News

Takeaways from the historic summit between Trump, Xi and Putin

SHENZHEN, China (AP) — The meeting among U.S. President Donald Trump, China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin on Thursday was the first-ever sit-down for the leaders of the three countries.

They started with talk of a shared responsibility for keeping peace as the victors of World War II and as global powers. But post-meeting readouts by the three nations reflected more symbolism than substance.

The "peace declaration" released after their meeting made no mention of Russia's war in Ukraine or the U.S.-led war in Iran. It said they agreed on the need for reforms to the United Nations, on increasing oil supplies and on reducing nuclear risks. The statement did not spell out the type and extent of the U.N. reforms the leaders agreed to.

The three sides also agreed that state officials should enjoy immunity from prosecution, opposing what they called "jurisdiction abuse" by the International Criminal Court, the reports said.

Here are key takeaways from the talks, which lasted over an hour.

China's Xi presided over the summit of 21st century powers

Xi added to China's already burgeoning diplomatic stature merely by hosting the event.

He said the talks with Trump and Putin were positive and fruitful, and that the three nations had aligned views on safeguarding world peace, according to China's Xinhua official news agency.

They agreed major powers should take the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously and believe differences should be resolved through negotiation and cooperation, Xinhua reported.

"As long as dialogue does not stop, doors remain open, there is hope for peace," Xi was quoted as saying. "The seeds planted at today's trilateral meeting will surely take root, sprout, blossom and bear fruit."

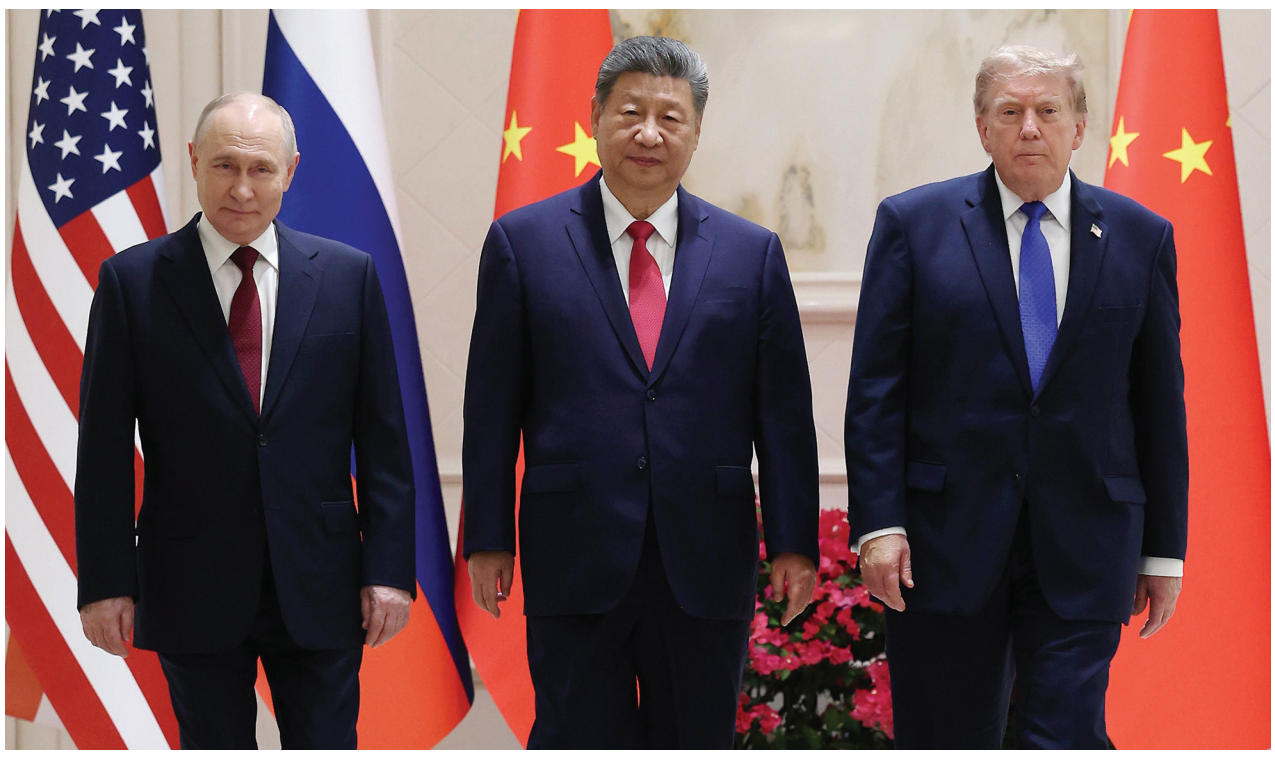
China's insistence that it has the right to recover the democratically governed island of Taiwan, possibly by force, was not addressed in the leaders' broadly worded agreement. China considers that a domestic issue.

