

SINO-RUSSIA RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION



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SINO-RUSSIA RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

PhD Thesis



By

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FINAL APPROVAL

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I hereby declare that this PhD dissertation is the result of my individual research under the kind supervision of Prof. Dr. Amna Mahmood and co-supervision of Dr. Manzoor Ahmed and that it has not been submitted to any other university for any other degree.

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DEDICATION

*I dedicate this research to my **MOTHER** (Late) who has been source of inspiration throughout my entire life.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCIM	Bangladesh China India Myanmar
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China and South Africa
CACO	Central Asian Cooperation Organization
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EPRS	European Parliamentary Research Service
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IBC	Interbank Consortium
INGOs	International Nongovernmental Organizations
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MSR	Maritime Silk Road
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NMD	National Missile Defense
NSC	New Security Concept
OBOR	One Belt One Road
PRC	People's Republic of China

RATS	Regional Antiterrorism Structures
RFE	Russian Far East
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
SREB	Silk Road Economic Belt
TMD	Threat Missile Defense
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ABSTRACT

The history of Sino-Russian relations cannot easily be comprehended in the light of their confrontationally cooperative interaction in the world politics. The leaders of both nations have adopted various formats of cooperation in their foreign relations parallel to the minor points of disagreements over different issues. The Sino-Russian relations were not good enough during the Cold War era. Even a brief era of rivalry between Moscow and Beijing let Washington to cultivate cooperative ties with Beijing parallel to augmenting its hostile interaction with Moscow. Various events in the post-Cold War era compelled both countries to adopt the policy of cooperation instead of confrontation. The quest for diversifying their cooperative relations, the leaders of both states with same common ideological features started emphasizing the adaptation of a multilateral approach in their foreign relations. As a result, the objective of multiplying their conventional patterns of bilateral cooperation led both governments to involve the four Central Asian states in their efforts of multilateral cooperative framework in the form of Shanghai Cooperation Organization-(SCO) in 2001. Through SCO, both Russia and China are trying to achieve geo-economic and geo-strategic objectives against the prevailing influences of the western world, transnational terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. Meanwhile, the growing trend of the regionalism in different parts of the World challenged the American Unipolarity in the international system where the SCO is not an exception. In theoretical terms, the structure of international system is based on a permanent anarchical environment of the international systems which compels the states to alter their standing in the world politics against the potential challenges. Therefore, the central theme of the study revolves

around the growing bilateral cooperative interaction between Beijing and Moscow and the growth of their collaborative bilateralism in different dimensions under the multilateral framework of SCO. Moreover, it is an academic endeavor to rationally explore the nature of growing Sino-Russian relations under the multilateral cooperative framework of SCO. It could also be treated as appropriate study to comprehend the nature of common threats to the cooperative inter-state foundations of Sino-Russian multidimensional collaborative bilateralism.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The debate on the growing cooperative bilateralism between China and Russia cannot be ignored in the contemporary world politics due to the changing nature of international system where the international community has started thinking about a post-American world. The rise of China as an economic power and Russia as a resilient country has put both states on limelight in the world affairs. Both countries are playing an important role in the world affairs and challenging the writ of the United States in the global affairs. From Middle East to South Asia, from Africa to East Asia both countries have teamed up against the US and put the American foreign policy in under extreme pressure. On many fronts, the US had to retreat because of the Sino-Russian political and strategic cooperation (Lo, 2004).

The relations between both states always remained an important element of international world politics because the political attributes of both states cannot be ignored in the international system. The leaders of both nations always remained active in the world politics due to the changing strategic dynamics of the international politics. The standings of both states in their respective regions are much important for the global players due to

the unique features of both nations in the world. Russia, the geographically largest country of the world, makes Russian leaders powerful enough to influence the changing patterns of international system. Russian political, economic and strategic influence is vivid from her active role in Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and other parts of the world. On all these fronts Russian political strategy got success and the US led alliance had to face the retreat. Even today most of the European allies of the US are relying on Russia for oil and gas supplies, their economies would face difficulties if the Russians stop supply of oil and gas.

In 2014, after Crimea's annexation had affected relations between Russia and West, the US and European Union imposed various economic sanctions on Russia. However, despite of these sanctions the EU has been a main importer of Russian energy resources. According to the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) in 2019, Russia export it 63.9 percent natural gas, 50.3 % crude oil and 50.3 per cent petroleum products to the EU countries. The following table shows geographical distribution of certain Russian top export items in 2019 (% total):

	EU	US	China	Other east Asia	Other
Crude oil	50.3	1.8	27.6	9.3	11
Petroleum products	50.3	6.7	5.0	6.5	31.5
Natural gas	63.9	0.0	1.1	7.3	27.7
Coal	29.0	0.1	13.5	29.5	27.9
Wheat	3.2	0.0	0.2	3.8	92.8
Sawn wood	15.3	0.2	55.7	8.5	20.2

Source: EPRS based on BOFIT Policy Brief 2/2022

In 2021, the trade volume between EU and Russia reached at €257.5 billion and the big share amounted to €158.5 billion was the EU's imports and most of the imported goods by the EU from Russia were fuel and mining products particularly mineral fuels were (€98.9 billion) 62% of total imports (EU Trade Policy, 2022).

Being the largest country of the world in terms of covering area, Russia always tried to become an influential actor in the international system where the western values remained a significant anti-Russian factor. Additionally, China, second largest economy and the largest country with 1.44 billion population, also played important role in the world politics. With huge skilled manpower of about 800 million people, the Chinese economy is growing rapidly and likely to surpass the US economy soon (Lee, 2016). This is the reason that China is expanding its economic influence and rapidly replacing the US as an able ally in many parts of the world. Especially in South Asia, China replaced America when it comes to Pak-China ties.

On the other hand, after the withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan, China quickly tried to extend the hand of friendship towards the Afghan Taliban, which means that China wants to maintain close ties with Afghan Taliban to ensure regional and global security. Chinese leaders always tried to acquire an influential position in the international political affairs due to their greater political, economic and strategic interests. The anti-Chinese obsession of the western world also remained a potential challenge for Beijing and its role in its respective region. Thus, the combination of Russian and Chinese standings in the global arena always remained an essential feature of the international system. The leaders of both nations attempt to stand influentially in the global chess board where the Western political trends are very much trying to get influential position in the Asian politics.

The new world order is now shifting and focusing on Asia because of its population, economic share, political influence and strategic outlook. Most of the major economies like China, Japan, South Korea, India and others are in Asia. Most of the nuclear weapon states reside in Asia with huge nuclear stockpile and offensive capability. Most of the natural

resources are in Asian states whether oil and gas or other precious minerals. Most of the important chokepoints, maritime routes and sea lanes of communication are in Asia which ensures the global trade and economic stability. This is the reason that United States and her allies are always eager to maintain their strategic presence in and around the Asia-Pacific region to protect their political, economic and strategic interests. In Asia China and Russia are two dominant powers who are trying to checkmate the US moves in this part of the world.

The nature of Asia political order is dependent on the political and strategic position of Moscow and Beijing in the world politics because the Russian and Chinese leaders are determined to keep the Asian power balance in their own favour which generates a new wave of global power politics. The Americanized nature of global politics containing western values against China and Russia proved to be the key element in defining the global structure of power. In the changing nature of global power politics, the western world supported by American standards always revolves around the positions of Russia and China in the international system due to their exceptional characteristics in the world.

The relationships between the both states are the matter of great concern for the US led Western world because the bilateral interaction between Moscow and Beijing would define the fate of global power politics in future. For example, in recent times both states cooperated with each other on four different fronts and thwarted the US influence. First on the North Korean nuclear issue, Chinese and Russian political support strengthened the North Korean stance and the US never tried to militarily engage that country in East Asia. On the Syrian front, the US and its regional allies wanted to remove Bashar Al-Assad from power but the Russian and Chinese political, economic and strategic support not only

strengthened the Bashar Al-Assad regime but also defeated the Western supported Free Syrian Army- (Rebel Group) and also transnational terrorist groups like Islamic state and Al-Qaeda. It was Russian military support which ensured this victory and political setback for the US and its allies (Phillips, 2022).

On the Iranian front, the US wanted to garner diplomatic support and UNSC authorization to attack Iran for its non-compliance over nuclear issue. But due to Russian and Chinese Veto the US could get UN authorization for the attack and had to retreat and stick to economic sanctions only. In Afghanistan, the US spent over \$2 Trillion dollars in almost two decades, but in the end had to leave the country in hurry because of the Russian and Chinese political influence in the region (Granwald, 2020). The Russians and Chinese took the lead and engaged the Afghanistan Taliban for a quick political resolution of the Afghan impasse, which resulted in the humiliating retreat of the US led alliance from Afghanistan (Fischer & Stanzel, 2021).

In Central Asia, the US wanted to increase its influence by getting more air bases in and around Central Asian states but due to the Russian political pressure, the local states refused to extend the lease of air bases in Central Asia, which reduced the US influence in this region. The recent history of cooperative bilateralism between Russian and Chinese leaders is inherited in the decades-long history of Cold War when the whole international system was placed under a strict bipolarity. The bipolar division of the world created a US-Soviet confrontational politics under the communist and capitalist shadows. During the days of Cold War, the actual fight was between the United States and the Soviet Union, the active role of Beijing was much important in the communist-capitalist struggle for global dominance. In this way, it was an interaction of three great powers in which the growth of

cooperative ties between Moscow and Beijing was the primary actor in shaping the Cold War politics.

The Cold War model of power politics was failed to undermine the emerging cooperative bilateralism between Russia and China due to their permanent positions in the United National Security Council (UNSC). The governments of both nations acquired the status of veto power in the UNSC and became an integral part of the global politics. The acquisition of veto power under the permanent seat of UNSC further enhanced the political and strategic standing of both Russia and China in the global world affairs which later converted into the politics of UNSC. Apart from their minor disagreement over some territorial disputes, the leaders of both nations did not let their bilateral confrontational attributes to undermine the broader scope of their common standings against potential security threats from the Western world. Despite remaining aggressive rivals over border conflict for a brief period of time, the both nations resolved their strategic differences for the achievements of mutual geo-strategic and geo-political interests.

The major shift in the bilateral relations occurred in the post-Cold War scenario when the rise of Soviet-less world order compelled different states to alter their conventional designs of foreign policies. The USSR overwhelmingly focused on military modernization and put less emphasis on economic growth and revitalization which led to their debacle and then the US emerged as the sole superpower of the world. But in modern times, Russia under Putin has emerged as a strong political, economic and military power, which has the ability to confront the US and its allies without any pressure. As per the demands of changing structure of global power matrix, vanishing of bipolar designs of the world forced Moscow and Beijing to change the conventional nature of their bilateral

interaction. Leaders of both states improved their bilateral ties after the dismemberment of the Soviet Union which was a reflection of their changing priorities in the aftermaths of Cold War conflict because both states faced the common enemy in global arena. The collapse of Soviet Union in the world politics and the disappearance of the communist expansionist designs from the face of the earth proved to be an end to US-China diplomacy.

The quest for fostering their bilateral relations in the multidimensional areas led the governments of both states to sign various cooperative agreements such as the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation in 2001. Apart from concluding various formal agreements for bilateral cooperation, the leaders of both nations decided to adopt multilateral framework agreements for the diversification of their bilateral relations in different dimensions. The leaders of two states activated their designs of multilateral cooperative framework under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization- (SCO) which was initially Shanghai Five in 1996.

Later on, the expanding designs of Sino-Russian cooperative alliance added India and Pakistan to expand their vision of multilateral cooperation. The conversion of Shanghai Five into SCO and the extension towards South Asia empowered the Russian and Chinese governments in introducing their global designs against the American global standing. The Russian strategic tilt towards India was aimed to reduce the US and Western influence over the latter and Chinese closer strategic ties with Pakistan provided an opportunity to Pakistani leaders to look for alternative to the US. The addition of both these South Asian states into SCO actually connected this region with Central Asia, which is going to pave the way for interregional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia. The growth

of Moscow-Beijing cooperative bilateralism expanded the vision of bilateral cooperation in the international system which was boosted in the form of SCO.

The primary factor behind the evolution of structure of international system which remained against Russian and Chinese global standings under the American influential role in the world politics was proved to be the main binding force behind the collaborative cooperation between Moscow and Beijing. Further developments in the bilateral cooperative mechanism between Russia and China adopted the multilateral framework to meet their desired objectives in the global power politics. In other words, the creation of SCO and its extension beyond the Central Asia region was a response to the rise of anti-Russian and anti-Chinese thoughts originating from unipolar structure of global power balance (Kimmage, 2005).

Since its creation, the SCO has been reacting on various issues including Ukraine crisis as per its Charter's Article 2 which stated "SCO not being directed against other states and international organizations". The Article is contrasting with Warsaw Pact's Article 4 and NATO- Article 5 that allows the members states to defend one another against any military aggression from non-member states. Both organizations have been intervened in regional and international conflict. On the other hand, under the Article 2, the SCO member states have not such legal obligation. Although, SCO criticized the various aggressive actions from the United States and NATO in the different parts of the world, especially military intrusion in Afghanistan and interference in the internal affairs of the member states of SCO on the name of human rights, freedom of expression and democracy. But practically, it did not become a part of any conflict against any state or organization. The best examples of the non-interventional approach of the SCO can be observed during

the three military confrontations of Georgia, Ukraine and Syria where one of its funding members, Russia was directly involved but the SCO remained silent or did not become direct part of these conflicts (Kaleji, 2022).

The theoretical explanation of the evolving bilateral relations between two largest states of the world can easily be comprehended through the neorealism which emphasized the structure of the international system. The proponents of neorealism explain the changing nature of global power politics and its dependency on the anarchical structure of international system which pushes the states towards certain directions. The anarchical nature of global world politics is a permanent feature of international system which does not spare even a single state and impacts the political standings of the states located at different regions. The theoretical descriptions of neorealism appropriately explain the growth of Sino-Russian relations and their unprecedented growth against the common security threats. The anarchical nature of global power structure convinced the Russian and Chinese leaders to strengthen their cooperative bilateralism parallel to their several political disagreements.

Moreover, the transformation of bilateralism between both nations into the cooperative multilateralism in the form of SCO could further be considered the response of their common interests. As a response to the growing American interests in the Central Asian region along US presence in Afghanistan, the SCO proved to be an effective intergovernmental setup supported by Chinese and Russian cooperation to outset American influence in the Chinese and Russian surrounding regions. While keeping in mind the complex interaction of three major powers, there is a need to academically investigate the nature of multidimensional bilateralism between Moscow and Beijing under the

intergovernmental context of SCO which is considered to be a major development in an inter-state cooperative framework between Russia and China. Therefore, the central theme of this research revolves around the main engines of SCO Moscow and Beijing, and their increasing bilateral collaboration with the help of SCO's multilateral cooperation supported by South and Central Asian nations. Moreover, it is an intellectual endeavor to explore the reasons of revolutionized transformation of emerging bilateral multi-layered collaboration between Russia and China from the platform of SCO.

1.1. Rationale of the Study

The end of Cold War era marked another chapter in the world politics where the leaders of different nations attempted to redefine their foreign policy priorities and in the wake of a new world order deficient of expansionist designs of communism. It was the end of four-decade long Cold War confrontation between Washington and Moscow. The rise of Soviet-less world created a world of new realities where the Sino-Russian rapprochement became a permanent feature of new world after the banishing of bipolar divisions of the global world order. The emergence of Sino-Russian bilateral cooperation further became a gravitational point of great power politics when the governments of both nations decided to augment their existing bilateral communications with the help of a multilateral cooperative framework under the SCO.

The creation of SCO transformed the conventional foundations of their cooperative bilateralism of by reducing their disagreements over various points. Therefore, the combination of bilateral and multilateral cooperative interaction between Moscow and Beijing expanded towards Central and South Asian nations. Therefore, this study seeks to

address the question of rising bilateral cooperation between two important players of global power politics where the governments of both nations are increasing their cooperation and coordination over various issues of great power politics. Moreover, this study also focuses on the emerging politico-strategic deep rooted ties between Russia and China and how it is going to impact on the regional and global politics.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the evolving great power politics, an increasing alignment between Russia and China has become a permanent feature of contemporary international system in which the mainstream leadership of both states remained to be a potential challenge for the unipolar designs of international system. The rising collaboration between the governments of both states is reaction to their common geostrategic interests and the unanimous position against common threats. The nature of multiplying cooperative bonds between Moscow and China has let the leaders of both nations to become vocal in the international system against the American opposition to their expanding influence in the surrounding regions. Thus, the multidimensional interaction between Russia and China has become a serious challenge for the American global standing due to the creation of SCO and its Central and South Asian extension. This study seeks to explore the nature of growing bilateral cooperation between Moscow and Beijing under the multilateral cooperative framework of SCO. The geographical proximity of the two largest states of the world has perceived to be a serious challenge for the American geostrategic interests for keeping the global balance of power in their favor.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The quest for studying the growing multidimensional relations between Moscow and Beijing led this study to explore the ongoing nature of Sino-Russian relationship and its transformation from bilateral to multilateral dimensions under the broader framework of SCO. Hence, the study is fundamentally designed to achieve following objectives.

1. To examine the nature and evolution of an inter-state interaction between Russia and China.
2. To investigate the role of SCO in increasing Sino-Russian relations in the post-cold-war era through analyzing their respective foreign policies.
3. To explore the reasons growing cooperative bilateralism between the Russian and Chinese leaders under the SCO.
4. To examine the scope of multidimensional cooperative interaction between Moscow and Beijing in the presence of American opposition.

1.4. Research Questions

The pursuit for completing this study on pragmatic basis has led the research to achieve the states objective based on following questions.

1. What is the genesis of Russian-Chinese relation structured in cooperative confrontational interaction?
2. How the Russian and Chinese leaders strengthened their rapprochement under the SCO?
3. How the multilateral cooperative framework of SCO transformed the foundations of bilateral relations between Moscow and Beijing?
4. What is the scope of ongoing Sino-Russian rapprochement in the presence of American opposition?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study seeks to investigate the role of growing Sino-Russian relations in the multidimensional directions while examining the role of potential challenges. The American opposition is a threat to the Sino-Russian rapprochement under the intergovernmental mechanism of SCO. Thus, the research is an appropriate feedback to the people interested in studying the world politics from the Sino-Russian perspective because the main argument of the study tried to examine the ongoing patterns of power politics between Moscow and Beijing and their impacts of the American global standing. Additionally, it is an important study to comprehend the nature of SCO, supported by Russian and Chinese leaders, and the extension of SCO from Central Asia to South Asia. While understanding the contemporary nature of cooperative bilateral interaction between Moscow and Beijing, the creation of SCO proved to be an important factor in diversifying the multi-layered collaboration between the two active players of global power politics. Furthermore, the findings of the study are helpful in understanding the increasing role of China and Russia in the South Asian affairs because the expansion of SCO's intergovernmental mechanism beyond the Central Asian region has raised various questions on the Russian and Chinese roles in the SCO and their determination of involving members into it. The inclusion of South Asian states in the SCO further enhanced the vision of SCO in which the Moscow and Beijing are the main supporting engines.

1.6. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The study is based on an analytical survey of bilateral relations between the two largest powers of the world and their growing bilateral values on various common interests have

become an essential element of global power politics. The access to available data consisting on secondary sources hampered the actual spirit of a balanced research which remained a dominating factor in this research because the lack translated versions of Russian and Chinese primary sources, including the declassified documents and official policy papers; this research is forced to rely mainly on secondary sources of data. Moreover, the financial and time constraints further hampered the rational and balanced analysis of the study which ultimately affected the findings of the study. Based on limited time and financial resources, this research try to access the available material related to Sino-Russian role in the global world politics. A limited access to the epistemological communities through various formal and informal interactions during the main intellectual gatherings on the topic considered to be an effective means for conducting research on impartial and rational grounds.

While keeping in mind the broader theme of the study and are various dimensions, this research is designed to specifically study the nature of Sino-Russian bilateralism under the intergovernmental mechanism of SCO. The mainstream patterns of bilateralism between Moscow and Beijing treated as main point of investigation in this study which is exclusively emphasizing the growth multidimensional bilateral between the Russian and Chinese authorities under the multilateral framework of SCO. There are various levels of challenges to the growing coordination between Moscow and Beijing, but this study is restricted to the examination of American opposition which is considered to be a potential challenge to increasing Sino-Russian collations in different fields. Thus, the study attempted to consider the an American antipathy towards Sino-Russian cooperation a

serious challenge demanding the leaders of both nations to take adequate security measures for against the rising American antagonism on their cooperative ties.

1.7. Operational Definition of Major Terms

1. Regional Integration: The process by which two or more nation-states agree to co-operate and work closely together to achieve peace, stability and wealth.
2. Geo-strategic: Governmental strategy based on geo-political interests.
3. Geo-economics: A study of the relationship between politics and economics at international scale.
4. Energy security: The uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price.
5. Cooperative Bilateralism The multidimensional close diplomatic interaction between two states.
6. American Antipathy American opposition to the Sino-Russian multilayered cooperation.
7. Multilateral Framework The intergovernmental cooperative mechanism of SCO.

1.8. Literature Review

A number of books and articles are available on Russia – China relations, organizational structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), some of them discuss the economic, political and strategic interests of different powers in Central Asia. Although, all the available literature discuss the Russian-Chinese relations, their relations with CARs and their economic and strategic interest in the region, inception of SCO and its structure but very few have tried to focus on the role of Russia and China for regional integration

through SCO, and what is the significance of other regional countries like Pakistan, India, Iran and Afghanistan for regional integration, and role of SCO in the post US-withdrawal period.

Wilson (2015) highlighted the nature of Russia – China relations. She discussed gradual process of improving relations from hostility to friendship and ups and downs in initial relations between Russia and China and factors which made them close allies. The study tried to explore the importance of strategic and economic interests from diverse point of views from both countries. She examined the Russian foreign policy and Russia-China relations after 9/11 incident, their stance on war on terror and American involvement in the region. However it did not discuss the nature of Russia-China relations within the SCO forum. Beckwith (2009) asserted that the Central Asia has signification position in the history of the world politics. He argued that Central Asian Region has been the chessboard of imperial rivalry among the great powers caused by their expansionist polices. So there had been a competition between empires for influence over Central Asia, owing to its location at crossroads of different civilizations and old silk route. However, the study does not highlight the geo-political and geo-economic realities of emerging regional arrangements among the regional states.

Clarke (2011) noted that Chinese policy maker always considered the Central Asian region as an important factor for peace, stability and development of Xinjiang province. He also discussed the strategic importance and political history of Xinjiang, its historical, religious and cultural linkages with CARs and the impacts of unrest in the Western border province on China's internal security. The study explored the significance of cordial relations between China and Central Asia in historical perspective.

Chng and Uberoi (2008) discussed the nature of Indo-China relations, competition and rivalry between two growing economies of Asia and its impact on the region. They argued that both countries have convergence and divergence of interest. It is an established fact that without normal relations with neighbouring countries and peace in the region, a state could not achieve economic and trade development. The study assessed their economic reforms, modernization, and their consequence on the region as well on the global affairs. Rozman (2010) argued that the national identities of Russia and China are very close to each other and in the modern era due to growing engagements for their mutual interests, the national characteristics of both countries are likely to get more strengthened. He claimed that since the end of cold war ideological magnitude of their identities have diluted. The study provided a comprehensive overview of Russian-Chinese national identities, their closeness from prerevolutionary history to present time and their communist behaviors. The study also gave a fresh insight into their approach toward emerging world order and their growing relations that would pose challenge to the world order and play a role to shift world order in favour of Asian region.

Legvold (2007) explored the current state of Russia's foreign policy and sheds of historical of Russian supremacy. The author argued that its historical great power status had influenced the foreign policy of Russia and more importantly after the 9/11 attacks. The author focused on the exiting patterns in Russia's foreign policy and transformations in line with emerging geo-political situation, geographical circumstances and economic interests. The study discussed the impacts of globalization, domestic issues, natural security and leadership role on Russia's approach to the outside world. He noted that Russia had complex relations with the regional powers.

Aris (2011) analyzed the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, its organization structure and its agenda for cooperation and regional security. The SCO consisted on the countries that have very important geo-strategic location; these states provide the link between Asia and Europe, and Eurasian heartland with the Arabian Sea. The author examined the role of SCO in Chinese and Russian foreign policy and how it addresses the diverse range of challenges in Central Asia. The study discussed the growth of Eurasian regionalism through Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Carroll (2011) argued that China has leadership role in the SCO, however, China claimed that she had no desire to exercise hegemony within the SCO. He discussed the Chinese motives in the region, its relations with other members and China's stance about multi-polar world. The study noted that China had economic as well as security interests in the region where Russia desired military influence. China and Russia have ambitions to counter US through SCO. Carroll also explained the US and European perceptions and response toward the SCO. Wang (2011) claimed that SCO was playing more effective role in achieving its objectives than other regional organizations, such as CIS, ECO and Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO). He discussed Chinese perspective in the SCO, its strategy of no confrontation and concept of "*Peaceful Rise*." In the wake of 9/11, US penetration in Central Asia, and presence in Afghanistan have been a great concern for China. He asserted that Chinese New Security Concept (NSC) would be a counterbalance strategy. China wishes to assure its energy security and enhance trade and economic activities through SCO.

Lanteigne (2018) states that Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a new security organization formed in 2001 to confront growing challenges in the Central Asian

area, such as terrorism and separatism. China and Russia continue to define the SCO, but disputes over how the organization should evolve have begun to generate a subtle but increasing schism between the two countries in recent years. Impending challenges related to expansion (India and Pakistan became full members in 2017), deepening Sino-Russian schisms (China pushing for a stronger economic role for the organization, while Russia is more interested in hard security), and the 'shadow of Crimea' are likely to stymie any Sino-Russian alliance in the near future.

Li, Dongchen & Kolotova (2020) have discussed about The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is the largest regional security and cooperation organization, having existed for more than two decades. China and Russia have been the driving forces behind it from its inception, and they have played a critical role in its development. The cooperation between the Big Two has three main goals: to ensure the development of the Eurasian corridor, to promote collective security through regional cooperation organizations, such as the United Nations, and to recast the world order based on political dialogue, mutual respect, equality, and international law. Despite this, there remain disagreements between China and Russia, as well as within the member countries. China wants to tackle terrorism, extremism, and separatism while simultaneously seeking economic cooperation, but Russia wants the SCO to serve as a geopolitical counterbalance. People may be concerned about how China, a rising economic and military force, will continue to share power within the SCO, particularly with Russia, but also with the other member countries. There is currently no conclusive solution to that question. We can only conclude that the SCO has evolved gradually into one of the most multilateral and energetic organizations. However, if success is to be sustained, reforms and systematic change are essential.

Giago (2021) states that purpose of this essay is to examine how the relationship between China and Russia, the two most significant members in the formation and functioning of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, shaped the organization's culture. The key inter subjectively shared features in the referred connection are discovered using constructivist research. It is suggested that they were assimilated into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's culture, particularly in terms of formal regulations and conventions.

Alimov (2018) examines the SCO's function and place in the evolution of interstate contact in the Eurasian sphere, as well as the state of and prospects for the Organization's primary areas of multidimensional collaboration. The author then examines the characteristics of the SCO partnership system as an interstate interaction model that can provide an institutional platform for broad regional economic cooperation in the context of the new realities of Eurasian development, the implementation of member states' national development strategies, the linking of efforts to align integration processes within the EAEU, and the implementation of China's One Belt, One Road initiative with the EAEU.

Kocamaz (2019) explains the United States and its Western allies have dominated international affairs through numerous political and economic organizations since the conclusion of the Cold War. However, as new power centres arose, Western governance and US supremacy came under scrutiny, notably from Russia and China. Russia and China have resolved to strengthen the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in order to achieve regional security, form a new energy club, and restrict US influence in the area, among other things. Although the SCO lacks the material and political capabilities to

aggressively fight US interests, it has become an essential weapon in balancing the US through Russia and China's soft balancing strategies.

Bobo Lo (2014) describes the principles of the Sino-Russian relationship have remained constant. Moscow and Beijing continue to place a high value on their "strategic alliance," the economic tie is growing, and both sides oppose Western notions of global governance and strive to limit American dominance. At the same time, they have opposing views on a 'multipolar' world order. Whereas Russia sees itself as a 'independent' centre of global power, China sees Russia as a prickly neighbour with an exaggerated sense of strategic self-worth and a failure to adapt to 21st century problems such as modernization. Strategic trust is difficult to get by. Their collaboration is more of a utilitarian axis, driven by a pragmatic recognition of the benefits of collaboration than a deeper affinity. Moscow is concerned about China's increasing aggressiveness in East Asia, the loss of Russian influence in Central Asia, and the creation of a China-centered or G-2 world in which Russia would be a minor player. It is also concerned about the rising imbalance in the bilateral relationship, as well as the amount to which Russia is now reliant on China, both inside Asia and in the international system as a whole.

Alexeeva & Lasserre (2018) highlights the introduction of several trade agreements, investments in transportation infrastructure, and the exploitation of Russian natural resources has marked a considerable economic and political reconciliation between China and Russia in recent years. Since the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, this collaboration appears to have deepened. Some European and American news outlets interpret it as a hint that China and Russia are forming a strategic partnership that might jeopardise Western

interests. This article examines the many kinds of Sino-Russian reconciliation while underlining the cooperation's economic and political limitations.

Khan (2013) points out the global political landscape and regional environment, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a key development. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization would represent a beacon of hope for the region's fight against terrorism, separatism, and extremism. Pakistan, on the other hand, is afflicted by terrorism, separatism, extremism, and socioeconomic destruction across the board. The Kashmir conflict is an essential, crucial, and substantial issue for both Pakistan and India. To resolve these challenges and complications, Pakistan must participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's platform.

Erdem (2015) reveals in the last decades of the twentieth century, massive economic upheavals and political incursions wreaked havoc on China and the Soviet Union. In today's world, Russia is a massive force attempting to restore its economic foundation in the face of globalization. The Western world, on the other hand, has paid close attention to China's economic progress and hailed it as a success story. On a variety of economic, political, and diplomatic fronts, China and Russia have undertaken efforts to expand bilateral ties and boost collaboration. The Shanghai Collaboration Organization (SCO) has been a key component of Eurasian politics since the mid-1990s, serving as a platform for forging new forms of cooperation between China and Russia. The SCO member nations have dealt with a variety of geopolitical, security, economic, and regional politics challenges. The SCO has made combating the trio of "terrorism, extremism, and separatism" its top priority. The primary documents of the SCO make no distinction between violent and nonviolent self-determination movements, or between those seeking

outright independence and those seeking improved regional autonomy. All are categorically labeled as separatists. In actuality, SCO member states accept, and in some cases even assist, other members' crushing of any other kind of antigovernment protest.

1.9. Research Methodology

It is basically a qualitative research that primarily designed to investigate the nature of interactions between Moscow and Beijing in the context of regional organization and their emerging role in the global power politics. It is a study of alliance behavior in the context of global politics. This particular study is a case study of Sino-Russian cooperation as well as competition in the context of SCO. The study tried to explore the contemporary nature of cooperative bilateralism between Russian and Chinese leaders at international level while examining their growth under the broader framework of SCO. The creation of an interconnection between both arguments in the study kept the main focus of the research on descriptive and analytical lines. However, it also tried to predict the future of Sino-Russian bilateral ties under the multilateral framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the basis of their past and present interactions. The qualitative method of investigating the main argument of the study further kept within the limits of certain objectivity due to the exploration of the central theme of the study with the help of a particular theoretical dimension. In the Post-Cold War era, the growing trends of regionalism become prominent phenomenon and various regional organizations emerge in the various parts of the world, these regional organizations are playing their affective role in the global affair. SCO is one the prominent Organizations that mainly driven under the great influence of China and Russia. To the study the multidimensional collaborative

bilateral Sino-Russian relations in the growing Eurasian regionalism, some regional integration theoretical approaches also is discussed.

