



## The Role of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) with special reference to U.S. Rivalry towards Central Asia

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### Abstract

*It examines the emergence of Chinese headed and Russian backed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The SCO member states occupy a territory over 60 percent of the world's land mass; have a population more than one third and nearly 45 percent world's energy reserves. It provides brief introduction (such as formation, structure, aims, principles and challenges) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In this research article, it is analysis the SCO's role in Central Asia and also discuss about challenges for Unites States.*

**Keywords:** Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), United States of America, Central Asia, Organization, China, charter.

### Introduction

As a comparatively triumphant macro-regional balancing attempt with a counseling safety structure, the Shanghai Five and later on the SCO have well-known position in the safety structural design of Central Asia. In the agenda by them, come into view two major grounds of direction; safety of regional level and particularly post year 1997 economy. By this regard, evaluating these controls were supposed to be the valuable, since Shanghai Five and its descendant organization SCO had dedicated majority of their attempts to these grounds<sup>1</sup>. Journalists of Western side were known as the inventors of the name of Shanghai Five and that was for their personal ease and it was also recognized by all the relevant sides. Afterward, the justification was presented by Chinese side regarding the site for a regional forum in Shanghai instead of in Beijing as a choice that was likely to reproduce the character of parity amongst the states having membership. The Shanghai Five, which was established on April 26, 1996, in Shanghai, China, when the Heads of state of Russia, China and three states from Central Asia Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan agreed and then signed the Agreement on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions<sup>2</sup>. This Treaty was broad attainment, surrounding a wrap up of fourteen accords on the border related issues and confidence building measures related to military<sup>3</sup>. The main initial objective for founding the organization was to settle border disputes, which included on 7400 kilometers, inherited from the Soviet-era and to avoid conflict amongst the five countries<sup>4</sup>.

On 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 2001, in the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shanghai Five in the city Shanghai changed the organization into an institution of international level with the authority of being fledged fully now named as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This was the place in which this organization practiced its 1<sup>st</sup> extension,

by submitting the admittance for Uzbekistan to become a new member in it. SCO was set up to imitate the new realism of organization when on 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2001 six chiefs of their states signed the assertion. It was also signed for the Shanghai Covenant on the Terrorism Repression, Extremism related to Religious matters as well as the Separatism. A meeting was conducted on 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2002 between the member states of SCO in the city of St. Petersburg, in Russia and these members did the signature over the Charter of SCO<sup>5</sup>. In this charter, the aims and principles about the system were clearly defined along with the structure of organization, operational format, and direction of cooperation, external relations and the Accord on the structure of Regional anti-terrorist, marking a concrete institution of this novel organization inside the hurdles of internationally accepted law.

### Aims and Principles of SCO

The main aims of SCO according to its Charter and the announcement on the organization of SCO were declared as: giving strength to joint belief, good cooperation and companionship amongst members of SCO; to develop their efficient collaboration in the matters related to politics, business and finance, science and technology, civilization, energy, education, protection of environment, transport and other fields; to work jointly to uphold peace of the region, safety and solidity and to promote the formation of a new global political and financial arrange which features Justice, democracy and wisdom<sup>6</sup>.

SCO too stands by the subsequent fundamental Principles: to stick to the aims and principles of the United Nation's Charter; to give respect to sovereignty of each other, independence and regional reliability, no intrusion in the interior issues of each other, no use of mutually or threaten of utilization of power; to

remain equal amongst all members; to settle down over all the questions via discussions; to avoid become ally or to direct in opposition to any other organization or country and to open to the world outside and show will to perform dialogues of all types, swaps and collaboration with other countries and pertinent global or local organizations.

## **Membership**

Presently, six countries were included in SCO as members those are its originators: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Just before that ending, five countries were granted the status of observer by SCO and those countries were Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, India and Mongolia. Turkey and Sri Lanka were designated as the Dialogue Partners whereas the Guest Attendances comprises with Turkmenistan, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)<sup>7</sup>. Still Organization was not closed for new members.

