Chapter Five

COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM: ROLE OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
The end of Cold War marked a spectacular change in the nature of the international system. While the old paradigm of international relations based on superpower rivalries came to an end, a new form of danger emerged, which threatened the stability of international order and peace.

This led to increasing cooperation among the states to tackle the common problems which they faced. It should be noted that trade, tourism, communication and relations in general have on the whole increased. There has also been a growing awareness among the states that as a matter of practical necessity, there has to be a greater degree of cooperation in the utilisation of resources, in the protection of environment and in many other fields.¹

Another essential feature of international relations, after the end of Cold War, is the growing tendency among the states to cooperate with each other, to tackle problems, which are common to them like combating drug trafficking, checking illegal cross-border trade, cross-border terrorism etc. Since no single state has adequate resources to tackle these problems, they generally cooperate with the other states especially the ones which are also facing the same problem. This led to the growth of regional cooperation.

Regional cooperation can be facilitated and strengthened by certain basic elements. First is the sharing of some problems on historical basis. Second, close linkages of between those countries and societies, in other words, recognition of a boundary of the region within which interaction would be more intense than that with the outside world, which may also be termed as regionalisation. Finally, the

emergence of an organisation is giving shape to the region in a legal and institutional sense, and providing some rules of the game within the region the elements of a conscious policy which is central to regionalism.²

The Central Asian republics which attained their independence faced numerous challenges during their initial years of independence. The unstable political system, transitional nature of Central Asian economy due to transition from a command economy of Soviet period to market oriented economy, fragile social structure etc. created some sort of structural imbalances in the political system. Coupled with these, which the Central Asian republics faced during this period were cross-border terrorism, increasing drug trafficking and growth of Islamic militancy. All these problems created a sort of chaotic situation in the Central Asian Republics. As these states were weak politically, economically and militarily, they resorted to cooperation among themselves and with some outside powers to solve their problems. In this context, the chapter will try to assess to what extent the regional cooperation mechanisms that the Central Asian states have developed can solve the complicated problems they are facing from militancy, drug cartels, and cross-border terrorism and arms trade.

**Commonwealth of Independent States**

The formation of Commonwealth of Independent States was a landmark step in the direction of establishment of a regional security mechanism. Soon after the disintegration of Soviet Union, all the 11 countries who initially formed the CIS realised that Russia should play a pivotal role in managing the security of their respective countries. Keeping this objective in mind, CIS came into existence in

December 1991. Soon after its formation, all the five Central Asian countries, decided to join CIS and it culminated, when they signed the treaty on 12 December 1991.

Soon after its formation, the first thing the member of the CIS did was the signing of CIS Treaty on Collective Security. The basic objectives as outlined by CIS were as follows: Article 1 states that the participating states confirm their commitment to refrain from the use of threat of force in inter-state relations. They pledged to resolve all disagreements among themselves and with other state by peaceful means; Article 2 of the treaty states that states will consult with each other on all important question of international security affecting their interests and will coordinate their position on those questions. Under the provision of the Article, the members will activate the mechanism of joint consultations for the purpose of coordinating their positions and taking measures to eliminate the threat that has emerged.3 Under this provision, the member states of Central Asia invoked Collective Security Treaty to combat drug trades, Islamic militancy and other security related problems.

Subsequently, in order to strengthen the Collective Security Treaty, the member countries in their meetings in Tashkent on 6 July 1992, and on 16 July 1992, decided to create a common unified military system, ‘CIS Blue Helmet Force’ for rapid deployment in those areas, which were affected by regional conflict. In Tashkent Conference, Russia announced the allocation of additional military force to protect the border with Iran and Afghanistan. This additional

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military force was to get support from military force of the respective Central Asian countries.⁴

During meetings of the heads of the CIS in Moscow, an agreement was signed on forming coalition defence forces on the territory of republic of Tajikistan. The entire Tajik-Afghan border was divided into zones of responsibility between Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.⁵

At the Minsk Summit of 22 January 1993, a charter for closer political, economic integration and defence alliance among the CIS countries was prepared. Russia, despite its own domestic crisis, maintained that it would continue to guarantee security and stability of the CIS states.⁶

In October 1993, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan signed an agreement on the concept of Military Security of the CIS member states in Bishkek. The document considers “as a major source of potential military threat for member states of the CIS, the instability of the social, economic, military and political situation in a number of regions, the existence of potent military potential in certain states which exceed their defence needs, the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction”.⁷

On February 1995, at a CIS meeting, a declaration of member states on Collective Security Agreement and a Collective Security were adopted. The declaration defines major sources of military danger and factors which might contribute to military dangers evolving into a direct military threat as follows:

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⁴ ITAR-TASS, Moscow, 16 July 1992, rep. in SWB/SU/1436/B/1, 18 July 1992
⁶ Ibid, 1594/C/2, 3 January 1993.
• The buildup of military capabilities in the regions neighbouring member states to limits which disturb the existing balance of forces.

• The formation and training on the territory of other states of armed forces intended for use against member states.

• Inflammable border conflicts and armed provocations from the territory of bordering states.

• The transfer of foreign troops onto territories neighbouring member states.\(^8\)

The security environment around Central Asia underwent a marked change after Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan. Soon after, they encouraged businessmen for trafficking of narcotics and small arms to the neighbouring countries. In this way, Central Asia due to its geographical location became some sort of conduit in trafficking of small arms and narcotics. Not only the then Taliban government encouraged trafficking of narcotics and weapons, but also many radical Islamic groups of Central Asia, took shelter in Afghanistan and tried to destabilise the whole of Central Asian region in the hope of establishing a theocratic Islamic state. This raised anxiety among Central Asian leaders, who felt threatened. It was in this background that the CIS under the leadership of Russia took some active measures to combat these radical elements.

