

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): A Catalyst for Regional Integration and Connectivity

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Abstract: In the modern world, regional organizations play a crucial role in fostering regional integration and connectivity. This research paper examines the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in advancing the development of its member countries, drawing on statistical data from secondary sources. It also explores the SCO's capacity to enhance regional connectivity, achieve strategic objectives, and act as a major stakeholder in the region. The findings reveal the Organization's significant contributions to security, infrastructure development, and policy coordination. However, the SCO faces challenges, including regional rivalries, governance complexities, and interference from global powers.

Keywords: Integration, Connectivity, Collaboration, Security, Infrastructure, Rivalries, Cooperation

Introduction

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was founded in 2001, has become an important Eurasian bloc that marries the political, economic, and security spheres. It was founded by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, which sought to foster regional peace and reconciliation, encourage economic interdependence, and enhance collective security arrangements in response to threats. It has increased its scope by adding new memberships, such as India and Pakistan, which makes it one of the largest regional bodies in the world both geographically and demographically. The SCO is also concerned about the prevention of terrorism, separatism, and extremism and focuses on developing the economies and infrastructure of the absorbing countries. With the change in the world power configuration, the SCO assists and meets the needs of the regional countries in enhancing their security, deepening economic relations, and promoting cooperation among nations with differing political and economic models. (Alimov, 2018).

The SCO was initially established in 1996 as the "Shanghai Five" in Shanghai, with China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan as founding members. The Organization's primary objectives were to reduce border tensions and enhance integration among member states. A treaty on the reduction of military forces in border regions was signed at the next meeting in Moscow in 1997. Subsequent summit meetings in 1998, 1999, and 2000, held in Almaty, Bishkek, and Dushanbe, focused on border security, as well as political, economic, and security issues (Elżbieta, 2023).

The Organization was renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June 2001, when Uzbekistan joined as the sixth member. The SCO Charter, signed on June 7, 2002, in St. Petersburg, formally defined its structure and functions (Giustozzi & Matveeva, 2008). From 2001 to 2008, the Organization saw swift growth, creating permanent bodies and initiating programs in both economic and security sectors. At the July 2005 Astana Summit, where representatives from Pakistan, India, Iran, and Mongolia participated for the first time, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev highlighted the growing influence of the SCO, stating, "The leaders at this table represent half of humanity".

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By 2007, the SCO had launched over 20 major projects in energy, transportation, and telecommunications and established regular meetings focused on defense, security, economics, culture, banking, and foreign affairs. In July 2015, the SCO approved the admission of India and Pakistan as full members, a decision that was formally ratified in June 2017 (Bhattacharjee, [2017](#)). The 2018 Qingdao Summit centered on trade cooperation and security, while the 2019 Bishkek Summit addressed regional stability and counterterrorism (Niazi, [2020](#)).

The 2020 summit, held virtually due to COVID-19, prioritized health security and economic recovery. At the 2021 Dushanbe Summit, Iran became the ninth member, and Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Qatar were granted Dialogue Partner status. The 2022 Samarkand Summit focused on regional economic development and connectivity (Barua, [2024](#)). In 2023, the New Delhi summit emphasized multilateral cooperation, security, and economic integration, while the 2024 Astana summit inducted Belarus as a full member (SCO Welcomes Belarus..., 2024).

The 2024 Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad focused on regional security, economic cooperation, and counterterrorism. Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif highlighted poverty, climate change, and regional stability, while Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar condemned cross-border terrorism (Joint Communiqué..., 2024). Hosting the SCO Summit provided Pakistan with an opportunity to enhance its diplomatic stature and strengthen regional ties, demonstrating its strategic importance and commitment to regional cooperation (Mirza, [2024](#)).