In the realist paradigm, the international structural is based on a permanent anarchical system where the states are act as per their personal interests and make or break their relationships in the global politics according to own benefits and against potential challenges. With the help of the established principles of neo-realism, this research is an academic endeavor to study the structure forces form the anarchical international system in shaping the cooperative interaction between two largest states of the world. The efforts to diversify their cooperative relationships under multilateral approach within the framework of SCO, the both countries trying to adopt various formats of cooperation for strengthen their mutual ties against the common geostrategic and geo-economics challenges and efforts for a multi-polar world order. The both states have also divergence of interest on several issues. The collection of data is largely based on combination of primary and secondary sources, where the more reliance on the secondary sources considered being the appropriate method for examining the main argument of the study. To quest of completing the research on balanced sources of data led this research towards limited sources of primary data. Due to the unavailability of primary sources of data, this study tried to overcome the problem of including original sources of data through accessing various online sources. The data collected from online sources mainly consisting of official websites of the various governmental institutions and departments treated to be the most appropriate sources of primary data. Furthermore, an active participation in the intellectual gathering of different communities further fulfilled the deficiency of primary sources for the completion of this research.

1.10. Organization of the Study

The pursuit of maintaining the central theme of the study on balanced and impartial basis led this study towards the achievement of specific objectives through addressing certain questions. Thus, the study is divided into following chapters.

The second chapter tried to emphasize the historical background of the Sino-Russian ties based on varying patterns of an inter-state interaction between two largest states of the world. The leading state officials under different political administrations tried to enhance their bilateral cooperation in different fields. An exclusive account of historical survey proved to be an essential element in understanding the contemporary nature of Sino-Russian cooperation.

After formally introducing the central theme of the study in the second chapter based on historical context, the third chapter of the research attempted to elucidate the reasons of transformation of bilateral interaction between Moscow and Beijing with the help of neorealist perspective. The theoretical explanation of the main argument of the research covers the debate in this chapter.

The fourth chapter particularly studied the Sino-Russian conflicting relation and tried to assess the divergence of interests through focusing on the indicators of conflict under the shadows of SCO.

The subsequent parts of the research continue the main arguments through developing a connection between Sino-Russian rapprochement and the creation of SCO. Thus, the fifth chapter emphasized the unprecedented growth of both neighbors started under the intergovernmental mechanism of SCO and its active role in the global power

politics. This chapter particularly focused the growth of Sino-Russian bilateral ties and assessment of indicators of cooperation under the multilateral framework of SCO.

The sixth chapter of the research tried to highlight the institutional development of SCO, its organization structure and mechanism through which SCO has been playing important role for regional integration and Sino-Russian growing ties.

The last chapter of the thesis tried to conclude the research by concluding the study on pragmatic basis. It will present findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

China and Russia have long and multifaceted history of relations which passed through various stages. The governments of both states tried to remain in a cooperative interaction under various political administrations while having minor points of disagreements. Both nations practiced the twisted and turning nature of their bilateral interaction consisting on various cooperative and competing phases due to their geographical proximity which has made them immediate neighbors. The geographical proximity was one of the factors which played an important role in bringing both states closer to each other especially after the nuclearization. The minor disagreement between both states remained an insignificant factor before their common interests in the world politics. Their minor clash wasn't a hurdle towards their major regional and global converging interests against capitalist bloc led by the US. America in the 1970s maintained tricky relationship with Soviet Union and China. Both were communist states and America instead of facing to large communist enemies chose to open up with China and continued her rivalry with Soviet Union.

The end of Soviet Union in 1990s ended the US dependency on China and from cooperative approach to confrontational approach started between the US and China. In the later years, Russia under Putin forged closer political, economic and strategic ties with China. Now both countries are trying to checkmate the US political maneuvering in the

world affairs. A shared vision for looking to the international system prevailed in the bilateral interaction between China and Russia, because the leaders of both states always tried to enhance their political standing in the international power politics with the help of each other. This is the reason that both countries cooperated with each other many fronts. Especially in the UNSC where both allies vetoed the US or EU led resolutions against Iran, Syria, North Korea or other states (Ross & Bekkevold, 2016).

The political leadership from both sides always tried to consider the bilateral cooperation a potential source of power in the international power-gaining competition of great powers. The evolving nature of their bilateral cooperation in various domains also remained an important factor of global power politics because the varying phases of their diplomatic twists and political upheavals proved to be an undeniable feature of international system. It is more appropriate to maintain that the nature of Sino-Russian relations could be considered as an essential component of international system and an unquestionable reality of world power politics. Both nations are powerful enough to impact on the global economies and politics and are key members of regional and global politico-economic and security forums. The evolution of their diplomatic communication was mainly dominated by the different dramatic moves resulting of a combination of cooperative and competitive interaction.

An analytical survey of their multifaceted cooperation suggests that the leaders from both sides have made concerted efforts to establish strong ties to secure their mutual strategic interests in the competitive world. The quest for improving bilateral political coordination and diplomatic cooperation led the governments of both states towards the

adaptation of an economically multidimensional model which augmented their position in the international power politics (Meyer, 1993).

The leaders of different nations have started considering an unprecedented growth of cooperation between Beijing and Moscow as an unavoidable dimension of international system where the People's Republic of China and Russian Federation are two key players. The mainstream leadership of both countries is still determined to multiply the contemporary growth of their multilayered collaborations in different domains. This is the reason that Sino-Russian collaboration is not just confined to politics only but it is also economic and strategically deep rooted. Both countries are nuclear weapon states and possess formidable conventional capabilities to defeat their enemies and win wars. Russia is helping China in modern capabilities like air defense, aircraft, maritime domain awareness etc. Sino-Russian defense collaboration is motivated by their mutual threat perception. Both states are facing challenges to their national security from the US proactive strategy in the Asia Pacific region and transnational organized crimes, terrorism and extremism.

Russian and Chinese leadership remained active and committed in addressing their territorial issues and mainly focused on improving their bilateral economic ties to boost their cooperation in future. The genesis of their cooperative and confrontational ties prevailed in the history of Sino-Russian bilateral interaction. Since ancient times the silk route which originated from China and passed through many civilizations including Tashkent, Bukhara and Yerevan the areas of Central Asia and Caucasian region were the trade routes between China and Rome (Sladkovskii, 2008).

The ancient era of Chinese and Russian history has been resulted in various treaties of the settlement of their border issues such as the treaties of Nerchinsk, Kyakhta, Aigun, Peking, Kulja, Uliassuhai, and Shimonoseki. These treaties were the main factors determining the evolution of Sino-Russian relations during the ancient times when China was under Qing rule and Russia was an Empire. Through settling their bilateral territorial points of disagreements, the political authorities of both states were intended to address their border issues over different areas (Shioya, 2019).

Therefore, the central theme of this chapter revolves around the history of Sino-Russian relationship through briefly emphasizing the main turning points of their bilateral interaction. With the lens of history, the main arguments in this portion of research attempted to explore the genesis of close coordination between two neighbors. An exclusive focus of the arguments focused on the nature of cooperation between both states having status of great powers. Their geographical proximity has made the border between both states the six-largest border in the world with a long territorial length. The biggest population size of China and largest geography of Russia made both states exceptions in the international system. Thus, the primary reason behind establishing a comprehensive historical account of Sino-Russian ties is the acquisition of an appropriate understanding of Sino-Russian relations. It is considered essential in this research to maintain a comprehensive account of Beijing-Moscow relations before starting the debate on the main theme of the study.

2.1. Early Developments

The initial phase of bilateral ties between both states inherited their close geographical features which have made them immediate neighbors capable of following an inter-state cooperation. Shared borders between both countries consist of different corridors such as China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Kazakhstan-Russia, and China-North Korea-Russia. The geographical proximity between China and Russia is important factor between both states. Their geographical position is pivotal for their mutual cooperation, trade and investment. The territorially adjoining geographical connections between both nations touched the Altai Mountains of Central and East Asia. This mountain range is on the headways of Irtysh and Ob Rivers where the populations of diverse ethnic affiliations were existed. The diverse ethnic backgrounds formed the societal attributes of this region where the Tavan Bogd was another mountain range with similar characteristics. The Tavan Bogd is a mountain massif on the tripoint of Mongolia-Russian-China (Bolt & Cross, 2018).

Mutual cooperation among these states has made this region the most important region of the world. This is the reason that East Asian economies are growing rapidly, especially China, which is set to replace the US (Lee, 2016). Russian economy is also good and showing reasonable growth rate of 4.5% in 2021 which is better than 2020 because of fluctuating low oil prices and Covid-19 situation (IMF trims Russian 2022 GDP growth forecast, January 25, 2022). South Korea is a trillion-dollar economy and Mongolia is also growing at rapid pace.

In thirteenth century, the Mongol captor Genghis Khan invaded Russia, defeated Russian army and destroyed the whole military structure and burnt most of their main cities

including Kiev and Moscow. Genghis Khan subjugated the Russians during that period and ruled the area for more than two centuries. At the same era Mongols ruled China under the Yuan Dynasty (Bolt & Cross, 2018). But in modern times Mongolia shares peaceful borders with these major powers in the region and believe in mutual growth and cooperation. Traditionally the first known connections between Russia and China were found under Mongols Empire. The inhabitants including warriors and prisoners from both China and Russia were at the court of the great Khan even the princes of Russia obligatory went to great Khan Court for forfeiting their tribute (Quested, 1984).

In 1404, Russian merchants were dealt with Chinese trade convoys for purchasing silks, rhubarb, pearls and precious stones in Samarkand. During the 16th century Russian authorities sent many representatives to obtain information about Chinese lands, cities, wealth and inhabitants (Sladkovskii, 2008). 17th century observed the Russian quest to enhance its land-power, search of new markets for fur trade and other economic benefits and spirit of adventure compelled her “eastward expansion” (Huhlhahn, 2019). The Russian freebooting adventurers established the contacts with inhabitants, who had been living alongside the Amur River under the Qing dynasty. The freebooters gained access to Amur Basin, they built forts and pointes for fur trade activities on the rivers. The growing armed power and their atrocious activities like enforcing the local tribes of the area to give them honor were not acceptable for new Manchu rulers. The military conflicts were rampant between China and Russia from 1680 to 1689, and finally both states ended confrontation after the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689.

The geographical proximity between China and Russia always remained an important factor in their mutual cooperation and growth. Under different political

administrations, the leaders of both states signed various treaties for the settlement of their bilateral territorial issues inherited in the past centuries. The aim was simple, you cannot change neighbors so let's change approach towards each other and turn this border of confrontation into border of cooperation between both states. Both countries started negotiations to settle their territorial claims under the Qing dynasty in 1600s. The idea was to resolve the border disputes and focus on mutual cooperation for collective growth. It was China under imperial rule of last dynasty which proved to be the last dynasty of non-Han people. The Qing ruler divided the Chinese people into two ethnic groups (Han and Non-Han people) and called China as Qing in their official documents and records. The 268 years rule of Great Qing (formally known in Chinese literature) dynasty was an important era of the Chinese imperial history because they adopted the territorial settlement model for its immediate neighbor Russia (Lieberman, 2008).

Before the establishment of Russian Empire, Russia was under Peter the Great who was the last ruler of Tsardom of Russia and Peter-I witnessed the transformation of Russian nation from Tsardom of Russia to Imperial Russia. The first treaty for border between Tsardom of Russia and Qing dynasty was signed in 1689 when both empires agreed on a peace deal after a brief conflict. Political leadership from both sides acted rationally and tried to resolve their bilateral disputes in an amicable way. The Qing dynasty was cohabited and harmonized with the Mongolian and Korean Dynasties. Koreans and Mongols were under the Chinese influence during Ming dynasty which was established after Mongol's Yuan dynasty. The peace treaty between Qing and Tsardom was a major development between two largest nations living under their historically golden time. Both nations were at the turning points of their history with the major political transformation (Shioya, 2019).

It was evident from the past that both countries historically had the desire to work together and grow collectively. Same approach is seen in today's China and Russia. Both countries are now very important members of the international community and both are working hand in hand on many fronts. Their mutual economic cooperation is also commendable. In 2021, Russian 18% overall trade turnover is because of China, which makes China as top trade partner of Russia in the last 10 years. However, Chinese imports from Russia revolved around only 2% share of China's \$6.51 trillion trade turnover (Simes, January 22, 2022). There is political will to increase the bilateral trade to newer levels. According to Vladimir Oshchepkov, Moscow's Consul General in Harbin, China,

“Russian-Chinese interregional cooperation has become an integral part of the relations of comprehensive interaction and strategic partnership between our countries. We see that even the pandemic does not create insurmountable obstacles for their progressive development.....recently political leadership from Russia and China set the task to bring bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2024.....we are confident that Russian and Chinese regions will make a significant contribution to achieving this goal”(Russia-China trade to reach new peak in 2021, December 9, 2021).

In nutshell, there is strong will and utmost desire in both nations to work collectively for mutual growth and development. It is expected that bilateral cooperation between both states would increase in near future and may touch new peaks.

2.2. Treaty of Nerchinsk

The Treaty of Nerchinsk was signed on 27 August 1689 at the end of nine years' border clash between China and Russia, This was the first official contact between both countries. This treaty not only considered the issues of regarding demarcations of territorial boundaries but also paved the ways to strengthen trade ties (Voskressenski, 2003). The Treaty of Nerchinsk was an important milestone in the bilateral relationship of both states. The treaty ended conflict in Albazino area, the first Russian settlement on Sino-Russian

border. It was the area of Amur River, and connects the Far East of Russia and Northeastern of China. Before the Russian arrival, this area was under the Daur people, a sub-ethnic group of Mongols.

In present China, the Daur ethnicity has been recognized as the prominent ethnic group in the list of China's fifty-six social ethnic groups. So, the Nerchinsk treaty ended the conflict in the Amur region where the Qing dynasty sieged a fort of Albazin. The fort was originally a Russian property which was founded in 1651 by a local Russian explorer of Amur River area, Svyatitsky. The Albazin fort was under the control of Russian Cossacks, who were one of the ethnic groups of China with Russian origin. The leading historians dubbed this conflict as the Siege of Albazin between the Beijing and Moscow when they were under the Tsardom Russians and Qing dynasty. After having a short armed conflict, the rulers from both sides were agreed on terms of surrender of Albazin to Chinese Qing and Russian abandonment of the area of Amur River. The archival record of the international history also known the treaty of Nerchinsk as a peace deal as the result of Russian-Manchu border disputes from 1652 to 1689, in which the initial fight began between Cossacks and Manchus on the river area of Albazin (Branett, 1977).

The disputes on the border area of China and Russia started with the series of skirmishes began from Qing dynasty (Cossacks-Manchu mixture). The signing of Nerchinsk treaty marked territorial border on the Argun or Hailar River and the Shilka River. The treaty also included the Stanovoy Range (a mountain range) as a formal border between China and Russia. Moreover, the agreed framework of the treaty facilitating both states in fostering of bilateral business ties (Lee & Bradshaw, 1997).

Through forming close cultural ties, the leaders of both nations were able to develop their intercultural relations consisting on various trading activities by covering the areas of Siberia, Nerchinsk and Kyakhta. Thus, the treaty launched a platform for the promotion of Chinese, Russian, and Central Asian societal identities through cross-cultural contacts. In 1727, the Burinsky agreement was a bilateral attempt to eradicate the role of major points of disagreements in the cooperative bilateralism of both states. Thus, the combination of Nerchinsky and Burinsky agreements were the main factors supporting the finalization of Kyakhta treaty in 1728 (Sladkovskii, 2008).

2.3. Treaty of Kyakhta

The border area of Siberia witnessed another territorial settlement between the ancient Chinese dynasty and Russian empire in the form of a treaty. The representatives of Qing dynasty and their Russian counterparts formally met to acknowledge the evolving cooperative bonds between their respective nations. As a result, the formal representatives of both states concluded the Treaty of Kyakhta, which upgraded the border recognitions between Russia and China through building trade relations. The Treaty of Kyakhta was signed on 14 June 1728, which paved the way for commercial and cultural activities. Because of the Treaty, Russia got access in Beijing and also permitted to build an Orthodox Church in Beijing. By maintaining a consensus-based Mongolian border, opened the avenues for trade Caravans, and the developed a consent on the annexation of Xinjiang. The agreed framework of the treaty addressed the issues of territorial borders between China and Russia based on the Burinsky agreement (Sladkovskii, 2008).

The treaty introduced a new approach for recognizing the diplomatic values of each other through improving the role of embassies in their cooperative ties. An exclusive focus of the treaty was on the maintenance of the joint mechanism to address the border violations. This treaty structured the legal approach of Sino-Russian relations which prevailed until the middle of nineteenth century. This treaty stabilized the politics of Far East region and helped the Chinese and Russians to resolve their pending territorial issues while reducing the impacts of their diplomatic estrangement on the bilateral cooperative ties. The improvement of trading ties between Chinese and Russian nations was the main focus of the negotiations of Kyakhta treaty. It revealed the Russian dependency on the trading capabilities of China, because the Kyakhta trade became one of the most important sources of economic development. Russia considered the trading potential of Kyakhta as a most important source of income through foreign business. The Chinese Qing rulers were aware of the Russian reliance of the Kyakhta trade and they used to exert economic pressures on Russia by partially suspending the trading lines between both states (Sladkovskii, 2008).

The quest for remaining at an advantageous position was the primary factor for inflicting a sense of superiority in Qing mindset. In addition to the Qing pressures, the presence of criminals and Thugs remained a major threat to the inter-state trade ties between China and Russia. Two sub-ethnic groups of Mongols, Buryats (from Russian side) and Uriankhais (from Chinese side), were the prominent thieves which remained an unavoidable factors for stopping the trade for brief period of time. Once, the trade was suspended for seven years due to the robberies of various Chinese traders. The robbed Chinese merchants were located in the Khovsgol region of Mongolia which augmented the

existing threats to the trading cooperation between two great powers. In continuation of their combined efforts for addressing the major constraints undermining the scope of an increased trading collaboration, the Russian and Qing Empire of China arranged various consultation meetings (March, 1996).

The subsequent events of Kyakhta treaty let the Russian and Chinese leaders to enhance the scope of their bilateral frameworks of agreements with the help of different formal steps such as the signing of International Protocol in 1792. It was signed in 1792 at Kyakhta, the International Protocol provided further validations to the previously agreed Kyakhta border treaty. The agreed framework of the Kyakhta treaty later clarified and strengthened when another treaty which took place in 1858 (Shioya, 2019).

The Kyakhta treaty opened new avenues for greater cooperation between both neighbors. It was evident that because of the shared borders both states needed each other's support to enhance their economic clout in the region and beyond. China has always been pivotal for its ancient Silk Route which connected many empires at that time. The Chinese are applying the same approach today and coming up with many economic corridors around the globe under their Belt & Road Initiative. The Russians are eagerly participating in those arrangements and improving their economy because the Russian economy needs Chinese support for its rapid growth and this is the main motivating factor between both states. Historically there were many other treaties like Treaty of Aigun which not only improved their political relationship but also enhanced their trade ties. The next part of the study focuses on Treaty of Aigun which was also an important event in their historical relationship.

2.4. Treaty of Aigun

Chinese rulers under Qing dynasty and Russian leaders were willing to conclude another treaty in 1858 titled as the Treaty of Aigun. The army officials from both sides, Nikolay Muravyov from Russia and Yishan from Qing Empire, arranged a meeting in the Aigun town of Manchuria to sign the treaty agreement. The background of Aigun treaty starts from the period of Catherine II when she introduced her aim of reforming Russian strategic position in the world. The Russian mission of developing its naval forces to meet the geostrategic objectives upset the Qing rulers and Qianlong emperor felt the up-gradation of the naval forces of neighboring super power (Lo, 2002).

Evidencing from the Russian increasing naval influence in its surrounding waters, Qing fifth emperor considered the increasing naval power of Russia as a potential threat which could undermine the Chinese geopolitical and geo-economic interests in surrounding regions. Russian annexation of a nearby peninsula, Kamchatka, for the purpose of establishing a naval base which was considered by Russian leaders as an important factor helpful for them for enhancing their strategic outreach in the international system. In addition to the rule of Catherine the Great's aspiration for increasing the influence of her country in the world politics, Catherine paid serious attention towards the Qianlong emperor and tried to take into account the military strength of Qing and his growing animosity and towards neighboring states. Chinese Taiping crisis changed the whole scenario due to Qing's engagement in the internal affairs of China (Griven, 2010).

The Taiping crisis placed China under civil war with the rise of massive rebellion sentiments under the Qing dynasty and became an unavoidable crisis in 1850 when an

intra-state war emerged as revolution. Two Chinese groups, Manchu people and the followers of theocracy of Hong Xiuquan, were involved in a bloodiest internal war of Qing dynasty. The Manchu versus Han societal divisions under Qing rule temporarily disengaged the Chinese politicians from global affairs. It considered as an appropriate opportunity for Russian leaders to utilize it. Nikolay Nikolayevich Muravyov-Amursky, a Russian Military General having diplomatic and political abilities appeared as a prominent factor launching the expansionist designs of his country. He decided to increase a more assertive role of the Russian military in the surrounding areas and started forces mobilization on the Manchurian and Mongolian borders when the Taiping crisis was at its zenith. The situation intensified further with the start of second Opium War when the European imperial powers, British and French tried to enhance their influence and expand their areas of operations.

2.5. Tianjin and Beijing Treaties

The opium wars were the two major conflicts between China and the European powers for the gaining of commercial benefits. The first Opium War was between Chinese and British forces initiated in 1839 whereas the second Opium War was between France and Britain forces against China that started in 1856. Qing dynasty was forced to overcome the crisis of Opium War with the help of Tianjin and Beijing treaties (Rimner, 2018). These treaties were remained key factors in enabling Qing rulers to overcome the crisis at external fronts and meet the enemies more effectively. Despite doing efforts for resolving the clash with the foreign powers, the unintended pressures on the Qing proved to be the primary forces for smoothing the ties between Chinese and Russian leaders and both agreed to start negotiations for dispute settlements. These circumstances led both neighbors towards

signing of Aigun treaty in 1858, which again focused the area of tenth longest river of the world, the River Amur (Neild, 2015).

The Russian leaders convinced their Chinese counterparts on the peaceful and positive intentions of the Russians and finalized the treaty on constructive lines. The signed terms of the treaty accepted the river areas as the officially recognized boundary between Qings and Russians, while providing permission or accesses to Russia to the Pacific region. The gaining of access to Pacific region let the Russians to expand their influence in the littoral maritime areas to protect their maritime economic and strategic interests because the Pacific Ocean was a key area defining the political moves of the two neighboring powers (Matsuzato et al. 2018b).

The aftermaths of Aigun treaty further empowered Russian role in the area when Russia got additional benefits of controlling the maritime areas of Ussuri Krai and Primorye. The signing of this treaty proved to be beneficial for both empires as both states further consolidated their economic and strategic ties and worked for the collective growth (Matsuzato et al. 2018b). Same approach is found in modern times. Russia and China in current times are cooperating on many fronts, which entails global political issues, economic development, regional & global connectivity, infrastructural development, international security, transnational terrorist & organized crime, military and strategic affairs. Their alliance is pivotal to their regional and global interests. Both states are veto powers and possess formidable militaries backed by huge nuclear arsenal which has the ability to deter or defeat the enemy. The historical link to their modern day engagement and cooperation is expected in foreseeable future.

2.6. Peking Convention of 1860

It was Peking Convention where the involvement of British and French increased the legality of the conditions agreed among four powers of that time. The Peking Convention of 1860 came up after the battle of Taku Fort during the period of Opium War crisis when the English and French forces attempted to annex the Taku Fort. Another battle at the Baliqiao Bridge considered being an extension of Opium war. The spillover effects of the Opium war dragged Russia towards Qing's rising crisis with the foreign powers (Rimner, 2018). A brief period of different battles, including the famous Battles of Taku and Baliqiao, proved to be an important factor widening the diplomatic gaps between Chinese and European powers and the signing of Peking Convention to utilize the economic potential of China in the international system. The consensus of the participants of the Convention on the opening of China for foreign trade and investment parallel to remain China active in the presence of their diplomatic forces across the China. For the peaceful settlement of territorial issues with its non-western participant of the Convention, the Qing leaders accepted the presence of commerce potential between two nations (Chung, 1981).

The Convention convinced the two-sides on the promotion of bilateral trade & investment by considering the entire boundary as an important line for continuing regular trade activities. The trading communities across the borders were allowed legally to conduct their business based on free and relaxed manner with the luxury of duty-free business activities. This development helped the citizens across the border to gain business advantages with the formal business permissions. Thus, the societal development dragged both nations towards the exploration of different cross-cultural trading values because the presence of business communities in foreign markets was protected by the states. The two-

sided governments ensured a countrywide security mechanism for the protection of foreign business nationals (Rimner, 2018).

The respect and protection of merchants in the society later became a supporting element for the stable growth of Sino-Russian relations. With the support of increasing cooperative ties between two-sides, the combination of political coordination and diplomatic communication further allowed the leaders of both nations to open consulate services in territories of each other. Russian and Chinese consulates were opened in the major cities because of the Convention which charted the rules and regulations for the running of smooth consulate affairs (Finkelstein, 1979). The main clauses of the Convention were related to the regulation of diplomatic affairs through maintaining consular services because it was recognized in the charter of the Convention that the extension of diplomatic communications between the Chinese and Russian governments would let their governments to diversify their ties. The improvement in the regular diplomatic correspondence of the two-sides encouraged the leaders of both states to develop a non-confrontational attitude for each other. It was the first Peking Convention settling the territorial issues between four great powers whereas the second Peking Convention was held in by the end of nineteenth century between Chinese and Britain governments over the question of Hong Kong (Carroll, 2007).

In 1898, the second Peking Convention for the Qing and British rulers came into being after the first Chinese war with its immediate neighbor Japan. The end of war between both neighboring empires persuaded both countries for a peaceful settlement of their bilateral disputes in 1895 (Carroll, 2007). Over the past it has been observed that there has always been a will in both nations to resolve their issues amicably and both had desire

to grow collectively. Such dynamics are common between these two sides. Their collective approach towards peace and development is commendable and still both countries believe that such positive approach is beneficial. This is the reason that both countries are dominant actors in international affairs, challenging the US led Western alliance on many fronts.

2.7. Tarbagatai Treaty- 1864

Despite the prevalence of different various diplomatic initiatives for maintaining cooperative growth of bilateral ties under peaceful ambitions, the bilateral desire for eradicating the main impediments of Sino-Russian relations were restricted to formal documents. The border clashes remained active between the Qing China and Russian Empire with varying extents due to the unquestionable existence of territorial confrontations between two nations. An inimitable arrangement of different collaborative and confrontational initiatives let the two-sides to continue their peaceful efforts parallel to managing their confrontational points (Shioya, 2019).

In this regard, signing of the Tarbagatai Treaty in 1884 can be considered another appropriate case of collaborative efforts between Qing Chinese and Russian Empire with the intentions of handling their border issues peacefully and in friendly environment. This agreement between the Chinese Qing and Russian Empire was a bilateral initiative to improve the cooperative ties beyond the confrontational lines. The genesis of the Treaty of the Tarbagatai basically inherited the treaty of Kulja which was signed between same parties in 1951 and opened the Qing areas of Kulja and Chuguchak for trade and investment by both countries (Noda, 1973).

The opening of areas for the Russian commerce activities gained momentum when the formal conversation between both states which started broadening of their geo-economic interests in the region and beyond. In continuation of their cooperative economic interaction, the political authorities of Russian Empire attempted to include other areas of China for the trading activities. The focus was on the Kashgar, and the matter went to Qing court for the settlement due to the lack of consensus on the extension of trading ties. The Qing court was reluctant in accommodating the economic ambitions of Russian and the Chinese leaders under Qing denied the Russian request for adding the area of Kashgar in the list of permitted trading channels. The treaty provided Russia access to certain areas for purely trade purposes and Russian traders were legitimately authorized to stay in municipalities of Xinjianglike Ningyuan (former Huiyuan and Yili) and Tarbagatai. Russian objective of increasing its trading sphere of influence reached to Central Asia where Kazakhstan emerged as another trading partner (Noda, 1973).

Increasing Russian geo-economic interests in the neighboring regions resulted in the growing presence of Russia in Central Asia which later compromised Chinese emerging presence in the same region. Even the preparation and promotion of few treaties restricted to certain texts without having a full formal availability in Chinese language. The treaty of Tarbagatai was initially between Chinese Qing and Russian Empire but later it added Kazakhstan as well. It established China-Kazakhstan border and dragged an intensified regional political order of Central Asia.

The above-mentioned survey of cooperative treaties and conflicted territorial claims created a complex web of cooperative efforts and confrontational interactions between China and Russia. Due to their status of great powers, the government authorities

of both states under different political administrations remained ambitious of playing active role in the world politics. The treaties discussed above is just a glimpse of dispute management attempts of both states, because the parallel developments their varying contradictory positions on different issues undermined desired outcomes of their cooperative interaction. Apart from the stated framework of agreements, a few other treaties proved to be milestone developments in defining the main course of Sino-Russian history.

2.8. Pre World Wars Era

The historical growth of bilateral cooperation between two neighboring great powers witnessed a major breakthrough in their inter-state communication which further passed through different agreements of territorial settlements. In this regard, a number of treaties shaped the collaborative framework of bilateral relations between Qing China and the Russian Empire. The Treaty of Uliassuhai signed in 1870 was one of the important treaties settling the issue of Zaysan Lake whereas, the Treaty of Saint Petersburg was another milestone development. In 1881, the state representatives of Qing China and imperial Russia met in the second largest city of Russia, Saint Petersburg, and agreed on a joint treaty. It provided some geographical leverage to Qing government over Russia by granting the area of Zhetysu to China (Noda, 1973).

This area was under Russian control. The agreed conditions and the main articles of the treaty pushed Russia at a disadvantageous position and posed a huge loss to the Russian Empire. The mainstream political authorities and leading state authorities translated the main agenda of the treaty a major drawback for Russian position in the global

power politics. The meeting of Saint Petersburg between Chinese and Russian leaders was the tenth meeting of the Russian foreign relations agreements. The first meeting was held between Russians and Persians in 1723, after the one-year war between Russian Empire and Safavid dynasty of Iran. The treaty of Shimonoseki was another treaty signed originally between Imperial Japan and Qing Chinese, but Russian position in the politics of Far East counted Imperial Russia as a key player. In Japanese city, Shimonoseki, the treaty renewed the terms of cooperation approved by Japanese and Chinese leaders in 1871 under a close Friendship and Trade Treaty. This treaty opened new vistas of cooperation and collaboration. The participants of the treat vowed to work together and settle their disputes in a friendly manner to avoid any clash in future.

With the turn of twentieth century, the nature of international system slightly altered and the change of the structure of international system, forced both great powers to modify their traditional way of treating each other. The Qiqibhar Agreement was the most important development in the initial phase of twentieth century when the Chinese Qing and Tsarist Russia met in Qiqihar in 1911 and willingly recognized the agreement signed under Qiqibhardeal. This deal resolved a border issue and established a border between Mongolia to the River Amur which was later accepted as an important agreement due to the last one of Qing dynasty (Urbansky, 2021).

The meeting for the signing of border agreement between the Qing governor (Zhou Shumo) of northeastern part of China and the formal representative of Imperial Russia. Zhou Shumo was appointed officially as the key authority to supervise the border problems with the neighboring nations. The meeting was held at Qiqibhar where Bodhirov participated as the official representative of the Russian Empire. Thus, the representatives

from both sides agreed mutually on the resolution of border problems between the two great powers. The agreement considered another attempt of two territorially proximate states on the management of land borders between them and the treaty of Qiqibhar was actually a trilateral treaty despite of the involvement of Mongolia. So, it emphasized on the hundred miles' area adjoining the tri-junction of Russia-China-Mongolia (Quested, 1984).

