

Role of Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Regional Security

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Supervisor:

DR. SHANTESH KUMAR SINGH

Associate Professor

Department of Political Science

Submitted By:

MOHIT NUNIWAL

Roll No. 190410

Department of Political Science

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

SCHOOL OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF HARYANA

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Role of Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Regional Security” is my own research study undertaken under the guidance of Dr. Shantesh Kumar Singh, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Central University of Haryana for the partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political science. This work has not been previously considered for the award of any degree, diploma, or certificate of this university or any other institute or university. I have duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this thesis.

Place: CUH, Mahendragarh

Name: Mohit Nuniwal

Date:

Enrolment No. 190410

The present work as above has been carried out under my Supervision and the declaration as above by the scholar is correct to the best of my Knowledge.

(Signature of the Supervisor)

Dr. Shantesh Kumar Singh

Associate professor, department of political science
Central university of Haryana
Mahendergarh, Haryana

Forwarded by:-

Head of department

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
bb	Billion Barrels
bcm	Billion Cubic Meters
bpd	Barrels per Day
BPCL	Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
CA	Central Asia
CACO	Central Asian Cooperative Organization
CAEC	Central Asian Economic Community
CAR	Central Asian Republic
CAREC	Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation
CAS	Central Asian States
CCAP	Connect Central Asia policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
CST	Collective Security Treaty
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization

DOE	Department of Energy
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EEC	Eurasian Economic Community
ETIM	East Turkistan Islamic Movement
EU	European Union
GOI	Government of India
GCA	Greater Central Asia
ICCR	Indian Council for Cultural Relation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOC	Indian Oil Corporation
ISI	Inter-Service Intelligence
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ITEC	Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation
INSTC	International North South Transport Corridor
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
JWG	Joint Working Cooperation
KMG	Kaz Munai Gaz
MFN	Most Favour Nation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO's	Non Governmental Organization

ONGC	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation
OVL	ONGC Videsh Limited
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PSUs	Public Sector Undertaking
RATS	Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure
RECC	Regional Economic Cooperation Conference
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAIL	Steel Authority of India
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TCM	Trillion Cubic Meters
TRACECA	Transport Corridor between Europe & Caucasus & Asia
TAPI	Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan India
TAR	Trans Asian Rail Road
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UTO	United Tazik Opposition
WB	World Bank
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The term 'region' may be defined as a cluster of states sharing a common space on the globe based on group identity, territorial affinities, or some Common identifiable patterns of behavior.¹

The term regionalism has a very wide context and is considered ambiguous in world politics because of its very changing nature. The term regionalism and region have some similar features but these can be interpreted according to the understanding and with its changing nature. The paramount international body the united nations charter had given space for its interpretation of regionalism and freedom to choose multiple modes of partnership among the nations partnerships². *“Joseph Nye’s older (and tighter) definition of a region as a limited number of states linked by geography and interdependence and of regionalism as the formation of and policies pursued by inter-state groups based around regions has stood the test of time”³* the old regionalism was defined by the sharing of borders, homogenous culture, ethnicity or language but as the international scenario changed and the viability and connectivity changed the features of regional cooperation also changed.

The thesis tries to evaluate the common challenges faced by the Central Asian region and the implications and barriers in tackling the issues. It also tries to find ways in which

¹ Kalevi J. Holsti, *The State War and the State of War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.142-43.

² (Danesh Sarooshi, *The United Nations and the Development of Collective Security: The Delegation by the UN Security Council of its Chapter VII Powers* (Oxford, 1999) 1-2, 142-146

³ (Joseph Nye (ed.) *International Regionalism* (Boston: Little Brown and Co. 1968)

uniformity in the execution of policies and an effect of institutionalization in implementation for common goals in the region. the thesis also tries to focus on the fears and demands of the region which consists of developing or underdeveloped countries that are trying to advance in globalized but also tries to defend their sovereignty from major powers of the world and more specifically America, China and Russia after the decline of the Soviet Union and the emergence of China in the world scenario.

The analytical framework of this study is based on the concepts of regionalism and localization. Regionalism has been understood as the expansion of rules and collective institutions which has been accepted by the governments of a region; In general, these may extend to areas other than formal trade and financial integration agreements. *“On the other hand, regionalization refers to the development of relations beyond the governmental level including trade, FDI/joint ventures between businesses; and links between other elements of society” (Brisling and Piggott, 2000).*

1.1 Theories of Regionalism:

Neorealism

To get the idea behind the formation of regional cooperation in the Eurasian region, we have to first look at the implications that had been faced by the region after the disintegration of the USSR which led to the security dilemma and suspicion that the region could be hijacked by any great power. As the realist stressed upon the fact that the whole international system is anarchic so if the state wants to exercise its political power free from foreign intervention it has to use its power to secure its boundary.

“Structural or Neo-realism is essentially a form of what Michael Oakeshott termed ‘Scientific Knowledge’ or Scientia”. Kenneth Waltz’s great achievement was in developing a parsimonious and deductive theory that established neo-realism as a distinctive research paradigm able to generate cumulative knowledge. The neo-realists have some basic assumptions like international politics is anarchic in nature that

no super-government exists in the world, and the states, not the group are the main actors in it. This assumption had deviated from classic thinkers like Marx, Niebuhr, and Gilpin. In the hierarchical system, the states become functional in a controlled manner but in the anarchical system, they become similar in functional in nature.

The neo-realist approach is somewhat different from the realist. The neo-realists proposed that only bilateral relations among the nations would halt the development and prosperity of the people and the peace in the world. The neo-realists focus much on opportunity rather than focusing on states. They had never suggested surrendering state sovereignty but to take advantage of the international system, but it has not denied the basic assumptions taken by the realist, thinkers and it has modified its convictions. As the classical realist thinks that the state is a unitary, rational actor. World politics is anarchic in nature and the distribution of power among the states is the prime actor of state behaviour. The neo-realist says that all states want their self-preservation which has contrast with classical realists like Han's Morgenthau who depicts that the states always strive to maximize their power. Fareed Zakaria⁴ quotes "states always want to maximize their influence, not power". The neo-realists always focused on resource-based power which is the instrument for power but not the end in itself. The relative material power provides enormous strength to influence the anarchic world order which can help to preserve itself and exercise its influence in world politics. They have to work within the constraints imposed, and demands made, by the international structures of power. Second, it holds that economic resources are not merely meaning to the end of power; they are an effective basis for exercising power by themselves.

Neo-liberalism

After The end of Cold War in 1989, which led to the vanishing of the Bi-poles in world, politics demanded the resurgence of the liberal perspective in the world politics. The

⁴ Zakaria, F. (1997). The rise of illiberal democracy. *Foreign Aff.*, 76, 22.

neoliberalism, the refined form of classical liberalism one can say has aroused in the later phase of history and somewhat deviates from earlier liberalism. Neo-liberalism can be traced in every current event of the world politics. It takes into account “the new unconventional threats to security, new problems, new challenges, conflicts, and emerging conflicts in the context of economic globalization and the spread of plural democracy. Neo-liberalism provides an overall consistent argument for more peaceful and cooperative international relations.”

Neo-liberalism which gained relevance to tackle the genuine issues is also known as plural. Neo-liberalism focused and acknowledged the complexity of several key players in the world political system. The neo-liberalists were endowed with solving the complex nature of world politics which contains major threats from non-state actors.

The core area of neo-liberalism is to tackle security concern of the states. Followers of neo-liberalism demonstrate a new understanding of security, not just a state in the international scene, but sometimes a major actor. The neo-liberals negate the concept of idealism which has been the core assumption of traditional liberalism, but they agree with the concept of progression and change in world affairs. According to neo-liberals, “the expansion of border operations helped to create common values and identities among the people of different states and paved the way for peaceful, cooperative relations by making war more expensive and therefore less likely”. As the nations would become more interdependent, they would enhance cooperation and establish international institutions for the betterment of all.

Neoliberals views that the peace and stability in the world can only be attained through the establishment of cooperative security organizations for international problems. they view the cooperative organization as the arbitrator and channel for tackling the problems. Regimes and institutions help govern the competitive and anarchic international system and they promote multilateralism and cooperation as a means of gaining the national advantage. Neo-liberals always state that in the economy their must always be the minimal role that must be played by the states and the actors in market must be allowed

to play freely without any hinderance or obstacle. According to neoliberals the free competition in market will help in the efficient utilization of resources and manpower.

From a practical point of view, India also believes in regional cooperation, India itself is a member of so many regional cooperation like BRICS, IBSA, WTO, SAARC, etc. India is among one of the members of CICA and with greatest zeal, wants to be a member of the SCO, as it is the regional organization include China and Central Asian countries and a direct gateway to interact with the Central Asian countries

As all the countries always tries to establish their relations and cooperate with other regional organizations and nation for enhancing their security, peace and stability. India has also been striving for the above-mentioned goals.

The approach of India towards CA with respect to its objectives in the region is of neo liberal perspective. The two major issue for India which could be solved in CA are firstly it will enhance the economic interest of the country and secondly it would also benefit in tackling security issues. India also views that the region has been continuously and regularly facing several threats which have been common in nature for example the problem of terrorism and the human trafficking and drug are one of them. from the above evaluation on practical as well as theoretical basis we can conclude that the main focus of India in context to its policy related to CA region is to get and several economic benefits and tackling security issues which had their origin in the region. The other factor for cooperation with the region is to democratize the region which has its roots in neoliberalism hence we can understand the viewpoint of Indian policy towards central Asia from neoliberal perspective.

Hegemonic Theory

After the end of imperialism in the 1940s, international politics took some substantial changes but the very nature of international politics was the same as every state lacked. Before understanding the hegemonic theory, we have to focus on what the word

hegemony means. It can be described as the dominance of a single entity in various aspects such as militarily, economically, technically, and socially at the world or regional level. The hegemonic power has the potential to implement or judge and to solve international disputes by its military or economic power. Robert Keohane states that the hegemony would enhance the cooperation and he concluded that the states which are subordinate to hegemon would also get benefits from it. The theory suggests that the hegemony of a state in international politics can lead to stability in international politics. According to Gilpin, the hegemony stability theory states that the powerful must take the decisions at the regional or international level while others must follow it. This will help the dominant and followers to maintain status-quo which would help everyone to maintain peace and security of investment in the economic sphere. but the hegemonic theory does not prove itself on empirical bases as the hegemon try's to maintain the status-quo he may have to invest or upgrade itself technically which results ultimately in the erosion or decay of the hegemon which results in instability or power struggle among the rivals which may result in war and can take a much longer period to stabilize the international system. The decline of the hegemon USSR in the Eurasian plateau had led to instability and power crises in the region. This provided an opportunity for the rising power of china to use this opportunity to become regional power though china was superior in the economic sphere Russia dominated in the military sphere.

Functionalism and Neo-functionalism

the theory of neo-functionalism can be stated as, “concentration of energy”. The very concept of neo functionalism firstly originated in Europe where it was demanded a “new power center” which can fascinate the political and economic interests of all the groups. The unity of Europe was based on two factor one was territory and other was identity. the concept of united states of European union took ground after the integration project of steel and coal industry throughout the Europe had taken place. It was predicted that the integration project would further enhance the chance of uniform policy throughout the

union in other areas such as taxation and this interdependence would further lead to the integration of goals of every nation where everyone would get several benefits from it. The structure so formed would be of supranational character. Thus, although European integration is in some respects connected with functionalist ideas, 'neo' conveys a very important distinction in neo-functionalism. This state-like, "energy-focused trend of the EU is also reflected in its external relations based on the gravitational pull of its internal market". The neo-functionalists tries to increase economic reliance among them. Hence this type of structure could be approached in the SCO where there would be integrated project among them which could benefit each and every country throughout the region

1.2 CENTRAL ASIAN REGION:

Historical background

In ancient times there was no concept of the Central Asian region as it had been intermingled with the Eurasian plateau. The region was earlier ruled by the Turkish and Persian empires and therefore the population of the region consists mostly of Muslims which are generally Turkish speaking .the imprints of the Turkish and Persian empire can be traced even today and the people speak the Persian language in the southern region of central Asia i.e. Afghanistan and Tajikistan there is no clear cut difference among the central Asian states as they have same culture and language. there has been always disagreement among scholars for the central Asian region as in the region Tajikistan has been included but Afghanistan has been cornered though both the states have the same linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and historically. The whole of the central region was underdeveloped and the people used to live nomadic life. though some parts of the region came under direct rule and tax had been levied by Russia but mostly it had been underdeveloped till modern times.

The concept of central Asia arises in the middle of the nineteenth century when the "THE GREAT GAME" arrives into play where there had been a power struggle between Russia and Britain. Russia tried to gain access to the Indian ocean region contrary to it Britain

was more concerned and had a sense of distrust with Russia so it tried to secure its economic corridor to the Ottoman empire and the Persian Gulf by making Afghanistan as buffer state by demarcating Durand line between Britain and Russian empire for their separate sphere of influence.

During the time of “THE GREAT GAME” Russia continuously invaded Kazakhstan and till the end of nineteenth century Russia had almost merged the central Asian region with itself .there were several protests and rebellions but Russia managed to suppress most of them and started a movement of its peasants and workers to central Asian region by providing some incentives and privileges for cotton cultivation in the fertile regions of central Asia. Russia in the early 19th century Russia had overthrown the rulers of the central Asian region who were against it. In 1917 during the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia installed its provisional government in different parts of the Central Asian region. till 1921 all the regions came under the communist regime of the USSR and the regional parties got sidelined.

Formation of Central Asian States:

In the 1920s the USSR brought some substantive changes in the central Asian region due to the fear that most of central Asia was under the Turkish empire and they had a sense of pan-Turkish unity, Russia feared this unity and perceived it as a challenge to their security hence they started fragmenting the small region in small parts which would diversify the region into smaller ethnic groups with a blend of a small amount of ethnic minority in every territory to make their national identity dominant rather than pan-Turkish collectiveness. So, that they would not be able to collectively challenge the soviet rule the USSR brought a new economic policy to increase its cotton cultivation in the central Asian fertile region. In 1924 the USSR communist regime made Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as a socialist republic and Tajikistan as the autonomous region .in 1925 the Kazakhstan autonomous region got bifurcated from Kyrgyzstan autonomous soviet socialist republic region .in 1929 the autonomous region of Tajikistan got converted into the socialist republic of USSR by adding some northern territory of that region .from

1929 to 1934 the central Asian region witnessed famine due to the changes made by Russia in the region .in 1936 the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan autonomous soviet socialist region were given the full republic status .in the same year the Karakalpak stan region was given to the Republic of Uzbekistan .during this time of disturbance the communist regime had successfully executed several regional leaders to impose its rule over the region and it got succeeded in to install its puppets on the top governmental position.

During Second World War USSR was under huge security threat and fear of invasion from axis alliance from Germany in the east Europe and western part of USSR so they started moving their industries and strategic equipment's to the central Asian region. as Nazis surrendered to the western alliance in 1945 but the economic and military loss of USSR during war was acknowledged by western allies hence several territories and financial aid was given to it through Post dam conference (1945) , Moscow conference (1941-47) , Tehran conference (1943) and Yalta conference (1945) and but as the cooperation between the western allies became skeptical after world war regarding USSR due to its expansionist policies and friction over annexed countries like Germany, Austria and Korea and the increasing control of USSR in Hungary ,Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania resulted in tension between the allies mainly USA and the USSR which resulted in cold war. The skepticism of world war II could be seen by the act that the soldiers and ethnic minorities who had come in contact with western allies and Germans were sent to Siberia and the Central Asian region.

After the end of World War II, the USSR focused primarily on its industrial development and the agricultural aspect, which suffered from a drought in 1946, but the Soviet Union continued to focus on achieving nuclear power status and began rapidly expanding its military technology development projects and the Soviet Union In 1949 the first atomic bomb was detonated. In USSR times the relation between states were conducted under the supervision of Moscow. However, before the disintegration, the last decade witnessed

several agreement between the states—chiefly “the Water Treaty (14 July 1981 and 22 August 1989) and the 1990 Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Co-operation”.

Disintegration of USSR:

In 1989 after the humiliating defeat in the Afghanistan war (1979-1989) and the fall of the Berlin wall which led to the end of ideologies in the world. Russia went through a series of events from 1989 to 1991, which caused instability and panic in the USSR and its neighboring countries. The socio-political crises inside USSR were the main cause of the collapse. The several people dying due to political and social violence which was earlier very low in the early decades had grown to a considerable amount in the 1980s which demonstrated the distrust in soviet union leadership and the “parade of sovereignties” by the republican where they gave more importance to their laws rather than execution or implementation of the central directions which resulted in the “war of laws” between the soviet union and central Asian autonomous regions. The use of the military in the domestic affair was also detrimental and a cause of dispute among the USSR military thinkers who always proposed that the real function of the military is to prevent the external threat and it should not intervene in the internal matters of the union but several other thinkers argued that it must be used to preserve the sovereignty and integrity of the nation. The real catastrophic event took place in the form of an “august coup”, the top government officials try to siege the whole USSR by imposing emergency rule in the country where the military units were moved to Moscow. State committee on emergency was formed to impose an emergency but the resistance developed within the Military and the august coup failed. So that the sovereignty of the Soviet Union can be saved officially it had been stated that the then president of the USSR Gorbachev who was on vacation in Crimea.

Several events took place from 1989 to 1991 that caused resentment and suspicion on the USSR central leadership this led to a dilemma in the functioning of the military where

they used the military to suppress the agitation in the Baltic region but remained at bay during the USSR used its military for suppressing domestic protests.

Initially, the Baltic states like Moldova, Azerbaijan, and Georgia were the first to revolt against the USSR government the legitimacy of the USSR was in great danger so the then president of the USSR had become a reluctant power though it took active participation in the After the collapse of the USSR in the Eurasian region and formation of new states which had no clear boundaries among them and their other neighboring countries made a deep concern to the regional stability .there was a perceived conflict among the states and its neighbor because there was no clear demarcation of borders among newly formed states and other regional states which were not part of the USSR. The region became a security vacuum in international politics as the flag bearer of communism had fallen and every regional and international community was ambiguous and suspicious about the future of the central Asian region.

1.3 Development of Shanghai Five

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991 the major problem aroused among the newly formed states as there had not been a clear-cut boundary among the states and the neighboring countries that had been having border disputes with the erstwhile USSR especially China which shares the largest land boundary. China always claimed that the Russian Tsarist regime had captured a large portion of its territory hence it had always tried to get back this portion. Earlier several treaties were signed but china refused to acknowledge them as it suspected that still a large portion of its territory had been annexed by the Soviet Union. Before disintegration, the china and soviet borders were heavily militarily packed from the 1960s to the 1980s. After the breakup of the Soviet Union earlier, the border dispute which had been between the Soviet Union and China had expanded to four states- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan through the newly formed states acknowledged the earlier Soviet Union and china border but these borders were never clearly demarcated so it became an area of security threat. The new states were suspicious about the Chinese expansionist tendencies in the region.

During this time the china was also struggling with Uyghur separatism which had been at a peak in the 1990s. The withdrawal of the USSR from Afghanistan showed the victory of Islamic extremist forces and the collapse of the USSR in which the newly formed states were mostly Muslim. These events concerned china and it feared that the demand for separate Uyghur stan by Xinjiang will get support from the region due to their ethnic ties, cultural ties, and Turkic descent.

In 1992 after becoming independent states the “*Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also inherited disputable segments on the outer boundaries, particularly on the border with China. Before the USSR's disintegration, there were 25 disputable segments*”⁵. Out of these 25 segments, the 19 disputed territories came under newly formed states. Clear demarcation in between the states also resulted in border disputes. This was the major concern for central Asian states, as they had no expertise or knowledge regarding foreign policy or international affairs as earlier all the decisions had been taken by Moscow.