## **Structure of the SCO**

The SCO comprised with two major enduring bodies in order to run its procedures: In Tashkent the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) and in Beijing the Secretariat. The appointments of Secretary General and director of the Executive Committee were performed by Council of Heads of States of this organization for three years duration. Russian and Chinese were named as official languages for working in SCO<sup>8</sup>.

The bodies of SCO, defined in Charter were; Highest body of SCO was the Council of Heads of State in order to convene yearly; the responsibility in the 1<sup>st</sup> place for financial matter and budget related lies over the Council of Heads of Government and they perform the convenes ones in a year; Examination of present matters in SCO work was performed by The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; Present activities of SCO were coordinated and managed by The Council of National Coordinators (harmonization of collaboration and interface of pertinent ministries and institutions of government), This was done thrice in a year; RATS was an enduring part of SCO with the mission of coordination against the battle against terrorism worldwide, extremism and self-rule, Located in Bishkek; In Beijing, The Secretariat of SCO was located and works as the enduring limb for administration<sup>9</sup>.

## **Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Central Asia**

States of Central Asia look to join growing significance to SCO, while no other additional local player or local program had been so timely in handling the safeguarding and financial issues of the region. Having the status of closed in, wealthy of resources states of Central Asia require an opening for financial progress. This passage was being supplied by Russia and China, which comprise their relevant practical concerns in taking the benefit

from the hydrocarbon resource budding of the zone. Hence, it was the joint compatibility of financial concerns that had covered the distance for larger harmony of ties amongst member states of SCO<sup>10</sup>.

States of Central Asia also recognized their gains and participation of the SCO in a different manner. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan desired to participate significantly in the area and reckon status of SCO as assisting in increasing their own status. On the other hands, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan reckon their role in the SCO as instrument to resolve the local matters of finance and solidity. Specifically, Kyrgyzstan relates its local solidity with safeguarding collaboration inside the framework of SCO<sup>11</sup>. These differences regarding perceptions put impact of contribution and interest of organization's member states. Then there was substantial dissimilarity in the inside organization and financial progress of every state and joint gains of financial collaboration amongst such states were not clear. States of Central Asia too require get a poised status between their foreign policies and the procedure of domestic collaboration as the slope towards either of them could leave any effect over the unity of the SCO.

From the very beginning, the issue of terrorism had been considered as the highly prioritized issue in the agenda of SCO, as the recognized probable hazard of militants belonging to Islam was the major danger that connects safeguarding strategies of regions of the countries jointly in SCO<sup>12</sup>. Extremism of Uygur in Xinjiang had been a concerned for China while Russians had been worried for quite some time from the Chechen terrorism. Countries belonging to Central Asian region around the period of year 1996 to 2000 were featured by the climb of extremism of Islam in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan had been worried regarding the safety risk caused by the Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan had caused a general threat to the safety of Central Asian region<sup>13</sup>.

In mid 1990s, when Taliban emerged, since then by all the countries of SCO, Afghanistan had been identified as the major exporting nation of extremism of religion and regional terrorism. Yet in the middle of the continuing war, to confront against the terrorism and United States had prepared for their extraction in the year of 2014 after making the safety related condition of Afghanistan yet further uncertain. The likely overflow of militarism led by Taliban from the region of Afghanistan stays a subject of deep worry for member countries of SCO.

It had been proved by SCO itself that it had come up as a regional stage to respond to the hazard of terrorism together. Its key organization for the intention was Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) situated in Uzbekistan, Tashkent and it was formed for the duration of the June 2004 SCO peak there<sup>14</sup>. The main functions of SCO also include gathering and assessment of terrorists' organizations related information, swapping of related

information and familiarity amongst member of SCO, analysis of terrorism of distinguished types, keeping an eye over efforts of SCO members countries against the terrorism, looking for the fresh approaches and techniques for complain against terrorism, growth of collaboration with alike organizations and centers, giving encouragement to flourishing accomplishment of the Shanghai Convention to combat extremism, separatism and terrorism and to publish and distribute the related data<sup>15</sup>. In spite of the fact that it had limitation of capability, RATS had assisted to avoid 250 terrorist assaults in member states of SCO<sup>16</sup>.

