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SCO Tianjin Summit 2025: A Paradigm Shift towards Making Multipolar World Order

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Abstract: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), established in 2001, has evolved from a regional security mechanism into a pivotal inter-governmental organization with a global strategic footprint. The 2025 SCO Summit in Tianjin represents a definitive paradigm shift, underscoring the organization's ambition to actively shape a more multipolar world order. Marked by unprecedented attendance, the summit culminated in the Tianjin Declaration, a document expressing a collective commitment to principles of justice, equality, and mutual respect in international affairs. Key outcomes included the advancement of a Global Governance Initiative and a decisive push to establish an SCO Development Bank. These initiatives directly challenge the existing, Western-dominated international financial and political architecture, aiming to provide alternatives for developing nations. The summit, therefore, signifies the SCO's transition from a forum for regional consultation to a proactive coalition advocating for substantive structural reform in global governance, accelerating the transition towards a multipolar international system.

Keywords: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Shanghai Spirit, Shanghai Five, Multipolar World Order, Global Governance Initiative, SCO Development Bank.

Introduction:

The 25th meeting of the heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), commonly known as 'The SCO Tianjin Summit 2025', was held from August 31 to September 1, 2025, in Tianjin, China. It was the largest summit in SCO's history. The SCO holds its key meeting, with participation of the heads of state and the heads of government, on annual basis. In 2025, at Tianjin, it was the fifth time that China hosted the summit meeting. The SCO is the world's largest regional organization in terms of geographic scope and population, covering around 25% of the world's total area (80% of Eurasia's land mass) and 40% of the world population, and a quarter of the world's GDP. In terms of geographic coverage and population size, it is the largest regional organization in the world. [1]

The SCO has ten members: India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. Including heads of these member states, the SCO Summit Conference 2025 was attended by leaders from more than 20 countries and heads of 10 international organization.[2] Such large participation of global leaders attracted special attention of the international media and analysts dealing with international affairs, geopolitics, geo-economics, and geo-security. At the end of the Summit Conference, a comprehensive joint statement - 'Tianjin Declaration' - was issued, which emphasized on strengthening investment and cooperation in various areas among all member states for ensuring sustainable development at regional and global level, promoting international peace and security, and resolving global conflicts through peaceful means. Though, SCO hold its summit conference regularly, yet Tianjin Conference 2025 has attained special significance as a 'paradigm shift' for expediting emergence of new multipolar world order because it symbolizes a transition of 'global power balance from west to the east' and from 'global north to the global south'.

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This paper explores the genesis and evolution of SCO, highlighting growth of its diplomatic clout and influence since its inception and significance of SCO Tianjin Summit Meeting 2025 as a paradigm shift towards emerging multipolar world order.

The Genesis of the SCO: From Shanghai Five to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

The genesis of SCO is linked with the concepts of 'Shanghai Spirit' and 'Shanghai Five'. The Shanghai Five was formed in 1996 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to build mutual trust and to resolve border disputes. Shanghai Five, later on evolved into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2001 when Uzbekistan also joined this organization. [3] The SCO was, primarily, organized to focus on regional security, economic, and cultural cooperation against terrorism, separatism, and extremism. "In 1996 and 1997, the Heads of States of aforementioned five countries came together and signed, in Shanghai and Moscow respectively, the 'Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions'[4] and the 'Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions.[5] In the summit meetings between 1998 and 2000, which were held in Almaty, Bishkek and Dushanbe respectively, the Member States consulted on ways to increase security in border region, as well as, on political, economic and security issues.[6] Therefore, it is correct to say that 'Shanghai Five' was a predecessor regional organization of the SCO.

In Heads of State Meeting of Shanghai five, which was held in Shanghai on 14-15 June 2001, the Member States decided to transform the Shanghai Five into another regional organization, which should carry out more effective cooperation for combating threats of terrorism, separatism and radicalism. In this context, a Joint Declaration admitting Uzbekistan as member of the Shanghai Five mechanism was adopted and the 'Declaration on the Establishment of Shanghai Cooperation Organization' was signed by six Member Countries. In addition, 'Shanghai Convention on Combatting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism' was also signed in the meeting. [7]

The 'Shanghai Spirit' is an internal guiding principle for the SCO. It is described by: mutual trust; mutual benefit, equality; consultation; and respect for diversity of civilizations and aspiration for collective development. The 'Shanghai Spirit' is consistent with the essence of the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence'[8] and is the core shared value of the SCO members. The SCO uses these principles to foster cooperation while upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, avoiding alignment against any other countries, and working through consensus. "The great idea of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which was jointly proposed by China, India and Myanmar back in the 1950s, has been upheld by China ever since. They include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. These principles have guided China's [foreign] policy with neighbours in the past six decades and such a policy by China has helped to foster continued progress in our region." [9]

Since its inception and transformation from 'Shanghai Five' to 'Shanghai Cooperation Organization', in 2001, the SCO has gradually and consistently consolidated and expanded, though very carefully and cautiously. As said earlier, Uzbekistan was the first country to join the Shanghai Five to form the foundation of the SCO. After 25 years of its existence, the SCO has added only four members and its current membership included ten member states, whereas as many more states are keenly interested to join the organization. India and Pakistan was accorded SCO membership in 2017, whereas Iran and Belarus were admitted in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

Declaration on the Establishment of the SCO, and SCO's Principles

'Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization', was issued after the meeting of the heads of state of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 2001. The 'Declaration' clearly stated that "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization aims at: strengthening mutual trust, friendship and good neighborliness between the member states; encouraging effective cooperation between them in the political, trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, educational, energy, transport, environmental and other fields; making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region and establishing new, democratic, just and rational international political and economic order." [10]

By acknowledging that "the Shanghai Spirit formed in the process of the Shanghai Five development, described by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, joint consultations, respect for cultural diversity and aspiration for collective development, is an invaluable asset gained by the countries of the region over the

years of cooperation”^[11], the Declaration reiterated that “the states members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization firmly adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, principles of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and mutual benefit, resolution of all issues through mutual consultations, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use or threat of use of military force, and renunciation of unilateral military superiority in neighboring areas.”^[12]

Contrary to the impression created by the United States and many other Western countries, the Declaration clarified in unambiguous words that “the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is not an alliance directed against other states and regions, and it adheres to the principle of openness.”^[13] It also expressed its readiness to develop dialogue, and cooperation of all kinds with other states and relevant international and regional organizations, that share the objectives and goals of cooperation in the framework of the organization.