The CIS and china faced a common problem of Islamic extremism regarding the Taliban that had been challenging the internal security of states by illegal trafficking, drug supplies, and terrorism. The activation of the Taliban in Uzbekistan and raiding in other central Asian countries demanded a firm step to secure its transparent boundaries that had become the gateway for Islamic radicalization of the region.

From 1992 to 1996 all the central Asian countries signed several treaties to solve their border disputes. In 1996 and 1997 the heads of respective five states met in Shanghai and Moscow signed "Agreement on deepening military trust in border regions" and "Agreement on the reduction of military forces in border regions", which became an important historical event and resulted in execution of the mechanism called "Shanghai Five"⁶. The main focus of the “shanghai five” was to deescalate the tension on border regions and its main aspect was to strengthen mutual trust and tranquility in the region.

⁵ On the Sino-Soviet border issue, see Tai-Sung An, *The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute*

⁶ Xinhua, history of development of SCO, china daily 12-06-2006

All the parties agreed that their forces would be stationed beyond 10km from the border areas and any military activity within 100km of the border area should be informed to the concerned country. All the states agreed that no military exercise will be done focusing on each other.

“In 1998 with the Almaty Declaration in 1998 it was agreed that the Shanghai Five would extend cooperation into combating ethnic separatism, religious fundamentalism, international terrorism, arms smuggling, narcotics, and other cross-border criminal activities⁷”.

Kazakhstan and China solved their border disputes completely and became the leading nations to solve them. The reason for this agreement can be traced that Kazakhstan was more interested in economic aspects as it wanted to improve its financial condition that had been deteriorating day by day.

In 1999 all the states met in Bishkek where they focused on making the region a nuclear-free zone and fighting three evils that had been the major threat to the region—ethnic separatism, international terrorism which had its roots in Afghanistan, and religious fundamentalism. all the countries had been suffering from all these issues and tried to save the region from more fragmentation or destabilization.

The major event of 2000 in which all the “shanghai five” nations criticized the ballistic missile program was done by the USA. This a firm proof to the western world regarding the hidden agenda of SCO that had been earlier suspected as Anti- NATO or Anti-Western front.

1.4 Formation of SCO:

Till 2001 after signing several bilateral treaties on territorial disputes and confidence-building on military reduction on borders but the shanghai five was being loosely tied

⁷ Norling, N., & Swanström, N. (2007). The Shanghai cooperation organization, trade, and the roles of Iran, India and Pakistan. *Central Asian Survey*, 26(3), 429-444.

discussion form and the Russian and Chinese regimes tried to stabilize and fill the security vacuum which had been created after the collapse of Soviet Union. China and Russia perceived that if they would not take the regional control it would ultimately result in the intervention and gateway for NATO countries, which would threaten the sovereignty and can lead to a new round of conflict.

On 15 June 2001, the Shanghai Cooperation came into existence which included all the “Shanghai Five” members and Uzbekistan. All the SCO members agreed to fight against the three evils which were separatism, extremism, and terrorism. After the demilitarization of borders and strengthening of mutual trust and friendship gave impetus and strength to the development of SCO. The SCO had no clear intention to fight against any particular “enemy” that had been described in political theories but to maintain regional peace and tranquility by eliminating the fringe elements from the region. The SCO had always clarified that its focus is to boost political and economic cooperation. The military ties among states are to fight against regional security and it has always denied the allegation that it has a cluster to fight against NATO or any other military alliance.

Since its inception in 2001, the regional leaders started meeting frequently as had been earlier met on annual basis.

In 2002 the China and Kazakhstan held a military exercise bilaterally under SCO sponsored norms on China Kazakhstan borders to counter anti-terror activities in the region. In 2003 the next phase of joint military exercise all the then SCO members except Uzbekistan participated though earlier China and Kazakhstan had participated under SCO norms it was not formally acknowledged exercise. The exercise against terrorism in 2003 was the first formal exercise under the SCO banner.

“The year 2004 then saw the completion of the institutional phase of the SCO. Two permanent organs were established: A Secretariat in Beijing and a Regional Anti-

Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Furthermore, Mongolia joined as the first SCO observer⁸”

After solving several issues which gave a big boost to the organization like arms control in the region and the members acknowledge some other issues such as communication, transportation, energy, economy and the ongoing war in Afghanistan .the above-mentioned issues were not only crucial for central Asian countries but for all the Asian region hence several countries which were not part of that region showed their interest to join hands. the diversifying agenda of SCO showed that it does not only want to be an organization for the region but to play a vital role in international politics which had been seen during 2004 when SCO was given an observer member status in UNO and in 2005 the SCO general secretary invited to UNO for speech. The SCO started widening its influence and significance by signing “a memorandum of understanding with the commonwealth of independent states (CIS) and the association of southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)”.

The major turn in the stance of SCO was noticed in 2005, Astana summit where the organization took a proactive role in its regional affairs by condemning the military bases in the central Asian countries of NATO and demanded a deadline from NATO forces to withdraw from Afghanistan .the regime change in Georgia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan and installation of the pro-western regime by NATO countries gave a big jolt to the autocratic regimes of the region. As earlier Russia had been fragmented and it feared that, it would loosen its grip over the central Asian countries. In the same year the inter-bank association for the economic development of the region. The SCO started its expansion in 2004 by inviting Mongolia as an observer state and India, Pakistan, and Iran in 2005.

SCO and Anti- US Front

In The Astana summit of declared, that the world order ought and must be based on rationality and it must be based on the idea of better and friendly neighborly relations

⁸ General, S., & General, D. S. (2011). Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

among the states and should have mutual trust upon each other, “upon the establishment of true partnership with no pretense to monopoly and domination in international affairs⁹”. The invitation to Iran by the SCO that had been considered a ‘rough nation’ by the western countries irked them and the western countries started calling it the ‘NATO of the East’.

In 2006, the leader met and agreed to focus on long-term goals for SCO and fifth anniversary agreed to cooperate on major tasks of the region. The initiatives regarding counter-terrorism and international security gained momentum during this summit and the member states stood firm in strengthening the regional ties that resulted in the loosening grip of NATO in the region.

In Bishkek 2007 several Memorandum of cooperation was signed between CSTO and SCO in defense where it was reported by media as anti-NATO or western front however the SCO and CSTO officials denied these allegations by stating that this cooperation is in its early stages and mainly focused on regional stability and the cooperation between CSTO and SCO had no intention of blocking or opposing any other organization. Some new dynamics took place in this summit where a first-time military exercise was conducted with the political meeting. In this summit, all members agreed on increasing security cooperation and developing energy resources through SCO. *“in the summit it was agreed on signing of a treaty among member-states on “good-neighborly relations, friendship, and cooperation”.*

In the summit a new SCO university was also proposed to be formed and strengthening information security among nations was also considered in this summit. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan stressed on forming an energy resource roadmap, stating that “a mechanism of meetings of energy ministers of the SCO member and observer states should function in the context of the idea of an energy club, and that this might become one of the main elements of an Asian energy strategy.” The members of SCO agreed on

⁹ Bailes, A. J., Dunay, P., Guang, P., & Troitskiy, M. (2007). *The Shanghai cooperation organization*. SIPRI.

forming “unified energy market” so that it would be feasible and trouble free in supplying oil and gas to the respective members of the organization. During 2007 summit which held in Bishkek, all the members which constituted of the producing states of natural gas and oil , the consumer states and in between them the transporter states will held dialogue for cooperation.

The SCO summit in 2008 took place in Tajikistan where everyone was eyeing the response of SCO on the Georgia crises in which Russia had taken military action in Georgia. The SCO did not exclusively oppose or supported but indicated their support towards Russia by endorsing its six-point resolution to solve the crises. However, bilaterally Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan supported military intervention by Russia. Uzbekistan stood neutral on this issue while china proposed that relevant parties must solve the issue peacefully. The variance in the opinion of states showed the rift and division of opinion among the nations which highlighted that organizations should not be allowed to enter in internal affairs of any nation. The relevance of regional organization with UN in tackling its regional issue was also highlighted

In 2008, the SCO members also emphasized the reconstruction of war turned Afghanistan and demilitarizing it and providing financial assistance. Moscow demanded a special session on Afghanistan's problems to tackle challenges faced by CAR and assisting Afghanistan in its narcotic supply, which had been a big concern for CAR. The special session of SCO took place in March 2009.

All the CAR’s nations were also interested in the financial aspects of SCO to provide economic aid in the development of the region and to promote a common energy strategy for the region. In this regard, the Kyrgyzstan president demanded the establishment of an SCO development fund for the development of SCO economic cooperation.

Financial Crises of 2008 and SCO

In the 2009 SCO summit held in Yekaterinburg where the world was under severe economic crises and every nation was under great pressure to mitigate the impact of

crises and was eager to find alternatives to commute its impact in their nations and increasing regional trade and rapid increase in the investment under SCO. All the members of the organization agreed in taking multilateral initiatives and projects. All the SCO welcomed the initiative taken by Russia, which stressed on common currency for the members and dealing in mutual currencies.

All the members of SCO stressed the need for regional cooperation in the economic sphere. All the countries agreed to trade in their mutual currencies. China and Russia demanded global currency reforms and fair financial world order was demanded in the summit. The focus on intra-regional trade and commerce was also a key feature of the summit where increasing trade and connectivity with Europe was also discussed. During the event, china agreed to provide \$10 billion US dollars on joint financial projects under the SCO.

The member states also discussed transnational organized crime, narcotics, and counter-terrorism. the summit was also crucial as during this point of time several key events were happening simultaneously as on Georgian crises US and Russia were at loggerheads and Kyrgyzstan demanded the withdrawal of US troops from its Manas base.

In the summit, the special expert group was commanded to frame a draft document for including new members of SCO. In the same summit, Sri Lanka and Belarus were given dialogue partners status. *“The Russian and Kazakh leaders suggested the establishment of a unified, supra-national settlement unit within the SCO framework. The summit adopted a declaration urging a fair global financial order. (Meena Singh Roy, June 2009)”*

The event had been happening after the 26/11 Mumbai attack where the Indian president gave a clear message to Pakistan to stop providing its territory for anti-India policies. This summit could be seen as the increasing influence of SCO at the regional as well as at the international level. The assertive role played by SCO in a regional issue. This summit gave some new dynamics to the world. As SCO challenged the hegemony of the US

dollar in trade and exchange and Kyrgyzstan's order to vacate its Manas airbase by the US provided the true significance of SCO in regional affairs.

Kyrgyzstan Crises and Expansion of SCO

In the 2010 summit, the core issue for SCO was the Kyrgyzstan crisis that is also known as the 'second Kyrgyz revolution' in which ethnic tension rose and torture on the Uzbek minority grew. Several thousands of Uzbek people were killed, and millions left the country. The situation had been grave for the stability of the region. The political unrest had caused instability in the country however the SCO declaration was silent on actively participating in resolving the crises but agreed to provide political and diplomatic assistance but refrained from taking direct action in Kyrgyzstan referring. The crisis is an internal issue. SCO had declared that it would not enter in the internal matters of any member states. SCO advised Kyrgyzstan to solve the problem by negotiation and dialogue among the concerned parties.

The 2010-11 summit witnessed the expansion of SCO where criteria for inclusion of new members was drafted and admission was approved in 2011. This time saw the advancement in military and security cooperation where 'peace mission 2010' was conducted in which Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan participated however; Uzbekistan distanced itself from this exercise. The information security sharing among the member states was also highlighted where it had been seen as a great concern for regional security.

Belt and Road Initiative and Syrian Crises

The 2012-13 summit witnessed several changes in international politics and the core of it was the 'Syrian crises' where the demand for democracy was raised. However, the pro-democrats had been supported by western countries. Russia and China supported the then regime and its impact was obvious in the 2012 summit where SCO collectively condemned the western interference in Syria and SCO declaration of 2012 criticized the armed intervention or "regime change" and condemned the sanctions that had been

imposed unilaterally. China perceived it as a direct effect on its Xinjiang province where the problem would lead to the high morale of extremist forces in the Xinjiang province as well as separatist and extremist forces of the central Asian region.

China's intention and dream of becoming an economic giant was also a key feature of 2013 where it introduced an economic belt initiative with central Asian countries through 'silk road economic belt'. It was also proposed to connect the Baltic Sea and the Pacific Ocean through road. The china agenda was to gain access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean through this project. It was seen as a direct threat to Russia's dominance in the Asian region and a challenge to India in the Indian Ocean region by setting up ports in Indian Ocean countries. China stated that "This new approach proposes the construction of international road transport corridors connecting the Baltic Sea and the Pacific Ocean, connecting Central Asia with the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf; Increasing financial support; Strengthening cooperation in the financial sector; Establishing an SCO development bank with a separate account for SCO and setting up an energy club; And establishing a food security cooperation mechanism, cooperating in agricultural production, working for the Agro-products trade and food security and other sectors".

SCOs concern over Afghanistan and Developments in SCO

After the declaration made by the US in 2013 that it would withdraw its troops from Afghanistan gave serious concern to the neighboring countries which all were parts of SCO except Turkmenistan. The SCO stated that it has no intention in involving in the Afghanistan issue directly but it is ready to assist in the rebuilding process. The SCO clearly stated that the reconciliation process must be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned.

In 2015 the SCO was directly criticized. The dominant orientation of the contemporary phase of international relations underscores the demand of the US and the multi-polar world by stating that the multipolar world should be based on the mutual benefits among states in cooperation and must have common acknowledgment of the threats and

challenges. The SCO also showed its concern over the increase in instability in the world which has been hampering the new reframing of the geopolitical order (Joint Statement of High-Level Conference Security and Stability in the SCO Region (Moscow, June 4, 2015)) Drugs, Trafficking and Terrorism The summit called for comprehensive efforts to address domestic threats. The summit also applauded the efforts of Iran and six international mediators in the settlement of the nuclear program of Iran. As Iran is an SCO's observer members had great potential to fulfill the aspiration of SCO members Hence, it was beneficial for regional stability.

The Bishkek summit which was held in 2016 was mainly directed to the heads of government stressed that “their priority goal is to enhance the prosperity and living standards of their people through the further strengthening of cooperation in trade, production, transport, energy, finance, investment, agriculture, customs, telecommunications and other spheres of mutual interest”. (Joint Communique the Fifteenth Meeting of the SCO Heads of Government (Prime Ministers Council). The meeting was mainly focused on connectivity between Europe and Asia and diversification and avoiding dependence on resources. The 2017 SCO summit witnessed the inclusion of India and Pakistan as permanent members that indicated the growing influence of SCO. The inclusion also refuted the perception of SCO as a mere central Asian regional organization by including nuclear power states India and Pakistan. The SCO members praised the action taken by G20 nations in quota agreements and IMF's management reforms. All the members demanded an open, unbiased, non-discriminatory, and rule-based World trade organization. The SCO also raised the demand that WTO must work to prevent the breakup of trade relations among nations.

The SCO members also jointly stressed the *“importance of extensive equitable international cooperation to boost the world economy's recovery, ensure economic and financial stability, and support sustainable, dynamic, balanced, and inclusive growth. They expressed a common understanding of the fact that all participants of international economic relations must have equal opportunities and participate in global trade and*

economic activities on a fair basis. Moreover, they noted the negative effect of unilateral restrictive measures that contradict international law and distort the competitive environment” (JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ following the 16th Meeting of the SCO Heads of Government Council).

Figure 1: SCO Member States



In 2018 the SCO was in favor of promoting spiritual as well as moral education of children which can prevent their involvement in terrorist and extremist activities. However, this summit was more focused on the economic perspective where they were seeking to eliminate the trade barriers among the states and providing incentives to e-commerce and service sector industries. The SCO also raised the issue of environmental protection and sustainable development. The member states also agreed to collectively form a program on food security. Tajikistan’s initiatives on “the International Decade of Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028 and the high-level international conference on this subject was appreciated by SCO”. The member states except India praised the belt and road initiative of china and expressed cooperation in the

implementation of the initiative through the Eurasian economic union. The organization showed its commitment in increasing trust and friendly relations between the nations and there must be people-to-people connection among peoples, the Member States also stressed upon the need of developing multidirectional relations between members through- “culture, education, science and technology, healthcare, tourism, and sport”.

They noted that in 2019 the UN Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Executive Directorate and the SCO’s Regional Cooperation. March 2019 State Council Meeting on Counter-Terrorism (RATS), as well as international and regional cooperation in counter-terrorism and its financing (Press release on Shanghai Cooperation Organization heads) on drug trafficking and organized crime).

1.5 The objective of the study:

- To study the concept of regional organizations in the world
- To study the origin and implications of SCO in a globalized world
- To study the role of SCO in solving the regional dispute in the Asian region.
- To study the impact of the withdrawal of the NATO forces & the role of SCO in building war-torn Afghanistan.
- To study the role of SCO in the quest for the energy security of its member states.

1.6 Hypothesis:

- H1:** SCO members can solely decide the challenges and implications of the Eurasian region.
- H2:** The SCO could play a vital role in bringing peace and stability in the region with the help of other unilateral/multilateral global players.
- H3:** The SCO’s energy policy will not only ensure the sustainable growth of the member states but also of the global economy.

1.7 Review of Literature:

S. Myasnikov, V. (2003) has depicted in their study that Russia-China-India: Cooperation in the Twenty-first Century. China Report. In discussing the possibilities of relations between the three countries in the twenty-first century, we precisely point to the coordinated measures taken in response to the challenges of the new century. Why coordinate our actions? Because with the advent of the new century, the international climate in which our states play the role of sovereign actors has become more and more complex. The September 11 attacks took a turn, provoking problems and dramatic changes in the richness of international relations. Subsequent events in the international arena have reiterated that the national interests of each state can be equated if they coordinate their actions with partners who have similar national interests. Russia, China, and India are responsible for such stages of the historical development-periods of reforms aimed at the radical and comprehensive transformation of social structures in the vital interests of the people of each country.

Oldberg (2007) this report focuses on the aims and objectives of the SCO regarding the Russian foreign Defense Security and Defense policy and development of the Asian region at the global level. The SCO feared that there may be some political instability in the Asian region as had happened in the west so to secure the stability of the more or less authoritarian regimes from Western-type democratic upheavals all the SCO nations come together to fight against such types of problems. The article also highlights the constraints in the implementation of the objective and its failure in containing the US in making its airbases in SCO countries for countering terrorism in Afghanistan.

Norling & Swanstrom (2007) explored the origin of SCO and its effect in the regional politics and what was the roadmap of development of organization. The article also explains the grounds on which it was alleged that it was perceived it as the anti-NATO front. The article also tracked the development of organization merely from ‘border dispute solving mechanism’ to the full-grown mature and influential organization at

international level. The article also examines the possibility and extent of the impact on trade and regional security after the inclusion of new members to the organization. It is argued here whether “the trade, infrastructure, and energy sectors are of particular importance and that substantial potential gains could be realized if coordination is improved”. Nevertheless, it is also analyzed the democratization in the nations which are major powers of the region.

Stephen Aris (2012) the article evaluates the role of its members in tackling the “three evils” which are the main issues for the region. The article describes the structure and mechanism in tackling regional challenges .it evaluates the role of regional anti-terrorist structure and mechanism in dealing with the evils. It also evaluates about the non-intervention in member states though they has been going under crises. it also discusses about the peace missions conducted by the organization and the possibility of formation of peacekeeping forces under the organization. The article also reviews about the possibility of formation of supranational structure.

