

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Eurasia Rising: The China, Russia, North Korea Axis; The SCO's Transformation, and Pakistan's Strategic Choices in a New Bloc World Order

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Abstract: This article examines a fateful week in September 2025 which solidified the revival of the bloc politics on the international platform. China hosted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tianjin, negated its military capabilities and historical revisionism with a Victory Day parade in Beijing and the US deployed missiles of its Typhon model to Japan. The new power pole, in Eurasian response, was added to by the possibility of an informed and assertive Russia, in opposition to China, suggesting the emergence of a new power pole. This paper addresses the reasons why the SCO has become as confidence and cooperation-building forum; how China, Russia and North Korea are becoming axis of defiance; and how Pakistan can ride on the finding wave of transformation using a historical-analytical perspective. It argues that these events are the dawn of a new multipolar order, which is challenging U.S. led hegemony.

Keywords: Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China, Russia, North Korea, Pakistan, Multipolarity, Bloc Politics, Typhon Missile System, Eurasian Order

Introduction

The global system is undergoing a significant disruption since the end of the cold war. The US and its allies dominated the world politics, economic and military strength, in the period of thirty years following 1991. This period also known as the unipolar moment was founded on three main pillars; the U.S military superiority, multilateral institutions along with the Western-led liberal model of economic globalization. And even now, in the middle of 2020s, this order is starting to break. The move of the center of economic power to Asia, growing aggressiveness of China and Russia and the decadence of a decade of wars and two crippling financial crises have collectively worked to shake the unipolar foundation. What used to be an intellectual discussion of multilateralism is now taking shapes, strategic contradictions and illusions of institutions on the non-Western world. A bright illustration of this change occurred in early September 2025 when three distinct incidents intertwined to declare the loss of American hegemony and the restoration of the world organized by bloc. During the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tianjin, China, President Xi Jinping elaborated a big vision to change the SCO into an inclusive Eurasian structure of finance, energy, and technology and even space exploration (Wu, 2025).

Months later, Beijing hosted an enormous parade during its Victory Day celebrating 80 years since the Japanese surrendered in World War II and displaying advanced missile systems, drone formation, and artificial intelligence-controlled technologies in the battlefield. Symbolically most, he was on the balcony of Tiananmen with Russian president Vladimir Putin and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un an arresting sight of a nascent axis of disobedience to Western hegemony (Bodeen, 2025). Almost simultaneously, the U.S. announced that it would provide Japan with its Typhon Mid-Range Capability missile system that contains

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containerized Mk-41 launchers with a target range of over 1,600 kilometers placing directly the coastal bases as well as sea routes of China into the range of the missiles (Reuters, [2025](#)).

Although these incidents are not operationally connected and are located in different geographical areas, they are strategically connected. They signify the revival of bloc politics: the stabilization of long-lasting coalitions that are ceasing to be contingent on U.S. primacy and are beginning to cluster around some different Eurasian nexus. Not merely the occasional bedfellows of ad hoc, China, Russia and North Korea are now co-conspirators of a counter-hegemony world order. Such a revival weakens the decades-old Western dogma according to which globalization and liberal interdependence had at last eliminated ideological and military alliances. The world will not become utopian, which is the world of common rule: it will be the world of sequences, paths and alliances that can extend over a few generations. The SCO lies behind this transformation. The organization, established in 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to limit the work on border security and counterterrorism activities, has expanded over the years. India and Pakistan joined as full members in 2017, Iran in 2023 and Belarus in 2024 (Klug, 2025). By 2025, the SCO incorporates approximately 40 percent of the world population, a quarter of the world GDP and over 80 percent of the territory of Eurasia. In contrast to the (public) legal-rational institutionalization of NATO despite the development of the SCO toward an open platform cooperating in the areas of CT and cyber governance, ETC/EEA to finance and space. The SCO 2.0 is being termed as having been inaugurated by Xi at the Tianjin summit. He proposed the creation of an SCO Development Bank to provide concessional loans, created an energy trading platform to reduce their dependence on Western markets, provided limited access to members to the Chinese BeiDou satellite navigation system, started a joint artificial intelligence innovation hub, and invited the members to join the Chinese future lunar space station program (Bodeen, 2025). The programs are to create a new web of finance, infrastructure and technology in the region that may in the future be comparable to the U.S. led systems such as dollar-denominated financial architecture, SWIFT payments network and GPS constellation. Xi did not propose these ideas as an anti-Western proposal, but rather pro- multipolar responsibility: the Global South needs its own rules. The presence of Putin and Kim in these events proved that this agenda is not restricted only to the development of the region. It is an effort to establish an alternative order on the Eurasian continent one that will be able to contain U.S. hegemony and provide character starved states in the former Westphalian world order, some legitimacy of regimes. As its Western competitors-imposed sanctions and isolation on it due to its invasion of Ukraine, the summit and parade gave Moscow an unprecedented chance to demonstrate that it was not isolated and irrelevant (Klug, 2025).