The SCO Declaration identified its priority for regional security and the Organization’s willingness to take necessary measures for combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism by establishing a regional anti-terrorist structure with headquarters located in Bishkek. It expressed Organizations future plans for ensuring cooperation in curbing illicit trafficking in arms and narcotic drugs, illegal migration and other types of criminal activity.^[14] In order to coordinate cooperation and organize interaction between the competent ministries and departments of the member states, a Council of National Coordinators of the member states was also established. While signing the Declaration, the heads of the member states firmly believed that the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will introduce a new era in the development of cooperation among the member states.^[15]

Legal Framework and SCO’s Charter

As mentioned earlier that ‘Shanghai Five’ was founded in 1996, two main treaties, ‘Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions’, and the ‘Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions’ signed in Shanghai and Moscow.^[16] In the later meetings of the organizations, it was discussed that the organization's mandate should also extend to economic and political aspects that would benefit each country's state.^[17] The Declaration for establishment of the SCO and was issued on June 15, 2001.^[18] The Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was signed on June 7, 2002, in St. Petersburg, Russia, by the founding member states.^[19] The Charter became into force with effect from September 19, 2003 after the required ratification as stipulated in Article 21 of the Charter. Pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter was registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations. Thus, the SCO attained the status of a regional organization recognized the United Nations.

According to the Article 15- ‘Legal Capacity, of its Charter’^[20] - subject to international law, the SCO has international legal capacity. It shall have such legal capacity in the territory of each member State, as required, to achieve its goals and tasks. The SCO enjoy the rights of a legal person and may, in particular conclude: treaties; acquire movable and immovable property and dispose of it; appear in court as litigant or defendant; open accounts and make monetary transactions’^[21]

The Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization comprises 26 articles. It was signed, on 7 June 2002, in St. Petersburg, Russia, during the SCO Heads of State Summit. The Charter formalized the organization's goals, structure, and principles, and it officially entered into force on September 19, 2003. The process of ratification of the SCO Charter by six founding member states was quite length and very deliberate. It took almost more than year for the SCO Charter to be ratified by all member as following: China (25 December 2002), Kazakhstan (21 August 2003), Kyrgyzstan (10 October 2003), Russian Federation (17 July 2003), Tajikistan (01 August 2003), and Uzbekistan (29 April 2004).

SCO’s Members, Observer States, and Dialogue Partners

At present, SCO has ten member states: the Republic of Belarus; the Republic of India; the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Republic of Kazakhstan; the People's Republic of China; the Kyrgyz Republic; the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; the Russian Federation; the Republic of Tajikistan; and the Republic of Uzbekistan.^[22]

One of the most important agenda items of the 17th SCO Summit of Heads of State that was held on 8-9 June 2017 in Astana, was the enlargement of the Organization. In this framework, the accession of India and Pakistan to the SCO as full members was approved by the Council of Heads of States. At the Dushanbe Summit of 17 September 2021, Iran was announced as the ninth member state of the SCO and Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar became Dialogue Partners. Presently, two members, the SCO has been granted ‘Observer States’ status: the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Mongolia.^[23] Whereas, following countries have

been accepted as 'Dialogue Partners': the Republic of Azerbaijan; the Republic of Armenia; the Kingdom of Bahrain; the Arab Republic of Egypt; the Kingdom of Cambodia; the State of Qatar; the State of Kuwait; The Lao People's Democratic Republic; the Republic of Maldives; the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal; the United Arab Emirates; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; the Republic of Turkiye (Turkey); and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.^[24] It must be noted that all these countries are desirous of join the SCO after fulfilling the preconditions of seeking SCO's membership.^[25] In 2024, Turkey, a NATO member, applied for membership of the SCO.^[26] The desire of all these countries to join SCO and "the SCO's expanding agenda mirrors shifts in the global balance of power and the roles of its two main members, Russia and China."^[27]

Goals and Tasks of the SCO

Article 1 of the SCO Charter determines following goals and tasks:

- "To strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighborliness between the member States;
- To consolidate multidisciplinary cooperation in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region and promotion of a new democratic, fair and rational political and economic international order;
- To jointly counteract terrorism, separatism and extremism in all their manifestations, to fight against illicit narcotics and arms trafficking and other types of criminal activity of a transnational character, and also illegal migration;
- To encourage the efficient regional cooperation in such spheres as politics, trade and economy, defense, law enforcement, environment protection, culture, science and technology, education, energy, transport, credit and finance, and also other spheres of common interest;
- To facilitate comprehensive and balanced economic growth, social and cultural development in the region through joint action on the basis of equal partnership for the purpose of a steady increase of living standards and improvement of living conditions of the peoples of the member States;
- To coordinate approaches to integration into the global economy;
- To promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the international obligations of the member States and their national legislation;
- To maintain and develop relations with other States and international organizations;
- To cooperate in the prevention of international conflicts and in their peaceful settlement;
- To jointly search for solutions to the problems that would arise in the 21st century."^[28]

Principles of the SCO

Article of the SCO Charter explains that the member States of SCO shall adhere to the following principles:

- "Mutual respect of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity of States and inviolability of State borders, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of its use in international relations, seeking no unilateral military superiority in adjacent areas;
- Equality of all member States, search of common positions on the basis of mutual understanding and respect for opinions of each of them;
- Gradual implementation of joint activities in the spheres of mutual interest;
- peaceful settlement of disputes between the member States;
- SCO being not directed against other States and international organizations;
- Prevention of any illegitimate acts directed against the SCO interests;
- Implementation of obligations arising out of the present Charter and other documents adopted within the framework of SCO, in good faith."^[29]

Areas of Cooperation

Article 3 of Charter defines following main areas of cooperation within SCO:

- "Maintenance of peace and enhancing security and confidence in the region;
- Search of common positions on foreign policy issues of mutual interest, including issues arising within international organizations and international fora;
- Development and implementation of measures aimed at jointly counteracting terrorism, separatism and extremism, illicit narcotics and arms trafficking and other types of criminal activity of a transnational character, and also illegal migration;
- Coordination of efforts in the field of disarmament and arms control;

Support for, and promotion of regional economic cooperation in various forms, fostering favorable environment for trade and investments with a view to gradually achieving free flow of goods, capitals, services and technologies;

Effective use of available transportation and communication infrastructure, improvement of transit capabilities of member States and development of energy systems;

Sound environmental management, including water resources management in the region, and implementation of particular joint environmental programs and projects;

Mutual assistance in preventing natural and man-made disasters and elimination of their implications;

Exchange of legal information in the interests of development of cooperation within SCO;

Development of interaction in such spheres as science and technology, education, health care, culture, sports and tourism.^[30]

It was also agreed that the SCO member States may expand the spheres of cooperation by mutual agreement.^[31]

SCO Organizational Structure and Main Bodies

For the implementation of goals and objectives of the SCO Charter the following bodies shall operate within the Organization:

“The Council of Heads of State;

The Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers);

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs;

Meetings of Heads of Ministries and/or Agencies;

The Council of National Coordinators;

The Regional Counter-terrorist Structure;

Secretariat.”^[32]

Authority of the Council of Heads of State

Article 42 and 43 defines that “The functions and working procedures for the SCO bodies, other than the Regional Counter-terrorist Structure, shall be governed by appropriate provisions adopted by the Council of Heads of State. The Council of Heads of State may decide to establish other SCO bodies. New bodies shall be established by the adoption of additional protocols to the present Charter which enter into force in the procedure, set forth in Article 21 of this Charter.”^[33]

The Council of Heads of State and The Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers)

The Council of Heads of State and The Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) are two apex bodies that control the decision making of SCO.

The Council of Heads of State (CHS) is the supreme SCO body. It determines priorities and defines major areas of activities of the Organization, decide upon the fundamental issues of its internal arrangement and functioning and its interaction with other States and international organizations, as well as considers the most topical international issues. The Council holds its regular meetings once a year. A meeting of the Council of Heads of State is chaired by the head of State organizing this regular meeting. The venue of a regular meeting of the Council is generally determined in the Russian alphabetic order of names of the SCO member States.^[34]

“The Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) approves the budget of the Organization, consider and decide upon major issues related to particular, especially economic, spheres of interaction within the Organization. The Council holds its regular meetings once a year. A meeting of the Council is chaired by the head of Government (Prime Minister) of the State on whose territory the meeting takes place. The venue of a regular meeting of the Council is determined by prior agreement among heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the member States.”^[35]

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Meetings of Heads of Ministries and/or Agencies, and the Council of National Coordinators

Functioning of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Meetings of Heads of Ministries and/or Agencies, and the Council of National Coordinators is governed by the provisions of Articles 7,8, and 9 of the Charter respectively.

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs considers issues related to day-to-day activities of the Organization, preparation of meetings of the Council of Heads of State and holding of consultations on international problems within the Organization. The Council, as appropriate, makes statements on behalf of SCO. The Council generally meets one month prior to a meeting of the Council of Heads of State. Extraordinary meetings of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs may be convened on the initiative of at least two member States and upon consent of ministers of foreign affairs of all other member States. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs shall represent the Organization in its external contacts, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Council.^[36]

According to decisions of the Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers), heads of branch ministries and/or agencies of the member States hold, on a regular basis, meetings for consideration of particular issues of interaction in respective fields within SCO. Such meeting is chaired by the head of a respective ministry and/or agency of the State organizing the meeting.^[37]

The Council of National Coordinators is a SCO body that coordinates and directs day-to-day activities of the Organization. It makes the necessary preparation for the meetings of the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. National coordinators is appointed by each member State in accordance with its internal rules and procedures. The Council shall hold its meetings at least three times a year. The Chairman of the Council of National Coordinators may on the instruction of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs represent the Organization in its external contacts, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Council of National Coordinators.^[38]

Regional Counter-Terrorist Structure (RCTS)

The Regional Counter-terrorist Structure is one of the most effective and consequential organ / body of SCO. It was established by the member States of the Shanghai Convention to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism. Located in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic, RCTS is a standing SCO body. Its main objectives and functions, principles of its constitution and financing, as well as its rules of procedure are governed by a separate international treaty concluded by the member States, and other necessary instruments adopted by them.^[39]

The SCO's Secretariat

Located at Beijing, the People's Republic of China, the SCO Secretariat is a standing SCO administrative body. It provides organizational and technical support to the activities carried out in the framework of SCO and prepares proposals on the annual budget of the Organization. The Secretariat is headed by the Executive Secretary who is appointed by the Council of Heads of State on nomination by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Executive Secretary is appointed from among the nationals of member States on a rotational basis in the Russian alphabetic order of the member States' names for a period of three years without a right to be reappointed for another period.^[40]

Financing and Membership

Financing and Membership of the SCO is governed and regulated as stipulated in Articles 12 and 13 of the Charter. The SCO has its own budget that is drawn up and executed in accordance with a special agreement between member States. This agreement also determines the amount of contributions to be paid annually by member States to the budget of the Organization on the basis of a cost-sharing principle.^[41]

The SCO membership is open for other States in the region that undertake to respect the objectives and principles of the SCO Charter and to comply with the provisions of other international treaties and instruments adopted in the framework of SCO. The admission of new members to SCO is decided upon by the Council of Heads of State on the basis of a representation made by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in response to an official request from the State concerned.^[42] As mentioned earlier, at present SCO has ten members, including four member states those have been granted SCO membership since its inception, in addition to six founding members. The obligations arising from participation in the SCO Charter and other instruments adopted within the framework of SCO are binding for the corresponding States until they are completely fulfilled. Any member State is entitled to withdraw from SCO by transmitting to the Depositary an official notification of its withdrawal from this Charter no later than twelve months before the date of withdrawal.^[43]

Currently SCO has two Observer States: Afghanistan and Mongolia. Whereas, there are, fourteen Dialogue Partner: Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bahrain; Cambodia; . Egypt; Kuwait; Maldives; Myanmar; Nepal; Qatar; Turkey (Türkiye); Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, and UAE.

