Chapter V

RUSSIA-INDIA COOPERATION TO COUNTER INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM
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Terrorism is not new, nor is it endemic to any particular society, culture or state. In different periods, in different states, terrorism has taken place with varying consequences. International terrorism does not recognize any national boundary, nor is it peculiar to any particular culture. Any state, any time is vulnerable to it. The upsurge of international terrorism, (Harman, 2000:1-12) in an age of globalization and information revolution is a reminder of the integrating and dividing force of the present trends. At a time of greater international fluidity and uncertainty, the coexistence of religious orthodoxy, ethnic or local affiliation, jingoism and even xenophobia in some societies with supposed internationalism and a single “global village” raises troubling questions about international peace and stability (Bertram, 2000: 44-46).

The current system of international relations is in a state of flux and transition. The process of formation of a new world order replacing the international architecture of the Cold War has turned out to be more protracted and complicated than one could have imagined way back in the early 1990s. One of the characteristic features of the new world order that emerged on the debris of the Cold War is the trend towards greater cooperation among nations. Today nations opt for the cooperative instrument largely because the issues confronting mankind are global in nature. The trend towards globalization of issues of common concern such as environment, ecology, economic issues, etc. is evident. A recent addition to list of global concerns is the fight against international terrorism earlier which was earlier confined to specific regions. The very nature of the present day problems and challenges calls for concentrated efforts. No country, however, influential or powerful is in position to single handedly solving major global problems. All this is evidence of the fact that, the future world order has to follow multi-lateral approach.

Terrorism, secessionism and ethnic conflicts, particularly in multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies have assumed a new dimension both in their sweep and intensity in the beginning of the twenty first century. The international community, including United Nations can no longer ignore this new development in the post-Cold War era (Chari, July 2003: 1 – 10). India and Russia being multi-ethnic and pluralist
societies faced common terrorist threats to their national security and integrity. These challenges are the rise of forces of religious extremism, aggressive nationalism, separatism, ethnic conflicts and terrorism. Since the last decade, the two countries are engaged in battling these threats, which come from Chechnya secessionist movement in Russia and Kashmir separatist movement in India. India understands Russia's security concerns in Europe, Central Asia and the North Caucasus. At the same time, Russia comprehends India's concerns on the Jammu and Kashmir issue. The threat of instability caused by the forces of religious fundamentalism, and cross border terrorism (which now became international terrorism) has impeded 'the growth of democratic institutions and civil society especially in India and Russia' (Patnaik, 2001: 129 – 136).

The cordial sentiment among the Indians towards Russians and vice versa is a legacy of the struggle of the two people against oppression and imperialism. The leaders of Indian freedom struggle were greatly inspired by the Russian revolution and the support given by the Bolshevik Government to anti-imperialist struggle world over. The makers of post-independence India were influenced by the Soviet model of socio-economic development. From the period of the 1950s, these two nations of Asia - Indians after two centuries of colonial bondage and Russians in the aftermath of the bloodiest war in history realized the imperative of joining hands in the aspiration to ensure a better life for their citizens.

The dramatic changes in the global scenario during the last decade of the twentieth century have undoubtedly transformed the scale of imperatives influencing the evolution of Indo–Russian bilateral ties in the twenty first century. Ideological considerations have receded into the background. Though the new generations of Indians and Russians are in a way different from the earlier generation, yet, they do carry forward into the twenty first century the baton of their amity and friendship in a new environment. At present, no country can deal with the problem of international terrorism single handedly. This challenge is global; hence there is the need for global cooperation; Russia and India need to play pivotal role in this effort (Kadakin, 2001: 23).

Indo-Russian Cooperation in combating terrorism is older than the coalition created after September 11, 2001. In the 1950s, as Moscow saw the value of cultivating
India, it extended unstinting support to New Delhi in its difficulties with Pakistan over Kashmir. At a time when the Anglo – American were seen as manipulating the issue in Pakistan’s favor, the Soviet’s valuable support in the United Nations Security Council remained a defining feature of Indian perception of them. Moscow chose strategic alignment with India through the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, and ended its flirtation with Pakistan (Mohan, 2003: 120 – 121).

The emerging realities in the post cold-Cold War scenario provide opportunities for India and Russia to forge common stand on various issues. These factors have brought both closer, thus providing common ground to adopt similar approaches on various issues including Kashmir and Chechnya. These factors include terrorism, multipolarity, democracy, ecology and economic imperatives. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, which brought an end to the Cold War, witnessed drastic changes in international politics. Bipolarity was receding to the vanishing point, the spirit of democracy was in upswing and the forces of market economy were in full drive around the world. After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia and India were able to forge a relationship that was marked by cordiality and friendship. This was because deep and vital interests of both the countries were at stake. The crux of Indo – Soviet relations lay in the compatibility of their geopolitical interests and security concerns. This commonality of interests augured well for Indo – Russian ties even after the breakup in 1991 (Joshi, 2002: 113 – 114).

Addressing the nation for the first time since being sworn as Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh reiterated the commitment made in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) to give a “New Deal” to India. On the crucial issue of Internal Security and terrorism the Prime Minister undertook “to combat terrorism with all the resources at our command. There is no doubt whatsoever about our resolve to deal with this insidious threat to our nation”. From the political perspective and global security challenges (especially on terrorism), he acknowledged that “the strength and vibrancy of our partnership with Russia, which has withstood the flux of the post Cold War period” (The Hindu, June 25, 2004: 1)
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The Kashmir issue came to the surface when the tribal forces from the North-West frontier areas of Pakistan armed and supported by Pakistan government, invaded Kashmir in 1947. When the issue was raised in the United Nations the Soviet Union maintained its neutral posture and its representative remained absent during the voting. However, the situation changed afterwards. The Soviet leader Khuraschev changed the non-committal attitude of the Stalin era towards South Asia and adopted the policy of “strengthening friendship and cooperation with neutral and peace loving countries in Europe and the Third World.” (Donaldson and Nogee, 1998: 70).

In the background of this emerging relationship, the visit of Khuraschev and Bulganin to India in November-December 1955 was seen as an exercise by the Soviet leaders to strengthen the relationship between the two countries. The Soviet leaders expressed their support for the Indian stand on the Kashmir issue explicitly during the course of talks and speeches (Bulganin 1955: 131). Speaking at the reception given by the then Prime minister of Kashmir, G.M. Bakshi on 10th December 1955, Khurushchev stated that, “Kashmir is one of the states of the Republic of India has been decided by the people of Kashmir. It is a question that the people themselves have decided” (Bulganin: 132). He criticized Pakistan for its membership of the “notorious” Baghdad Pact, “the aim of which is anything but peace” and for its policies being “dictated by monopoly circles of other countries” (Bulganin: 133).

After the sudden departure of Khrushchev from the Soviet political scene the Brezhnev period witnessed a shift in the Kashmir policy. The soviet leadership sought to put the Kashmir issue in a much wider and strategic context and envisaged using it for rapprochement between India and Pakistan so as to turn the subcontinent into a peaceful arena under the aegis of the Soviet Union. If Pakistan could be reconciled with the Soviet Union, Brezhnev thought, it would help in improving Indo-Pak relations and fulfill the Soviet dream of an India-Pakistan Soviet alliance as a bulwark against American and Chinese

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1 For details see, Visit to India of N.A. Bulganin, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and N.S. Khurushchev, Member of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Speeches and Official Documents, November 18-December 1 and December 7-14, 1955 9Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1956).
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The period of Andropov and Chernenko were short in Soviet relationship. Their successor Gorbachev focused more on reforming the Soviet political and economic system and moulding its foreign policy accordingly. Gorbachev's "new thinking" was designed to redefine the place and role of the Soviet Union in the world. Gorbachev was interested in enhancing relationship with the west, arms reduction and opening the polity and economy to the forces of democracy, market reforms and pluralism. As a result of this new thinking, Indo-Soviet relationship was viewed in a wider perspective. However, Gorbachev era witnessed no significant changes in the traditional Soviet stand on the Kashmir issue. This was reflected in a comment made by the Soviet deputy Foreign minister, Mikhail Kapista in October 1985. He assured a Pakistani newspaper that his country wished to be friendly with all the South Asian states, but "in case of a problem India and its neighbors, we will side with India".

The disintegration of the Soviet Union marked a new phase in international politics as it clearly evident from Gorbachev's resignation speech on 25th December 1991: "we live in a new world. The cold war is finished....(Roberts, 1999: 100) Russian leadership adopted the policy of pro-Western romanticism' or 'enlightened pragmatism' with a view to streamlining the process of its transformation to democracy, market reforms and pluralism. Russian President Yeltsin made explicitly clear this change in foreign policy approach in his statement at a special meeting of the United Nations Security Council on 31st January 1992: "Russia sees the US, the West, and the countries of the East not merely as partners but as allies: We rule out any subordination of foreign policy to ideological doctrines....(Donaldson and Nogee, 1992: 190).

The initial years of the Yeltsin period were marked by uncertainty, especially aggravated by transitional problems. During most of the year 1992, Russian foreign policy
was blurred by the profound economic, social, political and ethnic crisis in the country. The changing perception in Russian foreign policy towards South Asia was evident during the first months of the year 1992. In an interview the head of the Asia-Pacific department of Russia's Foreign Ministry, Alexander Losyukov, said: "...the present policy is aimed at developing cooperation with its former adversaries while preserving normal relations with the countries it called its friends." He said, "Moscow invariably supported India in its controversies with Pakistan, although such support quite often had a negative impact on our relations with Islamabad." This approach has been revised. For instance, now "Russia supports the Pakistani idea of converting South Asia into a nuclear weapon free zone; despite the fact that India is blocking it." (Summary of World Broadcast, 1992: SU/1302 A3/3) It appeared for the new leadership of Russia, the priority was not to maintain special relationship with old allies like India but to bring stability and economic development in their own country. The Russia-Pakistan joint Communique, signed on 22nd December 1991, said along with other things, "the Russian side acknowledged Pakistan's position (on Kashmir) and expressed the hope that the issue would be resolved peacefully through negotiations between Pakistan and India on the basis of international agreements" (Communique 1991: 31). This approach was at variance with the Indian stand as reflected in the Shimla Agreement signed by both India and Pakistan in 1972.