The Qiqibhar territorial agreement was clearly linked with the internal situation of China under Qing rule because of the political upheavals under the growing societal anti-government sentiments. Akin to the Qiqibhar agreement from the start of twentieth century renewed and continued the series of treaties with the territorially adjacent nations. The trilateral interaction of Russia-China-Mongolia resulted in a cooperative treaty in 1915, which emphasized on Mongolia because of the two great powers located at Mongolia's surroundings recognized the Outer Mongolia as an autonomous region. In other words, the treaty was primarily designed to discuss the issue of Mongolia's independence and its status between the Chinese and Russians. The three parties agreed on the autonomy of Mongolia by giving the Mongol leader the right to carry on his economic affairs independently whereas Chinese leaders agreed to avoid any military adventurism or offensive operation against Mongolia (Williams, 1996).

The idea of this treaty was to give Mongolia a chance to live in peace and grow as an economic power. It was cooperative arrangement among these three states which helped Mongolia to establish its economy and despite small population her economic growth is commendable in modern times. According to Asian Development Outlook- (ADO), Mongolian economic growth is continuous. In 2021, her economic growth was 4.6%, which is slightly less than the previous year of 4.8% but it is expected that by 2022 her

economic growth with increase to 6.0% which is encouraging development (Asian Development Bank, 2021). This economic growth credited to the regional stability and peaceful neighbors Russia and China. It has been observed that regional stability, cooperation and collaboration seriously impact on the economic development of countries.

2.9. Political Changes in China and Russia

The start of twentieth century changed the global political landscape due to the uncertain conflicting behavior of states which later resulted in the two World Wars and later resulted in Cold War between the capitalist and communist blocs. The whole century was victim of a severe wave of power politics and the great powers located at different parts of the world attempted to change their positions according to the changing nature of international power competition. This whole scenario shaken the security of whole international system and placed whole international community under the shadows an intense politics between great powers. The key players of the international system were more concerned to the relative distribution of power at global stage because it was widely believed that the shaking security environment of world politics and its spillover effects on different regions encircled the international political order.

The change in the world order and its unavoidable effects on the entire international system reached to different regions, including East Asia and Russian Far East. The combination of both geographical proximities made the regional standings of China and Russia as an undeniable feature of global power politics. The geo-political changes in regional standings of the Qing China and Imperial Russia were the key factor impacting the global order of power politics (Lonny E, 1994).

The multifaceted development consisting on the confrontational and cooperative communications of both great powers increased the dependency of the global power politics on the regional standings of two neighboring nations, China-Russia. The internal political developments and the leadership upheavals affected the foreign relations of both countries because the nature of their political systems always affected their standings in the world politics. Therefore, an analytical overview of historical survey of Sino-US relations cannot be completed without understanding the political earthquakes of their international system and the change of leadership. Moreover, the confrontational designs of both states impacted the politics of Pacific region. Following are some triggering points that took place in the region and impacted on the Sino-Russian bilateral relationship.

2.9.1. The Boxer Uprising

It was a societal uprising in China consisting on a social movement of anti-foreign and anti-religious nationalist movement. The movement was originally defined a righteous mass social movement with the member of a specialists fighting skills with the belief that these defensive skills make them strong and invulnerable before the potential physical threats. The Chinese version Boxing backed by ancient Chinese martial art styles known to be the main factor in the society which inflicted a sense of confidence and security in their mindset (Forman, 1999). The high rounds of defense feelings improved the role of Chinese nation and Chinese merchants against the foreign invaders. Their social imprints were very dominating in the previous uprisings like Taiping uprising because the society was structured on the ideological foundations of ancient China. The Chinese society always remained very much linked to its ancient civilizational traits because the societal infrastructure of China was at its peak during the Qing rule (Liu, 1989).

The Qing dynasty was at the challenging position against the strong societal practices of the citizens and their strong association to the traditional civilizational values. Thus, the social revolt of people with certain beliefs was generally dubbed in non-Chinese literature as the Boxing uprising whereas the Chinese literature treated it an uprising led by Empress Dowager Cixi with the support of his strong nationalist feelings. That is the main reason for calling this societal uprising as an anti-imperialist uprising consisting of people of certain martial arts skills. The Cixi was the Chinese lady with exceptional political capabilities based on his background of official serving under the Xian feng Emperor. She became an influential political authority in the last phase of Qing dynasty. She used the Boxer militia as the strong force against foreign invaders (Black, 2013).

The leading role Cixi in support of Boxer movement started in 1900 when the Boxer people raised their voices against foreign interventions. The rise of this social revolt emerged from northern China and became a serious challenge for the western intrusion in Qing Empire. The forma support of Cixi to this Boxer people later became a national voice and reached to a formal declaration of war against westerners. The people of northern China were the initial point of this movement because the areas of northern part of China was feeling insecure against the foreign invaders because the foreign invaders are leaving worse impacts on the Chinese system beyond the economic domains. The religious missionaries of western backgrounds were considered the main threat to the Chinese civilizational values and their associations to the religious ideologies (Forman, 1999). Their anti-imperialist and anti-foreign views were the threat against dynasty rulers and the foreigners on key positions of privileged status.

The voices against the massacre of Christian believers and their western thoughts became an international point of attracting global response. The widespread massacre of the foreigner, including Russians, let the international community to take adequate measures against Boxer rebellions and their ideological fanatical beliefs. On humanitarian grounds, the troops from surrounding countries, Russia and Japan, ordered to take proper actions against the massacre of foreigners in the imperial China. The vision of Moscow and Tokyo was admired by the international community and the governments of United Kingdom, United States, Italy, France, and Austria-Hungary were ordered their forces to join the Japanese and Chinese mission. It was an alliance of eight nations against the decision of Chinese Imperial Court's decision for supporting the Boxer movement. In this way, Russia played an important role in settling the internal crisis of China, and the Russian vision for arranging peace negotiations under the eight nation alliance admired by some European states (Blank, 1995).

The governments of Netherlands, Spain, and Belgium were the leading states supporting the Russian efforts for eradicating the threats of an intra-state war in China. Russian active role in the peace negotiation for the settlement of social disturbance in China and its unspoken demands for humanitarian intervention communicated to international community the Russian vision of developing stable relations with China. The interventions of Imperial Russia in the China for the suspension of Boxer militia and their violent anti-foreigner campaign emerged as a serious challenge to the Sino-Russian relations. It became a difficult task to during the period of Boxer movement to visualize the cooperative relations between two neighboring powers. At internal level, the subsequent developments

to the Boxer uprising started diminishing the presence of Qing in state politics and the Qing ruler jumped into their last imperial tent (Black, 2013).

2.9.2. Xinhai Revolution

In continuation of the opposition of Northern Boxer people and the believer of the righteous and anti-imperialist idea, the Southern Chinese people realized the spirit of political confidence and the spirit of independent system away from dynastical system of government (Liu, 1989). They started their struggle to topple the rule of Qing and overthrew the ruling dynasty in the first phase of twenty century. In 1912, Chinese political system turned into non-dynastic with the struggle of local people who decided to overthrow the Manchu Qing rule in the country. The struggle ended to Monarch rule from China and prevented the influences of imperial rule on the internal political structures while introducing new political thoughts on the practical basis. In other words, dawn of the new century changed the domestic Chinese political system by putting a full-stop on the monarchy and beginning a new era of republican rule in the state. The countrywide rise of anti-Qing thoughts were mainly supported by Han people (or ethnically native people of Great China). They raised their claims against the ruling tradition of non-Han Manchu-Monarch rule because the anti-Manchu-led Qing monarchy was dubbed by native Chinese as the barbaric rule over them. The gradual growth of anti-Qing movement became an overwhelming wave across China and supporters of native Chinese movement gathered under the revolutionary slogans (Forman, 1999).

The most dominating slogans made the “overthrow of Qing and the restoration of Ming” became a solid bond for revolutionizing the societal political sentiments. A number

of revolutionary leaders appeared in Chinese society and they formed their separate groups for supporting the anti-Qing rule by calling it an anti-Chinese rule consisting Manchu traditions. Main support to the voices for overthrowing the Qing dynasty predominantly emerged from Wuhan and encouraged by majority of Chinese people. The situation came to its end in 1911 the three centuries old dynastic ruling system came to an end and the system of government was placed under the Republic of China. Sun Yat-Sen became the first president of new China in 1912 and started a new era of politics for managing internal and external affairs of the state (Leese, 2012).

The creation of the Republic of China was initially recognized by few states in which Russia was the leading state and attempted to develop diplomatic communications with the new anti-Qing government. The leaders of Qing's successors paid special attentions to the Britain, American and Russian governments and considered them the cooperative friends and collaborative partners. London and Washington positively viewed the change of political system in the US and appreciated the transformation of Chinese nation under the Republic rule. The enactment of non-Monarchic and un-dynastic ruling principles in the Chinese political system let its leaders to cultivate high diplomatic grounds in the international system (Niemezyk, 2012). The prevention of imperialist influences from Chinese state system was in Russian favor because the transformation monarchy to a republic system was in support of reforming foreign relations with the outside world. The new leadership of the Republic invited Russian officials and emphasized the formulation of a closely coordinated and closely harmonized bilateral interaction in which the Imperial Russia can play an effective role. As a result, an era of unprecedented collaborative growth

was resumed on improved principles and updated standards for arranging reciprocal meetings (Pantsov, 2000).

The period of reciprocal visits allowed the two-sided leaderships to begin a new period of pleasant and friendly relations. Even, the initial leaders of the Republic considered Russian helpful in polishing Chinese strategic muscles through reforming their traditional structure of regular forces. While help of Russia in restructuring and reforming its National Revolutionary Army on the request of Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), the Imperial rulers of Russia were active in helping its neighbor. In this scenario, the leaders of Russian Empire were unaware about the political developments of their internal system where the shadows of a political change started prevailing on the imperial rule (Pantsov, 2000).

With the help of Soviet political advisors and military assistant along with the expertise of very experienced revolutionaries like Mikhail Borodin, the new born Chinese Communist Party and Chinese Nationalists under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen continued their struggle for success of Chinese revolutionary movement. However, later on Yat-sen's successor Chiang Kai-shek had broken the alliance with CCP, and killed thousands of communists and expelled Soviet advisors from China. On international level Chiang Kai-shek was considered as legal leader of China, the USSR also accepted him as legitimate representative of China (Iliev, 2015).

2.10. An Era of Revolutions

The rise of an anti-imperialist thinking across the Russian nation converted into a revolution with the demands of changing state infrastructure beyond the imperialist

designs. It was called the Russian revolution due to widespread promotion of Bolshevik ideas in the society and its countrywide societal appreciation. The wave of revolution was a countywide call of the local citizens with different beliefs, and these beliefs were called the radical and revolutionary ideas. Supported by far-left ideological traits, the followers of revolutionary thoughts gained momentous strength and powerful status in the domestic affairs of Russia and called for the change the imperialist rule. The occurrence of these ideas on the mainstream Russian political system gathered the society on a unanimous stance and made the social support to leftist ideas as a countywide movement. This movement initially called by various academic circles of international community as a political voice for the rights of labor and workers with socialist tendencies. The formalized version of these titles introduced a new political party in Russia, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1912 (Scott, 1974).

The formalized struggle of the Russian people with leftist thoughts eventually reached at October revolution, a turning point of the Russian history and an important development capable of shaking whole international system. It is commonly known as the great revolution of October associated to socialist dimensions of managing state affairs. It was formally known internationally as the Great October Socialist Revolution due to its exclusive focus on the society and the societal reforms spare from economic discriminations (Greg & Muraviev, 2000).

The voices for the political change began in the start of 1917 when the society was under a great disturbance caused by a mass movement, commonly known as February revolution. It was the first stage of the revolution when the common people were in the

streets of Saint Petersburg and joined the mass movement of industrial workers despite the presence and deployment of law enforcement agencies and security individuals. The intensity of the situation augmented when the February revolution turned into October revolution when the followers of leftist ideology toppled the government and marked a coup d'état against the central government. It was the Bolshevik Coup which was recognized internationally the Red October due to its ideological foundations (Eder, 2013). The overthrow of the government and the establishment of new government under communist ideology dubbed internationally the red revolution because of the transformation of the Russian society into a communist regime. The arrival of communist ideology in the Russia declared it a first communist state of the world under the leadership of a renowned politician, Lenin. He was one of the pioneers of communist ideologues and became the founding father of the Soviet Russia under communist rule. Vladimir Lenin was a Russian-revolutionary leader with Marxist thoughts, and the political tendencies of his ideas brought dramatic changes in the Russian state structure. His ideas were mainly influenced by a German political philosopher, Karl Marx, who formalized the communism through the combination of his economist, socialist, and historical thoughts (Eder, 2013).

The departure of Lenin from Russian politics altered the communist foundations of Russian political system and placed the whole state system under the Stalin's corollary of Marxism and Leninist dimensions. The Stalinian government was led by Joseph Stalin in communist Russia (1927-1953) and created a totalitarian rule of law. The prevalence of Stalin's thoughts on the Russian socialist system was a further extension and a countrywide extension to the communist ideas which were passed to Stalin after the death of Lenin. The spillover effects of Russian's admirations to the political approach of communism reached

to various other countries where China was the second biggest state with communist ideas. The class-specific struggle in the Chinese nation began in 1919, when a mass social movement against the imperialist political designs of the country. It was a student struggle which gradually turned a national voice and a great source of ratifying the concept of Chinese nationalism in the form of Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The creation of CCP was a major force binding Chinese and Russian nations together on common ideological basis (Zheng, 1999).

The Chinese approach for reforming the state system under the influences of communist thoughts was actually a reflection of Bolsheviks revolutionary ideas backed by Marxist philosophy. The initial inspirations of the Russian communist systems were came from some Chinese revolutionary leaders such as Chen Duxiu, a devoted communist and one of the main pioneers of creating CCP at national level. Li Dazhao was another leaders of revolutionary leader so same traits, and he was also the principle creator of CCP. In the mid-1930s CCP went under the control of Mao Zedong, under his leadership CCP concerted on rural areas gained peasants support and developed guerilla warfare military structure adopted the strategy of guerilla warfare (Wilson, 2015). After the 1935 party conference, most of the CCP leaders were criticized because of their mistakes in Jiangxi and they went into background and Mao came on frontline, he gradually enhanced it power (Luthi, 2008).

Soon after the eruption of 1937 Sino-Japanese war, Mao announced the CCP foreign policy in which he declared Soviet Union as a 'most reliable, most powerful and most capable' ally against Japanese aggression. Sino-Soviet Nonaggression Treaty of 1937 was a clear and solid indication for antagonists that Soviet Union was an enduring and

reliable ally at the global landscape. The period from 1937 to 1941, Sino-Russian ties were exemplary; USSR provided military and financial aid to China, and world also observed its clear diplomatic support on various international forums (Levine, 1992). The Chinese civil war was ended on the victory of the Chinese Communist Part, and under the influence of Socialist thoughts the People's Republic of China was established on 1st October 1949 and Soviet Union was first which recognized it (Heinzig, 2004).

Mao became the first president and the founding father of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and continued his services to the state till death. The literary circles of international academic communities generally, the revolutionary writings of political contents marked him as a key aspirant of the Marxist and Leninist thoughts. The evolution of communist ideology was promoted by Mao but it was informally realized in the society during the Xinhai movement which converted China into a Republic. The Moa's version further converted the Republic of China into People's Republic of China in 1949 as a result of an intra-state war. This civil war was between the state system under Republic of China and the CCP. Eventually, the clash reached to an agreement and the new political system was agreed after communist revolutionary forces getting the control of mainland China. To a larger extent, the rule of CCP in China was similar to the Russian communist rule. There were some ideological disagreements emerged between both political systems because their political orientations of the communist ideology became one of the prime reasons of their conflicting claims over different issues (Eder, 2013). Only point supporting Chinese version of communism was the long lasting presence of the CCP's ideology in the high politics of states whereas the occurrence of revolutionary struggle was just in one year in

Russia. Then the system adopted different personality oriented corollaries like the Stalinism and altered the main ideas of communist theory (Mustafic & Preljevic, 2017).

2.11. Relations during Cold War Ear

Although Mao's experience regarding support from USSR during the last two decades was not pleasurable, even then he preferred to rapprochement with socialist Soviet Union. After independence, Mao paid his first visit to Moscow and while the meeting of his counterpart Joseph Stalin, both leaders were agreed that the cooperation between China and Russia is crucial for spreading out the socialism globally. China initially accepted the leading position of USSR in world communist movement. The Treaty of Friendship was signed on February 14, 1950 by Mao and Stalin, under this treaty both countries were agreed on military and economic cooperation, USSR provided 300 million US dollars loan, assurance of military support lest of foreign attack and thousands of engineers, technical and industrial experts went to China those initially played a very crucial role in establishment and development of heavy industries during 1950s. Consequently, China accepted the strict terms and conditions of trade and loan and allowed economic and military excess in Xinjiang region (Bernstein & Li, 2010). Initially the whole Chinese economic and industrial structure was influenced by the Stalinist models of developments. Due to this economic and technical cooperation China dealt with UN-sponsored trade embargo with no trouble.

However, this era of friendship was not elongated due to various reasons including divergence of views about different political issues on global political arena, differences on the issue of involvement in Korean war, thrust of leadership position in emerging

communist movements in third world countries and Soviet posture as superior partner and Chinese claim on huge territorial areas of Russian part. At the start of 1960s, clashes and militarization on borders areas were started. This continuously growing tension ended on 1969 war and the two neighboring giants was on the brink of nuclear war (Garnett, 2001).

After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev came into power, starting years of Khrushchev era were improving relations he tried to eliminate the suspicions of Stalin period. World saw a real growth in economic and defense fields between the two countries. An important issue which widened distance between China and USSR was Chinese desire for help in development of nuclear technology (Westad, 1998). In 1954, Khrushchev during his visit to china promised to provide assist for building of 156 production enterprises in China. Mao Zedong had been asking USSR to provide nuclear technology and technical help for development of its own nuclear weapons but Stalin always showed reluctance on Chinese demand. However, under Khrushchev alongwith other facilitations Moscow extended to China, promised regarding cooperation in establishing research center for nuclear weapons was also an important development. China and Russia signed an agreement on October 15, 1957, under which USSR agreed to provide the data with the 'sample of an atomic bomb' which could China to manufacture atomic weapon (Chiu, 1965).

Khrushchev had soft corner for West and suggested the concept of "peaceful coexistence" between communist and capitalist blocs but on the other hand, it was not acceptable for Chinese Communist Party and Moa because they were believer of anti-West and anti-America ideology (Luthi, 2008). In the mid-1950s China overview its foreign policy toward non-communist world and it tried to establish its relations with non-

communist countries of third world especially with Asian and African states. In 1955, during the Bandung conference China first time divulged its foreign policy shift (Bin Huwaidin, 2002).

The congress of the Soviet Communist party was held from 14th to 25th February 1956, where Khrushchev introduced his famous policy of 'Peaceful coexistence' and urge the establishment of cordial relations with capitalist world for world peace, he advocated the concept of peaceful transformation of capitalist states to socialism and avoid war through political and social forces (Haig, 2016).

In 1957, on the occasion of fortieth anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution Mao visited Moscow, while his visit he tried to prevent Soviet leadership from perusing its new policy of 'peaceful coexistence'. Mao strived to convince the Soviet leadership that due to technological advancements in military and civil capabilities socialism camp has prevailing position over the capitalist camp. But the Soviets were not accepted the Mao's concept of 'the East Wind is prevailing over the West Wind' (Lawrance, 1975).

After that the Chinese Communist party and Mao decided to turn away from shadow of USSR. The world saw a new twist between Sino-Russian relations. Khrushchev visit China in July 1958, but this time Chinese behavior had been changed and they did not gave worm welcome to the Soviet leader, the accommodation provided to the Khrushchev's entourage were in very bad condition without air conditioning. Mao showed arrogant behavior while taking with Khrushchev and did not accept the proposal of joint defiance projects (Haig, 2016). Under the slogan of 'Great Leap Forward' Chinese leadership decided to build and develop its economy through country's own energy and resources in

the next three years. After the Khrushchev's acrimonious visit, USSR called back the Soviet advisors and technicians from China. As a result of the pulled out, Chinese decided to stop the ongoing projects development of huge industries and replaced them into small and medium plants all over the country. In the same year, Khrushchev visited China, he criticized the Mao's speech in which he admired the US President Eisenhower and his foreign policy. This personal antagonism between Mao and Khrushchev further widens distance between PRC and USSR (Kung & Lin, 2003).

Soviet Union promised in the 1919 Karakhand Declaration that she will give all the annexed territories back to China, but latter on she had been avoiding to talk on the issue, even while the time when Sino-Russian cordial relations were on high point. After taking the measures regarding industrial development and economics self-reliance under "Great Leap Forward" in the start of 1960s Mao had wanted to resolve the board issues instead of economic cooperation, he refused Brezhnev's offer for resume military and economic aid. On the issue of nuclear control treaties, China and Russia were not on the same page. Russia signed nuclear test-ban treaty with the USA and UK in Moscow on 25th July 1963. China issued a statement on 31st July 1963 and strongly criticized the agreement of nuclear test ban treaty (Mastny, 2008).

The world had seen the verbal war between the delegations of China and Russia during the party conferences from 1961 to 1962. Soviet Union supported India in Sino-Indian border clash in 1962. In 1964, Mao demanded back the Chinese territories which were occupied by the Russians during tsars' regime. The technical advisors left China without completing many projects. In July 1964, China closed its embassy in Moscow and suspended its diplomatic relations with USSR. In the result of intensive propaganda anti-

Soviet sentiments were at their peak, about 200,000 Maoist Red Guards cordoned the Soviet embassy in 1967. Chinese had been watching closely Soviet forces movement toward Czechoslovakia and started to prepare themselves against any such aggression from USSR.

At the end of 1968, both countries increased their forces on the north-west region along-with the Xinjiang province of China, about fourteen divisions of Soviet army and twenty two divisions of Chinese military were ready on the both sides of board. Russian claimed that about 300 troops of People liberation Army of China took position for sudden attacks on Russian patrolling troops. On 02 March, 1969 first clashed was reported on Zhenbao Island and in these skirmishes several casualties were reported from both sides. Tension was reached on boiling point, Soviets were even considered the option of nuclear weapons against China and the world was on the edge of third world war.

The era of friendship between the two neighboring giants was completely come to an end in 1969 after the border conflicts. To counter Soviet supremacy in the region, China revisited its policy toward America and tried to enhance its relations with USA. President Nixon's National Security advisor, Henry Kissinger paid a secrete visit to China in 1971 and American President Nixon visited China in 1972 (Hanhimaki & Westad, 2004). Soviet Union tried to reinstate relations with China but could not make it. Chinese captured a Russian helicopter which crossed border and entered about 70 kilometers into Xingjian province. Soviet troops also ventured in May 1978 along with the Ussuri River area and in 1979 Xingjian border area (Korhonen, 2008). As well as on international level Soviet involvement in Vietnam and invasion in Afghanistan and military build-ups in Asia were

also became the grounds for hostile relations between them during the whole decade of 1970s.

Mao Zedong died on September 9, 1976 and Deng Xiaoping became the supreme leader of China, who introduced economic reforms in 1978 and these reforms paved the ways of success journey of Chinese economic growth and development. The Chinese policymakers felt the need of relations with outside world especially with neighboring states for effective economic growth. China revisited its foreign policy toward Russia. A new era of cordial relations between China and Russia began in early 1980s. Leonid Brezhnev showed his intention about re-establishment of relations with China in 1982 while a speech in Tashkent. Mikhail Gorbachev came into power in 1985, which not only took steps for reforms in the countries but also tried to introduce new thoughts in Soviet foreign policy. He believed that trust building is necessary to break down the Cold War suspicions. Gorbachev considered the policy of friendly ties with China is USSR favour.

On 28th July 1986 in Vladivostok, Mikhail Gorbachev delivered his famous speech in which he announced the removal of “three obstacles” that identified by the Chinese for reconciliation of friendly ties. He announced the diminution of forces from Chinese borders, gradual withdrawal from Afghanistan and assurance regarding use of influence on its ally Vietnam for withdrawal forces from Cambodia (Anwar, 1998)). To fulfill these proclamations, Dimitrii Yazov, Defense Minister of USSR announced in February, 1988 the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Sino-Soviet borders, and in March, 1988 Gorbachev announced the withdrawal of Soviet army from Afghanistan within ten months’ time starting from May 15, 1988 (Rubinstein, 1988). These positive steps paved the way of suitable environment for future cordial relations. Gorbachev visited China from 15 to 18

May, 1989, both the countries agreed on conclusion of antagonistic relations and conformation for future friendly ties (Ziegler, 1993).

The most of the western countries strongly condemned Chinese action against the protestors of Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 and called it 'massacre' they imposed economic sanctions against China. On the other hand, the incident brought the two countries more close to each other, because Mikhail Gorbachev did not criticized it and Moscow in its official statement declared the Tiananmen Square incident as an internal matter of China.

Since 1964 Zhou Enlai's visit, Prime Minister Li Peng was first Chinese leader who visited Moscow in April 1990, after the 26 years gap and signed various trade and economic agreement with USSR including an agreement of mutual reduction of armed forces and confidence building in military affairs. In May 1991, through an agreement both countries mutually resolved the disputes of eastern borders (Lin, 1993). However, in the month of December of the same year after the collapse of USSR, Sino-Soviet border was divided in four parts, about 1700 km Kazakhstan-China border, 1000 km Kyrgyzstan-China border, 430 km Tajikistan-China border and 50 km Russia-China border. Under the principals of 1991 Sino-Soviet agreement a joint group consisting of Russia and three Central Asian states was constituted to negotiate on the border disputes with China. In the results of continuous negotiations, China and Kazakhstan concluded an agreement regarding settlement of their joint border issues in 1994 and two additional agreements in 1997 and 1998. China-Kyrgyzstan resolved border issues in 1996. This 4 (Russia and three Central Asian states joint group) + 1 (China) negotiation formula laid the foundations of Shanghai Five and later on Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Akihiro, 2005).

The trade embargo from Europe and America in the result of Tiananmen Square became good fortune for Sino-Russian economic relations. China revisited its Cold War trade policy and started to increase trade with Russia including purchase of military equipment to meet its defense requirements. Despite the minor ideological difference between both communist nations, the Chinese and Russian leaders always considered the common ideological grounds as the main sources of their close relations.

2.12. Concluding Analysis

This chapter addressed the first question of the research which is designed to explore the nature of Sino-Russian relations and their evolution throughout the history. The nature of this chapter is very much linked to historical growth of bilateral ties between both states, and their unprecedented growth under different phases. The varying nature of different phases throughout the history let the two-sided leaderships to not let the disagreements to overcome their cooperative ties. The governments of both nations are willing to enhance their cooperation in the world politics despite having various conflicting interaction on some territorial issues, but the issues of territorial border were never long lasting. The signing of different treaties for the territorial settlements proved the strength of their bilateral intentions for enhancing inter-state cooperative approach. The two-sided governments have accepted the potentials of each other positively, parallel to the view each other negatively on some border issues. Even on ideological lines, both countries didn't let the ideological differences to disturb their ideological commonalities. There were various commonalities between both versions of communisms like, the time of completion of struggle between both states were same. The revolutionary struggles were occurred in the post-world wars environment when the shadows of Cold War were emerging from the

international system. The decades-long period of Cold War transformed their collaborative ties under the bipolar divisions of the world politics. The bipolar balance of power system with the rise of communist-capitalist struggle brought minor difference between China and Russia which is discussed in the subsequent parts of the study, because this chapter exclusively emphasized the evolution of Sino-Russian relations. The objective of examining the increasing inter-state interaction between the governments of both nations led this research towards the exploration of historical survey of Far Eastern and Pacific regions. To maintain balanced and impartial arguments in this part of the research further included the varying viewpoints of different academic communities regarding the history of Sino-Russian relations. The quest for dominating the Asian political order was also remained the main force which let Chinese and Russian leaders to remain hostile with each other. The varying strengths of their bilateral interactions have become an essential element of international power politics.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS UNDER THE SCO

The debate of Sino-Russian relations can easily be defined with the help of certain theoretical dimension. The leaders of both nations tried to improve their bilateral interaction under the cooperative framework of SCO which could be studied with the help of few theories which are mentioned in this chapter. The growing cooperative frameworks of both states let their leaders to enhance their diplomatic interaction for the achievement of mutual interests in the international system where the great power politics always remained a driving principle of relations between nations.

The cooperative framework of SCO provided a way to Russian and Chinese leaders for the cultivation of their bilateral cooperation while reducing the bilateral points of disagreements. Under certain theoretical models of Liberalism, the growing ties between China and Russia can be defined, because the reduction of conflicted interaction between Chinese and Russian leaders proved to be a significant development in the world politics. With the support of Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism, and Inter-governmentalism, the growing cooperative ties between Moscow and Beijing can be studied easily. The leadership of both states under various political administrations learned to resolve their cooperative ties in the presence of various cooperative forces generated by the theories of regional integration. Therefore, the central theme of this chapter revolves around the

conception of mainstream theoretical debate in which the states learn to overcome their various points of disagreements.

Apart from discussing the cooperative dimensions of Sino-Russian relations, a brief survey of neo-realism has also been discussed in this chapter to completely understand various dimensions of bilateral cooperation between Moscow and Beijing. Under the prism of Neo-Realism, this chapter attempted to provide a comprehensive understanding of Sino-Russian relations in the contemporary international system. The reason behind attaching the two contrast theoretical perspectives of international relations is attached to the structure of international system in which anarchy cannot be marginalized. Anarchy in the structure of international system defines the varying levels of relations between States. For the effective management of anarchy in the international system, the leaders of different nations adopt various patterns of bilateral interactions and collaboration to protect their national security interests.

On the political arena, the end of twentieth century and start of 21st century brought the opportunities of rise of China. The Chinese leaders revisited their economic, strategic and political policies, especially its engagements on regional level. After the productive initiatives to resolve the border and other mutual conflicts with the neighboring countries a new wave of regionalism emerge. China reengages itself and a process of establishment of productive and warm relations started. Various theories of international relations discussed the rise of China and its growing economic strategic, cultural and strategic engagements on regional level. The Liberal Institutionalism has elaborated the strong mutual understandings and multilateral trade and economics collaborations between China and other regional states. The constructivist approach discussed the prominent position of

China under the concept of ancient hierarchical order and due to its rich social values customs, traditions and norms through which the regional states have close bindings with each other. An example of regional economic and political integration is the European Union, where the political and economic cooperation can be observed on the basis of historical believes. (Krupnick, 1996).

For the persuasion of greater national interests in the foreign relations, the leaders of different nations follow the cooperative models of interaction, parallel to minimizing the role of conflicted bilateral patterns. In this way, the combination of two theoretical dimensions adequately explains the growth of Chinese and Russian bilateral relations on varying extents.

3.1. Functionalism

Functionalism remained an important theory of International relations in terms of regional integration and cooperation since early nineteen forties. It has been considered as the leading theoretical aspect of the international politics where the competing national interests of the States always remained a dominating principle of the international relations. The relations between states always remained conflictual due to the competing nature of the states against each other. In this anarchical world every country wants to be dominant and secure their political, economic and strategic interests.

