



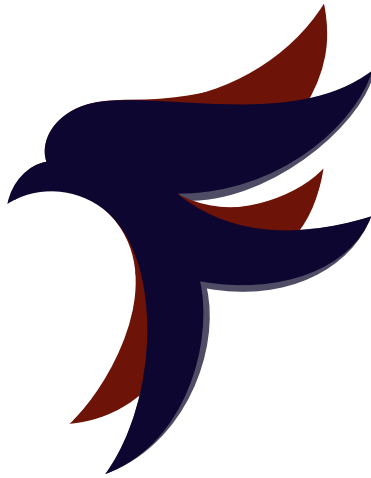
FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

EURASIA PROGRAM

# CHINA'S SECURITY MANAGEMENT TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA

NIVA YAU





All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a non-partisan organization that seeks to publish well-argued, policy-oriented articles on American foreign policy and national security priorities.

Author: Niva Yau

Design: Natalia Kopytnik

© 2022 by the Foreign Policy Research Institute

April 2022



FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

EURASIA PROGRAM

# CHINA'S SECURITY MANAGEMENT TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA

Niva Yau



# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTION	4
SECURITY INTERESTS	6
MULTILATERAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	12
BILATERAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	22
DOMESTIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES	30
ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION	32
APPENDIX	36
1. SECURITY-RELATED BILATERAL MEETINGS BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES 1993-2020	36
2. SCO MULTILATERAL SECURITY EXERCISE BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 2003-2020	49
3. BILATERAL JOINT SECURITY EXERCISE BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 2002-2020	51
4. SECURITY-RELATED TRAINING AND EXCHANGE BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIA STATES FROM 2000-2020	52
5. BILATERAL SECURITY-RELATED TRANSFER BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 2002-2020	56
6. DETAILS OF IN-CHINA SECURITY TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR CENTRAL ASIAN OFFICIALS	58





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the early years of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and Central Asian countries (roughly 1992-1999), bilateral security discussions strictly focused on the then-looming influence of a Uyghur-led independence movement in Xinjiang. Chinese officials directly asked Central Asian states to not support the East Turkestan Movement, orienting the issue as a regional mutual security interest. While concerns for stability in Xinjiang continue as the foundational drive towards deepening security relations with Central Asian states, new security interests have entered discussions since the late 2010s as expanded bilateral trade brought new issues, such as investment security and corruption-fuelled anti-China sentiment. Also, domestic issues in Central Asia, concerning leadership transition, economic decline, and nationalism, expanded the Chinese discussion of the role of Islam in politics and implications on Xinjiang's stability.

To address these interests, Chinese security engagement in Central Asia has steadily expanded. Within and beyond the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), multilateral dialogue on security issues have been regularized among all ranks of Central Asian security officers. The SCO has conducted annual security exercises since 2010, though the size of deployment, focus, and scope have changed. Between 2010 and 2019, the SCO created five expert groups to coordinate regional law enforcement agencies in order to address specific security issues.

However, in comparison, bilateral security engagement remains more diverse. The number of meetings is increasing, and their formats are becoming more efficient. There are joint patrols and operation, regular military exercises pre-pandemic, short-term training and long-term military degree programs in China, transfer of security equipment, construction of security infrastructure, and the presence of Chinese private security companies. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the two most responsive countries

towards welcoming these initiatives. In addition to multilateral and bilateral security engagement, the PRC has increased its military capacity in its western region. More emphasis has been placed on increased combat readiness, as well on the condition and human capacity on the border.

While some areas of existing security cooperation are productive in meeting security goals, such as consensus over non-tolerance of Uyghur independence supporters and tightening illegal cross-border activities, two problems persist. First, while the PRC to an extent desires a regional approach to security, deliverables are more visible as the outcome of bilateral cooperation in Central Asia. These regional efforts are meant to deter any Central Asian governments from making independent assessments and forming their own foreign policy on Xinjiang without PRC participation. Second, language remains the most difficult operational obstacle to overcome. The dominance of the Russian language cements a substantial cultural and operational gap between the armies.

So far, Central Asia-PRC cooperation has been a pragmatic, opportunistic choice—a choice that Central Asian leaders made due to the absence of comparable committed engagement from other major powers. Moving forward, in order to balance PRC security engagement, Central Asia's strategic significance must be independently considered outside of its role in securing Xinjiang for the PRC.





Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon shakes hands with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan September 17, 2021. REUTERS/Didor Sadulloev



# INTRODUCTION

**T**he collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent independence of Central Asian states shocked Beijing. The 3,000-kilometer border that the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region shares with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan is mountainous and was porous in the early days of Central Asian independence. Security discussions quickly dominated bilateral meetings when the People's Republic of China first established diplomatic relations with these newly independent countries in 1991, reflecting concerns from the PRC towards Central Asia's security situation. The PRC quickly began to engage with the Central Asian political and security sectors, gradually achieving and sustaining its core security goal of no regional support for Uyghur independence by early 2000s. Together with heightened domestic security management, there has been no spillover of security issues of any kind from the Central Asian side to the Chinese side.

This report sets out to provide an overview of the PRC's security management towards Central Asia by analyzing open-source information in the Chinese and Russian languages from 1993 to 2020. This research aims to map what has been done as a result of consistent emphasis and talk of insecurity and threats between Central Asia and the PRC. Security management is understood in this report as the group of activities carried out with the aim of addressing particular security concerns, such as law enforcement training programs and equipment transfer for improving Central Asian capacity in managing terrorism threats.

This report begins by discussing Chinese security interests in the region by analyzing 265 official records of high-level meetings conducted with Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, between 1993 to 2020, where security topics were discussed. These security concerns evolved over time, from emphasis on Uyghur political movements to security of Chinese investments and anti-Chinese

sentiments in Central Asia. Then, it details the PRC-led multilateral, bilateral, and domestic security activities carried out towards addressing these security concerns. It studies publicly available records of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Chinese and Central Asian militaries, law enforcement agencies, local media, and other relevant sources in the Chinese and Russian languages. It ends with a short assessment and conclusion.

The existing literature and public discussions in Central Asia mostly describe the role of the PRC in the region as strictly an economic one. This argument suffers from several problems. First, from the Chinese commercial standpoint, a positive environment for business is needed. Maximizing economic cooperation cannot be achieved through building political ties by exclusively working with elites. In the case of Turkmenistan, for example, economic cooperation is narrow, and profitability is limited in the absence of market principles. A positive environment for business is also needed, one that balances factors, such as political stability and predictability, a high ease of doing business, standardized logistics and customs, availability of market information, skilled workers, and innovators. Most of these factors call for strong performance in other sectors, such as media and education. Out of economic interest, the PRC must provide assistance towards these sectors, and indeed this is precisely what Beijing has attempted to do in Central Asia. Second, from a strategic standpoint, it begs the question why economic cooperation is beneficial to bilateral relations. Domestically, economic growth in the PRC is used by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to provide regime legitimacy. Abroad, this economic leverage is used to ensure global stability and stability of relations with which the PRC utilizes to achieve political interests connected, or not connected, to domestic goals. Similar to how Beijing invested its domestic economic success back into its society, it follows that Chinese economic influence will spillover to other sectors in Central Asia and beyond.





Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov attends the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan September 17, 2021.  
REUTERS/Didor Sadulloev

This report identifies Beijing's goals and influence in the security and military sector in Central Asia. It supports a counterargument that the PRC is actively engaging and increasing its presence regionally beyond the economic sphere. It shows that security interests concerning Xinjiang have been the foundational drive from the Chinese

perspective in building and deepening relations. Primarily written as the first step to allow further analysis of the effectiveness of these activities and trends, this report mainly offers information and evidence to showcase Chinese security engagement in Central Asia.

# SECURITY INTERESTS

**S**ecurity issues are important topics at meetings between leaders of the PRC and Central Asian states in both bilateral and multilateral settings.<sup>1</sup> In the early years of diplomatic relations (roughly 1992-1999), bilateral security discussions were strictly about the then-looming influence of a Uyghur-led independence movement in Xinjiang, which was popularly discussed by Uyghurs living in newly independent Central Asian states.<sup>2</sup>

Conservative statistics record the Uyghur population in Central Asia to be around 300,000; however, the Uyghur diaspora estimates the real figure to be at least one million because cross-border activities between the PRC and Central Asian states were not recorded during the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> During these early years, records of speeches made by Chinese officials during bilateral meetings showed repeated phrases, such as “anti-separatists in the territory of Kyrgyzstan against China” and “no activities harmful to China are allowed on Kyrgyzstan’s territory,” signalling an early lobbying effort against Uyghur-led activities.<sup>4</sup>

From 2000 onwards, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terror attacks by al Qaeda, PRC security concerns expanded from “separatism” to “terrorism”<sup>5</sup> and “religious extremism”<sup>6</sup> in order to include the broad activities of ethnic Uyghurs in Central Asia, even when those activities didn’t support Xinjiang independence. Chinese officials began to directly ask Central Asian states to not support the East Turkestan Movement, a group that supported (and still does) Xinjiang independence (historically referred to as East Turkestan), characterizing the movement as “separatism” at bilateral meetings.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, efforts also focused on inducing a sentiment that this movement was not simply a concern of the PRC but a regional “mutual security interest”<sup>8</sup> with strong expressions that “stand against separatism, terrorist activities must be forcefully cracked down to prevent them from posing a threat to regional stability.”<sup>9</sup> The Chinese word choice in these documents was dramatic, labelling the separatist movement a “serious threat”<sup>10</sup> that “must be severely cracked down, otherwise there will be endless troubles.”<sup>11</sup>

1 Drawing clear lines of border between China and Central Asia is considered by this research a political issue; the discussions on border issues have thus been excluded.

2 Gladney, Dru, “China’s ‘Uyghur Problem’ and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” Paper prepared for the U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission Hearings, August 3, 2006, [https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/06\\_08\\_3\\_4\\_gladney\\_dru\\_statement.pdf](https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/06_08_3_4_gladney_dru_statement.pdf)

3 Isa, Dolkun, “Uyghur situation in Central Asia countries (In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan),” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, September 25, 2007, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/1/27056.pdf>.

4 “不允许在吉领土上进行有损中国的活动.” While this phrase most heavily featured in China-Kyrgyzstan meetings, similar phrasing of the same sentence is also seen in meeting readouts between China and other Central Asian states.

5 “恐怖主义”

6“宗教极端主义”

7 “分裂主义”

8 “维护各自国家安全”

9 “反对民族分裂主义，要对恐怖主义活动加以有力打击，以防其对地区稳定构成威胁。”

10 “严重威胁”

11 “必须予以严厉打击，否则后患无穷”





Chinese border post between Kyrgyzstan and China. (Wikimedia / Nicolai Bangsgaard)

Between 1992 to early 2000s, there were many Uyghur associations set up by ethnic Uyghurs living in Central Asia. Some groups—such as the Committee for Eastern Turkistan and the United National Revolutionary Front of East Turkistan, both based in Kazakhstan; the Xinjiang Liberation Organization, based in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan; and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan—were political groups distributing explicit messages demanding East Turkistan independence.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, many were simply diaspora community groups hosting occasional cultural events and language classes; these groups also became targets of violence and intimidation from local law enforcement.<sup>13</sup>

Several Uyghur diaspora community leaders were murdered in this period, including Hashir Vahidi and Bilirim Samsakova in Kazakhstan, Mighmet Bosakup in Kyrgyzstan, and Eminjan Osmanuv in Uzbekistan.<sup>14</sup>

During this period, the PRC lobbied for Central Asian countries to criminalize the status of these organizations. For example, in 2003, one day after a bilateral meeting between the Kyrgyz and Chinese Ministers of Defense, the Kyrgyz Supreme Court labelled three Uyghur independence movements as terrorist groups, including the Turkistan Islamic Party, the Eastern Turkistan Liberation Organization, and the East

12 Giglio, Davide, “Separatism and the War on Terror in China’s Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region,” Peace Operations Training Institute, January, 2004, <https://cdn.peaceopstraining.org/theses/giglio.pdf>.

13 Mukhamedoc, Rustam, “Uyghurs in Kyrgyzstan under careful government supervision,” Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, January 28, 2004, <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/8747-field-reports-caci-analyst-2004-1-28-art-8747.html>; “Interview with the chair of national Uyghur society,” The New Humanitarian, February 17, 2005, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/197199>; and “IRIN Focus on Uyghur community caught in ‘political games,’” The New Humanitarian, July 2, 2001, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/14842/kyrgyzstan-irin-focus-uyghur-community-caught-‘political-games.’>

14 Isa, Dolkun, “Uyghur situation in Central Asia countries (In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan),” OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, September 25, 2007, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/1/27056.pdf>.

Turkestan Islamic Movement.<sup>15</sup> Similar verdicts spread across the region soon after. The forced return of ethnic Uyghurs to the PRC intensified, in most cases based entirely on their ethnicity without any legal procedures indicating their affiliation with banned groups.<sup>16</sup>

## HAVING GAINED A REGIONAL CONSENSUS OVER THESE ISSUES, BEIJING TURNED DISCUSSIONS TO SPECIFIC AREAS OF SECURITY COOPERATION NECESSARY TO “CREATE A PEACEFUL AND STABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES.”

While “anti-separatism” has been a heavily featured term since the early 1990s, the PRC for the first time introduced anti-terrorism terms in 1998 at head of state meetings with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. In 2000, the term “anti-extremism” was introduced. These terms—“separatism, terrorism, and religious extremism”—have been referred to ever since as the “three evils.” Having gained a regional consensus over these issues, Beijing turned discussions to specific areas of security cooperation necessary to “create a peaceful and stable environment for cooperation between the two parties.”<sup>17</sup> These areas of security cooperation include law enforcement cooperation;<sup>18</sup> combating transnational crimes, such as drug-trafficking;<sup>19</sup> training personnel;<sup>20</sup> and providing police equipment.<sup>21</sup>

In parallel, trade between the PRC and Central Asia grew significantly from \$463 million in 1991 to \$2.3 billion in 2002 to \$50.2 billion in 2013.<sup>22</sup> Given expanded Chinese economic interests in the region, from the 2010s onwards, the safety of these investments became a critical element in Beijing’s regional security concerns. While Central Asia was the best option for the PRC to shift its trade and energy imports from sea to land, secure pipeline routes and a stable regional security environment conducive for investment required more active security engagement. Large Chinese investments, such as the China-Central Asia Gas Pipeline, presented new security challenges. Since the pipeline is above ground, it is unclear if Central Asian governments have enough capacity to detect and deter domestic and international threats towards it. Readouts

15 “List of Terrorist and extremist organizations banned in Kyrgyzstan,” 24.kg, April 5, 2017, [https://24.kg/english/48835\\_List\\_of\\_Terrorist\\_and\\_extremist\\_organizations\\_banned\\_in\\_Kyrgyzstan](https://24.kg/english/48835_List_of_Terrorist_and_extremist_organizations_banned_in_Kyrgyzstan).

16 “Chinese Influence on Neighbouring States Leads to Extradition, Suppression of Uyghurs,” World Uyghur Congress, July 5, 2006, <https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/chinese-influence-on-neighboring-states-leads-to-extradition-suppression-of-uyghurs/>; and “No Space Left to Run, China’s Transnational Repression of Uyghurs”, The Oxus Society For Central Asian Affairs, July, 2021, [https://oxussociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/transnational-repression\\_final\\_2021-06-23.pdf](https://oxussociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/transnational-repression_final_2021-06-23.pdf).

17 “为双方开展合作营造一个和平稳定的大环境”

18 “执法安全合作”

19 “毒品走私等跨国组织犯罪”

20 “执法人员培训”

21 “警用装备交流”

22 Yau, Niva, “China’s Pursuit of Power in Central Asia,” OSCE Academy, December, 2020, [https://osce-academy.net/upload/file/Niva\\_brief.pdf](https://osce-academy.net/upload/file/Niva_brief.pdf).





