Chapter-II

China’s Response to Terrorism in Central Asia:
Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)
Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian states have become increasingly important in the foreign policy strategy of the PRC. While relations between China and Russia have been good since the early 1990's, the newly created states in the Central Asian region have presented new and unique challenges for Chinese security. China’s response to this region has been to be the driving force behind the development of the SCO (Lanteigne, 2005:115).

This chapter takes the SCO (Shanghai hezhu zuzhi) as a case study to examine China’s position, response and strategy to counter terrorism at the regional level. The SCO was created, largely at China’s initiative, to define mutual borders and to examine threats to state security in Central Asia. The following arguments make SCO as a strong case to be studied from the Chinese perspective:

- First, China has played a paramount role in the organizations development, and it may be argued, has made use of the group to advocate its own specific foreign policies in addition to those shared by the organization as a whole. The SCO represents one of the first cases of China taking the lead to develop a regional regime to counter terrorism, separatism and extremism;
- Secondly, the SCO has allowed China to refine and develop its National Security Concept (NSC), multilateral security cooperation based on community building rather than formal alliances and has created positive atmosphere regarding China’s role in counter-terrorism at the international level (Lanteigne, 2005:117). This has also provided China plenty of opportunities to build an image of a responsible and responsive power at global level;
- Thirdly, notwithstanding China’s comparative lack of experience in participating in the shaping of multilateral institutions, it has succeeded in helping to develop and shape the SCO into a body which addresses strategic issues which no country could reconcile unilaterally (Lanteigne, 2005:117).

The study of SCO is therefore an essential test case for analyzing Chinese counter-terrorism approaches at the regional level. In the context of Chinese interests, initiatives and actions to deal with terrorism (kongbu zhuyi), separatism (fen lie zhuyi) and extremism (jidiu zhu yi) within the SCO framework, there will also be some discussion of the Chinese bilateral (Shuangbian) initiatives with Russian and Central Asian countries.
PART-I

China and Central Asia in the Post-Cold War Era

As discussed in the previous chapter, the current global concerns regarding terrorism are decade old and a relatively recent phenomenon. However, the PRC’s problem related to it at the domestic level had begun as early as the late 80’s when strange incidents of unrest and terrorism in its largely Uyghur Muslim-inhibited frontiers region of Xinjiang started to occur. These concerns have become heightened since 9/11, and Chinese has attempted to link Uyghur separatism to international jihadist groups. After denying the problem for nearly a decade, official reports and the state-run media began in early 2001 to detail terrorist activities in the region officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (China’s State Council, 2002: White Paper on Xinjiang and People’s Daily, 10 October 2001). The objective of this thesis is however not to go into the domestic aspects but to establish the linkage between the domestic concerns and the formation of the SCO.

The first major violent incident China faced is in Baren township of the northwest of Kashgar in April 1990 (China State Council, 2002: White Paper on Xinjiang). This incident can be said the starting point which led China to launch a long-term strategy to assert tighter control over Uyghur society (Pan, 2004:531). For China, this challenge to the state was the turning point in its policies not only towards the Uyghurs but also to the entire Xinjiang region. It can be argued that the Chinese reaction to this region was linked to major changes in regional and world politics: the loss of control by Moscow of its eastern European neighbours and the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union and emergence of the new central Asian republics. Also it can be said that China feared that Uyghur “ethno-nationalist” aspirations in Xinjiang could be stirred up by the example of—and possible support from—the newly independent central Asian people across its Borders (Starr, 2004:107-118). China then launched an ambitious plan to accelerate the integration of Xinjiang with China by stepping up ethnic Chinese migration to Xinjiang. At the same time, it committed major resources to economic growth in Xinjiang, chiefly the exploitation of Xinjiang’s natural resources, above all oil and gas (Starr,
Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Document, Central Committee (1996, No.7) also reveals the problem of “Xinjiang” which China is facing since a long time and moreover, the official record of that meeting is a clear indication that China had reasserted central leadership control over the region.

Since 9/11, it is noticed that the Chinese leaders began to term these Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region as terrorists having a global connections. Although China’s experience with international terrorists beyond its borders has not been extensive, still it has been important from the Chinese government perspective. Looking at the nationals living outside of their country, Chinese have been targeted in comparatively small-scale incidents. Though Chinese civilians have not been targeted abroad in ways similar to attacks on Israel, America, Europe, Saudi Arabia, or even South Korea, many Chinese have been killed and wounded during indiscriminate attacks on civilians. The following incidents can be taken as major highlights:

- Four Chinese workers, for example, died in suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in 2002, and several Chinese were wounded during the August 5, 2003, bombing of the Marriott in Jakarta (Xinhua News Agency, 7 January 2003).

- Two Mainland Chinese were killed abroad American Airlines flight 77 during the attack on the Pentagon. In addition to these causalities, Chinese officials and businesspeople have been direct targets of assassination abroad. On July 1, 2002, for example, a Chinese diplomat Wang Jianping posted in Bishkek and his driver was reportedly assassinated (Shao, 2002).

- On January 5, 2003, one Chinese was killed in Israel in a suicide bombing (China Daily, 7 January 2003). After one month, on February 6, 2003, another Chinese was killed in Laos in a bus attack (New York Times, 7 February 2003).

These policies coincided with impressive economic growth in China, which made it possible to commit the capital and labor to carry them out. This led to tremendous changes in Xinjiang, as new roads, industries, cities, and waves of new migration ensued. The political calculus in Beijing was straightforward: in the 1990s many Chinese policy makers took the view that economic development reduces local nationalism and aids national integration. The transfer of ethnic Chinese labor was and is still seen widely in Chinese policy making circles as aiding political integration and ultimately removing reasons for political unrest. These policies in fact may have exacerbated political tensions because of a predictable local reaction to mass migration and the fact that many of the economic gains were unevenly distributed and favored the Han segment of the population. Uyghurs felt increasingly marginalized and left behind (Starr, 2004:3-26).
Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Central Asian States

Library of Congress Geography and Map Division
December 2001

Data Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute, ESRI

## Table-III

**RECENT TERRORIST INCIDENTS INVOLVING CHINESE CITIZENS OUTSIDE CHINA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PLACE/COUNTRY</th>
<th>INCIDENT</th>
<th>CHINESE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 29, 2004</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Suicide Bombing</td>
<td>One Seriously wounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11, 2004</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>None (All seven hostages were)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3, 2004</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Car Bombing</td>
<td>Three killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10, 2004</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Attack 11 killed and five wounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 24, 2004</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Attack One slightly wounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9, 2004</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>One killed and one wounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 5, 2003</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Suicide Bombing</td>
<td>One killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6, 2003</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Bus attack</td>
<td>One killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 5, 2003</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Bombing</td>
<td>Several Chinese were wounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2002</td>
<td>Bishkek</td>
<td>assassinated</td>
<td>Chinese Diplomat Wang Jianping and his driver was killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Suicide Bombing</td>
<td>Four Chinese workers died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25, 2000</td>
<td>Tel Aviv</td>
<td>Shooting Attack</td>
<td>work team of the Xinjiang People’s Government: one death and two injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2000</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>One murdered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5, 1998</td>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>Bomb Attack</td>
<td>In front of Chinese Consulate-general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1997</td>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>Fire at the Chinese Embassy in Turkey</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Looking at the above incidents, both inside and outside China, it can be said that China’s experience with terrorism has been somewhat different and not as severe compared to some other Asian states. Internationally, Chinese have not often been the specific targets of major terrorist acts but some have been killed during bombings and assassinations (refer table III). As we discussed briefly earlier that domestically, China is facing a complicated mix of ethnic unrest, minority separatism, political dissidence, and
sporadic terrorist actions—though the lines delineating these categories are difficult to draw. Many of the ethnic and separatist problems are centered in Xinjiang. Located in the vast northwest corner of China, Xinjiang has been termed by some observers “the scene of the most violent internal threat faced by Chinese government” (Associated Press Worldstream, 9 September 2000). The true extent of this threat, and whether it can broadly be equated with terrorism, is a matter of debate.

