, in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan particularly in the Fergana valley and they lacked political experience. People in general were indifferent to religious views and were often hostile to radicalism. These entire factors deprived the Islamic opposition of the opportunity to work actively to enroll large number of people and set up a corresponding organizational structure. However, in 1996 the situation suddenly changed when Taliban movement established a radical Islamic regime in Afghanistan. The victory of Taliban facilitated contacts between different Islamic groups. The threat of radical Islam became a common regional concern. As a result cooperation started between all Central Asian States. In this context Summit meeting of the Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek presidents was held at Almaty in 1996. The two-day deliberations resulted in expression of concern for the security of the Southern borders of CIS. It was stated that Uzbekistan and Tajikistan faced a direct threat to their integrity. Hence, the need to strengthen the defence along Tajik- Afghan border was emphasized.

The fall of Kabul to Taliban in September 1996 intensified the anxiety of Russian and Central Asian countries over the impact of this victory on their own Islamic movements and their security. Russia sought to use this opportunity both to revitalize the CIS collective security system and to strengthen its bonds with
Central Asian States in the military sphere and in fighting Muslim militants. Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin met the head of Central Asian countries in Almaty on October 1996. After the meeting, Kazakhstan president said, "We issue a warning. If the conflict spread beyond the Afghan border of Afghanistan into the Commonwealth of Independent States our states will take adequate measures" (Shireen. Hunter, 2004). After Taliban’s victory in 1998, brought nearly 90 percent of the Afghan territory under its control, Uzbekistan showed greater willingness to cooperate with Russia and Tajikistan in preventing Taliban’s further advance. During President Yeltsin visit to Tashkent in October 1998, a tripartite declaration was signed between Russia, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan that pledges all round co-operations to assist each other, including military, in case of an aggression and to defeat any attempts to change the existing constitutional and social system in any of the three countries by force from inside or outside (Nirmala Joshi, 2000).

Russia wants to strengthen regional security cooperation within the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and enhance its ability to deal with terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, and narcotics trafficking. Russia thinks that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as gateway to Central Asia and protector of Russia’s Southern border. Their security was essential for the security of the region. Russia also had a stake in keeping Central Asian leaders in power and preventing their overthrow by Islamic fundamentalists. The Islamic offensive in August 1999 in Southern Kyrgyzstan and Dagestan, followed by the war in Chechnya made Russia to redefine the Islamic threat as a threat of international terrorism in the
National Security Concept published in February 2000. The events in Kyrgyzstan initiated a wave of Russian activity to promote military and security cooperation with Central Asian States.

**Energy Issue and Transport Corridor**

Presently, Pakistan had been self-sufficient in its gas reserves, caters all the domestic requirements. The estimated recoverable reserves of natural gas in Pakistan stand at 17.39 billion cubic feet (Baber shah, Revival of Trans Afghanistan Gas Pipeline Project, http:www.issi.org.pk/journal/2003/files/no1/article/7a.htm). If further exploration is not done by the 2010, a sizeable shortfall is expected of around 7 billion cubic feet, had given the increase in demand for domestic and industrial consumption. At the same time Pakistan oil reserves is not good. The local production of oil, which had never met more than one-fourth of the national requirement, is constantly on the decline. In 1990 the daily production was 64,000 barrels. Now it is 54,000 barrels. The recoverable reserves had been depleted from 643 to 250 million barrel and present Pakistan oil import bill for a year at the current price is around $ 3.4 billion dollars(Comments: Great Gas Game and Pakistan. POT, September 2000, vol.xxvi, no.214, p 3732). In those 1.5 billion dollars is furnace oil that could be replaced by the gas. Therefore Pakistan wants to diversify its gas and oil resources and looking for outside sources.

In this context, Central Asian region and Iran are in position to help Pakistan to meet its energy requirements. During his visit to
Turkmenistan in May 2000, General Pervez Musharraf had discussed with President Saparmurat Niazov's new proposal to export via Afghanistan. The 1,600-kilometer gas pipeline proposal, linking Dualetabad fields in Southern Turkmenistan to Multan, was considered a vital outlet for Central Asian Republics gas reserves (Comments: Gas Pipeline: Great Game of other Kind, POT, vol.xxviii, no.228, September 26, 2000). In this regard Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) oil and gas pipeline is very important. Through TAP project, Pakistan can diversify its own energy supply sources that would help it in the overall strengthening of its energy sector. Through this project, Pakistan would able earn huge foreign currencies.