The pictures were even more powerful to North Korea. The fact that Kim Jong Un visited Beijing the first time in several years indicated that Pyongyang was no longer the pariah state but a welcome guest in the new architectural design that is developing in Eurasia. China and Russia have cushioned Pyongyang against further UN sanctions and have come to consider it as a mighty ally and not a liability. The appearance of Xi, Putin and Kim on the balcony of Tiananmen crystalized the view of many analysts that, to their own reasons, three nuclear giants are increasingly asserting their primacy upon the US but that increasingly are uniting around a common story. The United States has responded with the tightening of its military position in the area of its Indo-Pacific. On 28 August 2025, the Pentagon announced that it had provided the Typhon Mid-range Capability missile system to Japan to conduct joint exercises as part of the U.S effort in a move that terminated several decades of placing such allies in a position of self-restraint under an now-cancelled INF Treaty in addition to marking the first U.S attack power on land since the Cold War (Reuters, 2025). The system consists of containerized Mk-41 launchers, which can be fired by the Tomahawk cruise missiles or SM-6 interceptors more than 1,600 kilometers.

This would make virtually all of its eastern coast with its large naval bases there (Johnson & Dominguez, 2025) an Okinawan target. China and Russia began to condemn the action even further and Moscow threatened with military-technical retaliations, and Beijing alleged that Washington had upset the

balance in the region (Al Jazeera, 2025). It was no accident that it was a few days before the parade of Xi. Washington tried to send the message that it will not allow empty space in the Indo-Pacific. This action suggests that the U.S. policy is increasingly becoming trapped within a new logic of containment, east Asia as a militarized barrier. It is a bloc polarization that in a self-defeating threat it itself seeks to prevent by choking China, Russia and North Korea even more closely together.

Pakistan is standing at a very crucial crossroad in the evolving architecture. A former US violent ally in the war on the terror, Pakistan now ends up in the arms of the BRI via CPEC, the eastern route of a Russia moving even eastwards and with the SCO system. The proposed development bank, which SCO supports, and technology platforms would cushion Pakistan against the doldrums of institutionalized balance-of-payments crises. The accessibility of BeiDou services and SCO AI hubs would result in the emergence of industry in agricultural, logistics, and military sectors; high profile leaders like Xi, Putin, and Kim would remove Pakistan out of its periphery US client state position on the main station in Eurasian project. Nevertheless, the risks associated with going through this new terrain are great; greater exposure to US sanctions, overreliance on China, and involvement in great-power politics. Refined policymaking is required in this field. The window of reposition still exists in Pakistan but only it will be short lived.

Literature Review

The international relations community is now accepting the fact that the post-cold war unipolar system where the US exercises hegemony in military, economic and normative arenas (even though it is not comfortable) is becoming overtly challenged. Although the 1990s were once called by scholars as an end of history era, in the current studies and reporting, new centers of power exist in Eurasia. This change is not only theoretical, but it is occurring via tinkering of institutions, new alliances and realignment of the military. However, as much as the analysis and commentary revolve around the different paths of China, Russia and North Korea or the intrusion of the U.S. military into Asia, few attempts integrate these strings as constituents in a single bloc-building effort. This review surveys the most relevant recent empirical evidence on leading world reporting in order to reveal the way these parallel lines are coming together.

The growing institutional ambition of the China-oriented Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) may be taken as one of the strong signs of this change. However, during the 2025 meeting in Tianjin, President Xi Jinping suggested accelerating the process of establishing an SCO development bank, launching an energy cooperation platform and opening China BeiDou satellite navigation system to all SCO members (Associated Press, 2025). Xi promised about US 1.4 billion in loans and concessional financing in three years to fund these projects which he described as part of what Chinese media described as SCO 2.0. The programmers are a widening of the horizon of the SCO beyond its primary concern of border stability and counterterrorism to finance and schemes of technological connectivity and giant connectivity. Respecting the fact that such steps are aimed at empowering the Global South and multipolarization, Xi is equally focused on its goal of rendering Eurasia less reliant on the systems controlled by its foe in the IMF, SWIFT payment system and GPS (Associated Press, 2025). The strategies remain in an early phase and have little information on how it will be governed or its operating schedules but the investment and growth prospects in the sector have made it stand out compared to the old image of the SCO as a mere talk shop, as depicted in the report.

