

Conflict Studies Research Centre



**Russia's Relations With
India & Pakistan**

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Key Points

- * The USSR and India developed a close bilateral relationship in the Cold War, which was a useful counter to the US-Pakistan alliance, and to China.
- * Both sides desired to maintain close cooperation in the post-Soviet period. In the latter half of the 1990s, Moscow suggested a Russia-China-India strategic triangle as a counterweight to the USA. India had no interest in this idea. India and Russia probably did see each other as useful partners in verbally opposing US dominance, although India's relationship with the USA improved after the end of the Cold War.
- * Russo-Indian political cooperation has been good under Putin. Both have a strong interest in opposing Islamic terrorism. Russia probably also sees India as a useful means of checking Pakistani influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Russia supports India becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and eventual membership for India and Pakistan of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.
- * Economic cooperation is low. India is an important customer of the Russian military-industrial complex, accounting for about 20% of its exports. 70-80% of Indian military equipment is of Soviet origin, although India is now trying to diversify. In December 2003 the value of prospective Russo-Indian military contracts stood at around \$10-12 billion.
- * Russia will continue to cultivate India as a partner, as a major economic and military power in South Asia, capable in future of playing a major role outside the region.
- * Moscow sees Pakistan as an important partner, although veering towards India in the Pakistan-India dispute. Russia supports President Musharraf, to prevent a militant Islamic regime, given Moscow's concerns about Pakistani influence in Afghanistan and South Asia.

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India

The Soviet Period

The Soviet-Indian relationship from the Khrushchev period to 1991 was a very friendly one. A friendship and cooperation treaty was signed by the two powers in 1971. The Soviet Union became a significant arms supplier to India, and a significant economic relationship also developed. India was not part of the Soviet bloc, but could in some respects be seen as a quasi-ally of the Soviet Union.

Since independence, India has aspired to be a major regional power, and has been a major force in the Non-Aligned Movement. It benefited from the bipolar structure of the international system during the Cold War, playing the Soviet Union off against the USA. By having a friendly relationship with the USSR, India was able to ensure that Washington would not take it for granted. Soviet support was also a useful counter to China, which India saw as its main threat after the 1962 Sino-Indian war.

V P Dutt describes the Indo-Soviet relationship as follows:

They [ie India and the Soviet Union] could counter any other equation in the region and, from India's point of view, contributed to the maintenance of peace, security and balance in the region. The threat that both countries perceived from the Pakistan-US military alliance and at times from the Pakistan-USA-China equation was substantially mitigated by the Indo-Soviet link. From India's point of view, this relationship was not used for any aggressive purposes, but was significant in preventing any aggressive action against it, although inevitably both Pakistan and China were suspicious and unhappy about it. The USA looked askance at this connection, but for India it provided security from the rigours of the peculiar, and often changing, security perceptions of these powers and held it to insulate itself from the consequences of their action in pursuit of their own strategic interests. For the Soviets too these ties with the second largest Asian country and the largest non-aligned country were beneficial in averting isolation in Asia, enhancing security and winning more friends in the non-aligned community around the world.¹

The Yel'tsin Period

Although the end of the Cold War ended Soviet-US global competition, both sides still had an interest in maintaining a cordial relationship with India. The break up of the Soviet Union in 1991 did initially disrupt India's relationship with the Russian Federation. The ending of East-West rivalry meant that Moscow was less interested in supporting India against Pakistan. In the early 1990s, the Russian leadership pursued an Atlanticist foreign policy, and took an equidistant stance between India and Pakistan. In 1993, then Russian foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev followed the US line on nuclear non-proliferation and Kashmir. Yel'tsin complied with US wishes and refused to supply India with cryogenic technology for its civilian space programme. In 1993 a new Russo-Indian treaty was signed, which dropped the security clauses that had existed in the 1971 Soviet-Indian treaty.

From India's standpoint, the relationship improved following the appointment of Yevgeny Primakov as foreign minister in January 1996. Primakov saw India as an important strategic partner for Russia, and spoke of the formation of a possible Russo-Indian-Chinese strategic triangle. The Indian leadership was undoubtedly pleased at Moscow's decision to upgrade the relationship in the second half of the 1990s. However, it had no interest in forming a strategic triangle with China. From New Delhi's standpoint, Russian friendship, though desirable, was now of less value in countering China, given the improvement in the Moscow-Beijing relationship in the 1990s. Moscow in the second half of the 1990s continued to see its relationship with India as one means of countering the USA's post-Cold War dominance of the international system. India may also have seen its ties with Russia as being useful for this purpose, although New Delhi's relationship with Washington improved following the end of the Cold War.