In order to streamline integration, enhance outreach, and ease participation for interested countries in SCO, and paving the way for future full membership, according to the Tianjin Declaration, the member states of the SCO have decided to merge the statuses of 'observer' and 'dialogue partner' into a single status of 'SCO partner.'^[44] Consequently , countries with observer: Mongolia; and Afghanistan, and dialogue partner: Laos, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia) status now fall under the "SCO Partner"

Relationship with Other States and International Organizations

SCO, as provided in Article 14 of the Charter interacts and maintain dialogue, in particular in certain areas of cooperation, with other States and international organizations. SCO also grants status of a dialogue partner or observer to the State(s) or international organization(s).^[45] Currently, SCO has granted observer status to two countries, Afghanistan and Mongolia. Whereas, the Organization has fourteen dialogue partners, including: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Egypt, Kuwait, Maldives, Myanmar, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UAE, and Bahrain.^[46] Observer states and dialogue partners are added to enhance collaboration in areas like security, trade, and culture with countries outside the main membership. The SCO maintains active partnerships with major regional and international bodies, including the UN, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and ASEAN. While decision making within the SCO requires consensus, necessitating unanimous agreement from all member states, its policies and direction are heavily influenced by Russia and China, who are united in their desire to create a non-Western geopolitical forum and set of international norms. The United States applied for observer status in 2005 and was rejected, demonstrating the SCO's commitment to maintaining autonomy from Western influence."^[47]

Key Initiatives Launched/ Supported by SCO

In last twenty five years, SCO had launched and supported many important initiatives in the fields of regional and global peace and security, regional conflict resolution and peaceful resolution of border disputes among member states, development of communication infrastructure, and promotion commerce and trade.

"Security collaboration has been a central and highly successful initiative, establishing the SCO as the primary security organization in Central Asia. In addition to aggressive counterterrorism measures, the organization has promoted economic development and cultural dialogue as means to prevent further radicalization of vulnerable populations. The SCO has also made significant strides in anti-drug trafficking operations."^[48] Due to spectacular performance of the SCO by the United Nations has recognize the SCO's security operations as a crucial force for regional stability in Eurasia.^[49]

"Energy cooperation is another key priority of the SCO. The SCO Energy Club, established in 2013, has significantly enhanced cooperation between major energy producers like Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, and consumers like China, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. ---. The SCO intersects significantly with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) a cornerstone of China's foreign policy designed to enhance global trade networks and infrastructure development across Asia, Europe, and Africa, functioning as a "new Silk Road." Most SCO member states, with the notable exception of India, have endorsed or participated in the BRI, implementing projects such as the aforementioned Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) in Kazakhstan, and the planned China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan (CKU) railway project."^[50]

The SCO Heads of States Meetings

The supreme SCO decision making body, the Council of Heads of State (CHS) meets once every years. The CHS sets overall strategic, political, and security agenda and direction for the SCO, after due discussion and deliberations on major security, economic, and political issues. The CHS also oversee the SCO's functioning and expansion. CHS' decisions are generally made through unanimous agreement by all member states. CHS focuses on politics, security, trade, energy, culture, and international issues, aiming for 'win-win cooperation.'

The SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS) has held 25 annual meetings since its inception in 2001. The most recent meeting, the 25th, was held in Tianjin, China, from August 31 to September 1, 2025. The first meeting

of the heads of state of the SCO took place in Shanghai, China, on June 15, 2001. The venue and dates of previous SCO CHS are appended below:

SCO Summit Meeting	Duration	Venue	Host Country	Important Decisions
1 st	15 June, 2001	Shanghai	China	SCO was established
2 nd	June 7, 2002	St. Petersburg	Russia,	The SCO Charter was signed
3 rd	29 May, 2003	Moscow		
4 th	17 June 2004	Uzbekistan	Tashkent	
5 th	July 5, 2005	Astana	Kazakhstan	
6 th	15 June 2006	Shanghai	China	
7 th	16 August 2007	Bishkek	Kyrgyzstan	
8 th	28 August 2008	Dushanbe	Tajikistan	
9 th	15–16 June 2009	Yekaterinburg	Russia	
10 th	10–11 June 2010	Tashkent	Uzbekistan	
11 th	14–15 June 2011	Astana	Kazakhstan	
12 th	6–7 June 2012	Beijing	China	
13 th	13 September 2013	Bishkek	Kyrgyzstan	
14 th	11–12 September 2014	Dushanbe	Tajikistan	
15 th	9–10 July 2015	Ufa	Russia	Process for membership of India and Pakistan was started
16 th	23–24 June 2016	Tashkent	Uzbekistan	
17 th	8–9 June 2017	Astana	Kazakhstan	India and Pakistan joined as full members.
18 th	9–10 June 2018	Qingdao	China	
19 th	14–15 June 2019	Bishkek	Kyrgyzstan	
20 th	10 November 2020	Video conference	Russia	
21 st	16–17 September 2021	Dushanbe	Tajikistan	
22 nd	15–16 September 2022	Samarkand	Uzbekistan	
23 rd	4 July 2023	New Delhi (Video conference)	India	Iran joined as a full member on July 4, 2023.
24 th	3 and 4 July 2024	Astana	Kazakhstan	Belarus joined as a full member in July 2024, becoming the tenth and most recent member state.
25 th	31 August - 1 September 2025	Tianjin	China	
26 th	2026	Bishkek	Kyrgyzstan	
27 th	2027	Islamabad	Pakistan	Decided during 25 th SCO Summit Meeting at Tianjin

25th Summit Meeting of the Council of Heads of SCO Member States and the SCO plus in Tianjin
 25th Meeting of the SCO Heads of States, held at Tianjin, China, on 31 August and 1 September 2025, carries a unique significance. It has been very appropriately called as the SCO Plus Summit Meeting,^[51] as it was attended by 20 heads of the states and 10 heads of international organizations.^[52] Tianjin Meeting, the fifth such even to be hosted by China, was the largest in the organization's history.^[53] Moreover, this meeting

was followed by a spectacular military parade organized by the People's Liberation Army (PLA), on 3 September 2025, on Chang'an Avenue, Beijing to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the 'Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression' and the 'World Anti-Fascist War', the end of the 'Second Sino-Japanese War and the Second World War'.^[54]

