

Comparative Analysis of Counter-Terrorism Efforts of NATO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

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ABSTRACT:

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are two important regional security organizations covering interrelated areas, yet they do not cooperate in the area of counter-terrorism. The comparative analysis of their counter-terrorism efforts can bring a fresh perspective beyond that of inter-block rivalry by adding a layer of complexity while evaluating the advantages of cooperation. In this article, the counter-terrorism efforts of NATO and the SCO are compared with regard to their founding principles, legal doctrines, organizational structures and military operations. It provides analysis of how these organizations created their legal doctrines, established their organizational structures and implemented practices in combating terrorism. Based on this comparison, it was discovered that both organizations transformed and adapted to better fight terrorism following the 9/11 terrorist attacks; however, due to the differences in their founding principles, NATO and the SCO tackled terrorism via different paths. Since terrorism is their common enemy, it can be asserted that collaboration between NATO and the SCO would benefit the counter-terrorism efforts of both organizations, as well as global efforts.

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Introduction

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, regional security organizations put counter-terrorism on their agenda as one of their priorities. Although countries develop their capabilities to combat terrorism on their own for national security, cooperation under regional organizations is definitive as a coordinated response. However, in many circumstances, cooperation within regional security organizations may be insufficient, and therefore collaboration between regional organizations is needed to better fight transnational terrorism. Cooperation between regional security organizations, especially among those with common areas of coverage, is important. However, while researching effective interorganizational cooperation for providing security, understanding how organizations address counter-terrorism in their legal doctrines, organizational structures and military operations is of the utmost importance.

In this article, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will be the objects of investigation. How these organizations adapted to fight terrorism legally, organizationally and practically in the aftermath of 9/11 bears the utmost importance for global counter-terrorism efforts and can provide clues on whether cooperation among these organizations is possible.

Comparative studies on NATO and the SCO generally reached conclusions related to inter-block rivalry, which is why there is an evident vacuum in the literature regarding the technical studies of both organizations beyond a simple debate. Moreover, there is a lack of literature regarding the comparative analysis of the counter-terrorism efforts of these two significant regional security organizations. Although there has been research focusing on the importance of cooperation among NATO and the SCO in countering terrorism, these calls for collaboration have not been based on detailed analysis of the counter-terrorism efforts of these organizations.^{1,2,3,4} On the other hand, examining the counter-terrorism perspectives of these organizations bears importance for the achievement of working and effective cooperation, which is actually needed in the global fight against terrorism. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap and offer a fresh gaze into the literature. However, it is also necessary to emphasize that this comparison does not seek to present one organization as being superior to the other, but simply to make evaluations using the data received from the comparative findings.

The following sections are dedicated as follows: a short presentation of the importance of NATO and the SCO as the selected cases for global counter-terrorism efforts; a detailed presentation of the transformation and adaptation in NATO and the SCO for better combating terrorism following 9/11; evaluation of the counter-terrorism efforts of these organizations; and lastly, a short evaluation on the possibilities of cooperation between NATO and the SCO in fighting terrorism.

Importance of NATO and the SCO for Counter-Terrorism Efforts

NATO is a unique example of transatlantic security and political cooperation. It was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, and the establishing treaty was signed by 12 founding members in Washington, D.C. in 1949.⁵ The articles of the treaty reflect the purpose of the establishment of the organization, which was to counter the military and political threat from the Soviet Union.