For about two years the Yeltsin administration maintained a pro-Western orientation in the conduct of foreign policy. The romanticism between Russia and the West began to fade away as the promises made by the West to boost the sagging economy could not materialize. The Russian leadership realized that such a foreign policy would not only lead to the loss of independence in foreign policy formulation but also would not help revive the economy. Hence, by the end of 1992, internal criticism along with external events including the disappointing Western response to Russia's request for economic assistance strengthened the forces who sought an end to the "romantic" phase of Russia's foreign policy. Also by then the Russia liberals were moving closer towards the centrist foreign policy views of the "pragmatic nationalists" (Donaldson and Nogee, 1998: 115).

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Disillusionment with the West led the Russian leaders to turn their attention towards the old allies including India. Even before Yeltsin’s visit in January 1993, there were overtures from Moscow to develop a closer relationship with India. During his visit to Moscow in November 1991, Indian External Affairs Minister Madhav Singh Solanki held talks with important Russian leaders including President Yeltsin. Welcoming his Indian guest (on 15th November 1991), Yeltsin stressed that this is “the first visit in the history of Russian-Indian links” (SWB, 1991: 1232) and stated that the changed situation has made the present meeting “historically necessary”. The first contact of Yeltsin with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao took place in New York where both had gone to attend a United Nations Security Council meeting. During the discussion Yeltsin told Rao that there was no change in Russia’s policy on Kashmir and it followed the old Soviet line in this respect (Naïk, 1995: 179).

While speaking at a meeting with Indian businessman, Yeltsin made the Russian stand on the Kashmir issue clear: “We support the settlement in Kashmir according to the Indian version so as to maintain integrity and unity of India. We support it. And in whatever international organization—it may be the United Nations Security Council—we shall stand by this point of view” (Strategic Digest, April 1993: 586). During the visit, the treaty of friendship and cooperation was signed between the two countries and major irritants like rupee-ruble controversy were also resolved amicably to the satisfaction of both the countries.

On many later occasions, Russia came forward to support the Indian stand on the Kashmir issue. First Deputy Head of the Russian Foreign ministry’s Department on International Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights, Malghinov, during his visit to New Delhi in June 1994 stressed: “We have the same problems here in Russia; we cannot encourage separatists who use pseudo-democratic slogans” (Tiwari, 1994: 1). He further maintained that the Kashmir issue is artificially politicized and the human rights slogans have not used for non human rights ends.” In his veiled criticism of Pakistan for its efforts to internationalize the Kashmir issue, he added: “we are for India’s integrity and we think that manipulating human rights slogans to give an additional argument by those who stand

3 Excerpt from the speech of Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation, at a meeting with Indian Businessman in New Delhi on 28th January 1993, in Strategic Digest, 23(4) April: 586.
for its disintegration is a bad practice" (Tiwari, 1994: 10). Similarly, in the wake of Hazratbal crisis in November 1993, Russia reiterated its stated position on Kashmir. In diplomatic exchanges that followed the crisis the Russian government assured the Indian government of full help and declared Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of India and the happenings as an internal affair of the country (Bhargava, 1993: 1). It can be pointed out here that like India, Russia is also confronting the problems of separatism and terrorism in Chechnya. Therefore, it was not unusual to expect Russia to support India on the Kashmir issue as both were suffering from the same menace. The Russian approach was also reflected in the foreign policy concept of the Russian federation adopted on 25th March 1993, which among other things emphasized that, “inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of states be maintained” (Yadav, 1995: 441).

However, Russia’s policy towards the Kashmir issue during the Yeltsin era was still in the formative stage. Russia was still passing through the period of transition; the pillars of the new democratic process were not on a firm footing. Separatism and civil strife were still on the rise in the Russian society. It could well be imagined that the realities of internal and international politics were still shaping Russia’s foreign policy. But Yeltsin did not take any step to improve bilateral relationship during the initial years after the disintegration. Indo-Russian relations, in the later phase of Yeltsin’s period, however, were less vulnerable to the pressures of inter-national politics in comparison to his initial years in office. His successor Vladimir Putin took a more pragmatic approach to cope with the changing international situation which created grounds for both the countries to come closer and adopt a common approach on many issues including Kashmir (Mahapatra, 2004: 137-38).

Putins’s Approach to the Kashmir Issue

On 9th August 1999 Vladimir Putin was appointed by Yelstin as his Prime Minister and was also designated as his desired successor. Putin’s approach to internal and external issues was made public in an article titled “Russia at the Turn of the Millennium”. Written by staff members of the Centre for Strategic Studies, established

on his initiative, the article was published on 27 December 1999. His main thesis was that Russia could regain its former status as a ‘great power’ by combining the principles of market economy and democracy with Russia’s realities (Chubarov, 2001: 257). Unlike his predecessor, Putin made a vigorous assertion of independence in Russia’s policy making. This could be seen in his handling of the Chechnya situation which became the main focus of Russia’s strategic thinking, especially when the Chechens invaded neighboring Dagestan, a constituent territory of the Russia Federation, in an attempt to declare it an Islamic republic. Despite Western criticism, Putin ordered the Russian army to expel Chechens from Dagestan and then to March to Chechnya to destroy the rebel stronghold. His handling the crisis earned Putin the reputation of defender of the fatherland and a determined fighter against terrorism, even before he was elected as the President of Russia in March 2000 (Chubarov, 2001: 260).

Vladimir Putin, after being nominated as acting President on 1 January 2000, lost no time in devising a framework to pursue foreign policy objectives. Known as Foreign Policy Concept of Russian Federation, the document framed under his supervision set the goal before establishment to make Russia a great power (India’s National Security Annual Review, 2001: 669-687). Putin made it clear that Russia is no more going to succumb to external pressure; rather the time has come to adopt an independent foreign policy. The new foreign policy concept asserted: “The Russian Federation is pursuing an independent and constructive foreign policy. It is based on consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism” (India’s National Security Annual Review, 2001: 669-687). Here, in the pursuit of this mutually advantageous pragmatism, the Russian foreign policy makers engaged in building the image of Russia as ‘an integral part of the Asian space’, (Ivanov, 2001: 10) and to ‘deepen its relations with major Asian powers, such as China, India, and Japan’. The Concept, it appeared, marked a shift from the pro-West policy pursued vigorously during the initial years of new Russia. As a result Russia looked more favorably to its traditional allies. While expounding the basic principle of new approach Putin made it a point to develop relations with old allies like India.
The visit of Putin to India in October 2000 and in December 2002 raised new hopes among the leaders of both the countries to develop a closure relationship. Speaking at the Central Hall of the Indian Parliament on 4 December 2000, Putin highly praised the success of democratic system in India and said this “positive experience is very valuable” for Russia because “Russia, like India, is a huge pluralistic state”(Mainstream, 14th October 2000: 7-9). He agreed that the democratic system in Russia was new and, like every new democratic system, had its own pitfalls. Further he expressed the desire to learn from the Indian democratic experience. The democratic base of the two countries was very conducive for both to take common positions against non-democratic military regimes, which provided shelter to terrorist groups to strike against multiethnic and pluralist societies like India and Russia.

Regarding the Kashmir issue, Putin rejected much to the disappointment of the Pakistani establishment “any foreign interference” (Mainstream, 14th October 2000: 8). He agreed with the Indian position that “this issue can be resolved on a bilateral basis on the basis of a compromise and on an unconditional respect for the line of control” (Mainstream, 14th October 2000: 8). During his address to the Indian Parliament, Putin deviated from the prepared text and revealed that “the same individuals, the same terrorist organizations, extremist organizations, are organizing and, very often, the same individuals participate in organizing, in conducting and igniting terrorist acts from the Philippines to Kosovo including Kashmir, Afghanistan and Russia’s Northern Caucasus”. These common problems of “self determination”, terrorism and separatism whether in Chechnya or Kashmir were causes of grave concern for both India and Russia. Hence, an important objective of the two countries was to wage “decisive fighting against Islamic extremists.” (Lounev, 2002: 109).

Both India and Russia signed the Declaration on Strategic partnership to enhance bilateral cooperation during the Putin visit. The declaration was based upon the principles of sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of states, non interference in their internal affairs, mutual respect and mutual benefits. Both the countries expressed their conviction

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5 For details see the text of the address of the Russian President Putin at the Central Hall of Parliament on 4th October 2000 in, Mainstream, 33(43)(14 October): 7-9.
of the necessity “to built a multipolar global structure based on sovereign equality of all states and people, democratic values and justice” and “confirmed their adherence to the common ideals of peace, democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, non violence and secularism” (The Hindu, 4th October 2000: 14).

The 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington changed the whole international perception towards terrorism. Both India and Russia treated the incident as a major security threat and as an opportunity to use the issue of terrorism to reshape international politics. In his televised message to the Russian people after the attacks, Putin affirmed that “today’s event once again underscore the urgency of Russia’s proposals to unite the efforts of the international community in the fight against terror: the plague of the 21st century” (Quoted in Lapidus, 2002: 40). Similarly, Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in his address to the nation on 14 September 2001, affirmed the Indian stand that the international community must come forward in a concerned effort against terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations to tackle the menace (For text see Strategic Digest, 2002: 1375; CDPSP, Nov, 2001). The growing concern on part of the US in this regard and its wider ramifications led to the emergence of a sort of global consensus against fighting terrorism. What was more important was that reversing its earlier position, the US recognized “Chechnya as a part of Russia” (Goldgeier and McFaul, 2002: 319) and sought to bring some pressure on Pakistan to take steps to stop cross-border terrorism to against India. A consensus on Kashmir in a wider context could be discerned. India stood to gain from this emerging consensus.

