CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION
This study examines the changing nature of Soviet Russian perception of security. In order to do so the study has focussed on the changing nature of Soviet/Russian concerns vis-à-vis the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Despite other pressing demands on Soviet economic resources the armed forces of the Soviet Union received a high priority. This was so because Soviet/Russian concern for its security has often verged on "fear psychosis". The last centuries of Russian history is an eloquent testimony to this fact. As a consequence of the developments between 1949 and 1953, NATO was created and its purpose shifted from that of a politico-psychological projection of United States for Europe to that of a military guarantee for European security. The Soviet Union, too, organised its sphere of influence in the shape of a military alliance the- Warsaw Pact on May 14, 1955. The formation of blocs had culminated in the collective organisation of defence.

For nearly two and a half decades the NATO on one side and the Warsaw Pact on the other maintained peace and stability in Europe. The situation changed. In 1983, United States President Ronald Reagan presented the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI; also known as "Star Wars") an ambitious project to construct a protective shield capable of defending United States' military installations, as well as civilian targets, from Soviet ICBM attack. The more practical aspects of Soviet apprehensions were trained on the convergence of United States' financial and industrial potential united by the greater vision of SDI.¹ The escalation of the arms race in the early 1980s pointed to a new intensification of the Cold War fuelled by Soviet military supported actions in the Third World. The end of détente added to the impression that bi-polarity

again defined the structure of the international system.\(^2\) The Brezhnev –Kosygin period saw a massive investment in the military. Although Soviet Union continued to assume the position of a super power militarily, it was undergoing a deep seated economic crisis, gradually but substantially weakened. This had changed the face of the international relations and the new prominence of economic power as a defining characteristic in international relations put the Soviet Union out of business.

Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985 and realised the need for reforms. The Soviet Union was a super power militarily but economically still backward. He introduced *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* that is for transparency and open dialogue among the public at large about problems in the Soviet Union. Though the focus of *Perestroika* was internal, particularly to rejuvenate the economy, but in the process of reconstructing many earlier postulates including those on security came under scrutiny and underwent change. Another factor that impinged on New Thinking was the development of advanced and new technologies. This necessitated rethinking about traditional approaches to security. On this question Gorbachev was convinced that no single nation could be secure at the expense of the other. In his view it was an interdependent and integral world. The vast power of weapons of mass destruction would leave no victors. Hence he introduced the concept of “Comprehensive Security”. This shift meant that apart from military means, political means were also necessary to bring about comprehensive security. It was primarily because of new thinking that Gorbachev formulated the idea of “Europe Our Common Home”. While implementing his ideas Gorbachev disbanded the Warsaw Pact and importantly East

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 198.
Germany was allowed to unite with West Germany. Earlier East Germany was the keystone of Soviet security structure in Europe. In the changed circumstances of the 1980s, had the earlier approach to military means for ensuring security remained paramount, it is possible that Gorbachev may not have permitted the unification of Germany.

The historic upheavals experienced between 1989 and 1991 in Europe and elsewhere brought the Cold War to a close. With the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991, the ideological divide also came to an end. The Russian Federation had launched a systemic transition. The Russian leadership believed that with the disappearance of the ideological divide, they would be accepted as natural partners by the West. The West is seen as a friend, partner and potential ally and no longer a security threat to Moscow.

In the changed scenario of 1991 several questions arose such as- Is Russia an integral part of Europe? Or is it peripheral, with its geopolitical focus perhaps in Asia? Is Russia able and willing to orient its political and economic system in the post-communist era to Old European or American configuration? Will Russia mobilise forces and draw motivations from its own tradition to find ways out of the current crisis facing the state, society and economy? Russia is not only confronted with symptoms of crisis but the question of self-perception arises.³ The transformation of international relations and the end of confrontation between Russia and NATO has resulted in the steady elimination of the consequences of the Cold War and the advancement of Russian reforms has substantially broadened the possibilities for

cooperation in the world arena. At the same time, new challenges and threats to the national interests of Russia are emerging in the international sphere. There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States. In solving principal questions of international security, the stakes are being placed on Western institutions and forums of limited composition, and on weakening the role of the UN Security Council.⁴

The attention of those living in the former Soviet space has shifted to new issues such as the further breakup of the Soviet Union and the dangers of disintegration of Russia itself, military conflicts in the Russian periphery and within Russia (Chechnya), who live in the former Soviet Republics, military conflict in Balkans; and the threat of the NATO expansion. Many scholars and intellectuals have proffered visions of the emerging world order. Francis Fukuyama has theorized that the world is witnessing the end of the ideological conflict between democracy and totalitarianism.

The transition of NATO to the use of force (military force) beyond the zone of the responsibility and without the sanction of the UN security council has been elevated to the level of a strategic doctrine.⁵ It found expression in the events in Rwanda, Somalia, Iraq and Bosnia. The turning point in world politics was NATO’s aggression in Yugoslavia in March – June 1999 under the disguise of a humanitarian intervention operation. The main result of this aggression, apart from killing hundreds

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⁴ The foreign policy concept of the Russian federation, approved by the President of the Russian federation V.Putin June 28, 2000, source: www.mid.ru

⁵ National Security Concept of the Russian federation, Rossiiskaya Gazeta, January 18, 2000, approved by the Presidential Decree No.1300 of 17 December 1999 (given in the wording of Presidential Decree No. 24 of January 10, 2000.)
and thousands of innocent civilians, damaging and destroying civilian objects, was the new role of NATO: interfering in the affairs of sovereign nations.  

The Russian Security and Military Doctrine has undergone many changes concerning the threat situation in Russia.