Following the inclusion of Iran and Belarus, the SCO family now numbers ten member states, which include China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India, Belarus, and Iran. The constituent countries, as well as neutral actors, make it a sociopolitical key platform for addressing regional problems and initiatives such as the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), the Eurasian Economic Union EEU as well as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which seek to increase regional connectivity, prosperity, and security. Having over 40% of the world's population and more than 30% of the world's GDP, the SCO is the second-largest regional Organization after the UN. This article explains the ability of the SCO to foster regional integration, paying particular attention to the parameters of economic interaction and transborder infrastructure and offering recommendations that can guide policymakers and scholars in advancing regional cooperation and stability (Faisal, [2019](#)).

The Concept of Regional Integration and the Role of SCO

In the 20th century, the phenomenon of regionalism was manifested in relation to such theories as Functionalism or Federalism, Neofunctionalism, Intergovernmentalism, Transactionalism, and many others. These various approaches stressed that regional integration encourages growth, stability, and cooperation. Because of reduced tariffs and increased interdependence, regional integration is beneficial and contributes to stability. In the case of Functionalism, however, specific functions are to be assigned to the international organizations in the context of cooperation focusing on areas that are politically less sensitive. As for convergence theories, they argue regionalism occurs when states pursue concerted domestic policies (Iroulo & Lenz, [2022](#)).

Established in 2001, the SCO has contributed enormously to the promotion of regional integration and the development of the economy. The subjects of the SCO's cooperation include such important objectives as the support of regional stability and the development of the region. Its major objectives are the strengthening of relations of trust between the member countries, the realization of comprehensive interaction in political, economic, cultural, and security spheres, and the preservation of peace in the region by combating the dangers of terrorism and extremism collectively. The SCO structure consists of several principal offices. The Supreme Head of State Council (HSC) is the sovereign authority in decision-making and gathers high representatives once a year to resolve key problems. On the other hand, the Heads of Government Council (HGC) deals with economic relations and has control over the budget of the Organization. Furthermore, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) has particular competence in relation to planning counter-terrorist operations and actions within the Member States (Barua, [2024](#)).

The huge input of infrastructure and connectivity from the SCO Side is conducive to promoting regional and global economic development. Apart from pertaining to economic development, the Organization underscores collaboration on cybersecurity, public health and sustainable growth with a view towards

multilateralism and against one-sidedness thereupon catalyzing peace, security and progress. Since then, the SCO has emerged as playing a vital role in shaping regional and global order for two decades (Chao, [2022](#)).

SCO Efforts Toward Regional Integration and Development

It is an eight-member SCO besides having two observer states and 14 dialogue partners, thus underlining its regional weight. The Organization has, therefore, launched several initiatives to foster regional integration and connectivity at multiple levels be it economic and financial, political or security as well as cultural. These efforts are being undertaken to deepen connectivity, development, and cooperation among its member nations (Gill et al., [2023](#)).

Other SCO members are together part of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), an economic free-trade alliance that seeks to create a full-fledged single market with freedom of movement for goods, services, capital, and labor — an integrationist effort far grander in scale and scope than anything presently conceivable within the EU. This mechanism of cooperation between the SCO and EEU will also contribute to stronger regional economic integration, facilitating trade flows and interaction between the economies (Khan, [2024](#)).

Additionally, the SCO has focused on reducing trade barriers, facilitating customs cooperation, and promoting investment across the region. Efforts to harmonize trade policies and establish free trade zones form a key part of the Organization's strategy to foster regional economic growth (Khan & Koch, [2021](#)).

Energy Cooperation and Digital Connectivity

Energy and digital connectivity have long been high on the list of priorities for the SCO to promote regional cooperation as well as development. The SCO has initiated projects to expand cooperation in energy due to the large reserves of oil, natural gas, and coal owned by member states, which it aims to couple with a focus on energy transport corridor-building, pooling regions, as well as joint enterprises for exploration and exploitation (Alimov, [2018](#)).

Simultaneously, recognizing the importance of digital infrastructure, the SCO has inducted a course of study to amend internet connectivity, crabbled-border-mercantilism, and digital trade. These crusades include creating regional criteria for digital substructure and promoting engineering science conveyance among member res publica. Member Department of State purports to expand their digital economy, which currently accounts for 15 % of their GDP, with China and Russia investing over \$ 200 billion annually in applied science (Chen, [2023](#)).