Russia regards Kashmir as a part of India because it is anchored as such in the Indian constitution and in international organizations and bodies such as the Security Council; Russia does not advocate holding a referendum on Kashmir. Russia also acknowledged that the elections to the Jammu and Kashmir legislative Assembly in 2002 as free and fair saying the mere fact that they had been held demonstrated the will of New Delhi and the “people of Jammu and Kashmir to bring the situation back to a normal

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6 For the text of the document of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership, see The Hindu (New Delhi), 4th October 2000.
coursed (Hall and Fox, 2001-2002: 8-11). The Russian foreign Ministry advocates declaring the present India-Pakistan Line of Control as the international border.

Putin’s Russia is of the view that a conflict between India and Pakistan has unpredictable consequences. The terrorist attack on parliament in 2001 is viewed in India as an act of extremists based in Pakistan, and has brought both the countries on the brink of a conflict. Putin during his visit to India on December 2, 2002 urged Pakistan to destroy the “terrorist infrastructure” causing separatist operations in Kashmir (Malek, 2004: 389). Talks between leaders of India and Pakistan at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Islamabad in January 2004 opened a dialogue process where the parties adopted a concrete programme of negotiations. However, in the analysis of Ivashentsov, all this is possible only on condition that Islamabad “prevent the infiltration of Kashmiri terrorists across the Line of Control into the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir and also on condition that the entire terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan controlled territory is dismantled.” Both the sides are showing an interest to settlement of the problem recently. In Ivashentsov’s opinion, Pakistan could become a bridge linking India with energy markets of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, the project which Russian companies are also interested.

As tension increased along the Indo-Pak in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001, the Russian foreign minister came with a timely warning for Pakistan to stop cross border terrorism. The Foreign ministry expressed deep concern over the tension, “the main reason for which is the unending antinational activities of the extremist groups, based on the territory under Pakistan control”. (Russian Foreign Ministry Statement of 24 May 2002, Strategic Digest: 737). The Russian position was further reinforced in the joint statement on 3 February 2002, in which both the countries gave the call for a “comprehensive, long term, multi-dimensional” cooperation among the members of the International community to fight against “existence of extensive ties between Al-Qaeda and Taliban with terrorist organizations active in other parts of the world, including Chechnya, the Central Asian
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Repubics and the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir" (Strategic Digest, 2002: 235). In this joint statement, the Russian side reiterated its strong condemnation of continued acts of cross-border terrorism against India, including the terrorist attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001. Russia expressed "its understanding and support regarding India's justified demands that these activities from Pakistan and territory controlled by it cease of completely" (Strategic Digest, 2002: 237). Both the countries expressed the view that the Pakistani President Musharraf's commitment to fight against terrorism in his 12 January 2002 speech must be judged on the ground.

Although Russia wanted to show that its policy is even handed in respect of India and Pakistan, Russia-Pakistan relation at abysmally low ebb. During his visit to India in 2000, Putin surprised India by sending his envoy to Pakistan. Putin also met Vajpayee and Musharraf in Almaty in June 2002. Russia-Pakistan relation remains un-solidified although a joint working group on counter terrorism and other challenges to international security was instituted in December 2002 and President Musharraf visited Russia in February 2003. This time Putin had informed India about the discussions before and after the Pakistani leader's visit. Russia is also not transferring any major weapons to Pakistan, a sign that India is the preferred partner (Bahadur, 2008: 231).

The siege of the Moscow theatre by Chechen terrorists in October 2002 and their threat to blow up the theatre with hostages, if their demand for an immediate withdrawal of the Russian Army from Chechnya was not met, further confirmed Moscow's resolution to fight against terrorism with an iron hand. Rejecting the demands for a political dialogue with the Chechen terrorists, president Putin said, "Osama Bin Laden, Taliban Supreme Mullah Omar and their Like minded are calling shots in Kashmir, West Asia, Chechnya and elsewhere in the world (Quoted in Times of India, New Delhi: 10 November 2002: 12). He cautioned that anybody at home or abroad urging for talks with the terrorist leadership in Chechnya would be seen by the Kremlin as an accomplice of terrorists" (Quoted in Times of India, 2002: 12) this oft repeated comparison between the situations in Chechnya and Kashmir by Putin was an added advantage for India. This

7 Joint Statement of India and the Russian Federation on 3rd February 2002 during the visit of Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov to New Delhi, in Strategic Digest. 32(2) February: 235.
convergence of approaches on terrorism and on the way to fight it assured India of Russia's support on the Kashmir's issue. Russia was convinced that “crimes committed including the killing of innocent people in the name of ‘freedom struggle’ in Kashmir, are unpardonable. It is evident that, their activities have parallels with the activities of Al Qaeda, Taliban Movement and Chechen Terrorists” (Russian Foreign Ministry statement”, in Strategic Digest, May, 2002: 738).

In the declaration signed during the second Putin visit in December 2002, the two sides outlined their common position on terrorism, Afghanistan, Central Asia, West Asia, etc., hoping that it “will widen and strengthen the framework of the existing cooperation between India and the Russian Federation in different areas and will contribute to consolidation of their strategic partnership (Delhi Declaration between India and Russia, signed on 4th December 2002, in Strategic Digest, December 2002: 1427-30).

On the Kashmir issue, Putin expressed the Russian position that it “strictly and continuously supports the normalization and improvement of India and Pakistan relations” (Withington, 2002: 41) He agreed with the Indian leadership with regard to the importance of Islamabad implementing its obligations and promises to prevent the infiltration of terrorists across the line of control into the state of Jammu and Kashmir and at other points across the border, as well as to eliminate the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-controlled territory(Withington, 2002: 42). This was a necessary prerequisite, Putin added, for “the renewal of the peaceful dialogue between the two countries to resolve all outstanding issues in a bilateral framework as envisaged in Shimla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999”(Joint Statement of India and Russia on December 2002, see text in Strategic Digest, 2002: 1425). This stand of Russia was in full agreement with the India and Pakistan and it should be resolved bilaterally and in a peaceful manner in accordance with the provisions of the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration.

Putin has always been interested in peace in the region but not at the cost of India's interests. In the pursuit of this policy objective, Russia opposed Pakistan's reported move to rake up the Kashmir issue in the United Nations Security Council.
Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Yuri F. Fedotov, during his visit to New Delhi on 6 May 2003 maintained that: "this issue is not on the agenda of the world body", and the "Central problem was not Kashmir but that of terrorism and training camps operating in Pakistan". (The Hindu, New Delhi: 7th May 2003). The statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry on 17 May 2003, after talks between Sinha and Ivanov in Moscow, reaffirmed the Russians stand that, "the full implementation of obligations assumed by Islamabad to stop infiltration of terrorists across line of control into Jammu and Kashmir and destroy all terrorist infrastructure on Pakistan controlled territory would foster the spirit of cooperation in South Asia" (The Hindu, New Delhi: 18th May 2003: 13).

It would be inappropriate to hold the view that only international terrorism and its fallout on the domestic arena led to the convergence of perceptions between India and Russia on various issues and consequently led to Russia's support to the Indian stand on Kashmir. No doubt it was a significant or even "the most significant" (Dixit, The Hindu, New Delhi: 5th April 2005: 14) of the areas of convergence.

INDO-RUSSIAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO COUNTER INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Indo-Russian convergence on various aspects of terrorism has since been emerging from the beginning of Yeltsin era in the Russian politics. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed during President Yeltsin's first visit to India in January 1993, injected an element of stability in the relationship. This shift of policy was largely due to the emergence of factors, such as, religious fundamentalism, terrorism in similar approaches to their security concerns and the need for defense cooperation. While supporting India's position on Kashmir, Yeltsin said, "We know how topical are issue of preservation of the ethnic harmony in today's India. Thanks to our own experience we are aware how difficult are the endeavors to achieve this goal". He further added, "Russia and India are, at the same degree, interested in strengthening each other's stability and territorial integrity”. The Russian position was same as India's because it was also facing border problems during the Yeltsin period. Yeltsin was worried about the Tajik insurgents, which were being trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan, causing great threat to the stability of Kyrgyzstan. (Olcott, 1995: 337 – 338).
It was, however, with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao’s visit to Russia in June 1994 that Indo-Russian ties were put on a firm foundation. The Moscow Declaration on the Protection of Interests of Pluralist States signed by India and Russia has become the bedrock of the relations. This declaration was one of the milestones in affirming joint stand in protecting the interests of multi-ethnic states. Both the countries affirmed their stand to check growing menace of religious extremism, separatism, ethnic secessionism and terrorism, which often struck at the unity of pluralistic countries. The Moscow Declaration of 1994 drew attention not only to the common nature of challenges faced by the two countries but also made a commitment to support each other’s territorial integrity. The Declaration facilitates the exchange of information and cooperation in areas such as drug trafficking, illicit trade in small weapons and cross-border terrorism. Of equal importance was the Declaration of further development and enhancement of cooperation signed during the visit. An Extradition Treaty (1994) was signed between the two countries and meetings between the Home Ministers of the two countries were also regularized (National herald, July 1994: 13). Both the countries were convinced that destabilization of relations between ethnic and religious groups, efforts to forcibly replace them, ethnic cleansing and promotion of internal and trans-border terrorism was motivated by vested interests which lead to annihilation of all the positive and constructive elements accumulated by mankind during the many thousand years of existence. During his return flight from Moscow on 2nd July 1994, Prime Minister N. Rao, declared the Moscow Declaration “epoch making” as it concentrated on the main problems the world was facing in the post-cold war situation, such as religious extremism, political extremism and terrorism springing from these (The Hindu, Chennai, July 3, 1994: 14) The Russian Military Doctrine enunciated in 1993 and its subsequent amended version of April 2000 has highlighted this danger. According to the document this threat is more pronounced on Russia’s southern flank, in areas adjoining the Caucasus and Central Asia. Today, these negative tendencies have acquired an insidious dimension in the form of international terrorism. President Vladimir Putin aptly stated that “the anaconda” of international terrorism is forming a giant arc from East Asian countries to Europe via Central Asia and the Caucasus” (Sakwa, 2004: 171).
Russia-India Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism

Indo-Russian Strategic Partnership on Terrorism

In August 2001, an explosion in the passageway near Pushkinskaya metro station in Moscow resulting in the death and injury to innocent people, revived memories of a year back when a series of such blasts preceded the aggression in Dagestan (News from Russia, August 10, 2000: 5). In India too, there was a spurt in infiltration from across the border and terrorist activities and attempts arouse religious passion in the Kashmir Valley. These incidents show, how both countries are facing terrorism problems in Kashmir and Chechnya. Vladimir Putin, who succeeded Boris Yeltsin as the President of Russia took a pragmatic and tough stand towards terrorism. This was clear from his tackling the situation in Chechnya. The first visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to India, in October 2000, was a bold step further to delineate common approach on terrorism. The two countries urged declaration on strategic partnership, which gave new impetus to their cooperation in combating terrorism. It talked about “cooperating on the fight against international terrorism, separatism, organized crime and illegal trafficking in narcotics. Cooperation of mutual legal assistance in civil, criminal and matters relating to extradition, as well as, in other related areas are also discussed” (Kadakin, 2000: 1554-1556).

In order to maintain peace and stability at the regional level, India and Russia have initiated measures jointly as well as individually. For instance, in April 2000, the two countries agreed to establish cooperation between their respective security councils. Such an agreement would facilitate coordination, consultation and management of international terrorism. As there is a growing realization about the threat of terrorism to both countries and so also there is a growing convergence on the need to devise ways to combat it. There is a unity of approach emergence in terms of meeting this menace. During President Putin’s visit to India in October 2000, a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan was set up to coordinate their policies with regard to Afghanistan and terrorism (Kadakin, 2000: 1554-1556).

It is noteworthy that the Declaration of ‘Strategic Partnership’ has formalized what had already existed in practice between the two countries – the broad-based
convergence of fundamental national interests and the deep rooted national consensus regarding the need for a comprehensive enhancement of their bilateral ties. The crucial global level tasks, outlined in the declaration, comprised countering the spread of international terrorism, religious extremism, illicit drug and arms trafficking, taking consistent steps in curbing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction with the ultimate goal of comprehensive prohibition and formation of a just and multi polar world order. The Declaration is not directed against any third country and does not envisage the establishment of any military or political bloc (Kadakin, 2002: 480-481).

During Putin’s address to the Indian Parliament on 4th October 2000, he revealed that, “the same individuals, the same terrorists and extremist organizations are involved in terrorist acts from the Philippines to Kosovo including Jammu and Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chechnya” (Sinha, 2003: 103-104). These common problems of ‘self determination’, terrorism and separatism whether in Chechnya or Kashmir were causes of grave concern for both India and Russia. Hence among many common goals between the two countries an important one was to wage a “decisive fighting against Islamic extremists” (Lounev, 2002: 109).

The massive and unprecedented attack of 11 September 2001, against United States of America has fundamentally changed the worldview on international terrorism. The fight against terrorism, which so far had regional dimension, is now occupying the centre stage of international politics. Both India and Russia treated the incident as a major security threat to the world and considered it as an opportunity to reshape international politics. In his televised message after the attack, the Russian President asserted that, “today’s events once again under scored the urgency of Russia’s proposal to unite the efforts of international community in the fight against the terror” (Lapidus, 1999: 71). Similarly, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in his address affirmed the Indian stand that the international community must come forward to take concentrated effort against the ‘evil’. The growing concern on the part of the US about international terrorism had wide ramifications and led to the emergence of a sort of global consensus against terrorism. The US also clearly recognized Chechnya as a part of Russia (Hall, 2001-2002: 8-11). In statements, following the 11th September attacks,
Bush explicitly mentioned “Chechnya as an area where terrorist operate” (Antonenko, 2001: 5). At the same time, US pressurized Pakistan to take steps to stop cross border terrorism against India.

On the eve of terrorist attacks on the Indian parliament in December 2001, the Russian foreign ministry came with a timely warning for Pakistan to stop cross border terrorism against India. In a Joint statement on 3rd February 2002, both the countries gave the call for a comprehensive, long term, multi dimensional operation among the members of the international community to fight against the existence of extensive ties between the Al Qaeda and Taliban with terrorist organizations active in other parts of the world, including Chechnya, the Central Asian Republics and the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (Strategic Digest, February 2002: 235).

Indo-Russian cooperation has been further consolidated by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s visit to Moscow in November 2001. The major outcome of this visit was the Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism. “India and Russian Federation affirmed that, international terrorism is a threat to peace and security, a grave violation of human rights and a crime against humanity. The struggle against international terrorism has become one of the priority tasks of the world community. This evil can be vanquished only through cooperation by all the countries. The Declaration said that whatever may be in the motive of their preparation – political, ideological, philosophical, racial, ethnic, and religious or any other, terrorist acts are unjustifiable. India and the Russian Federation support the adoption on the basis of international law of decisive measures against all states, individuals and entities, which render support, harbor, finance, instigate or train terrorists or promote terrorism.

The Declaration says that in multi ethnic and democratic countries such as India and the Russian Federation, violent action being perpetrated under the slogan of self determination, in reality, are acts of terrorism which in most cases have strong international links. It calls for developing cooperation in struggle against new challenges in international terrorism including in the nuclear, chemical, biological, space, cybernetics and other spheres. Both sides noted the presence of close nexus
between terrorism and illegal trafficking in narcotics, trade in arms and organized crime and pointed to the significance of the need for close interaction at the bilateral, as also at the multilateral level in combating these challenges to international stability and security. The parties accorded highest priority to the continuity of effective interaction on Afghanistan in the framework of the Indo – Russian Joint Working Group on Afghanistan established between the two countries in October 2000. India and Russian Federation reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations in the efforts of the international community in the struggle against terrorism. The adoption of conventions like, Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism by India and Russia respectively, would assist in strengthening the international legal basis for effectively combating the global menace of terrorism” (Moscow Declaration, 4 – 13 November, MEA, 2001: 41 – 42)

Drawing from the experiences of the two countries with the recent Moscow theatre siege in Russia and terrorist attacks on an army camp in Kaluchak and Raghunath temple in India, the two leaders agreed that both countries needed to jointly wage a war against terrorism and need a holistic combat strategy. Without naming Pakistan, the Russian President Vladimir Putin in New Delhi, called for strengthening the international non-proliferation regime to prevent weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. In December 2002, displaying growing strategic concord in international affairs the Russian President Putin and the Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee signed the ‘Delhi Declaration’ to enhance strategic cooperation and setup a Joint Working Group on combating terrorism. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the two countries envisages a Joint Working Group on counter terrorism headed by the two foreign secretaries to provide a mechanism for such cooperation (Joshi, 2002: 10). The document stresses that Russia and India have agreed to exchange information on terrorist groups, cooperation in prevention and suppression of drugs and arms smuggling and to stop covert financing of terrorist organizations. The MoU says that they are also to keep in touch on issues of prevention of terrorist acts with possible usage of nuclear, chemical and biological materials. It further reads “the parties are to exchange knowledge and experience in the prevention
and suppression of definite terrorist attacks like hostage taking and hijacking and conduct corresponding joint operations. Also on the joint basis, both countries are to train personnel for anti terrorist units and share knowledge and experience in order to upgrade equipments, weapons and technical protection” (News from Russia, 6th December 2002: 1-3).

The first meeting of the India - Russia Joint Working Group Combating International Terrorism was held in Moscow on 29 – 30 September 2003. The two sides discussed a wide range of issues relating to combating international terrorism and the contribution they have already made and that they are prepared to make global, regional and sub-regional efforts in combating terrorism including mutual assistance to third countries in developing their potential to combat terrorist threats. The JWG was in agreement that terrorism must be eliminated wherever and in whatever form it exists. The sides examined the matter relating to mutual interaction between India and Russia in this area (terrorism) in the UN and other international fora. (News from Russia, 3rd October, 2003: 20-21). The two sides had converging views on Afghanistan and PoK (Pakistan occupied Kashmir) trained terrorists active in Kashmir and Chechnya and agreed to share information.

At the time of Delhi Declaration, both India and Russia discussed in detail the current situation in South Asia. They stressed the “importance of Islamabad implementing in full, its obligations and promises, to prevent the infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC) into the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir and at other points across the borders as well as to eliminate the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and in Pakistan controlled territory as a pre requisite for the renewal of peaceful dialogue between the two countries to resolve all outstanding issues in a bilateral framework as envisaged in the Shimla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999”. The sides stressed that the “roots of terrorism lay in their common neighborhood and posed a threat to their security interests. Both sides would take preventive and deterrent measures to prevent and suppress terrorism. They declared their determination to announce collective and bilateral efforts to prevent and suppress terrorism” (Baruah, The Hindu, 5th December 2002: 1).
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Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee referred to “the Moscow hostage taking, the Bali attack, the Mombassa killings and the continuing terrorist incidents in India as manifestations of the common threat from international terrorism” (The Hindu, 5th December 2002: 1). India and Russia have been victims of terrorism and as democratic and open societies have been vulnerable to threats posed by globalization of terror, including new manifestations of linkage between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Indirectly pointing to Western powers (US), they affirmed that “the fight against terrorism must not admit of any double standards and should also target the financial and other sources that support terrorism” (Shukla, The Hindustan Times, 5th December 2002: 4).

