



Russia's Role in Turbulent Times

by Dmitry Medvedev, President of Russia

New Stage of the Russian-Bangladeshi Relations

by Gennady Trotsenko, Ambassador of Russia to Bangladesh



Over the past few years the growing ambitions of "resurgent Russia" became one of the most actively debated topics at the international arena – and often the reason for concern and even alarm. Lately, as economic concerns globally proved to be a priority, the importance of this topic appears to abate. The crisis brings the opportunity to sensibly and rationally evaluate one's own international strategies and the risks emerging from the actions of other states.

In Russia, our priority is to ensure the resumption of economic growth, and this growth should be sustainable, and based on a more balanced structure of the economy. We will continue our efforts to modernize the economy, encouraging innovation and diversification.

Globally, Russia will continue to be a reliable source of energy and other raw materials. As such, we will remain dependent on the economic well-being of our customers and countries that provide transit services for Russia's exports. This is why Russia will continue its efforts to promote a legally binding agreement on international energy co-operation. Simultaneously, the task of modernization of the national economy requires that we remain large importers of new equipment, technology and services. In other words, Russia sees itself as part of the global trade

system, and wants to build stronger, more friendly and comfortable relations with all our partners. WTO accession remains on our agenda: we hope to conclude talks in 2010.

Year 2010 so far has been turbulent, financially and economically, both for Russia and the world: the depth of the current crisis, and the complexity of the problems that it has revealed, mean a protracted period of stabilization and recovery. The green-shoots talk will be heard now and again, with many countries becoming the unexpected leaders of economic growth. Yet it is the quality of recovery that matters, not the pace.

Currently the efforts of governments focus increasingly on post-crisis development. The foundations of a new economy start to emerge, and I expect that a reassessment of values will precede this process. The issues of security and environmental protection, reduction in consumption of energy and other natural resources, accessibility of information, health, greater mobility – all of these will become increasingly pressing and urgent. Reflecting these challenges, government spending on research will remain a priority.

Russia is no exception. We have already intensified our efforts to promote science and research in those fields that will be supportive of long-term sustainable development. We are also ready to invest in energy-saving technologies, research and development in the fields of nuclear power and alternative energy, further exploration of outer space, information technology, new medical technologies and medicines. It will create additional opportunities for global cooperation, and I am confident that Russia's contribution will be in demand worldwide.

Needless to say we must rely on political and diplomatic, rather than military, tools in resolving conflicts. The role of regional cooperation will increase. The policies of the leading world powers will be more and more focused on strengthening global security, rather than securing the dominance of any particular nation. We welcome in this respect the evident willingness of the current US administration to follow this route.

**It's good to talk**

Finally, a few words on the issue of global forums. Many have been saying lately that the new G20 format is replacing G8, making the latter redundant. Indeed, the G20 summits have been some of the most important global events lately. In my opinion, there is little sense in comparing the influence of the G8 summit in Italy with the decisions of the London and Pittsburgh G20 summits which took place in 2009. The interdependence of countries and regions means that new formats of dialogue will appear. G20 proved to be an effective format for discussion of global economic issues. However, G8 for the time being can remain the main forum for issues of international politics and security. Russia will continue to contribute to the work of both summits. Maintaining some specific summit format is not as important as creating favourable conditions for dialogue.

The experience of shows the importance of maintaining dialogue at the international level, and while it may not bring immediate results, it helps to reduce tensions and increase trust. This spirit of global co-operation must be carried into future. As the economic crisis in the largest economies becomes less acute, it is necessary to turn attention to tackling the global issues whose priority could have slipped over the past months. We can be confident that the world has learnt from the crisis only if the work to reduce global inequality continues, if not intensifies.



It gives me immense pleasure to address all citizens of Bangladesh on the occasion of the National Day of the Russian Federation. The 12th of June is a date of special significance for each and every Russian and for all those around the world who have warm feelings towards Russia and its people. On this day our country made its choice in favour of democracy, market economy, human rights and cooperation with other states

regardless of their political or economic system. On June 12, 1990 Russia stepped on the way of renovation and rejuvenation, though preserving its priceless and plentiful historical and cultural heritage. Our country has gone through dramatic social and political transformations during its thousand-year history, but nevertheless we, as the people of Russia, have retained a deep-rooted feeling of historical continuity and belonging to a strong nation.