China likes to position itself as a different kind of superpower from the U.S. and Russia — one that doesn't get involved in wars and advocates for smaller states, said Ruby Osman, a senior policy adviser at London's Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

Beijing's priority was steering the meeting away from specifics, she said. "Beijing wanted to be seen as the adult in the room."

Trump claims a place in history

Trump heralded the leaders' gathering as "really making history" and he suggested to Xi and Putin that together they were shaking things up by ditching the "old school" way adversaries engage.



President Donald Trump, right, Chinese President Xi Jinping, center, and Russian President Vladimir Putin arrive for a trilateral meeting at Kylin Villa Thursday, Nov. 19, 2026, in Shenzhen, China.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AP NEWS



President Donald Trump, from right, meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kylin Villa in Shenzhen in southern China's Guangdong Province, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2026.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AP NEWS

The White House set low expectations for the talks. But Trump framed them Thursday as only the beginning — a chance to get the conversation rolling on solving some of the world's thorniest issues.

"A lot of wonderful things can come out of this, or at least start," Trump told Putin during a one-on-one meeting prior to their three-way meeting with Xi.

The carefully crafted event was a welcome break for Trump after a couple of rotten weeks for his presidency in which his Republican Party was trounced in the midterm elections, widespread tech outages spooked Americans, and Iran escalated attacks on U.S. allies.

Trump said Iran was on the agenda as was Russia's war against Ukraine. China and Russia carry enormous sway with Tehran and also have been accused by the U.S. of supporting the Islamic Republic.

He reiterated Thursday that he and Xi agree Iran needs to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a critical waterway for world energy supplies that has become a chokepoint since the start of the war. They also agree that Iran cannot obtain a nuclear weapon, Trump said.

But there were no signs that Trump secured any agreements from Xi or Putin to help solve the Iran conflict.

Following the talks, Trump dialed into a meeting in Berlin between U.S. envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alongside more than 40 European leaders who are supporting Ukraine's war effort.

Trump told the Berlin gathering that he spoke to Xi and Putin about finding a peaceful end to the Ukraine war, Witkoff said.

Putin shares spotlight with Trump and Xi

For Putin, the three-way talks on the sidelines of the APEC summit — and his meetings with both leaders separately earlier — offered a much-coveted chance for the Kremlin leader to signal that he heads a superpower on par with the United States and China.

Trump and Putin found common ground in their opposition to the ICC. The Russian leader is wanted by the ICC under an arrest warrant for his alleged war crimes in Ukraine. The U.S. opposes the ICC's arrest warrant against former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Putin last attended an APEC summit in 2017. His presence as an honored guest and Russia's status as a top global power — at least at the gathering in Shenzhen — mark a diplomatic breakthrough.

Just before the summit, Russia sent a pair of nuclear-capable Tu-95 bombers on a visit to Vietnam in a reminder of its nuclear might. And as Putin arrived in China, Russian TV zeroed in on an officer in his retinue who was carrying a briefcase with the codes for Moscow's nuclear forces.

Putin addressed Xi as "dear friend" during their talks on Wednesday, and smiled contentedly on Thursday as he shook hands with Trump, who called him "my friend" and boasted about their "great relationship for many years."

Speaking at the start of the three-way talks, Putin underscored the global weight of Russia, China and the U.S. The three nations are "united not only by our status as victors in World War II, but, most importantly, by our shared responsibility for maintaining international peace and security," he said.

They are also among the founders of the United Nations, Putin noted, adding that "we bear responsibility for preserving and strengthening the system of international law."

"Our nations share many common interests regarding the resolution of regional conflicts, including, of course, the conflict in Ukraine," Putin said.

Russia's war in Ukraine featured in Putin's bilateral meetings with Trump and Xi. It wasn't the main topic of the three-way talks, Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

The Kremlin released video of the Chinese leader escorting the Russian president to his car at the end of the talks and the two men shaking hands.

"I don't think anyone even expected things to go so well," Putin told Xi as the two men parted ways.

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