NATO's counter-terrorism was largely shaped by the September 11th terrorist attacks. Countering terrorism gained importance for NATO in line with the statement in the Strategic Concept adopted in 2010: "Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly."⁶ Although terrorism became an important agenda item for NATO in terms of securing citizens, NATO did not undertake the role in combating terrorism completely. This was highlighted in the following sentence taken from the Counter-Terrorism Policy Guidelines: "In defining NATO's overarching approach to terrorism, Allies recognize that most counter terrorism tools remain primarily with national civilian and judicial authorities."⁷ Therefore, NATO defines its role in counter-terrorism more as "leading or supporting" while stressing that the main responsibility lies with the individual members.⁸ Although NATO's role in combating terrorism has been identified as minimal by some authors,⁹ NATO has developed a legal doctrine and organizational structure for combating terrorism and has practiced real-time counter-terrorism operations following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In comparison, the SCO was officially established in 2001 by six members: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. However, the Shanghai Five, the predecessor of the SCO, was established in 1996 primarily for solving border problems between China and four former members of the Soviet Union: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Although the goals and agenda of the SCO have broadened over time, combating what have been referred to as the 'three evils' of terrorism, separatism and extremism has always been a priority for the members. Although not reflected in the documents, at its inception, the SCO's aim was focused on combating internal threats; however, following 9/11, the focus of the SCO was reinterpreted. The 9/11 terrorist attacks showed that the establishment of an organization with a specific counter-terrorism focus was timely and essential. Despite its low profile in 2001, the SCO became a full-fledged regional security organization incorporating significant member states and made efforts to counter terrorism in legal doctrine, organizational structure and operations domains.

NATO and the SCO were selected as the objects of this research for several reasons and interrelatedness was among them. There are several regional organizations covering the Transatlantic and Eurasian areas and this architecture connects both regions to each other. It is apparent in Figure 1 that NATO and the SCO are interrelated regional security organizations. However, necessary comprehensive attention has not been paid to the counter-terrorism efforts of these organizations.

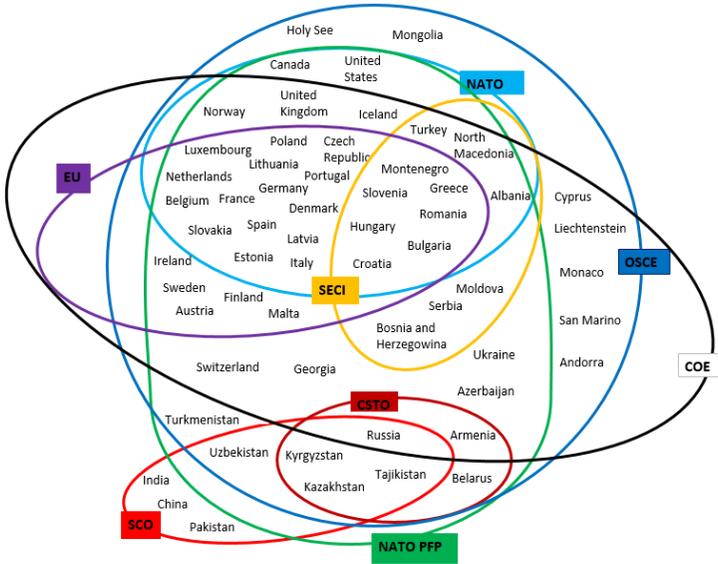


Figure 1. Transatlantic-Eurasian security structure.

In addition to this fact, the membership composition of both NATO and the SCO makes their selection important for security-focused research. As shown in Table 1, data on land coverage, population, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and military expenditure underscore the significance of these organizations for the global fight against terrorism.

Apart from these numeric data, being a nuclear power and having a seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) can be regarded as other indicators for the selection of these cases. NATO has the United States (U.S.), the United

Table 1. Basic data on NATO and the SCO.

	Area (sq. km) ¹⁰	Population ¹¹	GDP (Million USD) ¹²	Military expenditure (Million USD) ¹³
SCO	32 964 840	3 192 944 105	19 450 798	391 005
NATO	22 908 504	943 548 336	41 072 198	963 164
WORLD	127 343 220	7 673 533 972	87 697 519	1 782 351
(NATO+SCO)/ WORLD	43.9 %	53.9 %	69.0 %	76.0 %

Kingdom (U.K.) and France as nuclear powers, whereas the SCO has Russia, China, India and Pakistan. Furthermore, the UNSC permanent members are also members of these organizations.

Transformation and Adaptation in NATO and the SCO for Combating Terrorism

Prior to 9/11, terrorism was not discussed in detail at most of the regional organizations. However, following the attacks, several organizations began counter-terrorism efforts, but with different approaches. How regional security organizations created or transformed their doctrines and established their institutional frameworks for combating terrorism changed, as did how they conducted military operations for fighting terrorism. Therefore, in this section, the counter-terrorism efforts of NATO and the SCO were comparatively analyzed in detail to obtain a solid grasp of the transformations and adaptations that occurred within them for combating terrorism. In order to contrast the changes in these organizations, four headings were determined as follows: founding principles, legal doctrines, organizational structures and operations.

