

Competition and Cooperation In the Heartland: China's Security Strategy in Central Asia in the Post-Cold War*

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On the territory defense dimension, China has benefited from the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the honeymoon of Sino-Soviet relation in the 1950s, the whole north of China has been directly under the military pressure from the Soviet Union. Up to the 1980s, the northeast, north and northwest, what is so-called 'three northes' (san bei di qu), always has been prominent on the national territory defense. The independence of five Central States completely ends the history of Russian possible invasion against China from Northeast and Northwest at the same time. The Russian-China border is decreased to about 50 kilometers.

¹ For China, the newly independent Central Asian states can be interpreted as a huge 'buffer zone' between Russia and China.

From the collapse of USSR to the September 11 attacks, Central Asia has been seemly unnoticeable region in the eyes of the great powers. 'The overall engagement effort (US) of the early 1990s can best be described as limited'.² European was in a terrible fix plight of Balkan in the 1990s. Russian intended to cast off the heavy economic burden, at the same time still getting into collective security institutions. 'Russian interest in the region was progressively reshaped during the second half of the 1990s, and grew in magnitude in the 2000s'.³ For China, 'in the early 1990s maintaining stability in Xinjiang and resolving the

* The term of Central Asia in this paper refers to the five Central Asian republics, Mongolia, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, used to form a coherent and inter-connected sub-region for millennia until the impenetrable Soviet border sliced through the continent in the early 20th century (S. Frederick Starr, "In Defense of Greater Central Asia," Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, September 2008, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0809GCA.pdf>. See also Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pp. 1~2.)

¹ Zhao Huasheng, *China's Central Asian Diplomacy*, Beijing: Shishi Press, 2008, p. 38.

² Olga Oliker, David A. Shlapak, *US Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles*, Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2005, p. 5. http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG338.pdf.

³ Sébastien Peyrouse, Jos Boonstra and Malène Laruelle, *Security and Development Approaches to Central Asia The EU Compared to China and Russia*, EUCAM Working Paper No. 11, May 2012, http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Working_Papers/WP11.pdf.

border dispute with Russia and Central Asian Republics was at the top of the Chinese agenda'.¹

Harold Mackinder's heartland concept popularized the famous dictum:

- Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
- Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
- Who rules the World-Island commands the world.

Ever since then, as far the geopolitical significance of Central Asia, it will be must be cited. In the post-cold war, Central Asia is surrounded by China, Russia, India, Iran and Pakistan. As Zbigniew Brzezinski pointed, 'to the south of that large central Eurasian plateau lies a politically anarchic but energy-rich region of potentially great importance to both the western and the eastern Eurasian states, including in the southernmost area a highly populated aspirant to regional hegemony.'² Terrorism, organized crime, even state failure can be observed in Central Asia and its periphery, as such Kashmir, Afghan and Caucasia, which correlates and the influence beyond the region. The abundant energy resources contribute Central Asia to the international affairs. It is observable that Russia, China, US, EU, Japan and India issues the definite objects of energy strategy.

In a word, Central Asia is destined to attract the interests of powers due to geostrategic and abundant energy. 'The other newly independent states in Central Asia are very weak and will not be able to resist the dominance of great powers such as China, a resurgent Russia or the USA should they chose to exert their influence over the area'.³ Hence, the great games constitute the part of studying background. In the analysis of China's security strategy in Central Asia, the presence of great power has been considerable agenda. At the same time, it is noticeable that the various international regimes or organizations has played the roles in Central Asia, as such NATO's Partnership for Peace program (PfP), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The coexistence of the above-mentioned organizations and regimes can be considered as the other part of my studying background.

Clearly, China's interests in Central Asia have widened from stability at the borders to encompass energy security, geopolitics and combating extremists, terrorists, as well as "nationalist/separatist" forces.⁴ China's government never publishes any official statements or strategic files to explicit its regional goals and objections. It is certain of increasing the

¹ Ramakant Dwivedi, 'China's Asian Central Policy in Recent Times', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 2006, Volume 4, No. 4, pp. 139-159.

² Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New York: Basic Books, 1997, pp. 34~35.

³ Russell Ong, 'China's Security Interests in Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Dec. 2005, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 425~439.

⁴ Ramakant Dwivedi, 'China's Asian Central Policy in Recent Times', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 2006, Volume 4, No. 4, pp. 139-159.

difficulties. This paper includes three subsections: the significance of Central Asia to China; the practical and potential opportunities and challenges to China security; and the possible approaches under the background of the games of great powers and the coexisting international regimes.