Id Kah Mosque in the city of Kashgar, Xinjiang. (Flickr / Uyghur East Turkistan)

of meetings with oil-and-gas-rich Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan emphasized “protection of large cooperation projects,”<sup>23</sup> specifically to “protect the safety of natural gas pipelines,”<sup>24</sup> and later on explicitly stating that the two sides should establish a “pipeline security cooperation mechanism.”<sup>25</sup> After the Belt and Road Initiative launched in 2013, the discussion on investment protection was coined the “Belt and Road Initiative implementation security mechanism.”<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, these projects failed to provide sustainable economic growth and neglected local governance across the region. Dissatisfaction among local populations, aimed especially at their governments, spread across the region. In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, where

both state-led and private Chinese investments are concentrated, frequent corruption cases involving Chinese companies have polarized the relationships between the local population and the local government. Residents living around these projects have continuously staged protests, which resulted in some Chinese operations getting suspended. In one instance, a gold processing plant that was burned down, and, in another, 300 Chinese miners who were driven to the forests by local protests.<sup>27</sup> As anti-Chinese sentiment grew, from 2018 onwards, this issue has appeared in bilateral readouts. Labelling such anti-Chinese sentiment as “provocations from outside of the region”<sup>28</sup> and an “attempt to disrupt relations between the two countries,”<sup>29</sup> Beijing neglects to address the root causes of this growing sentiment and continues

23 “保护大型合作项目”

24 “保护天然气管道安全”

25 “管道安保合作机制”

26 “一带一路建设项目安保合作机制”

27 Yau, Niva, “Chinese Private Security Moves Into Central Asia,” *The Diplomat*, July 3, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/chinese-private-security-moves-into-central-asia/>.

28 “外部的挑拨”

29 “破坏两国关系的图谋”



to focus on high-level bilateral relations.

At the same time, Chinese scholars on Central Asian politics began to discuss global developments like the rise of the Islamic State and other international terrorist groups, particularly in northern Afghanistan, and the impact that these groups have on the role of Islam in Central Asian politics. These discussions occurred against the backdrop of intensifying domestic political competition in Central Asia over ongoing leadership transitions, economic decline, and nationalism.<sup>30</sup> PRC-led crackdowns on regional operations of Uyghur-led “separatism” expanded as cyber security and information security<sup>31</sup> were introduced to the security discourse in the 2010s to combat unfiltered religious messages online.

## SOME CHINESE SCHOLARS WORRY THAT CENTRAL ASIAN INSECURITIES OVER AFGHANISTAN WILL FUEL MORE RELIANCE ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

The intensification of repression against ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, particularly through the use of re-education camps to restrict movements, has cultivated a stable domestic environment according to Beijing’s standard. Together, with introduction of new interests, the mention of the East Turkestan Movement in meetings has declined since 2018.

After the Taliban captured Kabul in August 2021, the fear of insecurity spilling across the region—and even into Xinjiang itself—revived. From August to October 2021, Beijing’s official stance was that Afghanistan’s government should be inclusive. Chinese officials urged the Taliban to cut ties with all international terrorist groups, pushed for a regional effort to deal with Afghanistan-related issues, and asked the Taliban to establish good relations with neighboring countries. Most Chinese scholars doubt that the Taliban can effectively govern Afghanistan, don’t see it as a trustworthy partner, and worry that its priority to build an Islamic regime means that it will be impossible for the group to cut ties with members of the East Turkestan Movement.<sup>32</sup> Some Chinese scholars worry that Central Asian insecurities over Afghanistan will fuel more reliance on the Russian Federation and that the Taliban’s ideological influence on Central Asia will contribute towards the rise of Islam in society and politics, which will also impact Xinjiang in the long term.

30 Su, Chang, “An Analysis of the Influencing Factors of Social Stability in Central Asian Countries,” *Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Studies*, 2019, No. 3, <http://www.oyyoys.org/UploadFile/Issue/m5f0slna.pdf>; Bao, Yi, “Political Stability and Political Crisis in the Process of Political Development in Central Asian Countries,” *Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Studies*, 2016, No. 1, <http://www.oyyoys.org/UploadFile/20150113002/2016-03-02/Issue/eeuoydjy.pdf>; Li, Chao, “‘Islamic State’ and Central Asian Regional Security,” *Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Studies*, 2018, No. 1, <http://www.oyyoys.org/UploadFile/Issue/ytwkikqi.pdf>; Su, Chang, “Examining Historical Cultural Roots of Central Asia’s Islamic Extremism,” *Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Studies*, 2015, No. 3, <http://www.oyyoys.org/UploadFile/20150113002/2015-06-05/Issue/bzskm0rc.pdf>; and Xu, Tao, “Geopolitical changes in Central Asia and regional security trends,” *Modern International Relations*, 2012, Issue 1, <http://niis.cass.cn/webpic/web/niis/upload/2012/12/d20121206200709097.pdf>.

31 “网络和信息安全”

32 “Why did the Afghan Taliban ‘come back,’” *Dazhong Daily*, August 18, 2021, [http://124.133.228.83/articleContent/2610\\_902326.html](http://124.133.228.83/articleContent/2610_902326.html); “If the Taliban are in power again 20 years later, will Afghanistan still fall into civil war?” *Jiemian News*, August 16, 2021, <https://m.jiemian.com/article/6488758.html>; “Da Wei, deputy director of CISS, accepted an interview with the Asahi Shimbun on Afghanistan and other issues,” Center for International Security Strategy of Tsinghua University, September 10, 2021, <http://ciis.tsinghua.edu.cn/info/zlyaq/3972>; and “Is the chaos in Afghanistan over? Six questions to help you understand Afghanistan has changed,” *Global Times*, August 16, 2021, <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/44NeTIAUTpq>.



Protest in Xinjiang province in March, 2018.  
(Flickr / MaryCrandall)





# MULTILATERAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in 2001 as a formal multilateral organization when Uzbekistan joined the Shanghai Five grouping, which was formed between the PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan for the purpose of dealing with disputed border issues. Unlike the Shanghai Five, which dealt with formalizing and securing shared borders, the SCO set out to deal with a variety of security and economic issues. It allows Chinese, Russian, and Central Asian security officials to maintain regular dialogue, establish multilateral cooperation (such as military exercises), and provide a legal basis for anti-terrorism cross-border enforcement. Under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping, new PRC-led multilateral platforms for security dialogue were created, such as the China-Central Asia Foreign Ministers Mechanism (C+C5) since 2020 and Lianyungang Forum since 2015.

## *Dialogue*

The SCO is the primary multilateral organization in Central Asia that deals with security issues. The organization holds regular high-level meetings, during which decisions are made among member countries' Heads of State and Heads of Government. Agreements at these high-level meetings guide activities and implementation discussions at the departmental level. Supporting implementation, several government security branches meet regularly, such as Ministers of Defense (annually since 2001), Prosecutors-General (annually since

2002), Secretaries of Security Councils (annually since 2004), Ministers of Public Security and Internal Affairs (annually since 2009), and Commanders of Armed Forces (biannually since 2011).<sup>33</sup> Following implementation discussions, expert working groups from respective agencies work to resolve practical issues.

**MEETINGS BETWEEN  
DEFENSE MINISTERS  
PRIMARILY  
CONCERN LONG-  
TERM TRADITIONAL  
SECURITY ISSUES  
AND COOPERATION  
ON ISSUES SUCH AS  
ONGOING CONFLICTS IN  
AFGHANISTAN.**

---

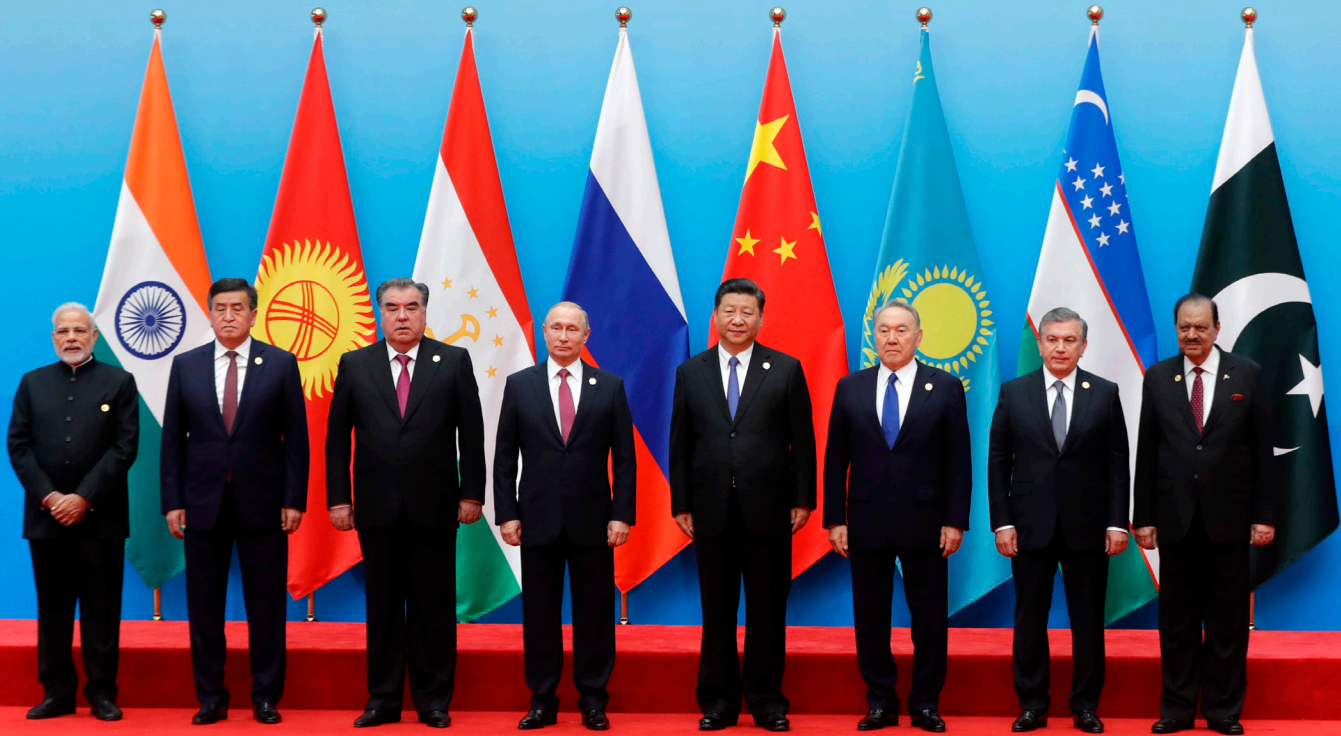
33 Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the Russian Federation, "Press Communiqué of the Meeting of Heads of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan," March 20, 2002, <http://ru.China-embassy.org/chn/eyxx/zyjhwhj/t4502.html>; Shanghai Cooperation Organization, "The 15th meeting of the secretaries of the Security Council of the SCO Member States was successfully held," September 15, 2020, <http://chn.sectSCO.org/news/20200915/677762.html>; Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "Meng Jianzhu Attends the First Meeting of Public Security and Interior Ministers of the SCO Member States," May 19, 2009, [http://www.gov.cn/jdhd/2009-05/19/content\\_1318391.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jdhd/2009-05/19/content_1318391.htm); and Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "The meeting of chiefs of general staff of the SCO member states held in Shanghai," April 26, 2011, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2011-04/26/content\\_1852268.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2011-04/26/content_1852268.htm).



# 上海合作组织成员国元首理事会

## ЗАСЕДАНИЕ СОВЕТА ГЛАВ ГОСУДАРСТВ-ЧЛ ШАНХАЙСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СОТРУДНИЧЕ

2018年6月9-10日 中国·青岛 9-10 ИЮНЯ 2018 Г. ЦИНДАО КИТАЙ



Heads of State at the 2018 SCO summit in Qingdao, Shandong, China. (kremlin.ru)

Meetings between Defense Ministers primarily concern long-term traditional security issues and cooperation on issues such as ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan. Records indicate that the multilateral security exercises within the SCO are organized at this meeting; at least four rounds of meetings are needed to plan one joint exercise.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, the Defense Ministers work to promote departmental communication and military culture. The Prosecutors-General meetings discuss a broad spectrum of topics, such as security issues, financial crimes, information crime, and prevention of the foreign fighter economy.

The Chinese Minister of Public Security represents the PRC at the meetings of the Secretaries of Security Councils and meetings of Ministers of Internal Affairs. Soviet governance separated the intelligence service from the police, and as this continued to be the structure in Central Asia, this separation is observed within SCO meetings. Based on records, meetings between the Chinese Minister of Public Security and Central Asian Ministers of Internal Affairs often include more details on practical areas of cooperation and the signing of working agreements to jointly combat transnational crime, such as money-laundering and weapons and drugs trafficking.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand,

34 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "'Peace Mission-2007' SCO Joint Anti-Terrorism Exercise officially begins," August 9, 2007, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2007-08/09/content\\_711805.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2007-08/09/content_711805.htm); and Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "To compose a new chapter in anti-Terrorism cooperation-'Peace Mission-2010' military exercise ended," September 25, 2010, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2010-09/25/content\\_1709430.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2010-09/25/content_1709430.htm).

35 "Meng Jianzhu Attends the First Meeting of Public Security and Interior Ministers of the SCO Member States," May 19, 2009, [http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2009-05/19/content\\_1318391.htm](http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2009-05/19/content_1318391.htm).

records of the meetings of Secretaries of Security Councils contain vague language of cooperation. Likewise, records of the meetings of Commanders of Armed Forces also contain vague language of cooperation.

Commitments made in high-level meetings are translated into agreements that guide departmental cooperation. So far, there are four agreements for customs, weaponry, transnational organized crime, and border defense.

1. A customs cooperation agreement was signed in 2007, concerning:<sup>36</sup> The exchange of information on drug-trafficking, weapon-trafficking, materials promoting ethnic and religious extremism, and other criminal activities.
2. An agreement on anti-weapons, ammunition, and explosives cooperation was signed in 2008, concerning:<sup>37</sup> The exchange of information on persons and organizations suspected of weapon-trafficking, production of weapons, ammunition and explosives, and illegal weapon modification.
3. An agreement to combat transnational organized crime was signed in 2010, concerning:<sup>38</sup> The prevention, stopping, and detection of transnational organized crimes, such as activities of terrorism, separatism, and extremism; and financial crimes, such as embezzlement, corruption, and money laundering; and financing terrorist organizations, human-trafficking, weapon production and trafficking, and drug production and trafficking.

4. A border defense cooperation agreement was signed in 2015, concerning:<sup>39</sup> The exchange of information and experience, such as criminal activities at the border, checkpoint management, border management, and emergency responses.

Beyond the SCO, the China-Central Asia Foreign Ministers Mechanism (C+C5) was introduced in 2020 as the latest addition to PRC-led regional multilateralism. For decades, the SCO has faced criticism of ineffectiveness at addressing regional security issues as the PRC is evidently more focused on building security relations with each Central Asian state bilaterally. The introduction of the C+C5 thus allows for more direct communication between the PRC and Central Asian states over issues and cooperation on a regional scale, without the participation of Russia. In the 2020 inaugural meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed political consensus, the Belt and Road Initiative, and “three evils” as the key regionwide Chinese interests while recognizing Central Asian states’ interests against color revolutions and politicization of human rights issues.<sup>40</sup> In his opening speech, Wang repeated the desire to build “mutual trust over political issues” four times, showcasing the C+C5’s role in building political consensus. In the 2021 meeting, for the first time, the PRC introduced the management of non-governmental organizations as part of the discussion on regional stability to combat foreign interference, among other issues, such as transnational crime and cyber security.<sup>41</sup>

36 Shanghai Cooperation Organization, “Agreement on Customs Cooperation and Support,” November 2, 2007, <http://chn.sectsco.org/load/270769/>.

37 Shanghai Cooperation Organization, “Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illicit Trafficking in Weapons, Ammunition and Explosives,” August 28, 2008, <http://chn.sectsco.org/load/270723/>.

38 Shanghai Cooperation Organization, “Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Crimes,” June 11, 2010, <http://chn.sectsco.org/load/270429/>.

39 Shanghai Cooperation Organization, “Agreement on Border Cooperation,” July 10, 2015, <http://chn.sectsco.org/load/270564/>.

40 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People’s Republic of China, “‘China + Five Central Asian Countries’ Holds First Foreign Ministers’ Meeting,” July 17, 2020, <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cetm//chn/sbw/t1798976.htm>

41 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People’s Republic of China, “Wang Yi hosts the ‘China + Five Central Asian Countries’ Foreign Ministers’ Meeting,” May 12, 2021, <https://www.fmchina.gov.cn/web/wjbzhd/t1875153.shtml>



There are also other PRC-led multilateral mechanisms involving Central Asian states. In 2015, the Lianyungang Forum was established with the aim of advancing international law enforcement and security cooperation.<sup>42</sup> All Central Asian countries except Turkmenistan participate in the Lianyungang Forum. Unlike the SCO and C+C5, which focus on high-level officials, the Lianyungang Forum is a consensus-building platform between security practitioners, such as Deputy Ministers of Internal Affairs, Directors of Anti-Terrorism Centers, Ambassadors, and police academies. In 2018 and 2019, the Academy of Armed Police and Special Police in Beijing hosted the “International Forum on Counter-terrorism.” Two-hundred and forty representatives from 31 countries attended to the Forum in 2019, including Central Asian representatives.<sup>43</sup>

## WITHIN AND BEYOND THE SCO, MULTILATERAL DIALOGUE ON SECURITY ISSUES HAVE BECOME REGULARIZED ACROSS ALL RANKS OF CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY OFFICERS.

