INDIA’S SECURITY NEEDS AND CONTRIBUTION OF RUSSIA IN INDIAN DEFENCE PREPAREDNESS

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s foreign policy was based on the Principle of ‘United Asia’ and ‘one world’ of which India and Soviet Union were two important and integral parts. Even after the disintegration of Soviet Union the relations between the Russian Federation and India remained unchanged and there is a great scope for deepening the bilateral treaties in future as well.

The present chapter is an attempt to throw some light on the evolution of Indo–Russian relations after the end of the cold war and its impact on Indian security. The study aims at highlighting the shared national security concerns of India and Russia, their defense ties, and the scope for their united effort in shaping the new world order.

The basic geo–political factors that lay at the root of the decade’s long uninterrupted Indo–Soviet friendship could not be ignored altogether. Indo–Russian relations have a unique character in the sense there is no basic geo–political conflict of interests. There are no border disputes and no irritants inherited from history. Their approach to various important international problems has either been convergent or quite close to each other. During the last fifty years a large number of agreements between the two countries about close cooperation in the field of industry, agriculture, science, technology and culture were concluded.
and successfully implemented. The people of both the countries have been benefited from the many-sided cooperation between them. Their bilateral cooperation has also contributed to the strengthening of peace and stability in Asia and the world at large. Between the Soviet Union Russia and India there have been no hostilities ever and they have never fallen at war. History does not record any other example of a smooth crisis free relationship between the two big powers of the size and strength of India and the Soviet Union extending over a long period of about six decades.

For India the culminating point was reached when the 1971 Friendship Treaty was signed. The Treaty proved to be a boon for India. The Soviet veto on Kashmir, and their neutralizing of the American 7th fleet in 1971 war, was reciprocated by India by not condemning the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. India's capacity to stand up to the machinations of Pakistan, China and the U.S. owes great deal to the Soviet support which was material as well over 70% of India's industry (specially in public and defense sectors) and even larger percentage of weaponry was of Soviet Origin, obtained through generous Soviet loans and rupee-rupee arrangements. The West, IMF, the World Bank could not match the soft Soviet credits.

The history of their relations and their geopolitical positions in the world should convince Russia and India that they are natural strategic partners. For many, decades, Soviet-Indian relations have been considered by both sides as a model for countries with different political systems. For more than half a century since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, this Cooperation has been perceived as a continuous interaction between equals.


Even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, slowly though steadily convergence of political and economic interests between the two countries shared once again come to the forefront. Though Russian is still in the process of evolving its own model of modernization and industrialization Russian nationalism has come to assert itself, the under current being primacy to the national interests of this erstwhile super power. Through a zigzag process the pro–American and pro–West tilt in Russia’s foreign policy is coming back to the even keel. Therefore the dominant Russian political elite has evolved a worldview, which is molded primarily by its national interests and not influenced by extraneous factors such as American Western aid to restructure its economy. To say this however does not mean that Russia is not striving to build its economic relations with the United States and other Western countries. Nevertheless the driving force behind Russia’s new foreign policy orientation is its national interests in the context of globalization of economy and emergence of an Interdependent world. Seen in this context, Indo–Russian relations have begun to reveal new tendencies, keeping in view the commonality of interests of the two countries.2

Observers of the Russian scene noted that since the end of 1992 Russian foreign policy was absorbing and reflecting the growing impulses in the country of assertive nationalism. Disenchantment with the West for trying to browbeat Russia and for inadequacy of aid offered and actually delivered. Claims of Russia’s status as an independent great power were repeatedly put forward... Moscow’s new assertive mood has been most marked in dealing with other former Soviet republics referred to as the "near abroad" in Russian parlance. It seemed Friendship with large Asian countries like India and China fitted well with new policy track in Moscow. Where Russia project itself as a truly Eurasian power.3
Indo-Russian relations have undergone many changes since the end of Cold War. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union initially shocked India and the impact of this even continued for quite sometime but a new policy towards the Russian Federation gradually re-emerged. Russia seemed keen to continue to base its relations with India on a strategic level but on a different footing. It consistently supported India's case for a seat in the Security Council, although it was not quite comfortable with India's nuclear tests in 1998 and it generally condemned nuclearisation of the sub-continent. Russia, however, did not support impositions of sanctions against India and did not allow the bilateral relations between the two countries to suffer. After the Kargil war the relations between the two countries improved greatly as Russia was openly critical of Pakistan's aggressive designs towards India and its policy of supporting and sponsoring insurgent-terrorism in Indian-controlled Kashmir. India was equally keen to maintain close bilateral relations with Russian federation, but it took time before a new equation could be stabilized after the collapse of Soviet Union.¹

In the current scenario, Indo-Russian strategic ties confront three significant challenges. The first and most important challenge is that both India and Russia recognize the importance of the United States in the current international order and the importance of maintaining good relations with the unipolar power. For both countries, this imperative over-rides most other strategic requirements. This affects Indo-Russian relations in a variety of ways, from the most obvious such as limitations on the extent of military ties and, particularly, research and development collaboration, to less obvious ones, such as the fact that both India and Russia have closer economic relations with the US than with each other.
The second challenge that India and Russia face is in understanding and dealing with China. There is a general reluctance in the foreign strategic policy establishments of major capitals around the world to talk in anything more than a whisper about how to deal with China. Both India and Russia recognize the long-term threat that China poses, but are unsure of how exactly to deal with this threat. In the Russian case, this problem is compounded by Russian arms sales to China, which though necessary to maintain a Viable Russian defence industrial base, something which is in India's interest also, nevertheless impacts on the military balance in Asia and on India's security.