As Graham E. Fuller and S. Frederick Starr pointed out in their report The Xinjiang Problem, there are a variety of viewpoints among Muslims in Xinjiang: ‘those who seek greater autonomy from Beijing within the framework of China, and out-and-out independent seekers, some of whom are predisposed to use force and others who seek their goals nonviolently. Given these categorical differences, USA’s inclusion of a Uyghur group on its terrorist list can either be seen as a victory in the war on terrorism or a defeat in the battle to protect civil liberties’ (Fuller and Starr: 2003:5-67). Ahmad Lufti in “Seek Jihad as far as China” argues that “for China, the war on terror began after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, at a time when the then newly independent Central Asian states were being formed....since the 9/11 incident; China has been forced to reverse its approach due to repeated terrorist attacks” (Lufti, 2004:506). Dru C. Gladney in his paper “Responses to Chinese Rule in Xinjiang: Patterns of Cooperation and Opposition” writes that “…since early 2001, due to the desire to receive international support for its domestic war on terrorism, China’s foreign ministry and the People’s Daily have documented an on-going series of incidents of terrorism and separatism since the large riot in the Xinjiang town of Yining of February 1997, with multiple crackdowns and arrests that have rounded up thousands of terrorist suspects, large weapons caches, and printed documents allegedly outlining future public acts of violence (Gladney, 2004:540).

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Wang Lequan, secretary of the Communist Party of China’s (CPC) Xinjiang committee, said that ‘the regional government has “reliable” evidence showing a Uygur fugitive, who was freed on bail and fled to the United States, had close connections with foreign
terrorists and after going abroad, he conspired with separatists and religious extremists "to plan terror attacks and jeopardize the region's 50th anniversary," which will be marked on National Day, 1st October 2005, but he did not say what evidence had been collected (China Daily, 26 August 2005). However, paper titled East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity issued in January 2002 by the Chinese State Council Information Office, disclosed that various terrorist activities have been underway in Xinjiang since the 1990s (State Council Information Office, 21 January 2002). The paper argues that "over a long period of time-especially since the 1990s-the "East Turkistan" forces inside and outside Chinese territory have planned and organized a series of violent incidents in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China and some other countries, including explosions, assassinations, arsons, poisonings, and assaults, with the objective of founding a so-called state of "East Turkistan." These terrorist incidents have seriously jeopardized the lives and property of people of all ethnic groups as well as social stability in China, and even threatened the security and stability of related countries and regions".

It has been observed that since 1991, the Chinese leaders worked assiduously to secure boundaries, curb terrorism and transnational crime, and incrementally advance Chinese influence with countries along China's border with Central Asia. Prof. Pan Guang has pointed out that there are many principles that guide China relations with the Central Asian countries and those are:

- To support independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, economy and political reforms and to oppose any attempt by any country to control or dominate the region;
- To develop China's relations with Central Asian nations on the basis of new security concept based on equality and mutual benefit;
- To soften borders with Central Asian nations on the basis of confidence-building measures and disarmament ground the border region;
- To deal with common issues such as terrorism, separatism and extremism, and national crimes like drug trafficking and illegal immigration, etc.
- To safeguard peaceful measures to resolve various regional conflicts, including border issues with the Central Asian nations;

35 Rebiya Kadeer, once a wealthy businesswoman, was jailed for eight years in 1999 on charges of endangering national security by giving State secrets to foreigners. She was released on medical parole on March 17 this year (Starr, 2004:382).
To endorse Uzbekistan's proposal to make Central Asia a nuclear and weapon free zone to prevent nuclear proliferation and arms race;

To promote economic and trade relations between China and Central Asian nations, especially in energy and transportation sectors;

To promote cultural collaboration between China and the Central Asian countries. 

However, the disintegration of the USSR resulted in the creation of new states, reduced Russia's influence, and opened opportunities for spreading Chinese interests. Many foreign policy experts believe that the collapse of the USSR also created a power vacuum that posed problems for Chinese security (Blank, 2003:51). Gradually, Chinese authorities showed an interest in improving relations with newly independent Central Asian states as much for defensive reasons of expanding Chinese influence and interests. So it can be said that with the disintegration of Soviet Union, it was essential for China to avoid being left behind in the scramble during the 1990s to secure good relations in Central Asia, especially in light of the region's borders on China's fragile and isolated western frontier (Starr, 2004:4). In addition to Russia, China's western border lies opposite Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (refer map), as well as Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan (via the disputed territory of Kashmir). It has increased China's sensitivity to separatist leanings with China's Muslim minority, and hastened the requirement for China to recognize the new states and acknowledge their borders. Some other reasons can be cited for the promptitude of China's overtures to Central Asia:

First, China wished to continue the process of rebuilding its international linkages after the repercussions of Tiananmen Square in 1989. The former Soviet states provided rich diplomatic opportunities to demonstrate China's commitment to regional peace and stability (Li, 1996:8-9).

Secondly, China was determined to block Taiwan's attempt at securing diplomatic gains in Central Asia by cajoling the republics into recognizing Taipei rather than the People's Republic (Melet, 1998:236-237).

Thirdly, it was also observed that throughout the 1990s, China was keenly interested in getting Central Asian governments to take stronger actions against pan-Turkic, Islamic, and other radicals who were linked to bombings, instructions, and other parts of China. At the same time, China wished to benefit from economic, military, and political exchanges, and took several notable steps to advance cooperation in joint ventures to exploit Central Asian oil resources (Li, 1996:8-9; Sutter, 2005:249).

In the aftermath of 9/11, China continued to expand its ties across Central Asia to stabilize its western frontier, gain access to the region's energy resources, and balance Western influence in an area China traditionally viewed as Russia's reserve (Sutter, 2005:250). The most important thing in this context that goes in favour of China that an improved relations with the Central Asian countries will help all of them to tackle the problems of terrorism arising from the linkages of religion and politics, can shield Xinjiang province and its ethnically Turkic population from outside Muslim and pan-Turkic influence (Gill and Oresman, 2003: viii-ix). Although at regular intervals, Central Asian leaders have assured China that they will not tolerate separatists groups targeting China, the Chinese on the other hand suspects its neighbours may lack sufficient resolve to eradicate the threat. In this context, Russian, Chinese and Central Asian countries efforts to support anti-terrorist initiatives at the regional level has given enough dynamism to the SCO (Shanghai hezhu zuzhi).

In Central Asia, China's initial apprehension ranged from ideological isolation to cope up with transnational ethnic resurgence. Over the years, China was concerned with the events unfolding in Central Asia, nevertheless describing them as "internal affairs". They in fact, took defensive postures, to forestall any adverse effect on China. Chinese Vice-President, Wang Zhen's instruction in August 1991 to People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops in Xinjiang to "form a steel wall to safeguard socialism and the unification of the motherland" was seen in response to the Soviet collapse (Garver, 1993:96-110). Although there are several dimensions of China's Central Asian policy, this thesis would limit itself to discussing issues relating to the Shanghai Five or the SCO, the linchpin of China's regional policy response to terrorism vis-à-vis Central Asia. While the Central Asian states offer vast economic opportunities - a hub for energy distribution and new regional cooperation schemes, the region is still rife with enormous threats to China Chinese foreign policy follows the earlier discussed approach "cooperative security" and more importantly, "trend of cooperation and partnership in China's foreign relations in the present, must be understood as a logical consequence of its perceptions regarding the shift from cold war and alliance politics- and here regional networks, coalitions and groupings become significant" (Acharya, 2006: 28).
PART-II
Formation of SCO and China

On 26 April 1996 Presidents of five states, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and China, gathered in Shanghai, China, to sign the Agreement on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area. The five presidents decided then to continue meeting together once a year successively in the five countries. This summit had widely reported in the West, as the “Shanghai Five” because of the location of the summit where the presidents of the five participating states. The Shanghai Five, the precursor to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, was related first and foremost to security motivations, although the concept of “security” has had various meanings. The Shanghai Five traces its origins to the bilateral negotiations on border problems between China and Russia that were resumed in November 1989.