Naarajarvi (2012) the focus was to study the Russian and Chinese cooperation over conflict the impact of SCO on the other overlapping organization such as the OPEC, ASEAN, CSTO. Russia and china's cooperation seem to be relevant as both countries face the same problems of terrorism, separatism, drug trafficking, etc. China and Russia differ on several issues though same bodies functioning under SCO do not show any active participation in regional issues it provides only a platform to raise their issues. SCO was formed mainly focusing on the central Asian region but now it has expanded its reach from the southern Asian region to the western region by including India, Pakistan, and Iran as an observer state. The SCO also provides international visibility and stature to small members and the interests of the EU in the cooperation among regional powers.

Joshi Nirmala (2012) in her edited book “attempts to form an evolving overview and further enhances relations between India and Central Asia in the political and economic spheres. The stability and security of Central Asia are of paramount importance to India

Part of its expansive surroundings. Is associated with Indian concerns Afghanistan, where it is actively involved in reconstruction efforts. So far, so has India. The region is mainly active in infrastructure, commerce, education, health, and technology. India will help improve capacity in areas such as better economic engagement and agriculture. Information Technology, Service Industries, Science & Technology, and Media. On the contrary, Energy-rich Central Asian countries can address India's growing energy needs; improved transportation networks are conducive to intercontinental trade. The interlinking of Asia under the organization would provide key benefits in economic as well as in security field to all the members of the organization.

Grainger (2014) explained that the SCO faces the challenges of eliminating religious extremism, ethnic separatism, and international terrorism; improving trust and cohesion among members; better managing relations with external parties; developing an enlargement policy; improving policy implementation; facilitating greater economic interaction; and improving their slow pace of decision making. To consolidate its growing status the organization must continue to improve communications and relationships between all stakeholders; develop deeper trust between members; better address legal economic and security issues, and generate stronger leadership from its two largest members Russia and China.

Roy (2014) examined the role and importance that the SCO has been gaining in Eurasian region and the significance of organization for regional players in exercising their power in the region. It also reviews about the trajectory followed by the organization since its inception to the full-grown entity. It also describes the challenges that have been faced by the members in dealing with each other on economic basis and defines the benefits that could be gained through SCO economic forum. The article also shows the implication and problems generated on the issue of the enlargement of the organization and the reasons that are of utmost importance for expansion. It also provides the in-depth knowledge about the role that SCO can play for India and challenges which can be sorted

out through the organization. it provides an in-depth knowledge about the role of SCO in economic and political importance for India

Koacmaz (2017) described the concept of 'soft balancing' the US hegemony in world political system .it describes about the conditions after the collapse of USSR and rise of US hegemony in world politics. It also stressed upon the reasons that led to 'soft balancing' rather focusing on hard balancing. it also provides the problems faced in using 'hard power'. The article also describes the motives of Russia which it wanted to attain in central Asia through SCO and how the nexus of china and Russia had put the west at bay in central Asian region. the article also provides the role of china in the economic sphere of the central Asian region.it also discussed about the interest of Russia in political sphere and Chinese interest in economic sphere. It also critically examines the reasons that led to the convergence of interests of Russia and china in SCO.

Zurich (2018) the paper talks about the flexible nature of the SCO as it can accommodate several agenda where consensus could be met and also explains about the minimal structure which does have some specific orientation .it also describes and evaluates the relationship between Russia and china . it also explains the very changing nature of the organization where china and Russia have been striving to maximize their interests in the region. It also provides the understanding of cooperation and conflict of interests between the two giants. It provides a study of involvement of Switzerland with SCO and talks about the risks and benefits that it will face while dealing with SCO. It also provides in-depth view on engagement of Switzerland with SCO on formal and informal basis.

Bailes, A. J., Dunay, P., Guang, P., & Troitskiy, M. (2007): the article reviews the historical background of the formation of central Asian states and the development of shanghai five to SCO. It examines the influence of Russia in the internal affairs of Central Asian states and penetration of china in central Asian trade and commerce and the role of Russia in the containment of Chinese expansionist economic policy in central

Asian states. It also provides an in-depth study of the reasons that inspired the central Asian states to join SCO and the role of guiding principle in strengthening mutual trust among the member states. The article also provided the interests which inspired Russia and China to cooperate over the competition in the Central Asian region. It also elaborated the military, political and economic interests of Russia and China. It also explained the reasons for suspicion among the member states regarding taking a collective stance in international politics. It also examines the difference between SCO and other regional organizations like CSTO, CIS, EU, etc.

Rab, A., & Zhilong, H. (2019): the paper shows the trajectory of development of SCO and its significance from the Chinese perspective. It further provides the In-depth approach of China from its Belt and Road Initiative and how the BRI had led to several opportunities for China. It also covers the geopolitical impact of BRI in the region and how the initiative has led to stability in Chinese border areas. The paper also encompasses the role of SCO in banning ETIM that has been a separatist movement. The paper also provides a comprehensive impact of BRI in Chinese regional politics. It further provides the view of Chinese energy security through BRI in the Central Asian region.

1.8 Research Methodology:

Methodology referred as “systematically structured or codified ways to test theories. The methodology is thus critical in facilitating the evaluation of theory and the evolution of research”. The proposed study would use international relations theories like Neo-realism, Neo-liberalism. All these theories provide insights into the nature of world politics and offer various possible explanations as to what course of action states would choose to undertake in the search of a solution in India’s Central Asia Policy.

The study is based on historical, comparative, descriptive, and as well as analytical methods. Data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources

such as Publication of MEA, reports of ministry of external affairs of Central Asia countries, discussion and speeches of various leaders of C.A and secondary sources such as books, articles published in academic journals, newspapers, and newsletters will also be used for further updates.

Chapter 2

Role Of SCO In Regional Politics

As every member of any alliance or union has its perception of joining the organization, hence it has been obvious with every member of the SCO as “The SCO covers one of the largest geographical areas of any regional organization, from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok and from the White Sea to the South China Sea. If its observer states are added, it reaches the Indian Ocean and the Middle East as well. Its members and observers collectively possess 17.5 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves, 47–50 percent of known natural gas reserves, and some 45 percent of the world’s population”. The above-mentioned natural resource-rich areas, connectivity, geostrategic importance shows the vitality and importance of the organization but there had suspicion and disagreement among the scholars regarding the real motive for the formation of SCO. As some suspected that it was formed as an Anti-NATO front after the collapse of the USSR and dismantling of the Warsaw pact. some consider, it just a “talking shop” which had nothing relevant output but a “paper tiger” which does not make any relevant sense in geopolitics. Initially from “shanghai five” to the formation of SCO in 2001, it was nothing but a forum to solve boundary disputes peacefully and build mutual trust among the nations but after the formation of SCO, the agenda and psyche of the organization got clearer and showed that it had much more vision and aim regarding their goals and destiny.

The formation of SCO in which it became 5+1 which is the inclusion of Uzbekistan as the new member which does not share a border with China had indicated the broader perspective of the founders and it was growing to a much larger extent. Cooperation on the dispute between China and Russia has shown that they have some serious policy and agenda in the establishment, which can be clearly understood from the declaration of its objectives, in which SCO members stated “they are strengthening mutual trust and good-neighbor friendship; Promoting effective cooperation between member countries in the fields of politics, economy and trade, science and technology, culture, education, energy,

communication, environment, and other areas; Jointly dedicating themselves to safeguarding and safeguarding regional peace, security and stability; And the establishment of a new international political and economic order of democracy, justice, and rationality". The above-mentioned objectives made other regional nations to join as it has something to offer to everyone. As everyone was facing several challenges in the initial stages of the 21st century, hence it was a great deal for the major and minor players in the region to get a favor out of it. The most important aspect of SCO was that the organization gave freedom to its members to manage its relations with other nations and respected the sovereignty of the member states by not intervening in the internal matters of the nation this had been described as the "shanghai spirit". This indicated that the main aim of the SCO is not to form a supranational structure rather forming a multilateral structure. This was the most demanding feature for the authoritarian regimes that had been under serious pressure from the western democratic countries in the region. The SCO also provided equal status to every nation irrespective of its power status or influence this may not be the reality but after all, it had been on paper that provided the moral basis to the organization.

The most surprising thing was the joining of two hostile nations, which is India, and Pakistan coming together and Iran that had been facing sanctions from the international community on its nuclear program became members in 2005. The Astana summit in 2005 changed opinion about the organization, where it explicitly criticized the airbases of NATO in the central Asian region and demanded a deadline for the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan this gave a clear indication that the regional powers will not tolerate the intervention of western countries in regional affairs. The implementation of social and political development based on western values and interpretations was negated. The SCO also challenged the hegemony and monopoly of the USA in the same summit by warning it to refrain from intervention in any country's problems based on their assessment.

In other regions, the concept of multilateral organization can be understood through two cases one in which the organization is legitimate but in the other way it might be

legitimate but could be ineffective. The first case where the organization is legitimate suggest that the it has been doing some excellent performance but in later case it might not be doing good but it has not been harming the member states. Earlier it was considered as legitimate but ineffective but as the organization matured it has been doing some betterment to its member states.

Different Perspectives of Member States on SCO

2.1 China

After the end of the cold war, a new wave of regionalism erupted in the world and china realized the importance of regionalism in its development and was eager to grasp this opportunity to sustain and flourish in international politics as during the cold war most of the nations were in great pressure to support either bloc which was USA and USSR. China and Russia had not been in good relations and the only cause of it was the “threat from the west”. Deng Xiaoping had earlier evaluated that a new world war is not possible and it has no immediate conventional or traditional threats rather non-traditional threats were the chief concern for China due to instability and separatism in Xinjiang, Narcotics from Afghanistan, and ethnic conflicts in the region.

China also perceived that if the security vacuum that had been generated after the disintegration of the USSR could also lead to the conventional threats in the future if this scenario would not be nipped in the bud as china feared that as Russia loosed its control in the CAR this would ultimately result in the intervention of NATO in the region under the veil of development, democracy or human rights that can destabilize the CAR and would lead to the direct engagement with NATO.

Economic perspective:

The most demanding feature for china from the beginning of the 21st century was to “peaceful rise” in global politics without any coercion. The focus of china was to influence the neighboring countries financially rather than focusing on military dominance. China was very much clear in its approach regarding the CAR as it knew that interfering in the region would result in the conflict between Russia and China as Russia

would never tolerate any military alliance other than CSTO in the region where it has been the sole dominant in the organization and hence china tried to make friendly relations with its CA countries by providing loan on low-interest rates.

China was very much eager to get natural resources from CAR, which has been present in huge quantities in the region. At in beginning of the 21st century, china was the nation after the USA in energy resources consumption and the natural reserves of china were depleting very fast hence, it has to rely on other alternatives to sustain its development pace that could be fulfilled by SCO, as it can provide several possibilities for its energy security, trade, and commerce “In 1992 import and export trade between China and the five Central Asian countries totaled \$459.35 million. It increased to \$872.41 million in 1997 and over \$2.3 billion in 2002. The total volume of trade between China and the five Central Asian countries increased to over \$8.730 billion in 2005¹⁰. On the eve of the 2006 Shanghai Summit” Furthermore, China and Kazakhstan cooperate in energy. In December 2005, the Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline between the two countries was opened. In due course, this Sino-Kazakh pipeline will be enlarged from 1,000 to 3,000 kilometers and will eventually provide China with some 15 percent of its crude oil needs. China was very much eager to get direct access to the western countries through its “new silk road” initiative, which would be cost-effective in transportation and time saving for china. This initiative has some social and political impacts also for the regional population to make a friendly environment for trade. As China tries to beguile the CAR by exaggerating about the “old silk rout” and telling the fairy tales of its prosperity. However, no one can deny this fact but the core suspicion by several thinkers that do it simply a means by china to exploit CAR or it has something to pay in return to CAR. Geopolitically in the 21st century, the CAR has become the most important area.

¹⁰ Yao, S. (2008). *Chinese Foreign Trade Performance and the China-US Trade, 1995-2004: A Graphical Analysis Based on China Customs Statistics*. US Internet Trade Commission, Office of Economics.

Security and Military Perspective:

Initially, the SCO, which was an annual meeting mechanism in its raw state known as “shanghai five”, was formed to solve the border disputes that had been the most crucial issue for china, as it doesn’t want a military threat from its northwestern front. The formation of “shanghai five” was based on a mechanism in solving border disputes and forming mutual trust on the borders as the northwestern province has been unstable hence china tried to stabilize the security on its north western province. The other perspective in CAR is to contain US in the region. The china also want to legitimize the suppression of Uyghur Muslims in the region and there are several other objectives which will be discussed in the next chapter however there has been no intention of china to form a military alliance through SCO due to mutual conflicts between the nations as practically it does feels feasible till now .

Political approach:

The most important element for any regime to survive is to maintain its legitimacy in a country. The legitimacy of a government can be tested because of whether it has been capable of maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of the country. The Chinese regime was well aware that if it would not be able to stabilize its northwestern province then it would meet the same fate as Russia. The core feature of SCO that highlights “separatism” had its deep root in its Xinjiang province where the most population comprises Uyghur Muslims and non-Han people who had been constantly demanding autonomy from Beijing. China was well aware of the fact that the withdrawal of USSR troops from Afghanistan and implementation of the Taliban regime which was an Islamic extremist group could encourage the Uyghur Muslims for independence hence china tried to collectively suppress the uprising of Uyghur Muslims by declaring east Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) a terrorist group through SCO. The Uyghur Muslims were getting aid and assistance from neighboring countries' areas. China also introduced the “shanghai spirit” in SCO whose focus was to non -intervention in the domestic affairs of a country. The main hidden agenda of the “shanghai spirit” can be perceived as the human rights

violation which had been done by communist regimes on Uyghur Muslims and the demand for democracy in the region could be curbed.

China was very much tensed regarding its “one China policy” approach however, it had not been seeing any threat in near future but it was well aware that in long term it could upset its aims and motives hence to legitimize and isolate Taiwan in world affairs by warning the SCO members to refrain from Taiwan issue. “China largely neutralized this risk shortly after the independence of the Central Asian states from the Soviet Union when the Chinese government itself established diplomatic relations with them.¹¹”

2.2 Russia:

Russia and China had started normalizing their relations after a decline in relation from 1960 to 1980 and started reviving their relationship under suspicion from 1985. Nevertheless, after the collapse of the USSR, both China and Russia were in dilemma to tackle the situation that had aroused in CAR. Though Russia never wanted that any other party should intervene and challenge its hegemony in CAR but paradoxically it was ready to cooperate with China rather seceding its local turf to NATO or the EU. Russia knew very well that if it would not come in the loop with china sooner or later it might lose its CAR dominance .as Russian think tank evaluated that china might not be able to challenge the Russian military might but it would be a potent threat economically and hence it tried to take advantage in stabilizing the CAR from china.

China was well aware that instability in the region would hamper its growth and could lead to a huge setback to its ‘peaceful rise’ approach. Hence, it agreed to cooperate with Russia in the region and solve the border disputes peacefully. Russia was not only focusing regionally but internationally through the prism of SCO where it was eyeing on

¹¹ Pan, G. (2007). China and energy security in Central Asia. *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, (6 (48)).

providing an alternative to the nation against the hegemony of the USA and demolition of unipolar world order. Russia was not in a state to challenge NATO after the dissolution of the Warsaw pact and hence it was focusing on maintaining its regional dominance and formation.

Political Perspective:

The political approach in SCO of Russia was much similar to china in domestic affairs regarding legitimacy. After the disintegration of the USSR, Russia was facing the threat in the North Caucasus, Ukraine, and several pro-democratic forces as china was facing the same in Xinjiang province. Russia had been severely criticized for its human rights violation in Chechnya and Hence, it was drawing support for its human rights violation by declaring it as its domestic affair from the international community. Russia was very clear that all the founding members of SCO were non-democratic and everyone wanted to suppress the domestic rebellion of democratic forces Hence, Russia tried to execute or repress the opposing forces who had taken shelter in the SCO member states.

Though Russia did not want the intervention of china in CAR, it knew that if it would not join SCO china might solely drive the organization and it might be isolated from western countries and other regional players. Russia's main concern was to solving regional issues and cooperation multilaterally and dominating the CAR through other organizations like CIS and CSTO.

Russia knew the intentions of the USA who had been constantly trying to isolate Russia by cutting it from other CAR states through its "greater central Asia policy" whose main aim was to ally with central Asian countries by sidelining Russia. The Russian leadership knew that if it wants dominance in the region it might not be able to tackle this issue and china was also concerned regarding this alliance and hence it might benefit mutually.

Russia also wanted to strengthen its relation with another UNSC member i.e. China which had a similar communist rule where other members were of anti-Russian stance and pro-democratic. The Russian regime also trusted the Chinese cooperation, as both the

countries were ‘sovereign globalizers’ where they were participating in globalization but on a selective basis. Russia cashed the opportunity by a founding member of SCO, as it had the advantage of selectively include the nation in the organization. As the SCO, charter clearly states that the inclusion of other members would be done unanimously. Russia also got an opportunity to frame the foreign policy of central Asian states as Russia's china synergy can put severe pressure on the states to make limited relations with western countries this could be evaluated in the events that showed. After the formation of SCO, the Russian thinkers genuinely undertook several initiatives to cash the opportunities present in the organization.

Military and Security Cooperation:

After the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, Russia tried to shift its policy from a bipolar world to a multipolar world so that it can challenge the hegemony of USA led alliance. However, no one can deny the fact that Russia was preparing for another Warsaw pact alike alliance but during the 1990s Russia had severely deteriorated economically and politically as well. Hence, Russia perceived that if it would be able to successfully retain its regional dominance it could challenge NATO in the coming future.

“Russia tries to create geopolitical pluralism, reflecting an emerging multipolarity that can be used in interregional interactions, including the SCO, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).¹²”

Russia feared that if NATO would be able to get a foothold in the region it would significantly impact the Russian interests in the region and NATO can install its puppets and could form an anti-Russian perspective in the region. Russia was well aware that it would not be able to counter the NATO alliance unilaterally and as it had seen its fate during the cold war; its earlier partners in the Warsaw pact had accepted the hegemony of NATO or were under great pressure to obviate from Anti-NATO alliance.

¹² ÜNALDILAR KOCAMAZ, S. (2019). The Rise of New Powers in World Politics: Russia, China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. *International Relations/Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 16(61).

In 'shanghai five' Russia was very interested in solving its border disputes so that it could use its military might in other parts of the region. Russia wanted to de-escalate border tension with its neighbors and make friendly relations with them. Russia wanted to maintain its dominance in the CAR without any conflict and the best possible way it saw was to give a fair share to its competitor in the region is China. Russia and China both were concerned with the approach of NATO toward CAR but no one wanted to degrade its relation with NATO. The reason for the issue was that no nation was in a state to contain counterbalance or challenge the NATO geopolitically.

After the 9/11 attack on the US and the military action of NATO in Afghanistan raised concerns for Russia and other SCO members as it might lead to conflict between Russia and NATO in the region in near future as earlier it had been described as "great central Asia partnership". Russia had been the biggest supplier of arms and ammunition to non-NATO countries and hence it tried to form an anti-NATO alliance by supplying arms and technology to China and central Asian states which could boost the arms industries of Russia through SCO and would help its allies to get technologically competitor to NATO in the military sphere. The SCO would also help in pressurizing central Asian states to maintain some distance from military tie-ups with western countries. Russia's analysis was that in a globalizing world the countries would focus on economic factors in their bilateral or multilateral ties rather than solely relying on military factors. Though Russia was having military ties with CAR through CSTO through the experience, it had evaluated that for national interest a nation would shift to any alliance. Russia was getting a

great deal through SCO where the lead role had been played by Russia and China which would help regional stability by controlling the regional partners to stake the region for lease or loan to western countries.