The Significances of Central Asia to China's National Security

Since the 1990s, China's presence has been increasingly involved Central Asia in the affairs, as such the border, multilateral trade, energy developing and international traffic. In the past few years, China has invested heavily into the Karakorum highway and the Gwadar port in Pakistan, built a US\$7 billion pipeline from Kazakhstan to Xinjiang, and has emerged as the most important trading partner for Mongolia and is likely to be the most important for Central Asian states in the coming years. Moreover, China signed a US\$100 billion 25-year energy contract with Iran. Recently, China won a US\$4 billion tender to develop the vast Yanak copper field, making it by far the largest investment in the history of Afghanistan, while a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan is also well underway. China's foreign direct investments in Mongolia accounted for more than 40 percent of its total foreign direct investments in 2007.¹ In 2009 China for the first time exceeded Russia by volume of trade with the region. In 2010 trade turnover between Russia and Central Asian states reached \$22 billion, between China and Central Asia \$29 billion.²

Theda Skocple stated that France suffered the penalties of 'amphibious geography', partly continental, partly maritime, she could not like Great Britain (or Prussia and Austria), through her energies in one direction or the other; willy-nilly she has to do both.³ In the 1870s, the dispute of continental defense (sai fang) and maritime (hai fang) took place in the top of Qing Dynasty. *ZUO Zongtang* stated, 'the integration of the Northwest links the arm with the fingers. Due to the importance of Xinjiang, protect Mongolia. Protect Mongolia to defend the capital'.⁴ On the contrary, *LI Hongzhang* advocated that the priority should be put on the maritime defense. Compared with Qing Dynasty, the prominent change is China's investment on security can be supported by the financial return from the energy and mineral developing in Central Asia. Hence, the status of economic interests and correlated ends the history that China's security affairs in Central Asia formed the heavy financial burden. Without the economic interests supporting, the security is hard to be carried out in the long run. Without the safeguard measures, the economic interests are fragile.

¹ Niklas Swanstrom, *China and Great Central Asia: New Frontiers?* Washington DC: SAIS Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, December 2011, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/silkroadpapers/1112Swanstrom.pdf>.

² Richard Rousseau, 'Competing Geopolitical Interests of China, Russia, and the United States in Central Asia and Caspian Region', *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2011, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 13~29.

³ Theda Skocple, *Social and State Revolutions: A Comprehensive Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 60.

⁴ MA Dazheng, *The Studies on Ancient China Border Policy* (Zhongguo Gudai Bianjiang Zhengce Yanjiu), Beijing: Social Science Press, 1998, p. 317.

As a rising power, China's energy and mineral requirements prodigiously increased. The highly dependence on the foreign energy resulted the domestic concerns on the energy security, especially the stable supply lines. What makes Central Asian energy especially attractive to China is that it helps diversify imports by reducing the geopolitical vulnerabilities of relying on seaborne energy imports across US dominated waters.¹ Whether the cost or risk, it is obviously lower the export oil across India Ocean; the latter is obviously a severe challenge to Chinese Navy; moreover, although China claims its navy's building-up is for the purpose of ensuring the energy supply security, the US, Japan, India and the related stakeholder still cast off the doubt of China's motivation. China's key project is the gigantic Sino-Kazakh pipeline, which will connect Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea fields with the Xinjiang border region and could secure up to 10 per cent of China's oil imports by 2020.² With the energy dependence on Central Asia increasingly, the stability in Central Asia or not is getting more and more important. Until the last few years, China's reliance on oil from Central Asia was said to be minimal and the potential thought to be limited to less than 5 percent of its needs, however, the new sources show that the proportion of China's oil and gas imports that comes from Central Asia has already risen beyond 10 percent.³ The importance of Central Asia attached to China is both the security and economic interests. As the first-grade foreign investor in Central Asia, China cannot count on keeping the distances from the security affairs, especial facing the fragile security status in Central Asia.

China's Security Dividend from the Collapse of Soviet Union

As the above-mentioned, the strategic buffer zone between China and Russia is China gained the comfortable security dividend from the collapse of Soviet Union, including the above-mentioned avoiding wars on the two fronts, Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the measure of confidence-building and disarmament along the border.

