

THE SINO-RUSSIAN COLLABORATION IN THE
SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Strategic Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

THE SINO-RUSSIAN COLLABORATION IN THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION, by Bayasgalan Lkhagvasuren, 69 pages.

Today many aspects of the Sino-Russian relationship are positive. The “Shanghai Cooperation Organization” (SCO) became an official multilateral regional organization in 2001. In 2008 both countries ratified an action plan to implement the China-Russia Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighborliness, and Cooperation, but the SCO is redefining their relationship and firming up their strategic partnership. With China in the lead, it has expanded to eight member states. After a slow start, the SCO is promptly achieving institutional structure and international recognition. The Sino-Russian relation in the SCO is going to be a “strong relationship” in coming years, with China becoming a strategic counterweight to the U.S. in matters of Central Asian security. The Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO is already seen as long-term cooperation which is determined to be a Neoliberal cooperative approach for the near future. This is promising for U.S. interests since a Neoliberal cooperative approach between the Russians and Chinese allows for the U.S. to engage in Central Asia to help solve common problems. There is no doubt that Russian and Chinese interest in this relationship will continue as long as Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping remain in power.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| SCO | Shanghai Cooperation Organization |
| U. S. | United States |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The future depends on what we do in the present.

—Mahatma Gandhi, *The Words of Gandhi*

The first significant contacts between the Chinese and the Russians occurred in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Mongols, after conquering China, expanded westward to what is now Eastern Europe, subjugating Kiev's Russia and other Slavic states.¹ As the Mongol empire started to disintegrate, important changes occurred in both China and Russia.² Both countries started to experience being in an empire state situation and tensions between them were inevitable over the centuries. Immediately after the establishment of the People's Republic China (PRC), the collaboration between China and the Soviet Union has reached the peak in the political, economic, and social arenas, but it did not last two decades. Less than forty years ago the two countries were seemingly implacable enemies on the verge of nuclear confrontation.³ Today many aspects of the Sino-Russian relationship are positive. In 2008 both countries ratified an action plan to implement the China-Russia Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighborliness,

¹ Amarsaykhan Serdar, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: Prospects and Implications" (thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2003), 5.

² Ibid.

³ Bobo Lo, *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics* (Baltimore, MD: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), 1.

and Cooperation, which had been signed in 2001.⁴ It was turning a moment for both countries.

Central Asia is a region where potential areas for the Sino-Russian cooperation and contention exist simultaneously. Historically, the region has experienced periods in which each state has been the hegemonic power. Russia enjoyed significant power and influence in the region over the past 200 years.⁵ During this period of Russian dominance, China and Russia came to an understanding that has served both states' security interests. After the fall of the Soviet Union, China's borders with the new states in Central Asia which were approximately 3700 kilometers long. Recognition of the unique challenges of the time led to unprecedented multinational cooperative security initiatives.⁶ Five countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China) started parallel, independent talks on reduction of their armed forces and confidence-building measures in the border areas of the countries concerned.⁷ The "Shanghai Five" group was officially established on April 26, 1996, with the signing in Shanghai of the "Agreement on Strengthening of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Sphere in Border Regions."⁸ Then, in 2001 it became an official multilateral regional organization

⁴ Paul J. Bolt and Sharyl N. Cross, "Contemporary Sino-Russian Security Partnership: Challenges and Opportunities for the United States" (Research, Institute for National Security Studies, ASAFA, 2009), 2.

⁵ Lo, *Axis of Convenience*, 91.

⁶ Henry Plater-Zyberk and Andrew Monaghan, *Strategic Implication of the Evolving Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2014), 2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 3.

as the “the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” (SCO) and it added one more member, Uzbekistan. With China in the lead, the SCO initially dedicated its efforts to fight against “three evil forces” (terrorism, extremism, and separatism), and established the following several collective objectives:

Strengthening mutual confidence, friendship and good neighborly relations between the participating states; encouraging effective cooperation between them in the political, trade-economic, scientific-technical, cultural, educational, energy, transportation, ecological and other areas; joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region, to build a new democratic, just and rational political and economic international order.⁹

The SCO was initially dedicated to fighting against terrorism, extremism, and separatism, but some political analysts believe that it is shifting to be a counter to United States (U.S.) national interests in Central Asia. It has been growing in influence over the years.

Research Problem

China and Russia have been pursuing favorable relations since the end of the Cold War. The broader security of Central Asian states provides an opportunity for cooperation along similar interests. The war on terrorism has brought the Central Asian nations front and center in U.S. foreign policy priorities, as evidenced by such activities as a constant parade of U.S. military, diplomatic, and congressional visits to the countries since September 2001, the creation of a Subcommittee on Central Asia and the Caucasus within the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and a more than doubling of U.S. aid to

⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Declaration on the Creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” *Daily News Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*, Information and Press Department, 15 June 2001.

the five nations combined compared with 2001 levels.¹⁰ The U.S. presence continued to grow in the region with bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and the U.S. military airplanes were granted access to Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, (Turkmenistan having limited this to civilian aircraft). In spite of this, the SCO has remained neutral because of China's ambivalence, and because Russia fully supported "the War on Terror." However, something changed around 2005. Uzbekistan shut down the Hanabat Military Base in 2005 and former President Almazbek Atambayev (a pro-Russian politician) announced Kyrgyzstan's entry into the Customs Union and closed down Manas Air Base in 2014. What changed their minds? Did Russia and China pressure these Central Asian countries to stop supporting the U.S.?

On June 9th, 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan, India, and Pakistan officially joined the SCO as full-fledged members. To pursue further security interests, Iran also expressed their strong intention to become full members of the organization. In addition to these countries, Japan and South Korea are interested in becoming observer states while Belarus and Sri Lanka were finally admitted as so-called dialog partners. This increased interest shows that the SCO is becoming a bigger organization with regional influence, much like the former Warsaw Pact. The question remains, will this regional security organization act as a balance of power to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?

¹⁰ Susan Clark-Sestak, *U.S. Bases in Central Asia* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2003), 3.



Figure 1. Shanghai Cooperation Organization Members and Observers

Source: Stratfor World View, “Can the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Live Up to Its Name?” June 9, 2017, accessed September 25, 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/can-shanghai-cooperation-organization-live-its-name>.

Research Question

The primary question answered by this thesis is: How could the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO be detrimental to the U.S. policy in Central Asia? In order to answer this question, three secondary questions have been identified as follows:

1. What are the Chinese and Russian common national interests in the SCO?
2. How could the SCO be developed as a balance of power to NATO?
3. What are the U.S. national interests in Central Asia?

Assumptions

There are six key assumptions in this thesis. First, the Sino-Russian relations will remain in the SCO framework against the U.S. national interest in Central Asia. Second, the SCO will increase their number of security exercises which include humanitarian relief, military exchanges, naval training, numerous small-scale border drills and a major annual bilateral or multilateral joint exercise. Third, Belarus and Iran will join as full-fledged members to the SCO. Fourth, Mongolia and Turkmenistan will remain only in an observer status in the SCO. Fifth, there will be tension in the SCO between Russian-backed India and China. Finally, the U.S. will remain committed to the Central Asian region, bolstering NATO engagement with their partners, and with Turkey.

Scope

In order to avoid an overly expansive topic, the scope of this study will be limited to the SCO, primarily focusing on Sino-Russian collaboration during the SCO response to Russia-Georgian war (2008). Although the research will attempt to keep the research condensed within this framework, the paper will briefly cover several additional issues such as NATO and the U.S. national interests in Central Asia.

Limitations and Delimitations

The inability to research Chinese and Russian documents is a significant constraint. The research in this paper will be predominantly English language-based, with additional Russian texts, if necessary since the author can read Russian. Not all the SCO's documents have been translated into English. The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.

Significance of Study

Countries choose their friends but not their neighbors. Like other countries, Mongolia does not choose its neighbors.¹¹ Hence, the geopolitical reality of living between its large neighbors, China and Russia, thus defines its fundamental security interests.¹² Both of them have nuclear capabilities and they are bigger players in SCO. Mongolia has mutually beneficial partnerships and strategic cooperation agreements with the Russian Federation and the PRC. Beijing wants to show its dominance by pushing Mongolia to become a member of the SCO to limit its independent policy within Beijing's spheres of influence, while Mongolia is satisfied with its observer status.¹³ Indeed, both China and Russia oppose anyone consolidating influence in Mongolia.¹⁴

The National Security Concept of Mongolia is a national strategic document, which states that, as a principle of its sovereignty, Mongolia must always use soft power as political and diplomatic means to ensure its independence and sovereignty.¹⁵ Furthermore, as *Concept of Mongolia's Foreign Policy* states, Mongolia pursues an open, multi-pillar, and non-aligned foreign policy. In addition, the recently renewed Basics of Mongolia's Defense Policy states that Mongolia is willing to neither join any military

¹¹ Bayar-Ochir Sukhee, "The Implications of the Rise of China's Military for Mongolian Security" (thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2010), 5.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ The Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, *National Security Concept of Mongolia*, last modified July 15, 2016, accessed January 19, 2018, <http://www.nsc.gov.mn/sites/default/files/National%20Security%20Concept%20of%20Mongolia%20EN.pdf>.

alliances nor take part in an armed confrontation unless Mongolia counters a military threat and Mongolia does not allow having foreign military stationed on its territory, or foreign military through its land or air spaces.¹⁶ In accordance with the realist theory, small states pursue two types of foreign policy in order to preserve their independence: entrusting their security to a powerful state for balancing power against possible adversarial countries, and conducting neutral policies to isolate themselves from either opposing or supporting powerful countries.¹⁷ The Mongolians have debated Mongolia's potential declaration of permanent neutrality status since September 2015, but the final decision had not been made as of May 2018.