The emergence of religious extremism developed parallel to the resurgence of ethnic strife at the end of the twentieth century. The 1990s witnessed a marked increase of terrorist incidents perpetrated by such organisations as Hamas, Hizbollah, Islamic Jihad, and notably the Algerian Armed Forces, Islamic Group. Beyond the potential terrorist use of modern Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), the manifestation of terrorism as evidenced by the attacks on September 11, 2001 reflected the distinct features of the new terrorism demonstrated the degree to which terrorism had been shaped by globalization and has consequently, become a product thereof; amorphous motive, diffuse responsibility for terrorist acts, a decentralised and net worked model of organization and a complex financial support structure. But the strategies and tactics differ from those of earlier types of political and religious violence movements.

The sympathetic response of Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested that he was willing to set aside disputed strategic issues in order to enter a new and cooperative relationship with the West. In contrast to present Russia-NATO council whose format Russian diplomats privately call ‘19 against 1’, New panel that is agreed to in Reykjavik (14 May 2002) gives Russia equal voice in discussing a limited, but

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expandable, list of issues. The debate over NATO's future intensified after the Prague Summit in November 2002 when the Alliance was deemed to have given itself a global role in the war on terror through the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF). However, differences inside the Alliance over the situation in Iraq and continuing uncertainties about the potential future role of NATO forces 'out of area' re-launched the debate in 2003. Experts remain bitterly divided between the 'NATO is Dead' and 'NATO Rides Again'. One key to the future lies in the viability of the NRF as a form of glue, which can hold the European Union (EU) member states and the United States together. Prague heralded a new honeymoon between the two sides of the Atlantic, but both political and military problems confront attempts to operationalize any matchmaking role for the NRF.

The challenge in the post-Prague period is for Russia to incorporate itself into a broader European and Euro-Atlantic security framework. President Putin's decision to openly support the United States in the war on terrorism opened up new prospects for developing a more cooperative partnership between Russia and NATO. A lot will depend on how well the newly established NATO-Russia Council (NRC)—which superseded the old Permanent Joint Council (PJC)—would function. The success of the new council will depend to a large extent on its ability to promote practical cooperation in areas of common interest. Rather than getting hung up on procedural issues, NATO and Russia need to identify a few specific areas of cooperation where they can show concrete, tangible results quickly. This will demonstrate to skeptical publics, Russian and Western alike, that cooperation is feasible and gives momentum

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to further collaboration. NATO also needs to begin to think about its longer-term goals vis-à-vis Russia. Defining the endgame at this point, however, may be premature. Russia has not expressed an interest in membership. Moreover, its transition is far from complete. If co-operation with NATO and Europe gradually deepens and expands, it could lay the groundwork for a different type of relationship for Russia.

Russian Army deployments reflect this concern – almost nothing faces NATO and the best troops, even before this latest war in Chechnya, were in the south. In short, Russia's new Military Doctrine is the defensively oriented policy of a weak power. It is quite wrong to think that only the military doctrine statement is important and more wrong to think it the most important: all these policy documents are supposed to be inter-connected and to flow from the National Security Concept.

In the post-2002 the U.S. policymakers need to give more thought to NATO’s future role in the Caucasus and Central Asia. NATO’s involvement in these regions is because of the events of September 11 and the war on terrorism has increased the strategic importance of both regions. Cooperation in these areas can not only help strengthen ties to NATO but also lay the foundation for broader regional cooperation.

With this overall theme of *Russia's Changing Security Perception* especially vis-a-vis NATO, the purpose of this work is to explore the various phases of Russian security. It is concerned with determining how successive Soviet leaderships have sought to define the security requirements of Russia. In order to understand these different phases the study will focus on the view existing prior to Gorbachev's regime, his views and the Russian perception. Hence the study will commence from 1985. The study is divided according to the following scheme. The introductory chapter is
followed by the second one Soviet Security Perception. An attempt has been made to trace the nature of Soviet security concerns of military alliances and counter-alliances and its repercussions since Second World War. Keeping this as a historical background the present study examines the intricate issues concerning Soviet security and its territorial integrity in the emerging new political order. An earnest attempt has been made to probe into various historical questions relating to the development of Russian security perception.

In the third chapter titled Russia and NATO: Quest for Peace and Security—Boris Yeltsin Period (1991 – 2000), the change in the security scenario and its implications for international security and peace is examined. Russia’s search for new security policy and the NATO’s strategic concepts and its policy towards expansion of NATO through ‘Partnership for Peace’ that focus on security issue of Russia in the last decade of the millennium. Russia and NATO are still searching for ways to shape a common approach to the security of Europe. This analysis reviews difficulties that have arisen in that quest, assesses the relative importance of cooperation between Russia and sets forth some ideas for defusing points of friction between the two.

The fourth chapter titled Russia and NATO: Quest for Peace and Security—Vladimir Putin Period (2000 – 2004) evaluates the development of NATO’s eastward expansion and its proximity to the Russian borders. At another level diplomatic and political consultations are also a regular feature to resolve all the differences. The most important implication for Russian security policy is to understand that the leadership links its national sovereignty and territorial integrity with NATO’s enlarging membership. It also deals with the new threat perceptions that are coming up in
different forms such as Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism, separatism and political instability in Caucasus and issues of Central Asia.

The fifth chapter Concept of Russian Strategic Partnership gives many insights and questions are raised on Russia’s search for new relationship with institutions like Commonwealth of Independent States, European Union and United Nations, which have openly shown displeasure to the American led unilateralism in the beginning of this decade. However, defining the nature and location of the threats to the collective security factors for securing the objectives- the threat is the new geo-political and international situation of Russia.

The last chapter gives an assessment of Russia’s perception of security and the policies it adopted during the Yeltsin and Putin period. We now turn to examine the Soviet perception and security.