In the presence of growing complex interaction between states, the concept of Functionalism denotes the idea of states' relations based on their conflicting claims. It is generally observed that the Functional theory was originated by David Mitrany, a renowned scholar of world politics. In 1943, David Mitrany in his writing '*A Working*

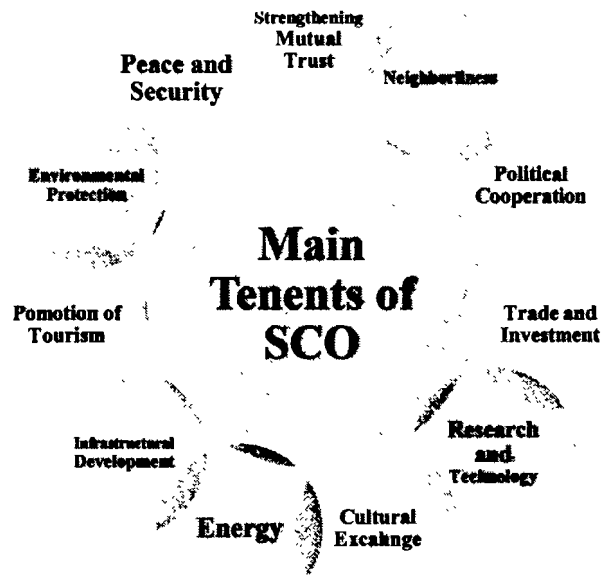
Peace System' discussed the concept of Functionalism and its different patterns. Preliminary concerns of functionalists and their mainstream ideas were establishment in a more secured and peaceful way regarding the world order. According to David Mitrany's comprehensive consideration, the main cause behind the anarchic history of Europe was nationalism and their political organizations in the region. This is the reason that European countries engaged themselves on World Wars to protect their nationalism and expanding political and economic interests (A, 1944b).

The term of 'Spill-over' effect is key concept of functionalism. Under the 'Spill-over' understanding, benefits of cooperation and decisions taken by states are related to one area and would have inadvertent effects for other areas. For instant, measures taken for environmental protection through reduction of greenhouse gases would affect industrial production which ultimately effect economic activities between different states. Majority of scholars believe that the Functionalism as the idea consisting of a 'rational-technocratic element' over and above a 'normative component' in the international relations.

It accentuates the 'role of experts and technocrats', in which the Functionalists say the functional institutions might be more effective means of public welfare in preference to national authorities (Diez, Bode, & Costa, 2011). They advocated the idea of increasing cooperation between different states through proper rules and laws. Another important principal of Functionalism is the classification or segregation of 'high politics' and 'low politics'. Functionalism differentiates the tow streams of world politics which are developed at two different extents. David Mitrany argued that the understanding on the doable issue that can be social issue or economic and trade issue or transit rights (low-politics) would be helpful to develop an effective understanding on the benefits of

cooperation by making it easy to resolve major security issues and main conflicts (high-politics). Mitrany's approach confronts the 'state-centric worldview' and advocates that the nation states are the best institutions to provide needs, but if some needs go beyond the national boundaries then it would be difficult for the nation-states to fulfill the required needs (Cox, 1996). On the other hand, the rapid technological development makes hard for states to maintain their respective security issues and conflicts. This scenario consequently creates an international cooperation to serve the purpose of relations between different states. This theory is relevant to the existing study because China and Russia two major powers are trying to secure their strategic interests through cooperative arrangement and bilateral collaboration under the framework of SCO. Both states are cognizant of the fact that greater cooperation would lead to greater prosperity and economic development.

In nineteenth century, many scholars notably G.D.H. Cole, Leonard Wool, Paul S. Reinsch and Pitman Potter keenly discussed the proliferation of international functional organizations in the international system. These authors assumed that the increasing number of these organizations could make the world more peaceful and stable due to their dominating role in the world politics. Leonard Wool was the first thinker who highlighted the departure of International Organizations from traditional 'state-centric model' and started considering the essential role of international organizations in the world politics (Iriye, 2002). Same approach is now being observed in the formation of SCO, through which China and Russia are trying to protect their regional and global interests. Purpose of SCO was also to strengthen bilateral relationship, overcome mistrust, greater political and economic engagements, enhance trade and investment and work for the greater regional integration and prosperity.



Source: http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/

Moreover, under the banner of SCO, Russia and China aims to establish democratic, fair and rational global world order where every nation can enjoy equal rights and opportunities for collective growth. Leonard Wool also underlined the significance of International Non-Governmental Organizations- (IGOs) in the nineteenth century and highlighted the importance of international functional organizations in the international system. He advocated the idea of creation and promotion of technical and economic cooperation between states, because he believed that the rise of multilateral framework of agreements between the states serve the fundamental interest of the states (Ahmad, 2013).

It has been observed in the study that through the establishment of SCO, Russia and China through multilateral framework of SCO are trying to promote economic values, trade and investment, peace and security and greater regional integration to connect South East Asia, East Asia, Far East, Central Asia and South Asia. These regions are the most

important regions of the world because of their huge population, natural resources and geostrategic position. However, Mitrany's approach confronts the 'state-centric worldview' and advocates the nation states in term of institutions. He says there are the best institutions to provide needs but if some needs go beyond the national boundaries then it would be difficult for the nation-states to fulfill the required needs (Mitrany, 1948).

On the other hand, rapid technological development makes it hard for states to maintain their respective security issues to eliminate the worse impact of conflicts between states on the cooperative interaction of state-governments. These ideas further supported the role of international organizations in the international system with the belief that these organizations organize the inter-state interactions of political authorities from different states. Thus, it is widely accepted that the functionalism is a strategy or 'normative method' based on the ideas to make international environment peaceful with the provisions of everyday necessities and utilities. Both provisions can bring together people across state boundaries, and the people living under different political administrations. In accordance with this concept, the sectors of cooperation should be clearly distinct with the particular focus on technical projects and essential functional plans of the nations. With these conditions, the internally existing power structure and national autonomy of each state would prevail without any external intrusion (Söderbaum, 2004).

The existing study is exactly following the same concept envisaged by the proponents of functionalism. The idea of behind this theory is to enhance greater cooperation and integration among states and reduce the conflictual tendencies for more peaceful and secure world. China and Russia are both cooperating with each other to

promote their regional cooperation and also working vigorously on many fronts in international politics to maintain peace and avoid any unnecessary risks.

Chinese and Russian role in the global peace and security is commendable. Both states teamed up on many fronts and avoided wars and clash. For example, both states vetoes military action against Iran, North Korea or Syria and instead promoted the option of negotiation over war. Through SCO both states are trying to overcome political divergence in the region, promoting greater economic ties, establishing greater partnership to increase connectivity to reduce tensions. For regional peace and security both states played an important role. For example, Afghan war played havoc with the whole region, disrupted regional connectivity and economic development. Drug trafficking, organized crime, and transnational terrorism forced China and Russia to work together, persuade Afghan Taliban for peace and bring an end to bloodiest war in the region. Due to their proactive efforts, the US was able to forge a peace deal with Afghan Taliban and left Afghanistan. Now the next step would be to stabilize Afghanistan under the SCO banner. Afghanistan got SCO observer status in 2012 and penned down an important counterterrorism protocol with the RATS in 2015, soon after the US bilateral security agreement with Afghanistan. The SCO played crucial role in reconciliation after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. It is expected that SCO would play more active role for the stabilization of Afghanistan (Wani, Feb 01, 2022).

The process of resolving common issues through functional cooperation paw the way to alter hopes and devotion from domestic to global authorities (Söderbaum, 2004). Leonard Wool maintained that the defense and foreign policy have become more important as compared to five decade ago. A number of functions had been changed quickly with the

passage of time due to the changing nature of international system. He highlighted the increasing thrust to control of financial and trade affairs through controlling material assets, trained manpower, and establishment of industries in the states. For effective development and progress of international government, he suggested the 'sociological framework' which would change the scope of conventional 'political instruments' (Mitrany, 1948).

According to the article 'Integration' published in the *new International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1968, vol. 7, sec. III), many scholars used the term Functionalism without agreeing on a single definition. The authors of different background are not willing accept the single definition of the concept due to the changing nature of international system. Meanwhile some 'political unions' emerged under the flags of national units like unification of the American states, German Empire and the union of Scotland and England. The ultimate aim of these unifications was 'political-territorial integration' (Mitrany, 1971).

In this way, it can easily be maintained that the Functionalism is founded on the contraction of the democratic principles including state autonomy, liberated participation, right of self-determination, and federalism. As per Mitrany's intellectual assumptions and academic standings, various problems of contemporary era could be solved through free economics and social contracts, global central management and cooperation, 'whenever and wherever possible'. With these essential arrangements under the international government, it could make easy to address the problems emerged from specific dimension because of socio-economic development and issues occur in the consequences of technological and scientific expansion, as well as it could be helpful to preserve global peace and prosperity while managing conflicted interactions of the states. But the world

did not enjoy the benefits of the cooperative interactions due to the emergence of new states on globe landscape, and the rise of “political-constitutional approach” (Ahmad, 2013).

Moreover, under the framework of functionalism responsibility of lawmakers, it is considered as the push factor for states to work collectively in peaceful manner with the likeminded states. The cooperative interaction with the likeminded states would promote the worldwide activities and institutes wherein existence and wellbeing of all states would be integrated gradually in various fields (Mitrany 1946). The ideas of Mitrany prevailed in the international system where the states from different regions tried to maintain their cooperative interaction through developing their cooperative agreements. In the existing study same concept has been highlighted that Russia and China over the past many centuries are working as link minded states and both are trying to avoid any direct clash but promoting peace and security. The interaction between both states is exemplary. Both were on same page on Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues in the UN and on other forums. Both countries supported each other against the US in Asia-Pacific and other parts of the world. Russia and China worked as team to settle the Afghan impasse and bring long lasting peace and stability to that war ravaged country. Due to their like-mindedness, both countries are trying to cooperate with each on many fronts like economy, defense, politics and regional integration.

Mitrany described three categories of international organization (i) a general and fairly loose association, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations, (ii) a federal system and (iii) functional arrangements. The League of Nations, and then the creation of United Nations, presents a loose association like clubs which provide opportunities to make joint action against common international problems (Mitrany, 1948).

However, there is no compulsion for member states to take part or not. Although social and economic activities improved under the umbrella of the United Nations but it has shown 'such a loose arrangement is inadequate in scope and uncertain in working'. On the other hand, federalism become a prominent and important addition in political theory and made peaceful place in various political grouping. To achieve their common purpose, numerous adjacent states and provinces try to work jointly but with their own separate identity. According to Functionalist prospective of the international system, political integration is accelerated through a cognizant political choice. Many scholars, like Laursen, considered functionalism as the fundamental concept which basically explains the integration process of states in Europe (Laursen, 2003). Now the same concept of would be applied on SCO states and littoral regions. It is expected that SCO has the ability to integrate nearby regions for better connectivity, economic growth, political interaction, peace and security.

3.2. Neo-Functionalism

The theoretical debate of Functionalism continued and promoted by many other philosophers which advanced the importance of Functionalism in the international relations. Ernst Haas developed "Neo-functionalism" approach in his famous work *The Uniting of Europe* published in 1958. "The Main theoretical contribution was the concept of spillover. Later Lindberg used this concept to study the early years of the European Economic Community (EEC), which started its existence in 1958" (Laursen, 2008). According to Leon Lindberg "spill-over refers to a situation in which a given action, related to a specific goal, creates a scenario in which the original goal can be assured only by

taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and a need for more action, and so forth” (Lindberg, 1963).

However, since 1940s Haas’s criticism on David Mitrany’s work ‘functionalism’ was the ‘starting-point’ of neo-functionalism, he merged the pragmatic approach of Jean Monnet regarding European integration with functionalism. Haas considered the integration process not only technocratic or functional but also political and contradictory to functionalism concept of international integration. He and his followers emphasized the process of regional integration in the international system. Under the concept of ‘spill-over’ neo-functionalist argue that the economic cooperation in one field would leave positive effects on other economic areas and become the cause of integration in broader cooperative relations between states. It eventually paved the ways of political integration. In this existing study China and Russia’s integration under the SCO banner would have spillover effects on South Asia, East, South East Asia and Far East. China is aiming to connect the many parts of world with her One Belt One Road initiative, which is going to connect many countries through maritime silk routes and land corridors. The economic integration among the SCO members would impact the neighboring regions and promote greater economic connectivity.

Haas explained the political integration as the “the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states” remained significant in the world politics. Through this political integration process ‘a new political community’ which covers up the existing authorities remained important between states. Haas argued that the supranational

institutions played their effective roles when nations are unable to deal with vital and divisive responsibilities effectively (Haas, 2004).

According to Thomas Gehring, 'progressive development of integration' is the main point of focus of both functionalist and neo-functionalist theories. They accentuate the function of 'spill over' effects and underline initial limited cooperation and its positive effects for future expanded cooperation between states. He stated that "From an institutional perspective, "spill over" amounts to a (positive) feedback mechanism stressing the possibility of self-supporting social processes that start modestly, gain dynamics and may over time produce dramatic outcomes" (Gehring, 1996).

Neo-functionalism also highlights the significance of non-state actors or (sub-national actors) for the process of cooperation, even they common people or interest-groups. Thomas Gehring argued that "the establishment of appropriate institutions and the transfer of the necessary competencies would decrease the role of the participating nation-states at least in relative terms, because other actors were expected to partially take over control both at the supranational and at the sub-national level" (Gehring, 1996). In 1965, several months of boycott from de Gaulle's France to the Council of Ministers meetings on various issues including budget related matters, Commission's powers and decision making process in EEC. This boycott was a 'sever set-back' for European integration. In the wake of 'Luxembourg Compromise' concordance system was introduced and the member states become powerful enough to obstruct the Commission's initiatives and no proposal "would be put into effect over the strong objections of any single member state."

This empowerment not only restricted the Commission's power but also affect European integration (Ahmad, 2013).

Consensus on the practice of unanimity in Luxembourg compromise (January 1966) decelerated or even damaged the European integration process. In the early 1950s, in the wake of creation of the European Coal and Steel Community- (ECSC), the formal process of regional integration was started from European part of the world. Lindberg also analyzed the initial era of the European Economic Community- (EEC) by using the neo-functionalist concept, and some other practitioners applied the neo-functionalist theories to integration process in various parts of the world like in Latin America- (Laursen, 2008).

Eanst Haas and Lindberg were the originators of the theory of neo-functionalism. The process of formulation of the theory of neo-functionalism was mainly started in late 1950s and early 1960s under the inspiration of establishment of European Coal and Steel Community- (ECSC). The cooperation under ECSC paved the way for establishment of the European Economic Community- (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy community- (Euratom). This transformation of cooperation is elaborated by the functionalists as 'spilled-over' process. The theory was researched at its peak by 1965, since then the evolution of European integration. However, criticism on the theory was started from mid-1960s because of various reasons especially French President Charles de Gaulle's boycott which became the reason of 'empty chair' crisis. After the failed attempts of neo-functionalist in modifying their arguments and hypotheses in late 1960s and early 1970s, Haas, one of the originators of the theory proclaimed it to be 'obsolete' (Niemann & Schmitter, 2009).

Later on, many scholars including Stuart Scheingold, Joseph Nye and Philippe Schmitter themselves revised the original formats of the theory. In the revising patterns of the theory, the works of Haas and Leon were remained a predominating factor in the theoretical development of the Functionalism. It is worth mentioning that there were several disagreements amongst the neo-functionalists' thinkers, they deferred on the questions such as whether and how 'loyalties shifted to the new centre' and 'whether depoliticization or politicization' is necessary for 'spillover process'. They also had divergence of views about the term 'spillover and *'engrenage'*', along with qualms about the limits of neofunctionalist notion (Niemann & Schmitter, 2009).

On similar grounds, Arne Niemann and Philippe C. Schmitter in 2009, stated that the neo-functionalist approach is mainly driven in the wake of European integration and identified some assumptions that played central role in European integration process: first of all, elites and pressure groups of states for the sake of their own interests change their preferences and recognize the constraints of states and shift their loyalties toward supranational organizations. These 'self-interested actors' support integration process and get ready to seek benefits from each other expertise, regional policies and 'cooperative decision-making'. Once established, these regional institutions can get away from the control of their architects with the aim of increasing their own power and their employees start to play the role as agents of further integration. Niemann and Schmitter elucidated that the neo-functionalists believed in 'positive sum-game' and refused the conventional realists' notion that all dealing between the actors are essentially based on 'zero-sum'. They quoted Haas's ideas in which he defined a supranational style of decision making as 'a cumulative pattern of accommodation, in which the participants refrain from

unconditionally vetoing proposals and instead seek to attain agreement by means of compromising and upgrading common interests' (Niemann & Schmitter, 2009).

Niemann and Schmitter described the process of '*spill-over*' in these words 'pushing the states to integrate other sectors' can be the resulted in certain pressures from a specific sector, since 'some sectors are so interdependent that is impossible to isolate them from the rest' (Niemann & Schmitter, 2009). Neo-functionalism considered economic interest groups as central actors and important variables which can play their effective roles in convincing administrations and national authorities to alter their loyalties towards a supranational level of larger integration. They believed that the non-state actors more effectively speed-up 'spillover effects' more than the sovereign states (Saurugger, 2014). The elites of countries considered the greater integration would provide opportunities to resolve economic issues of their nations. Sabine Saurugger coded the neo-functionalists thought "initially two kinds of spillover affects refer to the interconnection of various *economic* sectors or issue-areas, and the integration in one policy-area spilling over into others. Political spill-over is the creation of supranational governance modes, such as the EU or MERCOSUR" (Saurugger, 2014). In case of France, De Gaulle rejected the promotion of the concept of 'supranationalism' within the Commission, as he believed in central role of national governments in integration process (Saurugger, 2014).

Moreover, Haas and Philippe C. Schmitter jointly highlighted the common applicability of neo-functionalism and tried to untie the theory's association with the process of European integration development. They identified two main 'consensual distinctions' first, there must be differentiation between the situations in which actors do or do not show their will towards the ultimate political integration and secondly 'there is a

distinction between a comprehensive and explicit economic agreement' (Schmitter, 1964). The early neo-functionalism tried to distinguish between high-politics and low politics as they considered that the disparity between power issues (high-politics) and welfare issues (low-politics) create hurdles for achieving common interests. They strongly supported the ideas of Incrementalism and Institutionalism, and opposed the concept of 'power-orientation of realism' and strategy of 'grand design' of traditional institutionalism. Economic cooperation or collaboration in 'low-politics ultimately leads to political cooperation between states, it would establish a 'working peace system' that would integrate them vigorously (Gehring, 1996)).

The liberal perspective permitted for a 'conceptualization of a plurality of state and non-state actors' and the perspective of neo-functionalists has perceived the ultimate end point of European integration as 'European supranational state' (Apeldoorn, Overbeek, & Ryner, 2003). However, neo-functionalists did not consider the question of power struggle on interstate level and why actors are powerful and eminent and have influential bargaining position through which they get advantages in agendas setting of European integration. Bastiaan Apeldoorn and Henk Overbeek quoted James Caporaso as "Neofunctionalism had no explanation for which groups should succeed, form coalitions, mobilize interests, have access to policymakers, and affect policy" (Apeldoorn, Overbeek, & Ryner, 2003).

3.3. Inter-Governmentalism

Inter-governmentalism is another important theory of regional integration. The traditional inter-governmentalism theory floated up in mid 1960s driven from the realist and neorealist perceptions, which provided conceptual explanation of integration process in Europe. In the wake of French president Charles De Gaulle's boycott and 'empty chair' crisis and in

its result 'Luxembourg Compromise' accord 1966, arose several questions on the neo-functional arguments. In the mid-1960s, Hoffman gave a new paradigm 'inter-governmentalism' to explain the European integration. The inter-governmentalism approach discarded the neo-functional concept of 'spill-over' in European integration. While studying the developments in European Community in early 1990s, Hoffmann and Keohane even though discussed the partial 'role for spillover' but central argument remained inter-governmentalism (Huelshoff, 1994).

Hoffman argued that national interests always remain on top priorities for any state. Although economic integration (low politics) plays imperative role in the integration process but it would face 'impermeable barriers' if it affects the national interests of participating state (Hoffmann, 1966). Inter-governmentalism highlighted the key role of nation states in international system and criticized the neo-functionalism assumptions regarding central role of non-state actors in the European integration process. States struggle for gaining more power, prestige and influence in international system. In the European integration process the participating European states were tried to maximize their interests which exposed themselves as 'self-interested entities'. Hoffman argued that nation state is still here as 'basic units' as barrier in international integration due to the various divergence of interests among its units including historical rivalries, geographical realities and their 'domestic determinants'. He considered the states as powerful actors in global system because of their 'legal sovereignty and political legitimacy' (Hoffmann, 1966).

Inter-governmentalists considered state as a key player in international system and believed in the 'state-centralism' and depicted the national states as central actor in

European integration. Nugent argued that the inter-governmentalism theory is based “on the view that nation states are the key actors in international affairs and the key political relations between states are channeled primarily via national governments” (Nugent, 1999). In anarchic international system states are key actors, those consider the state survival is their primary concern and economic growth as secondary concern (Ahmad, 2013). Inter-governmentalism gradually became the one of the main theories of regional integration that has been commonly using concept in international organizations. Stanley Hoffmann was the first scholar who examined the European integration from a new perspective with ‘(neo)-realist paradigm’ with the main focus on states self-interests and bargaining capabilities and its results, which are decided through the power distribution amongst the contributing countries. Under the realist perceptions the center points of attention were big and powerful participating states and their interests. However, the theory became dominate regional integration theory in early 1990s (Apeldoorn, Overbeek, & Ryner, 2003).

Rosamond argued that “inter-governmentalism has to find an answer to the question of why it is that states should invest in an enterprise that results in a de facto clipping of their autonomy” (Rosamond, 2000). He emphasized ‘intergovernmental bargaining and decision-making as embedded in processes that are provoked and sustained by the expansion of transnational society, the pro-integrative activities of supranational organizations, and the growing density of supranational. And these processes gradually, but inevitably, reduce the capacity of the member states to control outcomes’ (Rosamond, 2003).

As per Hoffmann assumptions in European integration process, various aspects including national interests, nationalism, state structures and external environment were played their role. In the result of surrender their powers and 'temporary demise of nationalism' during war period, ECSC member states came under the influence of two hegemonies of the war. He argued that 'to pursue supranational course of action' the ECSC states had compromised their prestige, power and wealth (Ahmad, 2013). The main pushing force behind states to cooperation 'in relative gains term' is international anarchy. The concept of relative gains has remained a key component of inter-governmentalism, the main concern of states to maximize relative gains for their 'indivisible national interest' through bargaining (Huelshoff, 1993).

Neo-realists assumed that surety of state's sovereignty in any alliance and optimism about equal distribution of gains not only enhanced economic cooperation but also strengthened the members and the alliance (Ahmad, 2013). Dr. Ahmad believes that inter-governmentalists were inspired by the neo-realist perspective but regional integration has very limited place in neorealist approach. Traditionally, the concept of regional integration is contradicted with realist assumptions as states are main actors in international system and states sovereignty is the ultimate aim 'by all means', therefore without protection of states' self-interests, creation of any alliance is not possible on regional as well as world level (Saurugger, 2014).

Inter-governmentalists put into the integration theory 'what was missing in neo-functionalism' acknowledged the importance of states self-interests and interstate bargaining as key components in integration process. Roy H. Ginsberg stated that "European integration from a theoretical prospective is to recognize that neo-functionalism

and inter-governmentalism are two sides of the same coin” (Ginsberg, 2007, p. 88). Inter-governmentalism emerged under the traditional realist approach because of various developments in mid-1960s including French boycott, lack of expected result from cooperation, increasing external pressure and gradual expansion of European Council. He stressed on ‘the centrality of states as actors in international politics’ and recognized states ‘role in determining the pace and limits of’ European integration’ (Huelshoff, 1993)

3.4. Liberal Inter-governmentalism

In 1990s, the slogan of European integration shifted tilt from European Community to European Union. Sabine Saurugger argued that at the start of 1990s, the European integration was ‘relaunched’ by the ‘two main factors: first; intergovernmental bargaining and second; national interests’ (Saurugger, 2014). In the changing circumstance, Andrew Moravcsik worked for further development on inter-governmentalism theory and introduced the Liberal Inter-governmentalism, he stressed that ‘national preferences represented at international level had obvious national origins’. His contributions in the field on European integration studies were momentous. He became influential scholar of the regional integration studies and his theory Liberal Inter-governmentalism become an important and credible theory of the European integration process and took place as a ‘touchstone’ in integration theories. Frank Schimmelfennig entitled liberal inter-governmentalism as a ‘theoretical school with no discipline’ and Andrew Moravcsik is its ‘single teacher (Saurugger, 2014).

Many analysts focused on links between states internal policies and accordingly their stance while interstate bargaining negotiations. Domestic politics remained central theme in EC recent analysis, Zysman and Sandholtz stressed upon ‘elite bargains’ and

Keohane and Hoffmann highlighting 'preference-convergence' hypothesis that underlined domestic politics importance (Huelshoff, 1994).

Like inter-governmentalism, in liberal inter-governmentalism states are the core actors in international system. Although neo-functionalism along-with inter-governmentalism tried to cover up flaws of regional integration theories and highlighted the important aspects of regional integration. The main discourse of neo-functionalism is role and impact of regional institutions, regional actors, elites and national governments but could not point out the opportunities and hurdle that deal with decision-makers. On the other hand, inter-govermentalists emphasizes on centrality of state in regional integration but fail to highlight the zeal and zest of domestic policies of a state in regional integration (Huelshoff, , 1994). Moravcsik argued that "European integration can best be explained as a series of rational choices made by national leaders. These choices responded to constraints and opportunities stemming from the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, the relative power of each state in the international system, and the role of institutions in bolstering the credibility of interstate commitments" (Moravcsik, 1998).

Andrew Moravcsik asked three fundamental questions about the inter-governmentalism's formation. (1) "what were the fundamental determinants of national preference?" (2) "what factors best explain agreements on substance?" and (3) "what factors best explain to construct particular international institutions?". He employ here a rational framework of international cooperation which suggests that 'international negotiation be disaggregated into' three phases 'national preferenc formation, interstate bargaining, and institutional choice structures' various theories explain each stage, and theoretical tools are necessary for each stage. First stage relates to national preference

formation that occurs through negotiations and member states formulate 'set of national preferences' where economic and strategic interests are important. On second stage, to achieve the goals of national preferences successfully states start the process of mutual bargaining through effective strategies to reach significant agreements and thirdly, member states choose whether to surrender sovereignty in favour of global institutions for effective implementation of their agreements (Moravcsik, 1998).

To understand his rational framework of international cooperation Moravcsik summarized major theories of international political economy in the following table:-

Table-1: International Cooperation: A Rationalist Framework

Stages of Negotiation	National Preference Formation	Interstate Bargaining	Institutional Choice
Alternative independent variables underlying each stage	What is the source of underlying national preferences? Economic interests or Geopolitical interests? ↓	Given national preferences, what explains the efficiency and distributional outcomes of interstate bargaining? Asymmetrical interdependence or Supranational entrepreneurship? ↓	Given substantive agreement, what explains the transfer of sovereignty to international institutions? Federalist ideology or Centralized technocratic management or More credible commitment? ↓
Observed outcomes at each stage	Underlying national preferences →	Agreements on substance →	Choice to delegate or pool decision-making in international institutions

Source: Moravcsik, 1998, p. 24

3.5. Interdependence theory

In the contemporary era due to technological advancement and communication development world has shrunk and rapid global acquaintances across the national boundaries make the world a global village, any event or decision taken by people or government of a state internally, effects people and government of other states. People to people contact, free flow of information, goods and money beyond the national have increased the importance of mutual cooperation and interdependence on states level.

David Mitrany's functionalist approach emphasized that transnational activities establish greater interdependence between nations could eventually make world more peaceful. He argued that in the result of economic interdependence, political integration would be strengthened that leads to peace. Haas in his theory of neo-functionalism also discussed international integration under the inspirations of Western European countries growing cooperation in 1950s. But later on some events especially 'empty chair' crisis and in its result 'Luxembourg Compromise' accord 1966 stagnated the European cooperation and turned down the notions of functionalism and neo-functionalism as these theories 'did not allow for the possibility of setbacks in cooperation'. In the wake of this setback Haas stressed that 'theory of regional integration out to be subordinated to a general theory of interdependence (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007). Haas believe that 'general conditions of interdependence' were "much more pervasive than European integration process" gave boom to interdependence theory (Ahmad, 2013).

In 1977, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye presented their famous work '*Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*' where they define the term 'Interdependence' as "Dependence means a state of being determined or significantly

affected by external forces. Interdependence most simply defined, means mutual dependence. Interdependence in world politics refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries” (Keohane and Nye 1977). According to Keohane and Nye interdependence theory envisage that joint gains motivate states to cooperate with each other. Growing international interactions among the people of various parts and transactions in the shape of free flow of information, goods and money on global level and these worldwide relations generated social and economic interdependence. Interdependence theory stressed that in the presence of states competition among each other, this ‘systematic interdependence’ construct a prudence of cooperation between states to gain their joint interests (Keohane and Nye, 1977).

The existing study also deals with same concepts of inter-dependence. Both Russia and China are dominant countries with distinct characteristics and capabilities. China is economic giant and will be a number one economy in near future (Lee, 2016). It has got huge economic base and most of the regions, major powers are largest trading partners of China. China with huge man power can offer greater economic connectivity to Russia. Russia on the other hand is sitting on one of the largest oil and gas resources. It has got huge indigenous defense industry. Russia can address China’s energy woes and could also provide support in modern weapon and equipment to enhance Chinese defense capabilities against the US led Western alliance in the Asia Pacific. In addition, both states are veto powers and key actors in the regional and global politics. Both can extend their political support to each other to improve their political standing in world politics. China and Russia have many things in common but the most important thing which brings them together is their threat perception. Both countries consider the US/NATO as a threat to their regional

and global ambitions. Both countries are at odds against the US on many fronts but the most important is the US growing presence in the Asia-Pacific region. This is the reason that China and Russia under the SCO banner are teamed up and cooperating with each other on political, economic and strategic fronts to protect their mutual interests.

On contrary to the basic presentations of traditional and structural realism that studies state behavior through economic and military potential, in late 1970s, Keohane and Nye developed the model of complex interdependence under neo-liberal perception which highlighted the “emergence of transnational actors vis-à-vis state” and focus on growth of international organizations and global regimes that ‘compensated traditional military capabilities and new importance of welfare and trade in foreign policy matters compared to status and security issues.’ Complex interdependence analyses the state behavior how states willingly join alliances and mutually cooperative ‘under the conditions of anarchy and dependence’ (Rana, 2015).

As per Keohane and Nye’s assumptions, Complex Interdependence has three main characteristics. Firstly, different societies are linked with each other through multiple channels like ‘interstate, trans-governmental, and transnational transactions’. To establish connections between societies, non-governmental actors including Multinational Corporations- (MNCs) and International Organizations have gained equally important place in interdependence beside formal and informal ties between governmental elites. Secondly, there is no hierarchy among the issues, multiple issues can be considered in interstate relations without any hierarchy. Complex Interdependence clearly rejected the realists’ argument that security is always top priority in intrastate relations, in complex interdependence along with other many things ‘military security does not concisely

dominate the agenda'. And third one is limited role of military force, although Complex Interdependence does not completely null and void the importance of military force in any alliance for maintaining of mutual influence or as a bargaining tool but to achieve 'economic and ecological' goal force could be irrelevant (Rana, 2015).