SCO declaration mentions the peaceful disposal of border disputes, which has been a boon for Russia as it, staves off the possibility of western countries' intervention in the region on military bases. The SCO also helped Russia to contain illegal drug trafficking

from Afghanistan by which thousands of people were killed every year and it would further help in curbing the funding of terrorism in CAR. After the NATO operation in Afghanistan, the NATO engagement with central Asian states increased rapidly. The military bases of NATO in central Asian states angered Russia. The military bases were signaling the interest and real motive of the USA which was to extract energy resources from CAR and sidelining Russia in the region from the energy group but Russia wanted to maintain its patent right on CAR. The USA also wanted to balance and challenge the monopoly of Russia in the military sphere as after the disintegration of USSR the Russia had some exclusive rights on military engagement in the region. The USA established its military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on the grounds of tackling anti-terrorist activities in the region however the core reason which china and Russia perceived was that the USA want to create separate supply routes that do not include Russia.

Economic Perspective:

In economic aspects, the SCO has nothing much to offer to Russia as it has its substitute for the Eurasian economic union. Russia had not shown any promising approach towards the SCO in the economic sphere. The core reason was that if it would allow the economic policies formed through SCO, Russia would ultimately lose its dominance or monopoly of the region. The economic might of china had caused serious threats to the monopoly of Russia in the region, for instance, China had always proposed to form free trade zone in SCO However, Russia had always opposed this move while stating that the free trade agreement must be signed among equal economies. Since all of the member states are much behind China in the economic sphere which would result in the exploitation of weaker members. However, the hidden reason behind this approach was that Russia would lose the central Asian market due to the availability of cheap and modern products of china. Russia also wanted its monopoly in the gas and energy sector from which it imports gas and other minerals and then exports it to Europe and other countries. Since the formation of SCO China had invested heavily in the central Asian region to fulfill its energy needs. For example, “the second Euro–Asia land bridge running east-west from

China to Europe via Xinjiang will compete with the first Euro–Asia land bridge running on the trans-Siberian railway. The former is heavily promoted by China, the latter by Russia. Similarly, the development of the north-south route from Central Asia via Afghanistan to the Indian Ocean will compete with the corridor running from India, via Iran, the Caucasus, and up to Russia”. The above examples are a clear-cut indication of the growing influence of China in the region and Hence, Russia wanted to minimize the impact of this competition by not signing the FTA as it has other alternatives to freely trade with central Asian states.

2.3 Central Asian States:

After the formation of Central Asian states in the region, the new dynamics aroused strategically and globally for major players in the global arena. before the disintegration of the USSR, the region undisputedly belonged to Russia and it was the sole driver of the region no other country or alliance was in a state to challenge the monopoly of Russia but after the disintegration, the region became a battleground for regional and global powers for its natural resources, geopolitical and geostrategic importance.

On a global level, NATO and the EU wanted to curb the influence of Russia in the region. While Russia tried to maintain its dominance in the region by forming CSTO. The main aim of formation CSTO was to avoid and restrict the presence of NATO in the region however the central Asian states wanted a military alliance with Russia but they want to explore other alternatives for their development and hence, they opted for a ‘multi-vector policy’ of balancing. The central Asian states which were the members of SCO were either underdeveloped or developing the states were also fighting to save their autocratic regimes and to tackle the challenge of new demarcation of borderlines with china. the CA region was facing non-traditional threats such as drug trafficking, narcotics, Islamic extremism, and local insurgency. The most important reason for central Asian states was to tackle the Afghanistan issue which had deep roots in the central Asian region and more specifically in Fergana valley. During that period and till now no state has been able to tackle the insurgency or drug trafficking solely which had been visible to

them in the humiliating defeat of the USSR in Afghanistan hence all states wanted to tackle the regional problem collectively.

The other reason for joining SCO was that it had been providing membership on an equal basis, which had not been present in CSTO to central Asian states whereas they had been treated as junior partners. While the central Asian states observed that SCO would help to manage relations with China and Russia simultaneously and it does not prohibit them from managing their relations with the west. The SCO would also provide support of two great powers in tackling terrorist activities that were internal or cross-border to central Asian states. The organization also provided power infrastructure, which could help in the development of the central Asian region, all help in rapid development in its energy resource sector that could ultimately boost its economic development and provides access to different trade routes. All the central Asian states had some different opinions and perspectives in joining SCO. Broadly, the central Asian states had some common motives in joining SCO first and foremost was it would provide political legitimacy to the autocratic regimes which might be threatened by the west in the future. The other factor was it can counterbalance Uzbekistan's intention of dominating the region and the most important was it would provide economic assistance in the development of the region. Kazakhstan needed financial assistance; as after disintegration, there had been a contraction.

2.4 India:

The SCO has been the first of its kind organization for connecting the Eurasian region to south Asia and more specifically India. The organization has been of vital importance for India for its 'connect central Asia' policy. The SCO has of vital importance for India as it provides a platform for countering terrorism; India views "the SCO as an Asian body and not as a military bloc or a body to counter the West. It considers the SCO useful organization extremism and separatism, which have been the main concern for India and a dialogue platform for the regional countries to discuss economic and security issues. It is argued that this organization brings all the Central Asian countries and its neighbors on

the same platform where India can interact with all Central Asian countries at the same time”. Politically the SCO platform provides India to interact with other regional powers for stability and peace in the region irrespective of the fact that though Russia, China, and India shares platform in other regional organizations like BRICS on dealing with the regional issue the SCO has been a ‘platform of a different kind’. India never saw the SCO as a military block rather it views it as a platform for tackling regional issues and a political block. the SCO provides some exclusive features like it allows to maintain or balance its relations with the USA. it also gave a full guarantee of its sovereignty which states that the organization will never interfere in internal matters of the country.

The inclusion of India and Pakistan as full members in the organization has changed the dynamics of region and organization, earlier where china was unilaterally driving the organization. After the inclusion of India, India has provided some balance to the organization as India and Russia collectively working to balance the unilateralism of China. The other concern for India has been the fact that in the 21st century India needs a huge amount of energy for its development, which could be fulfilled by the central Asian region easily. The other concern for India’s stability is mainly dependent on Afghanistan stability, which could be provided or supplemented through the efforts of SCO hence the organization has been of very important for the Indian perspective

2.5 OSCE and SCO:

The OSCE and SCO the same circumstances during their inception as both were formed to de-escalate the tensions among nations. The formation of OSCE traces back to 1973 when the cold war was going and the world was divided into two groups one which had been led by the USA under NATO and the other led by USSR under the Warsaw pact. During the 1970’s the conference on security and co-operation in Europe to ease the relationship between NATO and Warsaw pact. The focus of the organization was the political and military stability of the region. There were other objectives too such as financial, environmental aspects, and respect for human rights. Similarly, The SCO was formed to maintain a balance between two regional powers and peaceful disposal of border disputes among member states. SCO played a crucial role in de-escalating tension

and confidence building between China and Russia. The initial focus of OSCE was to solve the disputes peacefully and respect the sovereignty of the nations. The similarity between SCO and OSCE could be traced back from their historical development from their raw state to the full-grown organization. The OSCE in its initial phase was just a conference and treaty signing platform and a consensus reached among the member states to respect the “Helsinki accord” which was signed among the states to respect the “Decalogue document” which enumerates ten objectives that should be considered while engagement among its member states. Initially, all the European countries except Albania and Andorra had joined the CSCE including the two antagonists USA and USSR joined. Geographically the conference constituted Europe, the central Asian region, and North America. The OSCE and SCO similarity in their formation and functioning as both organizations had been formed on political and military bases for the stability of their respective regions. Both emerged to stabilize their regions and comprehensive security. However, after maturing they started shifting their focus on other regional problems like environment, trade, energy security, connectivity, credit, and finance, etc. They also focus that the security of a state does not solely depend on its affairs, but it greatly depends on its regional security. It had been mentioned in their charters that regional stability would ultimately result in national security hence, both the organizations focus on co-operative security. the organizations also focus on conflict prevention and peaceful resolution of disputes. As SCO which was earlier “shanghai five” was formed for the peaceful resolution of border disputes and trust-building among its members. The two organizations had collectively stood against the arms race among nations. Both organizations also propose respect for human rights and fight against terrorism however the definition of several issues varies among organizations.

Difference:

Both organizations had some differences in their working as well as in their structure. The first notable reason for which SCO had been criticized by western thinkers is due to its non-democratic forms of government. The SCO has been majorly consisting of

autocratic regimes due to which it had been alleged that SCO was formed to save autocratic regimes from pro-democrats due to the above reason both the organizations deviate heavily from each other on human rights issues. As OSCE heavily criticizes the human rights violation, conversely SCO though it had mentioned it in its charter it had severely violated human rights. The suppression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang province of China, the recent incidents in Hong Kong by China, the North Caucasus in Russia, the Andijan in Uzbekistan, Fergana valley in central Asia, and many other examples can be traced in the violation. The SCO members treat the human rights violation as the internal matter nation as all the authoritarian regimes use it as a weapon to suppress the voice of rebellion or protests against them. The SCO members except India had a very tight grip over freedom of the press. The abduction or murder of free journalists had been reported many times. The NGOs had been harassed and the human rights activists have been forced to leave the nation or contained to visit the affected areas. Several features of human rights have been missing in SCO as the use of social media sites like Facebook, freedom of speech, the rights of minorities have been severely crippled by autocratic regimes and intolerance against the opposition.

The two organizations have several variations among them in several aspects as OSCE treats its observers as genuine observers while in the case of SCO for example in case of Iran, India, Pakistan it treats its observers as small level partners who were not only observers but actively participated in organizational work however this had been said that the reason for this difference was strong bilateral ties of the observer states with the two major driving powers which are china and Russia. India shares a strong bond with Russia while Pakistan had been the close allies of China and Iran had a good bond with Russia and china or both.

Cooperation between OSCE and SCO:

SCO has had relationships with OSCE since its inception. The Ministerial Council's Decision to Counter Terrorism in 2001 called on the participating states and the Secretariat to expand dialogue with partners outside the OSCE area on the Bucharest Plan of Action to combat terrorism. "*SCO is invited to various OSCE activities, for example, to participate in the OSCE conference with regional and sub-regional organizations and initiatives to prevent and combat terrorism on 6 September 2002*¹³" (Shanghai Cooperation Organization). In the terrorist area, there have already been some general statements about the need for more cooperation. For example, in his speech to the Permanent Council of the OSCE on July 18, 2013, SCO Secretary-General Dmitry Magentsev announced the SCO's openness for cooperation in addressing regional threats such as terrorism and the illicit drug trade. (OSCE and SCO - Perspectives for Cooperation, Daniela Pissoiu, November 2015¹⁴). Both the organizations agreed on the issue of scrapping and banning the sources of financial assistance provided to the terrorist groups and cutting the arms supply chains of the terrorist groups. OSCE and SCO collectively focus on the radicalization propaganda initiated through the internet and sharing information on terrorism. The organizations also view the Afghanistan issue as not only a neighbor state issue but also a transnational issue that had been affecting the Eurasian region. The major concern about Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria is its foreign fighters who had been attacked by several nations. The foreign fighters have been the major issue for both the organization and they had agreed to extradition and prosecution of terrorists. Another major issue for the region is narcotics, which have been the chief source of financial assistance to the terrorist outfits and separatist forces, and both the

¹³ de Haas, M., & van der Putten, F. P. (2007). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Towards a full-grown security alliance.

¹⁴ Pissoiu, D. (2015). OSCE and the SCO--Perspectives for Cooperation. OIIP-Austrian Institute for International Affairs.

organizations have agreed to collectively cut the narcotics network in the region and sharing information.

2.6 NATO and SCO:

Before evaluating the role of NATO and SCO in CAR, we have to analyze the formation of NATO as the formation of SCO has been elaborated earlier. The concept of the formation of NATO had its roots in the events that happened just after World War II. After WWII the allied powers took control of Germany and it was divided into four zones among the US, Soviet Union, France, and Great Britain. In the Potsdam conference, it was agreed that Germany would be ruled uniformly through all the four zones. The main reason for it was to revive the German economy since it would be beneficial for the whole world and more specifically Europe. The Potsdam agreement got breached in 1947 and the possibility of unification of Germany got to an end. Due to increasing tension, Russia blocked the routes to West Germany which had been collectively ruled by the US, France, and Britain. However, the US continued its supplies to West Germany through airlift. The blockade had brought the US and the Soviet Union to the brink of war. However, in the due course of time, several other events had been taking place in international politics which had been creating a serious threat to the US interests. The Soviet Union had started showing its intention of expanding its influence in the world. The elections of Czechoslovakia where the influence and intervention of soviet led to the formation of government of communist regime, which had been in the backyard of Germany. The increased voting share of communist party of Italy also raised concerns for the NATO allies. Furthermore, events in Germany also caused concern. (North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 1949, Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute United States Department of State). In addition, Europe had become economically weak and militarily exhausted after the Second World War. The US perceived that economically strong and militarily mighty Europe would lead to the collective security of the region and would help in the prevention of expansion of the Soviet Union or communism in the region. In this move, the US proposed the ‘marshal plan’ in 1948 for

the recovery of Europe. The US feared that the west European states might make a deal with the Soviet Union due to their security concerns. To tackle this crisis the Truman agreed to ally with the European-American alliance to tackle this situation. In 1948, the 'Brussels treaty' was signed between Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. This clearly stated that war against one member would be considered a war against all. However, the US Congress had not passed the resolution yet but it got its assent to the resolution, which had been presented by Senator Arthur H. Vandenburg in May 1948. The process of joining the alliance started.

Difference:

While comparing the inception of NATO with SCO we find that since NATO had been formed to challenge the traditional threats while the focus of SCO was to fight against non-traditional as well as traditional threats. In the formation of NATO, we found that it had been an alliance against a defined enemy while the SCO had no such targeted enemy in its formation. The formation of NATO demanded some special rights from respective states like providing military assistance and unified military command to fight against the threats while SCO has not yet established any such command. The maturity of NATO could be evaluated by its intervention and operations in different countries and regions like in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Africa, etc. while SCO had no such intervention in any countries. There had been very serious variation in the approach of the member states in dealing with both the organizations. As NATO, countries took a collective and undivided stance on most of the matters inversely the stand of SCO countries in most of the matters do not stand collectively. The SCO does not prohibit any nation from forming an alliance or agreement with other organizations or nations while NATO had clearly stated in its charter that no state would be allowed to join Warsaw Pact. The SCO also declared in its charter that it would respect the sovereignty of the member states however in the case of NATO it had been seen that the sovereignty of the nations had been compromised to a certain level. The other feature of NATO had been that the organization plays a key role in the framing of the foreign policy of the member states while in the case of SCO the

member states are completely independent to take their decisions. Initially, there had been a weak and incoherent alliance in west Germany in the military sphere.

2.7 Regional Challenges and SCO

Fergana valley and role of SCO:

The Fergana valley had been a geographical area that has been a depression in Tien Shan Mountain in the north and Alay Mountains in the south. As all the river systems had been the cradle of civilizations in the same way, the river *Syr Dayra* led to the development of the central Asian region. The region played a significant role in the development of the great silk route where the people of the region sold horses, perfumes, glasses, etc. to Chinese people and in return bought silk from the Chinese. The Fergana people sold this silk to Arabian, Assyrian or Jewish traders. Hence, it played a great role in connectivity between the empires. It had been of great importance that due to their trade the Sogdian language became the common language of traders in international trade. The region flourished during that time.

The region saw several invasions from different empires in history initially from alexander the great, Kushan rulers from India. During Kushan rule, the Persian people of the region ruled the region however due to the migration of the Turkish people the region led to a demographic change in the region. in the 8th century the region came under the rule of Arabs which led to the introduction of Islam in the region. The death of the Samanid who was a Persian descent ruler led to the end of Persian rule in the valley. Conquering the Fergana valley, the Kara-Khanid established the Turkic descent dominance in the region. They ruled the region from the 9th century to the middle of the 13th century but after the invasion of Genghis Khan who destroyed most of the cities of Fergana and the central Asian region in the 1230s. However, the rule did not last for too long as after his demise the empire was fragmented and one of his sons ruled the region

until the 1370s after which Timur lane ruled the region from 1371. From 1371 to the 16th century, the descendants of Timberlane ruled the region. In the 16th century, the local ruler of the region Shaibani Khan threw out Babur from the region who was one of the descendants of Timur. In 1709, the independent Uzbek state was established which had its capital in Kokand. It is comprised of the complete Fergana valley, eastern Uzbekistan, northern Tajikistan, and southern Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. However, the Uzbeks conquered Tashkent, which made an easy pass way for the Russian invasion of central Asia. The tsarist empire in 1876 after which a new political order was established conquered the region.

Reasons for the Fergana Valley Issue:

The Bolshevik revolution changed the history of the region as the war broke out between the tsarist empire and the opponents. The Bolshevik faced strong resistance from the *Basmachi* Movement, which was born in Fergana Valley and spread rapidly to other parts of former Turkestan. The *Basmachi*'s were Muslim guerrillas who resisted the Bolshevik onslaughts in the early 1920s¹⁵. However, they were defeated by the red army. The Tsar. Lenin established the People's Commissariat of Nationalities, with Stalin as the Commissar, which commenced the creation of a federation based on 'Nationality-based Territorial Statehood'. It led to the emergence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922¹⁶. The Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was created in 1924 within the Uzbek SSR. It was given the status of Tajik SSR only in 1929. The Kazakh and the Kyrgyz ASSRs within the Russian Federal Republic were given the status of full republics, and thus became Kazakh SSR and the Kyrgyz SSR in 1936.

The reason for dividing the region with overlapping ethnic identities was to curb the potent threat which the Russians had faced during the Fergana valley resistance in the

¹⁵ Whiting, L. (2017). Tajikistan: A Crumbling Peace?

¹⁶ Pathak, K. K. ENERGY RESOURCES IN KAZAKHSTAN. *CENTRAL EURASIAN JOURNAL*, 145.

Bolshevik revolution. The Russian perceived that if the region would not be divided on a nationalistic basis in the future it would lead to collective rebellion against Russia on a common religious (Islamic) basis and Turkic descent. The region faced several changes from the 1920s to 1991. During the Soviet Union times, the economic activities in the region took place and the people from the different regions started settling in the valley. Since the borders of autonomous regions were porous which led to the migration of people from one region to another? The migration of people also led to demographic change in the region. Several channels and trade routes were formed in the region. The communication and transport ran from one region to another and hence this led to the misconception of borderlines among the states, which became independent in 1991.

After the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, the region was divided into three nations, which were Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. After disintegration, the valley was not only divided on a political basis but also got fragmented on an ethnic and religious basis, which became a big concern for all three countries. It also affected the relations among all the concerned nations of the region. Afghanistan came under the rule of Mujahideen in the 1990s, which motivated the central Asian rebels against the government and rule under sharia.

Xinjiang Province Problem;

The region had been the homeland of Uyghur Muslims before the formation of the PRC. However, it had come under the rule of several empires in the past. However, they got short-lived autonomy in 1933 and from 1944-49. After the formation of the PRC irrespective of the communist government, it took a soft stance against the Uyghur Muslims. they also promised to provide autonomy to the region but the promise has been broken which led to the outrage in the region and demand for separate homeland has been raised which resulted into several separatist or terrorist attacks on china by the separatist groups. The problem has its ties with other regional terrorist groups. Hence it has been the chief problem for the whole region .