After the historic visit of Mikhail Gorbachev to China in May 1989, China and Soviet Union renewed negotiations on their 7300-kilometer borders. Then the five states reached the consensus that the border negotiations should be continued between China, as one side, and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, as the other side. From 1998 the five countries began cooperation in the framework of the Shanghai Five as five independent states. Before the Almaty Summit that was held in 1998 in Shanghai, the main concern had been the security and stabilization of the border areas between China and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Among the other factors, in the mid-1990s, a significant event happened in Afghanistan. The Taliban, an extreme Islamic movement took control of the country. Although the Taliban and its emergence had not been one of the main concerns of the Shanghai Five summit at that time, it caused serious concern among the five countries and sent out alarm signals. China was seriously worried about separatists in Xinjiang, Russia, had plunged into an extended war in Chechnya, and the Central Asian states were suffering from internal terrorism and extremism. Thus, it was not surprising that anti-terrorism soon turned out to be the main topic and task for the Shanghai Five. From 1998 the main concern for Shanghai Five summits had shifted from border issues to anti-terrorism. The Almaty Declaration of the Shanghai Five, which was published on July 4, 1998, points out that confronting international terrorism, national terrorism and religious extremism comprise the main tasks for the Shanghai Five.
From 1998, the summit meetings of the Shanghai Five began to expand the scope of its agenda to include other security issues, such as the three "evil forces" (terrorism, separatism and extremism), alongside non-security issues such as economic cooperation and cultural exchanges. Each summit resulted in a signed agreement or statement dealing with major security issues in the region as well as evolving common positions on major international issues. At the Fifth summit, held in July 2000, the joint statement explicitly stated that all parties would work to turn the Shanghai Five into a regional mechanism to conduct multilateral cooperation in all areas.

Eventually the Shanghai Five mechanism evolved into a formal regional organization- the SCO (Shanghai hezhu zuzhi), on 15 June 2001, at the Sixth summit meeting. Uzbekistan was admitted as the new founding member of SCO, thus expanding Shanghai Five to Shanghai Six. Since then, SCO has emerged as "an intergovernmental international organization...and according to the SCO charter and the Declaration, the main purpose of the SCO are: strengthening mutual trust and good neighbourliness and friendship among member states; developing their effective cooperation in political affairs, the economy and trade, science and technology, culture, education, energy, transportation, environmental protection and other fields; working together to maintain regional peace, security and stability; and promoting the creation of a new international political and economic order featuring democracy, justice and rationality" (Beijing Review, 29 July 2004:16). From bilateral to multilateral, from informal to formal, and from security to a comprehensive framework- China and other members identified a core set of issues of common interest territorial disputes, three evil forces, economic cooperation, and so forth through SCO. Thus, SCO provides an interesting case from which to study the change and continuity in Chinese multilateral diplomacy to counter-terrorism at the regional level by taking various initiatives with its Central Asian neighbours and Russia.

SCO is the first regional multilateral cooperative organization born in the 21st century. The SCO is the world's "first organization to clearly put forward the idea of combating terrorism, separatism and extremism" (Beijing Review, 29 July 2004:17). But more important, it is the first multilateral security organization largely promoted by China and one in which China has played a leading role from the very beginning (Yu,
A Chinese diplomat was appointed as the first secretary-general of the organization. All of these are remarkable and unprecedented events in China’s foreign policy in general and its multilateral diplomacy in particular.

Traditionally, China preferred bilateralism to multilateralism, in its diplomacy. It has been particularly skeptical about multilateralism in security fields. In its Southeast Asian multilateral diplomacy, the Chinese often argued that it is unnecessary and undesirable to establish a formal and institutionalized security regime in the Asia-Pacific region. Multilateral security dialogue and consultation will be sufficient to address countries security concerns. That China would more so swiftly to embrace a formal security-oriented organization with its former enemies in Northeast Asia was indeed a surprising development. Indeed, the Shanghai Five was initially designed to be bilateral rather than multilateral. The first two CBM agreements were signed between China as one of the contracting parties and Russia and three Central Asian countries as the other. The first meeting of the Shanghai Five was initiated by China on April 26, 1996. This meeting was proposed by China to tackle, address and stabilizes the nearly 7,000-kilometer border that China shares with the former states of the USSR. The “treaty of deepening military trust in border regions” signed at the summit, called on the signatories to invite the others to observe military drills and inform about any military activities within 100 kilometers from the border. It also forbade attacks on each other and restricted the scope and frequency of military maneuvers in border areas (China Daily, 5 June 2001). In 1997, the “treaty on reducing military forces in border regions” was signed in Moscow. This agreement proposed to reduce the total number of military forces along the border to less than 130,400 (China Daily, 5 June 2001). At a 1999 Shanghai Five summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, both the 1996 and 1997 agreements were seen as successful and the borders were said to be secure and stable (Bakshi, 2001:4).

Since 9/11, China and Russia and other SCO members have made an effort to offset the adverse effect of the US global war on terror. Among other things, they attempted to make SCO more relevant in the war against terror. Indeed, the Shanghai Five is among the earliest regional multilateral organizations, calling for cooperative action against terrorism in Central Asia. SCO took on international terrorism as its major
objective and the Shanghai Convention against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism signed on 15 June 2001, foresaw an intensified struggle against terrorism in Central Asia and laid down a legal framework for member states to combat terrorism (SCO Convention: 2001). Immediately after 9/11, the delegates were attending the Prime Ministerial conference of SCO at the Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, issued a joint communiqué on 14 September in which they denounced the terrorist attacks while expressing sympathy and condolence for the American people. The joint communiqué declared that the SCO was ready to closely unite with all countries and international organizations and effective measures would be taken to wage an unremitting struggle for eradicating all global risks brought about by terrorism (Kazakhstan News Bulletin, 14 September 2001). Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji made two points at the conference: (a) the drafting of “the Charter of Shanghai Cooperation Organization” should be speeded up; and (b) the proposed anti-terrorist centre in Bishkek should begin operation as soon as possible (Xinhua News Agency, 14 September 2001). No unitary or military actions were emerged. As Pan Guang explained:

- First, the 9/11 attacks were directed against the US, and it is natural that the US initially played a dominant role in the consequent war on terrorism. It is impossible and unrealistic for the SCO to play any other role than that of a cooperative partner;
- Secondly, the SCO is by no means a military alliance that demands unitary actions are taken by its members. Moreover, no SCO member state was then under any direct terrorist attack from Afghanistan that called for joint actions of all SCO members;
- Thirdly, the permanent secretariat of the SCO had not come into operation yet and the anti-terrorism center in Bishkek was still under preparation. Consequently, the SCO lacked capabilities to make quick responses or unitary actions;
- Fourthly, SCO countries were respectively also members of other organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Dushanbe Group (comprising Russia, India, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the North-Alliance of Afghanistan), and even NATO’s Partners for Peace. This means they had obligations to coordinate their actions with their fellow members in other institutions hence the different degrees of involvement in the unfolding anti-terrorist campaigns;
- Fifthly, the requirements made by the US on individual SCO members differed. For instance, the US required military bases and territorial space from Uzbekistan, while more information sharing and diplomatic coordination was needed from China and Russia’ (Pan, 2003: 100-101).
In short, it would have been illogical and premature for SCO to take the lead in the US-led anti-terrorist campaigns considering the nature and status of the organization as well as the US policy stance at that time. At the same time it can be said that because of the lack of a coordinating mechanism, SCO was unable to take more forceful and concerned actions against terrorism. SCO proposed to establish an antiterrorist centre long before 9/11 and as early as 1999. But the mutual progress of this initiative was stalled due to the different interests of member states. Some SCO members did not want to see too much militarization of the organization, apprehending the reaction of the United States and other Western countries (Pan, 2002:40). The 9/11 attack gave this antiterrorist initiative new momentum. China pushed hard for the institutionalization of a regional antiterrorism center. In early 2002, Chinese President Jiang Zemin declared it "the most urgent thing at present" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7 January 2002). The agreement signed in June 2003 to establish the SCO Regional Antiterrorism Structure in Bishkek materialized China's intention (Muslim Uzbekistan, 6 September 2003). The location of the centre was later moved to Tashkent of Uzbekistan. The agreement stipulates that this centre should become operational no later than January 2004.