On May 23, 1992, US, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belorussia signed *Protocol to the Treaty between the United States of American and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (Lisbon Protocol)*. Lisbon Protocol is the starting point of nuclear-free in Central Asia. At the almost same time, Mongolia declared it as the nuclear weapon free zone. *Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ) Treaty* is a legally binding commitment by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan doesn't seek to manufacture, acquire, test, or possess nuclear weapons. The risks of terrorists launching attacks making use of tactic nuclear weapons have been decreased further. On March 21, 2009, the treaty was ratified by Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan,

¹ Alexander Warkotsch, 'The EU and Central Asian Geopolitics', in Alexander Warkotsh edited, *The European Union and Central Asia*, London: Routledge Press, 2011, p. 67.

² Sébastien Peyrous, 'Central Asia's Growing Partnership with Central Asia', EUCAM Working Paper No. 4, October 2009, p. 8. <http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/2009/12/WP4-EN.pdf>.

³ François Godement al, 'The New Great Game in Central Asia', *China Analysis*, September 2011, pp. 1~2. <http://www.ecfr.eu/page//China%20Analysis%20The%20new%20Great%20Game%20in%20Central%20Asia%20September2011.pdf>.

Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, and entered into force. In any case, the nuclear-free zone in Central Asia is certain of propitious for China's security. At least, neighboring with Russia, and the two *de facto* nuclear states – India and Pakistan, Central Asian is the nuclear-free vacuum for the west of China. However, if Iran masters nuclear weapon, the Central Asian nuclear free zone will surround by nuclear armed states, such as Russia, China, Pakistan and India. To calm the concerns of states in this potential, isolated nuclear-free zone and the authority of international non-proliferation regime, China should invest more energy to prevent the potential candidate to seek nuclear weapons.

At the eve of collapse of Soviet Union, the disarmament negotiations between China and then-USSR states have been carried out. On April 26, 1996, China and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed *The Agreement on Confidence-Building in the Military Field Along the Border Areas*. On April 24, 1997, those countries signed *The Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions* in Moscow summit meeting. On the territory defense, China and Central Asian states show their intentions to adopt peaceful approaches to deal with the disputed region. At the same time, the influences of nationalists in any countries, who intent to make tension through the border, is certain of being limited by the international law and the SCO. In this section, the author draws conclusion that the impossibilities of territory-oriented challenges toward China's national security decreased obviously.

Since the 1990s, there exist various institutional frameworks in the field of regional security, including NATO, the Moscow-backed Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Russia and China-supported Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). As an intensive institutionalized region, the risks of conflict in Central Asia have been contained to large extent.

The Practical and Potential Security Challenges to China and Its Measures

From the present to the predictable future, the so-called 'three evils', which are the terrorism, extremism and separatism, constitute the most prominent practical challenge in the China's national security discourse. In this section, the author explores the implications of the terrorism inspired by separatism on China's regional security strategy. The implications of 'three evils' on China regional security strategy, as following:

- Abundant investment on the domestic security
- China's peaceful rising profile
- Mistrusts between China and the western communities

Uyghur separatists groups (the most well known being the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, ETIM) began attacks against government from the mid-1990 on. On Dec. 11, 2001, the

headline of *Xinjiang Daily* listed the six kinds of terrorism violence.¹ The abundant materials listed the detailed economic loss and civilian casualties in Xinjiang due to terrorism, so the author has no intentions to duplicate the existed working. To calm down the riots in Xinjiang, which are characterized as ethnic conflict, consumed China's abundant resources, whether the security or economic. According to a report published by the nation's Ministry of Finance on budget enforcement of central and local governments, China spent 406 billion Yuan (\$61.6 million), 474 billion Yuan and 549 billion Yuan from 2008 to 2010 on public security, a year-on-year increase of 16.4%, 16.8% and 15.6%.² According to *China Daily*, the XUAR government's spending on public security will reach 2.89 billion Yuan (\$423 million) this year, up 87.9 percent over last year's 1.54 billion Yuan, according to the budget proposal handed over to deputies of the Xinjiang People's Congress in 2010.³

The increasingly funding on the public security is certain of burden for national or local finance. Moreover, how to allot the funding is a tricky problem among the related institutions. The funding of allocation reflects the interior relation among the institution. We assume the competition for funding among the institutions relevant of anti-terrorism, as such Public Security, State Security even the Armed Police Units. In the light of the different priority in its function, each institution puts forward its budget plan. Seldom official documents prove that the trans-department mechanism in the Chinese governmental institution. Hence, there is the high possibility that is some programs get redundant invest, however, the other programs are hard to carry out due to lack of funding. If there is no practical solutions to the efficiency of funding spend, the policy-makers have to face the embarrassment that the stability and investment is not the positive correlation.