The Putin Period

Putin's emphasis on developing close ties with Europe and the USA did not preclude the policy of cultivating India as an important partner. This was seen in his visit to India in October 2000, where a declaration on strategic partnership was signed, along with several economic and military-technical cooperation agreements.² The agreement on strategic partnership was an attempt to place the bilateral relationship on a higher level, and also attempted to institutionalise the relationship, by having annual summits and increased cooperation between the foreign ministries of the two states. It was also agreed to enhance the role of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation.

The Political Relationship

Political cooperation between the two states has been very good. The Russian Federation has often expressed its support for India becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.³ The events of September 2001 have enhanced the importance of the relationship for both sides, as they both feel particularly threatened by Islamic extremism. Prior to September 2001, they were both particularly concerned about the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and set up a working group between their foreign ministries to discuss Afghanistan. This first met in November 2000. Both countries also have a strong interest in security in Central Asia, and in countering the possible growth of Islamic extremism in that region. India is interested in expanding its relations with the former Soviet states of Central Asia, presumably in the hope that its influence will act as a possible

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counter to Islamic extremism and Pakistani influence. It is likely that Moscow would support this aspect of Indian foreign policy.

The political relationship took a further step forward with Putin's second visit to India in December 2002.⁴ On this occasion an agreement was signed on developing the strategic partnership established in 2000.

Combating international terrorism is becoming a more important aspect of the Russo-Indian relationship. A declaration on this subject had been made when Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Moscow in November 2001. It was agreed during Putin's visit in December 2002 to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on the subject. This held its first meeting in September 2003, and its second in April 2004. At the second meeting, both sides agreed on a five-point plan of action which included joint efforts to tackle terrorist financing and curb trafficking in narcotics. It was agreed to improve the exchange of intelligence information between the two states. Deputy foreign minister Anatoly Safonov, who co-chairs the Russo-Indian JWG on terrorism, said that Russia was prepared to offer India satellite pictures of training camps across the Line of Control in Pakistan if India sought it.⁵ Safonov also noted that Russia and India have close views on regional conflicts.

Russia has urged Pakistan to do what it can to prevent terrorists crossing into Kashmir. During his visit to India in December 2002, Putin urged the Pakistani leadership to crack down on the terrorist infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir. Russia sees India as a more important partner than Pakistan. When Indo-Pakistani relations were extremely strained in the summer of 2002, and war (possibly even nuclear war) between the two powers became a distinct possibility, Russia offered its services as a mediator, at the June 2002 summit Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia held in Alma-Ata. However this was a low-level attempt at mediation, and no proposals of substance were made. This contrasted sharply with Soviet mediation between India and Pakistan in 1965-66. In April 2003, first deputy foreign minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov expressed concern that certain circles in Pakistan were attempting to take advantage of the instability in Afghanistan as part of its rivalry with India. In July 2003, the Russian Foreign Ministry condemned terrorism in Kashmir, and affirmed its support for India in its fight against extremism.

The next major stage in the development of the political relationship was the visit of Indian prime minister Vajpayee to Moscow in November 2003. The most significant outcome of this visit was the signing of a Joint Declaration on the Global Challenges and Threats to World Security and Stability. This declaration affirmed both sides' commitment to fighting terrorism, and also affirmed the leading role of the United Nations as the main security organisation, along with the desirability of a multipolar international order. It also expressed support for the expansion of the UN Security Council, in effect calling for India to become a permanent member of this body.

The declaration also referred to various regional security issues, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, and the North Korean nuclear problem, which made clear a close identity of views between the two powers. There appear to be few, if any, points of disagreement between Moscow and New Delhi on regional security issues. The November 2003 declaration noted that "India and the Russian Federation affirm that the future international order based on multi-polarity should be determined by collective and multilateral processes rather than unilateral ones."