The 25th Summit Meeting was chaired by President Xi Jinping. It focused on politics, security, trade, and development and approved the SCO Development Strategy until 2035 and the Tianjin Declaration. "It was attended by President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Masoud Peseshkian, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, SCO Secretary General Nurlan Yermekbayev and Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure Ularbek Sharsheev."^[55] AS mentioned above, "as a result of the meeting, 24 documents were approved, including the Tianjin Declaration, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Development Strategy until 2035."^[56]

Leaders of international organizations and multilateral mechanisms invited to attend the Summit Meeting included UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, SCO Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Ularbek Sharsheev, Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Independent States Sergey Lebedev, ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization Imangali Tasmagambetov, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization Asad Khan, Secretary-General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia Kairat Sarybay, Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission Bakytzhan Sagintayev, and President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Jin Liqun.^[57]

President Xi Jinping's Speech at 25th Summit Meeting of the Council of Heads of SCO at Tianjin

President Xi Jinping started his historic speech by recalling 'the Shanghai Spirit: mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations, and pursuit of common development', based on which the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established.^[58] Talking about multi-dimensional cooperation among SCO members, he said: "We were the first to set up a military confidence-building mechanism in our border areas, turning our extensive borders into a bond of friendship, mutual trust and cooperation. We were the first to take multilateral actions against the three forces of terrorism, separatism and extremism. We steadily promoted law enforcement and security cooperation, properly managed and settled differences, unequivocally opposed external interference, and maintained peace and tranquillity in the region."^[59]

President Xi, particularly talked about success of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and said : "We were the first to launch Belt and Road cooperation. A large number of signature projects and small and beautiful livelihood projects have been successfully implemented, and industrial investment cooperation has been actively advanced, providing robust driving forces for development and prosperity across the region. China's cumulative trade with other SCO countries has surpassed US\$2.3 trillion, hitting ahead of schedule the target that I had set. Our multidimensional connectivity network has been further improved. Nearly 14,000 kilometres of international land transport routes are in operation among member states. And the China-Europe Railway Express has operated more than 110,000 train services."^[60]

Appreciating China's friendly relations with her neighbours and good friendly relations among SCO members, he said: "We were the first to conclude a treaty on long-term good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation, proclaiming our commitment to forge lasting friendship and refrain from hostilities. We set up and fully leveraged mechanisms such as the SCO Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission. We built a network for people-to-people friendly exchanges, and expanded cooperation at the subnational level and in such areas as media, think tank, women and youth, bringing the hearts of our peoples closer to each other."^[61]

Highlighting SCO's and China's vision of global governance for the benefit of the world at large, he explained: "We were the first to put forth the vision of global governance featuring extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit as an effort to practice true multilateralism. We deepened cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations, and played a constructive role in international and regional affairs. We always stand on the side of international fairness and justice,

champion inclusiveness and mutual learning between civilizations, and oppose hegemonism and power politics, thus becoming a proactive force for world peace and development.”^[62]

Mentioning the spectacular growth of SCO and its acceptance among the comity of nations, President Xi Jinping said: “The SCO has grown into the world's largest regional organization, with the participation of 26 countries, cooperation covering more than 50 areas, and a combined economic output of nearly US\$30 trillion. Its international influence and appeal are increasing day by day.”^[63] He also recollected the difficulties and hurdles faced by the SCO during last twenty four years. Appreciating the resilience with which the Organization has surmounted all these impediments and challenges, he expressed his determination to move forward with determination. He said: “ We have weathered the storms on our journey and emerged stronger because we have adhered to the Shanghai Spirit. Looking ahead, we should carry forward the Shanghai Spirit in a world fraught with challenges and changes, forge ahead with solid steps, and better tap into the potential of our Organization.”^[64]

Having talked about above issued, President Xi Jinping share his vision, ideas and resolve to accomplish the SCO future aspiration by rendering five advises as following:

“First, we should seek common ground while putting aside differences. Shared aspirations are the source of strength and advantage, and the will to seek commonality while shelving differences reflects vision and wisdom. SCO member states are all friends and partners. We should respect our differences, maintain strategic communication, build up consensus, and strengthen solidarity and collaboration. We should make the pie of cooperation bigger, and fully utilize the endowment of every country, so that we can fulfil our responsibility for peace, stability, development and prosperity in the region.

Second, we should pursue mutual benefit and win-win results. We need to better align our development strategies and promote the high-quality implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, so that in planning and building relevant projects together and benefiting from them together we can strengthen the momentum of regional development and improve the well-being of the people. We should leverage the strengths of our mega-sized markets and economic complementarity between member states, and improve trade and investment facilitation. We should enhance cooperation in such areas as energy, infrastructure, green industry, the digital economy, scientific and technological innovation, and artificial intelligence. We should march toward modernization hand in hand by bringing out the best in one another and working together for a shared future.

Third, we should champion openness and inclusiveness. The vast land of Asia and Europe, a cradle of ancient civilizations where the earliest exchanges between the East and the West took place, has been a driving force behind human progress. Since ancient times, people of different countries have bartered and traded for mutual benefit and learned from each other. SCO member states need to enhance mutual understanding and friendship through people-to-people exchanges, firmly support one another in economic cooperation, and jointly cultivate a garden of civilizations in which all cultures flourish in prosperity and harmony through mutual enlightenment.

Fourth, we should uphold fairness and justice. We must promote a correct historical perspective on World War II, and oppose the Cold War mentality, bloc confrontation and bullying practices. We should safeguard the U.N.-centered international system, and support the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core. We should advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and make the global governance system more just and equitable.