Founding Principles

Founding principles are important in affecting how a topic will be handled in legal doctrine, organizational structure and military operations. An organization's fundamentals are mostly revealed in the preamble of its founding documents. Upcoming crises and opportunities are evaluated by taking this institutional genesis into consideration and cannot be dissociated from each other. It is the same for how NATO and the SCO approach counter-terrorism.

NATO and the SCO are both regional security organizations, but they are quite different in terms of their founding principles. NATO, as one of the oldest regional security organizations, was founded during the Cold War era. To comprehend the essence of NATO, it is crucial to refer to the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty. The guarantee of mutual defense lies at the core of the organization. For this reason, the words "collective defense"¹⁴ can be underlined as the most important phrase in the document. In contrast, the SCO was established in 2001, ten years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and has no link to inter-block rivalry. Bo¹⁵ summarizes this aspect in the following sentence: "Unlike NATO, the SCO needs no enemy to justify its existence." Moreover, in another departure from NATO, the SCO does not require mutual defense from its members. Although joint military exercises are sometimes conducted, they are not implications of such a guarantee. In yet another contrast to NATO, the phrase "Comprehensive cooperation" that appears in the preamble of the SCO Charter¹⁶ can be underlined as the heart of the organization. Therefore, unlike NATO focusing on security vertically, the SCO has horizontal competence areas from security to economics.

The North Atlantic Treaty of NATO was conceived by taking an armed attack from another country or countries into consideration, and combating terrorism was included as an agenda item by NATO predominantly after the 9/11 terrorist

attacks. Contrastingly, the SCO was founded specifically for countering terrorism, separatism and extremism from the beginning. In the Charter of the SCO, combating terrorism was clearly articulated to be among the main goals and tasks.¹⁷ In addition to combating terrorism, other horizontal competences of the SCO, especially those related to economic development, also aim to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

In terms of principles stated in the establishing documents of these organizations, the North Atlantic Treaty articulates its principles as “democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.”¹⁸ Moreover, NATO allies declare their commitment to preserve “freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples.”¹⁹ From these principles, it can be argued that NATO was established with trust among its members and was based on shared values. Conversely, the principles presented in the preamble to the SCO Charter are referred to as the ‘Shanghai Spirit’ and includes “spirit of mutual trust, mutual advantage, equality, mutual consultations, respect for cultural diversity and aspiration for joint development.”²⁰ These principles were set as loose denominators to bring all SCO members together despite a lack of common areas of interest. Therefore, these principles can be evaluated as having stemmed from mutual mistrust among its members.

Moving from the principles to deeper value-based differences, firstly it can be argued that NATO is more sensitive to human rights and more loyal to legal documents in its actions, whereas the SCO is more inclined to use hard power in eliminating its problems and “has widely been regarded as either “value-free” in terms of political and human rights principles, or directly opposed to Western values in those spheres.”²¹ Secondly, NATO is composed of democratic countries having liberal perspectives whereas the SCO is composed of authoritarian countries with strong governments holding realist perspectives and trying to act comfortably without the limits set by an international organization. As a result of the comparison of these principles, it can be determined that NATO supports the spread of liberal democratic values and approaches security from a more holistic perspective. In contrast, the focus of the SCO is to provide security even if this requires repressive policies in practice, and the Shanghai Spirit provides the necessary basis for this.

Legal Doctrines

Creation of a legal doctrine in a given area bears significance in terms of building a basis for all other actions that will be held in the future, such as the establishment of new institutional branches or the launching of military operations. While defining sub-questions under this heading, the article written by Rose and Nestorovska²² provided inspiration on what needs to be included.