Attempts had been made by SCO to encourage collaboration against terrorism amongst SCO members by arranging various military exercises together, organizing defense minister's meetings or regular basis and arranging training sessions for security forces for the members from Central Asia. The initial military exercise of SCO was held successively in Kazakhstan and China in the year 2003<sup>17</sup>.

A further this type of exercise was conducted by the security forces of members of SCO in March 2006, named as East-Anti-Terror-2006. It was conducted in Uzbekistan<sup>18</sup>. Simultaneously, war games, named Peace Mission 2005 were held by China and Russia in year 2005, whereas there was a participation of all SCO states' troops in Peace Mission 2007 which was held in Russia. It was reckoned the biggest exercise of SCO because it included about 80 aircrafts and 6500 troops from all members of SCO and Uzbekistan also participated in that exercise.

Summit of SCO in Shanghai, in June 2006, an accord over the process of conducting and arranging combined actions to counter the terrorism in the regions of member countries of SCO, Co-leaders argued that the raise of terrorisms related hazels, separatism and extremism made it essential to involve the armed forces at full scale.

As long as organizing non-conventional hazards such as arms smuggling, illegitimate migration and narcotics was concerned, SCO had formed a Contact Group with the Afghanistan and that was the key cause of these hazards<sup>19</sup>. Central Asia was a main drug shifting way in Eurasia because of vulnerable boundary control and inadequate anti-shifting harmonization. On September 27, 2010 the RATS marked a Protocol of Collaboration with the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC) in order to fight drug shifting, trans-border crimes related to drug and following financing matters related to terrorism. CARICC was an effort to mutually control the drug and it was formed in year 2006 between countries of Central Asian, Russia and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

SCO members, as part of the action plan from the SCO-sponsored conference for Afghanistan in 2009, agreed to consider establishing a regional anti-drug training center moving forward on an idea originally proposed by Tajikistan officials to be based in Dushanbe. Officials from the SCO

states' counter drug agencies meet regularly to discuss the status and prospects of joint efforts against trafficking and to build five-year anti-drug strategy programs.

SCO member states, specially belonging to Central Asia were provided a cooperative stage in order to efficiently deal with matters of mutual interests. By this, raising degree of understanding was also toughened amongst members of SCO that a massive amount of problems they had to go through with could only be resolved by mutual beneficial collaboration of regional type. Thus, unsurprisingly, in no much time, SCO succeeded in forming fundamental structural and lawful basis for regional collaboration, increasing ties related to safety and defense, especially for countering the terrorism, to strengthen the financial, trading and communicational links, harmonization of attachments between the member countries and raising the picture and status of organization internationally. All the elements were there in Central Asia for a proper regional assimilation procedure to be successful. It's financially deprived but countries enriched with resources require expanding. Russia and China as two enormous authorities had tactical motives for the expansion and assimilation of Central Asia, as it guarantees the increase of their personal worldwide financial and safety ability<sup>20</sup>.

### **Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the United States**

The SCO was established just a few months before 9/11 terrorist attack. 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 was the day when SCO came up as one of the first worldwide organizations to respond formally against the attacks by terrorists in the United States via a combined statement by its government leaders. No any action was taken by SCO except issuance of a statement in which attacks by terrorists were condemned. The destiny of SCO turned out to be yet further shaky after the war led by U.S. against the Afghanistan. The members of SCO chose to collaborate with U.S. on their own individual base. Russia and China charged to express their own support for the war to confront the terrorism led by U.S. Remaining SCO members opted to work with U.S in their own approaches, some of them even allowed the latter to utilize their forces capacity and furthermore forming the armed grounds in their respective regions<sup>21</sup>.