This statement, along with the affirmation of the belief in the central role of the UN in managing security, is an oblique criticism of US policy, and is indicative of the value that Russia and India see in each other as major powers that reject the USA's unilateralist approach to managing security problems. However it should also be noted that as India has had a very cooperative relationship with the USA in the post Cold War era, any Russian hopes of using India as a component in an anti-US foreign policy strategy (should Russian policy change) are unlikely to be realised.

In August 2002, the Russian president's special representative to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Vitaly Vorob'yev, said that India, along with Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia desires join the SCO.⁶ In February 2003 Vorob'yev said that Russia was supporting India's bid, although it was still too early to speak specifically about when the SCO could accept new members.⁷ Such a development would place Russo-Indian bilateral cooperation within a regional framework, and would also result in a greater institutionalisation of Russo-Chinese-Indian cooperation. In this way India could act as a more effective partner for Russia in Central Asia, and as a means of countering Chinese influence there. However, it would seem that Indian membership of the SCO is a matter for the long-term, as no further announcements on the enlargement of the organisation have been made.

The Economic Relationship

Although the politico-military relationship between India and the Russian Federation is a good one, the economic relationship is at a low level. Trade turnover was \$3.3 billion in the period January-December 2003, compared with \$2.1 billion for the period January-December 2002. In comparison with India's trade with the European Union, the USA, Japan and Switzerland, Russo-Indian trade levels are very modest. However it should be noted that trade levels are now not that much lower than during the Soviet period. In 1990, the Soviet-Indian trade turnover was \$5.5 billion (of which the Russian republic had a 60% share), and much of that was oil supplied by Iraq as Baghdad's way of paying for Soviet military equipment.

Indian Trade Figures with Selected Countries 1999-2003

	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Exps	Imps	Exps	Imps	Exps	Imps	Exps	Imps	Exps	Imps
USA	8,100	3,583	9,083	3,152	9,355	4,141	11,318	4,508	12,502	5,485
Japan	1,677	2,518	1,767	2,016	2,011	2,134	1,900	2,056	2,053	2,418
Germany	1,767	1,916	1,865	1,780	2,037	2,272	2,143	2,472	2,655	3,027
UK	1,990	2,686	2,233	3,053	2,467	2,824	2,553	2,913	3,190	4,115
France	890	720	999	661	1,047	1,077	1,091	1,173	1,276	1,349
China	511	1,240	758	1,449	1,545	2,094	2,067	2,940	3,865	3,678
Russia	888	604	904	544	492	765	468	1,784	522	2,500
Switzerland	345	2,684	417	3,020	315	427	301	453	363	533

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics, International Monetary Fund Yearbook 2003 and Quarterly June 2004. Figures are in millions of US dollars.

NB: Trade with China does not include trade with Hong Kong.

An Inter-Governmental Indo-Russian Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation was established in May 1992. Twelve Working Groups covering different spheres have been established within the framework of the Commission on: (i) Trade and Economic Cooperation; (ii) Power and Non-Conventional Sources of Energy; (iii) Petroleum (Oil Industry); (iv) Ferrous and Non-Ferrous Metallurgy; (v) Science and Technology; (vi) Culture; (vii) Coal;

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(viii) Information Technology; (ix) Environment and Natural Resources; (x) Pharmaceuticals; (xi) Cooperation between Regions; and (xii) Cooperation in Civil Aviation. There are eleven Sub Groups under the various Working Groups.

Indian firms show little interest in the Russian market, arguing that conditions there are insufficient to attract them. Russian firms do show a greater interest in the Indian market, but the major western powers are much more significant to India as economic partners, and Russian commercial interests will not be able to pose a significant challenge to western ones. India's principal exports to the Russian Federation and other CIS members are: tea, coffee, tobacco, cashew, leather, footwear, drugs, pharmaceuticals, fine chemicals, spices, rice, processed minerals, cosmetics and toiletries, and cotton yarn fabric. India imports from Russia the following: pulp and waste paper, cotton raw and waste, ferrous metal ores and metal scrap, organic chemicals, fertilizers, newsprint, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, machinery except electrical and electronics, and transport equipment.

There are some major projects developing. The Indian State Oil and Gas Corporation invested around \$1.7 billion in the Sakhalin-1 oil project in the Russian Far East in 2001, and Russian organisations are participating in the construction of the nuclear power station at Kudankulam. India has in recent years undertaken a number of large-scale projects, in which Russian firms are participating. Such projects include coal mining, building and modernisation of power stations, construction of metallurgical plants, the building and modernisation of railway lines, and water purification plants. Cooperation also takes place in the fields of electronics, information technology and biotechnology. Gazprom and Zarubezhneftegaz are cooperating with Indian partners in exploiting coal in the Bay of Bengal.

