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REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX IN CENTRAL ASIA: SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO)

Annotation

In this article it is noted that the purpose of this thesis is to examine the changing characteristics of the regional security complex in Central Asia. Particularly, the thesis will focus on the changes in the roles that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) play in promoting regional security in Central Asia. In this context, this thesis intends to examine Central Asian security architecture through the prism of the SCO. In this way, it attempts to examine this organization in its own wider context, which is largely ignored in the literature, by relying on the Regional Security Complex Theory.

Тірек сөздер: ШЫҰ, Б.Бузанның аймақтық қауіпсіздік кешен концепциясы, Орталық Азияның қауіпсіздік факторы, аймақтық бірегейлік.

Ключевые слова: ШОС, концепции региональных комплексов безопасности Б. Бузана, фактора безопасности Центральной Азии, региональная идентичность.

Keywords: SCO, the conception of Barry Busan's regional complexes of security, a factor of regional security of Central Asia, regional identity.

The thesis will focus on the changes in the roles that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) play in promoting regional security in Central Asia since the formation of the international coalition against international terrorism in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 (9/11.) In this context, dwelling upon these three preferred indicators will be beneficial in order to put a light on the intentions of this thesis.

First of all, in the post-Cold War world where regions acquired autonomy to a certain extent, unlike state-centric paradigms, a regional perspective is advantageous in examining the security architecture of the units, which share several interconnected concerns in terms of politics, economics and security. In other words, the security concerns are connected insofar as the conducts of one unit have consequences for others in the region. In this context, Central Asia draws significant amount of attention in world affairs after the collapse of the Soviet Union with its geo-strategic, geo-political and geo-economic position.

Although, until the end of the Cold War, the regional perspective was mostly neglected under the reigning realist paradigm, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there appeared several scholars that focused on Central Asia and its security equation. While some of them centered on the relations of the Central Asian states with one or more great powers, be it the United States (US), Russia or China etc., others focused on one of the dynamics that has significant impact on its security equation, be it internal or external or both etc. Although, one can discern a lack of comprehensive and theoretical examinations of the region that take all these components into consideration, it will be beneficial to have a look at the significant contributions to the studies concerning Central Asian security architecture. Starting with Roy Allison and Lena Jonson, the most significant study of them, 'Central Asian Security: The New International Context' focused on the region in a comprehensive and multi-dimensional manner by the help of the concept of the regional security complex /1/.

According to Allison and Jonson, the Central Asian security complex contained Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and also Afghanistan owing to its proximity and spillover effects on the region. In this regard, Central Asia, locked into common security concerns and linked to each other, was subject to great attention of the great powers, namely, the US, Russia and China followed by Turkey and Iran after the collapse of the Soviet Union due to its geo-strategic and geo-economic potentials. Therefore, along with its internal security dilemmas, especially deriving from the common denominator of radical Islam, these powers added much to the chaotic transition and affected the evolution of the regional security structure. They did so by mainly changing the distribution of power within the regional security complex with the help of their miscellaneous means and securitizations. As a result, according to Allison and Jonson, the region seemed unlikely to evolve into a regional society of cooperation. The conflictual dynamics dominated the security agenda of the region where regionalism attempts did not carry out any potential for such a transformation. In sum, they argued that the intervention of the great powers, especially Russia prevented the region from finding its balance. Although, this assumption is well supported in their book, the main weakness of their work appeared to derive from the fact that it does not take the impact of 9/11 into consideration as it was written before these events /2/.

Moreover, Niklas Swanström argued that Central Asia's most cooperation focused on crisis management through bilateral grounds rather than long-term conflict prevention owing to the lack of trust and political willingness to surrender some of the national jurisdiction to a regional organization. This tendency certainly invited the inclusion of extra-regional actors into the security mechanisms of the region /3/.

In this context, this thesis intends to examine Central Asian security architecture through the prism of the SCO. In this way, it attempts to examine this organization in its own wider context, which is largely ignored in the literature, by relying on the Regional Security Complex Theory. Unfortunately, there is almost no significant theoretical study on this organization. In this respect, following Matthew Oresman, I think that the SCO is significant for a study that aims to enforce a multi-dimensional research. This is to say that, the SCO, although being neglected among other organizations that have been established in the region, deserves more attention as it gives the scholar a ground to take a picture of almost all the units engaged in region's security architecture synchronically.

