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Q: China, Russia, <sup>Pakistan</sup> cooperation will find suitable support mechanism in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Elaborate:

1. Introduction

2. What is Shanghai Cooperation Organization?

3. Why was it created?

a) objectives of SCO.      b) Geopolitical factors

4. Why did Pakistan join Shanghai Cooperation Organization?

a) Alignment of Pakistan's National Interest

5. Expected areas of cooperation.

a) Geo Strategic (3)

b) Geo Economic (3)

c) Geo Political Areas (2)

6. What are the success of SCO in China, Russia, Pakistan cooperation so far?

a) Russian missiles (Mi-17)

b) RATS cooperation

c) CPEC

7. How can the cooperation improve further?

a) Pak-India bilateral relations.

b) Energy cooperation (Pak-Iran, IAPI)

c) Stabilization of Pakistan's inner

8. Conclusion

## Introduction

In the aftermath of 'War on Terror' by the United States, Pakistan has increasingly found its national interests in alignment with China's and Russia's interests. Pakistan, China and Russia are trying to play a constructive role in development of the Asian region and ~~develop~~ are pushing for an Asian

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world order. The main actors in Asian world order and a multipolar world will be China and Russia, therefore they created Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001. Since its inception Pak-Russia and China have found multiple areas of cooperation and have been able to support them through SCO.

In geo-strategic arena Pakistan and Russia have done arms deal, <sup>and</sup> there have been combined military exercise for armies of SCO countries. In future, Pakistan and China and Russia could further increase geo strategic cooperation by exchange of trained military personnel and military technology. In the geo-political vein, Pakistan is looking for international support due to the withdrawal of ~~the~~ United States as an ally and its closeness with India. Russia and China can provide that support to Pakistan on international forums.

Pakistan's incorporation into major world organizations and support in United Nations Security Council are an example. The SCO will provide a better ~~see~~ support mechanism for Pakistan. Lastly, but not the least in Geo-economics support. Pakistan provides the shortest route for China and Central Asian Republics to access warm waters. Therefore, China is building a multi-million project in Pakistan called China Pakistan Economic Corridor ~~which~~ (CPEC). Moreover, Russia and Central Asian Republics can serve as great opportunities for trade and to meet Pakistan's energy needs.

The only reason for a slower growth of SCO's influence is that India is also a part and prevents Pakistan from gaining a lot of advantages. However, <sup>still</sup> the SCO can provide a lot of support to this cooperation.

## The Emergence of SCO

### Shanghai-5 + 4

In ~~2001~~<sup>1995</sup>, China took an initiative to create an organization to enhance regional cooperation. It further added Russia, Kazakhstan, ~~Kyrgyz~~ Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan to create an organization called Shanghai-5. In 2001, as China's influence grew it expanded to add further members. In 2005, it added <sup>here</sup> Pakistan and India <sup>added</sup> Uzbekistan and in 2023 it added Iran. Today, SCO has almost all Asia and is looking to expand further.

### Rationale for creation of SCO

- a) From China's perspective:
  - ⇒ Allowed China to enter Central Asian Republics (CAR) for energy needs and trade
- b) From Russian perspective:
  - Allowed Russia to maintain its traditional influence in CARs and pursue its strategic interests.
- c) From Central Asian Republics:
  - An opportunity for economic expansions, conflict prevention and addressing security concerns.

### Objectives of SCO:

A lot of western powers view SCO has a block created to counter NATO. It is viewed as a forum from China to pursue its policies of becoming a global hegemon. In simple terms, a block to counter US' influence.

The formal charter of SCO states the following objectives.

- i) Promoting mutual cooperation and trust among member states.

- ii) Promoting effective cooperation (politics, trade, economy).
- iii) Peace, stability and security in Region.
- iv) Combating terrorism, extremism and separatism.
- v) Regional economic linkages
- vi) New international political and economic order.