In 2003 the joint council created by the Russian Chamber of Commerce and the Indian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry renewed its activities after a six year interlude. Individual Russian and Indian regions are beginning to develop direct ties, following an agreement signed on inter-regional cooperation when Putin visited India in October 2000. Astrakhan and Samara oblasts and Tatarstan have agreements with Indian states.

Both Russia and India have a strong interest in cooperation in advanced technologies. They have cooperated in the production of a polio vaccine, and a joint Russo-Indian computer centre has been set up in Moscow, which is equipped with the Indian super-computer PARAM-10000. This computer is used for modelling atmospheric processes, and for research in microelectronics, medicine, seismology and ecology.

In November 2003, Rosaviakosmos and the Indian Space Research Organisation signed a cooperation agreement. Both sides will jointly use the Russian GLONASS satellite navigation system and cooperate in the development of the Indian lunar programme. A new agreement was signed in July 2004 between the space agencies of the two countries, and an intergovernmental agreement on partnership in space affairs should be signed by the end of 2004. Some of the Russian GLONASS satellites will be launched in India using Indian rockets. The partnership in the GLONASS system also includes the creation of a new generation of navigation satellites and navigation equipment for users. The two agencies also discussed the development of equipment for remote sensing and joint work on electric motors for

space apparatus. The partnership plan includes proposals for sensing the lunar surface and the creation of a "solar observatory" to study x-rays emitted by the sun.

An Inter-Governmental Agreement on the International North-South Transport Corridor between India, Iran and the Russian Federation was signed in St Petersburg in September 2000. This has been ratified by all the three signatory states and came into force on 16 May 2002. The Agreement will facilitate easier movement of goods along the corridor connecting India through the sea route to Iran and then via the Caspian Sea to the Russian Federation and beyond. This initiative is expected to reduce transit time and cost of transporting goods to the Russian Federation and Europe.

The Military Relationship

India has been an important purchaser of Soviet/Russian military equipment for several decades. Since 1960 the total value of military contracts between India and the USSR/Russian Federation comes to \$33 billion. Some 70% of Indian arms imports are dependent on the former Soviet Union.⁸ During the Cold War period a large quantity of Soviet military equipment was produced under licence in India.

India remains a significant purchaser of Russian military equipment. After China, it is the Russian military industrial complex's most important customer. India accounts for about 20% of Russian arms exports, and China for 40%. In December 2003 it was stated that the value of prospective Russo-Indian military contracts stood at around \$10-12 billion.⁹ However, India has become more interested in purchasing arms from other countries in the post-Cold War period, and New Delhi has also been critical of Russian failure to fulfil all contracts adequately. Indian sources estimate that over the next 20 years India will spend \$100 billion on arms. In Soviet times and at the beginning of the 1990s Indian Armed Forces were largely armed with weapons of Soviet or Russian production. The situation is changing radically. Future arms purchases from Russia will account for no more than one-quarter of that \$100 billion. Experts say that in reality this sum may be even smaller. According to the Deputy Director of the AST centre, Maxim Pyadushkin, India is already saturated with Russian arms, and it is raising its requirements, seeking to obtain more advanced models. But Russia can offer only modifications of models produced back in the late 1980s. India is also deliberately pursuing a policy diversifying its arms suppliers, and does not wish to be dependent on a single country for arms supplies.¹⁰ India has also become interested in developing military-technical cooperation with Ukraine and Belarus.

However, Russia remains an important partner. At the defence exhibition DefExpo India 2004, an exhibition of land and naval weapons systems, Russian firms were well represented. Twenty-five enterprises from the Russian military-industrial complex brought over 370 models of weapons and military hardware and 70 models of dual-purpose and civilian products. The Russian exhibition displayed landing vessels and patrol boats, air defence systems including light missile systems, and helicopters for army and naval aviation. The Amur-1650 and Amur-950 diesel-electric submarines attracted attention.¹¹ Russian producers said they had taken into consideration the Indian Navy's prospective needs - India intends to create its own underwater fleet. Russia also offered a range of conversion projects. Uralvagonzavod - the supplier of the T-90 tanks - also offered a range of road building machines, freight cars and cisterns. Kurganmashzavod - producer of infantry combat vehicles - offered caterpillar cross-country vehicles and tractors. Russian automotive plants promised to launch production of Ural, KamAZ and GAZ trucks and AZ jeeps in foreign countries.

