Written by **Paul Dragu** on September 3, 2025

China, Russia, India Vow Increased Cooperation to Counter American Dominance

Three major Eastern powers met in China this week and vowed to increase collaboration as part of a broader challenge to Western supremacy in the already-emerging multipolar world.

While western media framed the event as more proof of the Trump administration's ineptitude, Russian media heralded it as "one of the defining political events of 2025." The 25th annual Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit was held in Tianjin, China, this year. The heads of Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Belarus, and other Central Asian and Caucasus states also attended.

AP Images
Vladimir Putin, Narendra Modi, and Xi Jinping at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Tianjin

The multi-day event began with the Chinese, Russian, and Indian heads of states embracing, a gesture mainstream Western foreign-policy pundits quickly interpreted as more proof that the Trump administration's foreign policy is a failure. "President Trump's gentle treatment of Vladimir Putin has done nothing to pull Russia away from China," Michael Fullilove, executive director of the Lowy Institute think tank in Australia, told *The Wall Street Journal*. "His rough treatment of [Indian Prime Minister] Narendra Modi, on the other hand, is pushing India closer to Russia and warming up its relations with China."

India in the Spotlight

India carries significant geopolitical weight in today's interconnected global economy. It boasts a sophisticated workforce and the largest population of any country on the planet. *Journal* correspondent Yaroslav Trofimov made the following observation regarding the West's and East's tug-of-war over India:

> India is the cornerstone of America's strategy to prevent a Chinese domination of Asia. Sino-Indian relations have remained nearly frozen since deadly clashes along the two giants' disputed border erupted in 2020. Modi traveled to China for the first time in seven years after Trump's abrupt move to impose 50% tariffs on India, half of them as punishment for New Delhi buying cheap Russian oil, sparked widespread outrage in India.

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) adjunct senior fellow for India Alyssa Ayres reiterated the significance of Modi warming up to Chinese President Xi Jinping. "This bilateral takes place at a moment of major disruption in India's relationship with the United States," she said. "That is raising all kinds of questions about whether the United States is causing New Delhi to lean away from Washington and look to hedge India's relations further on the world stage."

However, as Ayres pointed out, in addition to unresolved border issues, India also has a trade deficit with China (whereas it has a trade surplus with the United States) that is unlikely to be easily resolved. Modi called for "fair trade" between the two nations during the summit.

As for India's energy ties to Russia, more news broke on that front as the summit was happening. Despite being punished for buying Russian oil, India is considering doubling down on its energy collaboration with the Kremlin. According to Russian reports, the CEO of the state-owned nuclear energy company Rosatom told reporters at the SCO that India is interested in developing fourth-generation nuclear energy with Russia. Rosatom has already built two reactors in India, with plans to commission two more by the end of 2027.

The prospect of collaboration on an Arctic trade route also came up during the summit. Russia and India have been discussing an Arctic Sea route for at least a couple of years.

Chinese Connection

While the United States hit India with high tariffs for buying Russian energy, it did not add any to Russia's largest energy client, China. During the summit, Xi took a thinly veiled shot at the United States and its Western allies. He said that SCO members should "oppose the Cold War mentality, bloc confrontation, and bullying practices." Xi also said that SCO members "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." The issue of a multipolar world came up repeatedly. Non-Western leaders have made it clear that they seek a global order in which the West doesn't hold the most power.

Busy Bear

Russian head of state Vladimir Putin kept very busy. He held bilateral talks with the leaders of China, Mongolia, Slovakia, Pakistan, Serbia, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. And on Wednesday, he met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Beijing, where Xi put on a military parade to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Putin discussed energy, trade, and regional issues with other leaders. Echoing Xi, he suggested that Eastern powers create their own international block. Putin said, "It seems that the SCO could take a leading role in efforts to form a more just and equitable global governance system." He added this role would be based on international law and the United Nations charter. Putin, like Xi, also took a jab at the West. He said the ambition to create a new international order is "especially relevant in a situation where some countries still do not abandon their pursuit of dominance in international affairs."

Flynn's Feelings

Speaking of domination, nobody at this confab seemed obsessed, or even mildly bothered, by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Former Trump National Security Advisor General Michael Flynn noticed this as well. "Putin doesn't look very isolated here whatsoever!" Flynn said in a social media post that included a photo of the SCO attendees and their wives. In the center of the crowd stands Putin. Flynn saw this as a good time to advocate noninterventionist policies. Flynn:

> All the brilliant NEOCON and Geopolitical advisors pushing [Trump] to do the exact opposite of what he should be doing are going to drive America into a war we don't need, a war we cannot afford, and a war that could end very badly for the entire world. If the European Union wants this mess, let them have it. Ukraine has already lost over 1.5M in the

> past three years alone. More killing, more dying, more spending, more hard headed arrogance on the part of European leaders will not win the day. Team America needs to find a way out of this mess and very soon. We The People are with you. Make the right decision.