The riot in Xinjiang inspired by the separatism and terrorism results the neighbor's concerns due to the cross-border ethnic group. There are six cross-border minorities among China and Central Asian states, Tajik, Kazakhstan, Mongol, Kirghizia and the Dungan who are the descendant from Chinese Muslim immigrants from Shaanxi and Gansu in the 1890s. Without the support from Central Asian neighbors, China's endeavors to anti-terrorism and extremism are certain of being limited. Beijing has set up an intensive network of anti-terrorism cooperation with neighboring Central Asian republics. A series of 'Color Revolutions' increased China's concerns about Uyghur restlessness getting externally exploited.⁴ 'Once the success of Color Revolution in Central Asia, Russian and Chinese geo-security environment worsened, moreover, the three evils in China and Russia will be out of the

¹ Xinjiang Reveals the Six Kinds Terrorism Case for the First Time (Xinjiang Shouci Jieli "San Gu Shili" Liu Lei Zhuyao Kongbu Huodong Anjian), <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2001-12-10/416568.html>.

² Latest China Smear Targets Public Security Spending, *China Daily*, April 16, 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-04/06/content_12281120.htm.

³ Cui Jia, 'Xinjiang Security Funding Increased by 90 Percentage', *China Daily*, January 13, 2010. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-01/13/content_9311035.htm.

⁴ Ramakant Dwivedi, 'China's Central Asia Policy in Recent Times', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 2006, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 139~159, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/cef/quarterly/november_2006/dwivedi.pdf.

control due to the double-standard pursued by the anti-terrorism policy of US'.¹ Most of this cooperation is taking place within the SCO framework, especially the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) Council based in Tashkent. On the dimension of inter-government relations, Central Asian states have little rooms to maneuver in public. However, the social profile of China in Central Asia has been still casted off the doubt. To some extent, it can be explained why China Threat always emerged with the investment increased. At the same time, the local nationalists can make use of the disputed territories settlement to influence the public opinion and the governmental decision-making of towards China. The concerns about Xinjiang situations from Central Asian neighbor and international communities are inevitable to the tensions of China's positive profile in Central Asia both governmental and civil dimension due to cross-border ethnic group.

On the preventing and fighting 'three evils', China's endeavors also are limited by the concerns from international community on the human rights protection and the cross-border ethnic issues. After the events of September 11, some analysts suggest 'make it more difficult to pressure the Chinese government on human rights and religious freedom violations particularly as they relate to the plight of Uighur Muslims in northwestern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR)'.² They point out that 'China may be seeking concessions from the U.S. regarding Xinjiang inexchange for China's cooperation in the global campaign against terrorism'.³ China has no ideas that what is the appropriate approach to realize the balance of keeping the social order and moderate using of force. Through the video of CCTV, it was shown that China's security troops seemly lack of enough necessary non-lethality weapons to recover the social order.

To more important, the social root of the tension of ethnic minorities and Han immigration has not been acknowledged. The frequency of riot prominently is higher, coinciding with the 'Great Western Development' (*Xibu Da Kaifa*). Economic development does not realize the stability in Xinjiang and Xizang. Social transformation resulted from the economic development in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Xizang is too complicated and rapid to be accepted by the original habitants in the short-term. Ethnic minorities see Han immigration and economic competition as a threat to their numbers, welfare and identity. To take the economic development into the place of social transformation is the fundamental approach to the seriously domestic security challenge to Chinese government.

Besides China and Central Asian states, such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan & Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Western Europe, Turkey, and the United States, the Uighur Diaspora is surprisingly large and spread throughout several

¹ Zheng Yu edited, *Cooperation and Competition: China, Russia and US in Central Asia: 1991~2007*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2007, p. 147.

² Dewardric L. McNeal, *China's Relations with Central Asian States and Problems of Terrorism*, CRS Report for Congress, December 17, 2001, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl31213.pdf>.

³ Dewardric L. McNeal, *China's Relations with Central Asian States and Problems with Terrorism*, CRS report, No. RL31213, December 17, 2001, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl31213.pdf>.

countries. With the socialized in the residence countries, they organize various societies and NGO. Supported by international nongovernment organization, they take the opportunities to express their concerns and dissent via the lobby at the parliament. Through the members of parliament, their discourses will influence the policies issued by administration. As the core of western political discourse, human rights and freedom, any policies and actions of government are no doubt should be based on this morale and values. Hence, China is certain of being criticized usually by its policies and actions that are contrary of the western political morale. To be worsening, China's discourse towards its political values and institution cannot be understood and accepted by European and American. For example, the economic development and democratization, China's government believes the economic development is the precondition of social democratization. On the contrary, the western hold the opposite perception.

