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Q: China, Russia's Pakistan cooperation will find suitable support in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) • Elaborate.

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### Introduction

The recent SCO Foreign Ministers Summit of 2023, was held in Goa, India where the Indian Foreign Minister, Jay Shankar Prasad, refused to shake hands with Pakistani Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The event captured a lot of media attention and placed the a question mark on the effectiveness

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of SCO. However, this ~~is~~ non-diplomatic act of Jaishankar in now way puts Pakistan's cooperation with China and Russia on shaky grounds. The objectives of SCO <sup>and</sup> national interests of China, Russia and Pakistan are deeply aligned. These countries have started projects in geoeconomic, geostrategic and geopolitical fronts and are also planning more cooperation under the umbrella of SCO. The SCO is and can play a pivotal role in helping development of Pakistan and shifting the world towards a multipolar world order, where China and Russia can also emerge as global leaders.

### Weltanschauung of SCO

a) What is SCO?

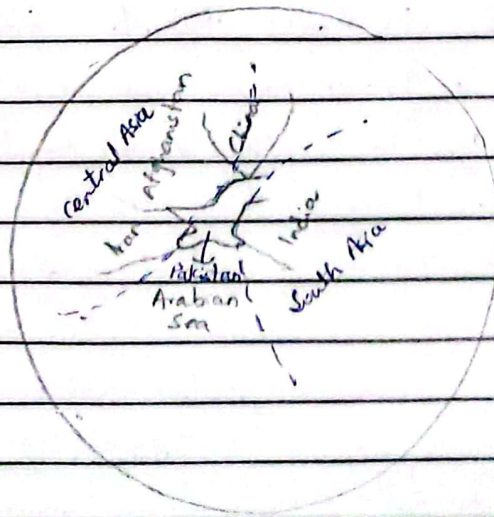
The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a diplomatic world organization which aims to strengthen regional cooperation amongst its member states. The following are the objectives of SCO according to its charter:

- 1) Promoting mutual trust among member states
- 2) Promoting effective cooperation in politics, trade and economy.
- 3) Peace, Stability and Security in Region.
- 4) Combating three devils: terrorism, extremism and separatism.
- 5) Regional economic linkages.
- 6) New international political and economic order.

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b) What is China, Russia, Pakistan cooperation is expected in 2023?

China and Russia are two Asian superpower that are pushing to create a multipolar world order by breaking the hegemony of United States of America. In order to get to this stage, it is imperative for them to have stability in their region. Pakistan lies at the heart of SCO region. It is the bridge between South Asia and Central Asia, <sup>as shown in the diagram on bottom, page.</sup> It also wants to make its country stable and prosperous. Currently, Pakistan is suffering from a myriad of conventional and non-conventional security threats. Its concerns are its ailing economy, nuclear war threat from Eastern neighbour India, terrorism in the country, social polarization, climate change, poor governance, food security and water scarcity. China and Russia can and in order to achieve their objective are willing to support Pakistan. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization can provide a platform to make such support official.



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3. How can China & Pakistan collaborate and what role can SCO play.