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There are plans to discuss the price of a contract to supply Smerch and Grad multiple rocket launchers (powerful offensive weapons with a range of 40 to 90 kilometres) to the Indian Ground Forces. The Smerch has already been tested in India.¹²

In March 2004 the Elta company (Israel) and Rosoboronexport formally shared a contract to supply three long-range radio-electronic surveillance planes to India. The contract with the Indian Air Force came into force in October 2003. India will receive three Phalcon radars (Israel) mounted on the Il-76 military-transport planes (Russia). The total cost of the contract is estimated to be \$1 billion, but Russia's share will not exceed \$100 million. The agreement with the Israeli company will be fulfilled by the Beriyevev aircraft scientific-industrial complex (Taganrog), the Ilyushin aircraft complex and the Vega scientific-industrial enterprise.¹³

Russo-Indian military-technical cooperation has steadily increased since Putin came to power. In June 2001, the first meeting of the Russian-Indian commission for military-technical cooperation took place in Moscow. The two sides signed a military cooperation protocol to 2010. In February 2002 India and Russia signed four defence protocols in New Delhi. One of the protocols included an agreement on cooperation between the armed forces of the two states. Both countries also decided to develop a satellite global surveillance system and a fifth generation strike aircraft. In August 2002 talks on cooperation took place between Russian navy commander Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov and Indian Navy chief of staff Admiral Madhvendra Singh.

In June 2003 the first ever joint Russo-Indian naval exercises (Indra-2003) took place in the Indian Ocean, with ships of the Russian Pacific Fleet taking part. In October 2003 Col-Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov, Russian air force commander-in-chief, and Indian Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Srinivasapuram Krishnaswamy met in Moscow to discuss the development of military and technical cooperation. Furthermore, when the Indian prime minister visited Moscow in November 2003 it was agreed that there would be further joint training exercises between the Russian and Indian armed forces.

Officers from various Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are now receiving training in Indian military academies. Moscow probably has little objection to this, as she would prefer that Central Asian military officers receive training in India than in China or Pakistan. In addition, Indian servicemen receive training in Russia. In January 2004, defence minister Sergey Ivanov said that there were currently 100 Indian officers studying in Russia. Over the entire Soviet and post-Soviet period, about 10,000 Indian military specialists had studied at Soviet/Russian military institutes.¹⁴

Main Russo-Indian Military Contracts

Contract	Value	Status
1990: 10 diesel electric submarines type 877EKM	Not made known	Fulfilled
1996: 50 Su-30MK and Su-30MKI aircraft, 140 aircraft licensed production	\$3.0 billion	Being fulfilled
1997: 3 frigates type 11356	\$1.0 billion	Fulfilled
2000: 124 tanks T-90S, 176 tanks licensed production	\$0.8 billion	Fulfilled
2002: guided munition "Krasnopol", 2000 pieces	\$80 million	Fulfilled. A series of follow up contracts has been agreed
Sale of the aircraft carrier <i>Admiral Gorshkov</i> , and a packet of 20 contracts for modernising and arming the vessel and its aviation group	\$2-3 billion	Agreed
Three diesel electric submarines type Amur 1650	Not made known	Draft leasing
The sale of 1-2 atomic submarines	Not made known	Project
Supplies of precision tactical rocket Iskander-E	Not made known	Project

Source: Viktor Myasnikov, "Indostan: "Sukhoy" goes into a spin", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 December 2003.

