

## SCO: Focus Of Multi-Polar World Shifting To East

The number of SCO's partners growing

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The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) advocates long-lasting peace and prosperity in the region. A declaration on this point was signed by the leaders of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan at the SCO summit which took place in Beijing this week. The members of the organization adopted a package of documents determining the strategy of SCO's development and its orientation at expanding partnership.

One of the main results of the summit is the expansion of the number of SCO's observers. Afghanistan has joined Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran in this status. "We always advocated closer cooperation of the Shanghai Six with Afghanistan," Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

"We expect that the observer status will encourage our Afghan friends to make an even greater contribution to the development of regional cooperation. The SCO is an open organization advocating the extension of links with multilateral structures and governments. We welcome everyone who strives for cooperation with the SCO."

Turkey has become SCO's dialogue partner. Earlier, this status was granted to Belarus and Sri Lanka. The growing number of SCO's partners has a geopolitical significance, political scientist Stanislav Tarasov believes.

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At the same time, Iran, which is an SCO observer, would like to become a full member but this has not happened yet. There are objective reasons for this, Muratbek Imanaliyev, who

was the SCO Secretary General before the latest summit, said in his interview with The Voice of Russia.

“There is a condition in the SCO’s statutory documents that only countries that are not subject to UN sanctions can join the organisation. The UN has imposed sanctions against Iran, but this does not mean that Iran’s application is off the SCO’s agenda for ever.”

SCO leaders expressed grave concern about the situation in Iran. They emphasized that attempts to use force so as to solve the Iranian problem could have unpredictable results. The SCO member-states also severely criticised the situation in Syria. The summit declaration reads that the SCO is against a foreign military operation and forced surrender of power in Syria.

It is necessary to mention the Declaration on missile defence as one of the important documents adopted at the summit. “Unilateral unrestricted build-up of missile defence by one country or a group of countries is capable of dealing a blow on international security and strategic stability,” the document reads. The participants in the summit agreed that if peace and stability in one SCO country were threatened, the other member-states should take political and diplomatic measures to dispel the threat. The delegates confirmed that SCO countries do not participate in unions or alliances aimed against other SCO member-states.

Ex-governor of Russia’s Irkutsk Region (Siberia) Dmitry Mezentsev has been appointed new SCO Secretary General. Prior to this, he was the head of the SCO Business Council for 6 years. Kyrgyzstan has become the new chairman of the organization and the next summit is due to be held in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek in the summer of 2013.

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