

China-Russia relations

By Sonika Gupta

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Siv. Pun

AFTER THE recent Beijing visit of the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, the relations between the two nations are on the upswing. An effusive confidence in building a strong bilateral relationship in political, strategic, military and economic fields marked the visit. In the last five decades, relations between the two states have gone through fundamental changes effecting major policy shifts. The euphoria and revolutionary zeal of the late 1940s and early 1950s was followed by the Sino-Soviet split in the mid-1950s. This was marked by polemical exchanges between the Communist parties of the two states. Bilateral relations hit rock bottom with the 1969 Ussuri river clashes. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and China's economic liberalisation recast the hitherto adversarial relationship into one of cooperation in search of economic development and political stability. Post-September 11, the United States' rise has brought the two countries together in a bid to create a multi-polar world.

Mr. Putin's China visit, coming on the heels of the transfer of power in China, is evidence of the desire to cement the process of cooperation set in place by the Treaty of Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation signed in Moscow last July. The aim of Mr. Putin's visit was to consolidate the gains in bilateral ties achieved over the last year and to chalk out common strategies on issues of global concerns — North Korea, Iraq and terrorism prominent among them. Nuclear proliferation and disarmament were also discussed.

On the economic front, cooperation in the energy sector and increased trade in goods and services were on the agenda. Mr. Putin's admiration for China's economic state plan comes as a role reversal of sorts. In 1949, China had adopted the Soviet command economy model to launch a programme for national development. This was later discredited by Mao Zedong and replaced with an indigenous labour-intensive economic model. In the post-Cold War period, Russia is looking at China as an example and wants to achieve a similar growth rate. Beijing has backed Moscow's bid to join the World Trade Organisation and believes bilateral cooperation is a must for develop-

ment in fields such as nuclear energy and space technology.

The joint statement signed by Jiang Zemin and Mr. Putin provides the framework for increasing cooperation and constructing a mutually beneficial relationship. Over the past decade, the two nations have made incremental progress towards a relationship of strategic coordination. Mr. Putin in an interview to Xinhua identified China as one of Russia's key partners in international relations. The Treaty signed last year has been hailed as establishing a new type of "non-alliance, non-confrontational

power to counter U.S. hegemony. In this context, security analysts are discussing the triangular relationship between Russia, China and India. However, despite the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the three countries this year in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, this idea is not likely to concretise into an anti-U.S. front. A similar meeting is planned for next year which too is unlikely to go beyond discussing issues of common concern. The reason why such a trilateral arrangement is not likely to materialise is that at present, each country values its relationship

to conduct regular discussions on regional security and economic cooperation within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation of which the U.S. is also member.

The latest issue in the northeast Asian regional security is North Korea's declaration about its nuclear arsenal which figured prominently in the talks between Mr. Putin and Mr. Jiang. The carefully crafted statement welcomed the proposal for a nuclear free zone in the Korean Peninsula. The two sides also called upon the U.S. to fulfil its obligations under the 1994 Framework Agreement. Under this agreement, North Korea agreed to halt its nuclear weapons programme in return for U.S. aid for energy plants including construction of nuclear plants. After the North Korean declaration, the U.S. has refused to be bound by the agreement. While Russian concerns are more towards safeguarding the nuclear non-proliferation regime, China would like to see the denuclearisation of South and North Korea.

China and Russia have agreed to coordinate their efforts in arms control and global disarmament. Both sides feel the U.N. should play a more active role in this area. The two sides are also ready to hold bilateral talks on export control related to non-proliferation. They share the view that a legally binding missile proliferation regime is necessary to strengthen the process of arms control. China and Russia are also in favour of concluding an international agreement on weapons-free outer space. Many of these concerns are also relevant to Sino-Indian relations though with different implications. India has time and again raised the issue of missile proliferation from China to Pakistan. However, Indian concerns are not likely to impact any strategic understanding between China and Russia. In any case, many of the above arms control proposals are yet to be effected and as such it is too early to speculate upon their impact on strategic equations between countries.

While Mr. Putin's visit to Beijing did not spell a change in existing policies, it did signal the beginning of closer ties between the two major powers. It also signalled to the U.S. that its unilateralism is breeding serious discontent among big international players. (The writer is Research Scholar, Centre for East Asian Studies, JNU.)

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relationship not targeting any third country relationship". Clearly, the two sides realise the importance of building a cooperative bilateral relationship while maintaining an independent foreign policy.

China and Russia are both increasingly uncomfortable with the growing U.S. power. In the joint statement they agreed that the United Nations was the main mechanism to safeguard world peace and that its role in solving international disputes should be increased. They said the issue concerning Iraq's weapons of mass destruction should be resolved through political and diplomatic means and that the resolutions of the U.N. Security Council in this regard be observed.