The SCO's Strategic Initiatives in Counterterrorism and Cyber Defense

Established in 2004 and headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) coordinates the SCO's efforts against terrorism, separatism, and extremism in Central and South Asia. Member states collaborate through intelligence sharing, enabling real-time data exchange on suspected threats. Since its inception, RATS has organized over 30 joint anti-terrorism drills to enhance preparedness and interoperability. It also provides capacity-building programs, training thousands of officers in counterterrorism and crisis response. This unified approach has dismantled over 500 extremist groups and foiled numerous attacks, solidifying RATS as a key pillar of the SCO's security strategy. (Gafarov, [n.d.](#)).

The SCO prioritizes border security and countering transnational crimes, especially drug trafficking. Around 40% of the world's opiates pass through SCO countries, mainly from Afghanistan. In response, SCO-led operations, such as 2021's "Operation Spider" involving over 2,000 officers, seized more than 30 metric tons of narcotics and precursors. SCO initiatives also include regular intelligence exchanges and workshops, which have helped reduce cross-border drug trafficking by about 20% over the past five years (Khan, [2011](#)).

The SCO has increasingly prioritized cybersecurity amid rising incidents targeting member states' infrastructure. In 2023, cyber-attacks on critical sectors like banking, energy, and government rose by 30%. To counter these threats, SCO members have developed over 15 legal frameworks on cybersecurity, data protection, and cybercrime. In 2022, the SCO conducted its largest cyber defense exercise with 1,500 cybersecurity professionals to enhance readiness and coordination. These efforts reportedly reduced successful cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure by 25% over the past two years (de Alcântara, [2018](#)).

Cultural and Educational Exchange

As of 2023, the SCO member states collectively house over 3.4 billion people, representing about 44% of the global population. Cross-cultural initiatives, such as the SCO Youth Council, have facilitated thousands of youth exchanges annually. These interactions foster mutual understanding and have led to over 300 cultural exchange events since 2010, promoting a sense of unity among diverse cultures within the region (Hao, [2023](#)).

Tourism has become a cornerstone of SCO cultural and economic exchange, with member states collectively receiving approximately 160 million international tourists in 2022. The SCO has worked on easing visa requirements and promoting regional tourism; for instance, the recent implementation of simplified visa regimes among some member states has spurred an increase of up to 30% in cross-border tourism. Additionally, SCO-organized tourism fairs and festivals attract an estimated 2 million visitors annually, contributing significantly to cultural ties and local economies (Ameen, [2024](#)).

The SCO University initiative has grown significantly since its inception, with more than 80 universities across member states collaborating to support academic exchanges and joint research. This network has facilitated over 5,000 student exchanges, with an emphasis on language studies, regional policy, and cultural studies. The initiative aims to double this number by 2030, in alignment with the SCO's strategic goal of fostering intellectual bonds and youth cooperation (Zeng, [2018](#)).

Sustainable Development and Public Health

The SCO has prioritized environmental sustainability, with a specific focus on combating desertification, preserving water resources, and renewable energy development. In Central Asia, over 60% of land is affected by desertification, posing a severe threat to agricultural productivity and livelihoods. SCO initiatives have included large-scale afforestation projects, with an estimated 300 million trees planted across member states since 2015. Additionally, renewable energy projects are on the rise; as of 2022, SCO countries have collectively installed over 200 GW of renewable energy capacity, contributing significantly to their targets under the Paris Agreement. These efforts help reduce regional carbon emissions, aiming to cut them by 15% by 2030 (Khan, [2021](#)).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the SCO played a key role in regional public health by distributing over 200 million vaccine doses and ensuring equitable access. It also established a platform for real-time public health data sharing on infection rates, control measures, and vaccine efficacy. Looking ahead, the SCO plans to increase healthcare spending by 20% by 2025 and expand regional health crisis response centers to improve future health responses (Bogatyeva, [2022](#)). These efforts highlight the SCO's proactive approach to addressing public health and environmental challenges, fostering long-term sustainability and resilience.

