CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION

Integration is a process that includes a series of actions which enables the joining together of previously independent units or states. It thus creates a new entity or a whole. Integration is thus a dynamic process and not a static condition. At a broad level, integration may be defined as any level of association between actors. It is also used to describe a very large range of different interrelationships between states and within states too.¹

Integration is both a process and end-state. As an end state the aim of the actors is the creation of a common political community of the previously independent units. Therefore integration should be voluntary and consensual. Imperialism also creates integration but it proceeds by force and coercion against the popular will. Nation building process of earlier eras resembles the process of integration although it has also been described as unification.

Integration has certain structural characteristics. One important feature is that decision making takes place at a collective level (of the integrating states) on the basis of majority or unanimity.² The political process assumes the characteristics of intra-state rather than inter-state politics. The political parties and interest groups willingly work within the

system in order to achieve the goals. The political community at the higher integrated level is based upon the loyalty of its constituent units, eg., historically, the emergence of nation-states involved the transfer of loyalty of the various nationalities to the nation-state. Scholars like Amitai Etzioni have used various terms to describe the dimensions of integration. They are (i) levels of integration, and (ii) scope of integration. The level of integration describes the way in which the areas are organized. It also considers the role of government control of the activities, for example, if an organization possesses considerable freedom from national intervention, there would be high level of integration. The scope of integration refers to the number of areas in which the various governments have to organize together in some way. Such areas may be of lesser importance like postal services or of greater importance like defence or foreign policy.

The integration theories can broadly be divided in three groups. It implies that integration theorists have stressed on three major elements or the conditions of integration. The first group stress on the institutional and political aspects eg. Amitai Etzioni. The second group puts primary stress upon consensus or community in the sense of Tonnies, eg. Professor Karl Deutsch and older funtionalist. The third group is concerned with the integrated pluralist society (a combination of elites group attitudes and the institutional and political framework) eg. Ernst Haas.

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3 Ibid. p. 3
Amitai Etzioni says that integration follows from a process of political unification. He views that a state that has been unified should possess three kinds of integration: it has effective control over the use of means of violence; it has a center of decision making and it has a political identification after integration. These three conditions result in the culmination in the process of political unification. In this, the role of institutions are considered important.

Etzioni was concerned with two things: emergence of elite groups in the new integrated framework, and with the development of various kinds of power to secure the integration process. He distinguished between coercive power i.e. involving the threat or actual use of violence; utilitarian power i.e. the use of economic strengths; and identities power i.e. the use of economic strengths and identitive power i.e. the exploitation of identity of values and attitudes. Each of this types of power would be used together or separately to bring about the institutional and social concentration of the integrating area.

Karl Deutsch has identified different conditions of integration. His focus was more upon the community in a socio-psychological sense-upon something that is analogous with nation to seize integration in a community (i.e. group of peoples). He felt that the attitudes and values of a community also had an impact on the nature of integration (hence the terms socio-

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6 Ibid. p. 37-38.
psychological community is used. He was influenced by the work of nineteenth century sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnes in taking his stand. Tonnes distinguished between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft meaning community and society respectively. 8

Gemeinschaft (meaning community) contained people who were bound together by common loyalties and sympathies. They performed the task of their group out of a sense of duty and they had a feeling of kinship among themselves. Gesellschaft, meaning society, on the other hand was characterized by a far greater competitiveness. The membership was maintained by individuals through the efficient performance of tasks. The actions resulted from contracts rather than a sense of duty. A Gesellschaft was much like a business firm while Gemeinschaft was more like a Church or nation.

Deutsch has discussed two major conditions to integration. In a pluralistic security community, many communities exist in a country. Many attitudes and values were found in the country. As such violent resolution of conflicts between such communities was unlikely. Conflicts could be resolved through negotiations. The second was the amalgamated security community. It existed when within a single political framework, there was a community in the Gemeinschaft sense as suggested by Tonnes.

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An amalgamated security community was analogous with a nation-state. Hence, it would pave way to integration.

Another approach of integration has been provided by Ernst B. Hass. He belongs to the Neofunctionalist school. He has reformulated the older functionalist ideas. His arguments are based upon the pluralist model of society and says that the society is made up of competing interest groups. Integration was obtained when groups were able to compete for their different interests in a common institutional and political framework. Hass has emphasized on the dynamic forces of integration. They have tried to understand the causative links between one stage of integration and the next stage. They talk that because of spillover, integration in one area might contribute to further integration in other area. In this way progressive integration tends to move closer to sovereignty. As the process of integration deepens, the bureaucrats who would learn from the experiences of integration would apply it in other areas.

It has to be emphasized that integration is different from intergovernmental co-operation. Integration entails the creation of a new entity that provides a recognized framework for accommodation among member states on issues relating to mutual exchange of goods, services, persons etc. Integration thus provides information, establishes common

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expectations and assures a level of predictability. Another difference between the two is that the grade of relations between the countries is different in case of integration and co-operation. The organization structures that arrange this relation is also different. While regional cooperation requires a non binding looser level of relations between the participating countries, the regional integration shows a tighter relation and binding decisions can be taken if necessary. Regional integration movements start from the phase of regional cooperation between the countries to the stage of attaining integration. On the other hand “inter-governmental cooperation results from ad-hoc bargaining between sovereign states; it does not necessarily occur within a framework of long term expectation and shared benefits.” Thus the process of regional integration can facilitate inter governmental co-operation among the member states but inter-governmental co-operation may occur in the absence of regional integration schemes.

Regional integration develops in response to international and domestic challenges. The integration among states may take at various levels – regional, hemispherical and global.

The process of integration can be characterized as regional (Regional Integration) when it takes place among sovereign states that share

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13 Hatipoglu Esra, "Regional Cooperation Between the Central Asian Republics and Integration Movements", Eurasian Studies, Vol. 17, Spring Summer, 2000, p. 50.
15 Ibid.
a widely recognized geographical identity, such as a common body of land or water. An example is the case of North America or Western Europe. Instances of Regional Integration are European Union, North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA) etc.

Integration at hemispherical or global level has not taken place so far. The concept of Western Hemisphere Free Trade Area (WHFTA) comprising of the North and South Americas is being mooted. Likewise globalization aims to integrate the world at global level into a global village. Regional integration as process means multiple integrations between involved actors with regard to broad span of issues and concerns.