The Tianjin conference also revealed the fact that Russia and North Korea are becoming more visible allies of the Chinese side of geopolitical signaling. Xi Jinping stood next to Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, on his balcony of Tiananmen gate, days later at the military parade of the Victory Day in Beijing, the first-ever three nuclear powers to appear on the same stage (Associated Press, 2025). Analysts in these reports put the tableau in a very definite context to Washington: that China is ready to publicly embrace regimes under western sanctions, creating a counter-polar to American hegemony. The second time that Putin met with Kim was during his visit when he had a bilateral meeting

with Kim which revolved around enhancing military cooperation and also political support, North Korean state media also vowed to provide full support in terms of global posture in Russia (Reuters, 2025).

These optics are a million miles away as many decades of diplomatic isolation of North Korea and tells, instead, of its established role in what appears more and more to be an emergent Eurasian civilization. Though, these actions are largely symbolic to date that they require the specifics of those agreements which are yet to be negotiated, nonetheless, in whatever forms they take, they do serve to reinforce the image of an axis of disobedience coming together against Western hegemony. In combination with these Eurasian events, the US has been increasing its military containment of the Indo-Pacific, as a way of hastening the polarization of the blocs. On 28 August 2025, the Pentagon announced that it was deploying the Typhon Mid-Range Capability missile to Japan to participate in the Resolute Dragon drills (Reuters, 2025). The Typhon systems are deployed by deploying launch ready Mk- 41 containers that they can use to shoot Tomahawk cruise missiles and SM-6 interceptors at a distance of more than 1,000 miles; much of the eastern coast of China is within reach of the Typhons. Japanese media reported that it was the first time to have land-based U.S. attack weapons in Japan since the Cold War, having broken its decades-long self-imposed ban after a historic arms control treaty to use them after the death of an Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. China and Russia complained about the announcement, Moscow claimed that it would take unspecified military-technological retaliation, and Beijing claimed that Washington destabilized Asia (Al Jazeera, 2025). The timing which was just a few days before the China parade was immediately interpreted by many observers as a counter signal by deliberate intent to sabotage the moment when symbolic unity in Beijing was to be had. This reaction too was a roll of dice as it had the risk of the backfiring of convincing senior officials in Beijing, Moscow and Pyongyang that America is trying to enclose them with military and bring them into a closer proximity as a consequence.

It is the hints that the intersection of these dynamics gives of a nascent structure that is larger than its constituent parts. The reality that the new economic and technological orientation of the SCO is an institutional concern to establish governance outside of the Western order. The entry of Russia and North Korea into the summitry of China and parades depict a premeditated re-branding of them as isolated pariahs to full partners. The forward-deployed missile units of U.S. troops Once again, this gives the upper hand to our theory of geographic denial when compared to the theory of cooperative integration with Asia, and is a militarization of the Asian region in a similarly dehumanizing way as is frontline militarization. Obviously, we tend to consider at least two of these strands separately, but when they accelerate together one of the effects is the establishment of a vicious cycle: U.S. containment stimulates and institutionalizes the alignment and Eurasia, which in turn supports the hard-balancing position of Washington even further in putting in place bloc dynamics. Meanwhile, these verified sources reveal massive gaps in the existing discussion.

At the same time the press has been silent with regard to how the proposed SCO development bank or energy platform projects are to be funded, governed and enforced - casting doubt as to the feasibility of these schemes. Relationships between Russia and North Korea have been studied majorly in a descriptive manner without ascertaining whether or not their interactions would go beyond the just looks of non-binding to include some form of binding commitment in terms of military or economic endeavors. And little of the coverage considers the effects of such developments on mid-size powers like Pakistan that really cannot be easily incorporated into the Belt and Road Initiative developed by China, the turn towards the east of Russia, and the historical connections of states to the United States. It is very interesting in that Pakistan is a full SCO member and will benefit out of any new schemes of finances or technology, but winks of its strategic options are irrevocably missing in the mainstream discourse.

On all of these omissions, the resultant image what has been produced by these verified reports is of Eurasia uniting as a more formal power pole. It could be said, the supposed bank projected by the SCO, technological platforms and desire to initiate space cooperation is institutional infrastructure of this pole.

