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## SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO) AND INDIA'S ROLE IN ITS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Multilateral regional organisations were founded all over the world in the decades that followed the Second World War and the Cold War. Building confidence mechanisms, regional economic integration, trade, and multilateral agreements are all activities that regional organisations are getting more and more involved in. Furthermore, they are paying more attention to matters like general notions of security, terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and more human rights, and energy and environmental concerns. The precarious conditions erupted after the disintegration of the USSR, encouraged Russia, China and the newly formed Central Asian countries to join hands for a strong regional cooperation. Thus, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was founded in 2001 with an aim to enhance political, economic cooperation and evolve strategy to fight against terrorism in the Eurasian region. This paper will focus on the evolution of SCO's multilateral cooperation and engagement of member countries in economic, political, energy security and strategic areas under the regional governance.*

**KEYWORDS:** SCO, China, Terrorism, RATS, India and SCO

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### **GENESIS AND GROWTH OF THE SCO**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a young regional group with one and half decades, has swiftly forged ahead from mere political to significant economic, strategic and cultural institution. Since inception, the

SCO has been devoting to the consensus building, confidence building measures, border solving issues, security concerns, economic and cultural cooperation. The SCO was founded with Five Central Eurasian countries – Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan – and the People’s Republic of China on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai. It evolved on the model of ‘Shanghai Five mechanism’ (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) which formed in April 1996 by signing of the ‘Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions’. China has land borders with all the members of the Shanghai Five mechanism. The cooperative mechanism, started to strengthen confidence-building and disarmament in the border regions. The ‘Shanghai Five’ at its fifth annual meeting held in Shanghai, while welcoming Uzbekistan – the non-border state of China – as Sixth member of the group, issued the Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001. In June 2002, the Heads of SCO member states met in St. Petersburg and adopted the SCO Charter, which clearly expound the SCO principles, functions, organizational structure, cooperation orientation and external relations, marking the actual establishment of this new organization in the sense of international law.<sup>1</sup> In the ‘Spirit of Shanghai’, the SCO pursues its policy in accordance with the principles of non-alignment, non-targeting anyone, and openness. It bases its internal policy on the principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equal rights, consultations, respect for the diversity of cultures, and aspiration towards common development.<sup>2</sup>

## EXPANSION OF THE SCO

All SCO members along with observer countries cover the largest geographical area of any other regional organization, which covers from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok and from the White Sea to the Indian Ocean. Another feature is that Russia and China are the members of P-5 of the United Nations Security Council and four of its members (Russia, China, India and Pakistan) the nuclear powers are the dominant and powerful actors of the SCO. It is interesting to note that another two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan would become full members by June 2017. The SCO at present has eight full members: India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; four countries with observer status -- Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia -- and six countries -- Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey and Sri Lanka -- are dialogue partners.<sup>3</sup> However, Turkey’s successful bid for the full membership would make it the first NATO member to join the SCO.

Interestingly, the SCO's has huge market and energy resource potential. On the potentials of the SCO, global economic analysts, said, the population of the SCO member countries combined is 3.33 billion (2021), or 42.49% of the world’s population. The combined GDP of the eight member states is US\$23.307 trillion (2021), or

24.2% of the global GDP. Together, SCO members account for almost 20% of the world's oil reserves and 44% of its natural gas. All of the member states are also large food producers and have produced a joint statement on food security as well as an agreement on diversified supply chain development. <sup>4</sup> The members of SCO share some 36 percent of the world's electricity production, 23 percent of natural gas, 20.8 percent of crude oil and 60.2 percent of coal production. They also consume some 28 percent of natural gas, 25.2 percent of crude oil and 65.1 percent of coal. <sup>5</sup>

In 2006 the SCO summit in Shanghai had observed temporary moratorium on membership expansion. After a decade of long stay, India formally applied for full membership in 2014 and in 2015 SCO summit agreed to sanction full membership to India and Pakistan. Both the countries signed Memorandum on accession in June 2016 and will become full members in June 2017. With their induction, SCO territory reaches the waters of the Indian Ocean and the grouping stance akimbo as a compelling presence on the edges of the Persian Gulf.<sup>6</sup> Considering their size and influence among the SCO members, China and Russia are dominant stakeholders in promoting regional cooperation and prosperity. Russia is the largest arms supplier; in addition, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan and Iran are big energy exporters; while China and India are significant oil importers.<sup>7</sup>