Xinjiang will remain an issue between China and the western communities, as it maybe as controversial and sensitive as Xizang. While the Obama administration's response towards the Xinjiang riots in 2009 was cautious, the US still puts its weight behind certain overseas Uyghur movements. Uyghur American Association and the World Uyghur Congress, two major Uyghur organizations in the western world, receive financial support from the National Endowment for Democracy, an American organization financed by the US Congress. The US also brings up Xinjiang as an issue of concern in its human rights talks with Chinese officials in May 2010.¹ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended in 2011 that China again be designated as a —country of particular concern, or CPC. The State Department has designated China as a CPC since 1999.²

Such the above-mentioned has raised Chinese concerns and suspects on the intentions of the western communities, whether government or conservative elites. The western communities have been accused of supporting the separatism movements in China, which aim to check out the rising of China and the ideology conflicts. Chinese is a reluctant player to cooperate with European and American in the Central Asian affairs for its mistrust. Chinese involvement was strengthened in the wake of Uzbek researchers termed the Andijon events of May 2005 a direct interference by the US in the internal affairs of Uzbekistan. Chinese scholar explicitly questioned the US's intentions in promoting democratic transformations in the region and saw it as interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states.³

Turkey is another type of country that has great interest in Xinjiang issue due to its cultural and linguistic linkages with Uyghur. The Uyghur are Turkic and as such share a common

¹ SHAN Wei and WENG Cuifen, 'China's New Policy in Xinjiang and its New Challenge', *East Asian Policy*, 2:3, 2010, pp.58~66, http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/Vol2No3_ShanWei&WengCuifen.pdf.

² U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, *China Chapter in Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May 2011, <http://www.uscirf.gov/images/ar2011/prc2011.pdf>.

³ Chen Xiangyang, 'Situation Evaluation of International Strategy and Security in 2005' (*2005 Nian Guoji Zhanlue yu Anquan Xingshi Pingguo*), *Journal of Jiangnan Social University*, December 2005, No. 4.

Islamic, linguistic, and pastoralist heritage with the peoples of the Central Asian states. Turkic nationalists proclaimed an “East Turkestan Republic” in Kashgar, China, in 1933, and another one in Yining, China, in 1944. Turkey by itself may not constitute a major challenge to China. But it has significant impact on the Turkic and Islamic states in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Any imprudent move in Xinjiang, if being interpreted as anti-Turkic or anti-Islamic, might spark off chain reactions in those countries and further complicate the Xinjiang issue. After the events of July 5, 2009, Turkey Premier Recep Tayyip Erdoğan defined what was happening in China as ‘nearly genocide’, who made this statement at the end of the G8 in L'Aquila.¹ The author believes that the combination of cultural and economic means is the appropriate policy option to handle the stakeholder in Central Asia.

The languages in Central Asia belong to the branch of Indo-iranian and Turki Indo-European language family.² Since the independence, the Central Asia states have attached the importance of ethnical language and national identity based on the ethnical hero worship.³ ‘The term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual’.⁴ ‘Language is, argues Derrida, a system of differential signs, and meaning is established not by the essence of a thing itself but through a series of juxtapositions, where one element is valued over its opposite’.⁵ Hence, language does not mirror an independent object world but constructs and constitutes it. In the process of national identity formation, the external agenda plays the role of *other*. ‘Security discourses have traditionally constituted a national Self facing one or more threatening Others, whose identities were radically different from the one of the Self. But identities are not necessarily constructed through juxtaposition to a radically different and threatening Other’.⁶ Considering the present deepening security concerns against China in Central Asia, how make a positive profile in security discourse and identity of Central Asian for China is a more severe, long-term task.

In Chinese academic community, the scholars always have expressed more concerns and cautions on the present posture in Central Asia. The complicated relations among US, Russia, EU and India constitute the potential challenge to China’s presence in Central Asia for the reason of great power competition. China regards the US military presence in Central Asia as the negative potential agenda, especial under the background of future conflict in the Taiwan

¹ Erdogan: Xinjiang is ‘near genocide’ But the Islamic World Remains Cautious, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=15757&size=A>.