One thing that the Russian people have preserved throughout all historical epochs is admiration for a true friendship. As a famous proverb says – "new friends are silver, old friends are gold". Bangladesh is one of these old and precious friends for Russia. The Russian-Bangladeshi ties have been tested over the decades and proven to be of true value for the two peoples.

Russia and Bangladesh started to develop friendly and mutually beneficial relations in the early 70s, from the very first days of Bangladesh as an independent state. However, the foundation for this friendship had been laid even before that. As every Bangladeshi citizen knows, the Soviet government raised its voice at the international arena against the atrocities being done to the people fighting for their freedom in 1971. The USSR also provided its support to Bangladesh in acquiring international recognition and joining the UN. We are honoured to know that up to this day Bangladeshis in this country and wherever they are in the world remember with gratitude the contribution of Russia to the emergence and further progress of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state.

Over the years Russia and Bangladesh have been sharing close or similar positions on the numerous pressing issues of the international agenda, such as matters of global security, counterterrorism, dialog of civilizations, mitigation of negative effects of climate change, strengthening of food and energy security. Russia has always seen Bangladesh as a reliable partner in promoting the principles of a multipolar global architecture and fair international economic system.

As for economic relations it is a matter of pride that the USSR/Russia has assisted Bangladesh in construction of the power plants which nowadays are contributing more than a quarter to the total power output in the country. With the view of assisting Bangladesh in overcoming its power shortage Russia is ready to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in this regard not only by modernizing the existing power plants and building similar ones but also by exploring traditional and alternative energy resources as well as by introducing new

and advanced technologies. In fact, establishment of closer cooperation in the field of energy and power has been dominating the bilateral agenda over the last year or so. This issue has helped the two sides to move the dialog between them to a new stage starting the phase of reactivation of the Russian-Bangladeshi relations in a variety of spheres.

This positive trend recently has been confirmed by a number of steps from the both sides. Thus, in April this year a high-powered delegation headed by Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment of Bangladesh Syed Abdus Samad had fruitful talks with the top management of the Russian oil and gas giant "Gazprom" and its subsidiary "Gazprom Zarubezhneftegaz". The sides agreed to establish joint expert groups for exploring possible projects of cooperation. It was also agreed to start drafting the Memorandum of Understanding between "Gazprom" and "Petrobangla".

May 2010 witnessed a milestone event in the development of the Russian-Bangladeshi interaction. The two countries struck a long-awaited agreement on cooperation in the field of use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, which opened the way for detailed discussion on establishment of the first nuclear power plant in Bangladesh with Russian assistance. The meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Russia and Bangladesh Sergey Lavrov and Dipu Moni showed the importance which the two sides attach to the promotion of cooperation. It was also stressed at the meeting that the upcoming visit of Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina to Russia is expected to be a leap forward in development of the Russian-Bangladeshi relations.

I would like to note that there is a lot to be done to reclaim the opportunities for cooperation which used to be overlooked before and there is a great potential yet to be fulfilled. I am confident that more and more frequent contacts between the officials of the two countries will provide the way for promotion of the Russian-Bangladeshi partnership to a qualitatively new level. This process can be facilitated inter alia by updating and broadening of the legal framework of the bilateral relations.

Russia and Bangladesh have had fruitful cooperation in the past and now relying on that experience, our two countries have every opportunity to work further together to ensure future development of these close relations for the sake of progress and prosperity of our peoples. The favourable conditions and fertile ground are in place. The only thing that the two peoples need now to achieve positive results in this regard is determination to go forward.

Long live the Russian-Bangladeshi friendship and cooperation!

Russian Diplomacy in a Changing World

by Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia

Human history from time to time reaches a turning point when its relatively smooth development gives way to a new era. The world is experiencing such a turning point now too. We witness a radical transformation of international relations. The world financial crisis has become a powerful catalyst for change, marking the end of the post-Cold War period of geopolitical uncertainty. The crisis of the West-centric international system stands apparent. New centers of power and influence are gaining strength. The heterogeneity, multiplicity and cultural and civilization diversity of the world stand ever more clearly revealed, and accordingly, the task of finding common denominators as a basis for international cooperation acquires new content.

The main vector for change is fairly obvious. We are talking about the formation of a polycentric world order and the creation of the foundations of a more democratic system of international relations. The scale of the common challenges dictates a unifying agenda in international affairs.

