Chapter – 1

INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background

The new Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmensitan are located in the heartland of Asia (refer to Map no.1.1 below) and due to their geographical proximity they are strategically linked to Russia, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. This region has also strategic proximity to the Middle East and South Asia. These neighbouring countries with their ethno-cultural and religious affinity with Central Asia and with the legacy of regional economic linkages could take advantage of the economic collapse and step into spread their influence. Several regional and global powers have become active to out manoeuvre the others, seeking their spheres of influence in Central Asian region. All the relevant powers have been focusing on the strategic direction of the Central Asian States and making full use of their respective political, economical and military advantage in the hope to increase their own influence and bring Central Asian States into their own favourable orbit.

China shares a long boundary with the Central Asian region on its western part i.e. with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Every country seeks stable and peaceful neighbourhood for prosperity and development, and China is no exception. The situation changed for China, after the emergence of new sovereign states in the Central Asian region in 1991. Central Asian region has high geopolitical significance. Its importance is pointed out by Mackinder’s Heartland theory and Spykman’s theory. Regional and global powers are trying to make their presence in the region and hence pose a security challenges to China in its western region. As China is the immediate neighbour and shares a long boundary with this region, it cannot ignore all these developments, especially when it is rising as a global power.

Geography influences the politics of any state and that is what’s all about geopolitics. In the present situation, the geopolitics of any region not is not determined by geography alone, rather the technological advancement in warfare and globalization, terrorism, global environmental changes, satellite monitoring, nuclear technology are of enormous significance. China has to consider all these aspects of geopolitics to define its relation with Central Asian region.
In this study an attempt has been made to analyse China’s relation with Central Asian region in geopolitical perspective. Both, China and Central Asia need each other in geopolitical terms.

From the perspective of Central Asian states, China has a unique offering that no other country has, i.e. access to the economic wealth of East and Southeast Asia. China has two strategic transportation corridors for such trade—the Second Trans-Eurasian Railway and the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-Xinjiang (Kasaghar) Highway, built in 1997 and it has opened 11 trade ports with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the three Central Asian states bordering China. These corridors are very important to facilitate Central Asia’s ability to trade with other Asian countries. To diversify its oil market in the Western market and dependence on old pipelines passing through Russia, China can offer an alternative. China is also offering technological and financial assistance in cheaper way to develop the oil and gas fields. For example China’s state-owned, China’s International Trust & Investment
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Corporation (CITIC), has successfully acquired the Kazakhstan oil assets of Canada's Nations Energy Company Ltd for 1.91 billion US dollars in December 2006 (China Daily 2006). The acquisition allows CITIC to develop the Karazhanbas oil and gas field in Mangistau Oblast, situated in west of Kazakhstan until 2020. The oil and gas field is said to produce more than 50,000 barrels of oil a day and has proven reserves in excess of 340 million barrels (China Daily 2006).

On the other hand, China's growing interests in the Central Asian region are multifarious. China has 3500 kms of joint borders with the Central Asian countries in its western frontier. So it is the strategic need of China to maintain security and stability on its north-western part. Peaceful and stable surrounding is the prerequisite for the development of a country. Ethnic and religious problems in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) are very sensitive and volatile. They may easily lead to social turmoil and affect security and stability in the region. So it is of strategic concern for China to deftly handle separatist and religious extremist infiltration and its negative effects upon Xinjiang region.

The rapid economic growth of China in the coming years will need large amount of energy supply. Considering the abundant oil and gas deposits in Central Asia, China seeks this region as a stable and reliable energy supplier. China has started investing heavily in Central Asia for its energy and other resources. China took just 10 months to propose, construct and operationalize a 1000 km oil pipeline from Atasu (Kazakhstan) to Alashankou (Xinjiang). China's major oil company (CNPC) has also acquired Petro-Kazakhstan Inc. (PK) a leading producer of crude on October 26, 2005 (CNPC website).

In the era of globalisation, China is greatly interested in Central Asian markets for its products. Trade and investments have been the most visible elements of China's growing involvement. The Chinese exports consist of consumer products, machinery, processed foodstuffs, textiles, shoes, electronic goods, pharmaceutical products, automobile spare parts, etc. (Peyrouse 2007: 13). These all indicate the importance of Central Asian region for China. It is interesting to study how China is going to fulfil its interest in this geopolitically important region characterised by intense rivalry.
between different regional and great powers like Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Russia, EU and US. China has the potential to dominate the weak Central Asian economies and fill the power vacuum that has emerged since their independence in 1991.

China and Central Asian states are geographically neighbours. Central Asia offers China the prospect of a transportation corridor for overland communication between China and Europe, while China gives Central Asia safe, secure passage to the Pacific Ocean as a cooperative partner. China and Central Asia are interdependent geographically. Therefore, the Central Asian states strongly desire to build a “New Silk Road.” The “New Silk Road” would extend from East China to Europe and include railways, highways, pipelines, airlines and energy cables, etc. The “New Silk Road” would be longer than the ancient route and has greater economic significance. Not only will this improve traffic conditions, but it will also help the Central Asian countries establish extensive economic and trade relations with other Eurasian countries (Zhuangzhi 2007: 51). China is building the Nanjiang (South Xinjiang) railway, which will connect with the railways of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The first step of China’s “Great Development of the Western area” is to build gas pipelines and other transport installations. The “New Silk Road” has wonderful prospects.

1.2 Basic Features of the Study Area

For a better understanding of the study area an overview of some of the basic features like geographic characteristics, socio-cultural composition and Human Development Index (HDI) etc is considered to be helpful. They are given below.

1.2.1 Geographic Features

The geography of an area broadly decides its importance and its potential for development. So, the major geographic characteristics of the Central Asian region are discussed here. The five Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan form the Central Asian region. The coastline of the Caspian Sea forms the region’s natural boundary in the west. The mountain ranges of Kopetdag and Pamirs form the southern border of the region, separating Central Asia from Afghanistan and Iran. The mountain ranges of Tian Shan and Alatai form the eastern borders of the region with China. Vast prairies and forest steppe form the
northern border of the region with Russia (Abazov 2008: 1). The region is landlocked and Uzbekistan is double landlocked country.

From geographic point of view the Central Asian region can be subdivided into five major geographic and climate zones (refer to Map No. 1.2 below). They are: the northern steppe and forest-steppe zone; the western dry desert zone; the southern and south-eastern high mountain zone; the fertile valleys and oases between Amu Darya and Sur Darya rivers; and the series of moderately elevated valleys on the border between the high mountains and central plain (Abazov 2008: 1). These zones do not necessarily coincide with national boundaries and are extended across the different states.

Map No. 1.2

Major Geographic Features of the Central Asian Region

Source: Modified after Abazov, Rafis (2008), The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Central Asia, New York: Palgrave Macmillan
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In the eastern part high mountain ranges are the Hindukush, the Tien-Shan, the Altai and Trans-Altai, and the Pamirs, (Knobloch 1972: 8). Tien-Shan, extending over 1,500 km through the countries of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Xinjiang regions, forms the backbone of Central Asia. The Altai and Trans-Altai lies in southeastern part of Kazakhstan (Abazov 2008: 1). Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are mainly mountainous countries and have large potentials of hydroelectric energy (Abazov 2008: 5).

Central Asia is a closed basin with no open sea or ocean outlet. Due to the scarce availability of surface water, the level of underground water is very low. The relationship between the mountains and the plains provides the most important link for the moisture exchange mechanism over the arid territory of Central Asia. Water resources are thus mainly surface waters those are formed in the mountains and utilized on the plains of Central Asia. Meltwater from permanent snowfields is the main source of water for the rivers, with glaciers and seasonal snowfields contributing as well. The region’s two largest rivers are the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya. The Amu Darya is the largest river in Central Asia, stretching some 2,540 kilometres in length. It begins in the Hindu Kush and is fed by the meltwater from snow and glaciers (Sinnott 1992: 81-82). The Syr Darya begins in the region of permanent snow and glaciers in the central Tien-Shan and flows through the Fergana Valley and the lowland plain to the Aral Sea (Sinnott 1992: 81-82). The water conflict is now getting prominent among the states of Central Asia.

There are some other water sources. The Caspian Sea is the largest inter-continental lake on earth. The Balkash Lake is inside Kazakhstan. A few glacially fed high altitude lakes are Issysk-kul (Kyrgyzstan), Song-kul (Kyrgyzstan), and Kara-Kul (Tajikistan) (Sinnott 1992: 72). Most of the Central Asia’s water resources drain completely internally to major hydrological basin, the Caspian Sea, Aral Sea, Balkash Lake and Tarim Basin (Sinnott 1992: 81-82).