One another important issue compelled the establishment of SCO was, each of the member countries of SCO involved in the issues of either ethnic or fundamentalism. Russia has been facing great instability near and within its borders (in Chechnya), while China is at risk in the Xinjiang autonomous region. Correspondingly, Middle East countries were encountering with the expansion of religious fundamentalism. More than one million Uzbek are living in Afghanistan, about 500,000 people Turkmen are living in each of the following countries, Iran, Iraq and Turkey and about 2 million Tajik people are living in Afghanistan. Now, about 2 million Kazakhs are living in Xinjiang of China and about 8 million Uyghurs (Muslims of Turkey origins) are living in this province. While about 250,000 Uyghurs are living in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Uyghurs are famous for their long-term fight to attain independence from China and establishing an autonomous country called "Eastern Turkestan" that includes some regions of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>8</sup> In view of the fact, Central Asian region is critical to global peace and stability, China and Russia with their relative military, economic, and political power could do maximum dexterity against ethnic and terrorism that could pose greatest challenges to the world order. The SCO developed a new concept, which is condensed to the "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, and respect for cultural diversity and the desire for common development. The new concept also embodies a new security concept that is opposite of the Cold War mentality, featuring common security, non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting a third country.<sup>9</sup>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Since inception, SCO identified economic cooperation among the member countries is an important area for regional coherence and development. China believed that SCO is intended to increase trade opportunities among the member states and also facilitate the exchange of information, technology and skills to complement each other capabilities. At the Heads of government first meeting held in September 2001, member countries discussed regional economic cooperation objectives and facilities for trade and investment among members. Accordingly, they signed Memorandum between the Governments of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation. In the next meeting held in Beijing in September 2003 the member nations signed a framework agreement called “Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of SCO Member States” that set the goals for economic cooperation among the member states, including the free movement of commodities, capital, service, and technology in SCO for 20 years. At the Tashkent summit in June 2004, promotion of intra-regional economic relations became a major item on agenda. After consultations, members of the meeting decided to establish five specialized working groups relating to: e-commerce, customs, quality inspection, investment promotion, and transportation facilitation. In the same summit members also agreed to create the SCO Development Fund and the SCO Business Council.<sup>10</sup>

## CHINA IN SCO’S INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

On the course of laying firm foundation of relations with Central Asia, China emphasized economic cooperation in the exploration of oil gas. The pertinent reason for China to engage Central Asia in the multilateral cooperation has been the climbing demand for energy, especially fossil fuels and to sustain its burgeoning economic growth rate. The logical conclusion is that the Central Asian states are new energy suppliers besides some of these oil and gas resources can be piped into China<sup>11</sup> which are less expensive and secure when compared with transportation by tankers. In addition, China with the growing internal challenges and external threats, particularly the Uyghur Diaspora that spills across national borders, Beijing sought to promote its economic interests in Central Asia and enhance energy security.<sup>12</sup>

The SCO member countries of the former Soviet Union republics are affluent in fossil oil deposits. The Caspian Sea and its continental shelf are the third largest area in the world of developable energy reserves; Kazakhstan, has oil reserves of between 9 to 40 billion barrels and forecasted oil production of 100 million tons by 2010 and by 2015 the output of natural gas will be 50 billion cubic meters; Turkmenistan, on the other hand, has reserves of 12-21 trillion cubic meters of natural gas.<sup>13</sup> China’s efforts of economic linkages led to the opening of China and Kazakhstan joint 998-kilometer, Atasu-Alashankou pipeline, estimated to deliver up to

200,000 barrels of oil per day in 2005. Similarly, oil and gas, communications, infrastructural projects in road and rail were jointly started between China and Central Asian countries.