2.9 Role of SCO in Regional Security against ‘Three Evils’

The SCO has been an intergovernmental international organization that had been formed to counter the three evils, which had been the main concern for all the member states. The main problems, which were addressed during the formation of SCO, were extremism, terrorism, and separatism. Since all the three activities were somehow interlinked with each other in the region all, the members tried to secure the region from all these ‘three evils. All the actions took by any terrorist outfit were interlinked to each other. For example, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which has been an extremist, as well as a terrorist outfit, has its links with the Taliban. While the separatist movement in Xinjiang EITM (which has been declared a terrorist group) has its connection with several terrorist groups. All these problems had been interlinked with each other as all the separatist forces and extremist forces use violent means to protest or rebel. Hence, the major problem, which aroused in the region, was terrorism. All the groups whether it is terrorist or extremist have come into an alliance to achieve their goals.

Framework for Fighting ‘Three Evils’

In the charter of SCO in 2001, the members explicitly mentioned that “joint combating terrorism, separatism and extremism in all their manifestations, fighting against illicit narcotics and arms trafficking and other types of transnational criminal activity, and illegal migration” under article 1. The SCO declaration clearly stated the seriousness of the problem in which they had faced several attacks from the regional terrorist groups. Several treaties had been signed in the SCO to counter terrorist activities, which are

- *The Concept of Cooperation Between the SCO Member States on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, June 5, 2005*

- *Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation Between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, August 16, 2007*
- *The Convention Against Terrorism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, June 16, 2009, made the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism more concrete*
- *Program of Cooperation among the SCO Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism 2010–2012, June 16, 2009*
- *Agreement on the Training of Personnel for Antiterrorist Units of SCO, The Member States, June 16, 2009*
- *Program of Cooperation among the SCO Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism 2013–2015, June 8, 2012*
- *Statement of the Council of Heads of State on International Information Security, June 15, 2006*

(The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, Zhao Xiaodong, © Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2012).

2.7 Regional Anti-terrorist Structure:

The SCO was the first regional organization that exclusively formed a unit to counter-terrorism. In this direction under article 10 of the SCO declaration, it was explicitly mentioned that the RATS will be a permanent body of the organization to fight against terrorism, separatism, and extremism whose headquarter will be in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. However, it also stated that a separate international treaty signed by member states would govern the functioning and financing of the organization. There have been several tasks that had been allotted to the RATS to counter-terrorism activities. The RATS has been formed to maintain relations with the member states other anti-terrorist unit and other

international organizations, which have been fighting against the same. The RATS has been functioning in providing training and assistance in countering the “three evils” to other organizations. It has been also working in sharing information with other organizations about the terrorist movements in the region. The RATS have several other tasks like searching, apprehending, and transferring persons with suspicion or charged with terrorism activities. The RATS have been working in the execution of operational search action on the demand of member states.

The RATS have conducted several military exercises under the SCO framework which includes

- *Peace Mission-2005: counter-terrorism exercise in Vladivostok, Russia, and Shandong, China, August 18–25, 2005*
- *Tian-shan-1-2006: an anti-terror exercise in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, and Yining in Xinjiang, China, August 24–26, 2006*
- *Volgograd Anti-terror-2008: an exercise in Volgograd, Russia, August 14–September 4, 2008, in Norak, Tajikistan, April 17–19, 2009*
- *Peace Mission-2009: anti-terror military drill in Khabarovsk, Russia and Tainan, China, July 22–26, 2009*
- *Peace Mission-2010: anti-terror military drill in Zhambyl, Kazakhstan, September 9–25, 2010*
- *Tianshan-2-2011: joint counter-terrorism exercise in Kashgar, Xinjiang, China, May 5–8, 2011*
- *Peace Mission-2012: anti-terror military drill in Tajikistan, June 8–14,*

(The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, Zhao Xiaodong, © Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2012).

The RATS have been playing a significant role in countering the illegal narcotic supply chain, which has been the chief source of finance for terrorists, separatists, and extremist groups. It has been effectively implementing the treaties and agreements signed between the states. The assistance provided by RATS in countering terrorism has been praised by all the members of SCO. However, some suggested a separate military setup for SCO for tackling the terrorist activities in the region. While RATS became useless, when the terrorism has been stating sponsored as it cannot intervene in the terrorism-sponsoring country due to the SCO charter declaration.

CHAPTER 3

ROLE OF SCO IN “WAR TORNED” AFGHANISTAN

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AFGANISTAN

Initially, there had been no concept of Afghanistan in the same way as the central Asian region but a pathway for different empires. The region of Afghanistan has been geographically situated in the central and south Asian regions, which mainly consists of mountains and barren land. The region was initially ruled by the Babylonian empire around 500 B.C then by alexander, the great in 329. The region was conquered by several kingdoms like Arabs, Turks, Chinese, Mongols, and Greeks. The old silk route which had been formed by the Han dynasty around 130 B.C also passed through Afghanistan. The dynasty rule had a very great imprint on the culture and religion of the region. The Arabs brought Islam to Afghanistan in the 7th century however; it got popularized in the 11th century. The region had been also heavily influenced by Persian culture due to the Genghis khan empire, which ruled the region from the 12th century. The establishment of Genghis khan’s Mongol empire led to the pacification of the region and -established the silk route that connected China to Europe. During Mongol rule, the region was divided into different Khanates however this system ended after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The identity of Afghanistan came into existence after the establishment of the Durrani Empire in 1747. The Durrani Empire which was established by Ahmad Shah Durrani separated its borders with Mongol and Persian empires and started its autonomous rule in Afghanistan and took an aggressive stance against the regional empires

3.2 Anglo –Russian War and ‘The Great Game’

In the 19th century, the rivalry between the Russian empire and Britain erupts regarding the hold of the Afghanistan region due to its geostrategic importance as Russia wanted its direct access to hot water harbors such as the black sea and a reach to the Mediterranean Sea. Russia also knew the natural resource-rich region, its agricultural land, and its animal breeding region. There had been another strategic importance for Russia, as it would get direct access to the Indian Ocean region and to get control of major seaports. In the same period, Britain took control of the Indian subcontinent and started expanding its empire. Britain had faced several setbacks by losing its colonies and it was suspicious about the intentions of Russia regarding their approach in Afghanistan and Central Asia. The central Asian region was crucial for Britain as it had immense natural resources and hence Britain wanted to take control of it. The main significance for Britain regarding Afghanistan was its trade and commerce passing through Afghanistan and it wanted it as an undisputed route for its trade. The tussle between Russia and Britain came to an end in 1907 where both the parties agreed by signing “Anglo Russian convention” where they agreed to make Afghanistan as buffer states between the two empires.

The struggle between the two powers led to the decline and depreciation of the Durrani empire as both Russia and Britain fought three Anglo-Russian wars to install their puppets on the crown and to get benefits from them. These reasons led to the political and military decay of Afghanistan.

3.3 Afghanistan from 1919-1947

In 1919 the king Amanullah khan established the sovereign and independent state of Afghanistan and started establishing relations with the international community. During this period Afghanistan started making modern reforms behind reforms the main leader was Mahmud Tarzi who fought for the education of girls, abolition of slavery, and burka. He also started coeducation for the students in the country however, these changes were

not liked by tribal and religious leaders. This whole scenario led to the armed rebellion and Amanullah Khan was forced to leave the crown. The rebel leader Habibullah Kalakani took over the charge in January 1929, but this dominance had not been sustained as in November 1929 the cousin of Amanullah Khan, Prince Mohammed Nadir Shah took back the charge from rebel leaders. The prince tried gradual reformation rather than an abrupt change in the country. He was assassinated in 1933 by a student from Hazara School. The Zahir Shah son of Nadir Shah who was 19 years old at that time succeeded the throne. Zahir Shah continued his rule by appointing his uncle as prime minister in 1946, but his uncle provided greater political freedom in the country however when he evaluated the consequences of such freedom, he took back the decision. In 1953, the cousin of Prince Daoud Khan replaced the prime minister and tried closer ties with the Soviet and distance from Pakistan. The reason for the distant relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan was as Britain left the Indian subcontinent India got divided into two parts which were Pakistan and India. The borderline that had been formed between erstwhile India and Afghanistan in the 19th century was the Durand line but after the formation of Pakistan in 1947, Afghanistan opposed the line as it divides its Pashtun tribe. The Pashtun resides in mainly Afghanistan but in Pakistan territory too. The relation between the two sides started hostile and both sides started a trade blockade which resulted in the economic crises for Afghanistan.

3.4 Cold War and Afghanistan:

After the 1947 and starting of the cold war, Afghanistan took a neutral stance by not aligning to any block but in the wake of the trade blockade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghanistan needed support to tackle the situation and hence it shifted towards the Soviet Union for trade and training of its military officers. During this period, America had no enmity or ill will against Afghanistan but as the cold war started and the relations between the two blocks deteriorated the relation with Afghanistan too changed with both the superpowers. Initially, Afghanistan demanded military support from America against Pakistan but America denied it though it promised to cooperate on

infrastructure projects like making dams, roads, schools, power plants, etc. America also provided technical assistance for the economic growth of Afghanistan however; America provided military aid to Pakistan, which led to the closer ties of Afghanistan with the Soviet Union.

The Afghanistan government tried to balance the relationship between two power blocks because in Afghanistan in this regards the Prime Minister Daoud Khan signed an agreement with US president Dwight Eisenhower in 1953. The personal relations between Daoud Khan and Eisenhower also helped to manage the relationship between the two nations. The reason for this friendship or relation could be traced from the 1950s Cuban revolution where the Soviet Union was supporting Fidel Castro in the neighboring country of US hence America tried to balance the game by supporting Afghanistan this would help to check on the Soviet Union and stopping Afghanistan from becoming a communist state. Afghanistan had some other goals for friendly relations with the US, as it was suspicious about the intention of the Soviet Union as Afghanistan was scared of Soviet invasion and needed modern weapons to fight against the neighboring threats. Russia was very eager to control Afghanistan as it had several goals and the advantage of the geostrategic location of Afghanistan. The main objective was to stop America from forming an Anti-Soviet sentiment state in its neighborhood. The other factor was to control the Iranian coal fields and have a check on Iran.

The Soviet Union also wanted to dominate the South Asian region and if it would lose Afghanistan control, it would be a major setback for the Soviet Union in the Persian Gulf as well as in the Indian Ocean region. In 1956 the Soviet Union agrees to help Afghanistan and both the nations became close allies. As the Cuban revolution was going on the Soviet Union tightened its grip over Afghanistan too. But in Daoud Khan got relied upon the Soviet Union for aid and assistance and mass resentment led to his resignation for his overdependence on the Soviet Union in 1963. In 1964 new legislature was formed and a new constitution was enacted in Afghanistan which stated the nation would be ruled on a constitutional monarchy basis. In 1964, it was drafted that the executive would be answerable to two chambers of the legislature. In 1965, the Afghanistan communist

party came into existence with the support of the Soviet Union. The main leaders of the communist party were Babrak karna and Nur Muhammad Taraki. The elections were held in 1965 and 1969 but they did not work well. In 1973, the former prime minister of Afghanistan Daoud khan took the control of Afghanistan and declared Afghanistan a republic. Daoud khan wanted to distant Afghanistan from the Soviet Union and closer ties with western countries. However, he was not able to sustain power and in 1978 was overthrown by the people's party of Afghanistan and the banner party both were leftist and pro-soviet which was a pro-soviet party and in 1979 Hufizullah Amin became the president of Afghanistan and Noor Muhammad Taraki became the prime minister. During this time equal rights for women were introduced and the land got redistribute. The actions took by the communist party were not following the soviet norms and were against the will of the Soviet Union.

3.5 Afghanistan War and the Soviet Union

In the initial days of 1979, thousand of political leaders were arrested and killed by the Afghanistan government; around 27000 peoples were executed by the government. By April however, the situation started deteriorating and the rebellion started in the whole country. In September 1979 the killing of President Nur Taraki who had been alleged that he had been killed by Deputy Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin worsen the situation in the country. USSR failed in pacifying the situation. The USSR was committed to not enter in Afghanistan, but it had to change its decision of entering Afghanistan. The entry of the USSR had been the reason that Amin's leadership would lead to the instability of the region. However, the situation worsened, and USSR entered Afghanistan in December and Amin got assassinated by USSR troops. The pro-soviet barback caramel was installed as president of Afghanistan in 1980. The Soviet Union was not interested in fighting a war but to stabilize the situation, as the conditions changed, and the local sentiment changed from pro-soviet to Anti-Soviet the USSR had no option but to enter into a full-scale domestic war. The international community condemned the action of the

Soviet invasion and demanded immediate withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan unconditionally. The United Nations assembly passed a resolution by 104-18 votes against the soviet. The international community viewed this act as the ‘new great game’ through which the Soviet Union wanted to gain direct access to the Indian Ocean. This act was seen as a violation of the “Yalta Agreement” of 1945, which stated that states must be given to decide their future and make self-determination of their policies to more specifically European states.

The reaction of the international community could be evaluated through different perspectives. the first and foremost had been of America which viewed the intervention as ‘a great threat to world peace’. The then-president of America jimmy carter stated that the act has been done under the shadow of regional harmony. *“The US also viewed it as the expansionist tendency of the USSR and one of Carter’s final foreign policy decisions was to announce that an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”*¹⁷

An Overview, to contain USSR the US formed ‘rapid deployment force’ for a quick reaction against USSR in the Persian Gulf and they started secretly signing the deal with gulf countries to get access to logistics and bases in case of war. The action taken by USSR in Afghanistan made the Islamic nations angry including its Warsaw pact allies. The other country, which had been concerned for obvious reason, was Pakistan. Afghanistan had a severe impact on the politics of Pakistan. Pakistan supported the Mujahidin’s by providing military training and financial aid through assistance from the US. The ISI and CIA conducted several operations against USSR in Afghanistan. The chief reason for Pakistan to support the Anti-Soviet agenda was that it feared that If DRA would be formed after stabilization it would directly revive its claim over ‘Pushtunistan’. Pakistan also viewed this as an opportunity for the installation of the pro-Pakistani

¹⁷ Hughes, G. (2008). The Soviet–Afghan War, 1978–1989: An Overview. *Defence Studies*, 8(3), 326-350.

regime in Afghanistan. The other benefit was that Pakistan had the opportunity the lifting sanctions imposed by the US over Pakistan's nuclear program.

3.6 SCO And Afghanistan

SCO had some serious concerns regarding the Afghanistan issue from its formation. The Afghanistan problem had a serious threat to the stability of the region, as it had been the main source of illegal trafficking of drugs and terrorist activities in the region. The narcotic supply had severely affected the people of the region and had been the chief financial source of terrorist, extremist and separatist forces in the region. All the neighboring countries had withstood the worst of the Afghanistan crisis. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan had suffered the most due to the problem. Before the establishment of SCO, the 'Shanghai five' showed deep concern over Afghanistan however refrained from any action by declaring it as the internal issue of the nation. However, experts had expressed that before the establishment of SCO the 'shanghai five' was neither capable nor qualified to take initiative or action in Afghanistan. The shanghai five proposed a 6+2 approach in solving the problem through which it suggested that the six neighboring countries China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Pakistan, including the US and Russia must form a model to solve the afghan problem under the supervision of UN.

Figure 2: Map of Afghanistan



3.7 Formation of SCO and Afghanistan Crises:

After 9/11, the US declared ‘war on terror’ and entered Afghanistan for the eradication of terrorism. However, The SCO had also been formed from its raw state of ‘shanghai five’ in 2001. The member countries of SCO in central Asia perceived that the SCO is ineffective in solving the Afghanistan crisis and hence established relations with NATO allies for the regional security in the region. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan provided

military bases to NATO for the fight against terrorism. The interest of SCO member states in providing military assistance and logistic support to NATO showed the incapability or incredibility of SCO's role in regional security. Though SCO was not able to take firm actions in the Afghanistan issue it passively supported the developments done by NATO. They demanded firm actions against terrorism, which had been a big threat to the region. SCO showed great concern on the narcotic drug trade in the region, which had been the chief source of financial assistance to the terror groups in the region. The SCO welcomed the formation of the interim government of Afghanistan and Afghanistan national army in 2002.

The deteriorating condition of Afghanistan raised concerns for its neighbors too and Hence, the issue of Afghanistan was raised in the 2004 summit where all the members agreed to form 'SCO-Afghanistan contact group'. *"The ACG consists of permanent member states of the SCO secretariat, secretariat officers, and senior Afghan diplomats posted at the country's embassy in China. If required, representatives of other SCO bodies and experts of SCO member states and Afghanistan can be involved in the meetings of the ACG"*.

In the same summit, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai was also invited to the SCO meeting. The establishment of SCO-ACG took place in 2005, where it was agreed that it will be the channel through which dialogue and cooperation will take place in the future. The focus of the group was to minimize the narcotic drug trade in the region and counter-terrorist activities in the region. However, the chief agenda of the contact group was to strengthen the capability of Afghanistan and the formation of an 'Anti- Narcotic security belt' around Afghanistan. From 2005 to 2007 all, the member states stressed improving the political and economic condition of Afghanistan by working with other international organizations. The member states again evaluated the consequences of Afghanistan's narcotic supply in the region and focused on the demilitarization of Afghanistan. The member states also emphasized motivating and providing other alternates to the farmers for shifting from poppy to other crops. All the members emphasized the need for providing aid on the humanitarian ground like forming schools, hospitals, and other

infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. However, in 2008 Russia proposed a special session on Afghanistan that took place in 2009.

3.8 Special Session on Afghanistan:

The summit held in an SCO Special Conference on Afghanistan was held in March 2009 in Moscow. *“Besides the full members and the four observers, it was also attended by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and representatives from the group of Eight, the E.U., and OSCE. Altogether, 36 countries sent their foreign ministers to the Conference. Afghanistan was also represented by Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfer Spanta.¹⁸”*. Nevertheless, the main triumph of the event was that it played a vital role in bringing Iran and the US on the same stage, which proved the importance of SCO in regional as well as in global politics. Both the parties agreed to cooperate on the Afghanistan issue. In the summit, all the members focused on setting up anti-narcotic, anti-terrorist, and anti-money laundering belts around Afghanistan. All the members also agreed to assist Afghanistan agencies in countering terrorism and providing assistance in controlling drugs.

In the summit, SCO opposed the expansion of NATO forces in the Central Asian region but agreed to co-operate in Afghanistan by providing logistic support to the NATO forces. The summit also proved to be a shift in US stance in Afghanistan where it asserted that it would consult and cooperate with Afghanistan neighbors for stability. The Russia had allowed the NATO forces to use its territory for logistics support in Afghanistan, which are combat, as well as non-combat supply. The route through Russia had been safe and easy for transit of military supply for NATO forces. The gesture provided also provided a landmark shift in the policy of east and west regarding the global problem of terrorism and the role of SCO this act had been acknowledged by everyone. In the summit, the SCO and CSTO agreed to take part in joint counter-terrorism and anti-drug trafficking operations in the region.

¹⁸ Khan, S. (2009). Stabilization of Afghanistan: US-nato Regional Strategy and the Role of the SCO. In *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* (Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 11-15).

During the summit, all the concerned parties had different opinions and approaches regarding the Afghanistan problem where the neighboring country Iran criticized the role of western countries in the region and pled guilty for the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. They also stated that Islamic countries are more aware of the social fabric and have a more connected culture to Afghan people than western countries. They emphasized that Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Iran are collectively more capable of solving the Afghan problem and welcomed the initiatives taken by SCO.

Pakistan expressed that it has been capable of solving the Afghanistan issue with the support of the international community. It expressed its desire in joining RCTS to counter-terrorism in the region. Pakistan also emphasized cooperation between SCO and ECO for the development of Afghanistan and praised the role of Russia and China in Afghanistan. Russia expressed its concern over Pakistan as being a nuclear power that had been heading towards Talibanization and activates extremist groups in their territory and safe Heaven for terrorist groups of Afghanistan. However, after criticizing Pakistan Russia started engaging Pakistan in the Afghanistan issue where “the fourth round of bilateral consultations of the Pakistan-Russia Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism was held in Moscow in August 2009. Before this, there was a Russia-Tajikistan and Pakistan summit in Dushanbe in July 2009”. The above stance taken by Russia showed that the role of Pakistan could not be neglected if anyone wants to solve the Afghanistan problem.