The third challenge that the partnership faces is that both countries are relatively weak. Unlike the Soviet-Indian partnership during the Cold War period, which was anchored by Soviet superpower capabilities and power, today neither India nor Russia has the material capabilities to back the other on significant international issues. For example, it is unlikely that Russia is not today in a position to veto decisions of the UN Security Council unfavourably to India, as it did during the 1971 war.5

Despite these challenges, the strength of the relationship lies in the continuing complementarities of interests. Neither India nor Russia can tolerate the dominance of any single power in the global community and in the region. American power and China's potential power in Asia are realities with which both India and Russia have already come to terms. Indeed, both powers may have actually learned to use these powers to promote their own interests, as can be seen in the war on terrorism and on other issues such as on nuclear weapons and ABMs. But these are strategies of weaker powers, and both countries will be more comfortable
balancing against these powers than bandwagoning with them. As both India and Russia grow stronger, their mutual interest in countering the dominance of any single power in global and Asian politics will only bring them even closer.6

On June 30, 1994 during the visit of Prime Minister Narsimha Rao to Moscow India and Russia signed "Moscow Declaration on the Protection of the Interests of Pluralistic States". The declaration underscored the two countries' commitment to the principles of democracy and human rights and "unity in diversity". It drew attention to the growing threat from the forces of aggressive nationalism, religious and political extremism, terrorism and separatism, which strike at the unity of pluralistic states and called upon the international community to respect the integrity of these states. India and Russia are both multi-party democracies. Indian democracy may not be perfect, but it is already well entrenched, both countries have opposed the use of the stick of human rights while dealing with sovereign states.7

There has been a revival of the talks of "Indo-Russian strategic partnership". President Yeltsin and India's (then) Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav during the latter's Moscow visit in October 1997 re-affirmed their countries intentions to develop a strategic partnership military technical cooperation in the backbone of their bilateral relations. India is the largest buyer of Russian military hardware. It is the only country, in the world with which Russia has a long term programme of military Technical cooperation, worth more than, $ 10 billion. During the Indian defence Minister's 1997 visit to Moscow, the two sides agreed to prolong to the dismay and disappointment of New Delhi.
Geo-strategic interests of Russia and India coincide in many spheres and they share special security concerns regarding Islamic fundamentalism. A link between Russia and India to limit the Talibanisation of the Central Asian states is necessary. After the Gulf war Afghanistan has emerged as the epicenter of such negative activities, especially after the Taliban came to power in 1996. For over a decade India has been the challenge of militancy in its state of Jammu and Kashmir. Cross-border terrorism and the support of various militant groups fighting against the Indian Union from across the border in Kashmir, has posed a serious threat to the integrity of the Indian Union. The talk of Jihad against India declared by the militant groups enjoying sanctuary and support from Pakistan and Afghanistan. This has made the situation in Kashmir extremely difficult. Similarly the Chechen separatist rebels have received support from Afghanistan.

The former Soviet Central Asia is in the grip of a new Cold War and the US has seen to it that the gains that the Russians and the Chinese made here are off. This is a feat that offset the Russian Chinese strategic partnership. The Americans are coming for them. In such a situation that obtains as of the defining moment India is advised to move out from its friendship with the Russians, Similarly it is said that since the Russians have a strategic relationship with the Chinese the Indians should be out of the Cold War mind set and recognizes the new reality. For others the best Way to take India out is to keep her engaged with the US in defence relationship.

In a post–Cold War world of burgeoning American supremacy, even though the United States of America accounts for some 20 per cent
of India's foreign trade, India has evidently neither abrogated nor curtailed its defence cooperation relations with Russia, due to the presence of large ex-Soviet inventories.\textsuperscript{10} It has two reasons First that its earlier system is based on Russian equipment and men have been trained there. Second that the Russian innovation being slower it is easier for the India to accommodate it to the existing system. The Western systems in contrast may be more advance. The problems will be of adjusting to them and having training.