Fifth, we should strive for real results and high efficiency. We should continuously promote SCO reform, increase resources input and enhance capacity building to improve its institutional structure and make its decision-making more scientific and its actions more efficient. We should put into use the SCO Universal Center for Countering Security Challenges and Threats and the SCO Anti-drug Center and set up an SCO development bank as soon as possible to provide stronger underpinnings for security and economic cooperation among member states.”^[65]

Assuring China’s unconditional support for SCO member starts, He said that “China always aligns its development with that of the SCO and with the aspiration of the people of member states for a better life. ---. China has always focused on taking real actions to ensure better development of the SCO.”^[66] In clear and

unequivocal words, he expressed China's plan to extend maximum financial support to SCO members. He said: "China plans to implement 100 small and beautiful livelihood projects in member states with such need. It will provide RMB 2 billion yuan in grant to SCO member states within this year, and will issue an additional RMB 10 billion yuan in loan to the member banks of the SCO Interbank Consortium over the next three years."^[67] Before concluding his speech, President Xi Jinping announced a very inspiring human resource development plan for SCO members state by saying that "Starting from next year, China will double the current number of SCO-specific scholarships, and launch an SCO innovative PhD program to jointly train high-caliber talent in academic as well as scientific and technological research. In the next five years, China will establish 10 Luban Workshops in SCO member states and provide 10,000 human resources training opportunities."^[68]

He concluded his speech by expressing his firm belief and conviction in SCO's founding mission, through stepping up to undertake our duties, promoting the sound and sustained development of the SCO with greater resolve and more practical measures, and marching steadily toward a brighter tomorrow of a community with a shared future for humanity. This, in deed, is great message which aims to harmonize SCO's efforts toward attaining more peaceful and prosperous future for the whole mankind.

Tianjin SCO Declaration – a Paradigm Shift Toward Multipolar World and Strengthening Integration

On the conclusion of 25th Summit Meeting of the Heads of States, the SCO issued a comprehensive document titled 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Tianjin Declaration' that reflects the positions and goals of the member states. "The declaration, consisting of five sections, addresses a wide range of issues, from global security and counter-terrorism to economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and cultural-humanitarian ties. It emphasizes the aspiration for a multipolar world order based on international law and the central role of the UN, as well as expresses concern over current international conflicts and calls for their peaceful resolution."^[69]

Another important development and outcome of SCO Tianjin Summit is the SCO Development Strategy until 2035. It focuses on multipolarity, economic growth, and enhanced security cooperation for sustainable development, shifting beyond mere security, AI, energy, and new financial mechanisms like SCO Development Bank. SCO Development Strategy aims at ensuring greater global South representation by challenging Western dominance through fostering connectivity and envisioning an alternative world order. Key pillars include deepening trade, countering terrorism, promoting green technologies, reforming global finance (IMF/World Bank), and strengthening multilateralism centered on the UN and WTO.^[70] In the Tianjin Declaration, the SCO member states also decided to merge the statuses of 'observer and 'dialogue partner' into a single status of 'SCO partner.'

Following excerpts from 'Tianjin Declaration' clearly indicate SCO members keen desire to move forwards towards making of a new world order that shuns hegemonic control and politics of one global power or a small group or alliance of few global powers at the cost of the rest of the world. They clearly expressed their aspiration for more just, equitable and rules based multipolar world order that represents aspirations of all nations and all regions.

"* The international system is evolving toward a more just, equitable, and representative multipolarity, opening new prospects for countries' own development and mutually beneficial cooperation.

* 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 shocks.

* The United Nations, as a unique intergovernmental organization, has carried out effective work in maintaining peace and security, promoting economic and social development, and safeguarding human rights, facilitating necessary cooperation. Member states reaffirm their commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and other recognized principles of international law, respect for civilizational diversity, and equality and mutually beneficial cooperation, supporting the central coordinating role of the UN in building a more representative, democratic, and just multipolar world.

* Member states believe that corresponding reforms of the United Nations are necessary to ensure the representation of developing countries in UN governance bodies and to adapt the UN to current political and economic realities.

* Member states reaffirm that in developing relations among SCO member states, they will fully and comprehensively adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the SCO Charter, as well as other recognized principles and norms of international law.

- * Member states advocate respect for the right of all peoples to independently choose their political, economic, and social development paths, emphasizing that mutual respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, equality, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs, and the principle of non-use or threat of use of force are the foundation for the stable development of international relations.
- * Member states reaffirm their adherence to the purposes and principles of the SCO Charter, consistently following the “Shanghai Spirit” of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilizations, and pursuit of common development, and continuously deepening cooperation to promote security, stability, and sustainable development in the SCO region.
- * 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.
- * Member states note the initiative to develop the «Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity of Eurasia in the 21st Century», which aims to consolidate the development process in Eurasia.
- * Member states reaffirm the practical significance of promoting the building of a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation, as well as a community with a shared future for humanity, and conducting dialogue based on the concept of “One Earth, One Family, One Future.” Member states call on the international community to jointly participate in the ‘SCO Initiative on United Efforts for a Just, Harmonious, and Developed World’.”^[71]

SCO Member States’ Unequivocal Support for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

President Xi Jinping introduced his vision for global connectivity in 2013. The 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR), later renamed as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) comprises two main components: the overland 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and the '21st-Century Maritime Silk Road'. Chinese concept of connectivity with outer world is ingrained in its ancient culture. The Chinese proverb that directly relates to connectivity and building roads is “If you want to get rich, build roads first.”^[72] It emphasizes the importance of infrastructure, particularly roads, for economic prosperity and development. Another Chinese proverb says “the whole year must be planned for in the spring.”^[73] In fact, the Belt and Road Initiative is revival of ‘Silk Road Spirit’ that had connected people of China and the rest of the world for many centuries. It was not a mere source of economic activity. Indeed, it provided an excellent opportunity to ancient people to interact with each socially and to exchange their ideas about their belief systems, culture, and languages, besides acting as a laboratory and melting platform for intermixing ideas, knowledge about science, technology and experiences that facilitated earlier time inventions and innovations.