Jackson & Sorensen argued that 'process of modernization usually increase the level of interdependence between states' level of interdependence between states become higher in the result of higher transnational relations. Although the concept to gain power through force and by conquering the huge area was dominant throughout the history, but in modern times use of force have become more and more expensive then before as compared to gains. In second half of twentieth century world has witnessed the rapid industrial development which changed the concept of gaining power, foreign trade and economic development become a useful and less costly tool for attaining affluence and eminent position on global canvas. According to Richard Rosecrance modernization has changed the historical assumption that "the possession of territory and ample natural resources were the key to greatness now a highly qualified labour force, access to information and financial capital are the keys to success" (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007).

3.6. Sino-Russian Bilateral Interaction

With the help of theories mentioned-above, it can easily be maintained that the growth of Sino-Russian relations is the evidence of regional integration models because the prevalence of regional integration forces between Chinese and Russians have created sufficient chances of regional integration in the Asian political order. The leaders of both nations learned from the politics of great power where the tug-of-war is the prime principle

for understanding the nature of international system. The state-governments rarely appreciate the cooperative models of international system in the presence of power politics between great powers. In other words, the great powers rarely appreciate the cooperative frameworks of international system due to their rising desires of power maximization. The political authorities of great powers always remained rational in calculating the power capabilities of their peers in the world politics. This factor creates the global power politics between great powers, parallel to reducing the chances of cooperative frameworks between states in the international system. The case of China-Russia relations is an appropriate development in this regard, because the governments of both states preferred to adopt cooperative designs in their bilateral relations. The political authorities of both states tried to overcome their points of disagreements for the greater achievement of their national interests in the world politics. The key factor in constructing the cooperative basis of Sino-Russian bilateral relations is the structure of international system, which is anarchical in its nature. The anarchical nature of international structure defines the varying levels of Sino-Russian relations in which the leaders of both great powers formulate the cooperative levels of bilateral relations between Moscow and Beijing.

The structural anarchy from the international system cannot be eliminated completely from inter-state interaction between states. The presence of anarchy can be controlled to some extent, in case of China-Russia relations anarchy has been compromised to some extent due to the rise of bilateralism between both states. The Chinese and Russian leaders developed their collaboration in different fields and formulated the basis of mutual collaboration under the broader conception of regional integration. Parallel to the rising cooperative basis of bilateral interaction between Moscow and Beijing, the governments

of both states are still having their minor patterns of disagreements. Political leadership of China and Russia proved capable in overcoming their disagreements before the changing nature of world politics. It is more appropriate to maintain that the structural of international system played important role in shaping the bilateral ties between China and Russia. The leaders of both great powers tried to adopt various cooperative mechanisms for the enhancement of their ties to overcome the worse impacts of great power politics.

3.7. Concluding Analysis

Under the theoretical explanations of the various models of regional integrations, mentioned-above, it is easy to maintain that the prevalence of regional integration on the multidimensional relations of different states creates the chances of cooperative frameworks at regional level. The states from different parts of the world decide to create their cooperative frameworks of bilateral relations under the growing designs of regional integration. In other words, the leaders of different states tried to enhance their cooperative ties with the help of various cooperative designs of regional integration. This factor enhances the bilateral relations of the states of a particular region. There are various examples of this scenario in the international system in which the leaders of different governments decide to enhance their cooperation on the basis of their increasing multilateral interactions. It is widely believed that the improvement of bilateral ties create sufficient chances for the cooperation at multilateral level.

The scope of regional integration provides a favorable environment for the smooth growth of multilateral ties between states. The cooperative frameworks of different states, in this way, provide incentives for the regional integration where the state-governments

overcome their conflicting stances over different issues. The regional integration facilitate states in reduction of their bilateral points of disagreements on various regional and extra-regional issues, because it is widely believed that the promotion of cooperative ties between states proved to be the efficient forces of bilateral cooperation between states. It allows the state authorities to overcome their difference and resolve their long-standing issues and start a journey for mutual cooperation.

An appropriate reflection of this trend can be seen in the growing cooperative ties with the states which remained non-cooperative for each other in the international system. The governments of Russia and China and their decisions for managing the bilateral ties for the greater cooperative interests is an appropriate example to comprehend the theoretical principles of ideas discussed in this chapter. The leaders of both nations remained hostile over brief period of time in the history. The leaders of both great powers tried to keep the Asian balance of power in their own favor while standing against the trends of global power politics. The leaders of two States gradually identified the strength of their bilateral ties and started overcoming their points of disagreements. The rise of regional integration forces played an important role in this regard. With the help of regional integration forces, the Chinese and Russian governments resolved their bilateral ties and started cooperating with each other. This development resulted in the creation of a multilateral cooperative framework between the governments of both states.

The creation of SCO can be considered as an important factor in the formulation of cooperative ties between the Russian and Chinese leaders. Despite having brief points of disagreements over the regional and extra-regional issues, the leading political authorities from Moscow and Beijing decided to alter their bilateral interaction which later

resulted in the form of multilateral cooperative agreement. The creation of SCO provided supportive environment to Russia and China for the promotion of bilateral and multilateral agreement in the international system. It also let the surrounding nations to admire the growing potential of cooperative interaction between Chinese and Russian leaders.

SCO would provide opportunity to Russia and China to extend their political and economic influence and dominate the regional and global politics. SCO's role in the reconciliation process of Afghanistan proved to be an effective step which is going to help the war ravaged country establish long term peace and stability. In addition, growing Chinese and Russian collaboration would also improve regional integration and would help the adjoining regions to connect themselves under Chinese BRI or New Silk Route initiative to improve their economies.

China and Russia are politically strong countries with Veto powers have the ability and political clout to influence the regional and global political issues. Both countries have convergence over many regional and extra regional issues whether it related to transnational terrorism in Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East or Africa. Both states are try to cope up with these emerging threats and trying to help each other and their allies to overcome such threats to their national security. Russia played an important role in Syria, where the Russian military effectively fought against the Free Syrian Army and Islamic State militants to consolidate the position of Bashar-Al-Aasad. On the other hand China also politically, economically and strategically extended it support to Syrian President and ultimately regime of Bashar-Al-Assad survived. It was a major victory of Russia and China against the US led alliance in Syria, who supported Free Syrian Army and wanted the ouster of Bashar-Al-Assad.

Both countries also influenced changing strategic dynamics in Afghanistan and because of their involvement the US had to leave Afghanistan in 2021. Russia and China got legitimate political and economic interests in Afghanistan. China wants to extend her economic influence in Afghanistan and want to eradicate transnational support to East Turkestan Islamic Movement- (ETIM) in the Western province. Chinese want Afghanistan to play an important role to help China achieve her economic and security related interests in Afghanistan. Russians also want that Islamic State Khorasan Province- (ISKP) militant group and drug trafficking must be eradicated, because these two issues are haunting Russian government. All these objectives could be achieved through meaningful engagement under the SCO framework. Russia and China's bilateral engagement would not only uplift the region but also would have a balancing impact on the global politics. The next chapter of the study deals with indicators of competition between Russia and China.

CHAPTER 4

DIVERGENCE OF INTERESTS IN THE SINO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

The Chinese-Russian Relations cannot be separated from the interstate disagreements. The leaders of two states have developed various points of disagreements under the broader scope of Asian political order. The leaders of both states have defined their national interests will aspire to protect it in a competitive international strategic environment. Due to the anarchical nature of international system, the states with the great power potential always remain ambitious for making the international political order in their favor which creates an international system of power politics (Acharya, 2018). This is the reason that every state works under realist school of thought and protect her national interests vigorously.

The formulation of a conflicted international system always relied on the behaviors of great powers because the leaders of these countries always think about global distribution of power on relative basis. The principle of relative gain in term of power creates the international power politics between different levels of states. The most dominating factor in this domain is the great power politics in which their government creates contesting claims over different international developments. Every country wants dominance at regional or global political arena and no country is ready to sacrifice her core

national interests for others (Acharya, 2018). Thus, the contesting nature of international political system has become a permanent part of the world where a power-gaining competition between states has prevailed. The leading political authorities of great powers always behave in contesting manner for the achievement of national interest in competitive terms. Under this principle, the leaders of China and Russia cannot be spared due to their brief points of disagreements in the world politics despite having a broader cooperation of agreement (Lee, 2016).

The Sino-Russian relations are, no doubt, cooperative and collaborative, but the cooperation in different fields failed to prevent completely the presence of conflicting claims in the international system. Beijing and Moscow, both are the permanent player of global power politics and their contesting bilateral claims have validated their active role in the global power politics. Their permanent presence in the world politics has become a permanent feature of global power politics where the other great powers are considering both states the cooperative allies against other global players (Acharya, 2009).

This scenario can theoretically be studied under the prism of neo-realist school of thought where the uncertainty in the international system creates a brief layer of various disagreements between China and Russia. Both nations have accepted each other as the major cooperative partners with few contesting points consisting on different geo-political and diplomatic differences. The leaders from both sides have a permanent nature of dominating each other in the broader Asian regional political order. The anarchical nature of conflicted international system creates a geo-strategic contest between Beijing and Moscow where the national leaderships from both sides have decided to keep the balance of power in their favor (Apeldoorn, Overbeek, & Ryner, 2003). This attributes between

both powers develops a permanent competition between the governments of Russia and China. Under the neo-realist principles, it can be maintained that the Russian and Chinese leaders have adopted competing positions over different levels of power politics while keeping in mind the role of each other in the broader geo-strategic competition.

Thus, this chapter has an exclusive focus on the competing nature of bilateral interaction between Russia and China. Both states have developed their various points of disagreements in the form of minor territorial claims which is the central theme of this chapter. The major part of this chapter emphasized on the competing nature of Sino-Russian relations in the surrounding regions generally, and in the Central Asian region particularly. The majority of arguments revolve around the structure of SCO where both states are the dominating players.

4.1. Conceptual Rationale of Conflicting Relations

The relations between China and Russia are the central part of international system where great power politics always existed. Both states are very active in the power-gaining competition of international system due to the fact that the great powers always show their interests in the world politics which are conflicting in nature. The leading political authorities of great powers always remained ambitious for gaining the maximum control of international system in the presence of anarchical nature of international system. The unavoidable and uncontrollable forces of anarchy in the world create the international system unpredictable and unreliable for all states. In other words, the role of anarchy cannot be marginalized in the international system which creates the power politics between different states ((Acharya, 2018).

The growing presence of anarchy in the world politics is the foundation of international system where different patterns of relations between states prevails defined the conflicting nature of international system. The power-gaining competition is also an example of anarchical nature of international system and its varying attributes. The anarchy mainly defines different layers of power politics in the international system which ultimately generates an unending power politics among states. Every state in the international system desires to get dominated political and strategic position to secure her interests in this competitive world.

This scenario further formulates the varying levels of power politics at regional and global level. The multilayered power competition between the states of different region creates incentives for the great powers in the world politics. In this way, the great powers try to enhance their position in the international system with the help of various regional politics because the endless competition between great powers led them towards the conflictual position. The increasing influences of the great powers on different regions attach the regional politics with the great power politics and create the international system consisting on different levels of power politics between great powers. This situation generally develops an international system permanently based on a power-gaining competition between great powers (Ross, 2003).

The conceptual debate of great power politics and its deeply-rooted foundations in the international system creates the conflicted relations between different states. It is more appropriate to maintain that the structure of international system develop an anarchical nature of world politics which forces the states located at different regions to develop different points of disagreements against each other. International structure is the primary

actor in shaping the conflicted interaction between states of different regions due to its anarchical nature (Donnelly, 2000). The impacts of structural changes of international system on the states and their worse impacts on the interaction of states are generally defined by the neo-realist school of thought in which the structure of international system pushes states towards different conflicting directions (Powell, 1994).

The neo-realist scholars define the uncertain nature of international system as the main sources of great power politics where the leaders of great powers under different political administrations prefer to remain cautious about the global distribution of power among other states. The sense of calculating the distribution of power among different states creates the competition for power politics between states while pushing them towards a contesting domain. It is also called the relative calculation of the relative distribution of power among the great powers. Russia and China are also not immune to changes in the global power politics (Donnelly, 2000). Whenever there is any competition involved between Russia and China, both states are tried to protect their national interests and leave behind their cooperative alliance. The governments of great powers always prefer to rely on the relative distribution of power because the maximum power could let the leaders of great powers to maximize their influence on other states (Ross, 2003).

The use of power for the achievement of the national interest is the primary actor driving the great powers towards the realization of the structural changes of international system. Moreover, the objective of enhancing the sources of power through various cooperative and confrontational strategies convinced the leaders of the great powers on the accurate calculations of the relative distribution of the power. This scenario formulates a unique combination of great power politics and the regional power politics, where the

central point between both extremes of power politics is structural of the international system. Structure brings the contesting nature of power politics between great powers because of their cautious calculation of the global distribution of power (Keohane, 1984). Under this principle of the international system, it can easily be said that the great powers always try to think about the change nature of global balance of power. The global balance of power compels the leaders of great powers to keep the international system in their own favor while pushing their competitors at the disadvantageous positions. In term of great powers, the authorities of great powers always try to maximize their power over the expense of others in the global power politics (Powell, 1994).

This scenario is best suited for the Sino-Russian relationship and their competitive behavior over different issues, parallel to their multidimensional cooperative ties in different domains. The Chinese and Russian governments are ambitious for making their position influential in the international system due to the uncertain and unpredictable nature of world politics. Both states are increasing their cooperative ties under the bilateral and multilateral frameworks of agreements parallel to having various political and diplomatic differences. Both states are engaged in great power politics and determined to enhance their role in the regional and global politics. The cautious calculation of the both states for the relative distribution of the power drives their leaders to enhance their positions in the international system without taking into consideration the impacts of their conflicting ties on the cooperative bilateral ties.

Apart from considering the role of bilateral collaboration in different economic matters, their integration in the international system as the great powers cannot be overlooked. The reason behind this argument is uncertain nature of world politics where

the contesting nature of power politics prevails on inter-state interaction of the States. In this way, the Chinese and Russian leaders are seriously taking care of their national interests in the world politics despite having various models of their bilateral cooperation. Beyond the bilateral economic cooperation, the multilateral framework of agreement in the form of SCO further enhanced the strength of Sino-Russian cooperation in the world politics. The realist-driven principles of international system have resulted in the cooperative and confrontational designs of Sino-Russian relations. The leaders of both states are convinced on the real-politik nature of world politics where the cooperative mechanisms between great powers always follow their national interests. Thus, the realpolitik defines the growing conflicting position of both great powers over different issues which are inherited in the contesting national interests. For the persuasion of influential positions in the global power politics, the Chinese and Russian leaders are determined to be influential in the Asian political order which develops a brief layer of power competition between both states.

4.2. The Nature of China-Russia Competition

China-Russia relations are vulnerable in the region due to some events at the end of last century. There were many negations, uncertainties and ambiguities in the history of Sino-Russian relationship, the world witnessed numerous ups and downs in consequential geostrategic and geo-economics matters between both states. Soviet Union shared the superpower status with United States of America about 45 years and after the collapse of USSR it was very difficult for Russian Federation to accept the realities about its losing dominance over the region especially on Central Asian States- (Formerly part of Soviet Union before 1991).

Today Russia is facing two prong dilemmas when it is dealing with China. First China is second largest economy and likely to be the number one economy in the next decade. Secondly, China is a credible nuclear weapon state with huge political clout in the modern world. Russia cannot afford to have animosity with powerful China. According to an analyst,

“Russia-China are two different worlds maybe even two different civilizations. They do not trust each other; that does not stop them from developing relations and doing business together..... for first time in contemporary history, Russia faces a China stronger than itself” (Lubina, 2017)

There is another important organization that exists in Central Asia ‘CSTO’. To strengthen its position in Central Asia, Russian has desired to play a role as a bridge between SCO and CSTO for the establishment of closer cooperation but China and Uzbekistan blocked the idea (Lubina, 2017). Gradually many suspicious have emerged between China and Russia, different proscription on each other from both sides including Russian veto for a Chinese proposal regarding establishment of SCO free trade zone and bank. On the other hand, Chinese veto for Russian-backed SCO fund has affected the SCO development and its symbol status as ‘peaceful buffer’ (Lubina, 2017).

These small political skirmishes have seriously impacted the efficacy of SCO at larger scale. Both Russians and Chinese are vying to extend their political influence in the region and trying to assert their positions. After the cold war and demise of Soviet Union, Russia faced decline in her political, economic and strategic power. But despite that it maintained political control over landlocked Central Asian States. These states were dependent on Russia for their oil and gas supplies to Europe because it has to go through vast Russian territories. Secondly, Central Asia shared approximately 6000 km border with

Russia. No regime in Central Asia could have challenge the Russian political hegemony. But with the passage of time China cultivated ties with Central Asian republics and invested over 46 billion dollars in infrastructure development, oil and gas pipelines and economic corridors (Lanteigne, 2018).

Russia despite her political influence over Central Asia cannot stop the increasing economic influence of China in Central Asia. It seems that Russia is not fearing the increasing economic influence of China in Central Asia but it has barred the US from renew leasing of several air bases in central Asia. It looks that both Russia and China are avoiding any direct clash and maintain working relationship to face bigger opponent the US and her Western allies. A new era of growing relationship of China and Russia started in early nineties, due to relaxations in visa policy inhabitants of the border regions were enthusiastic for economic cooperation and expected that because of geographical proximity to China and considered the normalization of relations would provide opportunities to develop border trade but Russian obsession for trade with China shortly had converted into discomfort (Lukin, 2002). Not only on the local level but also in Moscow the fears of 'demographic expansion' in the border areas had emerged and they started to believe that China is intentionally trying to resolve the problem of overpopulation and unemployment through settlement of its northeastern provinces population into the Russian Far East- (RFE) and Siberia (Lukin, 2002).

The Chinese One Belt One Road- (OBOR) project is basically revival of the ancient Silk Road. Mr. Rodger Baker, Vice President of Asia Pacific Analysis at Stratford enlightened the importance of Central Asia for both China and Russia in these words, "Central Asia is the place where Russian and Chinese interests really merge. As we look

into the future, there is potential for political problems in the region and that may create a space for the Russians and Chinese to increase their cooperation” (Baker, January 4, 2022).

Moscow considered former satellite Central Asian states as its backyard and has been incredulous about increasing influence of China in the region. In the prevailing scenario Shanghai Cooperation Organization has provided a way to Russia to demarcate Chinese increasing involvement and reduce its burgeoning power in Central Asia. On the other hand, Russia has tried to leverage through putting itself in the center of other international bodies like Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa- (BRICS) and Eurasian Economic Union- (EAEU), a best example of this Russian intention can be gauged in Russian response on Chinese proposal to create SCO free trade area and Russian stressed to make a consensus first within the EAEU (Lanteigne, 2018). Russia is trying to increase the role of the Collective Security Treaty Organization- (CSTO) in Central Asia, whereas China wants to enhance military and security cooperation within the framework of SCO. China replaced the Russian dominance in trade and become the major trading partner of each Central Asian country; various agreements between China and Central Asian states broke the Russian monopoly in energy field (Chen & Fazilov, 2008).

The agreement on ‘Program of Cooperation’ was signed in 2003 between China and Kazakhstan, where strategies regarding cooperation in the field of oil and gas from 2003 to 2008 were outlined and with the Chinese finance, Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline section was constructed. Another agreement “Asia Trans Gaz” was signed between China and Uzbekistan in 2007. A 7000 km gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Chinese province Xingjian through Uzbekistan and southern Kazakhstan was completed in 2009, which would supply natural gas for years. These engagements between China and Central Asian

countries challenged the ancient exclusivity on the regional energy resources (Sadovskaya, 2012). Russia has continuously been showing her reservation about increasing efforts from China to enhance its relations bilaterally with SCO member countries especially with CARs. Russia has always emphasized on multilateral relations within the SCO framework.

The Chinese analysts are of the views that although in the post-Cold War era, relationships between China and Russia have become more friendly and warm at the governmental level but at public level this relationship could not flourish as expected. These analysts observe that Russians traditionally believe China as an alien and inferior and considered themselves predominantly in European terms (Linda, 2011). The two dominant powers in SCO always regarded their national interest, which often becomes the cause of disagreement in the organization. In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia and recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. Due to its national interests, China refused the Russian request for support and to recognize these two regions as independent states, because of China wanted to discourage the separatist movements in Xinjiang, Tibet and Taiwan and its policy of non-interference in another country's affairs. Chinese President Hu Jintao said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization renounced the Russian invasion of Georgia, and declared Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states (Linda, 2011). Since then, a confrontation has started between the two. Russia has been trying to minimize the SCO's role and enhance the role of other regional organization in which China is not a member like the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Community (Linda, 2011).

Through the effective use of CSTO and Eurasian Economic Community Russia would have better chance to enhance her influence over Central Asia than Beijing (Giustozzi, 2008). On the other hand, Central Asia SCO member states are in frail condition as they are militarily reliant on Russia and economically dependent on China. Russia has shown her credibility as a reliable partner in regional context. Russian forces helped Kyrgyzstan to tackle the inter-ethnic violence. Russian forces patrol Tajikistan border areas with Afghanistan to stop penetration of terrorist outfits, IMU, Al-Qaeda and prevent drug trafficking. In the sense, Moscow has portrayed CSTO a much effective security organization than the SCO (Miller, 2017). The Chinese political and economic initiative including improving bilateral relations instead multilateral relations, huge investment in energy and pipelines projects with SCO countries and challenge the Russian monopoly in energy sector of Central Asian region, which damaged its capacity to charge massive transit fees are inevitable causes of growing tension between Russia and China. The SCO member countries concerns regarding competition with Chinese cheap labor and goods also remained obstacle for China's desire to form the SCO into a free trade zone (Bailes, et al., 2007). Critics of SCO have views about it that 'the organization is heavy on process and light on substance'. China and Russia support the idea of mutual cooperation and enhanced collaboration within the SCO but some pretty issues between the two major partners are hindrance towards the development and promotion of this regional forum.

Publically both Russia and China exaggerate their common interests but contention and doubts are still encompassing their 'strategic partnership'. Their relationship in SCO described by a former Kazakhstan's diplomat in these words 'dance of the mongoose and the cobra' (Miller, 2017). In 2010, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao floated the idea

regarding creation of SCO Development Bank in the meeting of the SCO Heads of Government in Dushanbe. To restrain 'China's financial expansion' to Central Asia, Russia has continuously been blocking China backed proposal regarding creation of a Development Bank of SCO but Russian policy is damaging its supremacy in the region because China lending money directly to the Central Asian countries on favorable terms and consideration. Russian partners in the region are dissatisfied with its policy, on the other hand Russia is totally obscured from their deals (Gabuev, 2016).

China provided the SCO with a US\$ 10 billion in 2009 and 10 billion in 2012 in the shape of loan to overcome the economic crises of Central Asian countries. Albeit Russia has always been shown its concerns about China's 'financial expansion' in the region but when Russian economy was badly affected by the western sanctions in the wake of annexation of Crimea, Chinese banks US\$ 18.8 billion loans and credit facilities gave a massive support Russian economy (Kocamaz (2019). China has been using the trade and loans policy as a powerful tool to compete with Russia in Central Asia, furthermore the global financial crises and Russian aggression against Ukraine opened avenues for China to strengthen its position in the region (Carlsson, Oxenstierna, & Weissmann, 2015).

China has always been unwilling to make out the SCO a military alliance like NATO, which is against the Russian ambition (Carroll, 2011). This is one of the diverging points between Russia and China. At Ufa SCO summit in 2015, China grimly reacted on Russian Defense Minister's declaration that the SCO could be served to restrain any such future Color Revolutions in Eurasian region (Kocamaz, 2019). There are also sentiments of abhorrence in Central Asian states as they are sandwiched between two regional giants Russia and China and find themselves as economic thrall of China and on the other hand

they are still politically influenced by the Russians (Humayun, 2016). On the SCO forum, China persuaded the Central Asian SCO member countries to send back Uyghur separatists those are involved in terrorism and separatism in Xinjiang region (Koreshi, 2016).

Chinese take the Uyghur insurgency seriously and they provide huge economic incentive to regional states like Central Asian states and Pakistan to discourage and curb Uyghur militants in their respective areas. This is the reason that Uyghur militants find minimal support in CARs or Pakistan. Various initiatives for development of trade sector with the SCO would face obstacles due to hostile behavior of two powerful actors in the organization. A constant struggle has been going on to get more and more share of overland trade from East Asia to Europe. Russia wants to see flourishing its Trans-Siberian railway project for future continental trade, on the other hand China wants the dominance of its Euro-Asia land bridge crossing through Xinjiang and Central Asia in future global trade activities. Establishment of energy club has been a longstanding wish of Russia for formulating energy policies and regulating the future energy trade under framework of SCO but China equally oppose any such proposal that consider the energy cooperation under multilateral relations instead of bilateral dealings as China see it problematic for its energy security (Norling, 2007).

It is a fact that in the prevailing situation China is more beneficial for Russia than Russia is for China and flaw in their relationship is 'Russia's weakness not China's strength' (Koreshi, 2016). For backing up of Chinese economic interests in the region the SCO Business Council was established in 14th of June, 2006 with the representation of China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (Navidreza Ahadi, 2015). China provided \$900 million for the purpose but the Council was evicted because funds were

spent for credit guarantees for procuring the Chinese goods instead of Central Asian countries infrastructure and industries development (Giustozzi, 2008, p. 4). Sino-Russian tug of war in SCO over small issues is hurting the overall working and effectiveness of this organization. It is imperative for Russia and China to overcome their differences and make SCO a success story. The success of SCO could bring prosperity to region and could also work as a catalyst for inter-regional connectivity and economic growth.

4.3. Competition under SCO

Competing behaviors of both China and Russia become obstacles in the way of effective implementation of various agreements and declarations signed under the SCO platform (Grainger, 2014). Delay in SCO led initiatives may slow down regional connectivity and undermine relations between both states. Both powers are driven by their own motives and agendas in the SCO for their interests not only at regional level but also at global level. Many analysts argue that Russia's basic interest in the SCO is to contain China. Russia has concerns on China's growing power in the region and needs to strengthen its influence in its former satellite states (Grainger, 2014).

The demise of Soviet Union allowed the European powers and Chinese to get benefit of vast energy resources in Central Asia. China is playing more assertive role in this regard. It has invested billions of dollars in CARs to secure oil and gas supplies from the Caspian Region share of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. It has also invested a significant amount in Uzbekistan to get natural resources to address its energy woes. On the other hand Russia is no doubt a dominant military power in the region and maintains strong political and military influence over the former Soviet Republics. But Russia cannot offer billions of

dollars to CARs because of her own economic issues. Most of the Russian revenue comes from oil and gas production, fluctuating oil and gas prices sometimes seriously impact the economic growth of Russia. Russia reluctantly accept the Chinese presence in the region because it is not hurting Russia much. But when it comes to global politics both countries support each other against Western bloc. After the fall of Soviet Union, the region of Russian Far East (RFE) was virtually ignored by the Russians and since then population has shrunk by 20 percent. However, due to future European trade and investment prospects and Chinese growing penetration in this region, eventually Russia's policy makers and leadership once again concentrated to the RFE (Bolt, 2014).

Historical legacy of conflict and mistrust has always remained present in the state behaviors of both neighboring countries. Several cultural and social constraints continuously hurt the relationship of Russia and China. Millions of Chinese settled in the region of Russian Far East even the Russian inhabitants are moving westward because of Chinese social, economic and demographic 'encroachment in the region' (Mitchell). Because of the Chinese demographic expansion in RFE, a sense of extreme nationalism and chauvinism has emerged in the native Russian population, they believe that Chinese role in Russian economy is worse than good. Majority of Russians has continuously shown reservations over the monopoly of China made products in domestic market, huge numbers of Chinese workers are in Russian industries, and Chinese businessmen are also purchasing properties in Russia. About 50% to 74% of Russians had opinion that Chinese presence should be reduced in the Russian economy. The ideology of 'Russia for Russians' is still flourishing in common Russians (Niemczyk, 2012).

Most of the Chinese usually come to Russian Far East for the jobs and mostly get those jobs that were rejected by the Russian due to low wages. Another major reason Chinese get jobs and become successful to secure prominent position is majority of inhabitant of RFE are alcoholic that's why they could not show effective progress. Growing trends of Sino-Russian intermarriages especially great number of marriages of Russian girls with Chinese boys is also a cause of anxiety among Russians, the fear is gaining that in coming years Chinese not only grab their jobs but also take over their wives and lands (Niemczyk, 2012). Such social tendencies and changing cultural tendencies would have serious impact on the Sino-Russian bilateral relationship. Many experts argue that although there is competing environment between China and Russia in the SCO due to divergence of views as China's main focus is on economic matters and Russia's center of attention is security issues but their bilateral relations are vital than the SCO itself (Scobell, et al., 2014).

Chinese trade has surpassed Russian trade with the SCO member states particularly in Central Asian region. Kazakhstan is one of the biggest trading partners of China in Central Asia, in the recent years Chinese trade engagements with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan's have also grown. These growing economic ties paved the way for future mistrust and doubt among the SCO member countries because of the imbalance of import and export, poor behavior and stubborn attitude of Chinese traders and businessmen, uneasiness of local population regarding frequent immigration of Chinese workers to these neighboring countries to grab the jobs market (Scobell, et al., 2014). On the other hand, Chinese still not satisfied with the border demarcations and claim back the lands which have given under the unequal treaties.

Russian main geopolitical objective is to reassert its political power in Central Asia through Eurasian Union and CSTO in place of SCO. Various experts have their own predictions but it is very difficult to predict that in future the region will remain a field of confrontation between China and Russia or they will jointly control this region. Western and Chinese experts have indicated that China is not in a “position to outflank Russia and become the leader of this region in the medium term (Bernardo Mariani, 2013).

Chinese have been utilizing the public diplomacy to strengthen the country’s soft power and make easy expansion of hard power. China zealously promoted the Confucius Institute project as a tool of public diplomacy. To promote Chinese language and culture and eventually promote its soft power image in different parts of the world, Chinese have started to establish Confucius Institutes. China also established the Confucius Institutes in the SCO member states, 14 in Kyrgyzstan, four in Russia, two in Kazakhstan and one each in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (Song, 2016).

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping while addressing at Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan announced 30,000 scholarships for the students of the SCO countries and provision of funds for visit of 10,000 teachers and students from the SCO member countries Confucius Institute to visit China (Andrew Scobell, 2014). Although these Confucius Institutes were established for the promotion of Chinese language and culture in the SCO member states but it has become another conflicting element in Sino-Russian relationship. Russia considered these activities of these Institutes for lobbying for Chinese interests and Russian agencies claimed that their activities are threat for national security and banned the attempt to open Confucius Institute in Yakutsk and stated that aim of the Institute is “to promote penetration of the Chinese Ideology and economic expansionism in the Russian

territory” (Moshes & Nojonen, 2011). The Russians are seriously aggravated by the Chinese ideological expansion into Russian territories. It is obvious that Russia will never compromise on her ideological front. It is expected that the ideological tendencies would further increase in the region which may force the Russians for countermeasures.

4.4. Contemporary Conflicting Claims

The objectives and goals of Russia and China in the SCO do not entirely fit together. Russia apprehend that without Chinese presence and active role it will be difficult for her to maintain durable stability in Central Asia, and consider the SCO a forum through which Russia can monitor China’s activities in Central Asia and effectively protect its interests in the region. China wants to make the organization more credible through Russian involvement in it (Carlson, 2007).

Since 1991, Russia has been gradually losing its status as a superior partner in relationship with China and currently is unable to treat China as a junior partner because of the growing Chinese economic and political clout in the global affairs. Western analysts argue that Russian involvement in the SCO is not actually because of the competition with China, the real motive is competition with the NATO in the region and beyond (Bailes, et al., 2007). This is what it has been observed in the post disintegration of the Soviet Union. Russia under President Putin consolidated her economy, revamped her foreign policy and improved her military muscle to challenge the US hegemony in Asia pacific and beyond. According to Bobo lo, Russian president Putin wants to advance his own vision of post-Soviet integration through Eurasian Union instead of Shanghai Cooperation Organization

and is not concerned about the China's dominated position, he just pays lip-service to the SCO (Lo, 2010).