Since 2001, China while undertaking joint projects, adopted 'diversification strategy' for its energy security, which include increased investment and exploration of oil in SCO countries. China's deep penetration with the region resulted in the completion of the 988 km Kazakh-China oil pipeline linking Atasu in western Kazakhstan and Alashankou in Xinjiang in December 2005. In July 2006 China granted US\$600 million loan for the joint exploration of energy deposits in Uzbekistan. In May 2008 the China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) had unveiled a plan for a new Kazakhstan-China natural gas pipeline to carry 40 billion cubic meters of gas per year, 30 billion of which would flow to China, from the Darhan block on the Caspian Sea. As a result, China's relations with Central Asia have reflected the pre-eminence of the goal of 'Integration for Xinjiang', with an emphasis placed on the establishment of political, economic, and infrastructural links with the Central Asian states, particularly Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Analysts on these developments observed that China's "westward advance" into Central Asia is also determined by its growing need for energy resources.<sup>14</sup>

Its growing potential economy allowed China to take up leading role to offer immense financial support to the SCO members. China's economic presence was manifested in the bilateral economic relationships between China and SCO members. The financial assistance and various business promotional activities has evidenced in the rapid growth of commodity turnover between China and the region was worth US \$ 11 billion in 2006; to US \$ 29 in 2010; in US \$ 36 in 2012; and US \$ 40 in 2013.<sup>15</sup> China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, which aims to recreate the ancient 'Silk Road' trade and infrastructure networks across central, west and south Asia, is expected to feature prominently on the SCO's agenda.<sup>16</sup> In the trade relations between China and Central Asian countries fuel and raw materials dominated the exports and imports by consumer goods.

Two major railway construction projects commenced will help strengthen economic connectivity in the region. The first one, Termez–Mazar-e-Sharif–Kabul–Peshawar, estimated to cost US\$5 billion, will open Pakistani seaports on the Arabian Gulf to Uzbekistan. The second is a new route from Torugart to Jalalabad, connecting the Chinese border with Kyrgyzstan was finally approved at the SCO meeting in September 2022. SCO brings many opportunities of economic collaboration and trade through infrastructure development. However, Elvira Mami, senior economist, analyses the situation as, economic connectivity often comes at the cost of a heavy debt burden, and it is important to examine the costs and benefits of these opportunities bearing in mind the growing number of developing countries today facing difficulties repaying their debts.<sup>17</sup>

## REGIONAL ANTI-TERRORISM STRUCTURE (RATS)

SCO's commitment to establish multilateral mechanism to forge regional cooperation, maintaining peace and stability and promoting development in the region largely credited to its structure, constructive mechanisms, economic and security cooperation within the framework of the organisation. The SCO has different governing bodies to look after and review the organisation for effective functioning. The SCO has formed organizational framework for effective functioning of the institution. The SCO summit had approved about ten legal documents regarding the institutionalization of the mechanisms for various councils and two permanent bodies -- the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) in Tashkent 2004.<sup>18</sup> The Secretary-General of the SCO is appointed by the Heads of State Council (HSC). China as the host country, accepted to provide free office facilities for the Secretariat in Beijing. China also agreed to pay the lion's share of the SCO budget. The SCO Secretariat has a permanent staff of 30 and its initial budget was \$2.6 million. About \$3.1 million was allocated to the effective function of RATS.<sup>19</sup> Zhang Deguang, former Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister and former Chinese Ambassador to Russia, was appointed as the first SCO Secretary-General. The term is three years and officials from member countries will assume the position of Secretary-General in Russian alphabetic order.

In order to defuse disturbances from terrorists, the six-member states set up a mechanism for prevention and mitigate the seriousness of the terrorist outfits. SCO directly involved in antiterrorism activities. Unlike most regional bodies, SCO took steps to ease local tensions by encouraging dialogue and reconciliation among members. This decision helped to setup RATS to the issue of terrorism and other related issues. SCO analyzed that the fundamentalists taking advantage of the unsettled border problems for promotion of separatist and terrorist activities at trans-national areas. Hence, China, which is having unsettled border dispute with neighbours adopted demarcation and demilitarization of borderlines by following pragmatic approach.