² Tan Baojun, ‘Understand Language in Central Asia: the New Perspective of China’s Strategic Decision-making in Central Asia’ (*Liaojie Zhongya Yuyan: Zhongguo Zhongya Zhanlue Juece de Xin Shidian*), *Forum of World Economics & Politics (Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi Luntan)*, 2009: No. 4, pp. 79~83.

³ Wang Peiran, ‘Mongolia’s Delicate Balancing Act’, *China Security*, 2009, Vol. 5, No. 2, <http://www.chinasecurity.us/pdfs/WangPeiran.pdf>.

⁴ Stuart Hall, ‘Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity’, in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen eds, *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge, 1996, p.446.

⁵ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and Bosnian War*, London: Routledge, 2001, p. 17.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 6.

Strait.¹ The geopolitical perceptions on energy-driven and confront - centralized are the basis of their research. Mr. Zhang Wenmu, then-researcher, at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, published his paper in 1998, which title is *The Oil and Geo-strategy of the US and China's Regional Security in Xizang and Xinjiang (Meiguo de Shiyou Diyuan Zhanlue yu Zhongguo Xizang Xinjiang Diqu Anquan)*. The logic of his paper is that to ensure the oil supply security, the US will establish the buffer zone constituted by small countries that prevent the influences from China and Russia. On the side of China, Xinjiang and Xizang will isolate China from the oil suppliers in Central Asia. Hence, the separatism movements in Xinjiang and Xizang will be supported that is similar as Kurds. However, he expressed the limited optimistic about the sovereignty over Xinjiang. He believes that it is impossible for Xinjiang independence because that will strengthen Islamic power, which cannot check out resurgent Russia.²

The security challenges in Central Asia has constituted by terrorism, organized criminal, non-proliferation of WMD and post-conflict reconstruction in the post cold war. To deal with transnational threat resulted from terrorism, it is necessary to international cooperation in the principle of global governance. China, US, EU, Russia and Central Asia share a paramount interest in enhancing regional security as an important aspect of global security and energy supply. Energy demand is the driving force for almost the great power to participate in Central Asian affairs. However, without regional security, energy development is hardly to be carried out. In energy development and its supply security, the competition is not zero-sum that is admitted by Chinese scholar.³ If China holds the zero-sum thinking on energy development and security, its peaceful profile and intention will be doubted by the related stakeholder and Central Asian states. From the practical perspective, the fundamental approach to regional security for China is more cooperation than confrontation.

In fact, China's economic interests in Central Asia have benefiting from NATO's presence in Central Asia. Afghan is a case in point. China is the largest foreign investor in Afghan currently. China previously won the rights to Afghanistan's most valuable copper deposits in 2007, the Aynak Cooper Mine, located south of Kabul in the Logan Province. On December 28, 2011, China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) won the 25-year valid contract for the development of oil blocks in the Amu Darya basin, a project expected to earn the war-torn state billions of dollars over two decades. It marks the second major deal for China in Afghanistan after developing the huge Aynak copper mine south of Kabul, which is due to start producing by the end of 2014, nearly the same to NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

¹ Zheng Yu edited, *Cooperation and Competition: China, Russia and US in Central Asia (1991~2007)*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2007, pp. 37~38.

² ZHANG Wenmu, 'The Oil and Geo-strategy of the US and China's Regional Security in Xizang and Xinjiang' (*Meiguo de Shiyou Diyuan Zhanlue yu Zhongguo Xizang Xinjiang Diqu Anquan*), *Strategy and Management*, 1998, No.2, pp. 100~104.

³ QIAN Juan, 'The Assessment on the Possibilities of Sino-US Zero-sum Games Energy Security in Central Asia', *Bridge of Century*, 2011, No.17, pp. 86~87.

On May 21, 2012, NATO issued *Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghan* stated 'the completion of transition, however, will not mean the end of the International Community's commitment to Afghanistan's stability and development'.¹ In the process of transition, coinciding with NATO's withdrawal, the capabilities of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) is immature. Imagining the dreadful security vision in Afghan: the worsening economy, desperate towards the withdrawal of international commitment in the local population, the collapse of administration and institution, even civil war breaking out ... assuming Taliban come into power again is not groundless. With the revival of Taliban, the Islamic extremists in the Central and South Asia will be boosted. The neighbor, Pakistan and China have to invest more resources into domestic security affairs. Taliban is in the north of Pakistan will take risk to challenge Islamabad publicly follow their Afghanistan colleagues. If Pakistan is in breaking-up, the disastrous nuclear proliferation will be inevitable. Among Beijing-Islamabad- New Delhi triangle relations, Pakistan's fell down means China loose the tool of balance India on the dimension of security and defense strategy. Considering the territory dispute and mistrust between China and India, Beijing and New Delhi are easier to evolve into the more hazardous, complicate security dilemma.

