COOPERATIVE SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TERRORISM AND ETHNIC SEPARATISM: AN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE SECURITY FOREIGN POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND PAKISTAN

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Abstract

of

COOPERATIVE SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TERRORISM AND ETHNIC SEPARATISM: AN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE SECURITY FOREIGN POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND PAKISTAN

by

Brendan McGuire

States have lost their monopoly on force and now face new sources of threat from violent non-governmental organizations (NGO) such as terrorist and separatist groups. This thesis uses the case study of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to analyze the unique aspects of the formation, maintenance, and governance of security organizations addressing violent NGOs. The sources of information used are secondary sources such as academic journals and news articles, along with primary sources such as public statements and speeches.

The case study provided an example of an environment that fostered state cooperation through the inherent need for coordination. Economic development played a role within maintaining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization by stabilizing allies and in eroding grass roots support for violent NGOs. Lastly, other factors facilitated expansion of its mission to counter balancing the United States within Central Asia.

_______________________, Committee Chair
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_______________________
Date

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather who despite not being able to complete his college degree due to service in World War II instilled an appreciation for education within his family. I would like to thank my friends who assisted me during my studies at CSUS and development of this thesis including Lacy Carter, Laurie Nichol and Bryant Furlow.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis utilizes the case study of China's security initiatives in Central Asia and Pakistan to contain the threat of ethnic separatism and terrorism along its western border regions to analyze the formation, maintenance and governance of security organizations intended to counter non-state based threat. China is a very diverse nation composed of numerous ethnic groups. One such group is the Uyghur, the indigenous people of China's Xinjiang province who share a common cultural and religious background with many of the ethnic groups in the neighboring Central Asian states. Heavy-handed security practices and inequitable economic development of Xinjiang has created discontent among the Uyghur and resulted in occasional terrorist attacks within the province and Chinese targets within Central Asia and Pakistan. In response to this threat, China created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with the initial purpose of countering terrorism and separatism within member states. China has also created an informal security regime with Pakistan that has converged interests around containing threat from separatists operating within its borders.

The case study supports analysis of three research topics related to the effect of non-state based threat on conditions facilitating security organization formation, role of economic development within organization maintenance and the propensity for mission expansion. The first research question explores the environment in Western China and Central Asia that led to the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to compare the differences between state cooperation when addressing non-state based
threat versus threat from another state or coalition. There are many barriers towards state cooperation in the issue area of security such as the competitiveness of security and the high stakes and impact of mistakes (Jervis, 1982, p. 358). The formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization provides an example in which the environment was conducive to promoting cooperation and in an issue area that reduced concerns around competition. Building on the first point of analysis, the role of economic development in countering terrorism is explored within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization along with China's security regime established with Pakistan. Lastly, the propensity for mission expansion is analyzed by reviewing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization mission expansion to include addressing state based threat. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a unique organization in that it was specifically created to counter non-state based threat such as terrorism and ethnic separatism; a search of international relations literature did not identify any other international security organizations that at their onset had the specific mission of counter terrorism. Other international organizations include counter-terrorism within their missions however; this was not within their original scope.

The case study utilized in this thesis was selected due to the unique and ideal characteristics it provided for the research points noted above rather than the level of threat posed by Uyghur separatist and terrorist groups. The level of threat posed to China by the Uyghurs is debatable. The majority of Uyghurs are peaceful and merely desire a level of autonomy that would preserve their culture and history along with economic development within Xinjiang that would promote increased quality of life. Terrorism conducted by Uyghur separatists are infrequent, typically target Chinese security and
typically are not conducted in China's inner provinces. Analysis is primarily from China’s perspective, as it was the driving force behind forming the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is composed of China, Russia and several Central Asian states who also faced threat from terrorism or separatism. This thesis focuses on China as the driving force behind the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; background on other member states is provided as needed to support analysis.

The world was caught off guard by this transition as noted by the wave of highly destructive terrorist attacks such as the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, the Madrid train bombing in 2004, the London tube bombing in 2005, and the Mumbai terrorist attacks in 2008. Terrorist threat exists globally and despite large-scale security efforts, remains a significant and complicated problem to address. Colonization and the Cold War was a significant contributor to the current level of terrorist threat.

Colonization by Europe and Russia left artificially created states across the world with borders established out of colonizing nation’s political interests rather than consideration for the demographics of the native populations. Both the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) supported authoritarian regimes to maintain control of developing states throughout Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. In some situations, these regimes utilized heavy-handed tactics to maintain control of the population and frequently targeted ethnic and religious minority groups in the process. Another contributing factor to global terrorism is the role of ethnic and religious groups
as a vehicle for Cold War era proxy wars. Of particular relevance to the current focus on Islamic-based terrorism was the U.S. support for Islamic nations as a containing force along the USSR’s southern border and support for the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan during its war with Russia. As a result, states have lost their monopoly on force due to current availability of military knowledge and arms. Remediating the sources of terrorism and ethnic conflict would require actions such as changing existing borders or augmenting cultural identities; these outcomes at best would take years to achieve and in some situations are not feasible.

Containing the threat of terrorism requires highly different policies and practices over addressing non-state based threats. For example, the role of military assets changes from a primary role to secondary roles such as reconnaissance. Other states’ assets such as intelligence, special forces, and law enforcement may play a more prominent role than conventional military (Lesser, 1999, p. 110). Terrorist groups are often network based organizations composed of cells or affiliate groups operating in multiple states. A successful strike on a single cell or team is a minor victory as the larger organization remains intact (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, Zanini, pp. 50, 79 -84). Additionally, terrorist organizations operate in a manner that allows them to blend into the civilian population. In some situations where interests align with civilian populations, terrorist groups may receive aid and safe harbor. These amongst other aspects, require unique tactics to counter terrorism over threat posed by conventional armed forces such as a high level of communication and coordination not just between national but also state and municipal
security entities. An additional difference is the increased role of economic development to erode grass roots support for terrorist groups.

Much of the current body of research in the area of cooperative security focuses on the formation of organizations designed to counter threat from either individual states or coalitions. Additionally, many organizations such as the League of Nations, United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Warsaw Pact used in the analysis of cooperative security focus on state based threat. With the increased level of global threat posed by terrorist groups and the inherent need for cooperative security, additional research into security organizations in this issue area is required. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a unique organization and therefore only a single data point is available to support the findings made in this thesis; they may not be generalizable to other situations. Despite this limitation, the analysis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and China's greater security policy as it relates to Uyghur separatism provides a starting point towards answering the following research questions:

- What are the conditions under which states will engage in cooperative security in response to threat from non-state based threat?
- What role does economic development play in cooperative security focused on threat from violent NGOs?
- Are security organizations formed to address non-state based threat prone to mission expansion outside their original issue area?

In the last 15 years, China’s focus on Central Asia has grown along with its need for energy resources to feed its currently manufacturing focused economy. In 1993,
China transitioned from being an oil exporting to an oil importing country overtaking Japan to become the world’s second largest oil importing country. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that by 2030, China will import 80% of its oil needs (Lee, 2005, p. 267). Dependence on foreign oil stems from the fact that the consumption of oil is outpacing domestic production due to its rapidly expanding economy; this gap is projected to continue to grow (Lee, 2005, p. 267). To ensure its ability to procure oil into the future, China has embarked on an aggressive campaign to purchase oil rights and develop favorable relations with energy-producing countries in Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America (Zweig, Jianhai, 2005, p. 25).

China’s Xinjiang Province plays a prominent role in its energy policy as the source of the nation’s largest domestic oil and natural gas deposits, and as gateway to the energy-rich areas of Russia, Central Asian Republics and the Middle East. Xinjiang is China’s largest political region and is located on the western edge of the nation. As the crossroads between China and Eurasia, Xinjiang’s population is highly diverse. The largest group is the indigenous Uyghurs (pronounced weéghr), a Turkic people of Indo-European descent that accounts for 45% of the population. As the Chinese central government increases its focus on Xinjiang, the population of Han Chinese has risen dramatically in the last two decades, and now accounts for over 40% of the country’s population (Tyler, 2004, p. 200). Discriminatory economic policies, religious suppression, and violations of human rights have created tension between the Han Chinese and Uyghur populations. This has resulted in a cycle of attacks between the state and Uyghur factions since the early 1990s. Xinjiang’s porous borders, vast terrain, numerous soft targets, and pressure
from the international community over human rights violations have presented challenges
to the central government’s efforts to combat Uyghur separatism. To circumvent these
challenges, China has developed closer economic and security ties with the Central Asian
Republics and Pakistan. This thesis focuses on the latter of these two initiatives. China
has demonstrated some success in containing the threat from separatists, through
draconian domestic policies along with the containment of cross-border support from
factions within neighboring states. The long-term effectiveness of China’s ability to
secure the region is questionable as large-scale incidents of ethnic conflict continue to
occur within Xinjiang, and as terrorist organizations continue to operate within
neighboring countries.

This thesis is broken down into three analytical focus areas that review the
formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (originally called the Shanghai
Five) in 1996 along with its mission expansion over time. Chapter Two provides a
literature review of the theories and concepts utilized in later analysis. Chapter Three
focuses on the initial formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in response to
the increased level of threat posed by terrorist and separatist groups operating with China,
Russia, and Central Asia. The fall of the Soviet Union created a large shock in the region,
resulting in concern over separatism among ethnic groups dispersed across borders.
Additionally, the dynamic shift in power distribution generated a civil war in Russia’s
Chechnya region and fear among the People’s Republic of China that the same would
occur within Xinjiang. In response, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was formed
with the purpose of combating terrorism and “splittism” (ethnic separatism). The case
study of the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization indicates that aspects of situations in which states are threatened by violent NGOs may be conducive to forming institutions due to reduced concerns around relative gains in addition to a large need for state cooperation and high cost of individualist pursuits.

Chapter Four analyzes the role of economic development in the maintenance of security regimes and institutions by providing an overview of China’s efforts in Central Asia and Pakistan. Economic development supported China’s security aims in two primary ways: stabilizing allied regimes and eroding grass roots support for separatists and terrorists amongst the general population. Many of the citizens within the Central Asian Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states did not have positive perception of their states’ relationships with China which created potential for civil unrest. One of the products of Chinese development in the region was a means for Central Asian governments to provide utility to their citizens helping to stabilize the regime. The stability of allied regimes is important, as governments under duress will likely not be of much assistance to the security regime or institution. Economic development also plays a role in eroding grass roots support for terrorist and separatist organizations. China also engaged in economic development within Xinjiang; however, the results of development have not added to the quality of life of the Uyghur people and has not had a positive impact separatist sentiment.

China has used trade to reduce the strength of historic relations between the Uyghur and Pakistani people. China has had a long-standing security relationship with Pakistan by providing arms and military technology. China invested in transportation
infrastructure projects in Pakistan such as creation of a deep-water port at Gwadar Harbor and expansion of the Karakorum Highway. These projects allowed trade to grow between the two countries. Historically, the Uyghur and people of Pakistan enjoyed a strong relationship due to a common Muslim background. China’s economic development efforts within Pakistan helped erode the strength of cultural ties and helped secure support for the Pakistani government for operations against Uyghur terrorists operating within the country’s frontier regions. Economic development also provided a vehicle for incentives and sanctions to facilitate compliance by the Pakistani government. For example, on a few occasions China shut down the main land-based trade route with Pakistan as a sanction for failing to control its side border.

Chapter Five will analyze the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s original mission focused on countering violent NGOs to include addressing state based threat. The presence of the United States in Central Asia expanded in the 1990s with a marked increase after the onset of the Operation Enduring Freedom, in Afghanistan. The growing U.S. presence and Bush era focus on government regime change caused concern amongst China and the authoritarian Central Asia states. Starting in 2001, rhetoric and security operations denoted an expansion of the organization’s original mission to also include countering U.S. presence in the region. For example, military drills expanded to include activities not relevant to counter-terrorism. Within the example of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, several contributing factors were found that facilitated expansion of the organization’s mission.
The wide swath of activities required for counter-terrorism including economic and military policies facilitates mission expansion. In the case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China was able to establish bases of operation originally focused on counter-terrorism within the Central Asian states as an intermediary step in expanding the organization’s mission. In addition to the breadth of policy activities undertaken by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the prevalence of nationalism expressed by populations under terrorist threat affords political elites wide decisional latitude. The primary tactic and goal of terrorist groups is to instill fear into the everyday population. Although the likelihood of being of a victim of attack is small, the fact that everyday locations (e.g. malls, restaurants) are the sites of attacks makes the threat highly tangible to citizens. This sense of threat from terrorism elicits feelings of nationalism as demonstrated in the United States after the September 11th attacks.

**Sources of Information**

The majority of information used in this analysis was derived from secondary sources such as peer-reviewed scholarly journals, books, and newspaper articles. Due to the high level of censorship on the part of the Chinese government, this thesis will source information from unpublished accounts of events in Xinjiang supplied by various activist groups. Primary sources in the form of speeches and public addresses will also be referenced. The primary method of analysis will be the case study. Chapter Four, which focuses on Chinese-initiated economic activity in Xinjiang and Central Asia, utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, such as time series graphs, to analyze trends and correlations.
One of the primary challenges to implementing this thesis is obtaining objective information on conditions in Xinjiang. Information related to Uyghur separatism is highly censored by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in order to further domestic and international agendas. Depending on what is most advantageous, the CCP will either underreport or exaggerate Uyghur separatist incidents. Various Uyghur diaspora activist groups operating in Western countries provide another vehicle of information. Similarly, Uyghur activist groups have an agenda of their own, and at minimum engage in subconscious distortion of information. In summation, the two primary sources of information on Uyghur separatism will inevitably be biased.

**Working Definitions and Theories Utilized**

China’s push for cooperative security in Central Asia originated from the threat of ethnic separatism and terrorism posed by the Uyghur; it is important that these two activities are distinguished from one another as they are contained through different means. Layman literature and mainstream media commonly use the terms “separatist” and “terrorist” interchangeably; however, they denote distinct groups that utilize specific means to achieve their goals.

There is no international treaty law that creates a generically applicable definition of terrorism. There is little consensus among the states or international governing bodies regarding an exact definition of terrorism. For example, definitions of what constitutes terrorism vary between the UN, United States and European Union (EU), with the first two focusing on violence and criminal acts, while the EU operates under a more broad-based definition. One possible reason for the varied definitions is the political
complications that would result for countries that support separatist or guerrilla movements that utilize tactics outside the norms associated with military conflict. States can avoid association with terrorist groups by maintaining a “soft” definition of terrorism so that they can more easily cast groups they support as separatists or “freedom fighters” and use semantics to blur the fine line between separatists and terrorists. This is not to assert that all states engage in this practice, however, the threat of being associated with terrorism is salient enough to avoid agreement on the topic within the UN and many other international bodies.

Varying operating definitions of terrorism also exist across government entities based on their organizational focus. For example, the U.S. Department of State, Department of Defense (DOD), and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) all maintain definitions with slight nuances with each organization’s definition highly focused on political, military or criminal aspects of terrorism. For the purpose of analysis in this thesis, the following definition will be used to define an act of terrorism: “A synthesis of war and theater; a dramatization of the most proscribed kind of violence – that which is perpetrated on innocent victims [or civilian infrastructure] —played before an audience in the hope of creating a mood of fear, for political purposes (Combs, 2006, p. 14).” This definition was selected as it incorporates a wide variety of the aspects of terrorism including motivations and methods.

To summarize the definition above, the term “terrorism” describes acts of actual or threatened malice against innocents purposely for political aims. Without question, documented examples exist of violence perpetrated by separatist groups. Despite attacks
by guerrilla fighters that have resulted in the injury of innocent parties, a clear line exists between separatist and terrorist fighters in that the latter deliberately target innocent civilians.\(^1\) A distinction exists between “legal” acts of warfare and criminal murder (Combs, 2006, p. 12)\(^2\). The distinction between terrorist and separatist action is particularly germane in analysis of the Uyghur due to the existence of both terrorist and separatist organizations involved in Xinjiang and the surrounding areas. Incidents have occurred within Xinjiang that specifically targeted government security personnel (guerrilla warfare) whereas others have occurred against Han civilians (terrorism).

An additional delineation exists within the definition of terrorism depending on the party engaging in acts of terrorism: there is terrorism from above, perpetrated by the state, and terrorism from below, conducted by violent NGOs. Terrorism from above is found in the form of policies enacted by states to instill fear within their populations and is often perpetrated against minority or disenfranchised groups to further policy or maintain state control\(^3\). It will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters that the CCP’s policies within Xinjiang and use of violence against Uyghur civilians constitute terrorism from above. Terrorism from below is initiated by organizations operating within civil

\(^1\) An example is the operations of British separatists during the American Revolutionary War. Despite the fact that many participants in the Revolutionary War did not wear formal uniforms, utilize conventional military tactics or restrict action to the battlefield, they were in fact not terrorists but rather were implementing one of the first instances of modern guerilla warfare.

\(^2\) In addition to political barriers, creating a universal definition of terrorism is challenged by the contexts under which terrorism occurs. For example, the attack on the USS Cole in 2000 might not be considered terrorism but rather an incident of guerrilla warfare as it was conducted against uniformed military personnel. The September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center were clearly acts of terrorism given the civilian target and use of civilian airliners. Although the September 11, 2001 attack was conducted on a military target (The Pentagon) the large number of civilians in the building and us of a civilian airliner also note this is as an act of terrorism.

\(^3\) Commonly known historical examples include Hitler’s Holocaust and Stalin’s policies against rural peasants and minority groups.
society or internationally. An example of this would be al Qaeda and its associated organizations, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

There are two distinct entities reviewed in this thesis one representing an international institution and the other is a regime. According to Steven Krasner, “International regimes are defined as principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area” (Krasner, 1982, p. 185). For the purposes of this thesis, the focus is institutions and regimes whose issue-area is security. First, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an international institution with official membership, charter, procedures and even physical assets. Second, China’s relationship with Pakistan around security represents a regime as it represents a confluence of interests and expectations rather than a formally codified agreement.

This thesis uses the term “cooperative security” to describe the efforts related to proactive counter-terrorism and includes both military and economic efforts (Evans, 1993 p. 7). Effectively combating terrorism requires not just security policy, but diplomatic and economic cooperation as well. Cooperative security includes these strategies and is geared more towards preventative measures or proactive efforts to address security threats. In addition, the concepts of cooperative security go beyond state-centered security and cross multiple disciplines such as economics and security. China’s security organizations analyzed in this thesis demonstrate some of these qualities, and therefore the term “cooperative security” will be used throughout this paper. Chapter Four will
focus on cooperative security by reviewing China’s economic activities in the region of analysis that contribute to its security aims.