A well-known Russian diplomat, Vitaly Vorobyov thought that although in China's view all the SCO member countries should be engaged in the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) initiative but slow progress on the project has been effecting multilateral economic cooperation within the SCO. Along-with the worsen security situation in Chinese Xingjian Uyghur Autonomous Region, territorial disputes with some neighboring states that are also contradicted with Chinese wish to involve neighboring countries in the project has become a stumbling block in the implementation of the SREB program (Lukin, 2017).

Although Russia never objected to China's perception on the role of the SCO in the South China Sea and its engagement in wide-ranging dialogues on the South China Sea but use of the SCO by China as 'excessive instrument' on the issue of South China Sea is annoyed Russia (Saalman, 2017). Basic objective behind the China's deep interest in Central Asia is to create establish a safe and sound neighborhood for the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and a secure zone for SREB project, which will become the cause of economic competition in Central Asia between China and Russia and disagreement within the SCO as Russia is showed reluctance to establish SCO free trade zone and China's enthusiasm to enhance bilateral cooperation within EAEU (Saalman, 2017).

In 2014 Crimea crisis has further accentuated the discrepancies within the SCO toward various regional policies between China and Russia. Crimea's annexation and Ukraine issue directly affect China-Russia bilateral relations but also broaden the gap between the two SCO dominant powers within the organization (Lanteigne, 2018). All the

members had their own motivations and inspirations behind the initiative of creating SCO. At end of Cold War and in the wake of disintegration of USSR, Russia and newly independent Central Asian states were facing many fiscal problems and financial conditions were not good enough to depute huge armies for taking care of their borders. On the other hand, at that time China wanted to fully concentrate on Taiwan, peaceful settlement of border disputes with Russia and Central Asian countries and creation of SCO provided opportunity to shift its military troops to the east (Carroll, 2011).

The divergence of stance on the issue of the expansion of Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been remained exist among the SCO member countries particularly between China and Russia due to many reasons. After the discussions and arguments finally in 2017, Pakistan and India joined the SCO as full-fledged member. Initially some Central Asian countries have had reservations on Pakistan's inclusion in the SCO because they thought that extremists and terrorist groups of their states have alleged linkages, training campus and safe heavens in Pakistan's border areas. Russia has also concerns about Pakistan's membership in the SCO because of its support to Afghan Mujahidin in Soviet-Afghan war. Moscow supported the insertion of India in the SCO as full-fledged member as Russia wanted to counter Chinese formidable influence within the Organization. On the other hand, China-India relations are not good enough throughout the history expect early ten years and Russia-India relations have been cordial, China was considering the inclusion of India in the SCO would disturb balance of power and become problematic for China's role in the SCO Although, Pakistan and India have secured permanent member status in the SCO, many analysts perceive that this expansion might

deteriorate the decision making process of SCO and unintentionally paving the way of future China-India-Russia strategic competition within the SCO (Lanteigne, 2018).

The inclusion of India and Pakistan in SCO may invite two scenarios. First, if they let their past animosities aside and cooperate with each other then interregional connectivity between Central and South Asia would be a reality. All these SCO member states can enjoy greater cooperation and economic intergration which may boost economies of SCO region. Second scenario is the status quo. If they continue to proceed with their present approach of blame game, non-cooperation, proxy wars, diplomatic tug of war and strategic competition, then SCO would face the same fate of SAARC, which suffered because of the Indo-Pak rivalry and political stubbornness. It is imperative for China and Russia to improve their bilateral ties and enhance their cooperation under SCO to bring long term peace and stability in this region.

4.5. Ukrain Crisis and divergence of interests

Non-interference in the internal affairs of any country has always been a corner stone in China's foreign policy and one of the main reasons in the US-China uneasy relations is United States stance on Taiwan issue, as China consider it US's interference in its internal affairs. Crimean annexation in 2014 was the Russian move which put China in an uncomfortable position. Because Russia clearly violated the principle of non-interference in Ukraine and it made difficult for China to support Russian stance. On the other hand Crimean referendum might become problematic for China as people of Taiwan, Xinjiang or Tibet can be demanded right of self-determination (Bolt, 2014). Geo-economically, Ukraine is an important country for China not only for its military technology and arsenal

imports but also Ukraine is an important country for implementation of its investment plans in Eastern Europe China has agricultural interests in Ukraine (Bolt, 2014).

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a flagship project for its economic development and energy security. However, the Ukraine war created many impediments for smooth and speedy development progress of BRI projects in the region. Even after the Ukrainian war breakout China managed to opt bypass Russia for its cargo trains by going through Kazakhstan and then Azerbaijan by ferry on the Caspian Sea, which increased six times. China has turned its focus to plan construction of land-based transit routes through Central Asia like China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railroad and “Middle Corridor” which would link Kazakh rail to Turkmenistan, Iran and Turkey onwards to Europe that would be ensured “emergency measures” in case of any disruption in sea based trade. According to a 2021 report China Railway considers these initiatives of China-Europe train would “ensure security of the global supply chain”. The Russia-Ukraine war constrained China and other regional countries to consolidate the diversifying plans of land based energy and trade route across the Eurasia for their future economic survival and energy security (Yan, 2022).

As landlocked states, the Central Asian countries have apprehensions towards their security and economic development because of Russia-Ukraine crisis and emerging uncertainties on the regional level as well as on international landscape. The Central Asian countries have been trying to enhance their strategic and economics ties with China within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and consensus has been gradually developed. China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan rail project is one of the examples this consensus.

While in an interview with Global Times, Mr. Zhang Hong, an Eastern European studies expert from the Academy of Social Sciences stated that:

“While the Chain-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway symbolizes more opportunities, as its long-term planning has become ripe, it also showed that big and small countries within the SCO are gradually reaching a consensus, although it was not easy to do.” (Global Times, 31 July 2022)

Russian invasion in Ukraine further highlighted the difference of opinion on various issues between Russia and China within the SCO. China because of its great interests in the regional did not support Russian stance on the Crimea crisis, which not only affect bilateral relations of China and Russia but also broaden the gap between them within the Organization (Lanteigne, 2018).

4.6. Great-Power Politics between China and Russia

The prevalence of global power politics in the international system is based on the anarchical structure of the global system. As discussed above, the anarchical nature of the international system is permanent in the world politics and it cannot be avoided ignored. The states can minimize it through adopting various models of defensive and offensive policies to overcome challenges emanating from anarchical structure of the international system. The conflicting policies of the great powers are inherited in their contesting national interests. This scenario explains nature of great power politics and its varying worldwide execution where the Chinese and Russian forge multifaceted bilateral interaction which is not an exception. Chinese and Russian leaders are consistently evolving their bilateral relations in various domains. The growing cooperative designs between Moscow and Beijing are, no doubt, enhancing the scope of their bilateral ties in

various fields but the persistent evolution of cooperative interaction between both nations remained ineffective in preventing their conflicted points. The leaders of both states are actively involved in the global power politics which represents their geopolitical thinking in the contesting dimensions.

The governments of both states have their inflexible positions on various territorial and diplomatic issues. Along with territorial and diplomatic differences, conflicting positions of both states in the security and defense affairs is another essential dimension of Sino-Russian relations. The above-mentioned debate of *realpolitik* accurately explained the logic behind evolving conflicting interaction between Moscow and Beijing which is very natural in the worldwide politics, in which every state is ambitious for maintaining and expanding its spheres of influence over the other states and wants to secure her geopolitical, economic and strategic interests.

The ambition for promoting and spreading the influence further led the leaders of other states to invest their full potential to maintain their regional and global hegemony. In this context, China and Russia are vying for strategic dominance in SCO because of their continuous conflicting position on several issues the SCO is yet to utilize its full potential. This factor creates an endless and unstoppable strategic competition between different states. Sometimes, the great powers follow contesting political attributes in the global and regional affairs. The behavior of great powers competition is an appropriate example in this case. Analogous to various other powers in the world politics, the Chinese and Russian relations are the exact case for the study of multi-pronged interaction between different great powers. Both states are taking various measures at inter-state level for the persuasions

of their national interests which are sometime causing cooperative initiatives and sometimes it cause clash of ideas between both states.

The Chinese and Russians are following a dynamic approach for managing their bilateral ties. Their cooperative and conflicting interactions are growing under the structural demands of the international anarchical system. Both states want political dominance over the other and a position of strength in SCO. The significant impact of anarchy on the inter-state interaction of both states further led them to play actively in the world power politics, even standing against each other on various points. The presence of uncompromising points in the Sino-Russian relations is validating the claims of structural uncertain nature of international system because the structural pressures from the changing nature of great power politics are inflicting a sense of insecurity in the psyche of both states. The conflictual approach over certain issues in SCO is hurting the very essence of this regional forum. It may not achieve desired goals if both major powers of this organization kept stubborn positions over political and economic issues.

4.7. Concluding Analysis

The main part of this chapter emphasized on the exceptional nature of Sino-Russian relationship beyond the traditional designs of their cooperative framework which evolved gradually. With the passage of time, the leaders of both states tried to emphasize on the role of cooperative bilateralism in the form of their varying points of diplomatic coordination. Their cooperative bilateralism has further introduced various models of bilateral collaboration in diverse fields. Despite having different levels of cooperation in

diverse fields, the leaders of both states remained ambitious for strengthening their positions in the Asian political order.

The formulation of a cooperative framework for the enhancement of their positions in the Asia-Pacific remained a central point of conflict between China and Russia. Therefore, a brief layer of conflicted interaction prevailed in the Sino-Russian relations in which the leaders of both states have developed various contesting positions against each other, which is seriously impacting on the interregional connectivity, cooperation and collaboration. The prevalence of a brief layer of conflict between both great powers proved to be a main hurdle in creating a unanimous stance of both states on different issues of global power politics. The cooperative designs of their bilateral collaboration remained ineffective in creating a complete model of bilateral cooperation between Moscow and Beijing. The reason behind this development is the status of great powers in which the leaderships of both states are obsessed with the great power politics and engaged in continuous competition to get the position of strength. The conflicting nature of great power politics forced both countries to remain ambitious for the global balance of power. In this way, the Sino-Russian relations are witnessing a brief level of power competition in the international system which makes them active players of great power politics. Sino-Russian stagnant positions on regional connectivity, change in security architecture and unresolved issues are keeping a bay SCO from becoming a successful organization like EU or ASEAN.

It is necessary for both states to work together, shun their aspirations for regional dominance and work for better regional connectivity, enhanced security and greater economic convergence among the SCO member states. The inclusion of India and Pakistan in SCO is a great step forward. Both states collectively represent a market of about 1.6 billion

people which could benefit the SCO member states in their economic revitalization and greater trade activity. Moreover, cooperative arrangements among these states can end proxy wars in Afghanistan, improve overall security and allow the Russians, Chinese, CARs and South Asian nations to improve their political, economic and strategic ties in future.

CHAPTER 5

INDICATORS OF COOPERATION IN THE SINO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

The cooperative ties between the two great powers, China and Russia, marked a new chapter in the history of international relations where the leaders of different states always prefer to maximize their roles against each other. The two largest states, by population and by geography, developed their cooperative ties for the enhancement of their political and strategic influence in the world. Both states tried to cooperate with each other in various domains to remain active in the changing dimensions of international system. The desire to remain active players in the international system remained the fundamental reason behind the increasing role of both states in the world politics. Due to the proactive role of both states in the global politics, the growth of international system cannot be explained without the presence of Russia and China. The presence of both states in the world politics creates a multilateral world in which political alliance of both states is challenging the US led Western powers on many fronts around the globe. Russian and Chinese governments are actively making their alliances in the world politics against the emerging influences of western powers (Bruce, 1996).

Both states are employing different strategies to be influential and relevant in the global politics. The Chinese approach is somewhat collaborative and mainly focused on economic incentives. The reason that Chinese are pursuing their BRI or OBOR project

vigorously and many countries are not only welcoming the Chinese investment in their country but also actively participating in those projects. In this way Chinese are enhancing their economic influence around the globe. Economic incentives by China are attracting more states towards the latter and establishing the soft image of China in the world affairs. One such example is China Pakistan Economic Corridor- (CPEC), which is going to connect Kashgar region of China with Pakistan's Gwadar port in the Arabian Sea. Through CPEC the Chinese have invested more the \$62 billion (Rafiq, 2019). Such a huge investment by China has compelled Pakistan to forge deeper economic and strategic ties with China and reduce economic dependence on the US, on the other hand, Russian approach is mainly aggressive and believe in hard power. Russians are trying to enhance their political influence through hard power approach in which it has taken action against all those states that were not in line with the Russian policy and provided military support to regimes who considered Russia as their ally. Russia's economic growth has been fluctuating because of the uncertain global oil and gas market, sanctions by the West and poor economic policies at home. This is the reason that Russia has very less economic incentive to offer, however, it has got strong indigenous defense market which fulfills Russian defense requirement at home and also help her allies in overcoming military contingencies in their respective countries. Russia and China are closely coordinating their efforts against the Western powers and trying to maintain strategic balance with the US and her allies in the global political arena. In recent past Russia and China collectively challenged the US position in Middle East, Mediterranean sea, Asia-Pacific, Indian Ocean Caspian region and Afghanistan (de Jesus, 2022).

In recent times Russia carried out full-fledged assault on Ukraine to replace the regime and maintain her strategic dominance in the area. Although, Ukraine is not NATO member but still it had close ties with EU and US. Russia would never want Ukraine become part of NATO for obvious security reasons. A NATO member on her border will be worrisome for the Russians, that is the reason it invaded Ukraine. On this issue China is showing neutrality and inadvertently supporting Russian belligerence. Dr. Alexander Korolev, a Senior Lecturer at the University of New South Wales and author of a book on the strategic alignments with special reference to the Russia-China alignment argues that “Beijing’s attempt to walk a tight rope of diplomacy have not been remarkably successful” with special reference to Ukraine crisis. He claimed that the US and its Western allies are not convinced with the Chinese claim of neutrality when it comes to Russia’s war against Ukraine; they considered China’s stance on Ukraine crisis as a ‘irresponsible fence-sitting’ where on the one hand China advocates on the principal to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of every state and on the other hand it has also emphasizes that the Russia’s legitimate security concerns in the regional must be respected (Korovel, 2022).

The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) in its Policy Brief stated that “At present, China’s response to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine seems to be more favourable to Russia than it was in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea.”

In this way, it is more appropriate to maintain that the international system is tentatively divided into two groups which could be assessed from the politics of United Nations Security Council- (UNSC). The UNSC’s politics slightly describes the levels of great power politics and its varying attributes in the international system. In the UNSC’s mainstream framework, the two groups of states consisting on China, Russia and the United

Kingdom, United States, and France provides a glimpse of great power politics. With the help of UNSC's great power politics, the role of Russia and China can easily be estimated because the governments of both states have communicated their decisions for remaining aligned in the great power politics to the international community while opposing the positions of opposite group in the international system. The political leaderships from Beijing and Moscow have decided to maintain their cooperative ties with each other by exploring various dimensions of bilateral collaboration in their inter-state interaction. The Chinese and Russian political authorities are strong-minded in remaining cooperative against the prevailing patterns of global power politics (Dimitry, 1997).

Because of the various territorial disputes involve potentially money-making oil and gas deposits and busiest passage of traffic, the China Sea has always been remained a curtail water strait and in the China Sea the South China Sea has remained a bone of contention between China and other regional countries including Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei. In the recent years China increased in military power in the region, even China imposed the conditions for foreign fishermen to get China's approval to operate in disputed waters. Chinese claim of extensive control on the waters of the South China Sea was refused by the Hague International Attribution Court in 2016, however, China did not accept this verdict. These events created tension among the regional states and the United States also increased the surveillance and maneuvering of its warships near the Chinese islands. In this whole tense situation Russia has supported Chinese stance (de Jesus, 2022).

The existing pattern of bilateral contacts between Russia and China has a brief history for cooperation and coordination in different spheres. The political authorities of both states

have a brief history of political coordination, diplomatic cooperation, and economic collaborations in diverse areas. The combination of various areas of close interaction has convinced the political authorities of both states to show their unanimous positions on several points to the international community which has declared the foundations of cooperation bilateralism to the whole international community. The development marked a new phase in the world politics where the strategically contesting and politically incompatible behaviors of Russian and Chinese leaders have made a unique case of great power interaction. In theoretical terms, the permanent nature of international anarchical structure has forced Beijing and Moscow to support each other in the world politics while opposing the role of critical states which are continuously opposing the aligned standings of both Russia and China in the world politics (Carlson, 2007).

The anarchic nature of international system explains the varying features of great power politics where the emerging alliances between Beijing and Moscow have introduced a change in the world politics. Thus, the prevailing wave of cooperative interaction between Chinese and Russian governments is due to the anarchical nature of international system. The permanent structure of anarchy has changed the fate of bilateral interaction between both great powers in which the both states have preferred to address their major points of disagreements. An exclusive approach for minimizing the mainstream points of disagreements between the two great powers occurred due to the anarchical structure of world politics. The persistent growth of bilateral cooperation between Beijing and Moscow is due to the prevailing uncertainty in the world politics and the rise of anti-Chinese and anti-Russian sentiment across the globe. The rise of cooperative bilateralism between the both players of international system has been countered by the promotion of Americanized

values in the international world politics. The leaders of both states under different political administrations structured their bilateral ties to counter the Americanized nature of anti-Chinese and anti-Russian sentiments and their promotion across the globe (Blank, 1995).

In view of the scenario mentioned-above, the central theme of this chapter revolves around the idea of cooperative bilateralism between China and Russia because of an unprecedented growth of bilaterally collaborative values between both states added another dimension in the world politics. The Chinese and Russian leaders have explored various dimensions of their bilateral collaboration in various fields in which both sides have explored various dimensions of interactions. The rise of cooperation between both states has become a serious challenge for the US led Western powers where the unipolar structure of international system under the US leadership has been jeopardized. The US dominating role in the world politics has pushed the Chinese and Russian leadership towards the maintaining of their cooperating ties against the potential threats emanating from the US hegemony. Thus, this chapter attempted to study the nature of cooperative ties between the two major players of world politics while analyzing the main indicators of cooperative collaboration between them.

5.1. Genesis of Bilateral Cooperation

In the modern history of bilateral interaction between the Russia and China started with the two-sided agreement for the strengthening of peaceful cooperation and harmonious collaboration in different areas. The commitments of the mainstream leaderships from both sides showed their willingness for becoming close allies against the emerging influence of the US led Western world. The initial agreement between Beijing and Moscow came into

being in 1950 when the two-sides signed a Treaty for Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. It was a formal agreement signed between the two governments for understanding their role and collaboration in the Asia-Pacific changing strategic political dynamics. The treaty was based on the priority settlement of issues between Beijing and Moscow, which emerged in 1945 with the rise of Sino-Russian cooperative bonds. It was the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance which proved to be an effective agreement for the dealing territorial issues between both states. This treaty was come into being under the shadows of Cold War politics when the whole international system was at the verge of growing bipolarity between China and Soviet Union. It was the time of growing bipolarity between the US and Russian ideological competition, which divided the world into two parts and made a global bipolar global system (Bernstein & Li, 2010).

Bipolarity seriously impacted the whole world and countries were forced to choose one bloc over the other. The US-Soviet tug of war seriously hampered the global world order during the cold war. The US initially managed hostile relationship with Both Soviets and Chinese until 1970s but in the later phase the US opened up with China. The US approach was to face only one communist hostile power than two. So to work on this agenda the US established friendly ties with the Chinese and continued with their hostile policies with Russians. After the disintegration of USSR, China and Russia has been improving their bilateral relationship keeping in view the US global hegemonic designs. Both states since then improved their political, economic and strategic ties and established consensus over many international issues where both countries faced the US led European powers.

In the growing shadows of Cold War politics, Chinese and American political authorities decided to find the grounds of cooperation between their nations while formally recognizing their position in growing bipolarity of the international system which remained active for four decades. Thus, it is more appropriate to maintain that both countries started supporting each other in the first phase of Cold War when the Soviet Union and United States were challenging each other across the world. It was the multilayered conflict between the Communist and Capitalist blocs. It was largely considered as the result of Second World War when the whole international system was reshaped as the result of restructuring of world politics. The rise of a new system altered the conventional geopolitical structure of the world politics where the realignment of great power politics emerged from different parts of the world. The rise of new international system redefined the positions of great powers in the international system and the change of bilateral interaction between Chinese and Russian states. Both states preferred to cooperate against the emerging realities of the new world system where the United States recognized as the potential threat for Moscow and Beijing (Bernstein & Li, 2010).

Thus, the first phase of the Cold War politics provided sufficient opportunities to both allies for the up-gradation of their inter-state relationship against the emerging new realities of the international system. The leading state officials from Beijing and Moscow showed their ambitions for supporting each other on equal grounds for the cultivation of their diplomatic ties.

Last decade of the twentieth century saw many radical changes in the global political arena. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the international political system had shifted from bi-polar to unipolar and America became a sole superpower of the

world. Rapid changes in the political system and formation of new power bloc under the aegis of the United States of America most of the countries revisited their policies and reexamined their relationship with other states according to their own self-interests. At the end of Cold War era, a new wave of regionalism was taking place in the various parts of the world. States started to realize that without establishing regional peace and stability, one country cannot achieve its goals in any field of life. In the emerging global scenario in early nineties the two Asian giants felt the need of new rapprochements in their relationship. China and Russia started negotiations to resolve their border disputes amicably and establish good neighborly relationship to overcome threats emanating from the US and her allies. Later on along-with the four Central Asian Countries they formed Shanghai Cooperation Organization and this Organization provided an effective platform to China and Russia to enhance their bilateral relations (Carlson, 2007).

Under the umbrella of Shanghai Cooperation Organization both countries achieved their desired goal of regional connectivity and still trying to improve their bilateral ties, but still there are various factors that create obstacles in the way of trust building, these achievements and hurdles can be measured through the indicators of cooperation and completion under SCO. Both the countries have been sharing the deep rooted geopolitical and geo-economic ties especially after end of cold war. There are many political and economic perspectives which compel them to enhance their cooperation in the fields of energy, trade, security, transport and infrastructure development. Although China and Russia cooperate and compete in many fields throughout the history of their relationship, but after the collapse of USSR and emergence of the US as a super power of the world and its various actions such as in the wake of 9/11 attack on Afghanistan in 2001, with UN

Security Council resolution invasion of Iraq in 2003. These military operations by the US in Afghanistan and Iraq established that it is asserting political and strategic influence in Middle East and South Asia.

The US presence in Afghanistan was challenging for Russians and Chinese because of their geographical proximity. The US occupation of Afghanistan after 9/11 posed serious threats to the Russian hegemony in Central Asia and beyond. This is the reason that Russia reasserted her position in Afghanistan through direct negotiations with Afghan Taliban in Moscow Talks and in other words tried to hijack the US negotiation process. The Russian and Chinese influence on Afghan Taliban was vivid by their role in negotiations with them. It was their political and strategic victory and it was diplomatic failure of the US that Afghan Taliban negotiated with quadrilateral initiatives led by China and Russia to resolve the Afghan Impasse. Apart from their active political and strategic engagement, both states also established economic ties. An impressive growth has been observed in trade volume between China and Russia in the recent years, it has increase from 70 billion US dollars in 2016 to 107 billion US dollars in 2018. Although there is a big difference in import and export ratio, out of this 37 billion dollars' trade, Chinese imports are worth of US\$27 billion which most included various mineral fuels and oil, one the other hand only US\$ 10 billion is the contribution of Russian imports (Ambrosetti, 2019).

However, in recent times Russia's economic relationships with China have grown. Trade between both states have seen upward trajectory from \$16 billion 2003 to \$146 billion in 2021. Russia is major source of Chinese oil, coal, natural gas, and agricultural imports and ensures regular energy supplies to boost Chinese economic growth (Chausovsky, February 4, 2022).

The increasing numbers of bilateral agreements between Chinese and Russians have opened new avenues of cooperation and collaboration between both allies. Both states are cooperating with each other to play a viable role in the global politics. The political authorities of both states have decided to increase their diplomatically supportive, politically coordinating, and economically cooperative interactions in diverse fields with the hope of sharing the common areas of interests against the potential threats. The potential threats originating from diverse directions, mainly from the United States and its major allies, the Chinese and Russian political authorities have showed their determination for standing with each other against the positions of their opposite forces. The gradual growth of their bilateral ties in various domains became a major bond between Beijing and Moscow which led their respective governments to diversify the conventional nature of their supportive ties. This development has changed the traditional perceptions of both nations against each other and the growth of their cooperative ties has further empowered their respective governments to focus on the strengthening of their existing bilateral ties. In this way, an exclusive survey of Sino-Russian bilateral ties can easily be understood with the help of different areas of cooperation (Chang, 2014).

A long list of area can be maintained in this regard because the two-sided authorities are very strong-minded in making their relations progressive and productive. So, following areas could be considered significant in making an interstate inter-state communication between Beijing and Moscow dynamic and energetic.

5.2. Energy Security

Energy is the central point of concern between Chinese and Russian governments because the mainstream leadership of both states tried to build their relations with the help of energy security. The relations between both remained cooperative and collaborative under the shadows of energy cooperation because the leaders of the both states recognized the significance of energy in the international system with the passage of time. The emergence of a cooperative alliance for energy security proved to be the main point which forced the two sides to develop close economic, diplomatic and strategic partnership with each other. In other words, the energy cooperation between Beijing and Moscow was the fundamental factor between the two nations due to the rising significance of energy in the global politics. Energy security is paramount for China because it has to sustain 1.41 billion populations sustains economic growth and maintains her economic clout in the world (Lee, 2016). Russia can provide China with uninterrupted energy supplies to maintain her economic growth and compete with the US economy. The agreement on the energy security was an unavoidable feature of Sino-Russian partnership because the both countries believed that the energy could provide them sufficient chances for the security of their future. Thus, the Cold War and post-Cold War realities of the international system structured the cooperative basis of energy alliance between Beijing and Moscow. During and after the Cold War politics, international system witnessed various bilateral agreements and deals for the maximization of Chinese and Russian positions on the question of energy. The concentration on the energy cooperation was aimed by both allies to enhance their economy development as a priority. Chinese economy is the second largest in the world and her dependency on Middle East, Central Asia, Africa and Russia is increasing day by day.

Chinese dependence on imported oil and gas is huge and Russia play an important role in this regard. Both countries have also decided to put maximum attention on the economic development and industrial growth in their respective countries to play vibrant role in the global politics. So, various agreements for the security of their energy supplies considered to be the most important factors causing a close diplomatic interaction consisting on various models of coordinated political approaches (Chang, 2014).

Due to a unanimous approach on the question of energy, Chinese and Russian political authorities attempted to remain active in their harmonious dealings against the unavoidable and unstoppable realities of the global power politics. The collaboration in the field of energy let both nations to involve their leading oil and gas companies to develop collaborative connections with their counterparts. Energy security policies of both countries play an important role in their foreign policy pursuits. It's China's primary concern to secure an adequate and sustainable supply of energy requirements for her industries and economic development, while the energy exports are the main source of Russian economy (Eder, 2014).

Both countries are relying each other for energy security and for their economic development. From the economic point of view, Shanghai Cooperation Organization member countries possess huge gold and foreign exchange reserves worth of more than \$4 trillion dollars which is gradually increasing day by day. Solid economic base of SCO member states and their immense natural resources are not only beneficial their national currency but also help them to fulfill the obligations of foreign debt. The average GDP growth rate within SCO was 4.84% which was about double the global average. In actual

economic terms, the SCO covers approximately one fourth of world's GDP (Alimov, 2018).

This makes SCO a distinct regional organization with huge economic and political clout. During the Chinese President's visit to Russia in 1997, in a joint statement both countries showed their concerns about the uni-polar world order under the supremacy of America and clearly expressed their viewpoint about promotion of multi-polarization of the world and establishment of New International Order (Buradov, 2013). The joint statement issued by the both countries during the Chinese President visit to Russia in 1997 was a clear indication for the world regarding their concerns about uni-polar political world order and American position as a sole superpower of the world and future intentions about establishment of New International Order under the multi-polar world order. Both the countries supported the stance rapidly increased in the post-Cold War epoch, where many countries rejected "hegemonism, confrontation and conflict" and considered "dialogue and cooperation" as favourable for their own development as each nation has right to "choose its development in the light of its own national conditions" external influence should not "become obstacle to the development of normal state-to-state relations" (Nadkarni, 2010).

Based on the various dimensions of energy cooperation between China and Russia, the international system mainly focused on the rising bilateral energy collaboration between the governments of two nations. A persistent growth of bilateral collaboration in the domain of energy provided a feeling of bipolarity to the international community, because the alliance on the question of energy security between two major powers of the world has become an undeniable feature of great power politics. Their collaborative

framework observed as an important development due to the rising opposition of the United States and her Western allies. The American unease on the growing energy cooperation between Russia and China validated the claims of growing scenarios of bipolarity in the anarchical structure of international system (Anthony, 1996). It was observed internationally as the prevalence of an intense bipolarity in the anarchical nature of international system where the shaping and reshaping of great power alliances were dependent on the behaviors of two great powers. Because of their influential position in the international politics, bilateral interaction between the governments of both nations observed as an essential feature of international system.

5.3. Economic Cooperation

Mutual trust, cordial relations and regional connectivity are the most important components that play significant role in sustainable economic development, durable economic stability of any region. China and Russia are two economically strong countries of SCO, firm growth of economic cooperation is the need of time not only for these two but also for other SCO member states. There are many predictions about economic and trade growth in Asian continent. Most of the major economies are in Asia for example China, Japan, India, Middle Eastern states, South Korea etc. Various global organizations are envisaging that this century will be Asian century, the economic indicators show that by 2030, 50% of global trade activities and more than 50% gross domestic product (GDP) will be in the Asian region and China will be at the top in terms of GDP. This rapid Chinese economic growth has positively influenced not only the Russian economy but also strengthening her geopolitical status on the world arena (Olga V. Grigorenko, 2016).

According to aim and objectives adopted by the SCO in first Summit in 2001, the “encouraging effective cooperation in trade, economic, scientific technology, energy, and other fields” is one of the main objects of this Organization. Since the creation of SCO, the process of multilateral economic and trade cooperation was initiated through various initiatives of trade and investment including exchange of services, goods, technology and capital among the member states. In 2003 Beijing Summit, member states espoused the plans regarding economic cooperation and multilateral trade and very next year in Bishkek Summit SCO countries emphasized to improve cooperation in the fields of energy, transportation, agriculture and telecommunications and approved about 127 projects in various areas. In 2005, the SCO Interbank and Business Council were established in the Astana Summit (Abdul Rab, 2019).

Economic cooperation between China and other SCO countries has been growing rapidly, in 2001, the trade and economic cooperation was recorded about US\$ 12 billion which reached at \$129.4 billion in 2013 and \$217.6 billion in 2017 (Abdul Rab, 2019). China is biggest trading partner of Russia in the Asia Pacific region and fourth largest partner in the world. A huge portion of Chinese imports from Russia consist of hydrocarbon products like Oil, Gas and refined goods, which is about 70% of total Russian exports to China and in 2014 Russians increased their oil production from 09% to 11% and surpassed the Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia. However, other manufactured goods export from Russia to China is minimal. On the other hand, China’s exports to Russia include manufactured goods containing of machinery, chemical and textile products, footwear and garments (Olga V. Grigorenko, 2016).