After the incident of 9/11, United States had intention to increase its financial, armed and diplomatic operations in the zone around Afghanistan, as well as in member countries of SCO separately. In years 2001 and 2002, all the states from Central Asia, apart from Turkmenistan approved armed collaboration and access to bases containing accords with U.S. moreover to receive considerable packages of financial aid. Especially, Uzbekistan took benefits from augmented U.S. concerns in the zone, the ending of an US-Uzbek "Strategic Partnership" in March 2002 and allowed the U.S. to establish

the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airbase to serve as a refueling and transit point<sup>22</sup>.

Finance and security related benefits of the abrupt engagement of U.S. with the zone were seen as a bonus for the countries from Central Asia, with P.M of Kyrgyz Mr. Kurmanbek Bakiev apparently giving the suggestion that the basing of thousands of U.S. arms recruits at Manas airbase of Kyrgyzstan was a probable gold mine<sup>23</sup>. In February 2002, Russian officials had briefed U.S. officials on the SCO's activities and expressed a strong desire to coordinate their respective activities in the region to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication.

In this regard, amid the actions against terrorism going down in Afghanistan and the Western forces led by U.S. apparently marking out in the countries of Central Asia, Beijing and Moscow made decision for reviving the SCO with increased prominence on its contribution as a coalition to counter terror and make effort to set up with the countries of Central Asia following a mutual program. This effort of re-activation was made primarily owing to the worries of China and Russia regarding the presence of U.S. permanently in the area that would ultimately restrict their pressure. As much there will be the presence of U.S. in this zone, the possibilities of SCO to lose its reliability in the form of a forum for regional safety will increase<sup>24</sup>. In total, it looked like to be a fine plan to make as early as it could be SCO quick response powers that could conquest complete dependability for safety in the zone in order to build needless the existence of non-regional armed dependents for steadiness of Central Asia<sup>25</sup>.

On 7 January 2002, in the meeting of SCO comprising Foreign Ministers, the combined declaration was that all the operations for anti-terrorism ought to be in order with the objectives and standards of the Charter of United Nations and other globally recognized regulations of worldwide law, their extent might not be expanded randomly and they should not be go along with the meddling in the global issues of independent countries. Furthermore, Mr. Igor Ivanov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia maintained that SCO ought to suppose liability for safety of regions, given suggestion that Russia and China were by now cautious of the course of the attachment of the U.S. in the region. Russian and Chinese showed concerns regarding the actions of pro-autonomies and the existence of the NATO and U.S. in Central Asian region. This means that the executive of few member states, especially Russia and China had belief the schemes could construct the integrity of SCO as a safety substitution to the U.S. armed forces existence in Central Asian region.

The mutual declaration of June 2004, a prominent non-attendance was noticed of anti U.S. or anti hegemonic oratory and the RATS had implied a wish for collaboration with the U.S. in order to counter the issues related to terrorism. The SCO in the way of attempt to respond to the influence of U.S. in

Central Asian region and generally as an organization with stance that was considered anti American<sup>26</sup>.

On the other hands, while looking towards the previous summit statements, we could certainly discover declarations with the directions at the U.S. however not clearly, over and over again by the means of a route next to the domination and politics of power and by remarks given with critics concerning eastward development of NATO<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, by noticing this summit, oratory that was anti American had slowly vanished from the statements surely owing to the incident of 9/11. In this regard, it could be evidently argued that opposing to the early fright of a few; the SCO looked improbable and is actually efficiently not capable to convert itself into a coalition with the directions in opposition to Western benefits as no one desires to provoke the U.S. in spite of their uneasiness on various matter summarized above.

While considering the financial phase, the Declaration of Tashkent spotted out upholding a maintained financial expansion in the region of Central Asia and the states in its border and achieving the vital requirements of their citizens which serve up as a main assurance in guaranteeing the steadiness and safety of the zone<sup>28</sup>. It was partially because of the rising financial sway of the U.S. in the region of Central Asia that had gone through in facing the SCO severe challenges with the rising struggle.