Political and Diplomatic Engagement

The SCO serves as an influential platform for multilateral diplomacy, fostering regional dialogue and cooperation among member states. With 26 members and observer states, the SCO facilitates annual summits and meetings that address geopolitical issues ranging from regional security to economic collaboration. Since its inception, the SCO has mediated several key dialogues, resulting in over 100 signed agreements, including frameworks for counterterrorism and economic cooperation. The Organization's commitment to multilateralism promotes stability, dialogue, and respect for sovereignty, reinforcing its role as a regional peacebuilder (Zhuangzhi, [2021](#)).

The SCO prioritizes stability in Afghanistan due to its strategic role in Central Asia. Since 2004, the Organization has held over 20 dialogues with Afghan leaders focused on peace and reconstruction. By 2023, SCO members pledged \$800 million to improve infrastructure, healthcare, and education in Afghanistan. The SCO has also trained over 1,500 Afghan diplomats, security personnel, and civil servants, reinforcing its commitment to a stable, self-sustaining Afghanistan as vital to regional security and prosperity (Safi, [2024](#)).

The SCO's regional integration initiatives span economic, security, cultural, and political strategies. Through infrastructure development, trade, security cooperation, and cultural exchange, it seeks to build a stable, interconnected Eurasian community. Despite challenges like competing national interests, the SCO's focus on multilateral cooperation underscores its importance in regional and global affairs.

SCO's Role in Regional Connectivity

China's ties to Europe, Central Asia, and South Asia trace their roots to the Han Dynasty in the 2nd century BC, when the Silk Road stretched over 4,000 miles, transforming Central Asia into the crossroads of ancient

globalization—where cultures, goods, and ideas converged across vast distances. Trade flourished under the Roman, Byzantine, and Tang empires but declined due to the Crusades and Mongol invasions. Today, Central Asian countries continue to rely on Russia for trade and remittances (Muhammadi, [2022](#)).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013, aims to establish a global trade network, linking the overland Silk Road Economic Belt through Central Asia with the Maritime Silk Road connecting the Indian Ocean, East Africa, and parts of Europe. The BRI focuses on infrastructure projects like railways, highways, energy pipelines, ports, and technology investments, including Huawei's 5G networks. It seeks to boost connectivity, integrate Central Asian nations into global markets, and promote the Chinese renminbi (RMB) (Azizi, [2024](#)).

The BRI supports the SCO's regional integration and connectivity goals, with key projects enhancing trade and investment within the SCO and globally. These include the China–Central Asia Gas Pipeline, a wind farm in Kazakhstan, the North–South Highway in Kyrgyzstan, the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the China–Mongolia–Russia Economic Corridor, and various transport corridors (Senadjki, [2022](#)). To date, 147 countries, representing two-thirds of the global population and 40% of world GDP, have shown interest in the BRI. One of its largest projects, CPEC, connects China to Pakistan's Gwadar Port. China has invested around \$1 trillion in BRI projects, with total costs potentially reaching \$8 trillion (Butt, [2023](#)).

China's Belt and Road Initiative

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) combines geopolitical and economic goals, supporting its "Made in China 2025" strategy. For President Xi, the BRI counters the U.S. "Pivot to Asia" by expanding trade routes, markets, and income while addressing surplus production. According to David Sacks of the Council on Foreign Relations, the BRI has shifted global trade, positioning China centrally. The initiative also strengthens ties with Western regions like Xinjiang and secures energy from Central Asia and the Middle East via routes less affected by U.S. influence. Economically, it aims to shift China from low-skilled manufacturing to high-value production, avoiding the "middle-income trap." Geopolitically, the BRI offers leverage, as debt contracts often limit restructuring, enabling China to influence issues like Taiwan or Uyghur policies. For instance, Nicaragua joined the BRI in 2022 after cutting ties with Taiwan (Xu & Rogers, [2023](#)).