Therefore, analyzing the development process of the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO context is essential to national security concerns of Mongolia. My topic is significant to the military profession because it is going to be a "strong relationship" between China and Russia in coming years, with China becoming a strategic counterweight to the U.S. in matters of Central Asian security.

Summary

The SCO provides to China formal entry into Central Asia with Russian support. Dr. Charles Ziegner highlighted that China and Russia have similar security interests in Central Asia including counterterrorism and a desire to minimize opportunities for

¹⁶ The Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, *Basics of Mongolia's Defense Policy*, accessed January 19, 2018, <http://www.mod.gov.mn/index.php?com=content&id=133>.

¹⁷ Bold Ravdan, *The Security of Small State: Option for Mongolia* (Ulaanbaatar: Mongolia: The Institute for Strategic Studies, 2000), 32; Jessica L. Beyer and Stephanie C. Hofmann, "Varieties of Neutrality Norm Revision and Decline," *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, no. 3 (2011): 287.

instability; concerns over the spread of color revolutions; and limiting U.S. and NATO influence in the region.¹⁸

The basic purpose and theme of the research are outlined in chapter 1. The chapter also presented background, the research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of the literature used for this thesis. It contains a wide variety of academic publications and websites. The Combined Arms Research Library at Command and General Staff College has been the principal source of the literature review.

¹⁸ James Bellacqua, *China - Russia Relations in the Early 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Center for Naval Analyses, 2007), 13.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.

—Kofi Annan, *Where on Earth Are We Going?*

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the following question: How could the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO be detrimental to the U.S. policy in Central Asia?

Other subsidiary questions include:

1. What are the Chinese and Russian common national interests in the SCO?
2. How could the SCO be developed as a balance of power to NATO?
3. What are the U.S. national interests in Central Asia?

This research is significant to the military profession and other scholars because current research suggests China is becoming a strategic counterweight to the U.S. in matters of Central Asian security. This chapter is organized by the following topics: Theory of International Politics; The Russian Perspective; The Chinese Perspective; The Military Relationship; Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure; Economic Interests; “One Belt, One Road” Initiative; and U.S. National Interest in Central Asia. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusions.

Theories of International Politics

A theoretical notion may be a concept, such as force, or an assumption, such as the assumption that mass concentrates at a point.¹⁹ A theoretical notion does not explain

¹⁹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California, 1979), 5.

or predict anything.²⁰ To the assumptions of the theory we then add the condition for its operation: that two or more states coexist in a self-help system, one with no superior agent to come to the aid of states that may be weakening or to deny to any of them the use of whatever instruments they think will serve their purposes.²¹

According to Stephen A. Walt's theory, the balance of threat is a revision of neorealists' balance of power theory. For states that matter, balancing is the rule: they will join forces against the threats posed by the power, proximity, offensive capabilities, and intentions of others.²² Based on the foregoing, if the balance of threat theory best describes Russia's and China's motivation for participating in the SCO, then the SCO would be a product of a perceived threat from U.S. hegemonic actions.²³ Walt considered that conventional wisdom maintains that alliances form as a response to power, however, he argues instead that states "ally with or against the most threatening power."²⁴ Thus, an imbalance of threat will cause an alliance response (e.g. SCO) against the most threatening state (e.g. U.S.).²⁵

²⁰ Waltz, 5.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (Spring 1985): 18.

²³ Jefferson E. Turner, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Paper Tiger or Regional Powerhouse?" (thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2005), 7.

²⁴ Walt, 8.

²⁵ Turner, 9.

Omnibalancing, the theory that emerges from these observations, applies largely to the Third World.²⁶ The dominant goal of Third World leaders is to stay in power, they will sometimes protect themselves at the expense of the interests of the state.²⁷ Rather than just balance against threats or power, leaders of states will appease—that is, align with—secondary adversaries so that they can focus their resources on prime adversaries.²⁸ *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* theories strive to explain cooperation among states.²⁹ Interdependence means the more collaborative action is needed for solving problems of common interests.³⁰ By pursuing multiple mutual interactions, states can reinforce cooperation as the best long-term strategy for reducing security competition.³¹ Neoliberalism argues that “growing economic interdependence, the diffusion of new technologies and ideas, and the awareness of common transnational problems diminish the importance of borders and create transnational actors and a demand for international cooperation.”³² Stated briefly, “states can no longer solve a

²⁶ Steven R. David, *Explaining Third World Alignment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 236.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977).

³⁰ Turner, 12.

³¹ Joseph M. Grieco, “Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism,” in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David A. Baldwin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 122.

³² Paul Kubicek, “Regionalism, Nationalism and Realpolitik in Central Asia” *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 4 (June 1997): 639.

number of issues through unilateral action alone. Common problems demand a pooling of resources and even the creation of regimes to facilitate cooperation.”³³ Regimes, unlike alliances, “must be understood as something more than temporary arrangements that change with every shift in power or interests.”³⁴ International regimes are “defined as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given issue area of international relations.”³⁵ Furthermore, “regime-governed behavior must not be based solely on short-term interests.”³⁶ In this vein, one must consider how Russia and China view the importance of the SCO’s multilateral framework over bilateral state-to-state relations among SCO member states.³⁷ The SCO provides China and Russia with the opportunity to strengthen their positions on issues internationally.³⁸

The Russian Perspective

The Russian Federation’s National Security Strategy published in 2015 expresses Russia’s desire to build up the political and economic potential of the SCO and to

³³ Kubicek, 639.

³⁴ Stephen D. Krasner, “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables,” *International Regimes* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 186.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Turner, 16.

³⁸ Paul E. Cunningham II, “The Bear and Dragon Embrace: Russian-Chinese Security Cooperation” (master’s thesis, Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, VA, 2017), 22.

leverage it to take practical actions.³⁹ Despite Russia's preference for security cooperation as the main purpose of the SCO, an even better scenario (from Moscow's perspective) would involve its subordination to the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a formal alliance under Russian control, which does not include China (but does involve Armenia and Belarus).⁴⁰ By aligning itself with China and the four Central Asian states in the SCO, Russia may also be seeking a tool to counter U.S. influence in the region and to hold China in check.⁴¹ Politically, the creation of the SCO has not only given Russia a "Trojan horse" to exert influence in the region it controlled for over one hundred years (1865 to 1991),⁴² but it could also allow Russia to achieve two of its long-standing foreign policy goals in Central Asia: "to integrate the Central Asian states in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) sphere and make them into close allies and to deny external powers strategic access to Central Asia."⁴³ Without the SCO Russia would have to compete alone against Western nations, notably the United States, for

³⁹ Russian President, *National Security Strategy* (Moscow, Russia, December 2015), para. 92.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Wishnick, "Russia, China, and The United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition and Cooperation in the Shadow of the Georgian Crisis" (monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2009), 30.

⁴¹ Timothy Craig, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Origins and Implications" (report, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2003), 7.

⁴² Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 23.

⁴³ The NATO-Russia Archive, "Russia and Central Asia," accessed November 19, 2017, <http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/CentralAsia.html>.