In October 1995, the tenth Conference of International Ministers of the CIS member states was held which ended with the signing of a series of protocols, agreements and documents. The representatives of the 12 states of the member states put their signature to a draft treaty on the procedure for the stationing of, and interaction between, members of the law enforcement bodies of the CIS on the

\(^8\) Ibid, p. 31.
territory of commonwealth member states and to a document on amendments and addenda to the CIS’s Minsk convention of 1993 on legal aid and legal relations on civil, domestic and criminal cases. Describing the significance of these documents, Maj. Gen. Saidaimir Zhukhurov, the Tajik Minister of Internal Affairs said that Yeravan documents would in future help to impose significantly the operational and procedural activities with the framework of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The minister further said that the criminals were not biding time but moving ahead of the law enforcement bodies. He summed up the objective of the meeting that it would enable better coordinated work on major direction of operational activities.9

The Council of the head of CIS Border Troops meeting in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe on 22 December 1995 signed 26 documents coordinating border policy through out the member states and along the Tajik-Afghan frontier. The Deputy Director of the Russian Federal Border Services, identified as Lt. Gen. Alexander Manilov told a news conference that the documents included the Russian-Turkmen agreement on the presence of up to 1000 border guards and Russian military advisers in Turkmenistan and an agreement between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia on cooperation to combat drug trafficking on the Tajik-Afghan border to stem the flow of narcotics from Afghanistan to Russia.10

On 4 September 1996, in Almaty, a CIS Summit on Afghanistan was held in which Russia and four leaders of Central Asian republics, except Turkmenistan, participated. Those leaders, after the Summit declared that UN Security Council should take urgent steps to end the protracted armed conflicts, which were going on in Afghanistan. These leaders also pointed out that conflict in Afghanistan pose

10 Interfax, Moscow, 22 December 1995, rep. in SWB/SU/2495/G/1. 28 December 1995.
a grave threat to regional security and stability of Central Asia and the whole region. However, CST as a mechanism of regional security received a serious jolt when Uzbek President Islam Karimov criticised the dominant role played by Moscow and criticised it as a failure.

The five Central Asian states in a joint statement issued on 6 January 1998, following two days of talks in Ashgabat agreed that CIS is “an acceptable model for cooperation at the transitional stage.” However, “each member of the commonwealth should determine its participation independently on the basis of the domestic priorities and international commitments.” Uzbek President Islam Karimov told a news conference after the talks that “CIS cannot act as an international legal entity, nor can exist as a military and political bloc”.12

This statement of the President, for the first time, showed the fissure that was developing among the CIS states in their cooperation. This mindset continued even after the talks were over and was the impediment for the success of the CIS efforts in curbing terrorism and militancy.

Notwithstanding Uzbekistan’s withdrawal from CIS Collective Security Treaty on 2 April 1999, CIS guidelines on development came into force. The Head of the states who participated in the conference took a stand that “armed conflicts in the CIS regions should be settled by peaceful means and by invoking UN principles to settle armed conflicts”.

On 2 October, Kyrgyz President Akaev and Secretary General of CIS Collective Security Council Vladimir Zemskiy signed an agreement on military assistance to Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek. Six months of the CIS Collective Security

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11 JAR-TASS, Moscow, 3 September 1996, rep. in SWB/SU/2709/G/1, 5 September 1996.
12 Interfax, Moscow, 6 January 1998, rep. in SWBN/SU/3118/G/1, 7 January 1998.
Treaty and Uzbekistan were to provide weapons and ammunitions for combat action in Kyrgyz mountainous region, according to the treaty. Further, the Central Asian and Russian military experts were to set up an operation group.

The agreements envisioned cooperation of the special services and foreign ministers among the CIS treaty signatories after the agreement was signed. Zeniskiy pointed out that “the recent events in southern Kyrgyzstan go beyond the Central Asian region and fall under the category of international terrorism”. He further said that “the same forces are fuelling wars in Chechnya and Dagestan, wanting to destabilise the situation in CIS and throughout the world”. Describing the shift in the focus of CIS he added that “the collective security treaty was initially aimed at defending CIS countries against an external threat, but its focus has been shifted to combating international terrorism”.13

A working session of the secretaries of the security councils of member states of the CIS was held at Ala-Archa state residence in Bishkek on 5 November 1999. Issues concerning the implementation of a resolution of heads of states of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and the republic of Uzbekistan on the situation in the Central Asian region were discussed at the session. The resolution places special emphasis on the need to unite efforts to fight international terrorism.14

A joint-military exercise named “Commonwealth Shield 2000” was held in Central Asia under the aegis of Collective Security Treaty in March 2000. Around 10,000 Russian, Tajik, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek troops participated in these exercises. These exercises demonstrated the viability of CST as a mechanism to

13 Interfax, Moscow, 2 October 1999, rep. in SWB/SU/3657/G/2, 5 October 1999.
combat drug trafficking, challenging cross-border Islamic militancy and other dangers the Central Asian countries were facing along with other CIS countries.

During the meeting of the Collective Security Treaty in Minsk in May 2000, the head of the participating countries made a joint declaration in which they pledged to fight jointly against all kinds of terrorism. The meeting also decided to develop a mechanism to coordinate their joint efforts in struggle against international terrorism. Addressing the meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin outlined the need for creating a mechanism which can make the Collective Security Treaty a working instrument capable of reacting to a dynamically changed world. The charter of the Summit also put too much emphasis on joint struggle against international terrorism. The importance of Collective Security Treaty as a mechanism to combat international terrorism can be understood from the fact that the 201st Motorised Division of Russian Armed forces are still playing a crucial role in protecting Tajikistan. This also demonstrates the pre-eminence of Russia in protecting the Central Asian security structure.

In a meeting of Collective Security Council which was held in May 2001, in Armenian capital Yerevan, the participating countries such as Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan decided to establish a Collective Rapid Deployment Force in which each country will contribute army units. The Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, pointed out to the “importance of officially combating international terrorism and armed extremism, and stressed for creation of regional system of collective security”.

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Following the Summit, a Collective Rapid Action Force for Central Asia was set up to counter the threat of terrorism. It started functioning from 1 August 2001. The headquarters of the centre were set up in Bishkek. During his meeting with Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov, President Putin during an informal CIS Summit in Sochi, gave support to the Tajik President’s fight against terrorism and drug trafficking. The Tajik President also apprised the Russian President regarding various measures being undertaken to face the challenges posed by religious extremist groups, drug traffickers and other insurgent groups who were trying to threaten the security and stability of Central Asia.