SCO believed that peaceful, secured and stable conditions are prerequisite for successful regional growth and development. This resource rich region is also vulnerable for serious security challenges. Chief reasons for the growth of terrorist activities in this area are: "poorly patrolled borders, lack of cooperation among the states, lawlessness, and corruption among officials, police, and border guards". All make it vulnerable to terrorist and crime organizations seeking an environment hospitable to their needs. Central Asia is known as "a major 'highway' for narcotics gangs to transport their products from Afghanistan to European and Russian markets."<sup>20</sup> The SCO's security objectives encompass socioeconomic development of the region besides dealing multifarious issues such as transnational non-traditional threats, terrorism, organized crime, illegal trafficking of people, weapons and drugs. The SCO also took the task of eliminating "three evils" terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Therefore, SCO tried to strengthen cooperation in defence and security in response to the regional requirements. Particularly, Taliban's extremist actions in Afghanistan and Uyghur's in Xinjiang region in China and fundamentalist forces in Central Asia had spillover effects on the region and constitute a serious challenge to the organization. Thus, SCO as a whole is facing risk from different terrorist outfits and criminal groups in the illegal narcotic trade. To mitigate the menace, SCO strive for collective strategy and cooperation rather than singularly fighting the cause. On the idea of SCO, analysts felt, this is a definite step in the right direction as terrorism is one of the most pressing problems in the region, and it signals to critics that the SCO is committed to eradicating this threat.<sup>21</sup>

The chief functions of RATS include maintaining working contacts with chief administrative bodies of member states and strengthening coordination with international organisations on matters of combating the growing religious radicalism.<sup>22</sup> The SCO-RATS also maintains a databank and facilitate information sharing of terrorist organisations and individuals, aiding and abetting terror activities amongst the member states. India as Chair of the RATS during 2021-2022, made members to agree to take joint measures to counter terrorist threats from Afghanistan. In the SCO-RATS meeting held in Samrkhand in September 2022, it was decided to a standard list of terrorists, separatist and extremist groups to provide an operational basis for effective counter-terrorism measures.<sup>23</sup> As well as the senior officials of the SCO-RATS decided to organise and conduct a joint border operation with the forces and means of the border services of the competent authorities of the SCO member states 'Solidarity-2023'.<sup>24</sup>

RATS will focus primarily on Afghanistan and the different terrorist organisations active under the Taliban rule that poses the threat to SCO member countries as a whole. RATS has made significant contribution in preventing terrorist attacks and killed number of terrorists. RATS has successfully prevented 20 terror attacks and neutralised 1,700, and led to the arrest of 2,700 members of terror organisations between 2011 and 2015. This anti-terrorism body also destroyed 440 terror camps, saved member countries from 650 terror-related crimes, and seized 450,000 ammunition pieces and more than 52 tons of explosives from different terror organisations.<sup>25</sup>

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SCO

On the bonhomie of relations China seeking to enhance its economic, security and military relations in the area. This increasing regional militarization could be used to address the regional issues like religious fundamentalism, terrorism and drug trafficking. China, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, successfully signed an agreement with Central Asian states not to support, protect or Xinjiang separatists. Since then, China and Central Asian

states have signed agreements on combating separatism and terrorism, launching military and security cooperation in the border regions and beyond.<sup>26</sup> SCO's conventions on drug trafficking and terrorism have made noteworthy achievements in exterminate the risks. RATS has made significant contribution in preventing terrorist attacks and killed number of terrorists. This was asserted by SCO Secretary-General, Rashid Alimov in May 2016 that, "Over 150 members of international terrorist organization were killed with the assistance of RATS in 2015, about 1,000 supporters of terrorists were detained, nearly 2,000 units of weapons and improvised explosive devices and over 150,000 units of ammunition were seized".<sup>27</sup> However, SCO took measures to control the problems it expressed deep concern over the growing threats of terrorism and extremism, illegal drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime and called for a build-up of international efforts combating these global challenges and threats.