The central Asian states had witnessed the color revolutions in the central Asian region, which had been backed by western countries hence the regional countries were shifting from pro-NATO to regional powers, which were Russia and China. The central Asian states had a very deep concern for Afghanistan as this region had a great economic and political impact on Central Asian states. The SCO agreed to the fact that the central Asian states have close ethnic and cultural links with Afghanistan, which can play a significant role in understanding the core problem of Afghanistan. Uzbekistan can play a crucial role in the establishment of industries of Afghanistan which were once had set up in the northern part of the country and Tajikistan can provide electricity and connectivity to the

nation. Kazakhstan emphasized. *“At the Moscow summit, its first deputy foreign minister, Murray Abykayev, suggested that the UN, NATO and such structures as the OIC and the ECO should be fully involved in resolving the Afghan problem and emphasized the need for creating reliable ‘zones of anti-terrorist, anti-drug and financial security’ around Afghanistan. He also considered it expedient to explore the possibility of full-scale NATO-SCO-CSTO cooperation.”*¹⁹

Afghanistan was given observer status in SCO in 2012 summit and after the declaration of withdrawal of NATO forces from the region, which had started in 2011 where 650 US personals left Afghanistan as declared by President Obama had left a great threat to the region as well as to the world. In NATO summit 2012, all members agreed to shift from active role to assisting role to Afghanistan forces and will leave the country by 2013. The consequences and change in dynamics in Afghanistan would be discussed in the next portion.

3.9 Afghanistan after the Withdrawal of NATO Forces:

The US had stated that it would withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan until 2014. However, in 2012 the NATO forces saw several attacks on NATO by Afghanistan forces, which were named, as ‘green on blue’ attacks. In the attacks, the NATO forces suspended all joint military operations with the Afghanistan army and police. The NATO handed over the complete security of Afghanistan to its military. The NATO forces stated that the Afghanistan army would take over the complete charge of the security of the nation where earlier it had been playing limited role. "Our security and defense forces will now be in the lead," Karzai said. *"From here, all security responsibility and all security leadership will be taken by our brave forces. When people see security has been transferred to Afghans, they support the army and police more than before"*²⁰. The NATO forces had started closing their bases and shipping out their equipment from

¹⁹ Roy, M. S. (2009). International and Regional Security Dynamics. *Indian and Iranian Perspectives*.

²⁰ Mankoff, J. (2013). *The United States and Central Asia after 2014*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Afghanistan. The NATO forces stated that the international security assistance force would continue to provide military assistance, training, and supporting role to Afghanistan forces but they will not take the lead role in counter-terrorism activities.

3.10 Role of SCO after the Withdrawal of NATO in Afghanistan:

SCO countries have a vital interest in Afghanistan, which can be noticed by the fact that Secretary-General of the SCO, Rashid Alimov in 2017 called it the ‘Heart of Asia and the SCO’. The importance of Afghanistan could be traced by its geostrategic location. First of all, before understanding the role of SCO in Afghanistan we have to understand the trajectory followed by SCO and Afghanistan. Afghanistan got the observer status in 2012 and it had applied for permanent membership in the SCO summit, at Ufa. During the summit, the chief executive of Afghanistan showed his interest in joining SCO by stating that economic convergence and regional cooperation could play a key role in the stabilization of the region. *“As Afghanistan applied for permanent membership of SCO China announced its support for the accession of Afghanistan at a meet between the National Security Advisor of Afghanistan, Mohammed Hanif Atmar, and China’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, in Beijing in 2016. China’s support for Afghanistan’s peace and reconciliation process was also mentioned by President Xi Jinping in his speech at the Astana Summit in 2017²¹”*. On 1 November 2019 in Tashkent, SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov met with Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Abdullah, During the SCO Heads of Government Council Meeting (SCO Secretary-General Meets with Chief Executive of Afghanistan, sectsco.org). In the summit, the SCO members provided a roadmap for an action plan of contact group where it was agreed to counter potential terror threats in the region and providing training and expertise to the Afghanistan officers in countering narcotic drug trafficking and aiding in infrastructure projects. During the meeting, it was discussed regional transport chains passing through Afghanistan could play a key role in the

²¹ Lalrinfel, B., & Tripathi, A. (2018). Afghanistan and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Prospects for Membership.

economic development of the nation and provide opportunities for the export of goods from Afghanistan. The Afghanistan chief executive Abdullah praised the actions taken by SCO in regional security and accelerating the economic cooperation with the nation.

The cooperation between SCO and Afghanistan has been on a limited basis since great regional or major powers try to increase. Their influence by cooperating bilaterally for their vested interests. The interests of the countries would be discussed later however; the SCO members have some benefits in dealing with the Afghanistan problem. The SCO had great opportunity and scope in dealing with the problem of Afghanistan.

3.11 Scope and Opportunity for SCO in Afghanistan

After the formation of SCO since 2001, it has been the sole organization in the Central Asian region that had been imparting security to its members without the involvement of the US. The SCO had cooperated and coordinated on several issues and provided a platform for its members to raise their issues related to regional security. The SCO has become the primary dispute solving mechanism or other disputes among its member states without the involvement of western countries. SCO has also contributed to counter insurgencies and Anti- Narcotic operations in the region that has been a trans-border threat. It has provided a regional platform for intelligence sharing on terrorism, extremism, and separatism through RATS. The member states' commitment regarding the regional threats could be well evaluated from its peace mission exercises done in past. The SCO has been the sole central regional organization that has the capability of bringing disparate states on a single platform irrespective of differences among them. It has also proved to be a juncture where the implementation of security-related policies is implemented uniformly by all members. The SCO has proved its mettle in reducing tensions among states that were hostile in the past.

The SCO has also prevented the power capitalization race in the region as both the great powers of the region Russia and china had shown their cooperation in the functioning of SCO. The SCO has provided a comprehensive approach in dealing with regional problems rather than focusing solely on their national interest, which has been tied to the

regional problems. It has also provided confidence-building measures among states and reduction of military forces on border areas among member states.

The SCO can be the guarantee for peace and stability of the Central Asian region and more specifically Afghanistan. The main reason for this has been the fact that all the neighbors of Afghanistan through which illegal narcotic supply takes place are the members of SCO. The issue which inspires its Central Asian neighbors is the fact that the development and stability of Afghanistan would ultimately result in the economic development of these states and would provide better connectivity and trade routes to them. The Central Asian state has close cultural and ethnic linkage with the Afghan people, which would help in resolving the issues among the people and also help in awareness programs. The ethnic and cultural ties would help in understanding the problems and challenges faced by Afghan people, where the NATO forces have failed to do so. The SCO also provides central Asian states the assistance and intelligence apparatus from more developed and modernized militaries. It also provides tactical training in dealing with Anti-Terrorist, Hostages Rescue, Anti-Smuggling operations where Russia, China, and India have many sophisticated and modernized approaches in dealing with these problems.

The SCO can help become a hub of economic activities for all SCO members due to its strategic location. If Afghanistan would be connected through South, West, and Central Asia. It would benefit all the countries for their energy supply and economic activities. Iran and all Central Asian states are rich in energy resources, which can be directly transported through Afghanistan to India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In the past, the TAPI pipeline project which passes from Afghanistan has proved the importance of Afghanistan. Hence; it can become a zone of interaction between energy producers and energy consumers.

The Central Asian states have an edge in dealing with the Afghanistan problem through SCO. The most important aspect of SCO for central Asian states is the fact that it provides political stability to their autocratic rule. In the past, during the color's

revolutions, the Central Asian states had become uneasy about the stance of western countries and the support of western countries to these revolutions had made suspicion regarding the intention of NATO forces in the region. While dealing with SCO, the Central Asian states feel comfortable in dealing with their internal problems. The ‘Shanghai Spirit’ has been enshrined. The SCO charter guarantees them that no member would intervene in the internal affairs of the country.

The other great power of the region, which has been investing heavily in Afghanistan, has several motives in solving Afghanistan crises through SCO. The first among them is the fact that after solving Afghanistan's issue the china would emerge in geopolitics as a regional power. However, the core issue is the fact that Afghanistan borders the Chinese most unstable and Uyghur Muslims populated Xinjiang province. The Uyghur terrorist groups have close links with the Taliban. Afghanistan has been a Launchpad for terror outfits in Xinjiang province. The Taliban has been a breeding ground for pan-Islamic ideology in the region hence; China wants to curb the influence of terrorist activities in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the question arises, why china would want to stabilize Afghanistan through SCO rather than acting unilaterally as it would get much weightage in global politics by solving it on its basis. The major cause of the multilateral approach is the fact that China is well aware of the fact that Afghanistan has been the ‘Graveyard of empires. The other factor being the Chinese army has been modernized but it lacks experience of wars.

China had some economical aspirations through Afghanistan. It has a vast presence of natural resources which can benefit China in its development. China is the biggest foreign investor in Afghanistan, having acquired the US\$4.4-billion extraction contract to develop the Mes Aynak copper field located in the province of Logar, winning the bid for oil exploration in the Amu Darya basin in northern Afghanistan, and developing extensive railway infrastructure in the country²². China has heavily invested in Afghanistan and hence, it wants to secure its investment in Afghanistan. China had been

²² Pandey, S. (2019). *Understanding China's Afghanistan policy: From calculated indifference to strategic engagement*. Observer Research Foundation.

failed in several projects run unilaterally and hence, it needs to collect approach in the smooth functioning of its projects in the region. The other factor being the Belt and Road initiative, which has been the most ambitious project of china, also known as the ‘new silk road’. The road does not pass through Afghanistan However, it has been earlier stated that the china Pakistan economic corridor could be extended to Afghanistan if the situation becomes stable in Afghanistan. All these events have a great impact on the strategy of china regarding the Afghanistan issue.

The other great power of the region which is Russia had ruled the Central Asian region with no match. The question arises that why Russia would work in Afghanistan under the umbrella of SCO rather than involving unilaterally. The most obvious reason is that Russia has ‘Afghanistan syndrome’. Where it had a beard the consequences by its humiliating defeat in 1989 hence, it never wants to involve unilaterally. The other reason is that Russia will never tolerate the presence of NATO, in its backyard where they had been the major threat to its regional dominance. Russia is well aware that instability in Afghanistan would ultimately result in the revival of the extremist Islamic group Taliban in Afghanistan. The Taliban has always been the biggest threat to Russia. The Taliban had provided shelter and training camps to Chechen rebels. The revival of the Taliban has a severe impact on all the regional countries hence; it demands collective efforts to stabilize the situation. The SCO can also play an important tool to end the presence of NATO in Afghanistan where it has used the organization during 2005 where SCO collectively demanded bounded time for withdrawal of NATO forces from the region.

The other concern for Russia is the drug supply and cultivation of poppy in Afghanistan. According to the UN, Russia consumes only slightly less heroin each year than does the rest of Europe combined (70 tons versus 88 tons). Out of about 100,000 drug addicts dying each year worldwide, between 30,000 and 40,000 are Russians. Russian officials point out that the production of narcotics in Afghanistan has grown exponentially 44

times²³ since the fall of the Taliban and the arrival of the coalition forces. They are genuinely worried²⁴ in the past; the SCO has cooperated in forming an ‘anti-drug security belt’ around Afghanistan which can assure anti-drug initiatives taken by Russia through SCO. If SCO takes the lead role after the withdrawal of NATO it can offer much to Russia as the presence of NATO forces has diminished the scope of investment Russia in Afghanistan. In terms of economic factors, Russia does not have much trade relations with Afghanistan however; it extracts some benefit from an Afghan natural resource.

Pakistan’s relations with Afghanistan since 2001 were in a mess as Pakistan has provided shelter and assistance to terror groups of Afghanistan especially the Taliban and Hence, the other factor for Pakistan is that SCO can help in trust-building between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pakistan and Afghanistan area, which has been the fertile ground for terrorists, could become an economic hub for the entire Asian region. Through SCO Pakistan can counter the separatist Baloch and Pashtun rebels which have their ties with Afghanistan terror outfits as SCO opposes the separatism and Hence, it can get a legitimize channel through which it can curb the separatist forces in its country. However, Pakistan has nothing much to offer on a multilateral platform like SCO due to its past track record while dealing with multilateral organizations like NATO.

Afghanistan has great importance for India due to its geostrategic location India. Afghanistan has a severe impact on India’s security concerns. The terrorist groups backed by Pakistan in Afghanistan had severely threatened the peace and stability of India since 1947. Politically and economically, Afghanistan is significant for India. The question that arises here is that why should India approach through SCO rather than bilaterally. This could be well understood from the declaration of ‘Central Asia policy’ which focuses on increasing political, cultural, and people-to-people connect with central Asian countries. The policy is based on ‘Commerce, Connectivity, Consular, and Community’. The main

²³ Cohen, A. (2014). How the US Withdrawal from Afghanistan Will Affect Russia and Eurasia. *Central Asia After 2014*, 13-32.

²⁴ Trenin, D. V., & Malashenko, A. (2010). *Russia's restless frontier: the Chechnya factor in post-Soviet Russia*. Carnegie Endowment.

route for engagement with central Asian countries passes through Afghanistan since after the peace deal signed between the US and Taliban in 2020 had made a serious challenge to India's security and hence, India wants to neutralize the Anti-Indian stance of Taliban through SCO.

The economic perspective of India about Afghanistan very crucial for maintaining its development pace. It has been estimated that India would need to import 80 percent of energy needs since due to instability in the gulf region the central Asian region has immense potential to fulfill the energy demand of India. The Afghanistan stability would enable India to get access to the central Asian region and can establish new trade routes through Afghanistan. If trade routes would be developed under the SCO framework, the cooperation would prevail over hostility. In recent times the TAPI project had enabled Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan in providing energy security to some extent however, if the pipeline would be extended to other members like China, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, Pakistan would behave in a more accountable way in securing and guarding the multilateral projects.

All the countries of the Asian region as well as of the world have great concern for Afghanistan as it severely affects the global politics similarly India has been one of them as the Afghanistan issue affects the Indian security and hence India has a close eye over Afghanistan. India has always been trying in stabilization and reconstruction of war torned Afghanistan. India has been constantly investing in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. However, several times the progress had been derailed due to the conflict of India and Pakistan where the Pakistani state sponsored terrorist groups had deteriorated the security condition in Afghanistan. India has always focused and proposed the e importance of regional cooperation as it helps to resolve border issues. Before gaining the status of permanent member of SCO India did not have much to offer through multilateral channel but after gaining the permanent member status of SCO it can play key role in defining the trajectory of Afghanistan in collaboration with China and Russia.

CHAPTER 4

ROLE OF SCO IN ENERGY SECURITY

The energy has been considered as the ‘oxygen of economies’ as it has been said that “Without heat, light, and power you cannot build or run the factories and cities that provide goods, jobs, and homes, nor enjoy the amenities that make life more comfortable and enjoyable”²⁵ and Roberto Bocca (World Economic Forum). Energy has been the engine of growth for the development or formation of any industry or goods in a country. The energy has been the backbone of a country without which it cannot sustain its development pace. It has been the crucial ingredient of agricultural and industrial activities which has been the main economic function of developing countries like India and China and hence when these activities increase the energy demand also increases. The energy has been the input to all activities and it is non-substitutable. Energy plays a vital role in employment. The energy sectors provide employments in two ways firstly by extraction, transformation, and distribution of energy services in a country and the second all the machinery or equipment’s relies heavily on energy for its working hence, when there is a shortage of energy the pace of development of countries also decreases. The energy sector has been an employment multiplier as it has been calculated that if one job is created in the energy sector it provides three jobs in other sectors. The energy sector provides jobs in several ways. Initially, it provides direct jobs directly where the individuals are contracted directly to extract or produce energy. Secondly, in this sector, the energy transportation and supply result in indirect jobs and thirdly it led to induced jobs where the beneficiary of these two sectors invest for other goods and services which generates jobs in other sectors hence, it has been the chief component of an economy.

²⁵ Yergin, D. (2012). How is energy remaking the world? *Foreign Policy*, (194), 60.

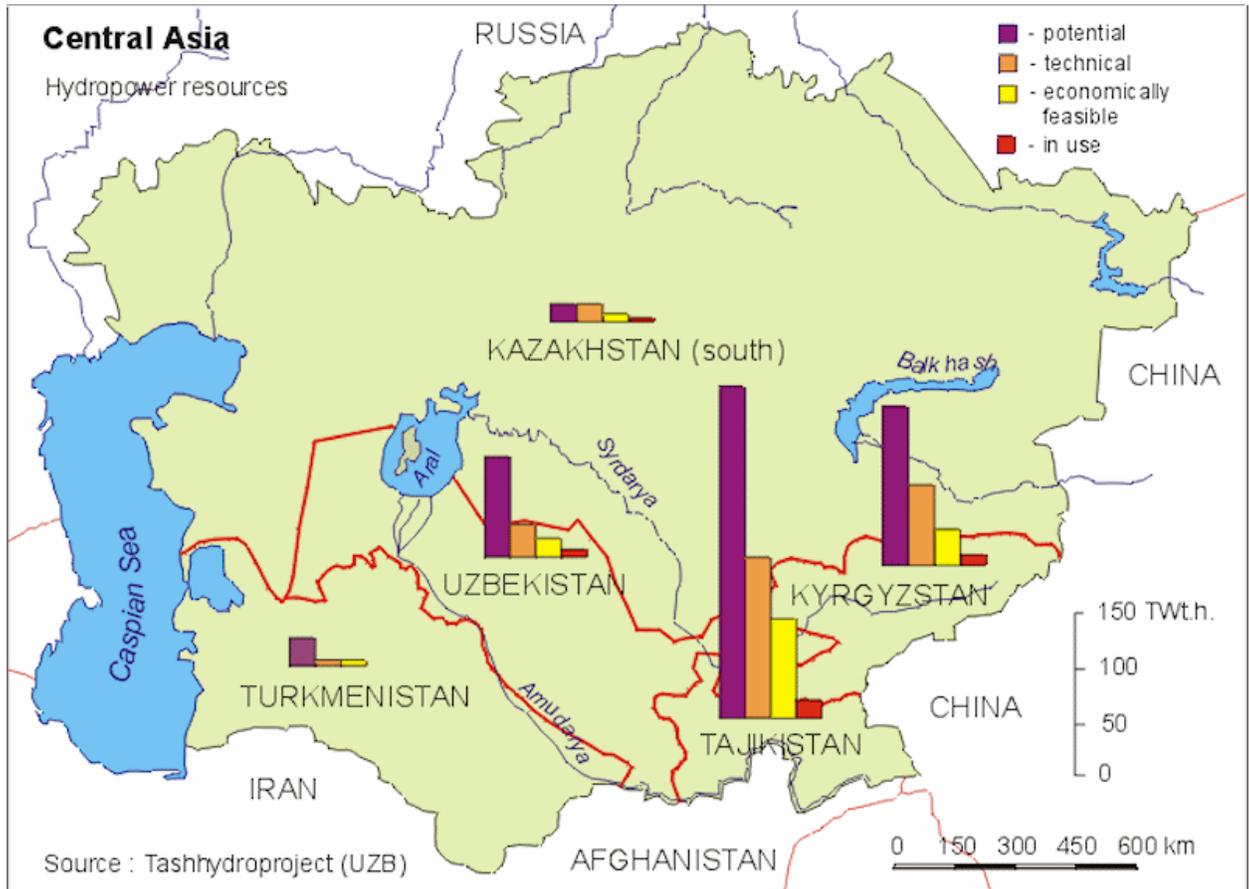
The first and foremost thing, which we have to understand, is what does energy security is? energy security has been defined as ‘adequacy of energy supply at a reasonable price’. The adequacy and reasonable price of energy are a paradox in nature due to increased energy demand and depleting oil and gas reserves. The energy supply and demand are highly inelastic due to no alternative to energy, particularly non-renewable resources. The developing countries' demand has increased exponentially in past decades, which includes India and China. Though countries are focusing on alternatives to renewable resources, the heavy demand and non-replaceable nature of traditional sources have led the countries to make ties and agreements with other countries for their energy security. The supplier countries have been lacking in providing energy supplies timely due to lack of investment in the energy sector and political disruption in their policies making. The problem, which consumer nations face, is the use of energy supply by supplier groups as a political weapon in dealing with these countries.