The founding of the SCO signaled both a desire to deepen the structure of regional cooperation and also to expand its mandate beyond purely security matters. The meeting was important from the point of view that a number of legal documents were signed, including the declaration of the SCO and the Shanghai Treaty on Cracking Down on Terrorism (kongbu zhuyi), Separatism (fen lie zhuyi) and Extremism (jiduanzhuyi). According to the declaration, the SCO's mandate was to encourage regional cooperation in the strategic, economic and cultural spheres and to call for peace and a just international order (SCO Summits and Declarations, Refer Appendix-I). Another result of this summit was to hold meetings of foreign ministers and defense ministers once a year to coordinate activities to consolidate regional security and stability. The summit reaffirmed the countries intention to speed up signing documents to ensure the establishment of an anti-terrorism centre and its immediate operation. It is believed that with the intensification of the battle against the "three evil forces" and closer cooperation among the Central Asian countries, China and Russia, the security situation will improve.
continually and social stability and economic development be further promoted in the region" (*Beijing Review*, 5 July 2001).

At the time the 9/11 incident occurred, the SCO was in the process of drafting its charter; its planned anti-terrorism centre in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, was yet to be established; the Shanghai Treaty on Cracking Down on Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism was waiting for ratification from the respective parliaments of the six countries; and the SCO’s organizational setup had not been completed. However, heads of state of SCO’s six member countries immediately issued special statements, strongly condemning the 9/11 attack.

The Foreign Ministers of the six members countries (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) of the SCO held a meeting in Beijing on 7 January 2002 - the first such meeting since the organization was found in June 2001 (For a chronological chart on SCO summits, refer Appendix-I). In this meeting, the foreign ministers exchanged views and reached a consensus on various related issues, the situation in Afghanistan which was of special concern, the international anti-terrorism campaign, the crackdown on the “three evil forces” and the organizational structure of the SCO. The one-day meeting ended successfully with a joint statement and the principle of a contingency mechanism endorsed. The joint statement that emerged from this meeting stressed how, “as close neighbours of Afghanistan, the member countries had long been subject to direct threats of terrorism and drugs originating from Afghanistan, prior to the 11 September terrorist attacks” (Zhao, 2002:11).

Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, while attending the first SCO prime minister’s conference, in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, in 2001, suggested that SCO should put its emphasis on two tasks: finish drafting the SCO charter as soon as possible and step up the establishment of the antiterrorism centre (Pan, 2003:40). To make the SCO more functional before the charter and permanent agency of SCO have been put into place, SCO foreign ministers agreed, in January 2002, to some traditional measures during the SCO foreign ministers meeting. The joint statement issued after the meeting established a contingency mechanism that included the emergency meeting of foreign ministers to express the common position of the SCO members (Pan, 2003:41). The first step was to
draft various legal documents to bind member states together and increase the normative stake for possible defection.

The next successful summit meeting at St. Petersburg in June 2002 suggests to some extent that SCO regained a prominent status under a new situation. Jiang Zemin noted in his meeting with Kazakh president Nazarbayev that SCO has relevance in that it conforms to the practical needs of the region, the interests of the SCO member countries, and the trend of development of history. As Kyrgyz President Akayev put it, SCO has withstood the test over the years (Xinhua News Agency, 8 June 2002). At the Moscow summit in May 2003, Chinese President Hu Jintao emphasized that institutional building was the top priority of SCO. He urged member states to work even harder to make sure that the secretariat could be operational by 2003 and that the anti-terror center should be created as soon as possible (People's Daily, 30 May 2003). Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the summit marked the first time the SCO has become an international cooperation organization “in a real sense” (Xu, 2003:27).

To provide more substance to antiterrorist cooperation, China pioneered a joint military exercise among SCO members. The Chinese troops conducted joint military exercise with the Kyrgyz forces in October 2002. The first multilateral antiterrorist military exercise of SCO was thus conducted in August 2003. The drill had two phases, which carried out, respectively, in Kazakhstan and China and included war games against terrorists and a hostage-rescue operation. For China, the significance of this military exercise went beyond SCO. It was the first large-scale multilateral antiterrorist exercise that the Chinese army has participated in, and it was also the first time that China invited foreign armies into its territory. The Chinese military subsequently set a precedent for conducting missions in other countries during peacetime when they participated in the China-Kyrgyzstan bilateral antiterrorist drill (Xu, 2003:42-43).

The next major SCO leadership summit was held during May 2003 in Kremlin. In this summit, the Chinese ambassador to Russia, Zhang Deguang was been confirmed as the first executive secretary of the SCO. The declaration of this summit also reads, “The chiefs of states have approved documents regulating the activities of the SCO bodies, namely the permanent institutions- the Secretariat based in Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Centre with headquarters in Bishkek, as well as documents on the SCO
emblem and flag” (Interfax). This summit was important from regional security point of view. The document says that an international order featuring democracy, development and security would ultimately become the choice of mankind (Xinhua, 29 May 2003). The SCO members, ‘who bear the brunt of terrorism, have been actively involved in international anti-terror efforts while joining hands to combat terrorism in their own region’, said the declaration (Xinhua, 29 May 2003).

According to the declaration, the SCO ‘will closely cooperate with the sponsored programme of the Counter-terrorism Committee of UN’ (Xinhua, 29 May 2003). It would support for the drafting of a comprehensive anti-terrorism treaty and a pact to deal with terrorist attacks using nuclear weapons. The declaration also stressed that the fight against terrorism should be based on the principles of international law, and shall not be taken as a campaign against any particular religion, country or ethnic group. Smuggling of drugs and chemicals which can be used to produce narcotics is a serious threat to the world. The endorsement of the SCO regional antiterrorist mechanism was part of China’s push for the further institutionalization of SCO. China was convinced that “internal institutional building is an important way to strengthen cohesiveness and enhance the validity of organization” (Xu, 2003:27).

On 15 January 2004, SCO secretariat was formally launched in Beijing. At the same time, the SCO’s Regional Antiterrorism Centre was opened in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The two organs have an annual budget of $3.5 million. China and Russia each pays 24 percent of the budget (Xinhua News Agency, 16 January 2004). Another way to sustain SCO is to add the economic dimension to the organization. Economic and trade relations among SCO members have been underdeveloped compared with the security relations. Even before 9/11, the Chinese had been of the view that for SCO to become a viable regional organization, security multilateralism was insufficient. The economic benefits from SCO are particularly needed by the four Central Asian countries. They are actually more interested in economic, rather than security or military, cooperation. It is predicted that promoting economic cooperation will constitute a new growth point to increase the coherence of SCO. Compared to Southeast Asia, the level of economic integration in SCO is much lower.
The Tashkent Declaration signed by the presidents of SCO states on 17 June 2004 marked the commencement of a new stage of multifaceted cooperation. After considerable delay, and a location change from Bishkek to Tashkent, the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structures (RATS) centre was formally launched during this summit. RATS was given the mandate of cooperating with both the SCO’s membership and other international organizations in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism as well as creating an information nexus and think-tank dedicated to the study of terrorism (Xinhua, 17 June 2004).

