

SCO SUMMIT 2025: OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

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The first week of September 2025 saw a series of important diplomatic events in China. China hosted the 25th meeting of Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in northern Chinese city of Tianjin on September 01, 2025. Following the Council of Heads of States, there was a “SCO Plus” meeting on the topic “Turning Multilateralism into Action, Ensuring Regional Security, and Promoting Sustainable Development”. Chinese President Xi Jinping chaired both summits. On 3 September 2025, Beijing staged a significant military parade in six years to mark the 80th anniversary of victory over Imperial Japan and the end of the Second World War.

The Tianjin Declaration 2025 released at the end of SCO Heads of State Summit expressed concerns over geopolitical and geoeconomic disruptions caused by United States. The declaration stated that “geopolitical confrontations are intensifying, posing threats and challenges to the security and stability of the world and the SCO region. The global economy, particularly international trade and financial markets, is suffering severe shock¹”. Pushing back against US-led block formation and pursuing militaristic foreign policy against China and its allies, the declaration read “Member states reaffirm their opposition to addressing international and regional hot-button issues through bloc-based and confrontational thinking.... Member states emphasize that cooperation within the SCO framework will lay the foundation for forming an equal and indivisible security architecture in Eurasia”.

At the SCO Plus Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping outlined China’s vision for a ‘stable and peaceful’ world order. He proposed a new initiative titled “Global Governance Initiative” as an alternate to what China describes as block politics and cold war mentality practised by the United States. The initiative centres on three pillars: primacy of United Nations and ‘international law’, coordinate global actions through SCO and pursuit of multilateralism as opposed to unilateralism of certain major powers.

The SCO Plus Summit was well attended by leaders of member states, the observer state Mongolia, dialogue partners — Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Turkey, Egypt, guest of the chairing side Turkmenistan, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam, as well as heads of executive bodies of the UN, SCO, CIS, ASEAN, CSTO, EEC, CICA, ECO, AIB.

The third and last major event in Beijing was the victory day parade to mark the 80th anniversary of victory over Imperial Japan and the end of the Second World War. Breaking from the traditional cycle of decade-year National Day parades, this was Xi’s fourth large-scale military review (following those in 2015, 2018, and 2019) and considered the largest in the Party’s history. China unveiled a huge arsenal of weapons including nuclear missiles with a global reach. The display was not just a look at where China has been, or how far it has come – it was a showcase of where the country is going in terms of military modernisation.

President Trump was quick to downplay the significance of Chinese military display and the threat of China-Russia axis. He remarked that “We have the most strongest military in the world by far. They would never use their military on us as that would be the worst thing they could ever do”. Trump was dismissive of Chinese threat because he correctly understands that China does not have the political will to confront US militarily at the moment.

¹ “Full Text: Tianjin Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” September 02, 2025, <https://dirittocinese.com/2025/09/02/full-text-tianjin-declaration-of-the-council-of-heads-of-state-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization/>

Although China signaled diplomatic and military strength via SCO Summit and military parade, it faces significant challenges in displacing United States as a dominant power. Despite significant advances in economic and military domains over the last two decades, China is unwilling to challenge US-led liberal order. It has not been able to translate its economic strength into political influence that can shake the foundations of American power. China is a pragmatic power dominated by reformist/ business-oriented faction of Communist Party of China (CPS) which prioritizes accommodation with US as opposed to hardliners pro Mao group. China deploys its hard power only in a defensive/reactive mode when US openly challenges her redlines e.g. in Taiwan and South China Sea etc.

Multiple statements from China's top leadership in past several years indicates China's desire to work with US for "win-win" outcomes. For example, the read out of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding a recent telephone call between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump read: "President Xi stressed the vital importance of China-U.S. relations. China and the United States are fully capable of helping each other succeed and prospering together for the good of the two countries and the whole world. For that vision to materialize, both sides need to work hard and in the same direction, so as to realize mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation. The recent consultation between Chinese and U.S. officials reflected the spirit of equality, respect and mutual benefit ²".

China has shied away from transforming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) into an "Asian NATO". The security agenda of SCO is limited so counterterrorism and anti-separatism which makes this organization inward looking. Moreover, most of the members of SCO are American agents and aligned with US strategic agenda. This prevents SCO to become a cohesive anti-American grouping even if China attempts to change its orientation in future. China is likely to keep projecting groupings like SCO and BRICS as an alternate to Western security and economic order but in substance it will remain a paper tiger.

How should the Muslim world respond to these developments? The visionless 'Muslim rulers' wants to either make us subordinate to any one of US or China or adopt "no-camp politics" posture. Both positions are product of a defeatist mindset. Muslims must understand that there is no good either from US or China. Both are colonial powers whose share common aim to subdue Islamic world and are robbing it of its immense wealth and natural resources. Muslims must strive to re-establish the Khilafah (Caliphate) State which will deal with major powers with equality and strength. Khilafah will not be part of any alliances led by Kuffar be it SCO or NATO or BRICS. The Islamic Khilafah State will establish relations with other nations on the basis of Islam and not so-called national interests. Sincere elements within Muslim political medium and ruling class should embrace the Islamic vision so that the Islamic State makes a comeback in international arena like our glorious past.

It is Allah's (swt) divine guidance that will prevent the humanity from falling into abyss of Western or Chinese capitalism. This can only happen when Islam is presented by a state at the global level. A state that will expose the brutalities of contemporary major powers and give humanity a divine alternate that will liberate it from clutches of slavery and spread justice around the world.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran: **كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾** ***You are the best community ever raised for humanity—you encourage good, forbid evil, and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them are faithful, but most are rebellious.*** [Surah Aal-i Imran 3:110].

² "President Xi Jinping Speaks with U.S. President Donald J. Trump on the Phone," Ministry of Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China, September 19th, 2025, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/zyxw/202509/t20250919_11712169.html