THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT: - With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1991s Central Asian nations and Japan established diplomatic relations and partnerships began to increase steadily as manifested by the level of official contacts. In 1997 the “Silk Road” Diplomacy concept was formulated for Japan’s policy toward Central Asia. At the beginning of the 21st century, we see the activation of new actors including India, Korea, and Japan in Central Asia, which were mainly welcomed in the region. Tokyo recognized the growing strategic importance of Central Asia in the context of international security and sought to play a more active role as an Asian nation in Eurasia. During two decades Central Asian nations and Japan began to increase steadily. Japan is one of the largest assistants to Central Asia in structural reforms and Japanese investments in the different aspects of the region's economy and transport communication add up to several billion. There are several areas of special interest to Japan in its relations with Central Asia, including cooperation in education, economic development of the region, political reforms, as well as energy resources. Japan’s effort in creating the “Central Asia plus Japan” dialog is part of its multilateral diplomacy. At the same time, there are some challenges and problems in Central Asia–Japan relations. However, there are potentialities for future bilateral and multilateral relations. Japan like Korea, India, and other countries has a strong positive image in Central Asia, which could be regarded as an additional factor for fostering partnerships between Central and East Asia as well as interregional relations with the vast Asian continent and beyond.

This article explores the interests of the Central Asian states as members of the SCO, and their compatibility with the SCO goals. This study shows that the SCO is compatible with the Central Asian
states' security and economic interests, regional cooperation, and the need for balanced relations with the great powers—China, Russia, and the United States.

**KEYWORDS:** Central Asia, energy, security, Eurasia, SCO. Central Asia Japan, Bilateral relations, Eurasian diplomacy, Multilateral partnership, Central Asia plus Japan.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an intergovernmental international organization founded in Shanghai on June 15, 2001 by six member nations: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It was established on the foundation of the ―Shanghai Five‖ mechanism, which was initially developed for the purpose of strengthening trust and encouraging disarmament in the border regions of China with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (Öksüz 2009:715, Kay 2006:159-160). The SCO admitted Mongolia into observer status at its 2004 Tashkent Summit and Pakistan, India, and Iran received observer status at its 2005 summit in Astana, Kazakhstan. The total area occupied by the SCO member states is about 30,189,000 square kilometers, or about three-fifths of the territory of Eurasia, with a population of 1.512 billion people, or approximately a fourth of the world's total population (Brummer 2007:185). The declared purposes of The Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism are: strengthening mutual trust and good-neighborly relations among member states; promoting effective cooperation in political affairs, economy and trade, scientific-technical, cultural, and educational spheres as well as in energy, transportation, tourism, and environment protection fields; joint safeguarding and preserving regional peace, security and stability; striving towards creation of democratic, just, reasonable new international political and economic order (United 2008:232).

Establishing relations and formulating Japan’s strategy toward Central Asia Central Asians and Japanese often refer to long history of trade, cultural, and humanitarian relations that have taken place among countries and regions, located along the way Silk Road. Among examples referred to the rarities, made in Samarkand in the 13th century and founded in the ancient city of Nara, the historic capital of Japan. Also Buddhism, which in the sixth century, was moved to the Japan from Central Asia through China and Korea. After WW2 thousands of Japanese war prisoners were deported to Central Asia, where they participated in the different reconstructions and had tolerant relations and attitude with and from local people (Zhukova, 2007. pp.62-71). It should be noted that during the Soviet time, Central Asia and Japan were not involved in direct foreign relation, but only in framework Soviets center dominated approaches, there were some contacts of representatives of Central Asia Soviet republics, including Uzbekistan, to involve in different exchanges visits to Japan. Due to the Soviet propaganda the students were well informed that the first atomic bomb where used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, but post-WW2 period of Japan political, social and
economic development was not wildly
informe exception very limited information on
it’s economic progress. Only in the post-Soviet
era Central Asian nations and Japan started
diplomatic, political and economic
relations.Japan is among the first ones
recognized and established diplomatic links
with the new states of Central Asia and parties
tried to develop relations in the different
fields. Japanese Foreign Ministry classified
them as a part of Europe and Newly
Independent States due to be inconvenient to
divide the former Soviet Union.

CONCLUSION
The SCO goals seem to be compatible with the
Central Asian states’ interests and it has made
efforts towards satisfying them. In the political
sphere, the SCO has stressed non-interference
in domestic affairs of sovereign states by
foreign nations and support for each member
state’s right to choose its own path of
development. Additionally, in the wake of the
Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan and the popular
uprising in Uzbekistan of 2005, Central Asian
leaders expressed appreciation for Beijing’s
and Moscow’s support for their regimes and
understanding of the need to suppress any
opposition movements – whether democratic
or Islamic – within their respective countries.
The SCO addressed Central Asian states’
economic interests by providing a forum for
discussion of building trade, transit and
transport systems in the region as well as
energy and tourism development.

The member states have talked about setting
up an —energy club‖ and a freetrade zone that
local economists believe would benefit Central
Asian consumers, although at this time
Central Asian products are not ready to
compete with Chinese goods. Since the
inception of the SCO, economic relations
among the member states have rapidly
increased, close to ten-fold in eight years from
1997 to 2005. To address security concerns,
the SCO created RATS and conducts yearly
joint military exercises. Furthermore, out of all
the cooperation organizations that Central
Asian states have created or joined, the SCO
has been the most successful in increasing
regional cooperation, especially in the transit
and transportation arena. The SCO Forum
began functioning in 2006 with the goal of
increasing multilateral cooperation in
environmental protection, culture, education
and sports and has been relatively successful
as these are not controversial areas. It is in the
interests of the Central Asian states to
continue the multidirectional policy towards
the major powers that have expressed
willingness to develop and secure Central Asia.
No major power single-handedly has been
able to satisfy all of Central Asian needs, nor
do the Central Asian states want a total
dependence on one power. It seems clear that,
Central Asian leaders will continue to exploit
major power differences and sell their
cooperation to the highest bidder. Most
importantly, multidirectional foreign policies
have allowed Central Asian leaders to pursue
their national (and personal) interests.

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