Central Asian oil and natural gas, something Russia is financially ill-equipped to do.⁴⁴ One of the chief reasons Russia pushed for the creation of the SCO was fear of the instability in the Central Asian region spilling across Russia's porous southern borders. Russia's southern regions are impoverished and ethnically diverse.⁴⁵ The lack of an adequate number of border guards to patrol Russia's 16,762 km southern border and the severe corruption among key officials in the region and among the border guards themselves contribute to the growing problems of narcotics trafficking and illegal immigration.⁴⁶ It has been estimated that nearly 70 percent of the narcotics flow through Russia's southern border passes through a border guard checkpoint.⁴⁷ These security concerns were probably among the main driving forces behind Russia backing China in the creation of the SCO.⁴⁸

The Chinese Perspective

China's National Military Strategy of 2015 states that "China's armed forces will work to further defense and security cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization."⁴⁹ The SCO is a prestigious intergovernmental organization, which

⁴⁴ Craig, 10.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *Military Strategy* (Beijing, China: People's Republic of China, May 2015), para. VI.

happens to support the broad spectrum of Chinese national security interests.⁵⁰ China is rapidly emerging as a world power. The successes and recognition of the SCO have increased Chinese prestige both regionally and internationally, which China has exploited for furthering its foreign policy agenda and meeting its strategic incentives.⁵¹ The SCO has also given China an organization in which to push its anti-U.S. views with Russia's backing.⁵² Through the creation of the SCO, China has attempted to ensure that the Central Asian states, especially those that border the Xinjiang province, will not support Uighur independence and will assist Beijing in repressing all Uighur independence movements under the guise of the global war on terrorism.⁵³ A clear indication of the importance China has placed on the development of the SCO as a security mechanism in Central Asia has been the Chinese military's participation in unprecedented military exercises outside its borders with a foreign country's troops.⁵⁴ It appears that the final reason China pushed for the creation of the SCO was to promote closer economic and trade ties, especially in the energy resources sector, with the Central Asian states.⁵⁵ The most populous nation in the world, China has become the world's second largest energy consumer behind the United States.⁵⁶ China hopes to use the SCO to enhance energy

⁵⁰ Turner, 89.

⁵¹ Turner, 90.

⁵² Craig, 19.

⁵³ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

cooperation across Central Asia, as well as move into other areas such as education, transportation, and tourism.⁵⁷ In other words, China sees no necessary limits on functional areas of cooperation.⁵⁸ China has also lobbied, through the SCO, to develop much-needed rail links from Central Asia to China and from Central Asia to Europe.⁵⁹

The Military Relationship

Since the Cold War's end, Russia and China have continued to strengthen their relationship and are engaged in substantial military cooperation, including arms sales, joint exercises, and military-to-military contacts and exchanges.⁶⁰ Improved relations have allowed the two nations to reduce expenditures of resources focused on defense against each other while allowing them to reinforce one another where their interests overlap, particularly where it concerns the United States' use of power.⁶¹ From 1992 to 2006, Russia-to-China arms sales held steady, with 40 percent of Russian exports going to China, and Russian arms comprising 84 percent of Chinese weapon imports.⁶² From China's perspective, Russia is the appropriate source for weapons because Moscow is willing to be flexible in the method of payment (i.e. barter trade), their weapons are largely compatible with the former Soviet weapons that the Chinese possess, and Russia

⁵⁷ Bolt, 9.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Craig, 40.

⁶⁰ Cunningham, 26.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Niklas Swanstrom, "Sino-Russian Relations at the Start of the New Millennium in Central Asia and Beyond," *Journal of Contemporary China* 23, no. 87 (May 2014): 491.

does not attach political strings to its arms exports to China.⁶³ As of 2014, Russian arms sales to China have totaled roughly \$2 billion annually.⁶⁴ On October 10 and 11, 2002, China and Kyrgyzstan conducted Exercise-01, which was the first bilateral anti-terror exercise within the SCO framework.⁶⁵ Hundreds of their troops participated in joint border operations in this drill, which Xinhua (China News Agency) says represented “the first time for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to hold a joint military maneuver with a foreign army.”⁶⁶ But, Russia and other members of the SCO did not participate in this exercise. In August 2005, for the first time in forty years, Russian and Chinese armed forces conducted joint military exercises, including the use of long-range strategic bombers, attacking enemy air defense and command and control systems, gaining air superiority, and controlling maritime territory.⁶⁷ The exercise, conducted under the auspices of the SCO, involved approximately 9,000 troops (1,800 Russian, 7,200 Chinese) and included military and political consultations and amphibious and airborne landings, all based upon a scenario of Russia and China conducting a combined operation

⁶³ Jing-Dong Yuan, “Sino-Russian Defense Ties: The View from Beijing,” in *The Future of China-Russia Relations*, ed. James A. Bellacqua (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 207.

⁶⁴ Stephen Blank, “The Context of Russo-Chinese Military Relations,” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 35, no. 5 (September/October 2013): 244.

⁶⁵ Richard Weitz, “Parsing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises” (paper, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA, 2015), 4.

⁶⁶ *Xinhua*, “Backgrounder: Major PLA-Related Joint Anti-Terror Military Training,” December 21, 2007, accessed November 28, 2017, news.Xinhuanet.com/english/200712/21/content_7290327.htm.

⁶⁷ Cunningham, 30.

to assist a third state battling terrorist separatists.⁶⁸ Although the exercises were billed as counter-terrorism, they had a decidedly conventional flavor.⁶⁹ Since 2005, the two countries have engaged in numerous combined exercises, either bilaterally or under the auspices of the SCO.⁷⁰ The SCO has conducted a range of partnership exercises, most notably its Peace Mission series, which have developed a degree of comfort and interoperability between participating SCO members along with structures and experience that might come into play in future contingencies.⁷¹ Table 1 lays out the participants and activities of major SCO military exercises.

⁶⁸ Kevin Ryan, “Russo-Chinese Defense Relations: The View from Moscow,” in *The Future of ChinaRussia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 187.

⁶⁹ Jing-Yun Hsu and Jenn-Jaw Soong, “Development of China-Russia Relations (1949-2011),” *The Chinese Economy* 47, no. 3 (May-June 2014): 7.

⁷⁰ Cunningham, 30.

⁷¹ Andrew Scobell, Arthur S. Ding, Phillip C. Saunders, and Scott W. Harold, *The People’s Liberation Army and Contingency Planning in China* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2015), 253.

| Table 1. Shanghai Cooperation Organization Exercises | | | |
|---|---|--|------------------|
| Name of Exercise | Location | Participants | Number of Troops |
| “Exercise 01” 2002 | in their border area | China and Kyrgyzstan | 500 |
| Cooperation 2003 | in eastern Kazakhstan and Xinjiang, China | China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan | 1,000 |
| Peace Mission 2005 | Vladivostok, Russia, and Shandong, China | China and Russia (observers from all members) | 10,000 |
| Peace Mission 2007 | Urumqi, China and Volga Urals, Russia | China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan | 7,500 |
| Peace Mission 2009 | in northeast China | China and Russia (observers from all members) | 2,600 |
| Peace Mission 2010 | Zhanbyl, Kazakhstan | China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan | 5,000 |
| Peace Mission 2012 | Sughd, Tajikistan | China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan | 2,000 |
| Peace Mission 2013 | Urals, Russia | China and Russia (observers from all members) | 1,500 |
| Peace Mission 2014 | Inner Mongolia, China | China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan | 7,000 |
| Peace Mission 2016 | Balykchy, Kyrgyzstan | China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan | 1,100 |
| Next Peace Mission exercise will be held in Russia in 2018. | | | |

Source: Created by author using information from Elizabeth Wishnick, “Russia, China, and The United States in Central Asia: Prospects for Great Power Competition and Cooperation in the Shadow of the Georgian Crisis” (monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2009); Richard Weitz, “Parsing Chinese-Russian Military Exercises” (paper, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA, 2015); Vladimir Mukhin, “Po uyguro-chechenskomu stsenariyu” [On the Uyghur-Chechen Scenario], *Nezavisimyy Gazeta*, July 21, 2009, accessed June 26, 2018, www.ng.ru/politics/2009-07-21/2_uchenia.html; ITAR-TASS, “SCO Anti-Terrorist Drills to Show SCO Potential in Security Area,” September 10, 2010, accessed June 26, 2018, www.ITARTASS.com/eng/level2.html?NewsID=15480561&PageNum=0; Roger McDermott, “China Leads SCO Peace Mission 2012 in Central Asia,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 26, 2012, accessed June 26, 2018, www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39538&no_cache=1#.VCKbl-l0y20; RIA Novosti, “Chinese Leader Vows Stronger Military Ties With Russia,” March 24, 2013, accessed June 26, 2018, en.rian.ru/military_news/20130324/180213648/Chinese-Leader-Vows-Stronger-Military-Ties-With-Russia.html.

These exercises could enhance the ability of the Russian, Chinese, and perhaps other SCO armed forces to deter—and if necessary suppress—another popular rebellion or large-scale terrorist movement, such as the ones that occurred in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 and Andijan, Uzbekistan, in May 2005.⁷² In justifying the exercises, Chinese writers pointed to the growing threat that terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries could spill over into Central Asia and argued that “joint military drills and other moves taken by SCO members for defense and security cooperation will send a strong deterrent signal to the ‘three forces’ of terrorism, extremism, and separatism in the region.”⁷³

In addition to exercises and arms sales over the past twenty-five years, Chinese and Russian defense cooperation has included high-level conferences and exchanges of officers for military education.⁷⁴ Thousands of Chinese military personnel have studied in Russia while numerous Russian officers have received shorter duration training in China at the National Defense University.⁷⁵ Such exchanges increase their ability to operate effectively together while strengthening defense ties.⁷⁶

⁷² Patrick Moore and Daniel Kimmage, “Uzbekistan: Was Andijon Uzbekistan’s Tiananmen Square?” *Radio Free Europe*, June 9, 2005, accessed December 19, 2017, www.rferl.org/content/article/1059188.html.