Commenting on the significance of this SCO summit, Du Wei, Assistant to Secretary General of the SCO Secretariat said that “the Tashkent Summit is a starting point for the SCO to enter a new stage of full-range cooperation” (Beijing Review, 29 July 2004). In response to a query as to the role of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in the world anti-terrorist campaign and whether it would contribute to shaping the global anti-terrorist structures, Du Wei replied, “...RATS is a significant step forward and it will provide an excellent tool and cooperation platform for the six member countries in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism.... We will use the structure to conduct cooperation among the six member countries, especially the intelligence exchanges. However, at least at present, the SCO has no plan to establish a rapid response force or conduct other military actions. Its current role is to promote the intelligence exchanges between member countries and with related international and regional organizations regarding anti-terrorist activities. It may also propose suggestions and work plan for the SCO to crack down on terrorism and helps coordinate actions of the six member countries in this field” (Beijing Review, 29 July 2004). However, the significant of the summit arose from the presence of the participation of the Afghan President Hamid Karzai to boost the cause to fight against Al Qaeda through the RATS (Zhang, 2004:11).

The 5 July 2005, Astana Summit signed a Declaration of heads of SCO member states, which contains a deep analysis of current international and regional conditions and outlines common position and prospects of the SCO member states towards the international order. While addressing at the plenary session of the Council of Heads of SCO member states, Zhang Deguang, Secretary General of SCO in his speech said that “...Central Asia have once again shown that terrorism, separatism and extremism still
remain to be the most serious threat to peace, security, stability and development in the region. Maintaining peace, security and stability is a matter of top priority to the Central Asia" (Zhang, Speech: 5 July 2005). Moreover, what is important here is to look at the speech delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, Li Zhaoxing at the reception on the occasion of SCO day, 15 June when he said that “The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an essential part of China’s diplomatic policy. China will continue to attach high importance to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and contribute to its progressive development as it has done before” (Li, Speech: 15 July 2005). But before really going to assess the Chinese diplomacy of using SCO in its counter-terrorism strategy, this study would try to explore that to what extent the definition on “terrorism, separatism and extremism” given by SCO is acceptable to China. Then it would be interesting to examine how China is going to use this definition in its own favour to curb terrorist activities in the Central Asian region.

PART·III
Defining Terrorism:
SCO and China

The Shanghai Convention of SCO defines the three principal threats: terrorism, separatism and extremism differently. Article 1 of the Shanghai convention on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism defines the concepts in the following manner:

1) "Terrorism" (kongbu zhuyi) means:
   a. “Any act recognized as an offence in one of the treaties listed in the Annex to this Convention (hereinafter referred to as "the Annex") and as defined in this Treaty;
   b. Other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict or to cause major damage to any material facility, as well as to organize, plan, aid and abet such act, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, violate public security or to compel public authorities or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, and prosecuted in accordance with the national laws of the Parties;

2) "Separatism" (fen lie zhuyi) means any act intended to violate territorial integrity of a State including by annexation of any part of its territory or to disintegrate a State, committed in a violent manner, as well as planning and preparing, and abetting such act, and subject to criminal prosecuting in accordance with the national laws of the Parties;

3) "Extremism" (jiduanzhuyi) is an act aimed at seizing or keeping power through the use of violence or changing violently the constitutional regime of a State, as well as a violent encroachment upon public security, including organization, for the above
purposes, of illegal armed formations and participation in them, criminally prosecuted in conformity with the national laws of the Parties” (Shanghai Convention, 15 June 2001).

The Shanghai Convention of SCO states that ‘terrorism, separatism, and extremism defined by the convention are under no circumstances justifiable, and that whoever commits terrorist acts would be punished by penalties consistent with their grave nature. The above definition would not hinder any international treaties or the domestic law of member states to include any other definitions with wider scope’ (Special Press Summary Report, 7 January 2002). So, it would be useful to see as to what extent the definitions laid down in the SCO approximate with the official position or definition of the PRC government.

During the news conference, in which he introduced the list of alleged "terrorists" in December 2003, Zhao Yongchen, deputy director of the counter-terrorism department of the Ministry of Public Security laid down the following criteria in 'defining' terrorist organizations:

- “An organization or organizations that engage in terrorist activities endangering national security or social stability, and harm life and property through violence and terror (regardless of whether it is based in or outside of China);
- Possessing established organizational leadership and division of labour or systems for division of labour” (Xinhua, 15 December 2003).

And in addition to the above two criteria:

- ‘Currently or previously involved in the organization, planning, instigation, conduct or implementation of terrorist activities;
- Funding and supporting terrorist activities;
- Establishing bases for terrorist activities or organizing, recruiting and training terrorists;
- Collaborating with international terrorist organizations by receiving funding or training from these organizations or engaging in terrorist activities with them’ (Xinhua, 15 December 2003).

He went on to define "terrorists" as:

- “Those who have established links with terrorist organizations and who engage in terrorist activities which harm state security or the lives and property of people (whether they are Chinese or foreign citizens)” (Xinhua, 15 December 2003).

And in addition to this, they must:

- “organize, lead or belong to a terrorist organization;
- organize, plan, instigate, propagate or incite the implementation of terrorist activities;
• fund and support terrorist organizations and terrorists to assist them in the conduct of terrorist activities;
• receive funding or training from the above-mentioned terrorist organizations or other international terrorist organizations to engage in terrorist activities" (Xinhua, 15 December 2003).

If one looks closely at this detailed list of categories, one thing gets clear that there is no concrete definition of the terms "terror", "terrorism" or "terrorist", and this has probably given the Chinese authorities a free hand to interpret various crimes in their own way and treat it as a terrorist incident. Article 103 of the Chinese Constitution says that ‘whoever organizes, plots, or acts to split the country or undermine national unification, the ringleader, or the one whose crime is grave, is to be sentenced to life imprisonment or not less than ten years of fixed-term imprisonment; other active participants are to be sentenced to not less than three but not more than ten years of fixed term imprisonment; and other participants are to be sentenced to not more than three years of fixed term imprisonment, criminal detention, control, or deprivation of political rights. Whoever instigates to split the country and undermine national unification is to be sentenced to not more than five years of fixed term imprisonment, criminal detention, control, or deprivation of political rights; ringleaders or those whose crimes are grave are to be sentenced to not less than five years of fixed term imprisonment’ (Xinhua News Agency, 24 December 2001). However, the definitional aspect of both China and SCO on this issue remains unclear as the term terrorism lacks a clear definition at the global level. But it is noticed that China is consistently using this opportunity to crackdown on terrorists, separatists and extremists in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region by using SCO as a tool. As a result, China is trying to organize and build the SCO as a strong tool to fight against terrorism. In this context, it would be very interesting to have a critical analysis of China’s role and strategy in SCO to counter-terrorism.

PART-IV
SCO and Counter-terrorism:
Role of China

There are divergent opinions on the orientation, prospects and development mode of the SCO. According to Pan Guang, ‘the development of the SCO has made it possible for the first time in history to involve China, Russia and the Central Asian states in a
multilateral mechanism of regional security and economic cooperation. Within its framework, China and its SCO partners have resolved, in a matter of several years, their border issues leftover from the past two centuries impeding the development of good relationships' (Pan, 2003:99). Miao Huashou, a research fellow at the Development Research Centre of the State Council in Beijing Review writes that ‘since its founding, the “Shanghai Five”, the predecessor of the SCO, has attracted worldwide attention for its effective cooperation in the realm of regional security. He is of the view that due to the infiltration of international forces into Central Asia and the region's special ethnic and cultural conditions, regional security has always been an important issue faced by the governments of China and Central Asian countries and here SCO is playing a vital role for regional security in this area’ (Miao, 2002).

On the other hand, Taiwan scholars do not hold the same opinion like their Chinese counterparts about the development of SCO. Professor Parris H. Chang, former chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations of the Legislative Yuan (Parliament) is of the opinion that ‘China is using SCO as a tool to protect from the international media the human rights violations, repressions in Xinjiang’. Vincent Wen-Hsien Chen of the Graduate School of Taiwan History, National Chengchi University also says that “SCO is primarily a Chinese strategy to counter US pressure in the Central Asian region. It is also to some extent an effort by the Chinese government to counter NATO”. Western writers and specialists like Marc Lanteigne feel that the founding of the SCO signaled both a desire to deepen the structure of regional cooperation and also to expand its mandate beyond purely security matters (Lanteigne, 2005:122). Since it is of recent origins, its consolidation and development are the primary tasks confronting the SCO. As a matter of fact, the SCO appears to be facing more challenges after its development as a formal regional organization. Hence, the challenges to SCO also raise some new challenges for Chinese security policy.