In pursuance of the anti terrorist objective, Russia has not only favoured a dialogue between India and Pakistan but also has tried to act as a facilitator. At the Conference on Initiating and Confidence Building in Asia (CICA) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, by 16 countries on June 2002, Russian President Putin tried to bring the Indian and Pakistani leaders for a dialogue. The CICA is a significant one for countering the menace, terrorism, in the Asian region. The CICA focused on the following issues like, the collective security against global terrorism, the ratification of trans-border terrorism as a common menace, a common mechanism to combat narco-religious terrorism in the Asian region, and the emergence of a common consensus amongst all members to end trans-border as well as global terrorism (Editorial, Mainstream, 8th January, 2002: 1).

The Republic of India and the Russian Federation are guided by noble purposes and principles of the UN Charter, relying on the provisions of the UN ‘Millennium Declaration’ of 8th September 2000, concerning sharing responsibility of states for managing threats to international peace and security and for promoting principles for human dignity, equality and justice at the global level. India and Russia share their views on the UN General Assembly Resolution, entitled ‘Responding to Global Threats and Challenge’. They are determined to cooperate in countering global challenges and threats, which emanates from international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
A Joint Declaration on Global Challenges and Threats to World Security and Stability was signed on 13th November 2003, by the Prime Minister of India, the President of the Russian Federation during the former's visit to Moscow. Both the countries are united in their fight against the evil of international terrorism. They actively cooperate with each other as also with other countries who have taken stand against terrorist activities. Both countries resolutely declared that international terrorists whatever be their stated objectives and the cause they espouse, will never succeed in bringing the world to its knees” (Strategic Digest, December 2003: 1292 – 1295). Both sides noted that cooperation in combating international-terrorism as an important aspect of their strategic bilateral ties. They also underlined their resolve to promote cooperation in this area at the UN and other international-organizations.

The Speakers of the Indian and Russian Parliament have called for greater international cooperation to combat terrorism and vowed support for the efforts of each other’s country in putting down terrorist hotbeds on their territories. On 7th September 2003, the Indo – Russian Inter Parliamentary Commission which focused on international terrorism was held in Russian State Duma. The then Speaker of Indian Parliament Manohar Joshi, accompanied by 7 Lok Sabha members visited Russia at the invitation of the State Duma Speaker, Gennady Seleznyov. Here addressing the State Duma, he said, “India and Russia believe in the urgent need for concerted international effort to combat the international terrorist threat”. Mr. Seleznyov thanked India for its support to Russia on Chechnya and reaffirmed Russian support to India on Kashmir (Radyuhin, The Hindu, 18th September 2003: 12).

India-Russia Joint Working Group for Countering International Terrorism met on 7th April 2004, in New Delhi. Anatoly Safonov at the head of an inter-agency Russian delegation presided over this annual session. The issue gains special importance in the light of the recent terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan. Apart from this the security situation in Afghanistan and Central Asia was high on the agenda (Radyuhin, The Hindu, 6th April 2004: 12). In its second meeting held in April 2004 in New Delhi, both the sides agreed to deepen their counter terrorism cooperation in particular
through: Exchange of information and sharing of experience in their fight against international terrorism.

1. Strengthening cooperation in curbing trafficking in Narcotics.
2. Continuing cooperation to address the threat of terrorist financing.
3. Extending support for the full and effective implementation of UN Security Resolution 1373 and the work of the Security Council’s counter Terrorism Committee.
4. Continuing consultations on the comprehensive Convention on Terrorism and the Convention against Acts of nuclear terrorism with a view to their finalization. (Joint statement on the First Meeting of the India-Russia Joint Working Group on Combating International terrorism, MEA, New-Delhi, Online Web )

The Third Meeting of the India-Russia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Combating International Terrorism was held in Moscow on January 19-20, 2005. The Indian delegation was led by Ms. Meera Shankar, Additional Secretary (UN) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The Russian delegation was led by Mr Anatoly Safonov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for international cooperation in fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime. Both delegations included representatives of relevant Ministries and agencies (MEA Report, 20/01/2005, New-Delhi cited in Strategic Digest, Feb, 2005).

The Indian and Russian delegations reiterated that cooperation in combating international terrorism constitutes an important part of the strategic partnership between the two countries. They unequivocally condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism and reiterated their commitment to further strengthen cooperation in the field of counter terrorism. The two sides reviewed the situation surrounding their respective nations and the security challenges that they face. They shared concern on cross border terrorism and emphasized the importance of action by all States to deny safe haven for terrorist groups and their members (Thomas, 2007: 130).
The two sides exchanged views on the measures taken by both countries domestically as well as in the international arena to strengthen the war against terrorism. They also discussed linkages between terrorism and illegal narcotics as well as new challenges, such as the threat of proliferation of WMD to terrorists. The two sides reviewed the findings of the report submitted by the high-level panel appointed by the UN Secretary General in so far as it relates to terrorism and decided to work closely with each other in advancing negotiations currently underway in the UN on India’s initiative for a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the Russian initiative for an International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The Joint Working Group attached special importance to strengthening bilateral mechanisms and agreed to continue to exchange information and share experience in the fight against international terrorism. To this aim, participants will hold a targeted discussion on suppression of financing of terrorism in the near future (MEA Report, 20/01/2005, New-Delhi).

The Fourth meeting of the India-Russia Joint Working Group on Combating International Terrorism was held in New Delhi on October 24, 2006. The Indian delegation was led by Mr K. C. Singh, Additional Secretary (International Organizations) and Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The Russian delegation was led by Mr Anatoly Safonov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for International Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism and Transnational Crime. Both delegations included representatives of relative Ministries and agencies.

The negotiations were held in the atmosphere of trust, frankness and mutual understanding. The two sides shared concern on cross border terrorism and emphasized the importance of actions by all States to deny safe heaven to terrorists. They stressed the necessity to take more efficient measures on preventing the propagation of terrorism, including in the Cyberspace. The importance of broader dialogue among cultures and civilisations to counter divisiveness, on which terrorists thrive, was underlined. In this context the two sides called for unconditional implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1624 on fighting incitement to terrorism (Thomas, 2007: 129-130).
The Russian and Indian delegations reiterated that cooperation in combating terrorism constitutes an important part of strategic partnership between the two countries. They unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reiterated their commitment to further strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation. The two sides expressed their concern regarding the increase in the spread of narcotics in the region and agreed that this directly threatens the security of both countries. They stressed the need to consolidate bilateral mechanisms for sharing information in curbing drug-trafficking. They shared concern over the financing of terrorism noting that its prevention is the key component in the counter-terrorism strategy and agreed to strengthen bilateral interaction in this field.

The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the international fora, especially in suppressing WMD terrorism. In this regard they noted that early entry into force of the International Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) would facilitate this objective. They stressed the need to further improve the legal framework for the fight against terrorism. The two sides also urged the early finalization of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the UN. Issues of regional antiterrorist cooperation were reviewed. It was noted that India-Russia partnership within the SCO and ASEAN Regional Forum must be enhanced, including in eliminating new threats and challenges in Central, South and South-East Asia. The sides also discussed the emerging threat to oil and gas installations from terrorists and agreed to exchange experiences to counter it, underscoring energy security as a vital component of national and international counter-terrorism strategies (Joint Statements, Ministry of External Affairs, October 24, 2006, New Delhi).

The Fifth Meeting of the India-Russia Joint Working Group on Combating International Terrorism was held in New Delhi on 16-17 December, 2008. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. Vivek Katju, Special Secretary (IO&PoL) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The Russian Delegation was led by Mr. Anatoly Safonov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for International Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism and Transnational Crime. Both delegations included representatives of relevant Ministries and agencies.
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The negotiations were held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust. Both sides noted that their cooperation in combating terrorism constitutes an important part of the strategic partnership between the two countries and referred to the deliberations between their leaders at the recent Summit Meeting in New Delhi on 5th December, 2008 which underlined cooperation between the two countries in combating terrorism.

Both sides unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stressed that there can be no justification for any act of terrorism, irrespective of motivations, wherever and by whosoever committed. The Russian side strongly condemned recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai and reiterated their solidarity and support to the government and the people of India. In this context, both sides underlined their shared concerns on the growing threat of cross-border terrorism and reaffirmed their commitment for strengthening bilateral cooperation against terrorism.

They stressed the importance of international efforts to prevent and fight terrorism including the UN’s Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and relevant UNSC Resolutions. The two sides underlined the need for expeditious conclusion of negotiations leading to finalization of India sponsored Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the UN General Assembly. (India-Russia Joint Statement on Terrorism, Ministry of External Affairs, 24/10/2008: New Delhi)

The two sides noted that curbing financing of terrorism is a key component of the counter terrorism strategy and agreed to strengthen bilateral interaction in this field. Both sides welcomed the recent signing of an Agreement on cooperation between the Financial Intelligence Unit of India and the Federal Financial Monitoring Service of the Russian Federation. The Russian side reiterated its support to India’s membership of the Paris based Financial Action Task Force (FATF). It was noted that India’s membership to the Eurasia Group could further enhance regional Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Finance regime.