Definitions of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism

Definitions have the utmost importance in legal discourse because they are written to avoid ambiguity through explaining the meaning of a word. Comparing NATO and the SCO in terms of their counter-terrorism related definitions,

firstly, as shown in Table 2 below, both organizations have provided a definition of terrorism in their official documents. Additionally, unlike the SCO, NATO has also provided a definition of counter-terrorism in its official documents. Moreover, because the SCO takes terrorism into consideration along with separatism and extremism, these concepts were also provided by the SCO.

Secondly, NATO clearly states in its legal documents that the definitions of terrorism and counter-terrorism are not accepted NATO-wide. Because these definitions do not have NATO-wide acceptance, they are non-binding on NATO members. According to Sadik,²³ this situation hampers cohesion in NATO and reduces its strategic relevance in the international arena.

However, in the SCO, although the definition of terrorism was presented in legal documents as being accepted SCO-wide, in Article 1(2) of the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism,²⁴ it was articulated that, if broader application of these terms exists in the member states, then members can take their definitions into consideration. Related to the handicaps of this, a Note prepared by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights states that: “the lack of comprehensive, binding definitions of such terms and the possibility for State Parties to the Shanghai Convention to adopt their own and potentially broader national definitions of such terms has been considered as particularly problematic.”²⁵

Lastly, in both organizations, a dominating effect of powerful members on the provided definitions of terrorism can be observed. Namely, similarities between the terrorism definitions of these organizations and their strongest members draw attention. For instance, the definition of terrorism found in NATO’s Military Concept for Counter-Terrorism (MCCT) resembles that of the U.S. Department of Defense with some differences.²⁶ On the SCO side, the definition of terrorism from 2001 resembles that of the UN International Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism from 1999.²⁷ However, together with the provided definitions of separatism and extremism, it can be argued that the “three evils” approach was a sign of Chinese dominance in the SCO in 2001.²⁸ In comparison, the SCO’s definition of terrorism from 2009 had more commonalities with the Russian definition found in the Russian Federal Law on Counteraction against Terrorism from 2006.²⁹

Criminalization under National Jurisdiction

Criminalization under national jurisdictions is an important indication for the achievement of coherent, applicable and effective measures against terrorism. According to Rose and Nestorovska,³⁰ multilateral agreements necessitate transnational character in an incident for the establishment of criminal jurisdiction in a state, whereas regional agreements may engender softer obligations on its parties.

According to the result of the comparison of NATO and the SCO, it can be argued that NATO has no specific legal doctrine on criminalization of terrorism under the national jurisdiction of its member states. On the other hand, the SCO

Table 2. Definitions of Terrorism by NATO and the SCO.

	Definition of Terrorism
NATO ³¹	The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence, instilling fear and terror, against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, or to gain control over a population, to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.
SCO ³²	a) any act recognized as an offence in one of the treaties listed in the Annex to this Convention (hereinafter referred to as "the Annex") and as defined in this treaty; b) any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict or to cause major damage to any material facility, as well as to organize, plan, aid and abet such act, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate population, violate public security or compel public authorities or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, and prosecuted in accordance with the national laws of the Parties.
SCO ³³	"Terrorism" refers to an ideology of violence and practice of affecting the decision-making of the authorities or international organizations through the commission of or the threat of committing violent and (or) other criminal acts intimidating population and aimed at causing damage to individuals, society and state.

provides a very detailed legal base and guidance to its members on the criminalization of indicated terrorist acts under their national jurisdiction.³⁴

Prevention Measures

Prevention measures articulated in the legal documents of international organizations bear significance in terms of drawing a frame for expected activities from the member states in combating terrorism. Gunaratna³⁵ calls these measures a counter-terrorism toolkit and lists three kinds of counter-terrorism: tactical, operational (including kinetic and reactive measures), and strategic, including community engagement as well as rehabilitation and reintegration.

According to the comparison of NATO and the SCO, no direct reference could be found in their legal documents on preventive measures. However, although there is no clearly expressed line dedicated to preventive measures, both organizations perform counter-terrorism measures through their actions, such as the establishment of cooperative networks, the sharing of intelligence and the conducting of operations. Moreover, what is common in the legal doctrine of both organizations is the belief in the need for eliminating conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, such as poverty, illiteracy and social exclusion.³⁶

Intelligence Exchange

Exchange of intelligence is a significant part of preventive measures, which is why it has been examined under a separate heading. In a world where terrorism has no borders and cooperation among countries is essential for efficient counter-terrorism, intelligence exchange is the first measure on the list for fighting terrorism.