The economic partnership between both states is growing and a key factor in their bilateral ties. The economic convergence and dependence of both states would likely to continue in the foreseeable future because of the global hostile environment, US belligerence in the Asia-Pacific region and other parts of the world. Other than economic cooperation both states are also involved in deep rooted strategic partnership which is aimed to offset any edge or misadventure by NATO in the Asia Pacific region.

5.4. Strategic Cooperation

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated on his visit to China in 2000 that, 'China is Russia's strategic partner and [...] number one foreign policy priority' (Solomentseva, 2014). During his visit a joint communiqué "the Beijing Declaration" was issued and leaders of both states condemned the US unilateral decision regarding her withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty signed in 1972 between the Soviet Union and America and they also opposed the US intentions of deploying the ballistic missile defense systems in Europe (Burakov, 2013). The US missile defense program would force the Russia and China to develop more lethal ballistic missiles to penetrate the defense shield by the NATO. Such a development is threatening for global peace and security. However, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Charter is not clearly indicating that it is security alliance. Some experts considered that there is possibility it may be deliberately kept unclear to avoid formation of any other alliance to counter the SCO (Khan, 2012).

A number of Western analysts seemed SCO as 'anti-US or anti-Western' alliance and professed China and Russia instigated this alliance to offset the American unilateral position at regional and international arena. Many considered it as a bulwark against the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization- (NATO) and compared the SCO with the Warsaw Pact (Tugsbilguun, 2009). After the creation of SCO a wide range of events occurred in the international environment which further motivated China and Russia to strengthen their Political, Economic and Strategic partnership. Particularly new political leadership in Russia felt growing American influence in Central Asia as a threat for her strategic position in the region. This is the reason that Russia after 2011 did not allow the US CARs to extend lease of their bases to the US. On the other hand, American antagonistic foreign policy and various actions including attack on Iraq, Yugoslavia bombing and in the result destruction of Chinese embassy in Belgrade, initiatives for creation of National Missile Defense- (NMD) and U.S. – Japanese Threat Missile Defense- (TMD) became the causes of concern for both China and Russia (Burakov, 2013). This is the reason that both States are vigorously cooperating with each other to minimize the US political and strategic influence in Asia.

To enhance strategic cooperation and counter outside aggression collectively, a number of joint military exercises were held under SCO's Peace Missions and both China and Russia participated and played leading role in these joint military exercises. The paramilitary forces, armies, law enforcement and intelligence agencies from the SCO member countries participated in these exercises and with the backup of the naval Marines, Aircraft and ground forces they practiced various concepts of warfare, which is likely to enhance the operational capabilities of both states. Through, these military exercises the member states would have learnt modern techniques, share experiences to overcome operational weaknesses in their overall war fighting capabilities and strengthen mutual trust and cooperation (Khan, 2012).

In 2021, Russia hosted SCO Peace Mission- 2021 multilateral military drills in which all the member states actively participated. These military exercises are aimed at enhancing the capacity of SCO member states against transnational terrorism at regional level. The main objective of these exercises was to share the good practices in counter terrorism domain and help each other improve anti-terror capabilities to establish long term peace and stability in the region. Such exercises would improve military to military ties among SCO member states (“Pakistan Army participates”, September 22, 2021).

Under the banner of SCO, “Peaceful Mission” is multilateral military exercise, which is held every year to improve military to military ties, between SCO countries and enhance their operational readiness to ensure regional security against organized crime, drug trafficking and transnational terrorism (Negi, September 15, 2021).

The momentum of growing relationship between Russia and China can be measured by the frequent meetings the leadership of both sides. In his statement, Mr. Wang Yi Foreign Minister of China highlighted the importance of Xi and Putin frequent meetings and their positive impact on Sino-Russian bilateral relationship and for peace and stability in the regional as well as at global level, he stated that:

“Both heads of state met five times within this year and made new strategic plans and arrangements for the development of bilateral relations in a timely manner, elevating [the] China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination to a higher level. In recent years, the high level operation of China-Russia relations and bilateral all-round cooperation in various fields have not only brought benefits to the two countries and the two peoples, but also injected strong positive impetus into regional stability and world peace. China-Russia strategic coordination has greatly transcended the bilateral category and become an important ballast stone of safeguarding world peace and stability” (Wang Yi, 2016).

China's desire to acquire advanced weapons has always been a main concern of Chinese foreign policy towards Russia. Russia is a leading country in modern weaponry after the US. Russia is not only a credible nuclear weapon state but it has also established formidable conventional capabilities which have the ability to effectively deter the enemies and win wars. China has become key economic and strategic partner of Russia in recent years. After 9/11 incident, the US built her offensive capabilities in and around Afghanistan and indirectly challenged the Russian and Chinese security in the region. They got strategic space in Afghanistan for primarily two reasons. First, to avenge 9/11 attacks, destroy Al-Qaeda safe havens and replace the Afghan Taliban regime. Second objective was to get a strategic space in Afghanistan to enhance her influence in Central Asia, keep closer check on Russia and China. To achieve these goals the US penned down an agreement of 'Strategic Partnership' with Uzbekistan on March 2002 and under this agreement the US established Karshi-Khanabad-(K2) airbase in Uzbekistan to support her military operations in Afghanistan and also to maintain strategic presence in Central Asia. In February 2002, during briefing on SCO's activities to the US officials, Russia articulated her desire for coordination and regarding their respective activities in the region (Javaid, 2015).

The leadership of Central Asian states became conscious about challenging threats toward their regime after the "colour" revolutions in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Ukraine and they suspected the US intervention in their internal affairs. After massive protests in 2005, the government of Uzbekistan had to close US Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airbase in Andijan to avoid internal backlash (Anker, 2010).

Russia accused the EU and the US of supporting the protestors of “Orange Revolution”, the US and the EU spent US\$ 1.5 billion for the promotion of democracy. In view of the ‘Orange Revolution’ experience Russia changed her policy and started work to enhance her military cooperation with China. Under the framework of SCO military exercises called Peace Mission 2005 were conducted with the particular focus on logistics and supplies drills in the Yellow Sea and nearby areas (Kocamaz (2019)).

The Joint military exercises ‘Peace Mission 2007’ were held in Chelyabinsk Oblast region of the Ural Mountains, Russia and China were the main contributor of advanced weapon and equipment. To highlight the purpose of these joint military exercise Chinese officials elucidated that, the joint anti-terrorist drills showed the determinations of the SCO member states against transnational terrorism and aspiration to strengthen their potential and operational capabilities against terrorism. Furthermore, the member states were optimistic that the exercises would increase regional stability, peace and security and boost mutual cooperation in the field of defense and security (Hass, 2007).

In 2019 again, Joint military exercises were held in China, in which 3000 troops along-with the fighter jets and main battle tanks took part (Kocamaz (2019)). Peace Mission 2010 was conducted in Kazakhstan’s Zhambyl region, 5000 soldiers involving 50 helicopters and aircraft, 100 artillery pieces took part in it. The SCO, Peace Mission 2012 was staged in Tajikistan, in which Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participated in joint operational maneuvers and Uzbekistan again refused to join. Peace Mission- 2013 took place at the Chebarkul military region in Russia, only Chinese and Russian troops took part in it, no other member from SCO participated in this exercise (Weitz, 2015).

In 2014, SCO joint military exercises 'Peace Mission-14' series were held in Inner Mongolia, about 7000 troops from China, Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. These drills focused on anti-terrorist operations. First time unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) participated in these largest military exercise under the framework of SCO (Andrew, 2018).

In September 2016, joint military exercises were held in Kyrgyzstan under the slogan of fight against 'three evil forces' of extremism, separatism and terrorism (Meick, 2017). First time in history since their independence, two nuclear armed neighboring states of South Asia, India and Pakistan also participated in these joint counter terrorism military exercises from 22nd to 29th August 2018 in Russia under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Although, India and Pakistan has always been avoiding to work together because of many unresolved issues, mistrusts and their blame games. But this was welcoming development when both countries worked together and participated in joint drills to share their experiences and good practices. From eight SCO member countries, about 3000 troops including 110 from Pakistan and 200 troops from India took part in these exercises 'Peace Mission 2018'. These exercises were considered as a positive sign for mutual respect, trust, interoperability and sharing of personal experiences and capability of every state with each other which will be helpful to counter insurgency and terrorism (Nation, 2018).

Table 1: SCO Peace Mission Exercises

Name	Dates	Participants	Location	Total Personnel	Major Systems (Specific Systems and Units, if Available)	Weapons Involved Chinese Units, if Available)
Peace Mission-2005	August 18–25	China, Russia	Vladivostok Russia; Weifang and Qingdao, Shandong Province, China	9,800 (8,000 Chinese, 1,800 Russian)	Fighters, helicopters, destroyers, tanks, artillery, and light armored vehicles (China sent Su-27 fighters, helicopters, three destroyers, three frigates, tanks, and armored vehicles)	early warning aircraft, frigates, and armored vehicles)
Peace Mission-2007	August 9–17	China, Russia, Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan and Uzbekistan	Chelyabinsk, Russia	7,500 (1,600 Chinese, 2,000 Russian)	Fighter-bombers, helicopters, supply aircraft, and tanks (China sent eight JH-7 fighter-bombers, 32 helicopters, transport aircraft, and army, air force, and integrated support groups)	
Peace Mission-2009	July 24–26	China, Russia	Tanoan, Jilin Province, China	2,600 (1,300 Chinese, 1,300 Russian)	Fighters, attack aircraft, helicopters, tanks, and armored vehicles (China sent 20 fighters, fighter-bombers, attack aircraft, helicopters, and tanks)	
Peace Mission-2010	Sep. 10–25	China Russia Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan and	Zhambyl region, Kazakhstan	5,000 (1,000 Chinese, 1,000	Combat aircraft, helicopters, armored vehicles, and tanks (China sent two J-10 fighters, four H-6	

		Tajikistan		Russian)	bombers, tanks, and ground force, air force, and logistics combat groups)
Peace Mission -2012	June 8–14	China Russia Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	Khujand, Tajikistan	2,000 (369 Chinese, 350 Russian)	Combat aircraft, helicopters, and armored vehicles (China sent six helicopters, a motorized infantry company, and an artillery squad)
Peace Mission -2013	July 27 to August 15	China Russia	Chebarkul, Russia	1,500 (600 Chinese, 900 Russian)	Bombers, helicopters, UAVs, artillery, armored tanks, and special forces units (China sent JH-7A fighter-bombers, helicopters, gunships, tanks, self-propelled guns, and army, air force, and logistics groups)
Peace Mission -2014	August 24–29	China, Russia, Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	Zhurihe Town, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China	7,000 (5,000 Chinese, 1,000 Russian)	Fighters, helicopters, UAVs, tanks, and ground vehicles (China sent J-10 and J-11 fighters, JH-7 fighter-bombers, early warning aircraft, helicopters, and UAVs)
Peace Mission -2016	Sep. 15–21	China Russia Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan	Balykchy, Kyrgyzstan	1,100 (270 Chinese, 500 Russian)	Fighter-bombers, helicopters, UAVs, tanks, and armored vehicles (China sent Z-9 helicopters and armored vehicles)

Source ((Meick, 2017, p. 11)

Sino-Russian tactical corporation in the Post-Cold war period is very much different from their alliance in the nineteen fifties and early sixties. The growing relationship is based on mutual benefit and deviating of priorities. China and Russia have continuously been accentuating on their stance that their collaboration within SCO is not against any “third party” (Tugsbilguun, 2009). Russia and China in modern times are cooperating in many areas of mutual interests. This partnership is deep rooted and time tested. Both countries are supporting each other in international politics. China on the other hand is improving her economy and connecting the regional and global powers through her new silk road initiative which is also known as BRI.

5.5. Belt and Road initiative

President Xi Jinping envisaged a new concept global ‘Chinese Dream’ objective, in the shape of One Belt, One Road (OBOR) or Maritime Silk Road- (MSR) initiative, in which China aims to connect the world with them. It is a massive economic initiative from China which will connect many regions and continents across Asia, Europe and Africa. It will link China to Middle East via Central Asia, to Europe via Central Asia and Russia and also through the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. The BRI is huge economic project that links 65 countries and covers 60% of the world population and 75% of the proven energy assets of the world (Lattemann, 2018).

The BRI provides a great podium for trade and economic development and worldwide cooperation, and indicating China’s new approach about her diplomatic and development strategy in the emerging world order. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is one of the most important organizations that directly encompassing six

main economic corridors of BRI through its permanent members and observer countries. On the SCO form, the member countries enthusiastically accentuating on regional connectivity through the development of international transit routes, building road and rail networks and up gradation of transportation transport facilities for regional economic cooperation. In SCO summits member states insured their support for China's Belt and Road Initiative (Abdul Rab, 2019).

President Xi Jinping elaborated the BRI as "China will actively promote international co-operation through the Belt and Road Initiative. In doing so, we hope to achieve policy, infrastructure, trade, financial, and people-to-people connectivity and thus build a new platform for international co-operation to create new drivers of shared development" (Xi, J., 2017). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization provided a useful platform to China for removing concerns and fears of other countries. China has signed various agreements with mostly SCO member and observer states under the BRI's corridors projects as these corridors begins through China's neighboring countries. An important corridor is China Pakistan Economic Corridor- (CPEC), Pakistan not only supported China's BRI on every forum but also actively advocating the other regional countries to join the CPEC. On the other hand, India is also becoming part of Bangladesh China India Myanmar- (BCIM) Corridor. Moreover, Russia geo-politically and geo-economically is an important and powerful country of the region and one of the founding members of SCO and her support and involvement in BRI is vital and encouraging for China because Russia has a great influence over Central Asian states as these countries were remained part of former Soviet Union and still Russians consider this part of the world as an extension of the native soil and maintain political influence. The Central Asian region

provides access to Europe because two other important economic corridors of BRI are passing through Central Asia, one is China-Central Asia West-Asia Economic Corridor and other is New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor (Abdul Rab, 2019).

Under the umbrella of Belt and Road Initiative, China Pakistan Economic Corridor- (CPEC) is a flagship project under biggest ever Chinese foreign direct investment USD 50 billion and also largest foreign investment in Pakistan throughout its history (“Total cost of CPEC projects”, 2020). The CPEC has been considering as ‘economic life line’ for Pakistan’s economic boost and vital step for sustainable economic growth in the region. This 2000 Kilometer corridor connects the Chinese eastern province Xinjiang to Gwadar Port of Pakistan on the Arabian Sea (Fayyaz, 2019). Under the CPEC, China is investing and financing various sectors including agriculture, livestock, roads, railways, telecommunication, energy, mining, stock exchange and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Pakistan (Nizamani, 2018). CPEC project will benefit China in big way, at the moment Chinese are importing oil from Persian Gulf which takes many days to reach China. After the completion of CPEC, China will cut short that distance and import Persian Gulf oil through CPEC routes. In this way China will bring peace and stability to her volatile Western province.

Even after becoming the member of SCO, India has been showing reluctance to become part of China led BRI projects because of her reservations on the CPEC that runs through the northern areas of Pakistan. However, Russia and China are trying to convince India through negotiations that the CPEC and BRI projects are beneficial for regional economic and trade development through regional connectivity. India must realize the fact that in the long run the CPEC has more benefits for India as well as for the whole region

as compared to the Indian concerns (Rowden, 2018). Professor Phunchok Stobdan, a former Indian Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan and expert on Eurasian affair stated that:

“the SCO can beget a gradual thawing of India-Pakistan tension, especially because of Beijing’s keen interest in a stable South Asia to realize the full potential of its One Belt Road- (OBOR) project” (Sengupta, June 5, 2017).

5.6. US presence in the region

The Chinese and Russian government officials have formulated their cooperative ties with the objective of enhancing their bilateral ties with each other to counter the rising influence of the US in region. After 9/11 United States of America came to this region for primarily two reasons. First to counter transnational terrorism, eradicate Al-Qaeda safe heavens and replace Taliban regime with democracy. Second reason was to get strategic space in Afghanistan to control Caspian Sea and CARs resources, keep closer check on emerging nuclear state Iran, counter Russian and Chinese influence in the region. But China and Russia decided to team up against the US strategic maneuvering in the region and ultimately forced the US to leave this region in 2021. Mutually collaborative relationship between both states sent a clear message to the international community that the Chinese and Russians are united to avert the American influence in the region and beyond. Chinese and Russian political authorities are determined to keep their ambitions high for augmenting their potential against the external players in which the United States is the prime threat to both states in the Central Asia. The focus of the US on the surrounding areas of China and Russia is the direct challenge to the Asian political order where the energy-rich countries of Central Asian region have become the central point of attraction for the regional and extra-regional players. In the debates of regional and extra-regional

powers and their emphasis on the energy-rich countries of Central Asia showed the determination of the key players of the world politics for focusing the Asian political order (Wigdortz, 1997).

The prevailing interests of United States on the Central Asia have ushered a new era of renewed Great Game among great powers in Asian politics. In the evolving political order of the Asian continent, the contemporary attributes of global Great Game have placed Central Asia under the influence of three great powers, China-Russia and United States. The governments of three great powers are trying to maintain their influence on the Central Asia where the regional countries possess huge hydrocarbon resources. The growing influence of the great powers on Central Asia has, in this way, inaugurated a new era of great power politics in which the Americans intervening role in the Central Asian has become a potential challenge for the Chinese and Russian governments. An analytical survey of Cold War and post-Cold War international system can provide the substantial understanding of three powers interaction in Central Asia, which could be treated tentatively as the bone of contention among three great powers. After 2021, it is evident that Sino-Russian deep rooted political and strategic engagement contained the US from any considerable role. Both Russia and China used their political and economic influence over CARs and forced the US to leave this region (Wigdortz, 1997).

In the present era, after rapid consumption of energy for different domestic and industrial requirements, the Central Asian region got eminence position for various developed and developing countries of the world and big powers including two neighboring giants Russia and China. United States of America, EU and Japan have also increased their influence in the region (Kuhrt, 2007). Especially, disintegration of the

Soviet Union opened the opportunities for energy scarce Western nations to cultivate ties with energy rich Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and signed significant deals to explore their natural resources in Caspian region and beyond. Most of the time in the history Central Asia remained under the influence of Russia. However, after the disintegration of the USSR, Russian political grip on CARs weaken for a brief period of time. In the early 21st century, Russia reemerged as a powerful country and consolidated her position as an economic and military power. In the post-Cold War era Russia felt its declining position in the region especially because of her losing eminence in former Soviet states. To regain her supremacy, first ever foreign military base with about 700 Air Force troops and 20 aircraft was established in Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan closed the US controlled “Manas Air Base” in 2009. However, both countries signed an agreement under which American’s used the base on rent as ‘transit center’ to facilitate her forces in Afghanistan (MacHaffie, 2011).

Initially both China and Russia considered the US as a stability factor in the region against the Afghan Taliban and other militant groups present in Afghanistan those involved in various acts of violence not only in Afghanistan but also active in Central Asian countries and borders regions of China and Russia (Kuhrt, 2007). Later on US presence in the border regions of the both countries was become cause of irritation for China and Russia US and started to consider as a ‘potential geopolitical threat’ (Kuhrt, 2007). As far as Russia’s concerns, it has been remained in wobbly position about US increasing involvement in the region, initially, Russia supported America in the war against terrorism because she has been facing severe issues of drug trafficking and insurgency from radical

Islamists within her border areas and would not want the resurgence of powerful Taliban in the in Afghanistan (Greeraerts & Gross, 2011).

The US interference in various issues became the cause of discomfort for Russia. The US censured the 2008's Russian attack on Georgia, Armenian annexation and recognition of two Georgian provinces Abkhazia and South Ossetia as sovereign. (MacHaffie, 2011). On the other hand, soon after the announcement independence from the Serbian province Kosovo in 2008, several NATO states and the US recognized it, which was also became the cause of mistrust between the US and regional powers, especially Russia and China.

The honeymoon period in relations West and Russia and which started after the 9/11 attacks in the United States was ended with several regrets (Mankoff, 2009). A welcomed gesture from the Central Asian States for the USA eventually started to change. By the mid of 2005, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan started negotiations for evicting the US from their countries, which was a major 'diplomatic and operational blow' for the US interests in the region (Rodrigues & Glebov, 2009). While addressing at annual Asia Security Summit 'The Shangri-La Dialogue' in Singapore on 2nd June 2012, US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced that 60% of American Naval warships would be shifted to the Asia-Pacific by the 2020 (Dawn, June 03, 2012). Russia and China considered this announcement as an alarming sign for their strategic interest in the region and in response of US-Vietnam, they decided to start joint navel exercise in the Yellow Sea. They realized that it's the need of time to adopt joint approach to tackle the growing US influence, for instance they collectively discarded the United Nations Security Council resolutions backed by America regarding military action in Syria (Khan, 2012).

In this way, all these developments represent the Sino-Russian cooperation against the American role in the world politics and its varying designs between other great powers. The leaders of great powers always think about the geopolitical attributes of the great power politics and the growth of unprecedented conflicting claims of great powers against each other. The leaders of great powers always care about their geostrategic policies for the enhancement of their influences across the world. This situation is very much relevant to the US intervention in the Asian political orders and its emerging clashes with the Asian powers, China and Russia. Even, the US increasing role in the Asian affairs has forced the Chinese and Russian leaders to develop their cooperation bilateralism to avert the American influences in the world politics.

5.7. Multi-polarity

Russian President Vladimir Putin while address at annual meeting of Valdai International Discussion Club in 2014, urged the establishment of a new world order that is favorable to Russian interests instead of Western dominated world order that is threatened Russian interests (Andrew Radin, 2017). From 1949, most of the time in China-Russia relationship, the Chinese position remained a junior partner but after the end of Cold war a new era of friendly relations started. Many Chinese experts claim that today's 'normal state to state relations Between friendly neighbors' based on equality and mutual respect, however, on the other hand Russian experts are considered this shift of balance of power is in China's favor. Although, the Chinese analysts claim that their bilateral relations has reached at 'the best in the history' but on the other hand many scholars agree that ages of hostility and bitterness built massive feelings of mistrust between China and Russia, one of the prominent scholar expressed his observation 'We have had 400 years of contract,

and Russia has deceived us many times. We cannot completely trust them'. Russian has concerns over China's rise in Central Asia, which Russia categorized as part of its geographic domain of influence and China has been increasing its political power through its economic power in this region. (Jakobson, 2011).

The clouds of new Cold War between China and the United States is emerging since the former American President Donald Trump started trade war through different initiatives regarding increase of various taxes and trade sanctions against China. Growing tension can be observed, at occasion of 70th independence anniversary while displaying new military hardware, demonstrated nuclear missiles system DF-41 which capability to hit U.S. cities. During his visit to Russia in June 2019, Chinese President, Xi enthusiastically stated "Russia is the country that I have visited the most times, and President Putin is my best friend and colleague" (BBC, 2019).

According to Walt, there are three vital options for weaker states, make alliance with each other to oppose unipole, 'align with the unipole' or keep themselves as neutral. At the end of Cold war the US seized the overriding position and emerged as sole superpower of the world, in emerging situation after the end of Cold War, China and Russia have come closer to tackle the dominant position of the US and its various antagonistic activities in various part of the world. The measures taken by the both countries that they consider the US as threat can be observed by their joint statements and actions (MacHaffie, 2011). Major concerns to 'shape the broader world order' for China and Russia is maintain stability in Eurasia and Pacific region. The both have been emphasizing on an active role of the United States Security Council instead of America in international issues. It is worth

mentioning that China and Russia are trying to increase UNSC's role in world affair on the other hand 'liberal' America has hesitations regarding its role (Bolt, 2014).

In the Post-Cold war era, China and Russia adopted common approach on various international political and security issues, with coordination of other states that has hostility with western power they started to oppose Western policies and sanctions regimes in the United Nations. From 2012, Moscow and Beijing jointly use their veto power for rejecting UN resolutions on Syrian issue. In 2014, China desisted and Russia used it veto power to reject the draft resolution regarding condemnation of Crimea's separation from Ukraine through referendum Russia's annexation of Crimea (Ferrari, 2016). To tactfully counter the US hegemonic status, there are some positive indications that the strengthen relations in China and Russia paves the way of a new multipolar world order. Many Russian does not consider China as major threat for their security and their cordial relations provide more space to Russia to regain its great power status and on the other hand tension free relations with big neighboring power provides opportunities to focused on its East and South (Bolt, 2014).

Just only after three months of its creation the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, terrorist attacked on United of America and targeted the world trade center and Pentagon, the SCO member states not only condemned these "terrorist attack" but also uttered their support for the US toward any action against event and showed their willingness to cooperate with any global organization or country against worldwide terrorist activities. Next year the under the SCO framework a 'Regional Antiterrorism Structure' (RATS) was formed and Russian president Putin pronounced formulation of RATS as a "contribution to global anti-terrorist efforts" (Akihiro, 2005).

The situation mentioned above presents a brief picture of great power politics in which the prevalence of strategic competition in the international system creates the great power politics. The varying levels of great power politics create the strategic commonalities between the key players of world politics. The presence of varying levels of great powers politics defined the interaction between US, China, and Russia, and the triangular strategic competition between three great powers has created an alliance of two players with geographical proximities. The Chinese and Russian in the international system created an alliance to avert the challenges of American influence in the world politics. The leaders of both nations have developed a common understanding of different strategic issues which has resulted in various levels of bilateral collaboration in the fields of security and defense. The combination of both strategic objectives has further resulted in different models of military exercises between Chinese and Russian authorities (Richard, 1997). It is important to understand the logics of growing military exercises under the broader frameworks of strategic collaboration between Beijing and Moscow, which is the greater reliance of both states on the bilateral economic cooperation. Economy always remained a main force for creating cooperative relations between states, because the economic collaboration between states develops the bilateral collaborative designs in peaceful way between nations.

5.8. Afghan Issue

In the emerging international scenario in wake of withdrawal from Afghanistan has increased the importance SCO in the region. The SCO is endeavoring to make the space for its image as major organization for collective regional security. In 2012, Chinese than President Hu Jintao said, “We will continue to manage regional affairs by ourselves,

guarding against shocks from turbulence outside the region, and will play a bigger role in Afghanistan's peaceful reconstruction" (Khan, 2012). Durable peace and stability in Afghanistan is not only crucial for China and Russia to secure their economic and strategic interest in the region but also it is also necessary for economic development, peace and security of other regional countries. Metaphorically, Afghanistan is located at 'Heart of Asia' (Dhaka, 2014).

Geographically Afghanistan is surrounded mostly by the SCO members' countries and since last forty years any turmoil, internal conflict and external invasions in Afghanistan badly affect the security situation in adjacent countries. The effective economic and trade development, regional connectivity and stability under the SCO forum have continuously been affected because of unrest in Afghanistan. Numerous terrorists' activities in the SCO countries including revolutions in Central Asian countries, violent demonstrations in Uzbekistan, Chechen issue and unrest in the Chinese western province Xinjiang and tribal areas of Pakistan have directly or indirectly connections with groups operating from the Afghan soil (Grainger, 2014).

There are divergent views about Afghanistan's inclusion as a member in SCO. To engage Afghanistan on the regional level and to observe prevailing situation in Afghanistan a SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group was established in 2005 with the principles to cover the issues of drug and weapon trafficking, illegal immigration and to enhance intelligence sharing. The Russians showed their willingness to support Afghanistan's observer status in SCO at the occasion of the Afghan President Hamid Karzai's participation as a guest in 2011 SCO's summit (Grainger, 2014). In the very next year, Afghanistan's request

regarding grant of observer status was approved in the SCO's head of states 2012 Summit (Aris, 2013).

5.9. Concluding Analysis

The evolution of cooperative ties between Chinese and Russian nations presents a different scenario of great power politics in the international system, because the cooperative interaction of both states has created a new dimension in the world politics. The new dimension has transformed their bilateral interaction into a multilateral cooperation by involving other states in their collaborative interaction. The cooperative interaction between the Russian and American leaders contains a different nature consisting on various cooperative levels of diplomatic interaction which has resulted in the SCO. The mainstream framework of SCO has let the Chinese and Russian leaders to introduce various collaborative scenarios for the expansion of their vision of cooperation in the surrounding regions where Central Asia is an appropriate case.

The Chinese and Russian governments have created a united stance in the Central Asian region by involving the states of Central Asian region in the broader framework of SCO with the believe that the bilateral cooperation between Beijing and Moscow has become a multilateral domain. The extensions of their bilateral ties towards Central Asian region has become one of the main actors creating great power politics. In the evolving great power politics, the leaders of both nations have involved their Central Asian neighboring nations into their bilateral cooperation. In conceptual terms, the uncontrollable forces of uncertainty in the international system and its permanent place in the geo-political priorities of states create different levels of cooperation between states. The Chinese and

Russian state officials have decided to structure their cooperative ties with the objective of managing the unquestionable anarchical force of the international system. The leaders of both great powers have developed their close diplomatic contacts and political coordination for the appropriate management of anarchical nature of international system. Thus, the structure of international system forced the Beijing and Moscow to increase the scope of their bilateralism in world politics. The development of multidimensional economic cooperation between China and Russia has become an essential feature of great power politics.

The integration of strategic interests to the larger economic interest further validated the claims of multiplying cooperative bilateralism between Beijing and Moscow. A persistent growth of various levels of economic collaborations in different fields has been resulted in close strategic engagement between the governments of both nations (Rosemarie, 1996). The strategic engagement of Beijing and Moscow has led their governments to conduct various levels of military exercises to communicate their bilateral strategic strength in to international community. The combination of economic and strategic objectives between the Chinese and Russian leaders have changed the nature of world politics in which the Central Asian states have also expressed their ambitions for joining the cooperative alliance between two great powers located at their surroundings.

The military exercises and economic collaborations between the Chinese and Russian state authorities is a permanent feature of great power politics where the American global standing has been jeopardized. The increasing influences of China and Russian in the Central Asian region and the growing cooperation of both superpowers in various bilateral and multilateral levels have become the potential threats for the United States. In

other words, the American state authorities have translated the growing cooperation between Chinese and Russian governments a potential threat to Washington's global standing, which is a reflection of great power politics at international level. Thus, it is more appropriate to maintain that the prevailing scenarios of uncertainty and the permanent existence of anarchy in the international system have fundamentally created the cooperation between China and Russia and forced US to oppose the standings of both states in the world. The anarchical and uncertain structure of international system has also created a great power politics in which the three great powers have growing their strategic interaction consisting on confrontational lines. Under this scenario, the great power competition has developed an international system of cooperative and confrontational designs of world politics. In this way, it is suitable to say that the contemporary international system is approaching a new bipolarity in the world in which the American opposition to Chinese and Russian bilateral cooperation is intended to introduce a new form of bipolarity in the world politics. The impacts of this growing bipolarity are further intensifying the international system while creating different unexpected development in the world. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan is accurate evidence in this regard due to the reemergence of question of peace stability in Afghanistan. The US hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan has convinced the Chinese and Russian leader on the question managing peaceful and stable Afghan society.

CHAPTER 6

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

The forces of globalization under the shadows of twenty-first century have marked a new chapter in the history of mankind and the international system has turned another chapter of world history with the rise of regionalism in the world. The traditional political landscape of the international system has brought a major change in the political world order under the influence of globalization. The increasing trends of globalization have compelled the leaders of different nations across the world to multiply their cooperative ties in the field of business and trade. Under the emerging global milieu regional states negotiate with each other to resolve their bilateral and multilateral disputes for amicable relationship and greater regional connectivity.

The growing role of globalization has shifted the conventional structure of whole international society in which the impacts of globalizing world affected the geo-economic and geo-political landscape of the world. Indirectly, the rise of globalization in the world has increased the regionally integrating activities among different states which gradually challenged the role of power politics in the world. The contradictory matrix between the fundamental features of globalization and regionalization has fabricated a new layer of politics in the international system. Both conceptions have mutually introduced new processes and procedures for economic interactions between the states across the globe. The growing influences of the regional economic orders are restraining the impacts of

global economic orders of the great powers by constructing a web of economic institutions and their evolving reliance on the regionalism. An appropriate reflection of regionalism and its growing importance in the globalized world order can be analyzed in the form of Shanghai Cooperation Organization- (SCO).