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37 My discussion with Prof. Chang in New Delhi.

38 My interview with Prof. Vincent Wen-Hsien Chen in Taipei, Taiwan on 16 August 2005.
The SCO possesses great potential for further development, but some real and underlying restraining factors should be taken into consideration as well, though they need not necessarily be seen as insurmountable. They are:

- **First**, disparities among state members of the SCO in political, economical, historical and cultural background. Disparities among SCO member states are not necessarily going to be serious problems for cooperation, but the contrast should help them see things differently;

- **Secondly**, the rising instability in the political conditions and internal politics of the Central Asian countries are some potential source of instability for SCO (Qian, 2002:221);

- **Thirdly**, in Central Asia, there exist at least three or four formal or informal security mechanisms, including the SCO, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the “Partnership of Peace” program of NATO, and the commitment of the United States to the Central Asian states, especially to Uzbekistan. How to coordinate these mechanisms and make their roles and functions complementary rather than over-lapping or confrontational is a problem that the SCO must dealt with (Qian, 2002:222);

- **Fourthly**, the difficulty in economic cooperation among the Central Asian, Russian and Chinese is another potential hindrance in front of SCO. Thus, difficulty in economic cooperation is one of the hardest problems for the SCO.

However, despite the above difficulties, the SCO is very important compared to other related organizations. It is important to mention that the SCO had to deal with an abrupt change in Central Asian affairs after 9/11. How to cope with the changing situation, and especially the emergence of a powerful and competitive US presence in the region, has been a big challenge for the newly established organization.

Less than three months after the establishment of the organization, the viability of SCO was put under a serious test as a consequence of 9/11. It was observed that after 9/11, many smaller members of SCO took a pro-western stand, for example; Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, allowed the United States to establish military bases and deploy military forces on their territories. The three countries strengthened their antiterrorist cooperation with the United States through bilateral channels rather than through SCO. It is possible that these temporary anti-terror arrangements with the Central Asian states may evolve into a formal US- dominant regional security mechanism, thus making SCO irrelevant (Zhao, 2003:115). Consequently, China’s strategic position “has eroded substantially” in Central Asia (Sands, 11 January 2002). There are contrary views as well. China would prefer Central Asian regional cooperation with the US, conducted
in the framework of SCO, where they would be in a position to monitor such cooperation. Some Chinese analysts argue that the SCO plays a particularly important role in the U.S. anti-terrorism strategy and that such a role cannot be entirely replaced by any other organization. Therefore, it is necessary for the US to cooperate with SCO to deal with international terrorism.

The presence of US forces in Central Asia after 9/11 even caused some analysts to raise doubts about the SCO’s viability, considering that the SCO (as an institution) did not react in any direct and practical way to the terrorist forces in Afghanistan, and that the Central Asian member states established close contact with the US. Western observers thus predicted a possible early demise of this infant multilateral organization. In response to these increasing doubts about SCO’s credibility, Chinese experts like Zhao Changqing wrote that “as an regional organization, the SCO is also unlikely to remain unconcerned about changes in the internal situation of Afghanistan that affect the security and stability of Central Asia” (Beijing Review, 31 January 2002). Miao Huashou writes that “as close neighbours of Afghanistan, the SCO members had, on many occasions before September 11, warned the international community of the harm of terrorism and drugs originating from Afghanistan” (Miao, 2002: 12). According to Pan Guang, the SCO was not playing its role against terrorism unitedly. Several factors were contributing to this situation:

- 'In the case of Afghanistan, while Russia is providing material support to the US directly as it has the experience of waging a war against Afghanistan, countries like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, have provided military bases to the USA. Thus they provide independent support to the US bilaterally. This is understandable since the USA is the direct victim of 9/11 terrorist attacks.
- SCO is not a military alliance, which demands unilateral action by its members.
- There was no permanent secretariat for SCO at the time of Afghanistan war and the discussions on anti-terror mechanism were in the initial stages.

39 Here are some descriptions about SCO’s state of affairs after the September 11 attacks: “The SCO has cracked at the first serious test”. The SCO went into cardiac arrest”. “SCO stood as exposed as irrelevant”. SCO is a “stillborn” organization, and “the SCO will lose viability as a regional security and political forum”. See (Yom, 2002; Monitor: 27 November 2001, Russia’s Week: 16 January 2002).

40 Talk by Prof. Pan Guang, see footnote 36.
However, the SCO member countries are located in the same regions, facing the same security situation, fighting the same enemies (extremist, separatists and terrorists), and sharing many of the same concerns. At this point of our discussion, the focus is on the nuances attached to China’s role and effort to organize and build the SCO as a useful mechanism to raise its influence in Central Asian regions and at the same time to fight against terrorism. In addition to this, it would also trust on how SCO is one of the important directions and a vital component of Chinese foreign and security policy.

China’s Role in SCO

As in the case of its participation in Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), SCO reflects China’s interest in establishing a norm- and rule-based security order in the region. Just like any other international organization, SCO does have its instrumental function, either to manage border disputes in the narrow sense or offset the US influence in Central Asia in the broad sense. The western media described SCO as China and Russia’s attempt to establish a condominium in Central Asia and a mini-NATO to counter-balance US dominance (Oresman, 2003). There is some truth in such an argument, but it is hardly the only or even the most important motivation. Indeed the initiation of the Shanghai Five mechanism has nothing to do with external balancing; thus, the Shanghai Five and the SCO point to the gradual evolution from an instrumental order to a normative-contractual order in this specific sub-region (Alagappa, 2003: 41-52). Chinese President Jiang Zemin made it very clear in 2000 that the purpose of SCO was not just to find a way to promote friendly cooperation among member countries, but more importantly, it was an experiment to explore “new interstate relations, new security concept and new model of regional cooperation” beyond the Cold War mentality (Yu, 2003: 29).

In terms of the nature of the organization, China has advocated that SCO follow the principle of nonalignment, not targeting against any third country or region, but opening to all, including nonmembers (SCO Declaration, 15 June 2001). In terms of

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41 Some alarmists even see the SCO as China’s Warsaw Pact. Western intelligence circles describe the SCO as merely a synergistic tool and framework for Russia and China to court Central Asian countries and to establish the strategic Sino-Russian condominium over Central Asia against NATO (Oresman, 2003).

42 For a detailed discussion of instrumental and normative-contractual order, see (Alagappa, 2003).
norms governing the relationship among member states, China emphasized that SCO is underlined by the so-called Shanghai Spirit. At the St. Petersburg summit in June 2002, Jiang Zemin defined the Shanghai spirit in the following terms: “mutual trust, mutual advantages, equality, joint consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and the desire for common development” (China Daily, 8 June 2002). It was summarized by a Chinese scholar as the “five Cs: confidence, communication, cooperation, coexistence, and common interest” (Lu, 2002:10).

These norms are consistent with the new conceptions of security discussed earlier. As Jiang Zemin indicated China wants to use SCO as a catalyst to promote a new type of international relations, based on these new concepts of security. These norms, needless, to say, are still closely attached to the Westphalian international system as well as to the realist framework. But it could be argued that the realism embedded in SCO is at least not the hard-core Hobbesian version as described by some scholars as “particularly acute” in Chinese foreign policy (Lanteigne, 2005: 135-141).