NATO prepared a legal doctrine for intelligence procedures through the Allied Joint Publication (AJP)2-series. The first Allied Joint Doctrine on intelligence was published in 2003 under the name AJP-2 Intelligence, Counterintelligence and Security and was revised in 2014 and 2016.³⁷ On the SCO side, intelligence exchange has been regulated via different documents, such as the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism from 2001; the Agreement on RATS between the Member States of the SCO from 2002,³⁸ the Agreement on the Database for the RATS of the SCO from 2004,³⁹ and the Convention of the SCO against Terrorism from 2009. In view of this, it can be argued that both organizations have comprehensively dealt with the issue of intelligence exchange in their legal documents, either as a whole in a separate document or in a dispersed way in many documents.

Extradition and Legal Assistance

Extradition and legal assistance are significant tools in the fight against terrorism both regionally and internationally. In combating transnational crimes such as terrorism, the need for accessing evidence from foreign jurisdictions is crucial.

In NATO, there is no legal regulation on extradition and legal assistance, and this topic was left to mutual agreements signed by NATO members. Most NATO members, which are also Council of Europe members, use the European Convention on Extradition⁴⁰ as a basis for such requests. On the SCO side, extradition and legal assistance were regulated in detail in the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of 2001 and in the Convention of the SCO against Terrorism of 2009.

Measures to Improve Compliance

Achieving compliance with the content of legal documents is one of the most important successes in multilateral agreements, because the implementation of such agreements is primarily based on the goodwill of the parties. Namely, organizations are largely reliant on volunteerism and do not possess formal legal remit to force members to implement decisions in their territory. Particularly, as a high security concern, when the topic is counter-terrorism, some members might be reluctant to act fully.

Compliance is a broad category, and improvement in the compliance of an organization's members can be achieved through various means. However, the following topics were selected for research: direct reference to compliance, reference on dispute resolution and reference on technical assistance.

Reference to compliance

Firstly, regarding NATO, there is no direct reference indicating the expectations placed on members for compliance with NATO decisions. On the other

hand, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, also known as the collective security clause, can be evaluated as the strongest commitment given in the realm of security.

In terms of the SCO, pursuant to Article 17 of the SCO Charter, member states are obliged to comply with the provisions of the Charter as well as the organization's other agreements and decisions, and a monitoring system was implemented for surveilling the compliance of states. Therefore, it can be asserted that there is a clear compliance reference in the founding document of the SCO.⁴¹

Dispute Settlement

It can be stated that both organizations have established mechanisms for dispute settlement, though not very formal ones. NATO issued a document called Resolution on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes and Differences between Members of NATO.⁴² For the SCO, Article 17 of the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism addressed possible disputes related to the convention and referred to consultation and negotiation among the members as a solution in such situations.⁴³ A similar reference sentence was found almost in all SCO documents.

Technical Assistance

Thirdly, both organizations provide technical assistance options for their members; NATO has offered direct support whereas the SCO has articulated technical assistance as an area of indirect responsibility. NATO has committed to assist the national efforts of its member states and has also offered support to its Allies in the MCCT under the heading of "capabilities."⁴⁴ However, the SCO has not offered a direct technical assistance option to its members,⁴⁵ and providing technical assistance is left to the responsibility of member states.

Organizational Structures

Institutional design bears the utmost importance in implementing doctrine in the field. For countering terrorism, working mechanisms and efficient workflows are crucial to the success of operations. While determining the sub-questions under this heading, inspiration was drawn from the article published by Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal⁴⁶ in which they question why institutions are designed in different ways.

In this part of the research, some of the characteristics of the branches in NATO and the SCO that were specifically created for countering terrorism or revised to better combat terrorism were compared.

Legal Personality

Under this heading, the question of whether NATO and the SCO and their counter-terrorism related branches have international and domestic legal personalities was researched. The question is significant because having such personalities gives the implication to gauge an organization's effectiveness in its region and the global arena.

