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Geopolitical Position of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization within the Belt and Road Initiative * *

Abstract

This paper will analyze the geopolitical position of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) within the controversial, pretentious, and grandiose Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The paper shall be made of three parts. The first part will tackle geopolitical schools that exist amongst Chinese academia and policymakers. Our attention will be focused on the debate on the geopolitical thoughts which occurred after publishing China's first military strategy in 2015. The second part of the paper will tackle the institutional development of the SCO. This Organization stems from the Shanghai Five mechanism which China initiated in 1996 and which was supported by Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, by Uzbekistan in 2001 and by India and Pakistan in 2017, respectively. By analyzing the institutional development of the SCO, readers will be able to understand how the SCO fits or, even, reinforce Chinese geopolitical ambitions. The third part of the paper will explain the role of the SCO in the Silk Road Economic Belt, that is, in the part of space that Mackinder defined as Heartland. At the same time, we cannot ignore the upcoming role of the SCO in Chinese maritime geopolitical ambitions, that is, in the space of Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific. Still, different historical backgrounds, individual interpretation of security interests, asymmetric levels of development amongst member states of the SCO are factors that produce political and economic mistrust within the SCO. Additionally, economic and trade globalization enhances two parallel trends. On one side, it enhances the flow of goods, people, services, and capital, and on the other side, it reinforces the vulnerability of borders and the flow of terrorists. Those challenges require pragmatic, flexible, and bold approaches which should be based on respecting the interests of the SCO member states and the guiding principles of the SCO.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, New Security Concept, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Geopolitics, Asia-Pacific, Indo-Pacific

1. Introduction

Analyzing contemporary balance of power and geopolitical order, we are witnessing that China is becoming one of the most (pro)active, and, at the same time, one of the most vul-

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nerable actors in the global landscape. This new role and position of China occurred as the consequence of the *Reforms and Opening-up Policy*, *Going Global Strategy*, and *Great Power Diplomacy* which could be understood as tools of the Chinese deep and sophisticated integration with the international community. Hence, the sustainability of the Chinese development and legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are affected by moves triggered by other influential members of Global Governance. This two-way process was, also, recognized by China's official documents, particularly, in the *White Papers on the National Defense*. The continuity of Chinese vision on the arrangement and shape of the international order represents *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI), offered by Xi Jinping in 2013. It consists of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. From a geographical point of view, BRI covers both the space of Eurasian landmass and the space of Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific. From the Chinese side, BRI offers new, i.e. Chinese perspectives and methods in realizing the 17 UN Sustainable Goals, compared to the Western hegemonism, power politics, and Cold War mentality. According to Professor Dragana Mitrovic BRI represents "China's courageous and powerful move towards having a bigger say in global economic and political affairs and showing how she would like to add her impact on shaping the world's and China's future."¹ As noted by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, official Beijing demonstrates its capacity of: "non-decisions." They argued that an important source of power in deciding which issues should be addressed and which should be ignored. Who can shape the agenda for decision making owns a relevant and very specific power. This approach also involves the structure of institutions - both at the domestic and international levels. Institutions, setting the rules of the game, tend to define what kind of issues should be addressed or ignored and contribute to setting the agenda."² On the other side, some analyses perceive Chinese proactivity as Chinese new assertiveness.³ The set of those ideas are gathered in the so-called *China Threat Theory*. Having this in mind, we can presuppose that BRI as an intercontinental initiative brought two changes regarding Chinese status, position, and role in Global Governance. The first change can be understood that achieving "these national objectives have also locked China into a development path from which there is no turning back. China must continue to move forward, for if it does not, the economy's productive force could turn into a destructive one that leads to chaos and even violent civil unrest."⁴ Second, it could be analyzed from the international political economy point of view, that is, through the prism of the *structural* and *relational* power.⁵

Having in mind that BRI includes the region of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the specific aim of this paper is to analyze the geopolitical nexus between the SCO

1 D. Mitrovic, *From Socialist Modernization to Chinese Dream*, Institute for Asian Studies, Belgrade, 2019, p. 171. Also more detailed on the BRI as a China's signal to Global Governance Club see in, D. Mitrovic, "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Connecting and Transforming Initiative", in, Yu Cheng et al. (eds.), *The Belt and Road Initiative in the Global Arena: Chinese and European Perspectives*, Palgrave MacMillan, Singapore, 2018; D. Mitrovic, "The 'Belt and Road': China's Ambitious Initiative", *China International Studies*, Beijing, July/August 2016, pp. 76-95.

2 P. Bachrach and M. S. Baratz, "Decisions and Non Decisions: An Analytical Framework," *The American Political Science Review* 57, no. 3 (1966): 632-42, referred according to M. Dian, "Does China Have Structural Power? Rethinking Chinese Power and its Consequences for the International Order", *The Journal of Northeast Asian History*, Vol. 13, No.2, Winter, 2016, p. 133.

3 D. Mitrovic, "The 'Belt and Road': China's Ambitious Initiative", *China International Studies*, July/August 2016, Beijing, pp. 76-95.