The Chinese and Russian concerns stem from the growing U.S. unilateralism in global politics backed by its increasing military power. NATO action in Kosovo and the U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan have demonstrated the will and the reach of the U.S. in dictating the rules of the game in international politics. The looming threat of an U.S. attack on Iraq has cemented the belief that America is ready to alienate major powers in defending its core interests. While neither Russia nor China wants to jeopardise its relationship with the U.S., at the same time they are not averse to creating contending poles of

with the U.S. above other arrangements.

However, Russia and China have set up multilateral fora that are not dominated by the U.S. such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) that discusses regional security and economic cooperation. The SCO was initially set up to tackle border disputes in Central Asia but later evolved into a forum for discussion on regional security and economic issues. It has gained prominence after September 11. China and Russia have huge concerns in this area and the joint declaration declared mutual support in the fight against ethnic separatism. The two countries have also successfully renegotiated the U.S. definition of terror to include movements for self-determination under the rubric of terrorism. The SCO has provided them with the international platform for this exercise. China and Russia also have a joint working group on terrorism and have agreed to exchange intelligence on sensitive issues. They are also keen on strengthening the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Both sides agree that the ARF is an effective mechanism for conducting political dialogue on regional security issues. Russia has reiterated its commitment towards the 'ASEAN plus three' formula to encourage discussion of regional security issues. China and Russia are also willing

THE HINDU

13 DEC 2002

Russia, China pledge friendship

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, DEC. 2. "China and Russia will be good neighbours, friends, and partners forever". This evocative pledge by the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, summed up the spirit of his latest meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Beijing today.

Mr. Jiang's post-summit observation of such an effusive magnitude, quite rare by the standards of China's pragmatic diplomacy in the present phase of the post-Cold War era, was in some measure echoed by Mr. Putin, who underlined that their bilateral relationship had by now "reached a quite high level". The emphatic theme of their summit was the evolution of a special strategic equation between the two countries.

While the timing of the summit compelled the two leaders to bring North Korea under a laser-beam scrutiny in the context of Pyongyang's declarations about its right to possess an arsenal of nuclear weapons and other more potent devices, the overall tone and tenor of the Mr. Jiang-Mr. Putin meeting were determined by the expanding strategic contours of the Sino-Russian landscape. Until nightfall, several hours after the summit took place, no authoritative version of the Joint Statement, which the two leaders signed, was released by the Chinese authorities in Beijing.

While there was not a hint of any dissonance at the summit itself, the sensitive North Korean question required much fine-tuning of the semantics to match the substance of the Sino-Russian accord on this issue. According to unofficial accounts, apparently based on a Russian version of the Joint Statement, the two sides said that they "consider it important for the destiny of the world and security in North East Asia to preserve the non-nuclear status of the Korean peninsula and (sustain) the regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction".

Also underlined was the "extreme importance" of the need for a normalisation of ties between North Korea and the United States on the 'basis' of the accords that they had reached in the past including the one known as the Framework Agreement of 1994. Formulations of this kind, not formally authenticated by an official release from the Chinese side until nightfall, are entirely consistent with the categorical stand that Beijing has often adopted. China stands for a nuclear-weapons-free Korean peninsula that would, by definition, include South Korea and not just its northern neighbour.

For Russia, still a nuclear superpower, non-proliferation under the relevant international law, which Pyongyang is a signatory to, is an article of political faith and strategic maxim in the present post-Cold War era.

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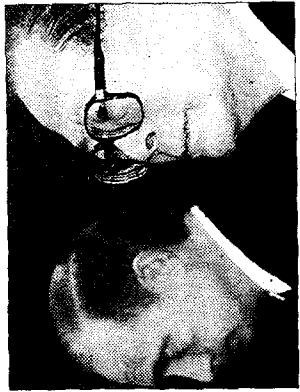
3 DEC 2002

China, Russia pledge to fight terror firmly

ANIL K. JOSEPH
BEIJING, DECEMBER 2

TAKING serious note of terrorist activities within their countries, China and Russia today pledged to deal with the menace with a firm hand while calling for political and diplomatic solutions to weapons crisis in Iraq and denuclearisation of Korean peninsula.

"Both countries will not tolerate the activities on their territories of organisations and groups harming their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity," a joint declaration signed by Chinese President Jiang Zemin and his Russian coun-



Vladimir Putin with Jiang Zemin in Beijing on Monday. Reuters

terpart Vladimir Putin here said. On Iraq, the two leaders said the weapons crisis can only be solved by political and diplomatic means on the basis of UN Security Council resolution.

China and Russia, two of the five veto wielding members of UN Security Council, have opposed any unilateral action against Iraq on the issue and want that any such move must have the world body's approval.