⁷³ Zachary Keck, “China, Russia Military Ties Deepen with Naval Drill in East China Sea,” *The Diplomat*, May 2, 2014, accessed December 19, 2017, thediplomat.com/2014/05/china-russia-military-ties-deepenwith-naval-drill-in-east-china-sea/.

⁷⁴ Cunningham, 30.

⁷⁵ Fu Ying, “How China Sees Russia,” *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 1 (January/February 2016): 98.

⁷⁶ Cunningham, 32.

Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure

The first meeting of the Shanghai Five security and law enforcement officials in Bishkek in December 1999 was Moscow's first serious attempt to set up an anti-terrorist substructure for the organization; the "Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure."⁷⁷ Three years later, at the SCO foreign ministers' extraordinary meeting in Beijing on January 7, 2002, the candidature of Bishkek as a location for this structure was accepted, and Article 10 of the Shanghai Charter, signed in St. Petersburg on June 7, 2002, confirmed that "the Regional Counter-Terrorist Structure established by the member States of the Shanghai Convention" would be located in Bishkek in the Kyrgyz Republic.⁷⁸ The internal conflict in Kyrgyzstan was a powerful argument to move the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure HQ to another country, and the SCO's Prime Ministers, with the approval of their Heads of States, signed off on a new anti-terrorist center in Tashkent on September 23, 2003.⁷⁹ The original budget of the organization was about \$2 million, of which 24 percent each came from China and Russia, 21 percent paid by Kazakhstan, 15 percent by Uzbekistan, 10 percent by Kyrgyzstan, and 6 percent by Tajikistan.⁸⁰

During a three-year phase beginning in 2007, law enforcement authorities from across the SCO nations stopped preparations for more than 500 terrorist (extremist)

⁷⁷ Plater-Zyberk, 20.

⁷⁸ *China Daily*, "Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," June 12, 2006, accessed December 25, 2017, www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-06/12/content_6020341.htm.

⁷⁹ *China Daily*, "History of Development of SCO," August 21, 2008, accessed December 25, 2017, news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-08/21/content_9572869.htm.

⁸⁰ Plater-Zyberk, 22.

crimes, destroyed over 440 terrorist training bases, killed or captured more than 1,050 members of international terrorist organizations, seized 654 improvised explosive devices along with over 5,000 firearms, forty-six tons of explosives, and over half a million rounds of ammunition.⁸¹ Gradual improvement of anti-terrorist cooperation within the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure can be considered a success, not only because (considering the lack of trust among certain member states) the decision to share some elements of anti-terrorist information must have been preceded by lengthy, complex, and secret talks, but also because it represents an entirely new technology and security network which the member states had to cooperate to set up.⁸²

Economic Interests

Although Russia possesses its own vast quantities of proven oil reserves, 48.6 billion barrels, and the world's largest natural gas reserves, Central Asian oil and gas reach the world markets as Russian exports.⁸³ The combination of Russia's own oil and natural gas reserves and the oil and natural gas it transports from the Central Asian states have made Russia the world's largest natural gas exporter and the world's second-largest oil exporter, behind Saudi Arabia.⁸⁴ China, on the other side, is currently the world's second-

⁸¹ Yu Bin, "China-Russia Relations: Politics of Reluctant Allies," *Comparative Connections* 18, no. 2 (September 2016): 132.

⁸² Plater-Zyberk, 24.

⁸³ Craig, 9.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

largest oil consumer and is projected to become the biggest by 2030.⁸⁵ Being the world's largest energy exporter and the world's largest energy consumer respectively, the complementary relationship between Russia and China is clear.⁸⁶ Comprising nearly half of the BRIC [Brazil, Russia, India, and China] countries, Russia and China are both deemed to be emerging global economic powers.⁸⁷

According to the Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, on June 7, 2002, “developing the economic partnership is a particularly important task in the activities of the SCO. . . . In the nearest future, it is necessary to determine priority projects for practical cooperation in such areas as the construction of transport communications and power supply projects, water use, the extraction and transportation of energy resources, as well as in other fields of mutual interest.”⁸⁸ The SCO's Business Council, founded in June 2006, has a Secretariat based in Moscow and is run by a Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Board consisting of member state representatives.⁸⁹ According to its website, the Business Council's key functions are to facilitate

⁸⁵ Leslie Hook, “IEA Courts China's Oil Sector,” *Financial Times*, April 1, 2011, accessed January 5, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/bebd70ce-5c33-11e0-8f48-00144feab49a>.

⁸⁶ Ruoxi Du, *Central Asian Energy: A Point of Contention or Collaboration in Russia-China Relations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2011), 19.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Declaration on the Creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*.

⁸⁹ Julie Boland, *Ten Years of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A Lost Decade? A Partner for the United States?* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 2011), 14.

cooperation in trade, credit, financial, scientific, engineering, transport, telecommunications, agricultural and other spheres, to implement projects in different sectors of the economy in members' territory, and to assist in finding funding for and making recommendations towards improving economic cooperation between SCO countries.

However, the current peaceful state of Russia-China relations concerning Central Asian energy resources does not ensure future stability.⁹⁰ If the oil and natural gas of Central Asian states were the only determinants influencing Russian and Chinese foreign policies toward each other, the two states would most likely have ended up in overt conflict over the control of these resources, regardless of mitigating factors.⁹¹ Instead, the Russia-China relationship, often dubbed as a “strategic partnership,” is based on broader common interests in a much more complex background of world politics.⁹² When it comes to China's activities in Central Asia, the biggest challenge for Russia is that there is no way Russia can invest an equal amount into the region's economy.⁹³

“One Belt, One Road” Initiative

The pattern for this concept was the Silk Road Economic Belt presented by President Xi Jinping in a September 2013 speech in Kazakhstan, combined with his proposal before the Indonesian parliament in October of that year for a Twenty-first

⁹⁰ Boland, 25.

⁹¹ Du, 16.

⁹² Ibid., 17.

⁹³ Ibid., 25.

Century Maritime Silk Road to be built through greater cooperation between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states and making apt use of the resources of the China-Association of Southeast Asian Nations Maritime Cooperation Fund in developing a maritime cooperation partnership.⁹⁴ The concept is a further development of China's earlier Great Western Development Strategy for China's central and western regions, now expanded into a wide-ranging economic strategy that includes the interiors of Europe and Asia and extends to all of Europe.⁹⁵ The concept includes;

1. a route stretching from Central Asia west through Russia to the Baltic,
2. a historical route starting from Central Asia and turning toward Western Asia, passing through the Persian Gulf on its way to the Mediterranean Ocean, and
3. a route that passes through Southern China into Southeast Asia then leads through South Asia into the Indian Ocean.⁹⁶

The Maritime Silk Road includes the historical course of transport from the South China Sea through the Indian Ocean, then through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean, as well as a route from the South China Sea through the South Pacific.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *People's Daily*, "Spotlight: Chinese Premier's European Tour Aims Pragmatic Cooperation, Innovation," October 4, 2013, accessed March 30, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n/2014/1004/c90883-8790855.html>.

⁹⁵ National Institute for Defense Studies, "East Asian Strategic Review 2016, Japan," 119, accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/index.html>.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

