

The University of Newcastle

***Old and New Contestants in the Modern Great Game: Sino-Russian
Relations and its Implications for Security in Central Asia***

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for examination to any other University or Institution.

(Signed) Mark Manson

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	v
List of Abbreviations	vi
Synopsis (Executive Summary)	viii

Chapter

1.	INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW	1
	Russia's Return as a Great Power	
	Will Russia Catch the 'Dutch Disease?'	
	Russia's Stand	
	China's Situation	
	China's Past and its Effects on its Foreign Policy	
	Central Asia	
	Some Views on Sino-Russian Relations	
2.	THE SHANGHAI CO-OPERATION ORGANISATION	20
	Introduction to the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO)	
	The Charter of the SCO	
	The Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS)	
	Structure of the SCO	
	States With Observer Status and Dialogue Partners	
	Hydrocarbons and Geopolitics - A Short History (and its effects on the SCO)	
	Disparate Views on the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation	
	Russia and China in the SCO	
	SCO - The Quiet Achiever	

3.	CENTRAL ASIA: AUTOCRACIES, HYDROCARBONS, TERRORISM, UPRISINGS AND GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS	45
	Hydrocarbons in China, Russia and Central Asia (SCO & Turkmenistan)	
	Domestic Militant Islam and Separatism	
	South Asian Exports: Islamic Fundamentalism from Pakistan and Afghanistan	
	Balance of Power in Central Asia	
	Central Asian Authoritarianism	
	Foreign Policy (Central Asian SCO states and Turkmenistan)	
	SWOT Analysis - (SCO, West, Oil and Terrorism)	
4.	RUSSIA, CHINA AND THE US IN CENTRAL ASIA	61
	From 'Strategic Partnerships' to 'Friendship Treaties'	
	Offensive Realism from <i>both</i> Russia and China?	
	'Soft' Balancing, Hyper-vigilance and Arms Races	
	Current Realisms vs. Past Idealisms	
	Russia's Take	
	US Interests in Central Asia	
	China's Strategy	
	Maintain Status Quo (For Now) - Without America	
5.	CONCLUSIONS	83
6.	APPENDIX	89
	Political Maps	89
	SCO Members	90
	Pipeline Maps	91
	Tables and Graphs	93
7.	REFERENCES	97

List of Illustrations, Maps, Tables and Graphs

Figures

1(i).	Structure of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO)	27
1(ii).	Members, Observers and Dialogue Partners of the SCO	90
2.	Estimated Proven Hydrocarbon Reserves in SCO States and Turkmenistan (Table)	93
3.	SCO/Turkmenistan Reserves and Production Share of Global Output (Table)	93
4.	SCO/Turkmenistan Share of Proven Global Gas Reserves (Graph)	94
5.	SCO/Turkmenistan Share of Proven Global Oil Reserves (Graph)	94
6(i).	SCO/Turkmenistan Share of Global Oil Output (Graph)	95
6(ii).	SCO/Turkmenistan Share of Global Producing Oil Wells (Graph)	95

Maps

Political Maps

1(i).	Political Map of Central Asia	89
1(ii).	Political Map of the Russian Federation	89
1(iii).	Political Map of the People's Republic of China	89

Pipeline Maps

2.	Kazakhstan-China and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipelines	91
3.	China-Russia Eastern Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline	91
4.	Turkmenistan-China (via Kazakhstan), Central Asia-Europe and the Caspian Coastal gas pipeline	92

List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BMI	Business Monitor International
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (Oil pipeline)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CHS	Council of Heads of State
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNC	Council of National Co-ordinators
CNPC	Chinese National Petroleum Company
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
ESPO	East Siberia Pacific Ocean (Oil pipeline)
ETIM	East Turkestan Islamic Movement
EU	European Union
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
HGC	Heads of Government Council
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Co-operation
OPEC	Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries

(List of Abbreviations - Continued)

RATS	Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure
SCO	Shanghai Co-operation Organisation
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USPACOM	United States Pacific Command
TGNFC	Treaty of Good Neighbourliness, Friendship and Co-operation (2001 Sino- Russian Treaty)

Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the 21st century, there has been no doubt that many geopolitical changes have occurred. Apart from the obvious such as the 9/11 attacks, there have also been other changes, some of which were not expected. The rise of China, and to a lesser extent, Russia have been a source of much debate and controversy as they assert their hegemony over Central Asia. Relations between Russia and China, it can be argued have improved since the end of the Cold War, so much so that they have signed numerous treaties cementing their ties, as well as establishing their own multilateral institutions without the West. One area of contention that will be a pivotal point in Sino-Russian relations would be Central Asia, where the discoveries of massive hydrocarbon (oil and gas) reserves, as well as the collapse of the USSR in 1991, has become a focus of contention between many Great Powers with conflicting interests. This is in addition to its close proximity to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan against Islamic fundamentalism, a major source of insecurity for all Central Asian states, as well as the Great Powers involved. Under the pretext of 9/11, the US have come to claim its share of the Central Asian resource boom, but will run up against a resurgent Russia, and a China looking to expand its share of global resources for its booming economy. The presence of the US in Afghanistan, has in itself has created fears within the Central Asian states, with the 'colour revolutions' as well as other unsuccessful uprisings, has brought China and Russia together to protect their interests in Central Asia and promote a new multi-polar order and global strategic balance. This thesis will argue that despite misgivings and criticism, relations between Russia and China have become closer, even more so

with the establishment of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), a new permanent multilateral organisation which has taken Sino-Russian relations to a new level and increasing its presence in a Central Asia that will also come under pressure from the West as hydrocarbon needs become ever more burdensome in the 21st century.

Introduction and Literature Review

Post-Cold War relations between Russia and China have become a major point of contention, made even more so due to their growing strength and the establishment of the Shanghai Five in 1996 and later the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) in 2001. The establishment of the organisation has also officially signalled Russia and China's longstanding interests in Central Asia, particularly with the inclusion of four Central Asian states in the SCO (Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Because of this both Russia and China's intentions and the nature of their 'strategic partnership' in Central Asia have been closely watched by observers, scholars and politicians in the West, the SCO and others. This has taken more prominence in recent years as the demand for energy rises and we see increasing geopolitical competition over the hydrocarbon deposits being found in Central Asia. The growing interest of the US and NATO in Central Asia has also fuelled speculation over possible rivalries developing between the SCO and NATO over Central Asia.

Russia's Return as a Great Power

Russia's role in the world stage has been characterised by increasing assertiveness and slow offensive realism (Dunne & Schmidt 2005, Kolodziej 2005) in Central Asia. Dobb (2008) suggests that the stronger Russia becomes, the less co-operative it will be, and points to examples such as the 2008 war in Georgia as a means of securing its interests against potential Western encroachment. Dobb (2008), unlike Lucas's (2008) sensationalist claims, reminds us that we should not be forecasting a 'new cold war', because Russia simply does not have the military capacity that it once had. At the same time, however, Dobb (2008) warns us that Russia's actions in Georgia are not simply about establishing a new balance of power

in the Caucasus or Central Asia, it is a stepping stone towards greater hostility to the West, and we must expect a more aggressive and unilateralist Russia in the future, especially against a divided North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (Dibb 2008). 'Moscow's actions in Georgia have signalled to its neighbours that it is ready to defend its interests by military means if necessary' (Dibb, 2008 p.15). More evidence of Russia's offensive structural realism can be seen in former Russian President Medvedev stating in 2008 that he plans on further rearming its military. Dibb (2008) believes the air force and Russia's nuclear arsenal will take precedence. Muraviev (2008) mentions Medvedev's address and has found that the most pressing foreign policy issue is the former Soviet space. Reasserting Russia's dominance in the former Soviet spaces, according to Muraviev (2008) is key to Russia's aspirations to become a regional and global power broker. Russia in 2008 has become more assertive in its use of soft and hard power, as well as expanding its interests for its capitalist economy.

Russia has also become much more revisionist, with Trenin (2009) pointing to the 2008 war in Georgia as an example. A resurgent Russia 'may now be willing to contemplate disruption in the international order to create strategic space in the former Soviet lands to re-establish itself' (Dibb 2008, p.19). Kupchan (2010) makes mention that just prior to the Russian-Georgia War, it has been known with considerable evidence that Georgia was the one who provoked Russia, but the dominant view in the United States (US) is that Russia was the one who was the unprovoked aggressor. Russia, according to Smith (2012) has been largely reluctant to become more assertive in international affairs, an example being Russian reticence in the face of the US push for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Russia, however has been more assertive in the former Soviet states to exert its own influence, and examples since the Cold War have been Russian military interventions in Chechnya in the 1990's and the war against

Georgia in 2008, both of which were defensive in nature (Smith 2012). The 2008 Georgian war happened after the US and NATO were making clear signs about the possibility of the Ukraine and Georgia would join NATO, but the military intervention made it clear that these are lines not to be crossed (Smith 2012). Russian officials 'are likely to be content with *regional* primacy in the former Soviet area in exchange for not seriously interfering with important US stakes and interests elsewhere in the world' (Smith 2012, p.186) Smith (2012) points out that the US has little what the Russians want, other than an understanding of US non-interference in its domestic issues or in the former Soviet sphere.

Russia in itself is one of the world's largest energy producers. Buchanan (2012) also notes that in 2006, Russia was the second largest (12 percent of total production) behind Saudi Arabia, had the second largest coalfields behind the US, as well as controlling a third of global natural gas resources, being the world's largest producer. The Russian Federation 'ranks among the world's leading countries in terms of reserves and production in all three categories of global primary energy sources: natural gas, oil and coal.' (Buchanan 2012, p.111) According to Dibb (2008), Russian foreign policies will give increasing precedence to security of the state, and this involves strengthening its economy, because Russia is the world's largest producer of natural gas and the second largest producer of oil, and with high energy prices, this would help their situation. In terms of internal politics, Buchanan (2012) notes Thomas Friedman's 'First Law of Petropolitics' that the pace of democratic reform decreases when the price of petrol goes up. This involves rolling back reforms such as free speech, fair elections and independent political parties (Le Vine 2011). In terms of outside states negotiating with the suppliers, this places them in a near powerless position, coining the phrase 'the higher the global oil prices, the less suppliers are

sensitive to global scrutiny' (Buchanan 2012, p.112) and this 'dramatic turnaround in Russia's geopolitical fortunes was directly related to its hydrocarbon resources and the official policy of restoring state control over them' (Hiro 2007, p.173) The later surge in oil and gas prices from 1998 to 2006 (and still rising) helped Russia pay its debts to its Western creditors and the IMF and raise the GDP per capita to almost \$10000 (Hiro 2007). The CIA World Factbook shows that Russia has made further gains, in 2011 having a GDP of (PPP) of \$2.38 trillion, with a GDP per capita of \$16700, and a annual growth rate of 4.3% (CIA 2012), up from under \$7000 per capita in 1999 (Shleifer & Treisman 2011) The EU on its own imports nearly a third of its oil and almost half of its natural gas from Russia (Buchanan 2012). Buchanan (2012) also states that the Baltic states rely 100 percent on Russian gas deliveries. In addition, the majority of oil and gas that comes to Europe originates from the oil-rich sources based in the Caspian Sea. These oil deliveries pass through pipelines in Russian territory to reach European consumers (Buchanan 2012). As a sign of this interdependence, Shleifer & Treisman (2010) demonstrate that in 2007, 67 percent of Russia's gas exports and 69 percent of Russia's oil exports flowed to Europe.

Buchanan (2012) makes an interesting observation that Russia uses energy to control its political relationships with its former Soviet states, using debt-for-asset financing, with Russia purchasing assets in the host's domestic market using 'political pricing', and this is relative to Russia's relationship with a state. An example of this can be seen in Russia providing relatively cheap subsidised gas deliveries to Belarus and Moldova, while anti-Russian states, such as the Ukraine and Georgia struggle with over-inflated prices (Buchanan 2012). Whether '[for] reasons of national security or national insecurity, many of Russia's elites have viewed their country's size and wealth of natural resources as an instrument with which to exert or re-exert control

over those countries that were formally or informally part of the Soviet empire' (Buchanan 2012, quoting Smith p.112). Rasizade (2008) makes a similar claim that "the foreign policy of Russia... an inevitable drive to 'regather' the severed historic Russian lands, including territorial claims to the 'newly independent states.'" (Rasizade 2008, p.1) Many scholars agree that such a surge in wealth has enabled the Russian leadership to use the energy card to push Russia's geopolitical interests both inside and outside the former Soviet sphere (Hiro 2007; Goldman 2010) These aspirations continue, despite assertions to the contrary of late due to falling oil prices in mid-2012 (Bush 2012). However, at the same time, this highlights the risk that is associated with economies that rely heavily on oil exports to global fluctuations in prices (Ross 2008). Buchanan (2012) believes that Russia has used energy as a means of exerting pressure on its former Soviet empire, and a case of this can be seen in the Ukrainian gas crisis of 2006.

It is also argued, according to both Buchanan (2012) and Klare (2002, 2008) that the question arises whether there will be increased co-operation or conflict, bearing in mind the growing temptation for governments to use military force to secure diminishing supplies. Buchanan (2012, p.118) cites a recent EU Commission report: 'conflicts over resources will surely arise from the current intensified competition over access and control over energy resources... and that in itself is and will continue to be a cause of instability... [and] has the potential to feed back into great energy insecurity and greater competition for resources.' Buchanan (2012) and Klare (2002) agree that with many of the world's dwindling energy reserves being located in conflict prone, authoritarian, and environmentally and politically vulnerable states including Russia and Central Asia, this can only serve to trigger instabilities in such areas.

Will Russia Catch the 'Dutch Disease?'

Kupchan (2012) makes the good point that Russia has failed to develop its high tech knowledge and manufacturing base, and that over half of Russia's exports are oil and gas that make up most of its revenues. This effectively makes other industries less competitive, because of the rising exchange rate that results from the income and forestalls diversification (Kupchan 2012; Van der Ploeg 2011). This, may be an Achilles' heel in Russia's strategy in Central Asia in its over-reliance on energy exports and is somewhat reminiscent of the 'Dutch Disease' that resulted after the Netherlands discovered gas in the 1960's and its implications afterward (Ross 2008). An example of these heavily fluctuating cycles in oil pricing can also be seen in Central Asia, as Hiro (2007) demonstrates. Interest in the Azeri part of the Caspian Sea largely dried up with falling oil prices (\$10-\$13 a barrel) in the late 1990's, making investments in the area undesirable (Hiro 2007). In 1998, however, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan signed a document favouring a crude oil pipeline from Baku to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan in Turkey (Hiro 2007). Because the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline (See Map 2 Appendix) was built specifically to leave out Russia, it can be said that the US had a strong hand in the deal (Hiro 2007). The pipeline was later opened in 2005, when oil and gas prices were much higher, but this again also highlights the risk associated with an economy and investments that are at the mercy of current (and future) energy prices (Ross 2008).

Russia's Stand

It is interesting to note that when Putin stood up to the US, his popularity soared because many Russians saw their country being encircled by US bases and an ever-expanding NATO while at the same time being lectured on how they should administer Russia (Hiro 2007). Russia is taking its own foreign policy route and meeting its own interests rather than rapprochement with the US, and is strengthening its hand in many areas. Smith (2012) gives a useful analysis of Russian views regarding the US, stating that the 'ultimate aim of multi-polarity is to resist American domination...so that Russia is not placed in the role of a junior partner in its relationship with the United States nor would the United States be able to dictate unilateral outcomes which affect Russian security interests' (Smith 2012, quoting Ambrosio p.146). Buchanan (2012) states that energy politics in Russia will enable a greater role and thus gain greater influence. Strahan (2007) also makes the point that Russia is the only state in the world that is a large scale oil and gas producer and owns a large nuclear arsenal. Russia, according to Buchanan (2012) is not a power that will necessarily play by international rules and global norms. States such as Russia and China have massive and increasing sovereign wealth funds raised from oil and gas export income revenue (especially Russia) (Haass 2008; Miller 2010). Because of the aforementioned, Russia is gaining confidence and can see itself having a choice between subservience to the Western order and re-asserting its aspirations of becoming a Great Power, and has decisively chosen the latter course (Dibb 2008).

China's Situation

Hutton (2007) compares China's present situation in the US-dominated world order to that of 1914 Wilhelminian Germany and the then British-dominated world order, with a possible return to a multi-polar world. Social strains as well as rapid urbanisation and industrialisation have caused increased pressure on China to expand, much like the situation of Germany in relation to Britain in 1914. This also puts China on a collision course with Japan, the other top regional power in Asia, but in the case of the US, this can have global implications, especially with China's strategy of acquisition of resources (Hutton 2007). Haass (2008) contends that although China will eventually attain GDP's similar to that of the US, they will be largely constrained militarily as well as in terms of global power projection, due to catering for the needs of the population. The CIA World Factbook shows that China has a GDP (PPP) of \$11.44 trillion (2011), but a GDP per capita of \$8500, with an annual growth rate of 9.2% (CIA 2012), compared to the US, who have a GDP of \$15.29 trillion, and a GDP per capita of \$49000 as of 2011 (CIA 2012).

Since its first importation of oil in 1993, China's oil imports grew by an average of 24 percent each year, which left it exposed to the pressures of the international oil market (Hiro 2007; Lee 2005). Because of this, the State Council began devising a strategy for energy security as an integral part of its foreign policy (Hiro 2007). Hiro (2007) mentions that by 2002, China was importing 33 percent of its oil demand, and 60 percent (now up to 75 percent) of this was through the narrow, crowded, accident prone Malacca Strait, dominated by the US Pacific Command (USPACOM 2012). Without serious naval power of its own, China cannot protect these lanes. Because of this 'the State Council favoured building overland pipelines

from adjoining Russia and the central Asian republics, thus reducing China's dependence on ocean routes' (Hiro 2007, pp.193-4) to change the situation and lessen its dependence on the insecure Malacca Strait. According to Kaplan, China is capable of this because China's 'virtual reach extends from Central Asia, with all its mineral and hydrocarbon wealth, to the main shipping lanes of the Pacific Ocean' (Kaplan 2010, p.22). Despite China's global power path being necessarily linear, China will still remain at the hub of geopolitics, according to Kaplan (2010), not only because of its location, but also because of its economic primacy and increasing assertiveness (which is a challenge to Smith's claims).

Interestingly, Kaplan (2010) claims that China is not more assertive in the US 'missionary' sense by exporting its liberal democratic capitalist model, but more pragmatic in its peaceful acquisition of natural resources and hydrocarbons, 'what drives China abroad has to do with a core national interest - economic survival - China can be defined as a uber-realist power.' (Kaplan 2010, p.24) In Central Asia, China has been purchasing resource assets in the area. In 1997, the Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) signed a \$4.7 billion deal with Kazakhstan involving the oil fields east of the Caspian and the northwest region of Aktyubinsk, with an additional \$10 billion invested in infrastructure (Hiro 2007). The Kazakh government used this to balance its commitments between the West and its traditional links with Russia, and saw China as a place of enormous economic opportunity. Hiro (2007) observes that for China it can give it a chance to develop Xinjiang province, while at the same time gaining more influence over Kazakhstan and importing oil at a much cheaper rate through the Chinese-Kazakh pipeline (See Appendix Map 2). Later in 2005, China signed more agreements to develop a strategic partnership with Kazakhstan. The CNPC later acquired PetroKazakhstan, who owned oil fields in

southern Kazakhstan, for \$4.2 billion (Hiro 2007) are examples of China's growing interest in Central Asia.

In terms of its relationship with Russia, Hiro (2007) makes the assertion that for 'the People's Republic of China, first the Soviet Union and then Russia constituted a pre-eminent neighbour' (Hiro 2007, p.207), despite the many rifts and differences that came about. Priestland (2009) and Radchenko (2010) also make the same assessment of Sino-Russian relations especially before the 1960 split. After the Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991, China has bought Russian warplanes, submarines, destroyers and missiles, and by the end of the decade, Russia's hydrocarbons and has done so on a large scale. At a Shanghai Five summit in August 1999, Chinese president Jiang Zemin and Boris Yeltsin of Russia expressed their belief in a multi-polar world, a concepts at odds with the US (Hiro 2007). This later culminated in the signing of the *TGNFC* in July 2001. With regards to diplomatic topics 'the interests of Beijing and Moscow converged in Central Asia. They shared the common aims of curbing Islamist extremism, maintaining and improving their commercial interests, and frustrating Washington's agenda to dominate the region' (Hiro 2007, p.207) In the 2005 Astana SCO meeting, China and Russia made a statement calling for the US to withdraw from its bases in Uzbekistan and in Kirghizstan (Hiro 2007). To further extend their influence, the SCO granted observer status to Iran, India, Pakistan and Mongolia. In 2005, military exercises between China and Russia in Shandong province and the Yellow Sea (Hiro 2007). Bjelakovic & Yeung (2010) also claim that the SCO nations did similar 'Peace Mission' exercises in 2007, suggesting that Russia and China could also be concerned about the longstanding US presence in Afghanistan.

The Sino-Russian 'strategic partnership' can be seen as a realist undertaking, in this case the balancing of power to offset the US through organisations such as the SCO. This has been taken as an implicit challenge to the US, despite protestations to the contrary by SCO members, especially China and Russia (Lo 2008). China and Russia seem to do everything to avoid the SCO being called an alliance (Lo 2008). The inclusion of Central Asian states in the group shows a strategy as a means of thwarting future US ambition in the area by having these states in the SCO camp. Smith, quoting Trenin makes the useful observation that 'as a major country, Russia must be an independent actor. By definition, it can have no natural friends or sponsors. Instead, it has partners who are also competitors. Virtually anyone can be a partner, and practically anyone can be an opponent' (Smith 2012 pp.141-2) Smith (2012) goes on to argue that this is a world familiar to realists. This means that although partnerships are not out of the question in such a paradigm, this will not be allowed to trump the national interests of nations in the partnership (Dunne & Schmidt 2011). Smith (2012) and Lo (2008) point to the Sino-Russian partnership as a concrete example of this.

Smith (2012) makes an interesting point that the Chinese tend to play down most of their strengths and pay more attention to their challenges, while the Russians are forever talking themselves up or imagining that the situation is in Russia's favour, when most of the time it is not. Much of the official downplaying occurs amid talks about China's 'peaceful rise' (Smith 2012). It is suggested that some observers 'might view this as being essentially a ruse designed to buy China time to develop its economic and military strengths without serious interference, until its leaders feel strong enough to mount a more overt and confident challenge to the established international order' (Smith 2012, p.156) Could a similar ruse be used by the rest of the

SCO in playing down their challenge to the US? By contrast Kolodziej (2005) mentions there are latent or open civil wars in the vast majority of the Central Asian and SCO states including the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizstan and Kazakhstan, which can reveal the truth about the real strength of the SCO and its members.

China's Past and its Effects on its Foreign Policy

'Hegemony' has been a term that China has been keen to avoid, and this has largely negative connotations that suggest suppression of the weak by the strong (Smith 2012). Some scholars believe that this has its origins in the 'century of humiliation', starting from the first Opium War in 1839 to the Communist victory in 1949, a period of imperial decay in a China that was bullied and humiliated in the signing of the unequal treaties imposed by Western and Japanese powers to semi-colonise China (Smith 2012). Smith presses the point that many have "argued persuasively that the legacy of the 'century of humiliation' from the 1840's is still a factor in shaping Chinese attitudes and policy today." (Smith 2012, p.172) Others agree with this idea that the 'century of humiliation' and subsequent 'victim mentality' (as Chen describes it) plays a part in Chinese foreign policy to this day (Chen 2001; Fenby 2009; Garver 1993; Gifford 2007; Hunt 1996; Knight 2004; Shambaugh 2011).

China's foreign relations are also about achieving international recognition for the sake of legitimacy for its government and as a global actor, and thus embracing pragmatism, and in this case a largely realist foreign policy (Kim 1998; Dunne & Schmidt 2011). An example of Chinese adaptation to the international system that comes from the trauma of semi-colonisation in the 19th and 20th centuries is the breakdown of the belief that China was the beneficent 'Middle Kingdom' at the centre

of a largely peaceful world (Krolikowski 2008). This changing world was a collection of 'competing and frequently hostile nations [where] the common denominator of international politics is power and thus to survive in a competitive and amoral world, China must be powerful and manoeuvre like other nations' (Garver 1993, p.17). Liebman (2007) presses the point that many Chinese feel that China needs to be strong to avenge past 'humiliations' by the West and Japan, and this affects Communist Party policy to this day. As Gifford (2007, p.49) argues, 'China was the victim... The Western powers and Japan are guilty as charged of military aggression. But now China is becoming a Great Power... is on the verge of greatness. And yet it still tends to think and speak like a victim'. The 'century of humiliation' has indeed left a permanent scar on China's psyche, which can be seen in its strategy and a driving force behind their Great Power aspirations.

Many see China's strategy as being a defensive (or 'optimistic') realism (Kolodziej 2005). Despite this, and assertions that the Chinese rise is 'peaceful' because of China's own experiences of being subjected to semi-colonisation, many still find China a menace, especially to their smaller neighbours, such as Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan and Malaysia (Smith 2012). However the overriding concern to the Chinese, according to Madeline Albright is Taiwan, this being a central part of China's obsession with restoring its traditional borders (Smith 2012), and they are willing to pursue this using the course of war if necessary. Because of this realist mindset, China cares little about ideology when it comes to negotiations over energy trade, even with the autocracies that dominate Central Asia. 'Having no choice in the matter, Beijing cares little about the type of regime with which it is engaged; it requires stability, not virtue as the West conceives of it' (Kaplan 2010, p.24). Kaplan

(2010) notes that China's grab for resources has seen it run into the spheres of influence of Russia and India as well as the US, and that China's influence is growing in Eurasia and Africa, but in a more subtle sense, rather than in the 19th century colonial sense. A major drawcard for China is its location which includes Central Asia, the Russian Far East and the South China Sea (Kaplan 2010). However, the issues of Tibet and Xinjiang remain prominent, especially when large mineral and energy deposits have been found in Xinjiang (Kaplan 2010). 'Beijing has been courting Central Asian governments in order to expand its sphere of influence; China already stretches far into Eurasia, but not far enough given its demand for natural resources' (Kaplan 2010, p.26). Kaplan (2010) mentions two major pipelines that connect to Xinjiang, one that delivers oil from the Caspian Sea across Kazakhstan and another that delivers gas from Turkmenistan that crosses Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan (See Appendix Maps 2 & 4). Beijing is also looking to expand its influence by infrastructure building in Central Asia and pipelines through Afghanistan and Pakistan in its hopes to gain access to the Indian Ocean (Kaplan 2010), but this is outside the scope of this thesis.

Central Asia

As previously mentioned, a major focus of Sino-Russian relations is Central Asia. The most common definition of the area that constitutes Central Asia, according to Cutler (2007) and used in this thesis is in reference to the region that encompasses the states of Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (See Map 1(i) Appendix). Debates regarding Central Asia or Eurasia in terms of culture, demographics, and area studies will not be discussed within this thesis and the aforementioned definition of the Central Asia will be used when referring to the

region. The Central Asian states have a small population of 64 million people and a total GDP (as of 2011) of \$389.69 billion (PPP) (CIA 2012), and Azarkan (2009) argues in line with Pilger (2002) and Klare (2008) that their location and abundance of natural resources are strategically important, and will have implications in the form of competition for these assets in the future. Azarkan, quoting *The Economist* writes with regards to the Central Asian states that these 'are flanked to the east by a rising great power (China); to the North by their former hegemon (Russia); to the south by a country collapsed in violent chaos (Afghanistan), a fundamental Islamic republic (Iran), and a fragile secular state in search of a greater regional role (Turkey).' And furthermore, 'a distant superpower seeks influence, if not dominance (US)' (Azarkan 2009, p.2) The Bush administration viewed some Central Asian states as being important partners in the 'War on Terror', especially with the use of their airbases that proved to be safer than the Afghan bases in Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan (Azarkan 2009). Azarkan (2009) makes the observation that the abundance of largely untapped resources in Central Asia has attracted the attention of China, Russia, the EU and the US and this is similar to the point made by Pilger (2002) and Klare (2008).

In previous years, Russia had a virtual monopoly on export routes, but since the collapse of the USSR, increased investments in transport and infrastructure have come from China, the US and the EU, challenging the Russia's monopoly on the transit routes (Azarkan 2009; Yergin 2012). As mentioned, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been interest in Central Asia, especially with hydrocarbon concentrations in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (Azarkan 2009; Leblond & Watkins 2009). For the purposes of this thesis, the overriding focus will be on states in the SCO and Turkmenistan.

Many Central Asian states have sought to play all sides in a bid to maximise their interests (Marketos 2009). Kazakhstan for example, unlike the West-leaning Azerbaijan has had a more balanced relationship when it comes to its oil (Hiro 2007). Kazakhstan has backed the BTC crude oil pipeline, but has also co-operated with Moscow and Beijing with the construction of the Aktau-Novorossiysk and Kazakhstan-China pipelines (Hiro 2007). In 2005 Nazarbayev unveiled plans for a new pipeline from Aktau to the BTC pipeline (Hiro 2007). The Tengiz onshore field was one of the biggest finds over the past 25 years, with 6 billion barrels in reserves of high quality oil, and \$20 billion went into investment through a consortium led by Chevron and Mobil and the Kazakhstan government (Hiro 2007). However, China, through the CNPC also made an investment of \$9 billion with Kazakhstan to develop oil and gas in the north western Aktyubinsk and Uzen regions, including a 3000 kilometre pipeline from Kazakhstan via the Xinjiang province of China (Hiro 2007) (See Map 2 Appendix). The Bush administration has strengthened ties with both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, using the 'War on Terror' as a pretext for gaining influence over the Azeri and Kazakh governments (Hiro 2007). Pilger (2002) and Kleveman (2004) make the claim that a covert objective in the 'War on Terror' was control of the republics of Central Asia.

Some Views on Sino-Russian Relations

Since 2000, many Russian leaders, according to Bjelakovic & Yeung (2010) see a mix of co-operation and competition between the two giants. Interestingly, many Russian analysts believe that despite much official fanfare and statements of friendship and co-operation, there is still mistrust between Moscow and Beijing (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). According to Bjelakovic & Yeung (2010), the most

serious misgivings arise on issues such as energy, immigration and Central Asia. One complaint is that Russia is quick to promise but consistently under-delivers when it comes to providing substantial quantities of hydrocarbons to China, despite China's massive thirst for such resources (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010, Lo 2008). Beijing in Central Asia has been building joint pipelines, whereas Russia has been using long-term contracts to buy Central Asian gas and oil. Russia has been known to have been uncomfortable about China's increasing stake in Central Asia (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). Russia knows that Beijing cannot be completely excluded from Central Asia due to its size, but at the same time, China cannot fully displace Moscow from its traditional sphere of influence in Central Asia (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010).

Despite these misgivings, the 'limited partnership' phase of the 1990's, the Sino-Russian relationship has developed into a more mature relationship, with the signing of the *TGNFC* in 2001 (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). China and Russia initially welcomed US intervention in Afghanistan in the war on terror in 2001, but are now more concerned about the long term US presence in Afghanistan as both Russian and Chinese influence grows in Central Asia (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). From this, Bjelakovic & Yeung (2010) make the assertion that the SCO has evolved from a confidence-building mechanism to become a multilateral defensive design. Dobb (2008) also makes the proposition that Russia will seek to form a Eurasian bulwark through the SCO with its current member states and this may also include Pakistan, Iran and even Afghanistan in the future. Organisations such as the SCO provide an alternative to institutions dominated by the West. Russia sees itself as being part of the great power club (such as its participation in the G8), while at the same time acting as a counterweight to the West (Kupchan 2012). The Russian Federation 'has a long history of diplomacy and engagement with the West, yet also considerable

credibility among emerging powers.' (Kupchan 2012, p.111) In both China and Russia in particular, the democracy promotion efforts of the West are seen as meddling in the internal affairs of others, and should be curtailed (Kupchan 2012). Indeed, as mentioned this may be one of the purposes of the SCO which can be described as an attempt at establishing a counterweight to Washington's hegemony. In this sense, Putin 'has sought to use Russia's burgeoning ties with Beijing as a counterweight to US global predominance, and the sides have found common cause in rejecting Western calls for more open politics and respect for civil liberties.' (Bodeen 2012) For Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010, the main drivers of the Sino-Russian partnership are twofold: to improve bilateral relations that have been strained in the past; and to capitalize diplomatically on shared strategic perceptions of the post-Cold War world (see also Baijia 2004).

As mentioned earlier, Bjelakovic & Yeung (2010) state that Russia and China harbour considerable distrust towards each other, and perceive their bilateral rapport through the lens of their relationship with Washington. Moscow sees China as 'an instrument in Russo-American relations, reaffirming Beijing's perceptions that the West remains Moscow's primary strategic focus [and] China seeks...balancing its relations with Russia and the United States. This is particularly so due to...China's economic relations with the United States and other Western countries.' (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010, p.280) The nature of their relationship will continue to favour pursuing a realpolitik type of partnership—where flexibility, balancing, and non-commitment represent the essence of Sino-Russian relations (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). Smith (2012) believes that Russia has also failed in its attempts at multilateralism and institutions that it helps to set up, an example being the 2008 Georgia war, in that

Russia did not inform its SCO partners about its upcoming action, and there also has been lack of support from the SCO after the war.

This encourages the view that Russia and China 'have essentially continued to pursue independent, and often rivalling, policies based on their own national interests and deep-seated mutual distrust of the other.' (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010 p.277) Because of this, a substantive strategic partnership between China and Russia is unlikely to emerge in the short to mid-term (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). In Central Asia, Beijing hopes that a positive Sino-Russian rapport through organisations such as the SCO will foster an equilibrium between unavoidable competition and necessary cooperation (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010, Lo 2008). However, Dibb (2008), Lo (2008) and (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010) do not rule out the possibility that Russia and China may become geostrategic rivals in the future. Certainly, it is 'important to emphasize that there is no definite consensus of views in Moscow and Beijing about each other' (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010 p.278). This is true in that others we will see further on, such as Azarkan, Palmer, Swanstrom and Wang have a more positive view of Sino-Russian relations and the SCO. From this, there is no doubt that the very topic of post-Cold War Sino-Russian relations and its impact on Central Asia needs further examination in an area that is of increasing importance in geopolitics.

Chapter 2 - The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation

Introduction to the SCO

The origins of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) can be said to have come from the post-Cold War relations between Russia, China (who was among the first states to recognise the Central Asian republics' independence) and the former Soviet states in Eurasia that began in earnest almost immediately after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. These relations eventually led to the creation of the 'Shanghai Five' in 1996. The original signatories to the treaty were China, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Russia and Tajikistan. Like its successor organisation, the SCO, the 'Shanghai Five' held annual summits, with the Almaty summit in 1998, Bishkek in 1999 and Dushanbe in 2000. According to Lo (2008) and Scheineson (2009), the original purpose was as a confidence-building exercise to resolve border disputes by demilitarising the border between China and the former Soviet Union. This purpose was formalised with the official release of the SCO Charter that explains the purpose of the SCO, the goals and tasks of the Organisation as well as legal aspects and the relevant internal governing bodies.

The SCO is 'a permanent intergovernmental organisation' (SCO 2001) that was officially created on 15 June 2001 in a meeting between the original 'Shanghai Five' signatories, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, and Tajikistan with the addition of Uzbekistan in 2001 to form the organisation that the SCO is today (See Figure 1(ii) Appendix). Its purposes, according to the SCO website are to extend ties between member states in the political, trade and economic, science and technology and cultural fields. This also extends to the military fields, as the SCO is known to hold 'Peace Missions' which are military exercises between the SCO member states,

the first of which were held in Kazakhstan and China in 2003. Although the SCO has many decision-making bodies (like most other international organisations), the SCO also has two permanent bodies, the Secretariat, which is based in Beijing and is the administrative body of the organisation, and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) which is based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The RATS is in charge of combating the major concerns that have brought the SCO together, namely 'terrorism, separatism and extremism', and the functions of the Secretariat and the RATS and their roles as set out in the SCO Charter will be further analysed in the discussion. The SCO website also notes that 'the SCO member states occupy a territory of around 30 million 189 thousand square kilometres, which make up three fifths of the Eurasian continent, and have a population of 1.5 billion, which makes up a quarter of the planet's population' (SCO 2011). In terms of its official communications, the SCO is an organisation that covers states of the former Soviet Union and China, and thus the working languages of the SCO are Chinese and Russian, though there is an official English language SCO website.

Since 15 June 2001, after the original declaration of the founding of the SCO, the heads of the SCO, or the Council of Heads of State (CHS) hold meetings annually in the capital city of a member state, and is the high-level decision-making body of the SCO. Major summits include the 2004 Tashkent summit which saw the establishment of the RATS and the inclusion of the first Observer State, Mongolia. In the following year, India, Iran and Pakistan were granted Observer status in the 2005 Astana summit. In the 2009 Yekaterinburg summit, Belarus and Sri Lanka both became Dialogue Partners, and most recently in the 2012 summit in Beijing, Afghanistan was granted Observer status, while Turkey was accepted as a Dialogue Partner. The SCO summit in Astana, Kazakhstan on 14 and 15 June 2011 celebrated

ten years since the founding of the SCO, with the last summit being held in Beijing in 2012. It is from these meetings that the SCO has managed to extend its ties with other states, allowing them to take part in the SCO's meetings, and to a limited extent, influence its policies. Observer States have limited rights in terms of attendance of meetings, access to documents and policy direction of the SCO. Dialogue Partners are also involved in the SCO, but in a more limited way than the Observer States.

Activities that are approved for Member, Observer States and Dialogue Partners under the SCO Charter will be discussed further later in the chapter. Other groups in the organisation include the Business Council and the Banking Association. The SCO as a group also has interaction with other international organisations, the SCO has established relations with the UN as an observer in the General Assembly, as well as with the EU, ASEAN, the CIS and the OIC.

The Charter of the SCO

Being a regional (and international) organisation, the SCO's Charter stipulates many aspects of the SCO in terms of its purpose, meaning, its ultimate goals both for the region and beyond, as well as its internal administrative, decision-making and military bodies within the organisation. An examination of this Charter, which also outlines the varying degrees of rights and responsibilities of the established members, observers and dialogue partners and the roles they play within the SCO, can offer an insight into the aims of the SCO. Many statements that are cited in the SCO Charter have polarised observers and experts studying the organisation, especially with regard to energy and its geopolitical consequences for Central Asia, and its implications for the SCO's two major members, China and Russia.

One of the first things that can be noticed about the SCO Charter, is a non-confrontational posture of foreign policy which include some of the aims of the organisation, in which affairs are 'conducted in accordance with the principles of non-alignment, non-targeting anyone and openness' (SCO 2011) In the preamble of the SCO charter it is mentioned the member states are 'desiring to jointly contribute to the strengthening of peace and ensuring of security and stability in the region in the environment of developing political multi-polarity and economic information globalisation' (SCO 2001), and in similar wording to the previous Sino-Russian treaty signed in 2001, the first statement in Article 1 mentions 'to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighbourliness between member states' (SCO 2001). A reading of this can demonstrate that as much as the SCO desires security and stability of the Eurasian region, based on Article 2's pledge that affairs will be conducted on 'mutual respect of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity of States and inviolability of State borders, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of its use in international relations, seeking no unilateral military superiority in adjacent areas', ideas of working towards a 'new order' and geopolitical 'multi-polarity' are explicitly mentioned. Article 1 mentions that one of the Goals and Tasks of the SCO is 'to consolidate multidisciplinary co-operation in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region and promotion of a new democratic, fair and rational political and economic international order' (SCO 2001). These references in themselves have aroused debate about the true intentions of the SCO and what they mean and how will they ultimately achieve their aims in both the regional and global contexts, which will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

On a regional basis, statements in Article 1 pledge to facilitate comprehensive and even-handed economic growth and social, cultural and political development throughout the SCO territories, as well as economic integration with the global economy, which can possibly demonstrate that the SCO is more than just a militarised geopolitical organisation. This includes provisions in Article 3 ('Areas of Co-operation') that this will lead to eventual free flow of trade goods, technologies, capital, knowledge, services and improved transportation and communications infrastructure and energy systems. The Article leaves open the possibility of joint projects 'SCO member states may expand the spheres of co-operation by mutual agreement' (SCO 2001, Article 3) Based on Article 2, its internal policy is 'based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equal rights, consultations, respect for the diversity of cultures and aspiration towards common development (SCO 2011)' Although the SCO claims that it is not directed at other states or international organisations, it will prevent or take action against illegitimate acts that are contrary to SCO interests. The foreign policy of the SCO, according to Wang (2011) follows the principles of mutual trust, non-confrontational behaviour, transparency and impartiality.

The Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS)

A recurring theme mentioned in Article 1 and Article 3 in the SCO charter (and indeed is a driving force behind the SCO and a source of unity) is the pledge to fight 'terrorism, separatism and extremism', as well as transnational crime and illegal immigration (SCO 2001). Concerns such as the aforementioned can be seen as a reflection of the fact that such issues were already prevalent in the member states, when the declaration and charter were announced in 15 June 2001, made before the 9/11 attacks that precipitated the 'War on Terror'. This theme is also mentioned in

other SCO declarations, such as the 'Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism', which coincided with the establishment of the specialist SCO body to combat terrorism, the Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure (RCTS) established in 2001 in Article 10 of the Charter of the SCO as a standing SCO body. The original RCTS is now called the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS). RATS was formed in 2002 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan to fight 'terrorism, separatism and extremism' and the Executive Committee of RATS was fully established as a permanent, official SCO body in January 2004 (RATS 2004). The Shanghai Convention outlines the definitions of terrorism, separatism and extremism, as well as actions that will be taken using the legal, political and military means available, and co-operative action to prevent and/or intervene in the event of a terrorist attack.

The RATS is an integral part of the SCO, specialising in 'Maintaining working relations with competent institutions of the member states and international organisations in fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism' (SCO 2011). This also includes organising, preparing and enacting counterterrorism exercises at the request of concerned member States (SCO 2011), and joint drafting of legal documents that outline action in the international fight against terrorism. As a permanent SCO body, RATS also shares and analyses information with other SCO members, with the purpose of compiling a database on terrorist and insurgent forces within the SCO States (SCO 2011). Another key task of the RATS is to prepare and learn from scientific conferences and workshops that share information and experience in order to refine counter-terrorism/insurgency strategy (SCO 2011).

Structure of the SCO

Mentioned in the SCO charter in Articles 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11 are the bodies of the organisation, listed as decision-making, administrative, counter-terrorism and ministerial. The highest decision-making body of the SCO is The Council of Heads of State (CHS) ((or Heads of State Council (HSC)), which meets once a year with regards to the most high-level issues that affect the SCO, and 'shall be the supreme SCO body' (SCO 2001). It is the CHS who determines the priorities and major issues and activities that affect the organisation, interacts with other states and international organisations, and works on the internal organisation as well as on the most pressing international issues. Like the SCO Secretary-General, the RATS Executive Committee Director is appointed by the CHS for three years (SCO 2011). The Heads of Government Council, the HGC ((also known as The Council of the Heads of Government (Prime Ministers)) also meets once a year, 'to discuss a strategy for multilateral co-operation and priority directions within the Organisation's framework, to solve important and pressing issues of co-operation in economic and other areas' (SCO 2011). Other tasks include allocating and managing the SCO budget. Including the CHS and HGC, the SCO also includes meetings with Speakers of Parliament, Secretaries of Security Councils, and meetings with ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Culture, Economy, Emergency Relief, Education and Healthcare, and law enforcement agencies, supreme courts and Prosecutors General. The official website also mentions the Council of National Co-ordinators of SCO Member States (the CNC), whose responsibility is to co-ordinate interaction in accordance with the SCO framework.

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs manages the more operational or day-to-day activities of the SCO, holding of consultations regarding the international affairs within the Organisation, as well as preparing meetings of Council of the Heads of State (SCO 2001). The SCO is represented by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs when dealing with external contacts (SCO 2001). The Secretariat is a standing administrative SCO body. Its tasks are to prepare organisational and technical support to activities that are being carried out according to the SCO Charter, and it makes propositions on preparing the annual budget. The SCO budget is made up and executed by agreement between member states in terms of the proportions of contributions that are paid annually on a cost-sharing principle, and are used to fund the SCO bodies. Any costs associated with activities by member states through experts and representatives will be borne by individual states related with such activities, and all are aforementioned are in Article 12 of the SCO Charter. Secretariat officials will be nationals of member States and are recruited on quotas, and staffing and leadership of the SCO institutions will also be restricted to nationals of member States. Figure 1(i) over the next page is a diagram of the structure of the SCO and its bodies

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

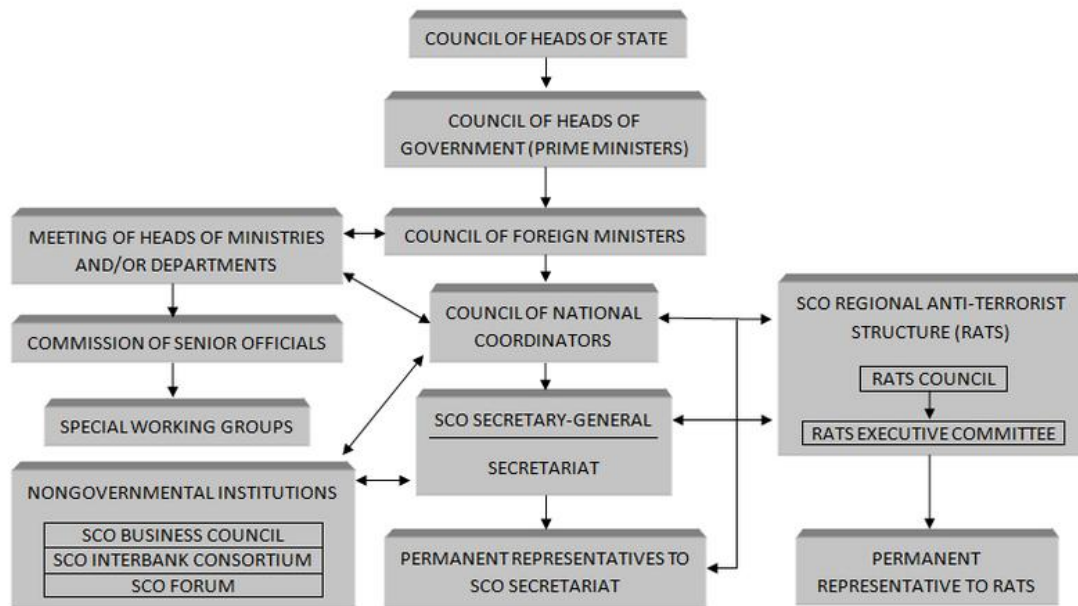


Figure 1(i) - Source: <http://khudi.pk/2011/05/13/massive-russian-investment-in-pakistan/>

Membership in the SCO (Article 13) 'shall be open for other states in the region that undertake to respect the objectives and principles of this Charter and to comply with the provisions of other international treaties and instruments adopted in the framework of the SCO' The admission of new members is decided by the Council of Heads of State (CHS) on the basis of representation by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in response to the official request made by the State concerned that is addressed to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Because the requirement of the SCO for member States is to comply with rules set out in the Charter, States who systematically do not meet their obligations under international instruments may be suspended by a decision made by the CHS. If there are further violations, the CHS may expel the offending State(s) from the SCO. There is also a provision under Article 13 ('Membership') that allows for a State to withdraw from the SCO, after an official transmission twelve months before the intended withdrawal

date. Members actively take part in decision-making as well as interaction with the SCO bodies, make statements against the SCO or member states (Article 2), and sign and prepare documents, have full participation in meetings as well as exclusive access to the Secretariat and RATS.

States with Observer Status and Dialogue Partners

States with 'Observer Status' include Mongolia (2004), India (2005), Iran (2005), Pakistan (2005) and Afghanistan (2012). Observer States, according to the SCO document *Observer Status at the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation*, can attend public meetings with heads of members of the SCO, and can have limited participation, without right to vote but can discuss decision-making, and gain access to documents in the bodies of the SCO, if there is no restriction on their distribution. Observers cannot sign or prepare documents, and do not actively participate in actual decision-making, and therefore have no responsibility in such decisions, and cannot make official statements against the decision-making bodies within the SCO. The 'Dialogue Partners' of the SCO include Sri Lanka (2009), Belarus (2009) and Turkey (2012) and formal rights of Dialogue Partners are set out in the document *Regulations on the Status of Dialogue Partner of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation*.

Outlined in the document, similar to Observer States, Dialogue Partners have no right to compose and sign documents, but have an advisory capacity in decision-making, and can also request documents from the Secretariat and the RATS, but their representation at SCO does not match that of Observer States, who have a similar standing to that of Member States (SCO 2008). Article 15 mentions that the SCO also has legal capacity that is covered by international laws, and legal capacity in the sovereign territory of each state, which means that SCO rules can apply in the legal

jurisdiction of member states. As mentioned in the Charter, the SCO can 'enjoy the rights of a legal person' and can conclude treaties, acquire property as well as dispose of it, appear in court as a litigant and open accounts and have financial transactions made.

Hydrocarbons and Geopolitics - A Short History (and its effects on the SCO)

References to oil and gas seepage on the Earth's surface and in the form of bitumen and petroleum can be found in the texts of Ancient times. The best examples of these can be found in Zoroastrian and Biblical literature (Hiro 2007). Hiro (2007) mentions that the first example of oil drilling for commercial purposes was in 1846, when wells were drilled to provide kerosene for lighting in homes and on streets. However, oil has caused geopolitical tensions since 19th century, one instance being when Russia fought to keep out the likes of Standard Oil from its petroleum rich areas in the Caucasus and Central Asia (Pilger 2002). Oil began to take much more prominence in international politics after the Nobel brothers constructed the first oil-fuelled steamship, called out of all names, *Zoroaster* in 1877 (Hiro 2007). When the internal combustion engine was invented in 1882 and used oil to operate, this furthered the need for oil by the industrialised European nations, who actively embraced this new commodity (and technologies) to build more powerful navies, which revolutionised naval combat in World War I.

At the time, the US was the world's leading exporter of oil, and both the oil industry and the government quickly realised that oil and politics can go hand in hand, and could literally be the broker of peace and war (Hiro 2007). It was oil that ultimately played a part in Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbour in 1941 (Hiro 2007), as well as Hitler's decision to attack the southern part of the Soviet Union to

gain vital access to the oilfields in the Caucasus, and eventually on to Persia and the Middle East to continue his offensive (Downing 2009; Veranov 2010). Soviet Marshal Timoshenko told his colleagues in 1941 that oil was the crucial factor and all the Soviets had to do was to force the Nazis to use more oil while starving them of fresh supplies (Downing 2009). At the end of World War II, a top State Department official noted that reviewing 'the diplomatic history of the past thirty-five years will show that petroleum has historically played a larger part in the external relations of the United States than any other commodity' (Hiro 2007, p.89). Henry G. Berenger, according to Hiro (2007, p.xvi) had said that 'the blood of the earth' had proved to be 'the blood of victory' - and could equally be applied to the situation in both World Wars, a demonstration of how oil can shape politics through the outcomes of conflict.

After the end of the Second World War, cheap and abundant oil was the primary driving force behind the exponential growth of the world economy (Hiro 2007), and the need to gain access to oil in the Middle East, Asia and Latin America played a major part in the US internationalist agenda to the present day (Heller 2006). In 1961, the Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was formed, and though at first it had little influence, it was the beginning of their increasing assertiveness in global affairs through a joint organisation. By the 1970's OPEC began strengthen its hand on the international oil markets as well as in geopolitics by major oil price shocks, beginning in 1973 and continuing until 1974 in response for the US support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War, and other shocks in 1978-9 that coincided with the Iranian Revolution that brought in a massive windfall for the OPEC states (Heller 2006; Hiro 2007). This led to the strengthening of conservative Sunni Islam in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf (Heller 2006) who make up the bulk of the OPEC member states (OPEC 2012).

For domestic politics, oil has also influenced outcomes. According to Ross (2008), a developing oil producing country is twice as likely to suffer from internal rebellion as a non-producing one. 'Oil revenues tend to increase corruption, strengthen the hands of dictators, and weaken new democracies. The more money the governments of Iran, Russia and Venezuela have received from oil and gas exports, the less accountable they have become to their citizens - and the easier it has been for them to shut up or buy off their opponents.' (Ross 2008, p.3) In terms of outside states negotiating with the suppliers, this places them in a near powerless position, coining the phrase 'the higher the global oil prices, the less suppliers are sensitive to global scrutiny' (Buchanan 2012, p.112) Most of the new oil fields being discovered are in places experiencing incompetent and undemocratic rule, including locations around the Caspian Sea and Central Asia such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (Ross 2008). Ross (2008) states that major fluctuations in oil and gas prices also contributes to unrest, as well as misappropriation of funds, which occurred in many states, including Kazakhstan. It is important to note that increased Chinese (and Russian) investment in the authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes in the Central Asia also have a chance of crowding out Western influence in the region, as their governments have more in common with Russia and China.

Unsurprisingly, hydrocarbon politics is a major issue for Russia, China and Central Asia, as there are major hydrocarbon deposits in Russia and Central Asia, especially with growing demand in China since 1993 (Dannreuther 2011; Lo 2008; Pilger 2002). In the context of growing Sino-Russian relations, Dannreuther (2011) points out that Russia is a state that has vast oil and gas reserves and is also resistant to pressure from the US, which can work in China's favour. In addition, the Central Asian republics have had increased interest from major powers such as Russia, China

and the US. Lo (2008) comments that for Russia in the 21st century, its possession of vast oil and gas reserves is the equivalent of nuclear weapons in the Soviet era, 'energy seems a much more flexible and useable form of power. Whereas the world once feared possible nuclear confrontation, now many countries, the mighty and not so mighty, both fear *and need* Russian energy.' (Lo 2008, p.132) This is interesting, because Strahan (2007) makes the useful point that in the post-Cold War era, Russia has the advantage in that it has both nuclear weapons and large quantities of energy.

From the previous paragraph, both Lo (2008) and Strahan (2007) talk of Russia becoming an 'energy superpower', albeit from different angles. Russia 'ranks among the world's leading countries in terms of reserves and production in all three categories of global primary energy sources: natural gas, oil and coal.' (Buchanan 2012, p.111) The EU 'imports nearly a third of its oil and almost half of its natural gas from Russia' (Buchanan 2012, p.111) Buchanan (2012) also makes note that the Baltic states rely 100 percent on Russian gas deliveries. In addition, the majority of oil and gas that comes to Europe originates from the oil-rich sources based in the Caspian Sea. These oil deliveries pass through pipelines in Russian territory to reach European consumers (Buchanan 2012). Given Russia's desire to retain its sphere of influence in Central Asia, as well as China and the US increasing their presence in the area (Pilger 2002), and issues of internal stability in the area, it could be said that oil by itself does not necessarily cause conflict, but can certainly exacerbate both latent tensions and wars in areas of instability (Ross 2008).

Disparate Views on the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation

Since its founding in 2001, observers, experts, politicians and academics have formed a wide spectrum of assessments of the SCO, ranging from a benign organisation that is merely out to protect its interests in the region and on the global stage to being outright anti-American and anti-West, seeking to challenge on all fronts of global relations. Kleveman (2004) recognises the SCO as an economic and security pact which and makes the observation that as much as the organisation was formed to combat terrorism, it is also a mechanism to deter US intrusion into Central Asia. Kleveman (2004) uses China's President Jiang Zemin's comment in 2002 that a purpose of the SCO is to 'support multi-polarity in the world' (Kleveman 2004, p.101), a statement that is largely consistent with the aims of the SCO as spelled out in the organisation's Charter, as well as in China and Russia's own foreign policy concepts (Russian Federation 2008, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2003). As mentioned earlier, energy plays a part in this arrangement.

There have also been many perceptions on the functioning SCO, from a constructive multilateral organisation that addresses issues in a practical manner such as common threats, terrorism and other challenges (Kleveman 2004; Palmer 2008), to being a strong, semi-coherent organisation that is essentially founded on an anti-Western schema (Lo 2008). Dannereuther (2011) sees the potential of a full-blooded alliance between China and Russia, which can see a greater landmass, population and a military that includes a serious nuclear arsenal, a huge population and most importantly, a large share of the world's natural resources, including an almost 98 percent share of the world's rare earth resources (Arredy & Hodge 2010). Some authors such as Lucas (2008) make the sensationalist claim that the SCO is part of

both China's and Russia's hostile agenda for a 'World Without the West', and playing up the threat of the SCO (as being a counterpart to NATO), while at the same time claiming that the organisation is wracked by internal conflict to the point that it lacks any long-term cohesiveness. It can be said that many commentators believe that the SCO is inherently anti-US and confrontational in its stated aims of working towards multi-polarity, and a new world order, as mentioned in the preamble and Article 1 of the SCO Charter.

Authors such as Hiro (2007) have also taken this as an implied threat to end the role of America as the sole superpower. Klare (2008) goes one step further and claims the SCO is unambiguously anti-American in nature, and Pabst (2009) observes that apart from Georgia and the Ukraine, the other Central Asian republics, especially those in the SCO agree with Russia's view that US dominance should be curtailed. A Dannereuther (2011) note that in 2005, Hu Jintao and Vladimir Putin made a joint declaration 'on an international order for the 21st century' that is undoubtedly an anti-Western declaration. The "creation of regional spaces 'without America' is a necessary part of the Chinese strategy for securing its neighbourhoods. A more pressing question might be why Russia should want to enter into such a space with China. Some Russian analysts argue that the importance of the SCO to Russia lies in enabling Moscow to manage its engagement with Asian countries multilaterally" (Kerr 2010, p.148). Others, such as Palmer (2008) argues on a more positive stance in that the SCO can serve as a defensive bulwark against Western domination in Central Asia (and indeed abroad) as well as helping to create alternatives for the members of the SCO to institutions often dominated by the West.

As mentioned in the SCO Charter, a centre of concern and a reason on why the organisation was founded was to fight separatism, extremism and terrorism. Azarkan (2009, p.4) remarks 'Important common aim of SCO members is... mutual security, fighting terrorism and separatism, defending regimes from west-inspired upheavals to economic cooperation. One may indeed get the impression of an emerging alliance and powerful factor in world politics.' (Azarkan 2009, p.4) Azarkan (2009) mentions that the SCO was focussed on issues such as security against extremists and Dannereuther (2011) believes that China can use the SCO as a means of countering the effect of the China's own Uighur separatist movement, and at the same time, a way for Beijing to counter US unilateralism with non-aggression. Hiro (2007) and Dannereuther (2011) show that China has made extensive investments in Central Asia in terms of securing its oil (and to a lesser extent gas) supplies, which led to a pipeline that connected Kazakhstan to Xinjiang province in China in 2009 (Danneruther 2011), and the CNPC takeover of PetroKazakhstan in 2005 (Lai 2007) are examples of the SCO states coming together for the purposes of securing energy as well as mutual benefit. Another example of this can be seen in \$10 billion worth of loans that China agreed to grant to the other member states, following previous loans of the same amount in 2009 to assist other SCO member state's recovery from the GFC, and almost \$1 billion in loans from China to the Central Asian members of the SCO in 2008 (Palmer 2008; Wee 2012).

Palmer makes the useful observation that the SCO has made significant ground in achieving common aims and integration over the past ten years, especially as the Central Asian states had virtually nothing to work with in terms of economic strength and strategic orientation. The Russians were still recovering from the Cold War and China was undergoing a major transformation (Palmer 2008). The SCO has

provided, many benefits in strategic, economic, infrastructure and cultural aspects, and has given a cohesive policy and direction to countries that have had little experience with multilateralism (Palmer 2008; Swanstrom 2010), and this fact has been overlooked, especially by Kotkin, Lo and Lucas. Wang (2011) agrees with Palmer in that many who vilify the SCO have a pro-Western bias because they look at the SCO as illiberal (one observer disparagingly called the organisation as the 'club of dictators'), and because of this, cannot work on a consensus similar to more liberal Western multilateral institutions.

Azarkan (2009) believes that the Central Asian republics use their membership in the SCO to maintain relations with China and Russia, while at the same time are dealing bilaterally with the west and other states to maximise the possibility of favourable outcomes. An example of this strategy can be seen in the Uzbek President Islam Karimov, who has swung back and forth between Russia, China and the West, first by joining the NATO Partners for Peace (PfP), and when pressures for democracy development became too much, he joined the SCO, who housed no concerns about human rights records (Azarkan 2009). Because of their multi-directional foreign policies, the Central Asian states have been able to further their interests and maximise gains, and Azarkan (2009) also observes that they have been able to influence the SCO agenda, as well as US policy in Central Asia. Azarkan (2009) makes the good point that no power can satisfy all their needs, and that the Central Asian states are willing to offer their co-operation to the highest bidder and exploit major power differences that help them have a say in both the SCO and the West. Danneruther (2011) that there is a powerlessness that is felt at times by Russian strategists regarding the former USSR. China can take comfort that many of the

Central Asian states have favoured China in terms access to the market of their oil and gas markets.

In spite of some of its shortcomings, the SCO has hardly ended up like the CIS, and it would be wrong, according to Lo (2008) and Azarkan (2009) to view the SCO as being an inconsequential organisation that is manipulated by Beijing and Moscow. Part of this can be seen in Palmer's analysis that the SCO has become a way of affirming Central Asia's importance in the region, both to Russia and China. Although there has not been many achievements, and that any comparison with NATO and the EU are absurd, there have been no openly dissenting members, despite some differences, and at times they have been largely united, for example calls for a 'final timeline' for the US to leave their bases in Central Asia (Lo 2008). Many of the smaller countries can be heard, despite Sino-Russian dominance and this has also assisted in both multilateral and bilateral relations between the states. In addition, the Central Asian states can also manoeuvre between the two great powers, Russia and China (Lo 2008; Azarkan 2009) Lo (2008) also recognises that although gaining ground, enough so for NATO and the EU to take notice, it is simply not strong enough to become a serious challenger to NATO. Lo (2008) also makes the claim that there are enough positives to note that there is little to fear from it. Lo (2008) notices that in the context of the Sino-Russian partnership, the organisation both reinforces and strengthens bilateral ties, but also has the capability of taking them apart. Despite this, Palmer (2008) argues that operating behind Moscow's back would be difficult to do, and poses a security risk for Beijing, and that China much prefers to enter Central Asia consensually, with multilateral institutions such as the SCO. Any overt attempt by China to subvert Russian influence would only jeopardise its strategy in the region (Palmer 2008).

Russia and China in the SCO

The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China are clearly the two major actors that make up the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation. As mentioned, ever since the Cold War ended with the collapse of the USSR in 1991, relations between China and Russia began flourishing. Many Western analysts believed that high points of the relationship since the end of the Cold War have been 1995-7, 2001-3 and 2005-7 (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). The end of the 1995-7 period saw the finalisation of the border demarcation process, as well as the roots of the future SCO, when the Shanghai Five was formed in 1996, culminating with a big increase in Russian arms sales to Beijing. Indeed in 1996, China and Russia had made a statement using the phrase 'strategic partnership' to describe their relationship (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). At the start of the 2001-3 period, the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (2001) had been founded, and with this the signing of the Friendship Treaty between Beijing and Moscow in the same year (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). From 2005-7, this started to take a more militaristic and assertive stance with military exercises between the SCO states in 2005 and 2007 as well as growing SCO demands for the withdrawal of the US-NATO presence in Central Asia (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010).

Being the two major powers in the same organisation, it probably comes as little surprise that the SCO is a source of tension as much as it brings China and Russia together. Lo (2008) makes the assessment that 'As long as the organisation remains a relative sideshow, Moscow and Beijing will be careful to manage their reservations about each other. But if a leadership role becomes synonymous with a broader influence in Central Asia, such self-restraint will come under increasing

strain' (Lo 2008, p.110) Tensions between Russia and China are evident in the SCO in that China is looking to steer the SCO's activities toward the economic integration and co-operative roles, while Russia seeks to concentrate on military, security and geopolitical aspects, which also highlights the strengths and weaknesses being played out in the SCO between Russia and China (Lo 2008; Swanstrom 2011). For example, many of Kazakhstan's decisions are made with a largely economic focus, with President Nazarbayev stating that 'If it is advantageous to transport oil through Russia, we will go in this direction. If we feel that transportation through Baku-Ceyhan is \$15 cheaper we will follow that direction. And if both options turn difficult, we will reach out to China.' (Azarkan 2009, quoting Nazarbayev, p.11). Lo observes that although Russia has stronger political links with the Central Asian republics, China is stronger economically, and could eventually outmuscle the Russians with its economic power, given how vulnerable nature of the Central Asian economies.

Lo (2008) notes that it was China, not Russia that led the charge to form the SCO, and has played the bigger part in making the organisation the most important in Central Asia. The SCO has often been seen as a means for China to channel its interests through a multilateral institution in Central Asia (Sheives 2006). Lo (2008) also makes the assertion that if there was not a common 'foe' in the form of the US, there would be very little to bind the SCO, and the 'Shanghai Spirit' is little more than an elaborate ruse, and this goes as far as evicting the US from Central Asia.

Dannereuther (2011) mentions the suspicions coming from the West regarding China's rise in international affairs, and that it is the West's accommodation at the same time that preserves the Chinese regime's legitimacy in the global order (Kim 1998). However, both Russia and the West are strategic competitors as well as partners, and indeed Kotkin (2009) sees the partnership as even more of an 'axis of

convenience' than what Lo suggests. However, this also helps to validate that it is Russia and China that are the major actors in the region, not the US and its allies (Lo 2008). As Russia and China start to assert themselves they will also press for influence in the Central Asian states, who will in themselves exploit this to the fullest, but at the same time, sees that strategic convergence seems more the order of the day for the foreseeable future (Lo 2008).

When the first joint exercises between Russia, China and SCO states began in 2005, according to them this would help build their armed forces and test their tactics and doctrines (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). Others had a different view, some believing that Beijing used the exercises to show that relations with Moscow had improved, especially to demonstrate this to Taiwan and other Asian states (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). Moscow was keen to use the exercises to show its military capabilities in the Russian Far East as well as to show that they are becoming closer to the rising power of the East (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). Another message that others assumed was that the exercises were to send a message to the other Central Asian states not to get too close to the West (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). Similar concerns were also raised in 2007, when the next 'Peace Mission' came about. The next rounds of military exercises were held in the mountainous region of Chorukh-Dayron in Tajikistan with the participation of the RATS and the Armed Forces of the Member States of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, for the new 'Peace Mission' in June 2012.

Another major argument that China puts forward is that a resurgent Russia helps to build a more multi-polar world and helps global strategic balance and constrains US hegemonism and unilateralism (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). The

establishment of the SCO also helps China to combat the 'three evils' of extremism, separatism and terrorism, especially in its Western regions (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). A stronger Russian economy and influence and increased assertiveness under the leadership of Vladimir Putin has contributed to Russia winning respect in Beijing. Since Putin's inauguration in 2000, Russia has sought to build itself up at home to reclaim its political influence, successfully tapping into Russian nationalism and stoking the great power aspirations of the once fallen giant (Kupchan 2012). Organisations such as the SCO thus provide an alternative to institutions dominated by the West (Kupchan 2012). Russia sees itself as being part of the great power club (such as its participation in the G8), while at the same time acting as a counterweight to the West (Kupchan 2012). 'The SCO process also sheds light on many of the most interesting issues and themes of Asian security today. It embodies a new model of relations between China and Russia in the post-Soviet period and space, and makes Central Asia an area of mutual cooperation, which in itself is a remarkable development.' (Palmer 2008, p.87) Palmer lauded the level of say that the Central Asian republics had in the SCO, as well as the organisation having a restraining effect on Russia and China through multilateralism.

China perceives the SCO as being a multilateral solution to terrorism problems, and promoting peace and stability in Central Asia (Bjelakovic & Yeung 2010). This is also mentioned expressly in the SCO Charter in its pledge to fight 'terrorism, separatism and extremism'. However, at the same time, China have always maintained that Sino-Russian relations is a 'strategic partnership', not a military alliance, and indeed some Chinese scholars believe that this is merely a 'marriage of convenience' in order to balance US uni-polarity. These observations by Bjelakovic & Yeung are somewhat similar to Bobo Lo's thoughts in his book *Axis of Convenience*. The same

scholars stress that neither China or Russia want an 'alliance' arrangement, for fear of provoking the West, as well as their sometimes diverging national interests, especially on energy in Central Asia. Lo (2008) notices that in the context of the Sino-Russian partnership, the SCO both reinforces and strengthens bilateral ties, but also has the capability of taking them apart, creating geostrategic rivalry in the future. Dibb (2008), Klare (2008), Dannereuther (2011), Lifan & Pantucci (2012), and Pabst (2009) also back these claims. An example of this can be seen where Pabst (2009) and Smith (2012) notices that Russia had failed to notify and inform its SCO partners about the subsequent war against Georgia in 2008. Russia's SCO partners even refused to recognise the independence of the Georgian enclaves Abkhazia and South Ossetia that were 'liberated' by Russian forces after the war (Smith 2012).

SCO - The Quiet Achiever

Russia and China have also recently extended energy ties with the construction of the Eastern Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) (Pipeline and Gas Journal 2009) that opened in 2011, the first oil pipeline from Russia to China, marking a new stage in Sino-Russian energy co-operation (UPI 2011) (See Map 3 Appendix). This is in addition to burgeoning energy ties between Russia, China and the Central Asian states. In the 2005 SCO meeting, China and Russia made a statement calling for the US to withdraw from its bases in Qarshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan and Manas in Kirghizstan (Hiro 2007). To further extend their influence, the SCO granted observer status to Mongolia in 2004 and Iran, India and Pakistan in 2005. In 2005, military exercises between China and Russia in Shandong province including long-haul aircraft, non-nuclear powered submarines, and amphibious and paratrooper landings in Shandong and the Yellow Sea. Interestingly, Dibb made the proposition in his

article *The Resurgence of Russia as a Great Power?*, Russia will seek to form a Eurasian bulwark through the SCO with its current members along with observers that include Pakistan, Iran and even Afghanistan. Dibb's (2008) hypothesis is gaining traction with the inclusion of Afghanistan as an observer state and Turkey becoming a Dialogue Partner in the 2012 Beijing summit (SCO 2012). Iran's application to become a member was rejected in 2006, the reason being that no state under UN sanctions can be a member of the SCO, but many believe that this is because China did not want to offend the US by admitting Iran as a full member of the SCO (Lucas 2008).

The structure of the SCO is enough to show that it will be a permanent fixture in the international community, and giving credence to Azarkan's, Palmer's and Wang's claims that functioning multilateral institutions are not necessarily the exclusive domain of the West, as many authors critical of the SCO have expressed and implied, namely being Kotkin, Lo and Lucas. There is no doubt that there are certain misgivings, and there are questions still to answered about the roles of China, Russia and the Central Asian states within the organisation, as well as the direction it is headed. However, the organisation is only a decade old and still has a long way to go compared to the EU and NATO - institutions that took over fifty years to get where they are today. Leadership issues and possible rivalry may arise between China and Russia in the future, indeed this scenario many scholars have hypothesised, but this has yet to be seen, but not necessarily out of the question. The SCO has shown itself to be a resilient organisation; paying heed to the military and non-military threats to the organisation's members (Palmer 2008), and provides a genuine alternative for states in the area that wish to join an organisation not dominated by the West. In terms of questions arising from leadership, there may be a more of a 'division of labour'

arrangement, one that plays into both China's and Russia's strengths, in this case, China's economic prowess and Russia's military might (Contessi 2010). The 'SCO is also the bearer of a new diplomatic reality on the world stage: that Western countries, particularly the United States, are no longer the only ones able to establish and manage successful multilateral organizations' (Palmer 2008, p.87). The SCO also shows a decision-making capacity between the representatives of the SCO and has put in place institutions to deal with any opportunity, threat and other situations that may challenge the SCO, such as the Secretariat, RATS and Council of Foreign Ministers and of National Co-ordinators show a robust and permanent organisation.

Chapter 3 - Central Asia: Autocracies, Hydrocarbons, Terrorism, Uprisings and Good Neighbourliness

The Chinese and Russians have had a long-standing presence in Central Asia. Originally a conduit between the East and West as an integral part of the Silk Road, Central Asia has become more important to both Russia and China, and this is exacerbated by the fact that the West and many others also are in the process of establishing or have already established interests in the area. Both the Chinese and Russian influences have been challenged by the West, mainly due to the discovery of hydrocarbons in the area, as well as a strategic point for the US and its allies to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Not only has Central Asia become a melting point for many cultures, religions and influences due to its past, but will remain a central focus of many interests that both converge and are in conflict with one another.

A History of Chinese and Russian Influence

Central Asia has long been an area of rich cultural heritage that have been influenced by the Chinese, Slavic and Turkic peoples that have lived in the area throughout history. MacHaffie (2010) points out that the first references to the area in Chinese records date back to the fifth century A.D, and it is due to this, a strong Chinese influence on Kazakh and Kirghiz culture is still present to this day. Islamic influences came from the Caliphate which also covered the Khwarizmi Empire in Persia that was close to the Turkic settlements in Central Asia in the twelfth century A.D. (MacHaffie 2010). After the conquest of the Khwarizmi Empire by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, the Mongols dominated Central Asia for 400 years through their descendants, the Tartars until the rise of Tsarist Russia in the seventeenth century (MacHaffie 2010). The Russian conquest of the Kazakh Khans in 1847, and

the incorporation of the Kirghiz people in 1863, after over one hundred years of Manchu rule ushered the period of Slavic influence that continues to this day. Since the Tang dynasty, Central Asia has been of strategic interest to China, with the subjugation of Tibet necessary to protect China's western borders, and from there maintaining interests in neighbouring Central Asian states, a policy that is in place today (MacHaffie 2010). In both cases, there is little doubt that both China and Russia have had longstanding interests in Central Asia.

Political, military and economic issues are now major priorities in Central Asia since the fall of the USSR and subsequent rise of the newly independent Central Asian republics. This Chapter will describe in limited detail the causes of security risks, the domestic situation in the Central Asian republics, and the terror groups within the SCO states. This discussion will also focus on hydrocarbon reserves and production in Central Asia, Russia and China (See Appendix Figures 2 and 3). Central Asia's vast hydrocarbon reserves are the obvious reason for Great Power interest in the area (Demir 2010). Undoubtedly, 'the growing global demand for energy has fostered strategic rivalries in the Caspian region. Oil's status as a vital strategic commodity has led various powerful states to use this vital resource and its supply to the world markets as a means to achieve their objectives in global politics.' (Iseri 2009, p.34) BMI (2012), EIA (2012) and Kandiyoti (2008) all note that Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are adjacent to, and have holdings in the oil-rich Caspian Sea, while Uzbekistan is known to have large gas reserves. Russia itself is another SCO state that harbours large hydrocarbon reserves, being among the top exporters in the world (Buchanan 2012; EIA 2012; Kupchan 2012; Strahan 2007). Although Kirghizstan and Tajikistan are not necessarily major hydrocarbon producers, their proximity to the producing states is important, especially in terms of transit routes (Demir 2010). A

fact that the BMI (2012) and many other scholars also argue is that Central Asia will remain an arena of Great Power competition for reasons other than its vast reserves (Lewis 2008; Palmer 2008; Scheives 2006). The factors that contribute to this include authoritarian rule, rising populations, Islamic extremism, locations that are adjacent to Afghanistan and theatres of operations for the 'War on Terror' (Jackson 2007), as well as being the focus of Russian, Chinese, Western and US interests make this area extremely important.

The strategic location of Central Asia as a link between Europe and Asia, similar to the Silk Road of antiquity is another reason for the region's significance (Demir 2010; Follath & Neef 2010; Moore 2007). These aforementioned factors can also bring instability that may cause strategic, political and economic problems in the future for states within the area, as well as those who are outside Central Asia and have interests in the area. Central Asia is important in that it can give many states a chance to lessen its dependence on the unstable Middle East as well as bypassing 'choke points'. For example, over 75 percent of China's oil is shipped through the narrow and accident prone Straits of Malacca that is within the operating area of the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) (BMI 2012, Demir 2010; Friedberg 2011; Lai 2007; Lee 2005; USPACOM 2012).

Hydrocarbons in China, Russia and Central Asia (SCO & Turkmenistan)

The share of hydrocarbons located in the SCO states and Turkmenistan is quite substantial, especially in proven gas reserves, with 32.64 percent of total global gas reserves in the SCO/Turkmenistan area (see Appendix Figures 3 and 4). Significant quantities of oil are also in the SCO/Turkmenistan states, with over 7 percent of proven global oil reserves, and over 24 percent of all productive oil wells

contributing 22.48 percent of total global oil production (Appendix Figures 3 and 5). Out of the Central Asian SCO states China, Kazakhstan and Russia dominate oil production, making up over 98 percent of SCO/Turkmenistan's proven reserves (Appendix Figure 3). In terms of gas Russia, Turkmenistan and China have the largest reserves, making up over 93 percent of SCO/Turkmenistan reserves (Appendix Figure 3). Russia has the most out of any state with almost 54 percent of proven oil reserves, over 76 percent of proven gas reserves and over 63 percent of oil production in the SCO/Turkmenistan states. Iseri (2009) remarks that the Kashgan oil field is the largest untapped oil reserve in the last 27 years and the Tengiz oil field, discovered in 1979 is about the same size, both of which are in Kazakhstan, emphasises the importance of the region.

Domestic Militant Islam and Separatism

Radical Islam is on the rise in Central Asia, despite harsh repression from its authoritarian rulers. Contributing to this is the region's proximity to Afghanistan and the Taliban, especially in states that border Afghanistan, including Tajikistan (Crosston 2008; Kayani 2006), Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. There is a general concern among the major powers that Islamic extremism could potentially spread; examples can be seen in Tartarstan and Bashkortostan (BMI 2012; Hahn 2012). Major examples include Islamic militancy and separatism brought on by clashes between authoritarian states as well as ethno-religious and nationalist tensions in Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria in Russia (Benjamin & Simon 2005; Carr 2006; Cronin 2003; Esposito 2006), while terrorist attacks on the Russian republic, Chechnya and neighbouring provinces still continue (King & Menon 2010).

Another hot spot is in Xinjiang in China, a province that continues to experience unrest (Cronin 2003; Kissinger 2011; Roberts 2009), with crackdowns continuing, especially in the wake of the deadly 2009 Xinjiang riots (AFP 2012). Kaplan (2010) notes that resources may be at play in Xinjiang, as new deposits of minerals and oil have been discovered in the area (as mentioned in the first Chapter). The Uighur separatism issue has become intertwined with the established threat of terrorism, an example being the ETIM, a terrorist group in Xinjiang who are known to have links to the IMU (Saadi 2011). This has led to China paying closer attention to the domestic situations in the Central Asian republics, as well as seeking their assistance in quelling Uighur nationalism in Xinjiang. Neighbouring Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan have significant Uighur populations that are sympathetic to their brethren in Xinjiang (Scheives 2006; Yuan 2010). Managing Xinjiang and its separatist groups 'is one of many factors in China's Central Asian strategy of maintaining regional stability. Regime stability, the reduction of ethnic strife, territorial integrity and even economic development in Central Asia are all important interests for China and its desire to maintain a stable internal and external periphery.' (Scheives 2010, p.210) This is but one example where a joint effort is being made to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism on the part of the SCO; with Palmer (2008) stating that in the SCO the inclusion of RATS is a (loose) collective security apparatus in combating these threats. Part of this can be seen that many Central Asian states are still weak states, despite being ruled by repressive governments (Tsygankov 2007), and deem this necessary to retain regime security.

South Asian Exports: Islamic Fundamentalism from Pakistan and Afghanistan

The aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979-1989 has seen the infiltration of Islamic extremists into Central Asia from Afghanistan, especially after the Soviet withdrawal and rise of the Taliban (BMI 2012). This left Afghanistan a more radicalised country after the Soviets withdrew, and despite the Taliban being forced from power in 2001, the Taliban's resurgence since then has seen Afghanistan once again becoming the centre of Islamic extremism in Central Asia (Palmer 2008). With many radicalised groups who believe that it is their divine duty to wage war on rulers who do not implement their interpretation of Islamic law (Wiktorowicz 2005) in the area, the largely secular autocracies of Central Asia, Russia and China make prime targets. Uzbekistan has been known to have completely outlawed religious parties (Spechler & Spechler 2010). There are also reports of terrorist groups in many Central Asian countries, predominantly in Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and of late, Kazakhstan (Blagov 2004; BMI 2012; CIA 2012), with more aggressive examples being the IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir (Saadi 2011). The impoverished nation of Tajikistan is one of the worst hit by instability, as Tajikistan suffered from a five-year civil war starting in 1992 and ending in 1997, fought between the post-Communist government and Islamic extremists that had effectively turned Tajikistan into a failed state and took over 50 000 lives (BMI 2012; Kleveman 2004; Lewis 2008). Despite a coalition government being established after the war, ongoing violence still causes concern, with clashes in the Gorno-Badakhshan oblast in July 2012 (BBC 2012; Eurasianet 2012) between government forces and rebels based in the province.

Kazakhstan also harbours concerns about the drug trade and is both a producer and transit point for illicit drugs, with inadequate enforcement by the government (CIA 2012). The BMI's Central Asia Defence & Security Report (2012) reveals the first terrorist attacks in Kazakhstan in May 2011, when a suicide bomber struck in Aqtobe, and a car bomb exploded outside the Security Service building in Astana. The same report also informs us that there are significant numbers of Kazakhs who are sympathetic to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and this is stopping President Nazarbayev from sending troops to Afghanistan. Le Vine (2011) agrees that Kazakhstan has been suffering from more and more terrorist attacks in the past year, and he notes that Kazakh security officials suspect Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to the CIA (2012), Uzbekistan is having difficulties with militant Islam as well as human rights concerns and economic stagnation. Militant Islam has been blamed for the assassination attempt on President Karimov in 1999 and led to further repression in Uzbekistan (Blagov 2004; Kleveman 2004). The magnitude of past, current and future threats, and their potential effects in the SCO states in particular will expose vulnerabilities that can lead to catastrophic results, have become a reality, in the forms of civil war, terrorism and assassinations. Certainly, many states in Central Asia, as well as Russia, China and US/NATO would like to see the eradication of the Islamic militancy that comes from the Taliban's bases in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Ali 2008; Lutz & Lutz 2008; Scheives 2006; Martin 2006; Sheffer 2006).

Balance of Power in Central Asia

Ever since Tsarist times and into the Soviet era, Central Asia was long regarded as a 'permanent' domain of Russian influence to the exclusion of all others,

and indeed to some, regarded as fellow Eurasians and as Russia's 'little bothers' (Shlapentokh 2007). However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union others have shown interest in the area, examples being the US, China, Turkey, Iran, India and even Pakistan (through Afghanistan), but for the purposes of this thesis, discussion will be focussed on the influences of China, Russia and in the next chapter, the US/NATO in Central Asia. This somewhat plays into Russia's idea that it still has major influence in Central Asia, and despite the loss of those regions after the Cold War, many oil and gas routes from Central Asia and Europe still pass through Russia and provide a major source of revenue for their governments, a remnant of the Soviet infrastructure (Chow & Hendrix 2010; Kandiyoti 2008).

Kerr (2010) states that part of China's aim for Central Asia; which happens to be in line with rest of the SCO, is the eventual removal of the US from the area. "According to Chinese analysis, the Sino-Russian partnership advances a new form of international relations based on equality, mutual trust in consultation, and mutual interest in common gain. At the same time it is based on a 'three nos policy': no alliance, no confrontation, no targeting of third countries." (Kerr 2010, p.135) Many of these policies are evident in the aims stated in the Charter of the SCO (SCO 2001). Kerr (2010) also understands that China is looking for stability, pursuit of common interests, enhanced trust and economic development important in good neighbourly relations, in which Russia and the Central Asian republics have accommodated Chinese engagement, and have produced a largely functioning relationship. This is important, especially with US/NATO interests in the area, and it is in the SCO's interests to minimise their influence as much as possible. 'At the same time Beijing activated the development of cooperation with the states of Central Asia on questions

of security with the aim of establishing...emphasis in the realisation of its strategy was placed on the strengthening of the SCO, as a distinctive counter-weight to the American presence in the region and...the realisation here of the PRC's interests as a whole.' (Kerr 2010, p.142) Interestingly, Palmer (2008) notes that the US has made attempts to gain an observer status in the SCO, perhaps aware of its growing profile in the international community, but was ultimately rejected in 2006. Indeed, the Central Asian states arguably view Russia as more trustworthy than China (not surprising as their ties to Russia go back further than China), but see China as more reliable than the United States (Kerr 2010). Kerr, like Azarkan agrees that having two Great Powers competing for influence among the Central Asian states helps lessen their dependence on Moscow and can also negotiate with China to maximise potential gains. However, Kerr (2010) also points out that this may increase China's vulnerability in that China is not only going to be dependent on Central Asia for oil, but also on its investments there (see Hiro 2007) China has 'certainly has placed much of its *long-term* energy security in the region, as it has heavily invested in Central Asian network infrastructure and in equity oil partnerships. Construction of network infrastructure...does indicate a shift towards Central Asia in terms of its long-term energy security.' (Scheives 2006, p.218) This is unlikely to change in the near future as, China is a largely oil dependent, oil-intensive state, and this dependence on oil will force China to rely upon Central Asia and Russia (Lee 2005), as well as reducing its dependence on the sea routes via the Straits of Malacca for its oil imports (mentioned earlier).

Central Asian Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism in Central Asia has had a long history, dating even before the collapse of the USSR. Most of the Central Asian states have had the same leader since the early 1990's (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) (Anceschi 2010). The leadership in Turkmenistan has changed once, with the death of Saparmurat Niyazov in 2006 and changes of leadership in two rebellions in 2005 and 2010 in Kirghizstan, though in practice, little has changed (BMI 2012; Cummings 2008; Ryabkov 2008). There are many characteristics that are common with all the Central Asian regimes in the SCO, as well as Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan where they 'routinely suppress internal dissent, arrest political opponents, and censor the media. Political dissent of any kind is harshly suppressed' (Stohl 2006, p.66) that make them authoritarian or semi-authoritarian states (Katz 2007).

From time to time, the Central Asian regimes have been occasionally challenged by the West, but the desire to tap hydrocarbon reserves in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and in some cases, continued military support for the 'War on Terror' coming from Kirghizstan and Tajikistan at times gains importance over democracy promotion in those states (Byers 2002; Clarke 2004; Le Vine 2011; Lewis 2008; Smith 2012). This is despite the fact that the West had criticised the crackdowns in these states such as the outcry over the 2005 Uzbekistan crackdowns which drove Islam Karimov to rapprochement with the SCO (Palmer 2008). Spechler & Spechler (2010) note that humans rights issues do not worry China's or Russia's forays into the region, and indeed the desire for stability has been the top priority for Russia and China, as well as for the Central Asian states themselves. An example of this can be seen in President Karimov's state visit to China, who showed solidarity

with Uzbekistan for its 2005 crackdown (Scheives 2006). Since 2011, the revolts that inspired the 'Arab Spring' have deeply unnerved the leaders of Central Asia because they share many traits with the Arab nations, including long-standing autocracies, nepotism, high levels of inequality and inequity, high unemployment and inflation, rapid population increases and endemic corruption (BMI 2012; Indeo 2012; Iwasaki & Suzuki 2007).

Lewis (2008) contends that the people of Central Asia themselves will try to forge their destinies in the face of authoritarianism, regional instability and rivalry, which may involve a similar scenario to the recent 'Arab Spring' uprisings. Heller (2006) argues that the authoritarianism of the Central Asian leaders have played a part in the area becoming a breeding ground for narcotics trafficking and Islamic militancy that comes from Pakistan and Afghanistan, giving credence to the idea that the very authoritarianism that brings stability to Central Asia can also bring it undone. Jones & Libicki (2008) demonstrate that authoritarian regimes in places such as Uzbekistan that deprive its people of civil liberties may actually *contribute* to instability. In terms of its hydrocarbon reserves and stability, Mousseau (2003) argues in a similar line to Ross (2008) suggests that a resources curse may be at play when sudden wealth from hydrocarbons or minerals (which is something that Central Asia has in high quantities) can lead to instability caused by a shift to terrorism, extremism or separatism, and outlines earlier in the Chapter that this has already happened. Again, this is a recurring theme in the SCO states to show that this is a serious problem, but also brings them together.

Foreign Policy (Central Asian SCO states and Turkmenistan)

Another factor that determines who the hydrocarbons go to is the foreign policy alignments of the Central Asian states in relation to its neighbours, as well as outsiders. Some argue that the foreign relations of the Central Asian states have moved in many different trajectories, as the 'post-Soviet states now have been independent long enough for us to understand that they are moving along very different trajectories, partly affected by their different cultural and historical backgrounds.' (Lewis 2008, p.126) Examples of this can be seen in Kirghiz and Uzbek support for the 'War on Terror' as well as Turkmenistan's policy of neutrality (Anseschi 2010). However, Silitski 2010 disputes the aforementioned, especially in the wake of the 'coloured revolutions' that saw an 'authoritarian convergence' (as Silitski calls it) when the Central Asian and Russian regimes came together to consolidate their autocracies by working both domestically and multilaterally against democratic reforms. Although conditions within the Central Asian states are different, there are also similarities in their foreign policy that make the aforementioned statement relevant, though contentious at the same time. The SCO is a prime example of this, as four of the five 'stans' (Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) have joined the SCO, with the exception of Turkmenistan, who adheres to a strict policy of neutrality (Anceschi 2010).

However, Turkmenistan is a guest of the SCO, and is a regular participant at the SCO summits. Despite claims of its permanent neutrality, 'Turkmenistan is willing to be actively engaged in regional and trans-regional cooperation projects within the framework of the SCO under the precondition that they are in line with his country's national interests and foreign policy.' (SCO 2012) This can leave open the possibility

of Turkmenistan coming closer to the SCO as pressure comes from the West over its authoritarianism (HRW 2012), while at the same time having good relations with China and Russia, as well as its copious reserves of hydrocarbons, especially in the Caspian Sea, some of which are already going to China (Hancock 2006; Jones 2010). "The Turkmen side would continue to support...China's core interests, enhance bilateral law-enforcement security cooperation and work with China to crush...terrorism, separatism and extremism." (SCO 2012) It is important to note that all the 'stans' are autocracies, and that Russia and China share this trait, and all are threatened by 'terrorism, separatism and extremism', including Turkmenistan who is not in the SCO, and are in general bringing themselves closer to Moscow and Beijing than to the West, despite Kirghizstan and Uzbekistan supporting the 'War on Terror' (Foust 2012; Kleveman 2004; Palmer 2008).

In their relations with Russia, it can be seen as "... the system can be better understood as one of *multiple hegemonies* in which Russia retains a dominant role without denying other countries' fundamental sovereignty." (Gayoso 2009, p.234) These moves towards Russia and China become clear in the crackdowns in Uzbekistan in the wake of the (suspected) West-inspired 'colour revolutions' in the area, with President Karimov largely abandoning the West and moving towards the SCO (Allison 2008). As mentioned, many of the Central Asian states have a multi-faceted foreign policy, welcoming Chinese, Russian and Western investments (Marketos 2009). Although many Western companies such as British Gas, ENI, Royal Dutch Shell, ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips (Demir 2010; Leblond & Watkins 2009) have also invested heavily in Central Asia's oil infrastructure. However, the Central Asian leadership still continues to favour Russia and China, despite some misgivings. Large scale investments from Russian and Chinese companies since the 1990's

(Cristoffersen 1998; Yeniekeyeff 2009) also help to keep the oil infrastructure profitable, ensuring the survival of the Central Asian autocracies.

Anceschi (2010) notes that in Central Asian foreign policy, and especially in the cases of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, foreign policy often follows a nationalistic agenda, which has been invoked by fighting foreign (predominantly Western) influences as well as occasionally resisting Russian overtures, and ensuring regime security. From this it can be argued that this would be an attempt by the Central Asian states for independent policy development (for example Turkmenistan's policy of neutrality, or Uzbekistan's short-lived move to host US bases). As Azarkan (2009) pointed out earlier, the Central Asian states have more say in the proceedings of the SCO than they ever did in the CIS or CSTO (which can be a reason why the SCO has proven more successful than the CIS and CSTO). Allison (2008) sees that at the same time, some of the Central Asian states are 'band wagoning' ((allying themselves the state that poses the major threat (Walt 1985)) in supporting the US 'War on Terror', while coming closer to Russia and China to ensure their own security in the area, and the same actors can also be seen as 'balancing' ((ally in opposition to the principle source of danger (Walt 1985)) in their active participation in the SCO. This can be seen a move towards the realist paradigm in terms of alliance building against an outside threat, as well as national interest taking prominence (Dunne & Schmidt 2011). Lewis (2008) argues that it will be Russia and China, not Russia and the West that will be the main competitors in Central Asia.

With relation combat, proxy wars will be more likely than interstate conflict due to the fact that the major powers in the region have nuclear weapons. Criminal or Islamic extremists and political movements may be used to topple undesirable

governments in the new resource wars, as what many suspect happened in the 'colour revolutions' (Lewis 2008). 'Sadly, internal conflict is all too plausible in a region where poverty, bad government, political oppression, religious radicalism, and shifting identities all fertilize the ground for violence and conflict.' (Lewis 2008, p.134) Despite this, Lewis (2008) and Demir (2010) agree that the Central Asian autocracies will not be mere pawns, as they have indulged in the habit of playing off or dancing between the powers in the region, as previously mentioned. An example where the Central Asian states are playing the Great Powers off against one another can be seen in the use of its sovereign territories for bases, which Kerr argues brought about a 'bidding war' between Russia and the US for bases in Kirghizstan, and signing lucrative deals with both powers, as well as the US base in Uzbekistan (Kerr 2010). However, Central Asia itself has received little help from the West, and the area has by and large been dismissed as at worst, a hotbed of Islamic extremism, criminality and drug trafficking, and at best, merely a source of hydrocarbons (Lewis 2008). However, at the same time it "explains why Washington is cautious in its interactions with the SCO, fearing that China and Russia will use the organization as their own 'closed club' to try to keep the U.S. out of Central Asia" (Palmer 2008, p.105). Palmer (2008) believes that the authoritarianism can be a factor in the region's foreign policy stance, with the Central Asian regimes suspecting US agitation and criticism that caused the 'colour revolutions' and other uprisings in 2003-10, having jeopardised relations between the US and Central Asia.

SWOT Analysis - (SCO, West, Oil and Terrorism)

Such a large share of hydrocarbons in one area can be viewed as a strength and as a weakness, an opportunity and a threat. The situation in Central Asia, and

particularly in the SCO, its combination of authoritarianism, terrorism, separatism and religious extremism, strategic location and their vast resources, including others such as Tajikistan's and Kirghizstan's hydroelectric power supplies, given their rather limited endowments of hydrocarbons (see Figure 3) make it a certainty it will be an arena of Great Power competition. The forming of the SCO, and growing interest by the West, and particularly America with statements with reference to the Caspian and Central Asia by former Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson that this is all 'about America's energy security, which depends on diversifying our sources of oil and gas' (Klare 2008, p.125) - it is not difficult to recall certain members of the SCO saying the same thing, (in fact we can almost interchange the names in the previous statement!) In addition to this, Colin Powell's remarks about Central Asia in the first chapter, 'America will have a continuing and presence in Central Asia of a kind we never dreamed of before [September 11]' (Pilger 2002, p.105) will undoubtedly be reflector of tension in the future. There is no doubt going to be conflict with a growing China, a resurgent Russia, unstable and authoritarian Central Asian regimes as well as the US and the West in the foreseeable future. This is more prevalent with statements such as 'It's also about preventing strategic inroads by those who don't share our values' (Klare 2008, p.125) coming from the only remaining superpower and statements from the SCO advocating for a change in the 'world order' these statements are being made public with the intension of putting the world on notice for what *may* be to come.

Chapter 4 - Russia, China and the US in Central Asia: A Strategic

Analysis

Post-Cold War relations between China and Russia can be best explained by realist international relations theory, although not necessarily only in the 'chessboard' view of international relations that realism endorses, but Sino-Russian strategy also incorporates a healthy dose of pragmatism, as well as cultural and historical factors that come into play. Discussions in this chapter will not analyse the complex relations between the US, China and Russia beyond Central Asia, and will not examine any other paradigms, but will focus on Russia's offensive and China's defensive structural realism. Analysing offensive and defensive structural realisms can shed light on Russia and Chinese strategy as well as their intensions, and this will focus on the nuances of Sino-Russian co-operation that are *particular* to Central Asia, with references to US involvement in the area, since they are regarded as the main threat to Sino-Russian influence in the area. When studying Sino-Russian relations after the Cold War, it is imperative that Neo-realists do not reduce international politics to pure microeconomic choice or instrumental thinking, despite the pronounced elements of pragmatism that shape their policies.

From 'Strategic Partnerships' to 'Friendship Treaties'

Mutual agreements are appealing to defensive neo-realists who see the benefit of having treaties, international institutions and alliances that can potentially remove the security dilemma, providing mutual security for participating states, despite the fact they do not always guarantee avoidance of conflict (Dunne & Schmidt 2011). The establishment of the 'Shanghai Five' originally came about with the purpose of border

demarcation and demilitarisation between the signatories and is no different from the aforementioned. Agreements such as the *Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions* in 1996 and later the *Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions* in 1997 can be seen as a means of resolving border disputes to prevent conflict. As a result of improving relations since the end of the Cold War, the Chinese and Russians have often called their relationship a 'strategic partnership'. China and Russia further cemented their co-operation with the declaration of the SCO in 2001, and later in the same year, signed the *TGNFC*. Wang (2011) makes the good point that Central Asia is a cultural, religious and strategic fault line, where East meets the West and is therefore largely unstable. The formation of the 'Shanghai Five' and the SCO has demonstrated that regional security is high on the agendas of the signatories (Wang 2011). A more offensive posture may lead to territorial conflict, and this has already been happening in disputes between China and its Pacific neighbours in recent years (Golluoglu 2012; Klare 2008). A defensive stance, argues Hancock & Lobell (2010) can lead to more moderated decision-making and greater caution. Dunne & Schmidt (2011) make the good point that ignoring the unique situation at hand as well as the leaders involved for the sake of a purely theoretical realist analysis, this minimises the idiosyncratic attributes of individual decision-makers and different cultural and historical factors that shape politics in a state, which can have a large bearing on their decision-making.

Many features of the realist paradigm can be seen in the *TGNFC*. For example Article 6 stipulates 'The contracting parties point out with satisfaction that each has no territorial claim on the other and both are resolved to make active efforts in building the border between the two countries into one where ever-lasting peace and friendship prevail' This can be seen as a realist means of ensuring mutual security and reducing

the security dilemma by a treaty that recognises both parties' territorial integrity, and in the realist principle of guaranteeing survival of the state (Dunne & Schmidt 2011; McLean & McMillan 2009; Morgan 2007; Wang 2011). Other elements of realism in the Sino-Russian treaty include self-help 'When a situation arises in which one of the contracting parties deems that peace is being threatened and undermined or its security interests... is confronted with the threat of aggression, the contracting parties shall immediately hold contacts and consultations in order to eliminate such threats' (TGNFC Article 9). Here a security initiative is taken in that both parties agree to assist each other when a threat manifests itself, and this can be seen as a means of evening the balance of power in Central Asia if the situation requires this. It can be said that the SCO's continued resistance to the US presence in Central Asia is a demonstration of the parties' fulfilment of this agreement (however subtle).

Articles 7 & 16 make the pledge that both parties shall increase trust in their militaries, in the form of sharing military know-how and technologies 'The contracting parties shall expand and deepen confidence building measures in the military field so as to consolidate each other's security and strengthen regional and international stability.' (TGNFC Article 7) Another example of deepening Chinese and Russian co-operation can be seen in Article 7, as well as the fact that this is a primarily defensive arrangement (unlike NATO) 'The military and military technology co-operation of the contracting parties carried out in accordance with the relevant agreements are not directed at third countries.' A similar scenario can be seen where the SCO is a realist act of balancing and regime survival, in the 2007 *Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighbourliness Friendship and Co-operation Between the Member States of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation* where Article 3 stipulates that the signatories shall respect the each other's right to choose their model for social,

political and economic development that take into account the historical and national characteristics of each state. Articles 4 and 5 demand that the signatories do not enter into alliances directed at the SCO, and to respect borders, and build confidence in each other's militaries.

Offensive Realism from Russia *and* China?

It is interesting to note that in the declaration of the SCO and the foreign policy designs for both Russia and China there are aspects of offensive realism that challenge the status quo, with clear support for a multi-polar world and an overturning of the current uni-polar world order ((Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2003), Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2008), SCO 2001)). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2003) makes it clear, however that their efforts to develop multi-polarity is not targeted at any specific country, 'nor are they aimed at re-staging the old play of contention for hegemony in history'. Further analysis of this statement could show that the Chinese foreign policy is still influenced by history, especially with regards to the 'century of humiliation', and China's stance on hegemony, being a victim of it in the past (See Chapter 1). On the other hand this can also lead to aggression, because as Shambaugh (2011) points out this can be used as a justification for potential modern-day aggression in retaliation for the injustices suffered during China's period of weakness. 'History is essential and central, not optional and incidental, to an understanding of Chinese foreign policy.' (Hunt, 1996, p.3)

There are also references to changing the world order from Russia's foreign policy that some argue has roots coming from the shadow of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Shleifer & Treisman 2011). Realism must take into account these cultural and historical factors because they can contribute to an actor's perception of reality. As Dibb (2008, p.13) remarks on Russian foreign policy 'Most countries are prisoners of their history, geography and culture - and none more so than Russia.' Indeed, the Russian President Vladimir Putin was once quoted as saying, 'the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century.' (President of Russia 2005) To many Realists, the collapse of the Soviet Union worsened the climate in the international system, fearing that an imbalance of power will encourage the US to abuse their 'superpower' status (Lamy 2011). From this statement it is clear that Putin believes that this is what has become of the international system since the USSR's demise, which can also shed light on the reasons behind Russia's slow offensive realism in Central Asia. Putin has also had suspicions about the motives of other states, especially in the wake of the 'colour revolutions' and suspected US involvement in democracy promotion efforts in the SCO states, especially with Western criticism of human rights issues 'There are some who are using the democratic ideology to interfere in our internal affairs' (BBC 2007) These concerns are seen in realist notions which are clearly stated in the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy Concept (2008) with statism, advancing the national interest and self-help, for example 'to ensure national security, preserve and strengthen its sovereignty, achieve strong positions of authority in the world community that best meets the needs of the Russian Federation'. Nourzhanov (2008) argues that Russia is indeed taking a more pragmatic course on security.

Nichol from the CRS seems to confirm the US push against Russian influence in Central Asia 'At the same time, the United States long has stressed to Russia that it should not seek to dominate the region or exclude Western and other involvement. Virtually all U.S. analysts agree that Russia's actions should be monitored to ensure that the independence of the Central Asian states is not threatened' (Nichol 2008, p.6). As mentioned in previous chapters, the Russians see the former Soviet space, and especially Central Asia as being under Russian sphere of influence and regard the growing Western influence in the area as further undermining Russia and blocking its aspirations for its Great Power status (Yergin 2012).

A critical element of realism can be seen in smaller states that make moves to even the balance of power through alliances between themselves, to maintain their existence and check power imbalances that occur when threatened by a much more powerful state (Dunne & Schmidt 2011). There are repeated pledges throughout the SCO Charter, the 2001 *TGNFC* and the 2007 *Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighbourliness Friendship and Co-operation Between the Member States of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation* insisting that the signatories are 'non-targeting' in nature, and from this it can be argued that the SCO is not necessarily looking for a revisionist stance as a whole, but rather an act of balancing the overwhelming power of the US through the SCO. However, a reason for this Hancock & Lobell (2010) propose is that there is no explicit plan by the US to destroy them, and hence they have little to fear for their survival. Despite this, the 'colour revolutions', criticism of human rights abuses and democracy promotion efforts that China and Russia are suspecting from the US are not exactly reassuring, as these factors encourage 'two large and precarious multiethnic continental empires to form a mutual help relationship that would be uniquely useful to them in the face of a relatively hostile

international environment' (Dittmer 2001, p.413). It is interesting that these aims are publicly expressed foreign policy goals of the US in the 2002 and 2006 NSS, which it could be argued had contributed to China and Russia to seek relations in the first place.

'Soft' Balancing, Hyper-vigilance and Arms Races

Some scholars believe that organisations like the SCO can be seen as a means of 'soft' balancing, which Paul defines as 'the formation of limited diplomatic coalitions or ententes, especially at the United Nations, with the implicit threat of upgrading their alliances if the United States goes beyond its stated goals.' (Paul 2005, p.47) From this it can be seen that the SCO is a soft balancer in Central Asia, in this case, many Eurasian states coming together in the face of US hegemony and military presence in their sphere of influence in Afghanistan and to protect energy interests in the area. Other realists harbour concerns that the Sino-Russian partnership may well extend to hard balancing involving military build-ups and increased military spending against the US, especially if this turns into a formal military alliance (Hancock & Lobell 2010), but this would not be for a long time coming, as SCO forces simply cannot match NATO and the US in a direct confrontation. Hancock & Lobell (2010) rightly argue that the West should practice vigilance and be prudent given signs of a military alliance between Russia and China, but the main challenge is how to manage this.

Hancock & Lobell (2010) reveal the most powerful states in the world are the most likely to initiate wars, militarised disputes, and enter into more crises than other states, and this fact should be taken into account for both NATO and SCO strategy. While the most powerful states ended up fighting more wars than any other states, it

was the emerging powers that were particularly prone to actions leading to warfare (Hancock & Lobell 2010). With regard to the SCO 'would allow China to maintain their commitment to multilateralism and to strengthen its relationship with states of ASEAN, via allying with Russia and Central Asian states. The result could be strategically critical to balancing powers with the United States.' (Wang 2011, p.6) Again, looking at the SCO, this has come into play, especially in light of the interest the US and the West have in Central Asia. Article 12 of the 2001 *TGNFC* is a prime example of this 'The contracting parties shall work together for the maintenance of **global strategic balance** and stability and make great efforts in promoting the observation of the basic agreements relevant to safe guard and maintenance of strategic stability' (emphasis added)

Hancock & Lobell (2010) make the assertion that West are in a predicament concerning China and Russia in that if there is a military build-up, then this may cause a security dilemma and force a counter-balancing alliance between China and Russia. A case of pre-emptive hyper-vigilance and subsequent military build-up from the West could see a response in kind from Russia and China, which can have the effect of bringing them closer together, and in the worst case scenario, a full blown arms race between the SCO and NATO. Complacency could show a perceivable weakness that may leave it open to fall victim to expansionary designs both premeditated and opportunistic (Hancock & Lobell 2010). There will be a fine line between what will be perceived as a threat and what will be more benign or normal behaviours, and both NATO and the SCO need to be aware of this. 'The defensive strategy of the SCO might be misunderstood by the US as an offensive, while the deterrence approach of the US might also be interpreted as an encirclement and containment tactic.' (Wang 2011, p.6) This is especially true in the case of hydrocarbon diplomacy in Central

Asia, an area that has garnered great interest not only from great powers, but as we have seen also from Muslim radicals who seek to destabilise the autocratic regimes that control the area.

Hancock & Lobell (2010) claim that many offensive structural realists' predictions argue that Russia and China will seek a military build-up in its short term goals, at the expense of longer-term goals. Many others would argue, however, that China is looking more at sustaining its long-term economic growth in preference to a military build-up. Despite this, there is also little doubt that China is expanding its military-industrial complex as well as its military hardware (Hancock & Lobell 2010, IISS 2012). However, a military build-up does not necessarily mean an aggressive strategic move. Dunne & Schmidt (2011) make the good point from Waltz that defensive structural realists believe that states are security maximisers, whereas offensive structural realists regard states as power maximisers. For offensive structural realists, expansion and war pays dividends, while for more defensive structural realists, war is ultimately a self-defeating exercise and leads to overexpansion, overextension, and encirclement by others fearful of their aggression (Hancock & Lobell 2010; Toft 2005).

In terms of the SCO and Central Asia, a similar difference can be found in Chinese and Russian ideas of realism (Hancock & Lobell 2010). Previously in the first Chapter, the point was argued that the Chinese were engaged in defensive structural realism and that the Russians were in a mild offensive structural realism. In relation to policies towards the Central Asian states, it can be argued that Russia seeks to control, or re-assert their dominance of Central Asia, whereas China is looking to gain 'respect' with the area's leaders, through both bilateral means, but also through

multilateral institutions such as the SCO, which is arguably part of their 'opening up' strategy in order to create friendly and stable regimes in its neighbourhood (Contessi 2010). It is through their Central Asia strategies that many of the differences in the Chinese and Russian strategies are made known. At the same time, however, as Swanstrom (2011) points out, the SCO can be used to assuage fears Russia may have of China having too much say in Central Asia. With regards to China's involvement in Central Asia, 'compared to other regional powers, most notably Russia, China has demonstrated a greater willingness to respect local sovereignty in the region.' (Swanstrom 2011, p.77) An example of this can be seen in China's acceptance of the Central Asian states' rights to form groupings without external powers, while Russia is staunch in its view opposing such moves (Swanstrom 2011). In China's policy of non-interference, they have let their investments and economic bonds work for them, rather than gaining influence through coercive force which can be a case for China using 'soft power' diplomacy. This is further cemented by the fact that their political and economic models are much admired by the Central Asian leadership (Swanstrom 2011). It is important that although China is welcome, Swanstrom (2011) points out that the Central Asian states have no intension of exchanging one overlord for another, either.

Current Realities vs. Past Idealisms

As in Dunne & Schmidt's description of US foreign policy during the Cold War where realism 'taught American leaders to focus on interests rather than ideology, to seek peace through strength, and to recognise that great powers can co-exist even if they have antithetical beliefs' (Dunne & Schmidt 2011, p.86), the document *China's Position on Establishing a New International Political and Economic Order* states

'Each country has the right to choose its own social system and road to development independently... It is impossible, therefore, to have only one model for everyone. The differences in social system and value between the countries should not become barriers to the development of normal state-to-state relations' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2003). Dumbaugh (2008) from the CRS notes that China's policy is about 'mutual trust, mutual equality and co-operation'. The National Security Strategy (NSS) (2010) also denies that the US sets out to impose its system on other people. 'We will not agree on every issue, and we will be candid on our human rights concerns and areas where we differ. But disagreements should not prevent cooperation on issues of mutual interest, because a pragmatic and effective relationship between the United States and China is essential to address the major challenges of the 21st century.' (NSS 2010, p.43) This is arguably in tune with current US strategy since the Bush administration.

This posture is in contrast to the 2002 and the 2006 NSS of the Bush era, which implied there was only one system 'a single model for national success - freedom, democracy and free enterprise' (NSS 2002) and 'We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the Great Powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent (NSS 2002).' The 2006 NSS also makes the assertion that the US is idealistic about its aims in their national goals, but realistic on how to achieve them. The 2006 NSS maintains that it will continue to fight to 'help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can best meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system'. (NSS 2006, p.1), with former President George W. Bush (2010) espousing the same views in his book, *Decision Points*. The 2006 NSS claimed that the 'colour revolutions' in Georgia, Ukraine and Kirghizstan 'have brought new hope for freedom

across the Eurasian landmass' (NSS 2006, p.2). This earlier US strategy in Central Asia took inspiration from the 2002 NSS where 'US national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests' (NSS 2002, p.1). The Bush administration spoke out against human rights abuses in many Central Asian states, and as mentioned in the 2002 NSS, the US used their foreign aid to promote democracy in the area, and the results can be seen in the 'colour revolutions' and the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. The 2002 NSS also set out to make freedom and the development of democratic institutions and freedom of religion high priorities in bilateral relations, putting pressure on undemocratic governments (an example of this can be seen in Uzbekistan and President Bush's dealings with President Karimov). 'We will champion the cause of human dignity and oppose those who resist it.' (NSS 2002, p. 4) The Bush administration also makes clear its intent on spreading market liberalism and the market economy to other states, (a continuation of the 'Washington Consensus') and criticising China for its one-party system, stating that China can only become great if it adopts the Washington Consensus (NSS 2002).

Some elements of this still remain now with the claim, that the 'human rights which America has stood for... drawn a clear contrast between the United States and our democratic allies and those nations and individuals that deny or suppress human rights' (NSS 2010, p.10) However, there is little doubt that US policy in Central Asia and China have changed markedly from an aggressive 'US internationalist' approach of spreading the liberal democratic market ideology (Washington Consensus) to a much more pragmatic approach in the Obama administration.

Interestingly, the Chinese foreign policy program does not make any mention of Marxism-Leninism, showing gravitation towards realism and pragmatism, Robert Kaplan mentions in the first chapter that China has become 'an uber-realist power'. Friedrichs & Kratochwil (2009) state that pragmatism may a good way of viewing international relations research and methodology, and the same could be said for examining Chinese or Russian (and the Central Asian states') foreign policy. Ideology or idealisms, according to Friedrichs & Kratochwil (2009) are merely theoretical concepts derived from textbooks that do little in their application in the real world, and they call for a more pragmatic turn in the study of international relations. This observation would apply to both Russian and Chinese foreign policies particularly since the end of the Cold War. 'Bloc approaches to international problems are being replaced by network diplomacy based on flexible forms of participation in international structures of the search of joint solutions to common tasks' (Russian Federation 2008), which can be a reference to the SCO as one of the organisations of which Russia is a member. The SCO is a multifaceted organisation with military, economic and political purposes, hence fitting Russia's idea of 'network diplomacy' and 'flexibility' when dealing with international structures. The Concept also criticises the West for "its monopoly in global processes and...its expression, in particular, in the continued political and psychological policy of 'containing' Russia". The Concept also targets Western-led institutions 'integration processes, including in the Euro-Atlantic region, are often of selective and restrictive nature', and this can be seen as a reason why the SCO was founded as a means of forming multilateral institutions without the EU or the US, in response to the exclusionary nature of many Western-led multilateral institutions (Laffan & Stubb 2008).

Russia's Take

The 2002 NSS prematurely describes Russia as being no longer a strategic adversary of the US, and openly states Russia's weaknesses that hinder opportunities for co-operation, and implies that Cold War thinking is over, and that the US can act with almost impunity, bordering on contempt, and seen Russia as a defeated enemy (Dibb 2008). However, much of this has changed since then, as Russia has regained much of its influence in Central Asia, maintaining a 'strategic partnership' with China as well as booming oil and gas sectors that have produced so much economic growth, and with it political power in recent years. Dibb (2008) and Wang (2011) both argue that Russia has decisively chosen the course of non-subservience to the US and re-asserting itself as a great power. In addition to its strong nuclear arsenal, the Russian Army constitutes 956 000 active personnel and 20 000 000 reservists (all services including conscripts) (IISS 2012) which points to a realist stance in terms of 'hard power'. Like China and the Central Asian republics, 'Russia views the SCO as a strategic instrument in driving the US outside of Central Asia and this Russia maintains its post-imperial status and can also continue building a new world order that is different from the one built and dominated by the West.' (Wang 2011, p.12) By 2010 the NSS explicitly mentions Russia and China as being highly influential members of the international system.

Pirog (2007), from the CRS, also acknowledges that Russian energy trends and policies considerably affect US energy markets as well as the welfare of the US in general. This is not surprising, given the global economy's dependence on hydrocarbons. Russia holds a virtual monopoly over pipeline routes in the Caspian, especially in Azerbaijan, and provides the most profitable route for Kazakh and

Turkmen hydrocarbon exports, as well as developments of oil fields and pipeline systems in the Caspian Sea (Iseri 2009). Iseri (2009), like many others such as Buchanan (2012) believe that Russia is using its monopoly over the flow of Caspian energy resources to gain more political leverage over Europe as well as maintaining control over the former Soviet republics in the area. This is also in response to newly established US corporate oil investments in the area, which have been widely regarded in Russia as a national security threat (Iseri 2009).

US Interests in Central Asia

Ever since the discovery of oil in the 19th Century, Central Asia has been of major strategic interest to the US, and this has become more so since the fall of the USSR, where the once-closed off lands are now a major centre of contention in 'The New Great Game' (Hiro 2007; Klare 2008; Kleveman 2004; Pilger 2002; Iseri 2009; Yergin 2012). Iseri (2009) finds that the US has recognised the strategic importance of the region with references seen in the 1998 NSS that a stable and prosperous 'Central Asia will help promote stability and security from the Mediterranean to China and facilitate rapid development and transport to international markets of the large Caspian oil and gas resources, with substantial U.S. commercial participation.' (NSS 1998, p.41) The findings in Section 2 of the *Silk Road Strategy Act (1999)* also recognises that Central Asia 'could produce oil and gas in sufficient quantities to reduce the dependence of the United States on energy from the volatile Persian Gulf region' (Silk Road Act 1999, p.3) and explicitly demonstrating US interest in the region before 9/11. Blank (2007) points out that 'US interests in Central Asia are primarily strategic' (Blank 2007, p.2) and Crosston (2008) makes the argument that US 'engagement seemed exclusively based on realpolitik: pre-9/11 it was influenced

by the desire to make Russian influence in the area more nominal and to gain access to new potential sources of energy' (Crosston 2008, p.155). Crosston (2008) also mentions that since 9/11 'the region became crucial for operations in the newly declared war against terror.' (Crosston 2008, p.155) The aforementioned statements show that there is considerable evidence to suggest that US strategy in Central Asia is also based on a realist outlook.

Iseri (2009) believes that as much as the US wants access to resources in Central Asia, they would like to use their presence to undermine both China and Russia, and Kleveman (2004) believes that the US has used the pretext of 9/11 to advance these aims. MacHaffie (2010) makes the point that China and Russia are wary of the US presence in Afghanistan and the fact that NATO is operating in their sphere of influence. It is explicitly stated in the *Silk Road Strategy Act 1999* that 'United States foreign policy and international assistance should be narrowly targeted to support the economic and political independence as well as democracy building, free market policies, human rights, and regional economic integration of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.' (*Silk Road Strategy Act 1999*, p.4) This was suspected to have been acted upon by the Bush administration as seen in the 'colour revolutions' and harsh criticism of the Central Asian leaders. Iseri (2009) states that the US plans to establish control over energy sources and transportation routes and a dependency by the Central Asian states upon the US for its security should be sustained as they remove themselves from Russia. Like Pilger (2002), Iseri (2009) has observed that Zbigniew Brzezinski has often stressed the importance of the Central Asia for US strategic interests. Within the SCO context, China has signed on co-operation efforts on border enforcement, signed pipeline and rail link agreements, and conducted joint military manoeuvres, as noted by the CRS, 'A brief survey of China's

more assertive diplomacy in the international arena hints at the increasing Sino-U.S. competition for resources, power, and influence around the world' (Dumbaugh 2008, p.16). Here it can clearly be seen that the US had designs on Central Asia before the 'War on Terror', and are now using the war as a pretext to act on these designs mentioned in the *Silk Road Strategy Act 1999*.

China's Strategy

Friedberg (2011) claims that since the early 2000's China has been watching the US expand its activities in Central, South and East Asia. 'China, the leading founder of the SCO, views the SCO as a defensive approach to the US's Eastern-Asia containment strategy. In this instance the United States' strategy would be to employ a "v" shape to surround China.' (Wang 2011, p.6) Friedberg (2011) points out that the US presence in Afghanistan has slowed China's process of dominating the Central Asian region, and continued its encirclement of China. Despite the fact that a US presence can assist in putting down potential revolts by extremist groups, a longstanding US presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia will not be viewed in China as a good thing (Friedberg 2011). Friedberg (2011) contends that Chinese influence may potentially grow in Central Asia because of its geography and an authoritarian regime that is similar to the autocracies of Central Asia, and this is combined with declining US desire to project its power in Central Asia, in the aftermath of its interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan and the GFC. Beijing has also made calls for the closure of US bases in Central Asia (Friedberg 2011). Blank (2007) asserts that US interests relate to attack from three sides - Russia, China and the Taliban. The US, according to Friedberg (2011) is looking to encircle China, by establishing bases in Central Asia and Afghanistan, South Asia and East Asia, the US

is looking at a virtual encirclement of China (but crucially excluding the northern border with Russia). Friedberg (2011) claims that the Chinese viewed the US presence in Central Asia as being dangerous in the wake of the 'colour revolutions' in Georgia, the Ukraine and Kirghizstan and if US-friendly allies are in place in Central Asia, Friedberg (2011) suggests will cause alarm in China, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet.

In its attempts to anticipate that the formation of the SCO or perceived US encirclement might be seen as a sign of aggression 'China... has attempted to ensure the US that its strategic intention is merely to expand energy and transportation cooperation with the Central Asian states...to deter US suspicions regarding any possible strategic intentions of the SCO.' (Wang 2011, p.6) Dumbaugh (2008) makes an insightful assessment of Chinese security strategy and its distinctive challenge to the US which 'is difficult to categorize or define: it focuses neither on spreading a political ideology, nor establishing a global network of client states, nor aggressively seeking territorial gains...with its foreign policy diplomacy, China's new security concept presents a unique and subtle challenge to U.S. policymakers.' (Dumbaugh 2008, p.2) Wang points out that Deng Xiaoping was a visionary in his post-Cold War assessment of international relations to "hide one's capabilities and bide one's time and rise abruptly on its accumulated strength." (Wang 2011, p.5) Even Dumbaugh (2008) of the CRS makes the admission that the US is not totally clear about China's foreign policy and security strategy, and that the US has been divided as to what Beijing's intentions are, with a vocal minority claiming that China is a major threat (Friedberg 2011, 2012), and others claiming not so (Glaser 2011), and others claiming a more middle ground (Chen & Wang 2011). While the IISS 2012 publication *The Military Balance* reveals that China is indeed building up its military forces for future

use and aims to modernise heavily for future operations by 2020 (People's Republic of China 2010), the integration into global markets as well as the leverage that China is gaining in the global economy shows that despite the uncertainties of outside observers, it can be said that China is 'hedging its bets'. From this, Friedberg (2011) states that 'China is growing wealthier, more powerful, more influential, and less susceptible to external pressures' (Friedberg 2011, p.140), and cites its hold on US debt as a factor.

Maintain Status Quo (For Now) - Without America

However, Hancock & Lobell (2010) based on Kennedy's assertions, oppose the view that China may change the status quo even in the near future, because it is by pragmatically emulating capitalism and integrating itself in the world economy and its economic and political institutions, ((China became a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001)) that Glaser (2011) and Wang (2011) argue has helped make its rise possible. When he took power in 1978, Deng Xiaoping was clearly more enthusiastic about pragmatic means to accumulate economic growth than being wedded to ideology, which was a fatal mistake, some would say from the previous leader Mao Zedong, and began reforms exposing China to the global economy (Chen 2001; Zakaria 2008). In terms of its economic growth, the results have been outstanding for China since market reforms were first passed in 1978, with economic growth increasing by over 9 percent a year for the past thirty years and the size of the economy doubling every eight years during this period (Cox 2005; Zakaria 2008). The CRS suspects that China will continue to hold economic growth as its priority (Dumbaugh 2008) and Central Asia is key to satisfying its energy demands. At the heart of the Chinese Central Asian policy 'lies the recognition that China is

surrounded by a belt of untapped oil and gas reserves in Russia, Central Asia and the Middle East.' (Andrews-Speed, Liao & Dannreuther 2002, p.35) Wang (2011) argues that it would be in China's best interests to keep such momentum going, despite the fact that China is building up its military for operations outside China (IISS 2012).

A similar situation could be said for Russia, especially in terms of the revenue gained from its oil and gas exports from its own territories and Central Asia, as well as the fact Russia became members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in August 2012 (Buchanan 2012; Kupchan 2012; WTO 2012). Despite their rising oil, gas and transit revenues that have integrated them into the international market, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not members of the WTO, apart from Kirghizstan in 1998 (WTO 2012). States such as China have massive and increasing sovereign wealth funds and reserves with \$US 2.4 trillion worth of foreign exchange reserves at the end of 2009 (Miller 2010). Russia has revenue raised from oil and gas export income, which have increasingly become a source of liquidity for US firms (Haass 2008). Despite the fact that 'anti-Americanism is widespread, no great-power rival or set of rivals has emerged to challenge the United States [partly] because the disparity between the power of the United States and that of any potential rivals is too great.' (Haass 2008, p.48) From this it can be argued that as long as the current system continues to be prosperous for China, Russia, the West and the Central Asian states, then the dynamics of the so-called 'New Great Game' will be largely subliminal and subtle in character, with the occasional sabre-rattling, but with outright confrontation unlikely under the current agendas.

Many defensive structural realists 'warn that U.S. primacy will provoke a Sino-Russian alliance, while offensive realists expect that China and Russia, as potential regional hegemons, threaten each other much more than the U.S. threatens them. The U.S. is likely to play the role of off-shore balancer and support the weaker side against the more powerful one.' (Hancock & Lobell 2010, p.153) Wang (2011), however, contradicts this by stating that China and Russia share more common strategic interests with one another than with the US, and some of these interests may challenge strategic interests of the US in some aspects, especially in Central Asia. The SCO 'and its new security concept created more opportunities and possibilities for member states. The aforementioned challenges and difficulties have made China, Russia and Central Asian states develop a new security concept, in order to adjust the regional and international situation in respect to regional collective security.' (Wang 2011, p.8) Wang (2011) suggests that communication between the SCO and the US should be strengthened because any miscalculation could result in an anti-contentment 'war' between the US and the authoritarian regimes of Russia and China.

No one in the world communities would rationally desire such a 'new cold war' and neither China, Russia nor the US would be able to afford such a situation (Wang 2011). Because of this, 'The geopolitical purpose of the SCO, then, is not to challenge the US strategy, but rather to create a political space that operates outside that strategy, as Safranchuk suggests: 'SCO does not intend to oppose the US globally or regionally, but it also does not want to have any relations with Washington, so that it operates not *against* America, but *without* it.' (Kerr 2010, quoting Safranchuk p.148) Again, here is clear evidence demonstrating that the SCO is not an aggressive organisation that is out to challenge NATO or the US, but to operate without them,

arguably in reaction to the exclusionary nature of many Western-dominated institutions, as well as their supporters who continually denigrate the SCO.

The very real US threat to the Chinese and Russian aspirations in Central Asia has indeed become a force that is most likely to bring the two Great Powers together, especially after the signing TGNFC and the SCO. Both the SCO and the TGNFC make assurances to the other signatories that they will collectively act against any power or group of powers that threaten their interests; is largely defensive in nature. However, there are also clauses that mention efforts to work towards 'a new world order', and some have taken this as an implied threat to US hegemony. The most rational course would be a peaceful one - an arms race, or a new cold war would be disadvantageous to all powers involved, and as mentioned, the current order remains profitable and manageable for the SCO and the West (despite the GFC). In the longer term future and issues of energy supplies and production falling in many countries, it can be only a matter of time before tensions break out in a desperate bid to claim hydrocarbon energy sources - and as seen, the Central Asian region may then become a focus of global strategy even more than it already is.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions

Sino-Russian relations have improved markedly since the end of the cold war.

As argued in the thesis, relations between Russia and China have improved, with the signing of a number of treaties, the most significant being the Declaration of the Founding of the SCO and *TGNFC* in 2001, and a similar arrangement with the other SCO members. These are significant in that they involve mutual security, balancing and commitments in military, strategic, political, economic and cultural spheres, all point towards more closer and improving relations between China and Russia. Many critics of the SCO and state of Sino-Russian relations have often been found to have a Western-centric bias that implies, or state explicitly that international partnerships cannot work unless they adopt Western market-based liberal democratic values.

The SCO is an example where a non-western multilateral institution can be functional, despite criticism from many Western scholars, and is a method of protecting and enhancing Sino-Russian interests in the area, strategic and energy.

As argued many times in the thesis, major reason for this is to keep US/Western interests out of Central Asia, and this is in the interests of all SCO signatories, despite some short-lived co-operation with the West in the past. The purpose of the SCO is to have a multilateral organisation that works *without* the US, not against it. Both Russia and China have expressed grievances publicly (especially in their foreign policy outlines) about the current world order and the nature of many multilateral institutions and international organisations they believe are exclusionary and too Western-centric, in membership, direction and interests. They have acted on this by forming their own multilateral institution for many reasons, a major one to

prevent 'terrorism, extremism and separatism', which are very real dangers to the SCO states, and NOT just a ruse to gain international legitimacy, as some scholars suggest. It is also a mechanism to protect a major source of hydrocarbons for their rapidly developing economies and militaries. It can be argued that by courting the Central Asian states, both members and non-members of the SCO, are also strengthening their ties with major powers for regime protection, as well as increased standing in international affairs and to combat the three evils of 'terrorism, separatism and extremism'. These problems are very real that have been faced in one way or another in all SCO members and Turkmenistan and is increasingly becoming a uniting force in these states. It also has become clear from joint declarations, to protests against US bases in Central Asia, as well as treaties and permanent institutions as well as acting as a unified force interacting with the UN, EU and ASEAN that Sino-Russian relations with the inclusion of Central Asia is NOT a mere 'axis of convenience' that many scholars propose.

There is potential for 'division of labour' politics in the SCO between Russia and China, could bring them together or can take them apart.

Both China and Russia can complement each other in terms of strengths and weaknesses in terms of determining their roles both on the global as well as the regional spheres such as the SCO. Examples of this can be seen in Russia's need for a more security, strategic geopolitical orientation for the SCO, in contrast of China's focus on economic growth, management and trade, as well as peaceful acquisition of resources. China is not necessarily looking to overthrow Russia as being the 'overlord' of Central Asia, but is looking to gain 'respect' and enter Central Asian consensually, through their investments and 'win-win' strategy. Russia meanwhile, seeks to re-assert

their dominance over Central Asia, especially in geopolitical aims, but also in terms of hydrocarbon extraction, distribution and transit routes. Although in a situation where two great powers are looking to further their interests in the same area may cause friction, it could be that working to gain the favour of Central Asian leaders, as well as common aims such as a multi-polar world order, balancing the US, as well as keeping the West out of Central Asia, this can no doubt bring them together. It is also important to note that Russia is in a situation of shrinking demographic growth, while China's population is expanding. Russia has a plethora of natural resources, including oil and gas that can be readily be traded and is perfect for China's growing needs. In this sense, if China and Russia can work on these aforementioned situations, this can vastly improve the outlook for Sino-Russian relations in the future.

However, in another scenario, the Central Asia question can also cause tensions between Russia and China. Friction could come from a number of areas, including evidence of mutual historical and current distrust, the Central Asian leaders looking to play sides off against one another, as well as hydrocarbon distribution and acquisition. Russia may feel that China is intruding on their traditional 'sphere of influence', but history has made known that both Russia and China have had significant interests in Central Asia. Traditional Great Power rivalries may have the potential to initiate wars, and cause geopolitical chaos, but the research undertaken in this thesis points toward Russia and China perceiving the US/West as more of a threat to them than each other.

Central Asia Will Remain a Point of Contention Between the Great Powers

Central Asia has in the past and will remain a point of contention in the future for several reasons;

1. Strategic Location - Often regarded as the conduit between the East and the West, the location of Central Asia has been important since the establishment of the Silk Road of antiquity. There are now plans to revive this ancient trade route in the form of the hydrocarbon trade, both in terms of pipelines and for energy-poorer states, road and rail routes. Their proximity to Russia and China, and being regarded under their 'sphere of influence' that are under pressure from Western interests, primarily from the US has already been a point of contention, and will be even more so in the future. Central Asia also happens to be very close, it not, sharing borders with Afghanistan, a centre of the fight in the US-led 'War on Terror' and major epicentre of militant Islamic fundamentalism that has spread from bases in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This in itself is a threat to stability to the states in Central Asia, as well as incursions in Russia and China. Between the major powers, as mentioned, there is little chance of direct confrontation, and the 'New Great Game' will be largely subliminal, characterised by open fighting against the likes of the Taliban and other Islamic terrorists and more subtle moves, such as US democracy promotion efforts to undermine Chinese and Russian influences in Central Asia.

2. Hydrocarbon Deposits and Production Centres - As argued throughout the thesis as well as in Figures 3, 4, 5, 6(i) and 6(ii) in the Appendix, there are significant reserves of hydrocarbons located in Central Asia, especially in terms of proven gas reserves, with almost one-third of global gas reserves in SCO and Turkmenistan, and almost a quarter of global oil is produced in SCO and

Turkmenistan, despite having only having just over 7 percent of global oil reserves. This has garnered the interests of Western powers, but also a pivotal point in Sino-Russian relations. Map 4 in the Appendix demonstrates that many oil pipelines are to be added in the future, including more to Europe from Central Asia and gas (through Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and onto China)

3. Authoritarianism and Instability - Because of the nature of the autocratic regimes in the SCO, this can be a source of stability as well as the opposite. Some Central Asian states have banned Islamic political parties outright, except for state sanctioned Islamic political activities. Because of its proximity to Afghanistan (see point 1) and Pakistan, both hotbeds of Islamic fundamentalism in the form of domestic terrorist groups and the Taliban, maintaining stability will be difficult for the Central Asian regimes. As they turn to Russia and China to assist them in this task, this can be a challenge in itself to Sino-Russian relations and their capacity to maintain stability in their borders, in this case Chechnya and the Caucasus in Russia and Xinjiang/Tibet in China.

Russia's slow offensive realism in Central Asia may also cause problems as their interests will inevitably run into China's interests in Central Asia, despite China's (largely) defensive posture. Chinese and Russian realisms in Central Asia differ in this important region that it requires further research in realism, a reason for the thesis. This in terms of the spectrum of realism and how much it explains about current and future Sino-Russian relations with regards to Central Asia. With Russia's attempts to project its traditional 'hard' power through its military, and with China 'hedging its bets' on both a military modernisation and economic building, some see this as causing a security dilemma and sowing mistrust between the two Great Powers. But

with the signing of many treaties attempting to reassure the other of its intentions, this could be a step towards more peaceful solutions if there is tension. In short, Russian and Chinese relations have vastly improved, and that the SCO may very become a driving force in global affairs, despite harsh criticism of the decade-old 'strategic partnership', with Russia and China working with Central Asia to keep their hold on the region as well as its hydrocarbons, something that will garner more tensions as the Arab world increasingly becomes unstable and as world supply diminishes. No doubt this is a new dynamic which can only have global consequences and will need further research into the question of Sino-Russian relations and their impact on Central Asia, a focal point for themselves and many others in the future of this 'New Great Game'.

Appendix - Maps, Tables and Graphs

Map 1: Central Asia Political Map (Source: Free World Maps)



Map 1(ii): Map of China (Source: CIA)



Map 1(iii): Map of Russia (Source: CIA)



The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO)



Figure 1(ii): The Emblem of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), written in both Chinese and Russian languages with all member states included. (Source: SCO)

Member States - Including 'Shanghai Five' Members (Alphabetical Order)

- People's Republic of China (1996)
- Republic of Kazakhstan (1996)
- Kirghiz Republic (1996)
- Russian Federation (1996)
- Republic of Tajikistan (1996)
- Republic of Uzbekistan (2001)

Observer States (Chronological Order)

- Mongolia (2004)
- Islamic Republic of Iran (2005)
- Republic of India (2005)
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan (2005)
- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2012)

Dialogue Partners (Chronological Order)

- Republic of Belarus (2009)
- Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (2009)
- Republic of Turkey (2012)

Pipeline Maps of Russia, China and Central Asia

Map 2: Here the map displays the Kazakhstan-China pipeline(s), as well as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline and oil tanker terminals in the Caspian Sea (Source: IEA, as found in <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH>)



Map 3: The East Siberian - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) Pipeline, including route via Skovorodino in Russia to the Daqing refinery in China opened in 2011 connecting Russian oil to China, a first in Sino-Russian energy relations. (Sources: JBC Energy, TNK-BP & Reuters, as found in URL: <http://www.marctomarket.com/2010/01/re-orientation-russia-looks-east.html>)



Map 4: Turkmen Gas Pipelines to China built as of 2009 (thick line), with more planned gas transit routes through Russia and to Europe, including the planned Caspian Coastal Pipeline and the upgraded Central Asia to Europe pipeline. (Source: IEA) as found in URL: <http://www.eurasiareview.com/26012012-turkmenistan-energy-profile-some-of-worlds-largest-gas-reserves-analysis/>



Hydrocarbons in SCO/Turkmenistan

Estimated Proven Hydrocarbon Reserves in SCO States and Turkmenistan

Figure 2: Estimated proven hydrocarbon reserves in SCO states and Turkmenistan

Source: *Oil and Gas Journal 109(19)* (December 2011)

* Does not include shut in, injection or service wells

Legend: bbl - barrel

bcf - billion cubic feet

bpd - barrels per day

Country	Oil Reserves Jan 1 2012 (x1000 bbl)	Gas Reserves Jan 1 2012 (bcf)	Oil Reserves Jan 1 2011 (x1000 bbl)	Gas Reserves Jan 1 2011 (bcf)	Producing oil wells* Dec 31 2010	Estimated 2011 (x1000 bpd)
China	20 350 000	107 000	20 350 000	107 000	71 552	4 090
Kazakhstan	30 000 000	85 000	30 000 000	85 000	1 256	1 600
Kirghizstan	40 000	200	40 000	200	-	1.7
Russia	60 000 000	1 680 000	60 000 000	1 680 000	107 476	10 325
Tajikistan	12 000	200	12 000	200	-	-
Turkmenistan	600 000	265 000	600 000	265 000	2 515	220
Uzbekistan	594 000	65 000	594 000	65 000	2 190	80
TOTAL	111 596 000	2 202 400	111 596 000	2 202 400	184 989	16 316.7

SCO and Turkmenistan Reserves and Production Share of Global Output

Figure 3: SCO/Turkmenistan proven hydrocarbon reserves and oil production ratio to world total output.

	Oil (x1000 bbl) 2012	Gas (bcf) 2012	Producing oil wells	Production (x1000 bpd)
World	1 523 225 385	6 746 751	764 244	72 559.7
SCO/Turkmenistan	111 596 000	2 202 400	184 989	16 316.7
SCO/Turkmenistan % share of World+	7.33%	32.64%	24.21%	22.48%

Source (Figures 2 &3): *Oil and Gas Journal 109(19)* (December 2011)

+ These figures were reached by dividing the SCO/Turkmenistan hydrocarbon reserves/output by the Global reserves/output and multiplying by 100 to gain a percentage ratio - e.g. 16 316.7 divided by 72 559.7 x 100 = 22.48%

Please Note: This was the most authoritative source publicly available, exact information on hydrocarbon reserves can often be a highly confidential and sensitive for strategic reasons.

The following graphs are based on the data shown in Figures 2 & 3.

Figure 4: Proven gas reserves in SCO/Turkmenistan region make up almost one-third of the total amount of gas reserves found globally. This is significant given rising demand for gas in Europe (and to a lesser extent China) (Klare 2008) and energy in general.

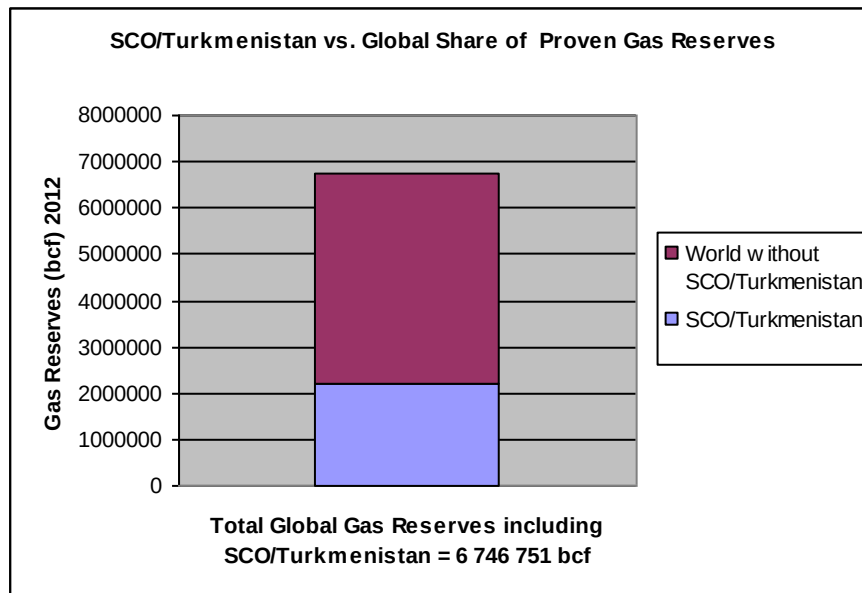


Figure 5: Although the share of proven oil reserves found in SCO/Turkmenistan is less than its proportion of gas reserves in terms of its share of total global reserves, 7.33% is still a significant figure, especially added to the one-third share of global gas reserves found in the area. This makes the SCO/Turkmenistan region even more strategically important, not only in terms of its share of hydrocarbons, but also its lucrative transit routes and location between East and West.

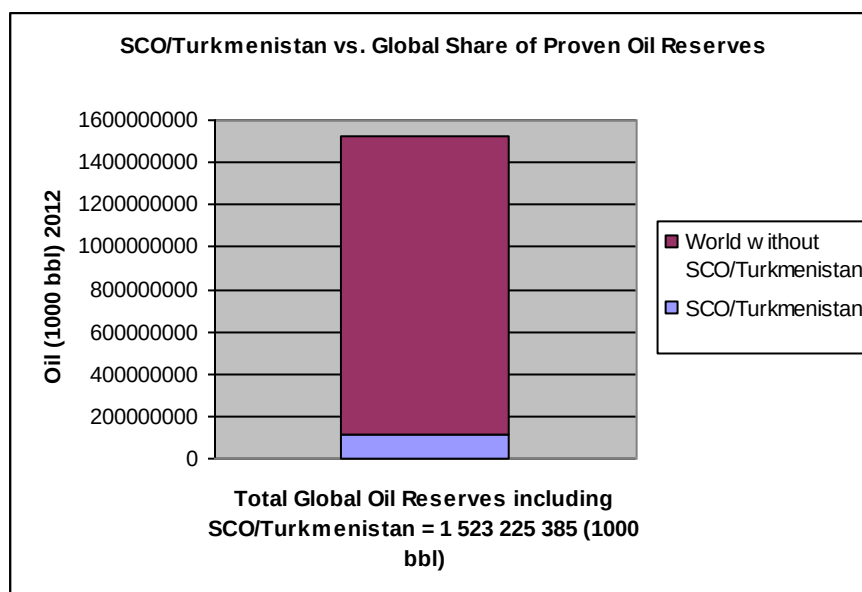


Figure 6(i): Despite the fact that the SCO/Turkmenistan area only has just over 7 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, many of the largest oil field discoveries in the past 30 years have been found in Central Asia (i.e. Tengiz and Kashgan) in Kazakhstan (Iseri 2009). Interestingly, as demonstrated in Figure 4 and the above graph, SCO/Turkmenistan's share of global oil production is almost a quarter of global output.

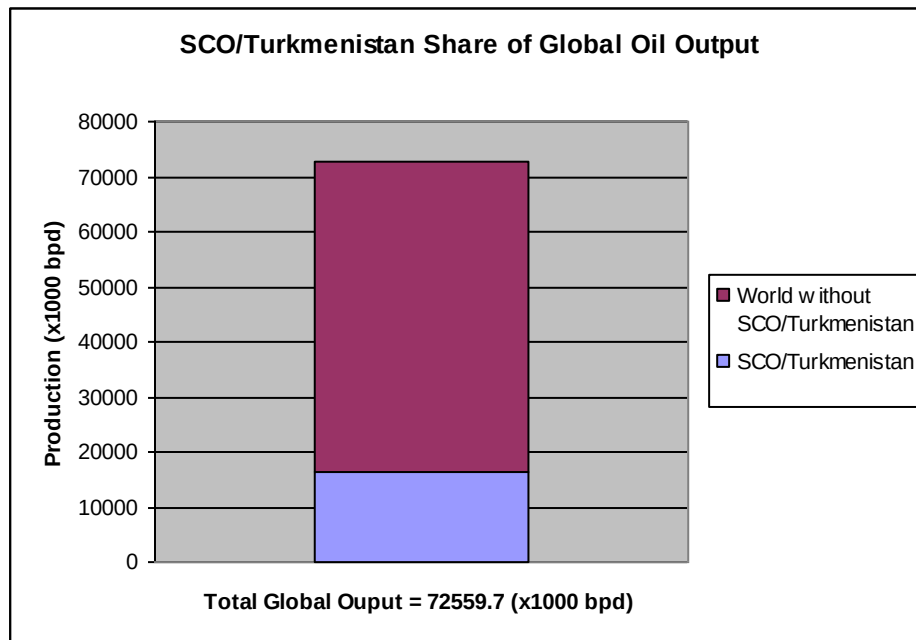
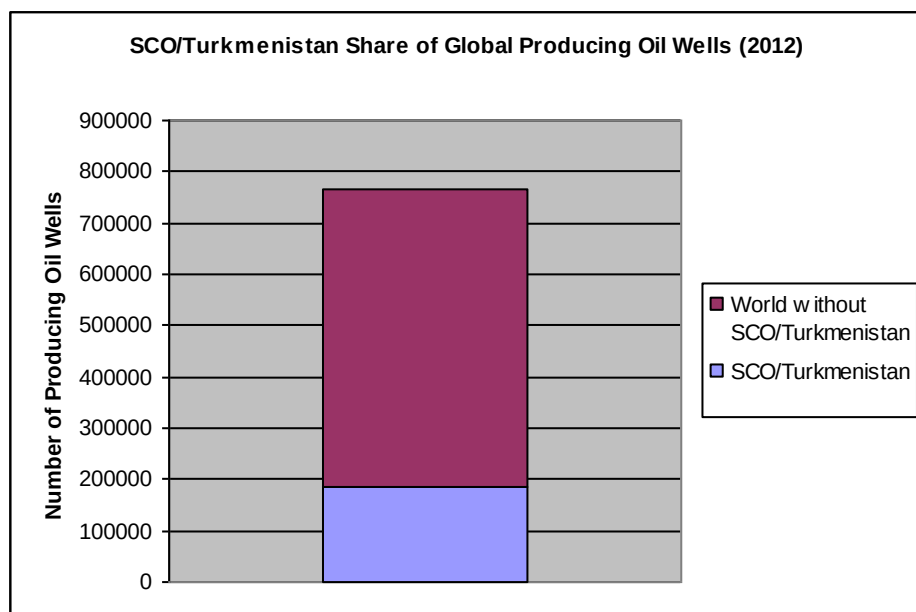


Figure 6(ii): The share of producing oil wells the SCO/Turkmenistan region is also significant, with just less than one-quarter share of total global oil wells. This could be a legacy of the Soviet Union oil infrastructure, as well as the fact that as many new hydrocarbon reserves are discovered in SCO/Turkmenistan and with it comes further investment in infrastructure, especially in recent years (Buchanan 2012; Klare 2008; Hiro 2007).



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