## Pakistan and SCO

"China supports India and Pakistan's accession to SCO and hopes that entry of new members will contribute to development of the SCO, and regional prosperity and stability" - Hua Chunying

The above statement was given by Hua

Chunying when both India and Pakistan were granted permanent member status in SCO. Pakistan's vision is also committed to regional development. It's participation in organizing Afghan Peace Talks and ~~also~~ Pakistan's foreign minister visit to Goa, India, after 12 years, for SCO's foreign minister's summit <sup>are</sup> testaments of its commitment.

Furthermore, Pakistan also hopes to improve bilateral relations with India. India has been defaming Pakistan on multiple international platforms for ~~been~~ supporting terrorism. By coming with India in an organization whose aim is combat to terrorism in region, it can use diplomatic pressure to improve relations with India. Furthermore, it is home to CPEC, an economic linkage that supports new international world order. Therefore, all of SCO's objectives, align with Pakistan national interests hence it decided to join SCO.

## Mapping Areas of Geo-strategic Cooperation:

### 1) Military Trainings

Pakistan's military has been ranked 7/145 on global firepower index. Russia and China are on 2/145 and 3/145 position respectively. If these militaries decide to hold combined military trainings, they can improve the strength and skills enormously. Moreover, Central Asian Republics with comparatively ~~can~~ weaker armies can create stronger defense mechanism. In the longer run, the armies can even collaborate to create a multi-ethnic army to safeguard SCO countries and their interests.

### 2) Arms Deal

Historically, Pakistan was given arms and ammunition from United States of America due to its strategic alliance with Pakistan in Cold War and War of on Terror. Recently, since 2004, United States have tilted towards India and are interested in providing them with best weaponry. Pakistan can turn to Russia which has the second biggest arms industry. Russia will also benefit by catering to Pakistan as an arm's industry client.

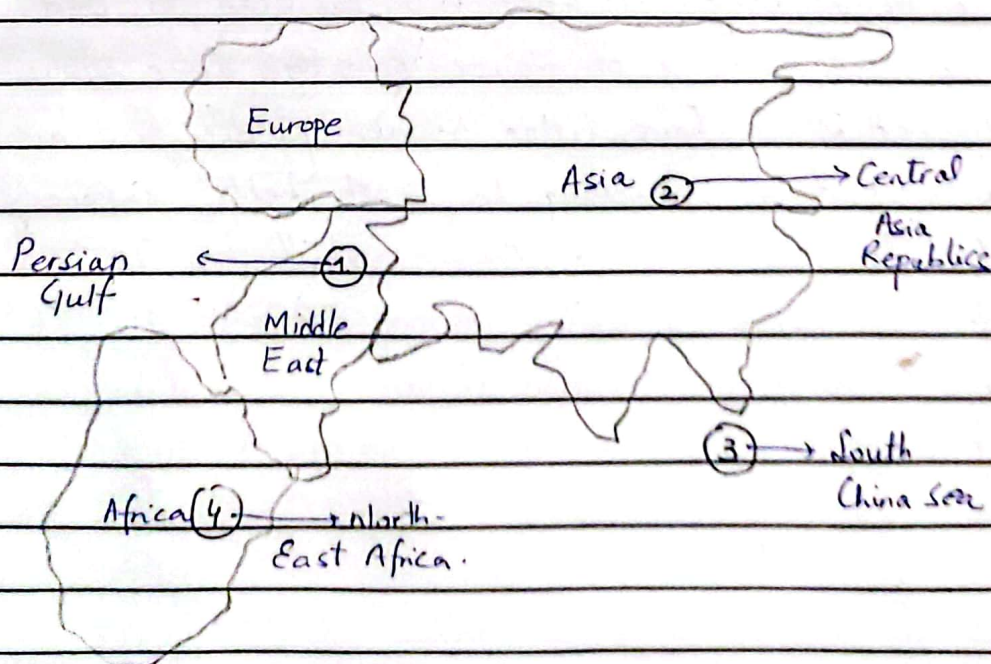
### 3) Battling the three evils: terrorism, extremism and separatism

Pakistan has suffered from extreme terrorism in last two decades. It has also suffered from cross border terrorism. SCO's objective to counter terrorism largely alligns with Pakistan's efforts for peace. SCO has a body called Regional Anti Terrorism Structure (RATS) that ~~aims~~ is headquartered in Tashkent. RATS has experts of intelligence, military and police that exchange information that prevents terroristic attacks. RATS is currently a research body but has successfully averted 1000 terroristic attacks.