In accordance with earlier decision of establishing Central Asian Collective Security Rapid Deployment Force, the forces started military exercises in Kyrgyzstan. According to Collective Force Commander, Sergai Chernomordin, “the exercises testified the fact that these forces had been finally activated, and hence had both practical and significant political meaning”.17

The 11 September 2001 attack on US by the Al-Qaeda radical groups with the backing of the Radical Islamic Party of Afghanistan, the Taliban, altered the geopolitical situation of Central Asia. It also vindicated the long standing problems raised by CIS and Central Asian countries, since 1996, regarding the dangerous role the Taliban used to play in whole of Central and South Asia. Soon after the attack, in the focus of political analysis and general public, Central Asia became the prime attention. The US government in order to finish the fundamentalist regime of Taliban and Al-Qaeda looked for Central Asia’s help so that the US could station its troops and other military equipments. In this process, the CIS states could not stand aloof. They started consultations among each other and

offered full cooperation to the US led multi-national force in their operation in Afghanistan. On 30 November 2001, all the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States participated in a Moscow summit to sum up the results achieved in last 10 years. The leaders acknowledged that the cooperation among the CIS countries was not as smooth as it was believed to be.

The CIS leaders made a joint-statement with a positive estimation of the anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan. The 12 presidents of the member countries were also unanimous in their view that the "struggle of the world community against international terrorism must be carried out on a comprehensive and long term basis in accordance with the international law and UN statute. "Our people, as the declaration points out, want to see Commonwealth as zone of stability and security, ethnic accord and sustainable scientific, political and economic developments, as these have been mentioned after the meeting". 18

Similarly, at the meeting of the Collective Security Treaty in May 2002 in Moscow, a decision was made at the end of the meeting to turn the mechanism and structures that exist for cooperation with member states into an international regional organisation to be called the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Addressing the meeting, Vladimir Putin pointed out that “the meeting provided opportunity to us to discuss whole range of issues, which we called problems of security”. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov while addressing the ministers' meeting of the Collective Security Treaty urged for “joint action within the framework of the international anti-terrorism coalition and a coordinated line of

handling Afghan settlement issues testify to the efficiency of Collective Security Treaty and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation".  

Apart from Collective Security Treaty, the other important trans-regional organisation is Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) through which Central Asian republics try to solve their grave problems, which they face. It was previously known as Shanghai Five consisting of four Central Asian republics, Russia and China.

**Shanghai Cooperation Organisation**

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation initially came into existence in 1996 to solve the complex border problems faced by countries of Central Asia, China and Russia. However, gradually it moved away from solving complex border demarcation to drug trafficking, growth of religious fundamentalism and trafficking of small arms, which all the countries are facing.

The first summit of SCO was held in Shanghai in April 1996. In the first summit, an agreement was signed on confidence building measures in military field. At Moscow Summit in 1997, another agreement was signed on the reduction of military forces in border areas. The two interrelated agreements representing a deepening process have laid a solid legal basis for mutual trust and common security among five neighbouring states.  

However, after Moscow Summit, the priority of SCO has been changed. Having more or less solved the boundary disputes, they shifted their focus and started looking on a priority basis to problems which each of the countries are facing. They decided to fight collectively to counter national separatism, political

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19 Ibid. 16 May 2002.
and religious extremism, international terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and small arms. The major factor which compelled the SCO members to shift their aims and objectives was the rise of Taliban to power in Afghanistan. During this period, China was greatly concerned about rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Xinjiang province, which got direct support from Taliban regime to increase their subversive activities in the Uighur dominated region. The Islamic radical groups not only fomented trouble in China, but also participated in many subversive activities in Central Asian republics and Russia. In order to carry out their heinous objectives, the Islamic militants required huge amount of money. The only way to generate such large sums of money was to carry out narcotics business and other corresponding illicit business. Not only Central Asia, but also China’s Xinjiang province became the hub of narcotics. During 1998, China’s border guards detained citizens with drugs on several occasions. Drugs from Osh region of Kyrgyzstan used to flow to China. This led to belief among the foreign policy making circles in these countries that a single country will be able to face on its own the challenge posed by drug-traffickers and radical Islamic fundamentalist groups. This type of environment compelled the participating countries of SCO to put joint efforts in order to check this imminent danger. In this background, the third meeting of Shanghai Five was held at Almaty in 1998. This summit took the developments in this region into consideration and the resolution passed at the summit condemned the growth of religious fundamentalism, narcotics trade and illegal migration.

In between Almaty Conference in 1998 and the Bishkek Conference in 1999, significant developments were witnessed in the Central Asian region. The Batken
incident, which took place in 1999, showed that Islamic fundamentalist forces in collusion with foreign countries could wreck havoc and threaten the unity, integrity and solidarity of the nation-state system. The fourth conference of SCO was held in Bishkek in August 1999. The joint declaration which came out after the summit of the five states declared solemnly the determination to jointly fight national separatism, international terrorism and religious extremism which constituted a threat to regional security, stability and development by encouraging weapons trafficking, drug trafficking and illegal migration. For this purpose, the meeting decided that the five participating nations would work out corresponding multinational programme, sign necessary multilateral cooperative treaties and accords and also hold regular meeting of officers from their departments of justice, border, customs etc. According to situation they also decided to hold anti-terrorism and anti-riot manoeuvres.21

The countries also expressed determination to prevent the use of their territories from engineering activities detrimental to the sovereignty, security and public law and order of any of the five states. The sides also stressed to observe the following basic principles in relations between themselves and in international affairs:

1. to be guided by mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in domestic affairs of one another.

2. to develop multi-lateral cooperation on the principles of equality and mutual advantage.

3. to help consolidate the role of the United States as the key mechanism for maintaining international peace and security and for ensuring a peaceful

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21 Chen Mingshen and He Xiguan, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
settlement of modern international regional problems and oppose the use of threat of force sanctioned by the UN Security Council in international relations.

4. to strictly observe the provisions of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty and the comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.22

Following the Bishkek Summit in December 1999, the chief of the law enforcement agencies and special services of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation met in Bishkek and signed an agreement on mutual understanding. The participating countries expressed grave concern about the increasing number of acts of international terrorism, separatism, other manifestations of extremism and the growing organised crime and illegal migrations. The meeting also decided on meeting once a year, of the chiefs of law enforcement agencies. They also reaffirmed their determination to prevent the use of their countries for organising any activity that may damage their sovereignty.23 At the Bishkek Summit, it was decided to set up an anti-terrorist centre in Bishkek in order to curb trans-border militancy, radical fundamentalism etc.

In 30 March 2000, the defence ministers of Shanghai Five member countries met in Kazakh capital Astana. After an overall analysis of the situation in Central Asia and its surrounding areas, the Defence Minister of the five countries pointed out those positive factors had increased continuously and peace and development remained the mainstream of the situation in the region. However, the destabilising factors still exist and the situation remained complicated due to religious extremism, ethnic separatism, international terrorism etc. The defence ministers,

22 ITAR-TASS, Moscow, 25 August 1999, rep. in SWB/SU3623/G/1, 26 August 1999.
23 Interfax, Moscow, 2 December 1999 rep. in SWB/SU/3708/G/3, 3 December 1999.
therefore, urged for close cooperation among the member countries for solving the complicated problems, which they continuously faced.\textsuperscript{24}

Shortly after the defence ministers meeting in March, the fifth Shanghai Five meeting was being held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan in July 2000. The significance of this summit lay in the fact that Uzbekistan participated in the conference as an observer. This shows the importance of Shanghai Five in regional security scenario as a mechanism for cooperation among various countries. The participating countries voiced their commitment for respecting human rights. The Dushanbe Declaration also formalised the intention of member countries to fight international terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and illegal arms sale, separatism as well as religious extremism. According to the Document’s provisions, the concerned parties’ readiness for coordinated action aims at preventing the above menaces. During this meeting, efforts were also made to change the name of Shanghai Five into Shanghai Forum. As Putin stated in the summit meeting, “our discussions have far transcended the boundaries of trans-border cooperation, therefore, the need is to change it from Shanghai Five to Shanghai Forum”.\textsuperscript{25}

The sixth summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was held at Shanghai in June 2001. In this conference, Uzbekistan became full fledged member of the organisation and the organisation was rechristened. The conference took a common stand with regard to terrorism, extremism and separatism. It was decided at the meeting that Anti-terrorism and Separatism Coordination Centre will be set up in Bishkek to fight against local guerrilla forces, which might be

\textsuperscript{24} Xinhua, Beijing, 30 March 2000 rep. in SWB/SU/3804/G/1, 1 April 2000.
\textsuperscript{25} Rossiskaya Gazella, 6 July 2000.
Uzbeki fundamentalists or Xinjiang's Uighur separatists. The countries also agreed that they will not provide shelter to militants of respective countries.26

The SCO member countries also decided to kick start consultation and coordination in regional and international affairs, support and cooperate with each other on major international and regional issues, and promote and consolidate regional and world peace and stability.27 Addressing the gathering, the Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev thanked all parties involved in the SCO, for their valuable assistance and support to Kyrgyzstan in its effort to combat international terrorist forces, and hoped that all SCO member countries would show concern and put efforts to meet the situation in Afghanistan.28

The leaders of Shanghai Five states on 5 July 2000 signed the Dushanbe Declaration which reflected the need for coordinating efforts in fighting international terrorism and regional extremism. "The sides are stating their readiness for coordinated actions to prevent these factors and positively assess the results of the meetings between the law enforcement and security chiefs", mentioned the declaration. The five leaders expressed determination not to allow the territory of their countries to be used for activities which would be damaging the security of each of them. The sides pledged to continue extending proportionate assistance to countries where territories are subject to the danger of being used for adverse purposes by international extremists and terrorist forces.29

In the same summit, the foreign ministers of the member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation signed a joint communiqué which said that the meeting

26 The Times of Central Asia, 28 June 2001, p. 3.
27 News from China, 15 August 2001, p. 5.
28 Ibid, p. 3.
29 ITAR-TASS, Moscow, July 2000, rep. in SWB/SU/3885/G/1, 6 July 2000.
paid special attention to the problems of regional security, the build up of tension in Afghanistan and the struggle against terrorism, drug trafficking and separatism.\(^{30}\)

Tajik President Rahmanov said that “this organisation shows to the world how countries with different civilisations and varied cultural traditions are maintaining good neighbourly relations to carry out effective cooperation in various fields and to achieve mutual respect and trust”.\(^{31}\)

In the post 11 September incidents, the SCO extended its support to US in its fight against Taliban. With the Chinese initiative, the foreign ministers meeting took place in Beijing on 7 January 2002 to discuss the security environment in the region. The joint statement emphasised the leading role of the United Nations in the struggle against international terrorism. The meeting also stressed that the scope of the anti-terrorist struggle may not be extended arbitrarily. The member states also held that fight against terrorism should be carried out at all levels: global, regional and national and with no double standards.\(^{32}\)

The presidents of six SCO member countries held meeting in June 2002 at St. Petersburg. The final communiqué which was adopted after the end of the summit showed great concern raised by the member states to regional security. The declaration or SCO charter highlighted joint actions to crack down upon all forms of terrorism, separatism and extremism and other cross border crimes as one of the basic tasks of the organisation. The charter also declared that the participating countries would take essential steps to execute the Shanghai Treaty on cracking down terrorism, separatism and extremism and also would draft documents on

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\(^{30}\) *Interfax*, Moscow, 4 July 2000, rep. in SWB/SU/3885/G/1, 6 July 2000.

\(^{31}\) Ibid, p. 3.

\(^{32}\) *The Times of Central Asia*, 10 January 2002.
multilateral cooperation on the fight against drug trafficking, arms smuggling and other forms of cross border crimes as well as illegal migration, says the charter.

**NATO and OSCE**

Apart from Collective Security Treaty and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation the Central Asian countries also sought the cooperation of NATO and OSCE, in their efforts to combat drug trafficking, cross border terrorism, and growth of militancy. In this regard OSCE playing a crucial role in the Central Asian region.

The Organisation of Security and Cooperation came into existence during the Cold War to take care of the security of Europe. The organisation came into force in 1975 during the Helsinki Accord. During the Cold War period, the organisation then known as OSCE, Council of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) basically confined its role to Europe and even the Eastern European countries were not under the CSCE, as these countries were ruled by Communist parties.

However, after the end of the Cold War, CSCE slowly tried to increase its sphere of influence, and former Communist countries became member of this organisation. Soon after, the organisation broadened its scope and sphere of influence to Central Asian region and Central Asian countries also became member of this organisation by the end of 1992.

The Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe resorted to a number of mechanisms to resolve conflicts like early warning systems, preventive diplomacy and conflict management, to attenuate sources of discord. Certain institutional mechanisms are also created like the High Commissioner on National Minorities. The High Commissioner on National Minorities was basically created
to solve the inter-ethnic rivalries and warning CSCE regarding the volatile ethnic conflict. Besides these objectives, the other objective of OSCE was promoting the spirit of democratic culture and values. In recent years, in order to combat the proliferation of light weapons, drugs, also established Forum for Security Dialogue (FSD). The FSD will examine the implementation of existing politico-military commitments and agreements in particular the code of conduct on politico-military aspects of security and document on small arms and light weapons.