It has become fashionable to invoke Rudyard Kipling’s notion of the ‘Great Game’ to describe the renewed political and economic interest in Central Asia. Essentially, this game is played for two prizes. The tangible prizes are the immense energy resources of the Caspian Sea and the possibility to transport them via pipeline to the markets of South and East Asia, instead of moving them westward. The Caspian Sea has proven oil reserves of up to 32.8 billion barrels and a potential of up to 218.8 billion barrels. With 232 trillion cubic feet, its proven gas reserves are comparable to those of Saudi Arabia. The intangible prize lies in Southeast Asia’s geo-strategic significance. Even in the information age, geographic proximity remains relevant to project power (Gray, 1996: 247:260; and Libicki, 1996: 261: 273). If we see it from the regional hegemony point of view, three reasons can be said to motivate China to bargain of mutual accommodation with Russia rather than to challenge it. They are:

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• *First*, Central Asia's energy resources can help satisfy China's ever-growing energy needs. A benign Russian posture makes it easier for China to pursue the active energy diplomacy in Central Asia that it has begun several years ago.

• *Secondly*, Central Asia's geo-strategic significance has not been lost on Islamic armed non-state actors either. These groups are establishing a network of mutual support (e.g. for training, arms procurement, and intelligence) in order to more effectively challenge governments from the Caucasus to South Asia. China is currently experiencing this in Xinjiang, where it is confronted with a Uyghurs self-determination movement (Yuan, 2003:128). If the Uighurs managed to secede from China they would not only take one-sixth of China's territory with them, but also China's bridge to the energy resources of Central Asia, its nuclear testing grounds and the oil reserves that Xinjiang itself is presumed to harbor (McNeal, 2001).

• *Third*, stability in Central Asia combined with secured access to the region allows China to concentrate on Taiwan and the South China Sea (Yuan, 2003:129).

There is no doubt that SCO is one of important direction and a vital component of China's foreign policy strategy. Determination of China's interests in the SCO, on the one hand, depends on the possibility the organization itself can offer and, on the other hand, depends on the objectives and tasks of China's overall foreign strategy. On these grounds, it can be said that China's main interests in the SCO or China's orientation of the organization should be as follows in the current stage: economic interests and strategic importance to China; SCO as a main link between China and the Central

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**Notes:**


45 In 1997, for instance, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) bought 60% of Kazakhstan's Aktyubinsk Oil Company for US$ 4.3 billion. In 2003 both countries signed an agreement to build a pipeline of 3000 km linking Kazakhstan and Xinjiang, See (Yuan, 2003:128).

46 What is today Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) has only become part of China in 1884 when Qing Dynasty troops finally overcame the fierce resistance of the Uighurs living in what was then East Turkestan. Since 1949, the Chinese government has systematically resettled ethnic Han Chinese to Xinjiang in order to gradually incorporate it into the Chinese heartland. This strategy has only exacerbated tensions resulting in an upward-spinning spiral of Uighur separatist violence countered by Chinese repression (McNeal, 2001).

47 Energy import concerns China's long-term economic development. With the expansion of China's economic scale, a rise of energy import will be unavoidable. Reliable energy guarantee has been a strategic issue playing an important part in China's future economic security. Central Asia is one of the most important sources of energy in the world and adjoins China. This is a rare convenient condition to China. If it enables Central Asia to become its reliable energy supply base through the SCO, that will be a great achievement (MacNeal, 2001).
Asia;\(^{48}\) SCO as a mechanism for cooperation between China and Russia.\(^ {49}\) But apart from the above three important orientations to the organization; China’s most important interests in recent years regards to SCO is security perspective and to respond to the threat posed by extremists, separatists and terrorists in the Central Asian regions particularly in the Xinjiang Autonomous region.

It can be said that China’s security interests in the SCO fall into three categories: first, is to guarantee China’s territorial integration and national unification; second, is to crack down on transnational crimes and to stabilize China’s northwestern areas and third, is to strengthen security in border areas and build a good peripheral environment. Safeguarding China’s territorial integration and national unification is the core (White Paper on China’s National Defense: 2000). Here, safeguarding China’s territorial integration and national unification refers to crackdown on terrorism, separatism and extremism. As to China, the three evil forces have mainly appeared in its Xinjiang ethnic separatist activities. The SCO provides a more active and realistic way to crack down on Xinjiang ethnic separatist forces.

Li Wei writes that ‘in recent years, “East Turkistan” terrorist forces in Xinjiang area of China have been rather active in Central Asia and South Asia. They have close links with extremist religious forces and terrorist organizations in Central Asia like Taliban, Wahabi, “Islam Baathist Party” of Tajikistan and “Islam Movement of

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\(^{48}\) In view of the important position of Central Asia in its national and energy security, China needs to hold its ground, take root and expand and consolidate its presence steadily and sustained in the region. Central Asia is very close to China geographically and has had close contacts with the latter in history. But it was part of Russian Empire and the former Soviet Union in over 100 years and in this region independent country only emerged in recent 10 years. So, in a sense, direct connections between China and the Central Asian region has just begun again. The SCO has offered a unique framework for cooperation between China and Central Asian countries. Within this framework, China can develop long-term, extensive and all-round cooperation with Central Asian countries in fields such as politics, security, economy and humanities. Through this kind of cooperation, it can resume and develop close relations with the Central Asian region they had in history. China and Russia both have immediate interests in Central Asia (MacNicol, 2001).

\(^{49}\) To Russia, Central Asia is its backyard. Russia has special interests and influences in the region, which occupies the primary position in Russian foreign strategy. After Putin assumed office, Russian determination to resume its special position in the Central Asian region and intensity has increased. To China, Central Asian countries are its neighbors. There is an over-3000-kilometers-long border between them. China cannot but develop close relations with Central Asian countries, enter this region and increase its influence there. So, it is unavoidable for China and Russia to meet in Central Asia (Blank, 2003; Gray, 1996).
Uzbekistan" and have got funds directly from bin Laden and Al-Qaeda’ (CIISS and HIIR, 2004: 332-334). He too writes that “in Xinjiang, China pursues the policy of autonomy of minority nationalities. In accordance with the stipulations of the constitution, Uyghurs as the principal ethnic group in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region enjoy a wide range of rights to autonomy. . . . In the course of cracking down on the terrorist crimes committed by “East Turkistan”, our law-enforcement organs have firmly carried out the policy of ethnic equality, ethnic unity and common prosperity and development of all ethnic groups and have protected the legitimate rights and interests of the people of all nationalities” (CIISS and HIIR, 2004:334-335).

Recently, China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has taken many repressive measures against the "three forces" of separatism, terrorism and religious extremism to protect its economic development. In response to the rise of terrorist activities, Chinese government has actively sought the cooperation of both the SCO and non-SCO members. As one might expect, the Chinese government has been especially successful in gaining such support by conducting joint military drills with the other neighbouring countries and mutual security guarantees. The following cases can be cited.

On 23 August 2003, a successful anti-terrorism exercise was conducted in a mountainous area in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, with the participation of the PLA units, the Armed Police Force, civilian police, militia and local governments (Su and Li, PLA Daily: 3 September 2003). Even, 27 military observers from 15 countries including the U.S, Russia, the U.K, France, Germany, Israel, South Africa and Pakistan came to watch and participate in a combined tactical exercise in Zhurihe base in Inner Mongolia performed by the armored brigade from the Beijing Military Area Command. The exercise was the first of its kind to be open to foreign military observers (Su and Li, PLA Daily: 3 September 2003). The Foreign Affairs Office of the Ministry of National Defense feels that the invitation to the foreign military observers to watch the exercise was designed to increase military exchanges and cooperation between China and the rest of the world, to adjust to new military changes in the world and to build up friendship and mutual confidence. The First Anti-terrorism Drills Symposium was held in Xinjiang
Uygur Autonomous Region. The symposium was aimed at finding solutions for the army with respect to the task, nature, and operational command, employment of strength and basic operational methods of anti-terrorism operation and enhanced the anti-terrorism capacity of the officers and men (Shi and Su, *PLA Daily*: 26 August 2003).