The symbolic and diplomatic merging of Russia and that of North Korea is a tangible expression of the consciousness of shared identity in counter to the Western hegemony. The spatial hardening of containment is represented by the United States missile installations in and around the first island chain. All these actions are indicative of the third wave of bloc politics re-entering the world politics as a graduated phenomenon of fluid multipolarity that one time would have been anticipated by many observers to turn into spherical tanks of influence. This is not only critical to comprehending the actions of great powers, but it is also crucial to understanding how a state like Pakistan may survive and navigate in what some are starting to view as a gradually narrowing fault line between an U.S.-led system and a China-led Eurasian alternative.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this paper is a historical-analytical method that is a qualitative method since it seeks to understand the Launching of China North Korea Axis by Russia, the institutionalization of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the strategic implication of it with regard to Pakistan in a more bloc-oriented international system. It uses primary sources, including official speeches, summit statements and policy reports of the Foreign Ministry of China, state media in Russia and North Korea, U.S. DoD announcements; and complemented with secondary sources of scholarly published documents (peer reviewed), think tanks (CSIS, Brookings, Carnegie), foreign news (Bodeen, 2025; Al Jazeera Japan Times). The content analysis which was meant to identify the trends of institutionalization, military signaling and bloc identity focused more on the Chinese sources although it was also cross-referenced with the Russian and Western sources in order to reduce the impact of the author bias and maximize the reliability. This paradigm of analysis allows placing these contemporary developments in a wider framework of patterned changes in a longer span of time, thereby beginning to theorize and conceptualize how the strategic environment in Pakistan is being transformed.

Discussion

The recent political convergence of China, Russia and North Korea that is not only evident in the cueing of diplomacy, but also in the institutionalization of this cueing, symbolic exhibitions of comradeship and opposition to the military gestures, is causing the new strategic environment. Such developments can be used to explain that bloc politics is not a conceptual and scholarly conspiracy but realizing geopolitics, which would outline the context within which Pakistan would derive its future decisions.

The most important institutional structure of such transformation is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). During the recently held Tianjin summit, Xi Jinping proposed to establish an SCO Development Bank, initiate a common energy market trading platform, avail access to its members to use BeiDou satellite system, develop AI innovation bases and jointly participate in space exploration in future. Such measures constitute a change of approach to the policy coordination model to a model of operational interdependency, among the member states, so that they can be less reliant, over time, on Western-dominated financial and technological frameworks. China is making sure that the SCO is making it the institutional support on a pole in Eurasia through the provision of physical resources lines of credit, technological standards, and logistics networks to the members. No, these proposals were not so much imposed as anti-Western, but as an act to mutual evolution, to sovereign equality and civilizational pluralism, a narrative that is popular in countries that are afraid of Western conditionalities. Here, in the example of Pakistan, this new type of architecture can not only stabilize its economy, in addition to modernizing its key regions, but it is also able to drag the state further into a structural dependence on Chinese staged structures.

When the SCO summit demonstrated the institutional framework of this bloc, the Victory Day parade in Beijing demonstrated its narrative authority. The parade redefined the World War II as a Chinese Soviet victory and Eurasia as its legitimate beneficiary and not its enemy. This deliberate attempt to appear on the

balustrade of Tiananmen alongside Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un was a visual illustration of this historic partnership, which implies that the countries are not simply working together because of the practical reasons but because they together are writing a post-Western world. The Chinese faith in their technological capability was also intended to be demonstrated by the display of the DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missiles, hypersonic glide vehicles, AI-controlled reconnaissance drones and integrated missile defense systems. This mixture of the ancient narration with the newest military force can be taken as a good sign of the Global south: The rise of Eurasia is not merely the morally right but the technologically inevitable. It is these symbolic acts that pose the strategic psychology as much as the correlative powers of physical power that you observe states that are disillusioned with the globalization process as institutionalized by the west begin to question themselves whether there not other forms of order may be.

The US reaction on the other has been military counter-posturing contrary to institutional intervention. The introduction of the Typhon Mid-range Capability in Japan was the first occasion that U.S. ground-based attack systems had been used in East Asia since the Cold War and virtually the entire regions in the east coast of China were accessible (Mcelhiney & Koja, 2025). It reinforces a deterrent but causes Washington to be subordinated to the logic of zero-sum containment and makes it apparent to China and Russia that they are surrounded with concrete on all sides. Not only mobile and concealable, but also pre-emptively oriented: Chinese and Russian strategists are encouraged to consider launch-on-warning policies or integrated early-warning arrangements as a means of calculating their perceived own weakness Offensive posture. Rather the opposite, the deployment solidifies the first island chain into a militarized front, augmenting the dynamic of security dilemma, banging Beijing, Moscow, and Pyongyang against each other. In trying to freeze it with a show of strength, Washington may be just doing that and coming up with the Eurasian Union that he fears.