In September 2013, during his visit to Kazakhstan, President Xi Jinping introduced his vision for global connectivity - the 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR), later renamed as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), while addressing the students and faculty of Nazarbayev University.^[74] Since its launching, BRI, has become symbol of China’s international cooperation with rest of the world and China’s contribution to global development through its support for building global communication and connectivity infrastructure. Over 150 countries have signed BRI cooperation documents, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China, that brings countries into the BRI framework.^[75]

All SCO member States, except India, are member of the BRI as well. Through SCO Tianjin Declaration, the Republic of Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan reaffirmed their support for the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by the People’s Republic of China, and acknowledge the work done by all parties to jointly implement the Belt and Road Initiative, including promoting the alignment of the Belt and Road Initiative with the construction of the Eurasian Economic Union.^[76]

The SCO’s Support to Build Multipolar Global Economic Order and Establishment of SCO Bank

The functioning of ‘the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, created through Bretton Woods system, in July 1944, are cornerstone of current global economic order, which enables and ensures the US hegemony over global trade and financial transactions. Such hegemonic control affords greater leverage to those few countries who controls this system by regulating international trade / financial transactions by imposing economic sanction and tariffs (trade taxes) in case of global disputes. Though, there are many

examples of such sanctions against, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Iraq and Libya, yet the US and EU sanctions against Iran and Russia, in the last few years, are sufficient to explain the devastating effects and impact of one sided abuse of Bretton wood institutions.

During the SCO Tianjin Summit meeting, SCO member states have expressed their disapproval of all such unilateral actions and methods for political manipulation and economic coercions. Therefore, SCO member state are keenly looking for an alternative global financial system or, at least, for fundamental reforms in the existing system to avoid undue coercion and blackmailing by the US and EU. The New Development Bank (NDB), founded by the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) in 2014, headquartered in Shanghai, China, has opened new dimensions of multilateral financial cooeration for sustainable development and as an alternative to traditional international financial system.^[77] Similarly, China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which was proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013 and began operations in 2016, is also a multilateral financial institution. It has created multibillion US Dollar fund for large-scale projects in Asia and beyond, focusing on connectivity and sustainable development at global level. It also offers an alternative financing arrangement as compared to Western lenders like the World Bank.^[78]

During the SCO Summit Meeting 2005, the SCO Interbank Consortium was created in October 2005 among several economic integration projects announced during the summit.^[79] It was envisaged to organize a mechanism for financing and banking services in investment projects supported by the governments of the SCO member states.^[80] At the SCO Tianjin Summit Meeting 2025, Xi Jinping announced that an additional amount of 10 billion RMB would be provided, in loans, to the SCO IIBC between 2026 and 2029.^[81] Through the SCO Tianjin Declaration, Member States emphasized the important role of the SCO Interbank Consortium, noting that after 20 years of its development, the SCO Interbank Consortium had become a preferred mechanism in the financial cooperation.^[82] They also appreciated and authorized the Islamic Republic of Iran to join the Consortium. Member states also noted the productive activities of the SCO Economic Think Tank Alliance and the proposal to establish an SCO Financial Think Tank Network. ^[83]

In line with SCO member states' aspiration and efforts to develop an alternate and parallel financial system to the one dominated by the US and the West, " the relevant member states reaffirmed the importance of establishing an SCO Development Bank and decide to accelerate consultations on a range of issues related to the operation of this financial institution.^[84] The SCO Development Bank will have very far reaching and significant impact on the global financial system.

The SCO Development Bank's Likely Impact on International Financial System and Emerging Multipolar World Order

At the SCO Tianjin Summit, President Xi Jinping urged that SCO Development Bank "be established as soon as possible to provide stronger support for the security and economic cooperation of member states."^[85] SCO member states, under China's leadership are keen to develop a non-dollar-denominated bank to counter the US sanctions and to promote a multipolar financial order. Such bank can act as a lifeline for the countries which are illegally and illegitimately sanctioned by the US and the EU and, many a times, by the UN as well under political pressure of the US. It would provide legitimate channels for financial transactions outside the Western dominated system. It would also provide funds and loans to finance projects in infrastructure, high-tech, and social sectors, in addition to promoting commerce and trade related financing. Its significance becomes more crucial in safeguarding national interest and averting trade war launched by the US President Trump though imposition of aggerated tariffs in an extremely irrational manner.

Many analysts view that the SCO Development Bank will operate as a regional version of the World Bank, ultimately helping the SCO members in further reducing their collective reliance on the US-dollar-dominated global financial system.^[86] As a matter of fact, all SCO member states, including China, Russia, and India, are still relying on US dollars for trade. Therefore, they are susceptible to the US coercion and vulnerable to constant political and security manipulation. It must be noted that China's decision to established SCO Development Bank is not a spontaneous reaction to any particular event. Rather, China's decision to launch SCO Development Bank, in addition to China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), is a very deliberate undertaking after prolonged consultations with SCO members, especially with Russia for more than a decade. In fact, this decision is closely linked with President Xi Jinping's concept of Global Governance Initiative (GGI) which was another major highlight of the SCO summit. Therefore, it is

expected that SCO Development Banks will play very important role towards promoting peace and security in the region. It would also complement President Xi Jinping's concept of 'Global Security Initiative (GSI). The agreement to establish an SCO Development Bank is considered as an important outcome of Tianjin Summit Meeting with strategic significance for all member states. In this regard, the most prominent development is the grant of approximately 2 billion RMB by China with a further 10-14 billion RMB in concessional loans.^[87] Not only SCO member states but many other developing countries, especially who wish stay out of global power block politics and do not wish to be part of any alliance, are quite worried about the US President Trump's ongoing weaponization of international trade through sanctions and tariffs. These states are looking forward to an alternative international financial system that offers strong incentives to support their resilience, sovereignty and independence.

Analysis and Conclusion

The SCO Tianjin Summit 2025 concluded at very critical juncture our time when the existing world order is undergoing profound shift. The meeting was significant for solidifying the SCO as a major force in a multipolar world. Key initiatives launched during this meeting are the SCO Development Bank, the SCO Development Strategy until 2035, and President Xi Jinping's 'Global Governance Initiative (GGI).

The most consistent themes of the Meeting was the call for an urgent transition to multipolar world order. The Tianjin Declaration reaffirmed the centrality of the UN Charter. However, it expressed the member states disappointment and frustration on failure of the UN to play its role as an effective and just arbitrator in global conflict resolution because the current global system has been hijacked and is dominated by a few global powers. In any case, it does not reflect the true aspirations of majority of nations, especially the developing world, the global south. Russia's President Vladimir Putin emphasised the point very bluntly, saying that "the era of unipolar dominance is over."^[88] Chinese President Xi Jinping framed the same issue in more philosophical and aspirational manner by calling for "an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys enduring peace, universal security and shared prosperity"^[89] and positioning the SCO as a model of cooperative multilateralism.