The latest protocol between India and Russia envisaged a package defence sales to India worth $3 billion.\textsuperscript{11} This included nuclear propelled submarines, strategic bombers, joint development of a fifth generation fighter aircraft and the setting up of joint ventures on the pattern of the supersonic Brahmos cruise missile. The Foreign Office spokesman said that, "The acquisitions would complete India's cherished nuclear triad. It would also aggravate the existing unbalance in conventional forces and strategic weapon delivery systems in the region." The two sides also resolved to enter into new commercial tie-ups in several areas including telecom equipment and hydrocarbons, which envisage investment of over $1 billion. The issue of steady delivery of high quality spares for the existing military aircraft of Russian origin had also been the issue of discussion between Mr. Klebanov, Mr. Putin's point man for defense ties with India, and Mr. George Fernandes, the Indian defence minister.\textsuperscript{12}

India and Russia are two great powers located in close proximity to each other. But the security environments have lately changed drastically, because of large scale US military presence in South and Central Asian regions. Russia is still obliged to maintain strategic consensus with the
United States because of its economic dependence on the West and this factor plays a restrictive role in shaping of Russian policies.\textsuperscript{12}

Significantly American Geos Stratagist Brzezinski’s game plan as spelled out in his book The Grand Chessboard envisages Russia and India as two powers whose strategic interests converge in the Eurasian region. It is by offering Russia as bait that America hopes to cultivate Germany, Japan and China for sustaining the unipolar world under its hegemony at least for a generation. Beijing is perceived by Brzezinski’s as America’s "natural ally" in Eurasia. Beijing’s growing interest in Central Asia is viewed by him as a move likely to prevent Central Asia’s reintegration with Russia. The Chinese support for Pakistan is seen as a factor restraining India’s ambition to subordinate that country as also offsetting India’s inclination to cooperate with Russia in regard to Central Asia and Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{14}

There is an important aspect of the friendly Indo-Soviet relations which has a direct bearing on our country’s defense and security. India, for years after independence, was forced by historical circumstances to lean on industrialized nations of the West for purchase of arms, including, sophisticated weapons. But the Western Powers and the USA in supplying highly strategic weapons to India formulated its policy by what it called "balance of power in the region."\textsuperscript{15}

The environment of South Asia with sustained military build up by neighbors, the strengthening of bases in the Indian Ocean region by foreign powers and the positioning of their forces in the various parts of the region gives a totally new dimension to the nature of security threats
to which the country may be exposed in the near future Indian defence planners thus will have to take measures to ensure national security over the long as well as short term periods. This implies that in the foreseeable future, Indo-Russian defense cooperation will grow.  

The demise of the Soviet Union inevitably created serious problems, no less in Indo-Russian relationship too. Not just that Russia was no longer in a position to advance the kind of economic and technological assistance that it gave earlier, but also the two countries had to grapple with the need for a new adjustment in their relations.  

For India the most critical area was the supply of defence equipment and spares from Russia. A significant segment of India’s defence requirements has been supplied by Moscow. With the altered political and economic condition Russian supply became erratic and creating serious bottlenecks and problems for India’s armed forces. In the early years of the successor Russian Federation, this was a matter of serious concern to the Indian Government and the military brass. It took considerable deliberations and efforts from both sides to get a grip over the problem and turn around the Defence relationship.

It was accepted that the geo-political interests of Russia and India still converge despite the changed security environments after the cold war. The growing Islamic militancy which threatens Central Asian Republics and North Caucasus region of Russia also threatens Indian Kashmir. It was felt that a grouping among Russia, India and China may be the only effective method of checking resurgent Islamists. A need was felt that the challenges posed by the USA, now the sole super power in
the world should also be neutralized under the tripartite arrangement. The requirement for cooperation between Russia and India for safeguarding their mutual interests in the Middle East and Central Asia is fully understood by both the countries. However all this did not prevent the previous Indo-centric relationship changing into an ordinary bilateral relationship.

Russia and Iran are reported to be interested in quadrilateral alliance on regional security issues, with China and India. This initiative can serve India’s strategic requirement in the region if it can engage China and Iran constructively. This alliance can also help in curbing the fundamentalist forces based in Pakistan Afghan belt.

The proposals for China–India–Russian triangular alliances to counter-balance the influence and hegemonic designs of the USA been also mooted. Russia is however uneasy with the growing economic and military build up of China which may create problems for Russia in the long run. India shares these concerns with Russia as Chin as growing might and influence can greatly upset the balance of power in Asia. China’s rivalry with the US on the other hand may bring a new cold war in being in Asia. It, will be in the interest of both Russian and India to engage China strategically and come to an arrangement so that adversial relationship of an arms race is not promoted between them. A political exploitation and pressure by the USA within acceptable limits. Any possibility of complications in relations between the three countries can be removed if a strategic alliance to safeguard their economic and security interest is formed. Russia recognizes India’s importance in such an alliance and wants to facilitate the process of a peaceful settlement
between India and China. India strategic interest can be well served by such an alliances if a consensus on the strategic sphere or areas influence of the three countries can be mutually determined. An overarching vision and desire for long term economic cooperation would be required to evolve the principles of such an alliance for the benefit of the participating countries. Any kind antagonistic activity against each other or an attitude of confrontation would not serve the purpose of peace and cooperation. If Iran also agrees to join this arrangement there will be no need to form a separate alliance to counter the Jehadi forces based in Pak–Afghan area. India has to tread very cautiously and watch the policies of the Bush administration which are yet to unfold fully. As a democracy India has much more in common with the USA then either with Russia or China. India under no circumstances should develop and adversarial relationship with the USA. It is an abiding interest of India to strengthen ties with the US, especially in the economic spheres. It is necessary that Indo–US ties remain on an even keel and Indo US economic ties are not adversely affected by India’s alliance with Russia or China.\(^{19}\)