Pakistan is in the middle of these tectonic changes, and its condition can only be said to be wonderfully favorable and dangerously susceptible. It is situated straddling the Eurasian landmass and the Indian Ocean, even to the extent of being molded as the southern anchor of this emerging bloc. The proposed SCO Development Bank would help alleviate periodic crises of the balance of payment, belonging to BeiDou navigation and SCO AI centers would accelerate the upgrading of technology in the logistics, agricultural, and military sectors. The membership in SCO energy mechanisms would guarantee an assortment of supply sources and reduction in reliance of Pakistan on dollar-based markets. There is also the diplomatic consideration of a higher representation in SCO meetings that can assist in the relocation of Pakistan to the role of an Eurasian stakeholder that can no longer be sidelined by other partners China, Russia or even Central Asian states and may one day also enable it have a better bargaining position with the Gulf allies seeking post-Western readings.

But these are the experiences fruitlessly cut short. Increased unity in a Chinese-led block will also pose the threat of American economic retaliation that would reduce strategic freedom and create structural dependence on Beijing. Further seclusion of the Pakistani economy to the western markets and investment inflows critical to the survival of the economy of the country can also be employed through hypocritical identification with an anti-western block. Islamabad game is thus a game of hedging: the benefits of economic and technological investment of Eurasian integration and assurance of security relationships with us (and to a considerable extent screen participation in common military platforms). Losing control of this may spell out a scenario where Pakistan would be stuck in its efforts to follow a group, which restrains its liberty, and failed to protect itself should a major power clash occur.

Collectively, these developments are indicators that the bloc as a system is being rematerialized not necessarily as a relic of ideological heritage of the Cold war but as a material interdependence-based construct, with heuristic politics of force and more profound security predicaments. The SCO itself is developing to become a systemic order; China Russia North Korea axis is forming a convergence discourse

of legitimacy and the U.S is re-establishing containment on a platform of forward strike deployments. In the instance of Pakistan, it is an open door that opens nowhere: a potential of leaving the periphery to swing as long as it can do without losing its strategic independence under the new regime of the bloc.

Conclusion

The September 2025 will not be just the symptom of geopolitical shivers; it will be the indicator of the re-emergence of the concept of bloc politics as the essential ordering principle in international politics. Alongside an SCO that increasingly is being turned into a bank, the (multilateral) money that is now being handed out and invested in finance-technology-space is gradually yet surely establishing an institutional base of kind to the provincial pole of the 21st century, which in China will be Russia-China-North Korea ideological-pull; on this metaphorical day the largest ever China-China-North Korea is converging in Beijing. Meanwhile, the U.S. intervention of Typhon into Japan reaffirms the shift in Washington to hard containment, and also adds to the process (not accommodation) of the emerging powers into hostile blocs. This shifting environment is a combination of both good and bad fortunes in the case of Pakistan. It was in a better position to achieve economic stability using SCO tools, modernization of key sectors and establishment of a more balanced foreign-policy identity but it needs to check over-dependence on, anyone pole. The only way to negotiate this multipolar order is through strategic hedging (becoming stronger in Eurasia without abandoning the West) in case Pakistan is to move beyond being a peripheral actor and become a link in the Eurasian connectivity.

Recommendations

- ▶ **Institutional Anchoring:** To gain access to credible and long-term concessional finance not conditional on political conditions by the west, Pakistan should struggle to become an early member of the proposed SCO Development Bank and be able to be represented in the board level. Institutional anchoring will bring Pakistan to the level of being a peripheral actor into an internationally accepted regional stakeholder in Eurasia and increase the effectiveness of its policy-making.
- ▶ **Strategic Technology Embedding:** It should organize its access to SCO technology projects, especially BeiDou satellite services, to AI innovation centers and energy exchanges to update agriculture, logistics and defense supply chains modernization. This inclusion would reduce the dependence on the West controlled technology structures and expand the strategy options Pakistan has.
- ▶ **Narrative and Visibility Diplomacy:** Pakistan must think of undertaking more aggressive public diplomacy at the SCO and other China-led forums through expansion of media interest, cultural diplomacy and high-level involvement. This would turn Pakistan into a perception that it is not a security-oriented state but a significant point connecting or a southern workhorse of the Eurasian landmass.
- ▶ **Balanced Hedging Strategy:** As Pakistan, continues to have a growing integration with the Eurasian systems, it will have to ensure that it continues to engage in critical economic, educational and security relations with the U.S. and other western allies such as NATO. This would hedge Korea against such a strategic freedom and sanctions exposure, and prevent dependency on one bloc.
- ▶ **Strategic Foresight Capacity:** In Pakistan, the government can establish a center of study on multipolarity and bloc politics in key universities and research think tanks. Such cells might also be used to provide scenario planning, the evaluation of risks and the policy advice to shape the form of the Eurasian order of the next several decades.

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