In addition, through its declarations and summits, concerns and factors shaping the calculations, whether internal or external dynamics, and conducts of these actors can be revealed. In this perspective, as the missing link of this equation, the global securitization process concerning anti-terrorism via the impact of 9/11 can be added into the picture as the developments that have taken place in Central Asia altered the very nature of its security architecture and this alteration can be witnessed through the response of the SCO /4/.

The framework provided by Barry Buzan under the name of Regional Security Complex Theory, stemming from the theories of international relations, there appeared two agendas concerning security. While traditionalist security studies continue to insist on their military and state-centered view by situating the state in a global web of security issues, there also appeared a wider agenda. This wider agenda, known also as critical security studies were dissatisfied with the narrowing of the field of security to such a scope and suggested new routes to follow and actors to examine when analyzing security issues /5/.

The Regional Security Complex Theory, developed by the Copenhagen School deserves attention. It does not only offer various analytical instruments for the security studies after the collapse of the Soviet

Union, especially owing to its regional focus, but also contributes to forming of a reliable framework for the intentions of this thesis. Before taking a closer look at the contributions and innovations of this theory, it will be beneficial to have a look at the insufficient evaluations of the neo-realist paradigm for the contemporary world order and its

critics, mainly constructivism, in order to have a better understanding of the Regional Security Complex Theory. As a member of the conventional constructivist Copenhagen School, Barry Buzan while taking his part in the above-mentioned debates, suggested a new framework for regional security studies. Retrospectively, his suggestion can be considered to be two-folds. First one is now named as the “classical security complex theory” and the second with a wider version of this theory; “regional security complex theory”. The latter derived from the desire to meet the needs of security analysts when researching the complicated world created in the aftermath of the Cold War. As this thesis mainly depends on this framework, it will be beneficial to dwell upon it briefly.

Buzan’s main objective was to include as many different types of threats and actors as possible to the security studies as a response designed for traditionalists’ narrow agenda and state-centric focus, and while doing so, knowing his limits in order not to fall into the incoherency of the wider agenda criticized by the traditionalists. Therefore, he started with giving no priority to any level of analyses. For this end, he depended on the assumption that after the Cold War, international relations would take on a more regionalized character /6/.

Buzan probably could not be satisfied with the result of his theory ending up with military-political sector and state concerning security and tried to widen it to embrace the new threats, actors and levels emerging on the international arena by referring to sectors and multiple units of analysis. In other words, he moves on to an agenda where he tests whether the rationale shaping the regional level remains true within a multi-sectoral approach to security by referring more to the system level effects on the region though recognizing the relative autonomy of the security complex as well as regional focus that has dominated the CSCT. However, it is not to say that he prefers an analysis at the system level. “As long as political life is structured primarily by states, territoriality will continue to be important and will be predisposed toward regional formation” which contains mixtures of military-political, societal, economic dynamics and actors /7/.

In this framework, he defines security as a situation where survival of the referent object (which is main reason of the securitization process) stands at the top of the security agenda and to deal with this kind of a situation emergency measures out of the political sphere have to be taken and accepted. In this context, security issues are made security issues by acts of securitization. The securitization process, “the discursive process through which an inter-subjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat” fits comfortably with the idea of security interdependence traced in CSCT, starts with a cause-effect definition in the shape of a speech act /8/.

Therefore, Buzan by focusing on the securitization process which can be ad hoc or institutionalized, is looking after the answers to the question, “who (actor who does the speech act, in other words creates the cause-effect linkage) on which subject, for whom (referent object), with which consequences and under which circumstances securitizes?” in relative accordance with the definition criteria suggested by Baldwin concerning security. “One could specify security with respect to the actor whose values are to be secured, the values concerned, the degree of security, the kinds of threats, the means for coping with such threats, the costs of doing so, and the relevant time period” /9/.

Experts give a different explanation of the reasons for the failure attempts to create a regional security system, as well as integrative initiatives in the whole region of Central Asia. Among the many causes of this lack of attention, such a factor as a regional identity. Awareness of the importance of regional identity was not yet recognized in the domestic political science.

In the works of the post Soviet - Kazakhstan political scientists on problems of regional security in Central Asia, more emphasis on political, organizational, institutional and other measures to build security in the region. It is not the reasons of the failure of these measures, the lack of coherence and coordination among the Central Asian states through an appeal to their regional identity.

