

The End of Bipolarity

FACTS THAT MATTER

1. The Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 gave birth to USSR with inspiration of socialism, ensure a minimum standard of living for all its citizens and also the government subsidised basic necessities and productive assets were owned and controlled by the state.
2. Russia was the only republic among fifteen republics who dominates everything and people in the region.
3. Soviet Union lagged behind the west in technology, infrastructure and could not fulfil political aspirations of 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.
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 as well as break up of existing trade alliances among the countries of Soviet Bloc to maintain relations directly with the West.

13. Shock Therapy resulted in 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 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. Russia revived 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 and decision making through UN.

19. India is benefitted from Russia on issues of 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.

WORDS THAT MATTER

1. Soviet System: Soviet system was introduced after Russian Revolution in 1917 based on the principles of egalitarian society and planned economy controlled by the state.

2. Socialist Bloc: The east European countries were known as Socialist Bloc because these countries were liberated from the fascist forces and their political and economic systems were based on this bloc only.

3. Capitalist Economy: In this economy, land and productive assets are owned and controlled by the Capitalists.

4. Unipolar System: Affairs at international level are dominated by only one superpower.

5. Multipolar System: Affairs at international level can not be dominated by one superpower only, instead group of countries play an important role.

6. Egalitarian Society: It believes that all people are equally

important and should have the same rights and opportunities in life.

7. Largest Garage Sale: It was resulted due to Shock Therapy to undervalue the valuable industries of USSR to sell them at throwaway prices.

8. Shock Therapy: The model of transition from authoritarian socialist system to a democratic capitalist system in Russia, Central Asia and East Europe under the influence of the World Bank and IMF.

TIMELINE

- **March 1985** Mikhail Gorbachev elected as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; appoints Boris Yeltsin as the head of the Communist Party in Moscow; initiates a series of reforms in the Soviet Union.
- **1988** Independence movement begins in Lithuania; later spreads to Estonia and Latvia.
- **October 1989** Soviet Union declares that the Warsaw Pact members are free to decide their own future; Berlin Wall falls in November.
- **February 1990** Gorbachev strips the Soviet Communist Party of its 72-year long monopoly on power by calling on the Soviet Parliament (Duma) to permit multiparty politics.
- **March 1990** Lithuania becomes the first of the 15 Soviet republics to declare its independence.
- **June 1990** Russian parliament declares its dependence from the Soviet Union.
- **June 1991** Yeltsin, no longer in the Communist Party, becomes the President of Russia.
- **August 1991** The Communist Party hardliners stage an abortive coup against Gorbachev.
- **September 1991** Three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania becomes UN members (Later join NATO in March 2004).
- **December 1991** Russia, Belarus and Ukraine decided to annul the 1992 Treaty on the creation of the USSR and establish the

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan joined the CIS (Georgia joined later in 1993); Russia took over the USSR seat in the United Nations.

- **25 December 1991** Gorbachev resigns as the President of the Soviet Union; the end of the Soviet Union.