As the declaration at Chicago Summit, the role of NATO-led ISAF will 'shift from a combat mission to a new training, advising and assistance mission'. With the mission transformation, NATO should strengthen the capabilities of the PfP countries against terrorism, which will form a hedge to prevent the potential regional instability spillover. Considering the five PfP countries as membership of the SCO, China has indirect channel to communicate with NATO on Central Asian affairs. Afghan is north to the PfP Central Asian states. Hence, if the extremists hold Kabul, there is high potentiality in their penetration towards Pakistan. Assisting in strengthening Islamabad will be China's strategic option in its security strategy in Central Asia.

The contemporary strategic environment in Central Asia has been compared to the nineteenth century Anglo-Russian 'Great Game'.² Difference totally from 'Great Game' in the nineteenth century is that currently there exist various institutional frameworks, which are the Moscow-backed Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Russia and China-supported Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The author assumes the present competition among great powers in Central Asia expresses in the form of institutional frameworks. On the one side, for Central Asian states, the institutional frameworks are not only the dialogue platforms with great powers; also more option to balance among the 'great game'. At the same time, the co-existing institutionalized frameworks have promoted the institutionalized regional security.

¹ NATO *Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan*, issued by the Heads of States and Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), May 21, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87595.htm?mode=pressrelease.

² Xuanli Liao, 'Central Asia and China's Energy Security', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 2006, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 61~69.

Although all of security institutions claim their goals are seeking regional security in Central Asia, there is no formal communication mechanism among them. Instead NATO discusses issues with Moscow under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council. The Alliance does not build institutionalized ties with the CSTO because it believes the organization reduces the autonomy of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the benefit of Russia. And when it comes to China and the SCO, there is not even a 'partnership dialogue'.¹

Compared studies on the security policies of related player in Central Asia, we can find US, Russia, China and the EU have divergences in their preference interests in Central Asia, as well as in their conceptions of the approach to security. 'Russian and American goals in the region are diametrically asymmetric. By means of its economic and political instruments, Russia aims to solidify her presence in south Caucasus and in Central Asia, with purpose to structure an integrated system that would be geo-strategically akin to Soviet Union, while the U.S. follows a different strategy that aims at preventing Russia from its aim to integrate its former soviet surroundings'.² At the same time, the different approaches have been adopted in the light of preference. For example, in Central Asia, the EU's focus lies primarily in the sphere of soft security or human security. 'The EU defines the priorities for its cooperation with each Central Asian state according to its specific needs, requirements and performance, including human rights, good governance, democracy and social development'.³ EU tries to place an emphasis on democratic values and human rights, which is challenging considering the authoritarian nature of the Central Asian regimes.⁴ Instead the SCO is committed to values such as 'stability', 'diversity', 'sovereignty', 'non-interference', and is opposed to the export of 'models of social development'.

To the predictable future, SCO is and will be certain of the sole platform for China to play its roles in Central Asia. Chinese scholar terms the SCO as a 'a regionally-based international organization established against the complex background of different levels of development, religious civilizations, national strengths and domestic institutions at the beginning of this century, when the Eurasian region was faced with new development and security challenges'.⁵ From this term, the SCO will undertake various functions from regional security, culture exchange, nation building and regional transformation. The cohesion of the SCO will be vital importance to its function. However, China's leadership in the SCO remains limited by shared

¹ Malène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, 'Why NATO doesn't Talk with the SCO and the CSTO', *EUCAM Watch*, February 2011, issue 11, http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Newsletters/EUCAMWatch-11.pdf.

² Boris Gorshkov, 'Shanghai Cooperation Organization: a Paradigm for Geopolitical Determinism', *World Affairs Review*, 2006, Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 30~46.

³ Council of European Union, *The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*, May 31, 2007.

⁴ Malène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, 'Why NATO doesn't Talk with the SCO and the CSTO', *EUCAM Watch*, February 2011, issue 11, http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Newsletters/EUCAMWatch-11.pdf.

⁵ Feng Shaolei, 'SCO: An overview of the Past Decade', May 16, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/valdai_op/20110615/164627685.html.

values, resources and its insufficient knowledge and skills in multilateral leadership.¹ Meanwhile, The divergent strategic goals between China and Russia serve to limit any coordinated activities of the SCO.

