

Chapter-2

The End of Bipolarity

1. The Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 gave birth to USSR with inspiration of socialism, based on following principles:-

- To ensure a minimum standard of living for all its citizens
- The government subsidised basic necessities
- Productive assets were owned and controlled by the state.

2. Russia was the only republic among fifteen republics who dominates everything and people from other regions felt neglected and often suppressed.

3. Soviet Union lagged behind the west in technology, infrastructure and could not fulfil political aspirations of people.

- The Soviet system, however, became very bureaucratic and authoritarian, making life very difficult for its citizens.
- Lack of democracy and the absence of freedom of speech stifled people who often expressed their dissent in jokes and cartoons.
- Most of the institutions of the Soviet state needed reform: the one-party system represented by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had tight control over all institutions and was unaccountable to the people.
- Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 also weakened the system furthermore.

4. Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of Communist Party of Soviet Union in 1985 initiated the policies of economic and political reforms to democratise the system which were opposed by leaders within communist party and contradictory view of people.

- Reforms were necessary to keep the USSR abreast of the information and technological revolutions taking place in the West.
- However, Gorbachev's decision to normalise relations with the West and democratise and reform the Soviet Union had some other effects that neither he nor anyone

else intended or anticipated.

- The people in the East European countries which were part of the Soviet bloc started to protest against their own governments and Soviet control.

5. The people of republic had been fed up with old style rule of Soviet bloc and in Dec 1991, under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin (an elected leader), Russia, Ukraine and Baltics declared themselves independent.

6. The formation of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) came as a surprise and the exclusion of these states was resolved by making them founder members of the CIS.

7. Russia was accepted as successor state of Soviet Union by inheriting a Soviet seat in UN Security Council, who accepted all international treaties and commitments of Soviet Union and carried out some nuclear disarmament measures with the US.

8. Now Soviet Union had been disintegrated on the grounds to maintain nuclear and military arsenals, awareness of people of their backwardness than western capitalism as well as alienation of ordinary people who were exempted from any kind of privileges.

9. The rise of nationalism and the desire for sovereignty within republics like Russia, the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Ukraine, Georgia and others proved to be the most immediate cause for disintegration of USSR.

10. Disintegration of USSR resulted into the end of Cold War confrontations, created dominant capitalist system, emerged many new states and the advantage was taken by Central Asian countries of their geographical locations by maintaining relations with Russia, the West, the US, China and others.

11. The process of transition from an authoritarian socialist system to a democratic capitalist system in Russia, Central Asia and East Europe was influenced by World Bank and IMF came to be known as Shock Therapy.

12. Shock Therapy involved :-

- Privatisation of property,
- Private firms emergence,
- Complete switch over to free trade and Foreign Direct Investment,
- Financial opening up, Currency convertibility
- Break up of existing trade alliances among the countries of Soviet Bloc to maintain relations directly with the West.

13. Consequences of Shock Therapy :-

- The largest garage sale in history,
- Declined value of Russian Currency 'Ruble', due to inflation, food was imported,
- Destroyed Old Social Welfare System,
- Migration of educated and intellectual manpower and
- Disparities due to privatisation between rich and poor in the regions of Russia.

14. The constitution of newly democratic institutions was drafted in a hurry where strong executives appointed themselves as presidents due to weak Parliament and lack of independent judiciary as in Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

15. Revival of Russia in 2000 due to export of natural resources like oil, natural gas and minerals which were available in abundance in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. And from where these pipelines crossed, were paid on rent.

16. Most of the former Soviet Republics had civil wars and insurgencies as in Russia,

- two republics Chechnya and Dagestan had violent secessionist movements, in Central Asia.
- Civil War took place in Azerbaijan and Georgia.
- Czechoslovakia was also split into two.
- Even countries and provinces like Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia are fighting over river water leading to instability and making life difficult for ordinary people.

17. The Central Asian Republics were rich in hydrocarbon resources for economic benefit as Oil Companies and outside powers had a competition to exploit these natural resources. Also the US approached them to hire bases and territories during wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

18. Russia and India share a vision of

- Multipolar world order,
- Collective security,
- Greater regionalism,
- Negotiated settlements of international conflicts,
- On independent foreign policy
- Decision making through UN.

19. India is benefitted from Russia on issues of

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- Kashmir,
 - Energy supplies,
 - Sharing information on international terrorism,
 - Access to Central Asia and balancing its relations with China.

In return Russia has also been benefitted from India on the ground of second largest arms market for Russia.