4 Z. Wenmu, "Sea Power and China's Strategic Choices", *China Security*, World Security Institute, Summer, 2006, p. 18.

5 More detailed on these types of power see in: D. Mitrovic, *Međunarodna politička ekonomija*, Čigoja štampa, Beograd, 2012; S. Strange, *States and Markets*, Continuum, London, 1994.

and BRI. Through this paper, we will try to answer the following question: how does the SCO geopolitically contribute to achieving the BRI? The germ of the SCO represents the Shanghai Five mechanism. Namely, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China faced unfamiliar security dynamism in its neighborhood. Simultaneously, this was an opportunity and a challenge for China. Although the USSR did not represent the military threat regarding, China faced a new type of challenge which could jeopardize its territorial sovereignty. Namely, instead of one neighbor Soviet Union, China faced Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia which directly multiplied the number of issues of territorial delineation. From the reason that China borders newly formed Central Asian states by Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang), official Beijing feared that separatist and terrorist organizations from Xinjiang could transform their ideas into concrete actions in creating the so-called "East Turkestan". In terms of religion, language, and culture Central Asian states could be supporting factors in those Uygur`s separatist "making state" ambitions.⁶

To overcome the abovementioned challenges, China created "two regular committees - for confidence-building and joint boundary demarcation and arms reduction."⁷ The process of negotiation was implemented through the "Four plus One" or "two sides, but five countries" formula.⁸ The members of these committees were China, Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Russia was included at the request of the Central Asian states, which China accepted as a powerful stakeholder in this process. At the same time, this can be interpreted as official Beijing`s approach in creating a win-win situation and respecting the economic and political position of its neighbors. Involved stakeholders in the city of Shanghai in 1996 signed the *Agreement on Confidence Building in the Military Sphere in the Border Areas*. The signing of the agreement was perceived as the initiation of the Shanghai Five Mechanism. For the very first time, China was the initiator of the process that will reshape or even create new security architecture in the space which was in power vacuum since 1991. During the next summit which was held in 1997, the five-member states signed the *Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions*. Every subsequent summit was the confirmation that involved states were willing to invest resources to deepen the cooperation and trust through this Mechanism. During the summit held in Shanghai in 2001, Uzbekistan joined the Shanghai Five. Besides the Uzbekistani accession, the Shanghai Five was renamed into Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The main ideational discourse of the SCO is the 'Shanghai Spirit'. From the reason that the `Shanghai Spirit` is based on respecting Westphalia heritage – the sovereignty of states - and nurturing diversity in terms of political and economic systems, the SCO was "disqualified from a value standpoint [Western] as a "dictator club" or even "non-gentlemen`s club."⁹

6 Д. Траиловић, Утицаји међународних чинилаца на етничке сукобе у Народној Републици Кини [In Serbian only], PhD Thesis, Faculty of Political Sciences, Belgrade, 2019.

7 A. Tripathi, *Kazakhstan-China relations 1991-2009*, Chapter 3, Negotiations and Settlement of Border Dispute, p. 102, PhD Thesis, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2012, Available at: http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/119862/9/09_chapter%203.pdf, accessed 24/ 9/ 2019.

8 W. Song, "Interests, Power and China`s Difficult Game in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)", *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 23, No. 85, 2014, p. 90.

9 D. Mitrovic, *From Socialist Modernization to Chinese Dream*, Institute for Asian Studies, Belgrade, 2019, p. 87; Д. Митровић, „Шангајска организација за сарадњу – настанак, циљеви и домети нове безбедносно-економске структуре (Централне) Азије“, Српска политичка мисао, бр. 1-2, Институт за политичке студије, Београд, 2007, стр. 219-242; Д. Митровић, „ШОС –проблеми и перпективе развоја“, Српска политичка мисао, бр, 3-4, Институт за политичке студије, Београд, 2007, стр. 125-142.

Pursuing the continental geopolitical course, China brought many changes in Central Asian states' geopolitics. Firstly, China unlocked its landlocked geopolitical position, by providing them access to the vibrant markets of the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific which records constant growth of demand for oil and gas. Besides that, China represents an additional source of Central Asian politics of balancing which main purpose is to loosen the reins of the Soviet heritage and the strength of the Western militaristic export of democracy. In that context, China was perceived as a state which could bring political stability and economic sustainability to this part of the *Heartland*.¹⁰ From the Chinese point of view, stable Central Asian space represents the success of Chinese good-neighborhood diplomacy. A stable and productive environment represents the precondition regarding the sustainability of Chinese economic and peaceful development.

As years were passing by the SCO was transformed into the prestigious organization with a "list of those who want to become its members."¹¹ In that vein, the SCO draw great attention on itself, particularly when India and Pakistan became member states in 2017 during the Astana summit.¹² This (un)expected change in member structure of the SCO, triggered a question whether the enlargement of the SCO will enhance or jeopardize the future success of the SCO and achieving the aims defined as a part of BRI. But, for the very first time, in 2019, the armies of India and Pakistan operated together in the SCO joint antiterrorist exercise. Before including Pakistan and the biggest democratic country in the world – India –, China positioned itself in the Pakistani port of Gwadar as a part of the China-Pakistan economic corridor. According to official documents, the port of Gwadar is the point of intersection of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Maritime Silk Road. In this respect, the SCO is becoming an important factor for China in the space which Nicholas Spykman defined as *Rimland*.¹³ Here, it should be emphasized that in the organizational and structural organization of the SCO, still, no sub-mechanism tackles the maritime potential of the Organization.

2. Geopolitical Approaches in China's Foreign and Security Policy

Because China is a different country as opposed to the Western nation-states, the schools and methods of geopolitics as a science were not developed in the Western way. On the other side, analyzing the thoughts and approaches of some Chinese scholars we can notice geopolitical elements in their researches. Furthermore, geopolitical perception of international order we can find it in Chinese official documents. When it comes to the level of the official documents, China's first Military strategy published in 2015 consists of significant geopolitical insight. Namely, in this document we can read the following: "the seas and

10 H. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, National Defense University Press, Washington, D.C., 1996; H. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History", in (Additional Papers), *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, National Defense University Press, Washington, D.C., 1996; H. Mackinder, "The Round World and Winning of the Peace", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1943; N. Vuković, *Logika imperije*, Nacija Press, Beograd, 2007.

11 D. Mitrović, *From Socialist Modernization to Chinese Dream*, Institute for Asian Studies, Belgrade, 2019, p. 87.

12 Currently, SCO is consisted of eight member states: China, Pakistan, India, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Besides the category of member states there are dialogue partners and observer states. Dialogue partners are: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, Sri Lanka. Observer states are: Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia.