Two of the world’s greatest deserts the Kara Kum and the Kyzyl Kum, covers much of the western Central Asia. The deserts are mainly located in Turkmenistan. The great
deserts of the Kara Kum ("Black Sands" in Turkic), stretches more than 350,000 square kilometres. It lies between the mountains and the Amu Darya. The Kyzyl Kum Desert ("Red Sands" in Turkic) lies between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. It stretches from the Aral Sea to the foothills of the Tien-Shan (Sinnott 1992: 80). The large flat steppe and forest-steppe of the northern zone cover nearly half of Central Asia and is located in the territory of Kazakhstan (Abazov 2008: 1). The Fergana Valley is situated between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It is an important cultural, population, and economic centre for Central Asia. It stretches 300 kilometres and reaches 170 kilometres in width (Sinnott 1992: 79). The valley’s fertile soils are irrigated by water from the Syr Darya and underground sources.

Thus, these are major geographic features of the Central Asia region: the mountains; the rivers; the deserts; and Fergana Valley the most fertile land of the region. The region is enclosed by mountains on its east and south, by desert and arid steppe along most of its northern expanse, and by the Caspian on the west. Historically, these physical features have served to isolate much of Central Asia from the outside world. But, now various steps have been taken up to remove the isolations. The construction of new pipelines in all directions, the idea of the revival of New Silk Road and to construct Second Eurasian land bridge across the region are few steps in this direction. All the relevant regional and global powers are interested and making their best efforts to integrate the region into their own orbit.

The two most influential player situated around the Central Asian region are Russia and China. Russia’s southern part has geographical border with Kazakhstan. On the other hand the Xinjiang region of China make geographic border with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Xinjiang and the Central Asian states have also socio-economic and historical linkages.

1.2.2 Human Development Index (HDI)

The details of Human Development Index (HDI) of Central Asian states, Russia and China are given in the following Table No. 1.2. Kazakhstan and Russia have high human development values while Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and China comes under middle human development values. Norway (HDI, value -
0.971) is ranked 1 and Niger (HDI, Value - 0.340) is rank 182 in the chart of World HDI values.

Table No. 1.1

**Human Development Index (HDI) of Central Asia, Russia and China in 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Country</th>
<th>Life Expectancy at birth (years)</th>
<th>Education Adult literacy Rate (% ages 15 and Above)</th>
<th>GDP Per Capita (Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in US$)</th>
<th>HDI Value</th>
<th>Stage of Human development (according to UNDP Report)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>10,863</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>2,006</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>1,753</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>4,953</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>2,425</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>5,383</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>14,690</td>
<td>0.817</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.2.3 Socio-cultural Composition

The presence of major ethnic groups, language and religion in the Central Asian region and the neighbouring Russia and China are given in the Table No. 1.1. It is clear from the table that in all the Central Asian states, the respective ethnic group constitute the largest (like Kazakh is the largest ethnic group is Kazakhstan) besides presence of others ethnic groups. The Russians constitute the largest ethnic minority group in the Central Asian region. There are many other large and small ethnic groups in Central Asia. Some of the groups, such as the Iranians, Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Tatars, Uighyurs, and others arrived in the region many centuries ago, Others, such as the Germans, Ukrainians, Koreans and Poles, moved in mainly during the twentieth century (Abazov 2008:7). The transnational characteristic of the ethnic groups extends to the neighbouring countries like, Russia, Afghanistan, China and Iran. In China, Han Chinese is the major ethnic group. There are other minority ethnic groups.
mostly living in western provinces of China. Russian constitutes the largest ethnic group in Russia.

**Table No. 1.2**  
Socio-Cultural Composition of Central Asia, Russia and China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Country</th>
<th>Ethnicity (%)</th>
<th>Religion (%)</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Kazakh (Qazaq) 53.4, Russian 30, Ukrainian 7, Uzbek 2.5, German 2.4, Tatar 1.7, Uyghur 1.4, Other 4.9 (1999 census)</td>
<td>Muslim 47, Russian Orthodox 44, Protestant 2, Other 7</td>
<td>Kazakh 64.4%, (Qazaq, state language) Russian 95%, (official) (2001 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Kyrgyz 64.9, Uzbek 13.8, Russian 12.5, Dungan 1.1, Ukrainian 1, Uyghur 1, other 5.7 (1999 census)</td>
<td>Muslim 75, Russian Orthodox 20, Other 5.</td>
<td>Kyrgyz 64.7% (official), Uzbek 13.6%, Russian 12.5% (official), Dungan 1%, other 8.2% (1999 census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Tajik 79.9, Uzbek 15.3, Russian 1.1, Kyrgyz 1.1, Other 2.6 (2000 census)</td>
<td>Sunni Muslim 85, Shia Muslim 5, Other 10 (2003 est.)</td>
<td>Tajik (official), Russian widely used in government and business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>Turkmen 85, Uzbek 5, Russian 4, Other 6. (2003)</td>
<td>Muslim 89, Eastern Orthodox 9, Unknown 2.</td>
<td>Turkmen (official) 72%, Russian 12%, Uzbek 9%, Other 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Uzbek 80, Russian 5.5, Tajik 5, Kazakh 3, Karakalpak 2.5, Tatar 1.5, Other 2.5. (1996 est.)</td>
<td>Uzbek 74.3, Russian 14.2, Tajik 4.4, Other 7.1</td>
<td>Uzbek 74.3%, Russian 14.2%, Tajik 4.4%, Other 7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Han Chinese 91.5, Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uyghur, Tujia, Yi, Mongol, Tibetan, Buyi, Dong, Yao, Korean, and other nationalities 8.5 (2000 census)</td>
<td>Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Christian 3-4, Muslim 1-2. (2002 est.)</td>
<td>Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Russian 79.8, Tatar 3.8, Ukrainian 2, Bashkir 1.2, Chuvash 1.1, Other or unspecified 12.1. (2002 census)</td>
<td>Russian Orthodox 15-20, Muslim 10-15, Other Christian 2 (2006 est.) and large populations of non-practicing believers and non-believers.</td>
<td>Russian, many minority languages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Russian is the main official language throughout the region along with the national language of Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Kazak, Turkmen and Tajik in their respective states. After independence, people have re-established their local language as state language all of which were suppressed under the Soviet rule. Russian language is used for administrative and educational purposes along with their respective national languages. Islam is the dominant religion in Central Asian region. Besides, Russian Orthodox Church constitutes some part of the following population in the Central Asian states.

1.3. China and Central Asia: Geopolitical Linkages

The whole geopolitical linkages between the Central Asian region and China can be understood in broader perspectives of the international situations that emerged at the end of the cold war in 1991, and particularly in the context of ongoing power struggle between the great powers and regional powers in the Central Asian region.

First of all, the geopolitical importance of Central Asian region can be understood in a historical context. Central Asian region was a zone of triangular contest between Britain, Russia and China during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, which has been romanticized as the ‘Great Game’ (Warikoo 1995: 17). In 1907, gradual relaxation was witnessed between Anglo-Russian rivalry by the agreement of “Convention Relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet”. After the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, Soviet control was established over the entire territory of Central Asian region. The current boundaries of the Central Asian republics were formed during the 1920s and 1930s based on national-and-territorial state delimitation in Central Asia and forming national republics principle under Soviet rule (Rahimov and Urazaeva 2005). After that, they became parts of the Soviet Union till 1991. During the Soviet period, the entire region was closed to external powers. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the strategic importance of Central Asia became distinct. Geographically, Central Asia is the core of Eurasia, and a transit corridor that spreads the influence of the world powers in all directions. Thus, as a separate geopolitical space, Central Asia is a newly defined region since the end of the Cold War in 1991. Since 1991, a few significant factors make Central Asian region a zone of contest between great powers and regional powers. They are discussed below.
1.3.1 Geo-strategic Location

Location of Central Asia is important. From very ancient period, the geographical location of Central Asia has been of decisive importance particularly for trade. It was a vibrant part of world economy, and formed crucial corridor between East and West and South to North. Before the discovery of sea routes, all the main land trade routes connecting East and Central Asia with Eastern Europe and countries of the Near East laid across this territory. The “Great Silk Route” connecting Persia and China with the Roman World, also passed through the Central Asian region. The noted British geopolitical thinker, Sir Halford Mackinder in his paper on “The Geographical Pivot of the History” on January 25, 1904 propounded his famous heartland theory establishing the importance of Eurasia in world politics. Mackinder’s dictum runs this way: “Who rules eastern Europe commands the Heartland, who rules the Heartland commands the world island (Eurasia and Africa) and who rules the world islands commands the world”. Spykman’s emphasis was also on “controlling the Eurasian region” to control over the world. He said, “Who controls the rim land rules Eurasia, who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world”. Geographically, Central Asia is encircled anti-clockwise by Russia (in the North), the eastern Europe (in the West), Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan (in the South) and China (in the East) Any power, which has a foothold or deep influence in this region, can have close watch to the important neighbouring area. Therefore, it bears great geo-strategic importance. The attention has increased due to the recent rise of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism too.