In the 21st century, energy security has become the central theme of energy security of a country. *“Energy security is the most important concern in international energy politics, in that energy is crucial for both industrialized and developing countries, while there is a huge inequality in the allocation, technology, and capital of energy resources among nations and there is also a lack of a centralized body capable of allocating resources in the international political structure”*.The energy security of a country is highly influenced by several factors. Firstly, it has also been seen that the emergence of new power in international politics led to a change in the energy supplies to the rest of the world. The second factor has been the geographical proximity to the energy supplier country. Thirdly, the presence of militant groups around its energy supply route and attack on infrastructure. Lastly, the political unrest which has been the chief concern (Middle East Asia) countries hampers the energy security of several nations.

Hence, from the above discussion, it has been clear that in this century the energy security plays a key role in international politics. The foreign policy of a country is highly influenced by energy security and it even plays a key role in the bilateral ties among the nations due to the high demand for energy at the global level several war and conflicts

had taken place in past decades. So, every country is trying to get access to its energy needs by strengthening ties with supplier countries. The countries have been heavily investing in energy resource-rich countries to get access to their natural resources.

Figure 3: Resources of Central Asian States



4.1 ENERGY RESOURCES IN CENTRAL ASIA:

The competition between great powers in the 21st century had been at another level in the central Asian region. The reason for this competition has been due to the presence of a vast amount of energy resources in this region. The central Asian region which consists of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan has been geographically situated around the natural gas and the oil-rich Caspian Sea. "According,

to the BP Statistical Review of World Energy (2004), proven oil reserves of the five Caspian littoral states total 216.4 billion barrels, while total gas reserves are estimated at 2819.2 trillion cubic feet. In terms of percentages, the five Caspian littoral states have about 18.8 percent of the world's total proven oil reserves and 45 percent of the world's total proven gas reserves". The hydrocarbon reserves of the region are significant. Proven oil reserves are pegged at between 15 billion to 31 billion barrels, about 2.7% of total world proven oil reserves. Proven natural gas reserves of 230 to 360 trillion cubic feet represent about 7% of the total world proved gas reserves. "By comparison, proven oil reserves of the Middle East represent 55% of world proven reserves while South America equals 8%. Some geologists assert that proven reserve numbers for Central Asia and the Caucasus, commonly referred to as the Caspian Basin, are misleadingly low because huge areas of the region have not been explored. Future exploration may confirm that the region potentially holds between 60 billion to 140 billion barrels of oil²⁶". The central Asian energy resource can not only play a significant role in diversifying the energy needs of the countries, but it can provide alternatives to the unstable middle east. The central Asian states can also provide stability to the world economy by the share of central Asian states in the global energy sector has been increasing at an enormous pace due to the high demand for energy in the world and instability in other oil and natural gas-producing states. The race to increase their influence in the central Asian region has taken place in the 21st century. All the countries are trying to increase their influence politically or economically.

4.2 Implications of Geopolitics in Central Asia:

Before the disintegration of the central Asian region, the USSR has the monopoly of the region but after the disintegration of the USSR and the rediscovery of energy resources of the Caspian Sea. The geopolitics of the region took a twist where Russia tried to sustain its dominance while china tried to enlarge its economic ties with newly independent states. China did not want to involve in the rivalry between Russia and the US but want to

²⁶ Jaffe, A. M. (1998). Unlocking the Assets: Energy and the Future of Central Asia and the Caucasus: Main Study.

fulfill its economic aspirations and it had been much interested in the 'peaceful rise'. In the 1990s, the china was neither capable nor interested in dominating the region but to get access to energy resources of the Central Asian region. Though it had been claimed that before the formation of newly independent states china had not much interest in the natural resources of central Asia, as it had a sufficient amount of coal and natural gas supply from its natural resources, However, as the development pace of china increased and demand of energy increased it started finding alternatives to its energy demand. China viewed the Central Asian region as a huge market for its energy supply and its cheap products. China had some serious concerns regarding the rise of extremism and terrorism in the region after the disintegration of the USSR. China had perceived that the rise of extremism and terrorism in the region would lead to instability in its northwestern province hence it tried to economically tie the province with other central Asian neighbors so that through which it can stabilize its Xinjiang province and get excess to the Middle East and European region. The Xinjiang province had been the chief concern for the political and economic stability of china. The Xinjiang stability has been seen through central Asia by China due to its religious and cultural connection with its neighbors.

The implication, which aroused in the region, is due to the interference and influence of several countries in the region. For China, the cooperation and competition with Russia had raised serious concerns for the region as Russia always want to be the sole dominant in the region but in the last two decades both the countries have invested heavily and provided high-end technology to the regional countries, but the problem faced is the fact that the cooperation is done to prevent any other power in the region like US, EU, Turkey or Iran. The problem is that the cooperation between Russia and China lacks confidence and the fears of the Central Asian states that it can become a new battleground for both the regional powers.

The US was more interested in the 1990s to control the weapons of mass destruction in the region, to contain Russia from its neo-imperial agenda in Central Asia and challenging the monopoly of Russia over oil and gas resources of Central Asia. The US

wanted to continue the supply of gas and oil of the Central Asian region to Europe and other parts of the world by-passing Russia. The US viewed the formation of Central Asian states as the victory of western ideals and values. The US also considered the event, as it would emerge as the global hegemon in the world but the formation of newly independent states formation and assumptions made regarding the region gone wrong as it was regarded by the western countries that after independence the countries would act independently with a minimal influence of Russia. The other factor which western countries considered was that the region would a homogenous block of Islamic nations. The other misconception was that after disintegration a new political leadership would come to power. However, after the formation of the former secretaries of the communist party of the USSR became the president of their countries except for Kyrgyzstan.

“Washington’s long term objectives in Central Asia were established at the beginning of the 1990s, and have not changed significantly since then: avert the return of Russian domination, prevent the emergence of a new hegemonic power in the region (Iran or china), promote energy and strategic partnerships that turn the region towards South Asia or the West, and contribute to political and economic reforms²⁷”. The “Trans-Caspian and Nabucco pipelines” had been some deep interests in its laying as it serves many interests. The core idea behind laying pipeline was to get connectivity to the natural and energy resource rich central Asia, which has abundance of hydrocarbons, and natural gas whereas the world had been relying majorly on the instable Middle East and the condition in Persian Gulf had been worsening day by day. The US had not only been trying to establish and strengthen relations with central Asia, but it was also well aware that the region could play major role in the stabilization process of Afghanistan.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks caused a major shift in U.S. foreign policy in the C.A., now the main consideration is to eradicate terrorism from Afghanistan and ensure security. Over the past decade, the CAS has been instrumental in helping the U.S. build law enforcement, intelligence, drug trafficking, and counter-terrorism mechanisms. Provided

²⁷ Laruelle,M and Peyrouse,S(2013), ‘*Globalizing Central Asia-Geopolitics and Challenges of Economic development*’, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

significant assistance. In 2010, its assistance to the region totaled \$ 6,436.3 million, a significant increase from the \$ 72 million allocated to CAS in 1996. The United States has also stationed troops in the CAS, particularly Tajikistan, which borders Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. Furthermore, it has largely used CAS as fly-over zones, bases for counter-terrorism exercises, and U.S. operations inside and outside Afghanistan. Has successfully lobbied to transport cargo from its territory. The policy of US regarding the central Asia had been full of compromise as the Turkmenistan refused to comply with the goals of the Northern Distribution Network in 2009 irrespective of it it continued to use the logistic support from the country In the fight against terrorism.

“However, there are other factors also affecting U.S foreign policies in the region, the first one is growing Chinese presence in the region²⁸”. As the SCO started becoming mature and influential in central Asia and the initiatives and interest shown by the Iran in becoming the permanent member of SCO has raised concern for the US. The change in dynamics and politics in central Asian region also forced the US to shift its policy towards the region and as a result it started focusing in sidelining the Iran and Russia in the region by laying trade routes which bypasses the two countries. The central Asia provides huge amount of energy resources as well as jobs due to the fact that US has been invested heavily on extraction of energy resources around Caspian Sea .it also provides a way for installation and initiation of democratic and pro-western regimes in the region.

At the commercial level, *“U.S lags far behind China, Russia, and the EU, but also behind South Korea and Ukraine. During the Obama administration, the ledger of U.S activity in the region remains paradoxical. Some objective was not reached (as Moscow again become a major player in the region, and China’s economic penetration was more rapid*

²⁸ Cohen, A (February3, 2006), *‘After the G-8 summit: China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation’*, The china and Eurasia forum Quaterly, vol.4, No.3.

*than predicted), while others were obtained but to the detriment of Central Asian economic development (the marginalization of Iran as a regional actor)”.*²⁹

The U.S for its academic and political establishment have adopted a geo-economic plan that would further encourage the country to stay in the Central Asian neighborhood the “New Silk Road” initiative, “the hub of transport and trade”³⁰, which is supposed to direct American investment in Central and South Asia to promote regional trade and social and economic development among Afghanistan and its neighbors.³¹ The U.S. has been constantly trying to install pro democratic regimes in the region since formation of newly independent states but till now due to the autocratic and authoritarian regimes suppression of democratic voices had made the efforts of US futile.

America’s power of attraction and prestige is now negatively impacted by what C. Elites interpret as U.S failure in Afghanistan. The region remains only of secondary concern for U.S foreign policy, compared to U.S interest in the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. Central Asia is not at the top of American priority or is there by default due to its proximity to Afghanistan, C. Status is subject to change in the foreign policy of leading world powers, sometimes appearing in limelight, sometimes forgotten or relegated to subordinate state.

4.3 Role of SCO in Energy Security:

Since security was the main aim of the organization for its inception, However, as the growth of the organization took place it started focusing on other dimensions of cooperation. Before the 21st century, the Central Asian Region was seen as a region of instability and under-development. Nevertheless, as the energy demand increased in the

²⁹ Olcott, Brill (Feb 10, 2010), ‘*A New Direction for U.S. Policy*’, [//http.carnegieendowment.org/files/us_caspian_policy.pdf](http://http.carnegieendowment.org/files/us_caspian_policy.pdf).

³⁰ Starr, S.F and Cornell, S.E(2005),(eds.), ‘*Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West*’, Uppsala: Silk road Studies Program.

³¹ Nichol, Jim (May 31, 2012), ‘*Central Asia: Regional developments and Implications for U.S Interests*’ Washington DC: Congressional Research Service report.

world and the fast depletion of energy resources in other countries moved the attention of all the powers in central Asia. The question that arises is that since all the countries are signing energy deals bilaterally, then why SCO is important for the countries, and how it can be a win-win situation for all the member states. The main demand for cooperation between all the states is the fact that all the countries would get benefits through the SCO framework since SCO has been working in stabilizing the Central Asian region. The SCO mechanism of countering terrorism, extremism, and separatism had opened new opportunities between member states. We will discuss all three aspects and how they had led to the transformation of SCO from tackling 'Three evils' to energy security.

The total area of the organization's member countries is five - thirds of Eurasia, with a population of 1.5 billion. Their total GDP is equal to a quarter of the world's total (\$ 12.4 trillion). The territory of the SCO member countries has 25% of the world's oil reserves, over 50% of its gas reserves, 35% of its coal reserves, and half of the world's uranium reserves. Large oil and gas pipelines have been laid or are being built here. (SCO Energy Club: The structure is ready for international interaction, not the Shanghai Six Elite Club).

The SCO had started focusing on cooperation in the economic sphere in the 2003 summit, where it was agreed to draft a framework agreement in the economic sphere. However, these objectives were not implemented due to a lack of consensus. In 2004 by the approval, the plan is executed, and measures are taken for its implementation. The year 2005 was most crucial for SCO, where it clearly showed its potential by demanding a timeframe for the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan. The summit also became crucial as the Uzbekistan which had been considered as closer to the US had shifted its stance by demanding the vacation of the Karshi -Khanabad air base from US troops. These events showed that in regional politics the SCO has been the vital component in framing the economic and political framework of the region. The event 2005 summit also showed the willingness of member states to cooperate with regional players. In the same year, China and Kazakhstan signed a deal, in which the Chinese petroleum company acquired Petro Kazakhstan for 4.4bn dollars. Both the countries also

agreed to link a pipeline of 1000 km, which would connect China to Kazakhstan. They also agreed to further cooperate in connecting the pipeline from Turkmenistan to china, which passes through Kazakhstan. In the same year the Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan agreed for laying another pipeline in the north of Kazakhstan. During Kazakhstan's president's visit to Washington in 2006 made serious concern for the hegemony of Russia in the region, where they agreed to form a pipeline from Turkmenistan to India through Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hence, Russia became more cautious regarding securing the central Asian assets from foreign influence. In 2007 the Russia, Iran, and Uzbekistan proposed a club similar to OPEC where they can counterweight the western countries. As Iran and Russia were number one and two at natural gas production this was seen as a game-changer for dealing with western countries. Taking into consideration that SCO members do control around 23 percent of the world's oil and 55 percent of natural gas reserves, with Russia accounting for the single largest gas reserves on the globe, the ability of SCO-coordinated activities to move markets would seem considerable³². However, until 2013 no consensus was made for the formation of the 'Energy club' due to several reasons between the states. The reason for the formation of the 'Energy club' is initially was to increase the transportation and telecommunication connectivity between the member states. The other perception of formation was to minimize or defuse the tension between the members as SCO consists mainly of three types of members. Firstly, oil-producing countries are Russia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. The other countries which are energy consumers like India, China, and Pakistan.

4.4 Energy Club:

The idea of an energy club is not new Since, it had been proposed by Russia in the 2006's SCO summit where Russia proposed an internal cooperative energy body under an organization. Russia tried to form an energy club much earlier, but it became successful

³² Raith, M., & Weldon, P. (2008). Energy Cooperation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Much Ado about Nothing?. *Eurasianet.org*, 25.

in 2013. The main objective of the energy club was to provide energy security to its member states. The formation of the energy club was welcomed by all the members including dialogue partners and observer members which includes Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The observer states at that time were India, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Iran. The dialogue partners included Sri Lanka, Belarus, Afghanistan, and Turkey.

The energy club had some objectives in working collectively for the energy security of all the members of the club. The core issues to be solved through the energy club were coordinating among member states over energy security for long term partnership in SCO. The formation of policies which are following the collective energy security of all members. It has also emphasized on development of a collective mechanism of economic cooperation with member states. The club emphasized controlling the investment race aroused in the central Asian region. The energy club also stressed the information sharing about the action taken by them in the global energy market. The formation of the energy club had been a win-win situation for most of the countries, since the club comprises of biggest producers of natural gas and oil which comprises of Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, and Uzbekistan, and energy consumers which include India, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. The club could be a boon for Afghanistan as it would be the main juncture for interaction between suppliers and producers. The energy club would provide opportunities to not only eight member states but to several other countries of the region. Due to its significant natural resources, the organization is now ready to interact with other regional organizations and other business communities. The framework of the energy club will also provide opportunities to its member states in investment according to their own need.

The energy club provided the freedom to its members that it had not been obligatory to be a part of 'energy club'. The reason for this issue was as since 2006 several attempts had failed due to a lack of consensus among the member states. Since the SCO, charter clearly states that it has been mandatory for members to implement the policies without any contradiction. Hence, to bypass this obligation Russia superseded this law by not

making it obligatory to be a member of the ‘energy club’. Article 16 of SCO charter states “In case one or other member states are not interested in the implementation of individual co-operation projects that are of interest for other member states, these member states refusal to participate does not prevent the interested member states from cooperation and at the same time does not prevent the specified member states from joining such projects later”. The club also provides an opportunity for interaction between other international organizations.

The framework of ‘energy club’ shows some optimism but on grass root level it has to face several problems due to dominance of national interest over regional interest however we would discuss the reasons for joining energy club by different countries. The energy club has to redefine its trajectory of development as it has to implement several projects which are needed to be addressed for the proper functioning of the club. The main concern for all the energy-producing states is to modernize the existing generation capacity and power grids. The other problem which the region faces is the lack of infrastructure for the supply of energy resources and overdependence over Russia for supply. Hence, infrastructure has been the chief concern for the club. The other factor which influences the working of the club is the formation of jointly administered routes for electricity supply and its market. The club also demands a modernized approach in oil and gas extraction. Hence, the ‘Energy club’ would act as the game-changer for regional and international politics if all the Member's participation will be genuine.

4.5 Incentives for the Member States in Energy Club:

1. Russia

Russia views the energy club as a platform through which it can monopolize the gas market and can use it to bargain with other international players. The formation of the club will provide a cooperative approach with china, which has been aggressively

investing in the Central Asian region. Russia would give a stern message to Europe that it has the potential to supply its energy resources outside the European Union. It will also get the opportunity to show its might in the energy sector through counterbalancing NATO. Russia also wants to warn that if western countries would not stop their mischief in the central Asian region it had the potential to convert the energy club as 'OPEC of the east'. Russia has several other motives regarding energy club as through energy club Russia can attract and control India that has been drifting towards the US in recent times. Since India requires a great amount of energy for development that can play a key role in its quest for the energy security of India.

2. China

The energy club initiative provides a new opportunity to china as it can become significant in increasing connectivity in the Xinjiang province. It will also provide economic benefits to the Xinjiang province since the connectivity required for transport of oil and natural gas would pass through this region. The other factor has been the fact currently, china does not have a mighty navy that can protect the interest or supply of oil and natural gas through sea routes as china fears that in case of a tussle with India, china might not be able to get the supply of resource through Indian Ocean. The energy club will also help in fulfilling its most ambitious project of 'New Silk Road' through the trade routes of the energy club. China would get an advantage in dealing with South Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The energy club has been also important for china in the view that it has provided several opportunities in the nuclear energy sector as china has been making several nuclear energy reactors in member countries. China has been the biggest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world, and Hence it can minimize the impact of emission by shifting to other clean sources of energy like natural gas and hydroelectricity.

However, no one can deny the fact that China has been the biggest investor in developing renewable energy like wind and solar energy.

3. Central Asian States:

All the central Asian states have vast potential for energy production. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are rich in hydrocarbon reserves while Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have a huge amount of water resources to develop cheap electricity. After having such potential in energy resources these countries lack behind in infrastructure, technology, connectivity, and investment. All these demands can be fulfilled through the energy club and hence, it can play a key role in the development of the energy sector in the Central Asian region.

The Kazakhstan energy supply chain was built to supply natural resources to Russia, hence initially Kazakhstan was solely dependent on Russia for the extraction and transportation of its energy resources to the world. Since the formation of the ‘energy club,’ Kazakhstan would be able to expand its supply chain. There are four main oil fields in Kazakhstan: Tengiz, Uzen, Karachaganak, and Kashagan. *“The Kashagan field has received much recent attention after preliminary drilling and exploration; however, the project has been delayed, due to complicated natural and geological conditions and estimated development costs of 29 billion dollars³³”*. The SCO club can help Kazakhstan to overcome investment crises from trusted partners. Kazakhstan would get the opportunity to bargain in the international energy market through different supply routes. Hence, it has been a win-win situation for Kazakhstan.