The two sides expressed their concern at the spread of narcotics in the region and agreed that this directly threatens the security of both countries. They noted the signing of
inter-governmental agreement on cooperation in combating illicit trafficking in narcotics, psychotropic substances and their precursors in November 2007. They agreed on the need to further consolidate bilateral efforts for sharing information and expanding cooperation against drug-trafficking. The two sides noted the growing threat of use of cyber-space by terrorists in their activities and the need to cooperate in this field. In the context of realizing practical cooperation among all relevant government authorities, they agreed to expand the exchange of information, experience, and cooperation in the means of countering terrorism. (Joint Press Statement, Ministry of External Affairs, 24/10/2008: New Delhi)

The biennial joint exercise between the armed forces of Russia and India aimed at coordinating cooperative engagement in the fight against terrorism has become a regular feature. The first ever such exercise was in 2003. The joint Russian-Indian military exercise, INDRA-2005, was held in India on October 10-20, 2005 this year, the naval part of INDRA-2007 also held in April 2007 at the Pacific Ocean involving naval units of the Russian Pacific Fleet and the Indian Navy. The land part of the war games is scheduled for mid-September at the training grounds of the 76th Airborne Division near the city of Pskov in northern Russia (Russia-India Set to conduct Counter Terrorism Exercises in 2007, see Online Web). Russia and India agrees on the definition of terrorism. That is, they take the stand that terrorism must not be identified with any particular religion or ethnicity, especially as has been propagated on the Islamic world, they are aware of their special place in finding solution to the acute problems facing the Islamic world Today (see Jasjit Singh, Online Web)\(^8\).

**Indo-Russian Cooperation on International Issues**

There are no major differences between the Russia and India in their approaches to various bilateral and international issues. Both countries have adopted almost the same position whether it is the US attack on Iraq, West Asia peace process, the issues of terrorism, or the restructuring of the United Nations (UN). On the issue of Iraq, Putin, during his speech at the 58th session of General Assembly of UN on 25 September 2003,

said, “Russia’s position is consistent and crystal-clear: it is only through the United Nations direct involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq that its people will get an opportunity to decide their own future.” (Putin’s speech in General Assembly, Quoted in International Affairs, 2003:1). He firmly believed that “United Nations should preserve its leadership in international affairs” (International Relations and Security Network (ISN) 2004, Online: Web). Regarding Israeli-Palestine conflict, Russia along with India called for the “prevention of the failure of the road map to settle the problem”. (International Relations and Security Network, 2004, Online: Web). Both agreed that any failure of the road map, backed by the quartet of Russia, the US, the UN and the EU, might result in the situation in Israel and Palestine, as also the entire West Asia, spiraling beyond control. Russia has reiterated its support for India’s claim for a permanent membership of the UNSC, describing her as “a deserving and strong candidate for the permanent membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council” (ISN, Online: Web).

**India and Russia’s Cooperative Approach on Central Asia**

The area shared concern between two countries India and Russia was Central Asia. Since Russia was adjacent to Central Asia, India considers it as part of its extended neighborhood. It was obvious that development in the Central Asian region would affect the two countries. The ongoing fratricidal in the Afghanistan and the rise of religious extremism were matters of deep concerns to both India and Russia. In view of the eruption of the Chechnya problem, Russia was keen that the secular regions in the Central Asia were not replaced by forces of religious extremism. India’s worry was also similar. It did not want the secular regimes to be disturbed, as it would add to the Pakistan goal of acquiring ‘strategic depth’ (Bedi, 2002: 60). These forces were contained by the stationing of military forces belonging to the 201st Motorized Rifle Division of Russia on Tajik-Afghan border. At that time force of religious extremism were specific to the region. In that context Russia was the sole guarantor of peace and stability in central Asia. Russian military presence was able to contain such forces. India was not opposed to the military presence of Russia, which was part of the Commonwealth Independent States (CIS) peace keeping mission, as it coincided with Indian interest (Joshi, 2005: 34).
The rise of Taliban in Afghanistan saw greater compatibility of interest between India and Russia. In their view the potential of conflict appeared real, escalating the threat perception to the new heights. Indian and Russian apprehension proved right. Religious extremism under the Taliban had acquired a sharper edge. The phenomenal growth of international terrorism, the worst manifestation of the religious extremism is a factor to reckon with today. Practicing a medievalist variant of Islam, the Taliban with the backing of Pakistan vowed to intensify its effort to further the cause of extremism through terrorism. The war in Kargil in Indian in 1999 is an eloquent testimony to this fact. The continuing conflict in Chechnya and its escalation into full scale war is believed to have been supported by the Taliban regime. Incidentally, Afghanistan under the Taliban was the only country to have recognized the independence of Chechnya. The large presence of suspected Afghans and Pakistani participating on the side of rebels in Chechnya and in Kashmir was reported in the media (CDPSP, February 13, 2002: 1305-8). This commonality of opposing the Taliban led India and Russia to extend support to the Northern Alliance. In the Indian and Russian view peace and stability in Afghanistan can be ensured only by a democratic government with secular spirit. Such government would in the long run be able to curb militancy and religious extremism.

The military presence of international coalition forces led by the USA in the wake of the horrendous act of barbarity of 11 September by terrorists has fundamentally altered the geo-political situation of the Central Asian region. The fight against terrorism which so far has regional dimension has now occupying the centre stage of international politics. India and Russia condemned the dastardly act in New York and Washington DC in no uncertain terms. President Vladimir Putin condemned terrorism as the plague of the 21st century. The Taliban has been defeated in Afghanistan but Osama Bin Laden has remained a fugitive and his Al Qaeda terrorist network has not yet been completely destroyed. India and Russia extended full support to the US in its campaign against terrorism. Russia was reluctant to get directly involved in the campaign but gave its approval for the establishment of Western military presence in CARs (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan). India and Russia offered, to further strengthen the capacity of the Northern Alliance forces in Afghanistan. India was a prime supporter of the US in the war against
terrorism from the very first day of campaign. As the global war on terrorism unfolded, New Delhi and Moscow stepped up bilateral cooperation to counter terrorism.

India and Russia extended full co-operation to the campaign against terrorism. Being victims of terrorism themselves, the immediate favorable response of the two countries was understandable. The changing dynamics of the Central Asian region has open up new opportunities and challenges for India-Russian relations (Roy, 2003: 125). As new opportunities it opened ‘window of opportunities’ for India and Russia to come to a better understanding with the United States. It also brought about new challenges as pressures began to be extended on the Indo-Russian relations. The arrangement prior to 9/11 got disturbed. The fight against terrorism kept the core of Indo-Russian relations in tact. The strategic partnership between the two depended with every high level visit adding greater content and substance to Indo-Russian ties. For instance, the Moscow Declaration of 2001 has pointedly stated that “violent actions being perpetrated under the slogan of self determination in reality represents acts of terrorism which in most cases have strong international links (MEA Report, GOI , January 13, 2002: 142).

**Indo-Russian Common Stand on Afghan Crisis**

The position of New Delhi and Moscow on the Afghan Crisis after September 11 and its regional impact on worldwide made efforts to eliminate terrorism is absolutely identical. Any negative development in Afghanistan would have serious security implication not only for India and Russia but also for Central Asian republics. India has always been concerned about security in its Northern and North Western border areas (i.e., Pakistan and Afghanistan area). India has more than 15 million Muslim populations. Taliban brand of highly radicalized Islam would inflame delicate communal tension at home. On other hand, Russia has an ethnic problem in Chechnya and also a sizeable Muslim population (15 per cent). The capture of power by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 1996 further complicated the situation for Russia and India. The Taliban supported by Pakistan had vowed to intensify its efforts to further the cause of their brand of Islam through international terrorism. Under the Taliban rule Chechen rebels were getting full support to carry out their terrorist activities in Russia. The large
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presence of suspected Afghans and Pakistanis participating on the side of militants in Kashmir and Chechnya has often been reported in the press. Therefore, a stable and friendly government in Afghanistan is what India, Russia and Central Asian Republics (CARs) favour. They want the situation to evolve in such a way that Afghanistan no longer remains the hub of religious extremism and terrorism (Roy, 2003: 203-212).

India’s and Russia’s support for the United Front or the Northern Alliance crystallized in 1995 when the Taliban emerged and began their rapid occupation of Afghanistan. Alarm bells rang in both Moscow and New Delhi when the Taliban captured the Western city of Herat in September of that year. While Russia was already providing sporadic exports of military equipment to Rabbani’s government, India suddenly entered the fray, sending non-military supplies through Iran (Withington, 2002: 42). The supply of military equipments by Russia and India continued through out 1996. Russia, early that year, upgraded the United Front Air base which was close to the Tajik border. India also assisted the United Front in the up keeping of its air wing. Approximately, 30 Indian aircraft technicians reportedly maintained the Front’s small collection of Sukhoi and MiG fighter aircrafts, which were similar to those, operated by the India Air Force. Although India continued to provide only non lethal military assistance, it stepped up its assistance to the United Front in early 2001 (Withington, 2002: 43).

India had several reasons for supporting the United Front. It was always concerned about security in its Northern and North Western border areas. Taliban ruled Afghanistan began to accommodate many insurgent groups operating in Central Asia, South Asian regions and North Caucasus in Russia. Since the September 11 attacks on Washington and New York, India has insisted that Kashmir militant groups such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba are intrinsically linked to the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The US has provided firm evidence of the existence of around 120 training camps run by the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) across Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some groups like the Lashkar-e-Toiba are founded by Osama Bin Laden’s Al Qaeda foundation. (Withington, 2002: 44). The Talibans of Afghanistan were a useful avenue by which the ISI could outsource its arming and training of pro-Pakistan insurgents for infiltration into the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.
Like India's terrorism problem in Jammu and Kashmir, Russia has terrorism problem in Chechnya. The spread of radical Islam from Afghanistan into the bordering Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan – often referred to as Russia's "soft under belly" (Kaushik, December 2007: 10) is something Moscow fears, especially as its war against Islamist insurgents in Chechnya continues. On May 26, 2001, during a visit to Washington D.C., Abdullah, the United Front Foreign Minister insisted that the Chechen militants were using Afghan soil for training and supply, "hundreds of Chechen fighters and their families had been arriving" in Afghanistan he said. (Withington, 2002: 41) The war called Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan led by USA has ousted the Taliban regime being supported by India and Russia for the security interests in Chechnya and Jammu and Kashmir respectively.