1.3.2 Geo-economic Importance

This is because of the presence of vast oil and natural gas resources. Some contradictory statements related to amount and presence of petroleum resources is given but there is no denial of their presence. In recent years, a number of states are involved to gain control over the Caspian Sea oil. The key actors are Russia, China, Turkey, United States, Iran, Pakistan and India. Its extraction needs huge capital investment and advance technology, so the developed nations have an edge over others. They are interested not because they have huge investment or technology, but because of the strategic importance of oil. About 10 billion barrels of oil lie beneath the Central Asian states, but much of it will not reach to international markets unless there are enough opportunities for transporting oil out of the region. Therefore, the
basic question of geo-political importance is the transit of oil and gas to the market. Should they rely on old pipeline passing through Russia or new pipeline passing through Afghanistan, Iran or Turkey? These are the main issues for planners and leaders of Central Asian states. At present, oil is a crucial source of energy all over the world and it is likely to remain so in the near future. Central Asia with its large hydrocarbon reserves and natural gas resources has undoubtedly become a region of critical strategic importance and a centre of international activity and interests.

1.3.3 Newness of the Region
The internal weaknesses in economic and political system and the democratisation process in social progress in Central Asian states have created a political vacuum. To fill up this vacuum regional and super powers are rushing to get hold on it. The major players are the US, Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan and possibly India.

Whereas, China’s importance in the world politics has increased as it is a rising global power and due to its vibrant economic progress it has established itself as major power in international arena. Central Asia may represent an important starting point for China in the expansion of its international influence. As an emerging power, China is experiencing a broadening in the scope of its national interest as its economy grows and its relations with other nations become closer. China desperately wants to increase its international influence, thereby gaining a greater say in world affairs. Lying just beyond China’s borders as it does, Central Asia will inevitably have an important role to play in China’s geopolitical strategy (Wu and Chen 2004: 1062).

Apart from this, there are other developments which are going in and around the geopolitical space of Central Asian region, which are crucial for a better understanding of our study. A discussion on them, hence, is presented below.

1.3.4 Europe-Asia Relations in the Post Soviet Era
In the post cold war era, the international system has changed. During the cold war period, the world was divided in two blocs- US led capitalists bloc and USSR led communist bloc, and the international politics was dominated by US, the European countries and the Soviet Union. In this period, military and security issues were
prominent and the Asian countries were either the battle ground of power struggle of the two super powers, or had little significance in the international politics. After the demise of Soviet Union, the international political scenario changed. The economic issues got prominent in the world affairs. The rise of Asia is dramatically changing the world balance of economic power. China, Japan, India and ASEAN countries have emerged as power centre in Asia. Asia's growing economic weight is inevitably generating increasing pressures for a greater role in world affairs. At the same time, the termination of the cold war has created a regional environment of political fluidity in the East Europe and post-soviet space. Transition politics have also transformed regional and international relations among the Asian states.

Moreover, the geopolitical and security situation in the world and in Asia is changing rapidly, as new threats posed by terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking and regional conflict have emerged. These threats are global in nature and coordinated, collective and multilateral efforts by the international community are required to effectively deal with them. The collective response was reflected in the emergence of different regional organizations. In the post cold war period, the first of its kind-CICA comes out from the Central Asian part of Kazakhstan. The European Union and the US are interested to develop its political dialogue with Asia and should look for ways to associate Asia more and more in the management of international affairs, working towards a partnership of equals, capable of playing a constructive and stabilizing role in the world. In this new global context, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process emerges in a mutual recognition that the relationship between the two regions both Asia and Europe needs to be strengthened.

1.3.5 The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

The first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was held in Bangkok in March 1996. ASEM explores the substance and the manner in which the member countries interact at bilateral, multi-lateral and inter-regional levels in order to seize the new opportunities emerging after the end of cold war. The key principles and objectives enunciated in the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF) - the political charter first adopted in ASEM- 2 Summit (London 1998) and amended by ASEM-3 summit (Seoul 2000) - noted that the ASEM process should:
• be conducted on a basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit;
• be an open and evolutionary process; enlargement should be conducted on the basis of consensus by the heads of state/government;
• enhance mutual understanding and awareness through a process of dialogue and lead to cooperation on the identification of priorities for concerted and supportive action;
• carry forward the three key dimensions of ASEM with the same impetus to foster political dialogue, reinforce economic cooperation and promote cooperation in other areas;
• not be institutionalized; as an informal process, ASEM should stimulate and facilitate progress in other fora; and
• go beyond governments in order to promote dialogue and cooperation between the business/private sectors of the two regions and, no less importantly, between the peoples of the two regions; ASEM should also encourage the cooperative activities of think-tanks and research groups of both regions (ASEM 2006: 5).

At the Sixth Summit of the ASEM meeting held in Helsinki in Finland in 2006, leaders reaffirmed their support for a fair, just and rules-based multilateral international system with the United Nations (UN) at its core. They exchanged views on major regional developments including the processes of European integration and community building in East Asia and ASEAN, developments on the Korean Peninsula and in Myanmar, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Iran and Iraq. The key message was that conflicts and disputes should be settled through international negotiations, particularly within the framework of the UN. Leaders also addressed the major security threats of the day, which often know no borders. They discussed efforts to combat proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the fight against terrorism. The need for a multilateral approach and the central role of the UN in tackling these challenges was emphasised.
China is a member of ASEM. ASEM's principle to resolve all international problems through consultation and cooperation and with the central role of UN will be helpful to China to solve the regional problems around its geopolitical space – North Korea, Taiwan and Afghanistan, in a peaceful manner.

1.3.6 Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

With the end of cold war and fast changing geo-political and geo-economic scenarios, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) received support from a number of Asian states those were playing significant roles in defining the political climate in the continent. The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, put the idea of CICA forward in 1992 while speaking at the 47th UN General Assembly Session. Nazarbayev said that, the idea of establishing structures for security and cooperation in Asia of the same type as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) has long been in the air, but has not yet gained wide support. The idea behind the initiative of CICA is to have an effective structure on security, which would facilitate discussion of security issues among the Asian countries themselves.

The headquarter of CICA is located in Almaty and members of the CICA are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Russia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam. The Observer states included Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Qatar, Ukraine and USA. International and regional organizations, including the United Nations (UN), the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the League of Arab States (LAS) are also observers of CICA (CICA 2010).

In a traditional sense, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) are understood as the measures taken by the states to reduce fear and suspicion among one another and/or reduce the fear of war. Confidence Building Measures were also perceived to be the military and political measures for reducing tensions among the states. Therefore, it is very important for states in today's world to gain mutual benefit from this principle.
However, the CICA Confidence Building Measures go beyond the traditional concepts. The leaders of the CICA member states recognized that in the increasingly inter-connected and inter-dependent world of 21st century, Confidence Building Measures in socio-economic dimensions are as important as in the politico-military dimensions (Yermekbayev 2007). Therefore, member states realizes five dimensions of cooperation for the CBM's: (i) human (ii) economic; (iii) environmental; (iv) fight against new challenges and threats (terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking and human trafficking); and (v) military-political.

In the first CICA Summit in June 2002 in Almaty the member states discussed ways of combating new threats and challenges. At the Summit, two important multilateral documents have been adopted. They are Almaty Act (The Charter of the CICA.) and CICA Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations. Member-states seek to enlarge cooperation, and create and strengthen the atmosphere of peace, confidence, and friendship on the Asian continent in order to promote regional security.