A variety of international relations theories are utilized to address the diverse questions noted previously. Chapter Two will provide a literature review of the theories utilized in the analytical portions of this thesis. Chapters Three and Four will utilize Stephen David’s theory of omnibalancing to analyze state action in response to domestic threat. Chapter Three utilizes Robert Jervis’ neo-realist based analysis of security regime formation. Jervis’ theory is primarily used to provide a common set of analytical points to analyze security organization formation rather than for predictive functions. Chapter Five draws upon Randal Schweller’s theory of under-balancing supplemented by Stephen Walt’s balance of threat theory to determine if China’s security policies in Central Asia constitute counter-balancing against the United States; this is used to determine the existence of mission expansion within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THEORIES AND APPROACHES: CREATING AN ANALYTICAL TOOLSSET

This chapter provides an overview of the theories used in the three analytical chapters of this thesis. First, the theories and concepts around security organizations are reviewed with focus on the barriers to cooperation as provided by Robert Jervis. In addition, Stephen David’s theory of omnibalancing is used to as a point of analysis for situations in which states cooperate against domestic level threats such as terrorist and separatist organizations.

This content is used in Chapter Three to describe how conventional theories around the barriers towards state cooperation were not as prominent in the environment that led to the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Chapter Four will further this concept by reviewing how economic cooperation is a component of containing threat from violent NGOs by stabilizing allied governments and diminishing support for such organizations among civilian populations.

Chapter Five focuses on the evolution of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s mission to include initiatives aimed at counter-balancing the U.S. presence in Central Asia. Stephen Walt and Randal Schweller’s theories related to state balancing tendencies are used in this chapter to determine the existence of drivers for counter-balancing within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Walt’s theory of balance of threat addresses variables at the international system level that determine counter-balancing. Schweller’s theory of underbalancing addresses domestic-level
variables related to counter-balancing. In addition to theories of international relations, Paul Brass’ theory of ethnic identity and Richard Cottam’s theory of nationalism are utilized to provide further depth for domestic-level analysis.

**International Organizations**

Central to this thesis are concepts around international organizations, specifically the analysis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. A secondary point of analysis is China’s more informal relationship, or regime with Pakistan. According to Robert Keohane, states enter into international organizations for benefits such as reduced transaction costs, operating framework and access to information (Keohane, 1982, pp. 338-343). These aspects are relevant to the analysis in Chapter Three of the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization along with Chapters Four and Five which covers the expansion of the organization into economic and security matters beyond addressing threat from violent NGOs.

Regimes reduce transaction costs by providing an operating framework to reconcile issues or differences in state preferences. These frameworks also provide a means of linking issues together broadening the scope of negotiation. For example, within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization issues existed between China and Central Asia regarding Uyghur diaspora. China wanted the Central Asian states to reduce support for Uyghur diaspora however, the Uyghur share a common cultural, ethnic and religious background with the people of the region. This created potential for backlash against the Central Asian states by their constituents. China was able to resolve this through issues
linking and side payments related to economic development. This topic is covered in further detail in Chapter Three.

The second benefit regimes provide is an existing operating framework based on organizational norms and values. The relevance of an established operating framework is covered in Chapters Four and Five in the analysis the Shanghai Cooperation Organization expansion into the area of economic development and counter balancing. Access to information was highly relevant to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization from the standpoints of coordinating counter-terrorism operations and providing insight into member state’s intentions. Violent NGOs in Central Asia operated across borders requiring a high level of coordination between member states. Additionally, understanding intentions of member state also helped addressed the historically adversarial relationship between Russia and China.

As demonstrated by the Shanghai Cooperation Organizations, international organization evolve over time to reflect the changing needs of their members. International organizations take on additional functions than their original charter specified. For example, although NATO was created with a security-focused mission, the organization also addressed economic issues related to trade disputes among members. Ernst Haas also provides examples in which security organizations have taken on economic, social and political questions in support of their core security mission (Haas, 1956 pp. 239, 243). The Shanghai Cooperation underwent a similar expansion by expanding into economic issue areas to stabilize its Central Asian member states. To a
more limited degree, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has also promoted cultural exchanges between its members.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a unique international organization from a functionalist standpoint. Many international organizations such as the United Nations embark on endeavors for cultural and economic exchange but also include security matters in their scope. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has a different genesis in that its formation focused on security matters incorporating economics and cultural exchange in later phases of its evolution. For example, although a security focused organization, NATO included norms and values around democracy to its member states. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization seems to be more pragmatically focused and explicitly rebuffs imparting sociological and political systems on its member states. This aspect of the organization is likely a mechanism to reject U.S. values of democratization and is reviewed in Chapter Five in the analysis of China’s efforts to address Bush era policies within Central Asia.

Central to this thesis is the analysis of security organizations, especially those formed to counter threat from violent NGOs. Neo-realist theorist Robert Jervis posits that the formation of security-focused organizations is different and more challenging than other issue-areas due to the fact that security matters are often more competitive than other potential areas of cooperation. Jervis denotes issues around the grave impact of breaches of trust and that states (under neo-realism) validate cooperation through the optics of relative rather than absolute gain which is amplified by the challenges states
have in measuring capability. Though challenges exist, Jervis defines four criteria under which security cooperation can be established:

- The great power nations must prefer to create a more regulated environment and maintain the status quo or create changes that can be implemented without unlimited warfare.
- All actors share the same values on mutual security and cooperation.
- All actors must settle on the status quo; no actors must have expansionist policies.
- Individualistic pursuits must be seen as costly.

A fifth criterion involves the relative efficacy of defensive versus offensive endeavors. According to Jervis, “If defensive measures are both distinct and potent, individualistic security policies will be relatively cheap, safe and effective and there will be less need for regimes.” In short, the costs of defensive endeavors are lower, reducing the need for working with other states (Jervis, 1982, pp. 358-362). This will be analyzed in Chapter Three, noting that this concept may not be relevant when combating threats posed by non-state entities for several reasons.

**Nationalism and Ethnicity**

Nationalism and ethnicity are driving factors within the conflicts analyzed in this thesis. Nationalism is an important determinant of both state capability and threat as citizens who display a high degree of nationalism view external threats in a stereotypical nature and give their political elites wide decisional latitude. Additionally, nationalistic states can also call upon their citizens to make great sacrifice in the name of the national
interest during times of crisis (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p. 17). Similarly, an understanding of the schema a nation uses to maintain the loyalty of its citizens further defines the solution space of foreign policy. These concepts will be utilized in Chapter Five as part of the analysis of how terrorist threat supports mission expansion within security organizations in this issue area.

Richard and Martha Cottam define a theory of nationalism that focuses on the phenomenon as a prominent factor that drives state policy. The first component of the theory is the identification and categorization of the primary allegiances or identity group of a state’s various demographic groups. Cottam and Cottam identify four primary identities within society: ethnic, religious, territorial, and racial communities (2001, p. 27-30). Recognizing that human beings are complex social organisms, the theory posits that people have a compound identity based on multiple distinctions; however, a level of primacy will exist amongst a single factor or subset of the identities to which they subscribe (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p. 31). For example, citizens of the United States may identify themselves by nationality, ethnicity and religion; depending on the context, one of these identities may be more influential on citizens’ actions than others. States are nationalistic when their populations identify most strongly with a primary national political entity rather than any other identity group (Cottam and Cottam, 2001, p. 2). In this context, nationalism can help promote stability because citizens will overlook differences in ethnicity and religion or past inter-group conflicts and instead focus on the interests of the state. For the duration of this paper, the term “nation state” will be used to
differentiate states whose citizens demonstrate a high degree of nationalism from states with less nationalistic citizens.

The effects of ethnicity on state politics are not unidirectional and flow between elites and the people. According to Brass’ theory of ethnicity, elites manipulate the perception of groups within society and create identities to further political objectives. The ethnic identities and preferences of citizens vary over time and are greatly affected by interactions with other groups along with messaging from elites. Elites in both dominant and disenfranchised groups manipulate ethnicity to a variety of ends. Those in the dominant group will seek to downplay the differences with the disenfranchised group to erode the legitimacy of their claims for autonomy. Elites within disenfranchised groups promote social differences amongst their constituents to legitimize control of local civil institutions such as schools. Under Brass’ theory, ethnic movements will arise in situations where the perception of inequality exists and elites are able to capture this sentiment and organize a cohesive group consciousness in response to the government. This outcome is not uncommon in situations under which rapid industrial development is occurring that does not materialize in benefits for indigenous people (Brass, 1991, p. 16, 20, 42, 45).

The concepts from Cottam and Cottam’s theory of nationalism are a useful mechanism to answer the questions related to elite and social cohesion along with governmental stability. Nationalism facilitates a more homogenous view of outside states and threats facilitating elite cohesion. Similarly, the mechanism by which a state maintains the allegiance of its citizens also defines elites’ decisional latitude.
Nationalistic states do not have to worry about external threats collaborating with disenfranchised members of society. Nationalistic societies also tend to be more accepting of the governments’ messaging about external threat, making it easier to implement policy by creating grass roots support for counter-balancing policies. States that demonstrate a high degree of nationalism are certainly more stable than those who rely on coercion, as resources can be focused on internal balancing rather than maintaining domestic security forces. Additionally, nationalistic states are able to manipulate political symbols to prompt action on the part of their citizens such as assistance with developing capability.

Chinese nationalism is a topic of study unto itself; analysis in subsequent sections will accept the existence of Chinese nationalism based on a strong tie of the Chinese people to their land and to their multi-thousand-year cultural heritage. Strong nationalistic tendencies amongst the Chinese people exist on a variety of levels, including a prominent desire for the nation to regain its prominence on the world stage. Although China’s diverse population includes disenfranchised groups such as ethnic minorities and some segments of the rural poor, nationalism is strong amongst the core Han ethnic group which represents the vast majority of the population. In Chapter Five, an analysis will be provided on the impact of ethnicity as it relates to China’s security related foreign policy. Chapter Five provides an analysis of CCP manipulation of symbols and identity as it relates to ethnic minority groups as a vehicle to promote nationalism amongst the core Chinese population in order to drive support for the mission expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Security Policy

In “Explaining Third World Alignment,” Steven David introduces the theory of omnibalancing as a means to elucidate the motivations and actions of developing nations at the international system level in response to domestic threats. As the title intimates, the theory is based on the premise that developing nations must resist threats from a variety of different actors at both the international level such as states and coalitions and at the domestic level such as separatist groups and political dissidents. David asserts that theories focused on the state as the central unit of analysis are not applicable to developing nations. Analysis of foreign policy of developing counties requires more granular inspection of internal factions, elites, and threats as the primary units of analysis.

David posits that for most developing nations, the primary threat to the central government comes from domestic groups rather than from other states (1991, p. 235, 243). The prevalence of domestic threats within developing states is a product of colonization, a system that arbitrarily drew artificial borders and created states composed of diverse groups that were often hostile to one another. In addition, the central governments in such nations lack legitimacy because they typically are not able to provide for the well-being of their citizens and are fragile regimes that came to power through the use of force or with narrow electoral support. Despite the power of nationalism, most minority groups maintain allegiance to local or ethnic identities (David, 1991, p. 238-240).

In order to preserve their power, actors within the central government will engage in actions at the international system level to combat domestic threats. Additionally,
omnibalancing also asserts the potential for interaction between the international system and domestic levels in the form of a third party rival taking advantage of minority discontent to destabilize other nations (David, 1991 p. 236). Both of these characteristics of omnibalancing are represented in Chinese foreign policy related to Xinjiang and are the focus of Chapter Four.

**Balance of Power Theories**

Chapter Five analyzes the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to include countering threat from other states, specifically the U.S. presence in Central Asia. Theories related to balance of power are used to determine if China’s actions with Central Asia constitute balancing. Additionally, the impact of terrorist threat is evaluated as a facilitator of elite cohesion and nationalism that are prerequisites for balancing in the theory of underbalancing.

**Balance of Threat**

Recognizing that balance of power theories require additional factors beyond structural components provided by neo-realism, Stephen Walt developed the balance of threat theory. Balance of threat extends traditional theories to include the perceived intention of the hegemon as a contributing factor to the existence of counter-balancing. Balance of threat theory is utilized in Chapter Five to address the timing in which Chinese counter-balancing was initiated in Central Asia. The perception of a hegemon as benevolent or aggressive will elicit different reactions from the world community such as alignment with or balancing against the hegemon. Perception of the hegemon is generated by how it
introduces change within the international system in forms of incentives or aggressive actions. Ironically, although the concept of benevolent hegemony is embraced by neo-conservatism, its implementation as part of the Bush presidency’s foreign policy led to a significant decline in the positive perception of U.S. influence (Walt 2005, 65).

Balance of threat theory asserts that nations will be more accepting of a benevolent hegemon; however, unipolarity is inherently threatening even under the context of a benevolent hegemon for the following reasons: conflicts inevitably arise, future intentions are unknown, and there is potential for inadvertent damage from a hegemon’s policies. Resistance to a hegemonic state will be muted if it is perceived to be benevolent; however, low-intensity soft balancing will still likely occur for the aforementioned reasons. Several other tenets of the theory are borrowed from conventional balance of power theory such as the geographic proximity of nations to the hegemonic state as one of the determining factors in policy formation (Walt, 2005, p. 77).

In *Taming American Power*, Walt utilizes his theory of balance of threat to explain why balancing did not occur against the United States until many years after its rise to hegemony. Historically, the world’s great power nations primarily resided close to one another in Europe and were more preoccupied with relative power compared to their neighbors. For nearly a decade of the post Cold War era, the United States was perceived as a benevolent hegemon until the initiation of the Bush Doctrine along with its open skepticism of international institutions has created alarm among other nations, resulting in primarily soft balancing against the United States (Walt, 2005, p. 124-125). The perception of the United States within Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan and
Kyrgyzstan has shown some improvement during the Obama Administration, however, much work remains to overcome the negative position taken by the previous presidency (Shaikhutdinov, 2010 pp. 84-91). Concern over U.S. ambitions on the region remain a concern as the current improvement in relations could easily shift depending on the U.S. Presidential election results in 2012. During the Cold War, the United States “bound” itself within various international organizations in order to gain the trust of its allies (Walt, 2005, p. 148). The tendency for the Bush Administration to work outside of institutions decoupled the United States from the norms of the international system, creating cause for concern amongst other states. Examples include the Bush Administration’s refusal to adhere to the Kyoto treaty and unilateral action against Iraq after failing to gain support in the UN. Walt notes that most resistance to U.S. hegemony has come in the form of soft balancing, seeking to fulfill the following goals:

- Increase ability to resist U.S. coercion
- Improve bargaining position in negotiations
- Create a means of communicating dissatisfaction with hegemonic policies by resistance that avoids escalation
- Hedge risk by joining with balancing coalition without overly alienating position with hegemon

Walt asserts that balancing efforts against the United States have been difficult to detect due to changes in the nature of conflict and military strategy. With its roots in realism, traditional balance of power has focused on great power nations and the strength of their armies, and to a lesser degree the ability to marshal their industrial bases into
military capability. Naval power is discounted, as historically naval powers were not able to project enough power to threaten other great power armies. In the current era, the basis of military power is not as clear-cut as the mere size or efficacy of a state’s army. The dissemination of military knowledge and increased accessibility to arms (e.g. the AK47) has led to the loss of states’ monopoly on combat force to guerrilla movements, terrorist groups and private military contractors. This trend has also decreased the relative strength of great power nations by providing lesser states with the capacity to defend their sovereignty through wars of attrition (Walt, 2005, p. 153-155).

**Domestic Factors Driving Balancing Behavior**

In addition to the intention of the hegemon, domestic factors in conjunction with variables at the international system level are required to determine balancing conditions. In *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on Balance of Power*, Randal Schweller defines the domestic factors that constrain and promote balancing behavior. Unlike structurally oriented theorists who assume that balancing is an automatic consequence of unipolarity, Schweller concludes that nations are more likely to underbalance, which is defined by lack of or ineffective counter-balancing (2006, p. 10). Although the focus of Schweller’s work centers on why states underbalance, it is also useful to analyze the conditions under which counter-balancing occurs. In Chapter Five, analysis of the effect of terrorist threat on security mission expansion is supported by Schweller’s domestic level requirements for counter-balancing.

Schweller asserts that the existence of a hegemon alone is a necessary but not sufficient condition for balancing to occur. In addition, a revisionist state must be present
and perceive itself as having a stronger capability base than the hegemon and its coalition of bandwagoners. The extent of change sought by the revisionist state is based on its level of dissatisfaction with the order of the international system. Under Schweller’s schema, dissatisfaction is defined as the gap between the have and have-not states based on the division of territory, institutional arrangements, norms and values. Schweller is careful to note that not all rising powers are dissatisfied; therefore, not all rising powers are revisionist states (2006, p. 28). Leveraging theories of international organizations posed by Alastair Ian Johnson, Schweller offers the following criteria to determine the extent of change sought by the balancing state:

- Level of participation in international organizations
- Adherence to rules of international organizations in which it has membership
- Desire to change the rules of international organizations for its advantage
- Display of a clear desire to redistribute power within the international system
- Tendency towards using military means

As with Stephen Walt’s balance of threat theory, Schweller includes the intent of the hegemon as a factor determining the likelihood of balancing. Both theories include the concept of benign versus malign hegemonic powers. Unlike Waltz, who asserts that states have at least some fear of hegemony regardless of its nature, Schweller’s theory of underbalancing positions bandwagoning as a more likely policy towards benign hegemonic states rather than resistance via soft power. When balancing occurs in situations with a large capability differential, the balancing coalition will engage in soft
balancing by using institutions to restrain the hegemons and engage in other efforts to undermine its legitimacy (Schweller, 2006, p. 35).

Extending his theory beyond structural balance of power and balance of threat theories, Schweller includes variables from the domestic system level in addition to the previously-stated variables from the international system. The need for these additional components is based on the numerous historical examples in which the international system demonstrated the previously defined criteria for balancing, but no such action took place. Several domestic level factors are required in order for governments to have the political latitude to engage in counter-balancing. The first requirement is the existence of elite consensus which is defined as the similarity or congruence of elite preference. A balancing of elite cohesion is created by a shared perception of the current world order and desire for change (Schweller, 2006, p. 47). In the absence of elite cohesion, a patchwork of policies will ultimately emerge and create an ineffective grand strategy.