According to the comparison of NATO and the SCO, it was found that both organizations have international legal personalities. However, NATO obtained this personality through its actions; namely, through concluding international agreements and benefitting from immunities and privileges from its members or third countries. Contrastingly, the SCO declared its international personality clearly in Article 15 of its founding treaty.⁴⁷ In terms of domestic legal personality, which refers to a personality effective in the legal systems of each member state, NATO, Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT) have domestic legal personalities; similarly, the SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) also have domestic legal personalities.

Membership and Decision-Making

In an organizational structure, several factors are significant: the number of members, the organization's components, the dominant position of certain members, whether membership is restrictive, inclusive, regional or universal and how decisions are made. Moreover, whether cooperative framework for third countries exists or whether entities other than states are accepted into these organizations are other questions to raise. Analyzing the membership structure of terrorism-specific branches is helpful for comprehending what kind of group handles counter-terrorism issues in NATO and the SCO as well as how.

According to the comparison of NATO and the SCO, it is obvious that NATO has more members and is more inclined to include new members from its region, whereas the SCO has fewer member states and is much slower in including new regional members. Secondly, decisions are made by consensus in both organizations, and neither NATO nor the SCO accept entities other than states as members. Thirdly, both organizations have some programs for establishing formal ties with third countries, such as NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the SCO's dialogue partners. Lastly, there are dominant member states in both organizations, such as the U.S. in NATO and Russia and China in the SCO.

Centralization of Tasks

While researching centralization, Lipson, Snidal and Koremenos⁴⁸ posed the following question: "Are some important institutional tasks performed by a single focal entity or not?" Mindful of this question, the centralization of counter-terrorism-related tasks in NATO and the SCO were compared because of its importance in the effectiveness of collective effort within each organization's framework.

It was concluded that, in terms of the centralization of tasks, although both organizations have working organs to combat terrorism, the SCO is more centralized than NATO via its permanent body, RATS. It should also be emphasized that the SCO has "a minimal institutional structure and an extensive informal cooperation network" as indicated by Maduz.⁴⁹ For NATO, it was determined that counter-terrorism-related responsibilities were divided among different institutional branches.

Scope of Issues Covered

In this section, NATO and the SCO were compared in terms of the issues they both cover regarding counter-terrorism. This question is believed to bear importance because terrorism can be dealt with in both broader and narrower terms; however, which method brings success is unknown. While handling terrorism in a narrower sense might bring more focus, combining terrorism with other relevant topics such as violent extremism might also bring more comprehensive results.

According to the comparison, it can be argued that NATO's counter-terrorism approach is more focused and narrower, whereas the SCO treats terrorism from a broader perspective. Before all, NATO's definition only stresses terrorism itself. It is also known that NATO members try to exclude it from efforts countering violent extremism.⁵⁰ However, the SCO approaches terrorism together with the notions of separatism and extremism, their "three evils." Since the foundation of the SCO, it has been believed that terrorism, separatism and extremism are interrelated and should therefore be addressed collectively.

Research Facilities

In an organizational structure, having research and development facilities is of the utmost importance, especially in an age of information and technology. This also applies to the study of terrorism since terrorism trends are constantly evolving, and states and organizations need to stay one step ahead to prevent attacks.

In the comparison of NATO and the SCO, it can be argued that NATO has established more mechanisms for fostering research, development and training for the prevention and combating of terrorism than the SCO. Although the SCO has clauses committed to research and education in its legal documents, the only concrete action taken thus far has been the establishment of a university.

Organization Budget

The budget of an organization is a significant indicator that reflects the goals it has set for the future. Namely, an organization's budget can be evaluated as its mission statement. Although a high budget is no guarantee of an institution's success, it can be argued that it can be an important asset if used reasonably to achieve goals.

With NATO, the North Atlantic Council is responsible for the approval of its budget and exercises financial oversight over the budget's management. Moreover, in NATO, there are direct and indirect contributions from member states. For the SCO, Article 12 of its charter states that contributions to the budget of the SCO will be used for financing permanent bodies,⁵¹ and the Council of Heads of Government was referred to as the body responsible for budgetary approval. Moreover, the contribution of powerful members to the budgets of these organizations draws attention, especially when their effect on decision-making is considered.