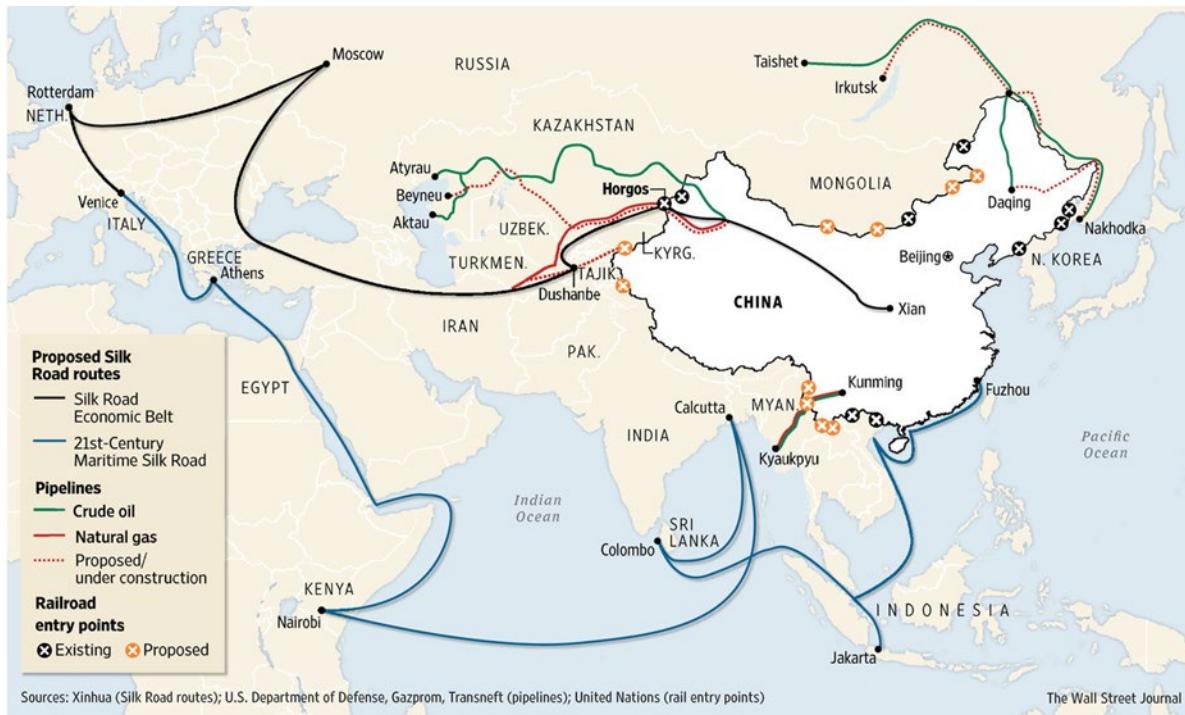


Figure 2. China's "One Belt, One Road" Concept

Source: Lucio Blanco Pitlo, "China's "One Belt, One Road," Yerelce, August 10, 2015, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://yerelce.wordpress.com/2015/08/10/one-belt-one-road-project/>.

United States National Interest in Central Asia

After developing a patchwork of security, economic, and political relationships with Central Asian states in the 1990s, U.S. Military cooperation expanded rapidly with them in 2001 and 2002, and anti-terrorism became the central focus of American policy.⁹⁸ The 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review* identified Central Asia as a "geostrategic crossroads."⁹⁹ As the *Quadrennial Defense Review* explained: "The U.S.

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Wishnick, "Growing U.S. Security Interests in Central Asia" (report, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, October 2002), 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

will seek to shape not only the choices of countries in those regions but choices of countries outside them that have interests or ambitions within them.”¹⁰⁰ Despite Washington’s apparent openness to cooperation with the SCO, the lingering U.S. Military presence in the region exacerbated fears of U.S. sponsored regime change, especially after the so-called “color revolutions” that upended governments in Georgia (Rose Revolution, 2003), Ukraine (Orange Revolution, 2004), and Kyrgyzstan (Tulip Revolution, March 2005).¹⁰¹ Autocratic leaders in the SCO were undoubtedly worried they could be next in line.¹⁰²

Thus, the U.S. requested membership in the SCO, but the SCO rejected this request.¹⁰³ While the Bush Administration openly denied the attempt to join the SCO, secretly, U.S. suspicion and uncertainty about the SCO objectives appeared to undermine the potential for any further cooperation.¹⁰⁴ In late 2008, the Obama Administration adopted a policy of “engagement and cooperation” with U.S. partners worldwide.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2006), 28; Alima Bissenova, “OSCE Urges Tajiks to End Shutdown of Facebook,” CACI Analyst, March 21, 2012, accessed January 14, 2018, www.cacianalyst.org.

¹⁰¹ Boland, 26.

¹⁰² M. K. Bhadrakumar, “Russia Regains Lost Ground,” *Asia Times*, September 15, 2005, 26, accessed December 12, 2017, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/GI15Ag01.html.

¹⁰³ Scott McClellan, “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Should the U.S. be Concerned?” (strategy research project, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2013), 26.

¹⁰⁴ Boland, 26.

¹⁰⁵ Simbal Khan, “Stabilization of Afghanistan: U.S. - NATO Regional Strategy and the Role of the SCO” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (2009): 1,

Accordingly, in March 2009, the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs attended a special SCO Conference on Afghanistan, which resulted in an SCO-Afghanistan Action Plan calling for joint operations against terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, and security collaboration with Afghanistan.¹⁰⁶ A successful raid in late October 2010 by Russian, U.S., and Afghan forces against drug labs in Afghanistan may be evidence of forward momentum on this action plan.¹⁰⁷

Although it has potential to be an anti-western bloc, the SCO has never characterized itself as such, and the U.S. continues to maintain good bilateral relations with most, if not all, SCO states.¹⁰⁸ The United States also works with the World Bank to develop transportation infrastructure in the region through the Asia Development Bank's project for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, involving Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, plus Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and China.¹⁰⁹ Most of the SCO countries, except China, India, and Pakistan have signed Partnership for Peace framework documents with NATO and the Central Asian SCO

accessed December 12, 2017, <http://www.chinaeurasia.org/images/stories/isdp-cefq/CEFQ200910/cefq7.3sk11-15.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Alissa Rubin, "Karzai Protests Russian Agents in Drug Raid," *New York Times*, October 30, 2010, accessed January 6, 2018, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/31/world/asia/31afghan.html?_r=2&ref=world.

¹⁰⁸ Bhadrakumar.

¹⁰⁹ Wolfensohn Center for Development at the Brookings Institute, *Integrating Central Asia into the World Economy: Perspectives from the Region and the U.S.* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 22, 2007), 9.

members are past participants in Partnership for Peace defense training and exercises, indications that the potential security benefits of cooperation already are recognized.¹¹⁰

Beyond this primary shared concern of terrorism are three other important U.S. foreign policy interests-a rising China, a reset Russia, and unstable regional regimes-that might be better understood and pursued through an enhanced relationship with the SCO.¹¹¹ U.S. interests in the region include countering terrorist threats that impact the security of the U.S. homeland and its allies, preventing cross-border terrorism that raises the prospect of military and nuclear tensions and preventing nuclear weapons, technology, and materials from falling into the hands of terrorists.¹¹²

Summary

Since 2001, the SCO has slowly, but steadily, developed various activities, and membership expanded as it became an important regional organization under the circumstances of Sino-Russian collaboration. Establishment of the SCO was a response to the Central Asian region's growing problems which could spill across Chinese and Russian borders and shake their internal security issues. Even though both had their own perspective for this organization, Chinese soft power played a more organized and synchronized role than Russian policies. The review of the literature on the Sino-Russian collaboration in SCO shows that there is a variety of areas for cooperation such as diplomacy, military, arms trade and economic outreach etc. The enlargement of

¹¹⁰ Boland, 6.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 32.

¹¹² U.S. President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, December 2017), 50.

membership might dramatically increase the organization's influence on future international relations however; it may also lead to a regional crisis. Currently, China and Russia continue to support the U.S.-led war on terrorism in Central Asia and they would avoid any direct conflict with NATO or the U.S. in the near term. Neorealists, using the balance of threat and omnibalancing theories, can make the case that the SCO is a temporary coalition (e.g. alliance or concert) based on perceptions of threat from internal and external actors.¹¹³ Neoliberalism can make the case that the SCO represents an effort to institutionalize longer-term cooperation in order to solve dilemmas of common interests.¹¹⁴ Chapter 4 will determine which theory most closely reflects the practices of their current collaboration in the SCO.

¹¹³ Turner, 108.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To know is to know that you know nothing. That is the meaning of true knowledge.

—Socrates, *Essential Thinkers*

The research methodology provides an understanding of the framework of this study. This chapter will discuss the research methodology designed to answer the primary and secondary research questions. This research paper concentrates on the descriptive content analysis of primary and secondary information to examine the actual collaboration of the Chinese and Russians in the SCO through an applied case study: the SCO response for Russia-Georgian War (2008).

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to seek an understanding of whether a “strong relationship” between China and Russia might lead to China becoming a strategic counterweight to the U.S. in matters of Central Asian security. The primary research question is: How could the Sino-Russian cooperation in the SCO be detrimental to the U.S. policy in Central Asia? The secondary research questions are: What are China’s and Russia’s common national interests in the SCO? How could the SCO be developed as a balance of power to NATO? What are the U.S. national interests in Central Asia?

Methodology

The methodology used for this study is a qualitative content analysis that will assess the case study to determine if the Chinese and Russians are following a Neorealists

balance of threat approach or a Neoliberal cooperative approach in the SCO. This will answer the research question by indicating whether Sino-Russian relations in the SCO framework are based on opposition to the U.S. or if it is based on a need for cooperation. A preponderance of evidence supporting one approach will provide the answer. The research will look at both primary and secondary sources of information to critically analyze the factors in the case. The literature review describes the Sino-Russian relations in the SCO framework, determining their national and economic interests, illuminates the military relationship, identifies Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, and addresses the significant linkage of the U.S. national interests in Central Asia.