Within and beyond the SCO, multilateral dialogue on security issues have become regularized across all ranks of Central Asian security officers. All of these meeting mechanisms are occasions for the PRC to deliver its security demands and initiate strategies to achieve them. These dialogues have delivered four agreements, which draw up frameworks and practical steps towards security cooperation in a few specific areas. As well, these dialogues were key in bringing to life the multilateral security activities described below in detail.

### *Multilateral Security and Cyber Security Exercises*

Chinese state media has generally provided extensive coverage of these exercises, while Central Asian media traditionally has not. These records show that the size of deployment and the focus and scope of the exercises have changed over time. There is no consistency in the size of deployment, changing from peak deployment 7,000 (of which 5,000 were Chinese) in 2014, 1,100 (of which 270 were Chinese) in 2016 and 3,000 (of which 700 were Chinese) in 2018. Beyond focusing on joint military responses to terrorism threats, in 2015, new exercises were introduced to address these threats on the cyberspace.

In general, these military exercises are organized around a scenario to simulate an actual joint combat; this includes strategy planning, communication, joint combat, and/or division of labor. These exercises have changed in scope over time, and they signal the kind of combat strategies and deployment in Central Asia that Central Asian states, Beijing, and Moscow are comfortable with, have communicated within the SCO, and are most likely to employ. For example, command was unified to the host country in 2012, which signals a consensus intended to give host country the control over movements of foreign troops on its territory. Another key development was the Chinese Air Force deployment across the border for four exercises, in 2003, 2007, 2010 and 2016, where during each exercise, the Chinese military aircraft

42 “Forum Introduction,” Lianyungang Forum, <http://www.lygforum.gov.cn/js.html>.

43 Ministry of National Defense of The People’s Republic of China, “Armed Police Forces ‘Great Wall-2019’ International Anti-Terrorism Forum Opens in Beijing,” June 18, 2019, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-06/18/content\\_4843803.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-06/18/content_4843803.htm).



Paratroopers kicked off 2018 exercises in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. (eng.chinamil.com.cn)

engaged in combat without landing.

Appendix 2 provides an overview of all multilateral security exercises conducted. Highlights from each exercise are documented in the subsequent paragraphs to show changes in perceived threats, combat strategies, and deployment characteristics. All of these security exercises have been framed under the umbrella of anti-terrorism, but agendas have varied throughout the years.

The first military exercise was conducted in 2003, involving a scenario in which a group of international terrorist launched an attack on a city in Xinjiang after hijacking a passenger plane seeking to land in Kazakhstan.<sup>44</sup> In 2007, the heads of states of SCO member countries

decided to conduct a joint military exercise every two-to-three years.<sup>45</sup> In this exercise, the Kazakh army first picked up intelligence of the attack, informed its Chinese counterpart, and opened a joint anti-terrorism command coordination mechanism. The exercise ended with a joint effort between the PRC and Kyrgyzstan armies surrounding and destroying six training camps on their border.

The 2007 military exercise involved a scenario where a group of international terrorists hid in a city supporting a local anti-government movement.<sup>46</sup> Russia and the PRC dominated this exercise, assigning 2,000 and 1,600 personnel, respectively.<sup>47</sup> Uzbekistan made its debut in this military exercise, though its participation was limited to coordination between commanders

44 "Joint-2003 anti-terrorism exercise documentary," China Youth Net, August 17, 2003, [http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2003-08/17/content\\_716488.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2003-08/17/content_716488.htm).

45 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "Joint counter-terrorism military exercises by the armed forces of the SCO member states begin," June 7, 2012, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2012-06/07/content\\_2156094.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2012-06/07/content_2156094.htm).

46 "'Peace Mission-2007' Joint Anti-Terrorism Real Force Exercise was officially held," China Internet Information Center, August 18, 2007, [http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2007-08/18/content\\_8705319.htm](http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2007-08/18/content_8705319.htm).

47 "'Peace Mission 2007' All participating troops have assembled in Russia," China News Service, August 6, 2007, <http://www.Chinanews.com/gj/kong/news/2007/08-06/995159.shtml>.

and not actual combat with the “terrorist.”

The 2010 military exercise involved a scenario in which a group of international terrorists hid in a residential area. This scenario involved a regional joint military intervention after getting mock approval from the United Nations Security Council, the only exercise to include such a step.<sup>48</sup> Aimed at increasing overall combat readiness of a joint SCO mission, the exercise introduced several new aspects. First, each participating state provided the same number of personnel. Second, it was conducted entirely outdoors, with each side being responsible for basic needs.<sup>49</sup> Third, more emphasis was placed on building a common command and joint operations. For example, Kazakh, Russian, and Chinese helicopters worked together in a joint attack. The Chinese also deployed a military jet to Kazakhstan for a support mission without landing on Kazakh territory.<sup>50</sup> Fourth, the joint team conducted an attack on the terrorist camp during the night.

The 2012 military exercise was conducted in a mountainous region, the first time that such terrain was used in a SCO joint exercise. The militaries would attack a terrorist camp. In previous exercises, commanders from all participating states discussed strategies, then individually instructed their own forces. At this exercise, command was unified to one commander, who then instructed all forces, with five of seven days devoted to making this new command system work.<sup>51</sup> Since 2012, the host

country leads the unified command system. For this exercise, the central commander was from Tajikistan. However, each army still has its own commander for internal purposes in exercises.

The 2013 military exercise was conducted between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan under the coordination of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) with the PRC serving as the rotating chair. RATS is the only joint operative security unit within the SCO (more will be discussed below). This exercise's scenario envisioned a group of international terrorists traveling across the border via helicopters and trucks to a village in Kazakhstan.<sup>52</sup>

The 2014 exercise involved a scenario in which a group of international terrorist hid in a crowded city, scattered in a number of buildings.<sup>53</sup> Located in Inner Mongolia, this exercise focused on showcasing the technological capacity of Chinese military equipment, especially by incorporating the use of satellites in combat.<sup>54</sup>

The 2016 exercise involved a scenario in which international terrorists were hiding in a mountainous region. For the second time in the history of SCO exercises, a Chinese military jet was deployed to support the attack mission in Kyrgyzstan and returned without landing.<sup>55</sup>

The 2018 SCO exercise conducted a scenario practicing an attack on a “terrorist camp.” This exercise was the first one conducted after Pakistan and India joined as full member

48 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, “‘Peace Mission-2010’ joint counter-terrorism military exercises and actual troop drills were successfully held,” September 25, 2010, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2010-09/25/content\\_1709140\\_2.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2010-09/25/content_1709140_2.htm).

49 “Focus on the five highlights of the ‘Peace Mission-2010’ military exercise,” China Central Television, October 9, 2010, <https://tv.cctv.com/2010/10/09/VIDE1355510392607392.shtml>.

50 “China's warplanes and bombers do not land overseas during a cross-border attack,” Sina Military, September 15, 2010, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2010-09-15/0708610859.html>.

51 “‘Peace Mission-2012’ Joint Military Exercise Deputy Chief Director Analyzes the Highlights of the Exercise,” China Internet Information Center, June 13, 2012, [http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2012-06/13/content\\_25641425\\_2.htm](http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2012-06/13/content_25641425_2.htm).

52 “SCO anti-Terrorism exercise held on the 13th, anti-terrorism capabilities have been significantly improved,” Sina, June 14, 2013, <http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2013-06-14/113627396920.shtml>.

53 “‘Peace Mission-2014’ Joint Military Exercise Documentary,” China Central Television, August 28, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLhcgd8fxzY>.

54 “Interview with Liu Zhenli, the commander of the 5-party joint real forces command post of the ‘Peace Mission-2014’ joint exercise,” *People's Daily*, August 26, 2014, <http://military.people.com.cn/n/2014/0826/c172467-25543937.html>.

55 “What happened at the ‘Peace Mission-2016’ joint military exercise drill?” *People's Daily*, October 2, 2016, <http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1002/c1011-28755088.html>.

states, and they deployed 100 and 300 military personnel to this exercise, respectively.<sup>56</sup> This exercise focused mainly on combat tactics and coordination between member states.

Apart from these larger military exercises, there are also exercises organized by RATS and joint army trainings. The exercises organized by RATS are similar to the military exercises above, except the officers who participate come from anti-terrorism departments. In 2011, RATS coordinated an SCO military exercise between the PRC, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, with a scenario where the “terrorists,” explicitly the East Turkestan Movement, crossed into Xinjiang from a Central Asian state. This exercise focused on intelligence sharing, cross-border communication, and investigating the movement of targeted individuals.<sup>57</sup> The Chinese Ministry of Public Security led command on the Chinese side in this exercise.<sup>58</sup> RATS has also coordinated several other exercises without the PRC participation.

Army trainings are focused on skills used in the combat, such as physical fitness, climbing buildings, shooting, and so on. The first joint army training between SCO member states was conducted in April 2014. In Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan, a delegation of about 100 army representatives from the PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan conducted training based on a scenario in which terrorists hid in a camp in the mountains.<sup>59</sup> The second joint SCO army training

was conducted in December 2016. In Korla, Xinjiang, a delegation from the PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan practiced combat and shooting skills.<sup>60</sup>

Beyond traditional security, in 2015, the SCO hosted its first cyber security exercise in Xiamen, Fujian. Similar to the previous SCO exercises, the cyber security exercise scenarios all aimed at anti-terrorism. In 2015, the exercise was directed to address the spread of online terror activities. The exercise was conducted entirely online in a scenario where a terrorist group launched an online campaign across SCO member states calling for cross-border attacks. SCO members’ anti-terrorism representatives engaged in content detection individually and shared information with other member states, coordinated removal of content, and jointly investigated promotion of cross-border attacks and arrests.<sup>61</sup> In 2017, the second cyber security exercise was again conducted in Xiamen, with a similar agenda.<sup>62</sup> Pakistan and India joined this exercise. In 2019, the third cyber security exercise (again in Xiamen) investigated extremist content and foreign-fighter recruitment ads on social media and messenger apps.<sup>63</sup> The exercise introduced new methods of investigation on the cloud and the use of facial recognition tools to detect terrorists.<sup>64</sup>

56 “‘Peace Mission-2018’: Two highlights are worthy of attention,” *Xinhua*, August 24, 2018, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2018-08/24/c\\_129939733.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2018-08/24/c_129939733.htm).

57 Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, “‘Tianshan-2 (2011)’ counter-Terrorism exercise: Demonstrating China’s counter-Terrorism power,” May 7, 2011, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2011-05/07/content\\_1859286.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2011-05/07/content_1859286.htm).

58 Shanghai Cooperation Organization, “‘Tianshan-2 (2011)’ counter-terrorism exercise held in China,” May 8, 2011, <http://chn.sectsc.org/news/20110508/60107.html>.

59 Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, “SCO Special Forces Joint Training Chinese Soldiers Affirmed,” April 25, 2015, [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-04/25/content\\_2853012.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-04/25/content_2853012.htm).

60 “SCO Mountain Infantry Joint Training,” *People’s Daily*, December 5, 2016, <http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2016/1205/c1011-28925389.html>.

61 Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, “SCO’s first cyber anti-terrorism exercise was successfully held in Xiamen,” October 14, 2014, [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-10/14/content\\_2946854.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-10/14/content_2946854.htm).

62 “SCO ‘Xiamen-2017’ cyber anti-terrorism exercise held today,” China Central Television, December 6, 2017, <http://m.news.cctv.com/2017/12/06/ARTIAWgbuaRbebix8FZnWO0m171206.shtml>.

63 “The third SCO cyber anti-terrorism joint exercise held in China,” *Xinhua*, December 12, 2019, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2019-12/12/c\\_1125340396.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2019-12/12/c_1125340396.htm).

64 “Visit to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization ‘Xiamen-2019’ Cyber Anti-Terrorism Joint Exercise,” *Guangming Daily*, December 15, 2019, [https://news.gmw.cn/2019-12/15/content\\_33401837.htm](https://news.gmw.cn/2019-12/15/content_33401837.htm).



Members of Kyrgyz armed forces line up in Ala-Too Square after President Sooronbai Jeenbekov declared a state of emergency in the capital and ordered troops to be deployed there, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan October 10, 2020. REUTERS/Mariya Gordeyeva





## BEFORE SCO'S ESTABLISHMENT, THE SHANGHAI FIVE CONDUCTED SECURITY COOPERATION AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION TO MUTUALLY MANAGE BORDER AFFAIRS.

Before SCO's establishment, the Shanghai Five conducted security cooperation after the collapse of the Soviet Union to mutually manage border affairs. The issue of mutually managing border affairs did not carry over into the SCO. Since 1999, to implement the 1996 and 1997 agreements on reducing military forces and strengthening military trust in border areas, border guards of the PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have conducted several rounds of joint border inspections annually. According to the 1996 and 1997 agreements, joint border guards inspect the military forces and technical equipment within 100 kilometers of each other's borders four times a year, each time inspecting two areas.<sup>65</sup> A typical border inspection on the Xinjiang side includes Chinese personnel briefing nine joint border guards from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan about its facilities, military staff deployment, equipment, and storage. This mechanism is an occasion for all sides to raise concerns about each other's military movements on the border. For example, in 2017, the Kazakh

representative asked the Chinese, "The Chinese side held a military exercise in the border area between China and Kazakhstan a while ago, but the Chinese side did not notify Kazakhstan in advance as stipulated in the agreement, please explain." The Chinese side then described a communication issue.

### *Enforcement Cooperation*

Established in 2004, the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) is based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and is the only joint operative security unit within the SCO.<sup>66</sup> Central Asian members of the SCO delegate their representative from the National Security Committees, Russia delegates from the Federal Security Service, and the PRC delegates from the Ministry of Public Security.

Initially, RATS focused on securing the legal foundation for all SCO members to jointly cooperate and coordinate efforts to tackle terrorism, separatism, and extremism. It worked to ensure that if the suspected individual is a member of an international terrorist group recognized in one SCO member state, he or she could still be arrested in a SCO member state that does not recognize such group as an international terrorist group. Such rationale gives added foundation for members of the Uyghur community to be deported from Central Asia to the PRC. RATS also created a database in October 2004 of over 1,000 members of 36 international "terrorist" groups and their sources of funding. Based on this database, the structure provides recommendations to SCO member states to issue international wanted orders to Interpol.

As the structure matured, between 2010 and 2019, five expert groups started, focusing on intelligence sharing, joint coordination to combat crimes by large-size international terrorist organizations, border security against international terrorism, terrorist activities on the internet, and specialized knowledge on

<sup>65</sup> Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia jointly organize annual border disarmament verification," June 26, 2019, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/diplomacy/2019-06/26/content\\_4844372.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/diplomacy/2019-06/26/content_4844372.htm).

"Boundary line becomes a line of cooperation Five-nation border disarmament inspections," *People's Daily*, November 21, 2017, <http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1121/c1011-29658857.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Sources for this section originally contained 17 links. However, due to the RATS website's domain change, the links have all been deactivated and much of information was removed from the website.



Director of the SCO RATS Executive Committee Ruslan Mirzaev participating in an online event addressing drug trafficking and combatting terrorism held on the sidelines of the 65th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March, 2022. (ecrats.org)

international terrorist groups. Additionally, RATS tried to forge consensus and expand joint coordination on regional security management in multiple areas, such as terrorist organization recruitment, returnees from conflict zones, blocking logistics of foreign fighters heading to conflict zones, pipeline security, investigating extremist religions, social habitation of returnees from conflict zones, and preventing the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in terrorist acts. RATS expanded its database in 2014 to include online resources where members of international terrorist organizations work digitally to promote ideologies and recruit foreign fighters. By 2017, the database expanded to over 3,000 members of some 100 international “terrorist” organizations.