APPROACH TO STUDY REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The theories of regional integration have been evolved by the functionalist school (David Mitrany). It was carried further by the Neofunctionalists like Ernst Haas, Leon Linbding etc.\(^{16}\)

The functionalist strategy suggests that regional integration should be arrived at gradually through non political co-operative organization in economic, technical, scientific, social and external sectors. Along with the neofunctionalists they argue that these non-political cooperative organizations could cause a trigger mechanism that would spill over from one area of cooperation to another and in this way it would deepen the

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bonds of integration. It may lead to growing general interest in matters of integration. Once this interest is translated into interaction it becomes associated with political decision making at a common level and may pave the way for regional integration. This model is justified by the case of European integration. European political co-operation since the first quarter of the last century paved the way for the Maastricht Treaty of 1991. The Maastricht Treaty, also known as the Treaty of European Union (TEU) came into force on November 1, 1993. It envisaged the fusion of economic and monetary union and the political union apart from revising the earlier treaties. The Maastricht Treaty added two new pillars of co-operation i.e. common foreign and security policy and justice and home affairs.

The Third World’s (i.e. Developing World), most successful regional organisation, ASEAN, owes its success to its network of close political cooperation.

ELEMENTS OF INTEGRATION

The integration of various nation states into regional umbrella may be due to various international and domestic factors. As such regional integration has many dimensions or elements. The various criteria for regional integration are:-

(i) Geographical,

(ii) Economic,

(iii) Security Concerns,

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MODEL FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION

NON POLITICAL COOPERATIVE ORGANISATION
EXAMPLE, IN ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL
SCINETIFIC ETC SECTORS

TRIGGER MECHANISM

CAUSES SPILLOVER FROM ONE AREA OF COOPERATION TO ANOTHER

DEEPENS THE BONDS OF INTEGRATION/COOPERATION

LEADS TO GROWING GENERAL INTEREST IN MATTERS OF INTEGRATION

INTEREST RESULTS IN INTERACTIONS

RESULTS IN POLITICAL DECISION MAKING OF VARIOUS STATES AT A COMMON LEVEL

RESULTS IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION
(iv) Political,
(v) Cultural and Social,
(vi) Technical, etc.

In most cases of integration there is a mixture of abovementioned factors.

(i) Geographical factors

The geographical factors play a pivotal role in regional integration, due to the following reasons:

a) regional integration takes place in an identifiable geographic area.
b) geographic regions reflect common concerns (functional concern)
c) geographic proximity imparts certain geographical and geostrategic significance to international regions.

Every geographic area is susceptible to the forces of integration and disintegration. The geographic theory based on this idea was developed in the early 1950’s by Gottmann (1951, 52), Hirtshorne (1950) and Jones (1950).

Jean Gottmann analysed the “functional integration of political regions through an ongoing process of pull and push between forces of cohesion and separation”.18 Gottmann is of the opinion that regional integration is based on two factors (a) movement and (b) iconography. In this approach, movement includes all exchanges throughout the world whether of people, commodities or ideas. Iconography is a system of

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symbols in which people believe, encompassing elements of national feeling from the state flag to the culture transmitted through the states schools. These two factors oppose one another and the regional integration is the balance achieved between stability and instability.

According to Hartshorne, the fundamental process of a state is to bind together its various social and territorial segments into a unit. While social groups are integrated vertically, a region is integrated horizontally or regionally or spatially. Of these two, social integration is not a part of Political Geography.

Regional integration, according to Hartshorne, depends on two factors: centripetal and centrifugal. When the centripetal forces (integrating force) is greater than the centrifugal force (disintegrating force) regional integration is strengthened. Otherwise disintegration results.

(ii) Economic Factors

Economic integration may be defined as a series of voluntary decision by previously sovereign states to remove barriers to the mutual exchange of goods, services, capital or persons.

The economic integration may be in the form of 'free trade area', 'Customs Unions' or 'common market'. 'Free trade' area means the removal of barriers for the exchanges of goods alone. 'Custom Union' includes erection of common external tariff apart from the criteria used

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20 Ibid.
for free trade area. 'Common market' means that all the barriers to the free flow of all factors of production especially services and capital should be removed.

The economic parameters of the integrating states should be homogenous so that common economic issues can be sorted out. In this regard, the Central Asian countries represent a homogenous group. Economic reforms in the Central Asian republics are required in the basic spheres: institutional reforms in the sphere of property, changes in the function of the state, formation of market environment, creation of a new money – credit mechanism, tax and budget reforms, reforms in the foreign economic sphere etc.\(^{21}\)

It is also important that for deepening of the integration process in a region, efforts should be concentrated in most priority area of economic interaction. In the case of Central Asian countries two major directions of common economic interaction can be identified. These are (i) joint use of water and power resources and (ii) in the area of trade and economic cooperation.\(^{22}\)

(iii) **Political Factors.**

Regional integration involves crucial political considerations. Whatever may be the motive for integration-economic, security etc., there are important political matters that are at stake. Any concrete step towards intense and diversified integration is based upon political will. More

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\(^{22}\) Leila Muzaparora, “Economic Integration in Central Asia: Problem and Prospects”. 12
### Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organizations

#### Core Area of Interaction

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<th>Traditional Threats</th>
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<td>1. Secessionism</td>
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<td>2. Separatism</td>
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<td>3. Irredentism</td>
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<td>4. Extremist nationalism</td>
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<tr>
<th>Economic Incentive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cross-border trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Intra-state investment</td>
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<td>3. Exchange of resources</td>
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<td>4. Sustainable economic development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Strategic Incentive</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Prevention of state contraction</td>
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<td>2. Regime Status auo</td>
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<td>3. Mutual recognition of state sovereignty</td>
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<td>4. Check American hegemony</td>
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<th>Non-Traditional Threats</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Radical Islamism</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Terrorism</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Drug trafficking</td>
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<td>4. Kidnapping &amp; Extortion</td>
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importantly, the implementation of the policy measures is by deliberate political decision making.

(iii) **Security Concerns:**

Concern over regional security issues are also an important criteria in regional integration. After the end of the Second World War, there was a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Some security considerable concern over security issues because of the emergence of two new superpowers in the form of United States of America (USA) and the organizations that were formed during that time include the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949) and Warsaw Treaty Organization (1955).

