

## ABSTRACT

The thesis on “The Multilateral Diplomacy of China toward Russia and Central Asia (1996-2008): From Shanghai Five to Shanghai Cooperation Organization” aims to study Chinese multilateral diplomacy toward Russia and states in Central Asia, under the regional framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) It also analyze the factors that influenced the multilateral diplomacy and the national interests of China from 1996 to 2008. In the past, China’s foreign policy focused on bilateral relations, but after the end of Cold War and the demise of Soviet Union, China shifted to multilateral diplomacy.

The Change in Soviet Union, China’s neighbor, especially the breakup into fifteen newly independent states, including Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan brought about the border tensions with China as a result of un-demarcated borderlines. China saw the need to negotiate the borders with these countries in order to reduce suspicion and conflict. China first used the bi-lateral negotiation and later shifted to multilateral diplomacy by inviting the neighbors’ leaders to annual meeting to consult on the border demarcation, known as “Four plus One Framework” (“Four” are Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, Plus “One” which is China) and developed further to “Shanghai Five” in 1996, before transforming into a regional organization “Shanghai Cooperation Organization”, in 2001. This regional multilateral diplomacy provided the opportunity for the Chinese leader to meet the neighbors’ leaders at the annual conference, resulting in deepening confidence among them and enhancing their cooperation in other fields including economic, political, and military.

This thesis examines the Chinese's multilateral diplomacy toward Russia and Central Asia in two dimensions, politico-security and economic. The study utilizes the theory of "Linkage Politics" by James N. Rosenau and the concept of "National Interest" by Charles O. Learch Jr. and Abdul A. Said as the framework of analysis. Both the internal and external factors, as well as Chinese national interests influencing the Chinese multilateral diplomacy throughout the past 12 years, are discussed.

The study found that the important external factors are the following,

First, the change in the neighboring country, especially the breakup of Soviet Union into smaller independent states in 1991, brought about the border problems between China and these new neighbors. China negotiated the border issue to prevent conflict, and used the multilateral diplomacy to reduce suspicion and to build a confidence among each other because they are smaller and just gain independent.

Second, the regional cooperation among states in the post-cold war era has increased in order to manage the globalization as well as to increase bargaining power and to expand cooperation. China, realizing the importance of regional cooperation, shifted to multilateral diplomacy toward neighboring countries in the West.

Third, transnational problems especially transnational crimes from terrorism affected Chinese security. The multilateral diplomacy brought about the confidence in the relations between China and her neighbors and enlarged their cooperation to manage border violence, caused by terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Fourth, the U.S. military presence in Central Asia after 9/11 situation contributed to the expansion of U.S. influence in Central Asia as a result of the uses of military bases in Central Asia to combat against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. China was concerned over the U.S influence in Central Asia, and tried to reduce American

influence by establishing close and friendly relations with neighboring states in Central Asia.

The Internal factors are those factors inside China which influenced the Chinese multilateral diplomacy as the following.

First, China's anxiety over the ethno-nationalism among some of 55 ethnic minorities, especially the Uyghur's minority in Sinkiang who had the socio-cultural similarities with those in the Central Asian states. Some did not want to be under Chinese control and wanted to secede or set up independent state. China seeks cooperation from Russia and Central Asia states through the multilateral diplomacy in order to manage the Uighurs terrorist threats.

Second, the political succession process from one generation to another generation of Chinese leaders had been so smooth that the multilateral diplomacy toward Russia and central Asian states continued through the Shanghai 5 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Third, the success of economic reform by using market mechanism brought about the market socialist economy with rapid growth. Consequently China wanted to trade with Russia and Central Asian states through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Fourth, China's increasing energy demand cannot rely upon domestic production since the early 1990s. Moreover, the main energy supplies from the Middle East region are also at risk. Thus the multilateral diplomacy of China through SCO could secure the access to energy resources in Central Asia and Russia.

The analysis of China's national interests in both security and economic areas found that China's multilateral diplomacy through Shanghai Cooperation Organization built more trust and confidence, solved border disputes and expanded cooperation in

other areas including transnational crime and terrorism. Economically, China gained more trade with Russia and Central Asia Republics, had more opportunities for direct investment as well as diversified energy source in addition to the Middle East.

In conclusion, China's multilateral diplomacy toward Russia and Central Asia republics not only brought positive outcomes but would strengthen the relationships among the members in the future with trend toward more member states as their relations are based on the five's Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect, non-aggressive, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual interest, and peaceful coexistence.