Both Russia and China were considering the SCO as a medium for strengthening their power, counterbalancing the growing U.S. presence and influence in their proximity, and thus preventing the full domination of Washington in their neighboring regions. In particular, they view the organization as a means of stopping the further expansion of NATO by stopping the membership of the Central Asian and Caucasian countries in the U.S. led military coalition and eventually ending their participation in its Partnership for Peace program. Other members were worried about the long-term goals of America in their region and its efforts to settle there through the establishment of pro-American regimes, especially following to the supposed color revolts that upended governments in Georgia (Rose Revolution, 2003), Ukraine (Orange Revolution, 2004), and Kyrgyzstan (Tulip Revolution, March 2005). Autocratic leaders in the SCO were undoubtedly worried they could be next in line<sup>29</sup>.

The July 2005 summit of SCO held in Kazakhstan, Astana, and the chiefs of countries had issued an affirmation asking the U.S. to declare an extraction deadline for its armed forces in the area. The emotion showed by SCO was highlighted when Uzbekistan consequently abandoned its accord with the U.S. about the U.S. armed forces' exercise of the airbase of Karshi-Khanabad<sup>30</sup>. An outcome of Tashkent's unhappiness with perceived U.S. criticism about its harsh crackdown on public unrest at Andijon in May. By November 2005, the last U.S. plane had departed K-2.

Answering questions from a United States House of Representatives committee in year 2004, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State told the members that actually, they had, since the beginning, proposed to start even the position of an observer at any stage with working with the organization, with the SCO, underlining Washington's want to see regional cooperation, especially against terrorism, succeed.

The K-2 incident likely soured the Bush Administration on relations with the SCO, however, the need for coordination of effort on critical issues in the region continued. In 2006, former Assistant Secretary of State Jones publicly noted that the SCO, The reality that U.S. did not have status of a member in SCO which did not reduce the worth of SCO only if all was going smoothly by the organization, real work was in exercise and not only the summit meeting were being held. In 2005 U.S. requested for the membership of the SCO, but it was refused. Mr. Richard Boucher, Assistant Secretary of State, in testimony September 2006, however, stated that the U.S. had not sought membership in the SCO. Thus, by 2007 at least, suspicion and uncertainty about the SCO's purposes, especially regarding the continued existence of U.S. and Coalition troops in the zone. America publicly stated that it did not "seek to become a member or observer" of the SCO.

U.S. had had a vigilant and inconsistent approach to the SCO, when the U.S. was seen as promoting government change in the region and the SCO was perceived as partly responsible for the closing of a U.S. airbase in Uzbekistan supporting alliance efforts in Afghanistan. U.S. had adopted a policy of outreach to regional allies in the Obama era and in 2009 sent U.S Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Patrick Moon to attend a Special Conference of SCO on Afghanistan which was held in March in Moscow. The conference resulted in an action plan of SCO targeting the Afghanistan, which called for combined actions to confront the terrorism, drug shifting, crimes of organized types and safety cooperation with the Afghanistan<sup>31</sup>.

## Conclusion

In this research article, it has been highlight that the objective to form the Shanghai Corporation Organization was, first of all; provide relief to extended tensed situation between China and Russia subject to borders related matter. This issue diverted a distinguished aspect when subsequent to the downfall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic and the appearance of fresh sovereign republics of Central Asia such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, which started to share their boundaries with Russia and China in that order. Second issue behind the formation of SCO was that the matters such as terrorism, extremism and separatism came up as mutual threat for that area and a united intergovernmental network and collaboration become necessity of hour. Third reason was that obligatory the countries, which were its members, was the necessity of financial collaboration in the zone, given the

profusion of area's natural resources and increasing need for it. The SCO neighborhood contains a variety of unstable or authoritarian regimes ripe for transition. Afghanistan, obviously, was the country the U.S. principally was centered around at this time, given battle troops on the ground there. SCO support to help attain or keep up U.S. objectives in Afghanistan, particularly given the probability that U.S. furthermore some Alliance militaries will be in Afghanistan until 2014, if not more, could be well worth the outreach from Washington.

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