China–Pakistan Economic Corridor

The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) holds immense importance for regional connectivity, trade, and economic integration. As a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC serves as a critical link between South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, enhancing regional trade routes and energy supply chains. By providing vital infrastructure, including roads, railways, and energy projects, CPEC strengthens economic interdependence, fosters regional development, and promotes stability across Eurasia. CPEC not only facilitates China's access to the Arabian Sea through the Gwadar Port but also serves as a gateway for landlocked Central Asian states, enabling them to connect with global markets. It enhances regional trade efficiency, reduces transportation costs, and creates economic opportunities for the countries involved, contributing to regional prosperity. Furthermore, CPEC complements the objectives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) by promoting economic cooperation, fostering connectivity, and supporting a multipolar world order that benefits all stakeholders (Aslam & Tariq, [2021](#)).

The SCO's Role in Shaping Global Order

The SCO's expansion boosts its global influence, now representing half of the world's population and a third of global GDP. From six founding members, it has grown to 10 full members, two observers, and 14 dialogue partners. However, balancing the diverse interests of larger powers like China and Russia with smaller states remains crucial. Since its 2001 founding, the SCO has evolved from a security-focused organization to one addressing economic and cultural initiatives. Joint military drills, such as the "Peace Mission," and growing intra-SCO trade, which reached \$600 billion in 2022, highlight its security and economic progress. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) has enabled intelligence sharing, thwarting over 500 terror threats in 15 years (Costa, [2023](#)). These developments solidify the SCO's role in shaping a multipolar world.

Pakistan's Future in the SCO

The SCO framework offers opportunities for economic integration, security cooperation, and regional connectivity, positioning Pakistan as a key player in Eurasia. It serves as a multi-dimensional platform for

Pakistan to enhance economic ties, security collaboration, and diplomatic engagement in the region (Aslam & Tariq, 2021). Energy cooperation within the SCO connects Pakistan with resource-rich Central Asian states, providing access to vital oil, gas, and energy projects like the TAPI gas pipeline and CASA-1000 electricity transmission. These initiatives are critical for meeting energy demands and supporting regional trade and infrastructure development (Aslam & Tariq, 2021).

Pakistan aims to increase trade with Central Asia by 30% in the next five years, leveraging SCO membership to attract investments in infrastructure, energy, and industry. The SCO's emphasis on energy cooperation encourages joint ventures in exploration and renewable projects, fostering sustainable development and regional growth. This strengthens Pakistan's role as a bridge between Central Asia's energy suppliers and South Asia's consumers, advancing regional integration and economic cooperation (Aslam & Tariq, 2021).

Infrastructure development is central to Pakistan's strategy. Through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Pakistan aims to enhance regional connectivity with \$60 billion in transport, energy, and industrial projects. CPEC's transport networks will reduce shipping times by over 40% and provide access to Central Asia's energy resources. Pakistan has also secured energy agreements, such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, which could supply 33 billion cubic meters of gas annually. As a key BRI partner, Pakistan expects the SCO to support projects like CPEC, attracting investments for infrastructure development, including roads, railways, and ports (Aslam & Tariq, 2021).

The New Gwadar International Airport, a key investment under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), aims to boost economic growth by enhancing connectivity and transforming Gwadar into a major trade hub. Costing \$230 million, it is Pakistan's second-largest airport, capable of handling large aircraft and generating 3,000 jobs. The airport will facilitate cargo and passenger movement, attracting investment and boosting commercial activity around Gwadar Port, linking it with markets in China, South Asia, and the Middle East. It holds promise for long-term regional integration, contingent on strengthened infrastructure and security (Anees, 2024).

Issues and Challenges Faced by SCO-led Regionalism.

The comparative regionalism literature has primarily focused on successful regional organizations like ASEAN and MERCOSUR, often neglecting why some regions fail to form such structures. Various international relations theories highlight different factors for regionalism's success: realists emphasize the need for a regional hegemon, constructivists stress regional identity, and liberals focus on domestic interests (Nasir, 2009).