The Central Asian states got admitted to CSCE not by virtue of their geographical location but as a legacy of being parts of the former Soviet Union. The Central Asian states soon after getting membership of this organisation are playing a vital role in contributing towards effectiveness and strengthening of this organisation. The OSCE has also tried to bolster the security, sovereignty, territorial integrity, economic and social progress, development of legislative and democratic political institutions, the respect for human rights and rights of national minorities. 33

In October 1995, OSCE opened a bureau in Tashkent. Mayak Radio on 11 October quoted the bureau chief, Alais Rezmik saying that the bureau's sphere of activity covered regional security, stability and economic cooperation. “Our main task is to promote the development of cooperation between the OSCE and the states of the Central Asian region”, he said. 34

In 1999, at the Istanbul Summit, the CSCE participating states vowed to cooperate more actively and closely to meet the intractable challenges of international terrorism, violent extremism, organised crime and drug trafficking. In

33 Oumirserik Kasenov, op. cit., pp. 44-45.
order to combat the growing menace of drug trafficking and organised crime, under the sponsorship of UN office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) and the CSCE chairmanship staged a two day conference in Tashkent on 19-20 October 2000, on "Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: An Integrated Approach to Counter Drugs, Organised Crime and Terrorism". After the conference, the five Central Asian states came out with a declaration outlining measures for "improving cooperation, coordination, exchanging information, enhancing preventive and central measures and strengthening Justice System and rule of law". The conference further emphasised the need for cooperation and coordination of CSCE in the security aspects of Central Asia. The participating countries called for coordination at a national, regional, inter-regional and international level in order to adopt measures to prevent, control and eliminate the interrelated phenomena of drug trafficking, organised crime and terrorism.35

On 16 November 1999, at the initiative of European Union and Canada, the OSCE states decided to take effective measures to curb illicit trafficking of small arms. The aim of CSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons which was endorsed by the Vienna Ministerial meeting on 27-28 November 2000 was to "provide a substantial contribution to the process underway in the United Nations on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all aspects". The ministerial meeting highlighted the danger posed by the illicit proliferation of small arms and it mentioned Central Asia as one of the region worst affected by the spread of small arms and light weapons. The OSCE states decided to combat illicit trafficking, reduce excessive accumulation of small arms and control their spread

by variety of means. These include: exercising restraint as regards their own small arms holdings; ensuring that small arms are produced, transferred and held for only legitimate defence and security need. The conference also decided to develop effective measures to regulate small arms in post-conflict situations.\textsuperscript{36} The OSCE also decided to hold a seminar on military doctrine at the level of the experts of the CSCE on 11-13 June 2001.

The Bishkek International Conference of 13-14 December 2001 on Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia which was organised under the sponsorship of OSCE played a crucial role in developing mechanism to combat drug trade and small arms in this region. The significance of this conference was the fact that it was first such summit to be organised with the sponsorship of CSCE in the aftermath of 11 September incident. The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) also participated in the conference. In the Bishkek conference, representatives from 50 countries and 21 international organisations participated. The conference took the first step in following up the CSCE Bucharest Action plan for combating terrorism by drawing up the programme of action which this conference adopted. The participants in this conference invited international and regional organisations to strengthen cooperation and coordination to combat the menace of terrorism and drug trafficking. The conference also outlined the need for coordination between various anti-terrorism organisations which were formed to fight the trans-national organised groups. The conference also called for checks to accumulation and uncontrolled spread of illicit trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The conference further decided to organise a series of workshops in all

Central Asian countries, which aimed at training the security forces of these countries to combat small arms and drugs. The conference rejected firmly the identification of terrorism with any particular religion or culture as well as the unacceptable attempts by terrorists and violent extremists to present their case as a struggle in defence of religion and culture. The conference also pointed out that terrorism is a global problem and that there must be no safe haven for the perpetrators of such crimes and their supporters. The conference also noted that, the Central Asian region is exposed to specific challenges and threats to its security. It also outlined that contributions of the states in the region to the global coalition against international terrorism and emphasised the necessity to render political support and financial and technical assistance to the states of Central Asia in this context, including support for sustainable development. This shows how CSCE has been trying to help this region through developing multilateral relations.

NATO

Another international organisation with whom Central Asian countries developed relations and also signed number of treaty is North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). NATO, which was established in 1949 as a challenge to the Soviet bloc has reoriented itself after the ignominious end of the Cold War. It soon developed a number of mechanisms to attract the newly independent countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Central Asian states, particularly the two bigger states i.e. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan looked up to NATO as a mechanism to fill the vacuum created after the demise of Soviet Union. In this connection, the observations made by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev are noteworthy:
"The NATO has a suitable goal for our rapprochement to assist the democratic development of the states of central and Eastern Europe and the CIS and to prevent regional conflict as far as possible. NATO member-states, for the purpose of cooperation with these states, have committed themselves to prove their accumulated experiences and considerable expert potential defence policy. Considering all this, we will broaden contacts with NATO, provided their sphere and limits are strictly determined and they are not damaging our military cooperation within the CIS framework or bilateral ties".37

NATO for the first time made its presence felt in the Central Asian region through the participation of Central Asian countries in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and Partnership for Peace (PFP programme). The strategic objectives of the NATO and PFP in this context can be summarised as follows:

- to involve Central Asian countries in the European security architecture based on cooperative process and on mutual consultations in case of threat;
- to increase military cooperation and information exchange;
- to contribute to stability in the region through democratic central over militancy and balanced civil-military relations and
- to increase inter-operability for inter alia peacekeeping operations on the basis of a common conceptual approach.38

In August 1995, military exercises were conducted in Louisiana (USA) which included the participation of some military units of Central Asian states alongside military units of Canada. To deepen this cooperation, NATO

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headquarters prepared similar exercises in August 1996 in North Carolina. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have established a joint Central Asian peacekeeping battalion (Centrasbat), which is receiving significant backing from the United States and the NATO. Centrasbat exercises held in the Kazakhstan desert near Uzbekistan in September 1997 that also included US, Turkey and Russian troops. Additionally, the US military held joint exercises with Uzbekistan troops in the Fergana valley, eighty kilometres from the Tajikistan border in June 1997. 39