The Second Summit (Almaty 2006) is viewed as an important event in further co-ordination of Member States’ efforts, aimed at strengthening security measures in the region as well as in establishing efficient economic co-operation. Establishment of a strong network of partnership with a considerable number of international and regional organizations, the CICA Member States being the participants of them (UN, SCO, OSCE, ASEAN, ACD, APEC, EurAsEC etc.) is one of the ways to realize these tasks (CICA 2006). Further, the Declaration of the Second CICA Summit reflected a common view of the Member States on key problems of security and cooperation in Asia and all over the world. At the summit member states called for strengthened cooperation against non-traditional threats and terrorism. It also sets out the Member States’ approaches to the United Nations reform; non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, resolution of regional conflicts, addressing new challenges and threats, further development of dialogue of civilizations. Regarding Nuclear power, the member states reaffirms the inalienable rights of states to have access to nuclear technologies, materials and equipments and their use for peaceful purposes in accordance with their respective obligations, emanating from relevant IAEA
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safeguards agreements. Also, the Central Asia States acknowledged joint efforts of to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia region (CICA 2006).

During the recent meeting of the Senior Officials Committee (SOC) of CICA held on 17th October 2007, had proved to be a breakthrough event. The Conference demonstrated that there was a forward movement in the military-political dimension. The Republic of Korea expressed gratitude to the CICA for issuing a statement ahead of many international organizations condemning the seizure of Korean nationals in Afghanistan as hostages. SOC also invited the Member States to continue to render assistance in combating terrorism, opium production and drug-trafficking as well as for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and extend political support for ensuring peace and security and normalization of life in this country (Yermekbayev 2007).

The objectives and activities of CICA have received wide recognition from the world community. Addressing to the general debates of 62nd United Nations General Assembly session on September 25th, 2007 the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev said the following: “...speaking of Asia, it is not possible to bypass the issue of setting up of a collective security mechanism of continental scale. That has become possible due to the realization of Kazakhstan’s initiative to convene the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), initiated by me from exactly this very podium, during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 1992. Today, the CICA process brings together 18 states, which occupy 90 percent of Asia’s territory. Their population makes half of the people living on our planet. Time has proven the relevance of the CICA process, within which a political dialogue among Asian states is gaining momentum” (Nazarbayev 2007).

It is important to emphasize that CICA is open to all countries. It is also ready for cooperation with other regional organizations. The CICA Senior Officials Committee has adopted a decision on establishing relationship with Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Eurasian Economic Community (EuroAsEC), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (Yermekbayev 2007).
China’s interest in promoting the CICA forum lies in numbers of ways. First, Asian problem can be solved by the Asian nations through Confidence Building Measures and regional organisation. That’s the aim of the CICA which helps China’s to solve its regional problem on in peaceful manner. Second, no foreign intervention in the Asian affairs will serve the Chinese security in the western border as US is trying to gain foot held in the Central Asian region. Third, unlike the cold war period in which the Super power interferes in Asian problems, the CICA forum will be helpful to resolve problems without external interference. Finally, the CICA can be used by China as to increase its influence in the Asian continent and portray China’s ‘Peaceful Rising’. That’s why China wants to promote CICA.

Chinese President Hu Jintao called for the building of a harmonious Asia of enduring peace and common prosperity, at the second summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Almaty in 2006. He said, “Asia is a continent of great diversity. ... Solidarity and coordination of the Asian countries and peoples are crucial for the success of Asia” (Xinhua 2006). The Chinese president urged Asian countries to increase mutual trust and coordination to build a new type of security architecture. “We should respect every country's right to safeguard national unity, pursue its development strategy and formulate domestic and foreign policies independently,” he said. While calling for strengthened cooperation within regional organizations such as the SCO, ASEAN and CICA, President Hu also urged Asian nations to uphold multi-lateralism and strengthen cooperation internationally to create favourable conditions for the development of Asia as a whole (Xinhua 2006). “Asia is crucial for China's development” the president said, adding that China “pursues a foreign policy of fostering a harmonious, secure and prosperous neighbourly environment.”

1.3.7 China’s Advancement in Central Asia through SCO

In 1996, the Shanghai Five was established to resolve the border issues among China, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan with the signing of the Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions. In 1997 the same set of countries signed the ‘Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions’, at a meeting in Moscow. In 1998, these five countries established annual summits and began to
shift their focus to “anti-terrorism”, to signify the containment of domestic insurgencies (Cutler 2004). Further, at the Dushanbe summit of July 2000 their defence ministers decided to plan and hold joint military exercises. Finally, in June 2001 the Shanghai five members and Uzbekistan signed the ‘Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)’, aiming to transform it to a higher level of cooperation.

In course of time the SCO has upgraded itself as a political and security organisation which was basically established to resolve the border issue among the member states. Stephen Blank argues that SCO’s transformation from an organization intended to build confidence over borders into a collective security organization was largely a Chinese initiative (Blank 2004). Its aims were to fight terrorism, insurgency, separatism, etc., in Central Asia, and for China, particularly in Xinjiang. Second, it was supposed to become a vehicle to obstruct further American inroads into Central Asia. Third, it was a centrepiece of Sino-Russian collaboration, and thus fourth, China has proclaimed it as a model for what it wants to achieve in other parts of Asia with its neighbours (Blank 2004). As a result, Beijing has made full use of its provisions to increase its military presence in Central Asia as provided for by the treaty and has pushed hard to upgrade the SCO into a multi-dimensional security organization that also harmonizes trade and economic issues among its signatories.

The evolution of SCO as a major powerful regional organisation was visible in the recent times. A joint military exercise by the SCO members “Peace Mission 2007” was organized from August 9-17, 2007 which started from the city of Urumqi in China’s XUAR and later continued in Russia’s Ural region of Chelyabinsk. The exercise involved mostly Russian and Chinese troops, but also troops from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. About 4,000 troops, 80 aircraft, and 500 combat vehicles participated in the joint exercises. China and Russia supplied the 500 combat vehicles together with 1,600 and 2,000 troops respectively. Not limited to this, China’s armed police (PAP) and Russia’s interior forces carried out a joint counter-terrorism exercise dubbed as Cooperation 2007 in September (Norling and Swanstra 2007). Chinese Ambassador to Russia Liu Guchang told reporters at a press conference in Moscow that the “Peace Mission 2007” exercise, the first joint
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anti-terror drill involving military forces from all SCO member countries, will be observed by the heads of states of the six nations. “It indicated the importance attached by member countries to the drill and their firm will to enhance cooperation, jointly crack down on the three evil forces, viz. maintain regional peace, security and stability as well as determination to promote the development of SCO,” he said (People’s Daily Online 2007a). Further, he added that the 10-day exercise will promote exchange and cooperation among China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and improve their ability in jointly fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism and coping with new threat and challenges. According to Liang Guanglie, Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, the drill is not intended to aim any at third party nor its is a military alliance.

The “Peace Mission 2007” is not the first of its kind of military exercise in the region. Before September 11 terrorist attack, the SCO members not only talked about the importance of joint actions against terrorism, but did real work in this regard (People’s Daily Online 2007b). In October 2002, within the SCO framework, China and Kyrgyzstan held a joint anti-terror exercise. In 2003, the first joint exercise of the SCO members, called “Interaction-2003” took place at the border between Kazakhstan and China without Uzbekistan's participation. Since then, SCO members have been holding anti-terror drills annually within the organisational framework. In January 2004, the headquarter of SCO’s Regional Anti-terrorist Structure (RATS) was opened in Tashkent.

The SCO’s importance for China is highlighted in the fact that SCO is the first international organisation headquartered in China and is its first membership in a collective security. This fact is further illustrated in the following points:

• SCO as a political organization is an important vehicle for Chinese diplomacy aimed to counter US influence in the Central Asian region. For example in July 2005 the SCO called upon the US to commit to withdraw its military personnel from the Central Asian regions as the situation in the Afghanistan has changed. Beijing is also seeking to counter US efforts to encircle China through a series of strategic alliance, including Japan, Australia and India.
China sees the SCO organisation as a useful vehicle for forging greater regional political cooperation in such a manner that would tend to limit the role and influence of outsiders in the affairs of Central Asia. Another objective of China to promote SCO in the region can be understood from the point of the separatist movement in China’s western part XUAR bordering CAS. Central Asian region borders the Xinjiang, China’s restive province. Both side of the border between China and three Central Asian states—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan—which runs for 3,300 kilometres is populated by representatives of the same ethnic groups practicing Islam: Uighurs, Kazakhs, Dungans, Tajiks, and Uzbeks. Beijing feared a “demonstration,” knock-on effect that the sovereignization of the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan could have on Xinjiang’s indigenous population (Mukimdzhanova 2004). Those concerns were caused by the fact that leaders of the Movement for the Independence of Eastern Turkestan (this is what the Uighurs call the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region) had banked on the support from the newly independent states in the neighbouring region, which, however, did not materialize (Mukimdzhanova 2004). China regards the Central Asian states as allies in the fight against religious extremism, especially given that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that on 15 June, 2001 adopted a convention on combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism. China believes that China can handle the problem with the help of neighbouring CAS.