The main security concern of India today centers round China’s attempt to strategically encircle the Indian subcontinent by its assistance to Pakistan in developing nuclear weapons and systems of their delivery. It is doubtful if any Indo–Russian alliance can deter China from continuing with these policies in South Asia unless mutual suspicions are allayed and competition for gaining strategic space in Asia is settled by mutual agreement.\(^{20}\)
Since the end of the cold war and the demise of the Soviet Union, there has been an enduring debate on the rubric and the nomenclature of the new world order. After, Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait in August 1990, President George Bush of the United States made a prophetic statement on the beginning of "a new world order" premised on respect for international law with an effective United Nations.²¹

The hegemonic designs and unilateral threats of use of force by USA is another area of convergence of Russian and Indian interests. Cooperation between Russia and India encompasses a vast spectrum, and since 1993 the two states have signed nearly 65 agreements of cooperation in various fields. In fact, since the mid-1950s, the two states have shared an intimate and uninterrupted friendship through many historical developments and various ups and downs. Notwithstanding the dismemberment of the USSR, the basic friendship framework has almost remained intact.²²

Nonetheless, India gave more importance to Russia than the United States because Russia had been a all-weather friend. Both countries maintained close political economic, nuclear and military relations. In fact Moscow wishes to develop a tripartite strategic partnership among Russia, China and India. But India and China have not entertained the proposal and preferred bilateral strategic partnership. In the 1990s, China has emerged a strong partner of Russia and in certain quarters it is felt that their relationship may develop into an alliance. The Indo Russian relations may be jeopardized if Russian–Chinese strategic partnership developed into an alliance and Indian–Chinese relations deteriorated.²³
It is a good base for Russia for further rapprochement with India. This task is no less important for Russia. India is a natural and objective friend. There are practically no differences between two countries on the vast majority of world problems. India can be a reliable partner in the case of actualization of the threat to Russian security posed by Moslem world or China. If, for instance, we take the southern boundaries of Russia, India is already playing a very positive role as her opposition to Pakistan limits the activity of the latter in the zone. India and Russia faces the same problems regarding the system of interactions with Moslem world. Both countries have the goals of

(A) Normalizing the relations with the region;

(B) Opposing the attempts of certain Western forces to impose on the countries the role of the vanguard in the struggle against to the Muslim world.

(C) Decisive fighting against Islamic extremist.

The possibilities of mutual cooperation with India in the military field are great for Russia. India is an ideal partner in this sphere. Multinational and multi confessional composition of both countries brings them closer. The existence of ethnic and religious separatists causes Russia and India to have similar approach to the problem of "self-determination", terrorism and separatism.24

Compatibility in their broad geopolitical interests continues to nudge them to seek closer cooperation in various fields, including in the economic sphere. Despite difficulties and uncertainties afflicting India-
Russia economic cooperation, Russia remains India’s biggest trading partner among the CIS countries.\textsuperscript{25} This backdrop is essential to understand the almost half-a-century long bond of sustained friendly relations between Moscow and New Delhi despite changes in leadership in both the capitals. During that long period they developed close political and economic relations. In the context of sale of arms and transfer of military-related technology, Moscow enabled India not only to upgrade its defence capability by acquiring new and sophisticated weapons but also to bypass arms control and even embargo on defence related technology often imposed upon it by certain NATO members. The West projected even that as a threat to its regional interest and accused India of pursuing a policy of hegemony. This was at a time when the Indian Ocean was being turned into an American lake thanks to the active collaboration of certain allegedly non-aligned states.\textsuperscript{26}

Military-related ties also suffered a set-back for a short time, especially after 1991, due to three main reasons. The one was due to the breakup on USSR. Many of the defence-related industries of USSR were split among several ex-SU states which posed problems of procurement. Several of these industries were privatized which meant designing new ways of bilateral deals. Also, lack of funds had seriously hurt the defence industry of Russia. The cumulative effect created shortage of spares and other defence related systems for on-going production programmes in India especially for the Navy.\textsuperscript{27}

Indo-Russian military ties are significant from another angle also. Unlike several NATO states that still continue to impose their unilateral norms of arms control and related civilian-military technology, Moscow
has not hesitated to transfer to India even the front-line weapons like the Su-30, Krivek-class frigates armed with long-range Klub missiles, as also other missiles like the Brahmos. These ties are very important for India because though reduced to the level of a great power from that of a super power, 'Russia is still a leader in defence related technology. Though Moscow is not adding large number of new weapons in its armed forces, it is investing heavily in research and development. The policy will reportedly be continued till 2007 after which funding will be gradually diverted to production of new weapons. Thus, Russia will continue to be a major source of modern weapons for India. Also, unlike other great powers, there are avenues of joint development of new weapons between these two states.28

At present, both Russia and India are in the midst of their economic reforms and Liberalization process. Consequently both are looking for investment from abroad, particularly from the advanced Western capitalist economics. Though the context and situation of reforms and economic scenario between the two countries are not parallel, both are desirous of coming closer to the West. However, the situation of Western aid, investment, and technological transfer to Russia is not optimistic. Hence, it will have to search for an alternative to this in other parts of the world. Besides, Russia, unlike India, is not in need of highly sophisticated technology. In this context, India could be the second best bet for Russia, which could be suitably reciprocated the former's need for space and defence related technologies.29

In the light of changing regional and global environment since the end of the Cold War India needs to redefine the basic formulate of its
foreign relations. Since the earlier rationale for pursuing the policy of non-alignment, conditioned by the bipolar world order of the Cold War era, is no longer valid in the post-Cold War era with its non-bipolar world order, India needs to stress multilateralism as the new and more appropriate basis for its policy in future. That will enable it to choose the path best suited to pursue its national interest without antagonizing other great powers.