On the basis of growing convergence of security interests in Afghanistan, India and Russia carved out a unity of approach to combat terrorism in Afghanistan, which is the epicenter of Islamic terrorism for both the countries. This was decided during President Putin's visit to India in October 2002, that a 'Joint Working Group on Afghanistan' should be set up for 'coordinating actions against international terrorism' by both the nations (Mainstream, October 14, 2000: 8-10). That both countries are seeking to address this problem was made clear during the first meeting of the Indo-Russian 'JWG on Afghanistan' on 23rd November 2000. They expressed their concern regarding exclusion of minorities from the political process in Taliban dominated Afghanistan (minorities such Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and Shias) and called for maintaining 'multi ethnic and multi cultural ethos' of that country (Patnaik, 2004: 133-134).

So far as the JWG on Afghanistan is concerned, seven meetings of this group have been held between India and Russia. The sixth meeting of the India and Russia JWG on Afghanistan was held in Moscow on 28th March 2003. The Indian delegation was led by the Indian foreign secretary, Kanwal Sibal and Vyachesla Trubnikov, first deputy foreign minister led the Russian delegation. "The two sides discussed the situation in Afghanistan including the progress in implementation of the provision of Bonn Agreement of December 2001, and coordination of various international efforts aimed at rehabilitation and reconstruction. They also discussed the threats to regional
peace and security from terrorist activity in the region and efforts aimed at weakening international terrorism. They exchanged views on the role of the UN in shaping the Afghan economy and reality. They agreed that international action against terrorism cannot be selective, but has to be uniform, comprehensive, continuous and multi-faceted. They also emphasized that action should be directed against those states, entities and individuals who support, fund, or abate terrorists or provide them shelter or asylum to engage in cross-border terrorism. They agreed that there should be no double standards in the fight against terrorism. Both the nations reiterated that there could be no justification for terrorism, political, religious or ideological. In this context, they concurred that the provisions of the various UN Security Council Resolutions including UNSCR 1373 should be fully implemented by all member states. They agreed on the need to strengthen international mechanism to fight against international terrorism and in this context agreed to work towards early conclusion and adoption by the UN General Assembly of the draft ‘Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism’ and the draft ‘International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism’. They emphasized that India-Russia Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism is an important constituent of our strategic bilateral ties” (Strategic Digest, 4th April 2003: 2402-2405). The seventh meeting was held in New Delhi on mutually agreed dates. The meeting of the JWG denounced the consolidation of “Obscurantist and Retrograde Ideologies”, in the then Taliban controlled Afghanistan, its promotion of international terrorism through Pan-Islamic insurgent training camps, support and protection to hijackers, and “permissive attitude” to narcotics production.

India and Russia voiced deep concern over “the escalation of subversive and terrorist activity of the Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants and their attempts to regroup by relying on outside support”. Without mentioning any state by name the Indo-Russian statement called for non-interference in Afghanistan’s affairs as a “decisive condition for restoring peace and stability in the country”. India and Russia fear that the war in Iraq will lead to ‘radicalization’ of Islamic extremist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The problem was extensively discussed during the Indo-Russian Foreign Minister Consultation in March 2003. They feared that the ‘Taliban and Al Qaeda can play a very negative role in
the context of the Constitutional Loya Jirga in later years. In the end, the two sides described bilateral cooperation in counter terrorism as a “weighty component of strategic partnership between the two countries” (Radyuhin, The Hindu, March 29, 2003: 14).

India and Russia for Greater UN Role in Combating International Terrorism

Based on objective facts, Russian Federation and India have come forward with an initiative to build a global system to meet contemporary threats and challenges. They are talking first of all about International terrorism, transnational organized crime, regional conflicts, illicit trade in narcotics and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and so on. Addressing the 57th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov outlined the parameter of such system. He stressed its global nature because today’s challenge threaten the entire planet and they should be confronted on a global scale. The destructive potential of this (terrorist) threat should call for comprehensive solutions (MEA, Annual Report, Government of India, February, 2003)

It is of fundamental importance that this concept met with an understanding and support from the world community. The UN General Assembly session of 16th December 2002, passed a corresponding resolution on responding to global threats and challenges. Its co-authors, in addition to Russia and a majority of CIS countries were China, India, Brazil, Egypt, South Africa and the Dominican Republic. The United States and the leading countries of the European Union took direct part in drafting it. It is evident that cooperation in combating international terrorism should become the most important component of the entire system.

India and Russia have given stress on the paramount importance of strict implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on the war against international terrorism, in particular the Resolution 1373 of September 28th 2001 and Universal Anti-Terrorist Conventions which created the basic framework for national, regional and international obligations and cooperation of the international community in combating terrorism in accordance with the UN Charter. India and Russia remain fully committed to implement these resolutions and called for an early agreement on and entry into force

India and the Russian Federation reaffirmed the important role that the United Nations and the international community must play in the international campaign against terrorism. They welcomed the Security Council Resolution 1373 of September 28th 2001 and the establishment of a Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) focusing on monitoring of implementation by states of their international obligations in the struggle against terrorism – primarily with the view to effectively curtailing any type of support -moral, material, arms supplies through propaganda, shelter etc. In this connection the sides called for early completion of discussions under UN auspices, of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Adoption of these conventions would greatly contribute to the strengthening of the international legal basis for effectively combating the menace of global terrorism. ("Joint Statement on Combating Terrorism “MEA, 3rd February 2003)

**Trilateral Cooperation (India, Russia and China) Against International Terrorism**

A lot of countries have to decide the problems of the fight against terrorism without any real support of those who declared the crusade against terrorism. India, Russia and China are among these states. "The Muslim arc “stretches from North West of Africa to South-East of Asia. India (With more than 130-million Moslem population), Russia (With Moslem population in the North Caucasus and Volga –Urals region) and China (with Moslem population in the Flinjiang Uighur Autonomous region) face the similar problems and task if there is the rise of Muslim extremism (Louniev, 2003: 114)

India, the Kashmir question has evident external dimension though there is a certain impact of internal factor (the same can be said about the Chechen problem for Russia). Jawaharlal Nehru said: “Kashmir is not an illness. The illness is the hatred of Pakistan towards India”. India and Pakistan have certain civilization unity but there is the religious difference. Experience shows that the indo-Pakistan relations is one of the most bitter and dangerous bilateral relations in the world (Louniev, 2003: 115).
The existence of ethnic and religious separatists, the external dimensions of the problem causes Russia and India too have similar approach to the problem of (self determination), terrorism and separatism. Russia can be a reliable partner in the case of actualization of the threat to Indian security posed by Muslim world. The same can be said about India, 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 face the same problems regarding the system of interactions with the Moslem world. Both countries have the goals of (a) normalizing 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 the modern world; (c) decisive fighting against Islamic extremists.

Over the last two decades, growing Chinese concern over ethnic nationalism, separatism, religious extremism and terrorism in its northwestern region of Xinjiang has been accentuated and reinforced by the ongoing regional, political, economic, ethnic and geopolitical developments across Central Asia. Xinjiang occupies an enviable geostrategic position at the crossroads of five cultural and geographic regions such as Russia, Central Asia, India, Pakistan, Tibet and China. Though situation in Xinjiang was relatively peaceful from 2002 to 2005 with stray incidents, the following years saw violent terrorist activities in Xinjiang. Recently on 4th August 2008, just four days before the Beijing Olympics 2008 opened, a terror strike in the Kashghar city of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China left 16 policeman dead (14 on the spot and 2 later) and 16 others injured. The present situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the Taliban and its mentor Al Qaeda ruling the roost, there seems to be greater dangers ahead. Taliban with the help of Al Qaeda and other international terror organizations have been able to keep sizable areas of Afghanistan under their control. It has also made inroads into the frontier regions of Pakistan leading to Talibanisation of Pakistan after Taliban controlled the territory of Swat and adjacent areas announcing Islamic Shariat rule over the region. This dangerous situation will surely have considerable security implications for the entire South Asia and Central Asia regions. It will also be a glimmer of hope for the dormant transnational terrorist organizations such of Islamic Movement of
Uzbekistan, Hizb-ut-Tahrir and East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to revive their terror networks and to bolster up their sinister designs. Last, but not the least, this sorry situation is going to affect India’s security scenario considerably simply because an unstable neighborhood always foretells holocaust. The present influence of Taliban in Pakistan will be morale booster for the jihadis, who have been launching terrorist attacks against India at regular intervals. Recently, according to an intelligence report, more than 500 Jihadis are preparing on the other side of India’s border with Pakistan to enter into Indian Territory in order to wreck havoc in the country. The end is yet to come and the future picture of an unstable region is no longer opaque (Debta, 2009: 315).

The 9/11 episode radically altered the geopolitical situation in the entire region, particularly in Central and South Asia as well as Russia. The international war against terrorism has set off the intensification of China’s anti-separatist campaign in Xinjiang. China was among the first few nations which wholeheartedly supported the US “War against Terror”. China took advantage of the situation sweeping across the world and launched a military crackdown on the Uyghur separatists. China extended its support along with India ad Russia to UN Security Council Resolutions condemning global terrorism. In order to combat the radical Islamists, China started cooperating with the Central Asian Republics and Russia through regional security mechanisms like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). China’s initiative in setting up the SCO is a manifestation of its positive efforts to develop a stable regional environment for economic development in Xinjiang as well as of its fears that the three “evil forces” (separatism and extremism) might affect Xingjian (Debata 2009:321-322).