Due to the disparate power arrangement in democracies and the numerous actors within the political arena with “veto” powers, democratic governments are particularly slow to respond to threats (Schweller, 2006, p. 48). The second political constraint on balancing is the stability of the government or regime. This point of analysis focuses on the existence of groups opposing elites or the possibility that balancing policies will result in removal of elites from their positions of power. In order for balancing to occur, a nation must exhibit a high degree of social cohesion that binds groups together to that society’s core identity. If a state must expend significant material resources to quell domestic unrest, it will likely not have resources to develop sufficient capability to challenge a
hegemonic power. Additionally, the existence of dissatisfied domestic groups such as ethnic separatist movements creates vulnerabilities for other states to utilize against the balancing government. Schweller defines social cohesion as a scenario in which citizens accept a common set of norms and values. Social cohesion indicates that citizens respect the authority and legitimacy of the state's institutions (2006, p. 51).

In short, the policy options available to vulnerable governments are much more constrained than those available to governments with broad-based support (Schweller, 2006, p. 49, 50). Table Two represents the policy options available to balancing states depending on the level of elite and social cohesion. The likelihood of balancing increases across the gradient from the upper left quadrant to the lower right as the stability of represented government increases.

In conclusion, Schweller’s theory is a much richer framework to analyze balancing tendencies than those offered by neo-realists. Schweller’s theory incorporates variables from both levels of the international system. Analysis begins at the international system level by first determining the level of satisfaction the rising power has with the current order, then by determining the relative capability of the hegemon in comparison...
to the balancing coalition. One shortcoming of Schweller’s framework is that it does not provide methods to measure the domestic factors that affect his units of analysis; for example, how to identify the contributing factors to assess regime stability in an objective manner. To perform the operation of identification and categorization, theories that focus on civil society are required.

**Conclusion**

This thesis draws upon various neo-classical realist theories combined with frameworks for the analysis of nationalism and ethnicity. David’s theory of omnibalancing is used to analyze China’s security and supporting economic development policies as they pertain to containing the threat of Uyghur terrorist and separatist groups. Walt and Schweller’s theories on counter-balancing are used in the analysis of China’s security policies as they relate to containing U.S. influence in Central Asia. In support, Cottam and Cottam’s framework on nationalism is used to analyze the domestic level factors defined in Schweller’s theory of underbalancing. These theories coalesce into a comprehensive analytical tool kit to address international and domestic level factors along with the varying levels of stability across the diverse nation of China. The following chapter reviews the context of instability within Xinjiang and Central Asia that led up to the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. David’s theory of omnibalancing is used to explain how the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states worked together despite historical tensions between them.
Chapter 3

FORMATION OF SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

“In fifty words: Granted mobility, security (in the form of denying targets to the enemy), time, and doctrine (the idea to convert every subject to friendliness), victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraical factors are in the end decisive, and against them perfections of means and spirit struggle quite in vain.”

- T.E Lawrence

In 1996, China formed the Shanghai Five later renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional security agency with a mission to contain the ability of separatist groups to conduct cross border operations in Central Asia. China faced barriers to development of its Xinjiang province due to unrest in the region stemming from Uyghur discontent with government security and economic development policies. The Central Asian states faced threat from ethnic minority groups and terrorist organizations such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. The organization also facilitated China’s efforts to develop better relations with the Central Asian Republics and to gain access to the region’s natural resources. Additionally, the Shanghai 5 helped to curtail the growing U.S. influence in Central Asia. In 2001, the Shanghai Five was renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and underwent a transformation from a regional to an international security organization which is the topic of Chapter Five.

This chapter will analyze the similarities and differences between the formation of organizations created to counter state-initiated threat and those created to counter non-state initiated threat; this will be analyzed in the context of China’s efforts to contain ethnic separatism and terrorism around its Western border. To provide context, background is first provided on the motivations for China and the Central Asian
Republics to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Background information is focused on these member states as China was the driving force in forming the organization. Focus is on the Central Asian states as this area witnessed a higher level of Uyghur separatist and terrorist activity than other member states such as Russia. Next, Jervis’ theory regarding security organization formation will be analyzed in the context of China’s regional security organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization by evaluating how states utilize both domestic and international factors when making determinations on how to work with one another.

**Chinese Foreign Policy Interests in Central Asia**

In the last 15 years, China’s focus on Central Asia has grown along with its need for energy resources to feed its currently manufacturing focused economy. China is on a worldwide hunt for natural resources, particularly oil. China’s Xinjiang Province plays a prominent role in China’s energy policy as the source of the nation’s largest domestic oil and natural gas deposits, and as gateway to the energy-rich areas of Russia, Central Asian Republics and the Middle East. China must maintain a high level of economic growth in order to maintain the utilitarian control mechanism, one of the primary factors of governmental legitimacy in times of low conflict. In order to absorb the number of new workers introduced into the work force each year, China must maintain 8% GDP growth (“Geopolitical Diary: For China, Grim Data and Grimmer Economy,” January 23, 2009 p. 1). China maintained robust economic growth, between 10 and 12% of GDP, from 2004 through 2007 (World Bank, January 2008); however, GDP receded to 9.1% in 2009 (World Bank - GDP Growth Annual Percent).
In 1993, China transitioned from being an oil exporting to an oil importing country. China overtook Japan and is now the world’s second largest oil importing country with over 90% of its oil resources coming from abroad. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that by 2030, China will import 80% of its oil needs (Lee, 2005, p. 267). Dependence on foreign oil stems from the fact that the consumption of oil is outpacing domestic production due to its rapidly expanding economy; this gap is projected to continue to grow (Lee, 2005, p. 267). To ensure its ability to procure oil into the future, China has embarked on an aggressive campaign to purchase oil rights and develop favorable relations with energy-producing countries in Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America (Zweig, Jianhai, 2005, p. 25).

Although China receives most of its foreign oil imports via sea transport, Xinjiang represents an important land route to gain access to the energy and mineral resources of Central Asia and beyond. China has dramatically increased its land-based transportation infrastructure with Central Asia via new rail lines and pipelines that extend thousands of kilometers from the country’s eastern provinces into Kazakhstan. China is also investigating expanding this infrastructure to provide a land-based route to access resources beyond Central Asia in countries such as Iran. China’s economic development policy and its relation to regional security are further detailed in Chapter Four.

The Uyghurs and Xinjiang

This section provides background information on Xinjiang province and the Uyghur people to provide background on the sources of discontent with Chinese rule. A significant amount of detailed background information is provided due to the relatively
low level of coverage provided by the Western media on the Uyghur. The Uyghurs are descendents of Caucasian people from the Cherchen Mountains who migrated to the area now known as Xinjiang at least four thousand years ago. Since that time, the peoples of East Turkistan have intermingled with various other ethnic groups, most notably the Mongolians and Persians (Millward & Purdue, 2005, p. 41; Tyler, 2004 pp. 24-27). The Uyghurs are a Turkic people and share this common bond with a diverse set of nations that extends from Cypress to the Central Asian Republics.

Figure 2: Map of China and Central Asia

Source: University of Texas Austin

The Uyghurs experienced invasions on several occasions, including incursions from the Mongolians and the Chinese on three separate occasions. The most impactful invasion occurred in 1715 by the Manchus and set the stage for the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) current control of Xinjiang. Since the Manchu occupation, there have been several brief periods of independence; however, for the most part the region has
remained under Chinese control. The first disruption of Chinese rule occurred in 1865 when local chieftain Yakub Beg ended Chinese occupation for 12 years. This period of independence was largely facilitated by the Taiping Rebellion that cut off support from central China to outlying provinces along with military support from ethnic Chinese Muslims known as Dongans\(^4\). Despite receipt of political and military support from both England and Turkey, Yukab’s harsh policies and taxes created tenuous loyalty for his government and the region was eventually retaken by the Chinese in 1877 (Tyler, 2004, p. 80 - 86).

Xinjiang remained under Chinese control for roughly 40 years. The tone of Chinese rule varied greatly based on the nature of the local administrator. The first Chinese administrator of Xinjiang, General Zou Zoutang, initiated draconian policies that targeted the local population, including forced indoctrination of the Uyghurs in the form of Chinese language, culture and religion. The second administrator, Yang Zengxin, was more progressive and viewed by English diplomats stationed in Xinjiang as more reasonable to the indigenous population. Yang passed away in 1930, and Xinjiang experienced several years of instability as various Chinese factions vied for control of the region. Finding opportunity in the chaos, the Dongans from the neighboring Gansu region seized control of portions of Xinjiang until challenged by Russians backed with modern-era military equipment (Tyler, 2004, p. 100 - 119). The local power vacuum and turmoil caused by World War II facilitated the creation of an independent state by the Uyghurs

\(^4\) The currently used term to denote ethnic Chinese practicing Islam is “Hui.”
called the East Turkistan Republic which existed from 1934 until Xinjiang was retaken by the Communist Chinese in 1949 (Millward, 2004, p. 5). Although brief in duration, Xinjiang’s periods of independence serve as the foundation for modern calls for Uyghur independence.

**Uyghur Nationalism and Identity**

At a high level there are two main factors creating conflict in Xinjiang. The first and most prevalent is related to Uyghur nationalism stemmed by discontent with Chinese security and economic policies within Xinjiang. Most of the Uyghurs motivated by nationalism are not seeking complete independence by merely a level of autonomy that provide for maintenance of their history, cultural and economic opportunity. The second driver of conflict is based on the aim to establish an Islamic state; a small minority of Uyghurs supports this goal. Uyghurs subscribe to a diverse set of allegiances that create a complicated compound identity. Although social groups rarely exhibit a homogenous identity, there is usually a small set of identity subscriptions that are more prevalent than others. Despite sharing a common language and ancestry, differences in Uyghur identity vary greatly across Xinjiang’s regions. Significant cultural differences exist between groups in the Xinjiang region due to their isolation from one another and different external influences from China, Central Asia, Russia and Pakistan. Cottam and Cottam define four primary identities: ethnic, religious, territorial and racial communities. Although differences in identity exist across Xinjiang, the Uyghur racial and ethnic identity components are homogenous due to common genetic ancestry and language along with history and culture.
The seeds of modern Uyghur nationalism formed in the early twentieth century as Uyghurs who had lived abroad in Europe returned to the region, bringing with them Western ideas of modernity. The Uyghur nationalism movement began in Yining and Kashgar with the modification of the education system to include ideals of democratic representation, nationalism and self-determination. Uyghur students were encouraged to study Turkic literature and understand the pan-Turkic movement and Ottoman Empire. The Bolshevik Revolution provided further unification of Uyghurs as an interest in Communism became prevalent in the region (Millward and Tursun, 2004, p. 72).

Islam is the predominant religion among the Uyghurs with most belonging to the Sufi sect. Fringe members of the Uyghur community adhere to the Salafi (Wahabi) sect of Islam, as noted by connections with the Taliban and other radical Islamist groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Salifism is focused on returning Islam to its roots and is the sect of the religion generally practiced by Islamic terrorist groups. The primacy of nationalism or religion is the driving factor behind the differences within the Uyghur separatist movements; non-violent separatists subscribe to an identity based on Uyghur nationalism whereas violent separatist or terrorist groups place prominence on Islamism.

The existence of Salafist Uyghurs stems from interaction with Arab mujahadeen (soldiers of Islam) and Taliban in Afghanistan. An additional source of Salafist influence is from Uyghur youth attending fundamentalist madrassas (religious schools) in Pakistan. A small number of Uyghurs traveled to Afghanistan in the 1980s to support the resistance against the Soviet Union’s invasion. There are unconfirmed reports that China supported
Uyghur mujahadeen and provided military equipment to them. The decision to fight the USSR in Afghanistan, which at the time was China’s primary adversary, indicates the prevalence among Uyghur mujahadeen for the support for the Islamic community over East Turkistan nationalism.

The Sufi Uyghur identity is much more heterogeneous. Sufism is less hierarchical in nature than both the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam as there is no organized central leadership. At a high level, Sufism shares the same general spiritual lessons with a focus on achieving enlightenment through self-exploration of Islam; however, the message of the religion varies greatly between spiritual leaders. This creates differences in religious practice between regions and localities and even differences between neighborhoods. In addition to differences within the Sufi sect, the role that religion plays in Uyghur life varies greatly between rural and urban areas. Uyghurs in rural areas adhere to stricter tenets of religion than their urban counterparts. Despite differences in the prominence of religion and Sufist practices among the Uyghur, religion is considered important among the majority.

In the 1990s, Pan-Turkism re-emerged as a political force in Central Asia spawned by the era of Glasnost and then further bolstered by the fall of the Soviet Union. Turkic political entities began to form, first emerging as the Assembly of Turkic Peoples in Moscow and later as movements in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan after independence from the USSR. Pan-Turkism failed to materialize due to many factors, most notably disagreement among factions within Central Asia and, at the time, Turkey’s lack of resources to facilitate the movement (Haghayeghi, 1996, p. 183 – 186). Most
Uyghurs align their territorial interests with the East Turkistan region and in fact merely desire a higher level of autonomy and opportunity for a good quality of life within the political structure of the PRC. In practice, this entails ending policies that erode Uyghur culture and curtail religious freedom along with creating programs to prepare Uyghurs for work in the region’s new industries and government.

Despite a common territorial interest, there are significant differences between the Uyghurs in each of East Turkistan’s three primary regions: Tarim Basin, Zungharian Basin and Tian Shan. For example, Uyghur culture in the Tarim Basin in the southeastern portion of the region is heavily influenced by India and Pakistan, whereas Uyghurs in the north are more influenced by Russia (Rudelson, 1997, p. 40 – 41). The figure below denotes the external influences on Uyghur identity based on geography:
The influence of religion on Uyghur identity also varies across the region. The Uyghurs of the southern region tend to be more conservative in their practice of Islam than people in the northern regions. For example, women in the southern city of Kashgar typically wear burkas while those in the north may only wear a headscarf (Rudelson, 1997, p. 42 - 44). Additional differences in religious practice are created by the nature of the Sufi religion, which promotes self-exploration. The interpretations of individual Imams create differences in the implementation of Islam from mosque to mosque.

**Uyghur Persecution**

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the Turkic states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan gained their independence. The Chinese government, fearing a rebellion in Xinjiang inspired by a desire to join their newly independent brethren, enacted harsh policies that targeted Uyghur culture, language and religion (Hong-Fincher, September 15, 2000, p. 5). The drive for autonomy based on these events was low as demonstrated by the relative peace in the region at the time of the rise of the Central Asian States. Chinese security and economic policies intended to quell the region have
had the opposite of their intended effect and have instigated conflict in the region. The Uyghur diaspora reports that over 1,000 Uyghurs have been killed and 10,000 detained by Chinese security forces as a result of these policies through the 1990s (Gladney, 2000, p. 5).

China has created restrictions around the Uyghur ability to practice Islam. *Imams* (religious leaders) are carefully vetted by Chinese authorities and required to attend a 20-day “reeducation” program. Religious texts are also censored by government authorities who are charged with translating them into approved languages and eliminating ideas contrary to Chinese law. The effort also seeks to undermine Islamic influence on the younger generation by forbidding anyone under the age of 18 to enter mosques and by requiring college students to sign documents stating they will not practice religion while attending school. In addition, Uyghur women have been arrested for wearing their veils as authorities have interpreted them as signs of sympathy for separatists (Congressional Executive Committee on China, 2002, p. 2).

A major source of Uyghur discontent is their economic conditions relative to the status of Han Chinese in Xinjiang. In an apparent effort not to illuminate disenfranchisement of its minority citizens, the Chinese government does not track economic statistics based on ethnicity; however, statistical interpretation of data denotes a huge income disparity between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. For instance, Han Chinese holds 60% of all professional positions in the region, although they only compose 40% of the population (Weimer, 2004, p. 179). Although aggregate economic metrics for Xinjiang have greatly improved in the last few years with per capita GDP breaking
$1,000 (“China’s Diplomatic and Military Muscle Flexing,” December 9, 2005), such numbers are misleading and do not reflect the wide disparity in wealth between the Han and Uyghur populations. This disparity is in part due to differentials in education, but a more prevalent factor is discriminatory hiring practices that are so pervasive that they equate to law (Weimer, 2004, p. 214). Critics of the complaints made by the Uyghurs cite the tremendous amount of funding coming from government coffers and foreign investment; however, economic metrics denote that this investment benefits the Han Chinese in the region (Tyler, 2004, pp. 210-213).

Rapid development of Xinjiang’s natural resources, nuclear testing, and mass-scale agricultural development projects are creating negative economic effects for the Uyghurs. Most Uyghurs live in rural areas and are agrarians engaging in small-scale farming or resource extraction. Development around Bosten Lake, the region’s largest source of fresh water has led to increased salinization of the water; the wetlands are now half the size they were 50 years ago. Crops that support indigenous rural farmers, such as reeds, are decreasing in yield, creating another threat to the economic livelihood of the Uyghurs (“Kuwait Helps Protect Xinjiang’s Lake,” April 1, 2005, p. 1). Additionally, industrialization and agricultural overproduction have increased the area’s desert land mass (“North China Faces Increasing threat of Desertification,” October 26, 2004, p. 1) resulting in some of the worst sand storms in modern history (“Sandstorm Sweeps over NW China Region,” March 12, 2006, p. 1).

The Chinese central government is also eroding the Uyghur culture by attacking the community’s literature, language and history. Books written in traditional Uyghur
script or that depict the people’s history are forbidden by the government and are regularly destroyed in public book burnings. The Chinese government has changed the script of the Uyghur written language three times in the last 50 years, creating a scenario in which three generations cannot communicate with one another in the written word (Tyler, 2004 pp. 158, 261). Additionally, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) banned traditional sports and cultural activities (Fincher Hong, June 29, 2000, p. 1). Between the destruction of literature and halt of written communication, and the ban on cultural events, future Uyghur generations will lose their sense of history and identity outside that which is established in the propaganda published by the CCP.

Despite guarantees made to minority groups in the Chinese constitution to maintain their language, the Uyghur language is being marginalized. The promise of official protection has been eroded by conflicting policy since the 1980s when a standard Chinese language was instituted. Initially, minority parents were faced with the difficult choice of sending their children to Mandarin-oriented schools that would increase the likelihood of future financial success or attendance at regional schools that would help maintain the viability of their culture. Today, this already difficult choice is disappearing. The central government is merging minority-oriented schools with those geared towards Mandarin-based curriculum. This trend is also occurring at post secondary schools; as of 2002, Xinjiang University ceased to offer classes in the region’s native dialect (Dwyer, 2005, pp. 38-43).