Even in the changed scenario when ideology has been replaced by economic considerations in foreign affairs, India occupies a unique position in Russian calculations. In the grim battle of economic reforms and sluggish economic growth in Russia, India could be of help to it in a number of ways. Till the Western technology is transferred to Russia (though this is unlikely despite repeated (assurances by the G-7 countries), Indian technology could fill the void as alternative means. Moreover, the soaring Soviet demand for consumer goods could be easily met by India. Besides, both have immense scope for strengthening their trade and economic transactions. Both could set up joint ventures in third countries to boost the Russian exports in terms of trade and technology. But these serious collaborations depend on healthy political relationships. Hence, Russian support to India on major political concerns is not ruled out.30

Since the USSR has dissolved, and the USA is a debtor nation, Japan, China and India, in varying degrees, are the Countries that could have a major military role in South-East Asia and the Pacific. This would be necessary to maintain peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region.
The development of the ties between the two countries has taken place so far within the defining moment. In that sense the Indo–Russian relations are a subset of Indo–US, and US Russian relations. Since Russia has also a Chinese dimension, India can negotiate with the United States in the Post–Cold war Asia–Pacific region in regard to strategic issues. China has lost its relevance as a wild card in the US–Soviet Cold–War poker game. It could well use the lingering romanticism of the Anglo Saxons to influence key elements in the Senate. China can thus factor into the US strategic calculus in the Asia–Pacific region, especially in regard to issues like nuclear weapons proliferation. In the Kennedy years in the White House, China was perceived as a hostile force in spite of the Sino–Soviet split, the new American administration faces a belligerent China that believes in detonating megaton weapons.

In the emerging world order, India needs to carve out a role for herself as there is plenty of scope. For four decades, the nation that produced Chanakya two thousand years ago preferred rhetoric to substance and real politic in foreign policy. Too much emphasis was placed on the continuance of the Soviet Union in spite of its inherent contradictions. India is today marginalized in the global order while its giant neighbor China has been able to create a visibility because of its belligerence backed by military power. The countries of the Asia–Pacific region have reason to fear China’s Military power.

The policies of economic liberalization and market economics that India is presently pursuing will provide opportunities for further strengthening of ties between India and the United States. Since Russia too is keen on economic ties with the US, India can provide Russia a great deal of managerial advice.
India had already been facing acute problems of irregular supply of spare for Soviet weapons. In India the problem was further aggravated as the Gulf War offered three lessons for Indian defence policy that were inimical to the Delhi–Moscow relationship. The previous history of uninterrupted delivery of Soviet arms during a war is no assurance of continued deliveries in future conflicts, Soviet war fighting doctrines have critical flaws, and technological gap between Soviet and US weapons systems is widening to dangerous dimensions for Indian security.

The Cold War and its rather dramatic demise had marked the reality that the world was evolving into a polycentric international order where a number of centers of power are adjourning to the nature of their relationship. The centre of gravity of international relations has shifted to the Asian continent and its contiguous oceans. The asymmetries in the capabilities of the leading half a dozen centers of power create the imperative for cooperation among them. And relations among them would also determine their ability to safeguard and further their national strategic interest. This is where Indo-Russian dialogue, high level contacts and relations get into perspective.35

After the end of the Cold War, the United States and some western countries have substantially increased their activities in Asia. In their scenario of world politics, the West, and America as the leader of the western alliance, attaches greater importance to their relations with China, taking of course into account it’s dynamically growing economic potential and rapidly emerging market.
In the face of this situation some Indian specialists on international relations started talking about the "isolation" of India, and about the possible emergence of a new bipolar global system, which would harm India's position in the world. I think that a bipolar world consisting of the US and China does not seem to be a viable proposition.

India, too, is now looked upon by the West as a possible centre of power. Its steadily developing economy and growing market is attracting additional international attention. That is why the attitude of western countries has started lately to change in favor of closer cooperation with India. It is quite understandable that as a major player in Asia, and later in the world, India has to take into account the present and future strategies of the Soviet Union with other main centers of influence the United States, China Japan the European Union and Russia.

In the past, India had very wisely used the bipolar situation to pursue own interests. In today's world this basic approach may not be as fruitful as it was the in the past, because of an entirely new international setting. Furthermore, Russia understands that from the point of India's national interests and security the present policy of the United States as the only superpower cannot be ignored, especially when it relates to the Asian region and more so to India's neighboring countries. It is known that some American politicians view India as a valuable US partner to cope with Eurasia's uncertainties, and advocate regular high-level security dialogue with India on Eurasia.