Security factors that lead to regional integration may have both historical and geopolitical dimension. Central Asia has historically and geopolitically always suffered from the outside pressure. Such pressure can prompt the Central Asian countries to unite against outside influences. Involvement of Central Asian countries in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a step in this direction. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is a security organization involving the Central joint border agreement between China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia.

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24 Prior to the formation of Shanghai 5, on 29 March, 1996, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan had signed a wide ranging agreement on the regulation of Economic and Humanitarian Integration. Its broad objectives were establishment of a customs union, development of common energy and transport system and harmonisation of legal systems and co-ordination of foreign policy. It known as Agreement of Four.
Figure showing the interlocking membership of multilateral Euro-Atlantic Security organizations, as in January 2001

OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
EAPC Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PFP Partnership for Peace
EU European Union
WEU Western European Union
CIS Commonwealth of Independent State

Asian countries, Russia and China. It started as Shanghai 5. As a formal multilateral forum, Shanghai 5 owes its origin to the 26th April 1996.

In the beginning, the objectives of the grouping was vague. It committed to establish collectively a range of confidence-building measures in the field of military cooperation along their common borders. As an appendage, the agreement also entrusted the members to “stand against stirring up ethno religious nationalism”. 25

But today, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization has encompassed a wide range of issues under its gambit that includes traditional threats such as secessionism, separatism, irredentism extremist nationalism; non traditional threats like radical Islamism, terrorism, drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion; economic incentives like cross border trade, intra state investment and exchange of resources, sustainable economic development; strategic incentives like prevention of state contraction, regime status quo, mutual recognition of state sovereignty and to check the American hegemony.

The Central Asian countries have experienced significant gains form this organization. For example, although the Central Asian republics have asserted their right to independence from the Soviet Union in recent years, they have refused to recognize any grouping or regions rights to succeed from the main unit. 26 Threats to national sovereignty and

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challenges to majority group dominance have prompted the regimes in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to seek regional cooperation against secessionism. In a nutshell it can be said that the parties in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are giving maximum priority to the strategic partnership.

Even a strong organization like the European Union has taken strong decisions in 2000 in matters of its defence and security. Within the European Union, there were the decisions on the common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which followed the British-French Joint Declaration on European Defence (Saint Malo Declaration of 1998), and those taken at the European Council meetings, under the Portuguese presidency in Santa Marina da Feira in June 2000 and under the French presidency in Nice in December 2000.

The changing geopolitical and geostrategic situations necessitates changes in the security structures in various regions. As such the European security structure has undergone new developments. The chart provided alongside shows the present-European security structure.

(iii) Other Factors

There might be several other factors that motivates integration. These includes social, cultural, technological, ideological factors etc.

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27 The invasion of Batken region of Kyrgyzstan by Islamic militants in the summer of 1999 highlighted such threats.
28 Summary of World Broadcast, SU/3886 G/1, 7 July, 2000.
EXPERIENCE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION FROM DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE WORLD

Integration is a highly persuasive process in the world political system. The emergence of changed world order provides conditions conducive for integration. The process of integration started vigorously after the Second World War (1945). It was largely on regional basis and the greatest advance was made within Western Europe. The regional integration process received a thrust once again after the end of Cold War in 1989. This was because the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 led to the emergence of 'a new world order'. Many new independent countries emerged. Moreover the bipolar world power structure gave way to the unipolar world dominated by the single superpower in the form of United States of America. Thus the countries felt the need to evolve new geostrategic arrangements for their security and other considerations.

There are other factors also that have opened new avenues for regional cooperation. They are

(i) Change in the norms and qualities of international arena like growing international interdependence, expansion of international society, increasing importance of international regimes, alteration in the composition of international actors etc. These developments have profoundly altered the structure and rules of the international system.

(ii) a new agenda for Western Europe i.e. emergence of European unification.
(iii) The growing awareness of what has been labelled as the Pacific century. It is widely believed that the past belonged to the Atlantic Ocean but the present belong to the Pacific ocean.

(iv) North America’s changed geostrategic importance, and

(v) The new efforts made by the Third World countries to overcome the immediate crisis and to visualize their potential for the long term future.

It is under the above mentioned circumstances that the revolutionary process and the working of some prominent regional organizations of the world may be seen.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

The European Union is the most highly developed form of regional organization in the contemporary world. It took the European Union decades to evolve. At present the European Union is a grouping of 15 European countries. It is proposed to be expanded. No final decision has been made on a headquarter for the Union. Meetings of the principal organs take place in Brussels, Luxemburg and Strasbourg.30

(a) Origin and Development

The evolutionary process of the European Union can be understood by the chronological order of treaties.

(i) The Treaty of Paris (1951): This led to the creation of European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952. It provided for pooling of coal and steel production in member-countries and the elimination of all

import duties and quota restrictions on coal, iron ore and scrap on inter
community trade. It was seen as a first step towards a United Europe.\textsuperscript{31} A
common market for coal, steel, iron-ore scarp was established on
February 1, 1953, for steel on May 1, 1953, and for special steel on August
1, 1954. There were six founding members of the ECSC.

(ii) The Treaty of Rome (1951): The success of the ECSC encouraged
efforts to expand the common markets to other areas as well as to achieve
closer political coordination. Consequently the six members of the
ECSC signed two separate Treaties in Rome in March 1957. It created two
more communities; the (a) European Economic Community (EEC) and (b)
European Atomic Energy Commission (EAEC or the Euratom). While the
EEC aimed at establishing a European Customs Union, providing a
common external tariff and a common market with the removal of barriers
to trade among members, the Euratom was established to meet the
growing energy requirements for economic expansion and also for the
peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

(iii) The Merger Treaty (1965): This treaty established a single Council
and a single Commission of the European Treaties. It provided for new
common institutions of the European Communities.

(iv) The Single European Act (SEA 1986)
It amended and complimented the Treaty of Rome. It spelt out the basic
objectives for the integration process through:-

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. p. 181.
1. Completion of the European market and creation of a large economic zone without internal borders by the end of 1992.
2. Strengthening of economic and social cohesion and social policy.
3. Promotion of research and technological development
4. Improvement of the environment, and
5. Progress towards economic and monetary union.\(^{32}\)

(v) **Maastricht Treaty, 1991** Popularity known as the Treaty as European Union (TEU), it revised the earlier treaties and envisaged the fusion of economic and monetary union and the political union. For the political union, any state that wished to become a member of the Union had to satisfy some prerequisites. In the treaty three essentials of a sovereign modern states to which the European Union should aspire were agreed - a currency, responsibility for internal security and external security.