Conclusions

India and Russia will continue to see each other as important partners. There never have been any major points of contention between Moscow and New Delhi since the mid-1950s, and it seem unlikely that any major disputes could arise in the foreseeable future. They have an obvious interest in maintaining a cooperative relationship. India aspires to being a major power in South Asia. Its armed forces are the fourth largest in the world, it has the fourth largest economy in 2000 in terms of purchasing power parity, the eight largest industrial economy, and the world's largest pool of scientists and engineers after the USA. The Indian economy has had an annual average growth rate of 5-7 % since 1991, and India could be the third largest world economic power by 2020.¹⁵ India is therefore capable of playing a major role outside the South Asian region, and may well become one of the major poles in the international system in the twenty-first century. It is therefore logical for Russia to endeavour to cultivate it as a major partner. Both powers have an interest in opposing Islamic inspired terrorism, and Moscow is likely to welcome an active Indian role in Central Asia for this purpose. Indian influence in Central Asia and Afghanistan is from Moscow's standpoint a useful counter to Pakistani influence, particularly if an extremist Islamic regime ever comes to power in Pakistan. Moscow may also see an expanded Indian role in Central Asia as a useful check on Chinese influence in this region. Although Russo-Chinese relations are currently very cordial, China is arguably a serious long-term threat to Russian security interests, and Russia may see India as a counter-weight if this threat does emerge, much as the USSR did during the Cold War. As India plays a key role in maintaining security in the Indian Ocean, a cooperative relationship gives Moscow the opportunity to play a role here too; hence the value to Moscow of joint Russo-Indian naval exercises.

India's value to Russia at the moment lies in India's aspiration towards a multipolar international system; both powers have an interest in opposing American

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unilateralism. However, India's opposition to US foreign policy is now less strong than it was during the Cold War. Relations improved markedly during the 1990s, although they did cool during the Clinton Administration given US opposition to Indian nuclear testing. Relations with the Bush Jr Administration have improved, and US-Indian military cooperation has stepped up since 2001. In some ways, India's relationship with the USA is similar to the Russo-US relationship. Neither power is willing to let its opposition to US unilateralism jeopardise its relationship with Washington, although both see their friendship as a means of signalling to the USA that they have important partners other than Washington. India's potential value to Moscow as a means of mounting a significant challenge to the USA's current position is limited. However, India's growing importance means that Russia will continue to see New Delhi as a major partner, and seek to develop its political, economic and military relationship with it. India has been irritated by the US decision in June 2004 to accord Pakistan the status of Major Non-NATO Ally, which may slightly enhance New Delhi's estimation of its relationship with Moscow.

Pakistan

Russia has seen Pakistan as an important state, partly because of the rivalry it has had with India, and partly also because of the close ties it has had in the Cold War period with the USA and China. Pakistan's rivalry with India, its possession of a nuclear weapon, its interest in Afghanistan and Central Asia, which includes the possibility that elements of the Pakistan foreign policy establishment may be supportive of extremist forms of Islam in this region, are all important factors. Russia therefore desires to develop a cooperative relationship with Pervez Musharraf's government, as representing the best alternative to a radical Islamic regime. At the same time, however, Russia is wary of the fact that there may be elements in the Musharraf leadership that are sympathetic to extremist Islam, for this reason Moscow is concerned about Pakistani influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Russia therefore has to perform a delicate balancing act. It will seek to constrain the growth of Pakistani influence in Central Asia, whilst at the same time not antagonising the Pakistani government. This makes anti-terrorist cooperation with Pakistan more complicated than anti-terrorist cooperation with India. In many respects, Russia and the USA have similar goals towards Pakistan, as both have a strong interest in ensuring that a militant Islamic regime does not come to power in Pakistan.

Prior to the overthrow of the Taleban regime in Afghanistan in October 2001, Russia saw Pakistan (which was the only country that had diplomatically recognised the regime) as a means of restraining the Taleban. In the late 1990s Moscow was concerned that the Taleban in Afghanistan might attempt to export their revolution into Tajikistan, and whilst supporting the anti-Taleban Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, it also encouraged Pakistan to try to influence Taleban foreign policy. In February 2001 the then Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov told Pakistan's ambassador to Moscow, Iftikhar Murshed, that Russia wanted Pakistan to use its influence with Afghanistan's ruling Taleban militia to stop action undermining stability and security in the region.¹⁶

There was however some awkwardness in the Russo-Pakistani relationship. In May 2001, then Secretary of the Security Council Vladimir Rushaylo said that the international community should put pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting the

Taleban and interfering in Afghanistan. President Musharraf responded in an interview in *Izvestiya* that Russia should recognise the Taleban.¹⁷ After 9/11, Pakistan was effectively forced by the USA to end its support for the Taleban, and Russia welcomed Islamabad's decision to join the anti-terrorist coalition. Pakistan, however, did criticise Russian support for the Northern Alliance. Russia and Pakistan were, though, able to agree on the broad goals for a post-Taleban regime in Afghanistan.