In the multilateral cooperation front, while resolving tensions over border demarcation, SCO sharpened focus on transnational issues, which could be addressed collectively. The unstable condition in Afghanistan has served to intensify the illegal trade activity in the neighbouring countries. To eradicate the illegal narcotics trade from the Central Asian region, SCO took united action and adopted an anti-narcotics strategy for 2011–2016. In order to seek wider cooperation to curtail illegal trade and trafficking, the SCO is working with other regional and global frameworks focused on tackling illegal narcotics. In 2010, the RATS signed a protocol of cooperation with UNODC's Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, whereby the two bodies collaborate on efforts to tackle the illegal narcotic trade as a source of funding for terrorist organizations in the region.<sup>28</sup> In order to represent Eurasia at a global level, SCO has been truly establishing diplomatic connections and partnerships with other multilateral institutions by signing memorandum of understanding with ASEAN, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), CSTO, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and also signed Joint Declaration with UN Secretariat in 2010 for developing a working relationship and cooperation.<sup>29</sup>

Besides, SCO also jointly conducted military drills and other moves for defence and security cooperation to send a strong deterrent signal to the "three forces" in the region. SCO conducted "Peace Mission 2014" an anti-terrorism military drill in Inner Mongolia, China was claimed a great success.<sup>30</sup> SCO's spirit of mutual trust, mutual respect and resolving problems through consultation is allowing sustainable mutual benefits, common development and common prosperity. Thus, SCO is appreciated as, "It now appears that the SCO is emerging as a major player on the world stage, at the right time and under the right circumstances, and is seen to be moving beyond its original mandate of resolving border disputes and combating terrorism."<sup>31</sup>



Attracted by SCO's successful accomplishments, vibrant economies and strategically important region, the US and Japan showed their interest to join the group, but their request was not considered stating that they are 'outsiders' of the region. As the extremism acquires global dimension and Afghanistan and Central Asia are becoming the epicenter of extremism and terrorism, SCO in a global effort to fight this challenge welcomed India and Pakistan for multilateral cooperation.

## INDIA AND SCO

India after the end of Cold War, perturbed by the emergence of new global security order, it became imperative for New Delhi to redesign foreign policy priorities. India started to become member in number of regional organizations for multilateral cooperation. This shift ushered in far reaching changes in India's economic, political and strategic affairs. The vibrant Indian economy for sustainable growth needs uninterrupted energy security. India wants to engage itself in different regions and organisations. India envisioned huge reserves of oil and natural gas of Central Asia is a promising regional area to depend and also considered as an "extended neighbourhood" with which New Delhi share a range of strategic interest. Historically India's relations with Central Asia were also very cordial and productive.<sup>32</sup> Besides, India enjoys tremendous benevolence with the SCO members and considered a benign neighbour.

Since SCO's establishment, its fast development and growing influence on regional affairs have drawn attention from the neighbouring countries as well as international community. India wants to become a member in this prospective cooperative mechanism. SCO also showed interest to admit India for mutual cooperation. India would get greater access to major gas and oil exploration projects in Central Asia and also for the partial fulfillment of energy security. Indian human resources particularly from Information Technology (IT), engineering expertise, science and space technology will offer opportunities in the ongoing mega infrastructural projects as well as SCO's regional advancement. India and SCO will help mutually in the issues relating to security, defence, intelligence sharing, narcotics trafficking and combating terrorism. On the prospects of multilateral cooperation Indian Prime Minister at Tashkent Summit in 2016 said, that, "India would significantly benefit from the grouping's strengths in energy and natural resources and in turn India's strong economy and vast market could drive economic growth in the SCO region." He also opined, "India's membership of SCO would contribute to region's prosperity. It would also strengthen its security. Our partnership will protect our societies from the threats of radical ideologies of hate, violence and terror."<sup>33</sup> For all of the member states of SCO, the roiling pot of escalating terrorism and drug trafficking poses a security risk. It is always a worry that Afghanistan could become a refuge for terrorist groups that threaten the security of Pakistan, China, India, and the Central Asian countries.

India adopted its ‘Look North’ strategy (Connect with Central Asia) to establish close linkages with Central Asia and viewed the enormous infrastructural project like the 7,200 km long multi-mode (ship, rail, road) North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) connects freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. The INSTC is designed to be a major route for energy supplies to India and all the countries involved are invested in its security.<sup>34</sup> Besides the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) gas pipeline is of great help to New Delhi as well as to the peace, prosperity, and stability of the region.