13 More detailed on Rimland see in N. Spykman, *The Geography of Peace*, Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1944; N. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and Balance of Power*, Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1942.

oceans bear on the enduring peace, lasting stability and sustainable development of China. The traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned, and great importance has to be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests. China must develop a modern maritime military force structure commensurate with its national security and development interests, safeguard its national sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, protect the security of strategic SLOCs and overseas interests, and participate in international maritime cooperation, to provide strategic support for building itself into a maritime power."¹⁴ According to Chinese scholar, Zhang Wenmu, this shift represents "hard social, political, and geopolitical choices that deeply impact matters of national security."¹⁵ During the history, especially in the era of Zheng He, China was presented in maritime geopolitical space. Thus, this announcement provoked debates not only amongst Western but amongst Chinese scholars as well. The representatives of academia and public policymakers raised the following questions: What kind of geopolitical course should China follow? Should that be continental or should China follow the course of the USA and the United Kingdom in becoming world power? Does China have capacities to combine both maritime and continental geopolitical aspects considering that BRI covers both *Heartland* and *Rimland*?

When it comes to the maritime geopolitical course and a strong navy, the abovementioned Chinese scholar Zhang Wenmu directs our attention to the lessons from history. He explains that in the following manner: "sea power has determined the fate of nations. China is no exception. In the past, China's slow but sure descent into a divided, colonized state at the hands of foreign powers was – to a considerable extent – due to its failure as a naval power. The two Opium Wars in 1840 and 1854 respectively, as well as the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, are examples showing China's crucial defeats at sea, which ultimately led to its failure as a state. The delay in resolving the Taiwan issue is also largely because of China's insufficient sea power."¹⁶ Besides that, the need for the strong navy in reinforcing the maritime geopolitical course he finds in the challenges which China faces in securing its energy security. According to *British Petroleum* China remained the world's largest energy consumer, accounting for 24% of global energy consumption and contributing 34% of global energy demand growth in 2018. Among the fossil fuels, consumption growth was led by natural gas (+18%) and oil (+5.0%), while coal use rose (+0.9%), the second consecutive year of growth."¹⁷ Through the competition of securing energy security, as one of the crucial factors for sustainable economic development, China faces many challenges such as American militaristic presence and control of extraction, production, and transportation of oil and gas, terrorist and pirate attacks as well. At the same time, regions rich in oil and gas are unstable and affected by different kinds of turmoil which is an additional challenge for China. Those challenges transformed China into a "very powerful geopolitical actor on the global energy market, especially in the oil, and in recent times in gas."¹⁸ As it was noted by

14 *China's Military Strategy 2015*, The State Council of the People's Republic of China, Available at: http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2015/05/27/content_281475115610833.htm, accessed on 24/9/2019.

15 Z. Wenmu, "Sea Power and China's Strategic Choices", *China Security*, World Security Institute, Summer, 2006, p. 17.

16 Z. Wenmu, "Sea Power and China's Strategic Choices", *China Security*, World Security Institute Summer, 2006, p. 23; More detailed on Opium wars see in: D. Mitrovic, *Kineska reforma i svet*, Institut za ekonomiku i finansije, Beograd, 1995.

17 "Statistical Review of World Energy – Country Insight, China", *British Petroleum*, Available at: <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/country-and-regional-insights/china.html>, accessed on 26/9/2019.

18 Д. Митровић и Д. Траиловић, „Геополитика кинеске енергетске стратегије у Централној Азији“, Српска политичка мисао, Vol. 44,

Zhang Wenmu, "the degree of resource shortage worldwide is proportional to the level of tension between big powers. Where resources are scarce, geopolitics is at play. The latter has a direct bearing on China's survival. China cannot have control over development goals without corresponding control over the resources to fuel the economy. The crucial difference is that China is almost helpless to protect its overseas oil import routes. This is an Achilles heel to contemporary China, as it has forced China to entrust its fate (stable markets and access to resources) to others."¹⁹ Thus, the problem is that China's energy security for the most part depends on imports of oil and gas through the sea lines of communication (SLOCs).²⁰ Moreover, Ivan Zaric claims that "during the history of PR China often neglected its maritime potential, which is mirrored in the size of the aquarium under Chinese control. Since China does not wield enough resources and its economy is becoming more and more advanced and developed, the sea represents the main artery in Chinese foreign commerce. In that context, SLOCs could be defined as the key platform of Chinese national development."²¹ Hence, according to advocates of this geopolitical approach, the main tasks of Chinese military modernization is enhancing power projection capabilities of People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) which will be able to exert effective control over the SLOCs and choke, but crucial, points - Malacca and Hormuz. That is necessary if official Beijing wants to accomplish *the Chinese Dream and Two Centenary*.

Some authors emphasize that China should develop maritime power and follow the thalassocracy geopolitical course as a response to challenges imposed in the form of American military naval exercises. From this perspective, James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara claim that "if Chinese maritime thinkers needed a reminder of the United States' continuing primacy at sea—including in China's backyard—they just got one. "Summer Pulse '04," the largest U.S. military exercise in history, involved the simultaneous deployment of seven aircraft carrier strike groups. Over two months, some 50 warships, 600 aircraft, and 150,000 sailors, marines, and airmen operated in five theatres spanning the globe. Presumably, those contingencies include wars in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, or elsewhere along the maritime periphery of the People's Republic of China (PRC) — which accounts for the reception accorded Summer Pulse '04 among Asian observers."²²

The second prism of geopolitical schools and thoughts which is developed amongst Chinese scholars, public policy makers, and strategists is continental geopolitical school. According to this approach, China should focus its geopolitical vectors towards Eurasia. One of the main representatives of this geopolitical school is Ye Zicheng, Professor at the School of International Relations, University of Beijing. This scholar distinguishes two continental epochs in geopolitics. The "first one is pre-modern characterized by the Mongol empire, whilst the second one is represented firstly by the Russian empire and then by the Soviet

No. 2, Институт за политичке студије, Београд, 2014, стр.135.