China’s position on the problems of the fight against Islamic terrorists is very close to the India and Russian terrorism problem. The governments of China and India began to discuss frankly the possibilities of the establishment of the Islamic radical regimes in Central Asia in the 1990s. Already in 1991, the Uighur community in Central Asia boosted its activities, and groups calling for the independence of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous region started emerging. China had to rush to strengthen its borders and tighten the entry into the autonomous region. On the one hand, the problem of Uighur separatists is not so acute, and there is the predominance of the ethnic Chinese in
the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous region. On the other hand, the so-called national and autonomous regions are located along the borders of China and constitute more than half of the territory of the country. The Chinese authorities are afraid that the disturbances in one autonomous region can move to other ones. Beijing has also reasons to be apprehensive of growing problems even in Tibet if extremism and terrorism are on the rise in the neighboring countries. There is a joint net of terrorists. The Uighur separatists were captured and killed both in Kashmir and Chechnya.

It is absolutely necessary to begin cooperation between the three countries in the fight against terrorism. The states have to struggle either alone or together. Unfortunately there is no evidence of the striving of other states to assist them. Moreover, the rise of separatism and extremism gives an opportunity to outer forces to use these problems as a certain control lever over two raising powers and a former superpower that still is the only one that may pose a real military threat to the US.

The strategic triangle among Russia, India and China is gaining momentum and acquiring substance on issues of international terrorism. Taking into account the convergence of interests and security threats, these countries are worried about the problem of religious extremism, terrorism and separatism in Chechnya, Jammu and Kashmir and the Xinjiang region. The Islamic militancy has been playing major role over these three areas. Deliberations on a number of Joint Working Groups (JWG) set up by the Foreign Ministries are yielding noticeable results in trilateral interactions among the three nations. The first round of the JWG on Global Challenges and the JWG on International Terrorism in September – October 2003, brought the three countries together (Kadakin, The Times of India, 17th November 2003: 9).

While cooperating with the Anti Terrorist Coalition, Russia, India and China are trying to forge a consensus amongst the countries on the issue of global concern. One of Russia’s priorities is greater cooperation with China, India and between other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in combating international terrorism. In September 2002, President Putin submitted for the ratification of the State Duma the Shanghai Convention on combating international terrorism, separatism and extremism.
The SCO summit in St. Petersburg set up a special agency consisting of the SCO and a regional anti-terrorism center. There are promising possibilities of greater cooperation within the SCO in combating terrorism. This was once again confirmed during President Putin’s visit to Beijing in December 2002. India was also invited for the 2002 SCO summit by Russia; India could seek membership of SCO (Mashkov, 2003: 8-9).

During the SCO Summit that took place in Tashkent on 17 May 2004, there was a major consensus amongst the nations on the issue of terrorism and the manner in which nations have to tackle the menace. The establishment of a Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) was set up in Tashkent, emphasizing the tool against transnational terrorism has taken in Russia, China and Central Asia. They have also recognized the problem of drug trafficking and the restructuring of Afghanistan that is required for the security of the region. India, though not a permanent member of the SCO, has got an Observer status in 2005 along with Iran and Pakistan, also come ahead to help Afghanistan in the process of reconstruction. It shows in the Indian government’s eagerness for a stable and growth oriented society in Afghanistan. (Sharma, The Pioneer, 2nd July 2004: 9).

The Russian President Dmitry Medvedev presided over the Ninth meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council (HSC) in Yekaterinburg on June 15 and 16. The documents adopted at the Summit include Yekaterinburg Declaration and Joint Communique. The SCO Secretary General Bolat Nurgaleiv presented a report on the activity of the Organization following the previous HSC meeting in Dushambe. The Heads of state signed the SCO Counter-Terrorism Convention which cements the legal base for counter-terrorism interaction in the SCO framework and its potential, cooperation in this field was taken to a new level as exchange of opinions took place on the issues of international and regional situation. The representatives of the member states of the Organization signed the Agreement among the Government of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in the field of Ensuring International Information Security and the Agreement on Training of officers for Counter-Terrorism Agencies of the SCO Member states. Proceedings from the outcome of the command staff joint counter-terrorism exercise of the SCO member states “Norak-Anti-Terror-2009” held
17-19 April 2009 in the Republic of Tajikistan, the parties acknowledged the expediency of continuing the practice of regular staging of joint counter-terrorism drills (Prime Ministers opening remarks at the SCO, June 16, 2009 Online: Web).

It will be necessary for India and Russia to engage China to join hands with them in stopping the aggressive designs of Pakistan based Jihadi groups in their tracks. Close coordination between Russia, India and China would go a long way in overcoming the turbulence that is being created by the Jihadi group in South and Central Asian regions. Russia may be in a position to facilitate cooperation between India and China and bring them together on a common platform to combat international based Jihadi terrorism. China has already shown inclination to make a common strategic cause with Russia and presenting an alternative to the US monopoly in the war against terrorism. China has problem with Uighar Muslims separatists in Xinjiang who are getting support from the Jihadi groups based in Central Asia and Afghanistan (Karim, 2003: 83-85).

At the regional level, as an informal coalition in combating terrorism, Russia, India and China may emerge as clear status quo oriented powers that specifically do not want to see border changed by force. It is notable that one of the key results of Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji visit to New Delhi in January 2002 was the establishment of a Joint Forum against terrorism (Ollapally, 2003: 152-153). In December 2002 Russian President visited China and later India for strengthening the ‘strategic triangle’. During his visit to China he said, “We consider our selves as a member of the international anti terror coalition and we hope all the coalition taken in combating terrorism, concerted action. And, so far, it has been exactly that way. We hope that it will stay that way” (Baruah, The Hindu, 1st December 2002: 14)

“Earlier in 2001, well known Russian Orientalist and Acting Director of the Centre for Indian Studies in Moscow, Dr. Tatiana Shaumian, attended the sitting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. She was of the opinion that – “Whatever their differences, India, Russia and China are all multi ethnic, federated states, with very diverse populations, who face similar threats to their sovereignty, and national integrity.
Each has specific problem areas that attract outside interference. Russia, has Chechnya, India has Kashmir, China has Tibet and Sinkiang. They all border on one and the same unstable region: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia. There is no surprise that they would tend to support one another on human rights issues stemming from efforts to control these ‘terrorist’ problems” (The Pioneer, 29th April 2001: 4)

**Commonality of Views on Iraq War, Against Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction**

India and Russia took a step towards re-establishing multi-polarity in international politics by re-affirming their long-standing strategic partnership during the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee on November 2003 to Moscow. This has got special relevance in an international context in which the US has exploited concerns over the menace of terrorism to further its hegemonistic ambitions. The two countries signaled that they would not allow the US to harness their resources for the achievement of this aim. On Iraq, there was unanimity of views opposing any unilateral use of force. Both the countries would like the UN to play a central role in promoting international security in a multi-polar world. In insisting that the fight against terrorism should be based on rules of international law and the Charter of the UN, they distanced themselves from Washington’s policy of unilateral intervention in third countries on the pretext of tackling the terrorist and elimination of WMD (Reddaway et al, 2004: 32-33). The two countries refrained from any pointed criticism of US actions in Iraq even as they felt no doubt that they wanted a swift end to the illegal occupation. India has refused US request to send its troops to Iraq. India and Russia proposed that a concrete and time bound action plan should be drawn under the UN, so that Iraq’s sovereignty could be restored as early as possible. While India had not subscribed to Washington’s policy on the issue, it had refrained from lining up with Russia and the other countries that were firmly opposed. The two countries opposed Washington’s tendency to concentrate on the global campaign against terror, solely on the basis of what concerned it. They insisted that the campaign against terror should be uniform, comprehensive and multi-faceted. They argued that confidence be built among the members of the anti-terror coalition on the basis due consideration to the interests of each of them. Russia
agreed with India’s view that Pakistan must stop cross border terrorism and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the territory under its control before a meaningful dialogue could be started. India reiterated its support for Russia’s efforts to protect its territorial integrity and constitutional order in Chechnya (The Hindu, November 17th 2003).

September 11, 2001 altered Putin’s strategy: The terrorist attacks in the US provided Putin with an opportunity to change a policy that seemed to be going nowhere. He chose to restore Russia’s status by bandwagoning with the US and joining the war on terror. In the words of Sergei Chugrov “Russia’s main goal is to find its place, not on the margin of war policy, but as part of the civilized world together with the US and Europe” (Reddaway et al, 2004: 32-33).

As Bush administration pushed for war with Iraq, recently, India and Russia saw the Iraq question as an example of US unilateralism. This explains the insistence on a UN mandate for the war and the quasi alliance with both Germany and France. India and Russian spokesman repeatedly stated that there was no clear evidence to substantiate US claims about both weapons of mass destruction or links to Al Qaeda and that therefore; the Iraq situation should be resolved in line with then existing Security Council Resolutions. Russia continued to oppose war led by US and its “coalition of the willing”, with Putin regretting, “the ultimatum issued to Iraq by George Bush”. Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov warned that war would undermine the anti-terrorism coalition and lead to a war of civilization” (Reddaway et al, 2004: 37).

Russia could not prevent the Iraq war but it quickly needed to decide what outcome would best serve its purpose. Within weeks, especially when it appeared that things were not going well for the US led coalition, Putin stated that, Russia was not interested in a US defeat. While the foreign ministry continued to issue strong criticism of the US war effort, the Russian President emphasized that Moscow could continue to cooperate with Washington, which shows balanced foreign policy of the Russian Federation. In an editorial the Izvestiya wrote that – “its one matter to simply refrain from supporting the war against Iraq – and quite another to become a sworn enemy of America. Being at odds with America is stupid....”( Reddaway and Lapidus, 2004: 38).
On the other hand, during a recent visit to US the Indian External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, has made some positive indication by saying that India “will reconsider its decision to send troops to Iraq” under the UN New Security Resolutions on Iraq.

Terrorism strikes every corner of the globe and the struggle against it should be waged without compromise. India and Russia affirmed that the future international order should be determined by collective and multi polar processes rather than unilateral one in the field of international terrorism. Indo-Russian cooperation in tackling terrorism has acquired a positive dimension. India’s ties with Russia are on a firm footing, terrorism has added new dynamism to them.