

## **ABSTRACT**

The collapse of the Soviet Union has brought about significant changes in Russia's international security policy. One area of interest is its security policy towards the Central Asian CIS states that were once part of the Soviet Union – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Its geopolitical significance to Russia in terms of strategic location and natural resource deposits contributed to the strength of the Soviet state. But in the immediate period following the empire's demise, Russia experienced a brief withdrawal period in the region, due to other foreign policy priorities for the new state. It was not until the late 1990s that attention was once again given to the area known to Russians as the 'near abroad', and the reformulation of a more active policy towards its neighbouring countries. Moreover, the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have made Russia more alert to maintain security in an area that would be vulnerable to external influences. Then the global trend of regional groupings for collective benefit was also growing, one which Central Asia formerly lacked. Russia's involvement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the region's first security-based grouping, would reassert its security role in the region as well as provide a certain level of cooperation among neighbouring countries as a form of preventive interaction against conflict.