Great importance for the development of regional research concept was a clash of civilizations known American political scientist Samuel Huntington. This concept is known, has caused heated debates of political scientists, philosophers, specialists in international relations worldwide. It was a lot of criticism

of the concept, which in many respects is fair. Nevertheless, the concept proposed in Huntington's idea of identifying the major regions of the modern world with the world's major civilizations or their branches, has revolutionized the study of regions and their role in international relations after the Cold War. Through the concept of a clash of civilizations in the study regions included the concept of regional identity, which has acquired a central importance in the discipline. This concept allowed a deeper understanding of the nature of the region as a geopolitical and cultural and civilization integrity /10/.

As a relatively successful macro-regional balancing attempt with a consultative security framework, the Shanghai Five and later on the SCO have prominent status in the security architecture of Central Asia. On their agenda appear two main fields of orientation; regional security and especially since 1997, economy. In this respect, examining these wheels will be beneficial, as Shanghai Five and its successor organization SCO have devoted most of their efforts to these fields.

Prior to the formation of the Shanghai Five, on March 29, 1996, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan had signed a wide-ranging agreement on the "Regulation of Economic and Humanitarian Integration." Its broad objectives were establishment of a customs union, development of common energy and transport systems, the harmonization of legal systems, and co-ordination of foreign policy in what was come to be known as "Agreement of Four" that also emphasized the need to maintain the multilateral nature of inner-state military and security dialogue. Besides, the Gorbachev era discussions on the demarcation and demilitarization of the Sino-Soviet border contributed to the process of its establishment /11/.

Consequently, Shanghai Five, which owes its origin to the joint border agreement between China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia on April 26, 1996, has been established. Shanghai Five is a name invented by Western journalists for their own convenience and was accepted by all parties concerned. Later, the Chinese side justified the location for a regional forum in Shanghai and not in Beijing as a decision that tended to reflect the spirit of equality among member states. This document committed that the member states would establish collectively a range of confidence-building measures in the field of military cooperation along their common borders and stand against ethno-religious nationalism. It is clear that border security was the initial motivation for establishing this mechanism not only as all the members shared a common border with China, but also they were all interested in securing the borders in terms of human resources and financial means.

Since its summit meeting in Bishkek in 1999, the main security concern, namely the fear of separatism rising from the multiethnic profile of the member states achieve one of the top spots on its agenda. "The focus has been on a few key issues and as improvements were made the agenda has developed, such as social stability, economic development... and (most importantly) suppression of separatism and extremism." This was mainly deriving from the potential of "irredentism within China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan and ethnoreligious uprising in Tajikistan which provided a strong reason for these states to stay together in the face of adversaries. The complex ethnic mixture of the Central Asian States has made it imperative for these countries to respect the status quo and discourage intraethnic solidarity to protect their territorial integrity. Thus, "the rationale among Shanghai Five is strongly in favor of mutual non-interference in minority soft spots." Second of these three forces that define the rationale for evolving such a mechanism of cooperation can be considered as the fight against terrorism. In this context, Afghanistan was identified as a major source of instability at an early date-long before 9/11 that drew the attention of the world to Afghanistan. Last one of the three forces, religious extremism take part among the top issues on the agenda. The perceived potential danger of Islamic militants as the main threat that binds the regional security policies of the member states, sharing growing unease with these separatist movements, speeded up the formation process of the SCO. In this period, one can discern that;

With reference to the arguments concerning the two wheels; regional security and economy on which Shanghai Five roled, before moving on to the SCO, I would like to have a quick look for the reflections of what I have discussed above in the following summits of the Shanghai Five.

In the third summit of the Shanghai Five on July 3, 1998, that was held in the capital of Kazakhstan, Almaty, members had formed a joint declaration concerning various issues. Especially against all the activities that were perceived as harmful for Central Asia, such as all the variations of ethnic separatism, fundamental Islam, terrorism, arms smuggling and drug traffic etc., all members emphasized the importance of acting on common grounds. In addition, the Alma-Ata Declaration signed at the summit proposed to take mutually beneficial economic cooperation as a new field for regional cooperation while

putting forth some basic principles for economic cooperation.