While the Maastricht Treaty entered into force on November 1, 1993, the term European Union (EU) became the accepted designation of the grouping. It was previously known as the European Community.\(^{33}\)

The Treaty of Nice introduced the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It can be considered the first step on the path to a future constitution.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{32}\) These were agreed in the 1992 Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), European Communities, Treaty on European Union.


\(^{34}\) The Treaty of Nice was signed by the President of the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the Commission at Nice on 7th December 2000.
One shortcoming of the European Union is that it has embraced only the western part of Europe. A window of opportunity had opened with the end of the division of Europe and Germany in the late 1980's and the early 1990's. The decisions of the European Council meetings in Cologne and Helsinki in 1999 and in Fiera and Nice in 2000 have opened up the Union to the East. 35

(b) **Objective:**

The main objectives of the European Union are:

(i) to strengthen economic and social cohesion,

(ii) to establish economic and monetary union, ultimately including a single territory:

(iii) to implement a common foreign and security policy,

(iv) to have a citizenship of the union, and

(v) to develop a close cooperation in judicial and home affairs.

(c) **Activities of EU:** the most significant economic activities of the EU have been the establishment of a single internal market, progress towards the economic and monetary union, the establishment of the European Monetary Union (EMU) and the formulation of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

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35 Apart from the 15 current members, 12 European states have entered negotiation on admission: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA)

(a) **Origin and development**: NAFTA grew out of the Canada – US Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA). CUFTA was approved in 1988 and initiated in January 1989. Its provisions were extended to Mexico.

The pact of NAFTA was reached in August 1992 and the formal agreement was signed by the leaders of the three countries in December 1992. NAFTA came into effect in January 1, 1994.

(b) **Objective**: The objective of NAFTA are to eliminate tariffs and others trade barriers on products and services passing between USA, Canada and Mexico. It eventually aims to create the largest trading block in the world. At present it has population of over 370 million and a combined economic production of US $6 trillion.

(c) **Activities**: Under the NAFTA provisions nearly all restrictions on trade and investment between the signatory countries are to be eliminated over a period of 15 years. Steps have also been taken to ensure duty free access for a vast range of manufactured goods between the signatories.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATIONS (NATO)

NATO brings together 19 countries of Europe and North America for their common security through cooperation and consultation in political, military, economic and scientific fields. It has its headquarters at Brussels (Belgium). NATO was created at the end of the Second World War to overcome the security concern of Western Europe caused by the
growing power of Soviet Union. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established in 1949.

The objectives of the NATO are to provide a system of collective defence in the event of armed attack against any of its member. It is based on the principles of credible deterrence and genuine détente.

Following the collapse of the communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe from 1989 onwards, and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, NATO has undertaken a fundamental transformation of its structure and policies to meet the new security challenges in Europe.\textsuperscript{36}

In the changed global geopolitical situation in the world, NATO, in all likelihood, may undergo an expansion. This is through the principle of inclusiveness that NATO has adopted.\textsuperscript{37} However, the NATO is cautious and balanced in its attempt to enlarge and has made no specific commitments. In 2000, the NATO reaffirmed its commitments to remain open to new members; however, it put stronger emphasis on the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process. The MAP helps nine aspirant countries in their efforts to prepare for possible future membership.\textsuperscript{38}

**SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)**

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was launched on June 15, 2001. The Presidents of China, Russia and four Central Asian


\textsuperscript{38} Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Silorenia.
countries – Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan – met in the Chinese city of Shanghai to sign a declaration establishing the new regional body to “promote peace, stability, economic and trade ties”. They also signed the Shanghai convention on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism. Five out of the six members of the SCO were already part of the Shanghai Five that was set up in 1996. Uzbekistan which stayed away from the Shanghai Five was the sixth entrant. It took five years of understanding and cooperation to convert the Shanghai Five to Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The Shanghai Five strengthened confidence building measures and brought reduction of tension and initiated demilitarization along the border.39

The Shanghai summit was attended by the presidents, foreign ministers and defence ministers of the members countries. They decided upon the objectives and agenda for collaboration of the SCO. The then President of China, Jiang Zemin put forward a four point proposal.40 Firstly, that the SCO should recognize the differences the member nations in order to find ways to adapt to each other’s unique characteristics. Secondly, an anti terrorist centre should be established as soon as possible. Thirdly, the six countries should carry forward the spirit of unity to solve problems through friendly consultation; and, lastly the organisation must adhere to the principle of being open, that is it should

not be aligned to any particular country. It was also decided that the foreign and defence ministries would meet once a year.\textsuperscript{41}

Shanghai Cooperation Organization is hailed as a new model of regional organization. It is more of a partnership than an alliance. The Bangkok based Asia Times called the SCO, an agreement that is "useful to all the three parties involved: China, Russia and the former Soviet Central Asian republics".\textsuperscript{42} This is based on delicate equilibrium of power between the participants in which nobody can assume hegemony. While Russia and China balance off each other, the Central Asian states will ensure that this continues. This is for the first time that an attempt to cope with the geopolitical vacuum in Central Asia is being made without discounting Russia. In fact no one Central Asian State has the power to ward off Russian domination.\textsuperscript{43}

It is too early to predict whether the SCO will emerge as a new model of regional cooperation and organization on the world scene that will counter balance the US domination in the world.\textsuperscript{44} It has however a impressive track-record in the formative phase (1996-2001) which witnessed the transformation of Shanghai Five into SCO.

\textbf{Analysis:} The abovementioned experience/examples of the working of the regional organisations have been cited to give a comparative analysis of the

\textsuperscript{42} Francesco Sisci, "Shanghai Spirit may Haunt Asia", \textit{Asia Times}, online, 23\textsuperscript{rd} June, 2001.
\textsuperscript{43} Website: Russian. Observer.com 17 June 2001.
varied nature of the these regional organization and the conditions that have necessitated the evolution of these organizations. It also justifies the necessity of a regional integration framework for the erstwhile Soviet Central Asian Republics. The examples of regional organizations can also indicate the process, steps and directions in which the Central Asian integration framework could emerge. Of the above mentioned examples the European Union fulfils the economic as well as the political requirements of Europe while the NATO guarantees a security system in its region. As the concerns for Central Asia are wider and encompasses political, security, economic etc dimensions, a holistic and comprehensive framework of an cooperative integrative mechanism can be evolved for the region.