a) Chinese Investment in Pakistani Development Projects

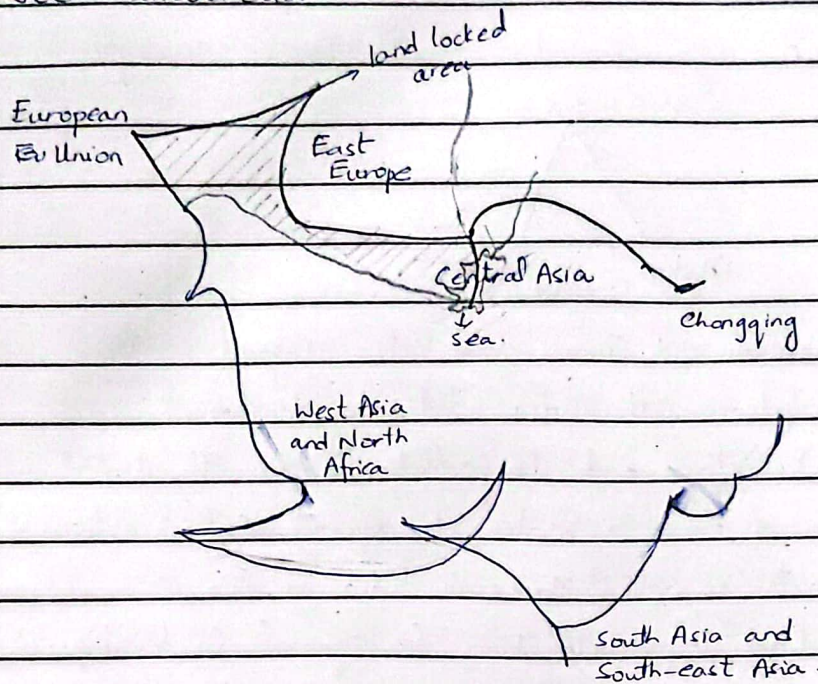
Currently, Pakistan and China are working together on project called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). As of 2022, Chinese Investment in CPEC was \$65 billion (Pakistan's Chief leads in Beijing to discuss the economy, debt, relations, Nov 2022). The CPEC is currently entering its second phase, after successful completion of first one. However, Pakistan's foreign direct investment (FDI) account is still extremely low at \$1456 bn from July to Aug 23, which is 480 mld lower than last year. The country could use more support from China and Chinese companies for its development and SCO can provide a forum to provide this cooperation.

b) Enhancing Asian Connectivity - One Belt Road Initiative

The construction of trade and connectivity is an area of cooperation between China and Pakistan since April 2015, when CPEC was signed. CPEC falls under China's One Belt Road Initiative which aims to revive the Silk Route. Pakistan provides a connection ~~white~~ through roads and easiest access to warm waters to Central Asian Republics. The diagram on next page shows the current plan of BRI and CPEC's connectivity projects. This connectivity is also a win-win for Pakistan as it can also benefit from trade in custom duties and road toll for its development. In future, if China's return on investment for CPEC road initiative is

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good. It can invest in more projects under SCO umbrella.



- Silk Road Economic Belt (land route)
- Maritime Silk Road (Maritime Route)

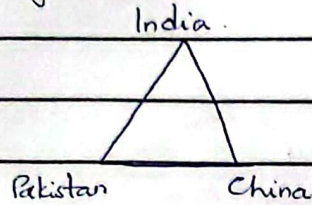
### c) Combined Military Trainings

Dec 2023, marked an important month in China-Pakistan history as naval forces of both countries held their military exercise together in Arabian Sea. Pakistan's military is ranked 6/142 countries in global gunpower index while China is at 3/142. Hence, both strong militaries can come together to create a great defense for the region. The west suspects that SCO will create its own army to counter NATO and ~~now~~ that idea is plausible. Such training can help in collaborating in defense by training personnel to work in multi-cultural army. Such an army can solve security threats in the region and enhance cooperation.

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in other areas.

d) Support against India. — the Devil's Triangle



Pakistan and China are also aligned in terms of relation with India. India has territorial issues with Pakistan and its collaboration with United States of America makes it against China's national interests as well. Moreover, India is also in a Thucydide traps with China for regional leadership. Although India is part of the SCO, SCO is a great forum to improve bilateral relations and break this devil's triangle to increase regional cooperation. ~~But~~ Improving relations with India is in both P

4. How can Russia - Pakistan collaborate and what role can SCO play?

a) Pakistan's Energy Needs

~~There~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~diagram~~ <sup>5 emer.</sup> ~~below~~ shows the energy hubs of the world. The energy hubs of the world include: Central Asia, Persian Gulf, North Africa, South China Sea and USA. Pakistan currently sources from Gulf / Middle Eastern states in dollars. This can caused its economy to get dollar deprived.