The object of international relations transforms accordingly. It is no longer armchair politics around a territorial re-division of the world and markets in anticipation of military conflicts. Modern diplomacy deals with the whole range of issues – from security to the issues of sustainable socioeconomic development and environmental protection. Methods of conducting affairs in international relations are also undergoing major change. It is no longer hierarchical configurations but a multi-pronged network diplomacy that presupposes flexible forms of interaction.

We in Russia made an analysis of the changes in the world and clarified the priorities of our foreign policy in a changing external environment such as pragmatism, openness, multivectorness, and the consistent, but non-confrontational advancement of national interests. Our task is to continue actively to ensure that Russia's national interests are maximally considered in accordance with the centuries-old traditions of our country as one of the leading states in the world with global interests.

Russia actively participates in the work of various multilateral formats, designed to help

determine the basic parameters of a new multipolar world which must rely upon the collective leadership of major states, representative in terms of geography and civilizations. It is, first and foremost, about the United Nations Security Council, but also about the G20, G8 and other international and regional entities. Prompt international community action under Group of Twenty auspices in response to the challenge of the global financial and economic crisis is a sign of the times. The G20 is establishing itself as the primary mechanism for coordinating approaches to global macroeconomic issues. However, there is still a great deal to be done, particularly establishing clear rules of the game in this forum.

In conditions of an ever-increasing interdependence of the contemporary world, the problem of ensuring equal and indivisible security in its global and regional dimensions is especially acute. A cause for concern in this regard is the situation in the Euro-Atlantic region.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization a real opportunity emerged to make the OSCE a full-fledged organization providing equal security for all states in the Euro-Atlantic region. However the Western partners made the choice in favor of the policy of NATO expansion, which meant not only preserving the lines that separated Europe during the Cold War into zones with different levels of security, but also moving those lines eastward.

Put forward by Russian President Medvedev in June 2008, the initiative for concluding a European security treaty has made it possible to launch a solid thought process at various intergovernmental and political security venues. The main purpose of this proposal is to confirm in a legally binding form, the existing political commitments that no one should secure himself at others' expense.

A moment of convergence has appeared in the Euro-Atlantic region. This makes itself evident in the improved atmosphere of Russian-American relations, including progress such as the new, parity-based START follow-on agreement; in the advancing formation of Russia's strategic partnership with the European Union; and in the ongoing process of the normalization

of relations within the Russia-NATO Council. At the same time, the Cold War prejudices are very tenacious in Euro-Atlantic politics. Much will depend, inter alia, on the direction of NATO's reform.

Establishing an effective collective security system in the space from Vancouver to Vladivostok would help reinforce the US-EU-Russia triangular construction, which is objectively designed to act as the basis for political cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic region.

The principles of network diplomacy find practical application in the foreign policy activity of Russia in different areas. A case in point is the development of cooperation within the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

We presume that the greater the number of centers of economic growth, financial clout and the political influence that goes with them, the more stable is the world structure as a whole. At this stage of historical development we are witnessing a powerful strengthening of the position of China in the global economy and finance, the uplift of India, Brazil and other major developing countries and the transformation of the Asia-Pacific region into the locomotive of global economic growth.

Such major shifts in the international situation naturally bring forth efforts to create and readjust the security mechanisms in different regions. The issues of bolstering security are no less relevant in the Asia-Pacific region than in Europe and in the absence of an umbrella organization incorporating all the region's states deliberation intensifies on this topic in different formats, including the ASEAN Regional Forum.

In today's world there is a persistent tendency everywhere to strengthen its regional and subregional levels. For Russia this trend manifests itself in the advancement of the idea of its modernization partnership with the European Union, and in the development of the integration processes within the Commonwealth of Independent States. Deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS member states is an absolute priority of Russian foreign policy. Significant results have been achieved, among the CIS countries – the formation of the Customs Union composed of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, the decision to establish

the Anti-Crisis Fund and the High Technology Center of the EurAsEC, the signing within the CSTO framework of the agreement on the Collective Operational Reaction Forces and the beginning of their creation.

Another lesson from the crisis is the danger of moral relativism, amounting to nihilism in fact, and the realization that society cannot function normally without the recognition of the moral nature of man. It is necessary to lay a common moral foundation predicated on the values of major world religions, which constitute the spiritual and moral basis of human solidarity.

The reaction to the Russian foreign policy initiatives suggests that our emphasis on the "security through development" formula has led many partners to take a fresh look at the prospects for deepening relations with our country.

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