The overall analysis is focused on the actual collaboration of the Chinese and Russians in the SCO through an applied case study: the SCO response for Russia-Georgian War (2008). Case studies provide an opportunity for the researcher to gain a deep holistic view of the research problem and may facilitate describing, understanding and explaining a research problem or situation.¹¹⁵ For that reason, the author used the SCO response for Russia-Georgian War (2008) as a case study. As described by Yin, the case study process comprises six interdependent stages (Plan, Design, Prepare, Collect, Analyze, and Share).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack, "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers," *The Qualitative Report* 13, no. 4 (2008): 544-559.

¹¹⁶ Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2016).

Data Collection

The research data will be collected from the primary (Russian texts) and secondary sources. A significant amount of research was conducted via the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library. The internet was used broadly to collect diverse data. The secondary sources consist of the variety of literature that includes books, reports, scholarly journals, magazine articles and digital resources. This research does not conduct any human interviews.

Organization of the Research Process

The first step in this research process was to identify informational resources to collect, study and an understanding of theories of international politics and the balance of world power. Reviewing multiple data sources, which included reports, news articles, scholarly journal articles, books, student papers and in-depth, peer-reviewed academic studies increased the credibility and validity of the research.¹¹⁷ The second step was to categorize information resources and distinct relations of primary and secondary research questions. The final step in this research process was to assess and analyze all related information and data in order to formulate a clear and concise conclusion.

Criteria and Metrics

To determine if the Chinese and Russians are following a Neorealists balance of threat approach or a Neoliberal cooperative approach in the SCO, evaluation criteria were developed from the theories. A Neorealists balance of threat approach would be indicated by Chinese and Russian cooperation based on the criteria of Threat power, Threat

¹¹⁷ Yin.

proximity, Threat offensive capabilities, and Threat intentions. A Neoliberal cooperative approach would be indicated by Chinese and Russian cooperation based on the criteria of Solving problems of common interests, Pursuing multiple mutual interactions, Growing economic interdependence, and Awareness of common transnational problems. A preponderance of evaluation criteria for one approach or the other will be the metric to determine which approach is being used.

Validity and Limitations

The validity of this case study is tied to the model used to analyze the data. This study is limited in that it explores only one ongoing case as its topic of study. Applicability of the conclusions beyond the current case cannot be demonstrated without further research.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided a description of the methodology used for this research. The chapter addressed how the data was gathered, outlined the methodology steps, and explained how the data will be analyzed. Chapter 4 provides an analysis based on the qualitative content analysis method outlined above.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Victory comes from finding opportunities in problems.

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

This chapter attempts to answer the primary research question which is: How could the Sino-Russian cooperation in the SCO be detrimental to the U.S. policy in Central Asia? Other subsidiary questions include:

1. What are China's and Russia's common national interests in the SCO;
2. How could the SCO be developed as a balance of power to NATO;
3. What are the U.S. national interests in Central Asia?

Chapter 2 reviewed literature collected and addresses the theories of Neorealism and Neoliberalism. Neorealists, using the balance of threat and omnibalancing theories, can make the case that the SCO is a temporary coalition (e.g. alliance or concert) based on perceptions of threat from internal and external actors.¹¹⁸ Neoliberalism can make the case that the SCO represents an effort to institutionalize longer-term cooperation in order to solve dilemmas of common interests.¹¹⁹ The evidence supports both theories; therefore, this chapter will seek to determine if the Chinese and Russians are following a Neorealists balance of threat approach or a Neoliberal cooperative approach in the SCO.

¹¹⁸ Turner, 108.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Response
for Russia-Georgian War (2008)

On the eve of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's official visit to the U.S., he made surprise statements to Russia which were: the possibility of Georgian membership of NATO and a signed agreement for hosting of U.S. troops in the Caucasus region for bilateral training without informing the Russians. Despite the opposition of some NATO members (France and Germany), the U.S. and the United Kingdom pushed hard for the initiation of a Membership Action Plan for Georgia, which is considered as a first step of joining NATO. As a result, Georgians and Russians both prepared for war in the following months. According to a Russian military analyst, Pavel Felgenhauer, it was the time that Moscow made a decision to go to war: "The goal was to destroy the Georgian central government, defeat the Georgian army and prevent Georgia from joining NATO."¹²⁰ Then and there the war happened and it lasted for five days.

The Sino-Russian ties were strained during the Georgian war in August 2008 in the SCO. China refused to support Russian military action in Georgia or its recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.¹²¹ Similarly, the SCO took a neutral position on the issue.¹²² Prior to the recognition, Chinese media coverage largely echoed Russian positions, and even afterward, Chinese experts sympathized with Russian opposition to NATO's expansion.¹²³

¹²⁰ Andrew Wolfe, "The Future of NATO Enlargement after the Ukraine Crisis," *International Affairs* 91, no. 5 (2015): 1107.

¹²¹ Bolt, 8.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Wishnick, 41.

Although the SCO held its eighth meeting in Dushanbe on August 28, two days after the Russian recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the joint declaration made no mention of it.¹²⁴ Instead, SCO members “expressed deep concern over the recent tension triggered by the South Ossetia issue, and urge the relevant parties to resolve the existing problems peacefully through dialogue and to make efforts for reconciliation and negotiations.”¹²⁵ During that meeting, Hu Jintao and Dmitry Medvedev met in Dushanbe and discussed the Georgian crises. Hu Jintao stated, “The Chinese president said China has noticed the latest developments in the region, expecting all sides concerned to properly settle the issue through dialogue and coordination.”¹²⁶ The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Qin Gang, issued a statement that same day which further noted that “China is concerned of the latest development in South Ossetia and Abkhazia” and reiterated the hope that “the relevant parties can resolve the issue through dialogue and consultation.”

A Neorealists Balance of Threat Approach

If the balance of threat applies to the Russians and Chinese in the SCO, it would be a temporary alliance against the threat of U.S. hegemonic power in Central Asia. Despite the fact that it has the potential to be an ad-hoc alliance against NATO and the U.S., the SCO had never characterized itself that way. For this reason, the defense ministers from SCO member countries signed a declaration on May 15, 2008 which

¹²⁴ Ibid., 42.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Hu Jintao Meets with Russian President Medvedev, June 18, 2010.”

stated: “The SCO member countries’ activities in the military field is not aimed at establishing a military and political alliance and are not targeted at a third party.”¹²⁷ Some suggest that constricted the Sino-Russian coordination and cooperation effort against the U.S. presence in Central Asia, and they would also identify the U.S. as a threat. Especially after “color” revolutions (the Georgian Rose, Ukrainian Orange, and Kyrgyzstani Tulip), China and Russia both wanted to limit the U.S. and NATO military presence in Central Asia. The Sino-Russian joint exercises such as “Peace Mission” and “Naval Intervention” series reflected a defensive alliance against the U.S. Although neorealists are more likely to emphasize conflict and neoliberals are more likely to emphasize cooperation, both sides have moved beyond the simple dichotomy between cooperation and conflict.¹²⁸ Undeniably, there had been a number of negative consequences of the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO. But in seventeen years of the SCO’s existence, the Sino-Russian relationship has been cemented in its economic, political, and security issues, and has expanded formal ties with other member states in the SCO. It is obvious that their motivations are different, but they are essential to each other. After Western sanctions on Russia for the Crimea and Ukrainian crises, Russia needs Chinese support more than China needs Russian support. A Neorealists balance of threat approach would be indicated by Chinese and Russian cooperation based on the criteria of Threat power, Threat proximity, Threat offensive capabilities, and Threat intentions. Although the U.S. has significant power and both countries respond to that,

¹²⁷ Wei Lianglei, “A Conference of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member Countries’ Defense Ministers Issues a Joint Communique,” *Xinhua*, May 17, 2008, accessed January 22, 2018, www.lexinnexis.com.

¹²⁸ Baldwin, 9.

within SCO cooperation there is no indication of reaction to U.S. in terms of threat proximity, offensive capabilities, or intentions. As a result, the neorealists theory does not fit in this circumstance.

A Neoliberal Cooperative Approach

Neoliberalism emphasizes that conditional cooperation can be achieved as states increase their interaction as the best long-term strategy for reducing security competition.¹²⁹ Regimes, unlike temporary alliances, must be understood as something more than temporary arrangements that change with every shift in power or interests.¹³⁰ Furthermore, the regime-governed behavior must not be based solely on short-term interests.¹³¹

The author specifically looks into the Neoliberalism theory based on the criteria of Solving problems of common interests, pursuing multiple mutual interactions, Growing economic interdependence, and Awareness of common transnational problems. The author explains one specific example of each criteria due to limited time.

Solving Problems of Common Interests

China and Russia have followed the most common interests in SCO regarding Central Asian security;

1. Counterterrorism and separatism,
2. Concerns over the spread of Color revolutions,

¹²⁹ Grieco, 122.

¹³⁰ Krasner, 186.

¹³¹ Ibid.