**TYPES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

Manfred Wilhelmy stresses that there are relative ups and downs inherent in the process of regional integration. Integration takes place through a pattern of challenge and response i.e. to overcome the regional problems, the concerned countries respond by cooperating among themselves. The efforts for regional integration emerges as a reaction to the given needs and situations. Due to the transformation in the international arena, three different types of regional integration may be identified. They are:

1. **Integration that is similar to World System in itself:** This type of regional integration constitutes in itself an international system. These are very powerful regional organizations and have great bargaining power.
in international relations. A classic example of this type is the European Union. Even in the early stages of its evolutionary processes, it was an important player in the international chess board. Other examples includes NATO, Warsaw Pact etc. This type of integration scheme enters the international stage as a competitor or a counterweight to the big powers.45

Implications: This types of integration will remain a rare case. The European Union will probably remain the only organization that can alter or co structure the new world order. This type stimulates integration in other parts of the world. This type of integration may not arrive at in other parts of the world, apart from West Europe because the economic, political and cultural conditions are not at a homogenously higher level of attainment.

(2) Meso level integration operating within a pre existing international division of power: This type of integration operates as smaller component within a pre existing international division of power. Such integration operates at meso level and these have little bargaining power in the international politics. These organizations may be dependent on or may have allegiance to the bigger regional organization. The various regional organizations of Asia, Africa, Latin America belong to this type of integration.

The main task of this type of integration is to harmonize developmental strategies between the different countries of a group. In addition, it also creates larger market and makes feasible joint economic efforts, enlarge collective self-reliance, guarantees identity and relative autonomy, ensures collective security to the countries, ensures viability of smaller states and achieves a better representation of its own interest vis-a-vis international powers. The Central Asian countries of the erstwhile Soviet Union can be put in this group.

The purpose of this type of integration is the same as the earlier scheme i.e. to present a common political, strategic, economic and decision making process. But the method/process regarding how to achieve this may be different. Therefore the countries of this type of grouping interpret the concept of integration differently according to their needs and requirements. Since this type of integration scheme is an organization of relatively less developed countries than the earlier type there may be irritant in the integration process. For example efforts for regional integration in Africa is hampered by its insignificance in the international economic and national fields. Ethnic divide and protracted nationalism also poses difficulties in integration efforts. The Asian countries while discussing regional cooperation emphasis on political stability and security as these issues are of immediate concerns to them.\(^{46}\)

\(^{46}\) Ibid.
Implications: Different forms of meso level integration schemes will remain the normal working unit of regional integration is most parts of the world. If at a later time, this type of integration is strengthened, it may become linked to the international system.

(3) Globalization oriented integration: This type of regional integration deals with the present day efforts at global integration that is emerging in the international system because of globalisation. This type of integration has a tendency to restructure the international system. It makes all the countries of the world inter dependent upon each other.

While traditional integration says that there should be internal coherence among countries, this new type of integration emphasizes on global connections which is farther, faster and deeper.\(^{47}\) It provides that there can be integration without a comprehensive regional organization. The earlier two types of integration is characterized by extensive contracts, linkages and interdependence within regions. Examples of this type of integration includes the big economic power constellations in Europe, North America and Asia. In East Asia, integration is developing at a rapid rate even though there are no regional organization there. Palmer calls this as "new regionalism".\(^{48}\) Guillermo Ordnats describes this new integration as de facto integration which is achieved through effective economic


relations. There are very few institutional sub structure like technical secretariat. Instead, there are collective authorities at the executive level who decided on policy issues. This type of integration is still in the state of development.49

EVOLUTION OF REGIONAL INTERGRATION

Integration is a complex process. By comparing the commonalities and variations of regional integration form different regions of the world, an identifiable pattern emerges which can be organized in a systematic manner. These patterns can be grouped under three separate heads.

I. Conceptualization or regional integration efforts,

II. Implementation, and

III. Development and expansion 50

I. CONCEPTUALISATION: This is the initial stage of the process of integration. The Government of the concerned countries discuss the why and how of integration.

1. The path towards regional integration should be selected based on the careful study of the integration schemes around the world.

   This is the planning stage of integration. The leaders think over what kind of integration is needed for the region. The likely areas of cooperation between countries is also assessed. The potential problems and opportunities are assessed in advance because regional integration is a

complex and cumbersome process. Thus this stage is the preparatory stage in which a comparative study of regional integration scheme in other parts of the world should be done.

(2) Integration requires political motivation and political will. There should be a rational assessment of national interests before embarking on integration process.

Regional integration develops upon political foundations. Integration is not only an economic or security enterprise, rather it also has a political component. For example, the foundation of European Union was based on two political goals i.e. Containing a post war Germany and the communist block. It gives the momentum and power to the long drive toward integration.

For integration to take place, there should be a recognized convergence of political interests of all the participating states. All partners must understand and acknowledge the interest of other states. Not only this, there should be a realization and anticipation among all the partners that their interests shall get a boost as a result of integration. It other words integration should create a win-win political situation.

The above mentioned fact can be understood by an example. MERCOSUR and NAFTA are organisation of South America and North America respectively. Both have a clear political basis. While MERCOSUR aims at promotion of peace (among rival sub regional
powers) and democracy, NAFTA too has strong geographical motivation. It keeps these two blocks to move towards integration. On the other hand the Enterprises for the Americas Initiative (EAI) does not have any political orientation. Therefore the EAI has not become a genuine contender for regional integration.

3. Regional integration should be a part of overall development strategy. It should also strengthen ties with the global community. Regional integration is not a panacea that can solve all the problems confronting a region. Integration can be only one key element in the overall strategy for achieving economic, social and political development. It cannot be the only strategy for regional development. Integration should operate as an open system. While it develops close bonds within the countries of the region, it also seeks to strengthen relations between members states and other regions of the world. Integration in Central Asia should therefore be conceived as an instrument that should improve the region’s insertion into the world economy.