PRC-led enforcement cooperation under the SCO is mainly focused on creating communication channels in which persons of

interest from the PRC can be tracked across the border in Central Asia. At the same time, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security specifically works with various SCO mechanisms to increase capacity of Central Asian partners by providing training. In 2014, the China National Institute for SCO International Exchange (CNISCO) and Judicial Cooperation was established for the purpose of increasing judicial capacity of Central Asian partners in combating transnational security issues.<sup>67</sup> Unlike other institutions that provide training programs to Central Asian military and law enforcement officers (more will be discussed below), the CNISCO provides a specific legal training course to Central Asian legal officers on the legal basis of SCO cooperation.<sup>68</sup>

67 “About,” China National Institute for SCO International Exchange and Judicial Cooperation, 2021, <http://cnisco.shupl.edu.cn/6/listm.htm>.

68 “The Graduation Ceremony of the Training Course for Legal Service Managers of the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan,” China National Institute for SCO International Exchange and Judicial Cooperation, March 22, 2019, <http://cnisco.shupl.edu.cn/2019/0322/c94a1118/page.htm>.



# BILATERAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES

Unlike multilateral security cooperation, the PRC's bilateral security engagements with Central Asian states are more diverse on all fronts. The number of meetings is increasing, and their formats are becoming more efficient. The PRC conducts joint patrols, operation, and regular military exercises with these countries. Before the pandemic, China offered short-term training and long-term military degree programs; the PRC also transfers security equipment and infrastructure. While the PRC raises security cooperation expansion regularly all over the region, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are the two most responsive countries. A total of 12 military exercises have been conducted bilaterally between the PRC and individual Central Asian states from 2002 to 2020, nine of which were on the shared border with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, signalling a great deal of concern over the porous, mountainous borders.

## *Dialogue*

From the 1990s, the PRC and Kyrgyzstan conducted at least 80 bilateral meetings with a security topic on the agenda; the PRC and Kazakhstan conducted at least 55; the PRC and Uzbekistan conducted at least 64; the PRC and Tajikistan conducted at least 53; and the PRC and Turkmenistan conducted at least 25.<sup>69</sup> Consistently, security topics dominate most bilateral discussions between the PRC and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with high profile and frequent mentions of the East Turkistan Movement. In the 2010s, the goal of addressing perceived influence of the East Turkistan Movement in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan led discussions on expanding practical security cooperation in the form of equipment transfer, personnel training, and military exercises. On the other hand, security discussions between

the PRC and Uzbekistan put greater emphasis on cooperation within multilateral mechanisms. PRC-Kazakhstan meetings generally emphasized economic cooperation as the highest priority. Like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan's security cooperation discussions also emphasized working within a multilateral mechanism.

**ANY DISCUSSION ON  
SECURITY COOPERATION  
IS A TOPIC FIRST  
CARRIED OUT BETWEEN  
HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS  
SUCH AS THE HEADS  
OF STATES, THEN  
IMPLEMENTATION AND  
WORKING DISCUSSIONS  
ARE DELEGATED TO  
RELEVANT MINISTERS.**

Any discussion on security cooperation is a topic first carried out between high-level officials such as the heads of states, then implementation and working discussions are delegated to relevant ministers. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan have a bilateral

69 While news archives recorded some mention of meetings between security officials of China and Tajikistan and China and Turkmenistan, press releases of these meetings are absent from official Chinese governmental websites. Coupled with a lack of press releases from local governments, it is likely that security officials of China, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan have met more than documented in this research.





The opening ceremony of three competitions of the International Army Games, the Uzbek troops participating in the competition of the International Army Games in 2021. (mod.gov.cn.en)

security cooperation committee that meets with the PRC annually.<sup>70</sup> This is a dedicated occasion for security discussions between heads of departments and invited Chinese and Central Asian stakeholders. While this structure has become routine, a new “cross-departmental mechanism”<sup>71</sup> was introduced in 2019 between PRC-Kyrgyzstan and PRC-Kazakhstan. This mechanism was created to address specific security issues directly with security agencies in a cross-departmental and cross-regional manner.<sup>72</sup> This cross-departmental mechanism is

headed by the External Security Commissioner of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, a position newly created in 2019.

In 2019, Central Asian intelligence agencies conduct bilateral meetings with high-level officials from Beijing for the first time. Unlike the bilateral security cooperation committee, which meets at a fixed time once a year, the cross-departmental mechanism allows Beijing communication access to Central Asian intelligence agencies, if necessary. This makes

70 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People's Republic of China, “The seventh meeting of the Security Cooperation Subcommittee of the China-Kazakhstan Cooperation Committee was held in Beijing,” October 31, 2014, <https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/chn/pds/wjb/zjg/dozys/xwlb/t1206028.htm>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People's Republic of China, “Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng with Turkmenistan First Deputy Foreign Minister Hajiyev holds a meeting of the China-Turkmenistan Security Cooperation Subcommittee,” June 25, 2021, [https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/wjbxw\\_673019/202106/t20210625\\_9138170.shtml](https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/wjbxw_673019/202106/t20210625_9138170.shtml); and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People's Republic of China, “The third meeting of the Security Cooperation Subcommittee of the China-Uzbekistan Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee,” July 11, 2014, [https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/web/gjhdq\\_676201/gj\\_676205/yz\\_676205/1206\\_677052/xgxw\\_677058/201407/t20140711\\_9305212.shtml](https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676205/yz_676205/1206_677052/xgxw_677058/201407/t20140711_9305212.shtml).

71 “双跨机制”

72 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People's Republic of China, “China Kyrgyzstan holds the first meeting of the inter-departmental and cross-regional security cooperation mechanism,” December 2, 2019, [https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/web/wjb\\_673085/zjg\\_673183/xws\\_674681/xgxw\\_674683/201912/t20191202\\_7676616.shtml](https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/web/wjb_673085/zjg_673183/xws_674681/xgxw_674683/201912/t20191202_7676616.shtml); and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The People's Republic of China, “Cheng Guoping, Foreign Security Affairs Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Kazakhstan First Deputy Secretary of the Security Conference Shaykhutdinov held China-Kazakhstan double-cross mechanism video conference,” January 15, 2021, [https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/ziliao\\_674904/zt\\_674979/dnzt\\_674981/qtzt/kjgzbdfyyq\\_699171/202101/t20210115\\_9279022.shtml](https://www.fmChina.gov.cn/ziliao_674904/zt_674979/dnzt_674981/qtzt/kjgzbdfyyq_699171/202101/t20210115_9279022.shtml).

responses to security issues more efficient, as arranging meetings and/or phone calls between heads of states and heads of security and law enforcement can be time-consuming. Also, the External Security Commissioner as a role is more informed and pays exclusive attention to all external security threats than other Chinese Ministers. In addition to the bilateral security committee, PRC contact with heads of Central Asian intelligence agencies were previously carried out by Chinese ambassadors or whenever Chinese security personnel visited a Central Asian capital. As this cross-departmental mechanism develops, it is likely to emerge in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, where PRC seeks the latest security information.

As the majority of meetings concerning security affairs are held between the heads of states, instead of discussions, state visits by Chinese Ministers of Public Security or PLA leaders tend to focus on visiting certain security facilities, donating equipment, and/or providing financial aid to Central Asian security agencies. These field visits to Central Asian security facilities include military schools, training grounds, border posts, and operational units. In Uzbekistan, Chinese security officers repeatedly visited Huawei's safe city implementation in Tashkent and the Center for Social and Legal Assistance to Minors; the PRC is reportedly interested in Uzbekistan's anti-extremism practices, particularly targeting youth.<sup>73</sup> There are also a few cases of Central Asian field visits to the PRC, such as visits to the PRC armed forces, military scientific research institutes, safe city implementation areas, and military academies. Law enforcement issues regarding the "three evils"—separatism, terrorism and extremism—are addressed in irregular meetings between Central Asian Ministries of Internal Affairs and the Chinese Ministry of Public Security. Cooperation between the Chinese and Central Asian Ministries of Defense focus on developing military exercises, boosting cooperative capacity, and providing trainings and mutual exchanges to improve communication.

Representatives of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Defense are present at the Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan, while one representative of the Ministry of Public Security is present at the Chinese Embassies in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. These representatives work to engage with local security actors to implement agreements. They also work to connect Central Asian security officials with the Chinese expat community to address their security concerns. They host events ranging from public lectures by Central Asian security officials for the Chinese expat community about local laws to initiate meetings with members of the Chinese business community about operational issues.

### *Bilateral Security Exercises*

Bilateral exercises between the PRC and Central Asian states are divided by two timeframes: 2002 to 2006 and 2013 to present (see Appendix 3). A total of three bilateral security exercises were conducted in 2002 and 2006 between PRC-Kyrgyzstan, PRC-Tajikistan, and PRC-Kazakhstan. These three bilateral exercises in 2002 and 2006 all had different agendas. The 2002 exercise with Kyrgyzstan focused on terrorists crossing into Xinjiang; the 2006 exercise with Kazakhstan focused on a terrorist attack at the checkpoint in Xinjiang; and the 2006 exercise with Tajikistan focused on terrorists holding Chinese workers hostage in Tajikistan. Then, with more attention and resources paid to multilateral exercises, there were no bilateral exercises from 2007 to 2012. From 2013 onwards, multilateral and bilateral exercises became regularized. Between 2013 and 2020, ten bilateral exercises have occurred. Compared to multilateral exercises, the Chinese military delegation to bilateral exercises with Central Asian states mainly concentrated on deployment from Xinjiang, especially border guards.

The 2002 bilateral exercise between the PRC and Kyrgyzstan was the first military exercise that the PRC conducted with a foreign country and the first time that People's Liberation Army (PLA)

73 Ministry of Internal Affairs of The Republic of Uzbekistan, "The delegation of the Public Security Administration of Zhengzhou got acquainted with the activities of the IIBB in Tashkent," March 6, 2020, <https://iibb.uz/uz/news/chjengzhou-shahri-jamoat-xavfsizligi-boshqarmasi-delegatsiyasi-toshkent-shahar-iibb-faoliyati-bilan-tanishdi>; and Ministry of Internal Affairs of The Republic of Uzbekistan, "On the visit of a delegation of the Department of Public Security of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region," August 15, 2018, <https://iibb.uz/uz/news/ichki-mongoliya-avtonom-tumani-jamoatchilik-xavfsizligi-departamenti-delegatsiyasi-tashrifiga-doir>.





Chinese and Kazakh troops in a 2019 joint exercise in Eastern Kazakhstan. (eng.chinamil.com.cn)

went abroad to conduct a military exercise.<sup>74</sup> At the time, the PRC considered Kyrgyzstan to have a serious terrorism problem due to its porous mountainous border with Tajikistan (and by extension Afghanistan), which allows for easy illegal entry. The PRC was particularly concerned about the presence of Xinjiang independence supporters who were trained in Afghanistan and the prospects of them making their way into Xinjiang via Kyrgyzstan. This 2002 exercise was conducted between Chinese-Kyrgyz border guards in a mountainous border area near a Chinese-Kyrgyz checkpoint to jointly combat the crossing of a terrorist group from Kyrgyzstan to Xinjiang.<sup>75</sup>

The 2006 bilateral exercise between the PRC and Kazakhstan was based on a scenario in which terrorist planned an attack on a border checkpoint.<sup>76</sup> This exercise had two stages: the first stage on the Kazakh side and the second stage on the Chinese side. The exercise focused on intelligence sharing and coordination, with armies attacking terror camps on each country's respective side of the border without a joint combat. For this exercise, the Chinese side deployed border guards and anti-terrorism Special Forces under the Chinese Ministry of Public Security in Xinjiang.<sup>77</sup>

The 2006 bilateral exercise between the PRC and Tajikistan was based on a scenario in which Terrorist captured parts of Tajikistan and held

74 "China and Kyrgyzstan hold joint counter-terrorism military exercise, the PLA's first outbound exercise," Sina, October 11, 2002, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2002-10-11/1036763316.html>.

75 While it is unknown who comprised the Chinese delegation, open-sourced information indicates that they were border guards. "The first joint exercise with a foreign military: 2002 China-Kyrgyzstan anti-terrorism exercise," *Xinhua*, August 15, 2017, [http://www.xinhuanet.com//2017-08/15/c\\_1121487737.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com//2017-08/15/c_1121487737.htm).

76 "China-Kazakhstan "Tianshan-1" anti-terrorism exercise begins," Sina, August 25, 2006, <http://news.sina.com.cn/w/2006-08-25/09049845073s.shtml>.

77 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "The Ministry of Public Security issued an order to commend Xinjiang officers and soldiers who participated in the China-Kazakhstan joint anti-terrorism exercise," November 6, 2006, [https://China.gov.cn.admin.kyber.vip/jrzg/2006-11/06/content\\_434414.htm](https://China.gov.cn.admin.kyber.vip/jrzg/2006-11/06/content_434414.htm).



Military members from China and Kyrgyzstan participating in the 2019 Joint Anti-Terrorism exercise. (mod.gov.cn)

Chinese workers hostage.<sup>78</sup> For this exercise, the Chinese side deployed the PLA from Xinjiang.

Eleven years after the first bilateral exercise, in 2013, the PRC and Kyrgyzstan conducted a second bilateral exercise on the border. This second border exercise concerned a scenario in which terrorists carrying bombs and weapons attempted to cross into Xinjiang from Kyrgyzstan.<sup>79</sup> The Chinese side first shared intelligence to the Kyrgyz side to work on a coordinated action to arrest them at a border checkpoint. For this exercise, the Chinese side deployed border guards from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security in Xinjiang. Again, in 2014, border guards from Xinjiang and Kyrgyzstan conducted a bilateral exercise on the border; this time, it focused on the practical

aspects of joint work, such as the detection of smugglers, vehicle inspections, and combat exercises.<sup>80</sup> This exercise was carried out by borders guards from Xinjiang's Ministry of Public Security.

The 2015 bilateral security exercise between the PRC and Tajikistan focused on a scenario to jointly eliminate an armed transnational criminal group.<sup>81</sup> For the first time, the Chinese side deployed Special Police to join the security exercise in a foreign country. In Tajikistan, the Special Police Force from Qiannan engaged in an exercise with the Tajik side to jointly rescue hostages, destroy a terrorist camp, and chase and arrest members of a transnational terrorist group.<sup>82</sup> In 2016, the PRC and Tajikistan conducted another security exercise, this time

78 "China and Tajikistan's first joint anti-terrorism military exercise begins," China News Service, September 22, 2006, [http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2006-09/22/content\\_7184924.htm](http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2006-09/22/content_7184924.htm).

79 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "'Border Defense Joint Determination-2013' anti-terrorism exercise held in the border area between China and Kyrgyzstan," August 11, 2013, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2013-08/11/content\\_2465049.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2013-08/11/content_2465049.htm).

80 "The anti-terrorist special forces of the border defense department of China and Kyrgyzstan compete on the same stage," China Youth Net, November 1, 2014, [http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2014-11/01/nw.D110000zgqnb\\_20141101\\_5-01.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2014-11/01/nw.D110000zgqnb_20141101_5-01.htm).

81 Ministry of Public Security of The People's Republic of China, "Chinese public security special police participated in anti-terrorism exercises in Tajikistan," June 6, 2015, <https://www.mps.gov.cn/n2253534/n2253535/c4927145/content.html>.

82 "Guizhou Qiannan Special Police: A 'Business Card' of 'Chinese Special Police.'" China News Service, September 5, 2019, <http://www.gz.Chinanews.com/content/2019/09-05/92152.shtml>.



between the armed forces based on a scenario to jointly eliminate a terrorist group.<sup>83</sup>

The 2017 bilateral border exercise between the PRC and Kyrgyzstan focused on a scenario in which a group of armed terrorists attempt to cross into Xinjiang.<sup>84</sup> The exercise was centered on managing joint command for counter-attack operations, investigations at checkpoints and mountain passes, counter-attack alert at police and highway checkpoints, and discovering camps in the mountains. The Kyrgyz side first discovered intelligence about the terrorists' movements, and an arrest operation at the checkpoint was coordinated with the PRC.<sup>85</sup> Satellites and drones were used in this exercise to track terrorists fleeing from the checkpoint to identify the location of the camp.