The demographics of Xinjiang have shifted dramatically over the last 50 years as a result of state-sponsored policies. In 1941, Uyghurs represented 80% of the population
of the region (Central Intelligence Agency, 1964, p. 2), whereas in the 2000 Census, Uyghurs represent around 45% (Toops, 2004, p. 245). The core of this drastic demographic change within Xinjiang comes from two trends: immigration from inner China and the elimination of laws that allowed ethnic minorities to claim exemption from population control practices. In the 1950s, one million members of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) were settled in Xinjiang, and in the 1960s many Han Chinese immigrated to the area to flee starvation caused by the Great Leap Forward (Tyler, 2004, p. 200). In the 1990s, the Chinese government developed a resettlement policy that started the process of making the Uyghurs a minority in their own land. For the last 15 years, on a monthly basis approximately 30,000 Han Chinese have immigrated to Xinjiang as part of the central government’s “Go West” development campaign (Tyler, 2004, p. 214).
In 1988, the Chinese government ended the exemption of minorities from forced family planning. This policy has created negative sentiment among the Uyghurs because it violates some interpretations of the *Shari’ah* (Islamic law) that prohibit abortion or utilizing birth control. Additionally, the publicly stated reasons for the policy are incongruous with fact. The central government recently announced efforts to step up this effort, and cited the fact that Xinjiang has the highest rates of population growth in the country, which is erasing gains from economic development (Bodeen, February 17, 2006, p. 1). Governmental policies are clearly behind population growth, with a large source being the inflow of ethnic Han from China’s inner provinces (Tyler, 2004, p. 160). Further contributing to the Uyghur population decline is a government-sponsored dowry bonus for inter-Han Uyghur marriages; children of such unions are legally considered Han rather than multi-racial (Tyler, 2004, p. 259).

**Uyghur Separatist Groups**

There is a large variety in both the aims and methods of Uyghurs resisting the rule or policies of the PRC. As noted previously, the aims of the Uyghur resistance range from...
the desire for additional autonomy within the structure of the PRC to nationalist succession, and in the most extreme case, the formation of an Islamic republic. The methods used towards desired aims vary greatly, from peaceful activism such as the efforts of Rebiya Kadeer, violent separatist groups targeting police and military, to terrorist organizations targeting civilians. A working definition of terrorism and separatism was previously provided in Chapter Two of this thesis. The organizations reviewed in this section utilize non-violent means to change the status quo and are largely motivated by Uyghur nationalism. Despite the fact that these organizations utilize non-violent means, they are perceived as threatening to the current policies of the PRC in Xinjiang. Although the allegations are suspect, the Chinese government attributed the riots in Xinjiang that occurred throughout July of 2009 to activists operating outside of the PRC.

Dozens of Uyghur separatist organizations operate all over the world with little coordination between one another. The World Uyghur Conference fills this void and provides coordination for Uyghur organizations working outside of China. Isa Alptekin, the former head of the free government in East Turkistan coordinated the resistance among the diaspora. His death in the 1980s left a void that was not filled until 2004 when the World Uyghur Conference was formed and brought together 21 organizations into a single coordinated entity. The mission of the World Uyghur Conference is as follows:

- Promote democracy along with human and religious rights in East Turkistan
- Promote non-violent means of change within East Turkistan
Create an umbrella and coordinate the efforts of other Uyghur organizations
(UyghurCongress.com)

The East Turkistan Information Center is an outlet of information and news related to Uyghur issues to the international media and activist organizations. The East Turkistan Information Center has connections inside East Turkistan that are able to communicate news to the west that is censored by the CCP. One of the primary focuses of the PRC has been to control the flow of information flowing from Xinjiang. This effort serves a multitude of purposes, including suppressing information related to human rights abuses among the international community, and controlling the perception of the Uyghur separatist movement that will be elaborated on in Chapters Five during analysis of terrorist threat’s role in nationalistic sentiment among China’s core Han population.

The East Turkistan Information Center is a major source of information on events within Xinjiang that is not subject to the controls of the Chinese government. The East Turkistan Information Center primarily utilizes the internet to disseminate information but also provides works with mainstream western media as well. For this reason, the CCP has labeled the East Turkistan Information Center a terrorist organization for contributing to religious extremism via the internet (“East Turkistan terrorist forces,” July 14, 2009). The validity of China’s claim is difficult to verify as internet postings of East Turkistan Information Center are primarily video and written accounts of protests in support of Uyghur autonomy.

Limited information exists that secular Uyghur separatist groups have received support from the Turkish, U.S., and Taiwanese intelligence agencies (Raman, July 24,
2002, p. 8). In the 1990s, Turkey provided support and safe haven for secular Uyghur separatists. Riza Bekin, a retired North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Turkish Army officer ("The General Looks to the World for Help," October 11, 1999, p. 1), maintained a military training camp for Uyghur separatists in Turkey. Riza Bekin is also noted as one of the primary members of the World Uyghur Conference. Turkey must walk a fine line when supporting Uyghur causes. Turkey is home to a large number of Uyghurs who have migrated to the country over the last century. China’s weight as one of the world’s largest economies is also a factor, and as such, Turkish support for the Uyghur waned in the earlier portion of the millennium. Another factor in Turkey’s support of the Uyghur is complications related to separatist ambitions of its Kurdish population. It was not until China’s blatant human rights abuses during the suppression of ethnic conflict in the summer of 2009 that Turkish authorities vocalized any meaningful criticism of Chinese policies ("China: Turkey's Interest in the Uighur Issue," July 9, 2009).

Uyghur Terrorist Groups

There are over 40 Uyghur separatist groups referenced in media reports; however, only nine are officially recognized as terrorist groups by the Chinese government. The East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is the only Uyghur terrorist group recognized by the U.S. government resulting from reports that the group was targeting U.S. embassies in Central Asia for attacks in 2002 (Millward, 2003, p. 23). The ETIM was formed by Uyghur mujahadeen who had fought the Soviets in Afghanistan. The organization has primarily operated in the Central Asian Republics; however, in 1992 the ETIM leadership
spearheaded an initiative to create forward bases within the PRC (Gunaratna, 2006, p. 60). As part of this initiative, the organization successfully created bases and training camps in Xinjiang around Bishek in Kyrgyzstan (Wang, 2003, p. 576). The organization also operates out of the Waziristan region of Pakistan.

Evidence exists that the organization has links to both the Taliban and al Qaeda. During Operation Enduring Freedom, 20 Uyghur members of the ETIM were captured and later confirmed the organization’s connections to these organizations. It is reported that Osama bin-Laden provided both funding and a safe haven to the ETIM in Afghanistan. The ETIM’s relationship with the IMU has allowed the organization to operate in the Central Asian Republics and receive safe haven in the mountains surrounding the Fergana Valley (Millward, 2003, p. 23).

Gauging the capability of Uyghur terrorist organizations is difficult due to the manipulation of information on the topic by the CCP. Events are frequently not reported or overblown in impact depending on what will best serve the interests of the CCP. Most reliable reports indicate that the group’s membership is in the hundreds. Chinese reports state that security forces have arrested over 2,500 members of the ETIM. It is likely that a portion of those arrested were not members of the ETIM and were political activists labeled as terrorists to facilitate their arrest (Christoffersen, 2002, p. 5). The ETIM has a high level of technical capability as a result of training received in Afghanistan. The group has known proficiencies with various Soviet-era small arms and rocket propelled grenades. Chinese security forces have discovered several bomb making facilities and even a factory building AK-47s. The ability to construct arms and explosives reveals a
high level of technical competence among the ETIM members (Millward, 2003, p. 23). The ETIM primarily conducts operations in Central Asia although in January 2007, Chinese security forces raided one of the group’s bases in Xinjiang indicating latent terrorist cells within China (MaCartney, January 10, 2007, p.1).

In addition to membership in the ETIM, documented evidence exists that Uyghurs are members of other Islamist terrorist organizations not focused on the issue of East Turkistan. Uyghurs may be joining other Islamist organizations to gain safe haven outside Xinjiang. After the ouster of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, Uyghurs residing in the country dispersed to neighboring countries, some of whom joined Islamic organizations in Central Asia and Pakistan. It is reported that China offered material aid to the Taliban in exchange for the deportation of Uyghurs in Afghanistan back to Xinjiang. The Taliban accepted the offer but instead of deporting the Uyghurs transferred them to regiments of the IMU in Northern Afghanistan fighting the Northern Alliance (Haider, 2005, p. 530). This is probably the source of the strong relationship between the ETIM and the IMU. Some Uyghurs who fled Afghanistan in 2001 to Pakistan have reportedly joined the Jundallah, a terrorist organization composed of Chechen and Uzbek fighters (Raman, October, 14, 2004, p. 1).

**Major Uyghur Related Incidents**

This section provides an overview of Uyghur related incidents of terrorist attacks and civil unrest as background for China’s motivations in forming the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Violent incidents between the Uyghur and Chinese can be largely summarized as a cycle of terrorism that started in the early 1990s clustered in a series of
Incidents of Civil Unrest

As noted by the sequence of Chinese counter-separatist policies and subsequent violence, the conflict in Xinjiang is not solely religious or cultural based, but rather a reaction to oppressive Chinese policy and the perception of inequality. There are three main clusters of violence that occurred in the 1990s. The first occurred in Baren in April of 1990 and was in reaction to anti-separatist practices of the Chinese. China had initiated heavy-handed policies to counter perceived Uyghur intentions to seek independence although no evidence indicates pervasive support for such an intention. The second wave of violence occurred in 1992, but was primarily composed of inter-Uyghur violence. This second wave of violence ended with the Ghulja Incident in 1997 in which Chinese security
forces quelled a riot in an aggressive manner that resulted in many injuries and deaths (Millward, 2004, p. 17). The following 10 years after the Ghulja Incident, acts of civil disobedience were limited in scale and impact.

This period of relative silence on the part of the Uyghur civilian population came to an abrupt and intense end in the summer of 2009 and resulted in three waves of large-scale civil unrest. In an effort to provide additional opportunity for minority citizens, the Chinese government has initiated programs to facilitate jobs for them in the eastern region where wages are typically higher than those paid in the west part of the country. As the impacts of the global recession have affected China’s export driven economy, job opportunities at its factories are not as abundant as during the previous boom period; increased competition for jobs has created tension between Han Chinese and ethnic minorities working through government programs. On June 25, 2009, a mob of Han Chinese wielding clubs and machetes stormed a dormitory housing over 800 Uyghur factory workers in Guangdong province; the mob killed two Uyghurs and injured over 150 others. The mob had mobilized in response to a falsified report by a disgruntled ex-factory worker that Uyghurs had raped two Chinese women (“Man Held over China Ethnic Clash,” June 30, 2009, p. 1).

On July 5, 2009 in response to the attack in Guangdong, thousands of Uyghurs in Xinjiang’s capital city Urumqi protested a perceived lack of response by the government. After encounters with the Chinese police, the protest dissolved into a full scale riot in which Han civilians were attacked. In retaliation, Han Chinese took to the streets in Urumqi attacking Uyghurs in turn. The series of attacks killed nearly 200 people, mostly
Han Chinese, and injured over 1,600 (Moore, July 14, 2009). Rebiya Kadeer, leader of
the World Uyghur Congress has stated that over 10,000 Uyghurs “disappeared” during
the July 5th riots; Chinese official statements put the number arrested at nearly 800
(McCurry, July 29, 2009). The Chinese government accused Kadeer of orchestrating the
riots through internet-based communication and in response cut internet communication
into Xinjiang for a period of three weeks after the riots. China has also put diplomatic
pressure on nations allowing Kadeer entry including Australia and Japan.

Urumqi experienced a second wave of civil unrest in early September 2009 when
Han Chinese took the streets over a series of attacks allegedly by Uyghurs in the prior
weeks in which people were stabbed with syringes. Local hospitals treated over five
hundred people for needle attacks; however, blood tests showed no signs of toxins or
biological threats. Over several days, Han Chinese protested the government’s limited
response to the Uyghur riots and lax punishment for those who participated in the attacks
and July 5th riots. During the Han-initiated riot, five people were killed and 14 injured
(Bodeen, September 5, 2009). Small-scale sporadic incidents of protest have occurred
through Xinjiang in the following weeks following up to the 60th Anniversary celebration
of the People’s Republic of China on October 1, 2009.

Terrorist Attacks

In January of 2002, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced a document
entitled “East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity.” This
document is purported by the Chinese government to provide a complete list of terrorist
activities that have targeted China at home and abroad from 1990 through 2002. In
numerous public statements, the Chinese government has accounted for over 200 incidents that generated 162 deaths and 444 injuries; however, the document only accounts for 57 deaths (Ministry of Foreign Affairs January 21, 2001, p. 2). Due to Chinese media censorship, an exact count of Uyghur civilian deaths is impossible to obtain; however, tabulation of known reports shows that incidents of “terrorism from above” have resulted in 79 civilian casualties.

Although it is difficult to determine an exact count of terrorism incidents inside China, reports in the international media indicate that a large number terrorist attacks have been averted by Chinese security forces from 2001 to 2008; a spine attacks occurred in 2008 due to the Beijing Olympics. In a news release in late August of 2006, the Chinese government reported that it had stopped efforts by Uyghurs to blow up oilfields, power plants and highways; no dates were provided for these counter-terrorism incidents. The report also stated that in 2004, Uyghur terrorists bombed the barracks of the People’s Armed Police and a rail line. Additionally, the press release reported that security forces had seized over 6,000 hand grenades and four metric tons of bomb-making material (“China Police Deter Bomb Attempts,” August 31, 2006, p. 1).

A second incident occurred in the fall of 2005, during which the Chinese and U.S. governments released terror warnings to their citizens living in Hong Kong. Reports from internet based sources reported that in mid-September of 2005, al Qaeda diverted forces from Iraq to the Fergana Valley and Xinjiang (“al Qaeda’s Passage to China,” December
The portion of 2008 leading up to the Beijing Olympics marked an increase in Uyghur-attributed terrorism within the PRC. Most of the incidents occurred within Xinjiang and were a series of strikes on security forces with counter arrests. The Chinese government reportedly thwarted one planned attack within Shanghai (“Terror Attack on Olympic Stadium Thwarted,” July 25, 2008). The Uyghurs were not the only source of unrest related to the Beijing Olympics. Just prior to the onset of the Olympics, a bus was bombed; two people were killed and 14 were injured in China’s Yunnan province (Spencer, July 21, 2008, p. 1).

On October 18, 2005 a news report indicated that Chinese authorities had arrested 19 foreigners who according to Wang Lexiang were sent to China for “violent sabotage” (Graham-Harrison, October 18, 2005, p.1). Within a few weeks, the Chinese government requested assistance from Pakistan in investigating threats from an Islamic terrorist group operating inside China against targets in midland China and Hong Kong (Maqbool, November 8, 2005, p. 1). The timing of the events and connection to Xinjiang indicate possible involvement of Uyghur terrorists working alone or with one of al Qaeda’s member organizations such as the IMU. The validity of the source citing al Qaeda movement within Xinjiang is not verified as other sources are not available to cross-reference its validity.

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5 The source of this information is from a highly biased website with noticeable anti-Islamic overtones. The information was included in this document due to corroboration provided by the news report of the arrests of foreign terrorists in Xinjiang.
Instability in Central Asia

The wake of the Cold War left a scenario of instability in Central Asia by leaving states with artificially created borders ruled by authoritarian regimes composed of former Soviet-era officials. Regional governments faced threat from ethnic minority groups dispersed across borders in addition to terrorist groups composed of mujahadeen and former Soviet military personnel. Historically, the region lacked formal states and has been the home of various nomadic peoples. Beginning in the 1800s, Central Asia was colonized by various foreign powers including China, pre-Soviet Russia, and the United Kingdom; the era was coined the “Great Game” by Arthur Conolly due to the positioning and competitive interference initiated by the main players, Russia and the United Kingdom. In the 1800s, Russia became the dominant power in the region at one time controlling the entire Central Asia region directly as provinces or indirectly in the case of Mongolia, except for East Turkistan (Xinjiang).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the newly emancipated states in Central Asia were unable to rally around pan-Turkism to form a single Turkic nation and the Soviet era regions fragmented into the current Central Asia Republics (Naarajavi 2005, p. 3). This fragmentation was primarily due to the existence of corrupt Soviet-era politicians who were unable to put short-term personal gains aside for the greater good of the Turkic people. As a result of the arbitrarily drawn borders created by the Soviet Union, and compounded by the nomadic nature of the indigenous peoples of the region, each state in the region was left with large minority populations of one another’s ethnicities creating heterogeneous populations. Although the population of Central Asia is primarily
composed of Turkic peoples, other ethnic minorities exist such as large numbers of Russians and Ukrainians. Additionally, the indigenous peoples of Tajikistan are of Indo-European descent. Despite possessing a common Turkic background, various ethnic groups faced discrimination and sought increased influence within their host nations’ political structures. The map below represents the distribution of various ethnic groups across Central Asia as of the early 1990s:

Figure 5: Geographic Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Central Asia

Source: University of Texas

Central Asia’s proximity to Afghanistan, weak fledgling governments and regional conflicts such as civil war in Tajikistan gave rise to a number of terrorist groups.
The military efficacy of Central Asian terrorist groups is derived from two sources, both of which are related to Cold War-era events. First, many prominent members of regional Islamic terrorist organizations such as the IMU were previously members of the Soviet Union’s armed forces. Some terrorists such as Jumaboi Khojaev were previous highly trained members of the Soviet Military or spetsnaz (elite special forces) (MIPT Terrorism Database, Bio: Jumaboi Khojaev). The organization’s religious orientation is questionable in light of the IMU’s connections to drug trafficking that has dramatically increased in recent years. Second, many members of regional terrorist organizations were previously mujahadeen fighters in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation of the country. The region’s terrorist organizations work closely together due to contacts made during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and later through the al Qaeda terrorist network during the 1990s. U.S. intelligence sources believe that IMU is a significant threat, with the potential to rapidly mobilize more than 5,000 guerrilla forces (Blank, 2004, p. 55).

Another security issue arises from terrorist groups that often operate across the borders of Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states, especially within the countries whose borders include the Fergana Valley: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The Fergana Valley is a key operating area for terrorist groups and a major drug smuggling corridor due to its large population base and surrounding mountainous terrain that remains inaccessible for many months of the year due to harsh weather. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s charter, which fosters coordination between the security agencies, has been critical towards reducing cross border movements of terrorist
groups, although the Fergana Valley remains a problematic region (Chausovsky, November 11, 2010). Addressing terrorist operations in the region through uncoordinated military action would be impossible, requiring a complete military occupation of the Fergana Valley. Any such attempt would likely result in civilian casualties radicalizing currently mainstream citizens and expanded support for terrorist organizations countering the government.

Figure 6: Map of the Fergana Valley

![Map of the Fergana Valley](image)

Source: Strategic Forecasting, Inc.