4. Opportunities for regional integration should be seized as and when they appear. 1990’s represent a unique phase in the world geostrategic situation. It has provided a “window of opportunity” to pursue integration in Central Asia. The countries of this region has emerged as independent political entities, the cold war has ended, the USA has

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emerged as the world's sole superpower and Japan and Europe have emerged as economic superpowers.

Although the conditions at the moment is very promising for integration, yet there are negative factors as well. Ethnic tensions are increasing, there is struggle for leadership between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, increasing American influence in the region may hamper integration tendencies etc. are some of the various negative tendencies in the region. Either of these issues could paralyse the movement towards regional integration in the Central Asian region.

All these considerations indicate that efforts towards integration should not be delayed. When the opportunities for integration emerge, it should be encashed. Apart from this, there should also be contingency plans for transformation as the circumstances change.

II IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is the second stage in the integration process. When all the partners agree to create favourable steps for integration, the need for an organizational structure is felt that is capable of taking decisions and implementing it.

5. In the early stage of the integration process, institutions should be created that are flexible, dynamic and open ended (receptive to change). Institutions are successful in coordinating government's policies of
various states in various areas like economic, political etc. It creates pressures on governments to align their polices.

Movement towards integration almost always begins at the top and not at the grass root level. Initially, there is a small cadre of political elites who press for integration. They need time and discretionary authority to establish the foundation of integration. So the institutional machineries should develop gradually according to the needs of the member countries. Hyperinstitutionalization can impede integration rather than advance it. There may emerge a temptation to establish a complete layers of government institutions in an effort to increase the process of integration. Experience shows that they impede the integration process.

Thus, a paradoxical situation emerges. When the opportunities for integration arise, it should be started immediately. But once the process of integration has started it should be moved slowly and with caution in response to the evolving needs.

The experience from the successful regional organizations across the world shows that institution has been a vital component in the early state of their evolution. MERCOSUR had a modest level of institutionality. NAFTA too had a very modest nature of institutions, which played the role of dispute resolution. In the case of ALALC/ALADI

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in Latin America, the lack of institution has been a major handicap. Likewise, a premature over-development of institutions has intensified problems for the Andean Pact.

In the long run the institutions should be fair, transparent and democratic.

6. The decision making process should be effective and authoritative. The decisions should be binding on all the countries of the organization. In the early stages of integration, the decision should be taken on consensus. Thus even the smaller members of the regional group can have a say. But as the integration scheme progresses, unanimous decision (through consensus) can become problematic. At this stage, as important decisions have to be taken (since the integration is expanding), decision making should be authoritative. The European Union has adopted qualified majority voting system.

Domination of the organization by the stronger states of the group can be detrimental to the integration process. There should be a mechanism to accommodate the preferences of the weak states. At present, there is a struggle for leadership between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the Central Asian region. Whoever emerges the leader, it should not undermine the aspiration of weak states like Tajikistan.

7. The member states must share the elements of national sovereignty with each other in the group. With the passage of time as the integration deepens in its impact and widens in its scope, the need for a supranational
decision-making is felt. Supranational decision making obliges member states to concede some of its sovereign authority to a body. Thus the individual member states surrender part to their sovereign rule over their national territory or society. 55

8. The opinion of the common people should be known.

The experience from the European Union shows that the common people do not have the opportunity to express their opinion about integration. Debates and seminars held on the Treaty of Maastricht reveal a difference of opinion between the political elites and the general masses. The European Union has taken measures to narrow this gap.

The Central Asian countries should take step to avoid the appearance of this problem. It may involve public education, referendum etc.

9. The social groups that incur loss from regional integration should be adequately compensated.

Regional integration provides political and economic benefits to all the member nations. However, there can be a certain short-term hardships to certain social groups. The trade union may suffer initial losses. They should be adequately compensated.

III. DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

10. New problems arising as a result of integration process should be dealt properly. Many new problems may emerge due to regional integration. These should be dealt tactfully. Unauthorized and illegal

migration across the international border may increase. People of Slav origin have migrated out of Kyrgyzstan to Russia. Environmental degradation may intensify. The Central Asian region already faces the problem of shrinking of Aral Sea. Anti social and criminal activity may increase. Highly sophisticated form of white collar crimes may emerge, like transnational frauds on security market. These are extremely difficult to detect. Traditional forms of illegal activity are likely to flourish in the changed environment.

Even as these new challenges emerge, the law enforcement mechanism may be diminished. Reduction of border control makes it difficult for the respective governments to check criminal activities. Extradition of criminals may become difficult, as there exists confusion regarding sovereignty. A supranational judicial authority may not exist to check these new problems as there exists international cooperation on criminal law enforcement. It furthers adds to the ambiguous nature of the new problems arising as a result of integration.

11. Effort should be taken to enlarge the regional grouping. The processes and procedures of expansion should be given a thought. Successful integration scheme face the pressure for enlargement. In the 1960’s and 70’s during the peak of cold war, the European Community faced the pressure for enlargement. It expanded by defining its boundaries according to the exigencies of the cold war. The criteria chosen for accession was political democracy and a pre-western foreign policy.
The countries of the Central Asian region may also face the problem of expansion in the near future if the situation changes. To counter the problems of international terrorism, the regional organization called Shanghai-5, now renamed as Shanghai Co-operation Organization has emerged. May be in future, the integration in the Central Asian states might include China as well. Another expansion effort may include Caucasus republics since there is commonality over issues like oil and natural gas.

12. There should be sound political criteria, preferably political democracy, for admission of new member into a regional grouping. The imposition of political criteria for membership in an organization is a crucial issue. There should be political compatibility among the member states for a grouping to survive successfully. In the cold war era, anti-communism was a factor that provided political compatibility in the western world. In the new world order, the political democracy is considered ideal criteria for accession. The countries of the Central Asian region are on the path of democracy.

As the process of integration generates momentum, it encounters pulls and pressures from the member states on various issues. These can be overcome by collective solutions through deeper policy coordination and harmonization. A supranational institution that acts like an impartial regional authority can help the countries to arrive at a common solution. Deliberate efforts should be made to tackle the less problematic issues.
first, like the protection of commonly shared environment issues.\textsuperscript{56} As these issues get resolved, an understanding develops among the countries of the group. Only then should the more trickier issues be tackled. In this way the process of regional integration will deepen. In this context it should be suggested that the Central Asian States should tackle the issues of environmental degradation and river water sharing first and then solve the contentious issues like border problem, ethnic problems etc.