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It can be seen that these energy hubs are in Central Asia and Russia. Pak and Iran. Pakistan can collaborate with Russia to fulfil energy requirements at cheap rates to fuel its development.

### b) Arms Deals

Russia is world's second largest arms supplier. Previously, Pakistan relied on USA for its arms requirement but since US-India deal US has not been a great option for Pakistan's arms needs. Hence, Pakistan and Russia signed a deal for Russian missile Mi-Hind 96 to be given to Pakistan. SCO has been collaborating on strategic fronts in other countries as well. Pakistan can look at Russia for strategic cooperation and SCO can provide great support as a forum for such collaborations.

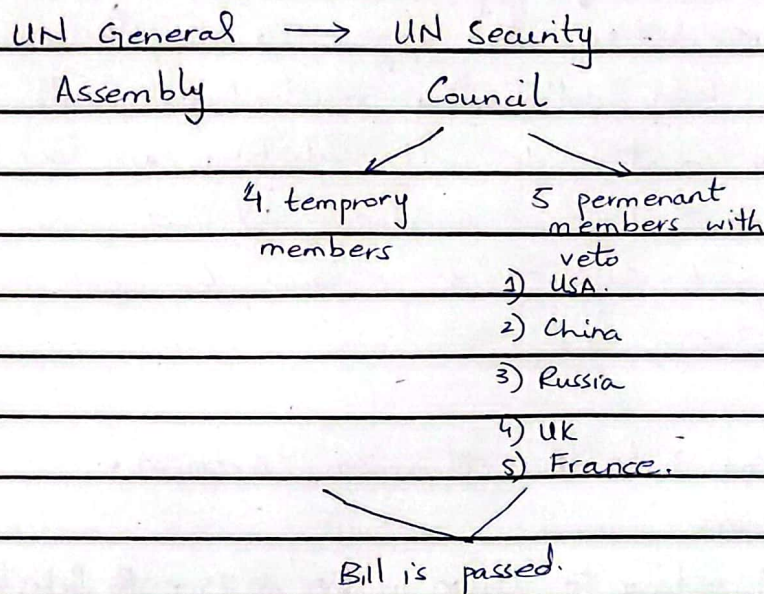
### c) Combatting 3 devils: extremism, terrorism, separatism.

According to Dawn in Dec 2023, Pakistan has faced 30% increase in terrorism last month. Since the takeover of Taliban in Afghanistan, terrorism in Pakistan has been on the rise. The SCO has a body called Regional Anti-Terrorism ~~organi~~ structure (RATS) headquartered in Tajikistan. The purpose of this body is to share intelligence reports in the region regarding terrorism. RATS has stopped 75,000 attacks. ~~est~~ and is closely linked with Russian security forces. With the help of RATS, Pakistan

can reduce threat of terrorism to improve stability in the region — a vision also supported by Russia and SCO's objectives.

#### d) International Support on Multilateral Forums.

Pakistan and Russia are together in multiple global organizations. The biggest one is United (UN). The United Nations has a structure for making policies as shown by the diagram below:



The diagram shows that for a bill to be passed, all 5 permanent member should be aligned. If a bill is passed against Pakistan, Russia has the power to veto it. Therefore, the SCO can provide a diplomatic platform for getting diplomatic support from Russia in future.



## 5. Conclusion

The situation of world affairs is extremely unsettled. According to Malecha Lodhi, Pakistan former ambassador to US, UK and UN: "The world will continue to be in an unsettled state with geo-political tensions escalating and driving volatility in global markets." Pakistan, China, Russia cooperation in such a time period will be ~~map~~ pivotal in the national interest of all three countries. As the ~~the~~ competition for power and resources heightens, SCO will serve as a platform to secure interests and ensure that Raison D'état of the three countries are met.