The geopolitical Position of India also favors the strengthening of its influence in this region. That is why India cannot ignore these far-
reaching American plans in Central Asia, which may result in the establishment of US Control over the "heart of Eurasia" it is going to be, and already is part of a "great game", reminiscent of the time of the British colonial empire.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR required Russia and India to develop new approaches in regard to their security. In any case, we have to admit that the fundamental changes in the world balance of forces have had a direct bearing on Russian–Indian relations. While formulating their strategy of national interests and security, Russia and India should fully take into account the radical changes that have taken place in the international system. They can not ignore the new realities.

India, undoubtedly, has objectively assessed the real strength and weaknesses of Russia. It could not neglect the near total western orientation of Russia in the first half of the 1990s, when it paid only lip service to its relations with India. But when Yevgeny Primakov took charge as foreign minister in 1996, things began to change, and relations began to improve.

In fact, post–Cold War developments have signaled new shifts in perceptions and approaches of the US, Russia and China towards South Asia, tending to dissolve their cold war images as well as paradigms so far as India and Pakistan are concerned. With the end of Cold War politics, the superpower rivalry in South Asia has virtually ceased. But at the same time, the demise of the Soviet Union has caused a considerable degree of anxiety and strains in the security, strategic and defence
equipment relationship of India with Russia. Its political instability, economic crisis and shifting priorities have rendered India a low place in the Russian strategic calculus. This is partly evident from the absence of security clause in the Indo–Russian Treaty of Friendship, 1993. On the contrary, Russia is embarking on a closer military and security relationship with China, and has transferred the latest sophisticated weapons worth $2 billion, including SU–27 and Sukhoi–27S military planes to Beijing. This is likely to have a negative impact on India's defence and security. And, moreover, Chinese security has been further enhanced with the collapse of the Soviet Union which was its principal security threat. Thus, the balancing role of the erstwhile Soviet Union vis-à-vis China and Pakistan has sought to complicate India's security problems.36

The study of post–Cold War Russia–China relations clearly demonstrates their relevance for India and the growing significance of India as a factor not only in the Eurasian geopolitics, but the world at large. Keeping a continuous watch on and careful scrutiny of Russia's military–technical cooperation with China are of crucial importance for India's defence planners and analysts. India can impress on the Russian side to ensure that

(a) The equipment is not used against India,

(b) The achievements of joint Indo–Russian R&D in defence projects are not directly or indirectly passed on to China and also.

(c) Russian defence equipment and technology given to China are not transferred to Pakistan.
In the South Asian region, Pakistan has been challenging India's primacy. It is unwilling to accept India's predominant position as Islamabad has attained nuclear parity vis-à-vis New Delhi. Pakistan has already acquired nuclear weapon capability and is engaged in missiles development programme both through indigenous and external sources to upgrade its defence capabilities vis-à-vis India. Pakistan has also acquired modern weapon systems from different external sources. These include an unspecified number of T-85 Main Battle Tank (MBT), 40 F-7P combat aircraft, and 6 Karakoram-8 jet trainers from China; a mine hunter, with two more vessels of this type to follow, and three Atlantic Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) from France, along with an order for three advanced technology submarines; and 6 Type-21 frigates along with three Lynx Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) helicopters, with three more on order, from Britain. In addition, weapon systems which could be acquired in the future include 6 frigates from China, another batch of 350 MBTs from Ukraine or Russia, approximately 40 Mirage 2000 5 combat aircraft from France, and an unspecified number of air-to-air missiles from South Africa.\(^{37}\)

Pakistan's ruling elites have strained India psychologically linking the nuclear issue to the resolution of the Kashmir problem. Their low intensity conflict in the form of sponsoring terrorism, insurgencies and communal violence in Kashmir, the Punjab and north-eastern states are mainly aimed at disintegrating and destabilizing India.

The post-Cold War world has both short and long term implications for South Asia, in particular for India and Pakistan, facing new defence and security problems in terms of weapons; spare parts,
military and diplomatic assistance. With the collapse of the USSR, India has lost a reliable strategic partner to whom India looked upon for defence equipments, sophisticated weapons, for diplomatic succor and for resources. Though Russian President Boris Yeltsin has renewed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India during his visit to New Delhi in January 1993. He gave full assurance of providing defence spare parts; India cannot afford to foreclose its options in forging defence cooperation with other countries.\textsuperscript{38}

India's external security milieu is fraught with dangers. The threat of nuclear proliferation in South Asia and induction of the latest weapons and military hardware in the subcontinent, and highly explosive situation developing in the Middle East, the Gulf-region, cannot be reassuring to India's security. Besides this, internal insecurity and domestic turmoil in India and also in its neighborhood are also causes of serious concern to the Indian government and people.\textsuperscript{39}

Security Environment

India's security environment in the post–Cold War period has undergone a major transformation at global, regional and intra-regional levels. It is no secret that fast growing naval-cum-nuclear activities of great powers in the Indian Ocean, in the Persian Gulf, including the Arabian Sea, have a serious bearing on India's defence and security. The stationing of US Central Command in the Indian Ocean and the expansion of the British, French and Chinese naval activities in the Indian Ocean have strategic implications for India. As we are fully aware the US has updated its Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean which is less than
10000 miles away from the southern tip of India. According to the ministry of defence, Government of India had already warned that "enormous increase in Great Power naval presence in the Gulf which has now around 150 warships and auxiliary vessels has heightened tension, India's concern regarding the tension caused by the foreign naval presence in the Indian Ocean region is well known... However, the recent accretion of airborne and ship borne missiles by some littoral navies also lends a new dimension to the threat from the sea to our coastline, island territories, and off shore oil installations. As reported, the US navy has been maintaining the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk on station in the Arabian sea. A carrier battle group of six to eight warships is reported to have been ordered to patrol these areas. According to American intelligence sources, China has also deployed large land based anti-ship missiles of a Chinese design known as HY 2, near the strait of Hormuz.