14. The concept used in the integration process should be used specifically.

The concepts like deepening and widening of regional integration should be used correctly. As mentioned in the earlier point, deepening means that better understanding develops among the member countries on a variety of issues. As against this widening means, inclusion of new members in the group. It thus appears that it is not viable to pursue widening without deepening.

15. Non-member states should also be given due weightage in the regional integration scheme. The regional integration schemes can survive and prosper only if there exist a supportive economic and political environment in the surrounding areas. For this, the member states should give due respect to the ideas and policies of the neighboring and surrounding countries.

\textsuperscript{56} The environmental issues tend to be highly conflictual. There are instances when the environment problems discourages cooperation like concerns about cross border pollution such as acid rain etc.
REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA: REASONS

Even since the Central Asian countries emerged as independent countries, this region has attained a geostrategically critical position in the regional as well as world politics. "The region due to several crucial factors assumes strategic significance in its own rights, and therefore, it cannot be treated simply in the context of the end of the cold war". 57 Central Asia can no longer be treated as a buffer zone of the 18th and 19th century. A stable Central Asia would be congenial to regional security. The vast oil and gas wealth has enhanced the significance of this region. The problem of ethnicity and nationalization is of transnational character. Economic growth and development is also a common problem. Regional integration creates a good opportunity for bringing stability in the region.

The compelling need for a workable regional cooperation among the Central Asian States has been felt. The debate now focuses on what form of regional integration should take place. Doubts have already arisen whether the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) would be a suitable platform for intensive cooperation among the successor states of Soviet Union. 58 When the CIS was formed in December 1991, it was hoped that it would generate a single economic territory. Mainly due to its decision making process, the CIS has not been successful in

57 Stobdan P; "Central Asia in Geopolitical Transition": Strategic Analysis Vol. XXII, No. 1, April 1998, p. 95.
maintaining a commonwealth of states. The CIS is divided into three distinct sections.

(a) A nucleus consisting of Russia and the European states,
(b) A second section consisting of Caucasus republics, and
(c) A third section consisting of the Central Asian states.

Under these circumstances it seems unlikely that CIS will develop as an integration project since the nature of problem is diverse in these three different sections. It thus necessitates close co-operation below the level of CIS.

The critics and sceptics of Central Asian integration have indirectly indicated that the future of integration in Central Asia depends mostly on the wisdom, willingness and readiness of the leaders and policy makers in these countries to translate the idea of integration into political action. Nationalism and regionalism have emerged strongly in these countries and it is the responsibility of the leaders to give it a proper shape. Nationalism is not one sided phenomena. Rather it is a multifaceted phenomena. Panarin has described the cultural dualism of Central Asia. The population of the Central Asian region is divided between the spheres of industrial and pre-industrial (agrarian) civilization. The habitat of the first civilization is a space for modernisation... the habitat of the later
civilization in the realm of tradition. In Panarin’s views the industrialized parts of Central Asia will be predisposed toward the industrial civilization of Russia, while the agrarian part will lean toward the Muslim East. If dual oriented communities can co-exist within a particular nation, then pluralistically identified national communities can also co-exist as a community within the entire region. Benedict Anderson has referred to it as imagined communities. Co-operation and integration among these countries should not be a major problem.

The British geographer Mackinder was perhaps the first scholar who indicated the potential powers of the vast region named by him ‘Heartland of Euro Asia’ (The present Central Asia constitutes an important part of this Heartland) due to its ‘population, wheat, cotton, fuel and metals so incalculably great, that it is inevitable that a vast economic world, more or less apart, will there develop inaccessible to oceanic commerce.

According to Mackinder’s conception, railways should determine the future of the Heartland. Despite the inaccessibility of sea ports, Central Asia now seems capable of developing land-based transport and pipe-line communication to a degree that will satisfy strategic interests in the

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extension of economic, political, cultural and other ties, both with neighboring countries and throughout the world. Mackinder predicted -

Who rules East Europe rules the Heartland
Who rules Heartland commands the World Island
Who rules World Island commands the world. 62

Paraphrasing Mackinder one can now agree with reasonably high degree of accuracy that who rules Central Asia commands the Heartland. Central Asia has again become the areas of so called ‘Big Game’. The current Big Game has several dimensions. One important dimension is that Central Asian States were ridding themselves of the image of ‘Buffer Zone States’. Buffer states are formed when two powers begin to approach one another's peripheral territory. 63 Thus a Buffer Zone is formed in the periphery as in the case of Central Asia between Russia and British India. Buffer Zones were phenomena of the nineteenth century.

The Central Asian countries no longer accept this image and are hence aspiring on the one hand, to develop their relations with great powers as well as with regional powers, and, on the other hand, to create a wide network of communication systems such as highways, railroads, oil and gas pipelines in order to gain access to sea ports and world trade. 64 An example is the newly constructed railway branch between Tedjen-Serahs (Turkmenistan) and Meshed-Bender Abbas (Iran). In February 1998, a

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strategically important agreement was signed between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China on the creation of the new highway and railroad connecting Tashkent Andijan (Uzbekistan), Osh (Kyrgyzstan) and Kashgar (China) – the initiation of a ‘transcontinental bridge’ connecting Europe with the eastern parts of China. The Western end-point of this road will be Istanbul (Turkey) and the eastern end-point is to become Beijing (China). Among several possible projects concerning transport and communication to the south are the following: a highway between Termez (Uzbekistan) Kabul (Afghanistan) Peshawar and Karachi (Pakistan); highway from Osh (Kyrgyzstan) to Khorog (Tajikistan) and Dushanbe to Khorog followed by the Vakhan Corridor (Afghanistan) and Karakorum Highway leading from China to Karachi (Pakistan) and Termez (Uzbekistan) to Mazar-i-Sharif, Meymene and Herat (Afghanistan) to Quetta and Karachi (Pakistan). 65

With their huge economic, political, cultural and scientific potential as well as their natural resources, transport and other kinds of infrastructure, one can understand the resistance of the governments of the Central Asian states to the establishment of hegemony or domination by any one external power. For this reason one should carefully consider Zbigniew Brzezinski’s optimism that “the United States in now able for the first time to inject its political presence in the new post-Soviet republics of Euraisa, all the way to the frontiers of China, as well as to

65 Ibid.
dominate the Persian Gulf region on the Southern fringes of Eurasia”.

The USA is still struggling to have a dominating influence in the region.