### Highlighting areas of Geo-Economic Cooperation:

#### 1) Energy Cooperation

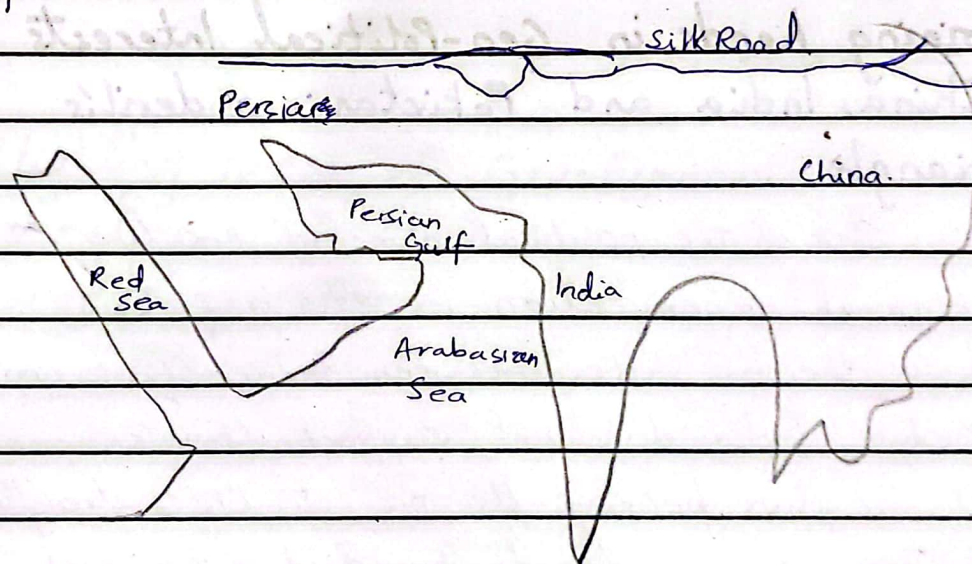
The map bellow shows the top energy resources hubs in the world.



Out of the four energy live centres, 3 lie within the SCO region. With projects that can transport energy resources amongst the region, such as TAPI, CASA, Pak-Iran pipeline etc, the SCO can help meet energy needs on growing South Asian Economies.

## 2) Enhanced Connectivity and Trade Routes

In 2nd and 3rd century BC, a famous trade route ran throughout the Asia. This route was known as the Silk Route. The map shows the silk route.



This route can be revived to serve as a modern trade route amongst the region. Furthermore, Pakistan can enhance maritime connectivity by easy access to warm waters. The Belt Road Initiative (BRI) of China serves to revive this route for better economy. Pakistan has also aligned itself with this project through CPEC.

### 2) Bringing Foreign Direct Investment to economically crunched countries including Pakistan

The SCO currently has two of the greatest economies of the world: China and Russia. It is also going to ~~is~~ expand to middle-eastern countries, like Iran. The newly independent Central Asian Republics were able to bring stability and prosperity to the region through SCO. The current trade between these countries is \$6 trillion in 2020. Pakistan can also benefit from this support and improve the state of its economy.

### 1) Joining hands in Geo-Political Interests China, India and Pakistan: a devil's triangle

One of the political aims of creating a regional organization in Asia was to reduce the hostilities between India, China and Pakistan. India does not support China's BRI initiative because its project CPEC strengthens Pakistan. It also has territorial disputes and cross border fighting with both China and Pakistan. The Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan is also a <sup>major</sup> bone of contention. With CPEC, passing through Gilgit, Kashmir and China is also threatened by India's claims on Kashmir. Therefore, SCO can act as a platform to resolve long-awaited deadlock amongst these three states.



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## 2) The United Nations Security Council and Big Five

South-Asia is home to a range of geopolitical issues. Areas, such as Kashmir and Sir Creek can be labelled as Nuclear Flashpoints.