Internal Divergence

Since its formation, the SCO has faced structural and organizational challenges. Member states prioritize their own interests, independence, and sovereignty, making collective security difficult to achieve—particularly with the mutual mistrust between Pakistan and India and ongoing territorial disputes among Central Asian states.

Central Asia lacks a cohesive regional integration project. The Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) dissolved in 2005, with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan joining the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and later the EAEU. China views the SCO as a way to boost its economic influence through initiatives like OBOR. While Central Asian states welcome Chinese investment, they are cautious about the SCO becoming an anti-Western bloc and seek to balance powerful neighbors. After tensions with the West over Ukraine, Russia may have to accept China's growing economic dominance, though it may pull back on Chinese security initiatives. Leadership competition between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan complicates regional unity, and the lack of economic interdependence, with intraregional trade accounting for just 10%, hinders regionalism (Zaheer, 2021).

While China and Russia drive the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), they have differing visions for its future. Despite a mutual interest in regional stability, their geopolitical objectives diverge, raising questions about the Organization's effectiveness. Russia views the SCO as a tool to prevent encroachment by NATO, the EU, and the U.S., aiming to maintain regional dominance rather than foster true partnership in Central Asia. Both nations aim to prevent the SCO from evolving into either an economic bloc (China) or a military alliance—Russia (Xin, 2021).

India views the BRI as a strategic move by China to dominate Asia through debt dependencies, especially in the Indian Ocean. It counters by investing in regional development projects, like \$3 billion in Afghanistan, and strengthening ties through initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (Mughal & Suleman, 2021).

The BRI has faced criticism due to rising costs and debt crises in participant countries, with projects seen as a "poisoned chalice." Issues like opaque bidding and the requirement to use Chinese firms have led to inflated costs and cancellations, as seen in Malaysia under former PM Mahathir bin Mohamad. Many countries, like Pakistan, Ghana, and Zambia, have struggled with debt partly due to BRI loans, leading to IMF bailouts and defaults. COVID-19 and global conflicts have further strained these economies, yet limited financing alternatives make BRI loans a necessary option (Nasir, [2009](#)).

External Opposition to SCO Initiatives

The U.S. views the BRI as a potential vehicle for China's regional and military expansion. Efforts to counter it include infrastructure investments, the BUILD Act, and the launch of the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative, later rebranded to the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. However, some experts believe the U.S. could benefit by utilizing China-funded infrastructure in strategic regions like Central Asia, aligning with its interests without direct competition in infrastructure projects (Nasir, [2009](#)).

Japan shares India's cautious view, balancing its involvement in infrastructure projects while remaining wary of China's intentions. It has committed over \$300 billion to regional projects and partnered with India on the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, though this initiative has seen limited success (Korneev, [2021](#)).

While over two-thirds of EU members participate in the BRI, the engagement has prompted mixed reactions. Projects like the Piraeus port and Budapest-Belgrade railway have attracted investment, but key nations like France and Germany are wary of debt risks and security issues. The EU's fragmented response includes initiatives like the "Global Gateway" and "EU-China Connectivity Platform," but concerns over debt, transparency, and strategic control persist, and a cohesive strategy remains lacking.

Despite China's 2021 pledge to halt coal plant construction abroad, nearly half of BRI funding still goes to nonrenewable energy. It remains unclear if the pledge applies to existing projects or just new ones (Khan & Jamal, [2023](#)).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) plays a pivotal role in fostering regional integration, connectivity, and multilateral cooperation across Eurasia. By advancing initiatives in economic, security, and cultural domains, the SCO seeks to unite member states towards shared goals of stability and prosperity. Key infrastructure projects and collaborative security measures underscore its commitment to strengthening inter-state ties. However, the Organization faces complex challenges, including regional rivalries, the influence of external powers like the USA, and governance issues that hinder cohesive action. Despite these obstacles, the SCO continues to shape a more interconnected and resilient Eurasian landscape, underlining its potential as a vital catalyst for sustainable regional development and integration. The study concludes that the SCO has significant potential to drive economic growth, stability, and people-to-people diplomacy, positioning itself as a vital force for regional integration in the face of global challenges.

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