China and Russia also saw the SCO as a vehicle for pursuing a number of interests connected with the continuing challenges to their central authority in Xinjiang province and Chechnya, respectively.² *The Russian Foreign Policy Concept*, published in July 2008, clearly places a priority on developing the CSTO, identified as 'a key instrument to maintain stability and ensure security in the CIS area ...transforming the CSTO into a central institution ensuring security in its area of responsibility'.³ Compared with CSTO, SCO lacks of practical means to meet its goals, such as joint troops and bases in Central. The CSTO has already constructed a joint command staff and coordinating center, holds annual exercises, and has established a permanent military force, while the SCO merely has RATS and is issuing statements calling for more security cooperation.

In recent years, CSTO expressed interesting to strengthen the cooperation with SCO. The Russian Chief of the General Staff, Army General Yuri Baluyevsky, intended to make these exercises a joint SCO-CSTO effort.⁴ There exists the common Sino-Russian interest in countering increasing Western 'encroachment' into Central Asia and assisting the local regimes in maintaining their positions of power, in particular with regard to the threat of 'color' revolutions.⁵ China's concern is that an intensified relationship between the CSTO and the SCO may give the impression to the outside world that the SCO endeavors to become a 'NATO of the East'.

The weak identities of the member states fundamentally limit the cohesion of the SCO and China's leadership. Excepting China, Russia and Central Asian states all possess the shared history of Soviet. Russian remains dominant language in Central Asia. Utilizing the identities based on the shared history and language, Russian easily influences the foreign policy of Central Asian states. Russia's use of armed force in Georgia in August 2008 when member states condemned Georgian "aggression" at the September 2008 CSTO summit in Moscow.⁶ If Russia seeks more support to confront NATO or US on the Eurasian affairs, it can mobilize Central Asian member states to vote the bill in the name of SCO, regardless of Beijing's

¹ Jia Qingguo, 'Shanghai Cooperation Organization: China's Experiments in Multilateral Leadership', in Iwashita Akihiro eds, *Eager Eyes Fixed Euroasia: Russia and Its Eastern Edge*, Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007, p. 115, <http://www.irchina.org/en/pdf/jqg07a.pdf>.

² Ruslan Maksutov, 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: a Central Asian Perspective', *SIPRI Project Paper*, August 2006, p.3.

³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *The Russian Foreign Policy Concept*, July 12, 2008, p. 15, http://www.russianmission.eu/userfiles/file/foreign_policy_concept_english.pdf.

⁴ Marcel de Haas, 'The 'Peace Mission 2007' Exercises: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Advances', September 2007, http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2007/20070900_cscp_paper_haas.pdf.

⁵ James Bosbotinis, 'Sustaining the Dragon, Dodging the Eagle and Barring the Bear? Assessing the Role and Importance of Central Asia in Chinese National Strategy', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 2010, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 65~81.

⁶ 'Security Treaty Leaders Condemn Georgia for Aggression', September 5, 2008, http://www.rferl.org/content/Security_Treaty_Leaders_Condemn_Georgia_For_Aggression_/1196765.html.

considerations. Then, combining with the different values of related stakeholder, the potential risk of new Cold War in the Central Asia still will be highly.

China' Strategic Options towards Regional Security in Central Asia

Up to predictable future, the security challenges to China in Central Asia are still the non-traditional security issues constituted by terrorism, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction under the background of the competition and cooperation of great powers, which implicate both domestic and international dimensions.

The terrorism, inspired by ethnic separatism, in Xinjiang directly challenges China's national security. The anti-terrorism, should attach the importance of the local social transformation, besides necessary violence. In the domestic, the policies should be adopted to help the local ethnic group adapt the social transformation by economic development. Facing the concerns and misunderstanding from international community, China should improve the transparency of its security and diplomacy policy. Through the international institutional frameworks, China positively cooperates with the related stakeholder to abide by the global governance.

The SCO serves as a vehicle for China's regional security strategy in Central Asia. The most urgent task for SCO is not enlargement, but the institution construction and strengthened cohesion. In the SCO, the security discourse just confined within 'sovereignty' and 'stability', which run counter to the western mainstream discourse based on human security. Promoting the regional security in Central Asia, China should take practical measures to boost regional security. Whether nonproliferation, or anti-terrorism, the threats to be dealt with in the way of cooperation based on global governance. Central Asian States participate the various international security institutions, such as NATO's PfP, which can make the interim role of communication, before the establishment of China – NATO or SCO – NATO.