19 Z. Wenmu, "Sea Power and China's Strategic Choices", *China Security*, World Security Institute, Summer, 2006, p. 19.

20 For example "80% of Chinese maritime oil imports by sea pass through the Strait of Malacca.", "How Is China's Energy Footprint is Changing", *China Power*, Available at: <https://chinapower.csis.org/energy-footprint/>, accessed on 10/ 12/ 2019.

21 I. Zaric, *Thalassocratic Dimension of Contemporary Chinese Geopolitics* [In Serbian only], PhD Thesis, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade, 2018, p. 20.

22 J. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "The Influence of Mahan upon China's Maritime Strategy", *Comparative strategy*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2005, p. 23.

Union in the 18th and 19th centuries, respectively.”²³ Following the clues of his analyses, the same professor introduces “new continental perspective” (Nuova prospettiva continentalista - *xin lu quan guan* - 新陆权观). According to his analyses, China has to direct its capacities in developing this “new continental perspective”, which will be shaped by the following features: 1) “earth (terra - *yitu* - 以土); 2) populations (popolazione - *ren* - 人); 3) development (sviluppo - *fazhan* - 发展); 4) Eurasia (Eurasia - *Ouya dalu* - 欧亚大陆); 5) comprehensiveness (*zonghewei ben de di san lu quan xinguan nian* - 综合为本的第三陆权新观念).”²⁴ According to his explanation, the earth is the “platform of the prosperity (“madre della prosperità” - *caifuzhi mu* 财富之母), populations refer to the quality of people’s life, development means to pay attention not just to the strategically important continental mass, but to the surrounding space as well. Eurasia refers to the privileged horizontal continental mass which will be covered by Chinese strategic partnership, whilst comprehensiveness presupposes that maritime space, aerospace, and cyberspace and security are intertwined.”²⁵ According to the same scholar, this kind of geopolitical course will empower Chinese endeavors to break the framework of regional state understood in terms of Alexandar Dugin.²⁶ By pursuing the continental geopolitical course, China very wisely evades being trapped in Thucydides’ trap in the Pacific region, in which security architecture is predominantly shaped by American military alliances. As noted by David Shambaugh “the U.S.-led alliance system remains the predominant regional security architecture. This system is commonly referred to as the “hub and spokes” model, with the United States serving as the hub of a wheel with each of the five bilateral alliances (Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand) serving as the spokes. The system has benefited the United States and its Asian allies for more than five decades and has been the predominant regional security architecture since the end of the Vietnam War.”²⁷ However, this approach does not mean that the Pacific region is not important in Chinese geopolitical ambitions. It means that China, firstly, has to secure its western borders and to boost its power and courage through the continental geopolitical course.

Having in mind that China faces Malacca dilemma and American militaristic domination over Middle Eastern energy resources, diversification and expending the energy supplies - of delivery routes and sources - represents the strategic and security need for official Beijing. Thus, by following the continental geopolitical vector China is reinforcing its capacities in overcoming the challenge of energy vulnerability. In the same context, the Central Asian region occurred as the logical choice for China for several reasons. The first reason is geographic proximity, and the second is the quantity of the proved reserves of oil and gas located in Central Asian space. Hence, China is directing its investments in building new infra-

23 叶自成, “中国的和平发展: 陆权的回归与发展 - Ye Zicheng, *Zhongguo de heping fazhan: Lu quan de huigui yu fazhan* (Y. Zicheng, China’s Peaceful Development: The Return and Development of the Continental Powers), *World Economics and Politics*, Vol. 2, 2007, p. 24.

24 Y. Zicheng, “*Lu quan fazhan yu daguo xingshuai. Diyu zhengzhi huan jing yu Zhongguo heping fazhan de diyu zhanlue xuanze*” (Il potere continentale e l’ascesa e il declino delle grandi potenze. L’ambiente geopolitico e le scelte geostrategiche per lo sviluppo pacifico della Cina). Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, referred according to Simone Dossi, “Dal dibattito accademico al progetto geopolitico - Le Nuove Vie della Seta fra potere marittimo e potere continentale.”, *Geography Notebook*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018, p. 114.

25 Y. Zicheng, “*Lu quan fazhan yu daguo xingshuai. Diyu zhengzhi huan jing yu Zhongguo heping fazhan de diyu zhanlue xuanze*” (Il potere continentale e l’ascesa e il declino delle grandi potenze. L’ambiente geopolitico e le scelte geostrategiche per lo sviluppo pacifico della Cina). Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, referred according to S. Dossi, “Dal dibattito accademico al progetto geopolitico - Le Nuove Vie della Seta fra potere marittimo e potere continentale.”, *Geography Notebook*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018, p. 115.

26 For his definition on regional state see, A. Dugin, *Geopolitika knjiga 1*, Ekopres, Zrenjanin, 2014, p. 176.

27 D. Shambaugh, “China Engages Asia - Reshaping the Regional Order”, *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 95.

structure, developing the capacities of existing and discovering new oil and gas fields, and M&A of Central Asian companies. For example, "during the 2005 China`s biggest producer of oil and gas *China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC)* bought *Petro Kazakhstan Inc* for 4.18 billions of US\$, which up to that moment was the biggest Chinese overseas investment. Also, when Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a visit to Kazakhstan in 2013, besides strategic partnership, *CNPC* from *KazMunaiGas* bought for 5 billion US\$, 8.33% of Kashagan oil field which is located in the Caspian sea."²⁸ Moreover, China pledged to finance phase two of the development of the Kashagan oil field. As pointed out by Shi Ze "energy and resources cooperation have strategic undertones. While for resource-rich countries the export of energy and resources brings significant revenues, for consuming countries the import of energy and resource concerns their socio-economic sustainability. Cooperation between two sides, therefore, concerns national security and political stability."²⁹ Concurrently, deepening the energy cooperation with Central Asian states, China reinforces its control over the Xinjiang and boosts the economic development of this autonomous region. "March Westwards" could be understood as the part of the Chinese kaleidoscope strategy in balancing the uneven economic development between its domestic west and east. Wang Jisi claims the following "the Special Economic Zones, which were set up in southeast China, widened the gap between coastal and inland areas even further. This meant that for a long time, China`s Western region lagged behind the rest of the country, both in terms of economic and social development, as well as in its contact with the outside world."³⁰ As the social stability has tremendous importance for the CCP legitimacy and if the leaders of the CCP do not achieve the economic balance between domestic developed east and underdeveloped west, the legitimacy of the socialism with Chinese characteristics will be questioned. This produces new opportunities for Central Asian states as well. Namely, economically developed Chinese west widens the framework for trade and finance cooperation between Xinjiang and Central Asian states. Hence, the continental geopolitical course is required on several levels – security, economic, diplomatic, and cultural – which are mutually intertwined.

