

# Islam as a Factor in Russian Foreign Policy: An Analysis

Dinesh Kumar\*

---

## *Abstract*

*Islam as a religion plays a very prominent role in Russia in the formulation of foreign policy choices, both due to its geopolitical variable and domestic factor. The dissolution of the Soviet Union marked the end of an era where ideology dominated the international politics. It led to “a condition of ‘geopolitical vertigo’ a state of confusion where the old nostrums of the Cold War were redundant and new ones had not yet been invented, issued and approved” (Tuathail 1998: 103). The Russian foreign policy makers were forced to reinvent, rethink, and rewrite the new contour of its foreign policy as a result of the “geopolitical vertigo.” Islam, however, is one of the significant aspects that helped statecraft to solve this issue of “geopolitical vertigo.” Under Vladimir Putin’s administration, Russia has redoubled its efforts in its foreign policy to promote multipolarity and protect its geo-strategic interest using Islam and the Islamic world. In order to strengthen its ties, protect its interests, and maintain its strong position in the Muslim world. Russia also uses para-diplomacy of Muslim-dominated republics of the federation. Moreover, Moscow has actively employed soft power to interact with the Islamic world in addition to the usage of hard military force. This article examines how Islam has influenced Russian foreign policy in this context. It asserts that Islam has been a dominant theme that fashioned new challenges and opportunities for foreign policy establishment in Post-Soviet Russia. This study is based on a comprehensive analysis of various academic and governmental sources to provide an in-depth understanding of Islamic influence on foreign policy choices of the Russian Federation.*

*Key words:- Russian Foreign Policy, Traditional Islam, Islamic Factor, Post-Soviet Russia.*

## **Introduction**

The status of Islam in world politics cannot be ignored any longer as a factor to be considered in strategic decision-making, as is becoming abundantly clear. Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has the opinion that “faith-based diplomacy

---

\*Assistant Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi