



# Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Grand Strategy of PRC: Some Observations

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**Abstract**— *Being the most populous country and the second biggest economy in the world, the PRC (Peoples Republic of China) is one of the most consequential State Actors in the contemporary international order/system by any yardstick. Like other great powers she follows a strategic vision or grand strategy to accomplish her aims. Meanwhile, importance of SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) can be gauged from the fact that this relatively new international body, set up in 2001, accounts for 60% of the land mass and 45% proven energy reserves in the world. In this essay I would like to analyse how SCO fits into the Beijing's foreign policy framework and Grand Strategy and whether the different aims and goals of the SCO are aligned with PRC's interests and objectives.*

**Keywords**— *Peoples Republic of China (PRC), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Grand Strategy, Communist Party of China (CPC), Central Asian Republic (CARs), Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), Silk Road, Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), design, emergence.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the establishment of the People's Republic, its relative power grew enormously in economic, political and military terms. As its importance on the world stage is increasing, it is more and more important to analyse China's Grand Strategy, by starting with a working definition. With "Grand Strategy", we intend "the collection of plans and policies that comprise the state's deliberate effort to harness political, military, diplomatic, and economic tools together to advance that state's national interest" (Feaver, 2009). From this definition, we can identify three main elements that are fundamental when talking about Grand Strategy: the goals, which have to be aligned with national interest; the means, which is to say the instruments a country can actually use to achieve its goals; and the policies, here intended as how a country mobilises its resources towards an end. Murdock & Kallmyer (2011) notice that "nations, like people, are not single-cell entities that pursue only one objective or interest. They pursue a combination of security, economic and value goals, each of which can be (and is) defined

variably (as is from physical to material or emotional security), and which can change with the context (such as, with the nature and extent of the security threat)". As the goals can differ greatly from nation to nation and also from an historical and political phase to another, identifying them should be the priority in analysing a Grand Strategy. But resources of Nation are not infinite. Thus, an effective Grand Strategy should acknowledge a nation's capabilities and then prioritise its goals. With this in mind, Colin Dueck (Dueck, 2011) underlines that for Grand Strategy to be fruitful, it requires 'successful, accurate and realistic ordering and identification of strategic ends and means, including the relationship between them'.

Ionut Popescu (2013) identifies two main models to explain the formation of Grand Strategy, **design** and **emergence**. According to the design (or rational planning) model, States "formulate, adapt and implement a long-term coherent strategic plan to define and accomplish the nation's goal, and do so despite the efforts of adversaries to counter your actions, and in the face of inherently unpredictable changes in international system". However,

this is not the only model which has been used to explain Grand Strategy's formation. Following the emergence model, a State's Grand Strategy is not the result of an adequate and careful planning, but it is the consequence of an adaption process; in this sense, "organisations can learn over time, thus allowing for coherent, consistent, and often successful strategies to emerge" (Popescu, 2013). Defining Chinese Grand Strategy is not easy, as there is no mention of it in any official document. Because of this, some may think that the emergence model better explains Beijing's strategy; some may even argue that China has yet to formulate one Grand Strategy (Stanzel. et al., 2017). But the reality, I believe is the other way round.

## II. EVOLVING GRAND STRATEGY OF PRC

The starting point in any analysis of China's foreign (and domestic) policy is simple: the ultimate aim of the actual ruling class is the maintenance of *political stability* (read: the maintenance of the CCPs monopoly of power). Stemming from this, Medeiros (2009) identifies three long-term priorities in Chinese foreign policy: *sovereignty and national integrity, economic development and international status*. These are strictly related to the objective of political stability. If China cannot preserve its sovereignty, the ruling elite will lose its credibility; if CPC cannot provide socio-economic development, then it will not be able to uphold its social contract, which is the source of its legitimacy; finally, the rise of China to a status of international superpower would represent the coronation of the long path started in 1949, when, thanks to the CPC and Mao, China ended the so-called "century of national humiliation".

Having identified the objectives of Chinese foreign policy, it is important to analyse which are the tools Beijing employs to achieve those goals. From the economic side, a fundamental instrument for PRC is trade; China currently is among the top-three exporters for all the G20 countries. This is extremely important, because, as Phillip Saunders notices, "trade dependence can generate significant political influence as groups that benefit from trade with China mobilize to protect their economic interests" (Saunders, 2014). Not only trade is important; the recent "One Belt One Road" initiative is a clear example of the usage of Chinese economic power in the international arena. Also China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is becoming a more effective tool among Beijing foreign policy instruments. In the last few years, PRC has undergone a radical transformation of its army following three main pillars: development and procurement of new capabilities; personnel reform and

quality improvement; development of new military doctrines (Finkelstein, 2007).

The SCO was founded in 2001 comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan; was enlarged further with India and Pakistan joining the organization in June 2017. The main aim of the SCO is primarily facilitating cooperation in the security field, but other goals are presented in its Charter; among these, we found "jointly counteract terrorism, separatism and extremism", "facilitate comprehensive and balanced economic growth" and "promote a new democratic, fair and rational political and economic international order" (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, 2001). From these objectives it may already look clear how the SCO fits Chinese Grand Strategy. Moreover, Central Asia represents an area of particular interest for China because of the new opportunities it has presented since the early 1990s, as the fall of the Soviet Union led to a partial vacuum in the region. In this sense, the SCO represents a perfect case study showing why Chinese Grand Strategy should be considered an example of emergence model, as stated above. Bearing in mind the main objective of Beijing's foreign policy (i.e. political stability), Chinese policy makers adapted to the new international context of post-1991 Central Asia; and, while recognising the possible problematic potential of this scenario - with the risk of a new wave of separatism - the PRC was able to deal with the region in a new way, turning it from a danger to an opportunity.

Hamid Golpira, expressed the salience of this region through the opinion of the former National Security Adviser of USA, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski said, "Control of the Eurasian landmass is the key to global domination and control of Central Asia is the key to control of the Eurasian landmass.... Russia and China have been paying attention to Brzezinski's theory, since they formed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2001, ostensibly to curb extremism in the region and enhance border security, but most probably with the real objective of counterbalancing the activities of the United States and NATO in Central Asia" (Tehran Times, November 20, 2008). As prime movers of SCO, Russia and China can be said to be contending powers vying for supremacy on the global stage with the United States (Hu, 2014). Nevertheless, China took the lead role by devising the mechanism to combat three evils – separatism, extremism and terrorism waged by radicalized elements, while promoting economic ties (Boland 2011:8). This development gave a new dimension to the organization towards multilateralism; meant for tackling security issues especially in Xinjiang. Xinjiang creates a sense of vulnerability in the national psyche of China. The

separatists, if successful, would snatch one-sixth of China's territory away, cut off its connectivity with Central Asia, strip it off its nuclear testing grounds and the oil reserves in Tarim basin. This arrangement has also addressed the concerns of Central Asian Republics (CARs) regarding the territorial integrity and committed them to concerted efforts against perceived common threats from the extremist forces, especially to curb nationalist sentiments among Turkish speaking Uyghurs. There are many areas where the convergence of interests is taking place. SCO provided China an opportunity to make ingress in the Central Asian region to meet her ever growing energy needs and to dominate Central Asian markets through extensive commercial activities. Russia on the other hand, conceived SCO as an opportunity for preserving its strategic interests in CARs and to maintain her traditional influence over the near abroad (Dmitry, 2003). As far as the Central Asians are concerned, security vulnerability was one of areas of concern, hence, the leadership of CARs felt strengthened by associating themselves with this organisation. Under the purview of SCO, however, it is a viable forum to prevent interstate conflict among member states and to make CBMs (Yuan, 2010).

The fundamental role played by China in the institutionalisation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2001 is notable. This initiative demonstrates a historical turning-point in China's foreign policy: an unprecedented active engagement of Beijing in establishing a regional organisation. In fact, China's role was crucial to Central Asia's regional security architecture. China sees the SCO as an instrument for its regional recognition and as a tool to improve its image of a responsible power. As the SCO has been the first organisation inspired and built by Beijing, its good development is considered to be a test for the Chinese leadership proving that China can do what other great powers have done before it. It is also the evidence that a 'new kind of organisation' - as China describes it - can be created by developing countries, which reproduces China's foreign policy guidelines. The so-called 'Shanghai Spirit' of mutual trust, benefit, equality, consultations, respect for diversity of cultures and aspiration for joint development, is constantly put forward by the Communist Party of China (CPC) as a new pattern shaping non-Western regional integration. Moreover, China's preference for multilateral engagement in Central Asia also arises out of its necessity of making itself more acceptable in Central Asia. China expects Russia to stay in Central Asia and engage it there, because China knows the objective ground reality of Russia wielding considerable influence in the Central Asian states. In this context, SCO can become a powerful link between China and Russia. In fact, SCO can be

considered as an outgrowth of the Sino-Russian cooperation. The future of SCO depends very much on this cooperation. Central Asia is the backyard of Russia and any problem with Russia could land China in problematic environment. Thus, China wants mutual accommodation and engagements with Russia in Central Asia in order to pursue its energy related goals in Central Asia. China also wants to seek the Russian strategic help in checking and curbing the Uighur separatism. Russian help in its military modernization is having the utmost importance for China. China has entered a "strategic partnership" with Russia and concluded a bilateral "Treaty of Good Neighbourly Friendship and Cooperation" in July, 2001 in Moscow.

### III. SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL INTEGRITY

The issue of sovereignty and national integrity is clearly fundamental within Chinese foreign policy priorities; the status of Taiwan, the separatist movements in Tibet and Xinjiang and the disputes in the East and South China Seas are all questions considered fundamental by Chinese policy makers. Since the summit of the then-called "Shanghai Five" in 2000 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, the group started focusing on security issues, and, in particular, on what Chinese officials define "the three evils": separatism, extremism and terrorism (Sutter, 2010). Therefore, the SCO plays a fundamental role when it comes to the fight against separatism (and, doing so, in preserving Chinese national integrity), in particular for what it concerns the question of Xinjiang. Xinjiang is mainly inhabited by Uyghurs, an Islamic minority which speaks a Turkic language. The region was conquered by the Qing Dynasty only in 1759, but they had serious problems in establishing their control over the region. In 1944, an independent Eastern Turkistan Republic was founded, but it was short lived, as it came back under Chinese control in 1949. Most of the Uyghurs (around 10 million) live in Xinjiang, but big communities are also found in Kazakhstan (around 220,000 people), Uzbekistan (55,000 people) and Kyrgyzstan (50,000 people); smaller communities are present also in Pakistan and Russia. The Xinjiang Autonomous Region is characterised by great social unrest, mainly due to the activities of the pro-independence movements. The dissolution of the Soviet Union, the civil wars in Central Asia (Afghanistan, Chechnya and Tajikistan) and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism made Xinjiang a top priority for Chinese ruling class (Sutter, 2010). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was then used to prevent the new-born Central Asian States to provide hotspots for Uyghur nationalists and to become "safe heavens" where separatist

movements could organise their activities. In particular, since the 1990s (years before the establishment of the SCO), the Chinese government had been collaborating with Central Asian countries on extraditing Uyghurs suspects; these activities were then formalised by the SCO Charter in 2001 (Cooley, 2014).

It had been proved by SCO itself that it had come up as a regional stage to respond to the hazard of terrorism together. Its key organization for the purpose was Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) situated in Uzbekistan, Tashkent and it was formed during the conference of heads of states in 2002. The main functions of SCO also include gathering and assessment of terrorists' organizations related information, swapping of related information and familiarity amongst members of SCO etc. In spite of its limited capability, RATS had assisted to avoid 250 terrorist assaults within two years of its formation in member states. Attempts had been made by SCO to encourage collaboration against terrorism amongst members by arranging various military exercises together, organizing defense minister's meeting on regular basis and arranging training sessions for security forces for the members from Central Asia. The initial military exercise of SCO was held successively in Kazakhstan and China in the year 2003 (Allison, 2004). Another this type of exercise was conducted by the security forces of members of SCO in March 2006, named as East-Anti-Terror-2006. It was conducted in Uzbekistan (Maksutov, 2006). Simultaneously, war games, named Peace Mission 2005 were held by China and Russia in year 2005, whereas there was a participation of all SCO states' troops in Peace Mission 2007, held exclusively in Russia. It was reckoned to be the biggest exercise of SCO because it included about 80 aircrafts and 6500 troops from all members of SCO.

According to the Declaration on the Establishment of the SCO, the Shanghai Spirit is characterized by "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for multi-civilizations, striving for common development". By many, the principle of "respect for multi-civilizations" has been interpreted as another expression for "non-interference". Moreover, Ambrosio states that the SCO represents an additional defence tool against regional or global democratic trends, being therefore useful to ensure regime survival (Ambrosio, 2008). Because of these reasons, Ziegler refers to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as the "club of authoritarians", established to minimise the effects of the "colour revolutions" in neighbouring countries (Ziegler, 2013). Thus, SCO is perfectly aligned to Beijing's aims to preserve sovereignty and national integrity. Many western analysts and policy makers regard SCO as anti-US, anti-

Western bloc, or as a Russian and Chinese anti-Western vehicle to have some check on the emerging great power's row in the region over the strategic-cum-economic gains. (Aris, 2009). This argument was strengthened when SCO during the Astana Summit (2005), called for US to vacate its bases in Central Asia.

#### IV. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Historically, Central Asia has always been fundamental when it comes to Eurasian trade. Nowadays, the region has restored its pivotal role because of its natural resources and commercial routes (Institute for Strategic Studies, National Defense University of People's Liberation Army, 2015). Moreover, central Asian markets are complementary to the Chinese one, providing natural resources in exchange for consumer goods. In this sense, China strongly expanded its economic activities in the region, becoming the largest exporter in the region in 2008. As mentioned above, Charter of SCO emphasises the importance of economic growth and the necessity to create an alternative economic system. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has been a useful forum for bilateral and multilateral initiatives and investments, like the Interbank Association, established in 2005 to coordinate regional investments, or the Business Council, established in 2006 as an advisory body for the involvement of business communities. Moreover, in 2007, Wen Jiabao affirmed that China's ultimate goal was to create a free-trade zone in the region (Cooley, 2014). The economic integration of central Asia is also functional to the first goal of Chinese Grand Strategy (i.e. territorial integrity); linking Beijing's economy to the countries at its West is fundamental for the development of the Xinjiang region, and economic prosperity guarantees more political stability therein. Another economic sector in which central Asia plays an important role is, as aforementioned, transports. In this context, it is impossible not to mention the so-called "One Belt One Road" initiative; of the six corridors that aim to link China to Europe, two will involve central Asian countries. The first, usually referred to as "the New Eurasian Land Bridge" will connect China to Europe through Kazakhstan and Russia, while the second, known as "Central-West Asia Corridor", will involve Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Among these countries, Kazakhstan has been particularly active, trying to maximise the impact of these new infrastructures establishing Special Economic Zones along the routes (International Crisis Group, 2017). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is acting in a more and more proactive way vis-à-vis the One Belt One Road

Initiative. In 2014, Xi Jinping announced the establishment of a Silk Road Fund of \$40 billion, and, as the SCO Secretary General Dmitry Mezentsev said, the decision was welcomed by all the SCO Member State (Institute for Strategic Studies, National Defense University of People's Liberation Army, 2015). As one scholar point out, the term Silk Road 'manages to create warm feelings outside China' but also 'stirs up equal enthusiasm domestically because it taps into memories of former greatness and its new assertions, placing China once more at the centre of the world'.

There is a cultural side to China's initiative in Central Asia. The learning of Chinese language has become quite popular and is probably the second most taught foreign language, after English, in the universities of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. An office affiliated with its Ministry of Education has established a range of Confucius Institutes in Central Asia to teach Chinese language and spread Chinese culture. Although these Institutes are certainly not unique to Central Asia; Tashkent in Uzbekistan was the site of a pilot project in June 2004 even before the first formal one was established in Seoul later in the same year. China has encouraged Central Asians to study at its universities and also delegated Chinese professors to teach and work in Central Asia. It has also sent cultural delegations like orchestras and theatre troupes to visit and perform in Central Asian countries (Laurelle & Peyrouse, 2012: 133-140).

Meanwhile, the countries of Central Asia are to some extent wary about the expanding influence of China. It may be very useful to them economically, because it helps development, but all countries fear too much dominance, especially from a country they have got used to regard as poorer than themselves and in many ways inferior. Russia, which was for so long master of the whole region before and during the Soviet period, may enjoy good relations with China but sees its own interests directly threatened by the Chinese advance into Central Asia. The Russian leaders know it is to their advantage to get on with China, but they cannot relish the fact of this strongly rising neighbour at the same time, as they themselves may be on the back foot, and even on the decline, in Central Asia. China's rise is inevitably a challenge to Russia. The writers of a relevant article (Pantucci & Peterson, 2012) aptly summed up China's role in Central Asia as follows:

With Russias influence in the region at a historically low ebb and the widespread perception across Central Asia that the United States will strategically abandon the region once most combat troops

have withdrawn from Afghanistan, Beijing has carved out an inadvertent empire. Lacking a clear strategy and attempting to keep a low profile (a characteristic Chinese approach), China has become the most consequential actor in Central Asia.

Several crucial points emerge from this extract. For China, what counts most in Central Asia is developing its own economy, especially in Xinjiang. Central Asia may still be a zone of conflict. However, the New Silk Road and the prosperity it brings are more important than conflict in the overall scheme of things, as well as being potentially able to ameliorate tensions by promoting peace. Another point to emerge from the quoted extract is that China has not laid any long-term plan to expand into Central Asia. The expansion has just happened more or less by the force of circumstances and Chinas need for resources and energy. But, most important of all, China had surpassed the activities of all other players in Central Asia. According to Dadabaev (2007), however, SCO is doomed to face huge problems when it comes to economic integration, mainly because of its central Asian Member States. Firstly, those countries are competitors in many economic fields, and in particular in the energy sector. Secondly, efficient economic integration would probably require some loss of sovereignty, which is seen as unacceptable by all the countries. Lastly, central Asian States are currently pursuing different model of economic development: Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are implementing liberal measures, Tajikistan relies on foreign aids and Uzbekistan is characterised by State-led development.

## V. INTERNATIONAL STATUS

The last point of Chinese Grand Strategy aims at restoring Beijing's status as a great power in the international scene. This is pursued in two main ways: challenging the unipolar international system created by the United States after the end of Cold War, and establishing a well-defined sphere of influence on its borders. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, in light of the American policy since the 1990s, is functional to both objectives. After the collapse of Soviet Union, the United States granted recognition to the new-born central Asian countries with the Freedom Support Act of 1992. The American policy towards those countries was mainly aimed at integrating those countries in the international political and economic system, at fostering the process of denuclearisation, at accessing the region's natural resources and at protecting those countries to possible

imperialistic ambitions of Russia (Ziegler, 2013). However, the region remained essentially marginal for the United States.

The situation dramatically changed with the terroristic attacks on New York and Washington: in few months, central Asia was under the international spotlights. After the attacks, central Asian countries cooperated with the United States: American bases were opened in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, while Kazakhstan and Tajikistan granted the use of their airports for refuelling (Ziegler, 2013). Initially, the interests of the former Soviet countries, Russia, China and the U.S. in the region were compatible: fighting Islamic terrorism and providing stability. Since 2002, however, a series of events drastically changed the relation between SCO countries and the United States. According to Ziegler (2013) the most important are:

- The publication, in 2002, of the National Security Strategy in the United States, which for the first time mentioned the concept of preemptive attack. This has been seen as a credible threat for non-democratic States' sovereignty.
- The consequent intervention in Iraq in 2003, aimed at carrying out a regime change in Baghdad. The intervention was unanimously criticised by SCO countries, in particular with those whose population is Muslim.
- The colour revolutions: starting in Georgia in 2003, these pro-democracy revolutionary movements reached Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 2005. They were seen by all SCO members as attempts organised by the United States to attempt regime changes.

As result of these events, SCO members became more intolerant towards American presence in central Asia. At the Organisation 2005 Summit in Astana, Uzbekistan requested for the American troops to leave from Karshi-Khanabad airbase. Moreover in the same year Iran was granted observer status to the organisation causing great concern in Washington, which included Tehran in the 'axis of evil'.

These have been the main elements that characterised how the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has been functional to China's aim to gain international status as a great power: firstly, the Organisation has been used to contrast American influence in Central Asia, which, with the intervention in Afghanistan and the establishment of bases in former Soviet countries, could have led to an enlargement of NATO to China's borders; secondly, SCO is a useful tool to strengthen Chinese

influence over central Asia, thus providing more stable foundations for its global claims; lastly, SCO provided China with a great forum to engage with other countries which oppose American unipolarism (primarily Russia, but also Iran).

## VI. CONCLUSION

Among the most important international trends in the first part of the twenty-first century is that China is rising at the expense of other major powers, including both Russia and the USA. The role of Xinjiang demonstrates that China's foreign policy not only is about the seas to the east and south but also shows the country as facing west. Xinjiang also shares in and contributes to the changing balance of power that favours China over the USA and Russia, above all as it affects Pakistan, the Central Asian region and Turkey. The idea of a Silk Road is actually not particularly new. Pushing trade and economic development from China westwards into Central Asia and beyond, has been a process for some time, and it is something that appears to be in the basic interests of the people of the region. China's push has been more or less worldwide so the Central Asian section is not something in contradiction with what China is doing elsewhere. China needs resources and the infrastructure that can help provide them.

The decision taken by Obama to withdraw combat forces from Afghanistan by 2014 offered new opportunities to SCO (and therefore to China) to diminish American influence in central Asia; moreover, Afghanistan will be able to be involved more in the SCO framework, strengthening the expansion southward of the Organisation (Institute for Strategic Studies, National Defense University of People's Liberation Army, 2015). However, different problems still exist in all of those fields, limiting the potentials of the Organisation. In the security sphere, the main problems come from Russia, which is generally more focused on the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO, a formal Russia-dominated alliance that involves Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). As Wishnick (2009) noted, Russia has been seeking to increase the cooperation between the two organisations, but it met China's refusal. As of now CSTO has been granted only the status of an observer. On the other hand, Russia has been cautious in getting involved in the establishment of SCO financial institutions such as SCO Development Bank or SCO Development Fund.

Finally, regarding Chinese influence in central Asia, the American withdrawal from Afghanistan offers opportunities as well as challenges. From China's perspective, an SCO's active role is obviously preferable

than American or NATO involvement (Ziegler, 2013). However, SCO's attitude toward Afghanistan has always been problematic. As Sutter (Sutter, 2010) notes, "the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom accomplished more in the area in five months than the Shanghai grouping had accomplished in five years". As SCO officials admit, the lack of consensus among the Organisation's member about their individual policies towards Kabul has prevented the SCO from developing coherent proposals (Cooley, 2014). Therefore, American withdrawal from Afghanistan has caused various tensions inside SCO, and a common policy has yet to be found.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has great potential to be a heavy-weight in global politics, and its recent enlargement strengthens its position. It can be a fundamental instrument of foreign policy in the hands of Beijing bureaucracy allowing them to pursue their strategic interests in the area in a much more efficient way. Moreover, the SCO represents, as stated earlier in this paper, a clear example of how Chinese Grand Strategy has been defined by the PRC policy makers not in a systematic way as the so-called design model would suggest, but more according to what is usually referred to as emergence model: Beijing adapted its strategies to the new scenario that came into place after the demise of Soviet Union in Central Asia, thus turning an area that risked to be problematic in an opportunity. However, great problems still persist, and they are likely to significantly reduce SCO's ability to shape Eurasian future. The way these problems are faced, together with (sometimes partly) exogenous factors (American commitment in central Asia, the implementation of Iran nuclear deal, the stability of the Chinese regime, Russian economic performance, just to name a few of them) will determine the future of the Organisation, and, perhaps, of the world.

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