The Tianjin Summit 2025 also focused on expanding trade and investment cooperation. The signing of the SCO's Development Strategy until 2035 provides a roadmap for economic integration across multiple sectors. SCO's future is intrinsically linked to the Belt and Road Initiative. BRI has established its credibility far beyond SCO. With over 150 BRO partners, it provide a unique opportunity to SCO member states to take maximum advantage of expanding global connectivity to promote their commerce and trade through BRI and strengthen their respective national economies.

In the regional security domain, SCO reaffirmed the organization's commitment to combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism. SCO's comprehensive security concept was framed not just in terms of hard power but as a broader definition of security that one rooted in food supply chains, energy stability, and climate resilience and addressing shared security concerns of all member states and others as well is a very innovative manner as compared to traditional collective security or collective defence approach followed hither.

The SCO's collective call for UN reforms, through the Tianjin Declaration, explicitly states the urgent need for a more representative and equitable international order. UN Secretary-General António Guterres's participation in SCO Tianjin Meeting and acceptance that global challenges require global solutions, and global institutions must evolve to reflect today's realities, validates the SCO's vision for multipolar world order.

The SCO is currently at a critical point in its development toward being a key force in global affairs by a delicate interplay of cooperation and competition. The SCO's strength lies in its flexibility and inclusivity. It's realistic and pragmatic approach, rather than an 'alliance mindset', allows it position itself as a platform which is more acceptable to most of nations in the world.

SCO's ability to harmonize the interests of its member states, particularly the major powers: China and Russia, and its flexibility and inclusivity affords it acceptance as a foundation of emerging multipolar world order. SCO's strength lies in its non-hegemonic philosophy and mutual respect for diversity of cultures, ideas, and shared values of mankind without demanding uniformity. The SCO Summit 2025 was a step forward towards institutional innovations and cooperation and diplomatic commitment for reshaping international governance. The summit positioned the SCO as a platform for non-Western cooperation, offering alternatives to Western-led frameworks and promoting multipolarity. Economic integration

including agreement on establishing an SCO Development Bank and cooperation to adopt new payment systems and digital currencies is great leap forward in this regard.

China's Global Governance Initiative (GGI) aims at advocating sovereign equality, non-interference, and multilateralism, opposing bloc politics and hegemonism. The is looking towards institutional consolidation by combining and merging the observer states and dialogue partners status into a single 'SCO Partner' status. This process will streamline engagement of desirous countries to join the SCO and will expand its global outreach. The SCO is also enhancing its role in managing regional conflicts and rivalries, which will elevate its status as an effective regional organization. It is expected that the 'SCO Development Strategy for 2026-2035' will lead new approach for regional and global peace, stability, and prosperity.

However, it is fact that the SCO still faces enormous challenges. With its envisaged expansion and massive size, there would arise clash of interests among member states on many issues pertaining to geo-politics, geo-economics, geo-security and geo-strategy, especially due to anti-Western stance and opposition to Western political and economic dominance. As the balance of global power continues to shift toward a multipolar world order, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and individual member states are poised to growing in power and influence, the SCO will have to handle many challenges.

As founding members, Russia and China will continue to set the SCO's direction. Russia, with its far greater experience in multilateral activities will take lead on politico-military affairs. Whereas, China, with its enormous financial and technological resources, will lead the Organization on economic development, investment and global infrastructure. This combination of political and economic steering is somewhat comparable to the role played by France and Germany as political and economic engines in the European Union.

The Tianjin SCO Meeting and the Declaration emphasizes multipolarity and non-interference. It demonstrates the mindset and desire for preservation of sovereignty of global south and resistance against global hegemony of the West and global north. The SCO efforts to attain freedom of intentional financial transaction to support free trade and commerce without any hindrance and restrictions imposed by illegal sanctions regimes of the US and the EU are lofty and uphill tasks. It is expected that the SCO Development Bank would become an effective mechanism for tariff mitigation and sanction resilience. This will be tectonic change and a paradigm shift from an establish multipolar global word order. The SCO's strategy is not to replace the US dollar by RMB. However, it would like strengthen and consolidate RMB to be used as a critical mass and as an alternative and preferred reserve currency.

China is certainly interested to project the SCO as a credible organization for regional cooperation and security that enjoys mutual trust of the member states for global conflict resolution based on justice and through peaceful means. During the Tianjin Summit Conference President Xi articulated five principles to guide the global governance, i.e. China's Global Governance Initiative (GGI). These five principles, form a blueprint for an alternative international order, one that aims to resist hegemonism and reaffirms the importance of multipolarity.

According a Chinese scholar, Liu Qing, who is vice president of China Institute of International Studies:

"The GGI provides not only theoretical guidance for China's major-country diplomacy with its own characteristics, but also a Chinese approach to reducing the global governance deficit. It enriches the knowledge and theories of global governance with Chinese wisdom. The GGI provides theoretical underpinning for the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity. Its implementation will reinforce the institutional foundation and chart the right path for this vision"^[90]

In his opinion:

"The GGI provides theoretical underpinning for the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity. Its implementation will reinforce the institutional foundation and chart the right path for this vision. The GGI will steer the international order toward greater fairness and equitability. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and the largest developing country, China firmly upholds the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. By implementing the GGI, the international community can reform outdated international legal institutions, develop new international norms, and hence advance international rule of law. The SCO can become a model for implementing the Global Governance Initiative. Adhering to the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations, and pursuit of common development, the SCO promotes joint deliberation on regional affairs, co-building of platforms and mechanisms, and sharing of cooperation outcomes. It has initiated many new global governance concepts and put them into practice."^[91]

To conclude, it can be said that SCO's Tianjin Summit 2025 is very consequential event, which has far reaching implications for global, politics, international economy and regional security. As the SCO continues to expand, its global influence will certainly pave the way for fast-track transition of unipolar or west dominated hegemonic world order to a multipolar world order. This is a paradigm shift and its consequences are inevitable.

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