However, China faces several challenges in pursuing the "Marching Westwards". The first one presents a very complex security situation in this region because it has consisted of countries that are "politically unstable, comparatively poor and conflicts between ethnic groups are not easily solved."³¹ Thus, China has to be very creative in maintaining the "fragile peace."³² Apart from this, China is one of the players of the New Great Game. Amongst the players are Russia, the USA, Japan, India, South Korea, and Turkey to name a few of them.³³ As China is mostly focused on energy cooperation with the Central Asian States, official Beijing has to be careful with the aim to avoid being judged as a "natural resource extraction."³⁴

28 Д. Митровић и Д. Траиловић, „Геополитика кинеске енергетске стратегије у Централној Азији“, *Српска политичка мисао*, Vol 44, No. 2, 2014, p. 143.

29 S. Ze, "Empowering the Belt and Road with Energy and Resource Cooperation", *China International Studies*, July/August 2018, China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, 2018, p. 62.

30 W. Jisi, "Marching Westwards": The Rebalancing of China`s Geostrategy", in Shao Binhong (eds.), *China in the World*, 2nd edition, Brill, Boston, 2014, p. 130.

31 Ibid, p. 135.

32 Ibid, p. 135.

33 Д. Траиловић, „Религијски екстремизам у Централној Азији“, *Азијске свеске*, бр. 1, вол. 2, 2016, Институт за азијске студије, Београд, стр. 66-74.

34 W. Jisi, "Marching Westwards": The Rebalancing of China`s Geostrategy", op. cit. p. 135.

3. Institutional Development of the SCO – Genesis, Prospects, and Limits

When the SCO was formed in June 2001, it was the pioneer amongst international organizations whose official goal is to counter terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism (three evils). This combat was institutionalized in 2003 in form of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS) with headquarter in Tashkent which is one of the permanent bodies of the SCO. Aside from this, the SCO contribution in fighting three evils is supported by many conventions, agreements, and other types of documents. Hence, member states signed the *Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism*. In this Convention member states stated the following: “firmly convinced that terrorism, separatism, and extremism, as defined in this Convention, regardless of the motivation behind them, cannot be justified under no-circumstances, and that the perpetrators of such acts should be prosecuted under the law.”³⁵ Stating this, China was accused that it does not make that even legal expression of will for creating East Turkestan jeopardizes China’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.³⁶ Besides this Convention, SCO member states signed: *Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illicit Trafficking in Arms, Ammunition and Explosive between the Governments of the Member States of the SCO* in 2008, *Convention of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization against Terrorism* in 2019, *Agreement on Cooperation and Interaction of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Border Issues* in 2015, *Statements by the Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Joint Counteraction to International Terrorism* in 2017, *Decision by the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on approving the Programme of Cooperation between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Countering Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2019-2021* in 2018, *Protocol of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group* in 2018. When it comes to the Afghanistan issue, from the institutional point of view, the member states of the SCO created the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group. As could be seen, the SCO is pursuing a comprehensive approach in fighting terrorism in the Central Asian and “Golden Crescent” regions. On the other side, the SCO relevance in fighting against terrorism was questioned when America declared War on Terror and deployed the NATO troupes close to the Chinese and Russian borders. Namely, the USA rented the Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in southern Uzbekistan and Manas Air Base in the north of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, for securing Northern Route in fighting Taliban regime in Afghanistan.³⁷ This was a great challenge for China. As noted by Professor Dragana Mitrovic, “NATO is one of the security threats (whose expansion to the East and the borders with Afghanistan and China follows closely) that makes China unhappy but also pragmatic and flexible enough to adapt to these changes. They [Chinese] think that the NATO expansion expresses the continuation of the Cold War mentality and the application of traditional security concepts

35 *Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism*, SCO/Documents, Available at: <http://eng.sectsc.org/documents/>, accessed on: 08/10/2019.

36 More detailed on this see in, J. Kirby, “China’s Brutal Crackdown on the Uighur Muslim Minority”, Vox, Available at: <https://www.vox.com/2018/8/15/17684226/uighur-china-camps-united-nations>, accessed on: 08/10/2019.

37 L. Beehner, “Asia: U.S. Military Bases in Central Asia”, *Council of Foreign Relations*, Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/asia-us-military-bases-central-asia>, accessed on: 9/10/2019.

that are dominated by the mentality of the containment and balance of the influence."³⁸ But, the SCO member states, and dominantly China, gave a great footprint and impetus in appeasing American endeavors to be the main "ruler maker" in the *New Great Game*. In that context, the heads of the member states of the SCO, unanimously, in Astana declaration from 2005 declared the following: "given the completion of the active military phase of the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan, the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization deem it necessary for the relevant participating states of the antiterrorist coalition to set a deadline for the temporary use of said infrastructure and presence of their military contingents in the territory of the SCO member states."³⁹ The fight against terrorism is additionally reinforced by *Peace Missions*, that is, the antiterrorist military drills. *Peace Mission* brought great changes in the Chinese understanding of sovereignty. Namely, the first military drill was held in 2003 in Kazakhstan and China, respectively. But, for China, the "importance of this military exercise goes beyond SCO. It is the first large-scale multilateral antiterrorist exercise that the Chinese army has participated in, and it is also the first time that China has invited foreign armies into its territory."⁴⁰