The two leaders urged the US and North Korea to normalise diplomatic relations, and called for making Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. Putin and Jiang, both allies of North Korea, said a nuclear free Korean peninsula was im-

portant for security of the region. The two leaders met a day before Putin embarks on a three-day visit to India. Addressing a joint press conference

after their meeting, Putin said that bilateral relations were at a "very high level" and expressed confidence in China's new leaders who have taken the political stage. "We hope the leaders in our two countries will work hard together to achieve great things," Jiang said the China-Russia good-neighbourly treaty of friendship and cooperation signed last July has provided a solid legal foundation for lasting friendship for generations to come.

"The treaty will guarantee the stable and healthy development of China-Russia relations in the long run," he said, adding that the two countries "will be good neighbours, friends and partners forever". Jiang described his talks with Putin as "rich in content" and said that he and Putin "fully summarised the smooth evolution of the Sino-Russian relationship over the past decade and laid out a blueprint for the future of bilateral ties."

During the past one year and more, Jiang said, the two sides maintained close high-level exchanges and the mutually beneficial cooperation was expanded on all fronts. "The treaty has shown great vitality in action," Jiang said, adding that he believes the document will provide stronger impetus for the future development of bilateral ties. "Under the current complicated international situation, 'peace is the most valuable'," Jiang said quoting an old Chinese saying. —PTI

3 DEC 2002

China seeks to balance strategic relations with U.S., Russia

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, NOV. 30. China is attempting to achieve a fine balance in its strategic equations with the major powers by sustaining a compatibly parallel relationship with both the U.S. and Russia.

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin's prospective three-day visit to Beijing, beginning on Sunday, will in this sense, open a new window of opportunity for the Chinese leadership, which is now in a state of a planned political transition at home.

As the first major world leader to visit Beijing after the latest change at the helm of the governing Communist Party of China, Mr. Putin is expected to engage the Chinese leaders in an en-

tirely future-looking perspective. With the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, remaining at the centre-stage to guide the political transition at home, his talks with Mr. Putin will mark a strategic sequel to the recent Crawford Summit when the U.S. President, George W. Bush, played host to Mr. Jiang.

The usual semantics of summitry apart, the present equation between China and the U.S., as seen by Mr. Jiang himself, is one of a "constructive and cooperative relationship".

As viewed by the American side, the same equation is defined by the additional dimension of a "candid" interaction between the two sides.

However, the substantive new element in the Sino-American engage-

ment is the present plan for "a new dialogue on security issues". In one sense, this new dialogue is already underway, given the intensive manner in which America engages China on the North Korean nuclear arms issue.

In some significant contrast, China has already blasted off (in a salutary rocket science terminology) for a strategic rendezvous with Russia.

The two are the most important prime movers within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which came into being on the basis of a Chinese initiative that struck a receptive chord in Russia.

The two countries are also linked by the "Good Neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation" that was

signed last year. The momentum of such an intensive relationship was given a further thrust during a meeting between the Prime Ministers of the two countries in Shanghai a few months ago.

It is this backdrop that sets the stage for the latest Jiang-Putin summit from tomorrow.

From the comments that Mr. Putin is reported to have made in a conversation with Chinese reporters on the eve of the new summit, it becomes clear that Moscow is looking at its dynamic equation with Beijing through the prism of anti-terror compulsions as also the U.S. plans for a missile defence shield and, more importantly, Russia's own strategic adjustments following

the latest expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation that now includes some former Soviet republics.

From the Chinese standpoint, the norm of sustaining a strategic balance as regards Washington and Moscow is a prime requirement within the framework, though, of creating and stabilising a multi-polar global order that might deny the U.S. an undue hegemonic say over the rest of the world.

As Chinese sources have indicated to *The Hindu*, Beijing is eager not only to "influence" America's foreign policy but also to develop "friendly" ties with Washington. Giving content to China's present strategic dialogue with Russia is the coordinated move by both sides to intensify their economic links.

THE HINDU

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Shanghai meet: Sino-Russian ties on the upswing

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, AUG. 23. China and Russia have entered the boost-phase in enhancing their political and economic exchanges in "a balanced way" after having placed their bilateral trade bandwagon on "a fast track" in the year since the two countries signed the 'Good-Neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation'.

This view has been articulated by the Chinese Prime Minister, Zhu Rong-

ji, and his Russian counterpart, Mikhail Mikhailovich Kasyanov, who held a "regular meeting" with much strategic intensity in Shanghai yesterday.

Mr. Zhu said the exchanges had taken place in an ambience of "deeper political mutual trust" since the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, signed the treaty that signalled a new partnership of strategic cooperation.

Mr. Kasyanov said Russia wished to upgrade the existing level of "the stra-

tegic cooperative partnership" with China, sources said.

The meeting has now taken place amid indications in the West that Mr. Putin might be beginning to draw a line in the sand for Russo-American cooperation that was catalysed by the global "anti-terror war" and looking at opportunities for strategic linkages with other powers as well.

