The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Balancing Mechanism for Security and Stability

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Having been little known to date, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an emergent regional body whose presence is increasing in the international arena. The SCO appeared as a low profile structure from the necessity of solving the border issues between its members and evolved into a growing organization with focus on the security and economic cooperation.

Although the SCO embodies both security and economic aspects, this article sheds light on the former in tackling the problems of each of the member states and the issues that they face within and beyond their border (terrorism, extremism, organized crime, drug trafficking, cyber security, joint exercises, natural resources, energy security, etc.). Neither being an organization directed against others, nor a military alliance, the SCO looks to create a stable and secure environment for its members, in respecting the non-interference in domestic affairs, promoting the status quo in the region, and fighting against non-traditional threats posed by non-state actors. Thus, this article aims to show how the SCO members, without being free from their divergences and difficulties, were able to create a framework for a multilateral cooperation to overcome their rivalries and manage their problems in focusing on common interests (security, stability, cooperation and development).

Taking into account the fact that neighboring countries are willing to become full member states, the article discusses possibilities and obstacles for enlargement of the organization. Without the intention of making a definitive judgment on the SCO, this article will try not only to understand the background, mechanism, motivations and utility of this organization, but also to analyze its strengths, limits, and potential roles that the SCO could have for Eurasia as well as for international affairs.

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Vietnam Mass Organizations Are Changing into NGOs: The Vietnamese Seek Solidarity with ASEAN Civil Society at ASEAN People’s Forum-6 in Hanoi / 2010

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“ASEAN People’s Forum (APF) - 6 in Hanoi/2010” was held in Hanoi, capital of Vietnam, from October 23 to 26, 2010. ASEAN has started implementing “ASEAN Charter” and a roadmap toward becoming a community by 2015. This process has a direct impact on all people in ASEAN,
and requires the participation of the people of ASEAN countries as active subjects. Regional integration should begin with and be based on the people’s integration. One such initiative for people’s integration into the life of ASEAN has been the ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC)/ASEAN People’s Forum (APF), a regional forum organized in connection with the annual ASEAN Summit. The ACSC/APF was initiated by Malaysia in 2005, and organized in the Philippines in 2006, Singapore in 2007, Thailand in 2009, and the ASEAN People’s Forum in 2010 was organized in Vietnam. In this context, I will try to consider the following three key issues; At first, although Vietnam adapted a market-economy, Vietnam is a socialist country politically. Then, there are no local NGOs in Vietnam theoretically. What is the reason why the government of Vietnam as a socialist country, however, had decided to be the host country and hold the ASEAN Peoples’ Forum-9 (APF-9) in Hanoi from 23 to 26, 2010? APF-9 is the annual conference of NGOs and Civil Societies in the region of ASEAN. Secondly, what is the reason why the government of Vietnam as a socialist country will recognize and accept an application to be a local NGO from Mass-Organization and Peoples in Vietnam, and to order them to be a local NGO from Mass-Organization and Peoples in Vietnam under the official documents by Vietnamese government. Thirdly, although there are already three types of actual NGOs, Ministry-umbrella NGOs, Mass-Organization NGOs and Peoples’ Private-NGOs in Vietnam today, what is the reason why there are three types of NGOs in Vietnam? About these three key issues, I will try to analyze these three issues from the view point of international relations as NGO in this paper. Between July 2010 and September 2012 I have visited Vietnam 8 times to research this topic.

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Modern History of “Traditional Chiefdom” in Niger: Criticism of African Civil Society Discourse

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After the 1980s, rethinking state-society relationships is one of the most important issues in African social science. The “African civil society” approach, identities social subjectivity and creativity against the state, which has become strong trend when studying the “democratization” of African countries through the 1990s. However, many social scientists of Niger studies have adopted critical stances against this approach. These social scientists have not neglected the state-society relationship, instead, they have made bigger issue of the relationship between external discourse and “traditional chieftaincy”.

This article attempts to shed light on the problem of African civil society approach through an analysis of the discourses on chiefdom in western Niger.

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