To develop further military cooperation and transparency in relations with the newly independent Central Asian states, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana visited these republics. He arrived in Almaty on 11 March 1997. Both Javier Solana and President Nazarbaev agreed to broaden cooperation with NATO within the Partnership for Peace programme (PFP). Solana expressed NATO’s readiness to help in training of Kazakh’s military officers. 40 Javier Solana also held talks with Uzbek Defence Minister Rustom Ahmed and Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Komilov in Tashkent on 13 March 1997. Komilov clarified the stand of Uzbekistan to the visiting NATO Secretary General stating that Uzbekistan in accordance with its foreign policy principles would not join and military or military-political blocs. 41

NATO along with Central Asian states, Russia and other countries started military exercises in Kazakhstan aimed at checkmating radical Islamic forces. The joint military exercises known as Centrasbet 2000, aimed at boosting military

41 Ibid.
relationship and regional security within the framework of NATO’s Partnership for Peace programmes. Nazarbayev acknowledged that “peace and security in Central Asia could only be assured through the joint efforts of regional states and with broad international support. The military exercises also aimed at training forces in various fields such as refugee control, patrolling and security operation”. 42

In the post-September 11 phase, NATO got an opportunity to play a bigger role in Central Asia. Most of the NATO member countries also participated in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in their operation against Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Donald Rumsfeld in an interview to journalists in Washington told that the US-NATO-Central Asian countries relationship is good for them, good for US and is good for NATO. Through NATO’s cooperation, the Central Asian army equipped themselves with sophisticated arms, and weapons which can help them easily to thwart the militant activities.

GUUAM

Apart from above mentioned organisations, Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian republic which became member of GUUAM. As a regional organisation GUUAM came into existence when the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine met in Strasbourg during summit of the council of Europe and stated their mutual interest in developing bilateral and regional cooperation, European and regional security, political and economic contacts. The joint communiqué issued after the meeting underscores the need for strengthening bilateral cooperation among the member countries based on the principles of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of state frontiers, mutual respect, cooperation, democracy, supremacy of law and respect for human

rights. Uzbekistan joined the organisation on 24 April 1999 during the NATO/EAPC Summit in Washington DC. During the April 1999 summit, the GUUAM presidents renewed their plea to develop interaction within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and NATO’s Partnership of Peace programme and deepened political cooperation with the aim to strengthen peacekeeping capability upon the relevant legal basis. They were also pleased to undertake joint actions to strengthen the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction as well as to prevent arms transfer to the conflict zone. The presidents also noted that cooperation within the GUUAM is not directed against the third country or a group of countries and membership is offered to any country which subscribes to fundamental principles and goals of the GUUAM group. On 4 October 2000, while addressing the United Nations on behalf of GUUAM countries the representatives of Azerbaijan highlighted the problem of illegal drug trafficking. He pointed out that GUUAM states have elaborated the national strategies for drug control particularly on the reduction of drug supply and its consumption. The importance of GUUAM as a body for multi-lateral cooperation can be highlighted from the fact that in June 2000, the then NATO Secretary General George Robertson praised the development of GUUAM and pledged the cooperation of NATO with the new organisation. On 18 May 2000 in Washington DC the ambassadors of GUUAM countries to the United States declared their intention to further strengthening the relationship with the US. The ambassadors described four immediate objectives of GUUAM:

1. to promote east-west trade and transportation corridor.
2. develop interaction within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Framework Council and NATO's Partnership for Peace programme.

3. to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in region.

4. to combat the trafficking in narcotics in their countries.\(^{43}\)

Following the 11 September 2001 incident, the GUUAM states took a united stand against terrorism and criticised the barbaric acts of terrorism that were committed against the United States. The United States and the GUUAM states acknowledged that terrorism is not identified with any particular religion and culture. The GUUAM started giving unqualified support to the United States in its fight against radical Islam led Al-Qaeda. The GUUAM states also agreed to work closely with US in preventing drug trafficking in illegal-trade and migration. During their meeting, the foreign ministers of GUUAM states and the US Under Secretary of State for political affairs explored possibilities for increased counter terrorism cooperation between the United States and GUUAM as an important regional organisation. In their statement regarding the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the GUUAM states unanimously stressed that a challenge was not only posed to United States of America but to the entire world community. They also pointed out that events of 11 September demonstrated with much clarity the need to establish conditions in the system of international relations which would exclude the possibility of a repetition of such tragedies.\(^{44}\)

Though only one Central Asian country joined GUUAM, but it is playing a crucial role in coordinating efforts of five countries who are members of this organisation in combating drug trafficking, checking illegal migration and other

\(^{43}\) www.guuam.org

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
such cross-border terrorist activities. Although GUUAM got active support from western countries but it can play an effective role in combating above mentioned problems only in cooperation with Collective Security Treaty in which Russia is a dominant player.

**Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia**

CICA is another regional institutional mechanism that has been developed at the initiative of Central Asian countries, particularly Kazakhstan. Through this organisation, the Central Asian countries are able to solve the major problems like cross-border terrorism, problems of drug and illicit trafficking at small arms. The major objective of Kazakhstan's initiating such forms is developing effective mechanisms of preventive diplomacy in Asia and development of a new system of relations between the states of the vast Asian region with the aim of ensuring security and stability in the Asian continent. The process of CICA started in 1992 and since then it is playing a crucial role in developing mutual cooperation and combating common problems which confront the member countries. The participants of CICA agreed to establish a Special Working Group (SWG) with the task of preparation of organisational and ideological aspects for the CICA meeting at the level of deputy foreign ministers.

In Almaty, the meeting of deputy foreign ministers was held during 1-3 December 1997. In this meeting, the member countries decided to establish the contact group which comprised the representatives of the Embassies accredited in Kazakhstan. The contact group became an instrument for non-formal discussion on CICA and provide the constant work during the inter-sessional period.45

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45 At the Dawn of the 21st Century, Kazakhstan, Embassy of Kazakhstan, New Delhi, p. 17.
The ministers of foreign affairs of the CICA member states to the further reaffirmed their support to the further development of the CICA process as a regional forum and signed the declaration on the principles guiding relations among CICA member states.