Kyrgyzstan has rich resources in producing hydroelectricity due to its geographical condition. The country also has a vast amount of coal but it has a minimal amount of oil and natural gas. The most important energy-producing capacity lies in hydropower where

³³ Azarkan, E. (2010). THE INTERESTS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AND THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION. *Ege Academic Review*, 10(1).

the country produces two-thirds of its total energy. Through the energy club, Kyrgyzstan has the potential to supply electricity to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India by developing infrastructure. The energy club can also help in the renovation of infrastructure, which has been decades old which led to heavy losses in electricity transmission. The energy club can help in energy security for Kyrgyzstan as 90 percent of its oil and natural gas are imported and the hydropower supply fluctuates in the country due to the seasonal effect of the river drainage system. The energy club would also help the country in the development of the renewable energy sector and power generation capacity by getting expertise from more advanced countries.

Tajikistan is 98 percent dependent on hydropower for its needs. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan currently produces 20bn kWh. However, it is capable of generating 300 bn kWh. Hydroelectric power plants on the Wax River generate most of Tajikistan's electricity, with a total capacity of 3,800 MW, and fourteen billion kilowatts annually. The largest of these is the Norak Hydroelectric Facility, at a rate of 3,000 MW. Rogun still has the largest facility, 335 meters high, and the world's tallest dam under construction, with a capacity of 3,600 MW.

Construction of Rogun began in 1976, and by 1996 over \$802 million had been invested. Completions of Rogun will require an additional \$2.2 billion (Zarifi, 2007). Tajikistan suffers from blackouts in the winter season due to heavy load on the electricity network. The main cause of electricity blackout has been the heavy use of electricity for heating purposes. The inefficient electrical types of equipment are a serious concern for Tajikistan in tackling energy security hence by collaborating with the 'energy club' Tajikistan would be able to get efficient equipment for electricity. The trade routes will also help in reducing blackouts during the winter season. The energy club will also help to increase energy production and energy storage in the country; Uzbekistan is the 11th largest producer of natural gas. It is the third biggest exporter and sixth largest producer of cotton. *"It is the seventh-largest producer of uranium and has 4 percent of the World's reserves. It has the World's fourth-largest gold reserves and is the seventh-largest producer. It has geological reserves of five billion tons of oil, and proven reserves of 100*

million tons³⁴”. Uzbekistan can benefit from the ‘Energy club’ as it will further expand its idea of a balanced approach in international affairs. It will help Uzbekistan to diversify its energy resource and would help in providing an integrated transit management system.

4. India:

India has been among the biggest importer of energy sources in the world. The current events in international politics have raised deep concern for the energy security of India. The gulf crises and conflict in the south china sea pose the biggest threat to Indian energy security, hence India needs to diversify its energy resource to continue the pace of development. The energy club can provide security to its energy needs as through energy club India would get access in the extraction of oil and natural resources of the Central Asian region. The energy club will enhance energy supply to India through collective security initiatives taken in the past like Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI) pipeline project there are several other projects like Iran, Pakistan and India (IPI) project and central Asia South Asia (CASA) electricity project which will help in energy security of India. Through the energy club, India will get access to the central Asian region through Pakistan as Pakistan will never allow Indian bilateral projects with central Asian countries passing through its territory but under the energy club initiative, Pakistan will be consolidated by china and Russia. The energy club will also help in boosting the connectivity of India to central Asia. Which will result in the revival of historical ties between the Central Asian states and India. The central Asian states specifically Kazakhstan will provide uranium to India for civil nuclear use which would benefit India. The energy club will also help in ‘Connect Central Asia Policy’ which had been proposed by Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2012 however, no such development had been seen until 2015 when Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi visited all the central Asian states and signed several MOUs between India and central Asian region. The connectivity of

³⁴ Xinbo, W. (2020). The China Challenge: Competitor or Order Transformer?. *The Washington Quarterly*, 43(3), 99-114.

the central Asian region through the energy club can also provide India a chance to compete against China in the energy sector.

5. Pakistan:

Pakistan knew that it has a significant role in the energy club due to its geostrategic location. As it has been the shortest route for the access to central Asian region it can become a gateway to Central Asian natural resources. Pakistan will get economic benefits to its deteriorating economic health. It will also give an opportunity in modernizing its port and trade routes to central Asia. Pakistan would also get help in countering terrorism in its territory, as the economic activities would increase. It will become a collective stake of all the regional players to secure the trade route. It can be clearly understood from the fact that after the formation of Gwadar port of the china has started investing heavily and provided financial as well as intelligence assistance for securing the trade route, hence if the participation of all the countries will increase in the region it would ultimately lead to an uplift in the economic condition of Pakistan. Pakistan will also get direct access to Europe and hot water ports in central Asia. The other factor is being that energy diplomacy may bring people to people connect throughout the SCO. Hence it can play a key role for Pakistan. The energy club will play a major role not only in regional politics but also in international politics too. The fast depletion of energy resources of every country and the gulf instability has provided vital importance to the region, but it seems there has been a lack of consensus between the countries as everyone has their interests to serve. Which are deviating from one another. However, if collective efforts would be taken it would be the game-changer for the energy security of all its members. The energy club has also proved the importance of the central Asian region. It might become the engine of development of the region if the trust deficit would be eliminated among the countries. However, it has traced a long path for its success due to its geostrategic

location in the region. The energy club might also initiate a new form of proxy war among international players in the region to gain access to the resources.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

After the formation of Central Asian states in 1991, 'the shanghai five' played a key role in solving regional disputes between the newly formed states. The shanghai five which consists of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, China, and Russia the mechanism of solving between the central Asian through the shanghai five has provided the stability to some extent. the shanghai five mechanisms strengthened the ties between the Central Asian states and also helped in confidence-building between the states. The mechanism of solving border disputes between the states also provides key ingredients for eliminating the trust deficit, which had been aroused after the disintegration of the USSR that had created fears among the newly formed states. It also provided a platform for the newly formed states in formulating their foreign policy. The 'shanghai five' created a cooperative atmosphere in the region. It played a crucial role in negating the conflict between regional powers, which were Russia and China and provided an opportunity for cooperation in the region. The cooperation superimposed the conflict of regional powers in the region. It also provided sovereignty to the central states, which had been fearing that after formation they might face threats to their security. The steps are taken in reducing military tension between the states by stating that no country would conduct any military exercise while targeting other countries showed the neo-liberal perspective of the organization where they had been focusing mainly on confidence-building and mutual peaceful coexistence. The agreement that no country will deploy military in 10km of border area showed the seriousness of the participating countries that all were willing to cooperate under the mechanism. The disarmament process clearly showed the intention that the mechanism was solely based on solving the regional issue rather than focusing on any alliance or organization. The initiatives taken by the shanghai five as controlling narcotic drugs, Islamic extremism, and international terrorism showed that it had been

working in the formation of a liberalized world. The declaration stating that all the countries would work in disarmament and forming a nuclear-free zone which was following the principle of the UN charter signaled that the organization would further cooperate with other international organizations in tackling these trans-border threats.

The inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001 and the transformation of 'shanghai five' to the shanghai cooperation organization gave a new direction to regional politics. As the objectives defined by SCO were extremism, terrorism and separatism have clearly shown that the organization will fight collectively to combat all these problems. The 'Shanghai Spirit' clearly states that the organization would never intervene in other countries. It described that the organization does not have any intention to form a supranational structure, as it wanted to be all the countries to be treated equally while dealing with each other. The best feature of the SCO initiative was that it allowed all its members that they could form bilateral or multilateral relations with any other organization that has clearly shown the neo-liberal perspective of the organization. The organization in its initial years was considered as just a 'talking shop' or 'paper tiger'. However, it was fair to some extent in its initial years as no such initiative was taken until 2003. The formation of the regional anti-terrorist structure showed that it has not merely a 'paper tiger' rather the organization is in its initial state.

The other feature of the organization clearly shows, while conducting 'peace mission exercise' and gave stern message to the west that the regional powers can maintain peace and tranquility in the region without the presence of western countries. The SCO also provided in the stabilization of regimes in the region as several civil wars had erupted in the region but the role of SCO while abstaining from intervening in the states indicated that the SCO will respect the sovereignty of the states and it would never intervene in any member states on any grounds either it is suppression or on humanitarian ground or human rights violation. The role of SCO in the western world was also considered as savior of authoritarian regimes in the region. The inclusion of Mongolia in 2004 and Iran, India, and Pakistan in 2005 as observer states also indicated that the organization is not merely a central Asian organization but had some serious approach to the whole Asian

region. The inclusion of two hostile countries, which are India and Pakistan, showed that it can provide a platform for the melting ice in relations of both the countries. The stance of SCO alleging the US and western countries for organizing color revolutions in the Central Asian region and the demand for a deadline of withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan indicated the 'Anti-NATO' sentiment of the SCO. The SCO also demanded the vacation of airbases of NATO in central Asian states, which were Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, indicated that the organization has the potential in molding the foreign policy of its member states.

The shifting of Uzbekistan from pro-west to pro-Russia also showed its importance in the region. While declining the proposal of the US to take part in the activities of SCO in 2006, it also showed that the organization was not formed against any hostile or enemy state but in its subconscious. The SCO has some serious concerns regarding the US and NATO. This approach can be well understood that all SCO members except china and Russia were either underdeveloped or developing nations and hence both china and Russia feared that if the US would enter in central Asian region it could drastically impact the influence of China and Russia in the region. Hence, China and Russia never wanted that the US should intervene in the Central Asian region. The other threat which Russia and china had feared was that due to financial assistance the other member states might shift towards the US for help. Initially, Russia tried to dominate the region, but the scenario has changed due to the deteriorating economic condition of Russia and the rise of China as an economic giant in the region. It was not feasible for Russia to dominate the region unilaterally and focused on cooperating with china and containing western countries in the region. The financially powerful china had also benefited from cooperation and signed several multilateral deals with the central Asian state.

The focus of central Asian region US had started gaining momentum after the 9/11 attack after which NATO intervened in Afghanistan and due to its proximity to the central Asian region and closer ties of afghan terrorist outfits in the central Asian region and for logistics support the NATO established two airbases which were manas and Karachikhana bad however initially China and Russia supported the establishment as both the

countries showed their incompetence to tackle the Afghanistan crises but as the NATO started initiating (alleged by china and Russia) color revolution in central Asian region both the regional powers feared that they might also be facing this kind of revolution in Xinjiang and the North Caucasus. hence, they demanded immediate withdrawal of NATO from central Asian states. The 2009 summit, where the special session of SCO on Afghanistan took place showed the seriousness of SCO in tackling the Afghanistan crises in which it was decided that Afghanistan should be given space in SCO to provide a platform to raise its concerns regarding the crises.

The role of SCO during the Syrian crisis showed its intention in forming a multipolar world, where it condemned the action taken by the US and warned that further escalation on Syria could result in further tension among the nations. The event showed the expanding area of influence of SCO. The most noticeable thing, which can be seen, is the inclusion of Iran due to its international picture framed by the US. The stand of SCO on Iran indicated that it will never tolerate the hegemony or dictatorship of the US and will take decisions according to its judgment. The other factor, which is being noticeable, was that the SCO never supported the Iranian nuclear program but tried to pursue Iran for peaceful disposal of its program. The event showed the confidence of SCO in tackling regional disputes of the region that had been the only platform that brought all the concerned parties on the Afghanistan issue on a single platform. The SCO brought the US and Iran on the same platform for dealing with the Afghanistan issue. The other major feature could be seen that it was the only platform where India and Pakistan had collectively participated in military exercises. Under SCO joint terrorism exercise in Russia was conducted where India and Pakistan collectively performed an anti-terrorism exercise. This had been the first event after 1947 that both the countries have performed a military exercise. The collective initiatives taken by Russia and China have played a crucial role in the peace and tranquility of the region. The SCO had played a significant role in driving out the western countries from the region and providing several channels in dealing with regional issues.

The formation of SCO was done when the region had been facing several problems regarding their future and all the SCO countries had their interests in joining the SCO. In the second chapter, the research states the different perspectives of states and the role of SCO in regional security. Since it had been clear from the inception of SCO that china and Russia were willing to cooperate in the region. Russia which was the sole dominant and hegemon of the region before disintegration tried to sustain its dominance but also feared that china might takeover it in this race, hence it always tried to provide only some relevant channels for solving the regional problem. The problem with Russia is the fact that Russia had tied with the central Asian states through other channels too like CIS, CSTO, and EEU; hence, it has been insecure regarding the approach of china related to the region. Russia wants that the organization must work to tackle the ‘three evils’ rather than focusing on economic aspects, as it fears that china has the potential to take over Russian control, hence it always tries to make the more military block kind rather than a comprehensive organization. The economic perspective regarding SCO is not much enthusiastic. Since it wants to use it as a tool against NATO and the EU. This is very much clear from the fact that it was eager from the inception of SCO to form an ‘energy club’ but has always opposed the formation of FTA under SCO as Russia has other platforms for economic relations with Central Asian states. The other factor which has been the crucial issue has been the perspective of china related to SCO. First of all, it has been the only organization which has been formed by China hence it always tries to make the most out of it. China wants to focus more on an economic basis rather focusing on a military basis the core reason for the issue has been the principal of ‘peaceful rise’, Where they never wanted to have tussle or constraint in relations with the west. The main objective of China is to use the natural resource-rich area of central Asia for its development. China also wants to get its access to Europe through the central Asian region by its ambitious project of ‘new silk road’. China also wants its stable relations with the west, Due to its huge amount of trade and commerce in Europe and the American region. The perception of forming military blocks varies where Russia demanded some changes in the functioning from the formation of SCO. China initially

never wanted to involve in controversy however as after 20 years of SCO. The SCO has now become a mature organization and the influence of China has drastically increased in international politics hence now it has been trying to show its potential through SCO.

The central Asian states perceive the SCO as an organization that can help them in dealing and bargaining with the west. The other factor for central Asian states has been the fact that most of the countries are landlocked and they have to rely majorly on Russia for their transportation of oil and natural gas; hence they tried to diversify their trade routes through china. The SCO played a crucial role in the stabilization of the region. First of all, the SCO always stands against the regime change revolutions like color revolutions or some civil wars erupted in any country. It provided legitimacy and support to authoritarian regimes in the region. Hence, it always failed the attempts of western led revolutions in the region. The other biggest concern for the region was extremism, terrorism, and separatism. The SCO led RATS has stopped several terrorist attacks in the region and political assassinations. The other benefit for central Asian states was that they have modern and sophisticated weapons and technology from China and Russia. The central Asian states have benefitted from SCO against terrorist activities in the Fergana valley, which provided some relief to the concerned authorities. The central Asian states have also been able to tackle the trans-border organized crimes, drug trafficking, and illegal trade to some extent. However, there had been some problems aroused due to heavy investment in the region in current years and the flooding of Chinese goods and services have made an anti-china sentiment as the local people are losing their job, and it will have led to several riots and protests. Hence for SCO, it has been a big task for developing the organization in the comprehensive development of all the countries.

The SCO had established contact groups with Afghanistan in 2002 for solving the Afghanistan problem. The main issue with the Afghanistan problem was the Taliban which has fertile ground for terrorism in the world, hence the problem was not only regional rather international. Every country has been concerned about the problem of Afghanistan. The main blunder, which has been faced by these crises, is the central Asian region. Since it has cultural and ethnic ties with central Asian states. Which has

dramatically influenced the security of these states hence they have been ready to assist any organization working in Afghanistan. Not only central Asian states but Russia, China, India, and Pakistan are also the victims of this terrorism, hence everyone wants to stabilize Afghanistan. Afghanistan has some other benefits for SCO as well as has the potential to become an economic hub for trade and connectivity to other regions of the world. The concern for China is its belt and road initiative though it has not been passing through Afghanistan.

The terrorist outfits of the region have been challenging the BRI project by promoting other terrorist outfits in the region. China is very much concerned, as the Taliban has been training the extremist Uyghur Muslims who had been constantly demanded independence from china. The Afghanistan issue is also critical for India as stabilization in Afghanistan can provide India access, which is safe to connect central Asian states. The relation in the ancient period was very friendly with Afghanistan. Hence, it wants to take leverage through SCO. Russia has its implication with Afghanistan as it has provided as Russia wants to counter the terrorism in Afghanistan as they had been done several attacks in Russia and trained the Chechnya rebels but conversely, Russia never want that the Afghanistan issue must be solved through NATO as the message of this victory would be that NATO. It has the potential to solve the issue in the proximity of Russia which would be a setback for their international stature. hence Russia wants to solve the Afghanistan issue but on its terms. The role of Pakistan in the Afghanistan issue has been crucial but of rough nature, as it wants to take leverage of its geostrategic location but also plays the victim card in international politics. Pakistan wants to stabilize Afghanistan but it also wants to install a pro-Pakistani regime in the region. Pakistan has also provided aid and assistance to the Taliban. The intelligence agency of Pakistan has also used the Taliban in propagating terrorism in India. Hence, Pakistan cannot be trusted in solving the Afghanistan problem. The SCO cannot solely tackle the issue of Afghanistan, but it needs a comprehensive approach from international organizations to counter the Afghanistan problem. The SCO must cooperate with NATO to tackle the issue and joint operations must be conducted to counter-terrorism in the region. The

major international players must not involve their ideological differences and personal rivalry in dealing with the Afghanistan issue.

Energy security is the biggest concern for every country in today's world and hence it plays a key role in the development and bilateral ties between the countries. The SCO consists of three categories of countries –producer, transit, and consumer. the producers are Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Iran while the transit nations are Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan and the consumers are India, Pakistan, and China. Since the organization has complete demand and supply it can become a potent driver in channelizing the energy supply to every country.

The ‘energy club’ which has been formed in 2013 can play a key role in enhancing trade and connectivity in the region. The energy club will also help in stabilizing the fluctuation of oil and gas prices in the world. It will also speed up the process of oil extraction in the central Asian region and provide modern techniques in the process of oil and gas extraction. The club will also increase the development as the energy-producing countries will get investment for extraction while the transit nations will get an opportunity in logistics and transportation of these resources. The other aspect of the energy club is the fact that Russia will get another market for its energy resources and in the future, it will not have to majorly dependent on the European region for supply. However, there have been some issues which is a major concern for the initiative of the organization. firstly, there has been a rivalry between Russia and China in connectivity as in some regions the connectivity and pipelines laid by Russia, but china has been laying parallel project to the same region which shows that no collection efforts had been taken by these member states. The other factor is the fact that Russia tries to monopolize the whole energy market, where it never wants to the diversification of trade routes out of its territory the recent example of TAPI where Russia never wanted that these projects should be started without its involvement. The other factor for the energy club is the fact that Russia wants an anti-OPEC but due to globalization, its dream would not be fulfilled as all the countries are interdependent. The energy club has also made serious concern for Russia to Iran as it will play a major role in connectivity to central Asia. However, it can

be concluded that after the formation of the 'energy club' if genuine efforts will be taken then it will play a crucial role in the member states' quest for energy security.

The SCO would be the most influential organization, if cooperation will prevail over the commission and if all the member states will work collectively then the SCO will be successful in eradicating the three evils from the region. The energy club of SCO will provide security, connectivity, and trade to all its member states and will be the biggest and safest energy group in the world. The SCO might not be a relevant mechanism in solving regional border disputes due to the expansionist tendencies of some countries the Afghanistan problem would never be solved unless and until some member states do not stop using terrorism and extremism as their strategic weapon against other countries.

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