The 1988 Soviet defeat in Afghanistan increased the military efficacy and influence of radical Islamic groups in Central Asia and beyond. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, through coordination by the United States, nations from all corners of the world sent money, troops, and equipment into the country via the Pakistani ISI in support of the *mujahadeen*. China was a contributor to this effort as a supplier of
light arms and encouraged Uyghurs to travel to Afghanistan to participate in the resistance movement. Heeding the call from Islamic leaders, Muslims from all over the world traveled to Afghanistan to join the resistance movement. The Afghan war created a large pool of well-trained and equipped guerrilla fighters, many of whom were unable to return to their home countries. Emboldened by their success in Afghanistan and the rhetoric of Islamic leaders such as Osama bin Laden, the former *mujahadeen* fanned out across the globe in support of creating the *ummah* and other ethno-religious initiatives. Many former *mujahadeen* stayed in Central Asia in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and joined with such groups as the Taliban and the IMU (Haider, 2005, p. 530).

Disparity in wealth between various demographic groups in the Central Asian states also created potential for civil unrest. As noted in Chapter Four, economic development in Central Asia was among the lowest in the world. Additionally, what little wealth was present was highly concentrated among former Soviet-era officials and ethnic Russians who remained in the country (Loughlin & Pannell, 2001, p. 471, 472). The income gap was troublesome on its own for the leaders of the region; however, it also served to generate support for Islamic movements.

Fledgling democratic movements also threatened the autocratic leaders of Central Asia. Fear of democratic reform increased with the start of the “Color Revolutions” or peaceful democratic movements rumored to be supported by Western governments. From 2000 to 2005, democratic governments were formed in five nations in Europe, the Middle East and Asia; in 2005, the “Tulip Revolution” occurred in Kyrgyzstan and put a
democratic government in place. The despotic nature of the political systems in Central Asia made them susceptible to internally driven regime change. In summation, the mixed ethnic populations, religious zealots, income disparity, and the desire for political change created a tinderbox ready to ignite into civil unrest.

The threat from domestic forces to Russia and China was not as severe as that posed towards the Central Asian nations because they are large developed nations with relatively stable political systems. Russia was faced with rebellion in Chechnya which resulted in two wars in the region and several major terrorist incidents conducted by Chechens deep within Russian territory including attempted bombings, suicide attacks, major bombings of residential areas and hostage attempts in Moscow (“Timeline: Terrorism in Russia,” February 6, 2004, p. 1). Until 2008, the relative level of threat faced from ethnic separatist movements within Russia and China was not comparable. The only reported terrorist incidents perpetrated outside of Xinjiang by Uyghurs was the bombing of a bus in Beijing in 1997 (Chung, 2003, p. 9) along with a cluster of attempted incidents thwarted by Chinese security in 2008 (Ransom and Lim, April 10, 2008).

Russia and China are motivated to quell separatism to ensure similar sentiment does not inspire or augment other ethnic groups within their diverse populations. This fear was especially salient given the demise of the Soviet Union in which tertiary breakaway districts such as Latvia and Estonia inspired others to follow. In the case of Russia, fears existed that the conflict in Chechnya would spread into Dagestan; a low intensity conflict did eventually start in Dagestan in 2000. In China, fears existed that
succession in Xinjiang would embolden domestic terrorist groups and inspire more aggressive pursuit of autonomy within Tibet.

*Formation of the Shanghai Five*

As noted previously, the Cold War left a context under which the ex-Soviet nations and the regional PRC authority in Xinjiang were not capable of effectively addressing separatist and terrorist groups independently. This created a scenario best explained by the tenets of omnibalancing theory. The core point of omnibalancing is that developing or unstable nations or regions in the case of China will band with external threats in order to combat high priority domestic forces. In the context of the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a clear case of omnibalancing is represented by the foreign policy of the Central Asian Republics and China and Russia. All the nations involved have an interest in containing separatism in the region as many groups fall within the al Qaeda umbrella network and support one another.

To address these threats, China drove the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which was inaugurated in Beijing on April 26, 1996. The organization’s members included the People’s Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia (Shanghai Cooperation Organization Website, p. 1). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s stated mission was highly focused on security matters and based on three objectives: military cooperation along common borders, protection of cross border trade, and a stand against ethno-religious nationalism. These three initiatives coalesced into an organized policy to counter cross border operations and inter-ethnic support for various ethnic and Islamic factions that threatened member states.
Despite being the two primary Communist nations during the Cold War, the PRC and Soviet Union did not maintain a harmonious relationship. Starting in the 1950s, China began to see the Soviet Union as a rival for influence at the international level rather than a collaborator in shaping the world in a socialist manner. In several situations, border conflicts erupted between the two nations across the Xinjiang and Siberian border (Ostermann, 1995, p.1). One of the goals of President Richard Nixon’s visit to China in 1972 was to improve relations and send a strong message to the Soviets against invading or intimidating the PRC (Madsen, November 27, 2006).

As the Soviet Union expanded interests worldwide, the level of perceived threat increased, culminating in a brief Chinese invasion of Vietnam, an ally of the Soviet Union in 1979 (Elleman, 1996, p. 1). The level of threat that Russia posed to China after the Cold War is debatable; threat from conventional military was certainly lowered due to Russia’s inability to maintain its large military force; however, the nation’s nuclear threat and political instability may have in fact increased the potential for conflict. The existence of tension between the two nations is reflected by the existence of major border and environmental impact disputes that continued or arose in the post-Cold War era (Blagov, May 25, 2005 p. 1). Despite historical tension between the two nations that continued after the Cold War to a lesser degree, they entered into a cooperative security agreement to counter domestic level threats from violent NGOs.

External threat existed to the Central Asian nations from the regional powers, Russia and China, along with threat from the United States during the Bush Administration. Sovereignty was threatened by hundreds of years of Russian and British
colonialism. The Central Asian nations had conflicts with China in its various forms and
dynasties for thousands of years. The case for omnibalancing as a motivating factor is
strong from the standpoint of the Central Asian states. Not only did they band with an
external entity but did so with two entities that posed possible threats to their sovereignty.
Despite this fact, the Central Asian states engaged in an alliance at the international level,
noting the prioritization of threat from domestic ethno-religious groups as higher than
that posed from external entities due to the fragility of the region’s governments.

The decision on the part of the leaders of the Central Asian Republics to engage
in an alliance with Russia and China also generated new domestic threats due to popular
sentiment against the alliances. Leaders within the Central Asian republics forged
relations with China despite the fact that new potential threats arose from public outcry
and erosion of governmental legitimacy. A statewide poll conducted in Kazakhstan,
reported that only nine percent of respondents supported their government’s relationship
with China (Chung, 2003 p. 59). The decision to cooperate with China despite lack of
public support can be attributed to two factors: first, the perceived domestic threat from
separatists and terrorists was viewed as greater than public sentiment. Second, the
Shanghai Cooperation Organization created a mechanism by which traditional
international norms against political persecution could be side stepped by labeling
political dissidents as terrorists. The nomenclature contained the potential for political
blow back from relations with China. An example of this was noted in Uzbekistan with
the Andijon Massacre in 2006, in which political protesters were killed by government
troops and were later labeled as terrorists in accounts to the international media (Norton,
May 24, 2005, p.1). This supports the assertion that the greatest perceived threat came from violent NGOs rather than states or democratic reform movements.

Under the tenets of omnibalancing, separatist groups such as the Uyghurs served as the nexus by which historically poor relations were overcome and a collective security organization (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) was created. Since 2001, the level of separatist and terrorist activity in Xinjiang has dropped significantly; however, China’s involvement in the organization has expanded. As China’s power within the region has grown and its long term agenda unveiled, the Uyghur have continued to play a pivotal role in the evolution of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a facilitator of China’s counter-balancing agenda against the United States.

**Shanghai Five as an Example of State Cooperation**

As noted in Chapter Two in the discussion of security organizations, there are many barriers towards state cooperation in this issue area. The example of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization provides an example that was conducive to start cooperation such as reduced competition and high need for coordination. Although the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a formal institution, Jervis’ points for security regime formation are used to create common points of analysis for state cooperation on security matters. The context around the Shanghai Cooperation Organization formation will be analyzed from three perspectives: China, Russia, and the Central Asian Republics collectively. As noted in Chapter Two, Jervis denotes the following criteria as favoring the formation of security regimes:
• The great power nations must prefer to create a more regulated environment and maintain the status quo or changes that can be implemented without unlimited warfare.
• All actors share the same value on mutual security and cooperation.
• All actors must settle on the status quo; no actors must have expansionist policies.
• Individualistic pursuits must be seen as costly.

During the 1990s, China and Russia were the only powers with a major presence in Central Asia. The United States did not maintain a notable presence in the region until after the September 11th attacks when operating bases were deployed within the region in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Both China and Russia were experiencing issues with ethnic separatism, the former in Xinjiang and the latter in Chechnya. Additionally, Russia maintained a military sphere of influence in Central Asia and had a stake in the stability of the region, which was fragile due to newly formed governments with interspersed ethnic groups along with a bloody civil war in Tajikistan. A confluence of interests existed between all parties that were filled by cooperative security to address terrorist and separatist groups operated throughout the region.

To address Jervis’ first point, China and Russia’s level of satisfaction with the status quo power arrangement must be determined. It could be argued that during this time period Russia’s economic influence in Central Asia was in the initial phases of decline, while China’s was on the rise. To be further detailed in Chapter Four, the Central Asian republics were beholden to Russia for transportation infrastructure for their exports, particularly oil and gas. At the same time, China was making significant
investments in pipelines and rail into Central Asia, reducing some dependence on Russia and therefore eroding its power base in the region. Although there are no indications either state had expansionist aims in the region from a military perspective, China did have an interest in expanding its economic sphere of influence. Based on these data points, there are indications that the major powers within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization membership were not completely satisfied with the status quo in Central Asia.

Based on the analysis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the requirement for preference for the status quo was not prevalent enough to bar cooperation. This may be attributed with two factors that are innate with threat posed by violent NGOs. As noted by the theory of omnibalancing states may create relationships at the international system level if the greatest perceived level of threat is from domestic entities. Another consideration for state cooperation is relative capability. Examples exist of states using ethnic separatism and support of terrorist groups as a vehicle to develop relative capability. For example, the United Kingdom utilized ethnic separatism among the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Another example is Iran’s support and affiliation with Hezbollah as a leverage point against the United States and Israel. In the case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, terrorist groups and ethnic separatism could not be used as a means to increase relative capability without potential repercussions due to cross border operations of terrorist groups and highly disperse nature of ethnic populations within Central Asia.
Jervis’ next point for cooperation is that actors must share a mutual level of appreciation for cooperation. By the nature of counter-terrorism, coordination with other states is required; each nation in Central Asia has numerous neighbors, is very mountainous and is extremely difficult to police. In addition, the existence of trans-border rail and pipelines that span numerous states requires coordinated security activities and intelligence sharing. For example, vital oil and gas pipelines extend across the border from China into Kazakhstan; while terrorist attacks in China are difficult to conduct, operations outside its border are much easier to carry out. Based on this case study, the need for appreciation of mutual cooperation is also pertinent in regime formation to address non-state threat.

Closely related, Jervis notes that states must determine that individualistic pursuits are costly relative to collective activities. Individualistic pursuits that would align to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization would at minimum require highly costly expenditures to supplement the security capabilities of neighboring states and, on the extreme side, manifest in cross border counter-terrorist raids. Such measures would be economically costly and not effective, and in the case of unitary security action, extremely damaging to a state’s standing and ultimately counter-productive to long-term security. For example, the largely unitary actions of the United States in Iraq have related to trillions of dollars of expense. A more extreme example is the unitary action of Israel against the Palestinians and Lebanese that has resulted in alienation from many other states. A common perspective regarding the high cost of individualistic pursuits is also relevant in the context of organizations focused on violent NGOs. As described
previously, the unique circumstances warranting coordinated action address this point around forming international organizations.

**Conclusion**

Although just one data point, the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an example where states were inclined to cooperate on security matters. Situational aspects such as mutual threat overcome barriers towards regional competition between China and Russia. Aspects of networked organization help create an appreciation for cooperation and the high cost for individualistic pursuits. This was particularly salient given the trans-border operations of violent NGOs with China and Central Asia.

The next chapter will analyze China’s economic development efforts in the areas surrounding Xinjiang to denote the relationship between cooperative security in this issue area and economic development. In many cases, ethnic separatist movements tend to operate from developing nations due to common interests and ethnic ties. As such, there is an inherent need to include developing nations within security organizations countering violent NGOs. Although not directly part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Chapter Four analyzes the role of China’s economic development beyond the security activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as they related to addressing Uyghur separatist activity in Xinjiang, Central Asia and Pakistan.
Chapter 4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY COOPERATION

“If I construct a hell of my own devising, no matter how terrifying its flames, I will call it heaven. But a heaven built by others, will cause my trees to wither.”
- Abuqadir Jaladin, Uyghur Intellectual

This chapter analyzes China’s economic development efforts via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and broader initiatives as they related to countering Uyghur separatism in the regions along its western border. Xinjiang contains 20% of China’s land, making it the country’s largest geographic region bordering India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Xinjiang’s geographic location has strategic importance as the gateway to Eurasia. As noted in Chapter Three, Xinjiang’s vast geographic area and trans-border operations of the Uyghur required high levels of coordination with neighboring states. When facing such threats, states engage in activities of territorial concessions and increased trade or economic development (Fravel, 2003, p. 53, 54).

The impact of economic development in containing Uyghur separatism is analyzed from three aspects. Studies have noted the role of economic development in quelling support for violent NGOs. This point of analysis is explored using the example of Chinese economic development in Xinjiang as it relates to quelling Uyghur discontent. The second aspect of economic development is the stabilization of allied governments. After the fall of the USSR, the Central Asian states faced poor prospects for economic development. This combined with popular criticism of their government’s relations with
China created potential for instability among critical allies. Economic development sponsored by China provided a means for allied governments to improve their position with constituents. The third aspect of economic development relates to the creation of incentive mechanisms to ensure compliance among allies. The example of China’s relation with Pakistan is the example supporting this use of economic development.

**Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s Economic Mission**

As noted in Chapter Three, the initial mission of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Shanghai Five) was purely focused on security matters. During this initial phase of the organization, activities were focused on joint security drills, intelligence exchange and establishment of operating bases in Central Asia. Over time, the organization’s mission expanded to include other facets of economic development and cultural exchange. The expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s mission is the focus of Chapter Five.

Economic development with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization became an officially recognized component of its mission in 2003. The organization established institutions to promote economic ties including the SCO Development Fund, Business Council, and the Inter-bank Association. At the 2004, Summit it was stated that “Progressive economic development of Central Asia region and continuous states, as well as satisfaction of [the] population’s essential vital needs are [a] guarantee of their stability and security (Bailes, Dunay, Guang, Troistkiy 2007, pp. 52 -53).” The role economic development expanded during the Fifth Annual Summit by establishing formal institutions to coordinate joint projects and advanced economic cooperation. China is the
driving force of economic development within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In 2005, China provided a $900 million export credit to promote implementation of specific projects within the organization’s member states (Weitz, July 12, 2006).

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s economic role continues to expand. In 2009, the organization member states met to determine coordinated activities to address the impact of the global economic crisis. In addition to expanding existing trade and infrastructure projects, the 2009 summit also included financial regulation and establishment of vehicles for inter-bank coordination (Shanghai Cooperation Website, October 14, 2009). The Shanghai Cooperation Organization also forged economic relationships with other international organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Community and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

**Development in Xinjiang and Uyghur Separatism**

This section analyzes the impact of economic development within Xinjiang on Uyghur separatist sentiment. Economic development has proven an effective tool to reduce support for terrorism as demonstrated in Northern Ireland. By creating a better quality of life for disenfranchised groups, grass roots support for terrorists and separatists is eroded. Additionally, economic development activity can be used as a “stick” to encourage support from local authorities affiliated with the disenfranchised group. A key determining factor in the efficacy of economic development towards containing terrorism is the amount of benefit received by the population; economic development in the form of ineffectively used funds or projects that do not add to citizen’s quality of life shows marginal impact in containing terrorism (Cragin and Chalk, 2003 p. 15).
During the 1990s, the Chinese central government renewed its interest in the development of Xinjiang. With the fall of the Soviet Union, China no longer needed to maintain a sparsely populated “buffer zone” between its industrial base and the border. In addition, China became a net oil-importing nation in 1992 (Calabrese, 2004, p. 2). As home to China’s largest domestic oil and gas reserves, interest in expanding Xinjiang’s resource extraction infrastructure increased. Initially, the central government’s economic development plans for the region were based on attracting foreign direct investment. This strategy proved to be problematic as the level of instability in the region during the 1990s made foreign firms wary of investing funds (Chung, 2003, p. 61).

Initially domestic firms were tasked with developing Xinjiang by expanding its resource extraction and transportation infrastructure. Although Xinjiang is rich in oil, China’s domestic firms lacked the technology to tap into its reserves as they are located deep underground and in some of the world’s most un-inhabitable land. Intra-industry relationships with more established firms in the Middle East made the required technology available to China. Additionally, previously cheap oil prices made extracting much of its oil impractical; however, as the global cost of oil rises, advanced extraction techniques become financially viable. Recently, significant oil reserves were discovered in the Tarim basin, estimated to contain 102 million tons of oil and 86.40 million cubic meters of natural gas (“China’s Tarim Oilfield Strives for Breakthroughs in Exploration,” April 11, 2006, p.1). In 2004, the first pipeline went online between Xinjiang and inner China. Sinopec and Petrochina, China’s two largest energy companies are both investigating building additional pipelines (“Petrochina Says it is Considering 2nd East-
West Pipeline,” March 30, 2006, p. 1). Increased technological efficiencies in extraction and exploration are expected to increase production in Xinjiang and support 60% of China’s oil demand (Richardson, February 17, 2006, p. 2).

Xinjiang Economic Development and Uyghur Separatism

Development within Xinjiang appears to be the type that has marginal impact on containing terrorism as it is highly structured towards extracting the area’s natural resources rather than providing sustainable industries or investing in the local population. A very small portion of the revenue from these activities is maintained at the local level. Resource extraction industries do not offer the externalities that other industries such as finance and high technology provide that lead to long-term development. Additionally, jobs within the resource extraction industry and governmental bureaucracy are largely awarded to the numerous Han immigrants to the region. As noted in Chapter Three, the cornerstone of the Go West development plan is not to improve the lives of indigenous people but rather to marginalize them in the short term and in the long term depopulate the region of indigenous peoples.