There were four bilateral exercises between the PRC and four individual Central Asian states in 2019. The PRC-Kyrgyz exercise was conducted in Urumqi, focused on a scenario in which members of an international terrorist group opened several training camps in a remote border area.<sup>86</sup> Part of this joint exercise was conducted in a desert

condition, the first time that such terrain was used in one of these bilateral exercises.<sup>87</sup> Also, for the first time, the Chinese side deployed the Armed Police Force to such a bilateral exercise. This exercise was commanded by the Head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Armed Police Forces.<sup>88</sup> The PRC-Kazakh exercise was conducted in Ust'-Kamenogorsk, focusing on eliminating terrorist camps at night.<sup>89</sup> The Chinese side deployed a team selected from the PLA Ground Force. The PRC-Tajik exercise included the Chinese Air Force, the first time that this branch of the military was used in such an exercise.<sup>90</sup> This exercise focused on the use of UAVs in mountainous regions.<sup>91</sup> In 2019, the PRC and Uzbekistan conducted their first bilateral military exercise. The Chinese side deployed the Armed Police Force to a mountainous region in Jizzakh, commanded by the Head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Armed Police Forces.<sup>92</sup> Apart from these security exercises, the PRC also conducts joint border patrols and operations with individual Central Asian states in response to illegal cross-border activities. The joint border patrols with Kazakhstan started in 2003 in Tacheng, 2008 in Altay, and 2009 in Ili; they are

83 While open-source information indicated that Li Weia, Director of the Strategic Campaign Training Bureau of the Joint Staff Headquarters of the Central Military Commission, was present at this exercise, his role in this exercise is unclear. "China and Tajikistan hold 'Collaboration-2016' joint counter-terrorism exercise," Sina, October 31, 2016, <http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2016-10-31/doc-iffxfuff7339912.shtml>.

84 "The border defense departments of the competent authorities of the SCO member states held the 'Tianshan-3 (2017)' joint counter-terrorism exercise," *Xinhua*, June 27, 2017, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-06/27/c\\_1121220004.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-06/27/c_1121220004.htm).

85 "Documentary of the joint counter-terrorism exercise by the border defense departments of the competent authorities of China and Kyrgyzstan in the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *China Daily*, June 27, 2017, [http://cn.Chinadaily.com.cn/2017-06/27/content\\_29905260.htm](http://cn.Chinadaily.com.cn/2017-06/27/content_29905260.htm).

86 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "Sidelights on China-Kyrgyzstan 'Cooperation-2019' Joint Anti-Terrorism Exercise," August 13, 2019, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/13/content\\_4848100.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/13/content_4848100.htm).

87 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "Scene of the Sino-Kyrgyzstan 'Cooperation-2019' joint counter-terrorism exercise in the desert pursuit and suppression battle," August 13, 2019, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/13/content\\_4848169.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/13/content_4848169.htm).

88 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "China-Kyrgyzstan 'Cooperation-2019' joint counter-terrorism exercise ends," August 13, 2019, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/13/content\\_4848152.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/13/content_4848152.htm).

89 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "China and Kazakhstan hold 'Fox Hunt-2019' joint anti-terrorism exercise," October 16, 2019, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-10/16/content\\_4853032.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-10/16/content_4853032.htm).

90 "'Cooperation-2019' China-Tajikistan joint counter-terrorism exercise ends with 1,200 participating troops," China Central Television, August 16, 2019, <http://military.cctv.com/2019/08/16/ARTIMZLDWdHajFA5dvrUzrce190816.shtml>.

91 It is unclear who were the exact Chinese delegation. Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "'Cooperation-2019' China-Tajikistan armed forces joint counter-terrorism exercise ends," August 16, 2019, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/16/content\\_4848308.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2019-08/16/content_4848308.htm).

92 "Documentary of China-Uzbekistan 'Cooperation-2019' Joint Anti-Terrorism Exercise," China Youth Net, September 21, 2019, [http://news.youth.cn/jslm/201905/t20190526\\_12076277.htm](http://news.youth.cn/jslm/201905/t20190526_12076277.htm).



held once in each region annually.<sup>93</sup> The PRC held joint border patrols with Kyrgyzstan in 2015 and 2017, and with Tajikistan in 2017 and 2019.<sup>94</sup> These border patrols are led by the respective heads of border guards of the specific border regions. Chinese joint operations with Central Asian states are rare and mainly focused on drug and wildlife smuggling. This suggests either that transnational crimes are in fact less rampant as made out to be by the SCO or that there is little willingness to carry out a joint operation. In November 2014, 38 drug traffickers were arrested in a joint operation between 5,000 Tajik and Chinese border officials.<sup>95</sup> In March 2015, the Kazakh police informed the Chinese side of a suspected drug trafficker in transit, who was later arrested in Shanghai.<sup>96</sup>

### **Military Education**

Focused on deepening enforcement cooperation, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security offers a variety of in-China training programs for Central Asian security officers. Described in Appendix 4, this report documented about 60 cases of Chinese training since 2000.<sup>97</sup> Most of these training programs focus on sharing experience on anti-terrorism, cyber security, investigative technology, crowd control, anti-drug trafficking, and pipeline security. Aside from lectures, the training programs include tours and visits to various Chinese security facilities, military-industrial complexes, and operations

in the field. Each training program is offered to about 15-25 Central Asian officers from one Central Asian country at a time, usually for about two weeks to one month. There are a small number of training programs offered to officers from more than one country; in these cases, the delegations are reduced to keep the size at 15-25 officers.

While this report documented over 1,000 Central Asian security officers who underwent training in the PRC from 2000 to 2020, it is likely that far more officers participated. Specifically, the Uzbek Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that more than 50 groups of staff have visited the PRC for these trainings, while this report has documented only 21 such groups.<sup>98</sup> As the public reporting frequency of these training programs varies across the PRC depending on the contracted institution, the number of training programs may be double what is documented here.

### **Security Transfers and Infrastructures**

The PRC generally donates security equipment—military and civilian vehicles, computers, night vision gear, microscopes, and handheld transceivers—to Central Asian countries to help improve their militaries' logistics, communication, and investigation capabilities (see Appendix 5). Jing'an Import & Export Corporation has been the most frequent government supplier of donated equipment. Arm sales are rare, and these

93 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "China-Kazakhstan border guards conduct joint patrols," July 20, 2018, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/v/2018-07/20/content\\_4819872.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/v/2018-07/20/content_4819872.htm).

94 "China and Kyrgyzstan's border defense agencies launched the first joint law enforcement action under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Council," *People's Daily*, June 15, 2015, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2015/0616/c70731-27158948.html>; "China and Kyrgyzstan carry out 'side-by-side' joint patrols," *People's Daily*, June 30, 2017, <http://pic.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0630/c1016-29373832.html>; "China and Tajikistan's border guards jointly patrol and deploy multiple sensors along the border," *The Paper*, September 19, 2017, [https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_1799172](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1799172); and "Joint border patrols of the China-Tajikistan Border Forces," China Military Net, June 4, 2019, [http://photo.81.cn/jypk/2019-06/04/content\\_9631660.htm](http://photo.81.cn/jypk/2019-06/04/content_9631660.htm).

95 "Tajikistan and China detained 38 drug smugglers during a joint operation," Ozodi, November 23, 2014, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/26706028.html>.

96 Ministry of Public Security of The People's Republic of China, "Shanghai and Kazakhstan cooperate in cracking transnational drug trafficking case," March 17, 2015, <https://www.mps.gov.cn/n2253534/n4904351/c5073366/content.html>.

97 This is from publicly available information reported mostly either by the contracting Chinese security-related higher education institution, the lecturers themselves, or the provincial government who held welcoming ceremonies for these Central Asian officers. For more discussion on these training programs: Yau, Niva, "Chinese governance exports in Central Asia," *Security and Human Rights Journal*, 2022.

98 Ministry of Internal Affairs of The Republic of Uzbekistan, "Tashkent police department and the Main Department of Public Security of Tashkent signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Beijing," August 7, 2019, <https://iibb.uz/ru/news/guvd-tashkenta-i-glavnoe-upravleniya-obschestvennoj-bezopasnosti-g-pekina-vpervye-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimani>.

purchases have only been made by oil- and gas-rich Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. These militaries have purchased aircraft and air defense systems, such as the HQ-9 and QW-2. There is some evidence suggesting that these purchases are part of state loan deals to trade arms for energy.<sup>99</sup>

In addition, in the 2000s, the PRC on multiple occasions provided cash in the form of aid to cover salaries of military officers and border guards in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.<sup>100</sup> According to local media, at least \$10 million in aid was transferred to the Tajik Ministry of Defence from 1991 to 2006.<sup>101</sup> Hard and soft infrastructure has also been donated to support security efforts. Hard infrastructure includes military hospital construction and equipment, apartment buildings for military personnel, Chinese classrooms at military academies, police stations, and four border posts on the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border. These border posts finished construction in 2016.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the Tajikistan-Xinjiang border has been equipped with various sensors, alarms, and surveillance equipment.<sup>103</sup>

As for soft security infrastructure, the PRC provided traffic systems in urban areas and disaster prevention technologies, which provide Chinese scientists with sensitive natural resources and real-time information about terrain in remote areas.<sup>104</sup> All these, most notably the space observation station on the Lake Surez, have surveillance capabilities.<sup>105</sup> The presence of Chinese private security companies—today most active in Kyrgyzstan due to their objective

of protecting Chinese businesses in locations vulnerable to local level conflicts—are expected to expand.

## THE PRESENCE OF CHINESE PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES—TODAY MOST ACTIVE IN KYRGYZSTAN DUE TO THEIR OBJECTIVE OF PROTECTING CHINESE BUSINESSES IN LOCATIONS VULNERABLE TO LOCAL LEVEL CONFLICTS—ARE EXPECTED TO EXPAND.

99 Yau, Niva, “What Drives Chinese Arms Sales in Central Asia?” *The Diplomat*, September 11, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/09/what-drives-chinese-arms-sales-in-central-asia/>.

100 “China will allocate gratuitous grant for Kyrgyzstan,” Azattyk, December 20, 2004, <https://www.azattyk.org/a/1232687.html>; and “China provides humanitarian assistance to the ministry of defense,” Azattyk, October 18, 2002, <https://www.azattyk.org/a/1202295.html>.

101 “China gives aid to Tajik army,” Ozodi, May 4, 2006, <https://www.ozodi.org/a/605287.html>.

102 “In Central Asia’s forbidding highlands, a quiet newcomer: Chinese troops,” *Washington Post*, February 18, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/in-central-asias-forbidding-highlands-a-quiet-newcomer-chinese-troops/2019/02/18/78d4a8d0-1e62-11e9-a759-2b8541bbbe20\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/in-central-asias-forbidding-highlands-a-quiet-newcomer-chinese-troops/2019/02/18/78d4a8d0-1e62-11e9-a759-2b8541bbbe20_story.html).

103 “China and Tajikistan’s border guards jointly patrol and deploy multiple sensors along the border,” *The Paper*, September 19, 2017, [https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_1799172](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1799172).

104 “China handed over \$6 million worth of equipment to rescuers of Tajikistan,” *Sputnik*, July 23, 2019, <https://tj.sputniknews.ru/20190723/China-Tajikistan-oborudovanie-6-millionov-dollarov-1029466912.html>.

105 “China commissioned a space observation station on Lake Surez,” Ozodi, December 6, 2021, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/31596053.html>.



# DOMESTIC SECURITY ACTIVITIES

In addition to multilateral and bilateral security engagement with Central Asian states, the PRC has increased its military capacity in its western region. Eyeing Central Asia, specifically the border regions of Xinjiang, military capacity has been raised in two areas: combat readiness and human capacity.

First, Beijing has placed more emphasis on increasing combat readiness and the conditions on the western border. The difficulty of military exercises and trainings has been increased.<sup>106</sup> Border guard are now equipped with state-of-the-art technology to track and stop illegal border crossings.<sup>107</sup> In addition, the border region is undergoing a full 3D mapping.<sup>108</sup> Since 2013, the PRC has completed seven civilian airports in Xinjiang. Additionally, two high-altitude military-civilian airports were built in 2022 near the borders with Kazakhstan and Tajikistan at Zhaosu and Tashkurgan.<sup>109</sup> Prior to these two airports' construction, among the five military-civilian airports in Xinjiang, four of them were built between 1930-1970. A total of five Air Force trainings were conducted between August and December 2021; it is expected that these high-altitude military-civilian airports will be incorporated into trainings and increase mobilization capacity.

Second, human capacity on the border has expanded. Prior to the 2018 reform which unified deployment of the Ministry of Public Security, there were three types of border guards: civilian farmer border guards, police border guards, and military guards. Civilian farmer border guards were populations who lived in these remote border areas working as farmers but were recruited to report abnormalities to the local security structure due to their regular visits to mountainous pastures to feed livestock. After the 2018 reform, civilian farmer border guards were placed under the jurisdiction of the police and the newly established immigration control administration. They received army uniforms and a salary increase from \$150 RMB in 2008 to \$2,600 RMB in 2018.<sup>110</sup> These informal guards now also participate in the PRC's bilateral and multilateral anti-terrorism exercises. These informal guards also have gained membership in the National People's Congress. In addition, a new policy offering a monthly stipend of \$400 RMB to each person living in a border area was introduced to increase migration and to retain the existing population. At the same time, after the military reform, more formal guards were hired by the Xinjiang Immigration Administration, with close to 200 new recruits deployed each year to the border regions.<sup>111</sup>

106 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "On the top of snowy mountain, from 'training for combat' to 'training to combat.'" January 21, 2020 [http://www.mod.gov.cn/power/2020-01/21/content\\_4858908.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/power/2020-01/21/content_4858908.htm).

107 "At an altitude of 5,000 meters, a family of 16 highland edge guards from four generations relayed the edge protection," *Xinhua*, August 26, 2019, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2019-08/26/c\\_1210256497.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2019-08/26/c_1210256497.htm).

108 "Xinjiang promotes the construction of a three-dimensional border prevention and control network," *Xinhua*, October 20, 2016, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-10/20/c\\_1119758725.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-10/20/c_1119758725.htm).

109 "Xinjiang's first plateau airport, Tashkurgan Airport approved," *Xinhua*, October 15, 2019, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/local/2019-10/15/c\\_1125108285.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/local/2019-10/15/c_1125108285.htm); and "Zhaosu Tianma Airport successfully made its first flight," China Civil Aviation Network, January 29, 2022, [http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/5/202201/t20220129\\_1339225.html](http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/5/202201/t20220129_1339225.html).

110 National Immigration Administration of the People's Republic of China, "Documentary on the construction of border guards at Xinjiang Entry-Exit Border Inspection General Station," June 19, 2019, <https://www.nia.gov.cn/n741435/n907688/n932720/n1008173/n1008202/n1008848/n1008916/c1012572/content.html>.

111 National Immigration Administration of the People's Republic of China, "National Immigration Administration and its directly affiliated institutions 2020 civil servant recruitment announcement," October 15, 2019, <https://www.nia.gov.cn/n741440/n741542/c1170103/content.html>.





Jets of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force Bayi aerobatic team perform at the China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, or Airshow China, in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, China September 28, 2021. REUTERS/Aly Song



# ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

**T**his report has shown that concerns about security issues related to Xinjiang continue to be the foundational drive from the PRC perspective when engaging in security cooperation with Central Asian states. At the same time, new security interests towards safeguarding Chinese investments in the region and addressing threats from Afghanistan are acquiring more attention and discussion to expand security cooperation with Central Asian states. Chinese security engagement in Central Asia had steadily expanded. While some areas of existing security cooperation are productive in meeting security goals, such as consensus over non-tolerance of Uyghur independence supporters and tightening illegal cross-border activities, two problems persist.

First, instead of building a shared regional consensus and approach, the most effective PRC security cooperation with Central Asian states is focused at the bilateral level. Overall, bilateral security discussions and activities are much more active than the multilateral ones. While dialogues via multilateral mechanisms are much more regular, they are mainly focused on building political consensus and integrating security issues through the work of the SCO by conducting exercises, drafting agreements, and building departmental ties. While they serve to address security concerns shared by all members by presenting a united front, SCO activities are less effective than bilateral activities in terms of delivering outcomes. The SCO has concluded agreements on border cooperation, anti-terrorism, information security, and anti-drug trafficking, but other areas, such as how exactly to manage the Afghanistan issue, lack consensus, let alone operationalization. While the SCO's RATS has the potential to develop further as an independent intelligence gathering center against movements of terrorist, perhaps even serving in a think tank capacity, it is not being explored. Currently, RATS serves primarily

to reinforce consensus among member states over a shared list of members of terrorist organizations and to advise individual security agencies on various terrorism prevention techniques.

