

The Case for Bringing Syria Into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

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Global Research, January 27, 2015
[Oriental Review](#)

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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Syria is ground-zero in the battle between the Resistant & Defiant (R&D) multipolar states and the unipolar world, and the resolution of the conflict would therefore have enormous implications for both sides. Thus far, however, the only R&D states that have been offering substantial support to Damascus in its [war on terror](#) have been [Russia](#) and [Iran](#), while the rest of them simply make [symbolic statements](#) which, although [supportive of the cause](#), basically serve in ceding the on-the-ground initiative to the unipolar front. The multipolar world needs to understand that all of its adherents have an existential stake in tangibly assisting the democratically elected government there and ending the War on Syria in its favor, and the inclusion of Syria into the SCO would facilitate this and be a strong step in the direction of global multipolarity.

The following are the legal, military, and strategic cases for bringing Syria into the SCO:

Legal

The [Charter of the SCO](#) shows that it is easily possible to bring Syria into the grouping, provided that the political will to do so is present. Let's take a closer look:

Article 3:

This section crucially mentions about how the SCO works to promote peace, security, and confidence "in the region", but the 'region' itself is never defined. It's left purposely abstract, much as the concepts of 'North Atlantic' and 'Europe' are when it comes to unipolar institutions. For example, about [95% of Turkey](#) is located in Asia, yet it's still a member of NATO and wants to join the EU. This shows that certain regions can extend well past what their expected geographic boundaries may be.

As for the SCO, many people assume it's restricted to Central Asia, but that's not true. Neither China nor Russia are Central Asian countries, with about a quarter of Russia even being in Europe. Not only that, but looking at the SCO's dialogue partners and observers, we see such states as Turkey and Sri Lanka, Mideast and South Asian states respectively. This means that we can draw the conclusion that the SCO's 'region', so to speak, is Eurasia, and that if Turkey can be made a dialogue partner, then neighboring Syria most certainly has the same right as well.



Map of SCO: Green: members; Light blue: observers; Dark blue: dialogue partners.

Article 14:

This important part of the Charter says that a state or international organization needs to be either a dialogue partner or observer in order to cooperate with the SCO. Using at Turkey as an example, Syria can become a simple dialogue partner in order to begin reaping the expected dividends of the SCO. The process for doing this, as according to the document, is “established by a special agreement of member States.” Although the specifics aren’t provided, Article 16 can be cited to draw more information about this process and serve as an informative guideline.

Article 16:

To quote the most relevant part of the Article:

“Should one or several member States be not interested in implementing particular cooperation projects of interest to other member States, non-participation of the abovesaid member States in these projects shall not prevent the implementation of such cooperation projects by the member States concerned and, at the same time, shall not prevent the said member States from joining such projects at a later stage.”

This can be taken to mean that the SCO does not have to be unanimous in its decision to approve cooperation projects, and that a dissenting state cannot throw a wrench in the process for everyone else. Therefore, looking at this legal framework, we can see that Syria absolutely has the legal grounds to cooperate with the SCO if the SCO so chooses. This is why Afghanistan, an observer state, is legally eligible for SCO support, but Syria has yet to be until it defines its official relationship with the multipolar institution.

As is seen from the three highlighted Articles of the SCO Charter, there are no legal obstacles to it cooperating with Syria as a dialogue partner. The only thing holding this proposal back is that the benefits of doing so haven’t been properly articulated until now, ergo the following two sections.

Military

Syria is facing the full brunt of force that the unipolar world is applying against the multipolar one (save for an outright conventional war), and the latter must comprehensively assist its fellow state in order to learn from its experiences. It is not to suggest that Chinese and Kyrgyz troops, for example, should directly engage in combat there, but that all the SCO’s member-state militaries should provide more on-~~the~~the-ground advisory support and/or training to their Syrian counterparts. After all, the organization is officially united in combating the three evils of terrorism, separatism, and extremism (as outlined in the Charter), and Syria is waging war against all of these at the moment, which is epitomized by its struggle against ISIL. Therefore, the country could be a vital training ground for the organization as it [prepares to deal](#) with the clearer and closer objective of [partaking in Afghan stabilization efforts](#), and it would also be an invaluable complementary exercise in defending the SCO member states themselves from any [future destabilization](#) modeled off of the Syrian scenario (i.e. the externally managed Color Revolution/Unconventional War hybrid supported by terrorist/mercenary outsourcing).

Strategic

There are three major strategic goals that would be advanced if Syria were incorporated into

the SCO framework as a dialogue partner, although this brief listing should not at all be seen as exhaustive:

Institutionalization and Multilateralization:

If the proposal is successful, then Russian support for Syria would be institutionalized within a larger, allied multilateral framework. This would create a counter-coalition that abides by UN legislation and is genuinely dedicated to combating terrorism, unlike the US-led 'anti-ISIL' coalition (which is more aptly described as a 'Regime Change Coalition'), and its establishment would prove to be a demonstrable instrument of multipolarity's influence in global affairs.

Proactively Assist A Brave And Beleaguered Ally:

The designation of Syria as an SCO dialogue partner and the subsequent opening of multilateral support to the country would give R&D states the initiative in helping to resolve the conflict. Such a move would place the Western and GCC countries on the strategic defensive for once, thus forcing them into a reactionary role and flipping the tables on their former prerogatives that were previously taken for granted. The resultant reversal could stun the aggressors' preplanned strategies and shift the war's dynamic in a way that may open up the opportunity for prominent pro-government gains.

Make A Clear Stand Against Unipolar Aggression:

✘ The inclusion of Syria under the SCO umbrella would be recognition of the fact that the multipolar world has finally made the leap from indirectly [challenging](#) unipolarity via [economic means](#) to directly confronting it geopolitically. It would undoubtedly show that multilateral R&D institutions can realistically defend and push back against their aggressive unipolar counterparts, which would signal that multipolarity is no longer a vague, theoretical hope, but a concrete and tangible force in international relations.

Concluding Thoughts

The objective of the article was to shed light on the significance of Syria's possible inclusion into SCO structures and the utility that this would have for the global multipolar movement. As was outlined in the first section, there are no legal prohibitions preventing this from occurring, as the organization's Charter clearly evidences that such a move is possible and could happen swiftly if the political will is mustered. Should this come to pass, the SCO and its associated R&D states would heap invaluable benefit from the military lessons that can be learned by assisting the Syrian Arab Army in its fight against unipolarity's vanguard elements of destabilization and destruction, since its member states are likely to be the next targets of these mechanisms after they're perfected in the Syrian theater. Just as important, meanwhile, are the strategic benefits that would come with the SCO's assistance to Syria, since such measures would vividly prove that R&D states can in fact succeed in striking back against unipolarity. *With the immense benefits of Syria's suggested association with the SCO having been descriptively articulated, it is now high time for the organization to take the courageous step in turning this vision into a reality and definitively stand up to the unipolar world.*

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