- SCO’s message of opposition to interference in other countries internal affairs is important for China to keep aside US and other Western state’s stand on Tibet and XUAR separatist issue.

- China believes that stability and security in Central Asia are best ensured primarily through the efforts taken by the nations of the region based on the existing regional associations.

- China is also keen to increase the SCO’s profile as an instrument for promoting the country’s economic influence in the region.
Above points vividly bring out the fact that China is making its position stronger in Central Asian region through the SCO to fulfil its own geopolitical interest.

1.3.8 Central Asia after 9/11 and the Chinese Response

On September 11, 2001, the most powerful state in the world- the US was targeted by a series of terrorist attack that destroyed the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and severely damaged the Pentagon. This incident marked terrorism as a global threat to the world community in 21st century. No nation is away from suspected terrorist attacks irrespective of its location. This event has changed the political equations in various regions.

The geopolitical situation has also changed in Central Asia, after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the US. This incident resulted in the deployment of the US-led anti-terrorist coalition forces in the Central Asian states, to carry out combat operations in Afghanistan, where the main suspect held responsible by the US, Osama bin Laden, was taking refuge under the former Taliban regime (Sulaiman 2002). The geography of Central Asia, however, has contributed most to making the region geopolitically important after 9/11. Central Asia's common borders with and geographic proximity to Afghanistan, on an immediate basis made the CAS front line states in the US war on terrorism. Four CAS allowed the US to use their airbases in war on terrorism, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Even Turkmenistan, an officially declared neutral state that is not part of any regional organisation or alliance system in Central Asia, offered its bases and air corridor to the US air force for logistic support, search and rescue operations (Sulaiman 2002). All the airbases were for re-supply missions, transporting of aid goods, carrying out search and rescue operations, for handling any emergencies, and in some cases launching attacks on Afghanistan, as in the case of the Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan.

The US military presence in Central Asia will have profound effects on the alliance system of the region. Earlier the Central Asian states were dependent on Russia for their security but they have made special ties with the US after 9/11, for example US-Uzbekistan relation. Later on in 2005, Uzbekistan turned down to US strategic partnership and tilted towards Russia. Further, the global support for the fight against
terrorists has provided an opportunity for Central Asian governments to suppress opposition under the pretext of fighting terrorists.

The events of September 11, 2001, and the US-led war against terrorism in Afghanistan and the establishment of military bases in the Central Asian region present new challenges and opportunities to Chinese security, political, and economic interests. China's initial response to the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC was one of deep shock, sympathy, and condolences. The Chinese President at that time, Jiang Zemin, sent President Bush a telegram expressing China's sympathy. When the two presidents spoke on the evening of September 12, Jiang pledged Chinese readiness to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with the United States and the international community in joint efforts to fight against terrorist violence (Yuan 2001).

Beijing also took concrete measures to support the US counter-attack on terrorism. Immediately after 9/11, China sent a team of 32 anti-terrorist experts to the US, unconditionally providing intelligence about the Taliban. It closed Sino-Afghan and Sino-Pakistan borders to prevent Bin Laden and his followers from fleeing into China. It persuaded Pakistan and some Central Asian countries to adopt a cooperative response to US requests for help. It promoted further cooperation against terrorism among the Shanghai Group of Six through institution-building and joint military exercises. All this was done in opposition to China's usual stance on national sovereignty and non-interference with another country's internal affairs (Ji 2004).

Beijing has strong reasons to express its condemnation of terrorism. China seeks to present itself as a responsible rising power on the world stage. Chinese leaders believe the selection of Beijing as the site for the 2008 Olympic Games reflects the international community's confidence in China's continuing reform and stability. China's admission to the World Trade Organization demonstrates China's commitment to embracing and upholding the rules of international trade and investment. A strong and forceful stand on international terrorism will put China in good stead in the community of nations.
China supports strong anti-terrorism measures due to concerns about its own vulnerability to terrorism and separatism in its vast north-western territories of Tibet and Xinjiang. Beijing thinks that international support may help it confront growing terrorist activities in support of separatist movements in Xinjiang. In August 2002, the US designated the ETIM (East Turkistan Islamic Movement) as a terrorist organization after pressure from China. The United Nations also put the ETIM on its terrorist list a month later (McGregor 2007). Since the late 1980s, Muslim separatists in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region have posed an increasing threat to China's territorial integrity. The 9/11 attack provided an opportunity for China to resolve the insurgent problem much more firmly than in the past (Yuan 2001).

China has strong reasons to support war against terrorism in Afghanistan, but Beijing also has deep reservations over intervention in other countries' domestic affairs and the use of force. China is concerned that US military operations may set precedents for future interference in domestic affairs and the further erosion of the UN's authority. China also worries about the potential for the United States to use the pretext of humanitarian intervention to challenge its sovereignty over minority regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang. Earlier, US/NATO intervention in Kosovo sent a chilling warning to policy-makers in Beijing that the United Nations could be bypassed and that sovereignty could be ignored and violated (Yuan 2001). Hence, China has taken precautions against the unconditional and military support to US in the Afghanistan attack.

China is also worried about the likely expansion of a US military presence closer to China's doorstep in a permanent basis. For example, an enlarged permanent US military presence is seen in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia after the Gulf War in 1990-91. Military operations against Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan could bring U.S. armed forces to South and Central Asia, with which China shares over 5,000 kilometres of borders. Another concern for China was that it can face backlash and possibly refugees as a result of US military retaliation. As one prominent Chinese security analyst has pointed out, China is worried that US-led military strikes against Afghanistan "may squeeze the evil activities out of Afghanistan and into our territory." High-ranking Chinese officials also warn that military retaliation could lead
to an escalation of revenge begetting revenge, further aggravating terrorism and violence (Yuan 2001).

Nevertheless, as the course of time passes China felt uncomfortable with the US military presence in its western CA region. Then China started its own measure to counter this challenge. China opposes US military bases in CAS; increases military cooperation with CAS; strengthen SCO; making good relations with Russia. Now China openly expresses its anxieties that the US position in Central Asia could become part of an overall American strategy of encirclement directed against it. In sum, 9/11 has brought about a policy changes for Chinese in the Central Asian region.

1.3.9 Colour Revolutions in CIS and Kyrgyzstan and the Chinese Response
Colour revolutions are the names given collectively to a series of movements that developed in post-communist societies in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Central Asia. The Rose revolution in Georgia (2004), Orange revolution in Ukraine (2005), and Tulip revolution in Kyrgyzstan and Andijan crisis in Uzbekistan have changed the geopolitical space in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Central Asian region. These regions are considered as buffer space by Russia and China from the Western states. Hence, both Russia and China oppose any type of colour revolution, which establishes hostile pro-western government in this region.

The Rose Revolution in Georgia, following the disputed Georgia legislative election, 2003, led to the overthrow of Eduard Shevardnadze and his replacement by Mikhail Saakashvili after new elections were held in March 2004. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine, followed the disputed second round of the Ukrainian presidential election, 2004 and led to the invalidation of the result and the repeat of the round—leader of the opposition Viktor Yushchenko was declared president, defeating Viktor Yanukovych. These colour revolutions are mostly to protest against governments seen as corrupt and/or authoritarian, and to advocate democracy. The resulted was the establishment of pro-western government in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. Thus, the Eurasian geopolitical landscape has been affected by these colour revolutions, as the previous governments were more favourable to Russia. It is believed that the Georgia’s Rose Revolution of November, 2003 inspired opposition groups in Central
Asia, it is more accurate to say that it really was the stimulus provided by Ukraine’s orange revolution of November-December, 2004 that galvanized sufficient domestic opposition in Kyrgyzstan to then overthrow the Akayev regime (Blank 2005).