India, on the rotation basis, has become the Chair of the SCO from 2022-2023 coincidence with the Chair of G-20 as well for the same period. India since its admission has flagged many important measures pertaining to energy, food security, connectivity, economic development and COVID-19 in the Central Asia. The strong historical and cultural ties between India and Central Asia are demonstrated through Buddhism. India staged the first-ever SCO virtual 3D Digital Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage in 2020, moving cultural and humanitarian cooperation forward. India, Presidency of the SCO, wish to present its civilisational glory and historical ties with Central Asia. Varanasi, one the ancient cities of the world, has obtained the rotating title of ‘Cultural and Tourism Capital’ for the SCO. This development will have a great influence on the member-nations of the SCO and offer an excellent opportunity to explore the shared cultural and historical heritage.<sup>35</sup> Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his speech at SCO summit held at Samarkand in September 2022 explained that:

India supports greater cooperation and mutual trust among SCO members. The pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine caused many obstacles in global supply chains, due to which the whole world is facing an unprecedented energy and food crisis. SCO must make efforts to develop reliable, resilient and diversified supply chains in our region. This will require better connectivity, as well as it will be important that we all give each other full right to transit.<sup>36</sup>

In the same meeting while explaining major challenges of the region, Modi called the members The world faces another major challenge today – and that is ensuring the food security of our citizens. One possible solution to this problem is to promote the cultivation and consumption of millets. Millets are a superfood that has been grown for thousands of years, not just in SCO countries, but in many parts of the world, and is a traditional, nutritious, and low-cost alternative to dealing with the food crisis.<sup>37</sup>

As an emerging global player and a benign actor who longed for peace around the world, Indian Prime Minister met Russian President Valadimir Putin at Samarkand meeting for first time after the Ukraine war started, and wished for the end of the war. Modi said, “today is not an era for war,” encouraging Russia to tread a path that

sees an end to the war rather than prolongs it. He also affirmed the importance of “democracy, dialogue, and diplomacy” in encouraging the end of the war. <sup>38</sup> India's serious efforts will, in part, neutralise the extremism and terrorism forces coming from Pakistan and Afghanistan and foster closer SCO member cooperation.

## CONCLUSION

SCO formed as non-military organization in 2001 eventually evolved into multilateral cooperative mechanism in Eurasian region. Since the beginning, the objective of the SCO is to cooperate with its members to achieve economic vibrancy, peace, stability and self-reliance. Accompanied by SCO spirit of confidence building mechanisms, consensus, and mutual respect it tried to solve border tensions and build bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Once allegedly viewed as an Eastern counterbalance to NATO by the West, SCO started to play benevolent role in economic development as well as fight against fundamental terrorism, extremism, separatism and illegal narcotics trade. It highlights the SCO's major role within the regional security architecture as well as its concerns about existing threats to regional stability. Russia and China despite their divergent views, pledged to enhance cooperation to thwart the US from this geostrategic region. Considering the energy prospects and security cooperation among the members SCO could overcome its institutional weaknesses and raise the possibility for collective security action within the SCO's framework. India and Pakistan would increase economic, political relations and deterrent capability against terrorism in the region vis-a-vis enhances interaction with the West.

The SCO's concentration on the regional non-traditional security governance to fight against regional terrorism will make an important contribution to the development of legal framework to fight international extremism. This dynamic multilateral institution evolved in a relatively stable environment has real strengths to become a paradigm with great vitality and significant influence in regional cooperation at global level by further drawing benign strengths from its associates. The recent political developments like the hasty withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan in 2022 and return of the Taliban enhanced the fears of terrorism and regional instability. The entire economy as whole and supply networks was impacted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Regional tensions between China and India have increased as a result of the border confrontations at Doklam and Galwan.

To sum up, the SCO, which is seen as a reliable organisation for balancing, can lower the tensions through routine exchanges and support full multilateral coordination among its members in the areas of energy, trade, security and transportation connections.

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