Without any kind of organization such as NATO, that military, i.e. antiterrorist exercises have tremendous importance in Chinese development of military diplomacy and securing peace in this very turbulent world region. When India and Pakistan accessed to the SCO, the institutional framework of the Organization was enriched for the summits of the Ministers of Defence of the member states. As may be seen, cooperation in security affairs is becoming even more important and widened. But the cooperation is established in many other areas, thus, the cooperation within the SCO is multi-directional and multi-layered. In that context, besides the abovementioned summits of Ministers of Defence and Peace Missions, member states held the meetings of the Ministers of the Foreign Affairs, Justice, Agriculture, Economy, Transport, Education, and many other sectors. The cooperation in energy security is realized by the SCO Energy club created on the proposal of Vladimir Putin. Here is important to underline that in 2017 Turkey (dialogue partner) chaired the SCO energy club, which produced geopolitical uncertainties for American ambitions towards the Caspian region with Turkey as a bridge. Another permanent in the institutional structure of the SCO is the SCO Secretariat based in Beijing. The SCO Secretary-General is appointed by the Council of Heads of State for a term of three years. THE current SCO Secretary-General is Vladimir Norov.⁴¹ In the vertical organizational structure of the SCO, the Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO. It meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organization. The SCO Heads of Government Council (HGC) meets once a year to discuss the organization's multilateral cooperation strategy and priority areas, to resolve current important economic and other cooperation issues, and also to approve the organization's annual budget. The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.⁴² Furthermore, there are SCO Business

38 D. Mitrovic, "The Strategic-Security Position of China after September 11, 2001", *Issues: Global Security Challenges*, Occasional Paper 12, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, Belgrade, p. 83.

39 *The Astana Declaration 2005*, SCO/Documents, Available at: <http://eng.sectsc.org/documents/>, accessed on: 08/10/2019.

40 J. Wang, "China Multilateral Diplomacy in New Millennium", in Yond Deng & Fei-ling Wang, *China Rising – Power and Motivation in Chinese Foreign Policy*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York, 2005, p. 181.

41 SCO-About, Available at: http://eng.sectsc.org/about_sco/, accessed on: 08/10/2019.

42 Ibid.

Club and SCO Interbank Consortium.⁴³ The SCO institutional development, simultaneously, is mirroring the Chinese strategic responses towards the challenges which official Beijing faces in Eurasia and Chinese endeavors in reshaping security architecture in this part of the world.

4. Geopolitical Nexus between the SCO and BRI

As it was previously said, the third part of the paper will tackle the geopolitical nexus between the SCO and BRI. By examining their geopolitical nexus, we will tackle and geoeconomic aspect, because economy and security are two intertwined aspects of Chinese development and two main gauges in almost every Chinese initiative. BRI, as a grandiose, transforming and connecting global initiative with many projects under it, consists of two parts – Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

Geopolitical nexus between the SCO and BRI is visible on many levels. Both the SCO and BRI are in service of promoting infrastructure modernization, economic development, and respecting cultural, economic, political, and diversity in values and traditions amongst nations. To promote cooperation through the prism of “Shanghai Spirit” and respecting diversities in the aforementioned segments, the SCO member states signed many agreements such as *Development Strategy of the SCO until 2025*, *Agreement between the Governments of the Member States of the SCO on Creating Favorable Conditions for International Road Transport*, *Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the Governments of the Member States of the SCO*, *Agreement on International Road Transport Facilitation*. This way, China through the SCO is gradually creating a convenient and suitable environment, which will be a solid geopolitical platform for the realization of BRI and its five major goals – policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds.⁴⁴ Apart from that, Chinese president Xi Jinping during the summit of the heads of the member states of the SCO held in Qingdao in 2018 announced that “China will set up an RMB 30 billion equivalent special lending facility within the framework of the SCO Inter-bank Consortium.”⁴⁵

The geopolitical nexus between the SCO and the BRI has been boosted by multilateral and bilateral anti-terrorist drills. Those drills are becoming an essential part of Chinese national security and military modernization because they combine intellectual, material, and personnel aspects of the PLA. The importance of those military and antiterrorist drills is notable in Chinese endeavors to secure border stability and to facilitate the flow of goods, services, personal, and capital. For all involved stakeholders, a stable environment is a vital aspect in further promoting economic development, as a platform for bettering the

43 The member banks of the SCO Interbank Consortium are: Kazakhstan Development Bank, RSK Bank, OJSC (Kirgizia), China Development Bank, State Corporation “Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs” (Vnesheconombank), State Savings Bank of the Republic of Tajikistan “Amonat bank”, Uzbekistan National Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs. Partners banks are: Eurasian Development Bank (2008), Savings Bank Belarus bank, OJSC (2012), Habib Bank Limited (Islamic Republic of Pakistan) (2015), Development Bank of Mongolia (2016). More detailed on this see in, *The Interbank Consortium of the SCO*, Available at: <https://xn--90ab5f.xn--p1ai/en/about-us/international-multilateral-cooperation/the-interbank-consortium-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization/>, accessed on: 08/10/2019.