According to Chinese analysis, the “Colour Revolutions” that have been fomented in the countries of the former Soviet bloc (Georgia, Ukraine) and above all the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan, as well as the events that occurred in Uzbekistan in 2005, were in fact only the result of destabilization efforts on the part of the United States, which had the goal of reinforcing its zone of influence (Niquet 2006). For Beijing, the risk would obviously be that, in line with the domino theory, these destabilization movements expand to the whole of Central Asia and reach the autonomous region of Xinjiang. Moreover, the Chinese analysts place this American strategy in the continuation of the fight against communism, since the Cold War, on the grab of the theory of humanitarian intervention, the war on terror, and up to the theory of the removal of “tyrannies” expressed by Condoleezza Rice. By doing so, China, significantly, is strongly reaffirming its ideological specificity, despite the policy of economic reforms that the regime has pursued for more than 25 years, but also attempting to recreate a kind of complicity with the Central Asian regimes that have emerged from the former Soviet Union (Zhi 2006).

China feared the development of colour revolution in the Eurasian geopolitical landscape and especially the Tulip revolution in Kyrgyzstan bordering China. China thinks that the colour revolution and the resulted pro-western government in those states will have negative consequence to China. It will weaken the power of central authority to control Tibet and XUAR. China also fears that it will have ‘domino effect’ on its western province of XUAR and Tibet, and put challenges to the territorial integrity of China. Colour revolution will helpful to establish pro-western government in the Central Asian States, which may be hostile to Chinese interest in the region. China has also recognized that internal instability in Central Asian countries affects China’s own national security, and a failed state on its borders would require a great deal of resources and attention, assets that China currently would like to focus on its economic development and the Taiwan situation (Oresman 2005).
Keeping in mind all this fears China is doing more effort to strengthen its relation with CAS. In response to the recent democratic “Colour Revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, the Chinese government is taking action to prevent similar uprisings in its own country. Under new “counter-revolution” measures approved by President Hu Jintao, censorship of web sites, books, and blogs has increased. The Chinese government views many of these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as fronts for a US effort to push global democratization, and has stepped up raids on particularly active NGOs (Yongding 2005). China has pushed to invigorate the Shanghai Cooperative Organization to use it as an agency for both bilateral and multilateral action to suppress popular unrest in Central Asia and to strengthen it as a bulwark against Western (especially American) ideas and policies about democratization (Blank 2005). In defiance of criticism from the US and its allies, the SCO strongly backed the Uzbek President Islam Karimov, who ruthlessly suppressed opposition protests in Andijan.

China is more conscious towards the Tulip revolution in Kyrgyzstan as Kyrgyzstan borders China in western front. China is concerned about potential instability created by a power vacuum in Kyrgyzstan. The unstable situation may allow radical Islamic groups to infiltrate more deeply into Kyrgyzstan and drug smuggling networks to more effectively establish their presence. These situations create problems for China because these groups could have adverse consequence on the stability of Xinjiang.

Beijing also keeps a close eye on how the new government handles the Uyghur Diaspora in Kyrgyzstan. With approximately 50,000 Uyghurs living in Kyrgyzstan, in addition to the thousands of shuttle traders going back and forth between Xinjiang and Kyrgyzstan, the country represents ones of the largest Uyghur populations outside of China (Oresman 2005). Prior to the revolution, China had done an efficient job of convincing the Kyrgyz government and all other Central Asian regimes to control the activities of Uyghur populations in their respective states. The former government helped monitor Uyghur activities in the country, prevented many Uyghur associations from organizing fully as political groups, and arrested and extradited Uyghurs as needed. Under a new, more democratic government, Uyghur groups could be able to develop more politically. If allowed, they may more aggressively seek to influence the
situation in Xinjiang or organize the Diaspora community more effectively. Both possibilities worry Beijing. If the Uyghurs of Kyrgyzstan are in fact allowed to challenge Beijing more openly, or, alternatively, if democratic activists start penetrating into China from Kyrgyzstan, Beijing may forcefully assert their interest to the Kyrgyz government and use all their levers of influence, including ties to the as-of-yet unreformed security branches, to make sure the situation does not become troublesome (Oresman 2005).

The Kyrgyz revolution will also provide an opportunity for the United States to forcefully assert its presence there, as the new government reaches out to new partners. China suspects that the United State was the hidden hand behind the revolution, and a new partnership between the United States and Kyrgyzstan could unravel many on the recent gains for China, especially in keeping the SCO an organization of Chinese dominance (Oresman 2005).

China has reacted to the Kyrgyz revolution with soft words. Officially, the Foreign Ministry has merely stated, “China hopes the situation in Kyrgyzstan turns stable at an early date... As a friendly neighbour of Kyrgyzstan, China is paying close attention to the development of the situation and wishes social order there restored to a normal state as soon as possible” (Oresman 2005). At the same time, China is keen to develop good relations with Kyrgyzstan to avoid any adverse effect on its security interests.

1.3.10 Beijing Olympics 2008, Tibet Uprising and Western Development Strategy

In Moscow in July 2001, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) elected the city of Beijing to host the 2008 Olympic Games. “Winning the host rights means winning the respect, trust, and favour of the international community,” Wang Wei, a senior Beijing Olympic official, proclaimed. The official Xinhua News Agency revealed in the moment, calling the decision “another milestone in China's rising international status and a historical event in the great renaissance of the Chinese nation” (Economy 2008: 47). This decision thus presents China as a political, social, and economic and sports model to the rest of the world. Chinese leaders believe that the selection of
Beijing as the site for the 2008 Olympic Games reflects the international community's confidence in China's continuing reform and stability.

For the Olympics preparations, the Chinese Communist Party has invested over $40 billion in stadiums and infrastructure for the Beijing Olympics. And it has forsaken billions more by closing factories in the hopes of curbing Beijing's notorious pollution (Gries 2008). China adds two greatest infrastructural architectures in the modern world by building the 'Birds Nest', opening venue of the Olympic Games, and 'Water Cubes' for water sports. Moreover, at the end of the Olympic Games on August 24, 2008, China had proved it by successfully conducting the event. Even in the medal tally, it topped with 51 gold and with total medals of 100. China has asserted itself in the world stage in the sports field apart from economic progress. This, it hopes, will reassure the world about its "peaceful rise."

Before the Olympics in August 2008, some violent incidents occurred in Tibet and XUAR. March 10 was the anniversary of the 1959 uprising against China's occupation of Tibet. On March 10, 2008, about 500 Tibetan monks at Lhasa's Drepung Monastery reportedly launched peaceful marches and demonstrations to protest Chinese population, cultural, and commercial policies, that over the decades have had the effect of economically disenfranchising Tibetans in their own cities and towns and eroding the social and linguistic cohesion of Tibet's indigenous people (Tkacik 2008). Tibetans also demonstrated in other parts of Tibetan area and were dispersed by police. In addition, protests in support of Tibet had plagued the Olympic torch relay in London, Paris and Greece and other cities of the world. The protests across Tibet were met with violent crackdowns by China (Tkacik 2008). On the other hand, China also agreed to talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, to defuse international criticism over its reaction to the uprising, which led to demonstrations in many countries.

In addition, on Aug. 4, 2008 four days before the start of the Beijing Olympics on August 8, two ethnic Uighurs drove a stolen dump truck into a group of some 70 Chinese border police in the town of Kashi in Xinjiang, killing at least 16 of the officers (Baker 2008). The separatist had also warned of terrorist attack during
Olympics games. China took this incident seriously and has taken strong measures of security during Olympics games. The Olympic event completed peacefully. But, Beijing notes the similarities between what is happening in Tibet and the “Colour Revolutions” and the United States supported and helped stimulate in the former Soviet Union (Friedman 2008b). Therefore, the Chinese have a fundamental national interest in retaining Tibet and Xinjiang because if these regions become independent, the vast buffers between China and the rest of Eurasia would break down. They must hold on to Tibet and Xinjiang for national security reasons.

Apart from forcefully suppressing the feeling of separatism in Tibet and XUAR, China has also taken steps of economic development of these regions. In comparison to the eastern part of the China, the western part is less developed. This is because when China first began opening up to the rest of the world in 1978, the government decided to focus economic development efforts on selected special economic zones and the eastern coastal areas. Cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou developed rapidly. Meanwhile, the inland and western provinces and regions, historically more economically isolated, failed to keep pace with the development of the east (China's Western Development Strategy 2003).