At regional level we observe that Pakistan's increasing military and strategic cooperation with China, with the Gulf cooperation Council (GCC), and especially with Saudi Arabia loaning its military personnel for the security of Saudi Arabia, and China's military and strategic relationship with the Gulf countries are likely to produce adverse security environment for India.

To India's north, China's military and nuclear build up in Tibet, its strategic and military designs on India's Sumdorong Chu Valley in Arunachal Pradesh, China's strategic moves to win over Bhutan as it is evident from their recent direct talks in Thimpu cannot but have very grave security implications for India. Besides this, India and China have not yet resolved the border dispute. However, the positive development is
that India and China signed an agreement in September 1993 during Prime Minister Rao's visit to Beijing, to maintain peace and tranquility on borders through a series of initiatives like: withdrawal of their respective forces from the eye-ball to eyeball position, reduction in forces and advanced notice of military exercises on regional issues like Kampuchea. India and China have divergent perceptions. Though on the Kampuchean or Vietnamese issue, India and China may not get interlocked in direct confrontation, it might have negative impact on the process of improvement of relations between the two countries.  

At intra-regional level, India's defence and security has been vitally affected by the resumption of US arm supplies mounting to $368 million to Pakistan under the Brown Amendment act a one time waiver to the Pressler Amendment. Though US have no direct security stakes in the region, it is not willing to abandon its vital strategic interests in South Asia and South, East Asia and the Gulf due to the missile development programme in India and Pakistan, ongoing military clashes between the government forces and those of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Iran's nuclear programme assisted by China and Russia including India also. This is one of the main reasons why Pakistan has been reassigned the role of a "frontline state" by the US Administration in its strategic calculus. In fact, Pakistan's growing strategic and economic ties with Central Asian states along with Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran, are looked upon by the US as central to its oil interests in Central Asia. America has already invested billions of dollars in oil-exploration there.  

The US arms policy towards the Indian subcontinent is buffeted by major contradictions and controversies. On the other hand, America has
consistently been maintaining that it desires to see both India and Pakistan friendly and peaceful but on the other, it is contributing to accentuate the arms race between India and Pakistan by resuming the supply of massive arms of sophisticated nature to Islamabad. Besides this, the Clinton Administration is consciously defeating its declared goals of suppressing terrorism and halting missile development programme by adopting soft attitude towards Pakistan. Despite the CIA’s disclosure of Pakistan’s overt hand in exporting terrorism to India, Algeria, Egypt and also Islamabad’s receipt of 5000 ring magnets from China, the White House officials are keeping themselves mum on such stunning disclosure by their own intelligence gathering agency. This disturbs India’s ruling leaders who look upon the US Administration’s double standards as a conscious deviation from the official moralistic pronouncements.

India has its legitimate security concerns over escalating rivalries of great powers in the Indian Ocean. India is not only concerned with safeguarding its maritime interests in terms of trade and commerce, it is also concerned with improving and updating its naval capabilities. However, India’s Indian Ocean option is quite marginal. It is not in a position to pressurize great powers to disengage themselves from the Indian Ocean or even combined, India and other littoral states do not possess matching naval capabilities vis-à-vis great powers to exert meaningful pressure on them to abandon the region.

Secondly, at regional level, India is locked in great regional rivalries. Given her more incremental naval power, the regional states are engaged in crippling India’s strength and influence. India’s pre-eminence in the naval field, regional states perceive the great power presence in the
Indian Ocean as an effective deterrence against India. Their interests surely aim at weakening of India's influence. Such a strategy suits the great power interests. Thus a strategic combination of Great Powers and anti-India regional states might tend to increase India's security risks.\textsuperscript{47}

The above scenario clearly reveals that India's options are very limited. Perhaps the best option before India is to evolve and apply a superb diplomacy aiming at preventing the combination of great powers and regional states against her as well as marshalling support from politically stable and influential countries of the Third World to create an international public opinion against the spillover effects of ever expanding naval activities of great powers in the Indian Ocean. But India's diplomatic option calls for taking carefully China's strategic profiles in the region into account.\textsuperscript{48}

Theoretically, China has been backing the U.N. resolution for converting the Indian Ocean into a Zone of Peace. But nevertheless, China will not tolerate India's diplomatic initiatives to create a tempo of world opinion against the great power presence in the Indian Ocean is rooted in the Chinese thinking that they would not be prepared to assign any role to India which might contribute to enhancing her prestige and stature in the world community. Moreover, India and China are not yet psychologically prepared to share each other's concerns, each other's susceptibilities or even each other's legitimate role in the regional or global politics, though they realize the need of redefining the emerging international order based on the western conception.\textsuperscript{49}
In order to stem external threats, one of the strong options for India is to modernize, update and strengthen her defence structure. The 1985–90 Defence Plan stressed upon the modernization of weapon system, enhancing fire power, updating of transport and communication systems with the ultimate goal of attaining self-reliance in the defence field.