44 D. Mitrovic, “The “Belt and Road”: China’s Ambitious Initiative”, *op.cit.*, pp. 76-95.

45 “Full text of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Speech at the 18th SCO Qingdao Summit”, *Xinhua*, Available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/10/c_1372444587.htm, accessed on 10/10/2019.

quality of people`s life. Operating in a peaceful, stable, and secure environment, Central Asian states could implement many projects, such as the proposal of Uzbekistani President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to develop a transportation system in this part of the world.⁴⁶ On the other side, this can open new markets for Chinese placement of overcapacity in steel and glass industry, labor, and foreign exchange reserves.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the SCO which is run by the “Shanghai Spirit” assumes that overcoming both traditional and non-traditional security issues is based on “shared combating”, that is, on collective security actions. Thus, the very important component in understandings the SCO actions represents New Security Concept. Although, the NSC was introduced to stabilize the situation in the Pacific realm, where the USA is, still, dominant geopolitical and security actor, in the official document *China`s Position Paper on the New Security Concept* the SCO was announced for the most successful praxis of this security concept.⁴⁸ The main features of the NSC as the active cooperation in securing security are “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and coordination.”⁴⁹ This security concept represents diplomatic and non-military activism. As is might be seen, this concept is based on the features which are essential for BRI, as well. Thus, both the SCO and BRI are Chinese tools in creating a multipolar world order structure, that is, in building a “new type of international relations and a community of shared future for the mankind.”⁵⁰

In the Bishkek Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization`s Heads of State Council all the SCO member states, except India, supported the realization of BRI and cooperation between the SCO and BRI. This was affirmed in the following way: “the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan reaffirm their support for China`s Belt and Road Initiative and praise the results of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (Beijing, 26 April 2019). They note the ongoing work to implement this initiative together, including the efforts to align the Eurasian Economic Union projects with those under the Belt and Road initiative.”⁵¹ Having this in mind, China is still facing great obstacles in reinforcing political trust and support for its foreign policy initiatives. Thus, the SCO presents the framework of communication within which China is striving to converge, insurmountable, geopolitical approaches of the SCO member states. By doing so, Chinese officials believe that “SCO member states will favor the organization`s policy coordination with the BRI.”⁵² Enhancing mutual trust and a stable environment, neighbors` states are creating fertile soil for deepening sincerity, cooperation,

46 More detailed on this see in, M. Levina, “Central Asia States Optimistic on Solving Transportation System”, *The Times of Central Asia*, Available at: <https://www.timesca.com/index.php/news/26-opinion-head/20313-central-asia-states-optimistic-on-solving-transportation-problems>, accessed on 10/ 10/ 2019.

47 The value of Chinese foreign exchange reserves in September, 2019, was 3,092 trillion USD. *Trading Economy – China*, Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/china/foreign-exchange-reserves>, accessed on 10/ 10/ 2019; D. Mitrovic, “16+1` Framework of Cooperation: Main Lessons from Six Years Experience”, in, Gerd Kaminski (ed.), *Chinese Strategies in Politics, Foreign Policy, Security Policy, Economy and Law*, OGCF, Wien, 2019, pp. 141-165.

48 *China`s Position Paper on the New Security Concept*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People`s Republic of China, Available at: <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/xw/t27742.htm>, accessed on 10/ 10/ 2019.

49 X. Guangkuai, *International Situation and Security Strategy*, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 2009, p. 96.

50 H. Lu, “Striving for Coordinated Development of SCO and BRI”, *China International Studies*, July/August, 2019, p. 83.

51 *Bishkek Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization`s Heads of State Council*, 2019, SCO-Documents, Available at: <http://eng.sectsc.org/documents/>, accessed on 11/ 10/ 2019.

52 H. Lu, “Striving for Coordinated Development of SCO and BRI”, *China International Studies*, July/August, 2019, p. 95.

and avoiding diplomatic, security, and religious misunderstandings.

Besides focusing on the continental part of the SCO, the maritime potential of the SCO should not be omitted, and in the coming years, it is expected to be developed. Namely, many authors underline the upcoming importance of the SCO in the maritime aspect of Chinese geopolitics, and in line with that in the realization of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The enlargement of the SCO in terms of geography, which produced geopolitical consequences, enriched predominant SCO orientation towards landmass with the maritime component. In that context, He Jian and Wang Lu argue the following, "as the security threats will not only come from the land after the expansion of the membership, the SCO member states should now also attach importance to maritime security threats, turn their attention to the ocean promptly and gradually strengthen maritime security cooperation."⁵³ Even more, some assumptions deepening cooperation in this sector are "conducive to improving the trade security in the Caspian Sea for Central Asian landlocked countries."⁵⁴ However, it is still early to predict whether the SCO have capacities to help the Chinese endeavors to reposition itself in the maritime geopolitical landscape regarding the objections and reaction from India, American Indo-Pacific strategy and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue initiated by Japan.

Furthermore, the SCO enhances the realization of BRI through its cooperation with other organizations, created or supported by China, all around the world. This kind of cooperation is established by signing the Memorandums of Understanding. As far, the SCO signed MoUs with ASEAN, UNESCO, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, CSTO, Silk Road Fund, Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, Economic Cooperation Organization, and many others organizations.⁵⁵ By doing so, the network of the SCO`s influence is becoming wider. Thus, through the SCO`s regional and global cooperation official Beijing is creating an environment that will welcome BRI`s projects.

5. Conclusion

Over the years, the SCO has been becoming a more important organization in Chinese endeavors in securing regional and interregional peace, security, and economic development. It was observed by Li Xin and Qing Xiayun that "over the past decade, the organization evolved from creation to grown-up, from setting rules and regulations to operating highly effective, and having soon become an effective mechanism of maintaining regional security and stability and promoting common development of its member states."⁵⁶ SCO from the geographic aspect of its membership is an inter-regional organization that connects Central Asia (*Heartland*) with South Asia and East Asia (*Rimland – Indo Pacific*). The SCO includes states with different socio-economic levels of

53 H. Jian and Wang Lu, "Maritime Security: A New Field of Cooperation for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", *China International Studies*, July/August, China Institute for International Studies, Beijing, 2018, p. 25.

54 H. Jian, Wang Lu, "Maritime Security: A New Field of Cooperation for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", *China International Studies*, July/August, China Institute for International Studies, Beijing, 2018, p. 26.