Operations

Military operations bear importance for improving readiness through simulated or real-time exercises. Due to increased attention in combating global terrorism after the 9/11 attacks, multinational military operations gained in significance for regional security organizations like NATO and the SCO. For this reason, conducting exercises is crucial in a multinational environment in order to achieve interoperability among participating nations. The objectives of a military operation can be to practice and test joint operations, to demonstrate military capacity and readiness, and to identify areas for future improvement. In this section, NATO and SCO counter-terrorism operations were compared.

History and Operational Objectives

In terms of counter-terrorism operations, it can be argued that regional organizations largely began counter-terrorism operations following the 9/11 attacks.

According to the comparison of NATO's and the SCO's counter-terrorism operations, it can be stated that NATO is considerably more experienced than the SCO. In terms of launching real-time operations, no regional security organization can compete with NATO. Although both organizations began conducting counter-terrorism operations following 9/11, NATO's prior exercises brought considerable cumulative knowledge. NATO's experience, dating back to the 1950s, also affected harmony among allies in the field. When counter-terrorism operations started after 9/11, NATO members had already achieved a level of interoperability afield. In stark contrast, by starting military operations in 2003, the SCO's experience in counter-terrorism operations lags far behind NATO. However, it could be argued that counter-terrorism operations are simply one amongst a number of missions that NATO conducts, whereas counter-terrorism is the focus of almost all SCO operations.

Number and Scope of Operations

Due to the evolving nature of terrorism and the expected threat from terrorists, the number and scope of counter-terrorism operations differ in each organization. Moreover, operational objectives differ from each other, and operations are planned taking current needs or future targets into consideration.

According to the comparison of NATO and the SCO, it can be argued that both organizations have conducted a considerable number of counter-terrorism operations, whereas NATO's main asset is its experience in large-scale real time operations, such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Because of this, it can be stated that since 9/11, NATO has been in the field with real-time counter-terrorism operations, while the SCO has conducted approximately 25 military exercises specifically for combating terrorism, separatism and extremism since its establishment in 2001. Moreover, it should be highlighted that both NATO and the SCO conduct exercises for countering cyber-terrorism as well.

Secondly, NATO allows for the participation of non-NATO countries and other international organizations in its military operations. In terms of the SCO, guest attendants such as third states and international organizations are only ac-

cepted as observers in military operations under certain circumstances. Apart from this, in both organizations, the composition of members in operations changes depending on the scenario; namely, some operations are conducted with all members while others have limited participation.

Lastly, in both organizations, scenarios for military operations are largely decided based on actual needs and priorities. For example, with the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, NATO military operations focused primarily on collective defense and deterrence scenarios.⁵² In a similar vein, on the SCO side, the scenario of Peace Mission 2007 concerned an anti-government action by an international terrorist group⁵³ and resembled the events that occurred in Andijan, Uzbekistan in 2005.

Possibilities for Cooperation between NATO and the SCO

The official documents of NATO and the SCO encourage and allow these organizations to establish cooperation with other relevant international institutions. Despite performing counter-terrorism activities in the same region, no official contact has been made between NATO and the SCO. However, it should be emphasized that although there has been no contact between NATO and the SCO, SCO members do have bilateral dialogue channels with NATO. Bailes and Thordisardottir⁵⁴ offer two hypotheses for such institutional non-contact: either NATO and the SCO are opponents and counterbalancing organizations, or NATO and the SCO are not alike and therefore cooperation is irrelevant. Regarding positioning, as an organization, the SCO was founded to balance NATO, and there is considerable literature on this. Documents published in the West represented the SCO as the NATO of the East,^{55,56} a “new and improved Asian Warsaw Pact, wielding large armies, big economies, nukes – and lots of oil/gas,”⁵⁷ an “Anti-American axis,”⁵⁸ “a politico-security bulwark against the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) into Central Asia”⁵⁹ and “the institutionalization of the opposition of Moscow and Beijing to the American-dominated, unipolar international order.”⁶⁰ In addition to these articles questioning whether the SCO is an Eastern counterbalance to NATO, some authors also questioned the SCO’s power by contemplating whether the SCO is a paper tiger.^{61,62} In terms of balancing the West, it has also been argued that although the SCO cannot counter the U.S. militarily or politically, it can use soft balancing tools effectively to counter the U.S.-led international order.⁶³ However, there are some authors who claim that the SCO is neither a military alliance nor a collective security institution, in contrast to the way it is portrayed.^{64–70} Therefore, just as Bailes and Dunay⁷¹ have asserted, “the SCO cannot be exempt from questions about its legitimacy and whether it is ultimately a force for good or ill as seen from the viewpoint of both its own members’ populations and the outside world.”