In the fourth summit, which was held in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, leaders of the member states declared their discomfort with the acts of NATO encouraged by the US as a tool to contain China that can be considered as an intervention to the domestic politics in the name of human rights. "China as a neighbor of the Central Asian states does not wish to see NATO conduct military maneuvers there year after year, near its borders. This is causing China serious anxiety, especially after the Kosovo crisis." Besides, in the joint declaration, they expressed their desire for a multi-polar world instead of a unipolar one, emphasizing that they were against any threat of power in the international arena without the approval of the United Nations, which can be considered as their reaction to the operations of the US in Bosnia and Kosovo at the time.

In the fifth summit of the Shanghai Five on July 5, 2000 in the capital of Tajikistan, the attendance of NATO, Uzbekistan and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan as observers, was a sign of the increasing interest of the international community.

In addition, China had declared its support for the principle of 'One China' and Russia's acts about the Chechnya issue. Furthermore, the atmosphere for the new members to join the organization has been created. In addition, the Shanghai Five agreed to create an anti-terrorist center in the Kyrgyzstan capital, Bishkek.

In this respect, it can be concluded that the Shanghai Five, predecessor of the SCO, successfully settled the security issues left over from the military confrontation between China and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War through dialogues and negotiations paving the way for mutual confidence in further regional security cooperation and other fields concerning separatism, extremism and terrorism. In addition to the changes in regional situation accompanied by the global world politics, their cooperation also took on nontraditional security threats, such as cooperation in intelligence and information sharing, police cooperation, judicial coordination etc.

In sum, Shanghai Five, with an agenda that has moved from traditional military components to regional security and economic development including common interests such as religious extremism, international terrorism, trans-border crimes, weapons smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal immigration, had five assemblies until 2000 and in 2001 achieving its mission transformed into the SCO. "This meant a smooth transition from a mechanism of regular meetings of heads of state of the five countries to a regional cooperation organization."

The role of the SCO in Central Asian security complex is getting increasingly complicated especially in the aftermath of 9/11. It seems that regional security complex theory becomes increasingly relevant for explaining the emerging regional security architecture in Central Asia. Rather than focusing on the security concerns of regional powers or of great powers separately and without referring to the structure emerged in Central Asian security complex, it is more illuminating if the researchers develop a regional perspective on Central Asia's security issues. Such a perspective would not only enable researchers to comprehend the unique regional patterns of its architecture, but also pave the way for a better understanding of the interaction between domestic-regional-global dynamics, revealing the obstacles standing in the way of Central Asia to transform itself into a regional cooperative society.

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Резюме

Мұратбек Жаннәт Мұратбекқызы

ШЫҰ және Орталық Азиядағы аймақтық қауіпсіздік кешен концепциясы

Бұл мақалада, Орталық Азия аймағында қауіпсіздікті қамтамасыз ету саласындағы интеграциялық үрдістер, аймақтық бірегейліктің институционалдық және әлеуметтік-мәдени аспектілері және олардың Орталық Азиядағы аймақтық қауіпсіздік кешендерінің қалыптасу мәселелері қарастырылған. Аймақтық қауіпсіздік комплекс теориясын концептуалды түрде зерттеу жұмысына аймақтану теориясы, этносаяси теория, ұлттық және аймақтық қауіпсіздік концепциялары, сонымен қатар, ғаламдану концепциялары, Б.Бузанның аймақтық қауіпсіздік комплекс концепциясы, С.Хантингтонның өркениеттер соқтығысы және т.б. концепциялары маңызды да, шешуші мәнге ие болғаны атап көрсетілген. Осы тұрғыда ШЫҰ-ның Орталық Азиядағы аймақтық қауіпсіздік мәселесінде атқаратын рөлі.

Резюме

Муратбек Жаннәт Муратбекқызы

ШОС и концепция региональной безопасности Центральной Азии

В данной статье отмечается, интеграционные, в первую очередь в сфере обеспечения безопасности, процессы в Центральной Азии. Комплекс региональной безопасности Центральной Азии которая рассматривается в рамках теории региональной безопасности предложенный Барри Бузаном, а также концепции столкновения цивилизаций известного американского политолога Самюэля Хантингтона. В данном контексте следует отметить ШОС является одним из вариантов комплекса региональной безопасности, в рамках которого может развиваться серьезное сотрудничество как в сфере безопасности, так и в других областях.