Hence, the Chinese government is concerned that continued economic decline in these areas will place an increasing burden on government resources and may well lead to social unrest and resentment among unemployed workers and poor farmers. There is also presence of high concentration of ethnic minorities in these regions, many of whom are dissatisfied with the central government control. This may lead to getting a strong feeling of separatism in these regions for example in Tibet and Xinjiang.

In response to all this concerns, the Chinese government announced in September 1999 the Western Development Strategy (WDS). The main reasoning behind the strategy is that the best way to promote social stability and economic development of these regions is to improve the regional economy. This strategy focuses on the 'west' or the western region of China, which is generally defined as including 10 regions. These regions include six provinces: Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, and Qinghai; three minority autonomous regions: Xizang (Tibet), Ningxia and Xinjiang;
and one municipality: Chongqing. These regions’ total landmass accounts for 57% of China’s total and includes 285 million people, which is 23% of China’s total population. Xinjiang is the largest minority autonomous region and jurisdiction by land area in China, and Chongqing is the largest municipality in the world with a population of more than 31 million (China’s Western Development Strategy 2003).

Chinese aim to Western Development Strategy is manifold. First, it wants to develop the backward region for giving pace to the ongoing economic growth as well to use it as a spring board to enhance its economic ties with Central Asia countries. Another one is to keep away the feeling of separatism in these regions especially in Tibet and Xinjiang by economic development. Thus, China is following all possible strategies to retain Tibet and Xinjiang by economic and development activity.

1.4 Russia, China and the US in Central Asian Region

Keeping the above mentioned developments in the Central Asian region, various regional and global powers’ are interested in Central Asia. Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and India are influential regional power in their respective zones. They want to increase their influence in the region nearer to them. All these states are linked with Central Asian region on ethnic, cultural and religious lines. So, their interest is to increase influence in these newly independent states. On the other hand, the US is a global power and China is emerging as a major power with global interest. NATO has come out of its image as it was in the cold war period. It is incorporating new role, i.e. to combat terrorism and maintaining peace and stability in the disturbed regions. It is seen in the case of NATO’s presence in Afghanistan as peacemaker. Russia, China and US, the three great powers who matters in the geopolitical design of this region, are gearing up in different ways.

China’s involvement in Central Asia has grown significantly in the past few years, driven by both, the country’s political and economic ambitions and its energy requirements. The collapse of Soviet Union required China to develop an entirely new policy towards Central Asia. The goals of this policy are to constrain new threats and enable China to take advantage of the new opportunities.
In developing relations with the newly independent Central Asian States, China has considered the following aspects. The emergence of smaller Central Asian Republics on China’s border has created some complexities. This is because Central Asian Republics were being formed on the basis of the ethnic identity during Soviet rule in 1924, which China fears that it can recharge the separatist sentiments among China’s minorities living in its Western provinces like Gansu, Qinghai and its autonomous regions of Ningxia, Tibet and especially Xinjiang (Singh 2000: 1110). China on its Western border have a whole host of ethnic groupings which have Central Asian origins and which have been nursing grievances against Beijing nationality policies for a very long time. Therefore, the given uncertainties in Central Asia’s domestic politics and their emergence have been a major causes of concern for China.

Islamic fundamentalism is also a matter of concern for China. Especially the Islamic fundamentalism that has flourished in Afghanistan and its spill over impact on the Central Asian states, especially the civil war in Tajikistan and fundamentalism in Uzbekistan. China thinks that the continued instability within Afghanistan has been one of the main reasons for continued instability in its bordering states of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It can complicate the China’s handling of its already sensitive Muslim majority region of Xinjiang; Xinjiang is the China’s sensitive western border across which it is facing the problem of Uighur separatism.

China has a vital interest in getting access to the vast energy resources of Central Asia in view of the increasing energy requirement of its growing economy. To fulfill this need China and Kazakhstan had signed on September 24, 1997 a 9.5 billion dollars agreement for the development of oil and gas fields in Western Kazakhstan with the Chinese aid (Bakshi 2001: 170). The agreement also envisages the construction of a pipeline from Kazakhstan to China. In 1998, China and Kazakhstan had begun to operate the Uzen oilfield and the Aktyubinsk oil and gas field in Kazakhstan. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) purchased 60 percent of stake in the Aktobemunia gas oil production enterprise for 325 million dollars and pledges to invest another 4 billion dollars in next twenty years (Singh 2000: 16). China is also offering to give technological and financial assistance in cheaper way to develop the
oil and gas fields. These are the examples of China - Central Asia engagement in energy sector.

China is also interested in Central Asian markets and enhancing its economic influence in the region. Trade and investment have been the most visible element of China’s growing involvement in Central Asia. Manufacturing goods from China form a large proportion of imports to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Much of this volume comprises basic consumer goods made in north-western China that is sold in neighbouring Central Asian states. From the perspective of Central Asian states, China offers one thing that no other country can, that is access to the economies of East Asia. China has two strategic transportation corridors for such trade—the second trans-Eurasian Railway and the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-Xinjiang (Kasagh) Highway, built in 1997 and it has opened 11 trade ports with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the three Central Asian states bordering China (Tang 2002: 370). These factors are very important to facilitate Central Asia’s ability to trade with other Asian countries.

These are the China’s interest for seeking engagement in Central Asia. For serving its own interest in Central Asian region, China cannot ignore Russia’s role in the region. In some issues, there is convergence between Chinese and Russian interest over common Central Asian threats and at some points they have some apprehensions about each other’s role in the Central Asian region. Russia’s and China’s common interest in the Central Asian region are stability, checking the growing influence of the West and NATO as well as the coincidence of their interests in the field of energy. If Islamic groups come to power in Central Asia, it may be more difficult to prevent the support coming from neighbouring Central Asia countries to Uighur region. Russia is also facing Muslim separatist movement in the Chechen region. Russia and China cannot escape the geopolitical reality of being Central Asia’s two largest neighbours. Shiping Tang (2002) has pointed out three external factors for a strategic partnership between Russia and China:

- the eastward expansion of NATO;
- the strengthening of the US-Japan security alliance; and most importantly,
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- the sense of weakness felt by both Russia and China in the Uni-polar world.

It is important for both Russia and China to oppose the NATO's eastward expansion because it poses security threats for both the countries. Both the countries also oppose the US attempt to extend its hegemony to the Central Asian region. As the region's largest neighbours and trading partners Russia and China have huge stakes in its economic future. Economic integration could lead to regional growth, which would benefit all the seven states.

The establishment of Shanghai-5, (later SCO) is a part of Russian and Chinese cooperation in the Central Asian region. Shanghai Five, comprising Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was established in 1996 primarily to resolve border disputes among the member states and to reduce the armed forces along the border to stabilize the region. Shanghai Five became Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 incorporating Uzbekistan. Later on, in June 2002, SCO adopted a charter that announced that it was upgrading itself into a military and political association, keeping in mind the American war on terrorism. China generally avoids alliance and blocs but in joining SCO, China has its own interest. First, isolating Xinjiang's turbulent Muslim environment; counteracting American influence in Central Asia; and replacing Russia as the sole actor in the region. Hence, Beijing has invested resources and efforts in enlarging the scope of the SCO more than any other member. In July 5, 2005 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit declaration urged the US to set a time table to withdraw its troops from bases in Central Asia, since the situation in Afghanistan has changed. Recently, in a clear message to the US and others, China and Russia carried out unprecedented joint military exercise on August 18-25, 2005, near Russia's far-east port city of Vladivostok. China might have been keen to weaken Russian control over the Central Asian countries by strengthening its economic links with them but seeing the US moves in this region, made closer links with Russia.

China's growing interest in Central Asia has been viewed as a strategic challenge to Russia as well. Several cases can be cited in which Moscow had expressed displeasure over Central Asian states' independent policies towards China. Russia did
not wish to see China forge bilateral defence treaties with these states. Moscow insisted that discussion on border disputes, troops reduction, and confidence-building measures with Central Asian states should have "joint delegation" consisting of Russian representative (Stobdan 1998b: 403). Russia also attacked the dubious methods of influencing Central Asia particularly by the Chinese traders settling in Kazakhstan.

China is aware of Russia’s sensitivity over Central Asia and does not intend to challenge its sphere of influence. Nevertheless, China has a significant stake in the region regarding troubled Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, access to Central Asia’s vast petroleum resources and Central Asian market for their product. The potential for disagreement with Russia over any of these matters is real.