The relationship after September 2001 can be described as being correct rather than close. Russia continued to criticise certain aspects of Pakistani policy. In February 2002 Indian Foreign Secretary Chokila Iyer and First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov had talks in Moscow in which they expressed concern about Pakistani influence in Afghanistan. In 2002 the Russian Foreign Ministry also criticised Pakistani missile tests, and called on Pakistan to prevent terrorists infiltrating into Kashmir. In May 2002 then deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov said:

Pakistan should make the first step in the settlement of relations with India ... Russia supports India, which insists that terrorist groups from Pakistan must stop crossing the line of control ... we regard this demand as just and think that the position of India, which does not wish to tolerate terrorism on its territory, is justified.¹⁸

In August 2002, Russia and Pakistan agreed to set up a joint anti-terrorist group, analogous to the Russo-Indian anti-terrorist group, and Losyukov said that Pakistan should do more to combat terrorism. A similar complaint was made by the Foreign Ministry in November 2002. Concern about Pakistani influence in Afghanistan, and Pakistan's alleged inability to combat terrorism fully remained on the Russian agenda. Deputy foreign minister Georgy Mamedov expressed concern in January 2003 that Pakistani nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of al Qaeda.

Since September 2001, there have been moves to improve a stagnant economic relationship. A memorandum of understanding was signed in November 2002 between Gazprom and the Pakistani Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources. Gazprom may also become involved in the construction of a gas pipeline running from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India. In February 2003, President Musharraf also expressed interest in attracting Russians to bid in the prospective privatisation of the Pakistani State Oil and Gas Corporation. Russian firms will also participate in the modernisation of the Karachi steel plant, which was built by Soviet firms in the 1960s.

During President Musharraf's visit to Russia in February 2003, Russia and Pakistan identified a number of promising directions in the development of their economic relations, such as power engineering, metallurgy, telecommunications and a number of infrastructure-related projects.

Russia will continue to attempt to develop a cooperative relationship with Pakistan. Islamabad is too important to ignore. At the same time, it is unlikely that Moscow would ever shift from seeing India as its main partner in South Asia. Pakistan is strongly oriented towards the USA, and Moscow cannot possibly hope to displace Washington as Pakistan's key partner. However, both Moscow and Islamabad see their relationship as being of mutual benefit. Russian sources have claimed that there is Pakistani interest in eventually becoming a member of the Shanghai

Cooperation Organisation, although, as in the case of India, there is little likelihood that this will happen in the near future. In the long-term, however, this might promote Russian aims of becoming further involved in the management of Asian security.

ENDNOTES

- 1 V P Dutt, India's Foreign Policy in a Changing World, New Delhi, Vikas, 1999, p65. Dutt is a former member of the Indian Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Foreign Affairs.
- 2 For text of the partnership and other agreements reached during Putin's visit in October 2000, see the website of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs: <http://www.meadev.nic.in/russianpresident-visit/intro.htm>.
- 3 See the background statement on Russo-Indian relations: <http://www.meadev.nic.in/foreign/newrussia.htm>.
- 4 Putin is due to visit India again at the end of 2004.
- 5 BBC Monitoring, 8 April 2004.
- 6 BBC Monitoring, 13 August 2002.
- 7 BBC Monitoring, 26 February 2003.
- 8 Baldev Raj Nayar & T V Paul, India in the World Order: searching for major power status, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p214-215.
- 9 Mikhail Sidorov, 'Fodder', Profil, 2 February 2004.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Nikolay Pokrosov, 'Smerch hits India', Vremya Novostey, 4 February 2004.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Mikhail Kukrushin, 'Russia, Israel shared an "air radar" with each other', Vremya Novostey, 23 March 2004.
- 14 'Moscow, Delhi intensifying military-technical cooperation,' Defense and Security, 23 January 2004.
- 15 Baldev Raj Nayar & T V Paul, ibid., p9.
- 16 BBC Monitoring, 1 February 2001.
- 17 Izvestiya, 31 May 2001.
- 18 BBC Monitoring Select, 30 May 2002.

Want to Know More ...?

See: **Indian Foreign Policy**

V P Dutt, "*India's Foreign Policy in a Changing World*", New Delhi, Vikas, 1999.

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