**NEW SECURITY  
INTERESTS TOWARDS  
SAFEGUARDING  
CHINESE INVESTMENTS  
IN THE REGION AND  
ADDRESSING THREATS  
FROM AFGHANISTAN  
ARE ACQUIRING MORE  
ATTENTION AND  
DISCUSSION TO EXPAND  
SECURITY COOPERATION  
WITH CENTRAL ASIAN  
STATES.**

---

At the same time, bilateral security discussions with each Central Asian state are more political as they are held between heads of state. At times, these heads of state meetings must balance security demands with other issues, such as the water imbalance between Kazakhstan and the PRC. The PRC has opened a new bilateral communication mechanism—the cross-departmental mechanism—to exclusively work on security issues at high-levels. This reflects willingness from the Central Asian side to cooperate with Chinese security actors. Bilateral meetings continued throughout 2020 and 2021 despite the pandemic.

Second, while joint military and law enforcement capacity between the PRC and Central Asian states are on the one hand professionalizing in terms of combat readiness and mobilization logistics, language remains the most difficult operational obstacle to overcome. Combat readiness has increased through the introduction of difficult terrain and climate conditions, as well as additional equipment, military vehicles, and aspects such as randomizing teams and commanders. Comparing multilateral and bilateral security exercises, the latter includes more scenarios and allows for more interaction between Chinese and Central Asian armies, while the former includes cyber security and rescue missions—something that is generally missing from the bilateral exercises. Also, the Chinese delegation to multilateral exercises comes primarily from larger forces from key theaters, whereas, for the bilateral exercises, the Chinese delegation tends to comprise more

specialized forces dealing with terrorism in Xinjiang. The forces delegated at the bilateral exercises are more likely to be efficiently deployed in the event of mobilization.

Through conducting these exercises, the logistics of the Chinese army's deployment into Central Asian territories have improved. In 2007, the Chinese army deployed the largest set of equipment to the joint SCO military exercise. Tanks were mobilized from Turpan, Xinjiang, and entered Russia via plane and train via the Manzhouli border post.<sup>112</sup> In 2010, the Chinese army deployed to Kazakhstan and set up a temporary gauge change to accommodate military cargo transported via train at the Alashankou checkpoint.<sup>113</sup> This gauge change is now permanent to accommodate commercial cargo at the Alashankou and Khorgos checkpoints. In 2012, the Southern Xinjiang Military Region delegation flew from Kashgar to Tajikistan via Kyrgyzstan in a commercial passenger plane; tanks were also deployed via Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan.<sup>114</sup> In 2018, for the first time, Chinese troops used train transit via Kazakhstan to get to Chebarkul, Russia, for the security exercise.<sup>115</sup>

However, combat readiness and logistics in these exercises worked smoothly as a result of extensive planning. On the ground, language remains a substantial obstacle. In the initial days of these exercises, with the higher popularity of Russian-language learning in the PRC, Chinese commanders at these exercises were briefing in Russian.<sup>116</sup> However, language became a problem later as the Russian-language capacity

112 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "'Peace Mission-2007' SCO Joint Anti-Terrorism Exercise officially begins," August 9, 2007, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-08/09/content\\_711805.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-08/09/content_711805.htm); and Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "'Peace Mission-2007' Joint Anti-Terrorism Military Exercises Successfully Concluded on the 17<sup>th</sup>," August 18, 2007, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-08/18/content\\_720490.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-08/18/content_720490.htm).

113 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "'Peace Mission—2010' Railway Transportation Accumulates Experience for Long-distance Delivery," September 22, 2010, [https://China.gov.cn.admin.kyber.vip/jrzq/2010-09/22/content\\_1708072.htm](https://China.gov.cn.admin.kyber.vip/jrzq/2010-09/22/content_1708072.htm).

114 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "SCO joint exercise Chinese troops safely arrived in Tajikistan," June 5, 2012, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2012-06/05/content\\_2153975.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2012-06/05/content_2153975.htm); and "Chinese major general commented on the highlights of the Shanghai joint military exercise, reflecting the advantages of joint operations," China Internet Information Center, June 12, 2012, [http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2012-06/12/content\\_25625978.htm](http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2012-06/12/content_25625978.htm).

115 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "In 2018, the 'China Print' on the International Training Field," December 27, 2018, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2018-12/27/content\\_4832962.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/action/2018-12/27/content_4832962.htm).

116 "Experience the 'Joint-2003' multinational anti-terrorism military exercise," China News Service, October 14, 2008, <http://www.Chinanews.com/gn/news/2008/10-14/1411127.shtml>.



of the Chinese army deteriorated.<sup>117</sup> In 2010, the Chinese military delegation worked on basic Russian language phases for seven days prior to joining the exercise in Kazakhstan, while the armies of participating states reportedly learned some Chinese-language phases.<sup>118</sup> Despite a mutual effort to learn Russian and Chinese, the preferred method is to rely on translators who work at the participating states' Ministry of Defense's public relations and news affairs department.<sup>119</sup> In 2016, due to language problems, communication between a Chinese military jet and Kyrgyz ground aviation staff had to be pre-practiced and supplemented by a plan chart, which contained technical symbols.<sup>120</sup> Similar language problems are observed at joint border patrols. Between the PRC and Kazakhstan, the Chinese side provided the translators as the Kazakh side lacks Chinese-language experts.<sup>121</sup>

As it develops, the language problems that persist will be the most substantial obstacle in the event of mobilization. While the PRC provides many in-China training programs to Central Asian security officials, most of these are short term, offered to law enforcement officials, and aimed mostly at promoting security narratives and gear, not Chinese-language skills. This research documented regular in-China law enforcement education programs since the 2010s, reaching its peak in the past couple of years, with at least four groups of officers from each Central Asian country (except Turkmenistan) annually. Skills transfer, facilitated by these short-term education programs, is evident through the adaptation of various security infrastructures by Central Asian states, such as Huawei's smart city traffic

surveillance.

Only a few programs offered to Central Asian military officers were documented. Of these, they tend to be long term, such as a three-year degree in a Chinese military university. They are offered to a few young officers annually, who tend to return with Chinese-language fluency and a better understanding of the PRC. While short-term programs are effective in terms of security norms and equipment export, the long-term programs appear to be unsuccessful as language evidently continues to be a key obstacle in China-Central Asia security cooperation. At best, Central Asian armies will grow to have designated translators available in case the Chinese side does not provide them. However, operative language is unlikely to change from Russian to Chinese. The dominance of the Russian language in the region cements a substantial cultural and operational gap between the armies. Nonetheless, these programs have demonstrated that the PRC can be a consistent donor and provider of security capacity.

This report has demonstrated that the PRC is actively engaging and increasing its presence in Central Asia beyond the economic sphere. The 2022 unrest in Kazakhstan proved Beijing's deep anxiety to be true—that strong leaders in the region can be toppled by protests and opposition, and the likelihood of a Central Asian country divided by intense political competition is around the corner. Together, with other expanding security interests in Central Asia, there is no doubt that more and new Chinese security initiatives will follow. While Beijing previously paid little attention to domestic politics

117 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "'Peace Mission-2007' Joint Anti-Terrorism Military Exercises Successfully Concluded on the 17<sup>th</sup>," August 18, 2007, [http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-08/18/content\\_720490.htm](http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-08/18/content_720490.htm).

118 Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, "'Peace Mission-2010': Chinese and foreign military personnel form friendship on the exercise field," September 19, 2010, [https://China.gov.cn.admin.kyber.vip/jrzq/2010-09/19/content\\_1705721.htm](https://China.gov.cn.admin.kyber.vip/jrzq/2010-09/19/content_1705721.htm); and "Chinese soldiers learn Russian conversation and Russian songs on their way to Kazakhstan," Sina Military, September 7, 2010, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2010-09-07/1457609669.html>.

119 "Comfortable sleeping beds in the Kazakhstan army but they said they want to go to China," September 9, 2010, <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/2010-09-09/1319610031.html>; "'Peace Mission-2012' joint anti-terrorism military exercise station to feel China's fate," China Internet Information Center, June 11, 2012, [http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2012-06/11/content\\_25613145.htm](http://www.China.com.cn/military/txt/2012-06/11/content_25613145.htm); and "'Peace Mission-2014' Joint Military Exercise Documentary," China Central Television, August 28, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLhcgd8fxzY>.

120 "'Peace Mission-2016' SCO Joint Exercise: Chinese participating troops conduct rehearsal training," China Central Television, September 19, 2016, <http://m.news.cctv.com/2016/09/19/ARTIVPdmCsAFel3DSCD13ow160919.shtml>.

121 Ministry of National Defense of The People's Republic of China, "Alashankou meeting station: close and build a 'bridge' along the Silk Road," December 14, 2018, [http://www.mod.gov.cn/diplomacy/2018-12/14/content\\_4832264.htm](http://www.mod.gov.cn/diplomacy/2018-12/14/content_4832264.htm).

and preferred to work exclusively with long-term leaders in power, the 2022 unrest in Kazakhstan will serve as an opening for more Chinese attention to domestic Central Asian politics.

## AS BEIJING PAYS LESS AND LESS LIP SERVICE TO LOCAL AUTONOMY AND NON-INTERVENTION, THERE WILL BE LITTLE DOMESTIC RESISTANCE TO NEW OVERSEAS SECURITY INITIATIVES.

deeply rooted in the domestic survival of any Central Asian government. This is particularly the case in Kyrgyzstan, where reliance on financial assistance from the PRC is strong and where the PRC's presence is evident across several sectors beyond security. The lack of a comparable presence of other major powers further elevates the role of the PRC in Kyrgyzstan, and more bilateral security cooperation can be expected.

As Beijing pays less and less lip service to local autonomy and non-intervention, there will be little domestic resistance to new overseas security initiatives. At the same time, Central Asian states are embracing Chinese influence in the military and security sectors. While this enables PRC assertiveness, it, at the same time, creates opportunities for other major powers to step up regional engagement. So far, Central Asian cooperation with the PRC has been a pragmatic, opportunistic choice—a choice that Central Asian leaders made due to the absence of comparable committed engagement from other major powers. Moving forward, in order to balance PRC security engagement, Central Asia's strategic significance must be independently considered outside of its role in securing Xinjiang for the PRC.



While the PRC, to an extent, desires a regional approach to security, such as the continuous effort on strengthening the SCO and categorizing security issues as shared by all regional countries, deliverables are more visible at the bilateral level. It is likely that these regional approaches, particularly the new ones such as the C+C5, are simply PRC initiatives to further tie its own insecurities over governing Xinjiang with the future of the region's security. In effect, these regional efforts are meant to deter any Central Asian governments from making independent assessments and forming their own foreign policy on Xinjiang without PRC participation. Bilateral cooperation in the economic sphere will continue to deepen Central Asian reliance on the PRC, thus making the need to sustain positive bilateral relations with the PRC a priority that is

## APPENDIX 1. SECURITY-RELATED BILATERAL MEETINGS BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 1993 TO 2020

KYRGYZSTAN	CHINA	DATE	SECURITY AFFAIRS DISCUSSED
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	November 2020	Three evils, regional Security
Minister of Internal Affairs	Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan	November 2020	Combating three evils, drug trafficking, transnational crime
Ambassador to China	Deputy Head of International Department of the Central Committee of Party	October 2020	Safety of Chinese nationals in Kyrgyzstan
Ambassador to China	Special Representative of External Security Issues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	October 2020	Safety of Chinese nationals in Kyrgyzstan
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan	May 2019	Strengthening law enforcement cooperation
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	May 2019	Three evils, transnational crime, drug trafficking, cyber security, law enforcement
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2019	Anti-China sentiment, three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	February 2019	Anti-China sentiment
Minister of Internal Affairs	Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan	October 2018	Development of law enforcement cooperation
President	Deputy Chairman of Central Military Council	September 2018	Implementing military-technical agreement signed in June 2018
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	August 2018	
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2017	Increase anti-terrorism cooperation
Head of State Border Service	Director of Border Service	April 2017	Practical border management
Head of General Staff of Armed Forces	Minister of Defense, Chief of Joint Staff of Central Military Council	March 2017	Combating three evils, military training
President	President	January 2017	Against East Turkestan Movement, regional security
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2016	Deepen law enforcement cooperation
President	President	September 2015	Strengthening of borders
Head of State Border Service	Deputy Director of Border Service	July 2015	Practical border management



President	State councillor	December 2014	Law enforcement cooperation, three evils, regional security
President	President	May 2014	Law enforcement cooperation, three evils, drug trafficking
Speaker of Parliament	State councillor	May 2014	Three evils
Chairman of Security Committee	Minister of Public Security	November 2013	Three evils, drug trafficking, cyber security, transnational crime
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	July 2013	Three evils, transnational crime, drug trafficking
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	April 2013	Regional Security
President	Premier	December 2012	Three evils, law enforcement cooperation
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	August 2012	Border security, three evils, transnational crime
Chairman of Security Committee	Minister of Public Security	April 2012	Anti-terrorism, intelligence sharing, departmental ties
President	Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	January 2012	Against East Turkestan Movement
President	Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	November 2011	Three evils
Acting President	Minister of Public Security	April 2011	Law enforcement cooperation, regional security
First Deputy Prime Minister	Vice President	April 2011	Three evils, regional security
Acting President	Premier	November 2010	Internal conflict in Kyrgyzstan, three evils
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vice President	August 2010	Three evils
President	Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan	April 2010	Internal conflict in Kyrgyzstan
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	May 2009	Transnational crime, legal cooperation
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	April 2009	Against East Turkestan Movement
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vice President	April 2009	Three evils, against East Turkestan Movement
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	December 2008	Law enforcement cooperation
Commander of Border Service	Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army	December 2008	Military exchange and cooperation
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vice President	November 2008	Three evils

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	June 2007	Three evils, against East Turkestan Movement
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	December 2006	Regional Security
President	President	June 2006	Three evils, against East Turkestan Movement
President	Vice President	January 2006	Three evils, regional security
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	December 2005	Against East Turkestan Movement
Minister of Defense	Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission	August 2005	Military exchange
Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2005	Internal conflict in Kyrgyzstan
Acting President	Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization	April 2005	Internal conflict in Kyrgyzstan
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	December 2004	Expand security cooperation
President	Premier	September 2004	Three evils, against East Turkestan Movement
Minister of Justice	Vice Premier of State Council	December 2003	Strengthen legal cooperation
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	December 2003	Three evils, transnational crime, drug trafficking, border security
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	November 2003	
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	September 2003	Three evils, against East Turkestan Movement
Minister of Defense	Deputy Head of the Office of Foreign Relations of the General Staff of PLA	August 2003	Develop military cooperation
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vice Premier of State Council	December 2002	Regional security, three evils, against East Turkestan Movement
Speaker of Parliament	Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	October 2002	Establishment of RATS in Bishkek, against East Turkestan Movement
President	Deputy Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Party	August 2002	Regional Security
Minister of Defense	Deputy Commander of Lanzhou Military Division	August 2002	Three evils
President	President	June 2002	Security cooperation, three evils, regional security, Afghanistan

Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces	Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army	December 2001	
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vice President	November 2001	Against East Turkestan Movement
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	November 2001	Situation in Afghanistan
Minister of Defense	Deputy Commander of Lanzhou Military Division	September 2001	
Speaker of Parliament	Vice Premier of State Council	August 2001	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	March 2001	
President	Director of the International Liaison Department of Central Committee of the Party	August 2000	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism
Minister of Defense	Commander of Lanzhou Military Division	July 2000	Defense cooperation
Minister of Defense	Vice President	June 2000	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-Terrorism, defense cooperation
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	May 2000	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-Terrorism, defense cooperation
President	President	August 1999	Anti-seperatists in the territory of Kyrgyzstan against China, anti-extremism, drug and weapon trafficking
President	President	April 1998	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism
President	Minister of Defense	June 1997	Anti-seperatist
Secretary of State	President	June 1996	Resolve border issues
Prime Minister	Premier	October 1995	Anti-seperatists in the territory of Kyrgyzstan against China, resolve border issues
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vice Premier of State Council	August 1993	Anti-seperatists in the territory of Kyrgyzstan against China