The meeting of the Special Working Group on preparing the CICA Summit was held on 12-14 April 2000. The participants fully supported the measures undertaken to combat terrorism, extremism, drug trade, international criminality and environmental problems.46

Another important International Symposium on “Asian Security in the Context of the Development of CICA” organised in Kazakhstan in June 2000. The participating countries agreed that only through regional cooperation they can able to solve common problems like cross border, terrorism, economic development and confidence building measures.47

Another important landmark in the development of CICA was the CICA Summit held in June 2002 in the Kazakh capital Almaty. In this conference, 16 countries participated. The importance of this conference lies in the fact that, this was the first such conference organised in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. The participants in the conference expressed deep concern over the spread of terrorist activities all over the world, including the CICA member states. The declaration on elimination of terrorism and assisting dialogue between civilisations pointed out that the heads of state and government from the CICA member countries resolved to fight against terrorism and boast bilateral, regional and international cooperation in line with the UN Charter to meet the challenge.

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.

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The conference also outlined that member states unconditionally and unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as any support or acquiescence to it and failure to directly condemn it. The menace of terrorism has been magnified by its close links with drug-trafficking, illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. The declaration of CICA also underlined the fact that illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons posed a threat to peace and security and it was directly linked with terrorist activity, separatist movements, drug trafficking and armed conflicts.

In order to checkmate religious fundamentalism, illicit trafficking of drugs and small arms various mechanisms have been developed in this conference to check these negative tendencies.

Finally, the declaration urged all participating countries to resolve their dispute peacefully through negotiations in accordance with the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and international law. The meeting also decided to follow institutional building measures to follow the declarations.

Organisation of Islamic Conferences (OIC)

The Central Asian republics soon after attaining independence became focus of attraction for the Islamic countries particularly Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan. The main objective of these countries in the beginning of 1990s was to bring these Central Asian republics into same regional forum, through which they can influence this region. In this process, they found Organisation of Islamic Countries a good forum for them to bring these countries into their fold. The vast natural resources and close religious ties also motivated them to share close contacts with them. In this way, the Central Asian countries found a suitable regional ally though
they could also shape their Islamic identity in the post-Soviet phase. They also participated actively in this organisation and raised a number of problems which they confronted after attaining independence. Among the most important problems that challenged them is the growth of radical Islamic fundamentalism, partly aided and abetted by many Islamic countries and some of them are members of OIC. The main objective of OIC is to promote Islamic solidarity among member states, to consolidate among member states in the economic, social, cultural, scientific, and other vital fields of activities and to carry out consultations among member states in international organisations. The other major objective is to create a suitable atmosphere for the promotion of cooperation and understanding among member states. During its Tehran Declarations of 1997, the OIC vehemently condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and distinguished terrorism from the struggle of people against colonial alien domination or foreign occupation and their right of self-determination. The conference also noted that killing of innocent people is forbidden in Islam and reiterated their commitment to the provisions of the OIC code of conduct for combating international terrorism and their resolve to intensify their efforts to conclude a treaty on this issue and called on the international community to take all necessary measures for combating terrorism. It also supported combating illicit trafficking of narcotics in conformity with international law and the United Nations Charter and without prejudice to sovereignty.\footnote{http://www.oic-oci.org} In an extra-ordinary Foreign Ministers Conference which was held at Kuala Lumpur in the aftermath of 11 September, it condemned the barbaric act committed by radical Islamic forces in the United States. The conference urged the need to convene an international conference on terrorism in order to adopt a
balanced international definition of terrorism so as not to leave it in the hands of superpowers to lay down a definition which serves their interests and jeopardises the interests of others. The conference also noted that the issue of fighting terrorism should be assigned an international role entrusted to it in order to maintain international peace and security.

The Central Asian countries also played a significant role in this conference in passing resolutions which aimed at condemning terrorism and fostering international peace and security.

A close analysis of the efforts of the Central Asian states in post-independence phase basically shows that they tried to use multilateral forum for regional cooperation as an effective means to sort out the immediate problems which they faced. If we can make a balance sheet regarding Central Asian states with multilateral forum, it can be observed that they gained much in terms of getting international recognition, obtaining large scale financial assistance which is necessary for them to rebuild their national economy and also received aid in terms of developing their armed forces. This helped Central Asian states to a large extent in combating narcotics trade, illegal proliferation of small arms and also dealing with radical Islamic forces.

In order to combat drug trade and Islamic fundamentalism, the Central Asian States operating through regional security mechanisms like Collective Security Treaty, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, NATO, OCSE, CICA, developed economic relations with major regional organisations like Economic Cooperation Organisation and Eurasian Economic Community. The major objectives of Central Asian states while becoming members of these organisations are in the following:
To get an opportunity to participate in regional economic organisations so that they can develop their economy through regional trade and getting financial assistance from the regional organisations.

To exploit the vast natural resources which they have through technical assistance from the regional organisations.

The Central Asian states have never had the experience of managing an independent national economy, as in pre-Soviet and post-Soviet period. So through participation in regional organisations they will get a first hand experience of managing an independent economy.

The Central Asian countries realised that through regional organisations, they can able to handle the transitional nature of the Central Asian economy, through this they can solve other important problems like, poverty, drug trafficking, unemployment, which are responsible for growth of religious extremism and cross-border terrorism.

Among the regional organisations, the two economic grouping that need mentioned i.e. Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and Eurasian Economic Community (EEC), formerly known as Customs Union.

**Economic Cooperation Organisation**

Economic Cooperation Organisation came into force in 1985, with the three Islamic republics - Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, for the purpose of promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation among member state. Soon after attaining independence the newly established Central Asian states took initiative in joining Economic Cooperation Organisations. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were the first Central Asian states to join Economic Cooperation Organisations. Later.
the other three Central Asian states Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined the ECO. Initially they joined ECO, as observers and later, got full members status after their formal accession to the Treaty of Izmir at a special meeting which was held at Islamabad on 28 May 1992.

After accession of the Central Asian member states, the member countries felt the need for restructuring the organisational and institutional structure of the Economic Cooperation Organisations in order to be effective with the changing times.