However, despite their differences, it has been argued that NATO and the SCO may be complementary for global counter-terrorism efforts, with what Bailes and Thordisarottir call “hidden synergy.”⁷² First, NATO and the SCO share a common enemy in terrorism. Therefore, even though their approach towards

combating terrorism differs in their legal doctrines, organizational structures and military operations, NATO and the SCO have a shared concern for terrorism. In particular, following NATO's decision for the gradual withdraw of forces from the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan,⁷³ establishing a partnership with the SCO would be helpful for NATO to be institutionally informed about extremist organizations and terrorists in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As Boland⁷⁴ states: "U.S. and Coalition forces cannot stay in Afghanistan forever. But geography is harder to escape and SCO participants, as Afghanistan's neighbors in the region, will remain." Collaboration between NATO and the SCO may also be to the SCO's advantage, because NATO has accumulated more knowledge and experience on counterinsurgency with real-time operations since the 9/11 terrorist attacks than any other regional security organization.

Moreover, cooperating with the SCO may also give NATO an opportunity to gather around the same table with several other significant countries at the same time, including new SCO members India and Pakistan. Although it has been questioned as to whether conflict or cooperation in combating terrorism can be achieved with the membership of India and Pakistan, it has also been discussed that the collaboration of India and Pakistan under the SCO will have a positive effect on their tense relationship, especially when the dominance and engagement of China and Russia in the organization are taken into consideration.⁷⁵

Consequently, despite the differences in their founding principles as well as legal doctrines, organizational structures and field operations for combating terrorism, contact between NATO and the SCO would be advantageous for both organizations as they each strive for stability and peace, in addition to their global counter-terrorism efforts. Cooperation among these organizations, which between them include most of the world's nuclear powers and every UNSC permanent member, may create an unequalled synergy against terrorism. Mindful of this, while the doors are still open for contact between NATO and the SCO, a practical push for interaction could begin with ad-hoc cooperation for tackling individual cases, such as in a counter-narcotics operation.

Conclusions

The 9/11 terrorist attacks vaulted counter-terrorism to the top of the security agenda of every organization, including NATO and the SCO. In this article, the counter-terrorism efforts of NATO and the SCO were examined through their founding principles, legal doctrines, organizational structures and military operations.

The findings of the research assert that, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, NATO and the SCO made efforts to adapt to the era's new security challenge, terrorism. This assertion can be made because of the adaptations in legal doctrines and transformations in organizational structures and field practices that were implemented in the period after 9/11 to better combat terrorism. Further, it was discovered that the democratic structure and liberal founding principles of NATO and the autocratic structure and realist principles of the SCO gave birth

to different security arrangements regarding counter-terrorism. The effects of such differences can be observed in their legal doctrines, organizational structures and operational domains. Namely, it was proven that the founding principles of NATO and the SCO determined their counter-terrorism policies and implementations.

With its new members, the SCO is a significant actor in global counter-terrorism efforts, while NATO is a valuable actor in combating terrorism with its real-time experience in Afghanistan since the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, in terms of the possibility of cooperation between these organizations, based on the comparative findings of their counter-terrorism efforts, it can be asserted that NATO and the SCO could cooperate in the field on a case-by-case basis when their interests coincide, since both organizations are dedicated to fighting terrorism. Collaboration such as this would certainly develop the capacity and contribute to the success of counter-terrorism efforts in a region that both organizations are concerned about.

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