

Third, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is Russia-dominated and has a program to fight international terrorists. In June 2002, Russian, Kazakh and Kyrgyz troops under CIS command began joint rapid deployment exercises in Central Asia. The troops are learning how to repel attacks by international terrorists and extremists.⁶⁷ Two other regional institutions of which Russia is a member are the Conference on Interactions and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). CICA aims to create a security framework for Asia along the same lines as the OSCE in Europe. In 1999 the members pledged to refrain from the threat or use of force, respect territorial integrity and practice peaceful settlement of disputes. However, while it may contribute to countering future terrorist threats, CICA's ultimate goal is to form a secure zone through the Asian continent. In comparison, the SCO is a smaller regional grouping which brings together China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It was founded in 1996 to broker border disputes and now has a particular interest in expanding economic ties as well as opposing the United States' unilateralist policies and curbing US power – particular in Central Asia.

NATO's future actions in Eurasia must carefully take into account the interests of these regional groupings and attempt to work with them in preserving stability in the region. Most significantly, involvement in the region must not only be military and ties should be carefully constructed to take into account well-documented concerns about authoritarian governance and lack of democracy and respect for human rights across Central Asia. This is an area in which cooperation with Russia will be key to the long-term success of any actions taken.

⁶⁶ "Fact Sheet on Centrasbat 2000", www.unembassy.uz/centcom/military.html.

⁶⁷ *UPI*, June 13, 2002