When it was formed, the objectives of ECO were mainly dealt with initiating economic liberalisation and effective utilisation of natural resources in their respective countries, ensuring that they should cooperate each other in checking trafficking of drug, within their respective countries, the member countries also decided that they will be the forming ECO mechanism to solve problems which confront the member countries. The ECO proposed a new “plan of action” in its ministerial meeting in February 1993 in Pakistan. The “plan of action” called for the mobilisation of resources to create a market-oriented economy for the benefit of the population of the member countries. A special fund with an initial capital of $3.00,000 was set up to conduct feasibility studies of the goal outlined at the May 1990s meeting.49

The other important objectives outlined in Islamabad ministerial conference were improvement of regional transportation and communication, removal of trade barriers and the improvement of the preferential tariff system in the region, and

developing proper mechanism to exploit the vast oil resources which these
countries are having.\textsuperscript{50}

Some major decisions were taken in the third ECO summit which was held at Islamabad on 14-15 May 1995. The third ECO summit also witnessed the signing of ECO Transit Trade Agreement, Articles of the Agreement of the ECO Trade and Development, Charter of the ECO cultural institute and charter of the ECO Foundation. They have also signed MoU for cooperation between ECO and UNDCP.

A meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation’s committee on fighting drugs trade opened in Ashgabat on 5 December 1995. The main purpose of the meeting was to work out a joint action plan for creating a barrier against the entry of drugs into the ECO member countries.\textsuperscript{51}

Another summit meeting of the ECO was held on 14 May 1996 in Ashgabat. The summit meeting was a landmark meeting from the point of view that in this summit meeting strong resentment was expressed by the members against the political role of the organisation. The opinion was headed by Islam Karimov who even threatened to withdraw from the organisation if that continued. He was endorsed by Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, the leaders stressed the role of the ECO in combating drug trafficking and mediating in regional conflicts.\textsuperscript{52}

A one-day meeting of the foreign ministers of the economic cooperation organisation in the city of Alma Ata on 9 May ended with the endorsement of three cooperation agreements. The three main areas of cooperation approved by ECO foreign ministers were transport, drug trafficking and customs regulation. The

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Turkmen Radio, Ashgabat, 5 December 1995, rep. in SWB/SU/2480/G/3, 7 December 1995.
\textsuperscript{52} Interfax, Moscow, 14 May 1996, rep. in SWB/SU/2613/G/1, 16 May 1996.
Uzbek leader refused to sign on any of these agreements saying that his country needed sometime to study them. After 1996, this was the second time when strong opinion regarding the functioning of ECO was expressed by Uzbekistan. In 1996, the Uzbek President had expressed his resentment over the political role of ECO but this time the Uzbek Foreign Minister even refused to sign the document which was mutually agreed upon in the meeting.

The 11th meeting of the council of ministers was held in Tajikistan. In communique the signatories decided early construction of the missing roads and rail links, the need for enhanced interaction of the private business communities of ECO, cooperation in the protection of the environment.

Despite achieving some degree of economic success like, developing infrastructure projects cooperatives, laying down rail lines like the completion of the Tejan-Sarraks-Meshad-Bandar Abbas railway line has linked Central Asia with the Persian Gulf, which helps in transportation of oil and gas, in other fields like achieving consensus on major political issues there has been wide discrepancies among the ECO members on various political issue. It was reported that once Uzbek President Islam Karimov has criticised the role played by Pakistan in sponsoring terrorism in Uzbekistan in the name of Islam. Similarly, all the three founding members of ECO - Iran, Pakistan and Turkey wants to dominate Central Asia and wants to keep it under their sphere of influence rather than genuinely interested in development of Central Asia. Despite these drawbacks, ECO provided opportunity to Central Asian states to come out of their Soviet legacy and

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53 IRNA, Tehran, 9 May 19998, rep. in SWB’SU/3223/G/1, 11 May 1998.
54 http://www.ecosecretariat.org
to reshape their identity. Their emphasis on fighting drug trafficking in the region was visible which was again an indirect contribution to curb militancy and terrorism. Their limited approach to the issue can be understood from the fact that the latter (terrorism) is more a political issue than drug trafficking which has direct bearing on economy. Therefore, in order to avoid any kind of embarrassing political confrontation among the member states some of which are alleged by the others to have encouraged terrorism in other states, they had dealt with the issue of drugs rather than terrorism. The second reason, the issue of human rights violations under the garb of anti-terrorism crackdown, had also prompted Islam Karimov, in 1996, to criticise ECO for meddling in political issues rather than economic ones.

The below are some of the efforts carried out by ECO for drug control:

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title of Meeting</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Initial Joint Meeting of National Focal Points of ECO to discuss the Plan of Actions</td>
<td>ECO Sectt.</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Two semi-Annual Meetings of the Focal Points in ECO Member States to review the progress made with regard to UNDCP Project</td>
<td>Any ECO Member State</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>ECO-UNDCP Legal Training Workshop on Judicial Cooperation in drug-related casework for the ECO Region</td>
<td>Tehran</td>
<td>March 1-5, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>35th Session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East</td>
<td></td>
<td>February 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.ecosecretariat.org/](http://www.ecosecretariat.org/)

Apart from the ECO, the Central Asian states also in recent years have developed multi-lateral trade in relationship involving some CIS states. In December 1995, four CIS states decided to set up Customs Union. Later, in February 1999, Tajikistan joined it. Finally, it culminated in Eurasian Economic...
Community. The Eurasian Economic Community came into existence on 10 October 2000, when the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed a treaty in the Kazak capital Astana. The basic objectives outlined in the summit were carrying out a coordinated restructuring of economics, devising and implementing joint programmes, forming a common energy market, conducting joint research and development in priority areas of science and technology. In the field of trade and commerce, the basic objective of EEC was to form a single customs tariff and a single system of non-tariff regulatory resources.\textsuperscript{56} The EEC agreements included a weighted voting and financing scheme. Russian will exercise 40 percent of voting rights and will be responsible for meeting 40 percent of organisation’s expenses. Belarus and Kazakhstan have 20 percent of the shares, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan each have 10 percent. The EEC Charter specified that a vote on a major policy issue will require 2/3 support. This, to some extent, curtails the dominance of Russian in the voting pattern.\textsuperscript{57}

This shows that the Central Asian states are devising dual strategy of both military regional cooperation and economic regional cooperation with external powers to improve their economy, enhancing security and stability, combating drug and small arms trafficking. However, the regional cooperation mechanisms involving outside powers have not achieved the desired objectives. It requires pragmatic approach on part of both leaders of Central Asia countries and other outside powers to develop a comprehensive framework of regional security that will enhance security and stability of Central Asia.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{ITAR-TASS}, Moscow, 10 October 2000.
\textsuperscript{57} Devendra Kaushik, op. cit., p. 36.