Russia considers Central Asian Region as its neighbourhood. Oil and Gas had become important elements in the political and economic relations of Central Asia and Russia. It is not in favour of the multiple pipeline policy of the Central Asian states as it would reduce the importance of Russia for the region. Russia also do not like outside countries, which are bypassing it and providing alternative route to Central Asian oil and gas reserves. It opposed to corner-stone project of building an East-West pipeline for the Caspian crude from Baku to Turkish Port of Ceyhan on Mediterranean. Russia had already succeeded in reaching agreement with Kazakhstan to transport the Kazakh oil from Tengiz offshore field through anew pipeline from Kashagan oil field to the Russian port of Novorossik on the Black Sea (Comments: Gas Pipeline: Great Game of other Kind, POT, vol.xxviii, no.228, September 26, 2000). This
shows the importance of Central Asian region in Russian and Pakistan relationship. Both Pakistan and Russia have similar, though not exact interests in oil and gas pipeline across Pakistan. Russia sees these as a way to preserve Russian influence and involvement in any new export routes from Central Asia. Pakistan also sees Russian involvement as a way of strengthening the chances of projects success, and of reducing Indian resistance to having Pakistan as part of the energy supply corridor from Iran and Central Asia. For Pakistan, relations with Russia would go beyond political realm. A producer of oil and gas, Pakistan would like to acquire Russian know-how to expand its own production and to build pipeline to link it to producers in Central Asia.

**Drug-Trafficking**

For Russia, another concern is drug-trafficking, Smuggling of arms and an inflow of illegal migrants. The Narcotics produced in the Taliban-protected laboratories of Afghanistan, which had been then shipped overland through Tajikistan and Russia to Europe. The long unregulated borders provide easy access for drugs to enter into Russia. Despite America’s military campaign against Taliban in late 2001, the narcotics flow has increased and anti-terrorist coalition had not succeeded in stemming it. Yuri Baluevskii, first Deputy Head of Russia’s General Staff, in June 2003 described narcotics as one of the most serious threats to Russia (Leszek Buszynski, 2005). President Vladimir Putin said that anti-terrorist coalition which has taken responsibility in Afghanistan is doing nothing to

The drug menace had been spreading in Russia at an alarming rate. The number of drug users in the country had raised by approximately 25% in the past five years. Drug sale in the country as a whole amounted to almost $1.5 billion in 1996 and more than $2.5 billion last year. This had an impact on the increased crimes involving drugs. The Deputy Director of Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs Administration on Drug Trafficking, Leonid Tantsorov said that narcotics now pose a very real threat to national security: drug use and drug related crimes are growing by leaps and bounds. Last year, for example the Ministry of Internal Affairs registered more than 180,000 crimes involving narcotics, nearly double the 1996 figure. The smuggling of heroin and cocaine into the country has increased by 15% (Rossiiskaya Gazeta, March 3, 1998, in Current Digest of post-soviet Press, vol. 50, no. 10, April 8, 1998, pp. 5-6). The increase in the number of cases of AIDS, viral hepatitis and other acute illness is closely linked with the growing drug abuse. Russian representative to 48th session of U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs said that drug use greatly contribute to the growing death rate, increasing incidence of drug related diseases, and demographic decline. Almost 90 percent of all heavy drugs in Russia come from abroad. Over the last five years Russia has registered more than a million drug related crimes and seized 129,731 kilogram of drugs in 2004 (The Times of Central Asia, Bishkek April 7, 2005, p. 17).

The bulk of expensive and most powerful narcotics would go to Moscow and surrounding region. A sizeable share of that is distributed among criminal elements. There are different criminal's organizations
operating in various parts of Russia. They are transnational in character. They work together with criminals from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Georgia. In addition, various foreign organization in the capital are involved in drug trafficking. The largest are Afghans, Chinese and Vietnamese. Leader of Russian criminal groups have contacts with the world’s most influential drug trafficking organizations from the US and Latin American countries. They often meet and discuss the question of global cooperation in distributing narcotics and promoting favorable political condition for such activity at the national level. There is powerful drug lobby in Russia. It puts pressure on various groups, including federal and regional legislator to dissuade them from cracking down on drug mafia. Special mention had to be made of the problem of money-laundering by the Russian drug mafia. Huge sums of money are involved-on the order of $1 billion, which is legalized through front organization that work with cash, such as restaurants, gambling.