The United States has established its military presence in Central Asia, (Manas in Kyrgyzstan and Kashi-Khanabad bases in south Uzbekistan) in the post-9/11 event, airbases in Kyrgyzstan and, until November 2005, Uzbekistan has played an important role in facilitating U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The US has lost the Kashi-Khanabad (Uzbekistan) bases in November 2005. But Central Asia is more than a stepping stone to Afghanistan for US. It is the heartland of Eurasia, the continent’s crossroads, surrounded by every important continental power Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and Iran. In addition, in the context of the U.S. global posture that puts a quality on unrestricted access and ability to deploy forces quickly, Central Asia region is an important place. NATO’s eastward expansion also put some pressure on China’s security on the western flank.

In some context, Russia and China have been beneficiaries of the US military campaign against the Taliban and ensuing reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Russia and China are uncomfortable with military presence in their shared strategic backyard in Central Asian region; however, they have accepted it as a consequence of a more stable Afghanistan and Central Asia.

In some instances, Russia has also welcomed the US move in Central Asia. Russia is concerned about the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the fear of biological and
Chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorist in the Central Asian region. American efforts to remove stocks of fissile material from Kazakhstan are certainly welcomed by Russia. For a decade i.e. in 1990s, the Central Asian states have faced the threat of Islamic Fundamentalism, terrorism and drug trafficking. These problems are also recognized by Russia, but both Central Asian States and Russians have been notably unsuccessful in handling the problem of drug trafficking and terrorism. So the Central Asian States and Russia will welcome US and international programmes to eradicate heroine production and trafficking in Afghanistan as a part of long-term reconstruction effort.

As Central Asian states are land locked, the vast energy resources to have access to the international market need to be brought by oil and gas pipelines to the ports and then it can be carried away to different destination. All the existing pipelines at present belong to Russia. They were constructed by the former Soviet Union, as it was the sole exporter of Caspian oil from the USSR to international market. Iran Turkey and Pakistan are claiming to provide alternate route to the pipelines. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline proposed by Turkey has found enormous support from the United States. This is because Turkey is a close ally of NATO and US. The BTC pipeline was opened on May 2005, which would bring the crude oil from Azerbaijan's southern Caspian offshore fields through Georgia to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan for shipment to world markets (Baran 2005). It seems that the US wants to bypass Russia and Iran and have exclusive control over the oil of Central Asian region. The BTC pipeline is a major success for the U.S.'s goal of enhancing and diversifying global energy supplies. Russia sees this as a direct loss of revenue and its control over petroleum resources of Central Asian region.

The existing geopolitical scenario of the Central Asian region depicts that the region is passing through a transitional phase. The rich oil and natural gas resources of this region are attracting the external powers and multi-national companies to invest in the energy sector. Construction of new pipelines needed to promote export to the international markets through different routes is also going on. The policy of the external players for power and influences in the region are likely to stimulate ethnic upsurge as well.
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The external powers may play a role in promoting or hampering the development of polity, economy, security and integrity of the region, but the ultimate key is in the hands of the individual countries of the Central Asian region. How soon Central Asian Region manages its relationship with the outside world with independent and dignified foreign policy, would determine the future geopolitical setting of the region.

These are the overall picture of the developments going on the Eurasian geopolitical space and China's position on it. Since 1991 China has been trying to establish diplomatic relations with the Central Asian States to preserve its geopolitical interest in the region.

1.5 Scope and Significance of the Study

The nature of this work has been descriptive and analytical. Along with geopolitics and geo-economics, geo-cultural factors have been considered in this research work. The proposed research work will also cover some theoretical understanding of geopolitics of the Central Asia and its importance to China. In the present situation, all the factors, apart from geography, those affect the geopolitics are discussed; technological advancement in warfare and communications, globalization, terrorism, global environmental changes, satellite monitoring, and nuclear technology. The main emphasis of the study has been the security threats from Central Asian and Chinese perspective, which emerge in Central Asia after Soviet disintegration and Central Asian engagement with China in security and economic terms. The period of the present study starts from the independence of Central Asia, after the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991, to the current situation, i.e. the time of study. However, historical linkages between China and Central Asian region have also been thrown light in the study.

Due to the presence of vast oil and natural resources and by becoming a breeding ground of terrorism and Islamic extremism, Central Asia has become a hot spot of world politics. This region is becoming the ground of rivalry between different regional and global power. Its implications do not brood well for Central Asia and China. So it is relevant to study the geopolitical dynamics of Central Asian region. It is also important to identify the measures, which will ensure peace and stability of
Central Asia and China. This will make a more stable, secure, harmonious, prosperous and progressive region.

1.6 Objectives of the Study
The main objective of the study is to analyze the geographical and geopolitical links between the Central Asia region and China. In this study the regional and global interests operating in Central Asia and threatens the security of Central Asia and China’s western flanks are identified to understand the real geopolitical design of the Central Asian region. Another objective is to study and assess the Central Asia-China relations, both in geo-political and geo-economic terms in reciprocity. Further, delineating Central Asian geopolitics and potential influence on China’s security, energy, economic and trade interests, is another objective of the study.

1.7 Hypotheses
The geo-strategic location and geo-economic importance of Central Asia are attracting different regional and global powers to enhance their interests, making security and economic concerns for Central Asia and China. Even the power play going on the region has affecting the geopolitical design of the region. China’s Eurasia Policy and its role in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) can be understood within the new Central Asian geopolitical framework. Also the Central Asia, China and Russia have a common interest in Securing Eurasia from, Western Geopolitical design.

1.8 Methodology of the Study
The research is based on both primary and secondary sources. However, due to the contemporary nature of the topic, much emphasis has given to the secondary sources. The research has involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. Normally quality work in the PhD is based more on primary sources. But this research is based more on secondary sources including books, journals, articles, paper presented in seminars and newspaper. However, whenever primary sources are required to analyse the issue; data, declarations, speeches, and government’s publications have taken into consideration. Besides, internet sources are used in taking data, articles and documents.
The methodology of this study is historical, descriptive and analytical in nature. Articles of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Charter and Shanghai Convention on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism is analysed to find out the prospects of multilateral agreement to keep the geopolitical important Central Asian region stable and peaceful. The energy demand of China in coming years and the Central Asian resource availability in that respect will be quantitatively analysed taking the data of National Bureau of Statistics of China, International Energy Agency and Energy Information Administration.

Due to financial constraints it is very difficult for the research scholar pursuing their research in the field of 'International Relations' and 'Area Studies' to visit their study area of research. But, the scholar was fortunate to get the opportunity to visit one of the countries of study area that is Kazakhstan in the Central Asian region. It was made possible under the scheme of SIS field visit in the Jawaharlal Nehru University. The scholar visited Kazakhstan during April 30th to May 31st 2009. During the stay in Kazakhstan Universities, Research Institutes and Libraries were visited and consulted. Comprehensive discussions and interviews with number of experts and academicians on various issues related to the current research work were undertaken. Independent researchers and freelance journalists were also consulted during the visit. The discussions and interview with experts were open ended and any strict questioners were not used. The in-depth discussions were extremely helpful for the qualitative improvement of the research work. The field visit was necessary to qualitative enriching the thesis by getting the real thinking of the Central Asian scholars.

The major approaches dealt with research work follow next. The geopolitical views of Mackinder and Spykman were analysed to establish the geopolitical linkages between Central Asian region and China. Mackinder's concept of the 'Heartland' as the key to world domination and his predication of China as a potential power in the 'Heartland' region are used to analyse the geopolitical linkages between Central Asian region and China. Besides, Spykman's identification of the geographical and location factors as conditions of the foreign policies of states is used to analyses the foreign policy options of Central Asian states. The Central Asian states are land locked and situated in between two great powers Russia and China. Thus, the geographical factors are
taken into consideration for analysing the relationship between Central Asian region and China.

1.9 Summary
In this chapter we have discussed the importance of Central Asian region in geo-strategic and geo-economic terms. After that various developments taken place in world stage after the end of cold world war were discussed to understand the evolution of new dimension in the relationship between Europe and Asia. In these developments the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the War in Afghanistan, Colour revolutions, Tibet Uprising, China’s Western Development Strategy and Beijing Olympics are examined. The description of the developments in an around the Central Asian geopolitics are necessary to better understanding of the research work. Subsequently, the relationship between Russia, China and the US in relation to Central Asian region are described. In the later part of the chapter objective, hypothesis, scope and significance and methodology of the research work is written in brief. The next chapter consists of the major theoretical work in the development of geopolitical field.