"Coalition-2003" was the first multilateral anti-terrorism military exercise within the framework of the SCO and resulted from the efforts of the heads of the SCO countries in fighting international terrorism. Cao Gangchuan, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the CPC, state councilor and minister of national defense, signed the "Memorandum on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States Armed Forces Anti-terrorism Exercises" with ministers of national defense of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan at the summit meeting of the SCO member countries in Shanghai on 29 May 2003 (Liang and Du, *PLA Daily*: 14 August 2003). It is equally important to mention that "Coalition-2003" was a result and success of the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Charter" and the "Shanghai Convention on Fighting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism and the Memorandum". It evolved in two phases: one was from 6 August to 8 in Ucharal, Kazakhstan and the other was from 11 August to 12 in the Ili area, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China. The first phase involved exercises against hijackers that held a passenger plane and eliminating terrorists across the borders. The second phase involved hostage rescue operation and destroying terrorist camps. In both phases, the SCO member countries carried out joint command and live ammunition exercises (Gong and Du, *PLA Daily*: 13 August 2003). Commanders from the five countries commanded their joint forces to encircle and annihilate the terrorists by using special anti-terrorism equipment, information technology, helicopters, tanks, infantry combat vehicles and self-propelled artilleries. Soldiers from different countries virtually became integrated in the exercise in terms of thinking, organization and actions. Through the exercises they enhanced their friendship, strengthened their confidence and promoted their cooperation (Gong and Du, *PLA Daily*: 13 August 2003).

The special features of this joint exercise were: first, the plan of the exercise was simply aimed at fighting regional terrorism; second, in the exercise, a small number of special elite troops were employed, high-tech means and modern weapons displayed unrivalled prowess; third, principles of psychological warfare and strategic concepts were
also applied; and finally, different arms, military police, public security police, militia and local governments all took part in the exercise. The troops from different countries in the exercises were under the same command system, and they shared information, intelligence and communications systems and coordinated their actions (Gong and Du, PLA Daily: 13 August 2003). Overall it can be said that "Coalition-2003" was designed to improve the joint performance of the SCO member countries in military anti-terrorism maneuvers and explored ways for future cooperation. On 14 November 2003, Lhasa joint Counter-terrorism exercise, code named "Himalayas 03", was held by "thousands" of forces of the PLA and armed police and in 24 November 2003, Nanning in Guangxi province counter-terror joint exercise with about 2,000 personnel was held (PLA Daily, 25 November 2005).

Another landmark joint exercise was the “Peace Mission 2005”. It was an unprecedented event involving 10,000 servicemen from China and Russia, was launched in the Russian port city of Vladivostok on 18 August and moved to the Chinese soil the day after (Xinhua, 22 August 2005). The main purpose of this Peace Mission 2005 was to deepen the Sino-Russian mutual understanding, mutual trust, enhance mutual friendship, strengthen cooperation and coordination between the two countries, especially between the two militaries in defense and security fields, carry out drills and training them against the evil forces like international terrorism, separatism and extremism, and to meet various international crisis (Panda, 2005). The relevance of this mission should be seen from the view of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) also, which was initiated by the Chinese and Russian leaders to check the rising separatists, extremists and terrorist activities in the Central Asian border areas and moreover to check the growing US influence in the region.

These above mentioned joint military exercises corresponds with SCO’s list of priorities which includes such tasks as to develop more profound cooperation in safeguarding peace, strengthening of regional security as well as acting counter to the threats of terrorism, separatism, extremism, drug trade, and organized crimes and future crisis. In his article to the Russian magazine Foreign Economic Relations, Secretary General of SCO, Zhang Deguang writes that the significant result of SCO can be seen from its external links and contacts. From the moment of its establishment, the SCO
attaches the great importance to the establishment of close connections with the United Nations Organization and considers it as priority direction in the field of external contacts of the SCO. In December 2005 the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been granted an observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

With the growth and success of SCO since 2001 in countering terrorism, questions were raised as to whether and how the group would expand its membership. The only former Soviet Central Asian Republics outside of the SCO, Turkmenistan, has opted for a largely neutral role in regional affairs and has no immediate ambitions to join the group. But other major countries in the Asian regions like India and Pakistan have shown interest to SCO since 2000 (ITAR-TASS, 26 February 2003; Asia Africa Intelligence Wire, 9 February 2003).\(^5\) Facing constant threats from the Islamic extremist groups, India has strong strategic interests in creating stability in Central Asia and it wants its burgeoning population to have secure access to Central Asia’s energy resources. The present SCO members have signaled however, that they currently do not intend to admit new members “until [the SCO] stands on its own feet” (ITAR-TASS, 3 March 2003).\(^5\) But the true reason in connection to India’s entry as a full-fledged member lies in the diametrically opposed policies of both Russia and China to South Asia.

In January 2001, Pakistan made a formal request for admission to the Shanghai Five and the head of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence, Lt-General Mahmud Ahmed, contacted China directly to gauge China’s support for Pakistan’s request (Dawn, 4 January 2001). Responding to the question put by Beijing Review reporter that ‘China and Russia have intensified cooperation on fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism under the framework of SCO, will you brief us the latest developments?’, the Russian Ambassador to China replied, “we have already established an anti-terrorism body under the framework of SCO, and the urgent task for us now is implementation. We are working on a shred information database which can be provided to various countries. On this basis, we can fight terrorism more effectively....Meanwhile, other important

\(^5\) On January 3, 2001 Pakistan formally requested observer status to the SCO. India-friendly Tajikistan opposed this and despite strong Chinese lobbying the request was not granted (ITAR-TASS, 26 February 2003, Asia Africa Intelligence Wire, 9 February 2003).

\(^5\) Quoting Russian national coordinator Vitaly Vorobyov (ITAR-TASS, 3 March 2003).
countries—Iran, India and Pakistan will join SCO as observers. These countries are expected to bring their important roles into full play in attacking terrorism” (Beijing Review, 2005:12). However, recently both India and Pakistan have been granted an observer status by the SCO members, but doubts still prevails from the China’s perspective regarding the inclusion of Pakistan and/or India. Clearly it would create more problems for China and SCO: first, including both countries would present an entirely new set of security issues, centering on the conflict in Kashmir, which both SCO and China would initially be ill-prepared to address; second, including these two sizeable regional powers would potentially dilute China’s now-extensive influence within the SCO, especially since both India and Pakistan have been anxious to improve ties with the Central Asian Republics; third, admitting Pakistan and not India would heighten the international perception the SCO was developing a partisan strategic organization, an impression which China has consistently attempted to dispel.

From Russia’s perspective, Pakistan is always seen as a nation who support the rise of Islamic extremism and as a result Russia feels that Pakistan would support Islamic extremism on the territory of the former Soviet Union just like it had done in Afghanistan. But Russia might therefore be willing to support Pakistan’s membership bid, if India can also join. From China’s perspective, India’s membership as a full fledged member in SCO would create enough chance for India to check the terrorist incidents in the Kashmir valley. So the point which gets interesting to be examined in our next case study is the stand of the Chinese government on the issue of terrorism in the Kashmir valley vis-à-vis South Asia.

Apart from the issue of terrorism, which is a common threat for the entire region, the tense India-Pakistan relationship over the Kashmir issue, the nuclear status of both countries and USA’s military presence in Asia, have made the situation very complex. The next chapter intends to examine how all these factors more or less have also had an impact on China’s perspectives and relations with the region. However, what makes the next case study “China’s stand on terrorism in Kashmir vis-à-vis South Asia” more interesting is that after 9/11, South Asia has become an important part of the international fight against terrorism. The anti-terrorism war led by India in this region has become complicated by two factors particularly: the first relates to the conflict over Kashmir and,
the divergent positions on cross-border terrorism by India and Pakistan; and the second
relates to the ambiguous and debatable pro-Pakistan stand of China on the issue of
Kashmir as well as terrorism. The PRC’s approach to terrorism in South Asia therefore
would have to be examined in the context of triangular politics, China’s strategic
objectives vis-à-vis the South Asian region as well as the emerging contours of a
normalizing India-China relationship.