Russia attracts drug traffickers for two main reasons: It offers a vast domestic market and it is the key country in the drug transit system. Most of the narcotics destined for the domestic market come from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia. Afghanistan is now the world’s largest producer of opium and the epicenter of transnational heroin trade across the Golden Crescent of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Opium cultivation is centered in the Southwest and Northeast part of Afghanistan. However, cultivation has spread widely over the last twenty years. As early as 1995, when most of the country comes under Taliban rule, this activity began a significant geographic expansion. In 2004, 67% of the
global opium poppy cultivation took place in Afghanistan. The area under cultivation increased from about 80,000 hectare in 2003 to an unprecedented 131,000 hectare in 2004 (2005 World Drug Report, United Nations Office on Drugs and crime (UNODC), volume 1, p 39). Of greatest concern is the fact that opium poppy cultivation had been introduced into previously unaffected areas and is now found in all 34 provinces of the country.

Opium production has been stable at around 4,000-5,000 metric tons since the early 1990s. Production stood at 4,765 and 4,850 metric tons in 2003 and 2004 respectively. However, a rapid assessment conducted by United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) earlier in 2005 indicated that the area under poppy cultivation has declined in 2005 as compared to the record levels of in 2004. It is, however, not yet certain whether the reduction of the land under opium poppy cultivation would be sufficient to offset a possibly higher yield than observed in 2004. But it is believed factor is that about 87% of opium for the illicit market is now produced in Afghanistan. The countries reporting the largest total opiates seizures for 2003 were Pakistan (34.7mt) and Iran (26.1mt)-equivalent to 31% and 24% of global opiate seizures respectively. Encouraging, the growth of seizures in countries neighboring Afghanistan was stronger than the growth of Afghanistan’s opium production in 2003. Seizures in Central Asia rose by 33% in 2003 to 7.1mt (2005 World Drug Report, United Nations Office on Drugs and crime (UNODC), volume 1, p 48-49). Most of the opiates trafficked via Central Asia are destined for the Russian Federation and other CIS countries.

A transnational network of heroin smuggling routes originates in Afghanistan and extends out into the wider region of the world. The
countries immediately adjacent to Afghanistan – Pakistan, Iran and other Central Asian states are most affected by Afghan drug trade. Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are destined to become the main transit route for Afghan heroine. The permeability of their borders and the weakness of their national law enforcement are helping the drug business. From those countries, the drug would then pour into Russia across the Russian-Kazak border. Russia is not Afghan heroin’s final destination. From Russia it would travel through Belarus, Ukraine and Baltic countries to Western Europe.

Operations to process the poppies into heroin are under way on a large scale in the different part of the country controlled by Taliban. According to intelligence data from Russian Federal Border Service, 27 new mini-factories producing heroin have cropped up just areas adjacent to Tajik-Afghan border (Izvestia, January 26, 2000, in Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press). As a result, the region had wound up with a huge glut of opiates. Although the Afghan-Tajik drug mafia had indeed become a powerful criminal structure by the late 1990s, it is clearly stretched to the limit in terms of its ability to smuggle drugs from Central Asia to Russia and to Europe. There is cooperation between drug criminals and terrorist organization. Terrorist organization rely on the network of the narcotic smugglers for their arms supplies.

Until recently, Pakistan was also a major producer of opium. The North West Frontier Province was the centre of this activity. However,
the decline in profits due to cheaper and more sustained levels of Afghan cultivation, along with Pakistan's pressure on domestic drug-related activities, led to a significant decline in outputs. Despite the decline in Pakistan's opium cultivation, trafficking network involving a significant Pakistan component often help heroin to flow unimpeded not only into the country but also other areas beyond.

The Republics of Central Asia had provided alternatives to Pakistan- Iran - Turkey routes for the smuggling of Afghan opium and heroin into Europe, and they would also become major producers and consumers themselves. Good East West rail connections from Central Asia to Ukraine and Western Russia in particular also help to explain much of the flow of Afghan heroin into drug market of Russia. The Central Asian Countries trying to stem the flow of Afghan heroin. They also recognised that there is a linkage between drug money and terrorist activities.