3. Limiting the U.S. and NATO influence in the region.

Some suggest that the shutdown of the U.S.-NATO military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was the first step of the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO to limit the Western countries' influence in the region. The SCO leading states have been suspicious about U.S. indirect involvement in color revolutions.

In the event of the Georgia-Russian crisis, it was a momentous test of limits for the Sino-Russian relationship in the SCO. The Government of the PRC did not provide formal support to Russia, although it did not condemn its actions. Therefore, the SCO remained neutral and Russia failed to gain the SCO's support during the Georgia-Russian crisis. Initially, Moscow was disappointed by Beijing's response to it; however, Moscow understood their position and did not insist on this support directly. The Chinese Foreign Ministry confined itself only to expressions of "concern" in connection with the situation that had arisen. However, somewhat later, in 2010, a joint statement following the visit of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to Beijing included an interesting issue:

The two heads of state underlined that mutual support on issues related to the core interest of the two countries is an important part of China-Russia strategic partnership of cooperation. The two sides emphasized that mutual support on issues relating to sovereignty and territorial integrity of the two countries is of great importance. The Chinese side expressed its support to Russia's efforts in maintaining peace and stability in the Caucasus.¹³²

Accordingly, Russia pretentiously supports Chinese policies toward Taiwan and Xinjiang, whereas China was to hold back from criticising Russian actions in Georgia and Ukraine. Based on online research on a Russian website, after the crises, small

¹³² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Joint Statement of the Moscow Meeting between Heads of State of China and Russia on June 18, 2010," accessed February 13, 2018, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t573751.shtml.

groups of Chinese businessmen, public figures and journalists visited the Abkhazia region with Russian support and commenced economic investment in Abkhazia.¹³³ It has been expected there will be further growth of Russian-Chinese activity in this country.

Pursuing Multiple Mutual Interactions

As the literature review mentioned before, there have been several political and military cooperation activities between China and Russia within in the SCO framework. The Chinese government published a white paper which labeled “China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation” in January of 2017. The document states that “China is committed to deepening its comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination with Russia and establishing a closer partnership with India.”¹³⁴ On the other hand, nothing in the paper mentions anything about the SCO’s Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure activity, but it references Afghanistan and the fight against terrorism. The future withdrawal of the U.S.-NATO troops from Afghanistan will be significant challenges to the SCO members. It is obvious that Moscow and Beijing will continue to work jointly to drive out the Western presence in Afghanistan.

A reasonably prosperous area of Sino-Russian military cooperation is joint exercises conducted under the umbrella of the SCO framework. “Peace Mission” exercises described as designed to deter and suppress large-scale terrorist movements are open to all the SCO states. But “Naval Intervention” exercises which are conducted only

¹³³ *LiveJournal*, “China and the Five-Day War of 2008,” accessed February 22, 2018, <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/587164.html>.

¹³⁴ *Xinhua*, “China’s Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation,” January 11, 2017, assessed April 8, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2017-01/11/c_135973695_2.htm.

between Russia and China are described as designed to maintain peace and stability in the region and world. Some Western analysts attribute it to be a counter to the U.S. rebalancing policy toward the Asia-Pacific region. Fyodor Lukyanov, an independent Russian foreign affairs specialist admits that “neither China nor Russia is trying to dispel that impression. It’s in the interests of both governments for the West to think that China and Russia are getting closer politically and militarily.”¹³⁵

One of the reasons behind the bilateral exercises is Russian arms sales. Even though there have been disputes between them on arms trade, it has been continued and will be in next few years. The Chinese claimed that the Russians charged too much and that they have sold some weapons to India. Likewise, Russia complains that China has been stealing their weapon designs. For instance, China made a deal with Russia to purchase 200 Su-27 fighter jets in 2008, then canceled the contract after they received advanced versions. Shortly after, China decided to build and export its own version of the Su-27, a clear indication that Russian aircraft designs had become Chinese manufacturing templates.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, the issue died down quickly due to their not wanting to damage long-term relations with each other.

¹³⁵ Joshua Kucera, “Russia and the SCO Military Exercises,” *The Diplomat*, August 28, 2014, accessed April 3, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/08/russia-and-the-sco-military-exercises/>.

¹³⁶ Mark Katz, “Russia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Moscow’s Lonely Road from Bishkek to Dushanbe,” *Asian Perspective* 32, no. 3 (September 2008): 185.

Most notable, after several successful joint exercises the Chinese and Russian defense ministers established a direct telephone line in March 2008—which is considered “the first such ministerial hotline ever created between China and another country”¹³⁷

Taking everything into consideration, the Sino-Russian mutual interaction has been relatively cooperative and tolerant toward each other’s activities.

Growing Economic Interdependence

Central Asia is one of the most energy-rich regions in the world. Economic cooperation between Russia (one of the world’s largest energy producers) and China (the world’s largest consumer) in Central Asia will continue to be a top priority, which requires collaboration within the SCO. As China’s economy continues to grow, it will require more sources of energy. If China plans to match with the West in military power and economic capacity, they need a huge budget and a strong alliance. Russia can be their first choice for this project. Similarly, Russia needs China for the reboot of their economy. After the Georgian and Ukrainian crises, Western nations had imposed economic sanctions on Russia which led to financial crises. On account of the Georgian crisis, foreign investors fled from Russia which resulted in billions of dollars leaving the country in a few weeks. Moreover, the Russian Government had to shut down the stock

¹³⁷ Information Office of China’s State Council, *China’s National Defence in 2008* (Beijing, China: Information Office of China’s State Council, January 20, 2009), chapter 13, accessed April 3, 2018, www.china.org.cn/government/central_government/2009-01/20/content_17155577_15.htm.

exchange early on a number of occasions in September 2008 and infused 190 billion dollars into the banking system.¹³⁸

In addition, figure 2 describes Russian quarterly Gross Domestic Product growth rates (2004 to 2015) and verifies how after the Georgian crises their economy contracted.

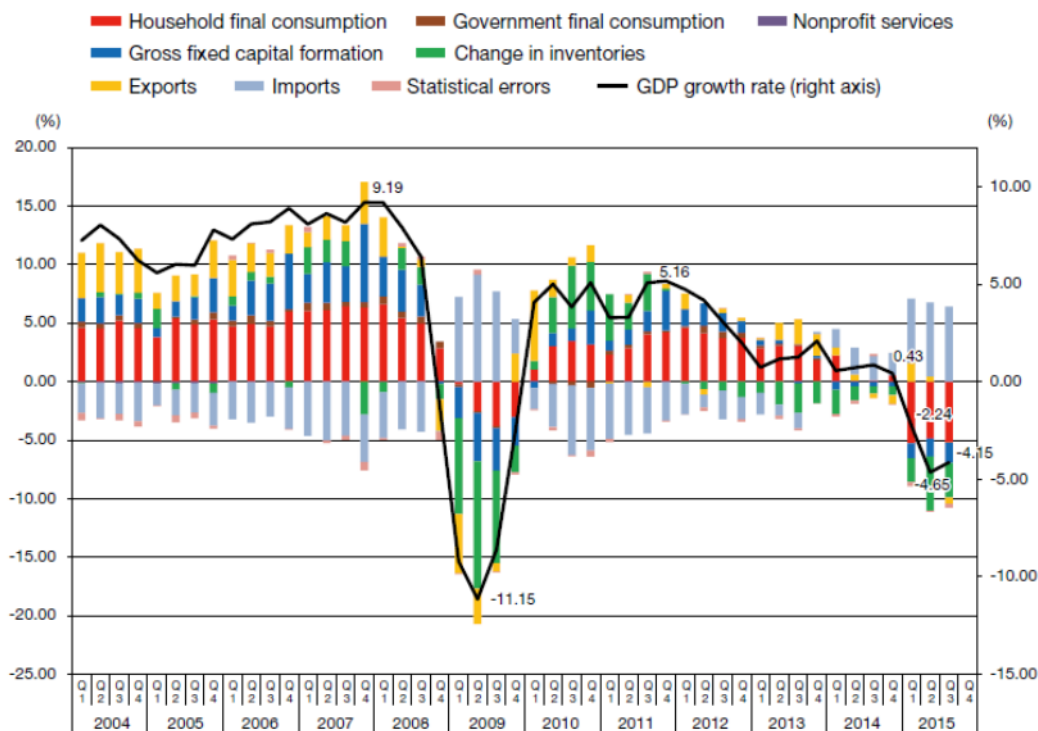


Figure 3. Russian Quarterly Gross Domestic Product Growth Rates

Source: National Institute for Defense Studies, “East Asian Strategic Review 2016, Japan,” 226, accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/index.html>.