The notion of SCO is based on the increasing trade ties between the states beyond their bilateral interactions has become the most significant development in the world of globalized values. The structural framework of SCO and its expansion towards South Asia has communicated its inter-regional connectivity to the whole international society. The regional organizational structure of SCO and its appreciation beyond its traditional structure needs an adequate understanding of its aims and functions. Initially eight members group of SCO was a group of five nations which emerged in the aftermaths of the Cold War politics. Therefore, the central theme of this chapter revolves around the mainstream structure of the SCO and its evolution and expansion parallel to discussing the varying positions of states having the statuses of full members, observers, and dialogue partners. The major point of argument in this chapter attempts to discuss the varying patterns of economic, political, and diplomatic cooperation under a specific format of regionalism.

6.1. Emergence of Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The creation of Shanghai Cooperation Organization was a regional initiative of two regional giants China, Russia and newly independent Central Asian states to resolve their border disputes and other issues related to security. The negotiations started in early 1990s to resolve border disputes among China, Russia and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and

Tajikistan. The success of these negotiations gave birth to 'Shanghai Five' in 1996, which was converted into Shanghai Cooperation Organization after the joining of Uzbekistan on June 5, 2001. The heads of the six states signed memorandum of understanding on future economic, trade and investment and declared it as the main objective of the SCO. In the same meeting emblem and flag of SCO was also approved by all member states. This was beginning of new era of regional integration and cooperation among all member states of SCO. The Charter of the SCO was signed in its second meeting held in 2002 at St. Petersburg, which mainly focused on inter-regional connectivity, peace mechanisms to resolve bilateral or multilateral disputes, joint cooperation to end organized crime and drug & human trafficking.

Another important landmark event was the expansion of SCO. It was need of the hour because it has already been discussed that this is global world and no country can survive with support of other countries. India and Pakistan are both huge countries with attractive markets. Both India and Pakistan are energy deficient states and connectivity with hydrocarbon rich Central Asia states may improve their economic condition. The expansion of the SCO towards South Asia added India and Pakistan by granting full membership to both nuclear neighbors in 2017 Astana summit. The addition of two nuclear rivals from nuclearized subcontinent has ensured the objectively productive and multilaterally collaborative framework of SCO between the member states. The leaders of the eight nations under the umbrella of SCO have decided to advance their common interests for the achievement of common goals in the security and defense matters. The participating nations from two regions have compelled their participating nations to invest their diplomatic potential for the enhancement of multilateral intergovernmental ties.

Along with the eight permanent members a few countries have observer status which includes Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia have observer status and six states including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey are dialogue partners of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The expansion of SCO is productive for regional states and they are going to achieve greater connectivity and integration.

6.2. Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of SCO is to promote the politically cooperative and diplomatically pleasant ties among its members by creating a web of trading relationship between its participating nations. The intergovernmental structure is primarily designed to advance the combination of economic and political relationship among its eight member states. The promotion of various cultural and trading connections between the Eurasian and South Asian members is aiming to strengthen the defense and political ties among the SCO member states. The representatives of the different nations under the multilateral framework of SCO is relying on its principle purpose of strengthening mutual confidence and neighborly good ties for greater connectivity and cooperation. In June 2002, the Charter of the SCO was signed by the heads of the governments of member states at St. Petersburg in its second meeting. The promotion of economically collaborative features among the members was later entered into force in September 2003. It was the formal Charter of the organization consisting of the details of the primary goals, leading principles, main structure, and core activities. The SCO Charter laid the accurately well-defined and objectively well-structured organizational structure for keeping the members in a close regional association. The Charter elaborates the mandate how this Organization would

fight against the three evils and enhancement of mutual trust, economics trade and investment among the SCO member states in such a way:

Strengthening mutual trust and good neighbourly friendship among the member state; encourage effective cooperation among the member states in political, economic and trade scientific and technological, cultural, educational, energy, communications, environment, and other fields; devoting themselves jointly to preserving and safeguarding regional peace, security and stability; and establishing a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order (Declaration of the Establishment of SCO, 2001).

6.3. Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The following are the main Organs of the SCO:

6.3.1. The Council of Heads of State

The Council of Heads of State is the supreme decision making body of SCO, which is consisting of the leaders of the member states, its core responsibilities are to determine road map, priorities and primary directions of the Organization for the next year. The Council takes up its internal issues, arrangements and workings. The Council of heads of State also considers the ongoing international issues as well as SCO's cooperation with other states and international organizations. The Council's summits are convened once a year in the different member countries as Russian alphabetic order and head of state of the organizing state is chair the meeting (Aris, 2013).

6.3.2. The Council of Heads of Government

The Heads of Government Council is a second highest body of the SCO, which has primary mandate to approve the budget of the Organization and also consider the major issues

particularly related to economic and determining the patterns of interaction within the Organization's framework. The Heads of Government Council hold its meeting once a year on rotational basis like the Council of Heads of States convenes its meeting once a year in the different member countries as Russian alphabetic order and head of state of the organizing state is chair the meeting.

6.3.3. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs has mandate to consider ongoing issues of the organization, its meetings usually convene one month before the summit of the Council of Heads of State of the organization and the meeting shall be chaired by the Foreign Minister of the host country. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs prepares the agenda of forth coming Summit and it is also responsible for implementation of the decisions of SCO. The Council also represents the SCO in its interactions with other international organizations and countries, it also provides consultation on international questions within the outlines of the organization.

6.3.4. Meetings of Heads of the Ministries and/or Agencies

In accordance with the decisions taken by the Heads of State Council and the Heads of Government Council, the meetings of heads of ministries and departments of the members states are held on regular basis for consideration of particular issues of interaction in various fields within SCO, The Organization has established a mechanism where various working groups of experts work on permanent or ad-hoc basis in their respective field in accordance with the adopted by the meetings of the heads of ministries and/or agencies.

6.3.5. The Council of National Coordinators

The Council of National Coordinators is consisting of members appointed by the each member state according to its internal rules and procedures. The Council has mandate to coordinate and make necessary arrangements for the meeting for the Council of Heads of state, the Heads of Government Council and Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Coordinators meet at least three times a year. The Chairman of the Council shall be from the state who preside the regular meeting of the Council of Heads of State for that particular year. The Chairman represents SCO in its external interactions with other states and organizations with the approval of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The SCO Secretariat and the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS) are two permanent organs of the Organization.

6.3.6. SCO Secretariat

The Secretariat of the SCO was established in Beijing in 2004 with the 30 permanent administrative staff, which comprises an Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretaries Beijing and other officials. The Council of Heads of States appoints the Executive Secretary and the Council of Foreign Ministers appoints the Deputy Executive Secretaries. The other staff is appointed on quota basis from member states. Mr. Zhang Deguang from China was the first Executive Secretary of the SCO Secretariat. Initially an amount of \$ 2.6 million was allocated for the Secretariat budget. (Bayles and Dunay, 2007)

The Article 11 of the SCO Charter is clearly stated the core objectives of the SCO Secretariat as:

“It shall provide organizational and technical support to the activities carried out in the framework of SCO and prepare proposals on the annual budget of the Organization.” (Declaration of the Establishment of SCO, 2001)

6.3.7. Regional Antiterrorist Structures (RATS)

The SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) was established under the framework of SCO to fight against the ‘three evils’ terrorism, separatism and extremism. It became functional as a permanent organ of SCO in 2004 with its headquarters located in Tashkent, the capital city Uzbekistan. Under the Executive Committee of RATS, a Council of Permanent Representatives is the main decision making body of the RATS and a permanent mechanism works for implementation of its decisions (Chung, 2006). The Council of Heads of States on the recommendation of the RATS Council appointed a citizen of the SCO member states as Director of RATS’ Executive Committee for a period of three year.

The main task of RATS to build up working relationship amongst the security institutions of the member states, collect and share intelligence information about suspected terrorist threat. The officials of intelligence, law enforcement police and security agencies of the member states meet frequently and collaborate in preparation of strategies and their application in fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is working very effectively, it provides the specialized training, organize seminars on tackling terrorism and coordinate with other international security organizations. RATS become a center of intelligence sharing among the member state regarding terrorist organizations and their outfits in the region (Rehman, 2014).

6.4. Non-governmental bodies

The SCO has two non-governmental bodies, first the SCO Business Council and second is SCO Interbank Consortium.

6.4.1. The SCO Business Council

In accordance with the decision of the SCO Council of Heads of State, the Business Council of Shanghai Cooperation Organization was formed in 2006 its headquarters is located in Moscow. It provides new opportunities to the business communities and financial institutions of the member countries to boost economic cooperation within the framework of SCO. The Council helps to establish direct links and discussions among business and financial circles to improve the effectiveness and practical promotion of multilateral projects. It also provides opportunities to the business communities to find funding for their projects within the framework of the Organization. The Business Council provides independent advice and gives expert assessments on the trade, investment and economic activities. The Council not only serves in the major areas such as energy, transportation, credit and telecommunications but also the Business Council pays especial consideration to relations of the SCO member states in fields of science and technology, education, healthcare and agriculture.

6.4.2. SCO Interbank Consortium (IBC)

In the wake of an agreement made by the SCO Heads of Government Council, the SCO Interbank Consortium was established on 26th October, 2005. It consists of the leading Banks of the SCO member states. The core objective behind the creation of the IBC was

to make a mechanism of financial resources and banking services for economic development. However, due to lack of financial activities parameters in SCO, IBC could not play its effective role in the regional development.

6.5. Decision making procedure

In the SCO all the member states have same weight; the opinion of a smaller state like Tajikistan has the same weight the bigger states China and Russia. The Organization takes decision by agreement without vote. On certain issues a consensus based decision making process is adopted. “Any member state may expose its opinion on particular aspects and/or concrete issues of decisions taken.

6.6. Sino-Russian rapprochement in the presence of American opposition

Repeated official statements, gestures of competent authorities, interpretations of renowned thinkers especially remarks published in 2013 in the Blue book of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences clearly indicates the China’s concern on maritime security interest and its intentions as a main stakeholder in Indian Ocean Region (IOR). To protect the energy security has always been a core concern for China and for assuring uninterrupted energy supply for its industrial development it is necessary to secure the SLOC which is spreading from the Gulf to South China Sea. China considered the involvement of two important powers the USA and India in the Indian Ocean Region due to the US maritime power and India’s strategic location in the IOR are continuous threat for its energy security (Rajan, 2013).

Because of its internal unrest and threats from outside from different terrorist groups, Russia initially supported American stance on war against terrorism and did not showed any concerns on American attack on Afghanistan in the wake of September 11 attacks. But gradually Russia started feeling of uncomfortable due to various US activities including growing influence in Central Asian region, attack on Iraq and lengthening of operations in Afghanistan. To tackle the US growing influence, compel Russia to revisit its policies in the region and for the purpose three steps were necessary, to establish military bases, effective utilization of multilateral security organizations and establishment of bilateral security and military relations. For utilization of multilateral organizations, Russia increased its concentration to institutionalize the two important Organizations SCO and CSTO. Not only Russia but also another important regional actor and founding member of SCO had apprehensions about the duration and scope of American involvement in the region. Both leading countries persuaded the Central Asia states to demand from the USA to evacuate the airbases. On the other 2003-2004 Colored Revolutions and Andijan Uprisings of 2005 provided logic for demand of withdrawal from Karshi Khanabad airbase of Uzbekistan. Due to its economic problems as well as Russian and Chinese pressure, Kyrgyzstan also demanded a 100-fold increase in the exiting rent for Minas Airbase (Blank, 2007).

Although the economic relations between Russia and China have been increasing gradually since last twenty years but still there ties are not on required level. Contrarily, economic and trade relationship of the both countries are more significant with the USA. It is matter of fact that both Russia and China has two different approaches about strengthening of their relationship. China always considered Russia as a consuming market

for its manufactured item and a good source of energy supply and advanced technology for its industrial development. Due to annexation of Crimea and invasion of Ukraine Russia faced the Western sanctions. These sanctions provided buying opportunity to China. To overcome from the damages of Western sanctions Russia needed of an outlet for its resources and China availed the opportunity but on the name of friendship (Chase et al., 2017).

In the wake of 9/11 attacks the US along with its allies invaded in Afghanistan in the name of war on terror. For strengthening its presence in Afghanistan and to provide logistic support to its military troops, the US established military basis in the neighboring Central Asian states. NATO operation in Afghanistan and the US presence in the region become one of the reasons through which the SCO realized that the regional security is linked to the external interference and actors. The US and NATO presence in the region induced to the two leading of the SCO powers China and Russia to enhance the security cooperation within the Organization (Kocamaz, 2019).

Under the framework of SCO, China spent huge amount in the shape of large scale aid, energy agreements, increasing trade volume and infrastructure projects in the Central Asian states. Through these initiatives China not only strengthens its relations with CARs but also reduce the involvement of external actors in this region (Kocamaz, 2019). The process of SCO military exercises started from 2002, in the start usually the military drills were conducted once a year or some time not only one. However, in 2006, three exercises were conducted and since then these war games and exercises have conducting one than once every year and mostly all member countries participated in these drills. With the passage of time these military exercises have been divided in two main types firstly the

Peace Mission drills and other one is antiterrorist drills. With the major support from China and Russia in the shape of armed forces and military equipments the Peace Mission drills give clear message of show of power to the adversaries on the international level like USA and West, one the other hand threaten to the regional and internal miscreants. Secondly the antiterrorist drills and war games played important role to enhance the capabilities against terrorism and improve mutual cooperation within the Organization and intelligence sharing among the SCO member states (Haas, 2016).

Many western thinkers consider the SCO as a counterweight of the US and called it 'NATO of the East' and believe it has a position in the region alike that NATO has in the west. The policy makers of America consider the US involvement in the regional provides a solid grantee to the weaker states of the region surrounding by China and Russia. On the other hand, in response to the US intervention in the region, the SCO member states Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and china under the framework of SCO alliance started to enhance their economic cooperation to counter the US expansion. Because of aggressive stance of Russia and China and backing to the Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan for evicting the US forces from the military basis showed the strong commitment of SCO member states that they were going to take more responsibilities in the region. Consequently, the SCO clear rejected the influence of external powers in the region. It also gave a clear message that under the SCO multilateral mechanism Russia and China become the prime diction maker in the Central Asia and no need of the USA and NATO forces (Grainger, 2012). As soon as the US grip declined in the Central Asia, China and Russia backed up SCO and CSTO to increase their effective participation in the region, because they considered the

vital aspect was that the US is not member of these organizations (Carlsson, Oxenstierna and Weissmann, 2015).

Pan Guang, a Chinese SCO expert elaborated the 2005 Astana declaration regarding demand for clear timeframe of US eviction from airbases in Central Asian countries. He argued that the declaration was a positive gesture from SCO members to take leadership position in region against new threats. The establishment of SCO provided a great platform to Russia for decreasing the growing engagements of new independent Central Asian states with Western security institutions and the USA. After independence almost all Central Asian states joined whether the Partnership for Peace (PFP) of NATO or Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in the 1990s (Bailes et al., 2007).

There are great apprehensions among the SCO member states about Afghanistan in the post US withdrawal scenario like rest of the world has concerns. Because Afghanistan is a breeding ground of volatility, large-scale crimes, militancy, violence, extremism, weaponization and drug trafficking. Flowing together all these variables has resulted in security fragility not only in Afghanistan but also surrounding region including SCO states. In the wake of these threatening situations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has to take measure to strengthen security along with border areas, especially China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to control unlawful activities and interference of miscreant to SCO member states (Rehman, 2014).

In the post withdrawal scenario, the SCO's role would be very important in Afghanistan, it can be helpful in terms of development of communication structure and energy infrastructure. SCO also provide training to the Afghan National Army, law

enforcement agencies and police to maintain internal peace and security and external defense. This will not only having an important effect on internal security and peace for Afghanistan but also equally beneficial for regional peace and stability. For the purpose, the SCO-Afghanistan Contract Group can be used positively (Rehman, 2014). The Group was established in 2005, however its activities were suspended in 2009, which was resumed functioning in 2017. The major task of the Group is to provide the legal outlines for the establishment of an inclusive security doctrine to address the challenges coming from the uncertain politico-socio- economic environment. In accordance with the guidelines of international program for providing aid and assistance to Afghanistan, SCO member states are already playing proactive role in the training of Afghan security forces and providing humanitarian and economic assistance (Rehman, 2014).

After the expansion of SCO, Pakistan become permanent member of SCO, which an important neighboring country of Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan has historical cultural, religious, social and economic ties. Pakistan is willing to play its constructive role in post US/NATO withdrawal Afghanistan under the framework of SCO. Due to geographical proximity Pakistan can provide help and assistance to the Afghan government for rehabilitation in health and education sections and for communication and infrastructure development (Rehman, 2014).

All regional stakeholders including Russia, China, Central Asian countries, Pakistan, India and Iran are panic about situation after withdrawal of International and US forces from Afghanistan. They considered that the situation will bring negative consequences for regional security and economic development. Previously, due to Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan without transfer of powers to a representative government

and a long turmoil started for getting power among different Afghan groups. This chaos and uncertainty made Afghanistan a safe haven not only local for extremist, terrorist and criminal groups but also for international mafias. The neighboring countries have been facing insecurity, militancy and terrorist attacks. In this context, the importance of SCO has been enhanced, the SCO can provide outlines for multilateral cooperation to counter negative consequences of post withdrawal (Jaffer, 2016).

After the US invasion in Afghanistan and long insurgency in the country made it a safe place for drug dealers and smugglers. During the period Afghanistan become the major supplier of opium based narcotics in the world. About the worth of US\$40 billion opiates have been supplying various countries of the world from Afghanistan annually. The Narcotics money not only a big source of funding for terrorists in the region but also a non-accountable funding sources for the antagonistic foreign intelligence agencies working their rebellious agendas in the region. Afghanistan's security situation after 2021 withdrawal of the US has complicated the situation. New Taliban regime over the past two decades cultivated good ties with transnational groups like Al-Qaeda, IMU, ETIM and TTP. It is expected that they may not cut their ties with these groups who pose serious security threats to almost all SCO member states including China, Pakistan, India and CARs. Post 2021 strategic environment of Afghanistan would be a serious challenge for the regional and global security. Greater cooperation among SCO states would help Afghanistan to overcome this emerging threat.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Sino-Russian geo-political and geo-strategic engagement at regional and global level enhanced their influence in global politics. Both states are enjoying deep rooted strategic partnership which has historical roots and likely to improve in near future. China and Russia are both key actors of the international politics. The most significant aspect of the two states is their standing as credible nuclear powers as well as Veto Powers. This is one of the reasons that their political clout is dominant in the world. China is economic power and likely to supersede the US in near future which means that Chinese political and strategic influence would also increase in the world. On the other hand, Russia is still a great power with immense nuclear and conventional weapons. Russian influence is now increasing around the globe where it has literally botched the US foreign policy. Especially in Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and Ukraine, the Russian foreign and defense policy was dominant and it has checkmated the NATO on all these fronts which has improved the Russian geo-strategic influence in the world affairs. Meanwhile, China is pursuing her economic power and trying to maintain her soft image around the globe. This is the reason that China is a dominant power and making her ground through her trillion-dollar project BRI or OBOR to expand her economic influence and establish her economic dominance around the globe. Both these countries are cooperating with each other because of the common threat perception. China and Russia have got common threats from same bloc.

NATO led by the United States of America poses serious challenges to both states. During Cold War the US played a shrewd move and maintained good ties with China after 1970s and continued adversarial relationship with Soviet Union. In this way the US tried to play smart and instead of facing to communist foes befriended China and pursued aggressive policies against Soviet Union. But after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, America became sole super power in world and relationship with China also saw decline. After a few years China consolidated her economic condition showing considerable growth.

On the other side, Russia under Vladimir Putin's leadership consolidated her economic and strategic position and emerged as dominant player. The US assertiveness after 9/11 attacks changed the political dynamics of the world and brought the Russians closer to China. The US after 2001 came to Afghanistan for primarily four reasons. First was to avenge 9/11 attacks, eradicate Al-Qaeda safe heavens and replace defiant Taliban regime with democracy. Second objective was to get strategic space in Afghanistan to maintain crucial presence in this pivot area. The idea was to keep closer check on strategic rival Russia and keep an eye on economic competitor China. Third objective was to carry out closer check on Iranian nuclear activities which may become nuclear weapon state if left unchecked. Lastly, to maintain presence and check on only Muslim nuclear weapon state Pakistan. The US approach towards this region brought the Chinese and Russians closer to each other which led to the establishment of SCO. The main objective of the SCO was to improve regional integration and enhance cooperation among all the member states.

China and Russia are living in complex regional and international environment which is marred by many uncertainties, hostile tendencies and emerging new security challenges in the shape of religiously, ethnically motivated extremist groups, which put

security of this region in impulsiveness and volatility. Such a situation demand deep rooted closer politico-strategic ties between these two major powers to protect their geo-economic and strategic interests. This is the reason that Sino-Russian political elites are focusing on multilateral cooperation to overcome these changing strategic dynamics in the region and beyond. Both states established SCO at regional level to cooperate with each other in multilateral domains. Chinese and Russians already maintain a cooperative relationship on many forums such as United Nations Security Council G-20, APEC, BRICS and closely working together on other projects like BRI, OBOR and Eurasian Economic Union to establish closer ties and also improve regional integration. The SCO is one of the most significant areas of cooperation between both these two major powers. But there are some frictions between both states. Russia tends to transform SCO into military alliance whereas China asserts to turn SCO into an economic bloc. Because of their non-compliance and consensus, SCO is facing hurdles. But despite their diminutive disputes or tug of war for regional dominance both countries share the same threat scenarios at regional and global forums which led both allies to formulate a comprehensive multilateral cooperative arrangement at regional level to further enhance their deep rooted ties.

Both states are looking towards the future and trying to enhance their influence in very complex strategic environment specifically after Covid-19 situation where many countries suffered. Closer ties between both states under the umbrella of SCO could improve their ties and also enhance their positive role for improving the regional and global power structure. China and Russia are both politically and strategically strong powers in the international system. Their bilateral cooperation would further strengthen political, economic and security cooperation at regional and global level. After the establishment of

SCO both states sought to improve their bilateral engagement as well and signed the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between them. This treaty would not only improve their political ties but also enhance economic cooperation and integration. It is expected that no future multilateral cooperation in Eurasia is possible without these two states. This is the reason that both these countries require to resolve their tiny political issues and work together to improve SCO and regional integration.

The study finds that both countries must strengthen multilateral cooperation because they share common threats and common interests which brought both states closer to each other. Their closer partnership at multilateral forums specially SCO would enhance the regional connectivity, improve economic activity and promote peace in the region and beyond. The establishment of SCO could be a catalyst for regional peace and security because the region surrounded by Russia and China is volatile and facing numerous threats. Especially, Afghanistan is facing uncertain situation, presence of transnational terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda, Islamic State Khorasan Province, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and East Turkestan Islamic Movement pose serious challenges to Russia, China and surrounding states like CARs, Iran, and Pakistan. It is imperative for Russia and China to enhance their strategic cooperation to support SCO member states in their fight against transnational terrorism and other organized crimes in the region for long term peace and security.

In addition, China and Russia also maintain good ties with mineral rich Central Asian Republics. These states except Turkmenistan are also part of SCO. Russia maintains her political influence over CARs whereas China pursues two types of interests. First is security and other is economic. China is emerging economy and it may become world's

largest economy in next decade. It needs more and more resources to sustain her economic growth which has attracted China towards the CARs. This is the reason that under SCO framework China is connecting these states under her mega New Silk Road project which is also known as Belt and Road Initiative. It has invested billions of dollars to connect these states with Chinese mainland through railways, roads, economic corridors and oil & gas pipelines. Economic integration among SCO states is critical towards regional prosperity.

For Russia, CARs has paramount importance for number of reasons, first, Russians want to ensure peace and security in CARs from any internal or external threats. Russians under SCO framework helped the CARs in their fight against transnational terrorist groups like IMU and Hizb-U-Tehrir which brought relative peace in the region. In addition, the Russians are also carrying out regular counter terror drills to enhance the capacity of SCO member states against issue of terrorism and extremism. Russians believe that security of Southern Russia is linked with Central Asia and Afghanistan, that's why it is playing proactive role in these areas. In Afghanistan, Russia played a vital role in negotiation process with the Afghan Taliban. Moscow talks actually played crucial role in ousting the NATO from Afghanistan. Russia and China's proactive role in the Afghan peace process was worrisome for the NATO allies which ultimately led to their quick withdrawal. Second reason of the Russian involvement in CARs was economic in nature. Russians consider CARs as indispensable for their raw material and believe it is attractive market for Russian finished goods. Russia is also seeking greater rights to explore minerals to expand her economic influence in the region and beyond. Russia previously used to buy CARs gas on cheaper rates and supply to the Europeans on favorable higher rates. The CARs are politically and strategically influenced by the Russians and can't resist her aggressive

policies. Through, SCO Russia wants to maintain her political, economic and strategic influence over CARs, which is also a stumbling block in the regional economic integration. It is imperative that Russia must understand the sensitivities of regional powers and instead of imposing her policies it must invest in collaborative projects. On the other hand, Chinese approach is much more collaborative and based on soft power. Chinese are heavily investing in economic corridors and infrastructural development of the SCO member states. This is reason that Chinese growing influence in the region may undermine Russian political and economic influence in near future. This is one such area where both these major powers need to work together to overcome their geo-economic differences to work for the betterment of this region. Moreover, Russia is also willing to convert SCO into a military alliance on the pattern of NATO. This is the reason that Russia maintains her active military presence in CARs and utilizing their military bases for any contingency. The idea of collective security for SCO members is Russian desire to consolidate her strategic position in the region and global affairs. If SCO becomes a purely security alliance, then it may supersede the NATO because collective resources of SCO would be much greater than Western powers. For example, in man power Chinese, Indians, Pakistani and Russians would collectively be almost 3 billion in population size which may generate much greater force for defense than NATO. SCO could also become militarily stronger alliance because of the military resources of Russia (which is leading nuclear weapons state), China, India and Pakistan. There will be four nuclear weapon states in SCO which may seriously challenge the US led NATO's hegemony in the world affairs. Meanwhile, there are serious unresolved issues in SCO member states which bar them from taking any concrete step towards converting SCO into a genuine military alliance. China and India got serious issues

which would be a major stumbling block towards this goal. India and Pakistan also share a hostile past and still both states are at loggerheads against each other. There are many unresolved issues between the two which may not allow them to pool in resources to transform SCO as a military alliance. Indian overwhelming tilt towards US and European powers is also one of the reasons which may not allow India to play any considerable role in this regard. Most importantly, two major powers Russia and China also got trust issues in changing SCO into a pure military alliance. Despite these issues Russia would like to maintain her strategic influence over CARs in the near future and would never want CARs to deviate or move away from Russian political and economic influence.

Chinese political and economic influence over CARs will increase in coming years because of her overwhelming financial aid, massive infrastructural development and economic support to these SCO member states. China will be critical for inter-regional connectivity. Chinese are heavily coming up with many economic corridors in South and Central Asia to connect these regions with her mainland. China will be an important factor in regional economic integration and development.

With Russia and China, SCO may not become a viable organization for regional connectivity and economic integration. Both countries must work together to ensure overall security of this region for better cooperation and engagement. Through this platform SCO states may resolve their bilateral and multilateral unresolved issues and work together on converging points. The study under research finds that both Russia and China can take following key steps to improve SCO as a productive organization which has the ability to integrate regional economies with international markets.

First of all both countries must work together to improve their regional influence and connect SCO member states with global markets for better economic dividends. In this regard China is critical towards achievement of this goal because it is second largest economy and share border with almost all SCO member states. China can help SCO member states to bring structural reforms in their economic set up and enhance their output by putting efforts in regional integration. Both China and Russia must team up to overcome emerging challenges in their backyard. At the moment Russia is being forced to accept the expansion to NATO in Ukraine which Russia countered with overwhelming force. Ukraine's overwhelming tilt towards NATO created anxiety in Russian political circles which led to Russian full fledged attack on Ukraine. This attack cannot be justified under the UN charter but since global political world order is anarchic in nature and every state pursue her national interests under purely realist school of thought. Such tendencies are normal by major powers when it comes to their national interests. The US did the same in Iraq and Afghanistan and Russia is doing the same in Ukraine now. At the same time China is also facing issues in Asia Pacific where the US has deployed her aircraft carrier and biggest base in Okinawa Japan. To counter the US, Chinese are investing a lot in her military machine and maintain a considerable force to deter any power in the region. Both Russia and China are trying to overcome regional and external threats to their security. Due to their tactical alliance SCO member states can feel security which could be enhanced with the passage of time. SCO could become an important political, economic and strategic alliance which may challenge the US presence in the region and ensure regional stability and economic development.

Most importantly, after two decades SCO still could not achieve her desirable results. Russia and China are responsible for SCO's ineffectiveness and sluggish growth as a viable regional organization. In recent times both major power has made some adjustments in their foreign policy goals. Chinese are pursuing soft power approach and believe in mutual cooperation, building friendship and closer partnership with border countries to improve integration and greater economic cooperation. This approach is working CARs and Pakistan. In both these regions China is investing close to a trillion dollars in infrastructural development and economic corridors. This cooperative approach is working and brings these SCO members closer to China. A prosperous, peaceful neighbourhood is main focus of the Chinese foreign policy. As far Russia under Putin is concerned, it is pursuing her goals with aggressive policies and not accepting any interference in her neighbourhood. At the same time Russia is maintaining her ties with other states with pragmatic approach, developing good ties with states who accept Russian dominance in the region and aggressive policies against those who challenge the Russian dominance. Russia is now pursuing look towards East policies are trying improve her ties with Pakistan and other countries which were traditionally in the American camp previously. This approach will bring Russia closer to CARs, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, India and China. Sino-Russian closer cooperation for regional connectivity and integration would play a significant role in transforming SCO a viable regional organization for great regional connectivity and economic cooperation.

Mutual Trust and Cooperation among the SCO member is prerequisite for regional development. This regional cooperation would be needed to overcome issues in CARs and Afghanistan. Both China and Russia can propose new ideas for regional collaboration and

global connectivity to SCO member states. The ideas must promote win-win situation for each member state which must be according to ‘Shanghai Spirit’ to promote regional integration.

Russia and China can also work and support the SCO members in maintaining regional peace and security against the “Three Forces—extremism, separatism and terrorism”. In addition, the Afghan drugs trafficking also pose serious challenge to the regional security. Under the umbrella of SCO these states can expedite the efforts to curb drug trafficking from Afghanistan. All these states are already carrying out multilateral joint terrorism exercises to combat the rising trends of terrorism and extremism for long term peace and stability in the region.

The Sino-Russian collaboration within the framework of SCO plays an important role in the wide-ranging strategic collaboration of synchronization between the two states in modern times. This partnership is not just confined to economic relationship but also permits for deep rooted strategic ties at regional and global political milieu. Political leadership from both sides have shown the will and desire to improve their bilateral ties within the framework of SCO. Both have improved their communication and collaboration in numerous fields and at several levels to improve the SCO and enhance its influence as viable, productive and credible organization. Despite the fact both major have some difference at local level but when it comes to their joint collaboration at regional and global level, both support each other and work together to achieve their political, economic and strategic interests. The collaboration between both states in multilateral mechanisms and frameworks like SCO is not only is the need of hour but also useful to the multilateralism. China and Russia’s interaction and collaboration under SCO is meant to achieve stated

goals of greater integration and connectivity at regional and global level to protect and promote their politico-strategic interests.

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