In Gardner Bovingdon’s *The Not-So-Silent Majority*, a survey of Uyghur and Han social sentiment notes that many Uyghur resent any Han presence in the region be it benign or malicious. One local doctor interviewed by Bovingdon stated that development was not worth the social and cultural costs that come with it. Such sentiment is also present in the contemporary Uyghur literature as noted by the quotation in the header of this chapter (Bovingdon, 2002 p. 55). The word “Xinjiang” translates to “new frontier” in Mandarin, creating connotations that it is something to be developed and exploited.
This perception manifested itself in the “Go West” development plan, which exploited both the land and people of Xinjiang. If China’s aims are to quell separatism through its domestic development initiatives, the results are bound to be disappointing. China’s economic development of Xinjiang is highly focused towards security by creating facilities to gain support from its neighboring states to contain cross border assistance for Uyghur separatists.

The Chinese government has publically stated that its aims are not intended to end ethnic separatism via improvement of Uyghur quality of life and are not related to foreign policy; several facts contradict this assertion. The central government has publically stated that development will not end separatism as noted in the quote below from Wang Lequan, the Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary.

> Currently there is a belief that the first priority for Xinjiang is to develop its economy. These people believe that after Xinjiang’s economy develops, people’s living standards will improve so the issue of stability will be resolved naturally. This belief is wrong and dangerous. Economic development cannot eliminate separatists and cannot prevent them from separating from the motherland and seeking independence (“Separatists Stay Even with Growth in China’s Muslim Area,” January 19, 2003, p. 1).

China’s economic development efforts aimed at quelling separatism would be more effective if structured to include the Uyghur in the benefits of development. The Chinese constitution grants minorities the right to cultural preservation, including education in their native language. Without a mastery of English or Mandarin, Uyghur are not able to compete in the highly globalized Chinese economy; efforts to correct this issue must be carefully crafted to not appear as the “Sinofication” of Uyghurs. Additionally, if Uyghurs are to obtain a higher quality of life within the rapidly changing
construct of Xinjiang, concessions must be made regarding embracing aspects of Chinese mainstream culture such as Mandarin language skills. Efforts to address Uyghur discontent will require rapprochement between Chinese and Uyghur political elites and generations to mend. Minority groups in many countries around the world including millions of diaspora Chinese have been able to engage and thrive in other cultures while maintaining a distinct ethnic identity.

**Trade and Development in Central Asia**

As established in Chapter Three, China required the assistance of the neighboring Central Asian states to counter separatists operating outside of Xinjiang. At their independence, the Central Asian Republics faced significant challenges to economic development and were beholden to Russia for transport of goods to global markets. Additionally, the citizen’s the Central Asian states had strong religious, cultural and economic ties with the Uyghur and created potential for backlash for governments supporting China’s security initiatives. In a statewide poll conducted in Kazakhstan, only nine percent of respondents supported their government’s relationship with China (Chung, 2003 p. 59). As noted by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization statements during the 2004 Annual Summit, trade was a critical component to the stability of allied governments.
The development of trade between China and Central Asia can be categorized into three phases. The first period covers the years of 1992 through 1996 and revolved around small scale trade between the Uyghurs and Kazakhstan. The second phase was from 1997 through 2001 and marked a significant expansion in trade between China and Central Asia. During this phase Uyghur merchants were displaced by ethnic Han Chinese as China saw trade based interaction as a vehicle to reinforce political and cultural ties with the Central Asians. The third phase began in 2002 and centered on large scale energy related infrastructure projects and formal institutions such as those created by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Peyrouse, 2007, pp. 10-12).

**Figure 7: Xinjiang Border Trade**

![Graph showing trade denoted in millions of U.S. dollars](source: Xinjiang Border Trade Association)
The graph in Figure 7 notes trade in millions of U.S. dollars between Xinjiang, the Central Asian Republics, Russia, and Pakistan. Further evidence of a growing relationship is indicated by the sharp increase in trade with the region after 2001. For instance, from 2001 to 2002 Chinese trade with Kazakhstan increased by more than 50% (Kydyrbekov, June 19, 2003, p. 30). This sharp increase in trade coincides with China’s formation of a regional security institution, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Xinjiang has served as the link between Asian and Middle Eastern trade for thousands of years, as it is the home of the northern portion of the Silk Road. Historically, the peoples of Xinjiang and the Central Asian Republics enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the Kazaks and Tajiks managing livestock, and the Uyghurs focusing on irrigation-based agriculture. During the later part of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century the region lost its autonomy through advances by Russia from the West and China from the East. Russia’s influence brought the modernization of transportation by replacing the camel caravan with the steam engine. The focus of Russia’s development efforts was to facilitate the transfer of agriculture resources, primarily cotton, to the rest of the empire (Loughlin and Pannell, 2001, p. 471, 472).

After the formation of the Soviet Union, Central Asia served additional purposes. During times of famine and hardship in the West, Russia (later the Soviet Union) used the region as a destination for starving peasants. As fossil fuel resources came to prominence, Russia’s interest in the region turned towards resource extraction as the Central Asian states are home to some of the world’s largest oil and natural gas deposits. In addition, the region became home to some of the Soviet Union’s largest petro-chemical processing
facilities. The result of industrialization left the region scarred and the Caspian Sea and other water sources largely unusable (Loughlin and Pannell, 2001, p. 473).

An equally deep mark was left after the fall of the Soviet Union as the policies of the former regime had focused too heavily on agriculture and left the region’s transportation infrastructure completely hinged on shipping goods into Russia. In the early 1990s, the nations of Central Asia were at the mercy of Russia for transportation and lagged behind the economic development progress of other former Soviet regions. In short, Russia left the Central Asian Republics ill equipped to function as independent nations and in need of an economic benefactor, a role China was eager to play a decade later (Loughlin and Pannell, 2001, p. 473).

Although Xinjiang’s resources are of importance to China’s continued development, its role as the gateway between the country and the rest of the Asian continent is of even greater strategic value. In a public statement in August 2005, China’s Vice Premier Huang Ju noted this point by stating “Xinjiang should become a regional trade hub and make use of its geographic advantage to expand business ties with Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and Eastern Europe to link inner China with the four regions (“China to Build Uighur Region into International Business Hub,” August 2, 2005, p. 1).” The central government’s economic plan for the region is to develop an export-oriented manufacturing base for trade with neighboring regions (“Frontier City Gears up for Economic Rival,” March 8, 2006, p. 1).

The most important component of Xinjiang-based trade is energy resources from Central Asia and the Middle East. In 1997, the first pipeline between Kazakhstan and
Xinjiang went online. An additional pipeline is scheduled for completion in the near future (Kurtenbach, May 17, 2004, p. 1). China also entered in agreement with the resource-rich nation of Turkmenistan to construct a natural gas pipeline between the two nations. Turkmenistan’s natural resources are largely unexplored; however, China is remedying this situation by providing the nation with long term low interest loans to develop its supply base (Gabuyev, April 3, 2006, p. 1).

The transportation infrastructure developed during the Russian occupation of Central Asia was highly focused towards transfer of resources from the region to the West; this left the Central Asian Republics in a poor position for trade with China (Loughlin and Pannell, 2001, p. 472). To address this situation, significant efforts have been made to build railways and roads between Xinjiang and Central Asia. There are now currently over 75 road and rail connections between Xinjiang and Central Asia (“China Kazakhstan to Open 12 New Transportation Roads,” December 2, 2004, p. 1). China has also extended transportation infrastructure to other nations in the region such as Turkmenistan. In addition to energy transportation, railway and highways have been constructed to transport other goods. For instance, Kazakhstan is currently making arrangements to export grain to China (“Kazakhstan Expects to Enter Chinese Grain Market,” April 12, 2006, p. 1).
Ultimately, China’s strategy is to create an efficient land-based transportation network that extends beyond Central Asia into Europe and the Middle East (“Turkmen Leader Chairs Cabinet Session; Discusses China Visit,” March 14, 2006, p. 1). In addition to energy transportation, railway and highways have been constructed to transport other goods. For instance, Kazakhstan is currently making arrangements to export grain to China (“Kazakhstan Expects to Enter Chinese Grain Market,” April 12, 2006, p. 1).

**Economic Development in Central Asia and Uyghur Diaspora**

Although obtaining oil from the region is essential to maintaining China’s economic growth, gaining the allegiance of the governments in the region is also extremely important from a security standpoint (Pala, March 17, 2006, p. 5). Pure economics are not the sole reason China has invested in energy projects within Central Asia. There are...
many financial challenges to making China’s pipeline projects provide financial return due to the extreme distance between the energy producing regions of Central Asia and the energy consuming regions in Central China. The primary oil pipeline running to China’s eastern provinces is equipped to handle roughly 50% more oil capacity than can be sourced from Central Asian resources. China is currently challenged to expand oil production in countries such as Kazakhstan as it was late into oil exploration relative to Western countries (Peyrouse, 2007, pp. 58 -61). Despite this fact, investment in oil pipelines serves two security goals. As elaborated in Chapter Five, land based oil transfer infrastructure serves security goals around countering the ability for the United States to exploit current dependencies on maritime transit.

China’s efforts to stabilize and secure support from the Central Asian states appear to be effective. Although neighboring states such as Kazakhstan view China with suspicion, its investments in infrastructure appear to have won the loyalty of the leadership of the Central Asian Republics (Pala, March 17, 2006, p.5). By creating direct pipelines between Xinjiang and the Central Asian Republics, China is removing structural dependencies these nations have on Russia by removing its monopoly on resource transportation (Gabuyev, April 3, 2006, p. 1). China’s efforts have been successful in Kazakhstan and to a lesser degree Kyrgyzstan in diminishing support with Uyghur diaspora in these countries. For example, China was successfully able to force the shutdown of the Institute of Uyghur Studies a department in the Kazakh Academy of Sciences established by the Soviets (Peyrouse, 2007, p. 12).
Trade and Development with Pakistan

In addition to the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China engaged in economic development activities with Pakistan as part of its broader initiative to counter Uyghur diaspora operating in that country. This section will analyze China’s economic development policies with Pakistan as an example of a tool to facilitate compliance among allies and to erode cultural ties with the Uyghur. Historically, strong ties have existed between the Uyghur and Pakistani peoples due to a common Islamic faith and centuries of trade. Additionally, reports exist of Uyghur separatists using Pakistan’s frontier regions as a safe zone and conducting attacks on Chinese targets in the country; some such attacks have been in coordination with Baloch separatists targeting the Pakistani government. In addition to other aims around developing alternate land based energy transfer routes from the Middle east, Chinese trade within Pakistani also sought to contain threat from Uyghur separatists and terrorist operating in the country. First, development helped to erode the relationship between the Uyghur and Pakistani peoples. Second, trade and developed secured support from the Pakistani government for military operations against the Uyghur. This section is provided as a supplement to the case study around the Shanghai Cooperation Organization denoting another example in which economic development has been used to counter terrorism and separatism.

During Pervez Musharraf’s presidency from 2000 to 2008, foreign policies towards China focuses on two efforts: securing of arms from the country and becoming China’s “energy corridor” (Musharraf Vows to Make Pakistan Energy Corridor for
In the spring of 2006, Pakistan declared its desire to become a primary transit point of energy resources from the Middle East and a major hub for downstream energy processing (Niazi, March 1, 2006, p. 3). The core of this development effort is the creation of a deep-water port in Gwadar and expansion of the Karakorum Highway which leads from Pakistan to Xinjiang.

In addition to economic interaction between the Chinese and Pakistani governments, strong levels of cultural exchange have occurred between the Pakistani and the Uyghur people. During the 1980s and early portion of the 1990s, many Uyghurs sent their children to Pakistan to obtain a religious education in the country’s madrassas. Enrollment has dropped significantly in recent years as China has refused re-entry for many students and has had Pakistan deport Uyghurs exposed to extremist ideology (Haider, 2005, p. 535). Additionally, Pakistan served as the primary route for Uyghurs making their hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca required at least once in a Muslim’s life under

![Figure 9: Proposed Overland Natural Gas Pipeline](source: Strategic Forecasting, Inc.)
the tenets of Islam. Pakistanis traveling to Xinjiang also left their mark in the southern regions by bringing their music and entertainment. These strong ties existed until recently when it appeared that the Pakistanis’ desire for favorable trade relations has superseded cultural ties to their fellow Muslims in Xinjiang (Haider, 2005, p. 523-525).

In the last five years, the level of trade between Pakistan and the Xinjiang province has increased significantly, the core of which is conducted through the Uyghur city of Kashgar located in the southeastern region of the province. Rapid trade expansion has literally transformed the city from being a little known region in China’s hinterlands to a major urban center. The bulk of this trade is focused on commodities such as wool, leather goods, tea, and finished goods such as electrical equipment, cutlery and clothing (Haider, 2005, p. 525). As the level of trade between China and Pakistan increased, the strength of the relationship between the Pakistani traders and the Uyghurs has weakened as financial concerns overshadowed cultural and religious ties.

The Gwadar Harbor project is a Sino-Pakistani effort to create an additional deep-water port in the country beyond the only existing one in Karachi. Phase one of the Gwadar Harbor project was completed in 2005. The total cost of construction was over $250 million; the Chinese government contributed $198 million to the project while the Pakistani government contributed the residual amount. Phase II of the project added additional berthing space and was completed in a later phase of the project (Niazi, March 1, 2006 p. 3).

China’s development projects in Pakistan have brought the core community groups of the two nations further together while alienating disenfranchised ethnic
minorities such as the Baloch and Uyghur. Balochistan encompasses territory in Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan with a population of roughly six million people (Owais, January 26, 2005, p. 1). In the 1970s, Baloch nationalism came to a head resulting in an armed conflict with the Pakistani government. Violence continued until President Benazir Bhutto provided agreements of autonomy to end the conflict. An uneasy truce has existed since then until recent separatist sentiment grew over development projects in their territory, many of which have been Chinese-led (Raman, December 12, 2005, p. 2). Balochistan and Xinjiang share many similar attributes. Both are among the largest territories within their respective states, contain large domestic deposits of energy resources, and are home to disenfranchised minority groups.

Although Baloch insurgents primarily target is the Pakistani government, Chinese targets are often attacked as Balochistan is an area in which China has many development projects. There have been several reports of Uyghurs supporting Baloch attacks on Chinese personnel and assets in Pakistan. The Baloch harbor resentment towards the Chinese in Pakistan over the low and often late paid wages to Baloch laborers. Additionally, Chinese expatriates working in Pakistan live in air conditioned modern housing while the Baloch laborers have marginal living accommodations (Raman, September 29, 2003 p.8). These factors have created hostility against Chinese ex-patriots and projects within Balochistan. In response, some members of the Baloch separatist movement conducted attacks on Chinese targets in Pakistan including energy infrastructure such as pipelines and nuclear facilities along with other Chinese supported facilities such as a petrochemical plant (Raman, April 15, 2005, May 17, 2006, August
Reports exist of the attacks on Chinese assets in Pakistan conducted by Uyghurs operating independently or in conjunction with other organizations like the IMU. In 2004, Uyghurs were connected with a bomb attack on the Gwadar Harbor and the kidnapping of Chinese engineers who were supporting an irrigation project in South Waziristan (Raman, May 8, 2004 and October 18, 2004).

Anti-Chinese operations on the part of the BLA and Uyghurs have been successful. China withdrew from a development project in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) after Uyghurs associated with the International Islamic Front kidnapped one of the workers on the project (Raman, May 24, 2006, p. 3). The efficacy of the BLA and Uyghur operations also prompted the cancellation of Prime Minister Wen Jiabao’s scheduled trip to Pakistan for the inauguration of the Gwadar Harbor (Raman, April 18, 2006 p. 1-2). Ultimately, stability within Balochistan predicates the success of the Gwadar Harbor project and other major trade routes that will traverse Pakistan. In the two years since the Gwadar Harbor become operational, it has not attracted commercial traffic due to instability within Balochistan (Raman, July 28, 2009). Volatility within Balochistan also impedes development of overland natural gas pipelines from Iran into China and India (“China, Pakistan: The Drivers behind a Possible Natural Gas Pipeline”, February 11, 2008).

Security Impact of Sino-Pakistani Economic Development

This section will analyze China’s trade and foreign development policy towards Pakistan using the theory of omnibalancing. It will be demonstrated that one of the reasons China is developing trade relations with Pakistan is to erode support for separatist groups in
Xinjiang and cross border support for the Uyghurs. Chinese development projects legitimize the presence of its intelligence and security personnel in Pakistan contributing to the effectiveness of counter-terrorist operations in Pakistan’s outlying regions. Pakistan is engaging in policies with similar domestic security goals; in addition to economic benefits of trade with China, Pakistan is also gaining security resources to combat the Baloch separatist movement.

Pakistan’s policy towards China has clearly paid off; until the summer of 2006, the strength of the BLA was growing to the point where the organization could deny entry to major regions of Balochistan to Pakistani security forces. In August of 2006, this trend dramatically changed when Pakistani security forces killed the two highest ranking leaders in the BLA and made several other major raids. This sudden change in the balance of power was the result of the outside assistance from China.

China’s development efforts in Pakistan serve numerous strategic security initiatives such as the establishment of an alternate energy transfer route from the Indian Ocean into China and extending China’s ability to extend naval power into the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. In congruence with omnibalancing theory, China’s development efforts have secured Pakistani support to counter Uyghurs residing in the country. Additionally, attacks on Chinese expatriates who support development projects legitimized the presence of Chinese military and intelligence personnel in Pakistan. Chinese and the Pakistani ISI have conducted joint efforts that resulted in the death of several prominent Uyghur separatist leaders (Raman, October 18, 2004, p. 5).
China used a mixture of carrots and sticks to quell support for the Uyghur among the Pakistanis. In reaction to separatist attacks in the early 1990s, China shut down the Karakorum Highway for several years that severely restricted trade between the two nations. Additionally, China let a long-standing land based trade agreement with Pakistan expire; this was particularly impactful since all land-based trade traversed through Xinjiang. This sent a clear message to Pakistan that if trade was to continue, support for the Uyghur must end and the country must get serious about terminating the cross border drug trade (Haider, 2005, p. 532).

Heeding China’s messaging that trade is based on security cooperation, the government of Pakistan has supported China’s security initiatives. Pakistan’s Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) captured and executed a number of Uyghurs at China’s request. A joint Chinese-Pakistani counter terrorist operation resulted in the death of Hasan Mahsum, the second in command of the ETIM. Additionally, the Pakistani government has put pressure on those who run the country’s madrassas to not accept any Uyghur students (Haider, 2005, p. 536).