In an effort to contain new threats either from Pakistan or from China or from any other adversary, India has been, striving to strengthen her defence power both through indigenous and external sources. For instance India's defence relationship with the Soviet 'union has in past registered qualitative changes. "The USSR delivered $ 2.3 billion worth of arms to India between 1976 and 1980, and more than $ 4 billion worth of arms to India between 1980 and 1986. These arms included over 500 T-72 tanks, Kilo-class submarines, a large number of MiG-27 flogger attack fighters, and the ability to co-produce the MiG-29 Fulcrum interceptor—the most modern interceptor in Soviet inventory and one roughly equivalent to the F-16A." 50

India is the first third world country to have acquired MiG-29. It has acquired above 40 MiG-29 and by the end of 1990, the number is likely to go up to 160. It is reported that India was estimated to acquire Soviet AWACS for her Air Force. This might match the sophisticated E-3 As, the American AWACS that Pakistan is seeking. 51

The Indian Air Force will now be integrating its existing MiG-21, BIS, MiG-23 MF and latest MiG-29s with the Russian AWACS including the SU 30 in accordance with the 1996 agreement. 52
By virtue of mutual geopolitical necessities, India and the former Soviet Union were engaged in expanding and strengthening mutual defence and security relationship. Especially after the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Soviet military assistance to India was on increase between 1976 and 1980, the Soviet arms transfer to India was estimated at $ 2.3 billion, and between 1980 and 1986, estimated at more than $ 4 billion. The former USSR was the largest supplier of India's defence requirements. It had provided nuclear powered submarines on lease to India.

After the demise of the USSR, why does India need Russia? In fact, India's defence modernization still depends on Russia. India's ageing fleet of MiG-21bis requires overhauling with the Russian assistance. Both the governments have agreed to setting up a MiG-29, assembly, servicing and spares facility at Nasik, for the IAF and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF).

The common binding force is the convergence of their perceptions on a variety of regional and global issues. India's perception is that the Russian weight is important to counter US-Pakistan strategic overarching ambitions in Central Asia.

President Boris Yeltsin is equally concerned with the attempts of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran to Islamize the Central Asian states as is evident from Iran's funding of establishing an Islamic university and Islamic Studies Centre there. These, in Russian perceptions, are a grave threat to its leadership, their oil and strategic interests in Central Asia.

During the Cold War period, the Soviet Union remained a
dependable friend of India all through its difficult times, especially from early 1970s. Even before it, the Soviet Union consistently supported India on the Kashmir issue. This was zealously contested by India's two principal adversaries—Pakistan and China. But it has been observed that both Pakistan and China are feverishly engaged in diminishing India's influence in regional and global politics. Since China and Pakistan are also forging special military ties with the Gulf countries, India's security risks are likely to heighten. It is, therefore, in India's defence interest that it should continue to outmaneuver its adversaries with a better strategic cooperation and coordination with Russia.  

In conclusion, we may say that there cannot be rigid demarcations while dealing with the question of India's security options. Due to inevitable interaction and overlapping of each option with the other, a viable composite option lies in India's upgrading and strengthening its defenses, exercising its nuclear option, and a balanced strategic cooperation with the US, and more importantly forging a stable strategic partnership with Russia and China as India's long term geopolitical, Geostrategic and geo-economics interests demand. The post Cold War scenario has to be evaluated objectively. In fact, the demise of the Soviet Union should not persuade India's defence planners into adopting a low profile cooperative relationship with Russia and China on defence and security matters.

Of course, both theoreticians and practitioners of foreign policies and diplomacy are wrestling with new puzzles of the emerging post-Cold War world to adjust their foreign policy requirements to the goal of achieving a peaceful and cooperative order.


10. India–US relation promoting synergy “report of an independent core group published by the institute of peace and conflict studies, page 5

11. The figures has been extracted from the report that appeared in The Hindu on 23 Jan 2003.


15. V.D. Chopra "Indo Russian defence cooperation and India’s independence and sovereignty" New trends in indo Russian relations page –122 Kalpaaz Pub.Delhi,2003


18. V.P. Dutta India’s foreign policy in changing world chapter III page 65–91


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27. Ibid Page No. 6.


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33. Ibid Page No. 1243.

34. Ibid Page No. 1244


41. The Times of India April 15, 1988.
43. Ibid page No. 41.
44. Ibid page no. 41–42.
45. Ibid page No. 50.
46. Ibid page No. 51.
47. Ibid page No. 51.
48. Ibid page No. 52.
49. Ibid page No. 52.
51. Times of India Dec. 21, 1987
54. Ibid page No. 66.
55. Ibid page No. 66.
56. Ibid page No. 67.