Central Asia may be the pivotal region in the strategy of countries like USA, Russia, China, European countries etc.

As far as the Central Asian countries are concerned, they would like to involve as many powers rather than be dominated by a few. Some countries like the USA and the Russian Federation intend to maintain their strategic presence in the region, some other countries have access to the gas, oil and other natural resources of the region. In these conditions, Brzezinski recommends the creation of "a stable continental equilibrium, with the United States as the political arbiter. Access to resources and sharing their potential wealth represents objectives that stir national ambitions, motivates corporate interests, rekindles historical claims, revives imperial aspirations, and fuel international rivalries."

The present ‘Big Game’ in Central Asia is based on national ambitions, corporate interests of various countries, historical claims, imperial aspirations and international rivalries. The Big Game or Great Game has attached multiple power interests in the region. As such new security challenges for the countries of Central Asia have emerged. This 'security complex' viewed by Buzan is "a group of states whose primary

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security concerns linking together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another. Security complexes are an empirical phenomenon with historical and geopolitical roots. Historically and geopolitically, Central Asia has always suffered from outside pressure. Such pressures can promote Central Asian countries to unite against outside influences in the present situation.

Central Asia is likely to play an active part in the global geopolitical restructuring which is to take place in the 21st century. The revitalized concept of the fundamental geopolitical dualism-Atlantism versus Eurasian continentalism – and its projection into the future is a reason for such anticipation.

The region has always been integrated in one form or another but modern integration in Central Asia is relatively new phenomena. The huge set of new political and economic factors such as the search for regional and national identity by the people in the area, the new Great Game in Central Asia which is multilateral and multi dimensional, the legacy of the recent Soviet past, the emerging new post cold war order etc. together play a systematic roles is shaping the future of the region.

Occasionally, the argument arises that it is too early to start the process of regional integration. One view suggests that national integration within the existing boundaries should be the first step. Upon

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closer examination, this argument lacks validity as the problem in Central Asia is of transnational character. Thus national consolidation without a broad regional cooperation is bound to fail. Without regional integration there is no possibility of stabilizing the individual nation states in Central Asia. Currently the Central Asian States have much in common that would facilitate comprehensive cooperative efforts. These factors are:-

I. Political, economic, social and cultural environment of these countries have been shaped by 70 years of communities

II. Russian is the language of all these countries. The countries have shown tendencies towards promoting their respective language.

III. The Central Asian countries have comparable economic positions. No country has definite edge over other economies in this region. The World Bank has classified these countries as low middle income countries.

IV. The economy of these countries is very much dependent on primary goods and their exports.

V. Regional integration is also based on countries common heritage. The concept of a United States of all Turkic people in the region dates back to the czarist rule. In the early years of Soviet Union, Central Asia was governed as the Autonomous Soviet Republics of Turkistan. The countries were divided in separate republics only in 1925.
VI. Due to overlapping areas of ethnic settlements within Central Asia, the creation of homogenous ethnic units is not possible. Thus the process of regional integration may be able to prevent situation similar to those in former Yugoslavia.

**GEOSTRATEGY**

The term "Geostrategy" is derived from the two Greek words "Geo" and "Strategy". Geo means earth while strategy originally means the art of the generals. In the wider context of the discipline it has been broadened to include the art of admiral and air commander also. This is the classic approach of geostrategy and is related with war and its associated aspects like planning and preparation. The word geostrategy is so dynamic and pregnant with application that it is applied to many other competitive situations like commerce, games etc.

Geostrategy is the art of employing all elements of the power of nation or nations (put collectively) to accomplish the objectives of a nation or an alliance in the situation of peace or war. It involves close integration of economic, political, cultural, social, moral, spiritual and psychological power. In other words geostrategy means making strategy by a country or group of countries for a spatial/territorial area in such a manner so as to contain the strength-military, economic or otherwise of its adversary.

The evolution of the concept of geostrategy can be traced back to the earlier geopolitical theories. The Heartland and Rimland theories are
based on the simpler assumption of the unity of space. While Mackinder said that the power that would control the pivot area would command the world, Spykman argued that the Rimland (that is the Inner Crescent of Mackinder) world neutralize the power of the Heartland. Saul Cohen in his book “Geography and Politics in a World Divided” (1973) has exposed the unity myth of the early geopoliticians. Cohen feels that there is not a strategic unity of space (like the Pivot area or Inner Crescent), rather there are separate blocks in a fundamentally divided World.70

**Geostrategic Regions**

According to R.J. Johnston Geostrategic regions are the “large scale international regions comprising group of states sharing common political and economic philosophy”.71 S.B. Cohen has provided a two-fold division of the world in geostrategic regions in the context of the Cold War. These geostrategic regions are functionally defined and express the interrelations of a large part of the world. The trade dependent maritime world constitutes the first geostrategic region. It comprises Western Europe, the Americans and most of Africa and Australia. This region has been held together by a complex network of maritime trading links. The Eurasian continental world is the second geostrategic region. It is based on ideology as a cohesive unit. The East European countries and the Soviet Union were the primary constitutes of this block.

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The collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990-91 into 15 independent republics has made this two fold division meaningless.

It is in this context (of independencies) that the 5 Central Asian States of the erstwhile Soviet Union (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan) gain importance as a geostategic region. All these countries are committed to introducing market economics. It thus indicates attempts to shift from the earlier ideology based geostrategic region to the trade dependent geostrategic region.\footnote{Ibid.}

After nearly three quarters of a century of Soviet domination, Central Asia has emerged as a sensitive region in World politics. The independence of these countries has presented Asia and the world with a new and challenging geopolitical, geo-economic and geostrategic reality. Culturally, the region is very rich. Therefore, Central Asia refers to not only a geographical and political concept but to a civilisational and historical aspect as well. It is located at the intersection of different civilizations i.e. Persian, Indian, Chinese, European, Turkic and Arabic.