55 SCO External Communication, Available at: <http://eng.sectsc.org/cooperation/#6>, accessed on 13/12/2019.

56 L. Xin and Q. Xiaoyun, *Ponders on the Long-Term Strategy of Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, Available at: <http://en.sis.org.cn/Research/EnInfo/1669>, accessed on 10/10/2019.

development and business praxis. At the same time, this great source of diversity is the benefit and challenge for the SCO. As claimed by Shi Ze, "there exist broad common interests, but the different national conditions and priorities of different countries may inevitably lead to different interests. Cooperation calls for seeking common ground while putting aside differences, but also requires relevant countries to resolve their differences."⁵⁷ Tremendous challenge is represented by India, which is active in the SCO but does not support the BRI. India in cooperation with America and the EU, excluded BRI from the resolution which tackles the issue of the stability in Afghanistan. Namely, the "last vestige of BRI propaganda was deleted from a resolution on Afghanistan on December 6 in a final act of cleansing that started last year when India took a strong stand against BRI. Interestingly, references to all other regional initiatives such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India or the TAPI gas pipeline project and the Chabahar agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran were retained, making the deletion of BRI reference even more noticeable."⁵⁸ As far as the external factors are concerned, they are mostly defined in terms of geopolitics and democratic manifest destiny.

In the organizational structure of the SCO, there is no such a sub-mechanism which will tackle, that is, enhance and deepen the cooperation in the maritime space, although China reached the Indian Ocean through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. But, India is not happy with spreading Chinese influence in Indo-Pacific realm. Hence, "the current functions of the SCO are still limited to land-based security governance, with its role in ocean global governance yet to be explored."⁵⁹ Some authors emphasize that before deepening maritime cooperation within the SCO, a "series of pressing question need to be answered before promoting maritime security cooperation. What are the security issues that the SCO can put on its agenda? What areas should be first promoted, continuously advanced, and specifically focused? Should the issues in some areas be addressed through bilateral or multilateral cooperation?"⁶⁰ On the other hand, we should also recognize the fact "that if a forum cannot produce anything significant and fails to be relevant in dealing with important global or regional issues, member countries will lose interests in the forum. Fatigue will set in and people will be bored attending the meetings, and the public will lose interest in the meetings."⁶¹

The geopolitical role of the SCO in the realization of BRI can be examined from the stance that all "the SCO member states and dialogue partners are by and large countries along the Belt and Road routes, and also supporters and participants of this initiative."⁶² Hence, Chinese business and investment praxis within the BRI and SCO is based on the "construction of relevant infrastructure, based on complementary advantages of produces and consumer

57 S. Ze, "Empowering the Belt and Road with Energy and Resource Cooperation", *China International Studies*, July/August 2018, China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, 2018, p. 71.

58 S. Sirohi, "India-US-EU Combine Halts China`s Belt and Road Initiative at the UN", *The Wire*, Available at: <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/india-china-belt-and-road-united-nations>, accessed on 7/ 12/ 2019.

59 H. Jian and W. Lu, "Maritime Security: A New Field of Cooperation for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", *China International Studies*, July/August, China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, 2018, p. 26.

60 H. Jian and W. Lu, "Maritime Security: A New Field of Cooperation for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization", *China International Studies*, July/August, China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, 2018, p. 33.

61 Y. Yongding, *The G20 and China: A Chinese Perspective*, The Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2004, p. 20.

62 H. Lu, "Striving for Coordinated Development of SCO and BRI", *China International Studies*, July/August, 2019, p. 82.

countries, helps the producer countries to reinvigorate their energy and resources industries, and provides opportunities for added value of capital and technologies, thus broadening the economic potential of [involved] countries.”⁶³

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63 S. Ze, “Empowering the Belt and Road with Energy and Resource Cooperation”, *China International Studies*, July/August 2018, China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, 2018, p. 59.

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Слободан Поповић

Геополитичка позиција Шангајске организације за сарадњу у оквиру Иницијативе појас и пут

Апстракт

Овај рад ће се бавити анализом геополитичке позиције Шангајске организације за сарадњу у реализацији контроверзне, претенциозне и интерконтиненталне кинеске Иницијативе појас и пут. Будући да је НР Кина носилац и иницијатор и ШОС-а и Иницијативе појас и пут, истраживање геополитичке споне између њих ће бити од великог значаја у увиђању стратешког позиционирања НР Кине у систему глобалне владавине. Рад ће бити састављен из три целине. У првој целини ћемо истражити геополитичке школе мишљења које су се развиле међу припадницима кинеске академске заједнице, као и оне које су настале међу доносиоцима политичких одлука као резултат стратешког промишљања међународних односа. Посебни осврт ћемо учинити на период од 2013. године када је кинески председник, Си Ђинпинг, свету понудио и представио Иницијативу појас и пут. Потом, од великог значаја ће нам и бити и 2015. година када је НР Кина обнародила своју прву званичну Војну стратегију. Други део рада ће бити посвећен институционалном развоју ШОС-а. Ово ће нам бити од велике помоћи у увиђању и анализирању континуитета, као и промене начина на који ова интеррегионална Организација утиче на реализацију геополитичких амбиција званичног Пекинга. Трећи део рада ће представљати својеврсну синтезу закључака добијених анализом у претходна два поглавља. Тим путем, покушаћемо да увидимо везу између ШОС-а и континенталне геополитичке стратегије НР Кине будући да се Економски појас свиле, континентална рута Иницијативе појас и пут, простира преко Евроазијске масе која је уједно и део ШОС подручја. Такође, приступање Индије и Пакистана 2017. године као пуноправних чланица ШОС-у, условљава и истраживање све растућуће улоге ШОС-а у кинеској поморској геополитичкој стратегији, а уједно и у Поморском путу свиле 21. века.

Кључне речи: Иницијатива појас и пут, Нови концепт безбедности, Шангајска организација за сарадњу, Геополитика, Евроазија, Пацифички регион.