The cultural ties between everyday Pakistanis and Uyghurs are diminishing as well. Ethnic Chinese have replaced the Uyghur as the main agents of cross border trade including governmental and business aspects of trade. This has resulted in a number of changes. In order to more easily obtain travel visas, Pakistani businessmen have married local women; preference in this area is clearly changing towards women of Han descent. Second, Pakistanis publicly note that they have no need to interact with the Uyghur to conduct trade. Cultural ties are also fraying. Strong sentiment exists among the
Pakistanis that the Uyghur are not “good Muslims” and that they do not pray enough, have a tendency towards immoral behavior, consume excess alcohol and engage in drug abuse (Haider, 2005, p. 541-2).

In summation, heavy interaction with, and reliance on, the ethnic Chinese has caused the Pakistanis to turn away from traditional cultural similarities they have with the Uyghur and embrace Han culture. The Pakistanis involved with trade in Xinjiang have been able to reconcile, turning their back on the umma by dismissing the Uyghurs as bad Muslims (Haider, 2005, p. 542). Recognizing the importance of their relationship with Pakistan, members of the Uyghur diaspora are desperately trying to maintain cultural ties with the Pakistanis by noting the long history of good relations between the two groups and numerous cultural similarities. On the ground in Xinjiang, the realities of breaking ties are causing Uyghurs to resent the presence of Pakistanis and note the existence of many of the same negative traits among the Pakistanis used as the basis for illegitimizing the Uyghurs as Muslims.

**Conclusion**

Using the example of China’s initiatives in Xinjiang, Central Asia and Pakistan, this chapter analyzed the relationship between economic development and security organizations focused on containing threat from violent NGOs. Three uses of economic development were reviewed. The first, was analyzed in the context of China’s economic development in Xinjiang. The second as exemplified by the activities of China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is the use of trade and development to support fragile allied governments. The third use of economic development is its role as a set of
incentives and sanctions to facilitate compliance among allied governments as demonstrated by China’s relationship with Pakistan.

The resolution of conflict in Northern Ireland have demonstrated the ability for economic development to quell discontent and support for terrorist and separatist organizations. Chinese economic development in Xinjiang is not improving Uyghur quality of life and therefore is not reducing Uyghur discontent; economic development may in fact be a contributing factor towards discontent due to environmental damage and disenfranchising Uyghurs in favor of ethnic Han Chinese.

In the case of the Central Asian Republics, relations with China are not viewed positively by the masses; China is perceived as a potential aggressor and Chinese merchants in the region are viewed as competition for local businesses. Although the central leadership of these nations values their relationship with China over their ethnic ties, the people implementing their security policies do not. Much of the Turkic based population of the Central Asian states shares a common ethnic background and religion with the Uyghurs, creating understanding of their cause. Additionally, a notable Uyghur diaspora exists in the region in countries such as Kazakhstan.

Economic development efforts within Central Asia served multiple aims for China. First, development provided enhanced access to the region’s natural resources through expansion of pipelines, rail, and highways. Central Asian nations benefited from Chinese development by gaining a new market for their goods along with an end to Russia’s monopoly over energy transfer from the region. As noted above, economic development contributed to regime stability and is in itself an effective counter-terrorism
and splittism policy. Another benefit that will be further explored in the next chapter is that it established China’s capability to counter-balance the growing U.S. presence in Central Asia.

China’s policies in Pakistan accomplished similar goals. Throughout history, the Uyghur and people of Pakistan have maintained a close relationship. Trade between the Uyghurs and Pakistan has been strong via the trade routes through Kashgar. Many Uyghurs attended Islamic schools in Pakistan, furthering ties with the country. China’s economic policy based on omnibalancing towards Pakistan has been arguably more successful than its program towards Central Asia. China gained support from the political elites in Pakistan and from the merchant class operating in Xinjiang. Using a mix of economic incentives and sanctions, China have won the Pakistani central government’s support for anti-Uyghur operations in the region and the presence of Chinese security personnel in the country. As with its efforts in Central Asia, China’s policy towards Pakistan serves additional purposes beyond containing separatism. The expansion of the Karakorum Highway and Gwadar Harbor addresses China’s concerns about the perceived threat from the United States blockade of the Malacca Straits.

In addition to the benefits already noted above related to countering Uyghur diaspora, China’s economic development efforts contributed to security aims at the international level. Chapter Four introduced the economic development facets of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that represented an expansion over its initial charter and focused on security matters core to countering violent NGOs such as intelligence sharing and joint counter-terrorism operations. Chapter Five will further analyze the
expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s security mission to include
counter-balancing the U.S. presence in Central Asia. China’s economic development
efforts and expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s mission provided a
shield for the Central Asian states that were becoming concerned over the Bush
Administration’s policy of regime change and democratization. In the case of Pakistan,
the development of the Karakorum Highway and Gwadar Harbor provided an alternate
route for energy transit in the event of a U.S. blockade of primary shipping routes to the
eastern province.
Chapter 5

EXPANSION OF THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION SECURITY MISSION

“Observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs calmly; hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile; and never claim leadership.” - Deng Xiaoping

This chapter analyzes how threat from terrorist and ethnic separatist groups facilitates security mission expansion within organizations whose focus area is non-state based threat. The example used is the role of Uyghur terrorist and separatist groups in the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization security mission to include counter-balancing the United States in Central Asia. There are two primary points of analysis within this chapter. First, China’s security policies towards the United States are evaluated to determine the existence of counter-balancing policies. According to Schweller, there are many barriers towards counter-balancing due to the risk of reprisals from the hegemon. The second point of analysis is the impact of terrorist threat, ethnicity and nationalism as a facilitator for the domestic environment required for counter-balancing to receive support from political elites and constituent populations.

As reviewed in previous chapters, counter terrorism and separatism require a broad base of cooperation and a wide swath of security and economic policies. Such broad ranging policies make mission expansion easier as the breadth of policies need not

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change, merely their scope. Additionally, casting a security organization combating non-
state based threat allows a coalition to develop capabilities in secret, reducing the risk of
reprisals from a hegemon. Combating terrorism and splittism may bolster levels of
nationalism within the population expanding the nation’s capability base, but also has the
ability to foster support for counter-balancing initiatives.

Initially, the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization focused on core
counter-terrorism capabilities, including development of regional intelligence and
counter-terrorism centers through the region; military activities were limited to special
operations. After its transformation into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the
activities expanded to include large military operations using technologies not typically
used in the type of operations supporting counter-terrorism. Additionally, China has
made public statements on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization noting that
the organization’s mission has expanded to include countering foreign threat to its
member states.

**Transformation of the Shanghai Five**

On the fifth anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the organization was
transformed into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that represented a significant
shift in the direction of the organization. Although containment of domestic threats
remained a key component of the organization, its mission expanded to an international
as well as regional security mission to expand cultural exchanges between members and
economic development in the region. The organization’s membership base also expanded
to include Uzbekistan along with granting observer status to India, Iran, Pakistan, and
Mongolia; the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states represent 45% of the world’s population and 28% of the Asian landmass (“China’s Diplomatic and Military Muscle Flexing,” December 9, 2005, p. 1).

Figure 10: Map of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Source: Strategic Forecasting, Inc.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s original aim of combating terrorism and separatism remained and its charter was extended to the stated mission of addressing “terrorism, splittism, and extremism (Shanghai Cooperation Organization Website, p. 2).” The change in terminology to include “extremism” allowed member nations to become more “creative” as to who could be deemed a national threat and resulted in the targeting of political dissidents by member governments. Although a relatively minor initiative compared to security matters, the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization also marked the increased importance of economic aspects of the organization as
reviewed in Chapter Four. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization mission doctrine states that the organization is focused on the following initiatives:

1. Strengthen mutual trust and good-neighborliness.
2. Foster friendship among member states to develop effective cooperation in politics, trade, science, technology, culture, education, energy, and transportation.
3. To work together to maintain regional peace, security and stability.
4. Promotion of a new world political and economic order featuring democracy, justice, and rationality.

In addition to a broader mission scope, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization formalized the previously loosely defined governing body into the following entities:

1. Council of State Heads
2. Council of Heads of Government
3. Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
4. Conferences of Heads of Agencies
5. Council of National Coordinators
6. Secretariat
7. Regional Anti-Terrorism Structures (RATS)

(Shanghai Cooperation Organization Website Mission Statement, January 7, 2004, p. 1)

Several aspects of the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are indicators of the power structure among its membership. First, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization articles of incorporation state that all key documents and governing bodies were to reside in China. Additionally, all of the organization’s permanently meeting
entities are stationed in Beijing except for the anti-terrorism branch, under the Regional Anti-terrorist Structure (RATS) center located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Although the guise of rotating leadership is present under the by-laws of the organization, control firmly remains within Beijing.

The organization’s pledge to fight splittism, extremism and terrorism is based on largely undefined concepts that allow the leadership in member nations wide latitude as to who can be labeled terrorists. As a result, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization nations have been able to associate peaceful democratic and separatist movements for greater sub-regional autonomy with terrorism. This effort was bolstered in 2001 with the onset of the U.S. led war on terror that legitimized extreme measures in the name of counter-terrorism, allowing China to bypass global norms related to human rights. As a result, the leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states have been able to respond with extreme violence (terrorism from above) towards groups seen as a domestic political challenge under the guise of combating religious extremism with little effective counter-action from the international community (Chivers et al., May 16, 2005, p. 3). A brutal example of this was the massacre of hundreds of demonstrators who were participating in a peaceful demonstration against poverty and government oppression in the Andijon province of Uzbekistan by government troops in May of 2005 (McMahon, June 7, 2005, p. 1). Despite eyewitness accounts of the event from the international media, the Uzbek government categorized the “Andijon Massacre” as an anti-terrorist incident (Shamsuddinov, May 14, 2006).
At the transition to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Uzbekistan was added as a full member, a critical addition due to its geographic location in the central of Central Asia and population composed of ethnic minorities from many other states in the region. Uzbekistan has significant geographical importance as one of the nations that contains the Fergana Valley and it shares mutual borders with all of the other Central Asian states. Additionally, Uzbekistan maintained close relations with the United States (Misra, 2001, p. 316) and allowed the U.S. military to use the Karshi-Khanabad air base until 2005 (Wright and Tyson, July 30, 2005).

As noted in Chapter Three, network-based terrorist groups are impossible for one nation alone to contain as they can easily operate between borders. Close coordination of counter-terrorism forces through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s center in Kazakhstan and agreements to allow security forces to operate within member nations’ borders have drastically reduced the frequency of terrorist attacks within China; even the burst of threats before the 2008 Olympics was relatively light compared to periods of violence in the 1990s. Based on the pattern of terrorist incidents since 2001, groups such as the IMU, ETIM and other terrorist groups are relocating operations outside of the domain of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to the minimally controlled areas of Waziristan and Balochistan in Pakistan.

In addition to new members, the transformation also represented mission expansion to contain threats from outside influences, namely the United States. China’s fears of an insurgency in Xinjiang arose as a result of increased U.S. presence in Central Asia starting in the late 1990s. Sources show that senior military analysts within the PLA
were concerned with the United States mounting a “Kosovo style war” by instigating Uyghur separatist sentiment. In 1998, the U.S. 10th Mountain Division conducted coordinated exercises with the militaries of several of the Central Asian member states and Turkey. The exercise was responded to with a major live fire military exercise conducted in Xinjiang during some the harshest portions of winter. The operation was conducted with such intensity that a number of PLA soldiers lost their lives after losing contact with supply lines and fell victim to harsh weather (Bodansky, 2000, pp. 5, 6). The likelihood of U.S. military engagement with China was unlikely at the time and is even less so now given economic dependence with China and engagement of military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The dominance of the organization’s two great powers, Russia and China, became of primacy during this epoch of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The organization’s agenda became more focused on expanding the domain of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization outside of Central Asian to the Middle East and Africa (“China’s Diplomatic and Military Muscle Flexing,” December 9, 2005, p. 1). Russia’s aims for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization also support counter-balancing posturing against the United States, as its vision for the organization is for an eventual military alliance capable of rivaling NATO. China’s interest in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization seems to be more focused on economics and regional security interests such as containing the United States and using the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to restrain Asia’s other major power, Russia (Strategic Forecasting, Inc., August 28, 2008). Another key difference between the Chinese and Russian agendas is differences on
membership expansion; Russia would like to expand the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states to extend influence towards Europe whereas China is reluctant to do so as new states may align with Russia and erode its current domination of the organization. China is likely to remain the favored of the two major powers within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization due to its focus on economics and military concerns along with the billions of dollars in support provided to members to counter shock the international crisis (Strategic Forecasting, Inc., June 16, 2009).

**The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Fifth Annual Summit**

The third and current epoch of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was marked by the fifth annual summit held in Shanghai in June of 2006, which denoted the declaration of the organization as an international security entity. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization publicly stated that the organization’s influence and foreign policy interests have transcended the regional to the international level. The public address of the summit had three primary messages: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a new type of organization that will be an active part of the world order, globalization is an important aspect of the international system and finally, the world is no longer a unipolar system. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization touted itself as a new model of international relations based on the concept of the Shanghai Spirit which embodies “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for multi-civilizations, and pursuit of common development” (“Full Text of Joint Communiqué of 2006 Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit,” June 15, 2006, p. 1).
Statements from the official Anniversary Declaration clearly demonstrate the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s position as a revisionist entity within the world system. Language in the address calls for reform within the U.N. Security Council to create equitable distribution of power based on geography (Shanghai Cooperation Organization, June 15, 2006, p. 2). This call for changes in the U.N. Security Council is more than likely just rhetoric as both China and Russia have permanent member status and have resisted reform of the Security Council in the past. Additionally, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization leadership called for the next Secretary-General of the UN to come from an Asian country. Although probably not related to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization request, the current Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon is from South Korea. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization asserts that it will be one of the architects of the global system based on mutual trust and understanding and the deconstruction of “double standards” (Shanghai Cooperation Organization, June 15, 2006, p. 2).

Notable in the address is the veiled language condemning U.S. policies of regime change and democratization (“Differences in cultural traditions, political and social systems, values and models of development formed in the course of history should not be taken as pretexts to interfere in other countries’ internal affairs”). Additional statements target the U.S. policy of democratization with statements such as “Model[s] of social development should not be exported” and “[The Shanghai Cooperation Organization] has a role in maintaining peace and stability in the zone of its responsibility” (Shanghai Cooperation Organization, June 15, 2006, p. 2). Such statements are a clear sign to the United States not to interfere with the political workings of the Shanghai Cooperation
Organization member nations. Further evidence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s anti-United States agenda came from President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s attendance of the meeting and his speech blasting U.S. foreign policy. Iran’s attendance at Shanghai Cooperation Organization events aims for soft balancing against the United States on the part of Russia and China. Although Russia is very interested in expanding the Shanghai Cooperation Organization membership to include Iran, China views the move as too controversial while rifts exist between Iran and the United States (Strategic Forecasting, Inc., August 28, 2008).

Recognizing the importance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in greater Asia, Pakistan and Iran are lobbying for full membership (Saidizimova, June 13, 2006, p.1; Radyuhin, June 16, 2006, p.1). Iran submitted a formal request for full membership in March of 2008 and Pakistan followed in 2009, which was welcomed by China. Acceptance of new members requires a unanimous vote, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization states are divided on acceptance of new members; for political reasons it is unlikely either request will be granted. In the case of Pakistan, China is unlikely to seek stronger official ties to avoid further aggravating its relationship with India, a strong ally of the United States. In the case of Iran, it would be foolish to formalize its back channel support into a formal relationship that might create direct confrontation with the United States. Chinese external balancing is carefully planned to avoid attracting the attention of the United States.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization became a vehicle for China and Russia, the two regional major powers enmesh one another in an international organization along
with containing the influence of the United States in Central Asia (Petrou, August 7, 2006, p. 33). Efforts to limit U.S. hegemony have largely manifested themselves as soft balancing, such as Uzbekistan’s eviction of the United States from the strategically important Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in the summer of 2005 (Rodriguez, November 22, 2005, p. 1) and joint military exercises such as “Peace Mission 2007” (Daly, July 27, 2007) and “Peace Mission 2009” (Blank, August 20, 2009). The United States has been able to maintain its presence at the Manas airport in Kyrgyzstan. The facility also serves civilian aircraft and incidents have occurred in the past; the collision of a U.S. military plane with a passenger jet has raised concerns about safety (Rusanov, November 1, 2006, p. 1). Despite this fact, the U.S. lease was recently renewed in 2009, indicating that the threat of eviction of the base is a bargaining tactic used by the Kyrgyz government.

**Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Counter-Balancing**

In this section, the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s security mission is analyzed in relation to counter balancing the U.S. presence in Central Asia. Theories related to balance of power are used to identify the existence of counter balancing policies. Subsequent analysis is provided on the impact of Uyghur separatism as a facilitator of domestic factors that facilitate counter balancing. Walt's theory of balance of threat is used to explain the timing of counter balancing behavior followed by an analysis of China’s domestic environment using Schweller’s theory of under balancing.

According to conventional balance of power theory, the United States should have encountered counter-balancing behavior in the early 1990s shortly after the formation of
the unipolar international system; however, this did not occur. As per Walt and Schweller, the existence of a hegemon alone does not stimulate counter-balancing behavior; in addition, the hegemon must be perceived as aggressive. Several aspects of China’s involvement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are congruent with Walt’s theory of balance of threat. First, in addition to combating internal threat (omnibalancing), China’s formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization enmeshed it in a regional organization, thereby reducing the perception of Chinese threat to neighboring regions. This helped minimize the fear of China as an aggressive hegemon and contained the threat of counter-balancing on the part of the other regional power, Russia. Second, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was not initially geared towards counter-balancing against the United States. It was not until 2001 that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s counter-balancing agenda emerged but did not become overtly public until 2006. This expansion in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s mission correlates with the expansion of U.S. influence in the region. In short, the perception of the United States changed from being a benign to an aggressive hegemon from the perspective of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states. China’s primary aims for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are for soft balancing against the United States and to maintain the allegiance of neighboring states.

Normalizing relations with the Central Asian Republics and Russia paved the way for a greater agenda that emerged in the late 1990s with aims at countering the U.S. hegemonic status. The early initiatives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization were designed to counter the presence of the United States, which emerged as a regional power
in the late 1990s; later, the mission expanded to counter the U.S. hegemonic position at the international level. In the late 1990s, the United States began establishing operational bases in Central Asia with major bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Additionally, military exercises in Uzbekistan between the United States, Turkey, and other NATO states would have caused concern.

The Central Asian Republics were not part of China’s counter-balancing coalition until 2001 when perceptions of the U.S. intentions changed. During the 1990s, the Central Asian Republics hosted and conducted joint exercises with the U.S. military, an indication that the United States was welcome in the region, more than likely as an insurance policy against Russia in China. The Central Asian Republics participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was still based on the tenets of omnibalancing. Evidence of active participation (counter-balancing) on the part of the Central Asian Republics in China’s counter-balancing coalition did not exist until after 2001. Actions such as the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq along with support of the Color Revolutions contributed to the portrayal of the United States as a potential threat.