Tajikistan is the major transit route for Afghan drugs. This country had well developed cross-border roads along Afghan border and the distribution of ethnic Tajiks on both sides of the border and their common language have also helped to facilitate the movement of drugs into the rest of Central Asia. During the first five months in 2002 Tajik law enforcement agencies and Russian border troops seized 1,769 kg of drugs, including 1,251 kg of heroin. In the same period in 2003 the catch was 4,679 kg, including 3,158 kg of heroin (The Times of Central Asia, June 18,
Afghan’s Ring Road runs North through Mazar-I-sharif into Uzbekistan, which is also facing the problem of drug trafficking and insurgency. In addition, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, utilizing guerrilla base in Tajikistan, had been linked to heroin trafficking. Crime reports proved that drug traffic is sweeping Kyrgyzstan. Recently, Bishkek police arrested a drug courier carrying 21 kg of opium and more than 0.5 kg heroine. Kyrgyzstan police say that previously they seized mostly marijuana, hashish and opium, but now they face a large flow of heroin. All these drugs come from Afghanistan with its large opium poppy plantations. Today Turkmenistan has been becoming another drug traffic destination in Central Asia (The Times of Central Asia, June 18, 2003, p 4.).

The problem is that over the past two years, the volume of Afghanistan heroin had increased by several times. Many experts think this is connected with Taliban’s defeat by US army. During Taliban’s rule, they were controlling Afghanistan, the Taliban spoke against drugs and punished drug producers with death. These tough measures had considerably restricted Afghanistan’s drug production. However strange it is, since Hamid karzai has come to power in Afghanistan, drug business in this country has strengthened because government is weak and not taking harsh measures on drug traders and the opportunities of heroin transit through Central Asian countries have increased. There is no proper border demarcation or customs control along the more than 6,500 km long border between Russia and Kazakhstan.
The end of Taliban regime affected positively Russia’s relations with both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the case of Afghanistan, the ousting of Taliban regime offered Russia an opportunity to reestablish its lost influence. The Islamic factor in the post-11 September period has acted as an impetus to Afghan-Russian cooperation in the form of a struggle against the remnants of extremist forces in Afghanistan and a fight against international terrorism. In Pakistan’s case too, the fall of Taliban opened new opportunities for improved relations by eliminating a major blockade in Russian-Pakistan relations. Pakistan used the lure of economic gains to elicit a more positive and accommodating response from Russia. Pakistan President even delinked Russian-Pakistan relations from Kashmir issue and Russia’s close partnership with India. During a Russian parliamentary delegation’s visit to Islamabad in April 2002, President Musharraf said, “Relation between India and Pakistan had their own value and should not be linked to the relation between Russia and India” (Shireen T.Hunter, 2004). Consequently, there was a flurry of Pakistani-Russian contacts at various levels, including a visit by the representative of an oil company Gazprom to discuss the possibility for Russia’s participation in various Pakistani and regional energy development schemes. September 11 incident had changed the competitive politics of a Cold War hangover to cooperative security and economic partnership.

In the end it can be said that, during the Cold War period, the relationships between the Soviet Union and Pakistan were not cordial.
This was due to Pakistan’s alliance with U.S. and its policy to contain Soviet Union’s influence. In addition, the India’s close relations with the Soviet Union also played its part in Soviet-Pakistan relationship. The end of Cold War changed context, but did not remove their suspicion. Pakistan had enjoyed high priority in Russia’s foreign policy due to its proximity to the former Soviet republics in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Russia also hoped to use Pakistan’s influence to bring normalcy in Afghanistan. But Pakistan’s support to Taliban and terrorists groups affected relations between two countries. However, US war on terrorism and its presence in Central Asia had heightened Russia’s desire to influence developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Improving relations with Russia is also important for Pakistan to have good understanding with Central Asian States because Russia is still an important player in Central Asian politics. A new understanding with Russia will therefore facilitate to develop good friendly relations with Central Asian Republics and it will also help Russia to address its security concern in Afghanistan and Central Asia with the help of Pakistan. Therefore, both the countries should work towards establishing close cooperative relationship.