KAZAKHSTAN	CHINA	DATE	SECURITY AFFAIRS DISCUSSED
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	September 2020	Information security
President	President	September 2019	Three evils, regional security
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	April 2019	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism, regional security
First President	President	April 2019	Three evils
Speaker of Parliament	Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission	September 2019	Three evils
Deputy Minister of Defense	Commander of Western Theater	September 2018	Military education, joint exercises, regional security
President	President	June 2018	Three evils
President	President	June 2017	Three evils, transnational crime
Prime Minister	President	December 2015	Three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	October 2015	Joint military training
President	President	August 2015	Regional security, cyber security
President	President	May 2015	Regional security
Prime Minister	Premier	December 2014	Against East Turkestan, drug trafficking, border security, pipeline security
Minster of Defense	Premier	September 2014	Regional security
President	President	May 2014	Three evils, anti-drug trafficking, cyber security
President	President	September 2013	Against East Turkestan, three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Defense	Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission	July 2013	Defense, military education
President	Vice Premier	December 2012	Against East Turkestan
Minister of Defense	Deputy Chairman of Central Military Council	December 2012	Military exchange
President	President	June 2012	Three evils, transnational crime, cyber security
Secretary of Security Committee	Minister of Public Security	April 2012	Anti-terrorism intelligence sharing, pipeline security, transnational crime
Prime Minister	Vice President	March 2012	Three evils
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	September 2011	Three evils
President	President	June 2011	Three evils, transnational crime
Secretary of Security Committee	Minister of Public Security	April 2011	Three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	March 2011	
President	President	February 2011	Three evils
President	President	June 2010	Regional security
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	May 2010	Military education

Deputy Prime Minister	Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC	December 2009	Against East Turkestan
President	President	December 2009	Three evils, regional security
President	President	April 2009	Three evils, transnational crime, regional security
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	June 2008	Three evils
Prime Minister	President	April 2008	Three evils
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2007	Against East Turkestan, three evils, transnational crime, drug crime
President	President	December 2006	Three evils, transnational crime
Deputy Prime Minister	State Counciller	September 2006	Three evils, regional security
President	Vice Premier	July 2005	Anti-separatist, anti-extremism, anti-Terrorism, regional security
President	President	May 2004	Anti-separatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism
Minister of Defense	Commander of People's Liberation Army	April 2004	Military training and exchanges
President	President	June 2003	Regional security, military and defense exchange
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	April 2003	Anti-separatist, anti-extremist
President	President	December 2002	Against East Turkestan, three evils, regional security
Prime Minister	Premier	June 2002	Regional security
President	President	November 2000	Anti-separatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism
President	President	July 1998	Anti-separatist, anti-terrorism
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	October 1996	Border security
President	President	July 1996	Anti-separatist
Minister of Defense	Deputy Commander of People's Liberation Army	March 1995	Military cooperation
President	Premier	April 1994	Anti-separatist
Minister of Defense	Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission	January 1994	Introduction to Chinese Military

UZBEKISTAN	CHINA	DATE	SECURITY AFFAIRS DISCUSSED
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2020	Afghanistan
Head of Department of Transport Security of Ministry of Internal Affairs	Deputy Head of Railway Department of Ministry of Public Security	October 2019	Training and exchanges
President	President	August 2019	Three evils, drug-trafficking, regional security
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Department of Public Security of Beijing	August 2019	Anti-terrorism, transnational crime, cyber crimes
Deputy Head of the Tashkent City Internal Affairs Directorate	Department of Public Security of Embassy in Tashkent	May 2019	Three evils, cyber security
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	December 2018	Three evils, regional security
Deputy Chief of Tashkent Police	Ministry of Public Security representatives	November 2018	Law enforcement cooperation
Deputy Head of the Tashkent City Internal Affairs Directorate	Department of Public Security of Inner Mongolia	August 2018	Fight against crime, intelligence sharing, training
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	July 2018	Investment security, three evils, transnational crime, law enforcement training
Secretary of Security Council	Minister of Public Security	May 2018	Three evils, cyber security
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	April 2018	Military education and exchange
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	February 2018	Afghanistan
President	Minister of Defense	December 2017	Regional security
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	January 2017	Three evils, regional security
Acting President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	November 2016	Three evils
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	January 2016	Regional Security
President	President	September 2015	Regional Security
President	Minister of Public Security	December 2014	Anti-Terrorism, drug-trafficking, East Turkestan
State Security Service	Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission	October 2014	Anti-Terrorism, regional security
President	President	August 2014	Three evils, Afghanistan
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	July 2014	Three evils, transnational crime, regional security
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	November 2013	Three evils, transnational crime, regional security
President	President	September 2013	Three evils, transnational crime, investment of large projects, regional security, Afghanistan



President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	July 2013	Three evils
President	Vice Premier	September 2012	Three evils
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	April 2012	Three evils, transnational crime, pipeline protection, joint investigation, training, equipment exchange
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	October 2011	Regional Security
President	Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	September 2011	Intelligence sharing, three evils, transnational crime, regional security
Chairman of the Senate	Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	July 2011	Three evils, regional security
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	May 2011	Departmental ties, transnational crime, joint investigation, training, equipment exchange
President	President	April 2011	Intelligence sharing, against East Turkestan, three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	March 2011	Regional security
President	President	June 2010	Three evils, law enforcement cooperation
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2010	Three evils
President	President	December 2010	Three evils
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	August 2009	Regional Security
President	Premier	June 2009	Regional Security
Minster of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	May 2009	Transnational crime, officers training, police equipment exchange
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	December 2008	Regional security
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	August 2008	Against East Turkestan, regional security
Chairman of Lower House of Parliament	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	July 2008	Against East Turkestan, regional security
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2008	Against East Turkestan, regional security
Deputy Chairman of Supreme Judicial Council	Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	November 2007	Against East Turkestan, regional security
President	Premier	November 2007	Against East Turkestan, three evils, regional security
President	President	August 2007	Three evils, regional security
Deputy Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	August 2007	Reginal security
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	November 2006	Regional security

President	President	June 2006	Against East Turkestan, regional security
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	January 2006	Three evils, regional security
President	Vice Premier	July 2005	Three evils, regional security
President	President	May 2005	Three evils, regional security
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs	December 2004	Three evils, regional security
Minister of Defense	Deputy Commander of Beijing Military Division	December 2002	Anti-terrorism
President	Vice Premier	April 2001	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism
President	President	July 2000	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-Terrorism, regional security
President	President	November 2000	Anti-extremism, anti-seperatist
Minister of Internal Affairs	Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	October 2000	Regional security
Minister of Defense	Vice President	August 2000	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-Terrorism, regional security
Deputy Minister of Defense	Commander of People's Liberation Army	April 2000	Anti-seperatist

TAJIKISTAN	CHINA	DATE	SECURITY AFFAIRS DISCUSSED
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Commissioner of External Security of Ministry of Foreign Affairs	December 2020	East Turkestan
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	September 2020	Three evils, information exchange
President	Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission Office	March 2020	International terrorism, transnational crime
President	President	June 2019	Three evils, transnational crime, anti-drug trafficking, cyber security
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Department of Public Security of Nanjing	May 2019	Three evils, drug trafficking
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2019	Three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Internal Affairs	External Security Commissioner of the Foreign Ministry	April 2019	Three evils, information exchange, training personnel
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	March 2019	Three evils, border security
President	Premier	October 2018	Anti-terrorism, regional security
President	Deputy Chairman of Central Military Council	September 2018	Afghanistan, defense cooperation
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Department of Public Security of Inner Mongolia	August 2018	Three evils, search for wanted persons, information exchange
President	President	June 2018	Three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	April 2018	Three evils
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Deputy Head of Foreign Security Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs	September 2017	Three evils, informational security, human trafficking
President	President	August 2017	Regional security
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Deputy Head of International Cooperation Department of Ministry of Public Security	April 2017	Three evils, experience exchange, training personnel
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	April 2017	Three evils
President	External Security Commissioner of the Foreign Ministry	October 2016	Three evils, drug trafficking, transnational crime
President	President	June 2016	Defense and law enforcement cooperation



President	President	June 2016	Anti-terrorism, drug trafficking, cyber security, transnational crime
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Deputy Head of International Cooperation Department of Ministry of Public Security	March 2016	Three evils, drug trafficking, transnational crime
Minister of Internal Affairs	External Security Commissioner of the Foreign Ministry	February 2016	Establishment of joint anti-terrorism center
President	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	May 2015	Defense cooperation
Minister of Internal Affairs	Anti-Terrorism Department of Ministry of Public Security	December 2014	Three evils, drug trafficking, weapon trafficking
President	President	December 2014	Three evils, Afghanistan, cyber security, anti-drug trafficking
Minister of Internal Affairs	Deputy Minister of Public Security	September 2014	Three evils, transnational crime
President	President	September 2014	Anti-terrorism, anti-drug trafficking, transnational crime, border security
President	President	May 2014	Three evils, anti-drug trafficking, transnational crime
Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Anti-Terrorism Department of Ministry of Public Security	December 2013	Three evils, training personnel
Minister of Internal Affairs	Department of Public Security of XUAR	July 2013	Three evils
President	President	May 2013	Three evils, drug-trafficking
Minister of Internal Affairs	Minister of Public Security	November 2012	Three evils, anti-drug trafficking, transnational crime
Minister of Defense	Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army	June 2012	Regional security
President	Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	January 2012	Three evils, transnational crime
President	President	June 2011	Three evils
President	Minister of Public Security	April 2011	Regional security
President	Premier	November 2010	Three evils, regional security
President	President	June 2010	Regional security
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs	April 2010	East Turkestan, three evils
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	January 2010	East Turkestan, three evils

President	President	August 2008	Three evils, anti-drug trafficking
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	July 2008	Regional security
President	President	January 2007	Three evils, transnational crime
President	Premier	September 2006	Three evils, anti-drug trafficking
Prime Minister	Minister of Defense	September 2005	Anti-terrorism, anti-extremism, anti-separatism, regional security
President	President	June 2004	Three evils, anti-drug trafficking
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	September 2003	East Turkestan, three evils, anti-drug trafficking
President	Li Peng	May 2002	Three evils, Afghanistan
President	President	June 2001	Three evils, regional security
President	President	November 2000	Three evils, regional security
President	President	September 1996	Stability in Tajikistan

<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	<b>CHINA</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>SECURITY AFFAIRS DISCUSSED</b>
President	President	November 2015	Regional security, three evils, transnational crime
President	President	September 2014	Three evils
President	President	May 2014	Three evils, regional security
President	President	September 2013	East Turkestan, three evils, transnational crime
Minister of Defense	Commander of People's Liberation Army	June 2012	
President	President	June 2012	Law enforcement cooperation, three evils, transnational crime
President	President	November 2011	Three evils, transnational crime
President	Minister of Public Security	September 2011	Three evils
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	August 2011	Three evils, transnational crime
Vice Prime Minister	Vice Premier	November 2010	Three evils, law enforcement cooperation, regional security
President	President	May 2010	Anti-terrorism, transnational crime
President	President	December 2009	Three evils, transnational crime, regional security
President	President	September 2009	Three evils, East Turkestan, regional security
President	Vice Premier	June 2009	East Turkestan, three evils, regional security
President	President	August 2008	Information sharing, training personnel, three evils
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	November 2007	
President	Premier	November 2007	East Turkestan, three evils
President	President	July 2007	Regional security, three evils

President	President	April 2006	Three evils, regional security
Vice Prime Minister	Minister of Foreign Affairs	December 2005	East Turkestan, three evils
President	Vice Premier	July 2005	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism
President	Minister of Foreign Affairs	October 2004	East Turkestan
President	President	November 2000	Anti-seperatist, anti-extremism, anti-terrorism
Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense	August 1999	



## APPENDIX 2. SCO MULTILATERAL SECURITY EXERCISE BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 2003 TO 2020

DATE	PARTICIPATING STATES	LOCATION	SIZE (IN PERSONNEL)	AGENDA
2019	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India	Xiamen, China	32	Terrorist group online campaign across SCO member states scenario: Detect extremist content distribution on social media and messenger apps, foreign fighter recruitment ads, intelligence sharing, investigation of terrorist location, funding sources and arrests
2018		Chebarkul, Russia	3000 (700 Chinese)	Attacking a terrorist camp scenario: Joint investigation, block movement and attack, combat tactics
2017		Xiamen, China	24-40	Terrorist group online campaign across SCO member states scenario: Extremist content distribution website detection and intelligence sharing, investigation of terrorist and arrests
2016	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan	Korla, China	Unknown	Combat skills, shooting exercises
2016	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan	1100 (270 Chinese)	Terrorist hiding in mountainous region scenario: Rescue villagers, block movements of and attack “terrorist”, Chinese military jet deployed from China to attack camp in Kyrgyzstan and returned without landing
2015	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Xiamen, China	Unknown	Terrorist group online campaign across SCO member states scenario: Extremist content distribution website detection and intelligence sharing, investigate ads promoting cross-border attacks, coordinated removal of content and arrests
2015	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan	100	Terrorist hiding in mountainous region scenario: Rescue hostages, block movements of and attack
2014		Inner Mongolia, China	7000 (5000 Chinese)	Terrorist hiding in a crowded city scenario: Joint investigation with high-tech tools, attack head of “terrorist” group in a mountainous hiding ground, “terrorist” fled to city, attack and rescue hostages
2013	China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Symkent Kazakhstan	Unknown	Terrorist group travelled cross-border to a crowded village scenario: Joint intelligence sharing, attack terrorists and rescue hostages
2012	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Sughd, Tajikistan	2000 (369 Chinese)	Armed terrorist training camp in a mountainous region scenario: Joint attack on camp under a unified command system

2011	China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Kashgar, China	Unknown	East Turkestan Movement crossed into China from a Central Asian state scenario: Commanded by RATS, cross-border investigation and arrests, attack on secret training camp in Kashgar, rescue hostages
2010	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Saratov, Russia	Unknown	Terrorists captured hostages scenario: Commanded by RATS, carried out by special forces of the participating states
2010	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Otar, Kazakhstan	5000 (1000 each country)	Attacking a terrorist camp hiding in a residential area scenario: Received UN permission for regional joint military mission, Chinese military jet deployed from China to attack camp in Kazakhstan and returned without landing, joint attack on camp day and night
2007	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Chelyabinsk, Russia	4000 (1600 Chinese, 2000 Russian)	Terrorist hiding in a city and supporting anti-government movement scenario: Joint investigation, UAVs and jets deployments, attack on hiding camps, hostage rescue, chase and capture
2003	China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan	1000	Hijacked plane scenario: Kazakh army closed off airstrip, Su-27 fighter jet forcefully landed the passenger plane, joint SCO armies landed via helicopters and surrounded some 100 “terrorist”, hostages rescue
2003		Ili River valley, China	1000	Attack on a city scenario: terrorists bombed governmental buildings, Chinese armies pushed terrorist into one building, captured terrorist, Chinese-Kyrgyz joint attack on 6 training camps at the shared border

## APPENDIX 3. BILATERAL JOINT SECURITY EXERCISE BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 2002 TO 2020

Kyrgyzstan	China	Date	Location	Size (in personnel)	Agenda
National Guard	Armed Police Force	August 2019	Urumqi	150	Jointly eliminate terrorist camp in border area
Border Guards	Border Guards	June 2017	Border	700	Terrorist crossing from Kyrgyzstan to China scenario
Naryn Border Guards	Kyzyl-Suu Border Guards	November 2014	Artush	Unknown	Joint border management
Border Guards	Border Guards	August 2013	Torugart checkpoint	1,075	Terrorist crossing from Kyrgyzstan to China scenario
Armed Forces	People's Liberation Army	October 2002	Border	Unknown	Terrorist crossing from Kyrgyzstan to China scenario
Kazakhstan	China	Date	Location	Size (in personnel)	Agenda
Armed Forces	People's Liberation Army	October 2019	Ust'-Kamenogorsk	Unknown	Jointly eliminate terrorist camps at night time
Border Guards	Border Guards	August 2006	Border	(800 Chinese)	Terrorist attack on checkpoint scenario
Uzbekistan	China	Date	Location	Size (in personnel)	Agenda
National Guard	People's Armed Police	May 2019	Jizzakh	Unknown	Jointly eliminate armed terrorist group
Tajikistan	China	Date	Location	Size (in personnel)	Agenda
Armed Forces	People's Liberation Army	August 2019	Badakhshan	1200 (580 Chinese)	Jointly eliminate armed Terrorist group hiding in mountain
Armed Forces	People's Liberation Army	October 2016	Badakhshan	414	Jointly eliminate armed terrorist group
Special Police Force	Qiannan Special Police Force	June 2015	Dushanbe	(20 Chinese)	Jointly eliminate armed transnational criminal group
Armed Forces	People's Liberation Army	September 2006	Kulob	450 (150 Chinese)	Terrorist captured Chinese workers in Tajikistan scenario
Turkmenistan	No public information available				