Schweller’s first requirement for counter-balancing policies to emerge is the existence of a dissatisfied power. To determine state satisfaction, Schweller leverages Johnston’s theory based on state behavior in the revisionist state in the context of international organizations. The text of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Fifth Annual Summit clearly notes China’s revisionist aims. Statements regarding shifts towards a multi-polar international system are clear challenges to U.S. supremacy. Additionally, China’s efforts to counter U.S. led initiatives within the United Nations also
denote revisionist aims. For example, China created numerous obstacles towards international resolutions against Iran and North Korea’s clandestine nuclear programs. Based on Johnston’s framework, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s statements and Chinese actions in the UN Security Council support the assertion that China is a revisionist state with revolutionary aims. China’s ability to execute on desired shifts in power distribution is limited to soft balancing due to the capability gap in relation to the United States.

**Role of Uyghur Ethnic Separatism in Counter Balancing**

In this section, the impact of Uyghur separatism is used to demonstrate the impact of ethnicity and nationalism on China’s domestic level factors that contribute to an environment that is conducive to counter balancing. As per Schweller’s under balancing theory, a number of factors must be present to facilitate counter-balancing behavior such as a dissatisfied power, capability greater than the hegemon along with a domestic environment including elite consensus, elite cohesion, social cohesion, and stable government. Theories of ethnicity and nationalism will help this section demonstrate how Uyghur separatism, among other factors, facilitates counter-balancing potential by supporting government stability and social cohesion among the Han Chinese. Analysis of other factors such as elite consensus and cohesion are outside of the scope of this thesis due to the vast scale and complexity of the Chinese political system.

The existence of Uyghur separatism played a role in the creation of domestic level factors that may have lead to an environment conducive to counter-balancing policies. By using a mission statement focused on domestic threats such as the Uyghur, China was
able to transform the Shanghai Cooperation Organization into a regional collective security organization with little notice on the world stage. The true nature of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization only became apparent after the 2006 annual summit in June. As noted previously, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization regularly conducts joint military exercises in Central Asia such as the “Peace Mission” exercises started in 2007. Although the exercises are labeled as anti-terrorism drills, the sophisticated warplanes and other equipment utilized are not congruent with these statements. Using the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to mask military expansion as an anti-terrorist operation helps to shield the organization from scrutiny by the international community. Until the 2006 Annual Summit, the U.S. media paid little attention to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; most international coverage is found in the Russian media.

China did not start to present soft-balancing based challenges to U.S. hegemony until the late 1990s when it began interfering with U.S. interests in Central Asia. Despite these measures, it is difficult to interpret Chinese policies as being fully revisionary. Congruent with Schweller’s theory, the required domestic attributes are not in place to support fully developed counter-balancing. Moments of anti-U.S. sentiment occasionally arise, as evidenced by the situations surrounding the U.S. accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 and collision of a Chinese fighter jet with a U.S. spy plane in 2001 (Callahan, 2006, p.192).

Despite incidents of civil unrest, a high level of social cohesion exists within the majority Han population. Among many other factors, such as a lengthy common history, ethnic groups such as the Uyghurs have helped cement social cohesion by providing a
means to bolster Han nationalism, a sense of ethnic identity, and another vehicle by
which the CCP can legitimize its role within the lives of China’s citizens by providing
security against internal threats. According to the research and observations of Dru
Gladney, media publications produced by the Chinese central government create an
image that exoticizes the country’s minority groups. Media, such as documentary film are
highly focused on the exotic customs of minority groups (Gladney, 2005, p. 248-
251). According to Gladney the efforts to accentuate the differences between China’s
various ethnic groups serve several purposes. First, the Han ethnic group is actually
heterogeneous and composed of many sub-ethnicities and identities. By focusing on the
differences between the Han and minority groups the minor differences among the Han
are “homogenized” in much the same way that a cohesive identity exists among people of
European descent in the United States. Second, by portraying minority groups as exotic
and different, thereby inferior, both justification and sense of obligation is created for the
development of China’s autonomous regions and for impressing mainstream culture on
its people. The portrayal of minority groups as inferior and distinctly different extends
feelings of nationalism and social cohesion by creating a common identity and purpose
among the Han majority group (Gladney, 2005, p. 243, 250, 252).

Chinese media outlets have also altered the context of separatism in Xinjiang by
utilizing language that portrays Uyghur discontent based on Islamism rather than
economic or political issues (Dwyer, 2005, p. 55). By instigating fear of Uyghur
separatists, the central government creates another facet of state control over its citizens
by becoming an entity that protects them from threat. Publicizing the existence of Uyghur
separatism also justifies the significant amount of funds used for economic development in the region along with the costly presence of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) and security mechanisms. By its inherent nature, terrorist activities are designed to generate fear within the population which creates focus on this source of threat; the fear of a terrorist attack is often much more tangible than threat from another state. The rise of a prominent threat or actual terrorist attack can stimulate a large increase in nationalism. For example, citizens within the United States denoted a higher level of nationalism, anxiety and prejudice towards Arabs after the September 11th attacks (Coryn, Beale and Myers, 2004, p. 175); history has demonstrated that these characteristics create the condition for unchecked government action.

**Existence of Chinese Counter-balancing**

Based on Schweller’s framework, China only demonstrates a subset of the variables required for full scale counter-balancing behavior. Although China’s record within international institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization indicates that it has revisionist aims, its internal and external capabilities are vastly smaller than those of the United States. Additionally, China’s domestic environment is only partially aligned towards support of counter-balancing initiatives. It is unclear whether elite cohesion exists in regards to counter-balancing against the United States; if the current trend of enmeshment of the Chinese and United States continues, anti-U.S. aims are likely to become even less prominent. Ethnic separatism from groups such as the Uyghurs is a contributing factor towards social cohesion. Based on this assessment, using Schweller’s “State Balancing Tendencies,” which is depicted in Table 2, China’s
propensity towards balancing is moderate as several critical elements are not present to support counter-balancing:

**Figure 11: China's Environment for Counter-balancing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revisionist Aims</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability Parity</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite Cohesion</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Cohesion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this time, the United States commands a significant capability advantage over China due to the experience and technology possessed by its military and intelligence agencies. China engaged in large-scale internal balancing with a growing military budget and investments in technology meant to directly counter core areas of U.S. strengths such as equipping the PLAN with attack subs (Nemets and Torda July 30, 2002 p.1), anti-satellite ballistic missiles (ASAT) (“Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of People’s Republic of China,” 2006), and cyber-warfare capability to counter the U. S. command-and-control advantage (Marquand, September 14, 2007, p. 1).

China’s ability towards counter balancing the United States could change in the future if the two remaining factors align with Schweller’s context for counter-balancing behavior. The possibility of these factors aligning is a topic unto itself. First, China’s relative capability must come into parity with that of the United States. In regards to conventional military capability, a large gap exists between the United States and China from an international perspective; it is unlikely this gap will be reduced in the near future to a degree that would facilitate full scale counter-balancing.
From a regional context, the relative capability advantage of the United States relative to China is shrinking rapidly. As noted earlier in this chapter, the United States maintained two air bases in Central Asia in the early phases of the war in Afghanistan but now maintains just one. Similarly, at the beginning of the last decade, China had no military bases in Central Asia and now operates one in Kazakhstan under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Currently, the largest regional concentration of U.S. forces is in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The ability for the United States to maintain a significant presence in Afghanistan is hampered by public opinion and the current fiscal problems of the nation. Additionally, the ability of the United States to maintain a major presence in Pakistan is based on the stability of their government that is highly questionable. It was speculated during the widespread floods in the summer of 2010 that the government would crumble (Masood, July 31, 2010).

The second point of alignment is that of elite cohesion within China. Under the general premise of liberal schools of international relations, nations that trade regularly are less likely to engage in conflict. Regardless of whether this notion is universally applicable, it appears logical in the context of U.S. and China relations. Members of the Chinese elite have become wealthy through trade with the United States and the West and would be unlikely to support any overtly bellicose policies on the part of the CCP. Objections towards counter-balancing from Chinese elites may be less of a factor if purely contained to regional security matters due to the lower likelihood of reprisals from the United States.
Given the shrinking capability gap between China and the United States in Central Asia, and the assumption that elites are less likely to object to counter-balancing in a regional over international context, China demonstrates the possibility of hard balancing in regions along its borders. Such hard balancing could manifest itself as the deployment of additional Chinese security forces in Central Asia. A likely maneuver is to put pressure on Kyrgyzstan to evict the United States from the Manas Airbase; such a move would significantly reduce the U.S. military presence in Central Asia and greatly complicate the U.S. operations in Afghanistan. Despite these possible events, China is not likely to be able to end U.S. presence in the region, but merely complicate operations and increase the cost of maintaining a presence by restricting access to the region.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has analyzed the evolution of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization security mission to include addressing both violent NGOs and state based threat in the form of the growing U.S. presence in Central Asia. The example of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization provides an example of some of the characteristics of security organizations focused on non-state based threat that facilitate mission expansion. As reviewed in Chapter Three, at the initial formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 1996, its mission focused on addressing the threat of terrorism and ethnic separatism originating from the Uyghur and other disenfranchised groups. Chapter Four reviewed expansion of the organization to include economic facets as a means to stabilize member governments and facilitate their compliance with the organization’s initiatives.
In this chapter, the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s security mission to include activities related to countering the U.S. presence in Central Asia.

In the case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, there were several facets of countering networked based organizations and the threat of terrorism that facilitated mission expansion. The broad base of policies and measures that include both security and economics allows gradual expansion of an organization’s mission by extending the scope of existing initiatives. For example, the existing regional anti-terrorism bases in Central Asia and standing security drills provided a starting point for China’s permanent military presence and now operates a military base in Kazakhstan under the banner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Nationalism generated by ethnicity and terrorist threat also provides an additional contributing factor towards mission expansion by generating social cohesion and support for political elites.

Although only one data point, the case study of the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization demonstrates the potential for security organizations originally formed to address threat from violent NGOs may be more likely to expand their scope over time. Due to the growing threat of terrorism, existing security organizations such as NATO are incorporating counter-terrorist operations within their missions. Security organizations countering violent NGOs need to expand their missions over time to keep up with the dynamic and highly flexible nature of terrorist organizations. In the case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the inclusion of economic development over its initial focus on security was an essential addition to its mission. Despite the need for organizational evolution, there is a danger posed by the relative ease in which security
organizations countering violent NGOs can expand their missions. This creates a high need for vigilance at the international level to detect organizations with expansionist aims and governance at the domestic level to avoid loss of focus on the organization’s core purpose and values.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Using the case study of Chinese counter-terrorism efforts in Central Asia, this thesis has sought to provide insight into the formation, maintenance, and governance of security organizations intended to counter non-state based threat such as violent NGOs. Much of the academic body of knowledge focused on cooperative security has focused on situations when the source of threat is another state or coalition. The case study of the formation and evolution of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization yields the following findings related to state cooperation to counter violent NGOs:

- State cooperation is facilitated by a high need for coordination to address the characteristics of terrorist groups such as the typical trans-border operations and network organization patterns.
- Economic development plays a prominent role in security objectives by stabilizing allied governments, providing incentives for compliance with agreements and eroding grass roots support for terrorist organizations among civilian populations.
- Mission expansion is facilitated by the large of breadth of policies required for counter-terrorism including military, economic development and law enforcement. Additionally, nationalism bolstered by terrorist threat provides political elites with wide decisional latitude to enact policies.
Research into these topics is germane to the current international security concerns given the elevated threat level posed by violent NGOs. Cold War era proxy wars dispersed military knowledge to violent NGOs and have continued through increased global communication. The sophistication of violent NGOs has increased accordingly, and albeit a rare occurrence, attacks have occurred within the borders of western states such as the United States, United Kingdom and Spain. Although great strides have been made to bolster counter-terrorism capabilities since the September 11th attacks, a high level of threat still remains. The Taliban continue to pose a threat in Central Asia; as NATO forces contain insurgents in one province in Afghanistan they simply relocate to another province or state in the region. Additionally, Africa has re-emerged as a breeding ground for terrorist groups working under the al Qaeda umbrella organization. The United States has been relatively fortunate in that a number of terrorist attacks have been averted; however, incidents such as the Mumbai India attacks in 2008 in India are reminders for continued vigilance.

After the fall of the USSR, China’s perceived level of threat from Uyghur separatists grew due to fears that they would seek additional levels of autonomy after being inspired by the formation of independent Turkic states in Central Asia. In response to this perceived threat, China invoked heavy-handed security practices within Xinjiang. At the same time, China’s growing need for energy increased the importance of Xinjiang as a source of resources and as a transportation hub with Central Asia. The actual level of threat posed by Uyghur separatism is highly debatable and evidence indicates that Chinese security and economic policies are significant factors driving Uyghur terrorist
attacks. Despite robust security within Xinjiang, Uyghur separatists were able to conduct trans-border operations due to the vast expanse and terrain of the region. Containing separatist operations in Xinjiang alone would not be sufficient to contain attacks; China needed the support of the Central Asian states. In 1996, China formed the Shanghai Five, a security organization that brought together many of the Central Asian states and Russia to coordinate efforts to contain the threat of terrorism, separatism and “extremism.”

There are many barriers to state cooperation and the formation of international organizations. According to Jervis, impediments towards cooperation are particularly salient in the issue area of security. The competiveness and impact of security related decisions are larger than other areas such as trade and create greater concerns over violations or free riding. The competitive nature of security inherently creates concerns over relative capability as military power is measured as compared to other states. Lastly, the typically clandestine nature of state security makes it difficult to measure other state’s capability and compliance with agreements. The environment that led to the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is one example that promoted state cooperation by reducing the impact of these barriers. In the case of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the primary source of threat was not another state or coalition, but rather separatist and terrorist groups along with political dissidents. Terrorist and separatists groups operated throughout the region and no one state could utilize violent NGOs as a source to drive relative capability; providing aid to a violent NGO with the aim of impacting another government would result in blowback. Given the source of threat was not another state and that the violent NGOs were not a source of capability, concerns over
relative gains were minimized. In alignment with the theory of omnibalancing, states were motivated to coordinate at the international level to address domestic level threats.

Jervis also offers a set of conditions that promote state cooperation in security areas. First, great power nations must prefer a more regulated and stable environment over that in which individualistic pursuits create unpredictable results. In the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, it is interpreted that the status quo is state maintenance of the monopoly of force, which has been weakened by the rise in efficacy of violent NGOs. Second, all actors must have a shared value of mutual security and cooperation. Effectively countering networked organizations such as terrorist groups requires a high level of coordination imparting the value of cooperation on states targeted by violent NGOs. Third, all the actors must settle on the status quo and no expansionistic states must exist. In the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, targeted groups posed widespread threat and could not be used to develop position relative to other states without potential repercussions. Lastly, individualistic security pursuits must be seen as costly. When faced by a violent NGO with a regional or global domain, actions by a single state would not be effective against networked organization creating incentive towards cooperation over individual initiatives.

In addition to core security initiatives, economic development plays a critical role in China’s agenda containing terrorist threat along its western border. Analysis of Chinese counter separatist initiatives identified three main roles of economic development. Most of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization members aside from China and Russia are developing states and governed by authoritarian regimes. In addition to
supporting China’s needs for foreign energy resources, development within Xinjiang and Central Asia increased the stability of Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states. As noted above, one of the impediments to cooperation is concern over free riding or non-compliance. One of the additional roles economic development plays is providing a mechanism to facilitate compliance with allied developing states. China was able to use trade to ensure compliance by Pakistan to address Uyghurs operating within its frontier regions. On several occasions China shutdown border trade as a means of sanctioning Pakistan. Economic development also played a role in eroding grass roots support for terrorist and separatist groups in two fashions. China used the benefits of trade to erode common religious and cultural ties that had developed between the Pakistanis and Uyghurs over centuries. Economic development can potentially reduce support for violent NGOs by improving the quality of life for disenfranchised groups. This is not the cause in Xinjiang as economic development in the region is harming the traditional Uyghur agrarian lifestyle, inflicting environmental damage on the region and is highly biased towards ethnic Han Chinese. In this regard, economic development has propelled separatism sentiment. Economic development activities also helped facilitate an expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s core mission to include regional counter-balancing against the United States in Central Asia.

With the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, the presence of the United States in Central Asia expanded. This created cause for concern due to the Bush era focus on democratization and regime change and hindered China’s efforts to expand its influence over Central Asia. In 2001, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
underwent a major transition that included taking on additional members and expanding its mission to formally include economic development. In the following years, it became apparent from the organization’s public statements that its security mission had also expanded to include counter-balancing the U.S. presence in Central Asia. Several factors promoted expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s original mission. First, the wide swath of policies required for counter-terrorism facilitated mission expansion provided an existing starting point to expand. China had already begun extensive economic development activities in Central Asia, which over time became an official part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization mission. Additionally, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization had established military drills and regional intelligence centers in Central Asia staffed by Chinese security personnel. These preliminary steps provided a stepping-stone towards the current yearly full scale military exercises involving military assets not typically associated with counter terrorist. The drills send a message to the United States and create the perception among the Central Asian states that they do not need to rely on the United States and NATO for protection (Weltz, October 8, 2010).

According to Cottam, states that exhibit high levels of nationalism afford political elites wider decisional latitude. Chinese media utilize the Uyghur to drive nationalism in two facets. First, Chinese media accentuates the cultural and ethnic differences of Uyghur and other ethnic minority groups which helps to create social cohesion among the core Han ethnic group. Social cohesion is one of the domestic level prerequisite variables under Schweller’s theory of under-balancing. Second, portraying regions like Xinjiang as being underdeveloped helps create a sense of justification for Han dominance of the
province and support for related security initiatives. The existence of terrorist threat also bolsters feelings of nationalism as demonstrated in the United States after the September 11th attacks. The actual threat of Uyghur terrorist attacks is minimal however; the Chinese media often amplifies the perception of terrorist threat in its reports.

The main constraint on this study is the availability of a single data point to validate the findings of this thesis. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a unique organization given its original charter towards countering terrorism and separatism. A survey of international organizations did not find any other major security regimes with an initial charter focused on addressing threat from violent NGOs such as terrorist groups. Other security regimes include containing non-state based threat in their missions; however, these regimes were originally formed for alternate missions. Although the Shanghai Cooperation Organization provided an ideal case study for this thesis, it is only a single data point that requires additional validation. As such, the findings in this thesis are not generalizable to other situations yet they provide a starting point into this important research area.
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