As for Trump, the event didn't fly under his radar. On Tuesday, he posted a message on his Truth Social account. He reminded Xi of the massive help the Chinese had from the Americans in defeating Japan and wished the Chinese "a great and lasting day of celebration" before accusing everyone of conspiring against the United States.

End of an Era

Eastern pundits are giddy. They believe this year's SCO is a reassuring sign that the era of Anglo-American supremacy is over. State-owned RT (Russia Today) published an analysis by Russian economist Farhad Ibragimov on Monday titled "The West had its century. The future belongs to these leaders now." He relayed Putin's suggestion that the SCO develop by 2035 into a powerful economic, humanitarian, and infrastructure block. Perhaps most interesting is the Kremlin's support for China's proposal to create a SCO bank, which, if successful, would indeed end Western financial dominance. Ibragimov:

> Such an institution could do more than just finance joint investment and infrastructure projects; it would also help member states reduce their dependence on Western financial mechanisms and blunt the impact of sanctions — pressures that Russia, China, Iran, India, and others all face to varying degrees.

It's no secret that Western hegemony rests, in large part, on the foundation of the dollar's reserve currency status, something rising Eastern powers have been trying to upend for years. While that has proved tremendously difficult, the proportion of U.S. debt held by foreign investors has decreased by 10 percent over the last decade. And now that the United States is $37 trillion in debt, Western-affiliated globalists are forecasting trouble ahead.

Destructive Debt

The realization is setting in that America has dug a hole it may not be able to spend its way out of. The September/October 2025 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the mouthpiece of the globalist-oriented Council on Foreign Relations, is signaling that the U.S.-dominated "rules-based order" is over. The issue includes an essay titled "The New Economic Geography: Who Profits in a Post-American World?" The issue concludes with an essay titled "America's Coming Crash: Will Washington's Debt Addiction Spark the Next Global Crisis?" Harvard Econ Professor Kenneth S. Rogoff echoes arguments by economic conservatives such as Murray Rothbard, Hans Sennholz, and Ron Paul, who have for decades warned that at some point the free lunch of fresh debt borrowing will end. Rogoff:

> For much of the past quarter century, the rest of the world has looked in wonder at the United States' ability to borrow its way out of trouble.… Even as U.S. public debt rapidly climbed from one plateau to the next — net debt is now nearing 100 percent of national income — creditors at home and abroad showed no signs of debt fatigue. For years after the 2008–9 global financial crisis, interest rates on Treasury debt were ultralow, and a great many economists came to believe that they would remain so into the distant future. Thus,

> running government deficits — fresh borrowing — seemed a veritable free lunch.… Given the dollar's reputation as the world's premier safe and liquid asset, global bond market investors would always be happy to digest another huge pile of dollar debt, especially in a crisis situation in which uncertainty was high and safe assets were in short supply. The past few years have cast serious doubt on those assumptions.

All the pieces are in place for a crisis. Rogoff again:

> With long-term interest rates up sharply, public debt nearing its post–World War II peak, foreign investors becoming more skittish, and politicians showing little appetite for reining in fresh borrowing, the possibility of a once-in-a-century U.S. debt crisis no longer seems far-fetched.

Afterward, he goes on a partisan rant, highlighting the reckless spending of the Trump and Ronald Reagan administrations before speculating as to what may trigger the coming financial crisis. "During the Covid-19 pandemic, a short-lived recession and the large-scale government response to it added debt roughly equivalent to 15 percent of GDP; in the case of the global financial crisis, the debt added was closer to 30 percent of GDP," says Rogoff. "It seems reasonable to assume that another shock approaching this magnitude — a cyberwar or even a full-blown military conflict, a climate catastrophe, or another financial crisis or pandemic — will come in the next five to seven years."

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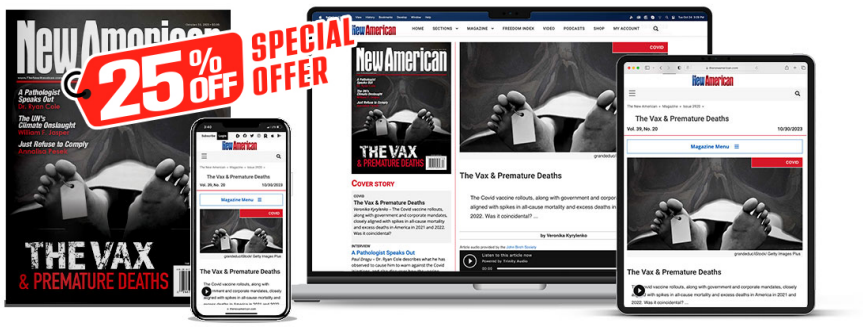

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