In a linear view of events, it was only after the Sino-Russian good neighbourly treaty was signed last year that

Mr. Putin established a certain strategic rapport with the U.S. President, George W. Bush.

While certain specific aspects of the evolving "anti-terror war" had induced Mr. Putin to gravitate towards the Bush world view, Russia has indicated a clear preference for strategic autonomy and diversified partnership-opportunities since the U.S. renounced its obligations under the old Soviet-American Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty.

It is this dynamic context that has

determined the mood and the consensus at the latest Sino-Russian meeting.

While Russia has in recent months raised the level of its military cooperation with China, Mr. Zhu and Mr. Kasyanov are said to have held "pragmatic and constructive talks" on nuclear power as also other forms of energy besides telecommunications and space-related projects, presumably with a science-and-technology orientation.

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24 AUG 2002

Moscow to sell more arms to Beijing

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, AUG. 22. Russia is mooting the sale of more anti-aircraft missiles and other weapons to China, a Russian news agency report said.

The Interfax news agency quoted a source in a Russian government delegation currently visiting China as saying that the two countries are discussing a "a number" of new defence deals,

including supplies of anti-aircraft systems.

The Russian delegation, led by the Prime Minister, Mikhail Kasyanov, is focussing on economic cooperation with China in the civilian sector, but defence tie-ups are also on the agenda on its August 21-24 visit. Mr. Alexei Volin, the deputy chief of Mr. Kasyanov's staff, said the sides, among other projects,

were discussing the assembly of Russian multi-purpose helicopters in China.

China is reported to have already ordered from Russia this year two Project 956EM Sovremenny destroyers for \$1.4 billions, eight Kilo submarines for \$1.5 billions and S-300F naval air defence systems for \$200 millions. The two sides are also said to be close to striking a deal for the

delivery of about 30 Su-30MK2 fighters equipped with X-31A anti-ship missiles.

Earlier this week, Russia delivered the first 10 of 40 Sukhoi Su-30MKK fighters that China bought last year.

The Russian delegation source told Interfax that Russia sells China weapons worth between \$2 to \$2.5 billions a year.

23 AUG 2002

Singapore
China, Russia offer alternative plan

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, AUG. 22. China and Russia today made common strategic cause, amid the ongoing global campaign against terrorism, by presenting an alternative to the evolving U.S.' framework of international security.

The two nations drafted a nucleus of security norms to serve as the basic building block of "a just and rational international new order". The agreement was spelt out in a joint communique issued by the Prime Ministers of the two countries at the conclusion of their latest 'regular meeting' in Shanghai.

The Chinese Prime Minister, Zhu Rongji, and his Russian counterpart, Mikhail Kasyanov, said the concept should be anchored to international law. "Mutual trust, equality and cooperation" among the states with an anti-terror fervour would form the framework of the updated security concept.

The salient features of the strategic entente are their stern opposition to the unilateralist style and substance of the United States, an urgent appeal to the international community to safeguard the outer space

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from weaponisation moves of any country, most notably the U.S., and a definitive proposal that the United Nations Security Council "should play a core role in (the) international anti-terrorist operations".

While China and Russia have not actually distanced themselves from the U.S.-led anti-terror war, Mr. Zhu and Mr. Kasyanov have certainly made a joint effort to compete with the U.S. for the common strategic space in this global campaign. The real political significance of the latest Sino-Russian accord is that China, which first spoke of a new security concept at the recent ASEAN Regional Forum session in Brunei, has now found a partner in Russia.

China made its move in Brunei in the context of America's effort there to begin fashioning a worldwide web of anti-terror alliances. Now, China and Russia have portrayed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which binds them with some Central Asian republics, as a worthy anti-terror group, in a purely regional context as distinct from the larger global scene and the U.N.'s relevance to it.

An authoritative Chinese summary of the latest Sino-Russian joint communique

speaks of "the urgency for ensuring that (the) outer space remains weapons-free". The entire international community has been urged to take necessary legal steps to ensure a weapons-free outer space.

Terrorism, according to the leaders of China and Russia, "poses a common threat to the whole international community".

Given this reality, any anti-terrorist strikes should be undertaken only on the basis of international law and in observance of the U.N. Charter. Calling for closer international cooperation to fight terror, Mr. Zhu and Mr. Kasyanov said the anti-terrorist strikes, such as those now being carried out under the U.S.' auspices, should suffer from "no double standards". Nor should terrorism be linked to specific ethnic groups or religions. Above all, the U.N. and its Security Council should take the lead and play a "core role" insofar as international anti-terrorist operations are concerned. The two Prime Ministers noted that such concepts would help promote a better framework for international relations and advance economic globalisation as also "multi-polarisation processes" in global politics.

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