## APPENDIX 4. SECURITY-RELATED TRAINING AND EXCHANGE BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 2000 TO 2020

KYRGYZSTAN-CHINA	TYPE	DATE
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	December 2019
PRC MPS training program for investigation department of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	September 2019
PRC MPS training program for GKNB	Education	September 2019
Kyrgyz cadets received graduation ceremony from military education in PRC	Education	August 2019
PRC MPS training program for Bishkek police of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	August 2019
Kyrgyz colonel finished 148-day senior commander class in PRC	Education	August 2019
PRC MPS training program for investigation department of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	September 2018
PRC MPS training program for Kyrgyz MIA	Education	September 2018
Kyrgyz cadres received graduation ceremony from military education in PRC	Education	August 2018
PRC MPS training program for drug control department of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	November 2018
PRC MPS training program for pipeline security officials of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	June 2018
PRC Public Security Bureau of Yancheng delegation visited Ministry of internal Affairs in Jalal-Abad	Field Visit	June 2018
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	July 2017
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	May 2017
SCO Secret Services examined bombing of PRC Embassy in Kyrgyzstan	Joint Operation	September 2016
PRC MPS training program for self protection department of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	June 2016
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	May 2015
PRC MPS training program for police department of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	May 2015
6-day joint legal enforcement operation between border guards	Joint Operation	June 2015
Joint operation against wildlife smugglers	Joint Operation	January 2014
PRC MPS training program for anti-extremism department of Kyrgyz MIA	Education	November 2011
PRC General Staff of the PLA delegation visited Kyrgyz Border Guard Service and military school	Field Visit	August 2003
Chief of Staff of Border Guards visited PRC Armed Police Force	Field Visit	November 2000
Minister of Defense visited guard of honor of PRC Army, Navy and Air Force	Field Visit	May 2000
KAZAKHSTAN-CHINA	TYPE	DATE
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Kazakh MIA	Education	December 2019
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	December 2018

PRC MPS training program for drug control department of Kazakh MIA	Education	November 2018
PRC MPS training program for criminal investigation department of Kazakh MIA	Education	September 2018
PRC Western Theater Command delegation visited the military units of the Almaty region	Field Visit	September 2018
PRC MPS training program for Kazakh MIA	Education	September 2018
PRC MPS training program for drug control department of Kazakh MIA	Education	July 2018
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	July 2018
PRC MPS training program for pipeline security officials of Kazakh MIA	Education	June 2018
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	February 2018
PRC MPS trained anti-extremism department of Kazakh MIA	Education	November 2017
PRC PLA trained Kazakh senior military prosecutors	Education	September 2017
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Kazakh MIA	Education	May 2017
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	October 2016
PRC MPS training program for Kazakh NSC	Education	July 2016
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Kazakh MIA	Education	May 2015
PRC and Kazakh drug trafficking departments arrested drug smugglers	Joint Operation	March 2015
PRC Ministry of Public Security delegation inspected Ministry of Internal Affairs in Almaty	Field Visit	December 2014
Two Kazakh naval officers studying in China Naval Academy	Education	August 2014
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	August 2014
PRC Central Military Council delegation visited Kazakh Naval Forces in Aktau	Field Visit	July 2013
PRC and Kazakh police exchanged cross border criminals	Joint Operation	July 2013
20 Kazakh military personnels studying at China's Military Schools	Education	July 2013
Kazakh Ministry of Defense delegation visited China's military-industrial complex	Field Visit	December 2012
PRC University of National Defense delegation toured Kazakhstan	Field Visit	November 2012
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	December 2011
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	February 2011
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	March 2009
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	June 2008
<b>UZBEKISTAN-CHINA</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
PRC training program for police department of Uzbek MIA	Education	January 2020
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Uzbek MIA	Education	December 2019
PRC training program for police department of Uzbek MIA	Education	December 2019
PRC training program for public transport safety department of Uzbek MIA	Education	December 2019
PRC training program for tourist police of Uzbek MIA	Education	December 2019
Uzbek Department of Safe Tourism trained in Shanghai	Education	November 2019

Uzbek Police Academy exchange program for PRC Public Security University	Education	September 2019
PRC Special Forces trained Uzbek Special Forces	Education	September 2019
PRC training program for police management of Uzbek MIA	Education	August 2019
PRC Female Special Forces trained Uzbek Female Special Forces	Education	December 2018
PRC MPS training program for drug control department of Uzbek MIA	Education	November 2018
PRC Ministry of Public Security delegation visited various Tashkent security agencies	Field Visit	November 2018
PRC MPS training program for immigration department of Uzbek MIA	Education	October 2018
PRC Ministry of Public Security delegation visited various Tashkent security agencies	Field Visit	October 2018
PRC MPS training program for Uzbek MIA	Education	September 2018
PRC MPS training program for investigation department of Uzbek MIA	Education	September 2018
PRC MPS training program for drug control department of Uzbek MIA	Education	September 2018
Uzbek Minister of Internal Affairs visited PRC First Scientific Research Institute	Field Visit	July 2018
PRC MPS training program for pipeline security officials of Uzbek MIA	Education	June 2018
PRC Ministry of Public Security delegation visited various Tashkent security agencies	Field Visit	August 2018
PRC MPS training program for police of Uzbek MIA	Education	April 2018
Uzbek Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs visited PRC Safe City implementation	Field Visit	April 2018
Uzbek Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs visited PRC Police Academies	Field Visit	December 2017
PRC MPS trained Uzbek prosecutors	Education	October 2017
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Uzbek MIA	Education	May 2017
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Uzbek MIA	Education	May 2015
PRC MPS training program for public security department of Uzbek MIA	Education	October 2014
PRC Embassy Attache delivered lecture at Academy of Uzbek Armed Forces	Education	March 2011
PRC Ministry of Public Security delegation visited Uzbek Academy of Ministry of Internal Affairs	Field Visit	November 2010
<b>TAJIKISTAN-CHINA</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Tajik MIA	Education	December 2019
PRC MPS training program for police academy of Tajik MIA	Education	October 2019
PRC MPS training program for human resources department of Tajik MIA	Education	September 2019
PRC MPS training program for senior staff of Tajik MIA	Education	July 2019
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	June 2019
PRC MPS training program for drug control department of Tajik MIA	Education	November 2018
PRC MPS training program for investigation department of Tajik MIA	Education	September 2018

PRC training program for Tajik prosecutors	Education	September 2018
PRC MPS training program for Tajik MIA	Education	September 2018
PRC MPS training program for senior staff of Tajik MIA	Education	July 2018
PRC MPS training program for pipeline security officials of Tajik MIA	Education	June 2018
PRC MPS training program for senior staff of Tajik MIA	Education	November 2017
PRC MPS training program for border guards of Tajik MIA	Education	September 2017
Joint patrol along the border	Joint Operation	September 2017
PRC MPS training program for SCNS	Education	June 2016
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Tajik MIA	Education	May 2017
PRC MPS training program for senior police of Tajik MIA	Education	May 2015
PRC MPS training program for senior staff of Tajik MIA	Education	May 2015
5000 Tajik and Chinese officers arrested 38 drug smugglers	Joint Operation	November 2014
Tajik Minister of Internal Affairs visited Central Traffic Safety Administration of Beijing	Field Visit	November 2012
30 Tajik military officers sent to Chinese military schools annually	Education	May 2006
<b>TURKMENISTAN-CHINA</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
No public information available		



## APPENDIX 5. BILATERAL SECURITY-RELATED TRANSFER BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES FROM 2002 TO 2020

KYRGYZSTAN	CHINA	DATE	TYPE
Ministry of Defense	People's Liberation Army	May 2021	Equipment: Military and civilian vehicles
General Staff of Armed Forces	Ministry of Defense	August 2020	COVID aid: \$480,000
Armed Forces	Ministry of Defense	May 2020	COVID aid
State Committee for Defense	Embassy of PRC in Kyrgyzstan	April 2020	COVID aid: \$10,000
Ministry of Interior	Ministry of Public Security	June 2019	Equipment: 30M RMB
Ministry of Interior	Ministry of Defense	May 2019	Equipment: Various types of cars, \$30M RMB
Ministry of Interior in Jalal-Abad	Consulate General of PRC in Osh	September 2018	Equipment: Police station infrastructure and 7 cars
Border Guards Service	Ministry of Public Security	April 2017	Equipment: 1M RMB
General Staff of Armed Forces	Ministry of Defense	March 2017	Aid: 100K RMB
Border Guards Service	Ministry of Public Security	July 2015	Equipment: 300K RMB
Ministry of Defense	Ministry of Defense	September 2014	Aid: Apartments
Unknown	Unknown	January 2014	Police Equipment
Unknown	Unknown	August 2011	Police Equipment
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Embassy of PRC in Kyrgyzstan	December 2004	Grant: \$2.5m for border guards and state army
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Public Security	November 2003	Equipment: 40 cars
Ministry of Defense	Ministry of Defense	November 2003	Aid: Military-technical
Ministry of Defense	Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan	April 2003	Aid: Military, \$10m RMB
Torugard Border Guards Service	Ministry of Defense	October 2002	Aid: \$8M RMB
KAZAKHSTAN	CHINA	DATE	TYPE
Ministry of Defense	Embassy of PRC in Kazakhstan	October 2019	Infrastructure at military academy
Ministry of Defense	Embassy of PRC in Kazakhstan	November 2018	Chinese classroom at military academy
Ministry of Defense	AVIC	September 2018	Purchase: Y8F200W Military Aircraft
Unknown	Unknown	November 2017	Purchase: UAVs
Ministry of Defense	Ministry of Defense	October 2015	Donation: Truck tractors, plato-forms
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Public Security	July 2007	Police Equipment

UZBEKISTAN	CHINA	DATE	TYPE
Ministry of Defense	Military-industrial complex	March 2020	Donation: COVID19 humanitraian aid
Armed Forces	Unknown	August 2019	Purchase: Anti-aircraft missile system QW-18
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Huawei	July 2019	Donation: Face recognition surveillance system
Unknown	Unknown	November 2013	Police Equipment
Unknown	Unknown	August 2011	Police Equipment
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Defense	August 2006	Donation: Police equipment
TAJIKISTAN	CHINA	DATE	TYPE
Ministry of Defense	Central Military Commission	May 2020	COVID aid
Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defense	Unknown	July 2019	Equipment: Special vehicles and rescus equipment worth 6M USD
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Unknown	Feburary 2019	Equipment: Infomration communication
Unknown	Border Guard Service	September 2016	Equipment: Four border posts
Ministry of Defense	Central Military Commission	May 2016	Apartments
Anti-drug trafficking department	Unknown	March 2016	Anti-drug trafficking post
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Public Security	Feburary 2015	Equipment: Police uniform worth 150,000 USD
Unknown	Unknown	October 2014	Anti-Terrorism Equipment
Unknown	Unknown	Janurary 2014	Police Equipment
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Public Security	April 2011	Equipment: 3M RMB Worth
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Public Security	October 2010	Police Equipment: 4.5M RMB Worth
National Guard Hospital	Ministry of Defense	November 2008	Medical Equipment: 3M RMB Worth
Ministry of Defense		May 2006	Aid: \$1.5m for Tajik military officers
TURKMENISTAN	CHINA	DATE	TYPE
Unknown	Unknown	Janurary 2018	Equipment: QW-2 Vanguard 2
Unknown	Unknown	March 2016	Equipment: HQ-9

## APPENDIX 6: DETAILS OF IN-CHINA SECURITY TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR CENTRAL ASIAN OFFICIALS.

REPRINTED FROM NIVA YAU (2022), "CHINESE GOVERNANCE EXPORTS IN CENTRAL ASIA, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNAL.BRILL.

Topics	Criminal investigation technologies	Cyber security	Anti-drug
Delegated trainer	Criminal Investigation Police University of China	People's Public Security University of China	Criminal Investigation Police University of China
Training specifics	This course introduces China's national conditions and achievements since the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up. Focusing on the area of security, through special lectures, seminars, visits to actual combat units, field inspections of operations and others, this course introduces foreign officials to China's judicial system and China's practical security management. Such as crime scene investigations, case handling procedures, intelligence-led police affairs, China's anti-drug work, forensics technology, China's terrorist threat situation. A number of professional and technical courses will be offered on topics such as counter-terrorism measures, large-scale event security, surveillance-led investigation technology, document inspection technology, credit card crime countermeasures, material evidence inspection technology, application of DNA technology in investigation work and others, to enhance understanding of China's crime science and their national achievements.	This course strengthen comprehensive understanding of China, status quo and prospects of the world with China's development. This course introduces China's overall police work, security concept and national security strategy. Focusing on the area of cyber security, through special lectures, seminars, visits to special units, field inspections of operations and others, this course offer professional and technical training on the application of information-led methods in crime investigation, China's cyber crime trends and combat strategies, application of big data analysis in public security, fight against telecommunication fraud and new cyber crimes, police information network security construction and others.	This course introduces China's national conditions and achievements since the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up. Focusing on the area of security, through special lectures, seminars, visits to actual combat units, field inspections of operations and others, this course offers professional training on China's anti-drug work, international cooperation in anti-drugs, drug situation in China, drug chemical inspection, drug case investigation, drug use prevention, national anti-drug trafficking tactics and others.
Field visits	1."Pearl of Peace" international law enforcement exchange and cooperation unit police practice training center 2. Command center of the Shanghai Public Security Bureau 3. Shanghai the Bund and Yu Garden police station 4. Shanghai "Safe China" Initiative constructions 5. Beijing Research Institute No.1 of the Ministry of Public Security 6. Beijing China Electronics Import and Export 7. Beijing Police Museum	Various units in Shanghai and Wuhan.	1."Pearl of Peace" international law enforcement exchange and cooperation unit police practice training center 2. Command center of the Shanghai Public Security Bureau 3. Shanghai Public Security Bureau Anti-Drug Work Office 4. Beijing Research Institute No.1 of the Ministry of Public Security 5. Beijing China Electronics Import and Export 6. Beijing Police Museum







## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**NIVA YAU** is Senior Researcher at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and Central Asia Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. Her work follows Global China affairs with a particular focus on China's foreign policy, trade and security in its western neighbourhood, including Central Asia and Afghanistan. Ms Yau is quoted by news agencies globally, such as *BBC*, *The Independent*, *Nikkei Asia*, *The Economist*, *VICE*, *Le Monde*, *Deutsche Welle*, *Al Jazeera* and others. Ms Yau was awarded the Albert Otto Hirschman prize for best political economy writing in 2020 by The Washington Post for her work on the latest development of Chinese policy banks in Central Asia. Originally from Hong Kong, Ms Yau has been based in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan since 2018, she is a native speaker of Cantonese, Mandarin, English and learner of Russian.



# FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

*A nation must think before it acts*

## **ABOUT US**

The Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) is a nonpartisan Philadelphia-based think tank dedicated to strengthening U.S. national security and improving American foreign policy.

Established in 1955 by the noted 20th century geopolitical strategist, Ambassador Robert Strausz-Hupé, FPRI was founded on the premise that an informed and educated citizenry is essential for the United States to understand complex international issues and formulate foreign policy. FPRI remains committed to this principle and strives to inform both policymakers and the general public through FPRI research and educational programs.

FPRI is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and takes no institutional positions on issues and conducts no advocacy. The organization has six main research programs, covering U.S. National Security, the Middle East, Eurasia, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Each program produces reports, articles, public events, and private briefings for policymakers, FPRI members, and the general public.

## **WHAT WE DO**

The Foreign Policy Research Institute conducts in-depth research to find new information about U.S. foreign policy challenges and provide insightful analysis that is evidence-driven, policy- relevant, and nonpartisan. We produce research reports, articles, and summary briefs tailored to the needs of different audiences. We host public events and private briefings to make our findings as accessible as possible and to ensure the information we uncover reaches the American people and the policymakers who need it most.

[www.fpri.org](http://www.fpri.org)

## FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



The Foreign Policy Research Institute is dedicated to producing the highest quality scholarship and nonpartisan policy analysis focused on crucial foreign policy and national security challenges facing the United States. We educate those who make and influence policy, as well as the public at large, through the lens of history, geography, and culture.

Foreign Policy Research Institute

1528 Walnut Street, Suite 610  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-732-3774 [www.fpri.org](http://www.fpri.org)

Follow us @FPRI