Additionally, the instability in the region due to wars in Afghanistan, terrorism and extremism has caused a myriad of international issues that require the attention of United Nations Security Council. The structure of United Nations Security Council include five countries which can veto decisions on these issues.

These five countries are China, Russia, United States of America, England and France.

In order to secure their interests, all other countries much ally with these countries.

Pakistan previously was helped by United States of America, however, since 2004 Pakistan is supported by China. Joining the SCO, a Chinese Initiative, Pakistan ensures that it has someone to lookout. Russia is also a veto power, it can also veto a decision that is against the interests of SCO region.

## 3) Improving nascent relations with Russia

Since the very early days of Pakistan, it allied itself with Western Powers. Today Pakistan is a capitalist state with liberal form of democracy. Communism was never the agenda. Infact, at certain times during Cold War

provided strategic support to United States of America against Russia. Therefore, its cooperation with Russians was minimalistic.

The resurgence of Russia, has provided Pakistan a unique opportunity to tactfully balance its interest as between Russia and USA. It now has the opportunity to increase Russian cooperation and SCO is the perfect platform.

## Key Achievements of Russia-China-Pakistan Cooperation and SCO's role

### a) 'Mi Hind 96' coming to Pakistan

Russia and Pakistan signed an arms deal that brought Russian missile Mi-Hind 96 to Pakistan. The objective of Pakistan joining SCO to improve strategic cooperation with Russia seems to be on track.

### b) Pak-China naval exercise in Arabian Sea

In Dec 2023, for the first time Pakistan and Chinese navies collaborated for a military exercise. Aligning with Chinese block through joining Chinese diplomatic initiative has been a success for Pakistan.

### c) Cooperation in RATS.

Pakistan has been fighting the menace of terrorism since a very long time. The military has developed the capacity to help other nations too. Therefore Pakistan contributes in

the success of RATs to a large extent. Moreover both India and Pakistan, aim to strengthen RATs.

#### d) CPEC

CPEC, unequivocally, is the biggest success of having close links with China. CPEC is the biggest project in Pakistan right now that is helping its developments and to bring foreign direct investment. Pakistan has already stepped into Phase 2 of CPEC and is hoping to reap the economic benefits of the project soon.

#### Way forward

#### a) Pak-India bilateral ties

On May 5, 2023, SCO held its foreign minister summit in Goa India. On the summit, the Indian foreign minister, Tai Shankar did not publicly greet Pakistani foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He further refused talks with Pakistan, labelling the country as a perpetrator of terrorism. Pakistani foreign minister sensibly addressed the issue by explaining Pakistan victimization to terrorism. However, the incidence shows that SCO should increase diplomatic pressure on India to fix ties with Pakistan.

#### b) Pak-Iran pipeline

Pakistan and Iran signed a gas pipeline agreement. While Pakistan's national interest was

to have a cheap source of gas, diplomatic pressure from United States (US) has caused the work on project to be halted for the time being. Iran, a neighbouring country of Pakistan, can also be a great trade partner for Pakistan but due to international politics, the cooperation is minimal. SCO can act as a support mechanism to improve Pak-Iran economic cooperation and resume work on pipeline project.

#### 4) Local Reforms in Pakistan

International relations can be seen as a chessboard, where every move of a country can lead to a gambit. ~~How~~ The country that is the best player is the one that secures most of its national interests. In the case of Pakistan, the chess game is perplexed because the other nations have little to acquire from Pakistan because of its internal issues.

For Pakistan to be able to use SCO more effectively it needs to set its house in order first through domestic reforms.

Without domestic reforms, even China and Russia will not be able to cooperate with Pakistan. Pakistan needs to work on improving its governance, security and economy. The Pakistani government needs to address the issues of Pakistan's internal policies and institutes before it can effectively cooperate with other states.

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## Conclusion

Pakistan, Russia and China are on the same side in world politics. They are generating new ideas ~~are~~ each day to secure national interests from each other. SCO is an ideal platform for formal execution of such ideas. A couple of pilot projects amidst the nations have been successful. Therefore, having further projects should not be a challenge.