The Chinese Government has unveiled a new grand design named “One Belt, One Road” for sustaining growth and building cooperation between the SCO member states

¹³⁸ Pierre Briancon and Jeffrey Goldfarb, “A Black Hole in Russian Banks,” *The New York Times*, October 9, 2008, B2, accessed April 4, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/09/business/09views.html>.

which was clearly led by Russia and China. The Chinese long-term stratagem seems to be cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union as well as to tighten their relationship. It is also reasonably related to Sino-Russian collaboration. According to an expert (from a Russian source), the PRC's Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Mr. Li Hui said to Russian media in 2016 "As the largest neighbor and strategic partner of China it's essential to participant of the initiative to build the Silk Road which employs substantial benefits."¹³⁹ It seems that China has been lobbying hard through the SCO to member states for the development of railways from China to Europe.

Awareness of Common Transnational Problems

Russia and China both have been fronting narcotics and human trafficking, illegal immigration and arms trade in the region. Moreover, through the creation of the SCO, they have been countering transnational illegal activities through the SCO. Afghanistan is one of the world's opium producer countries, and that opium is smuggled through the Central Asian states (mostly Tajikistan) into Russia and Europe. Hence, they have initiated counter-measure actions against it. For example, not only the Russian Military continues to have a presence (around 20,000 troops) in Tajikistan, but also China helps to restore some border posts in the Tajik-Afghan border area. In addition, through the SCO China and Russia have provided military support to Tajikistan such as equipment and training for the fight against illegal narcotics smuggling.

¹³⁹ РИА Новости, "Китай считает Россию важным участником проекта нового Шелкового пути," ["China Considers Russia an Important Participant in the New Silk Road Project"], January 19, 2016, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://ria.ru/world/20160119/1361667155.html>.

Illegal immigration was one of the hot subjects of the Sino-Russian relationship at this time. Russia has been concerned about Chinese mass illegal immigration into the Russian Far East. Less than seven million Russian inhabitants live in the Far East and Chinese immigration movement still goes on. There have not been any official deals between Russia and China, but the Russian Government is being sensitive on this issue. Likewise, China has been receiving the illegal immigrants from Vietnam and North Korea but has no concern about it.

Summary

This chapter analyzed the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO in order to answer the primary and secondary questions. Based on the research and answers to the questions, the analysis suggests that the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO is already shaped in long-term cooperation which is to be determined a Neoliberal cooperative approach for the near future. Above mentioned issues will be discussed for a long time to come and there is no doubt that Russian and Chinese interest would continue as long as Putin and Xi Jinping remain in power. Chapter 5 covers conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster.

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Having analyzed the data addressing the primary and secondary research questions in chapter 4, this chapter draws conclusions about the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO. Additionally, this chapter makes recommendations and proposes areas for future studies.

The purpose of this study was to seek an understanding of whether a “strong relationship” between China and Russia might lead to China becoming a strategic counterweight to the U.S., in matters of Central Asian security. The primary research question was: How could the Sino-Russian cooperation in the SCO be detrimental to the U.S. policy in Central Asia? The secondary research questions were: What are China’s and Russia’s common national interests in the SCO? How could the SCO be developed as a balance of power to NATO? What are the U.S. national interests in Central Asia? The methodology used for this study was a qualitative content analysis that assessed the case study of the Georgian Crisis to determine if the Chinese and Russians are following a Neorealists balance of threat approach or a Neoliberal cooperative approach in the SCO. The answer to the research question was indicated by whether Sino-Russian relations in the SCO framework were based on opposition to the U.S. or whether it was based on a need for cooperation.

The preponderance of evidence supported the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO as being characterized by long-term cooperation, rather than as a reaction to a threat, which this study determines to be a Neoliberal cooperative approach. This conclusion allows this study to answer the primary research question. Currently Sino-Russian cooperation in the SCO is not detrimental to U.S. policy in Central Asia because the cooperation is not directed as a balance against the U.S. This is clear from the SCO defense ministers' declaration from May 15, 2008 which stated: "The SCO member countries' activities in the military field is not aimed at establishing a military and political alliance and are not targeted at a third party."¹⁴⁰

Furthermore, the Neoliberal cooperative approach found to be the most appropriate by this study to characterize the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO, allows this study to answer the secondary questions. China's and Russia's common national interests in the SCO are based on solving common problems and improving economic conditions. This study does not see in the near term that the SCO will be developed as a balance of power to NATO; but does not preclude that possibility in the long term. Also, the Neoliberal cooperative approach can in the near term, assist the U.S. in advancing its national interests in Central Asia.

Conclusions

After a slow start, the SCO is promptly achieving institutional structure and international recognition. The SCO is redefining the Sino-Russian relationship for firming up their strategic partnership to counter global U.S. dominance after the Cold

¹⁴⁰ Wei.

War. NATO's Partnership for Peace program and the U.S. Military presence in Central Asia have caused Moscow and Beijing to articulate their opposition. Nevertheless, the Western influence in the region was openly welcomed by the Central Asian states and they regarded it as economic aid and security assistance.

Recent political developments in Russia and China indicate that President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation, and President Xi Jinping of the PRC, are going to stay in power during next decade. It is one of the proofs that the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO will continue to prevail over the negative aspects. The overall observation of cooperation based on larger common interests between China and Russia in SCO is to be expected to stay in place over the next decade. In contrast, the relationship may become more difficult to manage as wider regional and global developments occur, but they would stay in the Sino-Russian "strategic partnership" within the SCO framework. From the Russian perspective, the importance of developing relations with China is determined by several considerations: concerns about the Central Asian security situation, the requirement of a secure environment along common borders, and most notably, the urgent need to develop natural resources for economic development after Western countries' sanctions. China, on the other hand, is essentially a growing power, seeking to gather its economic and military capabilities to take over the region and to compete with the U.S. on a global stage in long term. Beijing leaders acknowledge that China is destined to be a great power and China will transition from a "Rising power" to a "Ruling power" by 2040. For this reason, China needs a strong alliance with countries such as Russia, Iran, Pakistan, India etc. Hence, the SCO will facilitate their ambitious. Once China reaches Ruling power status, they will assume the

“older brother” role in the Sino-Russian relationship. This may cause a controversy over their collaboration in the SCO. When the time comes, events will show us which theory was right.

Recommendations

The U.S., along with partner nations, will continue to benefit from an increased situational understanding about the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO. The following recommendations are offered for consideration in the future.

First, current U.S. policies in Central Asia include stability of Afghanistan, combating terrorism, restricting drug flow, and preventing proliferation. Developing cooperative approaches on above-mentioned issues may increase opportunities to improve the U.S.–SCO relations in near future. There was open-minded initiative on cooperation between the U.S. and Russia after the Georgian crises but it’s never been implemented. Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Nikolai Makarov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, met on October 22, 2008, and discussed possible NATO-Russian cooperation on counterterrorism, non-proliferation, and narcotics trafficking.¹⁴¹ Thus, the U.S. should initiate proposed cooperation on the above-mentioned global problems to the SCO and member states.

Second, international communities such as NATO, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and European Union should pay attention to the Sino-Russian arms trade, cooperation in bilateral exercises, economic developments and demographic shifts on both sides.

¹⁴¹ Thom Shanker, “Top Military Officers Talk in U.S.-Russia Conference,” *The New York Times*, October 22, 2008, A14.

Third, the U.S. could use one or more legitimate institutions such as NATO, UN, or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe for a vehicle of influence in Central Asia and to engage with SCO policies. The NATO-led Partnership for Peace program has been used in Central Asian states successfully and it should initiate this program with the PRC, India, and Pakistan.

Fourth, the U.S. Military should continue to monitor the Sino-Russian bilateral exercises and also conduct U.S. Military exercises with Central Asian states. Even in the SCO framework, Russia and China still lack the interoperability or integrated command and control for effective combined military exercises. The U.S. “Regional Cooperation” multinational annual command-post exercise (it is conducted within Central Asian states including Pakistan) in Tajikistan is one good example for improving U.S. Military influence in region.

Fifth, the U.S. should engage China in dialogue on Central Asia, both to increase trust and to address common concerns. Even though the U.S. and Russia have some direct dialogues such as the U.S.-Russia Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, the NATO-Russia Council etc., there is no equivalent dialogue with China. Today, China is clearly more influential than Russia in the SCO and it’s stronger militarily not only than Russia but also NATO in Central Asia.

Areas for Further Study

The following topics are recommended for further research:

1. Will a rivalry develop between Russia and China over the energy resources in the Central Asian region in coming years?

2. Could the SCO develop integrated command and staff arrangements similar to the Warsaw Pact?
3. Could Russian and Chinese armed forces effectively act together in Central Asia?
4. Will the SCO add Iran as its next new member in order to have an opposition voice to U.S. policies in Central Asia?
5. Will tensions between Russia aligned with India, and China aligned with Pakistan develop in the SCO?

Summary

Chapter 5 provided conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research. The chapter made meaning of the findings based upon the Sino-Russian collaboration in the SCO, described implications and how they may impact the current strategic environment. The U.S. must maintain high situational and economic awareness in Central Asia. Otherwise, the U.S. may lose their influence in that region.

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